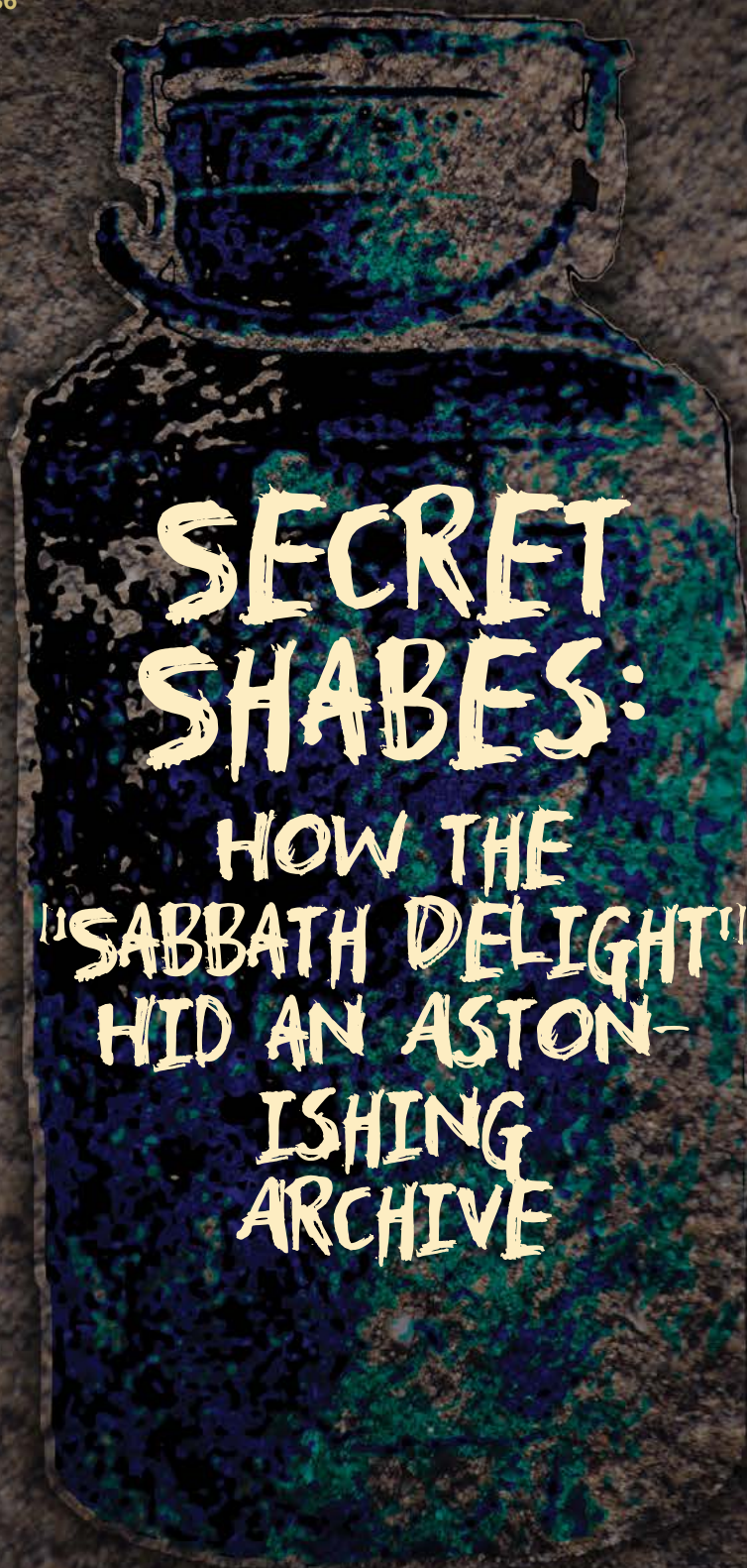


B'NAI B'RITH

M A G A Z I N E

PUBLISHED SINCE 1886

WINTER 2020



ORGANIC BY NATURE

NO
ADDED
SULFITES

100%
ORGANIC
GRAPES



   
HERZOGWINE.COM

Variations | Be-leaf

100% ORGANIC CABERNET SAUVIGNON

DISTRIBUTED BY ROYAL WINE CORP. • FOR MORE INFO, CALL (718) 384-2400 • WWW.ROYALWINE.COM • PLEASE ENJOY RESPONSIBLY





Have **Your Plans** *Changed*

For almost everyone, the answer to that question is yes.

Our plans have changed. Our lives have been put on hold. Most of us couldn't have anticipated the recent events that so greatly impacted our sense of personal and financial security.

Need Assistance?
We are here to help.

Please know that we are thinking of you during this time. If we can be of help to you and your family, don't hesitate to reach out.

During times like these, even the best-laid plans may need to be revisited.

If you are like most people, you are thinking about the impact of the current events on your future.

Clients are contacting advisers in record numbers to discuss their needs. If you need help connecting with someone to assist you and your family, please let us know. We can provide you with a list of advisors in your area who our friends and supporters have recommended.

Please let us know how we can help you determine your plans. We have many resources available that you might find helpful. Whether you're rethinking your retirement plan or inheritance planning for your family, we want to help build your legacy.

Contact plannedgiving@bnaibrith.org or call (800) 656-5561 with any questions you may have, today!

Editor's Note

There is an oft-repeated Hebrew phrase that declares “Am Yisrael Chai.” The English translation is something along the lines of “The Jewish Nation Lives.” That can be interpreted literally, applying just to Eretz Yisrael, the land of Israel, or metaphorically, referring to the Jewish people. The notion seems particularly poignant during the season of Chanukah, commemorating a time when the heroic Maccabees prevailed against enormous odds to defeat those who would undermine and destroy our unique Jewish religion.

In this, our annual issue, two articles in particular reinforce our people's determination to keep our traditions and our history alive. The remarkable Oyneg Shabes archives, collected and sequestered for decades by doomed Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto, and the ongoing effort to restore desecrated Jewish cemeteries in Eastern Europe testify to the survival of Judaism and the Jewish people in a hostile world where total destruction

of Jewish life, and the annihilation of Jews as a people, seemed imminent. And yet, despite it all, Am Yisrael Chai — the Jewish Nation Lives!

There is more: We look at “Get” refusal, when a spouse seeking a divorce cannot obtain the release required of Orthodox Jews to dissolve a marriage. We reprise the sorry role of U.S. diplomats after the First World War and before the Second who chose to shore up the Polish government rather than protest its reaction and role in anti-Semitic pogroms. Read about Rabbi Jacob Sonderling, a musical visionary whose impact was felt from Hamburg to Los Angeles. Finally, we are proud to have won another Rockower Award from the American Jewish Press Association, this one for “The Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom: Finding Common Ground,” by Miranda Spivack, which appeared in the Spring 2019 issue of B’nai B’rith Magazine. 🗨

—Eugene L. Meyer

From the Vault

To Pray in Verdun in a War-Torn World

For decades, the name “Verdun” evoked the chilling memory of the 302-day battle waged against the German army near that French city between February and December 1916, the longest and bloodiest of World War I, with an estimated 714,000 total casualties on both sides.

The remains of the soldiers who were killed populate the cemeteries and ossuaries there, while numerous monuments include one dedicated in 1938 honoring the “Jewish French, Jewish Allies and Foreign Volunteers Who Died for France 1914-1918.”

After 1918, the 30 Jewish families residing in Verdun barely maintained the city's small Moorish-style synagogue, dating from 1875. During World War II, those families were all exiled or murdered. In winter 1944, Col. Dr. Joseph Haas, a member of New York's Rehoboth Lodge commanding the Army's 120th Station Hospital unit, arrived with the platoons that would liberate the area.



Photo credit: Calman/wikimedia.org

The Verdun monument dedicated to France's Jewish World War I dead.

Snow fell through holes in the roof of Verdun's synagogue, decimated by bombs and the Nazis who broke apart its marble World War I memorial plaque, including the name of its last rabbi. But life was about to change. Haas noted in “Yanks Revive Verdun Schul,” published in B’nai B’rith's American Jewish Monthly, “a handful of khaki-clad American soldiers



Photo credit: fr.wikipedia.org

A contemporary photo of the exterior of the Verdun Synagogue. It was defaced with anti-Semitic graffiti and swastikas in 2016.

... the only Jews in Verdun” arrived one Sabbath to pray in English. “Yet it was a strange language the synagogue walls heard that night. It was a strangely clad people who uttered it.”

Over time, numbers increased; finally, French soldiers and some community members returned. Haas and other

continued on page 8

10 Secret Shabes: How the "Sabbath Delight" Hid an Astonishing Archive

"Oyneg Shabes" was the Yiddish code name adopted by a group of daring Polish Jewish historians and intellectuals. They met Friday nights, pretending to be in an Oneg Shabbat, to secretly document the dire conditions of Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto. The materials, hidden before these brave individuals perished in 1944, are now housed in the Ringelblum Archive.

By Beryl Lief Benderly

17 Unfinished Business: Restoring Eastern Europe's Desecrated Jewish Cemeteries

After World War II, few Jews remained to protect Jewish burial sites in Eastern Europe. Over decades, thousands of cemeteries disappeared under encroaching forests or new construction. Beautiful engravings wore away; elaborate headstones toppled. In the 1990s, efforts to restore Jewish cemeteries took root and continue, led by local residents and people worldwide connected via social media.

By Linda Topping Streifeld

23 Polish Pogroms and American Apologies

Why has anti-Semitism persisted, even among "civilized" nations? Two otherwise-distinguished American diplomats exhibited such behaviors in the first half of the 20th century, with deadly consequences. The stage was Poland. The play was in two acts linked to two world wars. Americans intervened to shore up shaky regimes in Poland, at the expense of Jews.

By Kenneth D. Ackerman

27 Untying the Knot: The Burden of a Get in Orthodox Marriages

According to traditional Jewish law, a divorce isn't complete until the husband gives his wife a "get" and the wife accepts it in a rabbinical court. Female get refusal is rare but does exist. Complex issues arise and individuals, especially women in Israel, face hardships when asserting their rights.

By Michele Chabin

31 Jacob Sonderling: A Musical Visionary, From Hamburg to LA

Rabbi Jacob Sonderling expanded the horizons of Judaism through music and art. In 1935, he founded Los Angeles' Reform Fairfax Temple. Its services attracted recently arrived European refugees. Later, Sonderling commissioned a series of choral works, including an English version of Kol Nidre, from four important musicians.

By Cheryl Kempler

FROM THE PRESIDENT 4 First Memories and Miracles of Eretz Yisrael

By Charles O. Kaufman,
B'nai B'rith International President

B'NAI B'RITH IMPACT B'NAI B'RITH IN YOUR COMMUNITY AND AROUND THE GLOBE

35 B'nai B'rith Connect: Busier Than Ever

Successfully adapting to social restrictions imposed by COVID-19 in 2020, Connect members stayed in touch via online get-togethers and kept current through interactive conversations.

37 Achim/Gate City Lodge Honors Essay Contest Winners Virtually

Nine winners of the Enlighten America essay contest for young people in the Atlanta area stressed equality for all.

38 B'nai B'rith Extra: Bringing the Conversation to You

In the spring of 2020, a new resource was added to the B'nai B'rith website. B'nai B'rith Extra is the central location for webinars, conversations and podcasts on issues in the news, plus online programs that are simply edifying and enjoyable.

42 B'nai B'rith in the European Parliament: The Working Group Against Anti-Semitism

Since 2012, the WGAS, with B'nai B'rith, has spearheaded achievements in the fight against anti-Semitism. As the coronavirus pandemic has sparked economic and cultural crises, anti-Semitism has reemerged in both old and new forms.

45 The Bershad Scholarship Fund Changes Lives of Winners

Four students entering college in 2020 received Bershad scholarships. The recognition and financial aid are helping the winners prepare for careers in medicine, law, community engagement and education, which will allow them to continue their lives of service.

46 B'nai B'rith Unveils None Shall Be Afraid, Initiative to Fight Anti-Semitism

B'nai B'rith launched None Shall Be Afraid, our signature response to anti-Semitism. Online resources focus on the different facets of anti-Semitism, including on college campuses, faith-based anti-Semitism and at global agencies.

44 B'nai B'rith Welcomes the American Jewish International Relations Institute

AJIRI, the American Jewish International Relations Institute, and B'nai B'rith have joined forces under the B'nai B'rith umbrella. AJIRI-BBI, as the new institute will initially be known, will continue to advance the groundbreaking work both organizations have undertaken in the realm of fair treatment for Israel on the world stage.

48 Marna Borgstrom Receives the 2020 B'nai B'rith National Healthcare Award

The CEO of Yale New Haven Health and Yale Hospital in Connecticut, Borgstrom acknowledged the healthcare heroes working on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic and paid tribute to B'nai B'rith's mission of helping others.

BACKSTORY: Dr. Sigismund Waterman

COLUMNS FROM OUR EXPERTS

From the Vault..... 2
From the CEO 6
About Seniors 55



LISTEN TO OUR
PODCASTS HERE:
[https://www.bnaibrith.org/
podcast-list-2020.html](https://www.bnaibrith.org/podcast-list-2020.html)

SEE PAGE 30 TO LEARN ABOUT
OUR 2020 AWARD WINNER.



First Memories and Miracles of Eretz Yisrael

By Charles O. Kaufman
B'nai B'rith International President



Do you remember when you first connected with the modern Jewish State of Israel?

Perhaps you recall hearing about the roll call vote on United Nations Resolution 181 partitioning Mandate Palestine, held Nov. 29, 1947 — the original two-state solution. Perhaps you or your parents or grandparents were huddled around the radio on May 14, 1948, listening to David Ben-Gurion, the first prime minister of Israel, declare independence. Or, you later learned of these momentous events.

Perhaps your most memorable moment was flying into Lod Airport (renamed Ben Gurion International Airport in 1973), playing paddle ball on Tel Aviv beaches or visiting Independence Hall, the King David Hotel, the first parliament at the Jewish Agency building, the Knesset or the Museum of the Scroll. Or maybe you strolled through the open-air markets eating shawarma or hummus.

My very first visit to Israel was in 1980, following a visit to Cairo, Egypt. These were heady times, with Israel and Egypt having only recently signed, on March 26, 1979, the famous peace treaty following the Camp David Accords.

My bride Vonne and I toured the pyramids and quickly learned that no guidebook acknowledged the identities of the slaves who built them, as has been told for thousands of years at annual seders.

We visited the synagogue in Ancient



This photo and those that follow are souvenirs of my first trip to Egypt and Israel in 1980. Documents found in its geniza (a synagogue storage space for archival documents) reveal that Cairo's Ben Ezra Synagogue existed prior to 882 C E and is probably pre-Islamic. The revered Jewish philosopher, physician and astronomer Moses Maimonides lived near the synagogue from 1168 until his death in 1204, when the country was under Muslim rule.

Cairo and the magnificent, then-remodeled synagogue in New Cairo. Touring groups attended Friday night services. Security was tight, with a guard booth in front of the massive building and plain-clothed “secret” police officers blending in with congregants in the service. We experienced several dusty, chaotic days in the city, navigating the narrow passages of the

famous Khan Al-Khalili bazaar, American tourists ushered in and out of shops and hustled at night through darkened alleys of the market, founded in 1382, to trade American dollars on the black market.

At that time, one could take a small plane to Sharm El Sheikh at the southern tip of the Sinai Peninsula, land recently returned to Egypt as part of the Accords



After Egypt and Israel signed their historic peace treaty in March 1979, security police on patrol outside New Cairo's Sha-ar Hashamayim Synagogue were vigilant, keeping guard with a watchful eye.



Time stands still in the quiet streets of Jerusalem's Old City.

and a global hotspot for snorkeling. There was one flight in and one flight out each day. The airport was a mostly cinder-block building and, when we arrived, we observed a battalion of paratroopers — tall, muscular soldiers who we quickly learned were Americans training with peacekeeping forces.

The trip from Cairo to Tel Aviv was filled with excitement. At that time, it was possible to take a bus across the desert into Israel. We flew Nefertiti Airlines, a charter flight with an international crew. We also discovered what an “unmarked” plane meant. No flags, no numbers. No announced flight plan. Nothing. Just buckle up and enjoy the flight. And so, we did. Well, sort of.

Soon after liftoff, we felt a sharp left banking during the plane's rapid ascent. Instead of just flying across the desert, over the shortest distance, we were finding legitimate airspace in Tel Aviv over the Mediterranean.

Cruising into Ben Gurion International Airport was such an incredible sight. When we walked down the stairs of this “sit-back-and-relax-though-we-don't-know-where-the-hell-we're-going” flight, I very soon found myself stepping onto the tarmac, falling to my knees and kissing the sizzling surface. Thank G-d we were here.

That's my first memory of Israel. Of course, the drive to Jerusalem was very different from that drive today. The highways were different. The blown-out trucks and tanks on the side of the then-narrow highway from the 1948 war for independence were more visible. The hills then were mostly undeveloped. As barren as the landscape was in 1980, it was more developed than the Israel of 1959, when my parents, Stanley and Sondra Kaufman, made their first visit as part of B'nai B'rith International's first convention in the Jewish homeland. Their grainy

continued on page 8

Charles O. Kaufman
President

Daniel S. Mariaschin
Chief Executive Officer

Sharon Bender
Vice President, Communications

Eugene L. Meyer
Editor

Felice Caspar
Deputy Editor

Cheryl Kempler
Contributing Editor and Staff Writer

Samantha Caruso
Contributing Editor and Proofreader

Smita Parida
Proofreader

Simeon Montesa
Art Director and Graphic Designer

Robyn Shrater Seemann
Graphic Designer

EDITORIAL OFFICES:
1120 20th Street NW, Suite 300 North
Washington, DC 20036
202-857-6647 or bbmag@bnaibrith.org

DISPLAY ADVERTISING:
202-857-6699
marketing@bnaibrith.org

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING, MARKETPLACE
AND STUDENT RECRUITMENT GUIDE:
Meg Berg: 702-987-5044

Signed articles represent the opinions of their authors and are not necessarily the view of B'nai B'rith or B'nai B'rith Magazine. Return postage must accompany unsolicited material, for which no responsibility is assumed. Contents ©2020 by B'nai B'rith International. All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A.

B'nai B'rith Magazine (ISSN 1549-4799) is published 1 time per year by B'nai B'rith International, 1120 20th Street NW, Suite 300 North, Washington, DC 20036, and is indexed in the Index to Jewish Periodicals. \$5 of member dues goes toward B'nai B'rith Magazine.

Standard Mail postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. Notification of address change should be sent to Circulation, 1120 20th Street NW Suite 300 North, Washington, DC 20036, or call 888-388-4224. Please allow six to eight weeks for change. Postmaster: Send address changes to B'nai B'rith Magazine, 1120 20th Street NW Suite 300 North, Washington, DC 20036.

B'nai B'rith Heard Herzl: “If you will it, it is no dream.”

By Daniel S. Mariaschin
B'nai B'rith International Chief Executive Officer



The year 2021 will mark the 125th anniversary of Theodor Herzl's prophetic pamphlet *Der Judenstaat* (The Jewish State), which outlines, 52 years before its realization, the modern State of Israel.

A talented essayist and critic, and a secular Jew, Herzl was bewildered — some would say, tormented — by the anti-Semitism he witnessed and experienced in his birthplace, Budapest, in Vienna, where he lived and worked through most of his lifetime, and in other European cities he visited. While working as the Paris correspondent for Vienna's *Neue Freie Presse*, Herzl was deeply affected by the trial of Capt. Alfred Dreyfus, the French officer wrongly charged with espionage in one of history's most blatant demonstrations of anti-Semitism at the highest levels of government.

