

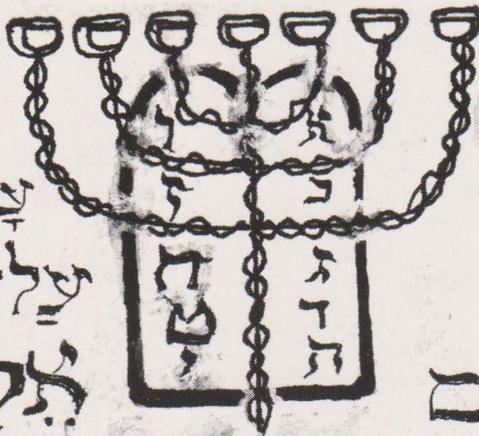
# The Edinburgh Star

Journal of the Edinburgh Jewish Community

March 1991

No. 9

Nisan 5751



אַתֶּם רִאֲתֶם אֲשֶׁר  
 וְאִשָּׁא אֶתְכֶם  
 וְאָבָא אֶתְכֶם  
 עָשִׂיתִי לְמִצְרַיִם  
 עַל-כַּנְּפֵי נְשָׁרִים  
 בְּאֵלֵי

*you have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and [how] I bore you on eagle's wings, and brought you unto me.*

But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.



*Rae ibn Selme*



# PESACH — I. GOLDBERG

♩ = 58  
 CHAYRUS PEYSACH MUSIC: MAJER BOGDANSKI  
 אָד אַרײַן TEXT: IZYK GOLDBERG

ADAGIO  
 mp  
 VI- DER IS TSU VHS GHE-KU-MEN CHAY-RUS PEY-SACH FAR YE-DEH GLAYCH

LEEB UN HAR-TSIK VERT ER OIF-GHE-NU-MEN SAY BAY U-RIM SAY BAY RAYCH LEEB UN

HAR-TSIK VERT ER OIF-GHE-NU-MEN SAY BAY U-RIM SAY BAY RAYCH HAYNT ERHAYT, VEN MIT

POCO MOSSO

FEEL KH-VO-NO, SVERT DER SAY-DEH TSU-GHE-GRAYT VEE IN HI-MEL DEE LE-

TEMPO PRIMO

VO-NOH, SHTRALT A-YE-DEH OIF FAR FRAYD, UN ES ZI-TSEH A-RUM DEE TI-SHEM

TA-TSEH, MA-MES, KIND UN HAYT BO-BES, ZAY-DES, ZEECH TSE-KU-SHEM VEE DEE KIN-DEH

CRESCENDO

AZH FAR FRAYD, ERSHT VEN SKUNT TSU KA-SHEH FRE-GHEN FUN DEE KIN-DEH O-DEH

AY-NIK-LECH DER-TSU, VER ES KEN TSU DAM DER-LE-BEN IS DOCH VERT DEE GAN-TSE

f

MEE. DA-MOLST SHTRALT IN YE-DEH VIK-EL FRAYD UN MA-SHEH BAY A-LE

RALLEN TANDO

GLAYCH, IN YE-DEH OIG BLITST DIF A FUA-MEL, SVERT A YID--DISH KEY-MIG-RAYCH.

## TRANSLATION OF YIDDISH TEXT

Pesach has come to us again  
 With its message of freedom for all;  
 With love and joy it is greeted  
 By rich and poor alike.

And when with great devotion  
 The Seder preparations begin  
 Everybody's face shines'

Like the moon in the sky.  
 Around the table they sit;  
 Fathers, mothers, kith and kin;  
 Boobas, Zaydes kiss each other  
 Like children full of joy.

When it comes to ask the questions  
 By the children or grandchildren,  
 Whoever is blessed to see it  
 Every effort in life was worthwhile.  
 Then happiness is found in every  
 corner

Joyful and delighted is everyone.  
 The eyes of all present sparkle;  
 It has become a Jewish Kingdom.

## THE ROSH HASHANAN STAR

Do you have any articles, news items, photos or even just ideas for possible contributions to *The Star*?

If so, contact the Editor or a member of the Board immediately.

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# Editorial

## The Edinburgh Star

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Editor: Ruth M. Adler

Editorial Board:

John Cosgrove  
Mickey Cowen  
Wendy Fidler  
Rabbi Shalom Shapira  
Mark Sischy

Editorial Assistant:

Ian Shein  
Tel: 031-332 2324

Advertisements:

Manny Wittenberg  
Tel: 031-667 0500

Visual Arts:

Judy Gilbert  
Tony Gilbert

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Tweedbank, Galashiels, TD1 3RS

Sitting in the train travelling from London to Edinburgh at the end of January, I noticed that someone had got off and left a copy of their evening paper behind. It was open at an article entitled: 'War and Remembrance' by Mira Bar-Hillel. She explained at length how in many respects, looked at from an Israeli perspective, January 1991 felt like a 'replay of the events of June 1967'. The tension, the fear, the waiting, the danger and then the destruction or grounding of the enemy force. The *false confidence* displayed by Saddam Hussein was just like that of Nasser and 'then the aftermath ...'

Now that the war appears to be well and truly over, it seems appropriate to turn our minds to the question of 'the aftermath'. Mira Bel-Hillel wrote that after the Six Day War 'Israel missed every single opportunity to use its advantage to win the peace. Instead of a Middle East Settlement, it ended up with the poisoned chalice of the Occupied Territories, a new wave of Palestinian refugees and Arab neighbours still seeking vengeance'. As a result, there were further wars in 1973 and 1982. She also reminds us that Nasser survived humiliating defeat and continued to lead his people till his death many years later. A similar scenario with Saddam Hussein seems unthinkable and yet it is a possibility. Perhaps most important of all, the article stated 'It is vital that opportunities are not missed once this war is over. The Middle East is a political and emotional mine-field and instant results must not be expected but that means only that efforts must be greater'.

Avi Shlaim, Reader in International Relations at Oxford, has written in similar vein. Observing that Saddam Hussein provoked the crisis for reasons which had nothing to do with the Palestinian problem and then cynically set himself up as a champion of Palestinians to unite the Arab world, he points out that the unprovoked attacks on Israel have given rise to a great strengthening of Israel's position while, at the same time observing that in the age of the missile: 'Strategic depth is of limited value and the holding of Arab territories does not guarantee Israel's safety. Indeed the perpetuation of Israeli control over this territory undermines Israeli security by feeding Arab hostility'. It is in the interests of the allies in the armed conflict, of Israel and of the world at large, that now that hostilities have ceased, an equal amount of energy, courage, human endeavour, forbearance and commitment is applied to winning the peace.

The Editor and Editorial Board would like to wish all Star readers:  
Chag Kasher Vesameach

Front cover: by S. R. Spark  
- drawn for The Star.  
We are very grateful to the artist.

### THANKS

The Editorial Board is grateful to the advertisers and the following donors for their support: Dr and Mrs M. Merrick  
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# REMINISCENCES OF A JEWISH SCOTTISH SOLDIER

A story for Passover by Fred Bullon

It was October 1942. Having completed my training with a Highland Scottish Infantry Regiment, I was now deemed ready to go into action. We were sent to an embarkation post and put on board a troop-ship, our destination North Africa, along with the American troops under the overall command of General Eisenhower. The strategy was that the combined Allied Forces under Eisenhower would link up with the British Forces under General Montgomery and drive the Germans out of the Middle East.

We left Scotland on 22 October and landed in N Africa on 8 November. We immediately started to advance towards Tunis, meeting heavy resistance from the Germans and Italians. On 22 November, just outside Tunis, I was wounded and sent back to Base Hospital, which was in Algiers. It was not serious and after a few weeks I was discharged from Hospital fully recovered. However, I had to go in front of a Medical Board for regrading, and I was found to be unfit for further active service, so I was sent to Allied Force Headquarters and attached to the Postal unit there. They were stationed in a little village just outside Algiers. I used to get regular days off, and

sometimes I would go into Algiers on Shabbat and visit the local Shul. After a while I got friendly with an Algerian Jewish family - a husband, wife and two children - and they would invite me to their home. Of course, like everywhere else, severe rationing restrictions were in force, but I used to try and help them as much as I could. Whenever it was possible, I would take them some tea, coffee and sugar, chocolates, sweets and chewing gum for the children, and the biggest luxury of all, SOAP, which was almost unobtainable by the civilian population.

It was now getting near Pesach, and one day the sergeant said to me, "Bullon, I suppose you will be wanting your unleavened bread?" I said I did, so he ordered it for me. A few days later, he told me to go to the store to pick it up as it had arrived. Well, imagine my astonishment when I went to sign for it; I just about fell over! There it was. *Twenty boxes* of Matzo. Now, I ask you, what would one Jewish soldier do with twenty boxes of Matzo? Sometimes the mind boggles at the mentality of those in authority. Anyway, I took it over to my friends, and you should have seen their faces. I thought they were going to

hug me to death. They had not had any Matzos for years since before the war.

I got a few days' leave for Pesach and stayed with my friends, and they asked me to take the Seder, which was quite memorable for all of us. There was one beautiful little custom that I must tell you about which I have never forgotten. At our Seder Service, as you all know, we distribute the Afikomen at the end of the meal, coupled with the Prayer, "Next year in Jerusalem". Well, their custom is to hand everyone a piece of the Afikomen which is put away in a safe place with the prayer and hope that the coming year will be a healthy one. Then when they meet again the following year they each produce the piece of Afikomen and eat it thus showing that the Almighty has spared them for another year.

I kept in touch with my friends for many years, even after I left the Army, but later my letters were returned "Address Unknown".

Army life was not all bad. It had its lighter moments, and it is the pleasanter times I prefer to remember.

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# ... AND FOR THE MATZOS, THE MIRACLES AND THE MISSILES

## A Passover Message from Rabbi Shapira

When we observe Passover, we are commemorating a most important event - the Exodus from Egypt. This unique event played an extraordinary role in the history of the Jewish people and in the establishment of the Jewish faith. The revelation of G-d to the Israelites at the foot of Mount Sinai gave the people a new set of rules engraved on two Tablets - the Ten Commandments. In the first ten words, G-d identifies himself as follows: 'I am the Lord your G-d who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage'.

The special feature of the Exodus is that it does not present itself as ancient history or a one time event, but it offers itself as an ongoing experience. We celebrate this event every year on the same night on which the Exodus took place, as we say in the Haggada: 'In every generation, it is a man's duty to think of himself as one of those who came out of Egypt'.

This may explain why Passover is the only festival that has this special prayer book - the Haggada - which is read during the festive meal on the first night of the festival. The reading of the Haggada, accompanied by symbolic actions which go back to our Temple times, are the central feature of the whole celebration of Passover. This helps us to focus our minds on the days of old and to remind us again of G-d revealing himself as a Saviour, a Redeemer and a Refuge.

One can have a better insight of this revelation, and the other miracles that occurred during the Exodus, when one looks into another Jewish festival of an entirely different nature. Some four weeks before Passover, we have the one day Purim festival, on which we celebrate the national deliverance from the plot of Haman. This event took place in the 5th century B.C.E. in the Babylonian exile. What is remarkable in the Purim festival is that, like Passover, it also has its special book, but not in the form of a prayer book. The Book of Esther, recalling this event, is an historical book which was later included as one of the books of the Bible.

There is one essential difference between the deliverance from Pharaoh and the deliverance from Haman, as represented in the Haggada and in the book of Esther. While the deliverance from Pharaoh is described as a direct intervention by G-d, accompanied with miracles like the ten plagues culminating in the parting of the Red Sea to let the Israelites cross safely on to dry land but drowning the Egyptians - the deliverance from Haman took place in a quite natural way. The story of Esther lacks not only a single miracle but even the name of G-d is not mentioned there at all.

This is not to say that the Author of the Megila Esther did not believe in G-d. On the contrary, the conviction of G-d acting behind the scenes, monitoring every single character of the story and calculating all the consequences is evident and appears as an obvious conclusion to any reader.

These two festivals, Passover and Purim, represent two aspects of the struggle of the Jewish people - the struggle for their freedom and national sovereignty and the struggle for their physical existence in the diaspora. Both find a full description in our scriptures. In spite of the many differences between them, they display the same underlying motives, and include the same convictions, the same belief in the same G-d by whom everything is ordained.

Some three weeks after Passover, we celebrate another festival, the festival of the day of Independence of the State of Israel. This new festival which was added to the Jewish calendar in 1949, is represented neither in the form of a Haggada nor of a Megila. The book for this festival is still to be written. One does not have to be religious or even Jewish in order to realise the miraculous events Israel has experienced from its establishment until the present day. About eight centuries elapsed between the time of the Exodus to the time of Haman. About 24 centuries have passed since the first Haman of Iran until the present one of Iraq and the other enemies who are trying to destroy us. In

every generation we have faced an oppressor, be it Pharaoh's enslavement of the Israelites, be it Haman's attempt to annihilate all Jews, be it Hitler's gas chambers or Saddam Hussein's missiles. It seems that nothing has changed for the Jewish people over the centuries, equally neither has the protection of the Almighty. He has always saved us, either by revealed or by hidden miracles. As reflected in one very eminent verse of the Haggada which is usually sung to a traditional tune at most Seder tables, the translation of which reads as follows: 'And that promise has stood our fathers and ourselves in good stead, for not one persecutor only has risen against us to destroy us; but in every generation there are those who rise against us to destroy us. *But the holy one always saves us from their hands*'.

When we celebrate round the Seder table the first night of Passover, there is a Jewish custom to leave one chair vacant to symbolise our sympathy with those who still live under oppression and are not able to enjoy freedom as we do. Since last Passover, some 200,000 Jews have been fortunate enough to get out of the Soviet Union and are now living in Israel as free people. At this year's festival we still have to maintain this custom, as there are many more Jews who are unable to enjoy full freedom. But the ability of Soviet Jews to leave their country marks a significant step towards the full redemption of our people, and fills the hearts of all Jews with the hope that, in not many years to come, there will be no reason to maintain this custom. Then we shall declare in the Haggada the following praise in a more meaningful manner - on behalf of all our people: 'He brought us out from slavery to freedom, from grief to joy, from mourning to festivity, from darkness to great light, from bondage to salvation. And therefore let us sing for Him a new song, Halleluya'.

I wish you all a Chag Kasher Vesameach.

## ROUND AND ABOUT THE CONGREGATION

**YOUTH SHABBAT** On Saturday, 2 February, the young men of the community took the whole of the Sabbath morning service in the manner first begun by Danny Sinclair and continued by his successor Rabbi Shapira. The 'old hands' included Benjamin Adler, Daniel Brodie, Nicky Cosgrove, Elliot Cowan, Paul Gilbert, Jonathan, Paul and Tony Goldberg, Sion Judah and Aaron Raffel. Newcomers were Benji Bowman and Sam Laydon. There are now three such occasions during the year: Parashat Yitro, Parashat Teruma and Parashat Bereshit. This Shabbat was as ever a very special one, followed by a lovely Kiddush. However it was tinged with sadness - many present, particularly the participants, remarked that it didn't feel right without Darren Cowan. They will always remember his special contribution to the youth services.

### EDINBURGH FRIENDSHIP CLUB

The Friendship Club celebrated its 34th anniversary birthday on Sunday, 23 December. There were 34 members and guests present and the Co-chairman Willie Caplan presided. Special guests were the speaker Rose Orgel and Eve and Nathan Oppenheim, Treasurer of the synagogue, who proposed the toast to the Club. The cake was cut by one of the most senior members, Gertie Vinestock. Thanks to everyone who contributed to a most enjoyable occasion.



*l to r: Rose Orgel, Willie Caplan, Nathan Oppenheim, Eve Oppenheim*

### Thank you to Jess Franklin

Mrs Jess Franklin presented a television and video to the synagogue in memory of her late husband, Dr Sonny Franklin. This gift has already become a most valued piece of equipment of great benefit to Luncheon Club and Friendship Club members and to the children of the cheder.

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### COMING EVENTS

<b>April</b>	7 Sunday	Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.
	21 Sunday	Maccabi	1.00 p.m.
		Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.
	25 Thursday	Council of Christians and Jews	7.30 p.m.
<b>May</b>	5 Sunday	Maccabi	1.00 p.m.
		Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.
	12 Sunday	Ladies Committee Social (Penny Farthing)	7.30 p.m.
	19 Sunday	Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.
	23 Thursday	* Council of Christians and Jews	7.30 p.m.
<b>June</b>	2 Sunday	Maccabi	1.00 p.m.
		Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.
	9 Sunday	Maccabi	1.00 p.m.

*\* This replaces the meeting originally scheduled for 30 May.*

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

All above events take place in the Community Centre, Salisbury Road.

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

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

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## Community

A beautiful Chanukiah was presented to the synagogue by Alex and Gerald Glass in honour of their mother, Mrs Bessie Glass, and in memory of their late father, Mr Harry Glass. At Chanukah, Paul Gilbert conducted the Mincha service (pictured below). Afterwards Howard Nicholsby recited the Chanukah blessings and Avigal Sperber and Jacqueline and Michelle Bowman lit the candles. (pictured right).



