

# The Edinburgh Star

Journal of the Edinburgh Jewish Community

July 2000

No. 36

Adar 5760



# The Edinburgh Star

SYNAGOGUE CHAMBERS  
4 SALISBURY ROAD  
EDINBURGH EH16 5AB

## Editor:

Michael Adler

## Editorial Board:

John Cosgrove (*Chairman*)  
Sidney Caplan (*Hon. Treasurer*)  
Philip Harris  
Janet Mundy  
Eve Oppenheim  
Freda Riffkin  
Elaine Samuel (*book reviews*)  
Ian Shein  
Judith Sischy  
Robin Spark

## Advertisements:

Michael Wittenberg  
Tel: 0131-668 3331

## Typesetting, page origination and printing:

Meigle Printers Ltd.,  
Tweedbank,  
Galashiels, TD1 3RS

## Front Cover:

Mark Gertler's *'The Rabbi and his Grandchild'* (1913). The original may be seen in Southampton Art Gallery. We are very grateful to the gallery and to the artist's son, Luke Gertler, for permission to reproduce this picture and for waiving the copyright fee. We would also like to record our gratitude to Vicky Isley, Registrar of the Gallery, and Jenny Page, researcher at the Bridgeman Art Library, London for their assistance in arranging the loan of the transparency.

# Contents

<b>EDITORIAL</b>	2
<b>THE LOCAL COMMUNITY</b>	
Freda Riffkin reports	3
Coming Events	7
Congratulations	30
Star Trek into the Past	4
A Snapshot of Edinburgh Jewry in 1881 – Harvey Kaplan	5
<b>PEOPLE</b>	
Edinburgh Says Goodbye to the Sedley's – Janet Mundy	6
Profile of Vicky Grüneberg – Ian Shein	8
<b>LECTURE ROUND UP</b>	
Professor Yasir Suleiman at the Literary Society – Ros Abramsky	9
Cardinal Thomas Winning at the CCJ – Janet Mundy	10
<b>THE WIDER COMMUNITY</b>	
So there is a Scottish Parliament...but is it good for the Jews? – Henry Lovat	12
A Letter from Vienna – Liselotte Adler-Kastner	14
<b>ARTICLES</b>	
Confessions of a Sinner (What does it mean to be Jewish?) – Esti Sheinberg	17
Five Twentieth Century Jewish Artists (Part Two) – Samuel Robin Spark	20
<b>POETRY</b>	
Two Poems by Heinrich Heine – translated by Eva Neuburg Erdelyi	23
<b>HUMOUR</b>	
Counting on the Lit – An exchange between Tony Gilbert and Charles Raab	24
<b>BOOK REVIEWS</b>	
Four Books on The Holocaust – reviewed by Jonathan Fransman	26
Alice Bach (ed.) <i>Women in the Hebrew Bible: a Reader</i> – reviewed by Ros Abramsky	27
<b>LETTERS TO THE EDITOR</b>	
Ian Leifer, Bill Simpson	29
<b>CROSSWORD</b>	
A Crossword for Kosher Girlies – compiled by Elaine Pomm	Back Cover

The Editorial Board wish to thank the advertisers and the following for their support:

Mrs Eva Erdelyi

Professors Charles & Gillian Raab

Mrs Netta Marks

Mrs Joan Rowe

Dr Jack E. Miller OBE, JP

Dr Richard Wolfson

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

**I**t would normally be considered inappropriate for an editor to sing the praises of his journal. However, **The Edinburgh Star's** success in the Board of Deputies' competition for the best communal magazine is surely something of which the whole community can be proud. As briefly reported in the last issue, **The Edinburgh Star** received a 'Special Commendation' and was one of three runners up in the competition and Esti Sheinberg, who contributes another article to this issue, received an 'Honourable Mention' for her article on 'Anti-Semitism in Music' in the competition for the best article. Just as the Editorial Board offers its congratulations to her, so, on behalf of all our readers and the whole community, I would like to offer my thanks and congratulations to the Editorial Board and to everyone associated with the journal. Many people have contributed to our success but I would especially like to thank John Cosgrove, Chairman of the Editorial Board, and Ian Shein. John chairs the Board with great skill while Ian is really the unsung hero of our success. His gentle chivvying ensures that the magazine comes out when it does; his wise counsel ensures that it doesn't lose touch with the concerns of its readership, and the efforts which he and his team put into distribution ensure that copies of the journal are speedily and efficiently distributed to readers. Than you Ian and John.

As noted in my last editorial, The Editorial Board has adopted the principle of rotating membership. We say good-bye and a special thank you to Mickey Cowen, who has been a member of the Board since 1991 and our Honorary Treasurer since 1994, and welcome in his place Sidney Caplan. We also say good bye and thank you to Myrna Caplan, Mark Sischy and welcome as their replacements Philip Harris, Judy Sischy and Robin Spark. The current membership of the Board is set out on the inside cover.

One of the defining qualities of **The Edinburgh Star** is its attempt at inclusiveness and in this issue we again try to provide something for everyone. One year after devolution, it is particularly appropriate that we should publish an article by Henry Lovat, until recently, Parliamentary Officer for the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities, on the implications of devolution for the Jewish community. Provoked by the electoral success of the far-right Freedom Party in parliamentary elections in Austria, we also publish a personal account of life in Vienna by Liesel Adler-Kastner whose parents came to Edinburgh as refugees from Vienna before the war, who was born, brought up and educated in Edinburgh, but returned to Vienna, where she married and brought up her own family, 35 years ago. If there is a connecting theme in this issue, it is perhaps the holocaust. We carry a profile of Vicky Grüneberg, who came to London as a refugee from Nazi Germany in 1939 and has lived in Edinburgh since 1942. Her experience, like that of my own parents, should make members of the our community extremely uncomfortable about the Government's asylum legislation since it is far from clear that she, or they, would have been allowed to seek refuge in their countries if the legislation which is now proposed had been applicable then. We also carry a review of four books on the holocaust by Jonathan Fransman. Jonathan Fransman is twelve years old and has just finished his last year at Bruntsfield Primary School. We also report on comings and goings at the Literary Society and the CCJ - which were addressed in the course of the year by the distinguished Palestinian academic Professor Yasir Suleiman and the controversial leader of Scotland's Catholic community, Cardinal Thomas Winning - and record the community's farewell to Rabbi David Sedley and his family on their departure to Leeds.

Although we cannot record the appointment of a successor, we hope to be able to do so soon. In making an appointment, your Editor hopes that the Council will attach the same importance to inclusiveness as does **The Edinburgh Star**. With a community that is declining in size, your Editor believes that this has never been more important than it is now. As usual we look backwards and forwards - backwards with Harvey Kaplan's snapshot of Edinburgh Jewry in 1881 (and with more snapshots for readers to identify) and forwards with Esti Sheinberg's attempt to grapple with and make sense of the contradictions which make up her Jewish identity. In addition, we include, for the first time, a crossword by Elaine Pomm. We hope that this will be welcomed by readers and that it may become a regular feature of the journal. Contributions, from crossword puzzle enthusiasts and indeed from anyone who wishes to submit material for consideration, will be welcomed as usual. Having been runners up in this year's competition for the best communal magazine, our aim should be to win next year.

The Editorial Board hopes that readers will enjoy this issue and wishes an enjoyable summer to everyone.

# SUPPORT

## The Edinburgh Star

SEND US YOUR LETTERS AND ARTICLES

**NEXT COPY DATE: 1st AUGUST 2000**

*Donations to* THE HON. TREASURER SIDNEY CAPLAN SYNAGOGUE CHAMBERS,  
4 SALISBURY ROAD, EDINBURGH EH16 5AB

## FREDA RIFFKIN REPORTS....

### WIZO LUNCH IN THE COMMUNAL HALL. 27th February 2000

The WIZO Committee held a lunch in the Communal Hall on Sunday 23rd February. Beautifully decorated tables complemented a tasty hot buffet which was much enjoyed by all those who were present and then a most novel raffle was drawn. Instead of the usual prizes the lucky recipients received offers of help from various members of the Committee such as an hour's ironing. Your correspondent was offered an hour dog walking by Rachael but as yet I have not informed her about my well known Bruno who would have her little pooch for breakfast

### LUNCH CLUB. 4th April 2000

On 4th April, the Lunch Club had the pleasure of entertaining the Lord and Lady Provost to lunch. There was a full attendance of both members and cooks for this congenial occasion and we were all delighted to have the opportunity of reciprocating the Lord and Lady Provost's invitation to the Lunch Club to visit the City Chambers.

The visitors were met by Mrs. Joyce Cram and Mrs. Freda Riffkin and escorted to the hall. Mrs. Riffkin welcomed them and recalled the very pleasant time they had given the Club. After lunch a bouquet of flowers was presented by Mrs. Betty Caplan and Mrs. Cram thanked them for coming. The Lord Provost responded and the Lady Provost graciously invited anyone who had not been able to attend at the City Chambers on our previous visit to make up a party and let her know an appropriate date.

Many thanks are due to the cooks who prepared the meal and to the ladies who assisted in the serving of it.

### COMMUNAL HALL LADIES COMMITTEE QUIZ NIGHT 12th March 2000

The Communal Hall Ladies Committee held another of their most successful Quiz Nights on Sunday 12th March. Around 90 enthusiastic punters arrived for one of the most enjoyable evenings of our Social Calendar armed with all sorts of miscellaneous information. The questionmaster was Ian Shein who was helped by a willing band of adjudicators and markers and Anita Mendelssohn was in the Chair.

The Competition was fast and furious and in the end the table chaired by Our Leader, Ian Leifer, won by a small margin. (I say small because the table I was at was only three points behind.)

The following were at the winning table:

Samson and Ros Abramsky  
Ian and Joan Leifer  
Gordon and Hephzebah Plotkin  
Stanley Raffel  
Richard Rifkind

The Committee served a tasty and appetising supper. We were glad to learn that over £600 were raised for the Funds of the Hall.

### LEAVING RECEPTION FOR THE RABBI AND HIS WIFE 9th May 2000

There was a large attendance of the Congregation at a Reception held in the Communal Hall to say farewell to our Rabbi, David Sedley and his wife Alit Sedley who have left us to go to another post in Leeds. The President, Dr. Ian Leifer said that this was both a happy and sad occasion. He was sad to say goodbye but also happy that the occasion for leaving was to go to position in a large and prestigious synagogue in Leeds. Rabbi Sedley

had come to us four years ago straight from *Yeshiva* and we had watched with pride as he grew in stature and dignity not only within the Community but also in City of Edinburgh. He had represented us well and had addressed the Scottish Parliament to general acclaim. Dr. Leifer presented Rabbi Sedley with a large selection of books for himself and for Alit and Avi.

In his reply Rabbi Sedley thanked Dr. Leifer, the Council and the members of the Congregation for their gifts. He and his family had enjoyed their time in Edinburgh. He remembered that when they arrived Mrs. Hilary Rifkind had arranged a wonderful *Shavuoth* for them with a group of young people and he thanked her very much for her organisational skills which were seen again on the evening of the reception in the beautifully arranged meal which she had provided.

Rabbi Sedley made particular mention of Dr. Nathan Oppenheim who had given him so much help and support when he first arrived and had guided him so well through the years.

He also went out of his way to thank the invaluable Mrs. Christine Burns who was always there with whatever he required.

After the formal part of the proceedings was over, everyone made their own individual farewells and communicated their best wishes to the David and Alit.

*Another account of the farewell reception can be found in Janet Mundy's article on page 6.*

*With Compliments  
from  
John and Hazel  
Cosgrove*

## STAR TREK INTO THE PAST

*Continuing our popular series of 'whosinnits' and 'whatwassits', we reprint two more photographs to test the memories of Edinburgh oldies.*

Who are the people sitting round the table and why are they there? Our team of experts can only identify five of the eight people present. Can any readers do better?

And who are the people gathered around the Hunter's hire coach and where were they going?

Answers on page 25



*The party.*



*The outing.*

# A SNAPSHOT OF EDINBURGH JEWRY IN 1881

by Harvey L Kaplan

Augustina Jacob has probably long-since been forgotten. But thanks to a newly available resource we can now picture her, an elderly Jewish lady, French-born, but now living with her sister and brother-in-law at 99 George Street in Edinburgh in April 1881. Described as 'formerly a lady's companion', we can perhaps envisage her promenading the smart streets of the city.

The Mormons have produced the UK Census of 1881 on an inexpensive set of CD-ROMs, and thus made it possible to get a fascinating snapshot of the country in that year. What can this census tell us about the Edinburgh Jewish community of 1881?

The first Jewish community in Scotland had been established in Edinburgh in 1816, when a small synagogue was opened in a lane off Nicholson Street, for the use of twenty Jewish families. Braid Place cemetery was opened four years later in 1820 and the community thrived and grew over the ensuing decades.

By 1881, the Jews of Edinburgh were worshipping in Ross House, Park Place, which functioned as the main Edinburgh Synagogue 1867-1898 – there is actually an illustration of the interior on display at the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre. Rev Jacob Furst was in the early years of his long term of office (1879-1918) as religious leader and *mohel* of the Edinburgh community. In addition, Jewish waterproof workers at the Caledonian Rubber Company had recently established a synagogue in Caledonian Crescent in Dalry.

Braid Place cemetery had closed, and a new cemetery had been opened at Echobank in Newington. In the 1950s, Sydney Cramer painstakingly transcribed the inscriptions from many of the older tombstones in this cemetery, and

there is a copy of his manuscript in the Archives Centre. He recorded tombstones of the two infant children of Meyer Henry Lindey, Marion and Solomon, who died aged 5 and 4, in May 1881.

Of course Edinburgh's Jewish community - like many all over the country (and abroad) – was about to be transformed unrecognisably. The Russian pogroms which followed the assassination of Tsar Alexander II in 1881 sparked off the huge wave of Eastern European emigration westwards, which was to continue right up to the First World War.

The Census CD-ROMs are subdivided by geographic area, and one of these covers central and southern Scotland, including Edinburgh. On this CD-ROM, one can search by name, but also by place of birth. I checked all those listed as living in Edinburgh in 1881, who were born in countries such as Russia, Poland, Germany, Austria and Hungary. From these, I identified all those with likely Jewish names, such as Moses or Esther, Goldstein or Esterson, together with their families. I also searched for around 20 of the most common Jewish surnames, such as Goldberg, Cohen and Levy, which produced a number of other Jewish families. There is no absolutely accurate method of extracting all Jewish entries for Edinburgh in the 1881 Census, but the above method must produce a high percentage. Some of those identified may have been the descendants of people who married out but retained a Jewish surname. On the other hand, a Jew born in Edinburgh and called Joseph Wilson might have been omitted. We do not know for certain if John Phillip Goldstein, described as Acting Principal Clerk of Session, was Jewish, but this is very likely. We are even less certain about his

wife Emily and their son who was also called John.

