

The Edinburgh Star

Journal of the Edinburgh Jewish Community

September 1994

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Tishri 5755



The Edinburgh Star

SYNAGOGUE CHAMBERS
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Editorial

Rosh Hashanah is the time for taking stock of our lives and reflecting upon the year that has passed. With the untimely death of Ruth Adler, the "Star" has lost a truly great Editor and her literary and editorial skills have been sorely missed by members of the Editorial Board who have edited this current issue. We look forward to the Literary Society's Ruth Adler Memorial Lecture (see COMING EVENTS) when Rabbi Hugo Gryn, a personal friend of the Adlers, will be the guest speaker. On a happier note, the idea of a residential student flat was conceived in this column in the January 1994 edition. The project is at present being nourished with kind donations (see Myrna Kaplan's article on Hillel) and will be delivered to the students in time for the new term in October. The speed with which this project has progressed and the enthusiastic response of the Community clearly demonstrates the value we place on Jewish Continuity.

A large section of this edition is devoted to PEOPLE. There are profiles of four members of the community as well as a retrospective article about the Doctors Lipetz. The Chief Rabbi in his challenging New Year Message says that "Individually we may be ordinary ... but collectively we are extraordinary". I think that his choice of the words "may be" was well chosen because in Edinburgh we do appear to have some quite exceptional people for such a small community.

On behalf of the Editorial Board, I wish you all a happy, healthy and peaceful New Year. Shana Tova.

J.A.C.

Front Cover: "Tashlich" by Judy Gilbert. This is the Rosh Hashanah custom dating from the 14th century of symbolically casting one's sins into a running stream. The Hebrew verse is from Micah 7:19 and means "and you will cast (Tashlich) their sins into the depths of the sea".

Typing: Valerie Chuter

Yom Teruah: Arnold Rifkind

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The Board would also like to thank Mr & Mrs Harold Mendelssohn for kindly defraying the cost of sending "The Edinburgh Star" overseas.

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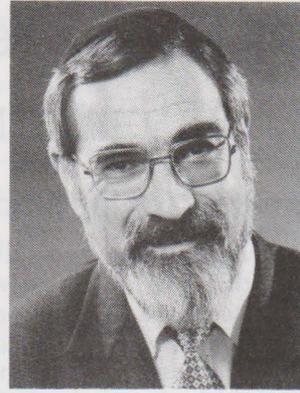
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ROSH HASHANAH MESSAGE 5755



לם ויעשו בולם אנדה אחת לעשות רצונך בלבב שלם "May they form a single association to do Your will with a perfect heart." These words, taken from our prayers for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, go to the heart of one of the most profound of Jewish values: community. What in many other faiths people do as individuals, we do together. We confess together. We atone together. Our prayers are said in the plural. We see our pain and grief in the midst of the suffering of 'others in Zion.' Our holiest acts of worship require a community. At the dawn of human history the Torah declared, 'It is not good for people to be alone.' We believe in the dignity of the individual but the sanctity of the community. Jewish spirituality is less a matter of I-and-Thou than of We-and-Thou. And I have often wondered why.

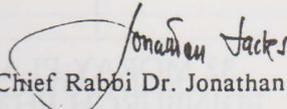
The answer, surely, is given in a prayer which never fails to move me. Every morning we confess to G-d our insignificance in the vast totality of the universe: "What are we? What is our life? What is our piety? What is our righteousness?" And then comes a monumental 'but': "*But* we are Your people, the children of Your covenant ..." *Individually* we may be ordinary. Our lives leave only a passing mark on the sands of time. But *collectively* we are extraordinary. No people has been through so many historic dramas and left so great a cumulative impact on the civilisation of mankind than the people of Israel. Our faith, our loyalty, our way of life, our steadfast rejection of the idols of every age, have been remarkable. For the last two thousand years Jews have been less than half a per cent of the population of the world. But as a people we have been giants of the spirit, with an influence out of all proportion to our numbers. When we join ourselves to the community we are touched by greatness, and the pulse of Jewish history flows through our lives.

One common factor runs through the pathbreaking research of the Kalms Report and more recently the report on 'Women in the Jewish Community.' It is the desire to belong: to be part of a living, inspiring community. This is a dual challenge. There is the challenge to religious and lay leaders to make our congregations more welcoming. There is no excuse for our synagogues to be exclusive clubs in which visitors are made to feel like strangers. Welcoming visitors, said the rabbis, is even greater than receiving the Divine presence.

But there is also a challenge to each of us to contribute to the life of our communities. Those who give most to Jewish life, gain most in return. Like other things which give shape and meaning to a life - marriage, or parenthood, or a vocation - Judaism is a lifelong commitment which must be exercised daily if it is to yield its full gift of joy. Judaism never claimed that blessings come easily. But they come. When we participate in the life of the community - its prayers, its hopes and its celebrations - we become part of the great chain of Jewish continuity which lifted the lives of our ancestors, and we too are brushed by the wings of eternity.

Modern life has given us many things, but it has left us lonely. Cities have become societies of strangers. Too many of us live alone, relax alone and feel alone. In an age which worships the 'I' we are in danger of losing the 'We' - the enduring bonds of love, fellowship and trust. We become part of the 'lonely crowd.' At such a time the Jewish concept of community speaks powerfully to our situation. May 5755 be a year of renewal for us, our families and our dedication to community,

בברכת שנה טובה ומבורכת,


Chief Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Sacks



New Year Message from Rabbi Shalom Shapira

זְכֵרְנוּ לַחַיִּים... וְכַתְּבֵנוּ בְּסֵפֶר הַחַיִּים, לְמַעַן אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים

Remember us for life, and inscribe us in the book of life, for Your sake

This prayer, which I have chosen as a title to my message this year, is recited during the first ten days of our Jewish calendar, the ten days of repentance from Rosh Hashana to Yom Kippur. The rabbis have inserted it in the middle of the first of the 18 blessings of the Shmone-*Esrey*, the silent Amida prayer. It seems that this prayer characterises the atmosphere of the High Holidays and represents the essence of the Days of Awe. Rosh Hashana is a Jewish festival with a universal theme. It is a day of judgement, a Yom Hadin, not only for Jews but for all mankind, when 'all creatures pass before Him as a flock of sheep'. This is emphasised clearly in the second insertion which says: 'Zochair Yetsurav' - 'who remembers his creatures to grant them life', referring directly to all mankind.

However, this prayer, like all our prayers, is recited by Jews only and not by all peoples. What makes this prayer significant is its final part, its last three words: 'For Your sake'. This motif 'for your sake and not for ours' goes through many of our prayers, such as, the 'Ovinu Malkeinu' which says: 'do it for thy sake if not for ours' and goes back to Biblical times, when Moses prayed for his people (Numbers 14,13-14) and to the prophecies of Ezekiel (Ezekiel 36,22) and Joel (Joel 2,17), who emphasised the same motif.

The implication of this is that we Jews bear the responsibility for the good name of God and upon whatever basis we should assess our acts, we should also assess them in terms of the way they are likely to be judged by other nations. This is called 'Kiddush-Hashem', the sanctification of God's name. It plays a very prominent role in the Jewish faith. Sanctifying God's name is regarded as the highest value in Judaism. On the other hand, desecrating God's name is regarded as the greatest sin (Sanhedrian 107a).

Living as Jews in a non-Jewish society means that this responsibility is borne daily. Ben-Gurion had a different point of view and used to say: 'It does not matter what the nations think, what matters is what the Jews do'. Perhaps Israel as a country and the people who live there in their own Jewish independent state, can afford to be less careful in that sense and to put more emphasis on action than on reputation.

However, one must remember that the majority of the Jewish people still live in the diaspora and the greatest duty of the Jews has always been and will always be to sanctify God's name among the nations, fulfilling God's commandment as it was given to the first Jew, our patriarch Abraham, when he was told by the Lord: '... And in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed' (Genesis 12,3).

When we pray 'Zochrenu Lechayim' we do not refer to our physical life only, but also to our Jewish life. We pray to God that He remember us as his own people who have an additional task beyond that of all other peoples; and that He enables us to succeed in our



Rabbi Shalom Shapira

duties as Jews and to bear his name among the nations with pride and with dignity, as it is said in Deuteronomy (28,10): 'And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord, and they shall stand in fear of thee'.

May God listen to our prayers, gather our exiles and inscribe us all in the book of life for peace, Amen.

On behalf of Rachel and myself may I wish you all a Happy New Year, Shana Tova and Ketiva va'chatima Tova.



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New Year Message from Dr N Oppenheim

President, Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation

As a young boy, some several years ago, I and my contemporaries regarded the President with much awe and no little trepidation, as he sat majestically in the Parnas's box or, having processed round the Synagogue behind the Chazan and the Rabbi (we had both then), stood - an Olympian figure - on the Bimah calling up those lesser mortals, whom he deemed worthy of favour, to a reading of the Law. A steely glare silenced the most recalcitrant; decorum was rigidly enforced by an indignant slap of the Presidential hand on the Bimah railing, reducing the most wayward to obedient silence.

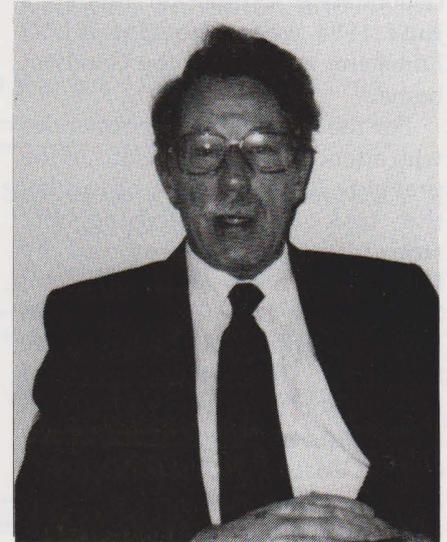
Now, eleven Presidencies later, I sit in that same box; stand on the same Bimah. I hope, and in fact know for a certainty, that I am not held in that same awe - not even by the youngest members of the congregation. Presidents do not now stride autocratically on to the Aron Kodesh and thundering like a vengeful Old Testament prophet proclaim: 'Know before whom thou standest' whenever their perception

of religious correctness is impaired by the decorum or lack of it in the Synagogue.

And I ask myself, how has this change come about? The answers are several: the social mores have changed - there has been a socio-economic levelling up of the community which has, sadly, diminished in number from those halcyon days. Perforce, the physical structure of the Synagogue itself has had to be altered to conform with the diminution in numbers. Our ladies no longer sit perched, heavenwards, looking upon us men carrying out the rituals of the services. We have been elevated up to them, and are the subject, and indeed the cynosure of their interested and, more than ever, knowledgeable gaze. It is no delusion from an executive's perspective that the most dangerous, - if unofficial - sub-committee in the congregation consists of several front-row ladies!

I, for my part, welcome these changes. The congregation is not ruled by Presidential fiats or edicts. We are a small cohesive community of all shades of religious conviction but, nevertheless, nestling together under the umbrella of Judaism. The watchword must be 'constructive harmony'.

We have a community to maintain: the children to educate in all aspects of our ancient faith; the old to succour - tasks which fall on the younger and the young-old members alike to sustain. We must remain one with the other to carry out these tasks successfully. Additionally, we have a duty to maintain and foster good relations with our fellow non-Jewish citizens, in whose midst we live in peace and



Dr Nathan Oppenheim

harmony, in order that the understanding and friendship we enjoy may be enhanced. This we do through our participation in organisations such as The Council of Christians and Jews and Inter-faith committees. And as a viable community we can stretch out a helping hand to the Jewish students at our universities, and support the special causes in Israel.

Consensus both within and without must be the theme for our joint efforts to keep the community alive and well. These are the parameters within which we must work to ensure that we are successful in our joint endeavours.

On behalf of the Executive and Council, I would like to take this opportunity of wishing you all a most hearty

Leshana Tova, Tikatevu
Vetechatemu.

May we all be spared in good health in the year to come.

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THE LOWRIE REPORT

The W-Day Luncheon

'W-Day' 21st Anniversary was celebrated at 12 noon on Sunday, 2 June 1994 when the 21st WIZO Luncheon was held at the Goodwin home.

For the 95 Gourmet/Gourmandes who attended, many Veterans of the previous 20 Campaigns, ahead lay the task of demolishing the sumptuous buffet prepared by Doreen Bowman, Andrea Cowan, Sylvia Donne, Leila Goldberg, Sheva Lurie, Hilary Rifkind, June Schulberg, Rachel Shapira and Rachel Skop led by Katie Goodwin and all under the authoritative eye of Mrs Rosin, whose energy was almost matched by the dedication of those present to ensure that nothing was returned to the kitchen - this year they almost succeeded!

If the savouries and salads were such as to tempt us all into abandoning restraint, or indeed control itself, what can be said of the sumptuous desserts? Brought to Himalayan heights of perfection over the years, the skills of the Committee members in producing such masterpieces brought us into temptation, passed us through mere passion and seduced us into sheer lust!

Not that the Shock Troops preparing to rush the buffet and bar were to do so without some semblance of discipline, for like the veteran Beachmaster he is, there was Sam Skop to direct and deliver us safely into the care and attention of Sommelier, Ron Goodwin and his dedicated Bar Staff of Ben and Joe who kept the glasses and contents sparkling and most importantly full, thus priming the happy guests' appetites.

There were those who exercised to activate their appetites and like the W-Day Battle-hardened Veterans that they are, did so again later to find their second wind. Some played tennis while the hustlers repaired to the billiard table, but most dandered about the garden in the sunshine and a few brought back that luxury cruise feeling in the Solarium. There were those who subscribed to the theory that the brain requires an enormous amount of energy and sought to improve their minds trying to decipher the symbolism on the blue and beautiful Chinese carpet and the meaning of the Chinese triptych. Long case, bracket and carriage clocks, ivory, enamel, silver, paintings and bronzes, all gave

pleasure and fed the mind quite as richly as carnally, the luncheon had the body.

All present would surely raise plate and glass to say 'that was the Luncheon of the Year'. Quite incidentally, this coming of age event raised £650 for the very good causes supported by WIZO.

Fiddler on the Roof :

17 September

Katie Goodwin has made a block booking with supper afterwards at the Goodwin home. It is apparently an added attraction that some 'Milkman' and his family have been asked along to supper - no, it isn't Sean Connery - it's somebody called Tevye who uses the name Topol for some reason!! The whole evening only costs £25 - book with Katie now. Maybe you get your milk delivered too — Hm?!

