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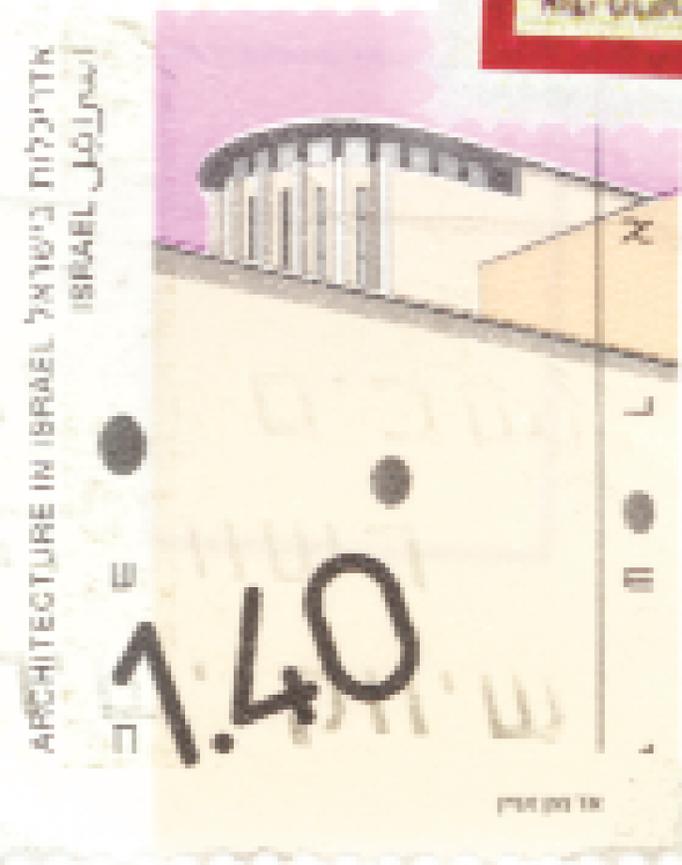
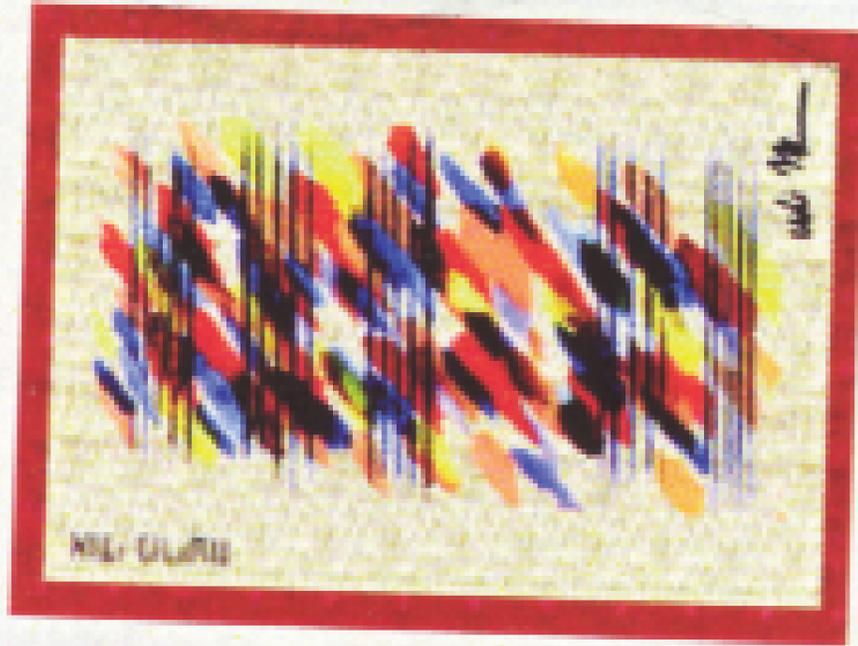
STAR

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Richard Hardman looks at the land and peoples of Israel

Lady Jakobovits – Interviewed

We review 'The Passion of the Christ'





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From the Editor

I am not sure where I draw the line. As Editor of a local community magazine, is it my place to comment on big issues of Middle East conflict, anti-Semitism and the like? As I sit down to write, I debate with myself the direction to point the keyboard. Is the future of the Edinburgh community the limit or is the future of Zionism in play? I conclude, with some remaining doubt, that these world-scale events do touch us all. We are bombarded in the media with images of death and destruction from both sides of the Israel-Palestine divide, so perhaps you will tolerate my humble opinions on these seemingly endless problems.

You will have seen in the last edition of the Star, an interesting piece from Michael Adler on the new anti-Semitism. In this issue he has written to me with some additional material on this theme. We have a letter from the eminent Professor Marvin Hershorn of Montreal on the same topic, and another from a small group of people who heard Professor Marc Ellis talk to the Lit. We truly cannot escape from the issues and I believe that we cannot afford to just look away.

We hear hate speech from the mosques and mainstream media of the Islamic world. It is pervasive, not only in nations openly hostile to Israel but also those, like Egypt, that have peace treaties with it. I read that there are comparisons with the Nazis, denial of the Holocaust and other hate libels appearing in the Egyptian press. It is also worryingly assumed that Jews run America. There are numerous studies and books on anti-Semitism in the West but little on the hatred of Jews by Moslems and Arabs. So why not, and why is our awareness of this endemic hatred so sparse? I believe that it comes down to language. The lack of ability in the west to read and understand Arab writings allows a lot to remain hidden. I recently read that

in Syria, the editor-in-chief of a government newspaper wrote "Zionism created the Holocaust myth to blackmail and terrorise intellectuals and politicians". The recent events relating to gross mistreatment of prisoners in Iraq by US troops neatly aligns with all these misconceptions. So what are the views of the man and woman 'in the street' here on these issues? Well I don't need a sophisticated polling organisation to answer that. They generally reject Islam's anti-Jewishness and abhor terrorism and incitement. They also believe that there are two sides to the Israel-Palestine story and criticise Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. They oppose settlements in the territories, not because they deny the Jews historic connection to the Holy Land, but because they believe that competing Israeli and Palestinian claims can be resolved only by partition into two states.

Furthermore, reports that I read, suggest that many Israelis share this view and debate this intensely in the hothouse of their democracy. So how should we react? Do we take the view that the policies of the Israel Government must be seen as inviolate and beyond discussion, let alone question? It is my opinion that we, as Jews in a non-Jewish world, cannot use double standards to avoid the wrenching questions we face about Israel's future as a democratic and Jewish state. We cannot apply one set of standards to Israel and its problems and another elsewhere. History teaches us to be forever vigilant, but we need to trust that open debate has got to be better than blind acceptance.

On the home front, this issue sees two articles from non-Jews who visited Israel. Thomas Inglis took part in a JNF mission and Richard Hardman, a geologist, takes a structural view of the Holy Land. It is a great pleasure to

receive such unsolicited contributions from people whose interest is simply that of genuine care and enthusiasm for the State of Israel. We have received letters continuing the issue of anti-Semitism and a delightful contribution from young Samuel Danzig. My thanks to all our contributors.

Peter Bennett



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What then did you go out to see?

Richard Hardman looks at the land and people of Israel on a study tour in October 2003

Richard Hardman

Why go to Israel at a time when retaliation by a Palestinian minority takes the form of suicide bombing of the majority, when a bomb made for peaceful Israelis could just as easily kill innocent tourists? Why go when a regime headed by a Prime Minister who replaced an assassinated hero, Yitzak Rabin, killed because he sought compromise, pays lip-service to a road map to peace, but allows settlement of the West Bank and then reinforces that position with a fence? These and many more reasons play on the emotions of the would-be traveller and lead to the conclusion, a visit to Israel? Maybe one day, but not now, not this autumn.



So why on Monday afternoon of the 13th of October, were 15 people assembled to catch El Al flight 316 to Tel Aviv? Were they sensation seekers, careless of their lives or merely heartless? After 10 days together on the journey it was clear that none of these were motivating factors. So what did we go out to see? What were our hopes and our fears? I suppose not many people like flying, but the rigorous security checks imposed by El Al, together with the knowledge of specially strengthened aircraft, provided some comfort at the

beginning of the adventure. Our hopes were probably as various as the number of people on the party. For myself it was to share an enthusiasm with my wife for a small country which from biblical times onwards has been a crucible of conflict out of which were forged three of the major religions of the world. I hoped she would see that there is good news in Israel, even if for the media all news is bad news. Most of all I wanted her to meet the people, those remarkable beings who in adversity do not despair, who could have comfort and a conflict-free life, yet continue to strive for justice and peace. As a veteran of an earlier trip and a geologist, I could not resist the opportunity that a tour entitled "Land and People" offered. And as for fears, based on the previous experience, I felt certain they would melt away as we realised that the majority of the people in the world, whether in London or Jerusalem, want to go about their everyday lives in an everyday way and generally do so.

"Where better to start a journey to understanding than the desert from whence all great religions have arisen?"

Concerning the theme of the tour, on a geological time scale, equating the age of the earth to a 24 hour period, human beings only appeared on the globe at one minute to midnight. Over the centuries that people have inhabited the globe, the land has changed little, but amazing changes have taken place in the people. An important aspect of the trip was to understand both the dead and the living in order to comprehend the Israel of today.

Geologically Israel is dominated by the great rift which passes northwards from Southern Africa for 3000 miles up the Dead Sea before petering out north of the Sea of Galilee. Both sides of the Dead Sea rift form mountains with Jerusalem on the Judean Hills to the west, The Judean Hills cause rain to drop abundantly to their west but a rain shadow to the east. Consequently the desert starts to the east of Jerusalem and extends southwards to the Negev, where moist westerly winds no longer blow off the Mediterranean. The city of Beer Sheva is at the southernmost limit of the area with a Mediterranean climate.

The Desert

Where better to start a journey to understanding than the desert from whence all great religions have arisen. The space, the emptiness, the night sky carpeted with gem-like stars, the need to seek answers to the nature of God and the universe and the hardships just to survive, have drawn mystics and adventurers from time immemorial. TS Eliot saw the desert as squeezed in the tube-train next to you, in the heart of your brother, but the real desert is marked by compassion. How else to survive but with help from friends and on occasion enemies? After a brief sojourn in the garden of Neot Kedumim, we were off to the rolling hills and barren brown wastes of the Negev, our mission very much land and people, so difficult in this area to disentangle. Robert May (now Lord May), when Chairman of the Natural History Museum, described geology as the stage on which life takes place, but the Negev comprises 60% of the land surface of Israel yet only contains 8% of the population. We visited places that epitomise this land. The first was the Ramon crater, a vast eroded anticline now a National Park, where from a

"In the recognised village of Lakiya we met two remarkable Bedouin women."

viewpoint high upon the crater walls, even non-geologists are impressed by the majesty of the natural environment. The 20km long feature is a relic of the stresses and strains caused by the northwards push of the African plate from Cretaceous times onwards (about 130 million years). Crustal shortening of about 20 kms has taken place and rocks have been folded, which when eroded give spectacular southwest - northeast trending craters, of which Ramon is one. Within the site one can see a rock wall covered with Lower Cretaceous ammonites, igneous intrusions into the sedimentary cover and sandstones baked by the molten rock to give hexagonal columnar jointing.

Also running down its axis is the great wadi which, almost always dry, floods during rainy times to cause great destruction.



The second site was the gorge of Ein Avdat with its natural spring. We were there late in the day and wild life abounds, particularly with ibis which seem to like to pose for visitors, but the truly amazing site that firmly linked the people to the land was a visit to a Nabatean cistern. The Nabateans controlled all the Negev and much of what is now Jordan, all the way down to the Red Sea. The Nabateans left no written literature so they are hard to pin down. They are mentioned in a Greek account in 312 BCE as an Arab tribe, in wealth far surpassing the others, a wealth based on the route from the Red Sea to the Fertile Crescent and a trade in spices such as myrrh and frankincense. They were overrun by the Romans in 106 CE and thereafter gradually declined, losing their Aramaic to the Greek tongue in the third century and losing their Semitic religion to Christianity in the Fifth Century. They were probably

the greatest masters of desert agriculture the world has ever known. They worked on a ratio of 15 to 1; that is for every hectare of cultivated land they used a water collection area of 15 hectares. Under their stewardship the desert bloomed. They grew corn and some of the best grapes and wine in the region. Petra is the most famous Nabatean town.

So we stood in the cistern and gazed at the horseshoe symbol of the Nabateans carved into the cistern wall. The simple effectiveness of their method of water collection made us wonder how far have we really progressed over the centuries. Then we thought about a stop we had made on the way, at Ben Gurion's home at Sde Boker. He had the vision that by his example he would encourage others to green the desert. Had he studied the Nabateans we wondered? Did they hold the key to a dream he never realised? Our guide, a hairy man looking not unlike biblical pictures of John the Baptist, of Gilad questions whether in these days it was right to even attempt to green the desert. The world needs wide open spaces, but agriculture on a sustainable basis as practiced by the Nabateans, would have been something to be proud of and would not have detracted from the feeling of space and wildness.

