



CSJL

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF JEWISH LIFE

NEWSLETTER

Fall 1997

No. 1

Yael Zerubavel to Head Jewish Studies Center

In September, 1996, Dr. Yael Zerubavel became the founding Director of the new Center for the Study of Jewish Life at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. A graduate of Tel Aviv University (B.A.) and the University of Pennsylvania (Ph.D.), Zerubavel came to Rutgers from the University of Pennsylvania, where she was Associate Professor of Modern Hebrew Literature and Culture. Zerubavel has published numerous articles exploring the relations between history and memory, Zionism and the emergence of Hebrew national culture, Israeli national myths, and immigrant literature. Her book, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition*, won the 1996 Salo Baron Prize from the American Academy for Jewish Research. Professor Zerubavel has served on the Board of Directors of the Association for Jewish Studies since 1993 and on its Program Committee from 1995 to 1996. She also served on the Board of Directors of the Association for Israel Studies from 1990 to 1994 and is currently the Vice President of the Association and Chair of the Program Committee for its 1998 annual meeting, which will be held at Rutgers.

The establishment of the Center for the Study of Jewish life was encouraged by the President of Rutgers University, Dr. Francis L. Lawrence, and Richard F. Foley, Dean of Faculty of Arts and Sciences and Graduate School. The Center was founded with the assistance of a generous gift of \$2 million from Joan and Allen Bildner of Short Hills, N.J. A campaign to raise \$10 million dollars on behalf of the Center is currently being led by the Rutgers University Foundation. The campaign

is co-chaired by two staunch supporters of Rutgers University and active leaders of the Jewish community, Joan Bildner, who is a member of Rutgers' Board of Governors, and Alvin J. Rockoff, the former Chair of the Board of Governors, who currently serves as Vice Chair for the Rutgers University Foundation's Board of Overseers. The campaign benefits from the leadership and devotion of its Vice-Chairs, including Bruce G. Freeman, Herb Klein, Sima Jelin Lichtman, Harold S. Perl, Dr. Norman Reitman, and Adelaide Zagoren, and from the dedication and energy of Amy L. Singer, its indefatigable development officer at the Rutgers Foundation.

The Center for the Study of Jewish Life has three missions: 1) To develop the academic program and establish a new major and minor in Jewish Studies at Rutgers University; 2) To function as a research and resource center serving the academic community and the public; and 3) To offer an array of academic and cultural programs to the larger community through its Office of Community Outreach. The Center is committed to highlighting the cultural diversity within Jewish history and tradition and to sponsor prejudice reduction



Professor Yael Zerubavel in front of the Center's building located in the heart of Rutgers' College Avenue campus.

See **Zerubavel** on page 11

THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
RUTGERS

New Jewish Studies Major at Rutgers

PROGRAMS

The Jewish Studies major offers 60 courses, providing comprehensive examination of all aspects of the Jewish experience, including the historical, social, cultural, religious, and political life of Jews throughout the ages.

The Center for the Study of Jewish Life at Rutgers University has established a new broad-based interdisciplinary program in Jewish Studies. The Jewish Studies major offers a comprehensive examination of all aspects of the Jewish experience, including the historical, social, economic, cultural, religious, and political life of Jews throughout the ages. Students are required to select one of four areas of concentration: 1) Jewish History and Society; 2) Jewish Culture; 3) Religion and Thought; or 4) Israel Studies. In addition to the new Jewish Studies major, students may select to major at the Department of Hebraic Studies, which focuses on Hebrew language and literature. All Jewish Studies courses are cross-listed in other departments, including Comparative Literature, English, German, Hebraic Studies, History, Philosophy, Political Science, Sociology and Women's Studies. The Center will be able to recruit new faculty to its program. This Fall, the Center and the Department of History will conduct a joint search for an Assistant Professor in Jewish history.

The Center has been instrumental in expanding the number of Jewish studies courses offered by Rutgers faculty. With the addition of 13 new courses, the university currently offers 60 courses in Jewish Studies.

Four new courses required for the Jewish Studies Major

Jewish Society and Culture I: From Antiquity to Middle Ages: This course examines the social, economic, religious, and political experiences of the Jewish people from the Biblical world of the ancient Near East until the Middle Ages.

Jewish Society and Culture II: The Modern Experience:

An examination of Jewish life from the breakdown of traditional society in Europe in the 1700s until the rise of the modern state of Israel in the 20th century.

Jewish Studies Seminar: This seminar explores a major theme in Jewish studies and allows students to pursue their own research project, culminating in a paper.

Senior Honors: An independent research project under the supervision of a faculty member, culminating in an honors thesis that must be approved by the program.

Nine New Electives in Jewish Studies

History of Jewish Women: This course surveys Jewish women's history by examining the religious, social, intellectual, and cultural environments of Jewish women from the biblical period through the 20th century.

Israeli Women: Historical and Literary Perspectives: The course examines the impact of socialism, nationalism, ethnicity, religion, and feminism on Israeli women's roles within the family, labor force, army, kibbutz, and politics.

