

The Edinburgh Star

Journal of the Edinburgh Jewish Community

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The Edinburgh Star

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Editorial

I regard it as a great honour to have been invited to become Editor of *The Edinburgh Star*. I certainly did not seek the position - far from it - but, after a long period of hesitation, I simply could not turn it down. I take over a journal which is not only well-established but is the envy of many larger communities. I can well remember when it was no more than a twinkle in the eyes of a few visionaries but, after bursting into the firmament six years ago, it has, as far as I can see, been in the ascendancy ever since.

What have been the ingredients of its success? It has, of course, been extraordinarily well served by three very talented editors: Eitan Abraham, whose inspiration got it started; Ruth Adler, whose personality held it together; and John Cosgrove, whose commitment kept it going. They have set some very high editorial standards which I will do my best to emulate. Fortunately, as I have already discovered, bringing out *The Edinburgh Star* is not the responsibility of the Editor alone, but is very much a collective effort. Thus, I would like to place on record my gratitude to everyone who has contributed to its success: to the Members of the Editorial Board; to Ian Shein, the inappropriately-styled Editorial Assistant who does so much for it; and to everyone else who has helped to produce it, who has written for it or who has supported it in other ways. With so much help and goodwill to draw on, it is not really surprising that *The Edinburgh Star* shines so brightly. Long may it do so.

Rosh Hashanah is, as the Chief Rabbi reminds us, a time for reflection and renewed commitment. Individually and collectively, this entails coming to terms with the past, taking stock of the present and looking to the future and, in this issue, we try to do just that. As my predecessors did, I have tried to achieve a balance between articles which record the activities and reflect the day-to-day concerns of the Edinburgh Jewish Community, and articles which engage with issues of wider significance. Thus, in addition to the Lowrie Report, which reports the retirement of Rabbi Shalom Shapira, and articles on past and present members of the community, we carry two articles on Jerusalem and review two major events from this year's Edinburgh Festival which should be of special interest to our readers (Ariel Dorfman's new play 'Reader' and the exhibition 'From London' which was shown at the Gallery of Modern Art). On the fiftieth anniversary of the dropping of the Atomic Bomb, we carry an article on the life and times of Dr Edward Teller, who championed the development of the even more destructive Hydrogen Bomb and, while the fighting in what was formerly Yugoslavia continues unabated, we also carry an article (by the Director of one of the Edinburgh-based charities) on the Bosnian tragedy.

These two articles should cause us to reflect on the human condition and to ask how much, if any, moral progress the world has made. The prophet Isaiah looked forward to the day when 'They shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning forks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more' but that day would seem to be as far away as ever. Although nearly all of us are individually powerless to prevent or resolve these catastrophes, we would do well to remember the importance Judaism attaches to *zedakah* and, in the case of the Yugoslavian tragedy, give generously to one of the many organisations seeking to bring humanitarian relief to the innocent victims of man's inhumanity against man.

Readers of *The Edinburgh Star*, whatever their political convictions, will, I am sure, wish to join me in extending our congratulations to Malcolm Rifkind on his appointment as Foreign Secretary. This is a truly exceptional achievement, a great honour to him personally, and a source of pride for his family, his friends and the Edinburgh Jewish Community. The responsibilities associated with the post are truly awesome - unlike the rest of us, he is in a position to influence not only the fate of individual nations but also our collective security. We wish him the courage, the strength and the humility to take difficult decisions, to act with compassion and to do what is right. To mark his appointment, a profile of Malcolm Rifkind will appear in the next issue.

MA

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

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

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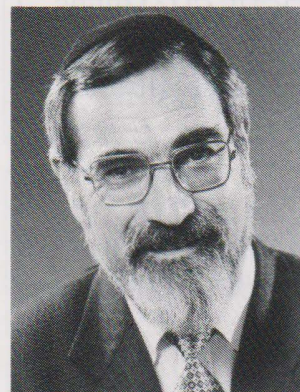
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Chief Rabbi's Rosh Hashanah Message 5756



"Remember us for life, O King who delights in life, and write us in the book of life."

The past year has been, for many of us and in a quite exceptional sense, a year of remembering. Throughout the country there were national and local commemorations for the fiftieth anniversaries of D-Day, VE-Day and VJ-Day. It was a time in which the whole nation was engaged in an act that plays a central part in Judaism - *zakhor*, the act of memory. Remembering is one of the themes of the Days of Awe. Rosh Hashanah is called *Yom hazikaron*, the day of memory. A section of the Amidah prayer is devoted to *zikhronot*, verses relating to memory. On Yom Kippur we say *Yizkor*. We ask God to remember us for life, and not to forget those who are no longer alive.

But during this past year, while we shared in the sense of thanksgiving for victory and the end of war, few of us can have been spared the feeling of still undiminished grief as we remembered what the war years meant for the Jews of Europe, for this was also the fiftieth anniversary of the Holocaust. We recalled perhaps the greatest crime in the history of humanity. We remembered the loss of two thirds of Europe's Jews. We remembered the million and a half children murdered without mercy. We remembered those who were not written in the book of life.

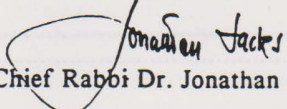
Fifty years is an important landmark. Memories fade. Those who lived through those events and can tell the tale are fewer each year. And yet we know that we must never forget. For Jews, memory is a religious duty. How shall we remember those who were not remembered for life?

One of the most moving tributes this year was the one organised by the Union of Jewish Students. They published fifty brief essays about Jewish life and enlisted some five thousand students to spend a little time each day - fifty days for fifty years - learning about Judaism and rededicating themselves to it. It was a way of saying, "What Jews died for, let us live for." It was a most beautiful memorial. Without in any way minimising the darkness of the tragedy, it was a way of reaffirming life.

The more I think about the Holocaust, the more I am convinced that we must remember it by redoubling our efforts to raise Jewish children who know, understand, practice, celebrate and enjoy Jewish life. The greatest collective reaffirmation we can make as a people is to strengthen Jewish education. As a people we still carry the grief of an entire missing generation. We must make sure that the next generation will continue to live the faith that once came so near to extinction. The future of memory lies with our children. For eighteen hundred years of exile, Jerusalem was not forgotten because there were Jews to remember. We must make sure that there will always be Jews to remember the things that must not be forgotten. And we must make sure that memory, even of tragedy, leads into life.

May 5756 be a year in which we individually and collectively, renew our commitment to Jewish education; and may it be a year of health fulfilment and blessing for you, your families, and for the whole Jewish people.

בברכת כתיבה וחתימה טובה


Chief Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Sacks



THE LOWRIE REPORT

THE RABBI'S RETIREMENT

On Thursday, the Rabbi was at the Luncheon Club*

Thursday, 20 July, saw the Rabbi and Rachel as guests of the Luncheon Club when a special three-course meal was enjoyed by a larger than usual gathering of members and regular cooks. After the meal, Leila Goldberg - Convenor of the Lunch Club - presented them with a set of table mats with a Scottish theme. After thanking them, Rachel made a presentation of a special tablecloth to the Club.

On Tuesday, Rachel was a special guest of the various Ladies Committees

Tuesday, 25 July, Rachel was the guest of the combined Ladies Committees, the venue being the Goldberg home. All had provided sustenance in one form or other for this farewell tea. Leila Goldberg, on behalf of The Ladies Communal Hall Committee, thanked Rachel for the unstinting help she had given over the past seven years and presented her with two prints of Edinburgh scenes. Rachel was also presented with a tray by Hilary Rifkind, on behalf of the Ladies Guild, and with a set of tartan napikins by Katie Goodwin, on behalf of WIZO.

On Sunday, the Rabbi had a farewell tea*

Sunday, 30 July, a large gathering, including many non-Jews, attended the Synagogue's Farewell Tea for the Rabbi and Rachel. The President, Dr Oppenheim, said:

'It is with very mixed feelings that I speak today at this farewell party. I well remember how, some seven years ago, I, with my two immediate predecessors, Malcolm Cowan and John Cosgrove, met you at Edinburgh Airport on your arrival to take up your appointment as Rabbi/ Minister to the congregation.

We wished you well in your endeavours, and well it has surely proved! I say this because over the seven

years you have been with us, you have made yourself an integral part of the congregation, always being there when required - helping and consoling the bereaved at times of tragedy and sadness: visiting the sick at home or in hospital - as well as taking a full part in all the simchas of our members. Your walkabouts at functions are well remembered - and the communal sedorim you lead reminded many of their Judaism. Your ever generous hospitality is a byword and gave pleasure to those who benefited from it! I do not remember you ever refusing to entertain any visitor who came to the shul on a Friday evening or a Shabbat morning. I need not mention your conduct of the services



on Shabbat or Yomtov; that was self-evident to all of us who attended. Your quiet guidance through a complicated ritual was much appreciated. Additionally and equally importantly, you took a full and vital part in other functions of the community: the Luncheon Club, the Friendship Club, and participation in the activities of the Literary Society and the Friends of Israel. The Council of Christians and Jews; and the Interfaith Association all know you as a regular member with much to give at their meetings. All these activities helped to build your position as the lynchpin round which the community revolved.

And now your period of office here is

coming to an end - we are sorry to see you go - but can understand your reasons for going! Your children and grandchildren are an important part of your lives and we can readily appreciate that you will want to be with them while you are both, happily, fit and able to enjoy them. We congratulate you and Rachel on your daughter Efrat's wedding. We remember her well as a lively, attractive girl while she was here and we are sure she will have many happy married years ahead of her.

You take with you the congregation's heartfelt good wishes for the future - and sincere thanks for all you have done with and for us in the past seven years. I hope that you, too, have happy memories of your stay here with us - and in the words of Robbie Burns, 'Haste ye back'.

Following the presentation of an inscribed silver salver from the congregation, the Reverend Malcolm Weisman, representing the Chief Rabbi, reminded us that his connections with the Edinburgh Community go back to his great grandfather in the mid-1880s, his mother was born here and he was related to many families in the community. He finished by reading a personal message from the Chief Rabbi, who very much regretted being unable to be with us on this important day.

Dr Walker, representing the Council of Christians and Jews, said that Rabbi Shapira had made his mark and done a great deal for the CCJ. He said that he had enjoyed his company and friendship and that the Rabbi had been very friendly, kindly and welcoming and always ready to encourage discussion with the CCJ. He concluded by saying that, although there may be hard times ahead for Israel, we should remember that there were many Christians with a great love of Israel.

Dr Whaling of Edinburgh Interfaith told us that he met the Rabbi at the beginnings of the Interfaith Association which coincided with the Rabbi's arrival in Edinburgh. His fond memories will always be of the Jewish Community's singing group

at the Interfaith Festivals, with the Rabbi conducting most vigorously! He praised the Rabbi's hard work, saying that he had helped immeasurably in bringing all the different communities together. Dr Whaling presented the Rabbi and Rachel with a book on Edinburgh.

David Goldberg, on behalf of the Rabbi and Rachel's many friends, then presented them with a testimonial cheque for £1,220 and said that amongst the many things that he could say of the Rabbi and Rachel, those that stood out were that as soon as the Rabbi arrived in Edinburgh, he got to know all our names and used to wish us all individually Good Yomtov or Good Shabbas after each service; and of course Rachel should go into the Guinness Book of Records for all the hard work and entertaining that she has done in her home.

The Rabbi replied that when he arrived in Edinburgh, it was with some trepidation because he was following some very great men. The Rabbi said that his father had been a member of a very religious community in Jerusalem and had been the Principal of a Yeshiva. Thus his father's life would have prevented him from freely expressing his views and trying to help the community as he had tried to do. He went on to say that the responsibility had given him a great deal of satisfaction and that Rachel had been a great support to him in his pastoral work. The Rabbi then presented a Bible from Jerusalem to the Community.

On Saturday, the Rabbi gave Kiddush*

On Saturday, 5 August, after the service, the Rabbi and Rachel gave a special Kiddush for the Community, when everyone had the opportunity to make their personal farewells, some of them very emotional - they have been good friends to us and will be greatly missed.

** with acknowledgements and apologies to Harry Kemelman*

WIZO

Edinburgh WIZO wishes to thank all Ladies who responded to the Jewish Women's Week Appeal.

