

New Cracow Friendship Society, Inc.

3905 Arthur Avenue North, Seaford, N.Y. 11783

CRACOW FRIENDSHIP

A NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW CRACOW FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY



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IN PERSON

THE COMMEMORATION OF THE
80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LIQUIDATION
OF THE KRAKOW GHETTO
LAKE SUCCESS JEWISH CENTER
MARCH 12, 2023 12 NOON
354 LAKEVILLE ROAD
GREAT NECK, NY 11020

VISIT OUR NEW WEBSITE: www.newcracow.org

CONTACT US AT: info@newcracow.org

תחי מדינת ישראל ועם ישראל

LONG LIVE THE STATE OF ISRAEL AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE

**NEW CRACOW FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER**

President Steven Radwan

Editor Bernice Slutzman

www.newcracow.org

Email: Newsletter@newcracow.org

EDITORIAL

The United Nations General Assembly designated January 27—the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau—as International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

On this annual day of commemoration, the UN urges every member state to honor the six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust and millions of other victims of Nazism and to develop educational programs to help prevent future genocides.

In recognition of that day, our membership will have access to view the ceremony of the 78th Anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau. The event, which will be hosted by President Duda and The Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum will be held at 6:00 am est. It will be streamed, and we will provide the link prior to the event. The program will also be recorded so that it can be watched when convenient.

For the first time since the Covid Pandemic we will be meeting in person for our Commemoration of the Liquidation of the Krakow Ghetto. Ironically, our last in-person gathering before the pandemic was the Commemoration at Lake Success Jewish Center.

There is a possibility that we will be able to show a pre-recorded feed from Poland and Israel as this is the 80th Anniversary. As always we will have a meaningful program including the lighting of the candles remembering the Six Million and the chanting of Es Brent, Kel Mole and the singing of the Song of the partisans.

When you receive the flier, please do RSVP so that we may provide luncheon for all attendees. Although we do not charge for this event, all contributions will be gratefully accepted as we are no longer subsidized.

We hope that you will find the articles on these pages of interest to you. It seems that those of us who identify as Ashkenazi more closely related to each other than we thought.

The Editor

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

I hope you had a wonderful Chanukah and am wishing you a happy and healthy 2023.

On December 11, 2022, for the first time in three years, we met for an in-person pre-Chanukah gathering and General Membership Meeting. I would like to thank

those who attended and say how wonderful it was to see everyone and mingle freely. Even wearing masks, it was far more rewarding than meeting on Zoom. I would also like to especially thank our Social Committee for transforming a barren room into a Chanukah festival which was perfect. They thought of everything, and we all enjoyed the decorations, dreidels and desserts.

I am happy to say that as we enter a new year, our Society is on a sound footing and we are continuing to plan for the future. Membership registration has started, and we have streamlined the membership questionnaire on our website. We have hired a tech person on a freelance basis to refresh our web content in a timely manner and finish the “Under Construction” portions of the site.

The contracts for the replacement of the loose slate with concrete at the entrance of plots 10 and 28 at Beth Moses Cemetery have been approved and the repair will begin in the spring.

I am pleased to announce that we are in the final stages of presenting our first webinar of 2023 on February 28th at 8:00 pm. We will be interviewing David Slater, the author of The Vanishing. This book, which is a Holocaust story, just won the 2022 American Writing Award for Book of the Year—Fiction. It has already been adapted for the screen and Mr. Slater is in negotiations for the making of the movie. He was recently interviewed by the Museum of Jewish heritage: A Living Memorial to the Holocaust, and is great demand. We are incredibly lucky to have him.

Steven Radwan

President

President@newcracow.org

LISTING OF COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Cemetery	Bernice Slutzman brei513@aol.com Leon Hilfstein Leonh74d@gmail.com
Commemoration	Bernice Slutzman brei513@aol.com
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Telephone Tree	Leon Hilfstein leonh74d@gmail.com
Website	Simone Scheumann info@newcracow.org
Welfare	Renata Farahnik

CALENDAR OF EVENTS/ACTIVITIES

Board Meetings by invitation to Zoom

2/14, 3/14, 4/18, 3/16, 6/13

March 12 Commemoration

May 21 General Membership Meeting

Days of Remembrance 2023

January 27 International Holocaust Memorial Day

April 18 Yom Hashoah

April 26 Yom Haatzmaut

June 26 Holocaust Survivor Day

HELP WANTED

As we move forward we are in need of help from individuals who can do any of the following: are proficient in Zoom, can help create content for our social media or create and format email flyers. Any time you are able to donate would be appreciated. Email us at info@newcracow.org if you are interested.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

Dear Members,

Another new year is unfolding. One of my teachers once said, "We're all hanging on a string!" I thought about the miracle of planet Earth being suspended, rotating, revolving around the sun. Hopefully this year will be a move in the direction of healing our planet of the many ills that have befallen us.

The new year, 2023, marks the beginning of the Society's 58th year! What started out in 1965 as a landesmanschaft of holocaust survivors from Cracow, Poland and its environs, continues to grow and evolve into a vibrant membership of survivors, 2nd generation offspring, and 3rd generation. I'm very pleased that the general Membership response to our 2023 renewal letter was swift. Within the first week we had over 100 membership renewals via both online and return mail. We were happy to see how many online renewals there were, as our website was expanded last year. Please do support your Society in making additional contributions by donating online or by check... celebrating special events, commemorating the loss or yahrzeit of a loved one, purchasing a memorial plaque online, or just because it's time to give.

