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MCGS Newsletter, April 2004



Holocaust Remembrance Day is April 18th

It has been over 50 years since the Holocaust. To survivors, the Holocaust remains real and ever-present, but for some others, fifty years makes the Holocaust seem part of ancient history. Year round we attempt to fight against ignorance with education and against disbelief with proof. However, there is one day in the year when we make a special effort to remember (Zachor). On this day, we remember those that suffered, those that fought, and those that died.



Mordecai Anielewicz, the 23yr old leader of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

The date of Yom HaShoah is in symbolic proximity to the 15h of Nissan, which marks the beginning of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of 1943, when Jewish resistance fighters defied their Nazi oppressors and fought for freedom and dignity against hopeless odds. Seven hundred and fifty fighters fought the heavily armed and well-rained Germans. The ghetto fighters were able to hold out for nearly a month, but on May 16, 1943,

the revolt ended. The Germans had slowly crushed the resistance.

Since Yom HaShoah is a relatively new holiday, there are no set rules or rituals, however there are various beliefs about what is and is not appropriate on this day. In general, Yom Hashoah has been observed with candle lighting, speakers, poems, prayers, and singing. Often, six candles are lighted to represent the six million. Holocaust survivors speak about their experiences or share in the readings. Some ceremonies have people read from the Book of Names for certain lengths of time in an effort to remember those that died and give an understanding of the huge number of victims.

Jewish Life and Culture in Popular Film (a short list):

- Almonds and Raisins: A History of the Yiddish Cinema (1984)
- American Yiddish Theatre (2004)
- Anne Frank (2001)
- Annie Hall (1977)
- Avalon (1990)
- Conspiracy (2001)
- The Diary of Anne Frank (1959)
- Escape from Sobibor (1987)
- Europa, Europa: A True Story (1990)
- Exodus (1960)
- Fiddler on the Roof (1971)
- Focus (2002)
- Funny Girl (1968)
- Gentleman's Agreement (1947)
- The Great Dictator (1940)
- Hester Street (1975)
- Invincible (2001)
- Jakob the Liar (1999, 1974)
- The Jazz Singer (1927, 1980)
- Life is Beautiful (La vita e bella) (1997)
- Luna Park (1991)
- My Mother's Courage (1995)
- Once Upon a Time in America (1983)
- The Only Way (1970)
- The Pianist (2002)
- The Producers (1968)
- Schindler's List (1993)
- School Ties (1992)
- Sophie's Choice (1982)
- Sunshine (2000)
- To Be or Not to Be (1942, 1983)
- The Wandering Jew (1933)
- Yentl (1983)
- Zebrahead (1992)

condensed from Jews in Film and Television: A Short Bibliography of Materials, 1996© by the Library, University of California, Berkeley.



In Israel, the Knesset made Yom HaShoah a national public holiday in 1959 and in 1961 a law was passed that closed all public entertainment on Yom HaShoah. At ten in the morning, a siren is sounded where everyone stops what they are doing, pulls over in their cars, and stand in remembrance.

--from about.com



Jewish Identity
Paul Cohen

The state of being Jewish is a complex matter. It can't be simply compared to the states of being Christian or Muslim, because those other states imply religious belief systems. Atheists born to Christian parents do not normally call themselves Christians. On the other hand, many people who have no religious beliefs at all, who may not even believe in God, call themselves Jews. To them, being Jewish means belonging to an ethnic group, united by a shared historical and cultural heritage.

On the other hand, the state of being Jewish can't be simply compared to the states of being African-American or Hispanic, since there is a distinctive religion of the Jews, Judaism, which has been an integral part of that shared historical and cultural heritage for millennia. Adherents of that religion think of themselves as Jews, regardless of their ethnicity, and some of the most prominent figures in the Austin Jewish community have been converts to Judaism.

Judaism takes many forms, just as there are



Books on Judaism available from the Multicultural and Gender Studies Resource Center:

- American Mosaic: the Immigrant Experience in the Words of Those Who Lived It, Joan Morrison & Charlotte Fox Abusky (1980)
- Black, White, and Jewish, Rebecca Walker (2002)
- First Facts in American Jewish History: From 1492 to the Present, Tina Levitan (1996)
- Growing Up Ethnic in America: Contemporary Fiction on Learning to be American, Maria and Jennifer Gillan (1999)
- Immigrant Voices: New Lives in America, 1773-1986, Thomas Dublin (1993)
- In Jewish Texas: A Family Memoir, Stanley E. Ely (1998)
- New Americans: An Oral History: Immigrants and Refugees in the U.S. Today, Al Santoli (1988)
- Tearing the Silence: On Being German in America, Ursula Hegi (1997)
- Women Who Ruled: A Biographical Encyclopedia, Guida Jackson (1997)

for more information on books available at the Resource Center, or a more complete listing of books, contact us at MCGS@txstate.edu.

