

Association for Jewish Studies  
Center for Jewish History  
15 West 16th Street  
New York, NY 10011

## The Museum Issue

SPRING 2010

### The Latest:

Ari Folman's *Waltz with Bashir*  
A travelogue from Jewish Moscow

### The Questionnaire:

Scholars write in about books  
they love to teach

# AJS Perspectives

THE MAGAZINE OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR JEWISH STUDIES





**KATECYZYM  
RELIGIJNO-MORALNY  
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Please direct correspondence to:  
**Association for Jewish Studies**  
Center for Jewish History  
15 West 16th Street  
New York, NY 10011

Voice: (917) 606-8249  
Fax: (917) 606-8222  
E-Mail: [ajs@ajs.cjh.org](mailto:ajs@ajs.cjh.org)  
Web Site: [www.ajsnet.org](http://www.ajsnet.org)

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**On the Cover:** "Encounters with Modernity." Courtesy of Event Communications and Museum of the History of Polish Jews.

**Front and Back Inside Cover:** Detail of the above.

**Back Cover:** "The Post War Years." Courtesy of Event Communications and Museum of the History of Polish Jews.

## From the Editors

### Dear Colleagues,

We begin our editorship of *AJS Perspectives* at a time when Jewish studies is an established and thriving field, one that continues the long tradition of Jewish textual study and advances new intellectual paradigms. We approach the editorship as partners: one of us works on antiquity and the other on the modern period, one of us is from Jewish Vienna and the other from Jewish Detroit. Our commitment rests on a vision of Jewish studies that, true to the title of the magazine, incorporates a range of perspectives. We look forward to dialogue and collaboration with one another and with all our colleagues and hope that *Perspectives* will reflect the breadth and dynamism of Jewish studies in the twenty-first century. We thank our teachers and mentors who have set the tone of Jewish academic discourse and extend our deep gratitude to Steve Fine, Riv-Ellen Prell, and Allan Arkush for envisioning and creating *Perspectives* as a forum. In continuation of their tradition, every issue of *Perspectives* will focus on a central theme.

Our first issue revolves around the theme of Jewish museums and the many roles that these museums can play. Jewish museums are opening and expanding nationally and internationally and, despite their different missions, confront some of the same challenges. Many of the museums visited in this issue showcase the primacy of memory in Jewish culture;

others point toward events not publicly remembered in Jewish settings. The current academic engagement with museums reflects how Jewish studies is increasingly moving beyond the academy. The articles in this issue discuss the conception, design, and engagement with museums by scholars of Jewish studies and present ways of using museums as subjects of research and teaching. While we have hardly exhausted the theme, we have tried to look at it in a global fashion.

Although we are continuing the *Perspectives* tradition of a central theme, we are also introducing two new features. "The Latest" offers articles about contemporary Jewish cultural production, and a questionnaire surveys the views of our colleagues on particular topics. Our first questionnaire explores favorite books for teaching Jewish studies to undergraduate students. We hope that you will read, enjoy, and debate this issue as well as our subsequent issues of *Perspectives*.

### Matti Bunzl

*University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

### Rachel Havrelock

*University of Illinois at Chicago*



**Our Mission | Preserve, Research, Educate**

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American Sephardi Federation  
Leo Baeck Institute  
Yeshiva University Museum  
YIVO Institute for Jewish Research

**The Center for Jewish History** is home to the American Jewish Historical Society, the American Sephardi Federation, the Leo Baeck Institute, Yeshiva University Museum, and YIVO Institute for Jewish Research. As the Center enters its second decade, we seek to broaden our role as a hub for primary source material and research services, to become a professional resource for scholars by providing avenues to present new research findings, receive and offer guidance, coordinate research projects, and find support to move them forward.

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## From the President

### Dear Colleagues,

It is a distinct honor for me to serve as the new president of AJS. When I joined AJS in the mid-1970s as a graduate student, we were a small but dynamic organization, and going to the annual conference was exciting. There was one session at a time, so everyone went to sessions outside their own field and got to know the scholars and the intellectually stimulating work they were doing. It was obvious that Jewish studies had an exciting future in the academy, and I for one felt proud to be part of a scholarly world with a long pedigree, high standards, and cutting-edge research agendas. I am a modern historian, but I loved the fact that I knew a great deal about the scholarship in Bible, Rabbinics, Hebrew and Yiddish literature, and all the other fields of Jewish studies. AJS has grown enormously since those days, and that is a good thing, even if it means that most people cannot follow the scholarly debates in fields other than their own. Indeed, the sheer variety of papers at the last AJS conference in Los Angeles impressed upon me the vitality and energy of Jewish studies. It's still exciting for me to attend the AJS conference.

One of the most interesting developments of the past decades has been the growth of new fields within Jewish studies. Some of these fields parallel developments in the academy generally like gender studies and cultural studies; some fields (like Jews and the arts) recognize that Jewish studies should not be confined to texts or history. One of the most dynamic new fields within Jewish studies in recent years—Israel studies—is the result of the recognition that Israel, the Jewish state which has existed for over sixty years, also forms a central part of Jewish studies, and must be studied using the rigorous tools of the critical scholar. Obviously we have studied Israel before. Hebrew literature specialists and social scientists have long studied aspects of Israeli culture, society, and politics, and historians have entered the field as the archives have opened. But until recently many students of Israel, especially the social scientists, I think, did not view their work as belonging to Jewish studies. Instead, they went to the social science conferences and gave papers about Israel as case studies of general political or social phenomena. They still do that of course, and they should, as good social scientists, but they

also now find a home within Jewish studies, sharing the fruits of their scholarship with the rest of us, and that is a very good development.

With all this growth, with all this expansion in fields and concerns, is there anything which unites Jewish studies as a field? I don't think that Jewish studies is a single academic discipline, with a shared methodology or approach. Jewish studies contains many disciplines, including history, literature, religious studies, cultural studies, philology, and the social sciences. Despite all the popular talk about the end of disciplines and the value of interdisciplinary studies, in fact, disciplinary approaches still retain significance and validity, and we should not disparage them. Yet, by its very nature Jewish studies is quintessentially interdisciplinary in the best of all possible ways, respecting disciplinary difference but fully committed to the benefits of crossing disciplinary boundaries for the sake of scholarly analysis. So, Jewish studies is not a discipline, but neither is it an example of "area studies," like American studies. After all, we are studying a group of people and its culture over thousands of years and in radically different cultural contexts. What unites all of us in Jewish studies is an interest in a particular group of people—the Jews—and their culture broadly defined over a very long period of time. We would all agree that the Jews and Jewish culture are very interesting and compelling, and studying them raises central questions about the very nature of human culture, human identity, and human interaction.

So, why don't we go to sessions outside of our areas of specialization when we attend the AJS conference? Perhaps many of us do. Perhaps it is also inevitable that with the growth of our field and the expansion of our scholarly activities we focus more narrowly on our own areas of specialization. I do hope, though, that many of us will make the effort to attend sessions outside our fields. Naturally, I am delighted that our field continues to grow and prosper. I just wish I still had the time to go to sessions outside my field at AJS annual meetings.

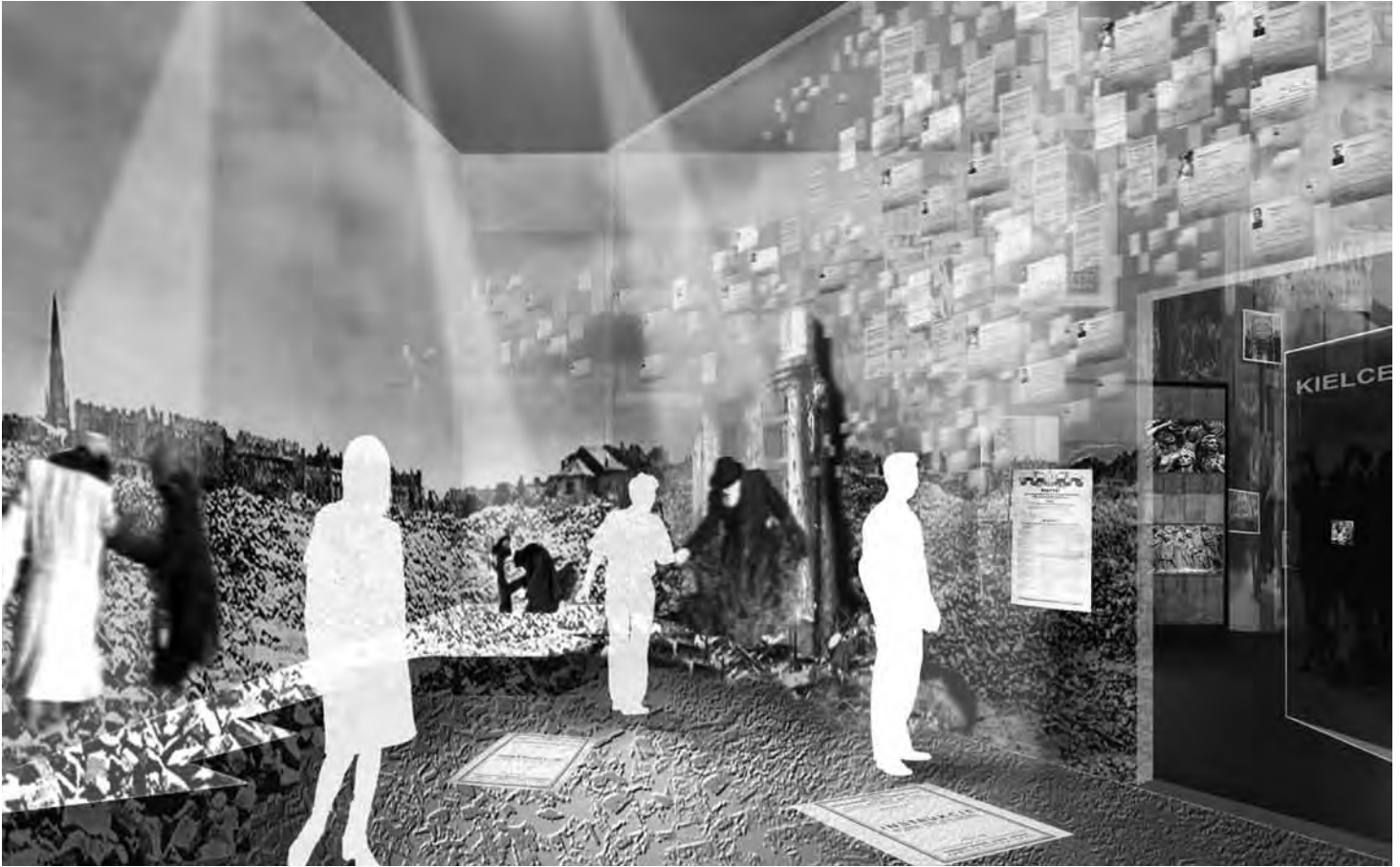
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*The Association for Jewish Studies wishes to thank  
the Center for Jewish History and its constituent organizations*

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*for providing the AJS with office space at the Center for Jewish History.*

# The Museum Issue



“The Post War Years.” Courtesy of Event Communications and Museum of the History of Polish Jews.

## Creating the Museum of the History of Polish Jews

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett

**F**acing Natan Rapoport’s Warsaw Ghetto monument, the Museum of the History of Polish Jews will present a thousand years of Jewish history in the very place where it happened. Understandably, this history has been overshadowed by the Shoah and the void that it has left. By presenting the civilization that Jews created in the very place where they created it, the Museum of the History of Polish Jews will convey the enormity of *what* was lost. Poland is the ultimate site of the Shoah. This is the place where the Germans built *all* of the death camps. This is the place where most of Europe’s Jews perished. Standing on the site of the former Warsaw Ghetto facing the monument to the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and Great Deportation, the Museum of the History of Polish Jews will honor those who died by remembering how they lived.

The history of Polish Jews is an integral part of the history of Poland, a message of special importance during a unique period in Polish history: never before has Poland been as homogeneous as it is today. Central to an understanding of Poland’s historical diversity is the story of Polish Jews, the rich civilization they created, and the spectrum of Polish-Jewish relations. The involvement of the lively, though small, Jewish community in Poland, whose story the museum will tell, is of critical importance. Jews from abroad, whose visits to Poland focus almost exclusively on the Shoah and antisemitism, will hopefully begin their visit with the museum and broaden their historical perspective.

The museum, the first public-private partnership of its type in Poland and a joint effort of the Association of the Jewish Historical

Institute of Poland, the Government of Poland, and the City of Warsaw, will fulfill its mission through its educational and public programs and a multimedia narrative exhibition. By providing the long and deep historical context that has been missing from contemporary debates, the museum aims to create a “trusted zone,” a place where diverse visitors will be more open to dialogue on difficult questions.

The permanent exhibition, which is being developed collaboratively by a team established by the museum’s director Jerzy Halberstadt, includes distinguished academics from Poland, Israel, and the United States; a world-class design company Event Communications; and professional curators, archivists, scholars, and researchers in Poland and abroad. As the leader of the Core Exhibition Development Team of the Museum of the History of Polish

Jews, I am working with all of these groups to create a multimedia narrative exhibition that will be a theater of history—history in the first person and history told through the sources—rather than synthesized and narrated by an anonymous historian, though of course the very selection and presentation of sources will construct a historical narrative. Those sources include privileges and contracts, wills and inventories, rabbinical Responsa and Jewish communal record books, illuminated manuscripts and early Yiddish and Hebrew printed books; letters, travelogues, diaries, and memoirs; literature and the press, art and music, theater and film—in addition to artifacts, when we have them and they can support the narrative. The strategic use of multimedia makes it possible to layer content and encourage visitors to explore the sources and not only to look at them, read a label, or listen to an audio guide. This approach makes for a very different type of visitor experience, a more flexible and exploratory one. Those interested in a particular subject will be able to pursue it in depth, while others can browse and still get the main idea.

A critical approach to the history the museum will present means of avoiding teleology, the idea that history drives towards an inevitable end. Visitors should not make an easy inference from chronology to causality. Historical explanation is considerably more complicated. With the pitfalls of teleology in mind, it is important to avoid foreshadowing what came later. Instead, visitors are kept inside the period and encouraged to see through the eyes of those who lived at the time, while made aware of larger trends, of macrohistorical phenomena and processes. By following the itineraries of various individuals and histories of various communities, visitors will discover the variety of paths taken and what people at the time knew and thought. Visitors will see and feel how history was actually lived.

Second, a master narrative runs contrary to the museum's commitment to presenting an open-ended past. For this among other reasons, the story of Polish Jews neither begins nor ends with the Holocaust. The postwar period is a very important part of the story. In fact, the museum is itself part of the postwar story and will be included in the exhibition narrative. Nor will the postwar period mark the end of the story. The book will not close in 2012, just before the museum opens. The story will stay open, extending beyond the borders of Poland to all the places where Polish Jews settled, and carry forward into the future.

Third, there is the principle of many voices, rather than a single voice telling a single story. Every effort is being made to let the sources do the telling. A synthetic third-person historical voice—the “museum voice”—will not be the main way through this history, though it will be used when necessary. Rather, a diversity of first-person accounts from the period will be carefully curated to insure that collective experience and macro-historical processes are also communicated.

Fourth, there is an effort to avoid an apologetic narrative—a “hall of fame”—and resting of the case on the “contributions” of Jews to Polish society and the world. Of course incredible people and marvelous accomplishments will appear, but first and foremost as they illuminate a larger history. This is a serious history museum and serious history is not celebratory, though there will be much to be proud of. Serious as this history is, it will be presented in a lively way and engage visitors in meaningful dialogue and thoughtful debate.

Fifth, the idea that a museum that does not depend primarily on “actual” objects is somehow a “virtual” museum is a misperception. Historically, museums evolved as institutions that preserved material evidence of the past and safeguarded treasures. Today, museums are civic institutions that fulfill their educational mission through exhibitions and programs that draw on a wide variety of sources, display techniques, and media. The key issues for the Museum of the History of Polish Jews are *historical integrity* and *what constitutes an “actual” object* or, put another way, “digital simulacrum” is an example of what I would call the materiality fallacy.

*Historical integrity.* Some of the best museums whose subjects are related to the Museum of the History of Polish Jews—the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. and Yad Vashem in Jerusalem—use facsimiles, copies, castings, and models. The original document or artifact may no longer exist or it may be too fragile to exhibit or it may be impossible to remove it from its current location or it is only through a scale model or reconstruction that a totality can be grasped all at once. The “authenticity” of what is shown rests on its historical integrity—like a notarized copy in a court of law—rather than on the literal materiality of the object, and on transparency in the way that original materials are mediated. That said, it is curious that facsimiles are often exhibited *as if* they were originals—they are shown in vitrines with labels, as if they were the original document—and they are not even consistently

identified as facsimiles. In other words, display practices associated with the installation of original documents intensify the illusion that you are indeed seeing the original and encourage you to respond as if that were the case. The mediation is not transparent. That is not the approach of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews. Quite the contrary.

The museum begins with the curatorial principle of responsibility to the nature of the source as an historical artifact and to *transparent mediation*. The goal is to confront visitors with primary sources, rather than extract information and embed that information in an anonymous third-person historical synthesis. Using interactive media, the museum can bring visitors into contact with a much greater range of sources than they could ever encounter as original objects, even at museums with the richest collections. Transparent mediation can sensitize visitors to the nature of the source as a source, make the back story visible, and treat the story of the source as part of the main story. Whether the back story is about Julia Pirotte and the photographs she took in the aftermath of the Kielce pogrom or about Julien Bryan and his photographs of the 1939 siege of Warsaw or about Natan Rapoport, the creator of the Warsaw Ghetto monument, we want our visitors to understand that all sources have been authored and to make the authorship of the source part of the story and not simply a technical detail on a label.