Beyond meeting his journalistic deadlines, Herzl spent many of his waking hours nudging important political and diplomatic figures and top Jewish community leaders about the need to find a home for the Jewish people where they could till the soil, establish manufacturing enterprises and run their own lives. At various times, frustrated and impatient with progress in implementing his vision, he even looked beyond Palestine — Argentina and Uganda were seen as possible options — but at his core he remained primarily drawn to Palestine, then under Ottoman rule.



The title page of *The Jewish State* by Theodor Herzl, his groundbreaking book first published in 1896.

Though it was seemingly just a business plan for a sovereign state, *Der Judenstaat* was so much more than that. It envisioned, for example, the establishment of a company to purchase land for settlement that would be the engine driving the Zionist enterprise.

Around the time the pamphlet was written, he was becoming more and more emotionally attracted to the ancient homeland of the Jewish people as the answer to their ongoing predicament. Indeed, stirrings of Jewish pride can be seen in the closing lines of the pamphlet:

“Therefore, I believe that a wonderful generation of Jews will spring into existence. The Maccabean will rise again...”

“Let me repeat once more my opening words: The Jews who wish for a state will have it...”

“And whatever we attempt there to accomplish for our own welfare, will react powerfully and beneficially for the good of humanity.”

The following year, in 1897, he convened the First Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland, beginning the process of creating not only an organization devoted to achieving a Jewish state but also a Zionist movement that would ultimately embrace nearly all elements on the Jewish spectrum, both secular and religious.

His vision for what lay ahead is captured in words he wrote at the conclusion of the three-day Congress:

“At Basel I founded the Jewish State. If I said this out loud today, I would be greeted by universal laughter. In five years, perhaps, and certainly in fifty years, everyone will perceive it.”

Herzl's premature death in 1904 ended his personal role in the national liberation of the Jewish people, but it did not end his vision. What began, in the eyes of the many naysayers he encountered along the way, as a quixotic endeavor morphed into an existential imperative during the years leading up to World War II and the Holocaust. Led by Chaim Weizmann, David Ben-Gurion and so many other founding fathers of the State of Israel,

International President
Charles O. Kaufman

Honorary Presidents
Gerald Kraft
Seymour D. Reich
Kent E. Schiner
Tommy P. Baer
Richard D. Heideman
Joel S. Kaplan
Moishe Smith
Allan J. Jacobs
Gary P. Saltzman

Chief Executive Officer
Daniel S. Mariaschin

Honorary Executive Vice President
Sidney M. Clearfield

Chairman of the Executive
Seth J. Riklin

Senior Vice Presidents
Brad Adolph
Scott D. Knapp
Roberto M. Nul
Rebecca Anne Saltzman
Stéphane Teicher
Morris Tobias

Treasurer
A. Michael Gellman

International Vice Presidents

Susana Chalón de Nesis

Argentina

Anna Marks

Australia and New Zealand

Sam Osmo

Brazil

Aubrey Zidenberg

Canada

Sergio Bitran

Chile, Peru and Bolivia

Valérie Achache

Europe

John P. Reeves

Europe

Avraham Huli

Israel

Abraham Mizrahi

Northern Latin America and the Caribbean

Jacobo Wolkowicz

Uruguay and Paraguay



Photo credit: The Herzl Museum, Jerusalem/Israel Free Image Project

Theodor Herzl on the ship bound for pre-state Israel, 1898.

the movement became a formidable, determined factor in bringing about statehood for the Jewish people.

B'nai B'rith bought into Herzl's Zionist vision as early as September 1883, when one of the first Zionist conferences was convened by Katowice's Concordia Lodge in Poland, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

In America, and in every European country where B'nai B'rith had been established, lodges were supportive of the endeavor. Money was raised to improve life and further education there, and B'nai B'rith even hosted fairs and expositions showcasing imports from pre-state Israel ranging from carpets, ceramics and paintings to specialty food items. In Germany and other countries, B'nai



Photo credit: B'nai B'rith Archives, Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio

In 1948, Eddie Jacobson of Kansas City asked his friend, President Harry Truman, for a favor that would change history.

B'rith helped those seeking to immigrate. We founded our first lodge in Palestine, in Jerusalem, in 1888. Its recording secretary was none other than Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, the father of the modern Hebrew language. B'nai B'rith established the first public library in pre-state Israel in

continued on page 9

First Memories and Miracles of Eretz Yisrael

videos showed vintage street scenes, the Allenby Bridge, distant views of the Old City — the Dome of the Rock was not yet painted gold — and many other early images of a fledgling country.

These are just a few of my many, many memories of Israel. What are yours? As we approach Israel's Diamond Jubilee in 2023, you are invited to tell us in an email (to president@bnaibrith.org) how and when you first connected with Eretz Yisrael.

The miracle of a peaceful accord between Egypt and Israel, negotiated between Anwar Sadat and Menachem Begin at Camp David in 1978, continued with Jordan's recognition of the State of Israel and has now led to yet another miracle: normalized relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates.

While threats from Iran and its proxies have loomed for more than 40 years, Israel has made enormous economic strides, with technological innovations in agriculture, health and medicine, water management and desalination, defense and cyber technology, and software development.

Israel has established relations — even partnerships — with more than



A 1980 photograph of the Sinai Desert, where the Jewish people wandered for 40 years.

160 countries. While love for Israel hardly shows in the United Nations General Assembly, where bias against Israel is the primary language, the world body's Global Innovation Index ranks Israel in its Top 10. And U.S. News & World Report ranks Israel No. 8 in its "Power Ratings," which are calculated from metrics reflecting its strong military, international alliances, economic and political influence and

its overall positioning as a world leader.

Clearly, Israel is turning heads on every continent on the economic front while, at the same time, it turns stomachs among countries that continue to seek its destruction. B'nai B'rith welcomes continued innovations, global partnerships, "normalization" announcements by countries in its neighborhood, peace in the region and more wonderful memories from Eretz Yisrael. 🇮🇱

To Pray in Verdun in a War-Torn World

officers joined forces to provide necessary repairs. In June 1945, Army Chaplain Capt. B. Joseph Elephant led the congregation's first official service.

The men continued to "complete their self-assigned task of removing the covering of concrete painstakingly put on by the Nazis to conceal the laudatory inscription" on Verdun's Jewish World War I monument.

Meanwhile, "in a German city," another B'nai B'rith member, U.S. Army Chaplain Ernst M. Lorge and American military personnel cleaned up and worshipped in a "torn, windowless and Nazi-wrecked synagogue" where we "resurrected Judaism ..." The National Jewish Monthly correspondent Cpl. Harold N. Solomon, who belonged to Chicago's Kraus Lodge, wrote that "it was

like a great Chanukah [miracle] ... we were reminded of the Maccabees."

Haas, who had also served in World War I, was in medical practice for more than 65 years. Attaining the rank of brigadier general, he received the medal of the city of Verdun, the Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit and the Bronze Star. He died at age 94 in 1985. 🇮🇱

B'nai B'rith Heard Herzl: "If you will it, it is no dream."

Jerusalem in 1892. It laid the groundwork for what would later become The National Library of Israel. In 1899, Herzl himself contributed 300 rubles to the library on behalf of the Zionist Congress.

B'nai B'rith leaders not only contributed greatly to the cultural life of the Yishuv (the Jewish community in Palestine) but also assisted immigrants who arrived with little or no means of support.

They remedied problems with modern solutions to city planning, care of the sick and mentally ill, and the schooling of children and adults. Answering the need for affordable housing, the Jerusalem Lodge founded and built the Motza and Garden City agricultural colonies during the first decades of the 20th century.

As they say, if it had only been those important efforts to establish a viable Jewish presence in Eretz Yisrael, that would have been "dayenu." But the ultimate demonstration of B'nai B'rith's yearning for and support of the establishment of the Jewish State was the historic role played by then B'nai B'rith President Frank Goldman and Kansas City's B'nai B'rith Leader A.J. Granoff in convincing Eddie Jacobson, Harry Truman's close friend, to press the president to meet with Chaim Weizmann at the White House. That fateful meeting led to official American recognition of the



Photo credit: commons.wikimedia.org

A stained glass window of Theodor Herzl in the guise of Moses, designed for B'nai B'rith's Hamburg headquarters c. 1900 by lodge member E.M. Lilien (1874-1925), the era's most important Jewish artist.

new State of Israel in 1948, the year of the modern state's birth — is a permanent source of pride to each of us.

Herzl led a somewhat restless life, based in Paris and London for long stretches of time, away from his family. While his essays on culture and the arts were well received, his efforts at becoming equally well recognized as a playwright were often an exercise in frustration.

His singular passion — devising an answer to rid Europe of the discrimination and anti-Semitism directed toward Jews in every economic and social stratum — was as prescient as it could possibly get. "If you will it," Herzl famously wrote, "it is no dream."

The Jewish people are eternally indebted to Herzl. One hundred and twenty-five years after he put it all down on paper, we should, each of us, pause to think what our world would have been without him. 🇮🇱

new State of Israel on May 14, 1948.

Today, our lodges throughout Israel and the B'nai B'rith World Center-Jerusalem are a living testament to our organization's commitment to a vibrant, strong and secure Israel. That we were present at the creation — both in the important final decades of the 19th



It's too difficult to choose just one podcast (as we have done in previous issues) to shine our magazine spotlight upon. Since March, our virtual offerings have included live webinars and a recorded Conversations series, in addition to our four-year-old podcast. This Extra content is a way to connect us all during the coronavirus pandemic.

On our Extra pages, you'll find interviews with ambassadors, authors, astronauts, chefs, thought leaders, aging experts, art and music historians, and more. There really is something for everyone! 🇮🇱



Visit: bnaibrith.org/bnaibrithextra



Secret Shaves:

*How the
"Sabbath Delight"
Hid an Astonishing Ar-
chive*

By Beryl Lieff Benderly

For most American Jews, “Oyeg Shabbat,” or “Sabbath delight,” is a joyful social gathering held right after Shabbat services. But the phrase that evokes family, friends and festivity is also associated with a little-known historical chapter involving danger, suspense, courage, tragedy and ultimately, inspiring vindication that emerged from the ruins of the Warsaw Ghetto.

“Oyeg Shabes,” the phrase in Yiddish, served as the code name for a band of daring and dedicated Polish Jews who created what Culture.pl, a leading national cultural institution in present-day Poland, calls “one of the world’s greatest monuments to human resistance and heroism in the face of ultimate evil.”

That monument isn’t a statue or building but the Ringelblum Archive, a collection of some 6,000 documents and artifacts that extensively document Jewish life in Nazi-occupied Poland from 1940, when Jews were forced into the Warsaw Ghetto, to April 19, 1943, the eve of the epic uprising by outnumbered, outgunned Jewish fighters.

Brought together by historian Emanuel Ringelblum, about 60 clandestine chroniclers — historians, writers, artists and other intellectuals — risked their lives to create, collect and preserve as wide an array of materials as possible, in direct defiance of the German occupiers. Totalling some 35,000 pages, these included reports, articles, essays, interviews, surveys, poems, stories, diaries, drawings, paintings, photographs, newspapers, posters, concert programs, school assignments and even such ephemera as streetcar tickets and candy wrappers that the group ultimately hid from the Germans by burying them in the ground.

Among thousands of observations, laments, hopes, accounts and recollections by Jews ranging from prominent intellectuals and social scientists to school children: Wladyslaw Szlengel, whom Ringelblum called “the poet of

the ghetto,” left a tribute to an ordinary housewife sent to Treblinka so abruptly that “she did not finish the soup” she was making for her husband and son. He wrote:

*For heroes — poems and rhapsodies!!!
For heroes — the homage of posterity
Their names etched in the plinths,
For them a monument of marble.
But who will tell you, the people of the future
Not about bronze or mythic tales/But that they took
her — killed her.
That she is no more.*

In a long poem, Yitzchak Katznelson imagined a heroic Hassidic rebbe climbing into a boxcar full of Jewish corpses to find God weeping over them. The rebbe “sat in a dark corner, in silent pain, and he listened to God’s sobs ... [He] Stayed still, and did not offer a word of comfort.”

Both excerpts appear in “Discovering a Hidden Archive from the Warsaw Ghetto,” historian Samuel Kassow’s definitive account of Oyeg Shabes.

The Nazis expected the world to know about Polish Jewry only through Germany’s vicious anti-Semitic propaganda. Ringelblum and his comrades thought otherwise. Jews, they decided, not those who hated, slandered and ultimately murdered them, would be the ones to tell the story of both the rich and varied life and the ruthless destruction of the Jewish people of Poland. Oyeg Shabes undertook this unprecedented task “in one of the deepest



Photo credit: Adrien Grycul/wikimedia.org

Warsaw's Jewish Historical Institute (The Emanuel Ringelblum Historical Institute), where the Ringelblum Archive is housed.

circles of hell during one of the darkest hours in the history of mankind," Culture.pl continues.

The record that the group produced "remains one of the most astonishing research projects in human history," the Polish website adds. "An attempt to write history from within the most terrible event of the 20th century, it gave a voice to victims of the

Holocaust, preserving a record of a world doomed to destruction." Through limitless courage and ingenuity, with full recognition that they would likely not survive and finally with a crucial dose of luck, the ad hoc historians ultimately succeeded in defying the dictum that the victors write history.

Burying History

To preserve their priceless assemblage of irreplaceable materials from the Nazis, Oyneg Shabes leadership entrusted a handful of members with the task of packing the papers into metal containers and burying them for safekeeping in several places within the Ghetto. Only three members survived the war, but one of them, Hersh Wasser, the group's secretary, knew where the materials had been buried. He and the other survivors — his wife, Bluma, and journalist Rachel Auerbach — led a postwar drive to find the hidden treasure



Photo credit: wikimedia.orgs

In defiance of the Nazis, academic Emanuel Ringelblum (1900-1944) recruited historians for a secret mission, to preserve documents that would convey a true and accurate record of Jewish life in the Warsaw Ghetto.

under the ruins of the Ghetto, which the German army had systematically burned block by block in revenge for the uprising, obliterating streets and reducing buildings to rubble. This made the search,

in Auerbach's words, akin to an "archeological expedition," complete with tunnels and airshafts dug under the devastation.

A still-standing church steeple provided a landmark that, along with prewar street maps and photographs, suggested where to dig. On Sept. 18, 1946, a team of excavators struck historical gold, unearthing the set of metal boxes that contained one of the three caches of hidden documents. In 1950, construction workers happened upon the aluminum milk cans protecting a second cache. A third cache remains undiscovered, despite strong suspicions of its whereabouts.

With much of the archive recovered, the testimony of the murdered Jews rather than the lies of their Nazi conquerors forms the accepted narrative of Polish Jewry under German occupation. The archive received international recognition in 1999 from UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), including it in its registry of the Memory of the World. It described the archive as "absolutely unique, both in terms of its origin and its historic value," having been "collected by victims of the Holocaust in order to pass on information about the Holocaust to future generations."

Oyneg Shabes members certainly had no illusions. "We have nooses fastened around our necks," wrote the author Gustawa Jarecka, in one of the unearthed documents, as quoted by Kassow.

Still, Jarecka and her colleagues believed they were "noting the evidence of the crime," just as Sherlock Holmes had in Arthur Conan Doyle's novel, "A Study in Scarlet." That book's "dying victim," Jarecka notes, "writes ... one word on the wall containing proof of the criminal's guilt." Even though the effort probably "will not help us," she believed that "the record must be hurled like a stone under history's wheel in order to stop it."

As Jarecka's hope of arresting the inevitable shows, Ringelblum and his cohorts wanted to reach people of their own time as well as future generations. Alerting the outside world to both the Nazis' genocidal intentions and the growing slaughter of Jews across Poland was a pressing goal. Starting in 1942, Oyneg Shabes issued Yiddish-language bulletins, which are also in the archive, detailing expulsions and killings of Jews in numerous towns as well as rumors and reports about their



Photo credit: wikimedia.org

Krochmalna Street in the Warsaw Ghetto, 1941.



Photo credit: wikipedia.org

Buried in various Warsaw Ghetto locations, these aluminum boxes and milk cans were used to store the materials collected by the Oyneg Shabes group.

fate in camps where some were being sent. The group also fed information to the Polish underground in hopes of getting it to the Allied powers.

“Friday 16 June was a great day for the Oyneg Shabes,” Ringelblum confided to his diary on that date in 1942, as quoted in Kassow’s book. “Today at dawn we heard a British radio broadcast about the Polish Jews [that] mentioned everything we know so much about,” specifically the many expulsions and massacres. “For months we have been suffering as we thought the world was indifferent to our tragedy, which is unprecedented in history,” he continued. The BBC’s report, however, confirmed that Oyneg Shabes had “performed a great historical mission ... It alerted the world to our fate and perhaps rescued hundreds of thousands of Polish Jews from extermination. The near future will show whether these hopes [of rescue] will come true.”

The People’s Historian

Why did so grave and heroic an effort call itself by such an apparently frivolous name? To safeguard the organization’s security, the leaders arranged that the great majority of those recruited to contribute knew the identities of only a very few other conspirators. A central coordinating group, however, met on Saturdays at the office of the Ghetto’s major social service agency, Aleyhlf (Self-Help) and used the name of a Shabbat celebration to disguise their real purpose. The building where they gathered, then the Main Judaic Library building, and since 1947 the Jewish Historical Institute, houses the archive today.

Ringelblum, the lead organizer, was born in Galicia in 1900 and grew up in a cultural milieu that “combined excellent Polish education with strong Jewish nationalism,” writes Kassow. An “atmosphere rich in Jewish folk tradition” gave him a lifelong love

of Yiddish language and culture. In his teens he became active in the Labor Zionist political movement Po’ale Tsion (workers of Zion), eventually joining the Left Po’ale Tsion wing that strongly favored Yiddish and Yiddish culture as expressions of Jewish nationalism. These influences combined to guide his life’s work.

At the age of 20, he began history studies at the University of Warsaw, where he and other Jewish students organized the Young Historians Circle, which grew to about 40 members. To earn his doctorate in 1927, he presented a dissertation that was the first scholarly treatise on the history of Warsaw’s Jewish community. Though Jewish scholars had little possibility of landing university positions, Ringelblum remained active in Jewish historical circles, publishing his dissertation, a number of articles in Polish and Yiddish and a second book on Warsaw’s Jewish history. Meanwhile, he supported himself as a secondary school teacher. For the young historians, history studies were not mere academic exercises but a way of serving the Jewish community and helping to “defend Jewish honor by demonstrating that Jews lived in Poland by right and not by sufferance,” Kassow writes in the YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe.

For Ringelblum and his cohorts, the study of Jewish history properly focused on the everyday life of ordinary Jews, not, as had earlier generations of historians, on the doings of famous rabbis. The historian’s sources, Ringelblum believed, should include the testimony and experience of a broad range of community members, forming what he called “history of the people and by the people,” according to Kassow. An association, the Yiddish Research Institute (now known as YIVO), which was devoted to documenting the Jewish experience in Eastern Europe, strengthened this point of view. This dedication to capturing and recording the lives of everyday Jews eventually found expression in the work of Oyneg Shabes.



Photo credit: The Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw

A self-portrait by Gela Seksztajn (1907-44), an artist who was confined to the Warsaw Ghetto, and who was involved in the Oyneg Shabes group's clandestine activities. Much of her work is preserved in the Ringelblum Archive.



Photo credit: The Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw

The 36 bound volumes of the Ringelblum Archive, containing letters and poems, posters, fine art, graphics, photographs and more.

In 1932 Ringelblum went to work, first as an editor and then as a relief worker and community organizer, for the American Joint Distribution Committee, a relief organization founded during World War I to aid European Jews impacted by that conflict. Working for the “Joint,” he helped develop Jewish community institutions and, later, organized social services for Jewish refugees. The skills this job taught him would prove central to organizing Oyneg Shabes. Once the Germans invaded Poland in 1939, Ringelblum focused on relief work for the Jews of Warsaw, especially as director of Aleynhilf, the primary social service organization in the Ghetto. He used his position there to hire many intellectuals and artists who needed a means of supporting themselves.

