

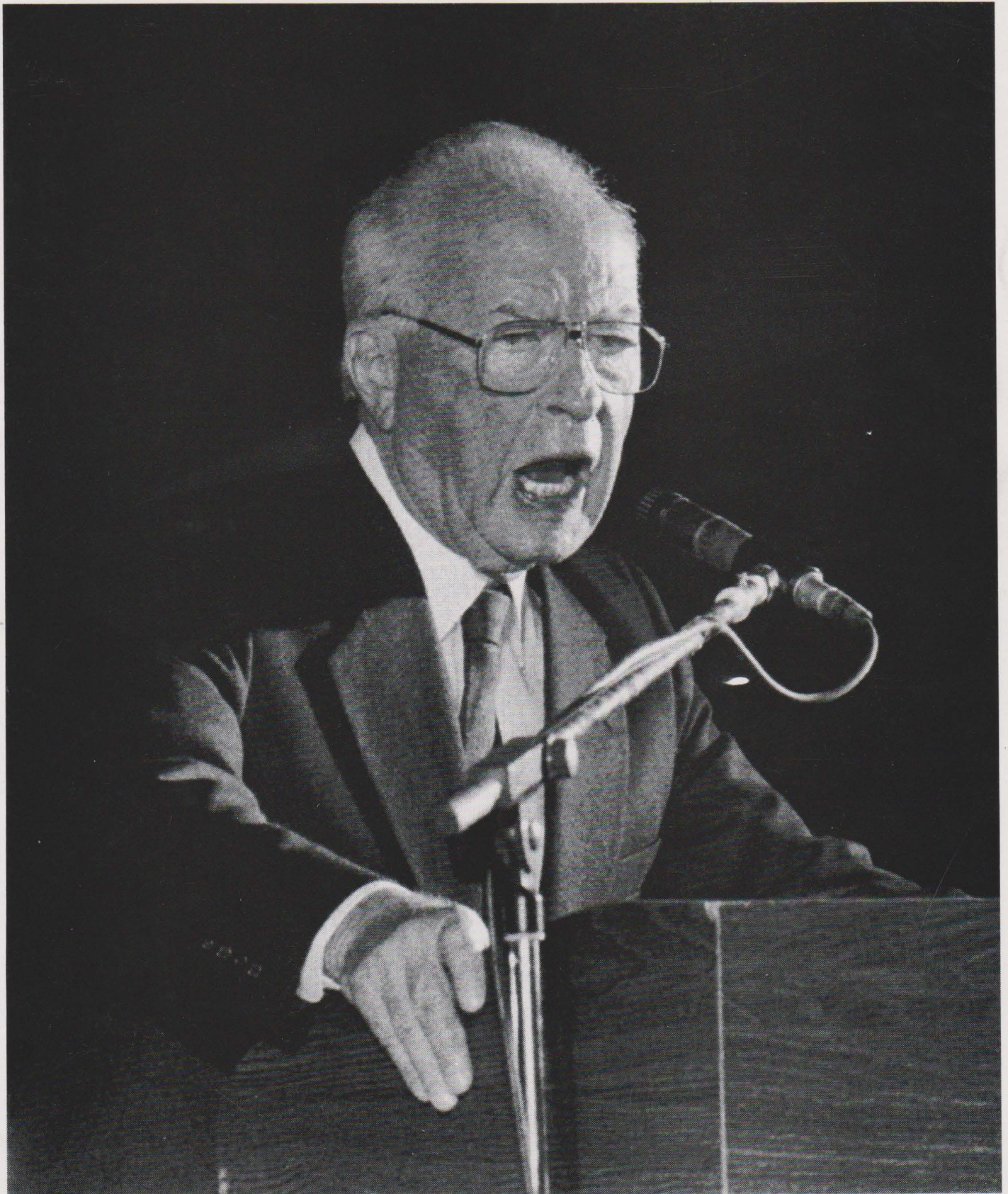
The Edinburgh Star

Journal of the Edinburgh Jewish Community

January 1996

No. 23

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The Edinburgh Star

SYNAGOGUE CHAMBERS
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Front Cover: The Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, speaking to a crowd of more than 100,000 people at the Peace Rally in Tel Aviv shortly before he was assassinated.

Typing: Valerie Chuter.

Editorial

Is the *Edinburgh Star* a 'local' magazine? Well, in one sense, it clearly is. The masthead carries the subtitle *Journal of the Edinburgh Jewish Community*. It is thus entirely appropriate that it should act as a 'journal of record', reporting on major events in the community, celebrating the achievements of individuals in the community and carrying articles written by present and former members of the community. But, it has always aspired to be more than a parochial publication. Although it is obviously not a 'national' magazine, it has always sought to address national and international issues where these are felt to be of interest and concern to its readers. Getting the balance right is not an easy task and the Editor would welcome some feedback from readers - either informally or in the form of a letter for publication.

One such event must surely have been the brutal and tragic assassination of the Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, on 4 November 1995 and in this issue we devote a good deal of space to an article by David Capitanchik, the foremost authority on Israeli politics in Scotland, which attempts both to appraise his life and to assess the prospects for peace following his death. Rabin was, in many ways, an enigma: a strong man with an impeccable military record who latterly (when he judged the time was right) devoted himself to the search for peace; a brave man who set great store on the nation's security but was utterly unconcerned about his own; a good man whose commitment to the peace process earned him both great support and implacable opposition. That he should have been killed, not by an Arab or even by a recent immigrant but by another sabra is a dreadful reflection of the divisions in Israeli society, of the arrogance and intolerance of religious fundamentalists and the naivety and complicity of those who give them financial and other forms of support. Rabin's death provoked much testimony to his signal achievements from political leaders around the world and a great outpouring of grief from most of his countrymen. We can only hope that the circumstances of his death will curb the influence of religious fanaticism in Israel and in the Arab world, help to heal some of the divisions in Israeli society and accelerate the search for peace between Israel and its Arab neighbours.

Another issue, this time from the United Kingdom, which certainly ought to be of concern to our readers is the Government's Asylum and Immigration Bill which seeks to curb the number of applications for asylum by drawing up a 'white list' of countries where it is deemed that 'there is, in general, no risk of persecution', weaken the appeal rights of asylum seekers, remove their entitlement to benefits, introduce fines of up to £5,000 on firms employing illegal immigrants and give immigration officers new powers to search for overstayers. Readers of the *Edinburgh Star* might like to reflect on how such restrictions might have affected their own forebears, most of whom came to this country as refugees from tyranny in the Pale of Settlement around the turn of the century or from Nazi Germany in the 1930s, and at the tragic irony of the fact that the legislation was introduced by the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, whose own father was only able to enter this country when the visa restrictions on Jewish refugees were relaxed following Krystallnacht in November 1938. Readers should note that Michael Howard's father came from Romania, a country which was not, at that time, regarded as dangerous by the British Government and would, almost certainly, have appeared on the 'white list' if such a list had been in existence. If he had been refused entry, who is to say what might have happened to him? It is much to the credit of the Board of Deputies that they have resolutely opposed the legislation. Concerned readers who think likewise may wish to write to their MP, to the Home Secretary or to the Prime Minister.

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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THE LOWRIE REPORT

UR YE DANCIN? UR YE ASKING? AHM ASKIN! AHM DANCIN!

It was the 27 August at 3.00 p.m. and the jiggers were up dancing the afternoon away at the Friendship Club's *Thé Dansant*. Stewart Caplan played the electric organ and his daughter Yvonne blew a very romantic saxophone, while Maestro Henry Mann crooned - such music, such atmosphere! There were five Raffle Prizes donated by the Committee, who also provided the fillings for the sandwiches. This was the Club's third Tea Dance and it is hoped that there will be another one next year - and remember that the Members would like to see you on the floor giving it laldie! Impresario Willy and a swinging committee - next job 'Come Dancing'?

FRIENDSHIP CLUB CASUALS HIT CRIEFF AND PITLOCHRY!

28 August at high noon - 27 members and friends left by bus from outside the Synagogue (they had an engine as well as a bus this year!)

The weather was good and they stopped for 30 minutes to rampage (or whatever) in Crieff.

Pitlochry had the privilege of policing this riotous band for two hours where an excellent high tea

with matching service was taken at Mackays Hotel in the High Street. Promptly at 6.30 p.m. the bus left for Edinburgh, entertainment on the return half being supplied by Edinburgh Yiddishkeit's answer to anywhere else's trio of talent:

- that redoubtable drummer/vocalist and bandleader par excellence - Henry Mann who sang 'I can't help falling in love with you' (an Elvis Presley number) - there is no information available on the quality of Pelvic Swivel!; 'Sonny Boy' (now who was that by?) and 'Hold Me' (we gather that this is a number pre-Henry) - no information on how successful his plea was!
- David Goldberg (do we have the name right?) - it is understood that he sings a lot in synagogue and that he is thought to sing not bad at all - sang a selection of Yiddish songs including 'In my quaint Bes Hamedrash in Town' (tune: Alice Blue Gown - a favourite of our grandparents)
- and the *pièce de résistance* - Rose Orgel who sang 'Joseph, Joseph' (must ask her who this guy was!)

A great time was had by all. Willy and Betty Caplan you've got the other Tour Operators on the ropes!

HAUTE COUTURE ET MANNEQUINS

Both were brought to the Fashion Show at the Community Hall on 29 November at 7.30 p.m. by Mrs Ann Campbell, the owner of 'Off the

Peg', Main Street, Gifford, under the auspices of the Ladies Committee.

Six beautiful mannequins, with the assistance of seven of our own lovelies as dressers (Avigal, Debbie, Ilana, Jacqueline, Juliette, Michelle and Wendy) showed 'Off the Peg's' extensive range of clothes for everyday wear, including elegant trouser suits and some eye-catching beaded and sequinned evening wear, all most reasonably priced.

Leila Goldberg, Chairman of the Ladies Committee, then presented Mrs Campbell with a basket of plants and the mannequins were given chocolates.

Prior to the opening, wine and nibbles were served and afterwards sandwiches, biscuits, tea and coffee.

The 62 ladies present, many from outwith the community, voted the evening a great success.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A SHERIFF

'Your Henship' - so was addressed Sheriff Hazel Aronson, QC by an occupant of the Dock when rebuked for addressing herself as 'hen' - but it doesn't do to address the Sheriff thus, even if it did originally mean quite politely 'yourself'.

It was a mystery as to how the speaker found the time to give this talk, for as well as describing her work in the Sheriff Court and in the High Court, where she is the first and only woman Judge, she also spoke of her work as Chairman of the Mental Welfare Commission for

'I HOPE YOU FIND TIME', 'IF YOU DON'T MIND' AND 'IF IT'S NOT TOO MUCH TROUBLE', 'I MEAN I DON'T WANT TO BOTHER YOU, BUT IF I'M NOT BEING TOO FORWARD, YOU MIGHT FIND THIS OF INTEREST, I HOPE'

On 13 September, Jane Ansell gave a talk at the WIZO Supper evening on Assertiveness. Making the point that being assertive was not the same as being aggressive, she sent the 50 ladies present home with copies of her special notes to carry on the good work with their families.

Jane has a full-time job at Edinburgh University and also has a young family. As Katie Goodwin said, we were all most appreciative that she found the time to try to make those present more assertive. Thanks also, said Katie, to the ladies of the committee for a most enjoyable meal.

So if at home you now line up - tallest on the right, shortest on the left and let me hear those heels smack together, you will know who brought all this into your lives! Get fell in!

Scotland, the Government watchdog body which looks after the interests of all those suffering from any form of mental disorder; no doubt her employers keep her very busy in this last role.

Three roles and a jigsaw schedule, but 'it's a privilege' was the Sheriff's verdict.

Definitely a successful supper evening on Wednesday, 8 November, for the Ladies Communal Hall Committee.

The horse, spurs, six-guns, star and ten-gallon hat looked terrific!

MARCIA BERGER HOSTESS TO THE BIG WIZO BLETHER-IN

On Wednesday, 6 December, at 1.00 p.m. five and twenty ladies were blethered-in at the L and M Berger homestead.

Enough breath was drawn to allow time for the consumption of wine, open sandwiches, fruit loaf, tea and coffee.

Katie Goodwin announced that, as this luncheon had been so successful and as it had raised £100 for WIZO, it was hoped that there would be more Ladies' Luncheons in the future.

1932 - A VERY GOOD YEAR

They who know of vineyards and *vendange* might write of 1932 as not a vintage year, but we know better, for that was the year that Simmy and Fanny Levinson married and on this wonderful couple's 63rd Wedding Anniversary we raise our glasses of 'President' and shout 'Mazel tov!' The ancient Greeks had a phrase for the best of the vintage - Simmy and Fanny must have been what they had in mind 'The last of the Summer Wine'.

*With Compliments from
Gladys and
Laurence Smith*

RECEPTION GIVEN TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE MALCOLM RIFKIND, PC, QC, MP

by the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation, to mark his appointment as
Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

On Hosh'ana Rabbah 5756, 15 October 1995, the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation held a lunch-time reception - attended by a large majority of members, and honoured by the presence of the Lord and Lady Provost of the City of Edinburgh, the Rt. Hon. and Mrs Norman Irons - to pay tribute to its currently most distinguished congregant, Malcolm Rifkind, on his recent appointment to the very high ranking Cabinet post of Foreign Secretary.

On behalf of the Congregation the President, Dr N A Oppenheim, warmly congratulated him on his splendid achievement - stating that he had not only brought honour to his immediate family, but also to the Congregation and the wider Anglo-Jewish Community. He then presented him with a *Lectern Siddur* bound in goatshide and suitably inscribed to mark the occasion.

The Lord Provost was happy to associate himself and the City with these sentiments - adding his own personal congratulations and wishing the Foreign Secretary all success in his difficult and demanding post.

Malcolm Rifkind, in replying, said he and his wife Edith were more than happy to be present to receive this unique presentation, which he would always treasure. He

had grown up in the Congregation amid a close family and regarded the Congregation as his spiritual home.

The Congregation, much moved, applauded these sentiments warmly, especially as Malcolm moved easily and freely among them chatting happily to old friends, some of whom had known him and his family for many years.

The reception can be counted among the Congregation's most happy and joyful events.



Malcolm Rifkind being presented with a *Lectern Siddur* by the President of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation, Dr N. A. Oppenheim

PHOTO: JUDY GILBERT

The President of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation offering his congratulations. From left to right, Eve Oppenheim, the Lady Provost (Ann Irons), Malcolm Rifkind, Dr N. A. Oppenheim, Edith Rifkind and the Lord Provost (Rt. Hon. Norman Irons).

