From the Directors

Four years ago, when we conceived of this joint newsletter of American University's Center for Israeli Studies and Jewish Studies Program, we did not imagine how different the context would be—then and now. More than ever, this altered context has highlighted the importance of having these two programs at American University, not only for the campus but also for the wider Washington, D.C., community. As we remain committed to our core university missions, we have also responded to the challenges of a changed environment. The pages of this year's YediatU testify to the enhanced importance of these two academic ventures today.

We thank you, our readers, for your past support and welcome your continuing financial contributions. There is a donation form on the next-to-last page of the newsletter. More than ever, your help is vital to meet the new demands placed on us and to ensure that we have sufficient resources to continue to mount our ambitious programming at American University.

Howard Wachtel,
Director, Center for Israeli Studies

Pamela Nadell,
Director, Jewish Studies Program

Diaspora and Comparative Immigration

The Center for Israeli Studies held its fourth and most ambitious conference in May 2002, “Diaspora and Comparative Immigration: The Jewish Experience.” Sixteen papers were presented by scholars, about half each from Israel and the United States. The keynote dinner speaker was syndicated Washington Post columnist Charles Krauthammer, whose address was entitled “Diaspora Jewry: The Challenge of Survival.” Conference participants and attendees at lunch heard from Frank Sharry, executive director of the National Immigration Forum.

The theme of the conference was the exploration of Jewish migrations to Israel and the United States in a comparative perspective. Historians, sociologists, demographers, and cultural anthropologists from Israel and the United States explored the migration and incorporation experiences of Jews who left their homelands for the United States and Israel from the late nineteenth century to the present.

The conference panels were organized by Jewish migration flows from particular countries or regions: from eastern Europe, Russia, Ethiopia, and North Africa (Sephardic). Panelists were asked to address several thematic questions:

- How do gender differences affect migrants’ experiences of national integration?
- How do studies of migration enrich the study of comparative immigration flows?
- How are migration flows related to contemporary political issues?
- How do migration flows affect countries of origin and settlement?
- How is the study of migration related to the study of culture and literature?

Syndicated columnist and keynote speaker Charles Krauthammer seated, discussing his remarks with AU literature professor Blysa Shlain at his left, and other dinner guests.

See Diaspora page 2
AU President Benjamin Ladner’s Letter after Hebrew University Bombing

The following is the text of a letter sent to the president of Hebrew University, Menachem Magidor, by presidents of universities throughout the world after the bombing on the campus of the university. It was signed by American University President Benjamin Ladner.

Institutions of higher learning, and in particular universities, reflect the core values of their respective societies. All great universities share certain characteristics that shape their academic and scientific directions: they are committed to pluralism, diversity, multiculturalism and uphold the tenets of democracy and mutual co-existence. For these reasons and many more, institutions of higher education in North America cannot remain silent.

We, the undersigned, denounce terrorism and, in particular, condemn the attack at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem on July 31st that claimed seven lives and injured scores of people. We express our solidarity with the academic pursuits of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Universities serve as intellectual meeting places that should ideally invite dialogue and understanding of people from all backgrounds. Throughout its history, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem has played a critical role in promoting co-existence between Israelis and Palestinians and amongst peoples of all nationalities, religions and cultures. The murderous act that took place on the Mount Scopus campus was intended to prevent the type of human interaction and discourse that can facilitate change and a more complex understanding of our challenging world.

We join The Hebrew University—and all universities—in a global quest to create productive avenues to peace and progress. We send our condolences to the families who mourn the loss of their loved ones and wish those who were injured a complete recovery.
News from the Jewish Studies Program

Jewish Studies Program Welcomes Joan S. Friedman

The Jewish Studies Program and the Department of History are delighted to welcome Joan S. Friedman to the faculty for 2002–03. Friedman is completing her PhD in Jewish history at Columbia University. Her dissertation, “Solomon B. Freehof, the Reform Response, and the Shaping of American Reform Judaism,” explores the life and legacy of Rabbi Freehof (1892–1990), the chief architect of Reform Judaism’s body of legal literature, the Reform Response. Her article “A Critique of Solomon B. Freehof’s Concept of Mishnaic and Reform Jewish Practice” has just been published in Re-Evaluating Progressive Halakhah.