Aleynhilf thus served as a clandestine recruiter for Oyneg Shabes, which Ringelblum started as a separate project in November 1940. For the first year or so, he believed that the work of his growing band of skilled observers documenting the life of the Jewish community would strengthen Jews’ position in postwar Poland. But once he realized the Nazis’ true plan for the Jewish community, Oyneg Shabes reoriented its efforts to recording — and attempting to forestall — the annihilation of Polish Jewry and warning the outside world.

In the Ghetto’s final months, Oyneg Shabes members desperately attempted to sequester the archive and to evade the Nazis. Ringelblum ultimately hid with his family and other Jews in a bunker on land owned by a sympathetic Pole. Betrayed to the Germans, the entire group was murdered in March 1945.

The Wassers narrowly escaped death through a series of fortunate accidents. Auerbach was able to leave the Ghetto and survive on the “Aryan” side of the city, disguised by false identity papers and what was said to be a “non-Jewish” appearance. But the work she had begun with Oyneg Shabes continued after the war, first in Poland and, after she immigrated to Israel in 1950, during a long career at Yad Vashem as a leader in the effort to record and organize the testimonies of Holocaust survivors, including preparing them for use as evidence in the 1960 trial of Adolf Eichmann. She died in 1976 at the age of 73.

“What we were unable to cry and shriek to the world we buried in the ground,” wrote 19-year-old David Graber — one of the three men who carried out the burial of the first tranche of documents — in a last will he composed in the final days of the Ghetto. Kassow further quoted him in his book. “I would love to see the moment when the great treasure will be dug up and scream the truth to the world.” Knowing how unlikely that outcome was, he hoped the treasure would “fall into good hands, ... last into better times, [and] alarm and alert the world to what happened.” His work complete, “we may now die in peace. We fulfilled our mission. May history attest for us.”

Almost 75 years after the diggers raised the Oyneg Shabes archive from the earth, it continues to fulfill Graber’s hope and Ringelblum’s vision. “Out of [Ringelblum’s] initiative, his humanity, and ... the great national and humanitarian fire within him,” Auerbach wrote in a memoir published posthumously, “grew a great national project ... an example for Jewish generations, a model of Jewish humanism, of Jewish creative life, young and eternal.” 📖

Make your home more comfortable than ever

“To you, it’s the **perfect lift chair**.
To me, it’s the **best sleep chair** I’ve ever had.”

— J. Fitzgerald, VA

NOW
also available in
Genuine Italian Leather
(and new Chestnut color)



**Three Chairs
in One
Sleep/Recline/Lift**



Pictured: Italian Leather chair
chestnut color. Chestnut color also
available in DuraLux™ fabric

You can’t always lie down in bed and sleep. Heartburn, cardiac problems, hip or back aches – and dozens of other ailments and worries. Those are the nights you’d give anything for a comfortable chair to sleep in: one that reclines to exactly the right degree, raises your feet and legs just where you want them, supports your head and shoulders properly, and operates at the touch of a button.

Our **Perfect Sleep Chair®** does all that and more. More than a chair or recliner, it’s designed to provide total comfort. **Choose your preferred heat and massage settings, for hours of soothing relaxation.** Reading or watching TV? Our chair’s recline technology allows you to pause the chair in an infinite number of settings. And best of all, it features a powerful lift mechanism that tilts the entire chair forward, making it easy to stand. You’ll love the other benefits, too. It helps with correct spinal alignment and promotes back pressure relief, to prevent back and

muscle pain. The overstuffed, oversized biscuit style back and unique seat design will cradle you in comfort. Generously filled, wide armrests provide enhanced arm support when sitting or reclining. **It even has a battery backup in case of a power outage.**

White glove delivery included in shipping charge. Professionals will deliver the chair to the exact spot in your home where you want it, unpack it, inspect it, test it, position it, and even carry the packaging away! You get your choice of Genuine Italian leather, stain and water repellent custom-manufactured DuraLux™ with the classic leather look or plush MicroLux™ microfiber in a variety of colors to fit any decor. **New Chestnut color only available in Genuine Italian Leather and long lasting DuraLux™. Call now!**

The Perfect Sleep Chair®

1-888-814-0540

Please mention code 113596 when ordering.



REMOTE-CONTROLLED
EASILY SHIFTS FROM FLAT TO
A STAND-ASSIST POSITION

Footrest may
vary by model

Genuine Italian Leather
classic beauty & durability

Long Lasting DuraLux™
stain & water repellent

MicroLux™ Microfiber
breathable & amazingly soft

Chestnut



New

Chestnut



Burgundy



Tan



Chocolate



Blue



Burgundy



Cashmere



Chocolate



Indigo



Because each Perfect Sleep Chair is a custom-made bedding product, we can only accept returns on chairs that are damaged or defective.

© 2020 firstSTREET for Boomers and Beyond, Inc.

46552

B'nai B'rith in Poland, Before the War

By Cheryl Kempler



Photo credit: wikimedia.org

Rabbi Moses Schorr



Photo credit: wikimedia.org

Dr. Meir Balaban

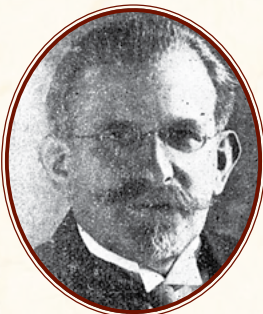


Photo credit: wikimedia.org

Rabbi Marcus Braude

After World War I, the Polish government extended permission for B'nai B'rith to officially organize lodges there in 1924. Composed of former German and Austrian lodges now located within Poland's borders, District 13 boasted a membership of over 900; its president was Cracow attorney Leon Ader. During the next 14 years, helping the poor and disaster relief victims took precedence over the lodges' mission to improve education for Jewish children. As Poland adopted stringent anti-Semitic measures, its government shut down the lodges in 1938.

From 1927 until the Great Depression, District 13 supported the Society of the Advancement of Judaic Studies in Poland and the Institute for Jewish Learning, the teaching academy and research center today housing the Emanuel Ringelblum Archives. Three B'nai B'rith officers were its founders and administrators: Moses Schorr (1874-1941) and Marcus Braude (1869-1949), Zionist rabbis and educators, and Ringelblum's teacher, Meir Balaban (1877-1942), a folklorist and historian. Their discoveries illuminated new perspectives on Jewish identity.

An authority on ancient Eastern languages, Schorr was also a scholar of Polish Jewish history. A member of the Sejm (senate) and the Warsaw University faculty, he led the city's largest synagogue. As District 13's vice president, Rabbi Schorr supervised cultural programs and published its monthly periodical from 1930 to 1935. His letters and essays about B'nai B'rith explore the concept of fraternity and reveal his conviction that the organization should benefit all people.

Schorr fled Warsaw in 1939, but he was arrested by the Soviets in the Ukraine. Despite Polish and American interventions for his release, he died in an Uzbek prison camp in 1941.

Descended from a prestigious family of printers, Balaban, professor of Jewish history at the University of Warsaw, discovered centuries-old manuscripts, ecclesiastical and municipal records from which he constructed a comprehensive survey of Eastern European Jewish life. His publications include: "The Jews of Lvov in the 17th Century" (1916); "The Jews of Lublin" (1919) and the two-volume "History of the Jews of Cracow" (1931), partially funded by B'nai B'rith. He succeeded Schorr as Warsaw's Brotherhood Lodge president.

Balaban continued his research and writings in the Warsaw Ghetto, where he died in December 1942.

Rabbi Braude, a founder and Grand Mentor of Lodz's Montefiore Lodge, was also active in numerous progressive educational and Zionist organizations. The three secular secondary schools he established also aimed to introduce Jewish culture to assimilated students; he himself authored the textbooks for classes conducted in both Hebrew and Polish. He was also involved in elevating teaching standards for rabbinical academies. Braude, who was married to the sister of philosopher Martin Buber, witnessed the destruction of his life's work in education, but many of his pupils later went on to teach and disseminate his ideas in Israel, where he himself lived from 1940 until his death. 🇮🇱



Photo credit: Photo courtesy of Tomek Wisniewski, Goniadz, Poland

Unfinished Business:

Restoring Eastern Europe's Desecrated Jewish Cemeteries

By Linda Topping Streitfeld

Last year, workers building a solar farm on an open field in Poland hit a snag. A stone basement was hidden beneath four feet of grass and dirt. As the men dismantled its walls, Hebrew letters and dates on the stones testified to their source: Jewish graves.

On a roadbed in Ukraine, on an airport runway near Warsaw and in parks, playgrounds and personal gardens across Eastern Europe, Jewish grave-stones — matzevot — have languished for decades. Some were stolen during World War II by German army units. Under postwar Communist regimes, the plunder continued.

Across a war-ravaged landscape, few Jews remained to protect Jewish burial sites. Over decades, thousands of cemeteries disappeared under encroaching forests or new construction. Beautiful engravings wore away, elaborate headstones toppled, walls were breached.

In the 1990s, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the defeat of many communist governments, efforts to restore Jewish cemeteries took root. They continue today, aided by drone surveys, ground-penetrating radar and willing hands from around the world, now connected through social media. Family groups, nonprofits, museums and governments

On a hot summer day in June 2019, Goniadz Historical Society President Arek Studniarek, (standing behind headstone, in blue shirt) and the Society's dedicated members initiated the process of restoring dignity to the town's Jewish cemetery. The matzevot are encased in a structure resembling the doorway of a small house.

are working to mend literal and figurative fences.

Myrna Teck, 82, had been researching her genealogy for several years as she approached “a big birthday” in 2018. The Silver Spring, Maryland, resident didn't want a party or a cruise, but the notice of a Jewish genealogy conference in Warsaw set her heart racing.

“Now, that was appealing,” she said. “This is not something you put off. ... I was turning 80, and I didn't have a lot of time to waste.”

She linked up with her sister for the conference, after which they hired a guide to take them to Goniadz.

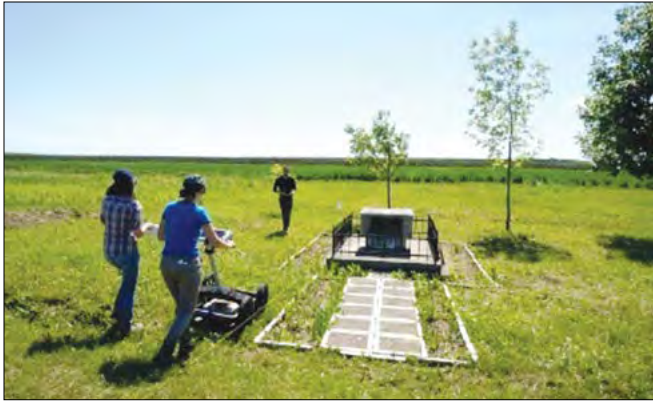


Photo credit: Rohatyn Jewish Heritage/photo: Jay Osborn

Archeologists from Staffordshire University in England relied on historical research, witnesses' testimonies and modern technology to identify locations where World War II atrocities were committed in the Jewish cemetery in Rohatyn, Ukraine. Noninvasive ground-penetrating radar (GPR) antennae detect the presence of human remains buried beneath the earth's surface.



Photo credit: Rohatyn Jewish Heritage/photo: Jay Osborn

Remnants of matzevot recovered in Rohaytn. During World War II, gravestones were crushed by the Germans to fill parking lots and roads, although some town residents considered it a sin to walk on them.

That was the town listed on a ship's manifest as the last residence of her paternal grandmother, who immigrated to the U.S. in 1905.

The small town, Teck said, was clean and pleasant, even picturesque. And then they arrived at the Jewish cemetery.

"Who's responsible for this?" she asked. "This is a shanda (disgrace)."

The three-acre site was completely overgrown. Weeds taller than people obscured vine-covered matzevot, many cracked or askew.

"This reflects badly on Jewish people, not to take care of their cemetery," Teck said. "I decided that I was very fortunate at this point in my life to have good health and physical strength, and I would devote myself to do what I can about this cemetery."

A year later, she was back in Goniadz for a full day of hard gardening in the cemetery, aided by local residents, including the town's mayor and some municipal workers. They were able to clear a small portion, but the rest remains to be done.

Building a Broader Connection

Ancestral connections such as Teck's have motivated hundreds of individual cemetery restoration projects, but they are supported by years of broader work

from scholars and historians to identify and map sites, and to lay the political and social groundwork.

Author and scholar Ruth Ellen Gruber runs the website Jewish Heritage Europe, with deep resources on Jewish monuments and heritage sites. She has documented the resurgence of interest in Jewish culture and history over three decades. After the fall of the Soviet Union and communism in Eastern Europe, she said, "People wanted to fill in the blank spaces, and Jewish heritage was one of them."

Still, many of the estimated 11,000 existing cemeteries remain undocumented, or even undiscovered. Mass burial sites present a grim additional challenge. They are considered cemeteries deserving of protection, but they were seldom marked. Local memories of the atrocities have faded.

In Rohatyn, Ukraine, the Gestapo carried out at least two mass murders of Jews. Memorials were placed near both sites, but their actual boundaries were never marked. In 2017, and again in 2019, the nonprofit Rohatyn Jewish Heritage commissioned experts from Staffordshire University in the U.K. to survey the area with ground-penetrating radar (GPR). While the technology is more than 100 years old, it has been

greatly improved in the last few decades and become more affordable. Using noninvasive electromagnetic radiation, it detects underground differences that may mark edges of pits and trenches.

The two surveys were able to reliably define borders of both sites, a first step to longer-term conservation. Plans to enclose and improve the sites have been developed, with fundraising now in progress.

With two grants from the EU totaling 1.8 million euros, the European Jewish Cemeteries Initiative (ESJF), a German-based nonprofit, began in 2018 a survey of Jewish burial sites in 12 countries. Engineering drones, whose birds-eye photographs can reveal landscape margins not visible from the ground, aid the efforts. ESJF considers this technology so important that it has developed classes — currently online — on how to use the aerial photos with special software to create three-dimensional maps, a process called photogrammetry.

ESJF compiles a history of each site using local records and interviews. The goals are to build a solid wall or fence around the perimeter, develop interpretive signs and markers for visitors, and educate local residents about their own history.

That focus on local education drives efforts on many fronts.



SUSTAINING A LEGACY OF SERVICE

The B'nai B'rith Essex Street Society

Founded in a cafe on New York City's Essex Street in 1843 to help those in need, B'nai B'rith would become recognized and celebrated around the world as the premier Jewish communal organization committed to improving the quality of life for people around the globe.

The Essex Street Society is open to supporters who make a three-year commitment of \$1,800 or more annually to B'nai B'rith. Essex Street Society members enjoy special access to invitation-only experiences, receive a limited-edition commemorative artistic piece awarded upon completion of commitment and more.

Safeguarding Israel and the Jewish people, fostering community and helping those in need. Today, the work of B'nai B'rith is as vital as ever before.

Partner with us to ensure wherever there is a need, there is B'nai B'rith.

To learn more please visit: bit.ly/BBIESsexStreet or call: 212-490-1352.



Hatte Blejer traveled to Przerośl, Poland in 2012, expecting to visit the graves of many ancestors on her father's side. Like Teck, she was appalled by what she found at the cemetery.

"The Catholic cemeteries were beautiful, with flowers, but this was totally overgrown, they were all in such terrible shape," she said.

Blejer connected with Steven Reece, a Baptist minister whose Matzevah Foundation has engaged nearly 1,200 local and international volunteers since 2012 to restore Jewish cemeteries, help Christians learn about the Holocaust and work toward the reconciliation of Jews and Christians.

Reece, 65, worked in Poland for more than a decade. A chance meeting there with a Polish woman of Jewish descent opened his eyes to the condition of the cemeteries. He felt called to help. Now, from his base in Atlanta, Georgia, he coordinates three to seven projects each summer, although COVID-19 canceled all work in 2020.

Typically, he begins a project by working with town officials, and with Jewish and Polish organizations.

"We want to establish a foothold in the community, so they become engaged partners," he said. "This is not just about gardening. The landscape is filled with challenges, animosities, wounds that are deep on both sides."

For Blejer, 70, those connections were among the greatest rewards for three summers of work in Przerośl. She befriended Jan Wiktor Sienkiewicz, an art historian in the town, who now hosts the group with Polish cakes and tea each time it returns.

She's made other friends there as well and said she's grateful to local residents who join them in the cemetery with loppers and chain saws, beating back nature's advance after every spring.

"They're just good people and they understand that Jewish history is their history also," she said.

Blejer has a degree in history from the University of California at Santa Cruz, and a Ph.D. in linguistics from the University of Texas at Austin. In the summer of 2019, she worked alongside others, clearing weeds in the heat, but also taking notes on the gravestone inscriptions. She gathered with a smaller group in the evenings, combing the Polish-language Suwalki Archives website for death certificates that matched the graves, to begin a directory of the cemetery.

Keeping Up With the Cost of Restoration and Upkeep

With so few Jews left in Eastern Europe, the cost of restoration and maintenance falls either to local municipalities, who often are cash-strapped themselves or to descendants in the diaspora.

Reece said the cost of an on-the-ground summer project is



Photo credit: Steven D. Reece, Matzevah Foundation

Linguist Hatte Blejer (seated, center) reads a Hebrew headstone inscription during the cleanup and preservation of the Przerośl Jewish cemetery in 2019. The cemetery was restored with the support of the Atlanta-based Matzevah Foundation, a nonsectarian philanthropy that coordinates these projects, and recruits the assistance of volunteers from all over the world.

about \$2,500 for 7 to 10 days, depending on the size of the cemetery. Most descendants go about fundraising by reaching into their own pockets, or those of family and friends.

Teck, who also hopes to work with the Matzevah Foundation, has obtained some funding from family and friends for the Goniadz restoration, but she also has cast a wider net.

She created two slide presentations, and gave brief talks in her home, to a multifaith group in her community of Leisure World, and for a Jewish Federation group. On Facebook, Friends of Goniadz, Poland Jewish Cemetery has more than 130 members.

Through the website jewishgen.org, she found others who were researching the same family name. Donations now total nearly \$10,000, she said, but that may not be enough to complete the cleanup, border fencing and a new memorial plaque that would mark one more Nazi horror.

Local historian Arek Studniarek believes that a mass murder of Jews was perpetrated somewhere within the Goniadz cemetery. They hope to locate it using GPR but must first complete the clearing of the land. The pandemic forced postponement of a planned trip with Reece's group until summer 2021.

The informational markers matter greatly, Teck said. Local records show that Jews in Goniadz bought the cemetery property in 1782. Today, it stands as the only evidence of more than two centuries of Jewish life — and death — in the town.

Blejer manages two Facebook pages for Przerośl, plus a separate website dedicated to the cemetery restoration project, with the requisite donation button. The online presence has helped her connect with more than 500 people whose ancestors lived in Przerośl, she said.



Photo credit: Photo courtesy of HFPJC

The Jewish cemetery located in the village of Huklyvyi (Guklivo) in the Czech Republic was restored in 2003 through the auspices of the Heritage Foundation for Preservation of Jewish Cemeteries (Avoyseinu). The organization also provides continued maintenance.

The Foundation for Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland, known by its acronym, FODZ, works to acquire Jewish communal properties such as synagogues and cemeteries in areas of Poland outside the major cities. Director Piotr Puchta brings together local officials and others to find appropriate uses for these often-abandoned spaces. Puchta succeeds when he can connect people and organizations with mutual goals, like the Matzevah Foundation and a town mayor. If they work together, the cemetery regains its dignity, and the mayor improves a section of town, maybe even drawing a tourist or two.

In Milejczyce, site of the new solar farm, Puchta was called on to find a way to return some 40 pieces of gravestones excavated from the hidden basement. FODZ owns the town cemetery, but because it is a historical monument, he first needed permission from the local curator. And then he needed a truck.