## The Luncheon Club



The Lord Provost, Eleanor McLaughlin, was the guest of honour at the Ladies Guild Luncheon Club Chanukah celebration. The Lord Provost enjoyed last year's celebratory meal so much that she asked if she might be allowed to come again. The Luncheon Club was delighted to accede to her request.

Opposite: from left to right:  
 Leila Goldberg  
 Rachel Shapira  
 The Lord Provost  
 Malcolm Cowan  
 Anita Mendelssohn  
 Rose Orgel

## THOUGHTS ON SAM'S BARMITZVAH : Philip Harris

Listening to what I may describe, with modest grandpaternal pride, as Sam's tour-de-force in synagogue, I found myself recalling that it was just over a century ago that one of his great-great-grandfathers arrived in these islands from what his Naturalisation Certificate referred to as "the territories of His Imperial Majesty, the Tsar of Russia". Another great-great-grandfather had arrived much earlier in the century, already a British subject, from Corfu, then belonging to Her Majesty Queen Victoria. They were both men of note in very different ways. The former founded a synagogue in Manchester and a branch of the Choveve Zion. The latter was a pillar of the Manchester Sephardic Community until, illustrating a familiar Jewish syndrome (of which Edinburgh appears to have been fortunately free), he left the main Spanish and Portuguese synagogue, of which he had been a founder-member and which now houses the Manchester Jewish Museum, to found a mini-synagogue of his own.

I dare say that both patriarchs had their hopes for the future as well as their anxieties but I cannot think that they could remotely have supposed that one day, many years on, the Barmitzvah of a young descendant would be celebrated in a famous city, renowned as a centre of culture,

hundreds of miles to the North. Nor would they have imagined that it would in some ways have reflected a background combining both Jewish

and British (or should I say 'Scottish?') cultural and communal traditions, with satisfaction to all and much praise to everyone concerned.

### Why is this Barmitzvah different from all other Barmitzvaahs?

Every Barmitzvah is a very special occasion, but Sam Laydon's was a 'Barmi' with a difference. Sam has known all his life that his father was raised a Catholic and his mother is Jewish. However neither of his parents are at all religious and although Sam and his sister Rosie know that according to Jewish law, they are both Jewish, neither particularly acted on this information until some two years ago when Sam, then about to be 13, decided that this existence in 'no-man's land' was not for him. He wished to make some kind of public affirmation of his Jewish identity. His parents made inquiries amongst their friends and found a young Cheder teacher to take on the task of teaching Sam to read Hebrew. He went for weekly lessons and in a relatively short time mastered the script and joined a cheder class of much younger pupils. A year later, he started preparing for his Barmitzvah and just eighteen months after his first encounter with the Hebrew alphabet, gave a wonderful rendering of Maftir and Haftarah.

A perfect guide to parenthood, according to which not only Sam, but both of his parents: Deborah Harris and John Laydon are to be heartily congratulated by the whole community on Sam's remarkable achievement.

R. M. A.



With  
Compliments  
from  
Mark and Judith  
Sischy

There is a beautiful poem by Kahlil Gibran which begins:

*Your children are not your children.  
They are the sons and daughters of life's  
longing for itself.  
They come through you but not from  
you,  
And though they are with you yet they  
belong not to you ...*

and ends:

*You are the bows from which your  
children as living arrows are sent forth  
Let your bending in the archer's hand be  
for gladness.*

With  
compliments from  
Geoffrey  
and Lorna  
Nicholsby  
and family

**DAVID and CELIA LEIGH:**  
An appreciation by Betty Caplan

The Edinburgh Jewish Community has been greatly shocked and saddened by the deaths of David and Celia Leigh. David passed away on 27th December 1990 after a long illness and Celia just a few weeks later on 23rd February, 1991.

The Edinburgh Jewish Friendship Club in particular has lost two very much respected and honoured Presidents and Chairmen, the former position being held by David and then by Celia just prior to her death.

David and Celia were founders of the Club 35 years ago, and worked very hard to make it the success it became. They both enjoyed the fulfilment which their involvement with the Club gave them and the pleasure it so obviously gave its members.

Born in Leeds, David came to Edinburgh before the war, and soon showed a strong commitment to the Jewish community. During his lifetime, he held office in many organisations which greatly benefitted by his involvement. He was a member of the Edinburgh Synagogue Council from 1945 for many years and became Treasurer and President. He was a past Master of Lodge Solomon, and had been President of the B'nai Brith and Treasurer of the Benevolent Loan Society. In these and other posts, David's warmth and sympathetic understanding were always evident as was his keen regard for the welfare of the community.

Celia was deeply involved with the life of the community in conjunction with her husband. For many years, she was a member of the Ladies' Guild and WIZO, and on numerous occasions lectured to non Jewish organisations on the Jewish way of life. She also sat on the Council of Edinburgh and Leith Old Peoples Welfare. Like David, Celia was ever ready to contribute in any way that would benefit the community. Her opinion and sound advice were much sought and highly respected.

They will both be greatly missed by the committee and members of the Friendship Club, and their passing will leave a great void within the whole community.

Our condolences go out to their daughter, Norma and to Celia's sister, Fanny and all the family.



*David and Celia Leigh on Norma and Ian's wedding day*

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## THE LOWRIE REPORT : SEFARAD SEFARAD

On 12 December, many members of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation and the Jewish community attended the preview of this exhibition at the Spanish Consulate, where they were received with traditional Spanish courtesy and hospitality by the Consul Senor Pombo Bravo and his wife and by their staff.

Mainly photographic, the exhibition portrayed the rich, scholarly, artistic and commercial life of the Sephardic Community prior to the expulsion of 1492. Many of the synagogues and Juderias (Jewish quarters) are still extant, the latter an integral part of present day life in Spanish cities, although many of the former now bear names relating to their period of conversion to churches. These synagogues are some of the oldest and most beautiful in the world.

The Sephardi community of the Iberian peninsula contributed many scholars to both the Jewish and non-Jewish world; philosophers such as Maimonides, Nahmanides and Crescas, poets such as Judah Halevi, Samuel Ibn Nagrela, Solomon Ibn Gabiral and Moises Ibn Ezra. Prominent among those who became high-ranking State Officials were Samuel Levi and Negrelas. There were also many well-known Rabbis and minor scholars together with a host of small merchants, craftsmen and agriculturalists. Many relics of their civic lives can be seen in Spanish Museums.

Many of the Sephardi community travelled widely throughout the then known world, perhaps Benjamin of Tudela being the best known; he travelled as far as South India, quite a journey at the beginning of the 12th century. The Sephardi influence on the Jews of India is strong; the Bombay community, one of the oldest in the Diaspora, being revitalised and brought into the Sephardi tradition by such a visit - an influence that shows in its Synagogue architecture today, which was confirmed by Sas and Sinora Judah who remarked upon the great

similarity between those portrayed at the exhibition and those they knew in India.

Today Jews are again living in Spain and it is official policy to encourage resettlement. The Spanish Government going so far as to decree in 1968 immediate citizenship to any of Sephardic descent, i.e. those whose families were in Spain prior to 1492; loosely speaking those whose families speak Ladino today. There are, of course, many of Jewish descent in Spain today - those who remained behind and were baptised, mainly forcibly - the Marranos. How many is not known, but assuming the same rate of expansion in population as among the rest of Spain's inhabitants, there must be several million. It is interesting to speculate what would be the position should they wish in any numbers to resume their identity as Jews.

Anybody going to Spain on holiday who would wish to see more of the Sephardic past and/or meet today's communities should contact the Consulate.

A most interesting exhibition.

### AN EVENING WITH KALMAN GLASS

#### Frae Cuddies' Hurdies to Baroness

Not many can claim to have started their profession as the rear end of a horse, eventually to become a Baroness, but Kalman Glass can!

This actor o' pairts, many many parts, at present playing alongside Stanley Baxter and Angus Lennie at the King's Theatre in Cinderella, entertained those enjoying a fund raising supper in the Communal Hall on 27 January.

Telling anecdotes and answering questions on his career, Kalman Glass disclosed his admiration for members of the acting profession as diverse as the late Anna Neagle and the very much alive Tommy Steele, both of whom he classed as 'real professionals'.

Kalman Glass has just finished a mini series in Luxembourg for

television, which we may see on our screens shortly.

The dinner was held under the auspices of the Communal Centre Committees, and once again, the Ladies' Committee provided an excellent meal.

### CHANUKAH DINNER

With the Blessing and lighting of the Chanukah Candles, Rabbi Shapira set the scene for a joyful Chanukah Dinner which was illuminated by the incandescent personality of Dr Ellis Barnett and the no less luminous presence of Mrs May Barnett.

A sparkling after-dinner speech had those present rocking with laughter and only too ready to vote Dr Barnett, Glasgow's doyen of after-dinner speakers, but then what else could he be with a father who seemed to have had his own brand of 'Parliamo Glesca'. It is the unanimous opinion of those present that few could hold a candle to such a speaker.

The Grace after Meals led by the Rabbi brought the evening to a happy and successful conclusion.

The dinner was held under the auspices of the Communal Centre Committees on the 15 December, the Ladies' Committee providing an excellent repast.

## WALTON'S

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- FOR LINE CAUGHT FISH
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- FRESH FISH DAILY

## THE 1980's : A DECADE OF CHANGE

MALCOLM COWAN LOOKS BACK

On 29 March 1991 the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation celebrates the tenth Anniversary of the Consecration of the New Synagogue and the opening of the Community Centre by the Chief Rabbi Dr (now Lord) Immanuel Jakobovits.

This historic event was the culmination of several years of hard work and financial sacrifice by the members which resulted not only in the magnificent new complex but also in reinforcing the communal spirit among the members.

In his sermon, the Chief Rabbi paid tribute to the leadership of the Congregation both spiritual and lay, for their vision which had enabled them to move with the times, to create facilities which he saw and hoped would be a spiritual as well as a material reconstruction. Even more exciting and encouraging was the 'extraordinary fervour, zeal and spirit of belonging and involvement that this enterprise had evoked among members old and young'.

The project's origins stem from a number of factors including the change in social climate from the 50s to the 70s. The existing facilities were being used less and less by individuals and the youth of the Community and more and more by societies and groups. Alongside this change in use of the facilities, considerable sums of money were required to keep the old Communal Hall in good repair and wind and watertight. In addition, the facilities afforded by the size of the kitchen and the main hall were felt to be no longer adequate.

Paradoxically during the period from the 40s to the 70s, the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation's numbers had been seriously depleted and together with a diminished commitment to religious observance and Synagogue attendance, the Synagogue was now far too large for a Congregation of half the number for which the Shul had originally been built. Added to this was the soaring inflation of the

1970s and it soon became apparent that the costs of running two buildings was becoming prohibitive.

The catalyst for change was the election in 1978 of Myer S Cowen, JP (Mickey to his friends) as President of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation. Mickey Cowen who had served on the Council for many years was born and brought up in Edinburgh and was very well aware of all the above problems.

Although a committee was formed representing all the societies with an interest in the communal facilities, the project was conceived by Mickey Cowen. It was his vision, drive, enthusiasm and energy, combined with his fund raising talents which brought the scheme to fruition. To mark his untiring efforts presentations were made to him both by the Council and by the Members of the Congregation at the conclusion of the first phase and a further presentation was made at the Annual General Meeting of 1981.

The new facilities were not the only changes to take place during the 1980s. Fundamental changes occurred throughout the decade affecting all aspects of communal life. Rabbi Weinberg retired on 31 October 1980 as Minister of the Congregation after 19 years' service and was accorded the title 'Rabbi Emeritus'. On 1 November 1980 Rev. S Knopp was appointed Minister of the Congregation. David Burns retired at the end of 1980 as Caretaker after many years and his daughter-in-law, Mrs Christine Burns, was appointed as from 1 December 1980.

To commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the opening of the

Synagogue a Reception was held on Sunday, 17 October 1982. At the same time Rev. Knopp retired to go on Aliyah. In 1983 a house was purchased for the use of the Minister and in April 1984 the Congregation welcomed the Rev. Daniel Sinclair as Minister. On 27 August 1985 the Cosgrove Memorial Library was formally opened by Dr Malcolm Cosgrove. In October 1987 Rev. Dr Daniel Sinclair left immediately after the Yom Tovim to return to Israel to join his family who had left earlier. Rabbi Shapira was appointed Minister and took up his office at Pesach 1988. On 3 May 1989 Rabbi Dr J Weinberg suddenly died. The following day a large congregation attended the funeral service in the Synagogue at which there were representatives from the City, the Churches, the University, the Earl of Balfour and the Edinburgh Friends of Israel.

Throughout the decade the communal activities continued to flourish and in addition the congregation celebrated 38 Barmitzvahs, 24 Batmitzvahs and 13 Weddings. However, the decline in numbers continued its inexorable march and the decade ended with a further diminution of 30% of the membership.

It is with particular poignancy that I record that at the Children's Chanukah Service held on 7 December 1980 the candles were lit by Darren Cowan and Rev. Sam Knopp addressed the children.

The material used in this article was obtained from the commemorative brochure written and compiled by Arnold I Rifkind issued in May 1982 and the Annual Reports of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation.



*The Community Centre 29th March 1981*

*Rev. S. Knopp, Chief Rabbi Dr I. Jakobovits, Rabbi Dr. J. Weinberg, Lord Provost T. Morgan, Cardinal Gray, Scottish Minister for Home Affairs Mr M. Rifkind M.P. and Mr M. S. Cowen*

# MEMORIES OF EDINBURGH

*Myre Sim*

There are well-researched and excellent reports of Edinburgh Jewry and David Daiches' account of his own upbringing<sup>(1)</sup> is, rightly, regarded as a classic. Articles in the *Edinburgh Star* have stirred memories. I have decided to cull from these because I have now reached the age of seventy five when youthful memories are clearer.

This account will not be a listing of the great successes of Edinburgh Jews, though these are many and distinguished but the observations of someone who grew up in the community and had closer contact with many who were less distinguished in the accepted sense. Neither will it resemble Grey's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* for it would be equally exclusive to omit all reference to the achievers.

After the First World War the Edinburgh Jewish community was stratified. Those whose families came before the 1880s were thoroughly anglicised and regarded the new immigrants with mixed feelings. The new immigrants were proud, independent and confident and the creed in Yiddish was 'breit und wasser zu essen abee nit anzukommen zu yennem'. Fortunately such short commons never arose and nearly all prospered by dint of hard work and thrift and their contributions to charity were proportionately substantial. There were few social contacts between the established and the new arrivals or "Greeners" who had their own synagogue in Richmond Street around which most of them lived. Another synagogue in Dalry catered mainly for an artisan class employed in the local rubber works. Social barriers were not so rigid and could be broken down with money, education and time, and in that order.

Edinburgh, through its port of Leith, was the main entrance of Jews from Northern Europe to Scotland but many did not remain and moved on to Glasgow where there was rapid industrial and commercial growth so the Edinburgh Jewish community tended to stabilise and then diminish. Other factors were the reduction in immigration after the First World War and the excellent opportunities for education in Edinburgh which were eagerly accepted by the vast majority

of Jewish children regardless of which "Aliyah". One of Edinburgh's main exports has been education and the products of its schools and the graduates of its university went all over the world. Many of the younger generation left and with much smaller families and no more mass immigration the community dwindled. The lack of a flood of immigrants after the turn of the century meant that the later arrivals took longer to reach established status and in the eyes of some who had a twenty year start, never achieved it. They tended to retain their orthodoxy and therefore their Jewishness longer so exclusion from the "club" was no bad thing. Groucho Marx epitomised the attitude when he said: "any club which will have me as a member is not worth joining".

## RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE

When I was a child Reverend Jacob Furst had been succeeded by Rabbi Dr Salis Daiches. Edinburgh Jewry was very fortunate in securing his services for he was of the highest calibre and in another location would have been a serious contender for the office of Chief Rabbi of the British Empire as it was then styled. He was highly respected by the non-Jewish community and because of this he was able to do much for Edinburgh Jews as well as for many refugees at the time of the Nazi rape of Europe. It was mainly his influence which persuaded a local landowner to give refuge to a large number of Jewish children from Germany thus saving them from certain death.

He must have seen the demographic changes in the community for by using his considerable influence he welded the factions into one congregation and thus ensured that all Jewish children would be exposed to a practice of Judaism which did not sacrifice the essentials yet was in a digestible form. He made his mark on the "Hebrew School" where there was due emphasis on Jewish history and an unusual emphasis on Hebrew grammar which gave the language parity with other languages learnt at school. It also made translation from Hebrew much easier. Davidson's *Hebrew Grammar*<sup>(2)</sup> was merely

revision for those who attended his class. In addition, he ran a Sunday morning class at his home where the Psalms, Isaiah and the Minor Prophets were studied in a liberal climate of scholarship.

One of the teachers of the school was Mr Rubenstein. He was a practising Chassid who had the traditional reverence for sacred text. He ran a Minyan for young boys where each was trained to conduct the Shacharit service in impeccable Hebrew. One could literally hear each Dagesh! Approval was also given to Reverend Ordman to run a Rashi class on Saturday afternoons and the strange script soon lost its mystique and made one's first steps into Baba Metziyah of the Talmud less formidable. It was much later that I learned that Rashi was a treasure house of mediaeval French for linguists.

