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The Edinburgh Star

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Editorial

There is an old Scots joke that states that when the Titanic sank the headline in an Aberdeen newspaper read; "Aberdonians drowned at sea." There is a Jewish version along the same lines in which Moishe Cohen hears who has won the Grand National and asks "Is that good or bad for us Jews?"

There is always a danger of such parochialism in our daily lives and the *Star* itself is probably not entirely innocent of the charge! In these circumstances it is particularly gratifying to note the contents of the Chief Rabbi's address to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. He spoke of the challenge to all people "to turn the aim of life from having a good time into making the times good."

It is impossible to think of a more appropriate note on which to say Shana Tova to all readers of the *Star* both from the acting Editor and from the Editorial Board.

THANKS

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be in the Chanukah issue

A Rosh Hashanah Message from Rabbi Shapira

לשמע אל הרינה ואל התפילה

To listen to the singing and to the praying

As we approach the High Holydays—Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, we should take the opportunity to look into our spiritual life, examine our achievements and failures and gather strength to carry on the struggle for a further improvement in the quality of our lives. I would like you to take a look with me at some of our High Holyday prayers, with special emphasis on the traditional melodies used in the Synagogue.

The Hebrew word for prayer is *Tef-*

ila, which comes from the root meaning “to judge”. The reflexive form means literally “to judge oneself”, and the word *Tefila* therefore would denote “self-examination”—searching your own heart and thoughts and actions to see if they are worthy in the sight of God. In fact, praying to God for your needs not only makes you conscious of the degree to which every creature is dependent on the grace and bounty of God, but it also makes you more cons-

scious of the presence of God, and this awareness inevitably influences your mode of life—“doing justice, loving mercy and walking humbly with God” (Micah). The following quotations from Hebrew Literature may give an idea of what Jewish prayer is all about.

1. Prayer is the basis of worshipping God, it is a worship through the heart. (Taanit)
2. Prayer is the source of life, it lifts up the soul, encourages a person to avoid bad and to stick to good and to improve his relationship with God and man. (Berachot)
3. God said to his people Israel: When you pray, do it in your Synagogue. If you cannot go to Synagogue—pray at home; if you cannot pray at home—pray wherever you are, even just in your heart. (Midrash)
4. In my distress I called upon the Lord, to my God I cried for help. (Psalms)
5. Even when a sharp sword is on your throat you should not give up praying. (Midrash)
6. ... befitting for you, O Lord our God are song and praise, hymn and melody, strength and dominion, victory, greatness and might, renown and glory, holiness and sovereignty, blessings and thanksgivings from henceforth even for ever. (From the daily morning service).

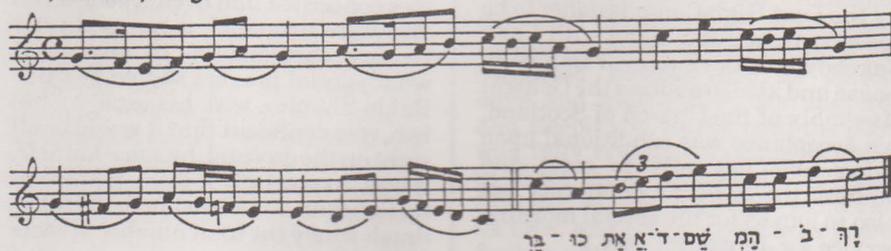
We Jews believe that prayer does not need a priest or an altar or any mediator. It can be done everywhere through a direct line between man and his Creator. However, the prayers for the High Holydays are different from all other prayers. They are longer and especially lofty in their content and sublime in their ideas. That is the reason why the liturgic singing has been associated with these prayers and many traditional tunes have become an essential part of all Synagogue Services. Many tunes serve also as a sort of interpretation to the meaning of the text of the prayers. There is a full harmony between the melodies and the meaning of the words.

The evening service of Rosh Hashana up to the *Amida* (silent service) is similar to any other evening



service in so far as the text is concerned. The main difference is the atmosphere created by the singing. The cantor starts the *Barechu* with a musical prelude, a short melody without words which is mostly joined by the whole congregation. This melody is repeated as a chorus (hymn) at the end of each paragraph and during the *Kaddish* before the *Amida*. The tune goes as follows:

Maestoso, adagio



The morning service is different and unique for these special days. The first significant feature is the words: *Ha'Me'lech Yoshev al Ki'se ram ve'Ni'sa*—"The king who sits on a throne". This differentiates Rosh Hashana by introducing a particular atmosphere of festive music, which is repeated at the end of the following chapters and during the *Kadish*. This tune is also sung by the whole congregation, and sounds as follows:

Sostenuto



A significant contribution to the High Holydays special prayers are the special melodies for the different *Kaddish* prayers. I have mentioned already the *Kaddish* of the evening and morning services, which are sung to the same melodies as the special evening and morning High Holyday Services. Then comes the *Kaddish* preceding the Additional Service. This Service is the most important and is the central focus of the High Holyday Services both with regard to its content and its musical structure with its traditional motifs. It takes place after the Morning Service is completed and concluded with the reading of the Torah and the blowing of the Shofar.

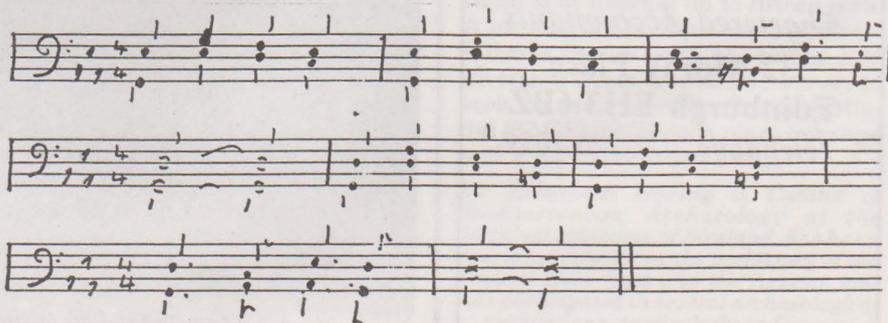
After the Scrolls have been returned to the Holy Ark, the cantor walks to the Bima to start the Mussaf Service. He commences with a special personal prayer called *Hineni* with the congregation seated. In this prayer he expresses with great sincerity the humility of his mission as the

representative of his congregation before God and prays for success in his duties ending with the blessing to God "who listens to our prayers". Now, he starts the Mussaf *Kaddish* prayer. This *Kaddish* is performed in a special melody unique to this occasion. A grandiose melody developing in a pleasant gentle and soft way in preparation for a merciful atmosphere for the following silent *Amida*

prayer. Most of the traditional melodies of the High Holydays are sung during the cantor's repetition of the *Amida*. Most of them are well known in many communities where the congregation join in the singing and some of them are sung by the choir.

Of all the songs and melodies which the choir in our Synagogue performs during this service, I would like to mention one small part of a melody which struck me deeply when I lis-

tened to it at my first Rosh Hashana service in Edinburgh. This was the melody for the *Unetane Tokef*. The prayer itself is a very emotional one. It speaks of that day when every soul comes before the creator to accept the verdict for the coming year. Equally as moving is the melody, which is the highlight of the choir under the skilful direction of the choir-master, Mr David Mendelssohn, who manages to coordinate the intricacies of the section and solo work to produce a most impressive performance. It sounds as follows:



Later on in the Cantor's repetition of the Mussaf, there is a section which has not previously been said by the congregation. This is called *Selichot*—"supplications for forgiveness" (from the root *Selach* meaning "to forgive"). At first it seems that *Selichot* were recited only as part of the service for Yom Kippur. Gradually, however, they came to be incorporated also in the prayers for Rosh Hashana and on the penitential days right up to Yom Kippur. In some communities *Selichot* prayers were arranged even for the whole month of Elul as a form of preparation for the great Days of Awe. In Western communities *Selichot* is recited before every morning service, starting from the first Saturday night before Rosh Hashana. The most prominent poem of this first *Selichot* night is called *Bemotsaey Menucha*—"At the departure of the Sabbath", and has the following refrain repeated after each verse: *Lishmoa el ha'ri'na ve'el Hatfila*—"To listen to the singing and to the praying". We notice that this special verse, which brings in the special atmosphere of the High Holydays, speaks first of the singing and later of the praying. The psalmist said: *Ivdu et ha'Shem be'Simcha*—"Serve the Lord with rejoicing". *Bo'au le'fanav biRna'na*—"Come before him with singing" (Psalm 100). And the Rabbis of old also said that the Shechinah—God's divine presence, rests only where there is an attitude of rejoicing and contentment. The High Holydays, with all their prayers and services being conducted in our synagogue with the traditional songs, can serve as a unique opportunity to conserve our ancient tradition and encourage our children and grandchildren to become worthy and proud bearers of our rich heritage, full of enthusiasm for Jewish living and Jewish learning.

This is the major task of our generation today, and there is no better opportunity to strengthen our efforts in this direction than at the coming High Holydays.

May I take this opportunity of sending you all, on behalf of Rachel and myself, our sincere good wishes for a Happy New Year—*Shana Tova and Ketiva va'Chatima Tova*.

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The Chief Rabbi's visit to Edinburgh

by JOHN COSGROVE

When Lord Jakobovits was invited by the Lord High Commissioner to be his overnight guest along with Lady Jakobovits at the Palace of Holyroodhouse and also to address the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, his acceptance was conditional upon being able not only to meet and address the Jewish Community but also to join us for the special morning service for Jerusalem Day.

Many a small community would have been daunted by this prospect especially since the meeting with the Community had to take place at 4pm on a Tuesday afternoon and the morning's proceedings had to be completed in time to enable him to be back at the Palace by 9am. However, the Community Centre Committee and the Ladies Guild under the leadership of Anita Mendelssohn, Hilary Rifkind and Leila Goldberg rose to the occasion with their usual enthusiasm and energy. They calmly and efficiently provided a wonderful tea for what was for them an unspecified number of people and on the following morning a sumptuous breakfast.

An apprehensive President, well aware both of the rarity of a weekday morning service in Edinburgh and of the complete absence of a precedent

for a special one for Jerusalem Day, was concerned that even if such a service were arranged, there might not be any participants. In any event what special prayers should be said? Rabbi Shapira, with his usual optimism, was confident that it would be all right on the day and, by some miracle, it was. At precisely 7.30am, there were no less than 40 men in the Beth Hamedrash where the total number of seats is ... 40!

Rabbi Shapira led the Service assisted by Rafi and Uri Wittenberg and he invited me to lead the Hallel *without the bracha*. After breakfast the Chief Rabbi said a few words indicating that he was due "in another place" and then led the Grace after Meals. Several of us followed him to the General Assembly where he was ushered in with the Lord High Commissioner's entourage and warmly welcomed by the Moderator. His address (printed in full below) was a skilful blend of diplomacy, common sense and uncompromising Jewish values which was warmly and most enthusiastically received. As he was about to leave the Assembly, the Moderator thanked Lord Jakobovits formally using the *Yevorechecha* prayer in Hebrew. We were all very touched.



Lord and Lady Jakobovits are greeted in Scottish style at the synagogue.

Lord Jakobovits addresses the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 23rd May

For me the privilege of addressing this venerable Assembly is enhanced by our special bonds of common roots and mutual respect. We are united in reverence to our biblical heritage and its centrality. As Jews, we particularly esteem the enlightened attitude to Israel and the Jewish Return to Zion pioneered by the Church of Scotland among Christian denominations.

At this time, let me express the grief felt by Jews the world over at the recent shocking murder of innocent lives in and around the Holy Land. These outrages should add further urgency to heeding the Psalmist's call to "Seek peace and to pursue it"—replacing confrontation by conciliation.

Allow me in these few precious minutes to take a broader glimpse at the cataclysmic events of the past half-century culminating in the recent spectacular upheavals convulsing our world on a scale, at a speed, and with consequences unprecedented in human history.

Man's political, social and moral evolution over the past fifty years has been quite staggering.

At the height of Hitler's crimes against humanity, the very term "human rights" was little known; oppression and starvation anywhere in the world hardly stirred the conscience of civilisation. Religious leadership was largely spineless, and insensitive to human suffering on a colossal scale.

Then the moral climate changed dramatically. Empires were dismantled, Colonial exploitation ceased. The ravages of famine in what became the Third World elicited unprecedented responses. The world became a more caring world.

But painfully we must admit that religion played a relatively minor role in this refinement of man's moral conscience. Even the United Nations and its agencies, as well as the vision of a united Europe, owe very little to religious leadership, though they manifest the Brotherhood of Man more realistically than ever before.

Some had already written off religion as a potent force in world affairs.



The Chief Rabbi greeted by the Moderator of the Church of Scotland.

They developed a "G-d is dead" theology and spoke of the "Post-Christian era". Religion, it was widely believed, had been superseded by science and materialism, by the mechanisation of technology, by the indiscipline of the permissive society. But the obituaries were premature.