In order to help us increase, develop and remain vibrant, the Board voted last year to change our by-laws, expanding both our boundaries and definition of who is now eligible to join our organization. Jewish individuals (and their spouses) who have family history in the greater area of Poland can now be accepted. Won't you please encourage some of your friends whose roots stem from Poland to join us. As a community, we have so much to share with one another. Very recently, a dear childhood friend (who has been hearing about our Society for 5+ decades!) discovered that she could indeed join our Cracow Society because her forebears emigrated from the

shtetl town of Zurawno, Ukraine, which was once a part of Austria and became a part of Poland 150 years later! I now have the opportunity to share my Society associates with a lifelong friend.

I'm also grateful that after these past few complex years, we are finally moving forward with some in-person Society activities. Those who attended our pre-Chanukah Party had "a sweet time" meeting each other face-to-face again and savoring the cakes, cookies, coffee and donuts provided by our Social Committee.

As Membership Committee Chair, I'd like to encourage members to be more involved in our operations. I want to know what interested you in joining the Society? What would you like to derive from your membership? What kind of programs would you be interested in seeing or attending? You can e-mail me at membership@newcracow.org. We'd like to offer more programs to our membership and invite all to participate and we want your input. This is not the same Society as our survivors created. Our survivors met each other regularly and were eager and enthusiastic to do so. We are primarily the "next generations" and the needs are very different. And still, we share a common past that cannot be denied. So, how can we come together and continue to enrich our lives? The truth is, it's up to you to volunteer and step up with "your" ideas and skills... whether they be helping with programs, computer skills, artistic ability, writing & authorship talents, grant writing skills, organizing social events, teaching, etc. There's a place waiting for you in our Society. Please let us know how you wish to participate.

Contact:

info@newcracow.com or membership@newcracow.com.
We look forward to hearing from you.

To the members who have recently suffered the loss of a loved one, we offer our deepest most heartfelt condolences. May you know no more sorrows and be comforted by family, friends, and the mourners of Zion and Yerushalayim.

Members who have purchased cemetery plots or had them purchased by a relative through the Cracow Society must be members "in good standing". We recently enclosed a memo to those members who have not yet remitted past dues. All dues in arrears must be settled for plot ownership to be honored. Please notify Bernice Slutzman, the Cemetery Committee Chair if there are any questions or changes.

We welcome new members:
Meryl Coleman and Carolina Jerud [Rubin]

I want to wish all our members and their families a happy and healthy 2023. Hope to see you at the next event!

Sincerely,
Ida Lewis, Membership Committee Chair
(718)380-3574
membership@newcracow.org

Maria Helfman, Co-chair
(646)256-2872
membership@newcracow.org

FROM THE CEMETERY COMMITTEE

Over the course of the many years the entrances to our blocks 10 and 28 have fallen into disrepair. We are now in the process of dealing with the Beth Moses to repair the crumbling entrances.

The cost of the repairs amounts to between \$4,000—\$5,000. We are appealing to the membership to aid in offsetting the cost. Donations can be made by check and mailed to The New Cracow Friendship Society 3905 Arthur Avenue N, Seaford, NY 11783 or by donating through the website and specifying that your donation is for the cemetery repairs.

All donations, great or small, will be greatly appreciated.

At this time I would also like to address a situation that exists where parents, sometimes unbeknownst to their children, bought plots for their children. In many cases these children are no longer members in the Society nor interested in being members. As stated in the Membership Report, to use these plots one must be a member in good standing in the Society. Unfortunately, in some instances we have no means of contacting these people. Unused plots revert back to the Society as per the agreement when they were purchased.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE REPORT

On Sunday December 12th there was a General Membership Meeting and a pre-Chanukah get together at the Adria. It was our first in person gathering since the Covid shutdown; and it was so nice to see everyone there! Lots of conversations, some desserts to nosh on and warm feelings filling the room made for a lovely afternoon.

Steven Radwan spoke about the goings on in our society and Ida added a few words about membership.

We look forward to future get togethers where we come together as friends with a close connection, thanks to our parents.

Susan Krul Caren, Maria Helfman,
Rachele Zuckerman



MEMORIAL PLAQUES

We are excited to offer our general membership participation in a new memorial project. You now have the opportunity to further honor your departed loved ones by dedicating a plaque with their names on the IN MEMORIAM page of our website (newcracow.org).

Simply scroll down to the bottom of the home page and click on In Memoriam to see examples of the plaques already inscribed. Then go to Donation at the top of the home page and in the Note section write your loved ones name, years of birth and death and yahrzeit. (If you are not sure of the yahrzeit date, give us the date of death and whether it was before or after sundown. We will be able to figure it out from that information). Also indicate whether he or she was were a survivor so that we can put the appropriate symbol on the plaque. The cost of each plaque is \$18.00 and will have one name on it. If you cannot make payment electronically, please send a check for the total amount to the Society's address listed on the face of the Newsletter.

I am looking forward to 100% participation in this worthy endeavor.

Dolores FINDER Berkowsky
Development Chairperson

SEEKING INFORMATION

I am a freelance writer working on a feature story on the newly released documentary film, 'Reckonings: The First Reparations,' directed by filmmaker Roberta Grossman. The film explores how in the aftermath of World War II, West Germany, Israel, and Jewish organizations negotiated reparations from the German government for Holocaust survivors of Nazi persecution, and how those reparations made possible the survival of the struggling State of Israel, and the chance for Holocaust survivors who had had everything taken from them, to begin to rebuild their lives.