Israeli Theater and Film: The course applies comparative and interdisciplinary approaches to Israeli theater and film as meeting points of Western and Eastern aesthetic traditions. The course explores the political, multicultural, ideological, and gender issues in these two genres against the background of their European, American, and African influences.

Jewish Immigrant Experience: This course examines the modern Jewish immigrant experience, focusing on European and Middle Eastern communities resettled in America, Israel, and Europe. The comparative study of Jewish immigrant experience is based on readings of various genres including history, autobiographical fiction, oral history, ethnography, and film.

Sociology of American Jewish Religious Movements: This course explores the development of American Jewish religious movements within the context of the broader American religious developments and patterns. It analyzes the denominational patterns of America's Jews — Orthodox, Conservative, Reconstructionist, Reform, etc. — from the perspective of both the religious leadership and the membership.

Special Topics in Literature: The Jewish Experience in Poetry: This course considers the evolution of Jewish-American and Anglo-Jewish poetics, 1830-1990, and presents writers who have been disregarded as well as those familiar in different contexts. It focuses on the tension between assimilation and the rejection or discovery of Jewish identity as a source of empowerment.

German-Jewish Literature and Culture from the Enlightenment to the Present: Beginning with G.E. Lessing's *Nathan the Wise* and Moses Mendelssohn's *Jerusalem*, the course examines the cultural record of German-Jewish interaction.

Classical Jewish Philosophy: The course examines the major trends and figures in medieval Jewish philosophy from the emergence of Jewish philosophical theology in the 9th century to the revival of Platonism in the Italian Renaissance. The development of Jewish Platonism and Jewish Aristotelianism will be the two main foci of the course.

Modern Jewish Philosophy: This course explores major thinkers and systems in modern Jewish philosophy, from early modern Jewish responses to Cartesian

thought to contemporary developments in French Jewish philosophy. The main foci will be Jewish responses to Kantian thought and then to Hegelian and post-Hegelian (phenomenological, existential, post-modern) developments, feminist critiques of Jewish tradition, and theologico-philosophical approaches to the Holocaust.

New Graduate Courses

"The Immigrant Experience: Jewish Communities in the Twentieth Century" was taught by Professor Zerubavel during Spring 1997. The course focuses on concepts and theoretical concerns relating to immigrant history and culture, drawing on a study of immigrant Jewish communities.

The Holocaust: History, Testimony, Meaning was added to the History Department and will be taught by Professor Bartov during Spring 1998. This course will focus on three issues related to the Holocaust: the most recent historical research on the Holocaust; accounts of the Holocaust by victims and survivors; and various forms of representation of the Holocaust including fiction, film, commemorative projects, and philosophical treatises.

PROGRAMS

Courses in Jewish Studies Program, 1997-98

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

Israeli Theater and Film
Fall, Michael Taub

ENGLISH

Special Topics in Literature:
The Jewish Experience in Poetry
Fall, Daniel Harris

GERMAN

German Jewish Culture from the
Enlightenment to the Present
Fall, William Donahue

East Side, West Side: Germans
and German Jews in Exile
America
Spring, William Donahue

HEBRAIC STUDIES

Jewish Laughter, Jewish Ghosts
Fall, Curt Leviant

Agnon Themes
Fall, Curt Leviant

Zionism and Israel
Fall, Moshe Sherman

Holocaust Literature in Translation

Fall, Curt Leviant

The Jew in American Society
Spring, Moshe Sherman

Cycles of Jewish Life
Through Literature
Spring, Curt Leviant

Modern Israeli Literature
Spring, Curt Leviant

Hasidic Tales
Spring, Morris Moskowitz

Jewish Cinema and Fiction
Spring, Curt Leviant

Jewish Music
Spring, Marsha Edelman

HISTORY

Road to the Holocaust
Fall, Omer Bartov
Spring, Beth Poelle

Jewish Experience in
Eastern Europe
Fall, Nancy Sinkoff

Arab-Israeli Conflict

Spring, Dina LeGall

Historical Studies: Antisemitism
Spring, Moshe Sherman

Jewish Immigrant Experience
Spring, Hannah Kliger

HISTORY/WOMEN'S STUDIES

Israeli Women: Historical &
Literary Perspectives
Spring, Rena Potok

History of Jewish Women
Spring, Melissa Klapper

JEWISH STUDIES

Jewish Society and Culture I:
From Antiquity to the
Middle Ages
Fall, Moshe Sherman

Jewish Society and Culture II:
The Modern Experience
Spring, Moshe Sherman

Jewish Studies Seminar:

Jewish Memory
Spring, Yael Zerubavel

PHILOSOPHY

Classical Jewish
Philosophy
Fall, Seymour Feldman

Modern Jewish Philosophy
Spring, Jacob Meskin

POLITICAL SCIENCE

Israeli Politics
Fall, Myron Aronoff

Seminar: Antisemitism-
Obsession-Hatred-
Persecution
Fall, Michael Curtis

SOCIOLOGY

Sociology of American
Jewish Religious
Movements
Spring, Chaim Waxman

CONFERENCES

Inaugural Program at New Center

The Center for the Study of Jewish Life celebrated its inauguration on November 20, 1996 with a program entitled *New Perspectives in Jewish Studies*. A hundred and fifty of Rutgers' faculty, administration, and distinguished community leaders attended this program.