Reverend Levinson took a class in Jewish history on a Sunday morning and his graphic accounts of biblical heroes and heroines instilled in us a quiet confidence and pride in our antecedents. Mr Levinson's main contribution was his organisation of the choir. He was a trained musician who had been professionally engaged in choir activities in Poland and he welded together a very good choir which contributed greatly to the beauty of the services and added a measure of decorum which many Jewish services lack. Furthermore, choir rehearsals were always great fun.

An earlier teacher was Reverend Teitelman. He was a scholarly man with considerable pride and dignity. He ran a class for the more senior students (12-14 years) in Schulchan Orach and his sense of humour was an excellent teaching aid. I recall his treatment of the question of what one should do should a fly fall into the plate of soup. It was obligatory to fish out the fly with a spoon and discard the fly with the soup and not suck the soup from the fly before discarding it. He would relate this in Yiddish and go through the motions of sucking the fly and discarding it with an aristocratic flourish.

All this education would not have been digested were it not for one factor, the Jewish home. The vast majority of Edinburgh Jews came from

Lithuania or Latvia where Jewish learning was ingrained and revered. I recall, as a boy, going to Shabbat Minchah services and in the Beth Hamedrash there would be about twenty men around a long table studying a "Blatt Gemorrah" and there was a volume for each person. They were all competent scholars.

Zionism was an early concern of Edinburgh Jews. A few years ago I was in New York State and looked up Lily Binder (née Stungo) and she showed me a photograph of her mother among a group attending the first Zionist Congress in Basle. A number of young Edinburgh Jews before the First World War had gone to Palestine as members of a group called Choveve Zion (Lovers of Zion) and, unfortunately, some died from the tropical diseases that were then prevalent.

During that war a number of Edinburgh Jews had served in Palestine and some became committed Zionists. One who was outstanding was Pesach Caplan. He formed a Tarbut society where only Hebrew was spoken and it flourished and helped to reinforce the Zionist commitment of the community. As I mentioned at the outset Dr Daiches was very much aware of what was going on and all these activities had his blessing. His influence was pervasive but this should not detract from the dedication of others I have mentioned and many more besides.

### OTHER ACTIVITIES

It would be surprising if a community with such a background and with the opportunities for education, sports, politics, business and professions did not produce a large number of successes and it did. Most of these are known but it may not be so well known that Isaac Wexelstein was one of the finest snooker players in Scotland as was Jack (Yudel) Levy, or that Sam Black (Bialek) was a Scottish wrestling champion. A number of lads did well at soccer and some played for good amateur clubs and, of course, some excelled at rugby. The Morrison girls enjoyed a high reputation for their chamber ensemble and their solo performances and in music one should not overlook Simon Stungo and his band which was rated very highly in the city.

Occasionally one is privy to an anecdote of an Edinburgh product. One such was the late Professor

Hyman Levy who was a former dux of Heriots and held the chair of Applied Mathematics at Imperial College in the University of London. He was a committed communist and my late friend Lancelot Hogben knew him and his wife very well and regularly visited them in their home in London. Professor Levy's wife was a dedicated Christian Evangelist and in the front windows of their home there were posters, some proclaiming Marxist doctrine and others the Teachings of Christ. It is to Professor Levy's credit that when he learned, at first hand, after a visit to the Soviet Union, that Stalin had instituted a virulent antisemitic policy, he resigned, publicly, from the Communist Party and was warmly commended for his stand in renouncing an allegiance of a lifetime.

One should not overlook the contribution of Edinburgh itself to the development of its Jews. The city's superb opportunities for education were made readily available and there was no evidence of antisemitism. In fact the Jews were, in general, made welcome as the Calvinist community regarded them as the People of the Book. Another reason which is less worthy was brought home to me by a fellow student and friend when we shared a tent in the Middle East during the Second World War. We were talking about Edinburgh and he remarked: "You know, Myre, the Catholics were my Jews". My friend, who was a scholar with a formidable list of publications including three very successful Penguins, was known for his tolerance and enlightened views!

Reference has appeared in the Edinburgh Star to the Edinburgh Rabbi who had invested money in ham shops. By all accounts he was a rather saintly and unworldly man who knew nothing about business and it was likely that he was more sinned against than sinning but, of course, the story was too good to be overlooked and would improve with embellishments.

There are some unanswered questions. Were they indeed ham shops? They were most likely corner shops which sold produce imported from Northern Ireland which included eggs, butter, cheese and, of course, ham. To say that they were ham shops would be equivalent to saying that Marks and Spencers food departments are ham shops because they sell pies which have a large pork and ham

content.

How much did he invest? A more appropriate question would be, how much could he invest? His congregation was relatively impoverished and could barely maintain him at a subsistence level so there just could not have been much left to invest. It raises another question which is: was the man set up? There were a number of Edinburgh Jews who were money lenders and they may well have loaned money to shopkeepers who, among other things, sold ham and they may well have advised the rabbi to put up a meagre stake. After all, the rabbi was not eating the stuff and neither was he asking his congregants to eat it. I recall the difficulty over whether Mac Fisheries should sell kosher poultry as they also sold other poultry for their non-Jewish and less observant Jewish customers. The rabbi ruled that he was satisfied that the kosher poultry would not be contaminated and Mac Fisheries were able to retain their Jewish customers who had been pressing strongly for this ruling.

So what was the rabbi's sin? The answer may be found in the penalty imposed. He was not allowed to officiate at weddings and it was in this area that the major scandal arose. Weddings, Barmitzvahs and funerals are the major perks that ministers had to supplement their meagre salaries. Of these, the officiation at weddings requires a licence which the Beth Din in London could grant and revoke. Was the rabbi undercutting or appealing to the substantial number of new immigrants and thus making a dent in this source of income? It is over such issues that baser motives surface and an investment in a shop that sells ham could prove an attractive excuse to lodge a complaint.

This rabbi had two sons who became rabbis. One had a post in Newcastle while the other got a good position in London. During the Second World War the latter earned quite a reputation as the Senior Jewish Chaplain to the Eighth Army. When Tobruk was surrounded by Rommel's Africa Corps he insisted on getting in by submarine as he felt that Jewish soldiers should not be forsaken by their religious leaders. He was later appointed to a top position in Johannesburg, South Africa, where he enjoyed a high reputation.

When the office of Chief Rabbi fell

vacant he was being seriously canvassed for the post though whether he wanted it I do not know. Here is a scenario to conjure with. The rabbi gets the job and some years later he is in his home town of Edinburgh on a pastoral visit. He tells the congregation that as exactly fifty years had elapsed since his late father's loss of licence, the Beth Din had decided to use this year of Jubilee to reinstate him posthumously and grant him an apology for the decision of their predecessors. The Chief Rabbi had decided to celebrate the occasion by officiating at a wedding in Edinburgh. He should be very careful. We know what happened to his father and we have a good idea as to why! The records of these two Edinburgh lads should not be forgotten. I think the story about the ham shops can now be laid to rest for it is unkind and does not bear close scrutiny.

As one who lived most of my days in Edinburgh at 33 Buccleuch Street I was naturally interested in Lionel Daiches' article on "Drei and Dreissig". The most striking personality in that block was the late Moishe Pinkinsky. He was an intelligent man with a forceful form of address. Of his nine children four of his sons studied medicine, two of whom were Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh. Myre (Mike) was for many years a surgeon in West Hartlepool and South Shields and was held in such high esteem by the citizens that he was given the Freedom of the town. He played a prominent part in the Jewish community and as well as being the President, he conducted services. The youngest son, Philip, had a very distinguished career in psychiatry. One daughter, Sophia (Sull) took her MA and taught before and after her marriage.

No generation has a monopoly on academic or professional excellence and that one's parents spoke with a Scotto-Yiddish accent was no handicap. We did not inherit the accent but did absorb much for which all of us should be grateful. In 1958 I was in North America on a Travelling Fellowship and the joke that was going the rounds then was: What is the difference between the American Garment Workers Union and the American Psychoanalytic Association? The answer was: one generation. It may be that these things are easier

to accept in North America than in Britain where "class" is more entrenched and accents play a greater part in society. I doubt whether any British Prime Minister other than Margaret Thatcher would have appointed a Henry Kissinger as Foreign Secretary.

While still on the article by Lionel Daiches, I was amused by the story about Saul Stungo. He was a great kidder with an excellent sense of humour and it is a pity that his jokes and puns were not preserved. For some years before I left UK I had frequent contact with his son, Ellis, who was a psychiatrist. He told me of a few. One was when his father had just bought his house in Lauder Road and was describing it to a friend. "The rooms are quite huge. You could seat twenty people in the dining room; God forbid!" Even on his deathbed he told Ellis. "I'll be very lucky if I get out of this world alive".

While returning from one of my trips to Israel the 'plane made an unscheduled stop at Rome Airport and an anaesthetist from Manchester and I were sitting at a table in the restaurant drinking the 'courtesy' coffee when a most attractive lady asked if she could join us. We both hastily scrambled out of our seats to welcome her. After a few pleasantries such as the delay in flights the conversation got down to real business. She said that my accent intrigued her and where in Scotland did I come from. I replied "Edinburgh". She smiled and asked

me if I knew of the Stungo family. "Indeed" I said, "and you must be Mrs Hurst". That surprised her for we had never met. I explained that my mother would occasionally mention the elder Stungo daughter whom she described as the most beautiful girl in Edinburgh and I told her that she had not changed. My Manchester colleague thought I was the biggest line-shooter he had ever met but I was only telling the truth. She was then a widow but later married Mannie (Lord) Shinwell.

One can be tempted to go on in one's anecdote but I feel I have written enough to give another slant to the background of a community which in so many areas has made significant contributions to Jewry, to Scotland and to the world and will continue to do so.

REFERENCES 1. Daiches, D. *Two Worlds : A Jewish Childhood in Edinburgh*, Harcourt, Brace and Co., New York, 1954 2. Davidson, A B. *An Introductory Hebrew Grammar*, 24th ed. Edinburgh, T & T Clarke, 1932



Dr Myre Sim is a psychiatrist now living in British Columbia



THE TEAM THAT REPRESENTED EDINBURGH MACCABI IN THE LESLIE LUCK CUP FOR SEASON 1950-1  
Standing: S. Solomons (Trainer) G. Share, J. Bierman, M. Myerhall, B. Strachan, R. Kiman, H. Myerhall (Manager)  
Sitting: J. E. Harlech, B. Levene, J. Strachan, M. BROWN (Captain), P. Hoare, J. Cowan.

A photo of the 1950 Edinburgh Maccabi Football Team sent in by Morris Brown

by Judy Gilbert

Welcome to your own page. At last here is your chance to make a contribution and perhaps write your own articles for what has so far been a magazine mainly for adults. In this issue there will be some puzzles to tease you and items of interest for the younger reader.

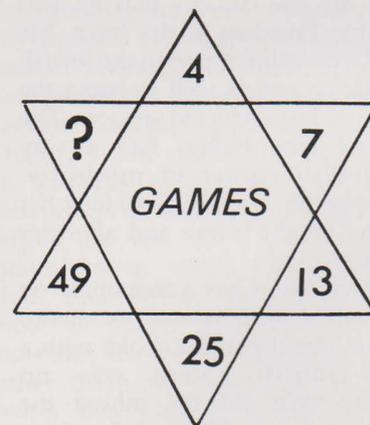
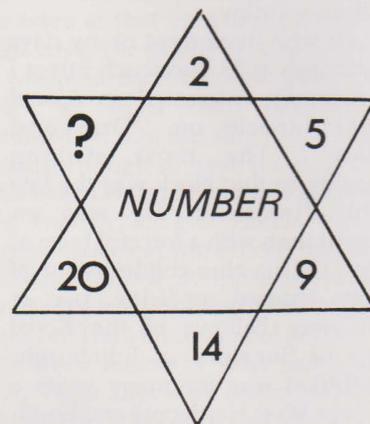
There will be a £5 book token for the first child under thirteen with all the correct answers. If nobody gets them all right, the prize will go to whoever achieves the highest score.

For the next number, please send me some of your own ideas. They may be jokes or riddles, poems, funny stories or even serious ones, or any items you think will be of interest or some relevance to this page in the *Edinburgh Star*.

Send your answers to Judy Gilbert  
2 Marchhall Crescent, EDINBURGH 16



SPOT 10 DIFFERENCES



R A P TRACK from LETTER to LETTER  
T D E without going over the same  
U R E one more than once in the  
same word. How many different  
words can you make of two or  
more letters. We found 45.

### A PESACH WORD SEARCH

Find nine words connected with the Passover. You can go horizontally, vertically or diagonally.

P	E	S	A	C	N	I	S	A	N
Y	A	C	L	U	T	Z	P	R	E
G	G	C	H	O	M	E	T	Z	G
E	L	H	M	A	T	Z	A	H	M
G	E	C	Z	O	R	Y	M	P	A
Y	R	A	T	O	H	O	M	E	T
P	G	S	D	D	G	A	S	J	Z
T	K	E	S	G	R	E	D	E	S
Q	W	P	E	G	L	O	Z	G	T

CHOMETZ

EGG

NISAN

PESACH

SEDER

ROD

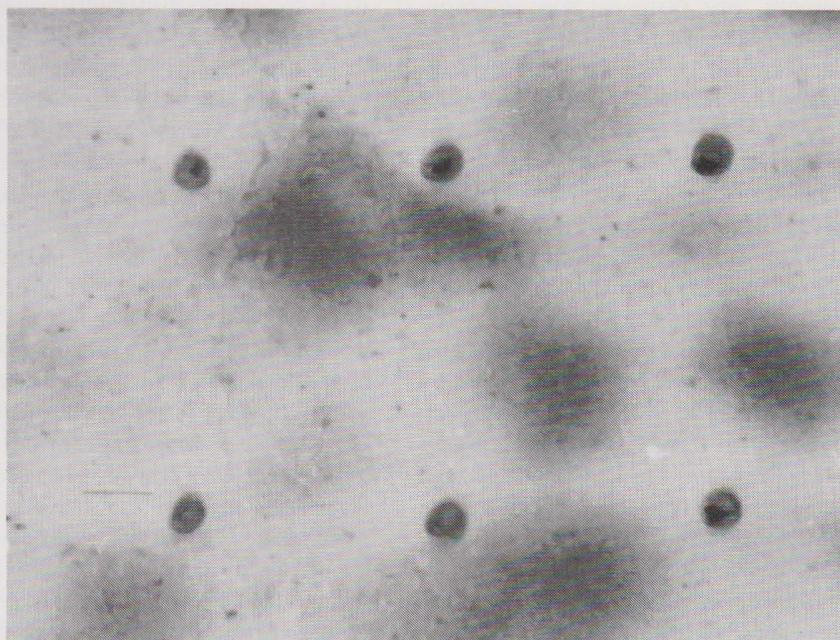
MATZA

EGYPT

? ? One more beginning with C

**WHAT IS THIS?**

*(approx. 4 magnification)*



**JUNIOR SHUL CHOIR PRACTICE  
WITH DAVID MENDLESSOHN**  
*The choir sings every shabbat*

# In Search of the Jewish Writer

(Thoughts on Glasgow's Jewish Writers' Day)

Beatrice Merrick

If the platitude that writers are born not made is true of anyone it is surely true of Jewish writers. What entitles anyone to this description other than an accident of birth it would be hard to say. Consider any set of "Jewish writers" - those who featured on the programme of Glasgow's Jewish Writers' Day, for instance. These included David Daiches, Evelyn Cowan and Chaim Bermant, reminiscing about their Scottish Jewish childhoods; Frederic Raphael, reading some sharply observed pieces on human relationships; Primo Levi, from whose work Ruth Rosen and Jack Klaff took extracts covering the forty years he spent trying to come to terms with his holocaust experiences; and, in the final symposium, Frederic Raphael, Bernice Rubens, Elaine Feinstein and Chaim Potok having their say on Jewish writers and writing. What immediately stands out, from the works of these authors as well as their characters, is not a common link, but the differences between them, the range of styles, subjects and ideas in their work and the varied backgrounds and attitudes of the writers themselves.

It is small wonder one sensed an uneasy shuffling of feet among the assembled authors at being labelled as "Jewish writers", as though that was some clearly identifiable attribute. Being pigeon holed and explained away is not something writers like; it is something critics do to them regardless, trying to pin down the influences that shape their works. Being Jewish is an obvious attribute to seize on. Obvious to the Jewish community, with our passion for claiming our own; obvious to the non-Jewish community, for whom the classification is relatively straightforward. Being Jewish entails having a particular cultural heritage, a common tradition on which one can draw. Two things, however, should be remembered: that that heritage is itself extremely wide ranging and varied, and that a

writer, though Jewish, may choose not to incorporate that tradition in his/her writing.

