

# The Edinburgh Star

Journal of the Edinburgh Jewish Community

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בימים ההם בזמן הזה



# The Edinburgh Star

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## CONTENTS

LETTERS . . . . .	2
COMMUNITY	
When your child asks why . . . . .	4
Coming event . . . . .	5
Ladies Guild . . . . .	5
A lively ladies night . . . . .	5
Lady Jakobovits . . . . .	6
Thanks! . . . . .	9
Snippets . . . . .	9
OBITUARY . . . . .	10
YOUTH	
Summer school reunion . . . . .	10
UNIVERSITY	
They came from the North . . . . .	11
LITERARY SOCIETY	
Human Rights . . . . .	12
Yosl Bergner . . . . .	13
RELIGION	
Chanukah . . . . .	15
ISRAEL	
Between war and peace . . . . .	16
Playing for time . . . . .	18
ESSAY	
Destination survival . . . . .	20
INTERFAITH	
The supreme ironist . . . . .	22
Reflections . . . . .	23
Gentile perspective . . . . .	23

Front cover: The Hebrew legend is  
translated as; "In days of old, at this  
season." Photograph: Judy Gilbert.

# Interfaith Dialogue

As one walks along a busy street and observes one's fellow human beings, one never ceases to be amazed by two opposite and yet coexisting phenomena. On the one hand there is this extraordinary physiological uniformity and on the other hand we not only look strikingly different but also think so differently. How did it all happen?

Our whole existence is shrouded in mystery of unimaginable enormity which raises more questions than there are answers. Both science and religion seek answers following approaches that some see as irreconcilable whereas others advocate complementarity: as Einstein put it, "Science without religion is lame and religion without science is blind." What is beyond question is that pluralism of ideas and interpretations is inherent to human nature—especially when it comes to religion.

If we take a pluralistic view of religion, all of us are pilgrims, fellow travellers towards the mystery of God who may reveal new insights to mankind as we seek the truth together. It is then both paradoxical and tragic that this unifying theme has been the cause of so much intolerance and persecution. One cannot help thinking that something has gone terribly wrong when God created Man, or is it that Man 'created' God?

Oscar Wilde argued that "the truth is never pure and very rarely simple." What religion can claim a monopoly of the truth? The search of that truth must encourage dialogue which begins when people meet each other and depends on understanding and mutual trust. Dialogue throws light on the darkness that ignorance generates.

In this issue we make a point of contributing to the interfaith dialogue that already takes place, for example, through the Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ). One contributor, the Right Reverend Richard Holloway, Bishop of Edinburgh, is a Christian leader of great humanity which transcends the limits of his own Church. In his article, Bishop Holloway expresses repentance for the past persecution of Jews by Christians and asks us to separate the message of Christianity from its messengers. The Reverend Thomas Fuchs, a German pastor, in referring to the Holocaust reminds us that the secret of redemption is remembrance. Finally, Marjory Grant, an active Church member, gives an obliquely critical account of a Bar Mitzvah based on her own perception after participating in one.

In the final article on interfaith, Ian Leifer reports on a CCJ meeting at which Dr. Alexander Broadie explained what Pharasaism is really about. This is an instance of dialogue dispelling misconceptions even expressed by the Archbishop of Canterbury. In fact Pharasaism is very precious to our Jewish heritage because the Talmud was created by this movement around 150 BCE. The actual Pharisees can be observed in the writings of Josephus and in the Talmud, and in the Jewish liturgy which was their creation. The Gospel portrayed them as proud, hypocritical, upper-class oppressors of the poor thus giving the world a wholly misleading picture. The Pharisees formed one of the greatest spiritual and intellectual movements in history.

## Does the end justify the means?

During the Chanukah period we saw the unfolding of the Romanian revolution and its toll of human tragedy. People were prepared to lose their lives as the price of freedom from the horrors of the Ceausescu regime.

When Lady Jakobovits visited Edinburgh just before Rosh Hashanah, she praised highly the quality of leadership of the Romanian Chief Rabbi Moses Rosen as reported vividly by Hazel Cosgrove. However, what is becoming apparent is that Rabbi Rosen was sent as chief emissary to praise the Ceausescu regime on many delicate missions round the world. Moreover, the former Chief Rabbi of Romania, Dr. Alexandre Safran, who now lives in Geneva, alleges in his book *Resisting the Storm—Romania 1940-1947* (Yad Vashem, Jerusalem 1987) that Moses Rosen has doubtful rabbinical background and was not chosen by the Jewish community. Dr. Safran is still alive despite claiming death threats from the communists in 1947 allegedly with the knowledge of Rabbi Rosen.

Yet 100,000 Jews managed to leave Romania through Rabbi Rosen's efforts and many might argue that the end justifies the means. But thousands of Jews still live in Romania and the continuous strengthening of ultra-nationalistic forces makes us wonder how the Rosen legacy will affect them.



### Delighted Soldiers

19 Brodetsky Street  
Netania  
Israel

The Edinburgh Star is a very impressive journal; we much enjoyed reading it and especially the report about our visit to your community, which was enabled through the kindness of family Fidler, and the photograph of some of our group at that event.

I would like to add that it was our greatest pleasure and surprise when we were welcomed, just on stepping off our minibus, by the host, Mr. Fidler, and by your Israeli Rabbi who made us immediately feel at home.

We were delighted to hear in our own native language, your Rabbi's short address about the interesting characteristics of your community, as a dynamic, lively congregation with close relations and strong emotional bonds with the State of Israel. The communal singing of Israeli songs, led by the Rabbi's wife during the second half of the evening, was a real thrill for all of us and the culmination of our short visit to Edinburgh.

Col. Yoel Lavie  
Israel Defence Forces

### Flourishing community

13/2 Hashkedim Street  
Tivon 36000  
ISRAEL

This summer I've been touring Scotland, visiting my home town Glasgow, staying with friends in Aberdeen and cousins in Edinburgh. In Glasgow I was told of the diminishing Jewish community and resulting decrease in communal activities. In Aberdeen, after lots of detective work, I located the shul and turned up one shabbat morning to find it closed. The caretaker told me that a few men get together on Friday evenings but only on festivals if there is Minyan.

When I arrived in Edinburgh it was therefore an unexpected surprise to be handed a copy of The Edinburgh Star—for a paper produced by the community reflects its cultural and spiritual health. After reading the first two issues I'd say that the Edinburgh Jewish community is flourishing!

Anna Sotto

### Not possible without them

16 Hill Park Crescent  
Edinburgh

The Lodge Solomon's Ladies Night could not have turned out the success it was without the invaluable help of some people.

It is to all that I must first of all thank both the Co-Convenors Morris Kaplan and Ian Brodie, for the enormous amount of work they both put in, to ensure that the evening would run smoothly and successfully. To Morris for being Director of Ceremonies and to Ian for helping in the running of the raffle and to all the others who helped to assist me in handing out my personal gift to the ladies and assisting in the sale of raffle tickets. I would ask them to accept my grateful thanks.

It was in the very capable hands of Harold Abrams to carry out the catering with his expert staff and out thanks go to him for an excellent meal, which needless to say was enjoyed by all.

To both young David Kaplan and Daniel Brodie for their help, and the donors of gifts for the raffle.

I cannot finish this letter without mentioning the very excellent work and assistance of Mrs. Burns to whom I extend my sincere thanks.

Alec Rubenstein

## Reviczky and self-examination in postwar Hungary

21 Malleny Avenue  
Balerno

It is pleasing to learn about British scholars having accurate knowledge of Hungarian language and history: Dr. Payne is a real expert and friend of Hungary; he is objective and empathetic at the same time as shown in his article on Reviczky (The Edinburgh Star, September 1989). That is the reason why I felt like explaining some facts and pointing out differences in emphases.

Dr. Payne is right that the issues on Hungarian Jews' history or Hungarian antisemitism used to be taboo until recently, and this has resulted in a highly sensitive and suspicious atmosphere among Jews and non-Jews as well. But this situation is even more tragic if we know that self-examination was indeed begun by the gentile István Bibó whose deeply analysing study *The Jewish Question in Hungary after 1944*

was published in 1948 just before the "final victory" of communism. István Bibó, who is one of the most important Hungarian thinkers of the 20th century, was sentenced to silence between 1949-55 and to life imprisonment in 1958 because of his position as state secretary in Imre Nagy's government during the 1956 uprising. His study on the Hungarian-Jewish question is the main source of (the non-Jewish) György Száraz's essay and survey *In Trace of a Prejudice* which was first published in 1975. This latter date shows when self-examination actually and publicly began in Hungary.

After 1949 in Hungary, Dr. Payne writes, "Hungarian irredentism... and the subsequent alliance with Hitler's Germany was not deemed to have been the responsibility of a the nation as such, but that of the ruling class." It was deemed to have been so: Mátyás Rákosi (the party leader between 1945-

56) brought Eastern Europe's cruelest terror to Hungary, with suffering and blood in an amount unknown in the bloc's other countries in order to punish the *sinful nation*. (Thus, this is one of the reasons for the 1956 uprising!) For at least two decades after the war both older and younger generations were also humiliated in several ways by the communist government. The main function of this was explicitly to prove and revenge the *guilt of a nation*.

There used to be many taboos in recent Hungarian history and politics. A nation's healthy mental state can only be achieved by abolishing taboos. Hungary has a lot to do in this respect. But one must also finish with old notions and dogmas. We have to be aware of a special coexistence of forgetfulness and memory both in Jewish and non-Jewish minds.

Julie Demeter

32 Priestfield Avenue  
Edinburgh EH16 5JL

The lengthy article on the late Colonel Imre Reviczky (The Edinburgh Star, September 1989) is misleading and rather out of context. He was a countryman of mine. He was a representative of a particular social class: the land owner aristocrats. Members of his class had the old fashioned 'morality' that we would call

conservative.

The land owner aristocrats in Hungary were quite unique. Most young men from this social class, invariably, followed a profession in the army. This was expected of them and it was their duty to fulfil this expectation but they had to have a certain amount of capital to enable them to lead the frivolous life which was the custom. However, the majority were in financial debt most of

the time, so their livelihood was very much dependent on the Jewish financiers of Hungary.

Gradually the restrictions on the intellectuals were extended to the trades and businesses of the Jews, followed by the overall restriction and discrimination against all the Jews, half-Jews and Gypsies. This new legislation endangered the easy-going and fun-loving existence of Reviczky's



social class. Therefore it was common sense to try to save as many Jews as possible—something Reviczky could comfortably do in his position.

All the Jews were thrown out of the Regular Army regardless of their distinguished medals. After this all those who were in the age range for army service, were 'called up'. They were not allowed to wear army uniforms. They had to wear civilian clothes with yellow arm-band for the Jews and white arm-band for the half-Jews. One can imagine the degree of humiliation this

caused since the Hungarian Jews were particularly patriotic.

Lt. Colonel Reviczky was in charge and the part he had played in those shameful events illuminates his character: he was a gentleman and treated the Jewish recruits with human dignity, so I was told.

I learned from Jerry Payne's article that Reviczky was a loyal member of Admiral Miklos Horthy's Army, the Szalasy's Fascist Army which was the instrument for Hitler in Hungary. After the liberation from the fascist

oppression by the Soviet Red Army in 1945, Reviczky became a member of the Communist Red Army of Hungary.

It is remarkable that he was able to serve three different masters consecutively. They were turbulent years in the history of Hungary. We should feel pity for this remarkable gallant gentleman because the Red Army of the People's Republic of Hungary blocked the avenues for him. There was no place for him in an Army which had for his main target the eradication of Reviczky's social class.

Marianne Laszlo

## Jerry Payne comments ...

The response to my piece on the Imre Reviczky biography is gratifying, despite the fact that both correspondents take me to task, in the nicest way, over certain points.

In answer to the many interesting and pertinent remarks made in Mrs. Demeter's letter (I find her description of Rákosi as the scourge of the "sinful nation" particularly fascinating) I have to admit that I may have appeared to be overstating my case in my very brief comment on the Hungarians' relationship to their wartime experience. Perhaps I can illustrate what I was trying to say in an oblique fashion.

Many years ago I visited the former concentration camp in Buchenwald near Weimar in the GDR. The memory of that visit is abiding for many reasons, not the least of which was what I felt to be evidence I found there of an "abnormal" attitude on the part of the GDR authorities towards the National Socialist past: firstly, the camp was explicitly preserved as a memorial to the victims of *fascism* (not *National Socialism*); secondly, the *German nation* appeared in a long, undifferentiated list cataloguing these victims.

I am not suggesting Hungary has indulged in the same degree of state-sponsored suppression of the past, and Hungary, as an ally of Hitler Germany, was, of course, a secondary executor of National Socialist policies, not a prime instigator. Neither would I deny the many attempts by writers, film-makers

and scholars to encourage self-examination and we should be very grateful to Mrs. Demeter for reminding us of this fact. I would, however, maintain that the former People's Republic of Hungary suffered from a problem that beset all East European countries to varying degrees.

The Stalinist regimes wanted to start out in the late forties with a *tabula rasa* on which they could build the societies of their imaginings. The past became a different country for which only limited responsibility was taken. Leaders such as Mátyás Rákosi chose to forget that their citizens had a past and had memories; these citizens have slowly reasserted and unburdened themselves, the ultimate result of which is perhaps best symbolised by the demolition of the Berlin Wall.

Mrs. Demeter writes of the "highly sensitive and suspicious" atmosphere surrounding relations between Jews and non-Jews "until recently". This surely is the point: a fully "normal" and open relationship to the past will only be possible, in (The Republic of) Hungary as in the GDR and other East European countries, when normal and open conditions prevail in the present. I should add that the suppression syndrome is not confined to that part of Europe, there being clear symptoms for example in present-day Austria and even here at home: to cite a topical example, Britain's failure to accept full political responsibility for returning the

Cossacks to Stalin and certain death after the war.

Marianne László's father was a member of the Transylvanian labour battalion commanded by Imre Reviczky when the Hungarian Holocaust began. From private conversations with her it is clear that her main reservations concern the attitudes displayed by the writer of the biography, Reviczky's son Adam.