Friedman was ordained at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in New York in 1980 and, for six years, was Jewish chaplain and instructor in religion at Colgate University. She was also rabbi of Congregation Beth Shalom in Bloomington, Indiana.

During 2002–03 Friedman will serve as interim director of the Jewish Studies Program, while Pamela Nadell enjoys a sabbatical year. Friedman will teach a wide range of courses in Jewish civilization, the Holocaust, and contemporary Jewish affairs; supervise the program’s senior theses and internships; and advise students.

Jewish Studies Majors Write Senior Theses

Since the founding of AU’s Department of Jewish Studies in the early 1970s, the senior thesis has stood as its capstone, required of all students. In May 2002, five seniors completed their theses and graduated. Friedman continues his work on theological responses to the Holocaust.

Alan Kraut, Department of History, continued to serve as president of the Immigration and Ethnic History Society and delivered numerous lectures, including: “The Rise and Decline of the Jewish Hospital” from the Masonic Jew’s Response to Nationism in Health Care Institutions.” At the International Conference on Jews and Medicine (Wayne State University). “Dr. Joseph Goldberger and Human Experimentation: The ‘Pioneers’ on the panel on medical experiments and ethical questions at the Fourth Annual Conference of the Southern Association of Jewish Health Care Institutions.”

Joan Friedman, Director of History and Jewish Studies Program, has just published “A Critique of Solomon B. Freehof’s Concept of Mishnaic and Reform Jewish Practice.”

Odette Goldberg, Department of Language and Foreign Studies, has a new book, American Jewish Woman’s History. A Reader, to be published by New York University Press in 2003. She continues to serve as chair of the Academic Council of the American Jewish Historical Society.

Saul Newman, Department of History, and Foreign Studies Program, has a new book, Building a Legislative-Centered Public Administration: Congress and the Administrative State 1946–1999. He has been in demand as a speaker in connection with the film Fighter.

Myra Sklarer, Department of Literature, graduated with honors in English literature. She has been appointed a permanent associate fellow, Institute of United States Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London, and is the author of Efis Malmon. Shrinov.

Faculty Notes

Marvin Rash, Department of Philosophy and Religion, taught Jewish Ethics.

Richard Breitman, Department of History, continued his work on Jewish institutions and Records Administration on the declassifica-

tion of World War II documents in conjunction with the National War Documents Working Group.

Eran Carmel, Kogod School of Business, has continued his research on Israeli high tech. His latest paper is “Issues Facing Israeli High Tech Firms.”

Alan Levine, Kogod School of Business, has continued his research on Israeli high tech. His latest paper is “Issues Facing Israeli High Tech Firms.”

Robert I. Lerman, Department of History, continued to serve as president of the Immigration and Ethnic History Society and delivered numerous lectures, including: “The Rise and Decline of the Jewish Hospital” from the Masonic Jew’s Response to Nationism in Health Care Institutions.”

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Spotlight on Our Donors

(Anne’s Center for Israeli Studies and the Jewish Studies Program would not exist without our dedicated supporters, who are listed at the end of this newsletter. We focus this year on two special donors who played a critical role in launching the Center for Israeli Studies, Lilian Klein Abensohn and Stuart Bindeman.)

Lilian Klein Abensohn became involved with the Center for Israeli Studies almost immediately after its founding a quarter-century ago. Her love for Israel, and her desire to give back to her native country, inspired her to become a major supporter of the Center for Israeli Studies and Jewish Studies at American University.

She has made many gifts to the Center for Israeli Studies in support of its various programs, including the Kermit Moyer Fund for Israeli Studies and the Cora and John H. Davis Scholarship Fund.

Throughout her tenure on the board of directors, Lilian was a powerhouse of energy and innovation. She was instrumental in shaping the Center for Israeli Studies into the dynamic institution it is today.

Lilian Klein Abensohn with one of her paintings

Invest in the Future of Jewish Studies and Israeli Studies Education

Help foster Jewish studies and Israeli studies teaching, research, and scholarship at American University. Your gifts guarantee that AU’s Jewish Studies Program and Center for Israeli Studies will move from strength to strength in the coming years.

We welcome and very much appreciate gifts of any amount.

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