

The Edinburgh Star

Journal of the Edinburgh Jewish Community

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The Edinburgh Star

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4 SALISBURY ROAD
EDINBURGH EH16

Editor: Ruth M. Adler

Editorial Board:

John Cosgrove
Mickey Cowen
Wendy Fidler
Rabbi Shalom Shapira
Mark Sischy

Editorial Assistant:

Ian Shein
Tel: 031-332 2324

Advertisements:

Manny Wittenberg
Tel: 031-667 0500

Visual Arts:

Judy Gilbert
Tony Gilbert

Typesetting and page origination
and printing by Meigle Printers,
Tweedbank, Galashiels, TD1 3RS

Editorial

Passover has been described as "the Jewish method of affirming the great truth that liberty is the inalienable right of every human being ... the celebration of Israel's homage to the great principle of human freedom." The following pages contain an account of a service to mark the beginning of the Edinburgh Peace Festival. The proceeds of this Festival are donated in large part to Amnesty International and Amnesty, perhaps more than any other organisation champions the right to freedom for all human beings who have not broken the law. "Prisoners of conscience" as they are called, are people in prison solely because of their beliefs or their ethnic origins. There are several thousand such prisoners from all walks of life in some 80 countries in the world. Among them, for example, are Eli and Selim Swed aged 30 and 50, two of at least 23 members of Syria's Jewish Community arrested since 1987. They were sentenced in May 1991 to six-and-a-half year prison terms, on charges of treason and espionage. The final hearing of their trial was reportedly held *in camera*, lasting only a few minutes with neither the defendants nor their lawyers being allowed to speak!

This Passover as we sit and enjoy the Seder and the wonderful food and the company of family and friends, let us also remember those - Jew and non-Jew alike - who cannot enjoy the freedom which we take for granted and let us hope that next Passover, they too will be free.

The Editor and Editorial Board wish all Star readers Chag Sameach.

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We should once again like to express our gratitude to Judy and Andrea for all the hard work which they put into *The Star*.

The Star needs your support. If you have any items of news, opinions to air or even an idea for consideration contact the editor or a member of the board.
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PASSOVER by I. K. COSGROVE

The Festival of Passover is the Festival of Freedom in commemoration of the Exodus of the Children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt. Throughout the world Jews gather round the festive table, rich in its religious and historical symbolism. They partake of the Matzah, the unleavened bread, which signifies the haste of their departure and the profound lesson that the historic moment of freedom does not always find its recipients prepared for it. We combine it with the eating of bitter herbs as a reminder of the suffering and travail which preceded the granting of the great gift of Freedom. We read the Haggadah, the rabbinical embellishment of the exciting story of the redemption from slavery.

The underlying and patent purpose of all that beautiful ceremonial is to recapture, if only for a fleeting moment, the emotions of that dramatic event in Jewish and in world history. On this night we say in the course of the recital of the Haggadah: "Every Jew is obliged to regard himself as though he personally had emerged from the bondage of Egypt." In this way, we rededicate ourselves to the message of freedom and its implications in our lives today. There is no single word which makes a more passionate appeal to the heart of both Scotsman and Jew than the blessed word 'Freedom'. It makes its instant appeal to our deepest emotions, but it is just because of that emotional impact that it is necessary to consider its implications. In its very appeal there lurks the danger that it will become trite, hackneyed, and therefore meaningless.

There are two aspects of freedom - national freedom - the inalienable right of every people to live in accordance with its own traditions, working out its own destiny and its own salvation, free from the government or overlordship of any other people. From that point of view the historian of the future will surely point to the second half of the

20th Century as that significant and revolutionary period in human history when the challenging doctrine which the Jewish people enunciated over 3000 years ago, became at last, the common possession of the world as a whole and joined those ideals which Carlisle called 'the eternal verities'.

The last two decades have witnessed one of the greatest steps forward in human progress, the casting off of the shackles of colonialism and subjection by virtually every nation in the world, no matter how small or culturally backward it may be. Vast areas in Africa and in Asia have achieved their national independence and the few pockets of resistance which still exist in the world are undoubtedly on the way out. No power in the world can withstand this floodtide in the history of mankind: "Let my people go" has become the stirring slogan of the world as a whole. To that extent the 'doctrine first enunciated with the Exodus not in mere words but by a dramatic historic act', has found its almost complete acceptance.

There is, however, another aspect to freedom, the freedom of the individual. The connection between the two is movingly expressed by a modern Greek Writer, who, in his youth, was a witness of and to some extent, a participant in the struggle of his native Crete to throw off the yoke of the Turkish rule over the island. In his book "Report to Greco", page 68, Nikos Kazantzakis says this:

"What first truly stirred my soul was not fear and pain, nor was it pleasure and games; it was the yearning for freedom. I had to gain freedom, but from what, from whom? Little by little in the course of time, I mounted freedom's rough unaccommodating ascent. To gain freedom first from the Turk that was the initial step; after that, later, this new struggle began - to gain freedom from the inner Turk, from ignorance, malice and envy, from fear and laziness,

from dazzling false ideas - and finally from idols, all of them, even the most revered and beloved."

It is a striking expression of the truth that national independence and freedom constitute only the foundation upon which can be erected the edifice of the greater freedom - that of the soul; its value lies only in the fact that it creates those conditions which can bring about personal fulfilment. There is no religion which stresses more than Judaism the absolute and unfettered freewill of man. Maimonides, one of the most towering intellects in Jewish history calls it - "the essential pillar upon which the whole of Judaism depends". The Fifth Chapter of his 'Laws of Repentance' where this statement is found opens with the fine declaration: "Man", he declares, "is absolutely free. If he wishes to incline to the good way and live a righteous life", or "towards the way of evil and be wicked" - the choice is entirely his own.

There is no power that can coerce him or command him or draw him towards one of those two roads. He himself of his own volition, chooses and even the Almighty cannot influence his choice.

Although such a doctrine apparently conflicts with the equally fundamental doctrine of the Omniscience of God, it is upheld without exception by all classical Jewish thinkers throughout the ages. God leaves the decision to man himself, as the Talmudic formulation of that principle expresses it. Everything is foreseen by God yet the freedom of choice remains with man.

But there is an obverse side to freedom, whether national or individual. It surely implies that before that much desired state was attained those upon whom it was conferred were subject to someone who "commanded and dominated them and imposed his will upon them controlling their destiny". When the slave or the subject attains his freedom, his former master

thereby loses his control over him and is deprived of his forced labour. By the same token when the Almighty granted man the priceless blessing of freedom he took, so to speak, a calculated risk. He relinquished his hold over man and the forced servant became only a voluntary one. And if man is free to serve God from his own volition, he is equally free to renounce that service, to refuse to serve him and to take the path which leads him away from that service.

God our loving Father, having given us free-will does not force his will upon us, just as in another context Britain or France do not pass laws - for the government of their former colonies and dependencies which have achieved their political independence. That is what I call "the calculated risk" which God took.

Paradoxical and almost heretical though it may sound God does not intervene, He shows us, he teaches us, he guides us and tells us what is good, and then he can but hope that man for the sake of his own happiness and wellbeing, for his own salvation and that of the world, will choose the way which is right and avoid the way which will bring him and the human race to destruction. In the world of spiritual freedom there is no place or room for the bombing of ones opponents into submission and therefore don't blame God for man's decisions and their disastrous consequences. Man and man alone can and shall decide whether the vast and inexhaustible energy which has been released through atomic power will bring about the destruction of the world or bring about a hitherto undreamed of plenty and prosperity. Man was granted freedom to save or to destroy himself. He may indeed achieve "freedom from ignorance, malice and envy and finally from idols even the most revered and adored," he might equally achieve freedom from every moral restraint, from compassion and brotherhood, from loving mercy and doing justice and walking humbly before God, as Michah defined the plea which God

makes to man. That, in essence is the struggle which is going on throughout the world today in the heart of every individual as in the councils which determine the working out of the destinies of the nations of the world. It accounts for all those excesses in behaviour which give such grave cause for anxiety to social workers and religious leaders, the casting off of all restraint on the part of youth, the disturbing increase in drug addiction, the absence of moral discipline. But on the other hand it also accounts for the growing awareness of responsibility, for the awakening of the desire for ecumenism which is being fostered by all faiths, for the passion for social justice, for the Welfare State in which we live and which we so lightly take for granted.

When I say that God took a calculated risk when he freed man from being a blind automaton inexorably fulfilling His will and without any will of his own, when He squarely placed upon man the responsibility of being captain of his soul and master of his own destiny, it was a risk based upon the belief in the innate and ultimate goodness of man. It rested upon the knowledge that ultimately justice will triumph and right reign supreme. Setbacks, there may be, period of retrogression and slipping downhill, but in man in whose soul is implanted the divine image of God, the source of all goodness, there is always the stirring of conscience which makes him call a halt to that decline, dig his heels in at the critical moment, and begin again the painful ascent up the mountain of the Lord.

..... If the spirit level of man's life is to rise it can be only when each one of us is inspired and activated to use our freedom to enter voluntarily into the service of God.

And the celebration of Passover comes to arouse us to a sense of responsibility, of the world of the spirit that its level may rise. To keep the Passover unto the Lord our God means not merely to clothe with verbal vestments the events it recalls. It means rather that we who on Passover regard ourselves as having

personally escaped from Egyptian bondage, have no right to enjoy the fruits of freedom unless we live it in our own personal lives and make it the universal heritage of all men. May we all be inspired to apply the divine gift of freedom to the cause of right and justice. Then truly will the world be filled with the spirit of God, as the waters cover the sea.

* FOOTNOTE: This is a slightly abbreviated text of a broadcast first transmitted on the B.B.C. Scottish Home Service on Sunday, 23rd April 1967.



Rev. Dr. I.K. Cosgrove was Minister of Garnethill Synagogue, Glasgow from 1935 until his death in 1973. During World War II he served as a Chaplain to the Forces at home and abroad. Part of that time was spent in Edinburgh as Senior Jewish Chaplain - Scottish Command. A large part of his vast library of Judaica was presented to the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation in 1985.

EDINBURGH HEBREW CONGREGATION

Cheder Classes

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 1992

A new pre-school/P.1 class is planned for August/September 1992. Applications are invited from parents of children reaching their fourth birthday by September, 1992.

Please contact the Headteacher, Elaine Samuel at 31 Leamington Terrace, Edinburgh EH10 4JS. (Tel: 031-229 5541) for further information.

13 Argyle Crescent
Joppa
Edinburgh
EH15 2QQ
17th February 1992

Dear Editor,

FUTURE GENERATIONS COMMITTEE

I thought your readers might be interested to hear about a new committee that has been set up under the auspices of the Council of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation.

The committee has the somewhat daunting remit of safeguarding our children's future in Edinburgh by containing and indeed reversing the current decline in numbers within our community. We have an ageing population whose youth are tending to leave Edinburgh for their higher education, seldom returning to settle down.

At first glance, it seems curious that Edinburgh is not more successful in attracting Jewish people from other centres. We have a wonderfully vibrant community here with considerable numbers of active and effective committees and societies. The Edinburgh Literary Society has a national if not an international reputation for the quality of its speakers, regularly drawing attendances of over 60. We have a very successful Community Centre Committee which together with the Ladies Committee, organise various social gatherings - from Chanukah dinners to Cabaret evenings to Burns' Supper - with attendance often exceeding 100. We have a Jewish Philosophy Group that is run by Professor Brodie of Glasgow University; we have a monthly Israeli dancing group. In fact, there are well over twenty active social groups operating within our community.

What's more, Edinburgh is one of the most beautiful cities in Europe, with an excellent quality of life and with a major financial centre second only to London.

The trouble is that we are not well known outside our community. I cannot believe how few Londoners I speak to are even aware that there is a Jewish Community and Synagogue in Edinburgh. There is also a touch of complacency in certain quarters within our community, believing somehow that things will turn out all right in the end, or worse, that there is nothing we can do to halt the decline.

I and the committee do not adhere to that view. However, we have to rise to the challenge and we have to act - now. What we have here in Edinburgh is far too precious, far too important to leave to the hand of fate.

The committee is planning to attack the problem from a number of perspectives:

- (i) We want to focus on four main sources of Jewish people outside our present community, namely (a) Edinburgh Jews who do not at present participate in community activities; (b) People in the main Jewish centres within the UK (notably London and Manchester); (c) European Jews, within and outside the EEC; and (d) The States and Canada.
- (ii) We need to 'sell' ourselves. No apologies for using a marketing term. If you are uncomfortable about this perspective, you may wish to stop reading now. We need to develop, with professional help, a major brochure (possibly in different languages) giving an account, historical and current, of the Jewish Community in Edinburgh and about Edinburgh itself. We need to include in the brochure facts about the educational system here, the quality of the health service, the Universities, the local economy, the professions. We need to prepare a hospitality pack giving a more detailed account of the many different societies and activities taking place here. And we need to prepare a monthly calendar of events.
- (iii) The third key perspective is that we have to make clear statements that we believe in ourselves and our future, and that we are delighted to welcome others into the fold. This is perhaps a more complex issue than it sounds. Clearly, the brochure we are proposing will help in this endeavour. But we must contain the negative forces within our community who say we must somehow yield to the inevitable. We have a vibrant community in Edinburgh. We must be excited by this fact and we must transfer this excitement to others. We need to develop a group of 'welcoming' families who will greet prospective newcomers and welcome them into their homes, explaining what we are about and fielding any concerns they may have. We need to develop connections with professional personnel agencies so that we can offer help to those who need jobs. We will also need to develop a Schools Liaison Service so that we can offer Jewish school leavers throughout Britain, and their advisers, information about the Edinburgh Jewish Community, the City of Edinburgh and its Universities. We welcome invitations to visit schools with Jewish pupils to give illustrated talks and to speak individually with pupils, parents and teachers.
- (iv) And finally, we must ask lots of questions so that we can tailor more closely our Jewish infrastructure here in Edinburgh to the needs of Jews elsewhere. We must ask Jewish students and other newcomers why they came to Edinburgh, what they like and do not like about life in this great city.

You will appreciate that all that I have said is only skimming the surface. A large dose of lateral thinking is required. Of course we have some ideas but we need more ideas as to how to attract people to our community. Please feel free to write to me at the address above. If there are things we are doing in the community which could be done better, please let me know. If you would like to know more about any aspect of our work, please let me know.

Yours sincerely,

John Danzig, *Chairman, Future Generation Committee.*

'Villa Samares',
30 Duddingston Road West,
Edinburgh, EH15 3PS.
18/1/92

Dear Editor,

I am writing to you after just receiving the news that Edinburgh University Jewish Society were forced to use university premises for a Friday night meal after being told that the Community Centre was not available despite them having booked the use of it. As far as I can gather this is the second occasion that this has happened with the students being given less than a week to find an alternative on both occasions. This has caused the students much inconvenience having already notified their members that the meal will take place in the Community Centre as well as the fact that kosher food had already been purchased.

Although I am now studying at Dundee University, I feel I am well placed to talk about student-community relations having spent a number of years as a youth leader in Edinburgh and I now maintain close links with Edinburgh students.

Firstly I would like to state that the apathy shown by the Edinburgh Community towards the students has bothered me for a number of years with the cancelling of the Friday night meals at short notice being the "icing on the cake".