Here lies the difficulty in dealing with the term "Jewish writer". Depending on which of the first three syllables one stresses, one is talking about three different things: a writer firmly situated within the Jewish tradition, or one who is tenuously linked to it, or one who is first and foremost a writer, but who just happens to be Jewish. Classification is not made easier by the width of that tradition. It is easy to situate Chaim Potok in the first category: a trained rabbi who writes about Brooklyn Hasidim is unquestionably a Jewish writer. Choosing who to place in the second and third categories is less simple. For instance, is there anything notably Jewish about Bernice Rubens' work? Does the fact that one book she produces features Jewish characters make her a Jewish writer, when another is set within a firmly Christian religious tradition? If one looks for a Jewish style, are Frederic Raphael's intellectually detached, razor-edged depictions of human frailties and deceptions in some way foreign to the Jewish perspective? Or merely foreign to one part of it?

What an author writes and how s/he writes it may be determined as much as anything else, by the reasons s/he has for writing. What would be a Jewish reason for writing? (A Jewish answer to the question "Why?": "Why not?") The reasons given in the symposium varied. For Bernice Rubens' writing came from her addiction to reading stories, which led her to start telling herself stories, and then to write them. For most of those present writing was not a choice so much as an inner need, something they had done for as long as they could remember. (Elaine Feinstein commented that, though she had written while she was young, she had stopped for years, having been

inhibited from writing by her degree in English.)

Possibly the most promising link between writing and Jewishness comes in the idea that the writer must be on the sidelines, detached from the society described. Alienation is something experienced by many Jews, caught between cultures. Chaim Potok, having familiarised himself with the wider world, could look back at his Hasidic origins with an outsider's eyes. Elaine Feinstein, despite her many years studying, teaching and living in Cambridge never felt she belonged there; in Russia, on the other hand, she recognised things with which she felt at home. Frederic Raphael clearly revelled in being a stranger in a strange land: born in the USA, but to all appearances quintessentially English, he chooses to live in France, a voluntary exile. Is the Jewish writer, then, someone who is at home with alienation?

When it comes down to it, however much authors may tell us about themselves and their works, the only satisfaction comes from first hand experience. Go read the books!

*Beatrice Merrick was awarded an honours degree in Philosophy last summer and is now working as a university administrator in Sussex University*

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# JOKES BY AND ABOUT JEWS AND SCOTS

Christie Davies

There are many similarities in the jokes told by and about Jews and Scots. For both peoples there exists a large genre of jokes about 'canny' individuals and it is perhaps significant that I have to use a Scots word to describe the central quality ascribed in the jokes though many parallel Yiddish terms would have done as well.<sup>(1)</sup> Seth Kravitz on the basis of his study of London jokes said that Scottish jokes were a 'modified sub-set of Jewish jokes'.<sup>(2)</sup> Jokes about 'the canny' can be switched between Scots and Jews and this is the basis of the overlap between the two sets of jokes. There are of course many Scots as well as Jewish jokes that cannot be switched and certain popular genres of Scottish jokes are in a sense the opposites of equally popular sets of Jewish jokes.

The overlap between Scottish and Jewish jokes is best demonstrated by quoting the Scottish version of some familiar Jewish jokes: The scene is Deeside, the time the Aberdonian Spring Holiday (roughly Easter Monday), the wind is sharp from ENE. Stamping about in order to keep warm, a wee laddie falls into the famous river. Among the trippers intense interest, but no effort at rescue, so cold is the day. A strong, silent Englishman stripping off muffler, overcoat and jacket, plunges in and brings the drookit bairn to land, and himself resumes his welcome garments. An active, wee 'thistle' of a mannie worms his way through the crowd, taps him on the shoulder and demands:

'Are 'ee the chielie 'at savit my laddie's life, mister?'

"The Englishman breaks silence with a shivering 'Yes' whereat the other:

'Whaur's his bunnet, then?'<sup>(3)</sup>

"A Scottish farmer put in an insurance claim after one of his barns burned down. The insurance agent who came round to settle the claim took the opportunity to try and sell him some more insurance.

'Why don't you take out

insurance against theft' he asked him, 'or even floods?'

'Floods?' queried the Scot. 'Floods?' How do you start a flood?'<sup>(4)</sup>

"The differences and contrasts between jokes about the 'canny' Scots and the 'canny' Jews can be as striking as the similarities even where both appear in the same joke. George Orwell shrewdly noted that:

'Occasionally a story is told (e.g. the Jew and the Scotsman who went into a pub together and both died of thirst) which puts both races on an equality. But in general the Jew is credited merely with cunning and avarice while the Scotsman is credited with physical hardihood as well. This is seen, for example, in the story of the Jew and the Scotsman who go together to a meeting which has been advertised as free. Unexpectedly there is a collection and to avoid this the Jew faints and the Scotsman carries him out. Here the Scotsman performs the athletic feat of carrying the other. It would seem vaguely wrong if it were the other way about'.<sup>(5)</sup>

The same contrast between the rigorous and violent canny Scot and his more peaceable Jewish counterpart can be seen in many other jokes involving members of both groups.

'An Aberdonian and a Jew had an argument and decided to settle it in the ring. The Jew thought to pull a fast one so he bet the Aberdonian to win. But the Aberdonian, thinking along the same lines, bet the Jew. In the ring the Aberdonian threw a punch, the Jew lay down, the referee started to count. At the count of nine the Aberdonian went over to where the Jew was lying and kicked him. The Aberdonian lost on a disqualification'.<sup>(6)</sup>

'The usual trio consisting of an Englishman, a Scotsman and a Jew (the Irishman was ill) had a nine course meal at an expensive

restaurant and the waiter presented them with a bill for £42.

"I'll pay that," offered the Scotsman. Prominent headlines in the following day's paper said "Jewish ventriloquist found dead in alley"<sup>(7)</sup>.

"The contrast in these jokes about Scottish and Jewish *men* may be linked to the existence in Jewish humour of three kinds of jokes about Jewish *women* for which there is no Scottish counterpart.<sup>(8)</sup> I have in mind the jokes about Jewish mothers (Scots only have comic mothers-in-law), wives and daughters, the last of these being the Jewish American Princess jokes from across the Atlantic. For example:

(After being away for more than a year, Ira phoned home.)

'Hello, Ma, how are you?'

'Just fine, son. When're you coming home? I'll fix you some chopped liver and chicken soup and a beautiful pot roast'.

'I'm still pretty far away!'

'Oh, son,' cried the desperate woman.

'Just come home and I'll fix you your favourite - oatmeal cookies!'

'I don't like oatmeal cookies!' said the boy.

'You don't?' asked the woman.

'Say,' said Ira, 'is this Century 5-7682?'

'No!'

'Then I must have the wrong number!'

'Does that mean you're not coming?' asked the woman.<sup>(9)</sup>

'One summer day Mrs Saperstein took her little boy Alan to Jones Beach. As soon as she settled under a beach umbrella she cried out to her son: 'Alan, Alan come here! Don't run into the water. You'll get drowned! Alan don't play with the sand. You'll get it in your eyes! Alan, Alan don't stand in the sun. You'll get sunstroke! Oy Vey! Such a nervous child'<sup>(10)</sup>

'How many Jewish mothers does it take to change a light-bulb? None. Don't you mind about me. I'll just sit here in the dark'.<sup>(11)</sup>

'Then there was the psychiatrist who told a Jewish mother her son had an Oedipus complex. "Oedipus-shmoedipus" she replied. "What does it matter so long as he loves his mother?"<sup>(12)</sup>

'My wife divorced me for religious reasons. She worshipped money and I didn't have any'.<sup>(13)</sup>

'Whatsa matter Harry? Ah, my wife is allergic to fur. Every time she sees another woman wearing a mink coat - she gets sick'.<sup>(14)</sup>

'A female skull was accidentally uncovered during an oil exploratiron in Beverly Hills, California, on 7 October 1958. Archaeologists from UCLA have estimated the skull at more than 22,000 years. Through carbon measuring techniques they also have ascertained that the skull belonged to a 5-foot 5-inch girl in her late teens weighing approximately 140 pounds. Predicated on the discovery of a primitive nose job, wooden orthodontic braces on the teeth, and transparent fish-scale contact lenses, the consensus is that this was the first Jewish American Princess!<sup>(15)</sup>

'How many Jewish American Princesses does it take to replace the light bulb? Two - one to pour out the Tab, the other to call daddy'.<sup>(16)</sup>

Q. What do JAPs most often make for dinner?

A. Reservations. <sup>(17)</sup>

These jokes, which are extremely popular among Jewish men, are less a statement about the shortcomings of their women-folk than about their own virtues. The Jewish sons, husbands and fathers who are the counterpart of the Jewish mothers, wives and daughters of these jokes are clearly paragons of male virtue,

utterly devoted to their families. Like King Solomon the Jewish male is a ... lover of women though perhaps not on quite the same scale and his worth is beyond coral and rubies put together. In particular Jewish men rarely get drunk or involved in drunken brawls.<sup>(18)</sup> Rather they drink moderately at home and with meals in the midst of the very women-folk who are the butt of their jokes. 'Solid joys and liquid pleasures none but Zion's children know'.

By contrast 'shikker' is the Scot because he is a Scot for Scottish drinking is heavy even by gentile standards. <sup>(19)</sup> For those Scots addicted to their company beer is an insolent mocker and whisky makes a raging uproar. Much of this uproarious drinking occurs away from the family home in all-male drinking groups where whisky and freedom from women gang together. This very unjewish spectacle lies at the core of many Scottish jokes:

A Scottish farmer who was rather fond of a drappie stayed out very late one night. After "nursing her wrath to keep it warm" for a long time, his wife went to bed and locked the door. At last her good man staggered up, and preparing himself for an outburst, resolved to counter it. He knocked loudly at the door. His wife, looking out at a higher bedroom window in her night attire, said, 'Is that you, John?' 'Aye' said John, 'wha were ye expectin'?'<sup>(20)</sup>

Donald (to Minister who had helped him home): 'Come awa' in, man, and let the wife see wha I've been wi' the nicht'.<sup>(21)</sup>

'A Scot who had been partaking too freely of the barley-bree, lost his way, and reached his home very late at night. In attempting to negotiate the route to his front gate, he fell into the pond. Recovering his balance, he found himself looking at the image of the moon reflected from the surface. Seriously alarmed, he began to shout at the top of his voice, and

aroused his wife, who appeared at the window of the upper room. She exclaimed, "Sandy, Sandy, what ails ye, man?" "Oh, Jeanie lass", he moaned, "but I have fallen into the mune!" "Don't stand chattering there, ye blithering gossoon", shouted the irate dame, "but come to bed, and, if ye like, bring the mune along with you".<sup>(22)</sup>

'At a football match in Scotland, members of the crowd began hurling empty beer cans onto the pitch. Every time a can whizzed overhead a man near the front ducked. "Don't worry", said his neighbour, "it'll only hit you if its got your name on it". "That's just it", replied the fearful one "my name's McEwan".<sup>(23)</sup>

'... the host ... was pouring out a glass of whisky for one of his principal tenants, who, when it was approaching the stage of being nearly full said "Stop, Mr B -, stop; what will the wife say if I drink all that?" "Drink that off, Mr C -", said the owner of many broad acres; "I'll give you another, and then you'll not care" (snapping his fingers) "what your wife thinks or says".<sup>(24)</sup>

"The all-male culture of alcoholic excess which is also where violence is learned is not a purely Scottish phenomenon for the same kind of binge drinking and polarisation of the sexes is equally to be found in Finland, Ireland or Australia and is the basis of ethnic (as well as non-ethnic) jokes about all these peoples. As far as Northern Europe is concerned the Jews are exceptional in their moderate and temperate use of alcohol which fits in well with their general ethic of 'canny' foresight, prudence and calculation,<sup>(25)</sup> and it is striking that there are very few jokes about Jews getting shikker. An ethnic joke that brings out the antithesis of canyness and alcohol concerns a motor accident in which a car driven by a rabbi collides with another vehicle driven by an Irish Roman Catholic priest. The two pious men

climbed out of the driving seats of their two wrecked vehicles. The rabbi produced a hip flask and offered the shaken priest a drink. The priest took a big swig and made as if to hand the flask back. 'No, no have another', said the rabbi. The priest drank again and asked the rabbi in puzzlement, 'Don't you want a drink for yourself?' 'No, not for me', said the rabbi, 'not until after the police have been'.<sup>(26)</sup>

In Scottish culture by contrast there is a tension between two incompatible ethics. There is the dour serious Protestant ethic of the canny Calvinists and the wild conviviality with a corresponding loss of self-control of the followers of Rabbie Burns. At first the Kirk was able to live with rural hard drinking but when Scots migrated to the cities in the nineteenth century many ministers began to preach total abstinence<sup>(27)</sup> as a way of avoiding urban squalor and violence. The ministers half succeeded but the result was not Jewish style temperance; Scotland became polarised between respectable, prudent, shrewd total abstainers and those who got drunk. Much of Scottish humour about drinking concerns the struggles between these two groups or the secret drinking of the former:

Always ready in a tight corner and quick to meet an emergency, a faithful member of a Glasgow kirk much addicted to too frequent liquid refreshment, met one of the elders of his congregation as he, the tippler, came out of a public-house one Saturday night. Unsteady but wary, he bad the elder 'a fine night'. But the elder fixed him with a meaning glare in his eye. Not a bit abashed, the unsteady one invited the other to gaze at that 'bonnie mune' shining in the clear frosty night. Still that steady boring gaze. Then the embarrassed one links his arm in the elder's and confidentially says: 'Now, Elder, tell me between man to man, wha dae ye really think aboot predestination? We'll talk about predestination, Sandy, when you are in a more fitting condition'. 'Na, na, Elder, when aw'm sober a dinna care a damn about predestination'.<sup>(28)</sup>

'A Perthshire blacksmith whom I knew intimately was once remonstrated with by the Free Church minister who lived nearby about his frequent and excessive indulgences. "Was Ye ever drunk, Sir?" inquired the smith. "No, Donald", said the minister. "I am glad to say, never was". "I thocht as muckle", said the smith, "for man if ye was once richt drunk, ye wad never like to be sober a' your days again".<sup>(29)</sup>

Stationmaster rings up manse in Dumbartonshire. The minister answers the phone.

Stationmaster: 'There's a box for you here, minister'.

Minister: 'Yes, John, that's all right. It's a few hymn books from Princes Street, Edinburgh'.

Stationmaster: 'Ay, weel ye'd better hurry up, yer hymn books are leakin'.<sup>(30)</sup>

"There is nothing like this in Jewish humour for the ambivalent and divided attitude to alcohol displayed in the Scots jokes is not part of the Jewish tradition. True, there are jokes about Jews covertly eating *traife* but you cannot get drunk on ham.

So, although the canny Scot and the canny Jew may be the heroes of very similar jokes there are also jokes which cannot be switched at all. To put a Scot in a Jewish mother joke or a Jew in a drunken Scotsman story is in each case to destroy the joke. The antithesis between men/women, brawling/peaceful, drunken/temperate that set these Jewish and Scottish jokes totally apart from each other<sup>(31)</sup> are as significant as the similarities and as rooted in the distinctive cultures of two of the world's most interesting, gifted and risible peoples.

