

B'NAI B'RITH – ON THE EUROPEAN CONTINENT AFTER WORLD WAR TWO

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In Vol.10, No. 2, of this journal you will have read a survey of the history of B'nai B'rith. The name B'nai B'rith is taken from the Hebrew Bible and means Children of the Covenant.

B'nai B'rith, founded in 1843, is the oldest international Jewish organization. In contrast to most other Jewish organizations, B'nai B'rith has no hierarchy, nor is it an umbrella organization. It is totally democratic, it is still the only major Jewish organization, in which every individual member has a vote.

The local organizations of B'nai B'rith are called lodges, units and - if all members are female - chapters. There are about 500 000 members - men, women and youth - in 50 countries (the former Soviet Union still being listed as one country), co-operating worldwide to fulfill the mission of B'nai B'rith in serving the Jewish people.

The following paper contains a more detailed chronicle of B'nai B'rith in Continental Europe after the Second World War. Later a final chapter tells the history of B'nai B'rith in Scandinavia.

Revival in Continental Europe

In November 1948 delegates of 7 of the 8 still existing or reborn lodges on the European continent and a brother of France as a representative for Greece (cf table 2) met in Paris. Also participating was a past President of the annihilated District 9 Romania, a delegate from the just inaugurated new lodge in Nice and representatives for the lodges that were going to be founded in Sweden and Belgium. *The President of District 15 Great Britain and Ireland Gordon Liverman* participated in the meeting.

Resolutions were adopted aimed at the creation of a *Arbeitsgemeinschaft der europäischen B'nai B'rith Logen / Union des Loges Européennes B'nai B'rith* - a cooperative of the European B'nai B'rith Lodges. *Rabbi Leo Baeck*, president of the Grand Lodge of District 8 Germany from 1924 until its destruction, and living in London after having survived Theresienstadt, became President of the Cooperative. He completely personified the idea of B'nai B'rith.

On the initiative of *Maurice Bisgyer*, Secretary of the Order, a European Office of B'nai B'rith was established in Paris, that existed from January 1949 until November 1952. On behalf of the Cooperative, *Saul E. Jofte* was in charge of the office. The Cooperative met again in London in 1949, in Amsterdam in 1950, in Zürich in 1951, where it adopted its constitution. *Edwin Guggenheim*, of Zürich, was elected President, and *Leo Baeck*, who had asked to resign, was elected Honorary President. District 15 Great Britain and Ireland also joined the Cooperative and therefore two Vice Presidents were elected: *Paul Jacob*, of Mulhouse, and the President of District 15 *Jack Morrison*, of London.

1. The Board of the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft der europäischen B'nai B'rith Logen / Union des Loges Européennes B'nai B'rith 1951-1955*

Rabbi Leo Baeck, London, Honorary Grand President

Edwin Guggenheim, Zürich, Grand President

Paul Jacob, Mulhouse, Grand Vice president

Jack Morrison, London, President District 15,

Grand Vice President unto 1953

Georges M. Bloch, Strasbourg, Secretary General unto 1954

Albert Brandenburger, Zürich, Grand Treasurer

Charlotte Adler, Bruxelles
 I van Esso, Amsterdam
 Leo Fischer, København *)
 Gaston Kahn, Paris
 Dory Oppenheim, Luxembourg **)
 *) from 1953 Grand Vice President
 **) from 1954 Secretary General

No. 1884 Loge Robert Lehmann, Lyon (1951)
 No. 1909 Malmö-Logen, Malmö (1952)
 No. 1923 Loge Elie Bloch, Metz (1952)
 Nr. 1928 Norgeslosjen, Oslo (1952)
 No. 1929 Logen Gothia, Göteborg (1953)
 No. 764 Amicale des Soeurs 'Henry Jones', Bruxelles (1952)
 No. 770 Chapitre B'nai B'rith, Anvers (1951)

When the Continental European Lodges were sufficiently strong to conduct their development without outside help, the Paris office of the Order was closed and the formal ties between the Continent and Great Britain were replaced by informal ties but in no way less cordial. Taking the place of *Jack Morrison*, *Leo Fischer*, from Copenhagen, assumed the office of Vice President of the Cooperative in 1953.

The Cooperative met again in Copenhagen in 1952, in Antwerp in 1953 and in Nice in 1954. It saw its task in promoting the progress of the lodges that had survived or had been reborn and to enlarge activities through the creation of new lodges for brethren and chapters for sisters. As early as 1946 a lodge in Sweden had received its charter, the first charter granted after the war. It therefore took the name *Fredslogen*, i.e. The Lodge of Peace. Thus Sweden, somewhat later Belgium and Luxembourg, and finally also Norway took their place in B'nai B'rith.

No. 1992 *Loggia Bene Berith 'Natan e Anna Cassuto'* was founded in 1954 in Milan and No. 2032 *Loggia 'Elia Benamozegh'* in 1955 in Rome. This was the first time B'nai B'rith had established itself in Italy. In Greece, No. 993 *Loge Philon* was re-installed in 1955 in Athens.

During that period, the institution of *Sisters' Circles* was also revived. The first two were founded in the farthest north and the deepest south of the Continent: *The Sisters' Circle of Fredslogen* in Stockholm and the *Benoth Berith 'Judith'* in Athens. Towards the end of 1955, the first European *Youth Chapter* was inaugurated, in Brussels, but it existed only a short time.

In 1953 the Cooperative established *The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith - Europe (ADL-Europe)* which was at first administered by *Paul Jacob* of Mulhouse.

2. Surviving or reconstituted lodgese

No. 595 Basel-Loge, Basel (1905)
 No. 648 Augustin Keller Loge, Zürich (1909)
 No. 712 Danmark Loge, København (1912, in exile 1943-1945)
 No. 945 Loge Hollandia, s'Gravenhage (1924)
 No. 986 Loge Hilleel, Amsterdam (1924)
 No. 993 Loge Philon, Athinai (1924, re-installed 1955)
 No. 1151 Loge France, Paris (1932, re-installed 1946)
 No. 1160 Loge Alsace, Mulhouse (1935, re-installed)

3. Lodge formations 1948 - 1953

No. 1603 *Fredslogen*, Stockholm (chartered 1946, installed 1949)
 No. 1625 Loge Cote d'Azur, Nice (1946)
 No. 1808 Loge Alsace, Strasbourg (1948)
 No. 1848 Loge Emile Zola, Marseille
 No. 1849 *Fratemelle Henry Jones*, Bruxelles (1950)
 No. 1868 Loge Henry Dunant, Genève (1950)
 No. 1871 *Genootschap B'nai B'rith*, Anvers (1951)
 No. 1872 Loge Scheurer-Kestner, Colmar (1951)
 No. 1883 *Association B'nai B'rith*, Luxembourg (1951)

District Grand Lodge No.19 Continental Europe

Ten years had passed since the end of the war. District 8 Germany, 9 Romania, 10 Czechoslovakia, 12 Austria, 13 Poland, 17 Bulgaria and 18 Yugoslavia had been annihilated, District 11 Orient was dismembered and District 16 Egypt had been dissolved. In ten countries of the free West of the European Continent, the survivors were ready to proceed with the creation of a new B'nai B'rith District.

The general meeting of the Cooperative, held in 1952 in Copenhagen, had already extended an invitation to the Secretary of the Order *Maurice Bisgyer*, which Washington accepted the following year. And one of the Vice Presidents of the Cooperative, *Paul Jacob*, and its Secretary General, *Georges M. Bloch*, participated in the 1953 Triennial Convention of the Order in Washington. Its Treasurer, *Albert Brandenburger*, represented the Cooperative later that year on the 40th anniversary of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith. On that occasion, the *Board of Governors of B'nai B'rith* invited

him to attend its meeting and decided, that henceforth the Cooperative would attend meetings of the Board of Governors, to have a voice but no vote.

The general conference of the Cooperative, meeting in Nice in 1954, noted that the time had come to form a District and applied for a District Charter to the *Supreme Lodge* in Washington. The extensive reports to the Triennial Convention and the Board of Governors, submitted by the delegates of the Cooperation the previous year, had prepared the way. Both the *President of the Order, Philip M. Klutznick*, and the *Secretary of the Order Maurice Bisgyer*, favoured the petition and in February 1955 President *Philip M. Klutznick* and Honorary President *Frank Goldman* met the Board members of the Cooperative in Paris and from there travelled to several lodges in Europe.

On September 4, 1955, the last President of the destroyed 8th District, *Rabbi Leo Baeck*, placed the charter of District 19 in the hands of *Edwin Guggenheim* at a ceremony in Basle. The Grand Lodge then appointed the entire Board of the Cooperative as *Executive Committee of the District*. Cf table 1. - *Willi E. Prins*, Antwerp, took charge of the leadership of ADL-Europe.

On November 7 of that year, the meeting of the Board of Governors of B'nai B'rith in Washington, in the presence of *Edwin Guggenheim*, opened with a dinner celebrating the founding of District 19 Continental Europe. It was the first new District to be established since the end of the war, exactly twenty years after the inauguration of District 18 Yugoslavia that had not survived the Shoa.

The *Triennial Convention* in May 1956 decided to enlarge the number of the Vice Presidents of the Order - hitherto seven, reflecting the seven North American Districts - by adding the three Grand Presidents of District Grand Loge No. 14 Israel, No. 15 Great Britain and Ireland, and No. 19 Continental Europe. And the chief executive of B'nai B'rith, the Secretary of the Order, now received the title *Executive Vice President of the Order*.

District 19 starts to work

In 1956, the spade work was done for the future tasks of District 19. A four-day seminar took place in Brussels in April on the subject "What Unites and What Divides the Religions which have their Roots in Judaism." Among the lectu-

res one of lasting value must be mentioned, *Leo Baeck's "Judaism, Christianity and Islam"* which was later published.

On May 3, 1955 the *Scandinavian Lodge Council* was established, a cooperative of the lodges of Copenhagen, Stockholm, Malmö, Oslo and Göteborg. 1956 it published a first issue, immediately followed by the quarterly "B'nai B'rith Nyt" that is still published by the same editor *Torben Meyer*, Copenhagen. In Brussels, the *Fraternelle Henry Jones*, in Metz the *Loge Elie Bloch* were regularly publishing a bulletin. The bilingual "Revue Européenne", that the Arbeitsgemeinschaft der europäischen B'nai B'rith Logen / Union des Loges B'nai B'rith Européennes had inaugurated in 1952, was discontinued.

Alarming reports came from the *Loge Emile Zola* in Marseille about the need and misery of North African Jews. A clothing drive was organized throughout the District, a number of lodges contributed money. On November 2, 1956, *Leo Baeck*, the great Ben B'rith, passed away. As the last honour, *Logen Gothia*, Göteborg, recommended completion of the old age home of B'nai B'rith - Beth Avoth - in Haifa where building had stopped because of lack of funds. Under the motto "Bricks for the Old Age Home" the District collected the sum necessary.

The Congress in Stockholm

The first Congress of the District took place in Stockholm, August 18-21, 1956. The District adopted here its statutes which constituted the framework for its activities until the Congress in 1971.

