



CIS CONFERENCE ON AMERICAN JEWS AND ISRAEL



Michael Koplow, Becka Alper, Gadeer Kamal-Mreeh, Dahlia Scheindlin, Dan Arbell

Rarely has a project so long in the planning spoken so perfectly to a current historical moment as this Fall's Meltzer Trone conference, "American Jews and Israel: A Complicated Relationship." Treated to an international powerhouse of experts from academia, journalism, public opinion polling, and the arts, audiences were riveted by the high level of conversation and debate.

The conference, cosponsored by AU's School of Public Affairs, began in a packed hall on Sunday evening with a discussion between author and journalist Franklin Foer and Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Joshua Cohen, moderated by conference chair Lauren Strauss, on the American Jewish experience and the post-October 7th world. The speakers explored the complex



Joshua Cohen, Franklin Foer, Lauren Strauss

relationship between American and Israeli Jews, and the interconnectedness of those communities, as well as the dramatic rise in antisemitism following October 7 and how it affects young American Jews. Ultimately, Foer and Cohen emphasized that the Jewish community is intimately connected, regardless of whether it sees itself as such. On Monday, the conference continued with four panels covering such topics as the history of American Jewish and Israeli relations, challenges to democracy in both countries, Israel and America through the eyes of fiction and non-fiction writers, and the post-October 7 era. (cont. on pg. 8)

ANTISEMITISM: AN AMERICAN TRADITION



Pamela Nadell leads a discussion with students

In her powerful new book *Antisemitism: An American Tradition*, Pamela Nadell, Patrick Clendenen Chair in Women's and Gender History and Director of the Jewish Studies

Program at American University, confronts a painful reality: antisemitism has been woven into the fabric of American life since the nation's founding. Through history and personal narrative, Nadell shows that antisemitism has transcended party, race, and religion, resurfacing in moments of national stress, from Henry Ford's Protocols propaganda and Charles Lindbergh's isolationism to the chants of "Jews will not replace us" in Charlottesville and rising hostility since October 7. Yet her book also points to endurance and hope: the ways American Jews have consistently drawn upon the nation's ideals of liberty and justice to respond to hatred with courage and conviction. *The Wall Street Journal* named *Antisemitism: An American Tradition* among the Best Books of October.

Speaking before full audiences across the country, Nadell appeared with Senator Ben Cardin at Washington's Politics and Prose, with *The Atlantic's* Franklin Foer at the Center for Jewish History in New York, and with *New York Times's* Bret Stephens at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh.

On November 12, American University students were privileged to discuss her book on our campus. Introduced by Kogod School of Business Dean David Marchik, five students of Professor Nadell's freshman class engaged in a lively discussion about the historical dimension of antisemitism in America and about the current surge of antisemitism. They were living proof of how important the education on antisemitism is today – more important than ever. ■

PERLMUTTER MEMORIAL LECTURE ALON TAL ON ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

On March 31, 2025, the School for Public Affairs and the Meltzer Schwartzberg Center for Israel Studies hosted the 2025 Amos Perlmutter Memorial Lecture, featuring prominent Israeli environmentalist and activist, Tel Aviv University professor and former Knesset member Alon Tal. His talk, titled “*Environmental Challenges for Israelis and Palestinians in Times of War*,” addressed the devastating ecological impact of the ongoing conflict in the region.

Tal provided a sobering overview of the fires, pollution, and destruction caused by the war in both Israel and Gaza, emphasizing

that environmental damage has become an overlooked casualty of conflict. Yet, he balanced this with an optimistic long-term outlook, highlighting Israel’s groundbreaking advances in desalination technology and sustainable agriculture, which serve as models for regional resilience. He cautioned that overpopulation remains a critical challenge for Israel and its neighbors, yet expressed hope that environmental cooperation could serve as a bridge for Israelis and Palestinians in the future.

The lecture drew a wide audience of students, faculty, and community members, sparking a



Alon Tal

robust discussion about how environmental concerns intersect with broader geopolitical and humanitarian issues in the region. ■

ISRAELI THEATER IN TIMES OF CRISIS



Roy Horowitz

In February 2025, the Meltzer Schwartzberg Center for Israel Studies welcomed Professor Roy Horowitz of Bar-Ilan University, a renowned Israeli actor and director, for a talk titled “*Israeli Theater in Times of Crisis*.” Horowitz discussed how the war has profoundly impacted Israeli theater and cultural expression, reflecting the resilience and struggles of a society in conflict.

