

The Edinburgh Star

Journal of the Edinburgh Jewish Community

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The Edinburgh Star

SYNAGOGUE CHAMBERS
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Events in the news during the past few months have been particularly depressing. Talk of 'ethnic cleansing' in Yugoslavia and the plight of the refugees there bear a horrific resemblance to events in Germany prior to the Second World War. Starvation in Somalia has reached an unprecedented scale with fears that the death toll may yet be as high as four million. In light of these tragedies brought about almost entirely by 'man's inhumanity to man', the news of the Israeli election results (analysed in this issue of the *Star*) brought a welcome ray of hope which was lucidly captured by Chaim Bermant in an article in the *Observer*. He wrote:

... Israel is already a happier place ... where the old Zionism had harnessed Jewish hopes, Begin and his associates harnessed Jewish fears. Universal aspirations, as preached by the prophets, were abandoned for particularist ones. The Holocaust became the focus and was allowed to overshadow centuries of Jewish progress and achievement ...

This is now finally over. It was Russian immigrants who were the first builders of the Jewish state, and it is Russian immigrants who have helped to redeem it from the spoilers ...

Rabin has always recognised that there can be no military solution to the Palestinian problem. It is for this reason that he, 'the hawkish head of a dovish party', gives rise to renewed hopes for a lasting settlement.

May the coming year bring peace and tranquility to all the turbulent parts of the world.

The Editor and Editorial Board wish all Star readers Shana Tova.

Front cover:

by Judy Gilbert

The Hebrew is the traditional prayer:
"May it be Your will to renew
for us a good and sweet year"

Typing:

by Valerie Chuter

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New Year Message from Rabbi Shalom Shapira

הַיּוֹם הָרַת עוֹלָם, הַיּוֹם יַעֲמִיד בְּמִשְׁפָּט כָּל יְצוּרֵי עוֹלָמִים

*This day the world was called into being;
This day all the creatures of the universe
are to stand in judgment.*

This verse, which is recited three times on Rosh Hashanah during the repetition of the Mussaf amidah, affirms that the festival is both the birthday of the universe and the day of judgment for all mankind. What is the connection between these two affirmations? I want to explore this question here since the answer throws a great deal of light on the nature of Rosh Hashanah.

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My answer takes its start from the fact that our festivals commemorate historical events, and that, as nearly as we can, we re-create and re-live those events by observing the various mitzvot and customs associated with the festivals. For example, on Pesach we eat the matzah and maror to remind ourselves of the suffering endured by the Israelites at the hands of Pharaoh and at least symbolically we share in that suffering. And on Succot, to remind ourselves of the frail huts, the succot, that sheltered the Israelites in the wilderness, we build and live in our own equally frail succot. Likewise since the Torah was given on the date on which we celebrate Shavuot, we study Torah throughout the night of Shavuot. In each case there is a physical re-creating and re-living of the events that the festival commemorates. But how can Rosh Hashanah be like that? How is it possible for us to re-create and re-live what the festival commemorates, the creation of the universe out of absolutely nothing? What act can we perform on Rosh Hashanah that corresponds to eating matzah on Pesach and to building a succah on Succot?

The answer in a word is *teshuvah* - repentance. Rosh Hashanah is the opening of *Asseret Yemey Teshuvah* - the ten days of repentance, which end with Yom Kippur. During this period, in which we dedicate ourselves to the task of moral improvement and spiritual renewal, we are in effect aiming to achieve a personal re-creation. Our rabbis saw repentance as a symbolic act imitating God's creation of the world. Just as on the very first Rosh Hashanah the world was new, so at each Rosh Hashanah that we celebrate we should become new. We do so by reviewing our lives of the past year, taking stock honestly of the wrongs we have done, and undertaking to abide by higher standards than those we had

previously managed to maintain. To do all this is to repent.

Torah tells us that *Maaseh Bereshit*, the divine act of creation, stopped at the end of six days. We are not told that the work of creation was complete, but simply that God stopped. What is the significance of this? We learn in the Talmud of a Roman governor Tinnaius Rufus who confronted Rabbi Akiva with these two questions: 'Why did your God create man uncircumcised, and why did He create poverty?' Rabbi Akiva replied: 'God purposely created an incomplete world, expecting man to complete it. The Torah which He gave to His chosen people describes our duty in perfecting and completing the works of creation'. Jews must not be passive. We are required to improve ourselves physically, morally and spiritually; we must strive continually to improve life in all its aspects, a task which our rabbis saw as helping to complete the work of creation begun on the very first Rosh Hashanah. In this task we are guided at every turn by the Torah, and so we can be seen as partners of the Almighty in the work of creation. A hint of this role is to be found in an interpretation of the phrase: *asher bara elohim la'asot* (Gen. 2,3) - He finished His work of creation 'which God created (for us) to do'. This difficult passage is taken to mean that we have a part to play in the task of making the world a better place.

In approaching the Days of Awe we must turn inwards, search our souls, review our lives, and dedicate ourselves to a life that faithfully reflects the Torah. There could be no more appropriate time for judgment. For the deep reasons I have been speaking about, the birthday of the universe and God's judgment of His people must go hand in hand.

Rachel and I wish you all a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year. May God inscribe us all in the book of life for a year of happiness and peace *Shana tova, ketiva va'chatima tova*.

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THOUGHTS ON 'THOUGHT FOR THE DAY' :

BY RABBI LIONEL BLUE

Giving a religious Thought on a Monday morning is not at all like giving a sermon. For one thing I am not wearing robes and no choirs accompany me as I creep into the studio. But then the listeners are not like any congregation I've ever preached to in a Synagogue. They are not dressed in their Sabbath best and perched on their pews. They are in bed (doing whatever they are doing), or in the bathroom shaving or showering, or in the loo, or eating kippers in the kitchen. They also have one power denied to a normal synagogue seatholder, they can turn off the preacher whenever they wish - with one flick of a switch they can obliterate him. So whatever you say in your little radio sermonette has to be relevant to the bedroom, bathroom, loo and kitchen. Unless it is part of that common reality, it sticks out like a sore thumb.

But the broadcaster-preacher has another problem. What does he preach? What scriptures can he appeal to? What authority can he invoke? The listeners include people of all faiths and none. They either have different scriptures from me, or recognise no scriptures at all. For some these are just old books. So it's no use relying on "Scripture says" or "the sages say ..." For me that private Scripture is the Book of My Life. Only when I spot God or providence or what you will at work in my life can I recognise Him (or Her or It) at work in other people at other times.

In broadcasting, I refer to that book of mine, and encourage people to work out their own 'books of life'. Some may write parts of them down and publish them like me. Some only tell it to those they love. For some it is secret to themselves. But I believe everyone has a 'Scripture' inside her or him, and unless it is pondered over and becomes conscious, religion will remain flat and formal, concerned with conventions, institutions and committees, without depth or insight.

Rosh Hashanah unlike other Jewish festivals celebrates no national

triumph or disaster. The events it deals with are "inner" or "in heaven" which may be the same. Since the Holocaust, Judaism has been held together by community feeling and solidarity. That event left too many question marks for an easy inner faith. But it is to that inner world of faith that Rosh Hashanah draws us. It is the theme of our own Book of Life.

One other observation: in my grandparents' day, people regarded their own lives as commentaries to the text of tradition. Now, I think it is the other way around. The text is now a person's own life, and the tradition is a commentary on it. With many listeners, quotations cut no ice. What they want is your own experience, what you learnt from life and how you learnt it, what spiritual capital is in your bank, and how you acquired it.

It was during a Rosh Hashanah service that I first realised this and what I must do. Someone else was chanting part of the service and my mind jumped from one phrase of the liturgy to another before settling on "Book of Life".

"O God of life, inscribe us in the Book of Life". And later in the High Holy Days' liturgy there is mention of a book that each one of us signs with her or his life. Every New Year card mentions this book, which is probably the same one that is sealed on Yom Kippur!"

Looking at my congregation I realised how far away they were in time and space from the traditional scriptures and how much ingenuity is required in sermons to connect the religion of times past with the realities of British-Jewish suburban lives. Some passages of course carry over the centuries with immediate impact. Many need a wealth of interpretation.

We therefore need another "Scripture" to lay alongside the traditional Scriptures which is not about "them, then" but about "me, now" - a private "Scripture" which can bridge the gap, which can open up the way into the traditional

Scriptures for us. Does this different approach matter? I don't think so. God is at the end of every road and at the centre of every life, provided you want to find Him (or Her or It).

This year, may you work out another page of your own "Scripture" and with the understanding that comes from it be inscribed for a good year.

Rabbi Blue is a Reform Rabbi and well-known writer and broadcaster.

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July 1992

Dear Editor

It was a pleasure to read the article by Ben Braber in the Pesach edition of the Star. Nostalgia took over on seeing the photographs accompanying it. I recalled many stories told to me when a child in Glasgow.

Tradition had it that newcomers to the City often en route to America were greeted on arrival. My grandfather, Joe Boston, met Benno Schotz and took him to the Boston house in Apsley Place, Gorbals, his first "digs".*

The photograph of the British Legion members brought back memories. Many faces are known but names forgotten over the years. Of course, I remember Rev Dr Cosgrove, a family friend. But what delighted me most was to see my father, Sam Boston, looking at me. He was for many years Hon Vice President of the Jewish Branch of the British Legion in Glasgow. He told me that the reason for having a Jewish Branch of the Legion which is a non-denominational organisation, was that during the two world wars many Jewish men and women fought and died for this country. And yet, there were people who would not believe that Jews played their part in the war effort. It was therefore agreed to allow them to form their own branches and to join fully in the British Legion movement.

In the 1950s I approached Rev Cosgrove for help regarding information on the Jewish Community in Glasgow for the Third Statistical Account for Scotland. Together we passed on to Dr Highet of the University the required details. At that time, the community numbered somewhere between 14,000 and 16,000. Now I believe it to be about half of that.

Yours sincerely
Myra Cohen

* Readers may be interested to know that the Chanukah Star is to include an article by Professor Jack Joseph on Apsley Place in the Gorbals.

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Yours sincerely *Rose Orgel*,
Chairman of the Community
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Anita Mendelssohn,
Joint Chairman of the Ladies
Committee
Ian Shein,
Hon Secretary of the Community
Centre Management Committee

With Compliments
from
John and Hazel
Cosgrove

Dear Editor

Regarding the letter in the last edition of the *Edinburgh Star* relating to the Edinburgh Jewish Students Society, it would perhaps have been more prudent had the writer firstly checked his facts. To say that the Community Centre was denied the students on two occasions despite the Centre being booked by them is incorrect. There were certainly two occasions early in the year when the Secretary of the Community Centre was contacted for bookings on Friday evenings at short notice. The Secretary regrettably had to inform the students that the two dates were unavailable due to previous reservations for functions which made the kitchen unusable. This is very different from the allegation that firm bookings by the students had been cancelled at short notice. This was not the case. To say that what happened 'smacks of bad organisation and leadership' is uncalled for. Surely the onus of booking the Centre lies with the students in that they should contact the Secretary timeously and ensure that the required dates are available. It is unfortunate that the students made plans on the assumption that the Centre was free.

We endeavour to ensure that the students are given every facility they require. We want them to use the Centre as often as possible and we do endeavour to accommodate them. In this respect, the Executive of both committees met on 10 February when a useful discussion took place and we were able to iron out the problems that had arisen, or might arise, to our mutual satisfaction.

In closing, and for the record, a most successful Shabbat Service performed by the students and followed by an excellent lunch hosted by the community took place on Shabbat 2 May.

Yours sincerely *Rose Orgel*,
Chairman of the Community
Centre Management Committee
Anita Mendelssohn,
Joint Chairman of the Ladies
Committee
Ian Shein,
Hon Secretary of the Community
Centre Management Committee

THE CHIEF RABBI VISITS EDINBURGH

On Thursday, 25 June, Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks visited the Edinburgh Jewish community. He attended services in the evening and on the following morning and, together with the Shul executive, was entertained to dinner by Rachel and the Rabbi and to breakfast by the Ladies Guild. The high point of the visit was, however, a reception followed by an address to a joint meeting of the Shul and the Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society (a first in the Society's 105 year history!) Rabbi Sacks spoke for over an hour to a packed room of more than 150 people, including members of the Edinburgh Friends of Israel and the Edinburgh Council of Christians and Jews. He regaled the audience with a series of delightful anecdotes and Jewish jokes but his underlying theme, Jewish Renewal, was a serious one.

He began by reflecting on the part of the Torah when Moses sent spies to give a report on the land of Israel - they returned confirming that it was indeed "a land of milk and honey" and then added "the weasel word 'but' " and sowed such doubts in the children of Israel that they remained in the wilderness for a further 40 years and a whole generation was denied the opportunity of entering the land of Israel.

Rabbi Sacks suggested that the spies did not want to proceed because they were "spiritual beings" who realised that in the wilderness, with its manna from heaven and water from the rock, they were in the "visible presence of G-d". The land of Israel on the other hand, presented them with the prospect of war, of having to build the land and hence of becoming absorbed with secular pursuits. By contrast, it was easier to stay close to G-d in the wilderness. And in a sense they were right, for in the years that followed their entry into the Land of Israel, the people became secularised and forgot G-d and their own past. So why did G-d become angry with the spies? The answer given was that they turned from the challenge, that is the challenge to be spiritual in the heart of a secular society and that for



Rabbi Jonathan Sacks receiving some Scottish spirituality!

Rabbi Sacks is the challenge of today - to be Jews *not* in the Ghetto but in a free and open liberal-democratic society. According to him, we are not doing very well. In the USA, for example, in 1991, 51% of Jews who married under the age of 30 married non-Jews. And yet there was never a more appropriate moment to renew our identity and reaffirm our Judaism: Jerusalem is once again a Jewish city; Soviet Jews have been allowed to leave Russia after years of campaigning and Ethiopian Jews have found their home in Israel. With all these "signs and wonders", the question was put of what more is needed to reaffirm the ideals of Jewish spirituality? Jews now have everything for which they have ever prayed: freedom, equality and acceptance. "All we need is the courage not to be spiritually fearful". In this day and age it is not "schwer zu sein ein Yid". Jews have made an impact far out of proportion to their numbers. Surveys in the US show that people believe the Jewish population to be between 20 and 30% of the total, whereas it is a mere 2%. In Britain a similar survey put the figure at 3 million, when it is 300,000. One possible explanation is that "we make ten times as much noise as everyone else"! It is sad to reflect that in this situation many students state that they become conscious of

their Jewishness through anti-semitism. Jews should define themselves in terms of their belief and not of their suffering. Rabbi Sacks asked the audience to "seize the moment".

The evening ended with a vote of thanks and a presentation of two of David Daiches' books and a decanter of Drambuie by John Cosgrove.

It was a most enjoyable occasion but frustrating too, for the spirit of the Lit was sadly lacking in the decision not to allow questions. How can we renew our faith in a community declining as fast as that in Edinburgh? And what should the role of women be in this renewal? Edinburgh has three women on the Council and a woman head of Cheder. Are these welcome developments? Rabbi Sacks spoke of the need for dialogue - what should the relationship be between the United and the Reform synagogues? And what of the children of mixed marriages? Should there be some easy road to conversion for those raised as Jews yet not halachically Jewish? And what are the prospects for a real and lasting peace in Israel? None of these questions were even posed, let alone answered.*

R.M.A.

* Rabbi Dr Jonathan Sacks did allude to these and other issues in his inaugural address, published under the title *A Decade of Jewish Renewal*.