At the time of the congress, the District was composed of 24 lodges, 2 chapters and 2 sister circles - all mentioned above - in 10 countries. A new Executive Committee was now elected:

4. The Executive Committee of District 19, 1956-1962

Leo Baeck, London, Honorary Grand President of District 19 *)
Edwin Guggenheim, Zürich, Grand President of District 19
Vice President of the Order of B'nai B'rith
Paul Jacob, Mulhouse, Vice Grand President of District 19
Member of the Board of Governors of B'nai B'rith
Leo Fischer, København, Vice Grand President of District 19 **)
Dory Oppenheim, Luxembourg, Secretary General

Albert Brandenburger, Zürich, Grand Treasurer
 Zwi Carneli, Milano, unto 1959
 Y. Colombo, Milano, from 1959
 I. van Esso, Amsterdam
 Gaston Kahn, Paris
 Aron Neuman, Stockholm ***)
 Rebecca Ratzersdorfer, Anvers
 Gaston Revel, Strasbourg
 René Wolff Marseille
 Georges Jacob, Paris, Chairman of the ADL-Europe

- *) Until his death in November 1956
- ***) President of the Scandinavian Lodge Council 1955-1957
- ***) President of the Scandinavian Lodge Council 1957-1959

By that time, while *Frank Goldman* was the President of the Order (1947-1953), B'nai B'rith had joined the "Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany". In 1951, the government of the West German Federal Republic had taken the first steps in initiating legislation for economic restitution - "Wiedergutmachung" and "Entschädigung" - for the victims of the Shoa. Two opinions permeated the Jewish world. One pointed to the traditional response that Jewry gave to Spain after 1492 - no Jew put his foot in that country for 400 years - the organized murder by the Nazis certainly deserved no other response. The others thought, one Iron Curtain in Europe is enough, and one should not drop a second - Jewish - iron curtain at Germany's border. At the District Congress both voices were heard when a decision was about to be taken on the problem of Germany. The advocates of reconciliation, however, met with little understanding. But the leadership urged, that there must be understanding for the brethren of pre-war lodges who, for a number of reasons, were again living in Germany. Thus, the Congress decided "to assist the brethren, resident in the Federal Republic of Germany, as far as possible in their efforts to revive the work for B'nai B'rith." Subsequently, on November 20, 1956, an *Arbeitsgemeinschaft des B'nai B'rith* was established in Berlin.

The political tension in the Near East had cast its shadow over the Stockholm Congress. Several weeks later, the uprising in Hungary took place and the Sinai War broke out. Many Jews used the short period of freedom before Hungary's occupation by Soviet troops to leave that country. In many places the lodges were able to perform valuable services in integrating these refugees in new surroundings. As a result of the Sinai War, initially Jews in Egypt were exposed

to persecution; later on, large numbers of refugees were able to leave the country. At that time, the pressure on the Jews in North Africa increased; some travelled to Israel clandestinely, most of them tried to reach France. They later became a nucleus for a number of lodge formations in France.

During the District's second working year, 1956/57, under the leadership of *Georges Jacob*, who headed ADL-Europe, began the systematic establishment of *ADL-committees* in the lodges.

1957 was also the year, when the *Head Quarter of B'nai B'rith* moved to a modern building on Rhode Island Avenue in Washington D.C.

In the same year, a lodge was founded in *Tokyo*. This was, however, not the first B'nai B'rith lodge in the *Far East*. During World War II, a group of refugees had established an *Association of Former Central European B'nai B'rith I.O.B.B.* in *Shanghai*, occupied by Japan, but this lodge was dissolved by the end of 1946, when peace allowed the refugees to move to other countries. Finally, a lodge was installed in *Hong-kong* in 1981.

During the third working year of the District, 1957/58, the number of lodges, chapters and sister circles was still unchanged. The most comprehensive gathering of Jews was accomplished by the Scandinavian lodges. Of a total of 2.000 members in Continental Europe, 450 were brethren of the five Scandinavian lodges and 100 were members of the sisters' circle of the *Fredslogen* of Stockholm.

In 1959, *Loggia Shemuel Zwi Margulies No. 2170* was founded in Florence and a short time later *Loge Isaac Berr No. 2229* in Nancy, so the District now amounted to 26 lodges, 2 chapters and 2 sister circles.

The Development of the District

At the Triennial Convention of the Order in Jerusalem 1959 - the first ever outside North America - District 19 Continental Europe brought the largest delegation. It agreed with District 14 Israel on a program whereby each European lodge adopted an Israeli lodge - a program that later showed itself to be most successful in France. And District 19 agreed further to participate in all efforts of assistance on behalf of Israel.

The Convention created a new body, the *B'nai B'rith International Council*, which,

among others things, undertook the task to deal with all questions not exclusively concerning North America. The BBIC at first consisted of 8 representatives for USA and Canada and 10 representatives for Latin America, Australia and the two European Districts 15 Great Britain and Ireland and 19 Continental Europe.

Several months later, District 19 held its Congress 1959 in Luxembourg. Grand President *Edwin Guggenheim* announced the establishment of the first post-war lodge on German soil, citing the words of the late Leo Baeck "no Jew shall be excluded from B'nai B'rith". On December 13, 1959 - the year of the aborted summit meeting between the United States and the Soviet Union - the *Leo-Baeck-Traditionsloge No. 2252* was installed in Berlin in the presence of Berlin's mayor Willy Brandt. The Federal German Republic became the 11th country within District 19. At Christmas the same year, swastikas were smeared on the Cologne synagogue and this misdeed spread across Europe like an epidemic.

Half a year later, on May 26, 1960, the Executive Committee decided that a charter be given to Loge *Zwi Perez Chajes No. 2286* in Vienna. And Austria, still burdened by its Nazi past, also became part of the District. In 1961, a second German lodge was installed, *Frankfurt-Loge No. 2296*.

The District now comprised the entire European Continent west of the Iron Curtain, except for the dictatorships on the Iberian peninsula in the southwest and Finland in the northeast, a district with 12 countries in which 8 different languages are spoken.

Much later, in 1973, the lodge of *Monte Carlo* was finally reconstructed and the miniature state of Monaco joined as the 13th country.

Bonn, Rome, Moscow

The *B'nai B'rith International Council* held, in January 1960 in Amsterdam, its first meeting in order to constitute itself. One of its first actions was the distribution of about 4 million DM of Claim's funds to the Districts outside of North America - the so-called *Oversea Districts*. Half of the sum was allocated to Israel. Of the USD 100 000 (approximately 450 000 DM) which were reserved for European lodges, a part was later used for the erection of lodges homes and similar institutions.

At that meeting the *President of the Order, Label A. Katz*, reported on the visit which the top

leadership had recently paid to Pope Johannes XXIII. The Pope's serious intentions to guide the Catholic Church toward brotherly understanding of the Jews were unmistakable.

Cardinal Bea vigorously pursued the task of implementing this idea. He sought advice from *Jules Isaac*, chief inspector of history teaching at the French ministry of education and author of "Jésus et Israël" and other books on Judaism and Christianity and on anti-Semitism. He consulted with *Paul Jacob* in Mulhouse on several occasions. Similar conversations took place between *Otto Herz* in Vienna and Cardinal König and between *Gaston Kahn* in Paris and leaders of the French Church. In 1962, this led to an unpublicized meeting at which the Jewish point of view was comprehensively stated. At this conference, professor R.J. Zwi Werblowsky, from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, participated as the Israeli representative.

When Pope Johannes XXIII, who had been deeply impressed by *Jules Isaac's* writings and a personal meeting, on 11 October 1962 in the Church of St. Peter opened the Vatican Council II, he gave expression for his endeavour to make up for millenias' persecution of the Jews and to recall instead the common heritage.

In 1960 Amsterdam was also the site of the 5th Congress of the District. At the suggestion of the *Norgeslosjen*, Oslo, it was decided that all papers and reports were to be published bilingually, namely German and French. Much later, at the request of the Scandinavian lodges, it was agreed to use English as common means of communication. The Congress also decided to open a District Secretariat in order to ease the President's work load. This office was opened in 1961 in Basle under the management of *Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich*.

The Honorary President of Loge France, *Gaston Kahn*, reported in Amsterdam on his meeting with Pope Johannes XXIII and several cardinals, that took place in the same positive spirit previously evidenced by the Pope. One might now hope for a revision of the religious text books in those sections, which lead to dogmatic anti-Semitism.

The Grand President of the Israeli District, *Joseph Lamm*, who was a guest at the Congress, reminded the lodges to assist the Israeli lodges in the building of children's homes, old age homes and hospitals. The Grand President of the British-Irish District, *Jack Morrison*, who was also in attendance as a guest, described the distress-

sing situation of the Jews behind the Iron Curtain.

At the same time the emigration of Jews from North Africa developed into a mass flight. The Loge *Emile Zola* in Marseille reported in the lodge year 1960/61 that its President had assumed the chairmanship of the United Jewish Social Fund, that tried with insufficient means to assist refugees, arriving in France from Algiers, Tunis and Morocco. Again money and clothing for the destitute immigrants was collected throughout the District.

Jean Pierre-Bloch, Paris, spoke in 1961 in Rome at the 6th Congress of the District on the problems of Algerian Jews. Should one consider those 80 000 of the original 130 000 who are still in their homeland as Algerian or as French citizens? And what would happen if France got an anti-Semitic government - what influence would such a government have on Jewish life in the Old World? *Jean Pierre-Bloch*, once a trusted co-worker of General De Gaulle and a leader of the Association of Resistance Fighters and the International League against Racism and anti-Semitism was to receive an unwelcome reply to this question a few years later.

The 1961 District Congress in Rome was the beginning of an event of global political significance for Jewry. The President of the Order, *Label A. Katz*, arrived directly from Moscow. There he had not even been allowed to send bibles, prayer books and prayer shawls. The Soviet Religious Council had strictly denied him this. But despite the difficult situation, there was a strong Jewish consciousness among the youth. *Label Katz* correctly recognized, that the era of the "Jews of Silence" - this had been the title of a book by *Elie Wiesel* - had ended. In Rome, he spoke to the Jews of Europe. Upon his return home to the United States, he mobilized public opinion throughout the free world. The first exodus from the Soviet Union was about to start.

In Copenhagen, in 1962, the Congress elected a new Executive Committee:

5. The Executive Committee of District 19 1962-1965

Edwin Guggenheim, Zürich, Grand President District 19
Vice President of the Order of B'nai B'rith. Died 1962.
Paul Jacob, Mulhouse, Vice President of District 19, 1962
Grand President of District 19 from 1963. *)
Member of the Board of Governors of B'nai B'rith
Vice President of the Order of B'nai B'rith from 1964

Aron Neuman, Stockholm, Vice President of District 19
Member of the Board of Governors of B'nai B'rith from 1964
Gaston Revel, Strasbourg, Vice President of District 19
Dory Oppenheim, Luxembourg, Secretary General
Albert Brandenburger, Zürich, Grand Treasurer

Pietro Blayer, Roma, 1962-63
Renzo Levy, Roma, 1963-65
Walter Goldschmidt, Amsterdam
Wilhelm Grzyb, Berlin
Ignaz Herzfeld, Basel
Armand Kraemer, Metz
Kaj S. Oppenheim, København
René Wolf, Marseille

Georges Jacob, Paris. Chairman of ADL-Europe

E.L. Ehrlich, Basel, Director of the Office of District 19 and of the Continental European office of B.B.International Council

*) Ex officio member of B'nai B'rith International Council

Shortly after the 7th District Congress in Copenhagen 1962, Grand President *Edwin Guggenheim* passed away at the age of 69. In memory of his service, the District sponsored an Edwin-Guggenheim Hall for the addition to the B'nai B'rith building in Tel Aviv. *Paul Jacob* assumed the mantle of the departed president.

Efforts for France

In 1963, the Order of B'nai B'rith celebrated its 120th anniversary by donating 450 000 Israeli pounds to open a research library in Sde Boker. This became the cultural center of the reclaimed Negev area and later the embryo of the Ben Gurion University.

Remembering the destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto 20 years ago and celebrating the 120th anniversary of B'nai B'rith, the District leadership was guided in taking its position. While during the last five years new lodges were founded in Florence, Nancy, Berlin and Vienna, the number of members in the District at the beginning of 1963 was practically the same as five years earlier. A positive development was, however, that in addition to Stockholm and Athens, sister circles were now participating in the work in Basel, Zürich and Berlin. Likewise a further 10 % membership growth in Scandinavia was encouraging. But the major growth potential was clearly located in France.

