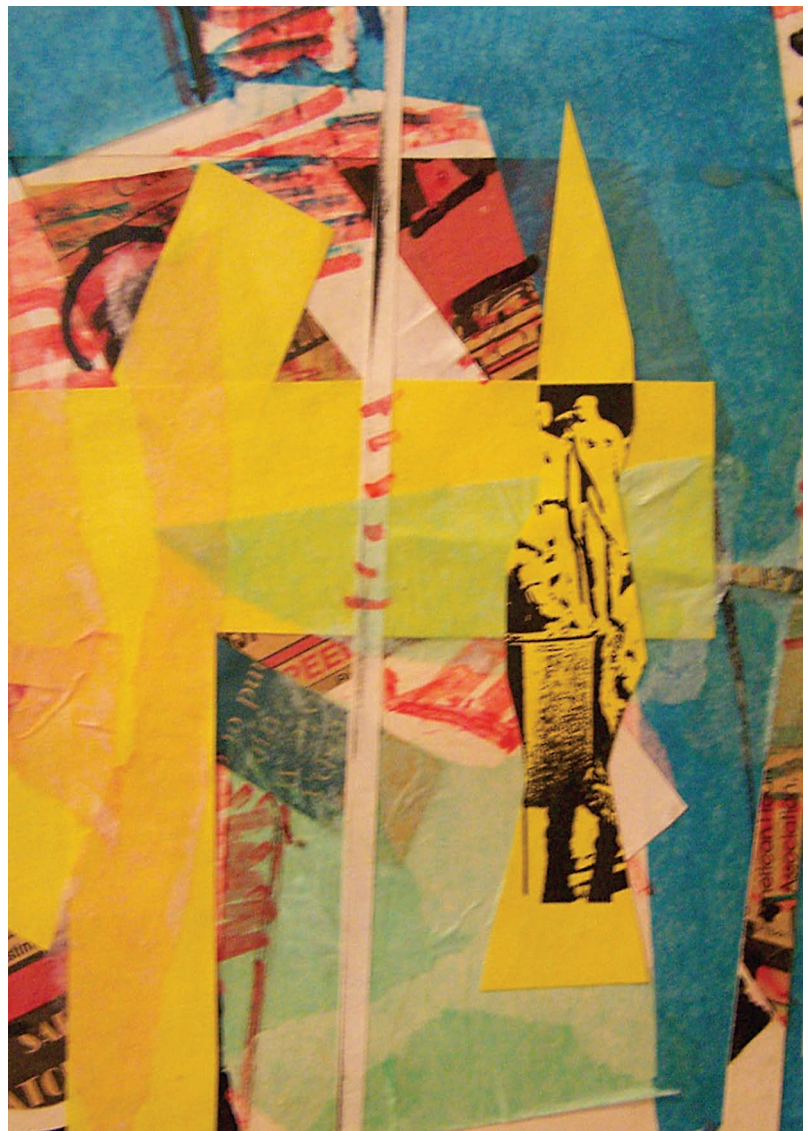


FRANKE LY SPEAKING

April 2011

Jean & Samuel Frankel Center for Judaic Studies

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Ben Wilson, Collage, 1997. (A gift to The Frankel Center from the artist's daughter, Joanne Jaffe.) (Detail)

From the Director: Gender and Jewish History



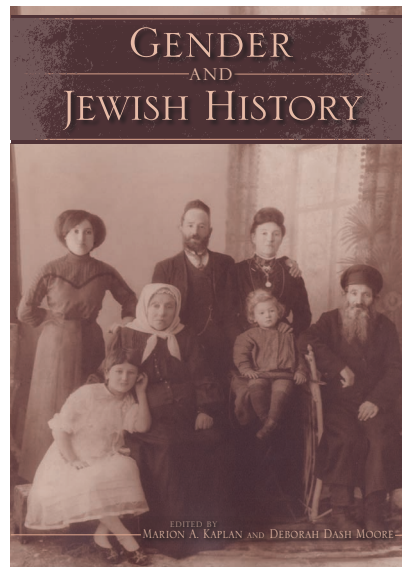
Deborah Dash Moore, Director, The Frankel Center for Judaic Studies, and Frederick G.L. Huetwell Professor of History, University of Michigan

In 1994, Paula Hyman, noted scholar of modern Jewish history, invited me to collaborate on what became, three years later, the two-volume *Jewish Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia*. We recognized at the time that the project would be a labor of love since we had no money to pay anyone to write entries. (We offered them copies of the encyclopedia.) It was soon evident that unlike most encyclopedias, this one would not synthesize previous scholarship but produce new knowledge. Despite their significant accomplishments, many of the women we chose to include had never attracted the attention of biographers. While we were excited with our discoveries, we could not anticipate the impact of *Jewish Women in America* upon the larger field of Jewish studies.

