



# Jewish Studies At Lehigh University



## Lehigh's Jewish Studies Center Begins Fifth Year With Five Full-Time Faculty

In his recent study of American Jews, *A Certain People*, Charles E. Silberman paints a portrait of a community in the process of dynamic growth and development. As one indication of the vitality of American Jewry, Silberman points to the "explosive growth in the number of Jewish studies courses and programs" on American college campuses, "the result of a transformation in the way both Jews and gentiles view Judaism." Nowhere is this phenomenon more evident than at Lehigh, the cornerstone of a broad-based effort to establish Jewish Studies on college campuses in the Lehigh Valley. When the Center for Jewish Studies was estab-

lished at Lehigh in 1984, few imagined that it would grow so extensively in its first four years. From one full-time faculty member at Lehigh in 1984, we enter the 1988-89 academic year with three Lehigh faculty, two full-time and one visiting professor from Israel, and two affiliated faculty at Lafayette College and Muhlenberg College. With the exception of a very few major universities such as Yale, Harvard, and Brandeis, it is rare to find this concentration of Jewish Studies scholars in one place.

Jewish Studies faculty include: Professors Laurence J. Silberstein, Chava Weissler and Berman Visiting Scholar Dr. Elie Rekhess of Tel Aviv University and the Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies. Mrs. Harriet Parnet, adjunct lecturer in the Department of Modern Foreign Languages, teaches modern Hebrew. Dr. Elizabeth Fifer

Prof. Laurence J. Silberstein

(English), Dr. Oles Smolansky (International Relations), and Professor David Amidon (Urban Studies, Government) also offer Jewish Studies courses. In addition to these academic positions, the Center at Lehigh enjoys the services of a program administrator, Dr. Myra Rosenhaus, who assumed her position in 1985, and a full-time secretary-coordinator, Ms. Shirley Ratushny.

The unprecedented development of the Center for Jewish Studies at Lehigh has been made possible primarily through the extraordinary generosity of Philip and Muriel Berman of Allentown, Pennsylvania. Internationally known philanthropists, Philip and Muriel Berman combine an abiding interest in the arts, medical care, and higher education with a deep personal commitment to Israel and the perpetuation of Jewish civilization. Philip Berman served as the Chief Executive Officer and the Chairman of the Board of Hess's Department Stores, Inc. Muriel Berman is a Doctor of Optometry and past President and Chairman of the Board of the Jewish Publication Society of America.

The Bermans provide the funding for the Berman Chair of Jewish Studies at Lehigh, held by Center director Laurence Silberstein, the positions of Berman Scholar at Lafayette and Lehigh, and the visiting professorship. Further, the Bermans underwrite the Center's participation in the Tel Mique-Ekron Excavation Project in Israel and fund scholarships for summer study in that country.

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## Lehigh Students, Faculty Praise Center's Progress

On May 15, 1988, over one hundred of the Center's contributors from the Lehigh Valley were guests at a luncheon held in their honor at Lehigh's Mountaintop Campus. Paul Franz, Lehigh Vice President for Development, brought President Peter Likin's greetings and commented on the overall impact of the Center on the university. Three Lehigh students, Edward Reich, Richard Rosier, and Meredith Seigle spoke enthusiastically to the gathering about the Center's impact on students.

Eddie Reich, a graduating senior from Mamaroneck, New York, remarked on the far-reaching changes that have occurred in Jewish Studies at Lehigh since his freshman year and how students have responded to these changes. As the number of Jewish Studies courses has grown, Reich said, so too have these courses become more popular with students. Courses such as "Sex and Gender in Judaism" and "Zionist Thought" now regularly attract fifteen to twenty students. He found personally enriching the independent study in Talmud he had just completed with Dr. Silberstein and his semester of study at Bar Ilan University in Israel. According to Reich, "The Center for Jewish Studies has opened new doors on campus for Jewish learning. As far as the future is concerned, I can only be optimistic that the Center will attract Jewish students to the university in greater numbers and will become an even more powerful force on campus."