French Jewry was the most numerous in free Europe. Especially after the large immigration of North African Jews, a strong need was felt in France to deploy every effort to secure the continuation of Jewish life. Many immigrants settled in places with small Jewish communities; others in cities which were able to offer only a diffuse network of Jewish community activity. It was there, that the lodges were going to become the center of Jewish life.

The beginning was the formation of *Loge Rachi No. 2413* in Troyes. Within a year, *Loge Emil Blum* in Belfort, *Loge Auvergne Emil Kahn* in Clermont-Ferrand, *Loge Dauphiné Doyen Goss* in Grenoble and *Loge Edwin Guggenheim* in Villeurbanne followed, thanks to the tough work performed by the District administration and the President of Loge France, *Albert Harouche*.

In July 1963, the District Congress was opened in the hall of the European Council in Strasbourg. This place, which is not open to other organizations, was put at the disposal of B'nai B'rith with the expressed motivation, that the European Council and B'nai B'rith are moved by the same spirit.

At the Congress in Scheveningen in Holland 1964, the President of the Order *Label A. Katz* summoned the District to develop into a mass organization as in the United States. The delegates were not enthusiastic and the Grand President of the British District *Jack Morrison*, who was a guest of the Congress, proposed "a happy compromise - not open, not closed, but exclusive". This is a quite exact description of the further development.

In 1965, in the building of the Swedish parliament a conference took place on the situation of the Jews in the Soviet Union, a forerunner of the later Brussels Conferences. In Paris, Roger Peyrefitte published the book "Les Juifs" - The Jews -, an innocently masked piece of plagiarism of Edourd Adolphe Drumont's anti-Semitic compendium "La France Juive" - The Jewish France, (1st edition 1886). And in front of the Cathedral of Notre Dame, "The True Mystery of the Passion" was performed with all the old phrases of the "perfidious Jews" and the "deicides".

Less than year after, at the initiative of the director of the District *E. L. Ehrlich*, a conference took place with Catholic authorities from Belgium, France, Germany, Holland and Switzerland. The deliberations were aimed, following the decision of "Vatican Council II", at eliminating the negative judgements of Jews and Juda-

ism in religious text books and to portray Judaism as a living religion. The Catholic leaders rejected the tradition that Jews killed Jesus - his death was at the hands of Roman centurions under orders from a Roman governor - and, following the decisions of Vatican II and the text of "Nostra Aetate", emphasized reconciliation with the Jews.

In 1965, the Congress in Genève had to cast its vote for the a new Executive Committee.

6. The Executive Committee of District 19 1965- 1968

Paul Jacob, Mulhouse, Grand President District 19
 Vice President of the Order of B'nai B'rith
 Aron Neuman, Stockholm, Grand Vice President District 19
 Member of the Board of Governors of B'nai B'rith
 Ignaz Herzfeld, Basel, Grand Vice President Distrikt 19
 Gaston Kahn, Paris, Grand Vice President District 19,
 Léopold Noudel, Bruxelles, Secretary General
 Georges M. Bloch, Strasbourg, Assistant Secretary General
 Albert Brandenburger, Zürich, Grand Treasurer
 Walter Goldschmidt, Amsterdam, Assistant Grand Treasurer

James Goldstein, Firenze
 Wilhelm Grzyb, Berlin
 Armand Kraemer, Metz
 Stanislav Krejzman, Grenoble
 Herman Molvidson, Stockholm
 Kaj S. Oppenheim, København
 Rébecca Ratzersdorfer, Arvers

Georges Jacob, Paris, Chairman of ADL-Europe 1965-67
 Gaston Kahn, Paris, Chairman of ADL-Europe 1967-68

Paul Jacob, Mulhouse, ex officio member of BB Int.Council
 Ignaz Herzfeld, Basel, Member of BB Intem. Councili

E.L. Ehrlich, Basel, Director of the Office of District 19 and of the Continental European office of B.B.International Council

André Cohen-Adad, Marseille, from 1966
 Director of the Bureau de liaison et d'information

Florence 1966

The District Congress 1966 in Florence decided to open, in Marseille, a professional, auxiliary institution *Bureau de liaison et d'information* and to call *André Cohen-Adad* as its director. In 1969 he moved to Paris and the office became the official secretariat of the francophone part of the District.

After the model of the chapters of Brussels and Antwerp, a female lodge had been founded in Paris, the *Chapter Anne Frank*. And in addition to the three sister circles in *Stockholm, Basel* and *Zürich*, and *Benoth Berith 'Judith'* in *Athens*, that in 1978 became a chapter, new sister circles had been inaugurated in *Amsterdam* and *Berlin*. New loges had been founded in *München, Saarbrücken, Lille, Bern*, and a second lodge, *Loge Zadoc Kahn No. 2440*, in Paris.

So at the time of the Congress in Florence 1966, there existed 39 lodges, 3 chapters and 6 sister circles.

In his opening speech, Grand President *Paul Jacob* informed the delegates, that the World Conference of Jewish Organizations COJO - a Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations that had been founded in 1958 - now finally had regularized its work. Participants are American Jewish Congress, B'nai B'rith, Board of Deputies of British Jews, Canadian Jewish Congress, Conseil Représentatif des Juifs de France (CRIF), Delegaciones de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas (DAIA), Executive Council of Australian Jewry, Jewish Labor Committee, South African Jewish Board of Deputies, World Jewish Congress and Jewish Agency for Israel (observer). The chairmanship alternates between B'nai B'rith and World Zionist Organization. The COJO does not interfere in the politics of its member organizations, it is a forum for common debate and exchange of experience. The B'nai B'rith sees for itself the following spheres of activity: anti-Semitism, Israel, Jewish consciousness, Jewish youth.

Grand President *Paul Jacob* also mentioned, that the Scandinavian lodges had decided to start working in public, and though he accepted this idea, he recommended that B'nai B'rith should avoid publicity.

The Congress in Florence was characterized by a well-functioning work of the commissions, which were appointed to prepare the different decisions of the Congress, the so-called *ad hoc commissions*. They played an important role in all following Congresses and, as a rule, were replaced by so-called *permanent commissions* in the periods between the Congresses.

Almost immediately after the Congress, Florence was flooded. Many of the delegates showed their gratitude for the hospitality by sending donations to relieve the lodge from disaster.

Before the end of the year, the President of the Order *William A. Wexler*, together with the

leadership of the District, visited the Austrian Prime Minister Klaus and presented its desire that education for democracy be the goal of the schools, that history books be corrected and history teachers attend special courses, and that seminaries and the organization for Christian-Jewish dialogue be supported by the state. The delegation also requested the establishment of a Sigmund Freud Foundation with the purpose of using *Freud's* scientific revelations in the fight against prejudice. This foundation was established several years later, thanks to the constant efforts of *E.L Ehrlich* and *Otto Herz*, of Vienna. In March the following year, the Vienna Lodge opened an exhibition "German books by Jewish authors". This exhibition, put together by *Desider Stern*, and especially the catalogue, created great interest and was later shown in Berlin, Frankfurt, Düsseldorf and Munich, as well as in Latin America.

In the late spring of 1967, Egypt raised the level of its continuous menace against Israel and on May 19, Radio Cairo announced: "There is only one method which we are going to use, and that is war. The only method which Israel understands is total war and that means the destruction of the Zionist state." The Egyptian army was mobilized and on May 23, by closing the straits of Tiran, Egypt produced the *casus belli*. A week later, Jordan's king Hussein declared that he was "ready for the battle that we have awaited for so long - the annihilation of Israel". Jewish men and women around the globe and throughout District 19 prepared for immediate departure to Israel to take up arms or to perform hospital duty. In several countries, and everywhere in Scandinavia, the lodges immediately offered all available assets to the threatened Israel. Early in the morning of Monday June 5, the Israeli air force reacted. Israel's victory in one blow changed the political picture, and not only in the Middle East. In France, president De Gaulle saw a chance for political success in the previously detested Arab world and called the Jews a power-hungry people - *un peuple dominateur*. His words found a strong echo in numerous anti-Semitic quarters.

At the suggestion of *Albert Harouche* and *Jacques Vatine* the lodges in France formed a loose coalition *Union Française des Associations B'nai B'rith UFABB*, and under the aegis of the District leadership began *Action Gédéon* to combat this new form of anti-Semitism in France.

Avoided split

On the eve of the 12th Congress in Basle in 1968, the split between the germanophone - German speaking - and the francophone - French speaking - half of the District loomed like a threatening cloud in the sky. *Elie Wurm*, the new president of the *UFABB*, the Union of French associations of B'nai B'rith, however, demonstrated a new understanding for the non-French, and instead of a split, an intensified cooperation was established. And the Congress received its imprimatur from the desire to find new tasks for the Continental European B'nai B'rith, a wish first articulated by *Ignaz Herzfeld*, Basle..

At that Congress, *Georges M. Bloch* was elected as the new District President. As his last official act, the retiring District President *Paul Jacob*, who was elected Honorary President, handed the new charter of the *Saloniki Lodge* to its President *Amarillo*. The lodge, which was destroyed in 1940, had been one of the richest lodges in Europe. The assets were missing, but there was still within the Jewish Community of Saloniki, now only consisting of 900 persons, the important Nissim Foundation, and the statutes said that the Board must consist of Jews, among them the President of the B'nai B'rith Lodge. In 1968, the lodge had already been active for some time, but found a few years later there was no longer any basis for activities in this town, which once had a flourishing Jewish life

Since Florence 1966, new lodges had been founded in Düsseldorf and Toulouse and second lodges both in Berlin and Marseille, so the District consisted in 1968 of 43 lodges, 3 chapters and 6 sister circles

In Basle, in 1968, a new Executive Committee was elected:

7. The Executive Committee of District 19 1968-1971

Paul Jacob, Mulhouse, Honorary Grand President and Mentor of District 19

Vice President of the Order of B'nai B'rith

Georges M. Bloch, Strasbourg, Grand President of District 19, Member of the Board of Governors of B'nai B'rith

Herman Molvidson, Stockholm, Vice Grand President of Distr. 19 Member of the Board of Governors of B'nai B'rith

Walter Goldschmidt, Amsterdam, Vice Grand President of Distr. 19

James Goldstein, Firenze, Vice Grand President of District 19

Armand Kraemer, Metz, Vice Grand President of District 19

Léopold Noudel, Bruxelles, Secretary General. Died 1969

Albert Harouche, Paris, Assistant Secr.Gen. 1968, Secr.Gen. 1969

Hans W. Levy, Göteborg, Assistant Secretary General from 1969

Alfred Abraham, Zürich, Treasurer. Died 1969

Jacques Berlowitz, Zürich, Treasurer from 1969

Lucien Benhaïm, Marseille

Chief Rabbi Akiba Eisenberg, Wien

Wilhelm Grzyb, Berlin

Jacqueline Jacob, Paris

Hans Kaufmann, Basel

Hans W Levy, Göteborg, 1968-1969 *)

Ino Nathansen, København

Jacques Vatine, Nice

René Weil, Strasbourg

René Weil, Strasbourg, Chairman of ADL-Europe

Georges M. Bloch, Strasbourg, ex officio member of BB International Council and Vice Chairman

Hans Kaufmann, Basel, Member of BB Int. Council

E.L. Ehrlich, Basel, Director of the Office of District 19 and of the Continental European office of BB International Council

André Cohen-Adad, Director of the Bureau de liaison et d'information, Marseille, from 1969 Paris

*) President of the Scandinavian Lodge Council 1968-1975

B'nai B'rith at the European Council

The lodges in Germany and Austria at several consecutive Congresses had offered to act as hosts the following year, but the overwhelming majority of delegates refused to hold a Congress in a country that barely 25 years earlier wanted to eradicate the Jewish people. As a sign of fraternal closeness with the lodges in these countries however, the Executive Committee met in 1969 and 1970 in Vienna and Berlin. Yet, when in 1972 the first meeting of the newly created *Central Committee* - a kind of parliament with restricted liabilities, working during the period between the Congresses - was scheduled in München, where a few days before the meeting 11 members of the Israeli Olympic team had been murdered, not enough delegates came to form a quorum.

