



Newsletter for friends of the Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies

# CONCORDIA STUDENTS CALL JERUSALEM “HOME” FOR THE SUMMER

Two recipients of Azrieli Institute funding experience the subject of their studies first-hand

What better place to learn about Israel than in its own capital city? In the final leg of Jonathan Punski’s undergraduate degree and Lindsey Jackson’s MA in religious studies, they spent July studying in Jerusalem thanks to support from the Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies.

“It was great learning about Israel while living there and exploring it on field trips,” says Jackson. “It all worked together to provide an enriching learning experience.”

Substantial scholarships and grants from the Azrieli Institute made this overseas adventure possible. For Punski, the institute also arranged an internship so he could stay in Israel after summer courses ended.

Both students took a three-week intensive class at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem on the emergence of the modern State of Israel. Weekly field trips took them to the beachfront metropolis Tel Aviv, the national landmark Mount Herzl and a Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) community in Jerusalem.

“On Mount Herzl we talked about the construction of a national identity in Israel. It’s interesting because it’s old but new,” says Jackson. “Israel is a very ancient land with sacred stories but it’s new as a country that was just founded in 1948.”

The focus of Jackson’s master’s degree research is contemporary Jewish families in

Montreal who are choosing a non-cutting ceremony as an alternative to circumcising their sons. It’s no accident that she also took a course at the Hebrew University entitled *The Body in Jewish Thought*.

Looking forward to her doctoral studies in the fall, Jackson hopes to expand her research to families in Jerusalem who are choosing non-cutting alternatives. “If I’m going to be doing interviews with people from Israel, then I’m definitely going to need to learn their language,” says Jackson. She hopes another trip to Israel is in her near future — this time to learn Hebrew.

*Continued on page 2*



*“In Jerusalem, there’s this religious mixing of people. Because of that, dress is really important and modesty is ingrained in the culture,” says MA student Lindsey Jackson. “Coming from a culture that doesn’t practice modesty in the same way, it makes you very aware of what you’re wearing and how it can make other people feel.”*



*“I went to the Western Wall and all the way up to the north,” says undergraduate student Jonathan Punski of his travels through Israel. “I saw a lot in the time I was there, but there’s definitely more to see!”*

Continued from page 1

"I've always been interested in Israel studies. Israel is such a unique place; very dynamic, conflict-ridden, and the level of religiosity is certainly heightened," she says. "Now with my particular research, I'd like to see what's going on in Israel with this ritual compared to Montreal."

Though Punski got involved in Israel studies more inadvertently, he's here to stay. "I'm hoping to find an internship with the Israeli government once I'm done my studies in December," he says. He is pursuing a major in economics with minors in political science and Israel studies.

While in Jerusalem, Punski also took a course titled Israel and International Law. He lived in the Hebrew University's student dorms on ancient Mount Scopus. "We could see all of Jerusalem from our rooms!" he says.

Bouncing from one library to the next, Punski spent August tracking down Hebrew articles from the 1950s and 1960s and digitizing their text. Punski's on-the-ground work assisted Csaba

Nikolenyi, director of the Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies, in his research. "I would definitely recommend the Azrieli Institute to students and I'm thankful for the generous grant," says Punski. "I was just happy to be in Israel. I think I did what they wanted me to do."

For both him and Jackson, the experience has been mind-opening. "There is something really valuable about getting out of your comfort zone in a considerably different culture," she says. "I would love to continue a relationship with the Azrieli Institute," adds Jackson, who presented her research with the institute at a seminar in September 2016.

While soaking up Israel's religious diversity, navigating shops with Hebrew signage and enjoying amazing hummus, Jackson also made lasting connections with her professors, who can point her in the right direction if she returns to do research.

"You meet people from all walks of life when you're in school," says Punski. "We're really well welcomed as Canadians in Israel."

## NEVER FORGET

### Elie Wiesel, 1928-2016



PHOTO CREDIT: RYAN BLAU/PBL PHOTOGRAPHY

The Concordia community mourned the passing of Elie Wiesel on July 2, 2016, at age 87. Many recalled the Holocaust survivor, acclaimed writer and Nobel Peace Prize laureate's impassioned address at the Concordia Student Union Lecture Series on October 19, 2010. The event welcomed a capacity audience of students, faculty and members of the community. Wiesel is pictured during the reception following the event with sisters Sharon Azrieli Peretz, Canadian soprano, and Naomi Azrieli, CEO of the Azrieli Foundation.

