



The Lehigh Valley Center for Jewish Studies



FALL 1988

Newsletter

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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 in the Lehigh Valley academic community. When the Center for Jewish Studies was established in 1984, few imagined that it would grow so extensively in its first four years. From one faculty member in 1984, we enter the 1988-89 academic year with a staff of five full-time faculty, four regular faculty members and one visiting professor. 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.

The Center's teaching faculty includes: Professors Laurence J. Silberstein and Chava Weissler at Lehigh University; Professor Robert Cohn, at Lafayette College since 1987; and Professor Alan Mittleman, who joins the faculty of Muhlenberg College this year. The Philip and Muriel Berman Visiting Scholar for 1988-89 is Dr. Elie Rekhess of the Dayan Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Tel Aviv University. In addition to these academic positions, the Center also 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 Lehigh Valley Center for Jewish Studies has been made possible primarily through the extraordinary generosity of Philip and Muriel Berman. 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 Migne-Ekron Excavation Project in Israel and

fund scholarships for summer study in that country.

In addition to the Berman contributions, Lehigh funds the positions of program administrator and secretary-coordinator. Muhlenberg College supports the position held by Professor Mittleman. 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.

The Center for Jewish Studies represents a unique cooperative venture on the American academic scene. Our four

continued on page 5

Lehigh Students and LVAIC Faculty Praise Center's Achievements

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 Mamoroneck, 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

continued on page 5



Professor Laurence J. Silberstein



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

Center's Growth Measured by New Faculty and Staff

Dr. Laurence Silberstein, director of the Lehigh Valley Center for Jewish Studies, is pleased to announce the addition of two new permanent Jewish Studies faculty and a visiting Israeli scholar to the staff of the Center 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 Religion Studies Department 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. Alan Mittleman has been appointed as the Muhlenberg Scholar in Jewish Studies in the Religion Department at Muhlenberg College. Mittleman received his doctorate in religion at Temple University and is a graduate of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Col-

lege. A specialist in modern Jewish thought and the philosophy of Jewish law, Mittleman has served for the past five years as Program Associate in Interreligious Affairs at the American Jewish Committee. His book on the philosophy of the modern Orthodox scholar Isaac Breuer is to be published by SUNY Press.

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 the Center 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, Mittleman, and Rekhess bring to five the

number of full-time faculty in Jewish Studies associated with the Center. Dr. Laurence Silberstein, Center director and Philip and Muriel Berman Chair of Jewish Studies at Lehigh University since 1984, and Dr. Robert Cohn, the Berman Scholar in Jewish Studies at Lafayette College since 1987, complete the complement of Center faculty affiliated with LVAIC institutions.

Dr. 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.

Dr. Cohn, a biblical scholar and historian of religion, received his Ph.D. in religion from Stanford University, where he later served as Aaron-Roland Visiting Assistant Professor. He was a member of the faculty of Northwestern University, where he received the Arts and Sciences Award for Outstanding Teaching. He also taught at The Pennsylvania State University. Cohn is the author of *The Shape of Sacred Space: Four Biblical Studies*. He has published numerous articles on biblical texts and narrative and has contributed to the *Encyclopedia of Religion*.

In addition to the Berman chair and scholars, the Center staff includes a full-time program administrator, Dr. Myra Rosenhaus and a full-time secretary-coordinator, Ms. Shirley Ratushny. Dr. Rosenhaus joined the Center in 1985. She received her Ph.D. from Indiana University in Comparative

continued on page 5

Center's Programming Emphasizes Quality and Diversity

Building on a foundation established over the years at Lehigh by Professor Alice Eckardt and Harriet L. Parmet and at Lafayette by Professors Howard Marblestone, Ilan Peleg, and Robert Weiner, the Center 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 promi-

ent 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 sponsored by the Center have included: Charles Silberman, author of *A Certain People: American Jews and Their Lives Today*; Emory University Professor David Blumenthal, who lectured on "Maimonides: Astro-

physicist, 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

continued on page 5

First Four Years See Dramatic Increase in Jewish Studies Course Offerings

As the Center concluded its fourth year, the number of courses in Jewish Studies and related fields available to students at Lehigh and the other LVAIC colleges reached a new high. At Lehigh alone, sixteen Jewish Studies courses were offered during the 1987-88 academic year, with a total enrollment of 400 students. Overall, 892 students were enrolled in the forty-five Jewish Studies courses that were offered on the six LVAIC campuses. In the past year, Jewish Studies courses were, for the first time, available on all the LVAIC campuses.