Ladies' Night Supper :

8 November

This will be at the Communal Hall. Guest Speaker and price to be announced shortly.



ANNE WAYNE

by Anita Mendelssohn

The Ladies Committee of the Community Centre held a surprise

farewell tea for Anne Wayne who was leaving Edinburgh to take up residence in Glasgow.

Anne, who is the sister of Monty Braverman, has been active on the Communal Centre Committee for many years. One of the main contributions she made until her retirement was to organise her jewellery stall at our Annual Bazaar.

Both Anne and her late husband Claude could always be relied upon to support everything that was happening in the Community.

We wish Anne many years of good health and trust that she will be very happy in Glasgow.

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

There was a large attendance at the AGM of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation on 25 May 1994 when not only the Council became due for re-election, but also the Executive, after the mandatory period of four years permitted by the Constitution. The outgoing President, Mr M L Cowan, thanked the members of the community for all their help and support and stated that it had been a privilege to work for them.

The following members were elected to the Council for the ensuing year: Messrs L Bowman, J Danzig, P Goldberg, I Leifer, N A Oppenheim, A I Rifkind, I Shein, W Simpson, J Sperber, M Wittenberg, Mrs A Mendelssohn and Mrs R Orgel. Dr N Oppenheim and Dr I Leifer were unanimously elected President and Hon. Treasurer respectively.

The following were re-elected Honorary Vice-Presidents: Messrs G Glass, M S Cowen, A Rubenstein and J A Cosgrove. In addition, Mr M L Cowan, the retiring President, was elected Hon Vice-President.

Messrs D Goldberg and B Dorfman were re-elected Senior and Junior Wardens, respectively.

Mr J Cosgrove, in demitting office as representative on the Board of Deputies, was thanked for his report and for his service to the congregation over the past three years in this office. Dr I Leifer was elected in his place.

An item under 'Any Other Business' and introduced by the outgoing President, Mr M L Cowan, who read a prepared statement, resulted in one of the most lively discussions heard in recent years at an AGM. The statement covered an issue which, though deemed non-halachic, had caused concern among many congregants and referred to the guidance issued by the Council to the Ministerial incumbent on a congregational matter. An open discussion followed, allowing members to air their views and Mr Cowan stressed that in no way was the status of any

member altered by this guidance but that the Council, as a democratically elected body, had the constitutional right and duty to proffer such guidance as was, from time to time, deemed necessary. Any misgivings or misapprehensions voiced by members were dispelled by explanatory replies in answer to questions and comments from the floor. After a frank and full debate the issue was considered to have been sufficiently discussed and the matter was deemed closed.

The newly elected President, Dr N A Oppenheim, then proposed a Vote of Thanks to Mr Cowan both for his handling of a potentially difficult meeting and for the many years of conscientious service he had given to the community, both as a Council member and then as a member of the Executive culminating in his Presidency for the last four years.

The meeting concluded in an innovative and welcome manner with the President inviting the congregation to tea and cakes in the adjoining Marian Oppenheim Hall.

At a subsequent Council meeting, Mr I Shein was appointed Hon. Secretary. The following duties were allocated:

Dr I Leifer : To head financial sub-committee with Messrs M L Cowan and J Danzig and to continue as Education Convener.
Mr M Wittenberg : Building maintenance with Messrs A Rifkind and W Simpson; all Synagogue and related repairs and to liaise with financial sub-committee regarding this
Mr A Rubenstein : Yahrzeits; sick visiting
Mr A I Rifkind : Security; assisting on building maintenance
Mr J Cosgrove : Hillel House; to advise on all Synagogue Services as required; computerisation with Mr L Bowman
Mr M L Cowan : Mailing list; financial sub-committee and to advise on revenue, covenants

and related matters

Mr J Sperber : Media; students
Mrs R Orgel : Lothian Racial Equality Council; Inter-faith Services; Council of Christians and Jews
Mrs A Mendelssohn : Kashrut; community centre
Mr J Danzig : Future Generations committee; financial sub-committee
Mr L Bowman : Youth Liaison; computerisation
Mr W Simpson : Building maintenance
Mr P Goldberg : Chevra Kadisha; Jewish Chronicle' correspondent; Jewish Year Book
Mr G Glass : Yom Kippur Appeal
Mr D Goldberg As Senior Warden, Minyanim mid week
Mr B Dorfman : As Junior Warden, Minyanim mid week

Council of Christians and Jews

Edinburgh Branch

Programme 1994 - 95

20 October 1994 Edinburgh Synagogue Choir and Mayfield Salisbury Church Choir

24 November 1994 Rev. Jonathan Gorsky - "To Mend the World" - Post Holocaust European Jewry.

12 January 1995 The Right Rev. James A. Simpson DD Moderator of the Church of Scotland - "Religion and Humour"

23 February 1995 Mrs Dianna Wolfson BA - "Jewish Education"

30 March 1995 Mr John A. Cosgrove and Rev. Dr James B. Walker - "A Jewish View of the Covenant and a Christian View of the Covenant"

11 May 1995 Sister Margaret Shepherd - "Current Issues"

All meetings are held in the Community Centre, 4 Salisbury Road Edinburgh at 7.30pm.

Edinburgh Joins the Hillel Family

by Myrna Kaplan

There was a move by the Jewish students in Edinburgh and some members of the Edinburgh Jewish community to look at the possibility of setting up a house/flat where Jewish students would be able to live in a kosher and homely environment.

Question: Why does Edinburgh need a Hillel?

Answer: Edinburgh needs a Hillel for a number of reasons; one should not lose sight of the fact that a Hillel is not just there for the students but is also there for the community.

For the students it would provide first and foremost a properly supervised kosher home and would also provide a base and resource centre for the ever-growing Edinburgh J-Soc. For those of you who are not aware, Edinburgh's J-Soc is one of the oldest J-Socs in the world formed in 1909 - two years before the Glasgow society and some 20 years before any national J-Soc was formed.

Question: Why does Edinburgh need a Hillel now?

Answer: Some six years ago, membership of Edinburgh J-Soc was approximately 20-25 people. Last academic session, the society had a membership of over 100, thus making Edinburgh one of the major Jewish Students' Centres in Britain.

In order to maintain this level of membership and attract even more to study in our city, the community must provide Jewish kosher accommodation in line with practically every other Jewish community in Britain, a parallel example to us can be seen in the Bristol Jewish community whose numbers are similar to ours.

Some three years ago, a Hillel opened for five people in Bristol with communal funding. This year as a result of that success, a new Hillel opened which could accommodate some 20 Jewish students. The result of successes like Bristol for the students' societies is immeasurable, and for the community it has provided a steady influx of young people into the heart of the community on an

ongoing basis, with many of them deciding to settle in that area after graduation.

Many of our sons and daughters have benefitted from hospitality given by other communities and as a result all have had their Jewish identities vastly enriched. In the last few years Nick Cosgrove lived in Hull Hillel, David Kaplan and Rhonda Segal lived in the Glasgow Student House, Elliot Cowan lived in the Manchester Hillel, Abby Korn (Cosgrove) was at Liverpool Hillel, as was her husband Joel. David Mason was a warden at the London Hillel and Elizabeth Dorfman first met her husband at a Hillel, so let us do our bit for Jewish Continuity and Renewal and fully support this new, exciting and progressive venture in Edinburgh!

An Edinburgh Hillel committee has been formed under the chairmanship of John Cosgrove with Myrna Kaplan as Hon Secretary, Ian Caplan as Student Liaison Officer and Stephen Robinson as Hon Treasurer. Hilary Rifkind will be in charge of kashrut and the supervision of the general wellbeing of the students. Morris Kaplan is in charge of the property sub-committee assisted by Arnold

Rifkind and Michael Miller.

A property has been leased in Mayfield Road, and applications are already being received in anticipation of the opening of the Hillel House and demand is expected to exceed the number of places actually available.

The Edinburgh Jewish community has long been supportive of students within the city and with the added input of the Hillel Foundation, Jewish students can expect even more support and co-operation. The Edinburgh Jewish community, I am sure, will extend a warm welcome to all Jewish students wishing to study in this most beautiful of British cities.

An appeal was launched in July to raise funds for the project and any reader who would like to contribute to this worthwhile cause and has not already done so should contact John A. Cosgrove, 14 Gordon Terrace Edinburgh EH16 5QR. You can become a Patron of Edinburgh Hillel (£100) or a Friend of Edinburgh Hillel (£25) and all donations large and small will be gratefully accepted and acknowledged. Cheques should be made payable to Edinburgh Hillel.

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COMING EVENTS

September 1994

6 Tuesday	First Day Rosh Hashanah	
7 Wednesday	Second Day Rosh Hashanah	
11 Sunday	Maccabi	1.00 p.m.
	Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.
14 Wednesday	Kol Nidre	
15 Thursday	Yom Kippur	
17 Saturday	WIZO Theatre Visit to Playhouse 'Fiddler on the Roof' with Topol followed by supper. Phone Katie on 228 6601 for details	
20 Tuesday	First Day Succot	
21 Wednesday	Second Day Succot	
25 Sunday	Maccabi	1.00 p.m.
	Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.
27 Tuesday	Shemini Atzeret	
28 Wednesday	Simchat Torah	

October 1994

9 Sunday	Maccabi	1.00 p.m.
	Community Centre Social	7.30 p.m.
16 Sunday	Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.
17 Monday	Lodge Solomon	7.00 p.m.
20 Thursday	Council of Christians and Jews Edinburgh Synagogue Choir and Mayfield/Salisbury Church Choir	7.30 p.m.
30 Sunday	Maccabi	1.00 p.m.
	Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.
	Literary Society - Eldred Tabachnik QC President of the Board of Deputies	8.00 p.m.

November 1994

8 Tuesday	WIZO Social, supper with speaker Jane Ansell	7.30 p.m.
13 Sunday	Maccabi	1.00 p.m.
	Remembrance Day Service	3.00 p.m.
	Literary Society - Sheriff Gerald Gordon, QC talks on 'Adam and Eve'	8.00 p.m.
20 Sunday	Maccabi	1.00 p.m.
21 Monday	Lodge Solomon	7.00 p.m.
24 Thursday	Council of Christians and Jews Jonathan Gorsky "To Mend the World"	7.30 p.m.
27 Sunday	Friendship Club Literary Society - Chanukah Entertainment Theme of 'Yiddish Food' presented by Elaine Samuel	3.00 p.m. 8.00 p.m.
28 Monday	First Day Chanukah	

December 1994

3 Saturday	Community Centre Chanukah Social	7.30 p.m.
11 Sunday	Maccabi	1.00 p.m.
	Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.
	Literary Society Ben Braber of Scottish Jewish Archives - Talk & Exhibition	8.00 p.m.
19 Monday	Lodge Solomon	7.00 p.m.

January 1995

12 Thursday	Council of Christians and Jews The Moderator of the Church of Scotland The Rt. Rev. Dr J. A. Simpson. Subject: "Religion and Humour."	
15 Sunday	Literary Society Rabbi Hugo Gryn on Jewish Survival (Ruth Adler Memorial Meeting)	8.00 p.m.

Maccabi meets every alternate Sunday from 1.00 - 3.00 p.m. For further information, contact Cassie Mendelssohn (452 9112)

Senior Maccabi meets on Sunday evenings in members' homes

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

The Luncheon Club meets every Tuesday and Thursday at 12 noon

The Mother and Baby Group meets every alternate Wednesday mornings at 9.30 a.m.

Meetings are subject to alteration

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

CONGRATULATIONS

to the following

Pilot Officer Simon Brodie on graduating B.Eng. (Hons.) at Cranfield (Military) University.

Sally Cowen on graduating LL.B. (Hons.) at Leeds University.

David Mason on graduating B.Sc. (Hons.) in Economics at the London School of Economics.

Susie Shenkin B.Sc. on graduating M.B., Ch.B. with distinction in Medicine at Edinburgh University.

Jean Shaw &

Richard Winetrobe

are pleased to announce

their engagement on

1st August 1994

TIMETABLE of SERVICES

Eve of Rosh Hashanah

Monday 5th September.....7.30pm

First Day Rosh Hashanah

Tuesday 6th September

Morning Service.....8.45am

Reading of the Law9.50am

Shofar10.45am

Sermon/Children's

Service11.00am

Conclusion1.00pm

Second Day Rosh Hashanah

Wednesday 7th September

As for First Day

Kol Nidrei

Wednesday 14th September

Fast Commences7.20pm

Kol Nidrei.....7.30pm

Yom Kippur

Thursday 15th September

Morning Service.....10.00am

Reading of the Law.....12.15pm

Yizkor1.15pm

Mussaf.....1.45pm

Afternoon Service4.45pm

Neilah.....6.45pm

Shofar/End of Service8.23pm

EDINBURGH JEWISH FRIENDSHIP CLUB

by Ian Shein

The Edinburgh Jewish Friendship Club goes from strength to strength under the benevolent leadership of Willie Caplan, ably assisted by wife and secretary Betty, Michael Gold, treasurer, and a very active and enthusiastic committee. On 8 June, a busload of over 40, obviously alluding much more to numbers than to age, travelled to Dumfries on the annual bus outing. En route, a brief stop in Moffat proved to be an attractive and necessary spot of convenience, allowing a slow meander through the interesting maze of the local Woollen Mill. A very happy group, undeterred by changeable weather, boarded again to continue the journey to Dumfries, there to disembark on historic Burns' territory. Excitement knew no bounds at the discovery, not of the Bard's haunts, but of branches of Marks and Spencer and Littlewoods as determined ladies of the group dragged feebly protesting partners, to no avail, around the departments in search of items one could never envisage to be found in our capital city. There was also some

time to savour the attractive if somewhat damp sights of Dumfries before sitting down to a very satisfying meal. A tired but contented party had difficulty in finding anything to complain about, a prerogative of Friendship Club membership so easily surrendered on this enjoyable day. At the time of going to press, word of a proposed bus outing to Berwick on Tweed in the autumn, the first venture south of the border. What with the Channel Tunnel, and this virile committee, what price Purim in Paris?