*The materiality fallacy.* What constitutes an “original” or “actual” or “authentic” object? Take, for example, the eighteenth-century wooden synagogue of Gwozdziec that will be featured in the eighteenth-century gallery. The museum intends to reconstruct the timber-framed roof and polychrome ceiling of this spectacular synagogue. Now the museum could go to a theater prop maker, give him or her the dimensions and some pictures, and say, “Make it!” The result would look pretty much like the original, but it would be a theatrical prop. That is not what the museum wants to do. In order to go to the heart of the issue of actual and virtual, the museum wants to work with a studio in Massachusetts, whose motto is “learn by building.” These beautiful eighteenth-century wooden synagogues no longer exist; the Germans burned to the ground those still standing in 1939. It is possible however to *recover the knowledge of how to build them* by actually building one. What is actual about that artifact resides therefore not in the original eighteenth-century wood, not in the original painted interior, but in the *knowledge that the museum recovered*



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for how to build it. It's a completely different concept of the object. This approach is related to a completely different tradition of thinking about what constitutes an object.

The best example is the Jingu Shrine in Ise, Japan. This is a shrine that is eight hundred years old and never older than twenty years because for eight hundred years they have been tearing it down every twenty years in order to rebuild it. The only way to maintain the embodied knowledge of how to build it is to build it, and to make it necessary to build it, they tear it down and then must build it again. *The value is in maintaining the knowledge of how to build it, not in preserving the original materials.* The result is not a replica or simulation of the Jingu shrine; it is the Jingu shrine. This is a completely different way of defining what is "actual" about such an object.

Finally, when visitors exit from the gallery dealing with the postwar years, they will find themselves in a circulation space in which we will open the narrative up to the story of Polish Jews in the many places around the world where they settled. That installation will stay current with what is happening

today. It will be a very participatory space and will potentially develop in collaboration with contemporary artists who engage a wide public in creating content through what is variously known as conversational art, social software, and locative media. What matters here is the ongoing involvement of a wide public not only within the walls of the museum but also far beyond those walls. Their voices are an essential part of legacy.

Together with other Warsaw landmarks, the museum will form part of a cultural precinct and must-see itinerary in the city. The museum expects about 20 percent of its visitors to be Jews from abroad, a diverse Jewish audience of Israelis, Holocaust survivors, children of Holocaust survivors, European Jews, Jewish youth from Israel, Jewish youth from North America, Jews who can trace their families back to Poland and those who cannot. The majority of organized groups—and especially young people—come for the Holocaust and only the Holocaust. The museum has a very important role to play in changing their itinerary: by starting their journey with the Museum of the History of Polish Jews, they will broaden

their historical perspective to a millennium of Jewish history in the place where it happened. More than half of the museum's visitors will be people living in Poland, and the rest will be international visitors.

Understandably, there are many sensitivities. Polish audiences worry that an honest history of Polish Jews will reinforce the perception of Poland as an antisemitic country, while Jewish visitors are afraid the museum will present a rosy picture. The museum will do neither. Rather, difficult moments will be presented within the *spectrum* of Polish-Jewish relationships, the high points and the low ones. Striking the right balance in a historically responsible way is the goal.

*Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett is professor of performance studies in the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University. She is the author of They Called Me Mayer July: Painted Memories of a Jewish Childhood in Poland Before the Holocaust (with Mayer Kirshenblatt; University of California Press, 2007). She is currently leading the development of the core exhibition at the Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw.*

## AMERICAN ACADEMY FOR JEWISH RESEARCH AND ASSOCIATION FOR JEWISH STUDIES

### STATEMENT ON HIRING PRACTICES

The executive committees of the American Academy for Jewish Research and the Association for Jewish Studies are committed to promoting equality of opportunity and diversity in the field of Jewish studies. The study of Jews and Judaism in the modern university should be open to all persons with the proper academic qualifications, regardless of their background. Jewish studies is not an exclusively Jewish endeavor with Jewish goals. In the modern university, the academic study of Jews and Judaism is a core component of a liberal arts education, the humanities and the social sciences, and the understanding of diverse civilizations and cultures. As such, Jewish studies should be and must be a field that is open to all who have the training and credentials to teach and conduct research.

It is inappropriate for search committees in Jewish studies to inquire about candidates' religious, national, or ethnic background, level of religious observance, denominational loyalty, marital status, or personal lifestyle. Institutions at which religion has been determined to be a bona fide occupational qualification (BFOQ) should state so in their announcements. Discriminatory conduct based on such factors as race, religion, age, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, and medical or disability status is unacceptable in Jewish studies and higher education. Interviewing and hiring decisions must be based solely on professional criteria. Intellectual acuity and originality, research and language skills, teaching ability and experience, and, in certain cases, administrative skills and collegiality are the only proper factors in determining the suitability of applicants for teaching positions and research fellowships.

# The Palmach Museum in Tel Aviv: History between Fact and Fiction

Avner Ben-Amos

On May 31, 2000, several hundred people gathered in Ramat Aviv, an affluent suburb north of Tel Aviv, for the inauguration of the Palmach Museum. It was no ordinary group of people. Among the important guests were Ezer Weizman, President of Israel, and Ehud Barak, Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, who both made speeches. Other guests included ministers, Knesset members, high-ranking army officers and other members of the political and cultural elite of the country. Moreover, what was inaugurated was no ordinary historical museum. Whereas most history museums teach about the past with the help of authentic objects displayed in glass boxes, the Palmach Museum does it through a sophisticated multimedia presentation. The inauguration ceremony was the culmination of a complex commemorative project that had begun more than twenty years earlier, in 1978. The museum, then, has a unique history of its own, which partly explains its particular way of presenting the past. What follows is a brief history of the creation of the Palmach Museum and an analysis of its exhibition.

In order to explain the origins of the museum, one has to go back to the *Palmach* itself: the paramilitary unit created in 1941 by the Jewish Yishuv in Palestine to help the British combat the Nazis who were advancing eastward in North Africa. Once the danger had passed, it became a semiclandestine militia associated with the Labor movement with special ties to the kibbutzim. The Palmach, a Hebrew acronym for Smash Platoons (*Plougot Machatz*), became the backbone of the Israeli army during the 1948 War of Independence, but was dismantled toward the end of the war by David Ben-Gurion. He was apprehensive of the ties between some of the unit's commanders and the pro-Soviet Union left wing parties—a sensitive issue during the era of the Cold War. The dispersal of the Palmach, however, did not diminish its impact. Since its veterans, who formed a strong social network, already belonged to the Labor movement elite that continued to govern the newly created state, their influence on post-1948 Israeli society was immense. They occupied important positions in both the army and political life, and also



The Palmach Museum, Ramat Aviv, Tel Aviv. Courtesy of the Palmach Museum.

became prominent in all the domains of civil society—among them the arts, the sciences, and the mass media, where they usually continued to advance a Zionist-Socialist agenda.

The Palmach Museum grew out of the need felt by the veterans thirty years after the unit's dissolution to create a central site of memory that would commemorate their dead companions and celebrate their achievements. Why did this need arise after so much time? The answer should be sought in the results of the 1977 elections. For the first time in the history of Israel, the Labor party, which had been the pivot of all coalition governments, lost power to a coalition led by the right wing Likud party. The leaders of the Likud had belonged to the right wing underground organizations that were the rivals of the Palmach, and since the Labor movement through its control of the state imposed its own version of the pre-1948 past, it was to be expected that the new government would try to promote a different narrative in which its own “ancestors” would occupy a central position. The place of honor that the Palmach held in national memory, which had seemed secure because of its identification with the Labor movement, was all of a sudden in danger. (The Etzel Museum was created after 1977, and the process of integrating it into

the Ministry of Defense began in 1983, when Moshe Arens was in charge of the ministry. It was fully integrated in 1991.) The sporadic commemorative occasions of the Palmach veterans were no longer adequate to the new situation, and a concerted effort was needed. Later, during the 1980s and the 1990s, another “front” in the war over national memory was opened. A group of “new historians,” the most prominent among them Benny Morris, attacked the policies of the Labor movement, the Palmach, and the Israel Defense Forces, arguing that they had played an active role in the expulsion of many Palestinian refugees during the War of Independence. The Palmach veterans, then, eventually found themselves attacked both from right and left, and the museum was their answer to their contesting versions of the national past.

The initiative was taken by Yigal Alon, the ex-supreme commander of the Palmach, who had become a Labor party politician, and had served in ministerial functions in several cabinets between 1961 and 1977. After a successful Palmach veterans commemorative ceremony that marked the thirtieth anniversary of the state, he convened a meeting of his fellow commanders in June 1979. In this meeting it was decided to establish a formal association, “Palmach Generation,” with the



Exhibition at the Palmach Museum: reconstruction of a street in Tel Aviv, 1941. Courtesy of the Palmach Museum.

aim to “pass on the heritage of the Palmach to our generation and future generations.” The association included some of the most powerful figures in Israeli politics. Three of them, for example—Yigal Alon, Haim Bar-Lev, and Yitzhak Rabin—were Knesset members for the Labor party at the time; the last two had also been chiefs of staff and members of several cabinets between 1972 and 1995, while Rabin was Prime Minister twice (1974–77, 1992–95). Initially, however, with the Likud in power the association had great difficulties obtaining the necessary funding to realize an ambitious project including a museum, a commemorative monument, an archive, a library, classrooms, and an auditorium—the “Palmach House.” Only in 1989, when Rabin was Minister of Defense in the second “National Union” government, the Ministry of Defense agreed to allocate a plot it owned near the Ha’Aretz Museum in Ramat Aviv. The Palmach House would be run as one of Israel’s military museums, owned and operated by the Ministry.

Because of budgetary constraints, the project envisaged by the association had to be reduced, and only the museum was finally built. After the inauguration, other elements were added, such as a photographic archive and a small library, but the museum still constituted the core of the edifice. The building was designed by Zvi Hecker, a well-known, innovative Israeli architect, who had won the open architectural competition launched in 1992. He planned a symbolic structure that looked like a military outpost on a frontier: entrenched in the sandstone

hill behind it, with some of the outer walls made of rough, grey cement, full of holes, as though they had suffered heavy shelling. The most innovative feature of the building, however, was the sandstone mined on site and fastened in a natural fashion to the large front wall. A similar mixture of authentic material and artificiality also characterizes the exhibition inside the building.

Work on the exhibition began soon after the allocation of the Ramat Aviv plot in 1990, once it was evident that the project was taking off. The team responsible for creating the exhibition was comprised of people who were relatively new to the field and therefore open to

new approaches: the chairman of the program committee, Haim Hefer, a Palmach veteran well known in the Israeli entertainment industry as a lyrics writer; the curator, Orit Shaham-Gover, daughter of a famous Palmach veteran writer (Nathan Shaham), who had been a history teacher and studied museology in the USA; the designer, Eliav Nahlieli, who studied design at Bezalel and was later trained at Disney World; a script writer, Yitzhak Ben-Ner, a well-known novelist, who was later replaced by the photographer Udi Armoni; and two historians, Meir Pa’il, a Palmach veteran and a military historian, and Yigal Eilam, who was considered a critical historian of Zionism.

The planning and execution of the permanent exhibition took about ten years, during which the team grappled with questions of historical representation and narrative construction until they finally came up with a solution. Having decided to do away with “authentic” objects and to emphasize the visitor’s experience, they developed a unique display that engaged all the senses.

The visit begins and ends in commemorative hall whose walls are inscribed with the names of fallen Palmach soldiers. The main exhibition is described in a brochure produced by Nahlieli’s office. It explains that:

[T]he museum uses the walk-through experience as a unique way to combine education and entertainment in a style known as ‘edutainment.’ Using a trail along which the audience walks, the museum tells the story in a very dramatic way of a fictional filmed group of young



Soldiers visiting the exhibition at the Palmach Museum. Courtesy of the Palmach Museum.

people at a historical crossroad, the choices they made, and their fates, while also giving serious histo-documentary information. The 'story of the group' is projected in full color while the documentary footage is in black and white. The experience, in fact, is more like watching a play while surrounded by the scenery and actors. At each stage, visitors watch three-dimensional replicas of people and situations, which reflect the experiences and landscapes in which the *Palmach* acted. The dimming of light and sound on one particular stage acts as a cue for the audience to move on to the next scene.

By following the personal histories of ten fictional characters, from their recruitment to the *Palmach* in 1941 to the 1948 War of Independence, the audience is made to identify with the protagonists, the way one does in a feature film. But viewers also learn of the main historical events of the 1940s, either through the documentary footage, or

in an oblique way—when the protagonists take an active part in them. The Jewish illegal immigration to Palestine, for example, is represented in the film through the story of one of the main characters who becomes the commander of an immigrant ship.

The power of the museum stems from its capacity to erase the differences that are characteristic of more traditional history museums. Some of these are mentioned in Nahlieli's text: the differences between education and entertainment, between history and documentation, and between film and theater. To these one can add the differences between historical analysis and commemoration, actor and spectator, past and present, and fact and fiction. Thus the visitor gets a history lesson camouflaged as a moving feature film without realizing that this is only one possible version of the past.

The exhibition tends, for example, to minimize or obliterate the partisan and controversial aspects of the *Palmach*. The political affiliation of many of its commanders is disregarded, and the circumstances

of its dismantlement are absent from the narrative. The deep hostility between the *Palmach* and the right wing underground organizations, the *Etsel* and *Lehi*, is barely mentioned, and the sensitive issue of the expulsion of the Arab population during the War of Independence is ignored. At the end of the exhibition, the film moves from depicting a 1950 commemorative ceremony at the (real) military cemetery of *Kiryat Anavim*, where several of the (fictional) heroes are buried, to a magnificent aerial view of today's Israel. A direct connection is thus implied not only between the past and the present, but also between the *Palmach* and the achievements of contemporary Israeli society, as though one naturally leads to the other.

*Avner Ben-Amos is associate professor of education at the Jaime and Joan Constantiner School of Education, Tel Aviv University. He is the co-editor (with Daniel Bar-Tal) of Patriotism: To Love the Fatherland (Tel Aviv: ha'Kibbutz ha'Meuchad and Dyonon, 2004 [in Hebrew]).*

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# Jewish Museums on the American Ethnic Museum Landscape

David Shneer

**O**n June 6, 2009, I found myself sitting in the back of the room at a conference called *Exhibiting Ourselves: Representing Cultures in Museums and Cultural Centers*, whose goal was to create a conversation about ethnic museums as grassroots organizers in Phoenix began to plan a Latino cultural and arts center. The organizers invited me to “give a different perspective” and in the words of one organizer, Casandra Hernandez, “to shake people out of their complacency.” My talk was scheduled for the next morning and was supposed to be about what Jewish museums can teach Latino museum planners. As I sat in the room, one of maybe a dozen white folk in an audience of more than one hundred, I quickly realized that my talk would have to be both about what Jewish

museums can teach and what they *cannot* teach Phoenix’s Latino community activists.

The evening keynote address was given by Karen Mary Davalos, chair of Chicano/a studies at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. She gave a fascinating history of the “public” museum—public always in quotes for her, as she doesn’t buy the idea of a neutral museum serving a nebulous, universal citizen (I am still in favor of “public” despite the repetition, since “agenda-less” is less elegant and maybe too apparent)—and then the rise of Latino museums as a challenge to the public museum in the late 1960s.

As a student of Jewish museums, which were launched by bourgeois Jews in late nineteenth-century Europe, I was surprised at the late date of the appearance

of Latino museums and the radically different political agenda that sparked the Latino museum movement. I was also surprised that African American museums, the subject of a talk the next day, have been around since the mid-nineteenth century with the birth of all-black colleges and the emergence of an American black middle class, and have things in common with the origins of Jewish museums.

Davalos argued that the radical identity politics that gave birth to Latino museums should inform the new museum project in Phoenix. She said that Latino museums should stop trying to emulate the so-called public museum. Something didn’t feel right. It sounded like 1970s Chicano/a politics being articulated to a twenty-first-century



Timothy Hursley, “Entrance to the Skirball Cultural Center, Los Angeles.” Courtesy of the Skirball Cultural Center.

audience. Davalos did not argue for an essentialist vision of Chicano identity that should define this new center. Rather, for her, the group to be represented by the museum has always been hybrid or *mestizaje*. But the question and answer period was frustratingly banal—easy questions, self-congratulations on the place Latino museums had in some cities, and much decrying the fact that they were not ubiquitous across America. I wondered how my talk about Jewish museums would go over the next morning.

I raised several questions that I have asked of Jewish museums to see if these were salient issues for this group planning a Latino museum:

1. Is a Jewish museum dedicated to the critical study of Jewish culture and art or to celebrating community? What if these two goals conflict?
2. Is a Jewish museum's main audience Jews or do Jewish museums want to incorporate Jewish culture into the broader American cultural fabric and try to reach a non-Jewish audience? Why are so many Jewish museums trying to universalize their mission statements and even their names like Boston's New Center for Arts and Culture, which "presents performances, art and ideas that explore universal themes through a Jewish lens"? How does this vision affect what and how Jewish museums exhibit?
3. Are the permanent exhibits of Jewish museums, at heart, a means of teaching acculturated American Jews what they would have learned from family two generations ago?

I argued for a more responsive and visionary Jewish museum, and by corollary Latino museum. Ethnically specific museums must take seriously the rights and responsibilities of being a member of their specific community but not simply by adopting the dominant community politics that hold sway at a given moment. I reached the end. The audience was with me, so I decided to drop my last sentence in light of the previous night's address: "By turning a museum into another means of ethnic cheerleading, curators risk appealing to a current constituency at the expense of future expansion and growth."

