

INTERMOUNTAIN JEWISH NEWS®

Candlelighting DENVER 8:12 p.m. BOULDER 8:14 p.m. ASPEN 8:17 p.m.

Vol. 105, No. 24

Tammuz 2, 5778

JUNE 15, 2018

© Published every Friday, Denver, CO

\$1.75

Summit
IRAN AND
ISRAEL
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175 years
AND TODAY
B'nai B'rith's
Mariaschin speaks

By **CHRIS LEPPEK**
IJN Assistant Editor

Daniel Mariaschin likes many things about B'nai B'rith International, the organization with which he has been affiliated for nearly 30 years, the last 19 as its executive vice president and CEO.

He likes helping people in need, which B'nai B'rith has been doing for 175 years now.

Mariaschin likes soliciting and articulating the organization's perspective on social and political issues — such as health care and education — on which it has become increasingly visible and outspoken in the still-new era of social media.

He also likes defending and stating the case of Israel, which B'nai B'rith has been doing since before the Jewish state even existed.

Mariaschin has met with an impressive number of presidents, prime ministers, foreign ministers, popes, archbishops and assorted others — powerful individuals whose statements and actions have a very tangible effect on citizens and countries alike.

"The ability to speak truth to pow-

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Kostas Papadopoulos won't be there



Kostas Papadopoulos, the last survivor of the 263 Jews of Crete, killed on their way to Auschwitz in 1944.

HANIA, Crete — On Sunday, June 17, 263 candles will be lit at an interfaith memorial service at this lovely city's historic Etz Hayyim synagogue.

The names of local Jews who perished during the Holocaust will be read before a delegation that is expected to include Chief Rabbi Gabriel Negrin of Athens, Greek Orthodox and Catholic clergy, and ambassadors from Italy, Germany and Israel.

One person who wanted to be here will be missing. His name is Kostas Papadopoulos, who may be the last surviving link to a proud 2,300-year Jewish lineage and the tragic military decision that vir-

By **ROGER RAPOPORT**
JTA

tually eliminated one of Europe's oldest Jewish communities.

His story dates back to May 29, 1944, when he was just two years old. On that day, German secret police singled out and round-

A different Holocaust tragedy

ed up 263 people across Greece's largest island. All were arrested and carted off to Agia Prison for the crime of being Jewish.

Eleven days later they were forced at gunpoint into the hold of a Greek merchant vessel, the Tanais, set to sail for Piraeus.

"A higher proportion of the Jew-

ish community of Crete was deported by the Nazis toward a death camp than of any country in Europe," said Rabbi Nicholas de Lange, a professor emeritus of Hebrew and Jewish studies at the University of Cambridge who conducts High Holiday services here.

None of the prisoners would make it to Piraeus and a train bound for Auschwitz.

When the ship left Heraklion as part of an announced "civilian" convoy, a British submarine captain, certain that the Tanais was piloted by a German military crew, targeted it near Santorini. Unaware of the human cargo below deck, which also included Christian Greek and Italian pris-

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The southern coast of Crete, June, 1943.

German Federal Archive/Wikimedia Commons

Dead Sea ROTATION II Limited ecological exposure

By **ANDREA JACOBS**
IJN Senior Writer

It's closing time at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science on June 5. Volunteers exiting out of the service entrance deposit their keys and head home with the public — but I'm staying.

I'm about to witness the "changing of the scrolls" halfway through DMNS' hugely popular "Dead Sea Scrolls" exhibition, which opened in March.

Tonight, the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) and museum

The strictest conservation techniques

staffers begin replacing the first set of scrolls (Rotation I) with Rotation II, in accordance with strict conservation techniques.

There is no portrait in the Louvre or abstract painting at MoMA that rivals the Dead Sea Scrolls, found by three Bedouins in Qumran in 1947.

Written between 150 BCE and 70 CE, the fragile parchments — some tinier than the tip of a baby finger — broaden the world's insight into Judaism 2,000 years ago and the subsequent rise of monotheistic traditions.

These ancient scrolls are constantly fluctuating in terms of new discoveries (over 1,000 fragments to date) and scholarship.

IAA experts spend untold months coalescing illegible, often indecipherable script into coherent meaning.

Jennifer Moss Logan, DMNS museum educator, gave me a private tour of the Rotation I scrolls, reported in the *IJN* March 30, 2018.

That tour, which took place during regular museum hours, was conducted amid a crowd of adults, students, children and an incessant din. Now, with a few exceptions, I am alone.

