

The Edinburgh Star

Journal of the Edinburgh Jewish Community

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The Edinburgh Star

SYNAGOGUE CHAMBERS
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This issue of the "Edinburgh Star" is thinner than usual and lacks the usual high standard of Editorial, because our esteemed editor, Ruth Adler has been unwell. Bravely defying her doctors and nurses she edited and put together this edition from her hospital bed. We are grateful to her and wish her a complete and speedy recovery.

Much of this issue deals with the past. Ian Shein delves into the 19th century Edinburgh Synagogue records, Emma Levy writes about her Cheder days. Ian Caplan talks to his grandfather about the past and Joyce Cram's vivid contribution to the Lit's "Growing up Pains" evening is reprinted. The picture is of a vibrant and glorious past but what of the future?

Rev. Malcolm Weisman, the Minister to the Small Communities on a recent visit here told us that by his standards we are a major Jewish Community. If we are to maintain our position, we must act positively now to prevent us becoming one of his flock. In the next year, decisions will be made regarding a successor to Rabbi Shapira. We must be extremely cautious. A rigorously orthodox Rabbi could split our closely knit community in months and a trendy liberal could alienate our traditionally orthodox.

Perhaps we should be capitalising on the fact that our Universities are world famous. More Jewish students would come to Edinburgh if there were better facilities for them. A residential Hillel flat run by the Community would make Edinburgh desirable for students and the more students we have, the more possibility there is of persuading them to settle here after graduation. Students have a lot to offer our community and we must encourage them to be comfortable here.

JAC

Front cover: Tu Bishvat Tree Planting
Edinburgh Synagogue, Salisbury Road
Photograph: by Judy Gilbert
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

4/5 Fettes Rise
EDINBURGH

September 1993

Dear Editor

We enjoy receiving, and reading The Edinburgh Star. Congratulations to you and your Editorial Board!

The 'Appreciation' on the late Betty Schulberg by Eve Oppenheim was most appropriate - Betty was a wonderful friend, a charming lovely person - who, unfortunately had so many heartaches and disappointments in her life. We all miss her.

Wishing you continued success with 'The Star'.

Yours sincerely,
Phillip Harris

32 Bath Hill Court
Bath Road
BOURNEMOUTH

October 1993

Dear Editor,

I enclose a cheque as my annual donation to your most welcome Journal. I enjoy the articles very much although most of the new names mean very little to me. I pass on the Journal to Rev A Brysh who is now also retired and lives in Bournemouth. He too enjoys the articles and of course knows most of the new names.

Keep up the good work and may you go from strength to strength.

Yours sincerely,
David Sim

*With
compliments from
Geoffrey
and Lorna
Nicholsby
and family*

25 Park Crescent
ELSTREE

September 1993

Dear Editor,

On receiving the May issue of the 'Star' I was overjoyed to note that two such eminent and eloquent scholars, Professor Abe Goldberg and Dr Stefan Reif paid tribute and gave appreciation of my Grandfather, Abe Rabstaff. I would like to record my gratitude to both for their kind words.

As Abe Rabstaff's youngest grandson I too am aware of his professional and social achievements; master tailor, raconteur, philosopher, yiddishist, historian ... I needn't go on. My two reputable cousins have already suitably enumerated most of my Grandfather's finer qualities. But I cannot let the tributes rest there. Indeed he would not have been content to sit back as the recipient of such accolades without that twinkle appearing in his eye, a mischievous grin spreading on his handsome face and a well-timed witty remark bringing levity into the proceedings in true Bohemian style.

My memories of 'Gramps' are of a more earthy nature. In the Fifties he sat me on his knee and taught me nursery rhymes and (in my innocence) songs of more dubious lyrics, delighting in my mother's embarrassment when I would sing them to visitors. The Sixties were bejewelled with picnics at North Berwick, fishing trips and making toys out of used thread 'bobbins'. During the Seventies the bond between us strengthened as he displayed understanding and empathy with my radical teenage ideals, hair and clothes styles. As a life-long show-off he relished my appearances on the amateur dramatic stage and taught me the art of public speaking. 'Start with a joke, end with a joke and keep the two as close together as possible'.

Since my move to London Grandpa and I kept in touch frequently and although the first half

of the Eighties was saddened with the loss of his wife and two remaining children, his strength of character shone like a beacon to guide the family through the tempest. Latterly, our marathon 60-minute 'phone calls consisted mainly of catching up on the gossip from Edinburgh and swapping risqué jokes.

My Grandfather never considered himself to be old, often referring to others 20 years his junior as such. This positive and spirited philosophy charmed all who came into contact with him and he gave us all greater perception. Even as I write this I can feel him looking over my shoulder and saying 'Don't forget to mention my tap-dancing. And tell them the one about the two Rabbis who meet in a pub ...'

Yours sincerely,
Douglas Brodie

121 Rankin Drive
EDINBURGH

December 1993

Dear Editor,

I should like, through the 'Edinburgh Star' to express my sincere thanks to all my family and friends for their very kind enquiries, good wishes and visits received during my recent illness.

Their many acts of kindness were greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
May Brown

*With Compliments
from
John and Hazel
Cosgrove*

DELVING INTO THE SHUL RECORDS

by Ian Shein

24 May 1868

The President, Mr M Muller, reported on a congregant's appearance before the Council when he had protested against our Laws, as he is an old member and has a Law book for himself, and did not consider that our Laws were legal; besides he stated that 'there were always a few black sheep amongst us who could not agree, and that we had misapplied the money belonging to the Congregation'. The President proposed that in consequence of such behaviour by the congregant, and besides the trouble he has given to the Congregation during the last six years, he would ask the members that the congregant should be expelled from the Congregation. This was seconded by the Secretary and carried unanimously.

4 October 1868

A letter was tabled from Rev Mr Rittenberg complaining of the butchers' overcharging the Poor People and it was resolved that the President look into the matter.

26 September 1869

It was agreed that a notice be posted up at the entrance of the Synagogue intimating that no person will be allowed to leave the Synagogue during Friday evening and Sabbath morning services.

20 February 1870

A letter was tabled from Rev Mr Rittenberg asking leave to go to Bristol 'for to better himself'. It was resolved to offer him for the approaching year £5 extra and free house to induce him to forego the offer made by the Bristol Congregation. Mr Rittenberg accepted the offer.

19 June 1870

A member acquainted the meeting that he saw the Beadle out for business on a Shabbas and it was resolved to suspend him for three months from saying prayers before the Omed (in public).

6 May 1872

It was reported that a congregant, previously in trouble, had insulted the Treasurer by most disgusting language and accused him of having entered a false minute into the books. The Treasurer defended the honour of the Congregation and at the same time proposed that the congregant be suspended for the insult. Mr H Levy proposed that a fine of 2/6 be imposed. This was carried.

8 September 1876

Mr Abrams complained that the Jewish butcher was using uncivil language and it was agreed that the butcher, Mr Wilson, be seen by the committee.

8 November 1876

This meeting was called by some members complaining of the butcher, Mr Wilson, not supplying some of them with meat. Mr Abrams, the prime mover, did not make his appearance; Mr Wilson was present. The latter promised if there was anything wrong he would try to rectify and speak to his men to use the people civilly. Mr Wilson also stated that it was impossible for him to make the meat any cheaper than what it is at present, but that he will facilitate and sell it somewhat cheaper to the Poor People.

27 September 1878

The President stated that the Treasurer called upon him to audit the Beadle's books and by doing so he found a deficiency of £4.4s. This being his third transgression, the President was under the necessity to suspend him at once from his duty.

17 November 1878

An official of the Synagogue was called in to the meeting to give an explanation in having received £10 from Lady Roseberry who sent it to him for the purpose of making an offering in memory of her departed parents, which to the knowledge of the Congregation, was never done.

The official maintained in the face of the whole meeting that the £10 belonged to himself. The meeting having heard his violent explanation and behaviour unanimously came to the conclusion not to retain his services longer and determinate it as per notice.

22 December 1878

A letter was read from a number of seat holders asking that the above official's services be retained and in the event that this was not done, that they will apply to Dr Adler, Chief Rabbi, for permission to form a congregation of their own. It was resolved to decline with the request.

2 July 1880

The President stated that a Poor man with a large family who previously had several times applied for assistance to the Congregation wished to remove with his family to Hull and begs to be assisted again by the Congregation. Mr Abrams proposed to assist him with 30/- out of the funds of the Congregation provided he really moves with his family to Hull.

18 September 1881

The President stated that the meeting had been summoned to consider the disgraceful conduct of the Beadle in embezzling £7.16.8, the money of the Congregation. The President, Mr Goldstone, moved, seconded by the Treasurer, Mr Glasstone, that taking into consideration the approaching Holy days when the services of a Beadle are so necessary, the delinquent should be kept on to do necessary services as hitherto with the exception of saying prayers for the Congregation and not to be allowed to collect any more money on behalf of the Congregation till the next general meeting. Mr Jonas moved that the Beadle should be dismissed at once to keep up the moral integrity of the Congregation's servants and that another Beadle be employed whose honesty could be relied on.

The President's motion was carried by a majority of one.

13 October 1881

A note of condolence was submitted to the American Nation on the demise of their President James Garfield. (He was assassinated in 1881 four months after his inauguration.) The President submitted a letter from the Beadle acknowledging defalcations of the Congregational money to the amount of £7.16.8 and praying the office bearers to forgive him and not to expose his embezzlement to the Congregation. Mr Goldstone proposed that the Beadle be given notice that he is dismissed. It was also resolved that a private subscription be raised for him provided he leaves town. Mr Isaacs was entrusted to carry out all the arrangements and see him out of town. He promised that he would do all he can for him.

20 November 1881

A complaint had been made that the poultry killed at Johnston were found to have tampered sealing which had been proved to the satisfaction of the committee that Mr Furst cease killing for the Congregation at the aforesaid Johnston as the fowls there were found to be treifa.

5 August 1882

The meeting was called in consequence of the Beadle absconding. It was resolved that the officers engage a Beadle temporarily until the general meeting.

5 November 1882

The President called the meeting to take into consideration that owing to the continued absence of the newly elected Treasurer, the Congregational duties have been neglected and other business. It was agreed that a statement should be made in regard to the Treasurer's long absence after being elected Treasurer.

15 November 1884

Letter to Sir Moses Montefiore, Baronet,

'Venerable Sir,
We the members of the Hebrew Congregation in general meeting assembled in the Synagogue Chambers at Ross House, Park Place, Edinburgh desire most respectfully to tender you our cordial and sincere congratulations on the interesting occasion of the approaching anniversary of your birthday and completion of your One Hundredth Year. This auspicious event recalls to our minds the distinguished services you have rendered in the cause of Humanity, Freedom and Justice, and those peaceful and brilliant victories over Oppression and Persecution which have placed you in the foremost rank of Philanthropists and won for you imperishable renown. We earnestly pray that God in His goodness may continue to grant you His choicest blessings and that He may spare you for years to come to adorn the venerable and exalted position which you have so faithfully filled during your long, good and useful career'.

Signed on behalf of the members.
David Goldston, President;
H Abrams, Treasurer.

25 February 1889

Letter to Synagogue Council.

'Gentlemen,
On behalf of the Jewish young men in our midst and myself, I beg to ask you whether you would kindly give us the use of the schoolroom on Sunday first March 3rd, in order to hold a meeting to consider the forming of a Jewish Young Mens' Literary and Friendly Association, and whether you will kindly allow us to continue the use of the same for the meetings which will in no way interfere with any Congregational meetings or with the children attending school. The Rev Mr Furst has kindly promised us every assistance in our noble project'.

Yours truly
Goodman Benjamin.

13 October 1889

It was agreed by a majority vote that a servant of the Congregation who normally receives an annual donation of two guineas should not

receive this donation due to losing £11 belonging to the funds of the Congregation by his carelessness.

2 February 1890

Letter from Mr H Adler.

