



Philip and Muriel Berman Center for Jewish Studies



Volume V, No. 1
Spring & Fall 1990

Newsletter

Lehigh University
Bethlehem, Pa.

Center Renamed to Honor Philip and Muriel Berman

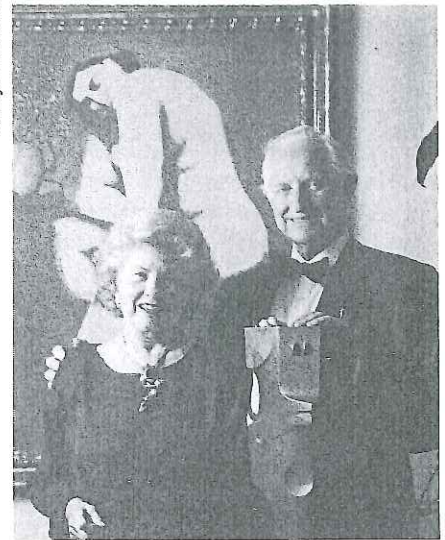
In tribute to the extraordinary generosity shown by Philip and Muriel Berman to the Lehigh Valley Center for Jewish Studies, the center has been renamed the Philip and Muriel Berman Center for Jewish Studies. Edward Uhl of Lehigh University's Board of Trustees noted that the name change recognizes the extraordinary contribution that Philip and Muriel Berman have made to the Jewish Studies program at Lehigh over the past six years.

Responding to the university's decision, Philip and Muriel Berman said, "To have our name attached to such a distinguished program is a welcome joy, and we are most grateful to the Board [of Trustees] for bestowing this honor upon us. In the past five years," they added, "we have seen the Center grow from a dream to a reality that has begun to embody our vision of a program of scope and depth previously possible only at much larger universities."

The renaming of the Center was formally announced at a luncheon in September, 1989, held at Lehigh. Speaking at the luncheon, Lehigh President Peter Likins said, "Lehigh and all of the schools of the Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges (LVAIC) have been enriched considerably through the many programs and scholars associated with the Center for Jewish Studies. Changing the name of the Center to honor the Bermans is just one way to say 'thank you'."

The luncheon was attended by noted Jewish Studies scholars from the United States and Israel, Lehigh alumni involved in fund-raising for the Center, members of the Lehigh Valley community, and academic administrators and faculty from the six LVAIC schools (Allentown College of St. Francis de Sales, Cedar Crest College, Lafayette College, Lehigh University, Moravian College, and Muhlenberg College).

Mary D'Amilia



Muriel and Philip Berman

Bermans Establish Two New Chairs in Jewish Studies

Presidents Peter Likins of Lehigh University and David Ellis of Lafayette College announced last spring that Philip and Muriel Berman have made provisions to establish two new academic chairs in Jewish Studies to be associated with the Berman Center, one at Lafayette College and one at Lehigh University.

The chair at Lehigh, known as the Philip and Muriel Berman Chair of Jewish Civilization, is held by Dr. Lenore Weissler, a tenured associate professor in the Department of Religion Studies. The chair at Lafayette is to be known as the Philip and Muriel Berman Chair of Jewish Studies. Dr. Robert L. Cohn, associate professor in the Department of Religion, will occupy the chair upon attaining the rank of professor. Dr. Cohn currently serves as Philip and Muriel Berman Scholar at Lafayette.

continued on page 7

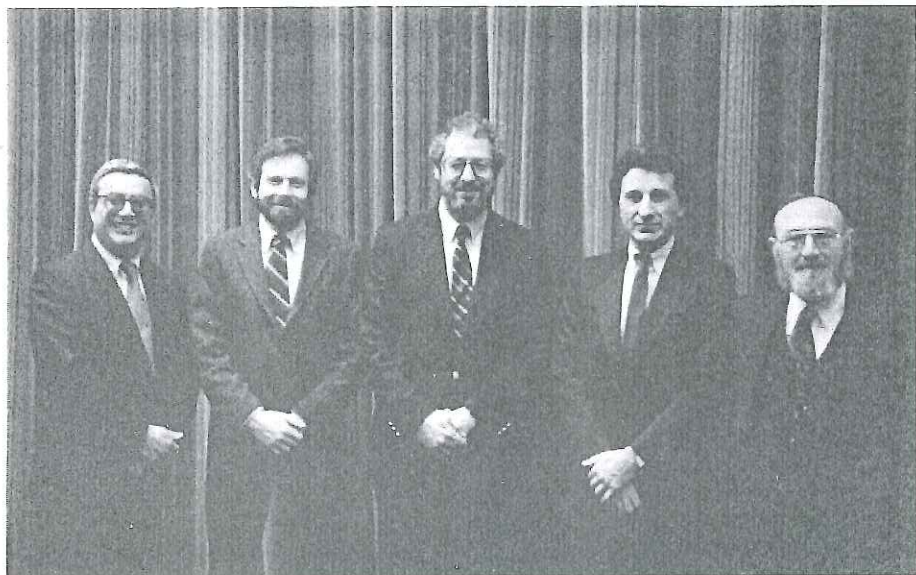
Center Signs Publication Agreement with NYU Press

A significant milestone in the history of the Berman Center for Jewish Studies was reached recently with the signing of a contract with New York University Press to publish a series on modern Jewish thought and history.

