

The Edinburgh Star

Journal of the Edinburgh Jewish Community

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ANNIVERSARY EDITION

The Edinburgh Star

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CONTENTS

LETTERS	2
COMMUNITY	
Reports	2
Where are the "children?"	7
FRIENDS OF ISRAEL	
EFI go "green"	9
PASSOVER	
Chief Rabbi's salute	11
Rabbi Shapira	11
UNIVERSITY	
J-Soc report	12
Tu B'Shvat	13
OPINION	
Are you one of us?	14
DIASPORA	
Synagogues	15
Raskolnikov's footsteps	17
Jews of Argentina	19
ESSAYS	
Nobel Prize winners	
unwelcome	22
Pinnacle of Creation	24
Reflections on Yevanim	26
Women's rights	27
The innocent blackguard ...	28
BOOK REVIEWS	30
LITERATURE	
Poetry of Abraham Sutzkever	32
HOLOCAUST	
Mengele's Victim	34
PEOPLE	
Aliyah at 75 plus	36
Drei und Dreissig	37
Abe Rabstaff	39

Front cover: "Exodus" by Robin Spark.
We deeply thank the artist for
designing the cover of this anniversary
edition.

Twinkling Stars

Throughout its two-hundred-year-history, the Edinburgh Jewish Community was always small but rather special. As far back as 1911, a correspondent of the *Jewish Chronicle* reported that the Edinburgh community was a "terror for its size" but "never slow to contribute." Moreover, he noted at that time that our Literary Society was the oldest of the Kingdom with a list of speakers that seemed "taken from Who's Who."

It is remarkable that so much of the old days is still true in 1990. Of course there is only one Shul today—there were four then—and the acrimonious and divisive confrontations of eighty years ago no longer exist. What remains constant about the character of our community is that, in spite of its small size, it remains active and manages to keep an acceptable standard of a Jewish way of life.

For too long it seemed sufficient to have an expensive Shul, run a Cheder and keep the social activities going. However something was missing: this is how *The Edinburgh Star* was born and stayed alive and well for the last 12 months.

During its short life, *The Edinburgh Star* has not only increased Jewish awareness in the local community, but it has also acted as a spiritual link among the Edinburgh Jewish expatriots scattered around the world. This can be called success without indulging in self-congratulation—especially if we think of Judge Finestein's words at a recent meeting of the Literary Society when he expressed the need to protect the community from "slithering away from Jewishness."

In the Rosh Hashanah edition, Rabbi Hugo Gryn expressed the wish that his journal "will go on serving both social and intellectual purposes for a long time to come." A pause for reflection is in order here. We can rest assured that the intellectual purposes have been achieved—concentrating on flavour rather than depth—as manifested by our readers, and authors of international standing. The articles we publish have always been specially commissioned from the potential contributors: only in three of four instances (out of 140) material published elsewhere was accepted. After only a year, our community can take pride in its journal.

Yet the social objective is still not quite what it should be, paradoxically one might add. Our advertisements requesting local reporters failed to attract volunteers and as a result many events were unreported. Today, as in our editorial of a year ago, we urge our readers to come forward with snippets, stories and all that spicy chit-chat that adds flavour to communal life through the written word. The room for improvement is vast in every respect, but we need your help.

There is undoubtedly cause for celebration and reflection, but also for gratitude. Any new venture needs ideas, enthusiasm and hard work—although this in itself will not pay the bills! It is therefore with great pleasure that the Editorial Board and the Editor of *The Edinburgh Star* wish to thank advertisers, donations and everybody who even in the most oblique way helped us make this publication a reality.

We hope that support at every level will continue to keep the Star twinkling. Chag Sameach!

Bending with the wind

7/2 South Oswald Road
Edinburgh EH9 2HQ

I wish to comment on your December Editorial "Does the end justify the means?"

With regard to your criticism that Chief Rabbi Rosen failed to stand up to the Ceausescu regime, (I want to point out that) Pastor Tökés was able to choose as he had the support of almost three million Transylvanians. Would those same non-Jews have rallied to Rabbi Rosen had he taken the same stand? Frankly I doubt it. There are in all 25,000 Jews in Romania—the majority of them anxious about their welfare.

Jean-Jacque Rousseau in his treatise *Humanitarianism* written just prior to

the French Revolution of 1789, stated 'man is born free but everywhere he is in chains'. Jews have been in chains for centuries in Eastern Europe as elsewhere. They have been hostages of fortune—depending upon the benevolence of the host countries.

Jews, like plants, have had to bend with the wind in order to survive.

At least Romanian Jews were spared the pogrom of Kielce (1946) and the virulent anti-semitism under the guise of anti-Zionism—of Gierek and General Moczar in post-war Poland.

Armchair critics should note the old Jewish saying "Do not judge your fellow man until you have stood in his shoes." (Dr.) P. Lurie, J.P.

Personal views

109(3F2) Dalkeith Road
Edinburgh EH16 5AJ

I have read with cautious interest the criticisms of Rabbi Michael Rosin, the students' chaplain, made by Adam Blitz. Whilst Mr. Blitz is certainly entitled to his own opinion, I am concerned that his views may be taken as representing the students.

Rabbi Rosin has offered constant support to my committee. He has never been of any hindrance, and although his views on PJS differ from my own, he has no problems in accepting the Society's decision to affiliate to PJS. On other matters, Rabbi Rosin is realistic and approachable, and many students rely on him for advice.

Natan Tiefenbrun
(Edinburgh J. Soc. Chairperson)

Community

Brave Norma on the mend

Norma Brodie is experiencing a remarkable improvement after a near-fatal accident last December. Doctors reckon that by the summer a full recovery can be expected—much of which has to do with her admired determination and resilience.

The community was shocked when it became known that Norma was hit by a lorry as she was crossing the road towards the Cameron Toll Shopping Centre. She was on her way to visit a friend and an innocent decision nearly cost her life: contrary to habit, she decided to get off the bus a stop before the usual one. "All I remember is the green man as I was crossing" and she was then hit 16 feet along the road according to witness accounts.

Norma Brodie is pressing charges and will demand compensation for damages, "it's all in the hands of my lawyer." Curiously enough, the driver is claiming for damages too—against his lorry!

Norma drew a marvellous support from her husband Ian and her two sons Simon (20) and Daniel (18). "The



Norma and Ian Brodie.

community was also very supportive, especially Rabbi Shapira who came to see me nearly every night while I was in hospital."

No doubt the encouragement will continue and we all wish Norma a speedy recovery.

pages of *The Edinburgh Star* as Literary Society correspondent. Some years ago she edited *Link Up*, the bulletin for the Edinburgh Council Social Service.

Special Chanukah

It was, no doubt, a special Chanukah for Rabbi Shapira and wife Rachel. On the second day of the national festival, they went back to Israel for the wedding of their daughter Yael—the first one of their children to get married.

The happy event, with some 300 guests, took place in Tel Aviv on the 3rd of January. Rabbi Yashar, who officiated the religious ceremony, is Rabbi Shapira's nephew: he is the Chief Rabbi of Acre, in the Northern part of Israel. Edinburgh was also present through Manny and Nicole Wittenberg who happened to be there for a holiday with their children. Mr. Wittenberg recited one of the blessings under the *chupah* and both attended the big party that followed.

Yael (25) met Ilan Tsur-Shadai (26) while both were doing their military service. Yael, who has a religious education, graduated in Criminology from Bar-Ilan University. Her husband was born in Israel but he is the son of Iranian parents; he graduated as a chartered accountant from Ben Gurion University. The couple will live in Holon, near Tel Aviv.

The first Shabat after their return from Israel, Rabbi and Mrs. Shapira organised a special kiddush for the community to toast to the happiness of Yael and Ilan. The number of congregants present heightened the special character of the occasion.

Leave of absence

The editor of *The Edinburgh Star*, Dr. Eitan Abraham, will take leave of absence from the 1st of April. This is to enable him to undertake professional commitments.

Dr. Abraham, who is a Physics lecturer at Heriot-Watt University, has been invited to the Soviet Union by Moscow State University. He will

start a research collaborative programme as well as lecture in Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev. The visit will last between one and two months. A further invitation to Holland forced Dr. Abraham to delegate temporarily his position as editor which he has held since the first issue of the journal.

Acting editor for the June and September editions will be Dr. Ruth M. Adler, a former President of the Jewish Literary Society. Dr. Adler has been a regular contributor to the

Mark Sischy appointed Sheriff

Mr Mark Sischy, a prominent lawyer and distinguished member of the local Jewish community, has been officially appointed Sheriff at Glasgow after a Temporary Commission since 1988.

Born in Johannesburg in 1945 into a liberal-minded family, he emigrated to Edinburgh in 1961 "due to the failure of my mother to co-exist with the South African Government." Once in Edinburgh, he completed his education at George Watsons and subsequently at Edinburgh University where he graduated in 1969 as M.A., LL.B.

In August 1969 he married Judith Lewis and went to Toronto for a two-year period. This was to enable his newly-wed wife to do post-graduate degrees in French as she had won an Open Fellowship to the University of Toronto. During this time, Mr. Sischy worked in the Legal Department of Goodyear Tyre and Rubber.

On his return to Edinburgh, he commenced an apprenticeship with Allan McDougall & Co. In 1975 he became a partner and presently he is Senior Court Partner of the firm. Mr. Sischy's reputation ranks very high among colleagues and clients alike.

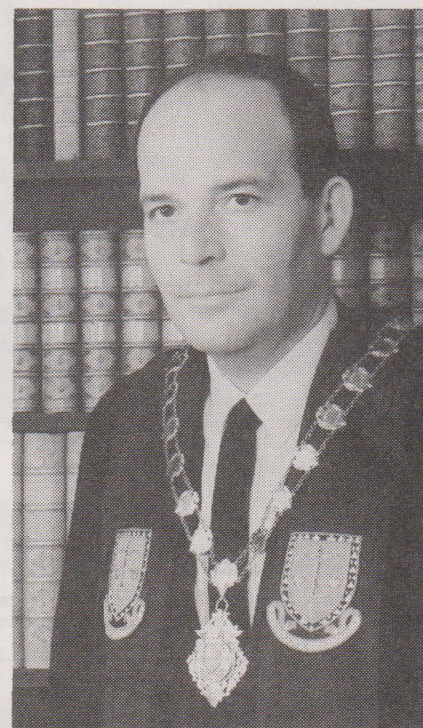
An ever-active professional, he has served on various Law Society

Committees including the Complaints Committee. Latterly he became a member of the Legal Aid Central Committee for Scotland. During the 1986-1988 period he was the President of the Society of Solicitors in the Supreme Courts of Scotland. He has also served as Executive Committee Member and Legal Adviser for the Lothian Family Conciliation Service.

Mr. Sischy's multiple commitments have not prevented him from being actively involved in the Jewish Community. He served on the Committee of the Jewish Community Centre and became its Chairman between 1985 and 1987. He is a member of the Editorial Board of *The Edinburgh Star* of which he is one of the founders, and he was instrumental in setting up its organisation.

At the relatively young age of forty-four, Mr. Sischy can expect a bright future ahead of him. Rabbis always tell their congregants that they must know where they come from in order to know where they are going: judging by Mr. Sischy's past achievements we can certainly guess where he is going.

In the meantime we all join in congratulating him, his wife Judith and daughters Deborah and Jennifer on the new appointment.



THANKS!

The Editorial Board is grateful to the advertisers for their support and to the following for their generous response to the appeal for funds in the September issue.

Mr. J. Rabinowitz
Mrs. A. Combe
Mr. & Mrs. K.C. Wayne
Miss D. Kaufmann
Miss A. Pass

Spark Exhibition

by Charles Raab

Nudes mingled with Jewish ceremonial objects in Samuel Robin Spark's showing of pastels, oils, and works in mixed media at the Richard Demarco Gallery in Edinburgh during February and March. With varying degrees of success, Spark moves along diverse styles and subjects in these figurative studies.

In some, his bold use of short, parallel marks moulds the forms as if to make an Ordnance Survey of the human body. Elsewhere, character emerges strongly in portraits of "The Winsome Girl", "James Goldie", and "Judy" (Gilbert); and humour in the dancing dog and cat of "The Succot Prayer". But in other works, the *havdalah* candle, the *etrog* and the *lulav* function more as stage props held by a figure in a *tallit*, than as symbols leading to a deeper meaning. Yet these were among the most attractive and colourful pictures in an exhibition of considerable interest.



"Judy" by Samuel Robin Spark and model Judy Gilbert.

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The Lord Provost of Edinburgh, Eleanor McLauchlan (centre), after a Lunch Club meal with John Cosgrove (left) and Rabbi Shapira (right).

Students lose debate but win the night

by Natan Tiefenbrun

Could the Jewish People survive without religion? was the subject of the joint debate between the Edinburgh Jewish Students and the Jewish Literary Society. The event attracted a healthy crowd of both students and community members, including Johnny Mendelssohn, UJS National Chairperson.

