



**The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute  
Annual Review 2016**



**מכון ון ליר בירושלים**

**THE VAN LEER JERUSALEM INSTITUTE**

**معهد فان لير في القدس**

# Israeli Civil Society Advanced Stu Advanced Studies and

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## About The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute

The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute (VLJI) is a leading intellectual center for the interdisciplinary study and discussion of issues related to philosophy, society, culture, and education. The Institute gives expression to the wide range of opinions in Israel and takes particular pride in its role as an incubator and a creative home for many of the most important civil society efforts to enhance and deepen Israeli democracy. The Institute was founded by the Van Leer family to advance knowledge in the realms of philosophy, society, and culture. Since 1959 it has operated as a center for advanced studies and for public discourse about ideas and social issues. Its intellectual and research goals are rooted in its commitment to public responsibility and civil ethics. With the support of the Van Leer Group Foundation in the Netherlands, the Institute—under the guidance of its Board of Directors—plays a central role in important and socially sensitive fields, touching on the main foci of tension in Israeli society. The contribution of a core of renowned scholars at the Institute has made possible the successful implementation of reforms and new approaches in formal and informal education, policy studies, civil empowerment, and cultural diversity. The Institute continues to realize its vision in the areas of culture, identity, and social unity.

### AIMS

- > To be an incubator for innovative ideas in the humanities and social sciences
- > To foster excellence in research and to use research findings for the public good
- > To promote humanistic, democratic, and liberal values in social discourse in Israel
- > To define and shape the public discourse and to point out alternative ways of thinking about current topics

### ACTIVITIES

To achieve its goals, the Institute has undertaken projects in four main areas: Advanced Studies, Jewish Culture and Identity, Israeli Civil Society, and Mediterranean Neighbors. It employs a variety of methods and approaches in each of these areas. It runs projects and discussion groups and encourages cooperation with academe, civil society organizations, and government departments, while providing a platform for diverse views and the broad representation of various groups. Its activities include conducting studies of public policy and applied social research, developing and running education programs and a range of training programs for educators and community leaders, and opening its doors to the general public for various cultural activities. The Institute cooperates closely with a large number of Israeli and international research institutions and conducts joint projects with visiting scholars from around the world. It publishes books, anthologies, and journals that are the fruits of its academic labors. The Institute's beautifully landscaped campus houses three auditoriums, two libraries, conference rooms, a multi-purpose room, seminar rooms, a restaurant, and cutting-edge multimedia services.

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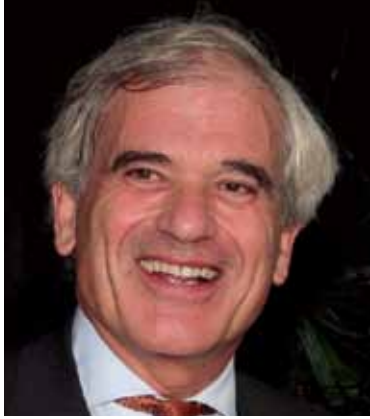
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**MESSAGE FROM THE  
CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF  
TRUSTEES**

**At the end of 2016** the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute bid farewell to its executive director, Prof. Gabriel Motzkin. Prof. Motzkin headed our Institute for nearly ten years and contributed greatly to its further development. The board owes him a great deal of gratitude for the excellent way he ran the Institute. Prof. Motzkin was succeeded by Prof. Shai Lavi of Tel Aviv University. We wish Prof. Lavi lots of success.

The environment in which the Institute operates remains very challenging. The further collapse of the political infrastructure in Syria and, linked to that, the immeasurable human suffering are of great concern. Geopolitically, the rise of populism, so alien to the principles on which our Institute is based, is very worrying. The political environment in Israel and the (potential) infringement of the democratic process are high on the Institute's agenda.

The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute is working on a new approach for achieving its objectives. The incoming executive director elaborates on this in his introduction. A vital part of the new approach is that the Institute must remain an independent meeting place for open dialogue and research.

The Polonsky Academy continued its very successful development. During 2016, twenty seven fellows were affiliated with the academy.

In 2016 we bid farewell to our board member Limor Beker. The board expresses its gratitude for her contributions to the Institute. In the board's December meeting we appointed Prof. Ruth HaCohen as member. Prof. HaCohen holds the Arthur Rubinstein Chair of Musicology at the Hebrew University. We are very much looking forward to her membership.

The success of the VLJI is completely dependent on the commitment of all who work for the Institute and those who are connected to it. On behalf of the entire board I express my sincere gratitude to all of them for their efforts during the past year.

**Tom de Swaan**



## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

### The Director of the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute

is a position in which one can make a difference. After more than nine years, I am leaving with sadness. I took over in September 2007. Since then we have had some wonderful achievements and we also faced some obstacles. As a consequence of the financial crisis in late 2008, we suffered a 20% reduction of our budget. Though we had to let some people go, one of my main aims was to retain as many units as possible, in the hope that recovery was just around the corner. Our grant from the Van Leer Group Foundation recovered only partially, but we were able to double our external fundraising intake, thus making up most of the difference. Our staff became very entrepreneurial, combing the web and the world for funding opportunities. However, fundraising capacity should be just one criterion for choosing projects; originality remains the main justification for our work.

Even within the reduced budget, we successfully developed new initiatives. Our biggest expansion was in our Mediterranean Neighbors division. We initiated deep cooperation with both Turkish intellectuals and Turkish policy institutes. We managed to maintain these connections despite the freeze in Turkish-Israeli relations. We also opened a new center for Israeli-Arab relations that emphasizes the dialogue between Arab and Hebrew cultures and has embarked on an ambitious new program of translating seminal Arabic literary texts into Hebrew. Finally, we also founded a new journal, the *Journal of Levantine Studies*, which has won international repute. Our Advanced Studies division developed a deep understanding of the situation of the humanities in Israel, and cooperated with both the Ministry of Education and the Council for Higher Education in this regard.

Above all, I was able to interest Dr. Leonard Polonsky in founding the Polonsky Academy for Advanced Study in the Humanities and the Social Sciences. In order to house this group of thirty 5-year postdoctoral scholars, Dr. Polonsky generously funded the construction of a spectacular building that more than doubles our space. This postdoctoral program has proved very successful both in terms of the quality of the fellows and their ability to obtain academic positions. So far, the Polonsky postdoctoral program is the most successful program of its kind in Israel. If something is remembered about my time in office, it will be this beautiful building and the breakthrough program it houses.

Finally, our centers—Women in the Public Sphere, Economics and Society, and Privatization and Regulation—all had significant achievements with great impact on society's thinking about issues. Considering the Institute as a whole, I was singularly blessed with a remarkably competent staff, a supportive board, and an extraordinary chairman. Let me close by expressing how delighted I am that my successor is Prof. Shai Lavi. I wish him great success and enjoyment in this position.

**Prof. Gabriel Motzkin**



## MESSAGE FROM THE INCOMING DIRECTOR

**It is with great expectations** that I take on my role as Director of the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute. VLJI, as I see it, is a unique place and has a special role to play in the turbulent reality around us. We are a leading research institute, committed to the larger community. We engage with questions that are of public concern, but are not bound to an existing political agenda. We believe in the transformative power of ideas and therefore we explore questions that are meaningful to the broad public and not just to decision makers. Finally, we are located in Jerusalem, a simultaneously provincial and cosmopolitan city, and strive to be relevant to both local and international audiences. Our mission, in short, is to advance new research, to be a welcoming home for intellectuals from all parts of Israeli society, and to promote public engagement with deep ideas, both locally and internationally.

In the coming years, we will develop our research and ideas around a few major themes, which are open to change every three to five years. These themes will cover a broad range of issues and may include topics such as borders and sovereignty, the sacred and the profane and the human condition in a technological age. Some of the themes carry on work currently done at the Institute and others will be new.

Public engagement with ideas will take place in a variety of ways, including outreach through books, symposia, podcasts, and other new media; in-house learning and teaching through engagement with diverse groups of students, young professionals, and other “ambassadors of ideas”; and the fostering of the creative arts through intellectual incubators for artists such as filmmakers, authors, and playwrights.

VLJI has achieved a great deal over the years thanks to its academic leadership, devoted staff, and, more recently, its prestigious Polonsky Academy. I am deeply grateful to Prof. Gabriel Motzkin for his warm welcome. I also take this opportunity to thank the Van Leer Group Foundation, our Board, and its Chair, Tom de Swaan, for their ongoing support. Most rewarding for me has been the opportunity to get to know VLJI's staff. Their talents and sense of community have enabled the Institute to thrive and continuously reach new heights.

I wish to conclude on a personal note. The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute has been close to my heart since I took my first steps in the academic world. Yehuda Elkana, the founding Director of the Institute, was my first teacher and mentor. It is with great respect to the Institute and its legacy that I hope to lead it into its future.

**Prof. Shai Lavi**

# Advanced Studies



Academic director: Dr. Yochi Fischer  
Project director: Dr. Adam Klin-Oron

[www.vanleer.org.il/en/advanced-studies](http://www.vanleer.org.il/en/advanced-studies)

The Advanced Studies program reflects the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute's commitment to intellectual excellence and cutting-edge scholarship in the service of society. The program, which is one of the leading centers for intellectual inquiry in Israel, serves as an incubator for cultivating new ideas and pursuing scholarly interventions in the humanities and social sciences. It encourages the combination of innovative, groundbreaking, and often unconventional theoretical thinking with practical social applications for Israeli society, exploring Israeli issues from a global-comparative perspective and emphasizing international collaborations.





### **Boycotts: An Academic Look**

Academic coordinators: Dr. Wolf Iro and Dr. Adam Klin-Oron

International seminar, in cooperation with Goethe-Institut Israel

Whereas boycotting has been a major subject in recent discussions, rather less attention has been paid to a general academic analysis of the phenomenon. Where, historically, does the concept of the boycott originate? On what levels (national, international, economic, cultural) are boycotts applied? Who calls for boycotts? Who is targeted by them? What are their consequences? Are there any historical examples of successful boycotts? This international seminar, hosting a diverse cadre of scholars from Norway, Germany, Britain, and Israel, looked at these questions, from the American Revolution to BDS; from the oil embargo of 1973/74 to the Wagner boycott in Israel; and through the lens of disciplines such as anthropology, economics, political science, philosophy, history, and law.

### **Bracketing the Difference: The Internal Stranger (A Reassessment)**

Academic directors: Prof. Manuela Consonni and Honaida Ghanim

Contemporary geopolitical balances do not allow us to easily recognize the Enemy who lurks outside the borders, confirms the boundaries, and has a uniform and simple identity. It is therefore within the borders that attempts are now being made to look for the potential, imaginary, or real stranger and transform that individual into an Enemy. That person often belongs to another ethnic group that lives among the “Us.”

Questions of ethnicity related to individual and collective identity-building have been among the most salient and politically charged problems in the last twenty years, becoming central in political, cultural, and social transformations throughout the world. This project examines the complex interaction of the peoples that inhabit two charged and overloaded spaces: Europe and the Middle East. A study of the models of inclusion that work more on the social and cultural levels, and the model of exclusion—which functions in more mythic-symbolic aspects through the category of the internal stranger—allows us to reconstruct the multifaceted ways in which the stranger operates within the group and outside the group and to expose the polarized discourse on Jews and Arabs in contemporary Europe and in the Middle East.

### **Intertwining Heritage: Language, Research, and Representation Based on Cultural Traumas**

Academic directors: Friedemann Derschmidt, Dr. Yochi Fischer, Dr. Shimon Lev. A joint workshop with The Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna

A workshop for European, Palestinian, and Israeli researchers and individuals in the creative arts, focusing on the question of language and representation in contexts of asymmetry, guilt, and trauma. Direct speech between the parties involved in a conflict in the present or the past is extremely complicated. This is a situation full of guilt and blame, victimhood and aggression. At the same time it is a multidirectional situation in which the guilt, blame, and trauma point in different, sometimes opposite, directions simultaneously. Victimhood, injustice, and guilt, on the one hand, and purging the language of authentic elements that require ethical consideration, on the other hand, are common means of representing the trauma of the Nakba in the Israeli-Palestinian context, the question of the relations between the Europeans and the Jews during the Holocaust, or the connection between the two events. These patterns and others like them prevent substantive conversation by making it impossible from the start or directing it into the meaningless channels that already exist. Through explorations in art and research, the workshop attempted to offer paths for exploring these questions. It took place at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, bringing together historians, curators, psychologists, musicians, visual artists, and dancers, including Marwan Abado, Said Abu-Shakra, Amos Goldberg, Alexander (Ari) Joskowicz, Yehudit Kol-Inbar, Yariv Lapid, Jürgen Müller-Hohagen, Mustafa Qossoqsi, Roe Rosen, and Osama Zatar.

### **Secularity and the Disciplines**

A Farewell Conference in Honor of Prof. Gabriel Motzkin

A farewell conference in honor of Prof. Gabriel Motzkin on the occasion of his retirement from the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, after almost a decade as its Director. The conference was titled "Secularity and the Disciplines" to mark the focus of the activity of the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute under Motzkin's leadership and to link it to his own studies devoted to the modern notion of secularity and the concept of secular time. During the conference, discussions arose around the links between two related issues: the interaction between religion and secular culture, and the development of the modern humanities and sciences in the context of a culture that is both religious and secular. Participants included Yochi Fischer, Nilüfer Göle, Ruth HaCohen (Pinczower), Ben Hutchinson, Jürgen Kocka, Winfried Menninghaus, Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, Jürgen Renn, Michael Roubach, Galili Shahar, Yfaat Weiss, and Linda Woodhead.



### New Religious Movements in Israel

Academic directors: Prof. Boaz Huss, Dr. Adam Klin-Oron, and Dr. Rachel Werczberger

Contemporary Israeli society is fertile ground teeming with religious activity, the site of new configurations of the three monotheistic religions, and a center of new religions, both imported and local, as well as of New Age spirituality. Over the years, the activity of new religious movements has given rise to sensational reports in the media, intense public discussion, vigorous anti-cult action, and sometimes even involvement by state authorities. So far, very little reliable scientific information exists about the new religious movements in Israel. Consequently, public discussion of these groups is often superficial, relying on incomplete or incorrect information. This project seeks to broaden the scientifically grounded knowledge about the new religious and spiritual movements in Israel today, as part of the establishment of Meida: The Israeli Information Center on Contemporary Religions. In 2016 a media website was initiated: [www.meida-center.org.il](http://www.meida-center.org.il) – with eight reports devoted to Scientology, Neo-paganism in Israel, “Shakuf” Breslav workshops, Neo-shamanism in Israel, the legal status of new religious movements in Israel and abroad, a review of the literature on brainwashing, and Anthroposophy.