EDINBURGH SYNAGOGUE MALE VOICE CHOIR

by David Mendelssohn

Records show that in 1925 there was a choir in the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation under the direction of Rev A Levinson. This was when the community's home was in the Graham Street Synagogue. Rev Levinson was appointed Chazan in the new synagogue which was built in Salisbury Road in 1932* and officiated there until 1937 when he retired. The choir ceased to function for the next twenty years until the appointment of Rev A Brysh as Chazan in 1957, when Jack Levinson, the son of the previous Chazan led a new choir for some two years.

I was appointed choirmaster in 1959 and the choir has enjoyed the support of the community ever since. We hope that over the years we have made some small contribution towards enhancing the services. After many years of working together, the members are capable of accepting any musical difficulty presented to them. This gives me the incentive to offer new work which involves us further in the service of the Synagogue. Our repertoire is ever increasing and we are now able to participate in the service in more than twenty areas of the scriptures. When we consider the size of the community, we are indeed fortunate that over the years we have managed to maintain a choir of approximately 20.

Our first tenors are Norman Dorfman, Sas Judah, Ian Leifer, Joe Aronson, Tony Gilbert, Gary Cowen, Andrew Caplan, Andrew Leifer, Ian Caplan, Sion Judah and Paul Gilbert.

Norman Dorfman is one of the elder statesmen of the choir and earned his 'choir money' from Chazan Levinson many years ago. Norman has an excellent voice and is never late for rehearsals.

Sas Judah always performs solo parts with feeling and understanding of the musical soul of the service.

Ian Leifer has been with us for many years and has established

himself as a key member of the choir. He has also made tremendous contributions to the welfare of the community at large. He has a very fine voice and always offers confident and friendly support. Ian absorbs music like a sponge and masters new pieces after one or two rehearsals.

Joe Aronson's solos give us so much pleasure and joy. He is in no way affected by the praise that is shown him and he performs everything that he does with a quiet and humble demeanour. We are privileged to have such a fine quality voice in our choir.

Tony Gilbert makes a considerable contribution in our effort to perform to as high a standard as possible. He also has no problem with stamina as he is a very keen cyclist as well as a musician. This stands him in good stead with the many voice demands that are made on him in the choir.

We now have a barrister among our members and we look after him most carefully as one never knows when we may have need of his services! Gary Cowen lives and works in London and is a Member of the Inner Temple. We look forward to having him with us when he returns to Edinburgh during the Yom Tovim. It is always a pleasure to welcome him home.

Andrew Caplan is a young man who is making his way in life very successfully. He stayed with us whilst at university in Glasgow studying pharmacy. The days of learning are now over and he holds a very responsible position with Boots the Chemist in Leeds. He continues to take a keen interest in the choir and always sings with us at the Yom Tovim.

Another of our choristers is Andrew Leifer, Ian's son, who works in London. Andrew has another role to perform as well as singing in the choir. He quietly dons his kittle and leaves the choir room when it is time to blow the Shofar. This he does with

incredible skill.

When I heard that Ian Caplan was always singing at home, I thought that it would be a good idea if he would change the venue and sing for us. This he does, and we are very pleased to have the benefit of his tenor voice and also his delightful personality. By the time this issue of the 'Star' comes to press, Ian will have graduated from university and will be a trainee solicitor.

Our three second tenors are Philip Mason, Daniel Brodie and Michael Rifkind.

Philip, who does sterling work for us, has been in the choir for many years. He always underestimates his ability to perform as a valuable second tenor and fills a very important place in the harmonic structure of our musical arrangements.

Daniel Brodie is a young man with an excellent ear for music. He is always happy keeping the choirmaster on his toes by advising him when he feels that some improvement might be made by changing some of the harmonies. His sense of humour is always appreciated!

Michael is a young man who learns his music with a quiet and methodical enthusiasm which makes life very easy for the choirmaster. He reads music and plays the guitar very well indeed and this aptitude is reflected most satisfactorily in his ability to take an important place in the choir. A keen rugby player, he will shortly be going to university.

The second bass members are Bill Simpson, Eli Atad, David Mason and Jonathan Mason.

Bill is a well known professional musician who requires no instruction from me, and who occasionally slips in a few of his own harmonies in a quiet tone so that no one may notice! We have a lot of fun discussing these alterations.

David, Philip Mason's son, supports us very well indeed. He has

* See Ian Shein's article in this issue

a fine voice which we feel will one day develop so that we shall be able to employ him in the first bass section.

Jonathan, Philip's younger son, has recently joined us and is making an excellent contribution to the second bass section. It is very hard work learning new harmonies and Jonathan does so with skill and enthusiasm.

Eli Atad has recently joined the second bass section and will have an extremely busy year ahead of him as he has to learn parts for our complete repertoire. Over the years, these have become quite extensive.

Jeffrey Sofaer has been a most important member of our choir for many years but now finds that he has to leave Edinburgh. We shall all

miss him. His excellent baritone voice played a prominent part in the service. He is a trained musician of considerable skill and we can ill afford to lose such talent. His solo 'Eloheinu' and many others will always be remembered. He performed with an ease that greatly belied the difficulty of the work that he did on our behalf. We are sad to lose him.

Our two first basses are Barney Hoare and John Cosgrove. Barney has now sung in the choir since he was a child under the direction of Rev Levinson. His outstanding deep bass voice is I am sure one of the highlights of the Yom Tovim. His 'Badin' is legendary and we are always aware of a marvellous atmosphere in Shul when Barney

sings. John provides the balance between reasonableness and humour in our choir. An enthusiastic bass, he methodically learns the musical parts and uses his extremely profound knowledge of Hebrew to help me in so many ways. Each year we endeavour to introduce a new work into the service, and John advises on which parts of the Prayer Book may be set to music.

The two most recent young members to join us are Sion Judah and Paul Gilbert. They have now left the ranks of 'Bimah' choristers and we are pleased to welcome them into the male voice choir alongside their respective fathers.

Let us all hope that the choir, along with the whole community, will continue from generation to generation.

COMING EVENTS

OCTOBER

7 Wednesday	
Yom Kippur	
11 Sunday	
Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.
12 Monday	
First Day Succoth	
18 Sunday	
Hoshanah Rabba	
19 Monday	
Shemini Atzeret	
20 Tuesday	
Simchath Torah	
25 Sunday	
Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.
26 Monday	
Lodge Solomon	7.00 p.m.
29 Thursday	7.30 p.m.
Council of Christians and Jews	
31 Saturday	7.30 p.m.
WIZO Dinner/Speaker	

NOVEMBER

1 Sunday	8.00 p.m.
Literary Society Dr Stefan Reif	
The Cambridge Genizah	
Collection	
7 Saturday	7.30 p.m.
Community Centre Quiz	
8 Sunday	
Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.
11 Wednesday	7.30 p.m.
Friends of Israel	
- Avner Barnea : Israel;	
Vision and her People	
15 Sunday	8.00 p.m.
Literary Society	
Professor Angus Mackay	
16 Monday	
Lodge Solomon	7.00 p.m.
22 Sunday	
Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.
26 Thursday	7.30 p.m.
Council of Christians and Jews	
28 Saturday	7.30 p.m.
Lodge Solomon Ladies' Night	
(Dance)	

DECEMBER

2 Wednesday	7.30 p.m.
Friends of Israel -	
The Rev Dr R Walker :	
The Magic Carpet;	
from Before and Until After	
6 Sunday	
Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.
Literary Society	8.00 p.m.
- Professor Noah Lucas	
18 Saturday	7.30 p.m.
Chanukah	
Dinner/Entertainment	
20 Sunday	
First Day Chanukah	
Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.
Literary Society	8.00 p.m.
Seeing it our way; a light-	
hearted look at our country	
through the eyes of Jewish	
immigrants	
21 Monday	
Lodge Solomon	7.00 p.m.

Maccabi meets every alternate Sunday from 1 p.m to 3 p.m.

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 Luncheon Club meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 12 noon.

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

MID-TERM AGM BRINGS FEW SURPRISES : COWAN-OPPENHEIM TICKET RE-ELECTED

by Ian Leifer

The Annual General Meeting of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation was held at 7.30 p.m. on Wednesday, 17 June, in the Community Centre and was attended by sixty people.

All four Honorary Vice-Presidents, the two Wardens, eleven out of the twelve members of Council and all eight members of the Community Centre Management Committee were re-elected, as were the President, Malcolm Cowan, and the Honorary Treasurer, Nathan Oppenheim. The only person to break the electoral status quo was Ian Brodie, who was elected to the Council after a year's absence with a swing of over ten per cent.

The President praised the work of the Ladies Guild under the Joint Chairmanship of Hilary Rifkind and Leila Goldberg and the work of those members of the Congregation who had either given lectures to or represented the Congregation on non-Jewish organisations. He then congratulated John Cosgrove on his broadcasts for the BBC World Service and BBC Radio Scotland.

The Treasurer in his report was pleased to note that there were now 191 membership contributions, only four down on the previous year, a much lower fall than usual. In answer to a question from Bill Simpson, the Treasurer explained that the 191 membership contributions consisted of 66 families, 63 single females, 53 single males and 9 country members, making a total of 257 adult members.

The President then sought the approval of the meeting for two areas of expenditure. The first was for roof repairs and repainting, especially for the Beth Hamidrash, and was accepted unanimously. The second was to provide facilities for disabled members of the Congregation, such as access ramps and rails, toilets and possibly a chair lift and was not accepted on the grounds that the proposals lacked sufficient detail. The matter will now go back to the Council, to produce a much more precisely defined project.

The Congregation's Delegate to the

Board of Deputies of British Jews, John Cosgrove, in his first report described the work of the Board and stressed its great importance. He explained that 'The Board presents the facts about the Jewish Community to the country at large and in particular to the Government and other public authorities. It deals with all matters that affect the relationship between ourselves and the State of Israel and presents Israel to the wider community and answers her critics at all levels. The Board supports Jewish Youth, defends students on campus and monitors trends in education and exposes antisemitism and racist activities. It defends Shechita and counters biased media coverage of matters concerning Jews and ensures that Jews enjoy, in safety and security, the unfettered rights of all British citizens'.

He concluded his report with this statement: 'I feel that the Board's work is so important that members should at least have the opportunity to contribute to it, and so a circular will be going out asking for the voluntary levy which is £15 per year per member. I trust you will respond and so ensure the continuation of work which ultimately benefits us all'.

The Chairman of the Community Centre Management Committee, Rose Orgel, in her report thanked the members of the Ladies Committee and her fellow members of the Management Committee for all their valuable support. She also thanked Joyce and Norman Cram for organising the quiz, Arnold Rifkind for organising the Yom Teruah greetings, the Car Boot salesmen for all their hard work and finally, but especially, Mrs Burns.

Under 'Any Other Competent Business' the following topics were discussed. The Future Generations Committee (watch this space!); the Mikvah (it seems unlikely that we shall take the plunge); the fact that only one member of Council has children attending the Cheder (a

sobering thought) and the Luncheon Club (a case of not enough cooks to make the broth).

The meeting closed at a relatively early 9.32 p.m. with a vote of thanks to the chair from Gerald Glass.

ELECTION RESULTS

Honorary Vice-Presidents:

Gerald Glass, Micky Cowen, Alec Rubenstein, John Cosgrove

Wardens:

David Goldberg, Bernard Dorfman

Members of Council:

Ian Brodie, Malcolm Cowan, Carole Cowen, Philip Goldberg, Ian Leifer, Joe Lurie, Anita Mendelsohn, Nathan Oppenheim, Rose Orgel, Arnold Rifkind, Michael Wittenberg, Manny Wittenberg

Community Centre Management Committee:

Rose Orgel

(Chairman and Treasurer)

Ian Shein (Secretary)

John Danzig, Leila Goldberg,

Sheva Lurie, Philip Mason,

Anita Mendelsohn,

Michael Wittenberg

President:

Malcolm Cowan

Honorary Treasurer:

Nathan Oppenheim

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DELVING INTO THE SHUL RECORDS

by Ian Shein

The circular was sent to members of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation. It stated that a Special General Meeting would take place in the Synagogue Chambers, Graham Street. The agenda read — 'that the meeting consider the question of providing a new Synagogue and Beth Hamedrash for the community'. In the chair was the President, Mr S S Stungo JP. The date, 31 October 1926. The minutes were unusually brief for a Synagogue meeting:

A general discussion ensued during which the chairman explained details of the forthcoming scheme. It was intimated that conditional upon the scheme being adequately supported by the members, donations amounting to about £3,500 had been promised. It was unanimously resolved that a sub-committee should be formed for the purpose of preparing a scheme and making a report within three months, and it was further unanimously resolved that the sub-committee should consist of the twelve members of Council, together with members of the Congregation co-opted by the Council.

The meeting created interest and enthusiasm. It was the first of many meetings and the setting up of various sub-committees which included a Building Committee under the chairmanship of H J Levitt, a Finance Committee with S Rosenbloom as Convener, a Functions Committee with J Cowan as Convener and a Press Committee with Rabbi Dr Salis Daiches as Convener. Subsequently a Ladies Committee was formed chaired by Mrs A Phillips. Thus began six long, arduous but successful years resulting in the opening of the present Synagogue in Salisbury Road, which is this year celebrating its Diamond Jubilee.

The cost of the ground, £1,500, and the eventual cost of the Synagogue at £20,000 was a tremendous achievement for a community of some 1,600 members. Individual contributions ranged from 500 guineas (£525) to ten shillings (50p).



The Right Hon. Viscount Bearsted, laying the foundation stone.

By October 1927, a sum of £7,000 had been pledged in the belief 'that seating for 610 males (the number contemplated) would be insufficient due to a most likely increase in the size of the community in future years'.

It was envisaged that the new premises would also provide meeting rooms for various local organisations such as the Board of Guardians, the Loan Society, the Literary Society (both adult and junior), Bnai Brith, Ladies Bnai Brith, Ladies Sewing Committee, Ladies Benevolent Society, Zionist Society, Jewish Girl Guides, the Hebrew Study Circle and the Dramatic Society, all of which were very active in the community.

After five years which saw considerable effort by the whole community, the Foundation Stone was laid by Viscount Bearsted MC on 3 May 1931. The open air ceremony was chaired by the President. Joining him on the platform were Rabbi Dr Daiches, the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, Sir Thomas Whitson, William Graham PC, MP, President of the Board of Trade, and many City magistrates. A hermetically sealed glass case containing documents including copies of the Annual Report of the Congregation, the 'Jewish Chronicle' and the

'Scotsman' was placed beneath the Foundation Stone for posterity. After the short but impressive ceremony, the gathering of 600 repaired to the Palais de Danse in Fountainbridge where they enjoyed tea and cake (strictly Kosher) at a cost to the organisers of one shilling (5p) per head.

The following year was beyond doubt one of the most demanding and exciting years in the history of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation. It was necessary for the new building to be completed in time for the High Festivals in 1932. Its consecration by the Chief Rabbi Dr J H Hertz took place on 11 September 1932 (10 Elul 5692). He was assisted by Rabbi Dr Daiches, Rev A Levinson, Rev M Ordman and Rev I Hirshow of Garnethill Synagogue in Glasgow. Among the many dignitaries who attended were the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, Sir Thomas Whitson, Sir Samuel Chapman MP, the Earl of Cassilis and J C Guy MP. The Synagogue was opened by Louis Lebus to whom a gold key was presented by the chairman of the Building Committee, H J Levitt. The key was subsequently placed in a glass case on the wall of the foyer. Inside the Synagogue, the Sefer Torahs were taken seven times around the Bimah and thereafter returned to the Ark by the President and the Treasurer.

