



Ameinu is Hebrew for our people. We are committed to peace, social justice and the centrality of Israel for the Jewish People.

## From the President: Kenneth Bob



Every time I go to Israel on an Ameinu "business trip" as I did recently, I am reminded anew of the breadth of our broad organizational agenda.

Let me share a few examples with you.

While attending the Jewish Agency Board of Governors meeting, the latest chapter in ongoing discussion about the importance of the Zionist youth movements and the related budgets allocated for shlichim (Israeli emissaries) took place. It is critical that those of us who appreciate the role that movement graduates play in both Israel and the Diaspora speak out since, unfortunately, there are those involved in these decisions who simply don't "get it." We speak often about the importance of our youth and student work, exemplified by the Habonim Dror youth movement and the Union of Progressive Zionists campus group. While our direct support is crucial, our involvement in decision making venues like the Jewish Agency is important as well.

Although Ameinu is not directly affiliated with the Israeli Labor Party, we do maintain close contact with party leaders. On this trip, I had the opportunity of meeting with Minister Yitzhak Herzog, Knesset member Ophir Pines-Paz and former MK Colette Avital. Much has been written about the deep conflicts in the party over the decision, championed by Defense Minister Ehud Barak, to lead Labor into Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition. I heard from all that the tensions remain, hampering the rebuilding of the Labor Party as a legitimate social democratic electoral alternative.

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## Ameinu in Israel: Partner Profiles

Ameinu remains committed to its mission of a progressive Israel at peace with its neighbors. We seek opportunities to support justice, equality, and peaceful coexistence within Israel and beyond. To that end, we partner with visionary organizations engaged in this work on the ground in Israel. As partners, we can strengthen their efforts to realize our vision of Israel as a flourishing democracy with civil and economic rights ensured for all its citizens.

### BINA



BINA was established in the wake of Yitzhak Rabin's assassination in 1995 to address the deep need within Israeli society for a common Jewish narrative and value system. They have sought to create a new leadership in Israeli society comprised of pluralistic, secular scholars versed in traditional Jewish learning from a humanist perspective. BINA helps secular Israelis learn about their Jewish heritage as they develop their personal identities and define their own roles as citizens of Israeli society.

In communities and neighborhoods of diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, they have built a presence, in order to teach and engage adults young and old  
Continued "BINA," page 3

### YEDID

Hebrew for "Friend," Yedid was established in 1997 to enable disadvantaged people to access social entitlements, ensuring the enforcement of social rights and promoting social policy change. They work through a national network of 24 Citizen Rights Centers in underprivileged and marginalized communities throughout Israel to assist communities on the geographic and cultural periphery of Israeli society; foster relations among members of diverse sectors of the population; and bring disenfranchised communities closer to the principles and practice of democracy.

Yedid employs a three-part strategy: legal aid, education, and advocacy. This approach allows them to apply "band-aids" to immediate problems as well as addressing the roots of those problems in public policy. They also use a  
Continued "YEDID," page 3

### Negev Institute for Strategies of Peace and Economic Development (NISPED)



NISPED was founded in 1998 to foster economic development and peaceful coexistence in Israel, the Middle East, and internationally. They provide training and consulting in leadership and implementation for many non-governmental organizations working for similar ends.

Thanks in large part to the efforts of Ameinu-LA, NISPED recently established an  
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## Book Review:

### *Transforming America's Israel Lobby: The Limits of its Power and the Potential for Change* by Dan Fleshler

Reviewed by David Segal

Since the 2007 publication of Mearsheimer and Walt's flawed analysis, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, much ink has been spilled to correct, deride, and even demonize its authors. The conversation—if it can be called something so benign—in the media and the Jewish community in the wake of their book has too often been accusatory and unproductive, as passions flared on both sides.