### Internationalization, Globalization, and the Governance of Academia

Academic directors: Prof. Gili S. Drori and Prof. Glen A. Jones

In partnership with the Halbert Centre for Canadian Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Globalization and internationalization are challenging the longstanding governance of academia. Globalization has led to an expansion of higher education worldwide and to the construction of global models of academic excellence, disciplinary formats, and pedagogy; internationalization is opening the boundaries of national higher education systems to accommodate the flows of students, faculty, and funding from across the world. Under globalization and internationalization, extra-national arrangements often come into conflict with national laws and local practices. Specifically, global academic practices may conflict with local regulatory forces. Applying a comparative perspective, the workshop brought together researchers from Canada, Germany, France, the United States, Australia, Turkey, Sweden, Finland, and Israel to discuss the various policy and governance issues related to the globalization and internationalization of academia.



### The State of the Humanities Report

Authors: Dr. Yochi Fischer and Dr. Adam Klin-Oron

In collaboration with the Planning and Budgeting Committee of the Council for Higher Education and Yad Hanadiv Foundation As part of the Permanent Committee for the Humanities in the Planning and Budgeting Committee of the Council for Higher Education, and as part of an ongoing national endeavor to strengthen the humanities in Israeli society, the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute wrote a report on the state of the humanities in Israel that will serve as a basis for informed debates and decision-making. As part of a comprehensive view of the meaning of “humanities,” which includes all strata of culture and society, and throughout months of meticulous research, we gathered data on teachers and pupils in high schools; matriculation exams; exposure to humanities and culture in the public sphere; employment of humanities graduates; and staff, research, and students in higher education—at all degree levels and across both universities and academic colleges. The final report received extensive media coverage and was widely circulated. The report was presented in February 2016 at a conference that featured the president of Israel, Mr. Reuven Rivlin; the minister of education; and the heads of the Council for Higher Education. The report is available online in an interactive and searchable website, <http://humanities.org.il/report>.

### Van Leer Prize for High School Final Projects in the Humanities

In collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Derech Ruach As part of its ongoing dedication to the furthering of the humanities in Israeli society, and in order to encourage the writing of original, scholarly, and excellent final projects in the humanities in Israeli high schools, VLJI has initiated a prize to be awarded to four such projects displaying exceptional merit. In 2016, its third year, more than sixty projects on a variety of subjects in many disciplines were submitted to the prize committee, which included academics from several universities. The prize was awarded to the four winners after they met the president of Israel, Mr. Reuven Rivlin. The winning projects were: “‘And Man Is a Prayer and a String’: Establishing Selfhood and Religious Experience in the Mirror of Israeli Poetry,” by Yonatan Gadot; “*Aurélia ou le rêve et la vie*: Feminine and Mystic Motifs in the Work of Gérard de Nerval,” by Shir Ventura; “The Religious and Philosophical Thought of Abul ‘Ala Al-Ma‘arri,” by Aram Abu-Salah; and “Mirror Maze: Employment and Identity Crises in the Films of Charlie Kaufman,” by Roei Even. Five additional students received an honorable mention.



### **Dostrovsky Forum for the Advancement of Music and Dance Education**

In collaboration with the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance  
Academic director: Prof. Yinan Leef

The Dostrovsky Forum consists of some fifty of the most prominent music and dance educators, composers, choreographers, performers, dancers, and researchers, representing the most important academic institutions, conservatories, and secondary institutions in these fields in Israel. This think tank focuses on principal issues concerning music and dance education, its place and significance in modern society, and its place within the overall education system in the country. The forum holds several sessions every year, each devoted to a particular agenda; issues position papers and public statements; and maintains a dialogue with policy makers.

In 2016, the forum devoted its sessions to the structural aspects of coordination between the various partners in music and dance education in the elementary and secondary (pre-college) levels. Each of the four sessions examined this topic from a different perspective: The first session presented innovative initiatives, primarily in the periphery—music education in two Arab communities, a Jewish-Arab dance initiative, and music teachers training in the Haredi community. In the second session, we considered creativity in the context of standardization vs. individuality from two contrasting angles: We debated the newly established matriculation examinations for the highest-level (5 units) of music study; and we discussed multi-age and multi-level dance activity in different cultures, and the position of the music/dance teacher between the highly talented and the “late bloomers.” The third session, held in collaboration with the Arts Division of the Ministry of Education, examined models of cooperation and coordination between the school and the conservatory. The final session focused on municipalities, looking at successful models of program implementation from the administrative and budgetary points of view.

### **The Sociological-Anthropological Moment: Theoretical Tremors**

Academic directors: Dr. Adam Klin-Oron, Dr. Nitzan Rothem

Providing a forum for lively discussions of sociological and anthropological theories, this research group focuses on theoretical innovation rather than on the forefathers of these disciplines. This year, the group focused on the encounter of sociology and anthropology with neighboring disciplines, meeting monthly to hear from an eminent scholar in the field and then challenging and discussing the relevance of these theories to the work of contemporary social sciences. We met with scholars such as Shai Lavi (law and ethics), Moshe Zuckermann (history of science), Yaakov Metzger (economics), Boaz Huss (Jewish thought), Daniella Talmor-Heller (Arab language and culture), and Edna Lomsky-Feder (education and gender).

### **New Work on Ineffability**

Academic director: Dr. Silvia Jonas

This workshop brought together four leading scholars whose work relates to different aspects of ineffability: Thomas Hofweber, James Shaw, Guy Bennett-Hunter, and Silvia Jonas. The topic of ineffability has a long and distinguished philosophical history, though contemporary analytical work on it is sparse. The workshop aimed to shed light on the various perspectives on, and approaches to, the concept of ineffability, as well as afford a deeper understanding of questions regarding the metaphysical structures that may underlie ineffability, the epistemic implications of ineffability, and the applications of the concept in aesthetic and religious contexts.

### **Iran between the Sasanians and Early Islam**

Academic directors: Prof. Shaul Shaked, Dr. Domenico Agostini, Dr. Michael Shenkar, Dr. Julia Rubanovich

In partnership with the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

With participants from eleven institutes of higher education from five countries—emerging and veteran scholars alike—this workshop explored topics including apocalyptic and eschatological traditions, literary and religious themes in early Islamic Iran, art and iconography in transition, the Sasanian Empire and its impact, and Zoroastrian literature and society.



### **The Polonsky Postdoctoral Seminar**

Academic director: Prof. Gabriel Motzkin

The weekly Polonsky Postdoctoral Seminar provides an academic platform that enables fellows to advance their research through discussion with colleagues, acquaint themselves with each other's work, and collaborate with each other. The talks cover a wide range of disciplines and subjects—for example, the philosophy of ineffability and the Liar Paradox—and offer a lively discussion of questions and considerations with which the fellows are grappling.

### **The Future of Justice: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Justice in the Context of Contemporary Conflicts**

Academic director: Dr. Renana Keydar

This group addresses the question of what it means to be just and do justice in the context of contemporary violent conflicts. Departing from existing research on protracted, intractable conflicts, we asked how the reality of the conflict challenges and changes existing historical, ethical, cultural, and legal ideas of justice. The strength of the research group derives from its interdisciplinary composition, with participants coming from diverse backgrounds, including academics, practitioners, human rights activists, and artists, and from a broad range of disciplines, including law, literature, religious study, sociology, psychology, gender, and conflict studies. Taking the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a central case study—while also employing a comparative approach—the group has explored various ideas, definitions, and perspectives of justice. We have critically examined the role that forgiveness, reconciliation, resentment, and revenge play in the process of doing justice, moving from the philosophical writings of Aristotle, on the one hand, and Holocaust survivor Jean Amery, on the other, to a proposed model for a civil society-based truth commission in the context of the local conflict.

### **The Anna Lindh Foundation: The Israeli Network**

Head of the Israeli Network: Dr. Adam Klin-Oron

Coordinator of the Israeli Network: Yarden Kedar

The Anna Lindh Foundation is an inter-governmental institution bringing together civil society and citizens across the Mediterranean and Europe to build trust and improve mutual understanding. The foundation is built as a network of networks: Civil society organizations in each country are connected through a network hub to the networks of other countries—42 countries in all, with more than 2,500 organizations in the various networks. The Israeli network is one of the largest and most active, with more than 200 members in fields such as education, youth, arts, democracy, human rights, gender issues, media, and research, and has been led by the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute since the inception of the Anna Lindh Foundation in 2004. In 2016, the Third Anna Lindh Forum was held in Malta, with hundreds of delegates from dozens of countries, and Israel was well-represented by a large delegation headed by the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute. In Israel, two network meetings were held, and the network's heads visited the south, the north, and the center of Israel.

### **Memory Transmission and Fiction: Gathering for Holocaust Remembrance Day**

Academic director: Prof. Michal Govrin

Coordinators: Miriam (Yami) Ben-David, Lior Chen

As the generation of survivors dwindles and while the voices of the last of the witnesses can still be heard, we have taken upon ourselves to design a gathering for Holocaust Remembrance Day as a way of transmitting the memory of the Holocaust to the coming generations. The gathering is a personal, experiential memory circle, in groups of active participants led by a facilitator. With readings, songs, testimony, stories, memories, and individual voices of the participants, discussion, prayer, or silence, the gathering brings memory to the present. It is intended for social circles, the family, communities, and educational settings. Learning from an initial run in 2015, this year the gathering was streamlined and made more accessible for diverse audiences. In preparation for the 2016 Holocaust Remembrance Day, the gathering text and the tutorial for coordinators were made available online, and during the day itself communities, institutions, and dozens of families adopted the Gathering, which we expect to spread even more in years to come.

### **Intersections: Holocaust Scholarship, Genocide Research, and Histories of Mass Violence—The 5th Global Conference on Genocide—The International Network of Genocide Scholars (INoGS)**

In partnership with INoGS and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Two related issues have figured prominently in the last decade in scholarly debates on genocide and mass violence: 1. the tensions between research on the Holocaust and studies on genocide, and 2. the links between various events and processes of mass violence and genocides and, in particular, the place of mass violence in Israel/Palestine within this evolving analytical framework and in relation to an international remembrance culture in which the Holocaust constitutes a focal point of reference. The 2016 INoGS Conference made these issues the center of discussion, thus giving concrete meaning to the choice to hold the conference at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute. The conference included an opening evening with a keynote lecture by H.E. Adama Dieng, Special Adviser for the UN Secretary General on the Prevention of Genocide, followed by three full days of sessions—a total of 53 panels with more than 200 scholars from Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Italy, Kenya, Mexico, Namibia, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Poland, Rwanda, Senegal, Slovenia, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Uganda, the United Kingdom, the United States, Zimbabwe, and Israel. For the complete conference program, see <http://www.inogs2016.org/Program>.

# The Polonsky Academy



for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute

[www.polonsky.vanleer.org.il](http://www.polonsky.vanleer.org.il)

Inaugurated in 2014 through the generous donation of Dr. Leonard Polonsky, the Polonsky Academy for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute will, at full capacity, host thirty outstanding postdoctoral fellows from Israel and abroad. The academy provides the fellows with a stipend of \$40,000 a year for up to five years and a welcoming physical environment with state-of-the-art services for their research, including individual offices, a library, advanced IT, a lecture hall, and meeting spaces. The Polonsky Academy serves as their intellectual home for the duration of their fellowship.



## Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellows

### Chrysi Kotsifou

In 2011 Dr. Chrysi Kotsifou was awarded a Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to work on a monograph titled "People, Objects, and Ideas in Motion: Communication and Social Interaction in the Late Antique Mediterranean."

### Ronen Mandelkern

In 2011 Dr. Ronen Mandelkern was awarded a Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to further explore the conditions that enable and support experts' involvement in, and influence on policy making.

### Silvia Jonas

In 2012 Dr. Silvia Jonas was awarded a Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to work on her project, "Mathematical Self-Evidence and the Rationality of Religious Belief."

### Stefan Ihrig

In 2012 Dr. Stefan Ihrig was awarded a Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to focus on two aspects of the societal acceptance of murder as a "legitimate" political tool in pre-1945 Europe.

### Wael Abu-'Uksa

In 2013 Dr. Wael Abu-'Uksa was awarded a Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to explore political concepts in his research project, "From Freedom to the Ideology of Freedom: Conceptual History of Liberalism in the Arabic-Speaking Countries in the Nineteenth Century."

### Domenico Agostini

In 2013 Dr. Domenico Agostini was awarded a Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship in order to tackle the transformation of the concept and the architecture of the afterlife, from Zoroastrian eschatology to Dante's Divine Comedy, from the philological and religious perspectives.

### Michal Gleitman

In 2013 Dr. Michal Gleitman was awarded the Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to further develop her PhD research. She is concentrating on the question of "How Conventional Is Linguistic Understanding? Individuals with Autism and Nonhuman Animals as Test Cases."

### Shalom Sadik

In 2013 Dr. Shalom Sadik was awarded the Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to study the philosophy of Jewish apostates in Spain, from the beginning of the twelfth century to the end of the fifteenth century.

### Tommaso Tesei

In 2013 Dr. Tommaso Tesei was awarded the Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to study "The Eschatology of the Qur'an in Light of the Cultural and Historical Context of Late Antiquity."

### Ana Bajželj

In 2014 Dr. Ana Bajželj was awarded the Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to trace the development of the Jain understanding of time and temporality, placing it in the specific frameworks of Jain metaphysics. The title of the study is "Being in Time: An Analysis of the Jain Doctrine of Time and Temporality."





### Almog Behar

In 2014 Dr. Almog Behar was awarded the Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship for a study titled "Between Hebrew and Arabic in the Literature of the Jews of the Arab World in the Twentieth Century."

### Claire Benn

In 2014 Dr. Claire Benn was awarded the Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship for a study titled "Artificial Goodness: Doing and Being Good in the Digital Age."

### Erdal Kaynar

In 2014 Dr. Erdal Kaynar was awarded the Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to pursue his research titled "Economic Thought in the Late Ottoman Empire and the Question of the Nation."

### Olla Solomyak

In 2014 Dr. Olla Solomyak was awarded the Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship for a study titled "Lessons from the Metaphysics of Perspectives: Temporal Experience and the Sense of Self."

### Roy Vilozny

In 2014 Dr. Roy Vilozny was awarded the Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to pursue his research project titled "A Shi'ite Mythology."

### Sharon Berry

In 2014 Dr. Sharon Berry was awarded the Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to pursue her research on "Mathematics, Logic, and the Access Problem."

### Sivan Balslev

In 2015 Dr. Sivan Balslev was awarded a Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to pursue her research titled "Looking at the History of Masculinity, Childhood, and Sexuality in Modern Iran."

### Nea Ehrlich

In 2015 Dr. Nea Ehrlich was awarded a Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to pursue her research titled "Animated Realities: How Animation Emerged as the Visual Language of the 21st Century and Why We've Come to Believe It."

### Filip Ivanovic

In 2015 Dr. Filip Ivanovic was awarded a Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship for a project titled "Virtue and Happiness: Moral Philosophy in Late Antique Christian Thought."

