



Pamela Nadell,
Director, JEWISH
STUDIES PROGRAM



Howard Wachtel,
Director, CENTER
FOR ISRAELI STUDIES

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FROM THE DIRECTORS

This past year the Jewish Studies Program and the Center for Israeli Studies hosted two significant conferences: the 2004 Biennial Scholars' Conference on American Jewish History and "The New Anti-Semitism." They were attended in large numbers by American University students and faculty, academics from around the world, and individuals from the greater Washington, D.C., metropolitan community. Such important contributions to the history and values of Judaism and Israel can be sustained only with your continuing financial support. We thank you for your past support and encourage you to sustain our vital programming by making a contribution with the form at the end of this newsletter. ■

Scholars' Conference on American Jewish History

Three hundred and fifty years ago, 23 Jewish refugees fleeing the long arm of the Inquisition found haven in New Amsterdam. There they established the first American Jewish community, a part of our national history the U.S. Congress has recognized by proclaiming September 2004 American Jewish History Month. To mark this anniversary, AU's Jewish Studies Program hosted, and program director Pamela S. Nadell chaired, the 2004 Biennial Scholars' Conference on

See Scholars' Conference page 2



Three generations of scholars reflect on the 1954 tercentenary anniversary celebrations of Jewish life in America. Left to right: Josh Perelman, graduate student, New York University; Karla Goldman, historian, Jewish Women's Archive; Arthur Aryeh Goren, professor emeritus, Columbia University and Hebrew University; Riv-Ellen Prell, professor, University of Minnesota.

Center for Israeli Studies Hosts Symposium on the New Anti-Semitism

A topic of growing concern is whether there is a rise in a new anti-Semitism that has its roots in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Center for Israeli Studies decided to tackle this complicated and contentious issue in a two-day symposium.

See Anti-Semitism page 3



From left to right, Rita Simon, University Professor in American University's School of Public Affairs, reviewed historical public opinion data on anti-Semitism; Marcia Synnott, professor of history at the University of South Carolina, spoke about anti-Semitism in universities; and attorney Jay Marks, of Marks and Katz, an expert on immigration law and founder of the Institute for Hispanic Jewish Relations, talked about whether there are anti-Semitic attitudes among Hispanics.

Scholars' Conference from page 1

American Jewish History. Thanks to the generosity of AU's Office of the Provost and Jewish Studies Program supporters, AU partnered with the Commission for Commemorating 350 Years of American Jewish History to convene what is likely the largest conference ever held on the history of America's Jews. Over three days in June a stellar international gathering of more than 100 scholars met on campus and at the Library of Congress to share research, ponder new directions for the future, and preview the Library of Congress's 350th anniversary

exhibition, From Haven to Home.

The Jewish Studies Program cosponsored this conference with the congressionally recognized Commission for Commemorating 350 Years of American Jewish History. The commission has brought together four great archival institutions—the Library of Congress, the National Archives and Records Administration, the American Jewish Historical Society, and the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American



Professor Pamela S. Nadell, AU's Jewish Studies Program director, greets conference participants after dinner at the Library of Congress.

philosophy and religion professor Gershon Greenberg led panels which included scholars from Israel. Aleisa Fishman, who earned her PhD from AU's Department of History in May, presented "Consuming is Believing:

Jewish Women Making Community in Suburbia," based on her study of New York's Nassau County Jewish community. Joshua Ford, director of the Washington Jewish Film Festival, and David Weinstein, senior program officer of the National Endowment for the Humanities, joined documentary filmmakers Debra Gonsker Vinik and David Vyorst to close the conference with a session called "Film and History: New and Forthcoming Works." The New York-based Radio Foundation recorded most conference sessions for its projected Web site for the 350th anniversary, www.onlyinamerica.org.

This remarkable conference ushered in a flurry of activities which will continue into June 2005, commemorating 350 years of Jewish life in America. AU Jewish Studies faculty will continue to play leading roles in these events, and we will report on them in *YediAUt* 2005. ■

Jewish Archives—to mark this historic milestone. The conference was but the first of several projects the commission planned for this anniversary.

Conference participants looked back to the very beginnings of American Jewish history with papers on Jewish characters on the colonial stage and early Jewish settlement in Jamaica. They heard new research on Jewish GIs under fire and the sociological love affair with intermarriage. AU history professor Alan Kraut and AU

<< Brandeis University professor Jonathan Sarna, coeditor with Pamela S. Nadell of *Women and American Judaism*, reminisces about Professor Naomi Cohen with Rafi Cohen and Avital Weisbrod.



