



# The Lehigh Valley Center for Jewish Studies



SPRING 1989

## Newsletter

VOLUME IV, NO. 2

### Center Seminar Series Examines Fundamentalism and Modernity

This spring, the Center for Jewish Studies is sponsoring its first interdisciplinary seminar series, "Fundamentalism: Religion, Political Order, and the Crisis of Modernity." The seminar examines the fundamentalist phenomenon both within individual cultures and religious traditions and comparatively across cultural lines. The political dimension of fundamentalism will be the topic of a conference, "Fundamentalism as a Political Force in the Middle East," to be sponsored by the Center in May (see page 4).

The seminar opened with a lecture by University of Virginia sociologist James Davison Hunter, "Towards a General Theory of Fundamentalism." Fundamentalism develops, in Hunter's view, as a result of the confrontation between modernity and orthodoxy. Faced with "the modern world order, its rationality, its pluralism, its public private dualism, its secularity," traditional religion

has several options, one of which is to resist modernity. It is this posture of resistance, in contrast to the Amish withdrawal from society, for example, which characterizes fundamentalist groups.

What modernity represents for the fundamentalist is, in Hunter's understanding, "history gone awry." The task of fundamentalism becomes, therefore, the restoration of history to its proper path. To illustrate his point, Hunter discussed Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, and the paradigm for descriptions of fundamentalism, American Protestantism.

For certain nineteenth-century American Protestants, the favors bestowed by God on a right-believing society were threatened by evolution, ecumenism, and biblical criticism. Hunter explained the emergence of new Bible colleges, fundamentalist periodicals, and the establishment of the Christian's Fundamentalist Association in 1919, as well as con-

temporary opposition to abortion, as attempts to redirect the nation and its history and restore God's favor to the American enterprise.

Hunter described the Israeli religious Zionist movement Gush Emunim (Bloc of the Faithful) as representing fundamentalism in Judaism. However, Gush Emunim differs from other fundamentalist groups in its belief that "history *could* go wrong." To Gush Emunim, the establishment of the state of Israel and its success in claiming the land are in accord with God's plan for the Jewish people as Gush understands it. To give up territory "would counter-vene God's will and represent a step backward in the messianic process of redemption" which Zionism represents and must, therefore, be opposed.

The other characteristics of fundamentalism enumerated by Hunter relate directly or indirectly to the central concept of righting history. These include orthopraxy, the connection of religious ideology and religious nationalism, and scripturalism (literal interpretation of sacred scripture).

In the February seminar, "Theravada Buddhism: 'Fundamentalist Resurgence' in Thailand, Burma, and Sri Lanka," Swarthmore Religion professor Donald Swearer proposed to study Theravada Buddhism through the lens of fundamentalism both to illuminate religious and cultural developments in Southeast Asia and to examine the nature of fundamentalism and its usefulness as a "comparative, analytical tool."

Like Hunter, Swearer sees fundamentalism as a modern phenomenon. According to Swearer, fundamentalist movements in Southeast Asia developed to fill the ontological void created by the disintegration of the "traditional synthesis of religion and culture" under the pressure of colonialism and the introduction of Western culture and values. In their

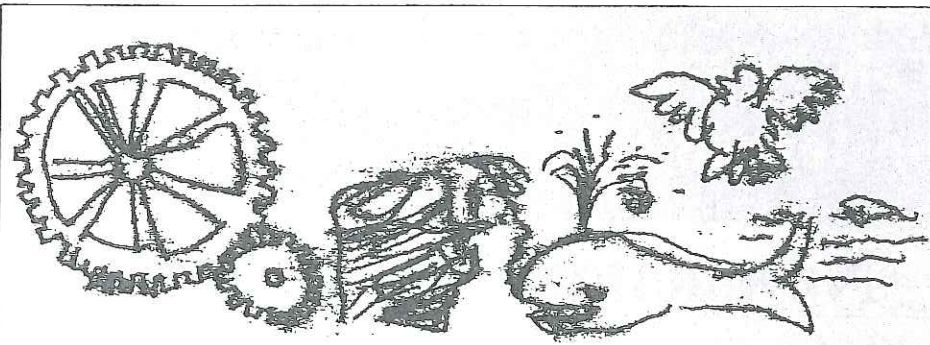


Joseph Ryan

James Hunter addresses fundamentalism seminar

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When the air, water, fellow creatures and beautiful world are protected for the benefit and enjoyment of all, and given priority over development for the sake of profit... Dayenu