It had been intended to hold the District Congress 1967 in the South of France. However General De Gaulle's hostile acts caused the District leadership to cancel the Congress and arrange a Presidents' Conference in Berne. After the Congress in Basle 1968, again Southern France was planned for the Congress, but France's poli-

tical attitude dictated the District to follow an invitation to meet in Brussels instead. During the preparations, the Secretary General of the District *Léopold Noudel* passed away. He had led the Brussels lodges in the preparations.

Therefore, instead of a Congress, a working session was called in Amsterdam. This meeting was well organized, the permanent commissions had prepared written reports, the decisions of the ad hoc commissions were immediately transcribed, duplicated and presented to the plenum. Since the hosts also saw to it that the social events left nothing to be desired, the planned simple working session was registered in the

annals of the District Grand Lodge as District Congress No. 13.

In 1969, the Council of Europe, at which B'nai B'rith had a consultative status since 1963, raised the B'nai B'rith International Council from Category II to Category I. Only large and important organizations belong to this category, such as the roof organizations of labour unions. With this promotion in rank, the Council of Europe honoured B'nai B'rith's merit to the European peoples' family in the area of civil rights, rights of asylum, and other human relations.



ARBEITSGEMEINSCHAFT DER EUROPAEISCHEN
B'NAI B'RITH-LOGEN

REDE VON EHREN-GROSSPRAESIDENT

RABBINER

Dr. LEO BAECK

Praesidialbericht 1951/1952

ANLAESSLICH DER INSTALLATION DER
DISTRICTS-GROSS-LOGE KONTINENTAL-EUROPA XIX

IN BASEL

(4. September 1955)



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The Peril of the Jewish People

The turn of the decade was repleted with efforts, often in vain, to help persecuted Jewish minorities. In Syria, where about 4.000 Jews were still living at the outbreak of the Six Day War, the persecution soon reached a climax and oppression was anchored in legislation. A similar fate befell the about 2.500 Jews in Iraq. All men of good will, and of course the lodges as well, wrestled with this problem. Several European governments offered their good offices in vain. Yet, a majority of the Iraqi Jews had still managed to flee.

In Egypt, actions against the Jews, triggered by the Six Day War, continued. Thanks to the good action of General Franco, the dictator of Spain, often supposed to be of Marrano origin, an estimated 2.000 Egyptian Jews received Spanish passports and toward the end of 1972 the last of the persecuted Jews leaved the country. A few hundred old people remained unmolested. Now, North Africa was practically "judenrein". Only in Morocco did a Jewish community of significance remain, the security of which, for the time being, is guaranteed by the government of King Hassan.

In the spring of 1969 the exodus of the Polish Jews who had survived the Shoa or returned to their homeland, began. The majority of those about 20.000 Jews who were now expelled, found a new home in Western countries - almost one third of them in Denmark and Sweden and a small number also in Norway. The five Scandinavian lodges took care in helping the new arrivals. Above all, it was important that the many "marginal Jews" among them should not be lost to Judaism.

The Hillel Houses

Of the 600 Jewish students in the south Swedish university town of Lund, 400 were Polish immigrants. In order to take them in, the *Scandinavian Lodge Council* established an enterprise together with the local Jewish community and the Jewish Agency. This became, in 1972, the fourth *Hillel House* in the District. As things developed, however, it later changed its activities and became the Resource Center for Jewish Education and Jewish Culture and still later the Institute for Jewish Culture. From 1974 to 1975 the Polish group of the Hillel House published *Littera Judaica*, a quarterly review for Jewish studies and culture in Scandinavia, under the auspices of the

Scandinavian Lodge Council. Egon Lánský was the editor and the editorial board was headed by *Hans W. Levy*, Göteborg. About half a year after the last edition of *Littera Judaica*, the Scandinavian Society for Jewish Studies, founded in 1973, presented in December 1975 the first issue of the more prestigious *Nordisk Judaistik - Scandinavian Jewish Studies* - the journal you now are reading.

Here a short survey is necessary regarding the Hillel House activities of B'nai B'rith. In 1923 *Benjamin Frankel* founded in the United States the *Hillel-foundations of B'nai B'rith* in order to care for Jewish youth at universities and other institutions of higher learning. Those Hillel Houses were staffed by specialists, who were not only counsellors for the students regarding their studies, but also gave religious and social service, and especially saw to it that the youngsters did not lose their contact with Jewish life. The Hillel movement is one of the most expensive agencies of B'nai B'rith, but after 50 years there were Hillel houses in 279 places, most of them in the United States and Canada, but also 6 in South America, 2 in South Africa, 3 in District 14 Israel, 17 in District 15 Great Britain and Ireland, and 3 in District 19 Continental Europe - in *Bologna, Delft* and *Zürich*. The Hillel House in Delft had been founded as early as 1924 and been reconstructed 1955. Zürich dates from 1959. Lund, however, never developed into a real Hillel house.

Support for Israel

Meanwhile, Israel's neighbours tried to eradicate the strength of the Jewish state. This War of Attrition - in fact the 4th war of the Arab neighbours against Israel - was fought on the banks of the Suez Canal and in the Sinai in the South, as well as in the Beit Shean region in the North. Appeals to the Red Cross for hospitals were in vain. So B'nai B'rith took over the supply of tents. In 1970 District 19 took up a collection and within a short time 16 small and 2 large hospital tents were sent to the Magen David Adom - the Red Shield of David, Israel's counterpart to the Red Cross.

The Belgian lodges invited Israeli war wounded to Belgium for recuperation. The lodges in Holland provided summer vacations for the children of Neve Etan in the valley of Beit Shean, which was constantly under fire. Several French chapters quickly followed the

Belgian example. When it became clear that the Dutch action did not include all children, the lodge in Stockholm gathered funds in Scandinavia and invited another group of children.

It would be wrong, however, to suppose that the B'nai B'rith only shows compassion in Jewish cases. A few years earlier, in December 1968, newspapers published the story that B'nai B'rith had already sent a second air plane load of food and medicine from the United States and Canada to Biafra. Both earlier and in future years, it has been a rule that B'nai B'rith carry out or participate in life-saving actions.

In 1972 the District, in cooperation with the Israel District, decided to establish a *children's home* in Jaffa. In this town, the oldest lodges and chapters had been founded in 1892 and 1894. One of the B'nai B'rith leaders in Jaffa was *Meir Dizengoff*, a founder and the first mayor of Tel Aviv. Later, B'nai B'rith established the first hospital and the first library of Tel Aviv.

In April of the following year the corner stone of the children's home was laid, but the Yom Kippur War delayed the inauguration of the home until the Congress of 1977. Parallel to the action for this home, an action for trees for the *Martyrs Forest* in the Judean Mountains was on the agenda of the District.

500.00 trees in the Martyrs Forest had been planted by the Order of B'nai B'rith during 1954 and 1955 and subsequently B'nai B'rith dedicated the *Scroll of Fire*, a monument in memory of the Six Million. A second 500 000 were ordered by the International Convention of the Order in 1965 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of B'nai B'rith's first action in the Holy Land, the important donations to help the victims of the cholera in 1865. Among the many important initiations of B'nai B'rith in later years, the delegates remembered the year 1892 when *Eliezer Ben Yehuda*, the "father of modern Hebrew" and a group of intellectuals of the *Jerusalem Lodge* established the *Abarbanel Library*, the core of the Jewish National and University Library of to-day.

The Order of B'nai B'rith becomes B'nai B'rith International

The Constitution can only provide the framework for the task, but an up-to-date constitution is required for performing the task. Thus the *District Congress* in Florence 1970 adopted and the Congress in Stockholm in 1971 confirmed in

second reading a *new Constitution* which included a number of innovations. The most important were:

- Following the example of the Scandinavian Region, which in 1955 had already banded together in the Scandinavian Lodge Council and always acted with solidarity, the District was apportioned into *6 regions*: the Benelux countries, Germany/Austria, Switzerland, Scandinavia, France/Monaco (to which Spain was added after 1979), Italy/Greece. It was soon proven that only the first four of these regions acted on common grounds

- The regions nominate representatives, which are confirmed by the Congress, and form a new body - the *Central Committee* of the District. This is vested with the authority of the Congress between the meetings of the Congress.

- This new body makes it possible to reduce the number of members of the *Executive Committee*, still the "government" of the District, because it is no longer necessary to pay regard to the country of each member, but the President and the members of the Executive Committee are elected ad personam.

- The Congress elects *Permanent Commissions*, as aides for the Executive Committee: The Chapter Commission, The Israel Commission, The Commission for Culture and Education, The Youth and Hillel Commission, The Membership Commission (Expansion Commission) and The Commission on Finances.

- The Congress will be in session every two years instead of annually.

8. The Congresses of District 19 Continental Europe

1 1956 Stockholm	15 1971 Stockholm
2 1957 Zürich	16 1973 Herzliya
3 1958 Paris	17 1975 Monte Carlo
4 1959 Luxembourg	18 1977 Tel Aviv
5 1960 Amsterdam	19 1979 Wien
6 1961 Roma	20 1981 Bruxelles
7 1962 København	21 1983 København
8 1963 Strasbourg	22 1985 Nice
9 1964 Scheveningen	23 1987 Jerusalem
10 1965 Genève	24 1989 Stockholm
11 1966 Firenze	25 1991 Madrid
12 1967 Presidents' Conference Bern	
12 1968 Basel	
13 1969 Amsterdam	
14 1970 Firenze	

This Constitution, with very few changes and amendments, is at present (1992) still in force but will soon be totally reformed.

An important change, which the District adopted in 1975, was initiated by the International Convention in November 1974: Henceforth, the B'nai B'rith will no longer be called the Order of B'nai B'rith but the B'nai B'rith International, the District Grand Lodge simply the District, the President of the Order will be called the International President and the Grand President simply the District President. Washington will no longer be the Constitution Lodge or the Supreme Lodge, but each department is to be called by its name. The International Conventions will henceforth no longer be every third year - from 1868 to 1935 they had been quinquennial and 1938 - 1974 triennial - but biennial. And the old Continental European lodges, which earlier always added "I.O.B.B." - Independent Order of B'nai B'rith - to their names, will now delete those four letters.

At the time of the Congress in Stockholm 1971, in which the President of the Order *William A. Wexler* participated, the District had 3.400 members in 67 lodges and chapters. In addition, there were 7 sister circles. The attempt to create Youth Chapters, last in Lyon and Marseille, however, had failed again and Washington had just approved the formation of a *Mixed Unit* for young people. It was instituted the following year as *Loge Benjamin* in a suburb of Paris.

