MEMBERS OF THE “LEOPOLIS” HUMANITARIAN SOCIETY IN LVOV (1899-1938): A GROUP PORTRAIT

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Abstract: The initiative of establishing B’nai B’rith in Lvov was put forward by Samuel Horowitz, a prominent member of the local Jewish community. On 5 October 1899, the statute of the “Leopolis” Humanitarian Society was registered with a rescript issued by the Lvov Governorship. On 29 October of the same year, the establishing meeting took place. This way, the Order’s presence in what was at the time the capital of Galicia, and after 1918 a provincial city of the Second Republic of Poland, was officially approved.

This analysis offers an image of an organization gathering people of high social trust, excellent educational background, and wealth. The majority of them were people who had built their professional position consistently and laboriously. The abovementioned data justifies the claim that the people gathered in Leopolis were not careerists seeking the chance to make a mark. Membership did not open their careers, but was rather a crowning achievement. The exclusive character of the Order sealed the high social and professional standards of its members. Crossing the threshold of the lodge was viewed as a distinction, and serving a function there was a true honor. In this matter, we can see a similarity between Leopolis and other Polish lodges. Another similarity is related to the range of basic activities undertaken by the Lvov brethren, among which was giving scientific and popular lectures, propagating reading, and caring for the poor and the orphaned. The charity activity of the brethren was mainly aimed at Jews, but Christians became its beneficiaries as well.

I. Introduction

The Independent Order B’nai B’rith is usually referred to by the shortened name B’nai B’rith. The organization was established in New York on 13 October 1843 by Heinrich Jones, an emigrant of German origin. The Order’s members came to Europe through Germany, where in 1880 the first European B’nai B’rith lodge was created. The first extended European structure of the Order was established in Germany in 1882 under the name of Deutsche Reichsloge. A decade later, the Order officially appeared in Galicia.

1 This project was financed by a grant from the National Science Centre (DEC-2012/07/B/HS3/03729).
2 Domańska 2002: 77.
nia. Lodges established in this Austrian province came under the authority of the Grand Lodge in Vienna. The statute of the “B’nai B’rith – Solidarity” Society in Kraków was registered with a rescript issued by the Lvov Governorship on 15 October 1892.³ The official establishment of the Lvov lodge took place years later, as shall be elaborated on in the following parts of the text.

By way of introduction, it should be mentioned that B’nai B’rith derived from the freemasonry movement, from which it borrowed the conduct of meetings, symbols and ranks. The members of lodges called themselves brethren, just like masons. Rituals based on the masonic tradition made numerous references to the Old Testament. On the other hand, the mysticism of masonry was abandoned, especially the part relating to Christianity.⁴ It was in this manner that the association, nowadays often present among the interests of historians of masonry and paramasonry, emerged. The fact that this organization originated from masonry proves that its Jewish members did not feel satisfied. They were usually people of high education and decent relations with Christians. However, they did not decide to fully assimilate, and wanted to preserve their Jewish identity. Having been raised in this community, they considered themselves its heirs and debtors. Therefore, they wanted to help those Jews whose situation was worse, often through no fault of their own – impoverished, ill, elderly, orphaned and abandoned. In such circumstances, it is not surprising that B’nai B’rith soon lost its paramasonic character and evolved in the humanitarian direction. An important part of its activities was the battle against anti-Semitism. At the beginning of the 20th century, some lodges engaged politically, supporting the development of Zionism. This is rather interesting, as initially brethren were hostile towards the idea. Nowadays, B’nai B’rith remains a humanitarian, educational and cosmopolitan organization.

Leon Chajn is the pioneer of modern studies concerning the history of the B’nai B’rith humanitarian society in Poland. His efforts led to the publication of a highly interesting study.⁵ Chajn mentions B’nai B’rith numerous times in his monumental work entitled Polskie wolnomularstwo 1920-1938 [Polish Freemasonry 1920-1938].⁶ The organization was also noticed by Ludwik Hass, one of the most prominent Polish experts on masonry.⁷ The growing interest in the subject can be seen from the 1990s onwards, mainly as a consequence of the work of Bogusława Czajecka, who benefited from the rich legacy of the organization stored in the National Archive in Kraków. The results of Czajecka’s studies can be found in Archiwum Związku Żydowskich Stowarzyszeń Humanitarnych B’nai B’rith w Krakowie (1892-1938). Zarys dziejów Związku. Historia zespołu i inwentarz [The Archive of the Association of B’nai B’rith Jewish Humanitar-

⁵ Chajn 1973.
⁶ Chajn 1984.
⁷ Cf. e.g. Hass 1984: according to Indeks obrzędów wolnomularskich i organizacji parawolnomularskich; idem 2004: according to Indeks wolnomularskich odłamów, nurtów, obrzędów, formacji ponadpaństwowych, porozumień interobediencyjnych, organizacji pokrewnych i parawolnomularskich; idem 1982: according to Indeks obrzędów wolnomularskich i organizacji parawolnomularskich; idem 1987: according to Indeks obrzędów wolnomularskich i organizacji parawolnomularskich; idem, Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego 1977, no. 4 (104): 3-26.
ian Societies in Krakow (1892-1938). An outline of the Association’s History]. The monograph in question allowed researchers to start systematic studies devoted to B’nai B’rith. The works of Anna Kargol take the lead. In 2004 she defended a PhD thesis entitled Dzialalność i charakter żydowskiego Stowarzyszenia Humanitarnego B’nai B’rith w latach 1892-1938 [The activity and character of the B’nai B’rith Jewish Humanitarian Society between 1892 and 1938] at the Jagiellonian University. Based on this study, a book entitled Krakowska Loża “Solidarność” 1892-1938 [The Krakow Lodge “Solidarity” 1892-1938] was published. Kargol is also the author of Po Jakubowej drabinie. O rytuale inicjacyjnym żydowskich lóż parawolnomularskich B’nai B’rith w okresie międzywojennym [Climbing Jacob’s Ladder. The Initiation Ritual of Jewish B’nai B’rith Paramasonry Lodges in the Interwar Period], and has written numerous articles devoted to the organization in question. A book by Hanna Domańska, Gdańsk Zakon Synów Przymierza. Dzieje żydowskiego wolnomularstwa w Gdańsku i Sopocie, lata 1899-1938 [Sons of the Covenant Order in Gdańsk. The History of Jewish Masonry in Gdańsk and Sopot between 1899 and 1938], was also received with a great interest by the academic community. The author of the present paper has written on the subject previously.