In December, Marion Kaplan and I published *Gender and Jewish History*, a collection of essays honoring Paula Hyman. In soliciting contributions for the book, we discovered with pleasure that much had changed in the dozen years since the encyclopedia appeared. A logjam regarding gender had broken. Jewish historians of all generations, from eminent senior scholars to emerging junior ones, reveled in the challenges of studying gender.

Older scholars recognized what they had previously overlooked, such as the powerful intimate correspondence

between the pioneering German Jewish historian, Leopold Zunz, and his amazingly smart and supportive wife, Adelaide. Or they uncovered previously obscured histories of women's key roles in the capture and trial of Adolf Eichmann. Attention to gender contributed to more subtle interpretations of how private understanding shapes public knowledge. In my own case, editing the volume stimulated me to focus on women photographers and to ask how gendered relations on city streets influenced the pictures they took.



Younger historians plunged daringly into more contested terrain. Rebecca Kobrin revisited a lurid murder of a Jewish maidservant in New York City to explore the sexual and emotional costs of a widespread form of employment for young Jewish women. Although we know much about Jewish female teenagers working in garment factories, domestic service employed many more women in the 19th century. They were part of Jewish households, though largely ignored by scholars. In 1900, U.S. census records defined as

“lower middle class” families that employed fewer than three live-in servants.

Lila Corwin Berman, a fellow at the Frankel Institute year on “Jews and the City,” also looked at women homemakers, albeit in the 20th century. She examined Jewish women's perceptions of race in Detroit in the 1950s. As housewives, they answered the door when real estate agents knocked inquiring if they were interested in selling their home and they shared their opinions with Jewish communal agents conducting surveys. They weighed the safety of their Jewish neighborhoods and the desirability of moving to distant suburbs.

By contrast, Judith Rosenbaum asked what happened to those married immigrant Jewish women in Brownsville, Brooklyn who lined up outside Margaret Sanger's first birth control clinic in 1916. It turned out that when the police shut down the clinic and arrested Sanger, Jewish women rallied to her support. They traveled into Manhattan while nursing babies to testify at her trial and they remained staunch allies despite difficulties. Birth control activism opened the door to political participation that lasted for many years.

These diverse articles offer a glimpse into a few of the rewards of gendered approaches to Jewish history. They speak to both the achievements of an emerging generation of scholars who no longer fear the taint of feminism and the pioneering research of such historians as Paula Hyman. Mainstreaming gender has initiated a revolution in Jewish history. It is exciting to see how much change a decade has wrought.

“We are eager to welcome Tony Michels, a leading American Jewish historian, to campus. Michels’ visit marks the rapid expansion of American Jewish history as well as increasing interest in the field among Americanist scholars and graduate students. Professor Deborah Dash Moore’s appointment in the U-M history department in 2005 helped raise awareness within the U-M American field of the new scholarship, as have growing numbers of graduate applicants who wish to study some aspect of American Jewish history. They are revisiting topics such as immigration, racialization and whiteness, and acculturation, and developing novel questions in the history of higher education, social welfare, suburbanization, civil rights and human rights, the 1930s Popular Front and antifascism, the history of American feminism, radicalism, liberalism and neo-liberalism, the Cold War, and religious history. Michels will not only give a talk on his new work, but will also participate in a Roundtable with graduate students on how to expand scholarly conversations among Jewish historians, American historians, and metropolitan historians studying the rise of conservatism, the suburban-urban divide, and the changing American political landscape. Michels will join two other leading American Jewish history scholars for the Roundtable: Professor Lila Corwin Berman (Temple) and Professor Eric Goldstein (Emory).”

— Regina Morantz Sanchez, *History*

Historian Tony Michels Visits University of Michigan

April 14, 4pm

Lecture: *In the Shadow of Revolution: Communism, Anti-Communism, and the Jews*

**Tony Michels, University of Wisconsin
202 South Thayer Street, Room 2022**

In the years following 1917, large numbers of American Jews welcomed the Bolshevik revolution, viewing it as both a beacon of social progress and the beginning of a Jewish cultural renaissance. Some went so far as to join the newborn American Communist Party with the hope of reenacting the Russian revolution on American soil. During the early 1920s, Communism grew into a popular movement among immigrant Jews and threatened to capture control of some of the largest Jewish workers’ organizations. Yet the revolution also gave rise to a strong anti-Communist movement, not from the political right, but from leftists who initially supported the revolution. By 1925, an anti-Communist alliance had coalesced and would shape the Jewish labor movement and the American left as a whole, for decades to come. This lecture will examine the roots of this conflict, when American Jews with close ties to Russia grappled with the revolution and its implications for Jews and socialists on both sides of the Atlantic.