The motion was proposed by Andrew Getraer and Adam Blitz, and opposed by Micheline Brannan and Ian Leifer. After the four main speeches, the debate was opened to the floor, and for forty-five minutes views of all perspectives were heard. The argument ranged through religious, cultural and historical aspects of Jew-

ish life, as well as the value of the State of Israel to Diaspora Jewry.

In the final vote the motion was defeated 32 to 21 votes against, but the debate continued for a further half hour during coffee. The fact that almost 40% of attendees supported the motion, is indicative of the lucid performance on the part of the students. They certainly were on the most difficult side of the debate and took on such 'heavyweights' as Mrs. Brannan and Dr. Leifer: the students may have lost the debate but they won the night.

Due to the high attendance and many contrasting views, the dialogue throughout the evening remained stimulating and entertaining. This successful event must surely be repeated in the future.

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One man one vote. The verdict from the floor: the Jewish people could not survive without religion.

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Kirk Minister Robin Ross taken aback by Lit. audience

Songs, reflections and controversy

by Ruth Adler

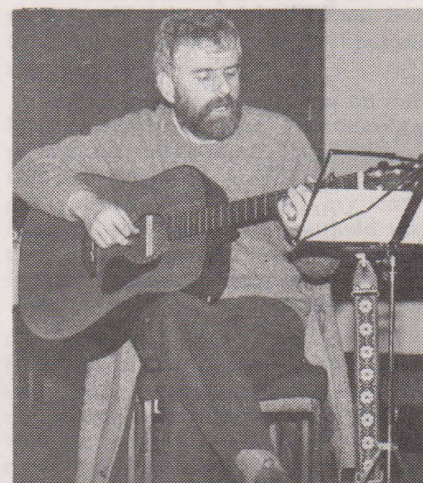
The meeting was billed as 'An Evening of Song' and an 'Entertainment'. This was a little unfortunate since those involved in arranging it were well aware that it was to consist of thoughts and reflections illustrated by songs. The theme of the evening was essentially serious—the pain generated on all sides by the current situation in Israel and the effect that experiencing this pain had on one man's perceptions of his own country, Scotland: hence the title 'Home Thoughts from Abroad'. The speaker (and singer) was Robin Ross, Minister of the Kirk, who spent several years working in Israel and seriously considered settling there.

It must be said from the outset that this was *not* one of the Lit's most successful meetings, although the Israeli and Scottish delicacies (olives, pistachios, oat cakes, smoked salmon, etc.) served throughout the evening, were sheer delight! The reasons for the limited success were two-fold: the first resting with the speaker the second with the audience.

Robin Ross spoke and sang poignantly about the prevailing sadness he had encountered amongst both Israelis and Palestinians. However, his

main reflections on Scotland appeared to relate to the Highland Clearances. The analogy between the Clearances and events in the State of Israel seemed to rest entirely on empathising with the dispossessed in the two countries. While we would do well to reflect on the plight of those deprived of their homes for whatever reason, by accident or design, legally or illegally, the analogy seemed to wear very thin beyond this observation and Robin Ross did not really develop his theme in a satisfactory way, but rather presented the audience with fleeting thoughts which needed to be worked out much more fully. However, any omissions on the part of the speaker were far outweighed by commissions on the part of some members of the audience.

It is sad to report that some members of the Lit completely misunderstood the speaker's stance as being pro-Palestinian and anti-Israel and set themselves up as 'defenders of the faith'. It might have been well if those individuals who plagued Robin Ross with statements of righteous indignation about the barbaric tactics employed by the Arabs, had done their homework. Robin Ross was



Minister Robin Ross performing during the Literary Society meeting.

recommended to the Lit by a Kibbutznik of thirty years' standing with two children in the Israeli army, a practising Jew no less, who thought that the Minister's freshness of approach and his attempt to stand back from the situation in Israel and recognise the heartache on both sides, would be just right for the Lit. Sadly, events on the day proved her very wrong.

QUIZ CHAMPIONS



Quiz champions and organisers. Front row: Morris Caplan, Andrea Cowan, Avril Berger, Hilary Rifkind, Joyce Cram (organiser), Myrna Caplan, Leila Goldberg. Back row: Philip Goldberg, Arnold Rifkind, Norman Cram (organiser), Malcolm Cowan, Norman Berger.

'Captain' Malcolm Cowan led the team which, with small variations, won the Quiz competition for the third year running. Mrs. Joyce Cram, who was one of the organisers, conducted the evening with her usual aplomb and declared the winners "champions".

The winning Table 11 only beat Table 3 by one point. The team of Table 3 counted on an imaginative input from Norma Brodie who was in excellent spirits and showed no signs of her recent near-fatal accident.

The evening had its usual moments of tension, laughter and "of course!" exclamations when the answers were read out. The presence of JYSG members and students added an extra dimension of liveliness to the event. The organisers Joyce Cram, Norman Cram and Anita Mendelsohn have to be congratulated once again for their efforts. Finally, the Ladies Committee are to be thanked for that indispensable gastronomic touch.

COMING EVENTS

APRIL

- 9 Mon Communal Seder . . . 7.45 pm
22 Sun Friendship Club 3 pm
Maccabi 1 pm
30 Mon Community Centre and
WIZO joint social. Play and
supper 7.30 pm
"The best of Sholem
Aleichem" with Michael
Schneider and Jeff Gurner.

MAY

- 8 Tue Friends of Israel 8 pm
Shelley Wachsmen,
Archaeologist.
Illustrated talk on "The Boat".
13 Sun Maccabi 1 pm
17 Thu Council of Christians and
Jews. 7.30 pm
Address by the Rt. Rev. Dr.
W.G.J. McDonald, Moderator
of the Church of Scotland.
Also Annual General Meeting.
23 Wed WIZO Meeting at 2 Ettrick
Road (all welcome)
Jane Moonman: Israel and
the British Press . . . 7.30 pm

JUNE

- 3 Sun WIZO Annual Summer
Lunch at 2 Ettrick
Road 12.30 pm
10 Sun Maccabi 1 pm
12 Tue Friends of Israel Annual
General Meeting 8 pm
20 Wed Community Centre . . 7.30 pm
An evening with Evelyn Rose
24 Sun Maccabi 1 pm

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.

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Lodge Solomon celebrates 70th anniversary

by Alec Rubenstein



Speech by the Lord Provost at the Lodge Solomon's 70th anniversary celebration. From left to right: Edith Rifkind, Malcolm Rifkind, Alec Rubenstein, Eleanor McLauchlan and Hugh McLauchlan.

The Divine Service of Lodge Solomon to celebrate the 70th Anniversary of the Lodge, was held in the Synagogue at 4 Salisbury Road, Edinburgh on Sunday 4 February 1990.

On entry into the Synagogue, both entrances in the south were used and precisely at 3 pm, the Director of Ceremonies Morris Kaplan and Assistant Director of Ceremonies Ian Shein, stepped out together at the first note from the choir to lead the High Constables of Edinburgh, led by their Moderator Ian Crosbie and followed by the City Mace and Sword Bearers, and then the Lord Provost Eleanor McLauchlan with the Convenor of the Lothian Region Mr. James Cook, the District Councillors and the Lothian Region Councillors.

On the opposite side the procession was led by Ian Shein followed by Rabbi Shapira, Cantor Levy and then the Scottish Secretary of State Malcolm Rifkind, Alec Rubenstein, as Right Worshipful Master and his two

wardens Sydney Caplan and Arthur Kleinberg.

The Mace and Sword of the City were placed in the passage in front of the Lord Provost and all were seated as planned on reserved seats. I am pleased to state that immediately following the procession everyone was in place and Psalm 100 was then sung by the whole congregation.

The ceremony went off extremely well and I am very happy indeed to have been connected with it in this our 70th year.

At the completion of the service the Grand Piper, Robert Tait, led the procession out of the Synagogue into the communal centre for refreshments.

The Lord Provost thanked us most sincerely and was most delighted with the service and tea and hoped that in the very near future that we would undertake a similar service and that she would be very happy indeed to return.

Where are the 'children' of the Community today?

FRANK ABRAMSON *reminisces about the early days and how, despite his moving away, has maintained close ties and associations with Edinburgh*

Just after the war my parents and I came to Edinburgh, the birth place of my mother. My parents still live there, about a hundred yards from where my mother spent much of her youth. Obviously this is the main reason for keeping an affinity with

Jack Goldberg, the son of David and Rachel Goldberg, got his Ph.D. from Heriot-Watt University. He married Ahuvah, an American who is the daughter of a rabbi, and they have four sons. Jack is presently the Director of Clinical Biochemistry at the

Fluss's children David a vet, is married living in North London. Golly, one could go on and on.

It seems that even when we leave Edinburgh somehow these exiles keep in touch with each other and retain ties with Edinburgh. A perfect case in point is but a few months ago when our shul (The New West End in St. Petersborough Place, West London) hosted an intershul supper quiz and my cousin Carolyn with her husband Mervyn were representatives on the Sutton shul table. Another cousin, Maxine Juliuss, is making a reputation in major film editing and maintains close ties with her sister in Edinburgh.

When I left Watsons I studied chemistry at the Heriot-Watt University and then went on to the Edinburgh University Medical School on a Medical Research Council scholarship where I completed in two years a Ph.D. in Pharmacology. As an aside I was saddened to read in the last issue of the "Star" an obituary to Imre Laszlo since I shared a laboratory with him in the Pharmacology Department in Edinburgh in the mid-60's while I was working on my Ph.D. I found him a stimulating influence on my work and he became a personal friend. On a happier note, it was at this time that I also met another person who was to have an influence



Frank Abramson with wife Jackie (left) and daughter Michelle.

the city but also my career has complemented that.

There were two schools where most of the Jewish kids of my era were educated. George Watsons - in those days a separate school for girls and boys - and James Gillespie, as a junior feeder school for boys, and a 5-18 school for girls. I should mention that George Heriots was fast coming on as another 'Jewish' school. From those days, some names immediately come to mind ... the Hoffenburg brothers, the elder a dentist in Israel and Ronnie, an orthopaedic surgeon in Ottawa, Canada. I see Ronnie about once a year, usually in London. Geoff Lindey and I meet in the City of London occasionally for lunch. The Flusses spread throughout the world. Some of the Rifkind family. The Bindman boys (Robert I believe is living on a Greek Island). The Smiths and their married children.

Resurrection Medical Center of Chicago and an Assistant Professor of Biochemistry and Pathology at Strich Medical School. Jack has had a successful career and discovered several important diagnostic laboratory tests. In 1988, celebrating Israel's 40th anniversary, Jack and Ahuvah were honoured by the State of Israel Bond Gala Tribute.

Harold Sterne, who after a very successful career as a hotelier in Southern England, has retired to Israel with his wife and family. Jacqueline Hallside, who married Jackie Bierman and lives in South Africa where she has become a leading bowls player, winning a gold medal for her country at the last Maccabiah Games. Frances, her sister, lives in London near their parents who retired there some years ago. In fact, Ethel Hallside sees Bertha Stoller and Mrs. Fluss in London and one of Mrs.

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on my life and be more than a friend. I met Jackie.

Jackie came from Birmingham, for the Edinburgh Festival in 1964 and we were introduced through her cousin Henry Levitt (now deceased). I was busy working on my research and thesis so we only managed to get to a few events. However, we corresponded after she went home and six months later she came back to Edinburgh, lived in digs and took a job there.

Just as I got my Ph.D., Ronnie Hofenburgh became the first Jewish boy to become President of the Students Union in Edinburgh. The following year an equally important honour befell him: he became best man when Jackie and I married in Birmingham.

As a research scientist and very idealistic I wanted to continue my drug research so I turned down a scholarship to Yale to work in this country for CIBA, the Swiss drug company in Horsham, where they had set up a new unit. Horsham was a small market town in Sussex about twenty miles from Brighton and devoid of Jews—or so we thought! However, one day when Jackie went to the bus station to collect her butcher's package she saw a not dissimilar looking bundle (you could always recognise them, wrapped in blooded newspaper and a greasy brown paper!) so she waited for the recipient. To this day we are still friendly with Dr. Cyril and Ann Furst who now live in Glasgow; he has now changed his career to that of a solicitor and she is very involved in Drug Abuse control in Scotland.

In 1966 Michelle was born and it was not long before we realised our small flat was no longer big enough for us as a family. I too had been offered a job with the Beecham Group

so we moved to Ham, on the River Thames, near Kingston, where we lived for seven years becoming active in the local community, which at that stage was fast growing under the dynamic leadership of Eddie Jackson. I remember in those days of Michael Bindman, the younger brother of one of my closest friends, Robert, coming to baby sit in

ters took me into W H Smith as a Marketing manager. The marketing of Books, Records, Stationery, Travel etc. is little different to pharmaceuticals provided you know and understand your customers needs. It is the techniques that are different. I progressed to Head of Marketing for W H Smith (Retail) and in 1982 was appointed Trading Director of their



Jack and Ahuvah Goldberg in Chicago.

exchange for a 'real' meal when he worked down there.