Their support was much appreciated. The annual WIZO luncheon was again held at Katie and Ron Goodwin's home and, after a dull start, the weather brightened up enabling those attending to enjoy the garden. Music was provided by Sunita Staneslow, formerly of the Jerusalem Symphony and currently with the Minnesota Opera, who was appearing on the Edinburgh Fringe with Vida Acoustic Passion. The food, provided by the indefatigable WIZO ladies, was as fantastic as ever and was enjoyed by a gathering of the usual loyal supporters of the Edinburgh Community as well as by some very welcome visitors from Glasgow. A total of 100 people attended and £650 was raised for WIZO.

THE BRAVERMAN'S DIAMOND WEDDING

On 22 July, Monty and Rachelle Braverman gave a Kiddush to celebrate their Diamond Wedding. They were married on 11 June 1935 at the Grosvenor Hotel, Glasgow. Monty was born in Glasgow, spent his very early years in the Kingdom of Fife at Leven. His mother, who was widowed when Monty was 18 months old, took her family of seven to her parents' home where Monty's grandfather was a ship's chandler. At the age of six, an uncle brought Monty to Edinburgh where he eventually went into the leather goods business in the High Street, supplying the Edinburgh school bairns with top quality leather school bags. Rachelle, who came



from Latvia, was a Zionist and hoped eventually to go to Israel. Before doing so she intended to study French in Switzerland. However, an aunt advised her to come to Scotland and to learn English so she came to Edinburgh University where she graduated with an MA in Hebrew and General Arts. In 1934 she met Monty at a Jewish dance given for 'Freshers' (first year students). They had three daughters, Jackie, Shirley and Aviva, and six grandchildren - two of the girls attended Carmel College, Craig has represented South Africa at the Maccabi Games and Russell is about to start a career in Australia.

The President, Dr Oppenheim, said:

'Monty and Rachelle are, of course, well known to us all, having been staunch members of the congregation for many years. Not only members, but active supporting members - generous with their time, effort and donations, not only to the synagogue but to every charitable organisation that has required help. Additionally, they have been valuable and enthusiastic members of every committee associated with the community! For that we thank them.'

They have earned the respect and affection of all who know them. They are a happy couple - always standing side by side - Monty always with a merry quip and Rachelle with her pleasant welcoming smile, comforting and supportive of each other especially in the times of deep sadness which they have known, as well as in happier times in their long lives together. They have been wonderful parents, particularly caring grandparents and are the centre of a close and affectionate family, spending as much time as possible with their daughters (Jackie and Shirley).

On behalf of the congregation I wish them a most heartfelt Mazeltov and many more serene years together'.

In the reply, made on their behalf by their grandson, Russell said:

'My grandparents, Rachelle and Monty, have asked me to respond on their behalf. They would like to take this opportunity to thank the entire Edinburgh Community most warmly for the kindness and fellowship you have shown them over the years. Your warmth and

generosity is greatly appreciated and it is indeed a tribute to you all and Rachelle's powers of persuasion that Monty has agreed to forgo a weekend at the golf at St Andrews to be with you all today!

Many of you have travelled from afar to be with Rachelle and Monty and whilst they thank each and every one of you, time permits them to mention but a few. First a thank you to three other people who are able to attest that there were great celebrations back in 1935, the best man - Dr Bertie Mann, the maid of honour - Rena Behrman, both from London and Monty's sister, Mina Green, from Glasgow. Other mishpocha include cousins from Tel Aviv, from London and of course the many Rangers supporters from the West Coast, Monty and Rachelle's daughter, Jackie and her family from South Africa and their special granddaughter, Rhonda, who has travelled up from Manchester. Monty and Rachelle, however, are disappointed that their daughter Shirley and her family from California were prevented by illness from being here, but she has now recovered and will be in Edinburgh at the end of the month'.

To this wonderful couple, a Diamond Mazeltov!

THE LUNCHEON CLUB

The Luncheon Club meets every Tuesday and Thursday at 12.15 p.m. except, of course, on Yom Tovim. A two course meal is on the menu and on Thursdays it is fish. The cost is a mere £1.25 or £1.50 for a carry-out.

The club not only provides Kosher food for the elderly at a very reasonable price, it also provides much needed company for people who often feel lonely and isolated at this time of their life. Twenty to thirty five members meet regularly and enjoy themselves immensely.

The Luncheon Club would greatly appreciate any volunteer help for this most worthy and essential of causes. There is an urgent need for volunteer cooks. Anyone who can spare a morning every six weeks or provide transport, if required, to deliver carry-outs or bring some of the less mobile members to the Communal Centre should contact the Convener, Leila Goldberg, on 0131 441 5955.

DINA LEIFER AND ROBIN BLASS



The marriage took place in Edinburgh on Sunday, 18 June 1995, of Dina Leifer and Robin Blass. The bride is the daughter of Joan and Ian Leifer who, as many readers of *The Edinburgh Star* will know, are both very active in the Edinburgh Jewish Community where Ian is, among other things, Treasurer of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation. The bridegroom is the younger son of Esther and Sam Blass of Glasgow.

The ceremony was particularly meaningful, not only because Cantor Ernest Levy sang so beautifully with the Edinburgh Synagogue Choir, but also because Rabbi Dr Daniel Sinclair, now Head of Jews' College in London, was

invited back to Edinburgh to conduct the service and did so with such obvious sincerity. The bride's great uncle, Rabbi Dr Sidney Leperer, who officiated at Joan and Ian's wedding, gave the Address.

Both the Synagogue and the Communal Hall were elegantly decorated for this special occasion, while the radiantly happy bride and groom mingled with their many guests and led off the dancing with great style and grace. The band 'Celebration' ensured that the evening was an outstanding success. *The Edinburgh Star* wishes Dina and Robin many years of happiness together.

E.O.

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COMING EVENTS

October 1995

1 Sunday	Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.
3 Tuesday	Kol Nidre	
4 Wednesday	Yom Kippur	
9 Monday	First Day Succot	
10 Tuesday	Second Day Succot	
16 Monday	Shemini Atzeret	
17 Tuesday	Simchat Torah	
19 Thursday	Council of Christians and Jews	
	Rabbi Dr N Solomon: 'A Decade in Dialogue'	7.30 p.m.
22 Sunday	Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.
23 Monday	Lodge Solomon	7.00 p.m.
29 Sunday	Literary Society	
	Rabbi Dr Danny Sinclair: 'Genes and Levis	

November 1995

5 Sunday	Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.
8 Wednesday	Ladies Committee Supper/Social	
	Speaker : Sheriff Hazel Aronson	7.30 p.m.
11 Saturday	WIZO Jazz Evening	7.30 p.m.
12 Sunday	Literary Society	
	Film : Aviya's Summer (at Edinburgh Filmhouse)	11.00 a.m.
12 Sunday	Remembrance Day Service	3.00 p.m.
20 Monday	Lodge Solomon	7.00 p.m.
23 Thursday	Council of Christians and Jews	
	Dr Timothy Lim : The Dead Sea Scrolls	7.30 p.m.
26 Sunday	Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.
29 Wednesday	Ladies Committee Fashion Show	7.30 p.m.

December 1995

3 Sunday	Literary Society	
	Dr Andrew Barker: 'Jews and Jewishness in Vienna'	8.00 p.m.
10 Sunday	Literary Society Concert	8.00 p.m.
17 Sunday	Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.
18 Monday	Lodge Solomon	7.00 p.m.
	First Day Chanukah	
23 Saturday	Ladies Committee Chanukah Dinner/Entertainment	7.30 p.m.

Junior Maccabi meets every alternate Sunday from 1.00 - 3.00 p.m. For further information, contact Judy Fransman (447 5861)

Senior Maccabi meets on Sunday evenings in members' homes. For further information, contact Jacqueline Bowman (339 75570) or Howard Nicholsby (317 7563)

The Jewish Philosophical Society meets every alternate Saturday afternoon in the Cosgrove Library

The Luncheon Club meets every Tuesday and Thursday at 12 noon

The Mother and Baby Group meets on alternate Sunday mornings at 10.00 a.m.

Meetings are subject to alteration

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

CONGRATULATIONS

to the following

Rt Hon Malcolm Rifkind on his appointment as Foreign Secretary.

Andrew Leifer on becoming a Fellow of the Institute of Actuaries.

Simon Brodie on graduating from RAF Cranwell and on his promotion to Flight Lieutenant.



SPECIAL BIRTHDAY GREETINGS AND MAZELTOV TO:

Mrs Bessie Glass	2 June (90)
Mrs Rocky Levy	14 July (90)
Miss Betty Franklin	19 July (80)



S ROBIN HALEVY-SPARK - AN EXHIBITION DOUBLE

Peter Potter Gallery, Haddington -
22 July to 18 August

Rachael's, The Botanic Gardens -
23 August to 2 September

Those fortunate to view the painter's work in these exhibitions might be excused for thinking that the artist had taken to signing his paintings with wee red dots! His work obviously appeals to a wide and discerning public.

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WHERE WERE THEY?

To commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the ending of the Second World War, our Editorial Assistant, Ian Shein, asked some current members of the Edinburgh Jewish Community to tell us, in their own words, about their experiences in the war. In the last issue, we carried nine brief pen portraits: in this issue, we carry eight more.

ALEC ABRAHAM



Volunteered for the army in September 1939 and, with the Royal Army Ordnance Corps, was one of the first volunteers to reach Egypt the following month.

His army trade was as a 'textile refitter' and he took part in the first desert campaign. His duties included repair of covers for lorries and Bren gun carriers. In May 1941, as a sergeant, he started and was in charge of a military depot textile shop with responsibility for making and repairing camouflage nets, bush nets and mosquito veils. Under his charge were over 300 machinists, the majority native peasant women who brought their own sewing machines with them. He remained in the Middle East until 1944 when he was posted to Germany and ultimately to Belgium where he was demobilised in 1945.

SHEILA KAYE

Served from 1942 until 1946 in the ATS. Her duties in an Ordnance Company were of a clerical nature and she was based in Feltham, Middlesex. She was often aware of German bombers overhead on their way to London. All of her service was at Feltham, she advised her commanding officer that she could not be posted as all her friends were at the base.

SAM LATTER



Called up in 1941 he enlisted in the Royal Air Force and was stationed at Dalcross where, as an armourer, his duties were to train air gunners and to fly

with them. In 1943 he was posted to Kirkham as a corporal instructor in guns, bombs, rockets and depth charges. The base included many Allied nationals who had joined the RAF. Apart from being armament instructor he also became orderly corporal with responsibility for assembling the defaulters parade for the Station Warrant Officer's inspection. Latterly he was attached to 201 Squadron of Sunderland Flying Boats before being demobbed in 1945.

SIMON LEVINSON

Was called up during the early days of the war and served in the Royal Air Force at Arbroath. Postings followed to north of Scotland and to the Midlands where he witnessed the heavy German air raids on Coventry. He trained as a wireless operator, his duties being to maintain contact and constant communication with patrolling aircraft for the transmission and receipt of information. He was based on the mainland opposite Scapa Flow in the Orkneys when a German U-boat penetrated the naval defences and sunk a battleship. Winston Churchill visited Scapa Flow after the sinking of the battleship and an anti-submarine blockade was later built by Italian POWs. He was demobbed after four and a half years.

SAM LEVY

Before the war he took flying lessons and volunteered for the forces in September 1939. However, he was not called up until 1940 due to health problems and was then placed in the Royal Army Service Corps. He was stationed at Chesterfield working as an office clerk before being posted to Newcastle where he was promoted to sergeant. One of his duties was the training of dispatch riders and the planning of road transport

should the Germans invade. He trained in jungle warfare before embarking for the Far East in January 1943 as a Staff Sergeant. Arriving ultimately on the India/Burma border he was involved in the collection and assembly of arms and equipment for the troops. He was in Rangoon for one year at the end of the war.

HENRY MANN



Volunteered for the Royal Air Force in 1941 in preference to conscription to the army or navy. Posted to the wireless operator/air gunner training unit near Marl-

borough, he was then sent to Drem near Edinburgh. His main duties were as regimental hairdresser but this did not prevent his playing the drums and being the vocalist in the local RAF band. Whilst in Drem, he was joined by another local lad, Sam Latter. Promoted to Corporal, he was transferred to the Orkneys where during one short spell, he was put in charge of an armoured car when there was the threat of a German invasion from Norway. Other duties included the instruction of air gunners on the clearance of jammed machine guns. When the war ended, he was stationed at Dalcross, and although a shortage of NCOs almost postponed this, he was demobilised in 1945.