1. There is a comparative survey of all manner of ethnic jokes about the canny in Christie Davies (1990) *Ethnic Humour around the World: a Comparative Analysis*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, Chapters II and V
2. Seth Kravitz (1977) 'London Jokes and Ethnic Stereotypes', in *Western Folklore*, Vol.36, No.4, October, pp.275-301, p.287 and also see p.297
3. A H Charteris (1932) *When the Scot Smiles*, London, Alexander Maclehose. See also Christie Davies (1986) 'Jewish Jokes, anti-Semitic Jokes and Hebronian Jokes', in *Jewish Humor*, Tel Aviv, Papyrus
4. Kurt Ranke (1972) *European Anecdotes and Jests*, Copenhagen, Rosenkilde and Bagger, p.119. For the Jewish version, see Raymond Geiger (1923) *Histories Juives*, Paris, Nouvelle Revue Française, p.11
5. George Orwell (1968) *The Collected Essays and Journalism of George Orwell*, London, Secker and

Warburg, Vol.2, p.338

6. From the file of Scottish jokes in the library of the House of Humour and Satire, Gabrovo, Bulgaria

7. Colin Crompton (1978) *More Best Jewish Jokes*, London, Wolfe, p.9

8. See Christie Davies (1990) 'An Explanation of Jewish Jokes about Jewish Women' in *Humor, International Journal of Humor Research*, Vol.3.4, pp.363-378

9. Larry Wilde (1974) *The Official Jewish/Irish Jokebook*, Los Angeles, Pinnacle, p.37

10. William Novak and Moshe Waldoks (1981) *The Big Book of Jewish Humor*, New York, Harper and Row

11. American 1970s. See also Arthur Naiman (1981) *Every Guy's Guide to Common Jewish Expressions*, New York, Ballantine, p.99 and Victor Raskin (1985) *Semantic Mechanisms of Humor*, Dordrecht, D Reidel, p.217

12. British 1960s, Naiman, p.99 and Raskin, p.217

13. Novak and Waldoks, p.257

14. Wilde, p.31

15. Burns and Weinstein, p.55

16. Novak and Waldoks, p.126

17. Leo Calvin Rosten (1983) *Hooray for Yiddish! A Book about English*, London, Elm Tree, p.168

18. See Donald Davison Glad (1947) 'Attitudes and Experiences of American-Jewish and American-Irish male youth as related to differences in adult rates of inebriety', *Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, 8, No.3, December, and M M Glatt (1973) 'Alcoholism and Drug Dependence among Jews' in Allan Shiloh and Ida Cohen Selavon (eds) *Ethnic Groups of America, their Morbidity, Mortality and Behaviour Disorders*, Vol.1: *The Jews*, Springfield, Charles Thomas

19. See Neil Kessel and Henry Walton (1969) *Alcoholism*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, p.19 and Paul Wilson (1980) 'Drinking Habits in the United Kingdom', *Population Trends* 22, Winter, pp.14-28 and pp.15 and 17

20. James Ferguson (1933) *The Table in a Roar*, London, Methuen, p.15

21. Ferguson, p.40

22. Rev. James Oliver Bevan (1911) *Wits and their Humours*, London, George Allen

23. British 1980s. Also in Max Hodes (1978) *The Official Scottish Jokebook*, London, Futura, p.5

24. Very Rev. John Gillespie (1904) *The Humours of Scottish Life*, Edinburgh, Blackwood, p.219

25. See Glad (1947)

26. British 1970s. Also in Michael Kilgarrieff (1974) *More Best Religious Jokes*, London, Wolfe

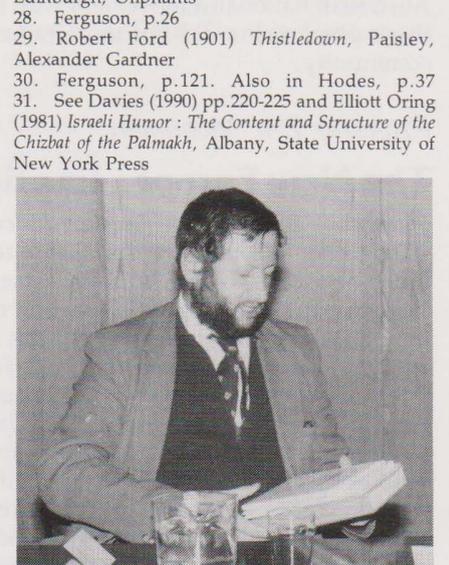
27. See Sir Archibald Geikie (1904) *Scottish Reminiscences*, Glasgow, James Maclehose, pp.317-8 and Charles Jerden, *Scottish Clerical Stories*, Edinburgh, Oliphants

28. Ferguson, p.26

29. Robert Ford (1901) *Thisledown*, Paisley, Alexander Gardner

30. Ferguson, p.121. Also in Hodes, p.37

31. See Davies (1990) pp.220-225 and Elliott Oring (1981) *Israeli Humor: The Content and Structure of the Chizbat of the Palmakh*, Albany, State University of New York Press



Christie Davies is Professor of Sociology at the University of Reading. This text was the basis of a talk he gave to the Lit. on Sunday, 20th January.

## THE LIT REPORTS :

### Professor Louis Waller **Antipodean Jewry**

Australia sounded like the ideal place to be Jewish, from Professor Louis Waller's address to the Lit on Sunday, 4 November.

The community had grown in stages, starting with 16-17 unwilling Anglo-Jewish immigrants in 1878, and growing to 90,000 today, with pre-Second World War, post-Holocaust and Soviet refugees all playing their part in swelling the numbers.

In the early days, the communal institutions had been modelled on those of Anglo-Jewry, and the rabbis had been graduates of Jews College - including Israel Brodie, who later became Chief Rabbi. The unparalleled growth in numbers had changed the shape of the community. The growth in the Jewish day school movement (with communally subsidised fees, for example for Soviet immigrants) and the emergence of Zionism, had also exercised a determining influence.

The whole spectrum of belief and practice was represented, from the confident and growing Liberal congregation to Lubavitch and even Sotmarer Chasidim. The various shades of Zionism were also well-supported through memberships of movements such as Habonim and Bnei Akiva. This had resulted in Australia having a better aliya record than any other Diaspora community.

Australia had provided a peculiarly hospitable environment for the expression of Jewish identity. The Jewish day school movement had grown on the back of a similar growth in Christian denominational schooling, encouraged by the Government. The Australian Government had been positive about Israel and Zionism, at least until recently. Many Jews had risen to positions of prominence in Australian public life, examples being the former Governor, Sir Zelman Cowan, and J Monash, the founder of Professor Waller's university, a noted engineer, lawyer and military leader.

As to the future, Professor Waller recalled the legend that when the Temple was destroyed, the gift of prophecy was removed from the Jewish people and left only with fools and children. Not being one of those, he did not wish to prophesy, but commented on certain paradoxes. For example despite the strong day school movement very few students continued with Jewish studies in tertiary education, though communal leaders were trying to create incentives and opportunities. Also, the tolerant embrace of the wider environment created obvious stresses and strains in trying to maintain Jewish identity against the forces of assimilation.

On the darker side, since Israel's invasion of the Lebanon, latent forces of anti-semitism had started to receive open expression, for example daubing of swastikas on synagogues, and insults shouted at shul-goers. There was also a growing Australian nationalist movement with sinister racist overtones. As yet, however, these phenomena did not undermine the security of a strong and successful community.

M.B.

### Professor Eric Moonman

### **The New Europe : Implications of Recent Changes**

Professor Eric Moonman gave an informative and wide-ranging talk on Sunday, 4 December. He characterised the situation in Eastern Europe as 'people on the move'. Democratisation has given rise to hopes for rapid economic change and to ever-rising criticism of the existing order, that is to freedom of expression. It must be asked whether anti-semitism is simply the result of the latter. In other words, was it always under the surface or is it in fact a new phenomenon? Speaking specifically about the Soviet Union, Professor Moonman compared Pamyat to the National Front. Both displayed all the most unpleasant features of racism, but both tend to adopt community causes. He was of the view that despite this, anti-semitism was not rife in the Soviet Union and was no more than one factor in the exodus from there to Israel, which is now of the order of 1,000 per day. He pointed out the good and bad consequences for Israel. On the one hand the huge strain on the economy and on the other one, benefits of restored diplomatic relations with Hungary and Bulgaria for example, which have resulted in new trading links.

There was a lively question and answer session and much interest in the speaker's topic.

R.M.A.

### Evelyn Cowan

### **Some Thoughts on Being a Writer**



Evelyn Cowan is the author of *Spring Remembered* and of a number of short stories and articles which have received considerable acclaim. She was President of the Glasgow Writers' Club from 1978-1983. In her talk on Sunday, 3 February, she said that the sub-title of her talk should be 'Find Me A Wife' - an allusion to her view that the lack of great women writers of the calibre of Shakespeare and Dickens could be attributed to the fact that men could always rely on women to provide meals, clean clothes and a comfortable home. This insight was given added poignancy when she described how once, trying to snatch some time at the typewriter while her boys were in the bath, strange noises had emanated from the bathroom. She rushed in to discover that one son was conducting an experiment to see how long he could hold the other son's head under water!

Evelyn Cowan told how she left school at the age of 14 with no qualifications at all but having learned to type. She married a Maths teacher and together they raised three sons. At the age of 50, she joined a writers' class at the University of Glasgow. She had made several attempts at writing 'romantic rubbish' and her teacher asked 'Why not write about what you know?' The result was *Spring Remembered*. She was also advised 'Never use a big word if you can use a small one'. The audience laughed heartily as she explained that the advice was superfluous. She didn't know any big words.

There were questions about her memories of the Gorbals compared with those of Ralph Glasser. She felt he had misremembered and that although life was hard, the deprivations were not as he described them. She was asked to name her favourite writer. She stated that she was a great admirer of Mordecai Richler. Her reading nowadays is primarily biographical. Evelyn Cowan ended by exhorting anyone who wished to write, to sit down and try.

R.M.A.

# Edinburgh Jewish Youth – What Now?

David Mason

I have now been personally involved in running Jewish youth organisations in Edinburgh for nearly four years, and can honestly admit to having gained a great deal from the experience. The sense of achievement and satisfaction that can be obtained from a commitment to Jewish youth at whatever age is unlimited, and has brought me enjoyment as well as abundant challenges. With my background as a Leader of Maccabi, and my present positions with Jewish Youth Study Groups and the Association of Jewish Sixth Formers (AJ6) I would like in this article to express my views on the directions the youth of Edinburgh should take in the future. Before I do so, however, I shall outline the present structure of Edinburgh's Jewish youth groups.

For the youngest children there is Maccabi which is run by Sally Cowen, Jonathan Mason and Michael Rifkind. This group has now been in operation for about ten years and offers great enjoyment for the 7-12 year olds. The meetings occur twice a month on Sundays and include topics of Jewish Education organised into games and activities.

After Bar or Batmitzvah, Jewish Youth Study Group opens up doors to deeper discussions on issues of Jewish importance, combined with more relaxed, less intense activities such as quizzes or games. JYSG meets every Sunday at a member's house and above all encourages participation from each member within meetings and regarding the running of programmes. JYSG is organised and run by myself, Caroline Rifkind, Emma Nicholsby and Elliot Cowan. Edinburgh also has a representative on the National Committee in Benji Adler.

For those in 4th, 5th and 6th year, AJ6, the Association of Jewish Sixth Formers allows more intense and elevated discussion of issues affecting Jews in Israel and the Diaspora. It furthermore acts as a source of knowledge on choice of

University or College and on how to combat anti-semitism and anti-Zionism on campus. AJ6 meets twice a month on Saturday evenings and is run by myself (as the Northern Region Chair), with the help of Anna Raab and Debbi Donne.

Each of these groups is well established in Edinburgh and at a national level. Events are organised for charity during the year as well as social meetings.

At a national level, there are a great many opportunities throughout the year to attend events and so meet young Jews from other towns and cities. Maccabi have many such events, including an excellent leadership scheme which this year will be attended by Caroline Rifkind and Wendy Goldberg. JYSG run a winter and summer school in December and August respectively along with Reunions for each school in February and October. Other social and leadership weekends occur through the year. AJ6 hold a five-day conference each year over Christmas and hold two national weekends and many other national gatherings. This term alone, there are more than five opportunities to attend such events: prime opportunities to meet Jewish young people from other areas of Great Britain.

However, one important aspect of attending any kind of national event is that you are representing the youth of Edinburgh. It therefore follows that you need to have successfully organised, well-attended youth groups in Edinburgh. I cannot stress strongly enough that as a young person in the Edinburgh community the closer the time comes to leaving home to attend further education or training, the more one should consider becoming involved in Jewish groups. With decreasing attendance figures (attendances at JYSG have dropped by, on average, 40% since 1987) every extra person giving their services to organisation and

leadership is of vital importance.

There are of course restraints on involvement and commitment to a local Jewish youth groups and the idea of responsibility, however challenging, is a burden. With increasing amounts of school work as one progresses through secondary school, with important examinations and with extra-curricular activities, putting in commitment to successfully organising a youth group is sometimes verging on the impossible! Despite this, involvement in Jewish activities, whether in leadership, in organisation or attendance at meetings, enriches one's sense of Jewish identity. Furthermore I can honestly comment that such experiences are wholly enjoyable and a tremendous sense of achievement can be derived.

At present in Edinburgh we do, as I have mentioned, have three different youth groups running side by side and holding strong links with their respective national groups. However, the simple truth is that attendance at meetings could and should be much higher. Meetings of Maccabi presently attract an average of eight people: however there is potential for a twofold increase in attendances. JYSG attendances



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average at about 15 each week - however attendances should be 40% higher. The first two meetings of AJ6 attracted 26 people. Attendances that delighted me with so many people turning up. But there is an overall lack of attendance. Whether this is due to apathy, laziness or lack of enjoyment, missing out on Jewish involvement and Jewish knowledge is I believe totally undesirable. So what can be done in the near future to remedy this extremely immediate problem?

The most significant solution will be to maintain group meetings at a high standard. This is, from my experience, extremely difficult, simply because those of the youth who run programmes are not trained Madrichim. However, if the members of the youth themselves are trained as to how to transform information on Israel or on Jewry into a coherent programme, they may be more confident at running programmes themselves. Many groups run training courses on how to programme combined with leadership techniques and more young people than at present should consider attending these events. They are usually over weekends and Edinburgh is in fact sending four people to a Maccabi leadership scheme this year.

Closely linked to the theme of leadership and running programmes is the acquiring of information necessary to become confidently involved with young people. Not everyone knows

everything about issues of Jewish importance - as young people we are all in the process of learning. But by attending meetings and national events and by taking part in programmes and, just as importantly through reading, one can learn more and more about the problems facing Jews and Israel today, and at the same time learn how to combat anti-semitism and anti-Zionism. Those who organise the meetings can also help by giving group members leaflets or documents with useful information as well as allowing members to become involved in meetings. However a problem we find today in Edinburgh (and have done so for the last few years) is where to find information for youth group programmes. JYSG do have files of information on various topics, but much of it is out of date. What is needed is for one member to hold files of previously run programmes, so that they can be adapted and run again. Furthermore, more use should be made of the organisation JPMP (Jewish Programme Materials Project) which has an office in Glasgow and can supply large amounts of resources and programming ideas to those who require it. We generally need to attach greater importance to the resources necessary for programming so that we can improve the standards of meetings and maintain them at a high standard.

Another extremely important change would be in the co-ordination and communication between the

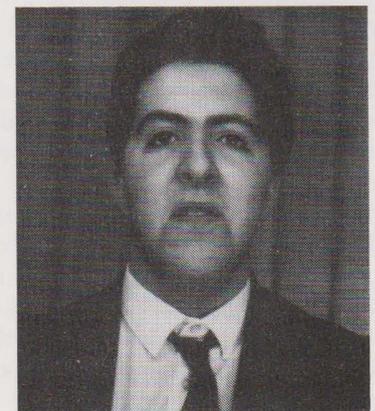
committees of each of the youth groups. Practically, this would involve a committee formed by amalgamating the committees of Maccabi, JYSG and AJ6 which would meet regularly to discuss vital issues confronting Jewish young people in Edinburgh. This move would bring the young people together instead of dividing them according to youth group, so that events could be organised involving members of more than one group. Such co-operation exists at present between the three committees who have already met to discuss the future of Edinburgh's youth and to subsequently draw up an agenda on this basis.

This co-operation, I believe, should be a permanent set-up in the future and I am sure that it will prove beneficial. Young adult members of the community would show a united front in publicising meetings and events; and efficiency of organisation could be maximised. It would also be extremely useful if the Shul Council would take a closer interest in the matter and I believe that this has been discussed by the Council with the intention of meeting a delegation of young people. For that I am grateful. I would furthermore encourage the Edinburgh Jewish Students to take a more involved role in the youth set-up - especially regarding programming meetings. Overall, it is absolutely vital that we give our young people a strong Jewish identity for when they leave home. Young people are effectively Edinburgh's contribution to the wider Jewish community - let us make sure that it is a fruitful one!

*David Mason is currently Northern Region Chair of AJ6 and Edinburgh Chair of JYSG. He plans to go to LSE in the autumn to read Economics.*



**STOP PRESS :** Congratulations to Benjamin Adler on being elected National Co-Chairman of JYSG.



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## EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' JEWISH SOCIETY

Susie Shenkin

Edinburgh J-Soc has continued to go from strength to strength, with membership and attendance increasing all the time. Monday Bagel Lunches and discussions see 20-30 people in the Chaplaincy Centre, Potterrow, and Friday night dinners in the Community Hall anything from an impressive 40 to an intimate 20.

Our annual events are also attracting increasing numbers and enthusiasm - the largest event was UJS National Conference in Derbyshire which was attended by 15 of our students. Their commitment was shown in the regional elections where no less than six positions on the Regional Executive were taken by Edinburgh members: Simon Hayes is the new Regional Chairperson, with Robin Kay (of Heriot-Watt University) as Secretary, Carole Racionzer and Rachel Furst (of Queen Margaret College) as Publicity Officers. Laura Hill (of Queen Margaret College) is Chaplaincy Representative, and Trudi Shenkin is an Officer Without Portfolio. We are also getting more involved at a national level - Richard Jacobs was elected as National Entertainments Officer, and Jamie Glassman and Mark Tabachnik will be on the Conference Steering Committee next year.

UJS Rag for Campaign Exodus this year prompted Edinburgh (with Rags Rabbit) to raise almost £500, £323 of which was from our now regular stint busking in Princes Street. Our efforts

are continuing on a more personal level, as students now have the opportunity to have 'Exodus boxes' in their rooms, the money from which will go to Israel to help absorption of the new immigrants from the Soviet Union.

The most recent, and without doubt the most successful event yet in Edinburgh, was the Annual Rabbi Burns Supper and Dance. The Communal Hall was transformed by hundreds of yards of ribbon and dozens of balloons, all highly co-ordinated in purple. Not to mention the surprise appearance of a 6-foot papier maché sheep! Almost 50% of the total membership of Northern Region were there (150 in total, including a few of the Edinburgh Community Young People) making it yet again proportionately the most successful event in UJS.

