



Philip and Muriel Berman Center for Jewish Studies

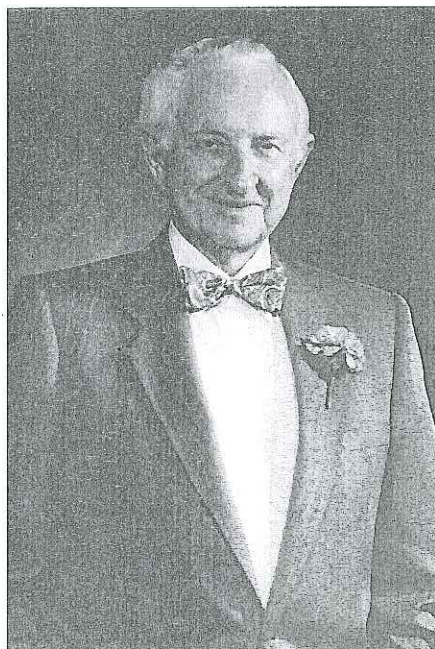


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Newsletter

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Philip I. Berman 1915-1997



Philip I. Berman

It is with deep sadness that we announce the death of Philip I. Berman on November 26, 1997. He and his wife, Muriel, established the Berman Center for Jewish Studies in 1984, and have remained its major benefactors. The following is excerpted from the eulogy delivered at his funeral by Laurence J. Silberstein.

Philip Berman was a true philanthropist, one who loved humanity. Phil demonstrated this throughout his life by doing whatever he could to increase the well being of other people. Phil was a man of great power, but not in the conventional sense of being able to exercise control over the actions of others. Phil's power, the power that he valued, was the ability to enable others to realize their own goals, their own dreams, the power to make it possible for others to do what they otherwise might not have been able to do. . . .

Throughout the world, there are literally thousands of people whose lives have been touched and enhanced by Phil's philanthropy. . . . People whose lives are different, for the better, as a result of having known him or having benefitted by what he did. . . .

- patients in hospitals stretching from the Lehigh Valley to Jerusalem; nurses who reside in the Berman Nurses' Residence at the Hadassah Medical Center in Israel; physicians and nurses who conduct research in the Berman Medical Library at the Hadassah Medical Center; nurses from the Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem who earn their masters and doctorates at the University of Pennsylvania through the Berman fellowship program and who return to Israel to assume leadership positions in nursing.

- scholars and students at the Berman Center for Biblical Archaeology at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem; students and faculty of the Berman Center for Jewish Studies at Lehigh University including two faculty members at Lehigh and one at Lafayette who occupy Berman Chairs in Jewish Studies; ten Israeli scholars who served as visiting Berman scholars at Lehigh University; Berman scholars at the Hebrew University; students and faculty at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, including priests and nuns, who benefitted from Jewish studies faculty provided by the Bermans; students and educators in the Former Soviet Union who have received hundreds of books on Jewish studies donated by the Bermans; residents of Pennsylvania who benefit from public television that Phil helped to establish in the state, and whose State Public Television Network Commission Phil chaired for twenty-five years.

- those who live in the city of Jerusalem and in the Lehigh Valley and enjoy

the works of art that grace their streets and plazas; visitors to the Berman Gallery at the Philadelphia Museum of Art; students and visitors to the Berman Museum of Art at Ursinus College, directed by the Berman Curator; administrators and curators; painters and sculptors; and students at fourteen Pennsylvania state universities that house art contributed by the Bermans.

Maimonides listed eight levels of *zedakah*, eight levels of acts of righteous giving. According to that scale of giving, Phil occupied the highest level. He and Muriel gave in order to make it possible for others to do for themselves. They gave in such a way so as to release the potential in others to achieve for themselves . . . to grow more independent.

While Phil's formal education only took him through a few years of college, those of us privileged to work closely with him considered him a great teacher who taught not only through words, but through deeds as well. Phil often said to me, "I am not a scholar and I am not in a position to evaluate scholarly matters. I have only one power, the power to give." And Phil exercised that power in the most imaginative, creative and judicious manner.

The way in which he and Muriel shared their wealth was a model for others. He and Muriel did not just give. . . . They planted seeds, and then watched to see what their seeds would yield. Phil often told me that he could have contributed chairs in Jewish studies to Harvard or Yale or the University of Pennsylvania, but that they already had extensive programs, whereas by establishing Jewish studies positions and a Center of Jewish Studies in the Lehigh Valley colleges and universities, he was helping to create something where nothing on that scale had previously existed.

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Philip Berman

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Phil and Muriel were unique among donors. They not only established academic and artistic centers, but they took personal delight in those who benefitted from them. Phil loved to meet and talk with students, whether at Lehigh University, Ursinus College, Hadassah Medical Center, Hebrew University or the Pontifical Gregorian University.

There was an extraordinary intelligence to his giving. He never undertook any enterprise, business or philanthropic, without first giving it careful attention and study. If, after listening to all sides and carefully considering the views of others, he decided on a course of action, he was not easily deterred. Moreover, he saw opportunities where others only saw problems.

To paraphrase a hasidic text: "One should not say: 'When will my works approach the works of my ancestors Abraham, Isaac and Jacob?': How could we ever venture to think that we could do what our ancestors did? Rather, just as our ancestors invented new ways of serving, each a new service according to his/her own character, . . . so each one of us in his/her own way should devise something new in the light of teaching and service, and do what has not yet been done. . . ."

Phil found his own way of teaching and service, and in the process, he did what others had not previously done. He never tried to imitate others. Instead, he always struck out on his own unique path. Independence of judgement was one of Phil's outstanding characteristics. This often made people who preferred to follow more conventional ways of doing things feel uncomfortable, even intimidated.

Phil also had a great sense of adventure. He saw life as a challenge, and never indulged himself by complaining or bemoaning the obstacles that he encountered. He took obstacles as challenges . . . as problems to be addressed rather than catastrophes to bemoan. When Phil's taste in art stimulated public controversy, he responded that he would rather see people argue about art than about sports.