The first signals of religious rebirth were faint, but they quickly grew in intensity. There were the freedom marches in America inspired by Martin Luther King and others which spawned the civil rights revolution. There was the religious awakening of the world conscience on the iniquities of apartheid leading to the radical changes we are now witnessing.

There is of course also a painfully negative side, notably the destructive rise of religious fundamentalism and fanaticism, rampant in different forms among all three monotheistic faiths, including holy wars with millions of victims, and unholy alliances between religion and politics. These aberrations are grave indeed, but they do not deflect the overall forward thrust of the religious renaissance, in world affairs.

Above all there is the collapse of Communism. This failed doctrine had for the first time challenged the belief in G-d in national constitutions proscribing religious education. It has now itself come to grief primarily through the power of religion. The disintegration began in Poland with the rise of Solidarity which was essentially a Catholic-inspired movement. From there it soon spread to the rest of Eastern Europe, from churches in East Germany to religious study and prayer groups among Jews and Christians alike in the Soviet Union itself.

A couple of months ago, I myself witnessed the almost unthinkable as a delegate to the World Forum on the Environment in Moscow. The final session was held in the Kremlin and addressed by President Gorbachev. He shared the platform with the Russian Orthodox Church leader and respectfully listened to religious recitations before delivering his own 40-minute speech.

The 1990's challenge religion more urgently than ever. Let me conclude with just a few priorities.

The family has become a disaster area. Its widespread breakdown exacts a higher social and economic cost, by fuelling crime, drugs and drink-addition, than any AIDS epidemic. Perhaps we should insist on pre-marital training before we issue marriage licences.

We need to intensify the reverence for human life, before birth by respect for the embryo, and before death by opposing euthanasia, if the horror of violence and murder is to make our society safer.

The challenge is to turn the aim of life from having a good time into making the times good.

Religion must play a key role in this regeneration for the betterment of the human condition.

May there be realised in you and in all the human family the blessing first pronounced by the Prophet Isaiah over Zion:

*"Then shall your light dawn,
Your healing shall come soon;
Your righteousness shall go
before you,
The Lord's glory backing you."*

LESSONS OF THE PAST.

1903

Peasants slaughter Jews in Russia

April 16. A mob running wild in Kishinev, Bessarabia, savagely murdered scores of Jews during a

The massacre is the first of its kind since 1891 but the resurgence of Czar Nicholas II has been

that local police have been encouraged to turn a blind eye to outbreaks of anti-Semitism.

1933

JEWS FLEE NAZIS' REIGN OF TERROR

On this Tuesday — London news papers describing the appalling

are daily recovered from the quay, the Berlin canal.

slaughter houses, confiscating all ritual opportunities and driving Jewish butchers from

1938

500,000 JEWS FACING ANNIHILATION

ONCE again, world Jewry is rising in alarm as the half-million Jews left in Germany

So strong is the wave of resentment against the new Nazi terror that measures

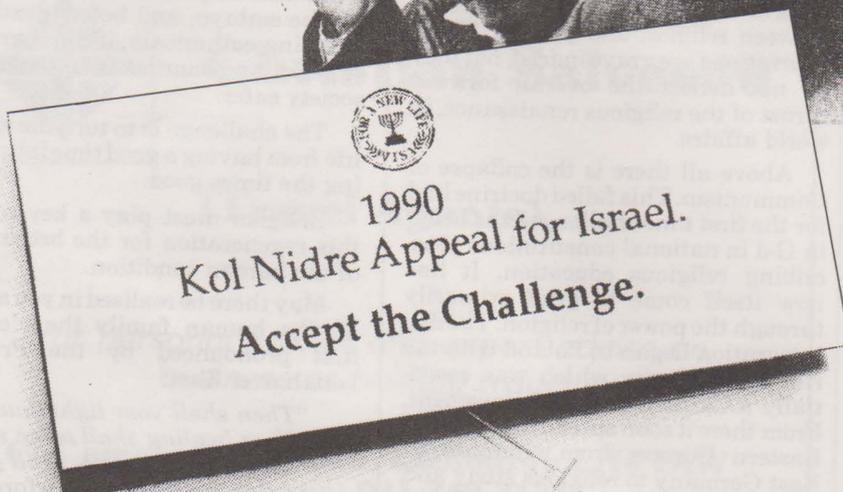
LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE.

1990 Let me go to Israel

Jews are getting the blame for all Soviet ills

'HOP shelves in the Soviet Union ever emptier, so also the mood is fier. According to Andrei, "journalist with the unofficial aper, "People need an and it's the Jews." ho for many years ghts of Soviet Jews, ve become the ka's failure to hanges — and body has to

Jewish and re p d



This Kol Nidre Appeal is one of the most important in our history. If we fail to learn the lessons of the past we put the future of our people at risk.

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Annual meeting of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation

by SHIRLEY BENNETT

Approximately 80 members attended this meeting on 13th June 1990 in the Community Centre. The President, John Cosgrove was in the Chair and he opened the meeting by asking those present to stand in silent tribute to members of the Community who had passed away in 1989.

Prior to the reading of the minutes of the last AGM by the Hon Secretary, Dr Nathan Oppenheim, a motion to ban smoking at the meeting was carried by a large majority. The President thanked Dr Oppenheim for his work as Secretary over the last four years which had been crucial to the smooth running of the Congregation.

Malcolm Cowan, the Hon Treasurer presented his financial report with a line by line explanation of the Financial Statement which had been previously circulated. He was happy to show a surplus of income over expenditure of about £1000 but warned that rising costs including possible salary increases, would force him to propose an increase in seat contributions for the year 1991. Later in the meeting the Congregation agreed that the new contributions should be:

Family Membership	£234
Single Male	£168
Single Female	£144

The election of Office Bearers took place and the results were as follows: *President*—Malcolm L Cowan; *Hon Treasurer*—Dr Nathan A Oppenheim; *Hon Vice-Presidents*—John A Cosgrove, Myer S Cowen, Gerald Glass and Alec Rubenstein; *Wardens*—Dr Ian Leifer and Reuben Zack; *Council*—R Ian Brodie, Carole Cowen, Philip Goldberg, Joshua Lurie, Dr Philip Mason, Anita Mendelsohn, Rose Orgel, Arnold I Rifkind, Emmanuel G Wittenberg and Michael Wittenberg.

John Cosgrove informed the meeting that Mrs R Weinberg had vacated the Synagogue's house at 50 Lauder Road of her own volition in order to live in sheltered housing nearby. The Congregation was obliged under an agreement made with the late Rabbi Weinberg to pay her £10,000 at the beginning of August. The President had consulted the Trustees and they and the Council were of the opinion that the property



Malcolm Cowan (right) takes over from John Cosgrove.

should be sold and he asked the Congregation to endorse this recommendation. John Cosgrove pointed out that the Congregation was declining numerically at an alarming rate and that in ten years time would be under great financial strain. It was our duty to invest the proceeds of the sale prudently in order to produce a sum of money which would subsidise the seat contributions of the year 2000. He estimated that at current interest rates a fund of £250,000 might be accrued by that date. The recommendation was passed unanimously.

Malcolm Cowan thanked the outgoing President for his outstanding success during his four year term of office. Because of John's talent and intellect the Community was both financially and spiritually sound. The new executive hoped that John would continue to give help and advice in the future.

Upon his election, Malcolm Cowan was given a rousing reception from members sitting at the back of

the hall. He then addressed the meeting, giving an interesting overview of the predicted demographic shift towards a declining Jewish population in Edinburgh.

The meeting ended when John Cosgrove thanked the executive, council and synagogue members for the support he had received during his years in office. He then made an impassioned plea for financial help for the new wave of immigration into Israel by Soviet Jews. These people were finally achieving their life-long ambition - to live in a society where they can practise their religion in freedom. However, as with emigration from Eastern Europe earlier this century, our fellow Jews are arriving in Israel without their personal possessions. It is the duty of World Jewry to offer them support and help.

250 letters requesting help had been sent to members. Only 6 responded. Have you? Note: At the first meeting of the new Council Dr Ian Leifer was elected Honorary Secretary.

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VISIT OF ISRAELI WAR DISABLED

by Rose Orgel

The group of Israeli War Disabled Soldiers who recently stayed in Glasgow as guests of the Community, spent a day in Edinburgh sightseeing. Before returning to Glasgow, the Edinburgh Jewish Community had great pleasure in entertaining the Group at the Synagogue where they were welcomed by the President, Mal-

The evening ended with a spontaneous sing-song and dancing and it was a happy if tired group that finally boarded the bus for their return to Glasgow.

I think their visit left us all feeling humbled and proud of the wonderful spirit of the whole Group and with the earnest desire for peace in Israel.



Finale to a memorable visit.

colm Cowan. They then joined members in evening prayers before sitting down to a beautiful meal prepared by the Ladies' Guild.

Edinburgh Castle was a favourite with 23-year-old Uri Avatihi. Yoram Shinar while policing the Intifada was badly injured when his jeep was "nailed", the wheel exploded and the vehicle, out of control, ran into a ditch. He spoke of the warmth of the Glasgow Community. The only girl in the group, 20-year-old Tama Moyal was wounded in a car accident while serving in the Army. Many had not realised there was a Jewish Community in Edinburgh and wanted to know many details about us. All thoroughly enjoyed their day in Edinburgh, were delighted to meet with the community and were full of praise for the hospitality extended to them.

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HOSPITALITY TO DISABLED BY THE EARL OF BALFOUR

by Lorraine Jaffe

On Tuesday, 3rd July, the Earl of Balfour generously entertained twenty Israeli war disabled soldiers together with members of the Manchester Committee of the British Friends of the Israeli war disabled and members of the Edinburgh Community.

The evening began with a tour of the extensive grounds of "The Tower" including a visit to an amazing tree one-thousand-years-old, which now only grows outwards creating a large "room" below its branches and then a visit to the peacefully situated family graveyard, the resting place of all the Balfours including James Arthur Balfour himself.

The tour was followed by drinks in the library. Lord Balfour's sister acted as hostess to the party and explained that some of the books on the shelves had been written by her husband, Michael Brander, who greeted everyone in full Scottish costume.

Next came dinner which had been prepared by Nicole Wittenberg from Edinburgh. Gilad, one of the Israeli guests, played the guitar to accompany some lively singing. There followed an address by Lord Balfour and a vote of thanks and the presentation of a plaque by Shemi, the leader of the group. Much to the amazement of everyone present, Rabbi Shapira took the kilted Michael Brander's hands and led him into a Hora. Dances on the lawn were followed by a photography session as many of the Israeli visitors wanted their picture taken with a real Scotsman in a kilt! Charming Michael Brander was heard to say, "Now I know what it's like to be an ethnic minority!"

The highlight of the evening was a tree planting ceremony. Dov Hamburger, Chairman of the Manchester Committee, had thought of everything, including a commemorative plaque to put by the tree. It was duly covered by a beautiful black mohair cardigan (belonging to one of the Committee) and ceremoniously unveiled, much to the hilarity of all those present.

Before leaving, there were prayers in the elegant dining room and then out into the courtyard for leave-taking, which included singing of the National Anthem, Hatikva, For He's a Jolly Good Fellow and even Auld Lang Syne. The whole evening was very moving. Everyone agreed that it had been a most memorable occasion.



Lord Balfour and Israeli war wounded plant a tree to commemorate their visit.

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247 E. 27 Street, Tulsa
Oklahoma 74114, USA

Mr and Miss Zack
and Mrs Klayman
24 Roseneath Place
Edinburgh

COMING EVENTS

OCTOBER

- 4 Thu 1st Day Succoth
- 5 Fri 2nd Day Succoth
- 7 Sun Maccabi: Meeting of Northern Region . . . am/pm
- 10 Wed Hoshanah Rabba
- 11 Thu Shemini Atzeret
- 12 Fri Simchath Torah
- 14 Sun Maccabi 1pm
- Friendship Club 3pm
- 21 Sun Literary Society 8pm
- 25 Thu Council of Christians and Jews 7.30pm
- 28 Sun WIZO Coffee Morning (cake stall/raffle) 11am
- Maccabi 1pm
- Friendship Club 3pm

NOVEMBER

- 3 Sat Lodge Solomon Ladies' Night 8pm
- 4 Sun Literary Society 8pm
- Maccabi Sports Day (in Glasgow)
- 6 Tue Friends of Israel 8pm
- 11 Sun Maccabi 1pm
- Armistice Service 3pm

- 18 Sun Literary Society 8pm
- 25 Sun Friendship Club 3pm
- 27 Tues WIZO Jazz Evening with Benny Green (in Glasgow) 7.30pm
- 29 Thu Council of Christians and Jews 7.30pm

DECEMBER

- 2 Sun Friendship Club 3pm
 - 9 Sun Literary Society 3pm
 - 12 Wed 1st Day Chanukah
 - 16 Sun Friendship Club 3pm
- (Please note: the above dates may be subject to alteration.)