'My dear Sir
On behalf of my mother and the members of our family, and in my own name, I beg gratefully to acknowledge the receipt of your vote of condolence on the demise of my dearly beloved and deeply lamented father. We all indeed have lost in the departed Chief Rabbi an eminent and zealous teacher, a wise and affectionate counsellor, a bright exemplar of the piety and virtue which throughout his life, he sought to inculcate. The numerous manifestations of veneration for the dear departed and of sympathy for ourselves which our bereavement has evoked are a source of sweet solace to us, and while thanking you with all my heart, I pray in the words of an ancient preacher: "My brethren, may the Lord of Recompense require unto you all the goodness you have dealt unto us"'.
'

23 October 1890

Letter from Dr H Adler, London.

'My Dear Sir
Mr Joseph Davis of your city has called upon me today and given me an account of the state of your Congregation which I regret to learn is not so satisfactory as I would wish. I am sorry specially to learn from him that no adequate provision for the instruction of between three and four hundred Jewish children exists in your town. I am quite aware that occupied as the Rev Mr Furst is with his primary duties of Chasan etc. he is unable to devote the necessary time and attention to this large number of children. I therefore earnestly hope that your community will take steps at the earliest date to engage a competent teacher. A vacancy should be declared for the post and advertised offering an adequate salary in the Jewish papers. You may rely on my co-operating with you in this most desirable end of providing the needful Hebrew and Religious instruction'.

(At a subsequent Council meeting, it was agreed that Mr Davis be written

to requesting what authority he had in calling upon Dr Adler and regaling him with the affairs of the Congregation.)

3 November 1891

*Letter to Council,
Ross House, Park Place.*

'Gentlemen

We have held a meeting on Sunday 1st November in Dalry and we have considered the matter that we are paying to the above Congregation, having no convenience whatever. Namely we must have a butcher shop in Dalry for our convenience and also an English school in Dalry for the children, as it is too far for them to reach town. So it was passed by the majority that we should apply to you to give us your opinion as an offer will be made personally. Having the rights for Burial Ground, Mikvah, Marriages, Schochet, Mohel and a butcher shop which we will open on our own expenses in Dalry. Gentlemen, take into consideration that we do not want to make any opposition, as it is only for our own convenience. We cannot explain everything in this letter and we have appointed four members anytime you may wish to see them for further explanation. Hoping you will answer us before Sunday first'.

(Signed) D Levinson;
Louis Raddin; P Phin; T Levinson.

8 November 1891

Mr D Goldston, President, chaired a meeting of Council at which the four above named gentlemen from the Jewish residents in Dalry were present. Mr D Levinson, of the branch Synagogue in Dalry, stated that a butcher shop locally was necessary as owing to the distance of the butchers shops in town, they could not get their butcher meat in time for their dinners as most of them worked in the rubber works there and had only a stated time for their dinner hour. They also requested a Schochet and an English teacher for their children. They would pay Edinburgh Congregation £20 per annum.

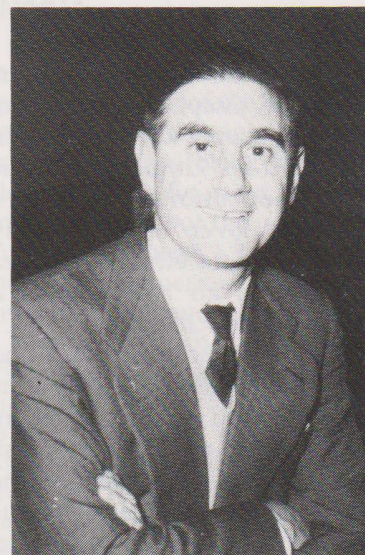
OBITUARY – Barnett Hoare

With the sudden passing of Barnett Hoare, the Edinburgh Synagogue Choir has lost its leading member. Barney joined the choir as a boy soprano over 60 years ago when the Synagogue was situated in Graham Street and when the choristers wore gowns.

As leader of the Bass section, he prided himself in ensuring that all the music was learned thoroughly and that only the correct notes were sung.

But it was as a Bass soloist that he excelled. His wonderful solo during the UNESANE TOKEF at the most important part of the Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur services added to the dignity of the prayer and to the solemnity of the occasion.

His voice cannot be replaced but his memory will live on. J.A.C.
(Fortunately his last performance in the choir was televised and can be seen on Evening Call on STV the week beginning 7th February 1994. Appropriately he appears in the first shot.)



COMING EVENTS

January

9 Sunday	Literary Society	3.00 p.m.
22 Saturday	Ladies' Committee Burns Night	7.30 p.m.
27 Thursday	Council of Christians and Jews	7.30 p.m.
29 Saturday	Jewish Students Burns Night	7.00 p.m.

February

6 Sunday	Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.
	Literary Society	8.00 p.m.
8 Tuesday	Friends of Israel (Dr Dan Bahat, Archaeologist)	8.00 p.m.
17 Thursday	Council of Christians and Jews	7.30 p.m.
20 Sunday	Elaine Sacks, Chief Rabbi's Wife, Luncheon and talk	12.30 p.m.
	Literary Society	8.00 p.m.
21 Monday	Lodge Solomon	7.00 p.m.
27 Sunday	Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.

March

5 Saturday	WIZO Social	7.30 p.m.
6 Sunday	Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.
	Literary Society	8.00 p.m.
17 Thursday	Council of Christians and Jews (Succah)	7.30 p.m.
27 Sunday	First Day of Passover – Communal Seder	Evening
28 Monday	Second Day of Passover	

April

10 Sunday	Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.
18 Monday	Lodge Solomon	7.00 p.m.
24 Sunday	Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.
28 Thursday	Council of Christians and Jews	7.30 p.m.

Maccabi meets every alternate Sunday from 1.00 - 3.00 p.m. For further information contact Benji Bowman (339 7557)

Senior Maccabi meets on Sunday evenings in members' homes.

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

Edinburgh Jewish Discussion Group meet periodically. For further information contact Carole Brown (331 2598).

The Luncheon Club meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 12 noon.

The above events, which are open to change, take place in the Community Centre, Salisbury Road, unless otherwise stated.

MEMORIES OF CHEDER DAYS

by Emma R Levy (née Wolfe)

My first Hebrew teacher was my Uncle Yosse, Joseph Dorfman, a kind and gentle man of whom I was very fond. Born in Lithuania with no formal education, he was a passionate lover of philosophy, particularly of the ethics of Spinoza. He was also an ardent lover of modern Hebrew literature.

He used to come to our house once a week to give Hebrew lessons to my older sister and brother, Sybil and Manuel, and to me. His enthusiasm for learning must have affected me, because when Sybil and Manuel went to Cheder, I was allowed to go with them although I was only five years old. The year was 1933.

Cheder classes were held in Sciennes School, which was fairly central. There were three classes, held four times a week, and a class on a Sunday morning, which was held in the Shul. We used to play in the playground before the commencement of classes and made many friends. The classes were well attended, the majority of children coming from working-class backgrounds. Children from wealthy homes did not attend, possibly having private lessons. I do remember that there were some children from desperately poor homes. Once a year we all looked forward with great anticipation to an open sports day in Currie Park. Many mothers accompanied their children on the bus and it was a great social event.

The teacher in Class I where I was admitted was Rev Rubenstein, who was the Shammos of the Shul. He was a very colourful character of fair complexion with bright blue eyes and neatly trimmed beard. He was a tall man, well-dressed and wore a bowler hat. He introduced us, at a very leisurely pace, to the rudiments of the Hebrew alphabet. We would repeat 'a', 'o', 'e' ad infinitum and, on looking up suddenly discovered that he had fallen asleep. The warmth of the atmosphere and the imbibing of a 'schnapps' before the lesson, clearly proved too much for

him. He was such a likeable character that we did not disturb him.

He came to life, however, every Simchat Torah when he would dance a Kozatski, an exuberant dance of Russian origin, on the platform of the Succah. His blue eyes sparkled and we never ceased to marvel at his agility.

Our teacher in Class II was Rev Levinson, who was the Chazan of the Shul, a handsome man with grey, curly hair. He had a fine baritone voice and a fearsome, fiery temper. We read and translated various passages in the Siddur, but my memory of these translations is really rather vague. What I can still see in my mind's eye, is an enraged Rev Levinson chasing an unfortunate victim up the stairs, prayer-book in hand.

Class III was by far the most interesting class for me. Rev Ordman, Shochet, Mohel and second Reader was our teacher. Paid a poor salary, with a wife and five children to support, he must have found life very difficult. His wife helped to supplement the family income by running a drapery shop, assisted by her daughter, Rita. In spite of his low income, Rev Ordman's three sons all had a university education: Lionel became a dentist, Nahum a civil engineer and Harold was a science graduate. The youngest in the family was Hannah, or 'Girlie' as she was called. I think that she trained as a nurse.

Rev Ordman opened up a new world for me. He introduced me to the mysteries of Hebrew grammar, or 'dikduk' as it was called. I was fascinated by the conjugation of Hebrew verbs, or 'binyanim', learning about 'hifil, nifal' and 'piel'. We read and translated passages in the Chumash, often not understanding the meaning of the translation. On Thursdays, the boys were taught the notes for their forthcoming Haftorah - I often wished that the girls could be

included in the singing. There was also a Rashi class, but girls were excluded from this, which annoyed me intensely. On Sunday mornings we met in one of the classrooms in the Shul and literally 'read' pages of Jewish history. Some of the older pupils would be chosen to read these passages, but I am afraid that my mind would wander far from the days of the Temple to more mundane matters like school homework and examinations. Understandably, my knowledge of Jewish history is rather sparse.

Most of the time, Rev Ordman was fairly even-tempered. On several occasions, however, he did lose his temper when one of his pupils was not paying attention. He would then lean against the wall for support and remove his trouser belt to punish the victim. Poor Solly Rosen, a very likeable boy with a bad stammer, would often wrongfully suffer. His only defence was, 'P-p-please, sir' but it was too late. Unfortunately, Solly was fatally injured a few years ago after being knocked down by a bus.

We used to go home in groups and in winter it was very dark and spooky when we passed by the old Jewish cemetery in Braid Place. Groups of 'Keelies' would jeer at us and shout 'Jew', but we were not afraid as 'our hero', six foot tall Jack Stein, was with us and could defend us. Jack was a very good-natured and kind boy who became a civil engineer, but sadly died a couple of years ago in London.

The headmaster of our Cheder was Rabbi Dr Salis Daiches who called in regularly to mark the register. I always used to think that this job was 'infra dig' for him. He would constantly ask a pupil if he had 'looked over' a certain passage and, if he replied in the negative, Dr Daiches would say, 'You mean you've overlooked it'.

Rabbi Dr Daiches was a very erudite man; his sermons were far above the heads of most of his congregation. Many overseas

students would visit him at weekends to hear his views on Talmudic matters. He was, for me, of rather stern appearance and kept himself aloof from his congregation but perhaps this was due to a natural reserve. He ran a continuation class which I attended in my teens. We studied the book of Jeremiah on which we were asked to write an essay. To my great surprise I received a prize for this, only to discover that it was won under false pretences as there was no other competitor! I did enjoy his class and was very touched when he 'phoned me one Sunday to say that there would not be a class because he was unwell - this was shortly before his death.

There were some very interesting people attending Cheder - Abe Goldberg (now Sir Abe), Zekke (Selig) and Mokke (Mordecai) Kaufman; 'Selig' became Asher who became the first Professor of Mathematics and Physics in Jerusalem University while 'Mordecai' became Leon who became an anaesthetist in London. There was Beryl Ostrovsky (Osborne) who became a general practitioner in London and Monty Lurie who practised as a dentist in Israel and many others who became successful in their chosen professions.

Edinburgh was a vibrant community in those days with a flourishing Literary Society which exists to this day. On Yomim Tovim the Shul was filled to capacity. I love to go back to Edinburgh from my home in Glasgow and recall these happy memories.

*With
Compliments
from
Mark and Judith
Sischy*

THE LOWRIE REPORT

SOLOMON'S EMISSARIES AND 1492

Eli Atad, born in Casablanca, a descendant of the Jews expelled from Spain in 1492 gave a most interesting talk on Wednesday, 8 September, in the Communal Hall by invitation of the Edinburgh Friends' of Israel.