### Torbjørn Ottersen

In 2015 Dr. Torbjorn Skinnemoen Ottersen was awarded a Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to pursue his research project titled "Staging the Present: Regieoper and Documentary Opera on the Modern Stage."

### Uri Weiss

In 2015 Dr. Uri Weiss was awarded a Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to pursue his research titled "Negotiation and Distributive Justice"

### Dong Xiuyuan

In 2015, Dr. Dong Xiuyuan was awarded a Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to pursue his research titled "The Presence of Buddhist Thought in Early Arabic Theological Literature."

## New Fellows



### Dr. Elvira Di Bona

In 2016 Dr. Elvira Di Bona was awarded a Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to pursue her research titled “The Content of Auditory Perception.” She received her PhD in philosophy and cognitive sciences from the University Vita-Salute San Raffaele, Milan and the Jean Nicod Institute, Paris in 2013. In her dissertation, she pursued the study of consciousness in relation to auditory perception and defended two theses: the “identity view” and the “maximalist view.” According to the first thesis, when we hear sounds, we also hear events and happenings that occur at the sources where the sounds have been produced. According to the second thesis, our auditory landscape is constituted by sounds that are not only identical to the audible events occurring at sound sources, but are also the tools that help us to recover information about the material objects that generate them. She is currently working on the nature of our auditory experience. Generally, we think that through audition we are able to detect only sounds and their audible qualities (such as pitch, timbre, and loudness). Dr. Di Bona’s intention is to show that through audition we hear not only sounds but we are also in touch with the objects of the environment that are sound sources (or, at least, some of their properties). Her latest publication is “Towards a Rich View of Auditory Experience” which is forthcoming in *Philosophical Studies*. In this paper, she shows that we can genuinely perceive gendered voice. This work is a first step toward the elaboration of her theory of auditory perception.

**Dr. Guy Paltieli**

In 2016 Dr. Guy Paltieli was awarded a Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to pursue his research titled “Privacy, Presence, and Participation: Changing Political Concepts in a Visible Democracy.” By tracing the history of these concepts, this research aims to offer a new kind of democratic theory for a new technological age. Dr. Paltieli studied at Tel Aviv University before completing his PhD in the Department of Politics and International Studies at the University of Cambridge. His doctoral thesis is titled “Thinking Alone: The Meaning of Solitude in Democratic Thought.” By combining contemporary political theory and history of political thought, Dr. Paltieli showed in his thesis the important role of solitude in the formation of democratic thought in the nineteenth century, the negative attitude toward it in twentieth-century political thought, and its possible relevance in the technological reality of the twenty-first century. His latest article, “Solitude de son Propre Coeur: Tocqueville and the Transformation of Democratic Solitude,” was published in *The Tocqueville Review* 37(1), 2016.

**Dr. Georgie Statham**

In 2016 Dr. Georgie Statham was awarded a Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to pursue a project titled “Applying Causal Models to Policy Debates.” In this study she aims to apply so-called causal modeling techniques to several policy debates to determine how much the norms we accept influence how we conceive of the causal structure of a given scenario. She has just completed her PhD at the University of Cambridge. In her thesis, at the intersection of the philosophy of causation and the philosophy of chemistry, she aimed to determine what we can learn about causal reasoning in general—and the interventionist theory of causation in particular—by investigating the causal reasoning used in organic chemistry. Her most recent publication, “The Manipulation of Chemical Reactions: Probing the Limits of Interventionism,” is forthcoming in *Synthese*.



#### Dr. Casper Storm Hansen

In 2016 Dr. Casper Storm Hansen was awarded a Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to pursue his research titled “A Conventionalist Philosophy of Mathematics.” In an effort to show that a metaphysical account of mathematics can be given without having to assume the existence of abstract entities, he aims to demonstrate that very significant parts of classical mathematics can be reconstructed on the basis of an ontology consisting merely of a potentially, countably infinite collection of sentences, plus human beings’ ability to commit to conventional truth conditions for those sentences. This project is a continuation of his dissertation titled “Constructivism without Verificationism,” for which the University of Aberdeen awarded him a PhD in 2014. In 2016 he has published “Brouwer’s Conception of Truth” (*Philosophia Mathematica* 24, 379–400), “The Temperature Paradox and Russell’s Analysis of the Definite Determiner” (*Linguistic Inquiry* 47, 695–705), “Unified Grounding” (*Erkenntnis* 81, 993–1010), and “On Fair Countable Lotteries” (*Philosophical Studies*, published online).



#### Dr. Leora Dahan Katz

In 2016 Dr. Leora Dahan Katz was awarded a Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellowship to pursue her research project titled “Retribution: Justifying State, Institutional, and Private Punishment.” While classic theories of punishment restrict themselves to the justification of state punishment, Dr. Dahan Katz’s project explores the commonalities that underlie the phenomenon of punishment within different spheres, identifying those that are relevant to the ethics and practice of punishment. Her project aims to develop a unified basis for the normative justification of punishment across relationships, while developing particular accounts of justified punishment within each sphere. Dr. Dahan Katz received her JSD in June 2016 from the Yale Law School. In her dissertation, titled “Restructuring Retributivism,” she developed a response-retributive theory of criminal law and punishment, while exploring the significance of harm for the justification and distribution of punishment. Dr. Dahan Katz’s recent publications include “Questioning the Normative Relevance of Philosophy of Action in Gideon Yaffe’s Attempts” and her contribution to *Neuroscience and Legal Responsibility* titled, “The Implications of Heuristics and Biases Research on Moral and Legal Responsibility: A Case Against the Reasonable Person Standard,” a product of her LLM (Hebrew University) research.



## Dr. Claire Benn

**Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellow  
Academic Report**

Every day we are faced with a torrent of decisions. Some are small (whether or not to buy ourselves a treat or give a few shekels to a homeless person), while some are big (whether or not to give up eating meat or do something challenging that frightens us). You might think that philosophy has nothing to say about the many questions, issues, problems, and choices we have to deal with. You would be wrong. It is this very feature of philosophy that attracted me to it, and was the source of my eventual decision to specialize in ethics. Understanding the significance of our actions is fundamental to understanding ourselves. It is becoming ever more important to answer questions such as: What are the limits of my duty? Is what is good to do dependent on culture? How do the changes in the world affect what is right/wrong or good/bad? It is through the study of ethics that I hope to make a contribution to answering such vital questions.

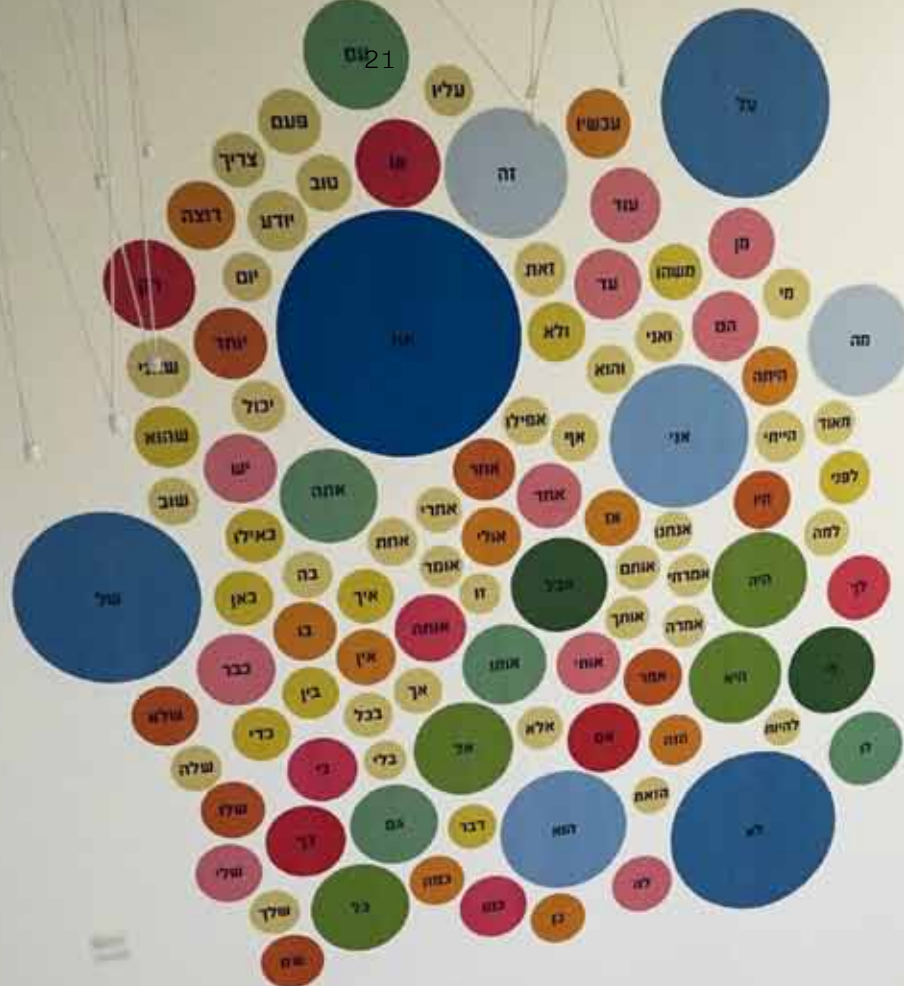
I completed my PhD at the University of Cambridge. Having done my MPhil dissertation on forgiveness, I decided to look at the more theoretical ethical underpinnings of actions like forgiveness that are undoubtedly good to do and yet are not ones that anyone has a right to demand of us. My PhD thesis was dedicated to understanding better the class of these *supererogatory* actions. Sometimes they are everyday occurrences, such as when someone, already late for an appointment, still takes the time to hold the door open for another whose hands are full. Sometimes they are less regular, like the donating of blood. Sometimes they are extraordinary, in the true meaning of the term, as when someone enters a burning building to save a child

or donates a kidney to a complete stranger. Understanding the nature and value of the supererogatory grants us insight into a wonderfully positive side of our moral lives. Often overlooked in the traditional ethical discussions of liars, murderers, promise-breakers, and thieves, the realm of the supererogatory instead encourages us to take more seriously those modest gift givers, blood donors, saints, and heroes that also populate our moral world.

One of the attractions for me of working on supererogation was that it brought together both the theoretical and applied aspects of ethics: It examined the framework and categories at play while embedding them in—and drawing on—our everyday lived experiences. I have continued this in my current project titled *The Ethics of Virtuality*.

Rapidly developing technologies of artificial intelligence, virtual realities, and robotic agents raise serious ethical concerns. Much of the debate has focused on the appropriate use of these technologies and directions for their further development. I suggest that the ethical implications of these technologies run much deeper: These technologies have the potential to create a new sphere of ethical action.

I have begun by examining the dark side of this new sphere: virtual child pornography and virtual pedophilia. So far, I have written three papers. In the first, I tease apart the ethical dimensions that make a difference to our understanding



of the very category of child pornography, bringing together considerations from legal studies, law enforcement, sociology, aesthetics, semiology, and ethics. In the second paper, I provide an argument for why pornographic pseudo-photographs require consent from those whose photographs are used, consent that children cannot give: This explains why doctored images of child pornography are morally problematic. The third paper addresses the issue of photo-realistic completely computer-generated child pornography. In my paper, I argue that there are structural similarities between such images and inegalitarian adult pornography. These structural similarities ground my claim that

the very arguments used against inegalitarian adult pornography are the very ones that apply to computer generated child pornography and that, conversely, our condemnation of child pornography should also lead us to condemn some forms of adult pornography.

I am grateful to the Polonsky Academy for giving me this opportunity, and for giving all the fellows here amazing support and encouragement. I love doing my research and couldn't think of a better place to do it!

# Israeli Civil Society



Academic director: Prof. Moshe Justman  
Project director: Ms. Hanan Saadi

[www.vanleer.org.il/en/civil-society](http://www.vanleer.org.il/en/civil-society)

The aim of the Israeli Civil Society program at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute is to promote and reinforce democratic discourse and culture in Israel. We seek to create a body of knowledge on citizenship and civic policy that is incorporated in public discourse and is drawn upon by decision-makers. Three centers—Economics and Society, Advancement of women, and Social Justice—are described separately. The projects described here address three major themes, often in tandem: citizenship, education, and Arab society in Israel.





### **Values and Citizens: Citizenship and Democratic Education**

Director: Haifa Sabbagh; Editor: Rabbi Naftali Rothenberg

A longstanding effort of the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute to promote active learning of civics in Israeli schools has led to the publication of a civics textbook for junior high school, *Values and Citizens: Citizenship through Active Learning*, which was officially approved by the Ministry of Education in 2014 and supported by the Cohen Foundation. The book charts a path to a shared civic infrastructure and literacy, directly addressing the challenge of teaching citizenship in a complex political and social environment with deep ethnic, religious, and ideological differences. Structured activities enable teachers to initiate values-oriented discussions of social and political questions, nurturing students' capacity to be active, involved, and responsible citizens in a democratic system. More than forty schools, from a wide variety of backgrounds, have adopted the book, which has already reached thousands of students.

### **Access of Arab Students to Higher Education in Israel**

Project director: Dr. Sarah Ozacky-Lazar

In cooperation with the Council for Higher Education in Israel (CHE) and generously supported by the Social Venture Fund (SVF) USA and the Schocken Family Foundation

Expanding access to, and success in, higher education for Arab citizens in Israel promotes greater equity and supports the country's economic development. In 2013, the Council for Higher Education launched an ambitious and well-funded six-year program to promote this goal, nominating a faculty member in each institution of higher education to coordinate these efforts. VLJI initiated a forum for these representatives in which to exchange ideas and learn from each other. In 2016, the forum held plenary meetings and specialized meetings throughout the country, thus providing professional support and promoting mutual learning.

### **“Umm el-Fahm Reads”: A Holistic Municipal Approach to Promoting Reading with Young Children from Disadvantaged Families**

Project directors: Ms. Haifa Sabbagh, the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute; Prof. Margalit Ziv, al-Qasemi Academic College of Education; Dr. Mahmoud Zohdi, Umm el-Fahm Municipality  
A joint project of VLJI, the Bidayat Early Childhood Center at al-Qasemi College of Education, and the Umm el-Fahm Municipal Department of Education, supported by the Bernard van Leer Foundation and the Bosch Foundation

Completing its fourth year, the program has worked to deepen parents’ and professionals’ awareness of the importance of reading books with young children, enriching their knowledge base, expanding their access to high-quality books, and creating an

organizational and professional leadership with the commitment and knowledge to promote reading books with children. This is achieved through capacity-building courses and workshops for parents, community activists, teachers, teachers’ aides, and early-childhood caregivers; the distribution of high-quality books; and community events on book-reading activities. External evaluations indicate that thousands of children have already benefited from the program; a nucleus of professionals has been trained; and the municipality is strongly committed to the program. Initiatives to develop similar programs in other communities are moving ahead.



