

HERITAGE

MACHAL AMERICAN FIGHTERS FOR ISRAELI INDEPENDENCE, 1948

+ inside

**SETH LIPSKY RECEIVES
EMMA LAZARUS AWARD**

David Ben-Gurion, first Prime Minister of Israel, and Paul Shulman, first Commander of the Israeli Navy (ca. 1948). More on page 8.

A Letter From

DAN KAPLAN



DEAR FRIENDS

Thank you for your continued support of the American Jewish Historical Society. I am pleased to share exciting news about developments since our last report in 2009.

The Society has been successful coping with the economic downturn. We've made prudent reductions in overhead without damaging the fabric of the Society and its ability to fulfill its mission.

The lead story in this issue of *Heritage* describes our receipt of the Aliyah Bet and Machal Archives recording the heroism and sacrifice of approximately 1300 American and Canadian Jewish volunteers who fought in Palestine and for the newly created State of Israel from 1947-1949. The archives contain interviews with over 400 participants, photographs, correspondence and diaries of their military service.

In June we paid tribute to journalist Seth Lipsky at an Emma Lazarus Statue of Liberty Dinner. The event was attended by numerous dignitaries including Elie Weisel, Ed Koch and New York Police Commissioner Ray Kelly. The dinner was produced by Chairman Emeritus, Ken Bialkin. In July, the Society's Boston division relocated to a prestigious location, the New England Historic Genealogical Society.

With this issue we welcome a new leadership team headed by Dr. Jonathan Karp, Executive Director. Dr. Karp served previously as Chair of the Judaic Studies Dept. at Binghamton University. He earned his PhD at Columbia University, and is a well-known lecturer and author. My successor as President of the Society is Paul Warhit who is a past president of Temple Israel in New Rochelle, NY and is on the Regional Board of the Union of Reform Judaism.

Serving as the President of the Society has been an enlightening and challenging experience. The Society is positioned to continue and expand its mission of preserving the history of the Jewish people in America and sharing that story with diverse constituencies. Our strength and resiliency is in no small measure due to the leadership and commitment of my predecessors, Jerry Wyner, Ken Bialkin and Sid Lapidus. Their support and the support of the entire board, staff and you, our readers, keep us inspired and able to perpetuate this extraordinary organization. Thank you.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel R. Kaplan".

Daniel R. Kaplan, Co-Chairman



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New Collection Comes to AJHS:

AMERICAN FIGHTERS for ISRAELI INDEPENDENCE

In May 1948, as Britain withdrew its forces from Palestine, David Ben Gurion determined that the Jewish People would have to act decisively. On May 14th the State of Israel was born. Immediately, armed forces from Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Yemen invaded. Israeli's defense forces were outnumbered and outgunned. With fortitude and support from the Jewish communities of the United States, Canada and South Africa, they withstood the hostile invasion and secured their nation's independence on the battlefield.

"Machal" is the Hebrew acronym for the 3,500 foreigners who volunteered to fight for Israel during its war for independence. Even before statehood, foreign volunteers had participated in "Aliyah Bet," the effort to ferry Holocaust survivors past the British blockade and into Palestine. The British tried to discourage Jewish

settlement in Palestine after World War II, sometimes forcefully, but the survivors of the Holocaust were determined to leave Europe and start a new life in Palestine.

Of the 3,500 "Machalniks" who participated in Aliyah Bet and the war for independence, around 1,300 came from the United States and Canada. They suffered casualties when British troops boarded the Aliyah Bet ships, and in combat during the 1948 war. Some had military experience in World War II. Not all were Jewish. Some were soldiers of fortune. The majority, however, was composed of idealistic young Jews who wanted to help create a Jewish homeland.

The stories of these American volunteers might have been lost to history, but thanks to the efforts of Ralph Lowenstein (himself a Machalnik) the letters, photographs and interview transcripts telling their stories

will be housed in the New York facilities of the American Jewish Historical Society and made available to scholars, family members and friends, journalists, filmmakers and students.

The story of the Machal archives begins when Lowenstein, a native of Danville, Virginia, was an 18-year old sophomore at Columbia University. After working on a British farm during the summer of 1948, Lowenstein made his way to Paris. Unlike most American visitors, his purpose was not to tour the city. Determined to get to the Jewish state, Lowenstein scoured the phone book for any business containing the word "Juif." A kosher butcher shop in the Marais provided entrée to a recruitment network that brought him to Marseilles, and then by boat to the new nation of Israel, where he joined an armored division.

