

# The Joftes case: ADL spying for Israel since the 1960s

by Joseph Brewda

"I find it difficult, extremely difficult and painful, to view what is going on in San Francisco without asking: What is happening? What's the motivation?" Anti-Defamation League President Melvin Salberg told the *Los Angeles Times* on April 17. Salberg was commenting on the San Francisco Police Department raid of the ADL's offices for files relating to the spying of its decades-long employee Roy Bullock. Anti-Semitism, it was claimed, is the reason that the ADL is being picked on. "We have a lot of questions as to why we're being targeted," added ADL attorney Barbara Wahl, who had earlier been the ADL's representative in Israel.

But spying on behalf of Israel has long been a specialty of the ADL and its mother organization, B'nai B'rith, as shown by the little-known suit of former B'nai B'rith official Saul Joftes, first exposed by *EIR* in 1988.

In 1967, Joftes began a series of lawsuits against B'nai B'rith regarding the circumstances of his firing from his 20-year position as the organization's director of international operations. Joftes argued that he had been illegally fired and denied his pension, because he had repeatedly protested against B'nai B'rith and the Anti-Defamation League's facilitation of Israeli intelligence operations in the United States. By so doing, Joftes, told his former employers, they were violating the Foreign Agents Registration Act, and otherwise identifying B'nai B'rith and ADL interests with the political interests of the state of Israel, rather than with Jewry.

Depositions taken in one of the suits, *Joftes v. Rabbi Jay Kaufman* (CA 3271-67 District of Columbia), show:

- In 1960, Philip Klutznick, then president of B'nai B'rith, wittingly established a B'nai B'rith cover for an Israeli intelligence operation at its offices in New York.
- The Mossad case officer for the operation was Uri Ra'an, then the director of the Israeli Consulate's Information Department in New York.
- Arnold Forster, the decades-long counsel for both B'nai B'rith and the ADL, was involved in this cell.
- Then-ADL national chairman Benjamin Epstein emphasized the ADL's role in facilitating this spying, in his inter-office correspondence with B'nai B'rith during that period. Spying against Arab diplomats and Arab-American organizations, and providing this information to Israel, Epstein stated, justified requests for increased B'nai B'rith budget allocations.

Ra'an, now a professor of Russian studies and CIA recruitment officer at Boston University, later trained Jonathan Jay Pollard, the Mossad spy who penetrated U.S. Naval Intelligence. Pollard is now serving a life sentence in U.S. federal prison, after being convicted of espionage in 1986. Ruth Sella, who together with her husband, Col. Aviem Sella, was Pollard's Mossad handler, was an employee of the ADL legal department during the period that she handled Pollard's espionage assignments. Following Pollard's arrest, Sella fled to Israel to avoid prosecution for espionage. Forster, who ran the legal department, has subsequently admitted in his memoirs that he had been a longtime Mossad "source."

Ra'an also trained Mira Lansky Boland prior to her recruitment by the CIA. Boland now runs the Fact-Finding Division of the ADL in Washington, D.C. San Francisco police investigations have proven that Boland is an overseer of the ADL spy ring that prompted the recent police raid of ADL offices.

