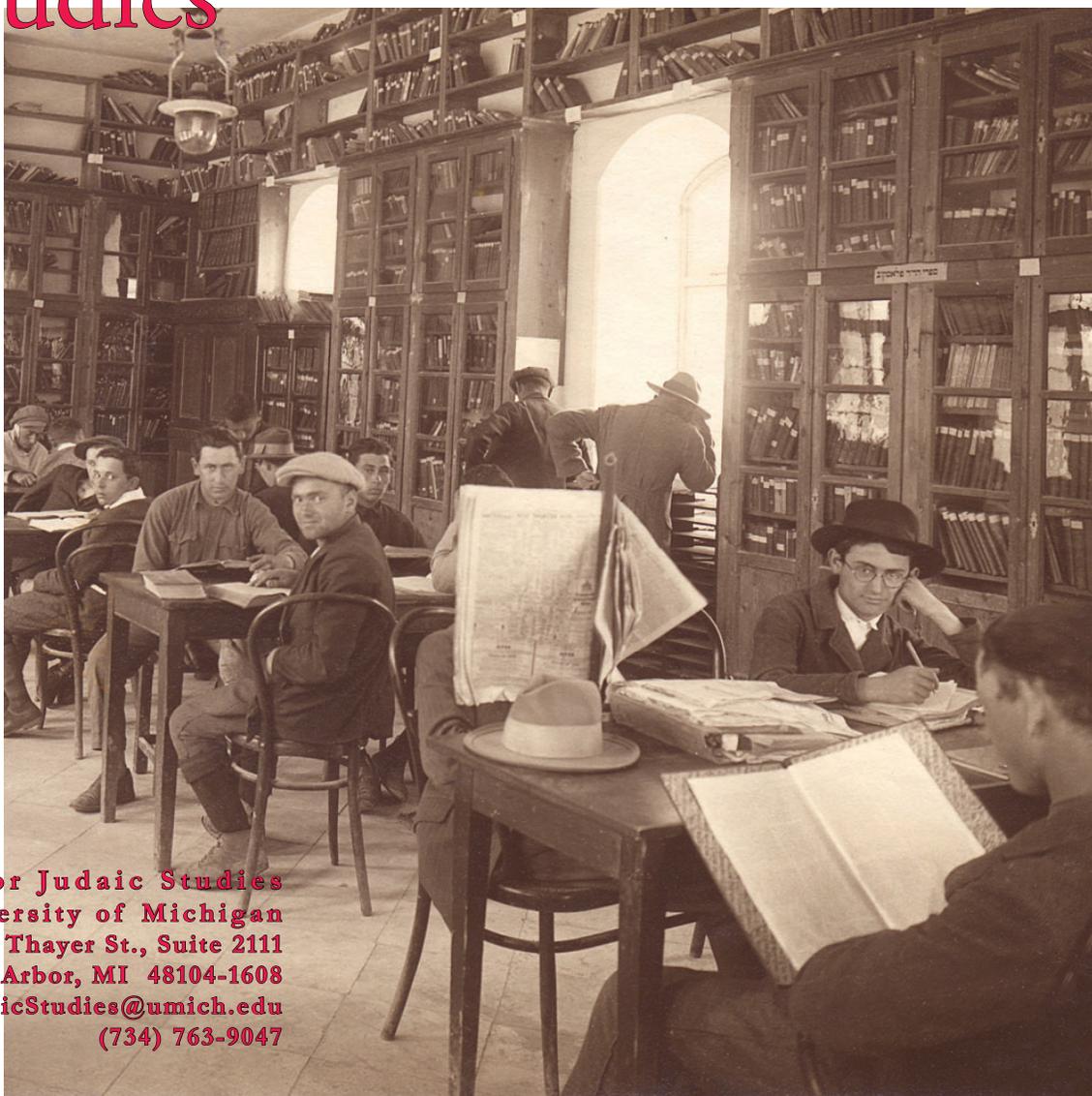


FRANKELY SPEAKING

July 2011

Jean & Samuel Frankel Center for Judaic Studies

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The B'nai B'rith Library's reading room, Jerusalem, early 20th century. (See story on Jewish Press website, P. 4.)

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From the Director: eigo ga wakarimasu ka? [Do you understand English?]

Deborah Dash Moore, Director, The Frankel Center
Frederick G.L. Huetwell Professor of History

The usual reply indicated, politely, “only a little,” expressed by a smile and thumb and forefinger held up, separated by an inch of air. Given my inability to speak Japanese, I lectured about American Jews in English. While I can’t know how much was understood directly, I remain impressed with the attentiveness of my varied audiences: beginning and advanced undergraduate students, faculty members in American studies, graduate students with diverse interests, and teachers of English who gathered regularly to read Henry James.

