

Jewish Studies Program

Spring Semester 2012



Michigan State University

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Note from the Director

MSU Jewish Studies is in transition, entering the final three-year period under my leadership. Professor Yael Aronoff (JMC) will serve in spring 2013 as Associate Director to become familiar with program operations, budgets, and the like. Another colleague may serve in 2013-14. Hence, faculty will be able to suggest new and prepared leadership to the Dean for 2014-15.

This spring, 2012, we have an enriched schedule of activities, which includes the two-week visit of Israeli documentary filmmaker **Yael Katzir**, formerly of Beit Berl Academic College. Yael Katzir is the creator of many well-known films, including *Company Jasmine*, about women in the IDF, *Shivah for My Mother*, about family and mourning, and *Praying in her Own Voice*, about the women of the Western Wall. Yael Katzir will teach a short course (one credit) on “From Collective Ideology to Personal Diversity: Israeli Documentary Filmmaking,” which will meet seven evenings March 19-22, 27-29, in 339 Case Hall, 7:00-9:00 pm. Yael Katzir will also be the special guest of MSU Jewish Studies at the 7th Annual MSU Israeli Film Festival to take place Sunday and Monday, March 25-26. Sunday night her newest film, *Violins in Wartime*, is the feature selection.

We will also host the first Michigan showing of the feature-length documentary film, *Kinderblock 66—Return to Buchenwald*, about the return of four Buchenwald boys,

who were sheltered in the children’s block 66 and rescued during the last months of the war, to the 65th commemoration of liberation at Buchenwald near Weimar, Germany. This will be the **20th Annual David and Sara Rabin Holocaust Lecture** and is planned for Tuesday, April 24, 2012, 7:00 pm in the Kellogg Center Auditorium. **Steven Moskovic** of Bigfoot Productions, the executive producer, **Alex Moskovic**, one of the Buchenwald boys, now an accomplished elderly man, and Professor **Kenneth Waltzer**, historian, will talk about the history behind the film, the making of the film, and the film’s meaning. **Liev Schrieber**, the noted actor, narrates the film.

The **Stanley and Selma Hollander Lecture on Jewish Art and Music** was given earlier this semester by **Janet Macoska**, who is the acclaimed photographer for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, on “*Jews in Rock and Roll*.” We also plan to host historian **Melissa Klapper** of Rowan University in New Jersey who will complete the final events in the **Telling Family Stories: Jews, Genealogy, and History Initiative** that has been led by Professor **Kirsten Fermaglich** and by **Judith Moses Dworkin** supported by a grant from the Association of Jewish Studies’ Legacy Heritage Fund. She will speak on “*Small Strangers: Immigrant Children in America, 1880-1925*,” in Room W449 at the MSU Library, Thursday, April 26, at 7:00 pm. Earlier that day, at noon in 340

Morrill Hall, Professor Klapper will speak on “*Ballots, Babies and Banners of Peace: American Jewish Women’s Pre-WWII Activism*.”

Considerable energy this spring is being expended planning events to occur in 2012-13. While a Schusterman Visiting Israeli Scholar in International Relations slated for James Madison College has fallen through, we are planning to host a Schusterman Visiting Artist during the spring 2013. He is **Benny Barbash**, winner of the Prime Minister’s Prize for Hebrew Literature, an accomplished screenwriter, and the author of the current Israeli TV hit, “*The Naked Truth*.” This program is under consideration by Lions Gate and HBO for American adaptation. **Benny Barbash** will teach screenwriting in the Department of English during spring 2013 and host an ongoing Israeli film series.

Professor **Marc Bernstein** is also heading a planning committee to design a special international conference on Israeli literature which will coincide with the opening of the Irwin T. and Shirley Holtzman Israeli Literature Collection at the university April 9-11, 2013. We are currently working with Israeli novelist **Meir Shalev** and with renowned American scholar **Robert Alter** to offer the two keynotes at the conference. Stay tuned for more news about these exciting ideas and initiatives.

-Ken Waltzer, Director

Visiting Israeli Fellow



Visiting Israeli Fellow, **Yael Katzir** is teaching a short course on Israeli documentary filmmaking and will be a special guest at the 7th Annual MSU Jewish Studies Israeli Film Festival on Sunday, March 25, talking about her new film, *Violins During Wartime*.

Yael Katzir is an acclaimed Israeli documentary filmmaker and former head of the History Department at Beit Berl Academic College. Her filmography includes *Company Jasmine: Women Officers’ School* (2001); *Shivah for My Mother* (2004), and *Praying in her Own Voice: The Struggle of the Women at the Wall* (2009).

20th Annual David & Sarah Rabin Lecture

Film - *Kinderblock 66—Return to Buchenwald*

Tuesday, April 24
7:00 -9:00 pm
Kellogg Center Auditorium

Steven Moskovic of Bigfoot Productions, executive producer, **Alex Moskovic**, Buchenwald boy, and **Kenneth Waltzer**, historian, will show and speak about the film on child rescue at Buchenwald.