Tony Michels is the George L. Mosse Associate Professor of American Jewish History at the University of Wisconsin. He is the author of *A Fire in Their Hearts: Yiddish Socialists in New York* (Harvard University Press, 2005) and editor of *Jewish Radicals: A Documentary Reader* (New York University Press, forthcoming 2011); Co-editor (with Mitchell Hart), *The Cambridge History of Judaism. Volume 8: The Modern Period* (Cambridge University Press, expected publication 2112).



April 15, 11am–1pm

Roundtable: *The Place of Jews in Modern American History*

**Lila Corwin Berman,
Eric Goldstein,
and Tony Michels
1014 Tisch Hall**

Where do American Jews fit into the Sunbelt? If you posed this question to an American Jewish historian, he or she would likely direct you to *To*

the Golden Cities, Deborah Dash Moore’s 1994 book about postwar Jewish migration to Miami and Los Angeles. But if you asked a U.S. historian the same question, the answer would probably be rather different—or, in fact, they might not have an answer at all. While the past two decades have seen a flourishing of scholarship on the rise of the Sunbelt, this literature has focused almost exclusively on the rise of the Christian Right, virtually ignoring the Jewish migration patterns that have resulted in large numbers of liberal Jews living alongside growing evangelical communities.

The question, then, about liberal Jews in the Sunbelt South has sparked an ongoing conversation about the intersection among U.S. history, Jewish history, and American urban history. To address both the convergence and divergence of these three fields, the University of Michigan has invited three scholars—Lila Corwin Berman (Temple University), Eric Goldstein (Emory), and Tony Michels (University of Wisconsin)—to participate in a roundtable discussion on April 15 from 11:00am to 1:00pm in 1014 Tisch. The ongoing conversation at Michigan echoes a larger conversation within the subfield. This discussion will bring together Jewish historians, American historians, and metropolitan historians to discuss the ways that these fields could and should speak to each other.

Faculty Spotlight: Anita Norich's Path to Yiddish

“Homecoming is not a function of place. Nor, despite what I have tried to learn from my professional commitments to literary criticism and, particularly, to Jewish culture, do I find a homecoming primarily in texts. I come home to language, in Yiddish, not only as the language spoken in my childhood home but also as the language spoken in those older homes to which none of us can return.”

Norich, “On the Yiddish Question,” in *Mapping Jewish Identities*, ed. by Laurence Silberstein (NYU Press, 2000), pp. 145-58.

Anita Norich was raised in the New York City public school system. Growing up in the Bronx, public schools all but followed the Jewish calendar. She attended Talmud torah several times a week, but that formal training was halted when her family moved from the South Bronx when she was in the sixth grade.

Yiddish was Norich's first language and, until the age of five, was her primary language. When her family came to the States, they all learned English. “I have vivid memories of my father going off to work with a German/English dictionary under his arm, in the hopes of making himself understood more quickly. Meanwhile, my mother went to night school English classes.”

The family's new apartment was just across the street from a Scholem Aleichem Shule, but Norich did not attend. “Yiddish wasn't an ideology or politics or choice—it was just the language we spoke. We had no identity problems with being Jewish or speaking Yiddish. It was normal—because it was simply an historical and biographical fact.”

After high school, Norich attended Barnard. She'd been inspired by her high-school math teacher, so she decided to become licensed to teach both high-school math and English.

During that time, teachers in New York were expected to obtain a master's degree within five years of taking a

job. Norich opted to start with her M.A. in English, while fully intending to go back for a graduate degree in math education.

Norich embarked on her graduate career at Columbia, where one had to be admitted to a Ph.D. program in order to earn an M.A. “I supported myself by substitute teaching in public schools. At that time, you could do it one or two days a week and earn enough money to live on. I had no intention of getting a Ph.D. I can remember the graduate chair at Columbia saying, ‘Look to your right and then look to your left. Next September, only one of the three of you will still be here. Here's how you can stay.’ I had thought that was just a myth.”

When Columbia offered Norich a fellowship to complete her Ph.D., she decided to stay. Her main field became the history of the English novel. (Her dissertation was on Benjamin Disraeli.) To earn the Ph.D. in English students needed two foreign languages; for Comparative Literature (the same Department), they needed three. After studying French and German, she petitioned Columbia to allow her to use Yiddish as her third language. “I thought it was wrong for somebody who was going to be as educated as I was about to become to be effectively illiterate in my native tongue.”

