



Dennis Ross

Rob Upton

Dennis Ross Shares Lessons on Peacemaking

Ambassador **Dennis Ross**, U.S. Envoy to the Middle East during the Clinton administration, offered his insights into the escalating conflict between Israel and the Palestinians during a talk at Lehigh in March 2002. A skilled diplomat, Ross assisted the Israelis and Palestinians in reaching the 1995 Interim Agreement and successfully brokered the Hebron Accord in 1997. He also facilitated the Israel-Jordan peace treaty and worked intensively to bring Israel and Syria together.

In his presentation, Ross sought to cut through the rhetoric and emotionalism of the issues involved in the conflict in an effort to reveal a core of four practical items that are needed to make negotiations work: "You have got to avoid the bad behaviors, promote good behaviors, condition the public, and create accountability."

Ross explained that the Palestinians cannot negotiate in good faith while their media incites their people against Israelis. Further, the Israelis must avoid actions that create a sense of grievance among the

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New Berman Center Book Focuses on Contemporary Art and the Holocaust

The most recent Berman Center volume, *Impossible Images: Contemporary Art after the Holocaust*, will be published by New York University Press this spring. Edited by **Shelley Hornstein**, **Laura Levitt**, and **Laurence Silberstein**, the volume is the seventh in the Berman Center's series *New Perspectives on Jewish Studies*, and the eighth Berman Center volume published since 1991.

The new volume evolved out of a conference "Representing the Holocaust: Practices, Products, Projections," held at Lehigh University in May 2000. The book draws together artists, curators, art historians, cultural critics, and Jewish studies specialists. Publication was underwritten by grants from the Philip and Muriel Berman Foundation and the Lucius N. Littauer Foundation.

Like previous volumes in the Berman Center's series, *Impossible Images* explores the boundaries of current Jewish studies scholarship and seeks to further the interdisciplinary discussion of what has been called "the new Jewish cultural studies." Whereas the majority of discussions concerning the representation of the Holocaust focus on literary and historical representation, this book focuses on the visual.

Acknowledging the growing legacy of creative works that engage the Shoah, contributors probe the processes through which these works have come into being and how they function in particular contexts. Focusing on specific works of visual art, and in one instance a musical composition, authors pose a number of important questions about representation that, while often raised in discussions of

culture, are less frequently asked by scholars in Jewish studies. Whereas writings in the field of Jewish studies often begin with the problematic of representing what many consider to be unrepresentable, contributors to this volume attempt to lay bare the representational processes themselves.

Many of the authors share a concern that, as the Holocaust becomes more distant in time, certain conventions regarding how to see, read, and respond to the Holocaust are becoming reified. Thus, several writers depict the range of representational strategies deployed by artists engaging with this legacy. A number of chapters pay particular attention to some highly provocative works in which painters, photographers, or architects reconsider their own relationships to the history of these representational processes. Reflecting the passions that surround decisions to employ either abstract or more

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Writer-in-Residence Program Brings Poet Gerald Stern to Campus



Gerald Stern

Gerald Stern, winner of the 1999 National Book Award for Poetry for his volume *This Time: New and Selected Poems*, read and discussed his work as part of the Berman Center's writer-in-residence program. He is the author of more than a dozen books of poetry and is considered by many to be America's leading Jewish poet.

Stern offered readings from three of his recent volumes, *This Time*, *Last Blue*, and *American Sonnets*. Noting that most

of his work is based on "real or imagined experiences," he prefaced each reading with a story of the event or person that was the catalyst for the poem's creation. His unique vision and irrepressible humor and joy in communicating the power of language evoked an enthusiastic response from the audience of students, faculty, and members of the general community.

According to Professor Ruth Setton, director of the Center's writer-in-residence program, Stern's reading at Lehigh was the first poetry reading many of her students had ever attended. "Who better to initiate students into the world of poetry than Stern," she asked, "who is our contemporary Whitman, Hawthorne, and Mark Twain, all rolled into one? Every Stern reading is an event, and this one was no different. Stern is a force of nature, America's greatest living poet. His exuberant, rolling phrases, profound compassion, and luminous precision transform every moment into a potential miracle. At times irreverent and hilarious, at other times tender and moving, he never fails

to startle the listener into a new charged awareness. Like all great writers, Stern teaches us how to see."

Setton went on to say that nothing is sacred to Stern, and conversely, everything is. "That's why his poetry is about everything: high and low life, American dreams and Jewish blues, rivers and frogs, eating a pear and taking a bath. Nothing is foreign to him, and yet, on some level, he will always be the Jewish boy who grew up in Pittsburgh, carrying the memory of grit and gray air that no soap can wash away."

Stern, the first poet-laureate of New Jersey, has earned many honors and awards, among them the *Paris Review's* Bernard F. Connors Award, the Bess Hokin Award for Poetry, the Ruth Lilly Prize, and four National Endowment for the Arts grants.