I am interviewing Long Island organizations/ Holocaust survivors who have been receiving compensation from the Claims Conference. Would it be possible to speak with someone from The New Cracow Friendship Society about this?

Lisa Schiffman
516 532-6649

KRAKÓW GENEALOGY AND RESEARCH RESOURCES KEHILALINKS

JewishGen KehilaLinks is a digital project dedicated to the commemoration of the towns where Jews lived. KehilaLinks provides the opportunity for anyone with an interest in a town to view pages about the history of that Jewish community, including Holocaust resources. These web pages may contain information about the town. Resources related to Kraków are listed below.

For general information about Jewish Kraków:

<https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/krakow/>

Kraków Birth records:

https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Krakow/kra_evr_births.asp

Kraków Marriage Records:

https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/krakow/kra_evr_marriages.asp

German Jews Registered in the Kraków Ghetto:

https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/krakow/kra_german.htm

Yad Vashem Testimonies by Kraków

Survivors

https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/krakow/kra_testimony.htm

Schindler's List

https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/krakowe/kra_schindler/htm

Holocaust Orphans

https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/krakow/kra_orphans.htm

THE DIGITAL ARCHIVE

The Digital Archive of KL Plaszow gathers and provides knowledge about the former Nazi German labor and concentration camp of Plaszow, but above all, it is a token of remembrance for prisoners and victims of the camp. Their names and surnames, sometimes biographies and photographs make up the individual stories and collective history of KL Plaszow.

The archive also contains databases on the camp staff, archives, photographs, and audio-visual materials. The information and documents gathered in the archive are the product of many years of queries, searches, interviews, and the work of scientists and specialists. The archive is open to the public. As new information is collected, its content will be supplemented.

We invite you to use the Archive and cooperate with us in order to expand it. We are trying to document the names of all those who were prisoners in Plaszow. If anyone from your family was at this camp please fill in the following details, including a photo if you have one, and send by email the following address:

archiwumplaszow@muzeumkrakowa.pl

PERSONAL DATA

Surname:

Name:

Family name:

Date of birth:

Place of birth:

Date of death:

Place of death:

FAMILY

Parents:

Spouse:

Siblings:

BIOGRAPHY

CAMP

Was held in the ghetto - city:

In Plaszow from:

In Plaszow to:

Camp number:

Other camps:

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Shalom,

The Ministry of Culture and Heritage in Poland together with the Municipality of Krakow is working to establish a memorial site on the site of the former German concentration camp - KL Plaszow. I am a member of the Planning Committee. If you would like to publish about this, I'll send you more information or you can find it on the net.

In any case, a database is set up on the memorial site where they want to commemorate the prisoners who were in the camp (about 30,000 Jews and Poles). Are there members of the organization who were or their families were prisoners in the camp? <https://ca.muzeumkrakowa.pl/>.

I would appreciate it if you will publish that information and people will update their details. Anyone who does not know how to do this - will send it to me and I will take care of the update.

Lili Haber

+366-4436-54-972

SUBMISSIONS WANTED

We need your help in building our digital archive!

We are hoping to collect a library of photographs and documents to preserve the memory of our society and the lives and Jewish communities of Krakow and vicinity. It could be photos of Jewish artifacts belonging to victims or survivors, photos of past society events, any photos showing the lives of our members from before/during/after the war or copies of any documents related to the Shoah and your family. View the archive at www.newcracow.org/archive To contribute, email us at info@newcracow.org

IF YOU WERE A KRAKOW RESISTANCE FIGHTER, OR THE CHILD OF ONE, PLEASE READ BELOW

Sheryl Ochayon the Director of the "Echoes and Reflection" program at Yad Vashem has contacted us to see if we can assist them in one of their projects. Sheryl and her team at "Echoes and Reflections" are currently producing a documentary on Justyna (Yustyna), and the Krakow Resistance Movement. If you have any pertinent information that can be used to enhance the Documentaries production. Please contact Sheryl directly at Sheryl.ochayon@yadvashem.org.il.

Some of you may remember Sheryl from the time she was one of our panelists for our "Women in the Resistance" Webinar. If you missed it, please go to our website newcracow.org, and it will be listed in the Power of Our Stories section.

Thank You.

THE SEARCH GOES ON

The District Court for Kraków-Śródmieście in Kraków, 6th Civil Division in the case on the application of Magda Leuchter asks whether the institution's documents contain any information about Joanna Ras born in June 13, 1936 in Krakow, daughters of Oskar Raps and Jadwiga Manne, last residing in Krakow at ul. Starowiślna 43.

By order of the Assistant Referee
On the authority of the Head of the Secretariat:
recording clerk Katarzyna Góra.

לילי הבר
Lili Haber
972-54-4436-366+
<http://cracowassociation.blogspot.co.il/>

CLAIMS CONFERENCE NEEDS YOUR HELP

The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against German (Claims Conference) aims to locate and contact all Jewish survivors of the Holocaust to provide financial compensation. If you know of any survivors who have not received compensation in 2021, have not submitted a form to Claims, or may not be aware of payment through Claims Conference please email HFSoutreach@claimscon.org or call 646 536-9157.

HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS OFFERED DNA TESTS TO HELP FIND FAMILY

NEW YORK (AP) — For decades, Jackie Young had been searching. Orphaned as an infant, he spent the first few years of his life in a Nazi internment camp in what is now the Czech Republic. After World War II he was taken to England, adopted and given a new name. As an adult, he struggled to learn of his origins and his family. He had some scant information about his birth mother, who died in a concentration camp. But about his father? Nothing. Just a blank space on a birth certificate. That changed earlier this year when genealogists were able to use a DNA sample to help find a name — and some relatives he never knew he had.

Having that answer to a lifelong question has been “amazing,” said Young, now 80 and living in London. It “opened the door that I thought would never get opened.” Now there's an effort underway to bring that possibility to other Holocaust survivors and their children.

The New York-based Center for Jewish History is launching the DNA Reunion Project, offering DNA testing kits for free through an application on its website. For those who use the kits it is also offering a chance to get some guidance on next steps from the genealogists who worked with Young. Those genealogists, Jennifer Mendelsohn and Adina Newman, have been doing this kind of work over the last several years, and run a

Facebook group about Jewish DNA and genetic genealogy.

The advent of DNA technology has opened up a new world of possibilities in addition to the paper trails and archives that Holocaust survivors and their descendants have used to learn about family connections severed by genocide, Newman said. “There are times when people are separated and they don't even realize they're separated. Maybe a name change occurred so they didn't know to look for the other person,” she said. “There are cases that simply cannot be solved without DNA.”

While interest in genealogy and family trees is widespread, there's a particular poignancy in doing this work in a community where so many family ties have been ripped apart because of the Holocaust, Mendelsohn said. Her earliest effort in this arena was for her husband's grandmother, who had lost her mother in a concentration camp. That effort led to aunts and cousins that no one in her husband's family had known about. Her husband's uncle, she said, called afterwards and said, “You know, I've never seen a photograph of my grandmother. Now that I see photographs of her sisters, it's so comforting to me. I can imagine what she looked like.”

“How do you explain why that's powerful? It just is. People had nothing. Their families were erased. And now we can bring them back a little bit,” Mendelsohn said. She and Newman take pains to emphasize that there are no guarantees. Doing the testing or searching archives doesn't mean a guarantee of finding living relatives or new information. But it offers a chance. They and the center are encouraging people to take that chance, especially as time passes and the number of living survivors declines. “It really is the last moment where these survivors can be given some modicum of justice,” said Gavriel Rosenfeld, president of the center. “We feel the urgency of this,” Newman said. “I wanted to start yesterday, and that's why it's like, no time like the present.”

Rosenfeld said the center had allocated an initial \$15,000 for the DNA kits in this initial pilot effort, which would cover about 500 of them. He said they would look to scale up further if they see enough interest. Ken Engel thinks there will be. He leads a group in Minnesota for the children of Holocaust survivors and has already told his membership about the program. “This is an important effort,” Engel said. “It may reveal and disclose wonderful information for them that they never knew about, may make them feel more settled or more connected to the past.” Young definitely feels that way.

“I've been wanting to know all my life,” he said. “If I hadn't known what I do know now, I think I would still felt that my left arm or my right arm wasn't fully formed. Family is everything, it's the major pillar of life in humanity.”

THE AFTERMATH OF THE ISRAELI ELECTION: HOPING FOR THE BEST

Firstly, full disclosure. I don't really know what's going on in Israeli politics right now. I've gone cold turkey. No more news for me. At least for now. Way too depressing, and I take it very personally. I have been known to take the world on my shoulder. So, I've been told, why get upset about things you can't change? Whatever is going to happen is going to happen, whether I get depressed about it or not. So, the easiest way, is just tune out from what is happening... Well, you can believe that or not, but one thing is for sure. If you don't know what's going on, you can't get upset about it.

These lines will immediately tell you that I am not very happy about the outcome of the recent election. Its not that I am taking the loss of the center-left to heart like the Portuguese felt when Morocco knocked them out of the World Cup. I may have had a preference for that side of the political map to win this election, but that's not what bothers me. At issue here is what scares me. The makeup of the incoming government, based on the promises of those that will makeup this new government, is very, very concerning. Now its altogether possible that few or none of the promises made before the election will actually happen. It is entirely possible that we will look back in six months and see that it's the same sun in the sky, nothing dramatic has really happened. We may even see that the new government is a very good one, and will help bring down the high consumer prices, improve the housing market for young people, improve the safety of the average citizen in the streets by clamping down on crime and terror, improving the lot of the country in the international arena by fending off vicious attacks at the UN and expanding the Abraham Accords. I'll be the first to tip my hat if these things happen. I do not come from those who want to see the government fail and will say gleefully, I told you so. No. That is not where I come from.

And to be fair, this is a democratic country and Netanyahu and his allies won this election. In many ways, it was the center left that lost the election. The popular vote reflected that the country remains split in two and not much has changed in the five elections. But this time, two left-center parties didn't pass the electoral threshold. The US has its electoral college. Israel has its threshold. When these two parties didn't pass, all the votes went to waste and the mandates were redistributed. But the end result was clear and stark. The Likud and its right-wing allies had 64 mandates, enough to form a solid, stable government. And it should be said that 50% of the population are ecstatic about the results of the election. I fully respect their feelings. This is a democracy and, in a democracy, you respect the voice of the people.