Initially, Columbia refused, saying that it had nothing to do with her studies and would not count as a language. This was the ruling despite the fact that the English Department shared a building with Linguistics, the department that the great Yiddishist Uriel Weinreich had once chaired; it was still one of the very few places in America where Yiddish was taught.

Norich's advisor suggested she tell the committee that she would do a field in her oral qualifying exams on the Yiddish novel and eventually her petition was granted. “When they said yes, I had never read a Yiddish novel. I didn't know what I was talking about. I couldn't even *name* half a dozen. So I started schlepping up to the Bronx and sitting with my father while he read to me. We borrowed Sholem Aleichem's

Stempenyu from a neighbor, and I would follow his finger as he read. Soon, I started reading to him as he followed my finger. My immigrant parents had rarely been able to help me with my homework and here I was, sitting at the kitchen table with my father. It was a very sweet time.”

It didn’t take Norich long to become excited by the literature itself: “It was like a world opening. These Yiddish novels bore comparisons to the literature I’d been studying, and comparisons had rarely been made. They opened up a world that I found exciting, important, worth knowing much more about.”

“It was like a world opening. These Yiddish novels bore comparisons to the literature I’d been studying, and comparisons had rarely been made.”

While finishing her degree, Norich started going to YIVO (the Yiddish Research Institute), reading Yiddish and auditing classes with the legendary Yiddishist figures of the 20th century (Shoshke Erlich, Chone Shmeruk, Shmuel Verses, and Dan Miron).

“I was working at the time at NYU, teaching and developing curriculum in math and English for one of its AA degree programs. Professor Shmeruk said I was wasting time. He urged me to come to Israel, and so I applied for a Lady Davis fellowship and ended up spending two years in Jerusalem. There, I began to learn Hebrew and to spend most of my days sitting in the National Library and reading Yiddish. It was wonderful.”

While in Israel, she became friends with the family of Jonathan Frankel, a well-known historian at the Hebrew University. Frankel called Norich one night and said that his wife, Edith, wanted her to meet Yehuda Reinhartz, the former head of Michigan’s Judaic Studies department who went on to become President of Brandeis. The University of Michigan had just posted a three-year Yiddish teaching position, and while Norich had her NYU job to go back to, she was excited about the possibility of pursuing her Yiddish studies and teaching. “And so, on the last day of a conference he was attending, I met Reinhartz on the lawn of Beit Hatfutsot in Tel Aviv where he interviewed me.”

She was asked to come to Michigan for a job talk and formal interview. The same week that she was offered the position, Norich also learned she had received a second Lady Davis fellowship. Fortunately, she was able to spend one more year in Israel improving her Hebrew and studying before coming to Ann Arbor.

When Norich arrived in Michigan (“*mit di mishigane/meshugane*” [“with the crazies”], as her mother had joked), she taught courses in the English Department and in Judaic Studies. Getting tenure was a challenge, as there were no clear tenure rules for dual appointments.

With the advent of ethnic studies, it has become universally accepted that American literature is not only written in English. When Norich was seeking tenure, however, you had to make the case that Yiddish literature in America could be considered part of the American literary canon.

“One of the things that was most rewarding for me, later, was the knowledge that Yiddish literature could be normalized in academic departments. It didn’t need its own department and it could branch out—as it has here at Michigan—from Judaic Studies into English, Comparative Literature, History, Political Science, Slavic Studies. And I just loved the idea that the U-M English department had a tenured Yiddish professor.”

There are more young people in the field of Yiddish than when Norich entered the field, but the reasons for studying Yiddish have changed quite a lot. There used to be more ‘heritage students’—students who had a personal connection to Yiddish through grandparents and other channels. “The study of Yiddish still has its heritage students,” she says, “but there’s also more and more impetus to learn Yiddish as a research tool or as necessary to understanding any number of things in Eastern European history or the labor movement, or the Jewish American experience, or Jewish culture of the last two centuries to name only a few. We get a range of students: those who are religious and want access to both Hebrew and Yiddish, and also secular Jews and non-Jews alike.

“I also notice that we have many more graduate students studying Yiddish. This is in part because Michigan has become a major international presence in Jewish studies and in Yiddish. We’ve been given opportunity to

hire and grow. We have incredible graduate students, some of whom fulfill their language requirement with Yiddish. And no one ever questions it. Now that's full circle.

“One of my earliest, fondest memories of teaching Yiddish here was when Samuel Frankel came to my class and positively *kvelled* when he saw these students forming sentences in Yiddish, learning to speak and read. He understood its significance to Jewish Studies—a program he and his son Stanley have sustained for decades—and to the University as a whole.”