Following greetings from Dean Richard Foley and the opening remarks of Yael Zerubavel, Director of the Center for the Study of Jewish Life, the assembly heard three distinguished speakers from diverse disciplines in Jewish Studies. Biblical scholar Jeffrey Tigay, Ellis Professor of Hebrew and Semitic Languages, University of Pennsylvania, spoke on "What's Left to Learn about the Bible? Biblical Scholarship in the 20th and 21st Century." Tigay emphasized that the Bible "has a very important place in a university curriculum that aspires to educate culturally literate graduates." He suggested that contemporary Biblical scholarship is advanced by our better understanding of the history and cultural world of ancient Israel and its neighbors. The study of the Bible has benefited from new archeological discoveries, our knowledge of Near Eastern languages, and insights gained from other scholarly disciplines.

Elliot Wolfson, Abraham Lieberman Professor of Hebrew and Judaic Studies, New York University, and scholar of kabbalah, addressed the issue of

Speakers at the Inaugural program (left to right): Jane S. Gerber, Elliot R. Wolfson, Yael Zerubavel and Jeffrey H. Tigay.



Lectures during 1996-97

"The Invention of the Lower East Side: Jewish Memory in Time and Space"
October 28, 1996
Beth Wenger,
University of Pennsylvania

"The Back to the Future Syndrome: The Case of Modern Hebrew"
November 7, 1996
Dr. Lewis Glinert,
University of London
Co-sponsored with the Departments of Hebrew Studies and Linguistics

"Anne Frank as Icon: Postwar Culture and Holocaust Remembrance"
February 25, 1997
Alex Sagan, Harvard University
Co-sponsored with the German Department

"Russian Political Culture and Antisemitism"
April 9, 1997
Prof. Boris Kolonitskii,
Russian History Institute, Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg, Russia
Co-sponsored with the History Department and the Center for Russian, Central, and East European Studies

Jerusalem as a symbol in medieval kabbalah. Wolfson's talk was entitled "Sacred Space and Mental Iconography: The Place of Jerusalem in Kabbalistic Ritual and Myth." Wolfson noted that in the mystical tradition, Jerusalem and the Temple are symbols of the *Shekhina*, the feminine personification of the Divine presence, and the last of the ten *sephirot*. "The kabbalists view Jerusalem as the female hypostasis of the divine, which complements the male aspects represented by the upper nine emanations," said Wolfson.

Historian of the Sephardic experience, Jane Gerber, Professor of Jewish History and Director of the Institute of Sephardic Studies, CUNY Graduate Center, emphasized the interdisciplinary character of current Sephardic studies. Her address was entitled "From the Romance of the Golden Age to an Academic Curriculum: The Development of Sephardic Studies." Gerber cautioned against the "simplistic dichotomy" of dividing the Jewish world into Sephardim and Ashkenazim: "The differences within each of these units are often as great as between the two groups themselves." She noted that proponents of the *Wissenschaften des Judentums* in Central Europe were drawn to the study of medieval Spain to advance their own struggle for emancipation and Jewish enlightenment. She concluded her talk by pointing out recent developments in the study of Sephardic history and culture.



Participants in the panel on War and Gender Relations (left to right): Joan Ringelheim, Hanna Herzog, Yael Zerubavel, Ruth B. Mandel, and Atina Grossmann.

Symposium on War and Gender Relations

Discussions of war often address the issue of military strategies, politics, gain and loss of territories, loss of human life, and heroism. Little attention has been paid to the issue of war and gender relations. How does war affect women? How do men and women differ in their attitude toward war? How does war affect family dynamics? On April 2, 1997, the Center for the Study of Jewish Life, in cooperation with the Women Studies Program at Rutgers, sponsored a symposium on *War and Gender Relations* to explore these issues in relation to the Holocaust and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Ruth B. Mandel, Board

of Governors Professor of Politics and Director of Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University was the moderator of the program.

In a paper entitled *Genocide and Gender: Split Memory*, Joan

Ringelheim, Director of the Department of Oral History at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum's Research Institute suggested that "assaults against women have been both minimized and difficult to face," and "rarely have questions been raised about female children's sexual vulnerability and sexual victimization in hiding." She pointed out that both scholars and victims have difficulty focusing on these issues.

Atina Grossmann, a history professor at Cooper Union and Women's and Gender Studies, Columbia University, who has written extensively on German women's history, explored women's experiences in the post-war period from 1945-1949. Grossmann believes that the defeat of Germany in 1945 brought about a psychological malaise among German women resulting in their "inability or unwillingness to bear children, as reflected by the high abortion rates and low birth rates." By contrast, Jewish female survivors were eager to bear children. This Jewish baby boom helped mediate what Grossmann called the "continuous tension

See *War and Gender* on page 8

CONFERENCES

Center Co-Sponsors Symposium at U.S. Holocaust Museum

On May 11-13, 1997, the Rutgers Center for the Study of Jewish Life joined in sponsoring a three-day international conference on *Genocide, Religion and Modernity* organized by the Rutgers Center for Historical Analysis and the U.S. Holocaust Museum's Research Institute. Held at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., the conference sought to address ways in which religion has shaped modern atrocities, from the Armenian massacres at the beginning of the century to recent conflicts in Bosnia and Rwanda. "While historians have analyzed everything you can think of in relation to genocide — politics, economics, race — they have not looked seriously at religion," says Phyllis Mack, Rutgers history professor and project director of the

Center for Historical Analysis.

