



# Shirenu שיריננו

THE BULLETIN OF THE JEWISH STUDIES PROGRAM OF TULANE UNIVERSITY • NUMBER 27 • FALL 2004

## Letter from the Director

### Sizeler Family Chair Professor, Brian Horowitz.



I finished my first year at Tulane! Just like the revamping and expansion of the university center, Jewish Studies is u n d e r g o i n g expansion and renewal. We are committed to

enlarging the curriculum, increasing the number of courses and diversity of subject matter, and creating a symbiosis between the New Orleans community and Jewish Studies. We're not finished yet, but we're making strides.

Next semester **we'll be offering several new courses**, such as the Politics of Water in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. The idea of this course is that the two camps have actually concluded a series of agreements regarding water rights, and these agreements can serve as the basis for successful peace negotiations. We are offering for the first time a course in *Yiddish language*, a course on *Latin-American Jewish writing*, and a course on the *Talmud*. We will also be teaching a course on the Jewish book and its place in Jewish culture over 3,000 years. In addition, we are glad to say that we are expanding our Hebrew language program and will now be offering three years of Hebrew language and literature.

**We are happy to announce** that we will be able to offer Israeli culture and politics in spring 2005. Thanks to a grant from the Willy and Erna Wolff Memorial Foundation and help from the Dean of Arts and Sciences at Tulane, Dean Teresa Soufas, we will be bringing to Tulane Professor Ehud Harari. Dr. Harari is a Political Science Professor at

Hebrew University, Jerusalem. During his stay in New Orleans, Professor Harari will be teaching two courses on modern Israel and will be giving lectures in the New Orleans community.

On the programmatic front, we are already gearing up for terrific events in the coming year. On **September 9**, we are presenting the **Byron Strug Memorial Lecture**, which will feature Steven Zipperstein, Daniel E. Koshland Professor at Stanford University, who will be speaking on "Rethinking the Russian Jewish Past." In his talk, Professor Zipperstein will deal with problems of collective memory. What do American Jews think about pogroms and czarist oppression and how have these perceptions been shaped? Is there a difference between memory and history, myth and reality? How and why do glaring differences occur?

On **October 3 and 4**, we are hosting a **symposium** in honor of the centenary of the death of **Theodore Herzl**. Among our speakers will be Anita Shapira, Tel Aviv University; Steven Beller, Washington D.C.; Brian Horowitz, Tulane University; and Istvan Deak, Columbia University. We are co-sponsoring this symposium with Center Austria at the University of New Orleans and received help from the Dean of Arts and Sciences at Tulane, the Jewish Community Center of New Orleans, and the Austrian Cultural Center in New York.

**In the spring** we are hoping to bring to Tulane Jan Gross, author of *Neighbors*. In his book, Professor Gross depicts the killings of Jews in Jedwabne by Polish neighbors in 1941.

These programmatic efforts are connected with my goal to deepen links

between the Jewish Studies program and the New Orleans community. I have been speaking at local synagogues and served as a teacher in the Lehrhaus adult evening classes in order to become acquainted with the community. I am happy to say that these events have been eye-opening. I have enjoyed making friends, learning what people expect of Jewish Studies, and trying to meet their needs.

While our expanded program and curriculum reflect the commitment of the university to Jewish Studies, there is room for more community outreach and support. In the coming months, I hope to pursue discussions regarding the ways Jewish Studies in Tulane can serve local needs and simultaneously deliver the highest quality education for our students. The faculty and I are committed to these goals.

## Jewish Studies 25 Years Old!

This coming year will be our twenty-fifth year of life. During the spring 2005, we are planning a series of events sponsored by the Friends of Jewish Studies. Among such events will be lectures, a visit to the home of President Scott and Marjorie Cowen, and a celebratory banquet!

We are expecting an appearance from Professor Emeritus, Joseph Cohn, the man who established the program, was its first director, and its eternal champion.

*With Deep Appreciation . . .*

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## Jewish Studies has a new Head of Friends!

René Lehmann of the law firm of Lehmann Norman & Marcus LC has agreed to serve as the new head of the Friends of Jewish Studies, the outreach arm of the program. We are very excited about this news. René's expertise in Jewish history and his commitment to Jewish life in New Orleans makes him the ideal person. Also, many thanks to our former head Margot Garon for many years of service.

