

# YPSA

## THE YALE PROGRAM FOR THE STUDY OF ANTISEMITISM

Newsletter • May 2012

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Maurice Samuels  
*Professor of French*

### Letter from the Director

This past spring, the murder of three small children and their teacher at a Jewish school in Toulouse, France was yet another shocking indication that antisemitism is again on the rise. In Europe, the danger comes increasingly from radical Islamists, as was the case in Toulouse, and their apologists on the fringe left, but right-wing groups also still pose a threat. In the United States, Jewish students are all too often targeted because they are perceived as being associated with Israel. The state of Israel itself has been the object of genocidal threats by its neighbors in the region.

This recent spike in antisemitism did not arise spontaneously from current political events. On the contrary, what some scholars call the “new antisemitism” has close ties to older forms of Jew-hatred, as evidenced by the popularity of the 19th-century hoax *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* in certain parts of the Middle East today. The Yale Program for the Study of Antisemitism (YPSA) was formed in June, 2011, to deepen understanding of the phenomenon of antisemitism by exploring both its contemporary manifestations and its historical roots. One of only two such programs at a major American university and one of only a handful in the world, YPSA seeks to foster innovative research and to encourage the study of antisemitism at Yale and beyond.

To promote and publicize research on antisemitism, YPSA hosts a cutting-edge lecture series, which is free and open to the public. In the 2011-2012 academic year, we sponsored 9 lectures, roughly evenly divided between current events and history. Topics covered by outside speakers included the Iranian threat to Israel (A. Rosenfeld), antisemitism in the Muslim Middle East (M. Litvak), the American response to the Nazi genocide (D. Lipstadt), British attitudes toward Jews in the 19th century (D. Feldman), and the plunder of Jewish property in Eastern Europe during the Holocaust (J. Gross). Members of the Yale faculty

spoke about how “the other” is represented in current Palestinian and Israeli textbooks (B. Wexler), problems of diversity in France today (M. Samuels and P. Weil), and Jews and capitalism in the early modern period (F. Trivellato). Finally, we hosted a panel on different ways to theorize the study of antisemitism (J. Judaken and J. Alexander).

Thanks to the support of the Salo W. and Jeannette M. Baron Foundation, YPSA was able to award 8 research grants to Yale faculty and students. Honoring the extraordinary lives and careers of Professor and Mrs. Baron, these grants will facilitate research by Yale undergraduates on topics including the Holocaust diary of H el ene Berr (Z. Egelman), the antisemitic writing of the recently deceased Egyptian cleric Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi (E. Katz), and depictions of Jews in French Canadian literature from the 1940s to the 1990s (B. Mappin-Kasirer). Yale graduate students will use their Baron grants to study the treatment of Jews in Frankfurt (M. Scholz), Jews and the police in Eastern Europe (D. Petruccelli), and the treatment of religious minorities in Renaissance Florence (J. Walden), as well as to work in Yale’s Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies (A. Smith). Yale Professor Timothy Snyder, the author of *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin*, will use his Baron grant to gather materials for his course on the history of the Holocaust.

YPSA will host an annual conference in order to focus attention on a specific aspect of the problem of antisemitism. The first conference, on “Antisemitism in France: Past, Present, and Future,” will take place on October 5, 2012 at the Whitney Humanities Center. At this day-long event, scholars from France, Israel, and across the United States will come together to debate the evolving problem of antisemitism in a country that is known for having been the first European country to grant citizenship to the Jews, but that has seen some of the worst antisemitic violence in recent years. How does the “new antisemitism” in France compare to earlier instances, such as the Dreyfus Affair and Vichy? And

how have responses to it differed? The event is free and open to the public. Mark your calendars now and be sure to check our website for further details.

In addition to encouraging teaching on antisemitism by Yale faculty, YPSA will bring a distinguished scholar for a semester every year to teach courses at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. Our first visiting professor will be Henry Rousso, of the renowned French National Scientific Research Center (CNRS), who is one of the leading specialists of the history and memory of the Holocaust. In the fall of 2012, he will teach courses on “The Holocaust in France” (undergraduate) and “Judging the Holocaust: Law, History, and Politics” (graduate). He will also participate in the conference and give a public lecture. We are very eager to have him with us.