He traced the history of the Jewish Settlement in the Iberian Peninsula from its beginnings in possibly 1000 BCE up to the present, ending the evening with a video showing the places of settlement both within Spain and subsequently in the

various countries of the Diaspora after 1492.

Eli's talk (on the evening, interspersed with Sephardi music and songs on cassette), is reproduced below. The video 'From Toledo to Jerusalem' was the story in song, beautifully enacted by Yehoram Gaon, a singer born in Jerusalem whose family came from Sarajevo and most of whom died in the Holocaust.

SEPHARDIC FOLKLORE : THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

by E Atad

From the discovery of old graves on which was written 'Adoniram, emissary of Solomon, King of Israel', the historian Amador de los Rios thinks that a Jewish population existed in Spain at the time of King Solomon, around 1000 BC. The destruction of the second Temple by Titus brought the first important settlement of Israelites in Spain and Portugal. The word 'Sefarad' means Spain and was mentioned by Obadiah in the Bible. It bears a strong similarity to Sefer which means Book. The 'Sefaradim' could be the people of the Holy Book. The peninsula Iberica may originate from the Hebrew word Hebria. The names of cities like Malaga and Toledo have strong similarities with Malka ('Queen' in Hebrew) and Toldot ('city of generations').

The Golden age for the Jewish people was during the reigns of Kings Alfonso VI (1065-1109) who took as advisor Amram Ben Isaac and Alfonso VIII (1120-1157) who appointed Yehouda Ha-Nassi Ben Ezra as minister. At this time there were 70,000 Jews living in Toledo in a population of 200,000, the biggest in Europe. Centres of Jewish thought and learning were flourishing. Ibn Gabirol, Ben Hasdai, Judah Ha-Levi, Moshe Ben Maimon (Maimonides)

are some of the most famous names of the times. This peaceful period was disturbed by wars raging between Mohammedans and Christians. Cordova, Maimonides place of birth was taken by the Almohades in 1148 and Jews and Christians had the choice between Islam, emigration or martyr's death.

Then came the reign of Ferdinand III, the Saint, from 1217 to 1252. He was a paternal king to the Israelites. For him the Jews were Jewish in the synagogue. In the street they were to be regarded just as other citizens. This was a 35 year period of great happiness and creativity for the Jews in Spain. Some of the Jewish writers were Ben Nahman, David Kimhi, Abulafia (author of Sefer Ha-Zakikim), Moses de Leon (cabbalist, author of the Zohar). The next king of Spain, Alfonso X, the 'Wise' (1252-1284) was also very well disposed towards the Jews. The great synagogue of Toledo was built. Rabbi Levi Ben Gershon (1288-1345) was the author of 24 books on Jewish Literature; doctor and mathematician he was the first to say that a scientific truth has to be taken into consideration even if it is in contradiction to the Holy Writings. Then in 1350 Don Pedro of Castilla came to power. He was also on good

terms with the Jewish community. He appointed as minister, Samuel Levi whose fine diplomacy enabled Spain to increase its supremacy in Europe. He also initiated the construction of the beautiful second synagogue in Toledo. However the Church became more and more opposed to the Jews and its power held sway over the power of the King. Samuel Levi was arrested and ended his life miserably in a prison of Seville. His house was confiscated. Today it is called 'Casa del Greco' and is a magnificent monument. The city of Toledo has a street called 'Samuel Levi Street'. The next king, Enrique II started to tax the Jews then dispossessed and enslaved them.

Some 28,000 Jews died in hunger. Conversions began. There were pogroms in Seville: 4,000 Jews were massacred and 20,000 were converted by force; 23 synagogues were completely vandalised. More than 70,000 Jews were victims of atrocities. The first exodus started towards North Africa. In Toledo during the Sabbath service the Rabbi was executed; in Valencia two-thirds of the Jewish population converted. Persecutions continued with the approval of Pope Benoit XIII. Vincente Ferrer organised a group of Dominicans to spread terror in the Jewish population; with a cross in one hand and a Torah in the other, he forced the Jews to convert: 'Who is not with us is against us, enemy of humanity and enemy of God'. The synagogues were proclaimed Churches. Entire Jewish Quarters were set on fire. Then came the reign of Isabelle of Castilla and Ferdinand of Aragon. They needed the Jewish community for economic reasons. The conquest of Granada from the Moslems was financed by Jewish loans. Once Granada was taken, they decided to convert or expel the Jews with the express prohibition of taking any money or precious metals with them.

Don (Adon in Hebrew) Isaac Abravanel (1437-1508) lived at this time. He was a statesman, philosopher and Hebrew scholar. He was born in Portugal and held an

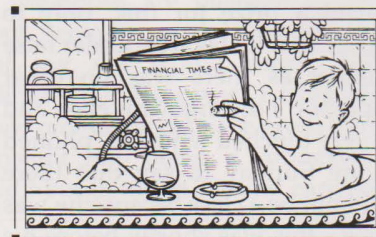
important post at the Court of Alfonso V of Portugal. On the death of Alfonso he was accused of conspiracy against the government and condemned to death. He managed to escape and to transfer most of his fortune to Spain. In 1484 he was invited to serve as advisor to the Court of Isabelle and Ferdinand for his qualities as a brilliant diplomat. He financed the war against the Moslems and tried to reverse the decree of expulsion against the Jews in 1492 but, in vain. He was offered 10,000 ducats of gold to cancel the debt. It is possible that his money served to finance Christopher Columbus' travels and discovery of America in 1492. Abravanel escaped to Naples in Italy where he devoted himself to the study of Jewish Talmud and Literature. His son Yehouda Abravanel was the writer of 'Dialogues of Love' which was translated into many languages and which inspired Cervantes later in the writing of Don Quixote.

After a period of at least 2,000 years in Spain, the Jews left. It was a terrible experience of suffering and martyrdom. Entire families lost their homes and fortune and started on a journey to a foreign country. They still carried the keys of their homes in Spain in the hope that one day they would be able to return. Many died en route. The Jews who stayed in Spain were the converts or as they were sometimes called the 'New Christians'. After converting some tried to practice their Judaism secretly, handing their tradition from one generation to the next. They were called 'Marranos' (which means 'pigs' in Arabic) or 'Secret Jews'. The Inquisition campaigned against them under the leadership of the infamous Torquemada who used torture to force them to confess their Judaism. A great number of Marranos died and others left Spain, among them Spinoza and Menache Ben Israel (1604-1657). Menache Ben Israel lived in Amsterdam, developed an important printing industry and was very knowledgeable in Theology. He influenced Cromwell to revert the

decree of 1290 expelling the Jews from England.

After the expulsion from Spain in 1492, the 300,000 Jews found new homes in the Ottoman Empire, North Africa, the Middle East and parts of Europe. Music was central to their daily lives and has been preserved for five centuries.

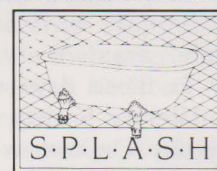
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Nigel stags a bull

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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BRIDGE NOT FAR ENOUGH : (OR KEEP DEALING THEM OFF THE BOTTOM!)

The only complaint heard of the hugely successful Card and Games Evening, held in the Communal Hall on 17 October, was that of the Bridge players who said their wee ghetto wasn't segregated enough as they had difficulty hearing their partners' complaints about their bad playing, or was that the other way around? Why the noise? Well everybody was having such a good time next-door

that they forgot to enjoy themselves in their usual subdued and decorous manner.

Just what games were they getting up to? Well there were the real green eye-shaded, shirt-sleeved, suspended, big cigared mafia solo school; the rum lot playing - yes - Rummy; a doubly rum lot playing Rummy Kub, would-be intellectuals displaying their knowledge of the

more dubious words in the language playing Scrabble and those who found it all a bit beyond them playing something called Pictionary.

Mid-evening time was found to consume a great variety of open sandwiches, cakes and liquid refreshments made by the Communal Hall Ladies' Committee.

It must be recorded there was no Police raid!!!

TU, BAV (FOR LOVERS), TU, BAV SOLO, THE EYES HAVE IT

All titles of Works on Paper in an exhibition by Samuel Robin Spark at Kelly's Gallery, 11 - 13 September 1993.

The media - paper and ink, the message - that of simple intricacy. No contradiction, stand back and there was the clear satisfying image but the

closer you went the more intertwining layers there were to investigate. Colour there was in plenty both contrasting and complementary but there was also the stark and bold use of monochrome.

Art lovers in plenty arrived to have

their red spots placed upon their choices, approximately 60% of the works being sold and so they should have been, for as they say in Edinburgh 'come in, come in, all unique and very reasonably priced'.

What developments will we see at Samuel Robin Spark's next showing?

A TRIP TO SAVOUR - LARGS OR BUS-T (Part Two) by Michael Gold

In the last issue of the 'Edinburgh Star', there was a heart-rending account of an abortive Friendship Club trip to Largs. This very traumatic experience, or strictly speaking non-experience, led to a second attempt by the intrepid organisers. Now read on.

Tuesday 17 August 1993 will long be remembered in the annals of the Edinburgh Jewish Friendship Club. Firstly that it took place at all. Secondly, the bus company, blessed be their name, actually kept to their promise and thirty three pairs of crossed fingers coupled with 'Oi vai, er hat farshloffen', or words to that effect, had the desired impact. At approximately 10.20 a.m. the coach came into view with our happy members on board. The Zacks corner contingent boarded and we were on our way to Tollcross to pick up the last people.

There was diesel in the tank, the electrics functioned and the coach was comfortable. What more could one ask for? Sunshine? I ordered it early and got it wholesale.

Ayr was lovely. Wellington Park was as I remember it years ago, full of beautiful flowers. The air was fresh as we sat and enjoyed lunch. Largs, yes we did make it, was extremely busy. The weather was fair but on the cool side as we walked the promenade and explored the shops. We all made our way to Nardinis where a satisfying and

welcome meal awaited us at the appropriate hour.

As we prepared for home, the sun came out once more and the calm sea and distant hills will remain in the memory as our tired but contented members, well as contented as thirty-three senior citizens can be, reflected on a day worth waiting for.



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I ASK MY GRANDFATHER THE HOW COMES AND WHERE TO FOS

by Ian Caplan

Q. So Grandad, when did you come to Edinburgh?

A. Around about May 1906, I was 9 months old, being born in August 1905 just outside Vilna. Your greatgrandfather who had just got out of the Russian Army decided he did not want to be recalled to go campaigning in the Russo-Japanese war that had just started and emigrated to the UK.

Q. So when did you start to sit up and take notice? I mean, what are your earliest memories?

A. Being with lots of children in the Cheder class, at least 25. I made life-long friends there; I would be about 6 at the time.

Q. Then these friends would also be your friends during schooldays?

A. Oh yes, particularly Nat Pinkinsky who was my best man when I married Nana, and of course David and Elkie Rifkind.

Q. Were there a lot of Jewish activities for teenagers and in what activities did you get involved?

A. Yes there were and I played football in the Judeans in a mid-week Football League. David Rifkind, Charlie Baker, Benny Levey all played and there was wee Alex Gordon (late husband of Flora) who once ran under a big Polis defender's legs to score a goal!

Q. There was more than one synagogue then, I know - which was yours?

A. The one in West Richmond Street called the 'Greeny' Shul. The Graham Street synagogue was known as the 'English' Shul! Of course in 1932 under that wonderful Rabbi, Dr Daiches, the congregations united to form our present-day synagogue.

Q. Was it here that you and Grandma met under the Chuppah?

A. Yes, she was Nana Lipman then, ours was the second wedding and Fanny and Simon Levinson's was the first.

Q. I know that like many in the Community you fought in the Hitler war, could you tell me something about your experiences?

A. It was the end of 1941 and things were going very badly for us. I joined then and after training I went to the 152nd Field Ambulance part of the 78th or Battle Axe Division attached to the American First Army. We landed at Bone along the coast from Algiers. There was a lot of fighting up that side into Tunisia where we all, particularly



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the Americans, took a lot of losses. From North Africa we went to Italy, Austria and Germany. At Termolie in the 'heel' of Italy I was wounded and later had convalescent leave when I visited Palestine as it was then. I got back to my Unit in time for the battle for Monte Cassino, where all the Allied Armies again took terrible casualties, particularly the Poles who finally took it.