As she writes in the article above: “My own scholarly work has often demanded a dispassionate and objective tone, but there are times in the classroom when all such claims disappear. A Yiddish sentence newly formed by a student from the Detroit suburbs, a Yiddish poem ‘discovered’ by an American who never saw a Yiddish book, a conference in which colleagues my age speak to one another in a richly nuanced Yiddish, Yiddish e-mail (even in transliteration)—these are not the stuff of which revolutions or redemptions are made. But they are a great source of delight, pride, and hope for the future.”

Anita Norich has taught at the University of Michigan since 1983. Her books include *Discovering Exile: Yiddish And Jewish American Culture During the Holocaust* (Stanford, 2007); *Jewish Literatures and Cultures: Context and Intertext* (co-edited and introduced, Brown, 2008); *Gender and Text in Modern Hebrew and Yiddish Literature* (Co-editor, JTS and Harvard, 1992); and *The Homeless Imagination in the Fiction of Israel Joshua Singer* (Indiana, 1991). She has published influential articles, including “Under Whose Sign: Hebraism and Yiddishism as Paradigms of Modern Jewish Literary History,” *PMLA*, Vol. 125, no.3 (May 2010), pp. 774-784; “On the Yiddish Question,” in *Mapping Jewish Identities*, ed. by Laurence Silberstein (NYU Press, 2000), pp. 145-58; “Harbe sugyes/Puzzling Questions: Yiddish and English Culture in America During the Holocaust,” *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol.5, Nos. 1 & 2 (Fall 1998/ Winter 1999), pp.91-110; “Mother, Mother Tongue, and Motherland: The Family in Jewish American Fiction,” *YIVO Annual*, 1996; “Isaac Bashevis Singer in America: The Translation Problem,” *Judaism* (Spring 1995); “Yiddish Literary Studies,” *Modern Judaism* (Jan. 1990); and “The Family Singer and the Autobiographical Imagination,” *Prooftexts* (Jan. 1990).

I was in the English L&L PhD program from 2004–2009. My current position is Dorot Assistant Professor/Faculty Fellow in the Skirball Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies at New York University.

I came to Michigan to work with Anita. I met with her at some point before starting, if I recall correctly, and then she was away at Penn my first year (2004–2005). I took a class with her my second year, on Holocaust Literature.

In our first meeting, she told me to study Yiddish. She didn't suggest, and she didn't want to hear any hesitations I might have; in not so many words, she just commanded me to go learn the language. It was precisely the kick in the pants that I needed. It was in that first meeting, too, I think, that she recommended Adele Wiseman's Crackpot (1974), which I read that summer and which got me started on the path to writing my dissertation on Jews and obscenity in American literature and culture.

What I can say about Anita as a pedagogue and advisor—and she was brilliant and inspiring in both capacities—that I've never seen anyone deflate and dismiss narrishkeyt [i.e., nonsense; silly, misguided thought], whether in a classroom discussion or in a piece of scholarly work, more witheringly—and yet she somehow always manages to do so in a supportive and productive way, so that her critique doesn't come off as harsh and the person who has spoken foolishly (and I say this from experience) doesn't feel like an irredeemable fool. It's a wonderful skill, and one I try to emulate, not always successfully.”

Josh Lambert, Dorot Assistant Professor/Faculty Fellow
Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies, New York University

The Adventure Begins: Experiences in the Jewish Communal Leadership Program

by Liz Kohn and Ilana Schuman-Stoler



JCLP students at the Roadhouse. Pictured with Zingerman's Co-founder Ari Weinzweig and Chef Alex Young.

The Basics

This past fall marked the inaugural semester of the Jewish Communal Leadership Program (JCLP). JCLP is a continuation of Project STaR and the Drachler Program, previous collaborations between the School of Social Work and Frankel Center for Judaic Studies intended to prepare graduate students to become professional leaders in the Jewish community. As the first JCLP class, the six of us have embraced the opportunity to bring our varied interests and backgrounds to discussions of Jewish identity, community, and leadership. We have attended Ann Arbor community events like the Michigan Jewish Professionals (JPros) Leadership Breakfast Series and attended meet-and-greets outside Detroit with alumni and other local leaders, generously hosted by Shaarey Tzedek and the Detroit Federation. The program has also taken us around the country and the world, from the General Assembly of Jewish Federations of North America in New Orleans, to the JPros Conference in St. Louis, and the American Jewish Committee Global Forum in Washington, D.C., and even to Israel with MASA.