Reich's sentiments were echoed by Rich Rosier, a sophomore from Caldwell, New Jersey. "Before taking courses through the Center," Rosier said, "I was unaware of non-traditional Jewish thinking. The courses I have taken have allowed me to become a more complete Jew. I now consider myself more mature, secure, and appreciative of my religion."

In the course of the luncheon, the group heard reports on the progress of Jewish Studies from Center director Laurence Silberstein; Norman Girardot, chair of Lehigh's Department of Religion Studies; Robert Cohn, Berman Scholar in the Religion Department at Lafayette College; and Gad Gilbar of Haifa University, the Center's first Berman Visiting Scholar.





LVCJS staff: Elie Rekhess, Laurence Silberstein, Robert Cohn, Chava Weissler, Myra Rosenhaus, Alan Mittleman.

## Lehigh Jewish Studies Strengthened By Addition Of New Faculty

Dr. Laurence Silberstein, Philip and Muriel Berman Professor of Jewish Studies and director of the Center for Jewish Studies, is pleased to announce the addition to the Lehigh faculty of a new professor of Jewish Studies and a visiting Israeli scholar beginning fall, 1988. Dr. Chava Weissler, a Ph.D. in folklore from the University of Pennsylvania, formerly of Princeton University, has been appointed as the Philip and Muriel Berman Scholar in Jewish Studies in the Department of Religion Studies at Lehigh. Weissler, a specialist in popular religion and the role of women in Jewish history, is currently completing a book on the religious lives of Eastern European Ashkenazic women.

Dr. Elie Rekhess, Senior Research Associate of the Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies and Lecturer in the Department of Middle Eastern and African History at Tel Aviv University, joins Lehigh's Department of International Relations as the second Berman Visiting Scholar. Rekhess's scholarship focuses on Israel's Arab population and on the Palestinians. Rekhess succeeds Dr. Gad Gilbar, associate professor in the Department of Middle Eastern History at Haifa University and Senior Research Fellow at the Dayan Center, as the Berman scholar.

The appointments of Weissler and Rekhess bring to five the number of full-time faculty in Jewish Studies associated with the Center. Dr. Robert Cohn, the Berman Scholar in Jewish Studies at Lafayette College since 1987, and Dr. Alan Mittleman, newly appointed at Muhlenberg College, also teach Jewish Studies courses on the six campuses affiliated with the Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges (LVAIC) under the auspices of the Center. The six LVAIC member institutions are Lehigh University, Allentown College of St. Francis de Sales, Cedar Crest, Lafayette, Moravian, and Muhlenberg colleges.

Center director Dr. Laurence Silberstein received his Ph.D. from Brandeis University and rabbinical ordination at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. His book, *Martin Buber's Social and Religious Thought: Alienation and the Quest for Meaning*, will be published by New York University Press early in 1989. He has published widely on modern Judaism and is a contributor to the *Encyclopedia of Religion*. He has previously taught at the University of Pennsylvania, and has served as a visiting professor at Haverford College, Princeton University, and Swarthmore College.

The Center's program administrator Dr. Myra Rosenhaus received her Ph.D. from Indiana University in Comparative Literature, and now works in the areas of feminist literary theory and American Jewish women writers. She has taught in the Department of Philosophy and Religion at DePauw University and likewise served as DePauw's Director of Convocations, with responsibility for planning and organizing the university's lecture series.

## Jewish Studies Programming At Lehigh Emphasizes Quality

Building on a foundation established over the years at Lehigh by Professors Roy and Alice Eckardt and Harriet L. Parmet, Jewish Studies has developed an expanded program of lectures, seminars, cultural excursions, films, and scholar-in-residence programs in fields ranging from Holocaust studies to rabbinics to modern Israeli and American-Jewish literature. Presented by prominent scholars from the United States, Israel, and Europe as well as local faculty, these programs provide in-depth analyses of current events and stimulating discussions of a wide variety of subjects in the field of Jewish Studies.