Phil was a consummate pragmatist. He tended to judge others less for what

they thought, than for what they did and how they did it. Whenever they were not traveling, Phil and Muriel attended every program sponsored by the Berman Center for Jewish Studies. Rather than be concerned with whether the position held by the speaker coincided with his own, Phil was, instead, concerned with whether or not the speaker made sense. From our many conversations, it was clear that he evaluated political leaders and corporate executives in the same way.

While Phil never had the opportunity to complete his formal undergraduate education, he never ceased to learn. He was a lifelong student in the true sense of the word. On his own, he achieved a greater knowledge and appreciation for art than most people acquire through formal study. He also had an unlimited curiosity about people and about life. He was always learning and was willing to learn from anyone who had something to teach him. . . . And he used that knowledge to enhance the knowledge and appreciation of others.

For all that he achieved, Phil remained a man of the people. Never did he once forget his humble beginnings in Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania. He never expected people to respect him for who he was, but rather for what he did. It was extraordinary to watch Phil interact with people from all walks of life. His bearing, his manner, his tone of voice was no different whether he was talking to popes or presidents, sales personnel or secretaries. He talked to everyone the same way, the scholar and untutored, museum director and laborer. He was not impressed with status, only with deeds, and he lived his own life accordingly.

Phil was also an ecumenical person in the best sense of the word. He truly believed that all people were the same, regardless of their religion. While visiting Rome, he discovered a bust of the Pope that was being sculpted by a local artist. Phil commissioned two busts, donating one to the Vatican and the other to the parish of St. Thomas More in Allentown in honor of his longtime friend, Msgr. Robert Coll.

Phil's efforts to foster the teaching of Judaism also spread to Rome, where he and Muriel established a visiting position in Jewish studies at the Pontifical Gregorian University. As one of the beneficiaries of that ecumenism, I had the privilege of teaching in a Pontifical University because of Phil's ecumenical outreach and vision.

Phil was his own person, a man of his people, and a man of the world. The following words from the writings of Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook aptly sum up the multiple sources of his own being:

There is one who sings the song of his soul, discovering in his soul everything—utter spiritual fulfillment. . . . There is one who sings the song of his people. Emerging from the private circle of his soul— . . . he clings to the entire community of Israel in tender love . . . he sings her song, feels her anguish, delights in her hopes. . . . Then there is one whose soul expands until it extends beyond the border of the people Israel, singing the song of humanity. In the glory of the entire human race, in the glory of the human form, his spirit spreads, aspiring to the goal of humankind, envisioning its consummation. From this spring of life he draws all his deepest reflections, his searching, striving, and vision. Then there is one who expands even further until he unites with all of existence, with all creatures, with all worlds, singing a song with each of them. There is one who ascends with all these songs in unison—the song of the soul, the song of the nation, the song of humanity, the song of the cosmos—resounding together, blending in harmony, circulating the sap of life, the sound of holy joy.

We shall miss Phil's unbounded energy and youthful vigor. While we have lost the physical presence of Phil Berman, his spirit lives on in the actions that he performed during his extraordinary life. May his soul be bound up in the bonds of life.

—Laurence J. Silberstein



Rob Upton

Bent Melchior, Chief Rabbi of Denmark

Center Marks "Coming of Age" Chief Rabbi of Denmark Is Guest Speaker

Celebrating its thirteenth year of operation, the Berman Center for Jewish Studies marked its "coming of age" with a reception and dinner for more than one hundred friends and longtime supporters. Guests of honor at the event were **Bent Melchior**, Chief Rabbi of Denmark, and his wife, Lilian. Speaking to the dinner guests, Center director **Laurence Silberstein** welcomed the group to the Center's "Bar/Bat Mitzvah" celebration and briefly recounted the beginnings of Jewish studies at Lehigh University. He expressed his appreciation to those individuals who, recognizing the need for a center for Jewish studies in the Lehigh Valley, acted upon it. He also thanked the many members of the Jewish community who stepped forward to provide the initial funding.

In 1983, responding to a request from Lehigh's president, Peter Likins, and David Ellis, president of Lafayette College, Philip and Muriel Berman of Allentown established a chair for Jewish studies at Lehigh. The Bermans also provided the seed money for the Lehigh Valley Center for Jewish Studies, housed at Lehigh. In 1984 Silberstein was installed as the first Berman professor and as director of the newly created Lehigh Valley Center for Jewish Studies. In 1989 to honor the imaginative vision, educational commitment and generosity of the Bermans, the Center was renamed the Philip and Muriel Berman Center for Jewish Studies.

Within a few years, the Bermans endowed two additional chairs, held by Professors Chava Weissler at Lehigh and Robert Cohn at Lafayette. For the past ten years the Center's staff has also

included a Berman visiting professor from Israel. Together, these professors have offered more than 100 courses on campuses throughout the Lehigh Valley. In its first thirteen years, the Berman Center has also held four international academic conferences, published six volumes and sponsored more than 130 programs, lectures, seminars and cultural events.

Following Silberstein's comments, two Lehigh students described the impact that the Berman Center has had on their lives. **Heidi Wachs**, a junior journalism major with a minor in Jewish studies, said the Jewish studies classes she has taken with Professors Weissler and Silberstein have helped her to clarify her own identity. Wachs is the president of Lehigh's Jewish Student Center and was awarded the 1997 Levy Leadership Award of the Jewish Federation of the Lehigh Valley.

Fifth-year student, **Athena Shapiro** told the audience that she had come to Lehigh to study engineering. However, after a freshman seminar with Professor Silberstein entitled "Religion, Gender and Power," she was "hooked." She declared a double major in religion studies and engineering and is currently engaged in writing an honor's thesis comparing Jewish feminist and reconstructionist interpretations of the prayerbook.