Finally, Dan Fleshler has given us a well researched, reasoned, common-sense insider's perspective on Jewish communal operations related to Israel lobbying and American foreign policy. And Fleshler's credentials are worthy: he is a board member of Ameinu, Americans for Peace Now, and the Givat Haviva Educational Foundation, as well as a member of B'rit Tzedek v'Shalom, four groups on the American Zionist left. He is also on the Advisory Council of J Street. Additionally, he has worked as a media and public affairs strategist for many clients that need to communicate with the American Jewish community, including Israel Policy Forum, Bar-Ilan University, the Abraham Fund, AMIT Women, B'nai B'rith International and others.

One of Fleshler's most helpful chapters delineates the vast array of American Jewish organizations engaged in some combination of advocacy, grassroots organizing, public relations, and political fundraising around Israel. Mearsheimer, Walt, and many others incorrectly describe a monolithic "Israel lobby" headed by AIPAC and

uniform in its unequivocal support for the government of Israel.

Fleshler demonstrates how misinformed that view is: in fact, there are many organizations occupying every possible point along the spectrum of opinion on Israel and Palestine. With useful charts, personal anecdotes, and institutional reports, Fleshler enlightens his readers on the details of the multifaceted communal reality and lets us in on what the misguided might consider a big secret: the many organizations and individuals that constitute the Jewish community rarely speak univocally as "the Jewish community"!

In order to debunk the myth of AIPAC's unbridled political muscle, Fleshler takes a closer look at the history of their legislative and lobbying operations. He attributes much of their success to "smoke and mirrors": the perception of power and the perceived threat of backlash lead politicians to act as if AIPAC had more clout than it does.

This is especially true for AIPAC's relation to the Executive Branch—which, importantly, wields more actual control over American foreign policy than does Congress. Fleshler shows that a confident, determined American President could pursue an aggressively pro-peace process, pro-negotiation policy in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. George H.W. Bush partially succeeded in pressuring Israel against settlement expansion by altering

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### TRANSFORMING AMERICA'S ISRAEL LOBBY

*The Limits of its Power and the Potential for Change*

Dan Fleshler

## Ameinu Speaker Tour Highlights: Dan Fleshler



Dan Fleshler is a member of the Ameinu Board of Directors and author of *Transforming America's Israel Lobby: The Limits of Its Power and the Potential for Change*, a new release from Potomac Books. Dan has traveled to many of our regions to discuss and sign his book. Several regions hosted special events with him before and after the official book signing. See David Segal's review of Fleshler's book above.

### Detroit

On June 14, 2009, Dan spoke about his book and signed copies at Book Beat in Oak Park, MI. Ameinu Detroit met with Fleshler for a potluck brunch and intimate discussion in the morning before the public book talk.

### New York

In New York, Fleshler presented his book in conversation with Samuel G. Freedman, Professor at the Columbia University School of Journalism and author of *Jew vs. Jew* and *Upon This Rock*. The conversation took place on May 5 at a Barnes & Noble on the Upper West Side.

### Washington DC

On May 31, Dan spoke about his book at a Reconstructionist congregation, Adat Shalom, in suburban Maryland. The presentation was co-sponsored by Ameinu and Adat Shalom's Israel Connection Committee.

# Making Giving a Two Way Street

## Ameinu Legacy Circle:

### Planned Giving & Investing with Ameinu

As a supporter of Ameinu, we value your generosity and appreciate all that you do to help us continue our work and programs. However, we fully realize that during these difficult economic times, making large gifts becomes more and more difficult. What if you could accomplish two of your goals at the same time—supporting your organization and guaranteeing yourself a high income stream for life? Well now you can.

Establishing a Gift Annuity with Ameinu will give you a fixed income for life giving you the security of knowing that your income will not be affected by market fluctuations, changes in your stock portfolios, etc. At the same time you have the satisfaction of knowing that you have helped secure the future of Ameinu, as the remainder of your gift at the end of your lifetime will pass on to Ameinu.

Let's look at an example. David and Judy, aged 82 and 80 respectively, long-time supporters of Ameinu, make a gift to Ameinu in the amount of \$25,000 to establish a Gift Annuity. They will receive a lifetime income at the rate of 7.3%, giving them an annual income of \$1,825. The rate will stay fixed and will continue to pay the full amount for the lifetime for both spouses.

