

yediAut



Pamela Nadell,
Director, Jewish
Studies Program



Howard Wachtel,
Director, Center for
Israeli Studies

From the Directors

This year's *YediAut* from American University's Jewish Studies Program and Center for Israeli Studies shows the growth in breadth and depth of our programs and activities, as well as the impressive accomplishments of the faculty who participate in these two university-wide undertakings. As the premier example on campus of interdisciplinary cooperation, they represent the best of what a university has to offer.

The pages of *YediAut* reflect that fact, with information on contemporary dance, distinguished visiting in-residence faculty, guest lecturers, conferences, courses in Jewish studies and Israeli studies, and upcoming events. Taken together, these activities attest to the commitment of American University's faculty to offer our students a truly exemplary educational experience, fulfilling AU's mission in "Building a Global University."

We thank you, our readers, for your past support, and welcome your continuing contributions. There is a donation form on the next-to-last page of the newsletter. Your help is vital to our further growth. ■

Dance: A Window into Israel

In spring 2001, dance students in the Department of Performing Arts had the good fortune to work with Amir Kolben, choreographer, founder, and director of the Kombina Dance Company. His 12-day guest artist residency, sponsored by the Center for Israeli Studies, culminated in a performance of an excerpt from Kolben's work "*Kriyat Shma*." This was the second time the center sponsored a residency and performance of an Israeli choreographer; three years ago we performed "*Echod Mi Yodea*," an excerpt from Ohad Naharin's Batsheva Dance Company's *Anaphase*.

The impact of Kolben's work was powerful. For students and audiences, the dance provided a window into life in Israel—the tensions, conflicts, joys, hopes, and sorrows. I asked one of our graduates to share her experiences.

—Dr. Naima Prevots, Chair, Department of Performing Arts

[Meisha Bosma is an adjunct professor at American University and of Northern Virginia Community College, where she teaches modern dance, ballet,

and dance education. She continues to dance with two local D.C. dance companies and is currently planning a January 2002 trip to Israel.]



The graduate dance program at American University attracts an extremely diverse group of students each year. This diversity generates an exciting yet challenging learning environment for faculty members, guest artists, and students. I spent three years of graduate study working and dancing with individuals from all over the world, each with their own unique interests and backgrounds, each very different from my own. The study of dance urges us to reach into an unfamiliar and sometimes vulnerable place. It is apparent to us as dance students that movement invites a special kind of communication regardless of differences. Sometimes

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a choreographer comes along and shows you exactly how this can be done.

I had the privilege of studying under both Amir Kolben, founder and director of the Kombina Dance Company of Jerusalem, and Aya Israeli, rehearsal director for Ohad Naharin's Batsheva ensemble. Both companies are among the leading contemporary dance exponents in the world. They are part of the Center for Israeli Studies' program of in-residence Israeli artists and scholars who visit AU and teach in their area of speciality, exposing the diverse landscape of Israeli contributions to the world. (Since 1998 there have been nine in-residence Israelis, across six disciplines.)

The work of Amir Kolben demanded a journey to an unguarded place inside us, leading us out of the familiar and into the unfamiliar. We spent 12 intense days dancing, sweating, falling down, getting back up, and, what I remember most vividly, anxiously awaiting the next rehearsal. The movement was full of slashing gestures, circular joint motions, and risky extensions of energy that literally knocked

us off balance, only to learn that the next movement sent us directly back into a rigid, shoulder-to-shoulder stance that marched us forward in uniformity. Experiencing the movement, my body initiated a conversation about breaking down expectations. I soon began to identify with a part of myself that only dance allows me to explore: a sense of individuality that can be discovered when the boundaries are pushed and when certain expectations are tested. I left each rehearsal with a sustained curiosity of how the piece would take shape.

Each day we met, Amir taught us new material. We were given rhythmical structures to count, clap, and march. We walked around the dance studio talking gibberish that no one could understand, occasionally

uttering words like *Coca-Cola* or

Mitsubishi, all seamlessly woven into the performance. We repeated particular sections of the dance over and over and asked many questions. Exactness and precision were important, along with the contrasting gestures that threw the body in all directions. We were in many unfamiliar places, physically and mentally. Just like the movement itself, space was quickly transformed into a struggle between circles and straight lines, traveling toward the audience and circling around to look squarely into the eyes of another dancer. Amir asked us to greet one another on stage as if we were engaged in a human-like greeting on the street.