Chief Rabbi of Denmark Recounts The Rescue of the Danish Jews

Following the dinner, **Bent Melchior**, Chief Rabbi of Denmark, spoke to 300 students, faculty and members of the local community on the rescue of the Danish

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Center to Host Conference on "Mapping Jewish Identities"

On May 17-19, 1998, the Berman Center will host its fifth conference at Lehigh University. Seventeen American and Israeli scholars from a variety of disciplines will take part in the three-day program. The conference will focus on the ways in which theories drawn from such fields as cultural studies, gender studies and postcolonial studies problematize and/or shed light on the processes through which Jewish identities are constructed. Among the questions to be addressed are: What are the processes of identification by means of which contemporary Jews construct their identities? How do contemporary Jews position themselves within and/or how are they positioned by the narratives of the past? What are the discourses, apparatuses and representational practices by means of which Jews construct their identities? How are power and power relations implicated in these? What are the practices of inclusion/exclusion involved in these processes of identity construction? In what ways is difference inscribed in them?

Conference speakers are **Ammiel Alcalay**, Queens College; **Daniel Boyarin**, UC Berkeley; **Gerald Cromer**, Bar-Ilan Univ.; **Geoffrey Eley**, Univ. of Michigan; **Tresa Grauer**, Hebrew Univ. of Jerusalem; **Hannan Hever**, Tel Aviv Univ.; **Laura Levitt**, Temple Univ.; **Regina Morantz-Sanchez**, Univ. of Michigan; **Anita Norich**, Univ. of Michigan; **Adi Ophir**, Tel Aviv Univ.; **Ann Pellegrini**, Harvard Univ.; **Miriam Peskowitz**, Univ. of Florida; **Marilyn Reizbaum**, Bowdoin College; **Susan Shapiro**, Columbia Univ.; **Deborah Starr**, Univ. of Michigan; and from Lehigh Univ., **Gordon Bearn**, **Michelle Friedman** and **Laurence Silberstein**.

Titles include: "I heard these guys chanting and beating drums. I couldn't tell if they were Yemenites or Algonquins" (Alcalay); "Life Drawing and Aesthetics of Existence" (Bearn); "Against Syncretism: Rabbi Eliezer and the Invention of Christianity" (Boyarin); "Terrorist Tales:

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Ellen Frankel Discusses Women's Voices in the Bible



Ellen Frankel

In a program cosponsored with the Women's Studies Program at Lehigh, Dr. **Ellen Frankel**, author and Editor-in-Chief of the Jewish Publication Society, lectured on "Women's Voices in the Bible." Reading from her new volume, *The Five Books of Miriam*, a commentary on the weekly Torah portions narrated in the many voices of biblical and modern Jewish women, she stressed the unique characteristics involved in reading the Bible as a woman.

To Frankel, biblical commentary, a 2,000-year-old tradition of Jewish learning, clearly shows that the Bible is not to be taken literally. She described Jewish commentary as an "archaeological exploration" with one generation commenting on the commentaries of the preceding one, and with all these conversations and

voices connected to the Torah. Following this tradition, Frankel created eighteen allegorical voices in her book to emphasize the diversity of women's voices. While each voice has a particular attribute, they are all pieces of herself as well. As examples of her approach, she explained that *Dinah, the Wounded One*, raped and voiceless in the Torah, speaks for women who are victims. *Esther, the Hidden One*, presents the mystical voice. Rachel, who longs for children, becomes *Mother Rachel* in Frankel's commentary.

Frankel believes that midrash is the most popular approach to reading the Bible among Jewish feminists. The text is read in the same way in which the rabbis read when they interpreted a text—by asking questions such as, What does the story mean? What kind of moral does the story have? What other kinds of stories can I find here? The reader tries to see herself in the story and understand her own sympathies toward the characters. "Midrash is an amazingly fertile method of approaching a text because you create stories when you read between the lines," Frankel said.

While writing her book, Frankel read between the lines of the Torah and tried to imagine other stories. In reading about

Sarah, she was led to ask, What was Sarah's life like? What kind of woman would leave her family, her culture and her religion? In Frankel's commentary, she provides the following answer:

Sarah, the Ancient One, answers: Understanding why we left home is vital to understanding who we are. . . . Abraham and I were brother and sister. We shared the same father, but not the same mother. . . . One night I had the most frightening dream. The tyrant Nimrod appeared to me and foretold the death of my beloved Abraham and his entire family. The goddess blessed my dream. My mother then urged me to flee Ur and take with me Abraham, Terah, and those of my family who wished to join me.

Frankel based her interpretation on the tradition that claims that Sarah and Abraham were siblings. "That is the way that midrash happens," she explained. "You hang a story on a few lines, a few comments, a few praises."

Frankel received her Ph.D. in Comparative Literature at Princeton University. She has taught writing and literature for many years at the college and high-school levels. She has published five books and frequently contributes stories, essays and reviews to *Shofar*, *Moment*, *Judaism* and *Sh'ma*.

Israeli Professor Analyzes Media Coverage of Rabin Assassination

In a lecture entitled "The Israeli Response to the Assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, Dr. **Gerald Cromer**, Professor of Criminology at Bar-Ilan University, argued that Israel's media coverage of the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin evolved into a bitter debate that deepened the divisions in Israeli society. While the Israeli media coverage of Rabin focused on his biography and portrayed him as an almost godlike figure, the coverage of the assassin, Yigal Amir, concerned not the man himself, but his reasons for killing Rabin. The emphasis of the entire media debate that followed, Cromer contends, was "Netanyahu and the rabbis" and what led to the assassination and who was to blame.

To those on the political left, the assassination was the natural conclusion of past events, the so-called "slippery slope"

argument. These events included the shift from verbal to physical violence, and the steady escalation of that violence. The verbal violence climaxed in a debate among certain religious leaders concerning whether Jewish law permitted killing Rabin and other leaders who were endangering Jewish lives. The physical violence, which began with vigilante attacks on Arabs in the territories, culminated in the massacre carried out by Baruch Goldstein in Hebron. Another argument in the media attributed responsibility for the assassination to the ideology of a Greater Israel and the unwillingness to give up territory to gain peace. This argument, observed Cromer, was an attack on Netanyahu and the leaders of the nationalist camp.

In their counterattack, those on the right argued that the assassination was not caused by the behavior of the nationalist

right wing as a whole, but only that of extremists. Attempting to project responsibility for the assassination on others, the right went as far as to claim that Rabin was responsible for his own assassination. Criminologists refer to this as victim-precipitated crime. By delegitimizing the right wing, Rabin precipitated the verbal violence, as well as the responses to it.