In addition, the Lunch Club meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 12 noon.

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

The Jewish Youth Study Group meet on Sunday evenings in members' homes.

The Edinburgh Campaign for Soviet Jewry meet on the first Monday evening of the month in a member's home.

Abramson

Jackie, Frankie and Michelle wish their dear parents, relatives and friends a healthy and happy New Year and well over the Fast.



PICNIC

On Sunday 27th May a group of people from the Edinburgh Cheder made their way to the Scout Camp at Bonaly for the annual Cheder picnic. The Maccabi leaders, namely Michael Rifkind, Jonathan Mason and Elliot Cowan had organised lots of games for all the children (and the parents too) and there was a prize for every child (mainly because of the poor turnout). At the end of each race or event the first three children won prizes, and quite often the races were "fixed" for younger children. At "half time" everyone sat down to a drink, a Kit-Kat and a packet of crisps and then the Maccabi leaders organised a game of rounders in which everyone played. At the end everyone agreed that although we were few in number we had great fun.

Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society

Mect

Jack Rosenthal

Author of

Barmitzah Boy

*at the Lit. on Sunday
21st October at 8pm.*

Edinburgh Council of Christians and Jews

The following interesting and varied programme has been prepared and we urge all members, both Christians and Jews, to attend, as it is only in this way that we shall ever get to know and understand each other.

The meetings are held in the Synagogue Hall, Salisbury Road, Edinburgh at 7.30pm on the dates given below.

SYLLABUS FOR 1990/1991

25th October 1990—Mr Lionel Daiches, QC—subject—"The Student from Leipzig and David Hume"

29th November 1990—Miss Marjory Turnbull—subject—to be advised

17th January 1991—The Rt Rev Professor Robert Davidson DD, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland—subject—to be advised

21st February 1991—Rev W B Miller—subject—will speak of his own experience as a fairly conservative Christian who has come to accept the Jewish and Christian dialogue without reservation

21st March 1991—Rev David Torrance and Mr John Cosgrove—subject—Easter and Passover

25th April 1991—Mr David Blewett—subject—Interfaith Circles

30th May 1991—Sir Sidney C Hamburger CBE JP DL LLD MA—subject—"It happened to me"

The Annual General Meeting will also be held on 30th May 1990.

Members are reminded that the local subscription for Edinburgh Branch is £2 and full membership of the Council is £10.

Please note these dates as no further notices will be sent out
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Wedding of the Year

"No schmaltz, nothing soppy, no tears," were the strict instructions given by the bride.

How can there be a good wedding without schmaltz, without sentiment and tears, let alone a Jewish wedding?

The wedding of the year, held on 27 May 1990 in the Synagogue at Salisbury Road, was no exception. Everything was perfect: the sun was shining; the bride was beautiful; the groom was handsome; the retinue was stunning and the arrangements were immaculate.

Who said that their knees were knocking? Who arrived late? What went missing? All figments of the imagination. A wedding in the Edinburgh Community is a particularly special occasion and the Levinson-Davies wedding was very special. The Edinburgh hosts were no doubt anxious to please and to impress their Leeds guests and to make them feel welcome. The beauty of the Shul itself must have impressed the guests, decorated as it was by flowers and by a splash of summer colours heightened by the stunning pinks worn by the bridesmaid and by the bride's mother and grandmother (all pure chance, of course).

On arrival guests were handed a booklet "The Marriage Service" which, as the Chief Rabbi explains in the preface, is intended to enhance the significance and impressiveness of one of our most ancient and beautiful ceremonies. The booklet is a simple but informative guide to the wedding ceremony. Rabbi Shapira and Reverend Levy officiated, supported by the President of the Shul, the guest organist and by David Mendelsohn's choir.

The ceremony was truly beautiful. No wedding is complete without a celebration and this was no exception. Still buoyant from the ceremony,



Fiona Levinson to Nigel Davies

the guests moved on to the Caledonian Hotel where they were wined and dined in style. The bride and groom shared not only the cup of wine but also their celebration with family and friends. All the ingredients were there - the champagne, the wedding cake, the meal, even the grace after meals sung joyously by the rabbi in his now familiar walkabout style. Then the presentations and the speeches - no schmaltz, remember. Only the ultra-observant would have noticed the odd tear being swiftly wiped away; the tiny handkerchief appearing at the corner of the eye and the subtle moistening of dry lips. Much more noticeable were the radiance of the bride, the happiness of the groom, the joy of the hostess, the glamour of the bridesmaid, the exuberance of the ushers and the enjoyment of the guests.

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BIPAC's efforts in defence of Israel

by GILLIAN RAAB

On 23rd May Jane Moonman gave an informal talk to the Edinburgh WIZO group on her work for BIPAC (the British Israel Current Affairs Centre). This was a most informative evening meeting which followed a day's seminar she had organized for non-Jewish group leaders in Glenrothes.

BIPAC provides information on Israel for organizations, individuals and the press in Great Britain. It has no formal connection with the Israeli government, and obtains all of its funding from UK sources, including the JIA and BIPAC's own fund raising activities. Jane Moonman has been director since 1982, and heads a staff of ten in the London office and in branches throughout the country. Jane sees BIPAC's role as that of supporting the Jewish community by providing information and attempting to boost morale in relation to Israel. As well as producing information sheets, press releases and maintaining a resource centre with film and photo libraries, BIPAC sends about sixty journalists per year to Israel. Their assignments are not front-page political coverage, but background stories. A recent example of this was the Channel Four "Despatches" documentary on the problems of absorbing of Soviet Jews in Israel—for how many lead violinists can a country of three million hope to find work? All too often speakers on Israeli topics have to allude to recent events which have brought the conflict over the occupied territories onto the front pages of British newspapers. May 23rd was no exception: the shootings in Rishon-le-Zion had taken place a few days before. Although there could be no denying the human rights problems of the occupied territories, it was Jane Moonman's view that the intifada was not the most important threat now, but that the conflict between Israel and her Arab neighbours would go on even if the intifada did not exist. The trouble on the West Bank and Gaza is a symptom of the Arab countries' refusal to accept the reality of the Jewish state. Most of the Israeli army are posted on the borders. She interpreted the Arab world's concern with the recent Soviet aliyah as being less about the pressure on Palestinian land than it was with the realignment of power in the Middle East, which could reduce supplies of Soviet arms.

At the same time, she did not claim that one could justify all of the recent



Jane Moonman with Gillian Raab (left) and Katie Goodwin (right).

happenings, or suggest that Israel lay beyond criticism. Her hopes for the future lay in the care and concern that does exist within Israel for human rights issues, and for the possibility that electoral reform will make it easier for future Israeli governments to implement policies of reform. She told us a current Israeli joke about the state of the world. God had been following the reports of what was happening, and he was so concerned that he decided to call a summit conference where he announced to all the world leaders that things had got into such a mess that he was going to bring the world to an end in forty days. Bush, Gorbachev and Shamir had to return to tell the citizens of their countries. Bush made his announcement to the American people on NBC news: there was good news—God exists, but also bad news—there would only be 40 days left of Bush's administration. Gorbachev's message had two pieces of bad news—God exists, and there were only to be 40 days left of perestroika. But Shamir could give two pieces of good news—God exists, and there would only be 40 days left of the intifada. Jane had some interesting ideas on why Israeli news and Jewish affairs in general had such fascination for the British media. The common religious heritage of Judaism and Christianity as well as the prominence of Jews in public affairs may play a part. A collective guilt for the history of the Jewish people may be relieved when Jews are seen to be behaving badly. BIPAC had run many enquiries to investigate whether the coverage of Israeli affairs in the British media could be shown to

be biased against Israel. However they had never been able to show that this was the case.

The meeting concluded with a question and answer session which touched on the difficulties of discussing Israel with student and church groups who were committed to the Palestinian cause. There was much practical advice and BIPAC could help by providing information from their Glasgow office. Jane Moonman will be resigning her directorship of BIPAC in the near future, and they are bound to miss the services of such a well-informed and eloquent spokeswoman. However, the good news is that she will be going on aliyah, where I am sure she will make good use of her many talents.

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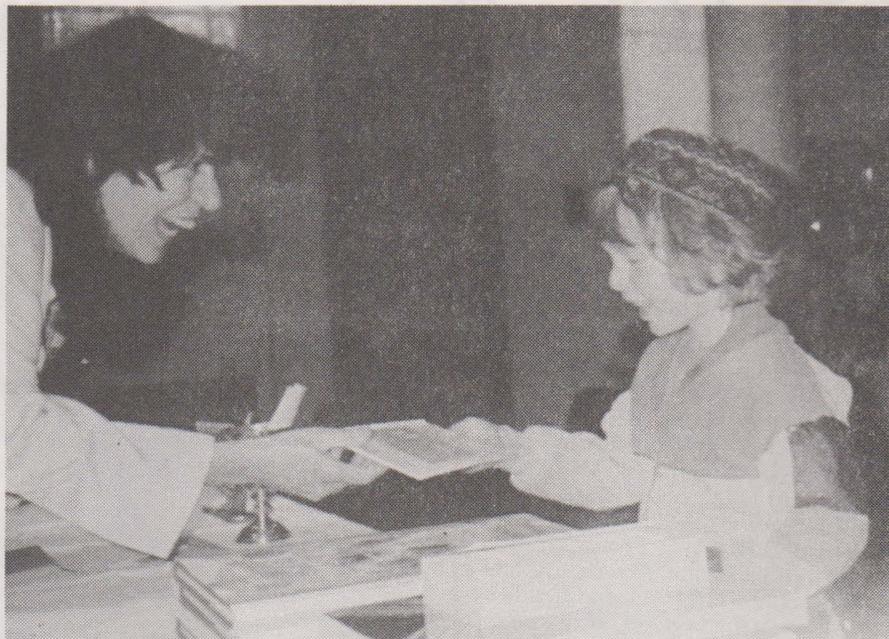
The best of days

by JONATHAN BARD

Sunday 24th June 1990 was the date of the cheder prize giving and the event was chaired by Malcolm Cowan, his first official duty as the new President. In opening the proceedings, he spoke what will undoubtedly come to be seen as the least contentious words of his term of office. "Today," he said "is the best of days: not only is it the last morning of the cheder year, but there are prizes for all the students". Although the children's approval was unqualified, Ian Leifer explained that the reason for this beneficence was that, with the declining attendance at the cheder, the number of endowed prizes now exceeded the number of students and the long-term outlook for the community was a source of some worry.

The Rabbi, concerned by what he sees as a lack of commitment by the students now, then tried to find out how cheder could be made more enjoyable for the children by asking them to suggest changes. Their poor response did not necessarily imply that the task was impossible, but the impression was given that they enjoyed spending sunny, summer Sunday mornings in cheder just as much as their parents had done and would have been far more enthusiastic had attendance been restricted to those Sundays falling on the 29th February.

The prizes this year were awarded by Elaine Samuel who struck a



Elaine Samuel presents the prizes.

serious note in her speech which was addressed to parents rather than children. It is reported in full in this issue. She pointed out that cheder teachers had never been held in high regard in the community because everyone thought that he or she could educate children in the Jewish tradition effortlessly. But they were wrong: it was only when people had to teach the children themselves that they realised how much work went into organising a class, matching the exam syllabus to the time available and preparing materials. She commended all the teachers at the cheder for their dedication and put in a plea that the community have both sympathy and respect for them and their work.

With the speeches delivered, the children were awarded their prizes and, to judge by the behaviour of class I students, it was not a minute too soon. Each of the 35 students marched up, was duly cheered and handed his or her prize by Elaine. Such was the height of the pile of books that excellence had to be measured by the number of times a student was called to the high table. By this test, Sam Laydon (silver cup for the student who had made the greatest progress over the year), Stacy Caplan (top girl) and Jonathan Mason (Israel Prize) merit particular mention for their diligence, while every alternate clap seemed to be for a Bowman!

In addition to the books and the cup, there was a further set of prizes, a stack of small brown envelopes. These were monetary awards to students who had obtained distinctions last year in the official United Synagogue exams and were given to about 35% of the candidates, a large proportion for any community in the United

Kingdom. This was public evidence that, although our standards. On a private note, I should add that I have seen at first hand the value of this incentive in encouraging children to study for the exams.

The proceedings were brought to a close by Natie Oppenheim, fulfilling his first public duty as Treasurer this time round. He thanked everyone associated with the cheder for their work over the year and expressed the community's gratitude to Elaine for her many years of teaching as she is, in her own words, retiring from public life so that she can spend more time with her young family! Natie spoke for us all when he said that he hoped that her sabbatical from the cheder would not be too long and Roy Mendelsohn of class I then presented her with a bouquet.

In our class . . .