With the Edinburgh Community ageing rapidly and therefore shrinking, I would have thought that the influx of 40 or so young and active Jewish students would have been welcomed with open arms. Clearly this has not been the case. In fact quite the opposite seems to have occurred with the community going out of their way to make things difficult for the students. The community should be making the facilities available to the students as often as is possible, not putting obstacles in their way. Surely if it is not convenient for the Centre to be used one Friday night it is possible for the students to be given notice of such a fact more than four days in advance. This smacks of bad organisation and leadership, and

reflects poorly on the Community as a whole.

Every February, Northern Region Union of Jewish Students holds a weekend school in Newcastle. I have attended two such events, and they are a credit to the Newcastle Community and an example which Edinburgh could well do with following. On the Shabbat, after Shul, the students are invited to lunch at the Community Centre with the prominent members of the Community. As an outsider, the warmth and friendship shown by the Community to the students is noticeable. All the Community know the students by name and are very approachable. I would hazard a guess that the idea of a Community-student Shabbat lunch has never even been considered by the Synagogue Council in Edinburgh.

I attended the last A.G.M. of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation and was taken aback at the amount of attention given to the future and so little to present problems.

The fact of the matter is that a number of things need to be done today. Improving relations between the Community and the students by, for example, holding a Shabbat lunch would be a start.

Yours sincerely, Ian Caplan.

Editor's Note: A special service and Shabbat lunch is to be held in the Shul on Saturday 2nd May.

22 Congreve Way,
Bardsey,
Leeds, LS17 9BG
9 February 1992

Dear Madam,

As an expatriate of Edinburgh and alumnus of its cheder from many years ago, I was most interested to see a copy of *The Edinburgh Star* and wish it well. I reflected upon and would draw your attention to the following. Your estimable Journal is apparently so-called from the Magen David displayed on the cover and refers to the Star of David. Surely this is a mis-translation which occurs frequently (e.g. in the Article on the Lodge of Solomon, p.6 of your issue

No.11) and in the minds of Christian friends, I suspect, is considered to be related to the Christmas star in the East. One does not have to be a Hebrew scholar but merely refer to a siddur which has an English translation to see that Magen means "shield". In cheder we were told, if I remember correctly by the late Chazan Levenson, that the shape of the Magen David was that of the shield which King David used on his legendary military expeditions and thus has no connections with a star. Incidentally, I should think that the Magen David has no religious significance but is merely a kind of Jewish logo. Correct me if I am wrong.

Yours faithfully, Philip Cowen.

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Dear Editor,

67 Warrender Park Road,
Edinburgh EH9 1ES.

I read with interest Jonathan Bard's letter, commenting on "the stark future we face if we carry on as we are - and our survival demands that more of the Jews living here should wish to be associated with the synagogue". My immediate thought was: why do I not go to the synagogue more often?

Firstly, I, and I believe many others, are not completely clear as to how we put into practice our Judaism. The one thing I envy Orthodox communities is their lack of questioning. I question my Judaism all the time, in the sense of how I want to implement it. Certain things are very clear to me: I bring up my children to celebrate the festivals with joy, and to relive each time what they mean. We all speak Hebrew fluently, they visit Israel often, and we talk about kibbutz and the beauty of the Jordan Valley. I also enjoy reflecting on the three religions of the Book, studying their differences and similarities, and discussing them with my more spiritual friends.

On the other hand I cannot escape the form that Judaism has taken and the difficulty women face in coming to terms with a religion which is thousands of years old and does not recognise feminism. In its very physical structure, the synagogue is automatically directed towards men, which counters all my beliefs about equality between the sexes. I also have my doubts about religious bureaucracy, probably resulting from a bad experience with the Rabbinit in Israel.

The one way I have found to be associated with the community is the Jewish Literary Society membership of which I recently renewed. I hope to come to many meetings and bring friends along.

I see no easy solutions to the dilemma I have raised, of a male-centred world of synagogue, and can only suggest that we invite Rabbi Julia Neuberger to come and speak and see what she has to suggest.

Yours sincerely, *Nikkie du Preez (formerly Atad).*

COMING EVENTS

APRIL	5 Sunday	Friendship Club	3.00pm
		Literary Society A.G.M.	8.00pm
	9 Thursday	Council of Christians and Jews	7.30pm
	12 Sunday	Friendship Club	3.00pm
	17 Friday	Communal Seder	8.00pm
	18 Saturday	1st Day Passover	
MAY	27 Monday	Lodge Solomon	7.00pm
	2 Saturday	Student Shabbat Service and lunch	
	3 Sunday	Friendship Club	3.00pm
	14 Thursday	Council of Christians and Jews	7.30pm
	17 Sunday	Friendship Club	3.00pm
	27 Wednesday	Friends of Israel	8.00pm
	31 Sunday	WIZO Annual Summer Lunch at 2 Ettrick Road	12.30pm
JUNE		Friendship Club	3.00pm
	7 Sunday	1st Day Shavuoth	
	14 Sunday	Friendship Club	3.00pm
	25 Thursday	The Chief Rabbi will address an Open Meeting of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation and the Literary Society	8.00pm
		Friendship Club	3.00pm
	28 Sunday	Friendship Club	3.00pm

Maccabi meets every alternate Sunday from 1.00pm to 3.00pm. For further information, contact Michael Rifkind (447 7386)

Senior Maccabi meets on Sunday evenings in members' homes.

The Jewish Philosophical Society meets every alternate Saturday afternoon in the Succah.

The Lunch Club meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 12 noon.

The above events, unless otherwise stated, take place in the Community Centre, Salisbury Road.

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THE LOWRIE REPORT:

CHANUKAH, BURNS NIGHT AND A GOLDEN WEDDING

THE DAY THE LIGHTS CAME OUT OF THE WEST

Chanukah was celebrated in style, Rabbi Shapira making Havdala, lighting the candles and then relating the story of the miracle of the oil for the Temple Menorah.

The Chair, Anita Mendelssohn, welcomed us and introduced the Glasgow "Lights" - those talented entertainers who had journeyed to the East to make our evening such a happy one.

After an excellent meal prepared by the Ladies Committee, a 90 minute cabaret compered by Tony Goodman, who also brought forth

roars of laughter with his comedy, and performed with verve and sparkle, kept us enthralled. The beautiful voice of Cantor Ernest Levy brought back memories of the great Richard Tauber with "You are my Heart's Delight", his Yiddish Chazanout songs were a sheer delight and his humorous song set to "Come back to Sorrento" brought the house down. Aubrey Gerber not only accompanied Cantor Levy but also soloed on the works of that wonderful composer George Gershwin, finishing with that tour de force, "Rhapsody in Blue". Irene

Conway played guitar and sang a selection of popular Israeli, Russian and Jolson songs.

What can be said of such performers except to applaud their generosity for it can be said that in every way they gave freely of their talents and services.

94 guests thoroughly enjoyed this Chanukah evening and Ian Shein expressed our pleasure in his vote of thanks.

The final draw of the 100 Club was made and Jessie Franklin was the popular winner.

BURNS NIGHT

115 guests gathered to honour the Bard on the anniversary of his birth, 25th January.

Into the Hall - decorated with posters of Robert Burns and the Selkirk Grace and with the tables hung round with tartan ribbon and laid with Burns place mats, by courtesy of Drambuie Ltd. and obtained through the offices of Fred Lowrie -filed the top table guests behind the Piper.

Rabbi Shapira made Hamotzi then recited the Selkirk Grace, which he also translated into Ivrit for the benefit of those whose Lallans was not too good! After a witty speech, John Cosgrove addressed the Haggis which had been piped in by Piper Tom Lewin and borne aloft by Chef Harold Abrahams; the Head Waitress followed with three drams which were "taken off" by Messrs. Cosgrove, Lewin and Abrahams before the Haggis returned to the kitchen. The Chairman, Mark Sischy, proposed the Toasts to the Queen and to the State of Israel.

The meal over, and as usual it was of that very high standard which the Ladies Committee has set itself, Philip Cohen brought his considerable experience to bear on delivering a scholarly and humorous toast to The Immortal Memory. Norman Berger's Toast to the Lassies was a superb delivery and very amusing matched only by Avril having an equally amusing last word with, appropriately on Burns Nicht, a marvellous poem. Accompanied by that fine pianist (and Choirmaster), David Mendelssohn, Margaret Aronson sang most wonderfully for us and in that beautiful song "The Rowan Tree" was joined by a fugitive tenor from the Mendelssohn Glee Club by the name of Joe Aronson and very accomplished he was.

Rabbi Shapira led the Adon Olam to the tune of "Ye Banks and Braes o' Bonnie Doune" while the Grace after Meals was sung to the rousing "Scotland the Brave".

The Vote of Thanks, entirely comparable with the speeches of the evening, was made by Mistress Rose Orgel, née Gordon, swathed most appropriately in the beautiful tartan of Ancient Gordon.

Burns Nicht ended with the singing of his song, now sung all over the world at the end of practically every festive gathering: Auld Lang Syne.

"Happy We Hae Been A' Thegither".



*Rose Orgel, Rabbi Shapira, Rachel Shapira, John Cosgrove
Hazel Cosgrove, David Mendelssohn, Mark Sischy (rear)*

OUR WILLIE AND HIS GOLDEN BELLE



Let's just look at what the world looked like on that day in 1942. The free world had its back to the wall, The Scotsman (2d.) reporting that the Japanese were almost in Singapore, the Nazis were only 65 miles from Moscow, Malta was under heavy attack, the "Prince of Wales" had been sunk, author, Norman McLean was putting a strong case for the establishment of Israel in a book entitled "His Terrible Swift Sword", trains were taking 26 hours from Scotland to London, there was also the Wilson Barratt Company at the Lyceum and that perennial subject around this time of year in the Letters - "Haggis, the Origins and Derivation thereof". In the Evening News (11/2d.), on the lighter side, there were Sale Ads. for shops, alas long gone, Parkers, Peter Allens, Cochranes and P.T's. There were also ads, for Oxydol, Vimatol, Bairds Shoes, Sister Laura's Food for Babies and something to give both sexes' simmitts zingy sex appeal at the Palais, Cav., or Plaza - Thermogene Vapour Rub! and Strangs Pools held out hopes of the high life with a prize of £125. 2s. 6d. The radio was still the wireless and the Dominion's picture that week was, appropriately, "I'll Wait for You".

So it was in this grim and dark world that Willie Caplan and Betty Kofsky decided to marry and contribute their bit of light, hope and optimism for the future. Three days later Willie's embarkation leave was up and he sailed from Liverpool, first stop Durban. A Terrier, Willie had been called up in 1939, starting off with the Lothians and Border Horse and eventually into the Armoured Corps.

Just the right degree of chill brought out the sparkle in "The President", Israel's finest Methode Champenoise, which those present at Willie and Betty Caplan's Golden Wedding reception were enjoying so much prior to spending a magnificent evening as their guests.

But it takes 50 years of marriage and rather more of life to get to a Golden Wedding and in the beginning the world was a very different place on Wednesday the 21st January 1942, when our Golden Couple stood beneath the Chuppah to be married by the Reverend Dr. Salis Daiches, Betty being given away by Sylvia Lewis's Father, Mr. Lindey.

Pesach 1942 was spent with a family in Durban and Willie then sailed in the "Ile de France" to Egypt; Willie was now a Desert Rat with these famous Armoured Divisions in the Eighth Army, of whom it was said by Churchill "When you are asked what you did in the great struggle it will be sufficient to say 'I served with the Eighth Army' "!

Willie's war was served at the sharp end, for Anti-Tank Gunners tend to fire at the bit where the driver is and the mines tend to go off just underneath him; the terrible casualty figures of the great Tank Battles of the Western Desert testify that it was not a lot of fun.

3½ years after his appointment under the Chuppah, Willie came home on leave then went back to finish 4 years overseas service before demobilisation and the (in)famous Demob Suit.

We owe a lot to Willie (and all the other Willies) and as a Standard Bearer at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday, Willie stands in for us all in remembering those who have their own little bit of Scotland, or wherever, in those places where men and women served.

Mind you, while Willie was swanning around on cruise ships or driving around in his own personal conveyance touring the Mediterranean holiday resorts at the taxpayer's expense, Betty had the real hardships to endure. She had waved Willie off not knowing when or if she would ever see him again. These were hard times, the hungry thirties had ended in war, there was rationing of food, fuel, clothing, the

blackout was depressing and in general life was not a bundle of joy for a 21 year old bride of 3 days, parted from a husband who might not return, but Betty did her bit with hard work and long hours as an Inspector of finished work at Manclark's Uniform Division.

Finally it was all over, Willie resumed work at Sam Crams as a Chairmaker then after moves to Vinestock and to Sloanes, he worked with Barney Lewis for 30 years, while Betty put her skills to good use from 1958 when she went into business in skirt making, alterations and dry cleaning, only giving up in 1970 because of ill-health. Betty and Willie of course have been very active in the Friendship Club for many years as Secretary and Chairman.

So 50 years on, the glasses of "The President" quaffed, 120 guests were honoured and privileged to sit down with Willie and Betty Caplan, their son Stuart, daughter-in-law Marsha and grand-daughters Yvonne and Stacey, for a superb meal, when each present consumed rather more than the entire rations for the week for a family of four in 1942, after which Stuart proposed in the most affectionate terms - which the guests thunderously endorsed - the Toast to his Parents.

Rabbi Shapira in wishing them Mazeltov said that they were indeed a Golden Couple and that while Willie is always first at the Shul, no matter how early the Rabbi gets there, his reliability is rock solid and that when Willie is there the Rabbi is confident nothing will go wrong. Of course, said the Rabbi, he had Betty behind him and that he would

conclude with the Mi Sheberach which especially refers to those such as Willie and Betty who concern themselves with service to the community.

Willie's reply and welcome to us all was a masterpiece of concise brevity, he may well have a second career ahead of him teaching the real art of public speaking!

Telegram Boy Ian Shein, doubling as Master of Ceremonies, read out the telegrams from the Shul Council and

from Lodge Solomon. Following this the President, Malcolm Cowan, made a presentation on behalf of the Council of a Silver Becher.

Then the cake, a very fine cake, was cut and distributed and the dancing started with Willie and Betty leading off on "The Anniversary Waltz". This waltz was a real family affair with Stuart on keyboard and Yvonne on Sax. Joining in were the two Bills - Simpson (Sax) and Sinclair (Guitar). On went the Dance,

carriages came and went and still it went on, the Band well into overtime, until the wee sma oors.

What a marvellous Golden Wedding, we all have our names down for the Diamond - it it's only half as good it will be worth waiting twice as long for it.

To Willie and Betty Caplan - the youngest Golden Wedding couple we have ever seen - what can we all say but Many more years of Happiness and Mazeltov.

EDINBURGH FRIENDS OF ISRAEL BY DOROTHE KAUFMANN

The Annual General Meeting of the Edinburgh Friends of Israel took place on the 13th November 1991 and proved to be a very positive event in the calendar of the Scottish Friends of Alyn.