The annual tea dance took place in the Community Centre on 19 June, wisely giving members time to gather their strength after the bus outing. Stuart Caplan, talented son of Betty and Willie, provided the music on his versatile keyboard ranging from slow waltz, slow foxtrot (the slow element meeting with general approval) to St Bernard's Waltz and the shloss. An enthusiastic group of almost 50 tripped, to be fair not literally in all cases, the light fantastic, literally in

some cases, and showed the younger 'uns just how ballroom dancing should be performed. Although there was no 'Ladies' Choice', male wallflowers were few in number, and dancers and spectators alike revelled in dance hall memories of the past. Stuart's excellent playing in strict tempo may not have been entirely mirrored on the dance floor, but an impressive display of feather steps and soft shoe shuffle could still be discerned even if legs were somewhat stiffer than in the nostalgic days gone past of the Fountainbridge Palais.

A big hit was Shirley Bennett, miles too young to be an official member, who gave an impromptu cabaret by her beautiful singing of two numbers to warm applause. A most pleasing tea complemented the afternoon and left members and friends saying "we'll be back". A gratifying sight was the presence of several members of the community. To all, come and join in next time for a most enjoyable and entertaining afternoon.

Women in the Community – Edinburgh's Contribution

by Rose Orgel

The "Women in the Community" project was initiated by Chief Rabbi Dr Jonathan Sacks to focus on the concerns of Jewish Women. The project was divided into five major areas:

Family Issues, Social Issues, Education, Religious and Synagogal Issues, Get and Agunah

Meetings were held in all the major centres of the United Kingdom and in Edinburgh a number of meetings were held when all the subjects were discussed and from which the following points were raised:-

CONVERSION: For women, there is no provision for intensive

study, no instruction in learning Hebrew or how to follow a service and not enough instruction on how to prepare for Shabbat.

ADOPTION: It was felt that it should be made easier to have a non-Jewish baby converted to enable it to be brought up in the Jewish Faith without future complications.

DIVORCE: Where difficulties arise in getting a Get, could a divorce not be withheld until a Get was given?

KASHRUT: Regularly updated lists should be made freely available to all Synagogue members especially in communities where there are no Kosher shops.

BATMITZVAH/BATCHAYIL: More formal guidance from the Chief Rabbi's Office would be welcomed.

EDUCATION: A mailing list of available books of Jewish interest would be useful in towns where there are no Jewish bookshops.

The results of the survey have been published in two books available from "Women in the Community", Adler House, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9HN.

"Women in the Jewish Community" Review & Recommendations £8-50.

"Women in the Jewish Community" Survey Report £10.

Junior Maccabi 1993-94

by Benji Bowman

The time was 1pm on Sunday 5th September; the communal hall was the setting and Junior Maccabi, the Jewish youth club for children aged between 5 and 12, was the means of getting a group of Jewish kids together. In doing this, the club could not help but be a fun, socially and culturally-educating and voluntarily-led organisation whose aim was to provide informed choices - or so we were told by Maccabi Union. Enough of the official Maccabi spiel from on high and back to the leaders on the ground: Benji Bowman and Cassie Mendelssohn, ably helped by Judy Fransman and Jacqueline Bowman. Our main aims were to allow the kids to get away from their parents, have as much fun as possible and, if possible, to learn something - anything about their Jewish heritage.

The first meeting included a welcoming party as an introduction for a few new members and re-introduction for those more familiar with Junior Maccabi. The next meeting saw us starting on the "socially and culturally educational" programmes; or so we hoped! We did in fact run a Rosh Hashana programme. How much was learnt from apple dunking and getting honey-coated remains to be seen, but if we succeeded at all, the kids will remember Rosh Hashana as the New Year - albeit strongly associated with apples and messy goo.

The rest of the term included many more programmes on Jewish themes, such as Jewish Identity, Russian immigration to Israel and Chanukah. Slightly less intense themes were also shown the light with a Halloween party, and just after the "other" new year, the climax of Junior Maccabi so far, a trip to the Odeon to see Disney's Aladdin, in which 20 children participated. It remains to be seen where the bookkeeping failed, as only 16 full subscriptions were ever

paid, making me, for one, feel that just maybe, the cinema trip was more exciting for the children than our interesting but probably less enjoyable Succot activity.

After this amazing turn-out (almost 75% of the Cheder) what could be done to ensure continued attendance? This was the question we asked ourselves. We did not immediately find a solution, as shown by our re-normalised attendance for our treasure hunt, poster making and drama activities, in which Roy Mendelssohn showed true thespian (or should I say pantomime) spirit in his interpretation of the part of Ruth in our Shavuot production.

We finally solved our problem of exciting number-pullers when we arranged the long-dormant but always nagging idea of a trip to Glasgow Maccabi - that huge place of promise kindly donated to the youth, for all their activities. Unfortunately the facilities of these premises were slightly exaggerated (accidentally I'm sure) when an unguarded comment on the pool table was mistakenly taken for praise of the swimming pool by

Jonathan Fransman. As it turned out he was ill on the day of the trip and so never had his illusions dispelled. The day was such a success in every way, except perhaps the stylish, but heavy financial burden of bringing the masses to Glasgow Maccabi in taxis. We did this only because we were too late to catch the bus, but as the Synagogue council have kindly repaid the cost of our transportation, we have recouped our losses.

The theme of the afternoon was space, and the "chanuchim" took part in space hockey, space pirates and a space quiz, with drama based on a space theme for the older children. The bombardment of space on these children proved too much, as they somehow managed to cover a whole room, in which they were instructed to paint one tableau of space, in colourful modern art. In other words, a colossal mess was made, and our only defence is that due to a mistake in timing, 40 budding Picassos came under the control (or not as the case most certainly was) of only 3 leaders. At least the mess makers were all from Glasgow! No harm



The Glasgow Visit

was done, thankfully, and we left safe in the knowledge that the trip would be repeated and hopefully reciprocated in Edinburgh next year perhaps without the art component of the afternoon. After all, we wouldn't want to ruin the community centre (more than we already do). Seriously though, a big thank-you must go to all the leaders, or should I say facilitators, who helped in Glasgow. They, like the children, were too numerous to mention, although thanks are especially due to Senior Maccabi for helping out.

All in all this year has been very successful, with rising membership, new activities and great leaders - actually we aren't bad as a team, and a pat on the back for each one would be well deserved. I only hope that a potential gap in the group with the older girls becoming, perhaps, too old, doesn't affect membership, as all new members

will be made very welcome, almost to the stage of having cash-inducements offered to their parents. All the leaders will continue their leadership training, both at Maccabi Union courses, where Cassie will complete the Advanced course and Jacqueline and Judy the Basic, but also in the club where I'm sure they'll do a great job, hopefully aided and abetted by Tony Goldberg. For myself, I am departing for Israel in September to take part in a nine month programme at Machon L'Madrichei Chutz L'aretz, or "Institute for Youth Leaders from Abroad" and at Or Yehuda, a development town closely linked with Maccabi GB. I hope to return a better leader and I certainly anticipate continued interest in this course by future members of Edinburgh Jewish Youth.

A large thank-you must be given to all the parents who have

supported Maccabi through the year by encouraging their children to come and to the children themselves for making it such a good year. Finally, to next year's leaders, participants and parents alike, Mazel Tov, Shanah Tova and Shecoyach!

In treasured
remembrance of
the late
Ralph Talisman
an inspiring teacher
and valued friend.

from

Dr Kenneth D. Baird



Andrew Caplan and Kathy Beim

There was a mini exodus of some fifty people from Edinburgh to attend the wedding of Andrew Caplan and Kathy Beim in London on Sunday 29th May 1994. Andrew is the son of Sandra and Sidney Caplan and grandson of Minnie Oilberg and Michael and Nana Caplan. Kathy is the daughter of Vera and Andrew Beim of London.

They were married in the elegant New West End Synagogue in Bayswater by Rabbi Yisroel Roll and the Cantor and choir added to the dignity of the occasion. The reception and dinner were held at the Carlton Hyatt Hotel.

Andrew is the manager of Boots the Chemist in Hammersmith and the couple have set up home in London.

THE LIPETZES : A JEWISH FAMILY IN EDINBURGH

by Charles S Coventry

The following notes have been compiled in the course of research into the careers of two members of a well-known Edinburgh Jewish family, Julius and Samuel Lipetz who were prominent in the medical profession between the 1930s and 1950s. They were known particularly for their work in the Pleasance (the worst slums in the city in the 1950s), and in the dosshouses of the Grassmarket.

Julius and Samuel in the Medical Profession

The main sources for this article are reminiscences of former patients and friends of Julie and Sam Lipetz and their obituaries in the British Medical Journal. There appear to be more anecdotes about Sam than about Julie.

Samuel ('Sam' to his friends and colleagues) was born on 9 May 1897 and died after a long illness on 19 July 1983. Lionel Daiches emphasised the point about him always being 'Sam'. He was one of his patients, and has a copy of one of the few photographs of him. He was sent to George Heriot's School and Edinburgh University. His medical education was interrupted by National Service in the First World War. He was first of all a private soldier, and was then commissioned in the Royal Horse Artillery. He graduated MB, ChB in 1922, and in 1923 became partner to a doctor who retired in 1926.

Julius or 'Julie' was born on 3 October 1903. He was educated at the Royal High School and Edinburgh University from which he graduated in 1926. After house appointments he joined Sam in practice at 5 Roxburgh Street in 1927-28. At this time they both lived at the family home, 13 Mansionhouse Road. The practice was in the Pleasance, and the partnership continued until Julius died in 1972.

The practice covered a wide cross-section of Edinburgh society from senior academic staff in the University to the inhabitants of the tenements and dosshouses of the Grassmarket. Lionel Daiches remembers that many of these patients, who were of Irish origin, would incorporate the name 'Samuel Lipetz' into the names of their own children in gratitude for

what he had done for them. This practice showed that he was more than just a doctor; he was a friend of the family. He must have been well-known throughout the Old Town as an anecdote from his obituary shows: 'Dinna bash him, it's the wee doctor'.

Sam set up a sixpenny dispensary practice for the poor, and frequently took loaves and bottles of milk which he left with his poor patients. He was chosen for the staff of the University Department of General Practice. At the age of 50 he wrote a dissertation on the diagnosis of peptic ulcer in general practice and was given the degree of MD in 1947 for this work. He was elected a fellow of the Royal College of General Practitioners in 1970.

Doctors are notorious for their bad handwriting, and this is illustrated in an anecdote in the obituary article:

'Though convener of the scripts committee he was fined in 1926 by the then panel committee for prescribing sevenpence worth of olive oil for a diabetic as this was held to be a foodstuff, and at the same time he was admonished for his handwriting, and was asked to give an undertaking to correct it.'

As well as general practice, Sam trained medical students, and one writer, 'RS', says that he was 'inspiring'. He always had time for young students. His house was always open. 'RS' was taken on house calls and visited the surgery. Sam was willing to learn from his students. Another former student, 'AS', says that he was not just a doctor, but a friend to every family. This hospitality extended beyond patients and medical students. One of my own relatives remembers coming to Edinburgh and being given a bed for the night by Sam and Vanda.

House calls were made in cases where a surgery visit would inflict financial or economic hardship rather than medical hardship. He deliberately kept his list of patients small; otherwise he would lack sufficient time with them and would not be able to keep up with progress in medicine.

Some informants described the brothers as 'notorious', and this reputation is related to the fact that Sam was a founder member of the Socialist Medical Association. The organisation still existed in Manchester in the 1970s. His interest in Soviet socialism was diminished by the Hungarian uprising and the treatment of Jews in Russia. He showed a pride in the Jewish contribution to civilisation. Although he was agnostic, he read the Jewish Chronicle as well as the Guardian. The obituary article says that he did not conceal his socialism, and he is also remembered as proclaiming to all and sundry, 'I'm an atheist!' which was still considered shocking, particularly for a Jew. One informant remembers attending a lecture given by "Doctor Lipetz", so the poster said, in the North British Hotel in 1949 about the formation of the state of Israel. This might have been Julius as he is remembered as being more involved in politics than his brother.

Outside of his medical practice



Dr Sam Lipetz

and political involvement, Sam was a keen sportsman. He took part in sport at school and university, and played rugby, tennis, cricket and golf, which is described as a 'passion'. The writer of the obituary article says that he did not age till his last few months.

Julius was active in the Royal Medical Society of Edinburgh, and began to contribute papers to medical publications with a dissertation entitled 'On being a Panel Doctor', which he read to the Royal Medical Society on 7 February 1930. It can be seen in the volume of dissertations at the Society's headquarters in Bristo Square. He was married in 1932 (see first article) and moved into 43 Esslemont Road.

He had 3 years National Service in Italy and Africa during World War II, and later was active in the Jewish branch of the British Legion. There is one anecdote from this period or just after which suggests that he must have been well ahead of his time. While in the army he smoked a pipe. On one occasion, he wrote home to Marjorie asking her to send him a Peterson pipe, a make which seems to have had particular prestige, and yet he was one of the first doctors to realise that smoking was damaging to health, and stopped long before most others of his generation.



Dr Julius Lipetz

After his war service, almost the whole of Julius' career was spent caring for the poor in Edinburgh. The writer of his obituary (BMJ 1973) says that it is difficult for anyone who had entered medical service during the existence of the NHS to picture conditions in the 1930s when only wage-earners were entitled to free medical care. Wives and families were expected to pay for medical treatment, but were often unable to do so. It was well-known that more than half of the work done by the Lipetz brothers went unpaid.

There is an account of the conditions the two brothers worked in. There was overcrowding with six or more in one room, with possibly one lavatory serving several families. Tenements in Arthur Street, Prospect Place and other parts of the Pleasance had leaking roofs and broken windows, and were infested with rats.

More detail of the conditions in the area covered by the practice is given in the joint paper 'Gastro-intestinal ulceration and non-ulcerative dyspepsia in an urban general practice' contributed to BMJ in 1955. It describes the partnership at the date of publication. The writers had worked in the Pleasance for almost thirty years. Conditions were fairly stable. At the beginning of the enquiry in August 1953, they had 5,331 patients, almost equal number of males and females from analysis of National Health cards. There was quite a high proportion of elderly and aged people, and a relatively small proportion of children.