While becoming acquainted with the Ann Arbor, Detroit, and broader Jewish communities, we have also been absorbed in our Judaic and Social Work studies. The members of the university and Jewish communities have greatly enhanced our experience, and we appreciate invitations into their homes and synagogues. This combined program has offered us the opportunity to learn about the history of Jewish organizations and also to participate in conversations around non-profit management and the future of the Jewish organizational landscape.

Group Dynamics

Getting to know one another has been an integral part of our studies. Our peers have aided in our personal and professional development as we interact in a small group and in our broader community. Our weekly seminar has rounded out this experience, encouraging open conversations about challenges defining today's Jewish community. Through these discussions, we connect history with identity and explore the contours of community. These themes are increasingly present in our group sessions as well as our developing professional lives.

In seminar, we have had the pleasure to meet with Jewish leaders and community builders like philanthropist Mandell Berman, Jewish Funds for Justice President and CEO Simon Greer, Covenant Foundation executive director Harlene Appelman, and Project STaR founder Armand Lauffer. This March, JCLP convened a compelling series of Communal Conversations with an impressive array of national Jewish thought leaders: Mik Moore, of Jewish Funds for Justice; Robert Aronson, of Birthright

Foundation Rabbi Sharon Brous, of Congregation IKAR in Los Angeles; and Nigel Savage, of Hazon, traveled to Ann Arbor to discuss critical challenges and opportunities defining American Jewish communities, both in our seminar and in public sessions with members of the broader Southeast Michigan community.

The Bigger Picture

We are optimistic about the future of Jews in the United States. Having spent this year immersed in studies of Jewish community—past, present and future—we are eager to embrace our new roles as communal leaders and look forward to applying what we are learning to the work in the field.

Maintaining communal and personal connectedness is a challenge for the ages. Today, we feel confident that a bright, fulfilling and compelling Jewish future lies ahead. JCLP is one of a few programs in the country training future leaders in this context by encouraging its students to look within while immersed in the modern communal environment.

In exploring our identities, both alone and within the group, we have expanded our understanding of the roles we will play in our respective communities. Serving as non-voting board members of local Jewish agencies and participating in our classes and seminars, we are able to apply this new perspective to leadership and participation. We are now preparing for summer placements with Jewish agencies locally, nationally, and internationally—from Detroit to Buenos Aires. As we expand our personal experiences in Ann Arbor to the national and global arena, we will work diligently with what we have learned to influence the community.

WRITER'S BLOCK: BENJAMIN PALOFF'S POLITICS

*Benjamin Paloff is an assistant professor in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures and Department of Comparative Literature at the University of Michigan. His most recent book is *The Politics* (Carnegie Mellon University Press, 2011).*



Photo by D.C. Goings

"Pretty jewy," my friend Mike said when I showed him the cover of *The Politics* on a recent trip to Los Angeles. The image, a detail from David Caravaggio's 1603 *Sacrifice of Isaac*, shows only the bound child, the knife gripped in his father's steady hand extending from the book's spine on the left, and, on the right, the poor ram waiting for what comes

next. Mike's pronouncement, equal parts praise and critique, was the latest volley in a conversation we have been having for years. Freshman year of college, before we decided to room together, our suites were separated by a fire door. It's as though we've been passing notes under that door our entire adult lives.

Mike observes Orthodox tradition and completed his aliyah a few years ago. My own religious life, on the other hand, has always been inflected more by Jewish philosophy than by ritual, and I remain deeply conflicted on many key questions having to do with the state of Israel and its relationship to the Diaspora. Rarely do Mike and I have a conversation that does not eventually become an argument about tradition, law, or Zionism. And while the temperature of these exchanges can get pretty high, they are also central to the community Mike and I share, a friendship that is among the most profound in my life. When our talk gets really heated, usually around some aspect of contemporary politics, we stop and remind each other good-naturedly that we are merely carrying on a conversation that goes back centuries.

In this respect, Mike's assessment of *The Politics*, as is often the case when we judge a book by its cover, is spot-on, though I did not set out with the intention of writing on Jewish themes. Instead, I was interested in the problem of how to negotiate tensions between the raw parameters of my own subjective experience: individual and community, the self and the Absolute, time and Time with a

capital "T." That the poems themselves assumed anachronistic postures, orchestrating a drama in which historical figures and current events share the same stage—thus the explanatory note, "Dramatis Personae," that comes at the end of the book—now strikes me as a necessary function of that negotiation. Nor should I be surprised, though I had been at one point during the four years I was working on these poems, that, as the note says, "the poems in this book respond to the tone or style of thought of writers long dead." After all, politics is in part the passage of these tensions through responses, tones, and styles of thought, perhaps toward resolutions, but never arriving at the resolution.