Having successfully completed the business of the A.G.M. at which all the committee members were re-elected, Kim White gave a stimulating and interesting talk on her field of interest in Israel - The Jerusalem Gardens - where she had spent many a back-breaking session as a volunteer. This talk was followed by a comprehensive, illustrated and informative talk by Bill Smith Briggs about Alyn Hospital for handicapped children in Jerusalem. Some members heard, for the first time, that Alyn's doors were open to children from all ethnic groups. Alyn is the leading centre in its field, in Israel. It is in the forefront of inventing mobility aids for the severely handicapped - all with a view to achieving the full potential of each child - several of whom have successfully taken the step from being cared for, to being carers - in their family, in the community, and in the defence forces. Reference was made to the tour of the E-F.I. in 1987, organised by John and Irene Eivan, which included a reception to mark their 25th wedding anniversary, and the 15th anniversary of the Edinburgh Friends of Israel. Etti and Odel - graduates of Alyn - were present and were able to tell us about their work at "Life Line for the Old" in Jerusalem.

In her vote of thanks, the writer was able to quote from a recent letter from Brenda Hirsch, the Public Relations officer at Alyn, to the effect that we should never let an opportunity to talk about Alyn go by. As a result of implementing this principle, an elderly lady in America, who was given some Alyn publicity material, changed her will to provide 25,000 dollars for the hospital!

After the talks a video film about Alyn was shown, in which the happiness and fortitude of the children was clearly evident, and moving. Several members had brought a variety of interesting items which were bought by those present to raise a welcome £71.50.

The Scottish Friends of Alyn have been in existence since 1987, and last

year were able to send money for two hydraulic beds, and a mobile stretcher which has given Matti, a 17 year old who has a disease called Lupus, a chance to attend school and join in all the extra curricular activities.

A Scottish Friends of Alyn Committee was formed on the 22nd January 1992, consisting of Sue Barratt, Chairperson, Rachel Shapiro, Judy Gilbert, Doreen Bowman, Valerie Simpson and the writer as treasurer, with a view to organising fund raising activities, and publicising Alyn. A piano recital by Kathleen Dyne is being arranged for the very near future, and possibly a Kariokee in the summer. Until now a lot of money has been raised by members making a donation to mark a friend's special anniversary.



Matti and some friends in Alyn

Twenty Years of the Edinburgh Friends of Israel

BY IRENE EIVAN

From its inception in March 1972 the aims of the Edinburgh Friends of Israel have been to foster friendship and understanding between people in Scotland and Israel, and membership is open to anyone who is a Friend of Israel. The EFI provides information about Israel through lectures, films, booklets, meetings with leading Israelis, Ambassadorial Receptions to which leading civic and academic figures are invited, and cultural events ranging from poetry readings and concerts to the Study Tour of Israel in 1987. Although fund-raising is not supposed to be part of the EFI brief, it has raised considerable sums for emergencies like the Yom Kippur War Medical Help, Operation Moses, and for charities like "Lifeline for the Old" and the "Alyn Hospital for Handicapped Children", both in Jerusalem. It has also launched a number of projects including the "Havanah" (Understanding) Youth

Travelling Scholarship; Toy Airlift for the children of Alyn, (half a ton of toys were collected by the Members and flown over free by El Al); Bridge in Scotland Youth Scholarship; British Israel Farmers Association and the International Friendship Forest in Galilee and in particular The Scottish Grove within it, (only another 100 trees are needed to complete the Grove). The EFI has also assisted the founding of the West of Scotland Friends of Israel, and more recently the Scottish Friends of Alyn (see page 9). There is no set annual programme, meetings and events are held four or five times a year as and when speakers and events can be arranged. It is a non-political and non-sectarian organisation of some hundred Members. Notice of meetings and further details can be obtained from the Secretary, Irene Eivan, 031-552-2860.

11th December

"Operation Solomon"

Shlichah Dafna Moshayov gave a fascinating and heart-warming account of the final airlift rescue of the remaining Ethiopian Jews in Operation Solomon. She briefly reviewed the history of these almost forgotten people and the earlier Operation Moses, and then showed a video film of the homecoming of the last 15,000 Ethiopians and the preparations of their absorption into their new life in Israel.

5th February "The Kibbutz"

Yossi Bar Zilai and Chagit Marcus showed a most interesting and informative video about the life and development of the Kibbutz system, and in answering the many questions put, explained the future role and changes of Kibbutzim and outlined the basic differences between secular and religious Kibbutzim.

EDINBURGH JEWISH PHILOSOPHY by Alexander Broadie and Eli Etedgui-Atad

The Society was formed in November 1991 and since then has been meeting at approximately fortnightly intervals on Saturday afternoons from 4 till 5.30 p.m. in the Rev. I.K. Cosgrove Memorial Library. At each meeting Alexander Broadie, professor of philosophy at Glasgow University but a near life-long member of the Edinburgh community, gives an introductory half-hour talk and there is then a general discussion, sometimes very lively indeed, on the issues raised. At the opening session it was decided that we should start by dealing in depth with the Thirteen Principles of Faith (the

Ani maamin) formulated by Moses Maimonides in the twelfth century. We are now, at the beginning of March and nine meetings later, near the end of the first principle. This may seem slow progress, but in fact a great deal of ground has been covered. The two topics that have chiefly occupied us have been, first, what the relation is between belief and practice in Judaism - for example, is Judaism primarily a religion of correct practice rather than of correct belief? And secondly, since fundamentally we believe in God, what light does Judaism shed on the concept of God, and on the nature

of His existence? These are deep questions, and we have sought to go deeply into them - which is why we have not yet completed discussion of the first of the Principles. However, we have not abandoned the goal of studying all the others also, dealing with topics such as prophecy (especially Mosaic), God's knowledge of His creatures, divine reward and punishment, and the world to come. We have a regular attendance of between fifteen and twenty, but the meetings are open to everyone, and all who wish to attend (whether they have ever read any philosophy before or not) will be very welcome.

W.I.Z.O

Our W.I.Z.O. annual commitment is £2,500 and every year we set our programme to meet this target. Our year starts in the Autumn and finishes usually by the beginning of June so planning has to be tight and fit in with the other activities in the community.

We were most grateful to Mr. and Mrs. D. Hyams who allowed us to use their new home for a champagne party in October which raised £250. Continuing

with this year's new approach with house functions Mr. and Mrs. Philip Goldberg kindly offered to host a ladies lunch. We had a good attendance and Kate Goodwin spoke on antique jewellery with samples - this proved most enjoyable if somewhat noisy. We raised £400.

Our thanks to Mr. and Mrs. J. Donne whose home was our next venue for another lunch in February which 34 ladies attended. Our speaker, Avril Berger, on "Colour me Beautiful" proved most interesting and raised questions and

discussion. We boosted funds by £230.

Our Annual Summer Lunch will be held at 2 Etrick Road on Sunday 31st May to which all are invited.

We also collect our Membership dues and make a Jewish Women's Week Appeal.

We are a small but active group but can only succeed with the loyal support from the community which makes all our planning and work worth while. We thank you for your generosity and interest.

REMEMBERING MY MOTHER by Sylvia Lewis

Recent issues of the Star have contained all kinds of reminiscences of Edinburgh. I should like to add to these with a tribute to my mother, Annie Lindey, who was born in Russia on 14 February 1886 and who was, in my opinion, one of the most extraordinary women the Community has known. The Edinburgh Community owes much to her vision of the needs of the congregation - she contributed more in thirty years than many others did in a life-time.

During the 1920's, the Board of Guardians was a society that looked after *men* and their families in hard times. The Board was solely male-oriented. In 1925 a man of the Community deserted his wife and baby leaving them destitute. The woman's relations refused to help her and she was not eligible to approach the Board. My mother visited the woman giving her food and coal. She then called a meeting of about twenty women to form a committee which came to be called the Ladies Benevolent Society, thereby doing away with the anomaly of leaving women without help. The annual subscription was set at five shillings. Assistance was freely given and recipients often chose to remain anonymous. In order to qualify for help, only two committee members needed to give their approval. I remember my mother used to give all my old clothes and those of my brothers to the Benevolent Society. She was also unfailingly generous. Often on Sundays, she would cook a meat pie or mince balls and somehow we would end up eating egg and chips because the dinner she had prepared had gone to a poor widow with several children..... The Ladies Benevolent Society was eventually amalgamated with the Board of Guardians to assist both men and women.

Later on, in the 1930's my mother read in the Chronicle about a newly formed Ladies Guild and wrote to the Beth Din seeking advice on how to start a Guild in Edinburgh. Once again she called a meeting, this time of all the women in the congregation and they agreed to form a Ladies Guild with several sub-committees, each one under its own leader. I remember some of them: there was one for the children of the cheder whose job was to arrange picnics, parties and other social events. There was one to arrange for visiting the sick. Another sub-committee looked after the mikvah and yet another dealt with vestments and Dorcas, (the society for sewing shrouds for the dead). At the first general meeting my mother was elected to the chair and remained an active member until she died in 1953. The Guild is still going strong and its aims remain the same as those my mother helped to set down some sixty years ago.

In the 1940's she began yet another venture. Recognising the inadequacy of holding cheder classes in a local school in which the cheder children were often terrorised, she set up a committee with Betty Franklin as secretary to explore the possibility of acquiring "a hall of our own". Eventually, the Shul purchased the house across the road and hard work followed to raise money from bazaars, tombolas, raffles and other events in order to refurbish the house. My mother chaired the Ladies Committee - sadly she died one month before the hall was officially opened in 1953.

In all these years of hard work and remarkable successes, there was one thing which my mother dearly wanted but failed to achieve - to get women members



Annie Lindey in 1935

on the Shul Council. She wrote to the Chief Rabbi inquiring whether there was any reason for excluding woman from membership. In reply she was told that as long as women took no part in services, there was no reason why they should not sit on the Council. The letter was read out at the annual general meeting of the Shul and Dr. Sam Lipetz immediately nominated my mother to serve on the Council. This was unacceptable to those present on the grounds that the Constitution laid down that twelve *men* were to be elected to the Council. Every year following this decision, Sam Lipetz proposed that Annie Lindey should be elected to the Council - every year the proposal was rejected. How proud my mother would be to know that her grand-daughter, Carole Cowen is a Council member today.

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EDINBURGH PEACE FESTIVAL – OPENING SERVICE - 29/2/92

BY JOHN A. COSGROVE

The Edinburgh Interfaith Association of which the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation is a member regularly holds interfaith services in the various Churches in the City. On many occasions I have represented the Community at these events and have together with representatives of other faiths participated in these Services. I frequently read a prayer in Hebrew and English or deliver a message with a specifically Jewish flavour. On each occasion I have been struck with the friendliness of the welcome and the interest shown in Judaism. At the back of my mind, I have frequently worried about how the Jewish Community might reciprocate!

We did not have to wait long. About 6 months ago the Interfaith Association was asked to organise the opening service of the 6th Edinburgh Peace Festival and they decided that it would be a wonderful opportunity to hold the service in the Synagogue. The ball was put firmly into our court and we were assured that whatever we decided would be acceptable to the Association. Several ideas were discussed but the general consensus of opinion was that a Shabbat Service was the proper place for non-Jews to get some insight into the Jewish way of Prayer. However to subject our visitors to two and a quarter hours of Hebrew might well be seen as a penance!

A formula was found. Shacharit was begun early---thanks to an early minyan and the Reading of the Law and Haftarah were concluded by 11.00am. Meanwhile our guests (over 70 of them) were greeted downstairs by Rose Orgel (a veteran of the Interfaith Association) and myself. Christine Burns gave each of them an 8 page specially prepared guide to the service in English.

At a prearranged signal, the Choir under the baton of David Mendelssohn produced a rousing Ma Tovv during which the Lord Provost, Mrs. Eleanor MaLaughlin,

Joan Strachan of the Interfaith Association and the lady visitors were led in by Rose, followed by the gentlemen led by the City Officer and Chief Executive who were shown to their places by Arnold Rifkind. The regular Shabbat service continued with the Prayer for the Royal Family and Rabbi Shapira gave a special sermon (printed below) on the subject of peace from a Jewish perspective.

The service was enhanced by the choir in splendid voice and some wonderfully expressive solo singing by Jeff Sofaer, Joe Aronson, Ian Leifer and Sass Judah of music composed and conducted by David Mendelssohn.

Malcolm Cowan welcomed the guests who included representatives of the various Christian denominations as well as Hindus, Buddhists, Bahais and Brahma Kumaris.

At the Kiddush which followed, the Lord Provost thanked the President for his welcome and the Congregation for their warm reception and singled out Rose Orgel for special praise. Mr. Ray Newton of the Peace Festival and Rev Dr Frank Whaling of Edinburgh Interfaith also expressed their appreciation. The Ladies' Guild under the dynamic leadership of Hilary Rifkind and Leila Goldberg organised the Kiddush which was much appreciated.

SERMON BY RABBI SHAPIRA ON SHABBAT SHEKALIM TO MARK THE OPENING OF THE SIXTH EDINBURGH PEACE FESTIVAL

Shabbat Shalom.

This Shabbat, like every Shabbat preceeding a new month, we recited the "Bircat Hachodesh" - the special blessing for the new moon, in which we prayed "LeChayim UleShalom" - for life and for peace.

It is very appropriate, therefore, that on such a Shabbat, I have the opportunity to welcome, on behalf of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation, the Lord Provost and the members of the Interfaith Association, as our guests in the Synagogue, on the occasion of the opening of the Sixth Edinburgh Peace Festival.

But this Shabbat has an additional significance. It is the Shabbat preceding "Adar-Sheni" - and it is called "Shabbat Shekalim".

Shabbat Shekalim commemorates an ancient Jewish law which existed in Temple times. The law is that every Jew should donate half a Shekel annually and this was used both for the census of the people and for the maintenance of the Holy Temple. Today, in the absence of the Temple, it is the custom for every Jew, when he arrives at the Synagogue on Purim to make a donation to charity of a coin of similar value to the half Shekel.

Purim is the festival when we celebrate the salvation of the Jewish people from Haman, as it is described in full detail in the Bible, in the book of Esther. In chapter 3 of this book, we read the following:

"And Haman said to the King: There is a certain people, scattered and dispersed among the other peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom, and their laws are different... and it is not in your Majesty's interest to tolerate them, let it be written that they be destroyed..... and let an edict be drawn for their destruction."

In this one single verse, unique in the whole Bible, we can see the original form of antisemitism emerging together with its inevitable solution - the destruction of the Jewish people. Purim which celebrates the victory of the Jews over Haman, happens to be the next Jewish festival, and takes place

in three weeks time.

One month later, we celebrate Pesach - the Passover festival, which commemorates the exodus and the redemption of the Jewish people from Egypt. Two weeks after Passover, we celebrate "Yom-HaAtsmaut" Israeli Independence Day, the redemption of the ancient Jewish land and the re-establishment of the State of Israel.

These three forthcoming festivals have one thing in common and perhaps it is no coincidence that they are so close to each other. They celebrate the victory of the Jewish people over enemies threatening their very existence. Those victories were achieved after bitter fighting in terrible wars. The rabbis call these wars "Milchamot-Mitzva" wars of a Mitzva, wars one is permitted to make for the purpose of saving lives and protecting the people, that is, defensive wars.

Our Torah tells us in the book of Numbers, Chapter 10, verse 9 the following:

"When you are at war in your land against an aggressor who attacks you... you shall be delivered from your enemies".

From this verse we can conclude that a war against an enemy who attacks you is permitted.