Students and a large community audience explored how artists are responding to wartime realities and the cultural forces shaping Israeli society during this turbulent period. ■

ULTRA-ORTHODOX DRAFT DISCUSSION

In January 2025, the Meltzer Schwartzberg Center for Israel Studies hosted an important conversation on one of Israel’s most pressing and divisive issues: the conscription of Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) Jews into the Israel Defense Forces. The event, titled “*Balancing Faith and Duty: The Haredi Draft and Challenges in the Israeli Military*,” featured Dr. Niva Golan-Nadir, a research associate at the Center for Policy Research at Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy (SUNY Albany) and research fellow at the Institute for Liberty and Responsibility at Reichman University in Israel.

Dr. Golan-Nadir traced the evolution of the Ben-Gurion compromise, which initially exempted Haredi yeshiva students from mandatory military service, and examined how the pressures of the ongoing war in Gaza have intensified public opposition to the arrangement. The discussion revealed how the draft debate reflects broader societal tensions in Israel, where military obligations intersect with deeply rooted religious and cultural identities. ■

EUROPEAN RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL BEFORE AND AFTER OCTOBER 7:

The Center for Israel Studies at American University kicked off the academic year with its first event on Monday, September 29th, hosting renowned journalist and Hebrew University Professor Gisela Dachs. Dachs discussed with CIS Director Michael Brenner the history of Israeli relations with European countries and how those relationships have changed over the years and especially after October 7, 2023. Dachs discussed specifically how Israel’s relationship with Germany has evolved from non-recognition to close relationship, and how relations with France, once Israel’s strongest political and military ally, are experiencing a crisis after its recent recognition of Palestine as a state. ■



Gisela Dachs and Michael Brenner

SONENSHINE LECTURE: PIGS AND THE WORLD JEWISH CONSPIRACY - MEAT AND JEWS IN THE NAZI MIND

On October 22, the Center hosted an engaging discussion titled “Pigs and the World Jewish Conspiracy: Meat and Jews in the Nazi Mind,” in which historian John Efron and cookbook author Joan Nathan explored the themes of Efron’s new book, *All Consuming: Germans, Jews, and the Meaning of Meat*. Together they examined how food, especially meat, has shaped the complex relationship between Jews and gentiles in Germany from the Middle Ages through the Nazi era. The conversation delved into Nazi obsessions and conspiracies surrounding Jews and pork, revealing how dietary taboos became instruments of antisemitic ideology culminating in a conspiracy theory that made Jews responsible for the killing of pigs during World War One. The lively discussion on the cultural and political meanings of food in Jewish and German history concluded with a description of the changing diet among German immigrants to Palestine in the 1930s. ■



Berkeley Professor John Efron, Joan Nathan, and Michael Brenner

PEACE TALKS WITHOUT LEADERSHIP: ISRAEL 30 YEARS AFTER THE RABIN ASSASSINATION



Aaron David Miller, Guy Ziv, and Chuck Freilich

On October 29, 2025, CIS Associate Director Guy Ziv moderated a conversation between former Israeli national deputy security advisor Chuck Freilich and State Department veteran Aaron David Miller commemorating the 30th anniversary of the assassination of Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin by an Israeli right-wing extremist. Both discussants knew Rabin personally and began the conversation with assessing his legacy and the different course history took after the assassination of the man who signed the Oslo peace accords. They continued their discussion by focusing on today’s situation. While reminding us of positive developments like the Abraham Accords, they emphasized the stalled Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and the looming threats to future US-Israel relations as reflected in opinion polls among the American public. ■

BRIDGE-BUILDING EVENTS

PROMOTING ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN DIALOGUE: CLASS VISITS OF PEACEWORKS FOUNDATION

In October 2025, the Peaceworks Foundation brought two speakers to AU classrooms to promote Israeli-Palestinian dialogue. Yuval Benziman, a Professor in the Conflict Research, Management and Resolution Program of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in Israel and Jaser Abu Mousa, a Palestinian political analyst and development

specialist from Khan Younis who lost his wife Heba and two sons in an airstrike during the recent Gaza War, discussed postwar strategies of Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation and future co-existence. AU students engaged in lively classroom discussions and opportunities to follow-up in more deeply engaged activities. ■



Peaceworks Speakers Visit History of Israel Class

ISRAEL-GAZA: WHAT'S NEXT?



Boaz Atzili, Piper Campbell, Fouad Alkhatib

In March 2025, the Meltzer Schwartzberg Center for Israel Studies hosted a timely panel discussion, “Israel–Gaza: What’s Next?” The event brought together Ahmed Fouad Alkhatib, a Palestinian analyst from the Atlantic Council, and Professor Boaz Atzili of American University’s School of International

Service, with SIS Professor Ambassador Piper Campbell moderating the conversation.