It was whilst at Beecham Group that my career changed dramatically. I developed and launched DIOCALM and NIGHTNURSE, two of Britain's leading proprietary medicines today, but got the urge to become more commercially orientated. This resulted in me going to the London Business School where within months of returning moved into Marketing, where my career has developed ever since.

After Beecham's I moved to Smith Kline & French so we had to move to Hertfordshire. By this time Michelle was well into 'cheder' so our nearest shul became Welwyn Garden City. This was a small shul started by pre-war immigrants, services taken by congregants (using Rent-a-Rov for Yomim Tovim) but no cheder. With some like-minded parents I set up classes—bussing in a teacher from North London each Sunday. When we left some six years later, there were twenty-one kids regularly attending classes and again today we still have friends there.

Then came my big mid-career change. An approach from headhun-

ter newly formed DIY division, *Do it All*, which meant that we had to move to Birmingham.

For Jackie this was a return to her native city, for her parents a happy time to have one of their daughters near to them, the other being in Toronto, and for Michelle the chance to settle into a good Jewish Community life at an important age. We all enjoyed it there and Jackie soon picked up with old friends and we were made most welcome. We bumped into old Edinburgh individuals, Doreen Segal (my old madricha at Habonim) married to an architect; Sylvia Gordon, married to an optician and Dr. Joe Rifkind of Wolverhampton.

Do it All became a success and it was in the mid-80's that High Street Banks recognised that they were really retailers with shops on the High Street but were not acting as such. I saw the opportunity and joined The Royal Bank of Scotland as they merged with Williams & Glyn's, Bank, still living in Birmingham, but commuting between there, London and Edinburgh. During this period I re-established contact with many of my old friends in Edinburgh, particularly Peter and Shirley Bennett, and

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Arnold and Hilary Rifkind, as well as having the occasional opportunity to see my parents, who were by then in their mid-seventies. Jackie accompanied me a few times to Edinburgh during this period so it was like old times again, so easy to pick up with old friends but I was introduced to new faces, the Cosgroves and Fidlers in particular (Shirley and Peter are great entertainers).

At one stage we thought the Bank would ask me to come back to Edinburgh and we would not have minded at all. By this time our daughter had gone to study in Manchester so it would not have been difficult. But fate moved my career on to Citicorp, one of the largest Banks in the world. I spent the next two years developing Private Banks in Europe, living in aeroplanes, airport lounges and hotels with frequent trips to the US. Exciting times but not for a "home loving yiddish boy." Anyway I met no Edinburgh people on these trips so I missed that aspect too!

Nine months ago as the TSB Bank was reformulating its team and strategy, I was asked to become Marketing and Premises Director—perhaps the most exciting challenge to my career, using everything I had learnt but practicing business and marketing disciplines.

Our daughter qualified from Manchester and is now living in Central London with us. Her generation are continuing the old traditions. She has



"Cheers!" The author's wedding in March 1965 in Birmingham. From left to right on this 25-year-old memorabilia: Peter Bennett, Frank Abramson, Mervyn Smith and Ronnie Hoffenberg.

met the sons and daughters of my contemporaries whilst in Manchester and London, for example Richard Glass (Alex Glass's son) so the small world reflects itself.

But perhaps the biggest coincidence, to close the circle, was as I came off the plane when I recently visited Edinburgh. I was picked up by a Jewish taxi driver (Mr. Casper) and as I popped into Haddows in Warren-

der park to get some begals, egg loaf, etc. for my folks to whom I was paying a fleeting visit on my way to my meeting. I bumped into Terry Kronman whom I last saw 27 years ago... he was over for the day from Glasgow to see his father.

Somehow no matter when or where or what generation, we Edinburgh Jews keep tripping over each other. Long may it continue!

Edinburgh Friends of Israel

Friends of Israel go 'green'

IAN LEIFER reports on three recent meetings that concentrated on the environment.

The Edinburgh Friends of Israel's first three meetings of the 1989/90 session were linked by a common "green" theme.

The first meeting was addressed by Professor Louis Berkofsky, Head of the Jacob Blaustein Institute for Desert Research which is part of the Sede Boker Campus of the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. His subject was *Desert Research in Israel*.

The Jacob Blaustein Institute for Desert Research is a national centre in which are concentrated numerous efforts for the research and development of arid zones and, in particular, the conversion of the Negev desert into a productive environment. The organisation and approach of the Blaustein Institute is interdisciplinary,

maintaining a balance between theoretical and applied studies. Members of the sixteen units work together as teams, exploring a wide range of problems that relate to the settlement of deserts. These scientists are all acutely aware of the impact of man's encroachment on the vast and unpopulated areas and seek new insights into the utilisation of local resources while protecting the desert's delicate ecology.

Some of the projects that Professor Berkofsky talked about and illustrated with slides include: research into the utilisation of waste water; developing plants that can survive in the deserts on little or no water and which would support livestock; work on increasing rainfall in the Negev by

means of a carefully controlled programme of cloud seeding and the study of ancient desert agriculture. The work of the "Runoff Farms Unit" has recreated the system developed by the Israelites and continued by the Nabateans at three sites in the Negev including the ancient city of Avdat. The water source of these ancient farmers was the runoff of rain from the hills which was trapped and funnelled to the fields below through an ingenious system of hillside channels.

Applied hydrobiology, desert architecture and desert ecology, were also included in this fascinating account of the progress Israel is making, in an area which could have a major impact on the development of

Edinburgh Friends of Israel



Hai-Bar Yotvata biblical wild life reserve. Top frames: addaxes and leopard. Middle frames: striped hyena and desert gazelles. Bottom frames: ostriches, caracal and white oryxes.

so many Third World countries.

The second meeting was addressed by Mr. Robert Ollason, who is the Head of Education at Edinburgh Zoo. He had, prior to the meeting, attended the International Zoological Conference in Israel, and his subject was *The Zoos of Israel*.

He described, with the aid of some outstanding slides, his visits to the Tel Aviv Safari Park, the Haifa Zoo, the Jerusalem Biblical Zoo, and the Hai-bar Yotvata Biblical Wildlife Reserve, as well as a tour of the Negev desert which included the Mizpeh Ramon Valley Timnah (the site of King Solomon's copper mines), Ein Gedi, Eilat and Avdat (the ancient Nabatean city).

The Hai-bar Yotvata Biblical Wildlife Reserve is about 23 miles north of Eilat, and in its southern part contains a breeding centre for endangered desert animals, and a variety of desert predators, some of which are extremely rare, but are indigenous to the region.

Over the years breeding at Hai-bar has resulted in increased populations of ostriches, onagers, Somali wild asses, Sahara oryxes, addaxes, gazelles, ibexes, and the white oryx. Of the four oryx species only the white oryx lives outside the African continent. Seen in profile the oryx seems to possess only a single horn, perhaps leading to the legend of the mythical unicorn.

Other animals at Hai-bar include wolves, foxes, leopards, caracals, wild cats and hyenas, as well as reptiles, rodents and desert birds of prey.

Mr. Ollason's talk included slides of many of the above creatures, and yet many more of others not mentioned here, and was appreciated and enjoyed greatly by everybody present.

The third talk of this "green" series was perhaps the most remarkable. It was given by Yossi Leshem, Israel's leading ornithologist, and was about the *millions* of migrating birds that pass through Israel on their way to or from warmer climates. They

include: pelicans, storks, eagles, vultures and other birds of prey. However as a result of their large numbers, they can cause serious and sometimes fatal accidents to Israeli jet planes.

It is a fact that more Israeli jets have been lost through their collisions with wild birds than through encounters with enemy forces. The number of air collisions with birds was monitored from 1972-82, and a year later Mr. Leshem presented the Israeli Air Force with a novel way of tackling the problem. He took to the skies in a motorised glider and for 263 days he patiently followed flocks of migrating birds from the Lebanese border down to Egypt.

He gradually became familiar with their migrating habits and carefully mapped their various flight routes. He noted the height and velocity of their flight and the date the birds arrived and left Israel. Equipped with this information Mr. Leshem was able to draw accurate maps for the air force, illustrating the birds main flight routes. As a result of Mr.

Leshem's work, there has been a substantial drop in air collisions and there have been no fatal accidents since the project began.

As well as seeing some excellent slides of Israeli bird life, the audience were privileged to see a video version of Mr. Leshem's new film *Flying with*

the Birds, which included many remarkable sequences taken from Yossi's motorised glider. The audience watched fascinated as a flock of pelicans glided effortlessly in long lines, kept afloat by warm air currents, known as thermals, then lost height turned and soared towards a

new thermal. The film will soon be shown on ITV's *Survival* series and should not be missed.

The last meeting was organised jointly by the Edinburgh Friends of Israel and the British branch of the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel.

Passover

A salute from the Chief Rabbi to the Edinburgh Community

Dedication and distinguished leadership

It is with special pleasure that I fulfill the request for an extended Message to *The Edinburgh Star*.

I am impressed by the resourcefulness of a community somewhat remote from the major centres of Jewish life, suffering from declining numbers, and yet demonstrating such imagination and dedication as manifested in this splendid magazine.

When our people were first chosen for our historic mission as religious pioneers and moral path-finders over the ages, the Torah tells us expressly that the choice was made because we were "the smallest of all peoples". Time and again in our annals numerically insignificant communities rose to fame and immortality because they produced outstanding leaders and thinkers. One thinks of places like Modiin as the birth-place of the Macabees, or Yavneh as the refuge of Torah learning after the Temple's destruction, or Mir and Lubavitch in pre-War times, or Gateshead so close to your own community at the present time.

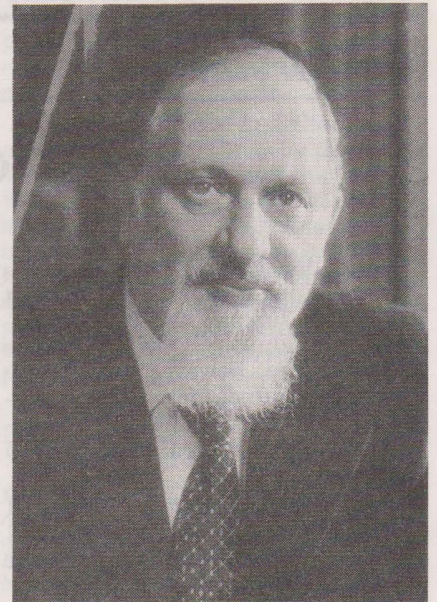
Under the distinguished leadership of your esteemed Rabbi, Shalom Shapira, helped by laymen of great

determination, you continue to maintain a degree of vibrancy which could inspire many a larger community. The whole of British Jewry rejoices at this achievement and is strengthened by it.

In these exciting times, full of hope as well as anxiety, we must all re-dedicate ourselves to the major tasks challenging our people: the security of Israel and its pursuit of peace, the reconstruction of Jewish life in the Soviet Union, the defeat of the scourges of antisemitism, and above all the assurance that our own children will become worthy and proud bearers of our rich heritage, full of enthusiasm for Jewish living and Jewish learning.

Every Jew is equally precious to us, and a few hundred matter as much as a hundred thousand as contributors to the Jewish future, just as the loss of a single Jew is as grievous as the defection of many. Infinite values and infinite pain can neither be multiplied nor divided.

In this spirit, I hope your readers, and especially your children, will continue to hold the torch of faith aloft, illuminating the path of our people to



enduring greatness, warming our homes as havens of Jewish living, and sending forth beacons of inspiration and moral fervour to all the families on earth.

A Passover Message

Compassion for one's enemies

by Rabbi Shalom Shapira

The Festival of Pesach recalls the birth of the Jewish People when they rejected the tyranny of a foreign nation and chose national and religious independence. It is appropriate that we in Edinburgh can use this anniversary to celebrate the birthday

of our own Edinburgh Jewish magazine—*The Edinburgh Star*. Four is a significant number on Pesach and the last four issues of the *Edinburgh Star* have contributed significantly to the social and cultural life of our community.

Pesach and especially the first night Seder is observed by all Jews—orthodox as well as non-orthodox Liberal and Reform. Even most of the so-called secular Jews have a form of celebration be it only "a touch of nostalgia" for our ancient and unique

history.

There are many traditional practices which we carry out on this special evening and they are all specified in the book called the *Haggadah*, which is to be found in every Jewish home. I would like to illustrate just one of the many concepts found in the Seder Service which is meaningful to any modern Jewish family celebrating Pesach.

During the course of the evening we recall the ups and downs of our troubled history and when we reach the point when the Egyptians are smitten by ten plagues because of the Pharaoh's stubborn refusal to "let my people go", the Haggadah instructs us to do a most unusual thing.