Cromer finds parallels between the responses to the Rabin assassination and responses to the Hebron Massacre and the killing several years ago of Peace Now activist Emil Greenzweig. He also finds "rhetorical symmetry in the way the left attacks the right and the right attacks the left." For example, when Udi Adiv, a member of a left-wing Hashomer Hatzair kibbutz was found guilty of passing information to the Syrians, it was the right wing and the religious who used the "slippery

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Center Hosts Seminar on Israeli Mediterranean Music

The Center held an entertaining, educational seminar on Israeli Mediterranean music featuring **Avihu Medina**, one of Israel's leading singers and songwriters. The program was cosponsored by Lehigh's Department of Music, the Israeli Culture Club and the Consulate of Israel. **Dr. Amy Horowitz**, Curator of the Center for Folklife Programs and Cultural Studies at the Smithsonian Institution, introduced the program with a lecture on "Israeli Ethnicity and the Impact of Israeli Mediterranean Music."

To illustrate the diverse ethnic influences in Israeli Mediterranean music, Medina sang traditional and contemporary selections from various Israeli ethnic communities. He also sang and discussed several of his own songs including "Father," "What Will Be," "Praises to Jerusalem" and "The Flower in My Garden." **Rubi Reuveni** accompanied him on the keyboard.

Contextualizing Medina's music, Horowitz explained how Jews immigrating to Israel from Islamic countries in the late forties and early fifties were excluded from the official European-influenced state culture. Musically, the new immigrants from the Middle Eastern countries (*Mizrahim*) were exposed to the official, dominant Israeli sound—Songs of the Land of Israel (*Shirei Eretz Yisrael*)—which often featured Russian or East European melodies. Hebrew words were added idealizing the worker, the land and the Zionist mission. Middle Eastern or Palestinian motifs were also included.

In trying to make sense out of the new social, political and cultural world in which they lived, the young *Mizrahim* created music that joined their old traditions and Arabic roots with the new Israeli national folk songs. This music also included a Greek sound, mediating between East and West. To the Israeli European establishment, the new sound conflicted with its efforts to create a clear Israeli national identity. The Ashkenazi-controlled National Radio, the recording industry and state television all rejected the music, relegating the Arabic and Mediterranean sounds to what Horowitz described as broadcast ghettos.

In the seventies, young *Mizrahi* Jews rebelled against their exclusion from the cultural mainstream. With the invention of

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Director of Moscow Center Reports on Jewish Studies in the Former Soviet Union

Speaking to Berman Center faculty and friends, **Dr. Victoria Motchalova**, Director of the Moscow Center for University Teaching of Jewish Civilization (*Sefer*), described the dramatic changes that have occurred in the academic study of Judaism in the Former Soviet Union during the last few years. Jewish studies, once a proscribed subject, now generates enormous interest and enthusiasm throughout the FSU, Motchalova reported. She speculated that this amazing surge of interest in Judaism is the result on the part of Jews to discover the roots of their identity. Besides serving as director of the Moscow Center, Motchalova is a senior research associate at the Institute for Slavic and Balkanic Studies at the Russian Academy of Sciences and a faculty member of the State Jewish Academy and the Jewish University of Moscow.

According to Motchalova, the academic study of Judaism has become the impetus behind the rebirth of Jewishness among Jews in the FSU. Jewish studies courses are now taught in fifty-four universities, and Jewish universities have been established in St. Petersburg, Moscow and Kiev. In addition, Jewish studies courses and seminars are offered in state universities and in the so-called Jewish people's universities. Notwithstanding this extraordinary success, these programs confront problems such as the lack of scholarly books and textbooks and a feeling of isolation from the wider academic world of Jewish studies.

The Moscow Center, which seeks to advance and develop Jewish higher education in the FSU, is working hard to overcome these problems and to eliminate disparities in the levels of Jewish studies teaching. "We are aware we have a long road ahead of us," Motchalova said. "Our task is to create Jewish scholarship and a Jewish scholarly community."

Sefer was established in 1994 in cooperation with the International Center for the University Teaching of Jewish Civilization in Jerusalem, Israel, and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. Motchalova spoke with pride about its many achievements. The wide range of projects conducted by *Sefer* includes regional and national academic conferences, training courses for university teachers, developing curricula and retraining scholars. *Sefer* is also recognized as a part of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

In 1996 *Sefer* published in English and Russian a directory of *Researchers of the History and Culture of East European Jewry*. It has organized four annual Jewish studies conferences. The most recent one, in February 1997, was attended by approximately 300 academicians, students and guests (see below). In July 1997, *Sefer* held its second student conference, attended by 150 students. The students presenting what were judged as the twelve best papers were sent to study at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Several of *Sefer's* students are currently engaged in postgraduate work in Jewish studies in Israel, England and the United States.

Berman Professor Attends *Sefer* Conference in Moscow

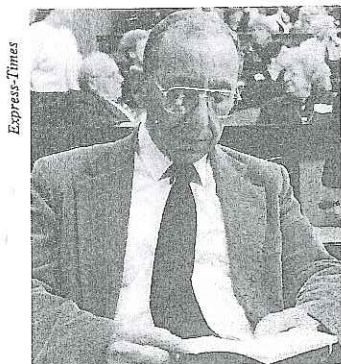
Robert L. Cohn, Philip and Muriel Berman Professor of Jewish Studies at Lafayette College, presented a plenary paper entitled "Deuteronomy and the Construction of Israelite Identity" at the fourth annual conference of *Sefer*, the Moscow Center for the Teaching of Jewish Civilization. The conference brought together professors and students of Jewish studies from all over the Former Soviet Union for a three-day program of seminars and workshops. Organized by Professors Victoria Motchalova and Rashi Kaplanov, it was funded by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

Several foreign academicians and representatives of Jewish organizations attended the conference and made presentations. Cohn commented that his participation at the *Sefer* conference was personally and professionally rewarding. "Those who attended the conference just seemed interested in contact with each other and with the West after working in secret or in geographical isolation for so long," he said. "It was both humbling and inspiring to encounter this emerging world of Jewish studies in a place where it was thought to have died."