The panel explored the obstacles to securing a ceasefire and the challenges to achieving sustainable long-term peace in the wake of the ongoing conflict. In a wide-ranging discussion, the speakers provided diverse perspectives on the political, social, and humanitarian complexities of the war, emphasizing the need for both pragmatic solutions and visionary thinking.

The event underscored the importance of open dialogue and respectful discussion, drawing a large audience of students, faculty, and community members eager to better understand the underlying forces at work in the conflict. ■

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY AND HEBREW UNIVERSITY TEACH JOINT CLASS IN SPRING 2026

American University is the first university to co-teach an entire class with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The class, *Misinformation, Polarization, and Hate Speech in the Digital Age* is a collaborative class that will bring Israeli

students to Washington for one week and will take AU students to Jerusalem during spring break 2026. The class is taught in the School for Public Affairs and is made possible through a generous donation. ■

CENTER FOR ISRAEL STUDIES

American University’s Meltzer Schwartzberg Center for Israel Studies is the nation’s first and one of its premier centers for educating about today’s Israel—its achievements and its challenges. Our approach is multi-disciplinary, going beyond the Arab-Israeli conflict to study modern Israel’s history, vibrant society, culture, multiethnic democracy, and complex geopolitical issues. The center’s goal is to enhance scholarship and knowledge in the university and the wider community about a multifaceted Israel. Using AU’s expertise in global education, and its central location in Washington, D.C., CIS seeks to connect Israel to the next generation of young leaders and to serve as a national and international hub for nurturing and catalyzing Israel Studies.

JEWISH STUDIES PROGRAM

American University’s commitment to the Jewish Studies Program dates back to the early 1970s. Since then, AU’s Jewish Studies Program has included a major and a minor and offered courses across the curriculum for all AU students. For more than fifty years, AU’s Jewish Studies Program has advanced research and teaching and fostered a greater understanding of Jewish Studies scholarship on our campus and among our wider community.



Michael Brenner, Laura Cutler, Julian Weiss

ISRAEL WRITING AWARD

Julian Weiss: “Yigal Allon and How the Golan Heights Became Israeli”

Congratulations to Julian Weiss for winning the 2025 Israel Studies Writing Award with his essay, “Yigal Allon and How the Golan Heights Became Israeli.” Weiss examines how Israeli leader Yigal Allon shaped the policies and political vision that led to Israel’s annexation of the Golan Heights. Drawing

on interviews he led with some of the actors involved and on numerous historical sources, he shows how Allon’s mix of security strategy and socialist idealism helped make the Golan an accepted part of Israel across the political spectrum. The paper offers a fresh perspective on how history, politics, and geography converged to define one of Israel’s most consequential frontiers. ■

MEET OUR STUDENTS



Ben Imershein ('27) is a student in the School for International Service with a double-minor in Israel Studies and Arab World Studies. He appreciates being able to hear from two ends of what is often a polarized spectrum while being able to learn new ideas within both fields. He notes that while many university students avoid dialogue today because of the fear of backlash, the Center for Israel Studies, and in particular Professor Ziv's falafel lunches, offers an opportunity for students to embrace a focused political dialogue. There is often disagreement, but the students remain collegial because the ultimate goal is to learn from one another.



CIS interns Peter Donlon SIS '26 and Maya Lobel SIS '26 have been actively involved in the CIS community, participating in Guy Ziv's Israeli politics lunches and taking classes with faculty members Dan Arbell and Michael Brenner. Both majoring in international studies with a focus on the Middle East, Maya has worked for the Center since her freshman year and Peter since his sophomore year. Outside of CIS, Peter has been interning for AIPAC with the Political team this semester, while Maya has been conducting communications work with the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies. This coming January, Maya will be leading an AU Perspectives trip to visit Israel and the West Bank. Also attending, Peter hopes that the trip will help him form a "holistic perspective on the region" and better understand the issues and realities on the ground.