Israeli choreographer Amir Kolben works with AU students.

The phrases of movement slowly came together, phrase by phrase, with an overwhelming sense of rhythm and spatial patterning. And then Amir began to talk with us about the *whys* and *bous* of the dance, the story of So-Dom, the biblical city of sin. This discussion helped us understand the inspiration behind his intentions. My thoughts held onto the words he spoke, linking them to the movement choices of the dance—the way hands and fingers were never fully stretched into the space, the line of energy often cut off at the wrists. With no prior knowledge of the biblical story, the choreographic decisions made by Amir told me all I needed to know about the tensions between real desires and the boundaries that constrain us.

I live in my memory as in a journey to another time and place. My own personal boundaries were pushed and tested. Kolben moved with aggression and spoke to us, holding nothing back. With his verbal and physical communication, Amir showed us how to test these perimeters and invited us to go along with him. When Kolben asked me to take a risk, I found it difficult to say no.

I can now reflect back to 1998 on my previous experience with an in-residence Israeli ensemble, the excerpt from Ohad Naharin's *Anapbase* ("Echod Mi Yodea") that was taught to us by the Batsheva's rehearsal director, Aya Israeli. I am privileged to be the only AU dance student who worked in both productions.

We started "Echod Mi Yodea" fully clad in black suits, crisp white collared shirts, and black hats. Confined to chairs placed in a semicircle, we learned 13 short movement phrases that ripped us from our seats to the floor, plunging our arms and legs at the audience, and eventually stripping down to blue underwear. As a dancer and choreographer, I was inspired by the richly woven texture of the piece. The simplicity of accumulation and repetition seemed to communicate a sense of cleansing and ritual, while working through movement that felt physically violent. We chanted in Hebrew, yelling with passion and forwardness after each accumulation of another phrase, throwing a single piece of clothing toward the center of the stage, until we firmly stood baring skin. Although the piece can be interpreted broadly, for me it stands as an abstraction of survival in universal terms. The work explores many metaphysical indications, including the search for knowing and the miracle of living in hope amidst fear.

These works provide a sense of what I imagine it might be like to live in Israel. It is rough around the edges, full of tension, with folk dancing placed in delicate spots, and through all this a humanity emerging through a universal voice. There is something beautiful and raw that comes from these two works by Kolben and Naharin, clearly pointing to the climate of Israel as each artist uses dance to find the real meaning behind survival and the boundaries we cross to achieve it.

Before his departure Amir Kolben asked me to join his dance company in Jerusalem. Although I remain here in D.C. for now, I am determined to travel to this place where dance is a true reflection of Israel in all its complexities. ■

Conference: Visions and Divisions

For the second time in three years, the Center for Israeli Studies hosted the annual meeting of the Association for Israel Studies (AIS),



Russell Stone, professor of sociology and administrative coordinator of AIS

the international academic professional organization of scholars who conduct research on Israel.

Some 125 participants met for three days in May 2001 on the AU campus and heard speakers in 30 panels and five plenary sessions under the conference's theme, "Visions and Divisions."

This was the first international meeting of this sort since the eruption of the second *intifada*.

The keynote speaker was Ambassador **Dennis Ross**, former U.S. special Middle East coordinator and principal U.S. intermediary for a decade under two presidents, who offered us a unique inside view of what it was like to negotiate under the Oslo accords. Other plenaries featured the ambassador from Israel, **David Ivri**, and noted cookbook author **Joan Nathan**, who spoke on the role of food in the creation of Israel. After her presentation, the conference participants sampled several of her recipes prepared by the conference's caterer.

AU is the administrative home for the AIS, which receives sponsorship and financial support from the Center for Israeli Studies. ■



Enjoying the spring weather and AU's campus



Speakers at session on prospects for Israeli-Palestinian peace are, left to right, Herbert C. Kelman (psychology, Harvard U.); Mohammed Abu-Nimer (School of International Service, American U.); Daniel Lieberfeld (government and legal studies, Bowdoin College); Jerome Segal (philosophy and public policy, U. of Maryland); and Khalil Jabsban (vice president, American Arab Anti-Defamation Committee).



