

Thank you, Simone and Ralph, for welcoming Vonne and me and being such important and long-time leaders and friends to B'nai B'rith. As you know, I come from Austin, Texas, where the late Joe Domberger, expanded his network of campuses highrises. A stylish dresser, Joe told me he liked my bowties. . . .

I am so honored to be in Frankfurt with my brothers and sisters from throughout Germany. B'nai B'rith was founded 175 years ago by 12 German Jewish immigrants led by an uncommon man with a very common name — Henry Jones. He would be amazed to know what people produced on Oct. 13, 1843, with \$27.

You know our story well. From helping widows and orphans, B'nai B'rith has become an incubator of service groups through hospitals, senior housing facilities, Hillels, the premier Jewish youth organization, camps.

B'nai B'rith also has helped countless people displaced from their homes by natural disasters and conflicts.

We are famous for our work as a Non-Governmental Organization, fighting anti-Semitism and advocating for Israel at the United Nations, UNESCO and other UN agencies.

B'nai B'rith International remains an incubator of programs. A changing world spawns new ideas for new times. As president of BBI, I'm pleased to report that we just launched the Mental Health Action Group of B'nai B'rith, to create awareness about this complex challenge.

Before the tragedy in Pittsburgh, we launched the Anti-Semitism Action Group of B'nai B'rith to take aim at what remains a prime failure of humanity. Lawyers around the world have joined B'nai B'rith Barristers. More new programs are coming from your B'nai B'rith.

I come to Frankfurt to acknowledge all you've accomplished in our history in Germany before 1938, and to salute the resilience of B'nai B'rith in Germany in this generation. We are extremely proud of you. And we salute you.

The Diaspora knows Frankfurt as the birthplace of Anne Frank. The Judengasse was the epicenter of Kristallnacht. The growth and slaughter of Jews here dates back to the 14th Century. Almost 800 years later, Jewish life in Germany is undergoing a renaissance and we at B'nai B'rith International want to be part of this movement in Europe.

And while the gunfire in Pittsburgh still rings in our ears, we face even stiffer threats in Europe. We have much to do. Your European brothers and sisters are BBI's **eyes and ears everywhere** to condemn and expose Anti-Semitism anywhere and everywhere. European capitals are trying to define it and teach it, but anti-Semitism rages on. We must confront it. Expose it. Stand up against it . . . every day if we have to. We are for tolerance, but we will never tolerate anti-Semitism.

As important as Germany is to B'nai B'rith's founding, it is equally important to B'nai B'rith's future. We need to increase our presence in Europe. We need a platform in Berlin, a platform that also can extend to serving our agenda at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. We need your help. We need the entire B'nai B'rith family's help in making this a reality.

Our role at the United Nations, a veritable playground for perpetrating hate and lies against Israel and the Jewish people, is more important now than ever. It would be easy to withdraw from this world body, but a dysfunctional organization of 193 countries must be exposed for all of its gaping flaws as more than half of all resolutions at the Human Rights

Council condemn the world's smallest, yet most productive country in the world.

B'nai B'rith supporters must attack this hatred like the swarm of locusts that G-d sent to Egypt. We are unable to repair the world without protecting ourselves. We know from the Haggadah that in every generation, there is someone who seeks to annihilate us. . . .

Questions that defy real answers, real understanding lead us to one conclusion, one answer — “G-d knows.”

Why do bad things happen to good people? “G-d knows.”

Why does one's hate manifest itself in gunning down people praying in Pittsburgh? “G-d knows.”

How is it possible that a multicultural country that performs technological miracles the world over is a target of destruction? “G-d knows.”

As the children of the covenant, we in B'nai B'rith work to recreate divine wonders. And I know you join me in this worthy enterprise.