In our class are Ellen, Michelle, Avigal and Katie. We do lots of reading from Lamdeni. It's hard work, it's boring—sometimes it's fun. But we've finished the book now. We often beg to play hangman and near Festivals we read stories about Dina and Dov in Israel. We also like to chat about things in class—like Katie's trip to Israel last Pesach. She always says she will bring in the photos but she doesn't. Elaine sometimes muddles up our names when she hasn't had her coffee, and then she has to put a penny in the middle of the table. At the end of the year, it will go to Jewish Child's Day. It is prizegiving today and we have to go out and collect our prizes. Our class comes quite regularly so it makes our class good. By Michelle Bowman Katie Lurie Class I, Avigal Sperber

S.P.L.A.S.H.

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The matter of teaching in Cheder

ELAINE SAMUEL'S *address at the Cheder prize-giving*

I known I'm just one of many this year quitting public office so as to spend more time with my young family. I'm sure, though, that unlike the others, I am not being honoured today so as to shut me up ... because I do want to say a few words about Cheder teaching.

Some time ago I saw the most amazing exhibition of Haggadot. For almost every occasion on which Jews have experienced some kind of liberation, it seems that another Haggadah was written, mimicking the original. Some of these Haggadot were to celebrate liberations only achieved in the imagination, and the most striking one of this kind was by a melamed, an East European Cheder teacher, written some 80 years ago. The multitude of oppressions afflicting this poor man were "doubled and redoubled". For in the good old days, you couldn't sink much lower in community esteem than the Cheder teacher. And you have to pause and wonder about the origins of these sentiments, how they were justified, whether they continue and how they continue to be justified—today. It's peculiar, isn't it, that Jews who value education so greatly could put their Cheder teachers at the bottom of the totem pole. But I think that in the old days, paradoxically, it was the very value of edu-

cation which devalued Cheder teaching. Everyone could read Hebrew—it was the minimum requirement of being Jewish. If you couldn't read you certainly couldn't do anything else, and if you made your living out of teaching children to read Hebrew, it was assumed that reading was born Jewish (and male).

And I hear parallel attitudes to Cheder teachers today. "Well, a Cheder teacher really only needs to have the background" ... *Translation*—if you happen to be brought up in an orthodox background, nothing more is required for teaching Cheder. Or, "You've just got to be acquainted with the syllabus". *Translation*—if you have been a Cheder student within the past five years, it comes effortlessly. Or, "You've got to be able to get on with children". *Translation*—if you're a young mother, it comes naturally.

Well, the news I have for you today is that it doesn't come naturally, it doesn't come easily and some people are not to the Cheder born. None of the teachers here, anyway, are doing an effective job simply by being what they are. I have to mention the tremendous amount of thought and preparation which Moira and Lesley put into the kindergarten class. And the

way in which Darren, Benjy and Nicky have worked through their respective examination syllabi and have worried ever how best to teach them throughout the past year has been truly awesome.

So I end with a plea and a bit of a nag ... what most teachers want is just a little awareness and appreciation of the time they have invested. And you can show this by doing, at the very least, what is expected of you in secular schools—informing teachers when children must be absent from a session or an examination, sending notes to explain absences not already arranged, by withdrawing children from the middle of a morning session for only urgent reasons, by consulting with teachers over any arrangements involving the Cheder children and their programme ... and by thanking every single one of your children's teachers on their Bar/Bat Mitzvah day.

If parents themselves place more value on Cheder teachers, I am sure it will filter down to the kids, and back up to the adults of the community. And who knows, with a new understanding of what it takes to be a Cheder teacher, maybe more parents would be willing to come forward and undertake the work to join this most select of groups.

Edinburgh JYSG—one year on by BENJAMIN ADLER

It is very easy to look back on my year on the local JYSG Va'ad and only remember high points. However, it would be foolish of me not to admit that there were disappointments. Mixed with the joy of the success of events such as the reunion and the charity stay-awake, was the sadness and frustration at the Group's unwillingness to join in national events and its inability to join in sensibly with serious functions prepared by the Va'ad.

The first of the problems seems in-built in the Edinburgh Youth Community. Attendance at national events has always been very low. This self-inflicted isolation seems very strange to me. Living in a small community like Edinburgh, my natural inclination has always been to try and meet young Jewish people from other parts of Britain. However, this inclination does not seem to be shared by the majority in Edinburgh and certainly does not appear to be encouraged by parents.

This was highlighted when the group decided not to be part of the national JYSG this year, preferring to pay local membership only. Even if Edinburgh members do not wish to take part in national events, it seems ridiculous that they want to cut themselves off from key contacts with young Jewish people outside Edinburgh. I hope this decision will either be reversed or that the group will at least decide to affiliate to an organisation other than JYSG in the future.

Changing affiliations would not solve the second difficulty. The Edinburgh group is by no means unique in having discipline problems. I believe that they exist because all the people within the group know each other so well, which means that either Va'adniks are reluctant to tell friends to "shut up" or group members resent their own friends and peers controlling their behaviour. Whatever the cause, the only way for this problem to be resolved is for people to be quiet and listen and to get involved in the

programmes that have been prepared. In the long run this would be beneficial to all, as group members would gain more from the meetings and the Va'ad could be more ambitious with their programmes knowing that members would co-operate.

Given these problems in Edinburgh, I think it is time for the leaders of the three youth groups to come together to discuss the future of Edinburgh Jewish youth and decide, perhaps even with the help of some adult (G-d forbid!), where the youth groups are heading and under the guidance of which national organisation.

I should like to end this short piece positively by saying that overall I did enjoy my year on the local Va'ad and see it as a valuable experience. I hope I contributed something too. I would also like to wish the new Va'ad the best of luck, especially the two "first-timers" Emma Nicholsby and Elliot Cowan. I am sure that together with the "old-timers", David Mason and Caroline Rifkind, JYSG is in for a good year ahead.

LITERARY SOCIETY PREVIEW

We have an interesting programme lined up to occupy your Sundays over the coming months. Most of our meetings will have our usual Sunday evening format, but we are also including an afternoon meeting in December and a day-time trip to Glasgow to take part in Jewish Writers' Day, which is part of the Glasgow 1990 Festival of Jewish Culture.

21ST OCTOBER

Jack Rosenthal, author of *The Bar Mitzvah Boy*, and many other plays will be coming to introduce our opening meeting.

4TH NOVEMBER

Professor Louis Woller who is visiting Edinburgh from Melbourne, will talk to us about Jews Down-Under.

18TH NOVEMBER

Sam Bard—to be confirmed.

2ND DECEMBER

Trip to Glasgow Festival of Jewish Culture Writers' Day. Bus transport will be organized and tickets will be on sale nearer the time.

9TH DECEMBER

An afternoon meeting—Eric Moonman MP will talk about The New Europe, an update and review regarding the unification of Germany.

Congratulations to



Sally Cowen

Sally has just won the Aubrey Scott Memorial Prize which is the highest commendation given by Maccabi for leadership. This is the first time the prize has been won outwith London and the Home Counties. She has also been awarded a certificate on completion of the advanced leadership course at a weekend in Northampton run by Maccabi Union.

WIZO goes to town

by KATIE GOODWIN

The Rebecca Sieff Centenary Luncheon held at the Guildhall, London on Wednesday 2nd May with guest speaker Margaret Thatcher was an occasion to be remembered. Irene Hyams and I took ourselves off to London on Tuesday on the 7.30am train and arrived in time for lunch, a few hours shopping, theatre at night followed by a visit to our favourite restaurant. Up in the morning sharp to prepare for the big event, a false start due to ripped tights and a quick dash into Peter Jones for a new pair caused a slight panic but we arrived well in time for the Champagne Reception and after half an hour we were invited to take our places for luncheon in the Guildhall itself.

This is a magnificent vaulted hall with wood panelling and ten wonderful twelve light bronze chandeliers. At one end a minstrels' gallery with gilded Gog and Magog poised at each end.

The guest list looked like a Jewish edition of Who's Who.

We were 500 for lunch, mostly ladies with only a few gentlemen to be seen.

The round tables were set for ten and looked stunning. There was an undercloth of black with an overcover in glazed chintz of pink and purple roses with a table centrepiece - a huge basket of fresh pink and purple rose heads. At each lady's place was a gold gift box presented by Helena Rubinstein. It contained a cake-like slices of delicious mille feuilles and pate with a bundle of finest french beans with pansy heads all set on a square, matt black plate. Salmon in a light mushroom sauce followed, the pudding was fruity and just right. With plenty of wine, coffee and mints we were well content to listen to the speeches.

Lady Sieff of Brompton, daughter-in-law to Rebecca Sieff and chair of the Luncheon Committee welcomed us all and Mrs Gerald Ronson, co-chair of the committee proposed the toast to the Queen. The President of the State of Israel was toasted by Marjorie Sherman. We next heard from Raya Jaglom, President of World WIZO who told of the incredible stress that WIZO faces at this time with the Russian Aliya far above the expected numbers. All the newcomers need facilities and help from WIZO which is already overstretched and struggling to maintain its existing commitments.

Mrs Vivien Duffield, daughter of Charles Clore and trustee of the Charles Clore Trust spoke next of her life-

long involvement with Israel and WIZO projects in particular.

Mrs Thatcher then took the stand. She spoke of Rebecca Sieff's extraordinary life and achievement, of her remarkable strength and vision in a world not yet awake to feminism. She spoke of her great admiration for WIZO and its outstanding success.

We were all amused as she explained, "Get a group of men together A group of women faced with the same problem will roll up their sleeves and get the job done."

You can just imagine in such a gathering *THAT* went down very well with much head nodding.

Gina Monty, chair of British WIZO was our speaker—she introduced Lord Sieff of Brompton, son of Rebecca Sieff who thanked all of the speakers for their kind words and great generosity when talking of his mother and her achievements. He agreed she was indeed a power to be reckoned with once she had set herself a task. The pretty, elegant and refined lady became an unstoppable force.

She saw for herself the grim remnants of Jewish women and children in Europe after the war. She visited Palestine. She travelled and made endless pleas and speeches, raised funds, spoke at the United Nations, begged and then did it all over again using her considerable influence to establish a homeland and give help to these sad survivors to secure a place where they could make a life for themselves and feel safe.

The luncheon finished at 3.30. Irene and I made our way to Kings Cross and talked all the way home.

It had been a memorable event and raised £630,000.

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The future of Judaism: convergence or schism?

Jonathan Sacks: TRADITIONAL ALTERNATIVES: Orthodoxy and the Future of the Jewish People. (*Jews' College Publications, London 1989*)

by **DAVID MEIR**

In the introduction to this, his first, book Jonathan Sacks explains the meaning of "argument for the sake of heaven", the traditional rabbinical method of distilling truth by means of serious intellectual discussion of all the acceptable alternatives. For that is the inspiration for the present work. Originally undertaken by

way of preparation for the eponymous international conference held in London in May 1989 under the auspices of Jews' College (of which Rabbi Sacks is the Principal), this erudite study of contemporary Judaism from a traditionalist point of view is an important addition to the literature on the subject.

At a time, therefore, when the survival of Judaism, if not necessarily "Jewishness", is threatened by intermarriage, a declining birthrate and a softening of attitudes to the centrality of Israel in the Jewish consciousness, a new, revitalised and often radical Orthodoxy raises questions which, so runs the argument, must be answered if there is to be a Jewish future. Does this mean that, in the ultimate analysis, Judaism for the next generation—say, for the children of the children round the author's hypothetical seder table—comes down to a kind of multiple-choice test question, a selection from four or five apparently possible answers, of which only one is actually correct? Yes, says Jonathan Sacks, and No. He states that, "convergence toward a common destiny can only come about through a normative reinstatement of Judaism as traditionally understood". But it is the concept of convergence upon which he lays stress. He emphasises the importance of regaining, however tentatively at first, Jewish unity, which "is less a fact than objective and unless it is a unity which allows for diversity . . . will not occur at all". Thus he proposes a "dialogue with dissent" in order to avoid the fatal tensions which may well lead irretrievably to schism.

OBITUARY

Aviva Segal



It was with a great sense of shock and profound sadness that we all learned of the untimely passing of Aviva Segal.

Aviva was known to one and all in the Edinburgh Jewish Community. Apart from those societies in which she played an active role, she attended and supported every aspect of communal life. We are greatly in her debt.

In good times, while young and healthy in Canada, and in bad with failing health in Edinburgh, she was always warm and generous. Despite personal adversity and ill health her tremendous courage and her abiding quality of optimism continued to shine. She never complained.

She was sincere in her concern for family and friends. She was incapable of a malicious thought about anyone. Her daughter Rhonda of whom she was justifiably so proud is a living testament to all these qualities.

In one matter at least the Edinburgh Jewish Community remain completely united—their love and respect for Aviva.

It is not only Rhonda, Monty, Rachelle and the Braverman family who have been deeply affected by her loss. It is all of us who are much the poorer.