PHOTO: JUDY GILBERT



COMING EVENTS

February 1996

10 Saturday	WIZO Jazz Evening	7.30 p.m.
11 Sunday	Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.
	Literary Society	8.00 p.m.
	(Heather Valencia - 'Brothers and Strangers : Yiddish Culture in Inter-War Berlin')	
19 Monday	Lodge Solomon	7.00 p.m.
21 Wednesday	An Evening with the Chief Rabbi	8.30 p.m.
22 Thursday	Council of Christians and Jews	7.30 p.m.
	(Mr Henry Tankel and Rev. Prof. Graeme Auld : 'A Jewish View and a Christian View of the Hebrew Scriptures')	
25 Sunday	Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.
	Literary Society	8.00 p.m.
	(Dr Thomas Toughill - 'The Oscar Slater Case')	

March 1996

10 Sunday	Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.
18 Monday	Lodge Solomon	7.00 p.m.
21 Thursday	Council of Christians and Jews	7.30 p.m.
	(Rev. R J Henderson - 'Impressions of Jerusalem')	
23 Saturday	'Alyn' concert	7.30 p.m.
24 Sunday	Friendship Club	3.00 p.m.

April 1996

4 Thursday	1st Day Pesach	
5 Friday	2nd Day Pesach	
15 Monday	Lodge Solomon	7.00 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 7557) 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 a.m.

Meetings are subject to alteration.

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

CONGRATULATIONS

to **Esti Sheinberg** on her appointment as Lecturer in Music at Edinburgh University.

(belatedly) to **Gillian Raab** on her appointment to the Chair of Applied Statistics at Napier University.



SPECIAL GREETINGS AND MAZAL TOV

to **Rose Orgel**, who was invited to a reception, hosted by the Queen and held in St James' Palace last year, at which she was presented to the Duke of Edinburgh.

to **Betty and Alex Abrahams** on their Golden Wedding.



APOLOGY

to **Sylvia Kaye**, who provided details of her wartime service in the ATS which were published in the last issue, for referring to her as 'Sheila Kaye'.

*With compliments
from*

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MALCOLM RIFKIND : A PERSONAL TRIBUTE

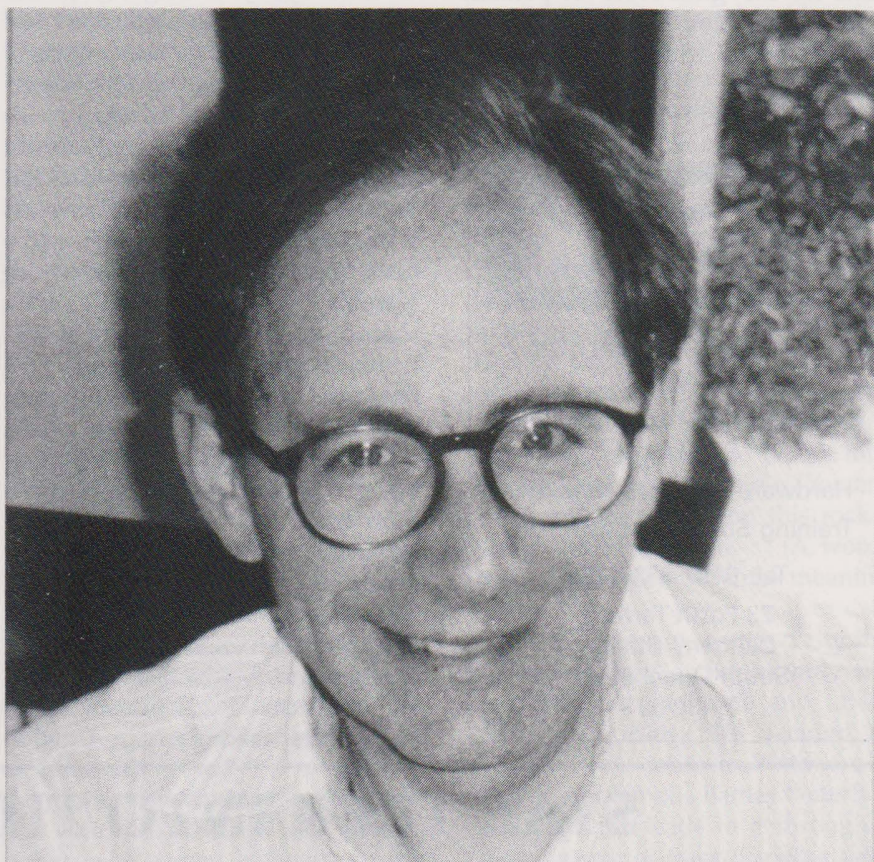
by Joyce Caplan

It was significant that the last profile of Malcolm in the *Edinburgh Star* (Issue No.3, September 1989) was entitled 'Mid-Term Report'. At that time Malcolm was Secretary of State for Scotland, but obviously a bright star still in the ascendant. Now he is Foreign Secretary, a post to which he has always aspired, and is still displaying those dazzling qualities which have propelled him throughout his career.

It was another famous son of Edinburgh, Robert Louis Stevenson, who wrote that 'Politics is perhaps the only profession for which no preparation is thought necessary.' Malcolm's preparation was a traditional one, nurtured in a secure, loving family, rooted in a community with a set of clear, consistent values. He was committed to politics from an early age (though it is probably apocryphal that when other boys had a football to kick about he had a globe of the world). At school he soon showed an ability to focus his sharp intellect to maximum benefit and cultivated the charm to persuade others of its exactitude.

It is many years since he was regarded just as 'Arnold's wee brother', yet such accreditation still lingers. Recently the younger members of Malcolm's old school, George Watsons, were asked why Malcolm Rifkind was famous. After much careful consideration an eight-year-old asserted enthusiastically 'because his brother is an optician in Morningside' - doubtless an interesting juvenile variation of the well-known Scots refrain of 'I kent his father.'

Malcolm rose quickly within local and national politics acquiring a wife and two children on the way. Time in Edinburgh is now precious and he values his family and is careful of the moments he spends with them, even more now his children are dispersed. Caroline, after graduating in economics from



Malcolm Rifkind in relaxed mood.

Durham, is now in Zimbabwe with 'Operation Raleigh'. It was there that Malcolm and Edith met, and there that Edith spent much of her childhood, so Caroline is discovering some of her roots. Hugo is in his first year at Cambridge reading philosophy and sharpening up his own analytical and debating skills. Edith remains the invaluable support and sounding-board, ensuring life runs smoothly, both here and in London, and providing a challenging intellect and wit when she feels it is needed.

The Rifkind household is one where verbal skills are sharply honed but tempered with considerable humour. Malcolm delights in language often manifesting itself in tortuous puns his friends try in vain to emulate (I write as one who has often retreated from the battlefield, defeated by laughter and waving a quivering white flag of surrender).

Malcolm's love of words means he is a renowned speech-giver, never using notes or a 'prompt', giving lucid and cogent speeches on many subjects, drawing on many diverse sources and references - the inevitable jokes providing lightness when required.

Malcolm is a man who values commitment, but it is a commitment controlled with reason; a rationalist whose intellectual detachment is sometimes misinterpreted as coolness. He believes strongly in the Tory values of individualism and self-help, these being manifest in his own career. The ability to focus absolutely on the task in hand serves him well in a job where 'it's Tuesday, it must be Washington', is very much the norm. He is not only highly regarded but genuinely liked by those in opposition. Many a fierce political opponent will begin by saying 'Of course, I despise his

politics - but he's a very decent person.' All acknowledge what an effective and conscientious constituency MP he is, that he still has time for the 'grass-roots' of politics and is as courteous with his opponents as with his colleagues and friends.

At the present time he is in the

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midst of coping with the difficulties of the world, both in foreign and domestic policy. He is sometimes irritated by what he perceives as a lack of loyalty among his parliamentary colleagues and does not hesitate to criticise their lack of party commitment when he feels directives are clear and necessary.

Personal memories of Malcolm abound; a joke at a family luncheon which ended with us all helpless with laughter; his resonant voice humorously querying our more extreme political statements; a shared love of poetry about which he is both knowledgeable and sensitive (there aren't many male politicians you can buy poetry for!). He is a rich fund of amusing anecdotes about himself and others - did you know he subsisted entirely on bananas for a week on one occasion?

The pleasure of family and friends is often enjoyed in an escape to the country, which he enjoys in all weathers. I can recall quite vividly one walking trip in Argyll in

that cold, damp blanket-fog that the West specialises in. Most of our party wanted to return to base, but Malcolm welcomed every step, even the peat bogs that kept engulfing us. He is a man who believes in enjoying the moment whatever it offers, in fact to misquote Horace Walpole 'though he is a politician his other habits are good'.

Malcolm's tenacity and instinct for survival are visibly embodied in the row of yearly Cabinet photographs that line the corridor of his home. He remains one of the few constant faces as colleagues swirl and evaporate around him. Resolutely he has advanced onto the front line, embracing the challenge of difficult times, confident of his own beliefs but most of all relishing the life he has, wherever it takes him.

Malcolm's early reports may have said 'shows promise', now they would definitely say 'promise fulfilled', though perhaps Malcolm would quote another skilled negotiator from a different profession 'you ain't seen nothin' yet'.

STAR TREK INTO THE PAST

When and on what occasion was this photograph taken and who can you recognise? Readers who possess snapshots which might be suitable for publication in a future issue are invited to contact Ian Shein (0131 332 2324)



YITZHAK RABIN: 1922 - 1995

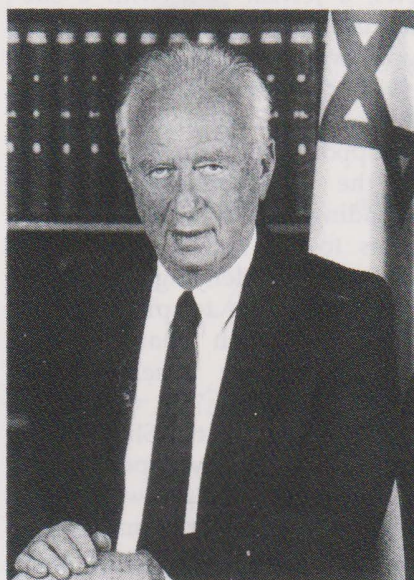
by David Capitanchik

'I was a military man for 27 years. I fought so long as there was no chance for peace. I believe that there is now a chance for peace, a great chance. We must take advantage of it.....'⁽¹⁾

The assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, in the aftermath of a rally called to demonstrate support for the Middle East peace process, was symbolic of the contradictions in the personality of a leader who was, for many, an enigma. In public, Rabin had always seemed ill at ease, an austere, remote figure with a reluctant smile. Widely regarded as a war hero and latterly, as a man of peace, he seemed to lack the personal charisma to fulfil either role convincingly.

However, his career, from soldier to politician was typical of many of the second generation of Israel's leaders. From the earliest days of his long and distinguished military service, he would have been both aware of and directly influenced by politics. From 1941 until the establishment of the IDF, he served in the Palmach, the elite corps of Israel's pre-state military forces, and he was appointed deputy commander in 1947, serving directly under its then commanding officer, Yigal Allon. The Palmach was based largely in the United Kibbutz Movement among those who were ideologically to the left of the dominant Mapai (the forerunner of the Israel Labour Party). After 1948, Allon founded and led the Achdut Ha'avoda faction in the Knesset which joined with Mapai in 1965 to form the Labour Alignment.⁽²⁾

In 1949, following Israel's War of Independence, the Palmach was merged into the new Israel Defence Force. Unlike most of its members who returned to civilian life, Rabin remained in the army. He graduated from the Staff College in Britain in 1953 and from then on his promotions followed a pattern common for those destined for high command; he was appointed the seventh IDF



Chief of Staff on January 1 1964. As in all armies, the Chief of Staff works in close association with the most senior political figures in the land. Although he took no active part in politics, given his background in the Palmach, Rabin would have been sympathetic to the ideals and aspirations of the Labour-led coalition governments that dominated Israeli politics until 1977.

Rabin and his generation lived through and were called upon to deal with the many crises that threatened Israel's existence in the early years of statehood. His reputation for being, as it were, a 'safe pair of hands' dated from the Six Day War of 1967. The crisis which led to that war was the most traumatic to date in the history of the young state. When Nasser ordered the UN peacekeeping forces out of Sinai, where they had watched over the peace between Israel and Egypt for the previous ten years, Israelis were convinced that they were about to be annihilated. However despite the vacillation of the government of Levi Eshkol and the inability or unwillingness of the international community to intervene on Israel's behalf, as commander-in-chief, Rabin presided over a stunning victory.

Less than a year later, he was appointed to the key post of ambassador to Washington. He returned to Israel in the spring of 1973 but took no part in government before the debacle of the Yom Kippur war. He was therefore untainted by the failure of the coalition led by Golda Meir and the high command of the IDF to anticipate the joint Egyptian-Syrian onslaught.

Rabin was elected to the 8th Knesset in the post-war elections of December 1973 and when Golda Meir formed her government in April 1974, he was appointed Minister of Labour. By June of that year, Golda's position had become untenable and she was finally forced to resign. The need to restore public confidence in Labour's ability to safeguard the country's security, made Rabin, a relative political novice, the natural choice to head a new government.

The policies of the Rabin administration of 1974-77 focused on strengthening the economy, solving social problems and reinforcing the IDF. In addition, however, disengagement agreements were signed with Egypt and Syria in 1974, followed by an interim agreement with Egypt in 1975. Later, in 1975, the first Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the governments of Israel and the United States. In June 1976, Rabin's reputation was further enhanced when his government issued the order for 'Operation Entebbe', successfully liberating hijacked Air France passengers, most of whom were Israelis, from their captivity thousands of miles away in Uganda.

In 1977, however, Rabin's political career suffered a severe setback when his wife was convicted of holding an illegal US bank account. He resigned and two weeks before a general election handed over power to his rival, Shimon Peres. Labour's subsequent defeat in that election

relegated Mr Rabin to the sidelines of Israeli politics for the next seven years.

In September 1984, with the country again in crisis and following an inconclusive general election, the Labour Party joined the Likud in a Government of National Unity to address two major issues: the extrication of Israel's forces from Lebanon where they had been bogged down since the invasion of 1982; and the problems of hyperinflation. Rabin served as Minister of Defence and, in January 1985, the government accepted his proposals for the withdrawal of the IDF from Lebanon and the establishment of a security zone to guarantee peace to the settlements along Israel's northern border. Rabin further enhanced his reputation for toughness when the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories, the *intifada*, broke out in December 1987. He ordered the security forces to suppress the uprising rigorously, telling them in a famous order 'to break the bones' of Palestinians rather than kill them.

