

# Australian Association of Jewish Studies

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Australian Association of Jewish Studies

22nd Annual Conference

**Judaism and the Other**

14-15 February 2010

Mandelbaum House, University of Sydney

## **UPDATE FROM CONFERENCE CONVENOR**

The closing date for the submission of papers is coming closer – 7 September. There has been a fair amount of international interest in the conference theme with international presenters from the UK, Israel and America submitting abstracts or being in contact, but only two local papers have been submitted so far. Please note the closing date and submit your proposals on time for what promises to be a fascinating conference.

**Suzanne D. Rutland**

### **Sir Zelman Cowen Universities' Fund Scholar and Expert on Islam to present at the AAJS Conference in 2010**

Professor Yitzhak Reiter, an expert in Middle East Studies and Islam, has been awarded a grant from the Sir Zelman Cowen Universities Fund to spend time consulting with the Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies at the University of Sydney. Professor Reiter teaches in the Conflict Studies Program of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and is also a senior lecturer at the Department of Political Science of Ashkelon Academic College. Between 1978 and 1986 he served as the Deputy Advisor on Arab Affairs to three Israeli Prime Ministers and he is very active in projects of Jewish-Arab dialogue inside Israel. His expertise on the Islam and Middle Eastern affairs is often featured in the media. He is a senior fellow of think tanks, the Truman Institute for Peace Studies of the Hebrew University and the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, and his work impacts on Israeli policy on prospects for the future of Jerusalem and on Arab-Jewish relations. During 2008/9 he

was a Schusterman visiting professor at the University of Minnesota (Department of Political Science and Center for Jewish Studies). Among his



most recent books are:

- *National Minority, Regional Majority: Palestinian Arabs versus Jews in Israel*, Syracuse University Press, 2009.
- *Jerusalem and its Role in Islamic Solidarity*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
- *War, Peace and International Relations in Contemporary Islam: Muslim Scholars on Peace-Treaty with Israel*.

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### Call for Papers

The Annual Conference of the Australian Association of Jewish Studies provides a meeting place for tertiary academics, Jewish educators, researchers, students and others devoted to the study of Jewish life, thought and culture.

With the conference theme for 2010, “Judaism and the ‘Other’” we are seeking to create a forum in which to explore how Jewish traditions, texts and cultures, and vision(s) of the ‘Other’ influenced relationships, social and economic conditions, cultural output and the like of Jewish communities in Israel and across the diaspora.

Papers from a variety of disciplines are welcome, and these may discuss the relationship of Judaism to paganism in biblical times, the emergence of Christianity and Islam, and of the Eastern religions. They can also see how modern developments, such as the Enlightenment, socialism and communism impacted on Judaism and vice versa.

Papers on other topics will be considered but preference will be given to those

bearing directly on the conference theme.

Submissions to present papers must be made by 7 September 2009. Acceptance of papers will be notified by email no later than October 2009. Submissions must include author's name, postal and email address, institutional affiliation, abstract of the paper to be presented and short biographical note. The abstract must be 200-300 words and the biographical note no more than 50 words.

The AAJS encourages students who are engaged in academic research to submit proposals based on their work to the program committee. Authors should clearly indicate their student status with their submission.

Presenters are invited to submit written articles for consideration for publication in the Australian Journal of Jewish Studies.

Proposals should be sent either electronically or by post to:

**A/Prof Suzanne Rutland**

[suzanne.rutland@usyd.edu.au](mailto:suzanne.rutland@usyd.edu.au)

Department of Hebrew, Biblical & Jewish Studies  
University of Sydney NSW 2006 Australia

**PROPOSALS MUST ARRIVE BY 7 SEPTEMBER, 2009**

## **HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS IN AUSTRALIA**

**First Annual Holocaust and Genocide Studies Conference at the Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation, Monash University, Melbourne,**

**14 and 15 March 2010**

*Co-sponsors: Jewish Holocaust Centre Melbourne, Sydney Jewish Museum, the Diana Zborowski Center for the Study of the Aftermath of the Shoa, at the International Institute for Holocaust Research at Yad Vashem*

### **CALL FOR PAPERS**

Tens of thousands of Jews migrated to Australia immediately after the Holocaust, settling mainly in Melbourne and Sydney. This interdisciplinary conference will discuss the aftermath of the Holocaust as it was experienced in Australia and New Zealand, by Holocaust survivors, their families and the Australian Jewish community.

