THE GEORGE L. MOSSE / LAURENCE A. WEINSTEIN

CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

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From the Director

Jordan Rosenblum, Director

On the cover:
Malka Heifetz Tussman, 1896–1987 (Kalman Marmor Papers, YIVO Archives, photo dated 1927)

Tussman, who lived in Milwaukee and studied at the University of Wisconsin in the 1920s, went on to become a distinguished Yiddish poet. For more on her life and work, see p. 10.

Newsletter Editor:
Gwen Walker

Welcoming New Colleagues

This has been an exciting year for the Mosse/Weinstein Center for Jewish Studies (CJS), as we both welcomed and prepared to welcome several new colleagues.

Reflecting the excitement for Jewish Studies across campus, six faculty (from four different departments!) became CJS affiliates for the first time. We are pleased to welcome Profs. Brandon Bloch (History), Kathryn Ciancia (History), Emma Kuby (History), Erika Meitner (English), Susan Ridgely (Religious Studies), and Chontel Syfox (Classical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies). You will be introduced to some of them in this newsletter and others you will meet soon. They reflect the robust and diverse perspectives on Jewish Studies from which our students, colleagues, and community can learn.

In addition to these affiliates, starting this Spring, we have had Prof. Ofer Ashkenazi visit us from Hebrew University in Jerusalem. A former Mosse Program Exchange Fellow, Prof. Ashkenazi will spend all of next year in Madison conducting research and teaching one course per semester on the history of the Holocaust.

We also welcome a new faculty member, Nina Caputo, who will be the next Lipton Professor of Jewish Studies. Prof. Caputo is a scholar of medieval Jewish history, an area of study that both students and faculty have desired to add to CJS' expertise for decades. She has written scholarly tomes and an accessible graphic history. Coming from the University of Florida, Prof. Caputo brings a wealth of research, teaching, and administrative knowledge. The latter skill will be especially important, as Prof. Caputo will succeed me in becoming the next Director of the Center for Jewish Studies. If you want to learn more about Prof. Caputo, you need only turn your attention to the next page of the newsletter!

In the pages that follow you will learn about many CJS activities this past year, from exciting programming to undergraduate field trips to New York City. Through it all, we have continued to focus on our core mission: providing a dynamic, impactful, and engaging undergraduate education in the history and culture of Jews and Judaism. We will have much more news to share in the coming months. But for now, we are proud of our accomplishments this year.

Finally, we wish to acknowledge the loss of Frances (Fran) Weinstein, a passionate and dedicated supporter of CJS since its inception. Our Center bears her name with great pride. May her memory be for a blessing.

Jordan D. Rosenblum
Director, Mosse/ Weinstein Center for Jewish Studies
Belzer Professor of Classical Judaism

"I am convinced that if injustice is the product of humankind, so are justice and compassion, and that they can be mobilized as change agents.... All any of us can hope for is that the bit we do, combined with the efforts of many, many others, can add up to solutions that go to the root."

— Esther Leah Ritz, in a 1977 acceptance speech for an award from the National Conference of Christians and Jews

For more on Esther Leah Ritz and the new scholarship created in her name, see p. 7.

For a full list of this year's scholarship winners, please visit this page of our website: cjs.wisc.edu/awardwinners-2024-2025/

Introducing Nina Caputo

Incoming CJS Director and Lipton Professor of Jewish Studies

Beginning this fall, Nina Caputo will become the Lipton Professor of Jewish Studies and the Center's next director. Caputo joins us from the University Florida, where she was an associate professor and the associate chair of the Department of History. She received her B.A. from the University of California, Los Angeles, and her Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley.