The first volume, to be published in 1991, will include papers from the Center's 1990 conference, "New Perspectives on Israeli History: The Early Years of the State" (see p. 4). The second volume, tentatively entitled *Fundamentalism: Religion, Political Order and the Crisis of Modernity*, will include papers from the Center's 1989 conference, "Religious Fundamentalism as a Political Force in the Middle

East" (see p. 2), as well as papers from the Center's faculty seminar series on fundamentalism held in 1988-1989. Another volume currently under consideration will include papers from a conference to be held at Tel Aviv University in 1991 that will be co-sponsored by the Berman Center. Other volumes will be based on future conferences held by the Center.

Dr. Laurence Silberstein, director of the Berman Center and Philip and Muriel Berman Professor of Jewish Studies at Lehigh University, will edit the first volumes and write the introductions. The volumes will appear simultaneously in hardcover and paperback.



Elie Rekhess, Ian Lustick, Laurence Silberstein, James Piscatori and Aaron Kirschenbaum

Fundamentalism and Middle East Politics Addressed in First Center Conference

In May, 1989, the Center for Jewish Studies sponsored a conference at Lehigh University on "Fundamentalism as a Political Force in the Middle East." Featured speakers included **Aaron Kirschenbaum**, Department of Jewish Law, Tel Aviv University, and Caroline and Joseph S. Gruss Visiting Professor in Talmudic Civil Law, New York University School of Law; **Ian Lustick**, Department of Government, Dartmouth College; **James Piscatori**, then of the School of Advanced International Studies, the Johns Hopkins University, and presently of the Department of International Politics, The University College of Wales; and **Elie Rekhess**, Philip and Muriel Berman Visiting Scholar, Berman Center for Jewish Studies, and senior research fellow at the Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Tel Aviv University.

Recognizing the conceptual problems in the term *fundamentalism*, participants sought to explicate the meaning of the term and to differentiate it from mainstream religious traditionalism. In addition, each speaker addressed the ways in which Jewish and Islamic religious movements, with their fusion of theology and politics, influenced the evolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Whereas three of the four speakers discussed the problems of applying a

concept like fundamentalism to a variety of cross-cultural phenomena and emphasized the word's emotionally charged overtones, Ian Lustick undertook to formulate a usable theoretical construct. In formulating his conception of fundamentalism, Lustick emphasized "political style" to the exclusion of religious praxis. "The defining characteristic of that style," he said, "is that political action, dedicated toward rapid and comprehensive transformation of society, is seen to express uncompromisable, cosmically ordained, and more or less directly received imperatives." The strength of this approach, he believes, is that it excludes many traditionally observant believers and fanatics who withdraw from society. Utilizing his definition, Lustick analyzed the impact of Gush Emunim, the "organizational core" of Israeli fundamentalism, on Israeli politics.

In his discussion, Aaron Kirschenbaum sought to identify ways of distinguishing the conventional understanding of fundamentalism from mainstream orthodox Judaism. In Kirschenbaum's view, the definitions offered by Elie Rekhess and James Piscatori for Islam, that of return to adherence to the faith, would apply likewise to the goals of the Catholic church, yet one does not speak of Catholic fundamentalism. Drawing on

the American Evangelical Protestant emphasis on the literal letter of the sacred text without regard either for its spirit or a living interpretive tradition, Kirschenbaum argued that such a textual literalism is "decidedly alien to the mainstream of historical, classical Judaism." Consequently, the concept of fundamentalism does not, in his view, provide a useful tool for analyzing the resurgence of orthodoxy within contemporary Judaism.

