

Leading the Conversation 2015 Annual Report

Dear Friends,

There's no question that 2015 was a year of dramatic, often turbulent events for American Jews. Terror attacks in Paris, San Bernardino and Jerusalem. A battle royale in Washington over the nuclear agreement with Iran. Elections in Israel. The Syrian refugee crisis. And the beginnings of a U.S. presidential campaign that has upended conventional political wisdom at every turn.

In our 119th year, the Forward covered every one of these events and many more, with our characteristically fearless reporting, meticulous editing, and fresh, deeply informed analysis not found anywhere else in the Jewish world.

But we did more than just cover these stories. We made history by sending a senior writer directly to Iran—the first time a journalist from a Jewish media outlet was able to report from inside that country since its 1979 Islamic revolution. Here at home, we weren't satisfied with the official answers we were getting. So our editor-in-chief sat down with President Obama in the Oval Office to ask him some tough questions on a range of critical issues—and got answers that helped shape the conversation.

Beyond the news, we also took time to appreciate the things that delight our senses, elevate our spirits, and bring meaning to our lives: the arts, cuisine, books, spirituality, and humor. The Forward's exploration of our Jewish culture, in all its rich variety, has never been more important, more surprising—or more fun.

Even as we moved the conversation forward, we haven't forgotten our roots. The *mameloshn* is alive and well in the pages of the *Yiddish Forverts*, with topical coverage of ideas and trends, articles about history and culture, and news of Yiddish life around the world.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without your support. We are grateful for the generosity of our many donors throughout the community. Year in and year out, you're here for us, and you demonstrate that the Forward is an indispensable source of information, connection and inspiration for American Jews. *Zayt gezunt.*


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1 Annual payment of \$50,000 grant
2 Annual payment of \$50,000 grant
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Unique Visitors to Forward.com up

+583%

2015 compared to 2009

2009

1,456,323
page views

2015

9,949,441
page views



Oval Office Interview with President Obama

JANE EISNER



A Jewish Journalist's Exclusive Look Inside Iran

LARRY COHLER-ESSES



Welcome to Haifa, the Israeli City that Refuses to Hate

NAOMI ZEVELOFF





The Jewish Senior Homes that Aren't (Anymore)

NATHAN
GUTTMAN

IN THE MIDST of last summer's debate surrounding the Iran nuclear agreement, the Forward made a bold move: we sent our intrepid news editor Larry Cohler-Esses on a reporting mission to Iran. His accounts of Iranian attitudes—from those of religious and political leaders to those of average citizens—toward America, Israel, and the Jewish people were nothing short of astounding.

Just a few weeks later, the Forward's editor-in-chief, Jane Eisner, was invited to the White House for an exclusive interview with President Obama. Jane asked the President a series of penetrating questions about the Iran deal, the U.S.-Israel relationship, and his relationship with the American Jewish community, and got answers that were thoughtful, deeply considered, and, to a degree, surprising.

We also covered the frightening rise in violent attacks by Palestinians against Israeli Jews that began in 2015, sparked by false rumors of an Israeli takeover of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. In the midst of that violence, we published a story by our Middle East correspondent, Naomi Zeveloff, about Jewish-Arab co-existence in Haifa, "the city that refuses to hate," that was both inspired and inspiring.

We found further inspiration in staff writer Paul Berger's story about an Orthodox charity that saves lives by promoting kidney donations—and an African American church leader considering whether to adopt a similar model for his community. And our hearts went out to the older adults described in staff writer Nathan Guttman's piece about the decline of a once-thriving group of B'nai Brith Jewish senior homes.



Can an Orthodox Charity Help Save Lives in This Man's Church?

PAUL BERGER

AT THE FORWARD, our coverage of Jewish culture isn't incidental—it's an essential aspect of our DNA. As the paper that first introduced writers like Isaac Bashevis Singer and Elie Wiesel to American audiences, the Forward's legacy demands that we continue to celebrate the writers, artists, musicians, actors, chefs and others responsible for our ever-evolving Jewish culture in all its dazzling diversity.