You may ask yourselves now, why am I talking about war, when we are here today to pray for peace.

The answer is that there can be no peace until we have fought the battle against evil and wickedness. There can be no compromise with tyranny, with racism, with antisemitism or with any sort of human hatred. They are the real obstacles to peace. They have to be totally uprooted in order to enable the building of an unbreakable peace.

No nation can deliver this message better than the Jewish people who have been through all these experiences and survived. Three times a day we say in our prayers: "O Lord, let all wickedness perish... and bless your people Israel with peace".

The concept of peace plays a most

essential role in the Jewish faith and its religion. Peace in Hebrew is Shalom. Shalom is regarded as the name of God. Shalom is also the most common word used in the Hebrew language by all Jews when they meet and when they say farewell to each other. It is even a Jewish tradition to give children the name Shalom. All our prayers are based on the desire and the longing for peace. And this is why we so much appreciate and support the work of the Interfaith Association which promotes tolerance, brotherhood and peace.

May I conclude by reciting the prayer for peace, which is said in this Synagogue, as well as in all other Synagogues, not only today, but on every Saturday morning:

"Heavenly Father, grant peace in thy Holy land and everlasting happiness unto all its inhabitants, so that Jacob shall again be in quietude and at ease, and none shall make him afraid. Do thou spread the tabernacle of thy peace upon all the dwellers on earth. May this by thy will, and let us say, Amen.

THE FRIENDSHIP CLUB : 35 YEARS OLD

On Sunday, 15th December the Friendship Club held a 35th birthday tea. Among the invited guests were the President of the Shul, Malcolm Cowan and his wife Andrea, the Rabbi and Rachel Shapira, and the speaker for the afternoon, Michael Adler and his wife Ruth (your editor!). After a lavish tea of several courses, the speaker reflected on how it was impossible to anticipate future events. His own parents, born and educated in Germany could never have imagined that they would marry and raise a family in England. Similarly nobody could have guessed how some of the more momentous events of 1956 would have ended in 1991. There was the Suez Crisis and the hostilities which it involved and now Israel and Egypt were at peace despite all the turmoil between Israel and her other Arab neighbours. There was the invasion of Hungary by Soviet troops and now Eastern Europe had rejected communism and thrown off the yoke of Soviet domination and even more momentous, the Soviet Union itself had broken up. There was Kruschev's denunciation of Stalin and now, like the countries of Eastern Europe, Russia too had turned its back on communism. Amidst all this unforeseen and unforeseeable development there were certain enduring values of which friendship was surely one of the most valued and valuable.

After the talk, Malcolm Cowan proposed a toast to the Friendship Club. To conclude the afternoon, Mr. Abe Rabstaff one of the senior members of the Edinburgh Jewish Community spoke most movingly of his happy times in Edinburgh and in the Friendship Club in particular. He had decided that the time had come for him to move to Newark Lodge in Glasgow, although he knew he would sorely miss his Edinburgh friends. There were few dry eyes in the room as he presented the President of the Friendship Club, Willy Caplan, with a gavel to call the company to order.

It was a delightful afternoon, greatly enjoyed by all those present.
R.M.A.



Friendship Club Birthday Tea

Rabbi Shapira, Malcolm Cowan, Andrea Cowan, Willie Caplan, Ruth Adler, Michael Adler

THE EDINBURGH JEWISH DISCUSSION GROUP BY SUSIE SHENKIN

In a year which has provoked much discussion on the future of Edinburgh Jewry and the apathy of the community, it is encouraging that a number of successful new groups have emerged to fulfil various roles. One such group is the Edinburgh Jewish Discussion Group (formerly the Jewish Postgraduate Study Group) created by two postgraduates at Edinburgh University, Shari Cohn and Susan Shenkin in February 1991.

The idea for such a group grew out of the need for Jewish Postgraduates to meet informally and discuss issues

related to Judaism. We meet in one another's homes once a month and the discussions are led by one of the group's members. Last year, our topics were: Can one choose or not choose to be a Jew? The role of Women in Judaism. Anti-semitism throughout Europe. The History of Anti-Semitism in the Church. The role of Israel in our lives as Jews. This year our topics have included: Intermarriage, Yiddish - is it a dying language? and Orthodox, Conservative and Liberal Judaism.

Over the past year, our numbers have grown from eight to twenty-

two members from all walks of life, current students, ex-students, working and retired men and women and so we decided to change our name to the Edinburgh Jewish Discussion Group. We hope that this group will continue to grow and give people an opportunity to air views and feelings about Judaism. For anyone interested in joining this group and finding out more about activities within the Jewish community, please contact: - Shari Cohn at 228-6473 or Susan Shenkin at 667-0887.

MUSINGS OF A LADIES GUILD CHILDREN'S CONVENER

BY JOYCE SPERBER

How did he do that?... No, not that. It's no big deal to cut a piece of string in half and make it whole again. Paul Daniels can do that. No, how did he manage to stop those little boys from attempting to saw up the little girl next to them and feed her to the rabbit? With one look and a word. Now that's magic. Several mums are eyeing him speculatively. Wonder if he's considered a spot of child-minding on the side? A communal nanny-share? Anyone who can keep 17 children enthralled like that for 45 minutes.....

Seventeen children gone are the days when the Ladies Guild catered for parties of 50, 60, 70. But as the cheder numbers shrink, the commitment of the parents seems to grow. The three events we hold each year, Chanukah party (see above!), Purim party and Picnic & Sports Day

in summer are, for most, a priority booking in the calendar, a fact which is extremely encouraging for those who organise them. And the support extends to more than merely sending the kids along to participate. It extends to practical help too. Apart from the helpers at the actual events, there are the behind the scenes crew. There is the Latke & Donut Team at Chanukah (the Latke According to Bard has become a byword in latke eating circles, likewise the definitive Wittenberg Jam Donut). There is the Hamantaschen and Whatever-Else-We-Can-Think-To-Make-In-The-Savoury-Line at Purim, and the Picnic Bag and Moral-Support-on-the-Day Team (crucial, given the stress induced by having no control whatsoever over the weather), not forgetting the Maccabi leaders who

organise races and games at the picnic and manage to get the whole caboodle of kids and families playing what is very loosely called a game of rounders.

For they have indeed evolved into real family events; with small numbers of children, the cheder parties and picnics are extended family events - everyone comes, little brothers and sisters, grandmas and grandpas, out-of-town visiting grandparents, the lot. There may only be 17 children this year, but who knows what future years may bring. The cheder ranks may swell again to 60. But by then, of course, I will be retired. None of this will be my responsibility any more! I am almost certain I read somewhere you only keep the job while your child is of cheder age. Now, where did I put that contract?.....

AN APPRECIATION OF ANNIE MacPHERSON

BY MYRA COHEN

Annie MacPherson, having overcome one serious illness with her typically positive and strong attitude, sadly succumbed to a further illness and died towards the end of the summer. She led an exemplary and utterly unselfish life. She was a teacher, companion, carer and friend. She lived abroad for a time, teaching in such diverse places as the Church of Scotland School in Jaffa and in Ghana. Wherever she went she brought a spirit of tolerance and wisdom. She served for many years on the Council of Christians and Jews and was Secretary of the Edinburgh group, frequently holding meetings in her home. Her contribution was invaluable. She was a wonderful friend and a truly good person who will be sadly missed by all who knew her.

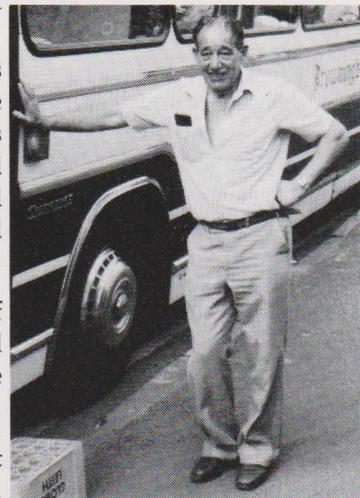
MORRIS BROWN: AN APPRECIATION BY IAN SHEIN

The Edinburgh Jewish Community is the poorer by the sad passing of Morris Brown after a long illness. Morris was born in Edinburgh and lived all his life in the city. For many years he worked as a shoe repairer in his own business until, in 1973, he applied for and was accepted into the Civil Service. After initial training, he was appointed to the Department of Customs and Excise and worked in the section dealing with V.A.T. In a few years, Morris rose in the Service and attained the position of Executive Officer from which post he retired in 1986.

In his youth, Morris was a keen sportsman. He played for and was captain of the Edinburgh Maccabi football team where he was assessed as a potential professional. During the war, he served as a sergeant in the Royal Air Force Regiment.

Morris's work within the Edinburgh Jewish community showed great commitment, a strong sense of devotion and a desire to give of his very best. He was an active member of the Association of Jewish ex-Servicemen and Women, on occasion participating in the Annual Remembrance Parade in London. He was at one time joint Treasurer of the Edinburgh Jewish Board of Guardians and for many years was Hon. Treasurer of the Friendship Club, a post he held at the time of his death.

The community extends heartfelt condolences to his wife May and his relatives.



“KORTEVNIKS”

Deep in tree lined Colinton with a real coal fire burning, four characters gather for the weekly ritual of playing SOLO. Some Jews are spiritually bound together, some are stomach Jews, others love the customs and traditions, but this quartet covers the entire spectrum via the common denominator of cards.

Many moons ago solo schools were a very popular Jewish phenomenon, but today, this surviving one in Edinburgh is surely just about the last one in Scotland. The participants are youngish enough to hopefully spawn a rebirth of this social need.

The players are individually highly diverse personalities and each one contributes his own brand of life and humour to the weekly sessions. One of them has risen to become a PARNIS - some say in spite of the card school - another is a FRUITY CRICKETER. The third shpeiler is a MULTIPLE NEWSAGENT and the final one of the foursome is PHIL THE PILL MAN. Each one brings his own version of the past week's happenings in shul, communally and socially plus strong opinions on

every conceivable subject from sport to business to politics, the arts and the latest Barmitzvah. No topic is sacred from the players tongues as they decide policy and strategy for every happening and even the future.

Often the actual play stops if a particularly juicy bit of scandal or yachné is deemed more important and can't wait for the tea interval. Even the quality of the tea is judged and voted upon. It's not that they play for big stakes - indeed they are nominal. It's the passion evoked if somebody plays a stupid card in a PROP & COP that gives the game its flavour and atmosphere. Some say - there are three amateurs and one expert round the table. The height of ecstasy is when the chochomim bring down a MIZER by the klooger one. It's the sheer fun and relaxation that drives them. There are fights, arguments, insults, the lot but above all there is never any question about reconvening the 'next week'.

The story began 15 years ago and will religiously (not only in the sense that wives are barred) continue for another 15 years subscribing strongly to its motto "CARD SCHOOL RULES".

P.M.G.

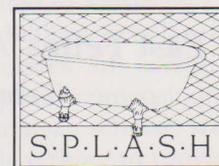
BATHTIME TALES NO 1



Nigel stags a bull

It had been a long day. The money market was up but Nigel's mood was anything but. He closed the bathroom door and turned the tap, noticing the satisfying touch of antique gold plated fittings. He lay back, the water gently lapping round the beautiful porcelain bath. It felt like a very expensive haven, designed with utmost style and taste. Life looked better already. And to think Nirvana could be gained just by visiting Scotland's premier bathroom specialist. Upwardly mobile? Right now Nigel felt wonderfully horizontal - and with his complete suite costing a mere trifle who could question his watertight business position?

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EDINBURGH STUDENT J-SOC UPDATE

BY BARAK HULLMAN

Shalom Alechem! Two main functions have dominated the J-Soc scene this term: the Community Debate on the motion: "This house believes that there is no future for Jews in Edinburgh," and our infamous Rabbi Burns Supper (okay, so only one dominated!).

The debate took place in the Communal Hall on 26 January at 8.00pm, and was well attended by both students and other members of the Jewish community. Participants included, on the "No future unless we change" side, Dr. Gillian Raab and Barak Hullman, and on the "Why change if things are so good" side, Dr. Nathan Oppenheim and Richard Jacobs. The debate was chaired by the President of the Lit, John Cosgrove.

The fundamental question was, "Is there a future for the Jewish community in Edinburgh if we maintain the *status quo*?"

Before the debate began, the Chairperson took a vote on where members in the audience stood. The vote was: 7 for the motion, 40 against and 17 abstentions. Each side was given a chance to present its views: Gillian Raab quoting statistics and claiming a more liberal stance was

needed, Barak Hullman suggesting we look to the liberal religious example set by Israel and follow it ourselves, Nate Oppenheim claiming that since two of the past generations in his family were buried in Edinburgh's Jewish cemetery, that he himself was debating this same issue many years ago, and today the community still exists, we need not change, and lastly, Richard Jacobs suggesting that what exists as seen through his experiences in the university J-Soc is sufficient to sustain the Jewish community for years to come.

After the presentation the floor was open for questions and comments. Some of the issues raised included the possibility of diluting Jewish tradition by allowing liberal interpretations of Judaism into the community, the impossibility of a secure future without a Jewish baker or butcher, the problem of native Jews of Edinburgh moving to other parts of the country or, antithetically, the question of whether Jews from other cities would be willing to move here, and that, *b'emet* (in truth), the future of this Jewish community lay in *Eretz Yisrael*.

Upon completion of debating the

topic, a second vote was taken in which the tally was: 20 for the motion, 38 against and 5 abstentions. In the end it seems many people had already made up their minds, but the debate clearly showed the issues that confront Jews in the diaspora.

The Jewish Society's Rabbi Burns Dinner took place on Saturday night, 1 February. It was a night of monstrous fun. Approximately 160 people showed up coming from as far as London to attend. The speakers included The Welcomin' by Benjy Lesser, Havdalah and Hamotzi by the Rabbi, the Address to the Haggis done by yours truly in my best Scottish accent, the "Immortal Memory (of Rabbi Burns)" by our guest speaker, Brian Mark, the Toast to the "Lasses" by Robin Kay and Karen Waldman respectively, the Toast to the Queen by David Kaplan, and the traditional toast to the State of Israel by Jamie Glassman.

Food cooked by members of the J-Soc was exceptional (especially the Hallot cooked by Nick), but the highlight of the evening was the Celidh with the *Panama Band* and Disco. All in all, it was a night of terrific fun, a fine blend of whisky, music, humour, Scottish and Jewish tradition.



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THE NEW LONDON SYNAGOGUE

BY WILLIAM FRANKEL

Most members of the New London Synagogue would be affronted by the suggestion that they were mavericks. So would its eminent spiritual leader, Rabbi Dr Louis Jacobs. For to them (declaring my personal interest, read us) the New London is the rightful heir of the traditional Anglo-Jewish orthodoxy now that the mainstream (at least organisationally) has veered off its historic path and joined the camp of the right wing extremists.

I do not go back as far as the Adlers. My first Chief Rabbi was Joseph Herman Hertz, the stocky, pugnacious American who brought with him the concept of "progressive Conservatism" evolved by the Jewish Theological Seminary of New York of which he was the first graduate. He was no great theologian but will long be remembered for his popular commentaries of the Chumash and Prayer Book (I recall his telling me, "My siddur will be so simple that even my ministers will understand it").