## New Visiting Professor in Jewish Studies and Classics.

***Kris Lindbeck: portrait of a scholar.***

Born in New Haven, Connecticut, to two professors of religion and theology, Professor Lindbeck decided to go into the family business. She received a Masters in Talmud and Doctorate in Ancient Judaism from Jewish Theological Seminary in 1999. Since then, she has been a Lady Davis fellow in Jerusalem, and taught at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas. A book based on her dissertation, "Elijah and the Rabbis: Story and Theology," is forthcoming from Columbia University Press.

As a scholar of the Babylonian Talmud, she is interested in exploring the place where the social, personal, and theological meet in narrative and aggadic texts. As a scholar coming from a Christian background, she is fascinated by the relationship between Rabbinic ideas and the New Testament. As a teacher, she seeks to help the past come alive for her students, and to make the obscure intriguing.

## Missive from former director Chris Brady

This past year has been one of transition for so many of us. As Dr. Horowitz has settled into his job as Director of Jewish Studies, I have been working hard to "learn the ropes" in the Honors Program where I have been Associate Director. Starting this July, I will become the new Director of the Honors Program and while my responsibilities there will reduce my teaching load, I will continue to remain active with the Jewish Studies Program and in my academic research. In fact, last summer my book The Rabbinic Targum of Lamentations: Vindicating God was published by E. J. Brill Publishers, and I have several articles due out this coming year. As one might expect, the uproar surrounding Mel Gibson's movie also kept me busy this year with several speaking engagements and round table discussions both on campus and in the community. Who knew Second Temple historians would become so popular!



At the end of the year, I am pleased to be able to look back and report that our students have responded thoughtfully and with maturity not only to the issues raised by this movie, but also to the current events that continue to confront us all. You should be proud, I am. Thank you again for all your support.

## First Sizeler Professorship awarded to Professor Ronna Burger

In 2002, Sidney and Marilyn Lassen endowed the first of what will become five Sizeler Professorships in Jewish Studies. This gift enables an associate or full professor to engage in teaching and research related to the Jewish Studies Program.

Ronna Burger, the first Sizeler Professor, is a member of the Department of Philosophy, where she has been teaching since 1980. She became Full Professor in 1997 and served as chair of the department for the past three years. Along with her seminars on Plato and Aristotle and undergraduate courses in ancient philosophy, she teaches philosophy of religion and Bible. Last year she was honored with a Tulane University Dissertation Director Award.



## Faculty Lectures held last academic year, 2003-2004

**Sept. 2003**, John Klier, University College London, "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion."

**Sept. 2003**, Avram Greenbaum, Haifa University, "Rabbis in Communist Russia."

**March 2004**, Wolfgang Mandathaner, Vienna City Archives, "Jewish life in Fin de Siècle Austria."

**March 2004**, Nelson Vieira, Brown University, "The Cultural Politics of Diaspora, Ways of Being Jewish in Brazil." (Co-sponsored with Latin American Studies, Department of Spanish and Portuguese, Tulane University, Center for the Humanities, Tulane University).

**March 2004**, Pamela Barmash, Washington University, "Self-Help, Asylum, and Pollution: The Contours of Biblical Homicide."

**April 2004**, William Hess, New Orleans, "Reflections on Menachem Begin."

**May 2004**, Reuven Hazan, Hebrew University. (Co-sponsored with Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans).



Prof. Steven Zipperstein

## Faculty Lectures to be held this academic year, 2004-2005

- **Byron Strug Memorial Lecture**, co-sponsored with the Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans; Speaker: Steven Zipperstein, Daniel E. Koshland Professor, Stanford University. Topic: "Rethinking the Russian Jewish Past." **September 9 2004**, Thursday, 7pm, Room 306 Jones Hall, Tulane University.

Jewish Studies is most grateful to Mrs. Marian Strug for her endowment that permits us to hold this annual lecture dedicated to the memory of her late husband.