## Aidan Beatty makes the connection between the Northern Ireland and Israeli-Palestinian peace processes

With lasting peace ever elusive in Israel, Aidan Beatty wanted to see how Israelis reacted when it was achieved elsewhere — in Northern Ireland in particular.

Ireland-born Beatty spent the last year as the Azrieli Institute's visiting postdoctoral fellow researching Israeli reaction to the 1998 Good Friday Agreement. The pact ended decades of strife between Catholic nationalists, who wanted Northern Ireland to secede from the United Kingdom and join Ireland proper, and the Protestant unionists, who wanted to remain.

His talk on the subject, *Belfast is Not Here: Israeli Perspectives on the Good Friday Agreement*, held March 10, 2016, was among the Institute's best attended in the past academic year.

By looking at Israeli media coverage of the peace process, Beatty found that the same cleavages that manifested themselves in politics were apparent in how commentators felt the agreement applied to their own conflicts with the Palestinian population. Some Israeli observers, he said, "wondered why Israel had no peace process, while others, who were more hawkish, were saying that there is no comparison to make."

Nevertheless, feelings of envy, even jealousy and pathos, were amply demonstrated in much of Israel's popular press at the time. Many commentators felt that in the years between the Oslo Accord and the Second Intifada, from 1993 to 2000, there simply was no possibility for reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians, even as there was a popular desire among many ordinary citizens for it. Others felt that the Oslo Accords had such fundamental weaknesses as to make a lasting peace deal all but impossible.



Aidan Beatty was the Azrieli Institute's visiting postdoctoral fellow in 2015-16.

Beatty has been making comparisons between Israel and Northern Ireland for a long time. His doctoral dissertation looked at questions of gender and race in Zionist and Irish nationalist movements. And he has written about efforts to revive ancient languages in both countries in order to forge stronger national identities. Bringing Hebrew in Israel and Gaelic in Ireland back to life "was a way to reconnect to a lost national ideal," he says. "With Hebrew you would go back to Biblical times, and with Gaelic you would go back to some kind of pre-English-invasion Ireland."

Beatty described his year at Concordia as generally "quiet but very productive." He wrote several academic articles on the intersection of Irish nationalism and Zionism, worked towards turning his PhD into a book and embarked on new research projects. Given that Concordia also is home to the School of Canadian Irish Studies, Beatty says he was fortunate to be able "to have a foot in both camps. It's the only place in the world where both Irish and Israeli studies are represented."



Aidan Beatty, former postdoctoral fellow at the Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies, completed the book *Masculinity and Power in Irish Nationalism, 1884-1938* during his tenure at the institute. Published by Palgrave Macmillan as part of its *Genders and Sexualities in History* series, the book offers a comparative study of masculinity and white racial identity in Irish nationalism and Zionism.

# SHARING HER PASSION FOR A TRAIL-BLAZING WOMAN

## Linda Kay presented her research into the life and legacy of Ida Seigler

In her award-nominated *The Sweet Sixteen*, Linda Kay recounted the journey of eight Francophone and eight Anglophone women to create the Canadian Women's Press Club in 1904. Once that project was done, the Concordia Department of Journalism professor began searching for another topic. "I wondered when ethnic women — women who weren't white, who weren't Christian — broke into this profession," says Kay.

She soon discovered Ida Seigler, one of Canada's first female Jewish journalists and one of the world's most impactful Zionists. Kay presented her ongoing research at a talk called *Searching for a Home: The Life and Work of Ida Seigler Bension Wynn*, hosted by the Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies on February 18, 2016.

In her childhood, Seigler's family fled persecution in Romania and settled in Montreal, where she became the first Jewish woman to edit a Canadian newspaper and write its lead editorial, beginning in 1918.

"The lead editorial is where the paper expresses its voice," says Kay. During the seven years that she occupied these positions at the *Canadian Jewish Chronicle*, known today as the *Canadian Jewish News*, Seigler wrote about topics as varied as the role of Jewish Canadians in global Jewish politics and the rise of juvenile delinquency among Jewish youth, expressing firmly her opinions and insights.