Caputo focuses on Jewish intellectual history and Jewish-Christian relations, with particular attention to the ways in which Jews negotiated their status as a religious minority in the medieval world. She is especially interested in the medieval scholar Nahmanides (Rabbi Moses ben Nahman, or Ramban, ca. 1194-1270), a significant figure in the history of Catalonian Jewry. In her first book, *Nahmanides in Medieval Catalonia: History, Society, and Messianism*, she examined Nahmanides' exegesis, letters, and polemics to show how they engaged with Christian views of history and scripture, at times embracing Christian forms and at times refuting them. Her second book, *Debating Truth: The Barcelona Disputation of 1263, A Graphic History*, is a close study of Nahmanides' public theological debate with a Dominican friar who had converted from Judaism to Christianity. Offering a graphic representation of their debate (illustrated by artist Liz Clarke), the book is regularly assigned in courses on medieval and Jewish history.

Caputo's areas of expertise will fill longstanding gaps in our curriculum. This fall she will teach "Medieval Jewish History," covering the early rabbinic period through the end of the 15th century—an era which, she argues, marked a radical shift in the role and status of Jews worldwide. Her future courses will cover a variety of topics in medieval and early modern Jewish history, including "Jewish Conversion" and "Jews in Medieval Spain."

In her teaching, Caputo encourages students to view developments in Jewish practice, culture, and politics as a product of the interplay between canonical Jewish culture and the specific societies in which they lived. "In a similar manner to my research," she explains, "my Jewish history classes stress Jewish actions and culture, rather than conditions imposed on Jews, in an effort to shed light on the complexity of local Jewish acculturation and identities."

In addition to her research and teaching, Caputo brings a wealth of administrative experience, with particular strengths in curriculum, governance, personnel, and policy. Her experience in planning public lectures, workshops, and conferences will serve her well in overseeing the Center's robust outreach program.

"Guiding discussions and decisions about the future of the Mosse/Weinstein Center is a uniquely exciting prospect," Caputo says. "The Center's long history as a leading Jewish studies program and its strong core faculty provide a solid foundation that can support development in a variety of directions. I look forward to participating in and contributing to a truly first-rate and dynamic program in Jewish studies."

Nina Caputo

The Lipton Professorship in Jewish Studies was created through a generous gift from Samuel H. Lipton (1922 – 2013), a brother of Frances Lipton Weinstein (1923 – 2025). A memorial to Weinstein appears on p. 11 of this newsletter.

CJS OUTREACH PROGRAMS

Making Madison a Destination for the Jewish Arts

The Conney Project Welcomes Director Erika Meitner

Erika Meitner

When Erika Meitner began her role as Director of the Conney Project on Jewish Arts last year, she felt a keen sense of responsibility. At a time that was "catastrophic and bifurcating for the Jewish community," Meitner reflects, she made it a goal to "meet the current moment with empathy, vision, and nuance." Building on the foundation laid by Professor Douglas Rosenberg (Art Department), who directed the Conney Project from 2004 to 2022, Meitner is developing an array of events to draw in diverse audiences and bring together people across divides in celebrating Jewish culture.

Meitner came to UW in the fall of 2022. A poet, a professor in the English Department, and a CJS affiliate, she has a deep interest and expertise in contemporary Jewish literature. Her six published collections include *Ideal Cities* (HarperCollins), a 2009 National Poetry series winner, and *Holy Moly Carry Me* (BOA Editions), which won the 2018 National Jewish Book Award in Poetry. Her newest book, *Assembled Audience*, will be published by Milkweed Editions next year. "All of my books," she remarks, "have explicit Jewish content and a more general *yidishkayt* [Jewishness] in their languages, values, and modes of narrativity."

Raised in Queens and Long Island, Meitner is a first-generation American. Her mother was born in a displaced-persons camp in Germany to two Holocaust survivors who survived five concentration camps between them. Her father was born in Haifa in 1947, where her paternal grandparents settled after fleeing the Nazi invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1939. Both of her parents immigrated to America in the 1950s. "My own writing," she explains, "has always grown from my conviction that the personal and political are intertwined, and from my history and experiences." Invoking autobiographical elements and the rhythms of everyday speech, her poems take up questions of sexism, violence, class, race, religion, immigration, and other social concerns.