For 30 years the Pleasance had been an outward rehousing area. Before World War I it was the most densely populated area in the city, and it contained a great many condemned houses. Although a large portion of the area had been rebuilt, there was still overcrowding at the date of the paper.

The population was mainly working-class, and most of the men and many of the women were in industry, including rubber and printing works, engineering

workshops, chemical works and breweries. Other men worked on the railways and on municipal transport, which at that time would still have been the trams. Many, particularly among the women, were in shops and offices. There were some professional people, and all the patients were in the National Health Service.

The contributor of the obituary says that Julie was a founder member of the Clinical Club of Edinburgh. He was recognised for his selflessness in expressing opinions and for his humour. He was a lecturer in General Practice at Edinburgh University and made his mark as a family doctor.

Julius joined the Socialist Medical Association, and David Daiches says that he was more doctrinaire than Sam in his opinions. He had a connection with the Communist

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Party, but it is not clear whether he was ever actually a member.

A picture of life at 43 Esslemont Road can be built up from reminiscences, and there are close similarities with 13 Mansionhouse Road. Although Julie had no religious beliefs, he still sent the children to the synagogue for Hebrew lessons, and it is also said of him that when on holiday, particularly in the Highlands, the family always attended the local church. He said that by this practice 'you see the people as they really are'. There is nothing particularly strange about this today, but in the 1930s it probably still seemed very strange, and possibly against Socialist scruples for a non-believer to be seen at any kind of religious ceremony. Marjorie Lipetz is

remembered as having an interest in music. She kept up the tradition of hospitality, and during the Second World War the house was known as a haven for Jewish refugees, and Marjorie was kept busy providing Jewish and non-Jewish food for Julie's numerous guests. Annie Rachel Yoffe kept up her own house until Sam and Vanda were married in 1940, after which she spent part of each year with each of her sons. Informants say she was very proud of them, telling visitors that they were the best doctors in Edinburgh, something which fits in with the other information.

This piece of research has shown an unusual element in Scottish genealogy, since Jewish settlement is late and restricted to the main cities, and also gives details of the

continued importance of the medical tradition in Edinburgh well into the 20th century.

The Edinburgh Star is grateful to Mr Ivor Guild of the Scottish Genealogy Society for permission to publish the above excerpt from a larger article on the Lipetzes printed in one of their publications.

With Compliments
from
Jess Franklin
205 STENHOUSE STREET
COWDENBEATH, FIFE, KY4 9DL

EDITH RIFKIND ON LIFE WITH MALCOLM

On April 28 1994, Mrs Malcolm Rifkind spoke at the annual fundraising lunch of the Glasgow Ladies Joint Israel Appeal Committee. This is the text of her speech.

There is immense curiosity about people in public life and I hope that by telling you something of my time as a politician's wife, I can inform a little and dispel some of the myths.

Described carelessly, my life may sound like one long party. Three or four dinners some weeks with Malcolm, trips to London three weeks out of five and many travels abroad.

On the other hand, it may sound like nothing other than hard work, or duties.

Those of us who are in public life by association rather than by choice are very vulnerable in many ways. We are also very privileged. At all times we should remember that the important aspect of life is not who we are but what we represent. Paradoxically, we should also be acutely aware of who we are and where we have come from.

I am often aware of my Jewish identity and to an extent it colours all that I do.



Edith Rifkind

Reproduced by permission of the Jewish Telegraph

After almost twenty four years of marriage I am so steeped in political life that it is hard to explain it clearly. We have both grown with the experiences so that something we take in our stride, may seem alarming to persons less exposed to the vagaries of public life. There have been a number of phases.

I spent the first three weeks of my married life fighting a General Election campaign. I half jokingly say that I thought that Politics was like the measles. One attack

conferring life long immunity. I was wrong. Politics is an incurable disease and one has to come to terms with it. We recently celebrated Malcolm's twentieth Anniversary in Parliament.

After three years on the old Edinburgh Town Council, my husband was elected to Parliament. I was just pregnant and his first five backbench years from 1974 to 1979 are associated with having babies and looking after tiny children.

The initial ministerial job in the Scottish Office in 1979 coincided with the children going to school and my first medical research job, to help with school fees.

By the time Malcolm went to the Foreign Office both children were well established at school, and I at work. I had a wonderful boss, and a flexible childminder so I was able to travel with Malcolm a couple of times a year. In all, we visited 15 countries together. The usual trip consisted of a couple of days in each of two or three countries which usually encompassed three or four climates. Packing was a nightmare, and after one delayed journey found me at a cocktail party straight

from the airport in my travel stained denims, I take now take at least one change in my already overloaded hand luggage.

From a Jewish point of view the most important thing that happened to me was our first trip to Poland in 1985. Martial Law was in force, Solidarity was banned and economic and social conditions were very stark. You may recall the political murder of a Catholic priest. We arrived on the day of his funeral into a very emotional atmosphere and mingled with the crowds outside the church where he is buried.

Malcolm, as the first British Foreign Office Minister to visit Poland for a long time, insisted on meeting Solidarity. This is remembered and greatly appreciated to this day. After he became Defence Minister he met his Polish counterpart who recalled going in to the British Embassy in Warsaw by the back door in 1985. Also, Lech Walensa referred to this meeting four years later when we visited Gdansk.

Both my parents were born in Poland and one of my first cousins on my mother's side lives there now. She, her sister and mother were hidden in the country by a Polish family during the war. She is married to a Pole and so is her daughter. Warsaw is a city where one third of the pre-war population was Jewish. My cousin's daughter, now aged 28, knew one other child in her class who was half Jewish.

We were acutely aware of this tragic history. However, as guests of the Polish Government, we decided that if we were to relate to our hosts, we would have to put our Jewish identity on one side. We decided not to visit the Ghetto or Auschwitz but to keep that for another occasion. At a reception given by the British Ambassador I met a Polish Catholic writer, working for reconciliation between Poles and Jews, who was horrified by this. Despite my initial protests, he persuaded me that on our last morning I should go with him to the

Ghetto. We visited the site of the bunker at Mila 18 and went to the Jewish cemetery where my father's parents and brother lie in the then neglected mass grave.

Now, in freer times, this awful shrine has been marked more appropriately. A year ago my cousins' mother died and she was able to be buried in the Jewish Cemetery. According to my daughter who visited Warsaw last summer, the names of her relatives who perished, and for whom there is no memorial, are inscribed on her tombstone.

I was also able to find the house in Krakow where my father grew up and behind which my grandfather had a furniture factory. An old woman leaning out of the tenement told me, through an interpreter, that she could remember the family and "the old people", my grandparents, being taken away by the Nazis.

We all live in precarious times. The Poles of Jewish descent and others less fortunate than ourselves, even more so. The reason I agreed to speak to the JIA is to remember the dangers all Israel faces.

On a lighter note, back to the family narrative!

In 1986 Malcolm became Secretary of State for Scotland and was consequently much more Edinburgh based. This was very good for us as a family and coincided with the early teenage years of our children and their respective Bat and Bar Mitzvahs.

At the end of this time I started to do Malcolm's secretarial work and still keep this up. An account of this would fill a talk in itself! An MP's secretary acts as a clearing house for problems. A travel agent if her Member is not a Minister. A producer of Press releases, a Tour Guide for constituents visiting the House of Commons and a procurer of tickets for the Strangers' Gallery. I could go on and on!!

My husband's 15 months at Transport were followed by his appointment as Secretary of State for Defence. This is definitely the

most interesting and challenging job he has done to date. It is also one that gives me further opportunity to travel with him.

A narrative of other people's travels is always of dubious interest. Briefly, we have been to Hong Kong together. As well as short trips to Norway, Gibraltar, Paris, Amsterdam and the Falklands, at Easter weekend this year we went to Nepal to see the Gurkhas. In May we flew to Bermuda for a weekend, where Malcolm was speaking at an inter-Parliamentary conference and visited a naval base.

In June, while he was preparing for the D-Day commemorations, to which few spouses were invited, I was at the Commissioning of one of Her Majesty's Frigates that I launched last year. The Jewish Chaplain to the Armed Forces, Malcolm Weisman, who is a Rifkind cousin, was present.

Also planned for this year is a trip to Greenland with the Danish Defence Minister and, most excitingly, one to Israel. Malcolm has been asked to deliver the Balfour Memorial Lecture. Another weekend trip from a Thursday after Cabinet until Monday morning, but one with added poignancy.

It will be another significant event in a very highly privileged life.

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'SCOTLAND'S BEEN NO BAD TO ME'*

by Max Mendick

I was born in 1897 in Lithuania, Russia, in a small village called Komai. I'll give you an idea o' the size o' it if you like: when a peasant with a horse and cart came into the village, by the time the cart was in the village the horse's head was oot the other end! There were several streets, with a market place in the centre and a church at one end with a clock which very seldom worked. There were two kinds o' Jews, a wee bit different from each other. There were more o' us. They lived on the other side o' the village. We had one synagogue and they had another.

We had quite a big piece o' land for ourselves, about the most land that anyone had in the village, and we had a kind o' double house and a big stable. My mother grew cucumbers on the land. The Lithuanian government had no money to pay for imports so they made a law: if you had a piece o' land you had to grow something on it or it would be taken away from you. That's why she used to grow cucumbers. See, my brother had a pony and cart. He'd load it up with cucumbers and take it to a bigger town about 17 kilometres away. There was a market there every Monday. When people asked him, 'What did you get for your cucumbers?' he replied, 'If I'd had to hire a horse and cart I would have been out o' pocket'. Everybody was poor. There were only a few big towns that had banks. At that time, young children, they died, a lot o' them. You see, there was no doctor. I mean, if a woman had to have a caesarian birth she'd die. Same with illness: they'd just lie on their bed and there'd be nothing much they could do about it whether Jew or Gentile.

I went to the Hebrew school until I was 13 years o' age. Then I would have gone to a higher class but my mother had no money to pay for it, so I came oot. I helped my mother to start with. She was a sort o' hawker. She went round the



Max Mendick

villages, to the peasants and the landowners, and she had a wee basket with needles and thread and a whole lot o' other things, all sorts, you know. She would sell them all about and they would pay her with tatties and corn and wheat and stuff like that. When I reached 14 years o' age, I went oot on my own. I used to go to a village and buy six dozen eggs or so from the women there, and skins from their husbands, from sheep and other animals, and bring them back in a big box. I would sell them to a wholesaler and he would gather up more skins and then take them to Riga, the nearest big town, to sell. Mind you, under the Tsar's law a Jew wasnae allowed to sell on the market in Riga. He would engage someone to sell for him and he would stand on the corner lookin' on.

There were, within a few miles, dozens o' villages close to one another with landowners and peasants. We got on well with the peasants and had no bother from them at all. But you see, Russia is a rural country. Even now, with 270 million people, only 70 million live in the big cities like Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Odessa. When I was there most o' the people were just small peasants. It's not like here where a farmer's got 1,000 acres. The biggest town in Lithuania was

Kaunas, the capital. It had a population o' 90,000. In our village we got on very well with the Catholics. You see, the small villages had no problem with the Catholics. We'd had business with them, trade with them. Jewish boys and Catholic girls would speak together in my day, but before that the Jewish life and the Catholic life had been altogether separate. Very seldom would you get a Jewish boy marrying a Catholic girl or a Catholic boy marrying a Jewish girl. It maybe happened once in a hundred years.

Standin' in the village was a church, and on Sunday they used to go to church and then they used to come out and get drunk - nearly every house sold vodka. It was like a public house; you'd buy half a bottle o' vodka, sit down with your drink an' the proprietor gave you bread and herring. A Jew wasnae allowed to sell alcohol, but there was a police sergeant in our village and we used to give him a rouble or two now and again so he kept quiet. We used to have markets several times a year. People came from great distances, buyin' and sellin'. And there was one Catholic, he lived in the very centre o' the market place, and he started sellin' vodka. Bein' a Catholic, he got a licence and he wasnae frightened; but people didnae go to him. I asked one o' the customers, 'How is it that when one o' your own kind has a pub and you can sit and drink there and nobody worries about it, you choose to go to the unlicensed Jewish house?' 'Aye', he said, 'If I get drunk in his pub he'll turn me out on to the street. If I get drunk in your house and the bottle's empty and I throw it through your window, you don't say anythin', do you? That's the difference!'

Now and again we found a Jew on the road, killed. I remember one Jew, travellin' to the next town with somethin' to sell, was killed. All that he had was three roubles on him

and that was stolen. The police came and made enquiries but they said, 'We cannae find anybody'. That happened now and again, but it was nothing to worry about, really. But in the big towns, Odessa, Kiev, and in the Ukraine, they were tremendously anti-Jewish and it was very bad. But who created these pogroms? There were so many millions o' peasants and beggars who had no homes, no work, no nothin'. They'd gather in crowds and come into a town. If anyone touched anyone, one o' their own, they would kill Jews and burn their houses and rob whatever they could. It would maybe go on for several days and then the Tsar or police would send in the Cossacks to stop it. The rich Jews would help the poor to build up their lives again. When I lived there, most o' the pogroms had been stopped because the Tsar was always borrowin' money from Britain and America and they started complainin' about such pogroms.

My father had served in the Tsar's army before he got married. Then, in 1903, there were rumours about a war with Japan and he was called up for manoeuvres. If a man joined the army and went to war, his wife an' kids could starve as far as the authorities were concerned. They didnae pay you anythin' at all, no like here, apart from a few coppers to buy cigarettes. That was the Tsar's rule. My father wanted to get away from the rumours o' war and try to do better for himself. There was no future in Lithuania. So he decided to leave and come to Britain - not because o' anti-Semitism, but because he couldnae make a livin' there. There were plenty o' Jews in Russia who were rich under the Tsar. They didnae come here, but the poor came. And thousands and thousands o' peasants went to America. Some became miners and then went back home and bought farms. So anyway, my father had a brother in Leeds, who'd come here before him. He arrived in Leeds and they had a quarrel. They couldnae agree so my father came to Edinburgh. He

hadnae seen any opportunities in Leeds and he'd heard that there were a lot o' folk from our village in Edinburgh. My father was one o' the Jews who didnae make a great success here. He sold cheap jewellery to the farmers. He had this jewellery box, and he used to gather up most o' his jewels in a lodging-house in Galashiels, and he'd travel to farms and sell watches to farmers. Most Jews did that kind o' thing, some would sell jewellery, some would sell slippers, some would sell drapery, some would sell pictures. He didnae do very well anyway.