When all people live freely in their own countries, practicing their beliefs and cultures without interference or persecution... Dayenu

When all women and men are allowed to make their own decisions on matters regarding their own bodies and their personal relationships without discrimination or legal consequences... Dayenu

When people of all ages, sexes, races, religions, cultures and nations respect and appreciate one another... Dayenu

*Dayenu from "A Haggadah of Liberation," The Shalom Seders, New Jewish Agenda.*

## Lawrence Hoffman Discusses Jewish Liturgy With Faculty and Students

In two seminars in November, Lawrence Hoffman, faculty member and former director of the School of Sacred Music of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in New York, introduced his ideas on the study of liturgy to Lehigh Valley faculty and students. Hoffman's presentations, "In Search of Sacred History: Using Prayer to Tell Us 'Who We Are,'" and "Looking for God on a College Campus," drew on ideas from his pioneering study *Beyond the Text. A Holistic Approach to Liturgy*.

According to Hoffman, for most of its history the study of Jewish liturgy was dominated by philologists intent on reconstructing a prayer's textual tradition. In contrast, insisting that "not everything in Judaism is literature," Hoffman draws on anthropology, sociology of religion, and phenomenology (among others) to study liturgy as a performance enacted by the worshipping community which offers valuable insights into the identity of that community.

As performance, liturgy is "acted out rituals involving prescribed texts, actions, timing, persons, and things, all coming together in a shared statement of communal identity by those who live with, through, and by them." Significant details about the Reform com-

munity, for example, can be garnered from the fact that the Friday night service appears first in the order of the prayerbook, that the prayerbook follows the English order and opens from left to right, and that the rabbi is sometimes referred to as minister. Details of the "choreography" of a worship service are equally revealing: how the congregation is seated in the sanctuary, when the congregation stands and sits, whether or not people kiss the Torah scroll.

Hoffman does not ignore the texts of individual prayers. Like the organization of the prayerbook and the choreography of worship services, prayer texts also yield significant knowledge about a community. For example, generations of Passover *haggadot* contain the "sacred myths" of Jews from widely different cultural and historical backgrounds. By "sacred myth," Hoffman means "[t]he subjective and selective perception of our background that we choose to remember and to enshrine as our official 'history'." This mythic history is recited liturgically...for its power to galvanize group identity." In his seminar, Hoffman examined medieval and modern formulations of the Passover prayer *Dayenu* to show what the variations in the prayer reveal about the identity of the Jewish communities who prayed them.

## Palestinian Uprising Is Topic of Rekhess Lectures

"The Palestinian Uprising (*Intifada*): Impact and Repercussions" was the subject of lectures delivered in October and December by Dr. Elie Rekhess, the Berman Visiting Scholar at the Lehigh Valley Center for Jewish Studies. Speaking to audiences at Lehigh University and the Jewish Community Center in Allentown, Rekhess discussed the *intifada*, which began in the West Bank and Gaza in December, 1987, from the varying perspectives of the Israelis, Palestinians, PLO, and Jordanians.

In his presentation, Rekhess distinguished between the responses of the Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza and those of the PLO. The uprising, according to Rekhess, has become a symbol of national reawakening for the Palestinians, restoring their pride and creating the nucleus of an independent local leadership.

Although the Palestinians see the uprising as a genuine expression of independence, some Israelis consider it to be a declaration of war. This disagreement notwithstanding, the uprising has negated the idea held by Israelis that the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza could continue indefinitely and that peace and security could be bought with territory.

Public opinion in Israel is sharply divided on the question of military versus political solutions to the uprising. Left-wing Israelis, including Arab Israelis, believe that a military solution is untenable, and favor negotiating with the Palestinians. Right-wing Israelis, on the other hand, see the situation as a basic conflict between Jews and Arabs over a single piece of land, a conflict which can only be resolved by having Israel control all the territory.

