



Jewish Studies at Rutgers

The Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life
Department of Jewish Studies

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Creating Programs and Community in a Virtual World

The Bildner Center is finding new and creative ways to fulfill its mission of bringing high-quality educational and cultural programming to the Rutgers community and the public. This pivot to virtual events and communication has been both challenging and rewarding as the Center explores new programmatic formats and reaches new audiences, unbound by physical and geographic limitations.

The Bildner Center's online public events kicked off in June with the webinar **"Writing the Life of Lucy S. Dawidowicz,"** on the pioneering work and complicated legacy of this historian of Eastern European Jewry and the Holocaust. An audience from as far away as Israel and as close as Highland Park joined Professor **Nancy Sinkoff**, the academic director of the Bildner Center, for a talk about her acclaimed new book, *From Left to Right: Lucy S. Dawidowicz, the New York Intellectuals, and the Politics of Jewish History*. (See article on page 10.)

In July, more than 100 people registered for



Clockwise from top right: Bella Ramsey, Jonathan Jakubowicz, Jesse Eisenberg, and Sarah Portilla at the *Resistance* film event

a three-session mini-course, **"From Yiddish Folktale to Hebrew Work of Art: Stories and Other Prose by Israeli Nobel Laureate S. Y. Agnon."** Curt Leviant, a novelist, translator, and professor emeritus of Hebraic studies at Rutgers, taught the online course. He provided

➤ See **GOING VIRTUAL** on page 5

New Holocaust Studies Minor

Rutgers has launched a new interdisciplinary minor in Holocaust studies to address students' interest in the history of the genocide and how it has been remembered over the past seventy-five years. **Jeffrey Shandler**, Distinguished Professor of Jewish Studies, initiated the new minor with the assistance of **Paul Hanebrink**, professor of history and Jewish studies, and **Michal Raucher**, assistant professor of Jewish studies and the department's undergraduate director.

"Our students have long shown a strong desire to learn more about the Holocaust, perhaps because so many of them were introduced to the subject before coming to Rutgers," Shandler observed. "For example, a mandate passed by the New Jersey state

legislature in 1994 requiring education on the Holocaust and genocide emphasizes that studying this subject is meant not simply to learn about an important chapter of history but to inform students' moral consciousness. As a result, students often regard the Holocaust as having a special significance for them, and they wish to study it in greater depth."

The new minor comes during a threshold moment in Holocaust remembrance, as the generation of eyewitnesses to the genocide grows ever smaller. "We will soon reach the point when anyone who is a Holocaust survivor or had some other direct involvement with this event will no longer be with us," said Shandler. "Therefore, it is important to consider how this development informs the ways that we recall and understand the Holocaust. We don't stop remembering events of the past when there are

➤ See **HOLOCAUST STUDIES MINOR** on page 13



Liberation Monument,
Liberty State Park

From the Academic Director



Our efforts at the Bildner Center to stay better connected with our public through regular e-blasts predate COVID-19, which, of course, has now made them a necessity. The e-blasts allow us to draw on the wealth of programming of the Center's past twenty-four years and to link our work to related virtual content of interest to the community.

Even as we face a semester that is virtual, we are delighted to announce that the Bildner Center will welcome three visiting scholars with wide-ranging expertise this coming year. The contributions of internationally recognized scholars to all aspects of our programming greatly enhance the intellectual vitality of the Bildner Center and the Rutgers community.

Dr. Marc Herman (Ph.D., religious studies, University of Pennsylvania), a specialist in medieval Jewish and Islamic jurisprudence, is completing a book on the legal exchange and dialogue that marked Jewish-Muslim interpretations of revelation. As the Aresty Visiting Scholar for fall 2020, he will teach a mini-course open to the public about Islamic influences on the Oral Torah and give a seminar for faculty and graduate students.

For the spring 2021 semester, we welcome Professor Jonathan Dekel-Chen, the Rabbi Edward Sandrow Chair in Soviet & East European Jewry at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, as the Allen and Joan Bildner Visiting Scholar. A specialist in Soviet Jewish history with a focus on Jewish agrarianism and transnational philanthropy, Dr. Dekel-Chen will offer a mini-course open to the public, a seminar for faculty and graduate students, and—with COVID-19 behind us, we hope—a workshop with a field trip component on Jewish agricultural settlements in New Jersey.

Also joining us in spring 2021 is Dr. Gregg Drinkwater (Ph.D., history, University of Colorado Boulder), who completed a dissertation on the impact of gay and lesbian synagogues on postwar American Jewish religious life. As the Norman and Syril Reitman Visiting Professor, Dr. Drinkwater will teach a course on Jews, love, and sexuality for the Department of Jewish Studies and a mini-course open to the public on postwar American Judaism.

We have been thrilled to reach you virtually during this unprecedented time, and we look forward to engaging with you this fall through diverse online programming.

—Nancy Sinkoff, Academic Director
The Allen and Joan Bildner Center
for the Study of Jewish Life

From the Chair



Academic year 2019–2020 was one of growth for the Department of Jewish Studies, in spite of the recent challenges posed by COVID-19. The department expanded its curricular offerings, hosted an array of talks and seminars, and continued to partner with units across the School of Arts and Sciences to enrich student learning and build intellectual community.

Major curricular developments included the launching of a new interdisciplinary minor in Holocaust studies, coordinated by Jeffrey Shandler, Distinguished Professor of Jewish Studies, with the assistance of Paul Hanebrink, professor of history and Jewish studies, and Michal Raucher, assistant professor of Jewish studies and the department's undergraduate director. This new minor will enable students to explore a complex and compelling topic across multiple fields of the humanities and social sciences. It will also help students understand the importance that has been attached to the Holocaust as a moral paradigm that engages the public in confronting issues of social justice.

Another curricular initiative involved my development and teaching of a large lecture course titled "Antisemitism." This class, in which ninety students enrolled this past spring, invited students to think deeply about contemporary expressions of antisemitism in light of their historical precedents. Students in this course also pondered continuities and turning points in the history of antisemitism as well as the significance of studying antisemitism in its own right.

Departmental talks and seminars drew students and faculty from across the university to learn about diverse topics, including Jewish-Muslim relations in modern Morocco; associations in the medieval imagination between Jews and animals; Jewish life in revolutionary Iran; the myth of the medieval Jewish moneylender; and constructions of Orthodox Jewish gay identity in contemporary Israel.

In March, the faculty and staff of the Department of Jewish Studies pivoted to teaching and working remotely. I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude for their flexibility and dedication to our students and the Rutgers community. I am confident that our department will emerge from these difficulties strong and united as ever in our shared vision for broadening students' horizons—and our own—through teaching and learning about all aspects of Jewish life.

—Paola Tartakoff, Chair
Department of Jewish Studies

BILDNER CENTER PROGRAMS

Bringing Home the Film Festival Experience

How the world has changed in the last six months! Though the pandemic has kept us all inside, the Bildner Center continues to expand opportunities and open doors to a wide array of cultural and educational experiences that are available online.

Advances in technology have enabled us to offer our programs virtually, bringing our community together for mini-courses, teacher workshops, lectures, and film discussions this past summer.

We have laid the groundwork to present a virtual cinematic experience this fall, bringing the festival directly to your home. The film lineup includes a wide range of topics: Israeli food and culture, Black-Jewish alliances, basketball legends, familial relationships, the refugee experience, Orthodox smugglers, wedding night blues, and much more. Some films are serious,

many are based on true stories, and others will make you laugh out loud—all are sure to keep you engaged with the community, even as you watch films and participate in discussions from the comfort of your home.