In total, I found some 280 Jews in Edinburgh in 1881, living in 59 Jewish households. Sixteen of these households had servants. Fifteen men listed their occupation as jeweller, and seventeen were hawkers, peddlers or commercial travellers. There were nine picture dealers or frame-makers, and nine tailors. We can see evidence of the waterproofers of Dalry – Morris Fedderman was a 23-year-old waterproof manufacturer, while David Levinson (36) is listed as a foreman over India Rubber workers. His three eldest children are shown as having been born in Manchester, while his fourth child was born around 1879 in Edinburgh, illustrating the fact that many of these waterproofers moved from Manchester to Edinburgh. There were a number of single men in this trade listed as lodgers at the time.

Rev. Jacob Furst, who was then aged 35, was born in Kurland, Russia. His wife's name was Mary, and they had three sons and three daughters, aged from two to thirteen. Their eldest child Rosa was born in Kurland in 1868, while their next child Bertera was born in Hull in 1872. Strangely, their third child Elias was listed as having been born in Russia in 1873 but this may be an error – unless they went back. The family also had a twenty-year old servant girl who was born in Liverpool.

Forty-five per cent of the community were born in Edinburgh or elsewhere in Scotland, while another ten per cent were born in England or Wales. Thirty-five per cent were born in Russia or Poland. Other places of birth listed include Prussia and Austria-Hungary. Henry and Clara Saloman were born in France, while Annie Leibler was born in America. There were

*Continued on page 11*

# EDINBURGH SAYS GOODBYE TO THE SEDLEYS

by Janet Mundy

As everybody reading this article will no doubt know, Rabbi David Sedley and his family have left Edinburgh for the Beth Hamedresh Hagadol Synagogue in Leeds. However, before he departed, he spoke to me regarding his feelings on leaving Edinburgh, just prior to more public farewells.

When I arrived at their flat, Rabbi Sedley showed me photographs of himself in the academic gown he wore for his graduation from the Open University, which had taken place the previous week. His MA in Education included modules in adult education, educational counselling and child development in a social context. He told me that the author of one of the textbooks for the course runs the nursery that Avi had been attending.

The previous *Shabbat* had been a Youth Service taken by the post-*Barmitzvah* class of David Brannan, Samuel Danzig and Joel Raffel. So when I asked Rabbi Sedley what he felt were the highlights of his time in Edinburgh, it was understandable that his immediate and heartfelt response was that 'the Youth Service justifies everything'. He also remembered with pride the guest speakers who had attended during his time here – Rabbi Asher Wade, Rabbi Yisroel Miller, Rabbi Dr Nathan Lopes Cardozo and Andrew Shaw – all of international renown. However, as he thought of more highlights, it became clear that he took pleasure in the less public, and



Rabbi David Sedley in his graduation attire.

some may say more modest, achievements. For example he said that he had felt particular pleasure at the Thursday night *shiurim*, as these attracted some people who didn't attend other events. He said it was 'nice having an open house' and that lots of people were regulars at the flat, especially students and young professionals. His saddest memory was of Dr Nate Oppenheim's death and, as he repeated at the *Yom Ha'atzma'ut* reception the following night, he felt that 'Dr Oppenheim would have been proud to see me going off to a bigger community'.

Knowing that many people in Edinburgh will miss Rabbi Sedley

and his family, he emphasised that they are 'only going to Leeds' and that they 'look forward to keeping touch', especially at *Simchas*! He suggested that we all meet in the Lake District for a *Shabbaton*. This might give him an opportunity to wear his 'kosher kilt' which was made for him by Geoffrey Tailor!

Alit's contributions to the community were always complementary to her husband's. For example, she pointed out that the Thursday night *shiurim* grew out of the Hebrew reading crash course that she ran. Also the website that she maintained always included the text of Rabbi Sedley's *Parsha* sheets.

Rabbi Sedley stated that he hoped that his lasting legacy would be that 'Jewish pride has increased in both children and adults, and I want that state to continue.' He concluded that he hopes 'another Rabbi will replace and continue what I've done'.

The following evening, the community took the opportunity to give the Sedleys a leaving party, as part of the *Yom Ha'atzma'ut* celebrations. For those readers who were not able to attend (and those of you who were too emotional at the Sedley's departure to remember what was said!) this is a summary of the speeches.

As President of the *Shul*, Dr Ian Leifer gave an address which commenced by summarising the feelings of everyone there, when he said he felt 'sadness but a touch of joy' and that he wanted to 'say thank you for all they've done over the last four years'. Dr Leifer said that when Rabbi Sedley arrived 'he gave the impression of being a man with a future'. Apparently, as a child, one of his teachers had told

*With Compliments*

*from*

*Jess Franklin*

205 Stenhouse Street  
Cowdenbeath, Fife KY4 9DL

him 'David you will go far' and he did go far – all the way from New Zealand to Scotland! Dr Leifer pointed out that 'in the time he has been here he has made a mark, and raised the profile of our community in the wider Jewish community and within Edinburgh and Scotland.' He gave examples (which Rabbi Sedley himself was too modest to mention in his interview!) of his contributions to the Chief Rabbi's website and his address to the Scottish Parliament, as well as the local innovations – the Tuesday and Thursday night and *Daf Yomi shiurim*, weekly *Parsha* sheet, winter *mincha* service, Thursday morning and *Rosh Chodesh minyanim*.

In response, Rabbi Sedley thanked Dr Leifer for his speech and for the books presented by the Executive (which the Rabbi chose himself) – he said that he would remember Edinburgh whenever he used the books. Like Dr Leifer, he had mixed feelings – sad to be leaving, but excited to be going to Leeds. He reassured the audience by saying that one of the reasons for looking for a position in Britain was so that he would not be so far from Edinburgh and that by going to Beth Hamedrash Hagadol he would be 'squaring the circle', as Rabbi Salis Daiches' father was once minister there. He thanked the Executive, the Council, Hilary Rifkind (who organised the evening), Willie Caplan ('for telling me we have 9½ people for a *minyan*!'), Michael Wittenburg and Christine Burns.

Like any good Rabbi, he closed his speech with a story.

Two years ago on *Simchat Torah*, Rabbi Sedley and Raymond Taylor went for a walk on Arthur's Seat. They saw a funny shaped bottle. When they picked it up, a genie popped out and said it would grant one wish. 'Can you make the *Moshiach* come soon', they asked. 'I'm just a junior genie!' the genie replied. 'Can you solve the Middle

East conflict?' The genie responded, 'Any other thoughts'. Finally, they said 'How about a wish that everyone in Edinburgh come to *Shul* more often?' The genie then asked 'What were the first two wishes again?'

In case anyone took umbrage at the joke, he finished by saying 'The Talmud says people should part with a word of *Halachah*'. When we say *Hamotzei*, we should hold the bread with two hands and ten fingers, for ten *mitzvot*, and ten words in the blessing. 'Ten', he reminded us, 'is a special number in Judaism – the completion of individual units. This is why we need ten men for a *minyan* – ten means being part of a community. I will think of Edinburgh when saying *Hamotzei*'.

A final parting gift was presented by Lesley Danzig to the Sedleys at *Cheder* the following Sunday, where their contribution has been so greatly appreciated by the children and their parents.



## COMING EVENTS

The Friendship Club meets on alternate Sundays at 3.00 p.m. For dates and further details of activities over the summer months, contact Willie Caplan (667 7984).

Junior Maccabi meets on alternate Sundays from 1.00 p.m. to 3.00 p.m. For further information, contact David Brannan, Samuel Danzig or Joel Raffel (229 5541).

Senior Maccabi meets on Sunday evenings in members' homes. For further information, contact Rowan Hendry (331 3795).

The Jewish Philosophical Society meets every month on a Sunday in members' homes.

The Luncheon Club meets every Tuesday and Thursday at 12.30 p.m.

The Parent and Toddler group meets on Sunday mornings at 10.00 a.m.

There are no meetings of the Literary Society, the Council of Christians and Jews or Lodge Solomon during the summer months. In each case, meeting commence after the High Holidays.

All meetings are subject to alteration.

All the above events, unless otherwise stated, take place in the Community Centre, at 4 Salisbury Road.

We wish all success to The Edinburgh Star from

*Goodwin's Antiques Ltd*  
*Antique Jewellery,*  
*Porcelain, Silver*  
*Insurance and Probate Valuers*

15 and 16 Queensferry Street, Edinburgh EH2 4QW

Telephone 0131 225 4717

also at 106-108 Rose Street, Edinburgh EH2 3JF

Telephone 0131 220 1230

Business hours: 9.30 a.m.-5.30 p.m. Saturday: 9.30 a.m.-5.00 p.m.

# A PROFILE OF VICKY GRÜNEBERG

by Ian Shein

The strident martial music, the guttural commands, the massed uniformed ranks, the crimson and black banners emblazoned with the swastika – these were the frightening hallmarks of Nazi Germany, which even after so many years can never be completely eradicated from the memory of one Edinburgh woman. Eminently realistic and rational, she epitomises the feelings and spirits of many of the victims of that momentous and bloody era.

Born in Westphalia, the youngest of three girls in a middle-class German family, Vicky Treistmann enjoyed a happy and normal childhood. Her father, originally from Poland, owned a factory which made accessories for motor vehicles before venturing into the property market. When she was four, the family moved to Wuppertal, a large town near Düsseldorf in the Rhineland. As a girl, she went to school there until she was sixteen. The family situation – emotionally and financially – was a comfortable one and Vicky grew up in a close environment of security and stability. She had many friends and led the busy, happy life of an average teenager. Tragically this was to change dramatically when the Nazis came to power.

Vicky left school with the ambition of becoming a nurse. She was now to learn what it was to be a Jew in Germany. The situation became a nightmare. The trappings of terror were already manifesting themselves and she became steadily aware of what the future held for minority groups in the country. On *Yom Kippur* in 1938, in the Synagogue in Wuppertal, congregants could only feel impending doom. Many tried to leave the country. Vicky vividly recalls the night of 9 November 1938, *Kristallnacht*, when the Nazis orchestrated a night of maniacal



Vicky Grüneberg.

hate and fear, destroying Synagogues and smashing property owned by Jews. The Treistmann family experienced this at their own home at three o'clock in the morning when boulders came crashing through their windows. Two days prior to this, the Gestapo had called seeking Vicky and her father. Polish Jews were being uprooted and forcibly sent to the border. Neither she nor her father were at home and; most fortunately for them, the Gestapo did not return. 30,000 Jewish men all over the country were rounded up and taken to concentration camps. It was only then that western nations, hesitant beforehand, opened their doors to the persecuted. Vicky's hopes of training to be a nurse were unfulfilled due to her race and religion. At this time her mother underwent a serious operation and Vicky devoted her time to caring for her.

As the situation worsened, Vicky's parents went to reside with relatives in Poland. One sister emigrated to Argentina with her husband. The other lived in Switzerland for health reasons. A friend of one of the sisters who lived in London succeeded, with the aid of Jewish

organisations, in securing a permit for Vicky to enter Britain. She arrived in London in April 1939 and lived with these friends. She remained in postal communication with her parents until war inevitably prevented this. Her parents, unbeknown to her at the time, were arrested by the Germans and sent to Maidanek concentration camp in Poland from which they never returned. Vicky recalls the changed attitude of neighbours in Germany at the height of the Nazi era. Hostility replaced friendship, although there were a few exceptions and there was strong anti-Jewish feeling where none, at least on the surface, existed before.

Rudi Grüneberg was a young doctor resident in Wuppertal. Although he graduated in Germany, after doing a one-year practical placement in a Jewish hospital, he was unable to practice there. He completed his medical training in Switzerland, met Vicky and the couple soon became engaged. It was not possible for Jews to go to another country without a permit. Vicky described the hopeless and helpless entrapment felt by Jews as no country wished to issue these permits. Only after *Kristallnacht* did the situation change. Rudi received permission to come to England as an agricultural worker; he arrived in July 1939 and he and Vicky married the following month. Initially he worked in Devon but when war broke out he offered his services and was sent to a post in a Plymouth hospital. Vicky joined him in that city but due to prolonged heavy bombing and its effect on their baby, Michael, the family moved to Edinburgh in 1942. Rudi joined the Royal Army Medical Corps and was, for a time, stationed on the Isle of Wight where his duties included treating wounded German prisoners-of-war and arranging suitable hospitalisation for them. He saw service in North Africa and

India ending the war as a major, before returning to Edinburgh. At that time, the family lived in Colinton although they later moved to Orchard Brae.

After the war, Vicky's time was spent bringing up their two sons while Rudi, after a refresher course, secured a position in the surgical department of the Victoria Hospital in Kirkcaldy. He was later appointed consultant orthopaedic surgeon in the Accident and Emergency (A & E) Department. Apart from his clinical duties, he was involved in medical research. He obtained his FRCS in Edinburgh and was held in the highest esteem by his patients and colleagues. He died suddenly in 1977 leaving a name which is still spoken of with warmth and affection.

Within the Jewish community in Edinburgh, Vicky and Rudi were well known, especially for their involvement in the Literary Society of which Rudi became chairman and Vicky was a committee member. They both loved classical music and Vicky fondly recalls the 'Lit Concerts' which were held in the old communal hall opposite the

Synagogue. Rudi became renowned for his lectures on anti-Semitism in music, on Beethoven and on philosophy. They were both keen supporters of the Edinburgh International Festival and Vicky is still a member of the long-established Edinburgh Gramophone Society.

The Grünebergs had two sons, Steven and Michael. Steven is married and lives in London. He teaches economics at University College, London and is the author of several books on the subject. Michael, married with two sons, both in the world of computers, lives in Swansea where he is Senior Lecturer in Psychology at University College, Swansea. He also has written many books on psychology and related subjects.

It was only at the end of the war that Vicky discovered the full extent of the Nazi atrocities committed against her family. She will never forget the day that news reached them from the Red Cross that no fewer than 86 members of her and Rudi's families perished in concentration camps such as Auschwitz, Theresienstadt and Maidanek.

Currently Vicky is seeking the return of rents of family properties which had been confiscated by the Nazis during the war. International law now permits this to be pursued and she asserts that it is the principle of the matter which spurs her on.

To be in Vicky Gruneberg's company is a rewarding experience. An intelligent, cultured woman, she has an independent mind and is very perceptive. Her views on a variety of subjects are given objectively if tempered with her own experiences. Her ready observations are refreshing and at times controversial. She takes a liberal view on post-war Germany averring that one cannot apportion blame or attribute responsibility to the younger generations of that country. Blaming them 'is just playing Hitler's game' in seeking scapegoats. She feels strongly that young Germans are victims of their comparatively recent horrendous history. Vicky still visits Germany as she has non-Jewish friends there. She is a remarkable lady who cannot forget the past but who has risen above it to reside firmly in the present.