Ido Levy chose to do his PhD at SIS because of its impressive faculty. Being in DC is also a big plus, making it easier for him to continue his policy analysis work and interact with people in the national security policy community. Professor Boaz Atzili is his mentor and their conversations have decisively shaped Levy's work on armed nonstate actors developing military capabilities. Levy is also an associate fellow at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy. ■

OUR ALUMNI: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



Andrew Sperling graduated in 2024 with a PhD in History. He then served as the inaugural Leon Levy Fellow at the Center for Jewish History, before starting a new position as the Historian and Director of Academic Initiatives at the American Jewish Historical Society in New York City. His upcoming book, *The Menace Among Us: American Jews Against Antisemitic Extremism*, will be published with New York University Press. Through his training under Jewish Studies professors like Pamela Nadell and Michael Brenner, Andrew learned about the value of public-facing scholarship, the richness of Jewish history, and the power of telling stories that connect the past and present.



Josh Kraushaar earned his undergraduate degree in History in 2004. Professor Pamela Nadell's Jewish history courses gave him something extraordinarily valuable for his professional career: a deep, contextual command of history that remains the most essential tool for any journalist covering complex stories. As editor-in-chief of *Jewish Insider*, he still draws daily on the breadth of scholarship and analytical rigor he first encountered in her classroom. Josh's time at American University built the foundation of his career—lifelong friendships, professional connections forged in the heart of Washington, and a cultivated curiosity paired with healthy skepticism that keeps him open-minded in a rapidly changing world. ■

STUDENT AWARDS



Israel Studies Leadership Award:
Tomer Ben-Ezer '25

Israel Studies Writing Award:
Julian Weiss '26

Israel Studies Student Excellence Award:
Max Lagoy '25

FACULTY NOTES

Dan Arbell - Scholar in Residence, Center for Israel Studies. Throughout the year he was interviewed on numerous occasions to US, Middle East and International media outlets, and spoke in public forums, providing his expertise on strategic, diplomatic and political affairs.

Boaz Atzili is a leading voice on international security and Middle East politics. His recent publications include "Sacrificed on the Altar of Netanyahu's Political Power" in *Benjamin Netanyahu's Dark Legacy: The Abandonment of October 7th Hostages* and "Trump's Ability to Counter Netanyahu's Spoiler Tactics in Public May Have Been Key to Advancing a Ceasefire in Gaza," in *The Conversation*. He has authored numerous Hebrew op-eds in major outlets and provided expert commentary to global media such as BBC, Fox News, and Al-Jazeera. Professor Atzili continues to serve as the Undergraduate Coordinator for the Foreign Policy and Global Security department in SIS.

Michael Brenner was appointed in 2025 as a member of the Academic Council of the United States Holocaust Museum and as a judge for the Court of Arbitration for Nazi looted Cultural Property. He continues to serve on the Commission of the German Government to Reappraise the Terror Attack at the Munich Olympics 1972. He delivered numerous lectures in Europe and the US, including New York's Center for Jewish History and the University of Colorado. He wrote numerous articles including a contribution on the current state of Israel Studies for the special thirtieth anniversary issue of the journal *Israel Studies*.

Gershon Greenberg, Department of Philosophy and Religion, published *To Redeem History: Real-Time Orthodox Responses to the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem); and "Lithuanian Musar Thought: Afflictions of Love (Yesurim Shel Ahavah)," in *Jewish Religious Life in Lithuania in the 18th- 20th Centuries*, "Origins of Religious Zionist Thought in America: Yehoshua Singer" at the World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem and made other conference presentations. He served as Visiting Research Professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where he directed the Ongoing Research Seminar on the Religious Dimension of the Holocaust.

Alan Kraut, recently retired Distinguished Professor of History (CAS) has published an essay "Mass Migration and Immigration

Policy" in the *Oxford Handbook of American Jewish History* edited by Micael R. Cohen and Shari Rabin. He also chairs the History Advisory Committee (HAC) of the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation that collaborates with the National Park Service on the content of the Ellis Island National Museum of Immigration.

Lisa Leff is wrapping up her tenure as director of the Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Over the past academic year, she presented her research in lectures at the University of Arizona, the University of Maryland, the University of Vermont, Stanford University, and Chautauqua Institution in upstate New York. Her essay, "Der Kolonialismus und die Juden," co-authored with Ethan Katz and Maud Mandel, will appear in *Schwarze Juden, Weiße Juden? Über Hautfarben und Vorurteile* this year.

The Wall Street Journal named **Pamela Nadell's** new book, *Antisemitism, an American Tradition*, to its top ten list of books reviewed in October. Book tour highlights included events with former Maryland Senator Ben Cardin, The Atlantic's Franklin Foer, and The New York Times's Bret Stephens. The Miami Book Fair gave her book to the Miami Dade College Honors students.