<< Yeshiva University professor Jeffrey Gurock (left) presented the American Jewish Historical Society's Lee Max Friedman award for lifetime achievement to Naomi Cohen, professor emerita, Hunter College. Cohen now resides in Israel. Accepting on her behalf was Rafi Cohen (right), her grandson.

LECTURES SPONSORED BY THE CENTER FOR ISRAELI

■ **DAVID NEWMAN**, an expert on political geography and border controversies, titled his talk "The



David Newman

Separation Fence and the Israeli-Palestinian Border Discourse" (cosponsored with the Department of Sociology). Professor Newman is from Ben Gurion University, where he has been chair of the Department of Politics and Government and editor of the *International Journal of Geopolitics*. He has written op-ed columns for the *New York Times* and the *Jerusalem Post*.

■ **EPHRAIM INBAR** delivered a lecture titled "Is Peace Between Israel and Palestine Possible?" at an event cosponsored with the Department of Sociology.

Professor Inbar, director of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies (BESA) at Bar-Ilan University, is a prolific scholar. Author of four books and numerous articles, he is an internationally known authority on the Middle East who has held appointments at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and Georgetown University and was a Manfred Warner NATO Fellow.



Ephraim Inbar

■ **SHLOMO GAZIT**, a retired major-general and one of the most respected authorities on the Middle East, former president of Ben Gurion University, an advisor to Prime Minister Shimon Peres on Palestinian affairs

and his special delegate to PLO chairman Yasser Arafat, lectured on security issues in the Middle East, cosponsored with AU Students for Israel. In 1985–86 he was appointed to head a team of Israelis engaged in back-channel political talks with the PLO and presently is a senior research associate with the Jaffe Center for Strategic Studies, having been a fellow of Harvard University's Center for International Affairs, the Woodrow Wilson Center, and the U.S. Institute for Peace.



Shlomo Gazit

Anti-Semitism, from page 1

We enlisted the support of American University's Washington College of Law, School of International Service, and Jewish Studies Program to bring to the campus a distinguished group of speakers with many different perspectives.

In the invitation to the symposium, the center asked the participants to address this set of questions: Has a new anti-Semitism erupted in the past several years in the United States and around the world with a current manifestation in an anti-Zionism and anti-Israelism which transcends the boundaries of legitimate debate about Israeli policy



Akbar Ahmed, Ibn Khaldun Chair of Islamic Studies in American University's School of International Service and former high commissioner of Pakistan to Great Britain (right), and Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, author of the controversial international best-seller *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*, at the first panel of the symposium.

toward its conflict with Palestinians? If so, what are the forms of a new anti-Semitism?

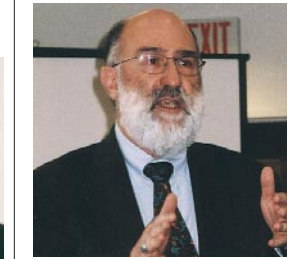
Needless to say, there was a spirited discussion before standing-room-only audiences of students and faculty drawn from the American University campus and an equal number of guests from the Washington-area community.

The center invited speakers from many different fields—literary journalism, philoso-



Two speakers addressed the debate on university campuses surrounding Israel in the Middle East. Mitchell Bard, executive director of the American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise and the Jewish Virtual Library, a comprehensive encyclopedia of Jewish history and culture, and the author of 17 books on the Middle East, talked about universities in the United States; and Norma Joseph, chair of the Department of Religion at Concordia University in Canada told about her first-hand experiences during the controversy at her university over the appearance of Israeli speakers, such as former prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and its aftermath.

phy, history, public interest law—in order to broaden the discussion beyond the usual contributors to this debate. We had one of the first screenings in the United States of the French documentary film *Décryptage* (Decoding), about the role of the media in reporting on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A full description of the event is on our Web site: www.centerforisraelistudies.org. ■



<< Sander L. Gilman, a cultural and literary historian, former president of the Modern Language Association, and the author or editor of more than 70 books, was the luncheon speaker. He is the Distinguished Professor of the Liberal Arts and Medicines at the University of Illinois in Chicago and the first director of its Jewish Studies Program.



Leon Wieseltier, literary editor of the *New Republic* and author of the critically acclaimed *Kaddish*, spoke at a packed dinner lecture.

STUDIES AND THE JEWISH STUDIES PROGRAM

■ **GUY LEVY-YURISTA** spoke on the Israeli high-tech industry in his talk "From Venture Capital to Start-Up: Israeli Technology in Silicon Wadi," cosponsored with the MoGIT Club of the Kogod School of Business.