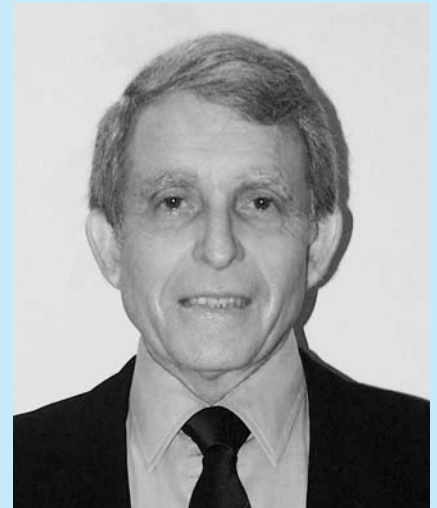
- **Symposium on the life and work of Theodore Herzl**

**October 3, 2004**, 3-5pm, Grand Ball Room, Uptown Jewish Community Center. Speakers: Anita Shapira (Tel Aviv University), Steven Beller (Washington D. C.), Brian Horowitz (Tulane University).

**October 4, 2004**, 7pm, Jones Hall 306. Speaker: Istvan Deak. The symposium is co-sponsored with Center Austria at the University of New Orleans, with help from the Jewish Community Center and the Austrian Cultural Forum in New York.

- **Future Lectures:** Jan Gross, New York University and author of Neighbors.

## Willy and Erna Wolff Memorial Foundation sponsors Professor of Jewish Studies



During the spring semester 2005, EHUD HARARI, Emeritus Professor of Political Science at Hebrew University, will be teaching the politics, history and culture of Israel. Thanks to the Willy and Erna Wolff Memorial Foundation and support from the New Orleans Jewish Endowment Foundation and Dean Teresa Soufas. Professor Harari will be enlightening students about Israel's relations with its Arab neighbors and how a unique Israeli culture has come into being. Professor Harari is also committed to community outreach and will be speaking at local synagogues and events. For further information on Prof. Harari's speaking schedule, please call Jewish Studies at 865-5349.

**If you would like to be placed on our mailing list to receive notices of coming events, please send your name and address to:**

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**Deena Greenspahn, graduating senior and recipient of The Ephraim Lisitzky Memorial Award (2004), speaks about the Jewish Studies Program:**

What I love about the Jewish Studies program is the professors and their dedication and passion to the courses they teach. I particularly appreciate the small class sizes and the individual attention these instructors give to their students. I was lucky enough to learn from wonderful professors in Jewish Studies and I enjoy the diversity of the course topics and the dedication of the professors to their specific subject of expertise. I feel that I have been provided with a factual, unbiased education through Jewish Studies which has allowed me to develop my individual beliefs. The Jewish Studies Department has a nice foundation, but now it is time for the program to grow to its potential.



**Abby Streusand, graduating senior, speaks about Jewish Studies Program:**

I have had a wonderful experience in the Jewish Studies program at Tulane. The courses offered are very enlightening and they have provided me with a greater interest in Jewish culture and history. The professors are all very engaging and dedicated to giving their students a meaningful learning experience.

After graduation I am participating in a Yiddish program in Vilnius, Lithuania. When I return I plan on going to graduate school in order to continue with Jewish studies.



Students in Professor Goldstein's seminar in Spring 2004 on "Rashi, Halevi, Maimonides" gather for dinner at his home to celebrate the close of the semester. From left to right: Eyel Ebel, Sarah Evans, Jenny Goodman, Rabbi Goldstein, Amy Irshay, Renee Masor, Crystalline Rosenthal.

**From Rabbi David Goldstein, Associate Director of Jewish Studies:**

Members of the class were asked to submit a final paper on the theme: If you were invited to a dinner party in a time warp and discovered that there was an empty chair next to each of three other guests – Rabbi Solomon Yitzhaki (Rashi), Judah Halevi and Moses Maimonides (The Rambam) – which empty seat would you chose? No "small talk" permitted, what would you talk about? Professor Goldstein discovered that his students had no reluctance to immediately engage their dinner partners in lively and stimulating conversation.

**Yiddish at Tulane, Fall 2004!**

For the first time ever we are going to offer a course in beginning Yiddish! Thanks to private donations from Barry Katz, Buena Vista Realty, and Dr. Victor Brown, we are going to "reden yidish." This course will be extra special because we intend to make it multimedia intensive. With help from an expert, Fanny Yoker, we'll be watching Yiddish films, listening to Yiddish songs, and studying the history of those people for whom Yiddish was always 'Mama Loshen.'