For the first 12 years of the annuity period, 75% of their income will be tax-free and thereafter will be taxed in full as ordinary interest income. In addition to partially tax-free income, they will receive a one-time Charitable Tax deduction of approximately \$8,000, the exact amount determined at the time the gift is made. If David and Judy are in a 25% tax bracket, this will give them a tax savings of \$2,000.

The income they receive that is considered tax-free, plus their tax deduction for making the gift would make their 7.3% return equivalent to a fully taxable investment of 10%. Additionally, at the demise of the second spouse the remainder principal will be transferred to Ameinu for its vital programs.

For more information or consultation on your unique financial situation, please call Jack Grunspan at our office for a confidential proposal (212) 366-1194.

AGE	RETURN RATE*
65	6.2%
70	6.7%
75	7.4%
80	8.4%
85	9.5%
90	11%

\*Rates current as of print date.



**GIVE** a gift annuity of \$5,000 or more to help support Ameinu's work toward promoting a progressive path forward for Israel



**RECEIVE** a guaranteed income for the rest of your life that is partially tax-free



**RECEIVE** a high interest earned at a rate determined by your age



**RECEIVE** tax deductions when you create your gift annuity

**Ameinu Legacy Circle**

**Giving is Giving Back**

## Recent Events

### Los Angeles

A break from our traditional weekend summer seminar was a one day/evening event at The Jewish Federation. Professor Raphael Sonenshein spoke to us on "The Road to the White House," and dinner was followed by the award-winning Israeli documentary, *Out for Love—Be Back Shortly*.

The Frontiers of Learning lecture in October 2008 featured Rabbi Chaim Seidler-Feller, Hillel Director, UCLA speaking on "Encounters between Isaac & Ishmael: A Jewish Perspective on the Relationship between Judaism and Islam".

On December 10, 2008, Ameinu-LA had their most successful Hemshech event. 250 people gathered to pay tribute to Bea Chankin Weisberg, their Executive Director and lifelong Jewish communal worker and activist; and to Alisa Belinkoff Katz, Habonim graduate and Chief Deputy to Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky. Ken Bob was there representing our national movement. As a result, we were able to provide over 20 scholarships to Habonim Dror members participating in Israel programs and to enable NISPED to initiate an educational project that promotes environmental awareness among children and teens in a Bedouin Village.

In related news, Ettie and Marty Taft will receive the Hemshech award, and Yodie Fishman, another Habonim alum, will receive the special Ameinu Award, at our next Hemshech event on November 17, 2009.

### Detroit

On October 30, 2008, Ameinu Detroit co-sponsored an Election Forum with Workmen's Circle and Brit Tzedek v'Shalom. They heard Democrat Doug Ross and Republican Bryce Sandler discuss the two presidential candidates' stands on Israel and America's Middle East policy. The Detroit Jewish News covered the event.

"Update on Israel" On March 21, Yoav Raban, the community shaliach from Federation's Partnership 2000 Region of the Central Galilee, spoke about the recent Israeli election and young people's attitudes toward Israel. The event was hosted by the Goldberg family at their home.

On Sunday, April 19, 2009, Ameinu Detroit held its annual Hemshech Award Tribute Luncheon. In recognition of their many years of service to the Jewish community and Israel, Allen and Lita Zemmel were honored with the Hemshech Award; and Marilyn Wolfe with the Tzedek Award. The guest speaker for the event was Brenda Rosenberg, an interfaith peace activist. Ron Sussman made the stained glass awards for the tribute luncheon. Steve Klaper played introductory music and led the group in the U.S. and Israel national anthems.