She is absolutely right. The same stubbornly conservative values that characterised Imre have in his son's case been adulterated, I would suggest, by the post-war Stalinist conditions in which he had to survive. The result is a mixture of veiled resentment, a reluctance to confront realities head-on and unreconstructed political attitudes. This is exemplified, as Mrs. László points out, by his use of the Hungarian word *Osszeomlás* (= collapse) to refer to the overthrow of Arrow Cross rule in 1945 in preference to the more usual *Felszabadulás* (= liberation).

I must say, however, that I remain puzzled why it is that a nation should adopt a version of the word meaning "liberation" that implies liberation "from within" when there is an alternative word, *Felszabadítás*, which implies liberation "by an outside agency", a more accurate reflection of the facts, I would have thought. Another example of the labyrinthine complexities surrounding a nation's dealing with its past or just a linguistic fact of life?

## Chaplain doing excellent job

'Villa Samares'  
30 Duddingston Road West  
Edinburgh EH15 3PS

I refer to the article by Adam Blitz (The Edinburgh Star, September 1989) "Dual affiliation to PJS and UJS hindered by Chaplain".

Firstly, the most obvious point, can the author possibly expect an orthodox Rabbi to contemplate being in favour of joining the Progressive Jewish Students (PJS)? Sure this move, if this is what the majority of Edinburgh Jewish Students want, and not just an individual student's ravings, must be carried out within the framework of the Society's constitution.

Secondly, a point about the Chaplain himself. Rabbi Michael Rosin accepted

the appointment as Chaplain in Northern Region's greatest hour of need after the sad death of the previous Chaplain and has done, and is still doing, an excellent job. Insensitive and basically half-baked articles like this will only succeed in losing possibly the best Chaplain to the region.

Finally, the possibility of cheap books seem to be a poor reason for joining the PJS!

Andrew Caplan

## Adam Blitz replies ...

I find the present state of affairs in the 'Northern Region' rather stagnating. What Mr. Caplan and many others fail to recognise, is that Edinburgh University Jewish Society is, at once, an

integral part of Northern Region whilst still being an autonomous society within the University. We are funded solely by the University. Many of our events, in particular inter-faith lunches and meals, revolve specifically around the University. In fact we are at liberty to do what we want within a democratic framework.

At the last Annual General Meeting of the J-Soc, a motion supporting dual affiliation with PJS and UJS was proposed not by myself but by the J-Soc Committee. This motion was then passed quorately by an overwhelming majority. This was a student matter.

The organisation of our society should not concern others—in particular the two individuals from Glasgow who were not entitled to vote nor were they invited previously to speak, but attended the AGM in any case. This echoes John Stuart Mill: "A person should be free to



## Letters

do as he likes in his own concerns; but he ought not to be free to do as he likes in acting for another under the pretext that the affairs of the other are his own affairs."

We, as a committee, tried to be diplomatic on every front. We discussed this issue of affiliation on numerous

occasions before the AGM. In fact my article should have read as an 'advertisement' encouraging students to debate and vote on this matter—and this objective was achieved.

I was, and still am, aware of various religious positions concerning this matter. This is not to say that we should

give in, or be found to give in to the Orthodox monopoly without any dialogue—that is, a dialogue between different Jewish perspectives. Ironically, if you excuse my facetiousness, we have not encountered any criticism for our dialogue and involvement with non-Jews.

## Community

# When your child asks why ...

by Leslie Danzig

"Mummy, why don't we go to Church?"

"Mummy, why does everyone not have Shabbat?"

"Mummy, why are we Jewish?"

When your child starts asking questions like these, then it's not Pesach, it's time to send him or her to Cheder. Here he or she can mix with other Jewish children, feel part of a larger community and learn about his Jewish heritage. At the new first class in Cheder we are attempting to deal with some of these questions and perhaps pre-empt some that haven't even been thought of yet! We are, to date, the largest group in Cheder, comprising nine 4-6 year olds, six boys and three girls from nursery age to Primary 2.

The class is run by two mothers working on a fortnightly rota—myself, Lesley Danzig and Moira Hart. Our two indispensable assistants are Susy Lanyado and Rachel Nelken.

Our programme each week is designed, first and foremost, to ensure the children enjoy the morning and look forward to Cheder. Much of what they learn is through stories, games and artwork. The morning is roughly structured to include a topic such as a coming festival or bible story with follow-up artwork. Mid-morning, while the children are still receptive, we teach recognition of the Hebrew alphabet. Again this is through colouring in and language games. No writing is required at this stage. The morning concludes with singing and storytelling.

We have two breaks. One short break is in the Succah (our classroom) itself with juice and biscuits. This serves a double purpose: it provides the children with a chance to relax and

chat. Also, to familiarise the children with the blessings, we say a *bracha* before we eat and before we drink. The second interval is with the rest of the Cheder children in the Community Hall. This gives the group an opportunity to get to know the other children in the community.

We have a small store of equipment such as art material, musical percussion instruments, games and tapes—all designed to make the teaching and learning an enjoyable experience.

The class runs from 10.10 to 12.30. So many people asked what would we do with them for all this time that we began to wonder ourselves. It didn't take us long to realise that it is a very packed couple of hours and we scarcely have time to fit everything in.

If your child is between 4 and 6 years old and would like to join the first Cheder class, please come along and have a look at our activities any Sunday morning between 10.30 and 12.00 in the Succah.



Typical Sunday morning scene in the Succah.

*Lesley Danzig is a qualified primary teacher with ten years of experience, four of which were spent teaching children with special needs. She worked in Israel for two years and speaks Hebrew fluently.*

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The Edinburgh Star  
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## COMING EVENTS

### JANUARY

- 14 SUN Maccabi ..... 1pm  
Literary Society ..... 3.30pm  
Judge Israel Feinstein QC  
(President of the Jewish  
Historical Society). "A Jewish  
Agenda for the 1990's".
- 21 SUN Friendship Club ..... 3pm
- 25 THU Council of Christians and  
Jews ..... 7.30pm  
Speaker to be arranged.
- 27 SAT Jewish Students Burns  
Night ..... 7pm
- 28 SUN Maccabi ..... 1pm  
Friendship Club ..... 3pm  
Literary Society ..... 8pm  
Rabbi W. Woolf (Rabbi of  
Newcastle Reform Synagogue):  
"Where Moses Mendelssohn  
got it wrong and Salis Daiches  
was right."

### FEBRUARY

- 4 SUN Lodge Solomon 70th  
Anniversary Divine Service.  
Afternoon.
- 11 SUN Maccabi ..... 1pm  
Friendship Club ..... 3pm
- 13 TUE Friends of Israel ..... 8pm  
Mr. Shlomo Levey (JNF  
Manchester) "Review of Israel  
and Security Problems".
- 18 SUN Literary Society ..... 8pm  
Joint debate with Jewish  
Students Society (Topic to be  
announced)
- 22 THU Council of Christians and  
Jews ..... 7.30pm  
Father Roger Clarke.  
"Breaking the Barrier"
- 25 SUN Maccabi ..... 1pm  
Friendship Club ..... 3pm
- 27 TUE Edinburgh University  
Theological Society ..... 5pm  
New College, The Mound, "The  
Holocaust and the Problem of  
Evil": Rabbi Dr. Norman  
Soloman

### MARCH

- 4 SUN Quiz in Glasgow (Edinburgh  
teams competing)
- 11 SUN Purim Party ..... Afternoon  
Literary Society ..... 8pm  
Heather Valencia (University  
of Stirling): "Abraham  
Sutzkever: a Great  
Contemporary Yiddish Poet"
- 18 SUN Maccabi ..... 1pm  
Literary Society ..... 8pm  
Annual General Meeting
- 29 THU Council of Christians and  
Jews ..... 7.30pm  
Mr. Lionel Daiches QC (Topic  
to be announced)

In addition, the Lunch Club meets every Tuesday and Thursday at 12 noon.

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

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

Unless specified, all the events take place in the Community Centre, 4 Salisbury Road, Edinburgh.

## Ladies' Guild

The Ladies Guild provides many services for the Community as a whole, including hospital and sick visiting, organisation of children's activities, provision of kiddushim and more.

In order to maintain these activities, your annual subscription is vital.

Unfortunately, we do not have the woman-power to collect this from you personally, and it would therefore be much appreciated if you could send in your subscription of £2.00 to Mrs. A. Cowan, 106 Charterhall Road, Edinburgh EH9 3HW.

## A lively Ladies Night

by Alec Rubenstein

All roads on Saturday evening the 4th November 1989 seemed to lead to the Community Centre for the annual Ladies Night.

People arrived from many areas including the Masonic Lodges in Glasgow and other towns in the West. There was a very hefty representation from Fife, viz. Rosyth, Kelty, Dunfermline, Kirkcaldy and many more towns. They all arrived in jovial mood and this was maintained throughout the evening.

As Master of the Lodge it was my privilege and pleasure to welcome our guests, which together with the people of Edinburgh totalled 170. Such was the demand for tickets that we actually had a fairly large waiting list.

Following the magnificent dinner the band struck up for dancing, and it was largely due to them that the dance floor was fairly crowded throughout the evening. They played until the 'wee sma' hours' when finally 'Auld Lang Syne' was played and sung; there wasn't room for all people present on the floor, but were actually spilling over onto the carpets.

May I be permitted to use The Edinburgh Star to invite the Congregation and friends to a Divine Service which will be held to celebrate our 70th Anniversary in the synagogue on Sunday, 4th February 1990 at 2.30 p.m. for 3.00 p.m. The officiants will be Rabbi S. Shapira, Cantor Ernst Levy from Giffnock Synagogue, Glasgow, and our own Synagogue Male Voice Choir, under the direction of David Mendelssohn. There will be present very many dignitaries including the Lord Provost and tea and refreshments will be served afterwards. I would ask you all to please be prompt as we expect a large attendance.

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## STAR

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When we receive your information, we hope to send you, in the near future, a questionnaire so you can be included in the Directory.

Please send your name and address to:

**INGE AUERBACHER**  
88-23—146th Street  
Jamaica, New York 11435  
USA



## Lady Jakobovits enthrals Edinburgh audience

by Hazel Cosgrove

It was not, she confessed, where she should be on the Sunday before Rosh Hashanah. That she was there with us on such a day was in itself a mark of the graciousness and dedication of our very special guest. Lady Jakobovits, wife of the Chief Rabbi, mother and grandmother to 34 3/4 grandchildren, enthralled and delighted her audience at the luncheon in the community centre with an account of her impressions of some of the countries she has visited during her 22 years as wife of the Chief Rabbi.

Two experiences in Rumania, where some 400,000 Jews perished during the Holocaust, had created a profound and lasting impression. The first was the sight in a small town of a square with a synagogue on each of its four sides. Was this evidence of a community divided into quarrelling factions? No, this was poignant and eloquent testimony to the very size of that pre-war community where each trade had its own separate place of worship.

### Vow of Silence

Then to the Old Age Home with its 28 residents and in particular the two women neither of whom has ever been heard to speak a single word in any language at any time during the 30 or 40 years which had by then passed since they were brought out of Auschwitz. Exhaustive medical examinations over the years have revealed neither physical nor mental cause for their silence and the conclusion has been drawn that the two have made a private vow never to use the human medium of communication on account of what the human race has done.

Lady Jakobovits described sitting with these women, holding their hands and feeling them communicate with her. Their message was unequivocal: we want to live and die as Jews and we count on you to tell the world that the Jews have survived and will survive as individuals and as people. This encounter had been a profound emotional experience which would stay in her mind and heart forever. We too were moved and shed many a silent tear.

On a happier note we learned of the incredible quality of leadership provided for Rumanian Jewry by

their Chief Rabbi, Moshe Rosin. As a diplomat and politician—a member of the Rumanian Parliament who also happens to be a Rabbi—his achievements have been such that he will undoubtedly go down in history as one of the outstanding leaders of world Jewry.

During the 1950's Rabbi Rosin succeeded in helping about 375,000 Jews to leave Rumania for Israel in what has been one of the best aliyahs in terms of contribution to the development and survival of the Jewish State. For the remnant of about 32,000 Jews left in Rumania, Rabbi Rosin has achieved privileges which no other minority has obtained under the communist regime. This has been achieved largely in recognition of his skill in obtaining from the Government of the United States a huge

children and this is so even for those in a high position in society. The particular risk is of dismissal from employment but the incredible fact is that in the face of such a risk about 1,000 children were, at the time of her last visit, receiving some kind of Jewish education.

Lady Jakobovits could not help but be shocked by the comparison between that situation and what she found on a subsequent visit to San Francisco. There, in what could only be described as a paradise for the 90,000 Jewish inhabitants—more than double the number in the whole of Rumania—only about 750 children were receiving any kind of Jewish education. This was an outstanding example of the incontrovertible fact that Jews under oppression have shown they can survive whereas as



*From left to right: Anita Mendelssohn, Lady Jakobovits, John Cosgrove and Rabbi Shapira. The guest is receiving a present after her speech.*

financial contribution towards the Rumanian economy.

There are 32 Jewish communities and each one has a Kosher restaurant at which every person can have one free meal a day. Further, each community has a little clinic where the Jewish community can receive medical and dental care over and above what they receive from the State. These privileges were a great boon but sadly the Jews of Rumania face tremendous difficulties in providing any form of Jewish education for their

soon as they are free they tend to lose their identity. The bitter fact of Jewish history is that we have never at any time succeeded in proving either to the Almighty or to ourselves that we can survive as a free people.

### Chinese Jews?

A visit to China three years ago was a source of happy memories. Lady Jakobovits explained that she had been invited by the Chinese Women's Federation as an official guest of the Chinese Government. However, it



was felt that it would be preferable to arrange the visit on a less official level so that the delegation could take its own food supplies.

The group numbered 46 and although a mixed bag they fortunately gelled together very well. One thousand five hundred deeply frozen meals travelled with the party providing two meals for each person every day, including a different menu for each night of the tour.

There were two reasons for the visit. Firstly, she had been invited in order to discuss with the Women's Federation attitudes to birth control. Secondly, it was Lady Jakobovits' belief that Jews, who have a tendency to criticise the whole world as being hostile towards them and at best uninterested in them, should set an example by extending their knowledge of other cultures.

She was also curious to discover whether any trace of Jewish life was to be found in China today. She explained that during the eleventh century Jews had wandered into China from Russia. Special distinguishing names had been given to these people by the Emperor. During her visit she met some people who have one of these names and who believe themselves to be Jews although they have in fact no idea of the concept of Jewishness.