Some Jews came here and didnae like it. I remember when I was a kid, an old Jew, who'd been to Edinburgh, came to our house and told my mother not to go there, and to get my father to come back to Lithuania. 'In Edinburgh', he said, 'you've got to wash stairs! If you don't send your kids to school, the police will come and take them away from you!' He was absolutely appalled [laughs]. Anyway, my father used to send letters tellin' us to come here. But there couldnae have been a great deal o' love between my mother and my father. You see, he didnae have to send money to bring us here, because we had property there which could have been sold to get us here and a great deal more. But she didnae, my mother never left, and eventually in 1913 I and my older sister decided to come here. We had to report that it was OK here and then she'd come too with my younger brother and sister. We wrote and told them to come but then as soon as she sold oot and started plannin', war broke out in 1914. During the First World War the village was burnt down along with our house.(1) I remember in my little lifetime there I saw fires twice. If the wind was blowin' and the fire started in the middle, it would burn half the village down. If it started at the end o' the village and the wind was blowing' towards the town, it would burn the whole lot down, you see. There was no fire brigade or anythin' like that. It was awful, we just used to look on and watch it

burnin'.

When I came to Edinburgh I found a lot o' Jews - from Russia, Lithuania, Latvia, Hungary, Bulgaria. They had a big community then - more than double what it is now. They're all dead now, o' course, except one, Berger, the fruiterer. He used to be a pal o' mine when we were young and he's about a year an' a half older than me. His family was over here before I arrived.

I learnt English. When I made mistakes people corrected me. I could have gone to night-school but I started goin' about with the girls. But I learnt to read. I used to go to the silent pictures and I learnt to read the writin' on the screen. The only thing is, I cannae write. I wouldnae be able to read your handwritin' but I can read print.

Compared with Lithuania it was good here, and I liked everythin'. In fact, when I went out into the street and I saw a policeman and he didnae bother me I couldnae believe it. Then I used to go dancin' and we used to be oot until two o'clock in the mornin' on Saturday night and we needn't go to work on Sunday. Yes, I thought this was a great place. I could never have imagined anythin' better than this.

My sister became a tailoress workin' for another Jewish woman who kept a tailor's shop. She took me to Weinstock Cabinet Makers in Balcarres Street where I got a job as apprentice cabinet-maker for 18 months. Somebody told me there was a cabinet-maker who'd started a small workshop in Rankeillor Street. I was 18 years o' age and I went to this man. He asked me what I earned. I was earnin' ten shillin's a week at Weinstock's but I said 15 shillin's. War had broken oot and workers were scarce so he gave me the job for 15 shillin's a week. We used to start at six in the mornin' and finish at six in the evenin'.

In 1916, Britain had a contract with the Tsar that all the people that had come to Great Britain should go back to Russia to join the army. And if they didnae want to they had to join the army here. I was called up

in 1916. They had a registration officer in the police station in the High Street. 'Do you want to go and fight for your country?' I said, 'No'. They didnae even know that the Jews hated Russia. We werenae even Russian citizens in a way, we were second-class citizens. Under the Tsar we werenae allowed more than an acre o' land or to move into big towns. We had to stay in the village we were born in - that was our life. The only thing they did was to take us into the army. The officer said, 'Well do you want to join here?' I said, 'To tell you the truth I dinnae want to fight for any country, but if I have to fight I'll fight for Britain'. As it happened, they found me medically unfit for military service due to my eyesight.

In 1919 my father took a shock [stroke] and he died. He hadnae made much o' anythin'. I didnae hear anythin' from my mother from 1914 to 1919 and then I got the letter that told me the village had burned down. They had no money. As my mother had two younger kids, I had to support them, I had to send money to build another house. Well, I wasnae well off at that time, I had just started myself. I sent £50. Now £50 was five thousand roubles, a lot o' money at the time. You could buy ten times the amount o' goods as here for the same money. They built a small house. My brother wasnae workin', he was still young, and I started sendin' a pound or two oot every month. You see, I kept 'em goin'. And after the Revolution, when Britain an' America divided Russia, Riga was in Latvia and there was a frontier between Lithuania and Latvia, and our merchants couldnae sell goods in Riga. Nobody had any money, just an acre o' land. The Jews were especially poor because they had nowhere to sell.

After workin' in Rankeillor Street, I left and worked for a Pole in East Crosscauseway. I worked there for quite a few years as a cabinet maker, but when he retired I couldnae get a job. I bought some wood and made six wardrobes and I took them to Howie's, a big shop in Cockburn

Street, and they accepted them. In 1928 I got a big workshop o' my own and became established. My eldest lad is from my first wife, she died after the Second World War. At first, the older boys used to follow me to the synagogue but later on, when I bought a shop in the High Street, I couldnae go. I've done pretty well. Scotland's been no bad to me. In the 70 years I've lived here, I cannae say anybody's said, 'Bloody Jew!' to me. I've made a lot o' good friends. Even now, I go down to the Meadows and I say 'Good Day' to a lot o' people and we talk.

I miss the peasants in Lithuania even though I was only young when I left. I remember in the beginning o' winter I went to a village and a peasant sold me a sable skin. I gave him two roubles for it and I went to a market we had every Wednesday. My mother told me to ask for four roubles for it. 'Laddie, what do you want for that skin?' 'Four roubles'. 'I'll give you three. You won't get any more, I know the right price!' So I sold it to him. I liked that sort o' thing, the bartering. And you know, I'll tell you somethin'. It doesnae matter to me now, but it's a funny thing: if Lithuania had become a free state, possible to live in, in freedom, I would have gone back. I still say that most o' the Russian people, Jewish and non-Jewish, would have gone back to Russia an' been part o' the Revolution - in fact, many did go back. They left because they wanted to better themselves and they went back because they thought that a Revolution was goin' to mean freedom for everybody, plenty for everybody. But when they started complainin', Stalin killed them off. There's no one to go back to.

When I returned to Lithuania in 1934 there was no big change. My village was still basically Jewish, although there was only one synagogue left, which had been burned down and rebuilt. My mother was still alive and I met one o' the peasants who'd got a big

farm. He spoke to me in English. He'd been a miner in America for a few years and he'd made \$3,000 which could buy a big estate in Lithuania. But when I went there in 1934, I said to my old pals, 'What the hell are you doin' here?' I said, 'England doesnae let you in, America doesnae let you in, but you can go to Africa. Pack up everythin' you've got and get to Africa!' I told my family and everybody there, 'You're between two fires: Germany on the one side and Russia on the other. There's goin' to be trouble. Get oot o' here if you can. Burn the bloody village!' 'God will help us' - that was their answer. But they could never dream - I mean who would dream? ... Would you think that soldiers would come in from another country, take oot a crowd o' people, make them dig their own graves, put them in a row and shoot them down - men, women and children?(2)

When I enquired to the Red Cross and the Jewish organisations, they told me, 'Your people were shot. They didnae live long enough to be in a concentration camp'.

NOTES

1. During and shortly after the First World War, the Red, Polish and German armies vied for control of Lithuania. In 1918, however, Lithuania achieved independence. This lasted until the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 28 September 1939, when Lithuania fell under Russian control.

2. During the Second World War, Lithuanians received brutal treatment at the hands of the Nazis. A total of 473,000 Lithuanians lost their lives, including 136,000 Lithuanian Jews who were killed in concentration camps.

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DAVID GOLDBERG : A PROFILE

by Ian Shein

Exactly 55 years ago, a young German boy of 16 came to Britain on one of the last Kindertransport operations organised by the Jewish Agency, set up to convey children to this country as refugees from Nazi Germany. David Goldberg was born in Kiel and lived there with his parents and two brothers, a third brother already having escaped to Britain. They were there during the rise of Hitler and Nazism and witnessed amongst other atrocities the horror of Kristallnacht in November 1938 when Jewish shops, homes and Synagogues were destroyed in a night of Nazi terror which swept the whole country. The family decided then to leave Germany and travelled to Belgium early in 1939. David was put on a ship for Britain in August 1939, a few weeks before the outbreak of war. He joined his brother and stayed with him in a hostel in Leeds, securing employment as an apprentice tailor's presser. In 1940, he moved to London and for the following two years worked as a waiter in one of the world-famous Lyons Corner House restaurants in Tottenham Court Road. During 1940, the Germany Army invaded Belgium. David's father and brother

were arrested and taken to a concentration camp near Vichy in France. His mother and other brother escaped by being hidden by a local Belgian gendarme. A happy ending saw the reunification of the family after the war.

At the age of 18, David volunteered for the army and was placed in the Pioneer Corps, the 'pick and shovel brigade' as he vividly recalled it. He initially was stationed in Liverpool before being posted to Glencorse Barracks near Penicuik. Whenever possible, he came into Edinburgh to attend forces' dances held in Lodge Solomon Masonic rooms in Duncan Street, which for a time served as a community centre for the Edinburgh Jewish community. The dances were organised by a committee headed by a local showbiz personality, Sam Freeman, well-known for promoting carnival and sporting events in Waverley Market. During Passover in 1943, David was invited to a Seder in the home of Percy and Minnie Myerthall. There he met their daughter Ray who was serving in the ATS. After a very brief courtship, and a romance which was to last for 49 years, the young couple, both

aged 19, married. The ceremony on Lag Ba'omer in 1943 was solemnised by Rabbi Dr Salis Daiches in the Edinburgh Synagogue.

In 1944, on D-Day plus 3, David's company was shipped to the Normandy beaches at Arromanches. There one of the troops' duties was to collect boulders for the building of roads for the supply of equipment for the invading Allied armies. On one occasion, David's squad was confronted by a group of angry nuns who shouted at the men. As David remembered "we were collecting large stones from a mass of rubble. How were we to know that the rubble had been a convent?"

During one such operation, David felt an agonising pain in his back completely immobilising him. Not as traumatic as a German bullet but just as painful, a slipped disc saw his hospitalisation for several months. Shipped back to England, he was confronted by a fleet of ambulances scheduled for several destinations. By pure luck, he was directed to one which was heading for Edinburgh. He thus found himself in Leith Hospital where, the upper part of his body being encased firmly in a plaster jacket, his first words to a nurse were "who nailed me down on to the bed?" The bemused nurse happened to be a local Jewish girl, Mira Lucas.

On recovery some months later, David returned to his unit. In 1945 he heard that Jewish soldiers of the Palestinian Regiment were stationed in Bolton. He volunteered to act as interpreter, believing amongst other things that his proficient Yiddish would serve as a bridge for better understanding amongst one section of the Allies. He was accepted, immediately made up to sergeant, and duly arrived at the Jewish camp. One of the quickest demotions on record took place when it transpired that the soldiers spoke not Yiddish but Hebrew, a foreign language to David. Unable



David and Ray Goldberg.

to interpret, Sergeant Goldberg left the camp and his stripes behind and Private Goldberg returned to his base where he became a telephone operator - in English. However his knowledge of German won him a posting to the Nuremberg Trials which had been set up to try Nazi War Criminals. He sat at a table near to the Chief Prosector, Sir Hartley Shawcross, his main duty to translate documents into English. Nazi leaders, including Goering, Hess and Speer, sat in the dock nearby.

David was latterly posted to York as a Corporal where he worked in the stores 'downkitting' army personnel who were due for demobilisation. There he met another Edinburgh-bound worthy, Claude Wayne. Before he himself was due for discharge, he was offered the opportunity of attending

an Officers' Training Unit for two years with the prospect of receiving a commission in the army. He apparently did not make the obvious reply about the kind of commission he wished, but instead advised the interviewing officer that "I served for four years and was bossed about. I will never be bossed about again".

True to his word, he returned to Ray in Edinburgh and used his army gratuity to set up a cleaning/valet service around the back of the old Empire Theatre on the South Side of the city, recently reopened as Edinburgh's impressive new Festival Theatre. He called at the old theatre, one of the most popular venues in the city, and cleaned and pressed clothes for many top stars including Judy Garland, Laurel and Hardy and Frankie Vaughan. Today David,

who holds office as Senior Warden of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation still has his shop near the theatre which he runs with the help of his son Philip. Another son Jackie lives in Chicago with his wife and four children where he is a Professor at Chicago University and has his own personal chair in Microbiology. The daughter of the family, Hazel, resides in Glasgow with her husband and has three children. Sadly Ray died two years ago after a long illness bravely borne and nursed so lovingly by David. She would still have been proud of him. His shop in Hill Place is well worth a visit not only for expert valet service, but for a warm, cheerful welcome and, should you have the time, a fascinating and colourful reminiscence of days gone by.

David Kaplan's Top Position



David Kaplan.

David Kaplan (23) has been elected chairman of the Union of Jewish Students, (UJS) the national representative body of Jewish student societies of Great Britain and Ireland. This is a one-year full time post involving the management of a team of 9 full time office workers, a national executive and a membership of over 6000. He is the first Scot to be elected to this post which he won after a keenly fought election campaign.

This important position involves

working closely not only with student organisations at a national and international level but also with the main communal institutions such as the Office of the Chief Rabbi, the JIA, the Board of Deputies (where he automatically becomes a Deputy) and of course the Hillel Foundation. David comes to this position with ample experience under his belt having sat on the national executive of UJS for two years as Northern Region Chair. In Edinburgh he ran both Maccabi and Jewish Youth Study Groups before he began his studies in Glasgow. He was educated at the Edinburgh Academy, took an M.A at Glasgow University and is now completing a law degree.

He is a keen cricketer, having played for both Edinburgh Maccabi and Glasgow Maccabi and last year he was voted Glasgow Maccabi Cricketer of the Year.

He is the son of Myrna and Morris Kaplan. Grandson of Sonny and Esther Levine and grandson of Esther Kaplan (nee Rifkind). We wish him every success in his new job.

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Mrs Tatyana Zhakovskaya, the Theatre Critic, was instrumental in bringing the Russian artist Eduard Bersudsky to Scotland. Being aware of her Jewish roots, Mrs Zhakovskaya contacted Rabbi Shapira and asked if he would instruct her son on the fundamentals of the Jewish Religion. As the months passed by the Russian Jewish Theatre Critic and her 13-year old son became regular visitors at the Shapira's flat, experiencing first-hand the warm hospitality of Rachel and Shalom. Tatayana mesmerised the Shapiras with her tales of life in Russia and her eventual escape with Eduard Bersudsky and her son.