From the past to the present, and our visits to the Bedouin people made a lasting impression. Jews such as Yehuda Paz whom we met in Beer Sheva, have a philosophy that if you want cooperation you must empower. NISPED was formed in 1998 to promote peace and understanding in

"A dig in the graveyard showed no one over 41 years old."

the region. The link between peace and sustainable human development is recognised, and Yehuda, white-haired and walking with a stick, exuded optimism and hope in a land where these are the most valuable of

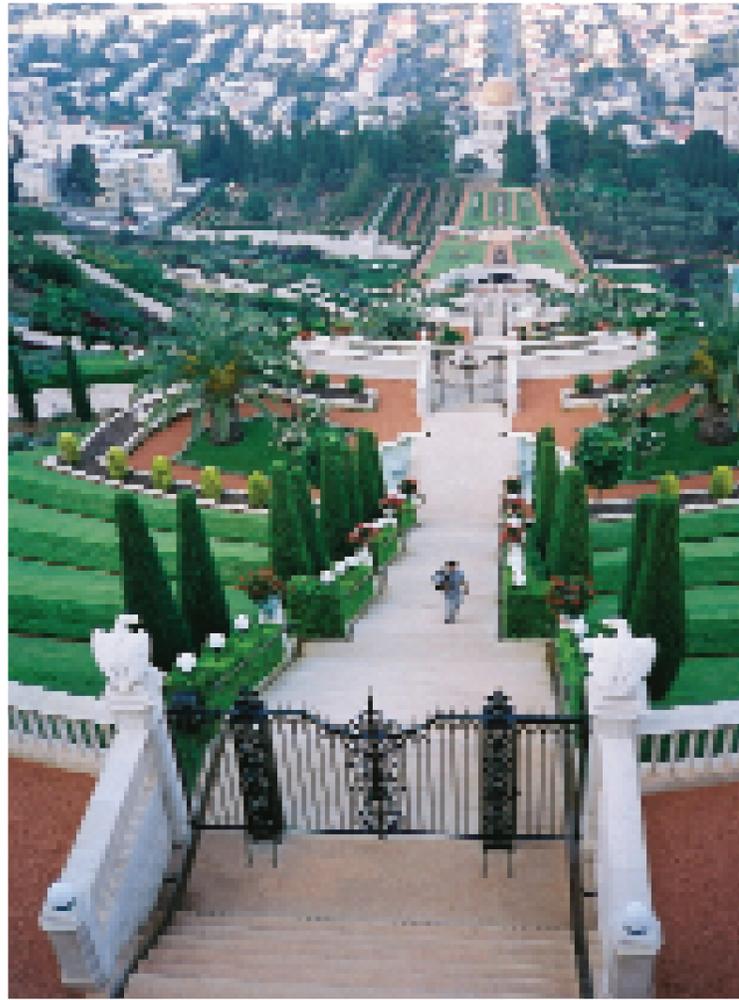
all commodities.

We visited Bedouin settlements. The Bedouin used to be nomads but in recent decades have become settled on the fringes of the desert around Beer Sheva. The big question for them is; are they recognised by the State of Israel or are they squatters on the land they claim as theirs from time immemorial? We visited both a recognised and an unrecognised settlement and it was easy to see what recognition meant, not just hope for the future, but schools, health service and better living standards. In the unofficial settlements, there was the echo of the Nabateans. The main income we were told came from smuggling not spices, but guns, girls



and drugs; a life style more desperate but presumably as profitable.

In the recognised village of Lakiya we met two remarkable Bedouin women. We were lucky to have with us an Oxford Ph. D. student, Richard Ratcliffe to translate. Two sisters Amal and Naama Al-Sana had been to university and they were looking for a more fulfilling role for Bedouin women than merely being their husbands' chattels. They started an embroidery business and now have 160 women working full-time producing traditional Bedouin designs. With the income generated, not only do they provide for needy women and families, but they have set up a mobile library, a mothers' literacy class, a kindergarten and a youth leadership class. Hope here has turned to reality. Two brave women earned our admiration for defying tradition, but then sitting on rugs and cushions in a tent, they served us a traditional meal of chicken and rice. Tradition had not quite gone out of the tent flap.



Historical Jewish responses to the desert on the shores of the Dead Sea, Masada and Qumran, are almost too well known. The first, popularised by Hollywood has become a symbol of Jewish resistance to oppression. It is a pity in a way, that the Zealots who captured it from the Romans in 66 CE were such an unattractive lot. They clearly had 'the end justifies the means' somewhere in their philosophy, for they were religious brigands who preyed on the people of the countryside round about in order to survive. Josephus has them all enduring a martyrs' death in 73-74 CE by committing suicide as the Romans approached to recapture the rock; although the truth as related by Jerome Murphy O'Connor and our guide Ophir Yarden, was probably more realistic. They met the ordinary fate of people who are conquered after a siege, i.e death at the hands of the enemy or escape.

Qumran is famous as the site where the Dead Sea scrolls were found and as a site where the Essenes lived. They lived ultra religious lives dedicated to purity. There is a thought that they had peeled away from the Temple in Jerusalem because of what they saw as corruption. Their greatest contribution to civilisation is probably the preservation of the Dead Sea Scrolls. They may have copied and hidden the scrolls as the Romans approached to kill them or carry them off to slavery. Despite their aesthetic lives dedicated to purity, they do not seem to have lived long. A dig in the graveyard showed no one over 41 years old. Perhaps you can overdo a good thing.

Jerusalem

Jerusalem the golden, with milk and honey blessed. The guide books say that one needs a week to do justice to Jerusalem and we had three days to do all the usual things. But nothing is

ever usual in Jerusalem. It is the crucible of the world's religions. History, politics, philosophy and religion collide to provide a city so unique, that from its very beginning conflict has never ceased. The walls of Hezekiah built in 700 BCE reminded us that it was because of these that Israel survived at all, beating back the forces of the Assyrians under Sennacherib.

"Friday evening prayers suddenly turned into a fantastic knees-up with everyone doing the equivalent of a conga around the room..."

A city of extraordinary relics:

- The massive temple mount of Herod the Great, probably in its day the greatest building in the world, stormed in 70 CE by Vespasian who destroyed the Temple but could do little about the mount itself.
- The Church of the Holy Sepulchre; Constantine's contribution built in 323 to 335 CE, over the place where Jesus was buried, destroyed by Hakim in 1009 and restored by Constantine Monomachus in 1042 - 8.
- The Great Gilded Dome of the Rock, built in 688-691 CE by Abd al-Malk on top of Mount Moriah on the Temple Mount where the Temple itself used to stand. According to Murphy O'Connor it was built to instill a sense of pride in Muslims and overawe the Christians.
- In more modern times, the great ruined Hurva Synagogue which was built by Ashkenazis in 1841 and destroyed during the 1948 war. In 1919, Herbert Samuel, British High Commissioner had read in this building, "Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished." It was not to be so.

Jerusalem is much more than past

conflicts. It is a living city and it was the Festival of Sukhot. We stayed in the Mount Zion Hotel overlooking the accursed valley of Ben-Hinnom where children were burnt as human sacrifices and a drum beaten to drown out their pitiful cries. No wonder from this valley we have the name Gehenna and then "Hell".

It was nevertheless a happy time in



Jerusalem for it was Sukhot, one of the great festivals, and we were there for Shabbat. Friday night was a revelation. We visited two synagogues. At the first, a Liberal Synagogue; Friday evening prayers suddenly turned into a fantastic knees-up with everyone doing the equivalent of a conga around the room and around whoever happened to be holding the Torah Scrolls. The second, an Orthodox, was slightly more sedate, men and women separated by a wooden bar down the centre of the room, but the sense of rejoicing very much the same. Later, kind people from this synagogue took us to their houses for grace, said before a delicious meal, and prayers of thanks after, longer and more convincing than the average Christian grace. Then, being Shabbat, we had the long and healthy walk back to the Hotel. Remembering that when the Cretans walked 12 kms a day, they were the longest lived people in Europe, one wondered what Shabbat did for observant Jews in terms of longevity.

Impressions

This write-up, despite best efforts, is already too long. It was not meant to be a description of what we saw and did. It was to be the essence of the impressions, but these are so many and so varied as to defy anyone not trained in journalism to write to a tight

limit. So I hope you will forgive me if there is a little bit of what we saw and did before embarking on impressions.

What did we go out to see? Perhaps to find our religious roots. The great surprise is that these are not dead, entombed in stone but around us wherever we looked. Rather as if an eminent palaeontologist had gone to look for fossil animals, only to find them alive in the place where he was looking. Israel is a crucible of faith and struggle including conflict to be able to practice the faith; Jews, Christians, Muslims, Druze, and most recent of all, Bahai hold the land dear and holy. Teilhard de Chardin was a Jesuit palaeontologist. He coined the word noosphere, the area where thought and religion evolves and moves slowly and inexorably towards God. Did he see among the religions in Israel a Darwinian struggle in which only the fittest would survive, for we were conscious that what we were seeing on this journey were only the few that had survived thus far. It is difficult to understand Christianity without proper perspective; to comprehend Jesus' Judaistic roots and listen to stories and sayings of the great Rabbis; then to walk where Jesus walked and see where he taught; to look back at the Essenes and their hopes shattered by the Roman invasion, but through the Dead Sea Scrolls to live again; and then to see the graves of the early Twentieth Century pioneers who believed that a Jewish Homeland would rise out of the desert and a utopian existence would be achieved.

"We met people who lived saintly lives who persue difficult and dangerous causes."

We looked at enigmas and broken dreams and yet could see steady progress through suffering towards higher aspirations. We met people who lived saintly lives who persue difficult and dangerous causes. We came back home with admiration for the spirit of mankind and its ability to

rise above adversity and a faith refined by reality. It would be nice to think that whatever religion we belonged to, whether Jew or Christian, whether Catholic or Protestant, we would be more tolerant; we would look with greater compassion at the world; and we would be permanently strengthened to face our own lives. It is unlikely that any of us came back with the same feelings as those with which we left. The 10 days in Israel were a pilgrimage in the truest sense.

Richard Hardman is Chair of the Friends of Southwark Cathedral, but by training and profession a geologist whose life has been spent exploring for oil and gas in Libya, Kuwait, Colombia and at present working on the North Sea and Poland. His Grandfather and two uncles were clergymen in the Church of England but like many from the Liverpool area had Jewish blood as well as Irish and Welsh. His father's mother however came from Edinburgh. He was anxious to understand the basis of his faith. It seemed natural to explore the roots of Christianity and to understand how this offshoot of Judaism came about. He was lucky enough come in contact with the Council for Christians and Jews and to go on two trips to Israel led in both cases by Beryl Norman and Ophir Yarden the latter from the Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel.



The Jews of Elephantine Island

Lindsay Levy



On the last day of my holiday in Egypt I visited Elephantine Island.

I was looking forward to seeing this site as I vaguely remembered it had some Jewish connection, but my guide book only gave me a tantalising half-sentence...and the remains of an Aramaic Jewish colony dating from the 5th century BCE. Fortunately the Egyptologist travelling with our group was able to give me more information. The remains, he told me, were situated on the site of a long-established archaeological dig. We should look for signs to the rams' cemetery, the colony had been built alongside it.

Elephantine Island is situated in the middle of the Nile off the coast of Aswan. It is thought to have taken its English name from the huge grey granite boulders that surround it and look from a distance like a herd of bathing elephants. It was also a centre for ivory trade. It now houses the archaeological site, a small museum, a luxury hotel, and two Nubian villages.

My friend and I caught the public ferry across the river and were met by a swarm of small boys hoping to earn some money showing the tourists around. We followed them and a couple of other foreigners from the boat through a maze of small streets.

When we finally succeeded in detaching ourselves from the others we found ourselves in the middle of the ruins.

A couple of the Egyptian temples have been reconstructed by the archaeologists; the rest of the site consists of the remains of dwelling

“we walked through the ancient streets, overwhelmed and silent.”

houses. We couldn't make out the rams' cemetery so we began wandering through the ruins, trying to work out which of these groups of houses might have been the Jewish colony.

It was October and the German archaeologists had not yet returned from their summer break. It was also the Muslim hour of prayer and the Egyptian caretakers had all gone to the mosque. The site was completely deserted and we walked through the ancient streets, overwhelmed and silent. Individual houses were clearly recognisable and the walls had been cross-sectioned and marked out into chronological strata by the archaeologists. From each layer of

history protruded the remains of ordinary every day life - potsherds, wood, pieces of rush matting, ashes from a hearth. Was this really how our ancestors had lived 6000 years ago?

“we were saved from a potentially very awkward few minutes”

Our time travel was interrupted by the sound of very angry yelling. The prayer hour was over and the Egyptians had returned. Clearly we were not supposed to be here. They waved their arms furiously at us and we waved back apologetically and hurried out. The boys had apparently led us onto the site through a back route through their village. Just as we were wondering how we were going to explain ourselves our friend the Egyptologist miraculously appeared. He has spent years researching in various sites and was enthusiastically embraced and greeted as “Professor” almost everywhere we went, so we were saved from a potentially very awkward few minutes with the caretakers by his presence and given a brief tour of the site. Sadly the houses we were wandering through were not the Jewish colony after all, but a Middle Egyptian settlement. He took us to the official viewing platform and pointed us in the direction of the rams cemetery. There were remains of the Jewish houses; next to the burial place of mummified ram's and barely a stone's throw from two Egyptian temples.

Since I returned home I have been trying to find out as much as I can about the Jews of Elephantine Island. Surprisingly there is a lot of information available, because their existence was revealed by the discovery of a cache of Aramaic papyri of legal documents dealing with

the minutiae of their everyday life: marriage, divorce, inheritance, property deals.

“The island was a frontier town and the cult centre of worship for the Egyptian ram-headed god Khnum.”

