A note from the director...

It is my honor to be the new director of Jewish Studies at Arizona State University. After three decades in existence, Jewish Studies has begun a new phase with an expanded faculty, additional staff and new leadership. A proposal for the creation of a center, which will combine research, instruction and community outreach, is currently being reviewed for approval.

As a research facility, the planned Center for Jewish Studies will generate new scholarship through research conferences, symposia and workshops, external grants and collaboration with scholars at other universities. The center will work with other academic units at Arizona State University to advance mutual intellectual interests and offer a new model for the integration of a Jewish perspective into diverse academic disciplines and discourses.

Undergraduate and graduate instruction will remain a primary focus of Jewish Studies. At present, Jewish Studies offers a certificate, but I plan to upgrade the curricular offerings to a full-fledged bachelor's degree in Jewish Studies. The requirements for a major in Jewish Studies will include a primary language (Hebrew and/or Yiddish), several survey courses on Jewish civilization and specialization in two of three available tracks: history and society; religion and thought; and modern and contemporary Judaism. To ensure the full integration of Jewish Studies, it will be recommended that students enroll in Jewish Studies in addition to another major. Strong emphasis will be placed on students' exchange programs with universities abroad, especially in Israel.

The proposed center will implement ASU's commitment to social embeddedness by conducting a rigorous outreach program and serving as an intellectual resource to Jewish life in metropolitan Phoenix. It will coordinate philanthropic efforts in the Jewish community, locally and nationally, and will offer opportunities for non-degree, interested students to engage in life-long learning. The center will work with Jewish schools in metropolitan Phoenix and recruit top-level students to ASU who currently prefer to go to The University of Arizona or to schools outside of Arizona.

While addressing all aspects of Jewish civilization, the Center for Jewish Studies plans to include specializations in a few areas: Judaism and Science; Judaism and Environmentalism; Judaism and Diaspora Studies; Judaism, Liberalism and Democracy; and Judaism and the Arts. These areas have been chosen because they cohere with the strength of the existing faculty, they represent areas in which there is a need or room for innovation and they reflect the intellectual vision and social commitments of ASU. Conferences, grants and research projects will focus on these select areas.

Jewish Studies at ASU already has a superb faculty, excellent library resources, and existing infrastructure for faculty support and community outreach. The Jewish Studies staff includes a newly appointed assistant director Ilene Singer, who brings extensive administrative experience and knowledge of the Jewish community in Phoenix, and Dawn Beeson who has been with the program for six years. Ilene will focus on grants and external projects, public events and community outreach. Dawn will be responsible for all publicity and communication needs, daily operations and courses. With the help of the staff, teaching faculty, bibliographer and the community in metropolitan Phoenix, Jewish Studies is poised to become a nationally and internationally known unit at ASU.

Hava Tirosh-Samuelson
Irving & Miriam Lowe Professor of Modern Judaism

Fall 2008 newsletter
Jewish Studies at Arizona State University is inherently interdisciplinary. Members of the faculty hold appointments in other departments at the School of Social and Behavioral Science, Department of Religious Studies, Department of History, Department of Philosophy, School of International Letters and Cultures, Film and Media Studies program, Department of Dance, Barrett, The Honors College; and the Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law. Jewish Studies faculty includes tenured and tenure track professors as well as contract faculty: fellows, lecturers and faculty associates. Two faculty members teach at ASU at the West campus, but will offer courses on the Tempe campus on a regular basis. The faculty exhibits a vast range of research interests and expertise, and its research and teaching cover the Jewish experience in Europe, the Middle East, and Latin America.

DIRECTOR OF JEWISH STUDIES

Hava Tirosh-Samuelson (Ph.D., Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1978) is the Irving and Miriam Lowe Professor of Modern Judaism, professor of history and also affiliated with the Department of Religious Studies and Department of Philosophy. Tirosh-Samuelson specializes in Jewish intellectual history, Judaism and ecology, religion and science and feminist philosophy. She is the author of Between Worlds: The Life and Thought of Rabbi David ben Judah ibn Tibbon (1991), awarded by the Hebrew University for the best work in Jewish history published in 1991, and Happiness in Premodern Judaism: Virtue, Knowledge, and Well-Being (2013). In addition to articles and book chapters, she is also the editor of Judaism and Ecology: Created World and Revealed Word (2002); Women and Gender in Jewish Philosophy (2004), and co-editor (with Zeev Koven) of The Legacy of the Hasidic Movement: Jewish History and the Phenomenon of Life (2008). Tirosh-Samuelson is the Principle Investigator of theTempleton Research Lecture Series “Facing the Challenges of Transhumanism: Religion, Science, and Technology” and is the co-editor (with Giuseppe Veltri) of the book series, Studies in Jewish History and Culture, for Brill Academic Publishers.

