



# Yale Program for the Study of Antisemitism

NEWSLETTER • ACADEMIC YEAR 2019–2020

## DIRECTOR

**Maurice Samuels**, Betty Jane Anlyan Professor of French

## ADVISORY GROUP

**Jeffrey Alexander**, Lillian Chavenson Saden Professor of Sociology; Director, Center for Cultural Sociology

**Carolyn J. Dean**, Charles J. Stille Professor of History and French

**John Dovidio**, Dean of Academic Affairs of the FAS; Carl I. Hovland Professor of Psychology

**Paul Franks**, Professor of Philosophy, Judaic Studies and Religious Studies

**Ivan Marcus**, Frederick P. Rose Professor of Jewish History and Professor of Religious Studies

**Samuel Moyn**, Professor of Law and Professor of History

**Stephen Naron**, Director of the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies

**Marci Shore**, Associate Professor of History

**Steven Smith**, Alfred Cowles Professor of Political Science and Professor of Philosophy

**Timothy Snyder**, Bird White Housum Professor of History

**David Sorkin**, Lucy G. Moses Professor of Judaic Studies and Professor of History

**Jason Stanley**, Jacob Urowsky Professor of Philosophy and Professor of Linguistics

## AFFILIATES

**Seyla Benhabib**, Eugene Meyer Professor of Political Science and Philosophy

**Howard Bloch**, Sterling Professor of French

**Steven Fraade**, Mark Taper Professor of History of Judaism

**Christine Hayes**, Robert F. and Patricia Ross Weis Professor of Religious Studies in Classical Judaica

**Charles Hill**, Brady-Johnson Distinguished Fellow in Grand Strategy

**Amy Hungerford**, Professor of English and American Studies

**Alice Kaplan**, John M. Musser Professor of French

**Millicent Marcus**, Professor of Italian

**Christopher Miller**, Frederick Clifford Ford Professor of French and African American Studies

**Paul North**, Professor of German

**Brigitte Peucker**, Elias W. Leavenworth Professor of German and Film Studies

**Rabbi James E. Ponet**, Howard M. Holtzmann Jewish Chaplain, Emeritus

**Joanne Rudolf**, Emeritus

**Stuart Schwartz**, George Burton Adams Professor of History

**Eliyahu Stern**, Associate Professor of Judaic Studies, Religious Studies, and History

**Katie Trumpener**, Emily Sanford Professor of Comparative Literature and English

**Bruce Wexler**, Professor Emeritus and Senior Research Scientist in Psychiatry

**Laura Wexler**, Professor of American Studies and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

## ADMINISTRATOR

**Inessa Laskova**

## From the Director...



*Maurice Samuels*

I was delivering a lecture – on Zoom, of course – related to my new book on the origins of antisemitism in nineteenth-century France. Suddenly vile messages started to flash on the screen: “Jews died LOL.” “6.6 million great.” The “bomber” (as we now call those who intrude on video conferences) managed to fire off a few more insults before being banished by the horrified host. Such was my introduction to one of the sinister side-effects of the coronavirus: the propagation of hate against Jews and other minority groups.

In the period before the virus disrupted every aspect of our daily existence, reports of antisemitism had begun appearing with alarming frequency. Attacks against Jews in Europe have been on the rise since the start of the new millennium, often spiking in conjunction with escalations of violence in the Middle East. In the past few years, however, antisemitism has become a regular feature of life in the United States as well. The synagogue shootings in Pittsburgh and Poway, the attacks on Hasidic Jews in New York, and the killing rampage at a kosher supermarket in New Jersey alerted Americans to the fact that the immunity they believed they possessed from the virus of antisemitism was a figment of the national imagination.

Although antisemitism has been displaced from headlines by the public health catastrophe, it remains a serious threat. Indeed, it has begun to mutate in dangerous ways. A report by the Kantor Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry at Tel Aviv University documents an 18% rise in violent antisemitic incidents worldwide in 2019 compared to the previous year. The report also points to evidence of an increase in antisemitism specifically related to Covid-19.

Zoom-bombing Jewish events constitutes one such manifestation of a novel coronavirus form of antisemitism. Conspiracy theories that circulate on social media accusing Jews of causing the virus are another. According to the Kantor Center report, these paranoid fantasies emanate mainly from white supremacist sources but have also taken root among radical Islamists who blame Zionists for unleashing the virus on Iran and other Muslim countries. Such conspiracy theories harken back to one of the oldest antisemitic calumnies: blaming Jews for poisoning the wells during outbreaks of the bubonic plague in the Middle Ages. A new twist on the old paranoia has wily Israeli scientists spreading the disease in order to profit from vaccines they have secretly developed.