In addition to these more public activities, YPSA sponsors a reading group in which faculty from across the disciplines gather to discuss crucial texts relating to antisemitism. The group has met roughly every month and frequently discussed texts by YPSA’s visiting speakers. It is our belief that the real strength of YPSA consists in the group of extraordinary scholars on the Yale faculty working on the problem of antisemitism. I am grateful to our affiliated faculty for their eager participation in our activities this past year.

Let me conclude by thanking the members of the YPSA Advisory Board, who have provided extraordinary support; Inessa Laskova, our administrative assistant, who has been wonderful to work with; and Maria Rosa Menocal, who has graciously provided us with a home at the Whitney Humanities Center. I urge all of you to sign up for our mailing list if you haven’t already and to check our website for news of upcoming events.



Maurice Samuels  
Director, Yale Program for the Study of Antisemitism

## Lectures 2011 – 2012



Meir Litvak

### September 21

*On the Periphery of the Holocaust: Killing and Plunder of Jews by their Neighbors*

JAN GROSS

Norman B. Tomlinson '16 and '48 Professor of War and Society, Professor of History  
Princeton University

*Co-sponsored by the Yale Department of History*

### October 3

*On Good and Bad Credit: A Forgotten Chapter in European Debates about Jews and Capitalism*

FRANCESCA TRIVELLATO

Professor of History  
Yale University

*Co-sponsored with the Transitions to Modernity Colloquium*

### October 11

*Exploring Diversity in France*

Roundtable featuring:

MAURICE SAMUELS  
Professor of French  
Yale University

PATRICK WEIL  
Senior Research Fellow  
CNRS, University of Paris 1 (Sorbonne)

*Co-sponsored with Humanity in Action*

### October 17

*Holocaust Denial and Holocaust Approval: Two Sources of the 'New Antisemitism'*

ALVIN ROSENFELD

Professor of English and Jewish Studies  
Irving M. Glazer Chair in Jewish Studies  
Director, Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism  
Indiana University

### November 2

*Joint Israeli-Palestinian Study of the Portrayal of the 'Other' in School Books, Sponsored by the Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land: Background, Methods and Process*

BRUCE WEXLER

Professor Emeritus of and Senior Research Scientist in Psychiatry  
Yale Medical School

### November 30

*Playing the Blame Game: American Jews and the Historiography of America and the Holocaust*

DEBORAH LIPSTADT

Dorot Professor of Modern Jewish and Holocaust Studies  
Tam Institute for Jewish Studies/Department of Religion  
Emory University

## January 25

*The 'Jewish type' and the 'mean Englishman': Equality, Difference and the Jews, 1750-1900*

DAVID FELDMAN

Professor of History

Director, Pears Institute for the Study of Antisemitism Birkbeck, University of London

*Talk co-sponsored by Yale Modern Britain Group and the European Studies Council*

## February 16

*Theorizing the Study of Antisemitism*

Roundtable featuring:

JONATHAN JUDAEN

Spence L. Wilson Chair in the Humanities

Rhodes College

JEFFREY ALEXANDER

Lillian Chavenson Saden Professor of Sociology

Yale University

## February 27

*Anti-Semitism in the Muslim Middle East*

MEIR LITVAK

Senior Researcher

Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies

Tel Aviv University



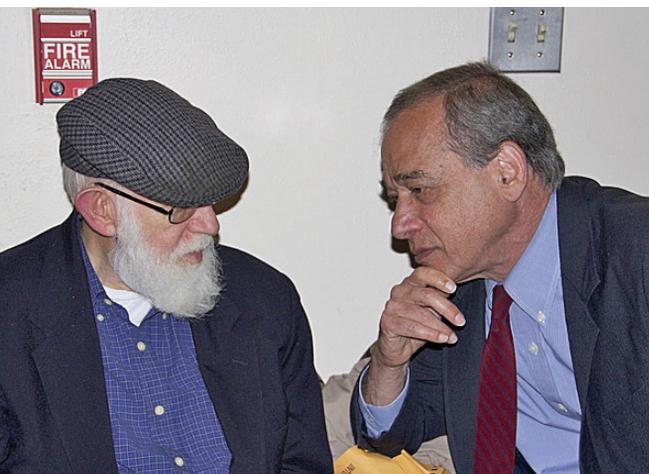
Alvin Rosenfeld



Maurice Samuels



Jan Gross Lecture



*Geoffrey Hartman and Alvin Rosenfeld*

**“YPSA put together an exciting program in its first year under Professor Samuels’ stewardship. It is an excellent omen for continuing success in the future.”**

JAN GROSS

*Norman B. Tomlinson ’16 and ’48  
Professor of War and Society,  
Professor of History, Princeton University*

**“Antisemitism, dormant for a period after WWII, has become resurgent in recent years and is once again a source of serious social concern. In its first year, YPSA has shown an admirable willingness to confront this pathology in both its historical and contemporary manifestations. Through its high-level scholarly lectures and research programs, it is off to a promising start and deserves to continue.”**

ALVIN H. ROSENFELD

*Professor of English and Jewish Studies  
Irving M. Glazer Chair in Jewish Studies  
Director, Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism  
Indiana University*

**“I believe that the Yale Program for the Study of Antisemitism has made a very promising start under the direction of Prof. Maurice Samuels, who is a fine scholar in his own right. It seems to me that it is succeeding in finding an appropriate balance between the study of antisemitism in its historical manifestations and the current challenges posed by contemporary antisemitic trends around the world. I’m confident that in its present form it will continue to evolve in a way that will enable it to make its mark in establishing a solid basis for advancing scholarship in this field.”**

PROF. ROBERT S. WISTRICH

*Director  
The Vidal Sassoon International Center  
for the Study of Antisemitism - SICSA*

## Salo W. and Jeannette M. Baron Research Grants

Through the generous support of the Salo W. and Jeannette M. Baron Foundation, YPSA was able to award eight research grants to Yale students and faculty. These first Salo W. and Jeannette M. Baron Research Scholars were chosen on a competitive basis and received between \$500 and \$3000 to conduct research over the summer on a topic relating to antisemitism. They will present their research at a YPSA colloquium in 2012-13.

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### Students

#### *Zoe Egelman, Yale undergraduate*

When H el ene Berr, at the age of 23, was forced from her Paris home in 1944, she left behind a journal in which she had documented her experience as a Jewish, French girl during the Occupation. This diary is both a poetic masterpiece of a young student of letters as well as an immense contribution to social history, shedding light on the fate of the assimilated French bourgeoisie in face of anti-Semitic persecution. However, the private and spontaneous nature of her diary writing leaves a vague picture of H el ene as a young victim of the Shoah. Furthermore, there is little secondary scholarship on H el ene and her Journal, published for public readership only three years ago. I will spend nine weeks in Paris using unique archival resources to fill in the historical and biographical context of H el ene's personal narrative. At the Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine, I will examine both the original manuscript of the Journal as well as the Berr family collection of documents. I will then use the archives of the Sorbonne to explore the powerful interplay between history and literature at the core of H el ene's diary. How did anti-Semitism influence H el ene's relationship to La Sorbonne and her studies? I will research what literature and with which scholars H el ene chose to study during this time, and I will track down H el ene's academic writings to consider the relationship between her scholarly and personal work. Lastly, understanding H el ene's Journal would not be possible without visualizing her Paris, as H el ene embodies the characteristic Parisian "flaneur" who often documents her city walks. To explore H el ene's relationship to a specific set of places, I will both literally retrace H el ene's footsteps as well as visually uncover the Paris of 1942-44 in historical photography collections. I hope this

project will contribute to the fields of Holocaust and anti-Semitism studies by uncovering the historical dimensions of a highly unique document and thereby contributing to the state of Holocaust research undertaken by the 21st century's new generation of scholarship.