What did I understand as a foreigner in Japan, outsider to Japanese culture, as an American, historian, and Jew? The brief report that follows represents impressions gleaned from my two-week short-term OAH-JAAS fellowship this past May-June. People were surprised and pleased that we had come to Japan at this difficult time. (Mac Moore also gave several lectures.) Across the southwest of the country we noticed few expressions of stress. Japanese volunteered that they were self-conscious about American perceptions. They wanted us to know that in Japan an air of normalcy could most effectively comfort those directly and indirectly afflicted by the catastrophe.

As the details of my fellowship in Japan developed, I wondered why Japanese scholars were interested in Jewish American history. What engaged my host, Professor Miyuki Kita of the University of Kitakyushu and the graduate students and early career scholars studying American Jews in Kyoto? Most importantly: politics. American Jewish political activities, from their early pre-state Zionism to their involvement in the Russo-Japanese war to their later civil rights

activism, intrigued these scholars. Professor Kita saw American Jews as situated between African Americans and white Americans. Jews complicated American history, adding shades of gray between black and white. Prejudice against Jews and Jewish difference from other Americans suggested possibilities of an alternative minority history. And since American studies occur in Japan under the rubric of international relations, a focus on politics makes sense.



Deborah Dash Moore lecturing to a group of English teachers in Japan.

Given the location of American Jews within the Jewish world and its history, this American-centered emphasis surprised me. I had expected that some aspects of American Jewish life, especially involvement with Israel, would be high on the agenda of my audience. Instead, Japanese women students and scholars were particularly drawn to American minority discourses, which have helped them to understand and negotiate their own minority status. As dissenters within the United States, as a group often stigmatized yet resilient enough to forge an independent history and produce changes in American society, American Jews offered a kind of comparative model. Indeed, Jewish involvement in the American women’s movement, especially second wave feminism, generated widespread interest among undergraduate and graduate students. Several graduate students were

studying Hadassah, both its leadership and its religious dimensions. Other young scholars suggested comparisons with Japanese Americans in the States or with ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia. These perspectives expanded my own understanding of American Jews, seeing them through Japanese scholars’ eyes.

My own lectures connected more with issues of social history and religious history, rather than political history. When speaking about Jewish immigrants to the United States, I stressed ways they synthesized Jewish and non-Jewish life within their particular American environs. When discussing the postwar period, I examined the impact of the Holocaust and suburbanization. In presenting an overview of American Jews for scholars, I focused on urban history. It is hard to judge how these lectures meshed with Japanese fascination with American Jews. The group reading Henry James took a break to read Philip Roth—“Eli, the Fanatic” and “Goodbye, Columbus.” They found it difficult to enter into the idiosyncratic, stressful humor of these stories. And yet we were able to discuss Roth’s dialogue, as well as the significance of black clothes (complicated by my own black dress and jacket—a style, I assured them, that had no significance beyond my lingering identity as a New Yorker).

Leading these discussions in Japanese contexts confirmed for me that American Jews have been integral to the history of the United States. Ironically, Jewish marginality in the United States enhanced their Americanness, an insight that many Jewish political activists might have espoused.

Eileen Pollack was raised in Liberty, NY, where her father was a dentist. Her grandparents owned a hotel in nearby Ferndale, the heart of the Borscht Belt. Some of her experiences growing up at her family’s hotel took shape in *The Rabbi in the Attic and Other Stories* and *Paradise, New York*. Eileen has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Michener Foundation, the Rona Jaffe Foundation, and the Massachusetts Arts Council. Her stories have appeared in journals such as *Ploughshares*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *SubTropics*, *Agni*, and *New England Review*. Her novella “The Bris” was chosen to appear in *The Best American Short Stories 2007*, edited by Stephen King, while her stories have been awarded two Pushcart Prizes, the Cohen Award for best fiction of the year from *Ploughshares*, and similar awards from *Literary Review* and *MQR*. She lives in Ann Arbor and is the Zell Director of the MFA Program in Creative Writing at the University of Michigan. In Fall 2011, she will teach a course in Jewish Comic Fiction.

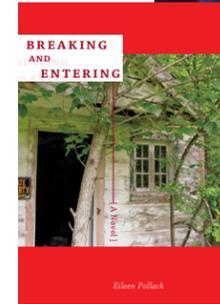


Photo by Nina Hauser.

Breaking & Entering: Eileen Pollack on Her New Novel

Eileen Pollack’s new novel *Breaking & Entering* was born in Michigan, in the mid 1990s, where Pollack was raising her small son. Timothy McVeigh had just blown up the Murrah Building in Oklahoma City, and his ties to the Michigan Militia were just becoming apparent. Pollack was concerned about bringing up a Jewish child among white supremacists and Nazi sympathizers, and her fears were not allayed by reality. One, the host of a hate-fueled shortwave-radio talk show, Mark Koernke, was an employee at the University of Michigan—the liberal institution where Pollack was teaching. As writer in residence in a high school in Western Michigan, she discovered that some of the biology teachers were creationists. She also met a woman who had just relocated from northern California to a small Michigan town. The woman reported to Pollack that the town minister was delivering virulently anti-Semitic sermons each Sunday. Her husband’s protests had led to the family’s harassment, and, eventually, the old Victorian farmhouse the family had been fixing up burned to the ground. The town fire marshal called it arson, but hinted that the couple had set their own house on fire. The comment he made was that the husband’s Jewish last name “fit the profile” for people who would set fire to their house to collect the insurance. That’s when Pollack had the premise of her novel—as well as a funny visual image of the literal Jewish “profile.”