In the Second Polish Republic, there were ten B’nai B’rith lodges: “Concordia” in Katowice, “Amicitia” in Poznań, “Esra” in Bielsko, “Solidarity” in Kraków, “Leopolis” in Lvov, “Michał Sachs” in Chorzów, “Fraternity” in Warsaw, “Humanitas” in Przemyśl, “Montefiore” in Łódź and “Achdut” in Stanyslaviv. Some of them have not been studied yet. In the case of Lvov, there is a brochure by Jakub Honigsman entitled Бней-Бріт у Львові. Історичний нарис [B’nai B’rith in Lvov. A Historical Outline]. It is a valuable memoir publication, published on the 100th anniversary of the society’s establishment. It does not, however, satisfy the need for a separate monograph. The present article also does not aspire to exhaust the subject. It only constitutes an attempt to portrait the members of Leopolis with regard to their education, professional and social activities and places of residence.

II. Brethren in archive records

The initiative of establishing B’nai B’rith in Lvov was put forward by Samuel Horowitz, a prominent member of the local Jewish community. On 5 October 1899, the statute of the “Leopolis” Humanitarian Society was registered with a rescript issued by the Lvov Governorship. On 29 October of the same year, the establishing meeting took
place. This way, the Order’s presence in what was at the time the capital of Galicia, and after 1918 a provincial city of the Second Republic of Poland, was officially approved.\textsuperscript{17} Guests from Vienna, Kraków, Bielsko and Prague participated in the opening ceremony.\textsuperscript{18} Leopolis’ first base was located in the building at 12 Bernstein Street. Efforts to obtain its own building were soon made, but the realization of this plan took a long time. Premises in the newly constructed building at 10 3\textsuperscript{rd} May Street were opened on 30 October 1932.\textsuperscript{19}

The activity of Leopolis was run by a board composed of a president, a vice-president, a secretary, a tax clerk and a treasurer (Statute §8). During the interwar period, the society was managed by a mentor, a president, a vice-president, a recording secretary, a treasuring secretary, a treasurer, a marshal and a guard. Until 1938, the function of president was held by Emil Byk, Rabbi Jecheskel Caro, Józef Czeszer, Ludwik Gruder, Samuel Horowitz, Aleksander Meyer, Emil Mieses, Emil Parnas, Jonasz Reinhold, Szyman Schaff, Filip Schleicher, Józef Parnas, Rubin Sokal, Lewi Freund, Wiktor Chajes, Witold Wiesenberg, Michal Ringel, Emil Grabscheid, Marceli Buber and Jecheskel Lewin.\textsuperscript{20} The board had the following committees at its disposal: tax, appeal, for the ill, for support, for peace, and for intellectual education (§12).\textsuperscript{21}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{leopolis_seal.png}
\caption{The seal of the “Leopolis” Humanitarian Society}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{17} CDIA, The Statute of Leopolis (B’nai B’rith) in Lvov, fond 701, desc. 2, case 1022.
\textsuperscript{18} ANK, B’nai B’rith, sign. BB 387.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{20} Górowski 1937: 67-68.
\textsuperscript{21} CDIA, fond 701, desc. 2, case 1022.
The society’s aims described in its statute are the following: “intellectual and moral ennobling of its members, propagating the purest human principles of love of one’s neighbor, maintaining dignity and honor, raising the material and moral standards of the followers in the country, providing members afflicted by ill-fated events with help, and supporting them materially in critical moments, caring for the ill, widows and orphans of the members.”\(^{22}\) The following means were declared to realize these goals: “a) organizing enlightening lectures, distributing good books, b) founding libraries, c) propagating friendship and noble sociability, d) participation in emergency actions in case of general disasters.”\(^{23}\)

One may interpret these sentences as a collection of high-flown slogans, but it is not about our beliefs, but about the facts that can be read from the following part of the statute and other source materials. There is justification to suppose that such noble challenges could only be handled by righteous and mature people, as well as well-off ones. Some of these issues were guaranteed in the statute, e.g. the basic criteria for a candidate: “a) 24 years of age or legally authenticated emancipation of a minor, b) an irreproachable character, c) good physical and psychological condition” (§5).\(^{24}\) In fact, a deep insight was gained in this matter by selecting appropriate brethren and making the candidate complete a question sheet.\(^{25}\) On the basis of the accessible sources, it is hard to estimate the percentage of rejected candidates. It can be stated for sure, however, that not all of them were accepted. Wiktor Chajes claims that there was “a severe runoff voting.”\(^{26, 27}\)

The registration fee (50 Frt) and yearly contribution (36 Frt) were precisely fixed.\(^{28}\) The following matters were also written down: the reasons for a member’s withdrawal (by means of a written statement) or exclusion by means of the general assembly’s resolution: legal statement for an offence and loss of honorary rights, a major offence of the society’s rules and interests, default on payment of fees for six months, concealment of facts that could have affected the enrolment of a candidate or false answers to the questions.\(^{29}\) In reality, the Lvov lodge of B’nai B’rith consisted of people of high social esteem. A detailed insight into this is provided by means of statistics. Among 198 members of Leopolis there were: 90 doctors, 17 engineers, and one doctor engineer. These people constituted 55% of all the members (see Chart 1). In the remaining group, there were also many brethren with higher education degrees, but maybe less titled.

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\(^{22}\) Ibid.
\(^{23}\) Ibid.
\(^{24}\) Ibid.
\(^{25}\) ANK, B’nai B’rith, sign. BB 387.
\(^{26}\) Runoff voting (ballotage) – a secret voting with the use of white and black.
\(^{27}\) Chajes 1997: 67.
\(^{28}\) §3. CDIA, fond 701, desc. 2, case 1022.
\(^{29}\) §22. Ibid.
The majority of brethren consisted of representatives of free professions, industrialists, bankers, medical doctors, traders, teachers, proprietors, judges, architects and pharmacists (Chart 2). Most of them were people who had built their professional position consistently and laboriously. Their work was based on direct contact with other people, mutual understanding, respect and trust. Breaking those rules could result in losing not only one’s good name, but also the basic source of income. It should be remembered that the legislation, social norms and unwritten code of honor of the time set the standards very high. Leopolis, based on the social group in question, had a guarantee that it was gathering righteous people. I conducted research on press titles and police records collected in the Lvov archives, on which basis no charges can be levelled against any of the brethren.