Cohn was named a founding member of *Sefer's* International Academic Advisory Board. The Board will help organize the annual *Sefer* conference and provide academic opportunities for Jewish studies students and resources for Jewish studies faculty.

Holocaust and Human Memory Addressed in Lecture by Shlomo Breznitz

There are many different truths, all quite plausible, and often very tempting. And then there is time, which plays tricks of its own. The fields of memory are like a rich archaeological site, with layer upon layer of artifacts from different periods, which, through some geological upheaval, got mixed up. —S. Breznitz, *Memory Fields*



Shlomo Breznitz

Dr. **Shlomo Breznitz**, Professor of Psychology at the University of Haifa, discussed psychological mechanisms that characterize human memory and their effects on the memory of the Holocaust. His lecture, "The Holocaust Experience at the Mercy of Human Memory," was cosponsored by the Lucius N. Littauer Foundation.

According to Breznitz, while the brain has a tremendous capacity to store information, it is very selective in the way the information is presented into awareness. Several psychological processes can alter the memory of a major event. In *leveling*, the event is reduced by time until it eventually becomes more in line with other experiences. At the same time, new information stored in memory becomes more prominent than the old. Our memory of more recent mass tragedies is fresher than our memory of the Holocaust. In *sharpening*, a few images gain the potency of symbols and come to represent the entire event. Thus, when asked what comes to mind when they remember the Holocaust, most people tend to remember similar things. Another process, *assimilation*, occurs when a particular memory is integrated with the rest of one's memories and is "put into perspective."

Breznitz, a Holocaust survivor, is deeply concerned over the possibility that the Holocaust experience could ever become just another experience. Yet, he suggests, this may be the only way the memory of the Holocaust can survive—not protected by walls of emotional distance but intermingled with mundane experiences. While no one who visits the

U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington comes away untouched by the experience, upon leaving a visitor very quickly returns to the everyday world.

Breznitz believes that one way of preserving the memory of the Holocaust is to preserve the purity of the language used to discuss it. Giving the example of an announcer describing a soccer match as a "holocaust," he insists that such a usage distorts what he considers to be its true meaning. "Language is a powerful force in either diminishing or protecting an important memory," he said, "and this is one thing on which we cannot compromise."

Breznitz urged Holocaust survivors to record their personal stories before it is too late. Soon, he said, our memories of the Holocaust will depend on how well we have gathered and preserved the information. Sheltered in a Catholic orphanage in Czechoslovakia during World War II, Breznitz preserved his own memories of the Holocaust in a book entitled *Memory Fields*.

Berman Visiting Scholar Discusses Xenophobia in Israel

In a lecture entitled "When a Minority Becomes a Majority: Fear of the Other in Israeli Society," Dr. **Devora Carmil** presented the findings of her two-year study of xenophobia (fear of the "other" or stranger) in Israel and Germany. A senior research fellow with the Center for Psychological Stress at the University of Haifa, Carmil served as the 1996-97 Philip and Muriel Berman Visiting Scholar.

Carmil explained that, from psychological and sociobiological perspectives, xenophobia is rooted in the need for safety. Creating borders between ourselves and others in order to feel safe, we create the "other." The criteria used to draw these lines include appearance, color, language, culture and religion. While this primary fear of the other is

defensive, it can become destructive if fear evolves into hate and violence.

"The Jews have a long history of being a persecuted minority," she said. "I always wondered if that made Israeli Jews a more tolerant majority in their own country." To her surprise, her research indicated that Israel is not more tolerant than any other society.

Carmil collected her data from a representative sample of 800 Israeli and 2000 German youths. In Israel, participants were asked questions concerning xenophobic and related attitudes toward immigrants in general, and then toward specific "others": Israeli Arabs, Russian immigrants and Ethiopians. A comparison of the statistics showed that the level of fear and hostility toward immigrants is significantly higher in Israel.

In Israel, Russian immigrants are perceived as being an economic threat and exhibiting arrogant behavior, while the Ethiopians are disliked just because they are different. Interestingly, the xenophobic attitudes expressed by Israel's Russian immigrants toward Ethiopian immigrants are stronger than those expressed by the "old Israelis." The fact that Russian Jews were a persecuted minority before coming to Israel has not made them more tolerant of those who are different, Carmil stated.

Three social factors were found to have an impact on xenophobic and ethnocentric attitudes: political affiliation, religion and ethnicity. Israeli youths who identified themselves as affiliated with the right are more xenophobic, ethnocentric and gender biased, and more willing to participate in violence than those on the left. Those Israeli young people who identified themselves as religious exhibited more ethnocentricity and gender bias than those who say they are not. Israelis of African or Asian origin are more ethnocentric, gender biased and ready to use violence than Israelis of European origin.

Carmil, who has studied the social and psychological effects of the Holocaust, was particularly interested in the effect of the Holocaust on xenophobic attitudes. Her study revealed that third-generation Holocaust survivors are less xenophobic and ethnocentric than the population as a whole. "Apparently," she said, "suffering a trauma like the Holocaust makes one realize the danger of hate."

While at Lehigh, Carmil taught courses on xenophobia and on the social and psychological consequences of extreme stress. Both courses used Israeli society as the primary example.

Israeli Mediterranean Music

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the portable cassette recorder, disenfranchised musicians around the world could record their own music. As a result, cassettes of Israeli Mediterranean music began to be sold in marketplaces in Tel Aviv and other cities. Eventually the music gained a hearing on the radio. Today Israeli Mediterranean music is popular in Arab countries as well, and the successful Mizrahi music industry exerts an increasing influence on mainstream Israeli popular music.

Horowitz's ethnographic fieldwork on Israeli Mediterranean music formed the basis of her doctoral dissertation. She discussed her work in a recent article, "Performance of Disputed Territory: Israeli Mediterranean Music," in *Musical Performance*. At the Smithsonian, she has had responsibility for its Jerusalem Program, a two-year folklore research project involving Israeli and Palestinian researchers. In her work at the Smithsonian, she said, "Medina was a teacher for me in the process of understanding this culture, this tradition and Israel."