ADVISORY FACULTY

Ron Amiel (Ph.D., University of Minnesota, 2004) is an assistant professor in the Department of Social and Behavioral Science at ASU at the West campus. He specializes in political philosophy, ethics in the public sphere and Zionism. He is currently working on a book titled The Political in Economic Policy and another project, “Discourse on the Nature and Scope of the Oslo Peace Process and its Aftermath.” His essays and reviews appeared in European Journal of Political Theory; History of Political Thought; Philosophy and Political Criticism, and Journal of Critical Realism.

Maddeleine Adelstein (Ph.D., Duke University, 1997) is an associate professor in the School of Justice & Social Inquiry, and is affiliated with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Studies and Women and Gender Studies. She specializes in political and legal anthropology, socio-legal studies, gender violence, the Middle East and U.S. She researches violence against women and her book Battling States: The Politics of Domestic Violence in Israel is at press. She has contributed book chapters or essays to Women, Violence and the Media (forthcoming); Blackwell Companion to Gender Studies (2005), Domestic Violence at the Margins: Reading on Race, Class, Gender and Culture (2005), and The Military and Minority Society (1999). Her essays have appeared in Journal of Poverty, Innovations on Social, Political & Economic Inequalities, Affilia: Journal of Women and Social Welfare, Social Work, American Ethnologist and Violence against Women: An Interdisciplinary and International Journal. She is the co-editor (with Mirjam Elman) of Judaism across the Disciplines (forthcoming).

Stephen Batalden (Ph.D., University of Minnesota, 1975) is a professor of history and director of the Melikian Center, Russian, Eurasian & East European Studies in arts and humanities; director of the Balkans and the former Soviet state and the relationship between religious minorities, including Jews. His authored and edited books include Sowing the World: The Spiritual Impact of British and Foreign Bible Society, 1804-2004 (2004); The Newly Independent States of Eurasia: Handbook of Former Soviet Republic (1993), Seeking God: The Recovery of Religious Identity in Orthodox Russia, Ukraine, and Georgia (1993) and Catherine II’s Greek Prelude: Eugenious Vourgas in Russia, 1771-1806 (1987). He has received numerous federal grants and contracts that foster partnerships with academic institutions in Russia, the former Soviet Union and Balkan states and to teach languages of those regions.

David William Fester (Ph.D., University of Washington, 1964) is Regents’ Professor of Spanish, Humanities, and American Studies. He specializes in Latin American culture, Spanish literature, and queer theory. He is the author of over 40 books and editor of nearly 30 books in English or Spanish. Among his authored books are Urban Photography in Argentina; Nine Artists of the Post-Dictatorship Era (2007), Mexico City in Contemporary Mexican Cinema (2002); Gender and Society in Contemporary Brazilian Civilization (1999); Buenos Aires, Perspectives on the City and Cultural Production (1998), and Sexual Textualities: Essays on Queering Latin American Writing (1997). His edited volumes include Studies in Latin American Popular Culture (2003), Spanish Literature: 1750 to the Present (2000), and Spanish Literature: From Origins to 1700 (2000). He has held several editorial positions and has done over 25 literary translations.

Rachel G. Fuchs (Ph.D., Indiana University, 1980) is Distinguished Foundation Professor and Professor of History specializing in French history, including the history of French Jews, French History and the History of the Family, and women’s history. Her books include: Contextual Paternity: Constructing Families in Modern France (2008); Gender and Poverty in Nineteenth-Century Europe (2005); Women in Nineteenth-Century Europe: Judaism and Politics of Social Reform in France, 1870-1914 (1995); and Port and Pomegranate in Paris: Strategies for Survival in the Nineteenth Century (1992). She has received several prestigious grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, and is active in numerous academic organizations. She was the president of Society for French Historical Studies and serves on various executive and editorial boards.