Q. Did you ever come across any 'weel kent' faces?

A. Most didn't but I did. I met my brother Maurice first. He was with the 57th Gordon Highlanders. He joined up when he was 17 and was at El Alamein with the Eighth Army. Well, I hadn't seen him for three years and when I saw the Highland Division sign I obtained leave to visit him. We had three wonderful hours together. Then at Monte Cassino, I met Dr Julius Lipetz and later when taking wounded out of the battle area to the hospital whom should I meet in the cookhouse but Joe Simonoff. Oh, I am not finished yet! At the end of the war the embarkation camp in Northern France was run by Reggie Levitt! Mind you, I think that the strangest experience was in Vienna when, as a Yiddish speaker, I interpreted in the distribution of food. It was while doing this that an old Jewish lady who had somehow survived the 'Camps' asked me where I came from. 'Edinburgh', I said and then she fair astonished me by telling me that her son was a doctor there - he was Dr Adler who lived for many years in Minto Street.

Q. And when did you finally come home?

A. 1946 when I went back to hairdressing. Nana had somehow or other kept the salon going all through the war years. I finally retired in 1977.

Q. I know that you took up your communal activities again, could you tell me what they all were?

A. Annie Lindey, who was your grandmother's aunt, a wonderful person, well ahead of her time, organised a committee to raise funds for a children's picnic and I was asked to help. The first picnic was in 1947 with six busloads of children, standing room only! Blackness I think we went to. Well, this started us on the road to obtaining a Communal Hall. I was on the committee and eventually became Chairman, third in line after George Magrill and Louis Lindey. It's always been my belief that alongside the Shul, the Community Centre was very important in keeping the Community alive and kicking. I was also Chairman of Ajax, the Jewish branch of the Royal British Legion and well I remember the first Hogmanay Dance in the Assembly Rooms - 600 people danced to those excellent Glasgow Bands, Louis Freeman and Harry Margolis.

Q. You've told me something of the good and less good times, there must have been some bad and very bad times, would you like to say what you would rather not have seen?

A. Yes, near the end of the war I was part of the Forces sent to liberate the Concentration Camps. Talk about 'Man's inhumanity to Man', some day I'll try to tell you about that horror.

Q. Could I finish by asking you what it is about the Community that impresses you most?

A. That's easy - the closeness, the family feel. Everybody, by and large, pulls together whether it be Barmitzvahs, Weddings or Funerals and I think the Community can be proud of the way we support each other. (Here he stopped and looked at me thoughtfully and intently) And how proud we all are whenever any of our children do well!

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Looking across the pond

An American Perspective on British Jewry *Editor of the Jewish Chronicle*

Ned Temko

on Sunday 24th October at 8.00 p.m. in the New Jewish Community Centre

Adapted from a speech by JC Editor, Ned Temko to the Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society.

I am indeed, as you may have surmised from the accent, an American – an American Jew – and do have an American-Jewish perspective on British Jewry. But I must qualify that, by saying that I have spent most of the last 20 years outside of the United States. While I had a very Jewish upbringing, I didn't have a particularly religious upbringing (although, like so many Jews, I have become more religious over the years.) So in a sense, I cannot offer a typical American Jew's perspective on Anglo-Jewry. Instead, I propose to talk about what it is to come as an outsider, not so much into Anglo-Jewry, but into the cathedral chair of Anglo-Jewish journalism – particularly via a somewhat unusual career path, having spent some two decades as a foreign correspondent for a major, non-Jewish, American paper.

The advertisement for the editor's chair of the *Jewish Chronicle* said, as I recall, that the successful candidate "will have to be over 40 years old" (which I wasn't at the time). The implication, moreover, was that one had to have grown up within a 40 or 50 metre radius of central Golders Green, and instinctively to know every nook and cranny of Blooms and various other of our time-honoured institutions. And then, at the bottom, it said in so many words: "journalistic experience – and, of course, a particular interest as a reader of the *Jewish Chronicle* and as a journalist who is Jewish. Well, one thing led to another, and I was ultimately fortunate enough to become the editor of the *Jewish Chronicle*. The disadvantage of being an American – or, indeed, any other sort of outsider in the JC editor's chair, was, as the advert appropriately suggested, that it is very difficult to presume to edit or do anything else for such an institution as the JC – for it is far more than just a newspaper – if you haven't grown up in the heart of Anglo-Jewry. That is simply a shortcoming that is impossible to remedy, and



Ned Temko addressing the Lit

I came to this job knowing that. Still, also determined to become an autodidact insofar as possible, I spent many hours a day for the first year or two in the job, speaking, questioning, listening, learning, touring Anglo-Jewish communities. And on the other end of the scales, I did and still do believe that there is also an advantage in coming to the JC editorship from the outside – not so much because one could look at *shortcomings* of Anglo-Jewry with a fresh eye, but at its real and potential strengths. One of the great, in fact some could argue the most notable, achievements of the Anglo-Jewish community has been the expertise with which it has contrived to emphasise its own shortcomings, to run itself down. I should like to offer you tonight a fresh eye on what is *good* about Anglo-Jewry – and what, potentially, is getting better.

That may seem an unlikely perspective for an American to bring to British Jewry. There is an assumption, almost

a cliché, in the Jewish world that the American Jewish community is the single diaspora community most worth emulating. Here, after all, is a community of Jews that, in numbers, outweighs even the State of Israel; and in influence, outweighs any diaspora community in the history of the Jewish people. Jews have not only been accepted in American government, academia, literature; they have, (with apologies to the Protocols of the Elders of Zion) made their mark at the very highest echelons of all aspects of American life. In a way, particularly addressing *The Lit*, there can be no better illustration perhaps than American Jewish literature – which basically invented a genre, a sort of alienated, funny, self-deprecating style of introspective narrative which even major non-Jewish writers in the United States have emulated and adopted.

There is thus an assumption among Jews worldwide that American Jewish society and American Jewish achievement in some sense provide a yardstick for the rest of the diaspora. One of the things that I have discovered – and, to be fair, it is something I anticipated from the moment I was lucky enough to be able to say “Yes” to the JC editor’s job – is that an accurate American perspective on British Jewry must turn on its head that old East-End joke: “Never mind the quality, feel the width”. In comparing the two Jewish communities, “Never mind the quantity, feel the quality”. In a sense, for all our problems – and the “our”, I hope not presumptuously, refers to British Jewry – the community here has an institutional strength which American Jews lack. One of the great ironies about American-Jewish life is that despite its intellectual richness – and despite the eclectic range of options available to Jews in the United States, from vegetarian mah-jong clubs to reconstructionist chess circles – people are asking themselves increasingly in American-Jewish life whether there will be an American-Jewry five, six, generations from

now. (I would be willing to bet, by the way, that the answer is “Yes”.) To the extent that the overall numbers in British Jewry are so much smaller, there is instinctively a higher rate of jitters about the question of communal continuity. But the fact is that Anglo-Jewry’s internal strengths are in a crucial sense greater than in the States, because of its central institutions. There is, for all the bickering within individual Jewish communities in England or in Scotland or elsewhere in the United Kingdom, a familial framework and context. There is a sense of central focus in Jewish life that is not often present in the larger and more geographically diffuse – if perhaps more powerful – American Jewry. Put at its simplest, there is in British Jewry a greater sense of community. In the States there is a far greater range of individual choice. But one of the weaknesses of this choice is that you get communities that by and large are defined by individuals – a little bit like supermarket trolleys, taking this bit here, and that bit there. You have, in terms of facilities, much more to choose from – hot tubs, indoor tennis courts and community centres – but what is lacking often, is a communality in which individual Jews can, however fractiously, relate to one another. We do have this core that continues to exist. Not least (and I say this not merely out of pride in and promotion for the JC) Anglo-Jewry has a *Jewish Chronicle*. It is surely not accidental that for all the great achievements of American Jewry in the postwar years, there has never been, and still to this day there is not, anything comparable to a *Jewish Chronicle*. There is not a Jewish newspaper that geographically, or in any other sense, can embrace American Jewry and provide a platform through which individual Jews or individual groups of Jews within a wider community can talk to each other, disagree with each other, yell at each other, and otherwise communicate. That, to use the old joke, is “the good news” about our community.

There is also, from my American

Jewish perspective, bad news – the fact that there is not much intellectual self-confidence, and indeed a lack of self-confidence on every level. This has, I sense, less to do with Jewishness than with the wider society which we Jews, as diaspora creatures, have always tried to emulate. In wider society, no matter where or when in our history, we have tended to try to find a niche into which we can fit ourselves. This has been particularly true in modern Western societies. We have tried to echo those wider societies in some Jewish way perhaps, but to echo, all the same, the values and measures of achievement that wider societies show us. And the fact is that we live, here in the United Kingdom, in a largely anti-intellectual society, a society that doesn’t value thought or learning or discourse very highly, that in a sense prefers fox-hunting to universities. And the result is that as Jews in this country began to emulate non-Jewish achievements, the role models they adopted were such that they created their own clubs, their own little elites whose main purpose, main joy perhaps, was the ability to exclude those whom one didn’t like. It is important for Anglo-Jews, far more than it is for American Jews, to have a knighthood – and not only because America doesn’t have knighthoods – or to be invited to the Palace, to be a member of the right club, to be able to invite other people, particularly non-Jews, to that club. Now all of that may be good fun, but it can also be corrosive of Jewish communal values and interests. We are at some level ashamed as Jews in this country of being seen as too “ethnic”. This is the flip-side of the American Jewish experience. In American Jewry, ethnicity runs riot. There is almost no aspect of life you can dream of which has not somehow been “kosherised” on the East or West coasts of the United States. That may be a very superficial way of defining ethnicity, but what it does say is that being Jewish is not a thing of which to be ashamed. And that is something that has been often lost, in Anglo Jewry, in our desire,

however subliminal, to become perfectly British. This is human nature. This is Jewish human nature. What is sad for Anglo-Jewry is that when you have a post-imperial society – a society that on many levels has lost confidence in itself, as has wider British society – it is inevitable that this, too, is copied. And that is bad news for the future of the community.

The other thing that is certainly not good news, is the sense in which each of the constituent parts of the community has often feared disagreement, or at least public disagreement, with others. What do I mean by that? There is certainly enough bickering, so it may sound like nonsense to say that there is a “fear of disagreement”. But when I say we are afraid of disagreeing publicly, I mean that there seems to be an almost surreal assumption that unless every Anglo-Jew basically agrees, or pretends to agree, with every other, the community will somehow self-destruct. Once again that is human nature, certainly Jewish human nature – to the extent that we Jews have survived in an often hostile wider environment over a period of many centuries and have learned to adapt to this insecurity. It is also a reflection of numbers (American Jews, by mere virtue of their quantity, have in effect been able to afford a greater sense of self-confidence) and of social history (in America, almost everyone is a hyphenated American; ethnicity is a matter of fact.) Still, it is a terrible way to sustain an Anglo-Jewish community, in the sense that almost inevitably we find ourselves not debating, or dealing with the issues that really matter, for fear that we may disagree with someone. This is, oddly, less a problem in many British-Jewish centres outside London than in the capital, although, given the numbers involved it should be the other way round. (One of the more uplifting aspects of getting to travel north of the Watford Gap is that you realise not all Jewish communities in England or indeed in Britain are identical.) But certainly among the institutions and

establishments of Anglo-Jewry, there has been an almost pathological fear of open disagreement.