Israeli Professor

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slope" argument, claiming that Adiv's treason was the result of the defeatist Zionism of the left wing.

Social theorists argue that one positive function of deviance is that it sharpens the borders separating what is allowable and what is not. In its negative response to the deviant, a society defines acceptable behavior. Research suggests several ways to delegitimize political deviance, but the common thread is that the deviant himself is delegitimized. In the Kennedy assassination, for instance, the media coverage concerned Oswald, the deviant, and did not ask who was politically responsible. In the Rabin assassination, the media debate focused not on Amir, but on the question of which camp was politically and morally responsible. Cromer contends that in a fragmented society such as Israel's, political deviance sharpens the borders between subgroups and not the border between society as a whole and the deviant.

Cromer, who earned his Ph.D. in Sociology at the University of Nottingham in England, specializes in the sociology of political extremism and terrorism. He recently completed a volume entitled *The Contaminated Camp: Delegitimizing Political Deviance in Israel*.

\$ 2 Million Campaign Reaches Mid-Point

The Philip and Muriel Berman Center for Jewish Studies recognizes with gratitude the individuals listed here. Through annual and endowment gifts, these generous contributors have greatly enhanced the academic, cultural and programmatic offerings of the Berman Center, Lehigh University and the community at large.

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Muriel & Philip I.* Berman '91H/'69H
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Karen & Paul Levy '69
Susan & Richard C. Master
Eugene Mercy, Jr. '59
Ronald J. Ulrich '66

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Faculty Notes

ROBERT L. COHN coauthored an article "Cultural Reparations: Jews and Jewish Studies in Germany Today" in *German Politics and Society*. His article "Narrative Structure and Canonical Perspective in Genesis" was reprinted in *The Pentateuch*, a collection of the most significant articles on the Pentateuch in *The Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*. He presented an invited paper entitled "Deuteronomy and the Construction of Israelite Identity" at the fourth annual conference of Sefer, the Moscow Center for the Teaching of Jewish Civilization (see article on page 5).

ILAN PELEG was a Research Fellow at the Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania last year. His most recent book, *Human Rights in the West Bank and Gaza: Legacy and Politics*, received the Choice Award for Outstanding Scholarly Book for 1996.

RUTH KNAFO SETTON read from her novel, *Suleika*, and joined a panel discussion on "Jewish Women Writers and the Immigration Experience" at the Jewish Museum in New York. Her fiction appears in the anthology *Sephardic-American Voices: 200 Years of a Literary Legacy* and in *International Quarterly, Response and Bridges*. She has been chosen to teach on a "Semester at Sea" voyage. Her courses will be Jews of Islamic Lands, Women's Literature of Asia and the Middle East, and Journal and Travel Writing.

LAURENCE J. SILBERSTEIN lectured at the University of Michigan on "Anton Shammas: Uncovering the Fault Lines of Israeli Culture and Identity." The lecture was drawn from a chapter in his forthcoming book, *The Postzionism Debate: Power and Knowledge in Israeli Culture*. He has also been appointed to the Editorial Committee of the Jewish Publication Society.

ROSLYN WEISS addressed the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion Academic Convocation last year on "From Freedom to Formalism: Maimonides on Prayer."

CHAVA WEISSLER coordinated the section on folklore and anthropology for Association for Jewish Studies annual meeting. Her articles "Thinnus" and "Women's Prayers" appeared in the *Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion*.

Her essay "Contrasting Views of Women as Religious Subjects in the Tkhines of Leah Horowitz and Sarah bas Toyvim" was published in *Di Froyen: Women and Yiddish: Conference Proceedings*. She presented lectures on "Yiddishkeit with Yiddish: Folklore and Culture" at the University of Pennsylvania and "Yiddish Tkhines as a Model for Feminist Creativity" at the University of Maryland.

BENJAMIN G. WRIGHT III is co-editor of a new English translation of the Septuagint (the Jewish Bible in its Ancient Greek translation) for which he will translate *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*. He published "Talking with God and Losing His Head: Extra-Biblical Traditions about the Prophet Ezekiel," "Jewish Ritual Baths—Interpreting the Digs and the Texts: Some Problems in the Reconstruction of Second Temple Judaism" and "Putting the Puzzle Together: Some Suggestions Concerning the Social Location of the Wisdom of Ben Sira." He also presented papers at two symposia in Jerusalem on the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Berman Visiting Scholar Is Specialist in Linguistics

Dr. **Ron Kuzar** of the Department of English at Haifa University is serving as the 1997-98 Philip and Muriel Berman Visiting Scholar. A specialist in linguistics, Kuzar is teaching courses on Language, Gender and Power, and Language and Nation Building. In addition to teaching at Lehigh last semester, he taught at Moravian College. In the spring semester, his course will be offered at Lafayette College and Lehigh.

Kuzar received his Ph.D. in Linguistics from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He has taught at Haifa since 1993 and also lectures in the Department of Hebrew at Tel Aviv University. He is currently engaged in a research project concerning the debate over the Hebrew language in Israel in the 1950s in relation to the cultural and political issues of that period. He is also engaged in a study of Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, a major figure in the modern revival of Hebrew as a spoken language. His recent publications include

"Scientificity in Linguistic Practice: Structuralism" in *Semiotica* and "Linguistic and Political Attitudes to Israeli Hebrew: Ongoing Revival vs. Normalcy" in *Antwerp Papers in Linguistics*.