These people have two distinguishing features: their names and the fact that they do not eat pork. They could be identified by the caps which they wore at social functions which were blue as opposed to the white worn by the rest of the population. Lady Jakobovits was able to have a long chat with one of them and in the course of the conversation she asked him if his people would like more Jews to visit. The response was an enthusiastic affirmative with the qualification "... but only good Jews." When asked what he meant, his response was, "Those who do not eat pig."

We were reminded that Lord Jakobovits is Chief Rabbi not only of the United Kingdom but also of the Commonwealth. There have accordingly been many visits to Australia and New Zealand. The communities of Melbourne and Sydney each with around 35,000 Jews are very lively and flourishing. In particular, Melbourne has the largest Jewish state school with 2,700 pupils which enjoys such a high reputation that non-Jewish parents are very anxious to have their children enrolled.

Our remarkable guest's sense of humour shone through as she recalled the occasion on which she and her husband, anxious to enjoy a short

break from a hectic schedule in New Zealand which included the Chief Rabbi delivering some 60 speeches, arranged a brief visit to a remote retreat. After a journey by small plane through the mountains they were just beginning to feel they had achieved the longed for peace and seclusion when the inevitable happened - a face to face encounter with a member of their London congregation!

## Miracle

The final memory which we were privileged to share with Lady Jakobovits was that of the horrific tribulations suffered by her family as they escaped from France into Switzerland, an experience which has fundamentally shaped her life.

She was a young girl at the time and with her parents and other members of their family, including her baby brother, they had succeeded in almost reaching the Swiss border. They were completely without possessions other than the clothes they wore, every last item having been exchanged for food. As they hid in a forest they were without even a match to light their way. A barbed wire fence and a river lay between them and freedom.

As darkness fell, her baby brother, usually the most placid of children, began to cry inconsolably. Within a short time a soldier appeared out of the darkness. Fearing all was lost, they were astonished to discover that he was leading them to safety through the fence and across the river. The soldier told her parents that the sound of the baby's cries had reminded him of his own children at home and he had felt compelled to help them. Had he not rescued them the family would undoubtedly have been discovered within a very short time by the German patrols. That her family was thus delivered the very week before Rosh Hashanah 48 years ago, was a miracle for which she has since thanked the Almighty every day of life.

In recent times Lord and Lady Jakobovits have been invited to Windsor Castle as guests of the Royal Family. Lady Jakobovits has had the opportunity to explain to the Queen Mother the enormous significance of such an invitation for the representatives of a people who have so recently been treated as animals solely because they were born as Jews. It is, I think, the good fortune of our people in this country that we have as our representative such an intrepid and charming lady who can, with deep and heartfelt emotion, convey such a delicate message.

In this small community of ours, far removed from the vibrant centres

of Jewish life, it was a truly inspiring experience to have the privilege of listening to such a gracious lady of warm humanity. For Lady Jakobovits, complete faith in the Almighty and his blessings, together with a total dedication to the cause of the survival and improvement of the Jewish people, have been the mainsprings of her life. Much has been said about the qualities required of the successor to the Chief Rabbi. One thing is crystal clear: the wife of the new incumbent has a very hard act to follow.

The Ladies Communal Hall Committee, with their own brand of efficiency and dedication, served a first class lunch which was much enjoyed and appreciated by everyone present. All in all the occasion must surely qualify as one of the highlights of our communal year.



**Hazel Cosgrove** has been a Sheriff at Edinburgh since 1983. She was previously a Sheriff at Glasgow and began her legal career as an Advocate. She is a member of the Parole Board for Scotland and is

Vice Chairman of the Edinburgh Friends of Israel. Her husband, John Cosgrove, is the President of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation. She has a daughter who is a dental student at Liverpool University and a son who is in his final year at school.

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## SNIPPETS

### *Changing Times*

Convention and custom are slow to adapt to changing times. Joe Aronson recollects with fond amusement that his great uncle, Moshe Pinkinsky, having recently arrived in Edinburgh from the old country, used to don his top hat before answering... not the front door... but the telephone.

### *For whom the bread rolls?*

There aren't many places that will offer you private accommodation free of charge at 1 a.m... unless you meet Mr. Wood, the baker at 'Kleinberg's'.

It happened during the Festival about 1 a.m. one Sunday morning. A knock was heard at the bakery door, and on opening, Mr. Wood saw two very tired Israelis who had sought in vain for accommodation. Being a young and sensitive family man, Mr. Wood just couldn't turn them away; so he allowed them to bunk down on the shop floor. At 7 a.m. they were given hot buttered rolls and a mug of tea. Then, our Israeli brethren left full of gratitude for such a hospitality.

As Arthur Kleinberg put it, "... in Mr. Wood the community not only has a very good baker but also a kind and generous friend."

### *Manny makes the wheels go round...*

He had sold his car and the new owner came to his address to pick it up. After about twenty minutes, during which only *his* voice could be heard, the man received the keys and drove happily away.

Our hero was happy too, but on approaching the front door suddenly realised that he had left the house keys in the car. In his predicament he desperately tried to run after the car whose shape was, by now, disappearing into the distance. No sooner had he felt frustrated than he was hit by a stroke of luck: there it was, a beautiful Jaguar with a man in the driving seat almost waiting for him. He got into the Jaguar, explained the situation to the driver without looking at him, and a forty-five-minute chase started around Edinburgh during which the kind gentleman listened to nothing but sergeant-like instructions. However, lack of success made them return and, much to *his* surprise, the door had been opened by his brother Michael who was paying an unexpected visit.

After a big sigh of relief he thanked the driver and introduced himself. "My name is Manny Wittenberg, what is yours?"... "I am Graeme Souness." The Rangers manager is not a man used to being bossed about, but Manny's Manny.



Fay Levey-Morris singing at the Jazz Evening organised by WIZO.

The Penny Farthings getting in on the act at the Cabaret Evening organised by the Ladies Committee. The event was an all-round success.



### Dr Imre Laszlo



With the sad and sudden passing of Dr. Imre Laszlo on 4 September 1989, the scientific community lost a dedicated member. He was one of the founder members of the Medical Research Council's Brain Metabolism Unit in the Department of Pharmacology at Edinburgh University. His helpful attitude and deep interest in science, contributed substantially to the Unit's achievements. He was much respected for his courage, inner strength and resilience.

Dr. Laszlo was born in Debrecen, Hungary, in 1924. During the Second World War he was in a labour camp which he miraculously survived. After the war he was active in forming the Democratic Parliament of Hungary in Debrecen.

In 1946 he resumed his studies and became a Doctor of Medicine. As well as being a general practitioner he was also a lecturer in the Department of Pharmacology at the Medical School of Debrecen. During the October uprising of 1956, he fled Hungary and came to Britain. Once in London, he worked towards his PhD at St. Thomas' Hospital and in the 1960s he moved up to Edinburgh.

Dr. Laszlo will be remembered by the scientific community for his contributions to medical knowledge and by his colleagues for his courtesy and willingness to offer help and advice. He was also a devoted father of his three sons and a straight man in every sense.

## Youth

# Summer School Reunion

by Benji Adler

No-one has yet admitted to having proposed that the JYSG Summer School Reunion be held in Edinburgh. The suggestion was certainly not taken seriously at first. However, suddenly we all knew that Edinburgh was the chosen venue.

About two months before the designated date, three of the local Va'ad began to meet regularly to plan the event. I think it is fair to say that initially none of us fully grasped the enormity of what we had taken on. It proved to be a considerable challenge. The biggest headache was accommodation, followed a close second by the catering arrangements. Thanks to tremendous support from some parents, menus and shopping lists were soon drawn up and the catering began to look quite manageable, not so the accommodation. Even one week before the event we were several beds short.

On the Thursday and Friday before the weekend there was a team of helpers working in the Community Centre kitchen: peeling, cutting, cooking, folding napkins, setting tables, etc. The atmosphere was friendly and optimistic. If the food was anything to go by, the weekend promised to be a great success.

The first arrivals came by train around 3.00 p.m. and the first hitch

too. There had been a last minute change of plan and it took two trips to the station to find them. Their arrival should have been closely followed by the arrival of the coach from London and Newcastle. Unfortunately, the coach was nearly an hour late, leaving little time to prepare for Shabbat.

The eventual arrival of the coach brought near chaos as it was discovered that none of the three lists of participants was correct. Matching visitors to families therefore became rather complicated. Several last minute offers to take extra guests saved the day. With the arrival of a car of Va'adniks at 5.00 p.m., for whom there had been no seats on the coach, the guest list of 60 was complete. It was nice to hear several people asking whether there was a Bar Mitzvah that weekend—they could not believe that the beautiful table settings were for JYSG.

The Friday night meal was a big success, apart from the fact that the vegetarian meals never materialised and the baked potatoes were rather black! There was much singing and talking and everyone seemed to have a really good time.

On Shabbat morning it was nice seeing a Shul full of (mainly well behaved!) young people. Everyone

was very grateful for the warm welcome from John Cosgrove and for the special Kiddush provided by the congregation. After lunch there was an impressive programme on how Jews are perceived by others in the communities in which they live. Although the programme was perhaps a little long, it was extraordinary to see how it held the attention of everyone present for almost two hours. After the programme came Shul and Havdalah with the Rabbi. Following this, there was a rush for home to put on less formal and much warmer clothes.

Just before 8.00 p.m. we met at the Mercat Cross to go on a Mystery Tour of Edinburgh. Some guests obviously enjoyed this more than others. Some tempers were frayed when, due to a misunderstanding, half the group were left standing for an hour at the Mercat Cross.

Next, it was back to the Shul for an evening of hot soup, music and fun. Many people did not get to bed until the early hours. Despite this, everyone managed to turn up in time for the departure of the coach at 8.00 a.m. on Sunday morning. As the coach drove away and we waved goodbye, we felt that all the hard work of the previous weeks had been well rewarded and really worthwhile.



## Edinburgh Students Jewish Society turning into success story

# They Came From The North

by Natan Tiefenbrun

In the past year the fortunes of the Society have changed dramatically for the better. From a small group lacking both motivation and identity we have been transformed.

It all began at the Annual Burns Supper back in January. It was praised by all as one of the Northern Region's best ever events, and the sudden recognition we received from Northern Region and UJS (the National Union of Jewish Students) instilled a little self-respect into the Society. The plan evolved: Edinburgh was going to be known as the strongest society in Northern Region and maybe even in the entire country. With only ten active members living far from the UJS centres of London and Manchester, this might have sounded like delusions of grandeur, but oddly enough, we are succeeding.

Freshers Week saw 40 students join, at least 15 of whom said, "Oh sure, I'll come to every meeting" as they walked away with their seven-page diary of events. None of us were ecstatic about the fact that Yom Kippur fell on the first day of term, but of the 20 students who attended the two seminars and the feast afterwards, I think all are still involved. It had been the perfect opportunity to meet the members in a special atmosphere.

The next event, a Succot meal with Rabbi and Mrs. Shapira, attracted 23 members and, after that success, numbers gradually increased. Twenty-six attended a joint evening

with the Bahai and Anglican Societies, while 27 turned out for the final Friday night dinner of term. Meanwhile, the Tuesday lunches attended by our Chaplain Rabbi Rosin were attracting 20 students, and were held weekly instead of alternate Tuesdays.

The numbers are impressive, but the variety of events is even more so. Edinburgh members were responsible for running the 'Life, Death and Superstition' Day School in Sunderland, and were also involved in the recent Glasgow Weekend School. Both of these regional events received a healthy delegation from Edinburgh and our presence was very noticeable! We made a presentation to Amnesty International on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and have had debates on Morality, Sex, Christmas, Alcohol and Cream Cheese (all in a Jewish context). Raising money for charities, the entire society could be found busking on Princes Street one Sunday in December.

With the UJS conference coming up, the nation is about to meet Edinburgh J-Soc, and they are going to be surprised at how active we are. For the first time, we will also be attending the UJS Ball in Birmingham, with plans to publicise ourselves further. Thanks to help from Mrs. Burns and co-operation from the Community Hall Committees, the 1990 Burnstein Supper will be Northern Region's biggest and best ever event, strengthening Edinburgh's new posi-

tion as the capital of the region. I am also looking forward to a joint debate with the Literary Society in February.

On behalf of the Edinburgh Students Jewish Society I would like to thank the Edinburgh Community for all the help they have given. Jonathan Sperber has on so many occasions been the perfect liaison between the students and the community, and all of our members are grateful to the families who kindly offered to adopt us during the festival period. Rabbi Shapira and the Hebrew Congregation made us most welcome, and I can honestly say we would have been lost without the help of Christine Burns throughout the past year.

I believe that such close ties with the community, a strong sense of motivation, and the present interest shown by our members, all point to a bright future for the society. If the news of our success reaches the Jewish youth of London and Manchester, and I intend to make sure it does, we will be able to attract many more Jewish students to study in Edinburgh in future years, and that is the ultimate goal.

And one day soon, the Northern Region slogan will change a little: They Came From The North ... (East).

*Natan Tiefenbrun is the president of the Edinburgh Students Jewish Society and can be contacted at (031) 667-5784*

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# Human rights are indivisible

*Conflicting Jewish attitudes to Human Rights is the theme chosen by opening speaker June Jacobs. Report by RUTH ADLER*

The opening meeting of the Lit was on Sunday, October 29th. The speaker was June Jacobs, who is Chairman of the Board of Deputies Foreign Affairs Committee and had attracted a great deal of publicity in recent weeks due to an informal, private meeting with a Palestinian Delegate. Her topic for the evening was a *Jewish Perspective on Human Rights*.

June Jacobs reminded her audience that it was a central tenet of all Jewish teaching 'to love and not to oppress your neighbour'. She pointed out that this precept was mentioned 36 times in the Torah and reflected that this was possibly more than any other commandment. The underlying idea being that there is one law for all and that *humanity* is to be discovered in one's attitude to 'aliens' and 'strangers'. Hillel had stated that the commandment: 'Do not do unto another what you would not like another to do unto you' encapsulated the whole of Jewish teaching.