We welcome new and summative papers by established scholars, and original research papers from academics, postgraduate students and independent scholars. A range of suggested topics appear below. The conference committee will consider papers on other related topics.

The conference will address three broad themes: Consequences, Identities, and Diaspora. The immediate and long term consequences of the Holocaust included displacement, migrations and antisemitism when people attempted to return to their former homes, family loss and health, repercussion, and the claims for reparations. The forging of new individual and/or collective Jewish identities after the Holocaust, the development of Holocaust remembrance, and comparative readings of the Israeli and American Holocaust survivor communities, are important areas of aftermath studies.

The strengths of Diaspora can also be explored in the context of aftermath, in terms of community building, politics, the growing international practice of Holocaust education and the second and third-generation movements of return to the sites of loss and atrocity.

### **Confirmed**

Keynote: Professor Yehuda Bauer (Hebrew University and Yad Vashem)

Keynote: Professor Konrad Kwiet (Sydney Jewish Museum)

Keynote: Associate Professor Suzanne Rutland (University of Sydney)

Keynote: Dr Ze'ev Mankowitz (Yad Vashem)

Keynote: Associate Professor Mark Baker (AC C, Monash University)

A panel of Holocaust survivors will present at the conference.

AC C will host a panel focused on the *landsmanschaften* of Australia. Contributions are sought for this panel on topics such as community of origin, aid work, membership patterns and memories of the Holocaust.

### **Suggested topics**

-Survivors

-Post-war DP camp experiences

-Post-war anti-Semitism

## CONFERENCE REPORTS

### **First International Graduate Students' Conference for Holocaust & Genocide Studies**

**23- 26 April 2009**

**Dr George B Foster, University of Sydney**

This most interesting and thought-provoking conference was held under the auspices of the Strassler Centre for Holocaust & Genocide Studies, Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts, United States. The aim was to provide graduate students with a forum to present their research papers to their colleagues and to prominent historians in the field, who also gave comments upon the papers and from their own experience. The historians included Yehuda Bauer, Deborah Dwork, John K Roth and Australia's own Ben Kiernan.

The wide variety of presentations by the graduate students was only a small indication of their disparate interests. I made the "mistake" of congratulating one of the organisers, Raz Segal, upon the fact that even psychological research was presented, including one presentation upon university students in Rwanda and their feelings about the genocide. Raz corrected me stating that the conference was meant to be an eclectic collection of research work only some of which would be purely historical. Sessions included: Children and Youth during the Holocaust, The Holocaust in the East, Law and the Concept of Genocide, Gender and Genocide, Post-Genocide Identity (which I was privileged to chair) and Holocaust Museums and Memorial Sites. Avril Alba, the Director of Education at the Sydney Jewish Museum, gave a fascinating account of her research into manner in which memorialisation and history are integrated into holocaust museums comparing the USHMM and the SJM. One of the most valuable aspects of the conference was to be able to network with people who were doing research in areas closing related to ones' own interests and hopefully to compare notes and ideas during the development on your thesis. The future of Holocaust and Genocide research is certainly in good hands given the high standard of presentations of this conference. I would certainly recommend attendance at such meetings as it is an invaluable and motivating experience.

### **Conference on Diaspora, Migration, and Jewish Memories of China**

Professor Antonia Finnane with Dr Gideon Reuveni, AAJS Victorian vice-president, History Department, University of Melbourne, co-ordinated a conference on Jews and China, with a small grant from the Asia Pacific Futures Research Network. The focus was on Shanghai and Harbin, which enabled Australian Jews who had migrated from China to Australia after the war to share their memories. The conference was held on July 26-27 event, hosted by the Jewish Museum of Australia and The University of Melbourne. It raised issues, such as preserving landmarks in the wartime Jewish ghetto of Hongkew in Shanghai, addressed by keynote speaker Professor Jiang Jin, of the East China Normal University in Shanghai. Professor Jin is an urban historian who has researched Jewish Shanghai districts and buildings. She spoke about the restoration of the Ohel Moshe Synagogue building as a Jews centre and museum, after it had

been used as government offices. As *the Australian Jewish News* reported:

She said normalised relations between China and Israel since the 1990s and the country opening up after the Cultural Revolution, spurred “a small scholarly community studying Jewish history”. However, the old Jewish quarter is on prime real estate, which could leave Jewish landmarks exposed to urban development’.