The question and answer period was lively as we very quickly recognized the privilege of the American Jewish community to build massive museum complexes. Carlos Tortolero, director of the National Museum

of Mexican Art (in Pilsen, Chicago), and a major player in the national and international Latino art scene, had earlier argued that ethnically-specific museums must not be tempted to try and compete with "public" museums and should keep themselves located in the neighborhoods from which they emerged. Heard alongside my talk, his unintended subtext was that Latino museums must resist a trend of many Jewish museums, which have moved from their small spaces embedded in Jewish contexts into large complexes located in the center of a city's museum district. I was thinking specifically of Spertus Museum's new expensive building right in the heart of Chicago's museum district and the Skirball Cultural Center's move from a small space on the Hebrew Union College campus in downtown Los Angeles to a hilltop next to the Getty Museum. There is also New York's Jewish Museum, which sits on Fifth Avenue and Museum Mile in the Warburg mansion in the heart of the old, established German Jewish community. It used to be in the library of the Jewish Theological Seminary. That example would have only further highlighted American Jews' own race and class privilege, their status as a so-called "model minority" in this audience of Latinos, whose communities are located far from most museum districts.

Later in the day, the ten invited guests engaged in a roundtable and my original sense of unease from the first night returned as Tortolero and Davalos argued for a Latino museum that was not aimed at white people, not located where white people live and play. For me, the irony of their position made itself apparent the night before at Phoenix's First Friday Art Festival, when the city's multiethnic young population pours out into its central arts district to drink, eat, listen to music, and peruse art exhibited in the city's local galleries. Conference participants went to a local gallery exhibiting some of the city's emerging Latino artists, and guess what . . . Latino art hung on fancy white walls with a very ethnically mixed crowd. This thought was in the back of my mind when the internal debate became public at the close of the conference. In our roundtable, a young self-identified Latina student asked Tortolero why he was proposing such a militant, anti-establishment, potentially anti-white museum for Phoenix when, in her words, "I'm multiracial, my friends are Latino, white, and everything in between."

It was at this point that I realized how my comments and critiques of American

Jewish museums might be applicable in the Latino case. Latino museum builders do not have the same pressure of pleasing community donors, since most of their funders, like large foundations, city governments, and individual donations, are not usually the same people as the community the museum serves. But orthodoxies reign on both sides, and I was witnessing a conversation between a Chicano/a orthodoxy that maintained an "us/them" approach to the ethnic museum and a young Latina woman who had trouble seeing us vs. them and hoped that a Latino cultural center could "be for everyone." Now the conversation was starting to sound familiar to ones I have with American Jewish museum professionals.

But there are at least two fundamental differences between the Latino and Jewish museum experiences. First, Jewish museums emerged at a time when Jews were articulating a position for themselves as equal citizens who bring a unique culture to a polity. They were showing that Jews have culture, and a particularly ancient culture, and Jews have important painters, just like everyone else. If Davalos showed how Latino museums emerged as a form of political resistance to the bourgeois European model of museum, Jewish museums emerged in order to emulate them. And second, as we debated the direction of Latino museums in our closing panel, Tortolero stopped the debate to ask a simple question,

"How many Jewish museums are there in the US?"

"About 100," I replied.

"And African American ones?"

"Probably 300, ranging from one room storefronts to big museums," responded Fath Davis Ruffins, curator of African American History at the Smithsonian.

To this Tortolero responded that there are only two viable Latino museums in the country. (Hernandez clarified later that this was an underestimation, and that there are at least ten, but the point still stands.)

"So let us develop our own network of museums before we engage in rethinking them."

Tortolero's words reminded me that all communities have their "conservative" politics—for Jews and Jewish museums, they may involve Israel; for Latino institutions, they are

about relationships to the not so distant past of Chicano politics. In both cases, ethnically specific museums struggle to envision their future audiences as they continue to serve the communities from which they emerged.

*David Shneer is associate professor of history at the University of Colorado at Boulder. He is the author of Through Soviet Jewish Eyes: Photography, War, and the Holocaust (Rutgers University Press, forthcoming in 2010).*

## Response

*Casandra Hernandez*

David Shneer's article raises important questions about the role of ethnic museums in the construction and expression of ethnic identity in the United States. His insights about Jewish museums are in many ways relevant to the Hispanic/Latino community of Phoenix, which feels itself significantly underrepresented and misrepresented in established museums. As the former president of

Chicanos Por la Causa expressed, a proposed Latino cultural center is meant to "show the other side of the community that we're not just gang bangers and other things that they think we are." Many questions have emerged about this center: Who will it serve? Why are so many Hispanic-operated museums in the country favoring the term *Latino* as opposed to *Chicano*, *Mexican*, or *Hispanic*? What are the politics of *Latinization* for U.S. Hispanic-operated museums?

As Shneer notes and as the Phoenix case study exemplifies, there are many tensions in the establishment and operation of any ethnic museum.

### **1. Empowerment vs. commoditization:**

Do ethnic museums construct ethnic identity in ways that empower minority communities to see themselves as equal citizens? Or do they construct it in ways that are easily digestible and marketable to a broad consumer audience?

### **2. Self-reflection vs. cheerleading:**

Do they function as spaces where communities can be self-critical or are they ethnic cheerleaders? Is ethnic

cheerleading justified if it empowers a community that is the target of discrimination?

### **3. Insider vs. outsider audience:**

Do ethnic museums teach their home communities about themselves? Or do they educate a broader American audience about the value of cultural diversity?

### **4. Plurality vs. essentialism:**

Do ethnic museums reduce fluid and complex identities to essentialist voices? Or do they embrace diversity within their own communities?

As an organizer of the *Exhibiting Ourselves* symposium, I join Shneer in arguing for more responsive and visionary ethnic museums, and for the development of new critical approaches to cultural representation in museums and cultural centers.

*Casandra Hernandez is education and programs manager at the Deer Valley Rock Art Center and organizer of the 2009 symposium, Exhibiting Ourselves: Representing Cultures in Museums and Cultural Centers.*

## Listening for Jews in the History of the Blues

*Ari Y. Kelman*

Some people make pilgrimage to famous delis trying to taste or to remember Jewish life. Others go on walking tours looking for traces of Jewish life in neighborhoods like the Lower East Side, Fairfax, or Maxwell Street. Some go to synagogue to hear strains of ancient texts, and others dig deep into the earth hoping to find Jewish history cast in pottery, bone, or bronze. I listen for hints of Jewish life on wax, vinyl, and shellac in places like 2120 South Michigan Avenue: the home of Chess Records.

Chess Records is one of the most important, most influential record labels in popular music. During the 1950s and 1960s, it defined the sound of Chicago blues, and its label was responsible for an avalanche of great music. Among the artists who began their careers at Chess: Muddy Waters, Chuck Berry, Howlin' Wolf, Willie Dixon, Bo Diddley, and Koko Taylor. As if that weren't enough, those artists wrote, recorded, and released the music that inspired the generation of white

British musicians who helped define rock and roll. (The British Invasion owes itself to Chess Records, and the Rolling Stones built their entire career on trying to sound like Muddy Waters.) At the risk of overstating: without Chess Records rock and roll may never have developed, and it certainly would not sound the way it does today.

So, on the first warm day of late spring in 2009, I found myself at 2120 South Michigan Avenue in Chicago, the home of Chess Records from 1956 until 1965. In a space I had heard but not before seen, I didn't find a celebration of the music or the label. Instead, I found a muted acknowledgment of a history behind the music—a story of Jews and African Americans, of unfinished business, of royalties, and American culture. 2120 South Michigan Avenue isn't a shrine, it is an exhibit of cultural contradictions.

Chess Records, famously, was owned by two Jewish brothers: Leonard and Phil Chess. It was one of a number of Jewish-owned

"independent" labels that emerged during the late 1940s and early 1950s in almost every city with a Jewish population: Cincinnati had King, Los Angeles had Modern and Aladdin. Newark gave us Savoy, and Commodore, Old Time, and Atlantic were all based in New York. And almost all of these labels specialized in music by and for African Americans.

This was at the time when Billboard and Cash Box, the two largest music industry magazines in the U.S., kept separate charts for "pop" music and "race" records. Basically, this method of record keeping divided white audiences from black, but the Chess Brothers understood that African American communities represented a market that most of the major labels (Decca, Columbia, and RCA) would not touch.

Leonard Chess, the first of the brothers to enter the recording business, freely admitted that he didn't know anything about music, but once sold on the blues by a young Muddy Waters, he grew in his



ability to hear a hit song. For Leonard, musical success was not built on scales but on sales.

Leonard proved a tireless salesman and recruiter for Chess (and its subsidiary, Checkers), but the financial dealings between the Chess brothers and their artists became a source of conflict and tension practically from the very beginning. The Chess brothers believed they paid artists for their work, while the artists regularly made claims of being ripped off or cheated out of their rightful share of the royalties.

The truth lies somewhere in the middle. The music business is a complicated tangle of laws, loopholes, and subsidiaries that dictate how everyone involved in the production of a record is paid according to their contribution to any and all of the following: radio play, touring, concerts, payola, publishing, record sales, songwriting credits, and studio performances.

Neither the Chess brothers nor their artists seemed to have fully understood contracts or the legal ins-and-outs of getting paid for making music. And the sums of money created in that murky middle area created as much bad blood as it did music. This is why 2120 South Michigan Avenue is currently the home of Willie Dixon's Blues Heaven Foundation, which operates the modest museum. Dixon played a key role at Chess Records. He was one of the most prolific songwriters at Chess and played bass on countless recordings. Perhaps most importantly, though, he made sure to get songwriting credit, which has assured him and his family a steady stream of rightfully earned royalties. Dixon bought the building and created the foundation sometime in the early 1990s and established it as a modest statement of the legacy of Chess Records.

Modest may be an overstatement. Ascending a famously narrow staircase, one arrives in what had been the Chess studio, where musicians played and recorded these important records. The room is practically

empty. The walls are largely blank, decorated sparingly with assorted records and posters and an oversized photo of Dixon.

Through a window, one can see the control room where Dixon and the Chess brothers would have sat during a recording session. The room is empty, save a table and some contemporary sound equipment.

The artifacts that the museum does house are placed largely without identification. On the north wall is a framed 78-rpm record: Mamie Smith's "Crazy Blues," one of the first blues songs to sell a million copies and something of a landmark in the American recording industry. But it just hangs there without a label or anything else to convey its significance (it was not recorded on Chess).

A few Coco Taylor gowns, a pair of Chuck Berry's pants, a few hats, and assorted albums and posters rest in display cases deployed around the building's two stories, but little exists to put Chess Records or Willie Dixon or any of what happened there into any context at all.

The Chess Brothers are virtually absent.

I sat in the studio trying to listen for echoes of songs like "Spoonful" and "Hoochie Coochie Man," but my mind drowned out those sounds with questions about American Jewish history. This building, which housed one of the most powerful cultural institutions in the U.S. was, for me, a Jewish cultural site because of the role that Leonard and Phil Chess (and their families) played in the growth and development of American popular music. As a Jew and a music fan, I came to Blues Heaven to celebrate Chess Records, but sitting in the spare studio, I couldn't bring myself to do that. The space demanded a different commemoration.

This place is a far cry from practically every other Jewish museum I'd ever been to. There was no donor wall, no delicately lit installations, no lengthy wall text (full disclosure: I've worked at two such museums and written lengthy wall text). Yet, in its rough

edges and absences, this place spoke much more strongly than its Jewish counterparts because it refused to cover over the complicated circumstances of producing American popular culture in favor of ethnic flag-waving.

Blues Heaven does not offer the heart-warming story of Heschel and King marching in Selma, and it does not share the story of Jewish labor activists struggling for the liberation of the working class. Blues Heaven tells a story about Jews and African Americans that is still—some forty years on—far from settled. The story revolves around a pair of Jewish brothers who produced some of the most important music of the twentieth century and left behind not only an unmatched sonic legacy, but a more painful one as well that still echoes with the inequalities between African Americans and Jews in mid-century Chicago.

For Jews like me, Blues Heaven's empty walls and halls echo with the whole story that's not there, the story that is still too hard and awkward to tell: should the Chess heirs pay back-owed royalties to their artists? Did the artists, however naively, willingly enter into contracts that did not benefit them? Who now owns Chess Records? Who owns its music? Its legacy? Who owns the right to tell that story?

These questions hung in the air like old melodies and made my experience there more powerful than a reconstruction of Leonard's office or a life-sized facsimile of the studio's control room could have. Instead of richly detailed labels and troves of vintage treasures, the space seemed unable to tell the stories that it held—an odd fate for a place so full of sound.

*Ari Y. Kelman is associate professor of American studies at the University of California, Davis. He is the author of Station Identification: A Cultural History of Yiddish Radio (University of California Press, 2009).*



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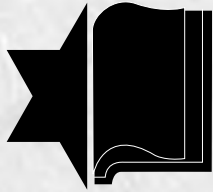
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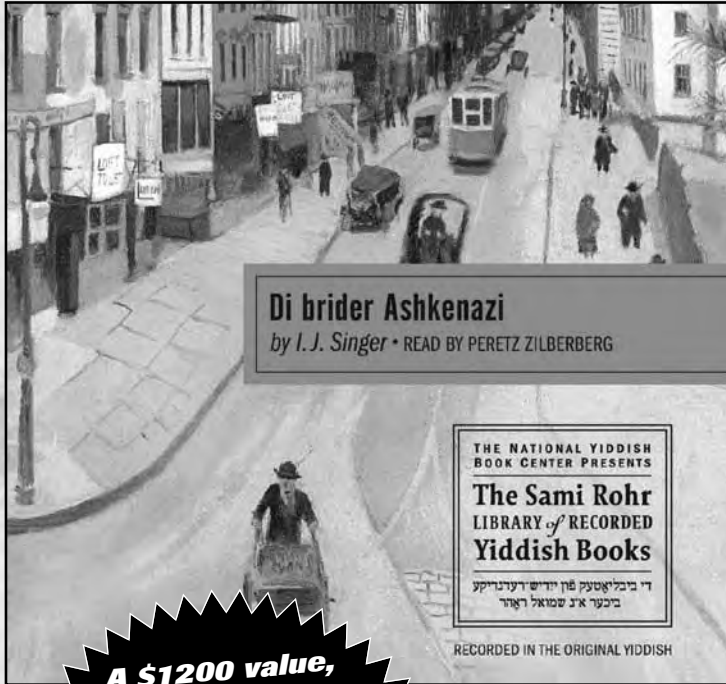
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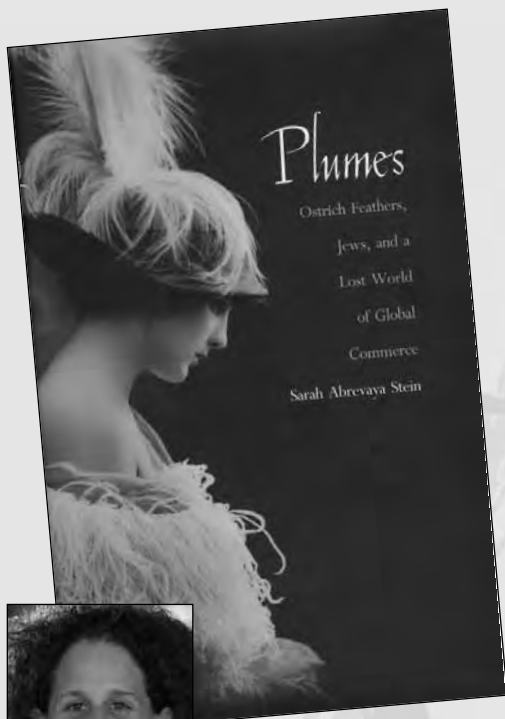
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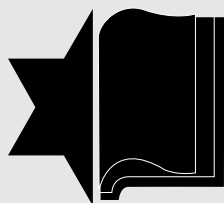
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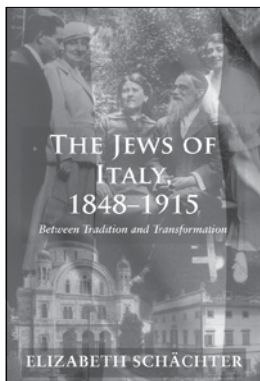


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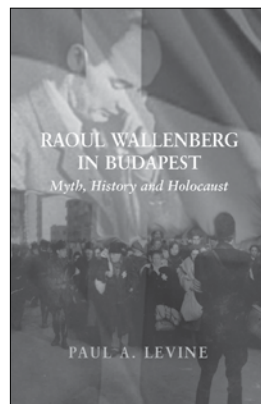


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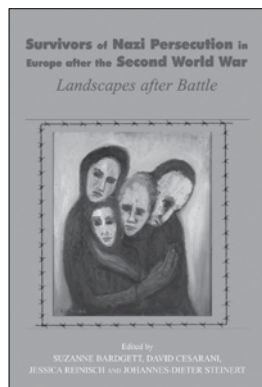


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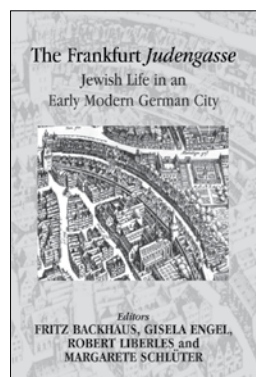


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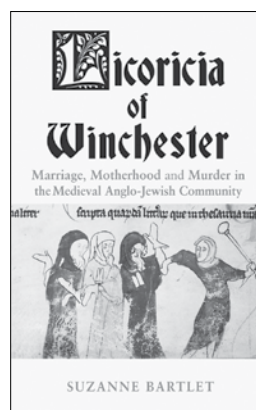


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# Memory Going Global: The Jewish Museum and Holocaust Centre in Cape Town

Albert Lichtblau

Cape Town's Jewish Museum and Holocaust Centre, each a one-of-a-kind institution in Africa, are part of an architectural ensemble that includes the city's Great Synagogue built in 1905. They're located in downtown Cape Town on the so-called museum mile immediately adjacent to the National Gallery and the Houses of Parliament. This is the result of a successful effort to include Jewish history in the city's most prominent site for the display of its cultural, political, and historical identifications and priorities. The museum and center have thus become prime tourism destinations, and it is probably no coincidence that they particularly attract tourists from Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, the United States, and Israel, countries with similar facilities.