Meitner's work draws on an engagement with Jewish texts that spans more than 25 years. As an undergraduate at Dartmouth College, she was trained in Jewish thought and biblical studies. In the late 1990s, as a Dartmouth Reynolds Fellow at Hebrew University, she continued these studies while also exploring Middle Eastern literature and Jewish mysticism. In the early 2000s, she was the Morgenstern Fellow in Judaic Studies at the University of Virginia, where she received an MA in Religious Studies and an MFA in Creative Writing.

Influenced by her early Reform Jewish education and its focus on *tikkun olam*, as well as Jewish liturgical and rabbinic texts, the Hebrew Bible, Yiddish literature, and Jewish philosophy, Meitner is well positioned to lead the Conney Project. In this role she will draw on networks that she has formed with Jewish arts partners across the country.

As Conney Director and Director of the UW's MFA Program in Creative Writing, Meitner has also begun to build partnerships across the university and broader Madison community. For the first Conney event under her directorship, she worked with the Wisconsin Book Festival and the Center for Visual Cultures to cosponsor a book talk by Solomon J. Brager, author of the graphic memoir *Heavyweight: A Family Story of the Holocaust, Empire, and Memory* (William Morrow). Held at the Madison Public Library in April, Brager's talk was followed by a conversation with Meitner and the audience about the book's themes of intergenerational trauma and narrative. As part of Brager's visit, they also spoke to students in the course "The Holocaust," offered by Jewish Studies, and in "Visual Narratives," a course offered by the English Department.

In the coming year, Meitner looks forward to building on the partnerships with the Book Festival and other arts organizations, including the Mead Witter School of Music, the Arts + Literature Laboratory, and the Chazen Museum of Art. Her overarching goal: "To make Madison a destination for the Jewish arts."

The Conney Project for Jewish Arts, an initiative of the Center for Jewish Studies, has been made possible through the generosity of Mildred and Marv Conney.

Greenfield Summer Institute Celebrates 25 Years

How a Cocktail Party Led to a Lifelong Learning Program

After the founding of the Center for Jewish Studies in 1991, dozens of UW alumni, their spouses, and family members asked how they could help to support the new program. A unique role was played by Lawrence Greenfield (BS 1956 in Electrical Engineering) and his wife Roslyn, who attended the School of Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy at McGill University in Canada. The article below draws on reflections offered by Ros in a 2015 interview.

In the late 1990s, Larry and Ros Greenfield hosted a cocktail party at their apartment in New York City to help raise funds for CJS. After the party, the Greenfields and several guests sat around talking, and Ros remarked that a number of her friends who grew up in Jewish homes had mentioned to her that they had "no Jewish education, none whatsoever. They knew nothing about the history and culture." It was this need that gave birth to the idea of a summer institute in Jewish studies for adults beyond the college age.

Larry grabbed onto the idea, and, as Ros recalled, "he was known to be very persistent if he was interested in something." In the initial conversations with faculty, administrators, and donors, everyone liked the concept in principle but thought it unfeasible due to financial and bureaucratic obstacles. "That's all he had to hear," said Ros. Larry persisted, providing crucial funds and completing the other necessary steps.

Held in July of 2000, the first institute was on the topic, "Jewish Identity in the 20th Century." At the time, the institute did not yet carry the Greenfield name. By 2002, Ros recalled, Larry had become ill, and it was in that summer that the Center changed the name to the Greenfield Summer Institute. Unfortunately, that was Larry's last summer. He passed away in June 2003,

The first summer institute included an optional tour of Taliesin, home and studio of Frank Lloyd Wright, located in Spring Green, Wisconsin. Here, Larry and Ros Greenfield (on right side of photo, in white T-shirts) are pictured holding hands.

ten days before the beginning of the program now bearing his name. "He wanted desperately to be here," Ros explained, "but that was not to be. Now I feel very much that if he was up there"—she pointed upward—"he would be kvelling, because this is his legacy."

The legacy is now in its 25th year. Each fall, a committee of CJS faculty selects a theme, which often stems from suggestions made by Greenfield attendees. The committee then begins brainstorming, thinking broadly about scholars doing research on subjects under the rubric of the year's theme. The result is a far-ranging, eclectic selection of talks that prompt the audience to think expansively about the history and culture of the Jewish people.