The National Unity Government was re-established following further inconclusive elections in 1988, but proved to be unworkable. Lacking any common purpose, it collapsed in 1990 and was followed by the creation under Yitzhak Shamir of a coalition of right-wing and religious parties, described by some as the most extreme in Israel's history.⁽³⁾

In the wake of the Gulf War of 1990-91, a peace process sponsored jointly by the United States and Russia was inaugurated in Madrid. In Israel, the debate was between those who believed in the creation of a 'Greater Israel' with territory stretching from the Mediterranean to the River Jordan, and those who argued that Israel could only retain its Jewish majority and eventually achieve peace with the Arabs by dividing that territory between Israel and the Palestinians. The opponents of the 'Greater Israel' concept, Rabin not least among them, did not believe that the Palestinian Arabs in the occupied territories would ever accept a peace

which ignored their national aspirations. Nor did they believe that, given the relative disparity in the birth rate between Arabs and Jews, a Jewish state with a substantial minority of some 1.7 million Arabs would for long maintain its Jewish character. They continually accused the Likud government and its supporters of refusing to face up to the stark choice between extending full civil and political rights to the Palestinians in the territories and denying them those rights in order to preserve the country's Jewish character and thereby turning Israel into an 'apartheid state'.

However, since the Shamir government was totally dependent on small extreme right-wing and religious factions for its majority in the Knesset, the mere hint, in early 1992, by Israel's delegates to bilateral peace talks in Washington of limited autonomy for the Palestinians in the occupied territories was enough to precipitate the government's collapse.

While most Israelis seemed to support the country's participation in the Madrid peace process, ongoing Arab hostility towards Israel, the recent experience of the Gulf war and the Palestinian uprising meant that there was considerable sympathy for the Likud government's cautious approach.

The Labour Party was itself divided between so-called 'hawks' and 'doves'. The former believed that Israel's security required a permanent presence in the occupied territories entrenched by Israeli settlements and military outposts. The latter, who were engaged in a dialogue with leading moderates among the Palestinians, believed that a two-state solution, with strong security safeguards, was likely to be the optimum outcome of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Within the Labour Party, which had been led by Shimon Peres since Rabin's resignation from the Premiership in 1977, rivalry between the two leaders and their respective factions meant there was a growing

crisis in the leadership which came to a head in the run up to the 1992 elections. The Party decided to resolve its differences over who should lead it into the general election by holding the first direct election of a leader by a party's rank and file in Israel's political history. On the eve of this election an opinion poll confirmed the popular view that with Yitzhak Rabin at its head, Labour would have a distinct advantage over the Likud in the forthcoming general election campaign. Rabin was perceived as the best candidate by disillusioned Likud voters because of his military background and because of the strong-arm methods he had sanctioned during the first year of the *intifada*.⁽⁴⁾

In the event, Rabin emerged as the Party's clear choice, clearing the 40% threshold required for an outright victory in the first round of voting. In the elections to the 13th Knesset on 23 June 1992, Labour was returned to power and Yitzhak Rabin was able to form a government of the centre-left parties without recourse to a 'grand coalition' with the Likud and without concessions to the extortionate demands of the religious parties.

While for Rabin security considerations were paramount, it is clear that he never believed that Jewish and Palestinian interests could be reconciled within the same political framework; separation was the only answer. In presenting his new government to the Knesset on 13 July 1992, the new Prime Minister undertook to change the national order of priorities. The basic aim of his government, he said, would be to achieve the twin goals of peace and security, but for him security was not only to be found in military strength, but in ensuring adequate social and economic security for all Israel's citizens. Changing the ordering of national priorities meant, on the one hand, diverting the excessive resources expended by the previous government on settling and holding on to the occupied territories to the benefit of the overwhelming majority of Israelis

who live within the so-called 'Green Line', and, on the other, pursuing with greater vigour and purpose than hitherto the 'peace process' with the Palestinians.⁽⁵⁾

The new government's approach to the peace process did involve a radical reversal of policy. First, and most important, unlike its predecessor, the Rabin government was committed to the principle of 'exchanging land for peace'. Second, where the previous Likud administration was essentially hoping to achieve peace settlements with the Arab states without first tackling the thorny issue of the Palestinians, Mr Rabin's government was determined to deal with the Palestinian question first by means of a combination of the autonomy proposals in the Camp David Accords associated with the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty of 1979 and the Allon Plan, drawn up when the Prime Minister's former commanding officer, Yigal Allon, was serving under him as Foreign Secretary in the Rabin Government of 1974-77. The Allon Plan called for, among other things, the redeployment of Israeli forces away from the densely-populated areas of the occupied territories.

The Rabin premiership was marked at home by an unprecedented expansion in the Israeli economy. In 1994-95, the average Israeli per capita income was only slightly less than in the United States and taking into account Israel's superior social security benefits, exceeded the average American per capita income in real terms. However, its peace policies aroused virulent and often violent domestic opposition. This opposition reflected a number of different, but related concerns. On the secular right of the political spectrum, the peace process pursued by the Rabin government was perceived as a betrayal of Israel's legitimate territorial claims and at the same time compromising the country's security. For the religious parties the issues were more complicated. Some shared the secular right's nationalist ideology, others claimed a divine

right to the Land of Israel no part of which could be surrendered by a secular government.

There was, however, a further factor which it would be wrong to underestimate. From 1977 until 1992, no government could be formed without the religious parties and they had become used to extracting a heavy price, in both material and spiritual terms for their support - a price, incidentally, which the Likud was more prepared to pay than Labour. The results of the 1992 elections and the formation of the Rabin government without them, deprived the religious factions of the financial support and political influence they had previously enjoyed. It made their opposition to the peace process all the more virulent.

The situation was aggravated further by an additional element unrelated to the peace process or anything else that was happening in Israel or the Middle East. This was the growth in Israel of a militant ultra-orthodox Judaism which had hitherto been ambivalent towards Zionism and opposed to the concept of a secular Jewish state. This development derived its impetus from America where traditional orthodoxy has been under severe pressure from the rise of non-orthodox reform movements to which at least half of American Jewry now adheres. This has driven the orthodox rabbinate and the rabbinical seminaries in particular into a highly defensive position and they have been increasingly focusing on Israel where to date, orthodox Judaism prevails with the support of the state. For them, all of the policies of the secular Rabin government in both domestic and security/foreign affairs are seen as threatening not just right of centre secular values, but Judaism itself.

Throughout his life, Rabin's overriding concern was for Israel's security. There could, in his view, be no peace process which did not guarantee that essential value. Hence his somewhat cautious approach when dealing, in particular, with the Palestinians and

the Syrians, as compared with the greater flexibility shown by his Foreign Minister and successor, Shimon Peres.

This caution was often regarded as a political tactic, designed to reassure Israelis that their security would not be jeopardised by agreements reached with the Arabs. However, while Rabin had become convinced that peace was now both possible and essential for the country's well-being, he was equally concerned to weigh the security implications of each step in the process. So while it would be wrong to underestimate the magnitude of his achievements towards peace, it must also be said that, prior to Rabin's assassination, his government had dealt only with the relatively 'easy' issues. The really difficult problems lay ahead: the final settlement negotiations with the Palestinians, due to begin in 1996; and achieving peace with Syria. Had he lived, further progress on these and any other outstanding differences with the Arabs would probably have had to await the outcome of the 1996 Knesset elections.

Given the state of Israeli public opinion at the time of his assassination, the outcome of those elections was by no means certain. Even the most ardent supporters of the peace process did not believe that peace would bring an end to terrorism and it was likely that a recurrence of terrorist incidents like the bomb outrages of 1995, would scupper Labour's chances of being returned to office.

For the time being, the circumstances of Rabin's assassination and the deep heart-searching it produced among the majority of Israelis, appear to have greatly improved Labour's prospects in the forthcoming Knesset elections and, at the same time, silenced if not removed some of the more extreme opposition to the peace process.

However, the really difficult issues have now to be addressed. Debate about the Syrian-Israeli talks which were restarted in the United States in late December 1995 has

revolved around the strategic importance of the Golan Heights for Israel's defence. The Syrian position is relatively simple and it has been consistent over the years. In their view, the Golan is sovereign Syrian territory and there can be no peace with Israel so long as it denies this by retaining control over all or part of the Heights. Syria has not been prepared to settle for anything less than Egypt which was handed back every last inch of its territory in return for peace with Israel.

For many Israelis, this has meant 'thinking the unthinkable', providing for Israel's security without the Golan. The arguments have long been confounded by the popular view that the strategic advantages of occupying the heights by far outweigh any advantage to be gained from a peace treaty with Syria. The origins of this conviction lie in the somewhat discredited view of the benefits for a small country of 'defence in depth', i.e. that any war must be fought outside of Israel proper where the density of the civilian population and lack of space made it imperative to keep the war and the enemy at a distance.

No amount of depth, however, was able to protect Israel's cities from the SCUD missile attack from Iraq in 1991 and, given the arsenal of missiles possessed by Israel's remaining enemies, it is clear that they had no lessons to learn from Saddam Hussein. But, what is true for the Arabs is also true for Israel. Arab cities too, not least among them Damascus and Baghdad, are just as vulnerable to missile attacks as Tel-Aviv, Haifa or Jerusalem. 'Defence in depth' is only an advantage if you intend to refight the wars of the past with vast tank battles requiring a huge expanse of terrain.

Moreover, there is a major contradiction in the arguments of those who refuse to surrender territory for 'security reasons'. They often argue that the security value of the territories is enhanced by the establishment of Israeli settlements, civilian as well as military. Rabin, for

example, took the view that while he was opposed to settlements established for what he called 'political' reasons, i.e. for purposes of claiming Israeli sovereignty over the occupied territories, he was in favour of those set up for 'security purposes', i.e. to serve as early-warning outposts or military bases in time of war and also to protect Israel proper from the infiltration of hostile forces.

However, experience on the Golan in 1973, when the settlements had to be evacuated at considerable cost to the IDF, reinforces the view that populating the so-called 'defence in depth' areas with civilian settlements negates their whole purpose. Far from adding to the country's security, settlements detract from it. In addition, given the hostile environment in which they are located and the continuing burden of high defence expenditures for the national budget caused by the absence of a comprehensive Middle East peace, the economic costs to the country are unnecessarily crippling. While few doubt that even in the best of circumstances, a peace treaty with Syria would not in itself guarantee Israel's security, the arguments for giving up the Golan in the context of peace are more evenly balanced today than they ever were in the past. The Peres government, according to Foreign Minister Ehud Barak, is seeking to try and resolve the conflict with Syria and to bring Israel to a reality of peace and co-operation, stability and economic development in almost the entire region.⁶ The peace process may still have some way to go, but what was set in train under Rabin from 1992 onwards is essentially irreversible.

The ever pragmatic Yitzhak Rabin had realised that the world had changed. The end of the Cold War and the Gulf crisis of 1990 showed that new policies were needed and that peace between Israel and its Arab neighbours was now possible. Rabin was able to provide his countrymen with a realistic possibility of living in a Middle East at peace rather than war. His

reluctant first handshake with Yasser Arafat when Oslo I was signed in Washington in September 1993 showed how difficult it was for Israelis of his generation and with his experience of fighting them to accept them as partners in the peace process. However, by the time of Rabin's death Arafat had become as much of a partner in peace as he had been an adversary in war.

The attendance of the world leaders, including Arab Heads of State, at his funeral was in itself ample testimony to Rabin's achievements on behalf of his people. Under his leadership Israel's position in the world was transformed from virtual isolation to full acceptance, not only by the international community in general, but by her Middle East neighbours in particular. Under Yitzhak Rabin, future historians might well decide, Israel came of age.

1. Last remarks of Prime Minister Rabin at the Tel-Aviv Peace Rally, 4 November 1995.
2. In the 1961 elections to the 4th Knesset, the last it contested as an independent party, Achdut Ha'avoda won 8 seats.
3. David B. Capitanchik, *A Guide to the Israeli General Election 1992*, Institute of Jewish Affairs (IJA), London, 1992.
4. David B. Capitanchik, *op. cit.*
5. Address before the Knesset by the Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, 13 July 1992.
6. Reply to No-confidence Motion in the Knesset on the Negotiations with Syria by Foreign Minister Ehud Barak, 25 December 1995.

David Capitanchik is a journalist and broadcaster, specialising in Israel and the Middle East. An article analysing the 1992 Israeli General Election, entitled 'A New Beginning?' appeared in Issue No. 13 (September 1993). He is Honorary Senior Lecturer in Politics and International Relations at the University of Aberdeen.

COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS : THE HISTORICAL DATABASE OF SCOTTISH JEWRY

by Harvey L Kaplan

An important new facility is now available at the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre.

The centrepiece of our new 'Community Foundations' project is the Historical Database of Scottish Jewry. This computer database cross-references a variety of sources and lists which contain information on Jews in Scotland prior to the end of 1918. The Database is the most comprehensive source for those who are trying to locate individuals and families during this period.

The Database lists Jews to be found in Scotland prior to the end of 1918, but the definition is flexible. It includes, for example, many people who were born during this period, but died much later. The earliest entries are:

- Julius Conradus Otto (1562-c1649) - a German-born convert who came to be Professor of Hebrew and Oriental Languages at Edinburgh University;⁽¹⁾
- Phineas Daniel, the son of a spectacle-maker from Hanover, born c1741, and said to have come to Edinburgh in 1787;⁽²⁾
- Lion Davis, born c1757 in Amsterdam, who became an umbrella-maker in Edinburgh in the early 19th century;⁽²⁾
- Fraidoel Isaacs (c1756-1838), buried in the Jewish enclosure in the Glasgow Necropolis.⁽¹⁾

Almost 9,000 entries are contained in the Database so far (from Gitta Aaron to Nathan Zweig), but this will expand as new lists and sources are discovered.

The principal source for the new Database has been the growing collection of Jewish cemetery records. These now cover approximately 4,900 burials in the Jewish cemeteries of Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, Inverness and Greenock. (Although only those presumed to be living in Scotland prior to the end of 1918 are actually included.)

Edinburgh - Scotland's oldest



*Engraving of the Rev. Moses Joel, the Community's first minister
by J. G. Howie.*

Jewish community - had its first synagogue in 1816, but strangely enough the first Jewish cemetery was not opened until 1820. Braid Place Cemetery was used until 1867, and we have a list of 29 burials here. This list appears in Abel Phillips' book on the origins of the Edinburgh Jewish Community.⁽²⁾ However, another list - offering some additional dates and information - was compiled in 1950 by Sidney Cramer.⁽³⁾

Sidney Cramer was a member of the Society of Genealogists. Between 1949 and 1953, he painstakingly transcribed the Hebrew and English inscriptions from some 260 tombstones in Jewish cemeteries in Edinburgh and Dundee.

