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

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

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.

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 Eyal Sarke, of Merke and Katz, an expert on immigration law and founder of the Institute for Hispanic Jewish Relations, talked about anti-Semitic attitudes among Hispanics.
Lectures sponsored by the center for israeli studies

David Newman, an expert on political geography and border controversies, titled his talk "The Separation Fence and the Israeli-Palestinian Border Disclosure" (co-sponsored 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 "Towards Peace Between Israel and Palestine Possible?" At an event co-sponsored 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.

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. In 1985-86 he was appointed to head a team of Israelis engaged in backchannel political talks with the PLO and presently is a senior research associate with the Jaffa 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.

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 MGIT Club of the Kogod School of Business. He is currently director of Technical Market Development at CalEli, 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. Klapman 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 Modern Jews, Jewish and the award-winning A Modern Hebrew and a Traditional Community: Ashkenazi M. Kaplan. Orthodox and American—Judaica Professor Gurock is past president of the Academic Council of the American Jewish Historical Society.

Arnold Daskin-Spyker, 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 Daskin-Spyker is the founding director of the University of Connecticut’s Center for Jewish Studies and Contemporary Jewish Life and past president of the Association for the Social Scientific Study of Jews. He is the coauthor or editor of six books and is currently completing a new book on American Jewry in the twenty-first century.

Studies and the Jewish Studies Program

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Richard Breitman, Department of History, with three other historians, has been working for many years on some 8 million previously classified documents to study the imprisonment of 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 1939, 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. diplo-
mat representative to the new state of Israel in 1948.


Kenneth Cohen, mubb and Hillil director at AU, reports that American University's Hillel has been recognized and honored twice by prominent outside groups. The ... 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 dams with the American University Department of History. He is currently working with Professor Amos Azaryahu, 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.

Alone Levin, School of Public Affairs, won an Endowment Fellowship for travel to France and England to continue researching his book on the idea of America in European political thought, 1482-911. He delivered numerous lectures on this topic in venues from Duke University to the Catholic Un-
iversity of Porto and wrote an article, "Jews," 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 Visitor Program, and serves on the board of the AU Hillel.

Arnon Linkatz, Department of Literature, received the American Academy of Arts and Letters Award in Literature, which "honors writers of exceptional accomplishment." In Fingers 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 Israel Joyce Cary Academy.

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

Naomi M. Naily, Department of Languages 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 mem-
ber 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. Nadel, Department of History and Jewish Studies Program, has worked on a variety of projects to celebrate the 300th anniversary of Jewish settlement in America. She served as historical consultant to the Library of Congress exhibition Congress of the States to Home: 300 Years of Jewish Life in America, and her essay “American Jewry 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, cospon-
sored 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 Rosenblum, 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 pub-
lished (with Robert S. Kravchuk) the sixth edition of his Public Administration: Understanding Management, Politics, and Law in the Public Sector. In 2004 he deliv-
ered three lectures in Japan: “Muster of Public Administration Programs in the U.S.A.: Curriculum and Contemporary Issues” (Hokkaido University, Kyoto) and “The Development of Municipal and Regional Administration” (Kyoto, Japan and Japan University Accreditation Association, Tokyo).

Myra Sidarov, Department of Literature, published several poems on Jewish and Israeli themes, including “A Three-Couse Meal for the New Year” in Celebrating the Jewish Holidays Series, Poems in English is “Trick or Treat in the Dark,” in Magazines, “Biography of an American,” the Washington University, and American University as well as other linguistic and Jewish establishments. Pamela S. Nadel, Department of History and Jewish Studies Program, has worked on the

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Center for Israeli Studies Establishes the Seymour and Lillian Abensohn Endowment

O n June 13, 2004, the Washington-Jewish community lost one of its most philanthropic and beloved members, Seymour Abensohn. To perpetuate his memory and his lifelong 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
American University
4400 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20016-8029

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

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Help foster Jewish studies and Israeli studies teaching, research, and scholarship at American University. Your gifts guarantee that what is taught in university classrooms will have a long-lasting effect on the next generation of leaders.

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― 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 Essay for his book 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, 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 Václav 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 Miloš Forman, Jan Kadar, Jan Sverak, and Ivan Passer. His university colleagues marvel at his unflagging 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 Socialist cultural domination. In the aftermath of the failed Prague Spring of 1968, Lustig, as a Jew and a dissident, 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.

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.

To honor Lillian Klein Abensohn on her 90th birthday, Geraldine Gittleson of McLean, Virginia, a long-time friend of the Abensohns and a former chair of the Center for Israeli Studies Advisory Council, has just completed a major gift to the Abensohn Fund. Her generosity along with contributions from a long list of donor friends to the Center for Israeli Studies, including nations and foundations, has allowed the Center to begin building the Abensohn Fund that will launch the next phase of the Jewish and Israeli Studies programs at American University.拉动海斯金和兰伯特·施泰因汉姆，你们二位为我们做出了巨大贡献。我们非常感谢你们的慷慨支持。

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The Center for Israeli Studies and the Jewish Studies Program thank the following donors for their generous contributions:

- **Curriculum Development Fund ($50,000)**
  Develop new curricula on the modern nation of Israel with components on the nation's history, multiethnicity, immigration and absorption, political system, water and arid agriculture, arts and letters, economy, and society. Will enable students to examine the country not only as a nation in conflict but also as one with remarkable achievements in the arts, sciences, humanities, and social sciences.

- **Visiting Professorship ($100,000 each)**
  Establish an annual rotating position staffed by the best of Israeli scholars to teach in the AU curricula being developed, address the campus, and participate in the Summer Institute on Israeli Studies.

- **Endowed Professorship ($1,000,000 each)**
  Establish the first chair in Israeli studies.

- **Summer Institute on Israeli Studies ($250,000)**
  Funds will provide scholarships and will be used to support the four-week summer institute in Israel for university professors, high school teachers, and community college instructors. The institute will develop replicable curricula in Israeli studies to extend the center's reach beyond the AU campus.

Please visit the Center for Israeli Studies website for additional details and opportunities for giving.

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**Opportunities for Giving to the Center for Israeli Studies**

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