[\(continues on page 2\)](#)

## From the Director... (continued)

The Kantor Center report makes an important point: Jews have by no means been the only minority group to find themselves targeted as a result of the pandemic. Racist hate-mongers have falsely stigmatized Asians – especially Chinese – as virus carriers and have unfairly faulted them for originating the disease. Within the Muslim world, some Sunnis consider the scale of the outbreak in Iran as punishment for supposed Shi’a misdeeds. And religious and political zealots of every persuasion blame the virus on their real or imagined enemies. The coronavirus has underscored the degree to which antisemitism is not an isolated phenomenon, but rather forms part of a wider culture of hate, rooted in deep social conflicts, that implicates us all.

Before the virus struck in March, it had been an especially active year for the Yale Program for the Study of Antisemitism. In February, we hosted an international conference to commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the publication of the landmark study *The Authoritarian Personality*. Organized by Kirk Wetters of the Department of German, along with colleagues from other universities, the conference brought a stellar line-up of speakers to campus and featured keynote addresses by Peter Gordon (Harvard) and Martin Jay (Berkeley). The conference was made possible by generous grants from the Edward J. and Dorothy Clarke Kempf Fund, the Knapp Family Foundation, the Jason M. Folk Memorial Fund, and the Federal Republic of Germany through the German Academic Exchange Service



Kirk Wetters, *The Authoritarian Personality* Conference, Feb. 14-15, 2020

(DAAD). Additionally, we hosted fourteen speakers as part of the Benjamin and Barbara Zucker Lecture Series.

We were happy to partner with the Council on Middle Eastern Studies to sponsor Aomar Boum (UCLA) speaking about Vichy forced labor camps in the Sahara during WWII and Deborah Starr (Cornell) speaking about the representation of Jews in Egyptian cinema.

Several lecturers addressed the Shoah and its aftermath. Judith Lyon-Caen (EHESS) delivered a lecture on Holocaust history and its literary sources and Jacques Semelin (Sciences-Po) talked about the survival strategies of Jews in France during WWII. Ian Thomson, the award-winning biographer of Primo Levi, spoke about the Italian author and Holocaust survivor in honor of the one hundredth anniversary of his birth. Mikhal Dekel (CCNY) gave a talk relating to her recent book on Polish Jews who escaped the Holocaust via Tehran. And Michele Battini (University of Pisa) delivered a lecture on the origins of European antisemitism and its relation to anticapitalism.

The lectures focusing on contemporary antisemitism were particularly rich this year. Journalist and author Susie Linfield spoke about contemporary anti-Zionism and its relation to antisemitism. A team of French specialists – Céline Masson, Béatrice Madiot, Jean Szlamowicz – highlighted their research into antisemitism among junior high school students in France and Yana Grinshpun (Paris II - Sorbonne Nouvelle University) addressed the question of antisemitism in the French media. Political scientist Ayal Feinberg (Texas A&M) introduced us to his quantitative study of contemporary antisemitism in North America and Europe. And journalist and writer Marc Weitzmann offered a comparative analysis of contemporary antisemitism in North America and Europe.

In addition, in partnership with the Slifka Center, we sponsored a panel discussion at the Yale Law School on the question of whether immigrant detention camps at the border should be called “concentration camps,” featuring Yale professors Carolyn Dean, Alicia Schmidt Camacho, Jason Stanley, and Michael Wishnie, moderated by author Andrea Pitzer.

of Yale's quality studying this topic is critical for us [...] to combat this kind of scourge.”

— Ira Forman, Former U.S. State Department Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism

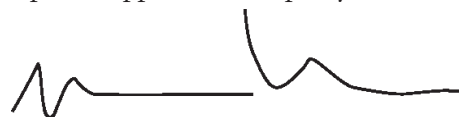
We were particularly happy that the student board of YPSA, led by the remarkable Miryl Hilibrand, organized an evening featuring Rabbi Jonah Pesner and Reverend Hurmon Hamilton in a wide-ranging conversation about ways to confront bigotry across lines of difference. Unfortunately, the coronavirus forced us to cancel the undergraduate conference on contemporary antisemitism in the US that the student board had been preparing to host. We wish Miryl and the other graduating seniors the best of luck as they pursue their passions away from New Haven.

Our postdoctoral fellow, Britt Tevis, taught a very successful undergraduate course on American antisemitism. Britt is leaving us to accept a prestigious fellowship at Penn's Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies.

Due to the travel ban this summer, we were able to award the Salo and Jeannette M. Baron student research grants to only two students: William Kwok, with the “Banality of Organization: Mass Killings as a Coordination Problem in the Shadow of War” project, and Eden Mendelsohn, who is planning to produce a production of *The Merchant of Venice*.