Anna Hellman (Ph.D., University of Chicago, 2015) is an assistant professor of History who specializes in modern Germany, genocide studies, and migration history. She focuses on the intersection between Jews and non-Jews among displaced persons after World War II and the recovery of cultural and institutional life in Europe after the Holocaust. She is working on a book manuscript, Between National Socialism and Soviet Commemoration: Surviving Germans in Postwar Germany, and her essays and book reviews appeared in Contemporary European History and Journal of International Migration and Integration. She received grants from United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, German Academic Exchange Service and German Historical Institute.

Dan Gilfi 1 (Ph.D., University of Oregon, 2000) is an associate professor in the School of International Letters and Cultures who specializes in German Studies and Women’s Literature. He studies the contribution of Jews to modern German culture, especially sound culture in the early part of the 20th century. His book, Pieces of Sound: German Experimental Radio will be published by University of Minnesota Press and he contributed essays to From Samizdat to Tamizdat: Independent Media Before and After 1989 (forthcoming) and RE-INVENTING RADIO: Zur Theorie und Praxis der Radiokunst (2008). His essays and book reviews appeared in German Studies Review, Modern Austrian Literature, EME: Exploration in Media Ecology, German Studies Review; and German Quarterly.

Vivian Gotzels (Ph.D., The Ohio State University, 2005) is an assistant professor at the Department of Political Science who specializes in international security, with a focus on the Middle East. His papers appeared in Journal of Strategic Studies; Security Studies; and Journal of Conflict Resolution. He is preparing manuscript titled, Indispensable Allies: Indigenous Forces, Infrastructure and Counterinsurgency for publication and several essays on the vanguard of Israeli and Jordanian national state and the future of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Most recently he received a grant from the Institute for Humanities Research at ASU (with Arshin Asopic) to study the interplay of religion, violence and politics in the Middle East.

Nina M. Jackson (Ph.D., New York University, 1997) is an associate professor at the Department of Dance who studies contemporary dance cultures, with a focus on Jews and modern dance. She is the author of Converging Movements: Modern Dance and Jewish Culture at the 20th Street F (2002) and Dancing Bodies, Dancing Rights for 40s (2002). She has contributed essays to the Encyclopedia of Genocide and Crimes against Unity (2004); The Reproductive Body: A Language of Contemporary Dance (2002); Dancing Bodies, Living Histories: New Writings about Dance and Culture (2000); Dancing Texts: Intertextuality in Interpretation (1999); and Dance in the Netherlands 1660-2000: New Directions in Historical and Methodological Research. Her essays appear in journals such as Dance Research Journal, Dance Connection, and Crude.

Yoav Gortzak (Ph.D., Th e Ohio State University, 2005) is an assistant professor at the Department of Political Science who specializes in international security, with a focus on the Middle East. His papers appeared in Journal of Strategic Studies; Security Studies; and Journal of Conflict Resolution. He is preparing manuscript titled, Indispensable Allies: Indigenous Forces, Infrastructure and Counterinsurgency for publication and several essays on the vanguard of Israeli and Jordanian national state and the future of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Most recently he received a grant from the Institute for Humanities Research at ASU (with Arshin Asopic) to study the interplay of religion, violence and politics in the Middle East.
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Michael W. Rubinfeld (Ph.D., University of Denver, 1978) is a lecturer in Film and Media Studies. He specializes in American media and culture, and the relationship between media and politics. He is currently working on the first historical biography of Sigmund Romberg (1887-1951) and teaches courses on Jews in film and American popular culture. He published Principle or Propagation: Intersect Groups, PMLS and Campaign Contributions in 1984 (1985) and his essays and book reviews appeared in Western States Jewish History; Journal of American History; German Studies Review, The History Journal; The German Studies Review; Commonweal; Election Politics; and Policy Review. He plays a leading role in the Arizona Higher Education Holocaust Initiative, sponsored by a large federal grant to prepare high school teachers to incorporate the study of the Holocaust into the curriculum of public schools in Arizona.

Judith Shemer (M.A., Bar Ilan University, 2000) is an experienced Hebrew instructor. She has taught at Hebrew College in Newton Center, Mass.; Hebrew Coordinator and Teacher, and History Instructor at Jess Schwartz Jewish Community High School in Phoenix. She will be teaching several Hebrew language courses.

VISITING PROFESSORS

Haim Armi is Professor Emeritus of Contemporary Jewish History at the Institute of Contemporary Jewish History at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He is also Academic Director of the Central Zionist Archives. He heads a Center of Contemporary Jewish History (1991-94), and co-Director (with Professor Judit Boxer-Liwerant) of the Judaic Studies Program at the Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City (1982-1997).

