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*Preserving American Jewish History*

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Series C: Interreligious Activities. 1952-1992

Box 14, Folder 6, Center for the Study of Judaism and Jewish-Christian Relations, 1984.

CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF JUDAISM AND JEWISH/CHRISTIAN RELATIONS

Central House Selly Oak Colleges Bristol Road Birmingham B29 6LQ  
Tel: 021-472 4231

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INFORMATION PORTFOLIO

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OBJECTIVES OF THE CENTRE

- 1 To foster the appreciation of Judaism as a living and ongoing religion; to offer an experience of personal encounter and creative partnership between Jews and Christians.
2. To consider the ways in which Jews and Christians have regarded and do regard each other's religious faiths; to seek improved mutual understanding; to define their own faiths positively rather than in opposition and reaction to one another. In particular, to investigate the theological and historical roots of hostility between Jews and Christians, and to search for ways to overcome them.
3. To provide an environment in which committed Jewish and Christian thinkers can work together, drawing on their rich and diverse traditions to formulate approaches to major issues of contemporary concern.
4. By working in co-operation with existing institutions, to co-ordinate and further the development of the preceding objectives on an international scale.

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THE SELLY OAK COLLEGES AND THE CENTRE

1. The Selly Oak Colleges are a federation of nine independent colleges together with a number of departments and centres situated in an attractive campus four miles south of the centre of Birmingham.

The colleges are INTERNATIONAL (the students come from over 100 countries), ECUMENICAL (All major branches of the Church are represented as well as several other faiths) and concerned with training for SERVICE in the multi-faith world in which we live.

2. The development of inter-faith encounter and dialogue at the Colleges provides a fertile soil within which the Centre can take root.

3. The proximity of the Centre for the Study of Islam provides a unique opportunity for exploring the development of Jewish/Muslim and also tripartite Jewish/Christian/Muslim relationships.

The Centre for the Study of Islam provides an academic and administrative model for setting up the Centre for the Study of Judaism.

4. The majority of the student-body at Selly Oak Colleges consists of students at the Westhill College of Further Education. Also on campus is the Regional Education Resource Centre which serves the whole of the Midlands. These institutions provide a superb opportunity for the development in co-operation with the Centre of a wide variety of educational courses ranging from the production of audio-visual material for school use right through to the in-Service training of teachers. Regional sixth-form conferences are also regularly arranged.

5. The Selly Oak Colleges with their considerable experience in Interfaith Dialogue have taken the initiative towards setting up the Centre, providing an infrastructure, initial funding and accommodation.

6. The Centre is well placed to work together with the Multi-Faith Resource Unit (Director Dr. Mary Hall), which is a co-operative of Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, Jewish, Christian and Muslim communities in Birmingham involved in programmes of Dialogue and Adult Education.

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RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

1. Dr. Solomon is a recognized lecturer of the Department of Theology at the University.
2. The University appoints a representative to the Planning Committee of the Centre.
3. The Centre participates in teaching at courses, such as that for the Advanced Diploma in Religious Education, which are validated by the University.
4. Research students in appropriate fields are referred to the Centre for instruction. The University's Postgraduate Studies Handbook, on the strength of availability at the Centre, offers direction of research in Judaism, Rabbinics and Modern Jewish Thought. This is line with the now established practice whereby the Centre for the Study of Islam currently supervises research for advanced degrees in Islamic Studies at the University.
5. Research facilities, such as Libraries, are mutually available.



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STAFF RECRUITMENT POLICY

The following remarks on selection apply to Research Fellows and Students as well as to Lecturers.

Recruitment is to some extent guided by availability. It is important to have staff members who blend well into the Selly Oak scene, and those with special gifts of expertise or personality should be welcomed even if their field is not one that may originally have been envisaged in planning the Centre's work.