ALEC RUBENSTEIN

Called up in 1940, he was posted to the Royal Engineers where he was trained in bridge building. Selected for bomb disposal training, he was attached to Scottish Command HQ. He also undertook a drivers course

becoming personal driver to his commanding officer and was promoted lance-corporal. He was involved in training American troops and other forces on bomb dismantling, and witnessed the heavy air raids on Clydebank in 1941. His unit excavated more than 600 bombs. Promotion to full corporal followed further training in more specialised equipment. He moved around the country and, whilst in Aberdeen, met the Gold brothers who invited him to take the Friday evening services in the Synagogue. In that city, he was awarded the Royal Humane Society Testimonial Parchment for diving fully clothed into a river and saving a young boy from drowning. His service extended almost six years.

SYDNEY SOLOMON



The war was a few weeks old when he was called up to the REME. After only six weeks initial

training in Glasgow, his unit was shipped to the Middle East. In early 1942 a posting to Singapore was diverted when Japanese troops captured the base and he landed in India. A return to the Middle East saw him being stationed in Palestine and he managed to get passes into Tel Aviv and Tripoli where he attended Synagogue. His duties as a textile fitter included camouflage of tanks, both British and captured German ones. Postings to the 8th Army and the 'Desert Rats' at El Alamein and Tobruk preceded the invasion of Italy where his unit advanced up the country from Naples to Venice. When the war ended he was in the north of Italy and was demobbed in 1945 after almost six years' service.

BBC Radio Scotland

"THOUGHT FOR THE DAY"

by John Cosgrove

Appox. 7.40 a.m.

Fridays

6th, 13th, 20th & 27th October 1995

WORLDS APART

by Ron Hoffenberg

On Tuesday, 4 June 1613, two small canoes slowly made their way upstream and against the current. The two Frenchmen looked around them in silent wonder. The Ottawa River widened here to almost two miles - on their right the colder, faster Gatineau River emptied into a pleasant wide and open mouth, while on their left another river fell 45 feet over a spectacular arch. The natives would delight in passing under the tumultuous spray for its full 200 feet without getting wet. Later this river would be given the apt name of the Rideau (the curtain) and the City Hall, embellished three centuries later by Moshe Safdie, who designed the Children's Memorial at Yad Vashem, would stand here within sight and sound of its waters.

Upstream the Ottawa River careered over sheeted rocks, plunged 50 feet and boiled like a cauldron. The French would rename this spot La Chaudière (the Kettle). Here the Indians, on the brink, stood and threw tobacco into the foam as an invocation to the local

spirit, the Manitou of the cataract. This was thought to ensure a safe voyage but instead was often the prelude to disaster by ambush from parties of hostile Indians lying in wait at the spot.

Resting on their paddles and almost awed by the sight of these cascades, and the endless forests on every side, they absorbed the rush of the river, the cool and fresh water glinting in the morning sun, and the stands of pine, white cedar, hemlock - loved by the white tailed deer, rock maple, elm, oak, beech and ash. Samuel de Champlain, who was to explore all the way up to the great lakes and become the pillar of French colonial settlement, turned to his companion and second in command and said 'Moishe, this will be a wonderful place to build a community and a few shuls'. Moishe Rabainous, an energetic and intrepid young man from Brittany, nodded and looked back to the south side of the river where beyond the falls he saw in his mind's eye the rise of a beautiful city with tall buildings and wide streets,



Ron Hoffenberg and his wife Rose Ann.

spacious parks, fine homes, peace and tranquillity, and a synagogue in every quarter of town. It would be two centuries before real settlement took place, and another 150 years after that before Moishe's vision became a reality.

Thousands of miles to the East a different type of exploration was going on. For almost 2,000 years there had been a steady migration of Jews following the trade routes from the Mediterranean to the Black Sea - first western Jews under Alexander and then eastern Jews under Roman influence formed settlements around the Black Sea and the Crimea. In the 8th century, the Khazars adopted Judaism. They were conquered by the Kievans in the 11th century and all were inundated by the Tartars in the mid 13th century. All these developments brought Jewish traders and families ever further northwards and westwards.

The crusades and Lateran Councils provoked intolerance and persecution and, with Polish encouragement, there was a flow eastward of large numbers of German Jews who were welcomed by the kings of Poland. The Russians saw things differently and Jewish settlement in Russia was sparse until the later part of the 18th century.

While Champlain was gazing with admiration at the scenic falls, it was only a few years before Bogdan Schmelnitsky revolted and initiated a slaughter of Jews that, within ten years, would reduce the Jewish population to a mere tenth of their former number. Many emigrated north west to Lithuania where no Jewish settlement had actually taken place since the 14th century.

To be honest I cannot tell you if the ancestors of the Hoffenberg family were to be found marching with Alexander as he fought Darius the Persian, or in the company of Roman legions as they colonised the Mediterranean basin. Perhaps they were the lucky survivors of the cruel and savage crusades who fled east to Poland and escaped the terrors of Cossack butchery on the south banks of the River Dnieper. What I

can tell you is that by the 19th century they were well established in the district of Kovno Giberne in Lithuania. Small towns in that district were Zosle and Vevye. Lithuania with its long history of settlement was an important centre of Jewish life, with many vibrant Jewish communities whose members were to spread far and wide and form the nucleus of other Jewish communities in Scotland, England, South Africa, Canada, USA and, of course, Israel. Life in these communities was harsh and, although the Jews were able to be merchants and farmers, they were continually at the mercy of the Russian Government and their Christian neighbours.

Between 1815 and 1855 the attitude of the Government went through three phases. A period of benevolent paternalism and severe restrictions, a military period in which their youth were subject to conscription, barrack training and compulsory assimilation, and finally a period in which 'crown schools' were established and the autonomous structure of Jewish life was destroyed. Vilna at the latter part of the 19th century was a thriving Jewish city. From the first Jewish community in 1320, and again after their return in 1573, the numbers had steadily increased until, by 1900, it had over 150,000 Jewish inhabitants. However, poverty was deeply-rooted and it was estimated that more than 20% relied on publicly-supported cheap or free meals.

The oppression, poverty and loss of their traditional ways forced many to seek a better life elsewhere. For example, in 1850 Eli Bilsky and his son Moses left Kovno and settled in Kemptville, a small town just outside Ottawa. When they moved to Ottawa and settled there in 1857 they became the first Jewish family in that town. That was the year that Queen Victoria chose Ottawa as the new capital of Canada.

When Eli and Moses Bilsky left Kovno, it is quite possible that the Hoffenberg family were there to see them off. Fifty years later my father's oldest sister set sail for

Edinburgh, and within a few years, the whole family had settled there. My grandfather Isaac opened a butcher shop that provided kosher meat to the community for over 60 years. The name Hoffenberg suggests a German origin, but who knows? It may have been a late replacement for a Hebrew name, and its meaning 'mountain of hope' may have had its significance in the hope felt by the family as they escaped the persecutions and uncertainties of life in Lithuania for the unknown but relative freedom of Scotland.

The Jewish Community in Scotland, and especially in Edinburgh, was small but not new. The first Edinburgh Shul was built in 1816 and by 1900 there were almost 1,000 Jews in the city, but it was not until 1932 that the spacious and well-designed Schul in Salisbury Road was opened, replacing the Graham Street Schul and the Central Shul. The Yiddish-speaking immigrants took time to merge with those who had arrived earlier (the 'Scottish' Jews), but with time, and especially with the creation of one synagogue, the Edinburgh community became more united and its influence was wider than its size would have suggested.

The immigrants settled in without major turbulence. Life was hard as many of them sought a living by opening shops, travelling the local countryside selling their goods and seeking work. They maintained an active Jewish identity and strived so that their children would have a better education and greater security than they themselves had known. The freedom of expression and relief from tyranny must have been keenly felt.

I was born in Edinburgh in 1939. My mother had come from Newcastle to marry my father Frank, and brought a little gentleness with her. My father had five sisters and was the youngest Hoffenberg sibling. Thus, we were part of a very large family which included the Rifkinds, the Luries, the Simenoffs, the Goldbergs and the Lichensteins. I never really

sorted out the whole mosaic of my extended family.

I spent 27 years in Edinburgh and built up memories that 29 years later are as clear and strong as ever. Edinburgh seems to do that. The smells are redolent and evoke visions of how it was. Autumn leaves burning, the bonfire on Guy Fawkes night, the Blackfords in summer, the smell of the buses at St Andrew's Square, as excitedly we waited to go on our outings. We invaded Balerno, Gullane, North Berwick and, with the community, Roslin.

For 11 years I attended Cheder. I was taught by long-suffering teachers - wonderfully colourful personalities, no longer seen in today's liberal but somewhat bland environment. I can still see in my mind's eye Mr Rubenstein, Mr Rafalowicz, Rabbi Isaac Cohen, and am grateful to them and others who gave us such a good grounding in Hebrew that 50 years later, despite a layer of rust, it can easily be polished and stands bright and ready for use.

Thirteen years at Heriot's School gave me a good Scottish education and those 'long' years of crossing the Meadows between Machmont and Lauriston are now but an instant. I played rugby and swam for the school and often quote our healthy involvement since sports in Canadian schools are not compulsory and are performed by only a few interested pupils.

Outside school, we had many good friendships, and Cheder, Habonim, and Shul plus family were the nuclei of our free time. I will never forget those long summer evenings playing cricket with Maccabi in the Meadows, and trying to mimic the graceful ability of David Mendelssohn. We made up for our lack of skill by immense enthusiasm and woe betide the player or umpire who tried to gainsay the 'experts' in our team. Nor will those images of cold rainy Sundays as Jackie Bierman, Louis and Joey Gordon, Lenny and Norman Berger, Harold Levy, my brother Edwin and I and others played soccer in the mud, lost our

tempers and the game, and tried to refresh ourselves in a pub which applied the rather ridiculous 'bona fide traveller' rules.

With Micky Cowen, Robert Bindman, Frank Abramson, Barry Leigh, David Fluss, Sandra Smith, Jacqueline Hallside, Katie Rosen and many others we passed through childhood, into adolescence and eventually, at least for some of us, into new lives away from Edinburgh. I realise that for many readers, this will be a boring recall of unknown names, but for me they are colourful stones in the mosaic of a very dynamic and wonderful childhood.

Edinburgh University Medical School had me crossing the Meadows for a further seven years, and after doing it the 'Edinburgh way' for over a quarter of a century I became part of what was known in the 1960s as the 'Brain Drain' and found myself in Ottawa, which at the 100 year anniversary of Confederation was poised to beautify itself and cast off its image as a 'lumber town', the poor cousin of other major national capitals. The untimely death of my parents and the emigration of my sister Joyce to Canada, and my brother Edwin to Israel cut most of the binding ties, and with a Canadian wife whose family had migrated here from Lithuania, I prepared to spend the next quarter century.

The Edinburgh I left was not a city that I was happy to leave. Beautifully situated within easy distance of the sea and the hills. It was steeped in history, with a tradition of culture, old and new. A famous University and Medical School, and an exciting summer Festival with a worldwide reputation. I could go on, but those of you who live there and those of you who used to live there don't need my description to appreciate its worth. Those who have never visited the city should certainly do so.

The Ottawa I found in 1966 was like Edinburgh in many ways. A capital city with little heavy industry, it blossomed as the years

passed to become a beautiful and, in many ways, exciting city. It doesn't have the history of Edinburgh but for almost 200 years it has been the centre of the Dominion Canada. Parliament buildings resembling Westminster, all kinds of architecture, including a glorious National Gallery designed by Safdie, and a fine Arts Centre.

The Jewish community thrived as well. From 70 Jews in 1889, it has grown to over 11,000 today. There are seven Shuls, Orthodox, Conservative and Reform. Six hundred pupils are enrolled in the Jewish day-school. We have our own newspaper, Social Service Agency, Jewish home for the elderly, and there are community functions almost every day of the week. A well-supported endowment fund supports many of the institutions and will do so more and more in the future as it grows. A choice of summer camps for the kids are available and the community is enthusiastic and generous in its support of Israel. It has sent its young people and has endowed several projects including a Sports Arena in Metulla.