The above data justifies the claim that the people gathered in Leopolis were not careerists seeking the opportunity to make a mark. Membership did not open their careers, but was rather a crowning achievement. The exclusive character of the Order sealed the high social and professional standards of its members. Crossing the threshold of the lodge was viewed as a distinction, and serving a function there was a true honor. A reflection of this fact can be seen in the attitude of Wiktor Chajes, who became the society’s president in 1927. At the time he had already served an internship in the City Council of Lvov and was a successful bank owner (Schütz and Chajes), together with his brother-in-law (Chajes’s activities shall be described in due course). Under the date of 15 December 1927, he noted in his Diary: “I was chosen to become the president of B’nai B’rith (“Leopolis”). It is the highest honor that a Jew can experience in Lvov.”

Membership in the organization allowed Jews to make numerous contacts. There is, however, nothing unusual in this fact. Many Jews integrated within their own community and the related societies. Entrepreneurs gained a chance to get to know each other in the local Chamber of Commerce and Industry and other professional organizations (trade, craft, etc.). Intellectuals had at their disposal various societies created especially for them. What was the reason for regarding B’nai B’rith as special and attractive? Much can be explained by looking at the specificity of other organizations, whose members, at least potentially, could be Jews. Among them, we can list those related to the Jewish Community, although they did not always declare their religious activity. Then there were committees (e.g. business, scientific), which had nothing to do with the Jewish Community. We can also enumerate those managed by Christians, some of which were later dominated by Jews in terms of numbers of members (a good example might be the aforementioned Chamber of Commerce and Industry). Meanwhile, there was a considerable group of Jews who sought something in between and something more. The key to understanding the B’nai B’rith phenomenon lies, among other aspects, in its statute goals. These were aimed at people who expected a lot of themselves. Based on the documents analyzed, it is impossible to state with one hundred per cent certainty how diligent the members of B’nai B’rith were in fulfilling those noble and high-flown statements. We know, however, what their ideals were, and this tells a lot about these people. There is one more important aspect. Namely, the fact that to become a member of the Order, one had to be Jewish. At the same time, following the statute, “political, religious, and community matters are excluded from the Society’s activity as a rule” (§1). Consequently, a non-confessional organization emerged, albeit one that concentrated people conscious of their (Jewish) roots. This can be confirmed by the fact that the Order was evaded by many outstanding, but assimilated Lvov scholars of Jewish origins. These included many professors of philosophy, mathematics, history, or law, who assumed an indifferent religious attitude. B’nai B’rith matched the needs of people of various religious engagement. We could find rabbis there (Samuel Wolf Gutmann, Jecheskel Lewin, Lewi Freund), but also secularized and partially assimilated people. After all, they fulfilled the

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31 From the second half of the 19th century until World War II the Lvov Chamber of Commerce and Industry was the main institution creating the city’s and region’s economic life. To date, it has not been studied in a monograph. One is currently being prepared by Dr Konrad Meus.
32 CDIA, fond 701, desc. 2, case 1022.
obligation of identifying with their nation and remaining unconverted. It should also be noticed that the Order did not limit itself to one profession only, allowing brethren to be enriched. Scholars fulfilled knowledge anger and the scientific aspirations of entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs, on the other hand, offered their own funds to finance scientific, artistic, and social projects undertaken by scholars. It was a beneficial and discrete relationship for all involved parties.

Members of the Leopolis Society were mainly citizens of Lvov – 164 people constituted 83% of the total (Chart 3). Other brethren lived in: Drohobych (9), Boryslav (4), Vienna (4), Ternopil (3), Romanian Chernivtsi (2), Warsaw (2), Gródek Jagielloński (2), Gdańsk (1), Kamitz near Bielsko (1), Korostow in Skole Oblast (1), Velyky Mosty (1), Stryi (1) and Tel Aviv (1). In total, 17% of the members lived outside Lvov. These numbers do not reflect the full scale of Leopolis’ influences. The general remark is that the main field of impact was East Galicia. There is no doubt about that. The greatest group of brethren from outside Lvov were the inhabitants of Drohobych. This is one of the most important centers surrounding the capital of Galicia. The distance to Przemyśl was similar, and Stanyslaviv was slightly further away (today: Ivano-Frankivsk). However, the two cities played a more significant role than Drohobych, and had a greater demographic potential. Why, then, do we not find a greater number of their inhabitants among the brethren? The basic answer is the following one: in the period concerned in the study, which is the year 1937, both cities had their own lodges: “Humanitas” in Przemyśl (established on 18 March 1924) and “Achdut” in Stanyslaviv (established on 14 February 1928). The emergence of the two organizations was highly influenced by Leopolis members.

![Diagram](https://chart.example.com)


In an essay devoted to the history of Humanitas in Przemyśl, its members recall: “The initiative of establishing the lodge came from the venerable Brother Professor Doctor

33 See Sroka 2011: 159-168.
Moses Schorr, who wished his hometown had a branch of our order. Thanks to his efforts, twenty citizens of Przemyśl were accepted and ceremonially introduced into the venerable lodge of Leopolis on 4 June 1922. After some time, yet another citizen of Przemyśl was enrolled. The ceremonial opening of Humanitas in Przemyśl on 18 March 1924 was conducted by brother ex-president, Józef Parnas from Leopolis. Just like in the case of Achdut, brethren from Lvov supported Humanitas, also in everyday activities, and on 22 May 1926 some of them participated in the opening of the lodge’s seat at 6 Grodzka Street in Przemyśl. Previously, it was the Lvov lodge that gained external help. Its establishment was supported by Krakow brethren from the Solidarity lodge. They also came up with the idea of creating a Poland-wide structure after 1918 (under the name of the Grand Lodge).