In the course of his sermon to the large congregation, Chief Rabbi Dr Hertz commented that organised life in Edinburgh had made great strides since the previous century when Jewish families in the city had met to worship in premises off Nicolson Street and later in a small hall in Richmond Court. A Synagogue was later acquired in Park Place and then in Graham Street. Dr Hertz continued 'As the central institution of Judaism, the functions of the Synagogue embraced every aspect of Jewish life. First of all it was a house of prayer. But the Synagogue was a great many things besides a house of prayer. It was a Beth Hamedrash, the house of study for the old; and often also a schoolhouse

for the instruction of the young'. The following week, Mr C Rifkind, Warden of the Synagogue, opened the Beth Hamedrash with a silver key.

At a reception following the consecration, Rabbi Dr Daiches, in proposing the toast to the 'City of Edinburgh', said that he had never seen or heard of anything being done or said by a responsible citizen of Edinburgh which caused the Jewish people in the community any unhappiness. He had seen many acts of kindness performed by Christian friends. Dr Daiches added that the Jewish community in Edinburgh was glad to have the opportunity of coming out into the open and he could assure the members of the Edinburgh Town Council that they would render greater service to the progress of the City of Edinburgh in the future than they had done in the past. Though there were only 1,600 Jews in Edinburgh out of a population of 400,000, they hoped in the future to have a greater share in the interests of the city.

Bailie Wilson McLaren, Chief Magistrate, replied on behalf of the City of Edinburgh. The toast of 'The Chief Rabbi' was proposed by Mr Reuben Cohen. Rabbi Dr Daiches proposed 'The Congregation and New Synagogue' to which Mr Simpson Rosenbloom replied. 'The Visitors', proposed by Mr Abel Phillips, was replied to by the Earl of Cassilis and Mr Jack Levine,

President of Garnethill Synagogue, Glasgow.

The following Saturday, the community held a poignant farewell service in the old Synagogue in Graham Street. Rabbi Dr Daiches in his sermon quoted from Isaiah 'Enlarge the place of thy tent and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitations; spare not. Lengthen thy poles and strengthen thy stakes'. Dr Daiches said that the words of the prophet were first addressed to the desolate city of Jerusalem, whose time of sorrows and period of adversity he saw coming to an end. 'Spare not the cost, spare not the effort, spare not the sacrifice, for the future of this community is at stake'.

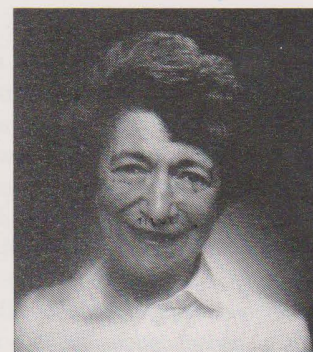
As the Synagogue in Salisbury Road enters its seventh decade, the words of Isaiah are perhaps appropriate. Sixty years ago the Congregation did enlarge the place of its tent and stretched forth the curtains of its habitations. It also, in the intervening years, fulfilled Dr Daiches' words that 'they would render greater service to the progress of the City of Edinburgh in the future than they have done in the past'. That the community has achieved this by quality rather than by quantity is as remarkable as the events of sixty years ago.

Sources: The Minutes of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation. Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation and its Synagogue, 1935



Carrying the Scrolls of the Law at the Opening Ceremony

Obituary



Sylvia Lewis: An appreciation
by Geoffrey Lindey

In the Passover issue of the *Edinburgh Star* there appeared an article entitled "Remembering My Mother" by Sylvia Lewis. Her mother, Annie Lindey, had been a remarkable woman by any measure and particularly so by the standards of her time. Sylvia Lewis wrote this article with great pride in memory of her mother's character and achievements. She must also have written it with a certain poignancy as she was well aware that her own illness was incurable.

Sylvia Lewis manifested all the attributes which so became her mother. Commitment to the community and to charity in general, love and devotion to her family, care for and empathy with those in need and a streak of feminism although she would not have cared for that label. She was associated with many committees for all of which her hard work was unstinting and particularly with the group that made the Communal Hall a reality rather than a dream. She and her late husband, Barney, were imbued with the concept of "Tsedakah" and did not need to be asked twice to make a generous contribution to a deserving charity.

She had a strong personality, an indomitable spirit and a lovely sense of humour. In his eulogy, Rabbi Shapira said that "she was fortunate to have three devoted children who never missed a day to come to see her and look after her needs to the last single detail. It was an unusual family relationship between a great mother and thoughtful children who supported her every single moment up to her last breath of life". This is the achievement, this is the memory by which Sylvia Lewis would most wish to be remembered.

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WIZO REPORT *by Katie Goodwin*

Our May Annual Lunch was attended by 100 hungry guests and although the weather was a little disappointing it was a thoroughly enjoyable gathering. There was a most welcome attendance of new faces from as far as Canada, Glasgow, London and Dublin. Such is the fame of our WIZO table!

We are well organised for the Autumn Season. August sees WIZO joining the Edinburgh Festival with a block booking for Ruby Wax at the Playhouse followed by supper at Goodwins. Miss Wax has been invited to join us but to date we have not heard if this is possible.

October 31 is the date for our WIZO Dinner at the Communal Hall - our guest speaker will be Dr Richard Wolfson from Glasgow.

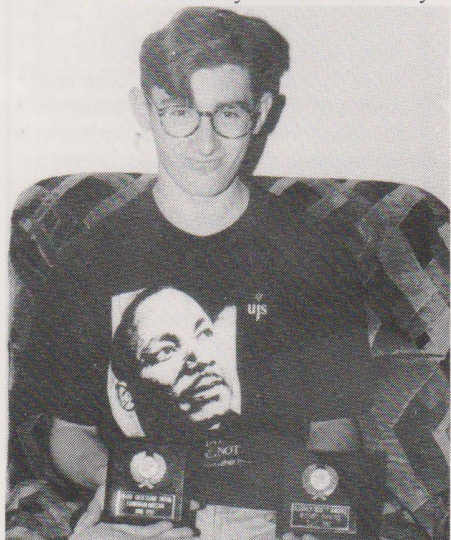
For more details and tickets for these events, please phone Kate (228 6601) or Andrea (662 1772). We are always most grateful for the continuing support for our work and look forward to seeing you at events on our planned programme.



Dessert-time at the Wizo lunch!

CONGRATULATIONS TO MACCABI LEADER!

Michael Rifkind, Chairman of Edinburgh Maccabi Juniors (and Vice Chair of Maccabi Seniors) 1991-92, has won the Aubrey Scott Award by



*Michael Rifkind
holding the Maccabi awards.*

Maccabi Union UK for 'his outstanding contribution to his club and to the Movement'. This award, the highest to any individual in Maccabi Union, was presented by Judge Israel Finestein, President of the Board of Deputies, at the Annual General Meeting of Maccabi Union in London on 14 June 1992.

Edinburgh Maccabi itself was also presented with The Pierre Gildesgame Award, comprising £200 for its 'huge investment in Leadership Development and training without parental involvement. This prize was also collected by Michael on behalf of Edinburgh Maccabi.



*Hilary Rifkind presenting the prizes
at the end of the Cheder Year*

HOME VISITS

If any readers of the Star know anyone in Edinburgh who they feel would like an occasional home visit from a member of the Community or if any readers themselves, who are perhaps housebound or lonely, would appreciate such a visit, please contact one of the co-Chairmen of the Ladies Guild, Mrs Hilary Rifkind (447-7386) or Mrs Leila Goldberg (441-5955).

If any members of the Community, male as well as female, would be willing to make an occasional home visit, please would they similarly contact the above.

Report from the Friends of Israel: Young Ambassadors

by JOHN and IRENE EIVAN

Every year the Israeli Ministry of Education sends fifty Israel sixth-formers to the principal cities of Europe to meet and speak with sixth-formers there.

Initially, some 200 pupils from schools all over Israel are selected to take part in the scheme. After sitting exams in Current and Foreign Affairs, History, and various aspects of Israeli life such as immigration and education, fifty are chosen to attend a one week seminar to learn, amongst other things, how to present themselves as representatives of their country. They are sent to most European countries, including this year, Czechoslovakia, and have to speak the language of the country to which they are assigned. The object of the exercise is to create bridges with other countries and to help European youngsters understand Israel's problems, so that Israel will not be judged as harshly as it often is, particularly by the media. The long-term aim is to provide a balanced appraisal of Israel and its people. On 17 March 1992, the Edinburgh Friends of Israel was privileged to welcome two of the six Young Ambassadors assigned to the UK - Pazit Lancry and Nadav Katz.

Pazit related how, as a member of Bnei Akiva, she helped Ethiopians to



Pazit Lancry and Nadav Katz with Rabbi and Rachel Shapira and John Eivan

become accustomed to a new environment where even a tap was a miraculous invention, let alone electricity, ovens and all the mod cons of the twentieth century. Nadav helped Russian immigrant children at his school to adapt to a new way of life and to a democratic freedom they had not known before. He found that although the children were good at most academic and cultural subjects, they had to 'unlearn' a large amount of the political history they had been taught in the Community schools of Russia.

Seemingly mature beyond their 16

years, Pazit and Nadav presented their account in a clear and competent way and answered searching questions with aplomb. They are both a great credit to their families, schools and the Ministry of Education. As part of their Scottish itinerary, arranged by the Glasgow Resource Centre on behalf of the Israeli Embassy, Pazit and Nadav visited two schools in Edinburgh to give similar talks. A country that can produce 50 youngsters of the calibre of Pazit and Nadav each year has reason to be proud and can look to the future with confidence.



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BOAZ MODAI – GUEST SPEAKER AT EFI by John Eivan

On 27 May 1992 the Edinburgh Friends of Israel had the pleasure of welcoming Boaz Modai as their guest speaker. Israeli born, Mr Modai progressed from High School through Military Service and University to the Foreign Ministry, becoming in 1989 the First Secretary of Information at the Israeli Embassy in London. His tour of duty in the UK ends this summer, when he and his family return to Israel.

Mr Modai began his talk by saying that May was an important month in the life of Israel, in that this month sees the 44th anniversary of the founding of the State and the 25th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem. Remarking that the media see the Middle East in terms of Peace, War and Terrorism, he went on to say that Israel's attempt to begin the peace process by holding elections in the Territories in 1989 was disregarded in the West and by the Arabs. The two issues that need to be resolved together are - the Israel and Palestinian problem, and, the Israel and the Arab problem. The Gulf War illustrated the need for this. While the major powers use Arab countries as an arsenal for 90% of the world's armaments, there is a danger to peace in the Middle East. The Gulf War was the first time that Israeli citizens were involved in a war in which their State was not a participant. This was a shock to the people.

Israel's pre-war warnings had been ignored in the West. Mr Modai pointed out that one million people had been killed in the Iran/Iraq War and that Saddam Hussein was already looking for his next target. The West told Israel that Saddam Hussein needed eighteen years to recover from the Iran War. In the event, he needed only two. In 1981, Begin ordered the destruction of the Osirak atomic reactor. Both Thatcher and Ronald Reagan told Israel that the action would accomplish nothing, and indeed Israel was villified by all sides at the time. Mr Modai said he shuddered to think of what Saddam Hussein would have done with his nuclear artillery had Osirak not been destroyed. The West can afford to miscalculate Saddam's threats, Israel cannot. Years ago Kissinger told Golda Meir 'Don't worry, if anyone attacks Israel, we will come and save you'. To which Golda replied 'By the time you come, there will be no one left to save'.

Mr Modai compared the size of the Middle East countries, showing Israel as a tiny island of democracy in the vast non-democratic Arab area. He also noted that the Intifada began in Egypt at the same time as in Israel. The Egyptians crushed the revolt in three days, killing 300 people, although admitting to only 25 dead. An earlier revolt in Syria was put down after Assad's soldiers

killed over 20,000 fellow Arabs. More recently hundreds have been slaughtered in the streets of Algiers.

In conclusion Mr Modai observed that Israel is considered to be strong for four reasons:

- (a) a high moral standard. He singled out the Israeli Army's overall handling of the Intifada in extremely difficult circumstances
- (b) that there can be only one place for Israel and that is where it is
- (c) the vision and will of its people
- (d) "you - the members, Jewish and non-Jewish, of the Friends of Israel groups round the world, who show the solidarity and support which is of great value to Israel".

Dealing with many questions, Mr Modai compared Israel's immigrant absorption problems to America absorbing the population of the UK in five years, and discussed the cost. He concluded by saying that so many "Mission Impossibles" like the War of Independence, the Six Day War, the Entebbe Rescue, Operation Moses etc., had become "Mission Possible". Many more problems remain but their solution will also become possible with the help of people like the local Friendship Groups.

The meeting concluded with an elegant vote of thanks from Malcolm Cowan, President of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation.

Syllabus for Meetings of Council of Christians and Jews

October 1992 - May 1993

Meetings held on Thursdays
at 7.30 p.m. in Community Centre

29 October 1992

- Mr David Capitanchik : Israel after the
1992 Election

26 November 1992 - Rev Alastair Lamont

14 January 1993 - Prof Alexander Broadie
and The Very Rev Prof T Torrance:
Jewish and Christian View of
Atonement

18 February 1993 - Archbishop K P O'Brien
: Human Rights and the Catholic Church

18 March 1993 Mr Stephen Gellaitry

22 April 1993 Dr Sneader

13 May 1993 - Dr Ruth Adler : Amnesty
International : A Secular View of Human
Rights?



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REPORT

from

THE COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

by Elizabeth Miller

The last meeting of the 1992-93 session of the CCJ met on 14 May to hear two key speakers reflect on 'Progress in Jewish-Christian Dialogue'. The interest in the state of dialogue today in Scotland is, as one would expect, high on the agenda of CCJ members. We thus anticipated an important and fruitful meeting from two people with wide experience in this area.

Henry Tankel is a member of the Jewish community in Glasgow who has been a leading contributor and participant in what has been described officially as the Consultations between the Jewish Community in Scotland and the Church of Scotland. In 1985 he addressed the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland at a crucial time in the development of mutual understanding which was marked by the publication of The Common Statement.

David Torrance is a Church of Scotland minister whose concern for and contribution to Jewish-Christian relations is widely recognised. A most significant part of his contribution has been the editing of a very important book 'The Witness of the Jews to God', a collection of articles from a wide range of contributors which is crucial reading for any with an interest in this area.

Both men attested to their valued friendship which has developed through the years of debate which have seen progress made in Jewish-Christian relations. And indeed it was evident from the way they spoke that they have succeeded in achieving what is considered a most important prerequisite for dialogue: allowing others to define themselves in their own categories and thus accepting the other on their terms rather than imposing our own

understanding.

Henry Tankel addressed the question of progress. He indicated areas where progress and understanding had been achieved but also indicated those areas of difficulty which can cause problems for the dialogue process. In reflecting on a series of study groups which had been set up to discuss such subjects as God in History, the Holocaust, the Land, and Antisemitism, there had been some hard, challenging debate which was important for deepening the dialogue and rescuing it from the dangers of superficiality.

On the theological question of taking Judaism seriously (not relegating it to the dim and distant past and thus invalidating it in the present) certain progress has been made. Christians more readily address the importance of this question. This has led Christians in the dialogue to take seriously the issue of what is called supersessionism - the idea that Christianity supercedes and thus runs the danger of delegitimising Judaism. This has also led to Christians re-thinking their understandings of mission.