As she learned more, Pollack became curious about how people so different from each other were living side by side. (This was, after all, a far cry from the hegemony of Cambridge, Mass., where she had lived before coming to Michigan.) “I had the political idea and now the story of the family living out the conflict—both sides assumed guilty. What’s interesting when you write fiction, you have to humanize characters,” she explains. “I didn’t want to be an East Coaster coming in and portraying people as the hicks in *Deliverance*. I was interested in how people saw themselves and how they saw the other. I was asking myself questions like ‘How does paranoia get started?’



Is there a way to break through it? What does it mean to be American when Americans in the same country, state, or town share so little common ground?”

In writing the novel, she was also working out another thread, one that examines the two sides of passion. The characters in her book, after all, feel passionately about their politics and their religion. She began to ask herself when passion was actually good—and when it was destructive. “I started to think about love and passionate love. Now, self-help books say passion is bad. But the definition of passion is unfulfillable love. Traditionally, passion was what inspired literature and art,” she continues. “It can be very destructive and unhealthy. But you miss it when it’s not there. I thought about the couple that moved here from the West Coast. They were now fully developed characters in my novel. I began to write their lives as a couple who moved to Michigan because the husband had to get away. He lands a job as a prison psychiatrist, and his wife takes a big hit to be with him. He’s the son of a Holocaust survivor and begins to hunt, connecting with the idea of how his own father survived in the Polish forests by killing rabbits with his bare hands. He starts spending time with the Militia, who seem to like having a Jew with them. They delight in teaching him their survival skills. He also loves working at the prison. So his wife feels abandoned, and she can’t get job because she’s too liberal. Her isolation leads to an affair with a Unitarian minister, who is also very liberal—another facet of passion.”

[*Breaking & Entering* will be published January 15, 2012. Pre-order at Ann Arbor’s Nicola’s Books or at Amazon.com. To whet your appetite before then, check out *The Rabbi in the Attic and Other Stories*; *Paradise, New York*; and *In the Mouth*, for which she is the recipient of the Edward Lewis Wallant Award for Jewish fiction. Visit www.eileenpollack.com for more.]

Rescuing Jewish Journalistic Heritage: Yaron Tsur and the Historical Jewish Press Website

During the late 1990s, Israeli tech company Olive approached Tel Aviv University Professor Ron Zweig seeking to move into newspaper and press digitization. Together, Zweig and Olive digitized *The Palestine Post*. This achievement proved to be a breakthrough, as it both preserved the original form of the paper and enabled a free-text search of its contents.



Yaron Tsur. Photo by D.C. Goings

In the fall of 2004, the project fell into the hands of Yaron Tsur, a professor of history at Tel Aviv University (and a 2010–2011 fellow at the Frankel Institute). Fueled by memories of newspapers disintegrating to dust, as well as a desire to have centrally located archives, Tsur launched the Historical Jewish Press website (www.jpress.org.il/view-english.asp). Since 2005, it has been a joint initiative of Tel Aviv University and the National Library of Israel. “The website benefitted from the Library’s treasures of microfilms and rare newspapers as well as from its highly professional teams,” says Tsur, who now shares the project’s management with the library’s chief information officer, Alon Strasman.

Six years after its inception, the website includes more than 400,000 pages; during the next three years, it will pass the million-page mark. The Historical Jewish Press houses 20 newspapers from 11 countries: Israel, France, Morocco, Prussia, Poland, Austria, England, Egypt, Russia, Hungary, and Germany. The site also enables free-text search in an impressive five languages: English, Hebrew, French, Hungarian, and Judæo-Arabic.

Among the collection’s highlights are *Maariv* (1948), the famous Israeli daily; *Davar* (1924–1996), the Histadrut newspaper; *Hamagid* (1856–1903), one of the first and the most influential Hebrew newspapers; *Hatzvi* (1884–1915), founded by Eliezer Ben-Yehuda; and the *bulletin de l’Alliance Israélite Universelle* (1860–1913) the organ of the great philanthropic French Jewish society to which Jews from all over the world reported.

The Historical Jewish Press is the first website dedicated to the press of Jewish communities worldwide, which necessitates that it be multilingual. Between 1840 and 1880, when Jewish journalism was in its nascent stages, German, English, French, and Hebrew were the main languages of Jewish newspapers. These languages did not, however, accurately represent the full linguistic portrait of world Jewry. Most Jews in Europe spoke Yiddish, and those in the Middle East and North Africa spoke Judæo-Arabic and Ladino. After 1880, the picture changed and newspapers in the under-represented Jewish languages “sprang up like mushrooms after the rain,” says Tsur. “In Poland, there were dozens of Yiddish newspapers; Tunisia produced many in Judæo-Arabic dailies, and the Greek city of Thessaloniki printed multiple papers in Ladino.”