**From left: Professor Jiang Jin with former Shanghai refugees Ernst and Edith Kohn and Professor Antonia Finnane at the symposium.**

The other keynote speaker, Associate Professor Suzanne Rutland analysed the connections of Australian Jewry and China from the late nineteenth century to the opening up of China in the 1980s and the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel in 1992. Papers were also presented by Dr Maisie Meyer, **from London**, on ‘*Baghdadi Jews in Shanghai: the formation of identity*’, Professor Andrew Jakubowicz, on *Polish Jews in Shanghai: politics and community among survivors*, Mara Moustafine, on *H’arbin and the Russian Jews of China*’ and Antonia Finnane, ‘*Stateless in Shanghai: some strategies of belonging*’. The conference ended with a roundtable discussion on the future of the directions of study of the Jewish Chinese Past.

## SHALOM INSTITUTE

### Dr. Zohar Raviv

Zohar Raviv has been a visiting scholar for the Shalom Institute’s Mosaic program. He is an internationally renowned educator of Judaism whose academic and professional experience span Israel, North America, Europe, South Africa and Australia. Raviv holds a B.A in Land of Israel Studies from Bar-Ilan University, a Joint M.A in Judaic Studies and Jewish Education from Brandeis University, as well as an M.A in Near Eastern Studies and a PhD in Jewish Thought and Mysticism – both from the University of Michigan, where he was awarded the Marshall Weinberg Prize for Outstanding Graduate Work in Judaic Studies. Raviv is currently a Visiting Assistant Professor of Jewish Thought at the Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies in Chicago and also serves as the Hebrew University Florence Melton Adult Mini-School Visiting Scholar to

North America. Starting September 2009 Raviv will assume the position of Assistant Professor of Jewish Studies at Oberlin College.



Prof. Raviv served as faculty in the Institute for Informal Jewish Education at Brandeis University, as well as Visiting Scholar in Residence at Monash University (Melbourne) and the Shalom Institute at the University of New South Wales (Sydney). His book on the eminent 16th century Safedian Kabbalist, Rabbi Moses Cordovero was recently published by VDM Verlag (Germany), and he is currently working on his second book, titled *The Wondering Jew*. While in Sydney he is presenting two courses:

### **The Prophets of Israel - Standing in the Shadow of God**

Contrary to popular belief, Biblical prophets were not individuals with a hold on the future. Neither soothsayer nor fortune-teller, the prophets played a significant role in shaping the ethical backbone of the Jewish nation and fought to maintain its covenantal relationship with God. By looking into biblical texts and secondary materials this course examines the evolution of the prophetic idea in Judaism, exploring the lives, trials, values and theological legacies of those “Who had stood in the shadow of God”.

### **The Evolving "One"- Ideas of God in Jewish Discourse**

While the unity of God is celebrated as a definitive idea in Judaism, the meaning of this monotheistic sovereignty is not as uniform as one might assume. God’s existence and interaction with people and the world have been viewed from a myriad of vantage points, creating a tapestry of mythological, religious, spiritual and rational paths to describe the elusiveness of this “oneness.” Through the study of primary and secondary sources, this course follows the development of the God of Israel in Jewish discourse and charts five historical and conceptual milestones in its evolution: Biblical, Rabbinic, Medieval, Pre-Modern and the Modern eras.

**ICCJ Conference. A Time for Recommitment. 2009 July 5-8 Berlin.**

The recent Conference of the International Council of Christians and Jews in Berlin celebrated Jewish-Christian dialogue seventy years after the World War II and the Holocaust by launching a seminal document, entitled: *A Time for Recommitment. The Twelve Points of Berlin: A Call to Christian and Jewish Communities Worldwide.*, Representatives from twenty-two countries signed the document, in the presence of the German Minister of the Interior Dr Wolfgang Schauble and several dignitaries including the Ambassador of Israel., and about two hundred representatives from Christian and Jewish communities. I signed on behalf of Australia.

The document follows another issued in the summer of 1947 at Seelesberg by a group of sixty-five Christians and Jews who came together to express their deep remorse over the Holocaust, their determination to combat anti-Semitism, and their desire to foster stronger relationships between Jews and Christians. In addressing these vital concerns, they issued a call in the form of ten points to Christian churches to reform and renew their understanding of Judaism and the relationships between Judaism and Christianity.