### **Arab Society in Israel: Population, Society, Economy**

Project director and editor: Ramsees Gharrah

This yearbook provides a comprehensive, reliable infrastructure of statistics on central themes pertaining to the Arab citizens of Israel, by demographic, geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic categories. Data from all previous volumes are freely available in Hebrew and English to researchers, policy makers, and the public at large through the Institute's website, and are widely used by researchers. The eighth volume appeared electronically in 2016, and volume 9 is now in draft form.

### ***Manbar-Bamah*—An electronic magazine on the relations between Arabs and Jews in Israel**

Editor: Dr. Sarah Ozacky-Lazar

Associate editors: Dr. Yonatan Mendel, Ms. Hanan Saadi

<http://www.forum.vanleer.org.il/>

This electronic periodical, established in 2013, examines current topics related to Arab life in Israel and to relations between the Palestinian minority and the state, the Jewish majority, and the wider Arab community. *Manbar-Bamah* appears in Arabic and Hebrew and is sent out electronically to thousands of subscribers in academe, politics, civil society, the media, education, and the general public. Contributors to the magazine, Arabs and Jews, include prominent figures in academe, public life, culture, and the media. Each issue is devoted to a specific topic. In 2016 a double issue of the magazine was devoted to Palestinian art in Israel, between nationalism and universalism and between East and West, in dialogue with Jewish artists in Israel.

### **Comprehensive Planning of the Israeli Education System: Is It Necessary? Is It Possible? How Can It Achieve Its Goals?**

Academic director: Nachum Blass

In its second and final year, this study group, which comprises forty leaders in the field of education, including a former minister of education and four former directors-general, asked what could be learned from Israel's major education reforms. All the meetings were recorded and can be accessed through the Internet. A public conference on the new budgeting regime of Israel's teachers colleges brought together eight current and former college presidents and senior officials from the Council for Higher Education in Israel and the Ministry of Education.

### **Ethiopian Jews Tell Their Story**

Academic director: Efrat Yerday

In its first year, this study group brings together a small, select group of young intellectuals of Jewish Ethiopian heritage who share a strong desire to reclaim control of the story of their community. The topics they address include the role of the Ethiopian community in its aliyah, a role minimized in official Israeli histories; the untold suffering and many needless deaths, especially of women, while waiting in the camps in Sudan; the difficulties, and implicit racism, many black Israelis routinely encounter in Israel; the resistance of Israel's religious establishment to accepting the unique religious heritage of Ethiopian Jewry; and, more generally, what it means to be black in Israel. A public conference is planned for 2017.

## THE CENTER FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE (WIPS)

Academic directors: Prof. Hanna Herzog, Prof. Naomi Chazan

Academic coordinator: Ronna Brayer-Garb; Research coordinator: Hadass Ben-Eliyahu

<http://www.vanleer.org.il/he/wips>

### WIPS's Vision

The central objective of WIPS is to promote gender mainstreaming as an overall strategy for advancing the democratic and civil status of women from diverse social groups. According to this approach, gender inequality is a general social worldview that relates to both women and men. To pursue these goals, WIPS engages in four areas of activity: theoretical and applied research; proactive projects of gender mainstreaming to enhance women's representation and increase the presence of women's voices in the public sphere; policy initiatives related to gender equality and gender mainstreaming; and public education to address key current issues.

### Invisible Work

WIPS's central research initiative in 2016 is the study and examination of the deep social structures that create and maintain women's "invisible work." The term "invisible work" refers to the unpaid and unrecognized care work and housework performed mainly by women in both the private and public spheres. A diverse research group has been developing the subject from various perspectives, addressing and analyzing the contribution of women to the economy and to society as a whole through their "invisible work." WIPS received research grants from the National Insurance Institute of Israel and from the Ministry of Science to develop this research topic and offer measurement and policy recommendations. The first conference in Israel on this subject, titled Time, Work and Gender, was held on December 7, 2016.





### Gender Equality in Action

Another major project of WIPS is titled Gender Equality in Action—a training program that provides strategies and tools for challenging gendered practices and barriers within the workplace. This innovative program enables a network of women from diverse professional fields and organizations to incorporate gender-sensitive viewpoints and practices into their everyday lives and experiences in the workplace. This initiative empowers participants by providing them with practical tools with which to interpret their experiences from a gendered perspective, teaching them how to decipher organizational networks of power, and training them as agents of social change in order to make work environments more rewarding, safe, and respectful toward women. Our action forums include women journalists who came together to lead a campaign against sexual harassment in the media; a forum of women senior researchers at a leading university who developed measures to ensure women's representation in central academic committees; a forum of women in high-tech who are formulating solutions for women who face harassment in interpersonal interactions; and a group of Orthodox women who are trying to introduce more egalitarian practices in their communities.

### The Gender Index

In 2016 the WIPS center continued to develop **The Gender Index**, an innovative tool for broad evaluation of the level of inequality between women and men in Israel over time. This is the fourth publication of the Gender Index, which is expanded and published annually. It provides a detailed picture of the state of inequality in twelve key domains, including education, the labor market, and the distribution of power. In 2016 we added a new domain to the index—**Media and Culture**, which measures the representation of women in top radio songs charts, among theater actors and directors, in the media, and among Israel Prize laureates. The media and culture spheres have a decisive influence on shaping collective perceptions of gender difference and gender gaps. They mold personal and collective identities by means of images, symbols, and myths; consolidate social worldviews; and influence values, norms, and a shared cultural base. The 2016 Gender Index was launched at the Knesset Committee for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality. It received much media attention and the effects of this groundbreaking tool for advancing gender equality in Israel are continuously growing. <http://www.genderindex.vanleer.org.il/?lang=en>

## THE ECONOMICS AND SOCIETY PROGRAM

Academic director: Prof. Michel Strawczynski

Project director: Mr. Yarden Kedar

<http://www.vanleer.org.il/en/economics>

The Economics and Society Program serves as a think tank specializing in economic issues related to Israel, with an emphasis on government policy. The program's goals are to address the growing gaps in Israeli society, with a focus on growth, income distribution, and the labor market; to elaborate alternatives for socioeconomic policy in Israel; and to play an active role in shaping the economic discourse in the country. Its staff includes senior economists with many years' experience in key positions in the civil service. To those ends, it publishes policy studies and position papers and sponsors conferences.

### Online Magazine

The program publishes a quarterly magazine presenting new and interesting studies and perspectives in a variety of economic fields. This year the magazine continued to be relevant for growing audiences and had tens of thousands of online visits. The magazine includes articles dealing with the measurement of wellbeing and quality of life in Israel, the effectiveness of household economics training, the impact of legal gambling on underprivileged communities, and a follow-up on the implementation of the Poverty Committee's recommendations. We conducted interviews with leading economic stakeholders, most notably one with Adv. Dror Strum about the committee he headed regarding competitive financial markets.

<http://www.econmag.vanleer.org.il/>

### Government Budget and Military Expenditure

As we do each year, we conducted our Budget Conference in June, presenting alternative scenarios for public spending and tax changes for the upcoming biennial government budget for 2017–2018. Our material documented the low level of government expenditure both historically and from an international perspective. The conference also addressed the defense budget, examining its composition and its impact on the civilian sectors. The conference was addressed by guest lecturer Dr. Christos Kollias of the University of Thessaly, who spoke about the effect of defense spending on growth in developed countries, and by a panel of notable local speakers.

### Health Expenditure Profile in Israel

In May we published a study that examines Israel's place in the ranking of OECD countries by national health expenditure, taking into account the differences between the countries in the age composition of the population and trying to tackle the widespread notion that the relatively young composition of Israel's population is the main reason for the relatively low health expenditure in comparison to that of other countries. The findings show that Israel's relative ranking by health expenditure has improved to some degree in recent years, but we still remain in the lower third of the scale, even after correcting for the differences in the age distribution.

### Recent Tax Cuts and the Impact on Income Inequality

At the end of 2015 the finance minister made two major tax cuts (despite the constantly rising need for resources in the government budget, about which we have warned several times). The cuts were in the VAT and in the corporate tax. In July we presented a study on these tax cuts, showing that the majority of the funds released by these acts benefited the rich, contradicting the official reasoning behind these cuts, which was to benefit society as a whole.

### "Progressive Economists" Scholarship Program

This program was launched two years ago, together with the Social Economic Academy, and is beginning its third year. The target group of this scholarship is economics students who aspire to work in the public sector. Our intention is to expose them to the discussions and critiques of the current economic paradigm, many of which are not raised in the classroom. Last year's projects were presented at a conference in July and dealt with topics that included the implications of higher education subsidies on inequality and the impact of housing taxes on the housing rental market.

<http://www.sea-progressiveeconomists.org/>



## THE CENTER FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND DEMOCRACY IN MEMORY OF YAAKOV CHAZAN AT THE VAN LEER JERUSALEM INSTITUTE

### PRIVATIZATION, REGULATION, COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE, AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES PROJECT 2016

Academic directors: Prof. Itzhak Galnoor, Dr. Varda Shiffer, Dr. Eyal Tevet; Project director of the Chazan Center: Nomika Zion  
<http://www.hafrata.vanleer.org.il/>

## THE PRIVATIZATION PROJECT

### Policy Change 2016

This year we continued focusing on influencing decision makers with regard to privatization policy. We directed our efforts at making the principles of the privatization bill and the Manual on Privatization and Outsourcing an integral part of the operation of various ministries and government offices, such as the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services and the Employment Service. The privatization bill was tabled at the Knesset in March 2016. A briefing was held for journalists, but the law was not adopted by the Ministerial Committee for Legislative Affairs. However, in September a significant breakthrough took place when the government adopted the Praver Report, which is based on the suggestions in our *Manual for Decision Makers* (2014) and includes instructions for improving the provision of social services. Despite the differences in perception between the Praver Report and the Chazan Center team, the report constitutes a significant step in restructuring the process of privatization and outsourcing.

### Histadrut

We negotiated cooperation with the Histadrut, with the aim of formulating an overall vision for the public sector regarding workers in public services who are employed by contract or indirectly through external bodies.

### Schoolchildren's Health and *Tipat Chalav*

In July we initiated a roundtable together with the nurses, who were supposed to be transferred back from privatized employment to direct employment by the state, and other stakeholders. A policy paper is in preparation on the challenges the government faces in nationalizing the southern district.







## RESEARCH

### Privatization of Driving Tests

We were invited to advise the driving examiners regarding the decision to privatize the tests. We held meetings with the Histadrut and submitted a professional opinion to the Labor Court and to the High Court of Justice, accompanied by interviews and articles. A policy paper, including comparisons with other countries, is in preparation.

### Establishment of the Credit Information Database

Our researchers worked intensively in the Knesset to combat the government-sponsored bill to establish a database that would make possible a credit rating of every citizen by commercial companies. We wrote two position papers, proposed amendments to the legislation, and organized a roundtable with the participation of stakeholders.

### Book: *The Privatization of Israel: The Depreciation of State Responsibility*

The book, an English version of the Hebrew volume (2015), aims to present the center's research to an international audience. It focuses on the broader lessons that can be learned from the privatization policy in Israel and is expected to be published in 2017 by Palgrave-Macmillan.

### Website on Privatization and Nationalization

We continued to update the website as a source of information about privatization and nationalization initiatives in Israel, and we published two newsletters containing reports of current developments.

### Regulation in Israel

The research examines regulation in Israel through ten test cases and includes concrete recommendations for regulatory models appropriate to the Israeli system of government. The book will be completed in December and will be sent for academic peer review.

### Collaborative Governance: State-Market-Society

This workshop aims at examining the changes in the roles of the state and the new forms of collaboration with non-state agents. The assumption is that governance will be based on a different definition of responsibility and a different way of dividing the tasks between the state, the economic market, and civil society. Some ten researchers submitted initial proposals for articles, which will be published in a pathbreaking book.

### The Growth of New Cooperatives in Israel

This research maps the new cooperatives during the last decade, focusing on three models that were introduced after the social protest of 2011. It will be part of a book on cooperatives in Israel, led by the Yad Tabenkin Institute.

### The Water System in Israel

This new research, which began in June with the collaboration of Mifal HaPais, aims to explore the impact of regulation of the water system on the water corporations with regard to price and service.

### Developing Educational and Leadership Structures to Improve the Local Education System

This action research is designed to strengthen the managerial and leadership abilities of the central education team in local authorities. In May we organized a two-day seminar for the education staff from Kafr Qassem, Jaljulia, and Kafr Bara, including representatives of the Ministry of Education. The seminar revealed a significant improvement in the education system in Kafr Qassem. In September, the project was expanded to Kalansua and Zemer.

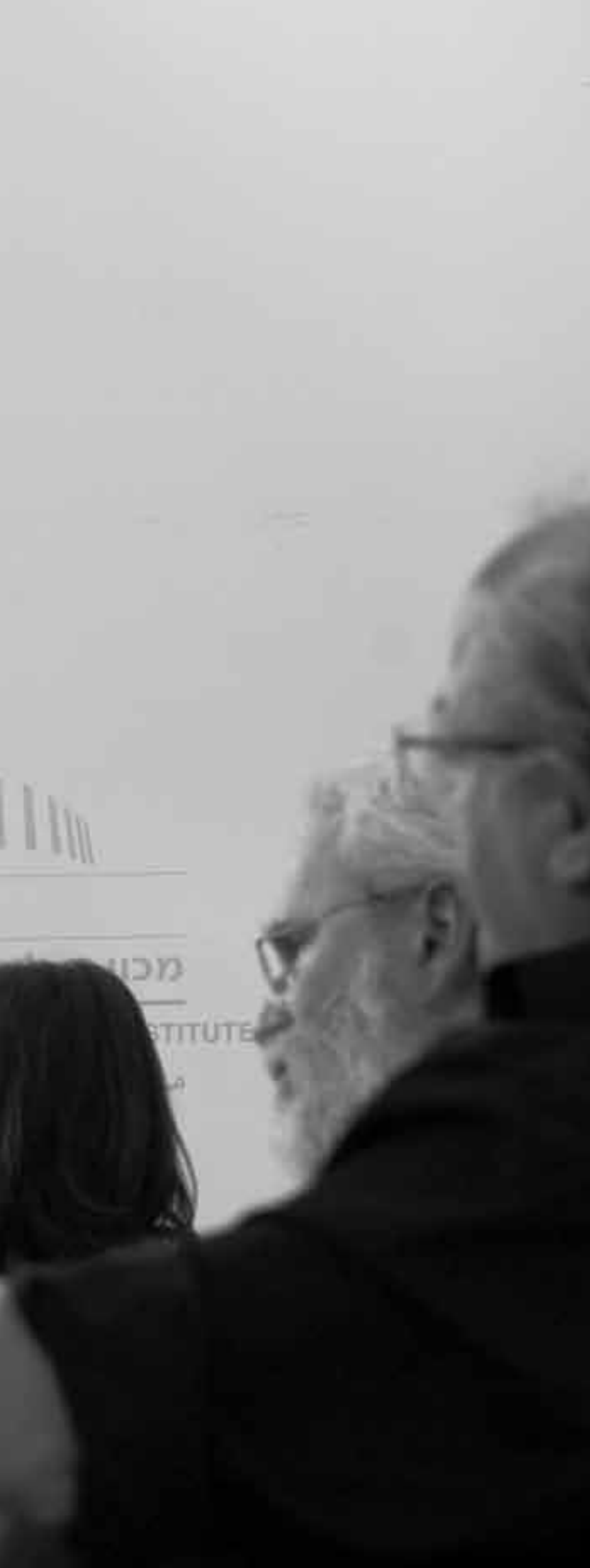
# Jewish Culture and Jewish Thinking



Academic director: Prof. Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin  
Project director: Dafna Schreiber

[www.vanleer.org.il/en/judaism](http://www.vanleer.org.il/en/judaism)

The Institute promotes research and public events concerning Jewish thinking and culture. The program focuses on interdisciplinary research groups whose aim is to propose new perspectives on major topics that engage Jewish thinking today, such as science and religion, Judaism and democracy, tradition and secularism. The program, an integral part of the VLJI mission, tries to contribute another perspective on the main topics that concern the Institute, such as science and religion, the role of tradition, East and West from a Jewish perspective, and the theological dimensions of political discourse. It brings together individuals from different groups—academics and rabbis, secular and orthodox—to establish together a common language that addresses contemporary challenges.