9. The Executive Committee of District 19 from the Congress in Stockholm 1971 to Herzliya 1973

Paul Jacob, Mulhouse, Honorary Grand President and Mentor District 19, Vice President of the Order of B'nai B'rith
Georges M. Bloch, Strasbourg, Grand President District 19, Member of the Board of Governors of B'nai B'rith
Herman Molvidson, Stockholm, Vice Grand President Distr. 19
Member of the Board of Governors of B'nai B'rith
James Goldstein, Firenze, Vice Grand President District 19
Joseph H. Domberger, München, General Secretary
Jacques Berlowitz, Zürich, Treasurer

Colette Stourdézé, Paris, 1971-1972
Nussia Rozen, St.-Julien-les Villas, from 1972
René Weil, Strasbourg
Jacob D. Wolff, Den Haag *)

Georges M. Bloch, Vice Chairman of B.B.International Council
Hans Kaufmann, Basel, Member of B.B.International Council

René Weil, Strasbourg, Chairman of ADL-Europe

E.L. Ehrlich, Basel, Director of the Office of District 19 and of the Continental European office of B.B.International Council
Gabriel Vadnai, from 1972 Director of Bureau de Paris et Zone francophone.

*) President of the Region Benelux

In the beginning of 1971, delegates from the Continental and the British lodges met in London. There were guests from Austria, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Denmark, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Sweden, and also from Israel. The meeting was held in the Hillel-House in London - at the same time office and centre of District 15 - that had been inaugurated in January. The concluding ceremony took place in Whitehall and for the first time since Cromwell had received Manasse ben Israel 1656 in order to negotiate about the return of the Jews to England, Jews again were official guests in Whitehall.

In January 1973, the neighbouring District No.15 Great Britain and Ireland installed its first mixed unit for engaged and married young couples. Following the same model, new units were formed in both District 15 and District 19 in the ensuing years. Toward the end of the decade, the *Mixed Lodge* had become the natural constellation for all new lodges in Continental Europe.

A Hostile World

For many years, *Gustav Warburg* had represented B'nai B'rith at the UNESCO and at the Council of Europe. After his death 1970, his task at the UNESCO was, for a short while, performed by his wife Miriam, who for many years had carried out similar work at the European Office of the United Nations in Geneva and with the Social Commission of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, as the representative of the International Council of Jewish Women. The work at the UNESCO was now transferred to *Sam Hoffenberg*, Paris, who had become President of the *UFABB* after the death of *Eli Wurm* in 1970. He was immediately able to chalk up a victory: In three resolutions, the composite "Racism, Colonialism and Zionism" were in the proposed text. In the final versions, the word "Zionism" was deleted.

On the day of Yom Kippur in 1973 Israel was invaded by its Arab neighbours. Normally, it would have taken a couple of days to mobilize the Israeli forces. But because of the Holy Day,

tians were pushed back over the Suez Canal and the Syrians behind the old armistice line on the Golan heights. Weapons were flown in from the United States. Then the United Nations intervened to stop the Israel counterblow and the Arabs had to sign a new armistice agreement.

A few weeks after the cease fire, some 400 members of the Continental European District left for Herzliya and on December 26, 1973, the 16th Congress of the District opened with a tree planting ceremony in the Martyrs Forest. The Israeli lodges and a number of public personalities greeted the European B'nai B'rith with joy and emotion - it was the first organization which met in Israel after the cease fire. Consequently, this Congress which mourned the dead and comforted the living, was named the *Solidarity Congress* in the District's annals.

10. The Executive Committee of District 19 from the Congress in Herzliya 1973 to Monte Carlo 1975

Paul Jacob, Mulhouse

Honorary Grand President and Mentor District 19

Vice President of the Order of B'nai B'rith unto 1974

Georges M. Bloch, Strasbourg, Grand President of District 19

Member of the Board of Governors of B'nai B'rith

International Vice President of B'nai B'rith from 1974

Joseph H. Domberger, München, Vice Grand President of Distr. 19

Hans W. Levy, Göteborg, Secretary General

Member of the Board of Governors of B'nai B'rith from 1974

Jacques Berlowitz, Zürich, Treasurer

Vittorio (Victor) Eskenazi, Milano

Nussia Rozen, St.-Julien-les-Villas

René Weil, Strasbourg

Jacob D. Wolff, Den Haag

Georges M. Bloch, Member of the Executive Committee of B'nai B'rith International Council

Hans Kaufmann, Basel, Member of BB International Council

Directors: E.L. Ehrlich, Basel, and Gabriel Vadnai, Paris.

The Constitution of 1971 had also introduced a *Council of Mentors* to be elected at the Congress. Six members of such a council were elected by the Congress of 1971 and re-elected 1973 but this Council was never given any task and was deleted in later issues of the Constitution.

The completely changed political situation had its affects not only in Israel but on Jews all

over the world. A meeting of the leadership of Districts No.14 Israel, No.15 Great Britain and Ireland and No.19 Continental Europe, held in Basle in 1975, was the beginning for an even closer cooperation.

There were many clouds on the international horizon. The Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme had established a political friendship with Yassir Arafat and now, by the end of 1974, had finally seen the result of his endeavours: The resolution 3236 opened the floor of the United Nations for the PLO. Before the end of 1975, the United Nations adopted the resolution 3379 declaring that *Zionism is racism*.

And UNESCO - the United Nations Economic and Social Council - excluded Israel.

The year 1975 also marked the 40th anniversary of the closing of the 9 lodges in Berlin and the center of District 8 at Kleiststrasse 10.

At that time, at the turn of its 20th year, the mailing list of the District numbered 72 lodges, mixed lodges and chapters. 1 of them in Austria, 3 in Belgium, 41 in France and Monaco, 2 in Greece, 7 in Germany, 3 in Italy, 1 in Luxembourg, 4 in the Netherlands, 5 in the Scandinavian countries, 5 in Switzerland. The Saloniki Lodge in Thessaloniki and the Lodge Marcus Melchior in Lugano, however, had not the necessary background in a thriving community and did not survive many more years. - The sister circles were no longer reported on the mailing list.

The Congress of District 19 in Monte Carlo, in late autumn 1975, elected a new Executive Committee:

11. The Executive Committee of District 19 from the Congress in Monte Carlo 1975 to Tel Aviv 1977

Paul Jacob, Mulhouse, Honorary President and Mentor District 19

Georges M. Bloch, Strasbourg, President of District 19

International Vice President of B'nai B'rith

Joseph H. Domberger, München, Vice President of District 19

Hans W. Levy, Göteborg, Secretary General

Member of the Board of Governors of B'nai B'rith

Leopold Marx, Zürich, Treasurer

Vittorio (Victor) Eskenazi, Milano

Jean Pierre-Bloch, Paris

Nussia Rozen, St.-Julien-les-Villas

Jacob D. Wolff, Den Haag

Georges M. Bloch, Strasbourg, Member of BB International Council

Hans Kaufmann, Basel, Member of BB International Council

Georges M. Bloch, Strasbourg, Member of BB International Council

Hans Kaufmann, Basel, Member of BB International Council

Directors: E.L.Ehrlich, Basel, and G. Vadnai, Paris.

In the summer of 1976 there were terrorist bomb attacks on the Paris office of the District and on the Paris office of the International League Against Racism and anti-Semitism LICRA, an organization chaired for many years by *Jean Pierre-Bloch*, during World War II comrade-in-arms of general Charles De Gaulle and later minister in De Gaulle's government. He was now also president of the *UFABB*. The offices were not manned at the time of the bombing, and although there was a great deal of destruction, there were no casualties.

The same year also contained cheerful events. The Director of the District *Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich* was awarded the prestigious Buber-Rosenzweig Prize. In the following year, *Sigmund Freud*, who had become a member of the Vienna lodge exactly 80 years earlier, where he gave his first lectures on his new theories, was finally honoured by his home town by the laying of the foundation-stone for a Freud museum.

But in 1977, unpleasant events happened in Washington. The Hanafi, an Arab terrorist group, invaded the office building of B'nai B'rith International and took more than 100 members of the staff as hostages. The ambassadors of Egypt, Pakistan and Iran voluntarily intervened and after a couple of days the hostages were released and the terrorists surrendered. The motive of the Hanafi was a bluff, they made no political demands. Possibly it was an act of despair of their leader, who wanted the convicted slayers of his wife and children to be delivered to him. But the event filled the newspapers around the world and made the B'nai B'rith known to readers who never had heard the name before.

At the same time, the anti-Zionist majority of the United Nations tried, in vain, to exclude B'nai B'rith from the ECOSOC.

Fourteen countries - ten languages

When the Executive Committee of the District, in the spring of 1977, decided to hold the District Congress in December in Israel, no one suspected that this would be a year of global historical importance: In 1977, sixty years after the Balfour Declaration, the Prime Minister of Israel,

Menachem Begin, and the President of Egypt, Anwar Sadat, stood side by side in the plenum chamber of the Knesset in Jerusalem.

And when the delegates arrived at Ben Gurion Airport, the airport staff had not yet taken down 'Cairo' from the departure board.

One of the main events of the Congress was a symposium in Jerusalem with representatives for the three biblical religions on the dais. Earlier, our partners in dialogue had been the churches of the West. With some hesitation, a few Eastern Churches had recently joined. So at the time of this symposium, the Armenian patriarch of Jerusalem Shahe Ajamian participated in this dialogue for the second time. But it was the first time, that we met a Muslim in dialogue, an orthodox Sunnit who was not afraid voicing very awkward viewpoints. The dialogue with the churches, that had started many years ago and was a specific task for our District Director *E.L.Ehrlich*, has continued, but dialogue with muslims is, at present, still a difficult task.

12. The Executive Committee of Distrikt 19 from the Congress in Tel Aviv 1977 to Vienna 1979 and from the Congress in Vienna 1979 to Brussels 1981

Paul Jacob, Mulhouse, Honorary President of District 19
Georges M. Bloch, Strasbourg,
Honorary President and Mentor of District 19
International Vice President of B'nai B'rith 1978-1982
Joseph H. Domberger, München, President of District 19
Hans Kaufmann, Basel, Vice President of District 19
Hans W. Levy, Göteborg, Secretary General 1977-79
Member of the Board of Governors of B'nai B'rith unto 1984
Nikolaus A. Kamp, Firenze, Secretary General 1979-81
Leopold Marx, Zürich, Treasurer

Marc Aron, Lyon
Sam Hoffenberg, Paris
Elias Hofmann, Frankfurt a.M.
Nikolaus A. Kamp, Firenze, 1977-79
Ruth Sosnowski, Bruxelles
N.H. Wijnperle, Den Haag, 1977-79
Leif Nathan, København, 1979-81
Irene Orès, Paris, 1979-81

Georges M. Bloch, Strasbourg, Member of BB Intern. Council unto 1978
Hans Kaufmann, Basel, Member of BB International Council unto 1978
Hans W. Levy, Göteborg, Member of BB Intern. Council 1978-80
Directors: E.L.Ehrlich, Basel

Charles Baccouche, Paris 1977-79, Haim Musicant, Paris from 1979.

The leadership of the District was received by the President of the State of Israel and every delegate went home with a strong will to fight for the Jewish case. During the following two years, new lodges were founded in France at a fast pace, and in *Spain* lodges were instituted in Madrid and Barcelona, adding a 14th country and a 9th language to the District. In Berlin, 50 Russian immigrants joined an existing lodge, where they speak the 10th language of the District - eleven if Dutch and Flemish are regarded being different languages.

The B'nai B'rith Journal

In Tel Aviv, *Joseph H. Domberger* was elected District President, a position he was to hold until 1985. In the summer of 1978, he began to publish the *B'nai B'rith Journal*, a colourful quarterly issued in a German and a French edition - later also with pages in English in the German edition.. For many years, the Journal was an affair of the heart for *Joseph Domberger* and his wife *Jacqueline*. It is still supposed to be the most prestigious B'nai B'rith paper outside the United States.

In 1979, the delegates went to the District Convention in Vienna with mixed feelings. The Chancellor of Austria, Bruno Kreisky, had a few months earlier officially received the PLO-leader Yassir Arafat. And those among the delegates, who keep kosher, will always remember that at this Congress adequate provisions were not made for them.

The same year the *International Israel Lodge* was founded, an institution to be joined by B'nai B'rith members all over the world.

