

The Edinburgh Star

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A Pesach Message

by Rabbi Shalom Shapira

It is with pleasure that I write this Pesach message in this newly-born publication, The Edinburgh Star. I wish to express my personal congratulations to the editor, Dr. Eitan Abraham, without whose quality of tenacity of purpose and sincere dedication, the launching of this journal may have remained only a dream. I also wish to extend my sincere thanks and best wishes to all those who pledged support and played their part in seeing to



Rabbi Shalom Shapira

the journal's success. I am sure it will serve as a means of communication and will stimulate greater involvement in all traditional and social activities which take place in our community.

The Pesach Festival is also known as the Festival of Freedom. Some 3,300 years ago when our ancestors were redeemed from Egypt under the leadership of Moses, they established themselves as a nation. They started their long journey to their promised land—the only place where they could live as a sovereign people free of oppression and persecution.

When we read in our Torah those verses that refer to Pesach, it becomes clear why this Festival acquires so much

significance for our religion, for us as a nation and for our way of life:

".... On the fourteenth day of the first month towards evening is the Festival of Passover.... On the fifteenth day is the feast of unleavened bread which you must eat for seven days.... Take your lambs according to your families and if the household is too small for a lamb, let him and his neighbours next to his house take it according to the number of souls. And this day shall be to you for a memorial, and you shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations" (Leviticus XXIII, 5, 6, Exodus XII, 4, 14).

".... And it shall be when your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'what is this', that you shall say to him 'by strength of hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt'...."(Exodus XIII, 14).

Through this first precept we note that the sacrifice of a lamb is not just intended for God but also for the family, to be eaten by the family or even shared among many families. It is not a one-off sacrifice but one to be carried out the same time of the year every year and in the same way.

This is the background to our traditional Seder evening, the Jewish family evening observed by the highest percentage of the Jewish population all over the world. The aim of it is to transmit our Jewish heritage to our children and grandchildren. Towards the last part of the Seder, after filling a special cup with wine for Elijah the prophet, we open the door widely to demonstrate that we are not afraid of anyone. However, we tell children a different interpretation: we open the door to enable Elijah to come in and join us as if we expected some spiritual help to gain the real freedom we still lack.

Since those days of complete slavery in ancient Egypt to our present period, the

striving for freedom for all Jewish people wherever they live has never really stopped. About a third of our people both in the Soviet Union and some Muslim countries have their freedom severely curtailed. It is interesting to note a prayer in the Hagadda: "Not one persecutor only has risen against us to destroy us, but in every generation there are those who rise against us to destroy us". This is also true in our own generation when we see the only Jewish State—the only place where Jewish people can enjoy substantial freedom and real sovereignty - being constantly threatened by surrounding hostile countries. Yet the Hagadda gives us a gleam of hope: "...but the Holy One always saves us from their hands".

I would like to conclude by wishing you a kosher and joyful Passover and I am looking forward to seeing you on the Shabat and the Festival Services and at the Communal Seder evening on the 19th of April.

CONTENTS

Calendar	27
Community	3
Diaspora	18
Editorial	2
Education	15
Israel	21
Obituary	14
Opinion	23
People	13
Science	16
Societies	5
Sport	28

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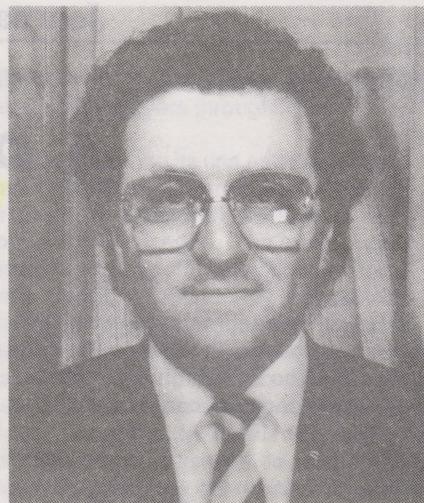
An opportunity not to be missed

Some two years ago when the president of the Board of Deputies addressed our Literary Society, he commented that if Jewish people always had a sense of reality then Israel would not exist. It is in this spirit of fine borderline between realism and fantasy that a journal for the Edinburgh Jewish Community was initially conceived by Rabbi Shapira and a group of enthusiastic followers. We have come a long way since those days of ceaseless discussions on the art of the possible and what we have today is the end product of a team effort. Perhaps with a touch of semitic dream about this venture, we would like to think that we are witnessing the birth of a baby that will grow stronger and healthier as years go by: only the full support and interest of the community can form the basis for such an optimistic outlook.

Why should we have our own journal? Because there is a need. Just think of the considerable number of activities and events taking place which neither go reported in the national Jewish papers nor are adequately publicised within the community. Think also of the lack of opportunity to voice our opinions on communal issues that affect us all but which we cannot express because there is no vehicle for it. To complete this picture, just think of the importance to our cultural life to have a quarterly with contributions from local and non-local authors on Jewish matters of general interest. These basic objectives justify the existence of The Edinburgh Star.

In this first issue we present an overview of the Edinburgh Jewish Community through a short historical sketch and reports on the activities of various societies operating within it. We expect all organisations to use the journal to promote membership, announce coming events and express opinions. A conspicuous gap in this issue is the absence of a report on the Jewish Youth Study Group. This was purely due to organisational reasons but its importance, as well as that of our young members in general, cannot be stressed enough and we hope to have contributions from them in the future.

A basic tenet of journalism is that people like to know about people. In line with this principle we will make a regular feature of publishing profiles on members of our community. The historical



Eitan Abraham

background, aspects of life and prominent people of other Jewish communities around the world will be regularly featured in coming issues. We also intend to include articles on Israel by qualified writers of various shades of opinion.

An important but inevitable omission in this issue is the Letters section. We want to encourage our readers to write in on all matters concerning the community, its organisations and its leaders. Reaction to our articles should also become a regular occurrence. In addition, we expect our readers to inform us on social, sporting, professional or any other personal experiences they consider worth reporting on. The opportunity for better communication and independence is with us. We must not miss it.

Edinburgh Jewry

by John A. Cosgrove

A great deal has been written about the Edinburgh Jewish Community and in this article there is a brief account of its history and present era and finally a comment on its future.

An interesting starting point goes back to 1691, the year in which the minutes of Edinburgh Town Council record the application of David Brown a professing Jew to reside and trade in the city. The minute narrates that....

"William Patoun, old dean of Guild, protested that noe person whatsomever than denyes the basis or fundamentalls of our Christian religion can have any priviledge within the city of Edinburgh or suburb As the said David Brown does not denye he being a profest Jew".

To which Hugh Blair old Thesaurer gave the answer that....

"Jewes as such are not to be considerd or treated as other infidels They being the ancient people of God of the seed of Abraham of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came And though now in their rejected state they are enemies of the gospell for our sake yet as touching the election they are beloved for their father's sake Upon which and several other acempts it is that they are allowed the libertie of trade in places of greatest trade where the reformed religione is professed".

Hugh Blair carried the majority of the council with him and, as Abraham Levy remarks in his *Origins of Scottish Jewry*, '....this minute may be regarded as a Charter of Liberty for the Jews of 17th Century Edinburgh....'

The first Jew to buy a burying place in Edinburgh was a dentist called Herman Lyon. He came to Edinburgh from Germany in 1788 and described himself as a Dentist and Corn Operator. Lest it be thought that the term corn operator has an agricultural significance, Levy notes that he was a Chiroprapist and wrote a remarkable book on corns. When Lyon was 43 he went to Edinburgh University to study medicine and although he passed his examinations, he never graduated and there is the suggestion that he was refused permission to graduate on the grounds that his conduct as a dentist and corn operator was more 'businesslike than

professional'. In addition, he was an alien and the country was at war. There is certainly no suggestion of anti-semitism and we know that 15 years earlier in 1779 Dr. Joseph Hart Myer graduated MD at Edinburgh University.

Herman Lyon is important because on 6 May 1795 he petitioned Edinburgh Town Council to purchase a plot of land on the Calton Hill for a burying place for himself and family. There is no trace of the burial plot on Calton Hill today but it is marked on the Ordinance Survey Map of 1852 as 'Jew's Burial Vault'.

The first actual Jewish cemetery was not acquired until 1820 and this was at Braid Place off Causewayside and this was used until 1867. Visitors to Edinburgh are often astonished to see Hebrew tombstones, 160 years old in the heart of Newington.

The first actual Synagogue in Scotland was established in 1816 in a room in a lane off Nicholson Street called Richmond Court. Glasgow's first Synagogue was not consecrated until 1823 so the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation is certainly the senior Jewish Congregation in Scotland. The Edinburgh Community in 1816 consisted of 20 families. There is a controversy as to who was the first minister. Salis Daiches said that Rev. Moses Joel was appointed in 1816 and remained in office for 46 years. However Cecil Roth, A. Levy and Abel Phillips who was Rabbi Daiches' brother-in-law disagree and say that Moses Joel was in fact preceded in office by Meir Rintel and in 1831 Moses Joel was appointed Minister, Shochet and Teacher.

In 1825, the Community acquired a tenement in Richmond Court, converted and equipped it for use as a Synagogue with 67 seats and this served the needs of the Community for 43 years. In 1867, The Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation bought Ross House in Park Place and converted it for use as a Synagogue. Park Place is no longer in existence but the map in the Edinburgh Room of the City Library shows it to be where the old University Union was, just north of George Square. The building was used until 1896 when a chapel in Graham Street was acquired and converted into a Synagogue.

The growth of the community at the end of the 19th Century can be gauged from

the fact that when Park Place Synagogue was opened in 1867 there were only 40 families subscribing to the funds whereas by 1898 the community was able to stage a grand opening ceremony for Graham Street with a choir and a hired 'American Organ' at which Chief Rabbi Herman Adler officiated in a congregation of over 500 people.

In 1880 a group of Jews arrived in the Dalry district from Manchester to work for the Caledonian Rubber Company and established the Dalry Hebrew Congregation in Caledonian Crescent. Our minutes show that whilst the Dalry Community regarded itself as independent from the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation that august body regarded Dalry as a branch Synagogue and this caused no end of trouble involving Chief Rabbi Herman Adler who clearly took the side of Dalry and was highly critical of Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation.

In one of the Chief Rabbi's letters he writes that a visitor to him in London from Edinburgh, a Mr. Davis, had told him that there were between 300 and 400 children in Edinburgh not receiving an adequate Hebrew education. Dr. Adler who was then the acting Chief Rabbi, as his father Nathan Marcus Adler had died the previous year, clearly took a dim view of events in Edinburgh and instructed them to obtain the services of a teacher because Rev. Mr. Furst was clearly overwhelmed with community work. In true Synagogue Council Spirit, the minutes show that they did not dispute the number of children nor the fact that they were being deprived of an education. The main worry at the Council meeting was - upon whose authority did Mr. Davis approach the Chief Rabbi? Clearly the endemic myopia which has never been eradicated has long antecedents.

In 1918 Dr. Salis Daiches succeeded Mr. Furst. Salis Daiches achievements in a nutshell were that in the short 27 years of his ministry he united the Edinburgh Jewish Community into a single cohesive unit and at the same time he acted as spokesman for the Jews in Scotland during the troubled interwar years. He made the description 'Jew' a proud title to bear in Edinburgh and today amongst non-Jewish circles. Despite the fame of both Lionel and David - both brilliant in their own fields - when the name Daiches is mentioned, they think primarily of the

Community

Rabbi. His monument is of course the Synagogue in Salisbury Road which was built in 1932 to accommodate 1,000 people. Salis Daiches died in 1945 and after the war Rev. Isaac Cohen of Leeds was appointed minister. He received Semicha while in Edinburgh and when he left in 1959, it was to become Chief Rabbi of Ireland.

When I first came to Edinburgh in 1968 and saw this vast shool on a Shabbat and even if 100 people attended in a shool built for 1,000 people it looked empty. I expressed doubt as to whether it had ever been full and I was told that before the war extra seats had to be brought in on the Yomim Noraim. Nevertheless, I doubt whether the Jewish population of Edinburgh even in its heyday ever exceeded 2,000 compared to Glasgow's 15,000.