The audience of academics and visitors heard panelists from Rutgers, The Hebrew University, the University of Notre Dame, and the University of Chicago present papers on such topics as "Religion Constructed as Ethnicity: The Fate of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire," "Christian Supporters of National Socialism: The Theology of Gerhard Kittel," "Religion and Genocide in Bosnia," and "Theological Writing of Second Generation Survivors." Several panelists suggested that religious leaders did not do enough to condemn the mass-killings of the 20th century.

Jewish Studies Faculty: 1997-98

FACULTY

MYRON ARONOFF, Professor of Political Science and Anthropology, has published numerous articles and books on Israeli political life, notably *Israeli Visions and Divisions* and *Power and Ritual in the Israel Labor Party*. He is also the Vice President of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, and Past President of the Association for Political and Legal Anthropology and of the Association for Israel Studies.

MATTHEW BAIGELL, Professor of Art History, has written numerous books and articles on American and Russian art and artists. His most recent book is entitled *Jewish-American Artists and the Holocaust*.

OMER BARTOV, Professor of History, received the Fraenkel Prize in Contemporary History from the Institute for Contemporary History and Wiener Library (London) for his recent work, *Murder in our Midst: The Holocaust, Industrial Killing, and Representation*. His forthcoming book is entitled *Imagining Destruction in the Age of Total War*.

RUTH BIRNBAUM teaches Hebrew language and literature at the Department of Hebraic Studies. She also serves as Principal of Temple Shalom Hebrew school in Aberdeen, NJ. Birnbaum received her masters in Jewish Education at Hebrew Union College.

MICHAEL CURTIS, Professor of Political Science, has published dozens of articles on Israeli politics and society. His books include *Israel: Social Structure and Change*, co-edited with M.S. Chertoff; *Israel in the Third World*, co-edited with Susan Aurel; and *The Middle East Reader*. Curtis was recently a Fellow at the Dayan Center, Tel Aviv University.

WILLIAM DONAHUE, Assistant Professor of German. Donahue's most recent article, "Cultural Reparations? Jews and Jewish Studies in Germany Today," was published in the Spring '97 edition of *German Politics & Society*. His forthcoming book is entitled *Holocaust as History Lesson? Contestatory Voices*.

URI EISENZWEIG, Professor of French and Comparative Literature, has published books and articles in French, English, and Hebrew on literary and social subjects, and on Zionism and its history. Eisenzweig, currently on a Guggenheim fellowship in France, is preparing two books: one on anarchism and literature in nineteenth-century France, the other on theoretical questions raised by the Dreyfus Affair.

MAURICE ELIAS, Professor of Psychology, is currently researching Jewish identity development in children and adolescents. He is a specialist in clinical/community psychology and in child, adolescent, and family development. Elias' book, *Teach Your Child Decision Making*, was honored by the American Psychological Association for Excellence in Psychology in the Media. His forthcoming book is entitled *Emotionally Intelligent Parenting: How to Raise a Self-Disciplined, Responsible, and Socially Skilled Child*.

SEYMOUR FELDMAN, Professor of Philosophy, has published numerous articles on Jewish philosophy, notably studies on Maimonides, Gersonides, Abravanel, and Spinoza. His four-volume translation of Levi ben Gershon's *The Wars of the Lord* is published by the Jewish Publication Society. The second volume received the National Jewish Book Council Award in 1995. Feldman is currently working on an essay on Spinoza's most extensive analysis of Judaism and Jewish history, the *Theological-Political Treatise*.

LESLIE FISHBEIN, Associate Professor of American Studies, lectures on the social and cultural history of American Jewry, Jewish American literature and the depiction of Jewish culture in American film. Fishbein published *Rebels in Bohemia: The Radicals of the Masses, 1911-1917*. She is currently working on two manuscripts, *The Harlot's Progress* and *Memoirs of the Sex Trade*.

ZIVA GALILI, Vice Dean of the Graduate School and Professor of History, has studied Russian politics and society in the early 20th century. Galili is the author of *The Menshevik Leaders in the Russian Revolution: Social Realities and Political Strategies* and the co-editor of several other works in Russian. She is currently studying Russian Jewish immigration to Palestine at the beginning of the century.

JUDITH GERSON, Associate Professor of Sociology and former Acting Director of Women's Studies. Her forthcoming book is entitled *At Home*.

and in the Office. She is currently studying German Jewish immigration to New York in the 1930s and 1940s.

DANIEL HARRIS, Professor of English. In addition to books on Yeats, Hopkins, and Tennyson, Harris' current work includes a critical anthology, *Anglo-Jewish and Jewish-American Poetry, Victorian and Modern*; *Coming to Terms: The Autobiography of an Assimilated Jew*; and a poem entitled *Reading the Holocaust*.