The standard activities of the Leopolis brethren were mainly their meetings, during which organizational and social matters were discussed and scientific and general lectures were delivered. For instance, in 1927 lectures were delivered by Róža Melzer (“Lady Member of Parliament”), Rubin Sokal (“The most urgent matters”), Mose Allerhand (“On Hamlet”), Józef Kohn (“Spinoza and Jewishness”), Giza Fränklow (“Regina Liliental – life and works”), Józef Mayer (“The sources and psychology of anti-Semitism”), Henryk Lilien (“Achad-Ha’am: portrait and works”), Arnold Freilich (“The role of inventions and discoveries in science”), Leon Reich (“The Three Congresses (Zurich – Geneva – Basel)”), Salomon Igiel (“The immortality of the soul in contemporary metaphysics”), and Róža Melzer (“Eternal youth”). In 1930, among the invited lecturers were: Józef Awin (“Mauryca Gottlieb”), Igiel (“Evil – its sources and ways of overcoming it”), Jaffe, the poet (“Spring in Palestine”), Róža Melzer (“Simche Furman (a short story)”), Mrs. Freund (“The life and activities of sisters from the Humanitas Lodge in Przemyśl”), Schaff (“At the threshold of a new era in social care”), Sokal (“Tobiasz Aszkenaze”), Michał Ringel (“Masaryk and Balfour”), Lilien (“Educational values of the ancient literature and art”), Schaff (“Deliberations related to Fink’s ‘Mich hungert’”), Cecylia Klaften (“The outcome of the congress on fighting with white slavery”), Rabbi Lewin (“On youth associations”), Rabbi Freund (“On the problem of Jewish youth education”), and Martin Buber (“Der jüdische Messianismus”). Much energy was consumed by creating separate lodges in Przemyśl and Stanyslaviv. Among the achievements of Leopolis, it should also be mentioned that in 1927 it created the Association of Sisters, gathering women interested in activities similar to those conducted by men from Leopolis.

34 ANK, B’nai B’rith, sign. BB 387.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
38 In the documents, some of the lecturers’ names lack their first names, ibid. The Leopolis Jewish Humanitarian Society in Lvov – speeches and lectures delivered during various meetings by prominent members of the Society, sign. BB 385. The speech of brother secretary Dr Maks Schaff delivered during the meeting on 13 October 1928 at Leopolis entitled “On the problems of BB,” sign. BB 386; Quarterly and annual reports of the Leopolis Lodge in Lvov on the entirety of activities.
A great deal of significance was attached to popularizing readership and care for the poor, especially orphans. The development of anti-Semitism was observed closely and the members of the society tried to fight it in their regions; however, it did not bring visible effects. International affairs were discussed, including – apart from the previously mentioned anti-Semitism (which was present mainly in Germany and Italy during the interwar period) – the question of Zionism. In the 1930s, there were attempts to address the problems related to the global economic crisis and to the control of its outcomes among the members of the Jewish community in Lvov (subsidies for charity, cultural and scientific organizations, support for hard-up brethren – e.g. by means of low interest rate loans, etc.). The activities of the brethren can be divided into individual and collective. Leon Topf promoted education and provided patronage for the Female Vocational School in Lvov. Samuel Nebenzahl was the head of the Social Services Agency of the community orphanage. Maurycy Herman Wohlfeld took care of war orphans. An example worth quoting is that of aid for fire victims from Uhniv and Przeworsk, given in 1930 by the whole lodge and individual members. Apart from that, there were social meetings, Purim and Hanukah evening parties and many other celebrations organized at the Leopolis headquarters.

The brethren’s charity activity was mainly aimed at Jews, but Christians became its beneficiaries as well. A good example of this is the Israeli Hospital in Lvov, opened on 7 June 1903. It was created thanks to the funding of Brother Maurycy Lazarus, who was the director of a credit bank for many years, and his wife Róża. The institution met all the standards of the time. There was a chemical-bacteriological laboratory, clinic rooms and a large operation room, situated on the first floor, between the two wings of the building, as well as 100 beds. Within one year, about 1100-1200 patients were treated on the wards, and more than 20,000 in ambulatories, one third of whom were Catholics. They received professional care from doctors, among whom were brethren: Dawid Ehrlich, Jakub Münzer, Samuel Oberländer, Marian Rapaport (senior registrars) and Samuel Meisels (director).

The first president of Leopolis, Emil Byk, worked hard to become one of the most prominent local politicians in Lvov. Between 1880 and 1905 he had the mandate of city councilor. He rendered a service to the city gaining a 10 million zloty loan, which made financing of the most important council investments possible (building waterworks, theatre, schools, shelters, new pavements, streets, lights and many more). Later, he negotiated with the government very attractive tax concessions over the date by which the loan was to be paid off. In 1891, he was elected to the Council of State, and became a member of the Polish Circle. Another brother, Filip Schleicher, was a member of the City Council of Lvov between 1909 and 1914. In 1914, he was elected vice-mayor of the city. He gained renown due to his invincible attitude during the First World War.

40 Ibid.
41 Ibid.
42 Mehrer 1906: 8-12.
44 Sroka 2012: 477.
46 Ibid.: 490.
Together with the mayor, Tadeusz Rutowski, he worked persistently to supply the city with food. Sixty-five popular canteens were created thanks to him. In November 1918, when Lvov became occupied, the Ukrainians offered him the supplies minister portfolio in the government of the West Ukrainian People’s Republic, but he refused to accept it. In 1919, the city councilors elected him vice-president once again. He served this function until 1927. In 1919, he was decorated with the “Orlęta” badge. In 1921, he received the Officer’s Cross “Polonia Restituita”.48 In 1922, he worked for Antoni Ponikowski’s government in the Economic Committee of the Council of Ministers. He also took the responsibility for creating the Extraordinary Committee for Fighting High Prices. Apart from that, he constantly took care of Jewish orphans, and was president of the Committee for Care of Jewish War Orphans.49 Wiktor Chajes was another brother who willingly engaged in public matters. In 1913 he was elected to the City Council of Lvov. When Poland regained its independence, he became a board member of the Lvov Stock Exchange.50 In 1930, he was honored with the Officer’s Cross “Polonia Restituita” for his social work, and in 1933, he received the independence medal.51 In 1930, he became the vice-president of Lvov, a post which he held until the beginning of the Second World War. After his arrest by NKVD, he died – most likely murdered – in 1941.