But for me, and what I will be writing here, I am expressing the fears that many people in Israel are feeling today (the other 50%). Based on the makeup of the incoming government and what the parties that will make up the government are demanding in terms of responsibility and future legislation, people like me have plenty to be concerned about. So here is a short analysis of why we feel this way.

It should be said, that at the time of this writing, the new government has not been sworn in yet. It's hard putting together coalitions. Netanyahu will have till December 20th to piece together his coalition. I have no doubt that he will succeed in this endeavor, but it will go down to the last minute. Now that he has given much of his assets away to his coalition partners – The National Religious Zionism Party, headed by Betzael Smotrich and Itamar Ben Gvir, and to the two Haredi parties – Shas and United Torah Judaism, he has the unpleasant task of giving out the rest of the portfolios to his disgruntled Likud members. Netanyahu's criticism of the outgoing government's dependence on small parties such as the Islamic Ra'am notwithstanding, (a party he courted himself after the previous election but was stopped only by Smotrich), he will face a similar situation with the extremist National Religious Zionism party and the Haredi parties, whose demands don't sit well even with many Likud people. For example, the demand of United Torah Judaism to enact legislation to ban any egalitarian presence at the Western Wall, a law that if enacted, will likely create a dramatic rift between Israel and the Diaspora. Or the demand by both Haredi parties to strengthen the monopoly they have over every aspect of religion in the country, from conversions (which they take a very hard line on) to Kashrut – (they will cancel the law enacted by the previous government to expand those rabbis who give Kosher supervision). The religious-secular rift in the country is likely to deepen. And of course, the coup de grace – basically enshrining in law the exemption from service in the army of Haredi yeshiva students. The Supreme court will likely say the law they want to pass is not constitutional, but no worries, everyone in the incoming government is in favor of an override law of 61 members of Knesset that will override any decision the Supreme Court will make. Including, for example, making illegal settlements legal (they were illegal under Netanyahu's definition from previous governments and his promises to dismantle them to the international community – Smotrich has demanded that they be legalized); And allowing people who were barred from serving in office like Aryeh Deri, head of the Shas party, who served time in prison in the past and was indicted recently for tax evasion and had the inability to serve in public office removed from the indictment due to the fact that Deri left the Knesset and said at the time, he wasn't going to run again. Now, he is back as the incoming Interior Minister and in two years will be the new Finance Minister. The Supreme Court will likely rule that the indictment precluded his ability to serve in that position. But like I said, no worries, the override law will allow him to serve.

Beyond all these issues of religion and state, and the delicate democratic fiber of the country which will be sorely tested, the extreme right wing views of Ben Gvir and Smotrich, not to mention their fellow party member Avi Maoz, truly scare a lot of people both in the country and outside. Maoz recently made a lot of heads turn with literal fear when he said that forms of liberal religion are a "darkness" that must be expelled. Ben Gvir, who has a reputation for incitement, will now be the Minister of Internal Security. The US is being careful as to how they

treat him, saying his actions will speak louder than his previous words. But some of the promises made by Ben Gvir and Smotrich regarding annexing of territory in Judea and Samaria, expanding dramatically the amount of Jews allowed on the Temple Mount and what they can do while up there, and more, have the serious potential to ignite a war in the region, and one that Israel may find itself without many supporters.

In general, some of the promises if carried through will alienate the country from the international community and others will alienate the country from Jews in the Diaspora, and all of them will contribute the widening gap inside of Israel, rather than contribute to healing and reconciliation.

Now Netanyahu, the incoming, record setting Prime Minister, promises to calm his partners down and not let them do everything they say they want to do. But in order to get them on board he has had to give over all sorts of assets which do not sit well in the Likud or in large parts of the population, including giving sections of the Ministry of Education relating to Jewish identity over to the very same Avi Maoz, who in addition to his views on “liberal religion” is overtly hostile to the LGBT community. Netanyahu has plenty of rhetorically off the charts Likud members to deal with as well, such as the foul-mouthed Dudi Amsalem, who promised to “break the bones” diplomatically (of course) of the Left once the Likud came back to power, who is vying for the position of Speaker of the Knesset. Netanyahu, despite his actions over the past few elections and in the wake of his own indictments (which may very well become irrelevant due to additional legislation his colleagues promise on passing), has always been a responsible Prime Minister. It is now fully on his shoulders to not only be a babysitter for some dangerous (albeit popular) troublemakers, but also be the responsible adult. Few are more experienced than he is as a Prime Minister and surely he knows what he will be up against, especially internationally, if he allows even a small percentage of these promises to become reality. It is not an exaggeration to say that Netanyahu is now the most liberal, left leaning person in the new government.

Now I don't know how things will turn out. And maybe Netanyahu will succeed in calming the more radical elements of his government, but there is no doubt that without those elements, he doesn't have a government. That in itself can dictate policy, with the apologetic chorus being – “I have no choice.” He will likely reach out to additional parties such as Benny Gantz's Machane Mamlachti Party to join and add buffer space to not allow the radicals to dictate policy. Frankly, I believe Gantz and even others on the center left should join the government to do exactly that. I believe the hour calls for that kind of national responsibility. But it is doubtful they will. The blood is so bad and specifically with Gantz who did join Netanyahu's previous government, was burned by his lies and paid the price for that move, it is hard to see him doing it again. But like the NY Lottery says – Hey, you never know. Netanyahu claims he will heal the wounds in the country, that he will be everyone's Prime Minister. I'm sure he means it and I hope he succeeds. His legacy is on the line. But how he reaches out across party lines to try to

heal the wounds of the past four years of elections and bitter internal struggle while placating the pieces that keep his coalition together is beyond me. He is certainly being reminded of this responsibility by the Israeli President, Itzhak Herzog.