The result is that we have learned to focus on the easy kind of “apple-pie” platitudes which we can pronounce with a semblance of genuine unity. There are certain cultural metaphors on which we can all agree. In Anglo-Jewry, the prime example is the frequency with which we fall back on jointly bemoaning the danger that children may “marry out”. Now as it happens, I can officially declare that my own child – who is 5 – hasn’t married out. But it is any easy issue to get communally upset about, because it strikes to the soul of “Jewish continuity”, to borrow a phrase from the Chief Rabbi. It is something that we can all get into a lather about. We can say, in effect, “I can’t necessarily define my own Jewishness, but more importantly, will my *grandchildren* be Jewish?” And it does seem, on the face of it, a centrally important issue. But it reflects a very Anglo-Jewish way of dealing with the future, because in fact anyone who has dealt with real Jews in real-life situations in modern-day Britain knows that “marrying out” is less a problem in itself, than a symptom of deeper challenges facing the community. People may or may not marry non-Jews, date non-Jews, go to cricket matches with non-Jews. But the far deeper, problem – one that we more rarely talk about – is that people are *opting out* altogether. They basically want no part of the Jewish community. They may well want to be Jewish instinctively as individuals – and many, many do – but they see nothing for them in Jewish life as we define it. They live in the late twentieth century, where they have video games, interactive television, rap music, Madonna . . . And with no disrespect to the anatomy of the Chief Rabbi, if it is a choice between watching Madonna at Wembley and the Chief Rabbi at St. John’s Wood shul, we may have a problem, in the sense that we are competing for people’s hearts, minds and attention span. In a sense we are competing as Jews in a crowded and

confusing free market of ideas. This is not to say that we don’t take with us a tradition that goes far beyond the great majority of what else is on offer. But it does mean that we have to have the self-confidence – and our leaders have to have the self-confidence – to argue those ideas to present them impellingly, to explain why they are exciting, to explain what is valuable, wonderful, in this tradition. To the extent that we shun serious issues, exclude each other on the notion that we are “not Jewish enough” or “too Jewish” or whatever, we impoverish our own communal life. We display a lack of self-confidence that inevitably makes it more likely that many, particularly the young, will indeed opt out.

It is my opinion that we are at a crossroads, which can lead in one direction to a gradual decline of Anglo-Jewry, or in the other to a genuine communal revival. In the past four or five years a lot has changed in Anglo-Jewry. Part of it has to do with the change in personnel. We have a new, younger Chief Rabbi. There is change in the Reform movement. There has been less change, in terms of personnel, in the Liberal movement, but there is change there as well. For the first time, a serious attempt might actually get somewhere at least in London, to talk about “secular Judaism”, much as that might sound like a contradiction in terms. To a greater extent than has ever been the case in Anglo-Jewry, there are various side initiatives that may involve at a throw five, six, twenty, a few hundred and at most a few thousand, Jews, many of them young, who are defining Judaism or Jewishness in ways that don’t imply waiting for someone from above to say, “This is how you shall be a Jew.” And by this I have in mind, for example, New Moon, the events-listing magazine, alternative minyanim all over North-West London – some of them left-wing, some of them right-wing, some of them vegetarian, but on every level people saying ‘We reject implicitly old style Anglo-Jewish Judaism, but we do not by any means reject being

Jewish. In fact, on the contrary, we want to define for ourselves what it is to be part of a new and changing community and we want a stake in defining what that community will be."

Equally, and I think this is perhaps the single most important encouraging aspect of the future of British Jewry, partly because it is something over which communal leaders and even newspapers have no final control, there are individual Jews starting to set the agenda on issues that simply haven't been debated. By far the best example of this is the case of women in Judaism. The Stanmore Women's Tefilah Group formed last year, saying in effect, 'We will not wait for the women's review' initiated by the Chief Rabbi. . . We have nothing against the women's review, but we have decided as individuals that we don't particularly like the United Synagogue service as it now affects women, or as it now does or doesn't bring in individual women at this particular shul, so we have decided (revolutionary idea!) that we want to form a group to pray'. Under ordinary circumstances this would seem something that most of the Jewish establishment would think quite a nice thing, particularly since we spend most of our time worrying about people who don't want to pray, but we had this surreal situation in which this particular segment of Anglo-Jewry had to fight for official sanction to hold a prayer meeting, despite the fact that there was no obvious halachic sanction against any of what they were proposing. The issue is in itself less important than the new sense in which individual members of the Anglo-Jewish community – and they can be young, old, men or women – increasingly are ready to say, "This is what I define Jewishness to be and this is the way in which I want to define my Jewish identity, but I want it to continue." There is thus a possibility of – if not a grass-roots definition of Jewish community – at least a much greater vitality, or a pushing upward on the people who lead from the people who will at the end of the day be affected by whatever decision or whatever direction the Anglo-Jewish

community takes. So we have, as we enter the third year of the decade of renewal of the calendar of the United Synagogue, areas of vitality that haven't existed in the past.

What is missing is a further area of vitality. And you have to forgive me for ending, with some self-interest, by coming back to the *Jewish Chronicle*. What is missing is a readiness to debate, to disagree, to grow creatively as a community by working through serious issues which face us. And it is missing because historically there has been a reluctance to get down past the symptoms to disagree with each other as Jews on serious issues – a problem from which even the *Jewish Chronicle* has not been immune. In the past – and the JC is 152 years old, even older than the Lit – we have rightly prided ourselves as a newspaper on being leaders of the community, in having the guts to take unpopular stands, whilst also being communal leaders in the sense that we have been an institution, and sometimes the only institution, that rather than define Judaism and Jewishness as either one or another segment of Anglo-Jewry, has been able to say that we consider ourselves the property of all who consider themselves Jews. We are determined in the 1990s to continue to be catholic in our Judaism, to be open to all members and segments and groups of the Jewish community – to be "the property of every Jew in the community, while in the pocket of none". But our role has inevitably changed. In the past, much of our "leadership" role consisted in forming, or seeking to influence, opinion – notably via leader columns. Too often, however, that has constrained our ability to lead in a more important sense: by encouraging others in the community to debate, discuss, disagree, communicate on issues central to our future. This constraint is particularly important when we become – as has sometimes been the case – an active and integral party, more than a catalyst, in communal debates.

If there is one commodity of which our changing community is not in short supply, it is opinions – strongly held opinions. What a

changing JC can, and must do, is to encourage the fullest possible airing of those opinions – and a genuinely vibrant and vital debate among them. We must, in effect, break down taboos. We must say basically – in the way we write the paper, in the tone of voice, in the issues we cover, to a greater extent perhaps than in the opinions which we may express – that it is not only OK to disagree, one Jew with another, one group of Jews with another, but that such debate is a critical measure of our vitality, maturity and ability to thrive as a community. Indeed, the central danger to our future as a community is the time-honoured fear of disagreement. It is the idea that if we keep on not talking about potentially contentious issues – whether it be dialogue with the PLO, women in prayer, mixed marriages, pre-marital sex, homosexuality, drugs, "secular Judaism" – these issues will go away. On the contrary, a synthetic consensus that such issues don't exist will in the end sacrifice the intellectual and spiritual vitality, the tradition of dispute and debate, that has enriched Jewish existence, helped to keep it alive, through history. It is that tradition, as much as anything, which can – and, I think will – yield a vital, ever growing, sense of Jewish community here in the decades ahead. This excitement in ideas, in dispute, is a gift we too rarely celebrate. And at the end of the day, it affords perhaps the best single way to ensure that my children or my grandchildren are Jewish – proud to be part of a tradition that has never feared arguing with itself. Thankfully, in the past several years, Anglo-Jewry has slowly, gradually been losing that fear of dispute, that lack of self-confidence, which was perhaps very much a part of its history. The result is that we are at a potentially exciting stage in our communal history, one in which the JC can and will inevitably play a critical role. As an American Jew – but now, perhaps above all, as an Anglo-Jewish editor – it is a challenge from which I (and my many colleagues at the paper) draw immense personal excitement, and immense hope for a venerable and reinvigorated community.

Introduced by Julia Merrick
on Sunday 12th December at 8 p.m.
The New Jewish Community Centre

It has become a tradition at the Lit to entertain ourselves at Chanukah. So it was that I was asked by the committee to put together an evening on Jewish Growing Pains. The richness, both in quality and quantity, of the childhood memories that were evoked make fascinating reading for anyone who values their Jewish roots or who is curious about what it is like to grow up Jewish.

I had wondered what difficulties other Jews had experienced in growing up among the many different nations of the diaspora. What had they absorbed from the countries of their childhood and what had they given from their own cultural heritage? I was mindful of George Eliot's words at the beginning of *Silas Marner*:

In that far-off time superstition clung easily round every person or thing that was at all unwonted, or even intermittent and occasional merely, like the visit of the pedlar or the knife grinder. No one knew where wandering men had their homes or their origin; and how was a man to be explained unless you at least knew somebody who knew his father and mother? ... Even a settler, if he came from distant parts, hardly ever ceased to be viewed with a remnant of distrust ... All cleverness, whether in the rapid use of that difficult instrument the tongue, or in some other art unfamiliar to the villagers, was in itself suspicious ... and the process by which rapidity and dexterity of any kind were acquired was so wholly hidden that they partook of the nature of conjuring.

Of course, I had to start with a Scottish story and so we began our Chanukah journey from Edinburgh, where Joyce Cram assured us she had never felt hostility. Among other experiences she spoke of her first hesitant contact with young victims of Nazi oppression. This trauma Bertold Hornung* experienced personally in Eastern Europe and yet it was combined with such an extraordinary wealth of Jewish cultural experience that he has many

good memories too. For the third piece, I have chosen Charles Raab's sheltered childhood in New York. When I was in Israel almost thirty years ago that country was very much a melting pot of Jews from all over the world and the one remark I heard again and again was 'One day we will be like America'. Charlie's America is what they had in mind. It is hoped that future editions of the *Star* will include contributions from England, Wales, France and Israel, each different and some quite amazing to us now.

Joyce Cram Remembers Growing Up in Edinburgh

To begin with I think you should know a little of my background. My late father, Henry, was born in Edinburgh in 1899 to Kate and Abraham Vinstock. He was one of twelve children, nine sons and three daughters. In 1922 he married my mother, Gertrude, born in Glasgow, one of eight children. Through the years it has been known for

Edinburgh boys to marry Glasgow girls! My parents were actually married in Edinburgh by the late Rabbi Dr Salis Daiches, an early example of 'Inter-City Services'. I had two older brothers, my late brother Arnold, born in 1923, and my brother Sidney, born in 1925. I was the baby sister, the only girl and pretty spoilt by all, which made for a very happy childhood.

I suppose early childhood memories consist mainly of halcyon days spent playing (it always seemed to be sunny then), punctuated by a series of special events. The first which I can recall marked a great change in my life. In 1937 we moved from a second floor tenement flat in Maxwell Street to a rather grand Victorian terraced villa at 145 Mayfield Road. This was a move to a more Jewish area of Edinburgh and Mayfield Road and the adjacent roads housed very many Jewish families. I have roughly counted from Esselmont Road down to East



Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society

Yom Kippur Blues

Jewish Growing Pains *A Chanukah Entertainment*



Participants at Lit Chanuka Entertainment left to right: Rabbi Shapira, Charles Raab, Julia Merrick, Ian Leifer, Elaine Samuel, Joyce Cram, Anthony Gilbert

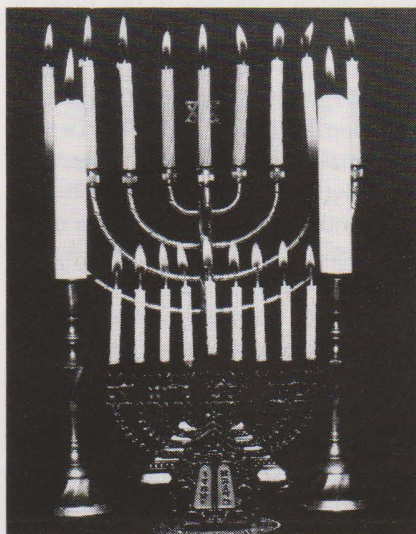
*Bertie Hornung was unwell on the Lit Chanukah evening, so his contribution is presented here for the first time.

Mayfield there must have been about forty families. Some of the names may be familiar still but, alas, many have gone from the community: Schulberg, Harris, Phinn, Julius, Levy, Strachan, Jackson, Lurie, Dorfman, Bennett, Victor and Nessie Brown and Julius and Marjorie Lipetz (the latter two couples being very active in the Lit and the Edinburgh Jewish Dramatic Society) are just a few names which conjure up memories.

