

New American Jewish Committee Archival Website Opens Doors to 100 Years of American Jewish History

by Charlotte Bonelli

A century of American Jewish history springs to life at ajcarchives.org, the American Jewish Committee's new archival website. The influential advocacy organization launched the site as part of its centennial anniversary celebration.

When you visit the site, you're just a click away from:

- ♦ Reading AJC correspondence with Henry Ford.
- ♦ Listening to a broadcast of the first Jewish religious service conducted by American GIs on liberated German soil.
- ♦ Viewing letters between AJC and David Ben-Gurion, among other seminal figures.

Through its user-friendly interactive timelines, and its basic and advanced search engines, the website opens to the web user an ever-expanding treasure chest of materials.

Primary Sources for Classroom Lessons

The site now contains a total of more than 75,000 pages of documents; a rare collection of films, radio, and television broadcasts; more than 100 years of the *American Jewish Year Book*, an invaluable historical source and record of events and trends in the Jewish world; and selections from the AJC-sponsored William E. Weiner Oral History Collection – one of the largest oral history collections in the United States. The oral history excerpts let you listen in on intimate conversations with, among others, Bella Abzug, Abba Eban, Hank Greenberg, Golda Meir, Arthur Miller, Molly Picon, and Neil Simon.

Material on the site offers educators a wide array of possibilities for creative and challenging classroom lessons. One example among many relates to how, in 1938, AJC's Survey Committee, began to use every conceivable form of communication to combat rising extremism and anti-Semitism in America. Now, for the first time, students can read these papers, evaluate this extensive campaign, and think of how they might fight prejudice in today's world.

Film and radio selections available at the site include AJC-produced dramas about the devastating effects of prejudice and hate. Among the famous actors and actresses that you'll see or hear bringing impressive intensity to these productions are Robert Duvall, James Cagney, and Helen Hayes.



American Jewish Life and Activism

Web users click their way to the site in search of primary sources that help clarify and uncover the history of American Jewish life and activism.

Turn-of-the-century pogroms. World War II pro-democracy radio campaigns. The struggle for civil rights. Israel advocacy. Catholic-Jewish relations. The movement to free Soviet Jewry. The struggle against terrorism and Islamic extremism. A host of documents and artifacts on all these topics and many more are fully searchable at www.ajcarchives.org. 

Preview the Material

To preview the site, just go to the links below.

- ♦ For images to accompany a story about the archival website, go to www.ajcarchives.org/ajc_data/photos/pres_dir.htm.
- ♦ To view the archival website, go to <http://www.ajcarchive.org>.
- ♦ To view the AJC's primary website, go to www.ajc.org
- ♦ To view an eight-minute video on the archival website, go to http://ajcarchive.org/archive_promo/ajc_med.wmv.

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