His appearance was sponsored by the Berman Center, the Department of English, the Humanities Center, Friends of the University Libraries, and the E. F. Robbins Fund in Jewish Studies.

Carole Angier Discusses Biography of Primo Levi

Carole Angier, British author of the recent, widely acclaimed biography of Primo Levi, *The Double Bond*, spoke to a large audience at Lehigh following a book tour of several cities. Levi, a survivor of Auschwitz, is recognized as one of the 20th century's most important writers. Angier's talk focused on his life, his work, his apparent suicide, and the role of his experiences at Auschwitz in all three.

In her research for her book, Angier found that Levi was a deeply divided person. Long before Auschwitz, she argues, he had cut himself in two: into a rational, moral "higher" half, and an emotional, instinctive "lower" half, and he lived only in the "higher" half. Throughout his life, he repressed his animal instincts—toward love, sex, anger, hate, revenge, and violence—and chose to live

instead through his intellect and will. Angier believes this explains how Levi survived the death camps and produced his first great book, *Survival in Auschwitz*. At the same time, it is, she contends, what eventually killed him. Based upon her reading of the manuscript of his last unfinished book and his conversations with friends, she reached the controversial conclusion that Levi killed himself because he was depressed, but Auschwitz was not the cause of his depression.

To Angier, the painful and paradoxical truth of Levi's life was that, in the end, Auschwitz was a positive experience. It not only gave him a reason to live and a moral requirement to write, but also provided him with the subject for the fundamental contribution to human knowledge that, as a boy, he had dreamed

of making. Before and after Auschwitz, being half a man—the moral and rational half only—was not enough. Levi was depressed before and after Auschwitz, but not while a prisoner. He thought of suicide before and after Auschwitz, but not while in it. It is ironic, Angier argues, that without the experience of surviving Auschwitz and without the sense of mission to report and understand it, death might have claimed him sooner. Levi, himself, referred to Auschwitz as his university, his only adventure, his time in Technicolor when he had been most alert and most certain of what he had to do.

There are those who argue that Levi's death was not a suicide, but an accidental fall down the stairs. Angier believes that, while he did not plan to kill himself, he

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New Course Offers Perspectives on Israeli National Identity

Beginning in spring 2002, a new course offered Lehigh students the opportunity to explore the dimensions and problems of Israeli national identity, focusing primarily on the role of religion, culture, and politics. Professor Larry Silberstein had originally planned to offer the course to Lehigh students in Israel. However, as the ongoing violence made that untenable, he decided to offer the course at Lehigh.

In "Israel: Religion, Culture, National Identity," students studied the development of Israeli nationalism, the construction of Israeli national identity, and the contested nature of that identity among various constituencies within Israel. Emphasis was placed on the basic conflicts and tensions that mark the formation of Israeli national culture and identity, with particular attention to the impact of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Students were thus introduced to such conflicting perspectives in Israeli national culture as those between Palestinians/Jews, religious/secular Jews, European/Middle Eastern Jews, and Zionists/postzionists.

Complementing the readings and class discussions was a series of programs offering varying perspectives on Israel today. These included a screening of the documentary *The Last Enemy*, depicting the interaction among Israeli, Palestinian, and Jordanian actors as they rehearse a play about the Middle East conflict; a lecture on the peace process by Ambassador Dennis Ross; and a presentation on the role of religion in Israeli society by Bar Ilan University professor Gerald Cromer.

According to Ruth Solomon, a student, the course challenged her to see the many sides of the conflict in Israel. "Having grown up Jewish and attending Hebrew School since the age of six, I believed that Israel was always right and the Palestinians, wrong. Attempting to put my personal biases aside was one of the most intellectually challenging feats I have had to accomplish."

Each student participated in a group project, the purpose of which was to address issues studied in the course through such alternative media as film, web sites, drama, creative writing, and role playing. Solomon's group role-played a debate among various constituencies within Israeli society. "I volunteered to present the Palestinian perspective," Solomon said. "I was thus forced to say the opposite of everything I believed instinctively to be correct. In this role, I was faced with the challenge of representing Palestinian claims to the land of Israel. As complicated as it was to voice opinions that I do not fully accept, I believe the presentation was extremely effective for me. Stepping outside of my own perspective to portray that of a Palestinian actually served to reinforce some of my own beliefs, while leading me to rethink others. The difference is that now, after taking Professor Silberstein's class, I have knowledge and understanding upon which to draw to support my position. At the same time, I am better able to empathize with the position held by others with whom I disagree."

Carole Angier

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was driven by an impulse to which he surrendered. A few days before his death, he said to a friend, "I think only of killing myself."