In 2015, we introduced "Soundtrack of Our Spirit," a new interactive, digital project at the Forward. Readers were asked to nominate the best and most inspiring new voices in Jewish music; we received 300 nominations and featured the top 12 selections—ranging from classical cantorial solos to folk-style tunes—on our website. The result was a marvelous display of talent that was both entertaining and uplifting.

Other highlights included opinion editor Sigal Samuel's fascinating chronicle of her search for her Indian Jewish roots; contributing writer Debra Nussbaum Cohen's review of the second season of "Transparent," explaining why this cultural phenomenon is, indeed, the "Jewiest" television show ever; an exploration by our food editor, Liza Schoenfein, of a remarkable new trend of Israeli haute cuisine in the United States; and deputy culture editor Ezra Glinter's lyrical review of three simultaneous museum exhibits examining Coney Island's rich history and its place in our shared imagination.

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14 →

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3,164



The Life and Death and Life of Coney Island

EZRA GLINTER





**Jill Soloway's
'Transparent'—the
Jewiest Show Ever**

DEBRA NUSSBAUM
COHEN



**Soundtrack
of Our Spirit**

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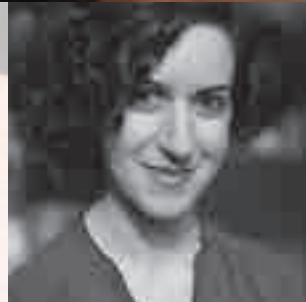
**The Year
We Tasted Israel**

LIZA SCHOENFEIN



Searching for My Indian Jewish Family, From Kabbalah to Bollywood

SIGAL SAMUEL

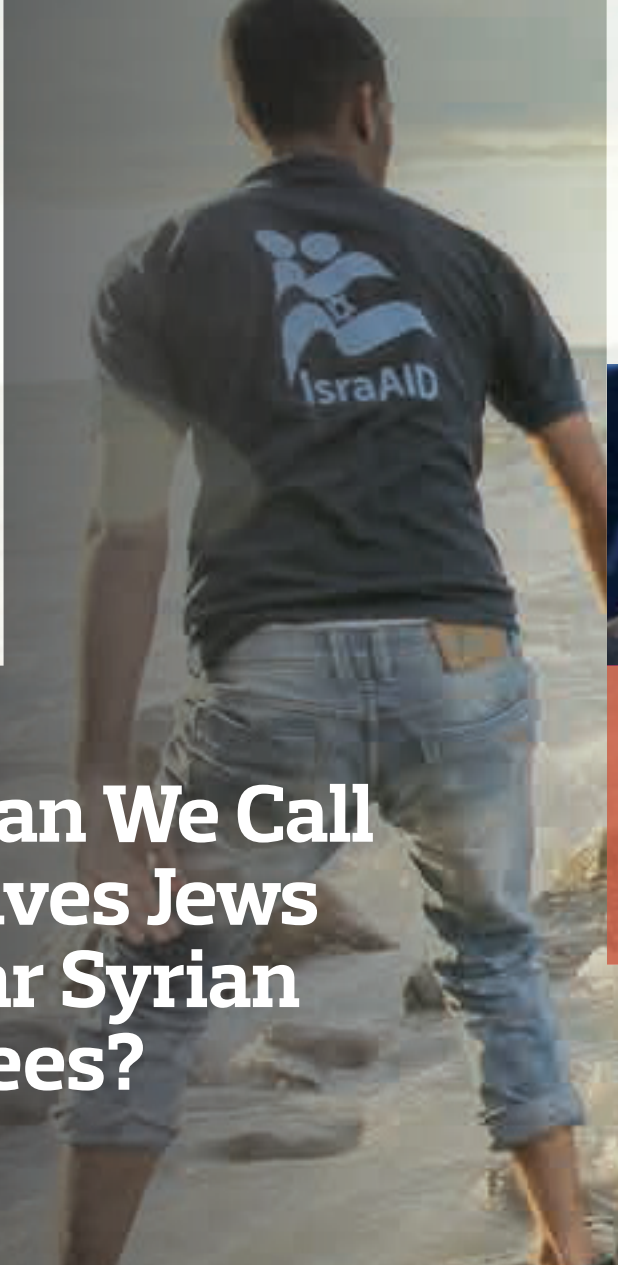


3.9 Million

Readers who clicked through from Facebook to Forward.com in 2015

How Can We Call Ourselves Jews and Bar Syrian Refugees?