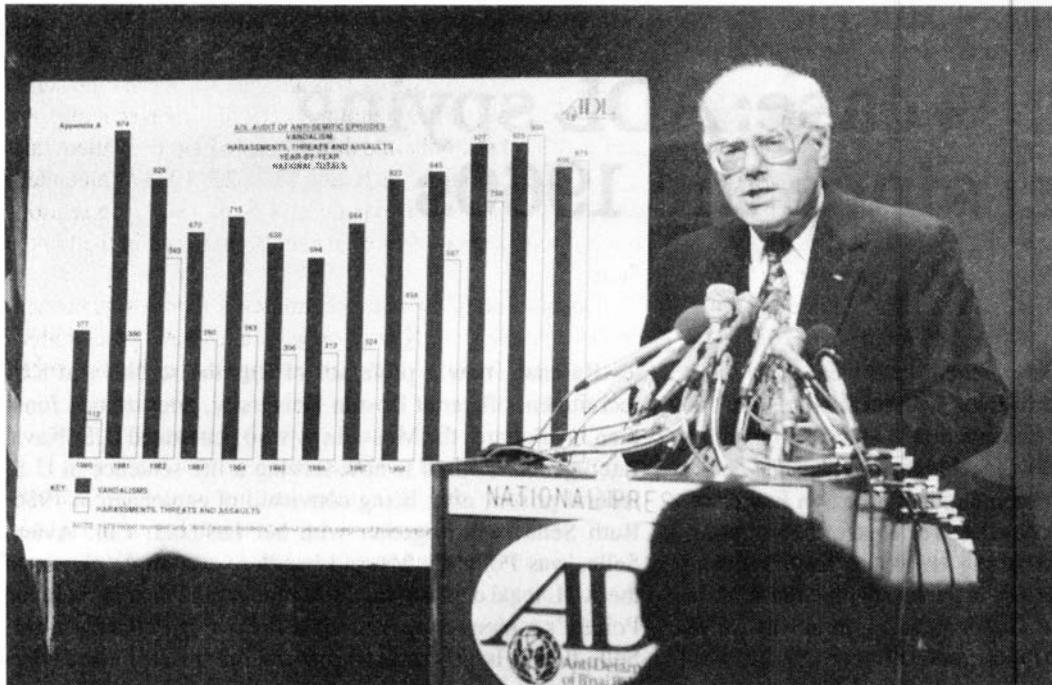
It was Joftes's attempt to block the B'nai B'rith's aid to Israeli foreign intelligence operations directed by Ra'an, Forster, et al. which led to his firing. Joftes summarizes his dispute with the B'nai B'rith, in his deposition to the court, as follows:

"Under the leadership of Mr. Klutznick, it [B'nai B'rith] has become an international organization engaged, by Rabbi Kaufman's admission, in other things besides charitable, religious, and educational activities. It engages in international politics and more often than not does the bidding of the government of Israel."

Joftes protested to the B'nai B'rith and ADL leadership that B'nai B'rith assistance to Israeli intelligence constituted a violation of the Foreign Agents Registration Act and related legislation, at the very least. In response to this charge, future B'nai B'rith President William Wexler rejoined sarcastically, "Here's to Joftes. The All-American boy. True blue and loyal, too." Joftes continued to protest. He was purged.

## B'nai B'rith houses Israeli spy ring

Joftes's strongest opposition to B'nai B'rith's aid to Israeli espionage centered around the case of Avis Shulman. A Mossad agent, Shulman had been placed in a secret cell at B'nai B'rith's New York offices, with the purpose of infil-



*Anti-Defamation League National Chairman Melvin Salberg at a press conference on Feb. 2, 1993, gives the ADL's annual count of "anti-Semitic incidents." Now that the ADL itself is facing the prospect of criminal indictments for espionage activities, Salberg and his cronies can only splutter that "anti-Semitism" must be behind it.*

trating U.S. intelligence agencies by providing information about Moscow.

As internal B'nai B'rith documents presented to the court by Jofes show, Mrs. Shulman was controlled and financed by Uri Ra'an, then the director of the Israeli Consulate's Information Department, and a Mr. Eliav, then the Israeli consul general in New York, among others. Through Ra'an's efforts, and with Klutznick's sanction, Shulman was placed at B'nai B'rith's New York offices in the summer of 1960. Shulman's job was to facilitate Israeli intelligence debriefings of American Jews visiting the U.S.S.R., and Soviet citizens touring the United States.

In her correspondence with B'nai B'rith regarding this Mossad operation, Shulman noted, "Jewish organizations, particularly B'nai B'rith, are especially useful" as a "base of operation." She requested, and Ra'an demanded, that B'nai B'rith provide her a suitable title, office, stationery, and telephone. She asked that a subcommittee be "invented" with her as the "secretary" to give her "a handle that could be relatively inconspicuous, but meaningful."