The evening was chaired by UJS Chair-elect, Ian Myers, whose rare blend of wit and crudity ensured the smooth running of the speeches. Rabbi Shapira began the evening with Havdalah and Hamotzi, then the Scottish content began with the piping of the haggis, and the Ode read by Julian Goodman. The traditional meal was served by Edinburgh students, who seem to have found their true vocation as waiters/waitresses - cum chefs if the compliments about the farin' were anything to go by.

Rosaleen Morisson toasted 'The

Immortal Memory' of Rabbi Burns, with a mixture of fascinating and convincing anecdotes and musical renditions about the Jewish lifestyle and family of the poet. The students all thoroughly enjoyed the speech, and we could hardly believe she had stepped in to replace our original speaker only two days previously. With such a hard act to follow, Mark Tabachnik and Trudi Shenkin had their work cut out, but both the Toast to and Reply from the Lassies were suitably sexist and humorous, and well received by all. Simon Hayes then presented Richard Dover with a certificate signifying his Honorary Life Membership of Northern Region, and gave Richard Jacobs a silver tankard in appreciation of all his work last year. He concluded with a toast to the Queen, and Rabbi Rosin proposed the toast to the State of Israel.

The evening continued into the wee small hours with a ceilidh (live music provided by Hugh McDiarmid's Haircut) and finally the traditional rendition of the Northern Region Anthem, Auld Lang Syne, and Hatikvah.

The event was a tremendous success, and I would like to thank the Community for their help in organising it (and clearing up at 2.00 a.m.!) Christine Burns can never be thanked enough for her unending patience and all her help; we could never have done it without her. Finally to the students who helped with the peeling, puffing and planning - thanks a million, especially Carole Racionzer, Mark Tabachnik and the tireless Trudi Shenkin who made the event all that it was.



Susie Shenkin currently chairs the Edinburgh University Jewish Society

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## THE JEWS OF YORK

Ben Sugar

This is written by way of a response to the interesting and scholarly article by Dr Dickson in your September issue headed 'The Jews and the Nineties', especially his section on Clifford's Tower, York.

Dr Dickson comments that the anniversaries during 1990 have been largely ignored by the wider community "... aside from a praiseworthy local commemoration at York". Whilst it is true that the anniversary of 1290 has largely been ignored (although what is perhaps seen as the more appropriate celebration did take place in November 1956, the Tercentenary of the Resettlement of Jews in England) I feel that Dr Dickson has rather lightly dismissed "the local commemoration at York". This consisted of a packed programme over four days. It commenced with an awe-inspiring service conducted within the ruins of Clifford's Tower and culminated in a unique service designated 'Expressions of Heritage and Hope' in York Minster. Both events were presided over by the Archbishop of York and were attended by numerous dignitaries, including the President of the Jewish Board of Deputies. Inside the great cathedral was a capacity congregation of 2,000 Christians and Jews.

In addition, and of particular note, a Catholic Mass of Reparation was held at the Bar Convent Chapel. The principal celebrant, Bishop Kevin O'Brian, Auxiliary Bishop of Middlesborough, delivered a remarkable homily on Christian guilt about their treatment of the Jews.

Dr Dickson, and I suspect many others, cannot have been aware of the vast amount of work and planning over one and a half years, and of the highly acclaimed results, despite the considerable publicity in the local and national media which these events provoked. Even from Israel, I received an article in the Jerusalem Post sent to me by a friend. The purpose of this short article is to put the record straight. It is also hoped to inform a small Jewish community about the current health and prospects of an even smaller Jewish community, to dispel some widely held misunderstandings of many of our co-religionists, and to explain something of the incomparably changed attitudes

now prevailing in contrast to those of eight hundred years ago.

The belief that Jews have not settled in York because of the 1190 massacre is still voiced today. The common response to my informing my Jewish friends that my home is in York is one of incredulity. Jewish people thought that a ban (or *cherem*) had been imposed, prohibiting Jews from living in the city. Nobody is able to quote any official source for this, and the idea is no doubt a myth that has developed with re-telling over time.

My own memories of living in York span more than half a century and it is to this period that I shall confine my comments. Initially I should make it plain that I am not attempting to claim that anti-semitism has been completely eliminated in York (or elsewhere). In fact at the time of the commemoration events I received some scurrilous letters. Needless to say, it was unpleasant to be subject to such attacks. But I have also to say that it was heartwarming to receive letters and telephone calls from well wishers who were largely unknown to me, offering their sympathies and support.

At the time of my arrival in York in the late 1930s there was a flourishing community of perhaps twenty active families. The synagogue, which dated from 1892, was situated in Aldwark and was used for services at regular intervals. Usually it relied on the good offices of a local volunteer who would officiate as Reader. For the High Holidays it was usual to engage the services of a Chazan from Leeds or some other town. One of the itinerants I recall as being a delightful man who had retired after a lifetime as Minister to the congregation in Kingston, Jamaica.

The Second World War resulted in a decrease in the number of our members but also produced fresh blood in the shape of a number of refugees fleeing from persecution. These found a safe haven in York, mainly through the humanitarian efforts of the Quaker community.

I should mention one particular family whose members have for many years been the backbone of the small community. This is the Morris family, a small number of whom are still living here. A short time ago I spoke to Lewis Morris, one of these founding members, who had recently celebrated

his ninety third birthday. He told me that his father came to England from Austria around the 1880s. He went first to Colchester, where he did tailoring work for the British Army stationed there, and then moved to York, another military garrison, where he eventually set up his own business. Apparently the number of Jews in York increased rapidly from the 1880s with the result that by 1892 there was a sufficiently large number to found a synagogue.

In York we are fortunate enough to have two or three boarding schools of high reputation. In the 1950s and 60s one school in particular, Bootham School, run by the Society of Friends, attracted a high intake of Jewish pupils, as to a lesser extent did its sister school The Mount. At Bootham, where there were at that time some twenty Jewish boys, the pupils were allowed one weekend each term to attend a service of their own religious denomination. On this day they were fortunate enough to have Rabbi Dr S Brown from Leeds to conduct a service in the York Synagogue. He also held religious classes at the school during the term. Present at these services were the boys of Bootham School and the girls of The Mount School and any of the York members who cared to attend. These days were landmarks for the boys and girls and also for their parents, who came along and enjoyed both a spiritual and social occasion at the Synagogue. I recall in particular an occasion when the Headmaster of the school joined the congregation. The synagogue was packed to capacity. I am happy to say that some of these boys, perhaps as a result of this experience at Bootham, today have emerged as the leaders of the communities in which they have settled. For various reasons, the number of pupils attending these schools has dwindled, and I doubt whether there are now any at all enjoying this kind of educational experience. Similarly in the synagogue in Aldwark, the number of our male members who make up a Minyan became fewer and fewer until eventually some fifteen years ago, the position became such that it was not possible to hold a service even for the High Holidays.

According to the Jewish Yearbook, in 1903 the number of Jews living in York

was 124. This number fell to 70 by the beginning of World War I and as I have already indicated dwindled even further after World War II. In spite of all these difficulties we have still managed to retain a religious presence in the city. Near the time of the High Holidays last year I had a telephone call from a doctor working temporarily in a York hospital who was very anxious to attend a service for Yom Kippur. I suggested he would have to travel to Leeds for this purpose, but as his wife was expecting a baby at any moment he felt unable to risk leaving York. After a good deal of hurried consultation we managed to organise a service in the home of one of our members, which satisfied both the good doctor and, I hope, his wife.

In 1963, during the lean years of the decline in the number of Jews residing in York, came the establishment of the University. Although a small number of students as well as faculty members were Jews, the impact of the university was not as great as expected. The first Vice Chancellor of the university was Eric James (now Lord James), formerly High Master of Manchester Grammar School, where he had had a great deal of experience of Jewish students. We were soon able to welcome to York one of Dr James's early appointments, Professor Michael Woolfson from the University of Manchester. He eventually became the head of the Department of Physics, and some years ago was made an FRS. I am delighted to say that, like Johnny Walker, he is still going strong and is still the doyen of Jewish affairs in the campus.

I have mentioned the small numbers of refugees from Germany and other European countries who managed to find a haven in York. I am delighted to report that there are still a few who are active in the Jewish community. Amongst these 'newcomers' I must mention the name of the late Benny Brent. It was through his dedicated and dynamic efforts that the Anglo-Israel Friendship Society was founded in York some 15 years ago. The society has acted not only as an Anglo-Israel Friendship Group but also, in everything but name, as a Council of Christians and Jews. The original membership of the Society, perhaps uniquely, consisted of something like 90% Christians, 10% Jews. I must pay unstinting tribute to the wonderful support we have had from the Church

in York and to the Minster, going back to the days of the Archbishop Stuart Blanch who, in his retirement, is still one of our Presidents. The Dean and Minster officials have also given magnanimous support for many causes sympathetic to the Jews.

I look back with many very happy memories to the small group which included the Archbishop and his lady, Rabbi Brown and myself being part of a mixed group of Christians and Jews who together explored the land of Israel in 1984. On a subsequent trip we experienced an amusing evening spent in Beersheva. I had a friend living there who years ago had worked with computers in York, and then emigrated to Israel. He had always been interested in amateur theatre, especially Gilbert and Sullivan, being involved with a group in York. Through his good offices we were allowed to attend a rehearsal of a production of Gilbert and Sullivan's 'Princess Ida' performed in English by 'The Light Opera Group of the Negev'. The director gave his directions largely in Hebrew, but these elicited responses in English and also what sounded like a babel of languages. To add to the impression of 'The Theatre of the Absurd', some of the English lines had a strong Scottish accent, and - believe it or not - the rehearsals were taking place in the Beersheva Mental Health Centre. To quote a comment made by a famous novelist, 'How astonished Gilbert and Sullivan would be at the notion of their work being played in what they thought of as the wilderness of Palestine'.

Hence it is no coincidence that the Chairman of the 1990 Commemoration Group is a Canon of the Church and Chaplain in the University of York, in addition to being a very active chairman of the York Anglo-Israel Friendship Society. I would like to place on record that we have also received a great deal of support from various other Christian institutions operating in York, especially Christian Fellowship groups and Roman Catholics. As a further example of the good will extended to us, in 1985 Canon Ralph Mayland, Canon Treasurer of York Minster, organised a Lent Course series of lectures entitled 'Heirs Together' (Jewish and Christian Spirituality) at which I was invited to speak to the Congregation. Probably this was the first time ever

that a Jew has addressed a congregation in the great Cathedral of York. Surely proof positive of the reconciliation which has taken place since the bad old days.

What does the future hold for such a Jewish Community as York? Consider the following true report before voicing apparently logical conclusions.

Some twenty years ago, a young Flying-Officer was stationed on an RAF base near York. Under the auspices of Rev Malcolm Weisman, he became a welcome addition to our Community Services and functions. Last year, the same fellow returned to the base after spending the intervening years in many different parts of the world. He returned as a Wing-Commander, Chief Flying-Instructor, Second-in-Command at the Station and has quickly established himself (plus his wife and two children) as a most enthusiastic and active member of the York Community.

Readers may be interested to learn of the very first Yom Kippur Service that we have held on an RAF base courtesy of our RAF member. Fortuitously, Her Majesty's Forces have provided him with a large house which includes a huge room and a seemingly unlimited supply of chairs. Although every worshipper was subject to a stringent interrogation at the guardhouse, we were all safely admitted. We held our services in complete confidence that the RAF was on guard. The Day of Fast ended most propitiously with the lady of the house providing every attender with an after-the-Fast meal. After our Yom Kippur

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services, the same Wing-Commander erected a Succah in his large and completely private garden, where a large number of Jews who seemed to have appeared 'out of the blue' thoroughly enjoyed a Simchat Torah Service. Last Pesach, more than twenty of us gathered once again to sit down to a wonderfully versatile Seder, under the complete security of the RAF.

How long this favourable change in the fortunes of the York Community continues, will depend to a large extent on the exigencies of the RAF. In the meantime we are making the most of the presence of our newest member.

As a conclusion to these musings I would like to bring to your notice what

seems to me to be an outstanding microcosm of ecumenical and religious tolerance. For many years I have lived in a short street, a cul-de-sac of only eight houses. My next door neighbour is a Vicar of the Church of England, and my other six neighbours are a mixed bag of Anglicans, Quakers, Roman Catholics and finally ourselves, Jews. Despite the differences in our religious beliefs and practices, we live in complete harmony, experiencing only good will, friendship and understanding.

*Ben Sugar is a retired economics lecturer who helped to organise the commemoration of the Clifford's Tower Massacre of 1190, last March.*

Members of the organising Committee, Clifford's Tower Commemoration, outside Clifford's Tower, Thursday 15 March, 1990.

from l. to r.  
 Rev. Malcolm Weisman, Chief Rabbi's Representative for Small Communities; Ben Sugar, York Jewish Community; Canon Jim Richardson, Exec. Dir. CCJ; Canon Ralph Mayland, York Minster; Canon Geoffrey Hunter, Heslington and York Minster (Chairman)



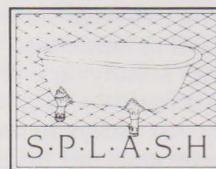
## BATHTIME TALES NO 1



### Nigel stags a bull

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

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## A LETTER FROM ISRAEL

*sent in by Kathleen Gouldman*

I am sure that everyone reading this has been glued to a television set for the last few weeks. Especially those of us with close family in Israel. The constant stream of information pouring out has reached saturation point. Experts from every field - military, diplomatic, public relations, and parliamentary, have their say and correspondents on every front pour out their hastily collated reports.

I have received a letter from Dennis (my son in Jerusalem) and his family, written on 22 January and I thought some of his comments might be of interest to those of us who sit here, not able to do anything except worry. "Everyone is fine, and as life starts to get back to normal I'll resume my letter writing routine and give you an account of the last rather interesting week.

*Tuesday, 15 January* : This was the last normal day here.

*Wednesday, 16 January* : Today the schools closed down although work continued as usual. However, everywhere was very quiet and there was a feeling that everyone was scurrying home. On Wednesday evening we went to a concert at the Theatre which was quite well attended, although the soloist from abroad had cancelled his appearance. Compare his actions with those of Zubin Mehta who cancelled all his New York appearances to come and be with us in Israel.

*Thursday, 17 January, 2.00 a.m.* : Gidon (son in Haifa) phoned to say that war in the Gulf had started. Announcements were being broadcast to unseal gas mask kits and finalise sealed rooms, so needless to say we didn't get a lot of sleep that night. Essential workers only were allowed to go to work, other people were supposed to stay at home.

*Friday, 18 January, 3.00 a.m.* : The first siren was heard. Initially we didn't believe it as there was still music on the radio, but when a missile attack was announced, Yvette (wife), Tamar (daughter) and I sealed ourselves into the room and donned gas masks. Josh (son-in-law) was at work and Esther (daughter) had a trying time on her own as Yair (baby aged 6 months) didn't like being sealed in his incubator and was screaming. However now he is used to it and goes in quietly. After an hour or so the people of Jerusalem were allowed to take off gas masks but still had to stay in sealed rooms. We all immediately had a drink of water, but soon discovered this was a mistake as we found we had to open the taped room for a quick dash to the toilet.

After recovering from the sleepless night, Yvette and I went in search of volunteer work, but at that stage there wasn't any available. However, Pantz (friend) was prepared to take me to the broadcasting service for the night. We tried to sleep very early but as there were sirens at 9.00 p.m. I stayed awake till midnight when I went to meet Pantz. At the meeting point in the dark I thought I'd made a mistake, but on a closer look, I realised that Pantz had shaved off his big bushy beard. This one was supposed to do in order to "fit in" the gas mask!

I had a very interesting night at the radio - monitoring foreign broadcasts, writing short news stories and feeding interview tapes to the technician while Pantz compered the programme. There were sirens again at 5.00 a.m. and 7.00 a.m. and Pantz was making the announcements in English, telling people to stay in their sealed rooms etc. and I was right by him.

*Saturday, 19 January* : Gidon was called up and he and Nessia (his wife) came to Jerusalem that evening. They just arrived at our house when we had another siren. Gidon went off to his Unit early on Sunday morning.

*Sunday, 20 January* : People were supposed to stay at home.

*Monday, 21 January* : Jerusalemites were allowed to return to work, but not people in Tel-Aviv and Haifa which had been attacked.

*Tuesday, 22 January* : Everyone could go back to work, though schools were closed and all Yvette's classes were cancelled. At our office the Hebrew secretary is at home staying with her children.

During some of these days of crisis, Esther has been on emergency teams at the Hadassah hospital, whilst Josh stayed at home with Yair. Fortunately the only cases were people with bad over-anxiety crises, or who had misunderstood instructions and injected themselves with the anti-gas injection found in our kits.

All is well at Kibbutz S'de Eliahu. The grandchildren are very well behaved and don their masks without question. Shira is upset about the cows who might die because they haven't got masks, and Avishai is going to join the army when he is 3.