CURT LEVIANT, Professor of Hebraic Studies. Leviant's most recent novel is *The Man Who Thought He Was Messiah*. He has translated several volumes of works by the Yiddish authors Chaim Grade and Sholom Aleichem, including *The Song of Songs*. A winner of several national and international fellowships, Leviant was an editor with the *Encyclopedia Judaica* and edited a widely used anthology, *Masterpieces of Hebrew Literature*.

DINA LE GALL, Assistant Professor of History, specializes in the Middle East and Islamic civilization. She has written articles on contemporary Arab politics, Middle Eastern women, and cultural transmission in Islam and has commented on Middle Eastern politics and the Arab-Israeli conflict in various public forums. LeGall is currently working on religious culture and its transmission in the Ottoman world.

PHYLLIS MACK, Professor of History and Project Leader for the Rutgers Center for Historical Analysis. Mack recently completed a two-year project at the center entitled "Varieties of Religious Experience." Her most recent work is *Visionary Women: Ecstatic Prophecy in Seventeenth-Century England*, and her forthcoming book is *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe*.

ORLY MOSHENBERG teaches Hebrew language. She received her Master's degree in Language Education from Rutgers University and is now working on a second Master's in Educational Psychology. The topic of her thesis is *Temporal Exploration Tasks as Perceived by Adults Representing Different Language Cultures*, a cross-cultural study of Israeli and American college students.

MORRIS A. MOSKOWITZ, Chair and Associate Professor of Hebraic Studies, published *The Vital Sketch*.¹ A Yiddish actor, Moskowitz recently

performed the lead role in Moshe Nadir's "Mayn Ershten Deposit" at the Workmens Circle Summer Festival in Fairfield, Connecticut. Moskowitz served as the past President of the Jewish Historical Society of Central New Jersey.

ALICIA OSTRICKER, Poet and Professor of English, has published numerous scholarly works and poetry collections. Her books include *Feminist Revision and the Bible* (1992) and *The Nakedness of the Fathers: Biblical Visions and Revisions* (1994). An article entitled "Aspects of Eve: Women Poets on Biblical Subjects," appeared in *Poetry Pilot: The newsletter of the Academy of American Poets*. She won the Anna Rosenberg prize for a poem on Jewish life in 1995, and has poems in several anthologies of Jewish poetry.

BARBARA REED, Associate Professor of Journalism, recently published *Outsiders in 19th Century Press History: Multicultural Perspectives*. This summer she won the Simon Rockower Award from the American Jewish Press Association for her work on Trude Weiss-Rosmarin, editor and publisher of *The Jewish Spectator*. Reed's research was supported by a fellowship at the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati.

MOSHE SHERMAN lectures on Jewish history. He recently published *Orthodox Judaism in America: A Biographical Dictionary and Sourcebook*.

CHAIM I. WAXMAN, Professor of Sociology, has written numerous articles and review-essays. His books include *The Stigma of Poverty: A Critique of Poverty Theories and Policies*, *America's Jews in Transition* and *American Aliya*, as well as more than half-dozen edited and co-edited works in political sociology, ethnicity, and social thought. Waxman serves as Editor of the *Israel Studies Bulletin*.

Yael ZERUBAVEL, Professor of History and Director of the Center for the Study of Jewish Life. Her book, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition*, was awarded the Salo Baron Prize by the American Academy for Jewish Research. She is currently studying the representation of war widows in Israeli fiction and film and working on a manuscript entitled *Desert Images: Visions of the Counter-Place in Israeli Culture*. Zerubavel is the Vice-President for the Association for Israel Studies and serves on the Board of Directors of the Association for Jewish Studies.

FACULTY

FACULTY

Jewish Faculty Discussion Group

This past year, Rutgers Hillel co-sponsored with the Center for the Study of Jewish Life a *Jewish Faculty Discussion Group*. Two luncheon meetings were held during the Spring. The first program, on March 10, 1997, featured Professor Omer Bartov, Department of History, who spoke on "The Politics of Holocaust Historiography." On April 17th, Professor Sarah Broadie, Princeton University, lectured on "God and Man in Jewish and Ancient Greek Ethics." Additional meetings are planned for this coming year.

Visiting Faculty

MARSHA BRYAN EDELMAN is Associate Professor of Music and Dean for Academic Affairs at Gratz College. She is active as a conductor, directing the Gratz College Chorale and *Hazamir Philadelphia*. Edelman served as editor for the recently published *Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion*, and contributed 12 articles to that volume. Her forthcoming publications include *Discovering Jewish Music* and *Freedom and Responsibility: Exploring the Dilemmas of Jewish Continuity* co-edited with Rela Mintz Geffen.

HANNAH KLIGER, Associate Professor, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, was a Fellow at the Annenberg Scholars Program, University of Pennsylvania, this past year. She published *Jewish Hometown Associations and Family Circles in New York: The WPA Yiddish Writers' Group Study*. Kliger's most recent articles include "Communicating a Culture of Place: Yiddish in New York" and "Communication and Ethnic Identity in Jewish Immigrant Communities."