In the 5th century Elephantine island was known as Yeb. The island was a frontier town and the cult centre of worship for the Egyptian ram-headed god Khnum. It also housed government buildings, a residential area, and temples. The Jewish community there was a military garrison. They had their own stone built temple, with five gates and a cedar wood roof, which they used for animal -Sacrifices. The Elephantine Jews kept many religious laws - Sabbath observance and the prohibition against eating chometz during Pesach are specifically mentioned in the papyri - but they

also lived in a multicultural society alongside Egyptians, Arameans, Phoenicians, Babylonians, and Persians, and the legal documents show that they transacted and intermarried with members of these communities, using a newly developed Levantine common law. Women had almost equal rights with their spouses. They could initiate divorce, conduct business and hold property in their own right.

In 411 BCE the Jewish temple at Yeb was destroyed by the Persian governor at the request of an Egyptian, an incident that is claimed to be the first anti-Semitic outbreak in history. In his history Louis Finkelstein puts it down to local disagreements. When the Jewish colonists wrote to Jerusalem asking for support in rebuilding their temple they were met with a cool response. King Josiah's reforms condemned any temple built outside Jerusalem. The temple of Yeb was never rebuilt.

Visiting Elephantine Island was a wonderful experience. My

overwhelming impression was that in some ways life in the Diaspora hasn't changed a great deal in five thousand years. The Jews of Edinburgh still live with temples (churches) at the end of their streets, integrated with their neighbours, but retaining their identity.

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The **JC**
A new look for an old friend

JNF Visit to Israel - November 2003

Thomas C A Inglis



JNF name stone at the entrance to Winter Pond

Is there a Dvorak creating a symphony describing the pioneering work which is going on, building a new world on an ancient and internationally important site?"

“Although violence is never far away no one in the group felt insecure”

After a visit to New York and four days later a visit to Israel, let's hope so. The histories are remarkably similar. The struggle against natural forces and



JNF Group visit the Golan Heights

those opposing progress. Into all this comes the need of care and sympathy and recognition of the plight of the young, many evicted from their homes, many disabled from natural causes and some seeking refuge from hostile governments.

Enter into the Winter Pond City Park, built thanks to JNF, who financed the design and building of it, and be welcomed by the Mayor of Netanya. A vivacious lady humourously conveyed the work which is put into the running of an ambitious scheme, caring for and educating children who in turn happily entertained the visitors with great enthusiasm, but paid scant attention to their applause.

The programme was running late and more importantly, lunch was ready!

Although violence is never far away no one in the group felt insecure and this confidence was confirmed at a briefing in the I.D.F. Intelligence Corps Headquarters at Hertzlya. Any anxieties left were successfully dispelled during the dinner at the luxurious Dan Hotel Tel Aviv.

For some of us a new feeling was experienced, that of our VIP treatment the next morning when the group was driven to Sde Dov Airport, straight up to an aeroplane and ushered aboard to fly to Rosh Pina. There we enjoyed a tour of the Golan Heights, visiting an I.D.F. base there and learning at first hand the work of the Security Forces from an Army Commander. Excitement rose with ascent of Nattali Mountain by cable car, for some came first feelings of fear - of descending the Nattali Mountains by cable car.

The coaches were on hand to take us to Kibbutz Misgav Am and a briefing by Kibbutz member Mike Ginsburg. Dinner was enjoyed at Kfar Giladi then we took a flight to Ben Gurion Airport where coaches completed our journey to King David Hotel, Jerusalem

The excitement of expectation saw us all down for breakfast on time and we were soon about our coach, checked and counted. Even the driver was carefully processed.

The first stop was at the Alep, Negev Project based in Gedeva. Here we could only feel sympathy for the extremely disabled young people, mixed with admiration for the carers who devote so much time and effort to attending their many needs.

Creating life on barren land is like painting a picture. A patch of colour here, a patch there. So it is with the Negev Desert. Water dragged up from



Orange trees growing in the Negev Desert

under the desert is collected into three reservoirs, clarified to fertilise plants and fruit trees as well as supplying the needs of villages. Orange trees flourished in locations where nothing could have grown before.

Lunch was at the Youth Village of Nitzana with students from Ethiopia and Russia. Imagine our joy listening



Miriam Fierberg, Mayor of Netanya dedicates the Winter Pond City Park

to a young Russian playing his violin so beautifully and so precisely for a good part of the time we were there. The day ended with dinner and a talk

from Mr Lore Gold, the former ambassador to the United Nations.

It was our final morning of this all too short visit and we were to visit the Carab Park for the dedication of the project in the British Park. There was a wonderful play area for the children. Many an adult in our group would have liked to try it out, but was too shy (or too big) to have a go. Lunch was a very merry affair with a hilarious talk from Mr. Beni Alon Minister of tourism, then on to Ben Gurion Airport for our journey home.

I can only express sincere thanks to JNF and the Israeli Government for a truly memorable experience.



Russian immigrant student playing violin in the Youth Village of Nitzana

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Bagels in the Breadmaker

Lewis Stevens

An article in the Guardian this summer pointed out that there had been a 13-fold rise in the sales of breadmakers from 1997 to 2001. A grocery trade survey reported that the British male is evolving rapidly from breadwinner to breadmaker as a quarter of machines are used by men. With the dearth of Jewish bakers in Scotland a recipe for bagels in the breadmaker might be welcome.

Bagel making is quite labour intensive and whilst a breadmaker cannot shape and bake the bagels, it can make a very consistent dough, thereby simplifying the whole process. My experience is that standard baking recipes sometimes require a bit of fine-tuning to work successfully in a breadmaker. I have to admit to never having tasted a New York bagel, so I was aiming for something like I recall buying from Ackerman's in Hurst Street Birmingham after coming out from cheder in the late 1940s.

The unique texture of bagels comes from poaching the shaped dough in simmering water before baking at a high temperature (200-230°C, 390-445 °F). Also the dough has a lower water content than most breads. The boiling water brings about a more rapid rise in temperature than simply baking alone, and this enables the crust to form more rapidly. The lower water content of the dough gives the more chewy texture.

Ingredients

Plain bagels were originally made using flour and water and live yeast; nowadays egg is often used and sometimes oil. Fast-action dried yeast is essential if using a breadmaker.

There is considerable variation in the amounts of water used in different recipes, for example with 500g flour Claudia Roden uses 125ml water, whereas Evelyn Rose uses 200ml water. Both recipes include an egg. The less water the more chewy the texture, so with the breadmaker it is best to reduce the water to the minimum that can still be blended

satisfactorily. As with all breadmaking there is variation in the strength of the flour. The strength of flour depends upon its protein content, and particularly on two proteins that form flexible resilient sheets of gluten when mixed with water, giving bread its texture.

Typically, a strong flour will have 11.5-13% protein. I have compared some of the different brands of strong flour from supermarkets and found no perceptible differences in the end-product. By including vegetable oil in the recipe, this interacts with the gluten and increases the plasticity of the dough making the bagel softer. Eggs have a similar effect, by virtue of their fat content, and they also increase the protein content of the bagel.

Recipe for 12 Bagels

500g (1lb 2oz) strong flour
160ml (6 fluid oz) water
1 egg (about 60ml)
1 1/2 tsp salt
1 1/2 tbsp sugar
15ml (1 tbsp) sunflower oil
1tsp fast-action dried yeast.

If making without using egg, then use 200ml (7 fluid oz) water in total. I have tested the method using Tesco's strong flour, sunflower oil and yeast, but have no reason to believe that changing brands will make any difference.

Place the water, oil and egg in the breadmaker and then add the flour. On top of the flour add the sugar, salt and yeast. By putting the liquid ingredients in first it is less likely that



the flour will become lumpy. Some recipes recommend putting the yeast separate from the salt, because high concentrations of salt can inhibit the action of yeast. For this reason I usually place the yeast at one end of the tin and salt at the other. Set the breadmaker to Basic Dough. I use a Panasonic breadmaker and on this machine the cycle is 2h 20min, after which the dough is removed from the breadmaker.

The dough should now be smooth and not at all sticky. It can be placed on a breadboard or working surface without requiring any flouring. Briefly roll the dough by hand and pull out and divide into 12 roughly equal sized pieces. Roll each into a ball in the hands, press down to flatten somewhat and then poke a hole in the middle, and shape with the fingers. Place on an oiled baking sheet, cover

with an oiled sheet of polythene and leave in a warm place for about an hour by which time the size will have doubled. I place the sheet on our central-heating boiler, the temperature of which ranges from 24°-28°C (75°-82°F) throughout the day. For poaching I use about 1 litre of boiling water in a 24cm (10in) diameter saucepan.

Place six of the bagels in the boiling water for 2min, turning them over after a minute and then place on a wire rack. Then repeat with the remaining six. Place all twelve back on the oiled baking sheet. Before baking, the bagels can be brushed either with egg-white or milk to give them a glaze. Bake in the oven for about 20min at 200°C (390° F) until nicely browned and sounding hollow when tapped on the base with your fingers.

With Compliments
from
Jess Franklin

205 Stenhouse Street
Cowdenbeath, Fife KY4 9DL

With Compliments
from
Mark & Judith
Sischy

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Write an article for the Star, the topic? The future of the Edinburgh Jewish Community. All entries for this category must be received by 30th June 2004.

Entries should be sent to:

Peter A Bennett, Editor
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Udi's Art: New Murals and Postage Stamps

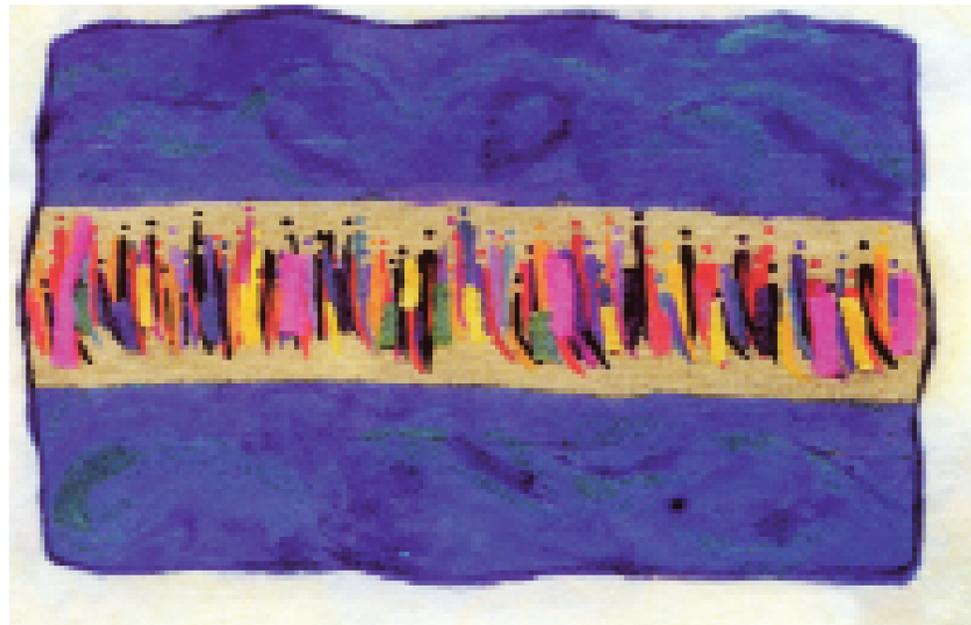
Samuel Robin Spark

Last January in the 'Jerusalem Post' there appeared an article by Jenny Hazan entitled "Art of the State" and subtitled "Old City Artist Udi Merioz Paints a Vivid Picture of Jerusalem". Readers of the 'Edinburgh Star' may recall my article of September 2002 (Issue 43) about Udi Merioz who studied at Edinburgh College of Art and became a personal friend of mine. In that article I described his 'soft paintings', tapestry-like works employing a technique using hand-painted textile-based dry pigments. Udi is one of only four artists in the world who use this technique.

As his work has become more and more renowned in the art world, it has attracted the attention of the Israeli Philatelic Bureau. Two of his recent tapestry-like paintings have been selected for stamp motifs. One is a joyous and uplifting flower piece and the other a more sophisticated multi-coloured abstract overlaid with parallel lines against a patterned buff-coloured background, suggestive of weaving. It may be that the influence of the Israeli artist Agam's 'agamographs' is evident in the latter. Both images are delightful and the more you look, the more you become aware of the intricacy of the work and the skill in selecting shapes and juxtaposing colours.

"Normally artists who deal with this theme present the city as two separate entities, but I linked the two."

In his large mural 'Jerusalem Above and Jerusalem Below', Udi shows not the two contrasting scenes as would be the conventional approach, but rather fuses the Heavens and the earth. Udi says, "Normally artists who deal with this theme present the city



as two separate entities, but I linked the two. The message I am trying to get across is that the things that you do here on earth affect what's going on in the spiritual world and 'vice-versa'. The layers of colour juxtaposed or partially superimposed on others, he sees reflecting the many aspects of Jerusalem itself with its rich and varied history. This mural, although not yet reproduced on a stamp, certainly has the potential to be so.

The method of construction of these tapestry-like murals presents the layman with something of an enigma. It is hard to categorise the method employed. It is probably sufficient to note that it involves the use of textile-based dry pigments that are applied by hand in layers on the canvas, and then pressed into one another using a special multi-needled machine. Udi avers that the vivid colours can withstand direct light and humidity without fading. A bold statement. If proved correct, these qualities would certainly enhance the appeal of these works among connoisseurs.