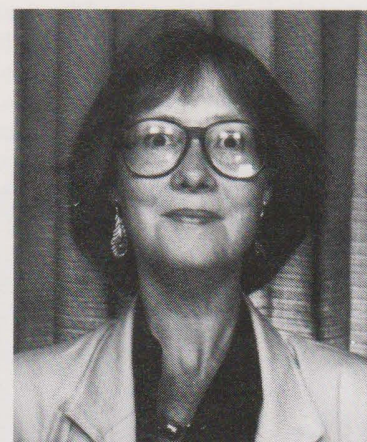
But the ever imminent reality of Middle East politics and the Israeli/Palestinian conflict over land remain the volatile issues which can so easily present difficulties for the dialogue. This is an area where debate can only be fruitful if rooted in firm trust and commitment. As in any relationship - the inner strength is tested by the most difficult issues. Where that strength exists then even very painful expressions can be articulated and people can hear one another.

It was evident that both speakers had achieved yet another of the pre-

requisites for genuine dialogue: both listened attentively and both responded out of their own particularity.

David Torrance reflected on the theological challenge which faces the Church. He stressed the importance of Christians addressing the question of their relationship to the Jewish people. By understanding themselves in the light of their Jewish heritage they will come to a deeper understanding of their identity and call under God.

It is well known that J/C dialogue is a fragile plant which can be severely affected by changes in climate - the political climate is a case in point. Dialogue can only flourish as a result of those people who bring commitment and sincerity to it. It is clear that in David Torrance and Henry Tankel we have such people. Those who care about the nurture of greater understanding between Jews and Christians owe a great deal to them.



Dr Elizabeth Miller is a tutor at St Colm's College, Edinburgh

THE LOWRIE REPORT

EDINBURGH PEACE FESTIVAL

29 February to 19 March

Rose Orgel, our Representative on the Community for Interfaith, on which all Faiths and Cultures are represented, had been asked to organise a contribution to this year's Festival. Duly organised, Rachel's Sing-a-long Choir made its first public appearance at the Leith Town Hall on 15 March.

The Choir sang a selection of Hebrew and Israeli songs; their performance was well attended and they were supported by members of the Community. Their songs were very well received and from the comments of the many members of the audience who congratulated them, it was apparently the highlight of the afternoon.

CHOIR MEMBERS

Margaret Aronson, Joe Aronson
Eli Atad, Shirley Bennett
Micheline Brannan, Shari Cohn
Norman Dorfman, Judy Gilbert
Vicky Lowrie, Rose Orgel
Rachel Shapira, Rabbi Shapira
Susi Sinclair, Margaret Wilson

GUITAR ACCOMPANIST

Bill Sinclair

MRS RACHEL GOLDBERG

The family of the late Rachel Goldberg, David, Hazel, Jack and Philip wish to thank Rabbi and Mrs Shapira, the Executive, Council and all members of the Community for their great kindness and for the many visitors, letters and expressions of sympathy on their sad loss.

A FAMILY SEDER

Perhaps the most emotional moment for this "family" of the Rabbi and Rachel Shapira was when Rhonda Segal read the same portion from the Haggadah that her late mother, Aviva, (Aale'ha Ha'Shalom) had read two years ago. This drew those present, including students and others, many of whom would otherwise have been alone on this Seder night, even closer together. The reading was shared by several of the participants and the enthusiasm of the children was remarked on by all.

YOM HA ATZMAUT

On Wednesday, 6 May, after the Memorial Service and a special Kiddush prepared by Rachel Shapira, Nicole Wittenberg and Vicky Lowrie, the audience seated comfortably in the hall, the walls bedecked with Israeli flags, Rachel's Sing-a-long Choir entertained us with a fine rendering of "Jerusalem the Golden" and other Israeli and Hebrew songs. They did this so well that two bookings were taken, one for the next meeting of the Friendship Club and the other for the annual WIZO Luncheon on 1 June.

The Choir, on Yom Ha Atzmaut, was accompanied by that chip off Django Reinhardt, Segovia and the other great guitarists, our one and only Bill Sinclair.

CHRISTINE BURNS would like to thank the Executive, Council and all members of the Community for their great kindness and many expressions of sympathy on the death of her father.

FANTASTIC FRANKLIN FISH FRY!

Tuesdays and Thursdays see growing numbers of lunchers and carry-out Caddies at the Luncheon Club. Leila Goldberg and her happy but very small band of devoted cooks produce a fine selection of haimische meals and of course, what is the big favourite but Betty Franklin's fried fish! Well, it seems that supply could not meet demand and a new fish fryer was purchased by the Ladies Club and the Ladies Committee with 50% of the cost being met by the generosity of Mrs Jessie Franklin and Betty. We all know that increased quantity will mean no change in the top quality of Betty's fried fish. Whaurs yir Harry Ramsden Noo?

"FRIENDSHIP, FRIENDSHIP, JUST THE PERFECT BLENDSHIP"

No, Rachel's Sing-a-long Choir did not include this number in their recital at the Friendship Club on Sunday, 17 May! Willie and Betty Caplan had organised this performance to coincide with Rachel's birthday and on behalf of the Club made a presentation of a Pen and Pencil Set to her. Rose Orgel also presented her with a plant on behalf of the Choir.

The turn-out was swelled even beyond the usual high attendance by many of those people whom Rachel visits all year round and who had made a very special effort to come along. The delicious smoked salmon sandwiches and special cakes consumed, and a heartfelt "Happy Birthday" sung, the Choir chorally chorused under the direction of the Rabbi, and the Friendship Club much enjoyed their Sunday matinee sing-song. That fine musician, Fiona Simpson, accompanied on the piano.

*Rachel's Choir
performing
for
the
Friendship Club*



EUJS : Student Renewal

by BENJY LESSER

It has been said that it is only the common fear of and resistance to anti-semitic/anti-Zionist opinion that brings Jews together at University. The Edinburgh University Students Jewish Society tried last year to prove this wrong and encourage a much more positive Jewish identity. It is not surprising then that of the many events we held last year, the highlights involved the participation and co-operation of the Edinburgh Jewish Community and for this we are deeply grateful.

Indeed, with the help and willingness of the Synagogue and Community Centre, 'J-Soc' was able to go from the very 'dizzy' heights of Scottish tradition, with the 'Rabbi Burns Dinner' in February to a more sober and uplifting affair: The Shabbat Student Service which took place on 2 May and was a huge success. This was preceded by a Friday night meal at the Shul where students from Glasgow, Newcastle

and beyond converged on Edinburgh to take part in a weekend of community spirit(s)!

The following morning students and community came together for the Shabbat service and Community Lunch. Several students, including Simon Hayes, Nick Cohen, Barak Hullman (now back in the US), Benjy Lesser and David Kaplan participated in this memorable occasion with the Northern Region Student Chaplain, Rabbi Mike Rosen, giving a very energetic sermon indeed. It was refreshing to see so many students together so early on a Saturday morning - a very rare sight.

Afterwards the marathon efforts of Hilary Rifkind and the Women's Guild were really appreciated by the eighty hungry folk who attended the Community/Student Lunch. It became apparent that real efforts were being made to better the delicate and important relationship between the congregation and the potential future members!

Such successful initiatives only go

to show how much there is to be gained for the future by nurturing and developing these sort of events. In the words of the Chief Rabbi, Dr Jonathan Sacks, when he visited Edinburgh in June, we should strive in earnest to make these essential efforts in the name of Jewish Renewal.

On behalf of all the students here in Edinburgh, we would like to wish the community members a very happy and peaceful New Year and look forward to joining you all for Yom Kippur, when the new term begins.

Shana Tova

STUDENT ALERT!

The Edinburgh University Jewish Society is about to begin a new session and would like to extend a warm welcome to all first year college and university students. The Society offers bagel lunches, Friday night dinners, opportunities for discussion and just for having fun! All inquiries to Benjy Lesser.

THE FAMILY ALBUM

A Journey Into the Past of the Rosenheim, Levy and Eppel Families by Cissie Eppel

What started out as a project to gather pictures for a family photograph album has resulted in the recorded history of the various branches of the Rosenheim, Levy and Eppel families dating back more than 200 years, covering nine generations, and illustrated with almost 500 photographs and genealogies.

Genealogy involves the meticulous

investigation and recording of family lines of descent from some known ancestor. The Bible is a prime example of family record-keeping with its lists of generation after generation, going back to a founding father. Those who have undertaken the task of genealogist, whether amateur or professional, acknowledge the patience and the incredible time-consuming effort

required, but readily admit that the results are both gratifying and rewarding.

Whilst we study the records of human progress, it is important to reflect on our own personal history. The need to bridge the generations, to trace our roots and maintain our heritage, should be everyone's responsibility - before it is lost. We know that Jewish traditions, being

ROSA EPEL

(standing 2nd from r.)

at a garden fete in 1928, held in aid of the Ladies Zionist and Ladies Benevolent Societies of Edinburgh.

Can anyone identify others in the picture?



the ties that bind, involve the sharing of family life in all its phases.

Each one of us is a descendant of common ancestors and, although whatever one contributes as a component of that lineage may never be noted, as long as our links subsist, there will always be a part of us. Each member provides a bond between that which is past and what will be in the course of time.

Whilst we reminisce on the good times and the happy memories, we should not forget or ignore the stages of our lives which were not pleasant. Events in our lives have to be recorded and must not be kept private. It is important for us to leave the legacy of our family history to our children and to those who come after us.

I became seriously interested in this subject in 1986 when I was asked to research the history of the Rosenheim, Levy and Eppel families, who were my in-law family, with the purpose of it eventually being presented as a published book. I did not believe there was much hope of accumulating any data, as unfortunately there were no longer any early surviving members with whom I could consult. I agreed only to collect as many family photographs as I could, and present them as a pictorial history, with written captions, as well as trying to assemble genealogical charts.

Arriving in Scotland in the mid 1860s, the families concerned had all made Edinburgh their home. The Rosenheims came from Poland, the Levys and the Eppels from Lithuania. They soon established themselves in business and made their contribution as well respected members of the Edinburgh Jewish community.

After exhaustive correspondence and thousands of miles of travel and interviews the research into their history progressed with worthwhile issues emerging. It was discovered that about 150 years ago an early Eppel ancestor was responsible for restoring the Hurva Synagogue in the Old City of Jerusalem, only later to be destroyed by the Arabs in the 1948 war.

Pictures, letters and documents were unearthed; parts of a giant jigsaw were shuffled and rearranged until gradually the parts conveyed



FAMILY PORTRAIT

standing l. to r. – Anne Levy, Priscilla Levy, Sarah Eppel and Ellen Levy
seated l. to r. – Rosa Eppel holding baby Millie, Bennie Eppel and Bertie Eppel held by Isaac Eppel – 1903



l. to r. Priscilla Levy (Lubliner)
Ellen Levy, Annie Levy (Ginsburg)
3 daughters of Rosa and Morris Levy
c. 1904



l. to r. Pauline (Polly) Levy
Minna Levy, Prof. Hymie Levy
Edinburgh
1912

CHANUKAH STAR

Copy Date: 21st OCTOBER All contributions welcome.

There will be a feature by young adults (under 21's) from Edinburgh who visited Israel this summer.

Please send in your thoughts and reminiscences.

some semblance of order, with impressive results. Previously unknown relatives were brought together, all excited in the realisation that their horizons had expanded to include new-found family bonds. It opened up the world to kindred individuals belonging to an international family from Lithuania, Poland, England, Ireland, Scotland, Channel Islands, USA, Australia, Canada, Denmark, Israel, Italy, Bulgaria, South Africa and Zimbabwe. A directory of 'Where to find the family' listing addresses and telephone numbers of more than 200 members throughout the world is included in the book.

All pictures have been assembled in chronological order with commentaries on family members, their professions and where they lived, including the history of the Jewish communities of some of the towns where they eventually settled. There are chapters on each branch of the family, letters, official documents and other memorabilia. Published and hitherto unpublished works by family members let them share intimately in the times, lives and thoughts of their kin. In essence, the

book presents a microcosm of Jewish life over the last two centuries.

Genealogy is time consuming but it has its rewards. It is a great way of strengthening one's identity, of taking on a new feeling of belonging whilst gaining a great deal of self satisfaction. In doing this research I have had the opportunity of meeting and bringing together relatives who had no previous knowledge of other members of the family. It is exciting, it is wonderful, and above all - it is a mitzvah.

After nearly six years, the results of this research are currently being printed in book form, primarily for members of the family, to enable them to discover their ancestry, and equally importantly for them to keep in contact with their relatives. Copies of the book will also be entrusted to various Jewish archives and libraries.

Regular family newsletters, reunions and a second edition of the book are all in planning stages for the future.

In conclusion - a quotation from an essay on 'The Family Reunion' by Dr Leslie Farber -

- *For the family is, indeed, inescapable.*

You may revile it, renounce it, reject it -

but you cannot resign from it; you are born into it, and it lives within and through you to the end of your days. This may be inspiring, it may also be very annoying; in either case it is humbling.

JOHN S. CAPLAN M.Ch.S., S.R.Ch.

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l. to r. Milly, Clara and Charles Eppel with (front) Mabel and Louis Ginsburg. Edinburgh, 1912



Rosa and Isaac Eppel, Edinburgh 1948

A Christian's Encounters with the Hebrew Scriptures

by G W Anderson

When James Moffatt, the great Bible translator, published his rendering of the Hebrew Scriptures, he dedicated the two volumes to 'The Very Rev Sir George Adam Smith from whom I learned Hebrew and more than Hebrew'. I have the same sense of a double measure of indebtedness to my first Hebrew teacher, Herbert M J Loewe, sometime Reader in Rabbinics in the University of Cambridge, who described himself as 'an Orthodox Jew, but not a fundamentalist'. Both before and since I came under his influence I learned much from other teachers; but what I learned from him affected my attitude to the Hebrew Scriptures for the rest of my life.

In his introduction to *Medieval Hebrew Minstrelsy* Loewe expressed his approval of old-fashioned educational methods. Much of my early education, in the home and in Sunday school and day school would, I am sure, be dismissed as old-fashioned; but from all three I gained an interest in the Scriptures long before I met Loewe or began to learn Hebrew. The first book that I asked my parents to buy for me was 'a book about David'. I was about four years old then and was probably more interested in David's sling than in his lyre. My father taught me many Bible stories. I can still remember vividly his description of the fall of Jericho, a description which was free of any reconstruction based on archaeological discoveries. At day school I had to learn the Ten Commandments at the age of eight, and at various times some of the metrical Psalms. During my early years at Sunday school I longed to reach the senior boys' class in which, year in year out, the Book of Job was read verse by verse in the Revised Version of 1885 (a more accurate rendering than that in the King James Version) and commented on by the devout old gentleman who was our teacher. When I was admitted to that class at the age of nine or ten, I felt that I had reached maturity. In my early teens I began to read the Bible (King James Version) from cover to cover and to make my own judgments on it. I was already familiar with many of the

narratives; but the detailed laws in the Pentateuch were, for the most part, new to me. I was deeply impressed by the pervading sense of justice and by the clarity and precision of the directions about Tabernacle, sacrifices, festivals, priestly duties, and the like. Only when I reached the last nine chapters of Ezekiel did I falter; but I persevered and completed what I had set out to do.

It was about that time that I saw a notice in a local paper that the subject of the evening sermon in one of the parish churches in the town would be 'The Oldest Book in the Bible. In my simplicity I assumed that this would be a discourse on Job. Accordingly I absented myself from the Methodist church which I regularly attended and went to learn more about Job. I did learn more, but not about Job. The subject of the sermon was Amos. The powerful presentation of 'the Gospel of the lion's roar' gave me a new understanding not only of Amos but of Israelite prophecy generally and stimulated me to a more intelligent study of the Scriptures.