On mentioning the ten plagues while reading the Haggadah we hold a cup full of wine and pour out one drop when mentioning each plague. This comes as an emotional reaction

to demonstrate our grief towards the suffering of other people even our persecutors. This concept of loving human beings because they were created by God is so much part of Judaism that it extends to having compassion also for one's enemies. Wine symbolizes rejoicing. Any Shabbat or Festival is celebrated by the Jewish family on a full cup of wine. But on the Passover night, the happiest evening for the Jewish people, this full cup of wine is diminished ten times to show our grief and sympathy for those who inevitably suffered due to our liberation.

The source of this extraordinary gesture is based on a passage in the Talmud Megilla 10b. Referring to the parting of the Red Sea and the drowning of the Egyptian Army, Rabbi Yochanan said that there was a discussion in heaven. The ministering angels wanted to sing praises to God

in celebration but the Holy One blessed be He said MA-ASAY YADAI TOVIN BAYAM VE ATEM OMRIM SHIRAH? (How can you sing songs while the work of my hands is drowning in the sea?)

Perhaps now we can understand the reason why the Jews of Modern Israel are so sensitive and take so many precautions before using any "plagues" against even those enemies whose aim it is to bring about the destruction of the State of Israel.

We live in exciting times. In the past year the countries of Eastern Europe have come from slavery to freedom. Let us hope that in the not too distant future our brethren in Israel will have the freedom to go about their daily existence without fear or worry.

I wish you all a Chag Kasher ve Sameach.

University

J-Soc Progress Report

by Natan Tiefenbrun

Attendance of the regular events has remained constant with 15-20 at the weekly lunches and 20-25 at Friday night dinners. The past three months have, however, seen many new ideas transformed into successful events, with Edinburgh's reputation within Northern Region (NR) much improved.

The Charity Busk which raised 380 is to become an annual event, and the Edinburgh success has prompted the Glasgow societies to follow suit.

UJS Conference was attended by eleven Edinburgh members, more than double the previous record. As part of NR's biggest ever delegation of 62, we were involved in all aspects of the Conference, including debates, leadership training and educational programmes. Richard Jacobs of Edinburgh was elected as regional chairperson, along with Rachel Furst and Simon Hayes as officers without portfolio on the regional executive. At least eight members - another record - will attend UJS Spring Seminar.

During February 7 - 14 the society experienced 'Dardas Week'. Every member was given a 'dardas' or 'smurf', and spent the week sending anonymous roses, poems, cards, sweets and other assorted gifts, in turn receiving the same from another secret admirer. The event was great fun and involved many new members.

Religious observance is increasing, and as well as Rabbi Rosin travelling to Edinburgh to give a *shiur* each week, a recent decision ensured that all future regional events will include a religious training seminar.

The *Tu B'Shvat Seder* and joint debate with the Literary Society were also tremendously successful.

The committee would like to thank the community for all of their help and support, and we hope the good relationship will go from strength to strength.

The Burnstein Supper and Dance

This year's Burns Supper was the largest ever Northern Region UJS event, and the record proportion of regional members attending made it the most successful event in UJS's history—it was attended by 122 students.

Held in the Community Hall, the evening was opened by Rabbi Shapira who made the *Havdalah brachot* and then read a poem by Israel's national poet—Bialik. Following the piper into the hall, the man behind the broad Scots accent of 'To a Haggis' was American student Andrew Getraer.

The traditional meal, of the standard of which only students could be responsible, ran smoothly until desert. After the problem of not bak-

ing the apple strudel had been overcome, the speeches commenced.

Dr. Ian Leifer toasted to the "Immortal Memory of Rabbi Burnstein", while the "Toast to the Ladies" and reply were delivered by Simon Hayes and Rachel Bailey respectively.

After Richard Jacobs, regional chair, had said a few words, the *ceilidh* began. With live band Hugh McDermot's Haircut playing rousing music, the students were soon exhaus-

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ted from dancing. The evening ended in what has now become the traditional NR style, Auld Lang Syne followed by the NR Anthem and then Hatikvah.

All credit for the spectacular even-

ing must go to Mrs. Burns, without whom we would have been at a complete loss, and to all of the students, Trudi Shenkin in particular, who spent to many hours on the preparations.

Tu B'Shvat: by Andrew Getraer

A new tradition was begun this year, as the Edinburgh University Jewish Students Society celebrated its first ever *Tu B'Shvat* seder. The gathering in honour of the Jewish New Year for the Trees was held in the Succah, and proved to be one of the most interesting and enjoyable Society events of the year.

Observance of the minor holiday of *Tu B'Shvat* is generally varied, if it is observed at all. Planting trees locally, or more often in Israel, to honour a person or event is the most common practice today, but the J-Soc., as it is known, chose to do something a bit different. The innovative seder was based on the more traditional Passover celebration, complete with Haggadah, wine, four questions, and a festive meal—all fruit of course!

The event was truly an original creation. The structure of the seder, as found in the *Tu B'Shvat Haggadah*, was wholly student-devised. The Haggadah itself was written entirely by a Society member. The evening began with a blessing over the first cup of wine, and the asking of the four questions. The first question should be familiar to everyone: "Why is this night different from all other nights?" But the answer was a new one: "Because today is *Tu B'Shvat*, the New Year for the Trees, so we gather

together to celebrate the trees which God has created and with which we share the world." After the questions, the first part of the meal was enjoyed.

The meal consisted of nineteen different fruits, from dates and apples to pomegranates and Israel sharon fruit. Everyone in the room took turns reading a history of *Tu B'Shvat*, from its origins as a part of the tax system of ancient Israel, and the mystical meaning attached to it by the kabbalists of Safed four hundred years ago, to the modern importance of planting trees as part of reclaiming the Land of Israel. After more wine and fruit, a discussion in the kabbalist tradition, was held on the symbolic meaning of different fruits. The celebration ended with readings on the symbol of the tree in the Bible, and the importance of caring for our natural environment, supported by portions from the Torah, Psalms and Prophets.

The University Green Society was invited, and several other interested non-Jews were guests. Reaction was so good, that plans are already under way for next year to pass the celebration on to the national Union of Jewish Students, and to invite people from the general community. The J-Soc. wants to share an event that is both fun and meaningful, a celebration of something new, that is at the same time rooted in Jewish tradition.

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ARE YOU ONE OF US?

COLIN SHINDLER *examines Jewish attitudes to Thatcherism.*

Margaret Thatcher's current difficulties seem to herald the end of an era: three foreign secretaries within as many months, the exit of an experienced team from the uppermost echelons of government to the back benches and less important posts, the trouncing of the Tories in the European elections, the ungrateful defection of the middle classes who are experiencing economic difficulties and the consequent advance of the Labour Party now some 18 points ahead in the opinion polls. Apocalypse soon, perhaps—the writing truly appears to be on the wall.

Yet last year was supposed to commemorate a special anniversary—her first decade in power. A wide range of books could be found in the bookshops on the persona of the prime minister and virtually every book and every article mentioned her relationship with Jews and Judaism.

The most recent one to reach the bookshops, by the former Labour MP Leo Abse, is entitled *Margaret, Daughter of Beatrice: A Politician's Psycho-biography of Margaret Thatcher*. Abse, who is Jewish, devotes an entire chapter to "Margaret Thatcher's Jews" which literally bubbles over with vitriol and indignation aimed at the Anglo-Jewish establishment. Today's Conservative Party represents the *nouveaux riches* and therefore is very attractive to those Anglo-Jews who have "made it."

The Conservatives of 1990 like many Jews in Britain are self-made people, the products of post-war social mobility. Unlike their predecessors of decades ago, today's Tory is the very model of a modern minor businessman. The Jewish Tory feels at home in a party no longer dominated by unworldly aristos and hard-nosed anti-Semites which is also sympathetic to Israel.

Symbiotic affection

Until recently there were numerous Jews in her cabinet and she evoked considerable support from Anglo-Jewry's business community. In turn, she preached her devotion to Judaic ideals and her deep respect for the Chief Rabbi, elevating him to the upper house as Lord Jakobovits. Beneath all this idolatry, it is worth examining why there has been an outpouring of so much symbiotic affection.

Thatcherism emphasises social individualism, an exhortation to achieve

but of little comfort for those who are unable to compete or do not exhibit ambitions to "move ahead in life." Thus for those Jews who through their own hard work have built up their businesses and their heirs who have inherited the fruits of their parents' labour, there is a tendency to identify with the Conservatives.

Thatcher herself comes from a Methodist background where her father encouraged a Victorian passion for communal service, solid education and hard work. Unlike the Jews, Thatcher's family was already safely ensconced in a lower-middle-class niche some 50 years ago. Neither was she unduly affected by the traumatic events of the thirties. The turmoil which affected a whole generation of Jews, the hypnotic attraction of communism, the deep hatred of Fascism, were never part of political endeavour in the rural English city of Grantham where she grew up.

Probably the best book on Thatcher is a huge tome by *The Guardian's* political columnist, the insightful Hugo Young. In his book, *One of Us*, he comments that "for her, too, there was a strong class element to her analysis: which was not so much an analysis, more a collection of instinctive feelings arranged around her favourite self-image, that of the outsider."

"Is he one of us?" is a question which could apply equally well to Jews as to Thatcherites. And it is this concept of being a radical outside the accepted framework of the political establishment that appeals to many Jews. While there are those Jews who aspire to Conservatism because it expounds traditional immutable values, there are others who regard Thatcherism as a revolutionary force initiating change in society. Indeed, one of the intellectual progenitors of Thatcherism, Sir Alfred Sherman, first worshipped Stalin, then located Zionism before a final transition to becoming a doyen of the English New Right.

Yet if there is a resonance within Anglo-Jewry's business people, those Jews engaged in the liberal professions, teachers, social workers, writers, profess no love for the Lady. In 1988, the director of the National Theatre, Sir Peter Hall, estimated that "well over 90 percent of the people in the performing arts, education and the creative world are against her."

Mirroring that section of British society, considerable numbers of Jews rejected Thatcherism because it encouraged the profit motive rather than the prophet motive, that it regarded those at the bottom of the socio-economic pile simply as layabouts and scroungers as opposed to non-achievers. Naturally, the Jews tied it to the teachings of the Torah and to the historical Jewish experience. Judaism, it was claimed, insisted that individual effort should benefit the collective rather than atomise it and was thus at the opposite pole to Thatcherism.

Moreover, although she was undoubtedly philo-Semitic, from time to time her actions and pronouncements on race relations where black people were concerned rankled with many Jews whose memory was not so short. For example, in 1978 she spoke about immigration into Britain in terms of "being swamped by people of a different culture." And last year, one of the by-products of the Salman Rushdie affair was the government's insistence on the acculturation of the Moslem community. Thatcher regarded British Jews in a different light. Not so much British Jews as Jewish Britons well on the way to Anglicization—a view welcomed by many a Jewish leader.

In the peace camp

Thatcher is known warmly as a friend of Israel and she is lauded as such by Israeli politicians and Anglo-Jewish leaders alike.

Even so, her three foreign secretaries of 1989, Geoffrey Howe, John Major and now Douglas Hurd, were all lukewarm when it came to Israel's predicaments. The hard words were always left to them.

As a near victim of the IRA Brighton bombing, her aversion to terrorism is not cosmetic. Yet her personal position on the Israel-Palestine conflict would paradoxically place her in the peace camp in Israel. At the beginning of the intifada, she commented that the "Palestinians had a grievance." Moreover, she didn't regard Arafat's declarations on the recognition of the Jewish State and a cessation of terrorism as a cleverly constructed deception.

Ironically, on the question of peace in the Middle East, the Iron Lady is a dove.

In his recent book, *London Jewry*

and *London Politics 1889-1986*, Professor Geoffrey Alderman argues that Thatcher's foreign policy is "more pro-Jewish than that of any of her predecessors since David Lloyd George." Few could argue with that reality regardless of their attitude towards her policies in general and the motivation behind them.

The relatively recent resignation of the chancellor of the exchequer, Nigel Lawson, who is an assimilated Jew himself, may signal, albeit symbolically, the association of Thatcherism with Jews and Jewish concerns is on the wane. The current economic problems might also decrease the sense of infatuation felt in some Jewish circles. An increasingly unsympathetic Foreign Office where Israel is concerned is yet another point against Thatcher.

Paradoxically, Labour, although seemingly equally as critical on Israeli government policy as the Conservatives, may prove to be an important

ally in the search for peace. Neil Kinnock, the party leader, has espoused a sympathetic position on Israel while distancing himself from the often inarticulate and unreal decisions of the Party Conference. As a Welshman, he feels an ethnic affinity for Jews. As an admirer of Aneurin Bevan and the Old Left, he is aware of their considerable support for Israel in the early years of the State. In addition, Labour's shadow foreign secretary is Gerald Kaufman.

Although he is disliked for his arrogant and abrasive approach to issues by many in Anglo-Jewry, he is a committed Jew and someone who would not disown the title "Zionist." Like many other Diaspora Jews, he aligns himself with the peace camp in Israel. Thus if a Labour government does come to power, an Israeli government may find a highly informed foreign secretary who speaks the language of Zionism and who cannot be dismissed as an ignorant non-Jewish

anti-Semite or a self-hating Jew.