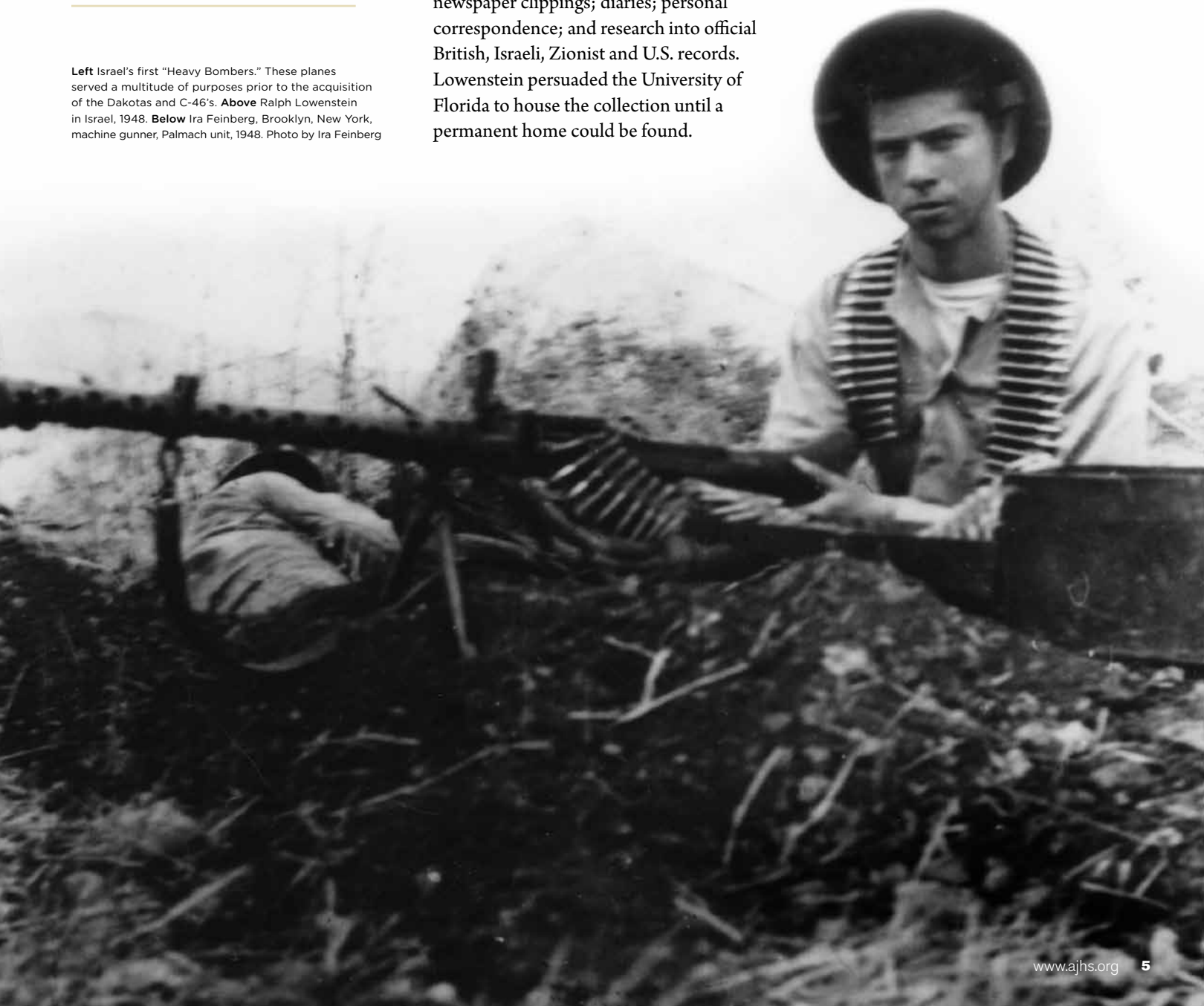


Left Israel's first "Heavy Bombers." These planes served a multitude of purposes prior to the acquisition of the Dakotas and C-46's. **Above** Ralph Lowenstein in Israel, 1948. **Below** Ira Feinberg, Brooklyn, New York, machine gunner, Palmach unit, 1948. Photo by Ira Feinberg

At war's end, Lowenstein returned to the United States and became a noted figure in academia. Formerly the head of journalistic studies at Tel Aviv University and chair of the News-Editorial Department at the University of Missouri, he is currently dean emeritus of the College of Journalism & Communications at the University of Florida.