During four years as a student of Classics at St Andrews I began to teach myself Hebrew and bought my first Hebrew Bible, a well worn second-hand copy with the beautifully clear print of the British and Foreign Bible Society's pre-1914 edition. In October 1935 I went to Cambridge to study theology. Loewe taught first year Hebrew. In a week or two I was under his spell and decided that if I did well enough I would specialise in Hebrew in my final year. He was a first-rate teacher with an easy, conversational manner, who communicated not only information but also the spirit of the language. He was always ready to impose burdens on himself for the benefit of those whom he taught. A few of us who had already learned some Hebrew were taken separately in his home, an arrangement which doubled his teaching time and enabled us to make much more rapid progress than if we had stayed with the bulk of the class. To be in Loewe's study

with its imposing array of tomes was in itself an enriching experience; but the supreme privilege was to read the Hebrew text with him and to benefit from his comments. At a later stage I was invited to join a group for Jews and Christians who met in his study on Sabbath afternoons to read rabbinic texts. For me this was entirely new ground. I was introduced to methods of interpretation which were unknown to me and to new realms of thought. Two of those who attended those sessions went on to achieve great distinction in later years: David Daube, who since then has held chairs of Law at Aberdeen and Oxford and who was Gifford Lecturer at Edinburgh some thirty years ago, and Abba (known to us then as Aubrey) Eban, whose distinguished service to the state of Israel is well known.

Loewe's kindness to me continued during the rest of my stay in Cambridge. He introduced me to the Hebrew Prayer Book, to Chief Rabbi Hertz's *Commentary on the Pentateuch and Haftorahs*, to G F Moore's *Judaism*, and to works of James Parkes. He also made it possible for me to attend various functions and services including the inauguration of a new Synagogue in Cambridge, at which Chief Rabbi Hertz preached with sonorous eloquence. My misunderstanding of Pharisaism was dispelled by Loewe's essay on the subject in the first volume of the series *Judaism and Christianity*. He not only taught me Hebrew; he taught me to love the Hebrew Scriptures and to see them in a new light. In his teaching no partisan note was struck. His calm and dispassionate presentation was all that was needed. Of the many memorable things that he said in my hearing, one stands out as supremely characteristic of him: 'When I read any unfair Christian criticism, I do not give rein to indignation or nurse any desire to retaliate. No; I take down from my shelves some work by a Christian author such as G F Moore, in which Judaism is treated with understanding and sympathy.'

Shortly before leaving Cambridge I went to pay Loewe a farewell visit. He had been very seriously ill and was confined to bed; but he was laboriously correcting the proofs of the *Rabbinic Anthology* in which he, the Orthodox Jew collaborated with C G Montefiore, the Liberal Jew. His many contributions to that volume reflect admirably his serenely tolerant spirit. He could state his own position without being aggressively controversial. Early in 1936 Loewe said to us, 'By the end of this term the Professor will have committed the entire Hebrew Bible to memory'. He was referring to Stanley Arthur Cook, the Regius Professor of Hebrew, an authority on comparative religion as well as on Hebrew, whose recreations according to *Who's Who* were conjuring and juggling. (He could write Hebrew using both hands simultaneously, one for the consonants and the other for the vowel points.) With him I read all the narrative portions of the Pentateuch, and later, in a more advanced group which included Abba Eban, many passages from the prophetic writings. Cook's comments were always laconic and to the point. Outside the lecture room, however, he could talk at length on one subject, William Robert-Smith, the author of *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, *The Prophets of Israel*, and *The Religion of the Semites*. Cook was one of the last of Smith's students. I was one of the last of Cook's students. It is perhaps a small matter; but I have always been glad to have that link with the great Scottish Semitist who brought to the study of the Scriptures an intellectual rigour which is an essential element in sound interpretation.

My interest in the prophets of Israel took me to the University of Lund in Sweden to sit at the feet of Professor Johannes Lindblom who had recently published a substantial and authoritative book on the subject. He had a special interest in the revelational experiences of Saint Birgitta, the medieval Swedish mystic, which he discussed in relation to the revelational experiences of the prophets; but in general he maintained that there was a marked contrast between mystical

experience and that of the prophets. His influence, like Loewe's, is one which has remained with me over the years.

Since then, until my retirement, with the exception of five years during the War, my job was always to teach Hebrew and to expound the Hebrew Scriptures. If after all that I were cast away on a desert island and allowed to take with me only three books from those Scriptures, which would I take? Genesis, Isaiah, and Psalms; and I would try to smuggle in Qohelet in my hip pocket. Why just these books?

When *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* (new edition) was published some thirty years ago, a witty reviewer wrote of the article on 'The Bible as Literature' that it was first-rate and said everything except the one thing needful, that in the Bible there are some very good stories. The stories in Genesis are outstanding. In their variety and vividness, in the subtlety with which they depict human character, and in their presentation both of the majesty and power of the Creator and of His nearness to those who have faith in him, these stories are of compelling interest. But Genesis is not just a collection of good stories. Running through it there is a sense of purpose. It is the essential preparation for Exodus with its accounts of affliction, deliverance, and covenant.

I choose Isaiah because it seems to me to be the supremely representative prophetic book. I am not a fundamentalist and therefore I believe that its varied contents come from several periods and thus reflect the changing situations which Israel had to face, and express the different prophetic messages which were appropriate to those situations. The literary style varies from the concentrated energy of some of the early chapters to the expansive poetic eloquence of 40-55. The book contains both judgment and consolation. It is directed to the need of the Chosen People and yet also has a universal vision.

The variety found in Isaiah is, of course, characteristic of the Hebrew Scriptures as a whole. What is one to make of this collection of different types of literature: stories, poems, prophetic speeches and songs,

reflective writings, commandments and regulations, genealogies, and visions of the future? One answer is that the history of the Chosen People in those far-off centuries holds together the mingled contents which reflect the variety of their experience. Another is that in my third choice, the Book of Psalms, there is a unifying factor. Leaving aside all questions of who wrote what and when, we must remember that these Psalms were sung or heard by successive generations. They express the faith not just of particular individuals or a particular group, but of the entire worshipping community, generation after generation. In a remarkable way they are representative of the Hebrew Scriptures as a whole, for they contain a wide range of literary material expressed in poetic form: history, prophecy, Torah, Wisdom, and the fundamental expressions of communal and individual devotion: praise and thanksgiving, confession and supplication. It has aptly been said that the Book of Psalms is 'a Bible in miniature, in which all things which are set forth more at length in the rest of the Scriptures are collected into a beautiful manual of wonderful and attractive brevity'. On the other hand it has to be admitted that the Psalms have been criticised, chiefly for the imprecations against enemies. I would feel better qualified to comment on this matter if I were sure just who these enemies were and what they were doing or had done. In most instances (Psalm 137 is the obvious exception) I am not. So I take these passages as reminders of the sufferings endured by the Psalmist (they have their counterpart in the sayings of Jeremiah, a truly compassionate prophet) or by Israel; and I remember the comment of Professor James Denney on the closing verses of Psalm 139, that the Judge of all the earth is not neutral in the conflict between good and evil, and that in the last two verses of Psalm 139 the Psalmist submits himself to judgment.

During most of my time as a teacher in Edinburgh, remembering Sabbath afternoons in Loewe's home, I held an informal seminar on Saturday mornings. It was always the Psalms that we read.

From that it is a far cry to Qohelet; but I want it just because it is so different; indeed, just because it seems to be self-contradictory, reflecting the changes of mood to which the human spirit is at times prone, and because in its seemingly negative passages it challenges us to face uncomfortable facts or to consider our response to stubborn doubt. Above all, I would not want to be deprived of the haunting beauty of 12:1-7.

With these four books as my iron rations I could survive on my desert island; but there is much else that I should long for and, in part at least, recall. Not having Professor Cook's capacious memory, I could not remember everything. I should wish that I had Exodus, to which Genesis points forward and which is in so many ways fundamental. Much of Deuteronomy I could remember, particularly chapters 5 and 6; and I certainly could not forget 30:11-14, which is an eloquent expression of the inwardness of Israelite religion and a remarkable parallel to the

prophecy of the new Covenant in Jeremiah 31:31-34. Nevertheless, I should wish that I had all of Deuteronomy, with its impressive account of how Israel was providentially led and its statement of what Israel is meant to be and do, setting out standards to which reference is repeatedly made in the Former prophets. I could remember many passages from the prophets other than Isaiah, both their stern condemnations and also their glowing predictions of an age of peace and the rule of a righteous Messiah. As for Job, I would prefer not to have to rely on my memory. I should prefer to have the text before me; and to contrast with its anguish and solemnity I should wish to recall the beautiful idyll of Ruth. Indeed so many memorable passages come to mind that I think that I shall go back to the beginning and start again, naming as the three items that I want The Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings; and perhaps I might try to smuggle in the Ethics of the Fathers in my hip pocket.

Professor George Anderson is Emeritus Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Studies at the University of Edinburgh. He was born in Arbroath, studied at St Andrews, Cambridge and Lund (Sweden) and held lectureships in Birmingham and St Andrews. He subsequently held chairs in Durham and Edinburgh. He was President of the Society for Old Testament Study in 1963 and of the International Organisation for the Study of Old Testament in 1974. He was also joint Chairman of the Edinburgh Council of Christians and Jews together with the late Rabbi Dr Weinberg.



VISIT TO AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE by Evelyn Cowan

One summer when I was just seventeen, I went on my first holiday without my mother, away from my large family of sisters and brothers - eleven in all.

I joined my friends of both sexes at Central Station, Glasgow and off we went, excited, laughing, carefree, to our Young Zionist Summer School in Stroud, Gloucestershire. We were representing Glasgow and Edinburgh (the prime of Scottish-Jewish youth) mingling with young Zionists from all over the world.

The venue was a boarding school rented out over the summer to various groups. It had all facilities, dorms for boys and girls, dining and recreation rooms, an outdoor swimming pool and venues for every kind of sport.

I had a fabulous holiday. It seemed, as it always does when you are looking back, that the sun shone brightly every day without fail. The moon was blue, its face shimmering our shadows into the waters of the pool. Round that swimming pool in the evening, we danced to the delicate sounds of an ancient



President Chaim Herzog receiving a copy of Evelyn Cowan's book from the author

portable gramophone. No ghetto blasters in those days!

That was many years ago. I give you no dates so you cannot work out my age on your adding machine! During the course of that holiday, I made the acquaintance of a young man who introduced himself as

Vivian Herzog (studying at an English University) whose father was the Chief Rabbi of Israel at that time. And I actually danced round the crazy paving of the pool, with the man who is now President Chaim Herzog of Israel.

So the flash-back is over and we

come to the autumn of 1991, prior to my bi-annual visit to my children and grandchildren in Israel. I wrote to President Herzog reminding him of our dance at the summer school in Stroud. I also offered to present him with a copy of my book "Spring Remembered : A Scottish-Jewish Childhood" which had been newly re-printed in paperback.

The reply came within two weeks, that the President would be delighted to see me and accept a copy of my book. It would be a private audience. A phone number was given and I was to call his office in Jerusalem to make an appointment after I had settled down in my son's home in Ra'Anana. A private visit between me and my old acquaintance - the President! I was extremely flattered.

From Ra'Anana to Tel Aviv and on to Jerusalem I was driven by my sister-in-law - a Sabra. We were met at the Jerusalem bus-station by Miriam Freidel, the ever efficient WIZO tourist officer. She had made arrangements to drive us to the President's Residence and later take us on a tour of the Jerusalem Baby Home.

President's Residence - an elegant building - 11 a.m. on a boiling hot day, we arrived. At the gate we were body searched and our names checked on a special list at the gatehouse. Handbags taken into care. Then we were escorted through the luscious gardens, blooming with flowers that only Israel can produce, to the main building where we were searched once more.

Inside the residence, all was cool and dignified. After a short wait in the outer office, we were agog with excitement. A photographer was in attendance and he followed us as we were ushered in to meet the President. Click, click as the President shook my hand, and the photographer was gone. The bill and photos came later.

President Chaim Herzog came forward, shook hands, greeted us in a most charming, unassuming manner. But here was Herzog the man, the statesman. Vivian my young (old) acquaintance of the dance was long gone. He reminisced about his days as a young Zionist and his war-time service with the British Army, claiming to be almost

a Scotsman - his grandfather lived in Glasgow at one time and his mother was educated at the Hutcheson's Girls Grammar School in that city.

My twenty minutes visit raced by. The President is a busy man and he had further and more important engagements that day. But he relaxed in his enormous leather armchair and made me and my sister-in-law feel so at ease. He did not consult his watch but seemed to know instinctively when our time was up. And we were ushered out with the same ease and charm as when we came in. It was a great twenty minutes for me.

WIZO tourist officer Miriam came up trumps once again and soon we were on our way in her car to another of my good memories - the Jerusalem Baby Home. I had not been there for twenty years but I had never ceased working (with my WIZO group) for that worthy cause.

When I was last there it was a day centre for orphaned and working mothers' children. Now, every room is full of the most beautiful Ethiopian babies from the age of six weeks to possibly three years. It was not intentional that the Baby Home should be devoted to the Ethiopians but that was the way it worked out due to operation Moses and subsequent intakes of black immigrants.

It was explained to me that the first wave of Ethiopian mothers had to be persuaded to leave their babies - even for a short morning. Their custom was to carry the child around even while cooking, working or sleeping.

We started in the first room where the wee ones were sound asleep.

And every room after that was an advance of age group. When I got to the eighteen months old group, I picked up a gorgeous black baby, eyes bright, teeth as white as ivory, and as I held the child to my breast, the tears streamed down my face.

Many Ethiopian teenagers were being trained to nurse the children and showed great care in teaching them to eat with the correct cutlery and (of course) potty training. Other Ethiopian girls, who had not made the grade into high school, were being trained in cooking and domestic work. The kitchens and all fittings were spotlessly clean.

One room on the ground floor was reserved for senior citizens lunches and leisure and I met there a lady of 92, a retired architect who gave me a resumé of her career in perfect English, although that was not her native tongue.

Believe me, all of you who work for this great cause - and not just WIZO contribute - your money is well spent here.

And so, back into the arms of my family in Ra'Anana, tired but happy, I came to the end of a most memorable day in my life.

*Evelyn Cowan is the author of several books including **Spring Remembered : A Scottish Jewish Childhood** and **Portrait of Alice**, a contemporary novel. She has written numerous short stories which have been broadcast by the BBC. She has also written many articles in Scottish and Jewish periodicals. She was the first Jew to be elected to the post of President of the Glasgow Writers Club, which she held from 1979 - 1983. She has three sons and eight grandchildren.*

With greetings from

Rosalyn, Bernard, Iain and Judith Jackson

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A NEW BEGINNING? - THE 1992 ISRAELI GENERAL ELECTION

by David Capitanchik

The Israeli General Election of 1992 has marked another watershed in the country's political history. There has been much talk of a *mahapach* - an 'upheaval' similar to that which occurred in the elections to the 9th Knesset in 1977. However, in many important respects, the elections to the 13th Knesset resulted in more than a mere 'upheaval'.

In April 1990, the 'national unity' government formed following the inconclusive general election of 1988 collapsed and in forming a government without the Labour Party, the Likud was faced with the extreme demands of the 'religious camp'. Prime Minister Shamir attempted to balance the influence of the ultra-orthodox parties with the largely anti-clerical extreme nationalist parties of the far right. This resulted in an administration of considerable ideological rigidity on the very edge of the mainstream of Israeli political life. It struck firmly to a set of priorities which resulted in a major crisis in relations with Israel's most important ally, the United States; a severe economic recession with unprecedentedly high unemployment; and failure to attract and absorb the masses of potential immigrants from the former Soviet Union. In addition, it became tainted by an unprecedented degree of corruption and malpractice, revealed most starkly on the eve of the election in the annual report of Israel's State Comptroller.