We are looking forward to an exciting line-up of speakers this coming school year. For the foreseeable future, these will be on Zoom, which offers the advantage of allowing us to reach beyond a local Yale audience. Please check the YPSA website regularly for details and make sure to sign up for our mailing list. We will do our best to keep the bombers away!

Let me conclude by thanking my colleagues from across the university who have served on the YPSA Advisory Board, assisted in reading fellowship applications, and attended our various events. I also want to thank our exceptional administrator, Inessa Laskova, as well as Gary Tomlinson, Jessica Kasje, and the entire staff of the Whitney Humanities Center for all their help and support over the past year.




Maurice Samuels

Director, Yale Program for the Study of Antisemitism

Yale Program for the Study of Antisemitism Presents

## RELIGION & ACTIVISM IN CONVERSATION

How People of Faith Cross Lines of Difference,  
Confront the Fierce Urgency of Now, and  
Create a More Just World



Rabbi Jonah Pesner & Rev. Hurmon Hamilton

**Thursday, February 13th, 6:30-8pm**

WHC, Room 208  
Refreshments Provided

Whitney Humanities Center, 53 Wall Street, New Haven, CT 06511



Maurice Samuels and Marc Weitzmann

Thursday, September 12, 2019

**Aomar Boum**, University of California

“Revisiting Vichy Forced Labor Camps in the Sahara, 1940-1945”

Co-Sponsored by the Council on Middle East Studies

---

Thursday, September 19, 2019

**Deborah Starr**, Cornell University

“Jews in Early Egyptian Cinema: Between Nationalism and Nationality”

Co-Sponsored by the Council on Middle East Studies

---

Wednesday, October 2, 2019

## **The Benjamin (Yale 1962) and Barbara Zucker Lecture Series**

**Judith Lyon-Caen**, EHESS, Paris

“Poems-Documents: Holocaust History and Its Literary Sources”

---

Wednesday, October 30, 2019

## **The Benjamin (Yale 1962) and Barbara Zucker Lecture Series**

**Yana Grinshpun**, Paris III-Sorbonne Nouvelle University

“The Rhetoric of Antisemitism. How to Build a Political Landscape with Words: Example of French Media”

---

Wednesday, October 30, 2019

## **The Benjamin (Yale 1962) and Barbara Zucker Lecture Series**

**Céline Masson**, University of Picardy Jules Vernes

**Béatrice Madiot**, University of Picardy Jules Vernes

**Jean Szlamowicz**, University of Burgundy

“Adolescence and Antisemitism, Budding Political Ideas. A Study in French Junior High Schools Around Paris”

---

Tuesday, November 5, 2019

## **The Benjamin (Yale 1962) and Barbara Zucker Lecture Series**

**Michele Battini**, University of Pisa

“Socialism of Fools: An Interpretation of Anti-Jewish Anti-Capitalism in Modern Europe”

---



*Judith Lyon-Caen and Maurice Samuels*

Tuesday, November 5, 2019

## **Panel Discussion: Carolyn Dean, Jason Stanley, Alicia Schmidt Camacho, and Michael Wishnie**

“Why We Must (Not) Call US Border Camps ‘Concentration Camps’”

Sponsored and Organized by the Slifka Center

---

Wednesday, November 20, 2019

**Ian Thomson**, writer

“Primo Levi’s Homecoming, 1945-46: The Need to Bear Witness”

Co-Sponsored by the Italian Department, Slifka Center, and Fortunoff Video Archive

---

Thursday, November 21, 2019

## **The Benjamin (Yale 1962) and Barbara Zucker Lecture Series**

**Susie Linfield**, New York University

“Zionism and Its Discontents”

---

Wednesday, January 29, 2020

## **The Benjamin (Yale 1962) and Barbara Zucker Lecture Series**

**Ayal Feinberg**, Texas A&M University-Commerce

“Quantifying Contemporary Antisemitism: Challenges and Findings from North America and Europe”

---

Wednesday, February 12, 2020

**The Benjamin (Yale 1962) and Barbara Zucker  
Lecture Series**

**Mikhal Dekel**, Rifkind Center for the Humanities and  
Arts, CCNY

“Tehran Children: Poles & Jews in the USSR and the  
Middle East, 1939-1947”

Thursday, February 13, 2020

**Rabbi Jonah Pesner & Rev. Hurmon Hamilton**

“Religion & Activism in Conversation: How People of  
Faith Cross Lines of Difference, Confront the Fierce  
Urgency of Now, and Create a More Just World.”