During the post-war period there was a gradual decline in the Jewish population. Large numbers of young people left to live in London and the South and I have the impression that there was a lot of Zionist activity in Edinburgh during the Cohen era. The result was that a disproportionately large number of young people went on aliyah which had an effect on Edinburgh that it did not have in Glasgow. It creamed off those people with a greater committment to Israel. If there is one thing about Edinburgh Jewry which is in stark contrast to Glasgow it is the lack of warmth towards Zionism. It is probably no worse that any other provincial town of the same population and we probably collect as much as we should for our numbers and the amounts collected during the 1967 and 1973 crises were magnificantly generous. Edinburgh must be unique in so far as it often has Yom Atzmaut celebrations organised by non-Jews through the largely non-Jewish Edinburgh Friends of Israel.

Rabbi Dr. Jacob Weinberg was appointed in 1961. He followed the Daiches tradition of being an

ambassador to the non -Jewish Community and his style is the Jews College, Anglo-Jewish mode. A man of quiet erudition, he ran adult classes in the Extra Mural Department of the University for many years and has educated a generation of Scots to be knowledgeable about the Psalms, the Dead Sea Scrolls, Modern Hebrew, Agnon and Maimonides. One of Dr. Weinberg's students a non-Jewish lady doctor, Dr.Helen Russell, studied Hebrew with the Rabbi and then collaborated with him to translate two books from the Mishne Torah of Rambam and some short stories of S.Y. Agnon. All three books have been published, the first two by the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh so acknowledging Maimonides work in the field of medicine.

The loss of population by natural attrition and emigration had become so severe that in 1980 it became obvious that the burden of maintaining a Synagogue capable of holding 1,000 people plus a Communal Hall which the community bought in 1956 for social and recreational activities across the raod was too much for the community of 600 to bear. Then, under the leadership of Mr.M.S. Cowen, J.P. the community mustered all its financial resources, dug deep into its pockets and literally raised the floor of the Synagogue to the level of the Ladies Gallery. This gave us a more compact shool of 500 seats and produced an area of classrooms, kitchen and halls. The bill was 170,000 and it is to the community's credit that almost all the money was raised from members and that no overdraft was incurred. The gain to the community was tremendous: not only was the goal achieved but the good attendances on Shabbat and the high level of use of the Community Centre made it all worthwhile.

About the present era I just want to mention that Dr. Weinberg was succeeded by the then Cantor Rev. Samuel Knopp whose warmth and sincerity permeated the whole community. Rev. Dr.Daniel Sinclair

was minister for four years and his time will be remembered for his raising the standards of Hebrew education. It is to his credit that when he left to return to Israel, he left behind an enthusiastic group of teenagers knowledgeable in Jewish matters and able to conduct the services and read the Law when called upon to do so. Rabbi Shalom Shapira also of Jerusalem and a sabra was appointed in time for Passover in 1988 and he has already made contact with every section of the community and is determined to maintain the high standards of his predecessors in office.

Finally, a word about the future. The major problem facing the community today is falling numbers and this is paradoxically generated by the leadership of the community. Because if we follow the traditional path of educating our children to have a Jewish awareness and consciousness and to have an affinity with the Jewish world and Israel in particular, they will move out of Edinburgh when they leave school, probably never to return. There will always be a nucleus of Jews in Edinburgh but if we do the right thing we are on course to shrink. This is not a new problem, nor does it apply to Edinburgh alone, indeed the fall in the number of Jews in Glasgow is far more dramatic than ours, nevertheless the community cannot ignore it because it will not go away.



John Cosgrove was born in South Wales in 1943. From there he came to Scotland where he obtained his B.D.S. from the University of Glasgow in 1967.

In 1968 he moved to Edinburgh as his wife Hazel had been called to the Bar. His intensely active involvement in the Jewish Community resulted in successive positions as secretary, treasurer and in 1986 president of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation.

Wishing The Edinburgh Star every success

*Manny & Nicole
Wittenberg*

*With best wishes to
The Edinburgh Star*

*Daniel & Anita
Mendelssohn and family*

The Edinburgh Campaign for Soviet Jewry

Gillian Raab presents a brief history of the campaign and argues that there is now a potential to do more than in the recent past

The establishment in 1983 of the Edinburgh Campaign for Soviet Jewry, in its present form, coincided with one of the most difficult times for Soviet Jews in recent years. Emigration to Israel, which had been permitted to many during the 1970's, had all but ceased. Many families were left divided, half in Israel and half in Russia, at a time when conditions for refuseniks in the Soviet Union were very harsh. There were many arbitrary arrests of those who actively promoted Jewish culture or the teaching of Hebrew. Crippling sentences, like Josef Begun's seven years of hard labour for Hebrew teaching, were all too common.

I first joined the Campaign in late 1983, shortly after a small group, under the energetic leadership of Micheline Borowski, had started to hold monthly meetings. When I was approached to come to the meetings I knew little about conditions for Jews in the Soviet Union. At that time there was very little press coverage about Russian Jews, and even the word 'refusenik' was not nearly as well known as it is now. Micheline provided excellent briefing for new members. What I learnt at my first meeting shook me out of any self-pity which I might have been feeling about the relative isolation of Edinburgh from the centre of Jewish life, especially for families like my own which are members of the Reform movement. We may find it difficult to arrange religious teaching for our children, but at least no-one puts us in jail for trying!

Micheline was not the first to organise a campaign for Soviet Jews in Edinburgh. From the mid-1970's until they left Edinburgh in 1979, Shey and Alex Habel organised the campaign. They wrote letters to Soviet officials and to Russian families and prisoners, lobbied MPs and demonstrated in front of Russian visitors, including Russian ships docked at Leith. Edinburgh even had a visit from an Israeli, then relatively little known, who was campaigning for her husband in prison in Russia: Avital Sharansky. Shey and Alex now have four children and live in Wimbledon where they are active in the Masorti movement (Louis Jacobs's Conservative congregations).

The activities of the Campaign have continued along similar lines up to the present. Our main activity is letter writing. We write to individual families and prisoners, and we plead their cases to Soviet officials and to British politicians, especially those who may be in contact with Soviet diplomats. Demonstrations have never been a major part of the Edinburgh campaign. If they are too frequent and too strident they may simply alienate those who might support our cause. However, we have had some successful demonstrations. Mr. Gorbachev made a visit to Edinburgh in December 1984, before he became the Soviet Leader. As he drew up in front of the Caledonian Hotel he and his entourage had full view of two posters, pleading the case for Soviet Jews., which were held back against the freezing wind by a four-and-a-half person demonstration (four adults and one baby). Mr. Gorbachev cut short his visit to Britain that day because the death of Marshal Ustinov forced him to return to Moscow to ensure that his place in the leadership was maintained. As a result, our tiny demonstration was widely reported in the press.

During the Edinburgh Festival of 1987 we mounted a campaign for Lazar and Galina Feigin, two elderly Moscow musicians whose artistic work was severely restricted because of their status as refuseniks. We contacted the press, the Festival Director and officials, the musicians of the Bolshoi Orchestra who were to play at the opening concert, and as many people as we could who were to be among the party to welcome the Soviet Ambassador at a civic reception before the concert. At the concert itself we handed out cards, with small bunches of heather attached, for the audience to wear to show solidarity with our campaign. Many members of the official party supported us, including the Jewish Lady Mayoress of Cardiff who wore one of our badges and approached the Soviet Ambassador on the Feigins' behalf. As we watched the televised version of the concert, we were delighted to see that the conductor of the orchestra had placed two of our bunches of heather on the podium on either side of his score. We later

discovered that he, and other members of the orchestra, knew the Feigins well as former colleagues. A few days after the concert we heard that the Feigins had received a telephone call from OVIR (the visa office) inviting them to re-submit their applications. They are now happily settled in London.

Not all our activities have been equally successful. Our fund raising concert in the synagogue hall turned into quite the opposite when the group of young Ukrainian dancers, who performed so wonderfully, had all their money stolen by intruders. Our attempt to dedicate a civic tree in the Meadows to a Soviet prisoner was frustrated by its being cut down by vandals, not once but three times. According to the city officials this was not an anti-semitic attack, but just the usual thing that some young people do on their way home from the pub on a Saturday night. It took us some time to establish a place on the map of Edinburgh communal relations but despite some setbacks, we now have strong support from the Jewish community.

Many people have helped in the campaign. The leaders of the national campaign in London provide encouragement, advice, news and information about the changing situation for Soviet Jews. Visits which individual members of our group have made to the Soviet Union, largely at their own expense, have been a great help in obtaining first-hand information about the situation of our adopted families. Former refuseniks who have visited Edinburgh to thank us for our help, have been an inspiration to us. The Christian members of our campaign have helped enormously. They are able to bring support from Church groups. Keston College, a christian organisation which is concerned with freedom for all religions in the USSR, is another source of information.

There have been sweeping changes to the situation for Jews in the Soviet Union in the last two years. The number of exit visas granted to Jews has increased from about 1,000 in 1986 to 18,000 in 1988. We can now send Hebrew textbooks into

the USSR. Hebrew teaching is no longer forbidden, and Jewish cultural centres are being established. Many of the families we have campaigned for are now in Israel or the USA. However, it is not yet time for us to shut up shop. There are still Jewish prisoners of conscience, and there are still many families who are denied exit visas because of alleged access to official secrets. Also, the new freedom of speech with Glasnost, gives more freedom to anti-semitic groups to spread the most horrific Nazi-style propaganda. Our campaign must adapt in response to these developments. We have the potential to do more now than has been possible in recent past. Russian tourists are even visiting Israel on package tours. It is an interesting time to be involved in a support group for Soviet Jews.



Gillian Raab was born in Fife of parents who were first and second generation immigrants from the highlands of Scotland to the lowlands. She converted to reform Judaism in 1968 before her marriage to Charles Raab, and

the family now live in Edinburgh with their two children and are members of the Glasgow Reform Synagogue. As well as being active in the Campaign for Soviet Jewry, she has been secretary of the Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society for the past two years. She is a part-time lecturer in medical statistics at Edinburgh University, and also works as a free-lance statistical consultant.

Edinburgh Friends of Israel

Founded in 1972 with the object of promoting friendship and understanding with Israel the Edinburgh Friends of Israel (EFI) arranges annual programmes covering such diverse subjects as Jerusalem, archaeology, geology, education, literature, the Kibbutz, Israel's scientific and agricultural achievements, Israel's aid to the Third World, history, ecology, flora, fauna, water system, etc.

The EFI has hosted many Israeli speakers, including Israeli Ambassadors to the U.K., giving them the opportunity to meet leading citizens of Edinburgh. The EFI has also hosted the Israeli Basketball Team, Rehovot Youth Orchestra, and the Holon City Choir.

Providing information on Israeli life and culture has always been the main priority. Invaluable special projects include: a youth travelling scholarship, half a ton of toys airlifted free by El Al for the Alyn Hospital, exhibition and sale of craftwork by Lifeline for the Old, Operation Moses Concert in Aid of Ethiopian children's crèche, and particularly the recently formed Scottish Friends of Alyn which raises funds for mobility and other aids and gifts for the handicapped children of Alyn.

The Inauguration of the International Friendship Forest in Galilee was one of the highlights of the EFI Anniversary Tour in 1987.

The Scottish Friends of Alyn

Alyn is Israel's only long-term orthopaedic hospital and rehabilitation centre for physically handicapped children. It is a non-profit organisation treating and caring for children, regardless of religion or ethnic background, suffering from crippling diseases or from trauma after accidents. Many of Alyn's patients are from socially and economically deprived families. The hospital is partially funded by official sources but at least 30% of the running costs must come from direct donations. In addition to the essential medical care Alyn is responsible for providing the children with recreational and cultural activities, music therapy, entertainment and enrichment programmes, all of which add to the quality of life for the youngsters.

The Scottish Friends of Alyn resulted from a group visit to Israel and to Alyn in March 1987. Our immediate aim was to provide the children with one or more Yorkhill chariots (a specialised mobility aid made in Scotland). Thanks to the generosity of our friends and the Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society, who chose Alyn as one of the beneficiaries for their Centenary Charity concert, we have now sent two Yorkhill chariots to Alyn, both of which are proving a great success. A cheque for £500 has gone to Alyn's Orthopaedic Appliance Fund. Steven Banks, who ran for Alyn in the 'Great Scottish Run' was very generously sponsored and as a result we sent the cheque which has been used to purchase a manual wheelchair. On 15 November, 1988 we combined with Edinburgh WIZO for a very successful Carmel Evening.