BCJS Faculty, 1997-98

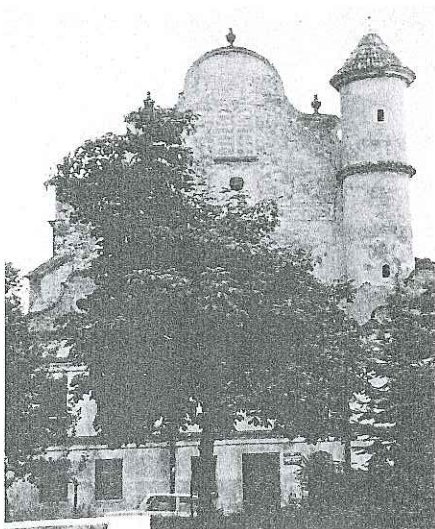
- **Laurence J. Silberstein**, Philip and Muriel Berman Professor of Jewish Studies, Dept. of Religion Studies, Lehigh University, *Jewish Responses to the Holocaust, Modes of Jewish Identity in the Modern World, Sex and Gender in Judaism: The Feminist Critique, Judaism in Israel and the United States*
- **Robert L. Cohn**, Philip and Muriel Berman Professor of Jewish Studies, Dept. of Religion, Lafayette College, *Hebrew Bible, Biblical Narrative, Jewish Response 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*
- **Ron Kuzar**, Philip and Muriel Berman Visiting Scholar (Haifa University), *Gender, Language and Power; Language and Nation Building*

Affiliated Faculty - Lehigh University

- **David Amidon, Jr.**, Urban Studies Program, *American Jewish Community*
- **Daniela Cohen**, Dept. of Modern Foreign Languages, *Hebrew Language*
- **Michelle Friedman**, Dept. of Religion Studies (adjunct), *The Holocaust*
- **Oles Smolansky**, Dept. of International Relations, *Middle East Studies*
- **Roslyn Weiss**, Dept. of Philosophy, *Jewish Philosophy*
- **Benjamin Wright III**, Dept. of Religion Studies, *Hebrew Bible, Judaism in the Greco-Roman World*

Affiliated Faculty - Lafayette College

- **Daniela Cohen**, 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*
- **Ruth Setton**, Dept. of English, *Jewish Literature*
- **Robert Weiner**, Dept. of History, *Modern Jewish History*



Synagogue in Lesko, Poland, now used as an art gallery

Chava Weissler Teaches in Poland

In the summer of 1996, **Chava Weissler**, Berman Professor of Jewish Civilization in Lehigh's Department of Religion Studies, taught a course on Yiddish Folklore and Ethnography in Cracow, Poland. The course was offered as part of New York University's "Summer in Cracow" program, which focused on the history and culture of the Jews in Poland and Eastern Europe. Students were from the United States, Great Britain, Germany, Austria, Argentina and Poland. Other faculty were drawn from Brandeis, Stanford and New York University with guest lectures by Polish Jewish activists, artists and performers, as well as visiting scholars.

Weissler's course was designed to orient the students to their surroundings in Poland, and acquaint them with the genres of Eastern European Jewish folklore they could witness even today. In the first unit, students were asked to analyze the ways in which different ethnic groups, including Poles, Gypsies and Jews were portrayed in folk sculpture. Other units focused on genres of folklore most relevant to the southern Polish landscape including hasidic tales and hasidic pilgrimages to holy sites. Material culture including synagogue architecture and cemetery art was also analyzed. Students examined the different meanings of the revival of klezmer music in Poland and the United States and heard a concert by

Leopold Kozlowski, a resident of Cracow, who comes from an old and distinguished family of klezmer musicians. The five-week program also included a week-long field trip to areas of historic Jewish settlement in Galicia (southeastern Poland).

In her Berman Center lecture entitled "On the Trail of Jewish Culture in Poland," Professor Weissler discussed her experiences and showed slides of her trip. She described how she and her students visited former synagogues—some in ruins and some beautifully restored, old Jewish cemeteries going back to the 17th century, museums and sites of former Jewish communities. In each case, a knowledgeable local guide, often a historian who had done graduate work in local Jewish history, showed the group the cultural monuments and lectured on Jewish history and culture. Sadly, Weissler commented, there remained very few Jews living in any of the towns visited. The group met only two elderly Jewish men. However, in Bobowa students met hasidim from the United States on pilgrimage to the tomb of the former Bobover Rebbe.

The trip gave Weissler, whose research concerns the religious lives of 18th-century Polish Jewish women, an opportunity to see where they had lived, and how. "Rural Poland seems little changed by the passage of time," she said. "Many farms still have horses rather than tractors. In such towns as Lesko, Bobowa and Rymanow I could see substantially the same landscape as that seen by hasidic rebbes and their pious wives."

Ilan Peleg Analyzes 1996 Israeli Elections

One hundred days after the election of Benjamin Netanyahu, Dr. **Ilan Peleg** discussed its ramifications for Israel's political culture and for the peace process. Peleg is the Charles A. Dana Professor of Social Science in the Department of Government and Law at Lafayette College, and is past president of the Association for Israel Studies. He is the author of more than forty articles and four books including *Human Rights in the West Bank and Gaza: Legacy and Politics*.

Since Netanyahu did not run on Likud's traditional platform of annexation of the West Bank and Gaza, Peleg does not see the Likud victory as an endorse-

ment of its ideology. Not only did Netanyahu run on a platform of peace, but despite his discomfort, he met with Yasser Arafat. In so doing, he in effect joined Labor in recognizing the Palestinian people as a nation and acknowledging that the PLO and Arafat are the only viable representatives among the Palestinians.

Labor's defeat in the elections is a mystery to many people, Peleg said. With the vast majority of its people in favor of territorial compromise with the Palestinians, Israel was in the midst of a historic peace process that should have assured Labor's victory. To explain the defeat, Peleg referred to several factors. First, Labor failed to clearly connect Rabin's death and the right-wing claim that the West Bank is sacred land. What this claim implies, argued Peleg, is that any Jew who wishes to surrender this territory deserves to die. "There is an inescapable logic to this, and it is the same kind of logic that drove Yigal Amir to kill Rabin," Peleg said. He speculated that Labor was reluctant to voice this issue and escalate what is known in Israel as verbal violence.

A second factor contributing to Labor's defeat was Peres's ineffectiveness as a vote-getter. Rabin, who was far more effective, would have won the election claimed Peleg. When he removed Labor's most effective leader from the scene, Amir changed history. To Peleg, Rabin was a "tough no-nonsense general and certainly not a peacenik." Yet Rabin understood that Israel could not beat the Palestinians by military means. If Israel continued to control the West Bank and Gaza, it would cease to be a Jewish state or a democratic state. On that basis, he concluded that Israel must negotiate with the Palestinians. The result was the Oslo agreement. Thus, in four years, Rabin changed the course of Israeli politics.