Guy Levy-Yurista

He is currently director of Technical Market Development at CeLight, an American-Israeli company developing optical communications systems, after previously working in Israel for Tamir Fishman Ventures, one of Israel's major venture capital firms, and prior to that with the Weizmann Institute of Science.

■ **JEFFREY GUROCK**, Libby M. Klaperman Professor of Jewish History, Yeshiva University, presented "From Ancient Face-Offs through a Medieval Time-Out." He is the author or editor of more than 20 books, including *When*



Jeffrey Gurock

Harlem Was Jewish and the award-winning *A Modern Heretic and a Traditional Community: Mordecai M. Kaplan, Orthodoxy, and American Judaism*. Professor Gurock is past president of the Academic Council of the American Jewish Historical Society.

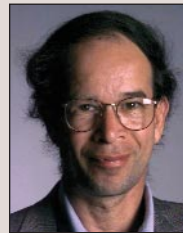
■ **ARNOLD DASHEFSKY**, director of the North American Jewish Data Bank and professor of sociology at the University of Connecticut at Storrs, presented his latest research on American Jewish identity. Professor Dashefsky is the founding director of the University of Connecticut's Center for Judaic Studies and Contemporary Jewish Life and past president of the Association for the Social Scientific Study of Jewry. He is the coauthor or editor of six books and is currently completing a new book on American Jewry in the twenty-first century.



Arnold Dashefsky

Faculty Notes

Richard Breitman, Department of History, with three other historians, has been working for many years on some 8 million previously classified documents,



many of which deal with the U.S. government's knowledge of the Holocaust during World War II and its use of Nazi war criminals after the war. He and his colleagues for the first time briefed the public on

their book at a National Archives news conference in May 2004. He has also been commissioned to edit the diaries and personal papers of James McDonald, who from 1933 to 1935, as the League of Nations high commissioner for refugees from Germany, tried to warn the United States and others about the impending Holocaust, and was appointed the first U.S. diplomatic representative to the new state of Israel in 1948.

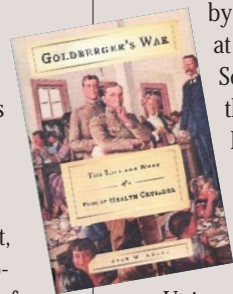
Erran Carmel, Kogod School of Business, continuing his work on the Israeli high-tech sector, published "Israel's Silicon Wadi: the Forces behind Cluster Formation," in *Building High Tech Clusters*, edited by T. Bresnahan, A. Gambardella, and A. Saxenian.

Kenneth Cohen, rabbi and Hillel director at AU, reports that American University's Hillel has been recognized and honored twice by prominent outside groups. The Avi Chai Foundation cited AU as one of the five top campuses nationwide for outstanding Israel advocacy (along with Yale, Purdue, University of Southern California, and University of North Carolina). AIPAC has chosen AU as one of only four campuses in the country to pilot its new CORE program (the others are Tulane, Washington University in St. Louis, and University of Texas at Austin).

Gershon Greenberg, Department of Philosophy and Religion, has two books forthcoming: *Jewish Religious Philosophical Thinkers: From Mendelssohn to Rav Kook* and (with Steven T. Katz) *Wrestling with God during and after the Holocaust*. He delivered a lecture, "Christianity and the

Holocaust: Wartime Orthodox Jewish Conceptions," at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Alan Kraut, Department of History, won two awards for his most recent book, *Goldberger's Wars: The Life and Work of a Public Health Crusader*: the Henry Adams Prize for the best book on the history of the federal government, awarded by the Society for History in the Federal Government, and the Arthur J. Visel tear Prize for the best book on the history of public health, awarded by the American Public Health



Association. His work was honored by the American University Library at its spring Celebrating Scholarship. In May he delivered the 2004 George Rosen Memorial Lecture, entitled "Pellagra is Only Ignorance; Pellagra is only Poverty": Dr. Joseph Goldberger's Fight for the Public's Health" at the Yale

University School of Medicine. He continues to serve as chair of the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island History Advisory Committee. He has been an advisor on two recently completed PBS documentaries, *Partners of the Heart*, which received the Organization of American Historians Erik Barnouw Prize for the best documentary on American history, and *The Most Dangerous Woman in America*. He has also been appointed historical advisor to a new PBS series, *History Detectives*.

Robert I. Lerman, Department of Economics, presented two seminars in Israel in March 2004. The first, "Recent Developments in U.S. Income Support Policy," was at the Brookdale Institute in Jerusalem before an audience that included Bank of Israel staff and committee members planning welfare reforms in Israel. The second seminar, "Can Expanding the Use of Computers Improve the Performance of Small Minority- and Women-Owned Enterprises?" was given at the Haifa University Department of Economics. He is currently working with Professor Avner Ahituv, of Haifa University, on a research grant from the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development on the

interactions between job stability, marital stability, and earnings.