Speakers have included: Charles Silberman, author of *A Certain People: American Jews and Their Lives Today*; Emory University Professor David Blumenthal, who lectured on "Maimonides: Astrophysicist, Philosopher, and Mystic"; George Ginsburgs, Distinguished Professor of Law at Rutgers University, who addressed "The Ups and Downs of Jewish Emigration from the Soviet Union"; and David Patterson, founder and President of the Oxford [University] Centre for Hebrew Studies, who delivered a series of lectures on the development of Hebrew literature. In an unusual joint presentation, Dr. Judith Lasker, Associate Professor of Sociology and Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences Lehigh, and her brother, Dr. Daniel Lasker, Senior Lecturer in Jewish Thought at Ben-Gurion University in Israel, offered contrasting sociological and rabbinic perspectives on issues relating to reproductive technology.

Owing to the pioneering work of Lehigh Professors Roy and Alice Eckardt, the field of Holocaust studies has occupied a prominent place in the academic program at Lehigh. David Wyman, Professor of History at the University of Massachusetts, drew a large audience to his lecture "The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-45." A lecture by philosopher and historian Joan Ringelheim, "Women and the Holocaust: A Feminist Perspective," presented a dimension of the Holocaust neglected by a majority of scholars in the field. Holocaust art was discussed and displayed in lectures by artist and survivor Luba Gurdus and American-born artist Mary Costanza. Finally, Lehigh's Division of Speech and Theater produced Shimon Wincelberg's play about the Lodz ghetto, "Resort 76."



## Funds Needed To Support Center's Activities

The funds being raised on behalf of the Jewish Studies program are essential to continuing the mission of the Center. Although the Bermans, in their extraordinary generosity, have provided the funding for the academic positions, additional financial support is necessary to provide for faculty and student development. The assistance of the alumni is vital if the Jewish Studies Center is to remain a visible, dynamic presence on campus and provide Lehigh faculty and students with the continuing opportunity to increase their knowledge and understanding of Jewish civilization.

The contributions of Lehigh alumni will help to support our ongoing program of lectures and scholar-in-residence programs. During their week of residency, scholars participate in classes, give seminars for faculty, engage students in informal discussion, and present public lectures. Similar programs have already brought to campus former deputy mayor of Jerusalem Meron Benvenisti and world-renowned archaeologist Trude Dothan.

Alumni contributions will provide scholarships to enable a greater number of Lehigh students to study and travel in Israel. These study programs in Israel enhance the Lehigh students' understanding of Jewish history, religion, and culture, Hebrew language, and Israeli society. Such programs allow our students to study at the Hebrew University, Tel Aviv University, or the Tel Migne archaeological excavation. Currently, we are considering creating a special summer program of study and travel organized and led by Center director Laurence Silberstein.

Funds are also needed to underwrite regional and national conferences. Under the Center's auspices, leading scholars in Jewish Studies, including our own faculty, will gather at Lehigh to discuss the latest developments in their fields with faculty colleagues and students. We are presently organizing the first such conference, to be held in May, 1989, on the subject of fundamentalism and politics in the Middle East, a conference made possible by the presence at Lehigh of Berman Visiting Scholar Dr. Elie Rekhess. In addition, the Center provides research and travel grants to support faculty.

A substantial library collection is an important part of a successful academic program. Funds are needed to purchase Jewish Studies books and periodicals for use in classes and by faculty for research projects. We are also developing our holdings of films and video tapes on subjects of interest in Jewish Studies, including Israeli films and tapes from the Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale University.

With your support, the Center for Jewish Studies will continue to provide quality programming for Lehigh students and faculty.