Lowenstein has been the driving force behind the archive of the American and Canadian Machal volunteers. Gathering most of the material himself with help from other Machal alumni, the collection includes transcripts, audio and video recordings of over 400 interviews gathered over the years; 3,000 photographs; newspaper clippings; diaries; personal correspondence; and research into official British, Israeli, Zionist and U.S. records. Lowenstein persuaded the University of Florida to house the collection until a permanent home could be found.

In July, the American Jewish Historical Society became that home. "The University of Florida Library understood that this archive would be a better fit with the collections at the AJHS," Dr. Lowenstein said, "where it would be more accessible to scholars and the general public, and so it graciously agreed to the transfer." Daniel R. Kaplan, president of AJHS, remarked, "We are grateful to Ralph Lowenstein and the American Veterans of Israel for making this transfer possible, and to the University of Florida for its cooperation in the effort."



AMERICANS ORGANIZED AND MANNED THE AIR TRANSPORT COMMAND, WITHOUT WHICH ISRAEL WOULD NOT HAVE HAD ENOUGH ARMS AND PLANES TO DEFEND ITSELF.

In Lowenstein's view, American Jewry played critical roles in three areas contributing to Israel's creation and early survival. They provided money and know-how to procure arms and war materiel when time to do so was very short. The 12 big American ships and American crews of Aliyah Bet, some of which later became the Israeli Navy, were indispensable in bringing thousands of Holocaust survivors to Palestine. Finally, Americans organized and manned the air transport command, without which Israel would not have had enough arms and planes to defend itself. Lowenstein observes, "Israel might well have lost the war without the latter." [See the related stories on Mickey Marcus and Paul Shulman on pages 7 and 8].

Currently, AJHS archivists are integrating the Machal collection into the Society's holdings, and preparing to welcome researchers who wish to use the collection. AJHS will also display an exhibition about the American volunteers in Israel's war for independence at the Center for Jewish History during 2011.

The Exodus 1947 before the British Navy boarded it. Built in 1928, the ship was formerly the packet steamer SS President Warfield, which carried freight and passengers between Norfolk, VA and Baltimore, MD.





Funeral of Mickey Marcus, Union Temple, Brooklyn, NY, June 1948. Marcus was buried at the United States Military Academy, West Point, NY.

“Mickey” Marcus: Israel’s American General

David Daniel “Mickey” Marcus, a tough Brooklyn street kid, became modern Israel’s first commanding general. Born to immigrant parents in 1902, Marcus grew up in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn where, to defend himself against neighborhood toughs, he learned to box. His high school athletic and academic record won him admission to West Point in 1920. He graduated with an outstanding record. After completing required military service, Marcus attended law school and spent most of the 1930’s serving as a Federal attorney in New York. He participated in the trial and conviction of racketeer “Lucky” Luciano. Mayor LaGuardia named him Commissioner of Corrections for New York City.

Convinced that American entry into a war with Germany was imminent, Marcus voluntarily reentered the military in 1940. In 1942, he served as executive officer to the military governor of Hawaii, then was named commandant of the Army’s new Ranger school, which developed innovative tactics for jungle fighting. Sent to England on the eve of D-Day, he parachuted into Normandy with the 101st Airborne Division. At the end of the war, Marcus helped draw up the surrender terms for Italy and Germany and became

part of the occupation government in Berlin. Admiring colleagues identified him as one of the War Department’s “best brains.”