February 14-15, 2020

**Annual Conference of the Yale Program for the  
Study of Antisemitism**

The Authoritarian Personality

Tuesday, March 3, 2020

**The Benjamin (Yale 1962) and Barbara Zucker  
Lecture Series**

**Marc Weitzmann**, journalist and novelist

“Antisemitism and Hate Culture in France and in the US: A  
Comparative Story, 2000-2019”



*Martin Jay, Keynote Speaker at the Authoritarian Personality Conference*



*Yana Grinshpun*



*Robyn Marasco*

# Books on Antisemitism by the YPSA Advisory Board Members

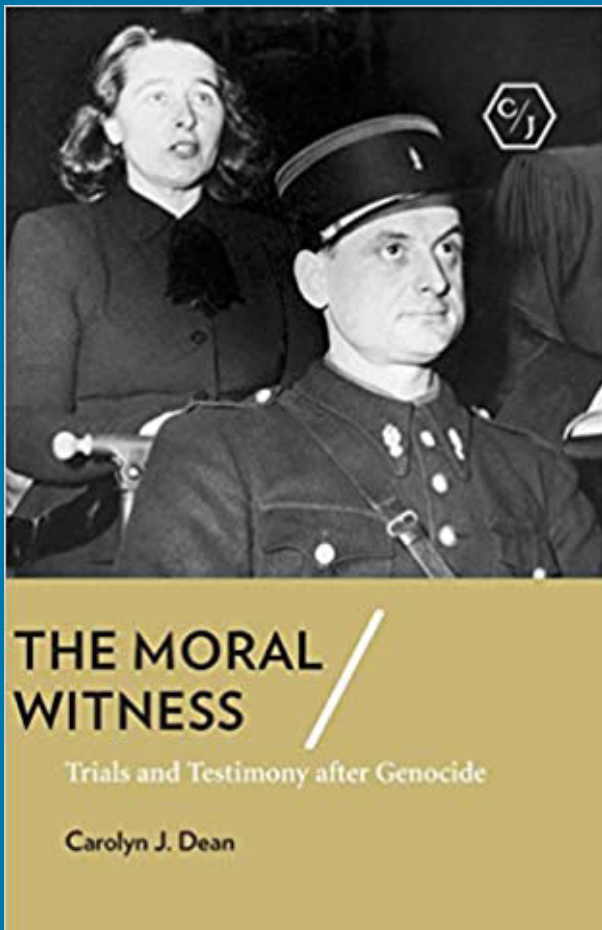
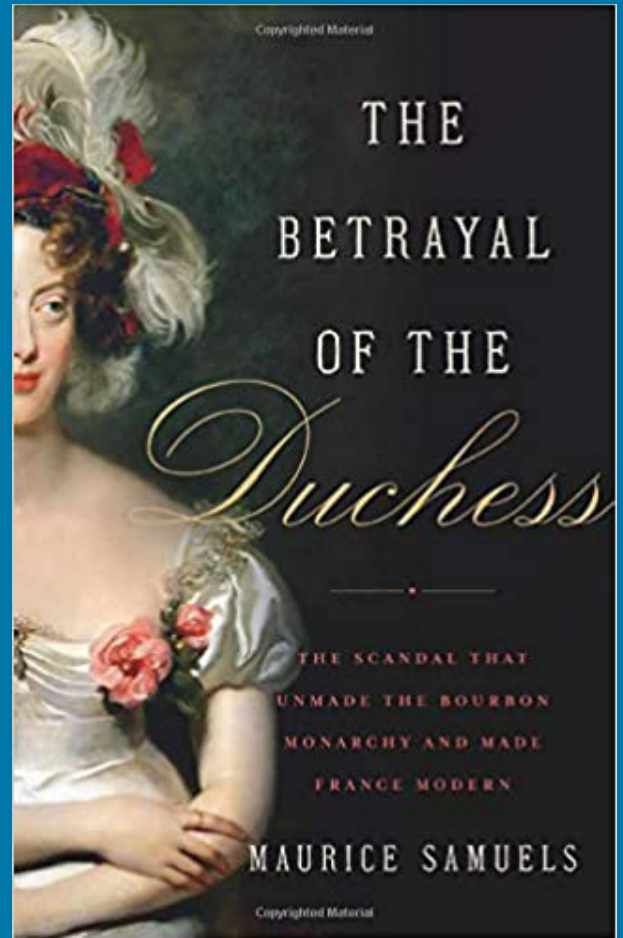
Maurice Samuels "The Betrayal of the Duchess: The Scandal That Unmade the Bourbon Monarchy and Made France Modern"

Carolyn J. Dean "The Moral Witness: Trials and Testimony after Genocide"

Timothy Snyder "The Road to Unfreedom: Russia, Europe, America"

David Sorkin "Jewish Emancipation: A History Across Five Centuries"

Jason Stanley "How Fascism Works: The Politics



Please sign up for our mailing list

[ypsa.yale.edu/ mailing-list-sign](https://ypsa.yale.edu/ mailing-list-sign)

Check our website frequently for updates on events and more

[ypsa.yale.edu](https://ypsa.yale.edu)