

HA-KOL

The Newsletter of the Judaic Studies Program
at SUNY-Binghamton

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THE FIGHT GOES ON

As the academic year draws to a close, our effort to bring about the establishment of a Judaic Studies Department is still underway. Since the appearance of the last issue of Ha-kol a lot has happened, a lot more than we can take the time and space to report. Perhaps the simplest way to sum up recent events is to say that we have taken one step backward and then two steps forward and then, finally, another step backward. We are, in other words, pretty much in the same place as we were when we put out our last issue.

The first step backward: On March 22 the Educational Policy and Priorities Committee of the Faculty Senate adopted a resolution recommending postponement of any decision regarding the creation of a Judaic Studies Department. When news of this decision reached JUST headquarters the usual pandemonium broke loose. Faculty members wrung their hands, chance visitors commiserated with us, and our faithful students plotted insurrection.

The two steps forward: Cool heads prevailed. We did what comes most natural to us: we wrote a letter. We complained to the EPPC, arguing that it had not given us a sufficient opportunity to present our case, that it had not, indeed, met with us at all. This letter appears to have had the desired effect. The committee soon voted to reconsider its earlier resolution. Shortly afterwards it gave us a chance to explain ourselves. At a subsequent meeting, on April 23, it debated the issue once again, reversed its prior decision and recommended the creation of a Judaic Studies Department.

The subsequent step backward: In May, the resolution passed by the EPPC arrived at the Faculty Senate Executive Committee for further evaluation. For reasons that are still not completely clear to us, the Executive Committee sent it back to the EPPC. We should, by autumn, have a better understanding of what is taking place, but this is all we can tell you for now.

What's next? We don't exactly know. We hope that the whole matter will be returned to the Executive Committee, which will proceed to send it to the entire Faculty Senate for a vote sometime this fall. Then, as Pipe Dream observed, "President Clark can approve or disapprove the Senate's recommendation." As Pipe Dream failed to observe, however, President Clark is leaving

office. Needless to say, we have no idea what position Dr. Lois De Fleur, our new incoming president, will take with regard to the creation of a Department of Judaic Studies. It is our hope, however, that "her proven commitment to achieving a multicultural university" (in the words of the President of the University Council) will augur well for the future.

A BIG DAY

Sunday, May 6 was one of our busiest days in a long time. It began with an on-campus brunch, jointly sponsored by the Jewish Student Union and JUST, in honor of our latest and largest crop of Judaic Studies majors. The day continued with a public lecture, the second of the Bernard Lasky Judaic Studies Lecture Endowment Series. Our speaker was Nicholas P. Stavroulakis, the director of the Jewish Museum of Greece, who spoke on the synagogues of Greece, both ancient and modern. In the evening there was a reception for Mr. Stavroulakis at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Harvey Levine.

Attended by more than forty people (including most of the honorees, all of whom will be listed here: Shari Fisch, Michelle Flacks, Eric Goldstein, Bonnie Samotin, Howard Sendrovitz, Howard Sokol, Shari Tellerman) the brunch gave us an opportunity to indicate, to some small degree, the extent of our admiration and affection for these seven graduating seniors and the regrets we feel at seeing them go. Obeying the ancient adage, we recited only a fraction of their praise in their presence. In their absence- and they will have left town by the time this comes out- we can speak more freely.

They are good kids. They are all very good students, some truly excellent. All of them were active, vocal participants in the numerous classes in which they were enrolled. Some were so studious that we didn't really get to know them that well outside of class. Others hung around our offices so much that it sometimes seemed as if we ought to put them on the payroll. Shari Fisch, Michelle Flacks, Eric Goldstein and Shari Tellerman (together with other students, who are not graduating this year) were a steady source of support throughout this year's campaign for a Judaic Studies Department, attending meeting after dreary meeting. They were always there when we needed them.

We should mention also that the brunch was attended and its participants were addressed by Ms. Paula Kramer, a SUNY-B graduate ('79) who received her degree in Judaic Studies and is currently working in New York as Chief of Operations for the United Hospital Fund. Paula reminisced about her days at SUNY-B, which she was revisiting for the first time since her graduation. She had a lot to say about the benefits she had received from

majoring in Judaic Studies even though she had not entered a "Jewish profession."

Another guest worthy of special notice was Gideon Taub, who made a notably successful appearance at his first JUST function. Taub, who was only recently born, managed to look adorable and to keep calm, as his mother, Pat, and his father, Professor Michael, passed him from one cooing admirer to the next. He didn't cry at all.

After giving our graduates a small token of our appreciation (a copy of the Stillmans' recently published Travail in an Arab Land) we succeeded somehow in avoiding what threatened to ruin the day. Some of the students had been talking about having a faculty-student softball game that afternoon. We dreaded such an event, which would almost certainly have exposed us to unnecessary humiliation, but we didn't know how to say no. Fortunately- and mysteriously- the crowd melted away without anyone saying anything at all about softball.

The crowd reassembled later in the afternoon for the Stavroulakis lecture. Its numbers were augmented by many more members of the campus community, including Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost Peter Wagner, who delivered opening remarks, as well as many people from the local Jewish community (all in all, an audience of more than eighty people). To our pleasure, we were joined by Mr. Bernard Lasky himself, who, together with his daughter Gail, flew up from Florida to attend the lecture.