In 1944, Marcus was put in charge of planning for sustaining millions of starving civilians in the regions liberated by the Allies. His responsibilities involved clearing out the Nazi death camps. Marcus came face-to-face with the survivors of Nazi atrocities and saw the uncounted Jewish corpses in the death camps. Marcus was then named chief of the War Crimes Division, planning procedures for the Nuremberg trials. Through these experiences, Marcus came to understand the depths of European anti-Semitism. Not previously a Zionist, Marcus became convinced that the only hope for the remnants of European Jewry lay in a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

In 1947, Marcus returned to civilian life. A few months later, the United Nations authorized the division of Palestine and the eventual creation of a Jewish homeland. David Ben-Gurion asked Marcus to recruit an American officer to serve as military advisor to Israel. Failing in his attempts to recruit one of his friends, Marcus decided to volunteer himself. The U. S. War Department consented to his

appointment on the condition that Marcus not use his real name or rank and disguise his military record.

Thus, “Michael Stone” arrived in Tel Aviv in January 1948 to confront a difficult challenge. If it declared statehood as planned, the newly created Israel would have indefensible borders, little air power, a few tanks and ancient artillery pieces and almost no light arms or ammunition. The Haganah was an effective underground organization but had no experience as a regular national army. Israel’s Arab neighbors determined to drive the Jews into the sea. The British administration in Palestine banned the importation of military supplies to the region and imposed a naval blockade to enforce it.

Undaunted, Marcus designed a command structure for Israel’s new army and wrote manuals to train it, adapting his experience at Ranger school to the Haganah’s situation. He identified Israel’s weakest points as the scattered Jewish settlements in the Negev and the New Quarter of Jerusalem. When Israel declared independence and the Arab armies attacked in May 1948, Israel was ready. Marcus’s hit and run tactics kept the Egyptian army in the Negev off balance. When the Jewish section of Jerusalem was about to fall, Marcus ordered the construction of a road to bring men and equipment to break the Arab siege just days before the United Nations negotiated a cease fire. Israel had withstood the Arab assault with its original borders virtually intact. In gratitude, Ben-Gurion named Mickey Marcus Lieutenant General, the first general in the army of Israel in nearly two thousand years.

Marcus did not live to see the peace. Six hours before the cease-fire began, in the village of Abu Ghosh near Jerusalem, Marcus was unable to sleep. He walked beyond the guarded perimeter wrapped in his bedsheet. A Jewish sentry saw a white-robed figure approaching and, not understanding Marcus’s English-language response to his challenge, fired a single, fatal shot. Marcus’s body was flown back for burial at West Point, where his tombstone identifies him as “A Soldier for All Humanity.” Hollywood would later immortalize Marcus in the movie “Cast A Giant Shadow.” Ben-Gurion put it simply, “He was the best man we had.”

Paul Shulman

ISRAEL'S FIRST NAVAL COMMANDER

When Israel came into existence in 1948 and had to fight for its existence, American Jewry contributed funds to purchase arms for the fledgling Israeli armed forces and pay for medical supplies. Thirteen hundred Americans and Canadians went beyond financial support. They put their lives on the line for Israel's survival. West Pointer Mickey Marcus became Israel's first commanding general of ground forces, Rudy Augarten was the Air Force's leading ace, and Paul Shulman became the Israeli Navy's first commander.

David Ben-Gurion, Prime Minister of Israel, personally recruited Shulman to help form an Israeli naval force. A veteran of three years service in the U.S. Navy, Shulman, although young, had the requisite training and experience. He had graduated from the US Naval Academy and served as a senior officer on board a combat ship. At the end of World War II, Shulman resigned from the US Navy and began helping the Haganah, the Jewish underground army in Palestine, to purchase surplus American ships to transport Jewish survivors from the displaced persons camps of Europe to Palestine in defiance of British immigration restrictions. Shulman's participation in the risky pre-independence effort to bring Jews to Palestine, known as Aliyah Bet, impressed Ben-Gurion.

By the third week of October 1948, five months into the war, invading Syrian, Lebanese, and Jordanian ground troops were largely repelled from Israel. Only Egyptian forces remained a threat to the new state. A United Nations-sponsored truce was scheduled for October 22, 1948. That morning, Commander Shulman learned that two Egyptian warships had anchored outside Tel Aviv harbor, including the cruiser *Emir Farouk*, flagship of the Egyptian navy. The Egyptians were trying to prevent Israel from rearming by sea during the truce. Ben-Gurion ordered Shulman to evict the ships.