Plans are afoot to form a small group of regular monthly contributors to help cover Alyn's day to day expenses. Negotiations with the Scottish Inland Revenue for covenanting facilities are near completion. We would be delighted to hear from anyone who has any ideas/suggestions or is prepared to help us.

WHO TO CONTACT ?

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Ladies Guild	Norma Brodie	332-4286
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WIZO	Kate Goodwin	228-6601

BAR MITZVAH?

Why not announce it in The Edinburgh Star. For details contact Manny Wittenberg.
Tel. 031-667 0500

The Edinburgh University Jewish Society

Adam Blitz gives a tongue-in-cheek account on the intricacies of running an association of Jewish students

Time and again I am reminded of Edinburgh University Jewish Society's glorious past - the time when there were over 100 members, many of whom were practicing Judaism not birth control, who dominated the University not only in sport but in debating, acting and scholastic achievement.

Times have certainly changed. Religious students would never consider studying at Edinburgh University. There is no Hillel House to accommodate them and provide a traditional atmosphere and, within the city, there are few provisions. In fact it takes a great effort to maintain your identity up here. Not surprisingly the Society has had many setbacks. Perhaps the greatest setback is the lack of members, although four non-Jews are happy to oblige.

In previous years, the J-Soc as it is affectionately known and 'Gay'-Soc as it is often misheard, has been comprised solely of first-year students who then drop out at the end of each year. In 1989 we were in a better position with two remaining members but with an overdraft of £130 sent to Adam - with love from the previous Treasurer.

John Waldman helped to restart the Society, now named 'Edinburgh University Jewish Society' and not 'Edinburgh University Jewish Students Society', lest we be accused of exclusivism and, no doubt, racism.

Freshers' Week was a tremendous success. We held a stall for two days with information concerning Soviet Jewry (from the 35's), Ethiopian Jewry (from the World Union of Jewish Students) Zionism and Progressive Judaism.

Our success in recruitment was largely the result of a petition for Soviet Jewry; as the 'freshers' passed by, anyone who looked remotely 'Jewish' was called over the sign the petition and then join the Society. Furthermore we were then able to track down any lapsed Cohen, Levy, Reuben or Woolf who had signed the petition but had declined membership of the Society. Our methods were somewhat unethical but Lubovitch would

have been proud of us. In the end we recruited 32 students; considering that these were mostly first years, I think that we did quite well.

It is unfortunate that many students of Jewish origin do not identify with us. In today's Britain it is still socially acceptable for aspiring Jews to circumcise their babies, thanks to the Royal Family, but that is as far as the tradition goes. Boys should be sent to boarding schools, preferably of Church origin. Little girls should be sent to ballet classes and horse-riding lessons - forget about Hebrew School, gymkhanas are now the rage.

Many Americans who had bad experiences with 'Hillel', the American equivalent of UJS (Union of Jewish Students) declined the J-Soc's offer and opted for 'The Edinburgh University Package': Scottish Ethnology, Scottish History, History of Art and Scottish Country Dancing. I hasten to say that these misled students are following the wrong tradition. Moreover, their practices are not even in keeping with that tradition - it was John Knox who said that dancing was 'lecherous'!

Even if the students had joined the Society I doubt that they would have lasted beyond the first Friday night meal. John Waldman, soon to be Dr. John Waldman, had prepared his famous vegetarian cholant. For two pounds our members received a glass of Palwins No. 10 and an unlimited supply of something which resembled pigswill and, I imagine, tasted even worse.

The 'Becks', those nouveaux riches North London Jews who aspire to the upper class, were under the misapprehension that they were going to a subsidised dinner party with waiter service. I am pleased to say that, after demanding their help in cleaning up, they have never been seen since.

'Please Sir, may I have some more?'. 'More!'. 'Yes, more!'. With Dr. Waldman's medical advice I had great plans to market this cholant as a facial scrub, hair conditioner, wallpaper remover and, in

very small quantities behind the ears, an aphrodisiac. Unfortunately, Rachel Bailey, fearing that she would be eating cholant for the next Friday nights until it was eaten up, disposed of 12 kilogrammes of the stuff.

Most of the social events revolve around Friday night meals and Tuesday lunches, although the largest and most successful event of the year has been the 'Rabbi' Burns Supper!. I have dreaded this event for three years. In the past it has been a debauched affair, a food fight and a drunken riot; I had planned to have nothing to do with it. After 'backstabbing' to Johnny Sperber, I was told that I would still be held responsible for the event and that, if I did not agree with my committee, I should resign.

Somehow things were going dreadfully wrong. Was I not a self proclaimed fascist? How could we even have a democratic vote on holding the 'Burns Supper'? That was a wrong move (they will want elections next).

With 'Burns' two options lay open for me: either I could let the committee do what they liked and I might end up like John the Baptist - sorry, testament - or I could supervise the meal and be beaten up by eighty-five hungry students who had expected a three course meal. Fat chance.

I figured that I wouldn't last until the eighty-fifth round, let alone the second, so the food had better be edible. Surprisingly the meal went very well; the committee had done their best to make a traditionally unattractive meal, 'Haggis, Neeps and Tatties', look attractive. (It had to make a better impression than the cholant!). Using a variety of heart, star and pig-shaped pastry cutters, the committee transformed the traditional slush into a culinary experience. To round off the evening, we danced to Scottish, Israeli and disco music.

We made a sizeable profit from 'Burns' and I hope that this will be used constructively. Perhaps the students can offer some hospitality to the community or make a contribution to the Synagogue.

Societies

The community has been particularly generous to us by way of reduced price admissions to the Jewish Literary Society, Council for Christians and Jews and the forthcoming Passover Seder. On behalf of the students I would like to thank all of the people who have supported us and helped us maintain good relations with the community.

On the political front, within the University, the Society is gradually establishing itself. At the last Annual General Meeting, we passed a motion, quorately, for Soviet Jewry. While we were unable to defeat a Palestinian motion, it was passed iniquorately and, consequently, had no effect. Rachel Bailey who is a member of the Students' Representative Council, informs me that the J-Soc has a bad reputation; we are constantly accused of being racist. This misnomer is based on the fact that we will defend Israel in certain circumstances. Yet the Society does not have a Zionist clause in its constitution and does not pursue any racist policies. Dialogue is encouraged between members of all

faiths – in fact, several of our members are not even Jewish.

Perhaps the most bizarre experience for us was having to oppose a motion on 'ritual slaughter'. The motion sought to ban kosher and halal meat and to write to the animal welfare council, implementing their 1985 'Ban on Ritually Slaughtered Meat'. I had never come across such a motion. The motion caused a heated debate. It was unfortunate that my opening line, which concerned the content of the motion and not the proposer's intentions, had repercussions from the audience. I referred to the motion as being racist and still maintain this; when there is a conflict of interests, we do not make other people submit to our laws. Why must we be the ones to compromise?

The floor started 'booing' and 'hissing' the proposers and criticising them for being 'racist'. I had not made any personal rapprochement. It was the audience that had misunderstood and misinterpreted my words. I became enraged when members of the floor started to misrepresent our tradition and then criticise it. These kids

didn't bother to do their homework. They made no effort to familiarise themselves with the Jewish argument and embarrassed only themselves.

However we successfully defeated this motion. Out of the goodness of my heart, I wrote a letter to 'Student', the student newspaper, apologising for any misunderstanding and clarifying our position. As a consequence of this letter, the Editor asked that I write for 'Student' telling me 'it doesn't matter how biased it is - just as long as its logical'. Oh Good! Maybe I can become an official apologist for Likud.



Adam Blitz was born in Miami, USA, in 1966. At the age of ten, he and his family moved to London where they decided to settle down. He is a Theology student at Edinburgh University and is the president of the Jewish Society.

THE FRIENDSHIP CLUB

On 7th December 1957 a meeting was called by the Synagogue Ladies Guild of members of the Edinburgh Jewish community to inaugurate a Friendship Club for the over 60's. An ad hoc committee was formed to run it.

The Club met in the old Communal Hall every other Sunday afternoon and membership to begin with was 160, with

attendances at meetings of between 80-90. Tea and cake was provided, and entertainment was provided by various groups. All the work was done by the committee of willing helpers. In the beginning the annual membership was 2/6 and the cost of the tea was 1/-; today the annual fee is £1 but we still charge only 10 p for tea. Members' birthdays were announced at each meeting, a practice which continues to the present day.

It was agreed to celebrate the Club's birthday on the Sunday nearest to 7th December, and this practice continues. The celebrations were held in the Carlton Hotel until the new Communal Hall was opened and then all our meetings were transferred there. However during the Summer, the members were taken out on picnics, and among the places visited were Ayr, Pitlochry, St. Andrews, Moffat, Kelso, Allander and Bridge of Allan.

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The Edinburgh Council of Christians and Jews

The Edinburgh branch of the Council of Christians and Jews was inaugurated at a meeting in the North British Hotel in 1969. On that occasion, Rabbi Weinberg of our local Hebrew Congregation and Rev. Simpson the General Secretary of the Council addressed a representative gathering of invited guests from both communities. The aim of the council is to bring together Christians and Jews in a common effort to fight prejudice, intolerance and discrimination between people of different religions, races and colours as well as work for the betterment of human relations.

Rose Orgel, the Honorary Secretary, reported to The Edinburgh Star that 'since the Council's inception, we have been able to obtain some very well known speakers for our meetings and their lectures have been greatly enjoyed. The subjects were varied and of great interest to all. We are hopeful of continuing the high standard of speakers and would urge Jews and Christians alike to support the group by coming to the meetings which are held in the Synagogue Hall, Salisbury Road, Edinburgh.

The cost for full membership is £10.00 per annum, which means you get the Journal, Common Ground and also News Letters three times per year free of charge. Local membership is £2.00 per year.

Ladies Guild

The Edinburgh Synagogue Ladies Guild was formed in early 1950's to actively involve the Ladies of the community. Its function is to provide parties for the children of the Cheder at Purim and Chanukah and also organise a summer outing. When called upon, the sick are visited in hospital or at home. Assistance is offered at Shiva houses should this be necessary. Generally the ladies see to the needs of the community as and when they arise.

The very successful Luncheon Club is held under the auspices of the Guild. Meals are provided twice weekly for the older members of our community. These lunches also provide a social outlet for the members of whom the majority live on their own.

Every Shabbat and Yom Tov the ladies see to the kiddush after the service. It should be noted that any member of the congregation is at liberty to organise a kiddush. Notification should be given to the president of the community and to the president of the Ladies Guild (Norma Brodie) who will advise on the quantities and procedure.

On Sunday 2nd April the members of the Ladies Guild will be going into the Hall for the mammoth task of kashering all the dishes, glasses and cutlery in preparation for the Communal Seder. If any ladies would like to help they would be very welcome to come along at 10.15 a.m.

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The Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society

Ruth Adler reports on the talks by Louis Blom-Cooper and William Frankel

The 101st session of the Lit began with presentations by the new President, Jonathan Bard, of framed posters by Tony Gilbert to both the Shul and the outgoing President – now Lit correspondent of the Edinburgh Star!

Civil Liberties : The Jewish Contribution

The event of the evening was the opening talk by Louis Blom-Cooper, Chairman of the Press Council. He is a very eminent London QC who writes on a free-lance basis for both the Financial Times and The Guardian. He chaired inquiries into the deaths of Jasmine Beckford and Kimberley Carlisle, as well as two major commissions into affairs in the Turks and Caicos Islands. He began by asking the audience to look back some fifty years to events in Germany. He felt his choice of topic was most appropriate, for at that time (actually on November 9th) Human Rights were being violated on an almost unprecedented scale during the infamous Kristallnacht and protesters from outwith the Jewish community were few and far between.

Louis Blom-Cooper's own family came to Britain at the turn of the century. Trying to do the best for their son, they sent him to Public School ('God help me' – he retorted!), where he was more than a little aware of anti-semitism. However in those days Jews who were good at sport were safe from the worst forms of anti-semitism; displaying prowess on the playing fields, he himself did not suffer, but others did. His topic was examined in British terms. Other perspectives, particularly the Israeli one were seriously problematic, especially for liberals and he intended to keep well away, reminding the audience that as for whales, so for humans 'Its only when you begin to spout that you get harpooned'. The Civil Liberties Movement was established with the founding of the NCCL in February 1934. This was in the main a response to police handling of the Hunger Marches and not to nascent Fascism and Mosley. The Jews in Britain in the 30's were being 'scape-goated'. But according to Mr. Blom-Cooper, the founding fathers of the Council (E.M. Forster among them) 'were not remotely

concerned with anti-semitism'. Nowadays it is the Bangladeshis who are the new scape-goats, whilst Jews have become accepted and established members of British society.