During a break in the sessions

AU's Center for Israeli Studies provided travel scholarships for eight young scholars, among them, left to right: Michal Frenkel (Tel Aviv), Andrei Fedorchenko (Russia), Rengin Gun (Turkey), and Radka Langhammerova (Czech Republic).

Center for Israeli Studies: Upcoming Events

"Conversation Through Photography: Israeli and Palestinian Photographers" is the title of a center-sponsored exhibition, February 8–28, 2002, in American University's Watkins Gallery. It is being developed by the in-residence Israeli art curator, Nella Cassouto, who has curated art exhibits in the United States, India, Poland, Denmark, Norway, and two countries in Latin America. She has taught at Ohio State University and was acting curator of contemporary art at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. Cassouto will lead a discussion on the works at the Watkins Gallery at a reception in the gallery on February 10, 2002, 3–5 pm, and deliver a public lecture, "Aspects of Memory in Israeli Art," at 8 p.m. on February 11 in Watkins, room G4.



Photograph by Rina Castelnuovo, from the series Religions, Untitled, 1997

"Diaspora and Comparative Immigrations," an international conference sponsored and hosted by the center, will run May 13–15, 2002. Some 20 scholars will present papers in panels and several prominent plenary speakers will contribute their insights.

Get updated information from our Website, <www.centerforisraelistudies.org>, or by calling Rhea Schwartz at 202-885-3780. ■

News from the Jewish Studies Program

American University's interdisciplinary Jewish Studies Program offers a broad selection of courses on the Jewish experience. They include classes in Hebrew language; ancient, medieval, and modern Jewish history; Jewish philosophy and thought; Holocaust studies; Israeli studies, and Jewish literature in translation. Special events of the past year included guest lectures by, among others, Hebrew University professor and AU scholar in residence Yoram Peri, "The Assassination of Yitzhak Rabin—Israel Five Years Later" (November 2000) and Yitshak Arad, deputy chairman of the International Council of Yad Vashem, "Witnessing the Holocaust and the Emergence of the State of Israel" (April 2001).

Spotlight on Jewish Studies Interns

In addition, a major facet of the undergraduate experience in American University's Jewish Studies Program is the internship. AU Jewish studies students gain invaluable experience working in a variety of national and local Jewish organizations. Often their hands-on experience, supplemented by a strong academic component, leads to their first jobs after graduation. Spring 2001 Jewish studies graduate Susan Schwartz was hired by

Hadassah's Washington Action Office, where she worked as an intern in her junior year.

In 2000–01 Jewish studies interns worked in a number of agencies, including the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the Anti-Defamation League, the B'nai Brith Youth Organization, the District of Columbia Jewish Community Center, Hillel of Greater Washington, and Project Interchange.



Graduation Day, May 2001. Jewish studies majors Jeffrey Rum, Alexis Bock, and Susan Schwartz join Prof. Pamela S. Nadell. The students, who held Jewish studies internships in the Washington Jewish community, are smiling. Not only is it graduation day, but all had already accepted job offers from local Jewish agencies.

Jewish Studies Program Student Awards

The Jewish Studies Program takes great pride in recognizing this year's student award winners.

Senior Jewish studies majors received awards to defray expenses for research for their theses. Jessica DeNino (senior thesis topic: Jewish bio-medical ethics), Nicole Gratch (modern midrash), Margaret Heidema (Reform Judaism and social justice), and Jamie Levine (the changing Israeli army) received **Jane and Jerrold Goodman Awards**. Cori Roth (Jewish communal agencies and church-state relations) received the **Everett Gordon Award**.

In addition, history graduate student Aleisa Fishman won a **Jane and Jerrold Goodman Award** for research for her dissertation, "Gender, the Market, and Jewish Identity in Suburban Nassau County, New York, 1946–1960." Fishman has won nationally competitive awards from the American Jewish Archives, American Jewish Historical Society, Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies, and National Women's Studies Association. In addition, she recently received the highly competitive College of Arts and Sciences Dissertation Fellowship.