Chief Rabbi Hertz was fiercely opposed to reform and liberal Judaism. A series of sermons, later published in a book entitled "Affirmations of Judaism" excoriated those who rejected tradition and described their movements as offering "a moving staircase out of Judaism". But while he attacked their views and (until the pressure became irresistible) refused to certify their Synagogues for the purpose of marriage, he did not exclude them, as individuals or institutions, from the religious Jewish community.

On occasions of national commemoration when a united Jewish voice was called for, Dr. Hertz had no hesitation in participating in religious services with non-orthodox colleagues. I remember such a combined service at the Great Synagogue on the occasion, I think, of the death of George V, at which he preached the sermon and in which Rabbi Israel Mattuck of the Liberal Synagogue and Rabbi Harold Reinhart of the West London Reform took part. And trifling as it is (though the practice has been given unprecedented importance by neo-orthodoxy) Dr Hertz did not always cover his head when in non-Jewish company.

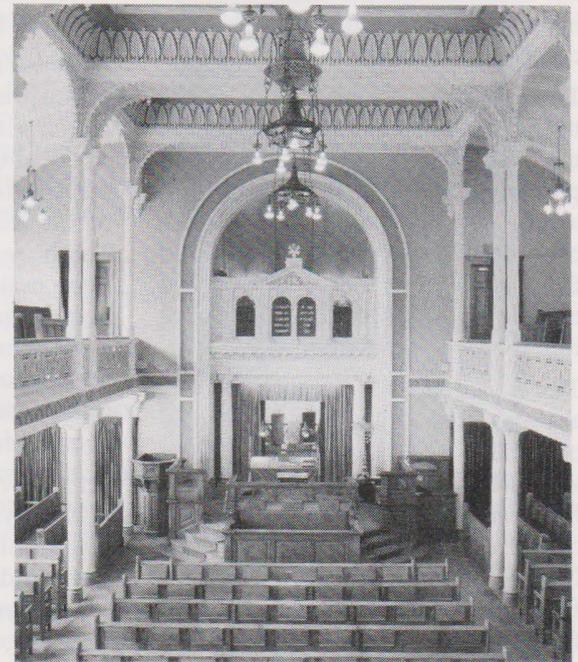
These were expressions of the tolerant orthodoxy often referred to as "minhag Anglia" and now abandoned in favour of self-righteous bigotry. The change began during the last years of Hertz's incumbency, largely through the influence of his son-in-law Rabbi Dr Solomon Schonfeld, leader of the separatist Aduth Yisroel, staunchly

orthodox in the rigid style of the Breuer Gemeinde of Frankfurt-am-Main.

Schonfeld in those days was a dashing, handsome figure, inexhaustibly energetic in the pursuit of the causes which mattered to him, authoritarian and supremely confident of his own rectitude. His achievements were considerable and his charisma undoubtedly impressed his father-in-law who saw in this commanding figure his divinely ordained successor.

The succession did not fall on Dr. Schonfeld but, at the instance of Sir Robert Waley Cohen then President of the United Synagogue, on Rabbi Israel Brodie the amiable Senior Chaplain to the Forces. Rabbi Brodie had completed his secular education at Balliol College, Oxford and appeared to Sir Robert to promise a return to the middle-of-the-road tradition of the United Synagogue.

That was not to be. Many analyses have tried to explain the post-War resurgence of reactionary orthodoxy and I shall not make my own here. Suffice it to say that, from the early days of Brodie's incumbency, it became clear that he was completely



The New London Synagogue

under the thumb of the right wing, in particular the members of the Beth Din. The powerful majority of the Dayanim, unlike most of their predecessors, had received little secular education or pastoral experience.

Hertz had controlled "his" Beth Din; Brodie's controlled him. It was this situation that forced him into the unyielding stance which led him to his proscription of Rabbi Louis Jacobs. An overwhelming majority of the members of the New West End Synagogue wanted Jacobs to be their rabbi but Brodie, who under the constitution of the United Synagogue had the power to do so, prohibited the appointment.

Essentially, the issue in the conflict was the orthodox doctrine of the verbal inerrancy of the Torah. To the London Beth Din and its international peer group, every single word in the Torah was dictated to Moses by God on Sinai. No Biblical scholar applying the principles of scientific research accepts this proposition. Jacobs, who is no mean scholar, was attempting in his writing to provide a basis for Jewish faith for those who could not accept the doctrine of verbal

inerrancy. To the fundamentalists, Jacobs was a heretic for conceding the existence of a human element in the Torah and Brodie was persuaded into employing bell, book and candle.

The controversy which raged at the time aroused passions and a great deal of support for Rabbi Jacobs. In particular, his former congregants, aware of their Rabbi's meticulous observance and integrity, resented the calumny that was being heaped on him and the attempt to deprive him of his chosen calling.

The issue of Rabbi Jacob's appointment fell to be decided by one man only; democratic opinion was irrelevant. The fiat of the Chief Rabbi ruled and he had the backing of the right wing and those, like Sir Isaac Wolfson who had become President of the US, who were for the Chief Rabbi right or wrong. The only practical course for the "Jacobites" was to establish a congregation independent of the Chief Rabbinate and the US establishment.

That was the origin of the New London Synagogue and it has flourished during the last quarter century. By a stroke of good fortune, the new community was able to acquire a Synagogue building scheduled for demolition in St John's Wood. It has now grown to some thousand members and has inspired the creation of five or six daughter congregations, all now affiliated to

the international Masorti movement which, in its beliefs and practices, stands close to the "progressive Conservatism" enunciated by Joseph Herman Hertz.

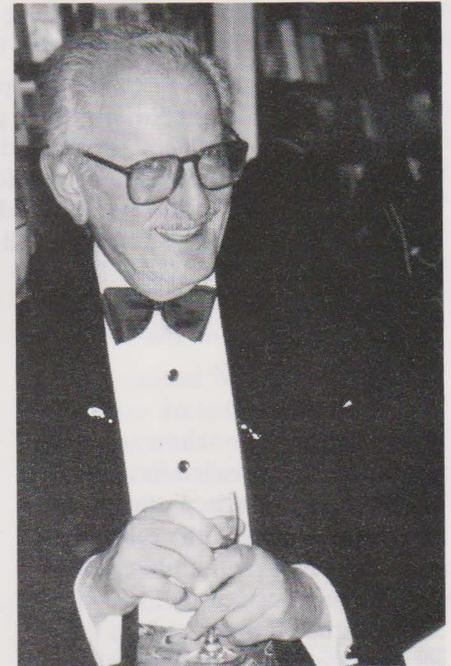
A visitor to the New London would be surprised at the almost complete conformity with orthodox tradition. The ladies sit in the gallery, the services follow Singer's Prayer Book or the Routledge Machzor and the Torah reading is complete, albeit often tedious. The decorum is rather better than the average orthodox synagogue and the choir includes female voices (which was the case in many United Synagogues before the counter-reformation).

The New London has become not just a Synagogue for prayer but a community, consisting as it does of like-minded people. Most of them, for the first time in their lives, joined a Synagogue through conviction rather than filial piety or for burial rights. It includes a large number of professional men and women and academics, probably more than any other Synagogue in the country. Its religion classes are excellent, so are its adult education and social facilities. Above all, the benign presence of Rabbi Jacobs is an inspiration and education to us all.

I sometimes imagine my favourite Chief Rabbi, Dr Hertz, sitting in his former place in the building that is now the New London Synagogue and beaming with pleasure. I feel that he would feel out of place in the

kipa-flaunting religiosity which mainstream Anglo-Jewish orthodoxy has become.

William Frankel must surely count among the leading members of the Jewish community in Britain today. He practised at the Bar for many years. He was Editor of the Jewish Chronicle for twenty years and is currently Chairman of the Board. He edits the Annual Survey of Jewish Affairs and also writes a regular column in a major daily newspaper in India, as well as chairing several tribunals and regularly giving lectures and contributing articles to several publications, including the Jewish Quarterly.



William Frankel

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THE INTEGRATION OF JEWISH IMMIGRANTS IN SCOTLAND 1880-1939*

BY BEN BRABER

Shortly before the First World War a young man from Estonia arrived in Glasgow. What did a young man do in the city which boasted the highest number of cinemas per head of population in those days? He went to the pictures. But in a Gorbals' cinema he was appalled by the behaviour of the Scottish audience, concerning which he made a derogatory remark. His brother rebuked him: "These are the people who rule the world" (1).

This young man was the Jewish artist Benno Schotz. Some twenty years later Schotz had found his place in Scottish society. He had become a professional sculptor with a growing reputation, and he no longer seemed to see himself as an outsider. On Hogmanay Benno Schotz would watch the somewhat intoxicated crowds, with, in the words of his 1981 autobiography, "their good natured jollification," and he felt "at one with them and as happy" (2).

Benno Schotz was one of the many Jews from Eastern Europe who settled in Scotland at the turn of the century. Between 1880 and 1914 one and a half million Eastern European Jews arrived in Britain on their way to America, and probably one out of every ten settled in the United Kingdom. Several thousand of them stayed in Scotland. The integration of these immigrants into Scottish society, however, was more complicated than the recollections of Benno Schotz would suggest.

Integration is a complex social process, the understanding of which easily causes confusion. In our case for example, in the scope of a few pages in a recent publication, two authors remark on it as follows:

"By the late 1930s the integration of Scottish Jewry was gaining momentum. Scottish Jews had become an established part of the Scottish scene with achievements in many areas of community and national life."
and:

the "relatively low degree of integration of the immigrants from Eastern Europe" (3).

Despite such confusion, it is possible to say something about integration. In the case of Jewish immigrants in Scotland, one can look at the development of the religious congregations, the changes in religious habits and lifestyle, Jewish and general education, Zionism, participation in general social-economic, political and cultural life, and the reaction of the population to the penetration of newcomers in their society - all these issues tell us something about their integration. In this article I shall concentrate on some of the changes in religious habits which have occurred among the Jews in Scotland.

The Jews in Scotland before 1880

Jews as travelling salesmen, doctors and medical students had visited Scotland prior to the Napoleonic Wars and there had been relations between the Scottish royal court and Jewish financiers in England going back to the 12th century, but only very few had settled here before the 19th century. This changed after 1813. As a result of improved transport facilities it became progressively easier to travel to and from England and Jews started to settle here. In addition, some people arrived from overseas.

From the 1830s onwards, following the development of trade, industrial expansion and urban growth, the opportunities to establish retail firms in Scotland rose significantly. The Jews, traditionally settling as retailers and small manufacturers, provided for the growing need of the urban middle classes, who profited from economic development and acquired a taste for luxury goods. Among the early Jewish settlers were opticians, instrument-makers, quill merchants and stationers, while on the more luxurious side jewellers, furriers, cabinet-makers and an artificial

flower maker could also be found.

It is remarkable that the Jews (like other newcomers) were allowed to be inhabitants of Scottish cities without the otherwise normal obligations like taking a Christian oath. Almost the same level of tolerance existed at institutions of higher education. Jewish medical students were not obliged to swear a Christian oath on entering a Scottish university or medical school, when this was still a normal procedure in England.

During the 19th century, Scottish cities attracted high numbers of people from their surroundings, the Highlands, Ireland and other countries. In Glasgow in 1851, for example, 18% of the population of the city had been born in Ireland and during the last quarter of the century more than half of its inhabitants originated elsewhere. In this climate the early Jewish settlers were accepted. The nature of trade and the sheer pace on industrial growth facilitated social mobility for ambitious newcomers who had the right connections and financial support.

Success in business was publicly rewarded. In 1880, for example, the weekly magazine *The Bailie* portrayed Benjamin Simons, who had been born in 1817 and came to Glasgow from London in the 1840s. On his way north he had spent some time in Edinburgh, which was said not to have appealed to him because "grass grew in the market place! 'No, no,' said sagacious Benjamin, 'the grass sha'n't grow under my feet;' and he certainly kept his word." (4). In Glasgow, Simons established a firm handling the wholesale and retail of fruit and he managed to expand his trade enormously, profiting from the easy access to business; his imports and sales increased especially after the reduction of railway freight charges, the shortening of journey times for steamships from the Continent and

America in particular, while he implemented the new technology of refrigerating in large warehouses. In true middle-class spirit Simons was credited thus:

"Fruit now is no longer a luxury to our city (Glasgow) – it is a daily article of food within the reach of all, and it is to Mr. Simons we are indebted for this. These are a few of the things which have been accomplished by a gentleman who, living unobtrusively among us, has fought his fight, and now relinquishes his command to those of his own name, in whose hands there is little fear of any falling off in this industry, which gives a new means of livelihood to thousands." (5)

Arrival of more immigrants

Towards the end of the 19th century the picture of Jewish settlement changed, when as a result of further improvement of railway and port facilities, Scottish towns became important transit points for Jewish (and other) migrants from the European Continent who were on their way to America. This started earlier than often thought – well before the 1880s. In March 1866, for example, the Glasgow Hebrew Congregation paid 10 shillings towards the costs of *matzoth* for "some Polish immigrants (who) arrived here and went to America" (6), and five years later financial support was given to a woman with two children to send her to the United States to join her husband there (7).

After 1891, during the second wave of emigration from the Pale and after the establishment of relatively cheap weekly and fortnightly passenger services from Glasgow to New York, transmigration figures boomed and this attracted attention. The Rev. James Paterson, who took great interest in the Jewish population, said at a public meeting reported in the *Glasgow Herald* on 23rd January 1892 that already "5,428" Jews from Russia had passed through Scotland, with 105 in the week before the meeting.

As many immigrants travelled on after a temporary stay, it is

impossible to give an exact figure of Jews living in the Scottish cities at any time before 1939. In effect Glasgow and Edinburgh each held two Jewish populations: the established older settlers and the immigrant newcomers. As yet there was little coherence. For the immigrants in general, Scotland was not the first place of settlement in the United Kingdom. Most of those who settled here and found employment in workshops, distribution and industry, came from England while some had previously lived in Ireland.

The Jewish population in cities like Edinburgh and Glasgow, quadrupled in less than two decades after 1891. The numbers were certainly high, but as a percentage of the total population the number of Jews in Scottish towns remained lower than in England. This relatively low percentage had some consequences. Unlike in England, the Jewish immigrants in Scotland were not able to compete on a large scale on the labour and housing markets and this in turn could have softened the attitude of the Gentile population; the labour and housing shortage had stimulated anti-Jewish feelings in English cities. This is of course not to say that no anti-Jewish feelings existed in Scotland.

While the new immigrants arrived in great numbers shortly before and after the turn of the century, the older settlers seem to have adapted well to their new surroundings. How did this influence their religious habits? Let us first look at the congregations which were led by the established settlers.

The older congregations

In September 1879, on the occasion of the consecration of the Garnethill synagogue in Glasgow, the *Jewish Chronicle* remarked that it was no longer the norm to worship on weekdays, but to limit this to the sabbath and Holy Days. According to the historian Vivian Lipman, Anglo-Jewry at this time (before the mass influx of Eastern European immigrants) tended towards nominal adherence to Judaism, limited to religious marriage and

burial and synagogue attendance on the High Holy Days, in general resembling the Victorian middle-classes who were increasingly staying away from church on Sunday. With regard to Scotland this statement can be disputed. Research by Calumn Brown suggests that in Scotland the Victorian middle-classes had not yet altered their churchgoing habits (8). If the Jewish establishment in Scotland confirms Lipman's picture, this might mean that they were well ahead of their times.