As I stand on the banks of the Rideau, close to the roar of the falls with my back to the City Hall and surrounded by green parks and tall and gracious buildings, I look down on the Ottawa River, flowing 500 miles from source to empty into the mighty St Lawrence and hence the sea, and am reminded of Champlain and Moishe who dreamed it all, but didn't see how I, a Lithuanian Edinburgh lad, would complete the circle.

Ron Hoffenberg graduated in medicine from Edinburgh University where he was President of the Union. He is now an Orthopaedic Surgeon in Ottawa

*With Compliments
from
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Cosgrove*

A STANDS FOR ATOM, B STANDS FOR BOMBS

by Eitan Abraham

On the fiftieth anniversary of the dropping of the first atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Eitan Abraham reports on the life and times of Dr Edward Teller, the 'father' of the H-bomb, who visited Edinburgh recently to give the annual Science and Society Lecture at Heriot-Watt University.

A Hungarian Jew by birth who fled to the United States in 1935, Teller was probably the most influential scientist of the nuclear era and perhaps the century. His political impact was nothing short of enormous. American Presidents have come and gone, along with their powerful aides. Statesmen of science have fallen in and out of favour. Not Teller. He was at the centre of the stage for decades, building bombs, testifying before the American Congress, advising Generals and Presidents, fashioning himself into a force that dominated the age. He was tough, bellicose and phenomenally charismatic. Most importantly, he was a major architect of the Cold War. With great skill and seemingly boundless energy, he did more than any other scientist, perhaps more than any other individual, to keep its structure intact and evolving. It is quite remarkable that, at the age of 70, filled with as much determination as ever, Teller longed for a crowning glory: to persuade the American Government to embrace the Star Wars programme.

Liberal politicians have assailed him as the mastermind of a ruinous arms race. Popular culture has cast him as a Dr Strangelove, a mad scientist fixated on mass destruction. In 1970, students at the University of California at Berkeley declared him a 'war criminal' and burned him in effigy fifty metres from his home. There has also been a clash of opinion among his peers. Linus Pauling, twice Nobel Prizewinner for Peace and Chemistry, called him 'the most dangerous man in the USA and the one who can cause most damage to future scientists'. The Jewish Physics Nobel Laureate, Isidor I Rabi, who worked on the Manhattan Project with Teller, called him 'a danger to all that's important' and that 'it would have been a better



The first explosion of a hydrogen bomb in 1952.

world without Teller'. Another Jewish, Hungarian-born Nobel Laureate who died recently, Eugene P Wigner, called him a 'great man' and 'one of the most thoughtful statesmen of science'.

Beginnings

Teller was born in Budapest on 15 January 1908, to Max Teller, a well-to-do lawyer, and his wife Ilona. At the time, science was viewed as the source of all material progress and had become the religion of educated men and women. The boy Edward spoke little during his first years, giving rise to worries that he was retarded. He uttered his first complete sentences after his third birthday, and by the time he started school at the age of six, he was thoroughly familiar with all the basic mathematical operations.

An affluent family of assimilated Jews, the Tellers stressed Edward's education above all else. He fell in love with learning, eagerly reading all kinds of books for school and for himself. Jules Verne, Teller recalled, 'carried me into an exciting world. The possibilities of man's improvement seemed unlimited. The

achievements of science were fantastic, and they were good'. His mother wanted him to become a pianist and he showed considerable promise. He also excelled at chess.

Budapest had a thriving Jewish community. A series of celebrated schools produced five of the twentieth century's great scientists, all of whom eventually fled to the United States: Theodor von Karman, Leo Szilard, Eugene P Wigner, John von Neumann and Edward Teller. 'I was very privileged to be the junior member of this club', Teller told the Linlithgow MP Tam Dalyell during question time after the Science and Society Lecture. The five Hungarian scientists were to have a remarkable impact on science in the United States and were universally seen as visionaries.

As Teller grew into adolescence, his family went out of their way to nurture his other-worldly feats. 'Please don't talk to me - I have a problem', Teller would announce at the dinner table. The family knew it was some calculation he was doing in his head for fun. According to Teller's biographers, everyone would duly respect his request and isolate him from mundane conversation for the rest of the meal. Remarkably, some seventy years later, when the two of us were discussing physics over lunch at Heriot-Watt, he reacted to one of my statements with, 'don't talk to me for the next five minutes, I need time to think'. After five minutes came the eureka-type of exclamation and a question. I then tried to emulate the great man and replied, 'now you don't talk to me for the next five minutes ...' He smiled. But after five minutes I realised I was no Teller. I needed injury time.

After going to university in Budapest where he studied chemical engineering to please his parents, Teller was seduced by the

intellectual currents then sweeping Germany. There was a revolution going on in physics called quantum mechanics that turned inward towards understanding the atom. Paradoxes plagued the new theory as particles could be waves and waves could be particles. By 1928, Teller was so excited by such riddles that he talked his father into letting him join the fray.

He then went to the University of Leipzig to work under Werner Heisenberg, a giant of quantum mechanics who was later to become a Nobel laureate. He obtained his PhD in theoretical physics two years later, somewhat bemused by the short time as he explained in another of his lectures at Heriot-Watt, on recollections of his life. Teller was a night worker and his office, which he also used as a bedroom, was below Heisenberg's. Teller was doing calculations on the hydrogen molecule on a manual mechanical computer, a rather noisy machine. One night, much to his surprise, Heisenberg said that it was time to write up his thesis. 'To this day I don't know if Heisenberg thought that I had done enough for my thesis or whether he had enough of the noisy computer'.

After working in Göttingen, Copenhagen and London, George Gamow, a tall, warm, talkative, imaginative Russian expatriate who had gone to George Washington University, offered Teller a full professorship. In August 1935, Teller and his wife Mici, set sail, destined to live in the USA for the rest of their lives. He began a scientific collaboration with Gamow and helped analyse many of the Russian's brilliant, eccentric ideas. More significantly, Teller was encouraged by Gamow to ponder the enigma of what powered the sun and the stars, a meditation that would ultimately lead to the creation of the hydrogen bomb.

A-bomb versus H-bomb

In January 1939 came the startling news from Germany that Hahn and Strassman had split the atom with a release of a burst of energy: it was

only a matter of time before Hitler could have an atomic bomb. The situation demanded an urgent response and prompted Szilard to persuade Einstein to sign a letter urging Roosevelt to start a nuclear programme. 'Szilard was a brilliant man who could do anything', said Teller in his lecture, 'but he did not know how to drive a car. So I entered history as Szilard's chauffeur and drove him to Long Island. Einstein received us in his slippers, offered us a cup of tea, read the letter, and signed it'. This marked the beginning of the Manhattan Project to build the A-bomb under the direction of J Robert Oppenheimer, whose earlier leftist connections were forgiven by the American establishment. The Los Alamos Laboratory was created in the New Mexico desert.

Teller had a relatively minor role in the Project, but he was present at every critical juncture. The leaders of Los Alamos found him more of a hindrance than a help. Always the visionary, always trying to see ten years ahead of his peers, Teller had decided the atomic bomb was a sure thing and unworthy of his attention. What preoccupied him was a much more ambitious project, namely the hydrogen bomb. This led to open conflict with Oppenheimer who held the view that there was no time to develop such a thermonuclear explosive which, in any case, needed an atomic bomb to trigger it.

After Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the crisis of conscience that followed, Oppenheimer saw no necessity for a more powerful bomb. This sharply contrasted with Teller's hawkish views and the two men were unable to reconcile their differences. Teller's argument began to gather strength after the first Russian nuclear test in August 1949 and in the political atmosphere created during the McCarthy period in the early fifties. Oppenheimer's early leftist connections were brought to the surface and he came under increasing scrutiny from the FBI. Teller was summoned to Washington to make a declaration on Oppenheimer, a paragraph of

which read:

'Oppenheimer's opposition to the hydrogen bomb is not due to any subversive reasons, but rather to a combination of reasons including personal vanity in not desiring to see his, Oppenheimer's work, on the atomic bomb, done better on the hydrogen bomb'.

He then added,

'I have confidence in the loyalty of Oppenheimer, but he is a complicated individual. I wish the security of the country was in the hands of somebody I understood better and therefore trusted more'.

Teller's testimony to the FBI was important in prompting the hearings that later took place, forming the basis of a substantial proportion of the charges against Oppenheimer.

The H-bomb project went ahead and the first device was built at Los Alamos and detonated in the Pacific on 1 November 1952. The island of Elugelab, one mile in diameter, ceased to exist. The bomb was 700 times more powerful than the one dropped on Hiroshima. Given the strained relations with Los Alamos scientists, Teller watched the explosion from a seismograph at Berkeley. After it happened, he sent a three-word telegram to the Director of Los Alamos: 'It's a boy!'

Around this time Teller composed a rhyming atomic alphabet for children that hinted at his ambivalence over the achievement:

A stands for atom; it so small

No one has ever seen it at all.

B stands for bombs; the bombs are much bigger.

So, brother, do not be too fast on the trigger.

F stands for fission; that is what things do

When they get wobbly and big and must split in two.

And just to confound the atomic confusion

What fission has done may be undone by fusion.

*H has become a most ominous letter,
It means something bigger, if not something better.*

For good or ill, Teller the theoretical physicist, intensely curious about nature and fearful of Russian power, had proven himself a wizard, at least in the eyes of the world. Through an exercise of pure thought and human will, Teller had commanded nature to release the energy of the stars, lifting a million tons of rock into the sky. By this time he had set the wheels in motion for building a new weapons factory at an abandoned World War II naval station in California, the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory. More than two years passed before Livermore successfully exploded its first H-bomb after many flops.

Teller was undeterred by the difficulties. Moreover, he felt that Oppenheimer's continuing scepticism about the H-bomb, coupled with his vast influence, endangered the nation. The Russians would surely have no qualms about forging ahead with deadly armaments to threaten the West. Teller judged Oppenheimer a risk and was quick to say so. The main forum for his criticism was a hearing before the personnel security board of the Atomic Energy Commission in April and May 1954, the height of the McCarthy era. By all accounts he was devastating in the witness box and his testimony resulted in the

demise of the most famous of wartime scientists. Teller was subsequently ostracised by the scientific community at large.

During question time after the lecture, Steve Adams, a research associate in the Physics Department at Heriot-Watt, asked the bold question we all wanted to ask but never dared: 'Do you have any regrets about having testified against Oppenheimer?' His answer: 'I have no regrets. Oppenheimer was a brilliant physicist but a less than honest man....' He then went on to say that in the early summer of 1945, Szilard wrote a letter to President Truman, which he hoped all scientists involved in the Manhattan Project would sign, asking him not to drop the bomb in Japan, but just use it as a demonstration. Teller felt he had to consult the Director of Los Alamos



Teller delivering the Science and Society Lecture at Heriot-Watt University. Professor John Erickson (left) chaired the event.

before signing it. But Oppenheimer denied him permission as he believed that scientists should not influence political decisions. Teller did not sign it. Later on he found out that Oppenheimer tried, in this case unsuccessfully, to influence political decisions. 'Ultimately', said Teller, 'It was Truman's single-handed decision, possibly with Churchill's approval, but that was beside the point'.

Edinburgh

When Teller was about to arrive at Edinburgh Airport on 7 October 1994, I could not stop thinking about his achievements and his larger than life image. He had done so much, he had seen so much, he had lived for so long, I could think of nothing that would surprise him. I was wrong. Inevitably I felt I had to ask him about his attitudes to Judaism. This was our shortest conversation. 'Look', he said, 'my wife is not Jewish so I never took a particular interest in Judaism nor do I make a particular fuss about being Jewish. But I never make a point of hiding it'. Concerning Israel, I gave way to my next temptation. 'Have you helped Israel with atomic secrets?' He replied, 'When I was invited to go to Israel I accepted the invitation provided that they would not ask any sensitive questions and that if they revealed any secrets to me, I would report them to Washington'.



At a reception in the author's home (from left to right): Dr Eitan Abraham, Dr Edward Teller and Tam Dalyell, MP.

The conditions were accepted and Teller went to Israel.