We also commend history graduate student Katrin Paehler, currently a fellow of the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, researching her dissertation, "Espionage, Ideology, and Personal Politics: The Making and Unmaking of a Nazi Foreign Intelligence Service." Paehler, who previously won a **Jane and Jerrold Goodman Award**, has also received a fellowship from the Holocaust Educational Foundation.

Our congratulations to all. ■

Faculty Notes

Richard Breitman (Department of History) continues his work with the Nazi War Criminal Records Interagency Working Group, examining newly declassified documents from the Office of Strategic Services.

Erran Carmel (Kogod School of Business) completed "Israel's Silicon Wadi: The Forces behind Cluster Formation" (with C. De Fontenay), which will appear in the book *Silicon Valley and Its Imitators*. With Richard Linowes (Kogod School of Business) Carmel is active with US-IBEX (Israel Business Exchange Group), which brings together American and Israeli business people.

Gershon Greenberg (Department of Philosophy and Religion) continues to research Jewish religious responses to the Holocaust.

Alan M. Kraut (Department of History) has published a second and expanded edition of his book *The Huddled Masses: The Immigrant in American Society, 1880–1921*. The volume contains a significant amount of material on the Jewish migration to the United States and other countries at the turn of the last century.

Robert Lerman (Department of Economics) will be a visiting professor at Hebrew University in the Public Policy Program (December 2001–January 2002), lecturing on social policy in industrialized countries.

Alan Levine (School of Public Affairs) received a fellowship at the Institute of United States Studies at the School of Advanced Studies (University of London); published a book, *Sensual Philosophy: Toleration, Skepticism, and Montaigne's Politics of the Self* (Lexington); and through the U.S. State Department lectures on political topics.

Richard Linowes (Kogod School of Business) continued his graduate-level teaching relationship with ISEMI (Israel School of Enterprise Management and Innovation) in Ramat Aviv, part of the worldwide network of Swinburne University of Australia; spoke to the Harvard Club of Israel on Israeli chutzpah and the spirit of enterprise; and continued his work with the Emerging Market Development Advisors Program, which places MBA students throughout the United States in emerging market countries.

Arnost Lustig (Department of Literature) received critical acclaim in Berlin, Canada, and the United States for the film in which he appears with Jan Wiener, *Fighter*. "The Sunshine Boys of the Holocaust," says John Anderson of *Newsday* and "a riveting personal adventure story," writes Stephen Holden of the *New York Times*, which is echoed by the *New Yorker's* David Denby: "an unusually cogent and

complexly structured documentary becomes, all at once, a kind of existential travelogue, an interrogation of memory, and a comedy of temperament." The film had its Washington premiere at the D.C. Jewish Community Center's annual film festival (December 2000) and its New York opening in August 2001. The *New York Post's* Jonathan Forman conjectures it "may be the year's outstanding documentary."

Pamela S. Nadell (Department of History), director of the Jewish Studies Program, published *Women and American Judaism: Historical Perspectives* (Brandeis University Press). She continues as chair of the Academic Council of the American Jewish Historical Society and a member of the Board of Directors of the Association for Jewish Studies.

Saul Newman (School of Public Affairs) continues to work on his manuscript "Conflict and Cooperation in Northern Ireland, South Africa, and Israel."

David Rosenbloom (School of Public Affairs) was awarded the American Political Science Association's John Gaus Award for Exemplary Scholarship in the Joint Tradition of Political Science and Public Administration and published (with Allon Yaroni) "The Transferability of New Public Management Reforms: Caveats from Israel," *Israel Affairs* (summer 2001): 81–99.

Daniel Schydrowsky (Department of Economics) has been named presidential counselor for economic affairs to Constitutional President Alejandro Toledo of Peru (starting in September 2001). In the spring 2001 semester, he was visiting scholar at the Harry S. Truman Institute for Peace of the Hebrew University, working on the economic determinants of the disillusion with the state in Latin America and lessons that can be drawn from this experience for the Middle East.