The history of printed Jewish papers presented Tsur and his colleagues at Israel’s National Library with a unique set of challenges. While scanning and displaying the newspapers was a simple task, creating searchable content required sophisticated programming known as “optical character recognition” (OCR). Until recently, the Latin alphabet was searchable with OCR, but not the Hebrew alphabet—used by Hebrew, Yiddish, Judæo-Arabic, Ladino, and other Jewish languages. “Every set of letters requires the development of special OCR tools. However, the companies investing in OCR rank an alphabet highly only if there is a promising market for their product,” Tsur says. “There was, therefore, a threat—

and it has still not entirely disappeared—that a technological barrier would be created that would check our ability to present the whole spectrum of Jewish press on the Internet.”

Fortunately, an effective OCR for the Hebrew alphabet was recently developed, making it possible to upload newspapers covering approximately 150 years of Hebrew journalism. “Right now, the website is dominated by Hebrew, but we hope soon to change it and to open portals for Yiddish, American Jewish, Russian Jewish, Judæo-Arabic, and Ladino journalism. Our French Jewish collection is rather developed and contains seven periodicals. It seems to me,” Tsur continues, “that only a multilingual website can reflect the ‘Jewish situation’ during what we may term the ‘classic era’ of Jewish journalism, between 1880 and 1980. It will also allow, in the near future, searching keywords simultaneously throughout the entire spectrum of languages and newspapers.”

Naturally, such lofty goals require the help of multiple collaborative partners. “Our policy is to identify our best potential partners, wherever they are found. The website is not planned to be a project of one or two institutions, but rather one of international cooperation for the benefit of the whole Internet community. Our first partner was the library of Alliance Israélite Universelle in Paris, with whom we established the French collection. The project is funded mainly by the Yad Hanadiv foundation. One cannot imagine the website’s impressive development without their encouragement and backing, but they invest primarily in preservation of the Hebrew press. We are actively seeking additional partners and donors for the other languages. Our collaborative efforts with cultural and academic institutions in Israel and elsewhere are the project’s lifeblood. We are partnering with Shalom Aleichem House in Tel Aviv and cooperating with YIVO in New York City for the site’s Yiddish section, and we have a joint project with the University of Pennsylvania library to upload *The Occident*, the first American-Jewish general periodical (1843 – 1869). We are negotiating similar projects with other universities, and we receive help from other philanthropic foundations such as Matanel in Luxembourg.”

Has Tsur’s time as a fellow at the Frankel Institute helped his project? “I have found Ann Arbor and the Frankel Institute to be an ideal place for promoting the case of rescuing Jewish journalistic heritage. The committee for the Yiddish portal has been established here, and its chairman,

Professor Avraham Novershtern, was also a fellow at the Institute. I have been able to discuss concerns about the Judæo-Arabic section of the website with fellow Benjamin Hary (Emory). And David Aaron helped to create contact with Hebrew Union College and its magnificent library, as well as the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati. Additionally, Todd Endelman is trying to help bring the *Jewish Chronicle* to our website. Finally, Frankel Center Director Deborah Dash Moore is investigating the possibility of uploading a Michigan-based Jewish newspaper to our site, which would serve as the Frankel Center’s contribution to the project.”

Homepage of the Historical Jewish Press website, English language version.

The website serves scholars and students from all over the world and from a variety of disciplines: history, literature, linguistics, communications, and more. It crosses not only linguistic and geographical divides, but also religious and political lines. “We were surprised to discover,” says Tsur, “that there are many North African Muslim students who take advantage of our archive of Jewish French newspapers, mainly from their own countries, in order to write seminar works on topics concerning Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia.”

A newspaper provides a window into a period’s zeitgeist that no other vehicle can provide. Tsur and his colleagues’ goal is to benefit the entire education system—to give teachers a tool through which to connect their pupils directly with yesterday’s events and discoveries. For example, students can study contemporary responses to the delivery of an historical speech or the publication of a classic piece of poetry. “We work for the whole community,” concludes Tsur. “Isn’t it the advantage of rescuing that kind of popular media from oblivion?”

Institute Scholars Convene to Examine Jews & Political Life

Each year, the Frankel Institute for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan invites scholars to Ann Arbor to pursue research projects on a general theme. They meet regularly with each other to discuss their work, interact with faculty and students, and enrich the intellectual life of the community. For 2011–2012, the group—led by U-M Political Science Professor Zvi Gitelman—will gather around the theme of Jews and Political Life.

“Jewish ideas are largely absent from the academic study of political theory, and the analysis of political behavior has little place in Judaic studies despite renewed interest in a Jewish political tradition,” explains Gitelman. “During the coming academic year, we hope to study and bring to light Jewish political ideas and patterns of Jewish political behavior, identifying what they share with other traditions and what is unique to them.”

