

# A Long-Term Commitment

## Supporting the Next Generation of Jewish Studies Scholars

**"I am so grateful to the donors and the Center who have allowed me and other graduate students in Jewish studies to pursue our projects with such fulsome support."**

—J. Shelly

Supporting graduate students is a multi-year commitment for the Center, which offers competitive recruitment fellowships, research and travel grants, and even one highly-competitive dissertation completion fellowship. This summer, nine Carolina graduate students received research and travel grants from the Center, which has allowed our students to cross the country and travel around the world in quest of unique learning opportunities and archival resources not available in Chapel Hill.

Building language skills is often a key component to graduate students working in Jewish studies, and many of our students ultimately speak and read several languages. Through the Jack O. Spies '37 and Family Jewish Studies Fund, the Center is supporting **Oskar Czendze's** two-month language study and



research stay in New York City. Czendze, a graduate student in the department of history, attended the Uriel Weinreich Yiddish Language Summer Program at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research and also conducted archival research in the Center for Jewish History (including YIVO, AJHS, and the Leo Baeck Institute). He is interested in questions of belonging and place in modern Jewish memory and culture, and his dissertation project is a transnational history of the migration experiences of Jews from the Habsburg province of Galicia between the 1890s and 1930s.

"The Carolina Center for Jewish Studies feels like home for me, thanks to all the wonderful events and seminars, its outstanding faculty and graduate student network. Being an international graduate student, it is not easy to find financial support for my research and language study. Private support is absolutely essential for me to complete my dissertation and to keep the transnational nature of my project. I'm very grateful for the many grants I received from the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies, among them the TEP Fellowship (2017-2018), a research and travel grant (2018), and the Spies summer stipend (2019). Without private support from the donors, my research work wouldn't be possible. Thank you!"

Traveling to academic conferences and presenting research to leaders in their field is an important process for graduate students who are in the early stages of their careers.



This summer, **Jordan Klevdal**, based in the department of English and comparative literature, attended the Rhetoric Society of America's seminar and workshopped her scholarly paper on Jewish mysticism and W.G. Sebald's novel *Austerlitz*. Sebald, who was born in Germany, but lived most of his professional life in Great Britain, wrote *Austerlitz*, about a fictional character who arrived in England with a Kindertransport. By using the framework of Jewish mystical thought, she hopes to read *Austerlitz's* wandering route through the history of the Holocaust within a Jewish tradition—something which has yet to be done.

"The Carolina Center for Jewish Studies was the first place on campus, outside of my department, where I felt truly welcomed. I believe that the Center offers a unique opportunity to form connections both within the university and beyond. This is important to me because developing a network which includes faculty members, other graduate students and community members is essential to the work I hope to do," said Klevdal. "This research and travel support is invaluable to me. Practically, what this support has done for me is twofold: I've been exposed to new theoretical approaches that allow me to continue my research and it has let me offer up my ideas to others who have much more experience in the field. This summer, not only was I able to work on my own project, but I met several people in the Jewish studies community (including a faculty member who works in Yiddish literature) with whom I believe I will have long-lasting professional relationships."



Despite the ever-increasing availability of online resources, many of our students must travel far from Chapel Hill in order to review specific archives. With research and travel support from the Center, **Dakota Irvin**, in the department of

[ Continued on page 3 ]

## 2019/2020 EVENTS

For event details and updates, and to learn of additional events still in the planning stage, please visit [jewishstudies.unc.edu](http://jewishstudies.unc.edu) or our social media sites.

**Aug 26, 2019, 5:30 pm** ▶ **Kaplan-Brauer Lecture**  
Community lecture with Jacqueline Vayntrub, Yale University: How Biblical Poetry Works

**Oct 23, 2019, 7:00 pm** ▶ **Margolis Lecture**  
Community lecture with Shari Rabin, Oberlin College: The Jews as a Class: Between Race and Religion in the Civil War South

**Oct 28, 2019, 5:30 pm** ▶ **Heilig Lecture**  
Academic lecture with Paul Mendes-Flohr, University of Chicago: Title TBA

**Nov 4, 2019, 7:00 pm** ▶ **Evans Lecture**  
Community lecture with Naomi Seidman, University of Toronto: The Navel of the Dream: Freud's Jewish Languages / Co-hosted with Duke Center for Jewish Studies

**Jan 27, 2020, 5:30 pm** ▶ **Holocaust Remembrance Day Lecture**  
Academic lecture with David Engel, New York University: Why Did the Holocaust Happen?

**Mar 2, 2020, 5:30 pm** ▶ **KF Sephardic Studies Lecture**  
Academic Lecture with Devi Mays, University of Michigan: Title TBA

**April 16-18, 2020** ▶ **Uhlman Family Seminar**  
Lecture April 16, time TBA, with Christopher Browning, emeritus professor at UNC Chapel Hill: Title TBA / Organized by Carolina Public Humanities.