His Science and Society Lecture, entitled *Who is afraid of Science?*, was astonishing. Tam Dalyell who, in his letter accepting the invitation to attend, expressed interest in meeting the 'Prince of Darkness', came up to me and said, 'I was mesmerised by this man'. It was vintage Teller. The theme of his lecture was his concern with the gulf that has developed between science and public understanding which has resulted in mistrust and fear of science. He spoke emphatically about the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the unfounded fears of low-level radiation which could even be beneficial for the thousand mutations per day that occur in the cell. Finally, he reminded us that the responsibility of the scientist is to science - the uses and misuses of science are the responsibility of others. Those of us in the audience who were scientists, felt that Teller rekindled our sense of purpose and the idealism that had turned us to science in the first place.

After a week in Edinburgh, Edward Teller the ideas man, the romantic, the atom visionary, the man who believed that his bombs and his Star Wars fantasies contributed to the collapse of the Soviet empire, went back home. Later on I learnt from his secretaries at Livermore and the Hoover Institution what a wonderful time he had had in Edinburgh. I have never heard from him since. Perhaps I never will, but the impact of his presence is unforgettable.

Dr Eitan Abraham was the Founding Editor of The Edinburgh Star. He is a Lecturer in the Department of Physics at Heriot-Watt University.

*With Compliments
from Jess Franklin*

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THE MIRACLE OF JEWISH SURVIVAL IN TUZLA

by Nikkie du Preez

'Our firm has sold 160 computers this year' said Igor Rajner, Member of Parliament, businessman - and the dynamic leader of the Jewish community in Tuzla (the largest city in North-Eastern Bosnia). He smiled at me with pride across the large desk, an eager, active figure in his early forties, his briefcase lying open on the floor beside him. The computers sitting on nearby tables twinkled gently, a sign of prosperity and continuing commercial acumen, but the large, square windows were criss-crossed with tape to prevent flying glass shredding the occupants.

Only a week before, Igor theoretically did not exist. When our charity (BOSNIA NOW) decided to send me with funds to the Mayor of Tuzla I had asked around: were there any Jews in Tuzla? 'No' was the short answer. In Sarajevo, yes, there was a community established for hundreds of years. In Split and Zagreb in Croatia, there were Jews; but in Tuzla no, no one had ever heard of any. And yet, after a bit of digging, a kind Jewish agency in Croatia (La Benevolencija) came up with a name and here we were in his office in the modern, once prestigious Hotel Tuzla. In front of us the typical Bosnian miniature cup of espresso coffee. In the hills above us Serb militias sat patiently, lobbing a few shells over every week or so. Like all the other Bosnian enclaves (Gorazde, Sarajevo and Bihac), Tuzla was still being shelled regularly, almost as if they were keeping their hand in, though not on that day.

I was astounded. How could his company be selling computers and to whom? 'To the Bosnian government and the Army' he explained, puffing on a cigarette. Tuzla was obviously different from the rest of Bosnia that I had seen on the way up: the central parts and the city of Mostar in the South. They had all been 'ethnically cleansed', gaunt



Igor Rajner

skeletons of houses opened up to the elements, roads destroyed, people barely scratching a living. Trains no longer worked. Communications were only local. It had taken five days to reach Tuzla by bus over densely wooded mountains on white dusty tracks blown out of the mountains by UNPROFOR engineers. (Building roads is, in the eyes of many Bosnians, by far the best contribution UNPROFOR has made in Bosnia Herzegovina.)

'Tuzla has always been the most prosperous region, heavily industrialised' he continued. 'We have the second largest power plant in former Yugoslavia. It is still working, though only at 15% capacity. We hope to increase that soon. This region is the Ruhr of Bosnia' he said emphatically. In the quiet room, the phone at his elbow, as modern as any in Britain, rang stridently. Immediately, Igor was actively doing business, discussing specifications and computer prices. As he negotiated volubly, I crossed to the window and admired the view. Around us were well-tended grassy lawns, in front a small canal flowed between concrete banks. Into the distance stretched the modern city,

large white UN Range Rovers with impressive aerials speeding down the busy streets towards the old city centre. Far below us you could still see traces of the hotel's dignity and wealth in its large marble-floored lobby, the expensive sculptured glass lamps and the well-trained staff, but the interminable war had reduced the corridors to shabbiness. The lobby was empty and dismal. The bulbs in the expensive lamps were dim.

On the phone Igor leaned forward, hands gesticulating to make a final point. The fast stream of fluent Bosnian flowed over me incomprehensibly, though the odd word of 'computer-speak' crept in: megabytes were megabytes, even in Bosnian. 'Da, da' (yes, yes) he confirmed at last cheerfully. Bosnian is clearly related to Russian. 'Tell me about the Jewish community in Tuzla?' I asked. 'It is small', he answered in fluent English, 'about 130 members, mostly young. Tuzla has always been good to outsiders. I myself came with my family from Sarajevo when I was six years old'. In Tuzla the different ethnic groups always lived happily together, he went on. On my way into the city I had indeed observed the opulent gold-embossed Serb (Greek Orthodox) church glowing next to the brilliant white modern Croat (Catholic) church and the tall, elegant minaret of the mosque.

'Anti Semitism does not exist' he continued. 'The Jewish cemetery has been cared for by the same Muslim family (and their descendants) for generations'. In such a tolerant community, assimilation had taken its toll. 'We had no sense of being separate'. The tolerance still survives. 'In May (25) this year', he continued, 'seventy teenagers were killed in a shelling attack when a disco was hit during the Youth Festival'. Though none of the victims were Jews, they were a mixture of Muslims, Croats and Serbs. The parents and grieving families insisted that they be buried together as a symbol of the spirit of co-operation and tolerance which has existed between the com-

munities for centuries. The Muslim religious authorities protested. The families went ahead anyway.

'Tuzla was never a big community, not like Sarajevo' he explained. 'Before the Austro-Hungarian empire there were just a few Sephardi Jews. With the Austro-Hungarians came a lot of Ashkenazim and within a few decades the most important industries were either owned or managed by Jews.' 'This was the renaissance of the Jewish community here' he added cheerfully. 'There were two synagogues, one Ashkenazai, one Sephardi. Being in Bosnia', he laughed, 'the two synagogues united'. The big Ashkenazi synagogue became the synagogue, the smaller one became a community centre. 'Are they still there?' I asked eagerly. 'During the last war (World War Two) the Ustashe (Croatian fascists) organised a pogrom and the big synagogue was burnt' he explained. 'Two hundred and twenty three Jews were massacred in the Holocaust but some managed to survive by joining the Partisans'. What happened to the small synagogue? 'The fascists used it to stable their horses but after the war it was cleaned and rebuilt. At the beginning of the sixties it was nationalised'.

In Tuzla today, there is no Rabbi, no tuition and no Jewish cultural centre to encourage Jewish traditions or learning. 'There is not enough background. Living in towns for centuries, living in non-religious circumstances as we did for the last fifty years (under communism) people lost their religious feeling' he explains. Igor himself, to his regret, does not know the prayers in Hebrew. The whole spirit of Jewish thought, religion and feeling have been lost. However, due to the Bosnian war, there is now a greater sense of community, of sharing, of being together. Igor is very conscious that this coming together might end when the war ends. He is keen to restore the small synagogue and turn it into a cultural and community centre. He believes the

community would welcome teachers (though not yet a Rabbi) to help them re-learn the Sabbath prayers, to read Hebrew and to understand their heritage. There are also practical problems: 'support of older people is a problem for us. There are sixteen elderly people. They live alone. They are retired and their situation is very bad'. There is also great awareness and interest in Jewish culture from non-Jews. 'We had a Ladino choir here from Sarajevo a few years ago' he said. 'The hall was absolutely packed and there was hardly one Jew among them' he concluded with a laugh.

Igor has many plans to restore the cemetery and the community centre. 'I am trying to do something, to build something' he explains and would value the help 'especially the moral support' of any Jewish community abroad.

Nikki du Preez was the founder and is now a Co-Director of BOSNIA NOW, an Edinburgh-based charity providing help and support for Bosnian doctors. In response to an appeal by UNHCR, she will be travelling to Bosnia again in mid-September 1995 to one of the most neglected and destroyed areas of the country, Bihac. On this visit, she will try to track down the Jewish families (reportedly a considerable number) who still live there. She will happily take any small donations of Jewish articles, and any financial help towards the trip would also be very much appreciated. She can be contacted at BOSNIA NOW, Unit 14, Abbeymount Techbase, 2 Easter Road, Edinburgh EH7 5AN, tel: 0131 652 1600.

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EXCAVATIONS IN THE WESTERN WALL TUNNEL

by John Eivan

On 31 January 1995, Dr Dan Bahat, Archaeological Director and Advisor to the Western Wall, Jewish Quarter and the City of David, gave an excellent talk to the Edinburgh Friends of Israel on the history of the Western or 'Wailing' Wall excavations.

In 1864 Captain Wilson made the first ordinance survey of Jerusalem. In 1865 Lt. Charles Warren was commissioned to dig shafts and a tunnel along the base of the Western Wall of the Temple Area attributed to Herod. In spite of Turkish objections, cave-ins and polluted water, he carried out deep scholarly research in both senses of the word. One of his shaft entrances, in the Wilson Arch Synagogue, can still be looked down today.

After this, work stopped for a century because Turkey and other countries 'objected to tampering with holy sites', although these sites were often out-of-bounds to non-Muslim worshippers, the Department of Antiquities had poor quality workmen, and the Municipality feared the walls would be undermined and collapse. Now such work has scientific principles and is properly supervised.

Dr Bahat compared archaeology to surgery: tests, i.e. borings, trial trenches and searches of biblical and historical literature, are carried out before the main operation starts. The sources used were Samuel, Josephus Flavius, and the Mishnah Tractate Middot (Measurements). The last gave the size of the Temple Area as 500 square cubits (250 square yards or about 13 acres). Middot also lists only one gate in each side. Josephus described a platform twice the area and with four gates in the Western Wall alone. Yet Middot was written more than a century after Josephus's 'Wars of the Romans'. Also British surveyors found four gates and nicknamed them Wilson, Warren, Barclay and Robertson after their discoverers.

Dr Bahat believes that, for

religious reasons, the writers of the Mishnah preferred to describe the Maccabean Temple and Area as a symbol of purity and worship. When Zerubbabel rebuilt Solomon's Temple, the area round it was circular. The Maccabees made it a square with a gate in each side, and made additions to the Temple. Architecturally, Herod's Temple on its enlarged, oblong area, is the fourth Temple, although it is traditionally referred to as the 'Second' Temple.

Neither did the Mishnah mention the stone inscriptions warning Gentiles to keep out of the Temple precinct on 'pain of death' as Josephus records. Two of these inscriptions are on show in museums, the Istanbul Museum and the Rockefeller Museum in Jerusalem. It is now known that Herod had these stones erected on the boundaries of the Maccabean Area.

In the 12th century C E Maimonides forbade the practice of Jews going into the Temple Area to bewail the destruction of the Temple. Dr Bahat claims that a knowledge of the true boundary of the Maccabean Area would permit Jews to walk on at least part of the present Herodian platform now administered by the Muslims. However, Arab guidebooks refer to nothing in Jerusalem before the ascent of Mohammad from the top of Mt Moriah which is now inside the Dome of the Rock. Arabs say there is no archaeological proof that the Temple ever existed. They do not add that the Muslim authorities do not allow any archaeologists to find out one way or the other, and that 'since no Jews come to pray on the Area,' (ignoring the prohibition of Maimonides against a Jew accidentally stepping on the site of the Holy of Holies), 'then they have no reason to, there was no Temple, it is only an archaeological legend'.

The Maccabees were more interested in recording divine

events, not the work of man. In fact much of the Temple Area is still Maccabean work. They raised the walls and built the aqueduct into the city and the Area, a part of which Dr Bahat showed in his excellent slides. Herod reshaped the Temple and doubled the size of the Area, particularly southwards. It was long assumed that the Western Wall was that of the Maccabees too.

