



The Azrieli Center
for Israel Studies

The Ben-Gurion Research
Institute for the Study
of Israel & Zionism

Ben-Gurion University
of the Negev



**B'NAI B'RITH
INTERNATIONAL**

THE AZRIELI CENTER FOR ISRAEL STUDIES • B'NAI B'RITH INTERNATIONAL

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS IN ISRAEL AND AROUND THE WORLD IN TIMES OF CRISIS

Historical and Contemporary Perspectives

DECEMBER 15, 2026 | SDE BOKER CAMPUS | BEN-GURION UNIVERSITY OF THE NEGEV

The October 7, 2023, Hamas terror attack and its aftermath have presented Jewish organizations in Israel and around the world with new challenges. Foremost among them is a resurgence of antisemitism and anti-Zionism, in forms long familiar and in others without precedent. These developments raise questions about leadership, methods of action, and the organizational forms that Jewish life has developed over the past two centuries.

Modern Jewish organizational life took shape from the early nineteenth century onward. Emancipation, the large-scale movement of Jewish populations, and the rise of Zionism produced new frameworks of association alongside older communal structures. Communal institutions of much older standing persisted alongside them, and bodies of both kinds proved central in periods of change, persecution, war, and political transformation. Responding to antisemitism, in its religious, racial, and political guises, was among their oldest tasks, and much of their apparatus, from defense committees to legal aid and public advocacy, was built for that purpose. Alongside the formal institutions stood initiatives and groups that operated outside established frameworks. Research in this field can draw on the study of civil society, transnational networks, organized philanthropy, and diaspora-homeland relations.

Among the international bodies formed in this period, B'nai B'rith International offers one instructive case. Founded in New York in 1843, it grew from a framework of Jewish solidarity and assistance into a network of lodges and institutions in Europe and the Land of Israel, with the Jerusalem Lodge established in 1888. Its members contributed to Aliya and settlement and to efforts that preceded the establishment of the State of Israel. Cases of this kind raise wider questions: the confrontation with antisemitism and anti-Zionism in changing settings, the relation between diaspora bodies and the State of Israel, and the durability of voluntary association across continents and political regimes.

We invite proposals for an international academic conference. Proposals may address Jewish organizations in Israel and around the world, past and present, and comparative treatments are welcome.

Suggested topics include:

- Formation and development of organizations, institutions, and networks
- Confronting antisemitism, anti-Zionism, and delegitimization: organizational strategies, alliances, and their limits, from defense work to the present-day arenas of international institutions, universities, the media, and civil society
- Mobilization and assistance: how organizations set priorities in supporting Israel and Jewish communities
- Relations between Jewish organizations and governments, international bodies, and local communities
- Jewish organizations and indigenous discourse: historical attachment to the Land of Israel
- Organizations and settlement in the Land of Israel: Aliya, land purchase, and the founding of new communities
- Settlement in the Negev and on the periphery: organizational involvement in regional development and local institution-building
- B'nai B'rith International as a case study: founding, structure, international expansion, and activity in the Land of Israel, including institution-building and the diplomatic efforts that preceded statehood
- Communal work and institutional memory: education, culture, welfare, mutual aid, leadership, and archives

The conference seeks to connect historical research on Jewish organizations with analyses of contemporary institutional practices. Proposals are welcome from history, political science, sociology, law, management, education, communication, and related fields, and from practitioners in Jewish organizations whose work bears on these questions. Collaborative proposals from scholars and practitioners are encouraged.

SUBMISSION DETAILS

Please send an abstract of up to 500 words via [this E-mail link](#): Include the names of all authors, their affiliations, contact information, and a brief biography for each.

Deadline for proposals: October 15, 2026.

Decisions will be sent by October 30, 2026.

The conference will take place at the Ben-Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism, on December 15, 2026, and will be livestreamed.

The conference will be held in English.

Selected papers will form the basis of an edited volume; participants are asked to submit full papers after the conference. Questions may be sent to

ilanshbnaibrith@gmail.com

Organizing Academic Committee: Prof. Havatzelet Yahel, Dr. Ilan Shchori, and Mr. Dan Mariaschin.