Provisionally, however, one may list the five required full-time staff members as follows (understand 'he' throughout as 'he or she'):

i. A Director, who will share in the teaching in his special field and also have some familiarity with the all the subjects being taught. His main function, though, will be planning, administration and external affairs. As he will presumably be involved directly in Jewish/Christian Dialogue around the world he will be the Centre's expert on the contemporary dialogue scene.

ii. An expert in Religious Education. He would work mainly in Westhill Bachelor of Education Courses and the Regional RE Resource Centre, and also help in planning courses for seminarians and other students. He would work with such bodies as the International Council of Christians and Jews in devising study materials for use in this country and abroad.

iii. Someone with expert knowledge of the growth of Judaism and Christianity at the time of their separation; he would need to be familiar with both Patristics and Talmud. In the likely event that no-one can be found with adequate expertise in both fields preference should be given to a talmudic scholar; one can draw on locally available talent for Patristics.

iv. A theologian, familiar with modern Christian and Jewish religious thought, who can play a part in the contemporary Jewish/Christian dialogue process at the deepest level.

v. Someone with knowledge of the primary materials of Jewish history through the rabbinic period to the present day.

Though preference must always be given to the 'best man for the job' a serious attempt should be made to ensure (a) a balanced ratio between Jews and Christians and (b) some denominational spread amongst both Jews and Christians.

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THE DIRECTOR-DESIGNATE

Rabbi Dr Norman Solomon, Ph.D.(Manc.), M.A.(Cantab.), B.Mus.(London), etc

Lecturer in Jewish Studies at the Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham.  
Lecturer in the Department of Theology, University of Birmingham.

Societies of which Dr Solomon is a member include: the Council of Christians and Jews (Member of the National Executive), Birmingham Inter-Faiths Council, Interfaith Dialogue Trust, Jewish Law Association, European Association for Jewish Studies, British Interplanetary Society etc.

Previously Rabbi of the following Orthodox Congregations:

1961-1966	Whitefield, Manchester, UK
1966-1974	Greenbank Drive, Liverpool, UK
1974-1983	Hampstead, London, UK

Norman Solomon was born in Cardiff, South Wales, on 31 May 1933, the second son of the late Phil and Esther ('Hetty') Solomon. He was educated at Cardiff High School and at St John's College, Cambridge, where he graduated with honours in Moral Sciences and in Music. He has also studied at the University of Bristol (Certificate in Education), Gateshead Yeshiva, and Jews' College, London (Rabbinical Diploma) and received his Ph.D. in 1966 from the University of Manchester for a thesis on 'The Analytic Movement in Rabbinic Jurisprudence'.

He has published widely in learned journals.

In 1955 he married Devora (Doris), daughter of Mrs Bertha Strauss and the late Berthold Strauss. They have three sons and a daughter.

He has wide experience as a popular and academic lecturer, and also (with his wife, the accomplished violinist Devora Solomon) on the concert platform.

Dr Solomon is a regular participant in major Jewish/Christian Consultations, frequently on behalf of the Chief Rabbi. Consultations attended include:

The First JEWISH-ANGLICAN CONSULTATION (Andover 1981)

Co-convenor for the Second JEWISH-ANGLICAN CONSULTATION (1986)

Annual Consultations with the UNITED REFORMED CHURCH since 1980

Consultations on behalf of the World Jewish Congress and IJCIC (the International Jewish Committee for Interfaith Consultations): with the Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews (London 1981, Amsterdam 1984); with the World Council of Churches at Harvard 1984.

Frequent liaison with the British Council of Churches and with the Roman Catholic Church in the UK.



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PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT

1. FIRST PHASE - complete at commencement of Academic Year 1984/5.

Securing commitment of Council of Selly Oak Colleges to exploring the idea of Centre - setting up of a broadly-based Planning Committee with representation from the main Jewish and Christian communities - appointing a Jewish Lecturer to the Colleges - funding the initial stages at approximately £20,000 p.a. - initiating courses in Jewish studies at the Colleges - creating an administrative infrastructure for the Centre - establishing contact with national and international bodies concerned in Jewish/Christian relationships.