Dr. William Korey, then head of B'nai B'rith's U.N. bureau, and formerly the director of the ADL's Washington, D.C. office (where Mira Lansky Boland now works), discussed Shulman's arrangements with Israeli consular officials, including Ra'an. He cited Ra'an et al. as "our friends" in inter-office correspondence presented to the court. Shulman reported that Ra'an and company insisted that she "report only to them. They wanted but very few people to know the inner workings of the operation."

In a memo written to Philip Klutznick dated Sept. 1, 1960, Korey reports:

"I met yesterday with Avis Shulman (she has just returned from her vacation) and Uri [Ra'an]. Some of Avis' thinking on the method of her operation has been crystallized and had already been, before we met, transmitted to Uri. This crystallization involved certain problems, among them are . . . an office or space in an already established office, preferably this one. She needs—she says—a place to hang her hat where she can receive mail, phone calls, and visitors. . . .

"She needs some identification, in effect a title, for stationery purposes as well as appropriate stationery. Is she to be secretary of some committee of the B'nai B'rith International Council? The latter point raises a question which I am not certain about. Was it your intention to have it understood that she was to work for the International Council (while I understood that she was to work under my supervision, I was never advised as to precisely what you conceived her public identification to be)?"

Shulman identifies her job as follows in an undated 1960 memorandum to Korey:

"A. The Job:

"1. Concentrating early information on all Americans to the Soviet Union and Soviet visitors to the United States—as far as is ascertainable.

"a. Channelling this information to the relevant quarters."

Shulman further specifies the need for "saturation briefings of Jewish tourists to the Soviet Union by creating suitable nationwide machinery via Jewish organizations, suitable individuals and especially through the use of tourist agencies. . . . Jewish agencies, particularly B'nai B'rith, are especially useful because of mass organization and trained

and experienced personnel throughout the country.”

After informing B'nai B'rith that “I have been asked to centralize activities, to find, choose and to establish personnel wherever necessary” for this intelligence operation, Shulman states the following requirements:

“1. In order to set the machinery into motion whereby the job can be done, it is essential that I be provided a proper base of operation which includes the following items:

“a. A name and a title. A sub-committee under the Office of International Affairs B'nai B'rith, with a name invented that is natural for the purpose would be ideal and the best base from which to operate. Such a committee might consist of Phil Klutznick as [sic] myself as secretary. In this manner, I would be provided with a handle that would be relatively inconspicuous but meaningful.”

### **‘She was working for them’**

Who ultimately controlled this intelligence operation is shown by a confidential memo from Korey to Klutznick dated Nov. 2, 1960:

“Last Friday, I met with our friends plus Moshe [Decter] and Avis. Our friends wanted to know about the future budget for Avis. I made it clear that this was a matter for the International Council which meets late November. I said that while the present period was provisional, we looked forward to seeing how it would work and the hope that it could work successfully. They indicated that they were looking forward to its success but wondered out loud whether the project could run into difficulties with B'nai B'rith structure. They stated that if it did, then perhaps as an eventual alternative and simpler method, there ought to be formed an independent committee made up of Jews within which the project would operate.

“Concerning her title, I proposed the term ‘liaison’ but they objected, indicating that they wanted something with greater dignity and status—like ‘consultant.’ They said that they would think about it and come up with a proposed alternative. Again they indicated they wanted her name on the letterhead.

“They then surprised me by (for the first time in our discussions) noting, that her instructions would come only from them, that her program would operate independently of B'nai B'rith, that she would report only to them, the only exception being that she would keep me abreast of her activities approximately once a week. I objected, stating that I had assumed that she would be technically under our jurisdiction, that I would be in a position to place limits on any specific activity of hers that might prove embarrassing to B'nai B'rith, that, in effect, she would clear with me.

“They stated, that in the nature of the case, this was impossible, she was working for them, that her instructions came from without. . . . They indicated that they wanted but very few people to know the inner mechanism of the operation.”