ANNE ROIPHE



Five Signs that Netanyahu's Split with Israel Security Chiefs is a Crisis

J.J. GOLDBERG



How I Would Reaffirm Unbreakable Bond with Israel

HILLARY CLINTON



Let's Think Before Acting Rashly on Migrant Crisis

DEBORAH LIPSTADT



Why We Shouldn't Accept Rabbis Who Marry Non-Jews:

JANE EISNER



“TWO JEWS, THREE OPINIONS.” A cliché, perhaps, but it captures the essence of the Forward’s opinion journalism. A diversity of viewpoints is a Forward hallmark. For example, we published pieces by two well-known writers, Deborah Lipstadt and Anne Roiphe, with very different perspectives on the Jewish community’s response to the Syrian refugee crisis.

We’ve never been afraid to challenge the positions espoused by the institutions that serve our community—and in 2015, we upheld this Forward tradition in many instances. When the Reconstructionist movement announced its decision to admit and ordain intermarried rabbis, our editor-in-chief Jane Eisner explained why she felt this was a serious mistake—and why it matters to the broader Jewish community.

Our editor-at-large, J.J. Goldberg, has written some of the opinion journalism of which we’re most proud. His opinions, while forceful, are carefully argued and always grounded in rigorous, painstaking research. A prime example is his piece analyzing the points of divergence between Netanyahu and his security experts.

The Forward’s reputation is such that when a national figure seeks to address the Jewish community, we’re the natural venue. Thus, former Secretary of State and presidential candidate Hillary Clinton chose the Forward for her statement reaffirming the U.S.-Israel relationship.



IN 2015, the Yiddish Forverts continued to inform, connect, provoke and entertain its readers with lively commentary and insightful journalism, exploring a broad range of subjects of interest to both native Yiddish speakers and new students of the language.

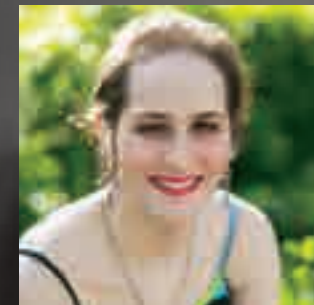
Some of our most memorable articles chronicled the year's milestone Yiddish cultural happenings. During the run-up to the Academy Awards®, we interviewed Geza Rohrig, the star of *Son of Saul* which ultimately won the best foreign language Oscar®. Rohrig describes his personal journey to reclaim his Jewish roots. We also reported on the launch party, in a hip East Village watering hole, for the new online Yiddish scholarly and cultural publication, *In Geveb*.

In addition, we explored the complex encounter between individuals in Hasidic and ultra-Orthodox communities and the modern world. For example, we reviewed *Samuel 613*, a remarkable short film about a young man who goes “off the path” in a London Satmar neighborhood. We interviewed transgender, ex-Hasid Abby (formerly Abe) Stein, who tells her unique story of transition to womanhood. And we published the personal account of popular ex-Hasidic blogger Ari Mandel.



Son of Saul Star Defends the Sonderkommando

RUKHL SCHAECHTER



אויס מאַנצביל

No Longer
a Man

NOAH BARRERA





100 יידישיסטן,
פארזאמלט
אין אַ באַר

100 Yiddishists
Walk Into a Bar

JORDAN KUTZIK




הינטער די קוליסן
"שמואל-613"

Behind the
Scenes of
"Samuel-613"

RUKHL
SCHAECHTER




טאַטע-מאַמע:
ס'איז אייער שולד"

It's Your Fault,
Mom and Dad

ARI MANDEL



Financial Summary

Expenses

Management:	\$1,296,837
Fundraising:	413,663
Newspaper and digital media: English:	5,900,954
Newspaper and digital media: Yiddish:	1,066,289

Total: **\$8,677,743**

Sources of Funds

Advertising:	\$940,651
Print subscriptions and newsstand sales:	886,653
Fundraising:	1,241,242
Other (rentals, royalties, misc.):	272,258
Investment income:	(752,403)
Funds drawn from invested assets:	6,089,342

Total: **\$8,677,743**

Audited financial statements available on request

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