With the change of home came a change of school. I transferred from South Morningside Primary School, where I was the only Jewish child (my brothers had moved on to Boroughmuir Secondary by then) to James Gillespie's High School for Girls, where many of the pupils were Jewish. In my class there were three other Jewish girls, Ena Dorfman, now in Israel, Emma Wolfe, Glasgow, and Clarice Oppenheim, who lives in Brighton. The Jewish girls were extremely successful academically at Gillespie's and, in the year of 1941-42, Esther Caplan was school Dux, a great achievement in a school of some 1,700 pupils. She went on to take a BSc at Edinburgh University and now lives in Israel.

Many went on to successful careers in science, medicine, teaching, law, and Clarice Oppenheim, Vivienne Goldberg and myself studied pharmacy at the Heriot Watt. Perhaps our most renowned star was Muriel Camberg, now Dame Muriel Spark. Her 'Miss Jean Brodie' was based on a Miss Mackay who taught in primary school. I'm afraid I was never one of her 'crème de la crème', these days more of a crème de la Cram (or maybe one of the clots in the cream!)

The next, traumatic, event was the outbreak of war in September 1939, when I was ten years old. Thus my most formative years of youth, 10-16 (we didn't know about adolescent problems in those days) were war-time years. My mother, brothers and myself evacuated to Galashiels, where we rented a house. Everyone feared an immediate bombing campaign by Hitler but by December we had returned home again. I went to Gala Primary School for three months, where you can be assured



I was once again the only Jewish pupil. I may add that in none of my schools did I ever experience any anti-Semitism.

One consequence of the war-time blackout, a great plus for me, was that my parents stopped my attending cheder, as this took place twice a week after school, as well as on Sunday mornings, at Sciennes school. I did, however, have private lessons on Sunday afternoons from the late Rev Tucker, a delightful, gentle man who had escaped from Poland before the war with his wife and family, to become Chazan to our community. He used to tell me I was his 'best-est' pupil, a great boost to my ego, until I learned that David Hyams and Gerald Glass, who were having Barmitzvah classes were also his 'best-est' pupils.

About this time, when I was twelve, I joined Habonim. At that time there were thriving groups of Habonim, Bnei Akivah and Maccabi for youngsters in Edinburgh, but Zelig Kaufman led Habonim and was without doubt the handsomest of the young leaders, so I chose Habonim! Zelig, who now lives in Israel, gave many of us our first knowledge of Zionism and indeed many of my contemporaries did go on Aliyah. The post-war years, the fifties and early sixties, saw quite an exodus from Edinburgh but that is another story.

We had week-long Habonim summer camps, under canvas, where we joined with Glasgow

Habonim and went berry-picking in Perthshire, as well as occasional weekend camps near home. One weekend there was a visit to Polton House, where young refugee children were housed. I suppose a fourteen year old youngster can be somewhat insensitive to the situation of others and I can only remember that weekend as a rather uncomfortable experience, where each group felt isolated from the other. I suppose our leaders' intentions were the striking up of friendships between us but I am afraid this never materialised. It was only later, in 1944, when we began to see in the cinema newsreels the horrific scenes of the liberation of the concentration camps, the full implications of the terrible suffering these children experienced that feelings of remorse and regret occurred. I think it may be difficult for later generations to realise the difference television has made to our awareness of world-wide events, the immediate impact it brings which we lacked. Our information came via radio, newspapers, and cinema newsreels, all heavily censored.

We, in Edinburgh, were spared the horrors of air-raids, although we did have gas masks and air-raid practice at school. There were Anderson shelters in the Meadows, where we sat, gas mask over the shoulder, talking, singing and escaping from the classroom at least once a week for the first two years of the war. So we were fairly isolated from the realities of the war, apart from rationing and the black-out. My own awareness came when my brother, Arnold, was called up in 1942. Most of his friends were by now away in the forces in various areas of combat - in the Middle East, Far East and later in Europe. At Yom Tov, of course, their empty places in shul were filled by visiting members of the forces stationed in Scotland or here on leave. In fact often extra seats had to be put up to accommodate everyone. We would have soldiers, sailors and airmen back to our homes for Sedarim and Yom Tovim and many friendships and romances were forged on these days.

Strangely enough, two years ago we placed an announcement in the

Jewish Echo for my mother's ninetieth birthday. A few weeks later she received a lovely letter from Melbourne, Australia. It was from a Glasgow chap who still received his weekly copy of the Echo and had seen the notice. He had been stationed for some time at Redford Barracks and had spent many of his off-duty hours at our home. Fifty years later he still recalled the hospitality he had enjoyed with our family in the 1940s.

This Chanukah celebration reminds me of a story, more related to my father than to myself. My late father, who had served in the Royal Scots regiment and was severely

wounded in both legs in the 1914-18 war, was co-chairman of the Jewish branch of the British Legion. The Legion ran an all-night canteen in Waterloo Place for members of the forces stranded at the Waverly Station late at night, with no connection to their destination until the next morning. Once every two weeks or so my Dad, with other members of the Jewish branch, like Abe Rabstaff and Hymie Baker and many others, all first world war veterans, were on duty from 11 p.m. till 7 a.m. the next morning, serving food and hot drinks. One Chanukah a Jewish soldier turned up and Dad made him potato latkes. By the end

of the night he had served them to all the troops who had turned up that night. Thenceforth, whenever they were on duty, latkes were the 'speciality de la maison'; the word seemed to have got abroad how great they were. I believe that year in the barrack cookhouses could be heard a new version of the old army song:

We don't want your Xmas pud,

We want fresh fried latkes.

Memories are pleasant to share but, being personal, I dare say others of my era would recall things differently. However, I trust these few reminiscences have given a small insight into being a youngster in Edinburgh in the 30s and early 40s.

Eastern European Memories

by Bertie Hornung

Though I grew up (if at all) in Prague I spent my early childhood in the north Moravian steel and coal town of unsurpassed ugliness called Ostrava, close to those parts of Poland and Germany once known as Silesia, where I was born in 1925. I remember the place as a jungle of factory gates, cooling towers and pitheads and department stores and banks all mixed together, of bings and subsiding wasteland next to neat workers' colonies, of glittering shops, elegant hotels and cafés and neon lights amongst a tangle of pipes and tubes and noisy foundries, of coal trains moving on tram rails through the main streets at night, of netting to protect houses and parks from debris falling off cable cars carrying coke and ore in an endless rattling procession high up across the sky.

Ostrava has had a big Jewish community or rather two communities: a westernised one of loyal citizens speaking grammatically correct German and Czech, and an eastern one, of Jews from Galizia, Slovakia, Hungary, Ruthenia, maybe even Transylvania and Bessarabia who spoke many more languages - in their own way. The two never mixed socially, least of all in the

coffee house society, except for their coming together in me, the product of the marriage of my eastern mother to my western father.

Accordingly, Ostrava had two places of worship: the lofty modern synagogue with organ music and ironed, gold embroidered prayer shawls, folded to fit under silk top hats - all pomp and dignity and splendour enhanced by cantor Eibenschütz's arias and Rabbi Färber's sermons delivered in thundering German; and the small, cosy smelling shul of extrovert davnen and business talk and bearded figures draped in unfolded taliths.

The family was at least trilingual. Father spoke Czech and German, mother Polish and something that was no longer quite Yiddish and not yet quite German. He died a young man of 39 (I was five at that time) so I was brought up by my mother and both grandparents. Later, my brother Leo, six years older than me, an active Zionist with a sharp intellect (he did not survive the Holocaust), had a great influence on me. He used to buy me books he himself wanted to read and to take me to cultural events I hardly understood. There were 'Gesangverein' musical performances, Lessing's Nathan Der Weise, Purim plays, recitals, an evening with Ilya Erenburg reading in Yiddish and Russian to a packed People's House, a Warsaw Habimah production of

Dybbuk which caused me sleepless nights and fever. I have not seen the play since but after 60 years, 'Senderke, Senderke' and the terrible shout 'Dybbuk tehze!' still rings in my ears. Then there was F C Makkabi of Second Division fame, and the Hagibor handball team with Leo the brilliant centre forward.

In 1930 I entered first the Jewish prep and then the Jewish primary school which the state recognised (that says something about Masaryk's liberal Republic); we were taught in German but the little Czech we had was good enough for me to pass the grammar school entry exam at eleven. Once a year my Polish grandparents stopped over in Ostrava on their pilgrimage to take the waters of Karlsbad - always a cumbersome expedition with enormous loads of luggage. On school holidays we travelled in the opposite direction across the border to Poland. Mother's older sister Haicia lived in the mountain village of Milówka, where there was skiing in winter, and exploring the Sola river and stealing apples in Dr Solomon's orchard in summer. For Pessach and Chanukah we went to my grandparents. Grandfather Nathan ('Nussan'), a giant of a man with the beard of a prophet in a Michelangelo painting, was Rosh-haKahal of a 'betamt' shtetl called Oshpezin in Yiddish, Osvetim in Czech, Oswiecim in Polish. The German name was Auschwitz.

In the mid thirties, as clouds gathered around us, Leo introduced me to the youth movement T'chelet-Lavan. We sang, recited Rachel's poems, went on long 'tiyulum' and summer camping, collected for the Keren Kayemet, painted posters. One day a Sheliach addressed us – a handsome, blond, athletic, blue-eyed fisherman from En Gav, called Teddy Kollek. (I reminded him of this 40 years later, when I presented my transport plan for Jerusalem, and he remembered the visit.) Another day the naïve artist Robert Gutmann painted our Kvutzah's group portrait. He used to go on foot across half Europe to every Zionist Congress; some of his pictures are now in the Jewish Museum in Prague.

Around the time of the Anschluss strangers appeared more and more frequently on our doorstep – a steady trickle of grey-faced, thin, shy and frightened Jewish people who managed to escape from Germany or Austria. They got food and shelter in our house and moved on after one or two nights. But on 15 March 1939, just before I was 14, the world of family and friends, of school and outings, of books and toys came abruptly to an end. That cold grey day brought in snow and sleet and the Wehrmacht. Around me everything collapsed and a new stage of growing up began. Barred from attending school I was dispatched to Prague on my own in the hope of securing a place in a Kindertransport; mother stayed behind to salvage whatever was possible, and Leo went to Brno to organise Zionist activities.

Growing up under six years of Nazi rule is not the most suitable subject of entertainment but when I look back through the mist of half a century or more, not all was black and hopeless. There were friendly episodes I'd like to remember, and even moments of light relief. Prague was a new place to me and the Jewish community was quick in creating the 'Jualka' – the Youth Aliyah School which existed from 1939 to 1941 to keep us children busy whilst futile negotiations about free passage were going on, and to provide education and prepare for life in Palestine. It was a splendid school. The best I ever had. In the

first year there were altogether about 40 children in one room rented in an ordinary office building at the end of a cul-de-sac called Biskupsky dvur. In the second year the number grew to about 80 and a whole floor was taken; I advanced to Kitah Beth and got the first glimpse of Hana who had joined Kitah Aleph, but we didn't pay much attention to each other as yet. Our teachers – enthusiasts in their twenties – were graduates or former university students (the Nazis closed all Czech universities in 1939). Though pupils and teachers had been on first name terms, an informality unheard of in those days, discipline and diligence were unique. In addition to maths, science, literature and other standard grammar school subjects we had everyday lessons in Hebrew. Then there was biblical and Jewish history, geography of Palestine and a choice of workshop training either in wood or metal. Until mid-1941 we could still use the Makkabi gym and the Hagibor stadium but otherwise spent most of the day at school, starting at 7.30 or 8.00 a.m. and finishing late, after our homework ('avodah azmith') was done. Of our teachers three survived. Zeév Scheck (Hebrew) went to Palestine in 1946 and came back to Prague in 1948 as first Israeli Ambassador. Albin Glaser (woodwork) became a prominent architect in Tel Aviv, and Willy Groag (maths and science) the founder of a chemical plant in Kibbutz Haogen.