Attendees at the Jewish Museum's official opening in December 2000 included Nelson Mandela and Helen Suzman, a Jewish politician who gained fame for her resistance to Apartheid. How is the Jewish past and present in Southern Africa represented here? The point of departure is the community's own history signaled by the emblem of South Africa's oldest synagogue, an 1863 structure that, beginning in 1958, also housed the old Jewish Museum. Now the museum is integrated into the new architectural complex.

Inlaid into the floor at the building's center is a map of the world that contains a representation of the size of the various continents' Jewish population and demographic developments from 1881 to 2000. This depiction makes it clear that

South Africa's 92,000 Jews—the figure has subsequently declined to an estimated 75,000—make up only a minute proportion of the country's 49 million inhabitants.

A featured attraction of the exhibit is what is said to be a typical eastern European shtetl, a diorama that could serve as the set for a production of the musical *Fiddler on the Roof*. The impression it makes is rather sterile and far removed from the poverty characteristic of real life in an actual shtetl. But how can poverty be portrayed in a way that does justice to reality? Dirt and mud, the smells, movements, and sounds can't be adequately expressed in a fictitious shtetl of this sort.

The museum's exhibits comprise a fascinating manifestation of the politics of historical remembrance, including a



A "typical Eastern European Shtetl." Photo by the author.

screening of a documentary film about Nelson Mandela entitled *A Righteous Man*. In addition to giving an account of Mandela's life, the film highlights Jewish activists' notable efforts in the struggle against Apartheid. Nevertheless this high level of commitment by no means garnered unanimous community approval during the Apartheid era, when many Jews feared making waves and attracting the spotlight of political attention. The film also touches upon the issue of collaboration with the Apartheid regime, staging an encounter between Nelson Mandela and Percy Yutar, prosecutor at Mandela's 1963 trial. Yutar was then the elected head of the Orthodox United Hebrew Congregation in Johannesburg. The dilemma is thus brought out clearly—after all, Mandela as an individual can obviously forgive or reconcile with some other individual, but what about the other victims of Apartheid who don't even know who bears the blame for their fate or that of their families? In any case, the museum has not yet complied with the demand by South African Jewish activists—first and foremost, Claudia Braude—that the community deal openly and critically with its past and especially its collaboration with the Apartheid system and the history of bilateral relations between Israel and the Apartheid regime.

The administratively independent Holocaust Centre that opened in 1999 seems, at first glance, to be oriented more to current issues relevant to South African historical memory. The origins of this museum and educational center are connected to the showing of the Anne Frank exhibition that ran for the first time in Africa during the phase of transition. The tremendous popular interest in this exhibition actually came as a bit of a surprise; one reason is undoubtedly the fact that *The Diary of Anne Frank* was one of the books available to the inmates of Robben Island prison near Cape Town. Attendance by Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu at the exhibition's opening in Johannesburg on August 15, 1994, generated a great deal of publicity. On that occasion, Mandela stated: "During the many years my comrades and I spent in prison, we derived inspiration from the courage and tenacity of those who challenge injustice even under the most difficult circumstances. . . . Some of us read Anne Frank's Diary on Robben Island and derived much encouragement from it." ([www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mandela/1994/sp940815.html](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mandela/1994/sp940815.html) [August 5, 2009]). The big question is whether, from a South African perspective, establishing a connection to Anne Frank, a global icon of

historical remembrance, can help to embed the fate of South Africa with respect to colonialism and racism into the global discourse of historical remembrance. If so, then this would also serve to help establish interest in the Holocaust and the process of dealing with it in South Africa and thus, for the first time, on the African continent as a whole.

The most interesting thing about the Cape Town Holocaust Centre is its effort to establish a historical comparison that transcends temporal and geographical differences between National Socialism and Apartheid. It was necessary for the Holocaust Centre to bring out parallels, because the overwhelming majority of visitors are non-Jewish and non-white, and about half are students, predominantly from impoverished areas who have never had personal contact with Jews.

The Holocaust Centre's permanent exhibition succeeds in establishing a relation between the Shoah and the history of Apartheid by drawing parallels between the Apartheid system and historical events before and after the Shoah. This is powerfully illustrated by the symbols of South African "apartness" in

the public sphere such as separate stairways in train stations and especially park benches labeled "Whites Only." Juxtaposing these images to pictures of park benches in Nazi Germany reserved, respectively, for Aryans and for Jews makes it clear that the concrete connection between the two regimes was their racism that aimed to achieve separation and isolation. Another excellent example of this is the comparison of the Nuremberg racial laws with the Apartheid system's Immorality Act that prohibited mixed marriages and sexual contacts between whites and other South Africans. Indeed, the drawing of these parallels ends with the beginnings of the Nazis' systematic mass murder, and is not resumed until it comes to consideration of the post-Holocaust period and the question of how it is possible to come to terms with such horrific inhumanity in a way that does sociopolitical justice to it.

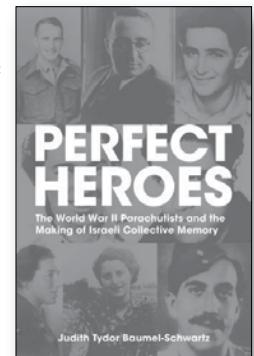
But a museum isn't just a location in which to represent a historical narrative that needs to be told. It's the presence of visitors that enables it to fulfill its mission—after all, without reception, representation would be senseless. About 25,000 people a year visit

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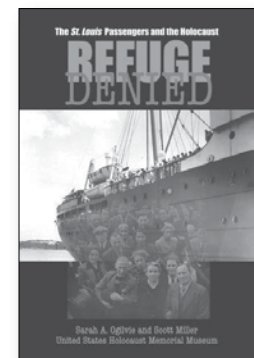
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the Holocaust Centre; group reservations are booked up more than a year in advance. And there's a good reason for that: namely, the fact that Holocaust education—"The Holocaust and Human Rights"—has been a required part of South Africa's ninth grade social sciences (history) curriculum since 2007. In this connection, it's probably realistic to assume that many students and teachers haven't the slightest idea what the term Holocaust signifies, so that this amounts in one respect to a campaign of enlightenment under the motto "Teach the Teachers." It goes without saying that this is a difficult undertaking. As history has shown in other lands with a violent past, attention is focused first and foremost on the country's own history, and current problems overshadow interest in events of days gone by. In order to carry out its mission more effectively, a second Holocaust Centre opened in Durban in 2008, and another is set to open in Gauteng in 2010.

The Holocaust Centre tries to reach all segments of South Africa's population; nevertheless, as in other countries, the ongoing

conflicts in Israel are having an effect on this effort. According to Holocaust Centre Director Richard Freedman, Cape Town's Jewish community (which currently numbers 16,000) had good relations with the local Muslim population of about 500,000, but things have deteriorated of late, especially since the Second Intifada. The reproachful argument is one now heard worldwide: why, after all they suffered at the hands of the Nazis, are the Jews now persecuting the Palestinians, and why they haven't learned from history? According to Freedman, these questions are now posed with increasing frequency in South Africa as well, and are arguments to which he must respond. The Holocaust Centre seeks to promote dialogue, but this is rejected by some segments of the Muslim community.

The Holocaust Centre of Cape Town is an example of the globalization of the remembrance of the Shoah. The upshot of this has not been to continue to isolate the Shoah from human history as a unique and separate phenomenon, but rather to specify the Shoah's position within human

history. It's no coincidence that the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's Darfur exhibition was shown here in 2007 after having previously been on view in Washington, D.C. Another 2007 exhibition on the genocide in Rwanda illustrates how the Holocaust Centre is blazing new trails by publicly presenting highly explosive Africa-centered themes. The Shoah is put forth as an example from which people can learn. Even if "Never Again," the ultimate mission of Shoah remembrance, has to be relegated to the realm of wishful thinking, the Holocaust Centre is staying the course—urging people to think about how this specific history is able to teach the world a specific lesson.

*Albert Lichtblau is professor at the Institute for History and Centre for Jewish Cultural History, University of Salzburg. He is the author of As If We Had Been Part of It: Austrian-Jewish Life Stories from the Habsburg Monarchy (Böhlau, 1999 [in German]).*

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# Revisiting and Remembering: Family Photographs and Holocaust Commemoration, Towers, Halls, and Cases

Laura Levitt

**W**hen the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) first opened in Washington, D.C. in 1993, there was a great deal of scholarly interest in the museum's permanent exhibit, but since then, we have not thought critically enough about how our familiarity with this exhibit and exhibits like it have affected how we think about Holocaust memory. Now that we know what to expect, now that we have come to expect what we see, how has our familiarity with these innovations changed how we engage with these exhibits and other Holocaust museums and memorials? The Tower of Faces is one of the more innovative aspects of the USHMM. It is a memorial that was written about extensively when the museum first opened, but it has yet to be more fully reconsidered as a now-familiar aspect of the museum. In this essay, I want to write specifically about my reactions over time to two permanent exhibits in two different museums: the Tower of Faces at the USHMM and the Hall of Names at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. I want to address briefly two different moments in the Tower (in 1994 and 2005) and then reflect on how those experiences shaped my response to the new permanent exhibit at Yad Vashem.

I visited the USHMM for the first time a year after it opened. What captured my imagination more than anything else was the Tower of Faces, located at the center of the museum. It is a memorial made up of family photographs, the visual archive of a single eastern European town. The tower extends vertically through the entire museum; visitors enter twice as they work their way through the permanent exhibit, first before and then again after learning about the Final Solution and the fate of virtually all those depicted.

Seeing familiar Jewish faces, postures, and poses in this public space in the capital of the United States moved me. I wanted these photographs to be those of my own family's albums and heard others express similar desires while I was there. Nevertheless, in the midst of this fantasy, I caught myself. I remembered where I was and what had happened to these people. I realized that I was not at the Smithsonian or

some other national museum but in a Holocaust memorial where seemingly ordinary images could not be so familiar. These photographs, unlike my family pictures, were the traces of a community of families, specific lives brutally destroyed by the Nazis. This is part of the logic of the permanent exhibit. It uses such identification to draw visitors into the legacy of the Holocaust as personal and specific and not simply an abstraction of the destruction of millions of lives. After completing *American Jewish Loss after the Holocaust*, a book about loss and Holocaust commemoration largely based on my first visit to the museum, I returned to the Tower in 2005.

Revisiting the USHMM after so many years I was struck by how much my own responses to the Tower changed. This time, I was keenly aware of the individual photographs and how they differed from other photographs in the museum, even Roman Vishniac's prewar images of Jewish life. I began to feel protective of the ordinary family and communal images that make up the Tower. Compared to the Vishniac images, these photographs hardly grabbed any attention. I was struck by how difficult it is to recognize any of them individually. Few have any marks of identification on them and none are officially labeled. I wanted to compensate for this lack of specificity and to do justice, not to the collection as a whole, but to each individual image. This new response was surprising. I left the museum disturbed by the anonymity of the collective vision of the Tower. Revisiting the Tower enabled me to appreciate anew how commemoration is itself an ongoing practice.

In the summer of 2009, I visited Yad Vashem, Israel's national Holocaust memorial museum. I arrived eager to see the new permanent exhibit. I was especially looking forward to seeing Israeli architect Moshe Safdie's Hall of Names because, like the Tower in Washington, it is built around family photographs. I was curious to see how this memorial worked and what it felt like in comparison to my ongoing engagement with the Tower of Faces.

Visitors to Yad Vashem do not have immediate access to the Hall of Names until

the end of a journey through the museum. As the visitor's guide to Yad Vashem explains, in the Hall, "the names and personal details of millions of victims have been recorded on Pages of Testimony, symbolic tombstones filled out by survivors in memory of their loved ones." These records are preserved in the Hall, "in an ongoing effort to collect more names before it is too late, Yad Vashem asks the public to assist in this sacred mission. To submit Pages of Testimony, visit our website: [www.yadvashem.org](http://www.yadvashem.org)." The space combines these records and Safdie's memorial. The museum's website describes this space:

The ceiling of the Hall is composed of a ten-meter high cone reaching skywards, displaying 600 photographs and fragments of Pages of Testimony. This exhibit represents a fraction of the murdered six million men, women and children from the diverse Jewish world destroyed by the Nazis and their accomplices. The victims' portraits are reflected in water at the base of an opposing cone carved out of the mountain's bedrock.

The outer walls of the hall are filled with files recording individual stories and visitors are encouraged to add to the archive. Blank forms are available to be used for this very purpose. There is plenty of shelf space. In this memorial space, I keenly felt the anonymity of those depicted in the photographs that make up the dome. This was similar to how I felt during my second visit to the Tower, but here the feeling was more acute precisely because the overt message of the entire room is to collect and record the stories of all of the individual lives that were lost. What I experienced here was a disconnection between these archival efforts and the use of the photographs to construct the dome. I was uncomfortable with the lack of information in the space of the Hall or on the website where interested visitors could learn the identities of any and all of those depicted in the dome. Moreover, I found it especially disturbing that this

disconnect was a part of the dome itself with its illegible bits and pieces of these same identification papers as part of the display.

Although there is an obvious connection between the Tower of Faces and the Hall of Names, I was more aware of the impact of the Tower on the logic of Yad Vashem's entire permanent exhibit. I was struck by how it seemed that each and every display case in the nine galleries offered exactly what I had been longing for in my return to the Tower in 2005: specificity. Here, once ordinary individual lives were front and center. Family images, letters, diaries, heirlooms were everywhere making vivid the six million individual Jewish lives destroyed. Each item, in turn, was carefully annotated and accounted for. At Yad Vashem everywhere except, ironically, in the Hall of Names, I felt as if my previous longing had been heard. Unlike the former permanent exhibit with its teleological drive to tell the story of Holocaust and redemption, Martyrs and Heroes, the new narrative is less linear and overarching. Although my own engagement with the Tower of Faces has pointed toward seeing the cumulative loss in individual terms, I found the specificity and detail of Yad Vashem difficult to assimilate and overwhelming.

### **Towers, Halls, and Cases: The Ongoing Labor of Remembrance**

When I re-entered the Tower in 2005, I was no longer as impressed as I had first been; I was startled by that loss even as I came to appreciate something different. And that realization in turn was disrupted by my recent experience in Jerusalem. At Yad Vashem I was forced to rethink what I thought I had learned anew in Washington in 2005. In Jerusalem I was overwhelmed by an abundance of specificity in the permanent exhibit and disappointed by its strangely absent presence when confronted by the photographs in the Hall of Names.

What changes as we return to places like the Tower of Faces and when we visit other places of Holocaust commemoration? Some of the most powerful ways we deal with loss individually and collectively are through our engagements with other people's sorrows, other people's losses and traumas. These museums and memorials have taught me this lesson. And yet, even these encounters are ephemeral. Our reactions to these same exhibits change over time. Like texts we read and reread, our ongoing encounters with monuments and

memorials are not fixed. Our interpretations and critical engagements change.

The texts, images, memorials, and museums that bring that past to us are not static. We learn new things from repeated encounters. The past does speak to us, but it cannot do so once and for all time. It speaks to us in the present, and it cannot be reduced to any single interpretation, lesson, or meaning. This is especially true at places like the USHMM and Yad Vashem. At their best, these places can trigger lively, dynamic engagement. But the visceral experience of these animated engagements is often disconcerting. These museums give us places to experience the shifting terrain of our collected and individual relations to even a past we thought we knew.

Let me try to say this another way: there is no single response to the Holocaust for any of us. Memorials touch us in lots of ways. They show us all kinds of things about the past and about ourselves. None of


these engagements is predictable, and this is what keeps the past alive. What these encounters show us is that Holocaust commemoration is an ongoing practice that will continue to grow and change as we continue to return to these sites in the future.

\*\*\*

This essay is adapted with permission from Laura Levitt, *American Jewish Loss after the Holocaust* (New York University Press, 2007) and Laura Levitt, "Returning to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum: The Tower of Faces Ten Years Later," *Photographs, Histories, Meanings*, Jeanne Perreault, Linda Warley, Marlene Kadar, eds. (Palgrave, forthcoming). I thank Catherine Staples for helping me clarify these reflections.

*Laura Levitt is professor of religion, Jewish studies, and gender at Temple University. She is the author of American Jewish Loss after the Holocaust (New York University Press, 2007).*

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# The Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center

Brett Kaplan



The front of the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center. Images courtesy of Stanley Tigerman, Tigerman McCurry Architects, Ltd.

The Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center in the town of Skokie, just outside of Chicago, opened on April 19, 2009. The compelling building, designed by Stanley Tigerman, represents a narrative of political action, transformation, and redemption. Embedded in virtually every aspect of the museum, from the structure of its building to the shape and color of its exhibits, is a sense of hope.

This museum is very much of its time—it resonates with the early twenty-first-century transformation in America's approach to memorializing the Holocaust. A placard near the entrance explains: "Dedicated to the survivors of the Holocaust, the building was designed in three parts. The dark section of the building suggests the Holocaust's descent into darkness. The cleave or hinge in the middle represents the rupture to humanity caused by the devastation. The sun-lit white section of the building represents the hope, enlightenment, and optimism of education and action." This sense of hope is felt phenomenologically as visitors move from dark to light. The center of the building houses a railcar with train tracks below. A dynamic tension thus stretches between the motion of dark to light and the motion of the train tracks leading to a room titled the Book of Remembrance. Names written in English, Hebrew, and Yiddish line the walls of this circular space; the letters begin small and dark and become progressively lighter and grayer as they ascend, giving

the eerie impression of smoke rising into the two columns. The columns symbolize simultaneously a smoke stack and an ancient temple thus evoking the sacrificial and controversial element embedded in the word "Holocaust."