Influenced by Rabbi Shapira's teaching, Mrs Zhakovskaya's son has now settled in Israel, where he is joined by his maternal grandmother and sister, who have both made Aliyah from Russia.

A LOOK AT EDUARD BERSUDSKY

by S R Spark

I was asked, as a painter, to write an article for the 'Star' about the artist Eduard Bersudsky, one year my junior, but already a noted performer/artist. I say 'performer/artist' because, having seen his work at second-hand through an excellent video, it seems to me that his images are theatrically inspired. These objects have mechanical movement and are transported around the stage by hidden helpers, accompanied by music and sounds relating to these mobiles.

Catherine Phillips in her informative article 'An Extraordinary Theatre in St Petersburg' about these mechanical mobiles implies Bersudsky's indebtedness to the metamechanical figures of Jean Tinguely and the fantastic frightening world of Hieronymus Bosch, with all their symbolic overtones.

Bersudsky was born in Leningrad and, initially largely self-taught, he created his wooden carvings in the mid-1960s. These large sculptures were commissions for parks and gardens. Perhaps he would have done well to have exploited and progressed in this skill as his carvings have merit. But he seems to have been destined for other things. In 1968 he produced the first of his kinetic three-dimensional objects. This development continued and by the 1980s a dozen performing wooden kinetic works had been produced. From this time on he has set the style and path for himself not so much as a sculptor but rather as a creator of mechanical theatrical performances.

Indeed this is what happened in St Petersburg where his works were seen by the public at the Sharmanka or Barrel Organ Theatre in 1990. Catherine Phillips notes that here his creations consisted entirely of kinetic objects - hybrid mechanical figures made out of metal scraps and carved wood. They are frightening in appearance and recall images out of the fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm.

The video includes the six-foot-high Tower of Babel. It is appositely confusing and disjointed with its conglomeration of wheels and pistons. The wooden carcass is also decorated or carved with brightly-coloured, activated, diminutive humanoids. Another piece, the

Orchestra, depicts a skiffle band in which the instruments become at once the performers and the performing objects under the direction of the conductor's 'wand'.

I much prefer the Organ Grinder, or Sharmanshchik, despite its plagiaristic connotations of times gone by. It is strong in visual impact, less cluttered and easier to come to terms with psychologically. The whole piece is on a base which is manoeuvred about the stage to startle and frighten the audience with its ghastly shadow on the back-drop.

When I look at other pieces such as the Hunchback, the Bell-ringers, the Head and the Clock, I would not be surprised to be told that they had



Eduard Bersudsky

been carved in the eighteenth, or even seventeenth century. And that is unfortunate. Highly skilled in execution, they suggest the styles of other artists. I would have wished for a greater degree of originality.

By contrast, *The Great Idea*, *An Autumn Walk in the Era of Perestroika* and *Nickodym* seem, in their shapes, a tribute to Joan Miro and to certain surreal tendencies of Francis Picabia. I have in mind Picabia's 'mechanical' painting 'Girl without a Mother' and Miro's 'Maternity', both of which may be seen in the Gallery of Modern Art in Edinburgh.

But on the whole I do not see, as Ms Phillips so categorically states, "intellectually profound works". What is evident is that not only are they mechanically intricate but, especially *The Time of Rats* and *An Autumn Walk in the Era of Perestroika*, they also have strong political overtones.

So what of the man himself who now resides in Scotland, near Galashiels? A checkered career in Russia included work in a mine, military service, some temporary jobs and a possibly telling experience as a student sculptor under Boris Vorobyov.

A milestone in his life was his meeting with the theatre critic Tatyana Zhakovskaya in the late 1980s. When I talked with her recently at the Shapira's flat, I could see why. A likeable and attractive earth-mother figure, supportive and capable of getting things done, she is an artist's dream of a soul-mate. She seems from all accounts to have been responsible for bringing Bersudsky before the public, both in Russia and here.

To mark his rising prominence, Glasgow Galleries and Museums hold three pieces of Bersudsky's work. They were chosen, I am advised, by their director, Julian

Spalding. The three pieces are: *Great Idea* (Karl Marx); *Kremlin Dream*; and *An Autumn Walk in the Era of Perestroika*.

To conclude, although these works show mechanical ingenuity and sometimes outstanding skill in carving, and although they are more than merely a tribute to the famous kinetic art of Tinguely and the paintings of Bosch, nevertheless, in my opinion, eclecticism flirts very closely with plagiarism here.

However, this work should go down well with the vast majority of the museum-visiting public - young and old. Whereas a static picture or sculpture may merit only a perfunctory viewing, these Bersudsky pieces will mesmerise. I suspect that, long after many of the works of contemporary artists in other fields have been consigned to damp cellars or bonfires, the kinetic art of 'The Master' will continue to give delight.

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Jewish Motifs in the Music of Dmitri Shostakovich

Talk to the Jewish Literary Society of Edinburgh, February 6th 1994.

by Esti Sheinberg

In 1943 Shostakovich wrote his Trio op.67 for piano violin and cello. Music commentators had noted that the last movement of this piece sounds "Jewish", while others mentioned the presence of "Jewish motifs" not only in this specific piece, but also in a considerable part of Shostakovich's general musical output.¹) On what grounds were these remarks made? "Jewish" musical characteristics could be recognised on the basis of a former familiarity with Jewish music: having heard Jewish music, we have built in our mind, consciously or unconsciously, a certain "storage" of musical signs that function as our identifiers of a "Jewish Musical Style".

What are these signs that serve as indices to "Jewish music" for us?²) A comparison of the mentioned Trio's 4th movement, that allegedly owns musical "Jewish" characteristics, with some authentic recordings of traditional Jewish music could help to identify some genuine characteristics of Jewish music.³) The results of such comparisons point at musical signs for "Jewishness", embodied in four characteristic musical elements; when these are present in a musical piece we tend to perceive it as "Jewish Music".

The first of these characteristics are two "sound-inventories" ("modes") usually associated with Jewish Music.⁴) The second one is a rhythmic "Oom-pah, oom-pah" accompaniment pattern; the third - many repetitions of musical ideas, and the fourth is a descending series of repeated pairs of sounds, the second of which is stressed. Each of these characteristics is not exclusively Jewish: for instance, we find these modes in North African music. As well "oom-pah" accompaniments abound in various forms of folk music, and gestures of "Yambic primas" exist in Bulgarian



Esti Sheinberg

and South Russian music. However, when accumulated, these characteristics serve as "signs for Jewishness" even in non-Jewish musical contexts, thus functioning as characterising agents.

It is apparent that Shostakovich chose to use Jewish musical idiom in several of his works. Specifically, such is the case in his song cycle "From Jewish Folk Poetry", in his 13th Symphony, in his second trio, in two of his string quartets, in his first Violin Concerto and first Cello Concerto, and in some of his Preludes and Fugues for piano.

Shostakovich was not a Jew, but had close Jewish friends and students. He orchestrated and completed the opera "Rothschild's Violin", written by his favourite student Veniamin Fleischmann, who was killed in 1941. He had a long-term friendship with the Mikhoels family, especially with Natalia, the daughter of the famous actor Solomon Mikhoels who was murdered in 1948 on Stalin's orders, (the sad fate of many Jewish intellectuals in those years). The Mikhoels were also the first to witness the formation of Shostakovich's song cycle "From Jewish Folk Poetry". Natalia Mikhoels recalled Shostakovich asking her family about the right pronunciation of certain Yiddish words, taken from a book of Jewish Poetry he had bought.

During and after the 2nd World

War Shostakovich was especially concerned with the Jewish fate. The Nazi horrors, antisemitism, and especially the systematic persecutions of Jews by Germans and Russians alike, are a reiterating theme in his works. His "Bai Yar" Symphony is a musical setting of this poem, written by Yevgeni Yevtushenko. The music openly mourns the 1941 Nazi massacre of over 100,000 Jewish men, women and children in Babi Yar. Moreover, in a bold and straightforward declaration against antisemitism, it does not hesitate to blame the Russian people's own role in these massacres. The music itself, however, does not have much of a Jewish idiom, and the only apparent ethnic flavor in it resides in the allusion to a coarse Russian folk idiom (ironically accompanied by the characteristic "oom-pah"), in the description of the Pogrom.

Shostakovich's interest in Jews, and Jewish culture, his sympathy and even his identification with their lot, is understandable; he was persecuted as well. Since 1936, when a denouncing article was published on his opera "Lady Macbeth of the Mzensk District" until Stalin's death in 1953, Shostakovich's life was in constant danger. In 1948, the very same year "From Jewish Folk Poetry" was composed, he was forced to a public confession, characteristic to the "Zhdanovschina" period, regretting his "crimes" as a modern composer.

However, his humane empathy toward Jews still does not sufficiently explain the fact that Shostakovich, who often declared his dislike of musical folk idioms, chose to use Jewish folk musical idiom in about ten of his works, instrumental as well as vocal. It seems that his choice has more in it than a mere identification with a persecuted people, and is rather connected to the qualities of the

musico-semantic units of Jewish music. Musico-semantic units are those musical elements which bear semantic and emotional meanings within our culture, regardless of topicalities (such as ethnographic origins). How then, is this kind of music perceived? Is it sad, happy, excited or depressed? A dance or a lamentation? Is it related to the lighter, livelier, euphoric side of the human mind, or to the dark, gloomy and disphoric?

What human significance is communicated by Jewish music? Generally, folk music transmits mostly its purport as either "happy" or "sad", using communicative musico-semantic units such as fast or slow tempi, high or low pitches, and major or minor modalities, and clustering coinciding elements together: slow-tempo, low pitch and minor modality will usually appear together as signs of "disphoric" expressions while fast-tempo, high pitch and major modality will frequently appear as "euphoric". Jewish music, though, appears to have no such constants: high pitch, that normally signals high-spirited state of mind, may appear with minor modalities that signal "sadness" and an "oom-pah, oom-pah" dance-like accompaniment, as in Shostakovich's "Song of Poverty". On the face of it - it is definitely a happy, lighthearted dance. The melody is high pitched, light, hopping; but the mode is minor, a bit distorted, and it has the downward direction of a fall, imitating a sigh or a mourning gesture. The result is of an accumulation of contradictory musico-semantic units: descending, "Jewish" augmented intervals are combined with dancing accompaniment patterns and repetitious melodic patterns that characterise a simple folk tune. It imparts an inner contradiction.

However, the song has a text, too. The texts for "From Jewish Folk Poetry" were taken from a 1947 Russian translation of Yiddish songs.⁶ Shostakovich expressed in one of his letters his fascination with these texts and his intention to

set them into music. This was composed in 1948, although not published until 1955, two years after Stalin's death; during these intermediate years Soviet Jewry had been tormented more than ever. The songs were written for piano and singers; their orchestration waited until 1963. In 1964, 16 years after the work was written, it was first performed in public. These texts, may then help to resolve the ambiguity of the music, clarifying the song's emotional purport:

A Song of Poverty

*The roof sleeps over the garret
dreaming sweetly under its thatch.
In a cradle sleeps the baby
without swaddling, all bare.*

*Hop, hop, higher, higher!
The nanny-goat's nibbling the thatch.
Oy!*

*There's a cradle in the garret,
and a spider there spinning trouble.
He's sucking out all my joy,
leaving me just poverty.
Hop, hop, higher, higher...*

*There's a cockerel in the garret,
with a bright red comb.
Hey, wife, borrow for the children
a little crust of dry bread.
Hop, hop, higher, higher...*

The verbal message, then, is ambiguous too: "we are so poverty stricken, starving and freezing to death, that - (and here comes the natural Jewish solution) - we should dance and hop higher, higher..."

Defying death and misery by dancing is characteristic to Jewish culture. It appears in Jewish literature, Jewish poetry, Jewish jokes and the Jewish way of life. Laughter through tears is spiritual elevation achieved by mocking the miseries of life and the fear of death.

Jewish music owns these very characteristics. Its modes are those used in Western culture for the expression of sadness, emphasized by the descending melodic gesture. However, the musical accompaniment-pattern and the whole rhythmic motion suggest a lighthearted, hopping dance. These inner contradictions abide in almost all East European Jewish music.

It is this inherent ambiguity of Jewish music that appealed so much to Shostakovich who was, not only in his so-called "Jewish" works, a composer of ambiguities. Almost all his music is ambiguous: it is neither happy nor sad. While abundant in musical banalities, it is highly intellectual as well, communicating deep meanings alongside with apparently futile, obsessed musical repetitions. Jewish music was for Shostakovich a model for his own aesthetic ideals of how music should sound, as stated in his own words: "I think, if we speak of musical impressions, that Jewish folk music has made the most powerful impression on me. I never tire of delighting in it; it is multifaceted, it can appear to be happy while it is tragic. It is almost always laughter through tears. This quality of Jewish folk music is close to my idea of what music should be. There should always be two layers in music. Jews were tormented for so long that they learned to hide their despair. They express despair in dance music. (...) I can say that Jewish folk music is unique. (...) This is not a purely musical issue, this is also a moral issue."⁷

In 1944, after the death of his pupil Veniamin Fleischman and to the memory of his life-long friend Ivan Sollertinsky, he wrote his second string trio. The last movement, which bears distinct Jewish musical characteristics, is often regarded as "a Jewish macabre dance of death". What transforms this imitation of a klezmer's tune into a macabre dance of death?

Shostakovich uses Jewish music in a peculiar way, emphasizing and exaggerating certain characteristics in order to express and communicate his own personal message. The listener is not simply presented with "Jewish music", but is invited to witness the whole process of its becoming, its transformation into being "Jewish". The movement opens with a repetitive note, that has nothing especially Jewish in it. Then appears a pizzicato (plucked) motif, that could, though almost imperceptibly,

imply Jewishness. Gradually, the "Jewish" mode becomes obvious. At the repetition of the tune, an "oom-pah" accompaniment is added. A third repetition has shrieking violin glissandos, alluding to a "kleizmer's" style.