Udi's earlier murals are relatively sombre in tone when compared with his previous works. In the recent mural 'Exodus', there is an enchanting array of colours against a sea of dark violet-blue and green. When I spoke to Udi on the phone to Jerusalem in April, I expressed delight at receiving a photograph of this work. It is, he told me, full of symbolism. As the people cross the Red Sea, no longer are they the slaves of their arrogant and cruel Egyptian masters, but a free people, full of individuality, walking proudly, no longer bowed down under the yoke of servitude. The figures vary in stature, shape and colour, symbolising their new-found freedom of individual expression. Here we have an image that embraces the religious as well as the secular in the sense that the artist's explanation adds another dimension to the picture, though its captivating colours already create a euphoric response in the spectator.

Udi says that he found his "true colours" through his work in Arad with new immigrants from Ethiopia. He set up an artistic communications programme there to help the

Ethiopians to adapt to their new country. He taught the women to use their traditional artistic skills both for their own pleasure and also for financial reward. An important spin-off from this work for Udi was that the uninhibited use of colour by the Ethiopian women infiltrated his own psyche. Consequently his 'Vision of

"He taught the women to use their traditional artistic skills both for their own pleasure and also for financial reward."

Jerusalem', with its minarets, dove of peace, archways and menorah motifs, is full of colour. The heavens reflect the earth and vice-versa against a black background depicting space, with planets, moon and sun. "In Edinburgh the colours are dull and grey," he says in Ms Hazan's article. Well, not all the time, perhaps, but one can understand how he felt. The colours used by his students were more attuned to the Israeli scene. This was what he had been looking for, and he utilises this brighter palette in his new murals and stamps.

Udi's contribution to Israeli art is substantial and we look forward to

hearing of his future success. I wish to thank him for his assistance in compiling this article.

POSTSCRIPT

It was with immense sadness that we learned of the sudden death of Udi's father, Elyada, here in Edinburgh on 5 May. Elyada was a much respected international art dealer who frequently visited Edinburgh, a city he loved, in the course of his business. He was a good man who will be sorely missed. We wish his widow Jenny and all his family a long life.

Edinburgh's Jewish Reform

Lindsay Levy

Edinburgh's Jewish Reform community can trace its history back almost 30 years to the late 70s, when half a dozen families who were members of the Glasgow New Synagogue but residents of Edinburgh, began to gather on Fridays in each other's houses. Many of us had young children at that time, and we met, held a short service and shared some food. I don't think we ever discussed, or even considered, the possibility of becoming more than an occasional prayer group.

Eventually, as is almost inevitable with such a small group, simple demographics put an end to our meetings. Some members moved away; there was a tragic accidental death in the community, and the meetings in Edinburgh faded out. Those who remained in Scotland continued as congregants of Glasgow New Synagogue, and their children were bar mitzvah there.

In 1997 Pete Tobias, then rabbi of GNS, encouraged us to try again. Invitations were issued for an Edinburgh Erev Shabbat service, and to everyone's amazement - not least our hosts! - over forty people turned up.

From then on the community grew

organically, as it seems in hindsight. We started with monthly Friday evening services, sometimes in conjunction with a family meal to which everyone contributed a dish, and soon occasional Shabbat services followed by lunch and study sessions were added, and an annual seder was established, held in the beautiful 17th century Inch House. Over the past few years we have held regular shiurim for adults; festival services on Sukkot, and Chanukah, Purim parties, and perhaps most importantly we have established our own cheder for the community's children.

All this while we have been functioning as an effective outreach group of Glasgow New Synagogue. Although we had expanded our activities, many important parts of Jewish ritual, such as rabbinical services, life events and High Holy Day celebrations have only been available in Glasgow. Some of our community have maintained two full memberships; they attend services in Edinburgh when we hold them but are eligible for pastoral care, burial rights etc. in Glasgow. Most confusingly, their children have attended both heder!

In his final year as GNS Rabbi Pete Tobias suggested we gave ourselves a

name, and we became Sukkat Shalom, Edinburgh. Also in the past twelve months we have had two bar mitzvahs, and two births in the community. Perhaps the outcome was inevitable - at our AGM in March we voted overwhelmingly to become autonomous.

The motion which was passed was this: We are committed to being a fully independent, progressive Jewish community, providing as many Jewish facilities - life cycle events, services and the like - as we possibly can. At this stage we do not know the details or time scales involved, but we are committed to developing these Jewish facilities to the best of our abilities.

I'm sure that all our members are aware of the enormous challenge we have set ourselves, but at the same time there is a great feeling of enthusiasm and optimism about. Our first act after voting ourselves into independence was to agree to purchase our own Sefer Torah. Almost half the purchase price has already been achieved through fund raising activities.

Anyone who wished to join us, or even just to keep in contact during this great adventure can do so through our website - www.ssedin.org

Around and About

Dedication of Mikvah

Lady Amélie Jakobovits flew up to Edinburgh on Sunday 28th March to officially open the refurbished Mikveh of Edinburgh Synagogue. During its rededication, Lady Jakobovits said 'Jewish life and Jewish spirit will be safe in this wonderful Jewish community. I cannot tell you how my heart bounced with joy and gratitude that I had the merit to be allowed to consecrate this Mikveh. I would like all of us to be in Yerushalayim and maybe we will deserve to be there soon because here in this lovely little community, they are keeping the mitzvah of 'Taharat hamishpachah'

She reasserted the viability of a community like Edinburgh saying 'It is very easy to be a religious Jew in Golders Green, Hendon, Stamford Hill, Yerushalayim, Tel Aviv and Eilat, unlike Edinburgh where a tremendous effort has to be made despite its distance from the centre of Jewish life.'

After cutting the ribbon, Mr Bill Simpson and his wife Valerie, who are entirely responsible for the Mikveh activities, showed Lady Jakobovits,



The Cheder children

Lag B'Omer in Edinburgh

Slightly wet underfoot, twenty Cheder children and staff, marched in twos to the foot of Arthur's Seat in Holyrood Park. Rabbi Rose gave his 'al fresco' tutorial, before the company partook of fishballs and a spot of archery in honour of Lag B'Omer. The deluge of the night before was driven away by an obliging sun which remained for the rest of the afternoon when Edinburgh and Glasgow communities got together to enjoy a Bar B-Q at Beecraigs Country Park which lies halfway between Glasgow and Edinburgh. The events were the inspiration of Irving Hyman of Glasgow.

Rabbi Weiss, head of Glasgow Beth Din, Rabbi Rubin of Giffnock Shul and Rabbi Bamberger, head of Glasgow Kollel around the tiny but beautifully updated house with its cosy little arm chaired waiting room. Dayan Gugavits, though invited to the proceedings, unfortunately missed his connection but made a special journey on Monday instead.

At the reception following the consecration, Mr John Cosgrove spoke of his long association with the Lady, and much to Lady Jakobovits's amazement produced the very wedding document on which she had witnessed his marriage to Hazel Aaronson. She then unveiled two plaques; one to rededicate the Mikveh, and another in memory of Miss Betty Franklin who had left a generous bequest, instrumental in the updating of the Shul buildings, and of whom her cousin Mr Gerald Glass spoke most movingly.

Rabbi Rose and former Edinburgh Rabbi, David Sedley also spoke during the reception.



Bar Mitzvah boy, Jmaes Hyams shows how it is done



Rabbis Hackenbroch and Ruben with Kenneth Collins

The Shein Scene

Burns Supper

The Hunting Rose was a most appropriate tartan for Rabbi David Rose's inaugural attendance at the Bi-annual Burns Supper held by the Community Centre Management Committee on 25 January and which attracted over 100 enthusiasts. In full Highland Dress, with the colourful kilt meriting much admiring attention, Rabbi Rose opened the proceedings with grace before meals to the rousing tune of Scotland the Brave accompanied on bagpipes by piper Jim Cooper. The Rabbi, to communal disappointment, did not avail himself of the opportunity of tackling the bagpipes himself.

Anita Mendelssohn welcomed the large gathering, Selkirk Grace was recited by chairman Jonny Sperber, and soup was served before the haggis, held aloft by cook Harold Abrahams, was piped into the room and addressed in his usual inimitable, excellent manner by Fred Lowrie. The delicacy, approved heartily by vegetarians, was served with attendant needs prior to the appetizing main meal.

A most informative and entertaining Immortal Memory was delivered by Bernard Povey, proving that the former police inspector was no novice at this presentation. The Toast to the Lassies contained the wit and humour expected of John Cosgrove, delivered in his usual endearing style. Micheline Brannan's reply was a masterpiece of acerbic repartee only too worthy of a senior civil servant but delivered with so much added lightness and entertainment value.

Chairman Jonny Sperber controlled the proceedings in a most effective, enjoyable and amusing manner. His challenge for anyone to identify the language of his second Selkirk Grace was unsuccessfully taken up; well how many can speak Klingon?

Delightful rendering of Burns songs was given by Heather Boyd ably accompanied by pianist Norma Brodie. An excellent evening was rounded off with everyone joining in Auld Lang Syne and thanks offered to all participants, by co chairman Lawrence Bowman.

WIZO Lunch

On a cold day in February, 21 ladies of WIZO were welcomed with a bowl of delicious soup followed by bagels with assorted fillings at a lunch held at the home of Sylvia Donne.

Katie Goodwin, local chairwoman, addressed the gathering and spoke of her and Sylvia's recent visit to Israel for the four-yearly meeting of WIZO delegates from many countries. Seminars and workshops dominated the agenda but also allowed a day tour of historical sites. 800 women attended plus a handful of men, whose duties were not defined! Sylvia and Katie emphasised their Scottish roots by sporting a piece of tartan on their clothing, augmenting their colourful personalities. £235 was raised for WIZO funds at the lunch.



Bill Simpson with Rachel Cohen entertain the J-Fest Guests

J-Fest

On 29 February 2004 one of the events under 'J-Fest for Scottish Jewry' took place in Edinburgh. The community supper and entertainment evening was attended by 90 people, including 40

who had travelled from Glasgow. Dr. Philip Mason, President of Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation, welcomed everyone and introduced Stephen Kliner, chairman of Glasgow Jewish Representative Council. Mr. Kliner commented on the success of the organisation since it was initiated 10 years ago and asserted his pleasure at the groups' visit to Edinburgh.

An excellent meal prepared by the ladies of the shul events committee under the convenership of Hilary Rifkind was followed by entertainment compared by well-known Glasgow comedian Tony Goodman, interspersed with typical Glasgow

Jewish humour. Edinburgh's own exponent of the saxophone, Bill Simpson, was accompanied by Rachel Cohen in the intricacies of Bach. Rachel thereafter swapped the saxophone for the piano as she provided the background for her mother Ruth's clarinet solo. The musical interlude was rounded off by Shirley and Peter with their inimitable performance. Thus concluded another successful evening for J-Fest cementing the already strong ties which exist between Edinburgh and Glasgow Jewry.

Shabbat Evening Dinner

Another Shabbat evening dinner took place on 19 March. Again this was organised by the ever-active shul events committee under the convenership of Hilary Rifkind. Seventy-five people attended the function which happily coincided with Rabbi Rose's birthday. His age was prominently displayed by balloons and greetings posters. In a short speech, he stated that if he were to read the latter using the Hebraic method reading from right to left, this would show him to have reached the grand age of 93. The extremely satisfying meal, the cosy enveloping atmosphere and all those present contributed to an excellent forerunner of Shabbat. Community President, Dr. Philip Mason, thanked everyone for a first class evening.

Israeli Dancing

On 27 March a small but dedicated and spirited band of dancers with graceful aspirations struggling to compete with graceful movements, took to the floor at another of the community centres' Israeli dance evenings. Legs occasionally became tangled due to temporary lapses of memory as to what was right and left. However the dances struck the correct chord and all participants finished at the same time, give or take a minute or two. Popular instructress Jane McKenzie again rendered her services voluntarily and must have been gratified at the response of those who had previously surrendered thoughts of becoming ballet dancers. The evening was most enjoyable, refreshments were served and a vote of thanks accorded to all by Lawrence Bowman.

Yom HaShoah

A small crowd braved the wet evening of 18 April when the annual Yom HaShoah service took place in the attractive surroundings of Princes Street Gardens Peace Park. The President, Dr. Philip Mason, welcomed Lord Provost Lesley Hinds and civic dignitaries to the short ceremony which was led by Rabbi David Rose. The Lord Provost commented on the warmth she and her colleagues always experienced when they came in contact with the Edinburgh Jewish Community and expressed her desire to follow her predecessors in maintaining this. Mr. David Goldberg, himself a victim of the Holocaust, lit the memorial candle which was followed by one minutes silence and his recitation of the Kaddish.

Yom Ha'atzmaut

A service was held in the Synagogue on 26th April to celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut. The Congregation Choir, in very fine voice under the leadership of David Mendelssohn greatly enhanced the proceedings. In his sermon, Rabbi David Rose spoke of the Holocaust and read the opening of Israel's declaration of independence. He commented on the terrible events of the past years which have however culminated in a strong democracy in Israel, and foretold a brighter future. The service concluded with the sounding of the Shofar by Bill Simpson and a spirited rendering of Adon Olam and Hatikvah by the choir and the congregation.

Afterwards, an appetizing array of falafel, humus, pita and Israeli salads were served followed by entertainment given by David Apfel from Leeds. If the previous hour was of a serious nature, this was amply compensated for by his witty stories which produced hilarious laughter from the audience. Mr Apfel, accompanied by Rachel on the piano, displayed more of his talent by singing a wide range of songs in a fine tenor voice.

The evening ended with cries of 'encore' and a vote of thanks given by John Cosgrove. The president, Philip Mason expressed gratitude to all concerned in what proved to be a most exceptional and enjoyable evening.

