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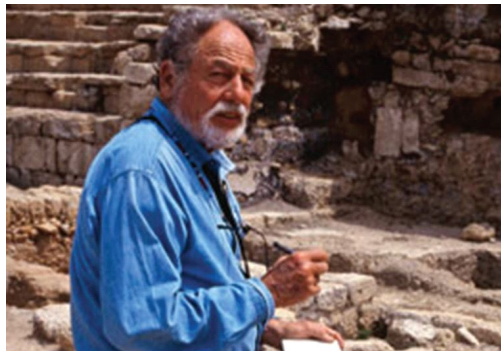
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THE JERUSALEM POST



Lawrence Halprin in 1998.(Photo by: SHLOMO ARONSON)

Honoring Lawrence Halprin in his centenary year

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Halprin was heavily involved in the urban planning of Jerusalem, and was a member of the International Jerusalem Committee.

Historians and people involved in the preservation of heritage sites in different parts of the world are engaged in a constant battle with urban planners and property developers who want to tear down the old to make way for the new.

In Israel in general, and in Jerusalem in particular, the preservation of heritage sites transcends the need or desire to understand the lifestyles of previous civilizations.

It's also a matter of political urgency.

Those who deny the right of Jews to live in the Holy Land that was home to their ancestors with the false argument that Jews never lived on the terrain called Israel, are forced to swallow their words in the face of discoveries that prove that ancient Jews or Israelites did indeed live in this land and left a legacy for future generations.

Many archeological discoveries are amazingly intact or partially intact after centuries of being covered by the structures of successor civilizations. But with current attitudes toward urban renewal and the lack of respect for buildings, walkways and public gardens that were designed only a century ago or less, there will be very little for future archeologists to find from that period because, with rare exceptions, developers are on a path of destruction rather than preservation.

Sometimes conservationists manage to get in ahead of them and insist that they cannot receive a building permit unless they retain the existing building, or at least its outer facade, and build around it. But often the conservationists are too late and a whole complex is gutted before anything can be done to save it.

ISRAEL IS not the only place where conservationists and modernists are pitted against each other. To preserve the work of great American architects, Charles A.

Birnbaum, a prominent American landscape architect, established the DC-based non-profit Cultural Landscape Foundation.

Birnbaum, who coordinated the National Park Service Landscape initiative for 15 years, serves as CLF president, CEO and chief curator of exhibitions – the current one of which is a tribute to Lawrence Halprin in the centenary year of his birth.

The Halprin family has a long and close relationship with Israel. Halprin's mother, Rose Luria Halprin, was twice national president of Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America.

During her first term, from 1932 to 1934, she brought her family to Jerusalem for a year, during which she was liaison to the Hadassah Medical Organization while its hospital on Mount Scopus was under construction. She returned for the official opening in 1939.

Altogether she visited Israel before and after independence more than 60 times.

The family had previously been to Jerusalem for Halprin's bar mitzva, which he wrote about in his posthumously published autobiography, *A Life of Changing Places*. Halprin died in 2009 at the age of 93. During that bar-mitzva visit, the Halprins toured the whole country, and Lawrence became particularly enamored of the kibbutz experience.

Later, while living in Jerusalem, Rose Halprin took her children on frequent walks around the city and particularly through the Old City.

Lawrence Halprin went to school in Jerusalem, and together with the time that he subsequently spent living on a kibbutz, that became the compass of his creativity. Halprin was one of the founders of Kibbutz Ein Hashofet, near Haifa, in July 1937. It was settled by Jews from Poland and the United States. He lived there for approximately a year before returning to America to complete his studies.

After earning degrees from Cornell University, the University of Wisconsin (where he met his wife, Anna, a noted avant-garde dancer and choreographer), and Harvard, Halprin was commissioned as a junior lieutenant in the US Navy.

The USS Morris, the destroyer to which he was assigned, was severely damaged in 1945 during a

a kamikaze attack in the Pacific. Fortunately, Halprin survived and was sent to San Francisco on leave.

He remained there after the war.

After working for a period with a local firm of landscape architects, he opened his own office in 1949.

During the mid 1950s and early 1960s, he was the supervising landscape architect at Berkeley University, where he also taught.

One of the students in his class was young Haifa-born Shlomo Aronson.

Aronson had gone to the US to study architecture and was fascinated by Halprin's landscape architecture philosophy.

A strong bond developed between teacher and student, and Aronson later spent two years working in Halprin's office.