To complete the image, we should note that not all the members were active to the same degree. Some of them even shunned their basic duties, such as taking part in the meetings and paying obligatory fees.52 In 1924, when the Leopolis lodge had 228 members (on 1st January), only about 60 of them participated in the meetings (the lowest number was 42, and the highest 84 members). The absenteeism of some of the brethren was related to their advanced age, or to the fact that they lived outside Lvov. However, the attitude of the others cannot be excused. The incomplete source base makes it impossible to say anything about the measures taken against them.53

The Leopolis Humanitarian Society ceased its activities in 1938, just like the rest of the B’nai B’rith lodges in Poland, closed down by the President of the Polish Republic’s decree issued on 22 November 1938, on the basis of which all freemasonry societies in Poland were to be disbanded. At the time, B’nai B’rith no longer had a parafreemasonry character, having become a typical charity-educational organization. The opinion of some that the government’s decision was an expression of anti-Semitism therefore seems to be legitimate. Wiktor Chajes, having been agitated, noted in his Diary: “B’nai B’riths were disbanded and we were made masons. Who makes these stupid jokes in Warsaw? What is the purpose of separating the Jewish elite from the rich American Jews? ‘Briths’ have existed for over 100 years in America, and almost 50 years here, and what do we have to do with masonry? What nonsense, what evidence of the government’s weakness, yielding to the nationalist demagogy.”54 In Poland, similarly to other European countries,

49 Ibid.: 502.
50 Świątek 2005: 365.
51 Almanach żydowski 1937: 475.
52 ANK, B’nai B’rith, The correspondence of the Leopolis lodge in Lvov with the Association on the number of members and the changes in numbers over time; the matter of regulation of the overdue membership fees for the Association, sign. BB 388.
53 ANK, B’nai B’rith, sign. BB 387; CDIA, fond 701, desc. 3, case 679.
54 Chajes 1997: 228-229.
the wave of anti-Semitism was rising. However, it was not Nazi-like here, but in the case of B’nai B’rith some similarities can be visible. In Nazi Germany, the organization was disbanded only a year before. Nobody took into account the unblemished opinion of the brethren, or their contribution to the development of local societies.  

As a result of the Second World War, Lvov became part of Ukraine, which in turn became part of the Soviet Union. At the time, the Leopolis organization could not be reactivated. This was possible only after the fall of the USSR and the declaration of independence of Ukraine in 1991. The lodge was re-established in 1995, thanks to significant help of brethren from various European countries. The greatest support was provided by the members of the “Hebraica Menorah” lodge from Munich. The Leopolis lodge took its name from Dr Emil Domberger. Professor Rudolf Mirski was elected the first president after the war. Between June 1996 and June 1998, Professor Jakub Chonigsman served as president. In October 1999, Leopolis celebrated its 100th anniversary, with guests from Germany, France, Israel, Austria and Monaco participating in the celebrations.

III. Conclusions

The present article complements the historiography of the international B’nai B’rith organization. It is modest in size, of a limiting and clearly specified title, and of a scope described in the introduction. My analysis offers an image of an organization gathering people of high social trust, excellent educational background, and wealth. In this matter, we can see a similarity between Leopolis and other Polish lodges. Another similarity is related to the range of basic activities undertaken by the Lvov brethren, among which was giving scientific and popular lectures, propagating reading, and caring for the poor and the orphaned.

Further research should explain the relations between Leopolis and the most important institutions for the Jewish community (with the Jewish Community in Lvov on top of them), as well as the key communities of the time: assimilators and Zionists. The cooperation of Leopolis and other Polish and international lodges also constitutes an interesting aspect. The organization operated very actively, and therefore the source material is extensive, varied (also in the linguistic sense) and scattered. As a consequence, the suggestion of preparing a monograph on Leopolis still remains valid.

Appendix

1. The list of members of the Leopolis B’nai B’rith Humanitarian Society in Lvov, with professions, places of residence and dates of entering (1937):
Dr Abend Jonasz, barrister, Ternopil, 9 I 1937.

55 For further information on the subject, see Kargol 2010.
56 http://www.bnaibritheurope.org/bbe/content/view/461/111/lang,en_GB/, 04.05.2014.
57 Хонігсман 1999: 31-32.
Members of the “Leopolis” Humanitarian Society in Lvov (1899-1938): a Group Portrait