A Crusader wrote that he 'left the city by a gate in the mighty Eastern Wall and was surprised to find a large place of worship outside the city'. Today the Western Wall piazza is 23 feet above the Herodian pavement and now known to be more above the east slope of Mt Zion than over the west slope of Mt Moriah. Herod connected the 'upper city' on Mt Zion, where he had his palace, to the Temple Area on Mt Moriah by a huge, imposing viaduct. The Wilson Arch Synagogue is under the easternmost arch of this viaduct, and the little, black steel door at the back of the synagogue leads into the Western Wall Tunnel which runs northwards horizontally, along the face of the massive Herodian wall supporting the artificial plateau of the Temple Area. It is cut through centuries of rubbish which accumulated and nearly filled the enormous caverns formed by the arches of the viaduct. It in no way threatens the integrity of the buildings of the Old City above.

Excavations have shown that Herod may have destroyed as much as he built. Separating the old Jebusite Jerusalem, that David captured, from Mt Moriah to the north was the Ophel Valley. This was filled in to support the southern end of the platform extension, the so-called King Solomon's Stables.

In the north end of the Herodian Area, St Anne's Valley had been filled in to level the ground between the Maccabean Area and the hillock on which the Maccabean palace stood. The palace was demolished and the hill also levelled (presum-

ably into St Anne's Valley) to make way for the Northern Wall and the Antonia Fortress. Herod fortunately died before his masons demolished the aqueduct too, although it was later destroyed to seal the walls of the city. The Maccabean reservoir fed by the aqueduct is now the plantation seen at the north end of the Herodian Area.

The Dome of the Rock is traditionally believed to have been built on the site of the Sanctuary, the Holy of Holies. Within it is the rugged top of Mt Moriah, a very uneven rock with a shaft leading down to the cave within the mountain top which Jewish tradition says is the tomb of Aravnah the Jebusite, who sold King David a threshing floor on which to erect an altar.

Apart from the fact that the tomb is, says Dr Bahat, of a bedou of the 23rd century BCE, it seems odd that the Holy of Holies should be built over a place that is ritually impure. Nevertheless, Dr Bahat insists that it is the original site of David's Altar

and the Holy of Holies, and he dismisses the more northerly alternative site suggested by Asher Kaufman as implausible. In fairness to Kaufman, it seems strange that there should be a threshing floor - 'goren' - on the exposed mountain top with a shaft grave in the middle of it. The word 'goren' means a flat, levelled place often used for threshing and as a level space before gateways. There is a perfectly good, flat exposure of rock now visible as the floor of the charming little 'Cupola of the Spirits' exactly where Kaufman has calculated, on geological and religious festival grounds, the position of the Sanctuary to be. (2 Samuel 24,18).

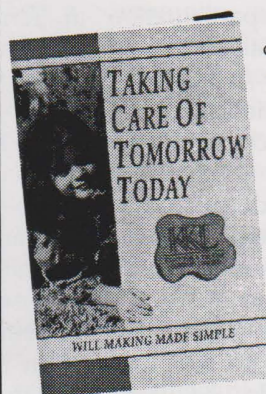
The Muslims built a similar massive viaduct alongside the Herodian one and raised other substructures. All these are now hidden by the largely Ottoman houses and other buildings in the centre of the Old City. The underside of these houses can be seen when walking through the tunnel, which runs South to North

for 530 yards. The tunnel contains a number of architecturally interesting features, including the largest 'brick' in Israel, in fact the fifth largest hewn and dressed stone in the world. It is 46 ft. by 11 ft. high by 15 ft. deep and it weighs an estimated 600 tons. The four larger and heavier stones are all at Baalbek.

Dr Bahat claims that radar has revealed a large chamber hidden behind the giant stone. He believes it to be a buttress block, though there is no such parallel use at Baalbek, and the chamber may be one where the Jews hid 'underground' during the seige of the Temple. He also showed a slide of the gate which has been blocked up repeatedly to stop access to the Area, and explained that this is why the Jews now pray at the Western Wall piazza as the nearest point to the Temple site.

The northern end of the tunnel reaches the quarry from which much of the stone came. It also reveals the pavement level of the Herodian Street which ran along the

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bottom of the Western Wall and cuts into the bedrock of the Mt Moriah. Here, Herod's engineers simply incised the wall of solid rock to imitate stone courses. Some pilasters of the original colonaded street can be seen.

Much argument revolves about the size of the ancient cubit measure. The cubit is measured from elbow point to mid-finger tip. The Hebrew word 'ammah' means both forearm and cubit, taken as equal to six palms. The once convenient, and rather generous, 18 inches of the classical archaeologists has been replaced by the metric 45 centimetres; as convenient but probably no nearer the true ancient value when people had smaller stature. (45 cms is still longer than most people's forearm plus hand. Ezekiel used a seven-palm cubit for describing his visionary Temple. This was the same as the Royal Cubit of the Egyptians and Babylonians, about 21 inches.)

Dr Bahat said that using a measurement for the Maccabean Area of 500 short (45 cms) cubits would allow a strip of land, 125 feet wide, between the Herodian and Maccabean western boundaries that Jews could safely walk over without fear of treading on the site of the Sanctuary. The Rabbinate will not sanction this, according to Dr Bahat, because they insist on the 'religious cubit' (the Ezekiel one), which makes the Herodian and Maccabean western boundaries coincide again, but also moves the 'official' northern and southern boundaries of the Maccabean Area platform outside the lines where they are known to be. Dr Bahat objects to this 'religious interference' with archaeological and architectural evidence, which condones the Muslim claim to the whole Temple Area, and rejects this politicisation of the facts.

The Earl of Balfour, President of the Edinburgh Friends of Israel gave a warm vote of thanks to the speaker.

John Eivan is Chairman of Edinburgh Friends of Israel.

JERUSALEM 3000

by Debbie Sinclair

A year ago, looking out of the window of our Ramat Eshkol apartment in Jerusalem across to Ammunition Hill, where a battle of enormous import for the reunification of Jerusalem was fought in 1967, I began to devise an article about Jerusalem for *The Edinburgh Star*. Little did I know then that one year later I would be sitting in Balfour House in London, with a poster of Ammunition Hill on the wall facing my desk, and writing about Jerusalem for *The Edinburgh Star* in an official capacity.

The Talmud says that of the ten measures of beauty that came down to the world, Jerusalem took nine (Kiddushin 49b). No one who has ever watched the sun rise on Mount Scopus, or strolled along the Haas Promenade in Talpiyot, or approached the Old City in that unique soft pink light that precedes nightfall in Jerusalem, can remain indifferent to the physical impact of Jerusalem's beauty. The beauty of Jerusalem is, however, more than skin- or stone-deep. It is a beauty born from the sufferings and upheavals experienced by the City over the centuries, from the ancient wisdom acquired through the history it has witnessed, from the fusion of the prayers of the different religions that look to Jerusalem, and from the great cultural richness provided by the scores of ethnic groups of which Jerusalem is comprised. It is the blending of the old and new: ancient monument and laboratory of nuclear medicine. It is the bitter-sweetness with which the beholder contemplates each of its sites, mindful of the glory and the tragedy that have been played out on every square centimetre of the stage that is Jerusalem.

King David, embodying that potent combination of artist and statesman, poet and warrior, surely realised the spiritual power and the durability of Jerusalem when he transferred the holy Ark to its permanent home there three

thousand years ago, thus establishing Jerusalem as the religious as well as political centre of Israel - at a time when neither its geographical nor its economic advantages seemed to warrant this position. Indeed, those essential qualities of King David - spirituality, passion and wisdom, art, engagement with the temporal world and a deep religiosity, characterise his City to this very day, and make it great.

In 1996, three thousand years after the establishment of Jerusalem as King David's capital, the entire Jewish world will join in celebrating this unique city. 'Jerusalem' will be the educational theme throughout the school system in Israel; festivities in Jerusalem will abound, ranging from pageants to festivals, concerts, exhibitions, theatre, competitions and a host more. The City will be thronged with visitors throughout the 16-month Anniversary year (Rosh Hashana 1995 - Chanukka 1996): youngsters, students, study missions, casual tourists, pilgrims - all hoping to become an integral part of the celebrations.

Around the world, Jerusalem 3000 National Committees have been established to promote, encourage and co-ordinate Jerusalem-oriented activities in the various communities. The objective of the UK National Committee, convened late last year and chaired by Brenda Katten, is to secure maximum participation in Jerusalem 3000 across the entire Jewish communal / religions spectrum. Schools, chederim, youth movements and clubs are being urged to incorporate the theme of Jerusalem into their educational programmes, and are being aided with seminars, training sessions and materials. Organisations running art, music, book, dance festivals etc. are being encouraged to adopt Jerusalem as their focus in 1996. It is hoped that newspapers, magazines and journals - communal, academic or other

- will run articles on the subject of Jerusalem; that Jerusalem will be included in the curricula of literary societies, that it will be the theme of communal seminars, symposia etc. An especially important goal is to encourage as many people as possible, and particularly 'first-timers', to make 1996 the year in which they visit Israel, whether in communal or synagogue groups, with an educational organisation, on a theme trip (Historians' Jerusalem, Music in Jerusalem ...) or as individuals, drawn by the prospect of being in Jerusalem in this most exciting of years.

The Joint Authority for Jewish Zionist Education, which is the Diaspora-education arm of the Jewish Agency and the World Zionist Organisation, has initiated several world-wide activities. Under the pen-pal scheme, Israeli and Diaspora youngsters will be matched up, and next year, the Diaspora youth will be invited to participate, together with their Israeli pen-pals, in a two-week seminar in Israel. An international 'Jerusalem Quiz for Youth' will be held, and Britain has been asked to send three representatives, to be selected at a National Quiz that will be held before Yom Yerushalayim. The Israel Embassy is also running an International Children's Art Competition on the theme of Jerusalem.

The UK is well ahead in its planning and realisation of Jerusalem 3000. It would be wonderful if Edinburgh, too, included 'Jerusalem 3000' in its communal diary, with a major communal event, at the Lit., in *The Edinburgh Star*, or in any other way that suits the community. We would be delighted to help with resources, ideas and specific or general information, and would like to hear in the near future what is being planned. Please be in touch (tel: 0181 446 8020, fax: 0181 343 9037, Balfour House, 741 High Road, London N12 0BQ).

Debbie Sinclair was, until recently, National Co-ordinator of Jerusalem 3000 activities in the United Kingdom.



FREEDOM IN THE HOUSE OF MIRRORS :

a review of Ariel Dorfman's new play 'Reader' which was premiered
at the Traverse Theatre during the Edinburgh Festival

by Adrian Harris

'My play is not something that happens far, far away in the magical-realist world of Chile where people levitate and women have green hair, it happens here, now and everywhere'. And for three weeks at least, Dorfman's remarkable play about censorship, art and personal morality happened in Edinburgh as part of the Traverse Theatre's Festival programme.

Best known for his *Death and The Maiden*, first a play produced at the Royal Court Theatre in London and subsequently a film directed by Roman Polanski, Dorfman is no stranger to the world his plays inhabit. Chilean by adopted nationality only, he was born in Argentina into a family of Jewish immigrants from Odessa in 1942. His parents were left-wing academics; by 1945 the Peron regime's increasingly fascist complexion forced them to leave the country for America. After ten years there, they were forced to leave again, this time by McCarthyism. 'My life has been made out of fleeing from repression', says Dorfman. He finally arrived in Chile in 1955. As the country slowly liberalised, he educated himself and began to write novels and poetry. Then in 1970 Chile elected a Democratic Marxist, Salvador Allende as President. Dorfman, whose first name came from the free spirit in *The Tempest*, was suddenly energised: 'It was just a wonderful time', he says.

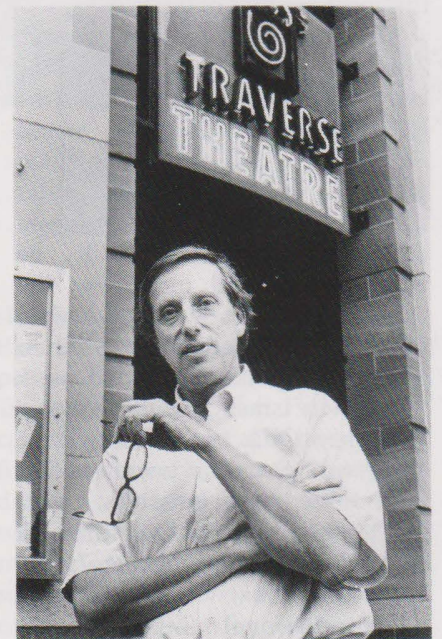
The wonderful time came to an end in 1973 when the CIA backed a bloody military coup to topple Allende and install General Pinochet. Freedom of expression was out: Dorfman saw his writings being burned in the street. He hid in the Argentinian Embassy while the death squads roamed outside.