Britain has a somewhat mixed record on Civil Liberties. The UK was the first member of the Council of Europe to accept the European convention on Human Rights, signed in Rome in 1950. But there still remains a historical resistance to acceptance of the declaration of Human Rights and its incorporation into UK laws. Politicians of both Left and Right appear to be equally reluctant to press for this.

Louis Blom-Cooper moved on to say that racial discrimination was one key area of Civil Liberties where he felt Jews had a special role to play. He stressed that individually Jews had a proud record, contributing to the NCCL, Amnesty International, Justice and other similar organisations. His concern lies with the failure of the Jewish community as such to speak out against racism and in particular to fight discrimination against the black community in Britain today. There seems to be no communal interest among Jews on the issue of immigration and its attendant problems – 'whiff of anti-semitism' gives rise to cries of outrage from the Board of Deputies, yet it remains silent when other minorities are subjected to race-hatred. He made brief comparison with the situation in South Africa. Here, too, Jews are individually active in fighting Apartheid but the community as a whole maintains a silence which he regarded as 'deplorable' and which stands in stark contrast to pronouncements from the World Council of Churches for example. 'Jews in Britain today are as secure as any minority has ever been ... they have a special duty to act on behalf of those who are in the very position from which they once struggled to free themselves'.

Questions from the floor reflected considerable criticism of the speaker's message and frustration at the lack of development of his theme. Some Lit members pointed out that the Board of Deputies had no remit to comment on general topics; pronouncements on the NHS or the Social Security system for

example, were not their province. Yet it was also pointed out that the Chief Rabbi had commented on a recent report on the inner cities, in terms which did no credit at all to the Jewish community. It might have been better had he kept to a rather narrower remit! There were questions on the mutual feelings of antipathy between the black community and the Jewish one, particularly where members of the latter acted as landlords to the former. A student asked the speaker for his views on the staging of *Perdition*. He had nothing to add to his earlier statement that 'freedom of speech is just that' - as long as there was no incitement to violence, everyone was and should be equally entitled to state their views, however odious they might be.

The talk was undoubtedly thought-provoking but disappointing too for the speaker had clearly underestimated his audience. The Lit did him considerably prouder than he did himself!

Jewish Leadership in Britain

William Frankel must surely count among the most distinguished members of the Jewish community in Britain today. He spent many years practising at the Bar and a further twenty as Editor of the Jewish Chronicle. He currently edits the annual Survey of Jewish Affairs, writes a regular column in a major daily newspaper in India, chairs several tribunals and regularly gives lectures and contributes articles to many publications, not least the Jewish Quarterly.

William Frankel began his talk by stressing that at no time in our history had there been a greater need for Jewish leadership in Britain. Jewish communities in the Diaspora were characterised on the one hand by ever-increasing polarisation between the orthodox and the less religious and on the other hand by a gradual contraction in their numbers. In Britain, the speaker suggested the leaders have been created by the institutions set up in a former age. They have not adjusted to the changing position of the Jewish community and indeed of Britain itself. Post-war Britain is no longer a world

power and its Jewish community today is a very small one compared to Israel and the United States and even France. Mr. Frankel holds the view that the British Jewish community has failed to adjust to the situation of not being important.

British Jewry - in theory at least - operates within the framework of a trinity of organisations.

The Board of Deputies

This is modelled on Parliament without divisions on party lines. It has statutory powers under the Marriages Act and the Shops Act. It has access to Government Departments and serves a useful purpose in its capacity as the sole platform where Jews of all denominations are entitled to representation. This is its great strength. However, there are currently about 500 members and the speaker felt that this was rather 'overblown'.

The United Synagogues

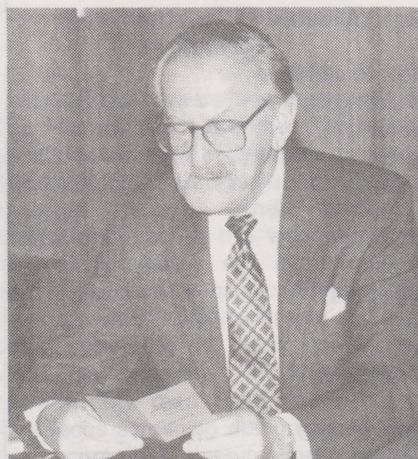
The organisation structure of the United Synagogues is remarkably similar to that of the Shell Trading and Transport Company—no prizes for guessing why! It is undoubtedly the best organised institution of its kind. It exercises strict control and maintains decorum amongst its membership. It also introduced ideas commonly associated with the welfare state, long before Beveridge, for example by offering a standard salary to Rabbis regardless of the type of community (rich or poor) to which they ministered. Its main influence today is through its so-called 'child': the Chief Rabbinate.

The Chief Rabbinate

This is a reflection of the Anglican hierarchy. It is now the recognised religious spokesman of the community though, in fact, its authority is limited to the United Synagogues. It is extremely doubtful whether this institution has done much for Anglo-Jewish leadership. Other Rabbis have become mere functionaries since they have to refer to the Chief Rabbi on all matters and can exercise no independence of thought. The result is a diminution of spiritual leadership and the complete lack of any real authority within individual communities. There is a need for the Institution to adapt if it is to survive at all. At the moment it is a key factor in the polarisation and ossification of the community. Devolution of authority would almost certainly breathe new life into the community. This situation stands in marked contrast to that pertaining in the United States, where the Jewish community has an extraordinary vitality and despite some bizarre features, is a

flourishing and vibrant one. In Britain the Institution of the Chief Rabbi stands between every community and its own Rabbi. Furthermore, the Chief Rabbi is often presented as a spokesman for Anglo-Jewry. This is particularly unwelcome when he is so closely associated with one political party and expresses views on social issues such as abortion and contraception for example, which do not represent the opinions of all, or even possibly the majority of Anglo-Jewry.

Mr. Frankel discussed one further organisation, the one he termed 'the source of real power', that is, the Joint Israel Appeal run by a triumvirate of key



William Frankel examines the Lit programme

contributors. The JIA is one manifestation of the fact that 'Israel is the new religion of the Jewish people'. Religion is increasingly the province of the right wing who live it and believe it. The majority of Jews care more about Israel than about religion. The JIA is run on autocratic lines and as something of a secret society. There is a reluctance to publish full accounts, not because of any irregularities, but because of embarrassment at the vast size of the sums of money sent abroad and a reluctance to admit to donors that some of their money in fact stays in Britain. The British projects selected to receive the money are influenced by the three men in charge, at least one of whom supports Tehiya—one of the most right wing parties in Israel. The whole ethos of the fund led the speaker to quote Samsom Raphael Hirsch: 'Once upon a time we had rich Jews, now we have poor Jews with money'.

Following this depressing note, Mr. Frankel proceeded to reflect that there was no correspondence at all between any list of eminent Jews in Britain today and any similar list of leaders of the Jewish community. With pride, he told the

audience that the Jewish Heads of Oxford and Cambridge Colleges could now form a Minyan. There are Jews in key positions in Government, in Parliament, in Industry and in the Arts. In all these spheres they make and are continuing to make contributions quite disproportionate to their numbers. This is in part a result of the open society in which we live, yet in the United States the calibre of Jewish leadership is much higher than in Britain and much more respected. Part of the reason, it was suggested, is the lack of any kind of career structure giving opportunities for Jewish leadership. In Britain these exist only in the realm of welfare. Furthermore, current leaders have little appetite for change and by and large prefer the maintenance of the status quo. The whole situation was likened to the Jew in the train who looked out at the station name as the train stopped and yelled 'Oy Vey' increasingly loudly. Eventually someone asked what was wrong and he said 'Every time I look out, I see I am getting further away from where I want to be'. The institutions are getting more and more orthodox, the community ever less so. The Reform Movement is growing at a time when the United Synagogues are going through a Counter Reform without ever having experienced a Reformation. Yet it is the United Synagogues together with the Chief Rabbi and the Board of Deputies that are regarded as the Establishment in Anglo-Jewry. In his time as Editor, William Frankel tried to make the Jewish Chronicle into a platform for the opposition. He sees danger as lying not along the path of difference, but along that of indifference.

In light of this erudition, liberalism, commitment to the cause of Rabbi Louis Jacobs and breadth of understanding, I should like to nominate him for the role of leader of the opposition. It was clear from the questions afterwards that William Frankel had both admirers and potential followers in the audience. His talk was unanimously voted among the best ever.



Ruth Adler studied in Oxford and London and moved to Edinburgh with her family in 1971. She taught Philosophy at Edinburgh University for several years and was awarded a PhD in Jurisprudence in 1984. Her thesis became a book: *Taking Juvenile Justice Seriously*. She was a member of the children's panel for eight years and was recently made a J.P. She is a founder member of the Scottish Child Law Centre. She is currently employed assistant to the Lay Observer for Scotland. She was President of the Lit during the Centenary Year.

An Ode To The Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society On The Occasion Of Its Centenary

by Ian (McGonagall) Leifer

O Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society
Always behaving with the utmost propriety,
To think you've lasted a hundred years,
Through times of joy and times of tears,
To reach this most auspicious day,
And to celebrate your Centenary.

Oh 'twas the year of 1888,
In the Park Place Shul which was in rather a shabby state,
That thirty or forty young Jews met,
And the future of the 'Lit' was set,
With meetings in the Winter every Sunday eve,

Which took a very great deal of effort to achieve,
Since then its gone from strength to strength,
With its membership list increasing in length,
With eight or nine meetings every year,
Which fills its members with great cheer,
And oh! it is a joy to enter
On Sunday night in the Community Centre.

But the one thing that in my memory sticks,
Is the behaviour of the many nudniks,
With nudniks great and nudniks small,
Nudniks that drive the President up the wall,
Nudniks large and nudniks wee,
And Phudniks too, that's a nudnik with a Ph.D.

And so over the years the 'Lit' has flourished,
And has been most well intellectually nourished,
With speakers from both far and near,
Who fill its members with great cheer,
And oh! it is a joy to enter,
On Sunday night in the Community Centre.

Now over the years the 'Lit' has shown great sense,
In electing to high office four women Presidents,
All of whom are with us here tonight,
Making this evening especially bright,
And so to Ruth and to Judy and to Jeane and to Elaine,
I say 'Kol Kakavod' over again and again.

There is something else that I would like to say,
That the 'Lit' is the oldest of its kind in the whole of the UK,
With an excellent programme of meetings every single year,
Which fills its members with great cheer,
And oh! it is a joy to enter
On Sunday night in the Community Centre.

And so to the future we direct our thoughts,
Knowing that we can count on all your support.
As I look round this hall almost full to the brim,
I say to the 'Lit' 'Ud' mea ve-esrim',
We all look forward to years of plenty,
And so I say it once again,
'Unto one hundred and twenty'.

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Profile

The Goodwins

by Debbie Donne

For my first assignment as a reporter I headed to Ettrick Road and the elegant home of Ronnie and Katie Goodwin to chat to them about their family and business life and of course not forgetting Katie's long and active association with Edinburgh WIZO.

The Goodwins have lived in their Merchiston Home for the past sixteen years and are a very well known family. Sara, the eldest at twenty, lives in Dublin where she is an English student at Dublin University. Ben, following a year out in Paris, is studying for his highers at an Edinburgh College. He shares a flat with fellow students but frequently visits home for large doses of Katie's home cooking. And the youngest of the family at fourteen years of age is Joe, an Edinburgh Academy pupil as well as an active member of the school rugby team. The most recent additions to the family are the large ginger tom cat and a ball of doggy fluff which answers to the name of Dougal.

The Goodwins are best known for their shop in Queensferry Street at the West End. The business itself started some thirty years ago as a wholesale outlet for antique porcelain and paintings in Rose Street and was managed by Ronnie's father. Silver and jewellery were added to the stock when a friend retired. Everything went well until the lease on the Rose Street shop expired and new premises had to be found. It was then a mid-block shop in Queensferry Street was found and the business traded from there until the present corner shop at Queensferry Street became available. The business expanded with the addition of the neighbouring shop and now the beautiful



Joe, Ronnie and Kate Goodwin with Dougal

window displays attract customers from far and wide.