The permanent exhibit of the museum outlines the Nazi genocide from a description of Jewish life in Europe before the war through the ghettoization and murder of European Jewry and ends in the creation of the state of Israel. Throughout the exhibit, wall texts detail these and other events, and are accompanied by video documentation and survivor testimonies. Artifacts include early editions of key books, all carefully preserved in vitrines; among these are a 1927 beautifully illustrated *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, a 1943 edition of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* (originally published in 1925), and Freud's *Zur Psychopathologie des Alltagslebens*, which was saved by the Strauss family from certain burning when they emigrated to Palestine in 1933. As this edition of Freud's work illustrates, an intimate correspondence often emerges between artifacts on display and the names, and sometimes the stories, of those who brought them to the museum.

In the first part of the exhibit, the walls are constructed of thick, white streamlined bricks clearly designed to evoke Nazi architecture. The presence of dates inscribed thickly in the walls and accented further by a display case holding bright red Nazi armbands accompanied by an enormous photograph of a giant Nazi rally reinforces this sensation.

This Nazi-architecture inflected area concludes with a large eagle, its talon clutching a Swastika, looming over a doorway. The eagle is surrounded by the passports (the actual passports) of Jewish citizens, affixed to the wall with Lucite and bearing the large red "J" that marked Jews. We enter this room through a portal, walking over broken glass (under a thick layer of solid glass) and view an impressive synagogue door, enlivened by an ever-changing film projected on it. The images projected onto the synagogue are of actual temples located all over Germany—Munich, Essen, Berlin, Baden Baden, Hanau, Aachen, Bamberg, and more. They are desecrated, graffitied, burnt, destroyed. In front of the synagogue there is a partially burnt Purim megillah saved by Jewish congregants during *Kristallnacht* (November 9–10, 1938), which further resonates with the broken glass embedded in the floor.

While the exhibit charts the history of the Holocaust we are reminded—much to the museum's credit—of the here and now. Images of contemporary Chicago including Anish Kapoor's *Cloud Gate* in Millennium Park (known as the silver "bean") are overlaid by the voices of survivors who note "It's always with us" or "My world was pretty much like yours, but then everything changed." These voices reinforce the idea that survivors must always live in the present alongside their traumatic past. They also underscore the idea that European Jews were free before the war

and not living the stereotype of the ghetto Jew that has been so persistent and pervasive.

After moving through sections on the world's responses to the growing oppressions of the Nazi regime, complete with an image of Chamberlain signing the Munich pact in 1938, and another describing a "Mosaic of Victims" including political dissidents, Jehovah's Witnesses, Roma, homosexuals, and the physically and mentally disabled, the decor changes. We enter a recreated ghetto under a crude wooden fence that holds up a sign: "Wohngebiet JUDEN Betreten Verboten" (Jewish District. No entry). Viewers thus "become" Jews for the brief time they remain in the "ghetto." Air raid sirens sound in the background as wall panels describe life in the Warsaw ghetto, where, in 1940, 400,000 Jews or 30 percent of Warsaw's population were compelled to live in 2.4 percent of the area of the city. One of the only spots of color in this room is a watercolor entitled *Maryla Returns to School*, painted by Nelly Toll while in hiding in Lvov in 1943 or 1944. Leaving the ghetto, visitors walk down a ramp and face a plaque bearing the title "Mass Murder" that begins a display about the *Einsatzgruppen*—the mobile killing units that were the harbingers of institutionalized genocide. The walls in this room are covered by one large photograph of an empty landscape punctuated solely by a video screen bearing pictures of dead bodies against that and similar landscapes through which the *Einsatzgruppen* moved. The contrast is very sharp—and effectively so, as the next room replicates the elegant Berlin villa, Wannsee, where, in January 1942 the details of the modern, mechanized genocide to come were planned.

The scene changes again as we enter a concrete room entitled "Deportation" where

six television screens juxtapose images of deportation with the testimony of survivors. Turning a corner, a ramp leads to the railcar that forms the center of the museum; musty smelling and replete with a darkness meekly relieved by a few chinks in the old wood, the railcar is a space for visitors to imagine themselves in the shoes of deportees. Down another ramp, un-barbed wire and concrete walls have been embedded with blown-up, faded photographs of inmates in uniforms; an actual uniform, worn by Maurice Raichel and on loan from the Raichel family of Chicago, hangs in a vitrine. Under a plaque entitled "Auschwitz" is a vitrine containing a baby's faded leather shoe, a woman's shoe, and a cracked bowl—haunting and inexplicable remnants of genocide.

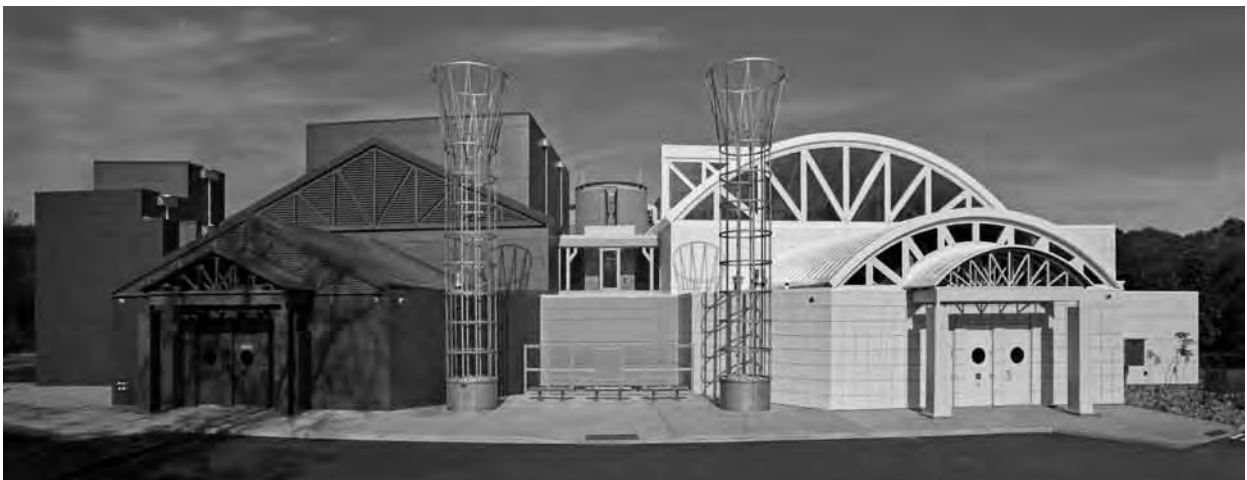
Moving through displays titled "Resistance" to "Liberation," one soldier remembers that some troops at liberation were repelled by what they saw and thus "vented their spleen by firing into the guards." In the next room, a replica of the Wailing Wall features two proud Israeli women of the early kibbutz era holding between them an Israeli flag. The final display bears the heading "Survivor Empowerment," and beneath it is a book in a case whose title could name the museum itself: *From Holocaust to Redemption: Bearing Witness*.

The exhibit ends with a film that describes the plans of the National Socialist Party of America (NSPA) to march on Skokie in 1977, a time when one out of every six Jewish residents was a survivor or a relation of a survivor. Despite the fact that the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the NSPA's right to march, a large parade never took place in Skokie. However, the threat to march was the impetus for the creation of the Holocaust

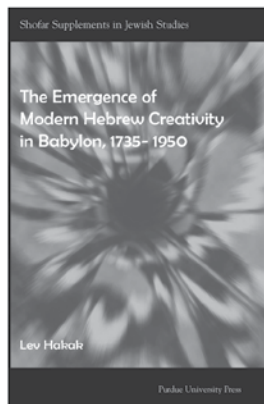
Memorial Foundation of Illinois, which since 1981 has been spearheading the effort to build the Museum & Education Center. The film that closes the exhibit includes the story of the Rwandan genocide prefaced with this comment from a survivor: "The Holocaust is a Jewish story but genocide is worldwide." President Obama concurs by adding that "walls between races and tribes . . . cannot stand. These are the walls we must tear down!" As the film ends the words on the screen proclaim "Now it is up to you." This sense of being an engaged witness as a form of political action is underscored by the Miller Family Youth Exhibition, which has a very different tone than the rest of the museum. Here, bright colors predominate and children are encouraged via computer games to take a stand and make a difference—to cleave, in other words, to a moral center rather than to the dictates of bullies who stand in for dictators.

The impetus for the creation of this museum—and the decision to build it in Skokie—flowed from a rapid and powerful response to the threat of a neo-Nazi march through a Jewish neighborhood. The museum, then, can be seen as an intervention into the history of racism in America and as issuing a demand that witnessing no longer remain mute. The architecture of the museum and the structure of the exhibits unite in leading toward redemption, light, and out into the world, to other genocides and to a call for citizens to voice their intolerance of injustice.

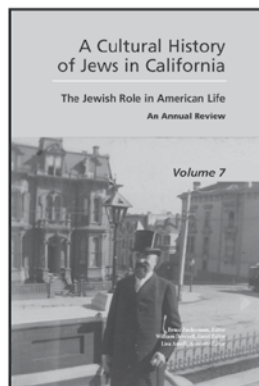
*Brett Kaplan is associate professor of comparative literature and Jewish studies at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. She is the author of Landscapes of Holocaust Postmemory (Routledge, forthcoming).*



The back of the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center. Images courtesy of Stanley Tigerman, Tigerman McCurry Architects, Ltd.



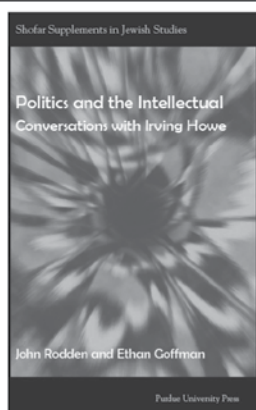
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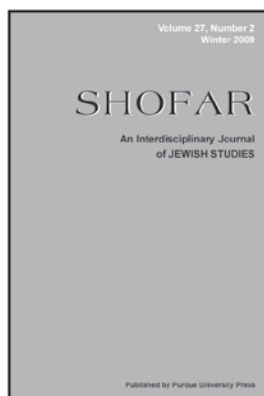


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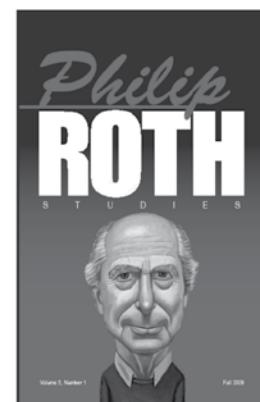
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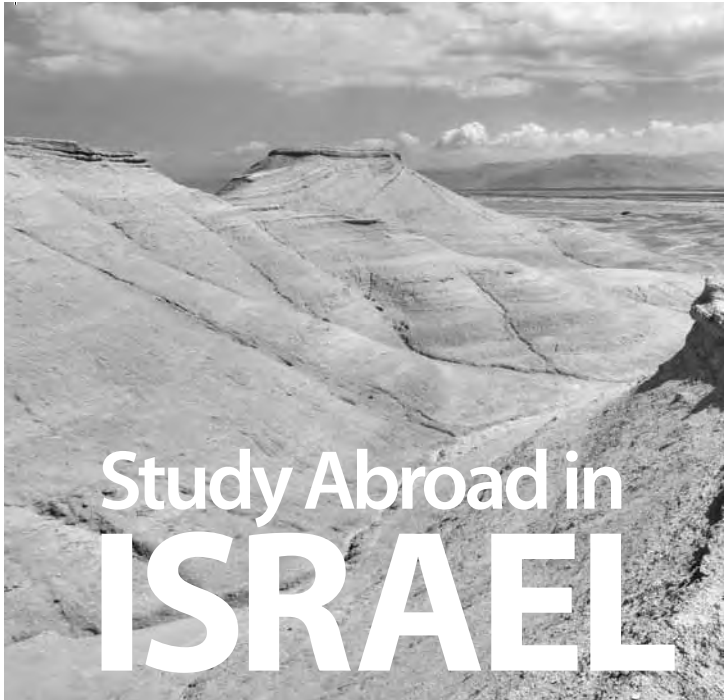
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# Teaching Jewish Studies with Museums

Jeffrey Shandler

I have included museums in my teaching throughout my career as a professor of Jewish studies. Museums figure in courses I offer not only on Jewish art but also on Jews and media, Holocaust remembrance, Yiddish culture, and ethnography of contemporary Jewish life. I consider museums especially rich pedagogical resources, and they have provided my students with some of their most engaging experiences with the study of Jewish culture.

To some extent my ability to include museums in my teaching is a matter of geography. Rutgers, my current university, is located about an hour from New York City, where more than a half-dozen museums of interest can be found; there are relevant museums in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, and even a trip to Washington, D.C. is possible. In addition, other nearby museums, galleries, or historical societies, including the university's own art museum, occasionally mount exhibitions dealing with some topic related to my courses. Yet even without this advantage, Jewish museums would figure in my teaching. Indeed, it has become increasingly easy to study museums without actually visiting them.

Following are suggestions for incorporating museums in Jewish studies courses; these suggestions apply not only to the sort of classes I teach on modern Jewish culture but can be related to a wide range of courses in the field.

**1. Museum visits.** To take full advantage of the museum visit, I approach it as an opportunity to teach not only about the content of a museum's displays, but also about the museum itself as a cultural medium and a public institution. Therefore, though most museums offer docents to take classes through exhibitions, I generally prefer to ask students to visit an exhibition on their own (this is also often easier to facilitate, given students' busy schedules). Before their visits, I provide students with targeted, yet open-ended, questions for them to consider about the exhibition and the museum itself. I ask them to look at the form of museum display—how objects are arranged, how space is configured, the choices of color, material, and texture made by the exhibition designer—and to consider how this relates



"Author listening to talking kiddish cup in the Jewish Children's Museum, Brooklyn." Photo credit: Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett.

to the content of an exhibition. I also ask them to consider museum-going as a social practice, by paying attention to how other visitors engage the exhibition and looking at how museums complement exhibitions with public programs: lectures, film screenings, live performances, etc. In addition, I ask students to look for discussion of the exhibition in reviews or blogs, especially if it has provoked controversy. Typically, museum visits are followed by a class discussion, allowing students to hear what their classmates discovered on their visits, as well as an analytic writing assignment.

Whenever possible, I try to arrange for students to meet with a museum professional. In addition to staff educators, other personnel—including archivists, conservators, curators, and designers—are occasionally willing and able to meet with students, either at the museum or in my classroom. The opportunity to hear how exhibitions are put together is an invaluable lesson, demonstrating how the curatorial process works. Sometimes, this information is available in other forms: exhibition catalogs, museum websites, press coverage.

**2. Virtual visits.** A class can study a museum or an exhibition even when it is inaccessible (or has closed), thanks to documentation

provided in museum publications, reviews, scholarly analyses, and especially museum websites, which now frequently archive Internet versions of past exhibitions as well as provide material on current ones. It is especially instructive to have students consider the online version of an exhibition in relation to the actual display in order to understand how these two different media provide information and engage the public. Virtual visits to museums can facilitate comparisons that would be difficult, if not impossible, for students to make with actual trips to museums—for example, comparing how different Holocaust museums use the medium of display to present the Holocaust narrative and how they relate it to other topics (Jewish history, American history, Zionism, World War II, prejudice reduction, genocide prevention, etc.). Some museums have developed sophisticated use of the Internet as an interactive medium. For example, Francesco Spagnolo, director of research and collections at the Judah L. Magnes Museum in Berkeley, California, has initiated the Jewish Digital Narrative project, which invites visitors to the museum's website to explore materials from its archive, add comments to curated online displays of these items, and even fashion their own narratives with them ([www.magnes.org/narratives.htm](http://www.magnes.org/narratives.htm)).



**3. Museums as artifacts.** Jewish museums have a history of their own, and the study of both individual institutions and of the phenomenon as a whole can provide valuable insight into modern Jewish life. There is a growing secondary literature on Jewish museums, extending to other forms of public display—at world’s fairs, charity events, cultural festivals, memorial sites, and the like—as part of the extensive scholarship on museums generally. The story of a museum’s creation or of the planning and reception of an exhibition not only can enhance understanding of one’s visit to the institution but also can be informative in its own right as a case study in the intersection of culture and politics or the encounter between cultural professionals and the public, among other topics. In addition to learning about actual museums and exhibitions, past or present, subjunctive projects—museums or exhibitions planned but never realized—merit attention. The path not taken in realizing a work of public culture can be as revealing as the final product, and considering alternative or “failed” proposals remind students that the exhibitions and museums that they do see are not inevitable—indeed, they are highly

contingent, depending on a complex intersection of variables. Thus, in addition to the intellectual issues that particular exhibitions engage, the Jewish museum as a topic in itself can inform the study of Jewish experience in valuable ways. By their nature, museums provide opportunities to discuss Jewish visual and material culture, as well as Jewish notions of space, including the intellectual history of their problematization. Moreover, museums are epitomizing examples of Jewish encounters with secularism, modernity, and changing notions of the place of Jews in public culture, and the study of these institutions can help concretize these abstract issues.

**4. Curatorial exercises.** I have occasionally asked students to curate their own exhibitions: this entails selecting a topic, gathering images, and submitting a virtual exhibition consisting of images, text panels and item labels, as well as other material (e.g., ground plan, script for an audio guide, proposed public programs) that demonstrates their vision of how the exhibition might be realized. As an alternative to a conventional research paper, this assignment asks students to engage the same intellectual concerns within a

different rubric. In particular, the project calls students’ attention to the value of the curatorial process—first, gathering possible materials, and then, selecting and arranging the materials to construct an argument that is informed by the juxtaposition of individual elements—which they can apply to other forms of scholarly work. Such an exercise need not be confined to works of fine art or Jewish ritual objects, but can engage a great variety of works of visual and material culture. Consider, for example, Emily Katz’s “eBay Judaica Project” (<http://modiya.nyu.edu/handle/1964/257>), based on her exhibition “Culture as Commodity: Internet Auctions and Judaica Collecting” for the Judaica Museum of the Hebrew Home for the Aged at Riverdale, New York, in 2001–2002. In this project, the Judaica available for sale on Internet auction sites forms the basis for a virtual exhibition that explores contemporary collecting of Jewish objects as a vernacular practice in the public marketplace.