In more recent times the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights had given voice to these ideas. The speaker pointed out that this was something to which all nations ought to aspire and few in fact did. She saw the declaration as a useful 'tool' and 'weapon'—like the Bible, there was something in it for everyone.

The Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel had greatly enhanced the freedom and strength of



*Opening of the Literary Society session by the new president Gillian Raab (left) who shows the cup won by the Lit. team before introducing June Jacobs (right).*

Jews as a whole. The speaker suggested that several other campaigns on behalf of Jews, in particular, the Campaign for Soviet Jewry, had received its impetus through the existence of the State of Israel. She pointed out that the Campaign fought for the *Rights* of the Jews and was in no way to be interpreted as anti-Communist. There were similar ones elsewhere, although on a much smaller scale, e.g. the one in Syria.

The speaker stressed her views that Human Rights are *indivisible* although violations occurred all around us. Immigrant families in Britain, for example, were currently being split up by invidious Immigration Laws. One of her main messages of the evening was that Human Rights should include Jews helping *others*. Care must be taken not to be patronising, but if it was possible to ask a Government to look to the plight of Jews in other countries, then surely it must be possible to ask them to examine the state of the immigrant community in our own country. She observed that 'which country you choose "to knock" depends on your politics'. Jews against Apartheid was an 'obvious and easy' group with which to identify.

June Jacobs found the situation in Israel very sad and retained a deep commitment to its land and all that it stands for. Nevertheless, she found the violations of Human Rights occurring in the occupied territories entir-

ely unacceptable and viewed them as 'letting down the side' and offering 'comfort to the enemy'. There are such practices as punishment without trial, the destruction of the homes of those suspected of terrorist activities and the denial of education to children of Palestinians.

The speaker drew attention to the fact that one of the highlights in the Campaign for Soviet Jewry had been to secure the right of all children to learn and be educated in the ways of Jewish life. She reminded us that Rabbi Akiva had been put to death for refusing to obey laws forbidding the teaching of Judaism. Yet despite all this, schools on the West Bank have been closed for almost one-and-a-half years. She soberly reminded the audience that all attempts to stop Jewish learning in the past had failed miserably. She asked 'Can we be that stupid?' She appealed to the audience to recognise that we owed a duty to attack violations of Human Rights wherever they occur.

Question time brought the inevitable pleas that things in Israel were 'different'. After all, the Palestinians were committed to the destruction of the State of Israel. It was suggested that this was not the case in South Africa for example. This misapprehension was quickly corrected. The speaker was very doubtful that the Palestinians remained committed to the destruction of the State if Israel. She felt that there was a basis for

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**John and Hazel  
Cosgrove**



negotiation and that current levels of Human Rights violations were entirely unjustifiable.

In answer to another question, she welcomed present-day developments in the Soviet Union and said that there were, without question, great improvements in the plight of the Jews. Nevertheless, there was still a need for vigilance as things could reverse again at any moment and indeed one of the regrettable factors of

recent developments in Russia, was that new freedom had brought about increased anti-semitism in some quarters. Furthermore, there were many Jews who still needed support from the West.

All in all, there was a sadness that pervaded the evening, brought about by the fact that many in the audience felt she was right but saw no solutions in sight. There was one comment to the effect that "It's easy for her to

stand up and say those things when she doesn't live there". My view is that it was not at all easy, but on the contrary, very courageous. It is always easy to tell other families what they are doing wrong in trying to preserve harmonious relations; it is much harder and often painful to look at one's own and admit to failure and we should not forget that in the last analysis, that is what June Jacobs was doing.

## A sparkling display of Art

**TONY GILBERT reports on a truly enlightening talk by Samuel Robin Spark on the Jewish artist Yosl Bergner.**

On Sunday, 12th November 1989, the Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society was addressed by Samuel Robin Spark.

Six years ago, at a time in life when most people are well settled into their careers, Spark made a dramatic break with the past and became a full-time art student, thereby fulfilling a dream that he had nursed over an extended period. Perhaps because he was senior to most of his fellow art students, and perhaps because he also felt that he had less time to establish himself than they did, he has devoted himself to his new career with enormous energy.

There has resulted an outpouring of pictures of extraordinary vitality, manifested through an intense use of colouring combined with a dashing use of brush stroke. Even though he has only been painting for a relatively short period, his pictures have been

well received: he has exhibited in the Royal Academies in London and Edinburgh, and in the past year he has held two one-man exhibitions which obtained very favourable comment in the Press. Most recently he has had a portrait selected for the Morrison Scottish Portrait Award.

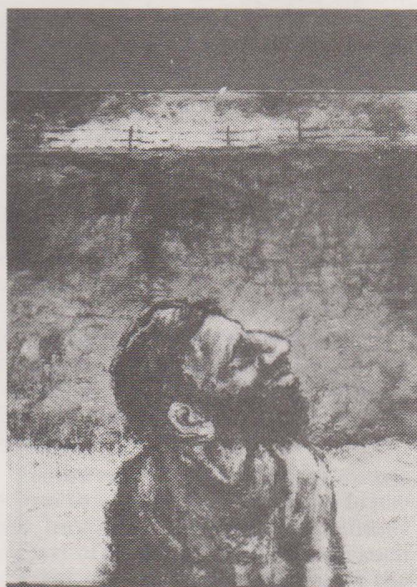
The subject of Samuel Robin Spark's talk to the Literary Society was the Jewish artist Yosl Bergner, born in Poland in the twenties, and now resident in Israel. Whilst at College, Spark submitted a degree dissertation that focussed on Yosl Bergner, but which looked more generally at the Jewish artists in Eastern Europe in seeking an answer to the question 'What constitutes Jewish Art?' His fascination with Bergner grew, so that on completion of his dissertation, he sent a copy to Bergner, from which developed a friendship between the two artists. The Lit. was thus indeed fortunate in that the talk on Bergner was delivered by someone qualified to talk about his subject both as a man and as an artist.

The means by which Spark chose to illustrate these two complementary aspects of Bergner was through the use of a sequence of slides of Bergner's pictures. This served in part as a basis on which to sketch a biography of Bergner, but was also arranged to develop a variety of themes which ran through the pictures and which in turn shed further insight into the man. A second sequence of slides was simultaneously projected to show work of other (mainly Jewish) artists: some of these illustrated ideas which influenced Bergner; others showed severely contrasting approaches to those same themes arising in Bergner's pictures.

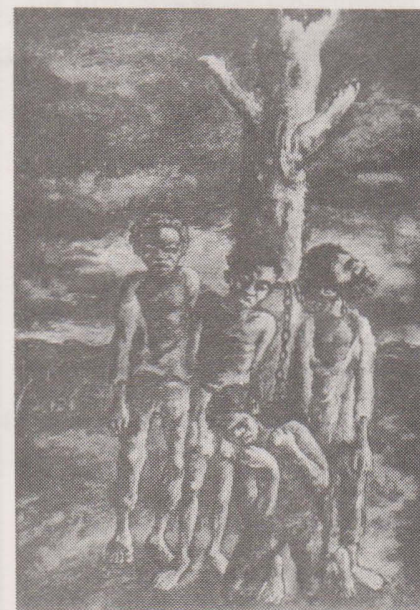
Bergner's artistic career started when he was young. In his youth he

emigrated to Australia and his early pictures, some drawn from his Australian experience, show him experimenting with the styles of other artists. Thus we saw a Bergner 'Cezanne', full of Autumnal blocks of colour and a Bergner 'Blue Period Picasso' in the sad, slow picture of *The Pumpkin Eaters*.

The stay in Australia was an extended one and was marked by considerable artistic evolution. On the whole, this period must have been a miserable time for him: the economic and social outlook in a depressed Australia of the twenties and thirties was bleak, and this was reinforced by the increasingly grim news from family back in Poland. Though not a specially religious man, he was distressed at the progressive destruction of Yiddish culture in which his family was steeped.



"Ghetto Wall"



"Aboriginal People"



These disturbing influences are manifest in a variety of ways in the pictures of this period: a fairly direct comment on social conditions occurs in *Salvation Army* in which a small Salvation Army band plays forlornly while dejected people look on; a relatively late reference to happenings in Europe occurs in *Ghetto Wall* (1943), showing a stark wall leading up to a fiery background, while in front stands a lone, crooked figure; and a bridge between these themes occurs in his artistic treatment of *Aboriginal People*.



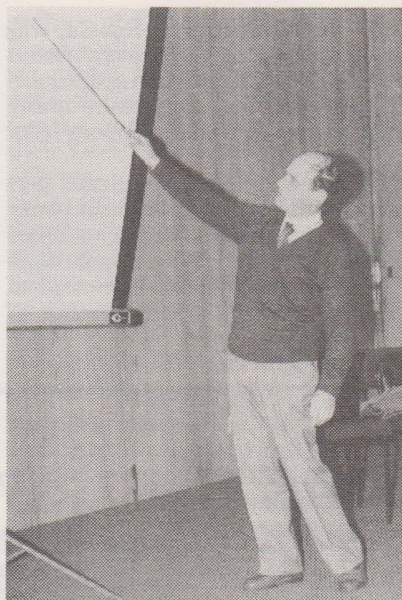
*"Marrano"*

He felt a special sympathy with aborigenes, seeing in them a down-trodden minority, whose treatment in Australia paralleled that of the Jews in Eastern Europe. In consequence, they make a considerable appearance in his pictures, mainly as sad, crushed figures, very sympathetically treated. These latter pictures have shed the earlier influences: the style is bolder, the use of colour frequently more stark and more direct.

While expounding on Bergner's art during his Australian sojourn,

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**David and Anita  
Mendelssohn  
and family**



*Samuel Robin Spark making a point during the Literary Society meeting.*

particularly in its Jewish aspects, Spark showed comparative slides of other Jewish artists. These ranged from the rather freer, more colourful style of Chagall to the extraordinary geometries in the religious figures of Kramer, the latter so striking, but somehow so much more cerebral than Bergner's figures. One felt that in some of these pictures by Bergner, there was a cry from deep within the soul of an unhappy man.

In 1950, Bergner moved to Israel, where he now lives, but his stay there was punctuated by his Spanish 'tour'. Bergner was fascinated by the culture of the Jews in Spain prior to their expulsion, and he travelled to Spain to learn more.

Two strikingly different styles of painting representing this period were shown. On the one hand, we saw beautifully composed formal groups of people, assembled in almost ritualistic pose, with mask-like faces. An analogy with the faces of Modigliani was drawn, but perhaps the grouping also echoed the conventions of the art of that very epoch. In total contrast was *Marrano*, a frightening commentary of the horrors of the Inquisition. The black figures in the foreground sport grotesque, white bird-like masks. A similar motif has been used elsewhere to pay lip service to the prohibition of the representation of the human form, but here a second meaning is unambiguous, the need to disguise one's very thoughts from the pervasive Inquisition; and in the fiery background, it is possible to imagine the threatening arches of the Inquisitorial Court.

The last major theme that Spark

drew on was that of symbolism. Many of the pictures contain symbols which, to a greater or lesser extent, aid the interpretation of the picture. Thus we have *The Tea Drinkers* showing a polite group sitting to tea among Rousseauesque foliage up to their knees, while in the background white birds of doom dive menacingly.

The interpretation provided was that this was a comment on the phenomenon, prevalent at the time, of Jews from fashionable quarters of various European cities to attempt to settle in rural parts of Palestine.



*"The Tea Drinkers"*

These people are quite unready for what is about to befall them, and the ludicrousness of their situation is reflected by their bizarre tea party in its magical surroundings, while the bird of doom signifies the probable outcome of such folly.

Other recurrent symbols also are present. Notable is the potato grater, which it transpires is none other than the much down-trodden, despised, but hard-wearing Jew, taking the knocks of the anti-Semitic potatoes, but nevertheless surviving. Thus we see him bent and bruised, but still upright, walking boldly down a Span-

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The Edinburgh Star  
every success*

**Manny and Nicole  
Wittenberg**



ish street. Other symbols are also present, in varying styles, so that we have a picture directly influenced by Magritte, and in a style that by now we seem to feel is more essential Bergner, is *Vanity of Vanities*, showing all manner of artefacts in a bin: a pictorial expression of 'dust to dust and ashes to ashes'.

Finally, Spark showed us some recent pictures exhibiting varied styles; beautiful flowing illustrations of a

family group for a Haggadah and a wonderfully harmonious scene of ploughing in Israel; yet, even to this day, other pictures harp back to the troubled times of the twenties and thirties, with the paint applied in agonising, tortured dollops.

Questioned about the recurrence of troubled themes in the work of a man who physically presents a big jolly aspect, Spark said that he felt that Bergner existed at many levels, that

despite his outward appearance, there was a deeper sadness learned from difficult times, and that this had to find expression through his art. It is surely a sadness that most of us feel from time to time, even if not so intensely as Bergner, so that it is not difficult to empathise with such pictures, and indeed the variety of the pictures is so large, that it is probable that there are many in which one could find much pleasure.

## Religion

# Chanukah: A National Festival

by Rabbi Shalom Shapira

Most festivals of the Jewish calendar were established in order to commemorate momentous events in our history and principal concepts of our Jewish faith. Pesach is aimed at marking the anniversary of our redemption from Egypt. Shavuot and Succot respectively celebrate the giving of the Torah and the forty years of wandering in the wilderness. Both of these events were of major importance in the forming of our national future. Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur do not mark our past history but rather commemorate some major concepts of our faith. The first reminds us of the creation of the universe and God's sovereignty over it and the second represents the power of repentance and God's everlasting mercy. These past historical events and ideological concepts are of such significance that they have festivals to commemorate them in order to get their message across to the hearts of the people.

Chanukah is a festival which seems not to have that similar justification, although it commemorates an event of the past Jewish history—the religious persecution by the Syrian Hellenists and the glorious struggle of the Maccabees against them in 167 B.C.E. It also reminds us of the fight and the victory of the few against the many, the weak against the strong and the righteous against the wicked, and of the cleansing of the Holy Temple.

However, neither of these events seems to be significant enough to justify having a festival. The military victory of the Maccabees was not such a great victory. The cleansing of the Holy Temple when the Maccabees

entered the defiled sanctuary, built a new altar and lit the Menorah again from a small cruse of oil which was to last only one day but miraculously lasted for eight full days—did not mark the end of that war; on the contrary, it went on for many years afterwards. Moreover, even after the victory, the Jewish people did not retain their national independence for very long. Within less than a century, King Herod deposed the Jewish rulers of the Hasmonean dynasty, appointed himself dictator and a cruel oppressive Roman government ruled over the country.