Letter from Israel

Samuel Vanzig

Friends and family, Shalom to you all.

As you may already know I have spent the past three and a half months on a gap year in Israel, living, working and experiencing the richness of Israeli culture and history. Right at the moment I am approaching the end of the volunteering section of the year, in which myself and 14 others have been volunteering in Safed, a small, religious city in the North of Israel. The city is absolutely beautiful with some stunning views over the Kinneret Lake; an expansive artist's colony, featuring the works of sculptors, craftsmen and artists; and the old city, the religious part of Safed, packed with ancient synagogues and beautiful little alleyways and streets. The old city has a real atmosphere of religiosity and Jewish learning with the sense that this is the place that looks and feels the same as it did 500 years ago.

Our volunteering group have tried their best to integrate themselves within the community but it is difficult with such an ultra orthodox presence in the city and our relatively secular lifestyles. That said, there is something really special about the religious dominance in Safed, the way the whole city practically closes down for Shabbat every week, with no shops open, no cars on the street and a complete focus on family and prayer. Safed is also a very spiritual place; there are many centres where people can study Kabbalah, a collection of Jewish mystical works which even Madonna seems to have taken to studying.

The main focus of the programme is, of course, volunteering. I have volunteered in 3 different placements: a local primary school; an absorption centre for new Ethiopian immigrants and the regional hospital for the area. I teach English in the primary school to children of all different backgrounds including Jewish, Arab Muslim, Druze and Christian Lebanese. Many of them also come from difficult homes where often the parents are very poor (the

current political situation has created sweeping unemployment), and are unable to provide books and equipment for their children. The children also lack support by way of reading practice and encouragement to do homework, and it is extremely difficult for the teachers to gain momentum with their teaching, when 3/4 of the class have taken in very little of the concepts from previous lessons. The kids at the school also tend to have a lot of learning difficulties and social problems in general such as dyslexia and ADHD. The school has many problems persuading parents to issue their children with medication for their disorders, rendering the kids with ADHD impossible to teach in a formal lesson, and persuading them to allow for their children to be tested for dyslexia and dyspraxia. (Without a test and a formal diagnosis, the children with these learning difficulties don't receive any additional support and must remain in an ordinary class setting for all their lessons). So my role then at the school, consists of taking kids such as those mentioned, out of the English classroom in order to teach them, i.e. those who find it impossible to work in an ordinary classroom setting. I tend to teach groups of difficult children (the trouble-makers in school as it were), and give one-on-one English tuition to the ADHD kids and those with heavy learning difficulties.

Even though the kids are difficult, they are, at heart extremely sweet. Myself and the other volunteer who works there, have developed a strong bond with the children and are always playing with them at break time and talking to them when we see them in the street. Working at the primary school is very rewarding, but also very challenging, not least because as a starting point the children's level of English is close to zero, and when I began at the school my Hebrew was at roughly that same level. Clearly being faced with having to teach



seven manic kids without the ability to communicate is not exactly the most pleasant of situations (especially when they all point at you, say things to their mates with one hand across their mouth, and laugh!) Fortunately, having been forced into the position where learning the basics of the language is a must, I have improved over the past few months to the stage where I can now just about get across anything I need to in a teacher-pupil setting.

Working at the school is totally different to anything I have done before. I am involved in formal education there, whereas in the past my experience has been working with kids informally, playing games and running programmes. Even so, teaching there has been a very good experience and has forced me to utilise every leadership skill I have.

The second volunteering placement I am engaged in is at the 'Mercaz Klita'- an 'Absorption Centre' in Safed designed to house and educate some of the many of the new Ethiopian immigrants who come to live in Israel. These immigrants come to the country in search of a better life, utilising Israel's 'right of return' policy, a law stipulating that any Jew around the world has the right to come and live in the Jewish state. These Ethiopians cannot prove that they are Jewish, but have been practising the rituals and prayers of the Jewish People for thousands of years. There are many views as to the Jewish origin of these people, but because their religion cannot be proven by Jewish law, they must, when they arrive in Israel, undergo a full conversion process lasting several years. Partly the absorption centre caters for them in this respect, but also educates them in Israeli culture, trains them in several vocations, and provides intensive

Hebrew training in order that the Ethiopians can leave the centre, able to integrate fully into Israeli society. As volunteers, we bring something new to the centre: the opportunity for the Ethiopians to study English.

Roughly half of the time there is spent simply playing with the children, football, games of tig etc., and being used as a human climbing frame for sometimes up to 5 kids at a time! The other half is spent by me not just helping to teach, as in the school, but by being a full English teacher with my own class of twenty four year-old Ethiopian girls. This means planning lessons myself, conducting the lessons myself, (all in Hebrew) and bearing the satisfaction of seeing their English improve whilst having the fantastic experience of using all the skills involved in being a teacher. The girls are great kids, very intelligent and extremely motivated to learn- really good fun to teach.



Samuel with Ethiopian children

A few weeks ago, I finished work at the local primary school in order to begin a placement at the regional hospital, working in the education department of the children's ward. It's proving to be a fantastic experience so far. I am involved essentially in two different projects. The first consists of one-on-one English tuition with children of all different ages and abilities. Most of them are Arabs from surrounding villages and cannot speak a word of Hebrew. The education centre is really just a room set-up for teaching Jewish kids Arabic and Arab kids Hebrew, as well as providing a base for use of the internet and general games to keep the ill children occupied. The centre has next to no resources for teaching English and this makes teaching extremely difficult, especially when I have no way of communicating with the Arab children other than by using hand

signals. So the other part of my job there, then, is to begin compiling a portfolio of English worksheets, games and other resources to be used as the basis as a future package for teaching English there. I feel that I managed to make a pretty good start at getting some material together, using the internet, coming up with some fresh ideas of my own and taking worksheets etc from existing English tuition books.

Every Tuesday, the enlarged group has a day devoted to learning about the country and experiencing what Israel has to offer- through tiyulim (excursions/walks), lectures and programmes usually co-ordinated by an organisation in Safed called 'Livnot u'Libanot' (To build and to be built).

So far just some of our experiences have included: a tour to the Golan Heights where we learnt about the Six Day War and the political/emotional impact it had on the Israeli people; an incredible bike ride through the Druze village 'Pikein'; a 4 day tiyul from the Mediterranean sea to the Kinneret with Shnatties, (participants in the Gap Year Programme), from all around the world (Australia, South Africa, America, New Zealand); a lecture given during a Shabbat spent at the 'Livnot ULibunot' base, from the ex-Prince of Swaziland, an amazing guy who converted to Judaism and now teaches at a yesheva, (school for religious Jewish studies), in Safed; and just last Tuesday, we went to a holocaust centre on a kibbutz in the North where we received an extremely moving talk from a survivor of one of the concentration camps, (an extremely rare and precious thing to be given as there are not many survivors left any more).

I spent one weekend in Haifa, visiting the stunning Bahai Temple and Gardens whilst finding time to walk around the old German Colony there. I experienced a Friday night Kabbalat Shabbat at the Western Wall where Jews from all different backgrounds- Ethiopians, Soldiers, Ashkenazi Jews, Sephardi Jews, secular American tourists, Ultra Orthodox Russian Chasidic Jews etc.- were praying, singing, dancing, all bringing in the

Sabbath together. It truly was a beautiful experience.

I was in Netanya for the festival of Simchat Torah where I spent the weekend with my cousin at his wife's Moroccan family's house. Just spending time with her huge extended Sephardi family was an experience in itself (the food in particular!) but I also took part in this amazing tradition within all the Sephardi communities of the area - each synagogue congregation during the Hakafot, (circuits carrying the Torah Scrolls round the Synagogue), leaves their synagogue in a procession following the Torah. Each congregation meets up at a central point to form this incredible mass of thousands upon thousands of adults and children, singing songs and dancing, following the direction of the Holy Scrolls down the streets of Netanya.

We have all been made very aware of the security situation here- we are always being informed of new threats and terrorist alerts and warned that it is forbidden to visit certain towns and cities in the country, to go to particular shops, cafes etc and to use public transport (rendering travel a very expensive business). We try not to let all the rules infringe upon our sense of independence but ultimately it is a challenge- there is only so much freedom possible in a country where attacks are as unpredictable as they are here. Every time there is a bombing, we are all in shock for several hours and passing by the settings of recent attacks (destroyed cafes etc) is always an extremely surreal experience. For ordinary Israelis however, life goes on and although the situation with the Palestinians and the politics of the country are at the forefront of everyone's minds, (everyone here is extremely opinionated), it in no-way dominates them in their day-to-day life.

From Safed, I am going to Eilat for Hogmanay, then on to Ashdod where the group will be volunteering with injured soldiers, mentally and physically disabled children, and altogether experiencing something completely new.

Star Trek into the Past



Answers on page 28

Edition 47 – Answers

as submitted by Mrs Anita Mendelssohn who wins our prize.



Editor Peter Bennett presents a prize of a gift token kindly donated by Sidney and Sandra Caplan, to the winner of our competition, Mrs Anita Mendelssohn.

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 3 Ethel Freedman | 40 Sheila Rosin |
| 6 Lily baker | 44 Harold Byers |
| 8 Sam Borfman | 46 Rita Noble |
| 9 Babette Shulfine | 47 Ethel Davidson |
| 10 Barney Hoare | 48 Mary Davidson |
| 11 Vivian Levey (Lucas) | 51 Abie Stoller |
| 12 Arnold Seftor | 53 David Hyams |
| 13 Mr Shulberg | 54 Matthew Allen |
| 16 Harry Ganz | 55 Dora Packter |
| 18 Rose Josephs (Bierman) | 57 Eric Simonoff |
| 19 Frances Gluckstein | 58 Freda Riffkin |
| 22 Muriel Baker | 61 Sydney Ivanoff |
| 23 Sybil Wolfe | 62 Annette Hart |
| 24 Nettie Benjamin | 64 Norman Dorfman |
| 26 Clarice Oppenheim | 65 Dora Blank |
| 27 Mae Stoller | 66 Beatrix Ronder |
| 28 Gerald Glass | 68 Mae Levey |
| 33 Essie Braverman | 69 Issy Blank |
| 34 Bertie Dorfman | 71 Tom Levey |
| 36 Katherine Ivanoff | 72 Ralph Purvin |
| 37 Rosa Massey | 73 Arnold Vinestock |
| 38 Morris Brown | 74 Joyce Cram (Vinestock) |
| 39 Mae Brown | |

Reviews

The Temple Mount

Berl Osbourne

It has been a pleasure to read this book by my old chaver from school and cheder and my neighbour from South Clerk St. Furthermore it has been a privilege to have been asked to review it.

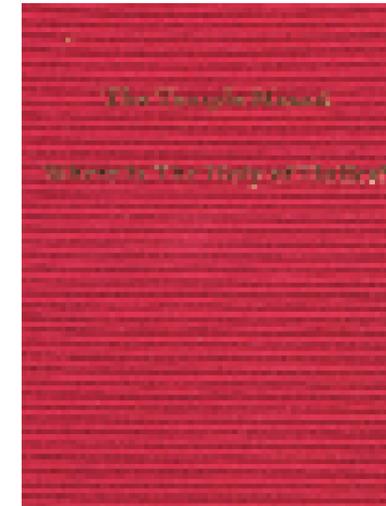
In the book he describes the efforts that have been made to determine the location of the ancient temple, and the various interesting artefacts that were uncovered in the course of the research. Investigations of this sort were given a tremendous boost by the reunification of Jerusalem in 1967.

To this task he brings the scientific analytical technique of a professor of the Physics at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, wedded to a lifelong devotion to Judaism and Zion.

As he says in the Preface, the book is addressed to two kinds of readers. Firstly there is the reader who is looking for a general survey of the research, without going into too much detail. The second type of reader is the one who wishes to pursue the subject further and in more detail, and also the specialised scholar; I and I suspect most of my readers looking to the first category. He describes the various avenues that he explored, some of which did not lead to any significant discovery.

One of the ideas that he explored was that of detecting the remains of sacrificial blood that would flow via a conduit from the altar into a Wadi* known as Wadi Kidron, which is in the eastern side of the Temple area.

The idea of detecting blood remains and thus the blood conduit leaving from the altar of sacrifice was an intriguing one but one that was fraught with difficulty. One difficulty was that the present watercourse of Wadi Kidron is different both in position and in depth from that of two



thousand years ago. In point of fact this avenue of research had been explored without result by other researchers over 150 years ago. Kaufman soon abandoned this approach and never returned to it. He drew from two literary sources on the Temple namely Tractate Middot from the Talmud and the writings of the historian Josephus.

He focused his attention on another landmark, the Mount of Olives (also known as the Mount of anointing) which is situated to the east of the temple area. In particular he studied it in its relationship to the ceremony of the sacrifice of the Red Heifer, the ashes of which mingled with water were sprinkled on those who were ritually unclean. This is described in the book of numbers: Chapter 19 Verse 4.

Detail from Tractate Middot postulates that in carrying out this ceremony the temple officiant (Kohen) would have had to stand on a high spot that was in line with the axis of the symmetry of the Temple.

The conclusion that he draws is that the temple axis is in the northern part of the temple area. I did not find these concepts easy to assimilate. I hope I have not misrepresented his conclusion.

Another source of information is the examination of archaeological remains. The detailed description of these is very technical and beyond the

scope of the average reader. However of particular interest is the description of cisterns, hewn from rock with interiors fully cemented, which served as a catchment for rain water.