*Jeffrey Shandler is professor of Jewish studies at Rutgers University. He is the author of Jews, God, and Videotape: Religion and Media in America (New York University Press, 2009).*



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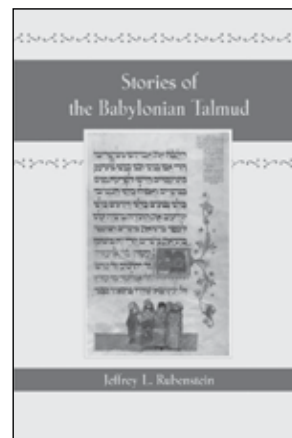
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# Curating Jews: Reflections on the Practice of Heritage

Erica Lehrer

To use the well-worn museum studies binary of “temple” vs. “forum,” should Jewish museums be shrines in which to revere an idealized image of Jewish civilization, art, and achievements, and to mirror and affirm the cultural identities and widely held beliefs of visitors? Or rather open spaces in which to engage different perspectives and difficult issues? Can multiple “logics” of cultural categorization and affiliation, and multiple claims of cultural ownership coexist productively? How do we facilitate interaction among divergent narratives—not to reconcile them into a single, unified story, but to hold them in proximity so they may broaden each other’s horizons?

## Beyond Jewish Museums

Anthropologists are inclined to see museums as social arenas as much as collections of objects. We look at the ways people interact with specially demarcated assemblages of material culture, how they treat each other in the presence of these assemblages, and the stories about ourselves, others, and the world that such assemblages enable. Culture “on display” provides the props and mise-en-scene for our ongoing performances of self.

Thinking of *collecting*, *curating*, and *exhibiting* culture—for our purposes Jewish culture—as *social technologies of self-making* allows us to think across a broader field of interrelated sites where Jewishness is materially negotiated and defined. While such a wide-angle view may include “internal” sites such as home decoration and synagogue Judaica shops, it would also extend to Jewish museums, heritage sites, and tourist venues. On this more outward end of Jewish display, Jews and non-Jews are brought into relationship with each other around Jewish material culture.

The far end of the spectrum includes non-Jewish curations of Jewishness. This phenomenon is occurring where local populations (often, but not always, in dialogue with visiting Jews) are “re-collecting” the long-ignored, “disinherited” heritage of their former Jewish neighbors. It is taking place in Eastern Europe, in Spain and Portugal, and even in small stirrings in the Arab world. Such recollection includes a broad swath

of activities that remember, revive, or (re-) create a connection with Jewishness.

Cultural theorist James Clifford has argued that collecting is a central aspect of identity construction in the Western world, a way we establish our senses of self, culture, and authenticity. We are, in essence, “collecting ourselves.” What sort of selves, then, may be collectively emerging in these domains of re-inheritance that stand on the cusp between death and rebirth, forming new “contact zones” where past neighbors suddenly overlap?

## Curating Difficult Knowledge

Jewish heritage in Europe, particularly Eastern Europe, constitutes “difficult knowledge.” This heritage is difficult to confront not only because of the tragic wartime chapter in which Jewish material culture was looted and destroyed along with its owners, nor even because of its widespread appropriation, neglect, or blatant misuse in the postwar period. Rather, the most complex, compelling, provocative difficulty is making sense of the recent forms of embrace of Jewish heritage among non-Jews (and Jews) that has grown with the waning of communist rule.

After a half century of public censorship, Jewishness is increasingly sought out and put on display. Foreign Jews are exploring newly accessible shtetls and cities for “roots”—some yearn for tangible places to anchor family stories while others look to assert diasporic cultural affinities. But an explosion of local heritage projects reveals that non-Jews also have strong emotional claims on their murdered neighbors. The changing relationship of new generations to Jewish heritage is difficult to accept, or even to discern, in the shadow of the post-Holocaust landscape. Seeing the Nazi camps can be, perversely, more comfortable than seeing Polish teenagers dancing to klezmer music. In the face of the former, the discomfort Jews feel is at least familiar.

The Jewish heritage of Europe is emerging as a matter of fundamental dispute. Do former synagogues renovated into museums provide lessons on the failure of Europe and Jewish diaspora, or evidence of its richness? To whom do they belong? And

what of the newly produced “Judaica” in the form of klezmer festivals, Hasidic figurines, and kosher-style restaurants, or even newly redesignated Jewish quarters, cropping up in urban centers from Girona, Bologna, and Berlin to Krakow, Vilna, and Lviv?

Jews and non-Jews may read these landscapes, objects, and spaces differently, but reactions among Jews are equally divergent. Foreign Jewish visitors tend to sacralize sites and monuments to Jewish ruin and dismiss things new or commercial as inauthentic or irrelevant at best, particularly if non-Jews had a hand in their creation. The small populations of local Jews, by contrast, may gravitate to lively spaces of Jewish folkloric expression because they attract not only other Jews, but also sympathetic non-Jews, and represent a much-needed renaissance and a claim to public identity.

Finally, the shifting demography of the new Europe along with a growing global interest in commemorating atrocity is changing the context in which Jewish heritage is understood. When Turkish schoolchildren are brought to Holocaust memorials in Berlin, what meanings do they take away?

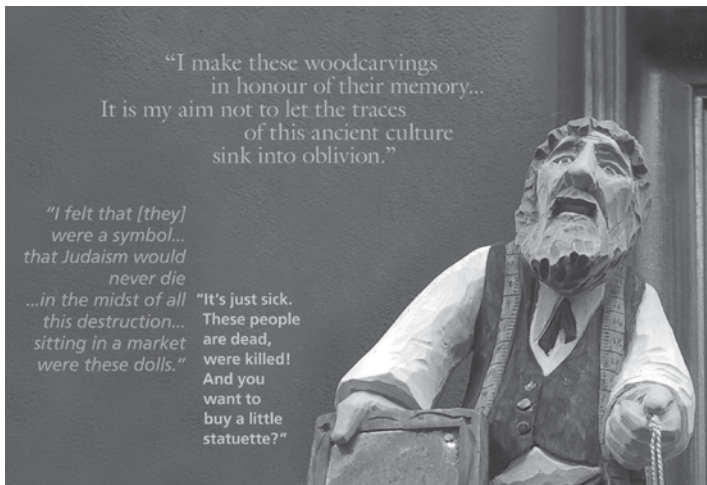
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As curators, collectors, and other heritage presenters are increasingly challenged to act less as experts and gatekeepers and more as sensitive, savvy hosts and facilitators for a broad range of visitors, what might curatorial practice look like? The field is ripe for innovation.

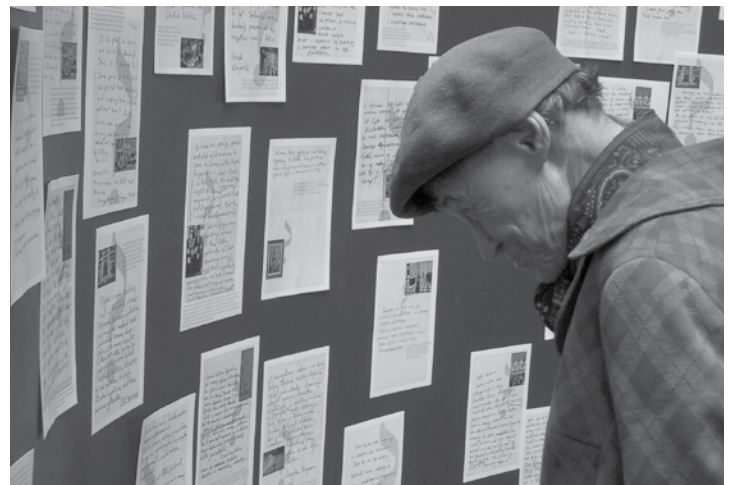
In my own ongoing work, I have sought to capitalize on the multiplicity that is latent in sites where Jews and non-Jews meet to contemplate Jewish history and culture. I proceed from the question of whether exhibits can serve as mirrors that do not simply reflect what Jews or others already believe about themselves or what others may believe about Jews but instead provoke a self-questioning gaze.

Here are some snap-shots of recent projects:

In *conversationmaps* (with Hannah Smotrich) the goal was to take the impassioned monologues about heritage and identity I recorded among Jewish tourists



conversationmaps postcard. Design by Hannah Smotrich.



odpowiedz. . . please respond. Photo by Erica Lehrer.

in Poland and local Poles—significant others who rarely meet—and transform them into visual dialogues. We transcribed and juxtaposed these voices with ambivalent images, and interspersed the resulting “maps” and postcards amidst more standard tourist ephemera in Krakow, hoping to catch visitors off-guard and illuminate the multiplicity of passions around popular objects and sites. Polish souvenir figurines of Jews, for example, are not so easily dismissed (or embraced) when framed by three very different perspectives on their personal meaning. Rather, they become objects of meditation on memory, empathy, and trauma.

In *odpowiedz...please respond* (with Smotrich and Stephanie Rowden), a quiet courtyard became a place to stop, contemplate, and converse about the celebration of Jewish heritage at Krakow’s annual Jewish Cultural Festival. Run and largely attended by non-Jews, the festival elicits a range of sentiments that swirl beneath its entertaining exterior. The aim of this participatory, site-specific installation was to make these sentiments collectively, bilingually visible, enabling them to inform and challenge. Alongside celebratory proclamations, some expressed anger at “kitsch” and “appropriation,” or simply voiced a sense of unfathomable loss. But a prominent Polish Jew wrote, “This place, at this moment . . . is the only place in Poland where being a Jew I feel like a host. This is a Jewish place more authentic than any other in Poland.”

I am further exploring such curatorial approaches in my teaching. In a seminar, “Curating Difficult Knowledge: Engaging with the Aftermath of Violence through Public Displays, Memorials, and Sites of Conscience,” I asked students to “re-curate” a video of

Holocaust survivor testimony in a way that would highlight how its meaning is made, both internally (by the narrator and interviewer) and when subsequent viewers bring their own experiences and questions to it. I tried to trouble too-easy assertions of empathy and identification, and assumptions about the transmissibility of experience.

One group, picking up on the refrain that the survivor “felt safer in the forest,” cut and transported tree stumps gathered from the Quebec woods for visitors to sit on as we listened to selections from the testimony. The result was the creation of a space that provoked multisensory contemplation and an intimate, social experience of listening that nevertheless highlighted our distance as witnesses.

Another group engaged visitors in a facilitated interaction with a miniature landscape, asking them to advance the story by making choices and manipulating objects. The participants were obliged at times to identify with perpetrators or bystanders rather than victims, and to reflect on how their small actions were caught up in much larger, ambivalent processes. The participatory curation also evoked questions of what memory becomes in our hands, behind glass, under our control. One student’s choice to move a wooden dreidel “back in time” from the ghetto into an intact, prewar Jewish neighborhood was a surprisingly moving gesture. As the student later reflected, this effort to reverse the hellish historical process and restore the ritual object to a time of more “wholeness” perhaps also honored the survivor’s wish, expressed in her testimony, that Jewish tradition continue to be remembered and enacted. Such

experiments suggest new ways that activation of the past might enliven the present.

I continue to expand on these projects and am encouraging others to do related work in a new research center CEREV (Centre for Ethnographic Research and Exhibition in the Aftermath of Violence) we are constructing at Concordia University (<http://cerev.concordia.ca/>). A key component of the center is a digital “exhibition lab” for which I have planned a program of “research curation,” exploring how humanistic scholarship and qualitative data on social experience can be mined, reframed, and re-circulated via unconventional pathways to educate and to stimulate difficult, important conversations about histories of violence.

With these resources, I hope to open spaces for new scholarly and public understandings of the aftermath of mass violence. Both ethnography and curatorial practice can be productively reconsidered in light of the particular risks and challenges of such “difficult knowledge.” Project-based, interdisciplinary collaboration across the arts, humanities, social science, and new media offers new possibilities for innovative, productive curation of the cultural legacies of social suffering.

*Erica Lehrer is assistant professor in the Departments of History and Sociology, Anthropology, and Canada Research Chair in Post-Conflict Memory, Ethnography, and Museology at Concordia University. She is the author of the forthcoming article, “Can there be a Conciliatory Heritage?” International Journal of Heritage Studies Vol. 16 (4–5), 2010.*

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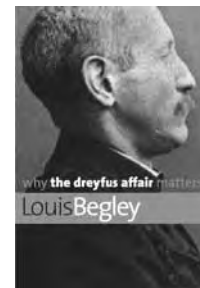
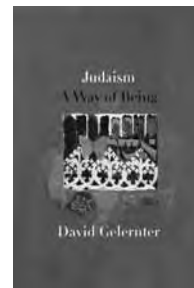
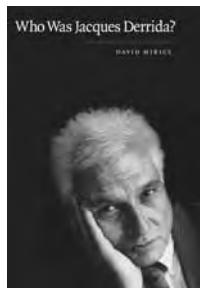
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# The Latest

## *Waltz with Bashir* Todd Hasak-Lowy



**A**ri Folman's 2008 animated documentary *Waltz with Bashir* is a genuinely remarkable film. Through its innovative use of animation, this film offers an illuminating treatment of the relationship between history and memory, while at the same time ingeniously reenacting and even enlarging the experience of witnessing. That being said, the film's profound closing moments also have the effect of foregrounding Israeli passivity in regards to the events it represents. This matter of passivity should raise concern since it resonates with the place Sabra and Shatila occupies in Israeli collective memory of the First Lebanon War.

The climax of *Waltz with Bashir* comes only a minute before its conclusion. This climax arrives not by way of dramatic action per se, but rather through a last instance of recovery. Folman, the filmmaker/protagonist, finally recalls his experience of the massacre in Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila, which took place more than twenty years earlier. The film's entire trajectory has been the steady uncovering of a vast network of repressed or lost memories, a network tracing out Folman's experience of the First Lebanon War. The narrative steadily illuminates this network, giving the film a simultaneous spatial and temporal vector: Folman, he relearns, entered Lebanon at the start of the war in June 1982 and traveled north into Beirut, just before the massacre in September. A travelogue is reconstructed, each of its different stations newly revealed under the light of active recollection.

Folman employs his film's central technique, that of animation, to investigate

the rich, real-imagined tension that lies at the movie's core. *Waltz with Bashir* revolves around a particular historical moment, and is thus interested in an actual past, but the film is much more concerned with subjective encounters and echoes of this history, that is, with visions, dreams, flashbacks, hallucinations, and the mechanism of repression. In other words, this is less a film about a war or a massacre than it is a treatment of what happens to a historical event once it becomes a memory, a trauma, or a repression gradually returned. These variously disorienting transformations motivate the film's masterful and creative use of animation, which is consistently employed to represent both the surreal qualities of war itself and the thin, permeable border separating the external, the actual, and the comprehensible from the internal, the imagined, and the inscrutable.

The film's last, powerful gesture—the sudden switch from the animation of Folman's flashback to actual footage of the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps immediately following the massacre—signals more than just a final act of remembering. This profoundly unsettling shift drives a wedge between the real and the imagined, unequivocally separating the two and privileging the former over the latter. In this moment, the various mutations and warpings of individual memory—the void of repression, the semifigurative realm of the nightmare, the nearly mythic logic of the flashback—are neutralized, reversed,



and utterly undone. The shocking clarity of the final recovered memory marks Folman's reunion with the horror of the actual event. The moment he finally remembers his experience of the massacre, the viewer is removed from the stylized world of animation in order to confront up close the immediate aftermath of the slaughter: women

overwhelmed with grief, piles of bloody, bullet-ridden corpses, and the closing image of a murdered child mostly buried under rubble recently created in a hurried effort to conceal the killings. Folman elevates the veracity of this footage by placing it at the end of eighty minutes of stylized drawings.

Moreover, the viewer sees these closing images through Folman's eyes. The final moment of animation shows us the younger Folman facing a large crowd of Palestinian women rushing toward him. We have seen this image more than once before in the film, it is the last moment of his recurring flashback, in which he, along with two other



Israeli soldiers, exit the sea naked, put on their uniforms, and enter the streets of Beirut. The film's denouement belatedly provides both Folman and the viewer with the conclusion missing from the protagonist's abruptly ending flashback, a conclusion that is also an act of witnessing, of confronting the aftermath of an atrocity. When Folman finally remembers, the viewer is finally allowed or forced to see as well. And we see it as Folman saw it (or as he sees it again), since the viewer's position in the scene suddenly flips one hundred and eighty degrees: we are transported from a head-on drawing of Folman's upper body to his view of the massacre itself. Folman shifts from object to subject, while the viewer moves from his or her position opposite Folman to inside Folman himself.

Overall, then, *Waltz with Bashir* stages the experience of witnessing in such a way as to force the viewer to experience it as well, in order to sense the profound shock of the initial encounter with an atrocity. Folman essentially relives the original experience of witnessing following the twenty-plus years of his repression, while the viewer, through the shift from animation to real footage

and the shift from outside to inside Folman, is struck with something approaching the power of the actual witness' encounter, even if we, like Folman himself twenty years later, already knew in general what had happened. As Folman becomes a witness once more, the viewer becomes a seemingly qualified proxy or secondary witness, one arguably capable of bearing witness to this experience as well. With all this in mind, we can say that *Waltz with Bashir* is a highly successful movie, not so much aesthetically, or not only aesthetically, but as a film that simultaneously reestablishes the identity of an original witness and manufactures, by the thousands, additional proxy witnesses. If bearing witness to an atrocity constitutes a moral act, then *Waltz with Bashir* ought to be understood as a film possessing unusual moral force.

