

UCLA LECTURE SERIES: JEWISH BERLIN

(1997)

The "1939" Club, through its Education Fund and the UCLA Center for Jewish Studies, sponsored the fifth event in its ongoing series on Great European Jewish Cities on October 26, 1997, at UCLA. This series explores the rich, cultural diversity of Jewish urban life in Europe prior to the Holocaust.

Understanding the vibrancy of Jewish life in Europe prior to World War II places in perspective the enormous destruction wrought by the Holocaust. The series features international renowned lecturers often accompanied by film or panel discussions.

The Jewish Berlin lecture featured a prominent young scholar, Michael Brenner, who focused on the city that was simultaneously a vibrant center of Jewish culture in modern times, and home to the most horrendous efforts to destroy the Jewish people, Berlin.

Michael Brenner is Professor of Jewish History and Culture at the University of Munich, and an expert in modern European Jewish history. Professor Brenner earned his doctorate from Columbia University, and has taught at Brandeis and at Indiana University. He is author of numerous books and articles, including *The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany* (Yale University Press, 1996; forthcoming in German), and has also co-authored volume 2 of *German Jewish History in Modern Times, 1780-1871* (Columbia University Press, 1997), which has also been published in German and Hebrew.

Professor Brenner's talk focused primarily on the Weimar years, the period between World War One and 1933. These years were a brief but unique period in German and Jewish history, when it would be impossible to imagine German culture without its many Jewish scholars, writers, artists, and musicians. In this period Berlin also hosted a plethora of Hebrew and Yiddish intellectuals. Professor Brenner concluded his lecture with brief comments on Jewish life in Berlin today.

The audience was welcomed by Professor Arnold Band, Acting Director, UCLA Center for Jewish Studies and Dr. Sam Goetz, Education Chair of The "1939" Club. A panel discussion followed the lecture.