Like the Israelis, the Palestinians and the PLO, in Rekhess's opinion, have not reached a consensus regarding their future course of action. A major question for the Palestinians is how to transform their military success into political action. Rekhess noted that while no PLO option for the West

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Bank and Gaza has yet come into being, he believes that moderates within the organization may be prepared to negotiate with Israel. Diametrically opposed to this group is the more radical PLO wing which wants to consolidate the military success of the uprising by pursuing the establishment of a secular state over all the land of historical Palestine. Complicating the issue, Rekhess said, is the growing influence of Islamic fundamentalists, who, in opposition to the secularists within the PLO, want to establish an Islamic Palestinian state.

In assessing Jordan's position on the uprising, Rekhess discussed the reasons for King Hussein's July, 1988, decision to break all ties with the West Bank. According to Rekhess, the Jordanians feared that the uprising might become a threat to the East Bank, spreading riots into Jordanian territory. By withdrawing and leaving the West Bank to the PLO, the Jordanians hoped that the PLO would be unable to fulfill its role as the legitimate representative of the Palestinians, thus demonstrating that Jordan was indispensable to the West Bank. However, the fact that Hussein did not initiate any constitutional separation between East and West Banks, and that he met with Egyptian President Mubarek and PLO leader Yassir Arafat, suggests to Rekhess that the King's decision to break with the West Bank is not irreversible.

Rekhess is a Senior Research Associate at the Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies and a Lecturer in Tel Aviv University's Department of Middle Eastern and African History. He was director of Tel Aviv University's Shiloach Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies from 1977-81, a member of Ezer Weizman's Steering Committee on Arab Affairs in 1984-85, and counselor on Jewish-Arab relations and West Bank affairs at the New York office of the World Jewish Congress from 1981-83. He is a regular columnist and contributor to the Jerusalem Post.

In his scholarship, Rekhess focuses on Israel's Arab population, including the Muslim, Christian, and Druze communities, and on Palestinian society.

Among his publications are "The Politization of Israel's Arab" in A. Hareven, ed., *Every Sixth Israeli* (1983); "Jews and Arabs in the Israeli Communist Party" in M. Esman and I. Rabinovich, eds., *Ethnicity, Pluralism and the State in the Middle East* (1987); "The Strengthening Relationship Between the Arabs in Israel and in the West Bank"; and numerous contributions to *The Middle East Contemporary Survey on the West Bank and Gaza*. Rekhess has recently lectured at the School for Advanced International Studies, the Johns Hopkins University, and at the University of Michigan's Center for Near Eastern and North African Studies.



Elie Rekhess

Joseph Ryan

## Faculty Notes

**Laurence Silberstein** (Center director; Religion Studies, Lehigh)

Professor Silberstein's book, *Martin Buber's Social and Religious Thought: Alienation and the Quest for Meaning*, has just been published by New York University Press. His article, "Modes of Discourse in Modern Judaism: The Buber-Scholem Debate Reconsidered," appeared in the Winter, 1988, issue of *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal*. His recent public lectures include: "Martin Buber: A Prophet Without Honor Among His Own People," in Detroit, Michigan; and "Jewish Studies, Religious Studies, and the Crisis of the Humanities," which was delivered at a plenary session of the Regional Conference of the Mid-Atlantic Region of the American Academy of Religion, Moravian College, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

**Robert Cohn** (Religion, Lafayette College)

1988 saw the publication of Professor Cohn's *Harper Bible Commentary* volume on 1 Samuel, and the co-authored *Exploring the Hebrew Bible*, written with John Carmody and Denise Carmody. His essay, "Sainthood on the Periphery: The Case of Judaism," appeared in *Saints and Virtues*, John Stratton Hawley, ed. (U. of California Press, 1987) and was reprinted in *Sainthood: Its Manifestation in World Religions*, George Bond and Richard Kieck-

hefer, eds. (U. of California Press, 1988). In November, 1988, he presented a paper at the American Academy of Religion national meeting titled "Professing' Religion in the Classroom."