---

## Lecture Round-Up

### Professor Yasir Suleiman's visit to the Literary Society on 13th February 2000

*a report by Ros Abramsky*

The Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society broadened its sights this year by inviting 'the enemy' into its own camp. Yes, we asked a Palestinian to come and talk to us in February about Middle Eastern politics. A heated discussion took place among the committee members about how this might be done without too much risk of head-on confrontation. In the end we went out on a limb and decided to give the the floor to Professor Yasir Suleiman, holder of the Iraq Chair of Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies at Edinburgh University. And when he came,

strange to relate, we couldn't detect any signs that he was 'the enemy' at all. Just a pleasantly-mannered man of Mediterranean appearance who reads the *Jewish Chronicle* every week and was born in Jerusalem. A man who lost his home because someone else wanted it, thirty or so years after similar dispossessions overtook the families of many who were listening to him.

Revisiting the city of his birth with his children, who are bilingual in English and Arabic, Suleiman despaired at the dire situation

confronting the Arabs who live there now. Their livelihoods are threatened by the new tourist opportunities provided by freer travel between Israel and Jordan, Israel and Egypt. Though Arabs can be citizens, there is no real integration between the Jewish and Arab communities. And the situation of the Palestinians is much worse, even though they now have their own proto-states in Gaza and the West Bank. There are two systems of roads on the West Bank: 'super-doooper' ones have been built for the Israelis, but the Palestinian

ones are in much worse shape now than they were in 1995.

What will happen now that, under Ehud Barak, the peace process is back on track? Suleiman was not optimistic. 'If they can't agree in ten months, they can't agree ever', was his view. The problem is that the differences between the Palestinian and the Israeli points of view are irreconcilable; there is no 'Bridge Over Troubled Waters', the title he gave to his talk. He proceeded to examine four different issues to substantiate his conclusion. The first big problem is that of the Jewish settlements on the West Bank, which have been built in strategically important positions such as hilltops. For the Israelis they are 'expressions of their God-given right to the land', and few will wish to exchange *Ma'alei Adumim* for a suburb of Haifa. He agreed with a poll, taken about the time of Yitzchak Rabin's assassination, in which half the respondents thought civil war would break out over the issue of settlements.

The next contentious issue is water. Sharing water, both inside the state

and in the area as a whole, is going to be a very difficult problem to agree on. In a Jewish settlement on the Golan Heights the residents had freely running water even for flushing loos. But in Gaza he visited a camp where 105,000 people lived in 4 square kilometres. They had water for washing and bathing half a day per week. This focuses attention on the third and possibly the most difficult issue: what is to be done with the refugees? Palestinian refugees in Syria, Lebanon and Iraq are not citizens – to make them so would completely distort the nature of the local political scene. Similarly, the Jordanians, who have given citizenship to Palestinians residing there, are afraid of being swamped by the refugees. Fearing that 'we'll end up a small minority in our own country'. Would their return threaten Israeli security? Suleiman thinks there may be some room for sowing seeds of harmony here, if the Israelis can give up 'the presumptions of the past'. He is less hopeful, however, on the question of Jerusalem, whose heart is currently so bereft and divided that it offers

little to either Jews or Muslims.

So is there no hope at all? Is the Middle East doomed to become another Yugoslavia? Suleiman offered one option that could provide a glimmer of hope. If the camps are unbridgeable, the only thing left to do is to take away the need for a bridge. Make Israel into a secular state with only one type of citizen, irrespective of religion. Give the right of return to Palestinians as well as Jews. Widen the boundaries to those pertaining under British rule early in the century, encompassing all the areas now occupied by either Palestinians or Jews. Suleiman senses the climate for such a solution may be more favourable now that Israel is facing up to the aggressive tactics which led up to the foundation of the State in 1948. If children grow up with a more balanced picture of what happened, they would be more inclined to respect the rights of their non-Jewish fellow citizens. And then maybe Professor Suleiman would feel able to take his children back to where he was born.

## Cardinal Thomas Winning's visit to the Edinburgh CCJ on 24th February 2000

*a report by Janet Mundy*

On the day that Scotland's First Minister, Donald Dewar, proposed a compromise in the controversy over Section 28, the most vociferous campaigner against the repeal of the clause addressed the Edinburgh branch of the Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ). The meeting was arranged by the branch's secretary, Mrs. Rose Orgel, and chaired by Robert Munro, who introduced the Cardinal and stated that out of a total of six Scottish Cardinals, Cardinal Thomas Winning was the third to address CCJ.

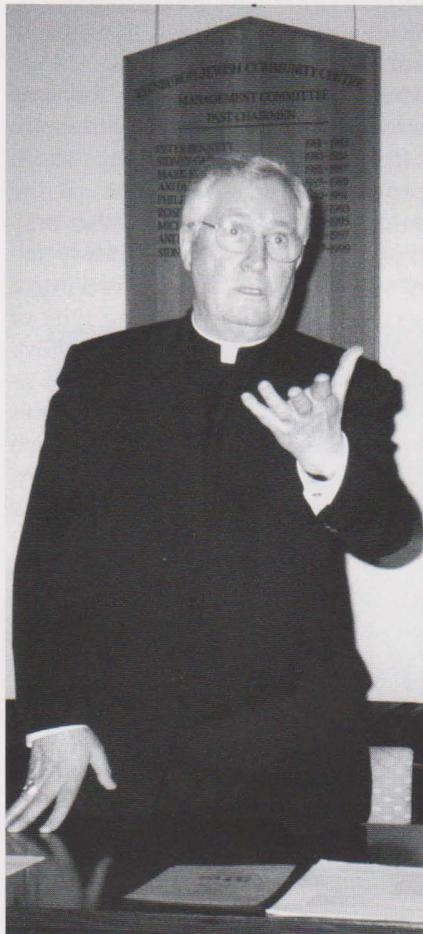
Cardinal Winning is the leader of Scotland's Roman Catholics, and he was invited to address the Edinburgh CCJ long before the current publicity regarding the repeal of Section 28, the section

prohibiting local authorities from promoting homosexuality or of presenting it as a 'pretended family relationship'. However, he took the opportunity to explain the moral issues behind the headlines, and to emphasise the common purpose behind Christianity and Judaism.

He came to Edinburgh fresh from an audience with Pope John Paul II in Rome. He told the audience that the Pope had since left on a pilgrimage 'walking in the footsteps of Abraham' visiting Abraham's birthplace, Ur, before Sinai and Jerusalem. The current Pope has also set up a commission to look into the relationship between Christians and Jews, and in his Encyclical Letter proclaiming the Christian Year of Jubilee, Cardinal Winning

reported that the Pope suggested that 'we could take the opportunity provided by this special moment in history to engage in dialogue and to seek forgiveness for past wrongs and misunderstandings which have divided the Jewish and Christian communities'.

The main part of Cardinal Winning's talk was devoted to the subject of morality. With some understatement, he suggested that 'in the last few weeks ... there has been some controversy over Clause 28' and claimed that 'the heat of the debate has perhaps obscured the... fact that there are two very different approaches to morality current in our country today'. He described one as the 'morality of the people of faith ... rooted in God's teaching', set



Cardinal Winning.

against the morality that 'declares that you may do whatever you like so long as you don't harm anyone else.' He took abortion and

euthanasia as examples of these divergent approaches, where for 'people of faith' the 'divine injunction' against taking of life outweighs any consideration of an individual's right to choose.

He allied himself with the Chief Rabbi, Jonathan Sacks, who he said 'made a notable contribution to the debate over Clause 28 and restated sound Jewish moral teaching', and emphasised the imperative within both the Jewish and Christian communities to pass our religious principles on to our children.

He was dismissive of Donald Dewar's announcement that day of a new draft section to replace Section 28, stating that 'the Scottish Parliament was unwilling to mention marriage because it would alienate some members of society'.

There was a lively question and answer session after the Cardinal's talk. He answered questions on education in Catholic schools, the problems of mixed Jewish/Christian marriages, and the lack of young men entering the priesthood. However, the evening really came to life when two 16-year-olds, Rowan Hendry and Michael Shaw, challenged him regarding his campaign against the repeal of

Section 28. Rowan asked whether, as 'both our religions teach us to respect teachers, do you not think that it is disrespectful to teachers to tell them what not to discuss with their pupils?', which led Cardinal Winning to point out that the Section legislated against local authorities, and not specifically schools, and that 'teachers are not forbidden to discuss issues relating to homosexuality but should do so at appropriate times.' He added that there was no disrespect for teachers intended, just protection for children.

Michael referred to a recent television interview with Peter Tatchell of 'Outrage', which campaigns for more openness about homosexuality. According to Michael, he 'suggested that if Section 28 were repealed there should be guidelines based on honesty, fidelity and respect rather than forcing themselves to be something they aren't'. In his response, the Cardinal referred to Peter Tatchell as 'a militant aggressive type ... looking for the Government to say that a homosexual relationship was as good as a heterosexual relationship'. However, the debate was good-natured and the two finally agreed to differ.

Continued from page 5

also Jews from Warsaw, Odessa, Riga, Kurland and Kalwaria.

127 of the 280 Jews (45 per cent) were under sixteen while less than ten (3 per cent) were over 60. The oldest I was able to identify were Selig Ayman (aged 70) and Nathan Rosseinsky (aged 69).

Through this unique and long-awaited resource, the Edinburgh Jewish community of 1881 has come to life again.

Harvey L Kaplan is Director of the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre in Glasgow, and a freelance family history researcher.

## CHIQUE

### LEADING LADIES' FASHION HOUSE

Select from:

Basler, Jobis, Lucia, Frank Usher,

Mansfield, Weill, Electre

23 JEFFREY STREET, EDINBURGH EH1 1DR

Telephone: 0131 557 3044

## SO THERE IS A SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT...BUT IS IT GOOD FOR THE JEWS?

*some personal thoughts from Henry Lovat*

In latter day Britain, Jewish Communities have for the most part been exceptionally fortunate. Both formal organisations and a network of informal relationships with government, have worked together 'for the benefit of the Community as a whole, and have for the most part ensured that the Jews have had good relations with those in power. Whether Tory or Labour, governments have always taken quiet note of the interests of the Jewish minority, and have generally been sensitive towards matters of concern to Jews in Britain.

Historically, however, Jewish Communities have had what might be described as 'mixed' relationships with official authorities and governments. In the Herodian period, relations with the nominal sovereign in Rome were kept off the boil first by the careful diplomacy of Herod the Great, and then by the efforts of his more level-headed grandson, Herod Agrippa. Similarly, under the Byzantine Empire's Justinian Code, through the efforts of 'prominente' as Rabbi Solomon the Egyptian (at one the only Jew in Constantinople who was legally allowed to ride a horse!) 'the Jews (found) much relief in their oppression.'

Through the 8th to the 11th centuries, this pattern was continued, most successfully in the Iberian peninsula. When the Moslems invaded Spain in 711, Jews assisted them, often garrisoning captured cities. In Cordoba, the capital of the Ummayid dynasty, Jews were numerous 'at court', and succeeded in making the city into what was then the 'leading centre of Jewish culture in the world.'

When the fundamentalist Berbers re-invaded, however, the Jews found themselves at the sharp end of internecine conflict. Communities sought refuge amongst the Christians in Northern Spain. Thus, in the 12<sup>th</sup> century,

when the Christians eventually came to dominate the peninsula, 'Jewish diplomats, financiers and physicians abounded', and even during the early years of the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, 'hidden' Jews played prominent roles in government.

More recently, close relationships between individual, influential Jews and governments can be seen to have borne fruit both in the Balfour Declaration and indeed in the establishment of the Nuremberg Tribunals following World War II. In the case of the latter, Roosevelt's Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Morgenthau campaigned long and hard for war criminals to be punished personally. The American Jewish Congress, in particular, lobbied both Roosevelt and Secretary of War Stimson to support the setting up of a criminal tribunal. The measure of their success can be seen in the extent to which the Nuremberg Tribunals were established according to a predominantly American design.

The fear which has always pervaded the development of relations between Jews and the state, however, has traditionally been the concern that either too-prominent a community, or too close a relationship between community and government will ultimately be 'bad for the Jews'. As the Rabbi in 'Fiddler on the Roof' puts it: 'God bless an' keep the Czar... far away from us!' Many infamous examples of this phenomenon are cited. The expulsion from Spain in 1492, for example, can be read as a last-resort course of action adopted by the Catholic Church in Spain, anxious to assert its dominance over policy-making.

Similarly, the rise of the Nazis to power in Weimar Germany coincided with what has been termed 'European Jewry at the zenith of its achievement.' Just as Hitler made the shift from rabble-

rouser into populist leader, he contrived to unite the disgruntled masses against a convenient, common and 'alien' enemy.

From early times, this 'scapegoating' has been the tactic of those who seek to dominate a fractured and economically weak society. Indeed, it is still visible in Indonesia and rump-Yugoslavia. The perceived rise in political, cultural and commercial favour of Jews in the period that followed the Great War allowed this particular brand of fascism to develop. Hitler capitalised on the very real prominence of members of the Jewish Community in the great industrial complexes and in the political, artistic and intellectual life of Germany at that time. The union of the impoverished and disenfranchised with the demagogic and embittered proved catastrophic for European Jewry.

In both cases, it all went, horribly wrong. It would be quite absurd to say that either the Holocaust, or the expulsion from Spain, was the 'fault' of the Jews for having held high public profiles in both cases. However, and understandably, these periods and other instances have bred in Jewish Communities world-wide a marked reticence 'engage' in relations with government except with extreme caution. There is the story of the two Russian Jews who were sentenced to death by the Czar. As they stood before the firing squad awaiting their certain execution, they were offered blindfolds. The first Jew bravely turned down the blindfold. The second Jew turned to the first and implored him 'Please take die blindfold. Don't make any trouble.'

Although only in keeping with a pattern already established in Spain, Belgium and Italy, devolution isn't necessarily good for the Jews, either. It does, after all, mean that, as far as the Jews in Scotland are concerned,

we can no longer rely on the comfortable relationships that exist in London between the Board of Deputies, the Chief Rabbi's Office, others in the Community and Westminster for 'protection'. However, it will most likely only be *bad* for the Jews if we – the Jewish Community in Scotland – do not ourselves begin to consider ways and means of developing effective relations with the Scottish Executive.