The work of restoring and protecting Jewish heritage in Europe spans fundraising, networking, negotiating and physical logistics. Puchta estimates that about 900 cemeteries remain to be restored in Poland alone. Time is not his friend.

In Search of Lost Cemeteries

In 2003, the family of Aharon Friedman contacted the Heritage Foundation for Preservation of Jewish Cemeteries, also known as Avoyseinu. The New York-based nonprofit's mission is to restore and preserve Jewish cemeteries in Europe, and Friedman had begun to wonder about the cemetery in Ukraine where his parents were buried.

Avoyseinu "sent a young man with a notebook" to Friedman's home in Monsey, New York, said son-in-law Mechel Tauber.

The notebook was soon filled with detail, as Friedman recalled funerals during his childhood in the small town of Guklivo, which then was in the former Czechoslovakia. "They carried the casket on a horse and buggy, through the village, up a mountain, across the train tracks, up another mountain, and somewhere up there was the cemetery," Tauber said.

Soon after the interview, Friedman passed away, but Avoyseinu, using Friedman's information and local records, found the cemetery, abandoned, and now engulfed by a weedy forest of evergreens.

Avoyseinu has restored at least 330 cemeteries since 2002, according to its website. Requests come from descendants. The organization identifies the site borders by consulting old records and maps, and by looking at fence foundations and corner landmarks.

"Tragically, it's very, very often we find part of the cemetery has been used by a neighbor, or a road," said Assistant Director Rifky Gelbman.

In those cases, she said, Avoyseinu enters into respectful negotiations. "It belongs to the people who are buried there, so whoever took it away needs to return it," she said. Families sometimes compensate the users for loss of the land, but she is firm that "they are not buying it."

There have been a few impossible situations, she said. An entire shopping center was built over a cemetery in Slovakia. In Ukraine, a gas station and a sports stadium have replaced Jewish cemeteries.

In Guklivo (now Huklyvyi), the original estimate of 50 matzevot swelled as the land was cleared, until finally, 330 matzevot were found. Among the last discovered were those of Friedman's father and grandfather.

When the call came, Taubman said, "We were all crying. ... Who would ever dream that we would see them?"

The Taubman family story has a happy ending, with a cautionary footnote. Since the restoration, they have visited half a dozen times.

On the first visit, the mountains on either side of the cemetery were similarly cloaked with trees. Within a few years, both had been razed and replaced by fields of tomatoes, cucumbers and corn. Taubman believes that if they had not acted in time, the cemetery would have been plowed under.

"Some people don't realize how much of a risk it is," he said. "If you don't save it, it's going to be gone." 📍

Unfinished Business: Restoring Eastern Europe's Desecrated Jewish Cemeteries

By Linda Topping Streitfeld

Dear Editor,

It is with much appreciation that I thank Gene Meyer and Linda Streitfeld for their roles in the article, "Unfinished Business," which appeared in B'nai B'rith Magazine. I was delighted to provide information from my experiences related to the Goniadz, Poland Jewish Cemetery and its ongoing restoration.

However, there is one extremely important component which was omitted:

I would like to bring to your attention the extremely important role that The Friends of Jewish Heritage in Poland (FJHP) www.jewishheritagepoland.org has played for me and many others involved in Polish Jewish cemetery restoration work.

This all-volunteer non-profit serves a critical and central role as a partner with me and several other U.S.-based descendant volunteer groups. In addition to offering guidance and moral/emotional support and education for launching and conducting our cemetery preservation/restoration efforts, it is a full partner with me and other volunteers in collecting funds for our projects, and it distributes and supervises the use of those funds to ensure success and integrity in the work.

The FJHP website and its publications allowed me to demonstrate the substance of my work to my Goniadz supporters. Its work is an integral part of my own success in Goniadz.

In addition, there are two minor issues that need clarification.

1. I do NOT live in LeisureWorld. Although this is surely a minor issue, I would like to correct it publicly.
2. Like Hatte Blejer, I also have a Ph.D. Mine is in "Visual Arts Education" with a focus on Jewish Art.

Myrna Teck, Ph.D.

President, The Jewish Art Education Corporation
Silver Spring, Md.

B'nai B'rith Homecrest House



NO APPLICATION FEE • RENT AND SERVICE SUBSIDIES AVAILABLE BASED ON ELIGIBILITY

**We offer support and safety during these challenging times.
Precautions are in place for your well-being.**

Stein and Moskowitz Communities:

- Bright and spacious apartments with balconies and large closets
- Beautiful landscaping
- Trails with safety rails along the pond
- 4-Course dinners
- Van trips
- Engaging activities

Edwards Enhanced Care Community

- 24 Hour on-site staff
- Daily meals
- Weekly housekeeping and laundry
- Engaging activities
- Walk-in showers with fold down bench
- Bathing assistance
- Optional medication administration



For more information and eligibility requirements call 301-244-3579 or email marketing@homecresthouse.org

For video tour and application, please visit: www.homecresthouse.org

**14508 Homecrest House Rd.
Silver Spring MD 20906**



Polish Pogroms

AND AMERICAN APOLOGIES

By Kenneth D. Ackerman

Why has anti-Semitism persisted so stubbornly over the centuries, even among “civilized” peoples and nations, and the diplomats who represent them?

Two otherwise distinguished American diplomats exhibited such behaviors in the first half of the twentieth century, with ultimately deadly consequences — for others. The stage was Poland. The play was in two acts linked to two world wars. Americans intervened to shore up shaky regimes in Poland, at the expense of Jews.

Up until World War II, predominantly Catholic Poland was home to more than 3 million Jews, about 10 percent of the country’s population. They were mostly poor, religious and apolitical. Yet, Polish Jews during those years absorbed repeated waves of pogroms — organized violent attacks with official backing. And this was before the Holocaust, when more than 90 percent of the Jewish population would be destroyed.

In 1919 and again 1946, the U.S. State Department inserted itself prominently into Polish politics, not to protect Jewish victims but to shield the Polish government from responsibility for the murderous attacks on Jewish communities. American policymakers in both cases viewed Poland as a bulwark against Soviet Russia and communism, regarded as an immediate threat, with harm to Jews a distraction.

Polish Independence and the Red Menace

Shortly after the First World War, Poland became an independent country for the first time since 1795. Poles had suffered terribly during the war, more than a million dying as soldiers or civilians, the country devastated. The new Polish State faced an identity crisis. Nationalists wanted a Poland dominated by ethnic Poles, not Ukrainians, Russians or Jews, all considered outsiders. Other leaders envisioned a multiethnic state in the western model, minorities welcome.

To the Nationalists, Jews were anathema. Religious divisions dated back centuries but now took new forms. Poles accused Jews of dominating Poland’s commerce and trade and, during the war, of showing mixed loyalties. With peace, many Jewish leaders in Poland sought special status for their community, with separate Jewish schools, recognition of Yiddish as a language, local autonomy and their own parallel Jewish nationalism, which they called Zionism. The Jewish question in Poland was not religious, Polish Nationalists insisted, but political.

Tensions rose, with boycotts, firings and beatings targeting Jews. In many towns, Jews armed themselves for defense. To this toxic mix, add the violence of border wars. Independent Poland faced armed encroachments from Germans, Russian Bolsheviks and Ukrainians, each also trying to create their own postwar states. The result: Anti-Jewish attacks erupted in more than a hundred towns and cities in late 1918 and early 1919.

Lvov (or Lemberg, in today’s Ukraine), then a city of more than 200,000, a third Jewish, had been occupied by Ukrainian militias until November 1918, when Polish troops chased them out. Jews had declared themselves “neutral” in the fight and organized a self-defense militia.

When Ukrainian militias withdrew, Polish soldiers disarmed the Jewish militia. Then violence broke out. The town was overrun by some 15,000 irregulars, deserters and criminals released from local prisons, as the regular Polish troops waited outside the city. It took three days before Polish soldiers restored order. Later investigations heard evidence that Polish military officers promised local fighters “forty-eight hours’ plunder of the Jews” as reward for their part in the battle. Houses and shops were burned, a synagogue set afire.

Counts of Jews killed ranged from 50 to more than 150; some newspapers claimed over 1,000. Hundreds of Ukrainians also died in the melee. Criminal charges were brought later against

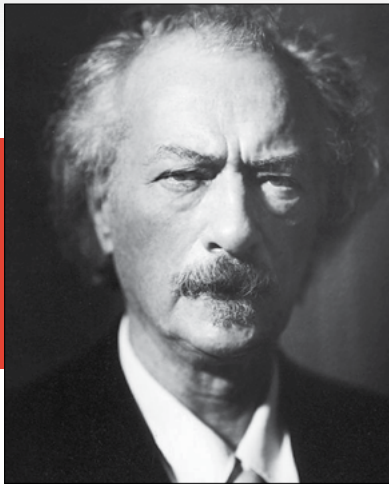


Photo credit: wikipedia.org

The piano virtuoso Ignacy Jan Paderewski was prime minister of Poland from 1919 to 1922. He attributed anti-Semitic atrocities to bad behavior by Jews.



Photo credit: Library of Congress Prints and Photography Division, Harris and Ewing Collection, Washington, D.C.

Hugh S. Gibson (1883-1954), American minister to Poland after World War I, protected American interests, insisting that reports of Jewish pogroms there were exaggerated.



Photo credit: wikipedia.org

Arthur Bliss Lane (1894-1956). In the aftermaths of two world wars, the American career diplomat declared that violence against the Jews in Poland was rooted in the political situation.

164 people, including several Jews. Similar outbreaks occurred in Pinsk (35 killed), Lida (35), Minsk (31), Kielce (4), Vilna (55), and other towns. Total confirmed Jewish deaths in the incidents reached almost 350.

The international press published lurid headlines. The reports told of “slaughters,” “massacres” and “horrors,” of Jews burned alive in synagogues, of casualties in the thousands. With only sketchy information reaching the West, accounts often exaggerated or misstated facts. In America, cities declared “days of mourning”; stores draped windows in black. In New York City, 15,000 Jews packed Madison Square Garden, and tens of thousands more marched the streets in protest. Angry petitions flooded the U.S. Congress.

Polish officials denied the charges. “There have been no pogroms in Poland,” insisted Ignace Paderewski, the world-famous pianist who was Poland’s first prime minister. He blamed Jews for causing the hatred against them; the church, the military and local leaders all agreed. Jews hoarded food, they said. Jews profiteered and colluded with enemies. Where violence occurred, they provoked it.

The controversy came at a bad time for the new Polish state. World leaders had gathered in Versailles, France, for the post-war peace conference that would decide Poland’s status on the world stage.

A post-World War I map of Poland and other countries that had been carved out of the vast Austro-Hungarian Empire. It includes the names of Polish cities with a large Jewish population.

How surprising, then, to suddenly hear from the American government’s highest-ranking official in Warsaw, Hugh Gibson, the newly appointed minister to Poland, that Jewish Poles faced no such dangers. “GIBSON DENIES POLISH POGROMS,” and “JEWISH MASSACRES ARE EXAGGERATED,” read headlines from The New York Times and other papers, attributing these conclusions to the new minister.

The U.S. State Department had taken sides.





This group photo including Jewish diplomat and B'nai B'rith leader Henry Morgenthau (third from left) was probably taken in Poland after World War I. Appointed by President Woodrow Wilson to investigate the violence against Jews in Polish cities during 1918-19, he aimed to be impartial, concluding that the government was not responsible for what he described as "excesses."



The burial of the 42 victims of the 1946 Kielce attack, who were mostly Holocaust survivors. Poles there were incited to the killings by an accusation of a little boy who alleged that he had been kidnapped by Jews. He recanted his story only in 1998.

Gibson, son of a California banker and educated at Paris's elite *École Libre des Sciences Politiques*, had joined the American Foreign Service in 1908. World War I sent him to Paris and Brussels, where he aided future President Herbert Hoover in his epic war relief efforts. By 1919, Gibson, 36, was a rising diplomatic star, worldly, multilingual, comfortable in elite circles, a natural choice as America's first minister to newly independent Poland.

Reaching Warsaw, Gibson and his small staff were welcomed warmly, wined and dined by Poland's elite, and became charter members of what historian Martin Weil would later christen the "Pretty Good Club," a tight circle of wealthy, well-bred Ivy League American men who dominated that era's State Department. Gibson dined at Warsaw's exclusive Club des Chasseurs, brought golf clubs and rented Warsaw's famous Blue Palace — where Chopin performed as a boy — for the American legation.

Pressed by Washington superiors, Gibson investigated the pogrom allegations. He traveled to key cities and concluded that, while anti-Jewish attacks had occurred, newspapers had exaggerated the details, and many had taken place near battle zones where non-Jews had also been killed.

Gibson quickly recognized a threat, not to Jews, but to the Polish state. In official cables and private letters, he repeated Polish claims that Jews had spied for Bolsheviks, monopolized the economy and hoarded food. The "bitter feeling against classes of Jews," he concluded, stemmed from "economic causes and not from religious intolerance." The fault, he claimed, lay with Jewish "propaganda artists," the reports of pogroms "exclusively of foreign manufacture for anti-Polish purposes."

Gibson's chief deputy in Warsaw was Yale-educated Arthur

Bliss Lane, 25, son of a wealthy New York merchant. Lane was openly dismissive of pogrom stories and ready to accept a report that the beating to death of five Jews in one town was "a perfectly natural outcome of poor food conditions."

American Jewish groups, hearing Gibson's reports, were outraged. Leaders including U.S. Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis, future Justice Felix Frankfurter and Louis Marshall of the American Jewish Committee all confronted Gibson publicly about his denials. But few Washington higher-ups questioned Gibson's placing Poland's strategic needs above a few extra deaths in a violent world. Back home, the U.S. Congress was preparing to adopt restrictive immigration quotas targeting Eastern and Southern Europeans. The eugenics movement, then at its peak, classed Jews, Italians, Slavs and others as lesser "races," a view widely shared in elite circles.

President Woodrow Wilson, sensing political trouble, decided to send a fact-finding mission to Poland headed by lawyer-diplomat (and later a member of the B'nai B'rith executive committee) Henry Morgenthau. Britain sent a separate group headed by Jewish parliamentarian Sir Stuart Samuel. Their separate reports each confirmed widespread killings while recognizing the nuanced situation. Morgenthau, for instance, avoided the word "pogrom" in his report, finding no proof of direct involvement by the Polish government in the attacks. But that didn't stop him from seeing the obvious human tragedy: "Excesses had occurred in Poland and Jews had suffered cruelly."

Gibson remained in Warsaw as American Minister until 1924 and went on to an accomplished diplomatic career before leaving the State Department in 1938. His deputy, Arthur Bliss Lane, would keep his focus on Poland and communists.

Postwar Poland ... Again, the Red Menace

Poles also suffered horrifically during the Second World War, at the hands of both Nazis and Soviets. An estimated 6 million Poles (including 3 million non-Jews) perished. Of the Jewish population, more than 90 percent were massacred; barely 50,000 remained in the country after the Holocaust. By 1946 Soviet Russia, acting through a local communist-led regime, was asserting ever-tighter controls. Fear, bitterness, poverty and a sense of betrayal all wracked Polish society.

On July 4, 1946, Poles attacked a building housing some 150 Jewish survivors in Kielce, an industrial town of 60,000, about a third Jewish before the war. Now, Jews were virtually extinct. The assault stemmed from charges that a Christian child had been kidnapped by Jews in an attempted “ritual murder.” The allegation was easily disproven; the boy said he’d been kept in a cellar and the building had none. But instead of protecting the Jews, police and militias joined the attack. A reported 42 Jews were murdered. Polish authorities later charged 12 attackers for the slaughter; nine received death penalties.

The Kielce pogrom shocked the world, including many Poles. Victims included mostly death camp survivors. The attitudes of surviving non-Jewish Poles toward surviving Jews — a mix of fear, guilt, shell shock and bigotry — is analyzed unflinchingly by writer Jan Gross in his book “Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland After Auschwitz” (2006). Just as striking, though, was the reaction of American diplomats.

America’s ambassador to postwar Poland in 1946 was none other than Arthur Bliss Lane, Hugh Gibson’s deputy in 1919. Poland in 1946 sat at the center of the emerging Cold War with Soviet Russia. Like Gibson in 1919, Lane saw his principal job as supporting Polish sovereignty against communism. Again, learning of the Kielce pogrom, Lane — like Gibson before him — saw it in geopolitical terms. Global reaction to the massacre, he believed, weakened outside support for Poland as the country faced threats from Moscow.

Shortly before the Kielce violence, Poles had approved a national referendum supporting the new Moscow-backed regime — which conspicuously included a small number of Jews in prominent posts. Western observers had alleged fraud in the vote count. This, to Lane, was the principal issue — and not the attacks — facing the country that July.

Lane didn’t issue a public statement after Kielce, but instead called foreign newspapermen to his office and suggested they talk with Poland’s Roman Catholic Primate, Augustus Cardinal Hlond — who could speak without implicating the U.S. government itself. The Cardinal, in turn, explained how Poland’s anti-Semitism stemmed from politics. Jews, he said, “occupy leading positions in Poland’s [pro-Moscow] government.” The Kielce killings, he argued, “did not occur for racial reasons.”

Hlond’s statement drew quick criticism for seeming to justify the killings, but in private reports Lane supported Hlond’s point. He traced the anti-Jewish violence to Poles being “infuriated” over “falsification of the referendum results,” and pointed to the handful of Jewish leaders in the Warsaw regime as being highly unpopular, including security chief Stanislaw Radkiewicz, who had appeared at a funeral for Jewish victims.

“[W]ere it not for the unpopularity of the Jews within the [communist-leaning] Provisional Government,” Lane argued, “the anti-Jewish feeling [in Poland] was bound to have diminished ...”

Lane would quit the State Department in protest a few months later, but not over his government’s lackadaisical attitude toward attacks on Polish Jews. Instead, he publicly blasted what he saw as American weakness in resisting Soviet expansion, making his case in a 1948 book pointedly titled “I Saw Poland Betrayed.” He would remain active in anti-communist causes until his death in 1956.

Looking back at Hugh Gibson and Arthur Bliss Lane in 1919 and 1946, one might ask: Were they anti-Semites? Personally, each would deny it, pointing to Jewish friends or colleagues. Did they minimize or make excuses for pogroms? Yes, though each would insist he was doing his job by supporting American interests. Did their reasons make any difference to the victims? No.

Gibson and Lane had long records of public service, hiding any prejudice behind good manners and worldly outlooks. But both were prepared to justify, minimize or explain away mass killings of Jews for what they saw as a larger cause, fighting communism or maintaining stability in Eastern Europe. If such well-educated, sophisticated professionals could gloss over or rationalize guilt-by-association, how difficult remains the challenge of separating convenient excuses for bigotry from legitimate public discourse. 🗳️



Untying the Knot:

The Burden of a Get in Orthodox Marriages

By Michele Chabin

Devora is no closer to getting divorced than she was four years ago, when she first sought to dissolve her marriage in an Israeli rabbinical court.

Her husband initially agreed to grant her a “get,” a Jewish divorce decree, but he changed his mind after his relatives said he was being “too generous.”

During the three rounds of rabbinical court-mandated mediation he insisted upon, Devora’s husband escalated his demands.

“He refused to pay any child support and wanted our children’s disability subsidies,” Devora said. She is an Orthodox Israeli mother of five who — like others interviewed for this article — requested a pseudonym, fearing retribution from their spouse.

Devora’s husband also demanded that she help pay off half the debt he accrued without her knowledge or consent. He wanted sole possession of the house, whose down payment had been supplied by her mother.

As much as she desired a fresh start, Devora refused to accept a get tied to these preconditions. “Doing so would basically be selling my soul,” she said, “and I’m not going to sell my soul for my get.”

But Devora may have been running out of time. Her estranged husband was calling himself an agun — a husband

chained to a marriage because his wife wouldn’t accept his get — and demanded that the judges issue sanctions against her.