### Opening the Week—God and Man

Project director: Dafna Schreiber

The “Opening the Week” series for 2015–2016 was devoted to a contemporary look at the perceptions of God in the Bible and in Jewish thought. In the course of the year we viewed the notion of God through philosophical and anthropological, religious and secular lenses, trying to understand how philosophers throughout the ages, from the Sages to Spinoza, from the Hasidim to Hollywood, looked upon His deeds and demands. Lecturers from many fields of scholarship and knowledge, with diverse cultural and ideological backgrounds, examined the place of God as reflected in the various Torah portions.

### Opening a Gate—A Series of Meetings

Academic director: Prof. Aviad Hacoen

Since its composition and canonization in the sixth century, the Talmud has been the core of Jewish learning and halachic negotiation. The talmudic dialogic text was considered an expression of the Jewish diasporic existence. Yet, what is the Talmud’s significance for our times? What is the relevance of its messages and values for the contemporary reality? In this series of meetings, we have tried to examine these questions by bringing together talmudic scholars and scholars from a variety of disciplines to discuss specific issues. Among the topics are practices for resolving conflicts between disputing parties; the attitude toward disabled individuals; the character of the Shabbat in a modern state; and harmful employment practices and their ramifications. Among the speakers were Prof. Nili Cohen, president of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities; Nobel laureate in economics Prof. Yisrael Aumann; Supreme Court Justice (emerita) Dalia Dorner; MK Karin Elharar; Supreme Court Justice Noam Solberg; Prof. Rami Reiner; and Dr. Yair Furstenberg.

## THE VAN LEER FORUM FOR JEWISH CULTURE AND JEWISH THINKING

Academic director: Prof. Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin

### New Trends in the Study of Jews in Islamic Countries

Prof. Orit Bashkin, Department of Cultures and Languages of the Middle East, University of Chicago

This lecture tried to trace the significant turning point that occurred in recent decades in the study of Middle Eastern Jewries, among scholars from various disciplines, and the way this trend contributed both to the general study of the Middle East and to the study of Jewish history and culture. The lecture demonstrated how changes in perceptions regarding the late Ottoman Empire, Arab nationalism, and the Arab revival movement gave rise to new views with respect to Mizrahi Jews.

### Sovereignty in Exile: The Case of Kiryas Joel—a Jewish Town in the Suburbs of New York—from Private Congregation to Public Corporation

Prof. David N. Myers, The Sady and Ludwig Kahn Professor of Jewish History, UCLA

This lecture dealt with the fascinating story of Kiryas Joel, a town in New Jersey in which Satmar Hasidim are the majority of the population. The lecture focused on the rapid changes the town has undergone since its founding in 1977—from a collection of private houses to a local authority with recognized legal status. The case of Kiryas Joel provides an opportunity for examining the relation between religion and state in the United States and for comparing the American and Israeli cases.

### Haredim: Toward Involvement or Continued Entrenchment

An evening dedicated to the TV documentary series by Avishay Ben Haim (Channel 10) on the alleged “collapse” of haredi society. During the evening, scholars, both academic and rabbinic, elaborated on various aspects of the argument raised in the documentary series. Among the participants were Dr. Yochi Fischer, Prof. Aviad Hacohen, Rabbi Yosef Miller, Rabbi Menachem Nabet, and Prof. Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin.

### Radical Judaism: Rethinking God and Tradition, by Arthur Green

In his book *Radical Judaism*, Prof. Arthur Green, one of the leading American-Jewish intellectuals today, calls for a Jewish spiritual revival accompanied by a new way of thinking about Israel and its relation with the Palestinians. The participants in the event discussed both aspects of this program. The discussion evening consisted of two sessions. The first was titled “Torah and Prayer for a Postmodern Era” and the second session was titled “Israel—the Name, the People, the State.”



### **“These Are the Names” (*Eleh Shmot*): Political Concepts in Hebrew beyond the Horizon of the Secularization of the Language—a Workshop**

Academic director: Assaf Tamari

The Minerva Center at Tel Aviv University in collaboration with the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute

The aim of this workshop was to explore the political meaning of terms in Hebrew—a language in which, in the words of Gershom Scholem, “We live as if on the edge of the abyss.” The participants examined a variety of words, names, and political concepts in Hebrew—some of which exist in contemporary Hebrew and some of which are absent—and discussed how they are used, their connotations, their hidden potential, and the complexities they may reveal. Special attention was paid to an examination of how concepts work in Hebrew, both in light of the central and hegemonic status of translated Western concepts in the contemporary political language and in light of Hebrew’s special, traditional status as a holy tongue—that is, as a theological and political concept in itself. Finally, the participants reexamined Hebrew as a highly important tool for critiquing the modern secular dichotomy between the theological and the secular, and examined the possibility of going beyond this dichotomy.

### **Mizrahi Perspectives, Jewish Perspectives**

Academic director: Prof. Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin

Group coordinator: Assaf Tamari

This continuous research group consists mainly of young scholars and focuses on the encounters between Middle Eastern and European Jewish communities. The group reexamines questions regarding the Jews of the East, in historical and contemporary contexts that go beyond the traditional disciplinary and conceptual distinctions between the historical treatment of Jewish communities of the East and the ethnographic and sociological treatment of Mizrahim in Israel. This encounter has also created a framework in which the discussion of Mizrahi perspectives of various kinds makes it possible to shed a critical light on some of the underpinnings of the secularization thesis, taken broadly, and to reexamine the dichotomies on which it rests—religious-secular, West-East, national-religious. The group concentrates on basic concepts such as “tradition,” “messianism,” and “exile” so as to examine how they may offer alternatives to the binary division underlying the secular order.



### Haredi Women: Community, Society, and Action

Academic director: Tali Farkash

Recent years have seen the emergence of a lively discourse among ultra-Orthodox women about their place in, and influence on, the haredi public space in which they live. This discourse found clear expression during the last Knesset elections, when a group of haredi women spearheaded a campaign calling for the inclusion of women on the candidate slates of the ultra-Orthodox parties, under the slogan “No votes without representation.”



Neta Elkayam, *Self-Portrait as Baba Sali*, 2006

These voices served as the catalyst for the coalescence of a discussion group for haredi women at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute. The group's goal is to provide haredi women direct access to relevant theoretical knowledge, as well as to various activist strategies, so that they can consolidate their own vision and worldview along the delicate axis that runs between feminism and the ultra-Orthodox way of life. It also seeks to promote and further ideas leading to women's equality in the haredi world, by means of projects led by the members of the sector. The first year of the program included lectures by a diverse list of speakers, with the focus on three axes: feminist theory and critical theory, analysis of haredi society, and issues of religion and femininity.

### Ultra-Orthodox Discussion Group of Secularization and Shared Social Life

Academic director: Prof. Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin

Group coordinator: Rabbi Yosef Miller

The aim of this discussion group, consisting solely of ultra-Orthodox rabbis, is to integrate knowledge of the humanities and social sciences into the rabbinic world of knowledge. The leading principle of this intellectual activity is the awareness that modern philosophical and theoretical knowledge are crucial for dealing with rabbinic questions in our time. On the other hand, rabbinic discourse can contribute another dimension to the discussion on general topics such as secularism, citizenship, and the public role of tradition. The ongoing critical discussion on the notion of secularism provides a turning point for a stimulating framework of learning of both bodies of knowledge. During the past year the group engaged in thorough study and analysis of philosophical texts, in order to propose a comprehensive program.

## BOOK SYMPOSIA

### Research Group on Psychoanalysis and Kabbalah

Steering committee: Dr. Hani Biran, Dr. Ruth Kara-Ivanov Kaniel, Prof. Haviva Pedaya

This is the second year of the research group that is aiming to identify the similarities and the differences between the kabbalistic world and the world of psychoanalysis, in order to develop a language based on interactions and comparisons between the two worlds. The group consists of women only, including both senior and young researchers in the areas of Kabbalah and literature, alongside experienced psychoanalysts, graduate students, and artists. This year the group dealt with the gaps between the psychoanalytic therapeutic and theoretical dimensions and the academic study of Jewish literature and Kabbalah. Each session consisted of two lectures, one in the areas of Kabbalah, Judaism, or Hebrew literature, and the second in the areas of psychoanalysis.

### Jewish Thought and the Public Intellectual: Following the Book: *Jewish Thoughts: In the Teachings of Aviezer Ravitzky*

This discussion evening was devoted to the project of Prof. Aviezer Ravitzky, one of the prominent public intellectuals in Israel. The first part dealt with the question of the role of public intellectuals and the second part examined the relevance of Jewish philosophy to contemporary political and social discussions. The participants included Shlomo Avineri, Ruth Gavison, Avinoam Rosenak, and Yedidya Stern.



# Mediterranean Neighbors



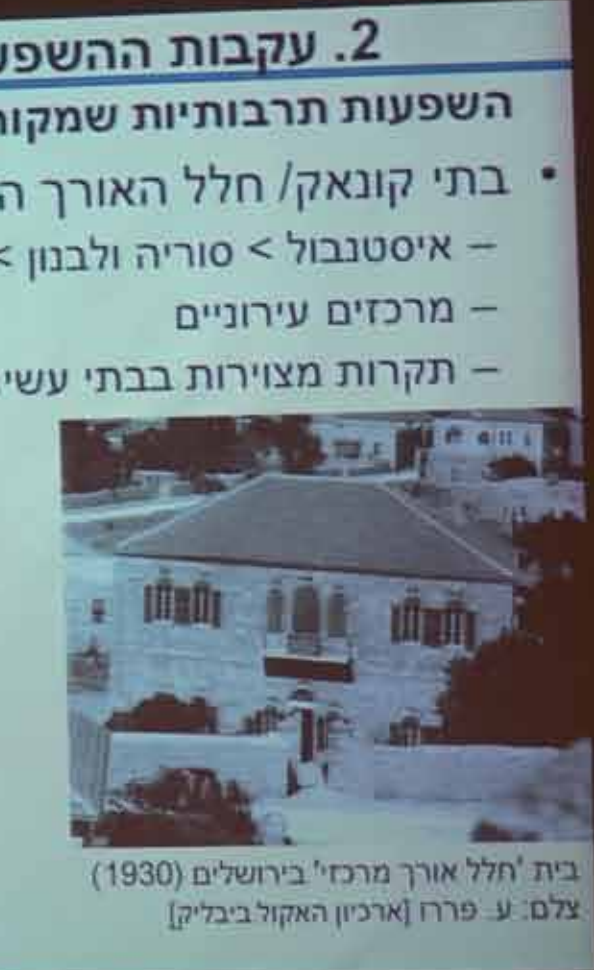
Academic director: Dr. Abigail Jacobson  
Project director: Dr. Edo Litmanovitch

[www.vanleer.org.il/en/mediterranean](http://www.vanleer.org.il/en/mediterranean)

The goals of the Mediterranean Neighbors Unit are to contribute to the establishment of a democratic society, a culture of peace; and healthy relations within the region. It aspires to influence how the region is portrayed and understood and serves as a unique platform for bringing together Israeli and Palestinian scholars, as well as scholars from the Middle East, and for empowering young Arab scholars. To achieve these goals we undertake various types of activities in several avenues: Israel and its neighbors, the Forum for Modern Turkey, and the *Manarat* Center for Jewish-Arab Relations. In all avenues, the unit promotes academic excellence by developing and conducting academic research and discussion groups and workshops and by publishing academic literature, while raising fundamental and challenging questions for public discussion by means of conferences, book launches, symposia, and nonacademic publications, and by promoting regional cooperation. *The Journal of Levantine Studies*, also published by the Mediterranean Neighbors Unit, disseminates the acquired knowledge about the region to a broad readership.







In 2016, the Middle East continued to experience the flow of refugees and the instability of states, as well as the emergence of religious and political movements that challenge the existing state order. Therefore, the Mediterranean Neighbors Unit devoted its research and activity to the historical and ongoing human crises and the fragile state of human rights in our region. The unit focused on ways of exploring the current state of affairs and understanding the historical, social, and political processes that shape this diverse region. In a variety of activities we tackled various facets of the fragile condition of minorities in the Ottoman Empire, as well as in twentieth-century Turkey, in the Balkans, and in Israel, and in the current conflict in the Syrian-Iraqi area. We explored the contemporary political and social upheaval in Greece, as well as the two-generation-old literature of immigration in Arabic. We studied the historical background of the political instability of the Middle East as well as the multifaceted motivations of present threats like ISIS. In addition, in the Center for Jewish-Arab Relations (Manarat) we continued the activities in the cultural-linguistic sphere regarding issues related to the status of the Arabic language and literature in Israeli academia and in the public sphere.

## RESEARCH GROUPS

### Arabic Narratives of Migration and Journey

Academic director: Dr. Ariel M. Sheetrit

“The journey” has been a crucial topic in modern Arabic literature since its inception, appearing first in descriptions of actual travels in the nineteenth century, later in novels from the first half of the twentieth century predicated on an Arab man’s fictional journey to the West, and in works of fiction of more recent decades that describe travel and migration from many points of view and in multiple directions. The research and discussion group was initiated in 2015 on the topic of Arabic narratives of migration and journey. The group consists of researchers who focus on diverse aspects of Arabic literature that are connected by themes of travel and identity and researchers who focus on related themes. In 2016 the group continued this line of research, reading extensively from a broad range of texts that concentrate on these issues. The group has been enriched by meetings with local writers of Arabic literature and has continued to host both writers and researchers whose texts revolve around different types of journeys. Several of the meetings constituted lectures in Arabic and were open to the public.

## INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOPS

### **The Sykes-Picot Moment of the Middle East: Border Making, International Intervention, and the Uncertain Legacy of WWI Diplomacy in the Middle East**

Organizers: Dr. Abigail Jacobson, Dr. Arie Dubnov

The borders that ISIS aims to erase were set a century ago, as part of the secret agreement signed in 1916 between the French diplomat François-Georges Picot and his British counterpart, Sir Mark Sykes, which divided the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire between the two colonial powers. Their vision of the future borders of the post-Ottoman Middle East was based on the colonial interests of the European powers, without any consideration of the interests of the local populations, the ethnic and religious divisions, and the political situation in the region. The outbreak of sectarian and national conflicts that the region is witnessing today, many observers agree, can be traced back to that decisive moment and its heritage, marking the demise of the Ottoman Empire and the rearrangement of the region's geopolitics. The aim of this international workshop, marking the centennial of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, was to cross disciplinary borders and bring together historians, geographers, international relations scholars, and political scientists who are interested in studying the genesis of the Sykes-Picot Agreement and the Western post-WWI diplomacy, as well as their impact on the current realities in the Middle East.

### **Ottoman Traces in the Land of Israel**

Organizers: Dr. Omri Paz, Dr. Tsameret Levy-Daphny

The symposium entitled "Ottoman Traces in the Land of Israel" is part of a broad collaboration between the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute and Yad Ben-Zvi that aimed to develop public and academic knowledge about the Ottoman period in the Land of Israel. Obviously, the 400 years of Ottoman rule had great and diverse influence on life in the Land of Israel, which was an integral part of the province of Greater Syria. This broad and deep influence has been largely ignored by scholars, and the Israeli public is even less aware of it. In the symposium we considered the extent of the influence of Ottoman rule in this area and discussed its traces in various aspects of life today, such as law, administration, urban planning, culture, and architecture in the Land of Israel. The symposium marked the beginning of what we hope will become an active community of scholars who will engage in a continuous dialogue on the Ottoman legacy in the Land of Israel and will hopefully make this knowledge available to the public.

### **Building a Sustainable Regime of EEZs in the Eastern Mediterranean — Building a Sustainable Trust**

Organizers: Dr. Edo Litmanovitch, Dr. Emine Sülün, Sophie Schor

Since the 2000s, there have been significant finds of natural gas in the Eastern Mediterranean region. Almost all these gas reserves are within declared exclusive economic zones (EEZs) of states. This development has significantly raised the geopolitical tensions in the area. Moreover, it poses the potential for catastrophic pollution of the sea. Avoiding transboundary hazards requires the cooperation of civil societies throughout the region and thus introduces an opportunity for mutual learning and development of common interests and respect. In our project, we examined the limits of such cooperation by building a multinational network of NGOs and individual researchers throughout the region, holding an international workshop in the symbolic buffer zone in Cyprus, and writing a joint policy paper aimed at governments as well as media in the region.

### **Shared Memories, Contested Memories, and Historical Silences: A Comparison between Israel, Turkey, and the Balkans**

Organizers: Dr. Tsameret Levy-Daphny, Dr. Abigail Jacobson

Turkey, Israel, and the Balkan states (the former Yugoslavia) all face challenges in grappling with their past and must contend with conflicting narratives regarding certain historical events, especially those that took place during the nation-building process. This makes it difficult to create a shared historical narrative that would integrate the narratives of marginalized communities or of those who became victims as part of the nation-building process. In all three cases there is a long historical connection to the Ottoman Empire, with all that it entails. In this workshop, conducted jointly by the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute and the Center for Comparative Conflict Studies in Belgrade, we brought together Turkish, Israeli, and Balkan scholars to discuss, from a comparative perspective, questions regarding shared and contested memories.

## PUBLIC EVENTS

### Human Insecurity, State Fragility, and Complex Humanitarian Crises in the Mediterranean

Organizer: Dr. Benedetta Berti

This conference aimed to discuss the findings of leading scholars on the relationship between internal conflict, state fragility, and human security in the broader Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. It focused on mapping emerging forms of state fragility in MENA and assessed their impact on broader regional human security. The discussions focused especially on the main ongoing complex humanitarian emergencies at the regional level, beginning with the Syrian civil war and its broader regional impact, and then zooming in to the ongoing regional refugee crisis as well as to the issue of forced displacement across the Mediterranean. A special issue of the *Journal of Levantine Studies* (JLS) is planned to give these discussions an additional platform in 2017.

### The Political Culture of the Young Turk Revolution of 1908: Space, Symbolism, and Language

Organizer: Dr. Bedross Der Matossian

The jubilation and the revolutionary festivities in Istanbul after the Young Turk Revolution of July 24, 1908, are testimony to the post-revolutionary euphoria in the cities and among the ethnic groups of the Ottoman Empire. The celebrations and festivities inaugurated a new era and announced the demise of the *ancien régime*. In his lecture, Dr. Bedross Der Matossian analyzed this moment of the minorities' hope for a new "civic religion," a hope that, of course, was not realized.

### Smashing the Image: The Destruction of Archaeology by ISIS

Organizer: Dr. Edo Litmanovitch

The destruction of world cultural assets by ISIS is not the organization's worst offense, but it does express the multilayered character of ISIS: Some of its members seek to impose a fundamentalist approach on the areas under its control; others seek to harm the West and its values; yet another group is interested in creating provocations so as to stay in the public eye worldwide; and there are also those who try to persuade collectors to "save" archaeological artifacts by buying them from the organization. In a panel held on this topic, we portrayed the multifaceted nature of the organization by examining the motivations for the systematic destruction of archaeological sites and cultural heritage sites.

### Outlawing the Northern Branch of the Islamic Movement

Organizers: Dr. Edo Litmanovitch, Dr. Yonatan Mendel

In 2015 the Israeli government outlawed the northern branch of the Islamic Movement, thus expressing its position that the Islamic Movement is a hostile, extremist organization like Hamas. A large part of the Israeli public, most of which supports the iron-fist policy toward Arab protest movements, supported this decision, as did all of the Zionist parties in the Knesset. In contrast, Israel's politically variegated Arab population reacted angrily to the decision, because they see it as the suppression of a legitimate political movement and a violation of their freedom of speech and right to organize. Moreover, because of the decision's timing—on the heels of the terror attacks in Paris—Israel's Arabs saw it as yet another stage in the erosion of their status as equal citizens in the state, mirroring international reactions to the attacks.

This discussion addressed the various aspects of the government's decision to declare the northern branch of the Islamic Movement a prohibited organization and examined its implications for the already tense relations between the Jewish majority and the Arab minority in Israel.

## PUBLICATIONS

### Greece in the Eye of the Cyclone — Lecture Series

Organizers: Dr. Jeannine Horowitz, Dr. Edo Litmanovitch

The economic and political upheaval in Greece, which reached its climax in the summer of 2015, drew public attention to the situation in the country. Whereas the international community was interested mainly in the consequences of Greece's remaining in the European Union or leaving it, the suffering of the Greek nation and the tremendous changes and tensions it experienced remained in large part unexamined. In this series of lectures, delivered by Greek researchers and public figures, we examined this neglected dimension of the crisis in Greece. We heard about the inner social and political instabilities, the formal Greek perspective on the crisis vis-à-vis the European Union, and the everyday struggles of Greek citizens.

### *Journal of Levantine Studies (JLS)*

Editor: Dr. Abigail Jacobson

Associate Editor: Dr. Edo Litmanovitch

Coordinators: Medi Nahmiyaz-Baruch, Sophie Schor

*JLS* is an interdisciplinary, peer-reviewed publication dedicated to the critical study of the cultural, historical, and political space known as the Levant. As a platform for novel academic discussion, *JLS* strives to publish original scholarship and engage new paradigms for studying and understanding the region. The journal's electronic issues also include abstracts in Arabic, Hebrew, and Turkish, as well as a blog. The journal has been published by the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute since 2011 biannually in English and appears in print and online. The recent volume (Vol. 6 1&2) is a special double issue devoted to the political dimension of the Converso phenomenon in the Iberian Peninsula and beyond. The journal's website: <https://levantine-journal.org/>



## MANARAT: THE VAN LEER CENTER FOR JEWISH-ARAB RELATIONS

Director: Dr. Yonatan Mendel; Project coordinator: Ms. Hanan Saadi

<http://www.vanleer.org.il/en/manarat>



Having recognized the great importance of fostering projects concerning Jewish-Arab relations and the importance of cultural interaction between Israelis and the Arab world, the Van Leer Manarat Center, which is dedicated to projects in this field, expanded its work over the past year. The following are some of Manarat's projects in 2016:

### Maktoob: Arabic Literature Translated into Hebrew

Academic director: Prof. Yehouda Shenhav

Academic coordinator: Ms. Maisalon Dallashi

In Israel today, only 2% of the Jews know Arabic, as compared with 92% of the Arabs living in Israel who speak and use Hebrew daily. This is obviously due to both political and linguistic factors. With this geopolitical precondition in mind, in 2016 we extended the project of the Van Leer Translators Forum to create the Maktoob Series, the only book series in Israel today devoted to literature translated from Arabic into Hebrew. With funding from Mifal HaPais and with the cooperation of the Olam Hadash (New World) publishing house, in 2016 we translated four books that will be published in 2017 and we are now selecting books for 2018–2019.

### Creating an Alternative Curriculum for Learning Arabic in Jewish Schools

Academic directors: Dr. Thabet Abu-Ras, Amnon Be'eri-Sulitzeanu, Dr. Yonatan Mendel

The failure of Israel's Jewish society to learn Arabic in a comprehensive, positive, and effective way lies at the heart of this project. Conducted jointly by the Abraham Fund Initiative and VLJI, this project has undertaken the task of creating a comprehensive curriculum for teaching Arabic in Jewish schools, which for the first time will include study of the language from first to twelfth grade and will benefit from the shared work of Jewish and Arab scholars, teachers, and pedagogues. The project's aim is to present to the Ministry of Education a new policy for learning Arabic and to propose a new future for Arabic studies in Israel.

### Ofek-Horizon — A Joint Project with I'lam, Yedioth Aharonoth Newspaper, and the Walla News Website

Academic directors: Prof. Amal Jamal and Dr. Yonatan Mendel

Horizon is a project conducted in conjunction with the daily newspaper *Yedioth Aharonoth* and the popular Israeli news website Walla. It aspires to give the Israeli public access to opinion pieces originally written in Arabic, which are translated exclusively by us and published on their opinion pages.

### The Arabic Language in Israeli Academia

A joint project with Dirasat—The Arab Center for Law and Policy, and Sikkuy—The Association for the Advancement of Civic Equality. During 2016 we published a pioneering study, by Prof. Muhammad Amara, Dr. Smadar Donitsa-Schmidt, and Dr. Abd al-Rahman Mar'i, on the place of Arabic in the Israeli academic sphere. We also held the project's final conference in the Arabic language (with simultaneous translation to Hebrew) in an attempt to “normalize” Arabic, not only as an official language on paper, but also as an official language with evident importance.

### **Promoting Democratic Values among High School Students in Jerusalem: A Joint Project with the Museum for Islamic Art and the Adam Institute for Democracy and Peace**

Academic director: Dr. Yonatan Mendel

In this project, students from Jerusalem high schools—Jewish and Arab, secular and religious schools—come to the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute for a discussion led by a prominent Van Leer scholar, then tour the Museum for Islamic Art and participate in workshops there. The topics of the discussion vary, but they deal generally with promoting democratic and liberal values among young people, including discussions about democracy, minority rights, the meaning of citizenship, and more.

## **RESEARCH GROUP**

### **Gaza: Toward the Landscape of an Israeli Heterotopia**

Academic director: Dr. Omri Ben-Yehuda

The Gaza Strip has been under siege for the last ten years. The aim of the Gaza group was to consider how Israelis see, reflect on, and understand Gaza. To that end, the group members tried to view its otherness as a “heterotopia,” that is, a place we constantly perceive but cannot reach. The second goal was not to adhere to the media’s common treatment of Gaza as that which is “outside.” The third goal, for which members of the group worked closely with the Rosa Luxembourg Stiftung in Israel, was to bring Gaza to the fore in Israeli public discourse.



## SERIES OF PUBLIC LECTURES

### Not Only Black and White: Jews and Arabs in a Changing Middle East

This was a series of three lectures on topics we wish to promote in Manarat: language as a bridge, cultural interaction, and greater understanding between Israel and the Arab world. At the first event we screened Arab Movie, a film that focuses on movies broadcast on Israel television's First Channel from the end of the 1960s. The second event focused on the role of current and former Palestinian prisoners in a possible peace negotiation between the Israeli and Palestinian leaderships. At the third event, held jointly with the Forum for Regional Thinking, we studied the transformations in the Middle East from an Arab-centric point of view.

### East Jerusalem in the Center

During the year 2016 we had two groups that worked on East Jerusalem, a heated and crucial topic in Israeli contemporary political and social life. The first was titled "Conservation and Presentation of Jerusalem's Antiquities," was headed by the archaeologist Yonathan Mizrahi of Emek Shaveh and titled "Archaeology in the Shadow of Conflict." The second, titled "Planning and Construction in East Jerusalem," was headed by Dr. Meir Margalit, the former deputy mayor of Jerusalem. Both groups are to publish policy papers in 2017.