### New York

On September 9, 2008, at Ameinu's office in New York, veteran Israeli journalist Danny Rubinstein led a roundtable discussion cosponsored by Ameinu, Americans for Peace Now, and Meretz USA about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Rubinstein is Israel's longest serving West Bank correspondent, recently retired from Ha'aretz Daily after a long career as a senior commentator on Palestinian affairs. Having covered the West Bank and Gaza since they fell under Israeli occupation in 1967, Rubinstein is one of the most trusted and respected experts worldwide on Israeli-Palestinian relations. He is the author of several books, among them *People of Nowhere: The Palestinian Vision of Home*, and *The Mystery of Arafat*, a biography of the Palestinian leader. Rubinstein, a native of Jerusalem, teaches at Hebrew University and Ben Gurion University in the Negev.

### Chicago

On May 17, 2009, at Temple Beth Israel in Skokie, IL, Ameinu-Chicago cosponsored the Rabbi Ernst M. Lorge Memorial Lecture along with the Lorge Family. Together, they hosted Ruth W. Messinger, President of the American Jewish World Service. In a lecture entitled "Jews as Global Citizens: Our Responsibility in the World," Messinger spoke about her lifelong pursuit of justice and her organization's efforts to improve the quality of life for people around the world. AJWS funds over 400 grassroots projects in 37 countries and sends over 450 skilled volunteers and young people to do hands-on service in the developing world each year.

## Celebrate 75 Years of Habonim!

### Join Us at the Ameinu Gala in Honor of 75 Years of Habonim

Saturday, November 14  
6:00–10:00 pm  
\$75 per ticket

Strata  
915 Broadway (at 21st Street)  
New York City

Celebrate with us  
and our honorees, all Habonim alumni:  
**Leonard Fein**  
**David Twersky**  
and **Rabbi Esther Lederman**

To reserve space in the Tribute/Ad Journal, contact  
office@ameinu.net or (212) 366-1194 as soon as possible

## Our Honorees:



David Twersky joined Habonim in the Bronx, NY in 1964. He was at Machaneh Bonim Deled and the 17th Workshop in Israel at Kibbutz Urim. He lived in Israel on Kibbutz Gezer from 1974-1986. Until March, 2009 he was director of international programs at American Jewish Congress. He also worked as a contributing editor at the New York Sun. During his 12 years in Israel, Mr. Twersky was active in the kibbutz movement and the Labor party.



Leonard Fein is a writer and teacher. In 1974, he founded Moment magazine, which he served as editor and publisher for 13 years. In 1985, he founded Mazon: A Jewish Response to Hunger. And in 1996, he founded the National Jewish Coalition for Literacy. His more than 900 articles and essays have appeared in dozens of publications, including The New York Times, The New Republic, Commentary, Commonweal, The Nation, Dissent and the Los Angeles Times. He writes a syndicated column for the Forward. From 1996 to the year 2000, Fein served as Director of the Commission on Social Action of the Reform Jewish movement.



Rabbi Esther Lederman, originally from Ottawa, Canada, was recently appointed as the Assistant Rabbi at Temple Micah, a Reform synagogue in Washington, DC. For the past two years, she served as the Marshall T. Meyer Fellow at Congregation B'nai Jeshurun of Manhattan. She was ordained in May 2008 from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in New York. Prior to becoming a rabbi, Rabbi Lederman worked at the Israel Policy Forum, a project on Middle East peace education for the URJ, and Habonim Dror North America as the Mazkira.



## Ameinu Online: Are You Connected



Progressive Zionism has always been ahead of the curve (maybe that's why it's called progressive). Those of us who've been involved with the Labor Zionist Movement know that we were light years ahead of Facebook. We were "friending" each other with the title chaver or chaverah for decades.

When we wrote a letter the salutation was "Dear Chaver/ah," when we spoke to one another we were each referred to as chaver/ah, when we signed a letter to the editor we signed it chaver/ah and so on.

Now you can translate your chaver/ah status into digital terms by friending Ameinu on Facebook. It's easy, it's fast and it will expand the Ameinu experience. To join the chevrah, go to [www.tinyurl.com/ameinuanamer](http://www.tinyurl.com/ameinuanamer). Once you're a friend, we invite you to become a "fan of Ameinu" by visiting [www.tinyurl.com/ameinufan](http://www.tinyurl.com/ameinufan). You can also follow Ameinu on Twitter by visiting [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com) and adding Ameinu\_Updates to your list. And don't forget our e-newsletter if you're not already signed up: go to [www.ameinu.net](http://www.ameinu.net) and enter your email address.