In summer 1940 the whole Kitah Beth worked on a farm near Prague, living on bread, onions and sour milk ('kyska') and sleeping rough in a barn. We took it as preparation for kibbutz life. By the close of the second year most of us could converse in Hebrew reasonably fluently with the correct 'pi'els' and 'nif'als' and 'hitpa'els', recite Bialik and Yehuda Halevi and Tanach passages by heart, had read Graetz and Dubnov along with Goethe and Schiller, could hone a plane iron to perfection and produce immaculate dovetail joints. But this micro-world of ourse with all its new friendships also came to an end in 1941: the transportation of Czech Jewry to Lodz, Riga and Vilnius had begun and in autumn the fortress town

Terezin (Theresienstadt) became a ghetto.

It may sound strange that I should include Terezin in the bright episodes in spite of the suffering all around. I was there only a little over one year before being taken to a place near Berlin (that would be another story), but this was enough to absorb at least a fraction of its incredible richness of cultural and intellectual milieu.

Terezin's Czech population of some 3,000 had been moved out to make space for a transit camp of up to 75,000 German, Dutch, Danish, Austrian, Czech and Moravian Jews en route to the east. With them passed through this small place the best brains and talents of Nazi occupied Europe: university professors, scholars, artists, writers, scientists, musicians, actors, composers, journalists. Though only few books and musical instruments or artists material found their way in, there was a variety of language courses (Hebrew, English, Spanish, Latin, Greek), lectures ranging from Gustav Schwarzkopf's history of art to Moise Woskin's Script of Sumer, and performances on stage. Karel Ancerl produced the Marriage of Figaro and The Bartered Bride, Rafael Schächter Verdi's Requiem. Hans Krasa's children's opera Brundibar (revived in Prague 50 years later) had its world première in a dusty loft, Jiri Orten read his poems, Gideon Klein, Siegmund Schul and dozens of others composed and played chamber music, and Fritz Taussig (Fritta) and Petr Kien, to name but two, made drawings and paintings of unique documentary value. There was even Svenk's satirical cabaret which would have been banned anywhere in Nazi Europe.

It is difficult to say what the 'Kommandatur' knew about these activities. Some were surely held in secrecy, some tolerated, some officially permitted, some a bit of each. This question, and the appraisal of this whole phenomenon of Jewish cultural history is likely to engage many a PhD thesis to come. As far as I am concerned both the Jualka and Terezin had made the strongest impression on my so called formative years.

GROWING UP IN NEW YORK by Charles Raab

Growing up in New York in the 1940s and '50s, which probably had the largest Jewish population of any place in the world, I could be forgiven for thinking that New York was entirely populated by Jews, or at least that anybody worth bothering with was Jewish. 'Coming from New York', in fact, was a derogatory euphemism in some gentile circles for saying that someone was Jewish. My impression that New York meant 'Jewish' did not only relate to the fact that we lived in the Bronx, which nowadays enjoys a certain reputation as a bombed-out disaster area. (I think that Trotsky once lived there, and always ate Roumanian tenderloin in a local restaurant, according to a memoir written by his waiter.) When I lived there, great swathes of it were Jewish; other parts were Irish or Italian, but we rarely saw them en bloc although we often came into contact with individual Irish or Italian people, and a few streets away there was an Irish Catholic school that I would pass on my way to the movies. New York, and the Bronx, was a great carve-up of nationalities and cultures. It was never a melting pot because these identities, in those days, didn't melt. In the Bronx at least, the Jews had the great centre cut, the best of everything: the Grand Concourse was 'Allrightnik Boulevard', wonderful 1930s Art Deco apartment blocks, a broad tree-lined Champs Elysées on which the great commemorative military parade took place on Decoration Day (later called Memorial Day). I remember one in which spectators came from all over the Bronx to see the fuselage of a shot-down Messerschmidt; it must have been 1945 or 1946. Tangible evidence of a war that had gone on elsewhere, with the fate of Jews in the balance.

I never remember anybody except Jews visiting our house, and most of them were relatives. Virtually everybody I knew, or my family knew, on close terms was Jewish. Like other prosperous professional or business families, we had a

housemaid, or rather a succession of them over the years. The maids weren't Jewish, of course. They were (usually) black, but there was once an Irish one, and a Hungarian called Erszy who smelt of vinegar and was soon sent packing; it was too much even for my mother, whose family was Hungarian. One of them was called Rebecca, who came from Jamaica. She was enormously fat, and baked us a Jamaica rum cake of heroic strength and with impenetrable icing. We liked Rebecca, and privately called her 'Rivka'. That was an interesting and very telling habit: whoever wasn't Jewish, but was likable, was given a private Jewish name. So Rebecca the black maid became 'Rivka'; Mickey Mantle, the greast New York Yankees baseball star, was 'Myron Mandelbaum'; Edgar Laprade, who played brilliant ice-hockey for the Montreal Canadians, was 'Edgarle'. Not even Marilyn Monro escaped: 'Marlene Moskowitz'; but God forbid you brought one home like that!

When you turned on the radio and television, there was further confirmation of Jewish prominence, this time in show business. There was Al Jolson and Eddie Cantor, and stand-up Borscht comedians like Henny Youngman and Sam Levinson. There was also the Sid Caesar show, with Mel Brooks. (If you saw Brooks' film *Blazing Saddles* about twenty years ago, with its Yiddish-speaking red Indians remarking on the 'Shvartza' cowboys, you'll get a flavour of the stuff he did for television. It's hard to imagine that kind of thing on the BBC!) Even the Ed Sullivan show, a variety hour hosted by a New York Irish journalist, always had Jewish comics, and featured a ventriliquist with a Yiddisher dummy who called Ed Sullivan 'Mr Solomon'. My grandmother liked the popular Arthur Godfrey show; so Godfrey became 'Gottfried'. And the famous cigarette slogan 'LSMFT - Lucky Strike Means Fine Tobacco' for us could only be 'Lazarus's Salami

Makes Finkelstein Thirsty'.

The neighbourhood was mainly Jewish. There was Max the grocer and Mr Louie the window cleaner. He was one of the few genuinely 'unsuccessful' Jews we ever came across. I suppose the rag-and-bone man was too: he came round the neighbourhood every few months crying out, 'Buy kesh cluzz'. My school teachers, especially the older ones, were mainly Irish. The cultural carve-up was also a fairly tight political carve up of municipal jobs and a monopolistic division of trades. In successive waves of immigration, the Irish had colonised the schools before the Jews came to run them, and they were also, famously, the police. The Italians cut your hair and collected the garbage. The Jews made the money (except for Mr Louie and 'Buy kesh cluzz').

My father, being a respected medical doctor, and my mother, being the respectable wife of the respected doctor, and my brothers and I, being their respectable (and clever) children, seemed to get the best of everything in the neighbourhood. We children never had to pay cash for our Saturday haircuts, not because we shouldn't handle money on *shabbos* (neither should we have haircuts or listen to the radio, for that matter - although we weren't Orthodox, my mother forbade us to write on *shabbos*, but

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illogically packed us off to the movies with money for admission and popcorn), but because my father would settle up later with the Sicilian barbers. It went without saying that his credit was good. Max the grocer was my father's patient, so we got the weekly order delivered quickly, the biggest eggs (with double yolks), and the freshest vegetables. We also got the hardest bagels (soft bagels are for the *goyim*, as we now know). The bagel trade was tightly controlled by the legendary union, called something like the Amalgamated Brotherhood of Bagel Bakers. There was probably a rival *Bialystoker* union as well, for all I know, who baked *their* kind of bagels, without holes; those were the bagels we didn't buy. Bagels were strung up in the grocer's window on a plaited straw rope. They were of modest size, the classic New York bagel, the definitive work; I believe bagels have become blowsy and decadent in recent times. But the bagels of my childhood were, especially at the weekend, invariably piled high with cream cheese and the 'lox' that was supplied in endless quantities by my mother, and sometimes by my uncle, who visited laden down with all manner of delicatessen goodies like sturgeon, pickled herring and authentic hot pastrami. The finest

and the best.

My closest school friends were Jewish. There were others, but it never occurred to me that they could really be friends. My brothers and I went to summer camp, which was the definitive summer vacation for the New York middle class. The camp had a Red Indian name and was run by Jews, and all the campers and nearly all the counsellors were Jewish. The camp pointed with pride to the fact that Leonard Bernstein had been a counsellor there once; the camp was near Tanglewood, that glorious summer music festival venue, and Bernstein was learning the ropes, I think, with the Boston Symphony and Serge Koussevitsky. We used to wonder whether rich Mohawks sent their kids to Camp Finkelstein for the summer, to have Sitting Bull as their counsellor. The camp had services on *shabbos* morning. For eight weeks I *davened* more than I did the other forty-four. One of the non-Jewish counsellors was taught to lead the camp in the *Amidah*; so, at camp just as in the city, non-Jews became honorary Jews. I hated camp, but when parents visited on the weekends (driving, of course, on *shabbos*), they brought kosher salamis galore, as though we were living on bread and water the rest of the week.

When the summer was over and September or October came along, we were occupied with *yuntif*. For years we went to my grandfather's *shul*. He was my father's father and lived alone, not far from us, and although of very modest means had raised his family well. He spoke Yiddish and only a little English, and read Yiddish newspapers. He was never without his prayer-book, although my father never really followed in his ways. My grandfather's *shul* was Orthodox, crowded, disorderly and very hot. To us, it seemed incomprehensible and paranoid (I remember one of the wardens breaking a window with the pole while opening it during a service, and calling out, 'They're attacking the *shul*! Guard the doors!'). The high holidays often occurred in the sweltering Indian summer that descends upon New York in the Autumn, and air-conditioning in a poor *shul*, especially in those days, was unheard of. So for many reasons - and I think my grandfather understood that we children would get more out of it - we switched to a Conservative one, with a younger congregation, a choir, and a children-friendly approach, where we could follow English as well as Hebrew, and sit as families all together in cool, air-conditioned comfort, the women of course finding their fur coats convenient to keep out the cold.

To get to *shul*, we had to pass another Orthodox *shul*, with its windows wide open, its noisy service spilling out into the streets, where men loitered in *yarmulkahs* for a breath of fresh air before plunging back in for *Musaf* or *Neilah*. That was the *shul* we didn't



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go to, needless to say. But my brothers and I had our *Bar Mitzvahs* at still another *shul*, which my mother's family attended, and that was very posh in the grand manner of elite Manhattan synagogues west of Central Park. I travelled there for Bar Mitzvah classes in the few months before I was thirteen. I had never gone to *chedar*, but most of what I had learnt from about the age of eight was from a very gifted and kindly private teacher, an elderly, learned and published Hebrew scholar who came to the house and taught the lot of us over several years. He would bring us *dreidels* to add to the collection that my grandfather gave us. As well as *Torah* and *Haftorah*, he taught us about modern Palestine and the Middle East, and then about the State of Israel when it was founded. I gained a reasonable command of Hebrew, which has sadly lapsed, but not so much of Jewish history.

I don't particularly remember *latkes* on *Chanukah*, maybe because we had them at other times of the year. But we observed it with candles, just as we did *shabbos*. And then there were the *Bar Mitzvahs*, mine and my brothers', and many friends, all produced out of New York's inexhaustible well of chopped liver and *gefilte* fish, resulting in great collections of fountain pens, cuff links, and travelling alarm clocks (but who ever went anywhere?) *Pesach* was something else again. We (and, of course, the maid, who was understandably bewildered) helped my mother to pack and unpack four sets of dishes, and my father to unload gallons of the disgustingly cloying syrup that Manischewitz passed off as wine, *kosher l'pesach*. As the youngest, I always asked the four questions; no problem, folks, but do you really have to pinch my cheeks? Once, or maybe twice, we went to Atlantic City, New Jersey for *Pesach*, along with throngs of other Jews from New York and Philadelphia, to stay over at a grand hotel and attend a *seider* conducted by one of the famous *prima donna Chazanim* like Moishe Oysher or Jan Peerce. That was a special treat; be-

ing pushed along the famous boardwalk, wrapped in blankets against the sea breeze, in cane wheelchairs that you hired for half an hour; the amusement arcades; and the vast hotels with enormous staircases that you could run up and down. There too, everybody seemed to be Jewish, lots of little fat kids in suits and bowties like me, and the *seders* were a feast.