Notwithstanding his apparent suicide, Angier considers Levi to be a heroic figure. The fact that he suffered bouts of depression and eventually committed suicide does not, in her eyes, make him less a hero, but more, for his life was even more tragic and terrible than we knew. His gift to us, she said, was a

series of humane and just meditations on the Shoah and beautiful, humorous, equally humane essays and stories about chemistry, language, animals, atoms, places, and people.

Carole Angier is Royal Literary Fund Fellow at the University of Warwick. *The Double Bond* is her third biography, to which she devoted almost ten years. She is also the author of an award-winning book on the life of novelist Jean Rhys.



Joyce Goldschmidt

Chava Weissler

Chava Weissler to Present 2003 Stroum Lecture Series

Chava Weissler, Philip and Muriel Berman Professor of Jewish Civilization at Lehigh, will present the 2003 Samuel and Althea Stroum Annual Lectures in Jewish Studies at the University of Washington. For the past 22 years, this prestigious lecture series has brought leading figures from various fields of Jewish learning to the University.

Weissler's overall topic for the three-part series is "Jewish Spirituality in America: The Jewish Renewal Movement." In her first lecture on May 5, "Jewish Renewal in the American Spiritual Marketplace," she will set the Jewish Renewal movement in the context of the growing interest in "spirituality" that has characterized recent American religious life. Her second lecture on May 7, "Gender and Jewish Renewal," will focus on women and women's leadership in the Jewish Renewal movement and examines why the majority of the participants are women. In the final lecture on May 12, "The 'Four Worlds' and the Popularization of Kabbalah," Weissler will explore the complex relationship of Renewal interpretations of Kabbalah to classical forms of Jewish mysticism. The lectures will be published by the University of Washington Press.

Weissler has taught in the Department of Religion Studies at Lehigh and has been on the faculty of the Berman Center for Jewish Studies since 1988. Her book, *Voices of the Matriarchs*, received the Koret Foundation Book Award in 1999 and was an alternate selection of the Jewish Book of the Month Club.

Recent Gifts

The Philip and Muriel Berman Center for Jewish Studies recognizes with gratitude the individuals listed here. These generous contributors have greatly enhanced the academic, cultural, and programmatic offerings of the Berman Center and Lehigh University.

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Events in support of the Berman Center were hosted during the current academic year by **Susan and Mark Beckerman** in California and New York, by **Janet and Gary Resnick** in Illinois, and by **Pauline, Michael, and Irv Gennet** (of Blessed Memory) in Florida. The Berman Center is grateful for the efforts of these generous and dedicated friends.

Beckermans Fund New Visiting Position at the Berman Center

The Berman Center is pleased to announce that **Susan Ballenzweig Beckerman '65W** and **Mark Beckerman** have created a full-time visiting position at the Berman Center. **Dr. Ruth Knafo Setton**, who served as Berman Center Writer-in-Residence in 2001-02, will assume the new position in fall 2003. She will teach in the Department of English and again direct the highly successful Berman Center writer-in-residence program. Her responsibilities will include teaching two courses each semester on different aspects of Jewish literature and writing and planning programs and projects that will bring Jewish writers to Lehigh's campus. During the 2002-03 academic year, she taught in the MFA program in creative writing at Georgia College and State University, and edited the literary journal *Arts and Letters*.

Setton's first novel, *The Road to Fez* (Counterpoint Press), received glowing reviews and is being taught at several American and Canadian universities. She has also given more than forty readings and lectures on the book. She has recently completed a new novel, *If I Forget You*, as well as her first poetry collection, *My Borrowed Country*. In May 2002, she received a literary fellowship from the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts,



Ruth Knafo Setton

where she served as writer-in-residence. During the past year Setton's fiction, non-fiction, and poetry have appeared in *Best Contemporary Jewish Writing*; *Nothing Makes You Free: Writing from the Second Generation On*; *With Signs and Wonders: An International Anthology of Jewish Fabulist Fiction*; *Lost on the Map of the World: Contemporary American Jewish Women's Quest for Home*; *North American Review*; and *Another Chicago Magazine*.

Dennis Ross

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Palestinians. Such unilateral actions as the expansion of settlements, confiscation of territory, and demolition of houses make the Palestinians feel powerless. "If you make the Palestinians feel powerless," he said, "then they are going to demonstrate that they are not."

Ross called for a code of conduct on each side to ensure the day-to-day behaviors are consistent with the intentions and purposes of the negotiations. This would include conditioning the public to compromise, an area where the Palestinians failed miserably. "If you want negotiation to work, you have to condition your public to what is going to be required for an agreement," he admonished.

Another lesson Ross learned about making negotiations work is the need to create accountability. He said that one of the reasons Oslo failed was that neither side was particularly good at implementing their commitments. A ground rule for the United States in the future has to be, "If you want us involved and you make a commitment, you are going to live up to the commitment. If you don't live up to the commitment, then we are going to say so publicly."