Bodies such as the Glasgow Representative Council have assiduously cultivated contacts and relations with nearby local authorities, and individual Jews have developed relations with leading figures in Scotland, but there has been little in the way of civic engagement on a national scale within Scotland. The building of a beneficial relationship with government requires a very different approach than does the equivalent effort with regard to local authorities. Aside from questions of scale, national government is a much more sophisticated ball-park – despite what one sometimes hears from the media of the 'goings-on' in Holyrood – and efforts to cultivate relations with figures working in that forum must be considered with a constant view towards the 'bigger picture' and the longer-term. This requires a broad strategy to be developed and put into place, and flexible and pragmatic approaches taken to the establishment of communal structures and decision-making procedures for working in this expanded field

The Scottish Jewish Community,

*Minnie Oilberg and Sandra Caplan would like to thank their family and friends for the many phone calls expressing concern during Minnie's recent stay in hospital and for the cards, flowers and gifts which greeted Minnie on her return to Sandra and Sidney's home to recuperate.*

with no real experience of working with government, stands at the perilous point of having to start pretty much 'from scratch' in forging a good working relationship with Holyrood. What happens in Scotland is not only of concern to Scottish Jewry.. For perfectly pragmatic, non-charitable reasons, events in Holyrood must also be of concern to English Jewry. Not only must those 'in the firing line' in Scotland *learn* from those who have successfully laid the foundations for good relations between British Jewry and Government in Westminster – those engaged in the field in London must also be willing to *teach* the Scottish Community how to fend for itself.

The establishment of the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (see article by Philip Schlesinger in *Issue 33*), and the 'stepping up a gear' of (what have broadly been termed) 'public affairs' operations in the national political sphere are moves in the right direction. Efforts have been made to learn as much as possible (and as rapidly as possible) from those working in the political environment of London. The lessons learned down south are now being applied in Scotland – and have born a surprising amount of fruit in a very short period.

Since the end of October, the SCJC has become increasingly involved in the political fabric of Scotland - from keeping a careful eye over a bill which threatened to introduce passive euthanasia by stealth, through taking up a seat on the Scottish Executive's Race Equality Advisory Forum, and on to lobbying for and helping to organise next year's annual Holocaust Memorial Day ,in Scotland. In other words – so far, so good. But there still remains much to do. Informal and personal relationships with senior figures are slowly being fostered. The Jewish Community is gradually beginning to feel its way around the maze of voluntary and faith organisations in Scotland, and monitoring is ongoing on a plethora of issues that could potentially be of

concern to the Community. In other words, the full extent of the work that has to be done in the field is terrific – and growing apace.

As history demonstrates, it is impossible ever to guarantee absolute 'political security' for any Jewish Community in the Diaspora. However, if in the long run, the relationship developed between government and community in Scotland is to be positive and solid, then there is no alternative but to work slowly, cautiously, and with as much help and good will as is on offer, towards the establishment of good formal and informal relations between community and government in Scotland.

So is the Scottish Parliament 'good for the Jews'? At this point it is still hard to say. It may not turn out to be, however. That is why it is so important, while the opportunity lasts, to make sure that the Community works towards building relations with those in power in Scotland, that it does so sensibly, and with a eye to the future as well as to the past.

*Henry Lovat was, until recently, Parliamentary Officer for the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities.*

**USER  
FRIENDLY**

**Personal  
Computer  
Services**

**Tel: 0131 539 7272**

**Fax: 0131 539 7273**

e-mail: [admin@user-friendly.co.uk](mailto:admin@user-friendly.co.uk)

COMPUTER TRAINING  
CONSULTANCY  
COMPUTER SYSTEMS  
NETWORKING – SUPPORT  
MACRO & TEMPLATE  
INTERNET SERVICES

For further details or brochure please telephone

**Unit 5 West Gorgie Park  
Hutchison Road  
Edinburgh EH14 1UT**

## A LETTER FROM VIENNA

from Liselotte Adler-Kastner

My relationship to Vienna, unlike the intense love/hate emotions typical of my parents' generation who were thrown out of the Austrian capital by the Nazis, is a very detached, and rather disturbed one. I appreciate the beauty of the city with its magnificent architecture, but the appearance of beauty is superficial and, thus, deceptive. This superficiality applies likewise to the well-dressed, middle-class inhabitants of the city with their reputed *Gemütlichkeit*. I find that, under this veneer, many are arrogant, ill-mannered and insincere. Initially I took this personally and wondered whether the formal and inhospitable attitude of colleagues and acquaintances was perhaps rooted in anti-Semitism, but on making the acquaintance of other British (non-Jewish) mothers whose children, like mine, attended the kindergarten of English School in Vienna, I discovered that their experiences of Austrian behaviour were identical to mine. Thus, it would be a mistake to think of these unattractive national traits as evidence of anti-Semitism. However, such attitudes make for uneasy social relationships, especially in view of Vienna's anti-Semitic reputation, and I greatly missed the friendships which had made life so pleasant in Britain. Moreover, according to my theory that Jews take on some of the characteristics of the country they live in, I did not make many friends in the Jewish community either, although very few of them originally come from Vienna.

Of course, there are wonderful aspects to living in Austria. I love the proximity of the Alps for skiing and the beautiful countryside where, on the whole, the inhabitants are so much more friendly than in the capital. The Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra is still one of the greatest orchestras in the world, even if there is only one female member, a harpist, and her

appointment was made under duress, following agitation from feminists in the USA and threats of boycotting the orchestra. The opera attracts the best international soloists and many of the productions in the beautiful opera house are superb. The opera house was gutted by bombs in May 1945 and was subsequently rebuilt according to the plans of Erich Boltenstern, an architect who lost his university professorship during the war on account of his anti-Nazi stance, reminding us that there were some, albeit very few, decent and courageous Austrians. But even in regard to music, Vienna is still partly living on its reputation, much of which was built up in the later 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries by Jews or those of Jewish origin – Gustav Mahler, Arnold Schönberg, Bruno Walter, Rudolf Serkin and Richard Tauber, to mention only a few of the greatest, never mind the most 'Viennese' composer of all, Johann Strauss. Today, the concert programmes in Vienna are generally rather conservative in comparison with those in London and New York. Before the War there were a number of excellent amateur ensembles such as the Wiener Ärztochester (Viennese Doctors' Orchestra) and most academics played chamber music avidly. However, since a large proportion of the players were Jewish, the exiled amateur musicians transplanted this tradition to their new homelands, to the detriment of the post-war Viennese scene.

The destruction of cultural tradition in Vienna in the aftermath of the *Anschluss* in March 1938 extended to all the arts and was paralleled by the decline in academic excellence. It is self-evident that if around 80% of the lawyers and 70% of the doctors in a capital city are dismissed overnight, this vacuum cannot be rectified in one or two generations, especially since the exiled were rarely reinstated after the war. The

once-famous Vienna Medical School, to which students flocked from all over the world, never recovered from the expulsion of over half of its senior staff following the *Anschluss*. Although the post-war medical training was abysmal by comparison with that in Britain, the Vienna Medical School made great difficulties over recognising my Edinburgh medical degree when I got married in 1963. The climate in the Pharmacology Department, where I obtained a part-time lectureship *faute de mieux*, was opposed to women – not a single woman was appointed *Dozent* (senior lecturer) in the 35 years I spent there. When our third son was born, I decided to give up the unequal professional struggle – a far cry in any case from the practice of clinical endocrinology or paediatrics, which had been my aim as a young doctor in Scotland – and I switched from medical research to editorial work. These difficulties are characteristic of Vienna University, but have nothing to do with anti-Semitism, as far as I can judge.

I must stress, in all fairness, that I have never personally experienced anti-Semitism in Austria. However, that is not to say that it does not exist. Perhaps Austrian colleagues and acquaintances are careful about what they say in front of me. I have been outraged and disgusted on several occasions by remarks made by (usually older) Austrians who have been interviewed on television, but since all programmes dealing with any aspect of the Holocaust are relayed after the 10 o'clock news, when the majority of Austrians, thinking or otherwise, are safely asleep, few others will have taken offence. Since I never read the "*Kronen Zeitung*", the "rag" with the highest daily circulation in Austria, I have learned of the occasional, despicable anti-semitic or even Holocaust trivialisation comment in its columns only at second hand. Certainly in the wake of the

'Waldheim affair', when the Austrians were affronted not only by the fact that the world could condemn a man who had been Secretary General of the United Nations but also by its 'interference' in their internal presidential elections, anti-Semitism reared its ugly head on a widespread scale and Jewish friends told me of unpleasant, even hateful, remarks made to them by Viennese people whom they had formerly considered friends. But one must not forget that the fuss over the 1986 Austrian presidential election was partly a political issue. For the first time, the People's Party had put up a candidate of international stature (so they thought) who was capable of breaking the Socialist Party's monopoly of Austria's highest office since 1945. Hence the anger directed at the World Jewish Congress, amongst others, for uncovering Waldheim's Nazi past. This was a most uncomfortable time to be Jewish in Vienna. I thought that, as a liar and an opportunist suffering from selective amnesia (covering the years 1938–1945), Waldheim was totally unworthy of the presidency, not least following Kirchschräger, who was a President of the highest integrity and who had commanded universal affection and respect. Moreover, Waldheim's (or his advisers') handling of the situation was stupid in the extreme – he would only have had to say that, like most other Austrians in the 1930s, he had been dazzled by the Nationalist Socialist promises, that he bitterly regretted his youthful affiliations and that, if elected, he would do all in his power to promote interracial harmony and the whole discussion would have been nipped in the bud. I have always maintained that this was the only lie he was incapable of uttering! However, I was unhappy about the accusations that Waldheim was a war criminal, because the Austrians were never presented with unequivocal evidence of his having been involved in Nazi executions or atrocities, and there was a grave danger that they would conclude

that undoubted war criminals, such as Eichmann and all the other bestial Austrians who were never tried or never convicted, in Austrian courts after the war, were equally innocent of war crimes. The reaction of the Western democracies (if the Vatican can be excluded from this definition) in shunning Waldheim for the entire tenure of his presidency, was heart-warming and should have prepared the Austrians for the international outcry to the current political situation. But which people learn from history? Not the Austrians who would appear to have particularly poor short-term memories.

What are some of the suppressed historical facts? The Austrian Jews were dismissed overnight from their positions in March 1938 and robbed of their homes and possessions, as well as their citizenship and their academic qualifications. About 65,000 of the Jewish population in Austria (over 186,000 in 1938) perished in the Holocaust. Most of those who miraculously survived or escaped never received anything back, nor were encouraged to return to their former homeland. It was infuriating then to learn from television or the radio on numerous occasions that a 'distinguished Austrian, now living in the USA' had received international acclaim or distinction. All of a sudden some exiled, persecuted Jew, who had never been given back his citizenship after the war, was patriotically reclaimed and fêted, whereby the Austrian media usually referring to his forced transfer of domicile as if it had been a voluntary act rather than an escape from almost certain death. The latest such 'honouring' was of Walter Kohn, who received the Nobel Prize for Chemistry in 1998. The headline in *Die Presse*, Vienna's conservative daily newspaper and pallid successor to the famous pre-war *Neue Freie Presse*, (on which Theodor Herzl served as journalist around 1900) jubilantly announced, '25 years after Konrad Lorenz, Austria can once again claim a Nobel prize-winner'. On interview Kohn

stated categorically that he did not feel Austrian and could never come to terms with the loss of his parents in the Holocaust, nor forget the humiliations he was subjected to as a teenager in Vienna before managing to escape on one of the last *Kindertransporte* to Britain. But how many viewers really understood the implications? Maybe the young generation did, for this distinguished American scientist said that he had been invited to speak at his former school, the illustrious *Akademisches Gymnasium* from which he had been dismissed after the *Anschluss*, and had been gratified by the interest generated by this among the present pupils in a lengthy question and answer session.

It is interesting that the Waldheim affair, which shocked many Austrian Jews into recognising the anti-Semitic undercurrents in the population, also had some very beneficial political effects over the past decade. For the first time since the war, young people demanded answers to questions about the role of Austrians as the perpetrators, instead of the first victims, of National Socialist ideology, which had been the illusive image until then. The ensuing discussions set in motion a change in climate in Austria. Official parliamentary statements made by then-Chancellor Vranitzky in Vienna in July 1991 — and later in the Knesset — publicly admitting the collective responsibility of Austrians to acknowledge the ignominious role played by their country between 1938 and 1945, paved the way for many positive developments. For example, Teddy Kollek came back to visit his former home town for the first time since 1938 and gave a most moving speech at a glittering reception in his honour in the Vienna Town Hall. Further examples were the initiation of very active co-operation in research between the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and Vienna University; the foundation of a flourishing independent liberal daily

newspaper *Der Standard* by Oscar Bronner, the son of a brilliant Jewish cabaret artist, in which excellent journalists could critically report on the Austrian scene; and spontaneous offers of help by youth groups to tend the neglected Jewish cemeteries in places where the community was completely annihilated. Last, but not least, at a commemorative symposium organised by the Medical Faculty in 1998 reflecting on the aftermath of the *Anschluss*, the retired highest church dignitary of Austria, Cardinal König, who has often attended B'nei B'rith meetings and shown much interest in Jewish matters, admitted that blame attached to the Catholic church for contributing to anti-Semitism in Austria.

Since Austrian involvement in National Socialism was so long suppressed or ignored, restitution claims by victims or their heirs were largely unsuccessful. Recently, increasing pressure has been put on the government from abroad to legislate for the return of stolen possessions such as works of art. Particularly damning revelations have emerged of blackmail by public institutions in Austria after the war. Thus, for example, when the former Viennese branch of the Rothschild family tried to retrieve its invaluable collection which had been confiscated by the Nazis in 1938, some of the best treasures including a Frans Hals were retained by Vienna's *Kunsthistorisches Museum* after 1945 (under the euphemistic term "donation") as precondition for shipment to the USA of the remainder of their reclaimed works of art. At least the Rothschilds eventually received everything back, albeit with a delay of over 50 years; the Bloch-Bauer family who owned the famous pictures by Gustav Klimt which hang in the Austrian National Gallery will probably never get their priceless pictures back.

Against this background of increased cognisance of Austria's reprehensible response to her

National Socialist past, the election results of October 1999, preceded by a chilling Freedom Party rally in the centre of Vienna accompanied by Nazi salutes and, apparently, shouts of 'Heil Haider', were a rude awakening for all liberally-minded citizens. The vote was partly a protest against 30 years of a Socialist-dominated government, but the Green Party would have been a viable option under their current very able leadership. However, it is truly shocking that, in a country as wealthy as Austria, 27% of the population should have voted for a flagrantly racist party. The overwhelming enthusiasm for Hitler in 1938 must be seen against the dire poverty, widespread unemployment and galloping inflation in Austria at the time. Today, Haider can rally his supporters with inflammatory speeches directed against foreign workers who are taking away the jobs of the 'good, hard-working Austrians', but in reality few Austrians will undertake the jobs which are currently done by Turkish or former Yugoslav citizens; moreover, he scaremongers by prophesying an overwhelming influx of workers from the former East-block countries into Austria on future expansion of the European Union. However, the banners defiantly held up by demonstrators stating that 73% of Austrians did NOT vote for Haider are too simplistic, since those who voted for the People's Party knew they were playing with fire when, during the run-up to the election, Schüssel, the leader of the party, refused to rule out a coalition with the Freedom Party. Still, 150 000 Austrians – a remarkable turnout – and many people are indeed appalled by the current political situation. It is particularly sad that the impeccable post-war record of Austria in offering hospitality to refugees successively from Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and other countries behind the "iron curtain" has been annulled by the present racist political overtones.