JACOB MESKIN lectures on Philosophy and Jewish Studies at Rutgers University and Princeton University. Professor Meskin serves as the Editor of *Textual Reasoning*, an electronic journal of the Group for Postmodern Jewish Philosophy, and is currently finishing a manuscript entitled *Jewish Tradition and the Critique of Modern Philosophy in Emmanuel Levinas*.

RENA POTOK is a recent graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, where she received a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature and Literary Theory. Potok is currently working on *Occupied Territories: Bodies and Borders in Modern Irish and Israeli Fiction* and *Re-membering the Body: Memory and Narrative Authority in James Joyce and S.Y. Agnon*. She also serves as the Associate Editor for the *Jewish Quarterly Review*.

NANCY SINKOFF has been a Dorot Junior Fellow at New York University since Fall 1995. Sinkoff is a recent graduate of Columbia University, where she received a Ph.D. in Modern Jewish History. Sinkoff's most recent work is "Strategy and Ruse in the Haskalah of Mendel Lefin of Satanow (1749-1826)," *New Perspectives on the Haskalah*, edited by Shmuel Feiner and David Sorkin (forthcoming).

MICHAEL TAUB lectures on Jewish and Israeli theater and film, and has written *Modern Israeli Drama* and *Israeli Holocaust Drama*. He is currently working on a collection of critical essays on Sobol and essays on the Jewish theater in Poland. Taub was a Research Fellow at YIVO for the Forward Centennial Celebration during Spring 1997. He is also the co-editor of a forthcoming two-volume work entitled *Contemporary Jewish American Writers - A Bio-Critical Sourcebook*.

War and Gender from page 5

between remembering and forgetting." She suggested that "babies in their names and in their features bore the traces of the past, of those who were dead and lost. But in their ever-present demands, the babies also represented the future."

Yael Zerubavel spoke on *Women, War and National Symbols: The Representation of War Widows in Israeli Culture*. Zerubavel maintained that despite the rhetoric regarding gender equality in early Israeli culture, fighting has remained primarily a male experience. Women's sacrifice is recognized mostly in the role of bereaving mothers and war widows. The literary and cinematic portrayals of the war widow reveal as much about Israeli society as they shed light on female representations within Israeli culture. In the 1940s and 1950s, the war

widow was largely ignored, yet since the mid-1960s, new images of the war widow reveal the tensions between her official status as a national symbol and her vulnerability as a young single woman who is subject to opposing concerns and ambivalent attitudes.

In her talk on the *Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and Gender Politics in Israel*, Hanna Herzog, Department of Sociology and the Gender Studies program at Tel Aviv University, focused on how the concern with security issues has reinforced traditional roles and gendered arrangements within Jewish and Palestinian families in Israel and thus contributed to gender inequality in both societies. More recently, however, the strengthening of feminist consciousness gave rise to shared activities by Israeli Jewish and Israeli Palestinian women to further the cause of peace and improve women's status in Israel.

Faculty Profile Seymour Feldman

Dr. Seymour Feldman, Professor of Philosophy, has been teaching at Rutgers since 1963. He served as Chair of the Department of Philosophy from 1971-1981 and as Associate Dean for Humanities from 1985-1990.

Feldman received a Master's in Hebrew Letters from the Jewish Theological Seminary while studying toward a doctorate in philosophy at Columbia University. Those were the years when Dr. Sidney Morgenbesser was at his height of popularity and influence. An extremely stimulating and provocative professor, Morgenbesser, who served as Feldman's dissertation advisor, attracted large numbers of people to his engaging lectures. At Columbia, Feldman also studied Jewish Philosophy with Dr. Arthur Hyman, the current Dean of the Bernard Revel Graduate School, Yeshiva University.

"My research interests and activities have developed out of a search for a philosophical understanding of Judaism that began in my undergraduate years at Cornell University," said Professor Feldman. "Eventually, I was to make this my intellectual and professional career, focusing upon the period of Jewish philosophy that set the pattern for much of subsequent Jewish philosophical activity." After some preliminary work in Maimonides, Feldman moved into the later medieval period, concentrating upon Gersonides (Levi ben Gershom), the great 14th century philosopher, astronomer and biblical exegete. His

translation and commentary on Gersonides' major work *The Wars of the Lord* is published by the Jewish Publication Society. Out of the four projected volumes of this work, two have already been published and two other volumes are now in press; the first volume received the National Jewish Book Council Award in 1985.

Feldman's work in late medieval Jewish thought includes essays on Isaac Albalag, Hasdai Crescas, and most recently Isaac Abravanel, on whom he is currently writing a book, entitled *Philosophy in a Time of Crisis*. This study describes and evaluates the philosophical activity of Spanish Jewry's tragic demise at the end of the medieval era. Feldman's interest has led him also to study Spinoza, whom he sees as representing the break with medieval thought and the beginning of modern philosophy. Having edited a new translation of Spinoza's *Ethics*, he has written on Spinoza's Jewish intellectual background and the earliest Jewish critical response to his philosophy. Currently, Feldman is working on an essay on Spinoza's most extensive analysis of Judaism and Jewish history, the *Theological-Political Treatise*.