The Haganah had obtained several armed motorboats that had been used by Italian commandos during World War II as kamikaze-type weapons. The boats were loaded with explosives

and aimed toward an enemy ship. At the last moment, the pilot would leap to safety while the boat continued to its target, a surface torpedo. These boats became Shulman's secret weapon.

Shulman organized a three-ship force to confront the Egyptians. One, the *Ma'oz*, carried the Italian motorboats on deck. All three ships had been used before the war to transport European Jewish refugees to Palestine. Upon declaring independence, Israel hastily converted them to warships. The three vessels pulled alongside the two Egyptian ships and Shulman called out over a loudspeaker: "Truce period or no truce period, if you don't get the hell out of here, I'm going to shoot!" The Egyptian vessels departed for Gaza; the Israeli ships followed closely. An hour later, Egyptian shore batteries in Gaza opened fire at the Israeli vessels, as Shulman had hoped. He radioed for permission to attack the Egyptian vessels. "No," came the response. Shulman radioed a second time, asking that his request be forwarded directly to Ben-Gurion, who replied, "Paul, if you can sink them, shoot; if you can't, don't."

Waiting until dark, Shulman positioned the *Ma'oz* between the Egyptian ships and the moon. Its crew lowered four small vessels into the water. Nearly an hour later, they reached the Egyptian ships. The pilot of the first vessel gunned his boat toward the *Farouk*, explosives armed. At the last moment, he leapt into the water. He heard an explosion and saw that the *Farouk* had been hit. Almost immediately, a second assault boat scored a direct hit, which erupted in flames and sank within minutes. As the *Farouk* slipped below the surface, a retrieval boat plucked the Israeli commandos from the sea.

Egypt complained to the U.S. State Department that an American citizen had sunk its navy's flagship. The State Department asked Shulman to resign his naval reserve commission. When the war ended in 1949, Shulman became an Israeli citizen and founded an engineering corporation in Haifa, where he lived until his death in 1994.

A GESTURE OF DEFIANCE

“ EVERY MAN AT SOME TIME OR ANOTHER UNDERGOES AN EXPERIENCE WHICH MOLDS HIS CHARACTER AND SHAPES THE ENTIRE COURSE OF HIS LIFE. I HAD THOUGHT MY SERVICE WITH THE MARINE CORPS WAS MY TIME, BUT I WAS WRONG. THE THINGS THAT I HAVE DONE IN THESE PAST EIGHT MONTHS . . . WILL LEAVE THEIR MARK ON ME TO MY DYING DAY. ”

The recently arrived Machal Archive compliments other AJHS holdings that document American Jewry's role in Israeli history. The letter that follows resides in the papers of Rabbi Joseph S. Shubow (1899-1969), a former US Army chaplain and longtime rabbi of Temple B'nai Moshe in Brighton, MA. Shubow was prominent in the American Zionist movement in Boston and on the national level.

The following letter, signed with a pseudonym, was sent from Athlit, Palestine and dated April 10, 1947. It is from one of Rabbi Shubow's congregants. It describes the man's role as a crew member on the *Ben Hecht*, an Aliyah Bet ship that tried to bring survivors to Palestine from the Displaced Persons camps in Allied Occupied Germany to Palestine.

Dear Rabbi Shubow,

Every man at some time or another undergoes an experience which molds his character and shapes the entire course of his life. I had thought my service with the Marine Corps was my time, but I was wrong. The things that I have done in these past eight months . . . will leave their mark on me to my dying day. Maybe it's because I am so young; maybe because I am so Jewish; but "Aliyah Bet" has made a profound impression on me. It's hard to explain just how or why.

You are no doubt familiar with our ship's journey from America to France and from France to Sweden where we picked up our first load of people. Of our five days through the Bay of Biscay through a storm which crippled English and Portuguese warships. Of passing the English King and Queen on their way to South Africa during that storm and raising our blue and white flag with the Star of David to them as a mock salute and a gesture of defiance. How we picked up 800 more people in the dead of night by small boats and rubber rafts working all through the night till our hands were blistered and cut from pulling on the wire we had strung. Of playing hide and seek with the British along the African Coast and then our final dash for the shores of the Promised Land.

We were sighted by a British air patrol in the afternoon. By nightfall, the first destroyer arrived. By dawn, we had six destroyers surrounding us. At 0800 all hands on the six destroyers stood to attention for morning colors and simultaneously on our ship 1400 voices joined in the "Hatikva" while the "Mogen David" was hoisted and streamed defiantly from our mast.