The 2011–2012 Frankel Institute participants:



Gershon Bacon, Bar-Ilan University

The Politicization of the Hasidic Masses in Poland: The Case of Alexander (Aleksandrow) Hasidim, 1900–1930

Gershon Bacon is associate professor in the Jewish history department at Bar-Ilan University, where he holds the Klein Chair for the History of the Rabbinate in Europe in Modern Times. He specializes in the social, political and religious history of Polish Jewry in the 19th and 20th centuries. His numerous publications include *The Politics of Tradition: Agudat Yisrael in Poland 1916–1939* (1996; revised and expanded Hebrew edition, 2005) and *The Jews in Poland and Russia: Bibliographical Essays* (1984). He is currently engaged in researching and writing *The Jews of Modern Poland*, to be published by the University of California Press.

Olena Bagno-Moldavski, Stanford University

Aetiology of the political culture of Jews from the Former Soviet Union now in Israel, Germany, and Ukraine

Olena Bagno-Moldavski is a former Neubauer Fellow at the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), Tel Aviv, and a current postdoctoral fellow at Stanford University (2011). She writes on Russian foreign policy in the Middle East and on issues related to international migration and political integration of minorities. Her publications include “VOX POPULI: Trends in Israeli Public Opinion on National Security 2004–2009,” a co-authored memorandum (The Institute for National Security Studies, 2010). She is currently conducting a comparative study of immigrants’ political culture in Israel from 1999–2010.

Miriam Bodian, University of Texas-Austin

An Argument for Religious Toleration: The Inquisition Defense of a Seventeenth-Century Portuguese Jew

Miriam Bodian is a professor of history at the University of Texas at Austin. She has written widely on the history of the Portuguese Jews of early modern Europe, with publications that include *Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation: Conversos and Community in Early Modern Amsterdam* (1997) and *Dying in the Law of Moses: Crypto-Jewish Martyrdom in the Iberian World* (2007).



Mia Bruch, Stanford University

Theory and Practice: American Jews and the Science of Democracy

Mia Bruch received her B.A. in Modern Thought and Literature and her Ph.D. in history from Stanford University, where she received both the Centennial Prize for teaching and the Lieberman Fellowship for academic

achievement. Her work has been recognized by the Center for Jewish History and the National Foundation for Jewish Culture, among others.

Zvi Gitelman, University of Michigan

Politics and Perspectives on the Holocaust in the Wartime Soviet Union

Zvi Gitelman is professor of political science and the Preston R. Tisch professor of Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan. His most recent edited volume is *Religion or Ethnicity?: The Evolution of Jewish Identities* (Rutgers University Press, 2009). His book *Uncertain Ethnicity: Jewish Identities in Post-Communist Russia and Ukraine* will be published in 2012. He is working on Soviet policy toward the Holocaust and how Soviet Jewish combatants perceived the war and the Holocaust.



Brian Horowitz, Tulane University

The Development of Russian Zionism as a Social Movement

Brian Horowitz is the Sizeler Family Chair Professor at Tulane University. He has published three books: *Jewish Philanthropy and Enlightenment in Late-Tsarist Russia* (University of Washington Press, 2009), *Empire Jews: Jewish Nationalism and Acculturation in Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Russia* (2009), and *The Myth of A.S. Pushkin in Russia’s Silver Age: M. O. Gershenzon-Pushkinist* (1997). His new collection of essays, *Russian Idea/Jewish Presence*, is forthcoming. Horowitz is the recipient of multiple awards, including the Alexander Von Humboldt, a Fulbright, and a Lady Davis.



Melissa Klapper, Rowan University

Ballots, Babies, and Banners of Peace: American Jewish Women’s Pre-World War II Activism

Melissa Klapper is an associate professor of history at Rowan University. She is the author of *Small Strangers: The Experiences of Immigrant Children in the United States, 1880–1925* (2007) and *Jewish Girls Coming of Age in America, 1860–1920* (2005; paperback 2007). Her current book, *Ballots, Babies, and Banners of Peace: American Jewish Women’s Pre-World War II Activism*, is under contract to NYU Press.

Benjamin Pollock, Michigan State University

Esotericism and Enlightenment: Salomon Maimon Between Politics and Metaphysics

Benjamin Pollock is an assistant professor of religious studies at Michigan State University. His book *Franz Rosenzweig and the Systematic Task of Philosophy* (2009) won the Salo Baron Book Prize for outstanding first book in the field of Jewish Studies. He also co-edited *The Philosopher As Witness: Fackenheim and Responses to the Holocaust* (2008) with Michael L. Morgan.



Michael Schlie, Indiana University

Franz Rosenzweig, Leo Strauss, and the End of Political Theology

Michael Schlie received his Ph.D. from Indiana University in 2011. His first essay manuscript, “Goodness Visible: Law and Faith in Lévinas and Paul,” is under review at *The Harvard Theological Review*. His article “Betraying Images: Paul Celan’s Translation of Charles Baudelaire’s *La mort des pauvres*” was published in *Naharaim: The Journal of German-Jewish Literature and Cultural History* (October 2010).