As Ros would later reflect, "It's really like an adult summer camp, where the adults are reciving the most intellectually stimulating lectures that they could possibly imagine."

2025 Greenfield Summer Institute, "Jews and Popular Culture"

With talks that range from Jewish graffiti in the ancient world to the efforts of American manufacturers to court Jewish consumers, this year's GSI also includes a special performance at the Hamel Music Center, "When We Remembered Zion: Jewish Songs of Love, Loss, and Life," by Philip V. Bohlman, Artistic Director of the Jewish cabaret troupe the New Budapest Orpheum Society, and musicians from the Mead-Witter School of Music. For the full program and information about registration, see cjs.wisc.edu/greenfield/

PAST GIFTS, NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Foresight of Milwaukee Philanthropists Leads to CJS Scholarships

Among the great leaders of Milwaukee's Jewish community, several were early supporters of the UW-Madison's Center for Jewish Studies. Prominent among these were Esther Leah Ritz (1918–2003), Gerald J. Kahn (1926–2011), and his wife Rosalie E. Kahn (1930-2022). This year, gifts that Ritz and the Kahns had separately designated for CJS years ago happened to give rise to new scholarships for students pursuing Jewish studies.

Gerald J. Kahn (Jerry), a longtime supporter of CJS, would undoubtedly have been pleased to know that the bequest he and his wife left for the Center as part of their estate is creating new opportunities for UW students to advance their research in the field of Jewish studies.

This past fall, CJS gave out the first Gerald J. and Rosalie E. Kahn Graduate Research Award to Ludwig Decke, a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of History, so that he could participate in a panel at the annual conference of the American Historical Association in New York City. Decke used the opportunity to present findings from his dissertation, "Antiracism After Auschwitz: Jews and the Fight against Racial Discrimination in Western Europe, 1943-1993."

Ludwig Decke

Raised in Milwaukee, Jerry Kahn attended UW-Madison, driving cabs and doing other odd jobs to support himself while earning his BBA in 1948 and LLB in 1950. As a student at UW, he met his future law partner, Dudley Godfrey. The firm they established, Godfrey and Kahn (which notably helped Milwaukee to secure the Milwaukee Bucks in 1968), is still going strong, with offices in cities throughout Wisconsin and in Washington, D.C.

At UW, Kahn also made another life-changing connection. One day at the university bookstore, he accidentally bumped into a student from the School of Education, Rosalie Eisenberg, spilling her books. When he said he was sorry, Rosalie joked, "Don't say you're sorry—pick up my books." Rosalie went on to receive her BA in 1951 and married him in that same year. A generation later, UW was also the choice for their three children, Nancy Kahn Grunfeld (BA 1978), Lori Kahn (BA 1977), and Cindy Kahn (BA 1982, JD 1985, MS 1987).

Active in the Milwaukee Jewish community, Jerry and Rosalie continued to maintain strong ties to UW. After a group of faculty, administrators, and donors established the Center for Jewish Studies in 1991, the next step was to convene a Board of Visitors. Jerry was tapped to be its first chair and served on the BOV in some capacity for a number of years. In 1993 Cindy gravitated back to UW and started working at the UW Foundation—a natural extension of the family's involvement in philanthropy. Cindy worked as Director of Development for CJS from the late 1990s to the early 2000s, eventually serving on its BOV for several years alongside her father.

Reflecting on her father's gift to the Center, Cindy recalls him as "an impressive man with a giant smile who believed in giving back to his community to the depths of his being." Today, 30 years after Jerry helped to lay the groundwork for CJS, his and Rosalie's generosity continues to support students like Ludwig and sustain Jewish Studies at UW.

In Milwaukee the Kahns had a wide circle of acquaintances, which included Esther Leah Ritz. "She was a formidable woman way before her time," says Cindy. "Absolutely amazing."