Dr Adlersberg Paweł, barrister, Drohobych, 29 V 1937.
Dr Acht Abraham, medical doctor (ophthalmologist), Drohobych, 29 V 1937.
Dr Aleksandrowicz Marek, director of a joint-stock company “Gazy Ziemne”, Lvov, 24 X 1931.
Amkraut Samuel, director of the “Galicia” petroleum company, Lvov, 7 III 1931.
Anhauch Cavaliere de Maks, proprietor, industrialist, Chernivtsi, 5 V 1906.
Aschkenasy Adolf, pharmacist, owner of the “Pod złotym Słoniem” pharmacy, Lvov, 25 I 1908.
Dr Aschkenasy Henryk, director of the Western Bank, Warsaw, 25 I 1913.
Dr Atlas Józef, barrister, Lvov, 22 IV 1924.
Auerbach Marian, associate professor in Jan Kazimierz University, gymnasium professor, Lvov, 30 I 1932.
Axelrad Herman, industrialist, steam mill owner, Lvov, 24 IV 1920.
Dr Bacher Gabriel, barrister, Stanislawiv, 29 X 1904.
Eng. Badjan Grzegorz, headmaster of Dr Koriks craft school, Lvov, 14 XII 1935.
Dr Barchasz Zygmunt, barrister, Drohobych, 7 III 1931.
Dr Bardach Teofil, colonel, medical doctor, Lvov, 29 X 1921.
Dr Bauer Izydor Marek, musician, Lvov, 1 II 1930.
Dr Begleiter Henryk, medical doctor, senior registrar, Lvov, 29 X 1921.
Bergner Maurycy, director of the Łódź Discount Bank, Lvov, 11 V 1929.
Birnbaum Henryk, proprietor, Lvov, 29 IV 1904.
Birnbaum Ignacy, trader, Lvov, 29 X 1902.
Dr Birnbaum Zygmunt Wilhelm, lawyer and philosopher, Lvov, 7 III 1931.
Dr Bloch Leon, appellate court judge, Lvov, 21 I 1933.
Bloch Mauryce, bank director, Lvov, 18 III 1922.
Bodek Jakub, former senator, retired senior post inspector, Lvov, 29 X 1921.
Dr Brill Mendel, medical doctor, dentist, Lvov, 30 I 1932.
Dr Buber Leopold, proprietor, Lvov, 26 II 1920.
Dr Buber Marceli, barrister, Lvov, 17 I 1914.
Dr Bund Salomon, barrister, Lvov, 29 X 1899.
Chajes Wiktor, Lvov vice-president, Schütz and Chajes bank house owner, Lvov, 16 XII 1919.
Czaczkes Herman, pharmacist, Lvov, 7 III 1931.
Dr Czeszer Edwin, barrister, Vienna, 7 III 1914.
Dr Dattner Herman, barrister, Lvov, 13 I 1934.
Dr Dogilewski Mojżesz, barrister, Lvov, 14 XII 1935.
Diesendorf Jakub, paint warehouse owner, Lvov, 9 I 1937.
Dr Ehrlich Dawid, medical doctor – senior registrar in Lazarus Hospital, Lvov, 16 III 1901.
Eibuschütz Salomon, trader, Lvov, 9 I 1937.
Elster Aleksander, industrialist, Lvov, 26 II 1920.
Ettinger Marek, pharmacist, owner of “Pod Archangiolem Rafalem” pharmacy, Lvov, 26 II 1920.
Fadenzech Anzelm, director of General Credit Bank, Lvov, 7 III 1931.
Finkelstein Adolf, industrialist, co-owner of Finkelstein and Fehl, an iron commodities wholesale company, Lvov, 9 I 1937.
Eng. Finkelstein Bernard, industrialist, co-owner of Finkelstein and Fehl, an iron commodities wholesale company, Lvov, 9 I 1937.
Dr Franzos Juliusz, pharmacist, owner of a pharmacy in Ternopil, Lvov, 4 VI 1922.
Dr Fränkel Izrael, barrister, Lvov, 5 III 1921.
Dr Freilich Arnold, gymnasium professor, Lvov, 5 III 1921.
Freud Adolf, iron commodities and files wholesale company “Fischer”, Lvov, 9 I 1937.
Freund Lewi, rabbi, Lvov, 5 III 1921.
Freund Maurycy, “Małopolska” concern director, Boryslav, 9 I 1937.
Dr Fried Maksymilian, barrister, Lvov, 30 XII 1900.
Friedländer Józef, industrialist, owner of a mirror factory and glass grinding workshop, Lvov, 17 XII 1921.
Dr Fruchs Leon, barrister, Lvov, 29 V 1937.
Dr Gerstmann Zygmunt, barrister, Lvov, 18 I 1928.
Dr Geyer Meier, Assecuration Society director, Lvov, 28 XI 1925.
Goldmann Jakub, petroleum industrialist, Vienna, 12 IV 1924.
Grabscheid Emil, director of the General Credit Bank, Lvov, 6 XII 1919.
Dr Graf Nesanel, medical doctor, Lvov, 30 I 1932.
Gruft Julisz, “Koncern chmielowy” owner, Lvov, 14 XII 1935.
Dr Halpern Jakub, proxy in the “Premier” petroleum concern, Lvov, 29 X 1921.
Dr Handel Jakub, gymnasium professor, Lvov, 9 IV 1921.
Hausmann Fryderyk, co-owner of E. Hausmann, Lvov, 20 III 1913.
Dr Jonasz Herschdörfer, barrister, Drohobych, 13 V 1933.
Herman Filip, director of “Polmin”, Lvov, 11 V 1929.
Dr Herscher Ignacy, medical doctor, director of the General Hospital, Ternopil, 22 I 1921.
Horowitz Herman, director of a joint-stock Mortgage Bank, Lvov, 18 XII 1920.
Dr Hübel Rudolf, trader, Lvov, 14 XII 1935.
Dr Igel Salomon, gymnasium headmaster, Lvov, 29 I 1927.
Dr Insler Abraham, barrister, former member of Parliament, Lvov, 29 I 1927.
Kiesler Adlof, industrialist, Lvov, 7 V 1910.
Kikinis Eliasz, retired National Railway inspector, Lvov, 9 I 1937.
Kimmelmann Emil, proprietor, Lvov, 5 III 1921.
Kimmelmellmann Oswald, barrister, Lvov, 5 III 1921.
Dr Kohn Izaak, barrister, Stryi, 24 X 1931.
Kohn Józef, trader, Lvov, 9 IV 1921.
Kopelman Maurycy, industrialist, Lvov, 30 I 1932.
Dr Kreisberg Izysor, petroleum industry, Vienna, 7 V 1910.
Kriss Benjamin, director of the Warsaw Discount Bank, Drohobych, 17 I 1920.
Dr Kroch Henryk, barrister, Lvov, 13 I 1934.
Kulbinger Bernard, director of the company “Kontakt”, Lvov, 14 XII 1935.
Dr Landesberg Henryk, barrister, Lvov, 11 V 1929.
Dr Lauterstein Wilhelm, medical doctor, Lvov, 22 III 1924.
Dr Leder Salomon, barrister, Lvov, 7 III 1931.
Dr Leser Maksymilian, barrister, Lvov, 30 I 1932.
Dr Lewin Jecheskel, rabbi, Lvov, 28 XII 1929.
Dr Lion Dawid, retired appellate judge, barrister, Lvov, 12 IV 1924.
Lipschütz Leon, industrialist, Lvov, 24 III 1923.
Dr Locker Jakub, District Court judge, Lvov, 21 I 1933.
Dr Löwenherz Henryk, industrialist, Gdańsk-Oliwa, 17 I 1914.
Dr Luft Bertold, industrialist, director of a joint-stock company “M. Weinreb i Spółka”, Lvov, 8 XII 1923.


Dr Madfes Stanisław, barrister, Lvov, 24 III 1923.

Dr Margulies Joachim Maks, medical doctor, Gródek Jagielloński, 7 III 1931.

Margulies Maksymilian, director of the Mortgage Bank, Stanyslawiv, 26 II 1920.


Dr Mehrer Franciszek, medical doctor, Lvov, 8 XII 1923.

Mehrer Jakub, barrister, Lvov, 31 XII 1922.

Mehrer Norbert, bank director, Lvov, 29 X 1921.

Dr Meisel Michał, director of the Stock Association “Petrolea”, Boryslav, 9 I 1937.

Dr Meisels Samuel, medical doctor, director of the Lazarus’ Hospital, Lvov, 6 XII 1919.