From c.1869-1945, the Edinburgh Jewish cemetery was at Echobank (Newington), off Dalkeith Road. Cramer lists some 130 burials in great detail. Here lies Mrs Rosetta Defries, born in Amsterdam in 1778, died in Edinburgh in December 1869. Also here are the children and grandchildren of Rev Moses Joel (the community's first minister), and Rev Jacob Furst (minister for 40

years up to 1918) with his wife Marion. Past presidents of the community buried at Echobank include: David Goldson (1911), Maurice Isaacs, JP (1913) and Henry Michael (1919). Other communal worthies include the Hebrew teacher Samson Rosenberg (1883), Henry Abrams, Hon. Treasurer of the community (1912), and Ernest Goldston, Hon. Secretary (1924). Murray L Cohen, MA, a 24-year old student who had come from Toronto, Canada, to study medicine at Edinburgh University was also laid to rest at Echobank when he died in 1902.

Cramer devoted eleven pages to the oldest burials at Piershill Cemetery, c.1890-1923. Included is Moses Berger, aged 18, who 'drowned in a small boat accident at Portobello, trying to save companions, Sunday 17 August 1919; his body found three weeks later ...'.

Another overseas medical student - Isaac Bliden from Capetown, South Africa - lies buried here in Edinburgh (1920).

In addition to a small number of burials in Dundee (thanks again to Cramer), Inverness and Greenock, the Database covers the following cemeteries in Glasgow: the Necropolis, Janefield, Craigton, the Western Necropolis, Sandymount and Riddrie. Virtually all Jewish burials in Glasgow prior to the end of 1918 are therefore included in the Database.

Much information has been gleaned from the Registers of Births, Marriages and Deaths (from 1855) of the Glasgow (later Garnethill) Hebrew Congregation, a Directory of the congregation from 1811, various minute books and financial records, and the Roll of Members of Lodge Montefiore from 1888.

Data pertaining to Jewish families in Glasgow and Edinburgh has also been extracted from the Census of 1891, and it is hoped to expand this

source by examining previous census records.

Another source of particular Edinburgh interest is the Circumcision Register of Rev Jacob Furst, 1879-1907. With almost 400 entries, this volume illustrates how Rev Furst was active beyond Edinburgh, performing circumcisions in Aberdeen, Cowdenbeath, Dundee, Leith, Leven, Musselburgh, Perth and Portobello. He proudly records the circumcision of 'my grandson Edie' (1898) and 'my grandson Sydney' (1900).

Six pages are devoted to Edinburgh in: 'A Commercial Directory of the Jews of the United Kingdom', by G E Harfield, published in 1894, as a street-by-street listing of Jewish businesses in British towns and cities. Of 76 entries, no less than 42 businesses are jewellers and watch-makers.

The Historical Database of Scottish Jewry records the following information for each individual (where known):

- surname (the Database contains approximately 2,400 different surnames, the most common of these being variations of Cohen, Levy and Freedman)
- first name(s); father's name; mother's maiden surname;
- year and place of birth and death; cemetery of burial;
- details of marriage;
- occupation - the most common occupations are:
 - tailor, clothier, draper, hatter, capmaker
 - jeweller, watchmaker
 - cigar/cigarette manufacturer/retailer, tobacco merchant
 - furrier
 - baker
 - joiner, cabinet-maker
 - picture frame manufacturer/retailer
 - pedlars, travelling salesmen, commercial travellers.

In order to further expand the Database, readers of the **Edinburgh Star** are invited to submit information about their parents, grand-

parents, or other ancestors, if they lived in Scotland prior to 1919. Such information requires to be documented and this most probably will be in the form of birth, marriage or death certificates, Ketuboth, naturalisation papers etc. These should be either submitted in the original or as photocopies. Please state whether you wish to donate the documents to the Archives Centre, or whether you wish them returned - in which case, a stamped addressed envelope should be included.

Material should be submitted to:
Harvey L Kaplan
Scottish Jewish Archives Centre
Garnethill Synagogue
127 Hill Street
GLASGOW G3 6UB

1. A Levy (1958) 'The Origins of Scottish Jewry', *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England*, XIX.

2. Abel Phillips (1979) *A History of the Origins of the First Jewish Community in Scotland* - Edinburgh 1816, John Donald, Edinburgh.
3. Sidney Cramer (1950) *Gravestone Inscriptions from Jewish Cemeteries*.

Harvey Kaplan is Director of the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre. An article by Harvey Kaplan describing the work of the Centre appeared in Issue No.6 (June 1990).

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CAMPUS CONCERNS 1 - UJS

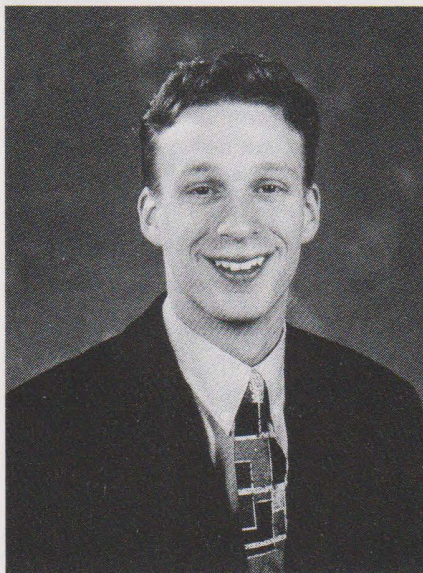
by Nick Cosgrove

In a small community like Edinburgh, it is not easy being Jewish. For students leaving home often for the first time it is even harder. When I went to study at Hull University, I joined another small community and it was there that I appreciated the forum of a national organisation and the opportunity to meet Jewish students from across the country. That is how I first became involved in the Union of Jewish Students (UJS) and five years later I now work for the organisation from our office in Hillel House, London.

UJS is the one national body dedicated to Jewish Students in the United Kingdom and Ireland. With a membership of around 6,000, it tries to reflect the diverse nature of the Jewish Community under one umbrella. This is not an easy task and UJS has never pretended that, in terms of unity, it could succeed where the adult community had failed.

Our work can be easily divided into three main areas of activity: **political, social and educational.**

On a **political** level, UJS is troubled by the Islamic fundamentalist group *Hizb ut-Tahrir* (meaning 'Party of Liberation') which is well organised at several universities. This year for the first time, HuT's material has been found at Edinburgh University. Their literature has called for the killing of Jews and the group has run meetings entitled 'Peace with Israel - a crime against all Muslims'. At a meeting at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, one of its members stated 'Let's be honest, the Koran does not mention Zionists, it mentions Jews. They are our enemy and *insha'allah* (with the help of God) we will finish them'. Additionally, HuT's leaders openly deny the Holocaust. Several Jewish students have been harassed, physically as well as verbally, and some university authorities have clamped down and banned HuT from meeting on campus. Sadly, on



most campuses, *Hizb ut-Tahrir* is free to propagate its material. UJS's involvement with this issue has meant that it is in the best position to monitor this group and we are working closely with the Board of Deputies of British Jews to try to bring HuT's activities to the government's attention. Significantly, HuT has also targeted other minorities, including gays and lesbians, Hindus and Sikhs and these groups have all turned to UJS for leadership and help.

It used to be the case that student politics was viewed as a game or a diversion. However, this is clearly no longer the case. In the words of National Union of Students President, Jim Murphy, '*Hizb ut-Tahrir* has now overtaken the far-right as the single biggest threat to minority groups on campus ... we view its propaganda as absolutely poisonous'. UJS has referred the group's literature to the Attorney General and perhaps more importantly has begun working with moderate individuals within the Muslim community in the hope of marginalising HuT's influence.

On a **social** level we are trying to bring together Jewish students of all backgrounds, from the most religious to the most secular, to unite around our common Jewish

identity. This is not always easy but I strongly believe that now, particularly after the treacherous assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, it is particularly important to bring together Jews of every shade of belief and to realise that baseless hatred will be our downfall. On a more basic level UJS is a forum for young Jewish men and women to meet and I would hazard a guess that quite a few people reading this article met their spouses through UJS or the IUJF as it was formerly known.

However, as readers will appreciate from my comments on the political situation on campus, we are certainly not just a dating agency. In any event it is not enough just to get along well together and that is why UJS is committed to a strong **educational** programme. I firmly believe that we should not wait for things to happen but that as students we must be proactive rather than merely react to events. A good example of the strength of our educational role was the recent UJS Conference which was held in December when over 50 Jewish educators from around the world were present to inspire the 400 Jewish students from the United Kingdom and Ireland who attended. Sessions were organised on topics as diverse as domestic violence and AIDS, Jewish philosophy and Jewish ethics.

The most important point about our work is that we engage Jewish students in enjoyable activities. We want students to be involved in UJS because we run good events and not just because they feel guilty about being Jewish or because their parents told them to come along.

Perhaps the most important thing we do at UJS is outreach - reaching to the hitherto unaffiliated or marginally affiliated. One of my predecessors summed up the UJS situation by explaining that 'if you annoy a religious student, he'll go off and have a *shiur*, whereas if you

put off a secular student you'll lose him altogether and he won't come back'. We bear this in mind when we run our activities.

This year every new student who joined UJS received a 'Jewish Essentials Kit'. This contained a Shabbat handbook, a small bottle of grape juice, candlesticks, Shabbat candles, matches and a 'Kosher on Campus' guide. The response was overwhelming. Below I reprint a letter received in our office:

Dear UJS

I'm an eighteen year old undergraduate reading Theology at Kent University, and I recently joined UJS. I wanted to mail you and thank you very much for the Jewish Essentials Kit which was part of the package I received. As a Jew with very little religious background, but as one who has always been eager to follow the traditions of the faith, I found it indispensable in helping me to do that, and I think that it is a really good idea, and one which can only help to keep the traditions going into the next generation. Thank you once again.

Chloe.

In conclusion, although being Jewish on campus is certainly not a bed of nails, by defending Jewish students' rights on campus, by providing a forum for Jewish students to meet whilst at university, by creating opportunities for Jewish students to learn more about being Jewish, we at the Union of Jewish Students seek to play our part in ensuring a Jewish future in this country.

Nick Cosgrove is President of UJS for 1995-96. He is the second student from the Edinburgh Community to be elected to this office in recent years. His immediate predecessor was David Kaplan.

*With Compliments
from
John and Hazel
Cosgrove*

CAMPUS CONCERNS 2 - EDINBURGH J-SOC

by Naomi Landau

Edinburgh University Jewish Society has seen its numbers soar this year as more Jewish students than ever, realising the increasing opportunities for them in Edinburgh, have joined up. The membership - now over 100 students - continues to make the society a lively one. The Autumn Term began with the customary bagel lunch for freshers and set the tone for the next ten weeks - these lunches are held at 1.00 p.m. on Mondays in the University Chaplaincy Centre at Potterow - and ended with the now annual event of busking for charity on Princes Street. Nearly £600 was raised for several charities including Jewish Care.

Friday night meals were also an important feature, as they will be in the Spring and Summer Terms; typically the different committees always work hard from year to year to provide an evening of good food, as well as company and that all-important Shabbat atmosphere! The highlight was undoubtedly Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind's most perceptive talk about the peace process in the Middle East. It was ironic and tragic that less than twenty-four hours after his positive words about the peace process, Yitzchak Rabin was assassinated.

Discussion plays an important role within Edinburgh Jewish Society, both with visiting Rabbis at bagel lunches and with the Northern Region chaplain, Dovid Cohen, at Hillel House, not forgetting the monthly all-female gatherings in the form of Rosh Chodesh groups. All these events will continue throughout the academic year.

Spring Term promises much - who could forget the annual Burns Supper in January when Jewish Culture meets Scottish Culture and will hopefully result in (yet) another great evening. Also in the pipeline is a Purim party to be held in Hillel

House in March. Fancy dress is compulsory and anyone wishing to come should start thinking about their costumes now.

Edinburgh Jewish Society, the oldest Jewish society in the country, is still going strong as it enters its eighty seventh year. It is a thriving J-Soc. and claims to be one of the best in the country, not only because of the quality of its activities, but now also due to its increasingly buoyant membership. The warm and friendly atmosphere it creates will undoubtedly ensure that the society will go from strength to strength.

For more information about Edinburgh J-Soc. phone the current chair, Yoni Jacobs on 0131 668 1816. Naomi Landau is an active member of Edinburgh J-Soc.

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GENETICS AND JEWISH LAW

by Danny Sinclair

HEREDITY IN THE HALAKHAH

The notion of heredity is implicit in various Talmudic rulings, e.g. not to marry into a family of established lepers or epileptics⁽¹⁾ and the non-circumcision of the third son in a family in which two male children have already died as a result of the operation.⁽²⁾ From a genetic perspective, the non-circumcision rule is a particularly suggestive one, since the *Talmud* identifies the cause of the fatality as a blood disease, and there is a significant body of halakhic opinion to the effect that it is transmitted by the maternal line alone.⁽³⁾ There is, therefore, little doubt that the disease in question is haemophilia, which is a genetic condition transmitted by means of a sex-linked recessive gene carried by the female. It occurs almost exclusively in males, and for this reason, it is in the context of circumcision that the problem arises in the *halakhah*.⁽⁴⁾

The method of transmission of this blood disease is, in fact, the subject of a debate amongst halakhic authorities. In his formulation of the Talmudic ruling, Maimonides emphasises that it is the third son of 'the woman' who is not to be circumcised,⁽⁵⁾ the implication being that if the father of two dead male children marries another woman, he will be obliged to circumcise a son of that marriage. A halakhic decision along these lines was made by R. Alexander Susslin Hacohen, a fourteenth century Ashkenazic scholar:

I was asked concerning a man who had lost two sons as a result of circumcision, and then his wife died. He married another woman and when she gave birth to a son, I ruled that he should be circumcised ... and this was done, and the boy lives.⁽⁶⁾

R. Hacohen's opinion, however, is not the dominant one and in the body of the *Shulhan Arukh*, R. Joseph Karo provides that the non-circumcision rule extends to both the maternal and the paternal line.⁽⁷⁾



Danny Sinclair with the President, Julia Merrick, at the opening meeting of the Literary Society.

In his commentary on the *Tur*, R. Karo cites a thirteenth century Narbonesc scholar, R. Manoah, as an authority for extending it to the paternal line.⁽⁸⁾ In his gloss, R. Isserless also implies that this view is the definitive *halakhah*, but it is important to note that the reason he gives for this is that matters of life and death are always decided leniently in terms of the overriding of halakhic norms. It is, therefore, the general principle of strictness with regard to the saving of life, and not the empirical or legal soundness of the minority view, which underlies the conclusion that the third son of the father, as well as that of mother, is not circumcised if the previous sons have died following the operation.