"Back then, women were writing about women's news, domestic issues and social gossip — women weren't writing lead editorials," says Kay. Somehow, Seigler did it all. She secretly wrote the women's page of the *Canadian Jewish Chronicle* under the pen name Jessie Abrams.

"At first, I was looking at Seigler from the perspective of her being a pioneering

journalist," says Kay. "She was the editor-in-chief until 1925 and then, all of a sudden, she left and married very quickly Ariel Bension, a brilliant writer, philosopher, academic and fundraiser for the Zionist cause."

Soon after uncovering that connection, Kay had her first Azrieli Institute speaking engagement on Seigler in February 2015. The talk was entitled *Writer, Editor, Jet-setter for Jewish Causes: The Life of Ida Seigler Bension Wynn*. "Now I had this huge scope of learning about Zionism, learning about the founding of Israel and learning about all the travelling they did," she says.

The couple's travels captivated Kay. Seigler trotted the globe alongside her husband, speaking to women about the importance of a Jewish homeland. She paved the way for the Women's International Zionist Organization in Brazil, Chile, Peru and Argentina, many chapters of which are still around today and whose members are in contact with Kay.

"I went to Brazil to follow in her footsteps — it was an 18-hour plane ride! It's astounding how long she must have travelled, taking ships everywhere, this being very unusual for a woman in that era," Kay reports.

Bension died suddenly in 1932. "In their seven years together they travelled constantly and never had a home," says Kay.

As a widow, Seigler continued her activism and her travels until 1939. She then remarried, to Samuel Wynn, a



PHOTO CREDIT: RYAN BLAU/PBL PHOTOGRAPHY

Concordia journalism professor Linda Kay presented *Searching for a home: The life and work of Ida Seigler Bension Wynn* at the Azrieli Institute in February 2016. "Rarely does one person's story encapsulate the passion that drives a movement," Kay writes in her biography of Ida Seigler Bension Wynn, published in the Jewish Public Library's virtual archives.

wealthy wine merchant in Australia, and made the country her first and only home since leaving Canada.

Kay's research has led to many new opportunities, including establishing a website on Seigler with Montreal's Jewish Public Library and starting to write a book on Seigler in partnership with the Azrieli Institute.

Not the least of these opportunities is her presentations with the institute. "Every time I share my research, especially with people who have done a lot of research themselves, I always learn something," says Kay.

# CAN ISRAEL PUT A STOP TO PARTY HOPPING?

**Azrieli Institute director Csaba Nikolenyi tackled the issue of the frequently shifting loyalties of members of the Knesset**

Looking at political parties from a Canadian perspective, it is easy enough to believe that elected members of Parliament are, by and large, loyal to their parties, and would not dream of crossing the aisle to join their erstwhile rivals. It happens from time to time, of course, but those instances are generally rare.

Not so, however, in Israel's Knesset — the legislative assembly. There, party hopping had become such a common occurrence and led to so many headaches that in 1991 the country passed an anti-defection law. Csaba Nikolenyi, director of the Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies, gave a talk on the topic in April 2016 and published a paper in the *Journal of Legislative Studies* earlier this year.

"There is a unique Israeli flavour to this problem," Nikolenyi says. Over the years, roughly one in seven members of the Knesset (MKs) had at some point switched parties.

That surprisingly high number, he believes, is due to Israel's proportional representation system. It welcomes small parties by giving them a relatively low threshold of the popular vote to overcome in order to secure representation in the Knesset. That gives MKs the incentive they need to break away from their current party for reasons that can be as varied as power — such as a promised cabinet position — or ideology or disputes with party leaders.

"If you are a member of the Knesset and you really disagree with the party leadership on a particular issue, you could cross the floor or form a new party and have a reasonable expectation of getting re-elected," Nikolenyi explains.



Csaba Nikolenyi gave a talk entitled *Party Hopping in Israel, 1949-2015*, on April 13, 2016.

He argues, however, that the law hasn't had the intended consequence of stopping party hopping; indeed, it may have exacerbated it by formalizing circumstances in which defectors may leave. Legislators who hope to flee their parties and keep their seats have to lay careful groundwork and time their departures in order to ensure they are able to run in upcoming elections. This often means forming their own political parties, which can wield outsized influence in a typical Israeli coalition government.

"Smaller parties are getting stronger, while the parties of the prime minister are getting weaker and weaker," he says. "And discussions within coalitions are getting more complicated."