Professor Armi's scholarship focuses on Spain, Latin America, contemporary Jewry, Holocaust, Zionism and modern Jewish history. He is the author of many books, among them: Argentina and White Slavers in Argentina and in Israel (1985); published also in Spanish and Hebrew); Emancipation and Jewish Education (1985); Spain, the Jews and Franco (1982, published also in Spanish and Hebrew); Argentina: The Promised Land – Baron de Hirsch Colonization Project in Argentina (1973 in Hebrew), Argentine Jewry: In Social-Political States and Organization Patterns (1972, in Hebrew). His forthcoming volume is "Clients, Prostitutes Through the Years: My Favorite Sermons (2008) and has been honored by many community and professional groups in Phoenix and around the country for his outstanding civic achievements. He was given the National Award for by the National Board of Religion and Jewish Education. He was honored with the rank of lieutenant colonel by the National Civil Air Patrol for his 15 years of service on the National Chaplain Committee. Since his retirement in 1992 he has served as "visiting rabbi" in several rural Arizona communities offering them leadership and advice.

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FALL 2008 PROGRAMS

August 16 | Public Lecture | Shai Cherry, Ph.D., Judaism, Creation, and Evolution: Jewish Responses to Science 12:30 p.m. at Har Zion Congregation | 6140 E. Thunderbird Rd., Scottsdale Co-sponsored by Har Zion Congregation

August 17 - 18 | Organizational Meeting | International Workshop on Judaism and Science Establishment of the first International Society of Judaism and Science. Twenty scholars including historians, physicists, medical researchers, psychologists, theologians and ethicists are involved. Organizers: Noerbert Samuelsson and Rabbi Elliott Dorff (American Jewish University). Sponsored by the Harold & Jean Grossman Chair in Jewish Studies, with support from the Irving & Miriam Lowe Professor of Modern Judaism and the Department of Religious Studies

August - December | Discussion Group | Let’s Talk About It: Jewish Literature Explore the best in contemporary and classic Jewish literature, and gain deeper insight into Jewish culture. Meet once per month, August through December. For information and online registration visit http://asu.edu/lib/events/

November 9 | Women’s Symposium | Women of the Book - In the Jewish Tradition of Learning and Growing This fourth annual women’s symposium will take place at the Ina Levine Jewish Community Campus, Scottsdale. Advance registration required, invitations will be mailed. Sponsored by the Bureau of Jewish Education, Valley of the Sun Jewish Community Center and ASU Jewish Studies, in cooperation with Brandeis University National Women’s Committee, National Council of Jewish Women and Women’s Philanthropy of the Jewish Federation.

November 16 - 17 | Research Conference | Stars of David: Jews in American Cinema A conference on the contribution of Jews to the film industry as producers, actors and writers. Leading historians of film and cinema, film critics and cultural studies scholars will present original papers. The opening program will include a public screening of the classic film His People and discussion by the keynote speaker, Lester Friedman. Organizers: Hava Tirosh-Samuelson and Daniel Bernardi (Film & Media Studies)

Co-sponsored by Film & Media Studies

November 18 | Public Lecture | Meir Shalev This leading Israeli author will speak on “Writing about Love in a War Zone.” | http://jewishstudies.clas.asu.edu/shalev 7 p.m. at Temple Emanuel | 5801 S. Rural Rd., Tempe

SPRING 2008 PROGRAMS

February 2 | Public Lecture | Eckstein Scholar-in-Residence: David Myers, UCLA Public lectures on the meaning of Jewish history and approaches to Jewish historiography. Seating for the lectures is limited. Campus lecture: 10:30 A.M. at Latte F. Coor Hall, room 4403 | ASU at the Tempe Campus Community lecture: 7 p.m. at Kier Cultural Center | 6110 N. Scottsdale Rd., Scottsdale | R.S.V.P. (480) 727-6906

March 17, 19, 24, 26 | Mini-course | Haim Avni, Hebrew University Mini-course on the Jews of Latin America. Four sessions, two hours each, followed by dinner. 5:30-7 p.m. at the University Club of Phoenix | Tuition $120; plus books. Pre-registration required. (480) 727-6906 or send an e-mail to JewishStudies@asu.edu

April 29-May 1 | Research Conference | Viewing Elijah, Viewing Mendelssohn An international research conference at ASU with leading scholars on Felix Mendelssohn from the U.S., Canada and England. A week of performances, lectures and the conference will culminate with the public performance of Mendelssohn’s oratorio, “Elijah.” Organizers: Hava Tirosh-Samuelson, David Schlieker (School of Music) and Joel Gereboff (Department of Religious Studies). Co-sponsored by the School of Music and the Department of Religious Studies.