In his analysis of Islamic resurgence in several Arab countries, James Piscatori rejected Lustick's theoretical approach, arguing that "we should ground ourselves in the empirical data rather than trying to presuppose [that] there is a single framework which can apply even across the Islamic world, let alone between the Islamic world and the Jewish and Christian worlds." Insisting that there is little to distinguish a "fundamentalist" Islam from orthodox religion, he preferred to speak of Islamic "activism," which he described as "the self-conscious and heightened identification of Muslims with the principles that they consider essential to their faith and which manifests itself in social and political activities ranging from accommodation to the political order to violent opposition to it." Utilizing this concept, Piscatori examined its manifestation in the religious and political thought of a number of Arab countries and the consequential effects on the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Like Piscatori, Elie Rekhess was reluctant to single out or define a discernible fundamentalism within Islam. Instead, he focused his discussion on an analysis of the reasons for a resurgence of adherence to Islam among Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza. Acknowledging that "one of the most striking characteristics of the Palestinian uprising . . . is the rise of Islamic fundamentalist groups," Rekhess delineated the ideologies of these groups and discussed the source of their appeal as an alternative to such secular nationalist groups as the PLO. To Rekhess, the resurgence of Islam among Palestinians "may well mark the Islamicization of the Israeli-Arab conflict."

The conference was the culmination of the Center's semester-long project on fundamentalism in a global, interdisciplinary perspective, which analyzed the phenomenon of religious fundamentalism in the context of modern culture and society.

Itamar Rabinovich Speaks on Political Situation in Middle East

Professor Itamar Rabinovich, recently elected Rector of Tel Aviv University and a recognized international authority on the Middle East, delivered two lectures on the Lehigh campus in October, 1989. The first lecture, given at a luncheon announcing the renaming of the Center as the Philip and Muriel Berman Center for Jewish Studies, focused on the current political situation in Israel and the Middle East.

In his talk, Rabinovich isolated three factors that have influenced Israel in recent years and that may effect a new era for the state. These factors are the end of the Iran-Iraq war, the change in the Soviet Union's posture in the Middle East from intimidation to negotiation, and the outbreak of the Palestinian uprising.

The impact of the uprising, Rabinovich said, has been to force the Israeli government to recognize the needs of the population living in the West Bank, who are no longer content with their second-class citizen status. "It has transformed the Arab-Israeli equation," he said. "The government is going through the painful struggle of making concessions or staying with the status quo."

Looking to the future through the lens of the past, Rabinovich speculated that the resolution of the Palestinian question could take longer even than the ten-year period of negotiations that preceded the 1977 Israeli-Egyptian peace agreement. The history of mistrust between the Palestinians and Israelis goes back at least to the founding of the state, he said, referring to the ongoing dispute over the origins of the Palestinian refugee problem and the question of whether the Palestinians left the new state voluntarily or through coercion.

In his afternoon seminar presentation, Professor Rabinovich focused on the recent revisionist interpretations of Israeli history. These studies, the work of a new generation of Israeli scholars, born after 1948, included Benny Morris's *The Origins of the Arab Refugee Problem, 1947-1948* and Avi Shlaim's *Collusion Across the Jordan*. Utilizing previously sealed government archives, the younger scholars, whom Morris has labeled the "new historians," have challenged the official versions of Israeli history. In particular, they have raised fundamental questions regarding the prevailing interpretations of such controversial issues as the origins of the Palestinian refugee problem, the atti-

tudes of Ben Gurion and other leaders to the transfer of the indigenous Palestinian Arab population, and the respective roles of Israel and its Arab neighbors in the peace process following the 1947-48 war.

After summarizing the central issues of the debate and its significance for Israeli history and current policy, Rabinovich questioned some of the methods and conclusions of these works. While acknowledging the quality of scholarly inquiry informing the works of these younger historians, he took issue with the highly politicized orientation that characterizes some of their writing. He further argued that any analysis of the behavior and attitudes that prevailed in 1947-48 must be viewed within the context of the political and military realities of that time.

Rabinovich has an active career as both scholar and administrator. He has served as dean of Tel Aviv's Faculty of Humanities and as director of the university's Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies. He is the author of numerous studies of Middle Eastern politics. His books include *The War for Lebanon, 1970-1982* (1984) and, with Michael Fry, *Dispatches From Damascus* (1986).

Tel Miqne Archaeological Dig Subject of Gitin Lecture

In October, 1989, Dr. Seymour Gitin spoke at Lehigh on the archaeological excavations at Tel Miqne-Ekron in Israel. Dr. Gitin is currently the director of the W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research in Jerusalem, one of the American Schools of Oriental Research. Along with Professor Trude Dothan of the Institute of Archaeology at the Hebrew University, Dr. Gitin has been investigating the archaeological past at Miqne since the project began in 1980.

Having previously excavated at such sites as Gezer, Jebel Qa aqir, and Tel Dor, Gitin has published widely in scholarly journals. His interests lie in interregional connection between Philistia and Judah, urbanization, cult and industry, and olive oil production.