Aronson became an internationally renowned multi-disciplined, prizewinning architect and like his mentor, he was also a teacher. He taught at the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design in Jerusalem, the Harvard Graduate School of Design and the Hebrew University. He has also been a guest lecturer at universities in America, Canada, Italy, Germany, India, Russia and South Africa.

Renowned as one of Israel's leading architects, Aronson set up an office in the Ein Kerem neighborhood (the office is now run by his son Ittai and daughter-in-law Barbara, both of whom have highly regarded architectural credits of their own).

Throughout the years, Shlomo Aronson maintained a close friendship with Halprin, and there were frequent meetings between the two both in America and Israel.

It was of great importance to Halprin to preserve his link with Israel, where he was the adviser, designer or co-designer of several major projects, including the Hebrew University's Givat Ram

campus, the Weizmann Institute in Rehovot, several national parks, the entrance to the Israel Museum, Hadassah University Medical Center in Ein Kerem, the Ben Yehuda mall, and together with Aronson, the first phase of the Haas Promenade in East Talpiot Hanatziv. The second phase of the promenade, designed by Aronson himself, is known as the Gabriel Sherover Promenade, and the third phase, the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Promenade, was designed by Halprin together with Bruce Levin.

Aside from the breathtaking views, which are a photographer's delight, especially at sunrise and sunset, the promenade as whole, generally referred to by the Hebrew word tayelet, is an important link between east and west Jerusalem, approached on one level by Arab residents of

important link between east and west Jerusalem, approached on one level by Arab residents of the capital, and on another by Jewish residents.

Even before the tayelet project, Halprin was heavily involved in the urban planning of Jerusalem, and was a member of the International Jerusalem Committee, an advisory panel set up by mayor Teddy Kollek in the aftermath of the Six Day War.

Today in Israel, few people are aware of the name of Lawrence Halprin, let alone his contribution to the national landscape.

Unfortunately, because he is no longer around to defend his creations in the US, some are under threat of destruction and have become a source of controversy in architectural circles. There are Halprin works that have fallen victim to neglect and are in sore need of repair. Some of his concepts have become obsolete and are out of sync with urban planning for the future.

The Cultural Landscape Foundation, with Birnbaum at the helm, wants to draw attention to the importance of preserving all of Halprin's projects, and on July 23, introduced a series of free on-site guided tours that will continue until October 30.

In America, other centennial events include a traveling exhibition of 55 framed photographs covering 30 sites – two sites in Jerusalem (the Hebrew University and the Haas Promenade) and 28 in the US. Each site is represented by one to four images. The exhibition will debut at the National Building Museum in Washington, DC on November 5. At the National Building Museum, the exhibition will be supplemented with artifacts, drawings, three-dimensional models and other material from the Halprin Archives at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, and Halprin drawings loaned by the Edward Cella Art + Architecture gallery in Los Angeles. The exhibition was curated by Birnbaum, a personal friend of Halprin's in the latter part of his life.

No arrangements have been made yet for the photographs to be exhibited in Jerusalem, although TCLF people hope that an arrangement can be made for them to be shown in one of the Hadassah facilities, particularly in view of the family connection with Hadassah.

However, on September 11, Barbara Aronson who was an intern and member of the team at Shlomo Aronson's firm when the Haas Promenade was being planned and constructed, will lead a guided tour along the Haas and Sherover promenades, beginning at 11 a.m.

In addition, TCLF has produced an oral history video narrated by Shlomo Aronson that can be accessed on You Tube.

TCLF has been involved in efforts to prevent the demolition of Halprin's Skyline Park in Denver, Colorado. The project was the subject of an award-winning book.

TCLF educates and engages the American public, making the shared landscape heritage more visible with the aim of identifying its value and empowering its stewards. This is accomplished

visible, with the aim of identifying its value and empowering its stewards. This is accomplished through “What’s Out There,” North America’s largest and most exhaustive database of cultural landscapes – comprising more than 1,900 sites, 900 designer profiles and 10,000 images. Two years ago, TCLF began to expand the database to include Canada, and is currently exploring ways to begin including Israel’s designed landscape legacy and to promote informed stewardship.

To commemorate the fifth anniversary of her husband’s death, Anna Halprin came to Jerusalem in October 2014 and led a diverse group of more than 100 women of different faiths and backgrounds – both Israeli and Palestinian – on a peace walk along the Goldman promenade, with commanding views of sites holy to three great monotheistic faiths. The women were from east and west Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Haifa, Fureidis, Daliat al-Carmel, Efrat, Ramallah, settlements, moshavim, kibbutzim and villages.

They were religious and secular, right wing and left wing – a diversity that was unified in sisterhood with the common denominator of wanting their children to grow up with peace and security.

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