Documents submitted in the suit show that Jofte repeatedly warned Klutznick that aiding Israeli intelligence operations in the United States was illegal. In one memo dated Sept. 16, 1960, Jofte denounces the Shulman scheme, and concludes, “I ask only one thing: before I am overruled, take a look at U.S. code Title 22 Sec 611-621 (1938 as amended) and Title 18 sec 951 (revision of 1 Sept 48).” The sections refer to registration of foreign agents operating in the United States.

Despite Jofte's resistance, and even Korey's queasiness about “our friends,” Klutznick went ahead and placed Shulman at B'nai B'rith. All evidence suggests that her secret cell still exists.

### **The Fulbright investigation**

Even before the 1967 Jofte suit, numerous U.S. intelligence officials were concerned about B'nai B'rith and related Zionist lobby facilitation of foreign intelligence operations in the United States. Reflecting this concern, in 1963, Sen. J. William Fulbright (D-Ark.), then chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, convened hearings into “Activities of Agents of Foreign Principals in the U.S.” One session of the hearings, held May 23, 1963, exposed that planting Avis Shulman at the offices of B'nai B'rith was merely one of several operations directed by Uri Ra'anah at the time.

Other Israeli spying operations exposed by Fulbright include the Jewish Minorities Research project at the American Jewish Congress, directed by the above-mentioned Ra'anah agent Moshe Decter; the “Russian research project” of the Jewish Agency, directed by B'nai B'rith President Klutznick; and the American Conference on Soviet Jewry. The overall purpose of these Russian projects was to penetrate U.S. intelligence by providing Washington with purportedly high-quality information on the Soviet Union. That the project was not a one-way street was later exposed in the Pollard case. The policy of Israeli intelligence has always been to sell U.S. secrets to Moscow.

American Jewish Congress documents subpoenaed by Fulbright showed that “the Jewish Minorities Research project, of which Mr. Moshe Decter is the director, has for several years specialized in research on the status and problems of the Jews in the Soviet Union, and secondarily of the Jews in other East European countries.” Toward this end, Decter was allegedly only involved in “discussions with individuals who have had personal experience of life in the U.S.S.R.,” and “discussion with American and foreign scholars and experts in the field of Soviet and East European affairs.”

Left unsaid by this memo is that Decter was working under the direction and funding of Ra'anah. Assisting Decter in this project was Avis Shulman.

Funding for this American Jewish Congress operation did not come solely from that organization, or even the Jewish Agency, an official arm of the Israeli government. Some

indication of the covert laundering of funds for the Decter project is indicated by a subpoenaed Jewish Agency inter-office memorandum dated July 7, 1961, in which director Isidore Hamlin states:

"Further to my memorandum to you dated June 16, about the Russian research project, you will find attached hereto copy of a memorandum dated July 6, from the Consulate to the Treasury of the State of Israel asking them to transfer to our account the sum of \$5,500. You are asked to carry out the following:

"1. Inform the Treasury office that the \$5,500 has to be applied to the joint fund. . . .

"2. Of the \$5,500 transferred to us by the Consulate, \$4,375 has to be added to our monthly remittances to the American Jewish Congress for the Russian research project in proportionate amounts. . . ."

Under Senate Foreign Relations Committee questioning, Hamlin confessed that the joint fund was administered by the director of the Office of Information at the New York Consulate, Mr. Arnon, in 1963. In 1960, the fund was administered by Uri Ra'an.

Joftes's attorneys deposed Maurice Weinstein, then chairman of the International Council of B'nai B'rith, in 1967; the deposition shows that Klutznick continued to push his Russian project as late as 1966:

**Q:** Now look at the last paragraph [referencing an internal B'nai B'rith memo]. . . . "The Israelis are adamant we must keep the American Jewish Conference on Soviet Jewry, make it a permanent body, and they will help us raise the funds. In this they are now giving directions and will brook no opposition." . . . Does the B'nai B'rith International Council take orders from the Israelis?