Then began the struggle. First they tried ramming tactics but in this they were unsuccessful and we even managed to cripple one of their ships. They started landing troops; British Marines armed to the teeth. The first ten were thrown back into the sea. Using clubs, tear gas and yes bullets they fought their way inch by inch across the deck battling men, women, and even children till they managed to take the bridge. They were too late. We went aground at Bat Galim, the Jewish section of Haifa. They already had troops ringing the beach and those who had leaped in the water were quickly rounded up. . .

Ten of us were arrested as members of the crew and sent to jail in Haifa. After twelve days we were released because of insufficient evidence and sent to Athlit [still under travel restrictions].

. . . I haven't had a chance to see much of Eretz since I've been here but what I have seen is inspiring. It is truly becoming a land of milk and honey Jewish milk, Jewish honey.

American Jewish Historical Society



LIPSKY EARNS EMMA LAZARUS AWARD

Media, political and philanthropic leaders gathered to observe Seth Lipsky, founding editor of the English language version of the *Forward* and the *New York Sun*, receive the 2010 Emma Lazarus Statue of Liberty Award.

The dinner, produced by Kenneth J. Bialkin, AJHS Chairman *Emeritus*, was held at the Harvard Club of New York City on June 2, 2010. Lipsky was toasted and roasted by journalists Peter R. Kann, Philip Gourevitch, Paul Gigot and Amity Shlaes (who is Lipsky's wife), as well as philanthropists Roger Hertog, Michael Steinhardt and Tom Tisch. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sent personal greetings to Lipsky, thanking him on behalf of the people of Israel for his "unwavering, life-long commitment to the Jewish state."

Described by the *Boston Globe* as a "legendary figure in contemporary journalism," Lipsky's forty-year career in journalism includes service as senior editor of the *Wall Street Journal* and membership on its editorial board. After graduation from Harvard College, he became a reporter for the *Star* in Anniston, AL. Drafted into the US Army, he became a combat correspondent for the military newspaper *Stars and Stripes*. Lipsky was then hired by the *Wall Street Journal* and rose to managing editor of its Asian edition. In 1980, he returned to the States to become associate editor of the *Journal's* editorial page, then foreign editor and, in 1984, editorial page editor of the *Wall Street Journal/Europe*.

During his time in Europe, Lipsky began considering the future of the Yiddish-language *Forverts*, which for decades under the editorial hand of Abraham Cahan had been one of America's leading Jewish newspapers. By 1990, the paper's readership was in decline. Motivated by the ambition to run his own paper, Lipsky resigned from the *Journal* to launch the *Forward*, an updated English language version of the *Forverts* that was true to the social democratic, Zionist, anti-authoritarian roots of Cahan's Yiddish daily.

Lipsky left the *Forward* in 2000 to launch a revival of another New York paper, the *Sun*. For eight years, Lipsky and his co-editor Ira Stoll challenged New York's major papers before closing during the economic downturn of 2008. Lipsky has since published a book of annotated thoughts on the United States Constitution and continues work on a biography of Abraham Cahan.

Lipsky joins a list of Emma Lazarus Award recipients that includes Abram L. Sachar, Edgar Bronfman, Sylvia Hassenfeld, Aaron Feuerstein, Beverly Sills, Henry Kissinger, Sanford I. Weill, Felix Rohatyn, Elie Wiesel, Mortimer Zuckerman, Ed Koch, George P. Schultz, Sid Lapidus and Kenneth J. Bialkin.

Left above Kenneth Bialkin, Sid Lapidus, Seth Lipsky, Amity Shlaes and Flora Lipsky. **Left below** Flora Lipsky, Seth Lipsky and Elie Wiesel.

