

The permanent Delegation of Bnai Brith to UNESCO has developed an international project which is of significance to the whole of Bnai Brith. Bnai Brith Europe has been attracted by it and has decided to support it...

What is this project?

Having learned from a UNESCO publication that this International Organization has classified Yiddish among languages in danger of extinction, the members of the Bnai Brith delegation to UNESCO were deeply moved by this information. This language belongs to our Jewish heritage.

If it is in danger of extinction it is not because it has become obsolete, but because the vast number who spoke it before the SHOAH (some 11 million people) were murdered, and were therefore unable to pass it on as their rightful heritage to their unborn descendants.

This, then, is the background to the birth of the Yiddish Symposium project which we have entitled "Permanence of Yiddish". The UNESCO organization consider this project to be exciting and have agreed to be patrons. They have also offered the free use of a 460 seat auditorium at the headquarters of UNESCO in Paris.

The Symposium is to take place on 6th and 7th February 2012.

The programme of the Symposium, worked out with the highly valued help of the Yiddish Culture Centre – Medem Library, of Paris, consists of a number of sessions including:

- An inaugural lecture given by Ms Rachel ERTEL, Professor Emeritus of the University of Paris, who is a highly reputed pioneer in the field of Yiddish studies at the French University;
- three roundtable sessions devoted to:
 - Yiddish as a living language today
 - unusual careers which take their roots in the past of their families
 - the contribution of Yiddish culture to world culture
- a session devoted to the diffusion of Yiddish by means of the new tools of information technology.
- a session devoted to creation of works in Yiddish.

Lecturers from all over the world, specialists in Yiddish literature and in teaching Yiddish, are invited to speak during these two days.

The programme which we have planned is rich in its diversity. It is intended for general interest and not specifically for specialists in this field. Our objective is to make it known that Yiddish is still alive and that it must regain its rightful place in the world of culture, a place which it would have occupied had not the disaster of the SHOAH descended upon an entire people – the People of the Book.

Yiddish Symposium project

Written by B'nai B'rith Europe

To achieve these aims, however, and to ensure the success of this Conference, we need the support of all the lodges of Bnai Brith Europe and of all our brothers and sisters. We call upon all of you to grant financial assistance to this project so as to enable the programme of the Conference to be implemented with success. The prestige of Bnai Brith is at stake.

To associate the name of Bnai Brith to that of UNESCO is a matter of great pride to us. We cannot allow the reputation of Bnai Brith to suffer. This Conference deserves the full financial and spiritual support of all of B'nai B'rith.

We invite you to come to Paris and to participate in this Conference which promises to be a unique event in worldwide Judaism and which will add to the prestige of B'nai B'rith internationally.

Donations should be sent

- either by cheques in the name of

BBF/ Colloque Yiddish to the address of Ms Irène Orès

- or by bank transfer:

From France: RIB Nr 30003 / 03181 / 00750313796 / 24

From other countries: IBAN FR76 3000 3031 8100 7503 1379 624