**Anna Kushkova**, who earned her Ph.D. from Carolina in 2017 and then served as a research assistant professor with the department of anthropology for two years, is a 2019-2020 Dalck and Rose Feith Family Fellow of the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. Her



research focus is titled **Soviet Jewish Home: Clandestine Ethnicity, Social Capital, and Grass-roots Resistance**. Kushkova, a sociocultural anthropologist who focuses on the historical Jewish communities of Eastern Europe, the U.S. and Israel, was an active participant with the Center's Graduate Student Network for many years.

**Advisory Board:** We are thrilled to welcome Marc Hennes '06, to the advisory board and we also extend our sincere thanks to Hal Levinson, who recently rotated off the board. The Center realized tremendous growth during Levinson's tenure as chair of the advisory board and his leadership will have a lasting impact on our students and campus.

**Documenting the Dig:** As part of the Documenting the Dig course, 14 UNC Media and Journalism students followed one of the University's biggest global research stories to an archaeological dig site in Huqoq, Israel. The class documented the work of the Center's archaeologist Jodi Magness and her team of experts and students. Read the full stories on both this year's incredible mosaic discoveries and the journalism classwork on [jewishstudies.unc.edu](http://jewishstudies.unc.edu).



Photo: I. Hieberman



# Your Support Helps Send Scholars Around the World

**By Ruth von Bernuth, Director**

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Professor, Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures  
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It is the middle of summer as I write this column, and I have just come back from a short



research trip to England, which holds one of the largest Old Yiddish collections at the Bodleian library in Oxford. My faculty colleagues and many of Carolina's students are likewise traveling and

studying around the world. One of the Center's top priorities is supporting the work of our faculty, grad students and undergraduate students, and I hope the stories in this newsletter help illustrate how varied the research topics are, and how scholarly work depends on the Center's support. The number of individuals at Carolina that are doing work in a sub-field of Jewish studies continues to grow, and that has a tremendous impact on both the campus community and the broader academic field.

Summer will soon turn into fall, or at least, the start of the fall semester, and I am thrilled to welcome a new group of undergraduate students, graduate students and faculty. This semester, Eliza Rose joins the department of Germanic and Slavic languages and literatures faculty as the Laszlo Birinyi Sr. Fellow in Central European Studies. Her research interests include visual culture and literature in Poland and Yugoslavia, as well as Yiddish, and she is eager

to become involved with our Center. We also have two graduate students coming to Carolina thanks in part to recruitment grants from the Center, and we look forward to their participation with the Center's Graduate Student Network. Margaret Weinberg joins the department of American studies to explore southern Jewish life, and Seonghyun Choi joins the department of religious studies to pursue Hebrew Bible studies.

The upcoming academic year continues our tradition of hosting a community events program, kicking off in late August with Jacqueline Vayntrub from Yale University. We will also offer lectures that will focus on the topic of antisemitism, as this is, unfortunately, a very timely topic on campus and beyond. I hope you can join us for these lectures, which are all made possible by private support. Learn more about all our events on our web site and social media sites.

The depth of our academic and events programs would not be possible without your generosity and I am thankful for all your support. We are pleased to be participating in the Campaign for Carolina, and all gifts to the Center also count toward the overall fundraising goal of the campaign. Please know that gifts at all levels make a significant impact on the programs we offer, and that we are so appreciative for all our generous donors.



## CAMPAIGN UPDATE

**The Fund for Jewish Studies** is a key component of the Center's overall fundraising program, and the unrestricted dollars provided by alumni and friends are essential for the Center to maintain its reputation for excellence while expanding its academic and public outreach programs for future generations. The accomplishments of the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies, since its founding in 2003, are direct results of generous donations from alumni and community members, and in fact, every single thing we do is made possible by private support. Donations made to the Center also count toward the fundraising goal of the Campaign for Carolina. To make your gift, you can use the enclosed gift envelope to mail in your check or use the online giving form found on our web site. To learn more, please visit: [jewishstudies.unc.edu](http://jewishstudies.unc.edu).

# Supporting a Scholar's Journey

By Max Lazar, graduate student, department of history

One of the best parts of being back in Frankfurt this summer has been walking around and constantly stumbling onto bits of my own research on Jewish life in this city between the start of World War I and Kristallnacht in 1938. In the mornings, my walk to the City's Municipal Archive goes past the site of several active and former synagogues and the neighborhood that was the hub of the local Jewish community between the creation of the Frankfurt Ghetto in 1462 and the Holocaust. In the evening, my trip to the grocery store or to grab a falafel usually includes a brief stop in front of the house of Henriette Fürth, a Jewish feminist who served as one of the first members of Frankfurt's City Council between 1919 and 1924.