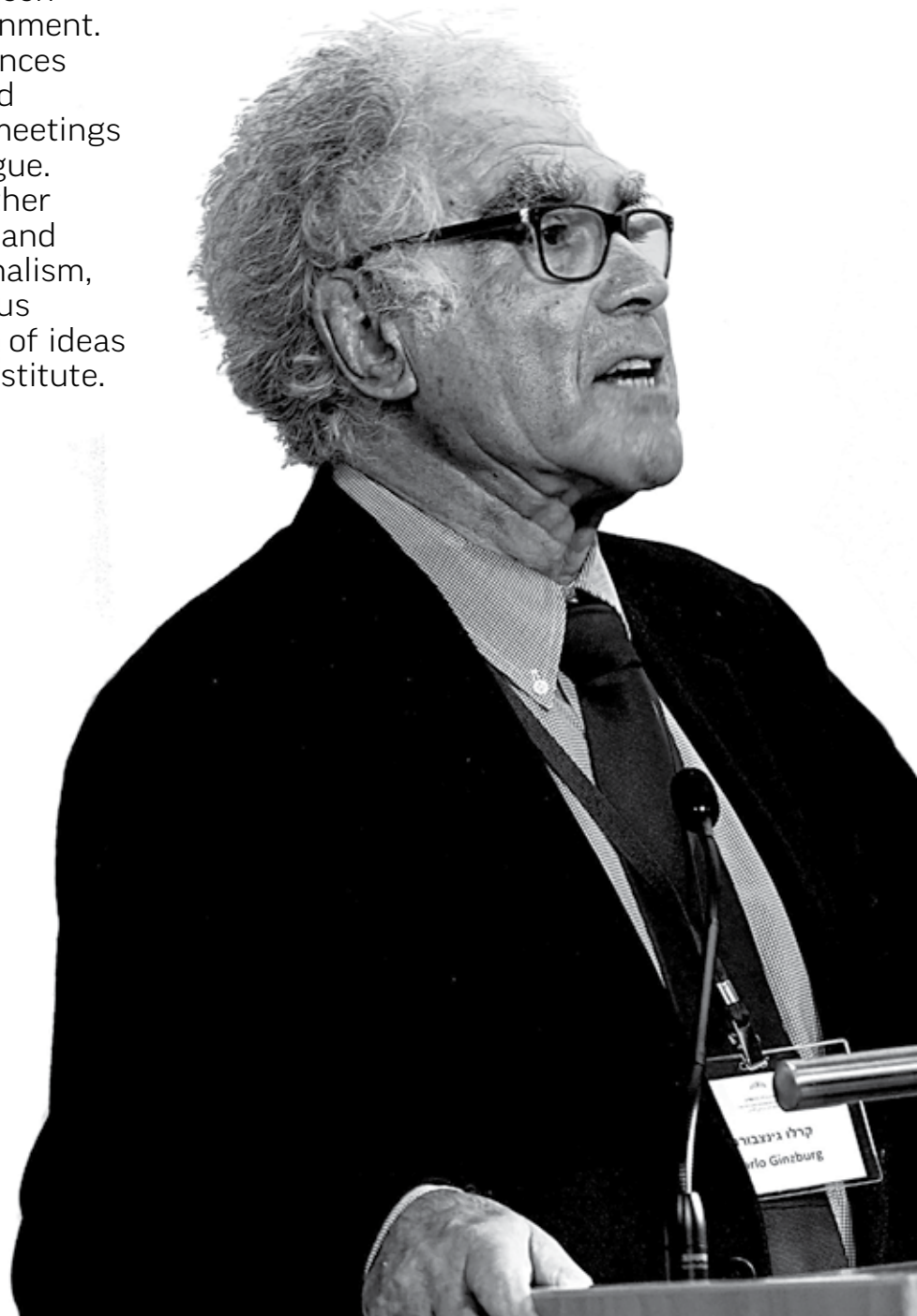
# Public Events

Director: Shulamit Laron

Coordinator: Eyal Efron

[www.vanleer.org.il/en/public-activities](http://www.vanleer.org.il/en/public-activities)

Built as a center for the meeting of minds, a space where local and international scholars congregate to exchange and explore ideas, the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute has since its inception prized its public events. Today, the Institute continues to host a dynamic array of events that display its work to the public and create an interface between the institution and its environment. The Institute's many conferences and workshops, colloquia and symposia, and other public meetings generate a stimulating dialogue. Its public forums bring together leading thinkers from Israeli and international academia, journalism, public policy, and politics, thus fostering the open exchange of ideas that is the lifeblood of the Institute.





## CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

### **Natalia Ginzburg: Her Life and Writing — On the Hundredth Anniversary of Her Birth**

Academic directors: Prof. Manuela Consonni, Dr. Tsippy Levin Byron  
In cooperation with the Department of Romance and Latin American Studies, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem; Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House; Yad Vashem; Istituto Italiano di Cultura Tel Aviv; and the Embassy of Italy in Israel.

The renowned author Natalia Ginzburg belonged to the generation of Italian-Jewish writers who had faced the threat of death, suffered severe persecution, and experienced bereavement that left a gaping chasm. In the end, the post-Fascist generation resumed living and writing and in so doing expressed its new liberty, with forgiveness or anger. Natalia Ginzburg chose a third way, which was characterized by a strong sense of self—the “little virtues,” the well-known novel *Family Sayings* that gave rise to her understanding of a fact that she had known for a long time, that her role was to write, without misunderstandings and with literary passion: “When I start writing I feel exceptionally comfortable, in a space that seems familiar, with known and familiar tools, and I feel that they are very steady in my hands.” Ginzburg’s books were very successful and many have been translated into a host of other languages. The conference dealt with various aspects of Ginzburg’s writing, her family environment, and her intellectual education. Among the participants were literary scholars, philosophers, and historians, including her son, Prof. Carlo Ginzburg.



### **Rene Descartes: Meditations, Objections and Replies**

*Celebrating the Hebrew translation of Descartes' Meditations with the Objections and Replies*

Academic directors: Prof. Elhanan Yakira, Prof. Michael Roubach  
In cooperation with the Philosophy Department and the S.H. Bergman Center for Philosophical Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the Magnes Press, and the French Embassy in Israel. Descartes' work was discussed in general, with an emphasis on the extremely important discussion between Descartes and a few of his illustrious contemporaries recorded in the Objections and Replies, which provided the ever-present agenda of the whole of modern philosophy. Also discussed were special problems in the translation and editing of Descartes' writings. Prof. John Cottingham (Reading University), the foremost English translator of Descartes, was among the participants. Also participating were Prof. Denis Kambouchner (Paris 1–Sorbonne), Prof. Frédéric Du Buzon (Université de Strasbourg), and Prof. Emily Grosholz (Penn State University).

### **Information and Information Processing in the Sciences: Biology, Physics, and Brain and Cognitive Sciences**

*The 30th Annual International Workshop on the History and Philosophy of Science*

Academic directors: Prof. Orly Shenker, Dr. Nir Fresco  
The workshop was supported by the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, the Cohn Institute at Tel Aviv University, the Edelstein Center at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the Israel Science Foundation, and the Jerusalem Brain Community. This workshop brought together philosophers and scientists to discuss the role and uses of information in physics, biology, and the cognitive sciences. What is the explanatory role of information in theories in physics, biology, and cognitive science? What is the relation among probability, entropy, and information? Is it theoretically useful to aim at a single, all-encompassing theory of information? Addressing these questions in a single workshop was especially important in view of the central roles information plays in different disciplines and sciences.

## **To Whom Does the Past Belong? Archive and Society in Israel**

Academic directors: Dr. On Barak, Dr. Liat Kozma,  
Dr. Avner Wishnitzer

In cooperation with the Social History Workshop

Far-reaching changes have taken place in archiving in Israel and elsewhere in recent decades. The increasing digital accessibility of documents and information generates new research possibilities, but it also creates previously unknown dangers and gives rise to limitations and obstructions. Despite the importance of the official archives of the State of Israel for the preservation and shaping of the past, and despite the above mentioned rapid changes, these archives are not the object of broad public interest or even of methodical and critical discussion of their role and functioning. Given this background, the purpose of the conference was to bring together individuals from three circles of involvement in studying and preserving the past: archivists, academic researchers, and activists in civil society organizations. At the conference, the reciprocal relations within and between these circles were elucidated, and the means and frameworks for deepening cooperation and shared discussion of the challenges facing archival work and public access to it in the twenty-first century were outlined.

## **Infinity in Early Modern Philosophy The NYC Workshop in Jerusalem**

Academic directors: Prof. Ohad Nachtomy, Prof. Reed Winegar,  
Dr. Pini Ifergan

The workshop was organized by the Spinoza Center and the Dept. of Philosophy, Bar-Ilan University.

This one-day workshop brought together four of the leading scholars whose work relates to different aspects of infinity. The topic of infinity has a long and distinguished philosophical history, though contemporary analytical work on it is sparse. The aim of the workshop was to shed light on the various perspectives on, and approaches to, the concept of infinity. It also aimed to afford a deeper understanding of questions regarding the metaphysical structures that may underlie infinity, the epistemic implications of infinity, and the applications of the concept in aesthetic and religious contexts.

## **New Directions in Democratic Thought**

Academic director: Prof. Michael Schäfer

The conference brought together expert academics from various faculties and countries. They discussed the permanent challenges to, and opportunities for, democracy in the present, as well as proposals for future reforms. Prof. Michael Schäfer spoke about the different historical concepts of democracy and the new challenges to democracy in an era of capitalism and globalization and within new structures of transnational governance, which has changed national politics profoundly. Prof. Carlo Strenger spoke about the increasing danger of populism, accompanied by the total collapse of the idea of the agora. Prof. Efraim Podoksik offered explanations of why there is a connection not only between nationalism and democracy, but also between nationalism and liberal democracy. Prof. Ulrike Guerot presented a completely new perspective on Europe. Prof. Yaron Ezrahi and Prof. Azar Gat delved into other topics in talks titled “Democracy as a Constructive Utopia” and “Why Democracy Won in the Twentieth Century and What Does this Augur for the Future?” Prof. Karl Schlögel, Helge Eikermann, and Prof. Hajo Funke presented three case studies from Eastern Europe/Russia, Israel, and Germany. All the participants agreed that democracy is always incomplete and always changing. Our challenge is to recreate our democratic ways of working so that they may be adapted to changing political, social, and economic contexts.

## **New Directions in Theories of Capitalism**

Academic director: Prof. Eva Illouz

The conference was supported by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, and the Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung.

Recent trends in financial markets, knowledge and information industries, new media, and consumer culture add new dimensions to our understanding of capitalism, variously dubbed cognitive, affective, or emotional capitalism. This conference examined the deployment of cognitive, affective, and emotional capitalism(s) by describing their sites and morphology and by highlighting the respective strength of these concepts in explaining the development of capitalism.

**סדרת ההרצאות השישית מטעם מרכז ספינוזה**  
**לחשוב עכשיו: פילוסופים על ההווה**  
 כעריכונם של ד"ר פני איפרגן וד"ר ינון ינון

סדרת ההרצאות השישית מטעם מרכז ספינוזה תתקיים בשנת 2016. מטרתה היא להעלות את השאלות המרכזיות של הפילוסופיה המודרנית והפוסט-מודרנית, ולהציגן בצורה חדשה. הסדרה תתקיים בשבתות, בשעות 10:00-19:30.

 1. <b>הנה ארנדט</b> 31 באוגוסט 1906 – 5 בדצמבר 1975 ד"ר פני איפרגן ד"ר ינון ינון	 2. <b>הנס בלומנברג</b> 7 באפריל 1912 – 9 באפריל 1996 ד"ר פני איפרגן ד"ר ינון ינון
 3. <b>מישל פוקו</b> 26 באוגוסט 1926 – 25 במאי 1984 ד"ר פני איפרגן ד"ר ינון ינון	 4. <b>יורגן האברמס</b> 25 במאי 1929 – 3 באוגוסט 2016 ד"ר פני איפרגן ד"ר ינון ינון
 5. <b>צ'ארלס טיילור</b> 3 באוגוסט 1929 – 28 בספטמבר 2016 ד"ר פני איפרגן ד"ר ינון ינון	 6. <b>צ'ארלס טיילור</b> 3 באוגוסט 1929 – 28 בספטמבר 2016 ד"ר פני איפרגן ד"ר ינון ינון

מפגשי הסדרה יתקיימו בימי חמישי בשעות 10:00-19:30

המרכז יתקיים בשבתות בין שעות 10:00-19:30  
 הכניסה חופשית  
 מידע נוסף: [www.spinoza-center.org](http://www.spinoza-center.org)  
 02-6409222

**SERIES OF LECTURES**

**The Sixth Lecture Series of the Spinoza Center—  
Thinking Now: Philosophers on the Present**

Convened by Dr. Pini Ifergan, Dr. Dror Yinon

The Sixth Lecture Series of the Spinoza Center presented philosophers who were active in the second half of the twentieth century: Hannah Arendt, Hans Blumenberg, Michel Foucault, Jurgen Habermas, and Charles Taylor. The uniqueness of these philosophers lies in their use of tools borrowed from other fields of knowledge. In this way they gave new meaning to philosophical questions, supported by a concrete historical, sociological, or other basis. Hence their broad influence that extended beyond the bounds of philosophy to the humanities and the social sciences. Each of the philosophers whose thought was discussed conducted, in his or her own way, a kind of critical interim summary of the socio-philosophical project of Modernism, from its beginnings to the second half of the twentieth century, and proposed directions for development. The series offered a glimpse of how philosophers anchor their philosophical thought in time, integrating it into other areas of knowledge and thus examining the justification of the ideals of Modernism and the ability of contemporary humankind to live up to them.

**The Pond: Philosophy of Science around the Mediterranean**

Academic directors: Prof. Orly Shenker, Prof. Stathis Psillos  
 The workshop was supported by the Edelstein Center at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute. This inaugural meeting marked the establishment of a center of excellence in this region. The Pond network is an academic community that promotes collaboration built on high quality, dedication, and solidarity, in a safe and inclusive intellectual environment. The topic of this meeting was the relevance of the philosophy of science to the sciences. This topic emphasizes, on the one hand, the interdisciplinary nature of this field and the multidisciplinary collaborative effort to promote knowledge that is characteristic of contemporary research, and on the other hand, the unique character and topics addressed by the philosophy of science as a separate field of enquiry. Representatives of eight Mediterranean countries participated, and the participants lectured on various aspects of this topic.

**The Bar-Hillel Colloquium for the History, Philosophy, and Sociology of Science**

Convener: Prof. Orly Shenker

A joint enterprise of the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, the Cohn Institute at Tel Aviv University, and the Edelstein Center at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem  
 In its thirty-fifth year, the Bar-Hillel lecture series hosted eight speakers. The Mara Beller memorial lecture was given by Prof. Kostas Gavroglu (University of Athens), who examined the phenomenal publishing success of Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Prof. Noam Chomsky (MIT) delivered (by video) the Prof. Yehoshua Bar-Hillel Special Memorial Lecture, titled "Problems and Mysteries Revisited." Jill North (Cornell University) presented a new approach to the spacetime ontology debate. Laurie A. Paul (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill) discussed preference capture. The talk by Richard Bradley (London School of Economics) was titled "Chances, Counterfactuals, and Credences." Shaul Katzir (Tel Aviv University) told the story of the invention of the quartz clock. Miklos Redei (London School of Economics) explained why Bertrand's paradox is not paradoxical but is felt to be so. And Christian List (London School of Economics) gave a talk titled "Objective Chance as an Emergent Phenomenon."

### Paris: The City and Its World

Organized by Prof. Richard Cohen, Prof. Moshe Sluhovsky

This lecture series was organized by Daat Hamakom (Center for the Study of Place in Modern Jewish Culture); the Paulette and Claude Kelman Chair in the History of French Jewry, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem; and the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute. The series examined the major representations of the transition to modernity in Paris of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the impact of modernity on a variety of fields of knowledge. In the opening two lectures, Prof. Moshe Sluhovsky and Prof. Richard Cohen discussed modernity and Jewish modernity in Paris. The following lectures were by guest lecturers, each a specialist in his or her field. Prof. Vanessa Schwartz (the University of Southern California) talked about new forms of visual culture (photography and film), Dr. Gal Ventura (the Hebrew University of Jerusalem) talked about Impressionism, and Dr. Assaf Shelleg (also of the Hebrew University) spoke about music in Paris in the 1920s. Mr. Yigal Zalmona (former chief curator of the Israel Museum) spoke about the impact of Paris on Israeli artists, Dr. Yona Hanhar-Marmor (the Hebrew University of Jerusalem) discussed aspects of Marcel Proust's writings, and Mr. Ynon Wigoda (also of the Hebrew University) spoke about Jewish philosophers in twentieth-century Paris.