It must be clearly stated that **at the moment**, anti-Semitism is not an issue. The number of hate letters received by the executive office of the Vienna Jewish community apparently increased last year and the president of the community has been given police protection as a precautionary measure, but on the whole life for Jews in Vienna has not really changed. However, the warning signals must be taken most seriously. Haider is a very dangerous politician and nobody should be fooled that he has now docilely relinquished the national platform to reign content over his province of Corinthia. Misusing his undoubted oratorical skills for propounding facile, populist arguments, offensive statements (which he never really retracts or apologises for on being censured), his economically-questionable, but alluring political promises, allied to charisma, flamboyant sporting activities, 'cool' sartorial flair and impertinent good looks, he appeals to a large, broad-based section of Austrian voters. To me he looks demoniac with that sneering grin, which reminds me of the photos taken in 1938 which showed Nazi Party members laughing at Jews who were forced to clean the pavements of Vienna with toothbrushes. However, Haider has never been recorded as making an overtly anti-semitic statement, although his defamatory comments have skirted close by in referring to the concentration camps as "*Staflager*" (punishment camps), praising the employment policy of the National Socialists and likening the fate of the *Südetendeutsche* on being expelled from Czechoslovakia after the war to that of Jewish Holocaust victims, among many other revealing comments.

Haider is surrounded by a team of absolutely loyal associates (if they are not they are immediately cast off), some of whom are very competent. Two who have made totally unacceptable racist remarks in the past were fortunately vetoed for ministerial posts by President

*Continued on page 19*

# WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE JEWISH?

In this issue, we publish another contribution to this series.  
The Editor would welcome further contributions from readers

## CONFESSIONS OF A SINNER

by Esti Sheinberg

Tel-Aviv, Saturday 1st April. In three weeks, two thousand years will conclude since the miraculous resurrection of God, the son of God, the grandson of the Holy Virgin's mother, who was the grandmother of God, yet nothing special is felt in the air, except for the unbearable heat of the first *Hamsin*, the smell of the vanishing spring flowers and the gut-feeling that hay fever is on its way.

I know, I know, my liberal, enlightened and intellectual friends. You are deeply shocked. You see the former paragraph as a coarse and tasteless offence against the culture within which we live, and which, as members of the modern civilised world, we should respect. How can I use such base mockery when speaking of the Christian belief in God's incarnation, knowing that there are people who will be offended by it? Relax, oh brethren. I promise to explain myself, later.

For the time being, however, we are still in the spring stricken Tel-Aviv, the sinful city that never rests, not even on a *Shabbes*, particularly not on a *Shabbes*. My sister-in-law, Michal, rings the doorbell. She drove all the way from Netanya with her worshipped son, my four-year old nephew, Tomer. He and grandmother, who is my mum but also the grandmother of God, because this is how Tomer is regarded in the family, go out to play football in the park. Tomer always wins 2017:0. It is a tradition and traditions must be kept. Michal and I stay at home and discuss crucial subjects like kitchen furniture and how horrible men are. Michal is wearing a teeny-weeny-mini skirt, which has slits up the

side so that nothing is left in doubt. She is barefoot and her long legs are stretched out in front of her. I drool my old-hag's envy all over the floor and Michal paints her nails pink. She will leave in half an hour, drive with a friend to the beach which is littered with shameless young Jewish men and women wearing tiny bathing suits, drink ice-coffee in a coffee house on the shore, gossip-till-bleeding, and then come back to take God home. When she passes through the door she kisses the *Mezuzah*. She always kisses the *Mezuzah* when passing through the door. I chuckle behind her back.

It is afternoon, 30 degrees Celsius in the shade. God's grandmother and Tomer Himself come back from their *Shabbes* football game and collapse in front of the video, to watch – for the 183rd time – the immortal Julie Andrews and Dick van Dyke dancing with cartoon-penguins. God's mum comes home, too. It is at this crucial point in time that Tomer has his favourite lunch, a processed 'junkchicken' with spaghetti. His mum, who might have been born in Egypt but is otherwise a fully qualified *Yiddishe Momme*, diligently shoves food into his open mouth while he stares at the Chim-Chim-Cheree. He eats very, veeery, slowly. God has nothing to hide; Tomer's mouth is eternally open wide. As everybody knows, spaghetti are messy by nature. Chewed 'junkchicken' looks quite messy, too. Julie Andrews ignores her educational duty and insists on speaking English instead of expressing herself in proper Hebrew. Tomer, who doesn't go to a *Cheder*, does not read the subtitles. Besides, he knows the film by heart. Penguins or not, the child is bored.

From time to time he goes to do something else – kick the ball toward the TV set, pull his mum's hair, dance, drop ketchuped noodles on the sofa. Whatever he does, be it open-mouthed chickenchewing, living-room footballing, shouting, pushing wet-sloppy thingies into the sofa's pillows, everything is accepted with the loving, admiring, worshipping eyes of both mum and grandma. I, the 'nasty auntie', grumble to myself. This kid never gets a 'no, you can't do that'. Nothing is forbidden. It is obvious that the poor child is getting the worst imaginable education.

God finishes his lunch. Mess is gathered. Now he stands erect and shouts: 'I'm thirsty! Give me chocolate drink'. Unlike me, Michal is insensitive to petty stylistic issues, and reacts immediately: 'No, you can't,' she says calmly, 'you just had meat, and a chocolate drink is dairy. Drink water instead.' So, Tomer goes and drinks water.

While any other 'no' would start World War III, or at least initiate a volcanic eruption of mixed liquids out of all the child's divine facial pores, nothing had happened. No argument, no shouts, no 'blah-blah'. Further, the 'no' sounded obvious and natural to all of us present.

What's going on? Why is everything fine – shouting, spluttering, spilling, getting wild – everything except drinking Carlo-Choco after junkchicken? Why does it feel fine to drive on a *Shabbes*, wear a teeny-weeny-mini-skirt, sit in a coffee house, watch half-naked hunks and hunkesses, gossip-till-bleeding (*Loishon-Horo!*), let the kid be cheeky and unruly, but not have

a dairy drink right after eating meat? After all, none of us is particularly *froom*. We don't observe the *Shabbes*. We are not particularly careful about Kosher food, either, but *obviously* - and this is so obviously obvious - we don't mix dairy with meat.

The reason for that is simple: this is how we are. Moreover, this is *important* for us. More important, apparently, than not driving on a *Shabbes*. More important than teaching a child to chew with his mouth closed. I don't care if anybody sees it as paradoxical (which it is) or primitive (which it is not). We also don't eat pork, shrimps, nor any other creepy things. This is not because we are better than anybody else. After all, eating a cow is not more moral than eating a snail. It is simply so. That's the way we are.

It is now time for explanations, as promised, and I return to my intellectual friends, here in Edinburgh and there in Tel-Aviv, who may have been shocked by my rude opening paragraph. Since I am Jewish, my explanation will start with a question. It is addressed to all the liberally minded, 21st century, new Millennium, non-observant Jewish people who speak disparagingly of the 'primitive and backward' Orthodox Jews; to those young cool Tel-Aviv men who gallantly and proudly wear their new skinhead non-hairdoes, because 'this is just a fashion' and talk jokingly about Jerusalem as 'another country'; to my dear close friends (and I mean it) who wholeheartedly believe in the healing power of shiny stones, in *chakras* and in *mantras*, but despise the significance attached to a *Mezuzah*.

Dear friends, *Yidn!* Could you please let me know why were you shocked by my smirk on the account of the Holy Virgin's *Momme* (please appreciate my discreet refrain from asking any questions about the *Schwigger*) and her grandmotherly

feelings towards God? Why did you regard it an offence to another religion? Is it because, regardless of any logic, Christianity is part of human culture and, as such, deserves respect? If so, why is it fine to mock and despise some illogical idiosyncrasies of our own culture, which (please correct me if I'm wrong) are also part of human culture? Is saying that a virgin conceived a child less ridiculous than kissing a *Mezuzah*? Is spreading holy water over a baby less superstitious than going to a *Mikveh*? Is the symbolical eating of Christ's body and drinking of his blood less primitive than not eating dairy with meat? Why not mock them and yes mock us, oh broad-minded friends, why the double standards, may I ask? Why is Christianity 'symbolical' and our religion 'superstitious'? Why must we be polite to them when they don't feel the need to be polite to us? Would it not be proper for us to ingratiate Judaism with the same respectful acceptance that we duly impart to all other religions? And as for my rudeness, I hereby offer an agreement: you will stop mocking the *Mikveh*, the *Mezuzahs* and the lack of logic of Kosher laws, and I will never again ask any questions about Mrs. Um-Miriam, God's grandmother. In other words: if other people are respected for illogical behaviours in certain contexts, then me too, me too. Agreed?

As a member of a human culture, I have the right to a cultural non-logic of my own. On these grounds I am ready and willing to discuss my Jewishness, Michal's illogical behaviour, and even my shameless habit of devouring *treif* Scottish Beef without any butter. I demand respect for this cultural non-logic precisely because this is what makes me Jewish.

Our rabbis and teachers say that in Judaism we obey the commandments without asking questions or demanding explanations, but simply accept them since God said so; we love

God, and in the name of that love His wish is done, period. This sounds right and perfectly fits the devotional way of life of any *Lubavitcher*. However, and with all due respect to Rabbi Yokhannan ben Zakkay who is said to have been the first to formalise this non-arguable argument, it does not explain why non-observant Jews, I mean us, sinful *shkutzem* that we are, still don't do this and don't do that. Why don't I eat shrimps? Why does cream sauce on a steak not look right to me? The reason is, of course, that I am Jewish, and Jews don't eat shrimps or pour cream sauce on a steak. Not eating certain things is a cultural characteristic. Cultures are made of myriad tiny details. We don't refrain from consuming certain items because of God's commands. Grandma and Michal and Tomer and I keep certain Jewish traditions not because we are observant, but because this is our way to be a part of a cultural 'us'. I abstain from the delights of Chicken Kiev- because this enables me to say 'we' and mean by that both myself and Rabbi Ovaddiah Yosef, even though he is not a nice person, and also mean that the Pope is excluded, even though he seems a nicer person. Rabbi Ovaddiah and me, like it or not, are a 'we' in that particular sense that prevents us from mixing dairy with meat. [Actually, it seems that this 'we' must mean a lot to Ovaddiah. Otherwise he would not be so violently angry whenever I drive on a *Shabbes*, while he seems quite indifferent when the Pope, who is far more important than I am, does the same thing.]

When I walk (or drive) on a *Shabbes* in the streets of Tel-Aviv I see many places open. More and more restaurants have mussels and other mucous stuff on their menus, which are regarded by the connoisseurs as real delicatessen. These restaurants are rarely empty, and it is quite safe to assume that most of their customers are Jewish. In the very same streets I also see people wearing *Yarmulkas*, who would never set a foot in these restaurants.

What I have in common with the latter is that, among some other details, we don't eat dairy with meat. What we have in common with those Tel-Aviv connoisseurs who delight in eating a steak with cream-sauce garnished with shrimps is they eat dairy with meat *in spite of it being prohibited*. This makes me, the *yarmulka*-wearers and the gourmet-lovers part of one group, which is composed of all those who regard shrimp-eating as a cultural statement. This group is opposed to another group of people who eat shrimps without attaching to it any emotional, ethical, moral or historical side-effects.

As a citizen of the civilised world I want to see Christian, Moslem, Buddhist and any other traditions and beliefs respected, regardless of their specific peculiarities, and regardless of the fact that these peculiarities may or may not seem funny to some people. I think it is only fair that we grant the same respectful attitude to Jewish traditions and beliefs. These traditions allow us to be what we are. As all human traditions, ours, too, has elements which are primitive, superstitious, funny, illogical, nonsensical, and which, with all that, are also symbolically and culturally significant. Whatever our personal opinion of these

traditions might be, they are part of a human culture which, coincidentally, happens to be our culture. Therefore, in this case, and beyond any fairness criteria, respecting these traditions is also respecting our very Self within humankind; respecting them means acquiring our right to say 'we'.

This is probably why not drinking Carlo-Choco after eating junkchicken may indeed be culturally more important for us than not chewing with an open mouth. But still, I must admit, I wouldn't mind if the latter could somehow be imposed, too... please... Michal... please do something... when did you say the next plane to Edinburgh leaves?

*Dr Esti Sheinberg is a Lecturer in Music at the University of Edinburgh. Her article on 'Anti-Semitism in Music, which was published in Issue 33, received an Honourable Mention in this year's competition for communal magazines organised by the Board of Deputies.*

*Continued from page 16*

Klestil, but I find it very worrying that the Freedom Party controls the Ministry of Justice (headed by a politically-independent minister in the previous government). Among other things, this means that no

further action on bringing Austrian war criminals to justice is ever likely to be taken. There is, however, one very bitter pill from the Jewish point of view. Haider has his *Hoffjude* (Jewish courtier) in Peter Sichrovsky, a writer-turned-politician, who is a Freedom Party member of the European Parliament. It is inconceivable that a Jew who wrote well-received books on Holocaust themes and thoughtful articles on Jewish issues in Austria should commit such a betrayal. His apotheosis of Haider and justification of his political mentor's ideology are unbearable.

The hard-line reaction of the European Union was a most welcome condemnation of the rise to governmental power of a racist party in Austria, made possible by the opportunism of the People's Party. Austrians naively did not expect this response and always underestimate the intelligence and informed political understanding of other nations, especially the British. Unfortunately, the sanctions probably hit the wrong people in Austria and may well have a boomerang, anti-Europe effect. However, a gesture of rejection was absolutely required. While other nations may also have their problems with virulently nationalistic parties, Austria must never be allowed to forget that with her notorious history of fascism and anti-Semitism a resurgence of racism in any form will not be tolerated.