Ronnie has always been successful as he loves his work so much just as Katie loves hers with WIZO. Katie first became involved with it in 1967 when she joined Aviv, which was a younger version of today's WIZO. Since then she has been a very active member going through the various positions of the committee and now is Chairwoman of the Edinburgh branch.

Our local WIZO is very much a fund-raising group with an annual target of

£2,000 raised by several events which take part throughout the year. One of these is the annual lunch at Ettrick Road which is always successful and raises the most money. Edinburgh WIZO thankfully has a lot of support from the shul and the community, which enables it to reach the annual target.

Katie would like to see Edinburgh WIZO being as successful in the future, reaching its annual target, having its four formal functions, but would also like to see many fresh faces.

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Debbie Donne

The Edinburgh Star is very fortunate to count on the reporting of two young enthusiasts. Debbie Donne was born in Glasgow in 1973 and at the age of six she and her family moved to Edinburgh. Presently she is a fourth-year pupil at Boroughmuir High School. She is also an active member of the Jewish Youth Study Group (JYSG) as secretary. Her ambition is to become a professional journalist!



Benji Adler

Benji Adler was born in Edinburgh in 1973. He is a fourth-year pupil at James Gillespie's High School. He has a keen interest in music: he plays the violin in the Edinburgh Secondary Schools Orchestra, sings in the Lothian Region Schools choir and plays the piano. As a sportsman he plays tennis, golf and water-polo as well as skiing. He is involved with the JYSG. Leisure pursuits permitting, he would like to become a medical doctor.

About the Editor

Eitan Abraham, was born in Jerusalem in 1951 and in 1953 he and his family emigrated to Argentina. He obtained his first degree in Physics from the University of Buenos Aires in 1975 and his Ph.D. in Theoretical Physics from the University of Manchester in 1979. Presently he is a lecturer in the Physics Department at Heriot-Watt University. His research interests include computer simulation of brain models and other complex physical systems. He is also the vice-president of the Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society.

Obituary



Mrs. Joyce Shein died suddenly, aged 60, in Edinburgh. A committed member of the Liberal Party, she represented Corstorphine on the former Edinburgh

Corporation, and later, on the District Council (1972-7) where she chaired the Management Committee. She held the position of Personnel and Administrative Manager of the Longman Publishing Group in Edinburgh until her retiral two years ago, and was made a Companion of the Institute of Personnel Management. Socially committed and active in good causes before her retiral, Joyce gave freely and totally of her time after it: to her work as a J.P. to which she was appointed in 1977, to the Edinvar Housing Association, and to doing tahara for the Edinburgh Chevrah Kadisha.

But it is as raconteur and humourist of Jewish life that Joyce Shein will best be remembered in the Edinburgh community. For though born and bred in South Shields, she was quick to take the pulse of her adopted home, and she did for Edinburgh what Sholem Aleichem had done for Kasrilevka. She wrote and directed Over the Grenitz to Granton, the story of the Edinburgh Jewish community in music and verse, for the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in the mid-70's, and followed this up with Kosher Klogs, a series of cameo sketches of Jewish life in an unnamed, Northern capital. Her productions, like The Burnstein Supper, The Mock Wedding, The Mock Barmitzvah - and many others - have had the community laughing collectively at itself so often over the years that credit for its continuation as a United Hebrew Congregation must go, in part, to Joyce Shein. She leaves a husband and true companion, Ian, to whom the hearts of the community go out.

ELAINE SAMUEL.



Quiz 'klds': Arnold Rifkind, Irene Mason, Norman Berger, Hillary Rifkind, Morris Kaplan, Myrna Kaplan, Malcolm Cowan, Avril Berger and Philip Mason.

Quiz Supper

Who designed the mosaics and tapestry for the Knesset? Who won Britain's first gold medal in the 1988 Olympics? These were some of the questions at last December's Quiz Supper organised by Joyce Cram, Anita Mendelsohn and Norman Cram. The standard of the questions was carefully thought out so as to give everybody the

chance to make a contribution and learn new interesting facts. Some one hundred people turned up for the evening. Joyce, Anita and Norman should feel strongly encouraged to continue their efforts to make of this event a regular feature of the calendar of activities. There had to be a winning team (see photo) and in the final cryptic words of Rabbi Shapira, '.... and let me remind you that the winners are regular shul attenders'.

Sunday Morning Enlightenment

The Cheder is not just about learning, writes **Benji Adler**, it is also about a fuller life for the young

The earliest record of a Hebrew School in Edinburgh is from 1827, just eleven years after the formation of the first Jewish Community in Scotland. The school concentrated mainly on the teaching of the Hebrew language. It was publicised in the Evening Courant on 13 October 1827 which stated that the school had just sat its first set of exams. The classes were not exclusively for Jewish people although they appear to have been attended only by Jews. At the time there were about twenty families actually living in Edinburgh and about one hundred people attended the class. Later, the Hebrew classes were held in a basement in the Graham Street Synagogue and then they were held in Sciennes School on a daily basis from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. The children regularly went on outings and holidays organised by the Community. Things are very different today.

Every Sunday morning at 10.15 a.m. while most of us are tucked up in our beds, teachers and pupils alike gather for a weekly 2-hour session of learning at the Edinburgh Cheder. Three or four years ago, the Cheder roll was as large as seventy, but today is only just over thirty. This dramatic fall is due primarily to a drop in the birth rate. Fortunately, however, there is a large group of three- and four-year olds who are just about to join the Cheder. The pupils are divided into seven classes and the syllabus is continued from one to another. But whereas there used to be eight to ten in each class, today some classes consist of only two or three. Pupils are entered for the London Board of Jewish Education's Examinations every summer and considering that the exams are really aimed at children receiving four or five times as much Jewish education per week than those in Edinburgh, the results are excellent. Edinburgh Cheder enters people for exams from the preparatory grade right through to the senior grade. As well as the pride, the extra knowledge and spiritual enlightenment engendered by success in these exams, there are cash prizes awarded to those who excel which are presented at the Annual Prizegiving! In the last few years pupils who have gained the top mark in the senior exam have won a four-week 'trip-of-a-lifetime' to Israel with the Federation of Zionist Youth. But despite these excellent results, there seems to be a lack of enthusiasm among



Elaine Samuel with pupils

the senior members of the Community to volunteer their services to the Cheder. Indeed, recently it has been the younger members who have themselves spent many years in the Cheder as pupils, who have been taking on the task of teaching the more junior classes.

Cheder is not just about learning. There are various events throughout the year, usually associated with the different Jewish Festivals. In my time there, we put on a performance of 'Joseph and his Technicolour Dream Coat'. The story of Esther has been performed in various versions at the time of Purim. The Purim parties are always particularly happy occasions. The pupils dress up as anything and everything from washing machines to clowns, you name it, they've been at the Edinburgh Purim party. Over the past few years there have also been 'mock' Seders just before Pesach, preparing for the real night and reminding the pupils what it is that we are really celebrating at Passover. There is also an annual Chanukah party after the service held particularly for the younger members of the congregation. Maccabi and the junior choir are also directly linked to the Cheder, the former meeting after the

classes are over and the choir performing every Shabbat during the service. Another important annual event is the prizegiving. It is always more than a little amusing listening to the Master of Ceremonies trying to announce such tongue-twisters as the 'Michael Irving Purvin Seftor Memorial Prize'! There is always something for everyone and it is a wonderful end to a hard year's work.

The Cheder is a vital part of our small Community and essential for its continued existence into the future. Of course, it is a drag having to get up at 10.00 a.m., but for me, now that I have finished, it is great to look back and I have many fond memories of my time there. We really must carry on supporting the Cheder and educating the young Jewish children today, so that when they grow older, they will be able to carry on practising our religion and teaching its traditions to their children and to their children's children.

BAT MITZVAH?

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Early screening is a medical success but it poses ethical difficulties.

Tay-Sachs Disease : The Ashkenazi Connection

by David McQueen

About twenty years ago there was real anticipation and excitement among researchers in medical genetics at the Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions in Baltimore, Maryland. An experimental mass screening for a genetic disorder was to become a reality; a preventive programme which to this day remains unique in genetic medicine. What added a particular significance to this screening was its focus on the Baltimore-Washington Jewish community, the group of people considered most at risk for Tay-Sachs disease.

Genetic Disease and Inborn Errors of Metabolism

The extent of genetic-related disease in the world is not known. This is for many reasons. The 'genetic component' of disease in general is not fully understood. Only now, in the late eighties are projects being started to 'map' the human chromosomal structure. One group of genetic diseases, autosomal-recessive inborn errors of metabolism, are themselves quite numerous, and Tay-Sachs is an example of this type. Autosomal-recessive gene traits have some unique properties. In general they are extremely injurious or lethal, but fortunately rather rare. An inborn error of metabolism is a genetic defect which 'blocks' a metabolic pathway, often expressed by the absence of a specific enzyme needed to properly carry out the normal chemistry of the body. Cystic fibrosis, galactosemia and sickle cell anemia are better known examples of inborn errors of metabolism.

Tay-Sachs is a most unkind disease which primarily strikes Jewish infants. The child suffers blindness, paralysis, dementia, loss of development, and progression to a state of gravely 'diminished response' to parents and environment. The disease is invariably fatal during the first few years of life. The psychological burden and economic cost to the parents is profound.

Carriers of the trait which can lead to Tay-Sachs disease in offspring are not

affected directly by the disease and lead perfectly normal lives. The discovery in the late sixties that Tay-Sachs disease is caused by a specific enzyme detectable in the blood of carriers led to the development of a test to detect carrier status. At the same time, developments in amniocentesis, the examination of amniotic fluid in the early stages of pregnancy, allowed for the detection of Tay-Sachs affected offspring. Finally the disease appeared predominantly in a well-defined group, namely Ashkenazi Jews. These three facts combined, allowed for a unique opportunity for a preventative programme in genetic screening. The use of the new techniques provided for the detection of carriers who could be medically followed. If two carriers were to have children, the ensuing pregnancies could be carefully monitored. Even with parents who are carriers, there is only a one in four chance that the offspring would have the disease. If the amniocentesis reveals the presence of the disease then the pregnancy may be terminated and the couple may try again to have a normal child.

The best estimates are that one in every thirty Ashkenazi Jews is a carrier. Although this seems very high, it is important to realize that both parents must be carriers and even then only one pregnancy out of four is at risk for the disease itself. In reality this translates into only about one in every 3,600 births among Ashkenazi Jews being a Tay-Sachs affected infant. Of course this is an oversimplification of the real situation. Actual levels of affected births depends much on the nature of the Jewish community, the amount of marriage with others who are not Ashkenazi Jews in origin and many other factors. One reason why the Baltimore-Washington community became a focus for this programme was related to the stability and 'ethnicity' of the Jewish participating communities.

The Baltimore-Washington Pilot Tay-Sachs Programme

From the very beginning the Programme worked closely with the

Jewish communities of Baltimore and Washington. There were no precedents or guidelines for carrying out a large scale, community-based genetic screening programme. In order to screen, that is take blood samples, several hundred individuals at one sitting, planning had to be very elaborate. Community cooperation was vital from many standpoints: belief in the importance of the programme; volunteer help; involvement of the religious community; help in education and provision of information and finally the provision of appropriate centres, synagogues and Jewish community centres, for the testing. The rabbinate were considered vital in any ongoing programme, especially as a link for counselling newly-married Jewish couples. In both Baltimore and Washington, the Jewish community was extremely supportive and undoubtedly helped to make it a 'model' for such a screening programme.

The Jewish Communities

Baltimore and Washington are two very different cities. Although less than forty miles apart and comprising an urban conglomeration of well over five million people, Baltimore is often viewed as unattractive, old, and highly industrialised; Washington, by contrast, is the Capital, powerful, influential and possessing a marbled elegance. The truth about both cities is probably something else, but the differences were reflected in their respective Jewish populations. Baltimore's Jewish community (estimated at slightly more than 100,000) is highly concentrated, very definable, religious, very stable (70% having been born in Baltimore), and mostly of East European origin. Washington's Jewish community (estimated at about 120,000) is somewhat dispersed, younger, more mobile and more varied in origin.