Born in the small town of Buhl, Minnesota, Ritz learned early in life to appreciate education and communal responsibility—values instilled by her father and maternal grandmother, an immigrant from Slonim (in today's Belarus), who raised her after her mother's death. Upon graduating from the University of Minnesota in 1940, Ritz had begun a graduate program in international relations at Duke University when World War II interrupted her plans. Fortunately for the city of Milwaukee and the UW-Madison's Center for Jewish Studies, Ritz found her way to Wisconsin.

In Milwaukee, Ritz became one of the city's great civic leaders, with a focus on Jewish communities. From her early days as a student, she was also committed to racial justice, writing editorials on race issues and attending interracial political organizing camps. In 2001, the YWCA recognized her lifelong efforts with a Philip E. Lerman Racial Justice Award. And so, when a CJS program supported by a fund that she had created decades ago ceased to exist, the Center rededicated it to a new project in keeping with her principles.

In 2022, in a partnership with the Department of African American Studies, CJS launched an initiative to encourage a cross-disciplinary approach to the study of African Americans and Jews. In addition to field trips exploring the histories and cultures of the two groups, the initiative provides scholarships for undergraduates pursuing studies in both areas. This spring we were delighted to award the inaugural scholarship to Jewish Studies certificate student Emerson Cronheim-Strasser, a major in Social Work, who graduated in May.

Fulfilling the courses required for the scholarship, Emerson says, "enabled me to explore Black and Jewish culture, history, and intersectionality through literature, art, and dialogue." In his Jewish studies courses, he analyzed a range of topics including antisemitism, expulsion of Jews from many lands, historical trauma, and *halakha*. He also learned Hebrew (and, in a reflection of his enthusiasm for the language, named his dog Alef!). In his African American studies courses, Emerson explored "literature by Harlem Renaissance luminaries, works of art created by well-known and overshadowed Black artists, and stories of African Americans traveling abroad to escape America's intolerable racism."

"Engaging in Jewish studies," he explains, "has felt natural as my Jewish identity is a big part of who I am as a person. I have been able to connect with family through these studies and expand my understanding of what it means for someone to be Jewish. African American studies has been important to me in expanding and correcting the education I received growing up. This has also been important for my education as a social work student. Cultural competency is discussed often in social work, and while I will never know how it feels to exist as a Black person in America, this education is a step towards being a better social worker."

During his senior year, Emerson was a social work intern at Jewish Social Services of Madison, where he served clients with a spectrum of needs. Next year he will complete his Master of Social Work at UW-Madison and then begin the process to become a Licensed Clinical Social Worker.

In addition to receiving the Joint Scholarship in African American and Jewish Studies, Emerson took part this April in a field trip to New York City to visit sites of significance for both populations. Pictured with Emerson are fellow participants DeOnna Garrison, Ryann Wesley, and Lia Glass.

FACULTY & CURRICULAR NEWS

New Course on Religion and the First Amendment

Susan B. Ridgely, Professor of Religious Studies and CJS Affiliate

This past fall CJS Affiliate Susan Ridgely (Professor of Religious Studies) introduced a new course called "Religion and the First Amendment." Listed in both Religious Studies and Jewish Studies, the course considers how Jews and other religious minorities have attempted to translate their practices into the overwhelmingly white Protestant Christian idiom of the Supreme Court.

To challenge the predominant understanding of religion in the U.S., religious minorities had three recourses: developing legal organizations like the Anti-Defamation League, bringing cases to the Court, and submitting amicus briefs. In Ridgely's new course, students analyze legal cases to investigate how various American Jewish communities engaged in each of these practices. In the process, students gain a better understanding of how religious minorities navigate the challenges and opportunities of a democratic society.