Well that's a long enough letter. Hope next time I write things will be more normal, although I'm sure we're not finished with the missile threat yet"



*Shira who thinks the cows should have gas masks*

# JERUSALEM : CITY OF PIECES

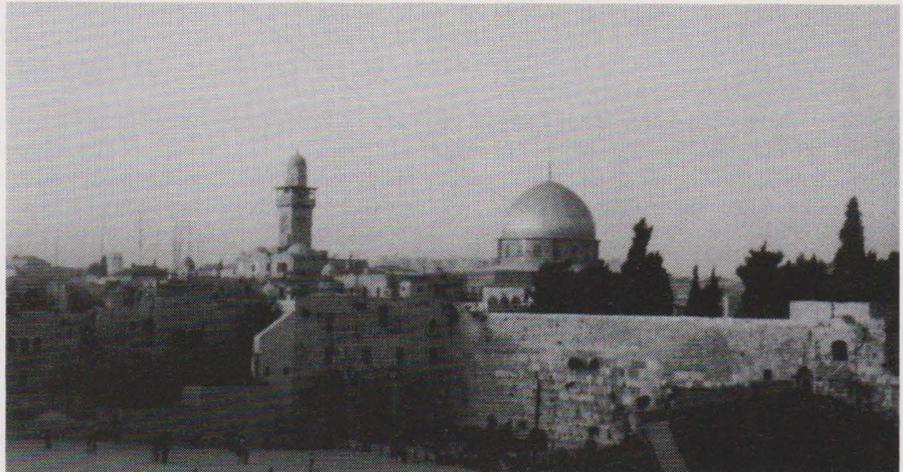
NICK COSGROVE

Having lived there for four memorable months as part of the study programme of my year in Israel, I feel a deep attachment to the city of Jerusalem. I was there not only when the atrocious stabbings in the peaceful suburb of Baka took place but also when violence erupted on the Temple Mount. Both these incidents were painful reminders of the continuing uprising of the Palestinians, or 'intifada' which continues to rage on in spite of all Israel's other problems.

In a conversation with one of my most respected teachers, Sharona, a person with a rich knowledge of Arabic culture and language and who is involved with the political party known as 'The Progressive List For Peace' which advocates a bi-national (Jewish-Palestinian) state, she related to me her frustration at not being able to visit areas of Jerusalem because of an in-built fear. Where once she had strolled carefree she now dares not venture. She spoke of having taken it upon herself to make a lone visit to the Muslim quarter of the old city. With a sadness in her voice she told me how she had walked only 200 yards through the Damascus gate entrance when she was forced to turn back feeling utterly dejected. For years the graffiti had read 'Down with the Zionists' whereas now fresh red paint proclaimed 'DEATH TO THE JEWS' and called for a 'Jihad'. Full of fear she turned back, her dreams shattered.

Intrigued by this account and hearing of an organised tour of the old city, I obtained the permission of the staff to join it. I had expected to be in a large crowd with an armed guard and so was somewhat shocked to find just myself, my companion and a pint-sized ministry of tourism guide who looked as if he himself would need defending if we were attacked!

The Muslim Quarter was beautiful whereas I had expected squalor. Was this stereotyping, I wondered. Turning into a narrow winding side-street, I suddenly noticed the dreaded red lettering on the walls. I nervously asked the tour guide, Moshe, what it meant. Characteristically he shrugged his shoulders and brushed my inquiry off. I pressed him further. He confirmed my suspicions 'things you wouldn't want to hear'. We moved on through another of those interminably



winding streets. All around us children playing glanced angrily at us - 'If looks could kill' my partner muttered. Suddenly a stone came flying towards us though fortunately it was aimed at our feet. Undeterred, we walked on looking straight ahead and trying to appear calm and composed although in reality very fearful. After what seemed like an age later we emerged into the pre-Shabbat atmosphere of western Jerusalem. Although unnerved, we felt a certain exhilaration. It was as if we had entered a dark and different age and had then emerged into the sunlight.

This episode and similar experiences shared with friends together with a general air of tension led me to reflect on our holiest city. Traditionally it was thought that 'Jerusalem' meant 'city of Peace' from the Hebrew 'Ir Shalom'. In fact it is more likely to mean 'city of Shalom', Shalom being a semitic god who was a patron of the city area.

All around Jerusalem signs read 'Siuh Shalom Yerushalayim', 'pray for the peace of Jerusalem'. Perhaps these prayers have been answered since to date Israel's largest city, seat of government and spiritual centre of the Jewish world has been spared the wrath of Saddam Hussein's 'scud' missiles. The reason lies of course in the spiritual importance of the city to Islam and the effect that any such attack would have on his largest group of supporters.

Jerusalem is a city of dreams where, side by side yet not in harmony, live not only Jew and Arab but also Jew and Jew. That is to say religious and secular, Zionist, non-Zionist and even anti-Zionist (or a combination of some

of these). Although inhabiting the same city, these people live in many different worlds at many different spiritual levels. For the outsider there is the chance to join in any one of these worlds.

Looking back I feel it is important to get things into perspective. Jerusalem is a western city and should be judged as such. It is arguably safer to live there than in London or New York - statistically one is far more likely to be involved in a road accident in Jerusalem than in an incident of a social or political nature. Yet the media would have us believe otherwise. The old maxim 'Jews are News' springs to mind. I know where I feel more secure.

It has for some time been my personal ambition to visit the graves of my great-grandparents in the cemetery on the Mount of Olives in East Jerusalem which until 1967 had been used for 19 years as a latrine by Jordanian soldiers. The physical barriers are removed and yet the psychological ones remain. As I ponder Jerusalem from a distance I wonder, how can they 'lie in peace' beneath such tension



Nick Cosgrove is at present back in Israel after working for AJ6. He plans to go to Hull University in October to read Political and Legislative Studies.

# The Christian Churches' Attitudes to Israel

Roger Clarke

(The title of this article has been very carefully worded. There are various Christian Churches, and concerning Israel, there are in any given Church a variety of attitudes.)

Whenever a Christian (whether a clergyman or not) makes a statement on Israel, he is not automatically speaking on behalf of all Christian believers. He is usually expressing his own attitude or a view held by some in his Church. It is important to be aware that there will certainly be others in his Church who will disagree with what he has said.

In this article I will outline some of the attitudes to Israel which exist in the Churches.

There are those Christians who take a very positive stance towards the State of Israel and interpret its inauguration in eschatological terms - the return of Jews to Eretz Yisroel is a sign of the "Last Days"; the existence of the State is, for these Christians, the "footsteps of the Messiah".

These *Christian Zionists* are usually found in the Protestant Churches and, in the main, take a literalist, almost fundamentalist approach to the Bible. They base their attitude to Israel on the Biblical promises of a future restoration of the Jewish people to the Land and they tend to see certain historical events as the *literal* fulfilment of Biblical prophecies.

They are criticised within the Churches for this literalist approach to the Scriptures and for what is perceived to be an uncritical support of Israel. The Middle East Council of Churches, for example, regards Christian Zionism as a new heresy and sees it as an intrusion into the life of the people of the region. The Council is evidently not well up on the history of Christian Zionism. If it is a heresy, it is not a new one: there have been Christians interested in the return of Jews to Zion from around the 16th century C.E.

Christian Zionists reject the charges of uncritical support and that they believe that the Israeli actions have the sanction of G-d. Despite their disclaimers, however, I have never come across more than minor or muted criticism, in general terms, of Israeli government actions from Christian Zionists.

It is undoubtedly this Christian

grouping which Zionists would regard as an ally. But it is necessary to remember that, from the Jewish point of view, the alliance must surely be a matter of political pragmatism and strategy. Given their theology, the Christian Zionists must look forward to an "end time" when all the Jewish people will, presumably, see the light and acknowledge Jesus as their Messiah. Conversionism is not on their present agenda - it is postponed until *olam haba*.

It is the Christians whom fundamentalists would loosely term "Liberals" with whom Zionists have most difficulty. These Christians feel strongly and sincerely that the Gospel demands an identification with the poor, the weak and the oppressed and that being a follower of Jesus means working to set such people free from whatever, and whoever, is diminishing or denying their freedom and well-being.

These Christians have taken the "option for the poor" and their interest is usually in Liberation theology. They are often strong supporters of the various charitable organisations which relieve suffering in the Third World and the Middle East - Christian Aid, Oxfam, CAFOD and the like. Their belief that it is the will of G-d that the weak and oppressed should be defended and the poor shown compassion is one of the gifts Christians have been given by the Jewish people and their tradition.

In this Christian grouping one can detect an uncritical attitude and an appearance of double standards. The interest in Liberation theology can lead to a knee-jerk sympathy for any movement describing itself as a "Liberation organisation". In my experience, few of the Christians who are harshly critical of Israel's actions in the Occupied Territories know much of the history or even the present-day activities of the PLO.

Few of them know, for example, about the massacre at Damour, few are aware of Arafat's telegram of congratulations to the Chinese leadership after the killings in Tiananmen Square, very few heard of Farouk Kadoumi's statement in January this year that he did not recognise the right of the State of Israel to exist.

It is, perhaps, only with the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the widespread Palestinian support for it that more people here are beginning to realise that Israel's neighbours don't always act in accordance with the mores which obtain in Hampstead.

A double standard also operates with some Christians strongly critical of Israel. For some of them, stones thrown in Bethlehem seem to be different from stones thrown in Belfast. In Bethelhem the one who is criticised is the soldier who may respond by firing a tear gas grenade; in Belfast, the tear gas would be seen as used to put down a riot and, hence, the stonethrower is in the wrong.

It is *right* that protests should be made when the IDF kill Arabs. Such incidents should be investigated and punished. But it should also be realised by critics that rocks and knives and petrol bombs too can kill.

In between these polarised positions within the Churches there stand many Christians who strongly support the existence of the State of Israel, who wish it to live in peace within secure borders, who recognise it as a democracy in an area of the world where democracy is not the norm and as a country which respects the rights of its minority religions. They would regard themselves as friends of Israel.

But, as a rabbi says in one of Chaim Potok's novels "It is not easy to be a friend". A friendship which excludes the possibility of criticism - mutual

With  
compliments  
from

Manny

and

Nicole

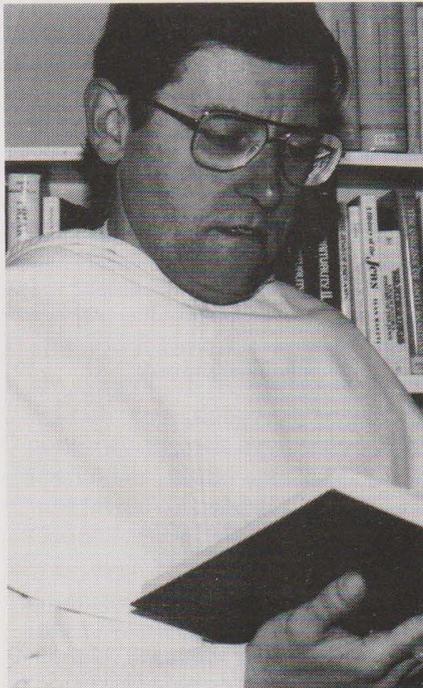
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criticism - is hardly a true friendship. A true friend will offer support, acceptance and understanding but will also care enough to be critical and will make it clear that the criticism is meant to be constructive and not symptomatic of a wish to de-legitimise the State.

So, when friends of Israel express their opposition to the blowing up of houses of people believed to be involved in the *intifada*, the deportation of such people, the instances of over-reaction by members of the IDF - the criticism should not be dismissed as that of a former friend suddenly becoming false, but rather as the action of someone worried about a friend being untrue to himself and his tradition.

As David Ben-Gurion once said, "If it's not just, it's not Jewish". Some criticism from Christians is based on respect for the centuries-old Jewish tradition of justice, whilst recognising that Israel has been put into a position in Judaea, Samaria and Gaza which was not of her seeking. Such critics recognise similar criticisms exist and are expressed within Israel itself. Such criticism has its source in the desire that Israel should be true to the role and destiny to which G-d has called it.

*This article first appeared in the 'Zionist Review' in December 1990. It is reprinted here by kind permission of the author and of the editor.*



*The Very Rev. Roger Clarke, O.P., Prior and Parish Priest, is a former Education Officer of the Council of Christians and Jews and now lives in Edinburgh*

## A BREATH OF FOUL AIR

*Extracts from an article by Neal Ascherson\**

"It's back. And so swiftly on the heels of Europe's beautiful year of revolution, when walls fell, mouths were opened and men to men were brothers. Many did speak with the tongues of angels, singing to welcome a reign of *truth and decency upon Earth*. Others, though, opened their mouths and let out a small, smelly breath which they had been holding for 40 years. "The Jews were behind it all", they said.

In Hungary, a poet writes that Jews have been disloyal to the nation ever since the last war. He complains that the main opposition party consist of Jews dressing up as Hungarian patriots.

In Poland, newspapers discuss who is a "true" (that is, Slav and Catholic) Pole, while Lech Walesa says that he has nothing against Jews but why do some of them hide under Gentile names?

In Berlin and Leipzig, young men paint *Saujud* on Jewish graves; in Moscow, the leaders of Pamyat bellow Nazi slogans as if they had invented them. In France, le Pen and his followers sneer at the "six-million lie" and claim that they are persecuted by media dominated by *les youpins*. In England, where men like Lord Denning have always privately sneered at men like Leon Brittan as "German Jews", that remark found its way into print.

... In Europe this year, there are tens of millions of men and women who are deeply relieved that communism has gone at last, but who also wonder what will happen to their jobs in a market economy, how they can feed their families without food subsidies, whether they can go on working if the state day-nurseries close, whether a Mr Somebody will arrive from the West with papers to prove that this farm belongs to him.

More important, though, is fear of mental freedom. Yesterday, there were systems of thought which explained that the evils and shortcomings of life had a single cause. One version, official, said that capitalism was to blame. Most people came to believe the other, unofficial, which said that Russia and communism were to blame. In the West, both left-wing and right-wing explanations of poverty and conflict relied heavily on the poisonous

effects of the Cold War. Now the Cold War is over, Russia is going home, liberty has arrived. And yet life is in some ways more perilous than before; perilous in ways which can no longer be attributed to this or that enemy. Many people, those who find it difficult to face a world in which things just happen or in which hardship is supposed to be morally neutral, develop a sudden thirst for hidden meaning.

Not many such meaning-structures survive, to offer escape from individual responsibility. If they do survive, it must be because their theories about how the universe works are immune to proof or disproof. Soviet communism made the mistake of promising verifiable, touchable equality and social justice on this earth. In this sense, religion and anti-Semitism share some advantages. But even religion is hampered by the enormous amount of its baggage, and by the energy it spends telling disappointed subscribers why prayers are not always answered or why a good God tolerates such terrible deeds committed by those made in his image. Anti-Semitism, in contrast, travels blissfully light. All it says, in essence, is that Jewishness is an incurable condition of badness which - if left unchecked - will take over the world and make it bad, too.

At that level, anti-Semitism is irrationality distilled to infinity. It has no priesthood, no book of dogma (only countless crazily dogmatic books), no set ritual - and almost no contact of any kind with historical or social evidence which might create problems for its adherents. The blatant presence through the ages of Jews who are good neighbours, loyal friends, generous partners and even selfless patriots has never bothered true anti-Semites. Every SS commander knew a "good Jew", but also knew that individual qualities had nothing to do with the inherent threat of Jewishness as an "idea".

Indeed, actual Jews are not really necessary for anti-Semitism. The most spectacular example of this is Poland. The murder of almost the entire Jewish population by the Nazis during the Occupation did not prevent the outbreak of a frantic anti-Semitic purge in 1968, manipulated by a section of

the Communist Party. Most of the remaining Jews, numbering fewer than 30,000 (or less than 1% of the population), then left. And yet even now there are politicians who insist that the real or imagined Jewishness of opponents is deeply significant ...

Arthur Koestler wrote about "sealed mental systems", creed which could explain away all dissent in their own terms. The critic of Marxism must have bourgeois origins; the critic of Freud must have unresolved father-hatreds, and so on. Anti-Semitism assumes its critics are intellectuals brainwashed by Jewish foundation money or by the Elders of the Kremlin. It is sealed, certainly. And yet its content has changed down the centuries.

Today, the revival of anti-Semitism is political rather than economic or social. Whatever its language "says", it is about fear of violent change and about fear of democracy at a time when ancient national identities are softening. It is alarming not so much because there is imminent danger of a new Jewish Holocaust, but because it suggests a return to general xenophobia, to tribalism and to autocracy by intolerant father-figures who pretend to "incarnate the true nation". Yet that is not the anti-Semitism of medieval Europe, but the "modern" pseudo-scientific version, invented in the nineteenth century.