Feldman is encouraged by the development of Jewish Studies over the past 30 years, and is particularly excited about the opening of Rutgers' new Center in advancing the field of Jewish scholarship. Feldman expects that a broad-based interdisciplinary Jewish Studies major will place Rutgers at the forefront of Jewish studies programs in America. Expressing concern that Jewish Studies not become another ethnic studies program, Feldman emphasized that "Jewish history and literature are worth studying by anyone," and is hopeful that the Center will attract non-Jewish students to Jewish Studies courses.



PROFILES



Allen and Joan Bildner

Bildners Support Jewish Studies Center

The Rutgers Center for the Study of Jewish Life has been greatly assisted by the benevolence of Allen and Joan Bildner. The Bildners, who owned and operated King's Supermarkets in New Jersey, have been active supporters of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, Dartmouth College, and numerous other community projects. A member of the Rutgers Board of Governors since 1993, Joan Bildner currently co-chairs the campaign to enhance

the endowment of the Center. "Judaism's heritage is so rich," said Bildner, "and Rutgers is a wonderful place to begin to share it." Allen Bildner, founding Chairman of New Jersey's Task Force on Diversity, shares his wife's enthusiasm for the Center. Bildner, who devotes considerable time to community service, is gratified that the Center will enhance scholarship, research, and outreach to the larger community.

PROFILES



**Amy
Cohen**

My religious experience has been a strange blend of Jewish customs and beliefs. Born into a culturally diverse family, my father came from

Iraq and my maternal great-grandparents came from Russia and Poland. The food, language, and culture of my grandparents' home reflected their background as children of immigrants. My father's family, on the other hand, lived in Iraq for many generations, and immigrated to Israel in the early 1950s. Needless to say *gefilte fish*, *potato latkes*, and *flanken* were not their usual fare, but rather *kuba*, *chackchuka*, and *pitot*.

While my parents maintained strong ties to Jewish tradition in their own way, my interest in Judaism was stimulated at age 14, when I became involved in NCSY, an Orthodox Jewish youth group. Interested in advancing my knowledge of Jewish life, I petitioned my parents to send me to a yeshiva high school.

During my high school years, the study of *halacha*, Bible, and Talmud fueled my interest in Judaism. Since my high school taught Judaic studies from an *Ashkenazic* perspective, my primary mission upon graduation was to learn the ways in which my father's Sephardic family celebrated Jewish holidays, chanted prayers, and observed rituals. I decided to spend a year at a women's seminary in Israel, eager to learn about Iraqi culture from my family in Tel Aviv. My grandparents filled me with stories of their background, and their challenging experience as Iraqi immigrants during the early years of the State of Israel.

The women's seminary I attended was located in Samaria, and established in the spirit of the religious settlement movement in Israel. I became fascinated by the dynamics of my surroundings — a politically charged environment, where religious injunctions initiated zealous politics committed to establishing Jewish sovereignty in "Greater Israel." When I returned to the United



**Michael
Singer**

My decision to pursue a rabbinical degree at the Jewish Theological Seminary was the culmination of many years of interest in Judaism and Jewish

life. It was also the result of many disparate influences. My parents kindled in me a deep love for the Jewish people, and encouraged me to question and read Jewish literature. During my years at religious school, I formed a strong relationship with the synagogue rabbi who inspired me to learn Torah and become more observant.

Upon coming to Rutgers University, I decided to double major in Hebraic Studies and Psychology. Courses in Hebrew language and literature honed my skills in the study of Jewish texts. I was privileged to take independent study classes with Professor Moshe Sherman, who gave me my first taste of Talmud study. Dr. Sherman also guided my Honors Thesis on the evolution of Jewish prayer.

At Rutgers, I became involved with the Jewish Identity Project under the guidance of Dr. Maurice Elias of the Psychology Department. The project employs surveys and interviews to research group tolerance, levels of observance, and issues of Jewish identity among children and adults. My Jewish experience at Rutgers was also shaped by activities sponsored by the Hillel organization, its guest lecturers, and weekly "havrutot."

The dream of becoming a Conservative rabbi enables me to fuse together a profound love of Judaism and a deep desire to learn and inspire people with teaching, with counseling people psychologically and spiritually; to take an active step toward Tikkun Olam and make the world a better place. The road to success in learning will not be easy to traverse. It will require commitment, hard work, and a passion for knowledge. Throughout my college years, I have continued to

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The Roots of Collective Memory

BY PHYLLIS GOTTLIEB

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I continue to be fascinated by our fundamental need to create meaningful narratives, ignore inconsistencies, silence some stories and elaborate others; by our enormous capacity to forget and live on, and remember and live on, and take this dual process for granted; by our inexhaustible efforts to continuously reconstruct our memory of the past between words and silences, images and void.

—From the preface of "Recovered Roots"
by Yael Zerubavel.

In A.D. 73, a group of Jewish zealots, entrenched on the mountaintop fortress at Masada, surrounded by encampments of the Roman army, committed suicide rather than surrender to the enemy.