As it is loaded with "Jewish" characteristics, the music becomes louder, coarser and increasingly grotesque, until it resembles a dance of death. This effect is achieved by the accumulation of "Jewish" musical characteristics, their exaggeration and their juxtaposition with musico-semantic units that imply grotesquerie: loudness, extremely high pitches, sound deformations such as sul-ponticello or col legno,⁸ harsh bow-strokes and violent percussive effects. All these create a musical nightmarish

world of grotesque images, eventually trespassing the borders of grotesque to the realms of obsession, insanity and death. The date of this work's premier (1944) makes the message especially obvious: here the Jews dance their own Dance of Death.

Shostakovich apparently locates Jewish music somewhere on the semantic axis between the musical expressions of "sanity" and "insanity". Dancing while dying is not regarded as a "sane" behaviour; however, it is this behaviour that kept European Jewry spiritually alive.

Moreover, it seems that Shostakovich has found this "dance of death" Jewish attitude coherent with his own way of life. Persecuted by Stalin's terror regime, Shostakovich had submitted to a double life, which could be perceived as bordering on insanity. While people around him were starving, dying in labor camps, disappearing from their homes, sentenced to death under no apparent accusations, he, compelled to wear the required "mask of happiness" like all the other intellectuals and artists in the Soviet Union, had to compose "optimistic", simple, folk-like musical works. Shostakovich didn't empathise just with the Jewish fate of persecutions and suffering, but also with their solution to their ironic situation in which it seemed that the only reason for their existence was to endure endless persecutions. Jews learned to live, create and even excel under constant conditions of hatred, rejection and abuse. What fascinated Shostakovich, in Jewish music, is not just the sheer musical idiom. It is its ambiguity, the unresolvable contradictions, the tearful, mad, optimistic dance of death.

From this spiritual fraternity stemmed Shostakovich's sensitivity to the tragic consequences of physical annihilation as well as to the deeper tragedy inherent in the loss of spiritual identity, dangers that confront the Jewish people wherever they are. One of the

cycle's songs tells about Elie the innkeeper and Tzirele, his daughter, who leaves him and her people to go with her lover, a Russian Pristav (head of police). Condemning spiritual self annihilation, Shostakovich does not confine himself to a musical description of Tzirele's cruel rejection of her father, but adds a poignant ironic note to his music. When Tzirele says that she will go with no one but the gaspadiom pristavom "Mr policeman" - we hear a hint of a waltz tune, alluding perhaps to the glamorous dance halls that could well have fascinated a provincial Jewish girl. However, no real ambiguities and no grotesquerie perturb the general tragic feeling of this song.

The Deserted Father

Hey, old rag-and-bone man, put on your smock.

They say your daughter's run off with the policeman.

*Tzirele, my daughter!
Come back to your father,
I'll give you fine dresses for your wedding day.*

*Tzirele, daughter!
I'll buy you ear-rings and rings for your fingers.*

*Tzirele, daughter!
And a handsome young man I'll give you too.*

*Tzirele, daughter!
I don't need finery.
I don't need rings.
With no-one but my policeman will I go to be wed.*

(the following two lines appear in Russian in the Yiddish original text)
Mr. Policeman, if you please, be quick, hurry and chase away the old Yid.

*Tzirele, my daughter! Come back to me!
Come back to me, oh, come back to me,
come back... Tzirele...daughter!*

Shostakovich wrote the first eight songs of the cycle in August 1948, and only in October he added the last three, describing the happy Jew in the Soviet Koljoz. These additions could be an outcome of the political events of those two months: massive arrests and executions and his own denunciation by Zhdanov.

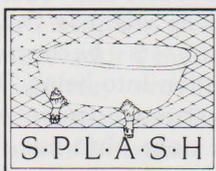
BATHTIME TALES NO 1



Nigel stags a bull

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

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However, the peculiar Jewish faculty of self irony and literary double meaning abolishes almost every possible trace of doubt as to their real meaning. In the Russian translations of the songs from Yiddish, some ironical and painful hints were planted by their Jewish translators, and Shostakovich added to that a bit of his own musical irony.

In a masterpiece of ambiguities Shostakovich describes the Jewish Happiness. In a loving, compassionate parody he satirises the Jews' naive, according to which life is now beautiful and secure, the stars are shining in the sky and the next generation is cared for and highly educated. "All our sons have become doctors", sings the Jewish cobbler's wife, sitting proudly in the theatre's stalls and contemplating her happy lot.

Happiness

*I boldly took my husband's arm,
though I am old, and old is my beau.
I took him to the theatre with me,
and we got two tickets for the stalls.
Till late at night I sat there with my
man,
all carried away with joyful dreams.
What blessings surround a Jewish
cobbler's wife!
Oy!*

*And what I want to tell the whole land
(Oy!)
about the joy and the light which is now
my lot: (Oy!)
Doctors, doctors are what our sons have
become, (Oy!)
a star shines over our heads (Oy!)*

The original Yiddish text of the last line says "the sun shines over our heads"; however, in the 1947's Russian translation the word "sun" was replaced by a "star", as a direct allusion to the Jewish star, "shining" on Jewish sleeves under the Nazi regime. Another change was apparently made by Shostakovich himself: while the original text declares that "our sons have become engineers", in the 1955 version these sons appear as "doctors". This is clear reference to the "Doctors' Plot": a murder slander on Jewish doctors that grew to the dimensions

of a catastrophe of massive denunciations, arrests and executions of more than 400 Jewish intellectuals.

These textual changes transform this song from a simple parody, disguised as a praise song for the Soviet Regime, into a bitter satire of self irony. Shostakovich used the musical style of a ceremonial procession. By the end of the song, after a beautiful setting of haunting harmonies on the so Jewish "oy" that is cleverly inserted between the woman's happy exclamations, the very last phrase sounds inane in its loud major chords and pompous atmosphere. This contrast only intensifies the ironical description of the Yiddishe Momme that at last, after so much suffering and deprivation she can sit happy and confident in the theatre stalls, while the Jewish star is shining on her head and all her sons have become doctors.

Notes:

- 1) The main sources of factual information for this article are Prof. Yoachim Braun's (from Bar-Ilan University) articles (1984,1986), as well as his edition of the Yiddish texts for Shostakovich's song cycle "From Jewish Folk Poetry" (1989).
- 2) "Jewish music" is here confined to the European culture of the 19th and early 20th centuries, as it is perceived by members of this culture.
- 3) The kleizmer's tune that was heard in the LIT talk was recorded by Prof. Uri Sharvit from Bar-Ilan University in 1991, during an orthodox Ashkenazi wedding in Jerusalem.
- 4) The word "mode" will serve here to designate a group of characteristic melodic formulas that make use of a limited pitch-inventory, as signalled above. The following analysis of the modes and their structure is mainly technical, and is not imperative for the understanding of the ideas presented in this article.
- 5) Dolzhansky, Alexander. 24 preludii i fugi D. Shostakovicha. pp.42,63.
- 6) Y. Dobrushin and A. Yuditzyk

(comp. and ed.) Yevreyskie narodniye pesni. 1947, Moscow.

- 7) Volkov, Solomon. Testimony. p.118.
- 8) Special sound effects generated by laying the string-instruments behind their wooden bridge, and playing the strings with the wooden part of the bow.

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Ecology and Judaism

by Avigal Sperber

The following article was based on Avigal's Batmitzvah project. She delivered it from the Aron Kodesh at the ceremony on Shabbat 11 June 1994, Parashat Korach in the Edinburgh Synagogue.

In Genesis Chapter 12 verse 5 we read as follows:

"when they arrived in the Land of Canaan, Avraham passed through the land as far as the site of Shechem, at the oak of Moreh."

So why did Avraham choose the oak of Moreh to camp beside?

The answer to this is that if Avraham had camped near the Canaanites' settlements his flocks would have destroyed the crops. By having his flocks graze by the oaks, he made sure that there was no damage done.

This is one of the earliest examples of conservation.

My batmitzvah project is about ecology in the Torah. The dictionary says that the word ecology means "the study of plants and animals in relation to their natural surroundings."

I found out that to the Children of Israel, nature played a very important part in their lives, and that is what I am going to show to you.

I am also going to show that if you live a good, proper, Jewish life, it really helps to conserve the earth's natural resources.

Genesis Chapter 2 verse 15 says that Adam was placed in the Garden of Eden "to till it and to care for it." This means that people must care for and cherish the world and everything in it, and we do not own it. We have a duty to look after G-d's world for our own species and for other forms of life.

The Garden of Eden gave us everything we need in life, because of the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge. This shows from the very beginning the close connection between the natural environment and the survival of the human race.

We are told in Devarim Chapter 20 verse 19 "When you are at war and lay siege to a city do not destroy its trees by taking the axe to them, for they provide you with food."

The Shulhan Arukh says "the spoiler of all objects from which humanity may benefit violates this negative commandment 'Bal Tashchit' - 'Do not destroy'."

Maimonides said "It is not only forbidden to destroy fruit-bearing trees, but whoever breaks vessels, tears clothes, demolishes a building, stops up a fountain, or wastes food in a destructive way, offends

against the law of 'Do not destroy'".

We are told by the rabbis that you should feed your cattle before yourself, and we are told not to cause distress to living creatures.

Nowadays, the ozone layer is being destroyed because we chop down trees, and pollute the air with cars and CFCs. We are just beginning to understand our crimes in destroying animals and habitats, such as the rain forests.

If we do not stop and look at the mess we have made, it could be too late. The earth's climate will change, and crops, animals and ourselves could perish. Keeping G-d's commandments will lead to fruitfulness:-

In Devarim Chapter 11, verses 13-17, we also read the following:

"If you hearken diligently to my commandments, then I will send rain for your land in its due season, and I will give grass in your field for your cattle. But if you turn aside and serve other g-ds, then the land will not yield her products and you will perish quickly from off the good land which the Lord giveth unto you."

In the time of the Torah, the Children of Israel were farmers. They knew that they needed sun and rain for their crops to grow, to keep the "land flowing with milk and honey".

During the seven weeks between Pesach and Shavuot, they brought offerings to G-d to the Temple, of grain, wine and oil. They brought those daily offerings so that G-d would bring rain and sun for those crops to grow well.

Many of our Hagim are linked to the seasons, and we still pray for rain, even when we live in rainy countries, carrying on the original prayers for rain in the Land of Israel.

In Vayikra Chapter 25, verses 2-4, we read the following:

G-d said "six years you shall sow



Avigal Sperber

your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in the fruit. But the seventh year shall be a Sabbath. You shall neither sow nor prune your vineyard".

Giving the land a rest from growing is good for the soil, and observing the law of Shemitta means that every seventh year it is forbidden to plant, plough or harvest. Only if a plant or tree is in danger of dying can it be tended.

Shemitta was allowed to lapse in the early days of the State of Israel, as it was a life and death need, but now more and more farmers and kibbutzim are returning to observing the cycle.

All those Jewish laws, aimed at maintaining the ecology of the land, were not observed for about 2000 years, when the Jewish people were exiled from their homeland and lived as minorities in the Diaspora.

More than one hundred years ago, when the modern Zionist movement began, many Jews who started to return to the Land of Israel found a land wasted and neglected, a wilderness. The most important thing to do was plant trees. Trees prevent the soil being washed away by the heavy rains. They act as windbreaks to allow other crops to grow, and they produce shade. They change

weather patterns, provide fruit, wood for paper, and last but not least, beautify the landscape.

In 1902, Keren Kayemet, the Jewish National Fund, was founded, and since then, have planted millions of trees all over Israel. They encourage us to celebrate Tu B'Shvat, a festival when it is a mitzvah for us to plant a tree. They encourage each Jewish home to have a blue and white JNF box, and the money donated is used to plant trees, clear swamps and buy fields, all geared to the Land.

Today the JNF box is back with a new logo "Working For A Greener Israel."

All our tradition is linked to trees and water. We start with the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, and go on right up to celebrating Tu B'Shvat, The New Year for Trees, when trees are planted in Israel and in Jewish communities all over the world.

Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakai said, "If someone is planting a tree and they are told the Messiah has arrived, they must finish planting their tree before running to greet the Messiah".

Because of the teachings of the Torah and the rabbis, trees, land and water play an important role in Jewish life. Modern Israel has laws concerning the cleanliness of air and

water.

Today's sidrah told us the story of Korach.

Korach rebelled against Moses and G-d, and because of doing this, he was punished by being swallowed up alive by the earth.

There is a midrash that tells us that there is a hole somewhere in the earth, where Korach and his men whirl past every 30 days. They can be heard shouting "Moses and his Torah are true". One day when the time is right, G-d will release them.

Through this midrash the rabbis are trying to tell us a very important ecological message, that just as G-d was protecting himself against Korach by punishing him, the earth is trying to defend herself against the damage we do. Korach and his people became a symbol of destruction.

And just as Korach will one day be forgiven, then we hope that, if we return to respecting the earth, that she will one day 'yield her products,' as G-d promised.

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BATMITZVAH 1912

by Judy Gilbert

I was invited to my first Batmitzvah in 1960 when my friend and I were both twelve years old. I remember how surprised I was that such a ceremony even existed. Maybe I was just uninformed or perhaps I was correct in thinking that this was a very new concept.

I was certainly wrong on the last count, as while I was contentedly browsing through some old photographs of my grandmother, I came across a lovely portrait of her in a rather business-like pose; she pointed out that this was a record of her Batmitzvah.

My great-grandparents the

Jacobsohns were fairly well off and lived in Danzig in one of the flats that my great-grandfather owned. Danzig belonged to Germany before the First World War and was known as the corridor to Poland. After the war, Danzig was handed over to Poland as a punishment and although I have heard that it has not physically changed beyond recognition after all these years, the language has changed from German to Polish as its first language.

My grandmother was born in 1896, on 24 August, the first of four children. She was registered as Hedwig Jacobsohn instead of Frieda

because, much to the amusement of her offspring, her father had forgotten the name he was supposed to have given and let the Registrar choose a good Catholic alternative.

There were several synagogues in Danzig serving a population of 5,000 Jews. My grandmother's Batmitzvah was the first to be held in a Danzig synagogue and she was among eight other participants, it was 1912 and she was already sixteen years old.

Dr Kälter was the Rabbi of the synagogue to which the Jacobsohns belonged which was reform in

Batmitzvah

name but still retained orthodox practices. Men and women still sat separately and the service was very traditional in style. My great-grandparents kept a kosher home, as did most of the congregants.