The Maccabean military victory can only be viewed as a passing incident in Jewish history. It certainly cannot be compared with any of those striking events which led to the establishment of Pesach, Shavuot or Succot as permanent festivals. The same applies to the miracle of the oil which was on a par with many other miracles mentioned in the Bible which are not commemorated by any special holiday.

In the Tractate "Rosh Hashanah" we read of some other happy events of Jewish history which were commemorated by minor festival days and were abolished later when it became clear that those days celebrated events that were only of passing importance. Chanukah was also included in the list of such days to be abolished, but Chanukah was eventually retained as a holy festival.

It seems that the importance of Chanukah goes far beyond its historical or miraculous phenomenon.

To understand this, we have to draw our attention to the following characteristics of the Chanukah festival:

1. There is no prohibition of work on Chanukah. There is no obligation to have a festive meal or to read a Megilla.
2. Chanukah is the only festival observed during eight full days, not only in the Diaspora but also in Israel, while Pesach and Succot were originally observed seven days each (as in Israel now, and in the Diaspora for eight days). During the eight days of Chanukah we recite the whole Hallel and read from the Torah every day the corresponding portion of the offerings brought to the Holy Temple during the first days of the inauguration of the Altar.
3. In addition to that, there are two more major observances during the eight days of Chanukah: (i) The lighting of the candles every evening, starting with one on the first evening and concluding with eight on the last. This is preceded by two blessings every day. (ii) The reciting of a special prayer called "Al-Hanissim" some six times every day, three times during the Amida (the silent prayer) of all services (morning, afternoon and evening) and during the grace after meals.
4. Chanukah is unique and differs from any Shabbat or Yom Tov in the lighting of the candles. The reason for the Shabbat and Festival candles is to brighten and dignify the home and the festive meal. This is not the case with regard to the Chanukah candles. On the contrary, because of their holiness we



are forbidden to derive any benefit from the light of the Chanukah candles or use them for any personal purpose. That is the reason why we light every evening one additional candle called the "Shamash"—the servant candle, which is not counted among the obligatory candles but enables us to enjoy the lights as a permitted light. So we now see that there is a fundamental difference between this festival of Chanukah and the others, but to understand its special message we must make the final and most important point:

5. All other festivals of the Jewish year celebrate events that took place outside the land of Israel: Chanukah is the only festival that is based upon occurrences that happened solely in Israel.

Looking into these special points which mark Chanukah, we immediately notice the different approach of our Rabbis to this festival. The reason for this difference becomes even more obvious when analysing them in comparison with the other Jewish festivals.

The exodus from Egypt was enabled through the salvation of God by a direct interference of miracles, signs and wonders. The other festivals—Shavuot, Succot and Purim—have also the same element of miracles by God doing the job for the people of Israel while they are passive. The

essence of Chanukah signifies quite the opposite: for the first time the Jewish people fought the enemy for the sake of God, for it was the Syrian-Greeks' aim "to make them forget their Torah", to deprive them of their religion, to assimilate them with the Hellenistic culture and eventually to dismiss their independence as a sovereign state. It was their own determination, their national pride and their religious conviction that motivated them to fight and not to surrender their will to their oppressors.

This struggle of the Maccabees in their own land for their independence and religious survival and their unusual victory over the Hellenists was a natural miracle, their weaker armies defeating a much stronger enemy. As believing Jews we know that God was behind the scenes in complete control. However, everything took place under normal rules of nature and no miracles were visible. This is the essence and the eternal message of Chanuka which shaped this festival as a model and as a basic key for the understanding of the whole truth of our subsequent Jewish history.

Chanukah is not so important as for commemorating the past but rather for looking to the future. Chanukah set the tone for all future Jewish history down to our own time and beyond. God continues to operate with these same principles in his guidance of his people.

We could draw our own conclusions when referring to our contemporary piece of history of the last 50 years. One could easily see the similarities of the mighty powers of the second century B.C.E. with those of this century, although those of our day operated with even greater barbarity and cruelty. When our Rabbis decided to ordain the Chanukah festival to be observed by all future generations, they did it despite the temporary nature of the victory it celebrates. They did it because this victory was extraordinary compared to any other past event in our history. They did it because this victory, taking place in the land of Israel, would greatly inspire future Maccabees to follow this example. They did it to sustain the theme of the victory of the few against the many and as an example of survival for future generations.

A few small Chanukah lights can eliminate darkness. Handed down from father to son from 167 B.C.E. to the present day, the custom of lighting those small Chanukah candles became the focal point of our existence. The Chanukah candles are not only a sign of a miracle which happened in the time of Judah the Maccabee. These candles being holy lights, became the shining emblem of our persistence to resist and to survive against all odds from the times of the Maccabees down to the Israeli Defence Forces of today and from now to eternity.

## Israel

# The Middle East between War and Peace

**DAVID CAPITANCHIK** *examines the political situation and concludes that only pragmatism from all parties concerned can lead to peace.*

These days, in certain parts of London, the walls are plastered with Socialist Worker Party posters demanding starkly, "Where is Eastern Europe Going?" The answer is blindingly obvious, "West!!!" If only a monosyllabic answer existed for the similarly worded question, "Where is the Middle East Going?" Alas, rarely in modern times has the political, economic and spiritual direction of that region been more in doubt.

### Political kaleidoscope

The Middle East, Professor Elie

Kedourie has remarked, is a kaleidoscope. Each morning you touch it and get a new pattern. Only one thing is clear, the Middle East stands now where it has always stood: somewhere between war and peace.

The kaleidoscope produces contrasting images. There is an actual treaty of peace, fragile but seemingly permanent, between Israel and the largest and most important of the Arab states—Egypt. By contrast, relations between the Israelis and the Palestinian Arabs, after two years of

continuous violence in the West Bank and Gaza, have never been more antagonistic.

Strangely, the so-called 'intifada' has been accompanied by a significant reduction in Israel's diplomatic and economic isolation in the world of international relations. Many countries that broke off diplomatic and other ties with Israel in the wake of the 1967 war, Third World states in Africa and some of the countries newly emerging from Communism in eastern Europe, have been re-opening



their embassies in Tel-Aviv and Israeli diplomats have been packing their bags for Warsaw, Budapest, Addis Ababa and even Moscow.

Sadly, any further diplomatic breakthrough among the Arab states of the Middle East seems a remote possibility at this stage. Relations with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan appeared the most promising, especially when in the summer of 1987, King Hussein actually signed an agreement with the then Israeli Foreign Minister, Shimon Peres.

The London Agreement, as it was called, laid the basis for an international conference at which the future of the Palestinians in the occupied territories and, thereafter peace between the Arab world and Israel might be negotiated. However, the Agreement was scrapped a few months before the 1988 Israeli General Election when King Hussein renounced all responsibility for the territories and their future. Henceforth, he declared, only the PLO could legitimately represent the aspirations of the Palestinian people.

The 'intifada' broke out a few weeks after a crisis summit meeting of the Arab League in Amman, which was called in November 1987 to consider how best the Arab world could bring about a ceasefire in the eight-year long Iran-Iraq war. This was the first Arab summit in the history of the League which had failed to include Palestine in its agenda. It was this sense of being abandoned by those from whom the Palestinians had the highest expectations, more than any particular action on the part of the Israelis, which provided the detonator for the explosion of demonstrations and violence that we have witnessed ever since.

A ceasefire between Iran and Iraq has now been in force for more than a year—that conflict is unresolved but suspended. However, fears remain throughout the Middle East, both of Iran's fundamentalist fervour and, more particularly, of Iraq's military might and the ambitions of the regime of President Saddam Hussein.

All of the conflicts in the Middle East are manifest either directly or by proxy in the continuing quagmire of what used to be Lebanon. Despite recent efforts by the Arab League to stabilise the situation and prevent further deterioration, there is little prospect that in the near future, Lebanon's neighbours will have any confidence that the country will acquire a central government capable of containing its many and violent domestic conflicts within its own borders and prevent them from spilling over into their territory.

### Need for a pragmatic approach

It is in the context of this dangerous, unstable and contradictory Middle East scene that Israel's policy-makers must decide what their best course of action should be; how they should respond to events around them, and steer a course which might lead to peace rather than war. This would be a monumental task of supreme difficulty, even if policy could be based entirely upon purely rational and pragmatic grounds, without regard to any domestic political or ideological interests.

However, the question facing those responsible for the country's affairs must always remain how to reconcile Israel's legitimate security concerns with the ideological commitments of its various political parties and especially those who make up the broad coalition government of the day. Is it really best for Israel's long-term security that she remain in control of the territories of the West Bank and Gaza and even incorporate them within the borders of the Jewish State?

There are very few people in Israel for whom this is a purely pragmatic question; there is for most people, a deep emotional attachment to both land and principle, as well as a deep concern for physical security. Many are, however, prepared to compromise and conciliate for the sake of peace. Territory, they believe, can be exchanged for peace.

Others, ideologically and emotionally are committed to the idea that what they regard as the entire Land of Israel, between the Mediterranean and the Jordan, must be incorporated within the contemporary State of Israel. They remain impervious to the so-called demographic argument, that such a state would inevitably include an Arab population whose high birth rate would very soon make Jews a minority in their own country. They ignore the uncompromising hostility of the Palestinian Arabs to Israeli rule, so manifest in the huge sacrifices they have been prepared to make in the 'intifada' in their determination to resist the Israeli occupation. Indeed, nowadays it often seems that they are more concerned to use Israel's Defence Forces to enforce their long-term ideological goal rather than to ensure that it is capable of fulfilling its primary purpose of defending the country's borders against Israel's powerful hostile neighbours.

In this age of 'glasnost' and 'perestroika', in which the superpowers are making every effort to settle regional disputes which might drag them into conflict with each other, Israel has to

give serious consideration to how it might safeguard its legitimate security interests. Efforts are already being made by the superpowers to make the various parties in the Middle East resolve their differences at least sufficiently to reduce the likelihood of another major war. They will demand and expect compromise and conciliation on all sides and contrary to the situation in the past, they will be sincere in their endeavours to achieve peace. For one thing is clear: the era of superpower confrontation is over.

If the Middle East is now poised dangerously between war and peace, Israel's best interests must now lie in a pragmatic approach which gives the highest priority to peace with the maximum possible security. It has to ensure that it remains a predominantly Jewish state and a liberal democracy. The real question remains: can Israel's political system produce a government capable of steering such a course? Everything now depends on the answer.



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## Playing for time

*Recently back after six months in Israel, MICHELINE BRANNAN analyses the present stalemate and speculates upon a solution.*

It is a bitter irony that at a time when reconciliation is breaking out all over Europe, the one place in the world which still seems irredeemably beset with strife is God's own land of Israel.

I recently spent six months there, and arrived back very pessimistic about the prospects of an honourable solution for the Israelis and their Palestinian subjects. Subsequent events have done nothing to change my view.

The Palestinians believe, as Arafat said in his recent TV interview with Ludovic Kennedy, that their state is only a stone's throw away. But in my view, those stones, thrown by the children of the Intifada, have done nothing to bring a Palestinian state any nearer.

While I was in Israel, Arafat renounced violence, proclaimed that the PLO Charter was "caduque", and recognised Israel. But his aim is a Palestinian State comprising the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, with its capital in Jerusalem. To this the Israelis will never agree.

### One Jerusalem

For a start, there is no question of redividing Jerusalem. Despite de facto segregation between Jews and Arabs, the potent symbol of the Kotel is part of the retaining wall supporting the platform on which the Dome of the Rock and the El Aqsa mosque are built. The Mount of Olives is full of

significance to Jews as well as Moslems and Christians. The excavations of King David's capital of 3,000 years ago look over the troubled Arab village of Silwan. The route to the magnificent Mount Scopus campus goes right through the Arab sector. Teddy Kollek has campaigned for one Jerusalem for 22 years. There is no way that Israelis will let the Arab sector go to foreign hands.

But let us suppose that the Arabs were to settle for a different capital. Nablus is sometimes mentioned. Nablus is a small and charmless commercial town in the heart of "Samaria". It has no attractions as a capital, but let us imagine the Arabs would settle for it. Where would their borders be? It is well known that pre-1967, the border between Israel and Jordan left Israel with a narrow strip inland from Tel Aviv and great difficulty in protecting the main highway to Jerusalem. It is impossible that the Israelis would concede this border to any Palestinian State, even if such a state were demilitarised. How long would it be before extremist elements, perhaps backed by Syria, took up positions along this vulnerable border? If this is not to be the border, what border would the Arabs be persuaded to accept?

It has been argued that because of the Intifada the Israelis will at last have to do something to resolve the question of the occupied territories. While I was there the stalemate became so obvious that President Bush demanded an initiative from Mr. Shamir. The Israeli Prime Minister offered elections on the West Bank and in Gaza, with the stipulation that he would not negotiate about these elections with the PLO. But his stipulation makes negotiations impossible. Mr. Arafat has actually declared a Palestinian State, and considers the PLO to be its Government in exile. Palestinians who value their lives cannot renounce their support of the PLO in order to negotiate with Israel. America and now Egypt are putting considerable effort into squaring this circle by offering to deliver Palestinian negotiating partners. Israel goes along with these efforts, but in my view they are playing for time.

Many Israeli commentators have suspected from the beginning of the

Shamir initiative that it was a cynical move to buy time. Shamir was adept at telling each faction what it wanted to hear. He offered elections to the Palestinians as a first step towards a final settlement. But he reassured his own side (or rather those members of his Cabinet who were attempting to outflank him) that the option of a state was ruled out. He satisfied the American Government of his sincerity; and appeared to offer a concrete alternative to the international conference favoured by Mr. Peres, by giving the interested parties something tangible to discuss.

The time Mr. Shamir is buying may allow events to take a course which will dispense with the need for negotiations or conferences. The gamble is on Israel's superior strength, and the apparent unwillingness of other countries, including the surrounding Arab countries, to get militarily involved.