Ross, now Distinguished Fellow and Counselor at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, is writing a book about his experiences in the pursuit of peace. One of the things he hopes to accomplish is to dispel the myth that the plan presented to the Palestinians at the end of Clinton's term would have created a Palestinian state that was dissected and surrounded. That was untrue, he said. The Palestinians were offered 95 percent of the territories. "Ninety-five percent means you have contiguous territory. There was no dissection. Chairman Arafat could not accept that. . . . He is one of those leaders who cannot make the transition from revolutionary to statesman," Ross said.

Ultimately, Ross is optimistic about peace because he knows Israelis and Palestinians want to live a normal existence. "The Clinton administration didn't succeed, but we pointed the way to what the conclusion will be."

The program was sponsored by the Philip and Muriel Berman Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities.



Lehigh alumni and parents gathered at the home of Janet and Gary Resnick in Highland Park, Illinois, for a Berman Center event. From left to right, Janet Resnick, Susan Ballenzweig Beckerman, Center director Larry Silberstein, Ellen Kaplan, and Richard Kaplan.

Lori Lefkovitz Discusses the "Second Generation"

Speaking during the fall 2002 semester, Dr. **Lori Hope Lefkovitz** described her struggle to determine the place of the Holocaust in her own identity and, by extension, its place in the lives of all Jews born after the events. The daughter of Holocaust survivors, Lefkovitz is the Sadie and Arlene Gottesman Kolot Professor of Gender and Judaism and academic director of Kolot, the Center for Jewish Women's and Gender Studies, at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College.

Explaining that children of survivors inherit extremes—idealizations and horrors—she observed that the most powerful aspect of the legacy may be ambivalence: "The fact is that we are the phoenix born out of those ashes and that we have Hitler to thank for our presence in America."

Psychologists, Lefkovitz noted, say that children of survivors are particularly protective of their parents as well as being defensive, a role reversal. "So, if we have come to be called adult children of survivors," she explained, "we were once child parents. Like other children of immigrants, we shepherded our parents through the culture that belongs more to us than to them. Because what we must preserve is destroyed, we preserve a fading memory; we memorialize absence." She said that the burden of carrying these memories is formidable.

Lefkovitz described how she finds pleasure both in the listening to and telling of Holocaust narratives. Referring to her mother's family's life in Siberia during the war, she called it "borderline survivorship." Her father was a prisoner in Auschwitz and Buchenwald. She particularly loves the stories her mother tells about having been a schoolchild under Stalin, and the descriptions of those parents who feared that their children might betray them. Even more than the stories themselves, she enjoys the process of discovery, of the new stories that emerge when her family gets together and talks about the past.

"So it continues," she said. "We will give our children words for heirlooms because, finally, the point of sharing our stories is in the act of sharing itself. In the absence of antique matzo-grinders, this truth—however compromised—is what we have."

Lefkovitz is the author of books and articles in the fields of literature, critical theory, and Jewish feminism. Her most recent book, coedited with Julia Epstein, is *Shaping Losses: Cultural Memory and the Holocaust*. Her presentation was sponsored by the Berman Center and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Paula Hyman Lectures on Jewish Women in Pre-Holocaust Poland

Paula E. Hyman, Lucy Moses Professor of Modern Jewish History at Yale University, discussed "From Tradition to Radicalism: Women in Pre-Holocaust Poland." Hyman's talk focused on the memoirs of Zionist and feminist Puah Rakovsky (1865-1955), which reflect on the position of Jewish women in her time and give her personal and political perspective on central events of modern Jewish history. An English version of the memoirs, edited and annotated by Hyman, was recently published as *My Life as a Radical Jewish Woman: Memoirs of a Zionist Feminist in Poland*.

Rakovsky's perception of women's differentness within the Jewish community began in her childhood, Hyman said. The disparity in Jewish educational ideals for boys and girls led her to secure a job teaching in a Jewish school for girls in 1889. She later taught in a newly organized Zionist girls' school and then opened her own school, the first modern Hebrew school for girls in Warsaw.

While Rakovsky first framed her calls for Jewish education for women in terms of their role as maternal teachers, her true concern, Hyman said, was for women as persons in their own right and she saw education as a tool for equality for women and as a means of acquiring "personal and social liberation."

In 1918 Rakovsky published a pamphlet in Yiddish that called on Jewish women to become more active in Zionist work, and she persisted in Zionist activism throughout her life. She was, however, committed to the concept of separate women's organizations that would place women's concerns at the center of their activity. In the early 1920s she joined with colleagues in establishing a nationwide organization that was explicitly feminist and pro-Zionist, the YFA (Yidishe Froyen

Organisatsie). It promoted women's equality on a number of fronts, including support of women's suffrage in Poland and Palestine. It also addressed the manifold social problems of women and children by providing vocational education and literacy classes and by running day-care centers and summer camps for children.