Nikolenyi has some recommendations to make to Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberal government as it considers a switch to proportional representation — in fact, he has already made them to the federal electoral reform committee in September.

"I told the committee they should think very hard before introducing an anti-defection law," Nikolenyi reports. "When you change the system, you change the public mentality, and you also change the politician. Everything becomes more complex."

# AZRIELI INSTITUTE OF ISRAEL STUDIES: OUR PEOPLE

## MONTEFIORE AWARD-WINNING STUDENTS

### Lindsey Jackson

Department of Religion doctoral student Lindsey Jackson is studying contemporary Jewish rituals, especially ritual change, their creation, the interplay between tradition and innovation when it comes to rituals and its diversity of practice in Montreal's Jewish community. Her research is focusing on Jewish parents who refuse the tradition of circumcision and opt for the alternative *brit shalom* (covenant of peace.) She is also interested in the roles of gender, sex and the body in Jewish rituals.

### Ming Hui Pan



Ming Hui Pan

Ming Hui Pan's studies examine two of the world's most ancient nations, the Jewish and the Chinese. While studying the history of Jews in China, her focus is on the Harbin Jewish community in particular, which until the Second World War was the largest Russian Jewish community in the country. Different religious imaginations, experiences and practices are of particular interest to her.

## VISITING POSTDOC

### Amir Locker-Biletzki

Amir Locker-Biletzki, 2016-17 postdoctoral fellow, comes to Concordia from Guelph University, where his primary area of research has examined anti-imperialist practices among communists in Israel/Palestine. He is currently working on a biography of veteran communist leader Meir Vilner, which will also explore Israel's political culture. Locker-Biletzki will also lead a seminar for the Azrieli Institute this academic year.

## VISITING SCHOLARS

### Ilan Danjoux

An expert on political cartoons in Israel, Ilan Danjoux received his doctorate from the University of Manchester and was a visiting scholar at the institute during the 2015-16 academic year. His current research examines political cartoons' ability to predict election results, what cartoons say about the role of emotion in international relations, and their use in investigating Israel's reactions to terrorism. Danjoux is the author of *Political Cartoons and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* and has worked with the Jewish Museum of Vienna and the Israeli Cartoon Museum. He has also written for *Yedioth Ahronoth* and the Zócalo Public Square website.



Ilan Danjoux

### Ziv Rubinovitz

Ziv Rubinovitz joined the Azrieli Institute in January 2016 as an expert in international security and Israel's foreign policy. His security studies deal mostly with United States foreign policy and grand strategy as well as geopolitics and global security. On the Israel side, he has specialized in the Israel-Egypt Camp David peace process and U.S.-Israel relations. While at the Institute he studied the rise and decline of the Palestinian autonomy plan from 1967 to 1982.

### Shawn Zelig Aster

Shawn Zelig Aster of Bar-Ilan University in Israel is a specialist in Biblical Israel and the Hebrew Bible. He joined the Azrieli Institute in March 2016. Aster's areas of expertise are prophetic literature and its historical context, and ancient Israel's relations with other powers and cultures in the region. He has authored several works relating to those subjects.

## AZRIELI INSTITUTE FACULTY

### Meir Amor, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Among Meir Amor's areas of research are the politics of inclusion, exclusion and violence in the making of the modern nation-state. Central to his work are the questions of recurring violence and the dark side of modernity and democracy. His studies have examined and compared societies as varied as 15th-century Spain, the Second and Third German Reichs, the United States, Ottoman Turkey and Uganda.



Meir Amor

**Lorenzo DiTommaso, Professor,  
Department of Religion**



Lorenzo DiTommaso

Lorenzo DiTommaso served as chair of the Department of Religion from 2011 to 2014. An expert on ancient, medieval and modern apocalypticism, he is also an authority on modern apocalyptic movements, on apocalypticism in popular culture and the study of manuscripts. The author or editor of six books, with three forthcoming, and more than 125 articles, book chapters and other shorter works, DiTommaso teaches courses on both Judaism and Christianity.

**Bina Freiwald, Professor, Department of English**

Bina Freiwald is director of the Humanities PhD Program at Concordia's Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies in Society and Culture. Her research and teaching interests include critical theory, women's writing, gender and sexuality, Canadian literature and Israel/Palestine. Recent research projects include examinations of contemporary Jewish Canadian writing and the identities of Jewish women in Israel/Palestine and Canada from 1880 to 1948.