We will miss seeing everyone in person and the excitement of watching films together in the theater, but I am confident that this curated group of award-winning films and a new Israeli TV series will entertain and inspire you. Join us on opening night and throughout the festival for gratifying Zoom discussions with filmmakers and other special guests.

Stay tuned to our website and e-blasts for the full film schedule and post-film discussions. I look forward to seeing you there.

—Karen Small, Managing Director



Karen Small and Sharon Karmazin

Film Screening: *The Adventures of Saul Bellow*

The year 2015 marked the centennial of the birth of Saul Bellow, the Canadian-born, Chicago-raised son of Eastern European Jewish immigrants, who went on to become twentieth-century America's most celebrated and decorated novelist. Winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature, three National Book Awards, and the Pulitzer Prize, he has been described by literary critics as the greatest American prose stylist of the twentieth century.

Bellow's complex, hybrid identity offered him a unique vantage point from which to reinvent the American novel. He identified fiercely as both American and Chicagoan, immersed in the Western canon of literature and philosophy, and he was also deeply influenced by his experiences growing up on the bustling streets of Chicago's largely immigrant Humboldt Park neighborhood. Best known for his novels *The Adventures of Augie March*, *Humboldt's Gift*, *Herzog*, and *Seize the Day*, Bellow moved effortlessly between the language of the street—giving voice to segments of the population previously unheard—and the elegant prose stylings associated with Western high culture.

In February, the Bildner Center presented a sneak peek at the first documentary film about Bellow's life, *The Adventures of Saul Bellow*. Israeli film director Asaf Galay tells Bellow's story through original, candid interviews with family, close friends, and writers, previously restricted footage, and visits to the places that shaped him and his fiction. The film probes Bellow's profound impact on Philip Roth, Martin Amis, Charles Johnson, Vivian Gornick, and other



twentieth-century writers. A full house gathered at Rutgers Cinema on the Livingston campus for this free public film screening, the annual **Abram Matlofsky Memorial Program** supported by the **Karma Foundation**. The program was cosponsored by the Department of American Studies and the Americanist Seminar of the Department of English.

The event featured a post-screening discussion with Galay, whose films on modern Jewish culture include *The Muses of Isaac Bashevis Singer* and *The Hebrew Superhero*, and American cultural historian **Louis P. Masur**, Distinguished Professor of American Studies and History at Rutgers. "Bellow's Jewish identity and search to understand America define his body of work," said Masur. "Galay explores these themes in all their complexity, allowing the audience to leave with a deeper understanding of, and appreciation for, Bellow's craft and life."

Above: Asaf Galay and Louis P. Masur in discussion



Letters to Erich: A Musical Performance and Talk

The letters were the voice of the grandmother I never knew, speaking to a father who never shared his story," **Ted Rosenthal** told the audience at **"Letters to Erich: A Musical Performance and Talk,"** held at the Nicholas Music Center in March. Presented by the Bildner Center, the public program also featured the performance of several heart-wrenching arias from Rosenthal's jazz opera, *Dear Erich*, sung by mezzo-soprano **Sishel Claverie** and baritone **Peter Kendall Clark**, with Rosenthal on piano.

After his father died, the acclaimed jazz pianist and composer found a cache of more than 200 letters in the attic, all mailed by his grandmother Herta in Germany to his father, Erich, who immigrated to Chicago in 1938. They would sit for another twenty years in Rosenthal's house, until 2015, when he began to create something meaningful and lasting from the discovery.

The result was *Dear Erich*, a poignant jazz opera about a son's successful journey to the New World, where he fell in love and married, and his family's tragic fate in the old. The libretto fills in the story as it unfolded on both sides of the ocean, touching on themes including survivor guilt, the promise of a fresh start, and the lure of jazz. Commissioned by the New York City Opera, the work premiered in January 2019 at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in Lower Manhattan.

For Rosenthal, the intimacy of bringing the personal letters to life in a jazz opera was intense and involved "a lot of tears." The correspondence, which stopped abruptly in 1941, features Herta mothering her son lovingly from across the ocean, and Erich's father, Friedrich, wondering if his son had found work while a student at the University of Chicago. Underlying it all is their plea for help in securing the visas that would enable them to escape Nazi Germany and join him in America.

The opera ends on a bittersweet note. Erich has

become a father, but he mourns everyone he lost in Germany. Rosenthal shared his deep regret that his father never talked about the past, but believes that as a forward-thinking immigrant, Erich chose not to burden his children with his losses. During a discussion with the audience after the performance, Rosenthal added that in this way, *Dear Erich* is "an act of remembrance and healing."

Teacher Workshop

The following day, Rosenthal explored the letters more closely during a one-day workshop, **"Using Personal Letters to Teach about the Holocaust."** The Master Teacher Institute (MTI) in Holocaust Education's professional development program, attended by thirty-five middle and high school educators, focused on the use of correspondence as primary sources for teaching about family separation, Holocaust history, and immigration.

Debórah Dwork, the **Allen and Joan Bildner Visiting Scholar**, analyzed another set of extraordinary letters at the workshop, which, like those of Herta Rosenthal, had been fortuitously saved. When the war started and civilian mail between Axis and Allied countries stopped, a Swiss woman named Elisabeth Luz became a conduit for correspondence between parents in Germany and their children whom they had tried to save years earlier by sending them to other European countries. Luz outmaneuvered the censors, copying the letters and sending the copies on to the recipients, while keeping the originals. This cache of more than 1,000 letters included final expressions of love and longing, and sometimes hope, of families separated by the Holocaust.

As Rosenthal told attendees of both the public talk and the workshop, the letters make the past present. "There are lots of words in my grandmother's letters, but the ones set to music for *Dear Erich* I'll remember for the rest of my life," he said.

Funding for the two-day program was provided by an **Association for Jewish Studies Arts and Culture Community Grant** and the **New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education**. It was cosponsored by the **Mason Gross School of the Arts**, the **Herbert and Leonard Littman Families Holocaust Resource Center**, and the **New Brunswick Jazz Project**. Additional support for MTI teacher workshops was provided by the **Marjorie and Egon Berg Holocaust Education Fund**.

Debórah Dwork, Ted Rosenthal, MTI Pedagogical Consultant Colleen Tambuscio, and Karen Small



The Herbert and Leonard Littman Families Holocaust Resource Center

Mini-Course for Teachers: Refugees during the Nazi Era

With Hitler's rise to power, Jews and other targeted groups were desperate to find a chink in the wall of the Nazi regime. Their hopes of slipping through to safety hinged on the debate about the refugee question that shaped government policies across Europe throughout the 1930s and 1940s.

The **Allen and Joan Bildner Visiting Scholar Debórah Dwork** examined the impact that these restrictive policies—and the general lack of public outcry against them—had on the fate of those most at risk for their lives in “**Refugees during the Nazi Era**,” a fall 2019 Master Teacher Institute (MTI) in Holocaust Education mini-course. The five-part course invited educators to engage with the past while learning innovative ways to make history relevant for their students today. A groundbreaking scholar and author of Holocaust history, Dwork is Distinguished Scholar-in-Residence at the Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York.