#### *Eian Katz, Yale undergraduate*

My project entails the translation of selected chapters from Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi's voluminous treatise, *The Children of Israel in the Qur'an and the Tradition (Banu Isra'il fi al-Qur'an wa al-Sunna)*. This book, published in 1997, piqued my interest for a number of reasons, not least of which is the figure of Tantawi (d. 2010) himself, a giant within the Egyptian political and religious landscape who acquired a global following as a progressive Islamic cleric and scholar. *Banu Isra'il* is Tantawi's interpretation of the Qur'anic portrayal of the Jews, and its appeal as a tool for the study of anti-Semitism is precisely this textual grounding, lending it a degree of intellectual rigor lacking in most lie-mongering and accusatory anti-Semitic pamphlets in circulation in the Arab world. As a component of the project, I will be traveling to Egypt in order to conduct background research and contextualize Tantawi's work within his time and environment.

#### *Benjamin Mappin-Kasirer, Yale undergraduate*

With the support of YPSA's Baron Foundation Grant, I plan to explore the evolving depiction of Jews in French Canadian literature during the Post Quiet Revolution era (1940s to 1990s). The Quiet Revolution was a period marked by the retreat from socially conservative politics in Quebec. I propose to examine how these widespread ideological changes allowed for a richer portrayal of the Jewish community in the novels and short stories of the

period, both in French and English literature. I will be conducting primary research at Montreal's Jewish Public Library and in the archives of the Canadian Jewish Congress during the summer of 2012. This project would not be possible without the direction of Prof. Maurice Samuels, Professor of French Literature and specialist of Jewish writers in 19th century France, and of Prof. Margaret Olin, Senior Research Scholar in Art History and in Religious Studies, here at Yale who have generously offered to assist me with their expertise and insight.

*David Petruccelli, Yale graduate student in History*

The Salo W. and Jeanette M. Baron Student Research Grant will fund a trip to Warsaw and Gdańsk in Poland, and Berlin, in Germany, in autumn 2012 to conduct archival research for my dissertation exploring the internationalization of policing in Europe between the two world wars. My account centers on Central and Eastern Europe, where the political, economic, and social upheavals surrounding the collapse of the Russian, German, Habsburg, and Ottoman Empires during the First World War spurred fears about international criminals. The International Criminal Police Commission, founded in Vienna in 1923 and now known as Interpol, reflected the desire to forge connections and foster cooperation between police forces in the region. Demographic characteristics of these territories influenced the developing system of international policing. Eastern European Jews made up a large proportion of the individuals targeted as international criminals across interwar Europe. My project explores the reasons for this, examining the complex interconnections between antisemitism and Jewish crime in this period. Assumptions about Jewish criminality inflated the percentage of Jews among those sentenced, while the conditions of Eastern European Jewish life and the transnational bonds of this diaspora people made involvement in offenses stretching across borders more likely, feeding preexisting prejudices. I will explore the myths and realities of Jewish international crime as part of a broader project looking at the roots of the modern

system of international policing based on such offenses as international fraud, counterfeiting, human trafficking, and drug smuggling.

*Max Scholz, Yale graduate student in History*

Thanks to the generous support of a Salo W. and Jeannette M. Baron Student Research Grant, I will be spending the summer in Frankfurt, Germany researching the city's treatment of its Jewish community. This subject likely brings to mind images of the Holocaust and the tragic story of one of Frankfurt's most famous daughters, Anne Frank. But the story of Jews in Frankfurt does not begin (nor does it end) in the twentieth century. I will be looking back four hundred years to a time when Frankfurt's Jewish community was the largest of several religious minority groups living within the city walls. In the late sixteenth century, Jews as well as Christian minorities (including native Catholics and refugee Calvinists) were subject to an array of prejudicial policies and decisions handed down by the city's ruling council (Rat). Inspired by Professor Baron's approach to history, my project is one of contextualization. I ask the central question: Where did anti-Jewish policy fit into Frankfurt's constellation of religious and national prejudices? Was there something unique about attacks on Jews? To answer these questions I will compare Rat legislation pertaining to the Jews to those decrees governing other religious minorities. Additionally, I will examine internal community responses to discriminatory policies. These two types of sources exist in Frankfurt at the Institut für Stadtgeschichte and at the Jüdisches Museum. Ultimately, I hope to uncover not only the differences between the treatment of Jews and the treatment of other minorities but also the common threads that connect various forms of discrimination in early modern Germany. My thanks again go out to the Salo W. and Jeannette M. Baron Committee, and I look forward to any comments, suggestions, or general *Gutachten* about my project.