Another area in which the issue of heredity has arisen is that of niece marriages. According to the *Talmud*, it is a virtuous act to marry a niece,⁽⁹⁾ and the proof-text is the Biblical verse 'and hide not from your own flesh'.⁽¹⁰⁾ The idea behind this recommendation is an altruistic one, i.e. to support members of one's own family rather than strangers.⁽¹¹⁾ This ruling is also incorporated into

the glosses of R. Moses Isserless on the *Shulhan Arukh*, although the question of whether it applies to the daughters of a brother, as well as those of a sister, remains an open one.⁽¹²⁾

In the *Will* of R. Judah the *Hasid*, a thirteenth century pietist work, the practise of niece marriages is frowned upon.⁽¹³⁾ No reason is given for this disapproval in the actual *Will*, but there is little doubt that it is based upon the metaphysical beliefs held by the medieval pietist group known as the *Hasidei Ashkenaz*, of which R. Judah was the prime exponent.⁽¹⁴⁾ Although the halakhic status of this *Will* is a matter of debate,⁽¹⁵⁾ its rulings were, nevertheless, taken seriously by a significant section of Ashkenazic Jewry.⁽¹⁶⁾

In a collection of *responsa* published in 1877, R. Elijah Klatzkin was asked about the impact of medical science upon the practise of niece-marriage. In his *responsum*, R. Klatzkin accepted the fact that the offspring of such a marriage were in greater danger of suffering from congenital defects than those of genetic strangers. In order to justify

deviating from the Talmudic position, R. Klatzkin relies upon the *Will* and argues that the obligation to marry a niece only applies to those who are motivated to do so solely by a desire to support their own family members. If the motivation to marry a niece falls short of this purely altruistic intention, then it loses its virtue⁽¹⁷⁾ and it is in this context that the practise is condemned by R. Judah the Hasid.⁽¹⁸⁾ R. Klatzkin's argument is found in earlier sources⁽¹⁹⁾ and provides the basis for a decision by a modern authority, R. Eliezer Waldenberg, to the effect that niece-marriages ought to be avoided on eugenic grounds.⁽²⁰⁾

GENETIC SCREENING

A number of issues arise in relation to any halakhic discussion of modern developments in human genetics including screening for genetic defects; the abortion of fetuses suffering from genetic defects; gene therapy; and the implications of genetics for the religious doctrine of free will.

Any genetic screening programme raises a number of ethical as well as halakhic issues, e.g. the need to avoid stigmatisation and discrimination; the need to close the gap between diagnosis and treatment, especially in the case of late-onset conditions such as Huntingdon's Chorea; the preservation of confidentiality; the

importance of education regarding the significance of the results of the screening and the necessity for counselling and follow-on care.⁽²¹⁾ The halakhic response to these issues is based upon the need to strike a balance between the principle of personal dignity and the requirements of public welfare, and it is noteworthy that the Tay-Sachs screening programme, involving young Ashkenazi Jews of marriageable age, received the sanction of major Rabbinical figures in North American Jewry. Tay-Sachs disease is a single gene defect and a child born with it begins to suffer from weakness at about six months of age. This is followed by progressive mental and motor deterioration, blindness, paralysis, dementia, seizures and death by the age of four years. There is no cure for Tay-Sachs syndrome. The condition is restricted, almost exclusively, to Ashkenazi Jews and a test prior to marriage is a simple means of determining whether the prospective couple both carry the defective gene. If they do, then there is a twenty-five per cent chance that their offspring will be stricken with the disease. The screening of American Jews, including the strictly observant and Hassidic communities, for Tay-Sachs has resulted in a dramatic drop in the number of babies afflicted with the disease. The success of this scheme

lies in the sound educational background to the screening and the care taken, at the insistence of Rabbinic authorities, to ensure the confidentiality of the results. It may, therefore, be concluded that genetic screening for therapeutic purposes is not halakhically objectionable provided that it conforms to the laws regarding the disclosure of private matters and the obligation to preserve human dignity.⁽²²⁾

ABORTION OF A GENETICALLY DEFECTIVE FETUS

The issue of aborting a genetically defective fetus in Jewish law came into sharp focus in relation to Tay-Sachs disease. Modern authorities have grappled with this issue and reached diametrically opposed results. According to R. Eliezer Waldenberg, it is permitted to abort a Tay-Sachs fetus until the seventh month of pregnancy.⁽²³⁾ R. Moses Feinstein, on the other hand, wrote a responsum in which he argued that the abortion of a Tay-Sachs fetus was tantamount to murder.⁽²⁴⁾ The issue, therefore, is a matter of debate amongst the authorities.⁽²⁵⁾

A detailed analysis of these two decisions in the context of the halakhic doctrine of abortion is clearly beyond the scope of the present article.⁽²⁶⁾ It is, however, clear that the crux of the matter is the extent to which the trauma of dealing with the birth of a child stricken with a genetic defect is sufficient to fall within the mental and physical health rubric of therapeutic abortion in Jewish law.⁽²⁷⁾ According to R. Waldenberg, the mental torture undergone by a mother who has no choice but to stand by and watch her child deteriorate and die is sufficient to justify a lenient decision. In terms of the problem posed by the gap in time between the proposed abortion and the birth of the child, R. Waldenberg is able to rely on earlier precedents according to which it is permitted to abort a *mamzer* fetus on the grounds of the 'shame, disgrace and trauma' which will be experienced by the mother at the birth of her tainted offspring.⁽²⁸⁾ R. Feinstein relies in the main upon the

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view of Maimonides, according to which it is arguable that only an immediate and direct threat to the mother's life is sufficient to justify a therapeutic abortion in Jewish law.⁽²⁹⁾ R. Feinstein's *responsum* also raises the moral aspect which is an integral part of abortion *halakhah* and it is clear that his concern is as much for the moral image of the *halakhah*, as it is for the niceties of its doctrinal reasoning in this area.⁽³⁰⁾

It is noteworthy that neither R. Waldenberg nor R. Feinstein feel constrained by the traditional time-limits of forty days and three months in their respective rulings on Tay-Sachs disease.⁽³¹⁾ It is, therefore, arguable that there is no strong halakhic insistence on early genetic testing of fetuses as opposed to such testing later on in the pregnancy. In terms of pre-natal screening, this point is a significant one, since a test such as chorionic villus sampling may be carried out as early as eight weeks but is associated with a relatively high risk of spontaneous abortion. The more well-established method of amniocentesis has a much lower risk of miscarriage but can only be carried out in the second trimester. On the basis of the Tay-Sachs *responsa*, therefore, it would seem that there would not be any compelling halakhic reason for choosing chorionic villus sampling over amniocentesis, since the abortion aspect depends upon the criterion of maternal welfare not the stages of fetal development.

The extent to which the *halakhah* permits - if it does so, at all - the abortion of a genetically defective fetus is a matter of debate. R. Waldenberg extends his permissive ruling on Tay-Sachs to Down's Syndrome,⁽³²⁾ although this *responsum* is couched in much more restrictive terms than his decision in the former case. The abortion issue becomes even more complex in relation to late-onset conditions such as Huntingdon's Chorea, and genetic predispositions to certain types of cancer and heart disease. In these contexts, it is highly unlikely that the *halakhah* would permit abortion, although in the case of a

particularly traumatised pregnant mother, there is, presumably, the same doctrinal basis for ruling permissively as there is in relation to Tay-Sachs and Down's Syndrome. Indeed, as work on the Human Genome Project progresses, the issues of screening and abortion are likely to become most pressing and halakhists will be required to issue definitive rulings which will guide Jewish law into the genetic era with both integrity and sensitivity.

GENE THERAPY

In principle, gene therapy would appear to be no different from any other form of medical therapy, and hence permissible in terms of Jewish law.⁽³³⁾ In contrast to somatic cell therapy, the simplest form of which is the replacement of faulty genes with properly functioning ones, e.g. the replacement of stem cells in the bone marrow bearing the haemophilia gene with cells containing normal genes, germ-line therapy involves the manipulation of the genetic code of future generations. Genetic alteration of the germ-line has almost universally been rejected at least for the time being, and the reasons include the lack of scientific knowledge with regard to its long-term effects; the problems involved in carrying out the necessary research on embryos and the possibility that other techniques, e.g. preimplantation, are capable of achieving the same therapeutic goal, albeit in a less scientifically dramatic fashion.⁽³⁴⁾ It is noteworthy that in its 1995 Report, the Science and Technology Committee of the House of Commons recommended that 'the current prohibition on manipulating the genetic structure of a human embryo should remain, and there should be no manipulation of a human germ-line at any stage without the approval of the Gene Therapy Committee'.⁽³⁵⁾

In terms of Jewish sources, there is a particularly dramatic Talmudic passage in which King Hezekiah is informed that it is not within his authority to determine the fate of future generations and to prevent a son being born to him who was destined to undo all his good work

in spreading the word of the Lord in Israel.⁽³⁶⁾ Now, although the future defect in this case is of a moral rather than a physical nature, the principle of 'what have you to do with the secrets of the All-Merciful' articulated in this passage may be of some value in shaping a response to the issue of germ-line therapy in the context of the scientific uncertainties with which it is surrounded. The biological fate of future generations ought not to be determined by their ancestors unless there are very good and well-proven reasons for so doing.

GENETIC DETERMINISM AND JEWISH THOUGHT

The notion that human behaviour is determined by genetics is a popular one and has manifested itself in relation to both criminality and sexual orientation.⁽³⁷⁾ It is, however, abundantly clear that, as yet, there is little scientific basis for any claimed link between gene variants and abnormal behaviour and that, in any case, a genotype does not necessarily make a phenotype. In the words of the Science and Technology Committee of the House of Commons:

Our awareness of the power and intellectual excitement of genetic science does not imply a belief that we are merely 'programmed by our genes'. Human nature is a product of the interaction between genes and environment which is subject to uncertainty.⁽³⁸⁾

This would certainly appear to be the position in the Jewish tradition. The *Talmud* records the view that 'everything is in the hands of heaven except the fear of heaven',⁽³⁹⁾ i.e. a person's qualities are fixed by nature but their moral qualities depend upon their own choice. A vivid illustration of this idea is the legend of the portrait of Moses cited by R. Israel Lipschutz in his commentary on the *Mishnah*. According to this legend, an Arabian King heard about the great exploits of Moses and sent an artist to paint a portrait of the celebrated Divinely inspired leader of the Israelites. Upon the artist's return, the portrait was handed over to the King's

physiognomists for the preparation of a character analysis of Moses. The results were totally negative and the great leader emerged as a thoroughly evil individual. The King was dissatisfied with the results and decided to visit the Israelite camp in order to check on the accuracy of the portrait. The visit confirmed the artist's claim that his portrait was a faithful reproduction of Moses's face and the King concluded that the fault lay with his physiognomists. Prior to leaving the camp, however, the King informed Moses of the events which had caused him to make his visit. Moses then assured the King that his physiognomists were as precise as his artist and that by nature he was even worse than the picture they had painted of him. Without a concerted effort to overcome the evil proclivities to which nature had disposed him, Moses would never have become the servant of God and the greatest prophet in Israel. This legend clearly expresses the notion that free-will reigns supreme even in the context of a natural disposition. It is clear, therefore, that the establishment of a genetic disposition does not in any way affect the theological doctrine of moral choice which is a very heart of traditional Jewish thought.

1. *Yevamot* 64b
2. *Yevamot* 64b; *Shulhan Arukh*, *Yoreh Deah* 263:2
3. See notes 6-9 below
4. See F Rosner, *Medicine in the Bible and the Talmud* (Ktav, N.J., 1995) 43
5. *Hil. Milah* 1:18 and see the commentary of R. Joseph Kapach, *ad.loc.*
6. *Sefer Ha'agudah*, *Perek Rabbi Eliezer* No. 164
7. *Yoreh Deah* 263:2
8. *Bet Yosef*, *Yoreh Deah* 263 s.v. *vehkativ R. Manoah*
9. *Yevamot* 62b-63a; *Sanhedrin* 76b. Maimonides includes the daughters of both sisters and brothers in the category of recommended marriages and described the practise as a 'commandment of the Sages' (*Hil. Issurei Biah* 2:14)
10. *Isaiah* 58:7; see Maimonides, *ibid*
11. *Maggid Mishnah*, *Hil. Issurei Biah* 2:14
12. *Even Haezer* 2:6 and 15:25
13. *Zava'at Rabbi Yehuda Hehasid* no.22

14. See G Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (N.Y., 1940) 80; H Soloveitchik, 'Three Themes in Sefer Hasidism', *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 1 (1976) 311
15. See *Resp. Noda Beyehuda* 2, *Even Haezer* No.79; *Resp. Divrei Hayyim*, *Even Haezer* No.8
16. See note 14 above
17. A similar argument is used to account for the fact that halizah takes priority over Levirate marriage (*Yevamot* 39b)
18. *Resp. Even Harosha* No.31
19. See *Yad Ramah*, *Sanhedrin* 76b; *Appel Zutra*, *Even Haezer* 2:6
20. *Resp. Ziz Eliezer* 15, No.44
21. These concerns are of a general nature and figure in most of the recent literature on human genetics, see *Our Genetic Future* (British Medical Association, Oxford University Press, 1992) 188-209; T Wilkie, *Perilous Knowledge* (London, 1994) 97-133; *Human Genetics: The Science and its Consequences* (Science and Technology Committee, House of Commons, HMSO, London, 1995)
22. See F Rosner, 'Tay-Sachs Disease: To Screen or Not to Screen', in F Rosner and J D Bleich (eds) *Jewish Bioethics*, (N.Y., 1979) 178
23. *Resp. Ziz Eliezer* 13, No.102; 14, No.100
24. *Resp. Igrot Moshe*, *Hoshen Mishpat* 2, No.69
25. See *Resp. Lev Aryeh* 2, No.32; *Nishmat Avraham*, *Hoshen Mishpat*, no.425; *Resp. Mishneh Halakhot* 5, No.233; 6, No.14; A Steinberg (ed) *Encyclopaedia of Jewish Medical Ethics* 2 (Heb.), (Jerusalem, 1991) 89-90
26. See D Sinclair, *Tradition and the Biological Revolution* (Edinburgh University Press, 1989) 93-98
27. See *Encyclopaedia of Jewish Medical Ethics*, 80-88
28. *Resp. She'lat Ya'avez*, No.43; *Resp. Rav Pa'alim*, *Even Haezer*, No.4
29. Maimonides, *Hil. Rozeah*, 1:9; see J D Bleich, 'Abortion in Halakhic Literature' in *Jewish Bioethics*, 169, No.34
30. See Sinclair, *op.cit.*, 76-78
31. R Waldenberg cites *Resp. Havat Yair*, No.31 to the effect that these time limits are 'merely inclinations of the mind', lacking any basis in normative *halakhah*; see, however, J D Bleich, 'Abortion in Halakhic Literature' in *Jewish Bioethics*, 169, No.34
32. See note 23 above
33. See A Rosenfeld, 'Judaism and Gene

- Design', in *Jewish Bioethics*, 401; F Rosner, 'Genetic Engineering and Judaism' in *Jewish Bioethics*, 417-419
34. *Our Genetic Future*, 185. Also see Wilkie 152-158 for a comment on the darker side of the prospects offered to society by somatic-cell gene therapy
35. Wilkie, *op.cit.*, 159-165, *Our Genetic Future*, *op.cit.*, 185-188
36. *Berakhot* 33b
37. 'The Genetic Revolution', *Time*, January 17, 1994, p.39; 'Search for a Gay Gene', *Time*, June 12, 1995, p.52
38. See *Human Genetics*, 22
39. *Tiferet Yisrael*, *Kiddushin* 4:14. In fact the earliest versions of this story in Jewish sources contain no reference to Moses whatsoever, and the source is probably a passage in Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations* (London, 1927) 4, no. 80; see S Leiman, 'R. Israel Lipschutz and the Portrait of Moses Controversy', in I Twersky (ed) *Danzig: Between East and West*, (Harvard University Press, 1985) 49.