Unfortunately we have little evidence to support any claim. What is obvious, however, is that it became difficult to hold daily synagogue services and that in the 20th century regular synagogue attendance on Saturday did drop. To reverse this development, leaders of the older settlers advocated changes to the service. It was said that by giving the service more decorum people would be attracted to come to the synagogue.

Several changes were made to synagogue ritual and although some of these changes might have had different origins and reasons, they mostly stimulated decorum. Attempts were made to shorten the sabbath service, to introduce choirs and organs, to regulate the prayers, to have a set time table, to invite laymen to give sermons, to change parts from Hebrew to English and to create extra education facilities so that members could understand and fully appreciate the service. Many of the introductions resembled practices in the surrounding Christian churches.

Significantly, proposals for changes started to meet increasingly traditionalist opposition. During the 1920s, committees were set up to investigate the need for further changes and although one commission came with a wide range of suggestions which in effect tried to reconcile traditional Judaism with modern Scottish society, most of it came to nothing. The reason for this was that by the 1920s, the congregations which had originally been in the hands of the older settlers had been taken over by immigrants



Members of The Edinburgh Jewish Branch of the British Legion

Photos: Scottish Jewish Archives Centre



*Dr I. K. Cosgrove, Rev. E. P. Philips, Rev. I. Hirshow
Clergy of Garnethill Synagogue with Command Leaders and Officials Jewish Branch of British Legion*

who did not favour further alterations to the synagogue service.

Religious change among immigrants

Eventually it became necessary to make adjustments to accommodate the younger generations. Young people increasingly lost the knowledge of Yiddish, but as the older settlers lost their influence, it took quite a while before English speaking clergymen were generally appointed. In Edinburgh Rabbi Daiches finally succeeded in uniting the different groups in one synagogue.

Before that and in Glasgow and the smaller Scottish towns immigrant groups appointed their own clergy. There were plenty of candidates from Eastern Europe. The Talmudic colleges or yeshivot had a steady output of rabbis and chazanim or cantors who found employment in the west and after 1933 their numbers were swelled by refugees from Germany and the Nazi-occupied areas. Some of them, although usually not the most distinguished rabbis, found their way to Scotland.

The Eastern European rabbis felt they had a task in Scotland. In an article written for a newspaper, one of them - immodestly introducing himself as "one of Great Britain's leading rabbis and Talmudic scholars" (15) - declared that he had come to Britain "with the aim of strengthening the religious life among Jews in this country." But was this necessary?

Regular attendances in immigrant synagogues appeared to be dropping during the 1920s and 1930s. Zevi Golombok, the editor of the Jewish Echo, noted in 1929 that a growing number of people started to avoid the synagogue and that the sabbath was getting a new character, on which he remarked the following: "There are people, especially some of our young folk, whose conception of a Friday night is Gefilte Fish and other specifically Jewish savouries." (16).

That people did not regularly gather

in the synagogues in large numbers was blamed on the assimilation of the Jews into a society which was said to pay more attention to material than to religious values. The issue was regularly touched upon in the Jewish Echo. Golombok believed that the "ill" effects of the First World War had created a wave of selfish materialism and pleasure seeking, which reduced the enthusiasm for religion. He wrote about a "general epidemic" which had struck the Jewish communities as well as the general society in this respect (22). The link to developments in the wider society was also made by others. One minister wrote that "the spirit of the Age is squeezing the soul out of the body of Man." (23)

There is, however, little evidence to sustain a claim that the immigrants and their children were severing the ties that bound them to Judaism. Before 1939, the membership of the congregations did not decline. Perhaps there was some leakage of Jewish youth, the young might have been more vulnerable to the temptations of secular society, but as yet this did not have serious repercussions. It seems that the clerical warnings were intended to have an alarming effect or to propagate institutions run by the rabbinate, and on the whole they sound rather exaggerated.

In 1939, Rabbi Salomon Morgenstern of the Hasidic Beth Jacob Synagogue in Glasgow offered the following explanation:

"(...) the Jew (is) being influenced by wealth, independence, freedom and happiness to fall away from the path of Religion, to strive for assimilation with his gentile neighbours and even to forsake Judaism (...) On the other hand when the Jew suffers poverty, persecution and oppression he generally holds fast to the religion of his fathers." (24)

Perhaps these religious leaders were over-reacting to the development of the society in which their people had settled. In this, Jewish clergymen actually did not differ so much from their Christian counterparts. Among non-Jews the rise of modernity had

led to a traditionalist backlash for which in retrospect there seems to have been no need. On the eve of the Second World War, Scotland was still a Christian country, in which Jews were given the opportunity to settle and to adhere to their own religious heritage.

* FOOTNOTE This is an abbreviated version of a talk given by Ben Braber to the Literary Society on 3rd November 1991. The full text is available on request. The references remain as in the original.

1. B. Schotz, *Bronze in my Blood*, Edinburgh, 1981, p. 53.
2. *Idem* p. 55.
3. Quoted from K.E. Collins (ed.), *Aspects of Scottish Jewry*, Glasgow 1987. The first quotation is from Collins (p. 53), the second from Koelmel (p. 60).
4. *The Bailie* 29.12.1880.
5. *Idem*.
6. Minute Book Glasgow Hebrew Congregation 19/3/1866.
7. *Idem* 8/2/1871.
8. V.D. Lipman, *A History of the Jews in Britain since 1858*, Leicester, 1990; C.G. Brown, *The Social History of Religion in Scotland since 1730*, London, 1987.
15. Handwritten article in Scottish Jewry Archives Centre, probably compiled in 1960 to mark the occasion of the opening of a new synagogue building in Crosshill.
16. *JE* 2/8/1929.
22. *JE* 3/5/1929.
23. *JE* 8/1/1937.
24. *Glasgow Jewish Year Book 1938-1939*, p. 19.



Photo: Norma McKinney

Ben Braber is a historian and journalist. He is a graduate from the University of Amsterdam where he specialised in Jewish history. He has published two books on Jewish resistance in the Netherlands during the Second World War. At present, he is completing a doctoral thesis on the integration of Jewish immigrants in Glasgow from 1880-1939. Ben Braber is Archives Officer of the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre.

GARY DICKSON AT THE LIT

On 17th November, a large audience gathered at the Lit to hear Dr. Gary Dickson (Senior Lecturer in Medieval History at Edinburgh University) give one of his inimitable performances. Speaking on "Teaching Anti-Semitism", he outlined his debt to the American historian Professor Gavin Langmuir (one of the foremost historians of anti-semitism, whose student he had been and whose most recent books he had reviewed in the previous issue of the *Edinburgh Star*), and

provided an insight into university politics by outlining the machinations involved in securing approval for a new course. As a result of his efforts, the University of Edinburgh is the first university in the United Kingdom to offer an undergraduate course on the history of anti-semitism.

Gary Dickson explained that the course, which is for final year historians, differs from courses on Jewish history which are offered in many

universities, in that it focuses on the societies in which Jews have lived and the antagonistic relations of the host societies towards the Jews, rather than on the history of the Jews themselves. He had not been certain whether the course would be of interest to final year undergraduates but it was a matter of considerable satisfaction to him (and his audience) that it had turned out to be very popular and that, in its first year, it had been fully subscribed. E.S.

Rev. Ernest Levy at The Lit

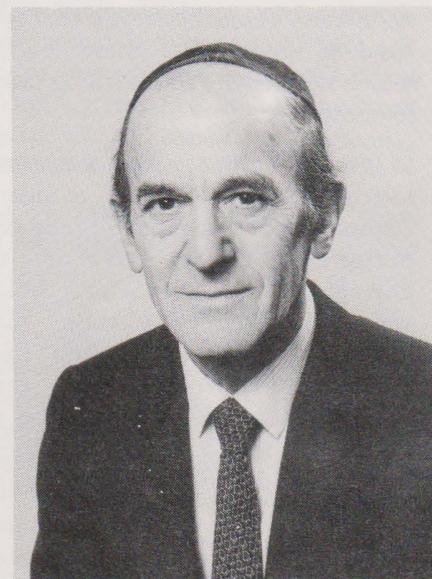
On Sunday, 8th December, Rev. Ernest Levy spoke about *The Art and Function of the Cantor*. He began the evening by lighting the Chanukah candles, thereby delighting the audience with his beautiful singing even before he started his talk. John Cosgrove pointed out that the Festival of Chanukah was a fitting time for the Cantor to address the Lit. He was a survivor of Auschwitz which had failed to break his spirit and that after all is what we celebrate at Chanukah.

Cantor Levy reflected that Chazanut is a dying art - there is no longer a place for the "vocal acrobatics" of the past. Congregations no longer have the patience to listen and shuls only rarely advertise for a cantor - something regarded as a "luxury they can no longer afford". The art of the cantor in the 1990's involves being a minister who participates fully in communal and pastoral duties, "singing is a side line". Reverend Levy spoke of the need to build up self-criticism and to be aware of what the community wants rather than forcing one's style on the community. He himself is a cantor of the fourth or fifth generation, all of whom had the ability to improvise. He reminded the audience that there had been no musical instruments in the synagogue from the destruction of the temple. He reflected on the importance of "joining in", on the need for a cantor to have a range in his voice as well as a musical and a Jewish education. It is important not

to take advantage of the fact that there is no conductor or director in Shul. Some cantors are interpreters, others composers. With the loss of the temple and the dispersal of the Jews, they had "travelled a bit and been around" and thereby "picked up the best and the not so good". He delighted the audience by illustrating some of his points. In particular he showed how improvisation is often based on well-known tunes and stated that it was impossible to compose without being influenced by music one had heard. He himself had composed music which turned out to be based on musical themes of the Flying Dutchman and Lohengrin! He spoke of himself as "truly mixed up" a real cosmopolitan and this was reflected in his singing - he has Hungarian, German and Czech roots. The Israeli cantor is quite different from the more traditional mould, quite lacking in "colourful background".

In conclusion Cantor Levy remarked that there were few clues as to what the original temple music sounded like - Rabbi Akiva had begun chanting and the first temple had a choir of 5000. He felt that Bernstein's Chichester Psalms echoed that original music, but who knows ----. Throughout he thrilled the audience with short bursts of song. The evening ended with latkes and sour cream as well as the more traditional tea and cake. A truly successful meeting to end the first half of the syllabus.

R.M.A.



Rev. Ernest Levy

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Eastern Europe – a journalist's view – NEAL ASCHERSON

Members of the Lit were once again invited to consider the significance of events in Eastern Europe when the distinguished author and journalist Neal Ascherson addressed a well-attended meeting on the 12th January, 1992 on the topic of "Nationalism and Prejudice". Neal Ascherson placed his analysis against a historical background in which 1848 and 1918 marked the previous high tides of nationalism in Europe, East and West, when the rise of ethnic-based nation states followed upon the collapse of empires. This was all dwarfed by events since 1989, and Neal Ascherson's conclusion was that we need to understand these forces which will be with us for a long time to come.

In Western Europe, nation-states are losing power to the European Community, releasing their hold on nationalist, self-government movements of peoples within those states. In Eastern Europe, the 'defrosting' of states from the Stalinist deep freeze raises the question whether there will be a revival of the old national rivalries and hatreds that have been

suppressed and contained within the Communist regimes that have now disintegrated. Unfortunately, Neal Ascherson thought there was now a resurgence of these nationalist political forces. As the writer Tom Nairn has observed, they are Janus-faced: alongside a forward-looking and progressive tendency there is also another face that harks back to a mythical past. There are enormous identity problems in all this, and religious problems too. In some of the more northerly countries of the East, the first wave of new leaders were liberal on social issues, concerned for human rights, and international in outlook. Many were Jewish, "maybe the very last assertion of Jewish liberalism on the Continent", but such progressivism has now been overtaken by events. In the more southerly countries, by contrast, former Communists transformed themselves from the start into leaders of authoritarian nationalist movements, the other face of Janus.

Neal Ascherson asked why anti-semitism has returned in all of these upheavals. By 1990, the elections in Poland were full of anti-semitic



rhetoric, and it exists in Hungarian politics as well. The Communist regimes had been bleak, but had offered people a kind of security as well as ideological explanations for events and shortcomings. Now the old certainties had failed, and Jews are once again scapegoats for bewildered people. This is not yet a revival of Fascism, but it has poisoned the political climate, and provides fertile soil for demagogues. However, Neal Ascherson tempered his pessimism with the thought that successful economic reform might help to contain these prejudices. Nonetheless, he thought that nationalism and the nation, which pre-existed the nation-state, would survive it as well.

C.D.R.

LIT SHIUR



John Cosgrove and Alexander Broadie at the Lit.

Professor Alexander Broadie's address to the 'Lit' on Sunday 9 February was another 'first' - a Lit shiur. Taking as his text chapter 3 of Exodus, the episode of the burning bush, Professor Broadie analysed the Hebrew with the help of Rashi and Rambam. The story proved to be rich in symbolism, whatever your preferred interpretation. The fire might stand for divine existence, needing nothing external to sustain it. The bush could be the house of Israel, humble and continuously under attack, yet surviving against the odds,

by the grace of God. Yet again, the presence of God in the bush might demonstrate how God inhabits the most lowly of his creations.

Continuing, Professor Broadie commented on Moses's attitude, at first hiding his face in awe, yet shortly afterwards following Abraham's example of arguing with God. The Lord sharply reminds him that he is only the instrument. God will be with him when he goes to plead the people's case with Pharaoh. This led on to the enthralling question of God's name, and how to interpret "I am that I am". Is it a tautology? Is it a reference to God's essential existence? Or, with Rashi, is it a reminder of God's continual presence with his people in past and future woe? Ending in the traditional way, with a division of views, Professor Broadie was bombarded with questions. The meeting, which lasted longer than usual, closed with a vote of thanks from the secretary.

M.B.

REFLECTIONS FROM AUSTRALIA TO EDINBURGH ON EVENTS IN RUSSIA BY MARK POWOLNY

AUGUST 1991

I don't know whether you want more reading material after the flood of papers, television and radio news.... the U.S.S.R. There I was in Vilno, summer 1935 and walking up a hill I looked towards the Soviet border. I thought about my destiny: in the Soviet Union or Australia? I could easily have got assistance to study in the Soviet Union. The next thought was, where could I get out easier if it didn't suit me. The answer was Tasmania rather than Sakhalin. Yet over the years my feelings and emotions were tied up with the land of the great human experimentation. In the twenties we rejoiced looking at the newspapers with photos of Lenin and Trotsky. Breathless we followed happenings, the development of industries, agriculture, education, the five year plans, the downfalls, the collectivisation, later the killings of opponents, Siberia and gulags for millions. The First and Second World Wars, years of our youth and adulthood were interwoven with the history of Eastern Europe, years of heartbreak and tears, yet hope. My dad served with the Don Cossacks at Yekaterinoslav in the heavy artillery battalion. This must have been round 1891 just a hundred years ago. He was born in 1871 so he was 20, military age. But his service was short as he was short-sighted. My father used to tell us how well he was treated by the sergeant who was a very fair man. There was a bit of Jew baiting in the Russian army. There was father's uncle Laubman who was taken for 25 years service when a boy. He served in the navy. I think on the Black sea. Once he rescued a Russian aristocrat troubled in stormy weather. Laubman was praised and given residence rights in places forbidden to others. Father took me to him one day. The rescue happened around 1870.