To conclude what many of you will likely understand to be a very different kind of article coming from me, I go to comparative history. Many of you know that I am student of American history. In the past, I wrote a book that compared the battle of Gettysburg to the battle on the Golan Heights in 1973 – *From Gettysburg to Golan*. You can find it on Amazon. Comparative history in our current situation is not very reassuring. In 1860, Abraham Lincoln's election led to the secession of the southern states which led to the Civil War. We in Israel, thankfully, are not in the same place, but one can make the argument that we have been fighting a quasi, bloodless, civil war for the past four years of elections. Following this fifth election, the good news is that there will finally be a stable government in Israel. The question is, will the election of 2022 be Israel's version of the election of 1860 that pushed rifts beyond repair? Let's fervently pray that it is not. It behooves the incoming victorious government to act magnanimously in victory and not seek revenge for real or imagined wrongs of the past years from their perspective. It behooves them (as Netanyahu also promised after he won the election) to reach out to the other side, those who didn't or don't support this new government, and work for the best interest of everyone in the country and not promote policy that further widens the already wide gulf between right and left, between Israel and the diaspora, between religious and secular. If he can succeed in this supremely important task, he will truly go down as one of the great leaders in Israeli history, and not just the Prime Minister who served the longest.

I for one, though I may not be listening to the news much in the near future, will certainly be hoping to hear, that he has succeeded in this task.

Barry Spielman

Ashkenazi Jews Have Become More Genetically Similar Over Time By Elie Dolgin

A study of skeletons unearthed from a medieval Jewish cemetery in Germany has revealed a surprising genetic split among Ashkenazi Jews of the Middle Ages that no longer exists. The analysis, the first of its kind from a Jewish burial ground and the product of yearslong negotiations among scientists, historians and religious leaders, shows that Ashkenazim have become more genetically similar over the past seven centuries. Two Jews walking the cobblestone streets of 14th-century Germany were more genetically distinct, on average, than any two Ashkenazi Jews alive today.

“That is wild!” said Dr. Harry Ostrer, a medical geneticist at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in the Bronx and a co-author of the new study. “Despite the rapid growth of the Ashkenazi Jewish population during the last 700 years, the population became more homogeneous.” The study, published in the journal *Cell*, compared DNA extracted from the teeth of 33 men, women and children buried in the cemetery with DNA taken from hundreds of modern Jews from around the world. Previous studies have shown that modern communities are a genetic *mélange*, with Ashkenazim the world over carrying essentially the same collection of DNA sequences. But the medieval remains tell a different story. They show that European Jews at the time came from two divergent gene pools.

Each group shared the same genetic ancestry, dating back to a small founder population that most likely emigrated from Southern Europe and reached the German Rhineland at the turn of the first millennium. But the DNA analysis also revealed a genetic divide among the skeletons, which could have several explanations. In one scenario, both groups originated from the Rhineland. One branch then stuck around the region, while the other headed east to modern-day Poland, Czech Republic, Austria and eastern Germany. Alternatively, Eastern Europe might have been settled by a different population of Jews who then mixed to a limited extent with their Jewish neighbors to the west. Either way, the two groups remained fairly isolated from each other for generations, as evidenced by their discrete genetic lineages. Then, prompted by massacres, expulsions and economic opportunities, they reunited in places like Erfurt, the central German city that is home to the cemetery where the remains were disinterred.

“It’s a supercool study,” said Itsik Pe’er, a computational geneticist at Columbia University who was not involved in the research. “Ancient DNA sequencing is a cheat-code that can take you to places where you don’t have information today.” The existence of an east-meets-west community in Erfurt is also supported by the historical record, which includes detailed accounts of a violent pogrom on March 21, 1349 — a Saturday. Angry mobs entered the local synagogue and attacked Jews in the midst of prayer. Few, if any, survived. After the massacre, Erfurt’s leaders took possession of property and belongings. They even collected on debts owed to the murdered Jews. But just five years later, the need for lost tax revenue prompted the city to invite Jews back.

They came from far and wide. Tax records show names denoting origins from all over Europe — including some from distant cities that had experienced their own antisemitic upheavals. “In the middle of the German-speaking lands, this was the place to be at the time,” said Maria Stürzebecher, a medievalist who is the curator of the Old Synagogue Museum in Erfurt. At least, that is, until 1453, when Jews were forced out again. The same migration patterns could be seen in excavated teeth. Isotope readings from the dental enamel showed that many people were migrants who had grown up elsewhere. But the DNA took this finding one step further, showing that Erfurtian Jews came from multiple places, and that those populations were genetically distinct. “This evidence both raises new questions and confirms stories we’ve been telling for a long time,” said Elisheva Baumgarten, a social historian at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem who was not involved in the study.

Preserved documents on money-lending practices show that the Jews from each subgroup largely formed business alliances with members of their own kind, according to Maike Lämmerhirt, a historian at the University of Erfurt and a co-author of the study. But both groups prayed in the same synagogue. They all cleansed in the same ritual bath. And, ultimately, they all lay side by side in the same cemetery. The Erfurt skeletons carried many of the same disease-causing gene mutations that Ashkenazi Jews worry about today. That suggests a population bottleneck must have occurred before the Erfurtians were born — one in which small numbers of individuals seeded an entire population, leading to genetic similarities and the amplification of certain gene variants.