So far, the court hadn’t acted on his demands, but it could do so at any time, those familiar with Israel’s rabbinical court system say.

Sarvaniyot Get: Women Who Refuse to Accept a Get

According to traditional Jewish law, a couple wishing to divorce must dissolve their marriage in a rabbinical court. The divorce isn’t complete until the husband gives his wife a “get” and the wife accepts it.

When a husband refuses to grant a get or the wife refuses to accept one, rabbis, not civil judges, are the final arbiters.

In the vast majority of Jewish divorces involving get refusal, it is the husband who refuses to grant the wife a get. The wife becomes an agunah — a woman forced to remain married against her will.

The phenomenon of female get refusal is rarely discussed, but it does exist.

It is felt most acutely in the Orthodox world, where rabbis do not permit a couple to divorce unless the husband voluntarily offers his wife a get and she voluntarily accepts it. Get refusal cases often drag on for years, leaving both spouses in limbo.

The more liberal Conservative/Masorti Rabbinical Assembly, which deals with divorce cases worldwide, holds that on the very rare occasion that a wife is unwilling to accept a get, the rabbinical court can “accept it on her behalf,” thereby freeing both spouses from the marriage.

“We see a woman refusing to accept a get perhaps once every three or four years,” said Rabbi Pamela Barmash, the St. Louis-based co-chair of the Rabbinical Assembly’s committee on Jewish law and standards.

Get refusal by either spouse is technically a non-issue for Reform Jews anywhere in the world, because the movement accepts civil divorce as completely dissolving the marriage and permitting the remarriage of the former spouses. In Israel, where there is no civil divorce, non-Orthodox couples do not need a rabbinical divorce because the rabbinate does not recognize non-Orthodox marriages in the first place. Within the marriages it does recognize, Israel’s Chief Rabbinate claims there are more sarvaniyot get — wives refusing to accept a get — than husbands refusing to grant one.

Organizations that deal with get refusal say that the vast majority of women being accused of get rejection are simply standing up for their rights.

“In probably 95 to 98 percent of the cases we handle, it’s the men refusing to give the get,” said Keshet Starr, executive director of the New York-based Organization for the Resolution of Agunot (ORA). Other organizations say that percentage is even higher.

From 2012 to 2017 the Israeli rabbinate — which has sole authority over divorce, despite the fact that most divorcing couples aren’t Orthodox — handled 427 cases of female get refusal, compared with 382 cases of male get refusal, the institution’s records show.

These cases represent just a tiny fraction of those handled by the religious court system.

Rabbi Rafi Rechef, a judge of the Israeli national rabbinical court, said a variety of motives fuel female get refusals.

“Sometimes women accuse their husbands of cruelty or abuse, and this is their way of getting back at their husbands for the way they were treated,” Rechef said. “Also, there are women with personal problems, who suffer from mental health issues or fear losing their children.”

In cases like these, Rechef said, the rabbinical court puts them in touch with professionals, including social services, to provide assistance and facilitate the divorce process.

The rabbinate designates a wife as a get refuser “as soon as a woman refuses to accept the get.” Her file remains open “until she accepts the get and we can close the file,” Rechef said.

Shoshanna Keats Jaskoll, cofounder of Chochmat Nashim,



Image courtesy of the Hebraic Section, African and Middle Eastern Division, Library of Congress.

Bill of divorce (get) from Yemen, circa 1795.

an organization that advocates for women’s rights in the religious sphere, believes the rabbinate’s definition of a get-refusing wife is “patently absurd” and “shameful.”

Jaskoll also takes issue with the rabbinate’s statistics.

“These numbers represent only the few hundred spouses who are refusing to comply with the rabbinical court’s order to divorce their wives or husbands,” Jaskoll said. “It leaves out the thousands of agunot whose husbands are refusing to give them a get but who haven’t been ordered by the rabbinical court to do so.”

In order for a woman to be considered an agunah — whose husband cannot or will not give her a get — a rabbinical court must first order her husband to release her from the marriage.

Often, a rabbinical court is reluctant to do so, citing the halachic prohibition against obtaining a get through coercion.

Ruth Halperin-Kaddari, founding academic director of the Rackman Center at Bar Ilan University, calls the Israeli rabbinate’s statistics “a willful attempt to paint men as the victims.”

Susan Weiss, founder and executive director of the Center for Women’s Justice in Jerusalem, said the “vast majority” of her organization’s clients will do anything to convince their husbands to give them a get.

“We recently helped a woman whose husband demanded that she relinquish her fertilized eggs. At first, she refused. She didn’t want him to have a child with a surrogate, using her eggs.”

Only after the wife agreed to hand over the couple’s embryos did the rabbinical court order her husband to divorce her.

Exceptions to the Rule

Although the overwhelming majority of women of child-bearing age are willing to give up their demands to secure a get and custody of their children, older Israeli women may be more reluctant to accept a get because they fear they will be doomed to poverty, Halperin-Kaddari said.

Believing that husbands and wives should be able to support themselves after a divorce, Israeli rabbinical courts do not award alimony to either spouse.

"In those rare cases where women insist on get refusal," said Halperin-Kaddari, "it would almost always be a woman in her late forties or early fifties or older, who all her life fulfilled the role of the homemaker with very few or no income-generating skills, who simply has no independent way of supporting herself."

The irony, Halperin-Kaddari said, is that the patriarchal rabbinical court system, which has no female judges, "suddenly channels feminist principals of female earnings equality in the divorce court."

This is not to say that some wives won't accept a get due to fears, greed or spite.

Many rabbis who deal with divorcing couples say they know of a handful of cases where the wife refused to accept a get for less than altruistic reasons.

Rabbi Kenneth Brander, president and yeshiva head of the Ohr Torah Stone Network of institutions in Israel, has encountered get-refusing wives on "a few" occasions.

In one instance, Brander — whose network runs Yad La'isha, a legal aid center for Israeli agunot — signed a *heter meah rabanim*, a permission to divorce signed by 100 rabbis. This legal loophole enables a husband to divorce his wife without her consent in order to release the husband from the marriage. There is no such loophole for wives.

"This was after the wife refused to accept the get and then ran away with her child to Israel," Brander said.

Michael, an American divorcee, said he spent several years in rabbinical courts because his now ex-wife rejected the get he offered her.

"She was angry at me for turning into this person who became less religious," he said, referring to his decision to no longer maintain an Orthodox lifestyle several years into

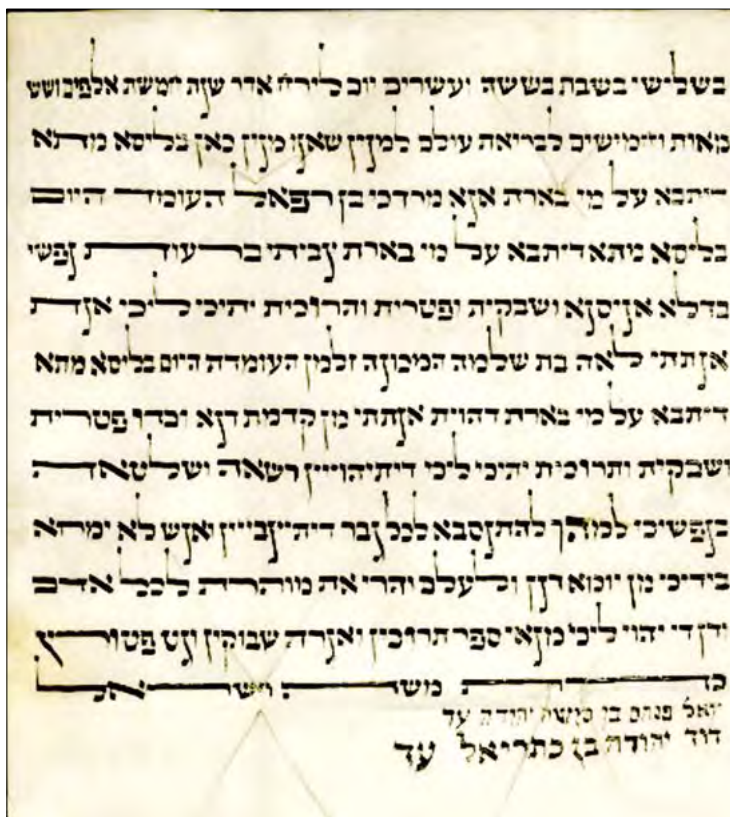


Image courtesy of the Hebraic Section, African and Middle Eastern Division, Library of Congress.

Bill of Divorce (get) from Lezno, Poland for Leah bat Shlomo Zalman Mordecai ben Raphael, 1890.

their marriage. "It was extremely painful for her. I'd jumped off the ship we'd sailed together."

Michael, who requested anonymity to discuss his case, was initially reluctant to speak about his struggle. "I've never talked to anybody about it, because there's something about manhood that makes you reluctant to share your powerlessness," he said. "It runs against the DNA of male pride. You find yourself very much alone in this situation."

Michael said the Jewish world "isn't primed to hear about the difficult situations some men face. The reality is that each spouse can be held hostage by the other."

Eventually, Michael's wife agreed to a divorce. Both he and his ex-spouse are happily remarried, he said.

Although Michael never requested a *heter meah rabanim*, the document can deny a blameless wife the only leverage she has against her husband in a divorce court.

Tamar, an Orthodox woman who lives in a Midwestern U.S. city, was threatened with such a document after her husband abducted the couple's young children to a European country and hid them, she said.

"He spread lies about me, claiming that I was no longer religious, that I was mentally incompetent, not going to the mikveh," the ritual bath, Tamar recalled.

The community's rabbis sided with her husband and insisted she leave the family home. When her husband was forced to return the children to the U.S. under the Hague Convention a year later, he refused to allow her to see them.

He was also engaged to another woman.

"He wanted to give me a get but not deal with things like custody, child support, dividing assets," Tamar said. "He put me out on the street without a dollar to my name. I didn't have access to our bank accounts."

Soon afterward, Tamar learned that her husband was in the process of obtaining a heter meah rabbanim, but that if she

immediately accepted a get he would give her a few thousand dollars in accordance with their ketubah, or marriage contract. If she refused, she would receive nothing.

"It wasn't that I didn't want to accept a get. But he threw me out, kidnapped my children, and later, I wasn't allowed to see them. He refused to give me alimony. The heter meah rabbanim took away that last shred of influence I could wield."

Tamar's husband remarried weeks later, despite not having a civil divorce — bigamy under civil law. The government took no action against him. She has since gained visitation rights but not custody of her children.

Divorcing the Get From the Divorce

Rabbi Seth Farber, a congregational rabbi and founder of ITIM, an organization that helps people navigate Israel's rabbinical court system, has seen both husbands and wives leverage the get to extract concessions from the other.

If it were up to Farber and many other activists, the get and

civil issues like custody and the division of property would be dealt with separately.

"The rabbis should make the get a precondition when a couple files for divorce," Farber said. "The first thing the husband would do is give his wife a get, and she would accept it. It would not be subject to negotiation and not tied to any civil issue."

For example, he said, "A couple comes into the court. They say, we have two kids. One spouse says I want full custody, the other says I want shared custody. The rabbinical court should say, 'We're not discussing this until the husband hands over the get and the woman accepts it.'"

Removing the get as a leverage tool "would free both women and men from unwanted marriages and make it far more difficult to extort the other spouse," Farber said. "That's the ideal solution." ■

This article was supported by a grant from the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute.

CONGRATULATIONS TO...US!



B'nai B'rith Magazine has again won a prestigious Rockower Award for Journalism Excellence from the American Jewish Press Association.

We earned a 2nd prize in the category:

Foundation of Ethnic Understanding Award for Excellence in Interfaith Relations Reporting.

Our story:

"The Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom: Finding Common Ground" by Miranda Spivack

Can be found here bit.ly/3leyyNP

Jacob Sonderling:

A Musical Visionary, From Hamburg to LA

By Cheryl Kempler

A visionary dedicated to expanding Judaism's horizons through music and art, Rabbi Jacob Sonderling (1878-1964) was a man whose appearance conjured, one of his congregants said, "the way I thought God would look."

A member of Hamburg's B'nai B'rith Steinthal Lodge as well as an early, ardent Zionist with ties to Theodor Herzl, he was born into an important Chasidic family but eventually found his sympathies lay with the Reform movement. As the erudite leader of a Hamburg synagogue, he kept current with modern art and is believed to have convinced the important Art Nouveau silversmith Friedrich Adler to design his first Judaica pieces in 1914. During World War I, Sonderling was appointed chief Jewish chaplain to German soldiers at the Eastern Front by Kaiser Wilhelm, who later awarded him the Iron Cross.

In 1923, Sonderling immigrated to America, where he hoped to introduce his congregations to a revised liturgy that blended Chasidism's fervent, mystical exuberance with Reform's rational philosophy. In 1935, he founded Los Angeles' Reform Fairfax Temple, known as the Society for Jewish Culture, where its German and English language services attracted recently arrived European refugees.

Three years later, Sonderling would commission the first of a series of choral works from four important musicians. He hoped that this music would eventually be incorporated into the liturgies of synagogues nationwide.

A modern genius, Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951) is cited for the groundbreaking innovations that influenced an entire generation of European and American composers, some of whom he taught. Converting to Christianity in his 20s, he returned to his faith before emigrating from Europe in 1933, when he began to develop a complex and highly personal belief system. He had been composing works with spiritual content for years.

Although he did not attend synagogue, Schoenberg wrote an English version of Kol Nidre at the behest of Sonderling, who educated the composer about the chant's history and traditions and who would perform the difficult, rhythmically spoken role of the cantor/narrator at its 1938 premiere in Los Angeles' Ambassador Hotel ballroom. Unlike the Fairfax sanctuary, it was large enough to accommodate worshippers, chorus and orchestra. Schoenberg pared Kol Nidre's traditional melody and altered its text to address one plea, absolution for false vows. It could be suggested that Schoenberg, feeling guilty about the conversion that he had renounced, conformed its words and meaning so that it would reflect his desire for forgiveness; he believed that this revised text conveyed "the original meaning of this prayer."

Kol Nidre's first section, the cantor's spoken introduction, describes the Kabbalistic belief that the world would be improved through the consolidation of errant sparks of light — a task consigned to the worshipper — unknown to most people, including Jews, at that time. Musicologist Neil Levin noted that the entire work resonated greatly with this first audience, Yom Kippur observers in a new land who had left



Photo credit: Max Fenichel/commons.wikimedia.org

Emigré composer Arnold Schoenberg, who renounced Christianity to return to Judaism, was commissioned by Rabbi Jacob Sonderling to write his own, highly personal version of Kol Nidre.



Photo credit: Prints and Photography Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

The son of Vienna's most influential music critic, prodigy Erich Wolfgang Korngold was photographed in his youth, when his music had already made him famous. A highly successful composer of American 1930s film scores, he wrote settings of Jewish prayers for Rabbi Sonderling.



their co-religionists, families and friends to experience great peril and suffering in Germany.

Collaborating again with Schoenberg in 1948, Sonderling adapted the Shema Yisrael prayer that the composer incorporated into his cantata "A Survivor from Warsaw."

Writing music in a style that contains both classical and modern elements, Ernst Toch (1887-1964), born in Austria, enjoyed fame and prestige during his years in Europe but would struggle for recognition in the United States. Although several of his movie scores were nominated for Oscars, his often-delightful vocal and instrumental works remain largely unknown here. His children's opera "The Princess and the Pea" is performed at colleges and music schools; other short pieces are occasionally heard in concert.

Visiting Fairfax Temple to recite Kaddish (the mourner's prayer) for his mother in 1937, Toch met Sonderling, who invited him to compose a piece for Passover, commemorating the liberation of the Israelites from bondage. In the United States, this narrative often took on the nature of a universal celebration of freedom, as it did during the American Civil War. Yet "Cantata of the Bitter Herbs" is very specific, focusing on the holiday, and the book of Exodus in the Torah. The originality of his score met its match in the English and Hebrew script, the product of a team effort by Sonderling and two emigrés, theater director Leopold Jessner and Paramount Studio Music Director Boris Morros. Premiered at Fairfax's 1941 on-site Seder, the cantata was later given a full-scale treatment, performed by members of Paramount's own orchestra, and narrated by movie star Dana Andrews. The recording featured on the Milken Jewish Music Archive stars Theodore Bikel.

Like his namesake — Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart — Erich Wolfgang Korngold (1897-1957) was a prodigy at age eight, composing ballets, vocal and instrumental music celebrated by Viennese audiences. Known for robust, witty American

Photo credit: Courtesy of Barbara Zeisl Schoenberg

Composed during 1944-45 and dedicated to the memory of his father who was murdered by the Nazis, the gifted musician and educator Eric Zeisl's Requiem Ebraico is a setting of the 92nd Psalm. One of the first musical responses to the tragedy of the Holocaust, its power is evidenced in performances worldwide.



Photo credit: Ernst Toch Papers (Collection PASC 1-M), Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA

The official world premiere of *Cantata of the Bitter Herbs*, at City College, Los Angeles, in 1941, with music composed by Ernst Toch; Rabbi Sonderling contributed to the lyrics. The choir is pictured with conductor Hugo Strelitzer (far left) and movie star Dana Andrews (same group, second from right), who performed the narration.

movie scores like “Robin Hood” and “The Prince and the Pauper” dating from the mid-1930s, he and his family left Europe permanently in 1939. One of the highest-paid film composers, he also wrote for the concert hall: Korngold’s violin concerto is still popular, and his opera “Die Tote Stadt” (The Dead City) is staged worldwide. Many more pieces are being rediscovered. Inspired by the lush romanticism of late 19th-century music, Korngold’s only religious works were commissioned by Sonderling. The rabbi himself compiled excerpts from the Haggadah for “Passover Psalm” sung in Hebrew by soprano soloist and chorus. “Prayer,” a setting of a poem by another immigrant, then-famed novelist and playwright Franz Werfel, was written for tenor, women’s choir, harp and organ. Both were premiered in Los Angeles in 1941, under Korngold’s baton.

A gifted composer of orchestral and vocal music, Eric Zeisl (1905-1959) left Austria in 1938 and lived in Paris before fleeing to the United States in September 1939. Continuing his career in New York, Zeisl and his wife relocated to California, where he wrote uncredited filler music for movies. In 1945, the year that he learned that his parents and many family members had been murdered in Nazi concentration camps, he composed what has been deemed the first serious musical response to the Holocaust, the richly textured “Requiem Ebraico” for Sonderling. Soloists and chorus sing from the 92nd Psalm, an offering of prayer and music to God, and proclaim the deity’s power to destroy all evildoers. There is no spoken reference to the Shoah, yet the grief it inspires is revealed through the contrast of the triumphant words of praise and solemn musical setting. The score’s harmonies seem familiar, evoking the memories of an old Sephardic chant.

Still persevering, Zeisl began a new life as a teacher at institutions including the Brandeis Summer Camp, earning the respect and affection of many students prior to his premature death at age 55 without getting the recognition that his music merited.

Sonderling was the author of several books on Jewish philosophy and art. At his death, he was a professor of Jewish thought and homiletics at the California School of the Hebrew Union College. 

B'NAI B'RITH IMPACT

B'NAI B'RITH IN YOUR COMMUNITY AND AROUND THE GLOBE



Andrea Cure
Director of Development,
B'nai B'rith International

In this issue: B'nai B'rith's new online resources

As 2020 comes to a close, we look to a new year filled with rejuvenated spirit and hope for better times.

One positive outcome of the “new normal” imposed on us all by COVID-19 was B'nai B'rith quickly pivoting to ensure that its work continues, resulting in tremendously rich and varied content related to all our programmatic pillars. With new offerings weekly, we are bringing the work of B'nai B'rith to new audiences.

With such an important and wide-ranging mission, we created a page on our site which outlines the work of B'nai B'rith today. Visit www.bnaibrith.org/bbtoday.html to learn more.