After walk-riding two escalators, I step inside the barely lit entrance to the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibition and recognize the museum's stand-

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B'nai B'rith more visible on policy

B'nai B'rith first helped victims of natural disaster in the 1860s — same as today

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er is terribly important," he told the INTERMOUNTAIN JEWISH NEWS in an interview last week.

"It's important to have an opportunity to sit across the table from a president or prime minister or

ON 175:

'The original mission was to help those less fortunate — that hasn't changed'

foreign minister and say, 'You know, your policy on Iran is not where we want you to be.' Or on Israel, 'Why aren't you talking about Hamas and the role that it plays?' Or talking about the anti-Semitism that's cropped up not only in Eastern Europe but in Western Europe."

While in some ways, Mariaschin knows that he's privileged to have a job that allows him that sort of access, he acknowledges that things can sometimes get a bit testy in such meetings.

Once, while speaking to the foreign minister of a European country on the subject of monetary aid given to the Palestinian Authority, he had the forthrightness to ask: "Does accountability ever work its way into the discussion?"

The minister didn't like the question or its implications.

"He didn't pound the table," Mariaschin says with the hint of a laugh, "but the look on his face was a pound-the-table look."

Thankfully, he adds, that sort of near confrontation is something that takes place only rarely in the course of his work.

"We try to be diplomatic and other folks generally try to be diplomatic with us," he says.

"There's a lot of agreeing to dis-

ON TRUMP ADMINISTRATION: 'We navigate it on a case-by-case basis'

agree, which can be very frustrating, but we still come back time and again, particularly with the Europeans, these days most frequently on the Iranian and Palestinian issues."

He sighs, reflecting on the irony that both issues remain current in his discussions with world leaders.

"The more things change," he says, "the more they stay the same."

Mariaschin was in Denver to speak on behalf of his B'nai B'rith lay counterpart, Denverite Gary Saltzman, who was honored on June 6 for his three years of service as the organization's president and four decades as a local and regional B'nai

B'rith leader.

"I spoke about his lengthy service to B'nai B'rith and the Jewish community and the respect in which he is held by the leaders of other Jewish organizations," Mariaschin said of Saltzman, who will step down from the BB presidency in October.

"Gary has led many B'nai B'rith delegations and met with heads of government and he has been a great leader, not only for B'nai B'rith but for our community broadly."

As another veteran of leadership in the Jewish community (he worked for the ADL and AIPAC before joining B'nai B'rith), Mariaschin is asked about the changes he has witnessed in the course of his own career at B'nai B'rith.

"First I would talk about the constant and the constant is the mission," he says.

"We're celebrating our 175th anniversary. The original mission of the organization, which was a volunteer-based organization, was to help those less fortunate. That grew in many different ways on different paths but the same mission continues — espousing human rights, working for civil rights, helping seniors, helping victims of natural disasters. That hasn't changed."

Just as B'nai B'rith helped the victims of floods in Johnstown, Pa. in

the 1860s — its first disaster relief effort — it is actively aiding the victims of a volcanic eruption in Guatemala right now.

"In terms of the differences, I think they are clear," he continues. "We were built as a mass membership organization. As great numbers of immigrants came to the US... there was this mass influx of Jews from Europe. And then you had their children. That process of integration into

whom are young, single men, frustrated and aimless.

Before it appeared that anti-Semitism likely played no role in this crime, the story spread in German Jewish social media circles — so much so that the Central Council of Jews in Germany stepped in with a statement meant both to show sympathy and douse flames.

"A young life has been cruelly cut short. Our deepest sympathy goes to her relatives and friends," the council's president, Josef Schuster, said in a media statement June 7 that noted the family's membership in the



Daniel Mariaschin, executive vice president and CEO, B'nai B'rith

the fabric of American society was very important as was the opportunity to be together with folks from your own community.

"Now, what we've seen in the last generation and a half, two

point where there aren't even news cycles anymore. What that means is that if you have something to say you need to say it now."

What "now" means is that instead of issuing press releases several

ON PALESTINIAN ISSUES:

'There's a lot of agreeing to disagree, which can be very frustrating'

generations, is that young folks in our community, most of whom are professionals, many of them in families with two spouses working, are people who want to spend more time with their families.

"They don't really have the time that people in our community had in earlier days to affiliate."

Reflecting the experience of other membership-based organizations, these days B'nai B'rith is relying less on members and attendance and more on moral and financial support.

"What we've found with young people is that if they believe in your cause, if they find that what you're doing meets their values and interests, they like to be a part of it. They just can't give you the time."

Another evolution in B'nai B'rith is increased visibility. While the organization has always taken public stances on important political and social issues — including American support for Israel — when it does so now it's louder, and faster, than it used to be.