The recovery of the history of Jewish women reshapes the story, Hyman concluded. Puah Rakovsky and other female activists pushed Polish Jewish society to accommodate the demands of women for more than they were offered. To achieve their goals, they expressed radical ideas that challenged the status quo.

A noted historian, Hyman is the author of *The Jews of Modern France*; *Jewish Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia*; *Gender and Assimilation in Modern Jewish History*; and *The Emancipation of the Jews of Alsace*. She is currently coediting a massive project, *Jewish Women: A Comprehensive Encyclopedia*. Hyman's lecture was sponsored by the Center, Women's Studies, and the E. F. Robbins Fund in Jewish Studies.

Jewish Mysticism Focus of Talk

"Anatomy of a Kabbalistic Body" was the title of a presentation by **Joel M. Hecker**, assistant professor at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. Scholarly studies of Kabbalah (Jewish mysticism), he said, have long treated the symbolism of kabbalistic texts primarily as tools for the mind to attain knowledge and perhaps even union with the Divinity. They have failed to take into account the centrality of the body in apprehending God.

Rereading kabbalistic texts from the period of the *Zohar* (13th century) from the perspective of embodiment, Hecker sought to better understand the kabbalistic experience. Focusing on hair, both human and divine, he traced the ways in which the body serves as the starting point for merging with the Divinity. For Jewish mystics, from the ancient period to the modern, visualizing God or aspects of the divinity has been a central part of the mystical praxis. "Job's proclamation, 'From my flesh I will see God,' becomes a *modus operandi* for the medieval kabbalists," he said.

In particular, Hecker explored aspects of anthropomorphic imagery used by Rabbi Yosef of Hamadan in a range of published works. Hamadan is believed to have been one of the primary figures involved in the authorship of the *Zohar*, the central and canonical text of Jewish mysticism. His writings, Hecker said, reveal a florid imagination with graphic images and details of the divine body. Not content with body areas treated in the *Zohar*, Hamadan reconfigures the human body, reimagines the way in which gender is borne out of the body, and probes the significance of details that are seen to be channels for the overflow of divinity—bodily hair.

Hecker received a Ph.D. in Jewish mysticism from New York University and is currently translating and annotating *The Book of the Angel Raziel*. The program was sponsored by the Berman Center and the E. Franklin Robbins Fund in Jewish Studies.

Jewish Immigrants and Food in America Topic of Lecture by Hasia Diner

Dr. Hasia Diner, Paul and Sylvia Steinberg Professor of American Jewish History at New York University, lectured at the Berman Center on “Jews, Food, and the Lure of America.” Her presentation focused on the ways that Jews, who put food at the center of their sacred system, have negotiated between the limitations of “tradition” and the boundless possibilities for consumption available in America. The minute details of Jewish religious practice, she said, posed greater difficulties in the U.S. than in the traditionally structured small towns of Eastern Europe. A shortage of religious functionaries in the U.S. well into the 20th century made adherence to Jewish dietary restrictions difficult. Further, in a society based on the separation of religion and civil law, in which the state hesitated to regulate the marketplace, the supervision of *kashrut* (dietary regulations) was a nagging problem. Jewish housewives repeatedly boycotted kosher butchers because of the exorbitant prices they charged, which set the stage for widespread cynicism about *kashrut*.

The availability of a wide variety of foods, particularly in America’s largest

cities, challenged new immigrants. Novels, memoirs, and autobiographies from the time discussed Jews reveling in the rich bounty before them. Consumption of the food of “others” became a hallmark of American Jewish public behavior. By and large, *kashrut* was not a major determinant in what Jewish immigrants chose to eat and the lure of taste seems to have won out.

One of the most dramatic themes in the history of American Jews, both on the public and private levels, is the conflict about food, Diner concluded. Much of the primary literature about food in Jewish culture mixes food and the memory of childhood with food and the conflict over Jewish religious culture. Likewise, conflicts over interpretations and the practices of *kashrut* divided communities, often engendering vicious fights and weakening community unity.

Diner is a specialist in immigration and ethnic history, American Jewish history, and the history of American women. Her publications include *Hungering for America: Italian, Irish, and Jewish Foodways in the Age of Migration*, and *Lower East Side Memories: A Jewish Place in America*. Her latest volume, *Her Works Praise Her: A History of Jewish Women in America from Colonial Times to the Present*, coauthored with journalist Beryl Benderly, chronicles the untold story of America’s Jewish women.

The program was sponsored by Littauer Foundation, the Center, and departments of Religion Studies, Women’s Studies, and History.

Gerald Cromer Explains Relationship of Religion and State in Israel

Professor Gerald Cromer of the Department of Sociology at Bar-Ilan University lectured at the Berman Center on “The Politics of the Spirit: Religion and State in Israel.” Cromer explored the historical roots and major characteristics of the closely interwoven relationship of politics and religion in Israel and the tension it creates between religious and secular Jews.