All too aware of the irony, it was a

book that saved him. An experimental Marxist novel called *Hard Rain* won a big literary prize in Buenos Aires, and the Pinochet regime was persuaded that murdering Dorfman would be bad for business. Dorfman went back to America, obliged to seek refuge in the country that had just undermined the democratically elected government of his adopted homeland. Dorfman knew his position - protected by his celebrity status from the same fate as his fellows because he wrote about that very fate - was contradictory. So he made similar ambiguities the basis of his work.

Dorfman chose the Traverse and it's director Ian Brown as the place to premiere *Reader*. 'I saw two plays he [Brown] directed last year which I thought were done extremely well. Ian has a special sense of making the space of plays absolutely concrete in psychological terms between the characters yet, at the same time, making things kind of unreal, with a sense of illusion which corresponds very strongly with my own aesthetic'.

Reader is set in both a recent past and a pseudo future. A government censor, Daniel Lucas, working for an imaginary totalitarian regime of eco-fascists, is horrified to read scene by scene and line by line, his own life unfolding in a script which he has to edit. The ending is as yet unfinished,



Ariel Dorfman outside the Traverse Theatre.
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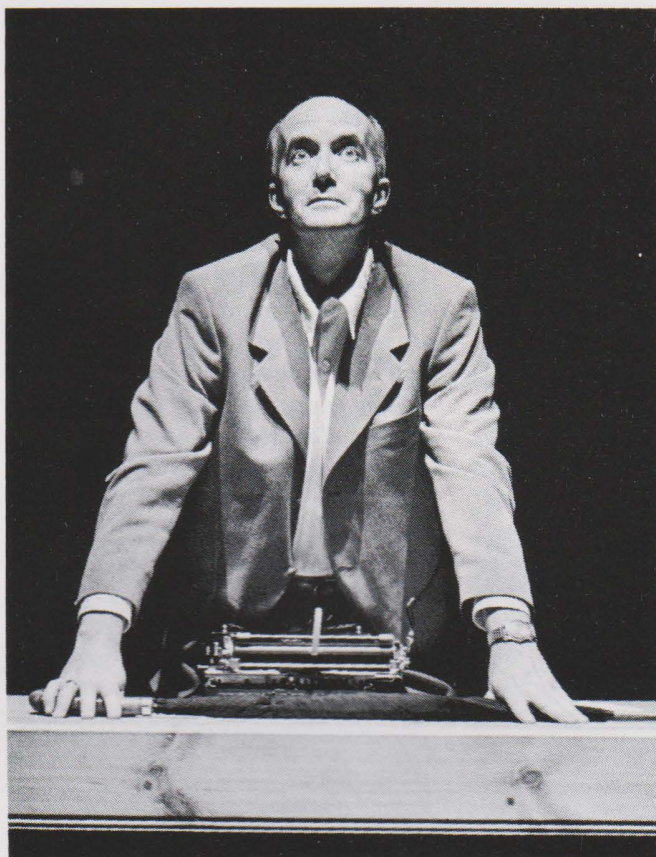
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Clive Manson as Daniel Lucas in *Reader*.

SEAN HUDSON - PHOTOGRAPHY

raising the possibilities of exposure (years before, he committed his wife to a mental hospital while telling their son that she had died) or radical change. If he were to admit to his earlier 'rewriting' of his own history he could liberate himself from constant self-censorship and denial. But the idea fills him with terror.

Lucas has suppressed the better part of his nature and distorted his own history. The unfinished work of fiction offers him the chance to recant and face a future guided by truth. In a second act which has provoked extreme reactions from a range of critics, Dorfman introduces a magical world with characters from the fictional script Lucas is editing providing a kind of parallel morality play within the play. Words like 'tricksy' and 'showing off'

have peppered the reviews. Dorfman is sensitive to this criticism particularly because being 'tricksy' was part of his plan. 'Just because the pain is real doesn't mean that the method has got to be realistic,' he says. 'On the contrary, I feel that complexity is the only real way'.

On designer Tim Hatley's revolving mirror of a set, the question is

constantly raised of who is real and who is fictional, who is being deceived and who deceiving themselves, what is truth and what is falsehood. Fear is clearly exposed as the chief motivation for our most cowardly and cruel acts, and censorship of others inevitably leads to censorship of the self.

But in *Reader*, for all its bewildering tricks, the action is constantly, unambiguously darkened with the paraphernalia of political oppression: chairs are for tying people to, scarves are for gagging, mirrors are always two-way. Arguing that Dorfman is abandoning the directness of *Death and The Maiden* and his own beliefs for bloodless aesthetic experimentation becomes difficult. Instead this very experimentation seems like a refusal to pander to his audience - the latest move of a defiant life. As Dorfman says, 'I don't like safety'.

For the last ten years, Adrian Harris has been Director of the Theatre Workshop, Edinburgh

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LOOKING BEHIND THE PICTURE :

a layman's drifting thoughts on 'From London', the Festival exhibition at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art

by Bertold Hornung

Somebody asked me the other day how come that four of the six artists whose work was shown in Edinburgh this summer (Auerbach, Freud, Kitaj and Kossoff) are Jews?

It is a very narrow question and has little to do with the artistic merit, or absence of it, of the works on show; it stands somewhat apart from those by no means indifferent reactions which range (or rage?) from admiration to outright indignation, and from the heated debates this controversial group (the so-called 'School of London') has generated and is likely to continue to generate. Nonetheless, the question did not surprise me.

It is no coincidence that Jews have, since Pissarro and Modigliani, played a leading role, both as singular one-offs and as patrons of the various schools and groups and countless-isms in painting and sculpture which have fed, in the habit of tributaries, the broad stream of what is loosely labelled the modern movement of western art.

The explanation of this phenomenon is fairly straightforward. The last century or so saw a constant shift - in drops, trickles and waves - of Jews from Eastern to Central and from Central to Western Europe and beyond for reasons which are too well known to need repetition.

Jewish immigration brought with it an influx of intellectual talent which included scientists and, of course, artists. It brought Chagall and Soutine, Gabo and Lipchitz, Lissitzky and Rothko and many more to Western Europe and contributed to the perpetual fermentation process in western art. Some were driven from home by sheer necessity to escape mortal danger, others were simply attracted by the freedom to think, to get away from stifling aesthetic norms and

conventions or from the misuse of art as an instrument of political diktat. Here they could experiment, explore new outlets of creativity, gain eye-opening access to museums, galleries, exhibitions and schools, meet other artists and join in what has become a permanent part of art, a part which sometimes overshadowed the work itself: discussion.

It is perhaps a truism to say that art by Jews is not the same as Jewish art. The Jewish presence in 'From

London' reveals itself by little else than the sound of the artists' surnames. Apart from this, neither subject, theme, composition, line, colour, genre offer any obvious clues to distinguish them from what non-Jewish artists might produce. They are just works by artists who happen to be Jewish and belong to the same 'school' although this connection may even be spurious. The trait, so evident in the group, of striving for originality and individuality, which does not recoil from



R. B. Kitaj: *The Jew etc.*, Marlborough Fine Art, London.



R. B. Kitaj: *The Jewish Rider*, exhibited in 'From London', Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh.

re-interpreting old masters, is often associated with Jewishness but is surely not exclusive to it.

Only two paintings, by Kitaj, seem to me to have a particular relevance to Jewishness. I do not include the large panoramic composition *If Not, Not*, with its transparent symbolism of the Auschwitz gate towering above chaos and desolation, but refer to *The Jew etc* which I saw recently, and *The Jewish Rider*, which is shown in this exhibition.

The Jew etc., of combined technique in grey on grey, portrays a man who travels by train without luggage or other belongings. A shnorrer? Not quite: his hat and suit, though crumpled, show him holding on to a measure of dignity. His posture is tense, he is worried, leans forward worn down by the uncertainty of the destination ahead. He sits on the edge of his seat ready to jump up any moment to vacate it for whoever might, rightly

or wrongly, claim it for himself. There is a small window with a leather strap - evidently a third class compartment - and a bleak landscape passes by, but the Jew doesn't see it; he sees only the empty wall opposite, or is his gaze an inward looking one, trying to figure out to where the train is taking him?

The Jewish Rider, by contrast, is full of vibrant blues, yellows, reds and whites. Only the face, in shades of grey, reveals something of the struggles of the past. It shows a traveller who is relaxed, comfortable, unworried. There is a wide panoramic window giving on to a dramatic landscape - this is a first class compartment - but he pays no attention to it, he reads a book for he knows where he is going anyway. His brilliant white shoes, colourful yet nonchalant attire and expansive posture reaching over two seats (as if one wouldn't be enough for him) and a defiantly and pushy, outward-

turned elbow bear all the hallmarks of ostentation: for he must show he is one of those who have made it and who are now sitting high and safely on the horse and could not care less. But beware, Jewish Rider! There is a menacing figure in the background, a slim man in a dark uniform wielding some sort of stick. He is approaching and will want to see your ticket.

I feel strongly that these two pictures tell us something about the Jewish condition in the diaspora. What the two pictures have in common is the moving train, the Jew's transient position in space and time. Though I see Jewishness in - or beyond - these paintings, I think the time has not yet come to talk with any confidence about a Jewish style. These works are part of the contemporary endeavour to broaden the modern movement and one would not expect otherwise of any Jewish paintings made in the diaspora. Whether a Jewish style will one day emerge, perhaps from Israel, is another question.

Bertold Hornung studied architecture and town planning in Prague and, until his retirement, worked as a town

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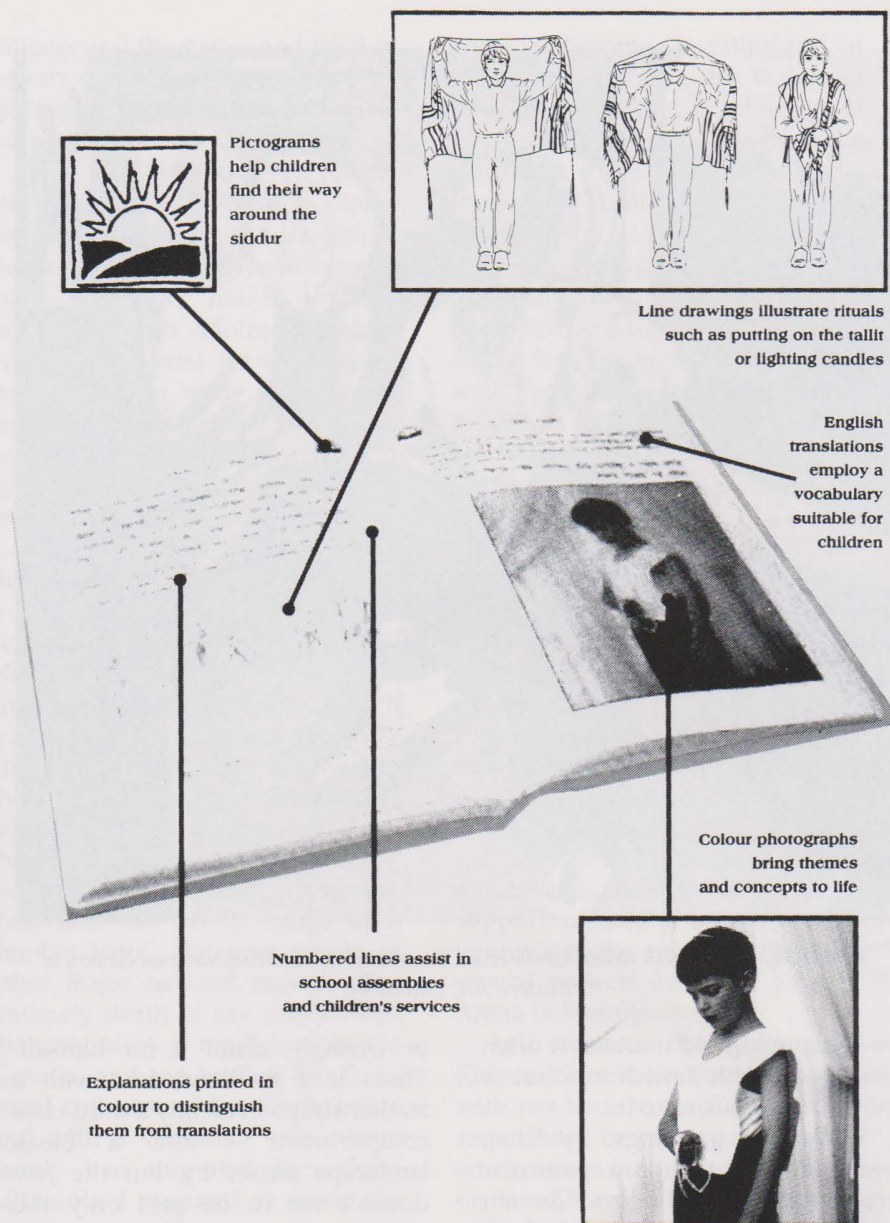
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Reviewed by John Cosgrove

The first question to be addressed is why have a special Siddur for children at all? Surely one of the main aims of a Cheder education is to teach a degree of familiarity with the prayer book. In the mainstream synagogues in the United Kingdom, this is usually the 'Singer's Prayer Book' in one of its three editions, or perhaps the American 'Art Scroll Siddur'. However, the publishers say that the Children's Siddur, is designed to bridge the gap between 'picture prayer books' for the very young and a complete Siddur and the Chief Rabbi in his introduction says that 'children need a prayer book of their own, one that they can understand, use, and respond to as children'.