*Our Austrian correspondent, Liselotte Adler-Kastner, whose parents left Vienna after the Anschluss in 1938, was born and educated in Edinburgh but has lived in Vienna since her marriage in 1963. She would like to point out that her thoughts are those of a non-political observer who spends a considerable proportion of time with her family in London and that they may not accurately reflect the current situation in Austria. The fact that her three sons were all born in 'The Simpson' in Edinburgh and therefore have British nationality, indicates her long-standing scepticism towards Austrian politics (and medicine). She is currently a Visiting Scholar in the School of Humanities at Oxford Brookes University.*

**STEWART**  
  
**SAUNDERS**  
 ESTATE AGENTS  
 & MORTGAGE CONSULTANTS

**SELLING YOUR HOME?**

41 FREDERICK STREET  
 EDINBURGH, EH2 1EP

- ★ Personal attention from our Directors and Staff.
- ★ Highly competitive sales fee.
- ★ Maximum legal fees £285 + VAT + outlays for sale or purchase of any price property.

We will call and advise on valuation and marketing **WITHOUT CHARGE OR OBLIGATION**

Tel: **0131 226 6464**

Monday to Friday 9.30 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
 Saturday 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sunday 1 to 4 p.m.

# SOME TWENTIETH CENTURY JEWISH ARTISTS

## PART TWO

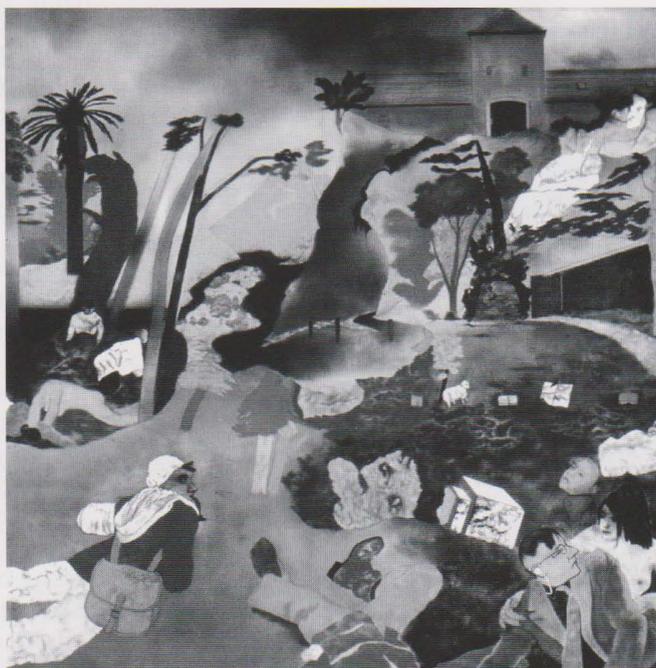
by Samuel Robin Spark

Mark Gertler (1891 - 1939) was born in England of Austrian parents. His first language was Yiddish. He grew up in the East End community of Spitalfields. In his early paintings he portrayed the people of this community, for example in 'The Jewish Family' and 'Rabbi and Rabbinitzin', in the latter of which, in spite of conscious patterning and manipulation of perspective, he creates a cosy, domestic scene.

A most beautiful painting is 'The Rabbi and his Grandchild' (reproduced on the cover of this issue) which expresses the tenderness of the relationship between the two. His hand is extended with his middle finger touching the child under the chin, as though the little girl was the greatest treasure of his life. The hand is beautifully rendered, as is the face of the venerable Rabbi. His features are Semitic; his eye-brows dramatic; and his beard carefully combed out. His grandchild, by contrast, has a Slavonic look. Her face is bland and unblemished - life has yet to etch its lines upon it. The touches of red in the prevailing black of the clothing - the ear-ring and necklace of the child, the fastening on the Rabbi's coat, and even the artist's signature and date - break up the density of the black in an aesthetically satisfying manner.

I should like at this point to give brief mention to three artists who are not among the principal five: Natalia Goncharova (Russian); David Bomberg (English); and R B Kitaj (American).

Goncharova's 'Rabbi with Cat' (see



R B Kitaj 'If Not . . . Not' (1976).

cover of last issue) is a good example of the 'cat-as-family' motif. It shows a sad Rabbi holding in his arms a cat which is trying to jump out of his loving embrace. Behind him are two figures with heavy backpacks making their way purposefully out of the picture - the emigrants. The hand pointing in to the picture from the left is the yad used to point to the text when reading from the scroll of the Law, a reminder to the emigrants to hold fast to their religion.

David Bomberg's 'Hear O Israel' shows a Rabbi with a mantled scroll in his right arm and a prayer shawl covering his head and shoulders. His face is in deep shadow and can rarely be seen - he is merely the servant of the Law. This is an immensely dynamic picture in which the gold cover of the scroll is reflected in the white of the shawl over the Rabbi's head and down his left side, so that he appears to be encircled in brilliant golden light. Another of Bomberg's pictures,

'Ghetto Theatre' shows members of the audience at the Yiddish theatre so popular in Eastern Europe and brought by the immigrants to London and New York. The audience is clearly Jewish since the men are still wearing their hats. There is a simplification of the faces and figures here, suggestive of Cubism and something of the patterning of Kramer.

R B Kitaj was born in Ohio in 1932 and has lived and taught in London for many years. His picture, 'If Not, Not' (reproduced left) was painted in 1976. The artist has acknowledged his debt to T S Eliot's 'The Wasteland' (from which comes the title of the picture) and beyond

Eliot to Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness'. This is clearly a Holocaust picture since the gatehouse to Auschwitz dominates the top left of the canvas. But this picture does not at first elicit from us a strong emotional response unless it be the repugnance we feel for the black, swamp-like expanse before the gatehouse and the unpleasant objects within and around it. In the upper right of the painting there is a tropical scene with dead or dying figures strewn along a river bank. This is a rather cerebral picture which invites us to ponder the question of how a seemingly advanced civilisation could descend to such depths of barbarity. Viewed from a distance the picture is almost pretty; up close we see that horrors abound. The veneer of civilisation is thin indeed.

The last of the five artists about whom I wish to write in some detail is the Israeli artist Yosl Bergner. He was born in Vienna but grew up in Warsaw. In 1937 at the age of

seventeen he emigrated to Australia but in 1950 settled in Israel with his Australian wife, Audrey, also a fine painter. His father was a well-known Yiddish poet and a friend of Kafka.

In the early forties news of what was happening in Europe filtered down to Australia. Bergner's response



Yosl Bergner 'The Village on Fire' (1972).

was a series of paintings in which he expresses his distress at the attacks upon and the destruction of the Warsaw ghetto.

'The Village on Fire' (reproduced above) shows a group of bewildered children, some barefoot, being shepherded away across the snow from their burning village by an elderly Jewish man. The body language and facial expressions of the figures are eloquent expressions of their desolation and their dark clothing seen against the whiteness of the snow gives further emphasis to their feelings.

'Job' is crouched on the ground, his knees drawn up and his arms clasped tightly around them. His head is tilted upwards and away from us. He is barefoot, seated on snowy ground, silhouetted against a dark sky. He is wearing a *tsitsit* and the sackcloth of mourning. A lonely, isolated figure, his expression is one

of infinite sadness and perplexity that he is being punished so cruelly. He is the personification of his persecuted people.

In the first of two pictures entitled 'Ghetto Wall', the figures in the foreground go about their business with hunched shoulders and frightened expressions. They are

separated, isolated, from one another, all turning in on their own misery. The snow they walk on is brown and dirty – it is noticeable that both Chagall and Bergner remember their native lands in the snow, but whereas for Chagall the snow is pure white, in Bergner it is always sullied. The middle ground is taken up with the tenements of the ghetto. The windows are black, empty spaces; some of the houses are askew – it is as if the very buildings are contorted in grief. At the top of the picture the ghetto wall looms over all, outlined against a dark sky with touches of angry red. There is an air of gloom and desolation over everything. The second picture entitled 'Ghetto Wall' shows the head and shoulders of a Jew looking up and back towards the ghetto wall which towers above him and has been fortified with barbed wire to imprison him within it. The ground

is white with snow but the wall is red. The sky is full of threatening storm clouds.

'Father and Sons' shows an emaciated Jew and two naked, emaciated children, prompting thoughts of the death camps, although the buildings in the background are those of the ghetto. The father is wearing his *tsitsit* and his hands are clasped before him. A gloomy, ominous sky fills two-thirds of the picture. There is no more heart-rending portrayal of man's inhumanity to man than is to be found in these pictures.

Once settled in Australia, Bergner became aware, to his dismay, that poverty and discrimination were not unknown there either. He empathised with the Aboriginal people who seemed to him to share many of the miseries of the Jews in Europe. They were isolated, persecuted, exploited and denied opportunity to participate in society.

In 'Aborigines in Fitzroy' he paints a group of Aboriginal people against the background of the buildings of the town. In fact they were not allowed to enter the town, something which incensed Bergner. 'Aborigines' shows four Aborigines chained by the neck to a dead tree. Of course this is not to be taken literally but rather as a metaphor for the disdainful attitude of the white population who looked upon the Aboriginal people as a sub-species, much as the Nazis looked upon the Jews. One of the figures is strongly reminiscent of 'Job'.

But poverty was not unknown among the white population also. In a picture with the ironic title 'Citizen', Bergner shows a man rummaging in a litter bin, while 'Salvation Army' is both a tribute to the work of that body and a comment on a society that made such work necessary.

The next group of pictures was painted after Bergner had moved to Israel. The first of these, 'Pioneers:

**Portrait'** commemorates his Uncle Monia who had been a pioneer in Israel between 1910 and 1920. After his return to Vienna, he took his own life. He is a ghostly figure in his Bedouin garb and protective face-covering, with only his eyes visible. He carries a rifle over his shoulder. **'Idealists'** shows a group of pioneers again in Bedouin garb, with rifles. A bird signifies the dangers of their life – hunger, malaria and the incursions of hostile neighbours. **'Ploughing'**, a water-colour, shows the pioneers at work, ploughing the land to make it productive. This painting is full of action and movement – huge amounts of hard, physical labour were urgently needed to make the land support them. There is an almost frenetic quality in the speed with which the painting has been executed. The brush-strokes are totally confident and very skilled.

There follows a series of pictures about the immigrants to Israel. **'Ship of Fools'** (the title alludes to Hieronymus Bosch's picture of the same name) is part of a huge mural at Haifa University. Bergner is now painting in the manner of the Surrealists. A large boat is full to capacity with a variety of masked figures, some with fools' hats, others with crowns. Some have animal faces, some appear to have horns. There is even a spice-box. An angel is gently guiding the boat to land. Bergner's picture of the new immigrants is far from idealised. They are a motley crew, a crowd of individuals, each with different hopes and expectations, many quite unprepared for the harsh realities of life in Israel.

**'The Girls from Safed'** has two elegantly dressed girls with stylised faces and dainty hands set against a background of brown terraced hills. The sky is dark and full of ominous-looking dark-coloured birds. The inference is that the girls are quite unprepared for the hardship and hard work that was required to form a new nation.



Yosl Bergner *'Alarm'* (1969).

**'The Butterfly Eaters'** makes the point even more forcibly. The five figures around the table are dressed for life in the affluent, comfortable, bourgeois districts of the European cities they have left behind. Instead of food, they are eating butterflies. A child plucks one from the air as it flies past. They are surrounded by lush, green, Rousseau-like vegetation. At the end of the table is a pair of crossed forks which, it has been suggested, signifies a lie. The new Israel is not a land where the living is easy. These people have had totally misconceived ideas about the country and are woefully unprepared to live there.

**'Alarm'** (reproduced above) shows a battered old alarm clock, the old-fashioned kind with a bell and hammer on top, striding across a brown, hilly, barren landscape against a stormy sky. The familiar domestic object has come to represent the people. The alarm had rung out all over Europe and now, at a very late hour (the clock shows twenty to twelve) the people are making their exodus to the Promised Land.

**'Vanity of Vanities'** shows a battered old dust-bin full of equally battered and discarded household objects and other rubbish. The lid of the bin is floating above the contents. The bin stands on a deserted shore. The refugees from Europe, the survivors of the death-camps, many destitute, sick, disturbed, unwanted in other places, have arrived in Israel. The sky above is still black and forbidding, but it is clearing near the horizon and a gleam of light is catching the metal of the bin and its contents. There is still hope.

**'The Gypsies of Jaffa'**, a play by his friend Nissim Aloni, inspired the painting of the same title. The characters in the play have been replaced by old or broken household objects and kitchen utensils. There are charcoal-burners, a spice-box, a broken mirror, a cakestand, a wine press, a large clay pot – and, of course, the potato grater, which Bergner himself told me represented the Jew. The potato was the anti-Semite who continually tried to grind down the Jew but was himself



*Yosl Bergner Marrano (1984).*

in the end ground away to nothing while the grater remained.

In the early 1960s, Bergner visited Spain and became acutely aware of the once-thriving Jewish of earlier centuries. In 1480, Queen Isabella decreed that Jews must convert to Catholicism or leave the country. Some of those who remained continued to practice secretly, knowing that torture and execution would follow if they were caught. These converted Jews were known as *Marranos*. In the picture '*Marrano*' (reproduced on the next page), a view is wearing not one but two bird-like masks. One frightened eye peeps round the side of the masks. The human figure with a bird-like face is familiar to any reader of any illustrated Passover *Haggadah* of earlier centuries. The illustrator felt that it would be blasphemous to portray a human being who was, after all, made in the image of God, in a realistic way. The first mask, therefore, affirms the Jew's humanity and value as a human being. The second mask, however, is forced upon him by the need to conceal his true religion. His human rights, therefore, are being denied him. He is being treated as a less-than-human being. The impulse which gave rise to the

Holocaust is not, alas unique to our century.

In conclusion I refer to the front cover of an illustrated *Haggadah*, or Passover story, done by Bergner between 1980 and 1984. This charming water-colour shows a happy family gathered round the Passover table with cheerful little angels sharing in the joy of the ceremony. The style is lyrical and shows the same sureness of touch we saw earlier in the water colour '*Ploughing*'. It is fitting to end with a modern example of an art form which has been familiar, in countless variations, to Jews for many centuries before Jewish artists finally took their place on the artistic world stage.

*Samuel Robin Spark is both a practicing artist and a teacher of art. Part One of his article, dealing with Marc Chagall, Jacob Kramer and Jankel Adler, appeared in the last issue of The Edinburgh Star. 'An exhibition entitled 'Yosl Bergner: a Retrospective' was held at Tel Aviv Museum of Art from March – June 2000 and The Edinburgh Star wishes to record its gratitude to the artist for permission to reproduce some of his paintings.*

## TWO POEMS BY HEINRICH HEINE

*translated by Eva Neuburg  
Erdelyi*

I

The waves are breaking on the cliff,  
I'm sitting here and dreaming;  
My mouth is spent, my limbs  
are stiff –  
Above the gulls area screaming.

The girls I loved, my friends of  
yore,  
Where are they now aroaming?  
The seagulls cry, while on the  
shore  
The waves are restlessly  
foaming.

II

Which the land and what the  
clime  
Where the wanderer's feet may  
rest?  
Under palm or under pine?  
In the East or in the West:  
Will a stranger dig my grave  
In a desert's barren sand?  
Or a gentle ocean wave  
Wash my body to the strand?