A Preview of Fall 2025 Courses in Jewish Studies

- Jewish Law, Business, and Ethics
- The American Jewish Experience
- Medieval Jewish History
- Yiddish Literature and Culture in Europe
- The Holocaust
- Modern Jewish Literature
- Modern Jewish Thought
- Sex and Violence in the Ancient Near East
- Anti-Semitism in European Culture
- Zionism and Its Critics
- Hebrew (introductory through advanced levels)
- Yiddish (introductory level)

Faculty Updates

Chad Alan Goldberg (Martindale-Bascom Professor of Sociology) co-organized a half-day preconference on the sociology of antisemitism at the August 2024 meeting of the American Sociological Association, and he is co-organizing a special session on the resurgence of antisemitism in the 21st century for the association's 2025 meeting. During the Fall 2024 semester, Goldberg moderated a Zoom discussion, co-sponsored by the Center for Jewish Studies and the Department of Sociology, with the distinguished Israeli sociologist Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi about the commemoration of October 7, 2023, in Israel. He also participated in a plenary session on "Antisemitism, Democracy, and the Struggle for an Inclusive and Resilient America" at the annual Diversity Forum at UW–Madison.

In addition, Goldberg made a presentation on "Jewish Identity and Antisemitism on Campus" at Case Western Reserve University and took part in an international symposium on "Human Rights in Troubled Times" at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Goldberg was also awarded a $62,000 grant in the university's 2024 Fall Research Competition for a collaboration with the University of Wisconsin Survey Center to study the relationship between populist and antisemitic attitudes in Wisconsin.

Jordan Rosenblum (Belzer Professor of Classical Judaism) co-edited a special issue of the journal *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* with Debra Scoggins Ballantine (Rutgers University) and Michael E. Naparstek (University of Tennessee, Knoxville). The volume emerged from a 2022 conference, hosted by Rosenblum at UW, to explore the traditions of Judaism and Daoism in relation to dominant theories and methods in religious studies.

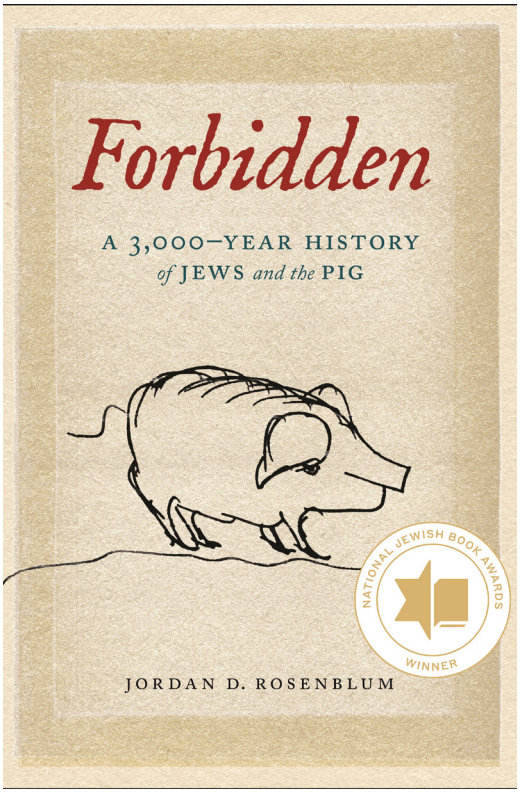
Sunny Yudkoff received the Max and Frieda Weinstein-Bascom Professorship in Jewish Studies (2024 – 2029). Her recent publications include "Yankev Glatshteyn and the Threat of Yiddish Joy" (*Jewish Quarterly Review*) and a review of Adam Ehrlich Sachs's *Gretel and the Great Way* (*Los Angeles Review of Books*).

Jordan Rosenblum Wins National Jewish Book Award

Professor Jordan Rosenblum was still a graduate student when he began to notice a surprising number of references to pigs and pork in religious, literary, and historical works by and about Jews. The prevalence of the animal in these sources was out of keeping with its relatively minor role in the Hebrew Bible. "The Bible says don't eat the pig, but it also says don't eat the camel, don't eat the rock badger, don't eat aquatic animals that don't have fins and scales," explains Rosenblum (CJS Director, Belzer Professor of Classical Judaism, and Professor of Religious Studies). Given the sparse attention to pigs in the Hebrew Bible, he wondered, how did it come to "hog the spotlight"?

"Why did the pig become such a popular means – indeed *the* means – by which people signal their Jewishness, non-Jewishness, or rebellion from Judaism?" asks Rosenblum.