Who Came and Why

There were many questions of interest in the screening programme. Some were technical, concerned with the methodology of the screening and the

chemistry of the tests; some medical, concerned with the management of amniocentesis; some genetic, concerned with counselling those at risk; and some social, concerned with who came to the screenings and why. Of course, most of those who attended the screenings were couples of child-bearing age, this was the group emphasised in all the planning and publicity. The main idea was that those potentially at risk for a Tay-Sachs child should comprise the bulk of those screened. Given the rarity of the disease, it is remarkable that some seven thousand people appeared for screening in a year's time.

Those who attended were very well educated and largely reflected the population characteristics of the Jewish community. Differences in religious affiliation, whether Reform, Conservative or Orthodox, appeared to be a relatively unimportant factor in attending. This was a small surprise, because there was some opposition to the screening among some religious Jews, partly based on the opposition to abortion. However most of this opposition did not come from the Baltimore-Washington Jewish communities.

Undoubtedly one of the main reasons for attending was whether or not the couple planned to have additional children. The majority of those who attended seemed to have understood the preventive aspect of the screening. The vast majority (82% Washington; 70% Baltimore) said that they would not change their plans to have more children even if they were a Tay-Sachs carrier; and, notably, a majority of those who were asked what they would do if as a couple they were both positive, and therefore had a one in four chance of having a child with Tay-Sachs, responded that they would still have children. Only twenty one percent of Washingtonians and twenty seven percent of Baltimoreans said they would have no more children. Of course,

these reports are what social scientists would call behavioural 'intentions'; what couples would really do given that choice remains unanswered. One thing is certain: attenders at the screening perceived their risk of being a carrier to be very low, but perceived the seriousness of the possible disease for their offspring as very great. From the information gathered at the time of the screenings it is impossible to know with certainty all the reasons why people attended. The models for understanding motivations and behaviours for health prevention and promotion were rudimentary twenty years ago. The research to answer the 'why people attended' question would be different today.

What Happened to Genetic Screening?

Almost twenty years have passed since this remarkable experiment in mass genetic screening for Tay-Sachs disease. Such screening has never 'taken off' in the medical world and become institutionalised in the way of other medical innovations, e.g. immunisation, blood pressure screens, etc. Undoubtedly there are many reasons for this and one could speculate on many alternative views, but probably there is no single reason. My own research on the Tay-Sachs screening demonstrated that the programme, despite considerable success in reaching the population at risk, would soon 'saturate' the target population with information and efforts to get people to attend, and that there would always remain a considerable proportion of the at-risk population who would remain unscreened. Unfortunately, the efficacy of any mass screening effort relies on a very high proportion of those at risk participating in the screening effort. In addition, when economic factors, such as the high cost of population screening united with very low benefits compared to other preventive measures, then alternatives to mass screening must be

considered. For example, when a man and a woman of Ashkenazi background decide to have children, then they can have a blood test to determine carrier status. Even then their chance of both being carriers is only around one in nine hundred.

Finally, and of very critical importance to many, are the many ethical questions. Perhaps because the Baltimore-Washington population knew they were taking part in a programme accepted by the community and carried out by a highly respected medical institution there was little discussion of some of the 'bigger' questions. Nonetheless, a screening programme such as that for Tay-Sachs is replete with philosophical issues. There is the question of abortion. There is the question of whether everyone who is a carrier should be identified before entering into marriage. And lingering in the background are the larger questions of eugenics, whether people of identifiable ethnicity, race, etc. should be further marked and identified genetically. Thus Tay-Sachs screening is not simply a medical innovation as it carries a considerable baggage of social and ethical consequences.



David McQueen was born in Iowa, USA, in 1940. He obtained his MA in 1967 and his Ph.D. in Behavioural Sciences in 1973, both from the Johns Hopkins University. Between 1973 and 1983 he was Assistant and Associate Professor at Johns Hopkins. During 1980 he was a Visiting Professor at Marburg University in West Germany. Since 1983 he became the Director of the Research Unit of Health and Behavioural Change at the University of Edinburgh. His current research interest is in the area of Lifestyle and Health. His hobbies include piano, electronics and dog walking!

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The Origins and Evolution of Indian Jews

A People Lost and Found

by Sas Judah

The history of my people, the Bnei Israel of India, can be likened to that of the Falashas of Ethiopia who only recently received recognition from the World Jewry. The Bnei Israel too went through a similar traumatic phase in their life—a people lost and found.

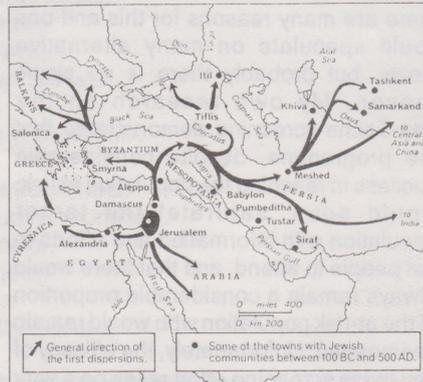
Origins

In about 1200 B.C.E., the Israelites under the inspired leadership of Moshe Rabbenu left Egypt and, on receiving the revelation of the Torah, took possession of the greater part of Canaan which had been promised to the Jews by the Almighty. They founded a Kingdom there and made Jerusalem the capital, building a temple where alone certain sacred rites could be carried out. Later, the kingdom split into two; the area occupied by the Ten Tribes constituted the Kingdom of Israel with Samaria as the capital, and the area occupied by the Two Tribes, Judah and Benjamin, constituted the Kingdom of Judah with Jerusalem as the capital. The temple in Jerusalem was the common shrine for both kingdoms.

During King Solomon's reign around 975 B.C.E., peace and tranquility prevailed throughout the Jewish dominions. Trade and commerce with far off nations was actively encouraged and abundantly flourished. Jewish seamen established a trade route to Ophir, the source of the gold that flowed into King Solomon's coffers. The famed historian Graetz gives the location of Ophir as the mouth of the Indus River (Sind) in India. Ophir or Sophir in sanskrit meaning 'region', was the undoubted source of supply of the indigenous products of South India.

In the eighth Century B.C.E. the Kingdom of Israel fell to the conquering Assyrians, and the majority of the inhabitants were deported; subsequent literature alludes to these people as the Lost Ten Tribes. Those that remained were scattered throughout Palestine. But after two centuries, the Kingdom of Judah was in turn conquered by the Babylonians, and most of the inhabitants were deported. Those who managed to escape were dispersed throughout Palestine and Gedalia. The deportees were allowed a certain amount of

autonomy and eventually the Persian Emperor Cyrus issued a proclamation under which a large number returned to Judea and started rebuilding in 519 B.C.E. the temple and the walls of Jerusalem. The work was completed in 516 B.C.E. under a later emperor. By this time the descendants of the Tribes of Judah and Benjamin came to be known as Jews, derived from Judah and their religion became known as Judaism. Even if the Ten Tribes which constituted the Kingdom of Israel are presumed to have disappeared from history, their common name of Israelites or Bnei Israel was retained solely by the largest Jewish community in India. There is a popular belief among the Bnei Israel that they belong to the tribes of Asher and Zebulun.



Jewish seamen who had undertaken voyages to Ophir from Eilat and Ezion Geber, were obviously impressed by the friendship, tolerance and hospitality extended by their Indian trading partners. So, when the destruction and desolation of Jerusalem took place in 586 B.C.E., Jews who were able to escape captivity went into exile and took temporary refuge in adjoining hospitable territories until the time was ripe for them to move on to a more secure environment. According to legend, a small number of Jews, burdened with families, chose to leave their temporary refuge around 180 B.C.E. for the safer haven available to them in Ophir, risking the hazards of the seas. These boat people of biblical time on their way to Ophir became victims of a storm that overtook their boats and were blown off course. Instead of landing in the familiar area of Sind, they were shipwrecked near the Henery and Kenery Islands fifteen

miles off the coast of Konkan, now known as Bombay.

Settlement in India

One of the most notable traits of the native Hindu character is the tolerance shown towards people of other faiths. The class and caste distinctions that existed then, the constant conflict between Brahmins and Buddhism for religious supremacy, enabled the Bnei Israel to remain outside the pale of controversy and follow freely the ancient creed of Israel without molestation.

The Bnei Israel took to the occupations of oil pressing and farming and set up a flourishing industry. That they chose such a vocation is a strong link in a chain confirming the tradition held by us even today: that our ancestors came from the Northern Confederacy of Israel. These Jews, it is recorded, worked for six days and completely abstained from work on Saturdays. They not only observed total abstinence from all kinds of work, but they also rested their oxen. The indigenous population gave my people the appellation of Shanwar Tellis, the Saturday Oilmen, which even persists to this day

Religion

There is, however, yet another expedient explanation available to throw some light on the origin of my people despite the passage of time. A critical examination of the observance of religious rituals, rites and ceremonies performed and the form of prayers recited by my people from time immemorial until their discovery, not only furnishes a valid test of their nationality, but also affords us material for forming some conjecture, as to the time of their flight from their homeland.

The rites and ceremonies, coupled with their manners and customs prior to the religious revival brought about by David Rahabi, bear a striking resemblance to those practiced by the Hebrews in Mishnaic times.

The early Bnei Israel knew only the Kiryat Shema, first of the two sentences of the Shema which they repeated on all

occasions—shabbath, festivals, brith milah and even funerals. This fact alone goes to prove that they were inhabitants of Palestine during the existence of the first temple at Jerusalem, at which period the Levite priests only, were familiar with the Hebrew liturgy. The congregants assembled in the temple precincts intoned only the Kiryat Shema at the beginning and conclusion of all religious services.

We all know that in pre-exilic period prayers were non-existent, or at any rate, there was no set formula for prayers. Everyone is known to have prayed in that period spontaneously and the worshipper displayed a variety of styles and patterns. It was only at the time of Ezra and his great assembly, that prayers began to take shape and became standardised, and our present format began somewhere in the third century C.E.

The Barukh Shem was engrafted on the Kiryat Shema only in the early days of the second temple. Had my ancestors returned to Palestine in 539 B.C.E. when Cyrus of Persia conquered Babylon and issued an edict - thus permitting the exiles to return and build another temple in Jerusalem - then perhaps even my people would have acquired the whole gamut of the new religious prayers, forms and ceremonies in vogue, throughout the country.

My ancestors observed all the festivals that were enjoined in the Pentateuch although with some variations considering their presence in a strange land thus giving them local names. By and large it can be said that the nature of observance of Judaism by the Jews who came to and settled in India, depended on the extent they were in touch with the developments which took place after their arrival in India.

An Unexpected Visitor

In 1172 C.E. David Maimonides, brother of the famed medieval Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides, visited the Indian Jewish community. It is said that although he was convinced of their Hebrew origin, he nevertheless put them to a canny test.

He gave the women clean and unclean fish and asked them to cook a meal for him. The women whilst obliging him, very quickly spotted the unclean fish and threw it away saying that they had never used fish for food which had no scales and fins and they did not even want their utensils to be tarnished with forbidden food. Being thus satisfied of their Hebrew descent, he undertook to teach them Torah and Halacha and introduced them to the Jews of Cochin.

The B'Nei Israel received religious instructions from the Jews of Cochin. Once they became proficient in the study of the Torah, they established the first synagogue in Bombay in 1796 and named it ShahaHa Rahamim, the Gate of Mercy. Congregational worship which hitherto had been held at the residence of some prominent Jews, was now held in the proper synagogue. Religious and higher secular education opened out unlimited opportunities and brought them wealth and prosperity. Affluence enabled the Bnei Israel to build many more synagogues and prayer halls in and around Bombay. There was, however, no way in which the Bnei Israel youth could escape conditioning from early childhood. Whether the employment was in an office, factory, armed forces or whatever, the stratification and social exclusiveness of the civilian environment was ever present. The state of affairs facilitated the transmission of the Bnei Israel tradition from generation to generation by word of mouth and by example.

Zionist Ideals

Never in over two thousand years sojourn in India, were the Bnei Israel ever subjected to discrimination, molestation or persecution of any kind. The word anti-semitism did not exist in our dictionary. In fact, when the news of the Holocaust reached India, our people were deeply shocked and unable to comprehend why their brethren in Europe were subjected to such degrading, dastardly and inhuman treatment. The atrocities committed against our co-religionists made our people sit up and wonder if a Jew had any safe place other than in a Jewish homeland. So with the re-establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, the fire of Zionism was re-kindled and 85% of the Bnei Israel population, of their own free will and accord, migrated to Israel determined to play their part in the building up of their national homeland.