## Jewish Studies Minor Available To Lehigh Students

The Jewish Studies minor at Lehigh offers students of diverse backgrounds the opportunity to explore the history, literature, religion, and social institutions of the Jewish people from its inception to the present. The diversity of courses highlights the interaction of Judaism with other world religions and the mutual influences between Judaism and societies and cultures of Europe, the Middle East, and the United States. Through the Jewish Studies minor, Lehigh students have the opportunity to study Judaism from the perspective of various academic disciplines.

The following is a list of courses offered during the 1988-89 academic year.

## First Four Years See Dramatic Increase In Jewish Studies Courses

As the Center concluded its fourth year, the number of courses in Jewish Studies and related fields available to students at Lehigh reached a new high. Sixteen Jewish Studies courses were offered during the 1987-88 academic year, with a total enrollment of 400 students.

For the current academic year at Lehigh, the addition of a second full-time Jewish Studies faculty member, Dr. Chava Weissler, and a new visiting professor from Israel, Dr. Elie Rekhess, will significantly expand the range of course offerings. Among the new courses scheduled for 1988-89 are "Jewish Folklore" (Weissler), and "The Israel-Arab Conflict" and "Islam in the Contemporary Middle East" (Rekhess).

This past year, to augment the classroom offerings, the Center inaugurated a special student seminar program in which selected students from the LVAIC schools meet with noted Jewish Studies scholars. In November, Daniel Matt, associate professor of Jewish Studies at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, introduced students to Jewish mysticism, while in April, Brandeis professor Michael Fishbane conducted a discussion on Jewish biblical exegesis. In November, 1988, Professor Lawrence Hoffman, former director of the Hebrew Union College School of Sacred Music, will offer a seminar on Jewish prayer and its relationship to the changes in Jewish communal life. In addition to the student seminars, each visiting scholar conducts a seminar for faculty.

In addition to the courses offered at Lehigh, in the past year Jewish Studies courses were, for the first time, available on all the LVAIC campuses. Overall, 892 students were enrolled in the forty-five Jewish Studies courses that were offered on the six LVAIC campuses.

### 1988-89 Course Offerings

Introduction to Judaism  
Jewish Thought Since the Holocaust  
Holocaust: History and Meaning  
Jewish Folklore  
American Judaism  
Dynamics of Biblical Narrative  
Hebrew Bible/Old Testament  
Elementary Modern Hebrew I and II  
Intermediate Modern Hebrew I and II  
Cultural Mosaic of Modern Israel  
Israeli Struggle for Survival (Freshman Seminar)  
Israeli-Arab Conflict  
Middle East in World Affairs to 1945  
Middle East in World Affairs Since 1945  
Islam in Contemporary Middle East  
Jewish-Christian Encounter  
Medieval Philosophy  
American Jewish Community



## Tel Miqne Excavation Offers Students Rare Opportunity For Field Work And Study

Through a generous contribution from the Philip and Muriel Berman Foundation, the Center, since 1985, has been a co-sponsor of the joint American-Israeli Tel Miqne-Ekron Excavation Project. The project is directed by Dr. Trude Dothan, Professor of Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and Dr. Seymour Gitin, Director and Professor of Archaeology, the W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research in Jerusalem. Other sponsoring institutions include Brown University, Boston College, the Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, the University of Lethbridge, the Albright Institute, and the Hebrew University.

Now in its seventh season, the Tel Miqne-Ekron Project is an interdisciplinary research program excavating Ekron, one of the five ancient Philistine capital cities. The main purpose of the project is "to investigate the evidence for cultural exchange between Philistines, Canaanites, Israelites, and Assyrians." The excavation has yielded impressive results, including evidence that the site was one of the most important centers of olive oil production in the ancient Near East. This season's excavations, as reported in the August 29, 1988 issue of *Time*, uncovered a building of monumental proportions which may have been a Philistine palace.