We are also excited to launch a new website specifically focused on legacy giving. BBlegacy.org is a tremendous resource for members and supporters who are looking to learn more about estate planning and legacy giving, as well as for professional advisors seeking to inform their clients about ways to give.

We hope you enjoy learning more about planned gifts and how they can benefit you and your loved ones, while ensuring that the vital work of B'nai B'rith continues to move forward with strength. 📌

Impact is published quarterly, online – posted on the home page, with back issues archived. Please visit the website to read new additional content for the December 2020 Impact.

B'nai B'rith Connect: Busier Than Ever



Connect delegates who traveled to Japan for the 2019 Kakehashi Project cultural exchange are pictured with B'nai B'rith Director of Donor Engagement Richy Leitner (far left) and B'nai B'rith Director of Legislative Affairs Eric Fusfield (fourth from right).

Young men and women making a difference through their involvement in B'nai B'rith Connect (formerly the Young Leadership Network) prove that proactive and impassioned commitment, fueled by love for Jewish tradition, is alive and well.

Connect, a group comprised of members younger than 42, offers a contemporary approach to B'nai B'rith's tradition of building bridges, fighting prejudice and improving lives. Dedication and focus link the group to the philanthropic spirit of B'nai B'rith's founders. Proud of Connect's achievements, B'nai B'rith ensures opportunities for educating and training of these talented individuals and welcomes them as the next generation of innovative Jewish leaders.

Connect represents a vital part of its members' lives. New York Connect Chair, writer and fundraiser Laura Hemlock has observed: "B'nai B'rith

International Connect allows me to engage in meaningful events and conversations centered around issues that are important to my peers and me. From anti-Semitism to anti-racism, Connect gives us a platform to be heard and make a difference in the Jewish community, locally and globally."

2020: Connection for a New Normal

After a very busy and successful 2019, Connect launched its 2020 season in New York with a lively January disaster relief fundraiser and a presentation by Ari Berman of IsraAID, an organization based in Israel that partners with B'nai B'rith to implement recovery in the aftermath of natural and manmade disasters worldwide. B'nai B'rith is a founding member of IsraAID.

Successfully adapting to social

restrictions imposed by COVID-19, Connect members stayed in touch via online get-togethers and kept current about subjects that affected them, through interactive Zoom conversations and webinars, all of which are posted to B'nai B'rith's YouTube channel. Rebecca Rose, associate director of development and special projects at B'nai B'rith has commented that "Since the pandemic, virtual programs have allowed our leadership to connect in a way we never expected. The possibilities for programming have become endless as leaders from different regions have been able to get to know one another and work together on the issues they are passionate about."

In the spring, Connect hosted a webinar with Elan S. Carr, Department of State special envoy to monitor and combat anti-Semitism. Hosted by Connect's chair Senior Vice



Elan S. Carr, United States special envoy to monitor and combat anti-Semitism, was the guest speaker for an online Connect program on May 21st.



A flyer for the August 26th online presentation on race and Jewish identity.

President Scott Knapp and B'nai B'rith International CEO Daniel S. Mariaschin, Carr talked about the causes and context of the rise of anti-Semitism during the pandemic.

An international audience accessed an August roundtable webinar on the repercussions of campus anti-Semitism and the rights of its victims. Moderated

by Rose and Hemlock, the panel included former Jewish student leaders and legal experts from North and South America and Europe. The audience also learned about B'nai B'rith's newest digital resource in the fight against anti-Semitism, "None Shall Be Afraid."

During another webinar in August, Eric Fusfield, B'nai B'rith director

of legislative affairs, engaged in a compelling dialogue with Stacey Aviva Flint, executive director of Congregation Bonai Shalom in Boulder, Colorado and Rabbi Isaiah Rothstein, public affairs advisor at the Jewish Federations of North America about racial diversity in the Jewish community. [🔗](#)



The first Jew on faculty at Yale University, German immigrant Sigismund Waterman

(c. 1819-98) also studied medicine there and graduated to become the school's first Jewish doctor. Waterman, a New York City police surgeon for three decades, published numerous scientific articles as well. Joining B'nai B'rith in its earliest years, he served as its seventh president from 1861-63. His numerous accomplishments included founding the District 1 Manhattan Maimonides Library, open to the public from its inception in 1852, and Yonkers' Jewish Home for the Aged in 1882, where he continued as attending physician until his death.

Achim/Gate City Lodge Honors Essay Contest Winners Virtually



Seventh grade 1st prize winner Sophie Grace Thomas, from Decatur, Ga.



Eighth grade 1st prize winner Anjana Murthy, from Peachtree City, Ga.



Ninth grade 1st prize winner Ilana Levenberg, from Atlanta, Ga.

Atlanta's B'nai B'rith Achim/Gate City Lodge held a live online ceremony in August honoring the nine winners of Enlighten America, its annual essay contest for 7th through 9th graders in the Atlanta area. A video of the event can be viewed on B'nai B'rith International's YouTube channel at: bit.ly/3hgAsKA

This year, the panel of local judges reviewed 26 compositions by young people whose writing underscored their personal beliefs regarding equality and respectful treatment for all regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation. Their essays incorporated a quote from an American president or world, national or local leader, which they related to current issues in today's society.

Seventh grader Sophie Grace Thomas, who earned a first-place nod, wrote in her essay: "We can overcome intolerance through a different mindset driven by love, which respects all human beings and supports our ability to live as one."

Guest speaker B'nai B'rith CEO Daniel S. Mariaschin commented on the contest's theme, Tolerance, Equality and Respect for All, as he described the shared

legacies of the Jewish and African American communities, and noted the organization's commitment to civil rights: "B'nai B'rith recognizes that our fight on behalf of the Jewish people includes the same fight for all religious and ethnic groups, to live without fear. Jews and Blacks as minorities found common cause based on our own history and the plight of African Americans; these experiences brought us together to try and create a better, more mutually respectful society."

The students who submitted the winning essays, judged on content and clarity of expression, were awarded monetary prizes, books and certificates. First, second and third prize categories were designated for recipients in all three grades.

All the winners signed the Enlighten America Pledge, a personal promise to acknowledge the humanity of all peoples and to educate and inspire others to make a stand against hate and prejudice in their daily lives.

Still timely and important today, B'nai B'rith launched Enlighten America in 2000 as a response to shootings sparked by racial and religious hatred in Los

2020 Student winners of the Enlighten America Essay Contest

Sponsored by Achim/Gate City Lodge, Atlanta

\$350 FIRST PLACE PRIZES:

Sophie Grace Thomas, 7th grade
Anjana Murthy, 8th grade
Ilana Levenberg, 9th grade


\$250 SECOND PLACE PRIZES:

Noa Zusman, 7th grade
Genesis Isom, 8th grade
Austin Corn, 9th grade

\$150 THIRD PLACE PRIZES:

Simran Gupta, 7th grade
Kymali Pierre, 8th grade
Emily Jane Kurtz, 9th grade

Angeles, Chicago, Pittsburgh, New York and elsewhere.

The B'nai B'rith Enlighten America program was the inspiration for our new interactive initiative, None Shall Be Afraid. Read more here, www.bnaibrith.org/none-shall-be-afraid.html. 

EXTRA, READ ALL ABOUT IT (OR WATCH, OR LISTEN)

Extra

This magazine has been published since 1886. Beginning in the early decades of the 20th century, its pages have shown readers images of B'nai B'rith gatherings: meetings with government officials and world leaders and/or fellow advocates, supporters and community members,

all gathered in places as diverse as conference rooms, glittering ballrooms and amid debris helping after a disaster. Since spring of 2020, during the coronavirus pandemic, most of those venues were off limits, and as we go to press, we now meet and inform almost exclusively via the internet. We miss being together, but we cannot deny that with B'nai B'rith's immediate action, interaction amongst the B'nai B'rith family and ability to reach out to the general public has grown exponentially.

In the spring, we added B'nai B'rith Extra to our website. This new resource is the central location to find informative content on issues in the news, online programs such as virtual tours, commemorations and events, and interviews that are simply edifying and enjoyable. We offer both conversations and webinars on Extra, featuring experts on anti-Semitism, Israel, the United Nations and advocacy and support for seniors. History, sports, music and cultural programs have all been showcased and are available for our magazine readers to enjoy. Here is a small sampling of what is online ... so far.

CONVERSATIONS AND WEBINARS



Ambassador Danny Danon Reflects on the U.N. at 75

Ambassador Danny Danon, Israel's outgoing permanent representative to the United Nations, joined CEO Daniel S. Mariaschin for a discussion on Israel at the U.N. and its complex diplomatic position within the organization. Danon reflected on his five-year tenure as the U.N. marks its 75th anniversary. It was part of a series: The U.N. at 75, which also included A Discussion with Past Israeli Permanent Representatives to the United Nations, and A Conversation with Nickolay Mladenov, U.N. special coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, who spoke with Mariaschin on a range of topics including the recent normalization of ties between Israel and the UAE and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.



Vision for the Western Hemisphere in the 2020s

In the latest virtual installment of our Diplomatic Encounter Series, our guest was Luis Almagro, secretary-general of the Organization of American States (OAS). Almagro discussed his vision and priorities for the 2020s, OAS's commitment to democracy and human rights in the Western hemisphere and the fight to combat discrimination and anti-Semitism in the region.

Another B'nai B'rith program that was featured via a live webinar was Unto Every Person There Is a Name. In partnership with Yad Vashem, B'nai B'rith commemorates the 6 million Jews who perished during the Holocaust. Every year on Yom Hashoah, names of victims are read aloud so they are remembered. And, read about the 2020 Enlighten America essay contest virtual ceremony in the Impact section of the magazine.

Our office of European Affairs has provided deep-dive expert conversations on a wide range of issues, including Iran and Hezbollah amid the COVID-19 crisis, racism in soccer and the trend of anti-Semitic conspiracies amid the coronavirus pandemic. Director of European Union Affairs Alina Bricman and Policy Officer at the European Union of Jewish Students and B'nai B'rith International European Affairs Officer Ilan Selby hosted a program that featured Matthew Levitt, Washington Institute for Near East Policy; Alireza Nader, Foundation for Defense of Democracy; MEP David Lega, Sweden, European People's Party; and our own Eric Fusfield, deputy director of our International Center for Human Rights and Public Policy.



Conversation on Race and Identity in the Jewish Community

B'nai B'rith featured an essential discussion about race and identity in the Jewish community with two important voices: Stacey Aviva Flint, executive director of Congregation Bonai Shalom and Rabbi Isaiah J. Rothstein, public affairs advisor for the Jewish Federations of North America. This conversation centering on Jews of color was moderated by Eric Fusfield, B'nai B'rith International's Legislative Affairs director.



Anti-Semitism on Campus: A Global Perspective

We tackled another pressing issue when our B'nai B'rith Connect team hosted a discussion about the state of anti-Semitism on college and university campuses around the globe. The participants addressed the main challenges facing Jewish students on campus, including the prevalence of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, modern manifestations of anti-Semitism and constraints on Jewish life.



U.S. Rep. Grace Meng on Seniors' Issues During Coronavirus

U.S. Rep. Grace Meng spoke with Mariaschin about how seniors in her Queens, New York district, including residents of B'nai B'rith of Queens, one of our senior housing facilities, have been impacted by COVID-19. The discussion also focused on how the community is responding to the pandemic, what Meng has done to assist seniors and what another federal stimulus package would mean for older Americans.



Be The Match Saves Lives One Bone Marrow Transplant at a Time

Jamie Margolis, senior vice president of Donor Services for Be The Match talked with Mariaschin about saving lives, one bone marrow transplant at a time. They discussed innovations in marrow matching and the impact of COVID-19 on the matching process, as well as a special patient whose family hopes to reach a broader Jewish community to save her life and unique matching issues for Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews.



Photo credit: en.wikipedia.org



Dan Joseph, Author of "Last Ride of the Iron Horse"

Author Dan Joseph joined Mariaschin to talk about his book "Last Ride of the Iron Horse," which details Lou Gehrig's final season with the Yankees as he battled the early effects of ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, later known as Lou Gehrig's disease). The conversation focused on Gehrig's last season in the Bronx and what Joseph discovered about Gehrig in his research, Gehrig's open condemnation of Nazism and the Yankee legend's strong support of Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany.



Conversation with Geoff Schwartz on Being Jewish in the NFL

Eight-year NFL veteran Geoff Schwartz spoke with Mariaschin about being Jewish in the National Football League, recent anti-Semitic posts by athletes online and the response from NFL teams and players. As one of the few Jewish football players in recent years, Schwartz has carved out a niche and spoken out against anti-Semitism in sports on various platforms.



Photo credit: commons.wikimedia.org

Live Tour of Jerusalem in Honor of Yom Yerushalayim

The B'nai B'rith World Center-Jerusalem and the World Zionist Organization took viewers on a special live Jerusalem Day tour commemorating the reunification of Jerusalem and development of the city since the Six-Day War.



Conversation with Astronaut Dr. Jeffrey Hoffman

Dr. Jeffrey Hoffman, the first American-Jewish male astronaut in space, spoke with Mariaschin about the journey that led him to join NASA, the Torah scroll he brought to space and how flying above the Earth impacted his global perspective. Hoffman currently serves as deputy principal investigator of MOXIE, the model experiment that will attempt to produce oxygen on the surface of Mars.



Photo credit: commons.wikimedia.org

Conversation with David Schoenbaum, Author of "The Lives of Isaac Stern"

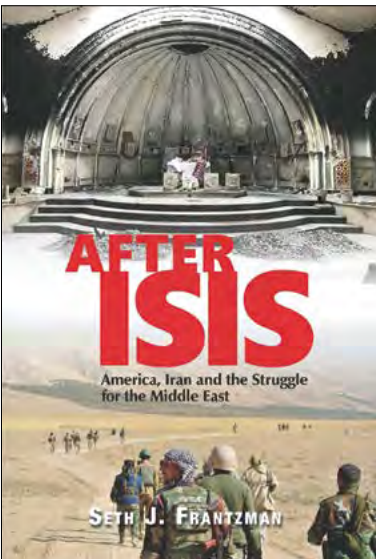
Author David Schoenbaum joined Mariaschin for a centennial celebration of Isaac Stern, one of the 20th century's greatest musicians and an incredible advocate for music, Israel and historic preservation. Schoenbaum, author of the new book "The Lives of Isaac Stern," discussed Stern's remarkable 60-year career from his formative years in San Francisco to concurrent careers as an activist, public citizen, chairman and cultural leader in the Jewish community.



Photo credit: Jaluji/commons.wikimedia.org

The AMIA Bombing, 26 Years Later

B'nai B'rith Director of Latin American Affairs Eduardo Kohn and Special Advisor on Latin American Affairs Adriana Camisar joined Mariaschin for this installment of our Expert Analysis Series. Kohn and Camisar spoke about the 1994 AMIA terrorist bombing in Buenos Aires. Though no one has been brought to justice in these 26 years, it is widely believed Iran was behind the deadly attack on the heart of the Jewish community in Latin America that killed 85 and wounded 300. Kohn and Camisar also talked about Iran's malicious activity in Venezuela and how Latin America is dealing with new waves of anti-Semitism.



Podcasts

Podcasts, hosted by CEO Daniel S. Mariaschin, remain a mainstay of our offerings. Mariaschin's guests are often renowned authors and the offerings are as diverse as B'nai B'rith's interests in Jewish culture and world events.

A podcast featuring Seth Frantzman, then-Op-Ed editor and Middle East affairs analyst at The Jerusalem Post and author of a new book, "After Isis: America, Iran and the Struggle for the Middle East" allowed listeners to have a glimpse of Frantzman's experiences reporting in the Middle East. Mariaschin and Frantzman also took a deeper look at how the coronavirus has impacted the dynamics in the region, from oil prices to war zones to Iranian hegemonism, and what the region may look like after the pandemic has subsided.

Visit B'nai B'rith Extra to enjoy the features described here, plus many more conversations, webinars and podcasts.

www.bnaibrith.org/bnaibrithextra.html

B'nai B'rith's Voice in the European Parliament: The Working Group Against Anti-Semitism



Photo credit: Tukka/commons.wikimedia.org

A member of the advisory board of the European Parliament Working Group Against anti-Semitism (WGAS), B'nai B'rith Europe plays an active role at the Brussels headquarters of the European Parliament.

In B'nai B'rith's long and proud history, Europe has always held a special place. Since our inception in 1843, we've served Europe's Jewish community, in the best and worst of times.

While our advocacy work around European Union (EU) institutions has been mostly concentrated in our Brussels office since 1997, today, under the umbrella of B'nai B'rith Europe, we have units across the continent.

The importance of engaging with the EU to combat anti-Semitism cannot be overstated. Today's EU is an economic and political alliance of 27 nations, anchored in the principles of justice, human rights and the rule of law. The European Parliament is the legislative body delegated to uphold these tenets. The preservation of its commitment to fight anti-Semitism in a reconstructed Europe requires constant and active engagement by politicians, policymakers and other members of society. It has been our role to mobilize and inform this engagement every day.

Among the various institutions of the EU, the European Parliament is the voice of over 450 million citizens of the EU countries. It channels this voice through 705 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), directly and proportionally elected by EU citizens. Working in various political groups, it represents the entire ideological spectrum and is somewhat similar to the U.S. Congress. A special group dedicated to fighting anti-Semitism and mainstreaming Jewish life was thus crucial in the EU's most representative body.

The European Parliament Working Group Against Anti-Semitism

It is for this reason that B'nai B'rith International joined the European Jewish Congress to form the Advisory Board to the European Parliament's Working Group against Anti-Semitism (WGAS) — a multi-partisan caucus formed in 2012 devising policy measures to address anti-Jewish hatred. MEPs who sign on

or become bureau members commit to oppose anti-Semitism, racism, xenophobia and all kinds of discrimination in all possible settings across the EU; defend the right for European Jewish citizens to practice their religion, including the right to worship and to practice Jewish traditions and promote a culture of respect for the diversity of Jewish life and heritage in Europe; condemn hate speech and incitement to violence against Jews, whether online or in the real world; and advocate for better monitoring and reporting of such incidents. They promote the importance of education in combating anti-Semitism and support initiatives that educate against hatred in the classroom and beyond. They publicly and systematically condemn anti-Jewish rhetoric; they work to preserve the memory of the Holocaust in the European Parliament and across the EU; they oppose Holocaust denial, trivialization and distortion; and ensure that the topic of the Holocaust remains on national school curricula across the EU. They advance legislative proposals to address all of the above.

Now functioning at its third Parliament, the WGAS, working closely with B'nai B'rith, has spearheaded major achievements that helped mainstream the fight against anti-Semitism on an EU-wide level and in member states. Ever since its inception, the WGAS has campaigned fervently for the appoint-



The European Parliament WGAS was photographed with Advisory Board members, B'nai B'rith International Director of EU Affairs Alina Bricman and European Jewish Congress Director of European Affairs Ariella Woitchik. Back row, from left: Bricman; Woitchik; MEP Frédérique Ries; MEP Sergey Lagodinsky; Former MEP Karoline Edtstadler; Vice President of the European Parliament Nicola Beer; MEP Dragos Tudorache. Front row: MEP David Lega.

anti-Semitism a top priority for the 2019-2024 EU leadership, following the terrorist attack on a synagogue in Halle, Germany.

Today and Tomorrow

Throughout the coronavirus pandemic, the Working Group has remained active, importantly bringing together the presidencies of the Council of the EU and IHRA — both held simultaneously by Germany — to coordinate a harmonized and accelerated agenda for safeguarding Jewish life in Europe.

As the health crisis has created both economic and cultural crises in their own right, anti-Semitism has reemerged in both old and new clothes, as conspiracy myths have implicated Jews as the drivers of the pandemic. While priorities of policymakers have naturally shifted, tackling anti-Semitism and discrimination must remain a central pillar of the focus in Brussels. B'nai B'rith will continue, both within and outside of the WGAS, to advance this priority.