Does the Content of a Box Depend on the Colour of the Wrapping?

The physical characteristics and pigment of our skin has, on occasions, caused raising of eyebrows. I remember we had just arrived in Glasgow and my wife went to the kosher butchers on Sinclair Drive. Ladies in the queue stared at her and after some hesitation one of them picked up enough courage to tell my wife, 'You are in the wrong shop, my dear, here they cater for Jewish people. The halal meat shop is round the corner'.

There is no such thing as a typically Jewish physiognomy today. Jews display almost every physical characteristic that

may be found in the nations among which they dwell and it should be no matter of surprise for an Indian Jew to resemble in many ways non-Jewish Indians rather than Russian, American or British Jews. The important point is that the Bnei Israel are essentially the sharers of a common religion. You will no doubt remember the words ... 'Tell us, we pray thee ... of what people art thou?' And he said unto them 'I am a Hebrew, and I fear the Lord, the God of Heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land ...'.

Finale

The history of the Bnei Israel has on the whole been a happy one unlike that of their co-religionists in many other lands. It is true that in the Diaspora, Jews have in one land or another, enjoyed periods of peace and prosperity and even outbursts of creativity which have brought advancement to the whole of mankind, but these periods have been succeeded by persecution, contumely and even expulsion. The most horrendous example is that of the Jews of Germany who for more than a century made a brilliant contribution to industry, science, literature, music and art only to be repaid with expropriation, expulsion, confinement, torture and, finally, extermination. ➔

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India is perhaps the only country in the world in which, for over 2,000 years, Jews dwelt in complete security and accorded an honourable place in the social structure of the land. While we cannot claim to have any extraordinary achievements to our credit but we did maintain our identity over centuries in the midst of an alien civilisation and, in our own way, prosper. And unlike some other small Jewish communities, we have neither allowed ourselves to be killed by kindness nor got assimilated in the host society. Part of the explanation may lie in the Hindu concept of Dharma, which has permeated the Indian outlook beyond the bounds of religion proper, and which requires one to

remain in, and fulfil the duties of, the station in which Providence has been pleased to place one. But this by itself would not have sufficed to prevent the Bnei Israel from becoming by gradual degrees but another Hindu caste. The saving factor was a stubborn pride in the Jewish heritage which enabled the Bnei Israel for instance, to resist the blandishments of the Christian missionaries, much as they admired them and appreciated what they were able to learn from them. After all, stiff-neckedness, of which the Israelites were once accused, can be a virtue. And survival as such is very highly rated in the Jewish scale of values. ●



Sas Judah was born in Bombay. He obtained an MA in literature from the University of Bombay. Runciman Shipping Limited brought him over to take up the position of Marine Insurance

and Claims Manager. For over twelve years he represented British Flag interests on the Tariff and Freight Rates Committees of the India-Pakistan-Bangladesh Conferences. He was an active member of Queens Park Hebrew Congregation, Glasgow, and served in several capacities until he moved residence with his job to Leith. He is now a member of the Council of Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation.

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Peaceful co-existence has prevailed over the chimera of absolute military victory

The Turn of the Tide in Palestinian Politics

by Paul Harper

What happens when an immovable post is hit by an unstoppable cannonball? The conundrum increasingly resembles the collision between the movement towards de facto Palestinian independence in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip and Israel's determination to keep control of the territories. In the case of the conundrum, the puzzle is solved by analysis of the terms 'unstoppable' and 'immovable'. If the hypothetical cannonball is really unstoppable, then logic will not allow the simultaneous existence of an immovable post, nor will an immovable post admit the existence of an unstoppable cannonball. The paradox, in other words, exists only in our flawed understanding, not in reality. And so it must be with the 15-month-old Palestinian Intifada or uprising against Israeli occupation. The Palestinian may pledge the Intifada will continue until the occupation is ended, and the Israeli may swear Eretz Israel will never be given up - but only one of them can be right.

Were unity of purpose the only criterion, the Palestinians would have to be judged the stronger party. As far as the immediate, central goal of ending the occupation goes, there is no dissent whatsoever in Palestinian ranks, a fact which made the task of mobilising, unifying and sustaining the Arab population of the West Bank and Gaza in support of the Intifada a relatively straightforward one. Israel, by contrast, is split in half between those who would trade territory for peace and those who would not give up an inch of land, and between those who would sanction talks with the PLO under certain conditions and those who would never talk to it under any circumstances.

Apart from the strong sense of national unity which is part and parcel of the Intifada, the Palestinians are far from monolithic in their political allegiances. Important as these differences are bound to be in the historic changes that have been set in motion, of far more importance at the moment is the fact that the majority support the decision of the PLO leadership to recognise Israel and enter

into negotiations with it on the basis of Palestinian independence in the occupied territories. I believe this is a genuine, widespread change of heart that gives Yasser Arafat a real mandate to negotiate a settlement with Israel, and opens up a real opportunity for peace.

The policies adopted at the Palestine National Council meeting in Algiers last November, and the subsequent declarations by Arafat, are an acknowledgment of this change. The PLO leadership did not initiate this change, they reacted to it. The changes itself originated among the Palestinians of the occupied territories, and was a generation in the making. The new voice of the Palestinians is that of a generation too young to remember anything except Israeli military rule. When it found expression in the Intifada, its impact on Israel and the international media lent it far more weight and volume than ritual slogans about revolution and armed struggle intoned by ageing men in battle fatigues in Sidon, Damascus or Tunis. This is not to say that radical or militant Palestinian nationalism has lost its appeal for many, but for the time being Arafat has trumped his domestic opponents by the dramatic gesture of proclaiming a Palestinian state in the occupied territories, and by the diplomatic breakthroughs which have followed his acceptance of UN Resolution 242 and public renunciation of terrorism. Even George Habash, leader of the uncompromising Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and once the most formidable of Arafat's enemies among the PLO's Syrian-backed rejectionist factions, has agreed to abide by the Algiers decisions., despite his public scepticism about the likelihood of these new policies paying off. Habash has slipped into the role of leader of Arafat's loyal opposition.

The radicals' acquiescence in the new policy is a potent illustration of the way the tide in Palestinian politics has turned in favour of the 'minimalists' over the 'maximalists'—the deep rift that has divided the PLO since at least 1974, and probably even before that. In effect, the

notion of co-existence - peaceful co-existence between Israel and the Palestinians - has prevailed over the chimera of absolute military victory. Reality, it could be said, has prevailed over illusion or at any rate, ideology. It is the Intifada that had brought about this transformation of the Palestinian political scene, because it has shifted the balance of power in favour of the insiders - those living under Israeli rule - a mute, even suspect group in traditional nationalist terms over the Palestinian diaspora. Perhaps this was always inevitable. Leadership of the Palestinians goes to whoever is achieving the most, or appearing to do so, in the struggle against Israel. And in practical terms, the absorption of the insiders into the structure of the Israeli state could not but give them a greater capacity than the outsiders to disrupt the workings of that state. The process was also undoubtedly assisted by the destruction of the military and para-statal apparatus of the PLO on the outside during and following Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, as even if the PLO 'state-within-a-state' in Lebanon had little real ability to challenge Israel, it certainly had the appearance of that ability in Palestinian eyes.

As to why the pre-dominance of the insiders should also be the pre-dominance of the co-existors, the simple fact is that the Palestinians of the occupied territories have been co-existing with Israel, however uncomfortably, for the last 20 years—that is, in the case of the real impetus behind the Intifada, the young, for their entire conscious lives. Despite all the strictures of life under occupation, that adds up to a view of Israel and Israelis belonging to another world from the perceptions of those in the only alternative centre of independent Palestinian nationalism, Lebanon. For Lebanese Palestinians, Israel is a demonic entity associated with sudden, brutal murder from the skies or beyond the horizon. The first actual contact many of them had with real Israelis in 1982 did little to modify this evil, terrifying image. Fear and hatred of the Israeli army is present in the occupied territories as well, of course,

but there the Palestinian view of Israelis in general is by contrast fully three-dimensional, formed not just through street battle with troops and police - in which panting, middle-aged reservists may be figures of fun as well as of terror - but through a whole range of interactions such as work, trade, officialdom and television. Such everyday co-existence must seem incomprehensible to many Palestinians on the outside. Even more so the fact that, with the passing of the Palestinian autonomous zone in Lebanon, there is more freedom to develop and express Palestinian political ideas under Israeli military occupation than there is under any Arab regime.

Growing up apart over the decades in such different circumstances has inevitably led to a divergence between diaspora Palestinians and those on the inside. The division of views between those who would settle for Palestinian independence in the West Bank and Gaza, and those who demand the maximalist goal of 'a democratic, secular state' in all of Palestine has largely reflected this geo-political division, as basic self-interest dictates it should. The divisions did not coincide exactly, and members of each camp might be found in the other, but that was the rough picture. By a consummate balancing act - enemies called it equivocation and subterfuge - Arafat for many years kept a foot in both camps, despite all Syria's efforts to make the split wider, deeper and permanent. But with the Intifada as his vehicle, Arafat has now clearly plunged down the minimalist road, and taken the PLO and the bulk of the Palestinians with him. There are still those who totally reject the move, both on the inside and the outside. The Muslim fundamentalist Hamas movement in the occupied territories denounces Arafat's recognition of Israel, and vows to fight on for an Islamic state in the whole of Palestine (and the rest of the Arab/Muslim world). The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command of Ahmed Jibril and the Fatah rebels of Abu Musa continue to lash the 'surrenderist, Arafatist clique'. But these are fringe factions, widely discredited in most Palestinian eyes as servants of rival causes. It does not escape attention that Hamas has enjoyed relative immunity from the harsher penalties of the occupying forces, nor is it forgotten who fought alongside the Syrians and against their own people in the Lebanon camps.

Arafat's success in uniting his people behind his timely demarche is neither final nor unconditional. Nothing succeeds like success-intensive, positive attention from the international media, diplomatic

breakthroughs in Europe and the United States, and the changing climate of opinion in Israel itself. But there are many factors outside the PLO's control which could reverse the spin on its fortune's wheel. Terrorist outrages, for one. The wider arena of international relations, for another - can anything really change in the Middle East unless the superpowers add it to their regional agenda for action, along with the Gulf, Afghanistan, Angola and the Western Sahara? Setbacks or even a prolonged deadlock could make those Palestinians who have suspended their misgivings think again. Ultimately, I believe, Arafat's success or failure hinges on the success or failure of the Intifada itself. He has correctly articulated its demands and sentiments, and as long as it continues to demonstrate the long-term untenability of the Israeli occupation, it will be difficult to undermine his position, either domestically or internationally.

Short of a political accommodation, or repressive violence on a scale neither the Israeli public nor the international community could stomach, I don't think the Intifada can or will be stopped. Stone-throwing youths are only the visible tip of a monumental, grassroots change in Palestinian society in the occupied territories. As a popular uprising or revolution, it is not on the same scale as the Russian or Iranian revolutions, but it shares the same historical irreversibility. Israel's massive military machine is useless against what is essentially civil disorder. Nor can it isolate itself from the impact of something that originates from within its own strategic and economic structure - unless by altering the shape of that structure. Nor, it seems, can Israel stop the gathering of international support for the Palestinians' limited, and clearly defined, terms for a settlement. At the moment the tide is running against Israel, while carrying the Palestinians where they want to go. If a settlement does eventually appear to be a real prospect, however, then the pressure will build up on the Palestinians as well. The nature of the future relationship between the West Bank and Jordan could prove highly divisive, in the face of Israeli and international determination to have King Hussein underwrite the security of any vacated territory - and Palestinian determination not to swap an Israeli occupation for a Hashemite one. The fate of the Palestinian diaspora will prove even thornier, as any compromise of what Palestinians regard as the right of return would sorely test the basic glue that holds the Palestinian people together. But such considerations are still highly academic. There's no shortage of potential obstacles to a settlement, on both sides of the conflict.