### The West Bank

There are already over 60,000 Israeli settlers on the West Bank. It is the natural place for Israel to expand—more attractive than the desert, where one can now see the remnants of planned but abandoned development towns. The Jordan valley may be parched and unwelcoming, but the hills of Samaria are green and rolling. Settlements have been sited and linked up in such a way that you can drive through the area without realising

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that 500,000 Arabs live there too in old established towns and villages. Every week bus parties of tourists start out from Jerusalem to view the settlements. They meet settlers, recently arrived from America, who tell them about the wonderful quality of life. It is part of a propaganda campaign to attract more and more.

Settlers have large and beautiful villas, and can dig deeper wells than their Arab neighbours. Control over the water is everything in a country like this. They also have guns and live behind barbed wire. The language of pioneering, of the early Zionists who drained the swamps and cleared the rocks to found the first Kibbutzim, has been hijacked by these people. Many of them are American "nouveau frum". They believe that they are fulfilling God's biblical promise, but they also live in a dreamworld of the Wild West. They see themselves as in a circle of wagons and call the West Bank "Indian territory".

Tragically, West Bank settlers are sometimes murdered by Palestinians when they venture out from the stockade. This only serves to escalate the tension because it provokes a show of strength by the settlers—an armed hike through an Arab village, shooting in the air, and occasionally shooting at people. It is terrible, as happened while I was there, to hear the word "pogrom" used—not about violence against Jews, but by them. The settlers do not believe that the army offers them adequate protection, and while I was there the phrase "taking the law into their own hands" was commonly used. There is no law I know which justifies reprisals against the innocent for the sins of the guilty.

The settlers provide an unofficial front line for the Government and I suspect that to an extent they are being used. In certain circumstances it could suit the Government if a serious attack on settlers was followed by heavy reprisals. The initiative would then be taken out of the Government's hands, but the violence might justify a military intervention and that in turn might result in Arabs taking to flight in large numbers on the model of 1948 and 1967. Sometimes force has apparent attractions as a way of solving intractable human conflict.

While I was there, American Secretary of State James Baker told the Israelis to renounce their vision of a greater Israel. I do not think they will renounce it. They see that many young Palestinians have left the West Bank because they have so few prospects there. They support the settlers, and, as I have argued, may entertain

apocalyptic visions about a future mass exodus. Some Palestinians would undoubtedly remain, and perhaps at that stage the area could be annexed, with citizen rights being offered to those who want them.

How can they square this with a Western moral conscience? It is not so difficult. Americans are not overburdened with guilt about the Red Indians. In a century people would forget about it.

#### The Gaza strip

I would find this vision quite seductive myself if it were not for the much bigger problem of the Gaza strip. This area, teeming with the refugees of two wars, is much more crowded than the West Bank, economically backward, and subject to frequent curfews, sealings off, and other forms of repression. It only has 2,000 settlers, a very hardy lot. It is geographically close to Egypt, which presumably does not want it back, and I have never understood why Israel should want to hold on to it either, unless it is for a source of cheap labour to empty Ashkelon's bins.

The annexation option looks much less feasible when you consider that Gaza adds nearly a million additional Arabs to the problem and they have absolutely nowhere else to go. How could they be offered citizenship without totally unbalancing the Jewish State?

To deal with Gaza, one would have to go down the road advocated by Meir Kahane and his Kach movement of effectively deporting the people en masse. It is that kind of thinking which led Amos Oz, the novelist, in a speech about six months ago, to denounce a "Jewish Hizbollah" whose first target would be human rights for Arabs, and whose next target would be all dissenting Jews. Unfortunately, it is a slippery slope from dreaming of annexation of the West Bank to the inhumanity of the Kahane supporter.

So what will happen? At one extreme you have people like Amos Oz who say that Arabs will not be deported because Peace Now supporters will lie down in front of the trucks. Some of them have meetings with the PLO, and openly advocate a Palestinian State. But they are a minority. Many more, while not enjoying the spectacle of Arabs being harassed and beaten up, are much more worried about what will happen to the Jews. They believe that the Arabs fundamentally hate Jews and want them out of the Middle East altogether. To them, the Intifada is one more phase of the Arab-Israeli conflict which is demanding a huge price economically and in terms of the human costs of

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national service. While they may respect and like some Arabs individually, collectively they would gladly be shot of them. But they have no constructive ideas about how to achieve this.

## In search of a solution

The most constructive idea I heard was voiced by a middle-aged Hungarian professor at a dinner, when he said that of course the Palestinians could not have Jerusalem, and could not go back to their pre-1967 West Bank border. But he suggested giving them instead part of Galilee, which is full of Arab villages, and of no special significance to Israel. Perhaps there would be room for a trade-off there.

I also read an article in which a political commentator suggested that the Gaza strip should be given immediate independence. He was being malicious, I think, in suggesting this as an object lesson to show the Palestinians how difficult statehood can be. Certainly it would be difficult, but they want it as part of their state—

and nobody else really does. Perhaps a package which offered Gaza along with a redrawn West Bank would give security to Israel and the Palestinians a respectable state, which could also provide a home for any disaffected Israeli Arabs.

To achieve a partition on these lines would require courage on both sides. The Arabs would have to renounce some of their dearest aims, for example Jerusalem. They would have to compromise, in a way which they were never prepared to do under the Mandate or when partition was offered by the UN. They would have to unite to exclude the extremist elements—in itself very difficult given the existing gulf between the Moslems and the Christians, and the divisions among Moslems themselves. The Israelis would have to change attitudes of fear and hatred forged over nearly a century, and suppress the visionary aspirations of many of their citizens. They would have to deal firmly with the betrayed settlers which would be a problem

many times greater than the bulldozing of Yamit.

This in my view is where the only prospect of an honourable solution lies. But I cannot see by what steps the parties could get there from where they are now. My fear is that instead of working for a solution, the Israelis will continue with the war of attrition, playing for time and gambling on some cataclysmic development to take matters out of their hands. It is not an attractive outlook for a country I have grown to love.



**Micheline Brannan** was born in Glasgow. She went to University in Oxford where she read Classics. When she finished her studies she came to Edinburgh where she lived and worked for the last thirteen years.

## Essay

### *A personal recollection of the Kindertransport*

# Destination Survival

by Hannele Zürndorfer

At last everything was ready and we had received the notification that our transport train was leaving Düsseldorf station on May 3rd 1939. I think it was one of the last Children's Transport trains that stopped to pick up in Düsseldorf. Those of my school-friends who had not already gone, had literally 'missed the boat'.

The night before we left my father wrote a final poem into our autograph albums and my mother also wrote some loving lines. I was to read these again and again during the years that followed. Before we left the house that morning, my father and my mother laid their hands on our heads and blessed us, as they always did on Friday evenings, for the last time.

It was a very long train. I don't know how many children it was carrying, but it had come a long way, picking up children in different towns. Düsseldorf was the last pick-up point. It all passed like a dream. I do remember when the unbelievable moment of separation actually came. We were all busy with the preoccupations of finding the right coach and

compartment, and of stowing the luggage. Then the last clinging embrace: my face against the familiar tweed of my father's coat and the comforting feel of my mother's fur collar.

Then we were on the train. We didn't cry then. We all knew we mustn't. Not Mummy either. She was so brave. I think Lotte and I waved goodbye happily, still hearing their last firm assurances: "We're coming soon ... in a few weeks ..."

Then, as I saw their lonely figures receding as the train drew out, looking so forsaken after all they had done for us, I cried, but not for too long. There were so many new faces to take in, so much to think about, and then there was Lotte, weeping away beside me. "Look after Lotte!" were their last instructions and I promised myself that I would. It was the least I could do, now we were on our own.

What I didn't know at the time, but learnt only after the war, was, that my father, anxious to see that we got safely across the border, had jumped on to the train at the very end, where it curved around a corner and we could

not see from where we were, and had travelled on it all the way to the Dutch border. At the frontier, guards and some officers came into each carriage and questioned us about our luggage: were we carrying any valuable things? Some children had their cases opened, but all passed off quietly in our carriage. My father left the train as unobtrusively as he had got on, and watched it snake its way across the frontier into Holland and safety; a train full of children, full of hope, leaving behind the broken hearts of mothers and fathers, empty homes and a future of 'night and fog'.

Of the journey I remember very little. There were children sitting beside us and opposite us; a blur of faces. But it was a strange journey: no larking or fooling about, as is usual on excursions where a lot of children are together. We were all subdued and thoughtful, wondering where we should end up and how it would all be.

We travelled by night-boat from the Hook of Holland to Harwich and from there by train to Liverpool Street Station where we were to be checked



and claimed by our sponsors and relatives. The whole journey had a somnambulist quality—train, boat, train, interspersed with endless standing in long, labelled files. I suppose with all the excitement and emotional strain of farewells, frontier hold-ups and apprehension, we were tired out.

The first clear picture that emerges is of our arrival very early in the morning at Liverpool Street Station, a vast glass dome swirling with steam, and of filing through a door into a great hall with windows high up in the walls and a grey light filtering through them. As we entered, our names were checked off a list and we were each given a packet of sandwiches, some chocolate and an orange. Its funny how children remember food. Certainly this orange, round and brightly glowing in the grey surroundings, suddenly cheered me and brought back a sort of excitement and anticipation.

I suppose we were hungry by then, but I don't remember actually eating the orange. Perhaps I was still clutching it when we arrived at my aunt's flat.

It seemed hours and hours that we sat in that grey hall on wooden benches. I have an impression of a gallery where relatives and sponsors sat waiting for their charges. I think we must have been dealt with alphabetically, for we two Zürndorfers heard name after name being called and saw nearly all the children who had travelled with us leave.

But where the Tante Rosel and Inge? I could not see them in the gallery. What if they had not come? Would we be sent back, or would we have to stay in this depressing hall? Lotte began to fidget and weep. Then, when there were only a few unclaimed children scattered about the hall, our names were called: 'Hannele and Lotte Zürndorfer!'

We stood up and a lady led us to a desk where our labels were taken off our necks and we were handed over to our official English sponsor, a kind, smiling lady. And there stood Tante Rosel, small and anxious, and Inge. We were no longer baggage, numbers, labels, but children with a loving aunt who hugged and hugged us and took us away from that stuffy hall as soon as the formalities had been completed and the luggage collected. I looked back, and the boy who had sat next to us on the bench was still there, looking lost and lonely. I wondered what was going to happen to him.

We went by taxi and I kept thinking to myself, "This is England!". We drove through crowded streets full of shops and people bustling about. All

the notices were in English and all these people out there were talking English. It really was exciting! Then the taxi stopped in front of a large, cream-coloured house fronted by a porch with flaking pillars. And out of the window at the very top of the house looked Uncle Ala, waving and pulling funny faces. When we had climbed the three flights of stone stairs, Ala tried hard to make us laugh, but he looked older and sadder than I remembered him and I felt a bit like crying. We were made so welcome and cousin Egon hopped excitedly from foot to foot and immediately starting teaching us English, "Good morning girls," he said. It was comforting to be with relatives. A telegram was dispatched to Mummy and Daddy . . .

*The present article is an excerpt from the authoress's book **The Ninth of November** published by Quartet in paperback at 5.95.*



**Hannele Regent (née Zürndorfer)** was born in Düsseldorf in 1925 and left Germany with her sister in May 1939 by Children's Transport (Kindertransport). At the outbreak of the war she was evacuated to Hertfordshire and spent the following ten years with a doctor's family. Later she studied English at London University and subsequently took up journalism. She moved to Fife in 1965 and lived there since. She has been teaching English in Dundee since 1975.

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# IS GOD THE SUPREME IRONIST?

by The Rt. Rev. Richard F. Holloway

Any article written by a Christian leader for a Jewish journal has to begin with an act of repentance. Edward Gibbon said that "history was little more than the register of crimes, follies and misfortunes of mankind" and one of the greatest crimes of history must be the persecution by Christians of God's ancient people, the Jews.

The hatred of Jews by Christians is a historical phenomenon that is riddled with paradox and irony. The main paradox is that we have persecuted Jews in the name of a Jew; and irony is added to paradox because the Jew whose way we claim to follow taught us that the two great commandments of the Law were *love of God* and *love of neighbour*. Too often in history we have expressed our love of God by hating our neighbour and if the Jew is not the neighbour of the Christian, who is?

I must say that I came to an understanding of this great evil that lies at the heart of Christian history later than I ought. I was brought up in a small town in the West of Scotland and if there were any Jews in our midst I was not conscious of them, though I think my mother knew some. She was a poor woman from the slums of Glasgow and one of the things I remember most fondly about her was her defence of the weak. Because she had known great suffering and adversity herself, she offered a helping hand to others in difficulties. Maybe her example unconsciously instilled in me a hatred for persecution and a loathing for cruelty, so that when I discovered the dark secret that lies at the heart of Christian history I was filled with both sorrow and outrage.

T.S. Elliot constantly reminded us that human beings cannot bear very much reality. We are all experts in delusion, in running from painful but saving knowledge about ourselves; and the supreme example in human history of this baffling irrationality is the Christian's treatment of the Jew. I think I came upon it first in all its enormity through literature, but one novel in particular had a permanent and devastating impact upon my consciousness. It was called *The Last of the Just* and it was written by André Schwartz-Bart.

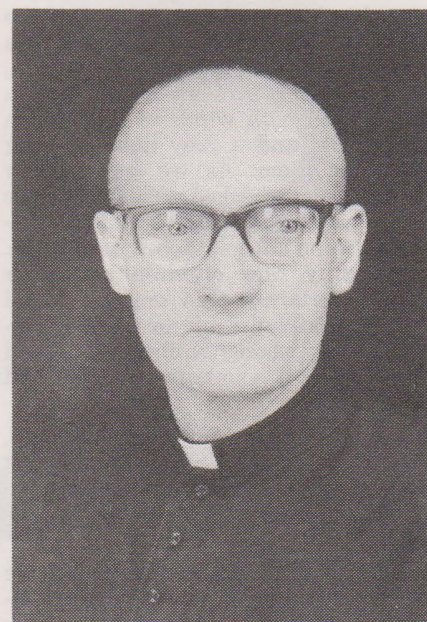
According to this book, in every

generation in Jewish tradition, thirty-six just men are born to take the burden of the world's suffering upon themselves. The book is the story of Ernie Levy, the last of the "Just Men", who dies at Auschwitz in 1943. At the very end of the story Ernie is in a box-car with some women and children, many of them already dead, lurching towards Auschwitz. It is Ernie's burden to console the inconsolable. When they reach Auschwitz Ernie leads his little flock of children into the gas chambers: "Breathe deeply, my lambs, and quickly!"