On the 5<sup>th</sup> of July 2009, sixty years later, the International Council of Christians and Jews has issued a new call. This time it is addressed to both Christian and Jewish communities round the world. After listing the twelve points and several specific tasks for each one, including care for the environment and a call for justice, the document reviews the history of the relationship



between Christians and Jews, which has provided the contextual framework and impetus for this initiative. The document, carefully prepared by a group of both Christians and Jews marks a new stage in the dialogue, which requires continual effort in the face of new challenges in the twenty-first century. The document is aimed for the first time at Jews and urges them to take account of Christian efforts at reform in their attitudes towards Jews and calls on Christians to develop theological understandings of Israel that affirm its religious integrity. It is notable that the German Government is making great efforts to atone for the evils of its Nazi past. We visited the new Holocaust Memorial and the Jewish Museum and the Brandenburg Gate. It is hoped that the

launching of this document will usher in a new period of recommitment to dialogue between Jews and Christians and will convince people that together we are working to build up a world of peace and justice where all can live together sustainably and in harmony.

The Twelve Points of Berlin document can be found on the ICCJ website at : <http://www.iccj.org/en/index.php>.

**Marianne Dacy**

## **PROFILE OF A STUDENT: MONASH UNIVERSITY**

### **DAVID SLUCKI**

I am currently in my final year of writing my doctoral thesis at the Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation at Monash University. My supervisors are Professors Leah Garrett and Andrew Markus. My thesis focuses on the post-Holocaust history of the Jewish Labor Bund as it came to terms with the new circumstances under which Jews around the world found themselves. I am interested in the Bundists' own self-perception. I am therefore examining how Bundists understood the implications of the genocide, the way they dealt with the dissolution of the Polish Bund in 1948, how they reacted to the establishment and rise of the Jewish state, and how they settled in their new homes. Having been a major force in the Polish-Jewish world, how did Bundists come to grips with their significantly-reduced influence? And what did Jewishness mean to them in a time when Yiddish was being spoken less and less? Focusing on Bundist communities throughout the world, I will be looking at the Bundist notion of *doykayt* [literally 'here-ness' in Yiddish] as a model for understanding contemporary Jewish identity and diasporas. *Doykayt* emphasises the importance of Jews building strong communities in the countries where they lived, and insists that the fate of Jews is tightly bound up with the fate of humanity. *Doykayt* is a repudiation of Jewish exceptionalism, recognizing the rich contribution that cultural exchange and diversity—both

Jewish and non-Jewish—can have on Jewish communal life. My thesis challenges the traditional historiographical assumption that the Bund perished in the ruins of the Warsaw Ghetto, arguing instead, that even though the movement would no longer play a key role in global Jewish politics

after the Holocaust, it did occupy an important place in the lives of thousands of Jews around the world, and touched the lives of many thousands more.

This is an important and under-researched field. It highlights the diversity of Jewish worlds even in the wake of the Holocaust and the establishment of a Jewish state, and proposes alternative ways of thinking about Jewish life and Jewish identity in an increasingly transnational world, one where diasporas have become a normal part of life for many millions of people. It also broadens our understanding of the way Holocaust survivors responded to their grief and displacement, and how they related to the ever-changing complexion of the Jewish world.

As part of my research, I spent three months in Germany at the end of 2007 as a guest scholar at the Simon Dubnow Institute for Jewish History and Culture at Leipzig University, and in June 2008 I was invited to participate in the International Advanced Yiddish Seminar at Tel Aviv University, which brought together 25 graduate students involved in Yiddish literature and history and some of the leading Yiddish scholars in the world.

News from The Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation

### **Zohar Conference**

The Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation convened a major international conference on the Zohar, the classic work of the Spanish Kabbalah, at Monash University's Prato conference in Italy during mid July.

The conference brought together for the first time the leading Zohar scholars from around the world for an intensive symposium dedicated to exploring new horizons in Zohar scholarship. Participants included Israel Prize winner Professor Moshe Idel from the Hebrew University as well as Professors Art Green and Daniel Matt and head of Jewish Thought at the University of Tel Aviv, Professor Ronit Meroz.

The conference proceedings will be published as two special volumes of the journal *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts*, the most prestigious journal in the field. In the words of Professor Idel, "This was the most significant Kabbalah conference in the last 20 years".