B'nai B'rith Director of EU Affairs Alina Bricman has observed: “In the European Parliament, which represents every EU citizen, it's only natural that a vigilant and effective body exists to safeguard the interests of Jewish Europeans and ensure that the fight against anti-Semitism is a permanent agenda item that demonstrates the acknowledgment of the past and the commitment toward the building of a positive, diverse and inclusive future.” 🇺🇸



Katharina von Schnurbein, the EU's first coordinator on combating anti-Semitism, speaks at the B'nai B'rith International Leadership Forum in Prague in 2017.

ment of a Special Envoy and a task force on anti-Semitism for the EU. This came to fruition in 2015, when the European Commission, the EU's executive body, appointed Katharina von Schnurbein as the EU's first coordinator on combating anti-Semitism. The WGAS also regularly advocates for the adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of anti-Semitism. In 2017, the WGAS led the effort to draft and pass a historic resolution against anti-Semitism, championing this definition and calling on states to develop national action plans to address anti-Jewish hatred. In 2018, this

was further mandated by a unanimous declaration in the European Council, the body that comprises the heads of government of the EU member states.

Beyond these legal and structural efforts, the Working Group is key in elevating and spotlighting topics relevant to the Jewish community at events and conferences, from tackling anti-Semitism in sports to the dangers of BDS (the anti-Israel Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement) and working with law-enforcement to tackle hate crimes to address extremism from right, left and Islamist factions. Notably, the strong WGAS voice was crucial in making

Planning



B'NAI B'RITH
INTERNATIONAL

FORWARD

in times of uncertainty

Ideas for Giving and Moving Forward in 2020

Our organization continues to move forward with its important work. In the midst of all that is going on, many of our friends and supporters are looking forward to the future when they can enjoy community with friends and resume their regular activities.

In response to the current situation, Congress recently enacted several tax law changes. Our organization has created this page to offer resources to help you with your tax planning and to offer some ideas for you to consider if you are thinking about making a gift in support of our mission during this time.

CARES Act

This recently passed law includes several charitable tax provisions to encourage giving.

These include:

- A new deduction for charitable donors who do not itemize when filing their tax returns. If you do not itemize but make a gift to charity, you will be allowed to take a special tax deduction, up to \$300, to reduce your tax liability.
- An increase in the deduction limit up to 100% of a donor's annual income for cash gifts (previously the deduction was capped at 60% of annual income). If you make a gift you will be able to deduct more this year.

Donor Advised Funds

If you have a Donor Advised Fund (DAF) and wish to help us this year, you can make a gift from your DAF to support our work without affecting your personal financial security.

Charitable Gift Annuity

If you are concerned about your financial security given the ups and downs of the stock market, you may want to consider making a gift to fund a charitable gift annuity. You might be surprised by the benefits. You can exchange your low-performing stock, CDs or cash for guaranteed, lifetime fixed payments. If you make a gift of an appreciated asset, you will not have to pay capital gains when you fund the annuity. You may also benefit from a tax deduction this year and a portion of your payments could be tax-free.

Restricted Gifts

If you have already made a gift to support our cause and your gift is restricted to a particular project or purpose, we would like to ask you to consider contacting us to remove your gift restrictions. This is an easy way for you to help us meet our current, most pressing needs, which will allow us to continue to support our staff and meet overhead expenses during this time.

Removing a gift restriction will give us flexibility to meet critical needs right now; this doesn't require any additional gift from you.

SECURE Act

The SECURE Act limits stretch payments to IRA beneficiaries to 10 years. If you planned to benefit your children with your IRA, your heirs will now pay higher taxes on the inheritance they receive from you. When you revisit your estate plan, consider funding a testamentary charitable remainder unitrust with your IRA balance. This plan can provide lifetime payments to your heirs and spread out the taxes on their inheritance.

Please contact plannedgiving@bnaibrith.org or call (800) 656-5561 if you have any questions or if we can help you navigate through these unprecedented times.

The Bershad Scholarship Fund Changes Lives of Winners

The Bershad Scholarship Fund awarded scholarships to four students who began college this fall.

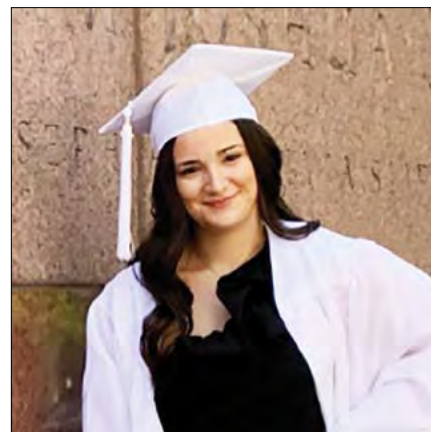
Created in the 1970s with cooperation from what was then the B'nai B'rith Career and Counseling Services office in New York City, the Bershad Scholarship Fund has supported 30 students to date, originally awarding scholarships of \$10,000 paid over four years.

As of September 2020, the Bershad/B'nai B'rith Scholarship Committee increased the scholarship amounts to \$20,000 annually to make an even more significant difference in the lives of the recipients. The four winning students will each receive \$80,000 paid over four years.

Michael Bershad, whose family lacked the funds to send him to college as a young adult, established the scholarship fund to honor the memory of his wife, Florence. Upon his passing, his family added Michael's name to the scholarship fund as well.

The four 2020 recipients are: Talia Levine, Teaneck, New Jersey, who enrolled at the Barnard/JTS List College, Double Degree Program; Alexa Von Mueffling, New York, New York, who is now attending Barnard College; Ella Serfaty, East Meadow, New York, who is attending Washington University in St. Louis; and Uriel Sussman, Valley Stream, New York, who is attending Yeshiva University.

The essay question, a key component of the application, asked each candidate to share why they applied for the scholarship and how they would use it to support the Jewish community in the future. Through their essays, each selected student demonstrated their commitment to improving the lives of others. Active leaders in their high schools and synagogues, they plan to continue their



Congratulations to all four 2020 winners of the Michael and Florence Bershad Scholarship. Talia Levine, Teaneck, N.J., (left) will attend Barnard/JTS List College in New York City. Alexa Von Mueffling, New York, N.Y., (right) is an undergraduate at Barnard College.



Ella Serfaty, East Meadow, N.Y., is a student at Washington College, in St. Louis, Mo.



Uriel Sussman, Valley Stream, N.Y., is enrolled at Yeshiva University, in New York City.

lives of service as they pursue degrees in medicine, law, community engagement and education.

Rhonda Barad, who chaired the selection committee, shared, "It was my honor to serve as Chair of the Bershad scholarships. It is our hope that our decisions have a long-term impact on each of their futures and that of the Jewish Community."

In addition to Barad as chair, the selection committee included: Rabbi

Joseph Potasnik, executive vice president, New York Board of Rabbis; community leader Stephanie Garry; Charles O. Kaufman, B'nai B'rith International president; Seth Riklin, chair of the B'nai B'rith Executive Board of Directors; and Michael Gellman, treasurer, B'nai B'rith.

After extensive interviews with the finalists, the committee members shared that it was a difficult task to choose just four from the many who applied. 🇮🇱

B'nai B'rith's None Shall Be Afraid, Initiative to Fight anti-Semitism

NOTE: For the benefit of B'nai B'rith Magazine readers, we are publishing the following article on our recent initiative None Shall Be Afraid, which originally appeared in the fall edition of our online newsletter, B'nai B'rith Impact.

B'nai B'rith launched None Shall Be Afraid in July 2020, our signature response to anti-Semitism. The initiative's name is inspired by a passage in a letter President George Washington wrote to the congregants of Touro Synagogue in Newport, Rhode Island in 1790 expressing his vision of religious tolerance in America: "Everyone shall sit in safety under his own vine and fig tree and there shall be none to make him afraid." Washington's inclusion of this quote from the Book of Micah 4:4 emphasizes his promise that we are free to live in the fledgling nation as Jews.

"Today, Jews face threats to their safety that have not been seen in decades," B'nai B'rith CEO Daniel S. Mariaschin said. "To fight the scourge of anti-Semitism and the hatred it encompasses, we must come together

in the spirit of Washington's letter. Anti-Semitism must be fought in all its forms, including challenging Holocaust denial and fighting the demonization and delegitimization of the State of Israel."

As part of None Shall Be Afraid, we have produced online resources to instruct about the different facets of anti-Semitism, including anti-Semitism on college campuses, faith-based anti-Semitism and anti-Semitism at global agencies. Our website includes a list of resources to understanding anti-Semitism in all its forms at: bit.ly/3k084yH

We all have a critical role to play opposing anti-Semitism and addressing hatred and intolerance as we see it happen. One step everyone can take right now is to sign the None Shall Be Afraid pledge. By doing so you are demonstrat-

ing a commitment to fighting intolerance and hatred; that you will not stand by and allow Israel to be demonized or the horrors of the Holocaust to be denied or minimized. "Take this pledge and do something important today. Say: 'I will not remain silent in the face of today's hate.' Take a minute to take the pledge," said B'nai B'rith International President Charles O. Kaufman. Those who take the pledge underscore their respect for equal rights and stand against all forms of stereotyping and bias.

Since our founding 177 years ago, B'nai B'rith has fought anti-Semitism in its many forms, from standing up for Israel at biased international organizations to supporting Jewish diaspora communities that face systemic discrimination. None Shall Be Afraid is our latest effort to combat the world's oldest hatred. 🇮🇱

NONE SHALL BE AFRAID: FIGHTING ANTI-SEMITISM

Fighting anti-Semitism is at the core of what we do.

Since our founding, B'nai B'rith has developed tolerance programs and spoken out strongly against anti-Semitism in all its forms. "None Shall Be Afraid" is our flagship response to the world's oldest hatred.

Read more about this initiative here
<https://www.bnaibrith.org/fighting-anti-semitism.html>

**NONE SHALL
BE AFRAID**
FIGHTING ANTI-SEMITISM

The American Jewish International Relations Institute now under B'nai B'rith International umbrella

The non-profit American Jewish International Relations Institute (AJIRI), founded by the late Ambassador Richard Schifter to promote Israel's cause at the United Nations, has now become a part of B'nai B'rith International. During the past several years, the organizations had often enjoyed a collaborative relationship, in the furtherance of shared goals.

Now to be known as AJIRI-BBI, the Institute will continue to expand its outreach, focusing on advocacy and education intended to advance Israel's fair treatment, not only at the U.N. but with agencies and governmental bodies worldwide.

"AJIRI is a welcome addition to the B'nai B'rith family," B'nai B'rith President Charles O. Kaufman said. "Simply, we are deeply honored to be linked with the distinguished board dedicated to realizing the ambassador's legacy. Our overlapping missions and excellent chemistry will strengthen our already strong policy efforts in advocating for a safer and more secure Israel in the world and within the United Nations."

B'nai B'rith CEO Daniel S. Mariaschin added: "The campaign to address bias in U.N. voting on Israel-related issues will be tremendously strengthened by AJIRI's joining forces with B'nai B'rith. AJIRI-BBI will continue to decry the double standards which are unfairly applied to Israel at the U.N. at the General Assembly in New York, and at its agencies around the world."

The merger stands as a tribute to Schifter, who was active as AJIRI's chairman until his death at age 97 on Oct. 3, a short time after the agreement took effect. A friend, colleague and inspirational leader, he worked with B'nai B'rith for nearly a decade to



Ambassador Richard Schifter was honored with B'nai B'rith's Distinguished Humanitarian Award at the organization's 175th anniversary celebration on April 25, 2018. L-R: B'nai B'rith President Gary P. Saltzman (2015-18); Ambassador Schifter; B'nai B'rith CEO Daniel S. Mariaschin.

advocate for Israel and to build connections with nations around the world.

In 1938, the 15-year-old Schifter emigrated from Austria to America before the Nazi invasion. His parents, who could not obtain visas, perished in the Holocaust. A member of the Army Intelligence Unit during and after World War II, he went on to become a lawyer, and later, a diplomat, serving in three presidential administrations, including as Assistant Secretary of State for Human

Rights and Humanitarian Affairs from 1985 to 1992.

This year, Schifter had observed: "It has been a pleasure for us to note how AJIRI's and B'nai B'rith's accomplishments produced highly useful results for the benefit of U.S. foreign policy objectives and of Israel." He envisioned a future in which "we look forward to witnessing many highly beneficial results."

The loss of his sage presence is felt by all who knew him. 🕯

B'nai B'rith National Healthcare Award Focuses on the Industry in Unprecedented Times

With health issues at the center of the world in the face of the novel Coronavirus pandemic, the B'nai B'rith International Charles S. Lauer National Healthcare Award took on greater significance this year.

In place of an award usually bestowed at a dinner ceremony, a virtual event saluted the award winner and global healthcare workers for their efforts caring for people fighting COVID-19.

On Oct. 28, healthcare professionals and B'nai B'rith members and supporters tuned in virtually to hear salutes to the honoree, Marna Borgstrom, CEO of Yale New Haven Health and Yale Hospital, to learn about advancements in the Yale New Haven network and, most importantly, hear tributes to the healthcare heroes who have been fighting the battle against COVID-19, the illness caused by the Coronavirus, since March.

Borgstrom dedicated the award to the healthcare heroes in the Yale New Haven network and to healthcare workers around the world and stressed that, this year, the award is more theirs than hers.

"At [Borgstrom's] urging, we even more importantly focus our attention in our virtual award ceremony on all those in our field standing up to the COVID-19 challenge," co-chair Charles Kahn said. Kahn is the president and CEO of the Federation of American Hospitals. "The coronavirus has affected all of us but not like the front-line caregivers in hospitals across the nation that have put themselves in harm's way to serve all of us. We owe them so much and honor them this year for their healthcare leadership."

Borgstrom emphasized the heroic efforts of frontline healthcare workers in her acceptance remarks. "Never has that been more evident than in the response of our physicians, nurses, frontline caregivers and others who support them to the unprecedented threat of COVID-19," she said in her acceptance address. "As most people sheltered in place and as the world as we knew it came to a crushing halt, the heroes among us – the women and men of our healthcare systems – put themselves at risk daily to meet the needs of those afflicted by the novel Coronavirus or other health-related emergencies."


The B'nai B'rith National Healthcare Award has a rich history: It was established in 1983 to highlight the outstanding work of individuals and corporations that set the standard for health and educational initiatives that better the lives of people throughout their communities and across the globe. The esteemed recipients of the National Healthcare Award have shown a history of dedicated leadership and outstanding civic involvement in the healthcare field and in the general community.



Acknowledging the efforts of caregivers on the front line of the pandemic in her acceptance remarks, Marna Borgstrom, CEO of Yale New Haven Health and Yale Hospital in Connecticut, is the 2020 recipient of B'nai B'rith's Charles S. Lauer National Healthcare Award. Borgstrom says she is proud of helping to build a talented, diverse group of leaders dedicated to improving patient care.

"The mission of Yale New Haven Health is closely aligned with the work of B'nai B'rith," Borgstrom said. "As an organization fully dedicated to social justice and civic involvement, B'nai B'rith has been a true leader in our communities. And, like the organization I am proud to lead, it has worked tirelessly to drive change based upon core values of fairness and equity."

"The date of B'nai B'rith's Healthcare Award is circled on my calendar every year, because it's where my personal and professional backgrounds come together in a very meaningful way," said co-chair Rick Pollack, who serves as the president and CEO of the American Hospital Association. "Since 1843, B'nai B'rith has worked successfully to make life safer, more tolerant and better for everyone. Hospitals share the same mission, and in this pandemic year, when caring, compassion and health care heroes have helped to hold our country together, I am especially proud to have a foot in both worlds."

To view the tribute video and read the tribute journal visit: www.bnaibrith.org/healthcareaward.html. 

Congratulations to Ha'aretz correspondent and B'nai B'rith Magazine contributor Dina Kraft, a winner of the B'nai B'rith World Center-Jerusalem Award for Journalism Recognizing Excellence in Diaspora Reportage.

The articles cited were two stories written for Ha'aretz in October 2019: "The Pittsburgh Playbook: How a Community Began to Heal" and "The Status of Anti-Semitism in Contemporary America and Britain."

On June 5, 2020, Ha'aretz reported on the Award presentation. Read about it and find links to the articles here: www.haaretz.com/israel-news/haaretz-journalist-dina-kraft-wins-major-jewish-journalism-prize-1.8824180/1.8824180

Dina Kraft most recently wrote for B'nai B'rith Magazine in Summer 2019: "Au Revoir, France. Bienvenue, Israel: French Immigrants Making Aliyah." Visit the Magazine Archives to read past issues: www.bnaibrith.org/magazine-archives.html

המרכז העולמי של בני ברית • ירושלים



B'nai B'rith World Center • Jerusalem

Catch up on previous issues of Impact here:

B'NAI B'RITH
IMPACT

www.bnaibrith.org/bnai-brith-impact.html



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES
**Arizona Center
for Judaic Studies**

GRADUATE WITH A STRONGER CONNECTION TO JEWISH LIFE

Housed in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, The Arizona Center for Judaic Studies offers a degree program as well as a variety of elective courses, Hebrew, and summer study in Israel.

Learn more at sbs.arizona.edu



Shalom from Hillel and
the College of Letters, Arts,
and Social Sciences at
Cal Poly Pomona

(909) 869-3500
www.cpp.edu

LIFE IN THE ARTS

www.kent.edu/artscollege

KENT STATE
UNIVERSITY
College of the Arts

Shalom! Best wishes to our many Jewish friends.

UF UNIVERSITY of
FLORIDA
The Foundation for The Gator Nation

Warrington College
of Business Administration
Gainesville, FL

For program information, please call
(352) 392-2397
or visit our website at
www.warrington.ufl.edu

We are Committed to a Diverse Student Body

Duquesne welcomes
students of all races,
cultures and
religious traditions.

DUQUESNE
UNIVERSITY
www.duq.edu



**WHERE ARTS AND
SCIENCES THRIVE.**

38 academic departments and
programs in the college of arts
and sciences.

cas.stthomas.edu **UNIVERSITY OF
St. Thomas**

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON
LAW CENTER

SHALOM!

TO OUR MANY JEWISH FRIENDS

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON EARNING A
J.D. OR LL.M. DEGREE, VISIT LAW.UH.EDU

The University of Houston is a Tier One research university and an EEO/AA Institution.

Shalom and best wishes to our many Jewish Friends!

**WIESS SCHOOL OF
NATURAL SCIENCES**
The Frontiers of Knowledge

RICE
UNIVERSITY
Houston, TX

For program information, please call: (713) 348-3350
or access our website at: www.naturalsciences.rice.edu

We are committed to a diverse student body.

**WHERE STUDENTS
BECOME WORLD
CITIZENS**

Serving a diverse
student body with
opportunities here
and abroad.



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

College of Humanities

CONTACT: humanities.arizona.edu | (520) 621-1044

Thank you for your support of

**B'NAI B'RITH
MAGAZINE**

Our 2021 issue will be in
homes near Chanukah

SUSTAINING A LEGACY OF SERVICE

The B'nai B'rith Essex Street Society

Safeguarding Israel and the Jewish people, fostering community and helping those
in need. Today, the work of B'nai B'rith is as vital as ever before.

Partner with us to ensure wherever there is a need, there is B'nai B'rith.

To learn more please visit: bit.ly/BBIESsexStreet or call: 212-490-1352.



MARKETPLACE

NATIONAL



GIVE FRESH.

Indulge your family, friends and yourself with the gift of flavor.



Whether you're looking for exceptional new fruits for Rosh Hashanah, the finest potatoes for latkes, or just want to make the right impression anytime, Melissa's has you covered.



FISHER FORENSIC
DOCUMENT LABORATORY, INC.