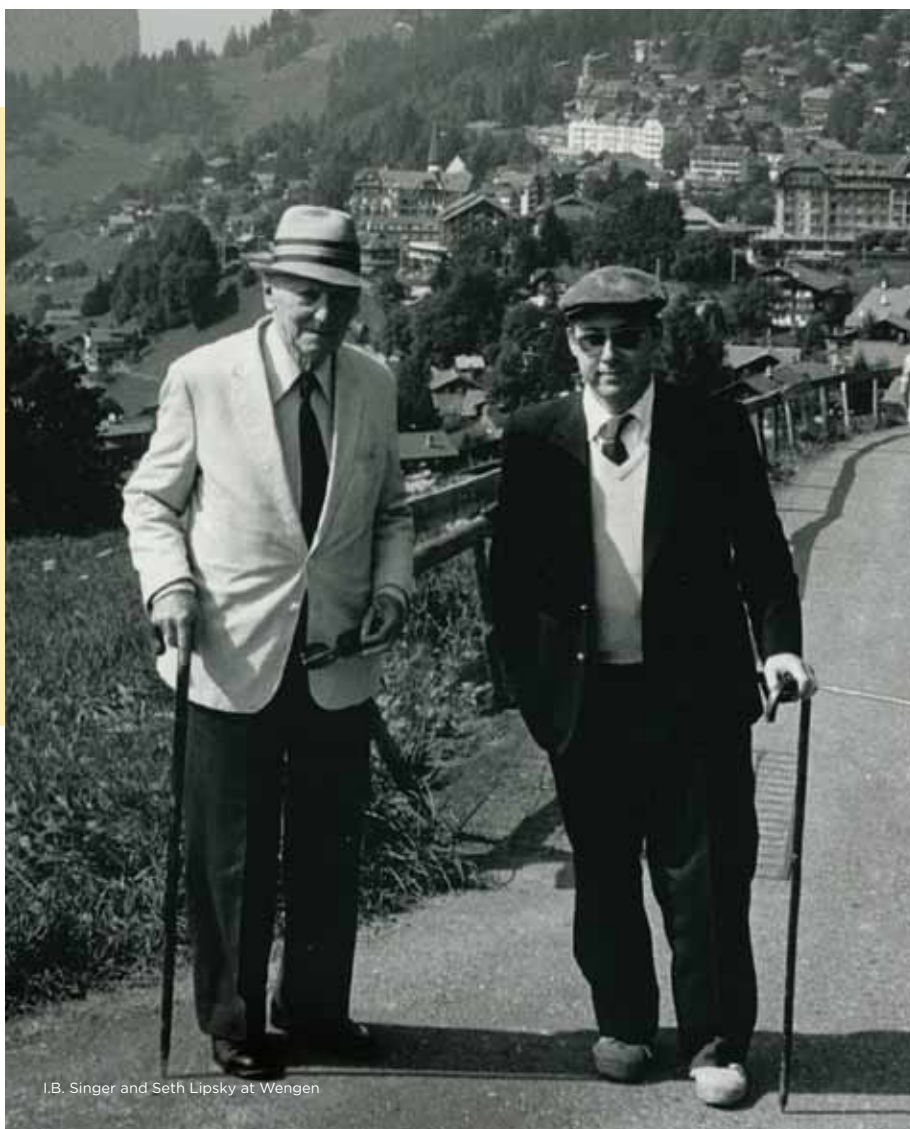
Lipsky Remembers I.B. Singer

One day in August 1984, we traveled by pinion railway up the foothills of the Jungfrau to the Swiss Alpine village of Wengen. We had journeyed there to spend a weekend with Isaac Bashevis Singer and his wife, Alma. We passed the days and evenings strolling along the mountain paths, listening to the writer talk. The range of his knowledge was as breathtaking as the mountains. Singer talked of the Talmud and Mark Twain. Of the former, he sneered at shortcuts to learning its secrets. Of the latter, he had a lasting love, laughing aloud at Twain's celebrated putdown of newspapermen, "How I Edited an Agricultural Newspaper." Singer had read the story 70 years earlier—in Poland, where it had been translated into Yiddish. He talked of fountain pens (he eschewed the fancy ones) and plasma physics (he grappled with quarks and gluons as well as golems). Singer spoke of the choices an aspiring writer has to make, including his conviction that he never would have achieved such greatness had he abandoned the Yiddish language. His life must have

been as difficult to manage as his mind, which left us with a great regard for Mrs. Singer's practical personality. Singer seemed untroubled by all the controversy back in the Jewish world, and even at the *Yiddish Forward*, over his indifference to socialism, say, or his obsession with sex. The value he knew he shared with the editors of the *Yiddish Forward*, which, despite all the controversy, published his stories for so many years, was a reverence for literature itself—and truth. And, also, humor. He talked about the elements of humor and what makes people laugh, surprise being the key one. We still were sharing funny stories as he walked us to the station for our trip down the mountain. At the Wengen depot, he helped us heft our duffel onto the train and waved as the train pulled out. It was the last time we saw him and he was, so help us, laughing—no doubt at some surprising sparkle on which his immense imagination had struck.