Rabbi Dr Daniel Sinclair was Minister of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation from 1984-1987 and is currently Principal of Jews College, London. He has a special interest in Jewish Medical Ethics and is the author of *Tradition and the Biological Revolution: the Application of Jewish Law to the Treatment of the Critically Ill* (Edinburgh University Press, 1989). The article was the subject of a lecture at the opening meeting of the Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society on 29 October 1995.

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LECTURE ROUND-UP

Talks to the Archive Centre, CCJ and the Lit

COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

Rabbi Dr Norman Solomon,
'A Decade in Dialogue'
Thursday, 19 October 1995

The first meeting of the 1995/96 season was held in the Synagogue Hall on Thursday, 19 October attended by over 50 members and friends. Rabbi Dr Norman Solomon, now a Fellow in Modern Jewish Thought at the Oxford Centre for Jewish Studies, chose as his subject 'A Decade in Dialogue,' referring to a period when he was deeply involved in Christian/Jewish relations - when he was, as he put it 'a fly on the wall' in twenty countries on four continents.

Many documents have been produced over the years setting forth ways of reaching greater understanding between the different faiths. What has evolved is that there are as many subjects on which Jews and Christians agreed as on which they disagreed - even among themselves. It was essential, Dr Solomon decreed, that we should learn to live amicably together, accepting the customs and traditions of other faiths while adhering faithfully to our own. In other words, we should be able to communicate in the activity of Theology on an academic basis.

Since the Holocaust there has been a positive attempt to make amends to the Jews for persecutions and anti-Semitic attitudes and a pioneer in this field was the late Reverend W W Simpson, a Methodist Minister, who was one of the founders of the National Council of Christians and Jews in 1942. The late Rabbi Weinberg, together with the Reverend Professor G W Anderson, started the Group here in Edinburgh on 14 April 1969 and it is still going strong today. CCJ looks forward to having new members and all are welcome at meetings. For further information please contact the Secretary, Mrs Rose Orgel, telephone number 0131 337 5474.

Blanche Mundy

SCOTTISH JEWISH ARCHIVES CENTRE, GLASGOW

Rabbi Dr Louis Jacobs,
'Reflections and Visions'
Sunday, 29 October 1995

'I am not here to sell Masorti' declared Rabbi Dr Louis Jacobs, addressing over 200 people at a public meeting of the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre in Garnethill Synagogue. Making a plea for respect for different approaches to Judaism in Britain, he disputed that communal unity was the most important aim in itself. British Jews should be able to work together, stressing the things that unite them, rather than the divisions.

Nevertheless, Rabbi Jacobs made no apology for his influence on the history of the community over the last thirty years. 'Making waves is the thing to do if the boat is to reach its destination'. He alluded briefly to the 'Jacobs Affair' of the mid-1960s, when Garnethill Synagogue, under the leadership of his friend Reverend Dr I K Cosgrove, voted narrowly against splitting from mainstream Orthodoxy and joining what was later to become the Masorti movement under Rabbi Jacobs.

Outlining his early life and upbringing in Manchester, he spoke about his own Orthodox yeshiva background. He studied under a Lubavitcher chosid, at a time when that movement was not yet so fashionable, but he felt that the philosophy of Lubavitch today was inadequate and foreign to the British Jewish way of life. Yet Jacobs was a product of Orthodoxy, and ironically only the outbreak of the War in 1939 prevented him from going to study at the famous Lithuanian yeshiva of Telz. 'I am the last person on earth to attack the yeshivot'.

Intellectually, Rabbi Jacobs was to find himself questioning the tradition in which he had grown up, most famously in his book *We Have Reason to Believe*. His Manchester friends referred to him as a 'local boy made bad'. Over the past decades, he had sought to apply rational and intellectual criticism to Jewish teaching, on such subjects as

evolution and the origins of the Tanach.

Referring to the 'unpleasant rigorousness' of the Orthodox establishment in Britain today, Rabbi Jacobs warned against copying the models of Judaism from other eras and other parts of the world. He attacked the priority given to 'Jewish Continuity' as reducing things to the lowest common denominator. Continuity could never be seen as an aim in itself.

In reply to a question about whether there were any plans to hold Masorti services in Glasgow, Rabbi Jacobs declared that he was not primarily interested in empire-building, and that any such moves would depend on local feeling. He did not seek to split up existing synagogues.

Harvey Kaplan

COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

Dr Timothy Lim,
'The Dead Sea Scrolls'
Thursday, 23 November 1995

There was good representation from the Synagogue and local Churches to hear Dr Lim, whose knowledge and fluency were such that it was not easy to absorb everything at one sitting.

The 'Dead Sea Scrolls' were found by shepherds between 1945 and 1947 in clay jars in a cave of the Judean Wilderness near the north-west shore of the Dead Sea in the vicinity of *Khirbet Qumran*. The documents, mainly Biblical, date from the third century before the Christian era to AD 68, the date of the fall of the community centre to the Romans. This discovery set off a series of manuscript finds in caves I to XI without precedent in the history of modern archaeology and threw new light on the daily life of the Essenes.

The *Essenes* were a religious sect who had retired to the wilderness away from the sins and temptations of the world. They were a mainly agricultural community occupied with the study of scripture and a life of worship, prayer and labour. Their leader was known as 'The Righteous Teacher' and the message, rather

than the actual form of the Bible, was what mattered to them.

Until the *Qumran* discoveries, the most important source of the text of the Hebrew Bible was the great codices (manuscript volumes) of the late 9th and early 10th centuries, works produced by the *Masoretes* (scholars who made a detailed study of the traditional Hebrew text).

Through the Scrolls, scholars have been able to trace the history and doctrines of the sect with considerable accuracy and have been enabled to draw a picture of Judaism in the last two centuries before the fall of the Temple.

The discovery of the Scrolls was kept secret for many years, while their significance were being studied and evaluated by scholars before being released to the public as considerable controversy had been created by conclusions which may have been false.

Blanche Mundy

LITERARY SOCIETY

Dr Asher Kaufman,
'The Mystery of the Second Temple'

Tuesday, 28 November 1995

'Make known the plan of the Temple and its layout' (Ezekiel 43:10)

At the end of November, the Lit welcomed back an old friend, Asher Kaufman. Now Professor of Physics at the Hebrew University, Asher Kaufman was an Edinburgh lad who remembers being taken to a meeting of the Lit at the age of 5 at which a 'magic lantern show' was given. He also remembers a talk on Spinoza, a subject of perennial popularity in our programmes. He was obviously not put off since he was President of the Lit in 1953-54, before eventually leaving Edinburgh to go on *aliyah*.

Asher Kaufman first began to unravel 'The Mystery of the Second Temple' when on sabbatical in 1974. He had decided not to spend his sabbatical abroad because of his elderly parents who had recently themselves made *aliyah*. Instead, he devoted his sabbatical to researching where the Second Temple was located.

His researches started with three basic sources. There was the written record, namely the Mishnah, Tractate Midot (using an ancient manuscript from the Cairo Genizah,

alleged to be in the hand of Rambam), and Josephus; archaeological discoveries; and Arabic representations of the Temple.

Although it is virtually impossible to excavate the Temple Mount because of the holy buildings standing there (e.g. the Dome of the Rock Mosque), nonetheless he was able, by careful observation including aerial observation, to challenge the conventional view that there was no archaeological remnant above ground to give a clue to the mystery. He observed the location of two cisterns which still fill with water on the Temple Mount. To this he added observation of a mound of rock and a platform of stones, and finally, taking the opportunity to inspect a hole being dug for an emergency water supply following a serious fire in the El Aqsa Mosque, he noticed the line of an ancient wall built of Herodian masonry. By mathematical means he was able to deduce that the Temple had an East/West orientation with entrances at either end, forming the shape of a long trapezium narrower at the back (West) end than the front. The north line followed the line of the ridge along the side of a major valley. It was about the size of Wembley stadium. These findings fitted with the description of the Temple as a crouching lion (paws providing the wider end of the trapezium). His findings were incorporated in a famous model of the second temple by a young Kibbutznik, carried out as part of a Sixth Form project.

The most intriguing aspect of the

thesis is the possibility that a tiny domed building near the Dome of the Rock may actually stand above what is left at ground level of the Holy of Holies. The slab of rock which this little dome covers is older than the surrounding flagstones. The building itself has three names - Dome of the Spirits, Dome of the Tablets and Prison of the Genie - which suggests a special origin preserved in Arab folklore.

Asher Kaufman certainly fulfilled the command quoted above from Ezekiel, and mercifully without the reproaches which that prophet thunders against Israel for her profanation of the Temple and its worship. His slides were simple and effective, his presentation appealing and straightforward. The meeting was very well attended and much enjoyed.

Micheline Brannan

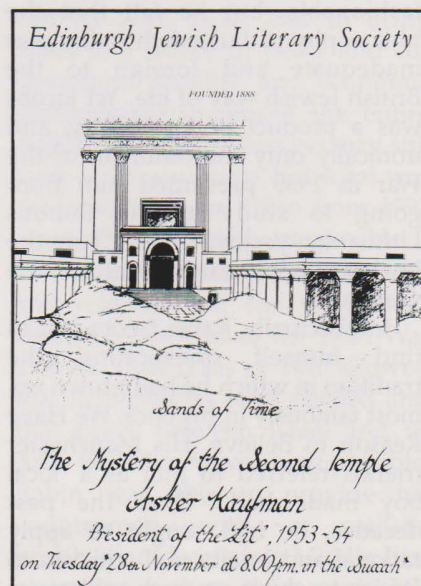
LITERARY SOCIETY

Dr Andrew Barker : Jews and Jewishness in Vienna at the Turn of the Century

Sunday, 3 December 1995

Jewish life in Vienna at the turn of the last century was the topic of a talk to the Literary Society on 3 December 1995 by Dr Andrew Barker of the German Department at the University of Edinburgh. Dr Barker, who specialises in Viennese cultural and literary life in that period, explored the social and psychological predicament of assimilated Jews whose contribution was central to the pre-eminence of Vienna in the arts, philosophy, and science. Men of Jewish birth or background were among the towering figures of the age: Wittgenstein in philosophy; Schoenberg and Mahler in music; Freud in psychology; Schnitzler and Hofmannsthal in literature. But Vienna was also the crucible for varied and sometimes deranged responses by Jews to their situation in the broader society.

A century ago, Vienna had the second largest Jewish population in Europe, numbering some 250,000 in a city of two million people. They were the statistically dominant group in medicine, law and journalism and at the University of Vienna. But Jews formed two geographically and culturally distinct societies: the established, pros-




POSTER: TONY GILBERT

perous and assimilated Jews who had taken the most advantage of the Habsburg Empire under Emperor Franz Josef I; and the Yiddish-speaking *Kaftanjuden* of the Leopoldstadt. The subjects of Dr Barker's talk were from the first of these. In a country that was experiencing a late-nineteenth century resurgence of anti-semitism, racism and nationalism, coupled with resentment in Catholic and commercial circles of Jewish influence, three patterns of Jewish response could be identified. One was to affirm their assimilated status through the patronage and practice of the arts, and through entry into the learned professions. Coupled with this was conversion to Christianity, as for example Wittgenstein's family and, later, Mahler. Changes of surname fit this pattern as well. All of this could lead to identity crises, providing rich material for psycho-analysis.

A second line of response was Herzl's Zionism. Himself an assimilationist until the time of the Dreyfus Affair in France, the journalist Herzl took his cue from other nationalist movements in conceiving Zionism; only in their own homeland could Jews come to terms with their identity and place in the world. Dr Barker observed that the same nationalistic climate and intellectual ferment that produced Freud, Wittgenstein and Zionism eventually also resulted in Nazism, although there was a vast moral difference between the two movements. Finally, the third response was a form of self-hatred, in which Jews absorbed mainstream society's hostility and turned it against themselves. This psychological damage and dislocation sometimes produced extreme and bizarre behaviour.

Dr Barker illustrated this with a fascinating overview of the work and life of the philosopher Otto Weininger and the writer Peter Altenberg. Weininger committed suicide at the age of 23, having failed to synthesise Kant, Christ, Jewishness and homosexuality. He had believed in a basic human bisexuality, but also posited the opposition of males and females and argued for the superiority of the former's qualities. Jews, he thought, were like females, incapable of

Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society



Vienna Trio

Jews and Jewishness in Vienna 1900

Dr Andrew Barker

Senior Lecturer, German Department, Edinburgh University

on Sunday, 3rd December at 8.00pm.

in the New Jewish Community Centre

FOSTER, TONY GILBERT

moral or artistic conduct - a view which not only appealed to Hitler but also to Wittgenstein, who expressed his own self-hatred along the same lines and accepted Weininger's views.

Altenberg - born Richard Engländer - enjoyed a large reputation until the 1920s, but has been neglected since then. He was a master of small-scale works such as prose poems, which had a great influence on Kafka, who took up Altenberg's stories and re-worked them, for example in *Metamorphosis*. Championing essence over ornament in the highly assertive and imposing physical and cultural milieu of Vienna, Altenberg was an ally of the prominent architect Adolf Loos, who similarly rejected embellishments in his modernist buildings, and had a likewise influence over Schoenberg's music. Altenberg's views on sexual and social questions were complex and contradictory. In public, he supported the cause of women in a male-dominated, bourgeois society, and defended prostitutes as its victims. But he was also scandalously obsessed with young girls and, in private, was a misogynist whose change of his Jewish name and conversion to Roman Catholicism could be seen as an attempt to assimilate to the very bourgeois society he professed to oppose. He was also given to making public statements of his anti-Semitism. This complex behav-

iour paralleled the dichotomy of appearance and reality that was underscored by the vast stage-set that was Vienna in 1900, on which Altenberg lived his dramatic life. He believed in weightlessness and was given to trying to fly unaided by mimicking birds. Alcohol, drugs and his penchant for pre-pubescent girls eventually landed him in a mental institution. He died in 1919, but his memory is preserved in the composer Alban Berg's *Altenberg-Lieder* of 1912, which caused a scandal in its 1913 debut. Dr Barker concluded his talk with excerpts from a recording of these songs.