### *Amy Smith, Yale graduate student in History*

Amy's project, which draws extensively on the Fortunoff Archive for Holocaust Video Testimony, examines the impact of the Holocaust on the family life of Holocaust survivors between 1945 and 1960. Her project examines the process of mourning and rebuilding that Holocaust survivors had to face; studying family life provides a unique window into this complex process. This focus on domestic life will also ensure that the experiences of male and female Holocaust survivors are analyzed as interrelated but distinct topics.

### *Justine Walden, Yale graduate student in History and Renaissance Studies*

My project will look at a select array of edited and unedited texts produced in 15th Century Florence and housed in libraries in Florence, Rome, and Milan in order to move beyond certain standard approaches to assessing attitudes towards Jews and Judaism during the Renaissance--approaches such as, for example, the examination of residence permits. To understand the variety of forms of, and subtle shadings within antisemitism in Renaissance Florence, I will look at accounts of pragmatic economic interactions, popular religious plays, humanist treatises, and biblical narratives. I will present my findings as a chapter in my dissertation, which focuses on religious life in Renaissance Florence before the advent of Savonarola, and in the form of an article entitled "Modes of Antisemitism in Renaissance Florence".

## Faculty

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

Timothy Snyder received his doctorate from the University of Oxford in 1997, where he was a British Marshall Scholar. Before joining the faculty at Yale in 2001, he held fellowships in Paris and Vienna, and an Academy Scholarship at Harvard. He is the author of five award-winning books, including: *Nationalism, Marxism, and Modern Central Europe: A Biography of Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz* (Harvard Press, 1998); *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569-1999* (Yale Press, 2003); *Sketches from a Secret War: A Polish Artist's Mission to Liberate Soviet Ukraine* (Yale Press, 2005); *The Red Prince: The Secret Lives of A Habsburg Archduke* (Basic Books, 2008). He is also the co-editor of two books *Wall Around the West: State Power and Immigration Controls in Europe and North America* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2001) and *Stalin and Europe: War, Terror, Domination* (forthcoming). In 2010 he published *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin*, a history of Nazi and Soviet mass killing on the lands between Berlin and Moscow. It has received a number of honors, including the Leipzig Prize for European Understanding and the Ralph Waldo Emerson Award in the Humanities. It was named a book of the year by some dozen publications, has been translated into more than twenty languages, and was a bestseller in four countries. Click here for a list of reviews and links. Most recently he helped Tony Judt to compose a thematic history of political ideas and intellectuals in politics, *Thinking the Twentieth Century*, published by Penguin in February 2012. He will use his grant to prepare materials for a course on the history of the Holocaust in Eastern Europe.

## First Annual YPSA Conference

The First Annual YPSA Conference will take place on October 5, 2012 at the Whitney Humanities Center. The topic will be “Antisemitism in France: Past, Present, and Future.” A one-day event, the conference will bring together scholars from France, Israel, and across the United States to discuss the role of antisemitism in French political, social, and cultural life, and to put the current outbreak of antisemitism into historical perspective.

### Speakers include:

DORIAN BELL

*University of California, Santa Cruz*

SUSAN SULEIMAN

*Harvard University*

PIERRE BIRNBAUM

*University of Paris I*

PATRICK WEIL

*CNRS, University of Paris I*

BRUNO CHAOUAT

*University of Minnesota*

NICOLAS WEILL

*Le Monde*

CAROLYN DEAN

*Brown University*

ROBERT WISTRICH

*Hebrew University*

LAWRENCE KRITZMAN

*Dartmouth College*

HENRY ROUSSO

*CNRS*



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