For the coming 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), "The Israel-Arab Conflict" and "Islam in the Contemporary Middle East" (Rekhess). Regular course offerings include "Introduction to Judaism," "Hebrew Bible," "The Contemporary Middle East," and "American Jewish Literature," as well as courses in Hebrew language, the Holocaust, and American Jewish history. Courses such as "Zionism and the Renewal of Judaism," "Sex and Gender in Judaism," "Jewish Response to Catastrophe," and "The Israeli Struggle for Survival" provide students with the opportunity for more specialized study.

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, 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 seminar, each visiting scholar conducts a seminar for faculty.

1987-1988 Jewish Studies and Related Courses

Allentown College

Jewish Response to Catastrophe
Old Testament
*Prophets and Prophecy

Cedar Crest College

Introduction to Judaism
Topics of Old Testament Thought:
The Prophets

Lafayette College

Introduction to Judaism
Jewish Response to Catastrophe
Jewish-American Literature
Religion of the Hebrew Scriptures
Modern Jewish History
Elementary Hebrew
*Politics of the Middle East and
Persian Gulf
*Studies in Judaism & Christianity

Lehigh University

Introduction to Judaism
Hebrew Bible/Old Testament
Holocaust: History and Meaning
Israeli Struggle for Survival
(Freshman Seminar)
Literature of the Holocaust
Modern Judaism and the Search
for Meaning
Sex and Gender in Judaism

Zionism & the Renewal of Judaism
Elementary Modern Hebrew I & II
Intermediate Modern
Hebrew I & II
Cultural Mosaic of Modern Israel
*Jewish-Christian Encounter
*Middle East in World Affairs
to 1945
*Middle East in World Affairs
Since 1945

Moravian College

Introduction to Judaism
Old Testament
*Judaism, Catholicism,
Protestantism

Muhlenberg College

Early History of the Jews
Holocaust and Its Impact
(2 sections)
Introduction to Jewish Mysticism
Topics in Modern Judaism
Elementary Hebrew I & II
Intermediate Hebrew I & II
Hebrew Literature in Translation
*Jewish & Christian Heritage
(5 sections)
*History of the Mid-East Since
World War II

**Related courses*

The Center and Israel: Academic Inquiry and Analysis

Besides sponsoring programs in Israel, the Center regularly invites scholars, political leaders, and public figures to address the academic community and the general public on issues related to Israeli life and culture. 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 discussed 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 engaged academic and community audiences in spirited discussion on the situation on the West Bank, Arab-Israeli rela-

tions, 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 in the valley, 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, Visiting Berman Scholar from the Department of Middle Eastern History at the University of Haifa

continued on page 5



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.

Tel Miqne Excavation Offers Students a Rare Opportunity for Field World 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 attending the Lehigh Valley colleges the opportunity to participate in a unique program combining study, excavation, and travel in Israel. To date, the Center

has sent five student volunteers from Lehigh and Muhlenberg to work 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 project's summer program.

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 LVAIC 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.

Another dimension of the Center's relationship with the Tel Miqne 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 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.

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 (see above).

In 1985 and 1987, Center director Laurence Silberstein and his wife, Mimi, organized and led two trips to Israel for LVAIC faculty and administrators. The educators' trips were made possible by generous grants from the 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 for LVAIC students. To achieve these goals, the educators met with university faculty and administrators at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv University.

The thirty-eight LVAIC faculty and administrators who participated also met with major political leaders and

continued on page 5

Fifth Year *continued from page 1*

full-time faculty teach on their home campuses and, as well, offer courses in Jewish Studies 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 likewise 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, the students and faculty of the Lehigh Valley 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 shun 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 continued encouragement and support from the Jewish community, the six colleges of the Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges will be seen as desirable schools for students seeking to learn more about Judaism, thereby enhancing the reputation of the Lehigh Valley as a center of academic life.

Achievements *continued from page 1*

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 Center's progress 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. The dominant theme of the speakers was the Center's growing national and international reputation and the extent of its influence on both academic and community life in the Lehigh Valley.

Staff *continued from page 2*

Literature, and now works in the area 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.

Programming *continued from page 2*

Lasker, associate professor of Sociology, and Associate Dean, College of Arts and Science, 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 Professors Roy and Alice Eckardt, the field of Holocaust Studies has occupied a prominent place in the academic program in the Lehigh Valley. Building on the Eckardt's legacy, the Center has sponsored numerous programs in this field. 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 the 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."

Israel Analysis *continued from page 3*

and Senior Research Fellow at Tel Aviv's Dayan Center, examined the economic and political background of the current Palestinian uprising. Gilbar, an economic historian, identifies the sources of the uprising in the Palestinians' growing frustrations 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. With the decline in oil prices and production, Gilbar explains, has come a concomitant decrease in the need for workers in the oil producing Arab States. Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza are employed by the oil producing states in far smaller numbers than previously, with a resulting loss of income for the territory.

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.

Israel Trips *continued from page 4*

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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