Even so, this is all, of course, conjecture. Thatcher is a power-house of resilience. For the Lady, there is nothing more exciting and enjoyable than a good fight with the gloves off. No one, including her opponents, both within Labour and her own party, underestimates her. Undoubtedly, an *eshet hayil* in more senses than one.



Colin Shindler is the editor of the *Jewish Quarterly* and is a member of the Board of Deputies. Author of a book on *Soviet Jewry*, 'Exit Visa: Detente, Human Rights and the Jewish Emigration Movement in the USSR', he is currently on sabbatical in Jerusalem. The present article, especially sent from Israel, is an edited version of a previous one which appeared in *The Jerusalem Post* in November 1989.

Diaspora

Synagogues and the faces of Diaspora

by Janet Altman

Many cities abroad which one would not necessarily associate with important centres of Jewish life have synagogues that are open to the public and, for the most part, still functioning. To visit such synagogues is to learn about the history and suffering of the Jews in different countries and periods, and also to gain an insight into the present-day lifestyle of Jewish communities in foreign parts. In recent years I have been to six especially interesting synagogues in six countries: Cordoba (Spain), Moscow, Prague, Rome, Istanbul and West Berlin.

Cordoba

There are currently only about 12,000 Jews living in Spain. Madrid and Barcelona have the largest communities; Cordoba, once a thriving Jewish cultural centre, now has none.

A few hundred metres away from Cordoba's outstanding religious monument, the Mosque-Cathedral, lies the *Juderia* (Old Jewish Quarter). The synagogue, situated in the Calle Judios, is reached via the Plaza de Maimonides, where a modern statue has been erected in honour of the great Jewish philosopher, a native of this town. The synagogue consists of a small, square room, dating back to 1315, with a tiny women's gallery on one side. After the expulsion of the

Jews from Spain in 1492, the building was variously used as a hospital, a school and even a church. It was declared a national monument in 1885 and was last restored in 1930. The simple exterior and modest entrance, through a small patio, contrast strikingly with the empty yet ornate interior. The upper part of the brick walls is covered with sumptuous stucco decoration in the Mudejar style typical of Muslim craftsmen of that time. It differs in only one respect from similar examples in other contemporary buildings: the delicately carved calligraphy is in the Hebrew rather than Arabic script.

Moscow

A free Saturday morning during a sightseeing tour of Moscow provided the ideal opportunity to experience a Shabbat service in the largest of the Soviet capital's three synagogues.

Owing to the huge proportions of this imposing building, which has a fine portico and resembles a Greek or Roman temple, it is difficult to examine the entire facade. It towers over a narrow side street a short distance from Red Square. On the opposite pavement stood a blond young man in civilian clothes, making notes conspicuously in a shorthand pad. A beggar approached all who entered the

synagogue.

Just as the exterior seemed out of proportion, so did the beautiful interior: the congregation must formerly have been many times larger than the dozen or so female and maybe 100 male congregants who filled only a fraction of the available seats on that day. It was sad too, on looking more closely, to note that these people were predominantly aged over seventy.

An elderly woman, whose two

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children are married and living in the USA, was eager to strike up conversation in a mixture of Yiddish and broken German. Strains of tuneful song, intoned by greying male choristers, floated up to the ladies' gallery. As we reached for our cameras, at the invitation of a wizened official, the women moved hastily aside and covered their faces.

When this visit took place, in 1987, the outlook for Moscow's marvellous synagogue, and likewise for its ageing Jewish community, appeared to be extremely bleak. Let us hope that the increased religious freedom granted by President Gorbachev will breathe the new life into the capital's Jewish community.

Prague

Another chance to observe the co-existence of Judaism and Communism came in 1988 when I spent a week in Prague at Pesach time.

The old Jewish quarter of Prague, known as *Josefov* (Josphe's Town), houses six synagogues, a Town Hall, a Ceremonial Hall and the Old Jewish Cemetery with its clutter of 20,000 gravestones dating from 1439 to 1787. The Ceremonial Hall and two of the synagogues have been turned into state-sponsored museums. Two of the synagogues are "closed for restoration", i.e. falling into disrepair; two actually function.

Many of the exhibits in the State Jewish Museum were compulsorily donated during the Nazi occupation in a bid to establish an "Exotic Museum of an Extinct Race". The Czech guide made some strange pronouncements. I quote: "the Jews don't have a Bible, they have the Torah"; "the Jews - as you know - don't have Priests"; and, most astonishingly of all, "this symbol is called the 'yellow

star'. The Jews of Czechoslovakia and, I suppose, the whole world had to wear it during the war".

It is remarkable that any Jewish life survives today in a country whose pre-war community of 360,000 was so savagely decimated in the Holocaust. Only 1,000 officially registered Jews live in Prague, approximately one fifth of the total in Czechoslovakia.

A white-haired lady, who described herself as one of the very, very few to return from Auschwitz, informed me that refuseniks do not exist here. She said that the picture given by the media of life in Israel makes it seem so precarious that Czech Jews prefer to remain where they are. And, after all, they do have a certain freedom of worship.

The focal point of the ghetto is the Community Centre which, amazingly, has a kosher restaurant. It was here that I participated in a communal seder, but not before attending the evening service in the Old-New Synagogue.

The main section of the synagogue dates from the thirteenth century and is the only one of its period in Europe still in use for worship. The *bimah* stands in the centre of a vaulted hall. This observation was not easily made: the ladies' section is a self-contained room, added four centuries later, and is separated from the hall by a thick stone wall. Narrow slits barely allow the service to be heard, and visibility is virtually non-existent. Women sit gossiping around a central table which occupies almost the whole room.

The seder itself felt so familiar that it was difficult to remember it was being held in a Communist country. The matzos had been imported from Britain and the Carmel wine from Israel (via Britain). The ritual slaughterer comes once a month from Budapest. The assembly of approximately 200, seated at long tables stretching out from a high table where the Rabbi officiated, showed a healthy disregard for the service, preferring to wander about and chatter to one another. The Budapest-trained Rabbi ignored them, just as they ignored him. The average age of the participants was certainly lower than in the Moscow synagogue, and three or four children were present. Nevertheless, there was a distinct predominance of older people. One cannot help wondering for how much longer it will be possible to hold such seders.

Rome

The synagogue is large and ornate, with stained-glass windows and a fine dome, built in 1874. It is situated between the River Tiber and

the former ghetto, to which Jews were confined from the year 1556 onwards.

From the synagogue it is possible to stroll along the banks of the Tiber, cross the river at Ponte Vittorio Emanuele and enter the Vatican City. And yet it was not until April 1986 that a pope took the historic step of visiting a synagogue. As John Paul II embraced Chief Rabbi Toaff, he called the Jews "our dearest brothers... our older brother", and deplored the oppression suffered by Jews throughout history, including oppression for which previous popes have been responsible. Just over a year later, the Pope received Austrian President Kurt Waldheim in a private audience at the Vatican.

John Paul II had already sparked off anger and protest within the Rome Jewish community when in September 1982 he received PLO leader Yasser Arafat at the Vatican. It was shortly thereafter that the synagogue was attacked by grenade-throwing Palestinian terrorists, just as congregants were leaving the building after Saturday morning prayers. One small child was killed and other people were injured. When I visited one week later, bullet holes were visible in the stone masonry on either side of the main entrance and there was a belated police presence.

Istanbul

In the massacre at Istanbul's main synagogue, Neve Shalom, in 1986, all 22 male congregants, including those officiating at the shabbat service, were gunned down when terrorists burst into the hall. Four women in the gallery escaped unharmed.

As in the case of Rome, security after the event was intense. Admittance is via an unmarked garage-type

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door which is opened a mere crack upon the ringing of a bell. My passport was taken away to be photocopied, and my bag was placed by the outside door. Bibles and spotless white skull-caps and headscarves were being arranged into neat piles by a Muslim attendant.

The main hall is small and unimpressive. It is modern, not merely because it was completely rebuilt after the outrage: it had in any case been only 40 years old and the new synagogue is an exact replica of the former one. Even the new grandfather clock is identical to the one now standing beneath a memorial plaque to the dead in the lobby, its hands still indicating 9.17, the time at which it stopped when the shooting broke out.

Neve Shalom lies in a bustling working-class suburb close to the city centre. It is one of ten synagogues, nine Sephardi and one Ashkenazi (few of which are fully operational), catering for Istanbul's community of approximately 20,000. That I was shown round by a Spanish-speaking official is not too surprising when one remembers that most of Turkey's Jews are descendants of the refugees from Cordoba and other Spanish cities, expelled in the fifteenth century by the fundamentalist Christian monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella. They have preserved Ladino as a living language, and even write and perform theatre productions in the Judeo-Spanish dialect.

Although 50,000 Turkish Jews left for Israel after 1948, numbers are relatively stable today and the rate of

assimilation is as low as 8%. In recent years the Jews have thrived both economically and socially, and arguably fare better than in any other Muslim country. The government allows publication of a weekly newspaper, *Shalom*, as long as it contains no propaganda for Israel. And in an unprecedented gesture of support, the State has pledged financial backing for a festival in Spring 1992 to commemorate 500 years of Turkish Jewry.

Berlin

A Jewish Community Centre is located in a side street which runs off the Kurfirstendamm in the very heart of West Berlin. Not until I had entered the low, grey, modern building did the framed photographs lining the walls make me realise that this was the site of the once great Fasanenstrasse synagogue, totally destroyed in the 1938 "Kristallnacht" pogroms. Watching an Israeli song and dance company performing a lavish - albeit somewhat over-sentimentalised - celebration of Yiddishkeit in this setting was a moving experience, all the more so since this was just 50 years and one month after the Nazis burned down the synagogue.

When I expressed surprise at the existence of a Jewish community in Berlin, an elderly Russian immigrant explained that, out of a total of approximately 6,500 Jews, about half are Russians who have settled there over the past ten years. Half of the remainder is made up of Germans who returned after the Holocaust; the

others are Poles and other East Europeans. Berlin has three more synagogues besides the room in this Community Centre which serves as one.

It might be thought that this lively, new Centre symbolises a rebirth of Jewish life in Germany. Too much optimism would be unjustified: as I observed in Moscow and Prague, many members of the community in Berlin are also pensioners. Furthermore, the popularity of the extreme right-wing Republicans is a disturbing phenomenon on the political front. At present their xenophobia is directed against Turkish and other immigrants, but who can guarantee that Jews are immune?

Returning home again, I wonder what a foreign visitor would make of Jewish life in Edinburgh. The old cemetery in Sciennes House Place bears testimony to a long history; that the Secretary of State for Scotland is a member of the Edinburgh Jewish community illustrates the public acceptability and prominence of its members. On the other hand, the closure of the only kosher butcher's shop and the halving of the synagogue show all too graphically the community's numerical decline. But our hypothetical overseas visitor could surely not fail to see in the creation of such a worthwhile publication as *The Edinburgh Star* a sign of hope for the future.

Janet Altman is a Lecturer in the Languages Department at Heriot-Watt University.

In the footsteps of Raskolnikov

by Gillian M. Raab

Leonid and Asya Gorelikov live in the same nineteenth century apartment building in Leningrad which was the setting for *Crime and Punishment*. Dostoyevsky lived in the building while he was writing this novel, after his release from political exile in Siberia. It was in a modest apartment like the Gorelikov's, that Raskolnikov, the main character in "Crime and Punishment", planned his murder and was subsequently haunted by his guilt.

Asya and Leonid are mother and son who have recently become more interested in their Jewish heritage. Soon Leonid hopes to marry Lena, whom he met at the synagogue. Until recently, none of them had planned to leave the Soviet Union. However, in the last two weeks Stephen Gellaitry (a member of the Edinburgh Cam-

paign for Soviet Jewry who has visited their home) has received two most disturbing letters from them. They too are afraid, but not like Raskolnikov because of any crime they have committed. Leonid writes, "With each day I become very afraid for my family. This February there will be Jewish pogroms. It is intended that it begins on 16th February on the very day of my marriage to Lena. It is initiated by antisemitic organisations like Pamyat. "In our country, each day, there is the larger national question. We are very afraid about this and are very afraid that there might be pogroms. In the shops there is hardly anything to buy for the table. On all products they are introducing restrictions."

Many Soviet Jews are, like Leonid, living in fear of a rise in Russian fas-

cism. Pamyat's horrific propaganda circulates freely. Virulently antisemitic reports appear in the press and on the radio without any official disapproval being expressed.

Asya and Leonid now hope to obtain an invitation to leave Russia, although the queues are long and they have no relatives in Israel or America to help them. In 1989 approximately 70,000 Jews left the USSR, and this number seems to increase in 1990.

What hope does the future hold for Russian Jews? In the light of recent changes in Eastern Europe, one must hesitate to predict even a few months into the future. However, many Russian Jews are already arriving in Israel, and this trend looks set to continue, at least in the short term.