Mieses Abraham, proxy of a joint-stock company “Oikos”, Lvov, 9 I 1937.

Dr Mischel Salomon, medical doctor, Drohobych, 18 I 1936.

Dr Moldau Samuel, medical doctor, Lvov, 13 I 1934.

Mościsker Simel, vice-director of the Mortgage Bank, Lvov, 13 I 1912.

Mund Ignacy, industrialist, co-owner of the Mund Brothers factory, Lvov, 17 XII 1921.

Mund Jakub, industrialist, co-owner of the Mund Brothers factory, Lvov, 18 XII 1920.

Mund Mauyczy, industrialist, co-owner of the Mund Brothers factory, Lvov, 18 XII 1920.

Dr Münzer Jakub, medical doctor, senior registrar in the Lazarus’ Hospital, Lvov, 4 VI 1922.

Münzer Leopold, professor of music, Lvov, 9 I 1937.

Dr Nathanson Herbert, clerk in the General Union Bank, Lvov, 5 III 1921.

Dr Neuwald Stanisław, retired tax advisor, Lvov, 30 I 1932.

Oberländer Paweł, trader, Lvov, 17 I 1914.

Oberländer Samuel, medical doctor, senior registrar in the Lazarus’ Hospital, Lvov, 25 I 1913.

Dr Parnas Józef, barrister, Lvov, 19 IV 1904.


Dr Rapaport Marian, medical doctor, senior registrar in the Lazarus’ Hospital, Lvov, 29 III 1902.

Dr Rapaport Artur, director of a syndicate of timber companies, Lvov, 31 XII 1922.


Dr Reich Jakub, barrister, Lvov, 30 I 1932.

Dr Reichenstein Jerzy, proxy of the Petroleum Association “Malopolska”, Lvov, 14 XII 1935.

Dr Reiner Józef, industrialist, Warsaw, 30 I 1932.

Dr Reiss Ignacy, barrister, Lvov, 21 I 1933.


Reiss Leopold, architect, Lvov, 17 I 1914.

Dr Reiss Salomon, barrister, Lvov, 6 VI 1922.

Reitmann Jerzy, proprietor, Korostów, Skole Oblast, 11 V 1929.

Rentschner Benedykt, trader, Lvov, 17 I 1920.

Dr Ringel Michał, barrister, former senator, Lvov, 31 XII 1922.

Dr Rittel Stanisław, secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, Chernivtsi (Romania), 26 II 1920.

Dr Rosenkranz Leon, barrister, Lvov, 21 I 1933.

Dr Rosmarin Henryk, barrister, former member of Parliament, Lvov, 17 I 1920.

Dr Rottenstreich Fischel, former member of Parliament, Tel Aviv, 28 XII 1920.

Dr Rothfeld Adolf, barrister, Lvov, 2 II 1924.

Dr Schaff Maks, barrister, Lvov, 2 IV 1924.

Schächter Wilhelm, architect, constructor, Ternopil, 7 III 1931.

Dr Schenker Emanuel, medical doctor, Lvov, 13 V 1933.

Dr Scherzer Edmund, barrister, Lvov, 29 X 1931.

Dr Scherzer Salomon, barrister, Lvov, 29 X 1931.

Dr Schmorak Emil, barrister, Lvov, 18 I 1928.
Schneider Arnold, director of the Lvov Brewery Stock Association, Lvov, 27 X 1923.
Dr Schönbach Ignacy, barrister, Lvov, 28 XI 1925.
Dr Schor Juliusz, secretary in the Warsaw Discount Bank, Lvov, 11 V 1929.
Schorr Zygmunt, writer and a publishing house owner, Lvov, 22 III 1924.
Schoetz Adolf, director of the General Union Bank, Lvov, 6 XII 1919.
Schoetz Zygmunt, vice-director of the General Credit Bank, Lvov, 15 II 1928.
Dr Schreiber Dawid, barrister, former senator, Lvov, 28 XI 1925.
Schumer Ludwik, proxy in the Stock Credit Bank, Lvov, 26 X 1912.
Schutzmann Leon, oil industrialist, Borysław, 21 I 1933.
Schutzmann Lipa, oil industrialist, owner of a refinery and mines, Lvov, 4 VI 1922.
Schütz Otto, clerk in the Stock Credit Bank, Lvov, 18 XII 1920.
Dr Schwarz Kopel, barrister, former member of Parliament, Lvov, 13 I 1934.
Selzer Dawid, trader, Lvov, 13 V 1933.
Eng. Seelenfreund Dawid, industrialist, Lvov, 18 III 1922.
Seelig Leon, timber industry, Velyki Mosty, 17 XII 1921.
Dr Sennensieb Marek, medical doctor, Lvov, 29 X 1904.
Singer Eugeniusz, director of the General Union Bank, Lvov, 1 IV 1905.
Dr Sokal Rubin, barrister, Lvov, 20 III 1913.
Sommer Józef, retired senior tax advisor, Lvov, Wlasna Strzecha, 24 III 1923.
Dr Sommerstein Emil, barrister, member of Parliament, Lvov, 18 I 1936.
Spätz Arnold, gymnasium professor, Lvov, 14 XII 1935.
Spätz Herman, school headmaster, Lvov, 31 XII 1922.
Stark Ludwik, trader, Lvov, 28 XII 1929.
Sternbach Herman, gymnasium professor, Lvov, 30 I 1932.
Strich Jakub, vice-director of the General Union Bank, Lvov, 1 II 1930.
Sueser Henryk, director of the Mortgage Bank, Lvov, 11 V 1929.
Tannenbaum Leon, barrister, vice-mayor of a city, president of the Board of the Jewish Community, Drohobych, 7 III 1931.
Topf Emil, industrialist, Lvov, 13 I 1934.
Dr Uber Joachim, medical doctor-dentist, Lvov, 15 III 1930.
Dr Wachtel Filip, vice-director of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Lvov, 7 III 1931.
Dr Wasser Ozjasz, barrister, Lvov, 17 I 1914.
Weichert Bernard, judge, Lvov, 21 I 1933.
Weinberg Juliusz, trader, Lvov, 31 XII 1922.
Weingarten Emanuel, trader, Lvov, 7 III 1931.
Weinreb Natan, trader, Lvov, 14 XII 1935.
Weinstein Seweryn, retired senior tax advisor, Kamitz near Bielsko, 7 III 1914.
Weintraub Gustaw, director of the Warsaw Discount Bank, Lvov, 20 IV 1907.
Dr Wiesenber Abrahm, notary public, Lvov, 17 XII 1921.
Wiesenber Jonasz, retired judge, Lvov, 24 IV 1920.
Wiesenber Maks, trader, Lvov, 5 III 1921.
Wiesenber Witold, barrister, Lvov, 24 III 1923.
Wolmer Jan, mine director, Lvov, 17 I 1914.
Dr Zausner Leon, barrister, Grodek Jagielloński, 24 III 1923.
Ziff Bernard, director of the Warsaw Commercial Bank, Lvov branch, Lvov, 7 III 1931.
Zipper Filip, trader, company owner of A. H. Zipper, Lvov, 28 XII 1929.
Dr Zucker Abraham, barrister, Lvov, 14 XII 1935.