Tel Miqne, located ten miles inland

from Ashdod, is identified with biblical Ekron, one of the five capital cities of the Philistines, who at the close of the 13th century B.C.E. settled on the southern coastal plain of Palestine. Excavations to date have isolated four periods in the history of the site, starting with a multi-phase Canaanite settlement of the second millennium and ending with the 7th century B.C.E. when Ekron, at its economic zenith, was destroyed in 603 B.C.E. by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.

Dr. Gitin's lecture presented several important archaeological finds. Occupied by the Philistines in the 12th and 11th centuries B.C.E., the city produced a magnificent Philistine palace with a cult room and associated finds such as an intact iron knife with bronze rivets and an ivory handle, and

assemblages of twenty-one Egyptian Dynasty artifacts. A surprising industrial complex of unusual size, with over 100 olive presses, attests to the great agricultural strength of the city in its last 7th century B.C.E. phase. "This was totally unexpected," said Gitin.

Past participation at the Tel Miqne dig has seen volunteers and staff from Belgium, Canada, England, France, Israel, Mexico, and the United States. The Tel Miqne project is sponsored in part by the Berman Center for Jewish Studies through a grant from the Philip and Muriel Berman Foundation. During the past several years, students from the Lehigh Valley colleges have taken part in the excavations. Students interested in participating in future excavations should contact the Center for additional information.

International Conference on Modern Israeli History

Sponsored by Berman Center

An international conference on "New Perspectives on Israeli History: The Early Years of the State" brought together at Lehigh University major scholars from the United States, Israel, and Canada. Held in May, 1990, the conference was constructed against the background of a growing debate among scholars concerning the early years of the State of Israel. In the wake of the recent opening of previously closed archival sources, several works have been published challenging prevailing interpretations of such issues as the origin of the Arab refugee problem, Israel's readiness to enter into peace negotiations, and the respective military strength of Israel and the Arab nations. These works, written by those whom Benny Morris has labeled the "new historians," have elicited sharp criticism from many Israeli historians and have aroused considerable controversy in that country. By examining a number of the issues raised by these historians, the conference tried to foster an understanding of the problems and decisions faced by Israel in its transition to statehood.

Conference sessions were devoted to such topics as: "From Yishuv to State: Social, Ideological, and Diplomatic Developments"; "Background to Statehood"; "The New State and Foreign Relations"; "Civil Religion in the New

State"; "Emerging National Identity"; "Arabs, Palestinians, and the New State"; "The Origins of the Palestinian Refugee Problem"; and "Early State Policy Towards the Arab Population."

Speakers and their topics included: **Jehuda Reinharz**, Brandeis University, "The Transition from Yishuv to State: Social and Ideological Changes"; **Neil Caplan**, Vanier College, "Zionist-Arab Diplomacy: Patterns and Ambiguities on the Eve of Statehood"; **Uri Bialer**, The Hebrew University, "Israel's Global Foreign Policy, 1948-1956"; **Ronald Zweig**, Tel Aviv University, "Israeli-Diaspora Relations in the Early Years of the State"; **Myron Aronoff**, Rutgers University, "Myths, Symbols, and Rituals of the Emerging State"; **Anton Shammas**, University of Michigan, "Myths, Symbols, and Rituals of the Emerging State: The Perspective of an Israeli Arab"; **Dina Porat**, Tel Aviv University, "Attitudes Towards the Holocaust and Its Survivors: A Debate over Emerging Identity and Values"; **Yael Zerubavel**, University of Pennsylvania, "Tel Hai in Israeli Political Culture: Model for the Future, Myth of the Past"; **Benny Morris**, The Jerusalem Post and The Brookings Institution, "The Origins of the Arab Refugee Problem, 1947-1949"; **Avraham Sela**, The Hebrew Univer-

sity, "Arab Historiography of the 1948 War"; **Kenneth Stein**, Emory University, "100 Years of Social Change: The Palestinian Refugee Problem in the Making"; **Elie Rekhess**, Tel Aviv University and Philip and Muriel Berman Visiting Scholar, Lehigh University, "Initial Israeli Policy Guidelines Towards the Arab Minority (1948-1949)"; **Don Peretz**, State University of New York, Binghamton, "Early State Policy Towards the Arab Population." Laurence Silberstein, director of the Berman Center and chair of the conference, offered concluding reflections on the discussion.

The conference, attended by over 100 students, faculty, and members of the general public, was funded by grants from the Philip and Muriel Berman Foundation and the New York-based Belfer Foundation and was a joint undertaking by the Berman Center for Jewish Studies at Lehigh, Tel Aviv University's Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, and the Institute for Research in the History of Zionism at Tel Aviv University. The proceedings of the conference will be published by New York University Press this coming spring as the first in a series of Berman Center publications on modern Jewish history and thought.