What the hope is there for a revival of Jewish culture for those Jews

When Jews leave Russia for Israel, all they can take with them are a few personal possessions. And a dream.

With growing antisemitism, what they need most is safety. They need a place to live, schools for their children, medical care and, of course, an opportunity to participate in Jewish life.

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But whatever their previous occupation, most of them will need re-training so that they can make a valuable contribution to Israeli society.

All of this costs millions and millions of pounds. And, as the trickle of Russian Jews coming to Israel turns into a flood, the need for money has become increasingly urgent.

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remaining in the Soviet Union? Will the Jewish Cultural organisations which have been given the breath of life by the new freedoms of Glasnost, be able to survive in the same atmosphere which gives Russian anti-semitism the chance to express itself?

This is a difficult question to answer, but there are some good signs.

Jews from the West are now able to visit the USSR, and rabbis and communal leaders from this country and the USA who have visited there recently should be able to help Jewish

communities to defend themselves. We must also hope that Gorbachev and the present regime succeed in maintaining their position. Their overthrow either by the left or the right could turn Pamyat's threats into a reality.

FROM THE SHTETL TO THE PAMPAS

The Jewish Community of Argentina, the largest in Latin America, celebrated its centenary in 1989. JORGE COHEN writes from Buenos Aires about its history.

In the 19th century, as well as producing a series of major figures and achievements, the Jewish people experienced a severe crisis of physical and economic survival from which emigration represented virtually the only escape.

The enlightenment and the Chasidic movement provided the Jews of Europe, both East and West, with a spiritual response to their situation, but neither these, nor Jewish emancipation, sufficed to resolve the structural problems of survival. At the same time, growing poverty in Eastern Europe and in the Ottoman Empire, together with rising anti-semitism, made the Jewish community increasingly insecure.

The history of Jewish settlement in South America dates back to the Spanish conquest of the continent. One Argentinian historian and philosopher has commented that "one of the key elements in the society of the River Plate region (modern Argentina and Uruguay) was the large-scale immigration of Portuguese Jews, most of them merchants, who helped promote economic progress. By 1600 they were already numerous, and the attempts at persecution carried out by the civil and ecclesiastical authorities in Buenos Aires proved ineffective.

They acquired citizenship by marrying local girls, and soon began to occupy leading positions in commerce and ranching. In spite of the obstacles

placed in their way by the Spaniards, 100 years later a large section of the "important classes" were descended from Jews, to judge by the surnames common at the time. Converts, the children of converts, the descendants of those convicted by the Inquisition, crypto-Jews and their offspring proscribed by Ferdinand and Isabella, all settled in the Americas, arriving in a series of different expeditions and establishing their own settlements.

After 1810 there were attempts to protect the Catholic faith against the influence of other creeds and, although the Inquisition was suppressed in 1813, its beliefs remained strong in the local population. It was only economic policy which began to



Panoramic view of Buenos Aires, the capital of Argentina. Some 8,000,000 people live in the city and its suburbs. Its Jewish community is 270,000 strong.

change the situation, as the opening of the port of Buenos Aires to free trade brought a considerable influx of British nationals. With them came greater freedom of worship and increased acceptance of non-Catholics.

The first Jews

The adverse circumstances of European Jewry in the last century, and the consequent need to emigrate, were the reasons why the first Jews arrived in Argentina, a country of which they were largely ignorant. In 1855 it is known that around ten had settled. However, given the imprecise nature of contemporary records, it is possible to deduce that numbers were in fact greater, and that many had arrived after the fall of Rosas in 1852 when individual and civil liberties were re-established and restrictions on foreigners, including Jews, were abolished.

In 1853 Argentina's Constitution - still in force today - was adopted. It was liberal in nature, although it did prescribe that the country's president must be a Catholic. In 1875, under the presidency of Nicolas Avellaneda, an Immigration Act was passed which provided for economic assistance to recent arrivals, among them a considerable number of Jews. The first Jewish wedding was celebrated in 1860. Two years later a minyan was achieved to allow the first celebration of the Yamim Noraim, which in turn gave rise to the Jewish Congregation of the Argentinian Republic, thirty strong in 1872.

Nonetheless it was the decision by Avellaneda's successor, Roca, appointing an honorary agent in Europe to channel Jewish emigration from Russia to Argentina, which marked a new stage in the history of the

country's Jewish community. This move aroused opposition among traditionalist groups and the upper classes, for which the daily *La Nacion* acted as mouthpiece. Yet the government refused to yield and in 1887 President Juarez Celman ordered the setting up of various offices in Europe to advertise the benefits of emigration to Argentina, and the facilities available to emigrants.

Russian Jews who had heard of this measure travelled to Warsaw to seek further information and begin processing of their cases. In 1889 the first contingent, 824 strong, arrived in Buenos Aires aboard the steamer *Weser*, and despite having no prior organization they set about building a new life in Argentina. They received support from the *Alliance Israelite Universelle* and founded the first Jewish colony in Argentina: *Villa Moiss*. In order to regularize matters the Jewish community of Buenos Aires came together to create the Jewish Colonization Association (JCA), founded by Baron de Hirsh in 1891.

The JCA soon developed a large organization and considerable expertise, purchasing thousands of hectares of Argentina's finest farming land. By 1894 some 7,000 Jews were working on the land and the same number in towns and cities. The settlers had left behind a long past and a way of life in Europe and arrived in Argentina with no knowledge of local farming techniques. Being ignorant of the language, they were also unable to seek advice. At the same time the JCA bought some 200,000 hectares in Argentina, many of which were not properly used by the organization. Yet, in spite of broken promises by the Argentinian authorities, and attacks on them, the network of settlements spread.

The settlers worked on cooperative lines. By coordinating production and marketing in this way they were able to pool their efforts, save on machinery and expand in an organized fashion. The system spread rapidly, and the Argentinian cooperative movement remains conscious of the Jewish contribution to its growth. Nevertheless, the children of the first settlers moved to the cities, studying at the country's universities and becoming part of its scientific and cultural elite. This abandonment by the young, along with Argentina's economic problems, created a crisis for the Jewish settlements.

The move to the cities

In 1879 the Congregation was authorised by the government to register births, marriages and deaths, a step which occurred in the contest of a

number of social reforms made under President Roca. In the face of Church opposition the Congress passed the Civil Register Act, thus doing away with the clergy's previous monopoly in this area. Civil marriage was also allowed for the first time.



Façade of the Buenos Aires Hebrew Congregation's synagogue, the largest in Argentina.

In 1891 the Latin Jewish Congregation was founded by Sephardic immigrants from Morocco settled to the south of Buenos Aires. In 1905 the JCA approached the Argentinian Immigration Office to inquire about the country's capacity to absorb thousands of immigrants. The reply was that especially welcome were "artisans, as employers prefer them because of their abstinence from alcohol and their tranquil nature".

As more and more immigrants arrived in Argentina, especially from Italy and Spain, the urban proletariat grew in numbers and the class struggle intensified. Strikes became more frequent and better-supported. First of May demonstrations led to clashes with the police, and in 1909 the security forces fired on an anarcho-syndicalist march, causing several deaths and injuries. The workers' fury fell on the Buenos Aires police chief, Colonel Falcon, who was assassinated on 14 November 1909 by an anarchist youth. The assassin was Simon Radovitzki, a 20-year-old Jew who had arrived two years previously from Russia.

The authorities blamed the Jewish community for the shooting and began to seek out activists among immigrant union leaders. In 1910, the

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Jewish community petitioned the city of Buenos Aires for land to build a hospital. The request was rejected, with the killing of Falcon being cited expressly as grounds for the decision. Indeed, Jewish patients even experienced problems in obtaining treatment in municipal hospitals.

At this time the first Jewish welfare organisations were established, such as *Ezrah*. This was founded in 1915 and, through public subscription, succeeded in laying the foundation stone of the Jewish Hospital, today one of the largest in Buenos Aires.

Education in the early years

Each Jewish settlement had its own religious institutions and Jews in Argentina's rural areas brought up their children in the faith. An extensive network of educational institutions was set up by the JCA, and in 1910 a total of 50 primary schools, employing 155 teachers, catered for 3,500 pupils. In 1908 the *Monitor de la Educaci^on*, the journal of the National Education Council (CNE), began its attack on the Jewish school system, with the accusation that in it "nothing is taught about Argentina". One nationalist author, Ricardo Rojas, maintained that "education in the Jewish settlements is the classic example for the negative results of Argentina's excessively liberal attitude to immigrants." In 1910 the CNE shut down three small Jewish schools.

Today it is recognised worldwide that Argentina's Jewish school system is the finest of the entire diaspora. Governed centrally since 1956 by the *Vaad Hachinuch Hamerkaz*, it takes in both primary and secondary schools, as well as kindergartens and technical colleges. Currently there are 300,000 Jews resident in Argentina, making the community the biggest in Latin America and among the five largest in the world. Some 40,000 of its members are of school age and 65% receive a Jewish education.

The community since 1918

After the First World War the number of Jews needing to emigrate grew, but the number of possible destinations also fell. Argentina not only imposed restrictions on new immigration, but also deported previous immigrants whose permits were not in order. At the start of the twenties, on the initiative of the Congregation and the JCA, the Society for the Protection of Jewish Immigrants was established. So also was the Central Committee for Popular Support of Pogrom Victims and the Protection of Immigrants.

These organisations were run by the community's lower social echelons, something which gave rise to a division between what we might term the "people" and the "upper classes" which was reflected in other spheres of Jewish life. In 1928 the First Congress on Jewish Immigration to Argentina requested the JCA to revise its settlement programme to broaden the occupational range in settlements.

Faced with the rise of Nazism in Germany, Jews petitioned the Argentinian authorities for permission to emigrate. In response the government tightened its restrictions, provoking a hostile public reaction. Nevertheless, the Argentinian barriers were to some extent circumvented by Jewish immigration from neighbouring countries. Argentinian neutrality during the Second World War meant that few Jews arrived in the country legally. Subsequently, with Peron's assumption of the presidency, a partially successful attempt was made to undermine Germophile influence and abolish restrictions on Jews.

Despite the barriers, some 200,000 Jews reached Argentina during this period. A number of other factors also contributed to this low figure, among them the country's fluctuating economic situation and the poor image of Argentina and of the JCA which Jewish residents passed on to family and friends. In addition, the members of a notorious gang of white slavers active in Buenos Aires at this time before being broken up, were discovered to be Jews. There was also a lack of organisations to channel immigrants from Europe to Argentina, a country which at the time when Jews had most need to emigrate had restricted access under pressure from anti-semitic groups, or those who feared a loss of Argentinian identity because of foreign influences.

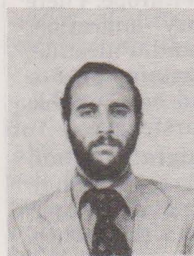
Nonetheless, the Jewish community continued to develop its own institutions, such as synagogues and neighbourhood welfare organisations. Politically, too, the community was taking shape, and in addition to working class anarchist, socialist and communist groups Zionism had a live and active presence. This dated back to 1904, the year in which Argentina's first Zionist Congress was held. Publications in Yiddish, Spanish and Hebrew reflected these different currents, and the world's oldest Yiddish daily (*Die Presse*, founded in 1917) is still published in Buenos Aires.

In 1940, the Chevra Kaddisha which had been set up at the turn of the century changed its name to that of the Argentinian Jewish Mutual Association (AMIA). Seven years

before, the first committee to fight antisemitism and the persecution of Jews in Germany had been set up, and in 1935 this became the Committee of Argentinian Jewish Associations (DAIA). This was an umbrella body representing all the country's Jewish institutions. Ever since it has been the supreme organ of Argentinian Jewry, and responsible for contacts with the government. In 1956 the Argentinian Zionist Organisation (OSA) was created as the ruling body of the movement locally, and most of the community's organisations affiliated to it.

Finally, as regards the role of religion, it is quite true that Argentinian Jewry organized itself first around the synagogue before going on to create secular and cultural bodies. Nonetheless, the community is more traditionalist than religious in character. Both Sephardim and Ashkenazim regard the synagogue as a public place within which orthodox rituals are practised.

We thank Mr. Chris Ross, from the Languages Department at Heriot-Watt University, for the translation from Spanish of the above article.



Jorge Cohen was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He works as a professional journalist since he graduated from university in Media Studies. He worked for the Argentinian equivalent of the *Financial Times*, "*El Cronista Comercial*", and was special correspondent

for the Spanish daily "*Cinco Dias*". During the Alfonsin government he was an official spokesman and presently writes for a Washington newspaper group. He is very active in the Jewish community of Buenos Aires.

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*The troubled migrations of Jewish scientists to USA and Britain
in the 1930's*

Nobel Prize winners unwelcome

by Paul K. Hoch

The rise to power of a Nazi government in Germany was to drive out of that country, and eventually out of continental Europe generally, a very large number of the most eminent scholars in the world in almost every discipline. This was to have immense effects on intellectual life in other countries, especially in the United States where the largest proportion of refugee scholars was eventually to settle.