Nancy Sinkoff, Rutgers University

“Last Witness”: Lucy S. Dawidowicz, the New York Intellectuals, and the Politics of Jewish History

Nancy Sinkoff is an associate professor of history and Jewish Studies at Rutgers University. She recently published “‘Yidishkayt’ and the Making of Lucy S. Dawidowicz,” which prefaces the reissue of Dawidowicz’ memoir, *From That Place and Time: A Memoir, 1938–1947* (2008) and “The Polishness of Lucy S. Dawidowicz’s Postwar Jewish Cold War” in *A Jewish Feminine Mystique? Jewish Women in Postwar America* (2010). “Fiction’s Archive: Authenticity, Ethnography, and Philosemitism in John Hersey’s *The Wall*” is forthcoming in *Jewish Social Studies*.

Andrew Sloin, Earlham College

Pale Fire: The Jewish Revolution in White Russia, 1917-1929

Andrew Sloin is an assistant professor of history and the co-director of Jewish Studies at Earlham College in Richmond, In. His research focuses on Jewish history in Russia, the Soviet Union, and Europe during the interwar period, with a particular emphasis on the relationship between economy, politics, and culture in the Soviet Union.



Sammy Smooha, University of Haifa

Israel as a Jewish and Democratic State: The Palestinian-Arab Minority as the Litmus Test

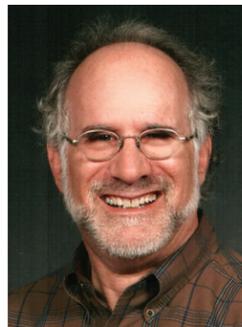
Sammy Smooha is professor of sociology and former dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Haifa, as well as former president of the Israeli Sociological Society. He spent the 2009–2010 academic year as a senior research fellow at the United States Institute of Peace in Washington, D.C., and the fall 2010 semester as a visiting professor of sociology at Brandeis University. The Israel Prize laureate for sociology in 2008, Smooha specializes in ethnic relations in the world and in Israel. His books include *Israel: Pluralism and Conflict* (1978), *Arabs and Jews in Israel* (1989, 1992), and *The Fate*

of Ethnic Democracy in Post-Communist Europe (2005, co-editor). In his current research work, he studies Israel in comparative perspective—its deeply divided society, its Jewish and democratic character, and its treatment of the Palestinian-Arab minority.

Kenneth Wald, University of Florida

The Political Behavior of American Jewry

Kenneth D. Wald is professor of political science at the University of Florida. Wald is the coauthor of *Religion and Politics in the United States*, now in its sixth edition. He has held visiting appointments at Harvard, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Haifa University, and the University of Strathclyde. His current research focuses on the political behavior of American Jewry.



Herbert Weisberg, Ohio State University

The Distinctive Jewish-American Voter

Herbert Weisberg is professor and chair of political science at Ohio State University. He is the author of many volumes, including *Controversies in Voting Behavior* (currently in its fifth edition); *The American Voter Revisited* (2008), *The Total Survey Error Approach: A Guide to the New Science of Survey Research* (2005), and *Models of Voting in Presidential Elections: The 2000 U.S. Election* (2004). He has been recognized in *Who’s Who in America* since 1986 and has received multiple distinguished awards.

Lenore Weitzman, George Mason University

The Politics of Jewish Divorce Law Reform: Agunah Activists in the U.S., Canada, and Israel

Lenore J. Weitzman has been a Professor at Stanford University, the University of California, and Harvard University. Most recently she has been the Robinson Professor of Sociology and Law at George Mason University. She is the author/editor of five books, including *The Divorce Revolution: the Unexpected Social and Economic Consequences for Women and Children in America* (1985), which led to the passage of 14 new laws in California and to federal legislation on pensions and child support. In 2011, she was invited to give the keynote speech to the General Assembly of the United Nations on the International Day of Holocaust Remembrance, highlighting their focus on Women in the Holocaust.



For a complete schedule of fellows’ colloquia, visit www.lsa.umich.edu/judaic/ or “Like” UMich Frankel Center for Judaic Studies on Facebook. You can also download our fellow colloquia free from iTunes U.

MacDonald Moore Delivers Lecture to Rapt Japanese Audience

During a recent teaching stint in Japan, Mac Moore (lecturer, American Culture and Frankel Center affiliate) delivered a provocative lecture on some ways that comedy has been used in American movies to engage difficult social and cultural issues. Sponsored by the U.S. Consulate in Fukuoka, Moore’s lecture—“Behind Laughing Masks: A Look at Race, Identity, and Prejudice in American Comedy”—drew a full crowd of around 90 students.



Moore shows a clip from *Breakfast at Tiffany’s* (above). Moore and a student during the Q&A session (below).