In A.D. 132, a Jewish general nicknamed Bar Kochba (son of a star) led a revolt against the vastly superior forces of the Roman empire. After three years of fighting, the rebellion was brutally crushed.

In 1920, eight Jewish pioneers at Tel Hai, the northern frontier of Palestine, were killed as they tried to defend their isolated settlement.

How modern Israeli society shaped national myths of triumph from such unpromising material is the subject of Yael Zerubavel's 1995 book *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition*. The book recently won the Salo Baron Prize from the American Academy for Jewish Research.

Zerubavel's research is based on a wide range of interdisciplinary sources, including history textbooks, literature, children's stories, educational materials, rituals, and commemorations — those things that fix an event in the mind of a people.

She found that as the new Israeli society searched for heroic models, it created rituals that transformed these histories of defeat into messages of

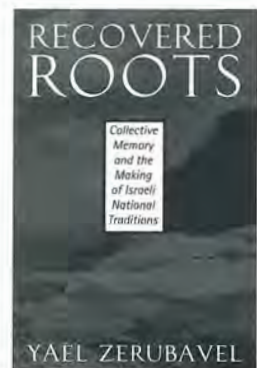
inspiration. Young people spent school vacations hiking to the stronghold of Masada, lit bonfires during the holiday of Lag B'Omer in honor of Bar Kochba's victories, wrote annual school themes praising the heroes of Tel Hai, and, in the process, all but forgot the devastating outcomes of these conflicts.

Zerubavel finds this deliberate disjuncture between the facts of history and the images perpetuated by collective memory endlessly fascinating. It's a phenomenon found in many cultures, she points out, including that of the United States. (The Alamo might be just one example.)

"So many historians claim that the age of memory belongs to the past; that with the rise of modernity, memory subsided and history took its place. I wanted to show that alongside of history there are the images that people carry in their minds. History textbooks say one thing, and somehow popular images of the past say something else." In exploring Israeli national traditions, Zerubavel also found herself deeply immersed in the stories of her own family. One of her grandparents is buried at Tel Hai; another was a top official in the Jewish National Fund when that agency was raising money to purchase the land around Masada. Her husband's grandfather, a well-known Zionist, was an early leader of the Israeli labor movement. "It was a very personal odyssey," she confesses. "I write about my grandparents', my parents' and my own generation."

The book, she says, is also an opportunity to pass some of her cultural heritage on to her children, Noga, 20, and Noam, 11. But, as Zerubavel knows all too well, cultural memory is never static, and with each political shift in the Middle East, these national traditions take on new meanings. What her children's generation will make of them remains to be seen.

PROFILES



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programs with community organizations and other programs at the university.

During its first months of operation, the Center was helped by Loretta Mandel who applied her vast experience and talents as a former Administrative Assistant at Rutgers to the new office. Since March 1997, the Center has benefited

from the arrival of Arlene Goldstein, a former Administrative Assistant at New York University's Skirball Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies. Arlene serves as the Assistant to the Director at the Center.

The University has given the Center a building located in the heart of its New Brunswick campus. The building underwent renovation during the 1996-97 academic year, and the Center will begin to operate from its new quarters in Fall 1997.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Politics, Law, and the Jewish Community in Greater Newark

Sunday,
September 21, 1997
Alex Aidekman Jewish
Community Campus
901 Route Ten,
Whippany, NJ
Co-sponsored with the
Jewish Historical
Society of MetroWest
and the History
Department, Rutgers-
New Brunswick

Modern Orthodox Judaism: Visions and Challenges

Sundays, November
2 and 9, 1997

The Future of Black-Jewish Relations in America

Spring 1998
Co-sponsored with the
Paul Robeson Cultural
Center

Association for Israel Studies — 1998 Annual Conference and 50th Anniversary for the State of Israel

June 1998

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States in 1995, I was eager to learn more about the culture and politics of Israel. In particular, I was determined to study the ways in which all types of Jews — religious and secular, *Ashkenazic* and *Sephardic* — interact, blend, clash, and understand the meaning of the Jewish State.

Upon entering Rutgers University, I found a myriad of resources and experts on Israeli society to assist the development of my work. This coming year, I expect to complete a senior thesis on Israeli religious nationalism under the supervision of Professor Zerubavel. My long-term goal is to prepare for a career in Israeli public policy. I also found at Rutgers several meaningful ways of expressing my deep interest in the future of the Jewish people, particularly as President of RAZI (Rutgers Association for Zionism in Israel). I am encouraged by the Center's attempt to develop new courses in Jewish history, philosophy, and political science. I expect that the Center will succeed in promoting a student-faculty lecture series, Hebrew discussion groups, Jewish and Israeli cultural events, and a Judaic video and book library. This is an exciting time for Jewish Studies at Rutgers, and I am pleased to be part of its development.

Amy Cohen is a senior at Rutgers University.

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grow and learn. As a Conservative rabbi, I am confident that I can play a positive role in the lives of others while pursuing my love of Judaism.

Michael Singer graduated from Rutgers University in May 1997. In September, he will begin Rabbinical Studies at the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York.

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