**Weinstein:** No. . . .

**Q:** Now I see your report . . . to the Triennial Convention in Washington in 1968. . . . It said, "At the London meeting, October 1966, the International Council adopted a proposal by former President Philip N. Klutznick to establish, with the International Council a special budget of \$100,000.00 for work on the problem of Soviet Jewry." . . . Was that special budget \$100,000.00 created?

**Weinstein:** Yes.

**Q:** Now, where is that \$100,000.00 in the B'nai B'rith International Council budget? Do you know? . . . Here is . . . the B'nai B'rith International Council budget. Where is the \$100,000.00 special budget in it? . . . Do you know whether any of that \$100,000.00 has been spent?

**Weinstein:** Yes.

**Q:** How much of it?

**Weinstein:** I don't know.

**Q:** You know where that money is deposited?

**Weinstein:** I don't.

**Q:** Isn't this the \$100,000.00 budget the Israelis demand be set up for the American Conference on Soviet Jewry?

## **ADL memoranda demonstrating spying**

In the course of the suit, Joftes not only documented that the B'nai B'rith and ADL leadership were wittingly facilitating Israeli spying for the state of Israel. He also proved that the ADL emphasized this role as a reason for the B'nai B'rith to increase its budget. The following letter, dated July 7, 1961, and addressed to Joftes on ADL letterhead by then ADL national director Benjamin Epstein, is an example. The letter is identified in the suit as plaintiff's Exhibit No. 1.

"Dear Saul,

"As you know, the Anti-Defamation League for many years has maintained a very important, confidential investigative coverage of Arab activities and propaganda. In terms of our interest, the anti-Jewish and anti-Israel propaganda programs for which the Arabs are spending millions of dollars, emanate primarily from the United Nations, New York, Washington, D.C., and Cairo. Their impact is worldwide and include anti-Jewish and anti-Israel programs affecting almost every nation in the world where they have diplomatic relations. In the course of our work, we have maintained an information-gathering operation since 1948 relating to activities emanating from the Arab Consular Offices, Arab United Nations Delegations, Arab Information Center, Arab Refugee Office and the Organization of Arab Students.

"In order to obtain complete and thorough data on these activities, we must follow the Arab diplomatic corps in their political efforts, lobbying activities and propaganda programs emanating from their embassies, as distinguished from the Arab League, Arab relations with organizations like the American Friends of the Middle East and all their professional publicity efforts.

"Our information, in addition to being essential for our own operations, has been of great value and service to both the United States State department, and the Israeli government. All data have been made available to both countries with full knowledge to each that we were the source.

"The nature of these activities has supplied us with substantive, documented information which has been the basis for exposés of anti-Semitic activities, anti-Israel programs and political maneuvers. In many cases our information has exposed Arab plans before they have been put into effect.

"In the course of our current difficult fiscal situation, there has been discussion of the reductions of our activities calling for the elimination of certain projects for which there are no funds. Considerable discussion was held at our last Commission meeting with respect to the subject at hand. It was felt that this activity is tremendously important and should not be discontinued. Therefore, we are requesting that you present this problem to the International Council for financial subvention.

"The cost involved in this entire effort is \$23,000. We hope that the International Council of B'nai B'rith will con-

sider the international aspects of this service as an area of proper concern for its support. Naturally, we are willing to give you any and all detailed information with respect to the activity that may be helpful in your considerations.

“Cordially,  
“Benjamin R. Epstein  
“National Director”

During the course of the case, Epstein was deposed, and the following question was put to him by Jofte’s attorney Byron Scott in respect to this communication.

**Q:** I notice this letter, which is dated July 7, 1961, plaintiff’s Exhibit No. 1 for identification in your deposition, states, “As you know, the Anti-Defamation League for many years maintained a very important, confidential investigative coverage of Arab activities and propaganda.”

Do you have investigative agents of the ADL in Cairo?