Maimonides plays an important role here, as does Philo. Seneca the Younger also makes many appearances. One thing I never resolved is whether the poems speak to, toward, through, or even against these thinkers. This, too, reflects the challenge of politics as I understand it: how to keep it dynamic, to maintain politics as a dialogic relation or interrelation, to refuse the temptation—a temptation I feel acutely—to resolve that relation into narrow judgment (i.e., "The invasion of Iraq was wrong.") or, in the other direction, a totalizing ideology (i.e., "All war is wrong."). This resistance of judgment and ideology is also a resistance to self, for judgment and ideology are most tempting in their promise of certitude: it is perfectly natural to long for assurances in an uncertain world, however illusory they may be. As far as I can tell, this resistance is both the poems' strongest motivation and their most enduringly Jewish quality. "It is not dogmatic," Emmanuel Levinas writes of the Talmud, "it lives off discussions and debates." And then, in a pointed remark reiterated not infrequently in his writings on Judaism, "Decidedly, with Judaism, we are dealing with a religion of adults."

I wrote *The Politics* from 2004 to 2007, a period when I saw scant evidence of such adulthood in American political discourse. While an attentive reading of these poems will likely reveal hints of my own leanings on the big political issues of that period, the book aims to explore not the politics of a particular time and place, but politics as such, that is: relation.

Maimonides on the Indestructibility of the Universe

If I have been placed on this earth to test its weathered ladders,
in no way can I be alone. It's on a morning show that I see
Gene Shalit raging against the stars, in the paper that I read
a story about a doctor in Florida who threw his two sons, then himself,
each his own story, fifteen stories off a balcony, just as his wife
was coming out of the hotel bathroom with wet hands. In the painting
I notice that the angel who restrains Caravaggio's Abraham
bears the likeness of Isaac, the seed of Abraham, so that it is Abraham
arriving in the nick of time to stop himself from destroying himself,
which is why the blade is almost transparent, the ram waiting patiently
to close the circuit. I say that God is somewhere in the opening
and closing of these circuits, a light you flick on and off to signal love
or distress across the courtyard. Across the rail yard I am led
by the light in the stationmaster's window, though the stationmaster
has long since been replaced by indifferent machines,
which throw the switches and cancel the cold sacrifices of physics.
They open the circuits, and the circuits say, This is not your transport.
If anything happens to you here, no one will help you. No matter what
happens, refuse to take the stage in the theater they've made of your temple.

from *The Politics* by Benjamin Paloff (Carnegie Mellon University Press, 2011)



Detail from Caravaggio's *Sacrifice of Isaac* (1603)

Faculty:

Deborah Dash Moore will travel to Japan to teach at The University of Kitakyushu.

Chosen by the Organization of American Historians as part of their Distinguished Lecture Program, Moore will spend two weeks in Fukuoka, Japan, in June 2011. The program is also supported by the Japan-United States Friendship Commission and the Japanese Association for American Studies (JAAS).

Dash Moore, a trustee of the American Jewish Historical Society, moderated a panel at the opening of the AJHS's Machal and Aliyah Bet Exhibition in honor of North American volunteers who fought in Israel's War of Independence.

Panelists included

Samuel Klausner, a Machal veteran and Professor Emeritus of Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania; Ralph Lowenstein, also a veteran who is the founder of the Machal/Aliyah Bet Archives and Dean Emeritus of the College of Journalism and Communication at the University of Florida; and Derek J. Penslar, Samuel Zacks Professor of Jewish History at the University of Toronto.

Vocalist **Caroline Helton** and pianist **Kathryn Goodsen** will travel to New York to perform "Voices of the Italian Holocaust" at the Museum of Jewish Heritage. The program was researched and compiled by ethnomusicologist **Aloma Bardi**.

Rachel Neis gave two invited lectures at the University of Virginia: *The Lust of the Eyes: Rabbis, Gender and the Gaze* and *Eyeing Idols: Rabbinic Viewing Habits in Late Antiquity*.

Todd Endelman has just published *Broadening Jewish History: Towards a Social History of Ordinary Jews* through the Littman Library of Jewish Civilization.

David Caron will publish a collection of essays that he co-edited with Sharon Marquart on French

Auschwitz and Ravensbruck survivor Charlotte Delbo. Published by Presses Universitaires du Mirail in France, it is titled *Les revenantes: Charlotte Delbo, la voix d'une communauté à jamais déportée*.