Another memorable *seider* was at the home of my close friend Marty, who was the grand-nephew of the celebrated Yiddish writer Yitzhak Loeb Peretz. Marty's parents, I think, had got out of Poland in the early 1930s. His mother was small, looked like Edith Piaf, and made wonderful *latkes*. Possibly through his family's Polish connections, Marty was acquainted with the radical socialist Jewish workers' movements and *landsman* organisations that intersected with Zionism. Their kids went to entirely different summer camps from those of the bourgeoisie, and for a brief time through Marty I saw another side of New York Jewish life, which was closer to the Lower East Side *Yiddishkeit* of my father's family although politically very different. Marty once invited me to a family *seider*, which was of an entirely different atmosphere from ours. It was conducted in very rapid Hebrew, interspersed with much Yiddish, in a room lit mainly by candlelight, and with the participation of a large *mishpochah* who, amazingly, actually drank the four cups completely down the hatch. So, when in Rome ... I managed to stagger my way back home.

I had no real 'growing pains' as a Jewish child in New York in those days, no sense of a tiny or oppressed minority in a hostile world. The 'downside' of that was that I missed out on the experience of close ties with friends based upon Jewishness in the sense of being Jewish, learning together, doing 'Jewish' things as a group of kids growing up. By way of contrast, Marty had a coterie of friends whose basis was in *Yiddishkeit* although not in religious Judaism. But for me, family circum-

stance and (probably) social class aspirations pulled in a different direction. In its way, it was a charmed life, in which the global predicament of Jews was not directly felt; it was, in fact, denied by the evidence one had to hand. I learnt later on what had happened in Europe, and about the probable fate of our relations who had not emigrated. But this was America, after all, and New York, after all. Post-war refugee relief, anti-defamation activity in *B'nai Brith*, and the like were matters for my parents, aunts and uncles. Lectures on Judaism and history by famous scholars like Salo Baron, Stephen Wise and (I think) David Daiches occasionally occupied my mother and her sister, but not me or my brothers. God forbid we should grow up to become rabbis! Or academics, even! My Hebrew teacher's services were regrettably no longer required after my *Bar Mitzvah*, but that wasn't my decision.

A New York Jewish childhood was great while it lasted. It was astonishingly well stage-managed to keep out other perspectives and to limit other contacts. That was the price one paid. Such an upbringing resembled the bagel; a lot of dough surrounding a hole in the middle. Maybe the *Bialystoker*, on the other hand, was trying to tell us something; but do bagels have subtexts? I wonder how it looked to Woody Allen, my Brooklyn near-contemporary. One of us, at least, survived it.

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AN OASIS OF PEACE by Judith Sudilovsky

The residents of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam (Oasis of Peace) are excited about the prospect of peace. But for them the idea of Arab and Jew living peacefully side-by-side is nothing new.

This small communal village, founded in 1978 and located halfway between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv on land leased from the neighbouring Latrun Monastery, constitutes 22 families, or 100 people, some 50% of whom are Arab.

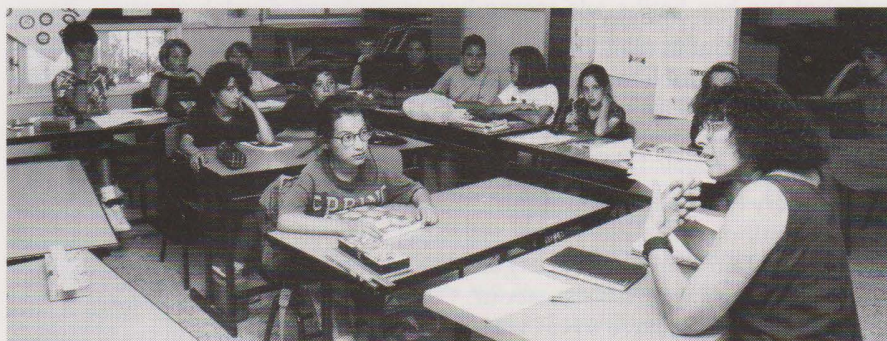
'We share the general feeling of the peace camp - that now the real work begins', said Howard Shippin, originally from England and a resident of Neve Shalom for the past nine years. 'Now is the time to build trust and a new atmosphere (between Arab and Jew) and that's what we are trying to do here. We're trying to establish respect between the two peoples. We want to be a model for what can be possible in the Middle East'.

The original idea for the village was to build a community where members of the world's three major religions - Judaism, Christianity and Islam - could come together. But this went through a transformation and the idea of a shared Jewish-Arab village was eventually born.

'Our idea was not easy to implement', said French-born Ann Le Meignan, one of the original founders of Neve Shalom. 'And we could never have imagined such success'.

'I came to Neve Shalom in 1977 as a volunteer with some other Jewish and Arab college students', recalled the village's current general secretary, Eyas Shbeta, originally from the Arab village of Tira near Netanya. 'Together we cleaned up the site and put up prefabricated houses. After a week we felt something begin to happen between us'.

Initially, there were more Jews than Arabs at Neve Shalom, said Shbeta, as the concept of a communal village is foreign to Arabs and their close-knit society discourages young couples from



Jewish and Arab children study together at the Neve Shalom village school.

leaving their villages and families. 'But over the past three years more Arab families have come to live here and the population now is almost equally divided between Arab and Jew', he said.

The once barren hilltop is now dotted with single-family homes and green lawns; laundry hangs out to dry and cars stand in the drive ways.

Each new family is allocated a plot of land to build its own home. The village provides the funding for a standard house but additional rooms and changes in the structure are privately financed. The houses remain the property of the village and each family pays rent to the village.

A large part of Neve Shalom's budget is donated by friends' organisations around the world, mostly in Europe. Plans to build additional homes for families on the long waiting list must wait until bank mortgages are approved. 'We are always short of money', said Shbeta, 'and we have no government help'.

Neve Shalom also runs a guest house, the School for Peace and a youth hostel, all of which create employment for some two-thirds of the members.

Run like a communal village, elections for the general secretary and committee members are held annually, and all members participate in discussions on major issues.

Most residents are professional couples in their late 30s and early 40s with young children. To some they may seem like aging hippies, with their ideas of living together in peace

WZPS photo by Sammy Avnisan

and harmony, but, says Michal Zak, director of the School for Peace, they are very realistic in their goals.

'We are not hippies', she said. 'It's true that we are trying to build something new here, but we are not just about love and peace. We talk more about conflict and co-existence and not brotherly love. I've come here to build something that I believe in and create a model of equality. My two daughters were born here. My whole life is here'.

The School for Peace has brought together over 134,000 Arab and Jewish students at its seminars on co-existence. As the Jewish students do not speak Arabic, the seminars are conducted in Hebrew. At first, said Zak, the Jewish teens dominate the discussions, but slowly, with the help of the school staff, there is a change in the group dynamics. 'The Arab students become more confident and assertive, and the Jewish students find themselves on unfamiliar ground. They also begin to understand what it's like to be a minority. Our goal is not that they become friends but that they take back (home) what they've learned here'.

The School for Peace also conducts seminars for foreign groups on conflict resolution, separate workshops for Jews and Arabs, encounter seminars for managers, teachers and social education administrators in Jewish and Arab schools, and an adult group leaders' course for Arab-Jewish encounters. Last year they conducted their first seminar with Palestinians from Judea

and Samaria.

'A political solution to the problem between the Palestinians and Israel can be found, but in reality we'll still have the same problems, especially inequality', said Zak. 'We have to learn how to be Jewish and democratic'.

Like every other small community, Neve Shalom has its share of problems, said Zak. They argue about the division of labour, about finances, but none have to do with the fact that they are Arabs and Jews living together, she said. Even last year's spate of violent attacks against Jews, she claimed, created no tension between Arab and Jewish residents.

One mixed Arab-Jewish couple lives in Neve Shalom, but intermarriage is not the village's goal, said Eyas. In fact, they work to maintain the identity of each group but in a pluralistic way. 'We think a great deal about identity here', he said. 'The children know exactly who they are and which are their holidays and customs. Everybody here has their own attitude towards intermarriage but I think that if the price I have to pay for creating a place like this is intermarriage, then I'm willing to pay it'.

Last year the village school, founded in 1984 and providing education up to eighth grade, was recognised by the Ministry of Education and now receives some funding from the government. In 1990 it was opened up to children from the surrounding area, and 60 of the 90 schoolchildren now come from outside Neve Shalom. Arab and Jewish children learn together and classes are taught in both Arabic and Hebrew. Jewish children are also taught Arabic.

'We are trying to teach them how to accept somebody who is different from them', said Zak, 'and get the Jewish children used to the idea of an Arab as an authority figure'.

Suliman Boulos, 13, was sent to a private Arab boarding school in Nazareth last year after five years at Neve Shalom. 'I started studying at the Neve Shalom school in fourth grade when we came here from Jerusalem', said Suliman. 'There

were no problems although at first it seemed strange. We learned in both languages and there were no differences between us. But when they brought in outside kids, the classrooms got too crowded. For me the way we learned was nothing special but maybe later things will be easier for me because I have experienced living with Jews. I know that not all Jews will accept me but also not all Arabs accept Jews. I can explain to both that living together can be done - not just with words but with actions'.

Suliman's mother, Rita, wanted to give her son the tools to function fully in a society comprised of both Arabs and Jews. 'He will make people respect him and like him for the person he is', she said.

It is the end of the day and in the kindergarten a few girls are helping their teacher, Miri, clean up. They speak with her in Hebrew. Sama, the best friend of Zak's five-year old daughter Neriya, scurries around pushing in chairs and clearing off tables. 'I know it is special here but I live here, so for me it's not so special', said Sama, whose Israeli Arab parents come from Nahariya. She sits on the end of her chair, fairly bursting with energy and rocking back and forth on the chair. 'I like living here. I have lots of friends'.

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Jewish Vegetarian Cooking

by Rose Friedman

The official cook book of the international Jewish Vegetarian Society published by Thorsons at £6.99

Review by Gillian Raab

A vegetarian in a non-vegetarian family can stretch the imagination of the person responsible for planning menus close to breaking point. This is never more true than during Passover and so it was with some relief that I found the new edition of this book on the shelves last Pesach. The Passover chapter runs to thirty five pages with interesting suggestions for main dishes, soups and snacks as well as a few cake and desert recipes. The leek patties I made for the seder worked out well, as did the other recipes I tried. For me this book would have been a useful buy for this chapter alone.

This book is much more a list of recipes than some other cookery books, Claudia Roden's for example, which are designed for people who like to read about food as well as just cook it. The recipes come from three main culinary traditions, Ashkenazi,

Sephardi and Israeli. There are lots of interesting ideas. The Ashkenazi dishes include vegetarian variations on kugels, tzimmes, cholents, kneidlach and stuffed cabbage. There is a good selection of Sephardi rice-based dishes and pastries as well as interesting Israeli dishes like cold avocado soup, galia melon soup and aubergine casserole. The recipe for Yemenite Marak Aviv (translated as soup out of thin air) consists of an infusion of spices into which beaten eggs are added to form threads. I will save this for when I am feeling in need of revival. The recipes are health-conscious and lighter than one generally finds in either vegetarian cookery books or in non-vegetarian Jewish cookery books. Those I have tried have been tasty. Purist vegetarians may complain

that there are a few recipes like 'mock chicken rissoles' which are trying to imitate traditional meat or fish based dishes. These include a selection of appetizers based on aubergines or other vegetables which are excellent dishes in their own right and deserve better names than 'mock chopped liver' or 'mock fried fish'.

However, I do have some practical reservations about this book. There is neither a list of recipes nor a decent index. I know from reading through the book that it contains two variations on tzimmes, but only one appears under tzimmes in the index. Also, the way in which the recipes are set out is not always easy to follow nor are they detailed enough for inexperienced cooks. Often the thing you need to do first is not mentioned until a few sentences on. Despite this I believe this book would be a useful one on any kitchen shelf.

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