**Epstein:** First of all, I won’t answer the question.

**Q:** First of all what?

**Epstein:** I don’t care to answer the question.

**Q:** Why not?

**Epstein:** I don’t see its relevance to what we are talking about.

**Q:** Let me determine that.

**Epstein:** You are entitled to your view. I am entitled to mine.

**Q:** Is there something of a confidential nature that you might reveal to me if you answer the question?

**Epstein:** I don’t care to answer that.

**Q:** Of what possible interest to the Anti-Defamation League would anti-Israel propaganda be?

**Epstein:** The line between anti-Israel and anti-Jewish propaganda is a very faint line, about which many people might differ.

We are concerned about its impact on the status of American Jews. In many cases, attacks have been made on American Jews, under the guise of attacking them as Zionists and using anti-Israeli propaganda to attack American Jews.

**Q:** Is it the policy of the ADL to activate its organization to protect Israel from anti-Israel propaganda?

**Epstein:** I think our basic concern is to protect American Jews from any attack upon their security and position.

**Q:** Israel is an independent nation. That is correct; isn’t it?

**Epstein:** Yes.

**Q:** How could propaganda that is anti-Israeli affect the Jews in the United States?

We see here one of the reasons that the ADL insists that anti-Zionism is the same as anti-Semitism. If it did not do so, it would be admitting to being in violation of the Foreign Agents Registration Act. To combat anti-Zionism is to act explicitly in the interest of a foreign power.

## Overseeing Israeli propaganda

Among the evidence presented in the Jofte suit was a letter from ADL President Epstein to all members of the ADL national commission reporting on the planned 1961 trip of ADL counsel Arnold Forster to Israel to monitor the Adolf Eichmann trial. Eichmann, a fugitive Nazi leader, had been kidnapped by the Israeli Mossad that year. The psychologically wrenching show-trial, by evoking memories of the horrors of World War II, prepared the Israeli population for the 1967 Israeli war against its Arab neighbors. It simultaneously laid claim to the idea that the Israeli government legally represented the Jewish people, and that it could carry out kidnapping and other crimes for this reason. The U.S. government, and many Jews, have always rejected both claims. The letter shows that the ADL counsel, reflecting ADL policy, advised the Israeli government on how to influence U.S. public opinion. He conferred with the Israeli government on handling Israeli public relations in respect to the case.

Here is Epstein’s memorandum to the National Commission, dated March 30, 1961:

“Arnold Forster will be in Israel from April 6th to April 24th as the ADL representative at the Eichmann trial. We have been so deeply involved in the public relations aspect of this forthcoming event that we felt it would be most helpful if he were to be on the scene.

“During his stay he will confer with Israeli government officials with respect to public relations aspects of the trial and will be addressing staff seminars of the Foreign Office of the Israeli government on American public opinion and media. Arrangements have been made for him to record on tape, three 10-minute commentaries per week, or a total of six reports, during his two-week stay in Israel. These will be flown to New York and made available to radio stations for their use.

“I am sure on his return he will have additional information of value and interest to us.”

Arnold Forster directed the ADL legal department from its inception in 1938 through 1979. His knowledge of Ra’anana’s intelligence operation within the B’nai B’rith is established by documents submitted in the Jofte suit.

In his memoirs, *Square One*, Forster admits to having been a friend of Mossad official Rafi Eytan since Eytan’s kidnapping of Adolf Eichmann in 1961. It was Eytan who oversaw Israel Mossad officials Col. Aviem and Ruth Sella’s deployment of Mossad spy Jonathan Pollard, during the period that Ruth Sella was an ADL employee. Forster admits meeting with Eytan in 1987, two years after Eytan was exposed for directing Pollard’s theft of classified U.S. documents. Speaking of his relation to Eytan and Israel, Forster frankly states: “Among other Israeli intelligence operations, the Mossad—an acronym for the Hebrew name of the underground service assigned to operate abroad—constantly sought leads from reliable governments and from other contacts and sources. I was a source.”