At the end of 1979, the Senate of the United States awarded *Simon Wiesenthal*, a member of the Vienna lodge, a gold medal for his achievements in tracing Nazi war criminals.

An action which continued during the following years, was inaugurated by the Congress in Vienna: The District collected the necessary money to enlarge the Rambam Cancer Hospital in Haifa.

In 1980, District 15 Great Britain and Ireland and District 19 Continental Europe accepted a proposal from B'nai B'rith International to join the endeavours of the Anti-Defamation League in New York to open an European ADL-office in

Paris. The idea was not realized, however, until, in 1981, the *Anti-Defamation-League European Foundation ADLEF* was shaped, thanks to the ongoing work of *Daniel Kropp* all since 1978.

The Congress in Brussels in December 1981 was opened by the President of Austria Dr. Rudolf Kirchschläger. He had offered to come to Brussels for just this purpose, thus demonstrating his lifelong friendship with the Jewish people. We shall never learn, if this also was a demonstration against the un-Jewish Jew Bruno Kreisky and if he possibly had a prophetic vision that he would be succeeded in 1986 by the former SS-officer Kurt Waldheim. In the year of the Congress in Brussels, the United Nations had just issued a serie of stamps to support "the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people" and B'nai B'rith had sent a protest to Kurt Waldheim, biased Secretary General of the UN.

In Brussels, the District 19 instituted a *Council of Presidents*. The idea was that all past presidents should join and the Council should perform advisory functions. In the beginning, when the Executive Committee sought its advice, it worked satisfactory - it strongly warned not to accept the new ideas from the US to accept *members-at-large* who were not members of any lodge. But after a change in the leadership of the Council, this body fell asleep and was disbanded.

13. The Executive Committee of District 19 from the Congress in Brussels 1981 to Copenhagen 1983

Paul Jacob, Mulhouse, Honorary President of District 19
Georges M. Bloch, Strasbourg
Honorary President and Mentor of District 19
Senior International Vice President of B'nai B'rith from 1982
Joseph H. Domberger, President of District 19
Hans Kaufmann, Basel, Vice President of District 19
Hans W Levy, Göteborg, Vice President of District 19
International Vice President of B'nai B'rith from 1982
Marc Aron, Lyon, Secretary General
Kurt Justiz, Zürich, Treasurer

Sam Hoffenberg, Paris
Elias Hofmann, Frankfurt a.M.
Ruth Sosnowsky, Bruxelles
Norma Anav, Paris
Leo Schloss, Amsterdam

Georges M. Bloch, Strasbourg, Member of BB Int. Council 1980-82
Joseph H. Domberger, München, Member of BB Int. Council 1980-82

Directors: E.L.Ehrlich, Basel, and Haim Musicant, Paris

The Soviet Union and Latin America

In 1978 the antisemitic propaganda in the Soviet Union reached new heights, and not so few journalists and authors stated "B'nai B'rith rules the West." After 1961, about 250 000 Jews had emigrated from the Soviet Union, and thereof about 135 000 to Israel, but around 1980 emigration was virtually stopped.

During the Congress at Brussels, the plight of Soviet Jewry was a central issue. There had already been two World Conferences on Soviet Jewry in Brussels. At the time of the first, in February 1971, the gates of the Soviet Union had stood ajar for two and a half years and 150 Jews had left the country every month to reunite with their relatives in Israel. A month after the Conference, the number of exit visas increased to 1.000 per month. Brussel II took place in an atmosphere of relaxed tension between East and West and the number of visas grew continuously until 1979, the year when 51.000 Jews were allowed to emigrate. But inside the Soviet Union, the situation went from bad to worse. A third conference was held in Jerusalem in March 1983, all the fighters for Soviet Jewry in the free world around the globe had come to the Holy City, 31 nations were represented. Ambassador Kirkpatrick read a message from the President of the United States, Ronald Reagan. The B'nai B'rith International and so District 19 had sent most of their leadership. At the time of the Conference, only 80 Jews a month received visas and there were 400.000 more applications. Those who had applied generally lost their jobs and were subject to all kinds of discrimination.

From the offices of B'nai B'rith in Latin America, District 19 learned that anti-Semitism was endemic also in many countries in Latin America. In Mexico, the book shops showed an abundance of anti-Semitic literature. Uruguay suffered from the nazilike death patrols of the Uruguayan League. In Nicaragua, the little Jewish Community, that in the 1970's counted 125 people, had left the country. There were, however, also bright spots in the reports. In Argentine and Bolivia democracy had succeeded anti-Semitic dictatorships and Guatemala had not forgotten the help that B'nai B'rith had flown in after the earthquake of 1976. And Costa Rica's new president had just moved his country's embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

From Israel we learnt that the municipality of Jerusalem had procured the means to start again, after many years interruption, the teaching of Aramaic in the Syrian-orthodox school, the holy language of this church, the language which most Jews in Eretz Israel talked in the time of Jesus. And from Germany there came a report, that the elderly inhabitants of the little town Schopfloch used Yiddish as a secret language. At the beginning of the 19th century, there lived between 300 and 400 Jews among the 1.350 inhabitants, and it was quite natural for the non-Jews to understand "lachoudish"

Although the District participated in international Jewish life and both received and often distributed information from all over the globe, its own activities during these years were concentrated on local problems within the different regions.

The next Congress of the District, in 1983 in Copenhagen, elected a new Executive Committee, but the convention as such did not generate any new actions.

14. The Executive Committee of District 19 from the Congress in Copenhagen 1983 to Nice 1985

Paul Jacob, Mulhouse, Honorary President of District 19
Georges M. Bloch, Strasbourg
Honorary President and Mentor of District 19
Senior International Vice President of B'nai B'rith
Joseph H. Domberger, München, President of District 19
Hans W. Levy, Göteborg, Vice President District 19
International Vice President of B'nai B'rith.
Kurt Justiz, Treasurer

Norma Anav, Paris
Maurice Honigbaum, Nice
Member of the Board of Governors of B'nai B'rith 1984-86
Serge Kopinski, Nancy
Daniel Kropf, Trieste
Leo Schloss, Amsterdam
Stéphane Teicher, Boulogne

Nikolaus A. Kamp, Firenze, Member of the Board of Governors
82-84
Ruth Sosnowsky, Bruxelles, Member of the Board of Governors
84-88

Maurice Honigbaum, Nice, Member of BB Intem. Council from
1982
Kurt Justiz, Zürich, Member of BB Intem. Council 1982-84
Ernst Braunschweig, Zürich, Member of BB Int. Council from
1984

Directors: E.L.Ehrlich, Basel. and Haim Musicant, Paris

B'nai B'rith and B'nai B'rith Women

In 1984 the International Convention of B'nai B'rith took place in Washington D.C. Ever since President Gerald Ford, every United States president and major candidate has been a guest speaker at B'nai B'rith's International Conventions and therefore International Conventions which coincided with US election years, i.e. every second Convention, were held in towns, where the candidate could speak to the delegates.

A few months earlier, the International Peace Research Institute SIPRI, based in Stockholm, had printed its annual report, mentioning the export of weapons to Iran from different countries and continuing: support has also been given by Israel, South Africa and Taiwan which "often are referred to as pariahs in the international system." This was the second biased report within two years. The writer of this chronicle had mobilized the Continental European B'nai B'rith and minutes before President Reagan arrived, he could tell the Convention that he just had received a cable that the president and the director of SIPRI had been asked by the board to hand in their resignations.

This was the second time during this Convention, when the delegates from District 19 received applause. The first was when the President of B'nai B'rith *Gerald Kraft* informed the Convention that District 19, at the beginning of 1984, had instituted a Youth movement with the assistance of the *B'nai B'rith Youth Organization BBYO* - an organization based in the United States but active also in Canada and in the Israel District No.14 and the British District No.15.

The main struggle during this Convention in Washington was the problem B'nai B'rith versus B'nai B'rith Women. B'nai B'rith had been started in 1843 as an organization for Jewish men, and in North America it was still an organization for men, with a few, very restricted exceptions - lodges assembling men and women of certain vocations - but the men still being counted as members of B'nai B'rith and the women of B'nai B'rith Women.

B'nai B'rith Women had about 150 000 members in North America, they performed their own activities, mainly social activities, and had - contrary to the B'nai B'rith International - a sound financial base. The Constitution of B'nai B'rith International stipulated that the B'nai B'rith Women be represented on the Board of Governors of B'nai B'rith, and therefore there

were also a few dozen of them sitting among the about 1.200 male delegates to the Convention.

The Districts outside North America, the so-called *Overseas*, had no such problems. Lodges for men and chapters for women stood under the sole authority of the Board of the District, and when mixed lodges were formed, first as a test in 1972 in Paris and then from 1973 as a praxis in the British District No.15 and soon also in the Continental European District No.19, the Overseas had won the battle for the equality of the sexes.

At the Triennial Convention of B'nai B'rith in 1974, District 14 Israel nominated *Hanna Kutin* and District 15 Great Britain and Ireland *Lottie Green* as their respective representatives on the Board of Governors of B'nai B'rith, and it was clearly noted that they represented B'nai B'rith, not B'nai B'rith Women. The President of B'nai B'rith *David Blumberg* ruled that these nominations had to be accepted by the Convention and the Board of Governors, and so this was approved. But the representatives of B'nai B'rith Women stated that it be clearly noted that the two represented their respective Districts and it should not be construed that B'nai B'rith Women was on record that women may belong to the B'nai B'rith.

Now, in Washington, and after ten years of negotiations, B'nai B'rith's International President *Gerald Kraft* demanded a merger between B'nai B'rith and B'nai B'rith Women. To begin with, the delegates of B'nai B'rith applauded. But then the leadership of B'nai B'rith Women, an extremely talented team, began to argue. They absolutely did not accept the proposition and the decision was postponed to the next Convention. In the large plenary hall, the wives of the delegates tried in vain to persuade their husbands to vote for the proposition put forward by *Gerald Kraft* but the arguments of the Women's leadership were stronger.

At present, at the time of writing, the problem is still unsolved. But the *Overseas*, led by Districts 14, 15 and 19, continue to maintain the equality of the sexes within their Districts.

40 years after World War II

The year 1985 marked the 40th anniversary of the end of World War II. In West Germany arose a debate as to how the day of the surrender, the 7 of May, should be remembered - to mourn the dead, and never to forget. The prestigious weekly

"Der Spiegel" illustrated the debate by showing a photo of the former Chancellor of West Germany Willy Brandt visiting the Prime Minister of Israel Shimon Peres: "He who comes to Israel from Germany has to know..." A double-page of the paper cited a speech by *Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich* at the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. He was presented as the *European Director of the influential charitable organization B'nai B'rith* and the paper reported, that more than a thousand people listened to his speech.

And in Berlin, District 19 awarded the golden medal of B'nai B'rith to Axel Springer, the newspaper king who was so totally involved in the Jewish case that there was a saying "he would have printed his papers in Hebrew, if his readers had been able to read that language."

In the autumn of 1985, the District Congress took place in Nice. At that time, in its thirtieth year, the District numbered 84 lodges, mixed lodges and chapters - 2 in Austria, 3 in Belgium, 10 in Germany, 46 in France and Monaco, 2 in Greece, 5 in Italy, 1 in Luxembourg, 3 in the Netherlands, 5 in the Scandinavian Countries, 2 in Spain and 5 in Switzerland. Most of the lodges are mixed lodges, but the lodges in Italy, Luxembourg, Scandinavia (Göteborg, however, became a mixed lodge in 1989) and Switzerland are male lodges and in Athens there is a lodge for men and a chapter for women.