2. SECOND PHASE - target date, commencement of Academic Year 1985/6.

Appointment of two full-time members of staff to assist Dr Solomon in the initiation and implementation of educational and research programmes - additional funding in the region of £50,000 p.a. - publicising the work of the proposed Centre and advertising its courses - recruitment of a full-time student body at the Centre - provision of courses for teachers and seminarians beyond the Selly Oak campus - expansion of activities to the national level - formal opening of the Centre.

3. THIRD PHASE - target date, commencement of Academic Year 1987/8.

Increase of the full-time academic staff to 5 members, with provision for adequate supporting services - full development of research facilities and activities on a high academic level - acquisition of suitable premises - funding in the region of £125,000 p.a. at 1984 prices - development of activities on an international scale.



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THE FIRST PHASE OF DEVELOPMENT

This phase was complete as follows at the commencement of the Academic Year 1984/5:

1. A Planning Committee was set up in 1982 with high-level representation from the Jewish and Christian communities.
2. The following resolution was approved by the Council of the Selly Oak Colleges in March 1983:  
"Council approves the continuing exploration through the two working parties established by Senatus of the feasibility of developing an initiative in Jewish/Christian Relations in the Selly Oak Colleges; initially in the appointment of a Jewish lecturer for 5 years, provided that all funding is guaranteed from external sources for the period and provided that Senatus can recommend the appointment to Council; Council expecting a full valuation within 3 years regarding the feasibility of an institutional development parallel to the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian/Muslim Relations subject to recommendations from a Jewish/Christian Consultative Committee."
3. An anonymous Charitable Trust agreed to underwrite the costs up to a limit of £20,000 a year for the first 5 years.
4. Rabbi Dr Solomon was appointed as Jewish Lecturer at the Selly Oak Colleges from 1st November 1983 for a period of 5 years, with a brief to report back to the Council of the Selly Oak Colleges within 3 years on the feasibility of establishing a full Centre.  
Dr Solomon was recognized as Lecturer by the University of Birmingham from 1st January 1984.
5. Contact has been established with national and international bodies concerned with Jewish/Christian relationships.
6. Courses in Judaism at various levels initiated at the Selly Oak Colleges - see Information Sheet 30. Well over 100 students are attending regularly.
7. The Peter Schneider library was donated by his widow as a beginning of research resources.
8. Several important projects have been initiated with the Centre for the Study of Islam - see Information Sheet 31.

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THE SECOND PHASE OF DEVELOPMENT

- to commencement of Academic Year 1985/6.

1. The appointment of two full-time members of staff to assist Dr Solomon (see Sheet 07 on Staffing Policy).

At the commencement of the academic year 1984/5 the Centre is already involved in 7 full courses in Judaism on the Selly Oak campus, attended by over 100 students. This alone represents a full-time teaching commitment for one staff member. Yet there are already further commitments, including supervision of research students for the University, requests for assistance for students with special requirements on the Selly Oak campus, and requests for 'one-off' lectures on campus and elsewhere.

The Director-Designate cannot cope with all this, plus administration, single-handed, nor make the full contribution he wishes on the international dialogue scene and continue his own research. Last term he found it necessary to withdraw from participation in the Annual Conference of the International Council of Christians and Jews because the burden of work was simply too great. Furthermore, there are new programmes to be initiated and educational and research work to be developed.

2. On the basis of £25000 p.a. per staff member, including back-up services (see Sheet 25 for a specimen project with costings) this will call for additional funding in the region of £50,000 p.a.

Anticipated income from fees, sales of publications and other sources, is unlikely in the near future to lessen the requirement substantially.

3. Publicising the work of the proposed Centre and advertising its courses.

4. Recruitment of a full-time student body at the Centre. An assessment is being made of the type and number of students likely to enrol for such courses. It should be stressed, however, that it is a prime objective of the Centre to cater for the needs of the students already on campus and to promote its activities through existing religious and educational institutions throughout the country.