"We are much more visible," Mariaschin says, "and a lot of it has to do not only with our interest in public policy issues but also with the time in which we live."

"Social media and the internet have changed news cycles to the

hours, or even days, after something happens, B'nai B'rith issues statements through such media as Twitter and Facebook within minutes of a development.

When a significant national or international development takes place, an important part of Mariaschin's job is to quickly consult with national B'nai B'rith board members and senior staff to reach a general organizational consensus that can then be put before the public.

Mariaschin admits that it's been a dramatic transition for him, recalling that early in his career he worked for a CBS Radio affiliate in New Hampshire where one of his tasks was to "rip and read" news copy from a Western Union teletype machine. That copy, he says, had a shelf life of several hours before it had to be updated for broadcast dissemination.

"Now it's a very different story."

An aspect of B'nai B'rith that has not changed dramatically, Mariaschin says, is its non-ideological approach to issues — its practice of taking positions on issues on their own merits or demerits rather than how they line up politically.

"We're not a partisan organization. We don't endorse candidates or

support candidates or raise money for candidates. Yet, we've been given the opportunity to speak out."

B'nai B'rith is navigating the currents of the Trump Administration the same way it has maneuvered through previous administrations — on a case-by-case basis.

The organization supported Trump's decisions to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital and to move the US embassy there, and to pull the US out of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action which lifted sanctions on the Iranian regime.

On the other hand, it actively opposed a number of administration moves that B'nai B'rith saw as potentially harmful to seniors and those who want to immigrate to the US.

"B'nai B'rith has been a longtime, staunch supporter of immigration law that recognizes the importance of immigration to this country," Mariaschin says.

"We recognize the security issues,

but you will always find us saying, we're an immigrant community. We're critical of those measures that impede what should be open-mindedness toward immigration."

Another consistent recipient of B'nai B'rith's ire and opposition is the Boycott-Sanction-Divest movement that serves as the vanguard of an international anti-Israel and anti-Zionist campaign.

"Those who spawned this movement, those who exhort young people to charge Israel with being an apartheid state, are contributing to the delegitimization of the state of Israel which is to apply double standards to the Jewish people," Mariaschin says.

"Everybody has the right have their country under the sun but Israel doesn't have that right. That's what they're saying."

"Now do they engage naive people in their campaigns? There are those people, but the people who are the founders of this movement know exactly what they're doing — to marginalize Israel."

"When you delegitimize, you are telling everyone that the Jews are entitled to less than everybody else. If that isn't anti-Semitic, what is?"

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German Jewish teen murdered by Iraqi

Not anti-Semitism, but Merkel, blamed; no women for male Arab immigrants

By TOBY AXELROD

JTA

BERLIN — In Germany, the case of a young Muslim refugee charged with the rape and murder of a teenage girl has captured media attention and rocked Germany's Jewish community: The victim, 14-year-old Susanna Feldmann, was Jewish.

Missing since May 22, the girl's body was found June 6 buried in a shallow grave near her hometown of Mainz.

The case has rattled Germany, which is beset with worries about crime emanating from the large Muslim refugee population — many of

whom are young, single men, frustrated and aimless.

Before it appeared that anti-Semitism likely played no role in this crime, the story spread in German Jewish social media circles — so much so that the Central Council of Jews in Germany stepped in with a statement meant both to show sympathy and douse flames.

"A young life has been cruelly cut short. Our deepest sympathy goes to her relatives and friends," the council's president, Josef Schuster, said in a media statement June 7 that noted the family's membership in the

Mainz Jewish community.

But, he added, "premature conclusions or speculation [about the case] are out of the question."

Schuster told JTA that he decided to comment in part because he had "heard that in social media the victim was being instrumentalized for xenophobic, anti-migration ends." He said the case is relevant to everyone in Germany, not just to Jews.

While many facts have come out since the body of Susanna Feldmann was found and the suspect was

arrested and interrogated, the incident still feeds populist speculation and anger at German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who in 2015 opened the door to more than a million refugees from the war-torn Middle East on humanitarian grounds.

Many are young, single men between 16 and 30 years old — like Ali Bashar, the 20-year-old former asylum seeker who admitted killing Susanna.

"There are no young women here" for migrants like him, Susanne Schroter, director of the Global Islam Research Center at Goethe Univer-

sity in Frankfurt, said in an interview June 9 with the web.de online magazine.

"We're no longer talking about isolated cases" of violence against women, she said, adding that German society urgently needed to confront reality.

"I'm not making a blanket accusation against refugees, Arabic men or Muslims," Schroter said.

"But we clearly are going through something I would call a culture clash."