Alan Levine, School of Public Affairs, won an Earhart Fellowship for travel to France and England to continue researching his book on the idea of America in European political thought, 1492-9/11. He delivered numerous papers on this topic in venues from Duke University to the Catholic University of Portugal and wrote an article, "America," for *The New Dictionary of the History of Ideas*. He continues to run the Washington, D.C., Political Theory Colloquium, is a regular consultant for the Department of State's International Visitors Program, and serves on the board of the AU Hillel.

Arnost Lustig, Department of Literature, received the American Academy of Arts and Letters Award in Literature, which "honors writers of exceptional accomplishment." In Prague he is the honorary president of the Franz Kafka Society and the Nine Gates Festival of Jewish Culture and is an academic board member of the Josef Skvorecky Literary Academy.

Renee Marlin-Bennett, School of International Service, gave a series of guest lectures on Jewish ethics and global political economy for the Machon Kaplan Institute at the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, Washington, D.C.



Naomi McNally, Department of Language and Foreign Studies, is an Israeli attorney and was a member of the Israeli Bar for eight years. She has lived and worked in Greece, Israel, Colombia, and Honduras as a family member in the American diplomatic mission in those countries. She has been teaching Hebrew and lecturing on Jewish topics in the past decade in Northern Virginia and in the Washington, D.C., area, for the D.C. Jewish Community Center, the American Foreign Service Institute, George Washington University, and American University as well as other linguistic and Jewish establishments.

Pamela S. Nadell, Department of History and Jewish Studies Program, has worked on

a variety of projects to celebrate the 350th anniversary of Jewish settlement in America. She served as historical consultant to the Library of Congress exhibition From Haven to Home: 350 Years of Jewish Life in America, and her essay "America's Jewish Women" appears in the companion catalog published by the Library of Congress. She participated in the Commission for Commemorating 350 Years of American Jewish History, cosponsored with, among others, the Library of Congress and the National Archives, and in connection with the commemoration chaired the Sixth Biennial Scholars' Conference on American Jewish History, held on the American University campus.

David Rosenbloom, School of Public Affairs, received the First Annual American University School of Public Affairs PhD Students' Excellence in Teaching Award for Outstanding Contributions to PhD Students and was a visiting professor at Renmin University in China. He is a member of the Board of Trustees, Marietta College and published (with Robert S. Kravchuk) the sixth edition of his *Public Administration: Understanding Management, Politics, and Law in the Public Sector*. In 2004 he delivered three lectures in Japan: "Master of Public Administration Programs in the U.S.A.: Curriculum and Contemporary Issues" (Ryukoku University, Kyoto) and "The Development of Master of Public Administration Program Accreditation by the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration" (Ryukoku University, Kyoto, and Japan University Accreditation Association, Tokyo).

Myra Sklarew, Department of Literature, published several poems on Jewish and Israeli themes, including "A Three-Course Meal for the New Year" in *Celebrating the Jewish Holidays: Stories, Poems, Essays*; "Tell It Not in Gath," "On Muranowska Street," and "April 1943," all in *European Judaism*; and "Impasse" in the *Forward*. She is working on "Holocaust and the Construction of Memory," a research study on the intersection of the neuroscience of memory and Holocaust testimony and has written the introduction to the memoir of Ephraim Sten, *1111 Days*

in *My Life Plus 4*, which was translated by former AU professor Moshe Dor.

Russell Stone, Department of Sociology, continues as administrative officer of the Association for Israel Studies, an international academic association for the study of contemporary Israel that is housed at American University in cooperation with AU's Center for Israeli Studies. He is advising editor of the Israeli Studies series published by the State University of New York Press, which publishes four to six books annually on contemporary Israeli society, politics, and history and currently has 65 books in print. He serves on the editorial boards of the journals *Israel Studies* and *Israel Studies Forum*. He was chair and discussant on the panel "Jews and Palestinians: Attitudes, Memories, and National Identity," and discussant on a meet-the-author panel about Ilan Troen's book *Imagining Zion: Dreams, Designs, and Realities in a Century of Jewish Settlement*, at the annual meetings of the Association for Israel Studies in Jerusalem. His review of Joel S. Migdal's *Through the Lens of Israel: Explorations in State and Society* will appear in the *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin* in 2004.