Engagingly, Rabbi Sacks opens and closes his investigation by introducing to the reader as role models the members of a fictitious "typical" North London Jewish family gathered, for the purpose of the argument, in the parental home for the celebration of Passover. Parents and children, the latter made to correspond to the four sons of the well-known passage in the haggadah, are a representative cross-section of main-stream Anglo-Judaism at the present time, ranging from ultra-Orthodox commitment, through middle-of-the-road conformism, to rebellious rejection of all things Jewish. Having thus set his parameters in the context of "the complexity that is contemporary Jewry" the author traces the historical development of modern Orthodoxy as one of the responses to the challenge which the process of emancipation posed to the traditional concept of the diaspora Jew as one of a distinctive people with a distinctive religion and a once and future homeland. Opposing the advocates of complete religious harmonisation with the outside world and rejecting the secular aspirations of Zionism, Samson Raphael Hirsch, one of modern Orthodoxy's founding fathers, was also at odds with the tenets of the traditionalist alternative: one which, unlike the other two, did not acknowledge the relevance of emancipation and hence chose to ignore its apologists, including those within the ranks of Orthodoxy. Refusing to make any concession to modernity, This type of religious commitment rested upon the revival of talmudic learning centred upon new-style yeshivot and the relegation of secular education to a subordinate place consistent with its relevance to the need to earn a livelihood, and no more.

Thus the scene was set for a late-twentieth century renewal of Jewish religiosity. The process was helped by the phenomenon of the "counter-productive" effect of social integration, more especially in the United States, and, less surprisingly, by Holocaust memories and Israel's "miracle victory" in the Six Day War.

For the sake of those children in Rabbi Sacks' "family portrait" his treatise should be read with respect and its message received and understood.

This review was written before the appointment of Jonathan Sacks as Chief Rabbi Elect and is reprinted with kind permission of the AJR.

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A year out in Israel

by NICKY COSGROVE

Having spent many holidays in Israel and having decided that I wanted to take "time off" before going to university it became increasingly obvious to me that Israel would be the ideal place to spend the coming year.

The first hurdle was to convince my somewhat conservative parents that this was a good idea and then to find somewhere to go that would be educationally profitable, socially agreeable and financially viable.

Fortunately my connection with the Association of Jewish Sixth-formers proved invaluable as they offered to sponsor me as one of their three participants on the "Machon" programme. This is a project which has been running for a long time—I recently discovered that our very own Elaine Samuel is a graduate. It consists of a "study" period of five months at the Institute for Jewish Youth Leaders from Abroad in Jerusalem and a "work" period for the remaining months. In return for the privilege of representing AJ6, I have had to commit myself to at least two years of service to that organisation. This is not as much of a hardship as it sounds as my predecessors have been able to fulfil their commitment by leading tours for teenagers to Israel.

As my sponsoring organisation is sending only three participants, that is to say myself and two other boys from England, we have been put together with participants from other small movements to form a "Community" group. After the initial study period the main group will split and

we shall all go off to different parts of the country. My group will spend three months working with immigrants in the Negev town of Dimona under the auspices of the British Olim Society. We will be involved in such tasks as teaching English to school children.

There is one month at the end of the programme in which all participants are free to choose something of special interest by way of work experience. I have not yet decided what to do, besides it seems a long way off!

Thinking that I was the only Edinburgh participant, you can imagine my surprise when a casual conversation in school revealed that Emma Lanyado was going on the same programme to represent the Reform Synagogue Youth movement!

We are both very excited at the prospect of spending the year in Israel in these eventful times, in the knowledge that when we return to our studies at our respective universities, we will have a greater understanding of the Middle East, Judaism and Israel in particular.



Hugo Rifkind

A sister's account of her brother's Bar Mitzvah

by CAROLINE RIFKIND

At last after all the practising and preparations the big day had come. It seemed ages since Hugo had started to learn his Maftir and Haftorah, and by now I had heard him singing them so often that even I could chant parts of them!

Because Hugo had been born only one day after his twin cousins Paul and Tony Goldberg it had been decided that his Barmitzvah should not be at the time of his birthday at the end of March, but a number of weeks later on the 26th of May. Coincidentally this was the same weekend as my Batmitzvah three years previously.

On the Friday evening we had a family dinner in our home for those who had arrived from out of town. (I never knew I had so many relatives.) The following day Hugo as expected performed perfectly. Even my mother, standing beside me, stopped shaking when he stood up. At the luncheon afterwards Mark Sischy made a very amusing speech which I feel captured Hugo's personality very well.

The rest of the day and the family party in the evening gave us all a chance to catch up with relatives from all over the world, many of whom we had not seen for a long time.



Benji Bowman blows the Shofar.

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Lest we forget

by ANDRÉ CURZON

I shudder when I think of the 6th September 1939, the day the German troops entered Lodz, ultimately leading to the destruction of the Jewish Community, the pain of which no passage of time can heal. My mother, brother, sister, her husband and their six-year-old Goldele were all there when G-d and the civilised world forsook us.

The 233,000 Jews of Lodz plagued already by the hostile attitude of the Polish government and the virulent antisemitism of their neighbours, found themselves suddenly trapped and at the mercy of a deadly enemy. The Jews were ordered to wear the yellow star of David. They renamed the town Litzmanstadt and the troops started to enter Jewish homes plundering and terrorising their inhabitants. The Poles and the indigenous Germans who used to be friendly with the Jews, felt free to molest and rob them at will. A reign of terror ruled in the town. Jews were being hunted and killed in the streets. They rounded up many community leaders and publicly executed them.

Some young people managed to escape and made their way East, to the part of Poland that was at that time occupied by the Russians. Two of my brothers were among them. (Theirs was another unbelievable story.) The postal service in the ghetto was somehow functioning and they managed to send home food parcels which kept my family alive for a while. of the Rabbinate of Lodz. He was erudite and well versed in German. He was to be the representative and spokesman for all the Jews of Lodz. However, unfortunately the Germans soon changed their mind and chose instead Mr Chaim Rumkowski. Rumkowski was a member of the Jewish Council and president of the famous orphanage of Helenowek. The orphanage was placed in several acres of land where Chalutzim were trained in gardening and agriculture in preparation for Aliya. It had an important vocational training centre which was sponsored by ORT and housed many orphans in some splendid buildings. This orphanage was the pet scheme in Rumkowski's career.

The day the Germans marched into Lodz, they already had their plans for the final solution of the Jewish problem. They concentrated all the Jewish people from the surrounding towns and villages in Lodz and it

is believed that the Jewish population there swelled to 300,000. They evacuated the Polish people from the slum district of Baluty and surrounding streets and demanded that beginning from the 1st of May, 800 Jewish families were to move to the ghetto every week. However, the resettlement did not proceed according to plan. The sudden brutal action of the Gestapo and the help of the Jewish militia accomplished the task much more quickly. Many people lost their lives, their homes and their possessions in the process. In September the evacuation was complete. The ghetto was fenced off with barbed wire and patrolled night and day by German soldiers.

The creation of the Jewish militia

was a diabolical German idea. They recruited the healthy and able-bodied Jewish boys into the militia and forced them to do the dirty work against their own people. In truth some boys volunteered for the militia hoping to benefit from certain privileges. Some proved to be traitors and were guilty of committing serious crimes and cruelty to their own people. But who would have believed that Chaim Rumkowski, the great benefactor and Community activist would become a traitor to the Jews in Poland?

To everybody's surprise, the Germans decided to preserve the ghetto of Lodz as an industrial centre. They allocated provisions, raw materials, medicine, finance, etc and although

Continued overleaf



The Curzon Family before the holocaust

Continued from previous page

the ghetto was kept under the strictest German supervision, they allowed Rumkowski with his helpers to administer it. Rumkowski managed to establish the ghetto as an independent mini-state with its own currency (the ghetto Mark), its own post office with Rumkowski's image on the stamps, their own judiciary, hospital, clinics, etc. According to the records left by the Germans as well as Rumkowski's archives there were in 1941 40,000 workers employed in 107 factories and workshops in the ghetto. It became a major supply centre to the German forces.

At first the people enjoyed the comparative freedom in the ghetto. They were pleased to be away from the hostility of their neighbours and soon got down to organizing their lives as best they could in their new circumstances. There was no shortage of doctors, lawyers, teachers, actors, musicians and tradesmen. They soon established schools, university courses, an excellent and a mutual help organization.

The initial euphoria did not, however, last very long. The appalling sanitary conditions, the meagre ration of food, the lack of adequate heating wrought havoc on the weak and sick and thousands did not survive the first winter in the ghetto. Curled up and frozen bodies were found in the streets. The music soon stopped playing. The schools stopped functioning. The hospitals were overflowing and running out of medicines. The Court of Law did not last very long. When the judges refused to give the death sentence for listening to the wireless, Rumkowski usurped the authority of judge over his people. Rumkowski ruled with an iron fist.

A Mr Herzberg was in charge of the jail. Together with his wife and three sons he treated the inmates in a most inhuman way. Beating, starvation and solitary confinement were common punishments. Together with some militiamen they used to raid homes. They accused the people of various trumped up crimes, robbed their homes of anything valuable and usually arrested the man of the house. That family was arrested on the 13th May 1942 and a cache of gold and diamonds was found and taken away by the Germans.

Rumkowski kept on pressuring the workers to produce more by working harder and longer hours. The workers demanded more food and eventually went on strike. Rumkowski promptly had the organizers arrested and under the threat of death, the workers

You would have thought things couldn't get much worse, but they did.

In January 1941 Rumkowski received the first order to supply 10,000 people for deportation to Chelmno. Chelmno was a village about 50 miles from Lodz. Chelmno was one of the worst concentration camps with crematoria where hundreds of thousands of people perished. Rumkowski promptly made it known to the inhabitants of certain streets that they were to assemble at a given time and place and be ready for a short journey to where they were going to be given work and better accommodation. Whole families with their old and their children duly assembled at the appointed places. Some families even volunteered for the transport.

A railway link to the ghetto was built and cattle trucks filled with

young and old, destitute, hungry, cold in the winter and scorched in the summer. The trains kept on rolling to Chelmno, Treblinka and Auschwitz. Some people still went with a glimmer of hope in their heart, but they were never seen again.

Rumkowski, with the help of the Gestapo and his own militia became very efficient in organizing transport after transport and whole districts of the ghetto were gradually emptied. When the order to supply 40,000 inmates came, Rumkowski had some difficulty in making up the number required. Rumkowski apparently did not hesitate to send the few remaining children of his favourite orphanage to their death.

In September 1942 Rumkowski received an order to supply 20,000 children and the old and sick. The horror of this order caused incredible panic and fear especially among the parents of the children. Seventy mothers were shot dead as they were trying to tear away their children from the hands of the soldiers. It was only then that the people were beginning to realize what was happening to the Jews.

By the end of 1942, large transports of people from Austria, Germany and Czechoslovakia started to arrive in the ghetto. Lodz became the transit centre for deportation to the Polish concentration camps. Emaciated, tired and cold, the people started to sell some of their clothes for an extra bit of bread or a few potatoes.

It appeared that there were many famous scientists, doctors, lawyers, artists and musicians among them. Tragically, they did not last very long. They were gradually herded into the cattle trucks on their way to their doom.

Some of the factories and workshops were still functioning at the beginning of 1944 when the news came that the Russian troops were within a few miles of Lodz. Rumkowski, together with his brother found himself on the way to Chelmno and despite his collaboration came to the same end as the rest. There were no more daily Yiddish bulletins, posters and speeches. From that day the posters appeared in German only and were issued by the Gestapo. There were only 800 young people left to clean up the streets and the dwelling places. That done they were ordered to assemble at the cemetery. They refused. They scattered in hiding places and underground. Among them were those who bore witness and gave evidence of the tragic fate of the hundreds of thousands of Jewish people of Lodz and its surrounding towns and villages.