Tractate Middot has been the source of many of the plans of the Second Temple produced by Professor Kaufman. From this he derived the scope and size of the inner court, the Court of the women, the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. From Middot and other rabbinical sources, he concludes that the Cupola within the Holy of Holies which is named the Holy of Spirits or the Dome of the Tablets, shelters bedrock which is the foundation stone of the temple. According to Melchior de Vogue the name Dome of the Tablets perpetuates the memory of the two tablets of the law that rested on the foundation stone within the Holy of Holies within the first temple. The bedrock sheltered by the Dome is flat so that The Ark of the Covenant, in which the tablets were deposited, could easily be placed on this flat surface.

This book is a work of prodigious research and scholarship; we can take pride that it was produced by one of our sons. For most of us it will be a book to be tasted rather than fully digested, but in the tasting there are several gems to be savoured.

*A Wadi is a rocky watercourse dry except in the rainy season.

Asher Kaufman was born in Edinburgh, Scotland and educated at George Heriot's School. He received his undergraduate training in physics and Ph.D. degree from the University of Edinburgh.

From 1954 to 1959 he was engaged in nuclear fusion research at the laboratory of associated electrical industries under the direction of the late prof. T E Allibone. In 1959 he moved to Jerusalem to take up an academic appointment of the physics dept. of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He is now honorary research fellow, the College of Judea and Samaria and also emeritus Professor of the Hebrew University



The Passion of the Christ

Berl Osbourne Review

I am writing in my eighty first year. It is seventy-three years since I first encountered anti-Semitism. I was an eight year old boy at Preston Street School (just around the corner from the Synagogue).

I remember being surrounded by a crowd of my fellow pupils shouting 'Jew, Jew, Jew vigide Jew,' making obscene gestures and eventually roughing me up physically. (I still do not know the significance of the word vigide).

I remember to this day, that my reaction was one of bewildered hurt. **I had done nothing wrong. Why was I being punished in this way?** There must be something wrong, something incurably wrong with me that I could do nothing about. It can be imagined what this does for the self-esteem of an eight year old.

Seventy-three years have passed – years in which I think I have been not a bad citizen of my country. I have committed no crime, I have been on Active Service in the army (as was my father before me): I have worked for forty years at the coal face of the National Health Service in an inner city practice.

And yet, and yet, I am still apprehensive of the possibility of a snide anti-Jewish jibe coming from new non-Jewish acquaintances who do not know I am a Jew. I reject the word Jewish – I am one hundred percent a Jew – not merely Jew-ish). I pre-empt this embarrassment by always letting new non-Jewish acquaintances

know that I am a Jew. Their introduction to me as 'Berl' is a useful way to this. It is against this background that I went to see 'The Passion'. I left the film with two emotions – disappointment and nauseated outrage. Disappointment because the film does almost nothing to address the religious, socio-economic and political circumstances in which the trial and crucifixion took place. These are of course, of the utmost importance in the understanding of the story. There were the tensions between the King, the Priesthood, the Sanhedrin, the Pharisees the Sadducees, and so on.

Such depictions of the historical figures involved are quite good - the Priesthood, Pontius Pilate, Jesus himself. **But all of this is subsumed in an unrelenting orgy of bestial cruelty that goes on for thirty or forty minutes** – quite unrelenting, this would appear to be the raison d'être of the film and

the only explanation for its notoriety and remarkable box office success. The producers appear to have crawled into every nook and cranny to see what further excess of sadistic violence could be inflicted on Jesus' broken body. It is not enough that he is flogged with rods – he must, as well, be flogged with a cat-o-nine tails; still not enough; each of the nine lashes of the cat-o-nine tails must be tipped with a steel pointed barb so that his back ends up as a raw bleeding mass with ribs exposed. We must hear loud and clear the crack of the broken bones as his hands and feet are nailed to the cross.

One clear and declared object of the film is to bring home in graphic detail and with all its horror, the bloodthirsty cruelty of the flogging and crucifixion. I do not think the film would be at all remarkable were it not for the 30 – 40 minutes of sado-masochism, near pornography.

Is the film anti-Semitic? Well, Mel Gibson was brought up in a strictly, orthodox Roman Catholic household by a father who is an unrepentant anti-Semitic Holocaust-denier, who rigorously imposed conformity. Mel Gibson, himself denies anti-Semitism and refuses to discuss his father's views. When interviewed on the subject his reply to his interviewer was 'You gotta leave it alone Diane '

I do not think it necessary or profitable to delve too deeply or to speculate on the psyche of either father or son. The important matter is what effect the film will have, particularly on devout Christians who have no problem with the historicity of the whole story (which I do have along with the other bible stories).

It is inevitable that the scenes of cruelty will have an effect that is antipathetic to Jews and Judaism.

True it is that the cruelty itself is shown to be inflicted by helmeted Roman soldiers, but it is clear that the Jews, particularly the Priesthood, surrendered him to his fate.

I have in the course of my life made many friendships with Christians, friendships which I greatly treasure. I would hate to think that such friendships might be vitiated by the fall-out from this film. As far as I am concerned they will not be.

But the embers of anti-Semitism are beginning to glow anew – the seemingly intractable problems of the Middle East, the rise of right-wing political parties in Germany and elsewhere in Europe – these are dangerous signs. It is important that all people of good-will, avoid language images that could fan these embers into flames.

'Hitler may be dead but then the bitch that bore him is on heat again'.

Ephraim Borowski's Review

Christ-killer" has for two thousand years been the rallying cry for persecution and murder of Jews in Christian Europe. Millions have died at the hands of the Inquisition, the Crusades, the pogroms, and the "final solution", the Holocaust. It did not matter that there was no license for this charge in the New Testament narrative - and it mattered even less that the Church condemned it as long ago as the Council of Trent in 1566. All that mattered was the xenophobia and jealousy of an uneducated mass, often cynically manipulated by nobles and churchmen to divert attention from their own responsibilities to their people.

Sadly there can be no doubt of the role of religion in this slaughter of innocents. It was scarcely a coincidence that Jews learned to keep their heads down during Lent, and, if they could, to escape completely during so-called Holy Week, as the frenzy rose. And yet, what was done in the name of a sacred text is condemned by that very text, by Jesus' final words "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do".

How could this be? We must remember that these were distant, dark times, when few could read. Out of that, as Orson Welles famously ad-libbed in *The Third Man*, came a thousand years of glorious art, but it was largely art with a purpose. Look at all the mediaeval paintings of the crucifixion in churches and galleries, and you will see traditional stereotypes of Jews - in that respect Hieronymus Bosch is no different from Joseph Goebbels. At a time when church services were conducted in Latin, a language few could understand, the purpose of these paintings was to tell a story to the parishioners.

"Why is a picture worth a thousand words? Because it hits you between the eyes; there is no nuance, no qualification."

Why is a picture worth a thousand words? Because it hits you between the eyes; there is no nuance, no qualification. To get the same message across in prose, you have to work hard at saying exactly what you want to say. A picture does that immediately - but that is a weakness, not a strength, because few issues are black or white. That is why we think the rise of literacy was a good not a bad thing. If a picture is worth a thousand words, that is not a strength of pictures, but of words! Look how much more precise we can be; look at how changing a word here or there can completely alter the message. A picture cannot say "maybe" or "perhaps".

Now the picture is taking over again. It is more sophisticated - it moves and it talks, but even in glorious Technicolor, it is still in black and white! And that is the underlying problem with Mel Gibson's *Passion*. It is a beautiful and powerful film. Parts of it are visually stunning, beautiful, moving, and the music is haunting and superbly emotive.

But it is not just the beautiful scenes which speak graphically straight to the gut, but the violence and brutality too. And that is the worm in the bud: to tell a violent tale so graphically is to exploit and condone that violence. It may be that most of the brutality is in the mind of the beholder, like the infamous non-existent rape scene in *Straw Dogs*: we see whips descending, we hear them crack, we hear screams, and we see a bruised and bleeding body, and we join the dots and are revolted by our own imaginings. That is the film-maker's art, and there is no doubt that at that Mel Gibson excels.

It is precisely because of his mastery of his medium that one is entitled to infer from what his film achieves to what he intended. And that is why people are right to be perturbed by his portrayal of a baying crowd replete with the stock mediaeval anti-Semitic stereotypes, or by his inclusion of statements that seem to resurrect the discredited charge that the Jews bear collective guilt for all eternity, or by his deliberate evocation of the mediaeval

paintings themselves. Just as the Council of Trent did not prevent the slaughter half a millennium ago, Jews have a right to be unconvinced that the Second Vatican Council will have any more effect. And remember too that Gibson is a fundamentalist, and incidentally the son of a selfconfessed Holocaust denier, who rejects much of Vatican II, preferring the Latin Mass, eating fish on Friday - and releasing this film at the beginning of Lent in the US, and in Holy Week in the UK. Can all this be mere coincidence?

"The point is that if an egg is bad it is all bad. This is a curate's egg of a film: parts of it - the cinematography, the music - are excellent; but parts of it are bad - the graphic violence, the ambiguous narrative."

There is a famous Punch cartoon of breakfast at the bishop's palace, in which the curate, screwing his face up over his boiled egg, says "No my lord, I assure you; parts of it are excellent." The point is that if an egg is bad it is all bad. This is a curate's egg of a film: parts of it - the cinematography, the music - are excellent; but parts of it are bad - the graphic violence, the ambiguous narrative. I would not say it is an anti-Semitic film, and even less would I say on the strength of it that Gibson is an anti-Semite, but I know this: that just like the New Testament itself, and in the face of the declarations of both the churches and film-makers, this film has the potential to foment anti-Semitism. For that reason and that reason alone it might have been better to have left it unmade.

This week was not only the beginning of Lent, it was also the week in which another increase in anti-Semitism incidents was reported, and the EU held a conference on the dangers of anti-semitism. It is clear that the oldest hatred is not yet dead. Beautiful and haunting as the film is, perhaps the world would have been better off without it.

Society Reports

A diversified programme of talks featured in the second half of the Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society season, covering the themes of Jewish drama, poetry of the Holocaust, Dutch Jewry, Israeli foreign policy, and a modern day Jewish king.

In his talk on Jewish characters in drama, David Neville posed the question of why is it that the names that most spring to mind when Jewish characters are mentioned are Shylock and Fagin? Neither are particularly flattering depictions of Jews. Until Shakespeare's complex characterisation of the Jewish psyche, Jews were objects of ridicule and disdain on the popular stage. But few others appeared on stage until the twentieth century.

A few Jews featured in novels, like Fagin, or Rebecca and her father in Ivanhoe, but in all cases they were tortured souls who eked out their living as moneylenders, save Rebecca, the noble silent sufferer of love. None of the authors were overtly anti-Semitic, but all held opinions shaped by the sentiments of their times. When challenged on his portrayal of Fagin as a Jewish arch-criminal, Dickens defended himself by saying he held nothing against the Jews, but only wanted to give a true impression of criminal society, and Jews were prominent members. It took until the twentieth century for even writers to become better informed of the Jewish people. Even then, the best drama featuring Jews, tended to be written by Jews. Memorable examples are Zangwill's "The King of the Schnorrers", and of course the musical "Fiddler on the Roof", based on Sholom Aleichem's popular Tevye stories. Major dramatic works like Arthur Miller's "Death of a Salesman", or Harold Pinter's "The Birthday Party" hinted at Jewish characters, but these were almost incidental to the story, though not perhaps to their personas. For now, the best place to find Jewish characters is on the radio, or American film and television. Perhaps it's the melting pot aspect of America that's needed to produce more mainstream Jewish characters like those portrayed by Woody Allen or Jerry Seinfeld.

Only very recently has Britain recognised the Holocaust in need of national remembrance, through the enactment of a National Holocaust

Day. There's probably no Jewish topic more difficult to approach than the Shoah. Joyce Caplan spoke about the efforts of poets, both Jewish and gentile, to make some sense of it, at least in their lives. Her talk was illustrated by several poems. Early poetry dealt with the growing alienation felt by Jews under the Nazis. Later poetry served as an outlet to "break the silence" for writers like Primo Levi, who said he wrote to bear witness for the sake of those who couldn't. Second hand witnesses, who's parents suffered or perished, also were driven to express themselves through poetry. More curious are gentiles, like Sylvia Plath, who identified with the suffering of Jews in her poems. Her poetry has recently had a bizarre consequence.

While reflecting an unusually sensitive, empathetic and troubled personality, Plath's poetry has inspired many school teachers to encourage their students to mimic the poetry of Jewish victims in an effort of identification and understanding. While well-meaning in intent, Joyce felt it's expecting too much for children to comprehend the horror involved. But it does leave open the question of how best to teach the Holocaust to the young, and its lessons.

We learned from Joel Cahen, Director General of the Jewish Museum in Amsterdam, that William III and Mary II were made English regents by Jews. Or, more exactly, it was the Dutch Jewish family Lopes-Suasso who financed their voyage from the Netherlands. The Suasso family hailed

originally from Portugal, where they were Marranos. But when Iberian Jews were given permission to immigrate to Amsterdam, they jumped at the chance, where they were once again free to live as Jews.

A wealthy family, they quickly rose to prominence as bankers for the House of Orange, and consequently got invited to all the best parties in the Hague. It wasn't too long before they regarded themselves as nobility, and well into the 19th and 20th century, the Portuguese Jews of the Netherlands maintained this pretence! (In fact, they were actually Spanish, but the war with Spain made saying so politically incorrect at the time.) There's little left of the once thriving Portuguese Jewish community, but their legacy remains, including the fabulous Portuguese synagogue in Amsterdam, fashioned after the ancient Temple.