This was an absorbing evening, stimulating many thoughts about the circumstances of Jewish identity in one of the twentieth century's most important cultural crucibles. The controversial issues concerning Jewishness in the diaspora are generally independent of time and place; nevertheless an understanding of Vienna nearly one hundred years ago casts a very interesting light on them. The Jewish population of Vienna - in which Jews first settled eight hundred years ago - is now counted as only between seven and twelve thousand, but the community maintains a thriving cultural life, including a museum and a monthly journal discussing major literary, artistic, political and social topics as well as reporting local news.

Charles Raab

VISITING THE HULA VALLEY AND THE SOURCES OF THE JORDAN

by Eva Erdelyi

In the first of the Psalms, the 'man who has not followed the counsels of the wicked' is compared to a well-rooted tree beside streams of water, which bears its fruit in season, whose foliage never fades. Where would the psalmist find such trees in the land of Israel? Not in the sands of the coastal region, nor in the Judean Hills, where the forest has to subsist on a scanty, seasonal rainfall; and certainly not in the Negev. There a torrent of water may rush down the *wadi* in the morning, and disappear, sucked up by the parched earth, in the afternoon. But those well-rooted, fruit-bearing trees of the psalmist must have been as abundant then as they are now, beside the headwaters of the Jordan River.

THE HULA RESERVE

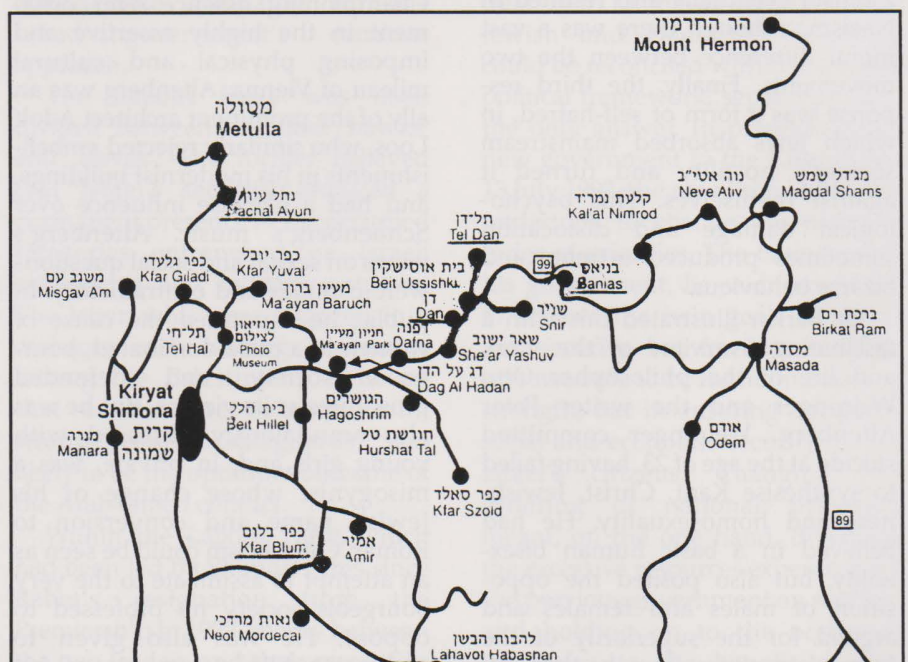
The best time to visit the extreme North of the country is in late spring or early summer, when the rocky hills are carpeted with wild flowers, and every nook and cranny waves a flag of scarlet poppies. When my son proposed to spend the Passover week in Israel last year, we decided to use the intermediate days of the festival for a visit to Northern Galilee. Our base was to be the guest house at Kibbutz Kfar Blum, which offers excellent accommodation, delectable meals and friendly service. There is even a swimming pool, but we were not tempted to use it as the weather remained cool and misty for the first three days of our stay, and we had reserved our fourth and last day for the Golan Heights. Coming from Tel Aviv in our rented car, we could choose our own route, with a lunchtime stop in Safed followed by a winding descent into the valley, spreading below and before us like an enormous patchwork quilt in varying shades of green and blue. The patches are fields and fishponds, about 15,500 acres of them, which have replaced the Hula

Lake and Swamp which was drained in the years between 1951 and 1959. This large, waterlogged area did not only breed anopheles mosquitoes, but also a great variety of wild life and plants, an ecological paradise untouched by the hand of man. Draining the lake eliminated malaria at the cost of the disappearance of what has been called the 'Hula Wonderland'. Realisation of this loss has convinced the authorities to save at least a small part of the lake, which was in 1964 officially designated as the Hula Reserve, the first of many nature reserves now dotting the map of Israel. But only after 1971 was the Hula Reserve fully developed as a sanctuary for migrating and nesting birds, and equipped with a visitors centre, an excellent museum, picnic grounds and other facilities including an observation tower which we climbed for a bird's eye view of the Reserve. My son and I enjoyed our walk on the swamp trail spanning vast thickets of papyrus and common reeds, while looking out for birds above and water turtles

below us.

THE TEL DAN RESERVE

You may ask: what has this marshy enclave to do with 'well-rooted trees beside streams of water', or, for that matter, with the sources of the Jordan? To answer this question we had to go further north, past Kfar Blum, to three other nature reserves, one more beautiful than the other, which we visited during the following two days. The first of them was the Tel Dan Reserve. This, as the name indicates, is an archaeological site as well as a nature park. Excavation at the Tel revealed remains of the Canaanite city of Laish, which according to the Bible was conquered by the Israelite tribe of Dan. The conquering Danites renamed the city and it became their capital, important as a frontier outpost. A centre of pagan cults during the back-sliding period of the Kingdom of Israel, the place by the springs of the river, with its shady groves of towering trees may have been the site of pagan rites ever since, or rather, long before the earliest period of recorded history.



Map of the Upper Galilee.

The River Dan is the largest and most important of the sources of the Jordan. It is not fed by torrential rains, but by the melting snow from the heights of Mount Hermon. Its cold, clear waters filter down in a multitude of rivulets, enriching the soil for an abundant vegetation. As we walked on the nature trail following the youthful Dan, a fast flowing, softly murmuring, limpid river, we saw many species of trees, among them Tabor Oak, Syrian Ash, Fig and Mulberry trees as well as the more exotic Atlantic Pistachio. All of them surely bear their fruit in season, being well-rooted beside streams of water, as described by the psalmist.

THE NAHAL HERMON RESERVE AT BANIAS

While the Tel Dan Reserve is tiny - it

covers barely 98 acres, and can be easily explored in a couple of hours - the Hermon Reserve, our second port of call, covers a large area including a bewildering variety of historic ruins, rivers and waterfalls. Distinguished on my map by the National Parks emblem, a green tree, the reserve and the river itself are commonly known under the name Banias, pronounced Banyas. The Nahal Hermon is, like the Dan, a major tributary to the Jordan, with its drainage basin in the Northern Golan and the area of Mount Hermon inside Israel.

From this high elevation the river drops 190 metres, gathering the power to cut a deep canyon before descending into the Hula Valley, where it meets Nahal Dan and the third tributary called Hatzbani, or Ayoun, and the three rivers unite to form the Jordan.

But within the reserve the Hermon River itself is swelled by three tributaries, and across one of these meandering streams, at the foot of a precipitous ravine, the ancient city of Banias was situated. Here the visitor emerging from the car park is confronted with a spectacular scene. Half-way up on the vertical cliff there is a cave, or grotto, about 15 metres high and 20 metres wide. Five niches hewn into the rock outside the cave are the only remains of a Greek temple of Pan, the Arcadian god of flocks and shepherds. The temple was called a 'Paneum' and the whole area 'Paneas', which in Arabic pronunciation became 'Banias'. Inscriptions on these niches show that one of them was dedicated to Echo, a nymph pursued by the amorous Pan. When she escaped from him and fled to the mountain, the angry god changed her into a voice which can only repeat the last words spoken to her. Poor Echo! She cannot even lament her fate in her own words.

According to Josephus, a temple of white marble was built by Herod, 'close by the fountains of Jordan'. This splendid temple has disappeared long ago, together with the statue of the deified Emperor

Augustus to whom it was dedicated. What remains are some broken fragments of marble pillars littering the ground near the entrance to the park, where they are used as convenient seats and tables for family picnics. What a come-down for the so-called 'god' Augustus! His cult was more short-lived even than that of Pan. While my son was taking photographs of this scene, I learned from my guidebook that Banias was renamed 'Caesarea Philippi' in the lifetime of Jesus. An interesting reference may be found in the gospel of Matthew 16:13. That is why Christian pilgrims from all over the world come to this source of the Jordan, which springs from the very rock Jesus had before him when saying to his disciple: 'You are Peter, the Rock, and on this rock I will build my church ...' (A word-play on the Greek *petros*, meaning stone, or rock.)

Of the extensive fortified city the Crusaders built at Banias only the monumental gatehouse and tower remain standing. We decided to bypass these relics and make our way to the famous Banias Waterfall. A lovely trail leads to it through a dense grove of trees dripping with spray. It is a slippery path, too narrow for the crowd of holiday trippers, on their way to, or return from admiring one of the most beautiful waterfalls in the country. As we passed the picnic area on our way back to the parking lot, it was shrouded in a dense cloud of smoke rising from barbecues where these latter-day pilgrims were broiling their meat, standing as the priests of Pan may have done, long ago, in the smoke of their sacrifices.

THE AYOUN RIVER RESERVE

This is also known as *Ha Tanur*, 'the Oven' - the nickname refers to a waterfall situated near the southern entrance of the reserve, which has formed something like a chimney in the rocky ridge marking the frontier between Lebanon and Israel. The reserve covers only a small area, about 200 acres, with an excellent single trail following the course of the river from one waterfall to the other, ending at a camping ground

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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at the top as well as the bottom of the trail. Unlike the Dan and the Hermon, the Ayoun has its sources not in Israel but in Lebanon, 7 km. north of the pleasant border town of Metulla. The first of the falls we visited was the famous 'Oven Fall', which was in full spate, and we could have done with a real oven to dry us from the spray of its 30 metre leap. We then went to the less spectacular Ayoun Fall, near the Upper Camp Ground, and enjoyed our walk downstream as far as the Mill Fall, which got its name from a flour mill that used to be driven by the water cascading for 21 metres down a rockwall. After a rainstorm, the waterfall forms one solid curtain, but when we saw it the river divided into three showers of foaming water. I watched them from a safe distance, while my son went down to the foot of the Fall to take pictures.

The sources of the Ayoun are perennial. But they are diverted by the Lebanese peasants to water their fields during the dry season, when the river dries up temporarily. Fortunately, the Jordan does not depend entirely on its three main tributaries, but is fed by a multitude of small streams and streamlets, flowing or trickling into it from Mount Hermon and the Golan Heights. No wonder the Hula Valley is green, no wonder it became a waterlogged swamp, after a basalt spill from the direction of the Golan blocked the Jordan Valley about 20,000 years ago. This natural dam created Hula Lake and the swamp surrounding it.

Draining the Hula Region caused what has been called 'The Death of a Lake', but it has stopped the growing death toll of human beings. Now there is no malaria, no stagnation, but a lively flow of water into the Jordan River, into the irrigation systems of our fields and orchards, and into the Sea of Galilee. But this is only the beginning of the story. Because from the Sea of Galilee a system of conduits known

as the National Water Carrier is flowing South, and so, of course, is the Jordan. Both are distributing their water in a network of canals all over the country, where they are badly needed.

After a glorious day on the Golan Heights we drove home, having seen and learnt a lot in a short space of time. It had been a memorable experience to see the water gushing from the rock as if touched by the rod of Moses, and to admire the pioneering spirit and engineering

skill which has in the Hula Basis created a large, fertile area full of well-rooted, fruitbearing trees. I am sure their sight would have delighted the heart of the psalmist.

After nearly half a century in Edinburgh, Eva Erdelyi went on aliyah in October 1987. She lives in Tel Aviv and has written a number of articles for the Edinburgh Star. Her most recent article, entitled 'The Northern Negev Revisited', appeared in Issue No.19 (September 1994).

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BIZ TSVEY HUNDERT UN FERTSIK: THE JEWISH STATE THEATRE OF ROMANIA VISITS EDINBURGH

Traverse Theatre, 3-4 November 1995

reviewed by Elaine Samuel

The Yiddish theatre was born in Jassy, Romania, exactly 120 years ago. From its birth in Shimen Mark's *Pomul Verde* (Green Tree) wine garden, it has now reached an age which we may wish on each other, but few of us attain. So how is it keeping - this Yiddish Theatre of ours? Sheva Lurie and I had the opportunity of checking it out for ourselves when the Jewish State Theatre of Romania played at the Traverse in November last year.

The Jewish State Theatre was billed by the Edinburgh producers of the Romanian Festival of Arts and Culture as never having closed its doors in its long history. It was to present *Tonight Lola Blau* by George Kreisler, not a piece to be found in the traditional repertoire of the Yiddish Theatre, nor by a known Yiddish playwright. And it was to star Maia Morgenstern. Our expectations were no doubt coloured by all our past experiences of Yiddish theatre - in Odessa, Tel Aviv and New York. Either this was to be a production of the *shmendrik/kuni-lemel* variety with plenty of songs about my '*shtetele Belz*' and at least one mother who must bid her child farewell forever, or it was to be of the declamatory variety with roles of epic proportion. And as for Maia Morgenstern? Well, perhaps a Molly Picon according to the first scenario, and an Ida Kaminska according to the second. Whichever it was to be, one thing was certain - the Yiddish actors would have good opportunity to exercise their thespian talents in character parts 20-50 years younger than themselves.

Which all is by way of telling you that the Jewish State Theatre of Romania that evening did to us what good theatre everywhere is meant to do! It shook out every

preconception, it upturned every unstated assumption, it tore us apart and left us gasping for breath. And all this wrought by the production's only player - a slight '20 something' actress who carried us with her in song (German), and in verse and prose (Yiddish), through the tormented life of a Jewish cabaret artiste in Vienna between the Wars.

Was there such a person as Lola Blau? Probably not, though Jews undoubtedly participated in the seamier side of culture in the Weimar Republic era, as well as playing their more renowned role in *haute culture*. There was, of course, Lola (Marlene Dietrich) in *The Blue Angel* 'falling in love again' and she was a showgirl - just like Lola appears so often as the archetypal showgirl, in cabaret or Copecabana (Barry Manilow). So is Lola Blau just a Yiddish speaking showgirl who must sing for her supper in German? I think she is something more. In this play, the Jew as cabaret artiste appears to have been devised by Kreisler as a metaphor for the Jewish condition. Who is more dependent upon the affection, kindness and favours of strangers than the cabaret artiste, if not the Jew? In *Tonight Lola Blau*, we saw the tragic form and destiny which that dependency took in the life of one Jewish Viennese cabaret artiste.