Stavroulakis spoke engagingly about the archaeological remains of ancient Greek synagogues as well as those of more recent times, some still intact and some destroyed by the Nazis. He showed us slides of unusually beautiful synagogues in remote, rural corners of Greece. His descriptions of these synagogues were blended with an explanation of the sad state of affairs prevailing since the Holocaust and an account of the heroic efforts which a few Greek Jews like himself have been making to preserve the buildings and artifacts of a dwindling community.

In the evening we reconvened for a delightful reception at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Harvey Levine. Nothing dramatic happened there, but we all had a good time talking to each other and to our distinguished and rather exotic guest of honor.

NO FACULTY UPDATE THIS TIME

As you can see, this end-of-the-year issue is a shorter one than usual. The explanation for this is simple: the editor is tired and is cutting corners. We know that many of you have been eagerly looking forward to our faculty update, and we apologize for not including one this time. We promise, however, to provide

in our very next issue a full description of the recent accomplishments of our peripatetic and prolific scholarly team.

We don't have a student update either, but there are a couple of items we don't want to omit. Ari Burstein, a graduating senior majoring in political science but with a minor in Hebrew, and in many other ways a member of our gang, was the student speaker at graduation this year. Ari, who was accepted into the University of Chicago Law School, will be postponing his legal studies. Next year he will be studying Jewish thought at the Jewish Theological Seminary. Shari Tellerman, another of our graduates, will also be in New York next year. Shari will be working for Haifa University, coordinating the American end of its program for overseas students. She hopes to help build a program that will rival those of the Hebrew University and Tel Aviv University. We wish both of these students the best of luck.

BIG BOOST FOR SEPHARDIC STUDIES CONFERENCE

Long ago, in April 1987, we held an international and interdisciplinary conference on Sephardic Studies here in provincial Binghamton. It was such a success that we're going to do it again next year. You'll be hearing a lot more about it in the months ahead. For now, however, we're only going to mention what a great start we've had. The Maurice Amado Foundation, an Ohio-based organization with a special interest in the promotion of Sephardic studies, has come to our aid with a major grant. One of the important supporters of our previous conference, the Amado Foundation has decided to give us fifteen thousand dollars to help subsidize next year's program. This will be of tremendous assistance to us. We are deeply grateful for this renewed vote of confidence.

LOWE FOUNDATION COMES THROUGH ONCE AGAIN

For the third year in a row the Joe and Emily Lowe Foundation of Palm Beach, Florida will renew its \$3500 grant to our Hebrew Program. As in the past, we will use this money to help pay for Hebrew instruction. As always, we are extremely grateful to an organization that continues to stand by us.

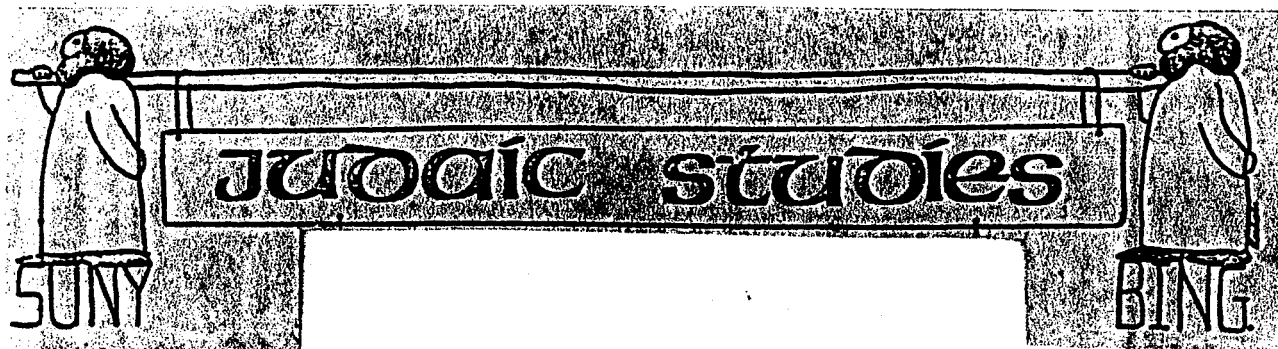
MORE DONATIONS

In our last issue we had the pleasure of announcing a number of contributions from our alumni, recent and not so recent. This time we take an equal pleasure in noting how many of the parents of our current students have sent us donations. Beverly and Julius Weiss accompanied their generous contribution with a note observing that their son "Joel has had a wonderful experience through your guidance- and we'd like to help others share in this positive and rewarding program." Other contributing parents include Harvey and Miriam Adelsberg, Howard S. and Ellen S. Bayewitz (who live, it appears, in our editor's native Zip Code of 12208, in consequence of which he sends them a special greeting), Marshall and Karen Mankin, Jerome Mestel, Henry and Susan Honey Pine, Mark and Florence Sanders, Melvin and Evelyn Sendrovitz, David S. and Irene M. Symons, and Col. Steven P. and Barbara L. Taubkin, Miriam Tellerman, and Gavriel Yonaty (who is the parent of a former student), and some others whom we will be unable to acknowledge in this issue, on account of a misplaced file. After a response like this, we can't help but think we must be doing something right. Thanks, folks! Thanks also to Berthold and Margaret Brenner who have, we should note, earmarked their contribution for the Silverman Zalman Fund. And last, but far from least, we wish to thank Jennie S. Eber, a member of the local community and a participant in many of our activities, for her very generous contribution to our program. It is especially gratifying to receive such a vote of confidence from someone who keeps such a close eye on us.

EVEN MORE CONTRIBUTIONS

are on the way now. And after having read this issue and remembered once again what a vital, positive program we run, you yourself are reaching for your checkbook and pulling out your pen. Don't stop... Do it... and then

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