Nevertheless, the film's central achievement comes at a cost, since our transformation from regular moviegoers to witnesses parallels a transformation undergone by Folman himself. At the time of the war, Folman's identity, beyond that of a young Israeli soldier, is not clear. On the one hand, he is an active member of an invading army. On the other hand, he is a comparatively powerless soldier sent into a war whose highly dubious aims and justifications he's ill-equipped to understand, let alone resist or reject. Folman's position grows only cloudier as we move toward the massacre itself, since his spatial proximity to these killings must be weighed against the fact that the actual murderers are his Christian Phalangist allies. There is little question regarding the identities of the victim (the Palestinian refugees) and the victimizers (the Phalangists). But where are we to position a common Israeli soldier like Folman?

Prior to the very ending of the film, we encounter alternatives to the witness position he will ultimately settle upon. In particular, Folman acknowledges his membership in the units that not only sealed off the camps, but also shot flares into the night sky and thus directly assisted the Phalangists in their around-the-clock killing. Similarly, in an earlier scene, a close friend suggests that immediately after the event the nineteen-year-old Folman did not conceive of any meaningful difference between the killers in the camp and the circles of Israeli soldiers who surrounded them. Nevertheless, the final moment of the film situates Folman at his most passive, reduced to eyes and ears, clearly distinguished from the murderers themselves. In other words, Folman the filmmaker

ultimately positions Folman the soldier in a relatively inculpable light as he draws the viewer into the literal picture as a witness.

This focus on the implicated witness resonates strongly with the dominant narrative of this war in Israel, a narrative in which Sabra and Shatila occupy a crucial position. Without minimizing the horror of the killings themselves, we ought to ask how it came to be that what many regard as a widely destructive war of choice is often synecdochically represented by a massacre perpetrated by a third party. Why is it that irresponsibility, denial, guilt by association, and a failure to intervene—all failings, but failings of a limited sort—are the primary charges Israelis hold against themselves for this war? How did Sabra and Shatila come to be seen as more important, and even morally worse, than, for instance, the siege of Beirut or the initial unilateral invasion? These questions are too great to be tackled here, since

finding their answers would require, among other things, an investigation of the way Israeli discourse surrounding this war and this massacre first emerged a quarter-century ago. For now it seems safe to conclude that while *Waltz with Bashir* masterfully represents and recreates Ari Folman's complex and ongoing experience of this event, it simultaneously reinforces the already dominant Israeli collective memory of this war, one importantly fixated on a moment of relative passivity.

*Todd Hasak-Lowy is associate professor of Hebrew at the University of Florida. He is the author of Here and Now: History, Nationalism, and Realism in Modern Hebrew Fiction (Syracuse University Press, 2008).*

Film stills from *Waltz with Bashir*. Credit: Ari Folman and David Polonsky/Sony Pictures Classics.

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## Jewish Moscow— A Guidebook

Olga Gershenson

In 2009 Olga Gershenson spent six months in Moscow, collecting data for her new book *Holocaust in Soviet and Post-Soviet Cinema*. Below are her reflections on Jewish life in Moscow.

*An old joke goes: How many Jews are there in the USSR? Three million. How many have left? Two million. How many remain? Ten million. The joke appears to speak to the present in Russia: Most Jews have left, but Jewish events and culture seem to be everywhere.*

### The Music Scene

On my first night out, my friends took me to the Gogol club for an evening dedicated to the memory of Arkady Severny (1939–1980), a beloved underground singer-songwriter with many Jewish songs in his repertoire. That night Jewish music sounded in the carnivalesque setting of the club (designed by the grandson of Boris Pasternak, a great Russian writer ambivalent about his Jewishness). The Moscow-based band Klezmasters, who are part of the local klezmer revival scene, brought the audience to its feet with a great cover of Severny's hit, "Good Morning, Aunt Chaya." The evening proceeded with performance artist Psoy Korolenko, who combines elements of klezmer, Soviet pop, and multicultural folk traditions in his songs. The dance floor became crowded.

The audience seemed Jewish as well and not only at my table. There were even one or two yarmulkes, and not on *alter-kakers*. The crowd was young and hip since Gogol is one of the most happening clubs in the capital and a popular spot for live music. (Gogol, by the way, was founded by a son of a prominent Moscow Jewish family that has been in the entertainment business since Soviet times.)

I met all the musicians and got invited to their concerts on every night in the following two weeks, including the grand Yiddish-Fest: an international festival that brought to Moscow such klezmer stars as Michael Alpert and Adrienne Cooper. The Yiddish-Fest concerts completely filled the gigantic halls of The Music House. The tickets were sold out weeks in advance.

### Theater



*Opus #7* at the School of Dramatic Arts. From the author's archive.

Moscow is the birthplace of the Stanislavsky method and is still one of the theater capitals of the world. Among the prominent directors working here today is Dmitry Krymov, son of renowned theater critic Anatoly Efros (Krymov took up his mother's last name in the antisemitic Soviet times). He is trained as an artist, so the hallmark of his style is visual metaphor. He mounts large-scale productions at the School of Dramatic Arts, one of the most famous and best-funded (from the Moscow city budget) theaters in the country.

Krymov's *Opus #7* is a visual and visceral expression of the Soviet Jewish

experience and the Holocaust. At first the "stage," a giant space between the audience and a great white wall, is nearly empty. A lone woman in a grey coat is dragging a broom on the floor amidst buckets. Then others in coats appear and the first miracle occurs. The "coats" take the buckets and splash black paint out of them on a white wall. Rorschach-test-like inkblots resembling human figures form on the wall. Then "coats" take out ribbons and staple them to the tops of the blots. Voilà, they are not inkblots any more but six Hasids in black hats and kaftans, with black *payos*. Still working like automatons each "coat" takes a knife and cuts a semi-circle around each "Hasid." The semicircular segments slightly separate from the wall and a heavenly light comes out from behind the Hasidic bodies. Is it *shechina*? The light onto the people? Then the semicircles fall out completely and the audience faces six holes, six open crematorium ovens, with bright light still coming out of them. Then a wind starts blowing from inside the holes. Tiny black pieces of paper, like ashes, fly out of the "ovens." At first just a few, but then the wind picks up and more and more "ashes" come out of them, some reaching the audience. Then the wind grows stronger and the ash-storm hits me in the face—I can't breathe,



Frescos in the Choral Synagogue, built 1903, restored 2006. Photo by the author.



I am blinded by the terrible light, I have nowhere to hide. Covered in ashes, I lose the sense that I am in the theater, that I am safe and that it is 2009 and not the 1940s. . . . And then . . . quiet. The floor is covered with ashes or maybe autumn leaves. The rest of the performance plays with the haunted traces of extinguished Jewish life by using family pictures, scraps of conversations, and digital projection. Objects are there, but Jews are not. Clothes on the hangers come alive with no bodies wearing them, shoes move with no feet in them, glasses are put on sketched faces in the absence of Jewish noses to rest them on. The Jewish experience on stage is disembodied, but the experience of the audience is visceral.

The Studio of Theater Arts is another major theater in the capital, generously supported by private funding. Their director Sergej Zhenovach (who, by the way, does not advertise his Jewish roots) stages *Marienbad* based on Sholem Aleichem's novel. *Marienbad* is a comedy of errors, in which a cast of characters with names like Schlojmeh and Bieltze are entangled in a complex web of friendships, animosities, and marital infidelities. Except for the names and the author, there is absolutely nothing Jewish, culturally or otherwise, on stage. It is the director's idea that Jews are just humans, no different from others. Unlike *Opus # 7*, *Marienbad* tries to turn the Jewish experience into a universal one. Still, it is good to see Sholem Aleichem on a major Russian stage.

## Synagogues

A very different kind of performance occurs in Moscow's synagogues. There are three big ones, all of which look like four-star hotels. They are lavishly, if not tastefully decorated and equipped with restaurants, concert halls, book/tchotchke stores, and at least in one case, a swimming pool. The Moscow JCC synagogue in the historically Jewish neighborhood (as much as Moscow had a Jewish neighborhood) Marina Roscha features the most delicious restaurant in the whole city. The Choral synagogue, the only continuously operating synagogue in Soviet times, also boasts a restaurant, but it is mostly worth visiting for the historical building and the recently restored magnificent frescos in the style of painted wooden synagogues.

Frankly, I couldn't figure out who goes to these synagogues and why. At the Choral



Memorial Synagogue on Poklonnaya Gora complex. Photo by the author.

synagogue, I once ran into a flock of Moscow school kids on a diversity education tour. "We just came back from a mosque," said one, "and straight to a synagogue!" "But we are not Jews ourselves, thank God," chimed in another. Apparently, diversity education can go only so far.

Things Jewish in Moscow are as confusing and confused as the children on the diversity tour. On the one hand, in my six months in Moscow, I met lots of Jews: film and theater directors, critics, scholars, and other intelligentsia. Russian Jews, as ever, are "people of the media." On the other hand, most of them were converts to Christianity. Yet their conversion did not diminish their identification with the Jewish people and culture.

## Memorials and Museums

As someone who left Russia for Israel during the time when the mere word "Jew" was impossible to say out loud, I wanted to see how Jewish history is represented today in public spaces. Alas, I did not find much. There is a statue of Sholem Aleichem in central Moscow. There are a few plaques commemorating Soviet Yiddish culture: one on the former building of the State Yiddish Theater and another one on the building of the Soviet Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee. There is Memorial Synagogue at Moscow's bombastic complex commemorating the Great Patriotic War (as World War II is still called in Russia). The synagogue

functions as a modest museum of Jewish heritage and the Holocaust and includes an exhibit dedicated to Jewish war heroism.

The truth is that Russia, a place with a rich and peculiar Jewish history and an obsession with memorials, still does not have a Jewish museum. For a while it looked like there was one in the planning. Last year, the board gathered and, with funds from local and international sources, purchased "Garage," a historic industrial building designed by an avant-garde Russian architect. However, the project was stalled, and Garage now houses a contemporary art gallery. It is an excellent art space in its own right, but it is not a Jewish museum. So, for now, the past is still a matter for the future.

\* \* \*

This is my Jewish Moscow with all its paradoxes, ambivalences, and irregularities. A place where klezmer concerts attract thousands, where Sholem Aleichem is dramatized in the mainstream theater, and where Jews wear crosses. This is post-Soviet Jewish culture, deeply influenced by the Soviet era separation of religion from peoplehood, and which offers its own ways to be and feel Jewish.

*Olga Gershenson is assistant professor in the Department of Judaic and Near Eastern Studies at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. She is the author of* *Gesher: Russian Theatre in Israel; A Study of Cultural Colonization* (Peter Lang, 2005).

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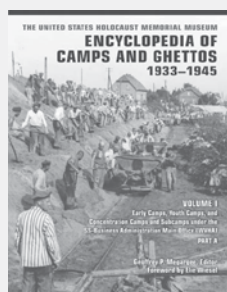
While each mode and each period brings its own questions and dilemmas, there are a number of common questions and issues cutting across disciplinary lines that proposals could address:

- What are the institutions and conditions that foster travel, such as new technologies, concepts of leisure, or commercial networks linking Jewish communities in far-off places? How do these factors provide social, political, and economic contexts that influence both travel fact and travel fiction?
- How do travel discourses engage in a critical dialogue with “hearth and home,” supporting or disturbing dominant perceptions of centers and margins? How do these categories look like when viewed through a Jewish lens as opposed to a Christian or Muslim one?
- How do the various genres and discourses of travel writing interact and influence one another? How does the real affect the imaginary, and vice versa? How do travel literatures themselves circulate?
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- To what extent does Jewish travel map onto the movement made possible by the expanding frontiers of empires, both ancient and modern? How, for example, do Jewish authors interact with European models of expansion and discovery?
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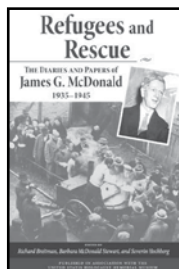
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# The Questionnaire

## What are three books you love to teach to undergraduates?

### RESPONSES

#### Joyce Antler

*Samuel Lane Professor of American Jewish History and Culture, Brandeis University*

#### Mary Antin, *The Promised Land* (Penguin, 1997)

The iconic story of the transformation of an immigrant into an American compels student readers with its vivid images and language. Yet readers are usefully perplexed by its contradictory perspectives—celebratory and tragic, psychological and historical, secular and spiritual.

#### Tillie Olsen, *Tell Me a Riddle* (Dell, 1994 [1956])

In economical, deeply moving prose, Olsen's novella tugs on students' emotions as it conveys the meaning of Jewish humanism in personal, familial terms.

#### Debra L. Schultz, *Going South: Jewish Women in the Civil Rights Movement* (New York University Press, 2001)

Oral histories bring to life a generation of activists whose commitment to civil rights and Jewish values (though often underplayed and unacknowledged) inspire students.

#### Judith Baskin

*Knight Professor of Humanities, University of Oregon*

These books have successfully supplemented primary and secondary readings in my course on "Medieval Jews and Judaism," which attracts an enrollment of fifty diverse students:

#### Amitav Ghosh, *In an Antique Land: History in the Guise of a Traveler's Tale* (Vintage Books, 1994)

Ghosh interweaves his own experiences as a Hindu anthropologist doing fieldwork in

Egyptian villages in the 1980s with Cairo Genizah documents about a twelfth-century Jewish merchant from Tunisia and his twenty-year sojourn in Mangalore, India. This humane exploration of intercultural coexistence and misunderstanding reminds us that medieval Jewish life extended east as well as west, illuminates Middle Eastern village life on the cusp of modernization, and also raises important questions about our approaches to the "antique."

#### Sharan Newman, *The Wandering Arm: A Catherine LeVendeur Mystery* (Forge Books, 2001)

This accessible and well-researched genre novel by a medievalist is set in twelfth-century Paris and deals with Jewish-Christian relationships of a number of kinds (social, economic, familial, romantic, and intellectual) revolving around a relic theft that threatens the security of the Jewish community. Newman provides detailed depictions of life in urban, monastic, and noble settings, as well as in the Jewish quarter of the medieval city, and the lively characters and situations engage student interest and provide connections to more conventional readings.

#### A. B. Yehoshua, *Journey to the End of the Millennium: A Novel of the Middle Ages* (Doubleday, 1999)

Yehoshua's demanding, richly textured narrative contrasts the mores of Sephardi and Ashkenazi Jews against the backdrop of a journey from Morocco to Paris to the Rhineland set around the year 1000. Diverse characters—Jewish, Muslim, and Christian, merchants and scholars, slaves and rulers, physicians and artists, and most centrally women and men—interact in a stylistic tour de force (with virtually no direct dialogue) that succeeds in conveying some of the complexities and dilemmas of an ultimately mysterious era.

#### Murray Baumgarten

*Distinguished Professor of English and Comparative Literature and Co-Director of Jewish Studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz*

#### Rebecca Goldstein, *Mazel* (Viking, 1995)

Gender and the Yiddish world of Ashkenaz combine in Goldstein's magical tale. The narrative plays *Hasidic* parable and philosophical and feminist polemic against each other. This familial epic, centered around four generations of women, leads us from the shtetl to the *Haskalah* and the rebelliousness of the 1960s. Goldstein asks, Is the result freedom or another form of exile? and students enjoy the argument as they untangle its wonderful, multilingual plot.

#### Primo Levi, *Se questo e un uomo*, published as *Survival in Auschwitz*, translated by Stuart Woolf (Macmillan, 1961)

Reading Primo Levi, students discover "the gray zone"—the ambiguity of choice in the Lager—in this "gigantic biological and social experiment" dedicated to the destruction of the Jews. Here there is no "Warum," no why, and I join with my students in their questioning of the horizon of possibility in the post-Holocaust world. We are awestruck by the precision of Levi's careful and accurate account, yet puzzle over the meanings of the incidents he recounts as he asks, "Are they not themselves stories of a new Bible?"

#### A. B. Yehoshua, *Mr. Mani*, translated by Hillel Halkin (Doubleday, 1992)

This novel of Zionist longing and biblically inspired myth takes us from present-day Israel into the Sephardic world of nineteenth-century Jerusalem and the Mediterranean. Yehoshua crafts five conversations in which we hear only one speaker, one side of the discussion, and imagine the rest of the dialogue. Yehoshua's characters engage their neighbors in fateful experiences. Act

and rhetoric intertwine here: the English Ladies Reading Circle meets in the Jerusalem Bibliophile Society to discuss Charles Dickens's latest novel, *David Copperfield*, as Yehoshua asks us how novelists compete with their predecessors even as they acknowledge their achievement.

## Adele Berlin

Robert H. Smith Professor of Bible,  
University of Maryland

I teach Bible and so the main text is the biblical text. These are three biblical books I love to teach to undergraduates:

### Ecclesiastes

An intellectual engagement about a perennial problem: the meaning of life. Non-religious students can feel as at home as religious students, if not more so.

### Isaiah 40–66 (Second Isaiah)

Amazingly strong language and imagery. Students get to see that a prophetic message has rhetorical force; it is not just pious or pretty words.

### Proverbs

I actually don't like Proverbs that much but the students always like it. They relate to it like a "how-to" book. And its parts are short enough to text or Twitter. They find the sayings relevant to their own lives, especially once they understand that the book is advice to adolescent males. They are surprised to learn that this is "establishment" literature, designed to make the next generation conform to society.

## David Biale

Emanuel Ringelblum Professor of Jewish History and Chair, Department of History, University of California at Davis

### Saul Friedlander, *Nazi Germany and the Jews* (HarperCollins, 1997–2007)

Friedlander's book features individual stories of the victims so that their humanity does not disappear in the welter of big numbers. He successfully conveys the *experience* of the Holocaust in addition to its history.

### Tom Segev, *One Palestine, Complete* (Henry Holt, 2001)

Segev tells the story of Mandatory Palestine from the viewpoints of Jews, Arabs, and the British, thus unsettling what is often a one-sided account. His contrarian arguments provide an effective springboard for class discussions of other points of view.

### Benedict Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise* (Hackett, 2001 [1670])

Spinoza's radical, secular philosophy challenges students to think about the big questions and stretches their minds in unexpected ways. A perennial favorite!

