

## Speaker helps build intellectual body armour to defend Israel

**Dave Gordon**  
Correspondent

TORONTO – There are still so many facts to learn about Israel and the Jewish claim to it, that many are stuck on how to tackle statements such as those from Sheikh Taissir Dayut Tamimi – the chief Islamic judge of the Palestinian National Authority – who said, “the Temple Mount has always been Islamic.”

At a recent talk, Richard Bass presented the critical thinking man’s session on Israel at Toronto’s Aish HaTorah Village Shul.

Bass, who has developed a book and 75-hour educational curriculum expounding on Jews’ historical connection to Israel, challenged the full auditorium of attendees how they would best refute the assertions of those who wish to undermine Jewish history.

Some intellectual tools he introduced were categorized as personal observation, tangible facts, common knowledge, tradition, shared values, expert authority, reasoning and personal credibility. “Virtually all of these are fallible in some way,” he said. “But the combination makes evidence more solid.”

To prove the Jewish claims vis-a-vis Tamimi, he brought in a Talmudic description of the Temple, 1st century historian Flavius Josephus’ works,



**Richard Bass has developed a book and 75-hour educational curriculum on the Jews’ historical connection to Israel.**

the Arch of Titus carvings of the Temple candelabra, and well-respected Islamic scholar Yusuf Ali’s commentaries, among other proofs.

Bass leads the JED Institute, which, according to its website focuses on “Jewish education so that all Jewish students possess the knowledge and pride to informatively debate the truth about Israel.”

Popularity of his talks is growing. In the past eight months he has spoken in Toronto, New York, New Jersey, San Diego, Boca Raton, and to students across Ontario. Last year, Bass gave a presentation to diplomats and NGO representatives in Basel, Switzerland, calling on their countries to recognize Israel’s rights.

Modules from the curriculum are scheduled to be part

of the March of the Living’s required pretrip education for teens in 2012.

The accredited Israel in World Relations curriculum was piloted to high school students in Toronto in 2010, and is returning, with a six-fold increase in enrolment.

One element of history that is “conspicuously absent,” according to Bass, is the conference at San Remo, Italy, on April 25, 1920 – signed by 51 countries and adopted by the League of nations, which “supersedes UN resolutions.”

At San Remo, he said, as the victors of World War I retooled state borders, the Jews were legally promised land in Palestine that included the modern West Bank.

It is among many rejoinders, he said, to those who espouse President Barack Obama’s speech to the UN in 2009 that his government will “continue to emphasize that America does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements [beyond the Green Line].”

## TV reporter earns B’nai B’rith Israel-Diaspora Journalism Award

JERUSALEM – Diaspora Jews and how they connect with Israel was the focus of a major journalism award and two citations recently by the B’nai B’rith World Center in Jerusalem.

The centre said last Wednesday that *Channel 2* reporter Lee Abramowitz had won its 2012 Award for Journalism Recognizing Excellence in Diaspora Reportage.

Abramowitz received the award for her report *American Jewry makes living kidney donations to Israeli patients*, broadcast in July 2011. The piece focussed on Orthodox Jewish Americans donating kidneys to Israelis, their motivations and the support they received through the process.

Receiving Foreign Correspondent Citations were Diaa Hadid of *The Associated Press*, and Jana Beris



**Channel 2 reporter Lee Abramowitz wins B’nai B’rith journalism award.**

(Jerolimski), editor of the Uruguayan Jewish weekly *Semanario Hebreo*.

Hadid won her citation for a June 2011 article on the Jewish community and Dar al-Bishi synagogue in Tripoli, Libya, during the revolution sparked by last year’s ‘Arab Spring.’

Beris received her citation for a March 2011 interview

with Natan Sharansky.

Established in 1992, the B’nai B’rith World Center Award for Journalism recognizes reporting excellence on contemporary Diaspora Jewish communities and Israel-Diaspora relations in the Israeli media.

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## Teachers, animator win chance to study at Yad Vashem

MONTREAL – Three teachers, including one from the English Montreal School Board (EMSB), two from the Lester B. Pearson School Board (LBPSB) and one spiritual guidance and



**Riva and Thomas O. Hecht (seated) congratulate 2012 scholarship recipients (left to right) Mary Rutherford, Carin Schwartz, Steve Santella and Julie Etheridge**

community involvement animator from the latter, have formally been presented with scholarships for a three week experience as part of the Yad Vashem International Seminar for Educators. Julie Etheridge, Mary Rutherford, Steve Santella and Carin Schwartz will be in Israel from July 1 to July 19. They are the 2012 recipients of the Riva and Thomas O. Hecht Scholarship, Teaching of the Holocaust for Educators Program. The teachers will take

part in a professional development program under the direction of the Faculty of the Yad Vashem Seminars for Educators from Abroad, International School for Holocaust Studies. The goal of the program is to provide professional development activities to teachers for teaching about the Holocaust and antisemitism to students in the youth sector. Each recipient will be asked to create at least one teaching unit or module developed within the context learned.

## Canadian government donates to maintain Auschwitz

OTTAWA – The Canadian government said Monday it would contribute \$400,000 to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation.

The Foundation was established to maintain the deteriorating concentration camp in Poland.

The announcement was made during a visit to Canada by the Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk.

A delegation from B’nai Brith Canada thanked Prime Minister Stephen Harper for the contribution at a reception Monday evening in honour of Polish PM.

Meeting with the Polish PM were Dr. Frank Dimant, CEO of B’nai Brith Canada and Michael Mostyn, B’nai Brith’s chair of government relations.

Dimant, a recipient of the Officer of the Cross of the Award of Merit from the Polish government for his efforts in building bridges between Canadian Jewry, the Canadian government and the Polish government, said, “The importance of preserving the killing factory of Auschwitz is critical for future generations and to bear witness against Holocaust deniers.”

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