I shall not forget how sad I was when a stack of Russian books were given away, around 1925, because newly regained independent Poland could

not tolerate anything Russian. I still remember the blue street plaques with Russian and Polish names changed to Polish only. Perhaps quite a just decision. There was an enormous Russian orthodox cathedral in the centre of Warsaw called the Sobor with beautiful mosaics on the outer walls and highly artistic works inside. This was dynamited day after day for 2 years, so solid was the edifice. Even Jews were sorry for the loss of this cultural treasure. Again I think a correct decision from the point of view of Poles and others who suffered pretty badly from arrogant Russian officers and other authorities. Later we read the good classical Russian literature in Polish. We were eager to see films from the Great Neighbour. We had leaflets, booklets, pamphlets for breakfast, lunch and tea, describing the endeavours of the workers, peasants and soldiers under the leadership of Lenin and his followers. We accepted the necessity of Red Terror against White Terror. Even the idea of total sacrifice and anything demanded from the individual was acceptable to us, for a while. Since the Second World War, so much has become known, so much of the tragic times people went through, often without need for it: totalitarianism, the power of idiots, half wits and informers, finally corruption all over: queues for food, hunger, billions for arms and billions for half baked dictators in far away places. An old acquaintance met me yesterday. He asked "Kuba, are you a communist?" I said, "yes and also for capitalism with a human face and also, I am a Jewish nationalist and an agnostic who goes to the Temple and of course an Australian patriot, and also with special soft spots for Israel, Poland and Brooklyn". Very contradictory emotions, yet they are not. I am not too excited about Yeltsin. He let certain forces loose that he may regret. Like Pamyat. He is certainly better than the conservatives, but return to the Rasputins? To Russian Chauvinism?

I am sure the Russian people will find their way. They will need a lot of financial help, but also a lot of pressure to retain what's good from socialism and not allow neo-Nazis, neo-Fascists to wag their tails.

The flag with the hammer and sickle may disappear from the republics of the Soviet Union, but it will stay in the heart of the believers and dreamers who thought a new order and new man could be created.

The sufferings of the Soviet people have already benefitted the people of the West. How long before they benefit their own?

Communism, was once a wonderful term, and it was said "who was a comm, had a heart, who is, has no head," but over the years communism became synonymous with the worst. Millions lost their lives who fought for the left ideas against Nazism and Fascism, jails, concentration camps, death camps and mass shooting. Every Jew must realize that many non-Jewish anticommunists regard all Jews as carriers of this pestilence." Some of the highest placed Catholic clergy replied to enquirers, that they saved and sheltered Nazi war criminals to be used against "communism" after the war. So one logic of understanding Tiananmen and the K.G.B., is to support the liberating forces which include the fascists and chauvinists. We shall face the consequences. The skin heads in London, neo-Nazis in Melbourne, the LePennists in Paris, Ku-Klux-Klan in New York. May God have mercy upon us. We are destined to suffer the fight. Often to be losers. What would happen if General Lyebyed had not sent his troops to assist Yeltsin from Tula? The same with General Victor Karpukhin who devised the whole plan for air and ground forces to attack the Russian Parliament and decided against in the last minute.

In conclusion I want to tell you that I am absolutely convinced that, if

Karl Marx were to come back from "heaven" in good health and spirit he would decide to go to Synagogue every Sabbath morning. A little opium is good for you. He would live in Israel six months every year. He would accept capitalism with a human face, especially for developing countries, he would discover that there is hardly a proletariat. Bourgeoisie yes, petit

bourgeoisie yes, but hardly a world leading proletariat. In fact he would mobilize all forces to defend these so called, "exploiting" classes as they are the real and only classes able to provide food, shelter and education to the people of this globe. The hate campaign against them of 1880-1930 and since, resulted in nazism, corrupted communism and antisemitism. We also have to keep

our eyes open and claws ready for those who will try to take advantage of democracy for a push towards fascism.

Mark Powolny is the pen name of Mark Kuba Langsam who was born in Warsaw, Poland in 1915, and emigrated to Melbourne, Australia in 1936, where he has lived ever since. He is the archivist at the Holocaust Museum Centre in Melbourne.

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**WINTER 1992: ANGLO-JEWRY SENDS
FOOD FOR LIFE TO SOVIET JEWS**

CBF World Jewish Relief has instigated a community wide FOOD FOR LIFE appeal for Jews in Russia and the Ukraine where harsh food shortages are forecast this winter.

Last year CBF World Jewish Relief launched an emergency food parcel campaign to the Soviet Union. The response was exceptional and nearly 3,000 food packages were distributed primarily to elderly Jews in Leningrad. The operation also signified the first time a Soviet Jewish community had joined forces in over 70 years, whereby residents worked energetically to ensure that each parcel reached its intended destination.

At that time, CBFWJR hoped the problem of food shortages would dwindle and everything would be resolved by this Winter, but the contrary is true and many Soviet citizens are being issued with ration cards for food.

FOOD FOR LIFE is supported by: the Assembly of Masorti Synagogues, Board of Deputies of British Jews, National Council for Soviet Jewry, B'Nai Brith, Reform Synagogues of Great Britain, United Synagogue, Spanish and Portuguese Jews' Congregation, Federation of Synagogues, The 35's, and the Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues.

Food packages weighing approximately 20 pounds and containing vitamins, aspirin, oil, baby food, powdered milk, powdered soup, powdered eggs, rice and pulses/beans have been sent to those who are most vulnerable -- the elderly, the disabled and families with young children. Resident Jewish communities are responsible for distribution.

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A YEAR ROUND EASTERN EUROPE BY JULIA MERRICK

In May sunshine Malcolm and I took the hydrofoil down the Danube from Vienna to Budapest. It was a splendid way to travel, going at about 50 knots along this wide trans-European waterway. As it was a Sunday people were picnicking on the banks or had canoes in the water. We passed old town and castles and arrived with Buda to starboard and Pest on our port side. In Budapest we were just tourists. We were amazed by the eclectic architecture, saddened by the bullet scarred walls and the museum of the holocaust. We suffered the noise and the fumes of a busy city, ate well but sadly did not meet people. After a few days we took the train north west to Prague (see Edinburgh Star No 6). It was truly a delightful city to visit.

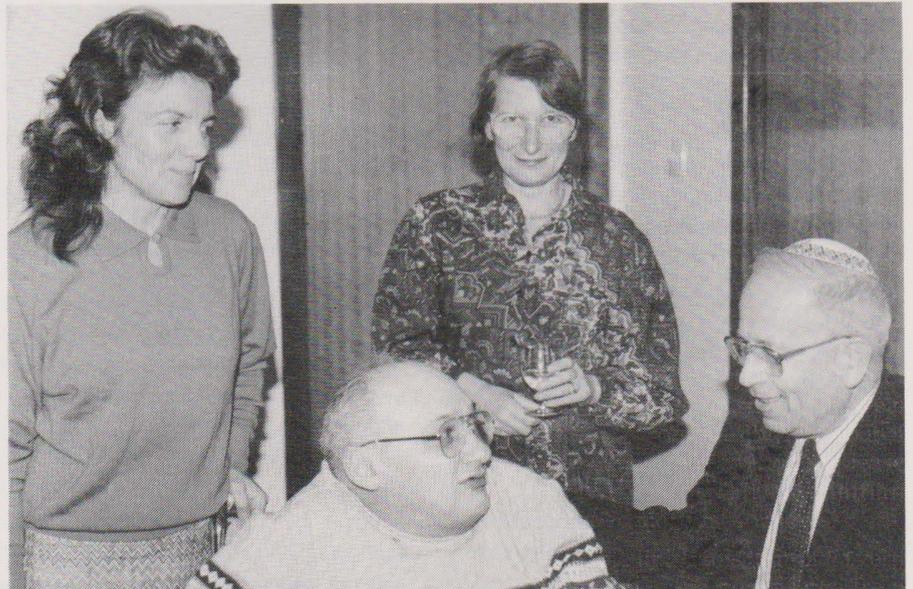
A Czech friend in London had asked us to deliver a letter and medal to the present head of Charter '77, Helena Klimova. Her husband, Ivan Klima, picked us up from our hotel and over tea and cake in their flat we exchanged information of East and West. Helena is a psychoanalyst and it surprised us that it was possible to practice privately in a communist state. However the authorities did not consider this as a threat, nor for idealistic reasons but because there was no money in it. We tried to describe what British democracy is, which is not what they thought it was. For example, we do not have a freedom of information act. They described the extent of pollution in what, to us looking from the train, seemed to be idyllic countryside. Ivan Klima is a novelist and for many years his works were banned at home. 'First Loves' and 'Love and Garbage' are two of his books I have enjoyed and which are published here by Penguin. Helena is also a founder member of a Jewish choir which has toured abroad. Ivan proudly told us that his son was Czech ambassador to Israel. Both Ivan and Helena were tremendously optimistic about the future of Czechoslovakia, but at that time looked with a wary eye towards the Russian border. Anything could then have happened in the USSR. Such conversation was continued with Ivan after he had appeared with Amos Oz at the Edinburgh Book Festival in August.

The Czechs were not rich but there were goods in the shops. Beer flowed in restaurants but food was sparse,

bread dumpling being the major feature of any dish. I wondered what the standard of living was in other countries. Until December I had met no-one who could give me first hand information on Romania. Then a friend 'phoned to say she had been there and that she was organising a visit for some senators and others who wished to help the physically handicapped in Romania. One of the group was Iancu Goldstein, founder of Romania's National Society for the Physically Handicapped. As a Jew who edited the journal of the Romanian Jews he was also interested to meet our community. So it was with great pleasure that Malcolm and I arranged a small reception for him. Disabled himself, he understands well the dearth of facilities in his own country. In Edinburgh we worry about ramps to give access to public buildings. In Bucharest they do not have the wheel chairs to use ramps. The aims of the visit were to find out what can be done, to raise money for a meals on wheels service and to found a newspaper for the disabled and to heighten Western awareness of the problems faced by Romanians. Romania has a powerful and famous Chief Rabbi, Moses Rosen who for years protected his community, encouraging aliyah and Jewish education. Iancu did not think that there was more anti-Semitism than in other countries, but he was speaking from the perspective of Eastern Europe. Ivan Klima from Czechoslovakia had spent some of his childhood in Terezin concentration

camp, so I think this must be viewed as a relative evaluation. However, the handicapped Jews in Romania were well off. Copious funds had been provided by American Jews for a beautiful and well equipped home for them. It was an embarrassment to him to see this selective charity. His appeal to the Jewish community was that if anyone wished to give money please could it be for all Romanian handicapped not just for Jews.

Finally let me finish this tour of Eastern Europe with a quote from a letter from a Russian Jew. After many years of teaching English to scientists in the closed city of Gorky (now Nizky Novgord) Jacob Donskui was able to come to Edinburgh about a year ago to improve his English. Some people may remember him coming to Lit meetings. He writes 'As once Audrey Hepburn said "I'm having a nervous breakdown" - and so are the majority of people here who can't understand that they don't live in the country they used to, that time and relations between people have changed drastically ... And yet this crazy life is like drugs - every day and every hour something new is happening - people think they are free to create and free to kill others. It seems Russia and Revolution always go together well.' He adds 'letters from the Promised Land are sad and dreary - they write it's next to impossible to find any job there, and as far as I know all other countries are very much afraid of potential refugees from the former USSR'. Next year in....?



Iancu Goldstein and his friend being entertained by Julia Merrick and Rabbi Shapira

JNF BLUE BOXES REVISITED

BY CHAYA STEINER

The Jewish National Fund's Blue Boxes went on exhibition recently as part of the year-long events marking the organization's 90th anniversary.

Inaugurated in 1902 as one of JNF's first fundraising devices to redeem the national homeland, "the small box with the big idea" was the brainchild of one Haim Kleinman, a bank clerk from Galicia. Capturing Jewish hearts as well as purses, it caught on so quickly that by the interwar period an estimated million boxes were to be found in Jewish homes around the world.

Yet their significance lay not only in the funds they generated, which perforce were limited, but mostly in their educational and ideological value, uniting and rallying the far-flung Jewish People around a single idea - the return to Zion.

As JNF's fourth World Chairman and "man of iron," Menahem Ussishkin, put it: "It's not the donor that gives to Keren Kayemeth, but, rather the Fund that gives to the donor ... an earthly foothold and a heavenly ideal."

So powerful was this ideal that Bernard Bucholdt, for example, chose his Blue Box as the one item the Nazis permitted the Lodz Jews to take with them on their "journey" to Auschwitz, where he kept it hidden under the floorboards. "It was my mezuzah," says Bucholdt. "To me it was the entire Jewish People and my entire Jewish heritage."

Jewish families all over the world made it a tradition to drop a coin into their Blue Boxes every Sabbath eve. Schoolchildren and Zionist youth took to the streets to canvass passers-by on JNF campaign days. Whole generations grew up on the words of the Hebrew song: "Here a dunam, there a dunam, a clod upon a clod, upbuilding the people's land, from the Negev to the North."

And yet, today, an entire generation is growing up that "knows not the Blue Box" - much to the disappointment of their parents,

who look back in nostalgia.

"I asked my 10-year-old son what the Blue Box is, and he thought I was talking about a new kind of television," says Israel Radio's Muli Shapira.

The renewed interest generated by the Blue Box Exhibition has brought a flood of letters pouring into JNF's head office in Jerusalem asking that the boxes be revived. And efforts are being made to do so, according to JNF World Chairman Moshe Rivlin: "In certain countries, the Blue Box is still a firm institution. Forty percent of JNF's income in Australia, for example, derives from it. The United Kingdom held a 'National Blue Box

Redemption Day' in July. I hope that the 90th-Anniversary year will spur the restoration of the Blue Box to schools, classrooms and Jewish homes."

Meanwhile, its changing forms (it was not always box-shaped, let alone blue) and relative scarcity in recent years has made the Blue Box a collectors' item. A box belonging to JNF's second World Chairman, Max Bodenheimer, and preserved by his daughter, Hannah, was recently assessed for insurance purposes to the tune of \$50,000! It closely resembles the one Theodor Herzl, the father of the Zionist Movement, took for his office straight off the production line in 1904.



*"The small box with the big idea,"
JNF's Blue Box was not always blue nor always box-shaped.*

REFLECTIONS ON A VISIT TO ISRAEL

"Jews are a people 3,000 years old with the confusions of an adolescent." So says Abraham Infeld, a 6ft 4 Israeli with a wild, unruly beard, a skull cap and a thick South African accent. He runs Melitz -- an education centre which tells young Israeli Jews why they ought to be good Zionists.

The Melitz Centre also has a programme called 'Christian Encounter with Israel' and it was this particular package that lured me to the Holy Land. The question most often addressed by Jews and Gentiles alike was: 'What is a Jew?' After two weeks of endless debate Abraham gave as good an answer as any. In proper rabbinic fashion, he told the story of Ruth, the biblical heroine. When disaster struck in Moab, Ruth was told by her mother-in-law to go out and seek her fortune. Instead she clung to Naomi and said the famous words: "Your people are my people and your God is my God." The Hebrew version takes only four words to sum up what being Jewish means -- peoplehood and God -- in that order.