### **Israel Studies Website**

A new Israel Studies website with details of activities around the Leon Liberman Chair in Modern Israel Studies can be found at [www.israelstudies.wordpress.com](http://www.israelstudies.wordpress.com)

### **Leon Liberman Lecture Series**

The Leon Liberman Lecture series in Modern Israel Studies on the theme, Israel Among the Nations, has been a resounding success featuring four weekly lectures by leading scholars exploring the place of Israel in the world today.

The first by Professor Fania Oz-Salzberger, Leon Liberman Chair in Modern Israel Studies at Monash University, on “Israel and Europe: Past Burdens: Future Assets” examined the complex and sensitive relationship between Israel and the European Union, Israel and specific European countries and Israel and Europe as a concept.

The second lecture entitled “The Islamic Revolution in Iran: A View from Israel”, presented by Professor David Menashri, Director of the Centre for Iranian Studies at Tel Aviv University, analysed the challenges facing Iran and those it is presenting to the region and beyond.

The third lecture, the Monash Israel Oration, was delivered by Professor Itamar Rabinovich, past President and Professor of Middle East Studies at Tel Aviv University. Professor Rabinovich is also Distinguished Global Professor at New York University and was Israel’s Ambassador to the United States from 1993-96, and chief negotiator with Syria. His lecture on “Israel and the New Middle East: What Next?” examined the present and anticipated phases in Israel’s 60-year-old quest to come to terms with its Middle Eastern environment.

The final lecture by Professor Yedidia Stern on Wednesday August 19 entitled “Israel and the Nations: Universal or Unique?” will look at how Israel defines itself as both a Jewish and democratic State and discuss questions of identity and politics, mythology and reality, culture and governance.

Professor Yedidia Stern appointed to Monash

Professor Yedidia Stern has been appointed Sir Louis Matheson Distinguished Visiting Professor at Monash University. The appointment of this prestigious position will bring Professor Stern to Monash every year as part of the ACJC’s developing Israel Studies program led by the Leon Liberman Chair in Modern Israel

Studies, Professor Fania Oz-Salzberger. Professor Stern is Professor of Law at Bar Ilan University, Vice President of the Democracy Institute where he is part of a team writing a constitution for the State of Israel. He will give a public lecture on Wednesday 19 August on “Israel and the Nations: Universal or Unique?”

### **Avivah Zornberg lecture, master classes**

The ACJC is hosting Dr Avivah Zornberg, one of the world’s leading interpreters of the Bible, who weaves contemporary themes from Torah, psychoanalysis, literature and traditional commentary. She is delivering a public lecture on Sunday 23 August and will give two Master Classes on Monday 24 August and Thursday 27 August. Enquiries: [acjc@arts.monash.edu.au](mailto:acjc@arts.monash.edu.au) or call 9902 9933.

### **Debbie Masel book launch**

The ACJC is also hosting the launch of Debbie Masel’s new book, *In the Cleft of the Rock*, on Sunday 23 August. The book will be launched by Avivah Zornberg and Sam Lipski AM, CEO of the Pratt Foundation.

**BENEFACTOR MEMBER CATEGORY**

The Australian Association of Jewish Studies has always operated on a shoe string basis, but this lack of funding really limits what we are able to achieve as an association. Following the pleas by our president, Dr Dvir Abramovich, we have decided to add a new membership category for Benefactor members, with a contribution of \$250, rather than the usual \$60 membership.

Why not consider benefactor member of the association. It will help to put us on a much better financial footing.

**MEMBERSHIP Fees for 2009**

MEMBERSHIP FEES for the Australian Association for Jewish Studies (ABN 16535824946) are current from 1 January 2009–31 December 2009 (include the *Australian Journal of Jewish Studies* published annually (towards end of current year), AAJS Newsletter, book discounts, and discounted registration fee for the AAJS annual February conference)

Benefactor : \$250

Regular: \$60 (Aus)

Pensioner/ Full-time Student: \$25 (Aus)

Institutional: \$70 (Aus)

Overseas: \$80 (Aus)

All correspondence to:

PO Box 233, Holme Building, University of Sydney NSW 2006

NAME:.....

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ADDRESS:.....

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TEL:.....

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Post your cheque to the above address.

Access: <http://www.geocities.com/aajsite/AAJSMembership.htm> for Pay Pal.