The Children's Siddur certainly looks good. It has an attractive bright green cover which looks 'user friendly'. The pages have a nice glossy feel and five colours are used. The print is clear and explanations are printed in green so that they do not get confused with translations. There are 'pictograms' on the corner of every page. A pictogram is a small postage-size drawing of the subject being dealt with and is similar to what computer users would call an icon (not a good term from a Jewish point of view!) Thus the pictogram for the Friday evening service is a pair of candles and a challah, for the morning service it is a rising sun, and for the Festival of Chanukah it is a menorah.

From an educational point of view, one of the finest features of this Siddur is a new system of Hebrew punctuation which, if followed, ensures that each word is pronounced accurately and with the stress placed in the right place. It is so good and simple that it should be copied by adult Siddurim. Also extremely useful is the numbering



of each line of the Hebrew text. Thus far the Siddur sounds quite attractive and yet there is a major failing which I feel is quite inexcusable.

In spite of the many explanations in Hebrew and English some of which are quite detailed (bend your knees ... bow ... stand up straight), a majority of the selected prayers are not translated. I was brought up and educated in Glasgow and I was privileged to sit next to my late father in Garnethill Synagogue, where he was the Minister. His lasting legacy to me was the message that it is extremely silly to say prayers in Hebrew and not understand the meaning of each word. Consequently, I was frequently tested on the translation of

each prayer and the Singer's Prayer Book became a friend. It still is a friend even in its new centenary translation by my uncle Eli Cashdan (see *The Edinburgh Star* No. 9). The lack of a translation for each prayer is an astonishing editorial decision. It is almost as if the policy is that the meaning is secondary to the actions. Covering the eyes when saying the Shema is illustrated twice, there is even a floor plan of how to take three steps back at the conclusion of the Amida and there is an illustration of a boy putting on a large woollen tallit although, from the tenor of the text, it is probable that he is so Orthodox that he will not be required to do this until he gets married! If lack of space was the

reason for lack of translation, then one must question why so much of the Hebrew text is repeated. Morning, afternoon and evening pictograms placed on the weekday Amida would have made it unnecessary to repeat this long prayer three times and left room for a translation.

Many of the prayers are explained rather than translated but to describe a well-known Psalm as 'taken from a biblical book called Tehillim' (spelt in Hebrew) is just not acceptable. We live in a non-Jewish society and the Book of Psalms is a treasure we have in common with many other faiths. The message should be that although the Psalms are entirely Jewish and we take great pride in this, they are something we can share with other faiths without fear of losing any of our own religiosity.

Most of the illustrations are helpful and the scenes from Israel are well chosen and quite inspiring, but the family scenes with smug faces are appalling. I also find distasteful the use of the word 'Hashem' as the English translation of God's name. This is also used in the Art Scroll Siddur and seems to be a sign of so-called Orthodoxy and an 'I am holier than you' attitude. There are also far too many terms written in Hebrew rather than translated but, although there is an excellent glossary at the end, children should be encouraged to express Jewish concepts in plain English. Perhaps this is the difference between living in Edinburgh and in North West London because, if you live in a heavily populated Jewish area, there may be less of a need to relate to the non-Jewish world. But is this healthy?

Some opportunities have been missed to make the Siddur more interesting for children. For example, in Ashrei where every verse starts with a different letter of the alphabet, the first letters could have been highlighted. In the morning service, the group of Psalms between Ashrei and the Shira, known as the Halleluyah Psalms, have been omitted,

although they are arguably the most beautiful and the easiest to say due to the frequent repetition of the Halleluyah theme.

The editors intend to produce an audio tape of popular liturgical songs as well as a handbook for parents and teachers to go with the book and this might make the Children's Siddur more attractive. Until then, my advice is stick to the tried and tested Singer's Prayer Book: your children will learn much more and avoid being indoctrinated.

THE ESKELLS, THE STORY OF A FAMILY

by Louis B Eskell

edited by James Belsey

published privately (copies may be obtained from the author at 61 Park Grove, Henleaze, Bristol BS9 4LQ). 105pp. £10.00 (including packaging and postage)

Reviewed by Julia Merrick

There were times when the cultural baggage that I carried around was irksome. The walls of my grandparents' dining room were hung with family portraits of Montefiores, Goldsmiths, Sebags and Lucases. The family, particularly my father, would tell stories about these people, their alliances and their personal foibles and I would hear anecdotes such as you may read in any Anglo-Jewish history. To an egocentric teenager it all seemed irrelevant. A few years later, a friend, whose family perished in the holocaust, told me how she longed to have a heritage of family stories. I choked on those links with the past for which she hungered.

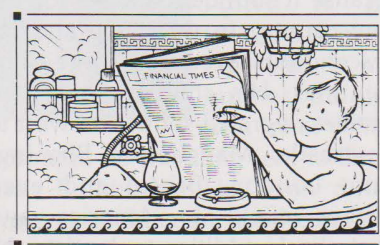
Some people drift away from the Jewish community deliberately, others do so by chance and are gradually assimilated into a very seductive British way of life. Even the mediaeval rabbis found it a problem that English Jews enjoyed meeting and drinking with non-Jews. Assimilation is not a new phenomenon. The story of the Eskells is the story of a family that

has gradually been assimilated. The author looks down a telescope into history, a non-Jew discovering his Jewish ancestors. Many readers of *The Edinburgh Star* are more used to looking through the lens the other way at descendants who have left Judaism.

Christopher Eskell is an Englishman who, when he was a student, carried out a little research into family history and discovered that his great grandparents had been married in a synagogue. Although interested by this he did not have time for further research. Many years later, still fascinated by the desire to uncover the family's origins, he persuaded his father Louis to take up the quest.

In the late eighteenth century, six brothers with the family name of Moses were born in Berlin. Soon

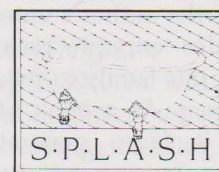
BATHTIME TALES NO 1



Nigel stags a bull

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

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after, the family moved to the Netherlands and adopted the name of the village of Van Noorden. Four of the boys Ezekiel, Salomen, Michael and Philip, aged from 19 down to only 12, emigrated to Edinburgh to seek their fortunes. Research by Abel Philipps in *A History of the Origins of the First Jewish Community in Scotland - Edinburgh 1816* (John Donald, 1979) and in the Scottish Jewish Archives revealed that Ezekiel Moses became a sealing wax manufacturer here. Everyday candles may be an oddity now but were an essential commodity then. The boys were befriended by Herman Lyons, with whose help Philip became a surgeon-dentist, a profession followed by numerous descendants in the years to come.

Ezekiel, a given name of the boys' father and grandfather, was adapted to serve as a new family name, Eskell, for one of the sons (Philip) because it sounded suitable for the new country in which he and his descendants were to forge new identities. His children and their families migrated south and west to Newcastle, Manchester, Birmingham, London, Bristol and even further afield to America and Australia. In addition to dentists, the family produced an Opera singer (Louisa Dukas), a Lord (Nathan), a fashionable New York surgeon and several members of the armed services. Of course, some of the family were less successful and the author uncovers an Australian 'black sheep' who committed a crime of passion.

The Eskells is an account of a lively and interesting family touched here and there by fame and scandal. The book comes with a very wide family tree; it has to be so to accommodate the families of ten children and their spouses, but it does not extend to exploring the female line. As a record of the author's antecedents, it provides enough breadth for others in this family to follow their own history. As a book of Jewish interest it fades generation by generation, but it is a story worthy of telling and of publication and I enjoyed reading it.

Letter to the Editor

7 August 1995

Dear Sir

As I am leaving Edinburgh to retire and return home to Jerusalem, I would like to write a few words to you and to the readers of *The Edinburgh Star*.

When I think of the highlights of my seven years as Minister of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation, I think first of a single photograph which appeared in *The Jewish Chronicle* and *The Jewish Echo* six years ago, showing a group of people with glasses in one hand and copies of the first issue of *The Edinburgh Star* in the other, celebrating the launch of the magazine in my house. The group of people included the editor, the entire editorial board, the Executive of the Schul and a few other activists and, as I recall the occasion, the sensation was similar to the one we experience when we celebrate the birth of a new baby.

The magazine was launched to provide a platform which would bring together the Jewish community in Edinburgh and other people who associate with it and

wish it well. I want to record my thanks to all those who took part in the foundation of the magazine, particularly to the first editor (Dr Eitan Abraham) who worked night and day and was involved in every detail of the first few issues. I want also to thank Eitan Abraham's distinguished successor Ruth Adler, who was so admired and talented and whose premature death shocked and saddened us all, John Cosgrove, who characteristically stepped into the breach, and everyone else who has contributed time and effort to create a magazine whose achievements have far exceeded our initial expectations.

On the occasion of our departure, Rachel and I would like to thank everyone who contributed so generously to our departure present. We accepted it as a token of your appreciation.

We wish you, as the new editor, the best of luck, *The Edinburgh Star* continued success, and all its readers a Happy New Year - good health, much happiness, peace in Israel and all over the world.

Yours faithfully
Shalom Shapira

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Judith Knopp

Judith Knopp, wife of the late Rev Sam Knopp, has passed away in Jerusalem following a long illness. She was 58.

She was born Judith Matyas in Transylvania on the Hungarian/Rumanian border in 1937. She survived the Second World War with her parents, her father being active in the Jewish resistance, organising safe passage for Jews over the border. After the War, her family settled first in the south of France and later in Paris where she belatedly started and completed her education. After school she studied art and music.

She married Sam Knopp in Dublin in 1956, where he was Chazan in the community for a few years until taking up a post in Leeds in 1959. In January 1972 they moved to Edinburgh where Sam was Chazan and later Minister. They spent ten happy, active years there

and were deeply involved in all aspects of community life.

In late 1982, they moved to Israel and chose to live in Jerusalem near their children. The following year Judith took ill with cancer, but regained her health after a successful operation.

Sam Knopp died in June 1986 aged 62. In September 1987 Judith was diagnosed as having lung cancer and was only given a few months to live. Following 14 months of intense treatment, she somehow recovered again and enjoyed healthy years. In this period she was able to enjoy her children and grandchildren and pursue her love of poetry and art.

Unfortunately, the illness re-

turned for a third time early this year, and she underwent major surgery in February. This operation appeared initially to be successful but two months later complications arose. For two further months she alternated between hospital care and home care, before it became evident that it was no longer possible to save her. Her last few weeks were spent at home where she enjoyed her family and appreciated the attentive nursing. She died peacefully on 15 June with her loved ones around her.

She is survived by her father, her daughter Rivka and her son Sid. Rivka is married with three sons and a daughter. Sid is married with a daughter and a son.

SK



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