Each three-hour session took place in the afternoon after a full school day, with several of the twenty-two participating middle and high school teachers traveling

an hour each way to and from Rutgers. Dwork found their commitment to expanding their knowledge of the Holocaust inspiring, and their engagement insightful.

“They were willing to make the deep dive into difficult material, including personal accounts of individuals who were desperate to find a way out, wherever it took them,” she reflects. “I was only the swim instructor. They were the ones doing laps.”

Dwork discussed early Jewish emigration from Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia, as well as the narrow routes to safety some took through the Alps and the Pyrenees, or into the Soviet Union. She examined the precarious status of undocumented, stateless refugees and the challenges of daily survival when they had no permission to work. The final session featured **Tracey Petersen**, manager of the Holocaust and the United Nations Education Outreach Programme, who made nuanced connections between the Holocaust and current global refugee crises.

“The language to convey the refugee experience is the same today as it was then,” Dwork noted. “Current events reinforce for our educators the critical importance of studying and teaching Holocaust history.”

► Read about the MTI 2020 summer program below.



Teachers in small group discussion

► GOING VIRTUAL from page 1

detailed textual analyses of three Agnon short stories while engaging with student questions and observations in real time.

The **Rutgers Jewish Film Festival** presented two virtual film discussions this summer—drawing in more than 800 people. The new film **Resistance** (2020) focuses on the early days of the famous mime Marcel Marceau, when he worked with the French Resistance to spirit Jewish children out of Nazi-occupied France. The film's star, **Jesse Eisenberg**; director and screenwriter, **Jonathan Jakubowicz**; and actress **Bella Ramsey** offered thoughtful perspectives on the film in a back-and-forth moderated by Festival Director Karen Small and Program Coordinator Sarah

Portilla. This event was presented in partnership with IFC Films and Tamar Simon from Mean Streets Management.

A discussion of **BlackKkKlansman**, Spike Lee's 2018 Academy Award-winning film, gave the opportunity to reflect on the ongoing issues of social justice and civil rights in the

United States. The film is based on the memoir of **Ron Stallworth**, the first Black detective in the Colorado Springs Police Department, who embarked on a dangerous mission to infiltrate the Ku Klux Klan in the 1970s. Stallworth and the film's primary screenwriters, **Charlie Wachtel** and **David Rabinowitz**, both hailing from East Brunswick, joined a dynamic conversation moderated by Professor **Enobong (Anna) Branch**, the senior vice president for equity at Rutgers University.

Perhaps the most rewarding experience this summer was the first series of online professional development seminars for teachers under the auspices of the **Herbert and Leonard Littman Families Holocaust Resource Center**. Fifty-five educators—from four countries (including India, France, and Ukraine), eight states, and thirty-seven New Jersey school districts—participated in the multifaceted program over a four-day period. The introductory seminar, “**History of the Holocaust: Resilience and Rescue**,” explored the Holocaust in Eastern Europe with an emphasis on hiding, collaboration, and personal narratives. More advanced educators discussed methods to teach news literacy in the digital age, as well as new perspectives on migration, in the seminar “**Media and Migration in Uncertain Times**.”



We are grateful for the generosity of our donors

The Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life is a vital component of Rutgers University, yet most of its programs are made possible through endowed gifts and private funding. The Bildner Center's cultural, educational, and scholarly programs are open to the public at little or no cost. Given the budgetary constraints of our state university, we face the increasing need to guarantee the ongoing development of the Center and the Department of Jewish Studies for future generations. Endowment gifts and bequests are important ways to ensure that we can maintain the academic integrity and high quality of our courses, educational programs, and communal outreach.

Bequest:

- The Bildner Center is proud to be the beneficiary of a generous bequest from the **Estate of Felix M. Beck** SB'49, RBSC'53. Felix recognized the importance of a strong Jewish studies center at Rutgers and included a bequest to the Center in his will. His planned gift will have a lasting impact, helping to secure the Bildner Center's future.

SUPPORT JEWISH STUDIES AT RUTGERS!

Gifts to Rutgers University can be directed to the Bildner Center or the department.

For more information, contact **Allison Klein** at 848-932-6455.

All gifts are greatly appreciated.

Leadership: \$25,000–\$49,999

- The Karma Foundation**, led by **Sharon M. Karmazin** DC'67, SC&I'69, and **Dina Elkins**, for its ongoing commitment to the Rutgers Jewish Film Festival.

Builders: \$10,000–\$24,999

- The Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation** for its support of the Rutgers Jewish Film Festival.
- Andrew J. Melnick** RC'63, RBS'70, for ongoing support of Israel studies at Rutgers.

Pacesetters: \$5,000–\$9,999

- Association for Jewish Studies** for its Arts and Culture Community Grant in support of the "Letters to Erich" public program and related Holocaust education workshop for teachers.
- The Henry and Marilyn Taub Foundation** for its continued support of curriculum enhancement in the Department of Jewish Studies.

Supporters: \$1,000–\$4,999

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- Len Littman
- NJ Commission on Holocaust Education
- Hana and Marcel Rozenzweig
- Donna and Steven Weiss
- The Wilf Family Education Foundation

IN MEMORIAM



The Bildner Center mourns the passing of **Ruth B. Mandel**, Board of Governors Professor of Politics at Rutgers, whose guiding hand and wise counsel will be greatly missed. When she was an infant, Ruth and her parents fled Germany aboard the SS *St. Louis*, the ship that was infamously denied entry into Cuba and the United States in 1939 and forced to turn back to Europe. Ruth devoted her life and scholarship to promoting democracy and empowering women in politics. She helped found and direct the Rutgers Center for American Women and Politics before leading the Eagleton Institute of Politics with distinction for nearly twenty-five years. Deeply supportive of the new Center for the Study of Jewish Life at Rutgers, founded in 1996, Ruth served on the advisory committee to shape the educational mission of its Holocaust Resource Center. She also served on the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum's Council, by presidential appointment, and as the founding chair of its Committee on Conscience.

Rutgers Jewish Film Festival Celebrates 20th Year

Since its launch in 2000, the Rutgers Jewish Film Festival has demonstrated the power of a film to tell a unique story about Jewish culture, history, and identity. It is the Bildner Center's most popular community program, and a landmark on the cultural landscape of both the university and the state of New Jersey. The 20th annual festival screened twenty-one films in five venues, bringing the total to more than 100,000 moviegoers over the past two decades.

International filmmakers and special guests enhanced the way audiences encountered the films. Hungarian director **Barnabás Tóth** spoke at the New Jersey premiere of his dramatic film *Those Who Remained*, about love and hope in post-World War II Budapest. French director **Élise Otzenberger** engaged with the audience at the New Jersey premiere of her film *My Polish Honeymoon*, about modern-day antisemitism and familial silence about the Holocaust.

Two pre-festival events added to the celebration: a screening of *The Museum*, a behind-the-scenes look at Jerusalem's Israel Museum, took place at the Rutgers Zimmerli Art Museum; and a veterans appreciation program, cosponsored by the Rutgers Office of Veteran and Military Programs and Services, featured the short

documentary *Footsteps of My Father*, shown at Rutgers Alexander Library.

Above all, it is the loyal audience of filmgoers who return year after year that gives the festival its continued sense of energy and excitement. No matter how they view themselves, there is always something they identify with in the films—a character, an unearthed secret from the past, a never-before-told story that resonates in the present.