None of this, however — my knowledge of Frankfurt, my work in the archives, or even eating the delicious falafel — would have been possible without consistent support from the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies over the course of my time as a graduate student at UNC. In fact, looking back at the past five years quickly reveals that the Center has been there to help me at almost every step of my intellectual journey. During my first year, a top-up

recruitment grant and a summer research and travel grant allowed me to spend two weeks in Heidelberg conducting research for my master's thesis on the children of Holocaust survivors in East and West Germany. A year later, another summer research and travel grant from the Center allowed me to do the preliminary research in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Frankfurt

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that confirmed that I did in fact have a viable topic for my dissertation. (Three years later, I can hardly believe that I ever doubted it in the first place.) Even this summer in Germany is possible in part thanks to a Christopher Browning Holocaust studies research and travel grant from the Center.

Aside from supporting my research, the Center has also served as a second intellectual home beyond the history department. Our

active Graduate Student Network has been a source of new friends and colleagues that I have continued to run into at several conferences around the United States or during the summer in Germany. Taking time out of her incredibly busy schedule, Ruth von Bernuth, director of the Center, did an independent readings course in early modern Yiddish with me and another graduate student, Lea Greenberg, when we both realized that our research would benefit from being able to read *mame-loshn* (mother tongue)." I also had the honor of working as a teaching assistant for the late Jonathan Hess, former director for the Center, in his course on "German Culture and the Jewish Question." And for two years, I served as the graduate student representative on the Center's advisory board, which allowed me to meet many alumni and supporters.

As I look ahead at what will likely be my final year as a graduate student in Chapel Hill, it's immensely comforting to know that there will still be plenty of occasions to drop by the Center to nosh some Med Deli during a lunchtime seminar, meet this year's graduate student speaker, or simply to touch base with the wonderful folks that continue to make Jewish studies a rich part of UNC's culture.

[ Continued from page 1 ]

history, conducted archival research in Moscow, Russia for a translated book project. This summer, Irvin researched in the state archive of the Russian Federation, the House of Russia Abroad, and the Lenin State Library, tracking down biographical and political sources on the life and activities of the 20th century Russian and Jewish political figure, Lev Krol'. Tentatively entitled *A Jewish Liberal in Revolution and Civil War: Lev Krol' and the Fate of Russia*, Irvin's project offers an edited translation of Lev Krol's 1921 memoir *Across Three Years*, a personal account of the Russian Revolution and Civil War, as well as the first biography of Krol' in any language.

"Private support from the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies has made it possible for me to pay for rent, transportation, and daily expenses in Moscow, without which I could not have undertaken my research. I have benefitted tremendously from private support during my time at UNC, which has allowed me to formulate

new ideas for research, such as this project," said Irvin. "The support from UNC and the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies has shaped my time as a graduate student and provided the ideal experience and training for my eventual career goal, which is to secure a tenure-track faculty position in history."

Likewise, **Joshua Shelly**, department of



Germanic and Slavic languages and literatures, is traveling overseas to access very specific source materials. He is headed to the Central Zionist archives and National Library of Israel in Jerusalem, where he will consult Theodor Herzl's archive, as well as several plays and a novel he identified during the course of his dissertation research. These works are not obtainable to Shelly in Chapel Hill and access to them will help him write his dissertation prospectus and later, his dissertation, which examines the novels and short stories of early Zionists and other German-speaking Jews who used literature to imagine

what a new Jewish space might look like.

"Over the course of my graduate study, the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies has provided me with vital support not available through other university organizations. After my first year, the Center's financial support enabled me to attend a summer Ulpan, thus helping me improve my Hebrew so that I could consult documents and sources not available to me in English or German. Now, at the beginning of my fourth year of graduate study, it is once again stepping in to provide me with crucial support to visit archives and libraries in Jerusalem, as I prepare to write my dissertation," said Shelly. "I am so grateful to the donors and the Center who have allowed me and other graduate students in Jewish studies to pursue our projects with such fulsome support."

*To learn more about supporting the Center's graduate students, as well as our undergraduates and faculty members, please visit us at [jewishstudies.unc.edu](http://jewishstudies.unc.edu).*



# FALL 2019 NEWS FROM THE CENTER

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## JONATHAN M. HESS SYMPOSIUM AT UNC CHAPEL HILL MOMENTS OF ENLIGHTENMENT German Jewish Interactions from the 18th Century to the Present

In April, the Center co-hosted, with the department of Germanic and Slavic languages and literatures, a symposium in honor of the late

Jonathan M. Hess, who led the Center for its first 10 years. The conference opened with a keynote address by Martha Helfer, of Rutgers University, titled: Maurice Sendak's *Dear Mili*:



A Contrapuntal Elegy. The next day was a full day of talks and roundtable discussions, which continued the third morning. Nearly 50 colleagues and former students participated in the conference. Production of a publication of the conference talks is scheduled to begin work in the 2019-2020 academic year.