These aspiring performers and filmmakers from Kyushu Visual Arts College were so engaged by Moore’s talk that the question portion was extended by 30 minutes. Moore navigated through the murky waters of ethnic and racial prejudice as he discussed movies from the last 80 years. Two particularly unfortunate filmed portrayals date from the decades after World War II.



In the 1948 English movie *Oliver Twist*, Alec Guinness

portrays the Jewish character Fagin, his prosthetic features dripping with malice. Moore asked his audience to consider the film’s gratuitously offensive release date.

Related problems sour the bittersweet *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*, starring Audrey Hepburn as Holly Golightly. As her fulminating Japanese neighbor, Mr. Yunioshi, Mickey Rooney recycles a war propaganda stereotype. Even in 1961 Rooney wears a bucktoothed appliance, round black-rimmed bottle glasses, and a constipated face.

Moore urged close observation of how stereotypes are used today, because performers still generate laughs by creating discomfort with racial depictions. He played clips from the recent *Tropic Thunder*, in which Robert Downey, Jr., plays a white actor who portrays an African American soldier in a movie within the movie—a satirical spin that recalls Al Jolson’s ethnically and racially layered performance in *The Jazz Singer* of 1927.

CHARLOTTE DELBO, THE FORGOTTEN WITNESS?

BY DAVID CARON

It may sound, at first blush, like an odd idea to talk about Charlotte Delbo in the pages of this newsletter. She was French, she was a “fellow traveler” of the Communist Party, and she was a member of the Resistance during the occupation of France. But she was not Jewish. Her political activities did, however, lead to her arrest and subsequent deportation from Paris to Auschwitz (and later Ravensbrück) on January 24, 1943, along with 229 other women. Only 49 returned, among them Delbo. The books of testimony on the horrors of the Nazi death camps she wrote and published over the years remain, to this day, some of the most compelling and unabashedly literary ones ever written—yet they are also some of the most insightful on the spirit of friendship and solidarity that has sustained women deportees during and beyond their captivity.

Few people who have read her would dispute the fact that her talent and intellectual depth have made Delbo the equal of a Primo Levi. This is probably why her books, most notably the extraordinary trilogy *Auschwitz and After*, whose final volume appeared 40 years ago this year, have become the focus of an increasing amount of academic work. For someone like me, who teaches on the Holocaust and the Nazi camps to both graduate and undergraduate students, the trilogy consistently remains a high point in my courses. Nothing, it seems, touches students or makes them think the way Delbo does. Is it the unique blend of fragmentary prose and poetry that characterizes her writing? Or the complex engagement in the very act of writing the unspeakable? Perhaps the experiences themselves, including that (traumatic in its own right) of the return? Yes, it is all that, to be sure. But I believe that what sets Delbo apart from so many of her peers is that her voice is inseparable from a community of women, a community of friends. Yes, Delbo wrote the books and signed them with her name, but she never speaks *for* her comrades; she speaks *with* them, the dead and the survivors alike. No individual voice may be heard, or even articulated, without the hospitality of a group. And in a sense, this is the demand Delbo, who was also a prolific playwright, places on us, her readers: to be hospitable and to read her, not in awe, but in friendship. To read Delbo today (she died of cancer in 1985) is to continue, within us and among us, the work of bearing witness. We too must now become the vessels of hauntedness that she once was for our dead comrades.

Strangely—and I am still trying to understand

why this is exactly—Delbo’s work never quite resonated in France the way it has on this side of the Atlantic. It may have to do with the fact that the question of community remains, in French culture, too closely associated with that of identity, and is perceived as a threat to certain universal ideals. More prosaically, there is the fact that Charlotte Delbo was a woman in a “field”—that of Holocaust and deportation testimonial literature—largely dominated by men, some of whom, such as Elie Wiesel and Jorge Semprun (who recently passed away), have become very public figures in France. Whatever the reason, my colleague Sharon Marquart at the University of Houston and I decided to try our best to remedy what is not only an injustice but a very sad waste. We have put together a collection in French of some of the best work ever written on Delbo in the U.S. and



Canada. The book is entitled *Les revenantes* and will appear in fall 2011.

It includes translations of essays previously written in English (by Michigan’s Ross Chambers and Patricia Yaeger, for example) and new pieces written especially for our collection. We also found a number of shorter, rarer pieces by Delbo; they will appear here together for the first time. Will French academics take notice? We certainly hope so. After all, judging by the renewed interest in her plays, it seems that the French public has already started to listen.