What will the festival's next decade bring? New audiences, including young filmgoers and students; fresh looks at old stories in restored vintage films. But mostly, a chance for all of us to find a treasured opportunity to once again sit together in the theater and watch the magic unfold on the big screen.

The festival is made possible through the generosity of **Sharon Karmazin**, president of the **Karma Foundation**, who helped initiate and continues to help shape the event. The Bildner Center is also grateful to **David and Sylvia Steiner**, who have endowed a film program; the **Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation**, sponsor of the 20th-anniversary opening night program; the Film Festival Advisory Committee; and a wonderful group of devoted festival patrons and sponsors.

Scenes from Opening Night at the New Brunswick Performing Arts Center



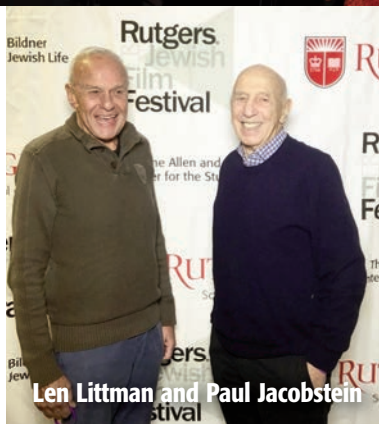
Karen Small and Nancy Sinkoff thank Sharon Karmazin for her support.



Gary A. Rendsburg, the Blanche and Irving Laurie Chair in Jewish History, with Laura Baron, president, Laurie Foundation, and Melissa Rendsburg



Dean Peter March, Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences, speaks to the audience.



Len Littman and Paul Jacobstein



Karen Small, Marcel Rozenzweig, and Frankie Busch



Steven and Susan Darien

Discoveries at the Ancient Synagogue at Huqoq

Since the summer of 2011, archaeologist **Jodi Magness**, the Kenan Distinguished Professor for Teaching Excellence in Early Judaism at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, has led the excavation of a site at Huqoq, an ancient village located in Israel's northern Galilee region. The area became the epicenter of Jewish life following the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem as Judaism shifted toward synagogue worship and the growth of rabbinic authority.

When the dig began, Magness's team expected to find a basilica-plan synagogue with a simple flagstone foundation, a structure akin to the one discovered in nearby Capernaum, a town known for its New Testament history. What they unearthed instead was astounding: a synagogue with a floor covered in stunning, multicolored mosaic panels that were unlike anything they had ever seen before.

"I got lucky," Magness told a rapt audience at a lecture entitled **"More Than Just Mosaics: The Ancient Synagogue at Huqoq in Israel's Galilee,"** presented at the Douglass Student Center in December. The Bildner Center sponsored the event with support from the **Sagner Family Foundation**.

Magness, director of the Huqoq Excavation Project, noted that the mosaics

found at Huqoq depict rarely portrayed biblical stories as well as the first non-biblical account ever discovered in an ancient synagogue: a battle scene featuring a Greek king. Also exceptional is the presence of Hebrew inscriptions, since the vernacular language Aramaic is more common at Israel's oldest sites. Magness called the synagogue "a masterpiece altogether unexpected in a rural setting, demonstrating that Huqoq somehow managed to thrive, even under strict Roman rule, when Christianity was the official religion."

The Huqoq archaeological team has spent nine summers slowly revealing these striking mosaic images, all crafted from colorful, local limestone. Among them is a panel in which the prophet Jonah dangles from the mouth of three nested fish, a scene that reflects Greek cultural influence and is the first known representation of Jonah in ancient Jewish art. Another shows the construction of the Tower of Babel, which offers detailed clues about building techniques used in fifth-century Galilee. Still, no overarching theme connecting the mosaic panels has revealed itself yet.

Magness noted that "archaeology isn't a solitary



EXCAVATION SITE PHOTO BY JIM HABERMAN

activity" and ended her presentation with a long list of those colleagues—excavators, historians, conservators, linguists, and scholars—who have made the digs possible.

She explained that they consult with and debate one another in order to solve enigmatic finds, such as the mosaic of a strange beast with features from several different animals. Looking for clues in biblical and rabbinic sources, members of Magness's team deduced that the beast likely represents various nations that had conquered Israel.

Still, she added, "We can't always fill in the missing pieces."

Magness, who also serves as president of the Archaeological Institute of America, estimates they will need two more years before members of the Huqoq project can lay down their spades and buckets. For now, they have backfilled the site to protect it from vandalism between digs. With only eight of the mosaics published so far, the next step is publication of additional images, along with important data and the unique selection of stories the various panels tell.

Though the discovery of this magnificent synagogue has been a story of arduous labor, painstaking scholarship, and serendipitous finds, the chapter that follows the excavation will be out of the archaeologist's hands. Magness hopes that the State of Israel will invest to develop Huqoq in a way that will protect the mosaics and preserve the integrity of the site while opening it up for tourism. Yet she suspects it will take some time before the world gets to see the mosaics she and her colleagues have relished this past decade in all their splendor.



Above and below right: Mosaic fragments from the ancient synagogue at Huqoq



Center Participates in Paul Robeson Centennial Celebration

At the height of his career, Paul Robeson, Rutgers' third Black student, was among the college's most famous graduates. A Renaissance man, he was class valedictorian, an All-American in football and a star in several other sports, and a bass-baritone who became a celebrated stage and film actor. But he was also a political activist who combated discrimination against the Black community and promoted social and economic equality, causes in which he found a partner in the Jewish Left.

In 2019, Rutgers marked 100 years since Robeson's graduation with an array of special events under the auspices of the **Paul Robeson Centennial Celebration**. The Bildner Center participated in the yearlong celebration by presenting a panel of four leading historians who explored Robeson's legacy, particularly his deep connections with the Jewish community and his support of the Soviet Union.

The panel, entitled **"Paul Robeson, 'Negro-Jewish' Unity, and the 'Jewish People's Movement' in the 1940s: Legacy and Challenges,"** took place in October at the Douglass Student Center. Cosponsored by the Paul Robeson Centennial Celebration, the public event was the Bildner Center's **Raoul Wallenberg Annual Program**, funded by **Leon and Toby Cooperman**.

Tony Michels, George L. Mosse Professor of American Jewish History at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, contextualized Robeson's role as the representative of the Negro-Jewish Unity movement during World War II. Not long after the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, the Soviets reached out to ethnic minorities, including Jews, to bolster the war effort. Understanding the importance of Western support in the face of the German threat, the Soviet government formed the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee in August 1941, one of five anti-fascist groups created after the German invasion. With prominent Yiddish actor and theater director Shlomo Mikhoels and Yiddish poet Itzik Fefer at its helm, the group openly campaigned for American Jewish support of the Soviet Red Army.

Despite the Soviet regime's long-held position against ethnic particularism, the initiative was embraced across the American Jewish religious and political spectrum, from rabbis to Hadassah members. "Jews rallied because they saw the Soviets as their greatest defenders against Nazi Germany," Michels said. The Jewish community then partnered with the Black community in the broad fight against fascism and

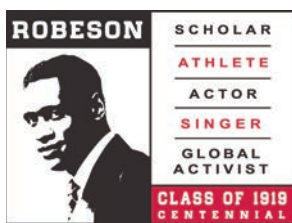
racism. It was against this background that Robeson, communist and celebrity, came to represent the Negro-Jewish alliance.