For the next two decades, the pig remained a side project for Rosenblum as he published books on related topics, including *Food and Identity in Early Rabbinic Judaism* (Cambridge University Press), *The Jewish Dietary Laws in the Ancient World* (Cambridge University Press), and *Rabbinic Drinking: What Beverages Teach Us about Rabbinic Literature* (University of California Press). During these years, he continued to jot down references to the pig from a vast array of sources, from ancient texts to contemporary television, before turning his full focus on the topic. The result is his latest book, *Forbidden: A 3,000-Year History of Jews and the Pig*. Published last fall by New York University Press, the book received the National Jewish Book Award in the category of Jewish Food Writing and Cookbooks. Inaugurated by the National Jewish Book Council in 1950, the National Jewish Book Awards recognize authors of outstanding English-language books of Jewish interest.



In the book's introductory chapter, Rosenblum summarizes the question that drove his research: "Why did the pig become such a popular means—indeed *the* means—by which people signal their Jewishness, non-Jewishness, or rebellion from Judaism?" In exploring this question, Rosenblum covers more than 3,000 years of history. It was in the Second Temple era, he explains, that pork emerged as the preeminent example of a food prohibited to Jews. During this period, as both Jews and non-Jews began to take notice of the restriction, it became "a litmus test for Jewish/non-Jewish identity and practice." Over time, the pig evolved into a metaphor not only for religiously idolatrous practices, but for transgressive behavior in general. This metaphor, which Rosenblum playfully refers to as "the signifying swine," can be observed at all levels of culture, from high to low. This is why, for example, there are so many jokes about rabbis eating pork, but none about rabbis eating rock badgers or camels.

Writing *Forbidden*, says Rosenblum, brought out his "teaching voice," the manner he adopts in the classroom to make the subject matter of his courses more accessible to the students. As a result, his many years of serious research unfold in a highly readable, often humorous style that the Jewish Book Council calls "academic yet entertaining and easy to follow."

"Carrying Around a Strange Alphabet"

A Sojourn in the Midwest, a Home in Yiddish Poetry

A little over a hundred years ago, Malka Heifetz Tussman (1896-1987) found her way to Milwaukee, where she taught for a time in a Yiddish secular school and took classes at the University of Wisconsin. Born in what is now the Volyn province of northwestern Ukraine, Tussman immigrated first to Chicago and eventually settled in Berkeley, California. Along the way, she became a significant figure in Yiddish literature—"a wonderful poet," according to Sunny Yudkoff (Max and Frieda Weinstein-Bascom Professor of Jewish Studies and Associate Professor of Yiddish Studies).

Perhaps it was Tussman's experience as a teacher in Milwaukee that inspired these lines:

> *I am the one who stubbornly*
> *carries around a strange alphabet*
> *to implant in children's ears.*
> (from "I Am Woman," translated by Marcia Falk)

Malka had spent her own childhood feeling out of place. The second of eight children, she grew up in a family that leased a large country estate. Along with her siblings, she received private tutoring in Russian and Hebrew, as well as in Yiddish. But she would describe herself as a "troublesome" pupil, always out exploring the fields, meadows, and barns around her home. Her nickname, she explained, was "Seno"—Russian for "hay"—"because of my wild, unruly hair." As she later reflected, "I didn't want to talk or act like the rest of them. I wanted to be a bird—so I swooped and jumped instead of walking. I spoke the language of the one that made its nest above our roof."

That language was the poetry that she first scribbled on walls, tablecloths, and scraps of paper. After immigrating to Chicago in 1912, she soon became fluent in English, even as her love of Yiddish deepened. In Chicago, she became part of a circle of poets who gathered at the Café Royale. As described in John Drury's *Dining in Chicago* (1931), the restaurant was "bohemia in the true sense of the word," "an intellectual and artistic rendezvous of the west side Jewish quarter," "full of poets, musicians, actors, artists, intellectuals, and all-night talkers."