Scientists had previously calculated that the bottleneck event of the Ashkenazi Jewish population occurred roughly 600 to 800 years ago. But the new study, along with a British study published this year that examined six 12th-century skeletons found in England, suggest it could have been even further back.

“Given the date of these samples, we’re putting it really at the very, very old end of those estimates,” said Mark Thomas, an evolutionary geneticist at University College London who led the British study. “If you put the two papers together, they’re completely in agreement — which is pretty cool,” said Ron Pinhasi, an anthropologist and geneticist at the University of Vienna in Austria who was not involved in either study.

Rabbinic law generally frowns on exhumation of corpses, out of concern for the dignity of the dead. Scientists therefore cannot excavate Jewish gravesites purely out of academic intrigue. But what happened in Erfurt had nothing to do with the scientists. In 2013, a storehouse that was built on top of the cemetery more than 500 years earlier was converted into a parking garage. Karin Sczech, an archaeologist then with the state preservation office, knew that the construction might disturb some ancient Jewish remains. Dr. Sczech came to the work site a day before excavation was scheduled to begin, only to find that the contractor had already broken ground. Inside the bucket of an actively digging excavator were the bones of a small child.

“I yelled at the driver and said ‘stop,’” recalled Dr. Sczech, now a UNESCO-World Heritage coordinator for Erfurt. She and her team discovered 47 graves in an area roughly the size of a volleyball court. In consultation with the local Jewish community, the archaeologists meticulously removed the skeletons and brought them back to the local archives. There, the bones sat for many years. The plan had been to rebury the bodies quickly, once scientists had a chance to study the remains. But the anthropologist involved in the effort became tied up, causing a yearslong delay. Lucky for genetic science that he did. Had the anthropologist been more prompt, the skeletons would have been back in the ground before the geneticists who led the new study, David Reich of Harvard and Shai Carmi of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, ever knew about their existence.

The researchers set out in 2017 to find an ancient Jewish cemetery undergoing excavation, with the hope that they could take a small sample for genetic testing. Dr. Carmi took the lead. He asked the advice of Ephraim Shoham-Steiner, a historian at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, in Israel. “I said, ‘If there’s anywhere that this might actually come into play, it would be in Erfurt,’” Dr. Shoham-Steiner recalled. At first, the top rabbi in Erfurt shot down the idea. There are situations that allow for DNA testing on Jewish corpses — for instance, families of Yemenite children who disappeared in the early years of Israel’s establishment can request graves be opened for forensic identification. But the reasoning in those cases centered on concrete benefits to the deceased. Scientific research performed on anonymous bodies is different. Dr. Carmi consulted a rabbinical court judge in Israel — Rabbi Ze’ev Litke, founder of the Simanim Institute in Jerusalem, which helps people determine whether they have Jewish ancestry through genetic testing — who ruled that it would be permissible to isolate DNA from teeth or tiny detached bones inside of the ear that, unlike the rest of a skeleton, do not require reburial under Jewish law. Convinced by the argument, the rabbi in Erfurt changed his mind. The project was a go. Dr. Sczech found that 38 of the skeletons had at least one detached tooth.

Soon, Dr. Reich was flying back to Boston with zip-top bags full of medieval molars, bicuspid and incisors. Using techniques that won this year’s Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, Dr. Reich and his colleagues successfully extracted DNA from 33 of the teeth. The scientists hope their approach to community engagement will provide a road map for others hoping to examine the DNA of ancient remains, whether from Jewish cemeteries or otherwise. “This really is a sort of prototype for what can be done in similar studies,” Dr. Reich said.

Viewpoints differ among authorities on Jewish law, or Halakha, about whether procuring any DNA during an archaeological excavation of known Jews is above board. Rabbi Myron Geller, a scholar of Jewish burial practices and a former member of the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards for the Conservative movement, described the rationale adopted by Rabbi Litke and the study authors as the “firmest halakhic perspective possible.” But others questioned whether the abstract benefits of scientific knowledge were sufficient grounds to

merit desecrating the dead. “It gives me pause,” said Rabbi Joseph Polak, chief justice of the Rabbinical Court of Massachusetts.

On a recent trip to Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial atop Mount Herzl in Jerusalem, Dr. Carmi strolled through the Valley of the Communities. In this massive monument to destroyed Jewish communities, he found the name Erfurt. Just as in medieval times, hundreds of Jewish residents of Erfurt were murdered during the Nazi era. Standing there, Dr. Carmi reflected on the pieces of lost history that his genetic analysis had helped laid bare. “It was a great honor for me personally to bring their story to life,” he said.



Dear Steven,

We wrote earlier this year to share an important update on the future of Integrity First for America and the ongoing fight against violent white supremacy and extremism.

After the historic verdict in our Charlottesville lawsuit, we've reached the point where remaining case needs can move forward without a dedicated nonprofit behind it. As we wrote in August, with our principal goals achieved and our case now serving as a model for accountability, we've decided to wind down IFA's operations – while ensuring IFA's work and legacy live on through key partnerships. Our full note can be found below.

With year-end approaching, IFA is now officially winding down as a standalone nonprofit organization. We're particularly gratified that our remaining financial assets at the end of the year will support the Charlottesville community and, specifically, survivors of the Unite the Right violence through a dedicated fund at the Charlottesville Area Community Foundation, in partnership with Congregate Charlottesville. And our case files will remain accessible long-term at www.IntegrityFirstForAmerica.org.