Anywhere, above my head  
Heaven's tent will surely  
spread,  
And the stars on cloudlus  
nights  
Be my graveside candle lights.

*With Compliments*

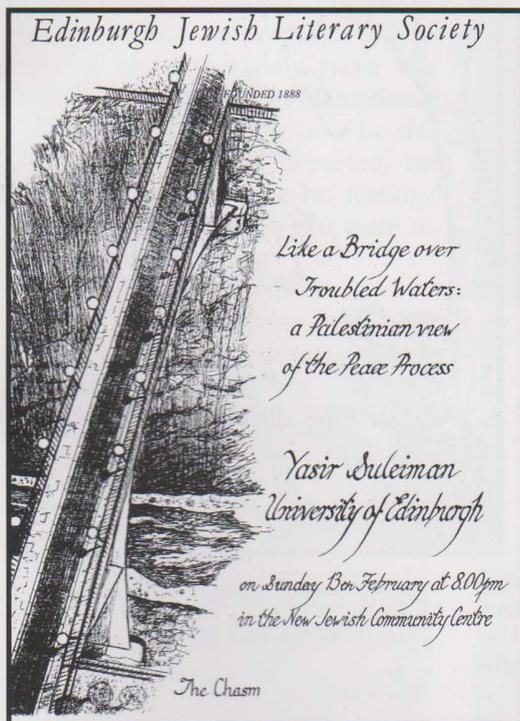
*from*

*Mark and*

*Judith Sischy*

# COUNTING ON THE LIT

*an exchange between Tony Gilbert and Charles Raab*



Behind the scenes of any great organisation with a public face, much goes on to ensure that the operation appears entirely seamless to those outside it; and so it is with the Literary Society. A small part of this major organisation concerns publicity, one aspect of which takes the form of regular poster production to advertise forthcoming events. Poster production itself has been delegated to just one highly motivated cartoonist, who in turn then calls upon the services of a totally dedicated team of publicity agents to ensure that his output gains the widest possible circulation. Of course such an operation requires much careful organisation with frequent messages passing between the cartoonist and his publicity team. We thought that there might be some general interest in the manner in which this highly professional exercise is run and that some of the emerging lessons concerning 'best practice' might usefully be employed elsewhere. So, below, we reproduce without change, a short exchange, in date

order, between the distinguished cartoonist and a leading member of the publicity team.

In order to clarify the background to this exchange, it may be helpful to point out that it concerns poster production for two successive talks. For the first of these, the cartoonist produced, rather unusually, two posters, while, for the second talk, which was arranged at rather short notice and was due to be delivered by a poet and authoress, the cartoonist hastily produced and had circulated a poster, only to learn subsequently that the talk was cancelled. The first message below concerns circulation of the poster for the second talk before it became known that the talk was cancelled. All the other messages were sent once it was known that the second talk had been cancelled.

Dear Elaine and Charlie

I am just about to put the latest Lit poster into the mail to you. As the speaker Michelene Wandor is an authoress and poetess, it might be a good idea to target bookshops, so I will send three extra copies to Elaine. If it is in fact easier for Charlie to target bookshops, could I leave the two of you to sort who posts where; I'm not getting into central area much these days. I will do the Shul, Hillel House, the UJS and the bakers as usual.

all the best,

Tony.

In reply, Charles Raab wrote:

Tony

You'll have heard that the talk has been cancelled.

Charlie

Tony's response was as follows:

Charlie

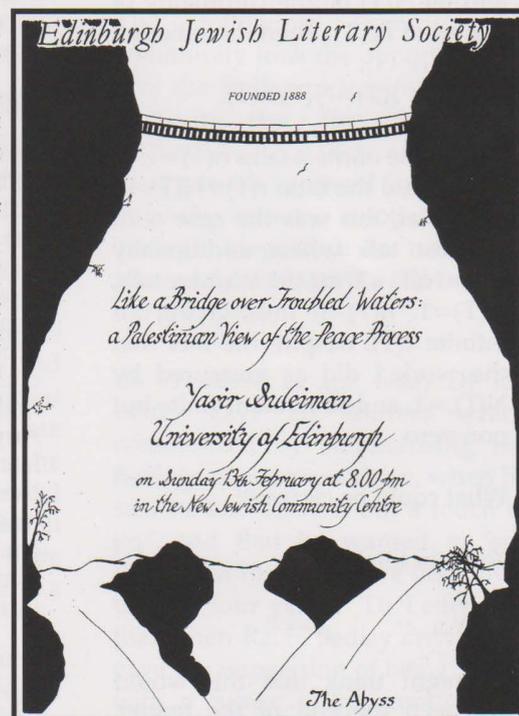
Thanks for the thought. I had indeed heard. I seem to be getting poster production rather out of synch with the talks: for the last meeting I did 2 posters for 1 talk, now I have done 1 poster for 0 talks. It is of course well known that mathematicians can't count.

Tony

This produced the following response:

Tony

If 2 posters for 1 talk means you did twice as much work, then 1 poster for 0 talks means either that you did an infinite amount, or you did nothing at all (in which latter



case, what's your complaint?). As a mathematician, can you tell me which it is? But if it is that you did nothing at all, then the poster you did an have in your hand, you only 'think' you did. You are either an existentialist or else you are meshuggah.

Or both.

An me too.

Charlie

These questions called for a full explanation:

Charlie

It's all totally straightforward. We need a definition.

The poster/talk ratio is defined as follows:

Let T be an advertised talk and let  $n(T)$  be the number of times it is delivered at the Lit. (We assume that  $n(T) = 0$  or  $1$ : a more general theory will in future be constructed to cover an arbitrary number of repetitions of the same talk!!!). For the advertised talk T, let  $P(i,T)$  be the  $i$ th poster produced and let  $N(T)$  be the cardinality of the set of  $P(i,T)$ . Then the ratio is

$$r(T) = N(T)/n(T).$$

In the case of most talks  $n(T)=1$ , in which case the ratio  $r(T)=N(T)$ . In particular, this was the case with the last talk where additionally  $r(T)=N(T)=2$ . for the Wandor talk,  $N(T)=1$ ,  $n(T)=0$  thus giving an infinite  $r(T)$ , despite the fact that the work I did as measured by  $N(T)=1$ , and so remains finite but non-zero.

What could be clearer!!!

Yours in total lunacy

Tony

You might think that this would have been the end of the matter.

However, Charlie was clearly not entirely convinced.

Tony:

I agree with every word you say, up to a point, and except in the Southwest between 1763 and 1810. And who is this cleric whose cardinality you're talking about? cardinal Numbers? That his name? What does he know from the Lit?

Feh!

Charlie

Tony did not reply directly but raised the issue of going public as follows:

Charlie

Do you thank our little exchange might have enough amusement content to be submitted to The Star? It seemed to be that it might raise a chuckle. I will attach it so you can read the whole thing. I won't submit it if you aren't happy about it.

Tony

At last, there appeared to be agreement between the mathematical cartoonist and the querulous member of the publicity team.

Tony

Could be nice. I would add one thing: could you apply the same acute mathematical reasoning to the rabbinical discussions in the *Haggadah* about how many plagues there were? I think one of those wiseguys was using a Modulo to up the ante but that's cheating. It was saloon-bar talk masquerading as rabbinics. Anyway they were all *shikka* and leaning too far to the left (or was it the right). Can you do maths under the influence? Maybe it comes out better that way. That's why alcohol is measured in proof numbers.

Yours aye (or oy!),

Charlie



### STAR TREK INTO THE PAST — DID YOU GUESS RIGHT?

#### The Party

The party are celebrating a successful fair held in 1948 (or thereabouts) to raise funds for a Communal Hall in Edinburgh. The fair was held in Forresters Hall in Forrest Road and Mr. Erin Deane supplied various entertainment machines for the occasion.

*From left to right:* Bernie Cohen, first unidentified man, second unidentified man, Erin Deane, third unidentified man, Clarice Osborne (née Oppenheim), Annette Hart, Freda Riffkin (née Oppenheim). Can anyone recognise any of the three unidentified men?

#### The Outing

The group in the picture are the Edinburgh Maccabi Cricket Club on a visit to Sunderland in the Summer of 1950. Can anyone remember the result?

*From back left:* Ellis Schulberg, Rudolf Essex, David Hyams, Rose Kleinberg, Betty Schulberg, Lennie Berger, Phyllis Bennett, Nan Caplan, Nette Benjamin, George Bindman, 'Tiger' Strachan, Barney Hoare, Ernie Josephs, Julie Lipetz, Mannie Wolfe, Debbie Benjamin, George Benjamin, Arthur Kleinberg.

## FOUR BOOKS ON THE HOLOCAUST

reviewed by Jonathan Fransman

There are two definitions of the Holocaust, the Greek definition and the definition of the Holocaust at the hands of the Nazi's during the Second World War. The first definition refers to a sacrifice consumed by fire and the second definition involves the slaughter of 6,000,000 Jews in Europe (That is bit under the population of London). I have taken four books to try to portray the meaning of the concentration camps and the Holocaust. They are all historically correct but in them the authors have produced some fictional characters and some uncharted events to base their books around. *Fragments* is the only book that is said to be the author's early memories of surviving the concentration camps but there is some doubt about the truth of the claims. Hitler disliked lots of groups including Homosexuals, Gypsies and Jehovah's Witnesses. He could not stand imperfections within his German system and hated people with disabilities too. He wanted each and every German citizen to be far superior to his or her European counterparts. He wanted the German race to be like god. He challenged the imperfections with the highest price, death.

**Judith Kerr:** *When Hitler stole the Pink Rabbit and the Sequel*

Anna is living in Berlin, Germany just before the war. Her dad is an anti nazi writer who is Jewish and has to get his family out of the growing Nazi regime. The book tells of the family's struggle as they move throughout Europe before finally settling down in London. This is definitely the tamest of the three books and it shows how Anna has to adapt to other cultures at the blink of an eye. In each new place Anna and her family have to cope with the vulnerability that the Nazis will follow them and catch them. She worries about making new

friends and getting behind in her work. When living in London, where everything is supposed to be safe, she has to brave the Luftwaffe Bombing London every Night and her brother is taken into a detention camp for being German and supposedly a Nazi supporter. Because her family have just come from Europe and are not recognized Anna needs to help her family to gain a decent income.

**Anne Holm:** *I Am David*

'I Am David' is a tragic story about a boy called David who is in a German concentration camp when a guard tells him how to escape the camp. Even though David thinks it is a trick he takes the guards advice and escapes. He discovers a beautiful world outside the concentration camp. He then tries to find his mother who he has never known, let alone seen. This book describes the journey he makes to get to his mother first through Poland, Germany and Italy; then through France; before finally arriving in his mother's home in Denmark. This book describes a compelling story about a child who has never known freedom and has a strong hatred for violence. His only memories outside are about a man called Johan who probably was his father. He had to learn to fend for himself in the concentration camps because if he didn't, who would have looked after him? Gradually on his travels he begins not only to see war but also to develop a love for the world around him. Children in the death camps had to grow up independently all over again because of their lack of parents and many other things that we regard as simple parental duty.

**Binyamin Wilkomirski:** *Fragments*

This is probably the most disturbing book that I have ever read. Binyamin Wilkomirski has recorded

his early memories of being in a concentration camp. He shows the incredibly depressing story through a child's eyes with primitive memories that could have easily been any child's. The book will probably shock any reader with no boundaries of holding back any details, no matter how disturbing the facts are. Apparently this book was made up and historians can trace his real parents but he still says it is true. He shows his emotion in an incredibly strong way that 'I Am David' didn't. He shows his feelings but I could understand why people could call it a fake because it's impossible that a man could remember those very particular feelings that he had in his youth. The argument to that is that people in his position will never forget the horror of the death camps. Some of the cruel events he describes are of playing with a guard who seems friendly but suddenly dashes his head against a wall. He remembers the smells being disgusting. He remembers a newcomer being shot blatantly because he screamed in the night. When he gets out of the concentration camps and is adopted in Switzerland he feels alienated by his classmates and wishes he was back with his friends who understand him in the concentration camp.

**Leon Uris:** *Exodus*

'Exodus' is without doubt my favorite of the four books, putting the spotlight on each of characters for a very long time, discovering their past and why they are here today. It's about after the war when thousands of Jews had survived the death camps and needed to find a home somewhere. They knew perfectly well that they couldn't go back to their original homes because most of them lived in Poland, Russia or Germany and their homes had been destroyed or taken and their neighbors turned against them. There was one place they could go

to and that was the land of Milk and Honey, Palestine. The only problem was that Britain had a peace agreement with the Arabs and the Jews would have to go somewhere else. At that time the Jews were living in something a bit like a concentration camp without the abuse. There were many boats trying to escape, but to no avail because the British destroyers just took them back again to Cyprus. It is a deeply depressing story and not all turns out well at the end. It showed me how people were abused in all kinds of ways. I learnt more through one of the characters called, Dov Landau. He was caught by the Nazis in the Ghetto uprising in Warsaw and sent to Auschwitz. He was in line to die but he saved himself by showing the Nazi officer that he could forge names. Later he was made to take out the dead from the gas chambers and burn the

bodies. He was damaged by all his experiences and became very bitter and hated all people who weren't Jewish. So from Dov Landau I learnt that the only thing that racism breeds is more racism. The same thing has happened recently in Kosovo. Do you think that the Kosovan Albanians will just think oh well, let's forget about it. No, there will be a feud between each other for generations.

### Death camps

The Holocaust was one of the most organized racial discriminations ever in the history of the world. People were abused in all different ways. From the 'Pink Rabbit' we saw how the lucky ones escaped to Britain and the U.S.A. But even they struggled. Other less lucky people died from reasons ranging from starvation to the gas chambers.

Inmates will never forget the trauma of the concentration camps. People went insane increasingly day by day. Jews were made to destroy the dead bodies and any other work that they required of them. The aim was to rid the world of the Jewish people and the others mentioned in the introduction. The few survivors probably would have gone insane from the images that they had been in constant contact in.

### Conclusion

The only antidote to racism is knowledge and the next generation should make sure that racists like Hitler don't commit atrocities like this to and type of people.

*Jonathan Fransman is twelve years old and in his last year at Bruntsfield Primary School. He wrote this book review as a school project.*

## **Alice Bach (ed.), *Women in the Hebrew Bible: a Reader*, New York and London: Routledge 1999, pp. xxvi + 539, hardcover £51.82, paperback £19.99.**

*reviewed by Ros Abramsky*

The millennium celebrations may not have the religious significance for Jews that they do for Christians. But the Hebrew Bible in its current form has survived intact throughout the two thousand years that Western culture denotes as *Anni Domini*. Reading from it has formed a central feature of Jewish worship, particularly in the absence of the Temple sacrifices, another situation we have been living with for nearly as long. Learning and discussing its contents are the starting point for much of Jewish education – the doings of its rich cast of characters provide much food for thought.