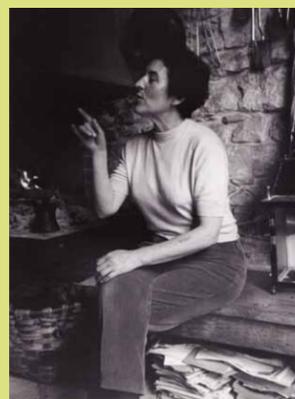
No, Charlotte Delbo wasn’t Jewish, but her unique voice has nonetheless made her one of the most important and unforgettable witnesses of the Shoah.

become very public figures in France. Whatever the reason, my colleague Sharon Marquart at the University of Houston and I decided to try our best to remedy what is not only an injustice but a very sad waste. We have put together a collection in French of some of the best work ever written on Delbo in the U.S. and

LES REVENANTES

CHARLOTTE DELBO

La voix d’une communauté à jamais déportée



SOUS LA DIRECTION DE DAVID CARON ET SHARON MARQUART

U-M Alumnus Gives Generously to Judaic Studies

As music editor of the Michigan Daily in 1954, H. David Kaplan started a campaign to create a new School of Music on North Campus. Through the years he has continued to support the music school and the University.

But in the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies and the Frankel Institute, Kaplan says he has found a place that honors his Jewish heritage as well as his desire to support the U-M. Frankel Center Director Deborah Dash Moore recently announced that Kaplan has made the Center the beneficiary of a sizeable annuity.

Kaplan says he was inspired by his great nephew’s work with the Hillel Center at Brandeis University, escorting Jewish students on birthright trips to Israel. “His interest in Judaic studies got me thinking about making a donation to foster that field,” Kaplan says. Donating to the Frankel Center also gives Kaplan an opportunity “to honor U-M for giving me so much.”

Nick Block will be presenting a paper at the Fourth Warsaw Conference for Young Jewish Studies Researchers. The conference will be at the University of Warsaw from June 14-16, 2011. His paper is entitled “Autoethnography in the Cult of the Eastern European Jew.”

Helen Marie Dixon won the 2011 Sweetland Dissertation Writing Institute Fellowship and was awarded the Museum Studies Program Graduate Certificate, as well as the Rackham Teaching Certificate, in April 2011. She will be chairing a session at the 2011 ASOR Annual Meeting called “Death and Burial in the Ancient Near East,” in November. Finally, she’s been offered a publication deal with Gorgias Press to edit and publish the proceedings of the ASOR session above from 2010 and 2011 together in one volume.

Sara Feldman was awarded this summer’s Mellon Dissertation Seminar in the Humanities.

The Frankel Center’s work also helps today’s scholars understand Jewish history, he says.

“There’s a saying that if we don’t learn from the mistakes of history, we will be forced to repeat them,” Kaplan observes. “Being a Jew in the world today is different from when I was a child. Maybe today’s openness is better, since we all know where we stand.”

Kaplan says a 2007 meeting with Dr. Moore reinforced his desire to support the center. “Her enthusiasm and conviction that what the Frankel Center and Institute were doing was important sold me,” he says.

Kaplan is a longtime patron of the arts and U-M supporter. He was graduated from U-M in 1956 with a bachelor’s degree in journalism and worked for newspapers, magazines and in corporate communications in New York, Texas and Washington state. He was actively involved in the Houston Grand Opera

Mazel Tov!

Anita Norich has been accepted in the Michigan Society of Fellows. She also published “Hebraism and Yiddishism: Paradigms of Modern Jewish Literary History” in *Modern Jewish Literatures: Intersections and Boundaries*, edited by Sheila Jellen, Michael Kramer, and Scott Lerner (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010); “Under Whose Sign: Hebraism and Yiddishism as Paradigms of Modern Jewish Literary History,” *PMLA*, Vol. 125, no.3 (May 2010); and “Singers of Different Tunes,” *The Jewish Week* (October 2010).

Paul Schoenfeld premiered “Freilach,” which was commissioned by the Seattle Symphony in honor of the retirement of conductor Gerard Schwartz. In addition, his new work for alto flute based on “Ani Ma’amin” premiered on June 13.

Ronit Stahl was awarded the 2011 Kevy Kaiserman Memorial Summer Fellowship from the Feinstein Center for American Jewish History.

and eventually became associate publisher of Houston’s Performing Arts magazine. He has taught continuing education classes on opera near his home in Federal Way, in Washington state.

He has also enhanced the performing arts collections of several libraries, the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas, Austin, and donated a 60-volume collection of New York City theatre playbills and programs to the University of Washington Libraries Special Collections. He continues to donate current theater programs to libraries and archives.

Kaplan currently serves on the Governing Board of Pacific Northwest Ballet in Seattle and has donated endowments to the University of Washington Libraries, Burke Natural History Museum, Seattle Opera and Pacific Northwest Ballet School to foster education in the arts and sciences.

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SAVE THE DATE

“Medieval Exegesis: An Interfaith Discourse”

Mon., Oct. 17, & Tues., Oct. 18, 2011, 8:45am – 5:30pm
Rackham Graduate School, 4th Floor

This conference examines the interpretation of scripture (the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, the Qur’an) in late-medieval Iberia (Spain) as a vehicle for dialogue and conflict. Papers will be presented by approximately 20 experts from Europe, Israel, and the U.S. The conference is being funded by the European Research Council. For more information:

www.lineas.cchs.csic.es/inteleg/conferences

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