Expanding your connection with the online Ameinu community offers all of us new opportunities to share news and information, invite each other to events, broaden our network, and find other like-minded people in our real and virtual neighborhoods. As a "friend of Ameinu" you are no longer limited to reading what we have to say - you have a voice as well, and we're very eager to hear what you think.

And we can use these networking tools to enhance our organizing and action efforts, coordinate campaigns, contact politicians in America and Israel and make our progressive voices heard in new and more compelling ways on the issues we care about.

If you haven't yet joined Facebook, simply visit [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and sign up. It's easy and it's free. Please let us know if you have suggestions or questions about our online community and its content by contacting [executive@ameinu.net](mailto:executive@ameinu.net), or just post it on Facebook.

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## Ameinu Speaker Tour Update: Bradley Burston



### YES WE CAN—OR CAN WE? Prospects for Peace in the Middle East

With a new administration in Washington and a new government in Israel, Bradley Burston, a columnist for Israel's Ha'aretz newspaper and Senior Editor of Haaretz.com—as well as a Habonim alum—presented lectures sponsored by Ameinu in New York and LA, followed by questions and answers on prospects for the peace process and changes in critical policies and issues in Israeli society.

#### New York

On March 10, 2009 Burston spoke at Ameinu's office in New York City. Due to popular demand, he added an extra date to his Speaker's Tour, which took him from coast to coast. On March 11 in an intimate parlor meeting on Long Island, the Bob family hosted an Ameinu group to hear Mr. Burston report on the latest developments in Israel along with his informed analysis.

#### Los Angeles

An overflow audience attended Ameinu-LA's March 8, 2009 Spring Seminar, with Burston as Scholar-in-Residence. Thanks to their Frontiers of Learning chair, Marty Taft, Burston was the guest speaker at the Los Angeles World Affairs Council and also spoke at several events in the New York area.



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## **Olameinu Summer 2009**



### **Ameinu welcomes you!**

The American Jewish community is changing and Ameinu is here to meet this challenge, providing a variety of programs and advocacy activities. We are proud to have college students, baby boomers, and veteran activists as members and supporters. Whether you are reaching out to the American Jewish community for the first time, or you are already engaged but searching for a new voice, Ameinu welcomes you!

Ameinu provides community. We have a national infrastructure where like-minded people gather. We offer a place—in person and online—for our members to discuss issues, hear speakers, celebrate life, and actively engage in American and Israeli causes. If you want to join the community, Ameinu welcomes you!

Ameinu provides liberal Jews with a voice in the American Jewish community. Ameinu works for a more democratic and inclusive Jewish community. Ameinu guarantees that a liberal voice and progressive values have a seat at the table within the organized Jewish community. If that voice echoes yours, Ameinu welcomes you!

Ameinu connects liberal American Jews with a progressive Israel. Our relationship with Israeli grassroots activists allows our members in the United States to impact Israeli issues. We have had a significant effect on poverty, women's rights, labor struggles, religious pluralism, Israeli Arab rights, and new forms of cooperative living. Ameinu links the American Jewish community with Israel through missions to Israel, speaking tours by Israelis, and national and international conference calls. If this sounds like something you are interested in, then Ameinu welcomes you!

### **Ameinu's Mission**

Ameinu, Hebrew for "Our People", is a national, multi-generational community of progressive American Jews. Recognizing the unbreakable bond between the Jewish people and Israel, as well as the commitment to make our own country better, we mobilize American Jews who seek opportunities to foster social and economic justice both in Israel and the United States. As Zionists, we understand that a secure peace between Israel and its neighbors is essential to the survival of a democratic Jewish state. With this in mind, we build support within the American Jewish community for a negotiated two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.