Tim Gilman

Kenneth Stein addresses conference

Moshe Idel Addresses Issue of Messianism and Jewish Mysticism

In a lecture delivered at Lehigh in March, Moshe Idel, Associate Professor of Jewish Thought at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, challenged prevailing views in Jewish scholarship, particularly those of Gershom Scholem and his disciples, concerning the relationship of messianism and mysticism, the impact of historical events on the development of Kabbalah (Jewish mysticism), and the relationship of Kabbalah to popular religion.

For Scholem, whose views on messianism should be viewed against the background of his Zionism, historical events are essential to an understanding of Jewish mysticism, which frequently transformed communal historical experiences into mystical symbols. In Judaism, according to Scholem, the mystics frequently absorbed the experience of the nation and embodied it in mystical symbols. Thus, through Kabbalah, the Jewish historical experience found symbolic expression. In Scholem's view, this role of collective experience in Kabbalah distinguishes the Jewish mystical tradition from both Christian and Moslem mysticism, which emphasize the individual mystical experience.

Idel challenged Scholem's claims regarding the so-called messianic turn in Jewish mysticism following the expulsion from Spain in 1492. In Scholem's interpretation, this messianic turn, manifested primarily in Lurianic Kabbalah, prepared the ground for the popular kabbalistic movement of the 17th century, which culminated in the activist messianism of Shabbtai Zvi. This messianism also set the stage, in Scholem's view, for the 18th century movement of Jewish Enlightenment and the 19th century reformers in Germany.

Taking issue with Scholem, Idel questioned the claim relating messianic themes in Jewish mysticism with historical events in the life of the nation. According to Idel, while the messianic tradition was so basic that no mystic could afford to ignore it, there is no need to refer to historical events in order to interpret it.

In Idel's view, no crucial messianic development occurred in Jewish mysti-

cism as a result of the expulsion from Spain. Although, according to Idel, Jewish mystics were messianic, this is equally true of pre-expulsion kabbalists such as the 13th-century Abraham Abulafia. Idel identifies Abulafia's messianism as ecstatic mysticism. For the kabbalists, as for Maimonides, the messiah did not come to solve historical problems. The kabbalists shaped messianic ideas through their own personal doctrinal framework with no reference to historical events.

Idel also challenged Scholem's efforts to link Kabbalah and popular religious culture and to tie mystical interpretations to historical events. To Idel, the kabbalists were sophisticated, learned individuals with backgrounds in both philosophy and the mystical texts. The appropriate interpretive framework for understanding the writings of the kabbalists, according to Idel, is the textual/intellectual tradition from which they drew rather than historical events.

While messianic figures might use terminology that would be recognized by a popular audience, Idel contends that the meaning of those terms differs from their popular meaning. Idel cited examples of Shlomo Molcho and Abraham Abulafia as messianic mystics whose language should be explained by reference to their own personal mystical experience and intellectual backgrounds rather than to national or popular movements.

Idel, considered by many to be the leading contemporary interpreter of Jewish mysticism (Kabbalah), is a regular visiting professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary and at Yale University. He is the author of many seminal works in the field, including *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (Yale, 1988), *Studies in Ecstatic Kabbalah* (SUNY, 1988), *Language, Torah, and Hermeneutics in Abraham Abulafia* (SUNY, 1988), and *The Mystical Experience in Abraham Abulafia* (SUNY, 1987). His lecture was one in a series on "Rethinking the Jewish Past" sponsored by the Center during the 1989-90 academic year.

Greco-Roman Judaism, Gender and Cultural Theory Subject of Kraemer Lecture

"Gender and Cultural Theory in Greco-Roman Judaism" was the topic of a February 1990 lecture by Professor Ross Kraemer sponsored by the Berman Center in cooperation with Lehigh University's Women's Studies program. Drawing on the "grid/group" cultural theory of anthropologist Mary Douglas, Kraemer interpreted the divergent representations of Jewish women's lives which emerge from rabbinic literature, on the one hand, and from inscriptional and archaeological evidence from so-called diaspora communities, on the other.

Kraemer noted the difficulties involved both in obtaining accurate information about Jewish women's lives in the Greco-Roman period (specifically from the 1st to 4th centuries C.E.) and in determining the accuracy of the information available in the extant sources. Observing that rabbinic literature is less likely nowadays to be seen as an accurate reflection of the lives of all Jews, she argued that epigraphical, archaeological, and non-rabbinic texts afford a more reliable, if limited, depiction of Jewish women's lives.