May 19-27 | Study Tour | Jewish Buenos Aires A study tour of Jewish Buenos Aires will be led by professor David Foster. Friends of Jewish Studies will visit the major Jewish communities in Latin America, and one of the largest communities in the world. Travelers will: meet daily with a prominent Argentine Jewish intellectual, artist, writer, or producer; take full advantage of the immense array of Argentine culture available in Buenos Aires; and experience Argentina’s important aspects of general Buenos Aires culture such as tango, overall immigrant culture and the very active arts scene in the city. Space is limited.

To receive additional information about this trip call (480) 727-6906 or send an e-mail to JewishStudies@asu.edu

FALL 2009 PROGRAMS

October 5-6 | Conference | Revival and New Directions: Jewish Arts in German-Speaking Countries An international research conference on revival of Jewish arts in German speaking countries. Leading art historians, cultural historians, writers and theorists from the U.S., Germany, and Austria will participate. Organizers: Hava Tirosh-Samuelson, Daniel Gillillan, Naomi Jackson, Claudia Mesch (Art History), and Volker Benkert (History).

Judaica Resources at ASU Libraries

Rachel Leket-Mor, Bibliographer

The Judaica resources at ASU Libraries support teaching and research relevant to Jewish Studies on all ASU campuses. The collection offers a variety of reference tools, scholarly journals and books in print and electronic formats, periodicals, videos, DVDs and music CDs. These materials cover all areas of Jewish Studies research, with particular focus on the modern era, including areas of specialization such as:

- History
- Religious Studies
- Yiddish literature
- Hebrew Literature
- Political Science
- Zionism and Israel Studies
- Latin American Judaica

Collection highlights include the donated Edward and Mae Zipperstein Collection, emphasizing Jewish history, religion and education; the Kehillah (Community) Collection, which is especially strong in local histories of European Jewish communities; a Yizkor Book collection of 250 Holocaust memorial books; the donated Lockard Collection of American and Postcolonial Literature in Hebrew Translation, and the Israeli Popular Literature Collection, a one-of-a-kind collection of rare materials from the 1930s-1990s. Unique materials are available at the Special Collections department: a 19th Century Yemenite Torah scroll, a complete run of the anti-Dreyfus periodical PSST, 1, and some facetiches such as the Rothschild Miscellany.

Bibliographer Rachel Leket-Mor | (480) 965-2618 | Rachel.Leket-Mor@asu.edu

ASU Libraries Judaica information online: http://jewishstudies.clas.asu.edu/libraries

Let’s Talk About It: Jewish Literature, a reading and discussion series, has been made possible through a grant from Nextbook and the American Library Association, and the local support of Jewish Studies at ASU. Explore the best in contemporary and classic Jewish literature, and gain deeper insight into Jewish culture. Meet once per month, August through December. For information and online registration visit http://asu.edu/lib/events/

Judaism & the Frontiers of Science

Jewish Studies seeks to establish a learning community for physicians who are interested in exploring “Judaism and the Frontiers of Science.” The group will hold a monthly meeting to study the interface between Judaism and contemporary science and to explore how Jewish values and beliefs apply to challenges posed by the life sciences, medicine and the neurosciences.

For more information contact Professor Hava Tirosh-Samuelson at 480-965-7767.