Since the inception of the state, which has 12 or 13 political parties, several parties have had to come together to form a coalition government, Cromer explained. Through the “doctrine of coercion,” the religious parties have achieved power

well above the proportion of seats they hold in the Knesset, the supreme legislative body of Israel. By agreeing to enter into the government only if certain demands are met, they not only ensure that the religious can live the way they wish, but they also, to some extent, force the secular majority to live according to the norms of Orthodox Judaism. By this method, they have succeeded in obtaining state-funded religious schools and state-provided services for the religious population.

Religious Jews also have power in the courts, where there are two systems of justice and law—one secular, the other Jewish—and it is the religious courts that have jurisdiction over laws concerning personal status. As a result, Cromer said, Israelis marry, divorce, and are buried according to traditional Jewish law.

After giving examples of how religion has become embroiled in politics, Cromer talked about areas where, since 1967, politics have become religious. One area where the religious Zionist parties and, of late, the non-Zionist Orthodox party have taken a definite stand is the question of the occupied territories and the possibility of peace negotiations. The National Religious Party, once one of the most dovish parties, has become the most hawkish element within Israeli society. As a result, “Greater Israel” has become a religious issue.

Cromer thinks that the connection between religion and politics may be changing. One interesting development, he noted, is taking place among the Orthodox population. Some are beginning to think that forcing secular Jews to behave in ways they do not want to, such as in regard to marriage and sabbath laws, may harm Orthodox Judaism insofar as it fosters hostility toward the religion of the Orthodox and alienation from it. These Orthodox Jews believe that Orthodox Judaism will benefit more if they were to permit the struggle over ideas in an open marketplace.

Cromer, who received his Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Nottingham, has served on advisory committees to several Israeli government agencies. He is the author of *The Writing Was on the Wall: Constructing Political Deviance in Israel* and *Narratives of Violence*. His articles have appeared in such journals as *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, *Crossroads*, and *Contemporary Jewry*.

The program was sponsored by the Berman Center and the Lucius N. Littauer Foundation.

BCJS Faculty 2002-2003

• **Laurence J. Silberstein**, Philip and Muriel Berman Professor of Jewish Studies, Dept. of Religion Studies, Lehigh University, *Jewish Responses to the Holocaust, Forms of Jewish Identity in the Modern World, Sex and Gender in Judaism: The Feminist Critique, Judaism in Israel and the United States, The Spiritual Quest in Contemporary Jewish Life*

• **Robert L. Cohn**, Philip and Muriel Berman Professor of Jewish Studies, Dept. of Religion, Lafayette College, *Hebrew Bible, Biblical Narrative, Jewish Responses to Catastrophe*

• **Chava Weissler**, Philip and Muriel Berman Professor of Jewish Civilization, Dept. of Religion Studies, Lehigh University, *Jewish Folklore, Hasidic Tales, Modern Judaism, Mystical Tradition in Judaism, Women in Jewish History, Gendered Jewish Lives*

• **Benjamin Wright III**, Dept. of Religion Studies, Lehigh University, *Hebrew Bible, Judaism in the Greco-Roman World, Archaeology and the Bible in the Land of Israel*

Affiliated Faculty Lehigh University

• **David Amidon, Jr.**, Urban Studies Program, *American Jews: Politics and Culture*

• **Bunnie Piltch**, Dept. of Modern Languages and Literature, *Hebrew Language*

• **Oles Smolansky**, Dept. of International Relations, *Middle East Studies*

• **Roslyn Weiss**, Dept. of Philosophy, *Jewish Philosophy*

Affiliated Faculty Lafayette College

• **Ilana Levy**, Dept. of Foreign Languages and Literatures, *Hebrew Language*

• **Howard Marblestone**, Dept. of Foreign Languages and Literatures, *Hebrew Language*

• **Ilan Peleg**, Dept. of Government and Law, *Middle East Politics*

• **Robert Weiner**, Dept. of History, *Modern Jewish History*

Faculty Notes

Robert Cohn presented "Negotiating (with) the Natives: Ancestors and Identity in Genesis" at the International Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in Berlin. He participated in a two-week seminar titled "Holocaust: History, Testimony, Representation" at the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and completed a two-week intensive course in Polish at the Prolog Polish Language School in Krakow, Poland. His current areas of research relate to Jews and Catholics in Poland and the biblical book of Kings.

He recently introduced two new Jewish Studies courses at Lafayette College: "Jewish Humor," a first-year seminar that includes a film series, and "Poland and Russia: Past and Present," a three-week winter interim session course that he co-taught in Krakow, Warsaw, St. Petersburg, and Moscow.