Thus the Likud's defeat in the 1992 election should have come as no surprise, although perhaps its extent could not have been anticipated. The stalemate between the two major parties, which had produced an unprecedented degree of *immobilism* in Israeli politics for the past decade and a half, has been broken. The elections to the 13th Knesset have resulted in the clearest outcome since the days of Labour dominance in the 1950s, the consequences of which are likely to be far-reaching. In what follows, in addition to an analysis of the poll, consideration will be given to what Prime Minister Rabin has described

as the shift in Israel's national priorities.

As in all previous Knesset elections, the turnout was high in comparison with most other Western liberal democracies. There was, however, a fall of some 3% compared with the participation rate in the elections of 1988 when 80% of the electorate voted. This time the official turnout was 77%, but the 3% decrease might have been critical, because of the unusually high rate of abstention among voters who have traditionally supported the Likud. However, it must also be remembered that Israel's current electoral register includes some hundreds of thousands of citizens who live more or less permanently abroad. If these are excluded from the calculations, then the "real" turnout would suggest that among the country's Jewish voters, at least, the degree of apathy was far less than many had feared.

Of the 25 parties that contested the elections to the 13th Knesset, 15 failed to win sufficient support to cross the new 1.5% threshold and thereby qualify for a share of seats in the legislature. Between them they accumulated 132,000 votes, all of which were lost or 'wasted'. Including 21,000 spoilt ballot papers, in all some 5% of the votes cast were wasted, compared with 2.4% in 1988. This must be seen as one clear effect of raising the threshold.

In every election from 1965 to the elections to the 10th Knesset in 1981, the Labour Alignment (largely Labour and Mapam) and Gahal (the forerunner of the Likud) increased their share of the poll. In 1981, Labour and the Likud between them took 95 of the 120 seats in the Knesset, giving rise to the view that Israel might be moving towards a two-party system.

In the elections to the 11th Knesset in 1984, however, support for the two major parties fell and this was repeated in 1988. In 1992, this trend has continued and in the 13th Knesset Labour and the Likud have only 76 seats between them. There has been a degree of 'de-merging' in

both camps. In the last two elections, Labour has run without Mapam at the cost of some three or four seats and in 1992, the New Liberals defected from the Likud, but at the cost of, at most, two-thirds of a seat. However, in 1992, the principal beneficiaries of the shift away from the major parties have been Meretz and Tsomet, respectively on the left and right of the political spectrum.

It is not difficult to see the reasons for the decline in support for the major parties and nor is it difficult to see why, in 1992, the Likud should have suffered more than Labour. Throughout the last fifteen years, neither of the two major parties together with their natural allies was able to form a government that was not totally dependent for its majority on the religious camp. The only alternative was to form a so-called "national unity" government, but with the exception of the two year period between 1984 and 1986, when both parties were united on two major issues - the withdrawal of the IDF from Lebanon and stabilising the shekel - these grand coalitions were little more than a recipe for *immobilism*. The enormous ideological gulf between them made constructive co-operation virtually impossible.

"National unity" governments apart, the only recourse for both parties if they wished to form a government without the other was to strike whatever deal they could with the religious parties. And throughout the period in question, only the Likud was successful in such dealings. In 1988, for example, the Likud and the small right-wing parties won, between them, two seats fewer than the Labour Alignment and the parties of the left. However, the President asked Mr Shamir to form the new administration because it was assumed that the religious factions would be more likely to favour a government led by the Likud than one headed by Labour.

However, for the Likud the cost of coming to terms with the religious camp and the extreme right-wing

nationalist parties was considerable. While there is no doubt that the majority of the Likud's leaders, activists and supporters could readily accept the outcome of the coalition bargaining, the process itself and the extent and nature of the demands which had to be negotiated, the intense political and personal infighting and the inevitable corruption involved, greatly disillusioned many of the party's supporters.

The same was true in respect of the Labour Party, both when it negotiated the terms of its participation in the "national unity" government and when it tried unsuccessfully, in April 1990 in particular, to strike a deal of its own with the religious camp.

Both parties have lost a great deal of their appeal among young idealistic voters disgusted by the lack of principle in political life - politicians have seemed prepared to sacrifice any value for the sake of gaining and holding on to office - and by the rigidity with which certain policies which had been agreed between the coalition partners have been adhered to, regardless of their costs. Thus the settlement policies in the occupied territories which enjoyed the unanimous support of the coalition partners, were pursued with the utmost vigour, regardless of the damaging consequences for the economy and Israel's relations with her most important ally.

Among Israel's larger parties, the Likud emerged as the biggest loser in the 1992 elections. However, the extent of the Likud's defeat should not be measured in seats lost in the Knesset nor in the percentage fall in the party's share of the poll. With 32 seats in the 13th Knesset, the Likud's tally is exactly the same as Labour's after that Party's defeat in 1977 and in the same Knesset (the 9th) the Likud had only one seat less than Labour holds after the elections of 1992. Moreover, in 1977, Labour lost 17 seats (15 of them to the Democratic Movement for Change - DASH), while in 1992, the Likud has only lost 8.

However, the Likud's defeat in 1992 is of greater significance for two principal reasons. First, it has to be seen against the background of the

decline in support for the two major parties. DASH, which was the principal cause of Labour's downfall in 1977, proved to be a short-lived phenomenon and by the following elections in 1981, Labour had regained all 15 of its lost seats. Indeed, the outcome of the 1977 election can be seen as the single exception in a whole series of results from 1969 up until and including the election of 1984, in which the two major groupings between them never won less than 80 of the Knesset's 120 seats.

However, between 1981 and 1992, the Likud's share of seats has fallen by 16, from 48 to 32, while in the same period Labour's share has fallen by only 3 seats, from 47 to 44. Thus it seems that the rise of the right-wing nationalist parties and the stabilisation of support for the National Religious Party have all been at the expense of the Likud. While the trend away from the major parties continues, and this seems to be especially evident among younger voters, it is likely to be difficult, although by no means impossible, for the Likud to recover its lost ground.

Second, the overall result of the 1992 elections has not only deprived the Likud of the dominant position it has enjoyed for the past 15 years as the principal coalition former, but it has also meant a return to the single-dominant party system which characterised the state's formative years. Not only is the Likud unable to form a government under its leadership, but together with its natural allies on the right and among the religious parties, it is unable to prevent the formation of a Labour-led coalition. This was the situation prior to 1977, but it is necessary to go back to the 1950s to find a time when Labour on its own, without the parties on the left of the political spectrum, was in such a powerful position.

The Likud has been left with a little less than 25% of the vote. In the deprived areas of the major conurbations and in the development towns, traditionally the heartland of Likud support, the party was abandoned by large numbers of its voters. The turnout was exceptionally low in the so-called "oriental" cities, those where 65% of

the population are of Sephardi origin, such as Ramle, Dimona, Kiryat Gat and Or-Yahuda and there was a significant shift of support to other parties such as Tsomet, although there were no wholesale defections to Labour. In the better-off neighbourhoods, on the other hand, the turnout was high and there was a marked tendency among the voters to switch directly to Labour.

Among the new immigrants from the former Soviet Union, there was a dramatic rejection of the Likud. Some 47% voted labour, 11% supported Meretz and only 18% are estimated to have voted for the Likud.

It remains only to be said about Labour's victory that in this election, the party appears to have benefitted most from recent demographic change among the electorate. Labour has traditionally been the loser from such changes because its voters are considerably older than the supporters of the Likud and it has been estimated that natural mortality alone costs the party more than one seat in each successive election. In 1992, however, there were an estimated 650,000 new voters, of whom 234,000 were new immigrants principally from the CIS and Ethiopia and the remainder young people who had reached voting age since the last elections in 1988.

Labour won almost half the immigrant vote, which gave it about 4 of its seats. Among first-time voters, most of whom are serving in the IDF, the majority supported Tsomet with Meretz coming second. In sum then, in 1992, Labour and its allies were the beneficiaries of change, while on the right, only Tsomet had any significant success.

Israel's system of proportional representation was intended to guarantee that the widest possible spread of opinion is represented in the Knesset. It is essentially a hangover from the days of the *Yishuv* (the pre-state Jewish settlement in Palestine) when it was believed to be necessary for all interests to be included in the political framework so as to avoid harmful divisions among the small Jewish community. After the establishment of the state, when *Mapai* (Labour) was the single

dominant party, even the purest form of PR did not prevent the formation of stable governments.

It was only after the elections of 1977, when the gap between the two major parties was so narrow that it was numerically possible for either to form a government, that the small parties were able to exert undue influence by playing off one of the major parties against the other and demand a heavy price for their support. The possibility of being able to exert so much influence undoubtedly encouraged the proliferation of small political parties which in other more stable democracies could only have existed as pressure groups.

In 1992, the situation has been radically changed by two factors. First, there has been the increase from 1 to 1.5% in the threshold parties need to cross in order to participate in the shareout of Knesset seats. This has had the effect of encouraging mergers between like-minded parties, the most successful being the merger between the CRM, *Mapam* and *Shinui* to form *Meretz*. It has also meant that the smaller parties who were obliged to run alone, were vulnerable to electoral extinction. The most celebrated casualty in 1992 being the extreme right-wing *Tehiya* list.

The second important outcome of the 1992 elections so far as the small parties are concerned is, of course, their relative loss of bargaining power. The re-emergence of Labour as the only party capable of forming a government has brought a return to the situation which prevailed in the past. Labour needs coalition partners, but not in order to ensure a minimal majority in the Knesset. Together with its natural allies in *Meretz* and with the support of the mainly Arab parties of the far left, Labour would have been able to muster a majority of 61 without requiring the support of any other coalition partner. This left the other small parties with some negotiating power because, apart from the difficulties of maintaining such a slender majority, the Labour Party was reluctant to form a government that depended for its majority on the support of the country's Arab politicians. But that power is considerably less than in the recent past.

The problem for the religious parties is that they must either join the coalition on terms that are acceptable to Mr Rabin and take the ministerial portfolios he has been prepared to offer so as to ensure that their interests are safeguarded, or remain on the opposition benches as small, impotent and ineffectual protest groups.

In 1992, the socialist-Zionist *Mapam* Party, the Citizens' Rights Movement and the small *Shinui* faction formed an electoral alliance called by the Hebrew acronym *Meretz*. *Meretz* emerged from the election as the third largest faction in the Knesset with 12 seats. Its post-election bargaining power has been limited by the fact that during the campaign it had insisted that its aim was to participate in a Labour-led administration and anyway, *Meretz* would never have been acceptable in a Likud-led government if that party had emerged victorious. The Labour Party negotiators, therefore, were able to secure the group's support on terms which were more or less their own.

Meretz did particularly well among first-time voters coming second only after *Tsomet* among serving soldiers and it also increased its support from 6 to 8% in the *Moshavim* (co-operative farms). In the *kibbutzim*, for the first time, there was a marginal swing, of between 1 and 2% away from Labour and *Meretz* to the *Likud*.

On the right of the political spectrum, one previously small secular party, *Tsomet*, led by former Chief-of-Staff of the IDF, Major General (rtd) Raphael (Rafal) Eitan, more than trebled its share of the poll and increased its share of Knesset seats from 2 to 8. *Tsomet* was the leading choice among young first-time voters and it picked up votes among disillusioned *Likud* supporters in deprived urban areas and in the development towns; its support rose from 3 to 10% among the settlers in Judea, Samaria and Gaza; and it doubled its support in the *kibbutzim*, albeit from only 1 to 2%.

The broad appeal of these two parties in the 1992 elections can be explained in a number of ways. Both *Tsomet* and *Meretz*, are anti-clerical parties opposed to religious coercion

and both have been untainted by the corruption of the Likud years.

In 'Rafal' Eitan, *Tsomet* has a leader who is much respected for his honesty and integrity, for the simplicity of his lifestyle, for his military record and for his total dedication to the security of the state, unobscured by other ideological considerations. He opposes the principle of "land for peace" and is set against any territorial concessions to the Arabs because he sincerely believes that any such concessions would endanger the country's security and not because he shares the Likud's ideological position regarding the entire "Land of Israel". On the other hand, *Tsomet* is largely a single-issue party and this alone must cast some doubt on its long-term future.

Meretz enjoys the support of the bulk of the *Mapam*-affiliated Marxist *Kibbutz Artzi* movement, although there is a feeling in the *kibbutzim* that the party should still be aligned with Labour rather than with 'bourgeois' civil rights elements. In the urban areas and among the young, it appeals to liberal-minded secular voters concerned with, civil liberties, women's rights and similar issues and anxious to pursue a peaceful political compromise with the Arabs.

The only other successful small secular party, *Moledet*, led by another retired IDF General, Rehavam Ze'evi, increased its representation from 2 to 3 seats in the Knesset, but the increase in its share of the poll, from 1.93 in 1988 to 2.38 in 1992, was much less impressive than that of its rivals. *Moledet* stands for the incorporation of all the occupied territories into the State of Israel and the transfer of the existing Arab populations to other Arab states.

Along with its rival, *Tsomet*, the party took most of its gains from the other extreme right-wing *Tehiya* (Renaissance Party), which was one of the principal casualties of the 1992 election. *Tehiya* failed to reach the 1.5% threshold, due largely to its inability to present a united and coherent front to its electorate, which, in the past, was based largely in the army and among the settlers in the territories. The party lost more than half its votes in the settlements

of Judea, Samaria and Gaza and its army vote shifted decisively to *Tsomet*.

It is of some significance that in 1992, there was a reversal of the trend, first evident in the 1984 elections, for Israel's Arab voters to desert the Zionist parties in favour of parties with an Arab or Arab-Jewish identity. This trend was most marked in 1988, when the Zionist parties' share of the Arab vote fell to a fraction over 40%, a fall of almost 10% from the previous election. Among Bedouin voters, the change was even more dramatic with only 45% voting for Zionist parties compared with 90% in 1984.

1988 saw the emergence for the first time of a Muslim-Arab list led by a former Labour MK, Abd el-Wahab Daroushe. Previously, non-Zionist parties like the Communist *Hadash* and the Progressive List for Peace (PLP), the majority of whose supporters are Arabs, were careful to stress their joint Jewish-Arab character by including Jews as well as Arabs in the lists of candidates for elections to the Knesset. The new Arab Democratic Party had no Jews among its candidates, neither in 1988 nor in 1992.

There can be little doubt that Israeli Arabs have considerable sympathy for the inhabitants of the occupied territories and the *intifada* which they have been waging there for the last five years. However, under the Likud administrations they have believed themselves to have been increasingly deprived vis-a-vis Israel's Jewish citizens. The Labour Party platform in 1992 carried a clear commitment to ensure equal rights and welfare benefits for all Israeli citizens and this has long been the policy of *Meretz*.

Moreover, despite intensive efforts prior to the elections, traditional rivalries and hostility between the various factions and personalities in the Arab communities, prevented any agreement between them to combine in order to present a common list to their voters. Had they been able to do so, the potential Arab vote could have given them anything up to 15 seats in the Knesset.

As it was, the two leading Arab parties, *Hadash* and the PLP lost votes to almost all the Zionist parties. The PLP's share of the poll fell from

1.48% in 1988 to 0.92% and it has lost its only seat in the Knesset. *Hadash* lost one of its 4 seats in the last Knesset and its share of the poll fell from 3.68 to 2.39%. In the past, the Communist *Hadash* took about a third of the minorities' vote. This time it received around a quarter.