2. The list of members of the Humanitarian Society “Leopolis” B’nai B’rith in Lvov, deceased before 1937:
Bader Józef
Beiser Jakub
Dr Berlstein Izydor
Dr Berlstein Jakub
Birnbaum Fabian
Dr Boral Leon
Braunstein Adolf
Bromberg Zygmunt
Buber Karol
Buber Mojżesz
Buber Salomon
Chajes Adolf
Dische Szymon
Elias Wilhelm
Ettinger Izydor
Dr Falk Dawid
Fried Ignacy
Glanz Zygmunt
Dr Goldhammer Artur
Dr Goldmann Bernard
Goldmann Gustaw
Goldstern Maurycy
Dr Gottlieb Henryk
Dr Hausmann Maurycy
Hescheles Ignacy
Hescheles Izydor
Dr Horowitz Jakub
Immerdauer Herman
Kallir Leon
Kapelusz-Kosecki Józef
Kimmelmam Efraim
Kimmelmam Markus
Klarfeld Juliusz Herman
Dr Klarfeld Leon
Dr Königsberger Samuel
Dr Korkis Abraham
Kraus Alfred
Kroch Jakub Salomon
Dr Landau Fryderyk
Landau Herman
Landau James
Dr Landau Julian
Landau Rachmiel
Dr Landau Zygmunt
Dr Landesberger Salomon
Lazarus Maurycy
Dr Lilien Adolf
Lindenbaum Maks
Liss Karol
Dr Löwenstein Natan
Dr Mahl Jakub
Maschler Klemens
Melzer Izaak
Mendrochowicz Wiktor
Dr Menkes Adolf
Dr Menkes Maks
Dr Nathansohn Bernard
Nathansohn Filip
Nebenzahl Samuel
Oberhard Aleksander
Eng. Orange Adolf
Ornstein Józef
Dr Paneth Marceli
Parnes Jakub
Piepes-Poratyński Jakub
Pollak Hugo
Pollak Samuel
Rapp Ignacy
Rappaport Dawid
Rappaport Joachim
Rappaport Karol
Rappaport Maurycey
Reich Herman Maurycey
Dr Reich Leon
Dr Reichenstein Marcin
Dr Reichenstein Marek
Reinhold Meier
Eng. Reininger Juliusz
Rochmis Jakub
Rosenfeld Leon
Rosenthal Leon
Rosenthal Nikodem
Rosner Józef
Rubel Herman
Rubinstein Jakub
Rud. Fleischel Antoni
Samuely Natan
Dr Sandauer Ignacy
Dr Sandauer Juliusz
Schaff Marceli
Schapira Adolf
Schleicher Szymon
Dr Schmelkes Maksymilian
Schmelkes Maurycey
Dr Schönfeld Maksymilian
Dr Schorr Adolf
Schreier Schulim
Dr Schur Samuel
Seemann Markus
Seidemann Benjamin
Sekler Wilhelm
Dr Silberstein Emil
Eng. Silberstein Maurycy
Dr Sokal Klemens
Sperber Natan
Sprecher Henryk
Dr Sprecher Maks
Dr Steinhardt Izydor
Sussmann Feliks
Dr Tenner Bernard
Topf Leon
Unger Józef
Weinreb Rudolf
Dr Wittlin Bernard
Dr Witz Justyn
Wohlfeld Mauryce
Wohlmann Zygmunt
Rabin dr Wolf Gutmann Samuel
Wollish Zygmunt
Zipper Henryk


ABBREVIATIONS

ANK – National Archive in Kraków (Archiwum Narodowe w Krakowie).
CDIA – Central State Archives of Ukraine in Lvov (Центральний Державний Історичний Архів України у Львові).

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a) Archival sources

1. The State Archive in Kraków
   The Archive of the Association of Jewish Humanitarian Societies “B’nai B’rith” in Kraków 1892-1938:
   – sign. BB 385: Jewish Humanitarian Society “Leopolis” “B’nai B’rith” in Lvov – speeches and lectures delivered on various meetings by the Society’s prominent members.
   – sign. BB 386: Dr Maks Scheff, brother secretary’s speech delivered during the meeting on 13th October 1928 in “Leopolis”, “On BB Problems”.
   – sign. BB 388: The correspondence of the “Leopolis” lodge in Lvov with the Association on the number of members and the changes thereof in time; the matter of regulation of the overdue membership fees for the Association.
   – sign. BB 392: Quarterly and annual reports of the “Leopolis” lodge in Lvov on the entirety of activities. Correspondence with the Association and related lodges on organisational and financial matters.
2. The Central State Archives of Ukraine in Lvov

- fond 701, desc. 2, case 1022: Statut Towarzystwa “Leopolis” (B’nai B’rith) we Lwowie;
- fond 701, desc. 3, case 679: Sprawozdanie z działalności Towarzystwa Humanitarnego „Leopolis”.

b) Printed sources


C) Secondary literature

Kargol, A. (2008b), Problem państwa żydowskiego w Palestynie w świetle korespondencji lóż B’nai B’rith, Ars Regia 10 (no. 17): 263-278.
Kargol, A. (2010), Likwidacja lóż B’nei B’rith w Niemczech i w Polsce (1933-1938), Ars Regia 12 (no. 19).

d) Internet sources

http://www.bnaibritheurope.org/bbe/content/view/461/111/lang_en_GB/, 4.05.2014.