In honour of this great occasion my great-grandfather completely refurbished the flat. It was lavishly decorated with gold leaf, and chandeliers which had been bought

from the hotel where the Crown Prince had stayed were lovingly erected.

My grandmother wore a black velvet dress with hand-embroidered flowers. The sleeves and neck were made from chiffon.

After the ceremony, Hedwig, her parents, two sisters and brother (Lotte, Friedel and Alli) returned to the flat to celebrate as a small family

gathering, unlike today's lavish simchas for all the family and friends.

The big domed synagogue of Danzig has sadly been turned into a swimming pool so I am glad that I came across that photograph of my grandmother as solitary but convincing evidence of what took place eighty two years ago.



My grandmother aged 16.



My grandmother now.



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THE NORTHERN NEGEV REVISITED

by Eva Erdelyi

If you are a Friend of Israel, and I hope you are, you may remember the Anniversary Tour of 1987, organised and ably conducted by John and Irene Eivan. Of all the places we visited during this memorable tour, I was most impressed by our visit to the Northern Negev, a region I had never seen before: the least 'developed', sparsely populated part of Israel, with its rugged landscape and wonderful climate. I dreamed of revisiting the places of interest we had seen on our tour, and of showing them to my son David who lives in England. It took almost seven years before I got my chance, when David decided to come for a week's holiday between Hanukah and Christmas, the most suitable season for a visit to the Negev. First, I made sure that he was willing to drive a hired car on desert roads. 'No problem,' he said, he was familiar with driving in the deserts of Arizona and Southern California. In Israel he had never been South of Mazada and the Dead Sea, and this would be a new expedience to which he was looking forward.

My next step was to go to the Centre for Tourism in the Negev which I discovered in Tel Aviv. There I got - free of charge - one illustrated booklet on Touring the Negev, entitled 'Sculptured Wilderness'; one in-touring map of the Negev, with place names in English. By telephone, we booked hotel rooms for three nights in Arad, the town where we had spent one rainy night on the Anniversary Tour of 1987. This town, more or less on the watershed between the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea, is by now a well-known health resort, and an excellent centre for the exploration of the Northern Negev. As it can be easily reached from Beersheba, we decided to spend our first night out with relatives who live in a beautiful residential area in the outskirts of Beersheba. Next morning we hired a small car at the

'Avis' Office in the centre of town, and set out for Arad. The weather was perfect, as it remained for the rest of our holiday.

About 7km (4.40m) west of modern Arad we took a sign-posted access road to Tel Arad, one of the archaeological sites developed as a National Park, with ruins more ancient than any we were to see in other archaeological parks in the region. There we spent a happy hour climbing over the remains of a Canaanite city of the Early Bronze Age (about 3000 BCE), at the foot of the Tel, and the Israelite fortress on the top, which was built after Joshua's victory over 'the king of Hormah, the king of Arad', mentioned in Joshua XII, 14. This citadel was destroyed and rebuilt many times, between the Iron Age (about 1200 BCE) and the 7th century CE. It survived occupations by the Edomites, Assyrians, Babylonians and Persians, was rebuilt in the Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine periods, and survived until the Arab invasion and conquest. We enjoyed the view from the top of the Tel, and David took photographs of the impressive ruins and the expanse of rolling desert hills, lonely except for a flock

of Beduin sheep and goats in the valley. Having thus exercised our eyes, and legs, we returned to our car, and shortly after arrived in

Modern Arad

This town is not even listed in my old guidebook, printed in 1955; but the Phaidon Art and Architecture Guide of Israel has a paragraph on the 'new Arad'. Under construction since 1962 as a dormitory town for the Dead Sea Works near Sodom, it is today a town of 20,000 inhabitants, famous for the climatic treatment of respiratory diseases like asthma, and a developing tourist trade. We liked the wide streets and the relaxed, friendly faces of the population; there seemed to be less hurry and less noise here than elsewhere in Israel. In the pleasant Visitor Center we picked up more leaflets and David bought himself a very fetching sun-hat. We bought picnic supplies in the adjacent supermarket: pitta and cheese, oranges and a big bottle of water. Eager to get into the real Negev, we did not stop to admire a small scale model of Ancient Arad; following our excellent road map, we drove south in the direction of the so-called Small Crater, in Hebrew



Tel Arad



Kibbutz, Sedeh Boker

Hamakhtesh Haqatan

'Makhteshim' are not really craters but anticlines, small or large, round or oval valleys, surrounded by steep ranges of desert mountains, drained by a riverbed. The term 'makhtesh' means mortar, a shallow vessel used for the crushing of spices. The largest of them is Makhtesh Ramon in the Central Negev, which measures 40km. in length, 9km. in width, and 400m. in depth. This Grand Canyon of the Negev we planned to visit the next day. The 'Small Crater' I remembered from our tour with John and Irene, when it was dotted with spring flowers, like the Californian desert after rain. We used to call them belly-flowers, because they were so tiny you had to lie on your belly to see them properly. In December there were no flowers in bloom, but we discovered a shady spot under a gnarled and twisted desert tree, where we ate our lunch and drank our bottled water. Then David went for a walk while I slept in the back of the car. We returned to Arad, reaching our hotel at sun-set, having established a pattern for the rest of our short holiday. There was plenty of time for a bath, a rest, and an excellent dinner to end our first day in the Northern Negev.

For the second day we had a big

programme, so we started out early and arrived before 10 a.m. at

Sedeh Boker

Established in 1952, this kibbutz was joined by David Ben Gurion and his wife Paula when he resigned from his post as Prime Minister. The house, or cabin, is usually open to visitors, but we found a notice at the gate saying 'Closed for Restoration'. So we had some coffee and went for a morning stroll in the shady grounds of the kibbutz, before driving on to visit the nearby Ben Gurion Tomb National Park! This I remembered as a truly magnificent memorial park, laid out on the rim of a spectacular canyon. Here the bare and rugged rock is confronted with the elegance of cultivation - honouring the memory of a man whose character combined the same opposite principles of ruggedness and cultivation. We stayed for a while, enjoying the dignity and beauty of this very special place. Then we drove on a winding road into the canyon we had seen from above, following signposts to a National Park called Ein Avdat. This we discovered to be a Nature Reserve with a trail leading to waterfalls and pools in the dry riverbed. We had no time to spare for this 3-4 hours' walk, but we saw some ibex, wild mountain goats

high up on the almost vertical cliffs, and took time for David to photograph them. Returning to the main road we continued on our way south, until we saw the ruins of Avdat rising above the plain, reminiscent of Stirling Castle seen from the road to the Highlands.

Avdat National Park

is the most highly developed archaeological site of the region. On paying your entrance fee, as in other national parks, you receive a well designed leaflet with a description and detailed plan of the excavations. There are picnic tables, taps for water and first class toilet facilities; also a motor road winding its way to the top, which saves you arriving exhausted. The excavation of this Nabataean city was completed by Professor A Negev between 1959 and 1961, but it had been discovered and identified already in 1870, by A H Palmer. The Nabataeans were originally a tribe of nomads who made their living as traders of spices and perfumes which they transported on their camels from Arabia to the shores of the Mediterranean. Avdat was a way-station along this 'Spice Route', perhaps the most important one between Petra and Gaza. In order to survive in the desert, the Nabataeans learnt to build deep cisterns, and to channel run-off rain water for irrigation. At the end of the 1st century CE, they had become farmers as well as traders. They lived in cities, building temples, cemeteries and army camps which were eventually taken over and enlarged by the Romans. Avdat was at its peak of prosperity during the Byzantine period in the 4-7th centuries. By then the Nabataeans had become Christians. They built two churches and a baptistry as well as a citadel, a wine press and pottery workshops in Avdat, and lived in houses instead of tents. With the waning of the Byzantine Empire the city declined, and was finally deserted after the Arab conquest had destroyed it in 636 CE. Walking among the ruins of Avdat one wonders: what became of the



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gifted people who built these splendid archways, porticoes and pilared courtyards? Is the Bedouin boy who works at the petrol station one of their descendants?

Mitzpe Ramon

was the last but not the least impressive of the places we visited that day. A 'mitzpe' is a look-out or observation point, an appropriate name for the Visitors' Center perched on the edge of a cliff, overlooking Makhtesh Ramon, 900 meters above sea level. There is also a modern town with hotels and

youth hostels raising its towers on the rim. The Makhtesh itself is planned to become a Nature Research covering 250,000 acres, called Park Ramon. The Visitors' Center offers an observation lounge on the second floor for viewing the 'crater', but David and I preferred to view it through the windows of a coffee shop, before driving down into what is said to be the largest crater in the world. The ranges of desert mountains surrounding it rise to the height of 1,000 meters, their muted pastel colours

reminding us of similar landscapes in the Western States of America. Ibex, gazelles, wolves and even leopards live and roam there by night, also rare reptiles and birds of prey. We stopped for half an hour at the geological site called the carpenter's shop, where segments of rock were baked into prisms by a lava flow. Some are stacked upright, others lie scattered on the ground like timber prepared for building. Then we started our return trip to Arad, feeling that we had seen more than enough in one short day. We were tired when we arrived at our hotel, but not too exhausted to do justice to a 4-course dinner. For our third and last day in the Negev we had planned a visit to

Mitzpe Revivim

This desert outpost established in 1943, at that time the southernmost Jewish settlement in the region, is now reconstructed as a historical monument. Here Avraham Eisenberg changed his family name to Negev, here he lived as police commander of the Negev and started exploring the remnants of Nabataean civilisation. On the way to Revivim we stopped at Golda Park, named for the former prime minister. This new project of the Jewish National Fund is not yet fully developed, but it promises to become a pleasant oasis of shrubs and trees surrounding a small lake. The water for irrigation comes from a well inside the park. The same well had been the only source of water for the pioneers at Revivim, the outpost near the present Kibbutz Revivim. It consists of a stockaded building of two storeys within a walled courtyard, topped by a watchtower. The rooms contain a museum documenting the daily life of the pioneers. Not far from this building there are two caves, originally water cisterns built by the Nabataeans. The larger one was housing the settlers during their first year, and later became their field hospital; the smaller one, discovered by chance, became their shelter and command post during the War of Independence. It is

furnished with a display of vintage weapons. We watched the museum's film relating the heroic history of the settlement, before walking over the grounds and taking photographs. We ate our sandwiches in a nearby picnic ground, on elegant stone tables in the shade of palm trees. I am glad we visited Revivim, a place not as well known or publicised as it deserves to be. Now we still had the afternoon for exploration of another ruined Nabataean city, named

Shivta, or Subaita

This site was not so easy to find. A bumpy dirt road seemed to lead

in the right direction, but it landed us at a barbed-wire enclosure. Eventually we found the sign-posted access road, also fairly bumpy, which led past a military training camp to the impressive site of what was the largest Nabataean town in the Negev. Founded in the 1st century BCE, it was abandoned as late as the 10th century. The ruins are extensive, including two Early Christian churches and one from the 6th century, also some Nabataean houses and a double water reservoir. The massive walls, pillars and lintels with carved decorations are similar to those in

Avdat, of a rosy sandstone particularly beautiful gilded by the late afternoon sun. Less touristified than Avdat, Shivta impressed us more. We happened to be the only visitors at the time, but the place seemed peopled by the ghosts of a lost civilisation. This was the last, and by no means the least memorable of our experiences in the Northern Negev. The next morning we packed our bags, left Arad and drove back to Beersheba, where we returned our hired car and waited for the bus to take us back home, to Tel Aviv.

SPRING PILGRIMAGE TO THE JEWISH LAG BA'OMER FESTIVAL

by Ruth Gledhill

The only place to escape the ubiquitous shell-suited Germans on the Tunisian island of Jerba, once known as the land of the lotus eaters, is in the El Ghriba or "the stranger woman" Jewish synagogue. We had joined Jews from all over the world for the Ba'omer festival, a spring pilgrimage to the synagogue which takes place annually on the 33rd day after Passover.

In the synagogue, throughout the year, the rabbi and other members of the community can be found reciting biblical texts and prayers. Regular sabbath services are also held in the rabbi's home. During our visit, however, the festivities were held mainly in the fonduk opposite, a caravanserai for welcoming pilgrims and for celebrations. During the two days of celebrations, a menara, a gold-painted wooden structure decorated with carved candles, was "dressed" with silk, gold and coloured scarves and led in lively, musical procession to the nearby Jewish village.

The Jewish community at Jerba, which has dwindled from its peak of more than 4,000 before the war to about 1,000 because of emigration, is one of the oldest in the world, founded after the Babylonian exile

in the sixth century BC and boosted by more refugees after the temple was destroyed and Jerusalem taken by Titus in AD70. We communicated with Rabbi, Chloumo Cohen, and the local dignitaries in an odd mixture of Hebrew, French, Italian, Arabic and remnants of the Berber once spoken by descendants of the indigenous Berbers who fled there from invaders on the Tunisian mainland.

The site of the synagogue was supposedly chosen in about 600BC, when a holy stone fell from heaven. According to local legend, the last Jew to leave Jerba must lock the synagogue and throw the key back up to heaven. Another legend attached to the site, describing a miraculous event around a beautiful virgin said to have lived alone in a tent there until it was struck by a thunderbolt, has given the synagogue some customs at odds with many in orthodox Judaism, where women are normally confined to a gallery or sit behind a screen. At Jerba, beneath the ornate panelling behind which are stored the Torah scrolls, the first five books of the Bible, is a sacred cavern or sanctuary where only women may go. Jewish women travel from

around the world to place eggs in the cavern, collecting them the following day in the hope that God will then bless them with a baby.

To enter the synagogue's inner room, we were asked to remove our shoes, as in a mosque, and cover our heads. The rabbi's baggy trousers and red fez, and some unusual architectural features around the synagogue, were indicative less of any syncretism with Islam than of this remarkable community's unique and peaceable position in the overwhelmingly Muslim population around it. Here Jews and Muslims have lived harmoniously side-by-side for centuries, and during our visit, all were talking excitedly of the new Israeli-Arab accord.

In Jerba, palm, fig and olive trees struggle to survive in the normally waterless environment. It rains only a few inches a year in southern Tunisia, and I think most of it fell during our visit. But compared to the rest of the country, Jerba is a luxuriant garden of fertility and it was not difficult to understand why so many at the festival had returned, year after year, as if to Israel itself.

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