Paul Harper was born in England in 1958. In 1980 he graduated from *Edinburgh University in Arabic Studies*. From 1983 until 1986 he was the deputy editor of *Middle East International* and between 1987 and 1989 he worked as talks writer for the

BBC Arabic Service. His journalistic experience includes several trips to Israel, West Bank and Gaza as BBC correspondent. He has published a series of school texts on the Middle East. He is currently working for the BBC World Service Newsroom.

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I need freedom to be a Jew

by Edgar Prais

I am an aggressive Jew. That does not mean that a Jewish Defence League membership card nestles in my wallet or that I boast a locket inscribed 'My people right or wrong'. No, the description was first attached to me some twenty years ago by a true, loyal and horribly perceptive friend. I remember it well simply because I saw it there and then for the apt piece of labelling it was. I hadn't suddenly become an aggressive Jew; it's not the sticker which makes the strawberry jam—not a question of identity as much as one of identification. I'd always been what my good friend saw me to be.

So what prompted my friend (and let me stress, for the removal of doubt, that when I use the term 'friend' I am most decidedly not Mark Antony complimenting Brutus) to design that label? I had just become the proud owner of a Yossele Rosenblatt record and in my wisdom was unable to conceive of the notion that any man could avoid aural orgasm when caressed by those velvet tones. It was precisely that blinkered view, accompanied by my insistence that the record play itself out to the last groove, which earned me that epithet. Really quite polite in all the circumstances. Which epithet would you select if subjected to an hour of shinto priest chant? Nobody could say, could they, that my friend was wrong to think of me as a Jew who made no bones of the fact - call it aggressive assertiveness or assertive aggression. I'm one of your heart on the sleeve mob.

Believe me when I tell you then that nobody I know is allowed to forget that I'm Jewish. I'm not merely an aggressive Jew; I'm a boring Jew. The Israeli wife certainly assists the Identikit. I've two Israeli kids. I carry an Israeli passport. I've lived there. And nobody, but nobody, is allowed to forget it. Take what goes on at work, for instance. Whatever happens in the Middle East, whenever the holocaust features, on the rare occasion when domestic Jewish affairs interest anybody other than those who are having them, mine is the statutory Jewish view sought by my workmates. What do you think? I'm at Sabra and Shatila. I'm in the Judenrath. I'm selling tanks to South Africa. I'm rubbishing Jesse Jackson. I'm repressing the Intifada. I'm cutting cows' throats. I'm Harold Abrahams, Helen Shapiro - well, she's my sister. And I never complain about my role because I have very happily brought it upon myself. All I try to do is to

define the edges precisely. Hardly a meal goes by without a preliminary enquiry as to my feelings about the clovenhoof or an apology for having forgotten to make such an enquiry. I'm deemed - and why really object - to be divine at least in the respect that like a predecessor I need a Saturday off work. I can't help thinking that too many people take it for granted that the strawberries in the jam must be grown organically.

So I'm Jewish and I don't care who knows it. That doesn't mean that I'm happy, sad, proud or ashamed to be Jewish; it just means that I'm Jewish neutral. I am not a Sartre or Streicher Jew. I am a Jew, and this brings me back to the aggressive element, who doesn't wait to be labelled; I come pre-packed. I am not a skeleton in my own cupboard. I am very much aware that we are all of us masters of self-deception; there are even moments when I see myself as elegant. Nonetheless, I honestly believe that when I speak of my Jewish identification I have the gift to see myself as others see me.

And what else do I or should I have? The answer to that question is what I originally wanted to place at the core of these rumblings. I have the right to be the Jew I want to be. Why is it that when the truism is canvassed in the present context it acquires the cloak of controversy? Why is the straightjacket the standard issue recommended by the Jewish establishment to its adherents? Being Jewish is an accident of birth or an error in choice, so why bind up the Jew in hoops of steel? Certainly, the Pope should probably be a Catholic and the Chief Rabbi a Jew. But does being a Scot hinge on kilt and haggis? Is a non-ideologically-sound Russian nothing? Does every United States citizen have to be religious? Are pork-eating Israeli athletes less Jewish than the fancy-dress merchants of Stamford Hill?

I am more than happy that being Jewish should be a matter of subjective assessment. What I cannot stomach is the desire canvassed in certain quarters to impose a set of Jewish standards, adherence to which distinguishes Jewish wheat from chaff.

I'll tell you right now why I'm Jewish - and aggressively so. And by the way, as should by now have become crystal clear, that aggression is levelled not only against

people who are not Jewish in any sense but equally, if not more so, against those Jews who are so insufferably arrogant as to believe that they have the trademark all wrapped up. I'm Jewish because I was born with a yellow star; I'm Jewish because I was brought up with the elephant and the Jewish question; I'm Jewish because what happens to some Jews seems to be of particular concern to me; I'm Jewish because I worry about Israel; I'm Jewish because certain cultural and historical allusions ring my bells; I'm Jewish because some music makes my spine tingle. I am not a Jew because I am such a supremacist as to imagine that Jews have a monopoly on the moral law. I have seen the poison spread time and again by the chosen race concept in a variety of contexts—wherever the camp

Anybody who says, after reviewing that list of the positive and the negative, that the latter outweighs the former, thereby denying me the right to call myself a Jew, I have no hesitation in denouncing as a right-wing extremist. What I am looking for is tolerance; I'd far rather Lord Jakobovits didn't hold the same card as me but I realise that I am not entitled to ask him to surrender it, however disagreeable I find his uses of it.

Essentially, I have three major objections to the Chief Rabbi and his attitudes. First, I can't accept finding myself inflicted with a tribal chief whose views I generally utterly reject but who has, nonetheless, arrogated to himself the leadership of a group to which I have since birth found my self attached. I am at a loss to understand why he imagines he can speak for my community. Let him be a member if he so chooses—but not a mouth. Secondly, and this I mentioned particularly in a letter to him, I am thoroughly ashamed that a man in a position to swing the moral pendulum in South Africa so very ostentatiously refuses to do so. I'm not sure that Jews have to emulate Catholics to the extent of producing their very own Pius XII. Finally, I can see no objective justification whatsoever in the chief's hitching his wagon to a very particular political star. Why can't Tutu or Runcie speak in my name rather than a churchman for whom I have no ounce of sympathy? The chief is my Jewish problem in microcosm. He is out to mould us Jews in his image. Don't just ask me—ask Louis Jacobs.

Opinion

It's because he and his ilk are there that people confuse me with the kind of Jew he wants us all to be. It's because of him that I need all my aggression to remain for all the world to see my type of Jew. He is, after all, merely the Palace of Westminster face on the orthodox body whose goose-stepping we witness on the 'Who is a Jew?' parade-ground. I need freedom to be a Jew; what is on offer is a stifling constraint. Yet I am tolerant enough not to ask for his expulsion. All I do want, in a secular sense, is a broad kirk; I'm fed up with the wee free Jews.

All I want is Jewish disestablishment.



Edgar Prals was born in Glasgow in 1942. As a student he read History and Politics and obtained his first degree from the University of Glasgow. He also obtained a second degree, in Law, from the University of Edinburgh. He developed journalistic

experience as a sub-editor of The Scotsman. Six years of his life were spent in Israel where he married and had two girls.

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Edinburgh Jewry

by John A. Cosgrove

CALL FOR ARTICLES

If you live within or outside the Edinburgh Jewish Community, and can write essays, poetry or articles about a specific subject or wish to express an opinion, send your material to

**The Editor
The Edinburgh Star
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4 Salisbury Road
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WHAT'S ON

March

19 Sun	WIZO Shop (Community Centre) Community Centre Brunch	10 a.m. - 12.30 p.m. 12.45 p.m.
21 Tue	Lunch Club Friends of Israel : Purim evening	12.15 p.m. 8.00 p.m.
23 THu	Lunch Club	12.15 p.m.
26 Sun	Friendship Club Maccabi	afternoon afternoon
28 Tue	Lunch Club	12.15 p.m.
30 Thu	Lunch Club Council of Christians and Jews: 'Studies on Israel', Rev. J Stein	12.15 p.m. 7.30 p.m.

April

9 Sun	Friendship Club	afternoon
19 Wed	Communal Seder	

May

2 Tue	Lunch Club	12.15 p.m.
4Thu	Lunch Club	12.15 p.m.
7Sun	Friendship Club	afternoon
9 Tue	Lunch Club Friends of Israel : Prof. H. Fisch	12.15 p.m. 8.00 p.m.
11 Thu	Lunch Club	12.15 p.m.
18 Thu	Council of Christians and Jews; 'Is there a relationship between the New Testament and Anti-semitism in Christendom?', Rev. H. Taylor	7.30 p.m.
21 Sun	Friendship Club	afternoon
23 Tue	Lunch Club	12.15 p.m.
25 Thu	Lunch Club	12.15 p.m.
28 Sun	WIZO Annual Summer Lunch, 2 Ettrick Road	12.30 p.m.
30 Tue	Lunch Club	12.15 p.m.

June

1 Thu	Lunch Club	12.15 p.m.
4 Sun	Friendship Club	afternoon
6 Tue	Lunch Club	12.15 p.m.
8 Thu	Lunch Club	12.15 p.m.
13 Tue	Friends of Israel : A.G.M. and film	8.00 p.m.

In addition the Edinburgh Campaign for Soviet Jewry meet usually on the first Monday evening of the month in a member's home.

The Jewish Youth Study Group meets regularly on Sunday evenings in member's homes.

SIGNIFICANT DATES

March

20 Mon	Fast of Esther
21 Tue	Purim

April

20 Thu	Passover, 1st day
21 Fri	Passover, 2nd day
26 Wed	Passover, 7th day
27 Thu	Passover, 8th day

May

10 Wed	Israel's Independence Day
23 Tue	Lag B'Omer

June

9 Fri	Feast of Weeks, 1st day
10 Sat	Feast of Weeks, 2nd day

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A Brief History Of Sport In The Community

by Mike Adelman

In spite of its size, the Edinburgh Jewish Community scored a few successes in the field of sports. Not unexpectedly, football was always the most popular. The Maccabi teams, over the years, won some famous victories against stronger teams from Glasgow and Newcastle. Initially, in the sixties, the team was built around Jack Bierman, Morris Brown and Reggie Kiman and also included some students from South of the Border. Players who won representative honours for Great Britain Macabi, senior and junior, included Jack Bierman, Steven Levey and yours truly. Tony Cowan and Bernard Feldman also played in North vs. South matches. The success of the football team was due mainly to the good organisation and dedication of Lennie Berger and in later years Harold Levey.

Table tennis was also strong in the sixties and Maccabi had three teams in the Edinburgh and district league. The first team usually included Jack Cowan, Mervyn mith, Jack Biemar and was coached by a former Swiss champion of the thirties, Boris Zifras. The seconds consisted of Alex Levey, Micky Cowen, Ernie Josephs and the late Hymie Abrams. The younger lads made up the

third team: Tony Cowan, Michael Fisher, Alan Myenthall and Michael Adelman.

For a few years Athletics championships were held, and Aron Rifkind won a javelin medal in the National Maccabi Championships in Brighton.

Tennis had a short 'life' in the mid sixties with a strong quarter comprising of students Mike Mench and James Denton along with the Braverman sisters Shirley and Jackie who took part in the Maccabiah trials, which they won, but surprisingly were not chosen to travel.

Badminton was always synonymous with success. There was always a super turnout for both mens' and ladies' sections. Annette Caplan reached the final of the National Maccabi championships only to lose to a very experienced Indian player. In doubles Annette and Judith Rosen reached the final where they lost an exciting match.

Before my time the community used to have a rugby fifteen! We actually defeated Glasgow 11-3. Prominent members of the side were David Deane and John Lipetz. In a return fixture

Glasgow got their revenge, as we were missing key players through injury.

Cricket has had its ups and downs over the years and is probably the only remaining Maccabi sections still competing in a league. The Mendelsohn brothers were a dominant influence in the early years, supported by out-of-town students. Nowadays the team consists mainly of non-Jewish players, but youngsters David Mason and David Kaplan are enthusiastic members of the side. Thanks to Norman Berger's continued enthusiasm, the Maccabi eleven has survived, so not all is quiet on the eastern front!



Edinburgh side of the early sixties. Back row, left to right Tony Cowan, Tommy the bus driver, Bernard Feldman, Len Mars, Maurice Kaplan, Roy Eprle. Front: Mike Adelman, James Denton, Norman Berger, Lennie Berger and Mike Mench.

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