'the layers of gas had covered everything, there was silence in the dark sky of the room for perhaps a minute, broken only by shrill, racking coughs and the gasps of those too far gone in their agonies to offer a devotion. And first as a stream, and then a cascade, then an irrepressible, majestic torrent, the poem which, through the smoke of fires and above the funeral pyres of history, the Jews—who for two thousand years never bore arms and never had either missionary empires or coloured slaves—the old love poem which the Jews traced in letters of blood on the earth's hard crust unfurled in the gas chamber, surrounded it, dominated its dark, abysmal sneer: 'SHEMA ISRAEL ADONAI ELOHENU ADONAI ECHAD... 'Hear, O Israel, the Eternal our God, the Eternal is One. O Lord by your grace you nourish the living, and by your great pity you resurrect the dead; and you uphold the weak, cure the sick, break the chains of slaves; and faithfully you keep your promises to those who sleep in the dust. Who is like unto you, O merciful Father, and who could be like unto you? ... The voices died one by one along the unfinished poem; the dying children had already dug their nails into Ernie's thighs, and Golda's embrace was already weaker, her kisses were blurred, when suddenly she clung fiercely to her beloved's neck and whispered hoarsely: 'Then I'll never see you again? Never again?'

Ernie managed to spit up the needle of fire jabbing at his throat and, as the girl's body slumped against him, its eyes wide in the opaque night, he shouted against her unconscious ear, 'In a little while, I swear it! ...'

I believe that the story and the obscene event that lies behind it almost completely destroys the credibility of Christianity. I say *almost completely* because I believe that we must some-



how separate the message from the messengers, and admit that they are not worthy of it. And in a paradoxical way this can be a liberating insight as we recognise that we are wounded messengers, burdened with a terrible secret yet sent to speak peace to the nations. The irony is almost unbearable but something about its intrinsic absurdity seems to redeem it. God himself must be the supreme ironist. How else could he endure the terrible contradictions of his followers?

Some years ago while waiting for a plane in Kennedy Airport, New York, I watched an old hassidic Rabbi saying Kaddish. I was overwhelmed by a variety of emotions as I watched him, oblivious as he was to the bustling modernity that surrounded him. His presence spoke of endurance, of pain and the great Nevertheless of God. I wanted to reach out, touch him and say "I'm sorry"; but I didn't. It would have been intrusive and hard to explain: but I can do it *now*; now I can reach out; touch him and say, "I'm sorry".

**The Right Reverend Richard F. Holloway** was born in Scotland in 1933. He was educated at the Theological Colleges of Kelham and Edinburgh as well as the Theological Seminary of New York. He obtained a Divinity degree from the University of London in 1963.

He held numerous positions in the



U.K., U.S.A. and Africa which include *Lecturer* (Harvard, 1985) and *Select Preacher* (Oxford, 1985 and Cambridge, 1987). He has also led many missions around the world. In 1986 he was consecrated Bishop of Edinburgh.

He is author of some thirteen books, one of which, *The Killing* (1984), was the winner of the Winfred Mary Stanford Award. As a journalist he is a regular contributor to the *Church Times* and the religious feature of *The Times* as well as

a frequent broadcaster on radio and television; he has been the presenter on several BBC series. His hobbies include reading, the cinema, running and music. Bishop Holloway is married and has two daughters and a son.

## Reflections of a German pastor

by Rev. Thomas Fuchs

Seven years back when I was still a pastor in Germany I organised a cycling holiday for a group from my church. The trip was to go over four days from the Lower Rhine to the town of Emden in Frisia, where we would stay for a couple of days. As we struggled over the windy planes of Lower Saxony we also crossed the Börgermoor. That's a place with a special reminiscence. Because, although the average German would not be able to identify places which were in one way or another concentration camps, he would not forget the Börgermoor. That was the camp where the International Anthem of Resistance originated: "Wir sind die Moorsoldaten - We are the peat bog soldiers." We felt somewhat haunted by what had happened there and proceeded to Emden.

In Emden itself, in the Old Town,

we found the remains of the synagogue. On one of the stumps which were formerly part of the gate we read in brass letters a verse from Jeremiah chapter 9, verse 1: "That I might weep day and night for my people's slain."

Beside the former synagogue there was a turn-of-the-century red-brick building, still in very good shape, which used to be the "Club for the Good Final Aim". It had been established well before the time of the Nazis, and it was, as I found out later, a club of the wealthy to arrange good matches. Be it as it may, you can't help, when confronted with the remains of the burnt down synagogue beside the wealthy club, associating the "final aim" with the "Final Solution". I kept wondering, were they there when the shul was burning on November 9th, 1938?

Ever since my Emden experience,

Jeremiah's verse on that stump has travelled with me: the genocide carried out by the Nazis with law and order, with German precision and obedience, goes certainly beyond human understanding. I feel a strong need that we remember even after 50 years. Of course people will remember Auschwitz as part of German history until the end of time, yet I keep thinking of the Jewish saying: "The secret of redemption is remembrance". I hope and pray that one day we may be able to cross the river of tears.

*Rev. Thomas Fuchs has been a pastor of the German-speaking congregation in Edinburgh for the last six years and will return to the Rhineland in March 1990. He is a member of the Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society. His reflections are an excerpt from a Remembrance Sunday sermon given at St. Andrew's and St. George's, Edinburgh.*

## A gentile perspective on a Bar Mitzvah

by Marjory Grant

To the Jewish community a Bar Mitzvah is an important occasion; to the boy concerned and his family it is extremely significant; but to a non-Jew, for whom this may be the only visit to the synagogue, it is a unique occurrence.

To comment on such a ceremony from a position of ignorance would not only be foolhardy but decidedly arrogant were it not that any comments are set in the context of privilege. It is one thing to observe passively; it is an honour to be invited to partake, to add one's assent to the ceremony and to be welcomed into the community to join in the celebrations, ever aware that the Christian tradition is firmly rooted in Judaism. Any suggestion that Jews and Christians venerate different gods, the Old Testament one being vengeful, concerned with legalistic matter and the New Testament one being loving, is unworthy and superficial and not the result of either Jewish or Christian narrative.

Christianity finds its roots in the traditions of Israel which, throughout the Old Testament, gave the community its identity and enabled it to respond creatively in crises and these traditions were passed on by successive generations through worship, whether it was in the outpouring of the psalms, the celebration of the Passover meal with its emphasis on the youngest child enquiring about the significance or in day-to-day worship.

While the Old Testament draws together many different strands of culture and thought, its basic message concerns Israel's relationship with God and her sense of being the People of God, divinely initiated and developed in an historical and conventional perspective. That early Christianity was fundamentally Jewish cannot be ignored. Jesus himself, when responding to criticism from the intellectuals of the day, used quotations from and based his arguments upon the Scriptures (for example, Luke 4.4/Deuteronomy 8.3).

The concept of Jews as the people of God continues into the New Testament and it is not until about c.e. 50 that the definition of God's people shifted from the ethnic to the religious (Galatians 3, 26-29, 1 Peter), a shift anticipated by Isaiah (19, 24-25).

There is no need here for an apologetic discourse on the precedence and dependence of one faith upon the other. Both are communities whose theology is open to constant questioning and counter-questioning, whose traditions have observed contradictory strands but above all who acknowledge the supremacy of one God. A Bar Mitzvah is at once part of that tradition and an act of worship.

### Another culture and time

And so, with few preconceptions and conscious of a common tradition, we enter the synagogue. Immediately the contrast - a word which is to emerge repeatedly as the ceremony proceeds - catches the breath. Simply crossing the threshold produces an



emotional reaction at the prospect of intruding into the self-contained tableau of another culture and time. It is at once almost ephemeral, making it imperative to capture the atmosphere and photograph the scene in one's mind before the vision vanishes (are there really fringes on those shawls, look how the men sway as they recite their prayers!) and at the same time permanent as if this specific scene had been going on from time immemorial, present so solidly that pictures from childhood books of Abraham, Moses and the prophets flash before one's eyes.

Coming to terms with the service in progress, the overwhelming sensation is of awareness of the reverence in which the Law is held and of the significance of the traditions. And yet that work, contrast, intrudes again. Sitting with the women, the contrast is not so much one of sexism, as of a distinction between the participants and the observers. Contrast, too, between the respect for the Law, and the inattentiveness of most of congregation. To a Presbyterian, understanding of reverence tends towards observing reverential silence and so chattering women and restless children not only detracted from the worship but seemed antipathetic to it. And the areas of contrasts continue: while the men read the Law eloquently and movingly, the women appear to have little understanding or even interest.

Yet, in spite of all this, there is an overriding sense of continuity; it is easy to imagine this ceremony conducted in synagogues, centuries b.c.e. and in the atmosphere of timelessness it is not difficult to project it centuries hence.

In spite of this continuity, the form

of worship, the lynchpin of the Jewish tradition, is strange to non-Jewish eyes. Worship is much greater than tradition: to be meaningful, it must have an element of dynamism and urgency, of wonder and mystery. Where tradition seems to produce complacency and where familiarity, an acceptable component of worship whatever the faith, appears to overreach its function of being but a skeleton to be clothed with a meaningful approach to God, there is an emptiness. Thus, more contrasts, a little confusion and some sadness resulted from not being able to feel part of a fellowship.

Coming from a Christian tradition where the set forms of worship are not rigid, but where nevertheless the familiar ways of doing things provide some comfort and support, the highly structured, but unintelligible worship seemed almost irrelevant. It was hard to break free from the feeling that it was the Law or even the ceremony itself which was the subject of veneration, a view reinforced by the praising of the Bar Mitzvah boy on his excellent 'performance'. While there can be no disagreement that he was quite outstanding and had obviously put much effort into his studies, the question that emerged was "Who is being worshipped?"

If the Bar Mitzvah service highlighted the reference for the Law, it also gave an insight into, or at least a glimpse of the fellowship of the Jewish community, particularly at the Kiddush and the meal afterwards. Indeed, it was here and not in the more formal events that the tradition seemed to come alive with the greetings of friends and the grace after meals, not to mention the dancing Rabbi. While the criticism of perfor-

mance rather than worship might be levelled at this too, it had the merit of being joyful, having some measure of spontaneity and being apparently familiar to most of the assembled company—and so meaningful to them in a way that perhaps the reading of the Law was not. If worship in the Jewish community is about the whole experience of life, as it is in the Christian faith, then this was worship, tangible and meaningful.

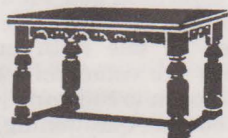
The sharing of a meal has so much symbolic meaning in both traditions and it is easy to see why. In spite of our unfamiliarity with what had gone before, our confusions and reservations, it was here we felt truly privileged to be accepted by the community and it was here we could offer our good wishes to the newest full member of the Jewish community and his family.

There is much to be learned from one another. It has been observed that Christians are at an advantage in being able to find much that is meaningful in the Jewish festivals and ceremonies and little, if anything, that is offensive.

If we can find it easy to share in the celebration of Channukah, how much more can we rejoice at a Bar Mitzvah? If at a personal level we can acknowledge that, in spite of all manner of homiletics, midrash, sermons and texts expounding the differences between Jewish and Christian theology, what we share in common, the universal fatherhood of one God, inevitably places us all under the same limitless love and grace.

*Marjory Grant is a clinical biochemist with an ongoing interest in science and theology. She is a member of the Mayfield Parish Church.*

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# Not for Pharisees, or is it?

*Alexander Broadie dispelled misconceptions about the Pharisees in his talk at a CCJ meeting and argued that Pharasaism is an integral part of modern Judaism. Report by IAN LEIFER*

The second meeting of this year's session of the Edinburgh Council of Christians and Jews was one of the most successful in recent times. About forty people came along to hear Alexander Broadie's talk on *Pharisaism*. Dr. Broadie, who is a Reader in Philosophy at the University of Glasgow, was educated at Edinburgh University and Balliol College, Oxford. He has written books on philosophy and logic in pre-Reformation Scotland and has a particular interest in Jewish philosophy and theology. For some years he participated in meetings held under the joint auspices of the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council and the Church of Scotland Board of World Mission and Unity.

The meeting did perhaps benefit from some unintentional publicity from no less a figure than the Archbishop of Canterbury. Some weeks before the meeting, which was planned well before the Archbishop's pronouncements, Dr. Runcie had suggested that Britain was in danger of becoming a society of Pharisees, as today's society was too "self-righteous" and "judgemental". Indeed, as the Chairman remarked, if the word *Pharisaism* is looked up in any dictionary or thesaurus, words like "hypocrisy", "insincerity", "sanctimoniousness", "self-righteousness" and many more can be found—all of them totally uncomplimentary and all of them totally unfair.

At the beginning of his talk Dr. Broadie took up this point and referred to a recent advertising campaign for the Observer newspaper using the slogan 'Not for Pharisees', where the word *Pharisees* like many other words in the English language today had been "hijacked" and used in a totally different sense.

## Origins

The Pharisees' "bad press" had started in the New Testament and Dr. Broadie continued by reading two parables from that work which portrayed the Pharisees as "cold-blooded legalists" as compared to Jesus who was pictured as being caring and compassionate.

This New Testament picture - even if accepted at face value - could only represent the Pharisees over the three-year period of Jesus' ministry; whereas Phariseism was in existence at least 200 years before the time of Jesus and has essentially lasted to the present day in the form of "modern normative Judaism".

The Pharisees could be traced back to the year 196 BCE—the time when the land of Israel was ruled by the Macabean dynasty. Of the two main religious sects in the land of Israel at that time, the *Sadducees* (from the Hebrew *Zadokim*—descendants of Zadok the priest) were primarily associated with the ritual of the Temple in Jerusalem, whereas the Pharisees (from the Hebrew *Perushim*—explainers or interpreters) devoted themselves to the religious well-being of the ordinary people. This did not involve the Temple in Jerusalem, but the synagogues wherever they might be: these were the places where the Pharisees worshipped, preached and taught. What above all they taught was God's law as revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai and as amplified and interpreted by generations of sages. But what was God's law?