## Jonathan Boyarin

Leonard and Tobee Kaplan Distinguished Professor of Modern Jewish Thought, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

### Miriam Bodian, *Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation: Conversos and Community in Early Modern Amsterdam* (Indiana University Press, 1997)

Bodian's book makes abundantly clear that twentieth-century America isn't the first time-space where people have had to figure out how and whether to be Jewish.

### Claudine Fabre-Vassas, *The Singular Beast: Jews, Christians, and the Pig* (Columbia University Press, 1997)

This rich and dense study shows the complex role of Jews and Jewishness in the traditional European Catholic imaginary.

### Barbara Myerhoff, *Stories as Equipment for Living: Last Talks and Tales* (University of Michigan Press, 2007)

This volume is a portrait of a dying Jewish ethnographer who was fully alive to those she met, and who makes them live for the reader in turn.

## Deborah Dash Moore

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

### Richard Nagler and Isaac Bashevis Singer, *My Love Affair with Miami Beach* (Simon & Schuster, 1991)

Nagler's photographs surprise and startle students: could old Jews really be so

attractive? Bashevis Singer's commentary beguiles them (and fools them as well). The combination is powerful and always an unexpected hit. (Though the book is out-of-print, inexpensive, used copies can be found.)

### Riv-Ellen Prell, *Fighting to Become Americans: Assimilation and the Trouble between Jewish Women and Jewish Men* (Beacon, 2000)

Prell provokes and engages, complicating the history of Jewish immigration to the United States and challenging students' assumptions.

### Michael Staub, *Torn at the Roots: The Crisis of Liberalism in Postwar America* (Columbia University Press, 2004)

Staub introduces students to their parents and grandparents' complex Jewish American world, encouraging them to choose sides in historic political debates.

## Hasia Diner

Paul S. and Sylvia Steinberg Professor of American Jewish History and Director, Goldstein-Goren Center for American Jewish History, New York University

### Anna Igra, *Wives Without Husbands: Marriage, Desertion, and Welfare in New York, 1900–1935* (University of North Carolina Press, 2007)

Jewish wives, Jewish husbands, and Jewish charitable bodies square off against each other in this book. It challenges students who have bought into a kind of romance about the solidity of the American Jewish family.

### Eric Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity* (Princeton University Press, 2006)

A deeply researched and seriously thought-out contribution to American Jewish history; probably the most sophisticated treatment of the whiteness issue that has so dominated historical writing in the last decade.

### Tony Michels, *A Fire in their Hearts: Yiddish Socialists in New York* (Harvard University Press, 2005)

Profoundly challenges some deeply held ideas in American Jewish history and in the history of socialism. In this beautifully written book, Michels provides a new way of thinking about the sources of the socialist presence in turn-of-the-century New York.

## Chana Kronfeld

Professor, Departments of Near Eastern Studies and Comparative Literature, University of California at Berkeley

**Benjamin Harshav and Barbara Harshav, eds. and trans., *American Yiddish Poetry: A Bilingual Anthology* (Stanford University Press, 2007)**

A paperback reissue of their epoch-making anthology. The introduction, along with Benjamin Harshav's classic *The Meaning of Yiddish*, also reissued by Stanford University Press in 1990 in paperback, are the most insightful guides to these truly great American Yiddish modernist poets.

**Shirley Kaufman, Galit Hasan-Rokem, and Tamar Hess, eds., *The Defiant Muse: Hebrew Feminist Poems from Antiquity to the Present: A Bilingual Anthology* (Feminist Press/CUNY, 1999)**

A groundbreaking collection from the Bible to the present with valuable biographical and historical information. Especially powerful selections of modern women's poetry from Rachel Morpurgo to the late 1990s. Having the Hebrew and English translation on facing pages is a great asset in teaching literature through language and language through literature.

**Naomi B. Sokoloff, Anita Norich, and Anne Lapidus Lerner, eds., *Gender and Text in Modern Hebrew and Yiddish Literature* (Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1992; distributed by Harvard University Press)**

Though the essays vary in degree of rigor, the joint historiographic narrative of Hebrew and Yiddish literature that emerges is an important corrective; includes helpful annotations.

## David N. Myers

Professor, Department of History, UCLA and 2009/10 Fellow at the Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania

**Gerson Cohen, "The Blessing of Assimilation in Jewish History," in *Jewish History and Jewish Destiny* (Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1997)**

Delivered as a commencement address to Jewish educators in 1966, this lecture briefly and elegantly introduces students to a

surprising key to Jewish survival: assimilation (as a ceaseless process of cultural absorption and exchange).

**Baruch Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise*, R. H. M. Elwes, trans. (Cosimo, 2005 [1670])**

A foundational text of Jewish modernity published in 1670, the *Theologico-Political Treatise* productively challenges and confounds students' assumptions about the secular, the religious, and the roots of modern Jewish identity.

**Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Schocken, 1989)**

This seminal book exposes students to a sweeping vista onto the Jewish past, while encouraging them to think about the ways in which historians work and history is constructed.

## Derek J. Penslar

Samuel Zacks Professor of Jewish History, University of Toronto

**Amos Elon, *The Pity of it All: A History of the Jews in Germany, 1743–1933* (Picador, 2003)**

Although heavily criticized by academic historians, this book's taut, novelistic prose and spot-on characterization of the German-Jewish elite engage students. Once "hooked," they are prepared for, and interested in, more serious scholarly work on the social history of German Jewry more broadly understood.

**Albert Memmi, *Pillar of Salt* (Beacon, 1992 [1975])**

To my surprise, this rather dated existentialist novel about the impossibility of Jewish assimilation appeals to students from many ethnic backgrounds. Perhaps it works so well because the University of Toronto's student body consists largely of the children of immigrants, striving to redefine themselves in their new Canadian environments.

**Tom Segev, 1949: *The First Israelis* (Free Press, 1986)**

One of the first fruits of the Israeli "New History," and still one of the best. The book's ironic tone and pithy narrative strike a responsive cord in students weary of propaganda and eager to understand Israel in all its complexity.

## Marsha Rozenblit

Harvey M. Myerhoff Professor of Jewish History, University of Maryland

***The Memoirs of Glückel of Hameln* (Schocken, 1977 [1690–1719])**

This book provides an easy and interesting way for students to understand the complexities of pre-modern European Jewish life, including such issues as piety, the economic role of Jews, the role of women, and Jewish attitudes to non-Jewish society. It helps set the stage for the modernization of the Jews, my central focus.

**Marion Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family, and Identity in Imperial Germany* (Oxford University Press, 1991)**

Kaplan explains so cogently and so interestingly several important issues: how the Jews in Germany—and by extension everywhere in Western and Central Europe—assimilated into the society and culture in which they lived; how they retained Jewish identity and Jewish community; and the central role of women in both of those processes. She does so by examining everyday life and the role of German and Jewish culture in the lives of ordinary people. Students thus understand immediately the complexities of German and Jewish identity formation.

**Dawid Sierakowiak, *The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak: Five Notebooks from the Lodz Ghetto* (Oxford University Press, 1996)**

Reading this incredibly moving diary of a Jewish teenager in the Lodz ghetto, students can understand the terrible privations of life in the ghettos of Nazi-occupied Poland, the ways that Jews coped with those privations, and how they understood (without the benefit of hindsight) what the Nazis were trying to do to them. They also learn a good amount about Jewish life in prewar Poland. Because Sierakowiak is a young man, students identify with him and thus find the diary extremely compelling.

## Susan Shapiro

Professor, Department of Judaic and Near Eastern Studies and Director, Religious Studies Program, University of Massachusetts at Amherst

**Moses Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem: Or On Religious Power and Judaism*, translated by Allan Arkush, introduction and**



**commentary by Alexander Altmann**  
(Published for Brandeis University Press  
by University Press of New England,  
1983 [1783])

This is a very useful text for advanced undergraduate and graduate students, occasioning a rereading of topics and issues often mistakenly thought to be already understood and surpassed, including the separation of religion and state and secularization, Jewish social contract theory, the parallels and differences between the emancipation of women and Jews, as well as Mendelssohn's critical notions of emancipation based on an acute understanding of contemporary (and not only contemporary) antisemitism.

**Ilana Pardes, *Countertraditions in the Bible: A Feminist Approach* (Harvard University Press, 1992)**

An excellent introduction to recent feminist and gender analyses of the Hebrew Bible, especially for undergraduates. I assign supplementary articles by scholars addressed—as well as others not mentioned—in her text, so that each chapter allows for a way of simultaneously framing and introducing not only the biblical texts examined but a range of contemporary interpretative approaches in this relatively recent but important field in Jewish biblical studies.

**Ilana Pardes, *The Biography of Ancient Israel: National Narratives in the Bible* (University of California Press, 2000)**

A very effective text for use in an introductory course to Jewish culture and history. Read alongside the relevant biblical texts (Exodus, Numbers, Joshua) and with the interpretations of other scholars, this text allows for an imaginative, engaged, and critical way into rereading the Hebrew Bible in the context of a large introductory university course.

**Mark Smith**

*Skirball Professor of Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Studies, New York University*

For me, undergraduate teaching all begins and ends with the ancient classics, both “high” and “low”: books of the Hebrew Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls; the Baal Cycle and all sorts of other Ugaritic texts; all the Mesopotamian varia—Atrahasis and Gilgamesh, magic spells and various incantations (especially one against the worm-causing toothache with

its creation account). The translations that make these texts alive—by Thorkild Jacobsen, Benjamin Foster, Michael Coogan, and many others—are longtime companions.

In-between, I am inspired by:

**Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (Oxford University Press, 1997)**

Unlike her earlier better known work, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, this book aims to be more holistic and pragmatic. For American culture increasingly devoid of a sense of ritual, a book like this stimulates the senses for understanding what ancient rituals are all about.

**Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2001)**

Where archaeology, texts, and iconography come together and make ancient Israel come alive.

**George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By, with a new afterword* (University of Chicago Press, 2003)**

A challenge to the usual ways in which many students think about metaphor and about that entire realm of ancient reality understood only through metaphor—divinity.

**Bernard Wasserstein**

*Harriet and Ulrich E. Meyer Professor of Modern European Jewish History, University of Chicago*

Among books of Jewish interest, three that I find evoke reflective, often sophisticated, and sometimes passionate responses from students are:

**Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz* (Classic House Books, 2008 [1947])**

Which, in its bare-bones sobriety, strips away so much of the phony sentimentality, emotional exploitation, and political instrumentalization that frequently attach to literature of the Shoah.

**Maxime Rodinson, *Israel: A Colonial-Settler State?* (Anchor Foundation, 1988 [1973]),** which I generally teach together with **J. L. Talmon, *Israel among the Nations* (Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1970)**

Two cogently and eloquently argued

statements of diametrically opposed views of the nature of the Arab-Israeli conflict by two of the great historians of the last generation.

**Isaiah Trunk, *Judenrat: The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation* (University of Nebraska Press, 1996)**

One of the great humane works of historical scholarship of the late twentieth century and also an effective antidote to Hannah Arendt's unhistorical, indeed one might say anti-historical, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*.

**Steven J. Zipperstein**

*Daniel. E. Koshland Professor in Jewish Culture and History, Stanford University*

**John Efron, Steven Weitzman, Matthias Lehmann, Joshua Holo, *The Jews: A History* (Pearson Prentice Hall, 2009)**

For many years the best of all one-volume treatments of Jewish life was Robert Seltzer's superb portrait of Judaism published by Macmillan. Seltzer's remains a standard work, but now we have an equally authoritative, lucid history of everyday life and lore written a group of first-rate, younger scholars. It is a seamless collaborative work that reveals none of the repetitiveness or awkwardness so characteristic of collective efforts of this sort.

**Saul Friedlander, *Nazi Germany and the Jews, Volume 1: The Years of Persecution, 1933–1939* (HarperCollins, 1997)**

One of the finest synthetic histories of twentieth-century European life written in any language, both in its subtle interplay of social, cultural, and political history and its capacity to integrate the voices of historical actors—and victims.

***The Diaries of Victor Klemperer, 1945–59: The Lesser Evil*, abridged and translated from the German edition by Martin Chalmers (Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2003)**

The post–World War II musings about Nazism, Communism, and, above all, linguist Klemperer's keenly felt, day-to-day vicissitudes. This heroic and astonishingly narcissistic volume is a superb way of introducing students to the smell and the feel of a primary source.



# Remembering Our Colleagues



Courtesy Columbia University Archives.

## Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi (1932–2009)

John Efron

Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, one of the twentieth century's greatest historians of the Jewish people, passed away after a long illness on December 8, 2009. He was 77 years old. Born in New York City, Yerushalmi was raised in a Yiddish-speaking home and simultaneously learned Hebrew from his father. This non-ideological but, rather, ecumenical approach to Jewish culture would later be a hallmark of Yerushalmi's approach to the Jewish past. His mastery of the entire sweep of Jewish history, its classical canon and vast array of vernacular sources, which saw him work with equal facility in Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Latin, German, French, as well as Jewish languages, was a distinguishing feature of his oeuvre.

Professor Yerushalmi received a bachelor's degree from Yeshiva University in 1953, rabbinical ordination from the Jewish Theological Seminary in 1957, and a doctorate from Columbia in 1966. His dissertation on the Spanish court physician Isaac Cardoso, who fled the peninsula for the security of the Venetian ghetto, led Yerushalmi to a profound exploration of the

themes of Marranism, Sabbatianism, and Jewish apologetics. This work later became the classic, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto* (Columbia University Press, 1971). He worked for a short time as a congregational rabbi at Beth Emeth Synagogue in Larchmont, NY, but opting for the academy, began his scholarly career as an instructor at Rutgers and then moved to Harvard, where he became a full professor of Hebrew and Jewish history. In 1980 he took up an appointment at Columbia University, as the Salo Wittmayer Baron Professor of Jewish History, Culture and Society, a position named for Yerushalmi's revered *Doktorvater*.

Despite the impressive range of Yerushalmi's work, which saw him take an extended historiographical journey from ancient Israel all the way to Vienna on the eve of World War II, these seemingly incongruous contexts nevertheless yielded a unifying theme, the permutations of Jewish identity, particularly when forged in the wake of moments of historical rupture. In a string of impressive articles and profoundly influential books, Yerushalmi tackled the meaning of Jewishness at different points along the Jewish march through time, examining in particular, the emergence of Jewishness as a psychological category or way of being. With great empathy and understanding he long anticipated the "Who is a Jew" question by offering finely grained and humane portraits of Jews who themselves struggled with various versions of this conundrum, as determined by time and place in which they lived.

While Yerushalmi may be best remembered for his pathbreaking book, *Zakhor* (University of Washington Press, 1982), in which he examined the tension that existed between Jewish history and collective memory, another theme, less often remarked upon but vividly present in his many works, is the way Jews at different points in their past have expressed their Jewishness in practical terms. Yerushalmi was a historian with a heightened sense of the ethnographic, for he was fascinated by the very texture and thickness of Jewish life, how it was lived and how it was learned and also how non-Jews imagined and often willfully misunderstood Jewish practices. (From beginning to end he was engrossed

by the subject of Jew hatred, a theme that appears in one form or another in nearly all his works.) Again and again Yerushalmi incorporated the ethnographic dimension of Jewish life into his work. Beginning with his first publication in 1970, "The Inquisition and the Jews of France in the Time of Bernard Gui," a study of the Inquisitor's claims about Judaizers and the particular practices and reading predilections of converts, to studying the "how-to" manuals for Iberian conversos in Western Europe who sought to return to Judaism, through his study of the apologia of Isaac Cardoso and the Sabbatian beliefs of his brother Abraham, and finally concluding, most appropriately, with Freud, a man likewise consumed with the meaning of Jewish identity and the anthropological origins of the Jews. In all of these studies, Yerushalmi plumbed the depths of Jewish ethnicity and the myriad ways it has been performed.

Performance, in the best sense of the term, as a vehicle for conveying understanding, was central to the way Yerushalmi practiced history. As a writer he was lyrical, as a speaker, poetic and captivating. Supremely self-confident, there were nevertheless moments when his faith in the power of the historian waned, lamenting in *Zakhor* that the memory of the Holocaust "is being shaped, not at the historian's anvil, but in the novelist's crucible." Yet ironically, in expressing his despair with such vividness and such power, he could not but reaffirm the historian's enduring capacity to shape a sense of the past. His performance as *Doktorvater* to so many students meant that he influenced the thinking and formation of a generation of historians who now occupy positions the world over. In the gift that he bequeathed to them and they to their students in turn, Yerushalmi can truly be said to have created his own *shalshelet ha-kabbalah*. It is a chain of tradition that will rarely be equaled.

Professor Yerushalmi is survived by his wife, Ophra, and son, Ariel.

*John Efron is the Koret Professor of Jewish History at the University of California Berkeley. He is co-author of The Jews: A History (with Steven Weitzman, Matthias Lehmann, and Joshua Holo; Pearson Prentice Hall, 2009).*

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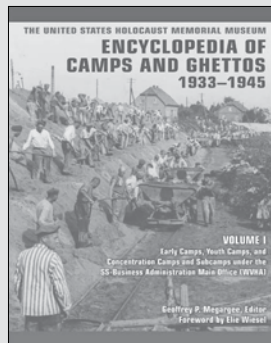
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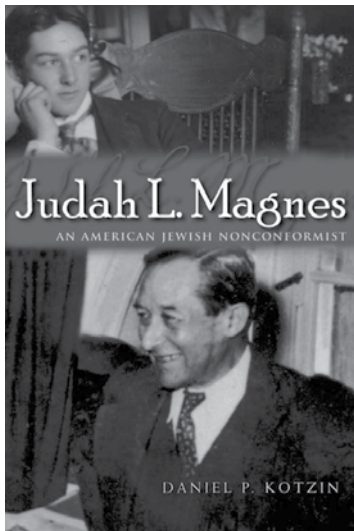
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