SUPPORTING JEWISH STUDIES

ASU is a state-supported, public university committed to higher education in metropolitan Phoenix. In collaboration with the community at large, ASU seeks to improve the quality of life for the greater Phoenix community. The Friends of Jewish Studies is a network of people in Arizona and nationwide who want to see Jewish Studies thrive at ASU. Contributions to Jewish Studies support:

- Endowed Chairs
- Visiting Professors
- Scholar-in-Residence
- Student Scholarships and Fellowships
- Faculty Research and Development
- Library Judaica Resources Collection
- Faculty Publications
- Guest Speakers
- Conferences
- Study Abroad

Give Your Support Today! http://jewishstudies.clas.asu.edu/support

FALL 2008 PROGRAMS

ASU Libraries Judaica Information Online: http://jewishstudies.clas.asu.edu/news

FOR UP-TO-DATE NEWS & EVENT INFORMATION: http://jewishstudies.clas.asu.edu/news
The Belgrade Jewish community today is small, but active. A few hundred people regularly take part in programs ranging from traditional religious services (with the Sephardic nusach) to alternative music concerts. Before the Second World War there were some 78,000 Jews in what was then called the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The Nazis murdered all but 14,000, and at least half of the survivors emigrated soon after the war. Those remaining spent a generation under a communist regime which then, in its turn, split into various national (and nationalist) states: Serbia and Croatia, Bosnia, Macedonia and more.

If all this sounds complicated, then you have some idea of how I spent this last academic year. From September of 2007 to June of 2008 I lived in Belgrade, Serbia as a United States government Fulbright scholar. My activities here were many: they included much time spent studying the Serbian language, a stint teaching U.S. history at the University of Belgrade (this is a story in itself), many public lectures and, above all, an effort to understand the complexities of Serbian Jewish history.

In order to summarize some of the results of my research, it is necessary to clarify something about the Jewish communities in the Balkan lands. This is a part of the world where many distinct peoples “smash up” against one another. Most people are familiar with the wars that have occasionally resulted from this process. However, it is essential to realize that violent conflict is only one aspect of the ongoing interaction between Balkan peoples. The Balkan nations have defined themselves in relation to each other, peacefully as well as bloodily, and it requires time and patience to untangle all the strands of the story.

As I see it, one of the more interesting and helpful ways to make sense of the Balkans is to look at the roles Jews have played in it. The Jews never were, and still are not, a national minority, in the sense that they made a claim to a regional state of their own (Zionism is another story).

Rather, they were a minority people, sometimes seen as a welcome part of a larger whole, sometimes seen as unwelcome outsiders.

From this perspective, I can explain my own specific research. I studied the role of philo-Semitism in Serbian life. Philo-Semitism, as a counterpart to anti-Semitism, is the friendship shown by non-Jews toward Judaism and the Jewish people. As I argue it, philo-Semitism has played, and continues to play, a significant and revealing role in modern Serbian life. The reasons for this importance are complex, but—in my opinion, one central fact stands out: the Serbs, at one point or another, have been in conflict with most of their neighbors over territory. And, as the headlines on Kosovo reveal, such conflicts continue to this day. With the Jews, on the other hand, the issue was never territory, but identity. This means that the Jews did not have to be understood as competitors in differing circumstances they could be seen as allies or friends.

What, then, were these circumstances? What impact did this have on the Jewish community, and what lessons can we draw from all this for Jewish history in general? Well, I have written up some of my findings in an essay called “Shapes of Serbian Philo-Semitism.” I hope that it will be published this coming year in a Serbian academic journal called Sociologija.

More importantly, I hope to keep discussing these issues with friends and colleagues at ASU. While the intricacies of Balkan life may be somewhat remote to us in Arizona, the question of how small and embattled peoples can find peace and friendship in the modern world is too important to ignore.

Improving Holocaust Education in Arizona

Michael Rubinoff

In the fall of 2007, the Arizona Holocaust Institute Initiative was established through a partnership between Arizona State University Jewish Studies, Northern Arizona University’s Martin-Springer Institute and the University of Arizona’s Center for Judaic Studies.

With encouragement from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the initiative facilitates an interdisciplinary and interagency dialogue among faculty, teachers, and Holocaust educators to improve and foster Holocaust education throughout Arizona. Initially the initiative’s emphasis was on teacher education, but all disciplines and students can gain from the lessons of the Holocaust.

The inaugural meeting took place at ASU on Feb. 1, 2008. Subsequent meetings in Tucson and a summer retreat in Flagstaff have expanded the focus by working with like-minded educators from other higher educational institutions, middle and high schools.

Gretchen McAllister, director of the Martin-Springer Institute, is pleased with the initiative’s first year: “We began this enterprise with three people, myself included. Now we have over 50 persons from a variety of disciplines on our e-mail list and these numbers just keep growing.”

The Bureaus of Jewish Education in Phoenix and Tucson are among the participants. Additionally, faculty from community colleges, private colleges and high schools are actively involved in the initiative.