One of the largest and most significant excavations in Israel today, the Tel Miqne-Ekron Project offers students the opportunity to participate in a unique program combining study, excavation, and travel in Israel. To date, four Lehigh students have participated as volunteers on the project. All volunteers take two courses in archaeology and spend eight hours daily engaged in the rigorous physical labor required by excavations of this kind. On weekends, students travel throughout the country, often on trips organized as part of the summer program.

A significant dimension of the Center's relationship with the Tel Miqne



*Lehigh students at archaeological excavation of Philistine city of Ekron. Standing in front of Philistine pottery, left to right, Director S. Gitin, Edie Kahn, Dennis LaJeunesse, and Director T. Dothan.*

excavation is the archaeometallurgical research being conducted at Lehigh by Professor Michael Notis of the Department of Materials Science and Engineering. The purpose of Notis's research is to determine the elemental content of the metal remains found at Miqne and to formulate hypotheses, based on his results, of the state of metal production at the site. Using optical microscopy, scanning electron microscopy, and microprobe techniques to analyze the metal fragments, Notis and research assistant Heidi Moyer have determined that both copper and iron were smelted at Miqne. Notis's preliminary research findings, which he presented at Lehigh in a talk co-sponsored by the Center and Lehigh's Science, Technology, and Society Program, comprise a valuable contribution to our knowledge of the production and use of metal in the ancient Near East.

Further, as a result of the Center's connection with Miqne, Dr. Trude Dothan, a director of the excavation, offered a series of lectures and classroom seminars to Lehigh students and faculty in 1987. During her visit, Dr. Dothan, a world-renowned archaeologist, delivered the first Littauer Lecture in Jewish Studies, a bi-annual event made possible by a grant to Lehigh University from the Lucius N. Littauer Foundation.

## The Center And Israel: Programs For Students And Educators

Since its inception, the Center has sponsored summer, semester, and year long study programs in Israel. Each year, an average of seven students spend the summer at Israeli universities, with an increasing number of students choosing to spend a year or a semester studying in the country. In addition to university study, students have the opportunity to spend the summer working at Tel Miqne, the site of the ancient Philistine capital city of Ekron and one of Israel's most important archaeological excavations.

In 1985 and 1987, Center director Laurence Silberstein and his wife, Mimi, organized and led two trips to Israel for faculty and administrators. Lehigh participants included Dr. John Hunt, former Dean of the College of Arts and Science, and Mrs. Marjorie Hunt; Professor Norman Girardot, Chair of the Religion Studies Department; Professor Richard Aronson, Department of Economics, and Mrs. Judy Aronson; Professor Roy Herrenkohl, Director, Center for Social Research, and Mrs. Ellen Herrenkohl. The educators' trips were made possible by generous grants from the

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# Center Brings Israel into Focus for Lehigh Audiences

An important goal of Jewish Studies at Lehigh is to educate faculty and students on the complex issues of Israeli culture and politics. Besides sponsoring study abroad programs, the Center regularly invites scholars, political leaders, and public figures to address the academic community and the general public on topics of vital interest concerning Israel. Over the past four years, speakers have discussed the politics, economics, history, literature, archaeology, and even the psychology of Israel and the Israelis. Among the most prominent themes of these discussions are the prospects for peace in the Middle East and the complex interrelations between politics and religion in Israeli society.

In 1986, Zvi Ganin, Senior Lecturer in the Department of History at Tel Aviv University, spoke at Lehigh on "The PLO and Israel: Prospects for Peace in the Middle East." Ganin dis-

cussed the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the significance of the PLO, and possible solutions to the problem.

In 1987, former deputy mayor of Jerusalem Meron Benvenisti was scholar-in-residence at Lehigh, engaging academic and community audiences in spirited discussion on the situation on the West Bank, Arab-Israeli relations, and the 'Israeli mind'. Benvenisti is currently the director of the West Bank Data Base Project, which monitors and publishes studies on the demographic, political, and economic conditions on the West Bank. During his stay, Benvenisti lectured on "Changing Realities and Settlement Policies in the West Bank," and "Formative Myths and Current Realities in Israeli Society."