Rita Simon (School of Public Affairs) spent 10 days during summer 2001 in Jerusalem, where she awarded 11 scholarships to students with North African origins who are attending Israeli universities. These are the first awards under a foundation she has established, the Shula Ankary Educational Foundation. While in Jerusalem she participated in a ceremony at Hebrew University honoring her late husband, Professor Julian Simon of the University of Maryland. A research fund will be established in his name at the Business School of Hebrew

University. She has three new books: She wrote (with Rhonda Roorda) *In Their Own Voices* (Columbia University Press) and edited *Women and the Military* (Transaction Books) and *Immigrant Women: A Comparative Perspective on Major Social Problems* (Lexington Books). Her new course, Justice and Israeli Society, was successfully launched in the fall 2001 semester.

Myra Sklarew (Department of Literature) published *The Witness Trees* (Cornwall Books), which re-issues her book-length poem, *Lithuania*, with a new Yiddish translation and photographs, along with essays on the history of Lithuanian Jewry by David Katz and on the destruction of the Jews of Keidan, Lithuania, by David Wolpe.

Janet Spragens (Washington College of Law) published "Sales Tax in Cyberspace," for the Israeli law firm publication *Technol-AWgy*; taught a five-week course in the law school in Haifa during summer 2001: Introduction to U.S. Trade and Tax Law (with Haifa University law professor Padideh Ala'i); and continues to coordinate the student exchange program with the University of Haifa law school.

Russell Stone (Department of Sociology) attended two conferences in Israel pertaining to Israeli studies during summer 2000. At a meeting on the future of Israeli nationalism at the Ben Gurion University Research Center in Sde Boker and Beersheba, he presented a paper in a panel examining whether Israel has reached the end of the Zionist era. At the Association for Israel Studies annual meeting at Tel Aviv University, he organized and chaired a roundtable on Israeli public opinion data resources with participation from several Israeli public opinion pollsters and researchers. He recently wrote the current article on Israel for the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. He is advising editor of the Israeli studies series published by the State University of New York Press.

Howard M. Wachtel (Department of Economics) is completing a book, *Street of Dreams—Boulevard of Broken Hearts: Wall Street's First Century*, and has been invited to contribute an article on water and environmental security in Israel and the surrounding region to a book on food security. ■



Celebrating Lilith

In November 2000, the Jewish Studies Program hosted "Celebrating *Lilith*: Twenty-Five Years of Jewish Feminist Journalism," on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the founding of this landmark magazine. *Lilith's* founding editor in chief, Susan Weidman Schneider, gave the keynote address. She was joined by a panel of *Lilith* authors: University of Maryland professor Evelyn Torton Beck, activist and writer Yael Flusberg, and Sarah Wildman, assistant editor of *The New Republic*. The event was cosponsored by the Women's and Gender Studies Program. ■

Pictured left to right, Susan Weidman Schneider, Sarah Wildman, Evelyn Torton Beck, Yael Flusberg, and Jewish Studies Program director Pamela Nadell



In Memoriam

Amos Perlmutter

Amos Perlmutter, a professor of government in the School of Public Affairs who taught in the areas of comparative politics and Middle Eastern politics, died on June 12, 2001, at the age of 69. Perlmutter wrote on civil-military relations, Middle Eastern politics, and American foreign policy. He authored 15 books, including *Making the World Safe for Democracy: A Century of Wilsonianism and Its Totalitarian Challengers* (1997), *F.D.R. and Stalin: A Not So Grand Alliance, 1943-1945* (1993), and *The Military and Politics in Modern Times* (1977).

His five books on Israel and the region are *The Life and Times of Menachem Begin* (1987); *Politics and the Military in Israel 1967-1977* (1978); *Anatomy of Political Institutionalization: The Case of Israel and Some Comparative Analyses* (1970); *Egypt, the Praetorian State* (1974); and *Military and Politics in Israel: Nation Building and Role Expansion* (1969). In 1996 he was honored by a festschrift, *A Restless Mind: Essays in Honor of Amos Perlmutter*, edited by Benjamin Frankel. In addition to producing his body of scholarship, Perlmutter was an active commentator on politics and foreign policy, with a regular column in the *Washington Times* and frequent contributions to *Foreign Affairs*, the *National Review*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, and the *Jerusalem Post*.