—August 2, 1991

The value he knew he shared with the editors of the *Yiddish Forward*, which, despite all the controversy, published his stories for so many years, was a reverence for literature itself—and truth. And, also, humor.



I.B. Singer and Seth Lipsky at Wengen

AJHS Boston Collections Find New Home

The American Jewish Historical Society's collection of Boston and New England archival holdings has relocated from the campus of Hebrew College in Newton, MA to the New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS). Located at 101 Newbury Street in Boston, NEHGS has over 25,000 members worldwide and is the oldest genealogical organization in the US. Its holdings date back to the 1600's; many of its members today can trace their roots back to that time. In recent years, NEHGS has made special efforts to collect historical and genealogical records relating to later-arriving groups such as African-Americans, Italian-Americans and Irish-Americans.

Now, NEHGS houses the largest collection of Jewish community records in New England. The New England Archives of the American Jewish Historical Society will remain a part of national AJHS, which is headquartered in New York City. However, the New England Archives will have access to NEHGS's highly advanced platform for digitizing and disseminating searchable images of archival documents. The New England Archives of AJHS has scanned well over a million pages of its own materials and will continue to do so until every document in its collections is available online through the NEHGS website, which attracts over 15,000 individual daily users who make over 16 million downloads every month.

Remarking on the relocation of the archives, Justin L. Wyner, chair of the AJHS Boston Board of Overseers, said, "The partnership between AJHS and NEHGS reflects our mutual awareness that the Jewish experience is an integral part of American history extending back to the first permanent Jewish settlement in New Amsterdam in 1654. Now, researchers can find the records of the Boston Jewish community in a context reflecting the interconnectedness of that community with its neighbors."

For information about hours, holdings and research opportunities, please contact Judi Garner, AJHS Boston Archivist, at 617-226-1245 or judi.garner@ajhsboston.org.



AJHS SCHOLARS EVALUATE AMERICAN JEWISH “EXCEPTIONALISM”

For decades, historians have considered the Jewish experience in America radically different from Jewish history in other lands, as well as from that of other American religious or ethnic groups.

For three days in June 2010, more than one hundred scholars convened at the Society’s headquarters in New York for the AJHS Biennial Conference in American Jewish History to discuss “American Jewish Exceptionalism Reconsidered.” Graduate students, college professors and independent scholars from the US, Canada, France and Israel presented 45 papers exploring ways the American Jewish experience both resembled and differed from Jewish communities elsewhere in the diaspora, and how it has compared to other ethnic and religious groups in the United States.

Professor David Sorkin (Wisconsin) delivered the Harry Elson Memorial Lecture, “Beyond Exceptionalism: American Jewry as a Port Jewry,” which compared the ways in which American Jews and European Jews each achieved political and civil equality. American historians, Jon Butler (Yale), Ira Katznelson (Columbia), and Aristide Zolberg (The New School), and historians of American Jewry, Rebecca Kobrin (Columbia) and Beth Wenger (Penn) engaged in a discussion about the validity of American Jewish exceptionalism as a concept. They concluded that the degree of exceptionalism could be verified through careful, cross-cultural research, setting an agenda for a new generation of scholars.

The Society’s Lee Max Friedman Award for distinguished service to the field of American Jewish History was given to Professor Pamela Nadell (American University.)

The conference organizing committee consisted of Eric Goldstein (Emory), Dr. Annie Polland (Tenement Museum), Lila Corwin Berman (Temple), Beth Wenger (Penn), Jeffrey Gurock (Yeshiva), Tony Michels (Wisconsin) and American Jewish Historical Society Board member Larry Zuckerman (Columbia).



Ben Shahn (1898-1969) © VAGA, NY. *East Side Soap Box*, 1936. Gouache on paper, 18 ½ x 12 ¼ in. The Jewish Museum, NY/ Art Resource, NY

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