The speaker at the 14 March meeting of the Literary Society was the American theologian Professor Mark Ellis, founder and director of the Centre for American and Jewish Studies at Baylor University in Texas.

Professor Ellis, author of 15 books (most recently Israel and Palestine: Out of the Ashes—The Search for Jewish Identity) spoke on the theme of the search for Jewish identity, focussing on the ways this identity is being transformed, and possibly endangered, by the current relationship between the powers of the Israeli state and the Palestinian population. In a wide-ranging discussion, he contrasted the Jewish past—where marginalization and exclusion was the norm—and the present emergence of what he describes as "Constantinian Judaism", the historically unprecedented closeness of certain strands of the Jewish community to the centres of global power. He explored the ways in which this shift has affected areas such as communal loyalty, censorship and self-censorship, double-standards and ethical values. He stressed the need for Jews to reclaim what he described as our traditional "prophetic" role, as moral witnesses and advocates for social justice.

If you thought there hasn't been a Jewish king in more than two thousand years, you were in for a surprise. During the second world war, a group of Italian soldiers abandoned to their fate on the small island of Lampedusa realised their good luck when a British pilot had to force land on the island. To the pilot's surprise, the Italians surrendered to him. The story of the incident spread, and the

pilot, one Sydney Cohen, found himself dubbed the "King of Lampedusa". The playwright Shmuel Harendorf turned the story into a Yiddish play, Der Kenig fun Lampeduse, recently translated into English by Heather Valencia, who told us the story behind the play. The play was a tremendous success on the London stage in 1944, both among Jews and gentiles, in spite of being in Yiddish, with every show a packed house. It was even reviewed in the London Times, the reviewer receiving simultaneous translation during the performance! It was a sorely needed source of humour - "a good laugh" wrote the Jewish Chronicle. But for the Jewish viewers, it was more than that. The incident served to illustrate a successful Jewish soldier, and Lampedusa, with its Jewish 'ruler', became an emblem for a Jewish state in their hearts. Avery Meikson

Council of Christians & Jews – Edinburgh branch report

The CCJ, Edinburgh Branch, continues to have a lively programme under the joint chairmanship of Rabbi Rose and Mr Robert Munro.

On Thursday 22 January 2004, we were honoured by a visit from the National Director, Sister Margaret Shepherd. It was a well attended meeting, chaired by the Rabbi, and her topic was 'Rescuers and Bystanders' with particular reference to the forthcoming Holocaust Memorial Day.

Talmud Brachot states: "The Universe exists on the merits of the righteous among the nations of the world and they are privileged to see the Divine Presence." That describes the rescuers of potential Holocaust victims.

The most tempting course for citizens in Europe was to do nothing to save the victims. The question that Sister Margaret posed was, what made some ordinary people step outside the norm, and think, 'I must do something, not matter how little or how much.'?"

There are clear cut cases of people who acted out of altruism and a sense of justice. The author Eva Fogelman, who wrote 'Conscience and Courage' was the daughter of Simcha Fogelman, who owed his life to various rescuers who acted at just the right moment. When the Jews of his town were rounded up and shot by the Germans, he was saved by the Russian baker who employed him. On their first sweep, the Germans overlooked him. When they came back, the baker hid him in the attic and turned up the ovens full blast so that the Germans could not face making an intensive search. The baker encouraged Simcha to take refuge in the forest where he hid with a friend. Both young men managed to beg food from farmers and were eventually introduced to Byelorussian partisans with whom they survived the War. That baker, and those farmers were people who put their own lives second to the moral purpose of saving others.

They were not necessarily exemplary characters: some such as Oscar Schindler, had their flaws. They did not view themselves as heroic but just as ordinary people just doing what they knew had to be done. This was extraordinary at a time when civilised values were in abeyance.

Another story: A woman from an influential German family had a farm in Hungary. Some time in 1944 she needed to harvest beans and asked the local German commandant for a detachment of Hungarian labourers who were building an underground aircraft hanger nearby. She offered the labourers potatoes so that they would have the energy to pick the beans and when their German guards saw how they fell on the potatoes, they called them 'animals'. The Hungarians retorted, 'It's you who have turned us into animals.' After that this woman asked the Commandant for a regular detachment of labourers and she made it her job to feed them.

Each European nation bears the scars of the slaughter of its civilians, and as Sister Margaret explained, Nazism was not only the enemy of the Jews but of Christianity and all civilised liberal values.

The Sisters of Zion in Rome saved 187 Jews during the German occupation by hiding them within the Convent. They used Vatican documentation to create false identities and to assist in the concealment. They hid men in a cellar camouflaged by saucepans and they brought in the supplies in boxes marked 'Vatican Property'. For this the Superior General received a 'Chasidei Umot Ha'olam' award after the War.

Another story is justifiably told again and again. A Polish woman confessed to a priest in 1946 that she had looked after a Jewish child since 1942 and now she wanted to baptise him. The priest sensed her qualms and interrogated her:

"What did the parents say when they left him with you?"

"They wanted him to be returned to his family and brought up as Jewish."

"So you must honour that wish."

The priest made it his business to ensure that the surviving family were contacted and the child handed over. That was Karl Woitiwa, the present Pope, who was done more than anyone to move forward Jewish/Christian relations.

This talk was highly evocative and held the audience spellbound for 90 minutes. Understanding the Holocaust is probably the single most challenging issue for Jewish / Christian relations and Sister Margaret's contribution over her years as National Director of CCJ cannot be over-estimated.

The second meeting of 2004 was on Thursday 26 February, when we welcomed Claire Singerman, a history teacher at Hutcheson's Grammar School, Glasgow, and Chair of the Scottish Association of Jewish Teachers (SAJT) to speak about 'Faith in our Schools'. This meeting was chaired by the Treasurer, John Stevenson.

Until taking over as chair of the SAJT, she had not involved herself in Jewish matters in her professional life. As a history teacher, she was, however, very conscious of religious conflict as a theme in history and of the excuses provided by religion to replace rationality with brutality. Antisemitism is an irrational movement which is often dressed up in rational clothes such as when Pharaoh said 'Let us deal shrewdly with them... etc etc' (recorded in the Hagadah). Hitler claimed that the Jews would start the World War that he himself unleashed. The Mel Gibson film 'The Passion' is a modern day example of how easily fear and hatred can be aroused.

There is no simple equation between religious education and tolerance, or ignorance and intolerance. It all depends on the quality of the teacher and the teaching. Claire has been involved in the revision of the Religion, Moral and Philosophical Higher syllabus. Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus are also contributing. The syllabus being replaced describes the Jewish religion as one whose main concern is suffering. But this was designed around the assumptions of the previous author, who was pre-occupied with the Holocaust. It is possible that teaching about other religions, not based on a thorough understanding, can give a picture of a religion that is scarcely recognisable to its practitioners. This also presents a challenge to a teacher – is she meant to teach enthusiastically about a religion that she knows nothing about? And what about marginal beliefs, such as scientology – do they count? The right of parents to withdraw children from RE can also be counter-productive as the parents withdraw the children because they do not like the religious background of the teacher, so the children end up just as intolerant as the parents. Despite the dangers, her conclusion was in favour of a more pro-active approach to religious education.

Claire's talk was followed by an intense and lively discussion with a number of expert contributions from people with a background in religious instruction.

The third meeting and AGM on 13 May was addressed by Revd Andrew McLellan, HM Inspector of Prisons. This was the same day as Andrew had issued his follow up report on Peterhead Prisons. While titled 'Faith in our Prisons' Andrew ranged widely over prison conditions, discussing the type of person who ends up in prison, the opportunities and the limitations of custodial sentences and the unacceptable conditions in which short term prisoners and remand prisoners often have to serve their time. Andrew touched on chaplaincy but made the point that there are very few prisoners who profess to be Jewish; and that Christian chaplains now have the responsibility to ensure that the spiritual needs of all faith groups are met. It was an informative and thought provoking talk.

The AGM resulted in the unopposed re-election of all office bearers and the existing committee, with the addition of Mrs Barbara Kwiecinska. We would welcome more volunteers for the Committee. Please phone Micheline on 0131 667 3409.

And a very successful session 2003-4 will conclude with our first ever Friday night dinner, hosted by the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation, on Friday 11 June.

Micheline Brannan

Secretary

Interview with Lady Jakobovits

Judy Gilbert



Lady Jakobovits, could you tell me a little bit about your background.

My mother was born in Germany and my father, who was orphaned at a very young age, came from Paris. He was sent to an aunt in Switzerland who subsequently became very ill and sent him to Germany. He then grew up in an orphanage together with a brother of his. When they were 17 and 16 respectively, they decided that they had to get out. They worked during the day, my uncle went in for chemistry, my father decided to go into the rabbinate and he had his very first position as an assistant Rabbi in a tiny little Bavarian village. It was at one of the youth rallies that he met his future wife my mother. They were very much in love and married soon after, and I was born in Ansbach. We came back to Paris in 1936, to the very community in which my father was born. My father always spoke French with us but we were always told off in German and that is the only German I know.

Can you tell me about your siblings? They worked for the United Nations in the 50's and the early 60's they were posted as translators to New York, my younger sister, being as of now, the head teacher of a very large School in Los Angeles.

Behind every great man is a woman. How do you see your role as the wife of a Chief Rabbi? When I met Rabbi Jakobovits he was already Chief Rabbi of Ireland at the young age of 27. I didn't even know there were Jews in Ireland. I hardly knew where Ireland was. We went round to

a neighbour who had an atlas, but we couldn't find Ireland. So we had to find someone who could lend us a magnifying glass and we finally found Ireland and who ever knew if we would find Jews in Ireland. My husband was the immediate successor to Rabbi Herzog who became the first Chief Rabbi of Palestine in 1940 with whom we've always had very close connections. I went from Paris to Ireland without a word of English. I did not know my father-in-law who had passed away but I always heard he was a very ambitious man; ambitious for himself and therefore ambitious with everyone around him. I was not brought up in that sort of way; I was brought up with the emphasis on the 'joi de vivre'. I was married for about nine or ten months when I had the courage to ask my young husband, 'What would your father have said when he would have met me, would he have approved of me?' my husband's answer was 'Amélie, my father would have loved you because you neither walk behind me, nor in front of me, but next to me' and on this motto our perfect marriage was based.

What major differences have you observed in the Jewish way of life over the last two decades? The world around us has been moving, and continues to move at great speed and in doing so is becoming more extreme both to the right and to the left. There is a well-known and justified saying, 'As the non-Jewish world does so does the Jewish world'. How sadly true: Religiously, morally, politically and economically. For the moment we seem certainly to have deviated from our divine mission in being the light unto the nation. How fervently I pray that this difficult period will soon be behind us.

Do you think the traditional role of the woman as homemaker has changed? Here again, we are much influenced by the society around us. And while in many cases the

economic situation demands that both spouses make themselves responsible for the sustenance of their family, the idea is of course for the Jewish wife and the Jewish mother to be able to concentrate entirely on polishing the precious diamond given them by the grace of G-d. Having said this, I have much admiration for the individual women who can achieve both tasks at the same time, and to perfection.

What are your views on the viability of a small community such as our own? As long as you have such wonderful rabbinical and lay leadership, there is every hope that a small precious community like yours will survive. Often 'great' women and men emerge from smaller communities. One can observe this when thinking for example of the communities in Sunderland, Dublin, and Belfast etc. etc.

How can we encourage our young people to maintain their Jewishness? As I have indicated already, my experience has always been that if Judaism is always taught and practiced with a joi de vivre, young people love it.

Which brings us to your own fun in life. How do you enjoy yourself outside the realms of your religious life? By way of priority my fun comes from: Our fabulous family, children and spouses, grandchildren and great grandchildren; The inter-relationship with many of my wonderful friends all over the world; My many voyages, both within England and abroad; Listening to classical music; Watching challenging pieces of theatre; Reading, with a preference to biographies; Walking along the seaside and rambling through the beautiful countryside.

Lady Jakobovits, thank you very much for allowing me this small insight into your full and gratifying life. May it long continue.

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Dear Editor

I read with interest the article by Michael Adler on the changing nature of anti-Semitism and thought that you might be interested to hear the views of some eminent speakers at a two-day conference, which I attended recently in Montreal.

“Demonization, double standard, and deligitimation are the new forms of anti-Semitism.” the new weapons in a war against the Jewish people argued Natan Sharansky, Israel’s Minister of Diaspora Affairs and Jerusalem, as he addressed an overflow audience at Montreal’s Congregation Shaar Hashomayim.

Sharansky was the keynote-opening speaker at The International Conference on the Global Dimensions of Contemporary Antisemitism which brought together a blue ribbon group of academics, intellectuals, writers, journalists, politicians and diplomats to explore the depth and breadth of anti-Jewish bigotry.

Demonization of Israel was Sharansky’s first “D”. “Israel faces the danger of becoming the new South Africa and is depicted as the Pariah State of the 21st century”, he said, remembering the international condemnation to that state’s former apartheid regime. The Jewish State is being demonized as the embodiment of all that is evil. Israel’s actions in the Middle East are distorted and magnified by its critics while being compared to Nazi Germany. Israelis are the new Nazis and Sharon is the new Hitler. A continuous and venomous criticism of Israeli policy is now a respectable tactic for venting hostility against the Jews. Israel has evolved into the new epicenter of Jew hatred.