**Alice Eckardt** (Religion Studies, Lehigh University, Emerita)

Professor Eckardt revised and enlarged *Long Night's Journey Into Day*, by A. Roy and Alice Eckardt, adding considerable new material and two new appendices. Her article on "The Reformation and the Jews," will appear in the Summer, 1989, issue of *Shofar*. Professor Eckardt's paper, "Forgiveness and Repentance: Some Contemporary Considerations and Questions," will appear as part of the conference proceedings of the 1988 Oxford University international scholars conference on the Holocaust. She contributed articles to *Faith and Freedom: A Tribute to Franklin Littell*, Richard Libowitz, ed. (Pergamon, 1987) and *Jerusalem: City of the Ages* (University Press of America, 1987), which she also edited.

**Ruth Knafo Setton** (English, Lafayette College)

In December, 1988, Professor Knafo Setton presented "Anzia Yezierska: A Hunger Artist," at the annual meeting of the Association for Jewish Studies; the paper will be published in article

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## Conference on Fundamentalism in the Middle East Set for May

On May 7 and 8, the Center for Jewish Studies will sponsor its first national conference, "Fundamentalism as a Political Force in the Middle East." The conference, which will be held at Lehigh University, is the culmination of a seminar series on religious revivalism in modern society which explored fundamentalism cross-culturally and as a phenomenon in Buddhism, Judaism, and Protestantism (see page 1). The conference offers the opportunity to discuss the political impact of fundamentalism in the Middle East. Conference speakers will examine both the nature of fundamentalist groups in the Middle East and their impact on the political scene in the region.

Two sessions of the conference will be devoted to Jewish fundamentalism and two to fundamentalism in Islam. Speakers include Aaron Kirschenbaum, Caroline and Joseph S. Gruss Visiting Professor in Talmudic Civil Law, New York University School of Law (Department of Jewish Law, Tel Aviv University Faculty of Law); Ian Lustick, Professor, Department of Government, Dartmouth College; James Piscatori, Associate Professor, Middle Eastern Studies, School of Advanced International Studies, the Johns Hopkins University; and Elie Rekhess, Philip and Muriel Berman Visiting Scholar, Lehigh Valley Center for Jewish Studies (Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies; Department of Middle Eastern and African History, Tel Aviv University). The sessions will be introduced and moderated by Center director Laurence J. Silberstein and Muhlenberg Religion professor Alan Mittleman.

Interest in fundamentalism in the Middle East has grown with the increased influence of Islamic and Jewish fundamentalist groups in that region. In common with other groups worldwide, these movements are characterized in part by a strict adherence to religious practice, a literalist reading of sacred scripture, and an adversarial stance to certain features of modern life.

There is, however, disagreement over the applicability of a concept drawn from Western scholarship to the study of religion in the Middle East. Accordingly, some conference speakers will question the validity of applying the

term fundamentalist to Judaism and Islam. Others, accepting fundamentalism as a valid classification for particular groups, will discuss the origin and development of these movements, their salient characteristics, and the similarities and differences between Jewish and Islamic fundamentalist groups.

The conference will also examine the ways in which Jewish and Islamic fundamentalism, with their fusion of theology and politics, have influenced the evolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Topics to be discussed include: the 'Islamicization' of the Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza; the ways Islamic and Jewish fundamentalists view the "other"; and the relationships between Islamic fundamentalists, the PLO, and Christian Arabs and between Jewish fundamentalists, secular Jews, and left-wing Jewish political groups.

### **Seminar** *continued from page 1*

various ways, these movements seek to restore the lost sense of individual, communal, and national identity by advocating a return to an original condition of "unity, certainty, and purity."

Swearer discussed two movements within Thai Theravada Buddhism which exemplify the fundamentalist program. Although strikingly dissimilar in their principles and practices, Wat ("the Thai term for centers of monastic and lay religious practice") Dhammakaya and Wat Santi Asoka seek to provide an authentic Thai-Buddhist identity for their adherents.