Kraemer outlined the differences between men's and women's religious lives, noting that the three commandments incumbent on women alone (lighting Sabbath candles, separating the dough, and observing menstrual purity) were seen as punishments for Eve's sin and were not intended to enhance their religious lives. Moreover, women could not exercise religious leadership, nor were they encouraged to participate in the public, non-religious lives of the Jewish community.

Numerous inscriptions from the synagogues in Asia Minor show women to have been major donors to synagogues, thereby achieving positions of influence and honor within the congregation. Kraemer cited the work of Bernadette Brootten to refute the commonly-held position that women and men were segregated in the synagogue.

continued on page 8

James Young Discusses Holocaust Remembrance Day

In November, 1989, as part of the Center's series "Rethinking the Jewish Past," James Young, a member of the Department of English at the University of Massachusetts, discussed "When a Day Remembers: A Performative History of Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day)." Drawing on recent work in narrative and historiographical theory, Young examined the origins and commemoration of Yom Hashoah in Israel and the ways in which it shapes and is shaped by national memory of the Holocaust and Israeli national identity as a whole.

Of the various ways that the Holocaust is commemorated, Young believes that the creation of a day of remembrance is the "most endemic to Jewish tradition." Such a day places the memory of the Holocaust within one of Judaism's most powerful "narratives," the calendar, whose cycle of holidays gives the year meaning and, in a sense, turns it into an ever-repeating story.

In 1951, when the new Israeli government passed a resolution declaring the 27th of Nissan as Holocaust and Ghetto Uprising Day (the original name for Yom Hashoah), it was making a deliberate statement about the meaning of the day within Israeli society. By placing Holocaust Remembrance Day on the 27th of Nissan, it created a sequence of days which, in Young's words, served "to dramatically emplot the entire story of Israel's national re-birth, drawing on a potent combination of religious and national mythologies." This sequence includes Passover, the day commemorating the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, the beginning of the counting of the omer, Holocaust Remembrance

Day, the remembrance day for Israel's war dead, and Israeli Independence Day.

Until 1959, under the influence of statist policy which looked with shame upon survivors for not having had the foresight to emigrate before the war and which lauded only Jewish armed resistance, Yom Hashoah was for the most part ignored. In 1959, however, the Israeli Parliament (Knesset) passed a law to guarantee public observance of Holocaust Remembrance Day and established guidelines and ceremonies to mark the occasion.

In addition to discussing the history of the day, Young also examined the basic form of the day, which, he asserts, places those who died in the ghettos and camps and those who kept Jewish life alive under impossible conditions on an equal plane with those fighters who actively resisted.

The day of Yom Hashoah begins in Israel with a two-minute siren, during which everything comes to a halt. For Young, this two-minute period serves to bind the Jewish citizens of the state into one polity. The plurality of memories experienced by the community at that moment ensures "that Yom Hashoah remains more the perennial guardian of memory rather than its constant tyrant."

The author of *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust: Narrative and the Consequences of Interpretation*, Young is presently completing a study entitled "The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning in Europe, Israel and America" under a grant from the Guggenheim Foundation. He is also serving as the guest curator for a Holocaust exhibit, "The Art of Memory," scheduled for the Jewish Museum in New York in 1991.

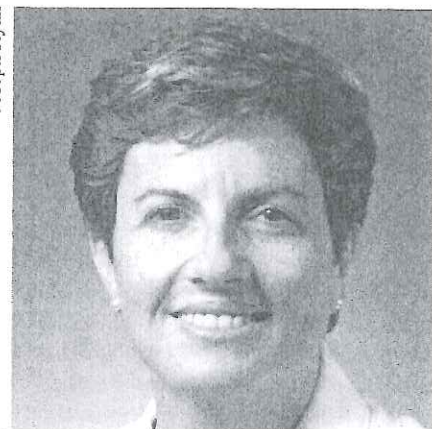
Students Participate in Seminar on Jews and Christians Today

In February, twenty-five students from the LVAIC campuses participated in a seminar led by Dr. Alan Mittleman, Muhlenberg Scholar in Jewish Studies, and Dr. Franklin Sherman, director of the Institute for Jewish-Christian Understanding at Muhlenberg College.

The seminar, entitled "Jews and Christians Today: Perceptions and Realities," focused on the ways in which Jews and Christians in the modern world

perceive and interact with one another and on the prejudices and stereotypes which influence these perceptions. Alan Mittleman discussed the presentation of Christianity in recent Jewish theologians, and Franklin Sherman examined Christian perceptions of Judaism. Following the seminar presentations, students talked about how prejudice operates in their own lives and in the society of which they are a part.