Ilan Peleg is spending the 2002-2003 academic year at Oxford University, where he is a Senior Academic Member of St. Antony's College, as well as a Skirball Fellow at the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies in Yarnton Manor, near Oxford. He delivered a series of lectures at Oxford: "Israel as a Jewish and Democratic State," "Democratization in the Middle East: The Case of Israel," and "Democratizing the Hegemonic State: A Worldwide Perspective," a topic on which he is now writing a book.

Bunnie Piltch presented "Tools of Engagement: Raising Hebrew Language Consciousness" at the 27th Annual Conference on Alternatives in Jewish Education held at Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas. Her talk addressed the theory, practice, and methodology of engaging learners in form-focused language instruction.

Laurence Silberstein coedited *Impossible Images: Contemporary Art after the Holocaust* with Laura Levitt and Shelley Hornstein. The volume, which will appear this spring (NYU Press), is the seventh in the Berman Center series, *New Perspectives on Jewish Studies*, which he edits. His article "Postzionism: Debating Israeli National Identity" recently appeared in the *Palestine Israel Journal*. He delivered a paper on Baruch

Kimmerling's *The Invention and Decline of Israeliness* in a panel on "The Invention and Decline of Israeliness" that he organized and chaired at the Annual Meeting of the Association of Israel Studies in May 2002. He also lectured on "Postzionism: Revisioning Israeli History" at the annual regional conference of Eastern Pennsylvania Reform Rabbis.

Roslyn Weiss presented a paper titled "It's Only Natural: Maimonides on Cosmogony and Prophecy" at the Association for Jewish Studies Conference in 2001. She lectured in Hebrew on "Maimonides on Biblical Text and Subtext" at the University of Haifa in December 2001, and at Ben-Gurion University, Beer-Sheva, Israel, in June 2002.

Chava Weissler, a recipient of a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship for 2003, will discuss "Jewish Spirituality in America: The Jewish Renewal Movement" at the Samuel and Althea Stroum Lectures at the University of Washington in May 2003 (see p.3). She presented a paper and organized a panel on "New Forms of Jewish Spirituality in American and Israel" at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Jewish Studies in 2002. She served as scholar-in-residence at Fairfield University, where she lectured on "Jewish Renewal: Revitalizing Contemporary American Judaism" and "Voices of the Matriarchs: Prayers of Early Modern Jewish Women." She also presented invited lectures at Drexel University, Boston University, University of Hartford, and Ben-Gurion University, among others.

In addition to her current research on "Jewish Renewal in the American Spiritual Marketplace," Weissler is editor for *Material Culture and Everyday Life, YIVO Encyclopedia of Jewish Life in Eastern Europe*.

Benjamin Wright's recent publications include "Why a Prologue? Ben Sira's Grandson and His Translation" in *Emanuel: Studies in Hebrew Bible, Septuagint and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honor of Emanuel Tov*; "The Jewish Scriptures in Greek: The Septuagint in the Context of Ancient Translation Activity" in *Biblical Translation in Context, Studies and*

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Playwright Promotes Peace and Reconciliation between Arabs and Jews

The Berman Center, in cooperation with the Jewish and Israeli Film Festival of the Allentown Jewish Community Center, presented a screening of *The Last Enemy*. The 1999 documentary follows Palestinian, Israeli, and Jordanian actors through rehearsals and performances of a play about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The play, also titled "The Last Enemy," was written by **Jim Mirrione** as an effort to promote hope and reconciliation among Palestinians, Jordanians, and Israelis. It was produced as part of the "Crossing the Bridge Project," funded through the United States Information Agency's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and other international organizations. Following performances at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center in Watford, Connecticut, and the American Place Theater in New York City, the play toured Jordan, Israel, and the West Bank. The New York run included a reception and performance at the United Nations.

Jim Mirrione, who was present for the Lehigh screening, described his part in the project. His goal, he explained, was to write a theatrical piece that would focus on the issues that have historically divided Arabs and Jews. As shown in the documentary, tensions surfaced on and off stage as the actors in his play were forced to confront their own biases. "What the actors went through during the last months of the project—the debates, fights, and compromises that all of them had to make—is symbolic of the entire peace process in the Middle East," he said.

The playwright went one step farther than putting Arabs and Israelis together on stage. He cross-cast them so that Israelis were playing Arabs and Arabs were playing Israelis. "We had a Jordanian playing an Israeli. He was probably the first actor in the history of his country to play a Jew on stage. This actor, who received death threats, showed incredible courage. If one individual has the cour-

age to change, somewhere down the road other things will change."

Mirrione expressed hope that the audience would see that at one time, during this project, there was an environment for reconciliation in the Middle East, and it could happen again. Just as the actors' preconceptions changed, he insisted, everyone's can. He believes that other projects that bring together Palestinians, Israelis, and Jordanians can also succeed. "The politicians and religious people have had their chance. I can't do any worse than what is being done now, and neither can you."