Wat Dhammakaya, the most successful new religious movement in Thailand, has much in common with the national government policies of the 1960's and 1970's which "promoted Buddhism as a vehicle for national integration"; the movement has strong government support. As a movement, it shapes an identity for its followers around a simple moralistic message and a simple religious practice. The movement's message is conveyed through its charismatic leaders, its sophisticated use of the media, its influence in Buddhist Student Associations throughout the country, and, most of all, at its impressive Wat (see photograph). The Wat, the hub of a network of lay

centers associated with provincial monasteries, attracts thousands of people for the celebration of major Buddhist festivals. Its simple, opulent elegance sets it apart from the elaborate design of traditional Thai Buddhist temples.

In contrast to Wat Dhammakaya, Wat Santi Asoka, working outside the mainstream, is a radical sectarian movement indebted to Theravada Buddhism's "forest tradition." This communitarian and egalitarian movement preaches a strict moral code characterized by vegetarianism and rejects the "materialistic hedonism" of contemporary Thai life. People living in Santi Asoka centers must follow a demanding daily regimen of work and study. Santi Asoka is also more "radically critical" of Thai society than is Wat Dhammakaya. It opposes violence in the media and in sports, advocating instead a non-competitive, non-Western lifestyle.

The seminar will continue with a lecture by Gerald Blidstein, Visiting Pew Professor at Gratz College and Hubert Professor of Jewish Law at Israel's Ben-Gurion University, on the subject of "Jewish Fundamentalism: the Religious and Political Issues." The final presentation will be given by Susan Harding of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Michigan, currently at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, who will discuss "The Born-Again Tele-scandals."



*Wat Dhammakaya*



## Faculty Notes *continued from page 3*

form in the March, 1989, *Midstream*. Her story, "Pieds Noirs," appeared in the March, 1989, *Response*, and an essay, "JAP: The Lethal Stereotype," was published by the Allentown Jewish Federation newspaper, *HaKol*.

**Alan Mittleman** (Religion, Muhlenberg College)

Professor Mittleman's translation from the German of an essay by Richard Chaim Schneider, "Compelled to Defend Israel," appeared in the November-December, 1988, issue of *Present Tense*. His contribution to a symposium on the Williamsburg Charter, "Toward a Post-Separationist Public Philosophy," appeared in the Winter issue of *This World*. Mittleman served, with Susannah Heschel and Nechama Askenazi, as judge for the Joel H. Cavior Book Award of *Present Tense* magazine in the category of Jewish thought.

**Harriet Parmet** (Modern Foreign Languages, Lehigh University)

Professor Parmet presented a paper on Haviva Reik at the 1989 Scholars Conference on the Holocaust in Philadelphia, "Bearing Witness 1939-1989." With Lehigh University Social Relations professor Judith Lasker, she is preparing two articles for publication, "Feminism and Halakha: Agreement and Disagreement on Reproductive Technology," and "Religion and Views on Reproductive Technology: A Comparative Study of Jews, Catholics, and Protestants."

**Ilan Peleg** (Government and Law, Lafayette College)

Professor Peleg's co-edited volume (with Ofira Seliktar), *The Emergence of a Binational Israel: The Second Republic in the Making*, will be published by Westview Press this Spring. His recent publications include "A Different Type of War: Begin-Sharon's Invasion of Lebanon," in Michael Stohl and George Lopez, eds., *Terrible Beyond Endurance? The Foreign Policy of State Terrorism* (Greenwood, 1988); "Political Terrorism in the Middle East," in Michael Stohl, ed., *The Politics of Terrorism* (Michael Dekker, 1988);

"The Emergence of the Neo-Revisionist Mythos in Israel, 1967-1987," in the Summer, 1988, issue of *International Problems*; and "The Impact of the Six Day War on the Israeli Right: A Second Republic in the Making?," in *The Arab-Israeli Conflict: Two Decades of Changes*, Yehuda Lukacs and Abdalla Battah, eds. (Westview, 1988).

**Elie Rekhess** (Berman Visiting Scholar, Lehigh Valley Center for Jewish Studies)

See article on page 2.