"Jews and Blacks shared a worldview that contested the bigotry that alienated them in this country, and the Left saw Communism as champion of the cause," said the public historian **Jennifer Young**. An icon of the Jewish Left, Robeson received a hero's welcome when he visited Camp Kinderland, then under the aegis of the Communist-affiliated International Workers Order, in the summer of 1949. Yet his political positions—both pro-Soviet and anti-U.S.—made him a controversial figure from whom many, including the NAACP, distanced themselves. Young contrasted Robeson's greeting at Kinderland with the one he received in Peekskill, New York, that same summer. He was to have headlined a civil rights benefit concert there, but violent, anti-Communist race riots broke out in anticipation and Robeson was unable to arrive or perform.

Ronald Radosh, professor emeritus of history at the City University of New York, who has written extensively on Jews, the Left, and Communism, spoke directly to Robeson's great political blind spot: tying up his quest to defeat American racism with his support of oppressive Soviet Communism.

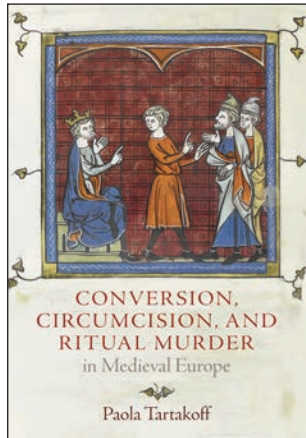
Robeson's only visible disillusionment with Stalinism came during a concert tour of the Soviet Union when he discovered that Mikhoels and Fefer, both dear friends, had been murdered by the Soviet secret police. At a performance in Moscow, a distraught Robeson stirred the largely Jewish audience with a rousing rendition of the Yiddish partisan anthem associated with the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. "The authorities weren't happy," Radosh said, "but Robeson exuded enormous power without making a public protest." By the time he returned to the United States, the press was already reporting renewed Soviet anti-Jewish aggression, though Robeson continued to deny that Jews were in any danger.

In a final question, moderator **David Greenberg**, Rutgers professor of history, journalism and media studies, and Jewish studies, asked the panelists to consider whether the university should put Robeson's Stalinism under scrutiny in an era when the public is reevaluating the myths of its heroes. They came to a consensus that imperfections do not make heroes less heroic, only human. But they urged the audience to reflect on Robeson's flaws as well as his gifts. What remains is figuring out how to connect people with his complicated yet important legacy.



New Faculty Books

Conversion, Circumcision, and Ritual Murder in Medieval Europe



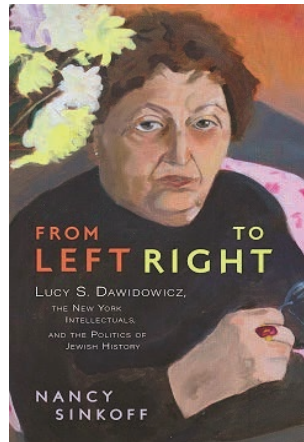
In 1230, Jews in the English city of Norwich were accused of having seized and circumcised a five-year-old Christian boy named Edward because they “wanted to make him a Jew.” Contemporaneous accounts of the “Norwich

circumcision case,” as it came to be called, recast this episode as an attempted ritual murder. In her new book, **Paola Tartakoff**, chair of the Department of Jewish Studies and professor of Jewish studies and history, contextualizes and analyzes accounts of this event, shedding new light on medieval Christian views of circumcision.

Tartakoff shows that Christian characterizations of Jews as sinister agents of Christian apostasy belonged to the same constellation of anti-Jewish libels, such as the notorious charge of ritual murder. Drawing on a wide variety of sources, she investigates the elusive backstory of the Norwich circumcision case and exposes the thirteenth-century resurgence of Christian concerns about formal Christian conversion to Judaism. In the process, she elucidates little-known cases of movement out of Christianity and into Judaism, as well as Christian anxieties about the instability of religious identity.

Conversion, Circumcision, and Ritual Murder in Medieval Europe recovers the complexity of medieval Jewish-Christian conversion and reveals the links between religious conversion and mounting Jewish-Christian tensions. At the same time, Tartakoff does not lose sight of the mystery surrounding the events that spurred the Norwich circumcision case. She concludes that medieval Christians and Jews understood these events in fundamentally irreconcilable ways, illustrating the chasm that separated them even as some Christians and Jews knew one another intimately.

From Left to Right: Lucy S. Dawidowicz, the New York Intellectuals, and the Politics of Jewish History



From Left to Right is the first comprehensive biography of Lucy S. Dawidowicz (1915–1990), a pioneer historian in the field that is now called “Holocaust studies.” **Nancy Sinkoff**, academic director of the Bildner Center and professor of Jewish studies and history, chronicles Dawidowicz’s life as a window into the major events and issues of twentieth-century Jewish

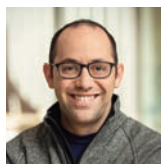
life, including the meaning of the destruction of the Jewish communities of Europe, the viability of secular Yiddish culture, the “sanctity” of liberal American Jews’ defense of the absolute separation of Church and State, the role of Jews in the civil rights and feminist movements, and the legitimacy of American Jewish dissent on Israeli politics. *From Left to Right* draws on more than forty-five archival collections and scores of unpublished personal letters.

Born in the Bronx to a secular, Yiddishist Jewish family, Dawidowicz spent a fateful year in Vilna, Poland (now Vilnius, Lithuania), before World War II, at the YIVO Institute, and fifteen months after the war working with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee to aid Jewish refugees in the American and British Zones of Occupation. She was, in her words, “the last witness” to the thousand-year-old culture of Polish Jewry.

The author of *The Golden Tradition: Jewish Life and Thought in Eastern Europe* (1967) and *The War against the Jews: 1933–1945* (1975), classic works in the creation of American Holocaust consciousness, Dawidowicz was a household name in the postwar years, not only because of her scholarship but also due to her political views.

Like several of the famous Jewish immigrant sons known as the “New York Intellectuals” who traveled from left to right politically, Dawidowicz was a youthful communist, became an FDR liberal democrat, and later identified with neoconservatism. *From Left to Right* argues that her rightward shift emerged out of her diaspora nationalist education, her experiences in Europe before and during the war, and her formal study of the long Jewish past.

Visiting Scholars, 2020–2021



Dr. Marc D. Herman, the **Aresty Visiting Scholar** for the fall, is writing his first monograph, *Imagining Revelation: Medieval*

Jewish Presentations of the Oral Torah in an Islamic Key, for the Jewish Culture and Contexts series of the University of Pennsylvania Press. His research explores the ways in which medieval Jews deployed Islamic legal theory when writing about the Oral Torah, and his articles have appeared in the *Jewish Quarterly Review* and the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, among others.



Professor Jonathan Dekel-Chen, the **Allen and Joan Bildner Visiting Scholar** for the spring, is the Rabbi Edward Sandrow Chair

in Soviet & East European Jewry at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His publications include *Farming the Red Land: Jewish Agricultural Colonization and Local Soviet Power, 1923–1941* (Yale University Press, 2005), coedited volumes, and numerous articles that have appeared in prestigious scholarly presses. His current research deals with transnational philanthropy and advocacy, non-state diplomacy, agrarian history, and migration.



Dr. Gregg Drinkwater will be the **Norman and Syril Reitman Visiting Professor** for the spring. He is currently working on a book about the

history of gay and lesbian synagogues in the United States, concentrating on the history of LGBTQ Jewish American engagements with Zionism and Israel from the 1950s through the mid-1990s. He is also coeditor of *Torah Queeries: Weekly Commentaries on the Hebrew Bible* (New York University Press, 2009).

