

Is it time for a ‘Jewish UNESCO’?

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SUMMARY

Jewish heritage worldwide is undergoing cultural theft, but putting the blame on UNESCO or on the ‘Arab lies’ will not get us far. Instead, we must take back control over our heritage, and create a ‘Jewish UNESCO’ with a sustainable approach towards preserving and protecting Jewish cultural heritage around the world.

Last week’s [UNESCO](#) vote was an alarming wake-up call we cannot afford to ignore. While the [Western Wall](#) was saved at the last minute (for now) from the recent trend to Islamify Jewish sites, other Jewish heritage sites were not so lucky. [Rachel’s Tomb and Cave of the Patriarchs](#) were voted to be Muslim sites by a vast majority of UNESCO’s member countries; this is yet another proof of how UNESCO has sadly become a political, Arab-dominated machine. It is clear that even those with the best of intentions, including UNESCO’s Director General [Irina Bokova](#), find it impossible at times to carry out UNESCO’s core mission, that is, to conserve culture and to promote diversity.

What can we do? Going against UNESCO is *not* the solution. What is needed, instead, is an alternative constructive approach, an approach that is already at the very heart of the [World Jewish Heritage Fund](#)’s (WJH) ongoing mission. With Jewish cultural heritage nowadays facing some of its biggest challenges to date, we feel it is of utmost importance for us to stand up for it. But truly standing up for our heritage is more than merely making big statements. It is about generating a change in the way things work; it is providing practical tools and [platforms](#) that ensure a [sustainable heritage-preservation system](#).

In light of these urging needs, the World Jewish Heritage Fund (WJH) suggests the formation of a ‘Jewish UNESCO’. It would have the same goals as the existing UNESCO, that is to identify and protect [tangible and intangible heritage assets](#) but, unlike UNESCO, it would be completely Jewish, and would be led by a designated [Preservation Committee](#), made up of Jewish heritage and culture specialists. This new organization would serve to conserve and advocate Jewish cultural heritage by sharing knowledge, raising awareness and promoting Jewish heritage tourism — all the while using innovative technology as a powerful engine. To start with, WJH will contribute its community-resource heritage database, the [WJHpedia](#), for all its partners to freely use in order to promote their shared goals. Additionally, WJH will soon offer cities and countries with a ‘Jewish TimeOut’- like smartphone app, at no cost.

WJH is taking an active stand, not only in condemning those who try to rewrite our history, but more importantly, by constantly seeking out ingenious ways that can make a difference in the way Jewish cultural heritage is being conceived, preserved and promoted. “I believe it is *our* job to build and safeguard our cultural heritage *together*... the World Jewish Heritage Fund is willing to lead that effort, but we need *your* help!”, says WJH founder, Jack Gottlieb.

The World Jewish Heritage Fund would like to deliver an urgent open call to all those who care about the continuity of our cultural heritage, be it donors, organizations, media outlets or private people — this is our immediate call for action: we must ensure the preservation of our heritage, and the best way to achieve that is to join forces and work together!



RELEVANT LINKS

 Find out more about joining the WJH Preservation Committee
<http://worldjewishheritage.com/wjh-designation/>

 Nominate others you know to the WJH Committee
<http://worldjewishheritage.com/committee-nomination-form/>

 Discover more ways you can become part of the solution!
<http://worldjewishheritage.com/get-involved/>

QUOTES

"I believe it is our job to build and safeguard our cultural heritage together... the World Jewish Heritage Fund is willing to lead that effort, but we need your help!"

— Jack Gottlieb, WJH Founder

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ABOUT WJH

The World Jewish Heritage Fund, Inc. is a non-profit organization established in 2011.

Our mission is to preserve Jewish heritage worldwide and promote tourism to a variety of sites and cultural events around the world that are of great importance to the Jewish heritage continuity. We are here to stand up for our heritage, giving it back its long-lost voice, in honor of past generations, and in favor of those to come.



WJHnewsroom