Joseph Ryan



Ella Belfer

Israeli Professor of Political Science Joins Faculty of the Berman Center

Dr. Ella Belfer, associate professor in the Department of Political Science at Bar Ilan University in Israel, has been named the Philip and Muriel Berman Visiting Scholar for the academic year 1990-91. Dr. Belfer, one of Israel's outstanding political theorists, specializes in Jewish political thought, a new and exciting field. She is the third academician to teach in the Lehigh Valley under the Berman Visiting Scholar program.

As a member of the faculty of the Berman Center, Dr. Belfer will teach two courses each semester. In the fall of 1990, she is offering "Politics and Religion" at Lehigh University and at Muhlenberg College. In the spring of 1991, she will teach a course in "Politics and Literature" at Lehigh and at Lafayette College.

Dr. Belfer, a native of the U.S.S.R., received her Ph.D. from Tel Aviv University. She has been associated with Bar Ilan University since 1975 and was promoted to the position of assistant professor in 1988. In addition to Jewish political thought, her fields of interest include socialist-radical ideologies, literature and politics, and Russian revolutionary intelligentsia. Her recent articles include "On Marxism and Judaism," "Rousseau in the Continuum of Western Thought," "Jewish Political Theory" and "Historical Interpretation and Political Ideology." Her forthcoming volume *The State and Israel: The Dialectical Dimension in Jewish Politics* will be published by Bar Ilan University Press.

Yaacov Ro'i Examines Patterns of Soviet Jewish Emigration

This past March, Yaacov Ro'i, Associate Professor of Russian History at Tel Aviv University, lectured on the historical perspective of Soviet Jewish emigration. The program was sponsored by the Berman Center and the Russian Studies program and Center for International Studies at Lehigh.

With the advent of *perestroika* and the lifting of certain official discriminatory practices, one would think, Ro'i observed, that Jews in the U.S.S.R. would be willing to stay to participate in the new Soviet society. However, the contrary is the case. From a trickle in 1987 (8,000), emigration of Soviet Jews increased to 65,000 in 1989 and is expected to be 100,000 in 1990. What accounts for this stampede at a time when life in the Soviet Union appears to be moving in democratic directions? According to Ro'i, the explanation must be sought historically, in a combination of factors that have created in Soviet Jewry a feeling of profound alienation, as well as in domestic and external forces that have combined to open the door to emigration.

Whereas various Soviet governments permitted greater or lesser Jewish cultural expression (which at its height was limited to secular, rather than religious expression), the Stalinist purges brought in their wake the curtailment and strict surveillance of even the limited forms of cultural expression. Consequently, Jews turned to emigration, particularly to Israel. In the period before the Six Day War, the struggle for emigration was to "find a solution for those who wished to live as Jews."

According to Ro'i, the Six Day War provided the setting for the second period of Soviet Jewish emigration. The threat to Israel intensified the feelings of Soviet Jews towards Israel. Because the Soviet Union supported Egypt in the Six Day War, Israel increasingly became the only true homeland for Soviet Jews, who saw that they would never have a place within Soviet society. The Soviet establishment supported the Soviet Jews' desire to emigrate on the grounds that it would rid the country of a foreign, dangerous element and would free up large numbers of technical and professional positions held in unusually high proportion by the Jews.

The mid-70s brought another change in the emigration of Soviet Jews. Prior to this time, the majority of Jews had

emigrated to find a place to be Jewish, and Israel had been their first choice. Now, many Jews sought to escape the anti-Semitism that prevented them from assimilating. For these Jews, the desired destination was the United States. By the late 1970s, eighty percent of Jewish emigrants came to the United States.

Following a virtual halt in emigration in the early 1980s, the advent of Gorbachev led to further changes in the pattern of Soviet Jewish emigration. While Gorbachev believed that Soviet Jews would participate in *perestroika*, his policies provided them a new opportunity to emigrate. Ironically, Gorbachev's policies also opened the way for right-wing nationalist factions, Pamiat in particular, which have fomented a growing tide of anti-Jewish violence throughout the Soviet Union.

According to Ro'i, the future success of Soviet Jewish emigration depends primarily on the continued strength of will of the Soviet Jews to struggle for that emigration. "The *sine qua non* of any meaningful emigration is Soviet Jews' pressure to leave. When there is no such constraint, no other extraneous force will bring about Soviet Jewish emigration."

Ro'i has taught at Tel Aviv University since 1971 and headed the Russian and East European Research Center at Tel Aviv from 1977 to 1982. He is the author of numerous articles on Soviet policy in the Middle East, Soviet Jewry, and religion and nationality in the U.S.S.R. His forthcoming book *The History of Soviet Jewish Emigration, 1948-1967* will be published by Cambridge University Press.