1985 marked the end of the International Women's Decade, a UN arrangement that had found its expression in three heavily biased conferences in Mexico City, Copenhagen and Nairobi. The female members of B'nai B'rith were involved and at the last of the three conferences, a powerful coalition of Jewish women from different organizations, and last but not least from Israel, succeeded in changing the text of the once again terribly biased final document.

15. The Executive Committee of District 19 from the Congress in Nice 1985 to Jerusalem 1987

Paul Jacob, Mulhouse, Honorary President of District 19
 Georges M. Bloch, Strasbourg
 Honorary President of District 19
 Senior International Vice President of B'nai B'rith unto 1986
 Joseph H. Domberger, München
 Honorary President and Mentor of District 19
 Maurice Honigbaum, Nice, President of District 19
 Hans W. Levy, Göteborg, 1st Vice President of District 19
 International Vice President of B'nai B'rith unto 1986

Henry Schneider, München, Vice President of District 19
 Stéphane Teicher, Boulogne, Secretary General
 Robert Gutmann, Zürich, Treasurer

Norma Anav, Paris
 Georges Kahn, Montigny les Metz
 Daniel Kropf, Trieste
 Arthur E. Vis, Rotterdam
 Friedrich Wiesel, Wien

Georges M. Bloch, Strasbourg, Chairman BB Int. Council 86-91
 Maurice Honigbaum, Nice, Member of BB Int. Council from 1982

Ernst Braunschweig, Zürich, Member of BB Int. Council from 1984

Joseph H. Domberger, München, Member of BB Int. Council 86-90

Directors: E.L.Ehrlich, Basel, and Haim Musicant, Paris

At the time of the Congress, Nice was ruled by Lord Mayor Jacques Médecin, who had good contacts with the neo-fascist Front National. Many years later, when it was shown that he was a criminal, he suddenly disappeared to South America. The Congress in Nice was one of the most exhausting in the history of the District, the delegates had to listen up to 15 hours a day to endless speeches, but no decision was taken that could influence the future work of the District.

The new President of the District *Maurice Honigbaum*, who was very well aware of the complaints of the lodges far from the geographical center of the District, emphasized that one of his future tasks would be to strengthen the unifying bonds.

Before he left the chair, *Joseph H. Domberger*, in his presidential report, told the delegates of the institution of a foundation by the Executive Committee, that had bought premises in Paris, and the establishment there of an *European Center*. The main task of the Center, under the leadership of its director *Haim Musicant*, however, was the administration of the French-speaking regions of the District, cultural work, the fight against anti-Semitism within the framework of the *ADLEF*, and information about Israel.

At the same time, *Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich*, who from his office in Basle is the administrator of the District, also occupies himself with fund raising, and has as a main task the job of being "foreign minister" of the District. He meets members of the governments in many of the countries within the District, works with the international organizations for Christian-Jewish

relations and many other important national and international organizations.

Here it can be added, that the European Center has recently been sold at a good profit - the only case ever when the District has made a profit - and has moved to other premises.

Carmelite nuns desecrate Auschwitz

In September 1986 an interesting letter arrived from Uruguay. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of B'nai B'rith Uruguay, the Post Office had printed a stamp, showing 2 menorahs within a big 50. The stamp carried the text "Año del Cinquentenario B'nai B'rith del Uruguay 1936-1986 filial oriental". At that time, the lodges of Uruguay belonged to the eastern region within the Latin American District No. 20, later they formed District No.28.

In 1986, the B'nai B'rith learnt that Carmelite nuns with heavy support from Belgian quarters, intended to establish a convent in the so-called theatre building of Auschwitz. The Conference of European Rabbis and the B'nai B'rith International Council reacted immediately and at the initiative of District 19, the question was put on the agenda of UNESCO, which, however, had no means to act, although Poland had in 1976 ratified a UNESCO agreement regarding the protection of historic places and two years later had demanded the inclusion of Auschwitz in the list. When the nuns had already moved in, an agreement was signed in Geneva, in February 1987, stating the nuns would again leave the premises of Auschwitz. The main negotiators on the Jewish side were the Director of District 19, *Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich*, and the Chairman of the Conseil Représentatif des Juifs de France CRIF, *Théo Klein*. It took, however, many years until all obstacles, set up by the Carmelites in cooperation with Polish circles, were removed and the construction of a new building outside the area of the Auschwitz death camp was started.

At the same time, the *Loge Henry Jones* in Brussels embarked upon a deserving cause. The Israeli health insurance had begun to send heart transplant patients who could not get a new heart in Israel, to Belgium hospitals. But there was no money for the long weeks of waiting, and so the lodge took over this responsibility, later with economic help from other lodges in the area.

In November 1987, the District held its biannual Congress in Jerusalem. Both the Presi-

dent of B'nai B'rith International *Seymour Reich* and its Executive Vice President *Daniel Thursz* participated as guests. The President of the State of Israel, *Haim Herzog*, opened the Congress, and among speakers there was the Mayor of Jerusalem, *Teddy Kollek*. During the days following, the participants had the occasion of meeting quite a few important personalities, among them the foreign minister of Israel, *Shimon Peres*.

The Unity of the Jewish People in its Pluralism

The Israel Post Office prepared a stamp in order to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Jerusalem lodge on May 26, 1988. But the Congress reckoned the Jewish date: The lodge had been instituted in the year 5648, and at the time of the Congress, we had already reached the second month of 5748, so why not celebrate the 100th anniversary during this Congress?

The Congress could have celebrated one more anniversary, but none of those responsible had remembered it: Almost exactly half a century earlier, on July 4, 1937, ten young German Jews raised a watch tower, and this was the beginning of the moshav "Moledet B'nai B'rith".

But the dais reminded the floor that this was the 90th year after the First Zionist Congress in Basle, the 70th year after the Balfour Declaration, the 40th year after the rebirth of the State of Israel and the 10 anniversary of the journey of President Sadat of Egypt to Jerusalem.

At the Congress a proposition was made to reorganize the District, an almost scientific program compiled by *Daniel Kropf* and supported by President *Honigbaum* and Directors *Ehrlich* and *Musicant*. This "New Jerusalem Program" should raise the efficiency and capacity and totally change the structure of the District. There had been rumours, that a "coup" was planned, and when this coup proved to be just the new program, the delegates asked why nothing had been published in advance. Some also feared that the program was an all to theoretical construction that would lead to total chaos. Although the program was generally met with sympathy, it was just put to the files.

One of the main tasks of B'nai B'rith is to unite Jews around the world, and the sign-post of this Congress was a round table conference on the theme "The Unity of the Jewish People in its Pluralism". Participants were professor *Pinchas*

Peli, Ben Gurion University of the Negev, orthodox rabbi, Dr. Uri Regev, Israel, progressive rabbi, Dr Michael Rosenack, educator and orthodox rabbi. *Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich* chaired the conference and professor Zwi Werblowski, of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, was the moderator.

16. The Executive Committee of District 19 from the Congress in Jerusalem 1987 to Stockholm 1989

Paul Jacob, Honorary President. Died 1988.
Georges M. Bloch, Strasbourg
Honorary President of District 19
Joseph H. Domberger, München
Honorary President and Mentor District 19
International Vice President of B'nai B'rith
Maurice Honigbaum, President of District 19
Henry Schneider, München, Vice President of District 19
Member of the Board of Governors of B'nai B'rith
Stéphane Teicher, Boulogne, Secretary General
Robert Gutmann, Zürich, Treasurer

Paul Becker, Helsingborg
Lionell Collet, Ecully
Georges Kahn, Metz
Ralph Mayer, Luxembourg
Friedrich Wiesel, Wien

Georges M. Bloch, Strasbourg, Chairman BB Int. Council
Ernst Braunschweig, Zürich, Member of BB Int. Council
Joseph H. Domberger, München, Member of BB Int. Council
Maurice Honigbaum, Nice, Member of BB Int. Council

Directors: E.L.Ehrlich, Basel, and Haim Musicant, Paris

Defamations and Honours

In 1987, the *Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith* published a paper "India's Campaign Against Israel" that showed that few countries outside the Arab world unceasingly were as hostile against Israel as India. And from Japan, that during decades had been free from anti-Jewish feelings, came reports of an increasing flood of anti-Semitic literature - in 1987 there were 82 books circulating which had the word "Jew" printed on the cover. And the Jewish world remembered, that in 1987, 35 years had gone, since Stalin tried to carry out the death sentence over Jewish culture in the Soviet Union.

Fear was also expressed by the Jewry of the West, when it learned from a seminar of Arabian scientists at the University of Bagdad in Iraq,

that there were still 21 000 Jews living in Arab countries, among them 4.200 in Syria, 70 in Lebanon, 280 in Iraq, 1.200 in Yemen, 500 in Tunisia, 250 in Algeria, 12.000 in Morocco, 220 in Egypt, and a single family in Libya. Among other Islamic countries Iran was mentioned with 25 - 30.000 Jews.

But there was also more pleasant news from the international scene: When the President of Panama, Eric Arturo Delvalle, in the summer of 1987 paid a state visit to the President of Israel, Haim Herzog, it was the first time in history when two heads of a states met who both were Jews.

There had, however, even earlier been a head of state in the Caribbean, who was a Jew: The Virgin Islands - earlier Danish West India - were, during the second half of the 1960, governed by *Ralph Paiewonsky*, President of the B'nai B'rith lodge in St. Thomas.

In 1987, *Georges M. Bloch*, Chairman of B'nai B'rith International Council, visited lodges around the District in order to inform them about the importance of B'nai B'rith for the World Jewish Community and to teach them how to react and give the right answers. Some of his listeners remembered the word of a former Secretary of the Order of B'nai B'rith, rabbi *Jay Kaufman*, at the District Congress in Florence 1970: "We can not steer events, but the course of history is formed by our answer to the events."

He also told his listeners about the International Council's endeavours to have the infamous UN-resolution on Zionism revoked, to have the different nations open their archives regarding war criminals and, last but not least, to participate in the struggle for a religiously more tolerant and pluralistic Israel.

At this time, *George M. Bloch*, already a member of the French Légion d'honneur, had just been appointed officer of the Ordre Nationale du Mérite. There were also other great Jewish personalities in Europe, who were honoured about the same time. René Samuel Cassins coffin was, on the 100th anniversary of his birth, transferred to the Panthéon in Paris, the place where the flower of the French people has found its eternal rest. He had been the main initiator of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights, often in intimate cooperation with B'nai B'rith, and had received the Nobel Peace Prize. During one period he had also been the chairman of Alliance Israélite Universelle.

Gerhard Riegner, the Grand Old Man of the World Jewish Congress in Geneva, the first man

to inform the free world about the extermination of the Jews in the German camps, was appointed Knight of the Légion d'honneur by the president of France, Francois Mitterand. At that time, the office of B'nai B'rith in Basle had a very close cooperation with dr. Riegner for a quarter of a century. And Jacob Kaplan, 93 years old, who had been the Chief Rabbi of France from the liberation in 1944 to 1980, was awarded the Grand Cross of the Légion d'honneur, the highest rank in the Legion of Honour which is restricted to past French presidents, ambassadors and a selection of authors and philosophers. At the same time, the Chief Rabbi of the British Commonwealth, Immanuel Jacobowitz, an immigrant from Königsberg in Germany, was made a Lord for lifetime.

The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith

1988 saw the 75th anniversary of the *Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith ADL*, the most outstanding fighter all over the world against racism and anti-Semitism. A year earlier, the *ADL* had established an office in Rome under the leadership of *Theodore Freedman* and in Paris under the leadership of *Robert Goldmann*. Those offices had taken over the task of the *Anti Defamation League European Foundation ADLEF*. Not quite two years later, *Robert Goldmann* moved back to head quarters in New York and soon the *ADL-Commission of District 19* again was responsible for the fight in the countries of the District.