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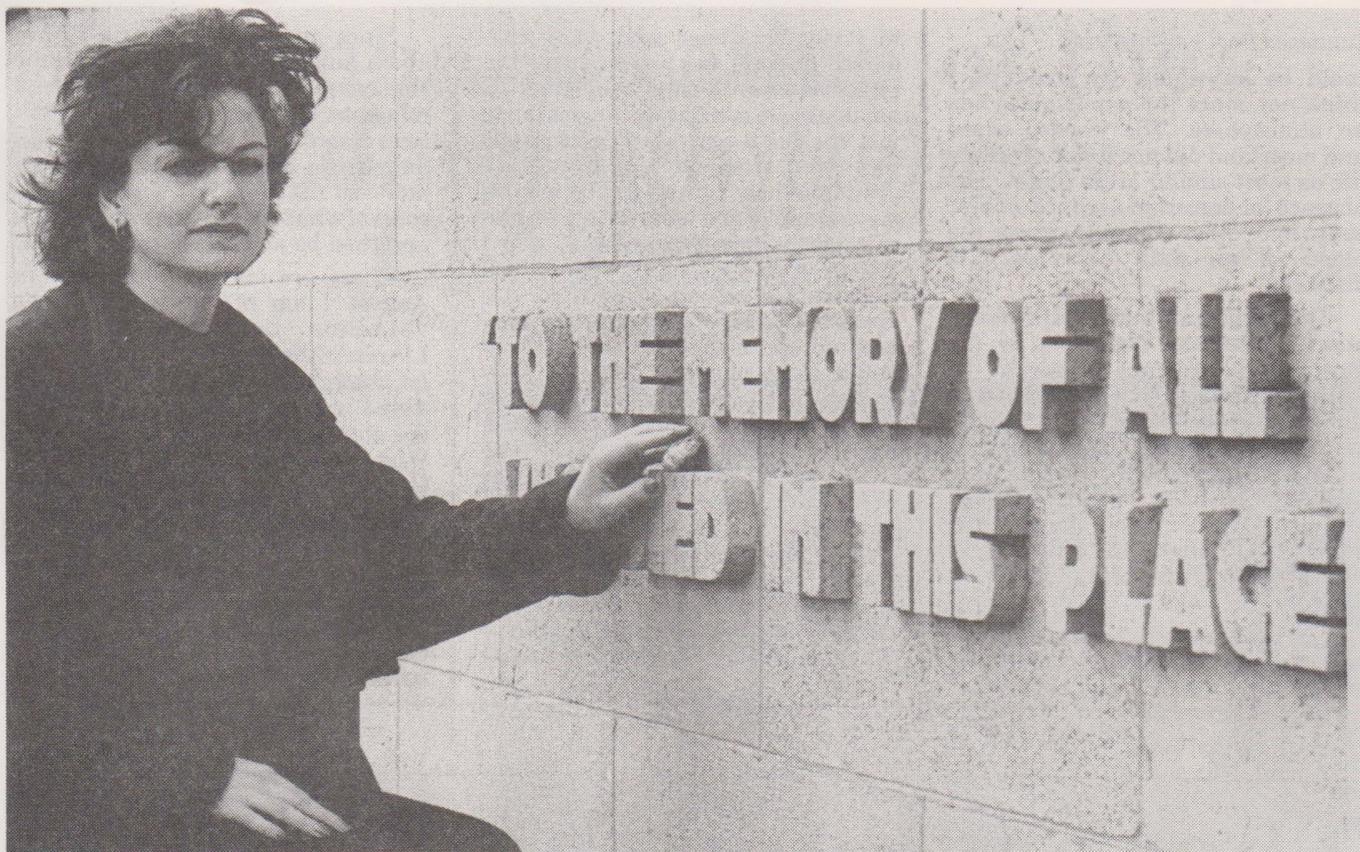
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Reflections on a visit to Bergen-Belsen

by JUDITH OPPENHEIMER

In February 1944 my father's family (parents, brother and sister) were deported from Holland where they had been living since 1936, to Bergen-Belsen via Westerbork Transit Camp. There they were held in a special part of the camp for possible "exchange prisoners"—Eve the younger sister held a British passport—the Germans thought they might be able to exchange these prisoners for their own POW's. In January 1945 my Grandmother died. In March 1945 my Grandfather died. They died of starvation. On 23 April 1945 my father and uncle were liberated by the Russians on a train near Trobitz. They were later reunited with Eve in Holland, and came to Britain after making contact with relatives here.

This is as much of the story as I know. I know nothing of the conditions in the camp during the war.

In April this year I visited the site where this camp once stood, with my father and his brother. The day of our

visit coincided with Yom Ha-Shoah and also the opening of an enlarged documentation centre at the site: two very important events.

The new documentation centre contains written evidence of the survivors along with other literature on the Holocaust, a lecture theatre for talks and a photographic exhibition of the rise of Hitler and the camp's history during the war. Outside, the memorial site consists of a wall and obelisk (which the British erected in 1946), a large wooden cross and a Jewish monument inscribed with the words "Israel and the world shall remember thirty thousand Jews exterminated in the concentration camp of Bergen-Belsen at the hands of the murderous Nazis. Earth conceal not the blood shed on thee." Fifteen large mounds, the mass graves, are scattered across the site. They have stones saying "Hier ruhen 1000 tote", the number varying between five hundred and nine thousand. On

the opening day, before the special commemoration service, unusual decor of colour from the five hundred tulips on the mass graves. I laid mine on the mass grave which would have been closest to the hut in which my father lived for fifteen months.

At the service I felt uncomfortable—I was overwhelmed by the feeling of "it all took place here..." while surrounded by two thousand people, including about five hundred survivors and their close relatives. Even so the Israeli choir singing the Hatikvah and the reciting of the Kaddish were very emotional for me. So too was the speech made by Hadassah Rosensaft. Mrs Rosensaft now lives in New York, but was deported to Auschwitz then to Bergen-Belsen during the war. She expressed the sacredness of the ground: "Wherever you stand, wherever you step, there are bones and ashes of the dead". Apart from the monuments and many mass graves it

Continued overleaf

Continued from previous page

could be anywhere. Or could it? I think not, since the whole place has an atmosphere. The wooded edges and moorland did not seem to radiate life as most similar areas might. The absence (or perceived absence) of bird song and other animals, gives the place an air that "this place is different".

The entire camp was burnt down shortly after the liberation by the British in an attempt to prevent the spread of disease. In Auschwitz there are still remnants of the camp, parts sometimes rebuilt. Should Bergen-Belsen also be rebuilt—as my father said, "The real atmosphere of Belsen can never be recreated: the filth the stench, the hunger, the lice, the disease, the terror, the death... and occasionally, the hope..."

The other significant event of our trip was the coincidence with Yom Ha-Shoah. Yom Ha Shoah is the day

to remember those who were murdered during the Holocaust—the important word being "remember". I am unable to confine my mourning to just one day a year—I often try to picture what it would be like to have grandparents... this may be seen as a symptom of the "second generation survivor". Jack Santcross, a man I met on my trip, has a very London. Frequently "second generation survivors" can meet and talk together with special counsellor help, "Many children of survivors have already suffered emotionally. Their parents kept a dark secret and are often insular and absorbed by their wartime experiences." Not many people are willing to talk about the Holocaust—I have found even my close friends change the subject. The Survivors' Centre also does other valuable work—a newsletter, a campaign to get a counselling help-line in light of the possible War Criminal Trials and more.

Since my return in April, I have had a hunger for any book about the Holocaust. This may be because I refuse to let it all be forgotten. But even more I want to know what happened—how others felt then and now—so that maybe I'll understand some of what my father went through, and then be able to tell my children.

These are my thoughts now. In August I am off to Israel on the "Machon LeMadrichei Chutz L'Aretz" (the Institute of Leadership for Foreigners) for a year. During this time I will be able to explore some of the answers to my many questions—Why the Jews? Where was God? Could this happen again?—but still I shall never forget the trip to Bergen-Belsen with my father in April 1990.

Judith Oppenheimer has just left sixth form college and is off to spend a year in Israel on the same programme as Nicky Cosgrove and Emma Lanyado before going to university to read Social Policy.

History

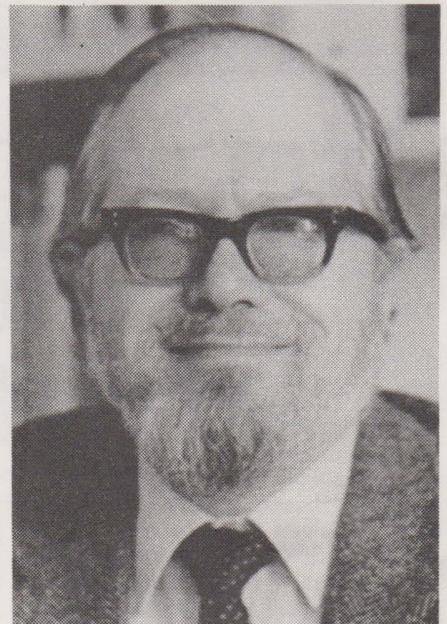
The Jews and the Nineties

by GARY DICKSON

Recently the word "pogrom"—associated in my childhood with the hushed voices of my Russian-born grandparents, and the cities of Odessa and Kishinev—has been plucked out of the historian's lexicon, and dusted off for possible re-application to Soviet Jewry. Who could have believed it? No longer dead and buried, the past forces itself upon our attention almost obnoxiously. And who can say if the impending mass exodus of Soviet Jews may prove to be as epoch-making an event in the world history of the Jewish people as the expulsion of Spanish Jewry was in 1492?

That date—1492—reminds us of an important fact: the 1990's look back upon many of the most significant anniversaries of medieval Jewish history. And these anniversaries offer a vantage point for historical rethinking. Dates, of course, are simply pointers. They belong to the stenography of experience; their function is to serve as acronyms for human events. So they are to be used, not worshipped. But certainly, if we look at anniversaries to come in our new decade, at least from 1996 to 1990, the Jewish nineties will bring a number of troubling recollections of the medieval centuries, dominated especially by the crusades.

Medieval Jewish history is twinned with the Christian history of the crusades in an uncomfortable, inseparable, Siamese fashion. 1996 will recall the dark side of Christian crusading enthusiasm, namely, the anti-Jewish massacres in the Rhineland (and elsewhere) of 1096, which were, in their scale and ferocity, unprecedented. Scholars are currently disputing just how influential the longer-term effects of these persecutions were. Did persecution, exclusion, and the new insecurity increase the Jewish role in finance, while reducing their commercial importance? Did Christians thereafter tend to mythologize and demonize Jews as a result of bad conscience? After all, the Jewish communities of the Rhineland were eventually restored, despite the trauma of rioting, looting, choices of "Baptism of Death", and the aftermath in medieval Hebrew literature of the sense of *kiddush ha-Shem*. And there can be no doubt that Jews now felt their new vulnerability to mass persecution, and their growing dependence upon such protection as the authorities of church and state gave them. A new wariness marked Jewish-Christian relations: the tension of problems to come. In short, it is difficult not to see the first-crusade massacres as a significant turning

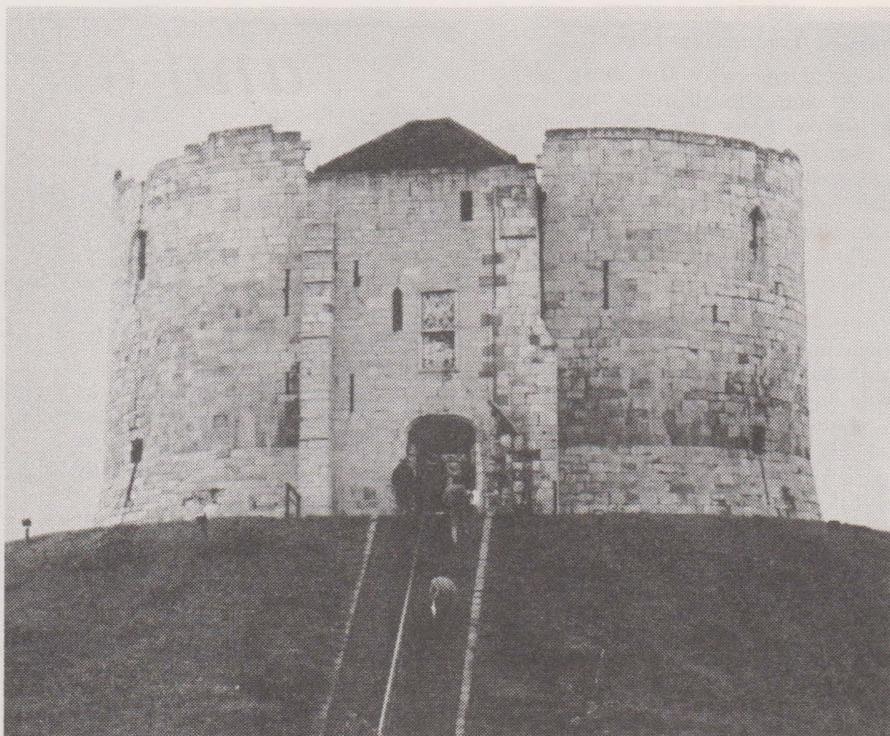


point in the fortunes of medieval Jewry. However, would not 1996 be a good time to hold an international conference, say, in Cologne (one of the Rhenish Jewish communities to suffer most in 1096) in a reunited, post-war Germany, to re-assess the first major outbreak of popular violence against the Jews in European history?