Bina Freiwald

**Norma Joseph, Professor, Department of Religion**



Norma Joseph

Norma Joseph is a well-known Jewish feminist activist, scholar and educator. She is director of the Women and Religion specialization and an associate of the Concordia Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies. While she has authored two dozen scholarly works, participated in two documentaries and edited one scholarly publication, her true passion remains teaching.

**Loren Lerner, Professor, Department of Art History**

The recipient of several awards for her scholarship and reference work dating back to 1992, Loren Lerner's undergraduate teaching specializes in 19th- and 20th-century European and North American art, and ethnic, ethical and diasporic art-making and curatorial work relating to Canadian art. She has authored and edited several scholarly works and served as curator for exhibits at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and the McCord Museum.



Loren Lerner

**Csaba Nikolenyi, Professor, Department of  
Political Science**

An expert in comparative politics, especially political parties, electoral systems and legislatures in post-communist democracies, Csaba Nikolenyi is also an authority on the political systems of Israel and India. From 2006 to 2011 he was the English co-editor of the *Canadian Journal of Political Science* and from 2011 to 2014 was chair of Concordia's Department of Political Science. The author of two books and numerous scholarly articles, Nikolenyi currently serves as director of the Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies.



Csaba Nikolenyi

**Ira Robinson, Professor, Department of Religion**



Ira Robinson

Ira Robinson is a prolific author and editor who has published more than 50 academic articles and worked on well over a dozen books. He has taught at Concordia since 1979 and served as chair of the Department of Religion. Robinson is also chair of the Concordia Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies and has served or continues to serve in prominent positions in several Jewish academic and public organizations. He has been honoured by the Association of Canadian Jewish Studies in recognition of his lifelong contribution to the study of Canadian Jewry and was recently inducted into the Provost's Circle of Distinction at Concordia.

# THE AZRIELI INSTITUTE OF ISRAEL STUDIES

## EVENTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2015-16

**September 29, 2015** — Aidan Beatty, postdoctoral fellow, Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies, gave the talk Irish Nationalism's Jewish Question: Between Philo-Semitism and Anti-Semitism, at the Canadian Centre for German and European Studies, Université de Montréal.

**October 9, 2015** — Aidan Beatty, postdoctoral fellow, Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies, presented De Valera's Gender and Nation: Political Propaganda in the East Clare By-Election, 1917, at the American Conference for Irish Studies Midwest Regional Meeting, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.

**November 13, 2015** — Aidan Beatty, postdoctoral fellow, Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies, presented *in absentia* Agitate, Friend Moses: Jews in the Irish Nationalist Imagination, at the North American Conference on British Studies in Little Rock, Ark.

**February 4, 2016** — Aidan Beatty, postdoctoral fellow, Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies, gave the talk The Shared History of the Jews and the Irish, at Concordia's School of Canadian Irish Studies.

**February 26, 2016** — Csaba Nikolenyi, director, Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies, presented Party Switching in Israel and Canada: Assessing the Impact of Electoral and Legislative Institutions, at the School of Politics and International Relations, Australian National University College of Arts and Social Sciences in Canberra.

**March 1, 2016** — Ziv Rubinovitz, visiting professor, Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies, gave the lecture Obstacles on the Road to Peace: Settlements, Oil, and Autonomy in the Israel-Egypt Peace Process, at Concordia.

**March 3, 2016** — Csaba Nikolenyi, director, Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies, presented Party Hopping in Israel: An Assessment of the Impact of Anti-Defection Laws, at Melbourne Law School, Australia.

**March 8, 2016** — Aidan Beatty, postdoctoral fellow, Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies, gave the talk Marx, Ireland, and the Racial History of Capitalism, at Concordia's Department of History.

**March 10, 2016** — Aidan Beatty, postdoctoral fellow, Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies, gave the talk Belfast is Not Here: Israeli Perceptions of the Northern Irish Peace Process, at Concordia.

**March 16-19, 2016** — Ziv Rubinovitz, visiting professor, Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies, presented Crude Peace: The Role of Oil Trade in the 1979 Israeli-Egyptian Peace Negotiations, with Elai Rettig, PhD candidate, University of Haifa, at the International Studies Association Annual Convention, in Atlanta, Ga.