Chairs *continued from page 1*

Contributions from the Bermans resulted on the establishment of the Center in 1984 to develop, administer, and coordinate programs in Jewish Studies among the member institutions of the Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges. At that time, the Bermans also established the original Philip and Muriel Berman Chair of Jewish Studies at Lehigh, presently held by Dr. Laurence Silberstein, who also serves as direc-

Lafayette Student First Recipient of Oxford Centre Scholarship

Kevin S. Koplin of Lafayette College is the recipient of the first Philip and Muriel Berman scholarship to the One Year Program in Jewish Studies at the Oxford Centre for Hebrew Studies in Oxford, England. The scholarship is made possible by a grant from the Philip and Muriel Berman Foundation.

As a student in the One Year Program, Koplin will pursue a comprehensive course in Jewish Studies while experiencing the culture of one of the world's oldest university cities. The program emphasizes close faculty-student contact, tutorials and independent study.

Koplin, a senior history major, has served as the president of Lafayette's History Club and is a member of Phi Alpha Theta, the Hillel Society, and Lafayette's student government.

Any student in the LVAIC consortium (Allentown College of St. Francis de Sales, Cedar Crest College, Lafayette College, Lehigh University, Moravian College, and Muhlenberg College) is eligible to apply for the Oxford scholarship. To be considered, students must have attained sophomore status, have a grade point average of 3.0 or better, and have taken two Jewish Studies courses, including one at an upper level. Interested students should contact Shirley Ratushny, Administrative Associate of the Berman Center, at 758-3352.

tor of the Berman Center.

In addition to the chairs, the Bermans support the position of Philip and Muriel Berman Visiting Scholar, which annually brings to the Lehigh Valley colleges a visiting professor, usually from Israel. They also regularly contribute funds for the Center, which, together with contributions from the Lehigh administration and Lehigh alumni, make possible the Center's operation.

Gender *continued from page 5*

Kraemer also utilized the cultural theories of Mary Douglas to explain the different images of women emerging from rabbinic and diaspora sources. However, what is known of the position of women in diaspora society modifies Douglas's interpretation and suggests, Kraemer believes, that not all women experienced the same constraints. Nevertheless, according to Kraemer, Douglas's model "is still enormously helpful in understanding patterns in late antiquity."

Formerly a lecturer in the Department of Religion at Princeton, Professor Kraemer recently joined the Religion Department at Franklin and Marshall College. She is the editor of a sourcebook of documents relating to women's religious lives in the Greco-Roman period, *Maenads, Martyrs, Matrons, and Monastics* (Fortress, 1988), and the author of a forthcoming Oxford University Press volume which will interpret and offer a context for those texts.

**Philip and Muriel Berman
Center for Jewish Studies**

Lehigh University
Maginnes Hall 9
Bethlehem, PA 18015

ACADEMIC ADVISORY BOARD

- Prof. Laurence J. Silberstein, Dept. of Religion Studies, Lehigh University, Director
Prof. G. Clarke Chapman, Dept. of Religion, Moravian College
Prof. Robert Cohn, Dept. of Religion, Lafayette College
Prof. Alice Eckardt, Dept. of Religion Studies, Lehigh University (Emerita)
Prof. William Falla, Dept. of Religion, Cedar Crest College
Dr. Galen Godbey, Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges
Prof. Darrell Jodock, Dept. of Religion, Muhlenberg College
Prof. Stephen Lammers, Dept. of Religion, Lafayette College
Prof. Howard Marblestone, Dept. of Foreign Languages, Lafayette College
Mrs. Reba Marblestone, Dept. of Foreign Languages, Muhlenberg College
Prof. Joseph Martos, Dept. of Theology, Allentown College of St. Francis de Sales
Prof. Alan Mittleman, Dept. of Religion, Muhlenberg College
Mrs. Harriet Parmet, Dept. of Modern Foreign Languages, Lehigh University
Prof. Ilan Peleg, Dept. of Government & Law, Lafayette College
Prof. Michael Raposa, Dept. of Religion Studies, Lehigh University
Prof. Robert Weiner, Dept. of History, Lafayette College
Prof. Chava Weissler, Dept. of Religion Studies, Lehigh University
Prof. Arvids Ziedonis, Jr., Dept. of Foreign Languages, Muhlenberg College



**Philip and Muriel Berman
Center for Jewish Studies**

This newsletter is made possible by a grant from the Philip and Muriel Berman Foundation.

To obtain further information concerning the Center and its programs or to be added to our mailing list, please write to the Philip and Muriel Berman Center for Jewish Studies, Lehigh University, Maginnes Hall 9, Bethlehem, PA 18015.

BCJS Staff

Laurence J. Silberstein, Director
Shirley Ratushny, Administrative Associate
Erica Nastasi, Secretarial Assistant

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Bethlehem, PA
Permit No. 230