One of these was Kalman Marmor (1879-1956), an important historian of Yiddish culture, who took Malka under his wing, introduced her to other young poets, and encouraged her to "Stay with us. Write Yiddish poetry." Some of Marmor's papers are held in the YIVO archives, and it was there that Tony Michels, George L. Mosse Professor of American Jewish History at UW-Madison, discovered the photographs appearing on this page and on the cover of this issue of our newsletter.

Malka Heifetz Tussman

Heifetz married a cantor, Shloyme Tussman, had two sons, and moved with them to Milwaukee in 1924. By that time, she had already begun to publish her work. Following Kalman Marmor's advice—"Write your own way, even if it is hard to get into print"—she continued writing in Yiddish. In the decades that followed, she published her work in Yiddish journals and anthologies, finally releasing her first collection, *Poems*, in 1949. She would go on to publish five more collections. In 1981, Tussman received the Itzik Manger Prize for Yiddish poetry.

In Memoriam

Frances Lipton Weinstein, 1923–2025

Frances Weinstein

The Mosse/Weinstein Center for Jewish Studies mourns the loss and celebrates the life of Frances Lipton Weinstein, distinguished benefactor of the Center and lifetime member of the CJS Board of Visitors. She passed away on March 6, 2025, at the age of 101.

Fran was born in Burlington, Wisconsin to Ida Liebowitz Lipton of Milwaukee and Isaac Lipton, who had come to the U.S. from Poland in 1903. Upon settling in Burlington, they established a successful scrap iron business and went on to raise seven children.

Like her siblings, Fran attended public school in Burlington. At Burlington High School, she learned to play violin, excelled academically, and graduated as a valedictorian in 1941. Two years later, as a sophomore at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, she met her future husband, Laurence Weinstein, at a Hillel mixer. In 1945, Fran received a bachelor's degree in Social Work. Following graduation, she served for a time as a social worker for the Dane County Department of Public Welfare.

Together with Laurence, Fran became deeply involved in Madison's Jewish community. Over the decades she served in various leadership roles with the Madison Jewish Federation, Temple Beth El, and Hadassah, among other organizations.

The Weinsteins' commitment to Jewish causes dovetailed with their loyalty to their alma mater in 1991, when they provided an endowment that laid the foundation for the Mosse/Weinstein Center for Jewish Studies. Laurence, who had served as president of the UW System's Board of Regents, explained what he and Fran were hoping to achieve through the Center's creation:

> Fran and I have had a long-standing commitment to the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In addition, we are committed to the spiritual as well as the physical survival of the Jewish people. We believe that our ancient heritage has a good deal to say to the world today, regarding tolerance, poverty, war and peace, and government corruption. The world's great public institutions of learning, such as the UW-Madison, should be among the most important research, teaching, and outreach centers for Jewish studies. Helping establish the Center for Jewish Studies on the Madison campus permits us to pay back a small amount of what we have gained through our education on this campus.

Members of the Center's Board of Visitors remember Fran for her generosity, kindness, and spirit. She was "a pre-eminent Madison foremother who helped shape Madison's Jewish community and who contributed significantly to the growth and development of the UW's Center for Jewish Studies," says Judy Sidran. Fellow board member Richard Roberts describes Fran as "a vibrant, lovely, very bright person." As Ben Sidran recalls, "Fran was always there when you needed her, always down to earth, always thinking of how she could leave our world a better place. May her memory be for a blessing."

Fran is survived by her sister, Esther Lange, her children Daniel Weinstein (Joanne) and Miriam Weinstein, grandchildren Sasha Kerlow (Eric), Dov Weinstein (Razelle), Vita Murrow (Ethan), and Rhea Weinstein, as well as her many grandchildren.

Elizabeth Woods, Frances Weinstein, Celia Rosenberg, Rae Schwartz, and Doris Simon in October, 1960 at a fundraising luncheon for the Hadassah Eye Bank (Wisconsin Historical Society)

George L. Mosse / Laurence A. Weinstein
Center for Jewish Studies
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

University of Wisconsin–Madison
Center for Jewish Studies
4223 Mosse Humanities Building
455 N. Park Street
Madison, WI 53706

(608) 265-4763
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