There was no disagreement between the two sects that the law revealed on Sinai and formulated in the commandments of the first five books of the Bible was God's law, but that law was then subjected to intense investigation by generations who wished to know what its implications were. We are commanded not to kill, but what about self-defence? We are commanded "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy - on it you shall do

no work", but what is to count as work? Surely a healer must be allowed to heal even on the Sabbath day, so perhaps the work of a doctor is not work in the relevant sense, or though work, is superseded by a higher law—the saving of life.

The Pharisees therefore fulfilled the need for people to interpret the written law, and so not necessarily be bound by its literal meaning. Dr. Broadie gave as an example of *Pharisaic* interpretation—the quotation from the book of Exodus, chapter 21, verse 24—"an eye for an eye a tooth for a tooth". This was "interpreted" as meaning monetary compensation in each case and firmly established the principle of recompense.

The Pharisees, said Dr. Broadie, by their process of interpretation, were able to provide for the Jews in their time nothing less than a "Guide for the Perplexed", this of course being the title of a work by a much later inheritor of the Pharisaic tradition: Moses Maimonides. This tradition had been passed on by famous figures such as Rabbi Hillel and by the Rabbis responsible for the development of the Mishnah and the Talmud and eventually by Maimonides and on to the present day.

## Love your neighbour

Dr. Broadie then stated that in all the historical evidence that we have about the Pharisees there is none that in any way matches their behaviour

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as described in the New Testament. Indeed the Pharisees followed the saying from the book of Leviticus, chapter 19, verse 18, namely "and you shall love your neighbour as yourself." Furthermore, their behaviour is exemplified in the golden rule of the archetypal Pharisee Rabbi Hillel, namely "do not do unto others that which you would not wish others to do unto you." This presents firm evidence against the negative stereotyping that has resulted from their portrayal in the New Testament.

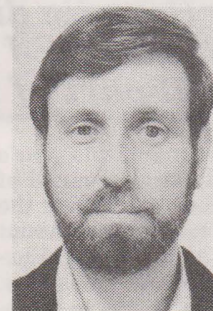
Dr. Broadie then went on to say that Jews would know far better how to read and interpret the New Testament than Christians. This was because he believed that the Gospels were essentially Jewish books, and that Jesus' apparent criticism of the Pharisees was no more than an internal argument within Judaism. Similar perhaps to the way in which the Prophets of the Old Testament criticised the behaviour of some of the Jews who lived in their time. In fact

without the influence of Paul, whom Dr. Broadie regarded as the first Christian, Jesus could possibly have become yet another Jewish Prophet. The error was compounded by the next generation of Christians who were able to turn Jesus' attack on other Jews into an attack on Judaism in general and so the misinterpretation was perpetuated.

Dr. Broadie concluded his talk by reminding the audience that Pharisaism exists today in the form of modern normative Judaism and that to be anti-Pharisee today is simply to be anti-Jewish.

After the talk there followed a lengthy and lively discussion on such questions as the origin of the name Pharisees, the role of Paul, and many more. In fact so many more that the Chairman (this reporter) had to intervene to bring the meeting to a close, well after the normal time-span. At the end the Chairman gave the speaker a very well deserved vote of

thanks which was echoed by a much appreciative audience.



**Ian Leifer** was born in Hackney, London, in 1938. He was educated at Hackney Downs School and Imperial College, London University, where he obtained both his first degree in Physics and His Ph.D in Applied Optics. Presently

he is a lecturer in Applied Physics at Napier Polytechnic where his research interests are primarily in the field of Industrial Holography. He is a Warden of the Edinburgh Synagogue, a former President of the Literary Society, Treasurer of the Edinburgh Friends of Israel, and on the Committee of the Edinburgh Council of Christians and Jews. He is married and has two children. He and his family spent two years in Israel from 1972 to 1974 soon after which they came to Edinburgh.

## Diaspora

### *Hungarian Jewry examined at International Conference* **People of Survival**

A two-day international conference about Hungarian Jewry after the Holocaust was held in Budapest in October. The Past and Future Circle of the Hungarian Jewish Cultural Union, founded about ten months ago, was the organiser chiefly represented by the writer Miklos Hernadi and the psychologist Ferenc Eros. Historical, sociological and psychological viewpoints were presented by the speakers.

The Haifa historian Asher Cohen explained the special meaning of rescue in his lecture on *Rescuing the Jews in Hungary in 1944*. He argued that towards the end of the Second World War it was Hungary which, from among the German-occupied and German-allied countries, gave a home to the largest crowd of Jewish refugees. However, four months after the German occupation, half a million Jews were deported and murdered. The question is why could Hungarian Jews not be saved in this late period when the German final solution policy was widely known? He analysed the deeds of the Hungarian government, the people, the ruling circles of the clergy, the diplomacy of the neutral states, the official Jewish leaders and the Zionist organisations. Newly uncovered facts about Zionist resistance and rescue organisations are

altering the understanding of this period.

Among the lectures on the situation of Hungarian Jewry after 1945, Janos Beri (Basel) pointed out that the Stalinist totalitarian state forced surviving Jews into an ethnic and cultural self-surrender and demographic collapse. According to his analysis the past 40 years have been much more harmful for Jews than for non-Jews as ethnic murder and suicide have taken place among the former. Laszlo Varga shared this view and stated that although Hungarian bolshevism did not aim to complete the final solution, it still might have done it by liquidating the bourgeoisie.

Istvan Vari (Paris) in his lecture on *Fear and identity in 1956* analysed how fear of pogroms helped Jews to find an identity. Sociological problems of Jewish religious conversions, postwar mixed marriages, and other lectures on coexistence were also given.

Well known psychiatrists and doctors spoke about the effect of the Holocaust on the psyche of the survivors' children. Lorant Kabdebo spoke about martyrdom and its problems, while Hanna Jaosz (Tel Aviv) compared the works of Hungarian poets living in Hungary and in Israel.

One of the main topics of the conference was the urgent need for scientific research. Almost nothing is known about the assimilation and the newly-arising return to their culture of present-day Hungarian Jewry. There is no statistics, so the number of Jews is not known. A definition is needed as to who is a Jew in Hungary today: he who considers himself a Jew or he who is considered a Jew by other people? Finally, the necessity to examine the extent of post-war anti-semitism emerged, as well as how identification of Jews with communists has developed anti-Jewish feeling in public opinion.

The proceedings of the conference will be published by the Hungarian Jewish Cultural Union.

*This report is an abridged translation by Dr. Julie Demeter of an article appeared in the Hungarian newspaper Magyar Nemzet*

### **A little known Jewish cemetery** by G.F. Gilbert

We spent part of a recent holiday at St. Remy de Provence, near Avignon, a town of some 8,000 inhabitants.

Looking at a plan of the town, I was amazed to see a Jewish cemetery marked on it. We went to visit it, but it



was surrounded by a high wall and the gate was locked. We enquired about visiting it at the Town Information Centre and they referred us to the Town Hall, which is responsible for the cemetery, under the authority of the Rabbi of Marseilles.

From the Mayor's Office we received VIP cooperation. We were escorted to the cemetery by a gendarme, who followed our car on a motor bicycle. He unlocked the gate, waited for sufficient time to enable us to look thoroughly round, and relocked the gate when we had finished.

The cemetery contained only twenty tombs, all of which had epitaphs in French, with only one bearing a Hebrew inscription. The latest date of death was 1920 and since that time there have been no Jews living in St. Remy.

Not a great deal is known about the Jews of St. Remy, less than is known about the Jews in several other Provençal towns. There never were very many and they never had a synagogue, though permission to build one was granted in 1791.

They had very varying fortunes through the centuries. When Provence was independent they were treated liberally and they prospered. After Provence became part of France in 1481, they entered into a much more difficult period and were confined to a ghetto, whilst at one point they had to convert to Catholicism or leave the area and surrender all their goods. This led to a proportion of them converting.

In the 18th century more liberal ideas prevailed and an edict of toleration was promulgated by the Proven-

çal Parliament in 1788 at which time there were ten Jewish families in St. Remy. In 1824 a government publication praised the political conduct of Jews in the area, who now took a full part in the life of the town though there were practically no mixed marriages. In 1830 a Jew was Deputy Mayor and in 1848 another was Secretary to the Council. In 1847 the Town Council contributed to the cost of the cemetery walls.

In spite of the liberal treatment, there was a steady decline in the Jewish population through the nineteenth century and practically all of the thirty newly married couples, thirteen of which were mixed, moved away from the town. After 1900 there were no more births.

It is interesting to note that a former President of Israel, Ben Zvi, visited St. Remy in 1955.

## Research

# Terminating treatment for the fatally ill

*Does Jewish Law contemplate such a possibility?*  
DANIEL SINCLAIR *explains that a model does exist.*

It is commonly assumed that the only exception to the principle of the supreme value of human life recognised by Jewish law is the removal of an impediment to the death of a moribund individual (*goses*).

This exception is interpreted rather narrowly by many contemporary halachists. They are not prepared to extend it to the removal of any device or cessation of treatment necessary for maintaining basic physiological functions such as respiration and nutrition. Thus, artificial respirators and intravenous drips may not be removed until death is established.

This view is undoubtedly consistent with the underlying theme of the Halacha relating to the treatment of the *goses*, which is that he is "considered to be a living person in all respects" (Semahot 1:1).

### Sanctity of Life

In the Talmud and Codes, the rules governing the treatment of the dying are clearly aimed at the traditional deathbed situation in which the dying person is surrounded by relatives and friends who may be tempted to put into practice various folk customs, such as removing pillows and placing

the keys of the synagogue beneath the dying person's head to enable his soul to emerge peacefully (*Shulhan Aruch, Yoreth De'a* 339:1).

In order to prevent such abuses, the *goses* is endowed with the status of a fully living person, and his killer is liable to the death penalty. Only external impediments to his death may be removed, the classic example being "the sound of a woodchopper in the vicinity" (*Sefer, Hasidim* No. 723; *Shulhan Aruch*, id.).

The question that arises from tragic cases such as that of Yael Sheffer, a young girl in a persistent vegetative state, suffering from a fatal disease, is the extent to which this model is relevant to a fatally ill individual undergoing treatment by a skilled medical team in a modern hospital.

Although it is possible to modify the *goses* category to some extent, the fundamental premise upon which it is based will always militate against the termination of life-supporting treatment, even in cases in which the patient's condition is fatal, and continued treatment serves only to prolong the suffering of both the patient and his or her family.

In the light of both the fatal nature

of the condition in this type of case and the value of preventing suffering which is widely recognised in Jewish sources, especially in the context of the dying process (*Ketubot* 104a; *Yevamot* 79a; *Yalkut Shimoni, Ekev* No. 471; *Avoda Zara* 18a), it would appear that the *goses* category is not really relevant to the case of Yael Sheffer.

### The terefa model

There is, however, another halachic model that may be more appropriate, and this is the category of human *terefa*, i.e. a person suffering from a "fatal organic disease which his physicians say is incurable by human agency" (Maimonides, Laws of Homicide 2:8).

R. Hayyim, Ozer Grodzinski (1863-1940) ruled in a *responsum* that any person suffering from an internal disease from which there is no chance of recovery may be classified as a *terefa*. The exemption of the killer of a *terefa* from the death penalty has been the basis of the views of various halachic authorities, such as R. Menahem Mein and R. Joseph Babad, that a *terefa* may be sacrificed for the sake of saving viable life, although only indirect means may be employed in bring-



ing about the death of the fatally ill person.

The underlying principle of the Halacha relating to the human *terefa* is that a fatally ill person is not treated as "a living being in all respects" and his life may be sacrificed for the sake of preserving another person's life. Hence, there is room for a measure of flexible (indirect) termination of the treatment of a *terefa* who is enduring enormous suffering, especially in the light of the fact that prevention of suffering in the dying process is a recognised value in Jewish tradition.

Why has the *terefa* category not been applied by halachists to the fatally-ill patient dying in hospital? The answer lies in Maimonides' formulation of the law and in the resultant moral policy.

According to Maimonides, the killer of a *terefa* is exempt only from regular criminal sanctions; he is still liable to divine and extra-legal penalties. Maimonides' strong moral condemnation of all forms of bloodshed is a pervasive theme in his juristic writings and, in the present context, has effectively stripped the legal exemption of the killer of a *terefa* of any practical significance in Jewish law.

It is important to note, however, that Maimonides' invocation of a divine and extra-legal penalties is a matter of moral policy rather than strict law. Indeed, it is only on the basis of a sophisticated understanding of various Talmudic and Midrashic passages that any support for his formulation can be found in halachic literature.

Nevertheless, modern authorities generally follow in Maimonides' footsteps and dismiss the *terefa* category from the halachic discussion of termi-

nating the life of a fatally-ill patient, presumably because of similar policy considerations. In their view, implementation of the exemption of the killer of a *terefa* from the death penalty would constitute a dangerous breach in the moral fabric of Jewish law and ought, therefore, to be relegated to the realm of pure theory.

## A particular case

The question which now arises, however, is the wisdom of maintaining this policy in a case such as that of Yael Sheffer.

Surely the moral arguments for terminating treatment in such circumstances are equal to, if not more convincing than, those in favour of defending the sanctity of human life. Only a very blunt intelligence could refuse to distinguish between this type of case and mass euthanasia programmes. Also, there is the question of allocating scarce medical resources, the morality of which is by no means a clear-cut issue in this sort of situation.

If it can be shown that there is in fact no genuine threat to public morality as a result of ignoring the policy constraint on the *terefa* category referred to above, then there would appear to be no valid reason for declining to apply it in this type of case.

The combination of fatal illness, indirect means for the termination of treatment, and the suffering of both patient and family is indeed an almost irresistible one in terms of justifying the removal of life support systems from the halachic perspective of the *terefa* model.

Clearly, the Halacha possesses the mechanisms for meeting the moral challenge of the contemporary revolution in the treatment of the dying and the fatally ill. The sanctity-of-life

principle in Jewish law does not necessarily require us to adhere blindly to the preservation of human life at the cost of great suffering.

It is up to halachists to elucidate and develop these mechanisms, so that the full range of halachic solutions is available for use in this tragic type of case.

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