Faculty Seminars, 2019–2020

The Henry Schwartzman Endowed Faculty Seminar

In February, **Elissa Bemporad**, the Jerry and William Ungar Chair in East European Jewish History and the Holocaust and professor of history at Queens College and the Graduate Center, City University of New York, came to the Bildner Center to discuss her book ***Legacy of Blood: Jews, Pogroms, and Ritual Murder in the Lands of the Soviets***, winner of the National Jewish Book Award in the category of modern Jewish thought and experience. Bemporad's pioneering research explores the legacy of the two most extreme forms of antisemitism in tsarist Russia—pogroms and blood libels—tracing their largely overlooked persistence and permutations, both in practice and memory, in the Soviet Union from 1917 into the early 1960s. An interdisciplinary group of scholars and graduate students attended the Henry Schwartzman Endowed Faculty Seminar.

Rutgers professors **Paola Tartakoff** and **Paul Hanebrink** served as respondents at the seminar. Tartakoff, professor of Jewish studies and history, and author of *Conversion, Circumcision, and Ritual Murder in Medieval Europe* (see page 10), noted connections to blood libels during the medieval period and raised questions about the interplay between the myth and reality of Jewish rituals across time. Hanebrink, professor of history and Jewish studies and author of *A Specter Haunting Europe: The Myth of Judeo-Bolshevism*, commented on the originality of Bemporad's decision to combine pogroms and ritual murder in one analysis and discussed how they both informed the complicated history of antisemitism in the Soviet Union, a state in which legally antisemitism was a crime.

Additional faculty seminars:

- **Debórah Dwork**, Bildner Visiting Scholar and the Graduate Center, CUNY: "A New Turn in Holocaust Scholarship: The Role of the Unpredictable and the Irrational"
- **Malachi Hacohen**, Duke University: "Jewish European History: The Challenge Ahead"
- **Julie Mell**, North Carolina State University: "Deviance, Usury, and Religious Difference in Medieval Europe: On the Construction of Jewish Economic Difference." *Distinguished Lecture in European History*, cosponsored by the Department of Jewish Studies, the Center for European Studies, and the Department of History
- **David Shyovitz**, Northwestern University: "'O Beastly Jew!' Jews, Animals, and Jewish Animals in the Middle Ages"
- **Lior Sternfeld**, Penn State University: "Revolutionary Jews: The Politicization of the Iranian Jewish Communities in the Twentieth Century." *Presented by the Center for Middle Eastern Studies in cosponsorship with the Department of Jewish Studies*

STUDENT NEWS

Virtual Year-End Celebration

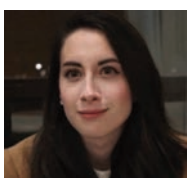
Rutgers students were honored for their academic achievements in Jewish studies at a virtual end-of-year celebration and awards ceremony in May hosted by the Bildner Center and the Department of Jewish Studies. Graduating seniors, award winners, family, faculty, and friends gathered online to mark the occasion. The ceremony featured video presentations of three student research projects, including a study of beliefs about mental health services among first-generation, American-born Russian Jews (see page 13); a study of political ecology and water politics in the Jordan River; and a documentary film about Holocaust survivors, with a special focus on Albania.



Moyagaye Bedward



Bradley Dorfman



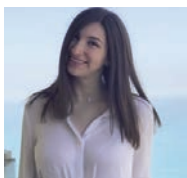
Dina Fradkin



Hanna Graifman



Christine Jensen



Ashley Jones



Anuska Lahiri



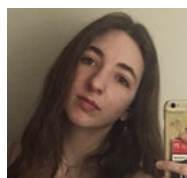
Amanda Leifer



Ryan McGinnis



Leah Needle



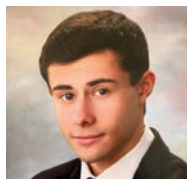
Brianna Newman



Arden Poller



Yael Rabin



Brandon Roberts



Annabelle Sinoff



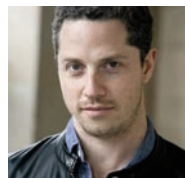
Eliran Sobel



Avraham Sommer



Caleb Squires



Steven Weinberg

Jewish Studies Graduates

Bradley Dorfman
Hanna Graifman
Ashley Jones
Ryan McGinnis
Leah Needle
Arden Poller
Eliran Sobel
Caleb Squires

Student Award Recipients

Moyagaye Bedward '21
(Doctoral Candidate, History)
Alexander and Ruth Seaman Award

Dina Fradkin '20
Deborah S. and Herbert B. Wasserman
Research Award

Hanna Graifman '20
Dr. Benjamin F. Glasser and
Lillian Glasser Award

Christine Jensen '21
Dr. Benjamin F. Glasser and
Lillian Glasser Award

Anuska Lahiri '21
Dr. Benjamin F. Glasser and
Lillian Glasser Award

Amanda Leifer '20
Herbert and Jacqueline Klein Award
for Study in Israel
Norma U. and David M. Levitt Award

Ryan McGinnis '20
Ruth Feller Rosenberg Award

Brianna Newman '22
Baruch S. and Pearl W. Seidman Award

Yael Rabin '21
Dr. Benjamin F. Glasser and
Lillian Glasser Award

Brandon Roberts '21
Leonard and Adele Blumberg Award
Louis Fishman Memorial Award

Annabelle Sinoff '21
Betty and Julius Gillman Award
Bernice and Milton I. Luxemburg Award

Avraham Sommer '21
Gertrude and Jacob Henoch
Memorial Award

Steven Weinberg '22
(Doctoral Candidate, German)
Harold and Betty Perl Award

Meet Dina Fradkin (SAS'20)

Dina Fradkin's experience as a first-generation American born to Russian Jewish immigrants shaped her decision to major in psychology and minor in history at Rutgers. She noticed that the stigma associated with mental health issues kept members of her community from seeking professional support when they needed it. But Dina knew that clinical services were broadly available and effective, and she wanted to study their best practices.

A two-time recipient of the **Deborah S. and Herbert B. Wasserman Research Award**, Dina used the award funding to conduct research in Israel. She graduated this May and is currently taking several courses to complete a second degree, in biology, at Rutgers, while studying for the MCAT and getting clinical experience before applying to medical school.

Share more about your background with us.

My family came from St. Petersburg, Russia, to Brooklyn before bouncing around different communities in New Jersey. They remain entrenched in Russian culture here, hardly assimilating—especially my grandparents, who raised me. But they had the most profound impact on me in so many meaningful ways, teaching me that education is freedom and showing me the importance of the sciences, which influenced my decision to pursue a career in medicine.

What inspired you to pursue Jewish studies?

When I enrolled in Professor **Paola Tartakoff's** course at Rutgers on Jewish history from antiquity to the Middle Ages, it was my first formal foray into Jewish religion and culture. I loved the course. It motivated me to expand the scope of my research into the realm of Jewish studies. I have since focused on the children of Russian Jewish immigrants and their perceptions about mental health, a path that has helped me understand a great deal about my family as well. Also, it was Professor Tartakoff who introduced me to Professor **Michal Raucher**, who later served as my independent study adviser.

Talk a little about your research project.