One of the founders of the Creative Arts Team at the Gallatin School of New York University, Mirrione has been CAT's playwright-in-residence since 1978 and has written nineteen plays for the company. His current project focuses on the former Yugoslavia and will bring Serbs, Croats, and Muslims together to work on the tenth anniversary of the Balkan war, in which hundreds of thousands of people were killed.

Rabbi Examines Contemporary Relationship of Judaism and Buddhism

In a lecture titled "Dharma and Torah: A Personal Account," Rabbi **Sheila Weinberg**, who has served as a rabbi to congregations and campus communities for 25 years, discussed the relationship between Judaism and the teachings and practices of Buddhism.

A student of insight meditation and a practitioner of mindfulness meditation, Rabbi Weinberg explored the ways in which these "borrowed methods" elucidate Jewish teachings and theology and can be used to support the practice of Judaism. Buddhism, she stated, has given her a new lens through which to interpret the sacred teachings of Judaism and to apply those teachings to her life.

Attending a retreat offered by the Insight Meditation Society in 1989, Weinberg was moved by the practice of mindfulness. "The process of returning again and again to the simple object of attention—the breath, the step, the pot I was scrubbing—was expanding the

dimensions of my mind. All the painful thoughts, judgments, fears, and endless desires for this or that to be different were loosening their grip." She also realized that, when she allowed her attention to rest on sensation in the body, she saw dynamism, change, and instability. "I open myself to the infinite power of pure awareness, the light of presence...the nameless energy of life... In Jewish language, I open to God's love, the power that heals, forgives, comforts, and...ultimately transforms."

What she learned at this first retreat was reinforced by many other brilliant teachers over the last twelve years. Now the teachings and practices of mindfulness inspire, sustain, and strengthen her. Moreover, she finds recurring references to this process of liberation in Jewish prayer, in the texts of the Torah, and in the practices of Jewish life.

Sheila Weinberg now devotes herself full time to teaching meditation practices

in Jewish settings. She is on the faculty of Elat Chayyim, a Jewish spiritual retreat center in the Catskill Mountains of New York, and the Spirituality Institute at Metivta, which promotes programs designed to help Jewish clergy and lay leaders deepen their own spiritual lives and the spiritual lives of others. She has also published a number of articles exploring the connections between Buddhism and Judaism.

In addition to her lecture, Weinberg also met with the students in Larry Silberstein's seminar for first-year students, "Turning Eastward: Jews and Christians Encounter Buddhism." The students, who had read two of her articles, questioned her about the possible conflicts between Judaism and Buddhism and how she is able to reconcile them in her own life and practice. Her visit to Lehigh was sponsored by the Berman Center and the Lucius N. Littauer Foundation.

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Faculty Notes

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Texts in Jewish History and Culture; "Who Has Been Tested by Gold and Found Perfect?" Ben Sira's Discourse of Riches and Poverty," with Claudia Camp, in *Henoch*; "Sirach and 1 Enoch: Some Further Considerations" in *The Origins of Enochic Judaism: Proceedings of the First Enoch Seminar*; and "Coptic/Sahidic Fragments of the Biblical Psalms in the University of Pennsylvania Museum," with Robert A. Kraft, in *The Old Greek Psalter: Studies in Honour of Albert Pietersma*.

At the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in Toronto, he discussed "Wisdom and Instruction in Ben Sira and 1 Enoch" at the Wisdom and Apocalypticism in Early Judaism and Christianity Group, and at a special book review session, he was a respondent on a panel that reviewed Gabriele Boccaccini's *The Roots of Rabbinic Judaism*. He also presented invited lectures at the Bangor Theological Seminary and the University of North Carolina.

New Berman Center Volume

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figurative forms of representation, many chapters demonstrate not only what these different forms accomplish, but also their limitations. Thus, while some contributors seek to uncover the possible notions of what might be offensive strategies of marketing the Holocaust, others expose the controversial taboos against images considered reverent or irreverent. These contributions underscore the importance of context, affirming the necessity to frame work within culture and history in order to challenge the valuation of art.

Contributors include **Ariella Azoulay** (Bar Ilan Univ. and Camera Obscura School of Arts), **Julian Bonder** (architect, Cambridge, Mass.), **Susan Derwin** (Univ. of California, Santa Barbara), **Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi** (Hebrew Univ.), **Michelle Friedman** (Bryn Mawr College), **Shelley Hornstein** (York Univ.); **Tami Katz-Freiman** (independent curator, Tel Aviv, Israel), **Norman Kleeblatt** (Jewish Museum, New York), **Laura**

Levitt (Temple Univ.), **Adi Ophir** (Tel Aviv Univ.), **Laurence Silberstein** (Lehigh Univ.), **Oren Baruch Stier** (Florida International Univ.), and **Ernst van Alphen** (Leiden Univ.)

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