The only Arab party to make gains among Israel's minorities was the Arab Democratic List. Its share of the poll rose from 1.18% in 1988 to 1.55% in 1992 and it has two seats in the new Knesset. The Party lost part of its vote among the Bedouins, but it made gains among the Druze, the Muslims and, indeed, in all Arab communities.

Almost all the Zionist parties made gains among the minorities. Surprisingly, the main beneficiary was the Sephardi ultra-orthodox *SHAS* Party, whose share of the Arab vote rose from 1 to 5%. The smaller the town or village, the greater was the tendency to vote for the Zionist parties. Labour, for example, recovered some of the ground it had lost in the last two elections.

In 1988, the result of the elections to the 12th Knesset confirmed the view of many that in Israel stable government by parties representing the mainstream of opinion could not be realised under the existing system of proportional representation. It took seven weeks after the November 1988 elections for a government to be cobbled together. The subsequent performance of that government and the one which succeeded it in April 1990, made it apparent that the immense problems facing the country could only be tackled effectively by a strong administration, which had not been obliged to make concessions to single-issue interest groups masquerading as political parties. If the results of the 1992 elections are anything to go by, then they are clear evidence that most Israelis, but especially the young, have had enough of such politics.

In 1992, it took only two weeks from the time the Labour Party leader Yitzhak Rabin was charged by President Hertzog with the responsibility of forming the new government, for that government to be presented to him and win a vote of confidence in the Knesset.

President Hertzog has told Mr Rabin that in his experience the formation of a new government in only two weeks is an unprecedented achievement. For his part Mr Rabin assured the President that the next election will be fought under a new set of rules.

In presenting his new government to the Knesset on 13 July 1992, Prime Minister Rabin undertook to change the national order of priorities. The basic aim of the government, he said, is to achieve the twin goals of peace and security, but for him, security is not only to be found in military strength but in ensuring for all Israeli citizens adequate social and economic security. In essence, changing the ordering of national priorities means diverting the excessive resources expended by the previous government on settlers and settlements in the occupied territories to benefit the overwhelming majority of Israelis who live within the so-called 'Green Line' and it means pursuing, with greater vigour and purpose than hitherto the 'peace process' with the Palestinians.

The new government's approach to the peace process does involve a radical re-ordering of priorities. First, and most important, unlike its predecessor, the government is committed to the principle of "exchanging land for peace", although the extent to which it is prepared to take this is unclear. Second, where the previous administration was essentially hoping to achieve peace settlements with the Arab states before resolving the Palestinian issue, Mr Rabin's government has stated its clear intention of tackling the Palestinian question first by aiming to reach an agreement on the autonomy proposals in the Camp David Accords associated with the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty as a matter of the highest priority.

Mr Rabin's early invitation to meet President Mubarak in Cairo, the first such invitation since the Egyptian President met Mr Shimon Peres when he was Prime Minister six years ago, is evidence that the new policy is widely regarded as offering hope of achieving a breakthrough in the complex peace negotiations. Moreover, the new government has

been able to move speedily in the effort to reach agreement with the United States over the vexed issue of American loan guarantees to assist with the absorption of the new immigrants and to encourage the resumption of immigration from the former USSR.

It is worth emphasising that two factors give credibility to Mr Rabin's determination in pursuing these policies and overcoming the inevitable obstacles in his way. First and foremost, his government depends for its majority only upon the support of like-minded parties and individuals in *Meretz* and in the Arab parties outside the government. In the ultra-orthodox *SHAS* Party, the government has a coalition partner whose spiritual mentor, the former Sephardi Chief Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, shares many of Mr Rabin's views regarding the peace process. And, while there is still room for more coalition partners to join the government, it is clear that so far as the peace process and the economy are concerned, they will be obliged to do so on Mr Rabin's terms.

It is believed that Yitzhak Rabin himself would prefer to preside over a broadly-based government, which is neither too far to the left or right, so as to enable progress to be made in the peace process, but without excessive concessions to the Arabs. And in achieving an agreement with the United Torah Judaism Party in which concessions have been granted to its interests without its leaders actually taking up ministerial portfolios, such a government has been realised.

Meanwhile, however, the government approved by the Knesset on 13 July consists of seven Labour ministers from the 'hawkish' wing of the party, as opposed to six Labour 'doves', three ministers from *Meretz* and Rabbi Arye Deri of *SHAS*. Along with the Likud's Foreign Minister David Levy, Deri was regarded as a 'left-wing dove' in the former Shamir Administration. Thus there is likely to be a clear majority in the new government (consisting of Shimon Peres, Moshe Shahal, Uzi Baram, Haim Ramon, Ora Namir, David Libai, Shulamith Alloni, Yair Tsaban, Amnon Rubinstein and possibly even Deri)

in favour of repealing the ban on meetings with members of the PLO and other liberalising measures.

Only four of Labour's ministers have any previous ministerial experience (Rabin, Peres, Shahal and Tsur), and their average age is high. Only two (Haim Ramon and Shimon Shitreet) are under 50 years of age and four are over 60, with a further seven reaching that age before the next election. Rabin had said that in choosing Labour's ministers, he would not be swayed by their ranking in the party's list of candidates for the elections, but only by their suitability for their Cabinet posts. In the event, 10 of the first twelve names on the list are in the Cabinet with only Avraham Burg, who was third on the list and Nissim Zvili, who was tenth, being excluded. Both of these, of course, are recognised supporters of Mr Peres, while Yaacov Tsur, who is a Rabin supporter, has been given a portfolio despite his poor showing in the primary elections.

The elections to the 13th Knesset have resulted in the possibility of radical change in many aspects of Israeli political life, whether in relation to bread and butter domestic issues, foreign affairs and defence or constitutional reform. There has been a radical reversal in the fortunes of the two major parties, which could not have been foreseen at the time of the last election in 1988.

The Labour Party has been transformed under its new leadership and in a remarkable turn of events, it has been restored to the pre-eminent position it enjoyed in government, not in 1977, but in the 1950s. It was only then, during the heyday of Mapai dominance under the leadership of David Ben-Gurion, that the party on its own, without the support of its satellites, won a larger share of seats in the Knesset.

As for the Likud, it has suffered a severe setback from which it will take some time to recover and by then, if the peace process gathers momentum, it will be faced with the need to modify its current ideological and policy positions.

In 1992, the manifest failings of the Likud and the renewed attractiveness of the Labour Party were important in determining the result. Expectations are high, both in

Israel and around the world, that the new government will address the many difficult and outstanding issues facing Israel and the Middle East with enlightened vigour and determination. The stalemate which has stultified Israeli policy both at home and abroad in recent years has been broken.

* This is an abridged version of a report written for the Institute of Jewish Affairs, London.

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THE SMILING LYON : FOUR DAYS AT KIBBUTZ HOTEL LAVI*

BY EVA ERDELYI



Some time ago I listened to a lecture at a meeting of the religious women's organisation "Emunah". The speaker was a good-looking, middle-aged woman who had given up her city life and married a kibbutznik, joining him and becoming a member of Kibbutz Lavi. The way she talked about her new environment, a strictly but not fanatically religious community, about its lifestyle, organisation and achievements, impressed me not only because the facts were impressive, but because she presented them in a spirit of grateful satisfaction, without a shadow of arrogance or pride. I have been dreaming of a visit to Lavi and its famous guesthouse ever since ...

My chance came: "Emunah" booked a group holiday in Lavi for members, friends and relatives for the Independence Day weekend, May 6 - 10. The tour commenced on Wednesday, when two full coaches made their way to the North, towards a hilltop overlooking the Sea of Galilee, from the moderate altitude of 313m above sea level. The name "Lavi" goes back to the Jerusalem Talmud, and means "lion". Accordingly, we were greeted on arrival by the effigy of a smiling lion carrying a cup of tea or coffee (the emblem of the hotel), as well as by a crew of smiling men and women who work as porters and receptionists. The hotel offers well over 100 air-conditioned rooms and I was delighted with mine: small and well designed with a view on to green trees and the red roofs of the kibbutz housing area. I think it was the nicest hotel room I ever slept in,

and the best equipped.

Our programme on the first evening included a special service for Independence Day, the 44th anniversary of the State of Israel. This took place at sunset in the Kibbutz Synagogue, situated at the centre of the housing area. We found it easily, following signposts through the grounds to an open space, where the synagogue stands opposite the Cultural Center (Beit Hamidrash). The two buildings are separated by a paved courtyard, where we admired the beautiful mosaic platform with the symbols of the Twelve Tribes, used as a base for the "chuppa" at wedding ceremonies.

The synagogue, where services are held three times daily, was built in 1959, on the modified plan of ancient synagogues of this region, dating back to the 1st and 2nd centuries C.E. The inner space is surrounded by twelve pillars and all the woodwork was done by kibbutz members. This eventually led to the establishment of the main industry of Lavi, the manufacture of wooden synagogue furniture in a variety of designs, which can be admired in modern synagogues all over Israel. Thanks to this industry, which has already branched out into the export market, Lavi is reportedly the only kibbutz not in the red!

After prayers, we walked back to the hotel where a festive dinner was served to our group as well as to other groups and individuals who had come for a holiday. The service was excellent. After the meal, Grace was said by the visiting Rabbi Adam Ferziger. He was to give two lectures on "The Chosen People: Past, Present and Future". After dinner, some of us went back to the moonlit central area, where the Kibbutz children and young people gave a concert celebrating the eve of Independence Day.

Two excursions were planned for our holiday: a whole day trip for Thursday, and a half-day one for Friday. On Thursday we woke up to a grey morning of Chamsin, the evil desert wind which does not spare the green hills of Galilee. Our coach

took us South, past Mt Tabor, to Gilboa, the mountain where King Saul and his son Yonathan were killed in battle and lamented by David. We were driving through large forests planted by the Keren Kayemet, now sadly devastated by this winter's unusually severe frost and snow. Climbing to the top, one usually has a magnificent view, and our guide told us all about what we might have seen but for the pall of grey fog hiding it. If, however, we directed our eyes to the ground we were standing on, we were rewarded by a variety of wild flowers: scarlet poppies, pale blue chicory, yellow mustard and wild hollyhock among others. Of the dark purple iris which only grows on Mt Gilboa, we saw

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only the withered remains. We had come a month too late to see it in bloom.

In the afternoon the sun came out and as we were descending into the valley of The Emek, it became very hot. Beit Shean, our next port of call, lies about 120m below sea level. Those who felt energetic visited the famous Roman amphitheatre and took a guided tour of the excavations. Others took it easy in the shade, where a well of ice-cold water provided relief for parched throats. Beit Shean, one of the most important archaeological sites in Israel, should if possible not be visited in the middle of a day of Chamsin!

Friday's half-day trip took us into the Jordan Valley, north of Lake Tiberias. Strong wind had cleared the atmosphere overnight and, apart from a few drops of rain, we had perfect weather. We found the river flowing rapidly, swollen to the level of its banks. Following it downstream for a while, we walked through a jungle of bamboo and other lush vegetation - a scene very different from the dry and dusty experience of the day before. After a pleasant walk we were driving south on a winding road high above the valley and enjoyed some exquisite views, reminiscent of Norwegian or Alpine scenery. For our final stop the bus came down to the river bank at a place where the Jordan showed all its potential power in a magnificent cascade, roaring and foaming like a cauldron. We were told that this was an exceptional spectacle, caused by the unusually heavy and prolonged rain of this winter. Impressed and refreshed, we returned to Lavi in time for lunch and a long siesta.

The Friday evening programme started with candle lighting in the Lobby followed by prayers in the basement synagogue of the hotel, packed with guests who had come for Shabbat. After the meal Rabbi Ferziger gave his talk in English. I found his lecture, based on R Irving Greenburg's book "The Jewish Way" (1989), very interesting.

On the last day of our visit there was the usual Shabbat morning service, followed by the second of Rabbi Fergizer's lectures. He encouraged his audience to ask questions and there was quite a lively

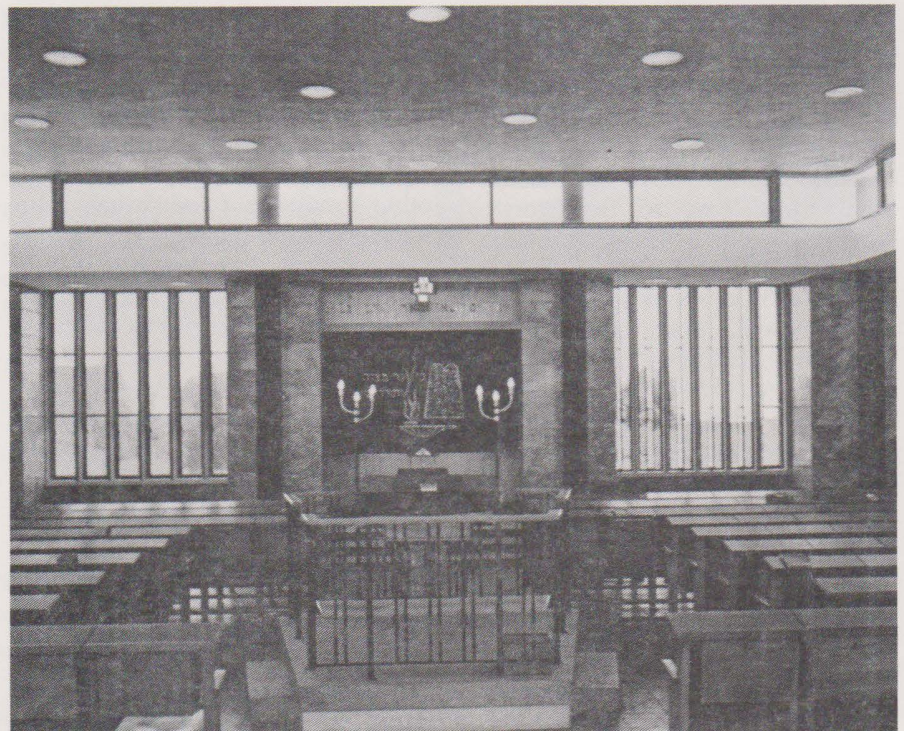
discussion. The rest of the day was free, giving us a chance for a leisurely stroll through the grounds. Leaving the older part of the Kibbutz with its shady trees and red-roofed houses, I discovered the workshops and the temporary housing provided for Russian immigrants, who are going through an intensive course of Hebrew, to fit them for life in Israel. I discovered the "Tayelet", a paved promenade with garden seats and borders of flowering shrubs. Skirting the northern boundary of the settlement, one gets a fine view of the valley and ranges of low hills sloping down toward the Sea of Galilee.

Kibbutz Lavi owns about 2,500 acres of land. Sixty per cent of it is arable land, producing grain crops as well as cotton, grapefruit, lemons, pears, olives, avocados, lychees and mango. The other 40 per cent include housing areas, workshops, stables and grazing land. In the valley I could see cattle grazing, with a young kibbutz-cowboy herding them on horseback. Lavi, with its 650 souls, owns a herd of 650 cattle; 280 of them have to be milked three times a day. On Shabbat and other days of rest, the milking is done by air pressure, without the forbidden use of electricity.