**Robert Weiner** (History, Lafayette College)

In 1988, Professor Weiner presented "On Interviewing French Jews: The Case for Oral History," at the meeting of the Western Society for French History at UCLA (to be published in the meeting's proceedings) and "Jewish Identity in France Since 1945: An Overview," at the French Historical Studies meeting at the University of South Carolina. In March, 1989, he was Scholar-in-

Residence at Temple Beth-El in Allentown, Pennsylvania, where he spoke on "French Jewry Since the Revolution."

**Chava Weissler** (Religion Studies, Lehigh University)

Professor Weissler's article "'For Women and For Men Who Are Like Women': The Construction of Gender in Yiddish Devotional Literature," will appear in the *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*; her selection and translation of "Tkhines, Yiddish Supplicatory Prayers," will appear in *Piety, Persuasion, and Friendship: A Sourcebook of Modern Jewish Women's Spirituality*, Ellen Umansky and Diane Ashton, eds. (Beacon). "Women as High Priest: A Kabbalistic Prayer in Yiddish for Lighting Sabbath Candles," is forthcoming in *Jewish History*. Weissler was an invited respondent at a conference on "Jewish Mystical Leadership, 1220-1270," held at the Jewish Theological Seminary in February, 1989.

## 1988-89 Jewish Studies Courses

### Allentown College

Old Testament  
Prophets & Prophecy

### Lafayette College

American Jewish History  
Dynamics of Biblical Narrative  
Hebrew Bible/Old Testament  
Intermediate Hebrew  
Introduction to Judaism  
Islam in the Contemporary  
Middle East  
Politics of the Middle East

### Lehigh University

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

Middle East in World Affairs  
to 1945  
Elementary Modern Hebrew  
Medieval Philosophy

### Moravian College

Hebrew Bible/Old Testament  
Modern History of the Jews

### Muhlenberg College

Early History of the Jews  
Elementary Hebrew  
Hebrew Bible-Old Testament  
Hebrew Literature in Translation  
Holocaust and Its Impact  
Intermediate Hebrew  
Jewish & Christian Heritage  
Modern History of the Jews  
Topics in Modern Judaism

### LVAIC Consortium Seminar

Between Arab and Jew in  
the Middle East

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## SPRING SEMESTER PROGRAMS

### SEMINAR: "FUNDAMENTALISM: RELIGION, POLITICAL ORDER, AND THE CRISIS OF MODERNITY"

**James Davison Hunter**, Dept. of Sociology, University of Virginia  
"Towards a General Theory of Fundamentalism"

**Donald Swearer**, Dept. of Religion, Swarthmore College

"Theravada Buddhism: 'Fundamentalist Resurgence' in Thailand, Burma, and Sri Lanka"

**Gerald Blidstein**, Visiting Pew Professor, Gratz College; Hubert Professor of Jewish Law, Ben-Gurion University, Israel

"Jewish Fundamentalism: The Religious and Political Issues"

**Susan Harding**, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton; Dept. of Anthropology, University of Michigan

"The Born-Again Telescandals"

### LITTAUER LECTURE IN JEWISH STUDIES

**Arthur Hertzberg**, Professor, Department of Religion, Dartmouth College; Senior Research Associate, the Middle East Institute, Columbia University

"American Jews and Israel in the Second Year of the Palestinian *Intifada* (Uprising)." Cosponsored with the Lucius N. Littauer Foundation.

### FIFTH ANNUAL WALLENBERG TRIBUTE

**Richard Rubenstein**, Dept. of Religious Studies, Florida State University

"Living Ethically in a Post-Holocaust Age." Cosponsored with Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Jewish Federation of Allentown, and Muhlenberg College (including Hillel, Catholic Campus Ministry, Lutheran Student Movement and Muhlenberg Christian Fellowship).

### JEWISH STUDIES STUDENT SEMINAR

**Katharina von Kellenbach**, Visiting Instructor, Lehigh University

"Now After All These Years," screening and discussion of the German documentary.

### CONFERENCE: "FUNDAMENTALISM AS A POLITICAL FORCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST," May 7-8, 1989.

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