The crusading movement itself began with the Council of Clermont (1095), and historians of the crusades hope to gather in Clermont-Ferrand in 1995 to mark this occasion. The crusades might be seen as arising out of a new scripturally-inspired and pilgrimage-inspired ideology that I

call Christian Zionism. An emphasis upon the Christian re-acquisition of Jerusalem had enormous ideological implications for Judaism and for Jews. If "the land of milk and honey" was meant for the *populus christianus* and if the Christians were "the new people of God" and the *verus Israel* (that is, the "true Jews"), how did the (necessarily displaced) actual Jews figure in the providential scheme of things? Towards the middle of the next century, at the time of the second crusade, Christian theologians like Bernard of Clairvaux offered what seemed to be theoretical safeguard to Jewish survival. According to Christian biblical interpretation, it was firmly believed that the Jews would convert to Christianity at the inception of history's last act. Therefore, the Jews had to survive in order for them to be able to perform their part, and so testify to the truth of Christianity. 1992 points to 1492. The expulsion of the Jews from Spain is, of course, no analogue for the present plight of Soviet Jewry; nor does it confirm the mostly post-medieval myth and stereotype of the wandering Jew; nor does it serve as a validation of a certain kind of Zionism's untenable claim that the Diaspora was born without a future. But can we say that 1492 closed the medieval chapter in Jewish history—a chapter which some have seen as lasting until French revolutionary emancipation? In his 1949 presidential address to the Jewish Historical Society of England, the Rev James Parkes thought so: "The medieval Jews had been deprived of their property, robbed of their learned institutions, and harried from land to land. When those of Spain took the long and hard road to exile, the last great medieval Jewry was destroyed..." But if Spain closed one chapter, perhaps Columbus unintentionally wrote the preface to a new one. In later centuries the New World would provide a safe haven for Sephardim and Ashkenazim alike. Columbus, however, saw himself as fulfilling a crusader-like, providential destiny that was rooted in the past. Indeed, he dreamed of being the prophetic instrument for an anticipated Spanish reconquest of Jerusalem. In 1992, amidst all the American-Italo-Hispanic jubilation (and Latin American ambiguities!) surrounding Columbus' 1492 voyage of discovery, the scission of Jewish history from Spanish history will also be re-evaluated. My esteemed Edinburgh colleague, Professor Angus MacKay, informs me that two large-scale conferences relating to the demise of Hispano-Jewry are planned, one in Spain, and one in America.

To historically conscious Israelis,



Clifford's Tower, the scene of the massacre at York.

the year 1991 will hardly bring reassurance. In 1291, Christian Acre fell to the Muslims. After less than two centuries, the final Palestinian outpost of the crusaders' Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem had gone. Ironically, the State of Israel has become the inadvertent historical guardian of the memory of the Christian crusader kingdom, at whose birth the Jews (and Muslims) of Jerusalem were slaughtered. It will be interesting, in 1991, to gauge the reaction of Israel's highly respected historians of the crusades to the death agony of the Christian kingdom. What contemporary perspectives will subtly inform their interpretations? The Christian crusader kingdom succumbed to internal dissensions, demographic weakness, formidable external enemies, and a European Christendom with far more pressing political and military concerns closer to home. Despite European Christian protestations of love and commitment, no last-minute crusader army went East to save the day.

And this brings us to 1990: the anniversary of both the York massacre of 1190, and the expulsion of the Jews from England in 1290. Both events have been generally ignored by the wider community. And aside from a praiseworthy local commemoration at York, jointly sponsored by the B'nai B'rith Jewish Music Festival and the Council of Christians and Jews, medieval Anglo-Jewry has been more or less neglected by the Jewish community as well. By neglect, I do not mean a failure to light *Jahrzeit* candles. *Jahrzeit* cand-

les are all very well, and not to be disparaged; but they are no substitute for calm, reasoned, historical thought. It is a great pity that, for example, the Royal Historical Society and the Jewish Historical Society of England have not this year held a joint conference devoted to the fate and significance of medieval Anglo-Jewry.

Eight hundred years ago, on *Shabbat Ha-gadol* (16-17 March 1990), during one of medieval Europe's most terrible pogroms, the Jewish community of York was destroyed. Some Jews were murdered outright, but most committed collective suicide at the hands of their kinfolk or community elders. The standard account of the York massacre remains the valuable monograph written by Barrie Dobson, formerly of York, and now of Cambridge. In the background to the pogrom at York were the preparations for the Third Crusade, causing a cash crisis for those English knights and nobles preparing to set out. Some of them were already indebted to Jews. It was the season of Lent, and this helped to fuel religious antipathy. An outbreak of anti-Jewish rioting had begun earlier in London (1189), which then spread to King's Lynn, continuing in Stamford, Bury St Edmunds, and Lincoln.

The York massacre was the outcome of a lack of royal protection; popular animosity; crusading enthusiasm; and a local conspiracy of debt-ridden nobles, many of whom had probably taken the crusading vow.

Continued overleaf

Continued from previous page

This explains why the Jews' debt records were the ultimate victims of the rioters. After the initial rioting, looting, and arson had begun, nearly all of the Jews took shelter in the royal castle, the site now occupied by Clifford's Tower, where, fearing betrayal, the Jews locked out the royal castellan, and were soon under siege.

Egged on by a white-robed hermit, later killed by a stone falling from the castle walls, the rioters finally resorted to siege engines. The situation of the Jews was hopeless. Under the instruction of their spiritual leader, the distinguished scholar Rabbi Yomtov of Joigny, they first started a large fire, and then began to cut the throats of their dear ones. The few who opted for baptism instead of suicide were all killed by the leaders of the pogrom, who had promised them mercy.

"In place of their herds, they offered up their children, and they slaughtered their first strength before their eyes", wrote the contemporary poet, Joseph of Chartres, in a Hebrew elegy. It is true that the Jews later returned to York, and that for a time even found prosperity there once again. But the precariousness of their position was emphasized by their increasing dependence upon royal protection.

This ceased in 1290, when the English crown expelled all its Jews. The Jews were by now of little long-term financial importance, a result of previous heavy royal exactions. Recent estimates indicate that around 3,000 Jews were involved, from about fifteen English communities. Playing a part in the expulsion were popular antisemitism, fuelled by both Chris-

... and at York ...

Helen Durrant, ex-member of the Edinburgh Jewish Community, now Assistant Director of the Castle Museum, York, writes on the eight hundredth anniversary of the Massacre of the Jews of York:

"It was very important to me to be able to attend the Commemoration Service at Clifford's Tower. I see the tower every day as I go to work. Such services are beacons of hope as one sees a rising tide of anti-semitism."

A service of reconciliation with expressions of heritage and hope was held in the minster, while the congregation held lighted candles in memory.

tian diabolization, and by the Jews' once necessary if unloved economic role as lenders of money at interest; and Edward I's immediate need for money, with short-term gains in taking over debts to the Jews. Perhaps, suggests Michael Prestwich of Durham in his recent study of Edward I, there was also a trade-off with magnates and knights, who agreed to a tax of a fifteenth, in return for the banishment of the Jews. During the Channel crossings, storms and murders cost many lives. The expulsion meant that no officially recognized communities of professing Jews existed in England between 1290 and their readmission at the time of Cromwell. The antisemitism of Chaucer

and Shakespeare evidently did not arise from contact with Jewish neighbours, nor from continental sources alone, but also derived from a demonic legend fashioned during the period of Jewish residence in England.

After more than two hundred years of settlement in England, the Jews were still thought of as an alien community. This must be a greater cause for reflection in our age of multiculturalism, than it once was. A year after the re-admission of the Jews under Cromwell, a book appeared in which it was alleged that: "When they were in England ... the Jews used every year to steal a young boy (the child of a Christian) ... and to crucify him to death ..." So the re-admitted Jews were forced to bear the full weight of a legend developed against them over 350 years earlier. For it was in England that the ritual murder accusation began. The significance of medieval Anglo-Jewry ought now to be seen in a context wider than that of merely state-building and the growth of royal power. The expulsion from England was the first such action taken by any medieval kingdom—but it was by no means the last. Even the Spanish (as Angus MacKay has shown) remembered it, though in a garbled form, before their own more famous decree of 1492. Moreover, just as the medieval history of Anglo-Jewry was crucial in shaping the negative image of the Jew in English literature, so too, English literature, as a world literature, has had a considerable influence upon the modern attitudes of others (Americans for instance) towards Jews. Altogether, it appears that the medieval experience of Anglo-Jewry was perhaps of greater consequence than has traditionally been supposed.



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This article is based upon a talk given at the Southampton conference (18-19 July 1990) on PRESERVING THE JEWISH HERITAGE. Its original title was "Neglecting the Past: 1190 (the York massacre) and 1290 (the expulsion from England) uncommemorated in 1990". The author wishes to thank the organizers of that conference, especially Dr Tony Kushner.

Dr Gary Dickson was educated at Stanford and Yale Universities, and at the University of Edinburgh, from which he received his PhD degree, and where he now teaches medieval history. Last summer he worked in the archives of Perugia (Umbria) on the cult of saints, this research being funded through a Leverhulme Trust award. A native of Oakland, California, his Scottish-Jewish connections derive from his father, Mr Philip Dickson, who, not surprisingly, does not regret having left the Gorbals as a young man in favour of a sunnier life in the San Francisco Bay Area.

THE BOAT

The story of the raising of the first ancient boat to have been discovered in the Sea of Galilee is an enthralling one. It was related with panache to the Friends of Israel on 8 May 1990 by Dr Shelley Wachsmann, with the assistance of an excellent series of slides. Dr Wachsmann was until recently Inspector of Underwater Antiquities for the Israeli Department of Antiquities and Museums. I first met him some ten years ago when he was captivating visitors to the museum at Dor with his vivid descriptions of ancient ships and seafaring. In May this year he entertained an enthusiastic Edinburgh audience with an equally vivid talk on his excavation of the now famous Kinneret boat.

In February 1986, two brothers from Kibbutz Ginosar informed Dr Wachsmann of their discovery of an ancient boat in the exceptionally low waters of the Kinneret. This announcement led to an impressive example of rescue archaeology which called for rapid decision-making and unusual reserves of stamina. By the end of the lecture, no member of the audience can have failed to have felt something of the atmosphere of the excavation, with its dedicated teamwork, and shared some of the total exhaustion and the ultimate exhilaration. In one of many food-inspired metaphors, Dr Wachsmann described his work as an example of "meatball" archaeology, a term borrowed from *Mash* to describe the technique of keeping the patient alive until he could be got to hospital. In this instance, the patient was the fragile boat, its waterlogged wood the consistency of "yellow cheese".

The first task was to confirm its antiquity. A two-day trial excavation established the considerable age of the boat, a conclusion principally based on its distinctive mortice and tenon construction which was only in use up to the end of the Roman period. Roman pottery found nearby cannot really be used to support the date since its association with the boat could not be definitely established. The excavators had hoped to leave a full investigation until the boat was once again safely below the waters of the Kinneret, when a careful underwater excavation could be carried out at less risk to the fragile structure. However news of the discovery leaked out, and was inevitably embellished. The story that a boat of the time of Jesus had been discovered soon became "the boat of Jesus has been found in the Sea of Galilee". This all became entangled with a rumour

about a treasure wreck, and in the end the potential risk from unauthorized interference meant that the excavation had to be undertaken at once.

There was no time for the usual careful planning, fundraising and acquisition of equipment that precede a normal excavation. The archaeologists had to work first, worry later, solving problems as they arose. Work continued without stop for eleven days and nights, the team digging and sleeping in shifts, until the boat was fully revealed. Volunteers came in force from the nearby Kibbutz Ginosar, which adopted the project as its own, and others came from much further afield. The first problem was the need to keep the rapidly advancing water back. The conditions of work were extremely uncomfortable: digging took place under mud rather than under water. The unusual conditions called for ingenuity and stamina. (The whole operation was complicated by the discovery of two other boats nearby, one of Roman date, the other Talmudic. These could not be excavated at the time, and await future investigation.) The most urgent problem was that of conservation. The boat was incredibly fragile. Once the wood was exposed to the air it began to dehydrate and the structure rapidly began to collapse. The boat therefore had to be excavated very fast and kept continuously wet.

The information gained about ancient boatbuilding proved to be exceptionally valuable. However almost the only find of an object from the boat turned out to be an intrusive American coin bearing the legend "In God we trust"! Dr Wachsmann felt this summarized his situation perfectly.

When excavation was complete, it was decided to move the boat to the Yigal Allon Museum five hundred metres away. A fibreglass frame was constructed and everything was then covered with polyurethane foam until the boat ended up looking like "a big cupcake". The excavators tunnelled underneath to free the fragile timbers from the mud. Eventually this "overgrown marshmallow" was floated to the museum, and it arrived at Ginosar harbour by water for the first time in nearly two thousand years.

This was by no means the end of the problems. The boat had to be lifted out of the water into its conservation tank. A pool was built and tiled within ten days. A heart-stopping moment, shared fully by the audience, came when the crane operator carelessly



by ELIZABETH GORING

tipped his crane over whilst attempting to raise the boat. He was discharged and a new operator hastily found. Eventually the polyurethane-jacketed boat was placed in its pool where another problem emerged. The pool was a perfect fit—too perfect. Unfortunately no allowance had been made for the space required by the excavators to get in alongside the boat to remove the foam. Dr Wachsmann admitted that this was the most disheartening moment of all. The re-excavation of the boat from its covering turned into an almost impossible feat of acrobatics. However the work was eventually completed. The boat will remain in its tank, undergoing conservation for final exposure in air, for another seven years, and a special building has been constructed around it.