When speaking with other first-generation Americans of Soviet Jewish descent, I discovered that nearly all of us have a family member with a psychological illness or disability, or know someone in the community suffering from one. But no one talked about it. The incidence rate seemed far lower among our non-Jewish Russian peers, which made me curious about our unique genetics. Only within the last two decades have studies shown that Ashkenazi Jews have an elevated risk for certain diseases, such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. Yet it has long been considered taboo within the Russian community to seek psychiatric services, both culturally and because of the record of abuse within the psychiatric services system in the former Soviet Union.

My research project, "Beliefs about Psychological Services (BAPS) of First-Generation, American-Born Russian Jews," explores whether that cultural stigma lingers in my generation, influencing our decision to seek or not to seek psychological care when we need that kind of support. With the help of Professor Raucher, I conducted a BAPS survey, disseminating it through Rutgers' social media outlets and beyond. The Wasserman Award made it possible for me to travel to Israel, where I expanded my research to include Israeli-born children of Russian émigrés, enabling me to compare these two geographic groups as well.

What do you hope your future looks like?

I always wanted to be a physician, and I'm looking forward to a career in obstetrics and gynecology. I hope to incorporate what I'm learning from my research into my medical practice by putting special focus on patient sensitivities and cultural differences, while ensuring treatment adherence. These aspects of care often get lost in the shuffle, given the overwhelming pressures and technical demands on medical practitioners today. I see this as a meaningful opportunity to bring a human touch back into the way we care for patients in the modern age.

► HOLOCAUST STUDIES MINOR from page 1

no longer any living witnesses, but we do remember these events differently." Shandler, who teaches courses on remembering the Holocaust and Holocaust literature, added, "One goal of the new minor in Holocaust studies is to help students understand how recalling the past changes over time, responding to our changing circumstances."

This new minor will include courses that explore the Holocaust from multiple perspectives, offered by faculty in several departments at Rutgers–

New Brunswick's School of Arts and Sciences (SAS), including German, history, Jewish studies, and sociology. "Students who enroll in this minor will acquire a deeper understanding of this historic event," said Susan Lawrence, vice dean for undergraduate education, SAS, Rutgers–New Brunswick. "The hope is that, through this interdisciplinary approach, they will leave Rutgers as more informed global citizens, who can continue to confront the pressing challenges of antisemitism, racism, and other forms of intolerance."

FACULTY UPDATES

Leslie E. Fishbein delivered an all-day seminar, "Law, Society, and Culture in American History," for the Rutgers Institute for High School Teachers, sponsored by the Rutgers Center for Historical Analysis. She was invited by the Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences to submit a blog post in honor of the 100th anniversary of New Jersey's passage of the Nineteenth Amendment: "[100 Years of Women's Voting: Jeannette Rankin and the Passage of the Sheppard-Towner Act.](#)"

Charles Häberl edited (with James F. McGrath) *The Mandaean Book of John: Critical Edition, Translation, and Commentary* (de Gruyter, 2020), in tandem with an [abridged and public-facing open access version](#).

Jewish Studies Faculty, 2020–2021

Core Faculty

Orna Goldman
Michal Raucher,
Undergraduate Director
Gary A. Rendsburg
Jeffrey Shandler
Nancy Sinkoff,
Bildner Center Academic Director
Paola Tartakoff, *Chair*
Azzan Yadin-Israel

Affiliated Faculty

Debra Ballentine
Ethel Brooks
Rebecca Cypess
Maurice J. Elias
Leslie E. Fishbein
Judith Gerson
David Greenberg
Charles Häberl
Paul Hanebrink
Martha Helfer
Efe Khayat
Michael G. Levine
Emma Wasserman

Visiting Scholars

Jonathan Dekel-Chen
Gregg Drinkwater
Marc D. Herman

He also published "Writing in a Sacred Tongue: Inter-Aramaic Alloglottography," in *Word: Journal of the International Linguistic Association*, and a review of Holger Gzella, *A Cultural History of Aramaic* (Brill, 2015), in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*. He gave invited addresses: "Neo-Mandaic," Department of Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations, Yale University; and "The Enclosed Peoples of Mandaean Lore," at a conference on Gog and Magog, Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, Erlangen, Germany. He also delivered the lecture "What Has Haran to Do with Nazareth?" as part of the program "Jewish Christianity / Christian Judaism," at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, San Diego. In January, he participated in the Russian Field Expedition to Tur Abdin (Mardin Province, Turkey), where he documented several village dialects of Central Neo-Aramaic (Turoyo).

Michal Raucher completed her first book, *Conceiving Agency: Reproductive Authority among Haredi Women*, which was published this fall by Indiana University Press. She wrote a chapter with Michelle McGowan, in the book *Teaching Sexuality and Religion in Higher Education*, that discusses the challenges of teaching about abortion and religion. She also published an essay, "Orthodox Female Clergy Embodying Religious Authority," in *AJS Perspectives*. She delivered an invited lecture at Lehigh University, "Tapping on the Stained Glass Ceiling," about different models for rabbinic authority among Orthodox women who have been ordained. She presented a paper at the American Academy of Religion on the family ties that embolden Orthodox female clergy. Over the summer of 2019, she participated in a research and writing seminar at Auburn Seminary, in New York, where she worked with colleagues who have a shared interest in reproductive justice. Since 2016, she has been conducting ethnographic research on women's ordination in Orthodox Judaism in Israel and America. She took four research trips this year to continue interviewing women who have been ordained, observing them in their congregations, and conducting focus groups. She is also working with the American Jewish Archives to create an

archive related to Orthodox women's ordination. Outside the university, she gave a series of talks at Congregation Beth Shalom in Teaneck on reproductive politics in Israel.

Gary A. Rendsburg participated in the conference "Biblical and Rabbinic Hebrew" at the University of Cambridge, delivered lectures at Tyndale House (Cambridge), the Smithsonian Institution, and the Museum of the Bible, Washington, D.C., and presented programs at various synagogues in New Jersey (Caldwell, Metuchen, Princeton). While in Cambridge, he also spent several days at the Taylor-Schechter Genizah Research Unit inspecting Cairo Genizah documents relevant to his ongoing research on biblical manuscripts in the collection. He published the following essays during the past year: "בְּנֵי־הַכֹּהֵן (Hosea 13:2)," "Sacred Space in Judaism after the Temple," "The Epic Tradition in Ancient Israel—and What Happened to It," "A Rare Torah in the Library of Congress," and "A Hebrew 'Book within Book' at Fisher Library, University of Sydney." This last article relates to a manuscript fragment of a rare piyyut (medieval Hebrew poem) that he discovered repurposed as a binding fragment in a book printed in Venice in 1601, housed at the Sydney library. He made this discovery while on sabbatical at the University of Sydney during the spring of 2019, and the article was published in *Journal and Proceedings of the Royal Society of New South Wales*, devoted to a wide variety of topics related to the history of Australia.