Saul Newman, Department of Government (SPA), has been developing the first joint course between AU and Hebrew University. The Spring 2026 joint SPA and Hebrew University course on Misinformation, Polarization and Hate Speech in the Digital Age is fully enrolled with no more seats available. The AU students will be going to Israel at no charge during Spring Break and the Hebrew U students will be coming to AU free of charge April 12-19.

Alicja Podbielska is a historian of the Holocaust, Polish-Jewish history, and memory, with a Ph.D. from the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Clark University. She has held fellowships and academic positions at Yale University, Emory University, and numerous international research institutions. During her fellowship at American University, she will teach Holocaust-related courses and research Jewish rescue networks in Nazi-occupied Poland.

Lauren Strauss, Jewish Studies Program (CAS), moderated a variety of public programs including a forum with kibbutz mem-

bers who survived October 7 and interviews with acclaimed Israeli authors Etgar Keret and Maya Arad. She published "William Gropper, Reliably Radical Son of the Yiddish Street" in *William Gropper: Artist of the People*. Continuing her work in DC-area Black-Jewish relations, she hosted events and consulted on educational curricula. Strauss serves on the boards of the Association for Jewish Studies, the DC Forum on Israeli Arab Issues, and the American Friends of Yad Tabenkin Kibbutz Archives.

Guy Ziv, School of International Service (SIS), was named SIS Scholar-Teacher of the Year for 2024-25 and received the SIS Dean's Research Award for 2025-26. His book, *Netanyahu vs. The Generals: The Battle for Israel's Future* (Cambridge University Press, 2024), was the subject of roundtables at the Association for Israel Studies Annual Meeting in Prague and the International Studies Association Annual Meeting in Chicago. Ziv gave book talks at Cornell University, the University of Oregon, the University of Florida, Duke University, and Northwestern University. Ziv's recent publications include, "From Populist Politician to Sober Statesman: Naftali Bennett's One-Year Premiership" in *Israel Studies Review*; and "Military Reservists and the Resistance to Netanyahu's Legal Overhaul" in *Middle East Policy*. ■

THANK YOU, LAURA!



Laura Cutler's farewell party

On May 2, CIS celebrated 16 years of service of Managing Director Laura Cutler. She has been a driving force behind CIS' success and we wish her all the best in retirement. ■

D-DAY IN NORMANDY

By Pamela Nadell



Pamela Nadell and Deborah Lipstadt at Lester Weiss' grave

Invited in June to speak in Paris at On the Frontlines: French-American Forum on Antisemitism, convened by the American Jewish Committee and CRIF, the Representative Council of French Jewish Institutions, I traveled the next day with a delegation from the forum, including the historian Ambassador Deborah Lipstadt, the former State Department's Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism, to the D-Day commemorations at Omaha and Utah Beaches.

At Colleville-sur-Mer on the cliffs above Omaha Beach, 149 Jewish stars stand out amid the more than 9,000 crosses atop the graves of the Americans who died liberating France. WWII Jewish GIs faced an agonizing choice. With H for Hebrew on their dog tags, they risked summary execution if Germans captured them. Heading into Europe, some scratched out the H. To avoid that fate, others put P for Protestant or C for Catholic or no religion on their dog tags.

In recent years, American Jewish leaders have begun replacing the crosses over Jewish military graves with the six-pointed star. One marks the burial site of First Lieutenant Lester Weiss. A co-pilot in the 487th Bombardment Group, his plane crashed on May 11, 1944, while on a bombing raid in the lead-up to D-Day. Originally buried in France at Orleans, his remains were reinterred at the Normandy American Cemetery. After the formal D-Day ceremony, with its speeches, wreaths and taps, our group stood before his marker. There, with tears in our eyes, we recited the mourner's Kaddish, the Jewish prayer for the dead, for this 24-year-old New Yorker who sacrificed his life to end tyranny and establish freedom. ■

CELEBRATION OF GERMAN-JEWISH HISTORY

By Michael Brenner

This summer, the Leo Baeck Institute (LBI) for the Study of German-Jewish History and Culture celebrated its 70th anniversary. Founded in 1955 in Jerusalem by luminaries of the academic world, including Gershom Scholem, Martin Buber, and Hannah Arendt, the LBI opened two additional centers in London and New York, and later added an office in Berlin. It is named after the spiritual leader of German Jewry, Berlin rabbi Leo Baeck, who followed his community to the Theresienstadt concentration camp and who later served as the first president of the institute until his death in 1956. It has been an honor for me to serve as the institute's international president for the last decade and to oversee the amazing research the worldwide scholarly community around the LBI has been conducting worldwide. The three institutes house the largest libraries on German-speaking Jewry, and extensive