The initial German migration of 1933, 1935 and following the Kristallnacht of 1938 was accompanied and followed by successive waves of Spanish, Austrian, Italian, Czech, Polish, Hungarian, Scandinavian and French academic emigration as fascism in its various varieties spread across the continent of Europe. There was also a secondary migration, mainly to America and Palestine, from countries like Britain, France and Turkey which had been unable fully to integrate the first waves.

These scholarly migrations had the intellectual significance that they did, especially for America and Israel, because they came at a time when scholarship in Germany (and in the German language generally) was still central in almost every discipline; and also when American scholarship and universities, while more peripheral, were growing rapidly.

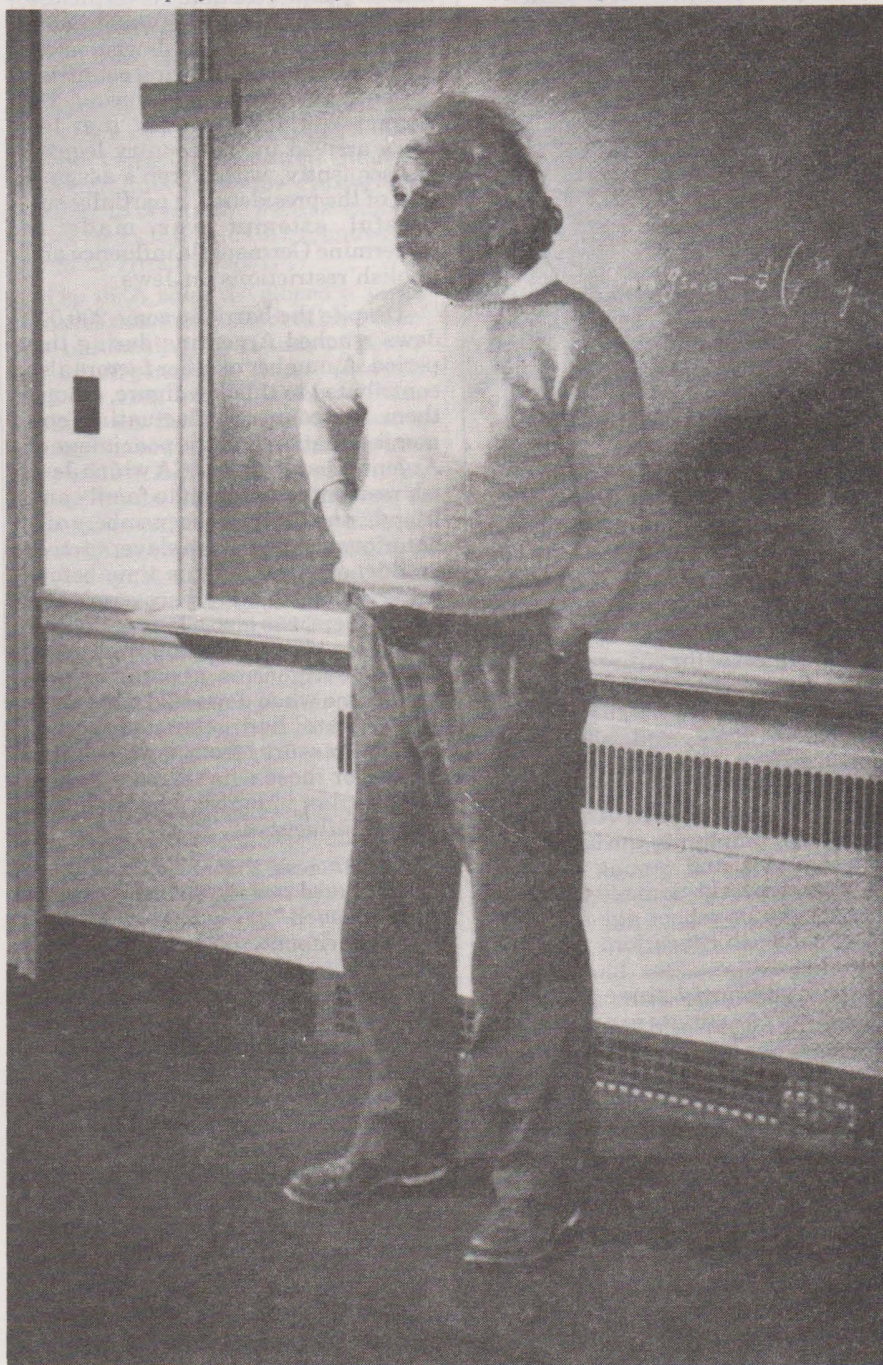
Refugee contributions were to be especially important in the then primarily laboratory-based natural sciences, which in America had already attained considerable successes, but which on the whole were somewhat deficient in the broad theoretical perspectives of physics and chemistry which had developed primarily in Central Europe, and which the refugee theorists were to bring with them to the United States and to Britain.

Indeed by virtue of their breadth and theoretical sophistication, as well as their willingness to move into previously uncharted areas, the refugee scientists were to dramatically augment whole subject areas many of which had heretofore been somewhat rudimentary in American universities: theoretical physics, applied mathematics, quantum chemistry, biophysics, biochemistry, and what was later to be called molecular biology.

The incentive for refugees to pioneer many new areas was at least partially to get around the entrenched hierarchies in the established disciplines—and also to avoid the charge that, in a period of substantial native unemployment, they were

depriving a potential American applicant of a job.

Refugee contributions were particularly prominent in such interdisciplinary social scientific and humanities areas as theoretical sociology, social psychology, psychoanaly-



Albert Einstein at Princeton in 1940.

sis, gestalt psychology; history of art, of science, and of medicine; and philosophy of science, language, law, aesthetics, and theology. Throughout the whole range of academic departments and specialities refugees often provided important theoretical perspectives that - added to the already outstanding American capabilities in organisation and experiment - were to prove so important to subsequent development.

Limitations and pressures on the free competition of ideas that were felt in the USA, also occurred in every other country of central European emigration—especially in the Soviet Union, which was unlikely to get (or accept) social scientists not in tune with its own ideology. Just before the Holocaust, in the late thirties, it expelled even refugee natural scientists as potential threats to its national security and 'proletarian culture'.

Britain

Lesser, but still quite considerable, pressures against refugee influence in the various disciplines on terms other than those of the prevailing orientations were felt also in Great Britain, whose university system tended to be numerically static, and narrowly oriented to the social conditioning of students from a comparatively narrow social background. In such a system, in which research was far from central, it was clear that 'foreigners' - not themselves members of the dominant elite - could have at best only a peripheral role, though of course there were exceptions.

The result was that Britain was able to offer far fewer permanent jobs to refugee scholars than America, and was perhaps even more demanding in weeding out those who did not fall in with the prevailing ideologies. Although this is seldom stressed, at Oxbridge colleges professing particular Christian confessionals, the Jewish background of most of the refugees was often something of an embarrassment. And so too, in many cases, was their very different scholarly traditions.

The uncongeniality of German theoretical orientations in Britain was evident even in physics. One result of this was that out of the very large number of Central European theoretical physicists arriving at Cambridge and Oxford in the 1930's - including men (most of them Jewish) of the stature of Einstein, Born, Schrödinger, Bethe, Courant, Peierls, Ewald, Gamow, Infeld and the London brothers—not a single one of these theorists had obtained a permanent post at either institution by 1940, by which time all of them had

gone elsewhere, in the end mostly to America.

America

The situation was more or less similar in such main centres of predominantly experimental American physics as Harvard, Princeton and Chicago. The welcome for refugee theorists was of course infinitely warmer at the more research-focussed, Princeton-based but independent, Institute for Advanced Study, which was to take in at one time or another such men as Einstein, Weyl, Pauli, von Neumann, Bohr and Infeld.

On the eve of the Holocaust even the most prestigious American industrial laboratories like Bell and General Electric showed very little interest in hiring refugees—or even Jewish-Americans. The young, foreign-born and Jewish Isidor I. Rabi, a future Nobel laureate, found that upon his graduation, in terms of securing industrial research posts, anti-semitism was a major impediment "not in many but in all cases. There were just no exceptions that I knew of..."

Dennis Gabor, a Hungarian Jew dismissed from the Siemens electrical company in Germany, wrote seeking employment with GE Laboratories in Schenectady, New York. By this time he had already published several important articles and would eventually receive a Nobel prize. He received only the rather cool reply from GE Assistant direct Irving Langmuir that, as conditions "are not yet such that any appreciable number of new men are being taken into scientific positions... I am at a loss, therefore, as to how I could aid at present in helping you..." In answer to a subsequent inquiry about Gabor from the British company which eventually hired him, Langmuir would only comment that, as "our experience with Germans (?) in the laboratory has not been particularly successful... I have not wanted to recommend his employment by GE." Oddly enough, the GE Laboratory was founded - only a generation earlier - by the Austro-Jewish engineer Charles Proteus Steinmetz.

Nor were the universities in America on the whole much more tolerant. Led by the openly proclaimed attempt to institute a Jewish student quota in the early twenties by President A. Lawrence Lowell of Harvard, almost all of the most prestigious universities had been substantially reducing their Jewish enrollments, and were not as a general rule inclined to be much more tolerant of Jewish faculty. The magazine *The Nation* commented

that, "Harvard is not the first American University to attempt to limit the proportion of Jews in its midst. It is merely the frankest."

It is arguable that in America such policies were a matter not so much of traditional religiously-based anti-semitism, but a rather more subtle caste exclusionism (or 'gentleman's agreement') in a situation where those defined as outsiders happened to be of a different religion. To the extent that the colleges and universities concerned professed adherence to a particular Christian sect, there would inevitably be a relation between these two aspects, but the theological element was of declining importance even in the 1920's.

By the 1930's it was much more a question of ethnicity and social class. The overwhelming majority of the Jewish populations in both Britain and America had only arrived from Eastern Europe in the preceding two generations thus providing in both countries the occasion for the first large scale immigration restriction. It was only in the 1920's and 1930's, when Jews were just beginning to enter the universities in significant numbers, that those concerned to protect the elite certification functions of these institutions felt the need to put up open or implicit social barriers.

At Princeton in the decade from 1925 to 1935 Jewish enrollment had been cut down by a factor of three, and in the year 1935-36 there were only five Jewish students in an entering class of 635, or less than 1% as compared to about 80% at the nearby City College of New York. Isidore Rabi, studying at Cornell and Columbia in the mid-twenties, had been unable to secure a fellowship at either institution and had to take a full-time tutoring post at City College New York while finishing his Ph.D. He later noted: "All that time there was the over-hanging problem of anti-Semitism and the (limited) possibility of earning a living. Indeed even though I was the top student (at Cornell in Physics)... I had not a single job offer when I got out."

In 1933 Harvard President Lowell's response to the refugee scholars was the ringing public declaration that his institution would not make a place on its faculty for any man simply because he was a migr or as a protest to the Nazi removal of educators from German universities. But then no one had asked Harvard to act in that way. The people in question included, after all, some of the most eminent scholars in the world. Though the situation improved somewhat at Harvard under Lowell's

successor, in far too many cases the refugee scholars - being foreign, heavily Jewish and often out of tune with American disciplinary perspectives - had often to seek employment under a multiple handicap; not to mention any additional difficulties they might have of language and cultural adaptation.

It goes without saying that a very large number of especially the smaller institutions in the South, and in what is sometimes called Middle America, were more or less closed to foreign and/or Jewish faculty. Many would be by no means entirely congenial to this day.

On the eve of the Holocaust the Nobel laureate (Jewish) refugee physicist James Franck, expressed the view to his friend Richard Courant that there was more anti-semitism in America than there had been in pre-Hitler Germany. Nor was

this view entirely based on speculation, as it was expressed during a period in which not only did Franck himself have to leave his post at Johns Hopkins for reasons of this sort, but his friend Lothar W. Nordheim was being denied a permanent post at Purdue because the governors stated they did not wish to appoint another foreigner.

Without agreeing with Franck's perhaps overly pessimistic views of the situation, they certainly do provide a valuable corrective to the usual opened-armed welcomes envisioned in most retrospective accounts of the refugee scholars.

Given the circumstances of economic depression, in-group exclusivity, the inter-related conflicts based on social caste and ethnicity, and over disciplinary territory and perspectives, it is remarkable that so many Jewish scientists could still be integrated—and with such long-

lasting effect. In the end, this was to be a key aspect of the process by which in many fields intellectual leadership moved from Central Europe to America.



Paul K. Hoch was born in New York, grandson of Jewish refugees of Tzarist Russia. As an undergraduate he attended City College of New York and thereafter Brown University where he completed his PhD on Theoretical Physics. Author of several papers on the history of science, Dr. Hoch

presented an expanded version of his article at the Bar-Hillel Colloquium on History, Philosophy and Sociology of Science held at Tel-Aviv University. Presently he is the Head of Science and Innovation Unit at the University of Nottingham.