After the applause had died down, we sat for a while in stunned silence. Maia would speak to us after the performance, and I had taken Sheva along to help out should my Yiddish fail me. A good group of *Edinburgh Star* readers was gathered in the bar, and collectively we put together the kind of questions we imagined its readers would like answered, and waited. Maia finally arrived and apologised

in English for keeping us waiting. No, like many of the members of the company who remained back in Romania, she actually spoke no Yiddish. But she had been appearing on the Yiddish stage since the age of 16, and it was here she had been taught her craft, learning to project before an audience of five as if before an audience of 500. Yes, Ceaucescu had supported and sponsored the Yiddish Theatre but, since his downfall, there were other more important destinations for resources. Many people in Bucharest were not aware that the Yiddish Theatre was still functioning because it is now surrounded by ruins which had to be carefully negotiated in order to access it. Yes, she was thrilled with the reception she had received in Edinburgh, but did not have any pictures of herself or of the company for the *Edinburgh Star*. These, one felt, were a luxury and a frivolity which the company could ill-afford. From Yiddish Theatre she could make no living, but there was more to life than 'a living'.

Penniless and passionate! In Maia was 120 years of living history - the history of the Yiddish Theatre. From whence came her intensity and commitment to Yiddish Theatre? We never did find out the answer to that one. Nevertheless, we went away with the feeling that in the hands of the likes of Maia Morgenstern, '*biz tsvey hundert un fertsik*' ('to 240') was no idle wish for the future of the Yiddish Theatre.

Before moving to Edinburgh some 20 years ago, Elaine Samuel carried out postgraduate research on Yiddish Theatre at Columbia University, New York

AFTER AUSCHWITZ : RESPONSES TO THE HOLOCAUST IN CONTEMPORARY ART

City Arts Centre, 2 December 1995 - 20 January 1996

reviewed by Michael Adler

The title of this exhibition alludes to the often-quoted assertion by Theodor Adorno, the German Jewish philosopher and sociologist that 'to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric'. However, his apocalyptic statement has clearly had little deterrent effect on modern poetry or on other art forms. Indeed, a number of poets, writers and artists have attempted to deal with the holocaust in their work.

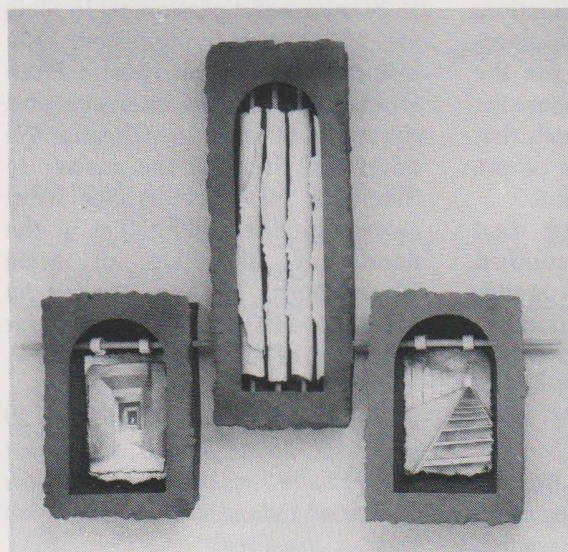
After Auschwitz contained the work of 20 such artists, some Jewish and some non-Jewish, from many different countries in Europe and North America. The exhibition, which included sculpture and photography as well as painting, was organised by Monica Bohm-Duchen on behalf of the Northern Centre for Contemporary Art in Sunderland, and was first shown at the Royal Festival Hall in London earlier in the year. Sadly it did not come to Edinburgh in its entirety and some very striking pieces which appear in the catalogue, such as **Fabio Mauri's** sculpture of leather suitcases, wood and canvas entitled *Western or Wailing Wall* (1993) were not on display. Nevertheless the exhibition was well worth seeing.

Although it probably contained no 'great works of art', many of the pieces were extremely evocative and made a profound and lasting impact.

Rather than review the entire exhibition, I shall concentrate on the three artists whose work impressed me most. **Daisy Brand** was born in Czechoslovakia in 1929 and miraculously survived seven camps including Auschwitz. She has lived in the USA since 1966 and, in the 1980s, began to confront the past in her art by producing small-scale, three-dimensional ceramic pictures. Recurrent motifs include railway tracks, gates, fences, corridors and empty chambers on the one hand; and scrolls and black and white material (which is reminiscent both of a *tallith* and of the uniforms worn by Camp inmates) on the other. In each case, the featured item is set back in a recess, which is itself suggestive of the Ark in which the *Sefer Torah* is kept. The triptych entitled *Broken Promise* reproduced below juxtaposes the scrolls with a 'terminal' railway siding and what I take to be a series of gas chambers in a particularly stark and suggestive

manner.

Superimposition rather than juxtaposition is the technique which the photographer **Shimon Attie** uses to project the past into the present and to reveal a historical tragedy which has all too frequently vanished without trace. Attie, who was born in the USA in 1957, now divides his time between San Francisco and Berlin. On visiting Berlin for the first time in 1991, he became very curious about the Jewish community which had once been so very important in that city, though few traces of it can now be seen. In an attempt to bring the past to life, and as a direct challenge to the prevailing view which equates 'out of sight' with 'out of mind', Attie projected portions of pre-Second World War photographs of Jewish street life in Berlin onto the old buildings or onto new buildings built on the same site as the old ones. The effect is both haunting and extremely powerful. The past, which, in the case of the *Ostjuden* (Russian and Polish Jews) in the *Schaunten Viertel*, a largely Jewish, working class area near Alexanderplatz in the Eastern part of the city,



Daisy Brand, *The Broken Promise* (triptych), 1990.



Shimon Attie, *Mulakstrasse 37*: slide projection of former Jewish residents (c1932), from *Writing on the Wall* series, 1991.

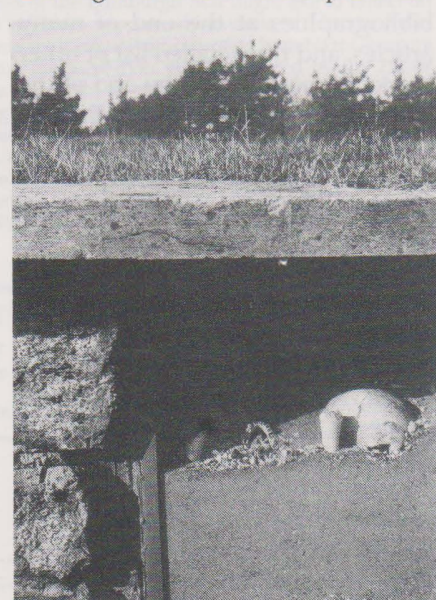
had been snuffed out, and in the case of the Germans who now live there, was mostly long-forgotten, is thus recreated in a striking and highly original way. Examples from his *Writing on the Wall* project include a couple of former residents in the doorway of a now derelict building (reproduced here), a Jew sitting behind a window on which a 'Star of David' has been painted in a respectable tenement house in which that window had actually been bricked up, and a 'storm-trooper' in uniform who has clearly come to round up or otherwise harass a large family which includes many children. Visually disturbing images such as these directly challenge the tendency to forget or, in some cases, to deny the past.

A more 'natural' juxtaposition of past and present is provided in an extremely stark and poignant series of photographs entitled *Memorials* by the German photographer **Henning Langenheim**. Langenheim, who was born in Hamburg in 1950 and now lives in Berlin, has visited some 70 sites of Nazi atrocities, including all the major concentration and extermination camps which are featured here. The result is a set of seemingly straightforward documentary photographs which highlight the apparent ordinariness of the camps today, and the ways in which places where unspeakable acts of depravity were

once carried out have been rendered anodyne and, in some cases, made into 'tourist attractions'. Three examples, reproduced here, exemplify Langenheim's approach. In a photograph taken at *Sobibor* (where my wife's grandparents probably perished), a flat, grassy field with trees and shrubs in the background hides the top of a skull and some bones protruding from a mass grave which is literally just below the ground. In one taken at *Auschwitz-Birkenau*, a man and a child are seen walking in the rain along a road which skirts the perimeter fence while in one taken at *Dachau*, a man is shown cutting the grass on a summer's day with a 'flymo'. When I visited Dachau, which is in a suburb of Munich, I was struck by the fact that the camp was surrounded, on at least two sides, by tall blocks of flats which must have enabled the occupants to see, if they had wished to do so, the terrible conditions in which inmates lived and the bestial ways in which they were treated. No doubt, most of them, like too many people today, found it easier to look the other way. However, for Henning Langenheim, this is clearly impossible.

Last year we celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the liberation of death camps like Auschwitz-Birkenau and Sobibor. However, that did not and should not mark the end of the matter. It is important

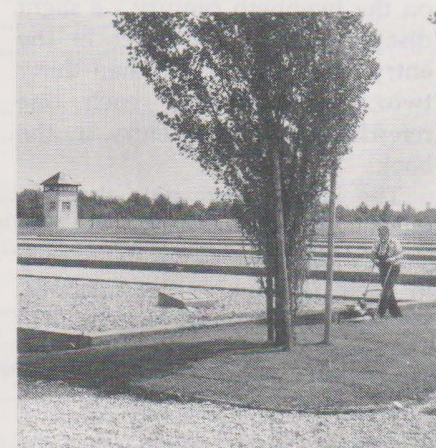
for all mankind, not least for us Jews, that we do not forget man's inhumanity towards man and that we are vigilant in our opposition to tyranny and oppression wherever and whenever it occurs. One of the most heartening aspects of the exhibition on the day I visited it, was the fact that the organisers had set out a table with books and pamphlets about the holocaust and that each of the chairs around the table was occupied. It is, of course, a sobering fact that those who would have benefitted most from seeing the exhibition and reading about the holocaust were most unlikely to have been there but, for those who did see the exhibition, it was a moving and memorable experience.



Henning Langenheim, *Sobibor: Mass Grave* from *Memorials* series, 1987.



Henning Langenheim, *Auschwitz-Birkenau* 1987, (untitled) from *Memorials* series, 1987.



Henning Langenheim, *Dachau: Grass* from *Memorials* series, 1987.

THE JEWISH RELIGION - A COMPANION

edited by Louis Jacobs

published by Oxford University Press, 1994, 641pp, £25.00 (ISBN 0-19-82643-1)

reviewed by Ian Leifer

This is a truly excellent book. Perhaps it could be given a subtitle - 'Everything you wanted to know about Judaism but were too frightened to ask' or, more seriously, 'An Encyclopaedia of Judaism'. The entries are arranged accessibly in alphabetical order. It assumes no prior knowledge of Hebrew and all Hebrew terms are fully explained in non-technical language. The numerous cross-references, the brief bibliographies at the end of many articles, and the detailed list of other works of reference at the end of the book, make it easy for one to literally meander through the pathways of Judaism by pursuing topics of particular interest through the book and beyond.

The topic of 'Controversies' is a good example. The author begins the entry as follows: 'There have been numerous controversies in the history of Judaism'. He then proceeds to deal with a long list from the Samaritans in the Second Temple Period down to the great divide between Orthodoxy and Reform in the nineteenth century. Near the end he states - 'It seems almost as if a major controversy has to erupt in each century'. For some reason he fails to include anything on the twentieth century - a slight disappointment. However in the entry there are no less than thirty two cross-references, each one referring to another entry in the book.

The book covers only the religious aspects of Judaism; the cultural aspects are considered only in their relation to the religious, although as the author says 'the two are really so interlinked that any attempt to separate them too categorically will certainly result in distortion'. In his introduction the author provides a potted history of the development of Judaism. Here

he makes first mention of Conservative Judaism - usually referred to in Great Britain as 'Masorti' or 'Traditional'. 'Conservative Judaism seeks a balance between Orthodoxy and Reform, taking issue with Orthodoxy in its theory and with Reform in its practice. Conservative Judaism affirms the validity of the traditional observances accepting the authority of the Halakhah (Jewish Religious Law), yet is more open to change than Orthodoxy'. Conservative Judaism is defined as 'Orthoproxy' - that is non-fundamentalist in theory but *allegedly* fully Orthodox in practice. Thus, in the article on Conservative Judaism, it becomes clear that there are considerable divisions within the movement - for example over the issue of women Rabbis and, as the author states, 'Conservative Rabbis have long been divided into those groupings adopting respectively the right, left and centrist positions'.

In the last section of his introduction, the author discusses the 'objectivity' of his work as follows: 'Works on religion are of two kinds: those which advocate that a particular religion or religious outlook be followed, and academic treatises such as the encyclopaedias of religion, the authors of which need not be followers at all of the religion they describe. This book belongs in neither category or possibly in both. I have tried to be objective, referring to all the points of view among Jews on matters that are the subject of controversy'.

The book is packed full of information on Judaism. From Maccabees to Mysticism, Rabbis to Ruth, Faith to Fundamentalism, Kabbalah to Kibbutz. It is an outstanding source-book on Judaism and I would thoroughly recommend it to readers of the **Edinburgh Star**.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir

I hope we can be permitted to use your Letter Page to wish Dr and Mrs Berl Osborne a very happy return to their Scottish roots. I feel sure their arrival in Edinburgh will be greatly welcomed but their many friends in Brighton and Hove will miss this special couple very much. Their home was always an 'open door' to their friends and visitors to the town. To be asked to join them for a Shabbat or Yontov meal was a real treat, with the beautifully-set table, a delicious meal ending with Berl's tuneful 'benching'. As well as the good times that we all enjoyed in their company, they could always be counted on to give comfort and solace to those who needed it on sadder occasions.

Their conscientiousness and dedication extended to the local Jewish community and our cultural and welfare organisations benefitted greatly from their willing assistance. For over ten years Berl was a very successful Chairman of a discussion group and a hard-working committee member of the Ben Gurion University Society while Clarice worked for WIZO and did stalwart work on the Jewish Welfare Board, taking care of the residents who lived in Jewish housing.

On behalf of all those who know them in Brighton and Hove, we send them our love and best wishes for many more happy and healthy years with their 'ain folk' - Edinburgh's gain is certainly our loss. But we hope to see them here again soon and, until then, I suspect the phone lines between Edinburgh and Brighton and Hove will be exceedingly busy at weekends.

Yours faithfully

Hazel and Joe Rubin, Brighton

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compliments from
Geoffrey
and Lorna Nicholsby
and family*

