Program Celebrates 25 Years

The year 1997-98 marks 25 years since the Jewish Studies Program was established on Indiana University's Bloomington campus. A full year of celebration is planned, marked with lectures by scholars from Germany and Israel, the introduction of courses on Yiddish language and culture, and the successful continuation of the Tel Bet Shemesh archaeological summer field school in Israel.

The first event was two lectures delivered by Dieter Lamping, a comparative literature professor at Johannes Gutenberg Universitat in Mainz. The first, "Today's Germany and the Jews," was presented in Indianapolis. The second lecture, "The Representation of Jews in Post-War German Literature," was given in Bloomington. Both were sponsored by the Dorit and Gerald Paul Lecture Series of Indianapolis, established in 1986 to foster research into the intertwined relationship between German and Jewish history.

On September 22, Ezra Mendelsohn, an expert on eastern European Jewry, delivered the 1997 Edward A. Block Lecture in Jewish Studies in Bloomington. His slide-lecture presentation, "Art and Jewish History: Marycy Gottlieb among Poles, Jews, and Israelis," outlined the historical framework for an important but unfinished painting by Gottlieb, "Christ Preaching at Capernaum," and spoke of the cultural struggles of Jews at that time and questions of assimilation. Mendelsohn is at the Institute of Contemporary Jewry at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

On November 20, Moshe Rosman of Bar Ilan University will speak on the topic, "When was 'Women's Work' Important? Economic Activities of Jewish Women in Early Modern Europe." The lecture will be held in Ballantine Hall 003, and is sponsored by Horizons of Knowledge, The Robert A. and Sandra S. Borns Jewish Studies Program, the Polish Studies Center, the Russian & East European Institute, the departments of History and Religious Studies, and the Economic History Workshop.

Important new additions to the Jewish Studies Program are the four Yiddish language and culture courses being offered this fall, thanks to the generosity of Alice Ginott Cohn of New York and the Friends of the Borns Jewish Studies Program. Nina Warnke is the program's first visiting scholar and will teach first-year Yiddish, as well as two courses on eastern European Yiddish literature and American Yiddish culture. These courses are being offered by the departments of Germanic Studies and Comparative Literature. Warnke is director of Columbia University/YIVO's Yiddish Summer Program and research associate of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in New York.

The archaeological field school in Israel, Tel Bet Shemesh, concluded its second highly successful summer. Designed by Steven Weitzman (Religious Studies) and administered through IU's Office of Overseas Study, the field school teaches undergraduate and graduate students about archaeology and ancient Israel through on-site training, pottery workshops, readings, and evening lectures. Students also experience modern Israel by living at Kibbutz Har El and taking field trips to various parts of the country. IU students work with students from other universities, and help Israeli archaeologists, who have been digging at the site for five years, uncover fortifications, secret passages, underground reservoirs, public buildings, and ceramics of various kinds. IU students earn course credit and are enthusiastic about their work in "seeing history in action." Ken Fisher, a past participant of the program, said that "...not only did we learn about history, but we actively participated in the uncovering of it."

- Carolyn Lipson-Walker

Jewish Studies Program