Ryan Szpiech has just published "Polemical Strategy and the Rhetoric of Authority in Abner of Burgos /Alfonso of Valladolid" in *Late Medieval Jewish Identities*, Eds. María Esperanza Alfonso and Carmen Caballero-Navas (New York: Palgrave-

Macmillan, 2010. pp. 55-76). In addition, "Citas árabes en caracteres hebreos en el *Pugio fidei* del dominico Ramón Martí: entre la autenticidad y la autoridad" has appeared in *Al-Qantara: Revista de Estudios Árabes* 32.1 (2011): 71-107.

Julian Levinson gave the annual Lapidus Family Lecture at Princeton University in February. His talk was entitled "Filming the Judeo-Christian Synthesis: Biblical Epics and Cold War Culture." He also led a workshop—"In defiance of Amnesia: Reading Post-war American Jewish Poetry." Both are the subject of forthcoming articles.

Gabriele Boccaccini organized a program of sessions on Italian Jewry at the meeting of the American

Mazel Tov!

Faculty, Student, & Visiting Scholar/Fellow Awards and Honors



Ralph Lowenstein, Deborah Dash Moore, Samuel Klausner, and Derek J. Penslar at the opening of the American Jewish Historical Society's program honoring North American volunteers in Israel's War of Independence.

Association of Italian Studies. This year's program marks the start of a yearly commitment to Italian-Jewish sessions at the AAIS.

Fellows and Visiting Scholars:

Oren Gutfeld published *Ramla Excavations North of the White Mosque* as part of the QEDem series of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

J.P. Dessel was awarded an NEH 2012-13 fellowship for his book project, *Acting Locally: Rethinking the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age I From a Village Perspective*. The project is an outgrowth of the work he did while a fellow at the Frankel Institute in 2009-2010.

Lisbeth Fried has been invited to participate in a year-long course in Oxford University's (UK) department of classics. The course is in connection with the Bodleian Library's collection of the documents of the Achaemenid Satrap Arsames (or Arshama).

Graduate Students:

Efrat Bloom presented a paper at the 42nd Annual AJS conference this past December. The paper title was: *A Woman's Word: Sholem Aleichem's 'Genz'*.

Oren Segal attended The American Comparative Literature Association's 2011 Annual Meeting in Vancouver, where he presented *In Their Own Image: Intertextuality in Photography of Tel Aviv's Independence Park*.



Weinberg Prize Awarded:

Benjamin Pollak Joins List of Distinguished Scholars to Receive Prestigious Honor

Established in 1993, the Marshall M. Weinberg Prize in Judaic Studies is awarded annually to an outstanding doctoral student. Past recipients include Eric Goldstein (Emory University), Robin Judd (Ohio State University), Maren Linett (Purdue University), Deborah Ann Starr (Cornell University), Maud Mandel (Brown University), Eugene Michael Avrutin (University of Illinois), Justine Pas (Oberlin), Emil Kerenji (The Holocaust Museum), and Joshua Lambert (New York University). Benjamin Pollak is the 2011 recipient.

"It is a great honor to be the recipient of this year's Marshall M. Weinberg Prize in Judaic Studies. The generous support afforded by the prize will provide invaluable assistance for my academic work. As a doctoral student in the Department of English Language and Literature, my research explores the intersection of Jewish cultures and literary expression in America. My dissertation examines Jewish

representations of New York, a city whose long and vibrant history as a demographic and cultural center of Jewish life in America is reflected in a no-less-vast body of literary and artistic works. In studying these works—particularly literary and photographic ones—my scholarship attempts to uncover the complex relationships that Jewish artists formed with the physical environment in which so many of them lived and worked. In doing so, I hope to contribute to our understanding of the formative role New York City played in these writers' and photographers' identities as both Americans and as artists. In addition to offering support while I work on this project, the Weinberg Prize will also help finance research trips to New York.

My knowledge of Jewish culture and literature has been enriched immeasurably by the many classes, conversations, and workshops I have participated in through my involvement with the Frankel Center. I have gained valuable experience as the organizer of the two reading groups associated with the Center, the American Jewish Studies Reading Group and the Judaic Studies Graduate Student Reader Group. More importantly, I have benefitted from opportunities to work with inspiring faculty members Anita Norich, Julian Levinson, Deborah Dash Moore, and Sara Blair, who have generously shared their knowledge and time with me. No less formative has been the friendship, advice, and high standard set by fellow graduate students Alexandra Hoffman, Josh Lambert, Danny Mintz, and Oren Segal."

Frankel Center for Judaic Studies

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SAVE THE DATE

In the Shadow of Revolution: Communism, Anti-Communism, and the Jews Tony Michels, University of Wisconsin

April 14, 2011, 4pm
202 South Thayer Street, Room 2022
Ann Arbor, MI

For more details on Frankel Center events, visit:
www.lsa.umich.edu/judaic/

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