- Signatures/Handwriting Identification
- Fabricated Documents • Alterations
- Indented Writings • Document Laboratory for Nondestructive Tests

Testimony in over 250 Trials

1-800-987-8129
510-844-2500

1990 N. California Blvd., 8th Floor
Walnut Creek, CA 94596
www.doclab.com

- State-of-the-Art Spray Booth and Bake Oven
- FREE Estimate
- FREE Loaner Car
- Frame Machine & Measurement System

Foreign Car Specialists
Porsche, Volvo, Mercedes, BMW
FREE Pickup & Delivery
Your Insurance Company Knows Us!



36 Lucy St.
Woodbridge, CT
(between Rte. 63 & 67)
(203) 397-2909
(203) 387-8069
Fax: (203) 389-4002
woodbridgeautobody.com

Have Your Plans Changed?



During times like these, even the best-laid plans may need to be revisited.

Please let us know how we can help you determine your plans. We have many resources available that you might find helpful. Whether you're rethinking your retirement plan or inheritance planning for your family, we want to help build your legacy.

Contact plannedgiving@bnaibrith.org or call (800) 656-5561 with any questions you may have, today!

Read past issues of B'nai B'rith Magazine at
www.bnaibrith.org/magazines



ADVERTISERS BY STATE • CALIFORNIA - MINNESOTA



PESTEC IPM PROVIDERS

Rodent, Pigeon Control & Proofing • Animal Trapping
Bedbugs, Mice, Roaches, Ants, Cockroaches

Commercial Sanitation Reports Issued

Residential, Commercial, Government & Transportation
Pest Control

(415) 587-6817	(510) 251-9000	(925) 934-2284	(925) 757-2945
San Francisco	Alameda	Contra Costa County	Contra Costa County

www.pestec.com



RESS FINANCIAL CORPORATION

1780 Town & Country Drive, Suite 105
Norco, CA 92860

BRUCE R. BEASLEY
President

Phone (800) 343-7377
Fax (866) 481-2032

PROFESSIONAL TRUST DEED AND LAND
CONTRACT FORECLOSURE SERVICES

Mention B'nai B'rith when calling



Lind Brothers Funeral Home FD1141

FAMILY OWNED

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY SINCE 1964

4221 Manzanita Avenue | Carmichael, Ca 95608
cporter@LindBrotherssacramento.com

Office 916-482-8080 Fax 916-482-2009

Spartan Enterprises dba *Giordano Monuments*

ESTABLISHED 1921

Family owned and operated. Serving the community for four generations.

Monuments & Markers • Monument Restorations & Cleaning
Statuary & Bronze Plaques • Cemetery Lettering Services

Largest Indoor Showroom in Connecticut

275 Derby Avenue, West Haven, CT 06516
Phone (203) 777-5569 • Fax (203) 777-5560
www.giordanomonuments.com

Family Owned & Operated Since 1972



AUTO REPAIR INC.
Foreign & Domestic Repairs

Paul Locicero

860-646-5036 Fax: 860-646-1552
174 West Center Street • Manchester

www.pp-autorepair.com

ppautopaul@yahoo.com



NEWMAN GALLERY

**ROTATING EXHIBITS
OF ORIGINAL WORKS**
Conservation Framing On Premises
Art Restoration
Free Pick-Up & Delivery
202-544-7577
Please Mention This Ad
513 11th St. SE, Capitol Hill
www.newmangallery.com



Tile & Marble
CORNERSTONE
RETAIL SHOWROOM

ENORMOUS SELECTION OF TILE

SPECTACULAR SERVICE

CONTRACTOR FRIENDLY

The Possibilities Are Endless

508-230-TILE (8453)
cornerstonetileandmarble.net
EASTON INDUSTRIAL PARK
15F Plymouth Drive, So. Easton, MA 02375

DERSON MANUFACTURING

Steel Storage Tanks
Clean Burn Used Oil Furnace

952-955-2668

200 Madison St.
Watertown, MN

SUPPORT OUR WORK

**B'nai B'rith
Apparel**

T-Shirts, Sweatshirts,
and other custom apparel



www.mylocker.net/shops/bnai-brith-international

ADVERTISERS BY STATE • NEVADA - TEXAS


GEICO
LOCAL OFFICE

We're local in North Las Vegas.

Call today and receive personal service from a local GEICO agent.

702-643-0057

3315 West Craig Road, North Las Vegas
geico.com/north-las-vegas
(Hablamos Español)



STATE OF THE ART FACILITY
FOREIGN AUTO SERVICE TECHNICIANS

We Specialize in Repairing:

ACURA • AUDI • BMW • HONDA • INFINITI • ISUZU
JEEP • LEXUS • MAZDA • MERCEDES • MITSUBISHI
NISSAN • SAAB • SUBARU • TOYOTA
VOLKSWAGEN • VOLVO

and other Fine Imports
Scheduled Maintenance

• Alignments • Electrical Troubleshooting
• Clutch Repairs • Mufflers • CV Joints
• Tune-Ups • Brakes • Diesel Repair • Struts-Transmissions • Front End Rebuilding

FREE TOWING,
Call for Details

SHUTTLE SERVICE

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICE - GENERAL AUTOMOTIVE REPAIRS - FUEL INJECTION SPECIALISTS

Serving Santa Fe
For Over 23 Years **471-0326**
2786 AGUA FRIA www.faststf.qwestdex.com



A.E. Rosen Electrical Company, Inc.

Edward Rosen - President
Cliff Wessot - Vice President
Adam Rosen - Treasurer

The Kensico Cemetery

The Kensico Cemetery (Non-Sectarian) and Sharon Gardens (Jewish Faith) are situated in a rural setting with beautiful trees, rolling hills and sweeping lawns in Westchester County. They provide a serene and peaceful resting place not found in many cemeteries today. For FREE color brochure call toll free:

1-888-KENSICO or 1-888-536-7426

P.O. Box 7, Valhalla, NY 10595
Sharon Gardens is a division of The Kensico Cemetery
914-949-0347
www.kensico.org



www.sharongardens.com

CRITTER CONTROL
The Nation's Leading Wildlife Control Firm™

SQUIRRELS
RACCOONS • SKUNKS

BIRD • WOODCHUCK
MICE • BAT
BEES • FOX • BEAVER
COYOTES • ETC.

Humane Removal
Damage Repair • Prevention

Attic & Chimney
Screens Installed

Wildlife Biologist On Staff

Serving All Of
Cleveland & Suburbs

EMERGENCY SERVICE AVAILABLE
216-642-3044

OLIVER
Comfort You Can Trust

Experts In:

- Heating
- Cooling
- Plumbing
- Electrical

610-616-5691 • OliverHeatCool.com

CUSTOM CATERING
Full Service Off-Premise Catering
Create your own menu with the assistance of our Catering Coordinator from Soup and Appetizers to full Meals & Desserts!

WEDDING & ALL OCCASION CAKES
Homemade Sour Cream Pound Cake with Buttercream Icing.
Decorated to Your Specifications!

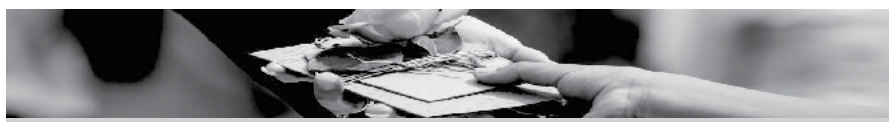
HENNING'S MARKET
290 Main St. Meadowbrook Plaza
Harleysville, PA 19438
215-256-9533
Open Every Day 7AM-9PM
for more information log on:
www.henningsmarket.com

Taking care of each other is what community is all about.
We're proud to serve our community with personal, compassionate care.

LEVY
FUNERAL DIRECTORS
BELLAIRE
713-660-6633

Every Detail Remembered | Dignity®

www.prepaidfunerals.texas.gov



ADVERTISERS BY STATE • TEXAS

FARMER'S MARKET

R.L. SAYERS FAMILY

WHOLESALE - RETAIL

- FRESH FRUITS & VEGETABLES DAILY •
- FULL LINE OF PRECUT VEGETABLES (Lettuce, Onions, Cabbage, Carrots, Celery, Etc.)
- FRUIT BASKETS FOR ALL OCCASIONS •
- SUPPLYING RESTAURANTS - SCHOOLS
- WATKINS PRODUCTS
- COMPLETE SELECTION OF NUTS
- SPECIALIZING IN CRACKING & SHELLING PECANS

(817) 838-8526
(817) 838-8781

FAX 838-7754
"FAMILY OWNED AND OPERATED"
5507 E. BELKNAP, FT. WORTH, TX

SOUTHWEST HOUSTON



Established 1956

- Custom Shower Doors
- Custom Wall Mirrors
- Glass Replacement

www.buffaloglassco.com
info@buffaloglassco.com

Hours Mon-Fri 8-5 Sat 9-2

Now accepting all major credit cards

713-774-7495
7936 Hillcroft, Houston, TX

NONE SHALL BE AFRAID

FIGHTING ANTI-SEMITISM

Read more about this initiative here

<https://www.bnaibrith.org/fighting-anti-semitism.html>

Catch up on all of our podcasts, live discussions
and Conversations on our Extra pages:

www.bnaibrith.org/bnaibrithextra.html

B'NAI B'RITH

BRINGING THE CONVERSATION TO YOU

Extra



PODCASTS



VIDEOS



WEBINARS

HAPPY
CHANUKAH
FROM B'NAI B'RITH!



Facing the Pandemic: B'nai B'rith Housing, Not Just Bricks and Mortar

By Mark D. Olshan

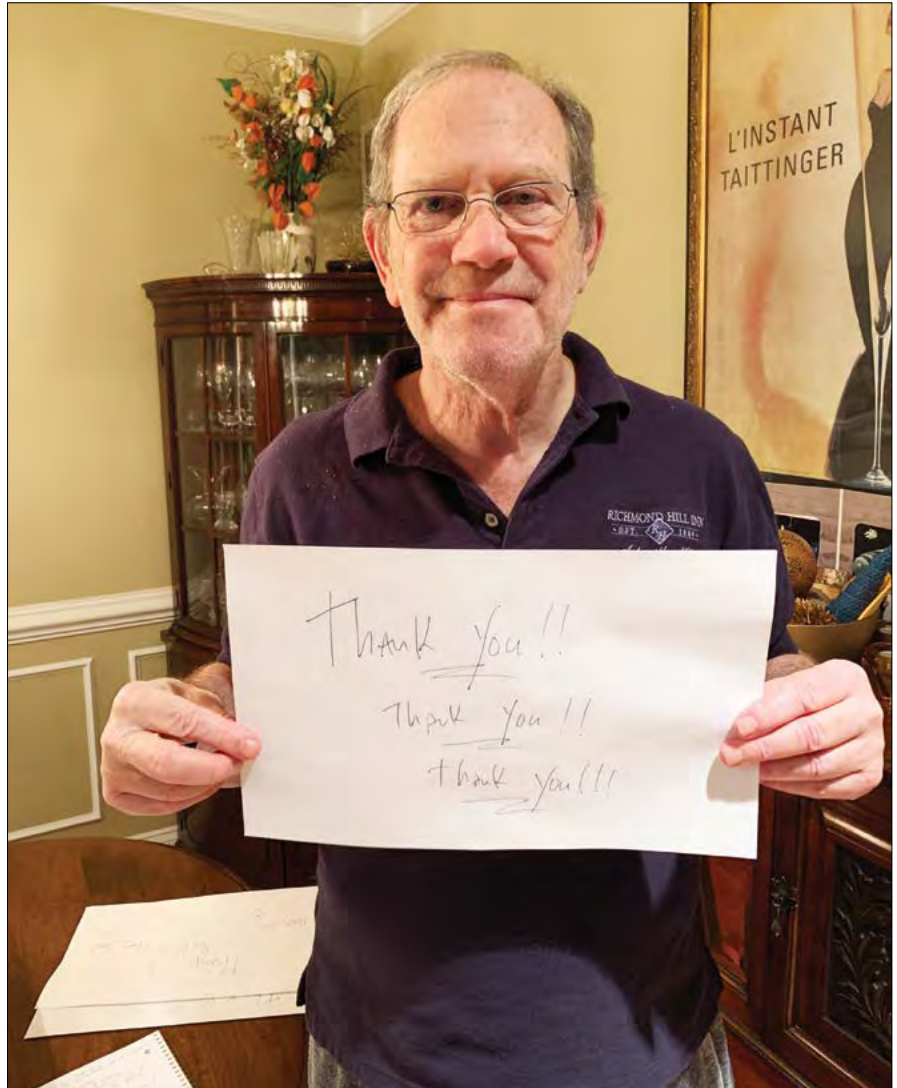
Associate Executive Vice President, B'nai B'rith International

The coronavirus pandemic is, hopefully, a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and certainly one that has had and will continue to have a lasting impact on our health, economy and very way of life. Here at B'nai B'rith, where I've directed the senior housing program for 37 years, we are seeking to ameliorate the pandemic's impact on the more than 5,000 residents living in more than 4,000 apartments in our 38 senior housing properties in 16 states.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been pervasive. Since March, and for an indefinite period, offices, schools, restaurants, mass transportation, sports, concerts, summer camps and more were closed, curtailed or canceled. There has been unprecedented self-isolation. For months, "eating out" has meant "curbside pick-up" for diners.

So, how does this relate to our affordable senior housing properties? As parts of the country were shutting down, our Center for Senior Services (CSS) worked to ensure that B'nai B'rith facilities met the unprecedented challenges. Regular readers of this column may remember that we often comment that the B'nai B'rith Senior Housing Network is "more than bricks and mortar." That is, B'nai B'rith housing doesn't end when the doors open. Rather, it only starts there.

Whether it's our annual Housing Conference, Managers and Service Coordinator Training, advocacy on Capitol Hill, Residents' Leadership Retreat or the myriad of other ways we



Mark Olshan, (pictured here) expressed B'nai B'rith's gratitude to our donors, advocates and particularly to our special family, the building staff, who continue to meet the challenge at our properties every day. Their optimism during this time is distilled in the hope-filled message of our Tucson service coordinators: "We feel blessed to have a job that we love where we can help our residents through this time of great change and turmoil. It's wonderful to be able to work at B'nai B'rith Manor and Covenant House where we can assist them."



work with our buildings, our overriding commitment is that we do not quit after we cut a ribbon. That's when our involvement and hard work truly begin.

In 2020, residents have been sheltering in their apartments, and the building staff have had to adapt to the “new normal.” Staff have had to calm residents and their families and find ways to acquire much-needed personal protective equipment (PPE), cleaning supplies and food, all while practicing responsible social distancing. If you think it's difficult in your own household, imagine what it's like in an apartment complex housing 50 to 250 “higher risk” older adults.

Hannah Rosner, a resident of B'nai B'rith Apartments of Deerfield Beach, Florida, sent a thank-you note to management. “The staff has kept the residents here as safe and healthy as possible,” she wrote. “The effort you have put into cleaning and sanitizing the buildings, as well as the regulations you have implemented are GREATLY appreciated. You have kept us informed, and directed and managed the staff to ensure the best outcome possible ... I am very grateful to be living at B'nai B'rith under your leadership.”

Notes like this made us proud to publish “CSS Hometown Heroes” on our website, which acknowledges our staff, facilities managers, housekeeping and volunteers serving on the front lines. For residents, staff posted “messages of hope.”

Within days of isolation mandates, CSS staff started thinking of creative ways to support our properties. We started a weekly

When residents of B'nai B'rith of Queens lost their local grocery store, our Senior Center staff rallied to obtain donations of food, whose delivery was arranged by New York's Metropolitan Council. The building's board and staff reached out to the office of Acting Borough President Sharon Lee, which arranged for the delivery of 200 masks, a precious commodity during this time.

B'nai B'rith Housing Network Zoom call for management professionals and provided regular updates from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Centers for Disease and Control and Prevention (CDC), and Capitol Hill. These Zoom calls let property managers share new ideas, hear success stories and speak directly with their colleagues across the country facing similar challenges.

Jeff Cottingham, the management agent for the Sam J. Stone B'nai B'rith Apartments in Peoria, Illinois, described our Zoom meetings as “invaluable!”

Since the pandemic forced us to cancel our annual in-person meeting of managers and service coordinators, our staff provided remote online training focused on staff and residents' day-to-day activities in our affordable housing properties. Participants heard from representatives from the American Association of Service Coordinators (AASC), the U.S. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), consultants in the field of affordable housing and B'nai B'rith staff. Discussions included suggestions as to how to obtain PPE and cleaning supplies, limiting access to common areas, informing residents, practicing social distancing, mandatory mask policies and networking.

Our work has included assisting individual properties throughout the crisis. We worked with community partners, including our own B'nai B'rith Center for Community Action (CCA), to ensure that residents received adequate supplies. Managers at our property in Queens, New York, told us that a local grocery store, where many residents were shopping, had to close for an extended period of time. Through CCA we were able to get pallets of food — including eggs, yogurt and nonperishable items — donated for 288 people. “The team at B'nai B'rith International quickly went to work to find donations and a food source for the residents in our building,” said Michael Pierce, the building's regional property manager. The staff assembled bags to be delivered to the residents' doors.

In California, CSS arranged with the office of U.S. Sen. Diane Feinstein, D-Calif., and other community partners a donation and delivery of face masks, hand sanitizers and other PPE to the B'nai B'rith Golden Years Apartments in North Hollywood.

On Capitol Hill, our advocacy intensified. Congress debated a variety of legislative fixes to the stalled economy, many of which included additional funding for HUD-assisted housing.



Housekeeping staff member Cindy Bloom (left) and Building Engineer John Jones were members of the team that kept residents safe at Amos Towers in Scranton, Pa.

Not only have we been supportive of these efforts, but we also forcefully fought for certain provisions to be included, such as increasing Wi-Fi capability, which allows residents a better means of staying connected to the outside world.

We were particularly excited to see our advocacy efforts addressed with the “Emergency Housing Assistance for Older Adults Act of 2020” introduced in both the Senate and House respectively by Sen. Robert Menendez, D-N.J., Rep. Katie Porter, D-Calif., and Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif., who also serves as Chairman of the House Financial Services Committee. Furthermore, it was nice to see our support for the bill noted in Senator Menendez’s press release introducing his legislation. These bills sought financial resources for HUD-assisted senior



During her visit to our property, Pasadena Interfaith Manor in Pasadena, Texas, on Sept. 12, 2020, Rep. Sylvia Garcia (D-Texas) delivered a donation of masks for residents and staff to On-site Manager Mike Garcia.

housing in response to COVID-19 that allow for greater flexibility to hire more staff, acquire PPE, increase service coordination and expand Wi-Fi access.

So, still after all these years as director of the senior housing program here at B’nai B’rith, I passionately believe we continue to provide an invaluable service for our housing network.

In light of what I hope is only a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic, I’m proud to say, once again, that B’nai B’rith senior housing is much more than just bricks and mortar. 🇺🇸

Mark D. Olshan, who holds a doctorate in psychology, is associate executive vice president of B’nai B’rith International and director of the organization’s Center for Senior Services.

To learn more about the B’nai B’rith Center for Senior Services, senior housing and to read the Seniority Report, visit www.bnaibrith.org/seniority-report-newsletter. Read more about Hometown Heroes here: <https://bit.ly/2HUk4Uj>

Thank you for your support of B’NAI B’RITH MAGAZINE

The spring issue of B’nai B’rith Impact will be published online in March 2021.

B'NAI B'RITH INTERNATIONAL
1120 20TH STREET NW, SUITE 300 NORTH
WASHINGTON, DC 20036

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PD
STRASBURG VA
PERMIT NO. 306

**WHAT WILL YOUR
LEGACY BE?**

MAKE AN IMPACT

LEARN MORE: [BBILEGACY.ORG](https://bbilegacy.org)

1843  SOCIETY