A short time before its jubilee, the *ADL* had instituted a new "Foundation to sustain righteous Christians" - also called *Hakarat hatov*, appreciation of good (deeds). The purpose is to sustain people, who had saved Jews during the Shoa and now had become poverty stricken. There were such people both in Europe, mostly in Eastern Europe, but also in other countries around the world.

In the same year, 1988, a short time before his death, *Sam Hoffenberg*, Paris, B'nai B'rith's permanent delegate to the UNESCO and President for many years of the *UFABB*, succeeded in including the Yiddish language and Yiddish culture into the program "The Decennium of Cultural Development in the World."

After *Sam Hoffenberg's* death at the beginning of 1989, his work as the leader of the permanent UNESCO delegation of B'nai B'rith was continued by *George M. Bloch*.

In 1987, an important conference took place in Stockholm to prepare for the UNO Conference on Disarmament in New York later in the year. The UNO had called its NGOs - Non governmental organizations with status at the UNO - to this "Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development". The B'nai B'rith was represented by its Scandinavian people, headed by the 1st Vice President of District 19.

The Israel Museum in Jerusalem opened in 1988 the Max Mazin wing. It was given this name to honour *Max Mazin*, founder of the *Maimonides Lodge* in Madrid, the first lodge in Spain. In 1965, he was instrumental in making the Spanish government recognize the Jewish community of Madrid, the first Jewish community in Spain after the expulsion 1492. When the synagogue in Madrid was inaugurated in 1968, the government - so reported in *Encyclopaedia Judaica* - revoked the decree of 1492. But it did not do so in fact. In an answer to professor Isaac Lewin who represented *Agudas Jisroel* at the United Nations, the Spanish minister of culture wrote in 1986 "the document of 31 March 1492 regarding the expulsion of the Jews has never been revoked."

Glasnost

In January 1987 the Central Committee of the Soviet Union had a debate regarding remoulding and leadership. Western media reported on this remoulding, using the Russian expression "perestrojka". In the summer of the same year, the book "Glasnost and Perestrojika" was published. At the beginning of 1988, Jews from District 19, and especially from Denmark and Sweden, went to the Soviet Union and came home reporting that the Jews were still suffering. But before the end of the year, glasnost and perestrojika had advanced from theory into practise and that changed the course of history.

In November 1988, a delegation from District 19 went on a mission to Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev. In December, in an historic move, 38 leaders of the Moscow Jewish community formed the first *B'nai B'rith Unit in the Soviet Union* in the presence of a senior-level B'nai B'rith delegation, headed by the President of B'nai B'rith International *Seymour Reich*.

At the same time, District 19 participated in an international B'nai B'rith action to send help to the victims of the earthquake in Armenia.

In May the next year, a B'nai B'rith mission from the United States participated in Riga in the first legally constituted all-Soviet Jewish cultural conference with leaders of 41 Jewish associations from 27 communities all over the Soviet Union. The B'nai B'rith mission also presented official organization charters to the new units, that were formed in *Riga, Latvia, and Vilna, Lithuania*, but those units never started to function.

At that time, the B'nai B'rith International reserved the right to work in the Soviet Union. At present, however, the Union is dismembered, and District 19 on its way to take over the responsibility for the Baltic states.

Just prior to the District Congress in Stockholm, B'nai B'rith's International President *Seymour Reich* installed a *B'nai B'rith lodge in Leningrad (now St. Petersburg)*.

By the end of 1989, 12,800 Soviet Jews had arrived in Israel.

A United Europe

In the Stockholm Congress, in 1989, participated both the International President *Seymour Reich*, the International Vice President *Th. Neumann*, and the leadership of District 15 Great Britain and Ireland, headed by President *Stewart Cohen*. As warmly welcomed guests *delegations from the Soviet Union and from Hungary* participated.

The Congress elected a new Executive Committee:

17. The Executive Committee of District 19 from the Congress in Stockholm 1989 to Madrid 1991

Georges M. Bloch, Strasbourg, Honorary President District 19
 Joseph H. Domberger, München
 Honorary President and Mentor of District 19
 Maurice Honigbaum, Nice, President of District 19
 Lionel Collet, Lyon, Vice President of District 19
 Friedrich Wiesel, Wien, Vice President District 19. Died 1990
 Paul Becker, Helsingborg, Secretary General
 Robert Gutmann, Zürich, Treasurer

Jean-Pierre Allali, Paris
 Dora Le Bovic, Lille
 Georges Kahn, Metz
 Raymond Levy, Frankfurt a.M.
 Ralph Meyer, Luxembourg

Henry G. Schneider, München, International Vice President from 1990

Maurice Honigbaum, Nice, ex officio member of the Board of Governors of B'nai B'rith

Kurt Justiz, Zürich, Member of the Board of Governors from 1990

Georges M. Bloch, Strasbourg, Chairman BB Int. Council, from 1991 Honorary Chairman

Joseph H. Domberger, Member of BB Int. Council, from 1990 1st Vice Chairman

Ernst Braunschweig, Zürich, Member of BB Int. Council
 Maurice Honigbaum, Nice, Member of BB Int. Council

E.L.Ehrlich, Basel, Director Distrikt 19

Haim Musicant, Director of the European Center, Paris,

The Stockholm Congress published a resolution, to bring to the attention of the European and national conferences of Catholic bishops, the failure of the Polish Catholic officials to remove the Carmelite convent from the premises of Auschwitz according to the agreement signed by the leaders of the Catholic church, among them 4 cardinals.

One of the questions the Congress debated, was the expansion of the *BBYO* in the District. The youth organization had a good foothold in the French-speaking region and the intention was to extend the work, to begin with, to Germany and Austria, if possible also to Scandinavia. The District gave also its consent to form *LOBBY* groups, groups of leaders of *BBYO* who would be the connecting link between the *BBYO* and young adults in B'nai B'rith.

But the real problem, that was debated, was the cooperation of District 15 and 19 within the European Community. At time, when Europe was on its way to form a politically united community, it was questionable if there should be a borderline between the two European Districts. Because of the very good cooperation of the existing two districts, no decision was taken to make any changes in the near future. But the districts agreed that the shaping of a B'nai B'rith in Hungary should be a common task for Districts 15 and 19.

A short time before the Congress, in June 1989, the Director of the District *Dr.phil. Dr.h.c. Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich*, who held the chair for Modern Jewish History and Culture at the University of Bern, received a professor's title. He could in fact, have used this title decades earlier, because he had accepted a chair at the University of Frankfurt which he later regretted

so he never entered this office. His doctor honoris causa he had received almost three years earlier, the first Jew ever to so be honoured by the ancient theological faculty of the University of Basle.

Before the end of the year, Arab terrorists murdered *Joseph Wybran*, famous scientist, chairman of the Comité de coordination des organisations juives de Belgique and President of the Lodge '*Henry Jones*' in Brussels.

In Switzerland, at the same time, the Bible Society of Geneva had edited a book "Die Freimaurerei im Lichte der Bibel" - the Masonry in the Light of the Bible - that heavily defamed the B'nai B'rith. The local lodge, supported by the District, went to court and the book was forbidden.

The District was now concentrating its work on a few issues, among them helping to establish commercial ties between European firms and Israel, supporting the integration of the immigrants in Israel, fighting anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism, and monitoring the media. As to the media, it is of great help that the Director of the Paris office, *Haim Musicant*, has been Vice President of the International Jewish Media Association since 1987.

During the Stockholm Congress most of the external work was prepared by different Commissions: ADL, Culture and Education, Israel, Jews in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, Membership and Expansion, Youth and Hillel.

B'nai B'rith in Eastern Europe

There is, however, a task that has been given top priority: To help the Jews of the Eastern European countries - finally free - to find their way back to Judaism. 80 000 Jews lived in Hungary, most of them in Budapest, and although there were many synagogues and even a famous rabbinical seminary, the overwhelming majority of the Jews were almost totally assimilated. So the District decided, to establish a lodge as soon as possible, and in February 1990 the *Budapest Lodge* was solemnly installed.

Some time later, the foreign ministers of 35 states met in Copenhagen to discuss the "Human Dimension" within the framework of the Helsinki-agreement. When the ministers had left the city, the conference continued on different levels, and Jewish NGOs - Non Governmental Organizations with that status in the UN - had organized a two days seminar on "The Road to

Moscow and Beyond", trying to evaluate the future for Soviet Jewry and also interrogating the chief delegates to the simultaneous Helsinki meeting. The District, represented by its Scandinavian section, was heavily involved in the arrangements and the writer of this paper had the honour to chair one of the sessions.

After many visits to Czecho-Slovakia, the leadership of District 19 decided the time had come to install a lodge in *Prague*, and in the spring of 1991 the lodge was installed by the International President of B'nai B'rith *Ken Schiner*. Shortly afterwards, the new lodge in *Bratislava*, the second lodge in the country, received its charter. Before the war, there had been 17 lodges in Czecho-Slovakia.

A year later, in March 1992, the *Carmel Lodge* was installed in Sofia, Bulgaria. That had also been the name of the Sofia lodge that existed before the war in that country that had done so much to save its Jews from the nazis.

By the end of 1990, the B'nai B'rith International published a bulletin, that there were 13 B'nai B'rith Units in the Soviet Union "from Leningrad to the Black Sea and to the Chinese Border", but the only two functioning lodges which are known to District 19, are those in Moscow and St. Petersburg (Leningrad).

At about the same time, the Executive Committee of District 19 ruled that the official term for the French lodges henceforth should be *Associations*.

Madrid

Since the beginning of the 1980's B'nai B'rith had, from time to time, contacts with the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency for Israel, in order to deepen and formalize the on-going cooperation. Both parties, however, had many other problems to solve, so it was not before 1990 that B'nai B'rith International and the WZO/JAFI sketched an agreement, that gave B'nai B'rith International's representative a seat in an "advisory capacity" in the WZO-Executive and eight representatives in the WZO General Council. A similar agreement was made with the JAFI.

The 25th Congress of the District was held in November 1991 in Madrid where a new *Executive Committee* was elected. The Presidency stayed unchanged. *Reinold Simon*, Den Haag, and *Dora le Bovic*, Lille, became Vice Presidents, *Ralph Mayer*, Luxembourg, was elected

Secretary General and *Paul Barth*, Zürich, Treasurer. The other members were *Jean-Pierre Alali*, Paris, *Yves Kamami*, Paris, *Rolf Kirschner*, Oslo, *Raymond J. Levy*, Frankfurt, and *David Levy-Bentolila*, Nice.

In Madrid, the new lodges of *Budapest*, *Prague*, *Bratislava* and *Sofia* participated for the first time. Also participating, for the first time officially, were delegates from the B'nai B'rith of *Turkey*, that had always been reckoned as a member of the District although the delegates could not appear in public. Now things had changed, a year prior to the 500th anniversary of the day when Sultan Bayazid II opened the gates of the Ottoman Empire for the Jews who were expelled from Spain, telling the world that "the Catholic monarch Ferdinand was wrongly considered as wise, since he impoverished Spain by the expulsion of the Jews and enriched Turkey."

At the time the District was meeting in Madrid, there was the famous Peace Conference between Israel and its Arab neighbours in the same town. One of the spokesmen of the Israeli delegation talking to the B'nai B'rith Congress, asked if there were some prophets in the District who, a year in advance, could fix the date of the Congress to coincide with the date of this peace conference, which had been convened only a very short time ago.

So the days in Madrid can be looked upon as a breathing-space in the history of District 19 and a starting point for a new relationship between the Jewish State and its Arab neighbours.

The names of members of B'nai B'rith are printed in Italics. In Europe and in most districts outside of North America, the members are called "brother" and "sister". No academic titles have been used in the text.

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