## GUEST LECTURES AND SEMINARS

### The Future of Reading

Lecture by Prof. Michael Hagner (ETH Zürich)

Reading is among the most contested issues in the early twenty-first century. While critics warn of “digital dementia” and argue that skimming through the Internet destroys the capability of close reading, other commentators welcome these technological options as a new epoch in the long history of reading. Instead of taking sides with one of these options, Prof. Hagner analyzed them in historical perspective and argued for a new ecology of reading, based on the profound difference between paper and digital technologies.

### Heidegger's *Black Notebooks*

Spinoza Center Seminar with Prof. Richard Wolin (City University of New York)

Heidegger earmarked the *Black Notebooks* as the culminating achievement of his 102-volume Collected Works. They represent, among other things, a stark reaffirmation of his philosophical commitment to National Socialism—and, as such, a point of no return for Heidegger scholarship. But what the *Black Notebooks* also disturbingly reveal is Heidegger's obsession with “World Jewry” in the most negative and cliché-ridden terms: as a pivotal source of cultural and social dissolution that must be eliminated in order to realize National Socialism's “inner truth and greatness,” as Heidegger himself put it in 1935. How, then, should one go about resolving the conundrum of a “great thinker” who remained convinced that the Nazi regime, with its unbridled racism and exterminationist militarism, represented an adequate solution to the “decline of the West”?

### The Homoerotics of Orientalism

In cooperation with the George L. Mosse Program in History, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Lecture by Prof. Joseph A. Boone (University of Southern California)

One of the largely untold stories of Orientalism is the degree to which the Middle East has been associated with male homosexuality by scores of Western travelers, historians, writers, and artists for well over 400 years. Examining European accounts of sites like Istanbul and Egypt as hotbeds of forbidden desire, juxtaposing Ottoman homoerotic genres and their European imitators, and unlocking the homoerotic encoding in Persian miniatures and Orientalist paintings, Boone modeled an ethics of cross-cultural reading that illuminates the critical role played by homoeroticism and homophobia in shaping the relation of the Middle East and the West to this day.





## LITERARY EVENINGS

This platform brings together authors, academics, and critics to examine new books. The following list includes some of the panel discussions (in Hebrew):

### **Hebrew Literature as European Literature**

Menachem Brinker / Carmel Publishing House

### **Cosmological and Psychological Time**

Yuval Dolev, Michael Roubach, eds. / Springer/  
Boston Studies in the Philosophy and History of  
Science

### **This Is No Africa: Boundaries, Territory, Identity**

Haim Yacobi / The Van Leer Press and  
Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House

### **On the Brink of the Abyss**

Is the Triumph of the Settlements the End of  
Israeli Democracy?

Talia Sasson / Keter Publishing House

### **Secularization and Secularism: Interdisciplinary Perspectives**

Yochi Fischer, ed. / The Van Leer Press and  
Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House

### **Richard Kaufmann and the Zionist Project**

Marina Epstein-Pliouchtch, Michael (Micha)  
Levin, eds. / Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing  
House

## EXHIBITIONS

### Last Folio / A Photographic Memory

Yuri Dojc, Photographer; Katya Krausova, Curator and Producer

This exhibition was sponsored by the Embassy of Slovakia and was hosted at the Polonsky Academy at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute. Yuri Dojc about his exhibition: "In January 1997, at the funeral of my father I met a remarkable woman, Mrs. Vajnorska. She was one of the thousand or so girls, who in early 1942 boarded the very first train to Auschwitz. She spent three years there, lost her entire family except for her brother. She told me of her daily home visits to others who survived like she did. I asked her if I could accompany her on her daily rounds. She agreed. And so I began photographing these people and the world they live in." Serendipity led Yuri and the documentary film team to an abandoned Jewish school in Eastern Slovakia, where time had stood still since the day in 1942 when all those attending it were taken away to the camps ... the school books all still there, essay notebooks with corrections, school reports, even the sugar still in the cupboard ... These decaying books lying on dusty shelves, the last witnesses of a once thriving culture, are treated by Yuri Dojc as the individual survivors that they are—each book captured as in a portrait, preserved in its final beauty, pictures speaking a thousand words. Among these many hundreds of books and fragments photographed by Yuri, one stands out especially—a book that miraculously found its way from a dusty pile to its rightful heir—a book once owned by Yuri's grandfather—Jakub. And so a journey that began with the portrait of his father came full circle.



### Beautiful Knowledge / Fulbright Sixtieth Year

Avi Muller, Exhibition Curator

This exhibition was sponsored by Fulbright, the United States-Israel Educational Foundation, and was hosted at the Polonsky Academy at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute.

The exhibition opened a window onto the last sixty years of scientific research and creativity of Fulbright program alumni. The purpose was to examine the relationship between knowledge and beauty and to translate that relationship into exhibition settings, screenings, and objects. At the same time, the exhibition was an attempt to assess possible development trends in human knowledge over the coming forty years. In this respect, the exhibition was a process in which—together with the visitors—materials were being curated for a conference that will celebrate Fulbright's 100th year of activity in 2056. Based on the forecasts of a variety of scholars and artists, projections of the future of knowledge, technology, and art were deposited in a time capsule. Visitors to the exhibition were invited to try to assess what the world will look like at the time of that future conference and whether the next generation of researchers will find the same beauty in it.







## Marketing and External Relations

Director: Danae Marx

Coordinator: Eyal Efron

In 2016 the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute established the Department of Marketing and External Relations (MER). The new department is responsible for marketing strategy, communications, and public relations. Our strategic approach aims at fostering connections with the Institute's traditional community while reaching out to new audiences and expanding VLJI's online presence. This year's successful public relations approach led to a 57% increase in media interest in VLJI's work and a doubling of the Institute's presence in social networks. In order to boost

strategic planning, we developed a marketing database that enables monitoring and evaluation of our various campaigns. At the same time, the department has been working to improve organizational capabilities concerning branding, visibility, impact, and relationship building. The department is maximizing the visibility of VLJI's work both in Israel and abroad. Alongside a new bimonthly English newsletter highlighting the Institute's activities, a new partnership with the Tel Aviv Review podcast has brought VLJI content to new English-speaking audiences around the world. We are also constantly expanding our English-language presence on our social media platforms.





## Website and Multimedia

Multimedia manager: Nahariel Leader

Photographer and new-media editor: Tamar Abadi

The multimedia department continues to offer a wide range of technical services for the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute's events, including video, still photography, and live streaming. In addition, the multimedia department is constantly developing technological capabilities that keep the Institute at the forefront of technical and online capability, enabling rapid growth of our online presence.

**Facebook:** 50% growth rate and over 9,000 followers

**YouTube Channel:** More than 2,300 recorded lectures, with over 1 million views and more than 3,200 followers

**Van Leer website:** Averaging 16,000 entries per month

All VLJI websites have been updated to accommodate new regulations for access by viewers with disabilities. In addition, several websites have been launched and updated:

<http://www.polonsky.vanleer.org.il> – The Polonsky Academy

<http://www.econmag.vanleer.org.il> – A magazine covering important socioeconomic issues

<http://www.meida-center.org.il> – The Israeli Information Center for Contemporary Religions

<http://www.genderindex.vanleer.org.il> – The Gender Index: mapping and analyzing gender inequality in Israel

<http://maktoobooks.com> – The Arabic-Hebrew Translators' Forum

<http://www.academiyya.vanleer.org.il> – The Forum for the Advancement of Higher Education in Arab Society

<http://www.hafrata.vanleer.org.il> – Updated data regarding processes of privatization and nationalization in Israel



# Van Leer Institute Press

Director and executive editor: Dr. Tal Kohavi  
Publishing production manager: Yona Ratzon  
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[www.vanleer.org.il/en/publications](http://www.vanleer.org.il/en/publications)

## Journals

**Theory and Criticism**, Vol. 46, ed. Eitan Bar-Yosef. Published in cooperation with Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, Tel Aviv.

**Theory and Criticism**, Vol. 47, ed. Eitan Bar-Yosef. Published in cooperation with Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, Tel Aviv.

**Journal of Levantine Studies**, Vol. 5 No. 2 (Winter 2015), ed. Abigail Jacobson [in English].

**Journal of Levantine Studies**, Vol. 6 (Summer/Winter 2016), ed. Abigail Jacobson [in English].

**Contributions to the History of Concepts**, Vol. 11 No. 1; ed. Sinai Rusinek.

**Contributions to the History of Concepts**, Vol. 11 No. 2; ed. Sinai Rusinek.

## Research and position papers

**The Gender Index: Gender Inequality in Israel 2016**, Hagar Tzameret-Kertcher, Hanna Herzog, Naomi Chazan, Yulia Basin, Hadass Ben Eliyahu, and Ronna Brayer-Garb.

**Arabic in the Israeli Academy: Historical Absence, Current Challenges, and Future Possibilities**, Muhammad Amara, Smadar Donitsa-Schmidt, and Abd Al-Rahman Mar'i [in Hebrew and in Arabic].

**The State Budget for 2015–2016 in Light of the Needs Raised by the New Social Index**, ed. Leah Achdut, Michel Strawczynski, and Avia Spivak.

**Health Expenditure Profile by Age in Israel and the OECD Countries**, Leah Achdut, Gabi Bin Nun, and Eran Politzer.

**Outsourcing of Public Policy Formation in the Public Sector**, Reut Marciano.



## Books

**Public Policy and Multiculturalism**, ed. Bashir Bashir, Guy Ben-Porat, and Yossi Yonah. Published in cooperation with Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, Tel Aviv.

**Disability Studies: A Reader**, ed. Sagit Mor, Neta Ziv, Arlene Kanter, Adva Eichengreen, and Nissim Mizrahi. Published in cooperation with Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, Tel Aviv.

**Mizrachi Ultra-Orthodoxy and Nationalism in Israel**, Nissim Leon. Published in cooperation with Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, Tel Aviv.

**The Halakhah as an Event**, ed. Avinoam Rosenak. Published in cooperation with Magnes Press, Jerusalem.

**An Arabic-Hebrew Literary Space**, ed. Hannan Hever and Mahmoud Kayyal.

**Arab Society in Israel: Population, Society, Economy (8)** (electronic book), ed. Ramsees Gharrah.

## Non-Hebrew Books

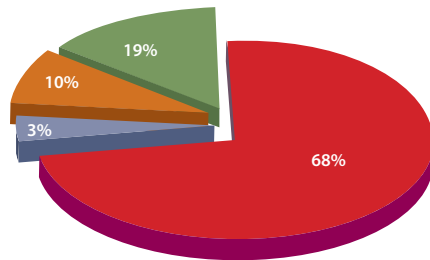
**Strategies of Polemics in Greek and Roman Philosophy**, ed. Sharon Weisser and Naly Thaler. Published in cooperation with Brill.

**Jews and Arabs in Israel Encountering Their Identities: Transformations in Dialogue**, Maya Kahanoff. Published in cooperation with Lexington Books.



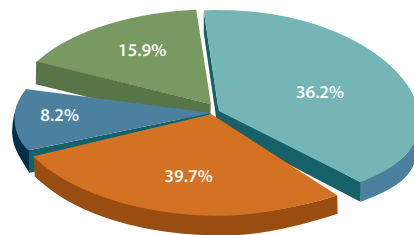
### FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES DATA (2015)

**Main Sources of Income**  
Total budget: NIS 26,905,000



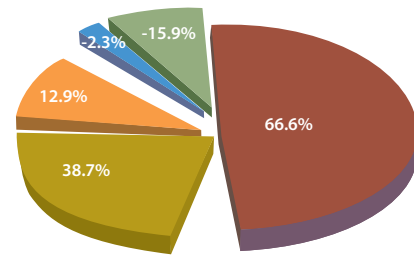
- VLGF
- VLJI
- Cooperation and grants from Israeli sources
- Cooperation and grants from foreign sources

**Content Units Research Cost as a Percentage of Total Research Cost**



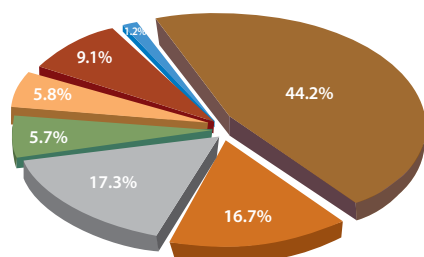
- Israeli Civil Society
- Advanced Studies
- Jewish Thinking and Culture
- Mediterranean Neighbors

**Percentage of Total Expenditure by Main Categories**



- The four content units
- Research support units
- Administration and maintenance
- Reduced Liability of Actuary Pension
- Depreciation

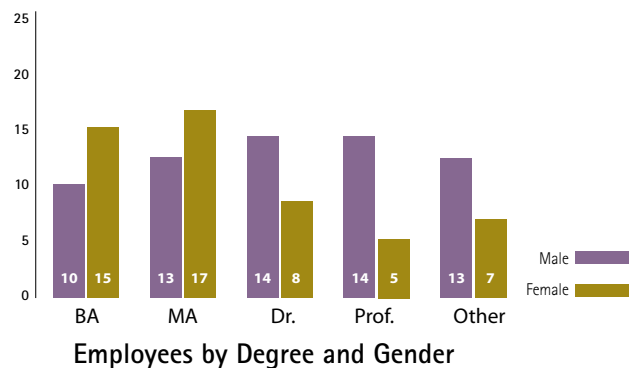
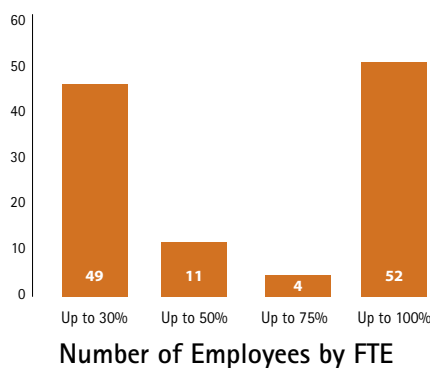
**Research Support Units Expenditure as a Percentage of Total Research Expenditure**



- Publications
- Public Activities
- Program Development
- Computer Services
- Library
- Business Development
- Documentation and Evaluation; Public Relations

\* Financial Data refer to CPA's Report for 2015

\*\* Because percentages have been rounded off, there may be a discrepancy of about 0.1 percent.



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To learn about opportunities to support the work of the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, please contact Sandra Fine at sandraf@vanleer.org.il Tel: + 972-2-560-5250 Fax: +972-2-561-9293.



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