Jeffrey Shandler was an Ivan and Nina Ross Family Fellow at the Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies, University of Pennsylvania, in fall 2019. He published the following essays: "Der Wunsch, die Vergangenheit in Erinnerungen festzuhalten: Das Visual History Archive der USC Shoah Foundation" [The Desire to Preserve the Past in Memories: The USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive], in *Einsicht: Bulletin des Fritz Bauer Instituts*; and "Shopping for Yiddish in Boro Park," in *How Yiddish Changed America and How America Changed Yiddish*, edited by Ilan Stavans and Josh Lambert (Restless Books, 2020). He gave the fol-

lowing presentations: "Transformations of the Ketubah: From Contract to Artifact and Beyond," National Museum of American Jewish History, Philadelphia; "When Homes Become Museums," Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies, University of Pennsylvania; "Jewish Museum Practices: A Modern Cultural Innovation," Norman E. Alexander Lecture in Jewish Studies, Columbia University; "Tchotchkes: American Material Yiddish Culture after World War II," Loyola Marymount University; "Seeing as Believing: Watching Videotaped Interviews with Holocaust Survivors," Program in Jewish Studies, Vanderbilt University; "Beyond the Mother Tongue: Learning Yiddish in America," Yiddish New York; and "Sharing Beds, Sharing Secrets," at the symposium "Sites of Passage: Domestic Materials in Jewish Contexts," Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies, University of Pennsylvania. He also oversaw the development of the new interdepartmental minor in Holocaust studies at Rutgers. (See article on page 1.)

Nancy Sinkoff published *From Left to Right: Lucy S. Dawidowicz, the New York Intellectuals, and the Politics of Jewish History* (Wayne State University Press, 2020). Her first book, *Out of the Shtetl: Making Jews Modern in the Polish Borderlands*, was reissued with a new preface as a free e-book with Brown Judaic Studies. She also published her translation of Menachem Mendel Lefin of Satanów's "Prayer against the Hasidim" in *Confronting Modernity, 1750–1880*, edited by Elisheva Carlebach, volume 6 of *The Posen Library of Jewish Culture and Civilization* (Yale University Press, 2019); a review of *Travels in Translation: Sea Tales at the Source of Jewish Fiction*, by Ken Frieden, in *Textual Transmission of Contemporary Jewish Cultures*, edited by Uzi Rebhun (guest symposium editor: Avriel Bar-Levav), volume 31 of *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* (Oxford University Press, 2020); and a blog post for the American Jewish Historical Society, "How Do We Honor an Anti-Feminist on International Women's Day?" She was a respondent to the panel "(Dis)Believing the Unbelievable: The Challenges of Witnessing the Holocaust," at the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies annual meeting,

San Francisco; and presented "Still Asking: What Is the Use of Jewish History?" at the conference "History and Memory: The Legacy of Yosef H. Yerushalmi," Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies, Columbia University. She launched *From Left to Right* at the Shalom Hartman Institute of North America, New York, and at the American Jewish Historical Society, New York (cohosted by the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research). She also recorded several podcasts and radio interviews related to her new book, including the *New Books in History* podcast via the New Books Network, *The Bookmonger of National Review*, the *Tel Aviv Review*, the B'nai B'rith International podcast, and *The Marc Bernier Show* on radio.

Paola Tartakoff, who began a three-year term as chair of the Department of Jewish Studies, published her second book—*Conversion, Circumcision, and Ritual Murder in Medieval Europe*—with the University of Pennsylvania Press. (See article on page 10.) She also published the article "Martyrdom, Conversion, and Shared Cultural Repertoires in Late Medieval Europe," in the *Jewish Quarterly Review*; and the essay "Of Purity, Piety, and Plunder: Jewish Apostates and Poverty in Medieval Europe," in *Bastards and Believers: Jewish Converts and Conversion from the Bible to the Present*, edited by Theodor Dunkelgrün and Paweł Maciejko (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020). She designed and taught a new large lecture course titled "Antisemitism," and she participated in a working group on antisemitism at the Center for Jewish History, in New York. In addition, she joined the editorial board of the *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies*.

Azzan Yadin-Israel published "Christian, Jewish, and Pagan Authority and the Rise of the Christian Intellectual," in *The Rise of the Early Christian Intellectual*, edited by Lewis Ayres and H. Clifton Ward (de Gruyter, 2020); and a more popular piece, "St. Augustine's Jews and the Undeserving Poor," in *Marginalia*, part of the *Los Angeles Review of Books*. He also developed and taught a new course for the Honors College on language contact and cultural contact. He gave several presentations this past year. In Prague,

FACULTY PROMOTIONS

Congratulations to faculty recently promoted to the rank of full professor:

• **Nancy Sinkoff**
Jewish Studies and History

• **Paola Tartakoff**
Jewish Studies and History

• **Emma Wasserman**
Religion and Jewish Studies

FACULTY AWARDS

Michal Raucher
Special Mention, 2019
Cashmere Subvention Award in
Jewish Gender, Sexuality, and
Women's Studies
Women's Caucus of the
Association for Jewish Studies
In support of her new book,
*Conceiving Agency: Reproductive
Authority among Haredi Women*
(Indiana University Press, 2020)

Nancy Sinkoff & Rebecca Cypess
Book Prize, 2019
Jewish Studies and Music
Study Group of the American
Musicological Society
For their coedited book,
*Sara Levy's World: Gender,
Judaism, and the Bach Tradition
in Enlightenment Berlin*
(Eastman Studies in Music
series, University of Rochester
Press, 2018)

he spoke on the subject "Bialik on Halakhah and Aggadah." Over winter break, he traveled to Israel as part of a collaborative project with Haifa University's program in digital humanities. While there, he gave two talks: "Rabbinic Sources and Jewish Ethics," Tel Aviv University; and "On the Concept of Second Temple Judaism," Haifa University. He also participated in a Berkeley conference honoring Professor David Biale.

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Email: BildnerCenter@sas.rutgers.edu
info@JewishStudies.rutgers.edu



Karen Small, Managing Director
Jenny Gehrmann, Senior Department Administrator
Sarah Portilla, Program Coordinator
Darcy Maher, Communications Coordinator

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New Brunswick, NJ 08901

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VIRTUAL PUBLIC PROGRAMS, FALL 2020

The Ruth and Alvin Rockoff Annual Program

Hatikvah: Sacred Readings of a Secular Text

September 13

Edwin Seroussi,

Hebrew University of Jerusalem

The Toby and Herbert Stolzer Endowed Program

Jerusalem: City of the Book

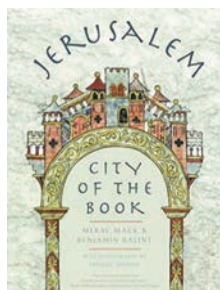
October 25

- **Benjamin Balint**,
coauthor,
*Jerusalem: City
of the Book*

- **Father Columba Stewart**,
Hill Museum & Manuscript Library,
Saint John's University

- **Bedross Der Matossian**,
University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Cosponsors: *Rutgers–New Brunswick
Libraries; Center for Middle Eastern Studies*

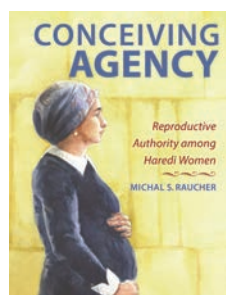


Rutgers Jewish Film Festival November 8–22

Reproductive Authority among Haredi Women

December 7

- **Michal Raucher**, Rutgers University
- **Avital Chizhik-Goldschmidt**,
Life and Features Editor, *Forward*



THREE-SESSION MINI-COURSE **Writing the Oral Torah in Islamic Terms**

October 13, 20, 27

Marc D. Herman,

Aresty Visiting Scholar, Bildner Center



Muhammad receiving revelation from
the angel Gabriel, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*,
ca. 1314, Edinburgh University Library

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