**March 22, 2016** — Ziv Rubinovitz, visiting professor, Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies, gave the lecture Obstacles on the Road to Peace: Settlements, Oil, and Autonomy in the Israel-Egypt Peace Process, at McGill University.

**April 11, 2016** — Jointly sponsored with Canadian Associates of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, a talk and panel discussion were held at Concordia with Yaakov Sharett, son of Israel's second prime minister, entitled The Rise and Fall of Moshe Sharett: The War that Abruptly Ended the 23-Year Coalition Between David Ben-Gurion and Moshe Sharett.

**May 10, 2016** — Csaba Nikolenyi, director, Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies, presented What Explains Kalantarism? The Role of Political Institutions and Personal Attributes in Motivating Party Switching in the Knesset, at the Ben-Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism in Israel.

**June 16, 2016** — Ziv Rubinovitz, visiting professor, Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies, wrote the op-ed "Between Clinton and Trump: Israel will miss Obama" in the series "Discovering the World" of the Leonard Davis Institute for International Relations, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, published in Hebrew on Ynetnews, a major online Israeli news source.

**June 20-22, 2016** — The Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies was well represented at the 32nd annual meeting of the Association for Israel Studies, held at Yad Ben-Zvi and the Begin Center in Jerusalem. The following scholars presented research:

- Meir Amor: Mizrahi Social Media Visibility — Headless and Shapeless Voices and Presence, and Capital and Social Selection: Manufacturing Ashkenazi Supremacy and Mizrahi Subordination in Israel
- Norma Joseph: Gender, War and Film: A Classroom Experiment
- Csaba Nikolenyi: "Kalanterism": Conceptual and Empirical Perspectives on Party Switching in Israel
- Ira Robinson: Neturei Karta Meets Red Haifa: The Case of the Haifa Industrial Exhibition of 1956
- Ziv Rubinovitz: The Rise and Decline of the Autonomy Plan, 1967-1982, and Crude Peace: The Role of Oil Trade in the 1979 Israeli-Egyptian Peace Negotiations

**July 23-28, 2016** — Ziv Rubinovitz, visiting professor, Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies, presented *Crude Peace: The Role of Oil Trade in the 1979 Israeli-Egyptian Peace Negotiations*, co-authored with Elai Rettig, PhD candidate, University of Haifa, at the International Political Science Association World Congress in Poznań, Poland.

**June 30, 2016** — Ziv Rubinovitz, visiting professor, Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies, gave a special guest lecture, *Begin in Space: How and Why Israel's Space Program Began*, at the Canadian Institute for Jewish Research in Montreal.

**August 26, 2016** — Aidan Beatty, postdoctoral fellow, Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies, presented *Sé de Bhaléra Fear na nGaedheal: Masculine Propaganda in the East Clare By-Election, 1917*, at the Revolutionary Masculinities Symposium at National University of Ireland-Maynooth, Republic of Ireland.

Csaba Nikolenyi, director, Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies, received a three-year Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) grant and Lady Davis Fellowship at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem to study party politics in the Israeli Knesset. The research fellowship also included the teaching of a political science course by Nikolenyi at the Hebrew University.



# THE AZRIELI INSTITUTE OF ISRAEL STUDIES UPCOMING EVENTS IN 2016-17



Meir Shalev

## **Two She-Bears: On Violence and Vengeance with Meir Shalev**

Spanning three generations in one family's life, Shalev's latest novel tells a story of love, betrayal and salvation. Join Israel's master storyteller on this fascinating journey through and exploration of our dark side.

**Tuesday, November 8, 2016, 7 p.m.**

H-767, Henry F. Hall Building  
1455 De Maisonneuve Blvd. W.



Derek Penslar

## **The End of the Affair? The Changing Character of the Zionist-Diaspora Romance**

Derek Penslar, professor, University of Oxford and the University of Toronto, sees diaspora Jewry's feelings about Israel as a romance. He argues that its origins date back to the years immediately prior to Israel's establishment and that the romance continues to this day, although the balance of emotions that sustains it has changed over time.

**Monday, November 14, 2016, 7 p.m.**

H-767, Henry F. Hall Building  
1455 De Maisonneuve Blvd. W.