Howard M. Wachtel, Department of Economics, was an advisor on global taxes to a commission established by the president of France, Jacques Chirac, and has an article, "Global Taxes," in *The Encyclopedia of Globalization*. He continues his work on water issues in Israel and the surrounding region: "International Water Markets" a paper delivered before the Association for Israel Studies (Jerusalem); an article in *Food and Nutrition Security in the Process of Globalization*, "The Intersection of Food and Water Security: A Case Study of the Near East"; and a paper delivered at the "Second Israeli-Palestinian Conference on 'Water for Life in the Middle East'" (Antalya, Turkey). In connection with his recently published book, *Street of Dreams—Boulevard of Broken Hearts: Wall Street's First Century*, he has published "Wall Street's Early Days" in the magazine of the New York State Archives and was honored by the American University Library at its fall 2003 Celebrating Scholarship. ■

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To learn more about gift opportunities and the Center for Israeli Studies, go to www.centerforisraelistudies.org

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Center for Israeli Studies Establishes the Seymour and Lillian Abensohn Endowment

On June 13, 2004, the Washington-area Jewish community lost one of its most philanthropic and beloved members, Seymour Abensohn. To perpetuate his memory and his life-long interest in Israel, he and his wife, Lillian Klein Abensohn, made a generous gift to start an endowment fund in the Center for Israeli Studies.

The Abensohns' donation along with their previous gifts were in the form of a substantial seed grant. As Seymour said to us shortly before his passing, "Go out and ask my friends to build this endowment to the point where we can have an endowed Professorship in Israeli Studies," so that students can learn about Israel in a balanced way without bias. In what became his last project, Seymour Abensohn understood that what is taught in university classrooms will have a long-lasting effect on the next generation of leaders.

We are building the Abensohn Fund toward our goals for the fund and need

your help. Please consider adding your name to the list of donors by making a contribution to:

ABENSOHN FUND AT THE CENTER FOR ISRAELI STUDIES

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Lillian Klein Abensohn and Seymour Abensohn

"Go out and ask my friends to build this endowment to the point where we can have an endowed Professorship in Israeli Studies."

—Seymour Abensohn

Faculty Comings and Goings

Internationally acclaimed novelist and film-script writer **Arnost Lustig** retired from the Department of Literature, having inspired untold numbers of students in his classes on creative writing and writing for the cinema. Winner of an Emmy for his



Arnost Lustig

script for *The Precious Legacy*, and twice the National Jewish Book Award recipient, he has also written novels nominated for National Book Awards. He wrote the script for *Diamonds of the Night*, which was voted among the 100 best European films ever made. He has been honored in his native country, the Czech Republic, with the Order of Merit for

Outstanding Artistic Achievement by former president Vaclav Havel and the Czech Pen Club for Literary Achievement—the highest Czech literary award. He continues to be honored, most recently in 2004 by the American Academy of Arts and Letters with an Academy Award in Literature.

Lustig organized a Czech New Wave film festival that brought to the American University campus his friends Milos Forman, Jan Kadar, Jiri Weiss, and Ivan Passer. His university colleagues marvel at his unflinching cheerfulness, exuberant friendliness, charm, and abundant energy, despite his childhood internment in three concentration camps after the Nazi invasion of Czechoslovakia. As a young radio reporter he covered Israel's War of Independence and returned to Czechoslovakia as one of the young writers challenging Soviet-style cultural domination. In the aftermath of the failed Prague Spring of 1968, Lustig, as a

Jew and a dissenter, was doubly vulnerable, so he left his country to live in Israel before coming to the United States in 1970 and to American University in 1973, where he became a principal voice of the Holocaust in serious fiction.

He wrote the script for *Diamonds of the Night*, which was voted among the 100 best European films ever made.

A colleague who was directly involved in his becoming an American University faculty member said of Arnost Lustig, "After such a difficult and painful start, he deserves tribute for [his] persistence, accomplishment, and indeed heroism."

Now he has returned to Prague, where he is engaged in stimulating a new generation of Czech writers as the honorary president of two organizations—the Nine Gates Festival of Jewish Culture and the Franz Kafka Society—as well as serving on the academic board of the Josef Skvorecky Literary Academy. ■

We thank these contributors to the Seymour and Lillian Abensohn Endowment Fund (through September 30, 2004):

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Lillian Klein Abensohn Book Signing Hosted by Center for Israeli Studies

To honor Lillian Klein Abensohn on the occasion of the publication of her new book, *From Deborah to Esther: Sexual Politics in the Hebrew Bible*, the Center for Israeli Studies hosted a book-signing party.



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■ **Endowed Professorship (\$1,000,000 each)**

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Funds will provide scholarships and will be used to support the 4-week summer institute in Israel for university professors, high school teachers, and community college teachers. The institute will develop replicable curricula on Israeli studies to extend the center's reach beyond the AU campus.

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