One of the great arguments about anti-Semitism is between those who see the Nazi gas-chambers as the inevitable culmination of 2,000 years of history, and those who regard the Final Solution as a preventable catastrophe whose origins are no older than the last century. The historian Raul Hilberg stands by his sepulchral aphorism about the development of Christian attitudes to Jews: "You shall not live among us as Jews; you shall not live among us; you shall not live". In other words: first the attempt to force conversion on Jews, then the confinement of Jews to ghettos, then the gas-chamber - each step making the next step possible.

Of course there are continuities. But mediaeval Christian anti-Semitism, which survives strongly in the East European peasantries today and, more weakly, in backward regions of the Catholic West, was very unlike the official Nazi ideology or the earlier racial theories of the nation from which it sprang. At the centre of it was the belief that the Jews were accursed

because they had not only rejected Christ's message but killed him, a belief inflamed often to hatred by rivalry and competition in the squalid rural struggle to survive. But this dislike and fear was not primarily about race, a concept which then meant little. A Jew could escape his curse, by conversion or by paying for the "Deocide" by suffering.

The other day, I listened to a Polish Catholic friend (born long after the war) reflecting about all this. "The Church" he said, "teaches us to love your enemy but to hate the evil that is in him. The evil in Jews, in that view, was their Jewishness, compounded by the murder of Christ. So it came about that in 1942 the novelist Zofia Kossak-Szczucka - who had certainly been anti-Semitic in some of what she wrote - plastered Warsaw with thousands of posters on behalf of her underground resistance unit, whose mission was to rescue Jews. Her posters proclaimed that the deportation of Jews to Treblinka was a crime against God and humanity, and called on Catholic Poles to resist and to save the Jews. And yet she ended the poster with a paragraph emphasising that the Jews, nonetheless, remained the enemies of Poland ..."

He went on: "Here we see why many Polish peasants who did save Jewish fugitives, risking the execution of themselves and their families, remained entirely anti-Semitic. The Final Solution was the atonement, the punishment, for Jewishness and the killing of Christ. Thus a good Christian should all the more eagerly rescue his enemy the Jew rather than a Catholic Pole". There were many other Poles, of course, who declined this invitation to virtue and an old farmer, filmed in the television series *The Struggles for Poland*, who hid several Jews in his cellar, but put on his best clothes to go and watch the deportation of the Jewish population from a nearby town. "When Christ went to his death, you lined the streets", he said to his protégés. "Now it is our turn".

From the medieval Rhineland came the "blood-libel", the tale that Jews kidnapped and murdered Christian children in order to use their blood in secret rituals. This hideous myth, which was to recur and to plague Jewish communities all over Europe, has survived into our own times: the Hilsner trial in Slovakia in 1900, the Beilis trial in Kiev in 1913, the Kielce

pogrom of 1946 are only a few examples. But Norman Cohn, in his book *Europe's Inner Demons* (1975), has related both the blood-libel and the later outbreak of witch-burning to a fantasy older than Christianity: the myth that religious dissidents conduct abominable secret rites, which include child-torture and child-murder and orgies of every variant of sex. The early Christians were the first targets of such rumours, under the late Roman Empire. Quick learners, their churches soon redirected the fantasy against their own heretics and against "inner enemies" of many kinds, including the Jews. (This, almost certainly, is the true pedigree of the current "Satanic abuse" panic.) ...

Jews who had fought in the anti-Russian insurrections in Poland and Lithuania were now perceived as a threat to national revival. The new "modern" nationalism in Poland, represented by Roman Dmowski and the National Democrat movement in the late nineteenth century, argued that the "true Pole" was Catholic and Slav, and that the Orthodox and Jewish minorities were a liability to Polish identity and the recovery of independence. This distortion of history received disastrous encouragement when revolutionary Marxist parties appeared: their leaders - like Rosa Luxemburg - were mostly of Jewish origin, and they treated the project of Polish independence as a bourgeois irrelevance in the world class-struggle. It was then that nationalists coined the deadly epithet *Zydokomuna* - roughly, "Red-Yid" - implying that Jew, communist and traitor to Polish independence were a single creature.

But it was in Central Europe, above all in Germany and Austria, that anti-Semitism was elevated into a pseudo-science of "biological politics". Here, in conditions of social and national struggle, the "fear of freedom" grew most intense. It was often said by European liberals in the latter part of the last century that democratic government and universal suffrage were irreconcilable. Liberty and tolerance depended on a responsible electorate with enough personal independence to judge issues wisely; the enfranchisement of millions of uneducated and bigoted people without property could only lead to rule by demagogues, to the politics of prejudice and hatred, and eventually

to a relapse into tyranny. (The same venerable point was made only the other day by the Romanian dissident Doina Cornea, horrified at political developments after the December revolution, and it is a view still shared by many Russian intellectuals.)

The coming of mass politics to Germany and Austria led many industrial workers to the stolid decency of social-democracy. But it left millions of bewildered "small people" searching frantically for new certainties, new explanations of the world's unfairness, as faith in Church and Kaiser evaporated. The liberal, sceptical views of the established Jewish middle class, which seemed to mock their inarticulate hopes, aroused their envy and hatred. For the demagogues, they were easy meat. The conspiracy theory of anti-Semitism did for petty-bourgeois self-confidence what Marxism did for many self-educated workers.

And yet it is a curious fact that racialist anti-Semitism reached an extreme of sensitivity in a land where Jew-baiting agitation has never in modern times become a serious menace. Even in Nazi Germany, obsession with Jewish "physicality" was cruder than in England. The acuteness of English interest in noses, hair colour or texture, gait, accent, clothing, fingers and personal odour amounts to a battery of mostly imaginary perceptions which is hard to explain, expressed only with the greatest caution, and apparently ineradicable. Those who were students in the Sixties will remember the revolting confidential assessments

found during an occupation of the Cambridge University appointments board, with their references to damp palms, oily manners and "the chosen race". Perhaps it is all to do with the English science of class-discernment. If so, it is difficult to see an end to it ...

Hatreds are rising again, in our excited but also frightened Europe. The dud currency of anti-Semitism is once more in circulation among the credulous. And yet this is far from the full picture. There are grounds for hope as well. There can never be another Auschwitz on this continent, partly because Hitler's immense crime means that political anti-Semitism will always be a war against ghosts, but also because the scar drawn across the European conscience - drawn across the minds of generation after generation - is too deep.

Some bad things are said and done in Hungary these days. Yet at the local elections last month, parties representing an intelligent internationalist liberalism - those accused by their enemies of covert Jewishness - won about 40% of the vote and swept their opponents almost out of sight. Modern Hungarian history has never seen such a score for views like those. In Poland, Lech Walesa drops his little hints about "true Poles". Yet Solidarity, as a mass movement at liberty or banned, has always vehemently denounced anti-Semitism as the real conspiracy against the nation, and sponsored a rescuing of Jewish history and culture throughout the country. In 1983, at the 40th anniversary of the Ghetto Rising in Warsaw, leaders of Solidarity were

dragged away to prison for proclaiming that the ideals of the ghetto fighters were their ideals. And only a police cordon round his home at Gdansk stopped Walesa from speaking at that meeting too.

The army of sane and decent Europeans is stronger and wiser now than it has ever been. And yet the inner demons, quiescent for so long, have started to breed again.

Bertolt Brecht, for one, knew they would. *Der Schoss ist fruchtbar noch*, he wrote, *Aus dem das kroch*: "The womb is fertile yet/ From whence That crept".

*\*Neil Ascherson is an Edinburgh-based journalist who recently gave a very well-informed seminar on Eastern Europe at the University.*

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## *A Day With the King of Klezmer* Ruzena Wood

Have you ever heard Giora Feidman play the clarinet? Even listening to something as impersonal as a cassette you're likely to remember. You're immediately aware of a unique element, a sense of something more than ordinarily alive, which makes Feidman's concerts special.

This impression is reinforced even more strongly in live performance with his two current trio partners. Anthony Falanga hails from Brooklyn. He plays the double bass as easily as someone cutting a loaf of bread: he hardly looks at it! Young Adam Rogers plays his guitar with rare sensitivity, like a master jeweller cutting stones. You can hear every note. These men use hardly any amplification. This displays their technique to advantage. And brings their audiences closer in every way.

The first time I heard Giora Feidman was at the Logan Hall in London, at a concert which was part of the B'nai Brith Jewish Music Festival in 1988. In November 1990 I again travelled to London, this time to hear Feidman's recital *Gershwin and the Klezmer*. Along with forty other musicians I was lucky enough to attend an all-day seminar on klezmer directed by Maestro Feidman. And although he's regularly billed as 'King of Klezmer', London audiences were still asking, 'Who's Giora Feidman?' And, 'What's klezmer?'

The word 'klezmer' derives from two ancient Hebrew words, 'klee' meaning instrument, and 'zemer' meaning 'song'. It's the language of laughter and tears. Until fairly recently it wasn't even written down. Musically, it's a folk tradition extending from Israel to Central Europe and beyond. Klezmer has its roots in the liturgical chant of the Middle Ages, but it has absorbed a lot of folk influences on the road. The village bands of old Eastern Europe are now enjoying a new lease of life on both sides of the Atlantic.

Giora Feidman himself is the fourth generation of a family of klezmer players. His own range extends beyond the boundaries of

Western folk music. He graduated from the Conservatorio Municipal in his native Buenos Aires and for eighteen years was principal clarinet of the Israel Philharmonic. During our seminar in Hillel House, Feidman told us he had eventually felt the need to return to his roots, to freelance internationally specialising in klezmer. "(When I play klezmer) man himself is the instrument, I do not 'play' the clarinet. I use it as a medium through which I 'say' a melody that speaks the truth".

(As a composer I was aware of the warning behind this remark. Although all student composers struggle to acquire technique, technique without spiritually valid substance at its core is a deceit, and it accounts for the unpopularity of much contemporary music.)

Feidman voiced his concern about two aspects of musical education. He is worried about the way young children usually delight in music - to start with. But then when they 'go to music' - (always as if it's some kind of geographical location!) and then 'drop it', the youngsters become discouraged and disillusioned by technical difficulties.

Adult attitudes don't always help. Feidman described the audiences who love to intellectualise every living nuance out of an orchestral performance, arguing about whether Mehta or Bernstein offered a 'better' performance of Mahler's First. It was this kind of snobbery which spurred Feidman to return to the life of a free-wheeling klezmer player. Every intelligent 'mensch' respects intellectual prowess, but danger abounds when other elements of human perception are stifled. In Feidman's case four vital elements of musical performance flourish: technical, mental, physical and spiritual. That's what charisma is all about: the total involvement of a human personality.

We sat round Feidman in a semi-circle so that we all had a good view of the demonstrations with the clarinet. He waved it. 'Any questions?'

I raised my hand. 'Have you any advice for composers?'

'Listen to your still inner voice'.

Again this emphasis on integrity. Feidman is aware that his performances must go beyond mere virtuosity. Inevitably he's conscious of his own technical assurance: he delights in a carefully cultivated ultra-soft pianissimo which sounds impossible and he uses it frequently. At the same time there's a rock hard humility in the face of the music he plays. 'The Hebrew language is *the* language for the communication of spiritual truth', he assured us.

After lunch we formed a seventeen piece klezmer band to play a composition by David Kornhauser, a tuba player from Gateshead. The instructions from the composer were just a little complicated!

'Are these directions in the score?' inquired a bemused Feidman.

'I'm Jewish. So I explain!' retorted Kornhauser with a twinkle in his eye. Reluctantly, one glance at my watch revealed I had better hit the trail for King's Cross and leave the klezmer band in orbit. I could not help wishing there was a second session so I could learn a lot more!

*(Readers interested in recordings by Giora Feidman may like to know that these (plus a wide range of Jewish music) may be purchased from Jewish Music, PO Box 232, Harrow, Middlesex, HA1 2NN: tel. 081 907-1905)*



*Ruzena Wood is an Edinburgh graduate who worked as a Music Archivist in the National Library of Scotland. Her anthology of Czech folk tales *The Palace of the Moon* was published by André Deutsch. A choral work, *Chazon Shalom* (Vision of Peace) is to be performed by the West London Synagogue Choir in 1991.*

## THE NEW SINGER : A REVIEW *John Cosgrove*

**The Authorised Daily Prayer Book** (Centenary Edition) Cambridge University Press, ISBN 0 521 50751 0 Standard Edition £6.00)

To celebrate the centenary of the 'Authorised Daily Prayer Book' generally known as the Singer's Prayer Book, named after its illustrious translator, the Rev. Simeon Singer, the publishers decided to modernise the somewhat archaic English translation and at the same time to make fundamental innovations without altering the size and the familiar chunkiness of the book.

The new translation was entrusted to Rabbi Eli Cashdan, a well kent face in the Edinburgh Synagogue who pays us an annual visit and the editor was the Chief Rabbi, Lord Jakobovits. For the last hundred years every Chief Rabbi has made alterations to the text and an occasional amendment to the translation, but Lord Jakobovits is the first to produce something radically different. In so doing, he has shown great courage and at the same time left himself wide open to criticism, because the very fact that the Siddur has been popular for a century means that not only the layout but the translation has acquired a holiness of its own.

One of the problems facing the translator is how to combine faithfulness to a Hebrew text thousands of years old with modern, readable, sensible English. If the purpose of the translation is to educate the reader in the skills of translating Hebrew, the result might not be aesthetically satisfactory. The fact that Hebrew style is totally different from English gives rise to a number of problems. Thus in the Ya-aleh Ve-yavo prayer said on the New Moon and Festivals, there are no less than eight expressions, all of them so similar as to be synonymous and yet forming an integral part of the cadences and poetry of Hebrew prayer. Singer's approach to the problem was to choose the first three expressions, thus leaving the serious student wondering about the translation of the other five. Cashdan solves the problem by an ingenious shifting of the phrases making it understandable and by virtue of translating all eight expressions, educationally sound.

Regular attenders at the Friday evening service will be delighted to read Rabbi Cashdan's translation of the Lecha Dodi poem because the

English actually has the same rhythm as the original Hebrew and can even be sung to the same tune as the Hebrew. Alas, this is not possible for all the renderings, but then too much might weaken the overall effect.

Some of Singer's translations tend to stick in the throat, possibly because they are meaningless to young Cheder pupils. A famous example is Chiltz Atzamot translated as 'bodily vigour' in the Shabbat prayer for the New Moon. In the bad old days when Siddur translation was 'taught' by the monotonous repetition of phrases with no concern for either the sense or the context, it was not surprising that 'bodily vigour' became 'bottle of vinegar'! The new translation prays for a life of 'physical health'.

Sabbath morning attenders will have noticed the changes in the Prayers for the Royal Family and the State of Israel. In the former, the Chief Rabbi has altered the wish that the Queen and her Counsellors ... 'deal kindly and truly with all Israel' to 'deal kindly and justly with all the House of Israel' so clearly making the obvious distinction. In the latter we now add a prayer for the Israel Defence Forces in common with Congregations throughout the world.

The addition of the weekday Torah readings to the Siddur are useful as they mean that one no longer has to rummage for a Bible in order to follow this very short yet central part of the service. However, as a consequence of including these 63 pages, the editor had to omit other prayers to prevent the edition becoming overlarge and unwieldy. The omitted pages in the new edition are the Rosh Hashana and

Yom Kippur prayers, presumably on the basis that every congregant possesses a Machzor. On the other hand, the prayers for the three pilgrim festivals and minor festivals and occasions have been amplified to such an extent as to make the other Machzorim redundant. Also omitted is the burial service on the argument that special books are available for this at the cemetery. In my opinion, this omission is unfortunate as in a time of emotional upset one should be able to look up the service in advance to prepare for the ordeal.

The principle contribution of the Chief Rabbi is his series of extremely enlightening introductions to the various groups of prayer. These are neatly distinguished from the actual prayers by what can only be described as 'lowlighting' - a process which is used in the American Art Scroll Siddur which our Community presents to each Bar/Batmitzvah in place of the Hertz Siddur which is now regrettably out of print. Lord Jakobovits also deals with the subject of animal sacrifice which dominates the Mussaph service and which most of us find problematic.

There are a number of typographical errors and inconsistencies including the surprising omission of the name of either the publisher or the printer, but these will be rectified in the next edition which is already being prepared. The prayerbook comes in three formats. The standard edition (chunky) now has a nice smooth feel to it and there is a pocket edition as well as a lectern edition which makes a useful present for a person whose eyesight is not as good as it used to be or indeed for anyone who enjoys handling a beautiful book.

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### **Don't Cry on My Shoulder** by Rocky Levey

Don't cry on my shoulder, for I have seen so many years,  
Years of troubles, sickness, and of fears.  
Each to his own, a life to live,  
Each to his own, a life to give.  
Many hide their sorrows behind a smile,  
Many bore people with their troubles, a long while.  
Some take like in their stride, others keep moaning,  
There is no use in grumbling and ever groaning.  
So, don't cry on my shoulder, I've shed too many tears,  
For I too am a widow, but I hide my fears.  
The future looked black till I looked around,  
And, the love of my children was what I found.  
So I still have the comfort in what years are on line,  
I won't cry on your shoulder, if you won't cry on mine.

*A poem sent in by Rocky Levey, originally from Glasgow but now living in Edinburgh after 37 years in California.*