Dr Wachsmann ended with a summary of his findings. The boat, which was made principally of Cedar of Lebanon, was already old by the time it had been abandoned, as it had been repaired with iron staples. At the end of its working life, elements such as the mast step and the stern post had been stripped out of it for re-use as spare parts. The boat may have been traded in at a boatyard, where it had simply been dumped. Construction techniques indicate a date between the first century BCE and the second century CE, by comparison with similar vessels, ancient illustrations and historical references. The boat was capable of holding up to fifteen men. A reconstruction is planned, so that a full-size replica may be studied and given sea-trials, as well as a survey to seek the remains of the Battle of Migdal (67 CE) which took place only one and a half kilometres away.

Dr Elizabeth Goring is Curator of Mediterranean Archaeology at the National Museums of Scotland. She has a specialist interest in the prehistory of the ancient Near East and the Aegean, and has participated in several archaeological excavations, particularly in Cyprus.

Role of the Synagogue President

WENDY FIDLER *in conversation with* JOHN COSGROVE

Now that John has just retired from holding the High Office of President of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation, the opportunity to hear his reflections on the last few years was too good to miss. I asked if he had always cherished an ambition to be the President of a community, his reply gave me a glimpse of his childhood.

John was the son of a minister, and had been brought up steeped in communal matters. In his early years he recognised that the most important person in his father's life was the President of the Shul. From this example grew the ambition both he and his elder brother Malcolm nurtured—to become good Presidents.

What then makes a "good" President?

John decided it was most important to be a good listener, to know what's going on by actually listening to what is being said, and keeping an ear to the ground. There was no room to be aloof.

Incidentally, John's brother Malcolm is now President of his temple in Los Angeles.

History

John's father always had a great respect for the Edinburgh Community, for Rabbi Daiches and for Reuben Cohen, who was the President for 30 years. From earliest childhood John had a rosy picture of the community which later grew into a trues respect, when he came to live here in 1968.

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Two years after arriving, in 1970, he was first elected to the council as Junior Warden, in the days when Isaac Cowen was the President. He then graduated to Senior Warden, and became Secretary when Isaac's son, Mickey Cowen, was President. Rising through the ranks he then became Treasurer, before becoming President in 1986. John feels this progression through the offices contributes greatly towards the total understanding a president needs. He stressed that he thought it essential for any president to have spent four years as treasurer. A shul is run totally unlike anything else, and it is particularly important for a President to understand the source of funding as well as exactly what can and cannot be afforded by the community.

The Family

John's wife Hazel otherwise known as Sheriff Aronson arrived at this point. I asked him if he'd found it useful to have a wife who would "judge" him. In John's view, Hazel's success as a judge is helped by the fact that she is endowed with a lot of common sense, combined with a "Guid Scots tongue". These leave her fearless to express what she feels is right, and he was certain it was advantageous to receive immediate honest feedback.

With characteristic humour John told me what frequently occurs after he has given a good speech. Apparently he is consistently told, "I bet Hazel wrote it". John finds this particularly poignant as when his father had likewise given a good speech, he was also asked if his wife had written it!

The love of communal leadership must indeed surge through the Cosgrove veins. John's father was a founder member of the World Union of Jewish Students, and Grandfather would be so proud, as indeed is father, that Abigail, John's daughter, is an executive of UJS. Following closely in the family tradition, Nicky is a national executive member of AJ6.

The Role of President

I asked what aspects of a President's job John would rank as being important. His reply included, supporting the minister; uniting the community; the conduct of the services—that is ensuring they are meaningful, interesting and that decorum is respected; and finally and

predictably the education of the children.

Continuing with deeper matters, I asked what aspects of being President had been the most difficult. This was the response:

"Over an eight year period, four spent as Treasurer and four as President, I introduced to the community two ministers, both totally different in outlook, and each equally accepted by the community. Rabbi Shapira's great strengths surely lie in the pastoral field. I doubt if any community in the UK has its spiritual leader someone so caring and so thoughtful.

"The Minister and his congregants must develop a relationship and the President must act as a catalyst to ensure harmony. It's rather like trying to create a marriage—the Minister and the community must learn to live together. I found this job of *shadchan* one of the most difficult, but at the same time it was one of the most challenging.

"While we ourselves in Edinburgh are nominally 'orthodox' we must search for a rabbi who appreciates the fine distinction between the reality of orthodoxy and the nominal shades of the community here.

"I think it is particularly difficult to make the right match in Edinburgh, as the expectations of the community are high.

"Historically the community has been used to supporting three ministers—one to preach, one to take services and one to teach the children and youths. Now one man must deliver speeches like Lionel Daiches, sing like Pavarotti, teach Judaism like Rashi and have the Wisdom of Solomon. At the same time he must be prepared to accept the wages the community can afford to offer!"

The Community

This led us to talk about the community itself, and we started from the negative viewpoint.

One fault John saw was the fragmentation of the community. He finds there are too many groupings, for example the Literary Society as opposed to the "Shul" group. However, one of the President of the Community—to propose the toast to the Literary Society at their Centenary Dinner. John felt this a great example of building bridges, helping to create a more cohesive community.



He also thought it highly commendable that the community put great effort into ensuring the Communal Centre continues. It is vital to our future. But it should not be supported to the exclusion of the national and inter-national community.

From the positive standpoint, being President in Edinburgh is much more than running a shul. We are a community with an extremely high national profile, out of all proportion to the small number of Jews who reside in Edinburgh.

The National Scenario

To illustrate the high regard in which the Edinburgh Community is held, it was John, from Edinburgh, who represented Scotland on the committee which selected the new Chief Rabbi. He was recently elected to the new Chief Rabbinate council, to advise and organise the running of the Office of the Chief Rabbi. Thus Scotland is represented from Edinburgh, not Glasgow, where numerically the community is stronger. Edinburgh is certainly the smallest community to have a voice on this important body.

Talking about the Chief Rabbi led us on to discuss the relevance of the office to Edinburgh. In general terms John thinks it desirable that we are affiliated to "middle of the road" orthodoxy.

We then went on to talk about our community in relation to communities nationally. John feels that the policy in Edinburgh is unique. It has only one synagogue which has to cater for all shades of Judaism—reform, conservative and orthodoxy—which John thinks must be done under the banner of orthodoxy.

We explored this interesting idea further, and I asked John if he would describe himself as orthodox. Without hesitation he replied he would not; but would place himself as a traditional Jew; as conservative in the American sense of the word. He aligned himself with Rabbi Dr Louis Jacobs.

This inevitably led me to ask if it wasn't a paradox for John to be the President of an orthodox synagogue. His response was that these ideas brought him more in line with the thinking of the majority of the Community.

John's personal philosophy is that it is more important to be an educated Jew rather than an orthodox Jew. The study of Judaism is more important than its practice. He has been brought up to have a tremendous respect for Jewish learning and teaching, and that is why he thought so highly of our previous minister, the Rev Dr Danny Sinclair, both for the depth of his own knowledge and for his ability to instil in our children an enthusiasm for Jewish learning.

I finally asked if John would manage to fill the void left in his life now he is no longer the President. He replied that he has been acutely aware of the honour of being the lay leader of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation and wouldn't have missed it for the world. However, he now felt a sense of release, and said he was beginning to enjoy life to the full again.

I'm sure the readers of the *Star* all feel grateful to him and wish him well.

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The fragrant good old days

by FRED BULLON

My recollections of "The Good Old Days" are inextricably associated with food. My childhood years were spent in the city of Edinburgh, Scotland, and we looked forward with keen anticipation to the approach of each of the Festivals in the Jewish Calendar. The culinary delights that were concocted in honour of each of the occasions were really a marvel to behold and to taste.

We were a close-knit community of about 1500, and everybody knew everybody else. We were second genera-

From down-under

9/142 Old South Head Road
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24 July 1990

I have recently received nos 4 and 5 of *The Edinburgh Star* which Ian Shein kindly sent to my brother Henry and he, in turn, sent them on to me, for which I want to thank Ian very much.

First of all, I must compliment you and your Editorial Board on a very fine publication. It is one of the best of its genre that I have seen, and for me, reading them was very nostalgic. I particularly enjoyed Lionel Daiches' article "Drei und Dreissig" as I also knew the "skys" and other people that he mentioned.

I remember Lionel and his brother David very well as boys when we used to attend the late Mr Rubenstein's (Alec's father's) boys' Minyan on Sunday mornings. As a matter of fact, I still have a book which I treasure very much, *The Book of Jewish Thoughts*, which was presented to me on the occasion of my Bar Mitzvah by their late father Rabbi Dr Salis Daiches. My Bar Mitzvah was one of the last to be held in Graham Street. Shortly after that the Shul closed and the Congregation moved to its present building in Salisbury Road.

I am enclosing a piece that I wrote for one of the Communal magazines here in Sydney two or three years ago and which was quite well received. If you feel you can use it in any of your future editions of *The Edinburgh Star* please feel free to do so. Perhaps it will jog the memory of some of your older readers.

So, once again many thanks for a pleasant trip down memory lane and I wish you all *Jasher Koach* and may you go from strength to strength. Looking forward to seeing future editions of *The Edinburgh Star* as and when they are published.

All the best,

FRED BULLON

tion, and most of our parents emigrated from Russia, Lithuania or Poland between the beginning of this century and World War I. They came over to give their children a better life and to have freedom of worship—such as the New Australians are doing here now.

The period I am referring to—the early twenties—was happy and care-free. People didn't have much money, but they worked hard and we always had plenty of food—we certainly never starved.

There were very few electric or gas cookers in those days, and most of the cooking was done on big black coal-range fires which had an oven on the side. My mother (of blessed memory) cooked on one and she used to bake her own challahs (bread) for Yomtov. Is there anything nicer when one enters the house than the aroma of newly baked bread?

For Purim, my mother used to bake her own Hamentashen. Not like the ones you get these days, but baked with a yeast dough. They just melted in your mouth. And for dinner, we had soup and kreplach.

Also about this time my father (of blessed memory) had his big chore to do. We had a spare room in which were kept all the Passover utensils and crockery and other bric-a-brac that was seldom used. In that room we also kept a ten-gallon wooden barrel with a tap at the front. My father got it out, and his job was to make mead (we pronounced it "med") so that it would be ready for Pesach in four weeks' time. This was a powerful brew made from water, honey and hops, and it was better than all your modern beers.

The next Yomtov, Pesach, Ma started baking a week beforehand. No recipe books in those days, everything was in her head, and surprisingly there were very few failures. Tins of coconut biscuits, macaroons, sponge cakes, imbers (carrot ginger sweets), eingemachts (a beetroot preserve) and various other goodies too numerous to mention.

I had four brothers and one sister, and we all had our chores to do. My little special chore was to go for the milk. Let me explain! In that spare room, we kept a tin can with a lid, approximately one gallon size. In those days, about two miles from Edinburgh there were lots of farms.

So, the day before Pesach, I had to go to one of the farms with the pitcher and get the farmer to milk his cow directly into the can. (My parents were very Orthodox.) This would keep us going for a few days, and during Chol ha-Moed, I would go back and get a refill. That was the best milk we had the whole year, unadulterated and with thick cream on the top.

Then came Shevuoth. Naturally we had cheese blintzes and cheese cake, and we also had teiglach (nuts in a dough in thick syrup).

There was no one particular food associated with Rosh Hashanah. If possible we always tried to taste a new season's piece of fruit so that we could make a Shehechiyonu. And of course, so that my mother could go to Shul, we invariably had a Cholent.

For Succoth, there was the usual baking of cakes and biscuits and for dinner we had tsimmas. There were two kinds—carrot and prune—and sometimes we had one and sometimes the other, along with potato kugel.

And finally, to round off the year, Chanukah—Potato latkes and Chanukah are synonymous.

Of course, apart from the Festivals, all the year round we had traditional Jewish cooking. Sometimes we had borsht (beetroot soup), cabbage soup, lokshen soup, and that famous cure for everything—chicken soup and kneidlach. There was lokshen kugel, helzel and chremslach (matzo meal pancakes), gefilte fish, fried and boiled. There were so many other foods, I could just go on and on. And, needless to say, the biscuit and cake tins were never empty. Possibly because of the difference in climate—it is so much hotter here in Australia—the young Australian Jewish housewife does not go in for the heavy Jewish cooking. Meals are much lighter here.

Times, alas, have now changed. Everything nowadays is out of tins, jars and packets. Nothing seems to be freshly made any more. However, I still dream with a great deal of nostalgia of the "Good Old Days", and just thinking and writing about all these wonderful succulent dishes of a bygone era truly makes my mouth water.

Originally printed in June 1987 in Keeping in Touch, a quarterly magazine for senior citizens printed by the Sydney Jewish Welfare Society.