In the afternoon, we were taken on a rambling tour of the Kibbutz by one

of the "chaverim". He gave us some facts and figures on the history of Lavi, which was founded in 1949 by a group of 50 settlers from England. Some of these young pioneers, all members of the Bnei Akiva Youth Movement, were not British born, but had come to Britain as refugee children from the continent, then in the hands of the Nazis. The site of their settlement was chosen by the authorities, for strategic reasons. It was a barren hill, with an abundance of stones, and a complete absence of water. Stone after stone had to be removed by hand and water had to be brought up in a tank, on the back of a truck. Gradually the tracts were cleared for fields, plantations and gardens. After some years a spring was discovered at the foot of the hill and now the water could be piped up to the top through a pipe 12 miles long. Looking today at this shady oasis, it is hard to imagine the heroic effort that went into painting the hilltop of Lavi green, on a background brown like the back of a camel.

The population of the Kibbutz now includes members from 24 countries around the globe. There is accommodation for Israeli youths doing their army service, as well as for groups of youngsters from abroad on a year's work-study programme. The school building



Interior of the Synagogue at Kibbutz Lavi

near the main road was enlarged to accommodate 250 Ethiopian children brought to Israel a year ago by Operation Solomon. Our guide showed us the rather ugly new units of flats for young adults who wish to leave the family nest. We did not see the children's houses, but were told that they are only day-centres, as every child returns home when his parents return from work, so that evenings as well as nights are spent within the family circle, not merely shabbat and holy days, as in some other kibbutzim. This feature is typical of Lavi and aims at strengthening family ties.

I regret that we were not shown the Dining Hall, nor the Beit Midrash with its library of Judaica; nor the Adult Education Center, where concerts and plays are performed,

films are shown once a month and study circles meet regularly; nor did we see the famous furniture factory. In fact, we were only inside one of the kibbutz buildings, the synagogue. But even so, I think I got a good general impression of the place and its atmosphere. It seems to me that Lavi, like the architecture of its synagogue, seeks to combine the new with the old. The kibbutz principle of a community of workers who are their own bosses, working not for individual gain but for the advantage of the community as a whole, is grafted on to the principles of orthodox Judaism, ensuring a rich, Jewish Life, within and without the family.

Does it work? Amazingly, it does. The story of Lavi is definitely a success story.

For my part, I feel that I have not seen enough, and should like to come back for a more extended visit, with opportunities of sharing some of the life of the Kibbutz. But even a mere "sightseeing" visit of four days can be a great experience. So, let me recommend the lovely four-star guesthouse, with swimming pool, gift shop and all mod cons for your next holiday in Israel. The telephone number is 06 799450.

Postscript : Readers will be interested to know that Kibbutz Lavi has a special connection with Edinburgh. It is the burial place of Maurice David Katz or Kaye, the son of Sylvia and Andrew Kaye, who died in Israel on 20 October 1973, whilst on active service as a paratrooper.

* pronounced: "la-vee"

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"SCIENCE AS A CREATIVE ACTIVITY IS AN ART FORM"

The Autobiographies of Three Nobel Prize Winners for Medicine

by Lewis Stevens

In his book 'Go and Learn' Kenneth Collins points out that the attachment of Jews to the medical profession dates back to antiquity, and that Jews have been represented in most branches of medicine in a proportion far greater than their relative numbers in society. It is perhaps not surprising that with the increase in medical research this century, Jews have featured prominently as recipients of the Nobel prizes for Medicine. Since 1981 the autobiographies of Hans Krebs,⁽¹⁾ Arthur Kornberg⁽²⁾ and Francois Jacob⁽³⁾ have appeared, each of them from differing Jewish backgrounds, with careers influenced by the second world war.

Sir Hans Krebs (1900-1981), was born in Hildesheim, the son of a medical practitioner. He went to school at Hildesheim and from there to the Universities of Göttingen, Freiburg and Munich where he studied medicine like his father. His upbringing was rather spartan, and he was rather unpopular and shy with his school contemporaries. After qualifying he was attracted to research in the developing subject of biochemistry. At the time it was difficult to earn a reasonable livelihood from research, and his father was not altogether happy that he had not opted for medical practice. In 1930, after he had been a research worker for four years, he made his first major discovery, the urea cycle. This was the first of a number of metabolic cycles that were to be discovered in the ensuing years. Although one might regard this as purely academic research, Krebs points out that at least five genetic diseases are known in which this cycle is defective, and this new understanding later enabled a treatment for alleviating the diseases.

At this time the rise of the Nazi party in Germany looked ominous, and it was to affect Krebs directly when in 1933 as a Jew he was suspended from duty and eventually dismissed. He contrasts how the

Dean of the Medical Faculty wrote a glowing reference for him in December 1932:

'Dr Krebs has shown not only outstanding scientific ability, but also unusual human qualities. He is an excellent doctor ...'

and then four months later he issued the notification for his immediate removal from office with the following:

'By order of the Office of the Academic Rector I hereby inform you, with reference to the Ministerial Order A No.7642 that you have been placed on leave until further notice'.

Krebs counted himself very lucky in that he had managed to make the important discovery of the urea cycle one year before; this received favourable comment from the international scientific community, and in particular from Gowland Hopkins, then Professor of Biochemistry at Cambridge, who invited him and a number of refugees to work in Cambridge. Krebs contrasts the attitudes of his new colleagues in Cambridge, and the general atmosphere he left behind in the German Universities. Two interesting statements which he makes are that he never lost faith in the German people as a whole and secondly how important he regarded British citizenship which he gained in 1939. He quotes Carl Zuckmayer "Home is not where a man is born, but where he wants to die, where he wants to carry out his life and bring it to a close as is ordained".

Whilst at Cambridge he met Weizmann, who asked him to come to help to set up a research institute, the forerunner of the Weizmann Institute. Excited at the prospect he visited Palestine in 1936, but decided that the research facilities at that time were limited, and he was best to remain in Britain. After two years in Cambridge, he was offered a more permanent post in Sheffield, and

subsequently a chair in the newly found department of biochemistry. It was there that he carried out his work which led to the discovery of a second metabolic cycle, referred to as the citric acid cycle, which is central to the understanding of metabolism and is now a household word in school and university textbooks of life sciences. For this he was to receive the Nobel prize for medicine in 1953. In 1954 Krebs moved to Oxford as head of one of the largest biochemistry departments in the UK. He was to remain there until his retirement in 1967, and then in his retirement post at the Radcliffe Infirmary until his death in 1981.

During the late 1940s the first international meeting of biochemists took place in Cambridge. Krebs played a leading part in the organisation, and was particularly anxious to reestablish contacts with German biochemists. He states:

'I believed it not only morally wrong to cold-shoulder decent Germans, but also a great political mistake because it would fuel pro-Nazi elements in Germany. I also felt that there was a special reason why I in particular should take a stand against this discrimination. If I did not, my fellow committee members might assume that as a refugee I might have strong feelings against any resumption of relations with Germany'.

He pointed out that since this war was total war, understandably no contacts were permitted between enemy scientists, unlike during the Napoleonic wars when Sir Humphry Davy visited French scientists in Paris travelling in his own carriage.

As an early student of the biochemistry school at Oxford, I encountered Krebs both whilst I was an undergraduate and postgraduate. He was a modest man, and was not regarded as a particularly good lecturer, but by contrast his writings were a model of clarity. After

listening to his lectures and reading a copy of his Nobel prize address, students were puzzled as to what his contribution was. He never referred to his contribution in his lectures, but merely referred to 'the work of the Sheffield school'. As head of a large department he seemed a bit remote, but we were impressed that in spite of this he followed closely the progress of both undergraduate and postgraduate students. He was very successful in raising the profile of biochemistry at Oxford, so that whilst there were only eight graduates in biochemistry in my year, a generation later when our daughter graduated there were nearly 80.

Rise and fall in fashion occur in sciences; once the main questions in a field have been resolved, it then remains to polish up the details, and that field goes out of fashion. The theme of Arthur Kornberg's autobiography is very much concerned with the development of particular fields in their historical context, as seen through the eyes of a major participant of fifty years standing.

Kornberg's parents emigrated to New York in 1900 from what is now Poland. His paternal family name was Queller, of Sephardic origin, but was abandoned by his grandfather in favour of Kornberg in order to escape being drafted into the army. The real Kornberg had already done his service. His father was a farm manager, but after forced emigration he first worked in the sweat shops of the Lower East side of New York, and later opened a small hardware store. Always encouraged to study by his parents, Kornberg went to the City College at New York along with many fellow emigrant Jews. By working evenings and weekends he saved enough to see himself through the first half of medical school at the University of Rochester. He failed to obtain a special training award which would have enabled him to take a year out for research, although he learned later that he had been ranked first in the class. This was through discrimination on the part of the dean of the school. Nevertheless he managed to fit in sufficient research on the topic of jaundice, whilst

studying pathology, to obtain his first research publication.

In 1942 he went into the Navy, but this was cut short. The Army and Navy medical corps were desperate because of the many cases of severe jaundice among recruits inoculated with yellow fever vaccine. The Director of National Institute of Health visited Rochester University to see the Dean of the Medical Faculty, an expert in blood diseases. The same dean, who earlier determined that Kornberg should not receive the special training award, was astonished to learn that they were not seeking his advice, but that of Kornberg. From there he went to National Institute of Health on what turned out to be the start of a long and illustrious research career. After the discovery of the double helical structure of DNA by Watson and Crick in 1953, Kornberg worked on the mechanism of its replication, which culminated in his award of the Nobel Prize in 1959.

In 1967, a discovery of his caused the national newspapers and magazines, to carry statements such as that in *Time Magazine*

'Since the dawn of science, one of mankind's dreams has been the creation of life in a test tube. Last week, scientists moved a step closer to making the dream possible'.

Alistair Cooke's comment in the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* was perhaps closer to the mark.

'Life', the press reported, 'has been created in a test tube. It is near enough to the truth to astound the layman, far enough away to annoy the expert'.

What Kornberg and his colleagues had achieved was the replication of a small virus in the test tube, which was indeed quite a breakthrough at the time. It subsequently turned out, that although there was no mistaking that the virus had been replicated, one of the enzymes (catalysts) was not the one used in living cells for replication. The catalyst that does perform that task was discovered by one of Kornberg's sons, Thomas in 1971.

Unlike Krebs and Kornberg, Francois Jacob did not embark on scientific research until after the

second world war, and a substantial part of his autobiography⁽³⁾ concerns the period before he eventually began research, but like Krebs and Kornberg it sprang from an initial medical training. It is an engaging account recalling vividly particular events from his childhood and adolescence, told at times with self-deprecating humour. A number of people influenced his political views. His father and grandfather were both patriots. He relates how his father and uncle celebrated the victory of Léon Blum, the Popular Front and socialist leader, with pretzels and beer. In the mid-1930s he met a Jewish-German refugee looking for work in France. From him he began to learn German, but more important as he saw it, he learned first hand of the situation in Germany and the beginning of the Nazi outrages.

His mother, to whom he was devoted contracted cancer at the time of Munich, and she died shortly before the war. Very soon after, he slipped into a boat carrying Polish troops at Bordeaux, bound for England. He watched the French coastline receding and wondered whether he would see it again. He hoped to join the artillery of the Free French, and be directly involved in fighting for his country, but he was not given the option in view of his medical training, and was assigned to the medical corps.

Jacob spent most of the war time in Central Africa. With a touch of humour he describes his experience of learning to mount and ride a camel with the aid of the *Camel Corps Manual*, and also a visit to vaccinate the Sultan of Kanem's harem. Exhilarated at the prospect of seeing the harem, he was disappointed at being presented with their arms poked through an 8" hole in a black curtain!

Later as medical officer to General Leclerc he was involved in the offensive against the Germans in North Africa, and then with the US Second Armoured Division in the Normandy landings. As the war drew to a close, the moment he had been dreaming about when he would return to Paris, and have news of relatives and friends approached. In the event he was

badly wounded in action, and so when the armistice was signed he found himself lying in a Paris hospital, and spent several months having shrapnel removed. It was sometime before he could walk. At this point he realised how much had changed. He met his father and various relatives, and now felt the full force of his mother's death. He, and many like him who fought for the Free French, hoped that after France had been liberated a new social order would emerge, only to be disappointed. His frustration grew when he resumed his medical studies. His contemporaries had qualified but his injuries, particularly to his hand were such that he could no longer contemplate becoming a surgeon, and the whole business of having to resume the medical course after a five year break seemed daunting. He tried unsuccessfully to obtain some exemptions. Eventually he decided to complete his medical studies as quickly as possible, and reached the point where he had only a thesis to complete to become a doctor of medicine. He was apprehensive of the 'established' branches of medicine and opted for a topic then on the fringes of clinical medicine - antibiotics.

Towards the end of the war the newly discovered antibiotic penicillin was available in England, where it was discovered, and in the USA, where it had been manufactured, but the French had to obtain supplies from abroad. There was thus a growing interest in developing antibiotics in France. For his project he worked at the newly formed National Penicillin Centre, housed in a garage in the Rue Alexandre-Cabanel, on the antibiotic tyrothricin, and then continued work for a short time after graduation until the centre shut down. At the end of this he was still uncertain about what to do, until he happened to meet a friend who had also started medical studies before the war and who had now started biological research. He applied for and was offered a research fellowship at the Pasteur Institute, to work with André Lwoff, starting in October 1949. As he later stated it turned out to be 'a case of being at the right place at the right

time'.

He gives a fascinating account of working in collaboration with Jacques Monod, who became regarded as the most outstanding French scientist since Pasteur. He began working on bacterial genetics, and at first felt very inadequate, not knowing the subject or any of its jargon. At least one word, 'enzyme' was sufficiently close to 'azyme' (unleavened) and hence matzos not to elude him! Gradually he picked up the essentials and his confidence increased to the point where he was really excited by research.

He and Monod were trying to understand how genes work, or more specifically how they control virus and enzyme synthesis. They worked with bacteria which grow faster and are less complex than higher organisms. In July 1958 on a day when he had no taste for work, he and his wife went to the cinema. In a flash of inspiration he saw parallels in the two different systems and the underlying explanation for both - the abstract concepts about which he had thought assumed a reality in the cell. He and Monod had made one of the great discoveries of the century. From this discovery it was possible to explain a number of different phenomena, e.g. although all tissues of the body contain the same genes, the tissues themselves may be quite different, and this

arises because a different selection of those genes are expressed in the different tissues. For this Jacob, together with Monod and Lwoff received the Nobel Prize in 1965.

All three authors adopt quite different approaches and styles. Krebs and Kornberg emphasise scientific discovery with occasional glimpses of their personal lives. By contrast it is not until over half way through the book that Jacob's research career begins to unfold. In Krebs' one sees the same clarity and style of much of his scientific writing, and he includes a complete bibliography as in a scientific paper. With Jacob, I was somewhat reminded of André Gide's autobiography 'If it die'. I enjoyed reading all three.

1. Krebs, H A (1981) *Reminiscences and Reflections*, Clarendon Press, Oxford
2. Kornberg, A (1989) *For the Love of Enzymes : The Odyssey of a Biochemist*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge Massachusetts
3. Jacob, F (1988) *The Statue Within*, Basic Books Inc., New York

Lewis Stevens is a Senior Lecturer in Biochemistry and Head of Department of Biological and Molecular Sciences at Stirling University. He is the author of books on genetics and enzymology and enjoys cycling and hillwalking. He is also a keen gardener and is married with twin daughters and a son.

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*Mazal Tov
to Abby Cosgrove
on her engagement
to Joel Korn.*

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and to their families.*

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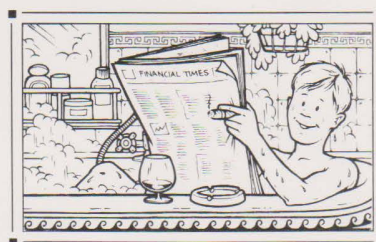
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