The re-emergence of key works such as the Protocols of the Elders of Zion and Mein Kampf, as well as indigenous invented tales of Jewish conspiracies, have circulated in all Arab countries. Robert Wistrich, the Director of the Vidal Sassoon Centre for the Study of anti-Semitism at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, argued that the “popularity of the Protocols is one of the most telling symptoms in the Middle East of the complete merger between anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism.

Margaret Wente, a columnist from the Globe and Mail, noted, “The virulent anti-Semitism in the Arab and Muslim world is one of the greatest unreported stories in western media.” State sponsored publishing firms; television and radio spew a consistent diet of poison attacking the Jews and anyone else who can plausibly be associated with them.

Since the beginning of the intifada, there has been a growing barrage of anti-American propaganda now inextricably interwoven with anti-semitism, to the extent that anti-

blamed for the ills of the world. Anti-Semitism reared its ugly head in the 3rd century BC in Alexandria, where the Greek rulers blamed the Jewish minority for all the ills that befell that society. Since that time, speaker after speaker at the conference, uncovered the archeological layers of the anti-Semitic vilification with updated anecdotes, myths, hate figures, folklore and pseudo facts.

The irrational explanation of why international events occur is linked directly to Jews. Ideologies such as Marxism and Freudianism may be used as templates to loosely explain human behavior. Almost all events especially maligning ones can be fitted into either theory. While Marxism suggested class warfare and Freudianism infantile experience bottled up in the unconscious, anti-Semitism uses a sinister, worldwide conspiracy theory blaming the ills of the world on Jews and Israel.

The United Nations Security Council is a case in point. Israel was strongly condemned for the assassination of Sheik Ahmed Yassin, the founder and spiritual leader of the Hamas Terrorist group. The UN considered neither the 19,000 terrorist attacks against Israel nor the deaths of countless Israelis as morally equivalent crimes against humanity. Since the beginning of the Intifada in September 2000, Israel’s Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz pointed out that Hamas has attacked Israelis 425 times, causing 377 deaths and 2,076 wounded. The human rights violations of China’s occupation of Tibet or the de facto Syrian occupation of Lebanon, fall on deaf selected ears.

The third D is deligitimation. Israel is the prototype example of colonialism and is a political malignancy that should be excised geographically from the Middle East. Robert Wistrich notes that Palestinian anti-Zionism has helped infect Europe with an old-new version of anti-Semitism in which Jews are depicted as imperialist

invaders, who conquered Palestine by brute force. Zionists are modern Crusaders with no legitimate rights to the soil, who cleverly manipulated Great Britain and then America to achieve their goals.

In the concluding panel of the conference Martin Peled -Flax an Israeli foreign affairs ministry officer responsible for the fight against anti-Semitism, argued that the key struggle would be “to confront the genocidal anti-Semitism in some quarters of the Muslim world.” He urged Jewish communities to “find allies at the local, grassroots and international level” to fight anti-Semitism. “We cannot do it alone.”

It is a truism today that world Jewry pays a price everywhere when events in the Middle East resonate beyond the borders. It permeates our consciousness now because anti-Semitism is omnipresent, invading our psyches in the guise of anti-Zionism. This pseudo-political strategy allows for a false overview of the Middle East crisis perpetrated by the mainstream media...that rationalizes terrorism and paints Israel as the common denominator of the evil incarnation that troubles the world.

Marvin Hershorn

Marvin Hershorn is Prof. of Humanities at Dawson College and a lecturer in the Department of Political Science at Concordia University both in Montreal

Dear Editor

In the last issue of the Edinburgh Star, I took issue with the Chief Rabbi’s claim that anti-semitism is not only ‘alive, active and virulent’ but has reached unprecedented levels today’. Readers may be interested to know that, in a speech prepared for a high-profile seminar, which was held in Brussels in February and hosted by the President of the European Commission, Romano Prodi, Rabbi Sacks subsequently said ‘I do not wish to exaggerate. This is not 1942 or 1938 or 1933’. However, he went on to claim that ‘seeds are being planted that will bear fruits of pure poison’ and to urge the European Commission ‘for the sake of heaven and humanity’, to take a stand on anti-semitism.

In my article, I cited a recent news item in the Guardian, which contained a summary of ‘serious’ anti-semitic incidents in a number of European countries in 2003, in support of my contention that, by suggesting that anti-semitism is as bad now – and therefore as much of a threat – as it was in the 1930s, we were failing to keep a sense of proportion about anti-semitism and degrading the memory of the millions of Jews who lost their lives during the Holocaust. Since then, two reports have been published by the Community Security Trust (CST), a charity which collects data on anti-semitic incidents from a number of sources – including the victims themselves, third parties, the police and the media – and acts as an unofficial anti-semitism watchdog for the Jewish community. CST reports are taken very seriously by communal organisations, including the Board of Deputies.

The first of these reports, which is available on the internet from the CST’s website, (http://www.thecst.org.uk/incidents_statistics.htm), was published in February. It reported that the number of anti-semitic incidents recorded in Britain last year had risen by 7 per cent compared with 2002. 375 incidents were recorded, the second highest total since records began in 1984 (the highest was 405 in 2000).

Anti-semitic incidents are broken down into six categories – extreme violence, assault, damage and desecration of property, threats, abusive behaviour and anti-semitic literature. In 2003, there were no incidents of extreme violence but 54 incidents of assault, an increase of 22 per cent on 2002. According to the CST, they were mainly directed at people who were ‘visibly Jewish’, and could be recognised by the fact that they wore religious or traditional clothing. In addition, there were 72 incidents of damage and desecration of Jewish property – in particular cemeteries – which was up 31 per cent from 2002. The only area to show a decline was ‘abusive behaviour’, covering written or verbal abuse.

The second report, published in March, claimed that anti-semitism was on the rise in Europe and cited examples of hate mail, arson and attacks on Jewish cemeteries. This claim was not based on systematic data collection but on reports from individual countries. The report singled out Belgium, France, Germany and the United Kingdom where, it said, the rise in anti-semitism had been of particular concern.

In light of these two reports, should I revise my position? I have given this question a fair amount of thought but come to the conclusion that they support rather than undermine my position. The first point to make is that it is hard to assess the significance of the CST statistics summarised above. Accurate figures on the incidence of racist crimes are difficult to obtain since many racial incidents go unsuspected and, on the other hand, a racial motivation may be assumed where there was none. In addition, suspicion is not enough on its own and victims rarely have sufficient evidence to say, with certainty, that an offence was racially motivated. The British Crime Survey now asks respondents whether they think that race was a motive in the crimes they have experienced as victims and the results are instructive: Pakistanis and Bangladeshis are most likely to think that offences against them are racially motivated – they

believe that 26 per cent of all the offences against them are racially motivated compared to 13 per cent for Indians, 9 per cent for Caribbeans and 1 per cent for white people. There are no comparable figures for other minority groups, and it is therefore impossible to compare Jewish experiences of anti-semitism with the experiences of other ethnic minorities with diverse forms of racism. However, I am sure that Jews are much less likely to be victims of racial attacks than are a number of other minority groups in Britain today.

Anti-Semitism is an extremely

unpleasant and offensive form of racism that needs to be exposed and rooted out wherever it raises its ugly head. However, we need to keep a sense of proportion about it and not become so obsessed with it that we fail to notice or be concerned with other equally unpleasant and offensive forms of racism. As Jews, it is understandable that we should be more concerned about anti-semitism than others are. However, we should not be so preoccupied with our own experiences that we fail to notice the sufferings of others. Rather than calling for the European Commission to take a specific stand on anti-

semitism, we should be joining with other minority groups and urging the European Commission, and other representative bodies, to adopt a take a stronger stand on racism in whatever form it takes. The most effective means of drawing attention to the menace of anti-semitism is to join with others in drawing attention to their experiences as victims of racism and demanding effective means of countering it.

Michael Adler.

Star Trek Answers

Back row: Bill Sinclair, Ian CAplan, Norma Brodie, Tony Gilbert, Vicki Lowrie, Rose Newman, Rose Orgel, Suzie Sinclair, Lennie Berger, Ian Leifer

Front Row: Judy Gilbert, Christine Burns, Valarie Simpson

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Dear Editor

On 14th March Marc Ellis, Professor of American and Jewish Studies at Baylor University, addressed the Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society (EJLS) on the subject 'Towards a Just Peace in Israel and Palestine'. We are writing to take up his theme of the crisis in Jewish identity caused by Israel's treatment of the Palestinians. In doing so we are not making a political judgement on the causes of the conflict; our concern is rather whether Israel's conduct is consistent with the Jewish ethical tradition.

Professor Ellis began with the observation that Jews witnessing the treatment of the Palestinians today should see parallels to the treatment we ourselves received in the past from our oppressors. His illustration of this, a series of maps and pictures of the separation barrier, came as a shock to many of the people attending the talk. The barrier - partly fence and, in populated areas, partly high wall with watchtowers - cuts deep into the West Bank territories. According to Professor Ellis, its path was chosen not for military or security reasons but to take in the largest possible number of Jewish settlements.

Maps of the barrier show a disturbing disregard for the welfare of ordinary Palestinian people. Communities are literally split in half, farmers cut off

from their fields and livelihoods. Towns like Qalqilya, almost completely surrounded by the wall with only a narrow corridor left for communication, have effectively become prisons. The barrier will eventually pen 2 million Palestinians into two separate enclaves constituting less than half of the 1967 area of the West Bank. The echoes of other walled-in communities in our past are too disturbing to ignore.

Professor Ellis noted that no one can justifiably say "We did not know." Maps of the wall's path are now a matter of public record, reproduced in such mainstream media as the American current affairs weekly Newsweek

He went on to make an uncompromising assessment of the position of many of the mainstream Jewish leaderships of the West in the face of this injustice. Jews in the West - in the US, in particular - have become more secure and closer to power than at any time in our recent history. His provocative term for this development is "Constantinian Judaism", drawing a parallel with the way in which Christianity, after its adoption as the Roman state religion, became assimilated into the imperial power structure. He asks if this new proximity to and identification with the contemporary equivalent of that power has begun to transform the notion of what it means to be a Jew.

The Jewish community in the UK has long taken a public stance of uncritical support for Israel. But the question posed by Ellis's talk is whether this stance is now compatible with the dedication to social justice enshrined in the Jewish ethical tradition.

The talk left us deeply disturbed about the situation in Israel/Palestine and our relationship to it as Jews. This does not imply a one-sided judgement: we feel deeply the suffering of Israeli Jews in the current situation, and we are well aware of the need for conscience-searching on all sides of the conflict. But we feel that we as Jews must address specifically the question of how Jewish ethics can be applied to Israel's actions.

In this context it is unfortunate that, whatever the reason, the meeting that Prof. Ellis addressed was not held in the Lit's usual venue of the Salisbury Road synagogue, but was instead relocated to a church hall. If indeed this relocation was purely on security grounds and implied no desire to suppress discussion, we would hope that the issues that Prof. Ellis raised will be vigorously explored within the wider Edinburgh Jewish community in the months to come.

Maurice Naftalin

Anna Caplan, Ellen Galford (EJLS vice-president), Tony Gilbert (past EJLS president), Sharon Jacobsen, Sue Liebermann, Maurice Naftalin, Charles Raab (past EJLS president), Gillian Raab, Bill Sircus, Lewis Stevens (EJLS secretary)

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Announcements

Congratulations

Avigal Sperber for obtaining her B.Des. (Hons)

Isabel Kelpie for her forthcoming Bat Mitzvah on 20th June.



Arnold and Hilary Rifkind on the birth of their first granddaughter Avigayil born to their son Michael and daughter-in-law Sharon.



Lennie and Marcia Berger on the birth of their first grandchild Talia Sophie Rudin to their daughter Gillian and son-in-law Garry.



Bar Mitzvah boy James Hyams

Bnai Mitzvah James Hyams son of Susan and Stephen, brother of Amanda.



Bar Mitzvah boy William Gilroy

William Gilroy son of Melissa and Keith, brother of Daniel.

Thanks

From Norman Cram to the many friends who visited during his recent stay in Respite Care in the Braid Hills Nursing Home. They all helped to keep his spirits up as did all the goodies with which he was lavished. Now home, Norman will be pleased to welcome them at any time.

Coming Events

May

30 Sunday

Junior Maccabi

Senior Maccabi at the home of Lesley and John Danzig)

June

11 Friday

CCJ Dinner 8.00pm

13 Sunday

WIZO Annual Brunch at the home of Katie and Ron Goodwin

Junior Maccabi

20 Sunday

Open Garden day, 2 – 5 pm at Esther and Harold Mendelssohn.

40% proceeds to Community Centre

Cheder end of term picnic

July

6 Tuesday

Fast of Tammuz

14 Wednesday

AJR Annual Northern Meeting

19 Monday

Fast of Av

25 Sunday

CCC Sponsored Walk. Contact Doreen 339 7557 for more information

August

2 Monday

Festival of Av

September

5 Sunday

WIZO Festival Fireworks Supper at the home of Judy and Mark Sischy

16 Thursday

1st day Rosh Hashannah

October

31 Sunday

CCC Community Quiz 7.00pm

WIZO lunches: Oct, Nov, Dec, dates to be confirmed in next edition

Junior Maccabi meets on alternate Sundays from 1pm to 3pm. For further information, contact Benjamin Danzig (229 3054).

Senior Maccabi meets on Sunday evenings in members' homes. For further information, contact Hannah Cohen (653 0570).

The Luncheon Club meets every Tuesday and Thursday at 12.30pm.

All meetings take place in the Community Centre, Salisbury Road, unless otherwise stated. All are subject to alteration.