Perlmutter was born in Bialystok, Poland, and grew up in Palestine. He fought in the 1948, 1956, and 1973 Israeli wars. He received his PhD from the University of California at Berkeley and became a member of the American University faculty in 1972. Before coming to American University, he taught at Harvard University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the Free University of Berlin.

Benjamin Kahn

With great sadness, *YediAU* announces the death of Professor Benjamin Kahn, former director of the Jewish Studies Program, on July 4, 2001.

A graduate of Harvard University (magna cum laude, 1934), Kahn was ordained rabbi at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. He pursued graduate studies in philosophy at Columbia University and received an honorary Doctor of Hebrew Letters from the Jewish Theological Seminary.

Kahn came to American University after a distinguished career in Jewish communal service. He was B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation director at Pennsylvania State University. In 1959 he came to Washington and became the first international director of B'nai B'rith Hillel. In 1971 he became executive vice president of B'nai B'rith International.

When he retired from B'nai B'rith in 1976, Kahn began teaching Jewish studies at American University. He subsequently became director of the Jewish Studies Program, a position he held until his retirement in 1994.

In his second career, Kahn won the respect of his colleagues and the deep affection of his students at AU. He was honored twice, first, in 1982, with the University Award for Outstanding Teaching by Adjunct Faculty and subsequently with a Special Merit Award for Outstanding Contributions to the College of Arts and Sciences.

Author of numerous articles and guide books published by Hillel for the campus, he was also coauthor of *Exploring Religious Ideas: The Great Western Faiths* and he completed a history of B'nai B'rith Hillel.

Donations in his memory may be made to the Jewish Studies Program. ■

New Deputy Director, Rhea Schwartz

Joining the Center for Israeli Studies is the new deputy director, **Rhea Schwartz**. She comes to the center after a career as a lawyer and business woman in Washington. Her impressive credentials cover private practice and corporate and government service, including as counsel to the Board of Directors of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. For the past 16 years she has also been president of RAPCO Development, an investment and real estate development firm.

Schwartz has served on the board of the American Jewish Committee and last year undertook a mission for the Jewish Joint Distribution Committee to the Baltic states. She has served on the boards of the Girl Scouts and the Washington Performing Arts Society. While serving as a member of the Board of Directors of the United States Figure Skating Association, she founded and developed the adult skating programs for the association. She was recently named by *International Figure Skating* as one of the 25 most influential people in figure skating.

Her addition to the staff will help bring the Center for Israeli Studies to its next phase of activity in programming, development, and extension of its external profile. ■



Schwartz can be reached by email at schwartz@american.edu or by phone at 202-885-3780.

Lectures Sponsored by the Center for Israeli Studies

With American University's Washington College of Law and School of Public Affairs, the center hosted Zeev Segel, professor of public policy and law at Tel Aviv University and frequent commentator on the law for *Ha'aretz*, who spoke on freedom of information issues.

Two guest lecturers from Tel Aviv University's Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research offered us unique insights on the state of public opinion in Israel. For about a decade, the center has conducted a monthly survey of Israeli public opinion on the Oslo process and related subjects pertaining to the negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. ■



In the spring of 2001, Tamar Herman, from the Steinmetz Center, in a lecture entitled "The Peace Index: Six Months after the Intifada," presented the results of the Peace Index monthly survey some six months after the eruption of fighting.



Professor Ephraim (Eppie) Yaar, director of the Steinmetz Center, was on campus in early September 2000—some weeks after the meetings at Camp David and a month before the start of the second intifada—and spoke on the center's Peace Index in a lecture entitled "Israeli Public Opinion on the Peace Process after Camp David II."

www.centerforisraelistudies.org

NEW CENTER FOR ISRAELI STUDIES WEB SITE

To learn about future events and programs and the Center for Israeli Studies' origins and statement of purpose, visit our new Web site at www.centerforisraelistudies.org or go to American University's home page, click on "Academics," then "Centers, Institutes, & Programs" and look for the Center for Israeli Studies.



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Produced by University Publications

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

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