Yael S. Aronoff

## **The Political Psychology of Israeli Prime Ministers**

Yael S. Aronoff, professor, Michigan State University, East Lansing, will examine the psychology and decision-making processes of key Israeli prime ministers of the last 30 years. She will show how their views and decisions about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict developed over time, leading some to persist in hardline positions while others opted to become peacemakers.

**Thursday, January 26, 2017, 5 p.m.**

H-1001.01, Henry F. Hall Building  
1455 De Maisonneuve Blvd. W.

## **Save the date: May 23, 2017: Israel at Expo 67**

This joint conference and exhibition with Tel Aviv University will be hosted at Concordia, coinciding with the 50th anniversary of Expo 67.

For information on Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies events, contact 514-848-2424, ext. 8721, or [azrieliinstitute@concordia.ca](mailto:azrieliinstitute@concordia.ca).

# EXAMINING CONTROVERSIAL POLITICAL CARTOONS

## Azrieli Institute visiting scholar Ilan Danjoux's talk explained that drawing the tension between Palestinians and Israelis could further aggravate the conflict

To some, media can create an essential sense of awareness. Others view media as a negative and conflict-creating outlet. Political cartoons are a form of media that have been the centre of controversy. Whether humorous or dramatic, the worry that arises with the publication of these drawings causes many to wonder, do political cartoons promote violence?

"There is a lot of effort taken to silence cartoons or cartoonists," said Ilan Danjoux, a visiting scholar at the Azrieli Institute, at a talk at Concordia on January 27, 2016.

In the current political climate between Palestinians and Israelis, Danjoux warned conflict can emerge as a result of the media's influence. Danjoux studies the effects of political cartoons, tying it to the current strain in the Middle East.

"The number of cartoons is a good indicator of how conflictual an era is," he said. Danjoux addresses this conflict in his book, *Political Cartoons and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*. During his talk, Danjoux brought to light many examples of editorial cartoons published by Israeli and Palestinian media in the weeks approaching the Second Intifada — a period of intense Israeli-Palestinian violence that started in 2000.

The main focus of Danjoux's talk was to ask if political cartoons provide expressive freedom or evoke violence. "Cartoons invite action — I think that's their most interesting aspect," Danjoux said.

Danjoux studied different properties of political cartoons in Israel and the Palestinian Authority, drawing on newspapers that were more anti-Semitic or anti-Islamic than others. He described cartoons as "images of events that are yet



PHOTO CREDIT: KEISEY LITWIN

In January 2016, Ilan Danjoux discussed his studies of conflict in the Middle East with representations of cartoons.

to unfold." These cartoons are used to creatively bring attention to rising issues. In regards to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, many of the prominent issues these cartoons refer to include Israel's separation barrier, the Holocaust, the economy and Israeli and Palestinian leaders.

Many people have issues with how certain figures are inaccurately represented in political cartoons. While written media must accurately portray current events and political figures, cartoons are not required to follow this exact format.

These cartoons often "physically distort the outside to what's on the inside," Danjoux said. This can be seen in cartoons of former American president George W. Bush: at the beginning of his first term, Bush's head was drawn at a regular size. However, as his presidency progressed, his head gradually decreased in size — showing that "Americans perceived him as less intelligent as time went by," said Danjoux.

While conflict may arise in spite of political cartoons, for many readers who choose not to follow politics, political cartoons help develop a structure of what issues they should be concerned about. Cartoons also help to provide a visual approach to a world view, as well as give people who may not speak the language a sense of current issues in the media.

*A version of this article by Savanna Craig first appeared in The Concordian on February 2, 2016*

## ABOUT US

The **Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies** unites students and scholars across disciplines in drawing a bigger picture of Israel, its languages, religions, rich history and evolving culture. Its researchers aim to advance how society understands the multifaceted Middle Eastern state by sharing knowledge that benefits Montreal, Quebec, Canada and the world.

Founded in 2011, the Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies was born thanks to a visionary gift from the Azrieli Foundation to Concordia University. Today, the Institute serves as fertile and neutral ground for stimulating discovery and discussion. For more information, please visit [concordia.ca/azrieli](http://concordia.ca/azrieli).

1455 De Maisonneuve Blvd. W., SB-435  
Montreal, Quebec H3G 1M8  
Phone: 514-848-2424, ext. 8721

## SECURING A BRIGHT FUTURE

A contribution to the Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies is a gift towards education and research. Help us advance knowledge on the State of Israel by giving to Concordia.

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