## Faculty News

### Ronna Burger

During the past year, Professor Burger presented a lecture on Aristotle at the University of Chicago ("Pleasure and the Good: on the Action of the Argument of Aristotle's Ethics") and published an article on Platonic psychology ("The Thumotic Soul," in EPOCHE: A Journal in the History of Philosophy). After spending a number of years participating in and recording a series of conversations with her mentor, last year she edited and published Encounters and Reflections: Conversations with Seth Benardete, University of Chicago Press. Readers have been especially intrigued by Benardete's discussion of his studies at the University of Chicago in the early 50s with Leo Strauss, the political philosopher known for his work on Plato and Maimonides, among others.

### David Goldstein

Professor David Goldstein expanded his teaching role this year to include a new course, "Introduction to Judaism." The large registration suggested that there is great interest at Tulane in such a course, which will be repeated next Spring semester. Future plans call for offering this popular course every semester. Additionally, Rabbi Goldstein taught his regular offerings of "Judaism in the Renaissance and the Age of Reason," as well as "Rashi, Halevi, Maimonides: Three Stars of the Middle Ages." That class often met in the garden at the rear of Jones Hall as the weather became increasingly beautiful. Such is the joy of learning at Tulane.

### Shannie Goldstein

Shannie Goldstein begins her twenty-third year as an adjunct member of the Jewish Studies faculty specializing in Hebrew language. Shannie is a graduate of the Boston Hebrew College where she received her Bachelor of Hebrew Education degree in 1965. Two years prior to her graduation she was awarded a Hayyim

Greenberg fellowship in Jerusalem, with additional studies at the Hebrew University. Beyond that, she is an MSW graduate of Tulane's School of Social Work. In her "second life" she is both a rebbitzen (wife of Rabbi David Goldstein) and a practicing social worker. Her students love her for her personal warmth and for her passion for the Hebrew language.

### Brian Horowitz

Brian Horowitz published an article on the writer Lev Levanda, which appeared in Polin, vol. 17, 2004. An article on the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment was published in the latest issue of Contemporary Jewry (vol. 19), which is an imprint of Oxford University Press. He also published another article on the Russian-Jewish thinker, Mikhail Gershenzon, that appeared in Judaica Rossica. Moreover, he has appeared in a number of international conferences, including "The Revolution of 1905 and the Jews" at Hebrew University, The Association for Jewish Studies in Boston, and The Klutznick Conference in Omaha. Additionally, he has published two book reviews this year as well as an encyclopedia article on "Jews" in Encyclopedia of the Romantic Era, Fitzroy Dearborn, 2004.

### Yona Shapira

In the spring of 2004 Professor Shapira taught the course, "The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict in Culture and Literature," in which she focused on both Israeli and Palestinian texts. The class centered on a comparative study of the historical roots which determined the creation of the national identity of both communities, highlighting the dynamic of formation and change. The course's requirements were quite substantial but the students' maturity and dedication made this course successful in terms of acquiring knowledge of the subject matter and developing tools for critical thinking. She also had the privilege of teaching a course on "Jewish Responses to the Holocaust," in which she traced the development of responses from the initial records of Jews during the

Holocaust, through memoirs and testimonies of survivors. For many of the students it was their first meeting with the horrors of and reactions to the Holocaust. The students' presentations in class and their involvement in discussions were beyond her expectations. This enabled the study process to become an exceptional experience for all. The heterogeneous community in both courses brought a rich variety of perspectives to class discussion. In her "Hebrew 102" course she found a serious group of students.

### Rakefet Stav, Instructor of First-Year Hebrew.

She was born in Israel in a town called Rechovot (in the center of Israel), and finished elementary and high school there. When she was 18 years old, she served in the IDF, first as a teacher of soldiers who had not finished high school, and thereafter a year, as an officer, responsible for student-soldiers and teachers.

After graduating teacher's training college, she followed her husband, Gil, who started his academic studies in Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. She taught for three years in elementary school in the Negev (southern Israel).

After a year she started her undergraduate studies at the same university, earning a B.A. in Biblical Studies including Hebrew language. She and her husband spent the last twelve years in Be'er-Sheva, the main city in the Negev, where she was teaching the Bible in high school and Gil was working on his Ph.D research.

During her sabbatical year, she began coursework for her M.A. degree at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. She received the degree a year later.

They have two boys, one is almost three years old and the second will celebrate his first birthday within two months. Her husband's post-doctoral position in Tropical Medical here in Tulane University brought them all to New Orleans and they are eager to have new experiences in their lives.

# SHIRENU

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