In many parts of the diaspora, Judaism is simply lumped together with other world religions. Jews are of the 'Hebrew religion' or (more British) 'Mosaic persuasion'. And yet Abraham, who prays three times a day, keeps the Sabbath and eats Kosher food does not see Judaism as a religion. It is bigger than that. It is the culture -- sometimes religious -- of a particular people. And this group of people has no intention of converting others. They simply want to be left alone in order to get on with being Jewish -- which brings us to the original question -- 'Who is a Jew?'

The case of Father Daniel illustrates the problem. He was brought up in Poland as a Jew. He converted to Christianity and became a Carmelite monk (in which capacity, by the way, he played a major part in rescuing Jews from the blood-stained hands of the Nazis.) In 1964 he applied for Israeli citizenship under

BY CAROLYN BUTLER

the Law of Return -- i.e. as a Jew. After much anguished debate and a stint in the Supreme Court he was turned down for the reason that, having changed his religion he was no longer perceived as a Jew. The nation was divided and even today there are many who see Father Daniel as a Jew -- a very bad one -- but still definitely a Jew.

Another area of confusion takes the form of Israel's dual identity. On the one hand it is the Promised Land which will itself bring about the Messianic Kingdom. On the other hand it is a modern state with civil laws and a highly sophisticated army. In the words of the Independence Declaration: "The state of Israel will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the *prophets of Israel*" (underlining, mine). A Jewish state or a state for Jews?

Abraham sums up: "When I get out of bed each morning I'm not sure whether I'm part of a messianic process or the building up of a new state ... all I know is that I'm happy to be in a land where I can talk about it." In other words, he quite enjoys being faced with the dilemma.

Talking is a great Israeli pastime. One of our hosts, Rabbi David Rosen, admitted to an almost sensual love of words and told us to stop him if he got carried away. But he, like all our speakers, refrained from talking about the Palestinian problem. We were told at the end that this issue was not for our consumption, since, once aired, it tended to suffocate the Jewish/Christian dialogue that was the *raison d'être* of the trip. How often do we in England talk about Northern Ireland they asked? Nevertheless the silence was deafening.

In the face of death, silence is our only response. A visit to the Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem reduced our group of twenty to a silence that took hours to break. To

this day I have kept that silence insofar as I have not talked about the photographs I saw. It is enough for now to recall one image. A mother walks briskly down the street with her three children. She is hurrying so that the two year old girl can hardly keep up as she stretches up to keep hold of her mother's hand. They are a well-groomed family with smart woollen coats and those heavy boots laced at the ankle that are so characteristic of the 40's. Each carries a bundle; food for the journey, nappies, clothes. They look as though they're setting out for a rather smart weekend in the country. But they're not. They're setting out for death. And the mother's careful preparations for her children will be wasted. Guilt is also a waste. When faced with the Holocaust, I know that I must do more than remember, I must understand.

Our next stop was Meah Shearim -- the ultra orthodox quarter of Jerusalem. It was the Sabbath Day so roadblocks were up to ensure peace and quiet. From one corner to the next, we had stepped out of modernity into an era that looked pre-Enlightenment. The men without exception were dressed in fur hats and long, off-black belted coats which looked hot and bulky. They hurried past us with bowed heads and impressively long sidelocks swinging and dancing next to them. With white, bespectacled faces studiously averted, they appeared oblivious to our gaze. The women by contrast were colourful verging on gawdy. Their long dresses revealed nothing; not even a wrist or a collar bone. Their faces, framed with wigs and scarves, were uncompromisingly plain. Together with their men they say 'No' to the modern world. They seem uninterested in society at large although I suspect they simply mask it well. At first sight the men looked hideous to me with their dirty, unlaced shoes and tassled coats. Didn't they know they looked like nineteenth century caricatures? It was only later that I began to appreciate the uniqueness of this

community. In the midst of a teeming and pluralistic state, they have retained an East European identity for generations. They also say 'No' to the state of Israel and to what they see as the heresy of Zionism. A Jewish nation that lives by mortal strength and weaponry is, for the ultra orthodox Jewry, a denial of the true Israel. The People of Israel will be forgiven and transformed only by the just Messiah and only as a result of their faithful observance of the Torah. As a result Meah Shearim stands alone from the state with their private supply of water and electricity as well as their own bus service and rubbish collection. The Government in their turn shun the community which leaves them in a state of near poverty. It was the first time for example that I had seen rubbish on the streets in a Jewish quarter which are normally so kosher clean. But their dignity more than made up for it. It was memorable and it made our Western curiosity look kitch by comparison.

Israel is not a melting pot. Jewish, Christian and Moslem communities live side by side in unholy tension. In the Church of the Holy Sepulchre for instance in Jerusalem, the Syriac, Armenian, Coptic and Greek Orthodox communities vie for space and almost drown each other on Sunday mornings. The Ethiopian Church is in the basement. But for Jews, the most splendid and new-fangled Church or synagogue cannot compete with Eretz Israel – the land of Israel. Here, the soil itself is sacred – the very dust and stones on which we tramp are the Holy Altar of Judaism.

As we left the mountain top of Masada on our last day, we met Danielle, a young Israeli girl about to enter the army. She visits Masada regularly and looked on as our guide recounted the Jewish stand against the Romans which ended in mass suicide. Danielle was clearly moved to speak. She arose from her sunbathing and explained her love of Israel. A number of her friends had died as heroes for Israel and she too, at the age of seventeen, would feel honoured to die for her country.

"Nationalism is real" she said. "It did not just happen 2,000 years ago. It is happening here and now." I seemed to be the only one in the group who reacted to these words with a sense of sadness. Perhaps she had been drilled at the Melitz Centre for Zionist Education. Perhaps in Israel the reality of borders makes pacificism a middle-class, British luxury. All I know is that I am left with a legacy from Israel. I passionately believe in the right of the Jewish state to exist, but at what cost? However high the cost I am virtually compelled to accept it because of the past suffering of the Jewish people and as such I live out in a small way the tensions that most Jews have suffered for centuries. I am left in a permanent state of unease. Perhaps this more than anything answers my question: 'What is a Jew?'



Carolyn Butler graduated from the Divinity Faculty of Edinburgh University this year in Old Testament Studies and Hebrew. She has since taken up a research and presenting post with the Religious Broadcasting Department of the BBC. Carolyn has two daughters and a son and is also a member of the Council for Christians and Jews.



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School Reunion in Israel after Seventy Years

BY MARIANNE LASZLO

I was privileged to be present at a very unique reunion in October 1991. It took place in Tel-Aviv and Jerusalem and the occasion was without precedent. It was the reunion of D.Zs. Rg. (Debreceni Zsido Realgimnazium), the Jewish Grammar School of Debrecen, Hungary. The school no longer exists however its short life made a significant mark.

In 1921, there were more than 10,000 members in the Hebrew Congregation in Debrecen. It became necessary to establish a school for the Jewish children who were restricted in their education because of the antisemitic Education Act of Hungary. There were steadily growing restrictions on Jews in the professions and commerce. Teachers from schools and academics in universities were sacked because of their faith. Most of these people gained posts as teachers in the new Jewish Grammar School. All the pupils of the school which was in existence for little more than twenty years had the best possible education. The standard of teaching was almost at university level. After the Second World War many of the pupils who survived the murderous 'Labour Corps' of the Hungarian Army, have become leaders and respected authorities in every field.



Marianne Laszlo in Rosh Hanikra

A view of the Mediterranean coast line from the cliff tops

There are only three hundred former pupils alive to-day. They are all around the world. At the reunion 150 were present. They came from near and far. They spoke different languages and brought with them different customs of their adopted homes. However there was one thing we all had in common, our background and part of our secondary education.

Two of our teachers are in their 90s' and to everyone's delight, they too were present on the reunion. One of the teachers was Mannheim, who edited the first Hebrew-Hungarian Dictionary. He is an Israeli citizen. The other teacher travelled from Budapest to be the guest of honour at the meeting. He was the P.E. teacher 'Karpati', the famous former Olympic Champion in wrestling. He represented Hungary at the Berlin Olympics. He was the one who knocked out his German opponent to the dismay of Hitler. The event there in Berlin was a miracle, like the story of David and Goliath. Karpati the P.E. teacher gave 'survival training' to his pupils because he knew at the time what to expect from the Fascist administration of Hungary in the late 1930's early 1940's. Most of his pupils survived the Holocaust.

There will be no more reunions. It was the end of a chapter for part of Hungarian Jewry.

HAGGIS IN HERZLIYA BY CHANA STERNE

Apart from Shakespeare, no other British poet has been translated into so many languages as Robert Burns. Some of his poems are so well known that one assumes they must be traditional folk songs probably listed under Anon. "Auld Lang Syne," "Scots Wha' Hae," "John Anderson, My Jo" or "My Love is Like a Red, Red Rose."

Burns (lovingly known as Rabbie Burns by the Scots) wrote them all. He died at the age of 37 in 1796 and the first Burns Supper was held as soon as 1801, and the tradition has been going strong ever since.

Thousands of Burns suppers are held around the world on his birthday, January 25, in locations as scattered as Waikiki, Philadelphia, New Zealand and Canada. The traditional form of the festivities has long been sacrosanct.

Last year's Israeli event was scudded off the calendar altogether, and this year, certain improvisational liberties were taken: the date was moved so as not to hold it on Shabbat; the meal was kosher; and the chef, never having cooked haggis before, substituted it with "kosher kishke kelti."

Truth to tell, the Burns part of the evening was downplayed for a general Scottish reunion. And why not? Other ethnic groups have their regular get-togethers and with Yigal Levine (ex-Glasgow) as head of the British Olim Society, it's only fitting that the Scots have theirs too.

This is the fifth time it's been held locally, and they came to the Country Club in Herzliya from as far north as Mevo Hama and from as far south as Eilat. For us Scottish Israelis, it's the one time of year to stand and be counted not as *Anglo-Saxim* but as true Scots, to dig our tartan out of the closet and wear it proudly, to drink whisky with a clear

conscience and not to have to explain what a "Sassenach" is, nor shudder while others fumble with the words of "Auld Lang Syne."

The master of ceremonies, William Livingstone (Hararit, ex-Glasgow) was splendidly arrayed in tartan, though sadly lacking a sporran. He told a stream of Scottish jokes which were then translated for spouses who lack the benefit of a Scots upbringing.

After the Selkirk Grace ("Some hae meat and canna eat, / And some wad eat that want it, / But we hae meat and we can eat, / And sae the Lord be thankit"), Iri Foreman (ex-Glasgow and, like Burns, a farmer, though now only in the labs of Tnuva) recited Burns's "Address to the Haggis," one of the most important elements of the proceedings.

The haggis is Scotland's national dish and tradition dictates that it be served with "neeps and tatties" (turnips and potatoes) as a main course. Here it was served in its lone glory as an hors d'oeuvre and was duly trundled round the room, aflame, preceded by a bagpipe player. (I'd love to know what the hotel staff think of making such a fuss over kishke.)

I don't know why the haggis/kishke was not properly stabbed by a skean dhu - for reasons of security, perhaps.

To confuse matters even further, the piper was from Holland and learned to play the bag-pipes while studying in North Carolina. In real life, he's David Benninga, a real estate agent in Jerusalem, but his piping services are called upon in Israel more often than you'd think.

Then the toast. It's surely the first time that the haggis has been toasted by a Sassenach (Darren Fields) doing an imitation of Yitzhak Shamir "apologizing" in a genuine Polish accent for not being able to find a kilt to fit him.

There was nothing very Scottish about the meal, though over-cute names had been tacked on to the items on the menu (Strudel Ben Nevis, for heaven's sake! What would have been wrong with some good Scots trifle or a dessert made with some oatmeal?).

Grace following the meal was led by Edwin Hoffenberg (Haifa, ex-

Edinburgh) starting off with a rousing rendition of "Shir Hama'alot" to the tune of "Scotland the Brave." Try it, it fits perfectly.

I heard comments that the musical part of the evening was overlong for most people's liking and this reporter would tend to agree. If someone had recited "Tam O'Shanter" it might have gone down better. But this is Israel and when people have "shlepped" from the Galilee to Herzliya to sing to you, it's difficult to cut down their program. But the poem ("Owed to the Bard") composed and recited by Amiel Schotz (Beersheba, ex-Glasgow) was absolutely brilliant. Rabbie Burns would have loved it both for its Burns-like rhythms as well as for its humanistic sentiments.

No less enjoyable, though on quite a different level, was the hysterically funny "Toast to the Lassies" and "Reply by a Lassie" which was actually a comedy act in broad Glasgow accents by Joy and Arthur Livingstone of Ra'anana. Yigal Levine of the BOS will probably be called "Yiggle" from now on by all the audience who will also no doubt refer in future to Saddam Hussein's threat of "Comical Warfare."

There were some 220 people present and everyone who had something tartan was wearing it, whether a full kilt or a hair ribbon. The crowd included about a quarter of the Dundee Jewish community, now transplanted to Beersheba. In real terms, that means two Dundonian doctors who work at Soroka hospital.

One of the few men in a kilt turned out to be Neville Lamdan (formerly Mandel, ex-Glasgow), head of the North American division at our Ministry for Foreign Affairs. He's proud that he's been wearing the same kilt since he was 15 (no, that's not because of Scottish stinginess, which is a myth) and can still fit into it.

Kilts, though they wrap around the wearer, are made to fit by little belts on the side. A good quality new kilt is very expensive, with seven to eight meters of material folded into it. Apart from Burns suppers, Neville wears his regularly every year at Purim, which doesn't seem quite right, since a kilt is hardly fancy dress for a true Scot. He's not taking it to the peace talks in Moscow,

which is a pity as it could help to lighten the atmosphere.

To be a Scot is to be schizophrenic. The Scot fights a lifelong battle to prevent his Scottish identity being swallowed up by the overall English culture and displays the defiant pride of the minority whenever his identity seems to be challenged. How much more so when the Scot is also a Jew and wants to maintain that part of his identity as well. Schizophrenia within schizophrenia.

True, *helzel* was on our table at home and not haggis, but Hogmanay was as much a part of our lives as Rosh Hashana. Bonnie Prince Charlie was more real to us than the Ba'al Shem Tov, and the massacre of Macdonalds by Campbells in Glencoe more easily imagined than our own ancestors being massacred by Cossacks in Lithuania.

I - like many other Scottish Jews - grew up not knowing which words we used at home were Scots, which English and which Yiddish. Our lives were divided into different spheres. That problem is taken care of when you come on aliya, but then you find you're regarded as an "Anglo-Saxon" and the Scottish part of your identity is weak, to say the least.

So it was grand to feel Scots again, even if only for one evening. As we would have said back in the old country, this year's Burns supper was "a *mehaye*."



FOOTNOTE: This article first appeared in the weekend magazine of The Jerusalem Post on 31 January 1992.

Anne Chana Sterne grew up in Edinburgh, went to Mary Erskine School and was active in Habonim. Her late parents, Bessie and Frank Sterne were also active members of the community. Anne has lived in Israel since 1967 and works as a Hebrew-English translator for "The Jerusalem Post" to which she also contributes occasional articles.