Yiddish Words Found in English (a selection):

yiddish	definition	sample use
bob(kes)	beans, nothing	"What have you got? Bobkes."
cockamamie	crazy	"She's got another one of her cockamamie ideas."
chutzpeh	unmitigated gall	"Boy do you have a lot of chutzpah!"
farklemt	bummed out	"(sob) Now I'm getting all farklemt."
kvetsh	complainer, whiner	"He is such a kvetch!"
mazl-tov	good luck, congratulations	"Mazel tov on the new baby."
meshugeh, meshugass, meshugeneh	crazy, crazy person	"What are you, meshugeh?!?"
nebbish	a nobody, simpleton, nerd	"Her boy is such a nebbish."
nosh	to snack	"I was noshing all morning."
schlep	to drag, carry	"I had to schlep his stuff across town."
oi, oy	an exclamation (like oh!)	"Oi, you give me such a pain!"
phooey, fooley, pfui	disbelief, distaste, contempt	"Phooey on her!"
shalom	peace	"Shalom, welcome to our house."
schmaltz	grease, fat, (slang) flattery	"Don't get all schmaltzy on me."

substantial differences between the beliefs of, say, Catholics and Methodists, or Sunnis and Shiites. At the traditional extreme, Orthodox Jews follow a set of laws centering around 613 mitzvot, or commandments, found in the Torah, the first five books of the Hebrew Bible. At the modern extreme, Reform Jews exercise a great deal of personal interpretation of Jewish law and tradition.

There are roughly 13 million Jews in the world today. Of these about 5 million live in the United States, where they make up roughly 2% of the population. Another 5 million live in Israel, a nation established in 1948 in part to provide a safe haven for survivors of the Nazi Holocaust, which killed about a third of the total world Jewish population. Two holidays commemorating these events are coming up this week: Yom HaShoah, a memorial day for those who died in the Holocaust, observed this year on April 18, and Yom Ha'Atzma-ut, Israeli Independence Day, celebrated this year on April 26. Everyone is welcome to participate in holiday activities sponsored by the Jewish Community Association of Austin. For information, go to jcaaonline and click on events on April 18 and May 2.

My favorite expression of Jewish identity came from Albert Einstein, who said: "The pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, an almost fanatical love of justice, and the desire for personal independence—these are features of the Jewish tradition which make me thank my lucky stars that I belong to it." These characteristics of Jewish cultural tradition have resulted in the extraordinary numbers of Jewish scholars, writers, judges, social activists, artists, and so on, numbers far out of proportion to the small percentage of Jews in the overall population.

Dr. Cohen is the Director of Graduate Studies for the Department of English. He is 2003-2004 Minnie Stevens Piper Professor, and lists among his fields Postmodernism, and 19th/20th Century British and Irish Literature.

Notable Jewish* Americans:



Mel Blanc, (b.1908 - d.1989) known as "The Man of 1000 voices" Mel was the voice of popular and beloved animated cartoon characters, including Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Porky Pig, Tweety Pie, Sylvester, and many others.

Michael Dell, (b.1965) Began by selling computers out of his dorm room at the University of Texas. Dell pioneered the concept of selling computers directly to consumers, built to their specifications and without the added costs of retail distributors.



toches	buttocks, behind	"I'm going to pinch you on your toches"
mavin	connoisseur, expert, authority (fem)	"She's the web-maven of MCGS"
yenteh	gabby, talkative woman	"My grandmother is such a yenteh."
bubee	term of endearment, like "sweetie"	"Come over here, bubee."
shnecken	fruit and nut coffee roll	"One more shnecken before lunch."
shtick	piece, bit: a special bit of acting	"Being clumsy is his shtick."

from *Yiddish Words in English* and the *Yiddish Glossary*



The Thirteen Foundations of Jewish Belief:

1. The existence of the world or any part of it is dependent upon the existence of the single, unique Creator. But the existence of this Creator, the Master of the universe, is not dependent on anything.
2. This principle is known as "Yichud," G-d's Oneness. There is only one G-d, he is unique, and is without any divisions.
3. G-d has no body or any physical aspect, nor is His Power that of a physical body. If G-d were to have a body, he would not be infinite.
4. G-d has always existed and always will. He is eternal. If this were not true, G-d would be limited by time, and no longer be infinite.
5. There is no individual or power besides G-d whom it is fitting to worship or serve. Even to worship or attribute independent power to intermediaries is forbidden.
6. G-d grants prophecy, "Nevu'a," to people who have perfected their personal character and who follow all the commandments of the Torah.
7. The prophecy of Moses was greater than all other prophecy in four ways:
 - o It was not "heard" through any intermediary, but was directly from G-d.
 - o It was always given while Moses was wide awake, and in complete control of his faculties.
 - o Moses was not overcome with shaking and dread, as the other prophets, but was calm and alert.
 - o Moses had the incredible ability to summon prophecy at will, while other prophets had to prepare and wait for G-d to appear.
8. The words of the Written Torah (the "Five Books of Moses") are true and completely accurate words of G-d, dictated by G-d to Moses. G-d also taught Moses how to carry out the commandments found in the Written Torah; these G-d given explanations form part of what we call the Oral Torah.
9. Since the entire Torah comes from G-d, no one may add or subtract from it.
10. G-d is aware of all our actions and does not ignore them.
11. There is reward and punishment for our actions in this world.
12. The Messiah (anointed one), a descendant of King David, will come (and can come) at any time. He will be wiser than King Solomon and possess a level of prophecy close to that of Moses.
13. There will eventually be a revival of the dead.

source: *Maimonides' introduction to the tenth chapter of the*



Alan Greenspan, (b. 1926) American economist, chairman of the Federal Reserve Board (1987 to present). Greenspan is a strong supporter of the free market and an opponent of government intervention in the economy.

Gilda Radner , (b.1946 - d.1989) First person cast for Saturday Night Live, stayed for five seasons, portraying: Baba Wawa, Rosanne Rosannadanna, Lisa Loopner, and Emily Litella. Her husband, Gene Wilder founded "Gilda's Club" in her honor, where people of all ages with cancer can come and support each other.



Mel Brooks , (b.1926) Comedy writer-director whose satiric touch and farcical stylings are influenced both by vaudeville and Borscht Belt shtick. Dismissed by some as "too Jewish," his first film, *The Producers*, won Brooks an Oscar for Best Screenplay. He later adapted the movie for Broadway and won Tonys for Best Musical, Best Book of a Musical, and Best Musical Score.

Benny Goodman (b.1909 - d. 1986), Known as the "king of swing," Benny Goodman and his band were the first to play at Carnegie Hall in 1938. Known for his clarinet, Goodman toured the USSR for the US State Department in 1962, and continued to perform and record until his death at 77.



Allen Ginsberg, (b. 1926 - d. 1997) an American poet and leading apostle of the beat generation. His first published work, *Howl and Other Poems* (1956), sparked the San Francisco Renaissance and defined the generation of the '50s with an authority and vision that had not occurred in the United States since T. S. Eliot captured the anxiety of the 1920s in *The Waste Land*.

* note that "Jewishness" has the meanings both of "adherence to the religion of Judaism" and "membership in the ethnic group 'Jews'." People of both groups are included.

source: Wikipedia and Encyclopedia4u.com.

Mishnaic tractate, Sanhedrin. Written by Rabbi Boruch Clinton.
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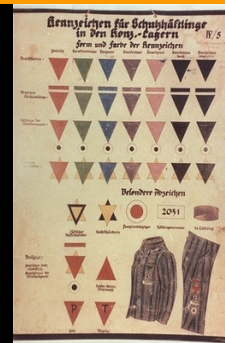
Hillel at Texas State

Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life provides opportunities for Jewish students to explore and celebrate their Jewish identity through its global network of over 500 regional centers, campus Foundations and Hillel student organizations. Hillel is working to provoke a renaissance of Jewish life.

Last year members of the Texas State Hillel group spent the week in front of Flowers Hall housed in a structure (Sukkah) built by the group to celebrate the final stages of a month-long holy season (Sukkot). The group was started at Texas State five years ago when students questioned the absence of a Hillel at the university.

More resources for researching Jewish Heritage and the Holocaust online

- [Ask a Rabbi](#)
- [Maven Search](#)
- [Anne Frank House](#)
- [Jewish News Links](#)
- [March of the Living](#)
- [The Anti-Defamation League](#)
- [The Simon Wiesenthal Center](#)
- [Consolidated World Wide Web Resources for the Holocaust](#)
- [United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#)
- [El Paso Holocaust Museum and Study Center](#)



Printable Calendar of MCGS & Related Texas State University-San Marcos Events



Texas State University
SAN MARCOS