A third reason for Labor's defeat was the terrorist activities of the Hamas in early 1996. This had the effect of shifting Israeli public opinion in Netanyahu's favor. A fourth reason was the unprecedented support for Netanyahu by Israel's religious parties. Finally, Labor lost the support of Sephardic Jews and Russian immigrants. While he does not believe that the peace process is dead, Peleg is not sanguine about Netanyahu's ability to rescue it. His inexperience and his ideological commitments are clearly impediments to a successful continuation and conclusion of the process.

Rabbi Melchior

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Jews during World War II. Rabbi Melchior mesmerized the audience with his description of the heroic actions of the Danish people in 1943 that enabled 8,000 Danish Jews to escape from the Nazis to safety in Sweden. Denmark's Jewish community, he observed, was the only one in German-occupied territory to survive the war virtually intact. Rabbi Melchior described his story as one "about a little bit of light in the darkness of the Shoah." One of his reasons for telling the story was "so that we remember that humanity does exist." The lecture was made possible by funding from the Lucius N. Littauer Foundation.

When Melchior was fourteen years old, his father, rabbi of Copenhagen's Krystalgade Synagogue, received the first warning of the imminent arrest of Denmark's Jews. On the night of September 28, 1943, a woman arrived at the Melchior's home and warned that the Gestapo would arrest all the Jews on the coming Friday night. She asked the Melchior's to see to it that no Jews were home when Germans came.

Since it was past curfew, the Melchior's began to spread the word by telephone. Knowing that they could not talk openly, they called friends and neighbors and announced that they were going on a holiday, hoping that everyone would realize that something must be terribly wrong for the rabbi and his family to go away for Rosh Hashana. The Melchior's then urged their friends to go away as well because a trip to the country would do them good.

Rabbi Melchior's father was also able to make a public announcement at a service at the synagogue on the morning before Rosh Hashana, and told those present to spread the message to everyone. The word eventually reached non-Jewish citizens, who warned their Jewish friends, often adding "stay with us."

"Thus began an extraordinary happening," commented Rabbi Melchior. "There have been other places where gentiles have helped Jews and risked their lives for them. What was special about Denmark was that an entire people, with few exceptions, acted to see that the German action would fail. . . . You could turn to the doctor and the nurse, to the policeman and the taxi driver, to the farmer and the fisherman, to the shoemaker or just to the next-door neighbor, and you could be

sure to find a person ready to help you hide from the Gestapo."

Rabbi Melchior estimated that on the night of October 1, 1943, only 200 of the 8,000 Jews were arrested. The Danish citizens were infuriated by the Gestapo action. A letter from the Danish bishops was read in the churches strongly protesting the German action and stating that all true Christians were obligated to protect the Jews. Rabbi Melchior called this letter one of the most remarkable documents in Jewish history.

The Melchior family fled to a small village about 100 kilometers outside of Copenhagen where they were invited to be the guests of the Lutheran pastor. When word came that all Danish Jews would be welcome in Sweden, the Melchior family traveled south to a little town on the coast where they awaited transport in the home of the bishop. After dark, the Melchior's and about sixty other refugees were taken by fishing boat across the Baltic Sea to Sweden.

Why, asked Rabbi Melchior, did it go differently in Denmark than in other European countries? He believes that it was primarily the result of the open relationship between synagogue and church in Denmark and the mutual respect that existed there between Jews and Christians. When the Germans took action against Danish Jews, the Danish people responded by doing what was natural to them—they helped their neighbors.

During his career, Rabbi Melchior has been actively involved in social and human rights issues. For many years he lectured at Copenhagen University in Jewish literature. He has written a Danish version of early biblical history, a college textbook on Judaism, and many scholarly and popular articles on biblical theology, anti-Semitism, Danish Jewry and Israel. He has also translated the five books of Torah and the Passover Haggadah into Danish.

The BCJS Newsletter is published once a year and is made possible through a grant from the Philip and Muriel Berman Foundation. To obtain further information concerning the Berman Center and its programs or to be added to our mailing list, please write to Shirley Ratushny (sar0@lehigh.edu), Philip and Muriel Berman Center for Jewish Studies, Lehigh University, 9 West Packer Avenue, Bethlehem, PA 18015-3082.

BCJS Staff: Laurence Silberstein, Director; Shirley Ratushny, Administrative Associate; Carolyn Hudacek, Secretarial Assistant.

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Conference

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The Narrative Construction of Jewish Identity in Lehi Propaganda" (Cromer); "Memory, Film, and the Construction of the National Past" (Eley); "The Holocaust and American Jewish Identity (Friedman); "'The Changing Same': Narratives of Contemporary Jewish Identity" (Grauer); "From Hebrew to Israeli Literature: Postcolonial Reading of the Politics of National Allegory" (Hever); "Photographing American Jews: Picturing American Life" (Levitt); "Two Female Characters in Search of a Theory: Mapping Jewish Identity through Personal Narrative" (Morantz-Sanchez); "On the Yiddish Question" (Norich); "The Identity of the Victims and the Victims of Identity" (Ophir); "Melancholy Camp" (Pellegrini); "Passing/Moses' Wilderness Tabernacle" (Peskowitz); "Surviving on Cat and Maus: Art Spiegelman's Holocaust Tale" (Reizbaum); "Mapping, Not Tracing" (Silberstein); and "'Ana Ummik': Dissolution of the Self, the Mother, the Mother Tongue, and the Mother Land" (Starr).

To receive registration materials and a detailed conference schedule, please contact Shirley Ratushny at the Berman Center for Jewish Studies, Lehigh Univ., 9 W. Packer Ave., Bethlehem, PA 18015-3082—e-mail inber@lehigh.edu. Registration forms, conference schedule and information on accommodations and travel are available on our website at <http://www.lehigh.edu/~inber/inber.html>.

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