Aside from bringing Holocaust educators together, the Arizona Holocaust Institute Initiative expects to produce several recommendations for consideration by the state universities, including: the implementation of new courses, adaptations for Holocaust units in existing courses, and improved communication between the colleges of liberal arts and sciences and education on Holocaust curriculum development.

Michael Rubinoff of ASU Film and Media Studies, sees the initiative as a pilot program for other states to follow: “We first got together with this idea through the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum regional summit in October 2007. I have already exchanged e-mails with colleagues in Colorado who seek to do a similar program.”

For more information on the Arizona Holocaust Institute Initiative and ways to participate or contribute to its mission, contact Gretchen McAllister (Gretchen.McAllister@nau.edu) and/or Michael Rubinoff (mrubinoff@asu.edu).

Preserving the Past on Video

The Arizona Jewish Historical Society is in the beginning stages of a unique and important project: to create complete video histories of 100 individuals in the community. These histories will complement the 20th-century oral histories already in the archives (http://www.azjhs.org).

This project is funded in part by grants from the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Phoenix and the Jewish Federation of Greater Phoenix, with additional support from various additional community organizations, including Jewish Studies, Film and Media Studies and the Department of Religious Studies at ASU.

Filming will begin in September. Individuals who are interested in preserving the history of the Jewish community in Arizona might enjoy being a part of this project. For additional information, please contact the Arizona Jewish Historical Society at (602) 241-7870.

Notes from Serbia, 2008

David Pickus

The Belgrade Jewish community today is small, but active. A few hundred people regularly take part in programs ranging from traditional religious services (with the Sephardic nusach) to alternative music concerts. Before the Second World War there were some 78,000 Jews in what was then called the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The Nazis murdered all but 14,000, and at least half of the survivors emigrated soon after the war. Those remaining spent a generation under a communist regime which then, in its turn, split into various national (and nationalist) states: Serbia and Croatia, Bosnia, Macedonia and more.

If all this sounds complicated, then you have some idea of how I spent this last academic year. From September of 2007 to June of 2008 I lived in Belgrade, Serbia as a United States government Fulbright scholar. My activities here were many: they included much time spent studying the Serbian language, a stint teaching U.S. history at the University of Belgrade (this is a story in itself), many public lectures and, above all, an effort to understand the complexities of Serbian Jewish history.

In order to summarize some of the results of my research, it is necessary to clarify something about the Jewish communities in the Balkan lands. This is a part of the world where many distinct peoples “smash up” against one another. Most people are familiar with the wars that have occasionally resulted from this process. However, it is essential to realize that violent conflict is only one aspect of the ongoing interaction between Balkan peoples. The Balkan nations have defined themselves in relation to each other, peacefully as well as bloodily, and it requires time and patience to untangle all the strands of the story.

As I see it, one of the more interesting and helpful ways to make sense of the Balkans is to look at the roles Jews have played in it. The Jews never were, and still are not, a national minority, in the sense that they made a claim to a regional state of their own (Zionism is another story).

Rather, they were a minority people, sometimes seen as a welcome part of a larger whole, sometimes seen as unwelcome outsiders.

From this perspective, I can explain my own specific research. I studied the role of philo-Semitism in Serbian life. Philo-Semitism, as a counterpart to anti-Semitism, is the friendship shown by non-Jews toward Judaism and the Jewish people. As I argue it, philo-Semitism has played, and continues to play, a significant and revealing role in modern Serbian life. The reasons for this importance are complex, but—in my opinion, one central fact stands out: the Serbs, at one point or another, have been in conflict with most of their neighbors over territory. And, as the headlines on Kosovo reveal, such conflicts continue to this day. With the Jews, on the other hand, the issue was never territory, but identity. This means that the Jews did not have to be understood as competitors in differing circumstances they could be seen as allies or friends.

What, then, were these circumstances? What impact did this have on the Jewish community, and what lessons can we draw from all this for Jewish history in general? Well, I have written up some of my findings in an essay called “Shapes of Serbian Philo-Semitism.” I hope that it will be published this coming year in a Serbian academic journal called Sociologija.

More importantly, I hope to keep discussing these issues with friends and colleagues at ASU. While the intricacies of Balkan life may be somewhat remote to us in Arizona, the question of how small and embattled peoples can find peace and friendship in the modern world is too important to ignore.
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