Benvenisti has stirred up much controversy in Israel by insisting that the annexation of the West Bank has taken place by default as a result of time and economic factors. He sees little likelihood of change in the Israeli position. Similarly, as long as the Jordanians, the Palestinians, and the PLO remain fixed in their positions, they will initiate little in the way of new policy. What is needed, he asserts, is leadership that will first present a pragmatic assessment of the situation, and then provide clear choices for their people to act on.

More recently, in the spring of 1988, Gad Gilbar, Lehigh's Visiting Berman Scholar from the Department of Middle Eastern History at the University of Haifa and Senior Research Fellow at Tel Aviv's Dayan Center, spoke on the economic and political background of the current Palestinian uprising. Gilbar, an economic historian, identifies the sources of the uprising in the Palestinians growing frustration with their lack of independent political status and with the weakness of the leadership of the PLO, the organization which tries to represent the Palestinians; the apparent lack of concern on the part of the Arab states for the plight of the inhabitants on the West Bank and Gaza; and the worsening economic conditions in the territories.

On a more positive note, Gilbar detects a reluctant acknowledgement of Israel's continued existence by the younger generation of Palestinians. He has also noticed that moderate Palestinians are inclined to recognize the need to deal with Israel in any solution to their national aspirations. While he does not minimize the obstacles to the achievement of peace between the Palestinians and Israelis, neither does he see that goal as beyond the reach of the two nations.

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## Israel Programs *continued from page 4*

Philip and Muriel Berman Foundation.

The major purposes of the trips were to introduce the American educators to the Israeli higher education system and to the academic field of Jewish Studies and to set the stage for the establishment, through the Center, of study programs in Israel. To achieve these goals, the educators met with university faculty and administrators at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv University.

The faculty and administrators who participated also met with major political leaders and public figures including: Teddy Kollek, the mayor of Jerusalem; Meron Benvenisti, director of the West Bank Data Project and former deputy mayor of Jerusalem; Nahman Raz, the chairman of the Knesset Committee on Education; Dr. Subhi Abu Ghosh, the director of the Islamic courts in Israel; and Mordechai Bar-On, former Knesset member and former Chief Education Officer of the Israel Defense Forces. Topics discussed at these meetings included Israel's political and educational system, Jewish-Arab relations, Israel's foreign policy, and the prospects for peace in the Middle East.

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## Fifth Year *continued from page 1*

In addition to the Berman contributions, Lehigh funds the positions of program administrator and secretary-coordinator. Contributions from members of the Jewish community of the Lehigh Valley have made possible many of the Center's activities during the past four years.

Beyond its strong presence on the Lehigh campus, the Center for Jewish Studies provides courses for students at the six affiliated institutions of LVAIC, the Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges (Allentown College of St. Francis de Sales, Cedar Crest College, Lafayette College, Lehigh University, Moravian College, Muhlenberg College). The visiting professor also teaches on several campuses in a given semester. Rounding out the Center's activities are academic and cultural programs and Center-sponsored

study programs in Israel.

Through this exciting and imaginative program, Lehigh students and faculty have a rare opportunity to participate in that process of creative growth described by Charles Silberman in *A Certain People*. Their enthusiastic participation marks a new era in Jewish student life on college campuses. Just a few decades ago, it was not uncommon for Jewish college students, viewing Judaism as an inferior culture, to downplay all visible connection with Jewish tradition. By contrast, today's Jewish students, asserting their identity, seek to broaden their knowledge by enrolling in Jewish Studies courses.

With the continued encouragement and support of the Jewish community, Lehigh University is increasingly seen as a desirable school for students seeking to learn more about Judaism, thereby enhancing the university's reputation as a center of academic life.

## Center for Jewish Studies Staff

Laurence J. Silberstein, Director  
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## Jewish Studies At Lehigh University

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