5. Provision of courses for teachers and seminarians beyond the Selly Oak campus, the former in co-operation with the Regional R.E. Resource Centre, the latter on co-operation with the CCJ and with the appropriate Church bodies. The effect of this will be to expand the activities of the Centre to the national level.

6. Formal recognition of the viability of the Centre should be sought from the Council of the Selly Oak Colleges, with the aim of declaring the Centre open as soon as possible.

7. The engagement of further staff will place a strain on available accommodation. Thought must, therefore, be given at this stage to acquiring a suitable home for the Centre. This could well cost something in the region of two to three hundred thousand pounds.



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CURRENT COURSES ON JUDAISM AT THE SELLY OAK COLLEGES

1. MULTI-FAITH RESOURCE UNIT  
Certificate in Religions (Judaism module)  
Mondays 7.0 to 9.00, October 29 to December 3
2. WESTHILL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
Introduction to the Faith & Practice of Judaism  
Tuesdays 12.00 to 1.00, 25 September to 11 December
3. SCRIPTURES IN DIALOGUE  
(With Professor Hollenweger, Dr Kerr and Professor Askari)  
Genesis 12, Luke 15, Quran Sura 2:62  
Tuesdays, 2.0 to 3.50, 2 October to 11 December
4. MISSION DEPARTMENT  
Introduction to Judaism  
Central House, Tuesdays, 4.0 to 4.50, 2 October to 11 December
5. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTRE  
Advanced Diploma in Religious Education (Module in Judaism)  
(A diploma course, validated by the University of Birmingham, for  
qualified teachers of Religious Studies)  
Tuesdays 5.0 to 6.0, from 25 September
6. WESTHILL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
Seminar (Perspectives on Man)  
Wednesdays, 9.30 to 10.45, 26 September to 12 December
7. Advanced CERTIFICATE  
in the Study of Judaism and Jewish/Christian Relations
8. MULTI-FAITH RESOUCUE UNIT  
Advanced Certificate in Religions  
Last Wednesday of each month 7.0 to 9.30  
This course is shared by Jews, Christians, and Muslims.



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JOINT PROJECTS WITH THE CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF  
ISLAM AND MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN RELATIONS AT SELLY OAK

1. The staff of both Centres, together with the President of the Colleges and some interested members of the staff of the University, meet two or three times a term for an ongoing study of the tension between rationalism and religious insight as exemplified in the works of Alghazali, Maimonides and Aquinas. There is some joint study of the texts in the original languages. It is envisaged that this confidence-building work amongst ourselves will lead to courses for students and the general public and, even more important, to improved Muslim-Jewish communication.
2. A Jewish/Christian/Muslim seminar on 'The Immigration Experience' is to be held in London on 25 October.
3. A high-level Jewish/Christian/Moslem conference on Medicine in Society is scheduled to take place under the auspices of the two Centres from 17-19 December 1984.
4. Both Centres share in teaching activities on the Selly Oak campus, typical ventures being:
  - a. Participation in courses for the Certificate in Religions at the Multi-Faith Resource Unit.
  - b. Provision of options in Judaism and Islam for the Diploma in Religious Education (validated by the University) at the Regional Religious Resource Centre.
  - c. Participation in the 'Scriptures in Dialogue' course.

**JEWISH-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE**

**THE STATE OF THE ART**

**AN INAUGURAL LECTURE**

GIVEN AT THE GEORGE CADBURY HALL ON TUESDAY 26 JUNE 1984 BY

**RABBI DR NORMAN SOLOMON**

(MINISTER OF THE HAMPSTEAD SYNAGOGUE, LONDON, 1974-1983)

LECTURER IN JEWISH STUDIES AT THE SELLY OAK COLLEGES BIRMINGHAM  
AND AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

DIRECTOR DESIGNATE OF THE  
CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF JUDAISM AND JEWISH-CHRISTIAN RELATIONS  
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