Of course the broader fight against violent extremism continues – and we'll ensure you remain up-to-date on that fight in the coming weeks and months. Stay tuned for updates!

We remain incredibly grateful for your support and partnership. None of this would have been possible without you.

Wishing you and yours a wonderful holiday season and a happy, healthy, and more just 2023.

In gratitude,
Amy

Amy Spitalnick
Executive Director
Integrity First for America

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE REPORT

HAPPY EVENTS

Anniversaries

January

Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Chaikel 53

Mr. & Mrs. Jack Gingold 38

Mr. & Mrs. Allan Spielman 26

Congratulations

To Sol Dreier, our survivor member, who, at 95 years of age, has been traveling around the world entertaining audiences with his Holocaust Survivor Band in which he is the organizer and lead musician.

Mazal Tov

To Bernice Slutzman on her grandson, Noam Orev Slutzman, becoming a Bar Mitzvah in November. He is the son of Dr. Jonathan Slutzman and his wife, Amy Weiss.

Mazal tov to all members celebrating "smahot" (happy events)! Please inform us (online at membership@newcracow.org) of your anniversary dates and any/all happy occasions (births, special birthdays, bar/bat mitzvah, engagements, weddings, graduations, etc.) so that we can congratulate you in future Newsletters. Your joy is our joy... and we love to share good news.

It was delightful to see our survivor member, Eva Pfau again at our recent pre-Chanukah gathering. Yasher Koach, Eva.

Arzewski, Michael- \$8
Berkowsky, Dolores and Peter- \$36
Dreier, Saul \$18
Friedman, R. Zev & Renee Friedman- \$40
Gingold, Jack & Faye- \$200 for Scholarship to Welfare
Gonen, Jerry & Yona- \$103 in honor of Regina Lewis 103rd birthday.
Helfman & Stoeger families- \$18 From loving family in memory of mother Janet Stoeger's yahrzeit.
Hilfstein, Leon & Dena \$20.
Horowitz, Roselyne & Michael-\$18
Indorf, Annette- \$15
Indorf, George- \$15.
Jerud, Caroline- \$100. in memory of Cantor Max Rubin, z'lv
Kasmer, Jean & Charles Jacobs- \$36.

Kaminski, Harvey- \$36.
Klapholz, Mark- \$36.
Krieger, Abraham & Renee- \$96.
Krul, Jeffrey- \$36.
Kujawski-Szancer, Elizabeth- \$102.53
Laufer, Albert- \$102.53
Lewis/Kaplan, Barbara- \$100 for yahrzeit, in memory of dear father, Leon Leszek Lewis, zlv.
Lewis, Ida- \$11
Liebling, Drs. Ralph & Melissa- \$54
Novotny, Fay- \$18
Ores, Michelle- \$100
Rosenstock, Sigmund- \$72
Salamon, Betty & Simon- \$18
Schanzer, Sara- \$25
Schapiro, Shelly Hilfstein-\$32
Schein, Lisa & Alvin- \$72

Scheumann, Simone & Lee- \$306.59 donation made for all family members
Schwartz, Jean- \$36
Solz, William- \$18
Spielman, Arthur -\$54
Steif, Ruth -\$36
Susser, Jack- \$18
Weinstein, Sandra & Marshall-in Memory of Harold Blau \$25
Weissberg, Renata- \$25
Wimmer, Sally- \$29
Winchester, Steven- \$20
Wohlmuth, Elaine-\$36
Zuckerman, Rachele- \$40

DONATIONS

Donations may be made online by going to our website at newcracow.org and clicking on donations.

Check donations made out to New Cracow Friendship Society can be sent to :

NCFS

c/o Ida Lewis

147-17 78th Road

Flushing NY 11367

REFUAH SHELAYMAH.: GET WELL SOON

To any of our members presently in need of healing... Continued blessings for a complete healing are extended. To those members who are recovering, may you go from strength to strength!



Please keep your support to the NEW CRACOW FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY flowing with your thoughtful tzedaka. Our Society depends on your voluntary generosity. A donation can be made in memory of a family member's yahrzeit, a GET WELL blessing, a celebration of a simcha, or simply for the mitzvah of "giving Tzedaka". Please send your contributions to the address below. Donations can also be made online through PayPal on our website... www.newcracow.org. Please be sure to mention what your donation is for (and consider the PP fee in your giving).

Ida Lewis Eva Pfau
718 380-3574 718 464-0932
membership@newcracow.org

It is with great sorrow that we announce the passing of dear founding member and friend

ESTHER GEIZHALS ROSEN

To her sons, daughter , spouses and grandchildren

Our profound condolences

We sadly announce the passing of

Dear Member and Friend

MALKA GELLER

To her Family

Our Sincerest Sympathy

We sadly announce the passing of

Dear Member and Friend

HALINA HORVITZ

To her family

Our sincere condolences

With sadness we announce the passing of
Dear Member and Friend

ETA MANDELBERGER

To her Family

Our sincerest sympathies

We sadly announce the passing of

Dear Member and Friend

CANTOR MAX RUBIN-TILLES

To his Family

Our deepest condolences

We announce the passing of
Dear Member and Friend

RUTH ZAIDBAND

To her Family

Our sincere condolences

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