German undersecretary of the interior Bernd Kroesser, former Israeli ambassador to Germany Shimon Stein, keynote speaker Doron Rabinovici, international LBI president Michael Brenner, and Berlin Jewish Museum director Hetty Berg.

archives with family papers, community histories, genealogical materials, significant art collections, and public and private records of German-speaking Jews from the 16th to the 21st centuries. On June 17, the institute celebrated its festive 70th anniversary in the Berlin Jewish Museum. I was pleased to welcome over 300 guests, among them many German government officials, international diplomats including the US Chargé d'Affaires, and important personalities of the academic and cultural world. ■

WELCOMING OUR NEW PROGRAM MANAGER, DAVIDA YITZHAKY



Davida Yitzhaky

We are delighted to welcome Davida Yitzhaky as the new Program Manager at the Meltzer Schwartzberg Center for Israel Studies and Jewish Studies Program. Davida brings a wealth of experience to our team, having taught middle and high school English for 14 years, most recently serving as the English Department Chair at Berman Hebrew Academy. She is excited to transition into

the higher education space and has already expressed how much she is enjoying her time at American University.

Davida earned her B.A. in English, with a minor in Jewish Studies, from the University of Maryland and holds a Master's in Teaching from Virginia Commonwealth University. She lives in Silver Spring with her husband, three children, and their dog. Beyond her professional work, Davida is deeply engaged in her community—she has served as Vice President of her synagogue, currently serves on the bereavement committee, and even started a book club.

We look forward to collaborating with Davida and benefiting from her expertise and enthusiasm. Please feel free to reach out to her at dyitzhaky@american.edu or stop by her office to say hello! ■

We are deeply grateful to all who have supported the Meltzer Schwartzberg Center for Israel Studies this past year—your generosity and engagement have enriched our students, faculty, and programs, making our mission possible.

The roster of speakers was unparalleled: among others, we heard from historians Jonathan Sarna and Derek Penslar, journalists Joshua Leifer and Dahlia Scheindlin, former Member of Knesset Gadeer Kamal Mreeh, museum directors Dan Tadmor and Beatrice Gurwitz, novelists Maya Arad and Ruby Namdar, public intellectuals Yehuda Kurtzer and Shmuel Rosner, with expert moderators drawn from the CIS faculty.



Shmuel Rosner, Dina Kraft, Yehuda Kurtzer, Boaz Atzili, Guy Ziv

In a turbulent era, CIS once again stepped up to educate our community about one

of the most important and ever-changing relationships in the Jewish, Israeli, and American worlds. ■

WE COUNT ON DONOR SUPPORT TO ENSURE THE VIBRANCY OF OUR PROGRAMS.

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FROM THE DIRECTORS

This past year has reminded us just how essential our work remains. In a time of polarization, misinformation, and deep division, the mission of the Meltzer Schwartzberg Center for Israel Studies and the Jewish Studies Program is as clear as ever: to teach, to question, and to bring people together through knowledge and dialogue. Education and understanding are our most powerful tools for countering prejudice and building bridges, both on campus and beyond.

Through our lectures, symposia, courses, and student-oriented activities, we continue to explore the rich and often complicated story of Jewish and Israeli life. One highlight was this year's Sonenshine Lecture, "Pigs and the World Jewish Conspiracy: Meat and Jews in the Nazi Mind," with historian John Efron and author Joan Nathan, a conversation that used history, literature, and food to shed light on how cultural ideas can both connect and divide societies. Another one was our annual Meltzer Trone conference, which this year focused on American Jews and Israel and brought some of the world's leading experts on this relationship to campus for two days of fruitful discussions.

In an era when emotion often drowns out evidence, our students and faculty remain committed to critical thinking and open discussion. From new research on antisemitism in digital spaces to public programs on coexistence and shared society in Israel, our community continues to show that rigorous scholarship can go hand in hand with empathy and humanity.

We are proud that our programs continue to offer a space where diverse voices—Jewish Jewish and non-Jewish, Israeli and Palestinian, academic and creative—can meet in the spirit of curiosity and respect. The challenges are many, but our purpose is constant: to keep learning, to keep listening, and to ensure that American University remains a home for thoughtful, informed conversation about Israel, Judaism, and the world we share. ■



Top to Bottom: Michael Brenner, CIS Director; Pamela Nadell, JSP Director; Davida Yitzhaky, Program Manager; Guy Ziv, CIS Associate Director