Prophets and patriarchs are held up as examples to emulate, at least in certain aspects of their behaviour. However, the search for role models is much more of a challenge for women than men. Women have been largely written out of the story.

When they do appear, the events are rarely seen from their point of view. In this fascinating collection of papers, dozens of researchers explore the experiences of the handful of women who figure in the events portrayed in the *Tanach*.

There are few clues on offer. Some come from the ancient records of other cultures: Hittite, Phoenician, Akkadian, Mesopotamian. There is evidence, for example, that women worshipped female deities and became their priestesses. When Abraham rejected polytheism, such options were closed off to his womenfolk. The Bible records little of women's religious involvement, though whether this reflects the historical situation or has resulted from later redaction is probably something we will never know.

In the chaos of the struggle for the

land of Israel, women came off very badly. The text of Judges has stripped the victims of the worst violence at the hands of males of their names as well as their voices: Mieke Bal defiantly remedies this lack in order to emphasise their roles as hapless victims, pointing up their fates in a pattern of patriarchy – the overriding necessity of maintaining the name and status of males in the chain of tribal history. Several authors also discuss a related theme: the fear of aberrant female sexuality – the cultic horror of the possibility that a woman might be unfaithful and so give birth to a child not fathered by her husband.

When the Bible approves of women taking the initiative, it is their very marginality, as prostitutes, widows or non-combatants, that is the key to their success. This work at the boundaries, even sometimes

breaking the rules, is something the Bible likes to tease us women with. Look at Esther, who married out, and Ruth, who married in. Deborah and Jael, who took the initiative in very unfeminine ways, are counted as heroines. Rahab, the Christine Keeler of her day, is recorded for posterity as a *gera tzedek*.

'As long as the society was based on a household production system, and as long as there was a relative absence of the public hierarchies that usually favour males, females would have had great social impact beyond the household', writes Carol Meyers. Look at how sceptical Sarah and devious Rivka shamelessly manipulated those around them to help their sons get ahead, thus laying the foundations for the renewal of the covenant and hence earning the status of matriarchs. Yet we search the text in vain for evidence of solidarity between women. Alice Bach, editor of the volume, has included a whole section on attempts to show that Moses' sister Miriam was leader of a collective of female musicians.

Later on, as Israel achieves statehood, with power precariously balanced between priests and kings, it is the women who play by the rules - being industrious, chaste, obedient, supportive and largely silent - that get the plaudits as 'women of valour'. Women such as Jezebel and the Queen of Sheba, who come with their own religious traditions, are serious threats to the status quo.

And so it has continued. Women's experiences play little part in the dominant debates of our time. 'In our secular world we continue to authorise, albeit unconsciously, many biblical ideologies, granting the Bible status not only of a spiritual guide but also a manual for politics' writes Regina Schwartz. Ironically, the role of the Jews in the wider cultural context has been very similar to that of women within Judaism: at times idealised and respected for their unique

contribution, but more often plundered and violated. Out of this confrontation, Judith Plaskow derives a new vision: the feminist insistence on 'the communal character of human selfhood over against the individualism of the dominant strand in Western culture'. To oppose an oppressive *status quo*, it is necessary to join forces with others in a similar position. However, it is also necessary to respect and explore the experiences of different groups. 'Boundaries can also be places where people can touch', Plaskow writes, (though Judaism's strict rules discourage 'touching' between men and women, Jews and others).

A doubly excluded person, a disabled woman, Margaret Moers Wenig, brings the debate right back to first principles. She reminds us that the community as a whole stood before Sinai and accepted the obligations of the covenant. Each person, whatever their gender, health or ethnicity, has the right to be included, respected and supported. As the Bible shows, however, this guiding principle did not prevent the rigid codifications of hierarchy: of bodily perfection and purity, of power and of knowledge. It has taken one subversive movement after another, both within Judaism and within the wider context, to remind those at the top of the tree of the limitations they had forgotten to observe on the hegemonies they imposed.

The authors, so ably and knowledgeably drawn together in this illuminating volume, retell and recast the stories their mothers told them. In doing so, it is in a very Jewish tradition, of questioning, developing, reinterpreting texts that they work - the legacy of the *Mishna*, the *Talmud* and particularly the *Midrash* is never far away, for all the deep discussions of fashions in literary analysis. It is a fascinating phenomenon that their contemporary approaches can make these ancient stories work in a modern idiom, two thousand years

and more after they were first committed to memory.

This work at the boundaries, even sometimes breaking the rules, is something the Bible likes to tease us with.

1.	Miriam	1.	Mara
4.	Judith	2.	Rumps
7.	Ram	3.	Maria
8.	Rebecca	4.	Jabin
9.	Susanna	5.	Dice
12.	Nod	6.	Toado
14.	Rachel	10.	Sue
15.	Entomb	12.	Naomi
16.	Eve	13.	Deborah
18.	Otis	19.	Tamar
22.	Redeemer	20.	Sarah
23.	Ruth	21.	Leah
24.	Esther		
25.	Hagar		
Across		Down	
ANSWERS		CROSSWORD	

## Letters to the Editor

In this issue, we print two further letters concerning the issue of amenity housing on the site occupied by the Synagogue. Although this was a very controversial issue, as both letter writers make clear, the proposal considered last year is no longer on the agenda. There would therefore seem to be little point in prolonging the discussion and, as far as **The Edinburgh Star** is concerned, no further correspondence on this matter will be published.

Dear Sir

I have followed the ongoing correspondence on the issue of Amenity Housing with great interest and initially had no intention of contributing to it. However on reading the letter from Mark Sischy in the last issue of **The Edinburgh Star**, I felt I had no alternative but to join in and attempt to set the record straight.

I certainly have no intention of even trying to challenge Mark's legal arguments. I have much respect for his great expertise in this area but I wish I could say the same about his arithmetic, which I find severely flawed. Since his arithmetic forms the foundation of his legal arguments, these too become suspect.

In the last issue of **The Edinburgh Star** Mark stated 'I believe it is a matter of public record that having obtained an independent valuation from a surveyor, the price being offered by the Glasgow Jewish Housing Association for the purchase of the property was (however the calculations are done) at least £100,000 less than the independent market evaluation'. In coming to this conclusion, Mark has completely overlooked two key facts, which were clearly presented at the A.G.M. on 9 June 1999, as follows:

1. The independent valuation obtained by the Trustees for the land behind the Synagogue was clearly based on the premise of 'vacant possession', whereas the offer from the Glasgow Jewish Housing Association was based

on the premise that the Caretaker's house would continue to be occupied by Mrs. Burns and her successors for many more years. Moreover Christine Burns and her successors would continue to live there *rent free*. Now in order to obtain a valuation on the same basis as the offer, i.e. in order to compare like with like, it would be necessary to reduce the Trustees valuation of £215,000 by at least 20%, in going from 'vacant possession' to 'sitting tenant living rent free'. This produces a much more realistic figure of not more than £170,000.

2. The offer from the Glasgow Jewish Housing Association consisted of two parts. The first was the basic offer of £90,000 and the second contained the following four components:

- i. the refurbishment of the Caretaker's house
- ii. the upgrading of the Synagogue heating system to include a new and larger boiler
- iii. the landscaping of the whole site
- iv. a new *Mikveh*

The value of the second part of the offer was at least £80,000 (even without the cost of the new *Mikveh*), bringing the sum total of the offer to not less than £170,000.

In light of these two facts, it is clear that Mark's arithmetic was wrong and that there would have been no 'huge potential financial loss' - quite the contrary - and therefore that

there was no 'substantial problem' for the Trustees, no 'gratuitous alienation', and hence no reason to oppose the Housing Scheme.

The above facts are of course now of academic interest only. The Housing Scheme was lost and will never be revived

Yours sincerely

Ian Leifer  
2 Observatory Green  
Edinburgh  
EH9 3HL

Dear Sir

I have followed with interest the recent correspondence in **The Edinburgh Star** concerning the proposed amenity housing on land at the rear of the Synagogue. The subject was fully discussed at the AGM last year and whilst I agree that the hour was late and more time for discussion would have been preferable, the fact remains that the proposal was defeated in accordance with the change to the constitution approved at that meeting. In light of that decision and consideration of the fact that Glasgow Jewish Housing Association would no longer wish to pursue a development on the Synagogue site, I feel that discussion on this subject should be closed as no useful purpose can be achieved without creating unnecessary bitterness and division.

As the subject comes up for discussion on numerous social occasions, it is becoming a source of

discomfort and embarrassment to all concerned and I appeal to all members of the community to put this behind us and turn our attention to other matters.

With regard to my resignation as Hon Treasurer and Council member, I wish to dispel any impression that this action was taken in a fit of pique. I had previously indicated to the President that I had no desire to aspire to the position of President and that I intended to resign at an early date to allow sufficient time for successors to be in place. I had indicated my desire to leave office some considerable time prior to the AGM but, at the urging of the President, I agreed to carry on until the housing project had been resolved one way or the other. Once the decision against the project had been taken I felt relieved of my obligation to remain in office and I considered this to be an appropriate moment to demit office and therefore offered my resignation.

Both Valerie and I remain fully committed to the community and wish to play an active role in the religious life of the congregation.

Yours sincerely

Bill Simpson  
3 Hallhead Road  
Edinburgh EH16 5QJ



*Dr Jacqueline Glass Campbell.*



*Michael Adler (right) receiving the award from Eldred Tabachnick, QC (left), President of the Board of Deputies.*

## CONGRATULATIONS

*The Editorial Board offers its warmest congratulations to:*

Everyone associated with **The Edinburgh Star** which received a 'Special Commendation' and was one of three runners up in the competition for Best Communal Magazine at the Annual Convention for Editors which was organised by the Board of Deputies and held in London on 20 February 2000 (see photo above).

**Dr. Esti Sheinberg**, who received an 'Honourable Mention' for her article on Anti-Semitism in Music (published in Issue 33) in the Board of Deputies Competition.

**Dr Ellen Bard** on her promotion to a Readership in Linguistics at the University of Edinburgh.

**Jacqueline Glass Campbell**, elder daughter of **Gerald and Sylvia Glass**, on being awarded a PhD from Duke University, North Carolina. She will now take up the post of Assistant Professor in American History at the Liberal Arts College of the University of Vermont.

**Eliot Cowan**, son of **Andrea and Malcolm Cowan**, on the occasion of his marriage to Caroline Davis, in Zurich, Switzerland on Sunday 2nd July.

**Sir Gerald Gordon, QC** on his appointment as a Member of the Criminal Cases Review Board for Scotland.

**Abby and Joel Korn** on the birth of their third child and Hazel and John Cosgrove on the birth of their third grandchild, a brother for Deborah and Saul.

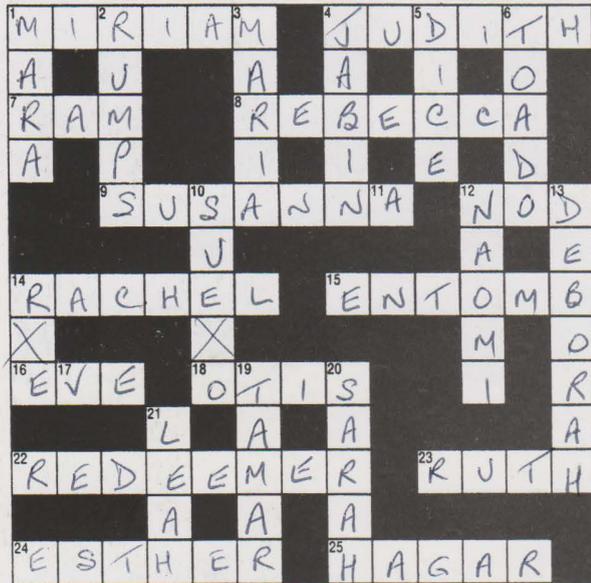
**Cassie Mendelssohn**, daughter of **Esther and Harold Mendelssohn** and granddaughter of **Anita and David Mendelssohn** on her engagement to Dr Jonty Karro of Melbourne, Australia.

**Rabbi David Sedley**, former Minister of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation, on graduating with an MA in Education from the Open University (see photo on page 6).

# CROSSWORD FOR KOSHER GIRLIES

compiled by Elaine Pomm

## CLUES



## Across

1. Led a dance, was this relative to Moses?
4. Granddaughter of an Ox perhaps? Descendent of Elijah, by her hand Assyrians were defeated. Of course she could throw a Punch in the seaside shows.
7. Abraham offered this as a sacrifice instead of his son (I bet Sarah was relieved and social services are never there when you want them!).
8. She deceived her elder son out of his birthright (Genesis 27:)
9. Her husband sounds a bit of a joker, but she was so beautiful and had studied the Torah, God saved her from the lies of the men who condemned her to death, but not Daniel of course. If you like, have recourse to chapter 13.
12. A land that's a bit of a head bender. East of Eden, not a recommended area to live, Marchmont or even Stamford Hill is better, as Cain was exiled here.
14. Jacob had twice the trouble and strife in cousins, but he fancied one more than the other because she had a better figure (weightwatchers girlies! !).

15. 'MT bone'... a long term coverplan (anag)
16. She's been blamed for everything just because she liked fruit. Just call her 'mummy'.
18. On Trial Is Seahorse initially of course, unless he sings in Reading.
22. He isn't only Adonai and our Saviour, He is also this (Isaiah 49:26)
23. A Moabite but never got HURT (anag)
24. A queen so beautiful, Mordecai called her 'a river'.
25. She had a poor deal from Abraham sending her off with her son, his firstborn.

## Down

1. Naomi's new name because she was bitter.
2. Sailor's drink, backend of cattle meat, it goes with the ram and the fat of Leviticus (Leviticus 8:25) rhymes with a camel's container for a T.V. dinner.
3. Western interpretation of the name Miriam (one of many).
4. Not a razor but king of Hazor, (Joshua 11:1) and as to Sisera as to him (Psalms 83:9)
5. It's loaded to be thrown. Iced mixed.
6. It never turned into a prince, ending with a zero, and there was much of this about nothing.
10. Short Susan goes to court.
12. Bitter mother in law who tells her daughter in law to be promiscuous with Boaz.
13. The greatest biblical character ever, led an army of men to victory and was judge over the whole of Israel (and we never hear of her!!)
14. Slept with her father in law out of duty to God.(Genesis 38)
20. Not too keen on her handmaid but, like all Jewish women, she was beautiful. Gave birth in old age without the use of viagra nor HRT, and married to Abraham.
21. Unappreciated wife of jacob, but had nice eyes.

(Answers may be found on page 28).