MAN AS THE PINNACLE OF CREATION

NATHAN AVIEZER argues that recent advances in astronomy are contributing to our understanding of the Bible.

The first chapter of the book of Genesis poses a challenge to the believing Jew of the 20th century, especially to a Jew with an academic background. The problem is that there seem to be a large number of discrepancies between the 'facts' as represented by well-known scientific knowledge and the 'facts' as implied by a literal rendering of the biblical text. This apparent discrepancy between Torah and science is particularly striking in the biblical account of the origin of man.

At the conclusion of the six days of creation, the book of Genesis strongly implies (verses 1:27-29) that the entire universe exists solely for the benefit of man. This idea is elaborated upon in the Talmud, where the following parable is brought:

'was created on the eve of the Shabbat, and why? This can be compared to a king of flesh and blood who built a palace and furnished it and prepared a meal; and after that, he brought in his guests.'

The claim that everything in the universe exists to serve man seems to be utterly without foundation. To become convinced of this, one need only consider the distant stars. The universe is filled with many billions of galaxies and each galaxy contains many billions of stars. What possible

relevance to man could there be in all these countless stars that stretch across the vast expanses of outer space? In fact, before the recent invention of powerful telescopes, no one was even aware that so many stars existed. The belief that there is some connection between man and the distant stars may be dismissed as mere astrology and superstition.

The above represents the popular view. In this essay, we shall present current scientific evidence that provides an explanation of the biblical text.

The Distant Stars

Recent advances in astronomy have revealed a remarkable link between life on earth and the distant stars. In fact, it is no exaggeration to say that without the stars, life on earth would have been impossible.

The bodies of all living organisms contain the chemical elements carbon, hydrogen, oxygen and nitrogen, plus smaller but crucial amounts of several other elements. What is the origin of these chemical elements?

According to the firmly-established modern theory of cosmology, in the very early history of the universe, the only chemical elements that existed were hydrogen and

helium. There was neither carbon nor oxygen nor nitrogen nor any other element essential for life. These elements were formed only much later, in the blazing interior of large stars. Professor Michael Zeilik explains:

'massive stars have lifetimes of only a few millions to tens of millions of years, after which they catastrophically explode. During their short life span, the thermonuclear furnace deep within them manufactures elements as heavy as carbon and iron; at their death, the awesome violence of the supernova explosion forges elements heavier than iron and blasts as much as 90% of the star's material into interstellar space. Out of this recycled material, new stars and planets will be born: stars such as the sun and planets such as the earth. Moreover, life arose on our planet because massive stars lived and died; without supernova explosions, the carbon that is the key to life as we know it would not be distributed throughout interstellar space.'

The authoritative *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Astronomy* describes the essential relationship between life on earth and the distant stars: "It used to be supposed that the universe has always had the composition we observe today...It is not, perhaps, widely appreciated that all the atoms on earth (except hydrogen) had to be created inside a generation of stars that evolved before the birth of the



"What possible relevance to man could there be in all those countless stars that stretch across the vast expanses of outer space?"

sun...Every atom of our bodies was fused together in past aeons of an almost fantastic galactic history. In truth, we are the children of the universe."

There is yet another important connection between ourselves and the stars, which relates to the vast distances that separate us from them. It is now recognized that these distances are crucial to our existence. Stellar explosions emit not only the chemical elements that are essential for life; they also emit 'cosmic radiation' which is deadly. We are saved from this cosmic radiation *only* because the stars are so very far away from our planet. Over the enormous distances that cosmic radiation must travel before reaching the earth, it becomes so reduced in intensity that this radiation is no longer harmful. Professor Freeman J. Dyson explains:

'vastness of the interstellar spaces has diluted the cosmic rays enough to save us from being fried or at least sterilized by them. If sheer distance had not effectively isolated the quiet regions of the universe from the noisy ones, no

type of biological system would have been possible." PB

The Biblical Text

Having described some recent findings in astronomy that relate to man, we are in a position to make a comparison between the biblical text and current scientific knowledge. We shall relate to the question that was raised at the beginning of this essay.

It is a fundamental principle of our sages that man is the pinnacle of creation, and that everything in the universe was formed for his benefit. Nowhere is this principle demonstrated more strikingly than in the recent scientific discovery that even the distant stars played a vital role in making it possible for man to exist; "Life arose on our planet because massive stars lived and died." It is now recognized that all the chemical elements that are necessary for life (except hydrogen) were originally formed deep in the interior of the stars. These elements were later ejected into space when a star

underwent a violent supernova explosion. Eventually, the chemicals reached our solar system to form the living tissues of plants, animals and man; "In truth, we are the children of the universe."

The explosion of distant stars is merely one example of a large number of different events that were necessary for the existence and well-being of man. Indeed, it has become increasingly obvious in recent years that there are many quite stringent requirements of nature for the survival of man—and all of these somehow *just happen* to occur. This phenomenon has attracted considerable scientific attention and has been named the 'anthropic principle'.

Many scientists have commented on this phenomenon, but particularly perceptive are the impressions of the distinguished physicist, Professor Freeman J. Dyson of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton:

'e look out into the universe and identify the many accidents of physics and astronomy that have worked

together to our benefit, it almost seems as if the universe must in some sense have known that we were coming."

We note the harmony that exists between these words of the world-famous non-Jewish scientist and the writings of our sages that were quoted earlier.

There has always been a certain reluctance to accept the text of the first chapter of Genesis in its literal sense. Such reluctance is not surprising. It is almost universally believed that, on a purely scientific basis, it is not possible to understand the book of Genesis as a record of events that actually occurred in the past. To examine this assumption, I have recently undertaken a detailed comparison between the biblical text and current scientific knowledge.

In contrast to the widespread

misconception, the analysis shows that there exists remarkable agreement between many biblical passages and recently discovered scientific facts in the fields of cosmology, astronomy, geology, meteorology, paleontology, anthropology and archaeology. Indeed, modern science has provided us with a unique opportunity to discover new and deeper insights into numerous biblical passages that otherwise seem enigmatic. Far from being the antagonist of the book of Genesis, science has become an important tool for its understanding.

This article is based on Professor Aviezer's recent book on this subject entitled *In the Beginning... Biblical Creation and Science* (Ktav Publishing House, 1990). This book is reviewed by Professor Cyril Domb in the current issue of this Journal.



Nathan Aviezer was born in Switzerland, grew up in Detroit, and received his doctorate in physics from the University of Chicago. He then held a research position at the IBM Watson Research Center near New York. The Aviezers made Aliya to Israel in 1967,

where he joined Bar-Ilan University as Professor of Physics and Chairman of the Physics Department. They have four children and live in Petach Tikva. The author of nearly 100 scientific articles on solid-state physics, Aviezer was elected to Fellowship in the American Physical Society in 1984 in recognition of his research contributions. In the last few years, he has taken an active interest in the relationship between Torah and Science.

Reflections on Yevanim

by David Daiches

Last Chanukah, as I was reflecting over the candles, there came to my mind the last verse of the hymn *maoz tsur* where we are told that the Greeks gathered together against us. The *Yevanim* of this verse were not in fact Greeks but Hellenizing Syrians under the Seleucid king Antiochus IV.

Hellenism is the name given to that late phase of Greek civilization beginning with Alexander the Great and ending with Cleopatra, covering roughly the 3rd to the 1st centuries BCE. It was thus the Hellenistic not the classical Hellenic culture that Antiochus was trying to spread: it could be argued that the earlier Greek culture, represented by the great Greek dramatists, for example, or by the philosophy of Plato, had much more in common with Hebraic values. (The American scholar Horace Kallen maintained that Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* was influenced by the Book of Job.) It is a pity that it was the late Hellenistic rather than the earlier Hellenic version of Greek culture that was involved in the Maccabean confrontation.

However that may be, it is intriguing that the forces of Antiochus were called *Yevanim*. This is the word generally used for Greeks in post-biblical Hebrew literature, and it derives from the name of Noah's grandson Yavan (spelled Javan in English translations) in Genesis X:2. It was from the three sons of Noah, we are told, that the whole earth was repopulated and Jewish tradition saw

each of the sons as progenitors of different groups of nations.

Jewish commentators called the Syrian government of Antiochus *malchut yavan*, the kingdom of Yavan, identifying it with the Greeks. This is linguistically extremely interesting. Ionia was the name of the central sector of the west coast of Asia Minor colonised in the 2nd century BCE by the Greek tribe known as the Ionians, who contributed so much to Greek culture.

An early Greek commentary on Aristophanes says that the barbarians (that is, all non-Greeks) called all Greeks *Iaones*, i.e. Ionians. Now in the early Ionic dialect of Greek there was a letter, later lost, having the sound of V or F which scholars represent by an italic capital *F*. Thus the original name of Ionians must have been *IaFones*, the people of *IaFan*. The name of Noah's grandson thus bears witness to the existence of the lost Greek letter and to the original name of an important section of the Greek people.

As early as 1908 a writer in the Jewish Quarterly Review discussed the many oriental references to the Yavana people and pointed out that they could not have referred to the Ionian Greeks as we know them from the standard histories since the term Yavana was used long before any Greeks had settled in Ionia and seems to refer to a powerful seafaring people. It now seems clear that these references are to the people of Minoan Crete.

The brilliant Minoan culture of the island of Crete dominated the Mediterranean in the 2nd millennium BCE and greatly influenced the culture of Mycenae (the city of Homer's Agamemnon). For long the language of Minoan culture remained undeciphered, but ever since the decipherment of the script known as Linear B in the early 1950's we have known that it was Greek.

The original people of Yavan were thus the founders of the great Minoan Crete culture, which flowed into Greek civilization and thence into the civilization of the Western world. This Greek civilization was greater than that of the degenerate *Yevanim* confronted by Judas Maccabeus, and what we know as Western culture today is in large measure an amalgam of the heritage of Yavan with that of the Judaic tradition.



David Daiches, son of Rabbi Dr. Salis Daiches, was educated at George Watson's College, Edinburgh University, and Balliol College, Oxford. He has taught at universities on both sides of the Atlantic, including Edinburgh, Cambridge, Cornell and the University

of Sussex, of which he was one of the three founders in 1961. His latest position was Director of the Institute for Advanced Stu-

dies at Edinburgh University. He has written some 45 books of literary criticism, history, biography and autobiography, as

well as poetry and short stories. He holds honorary degrees from many universities, including Edinburgh, Glasgow, Sussex,

the Sorbonne and Bologna. He is now retired, but continues writing and lecturing.

Women's Rights and Jewish Law

by Hyam Maccoby

The status of women in Pharisaic Judaism was far higher than that found in Christian countries until very recent times.

According to Pharisaic law, a married woman did not lose property rights. Any woman who brought property into her marriage, the Pharisees ruled, still owned that property, which had to be returned to her in the event of divorce. The most that a husband could claim was the profit accruing from his wife's property; he had no right whatsoever to the capital. Even this profit, however, could be claimed by the husband only if he made himself responsible for her maintenance. This was a matter for the wife to decide; if she preferred to be responsible for her maintenance herself, her husband could not claim the profit, since he was doing nothing to deserve it.

On the other hand, if a woman entered marriage without any property at all of her own, she was not allowed to be at her husband's mercy in financial matters. By an enactment of Simon ben Shetach (who flourished at about 100 B.C.E.), every husband was obliged to settle on his wife on marriage a substantial sum (equivalent to the provision of food and clothing for one year) which had to be paid to her in the event of divorce, or on the death of the husband.

A marriage document, known as the *Ketubah*, was instituted, stating the rights of the wife in full, and this document, owned by every Jewish wife to this day, guarantees her property rights in all circumstances. It is extraordinary, then, that it has so often been believed that in Pharisee law 'women had no rights', and that it was only the advent of Christianity that raised women to the status of legal personages. The historical fact is that the abolition of Pharisee law by the Church led to the loss of much humane legislation and to a tragic lowering of the status of women.

Another important aspect of women's rights is the right to divorce. This, again, is a topic on which many misunderstandings are current about Pharisaic and rabbinic law. It is often said that, in Jewish law, only a man is allowed to give a divorce, not a woman. This is technically correct, for the Bible makes provision for a

man to divorce his wife (Deuteronomy 24.1), but not for a wife to divorce her husband.

Pharisee law was not content to accept a literal interpretation of the Bible in this matter, and rules were developed by which a woman could free herself of an intolerable marriage, while still having her property rights protected. The procedure was that a woman could bring a divorce suit in the courts and, as a result, the husband could be compelled by the court to give the wife a divorce. Thus the letter of the biblical law was preserved (since the divorce procedure consisted of the handing of a 'bill of divorcement' by the husband to the wife), but the inequality of the biblical institution was abolished.

It is also interesting to note that the rights of women in this context were very literally interpreted. A woman could sue for divorce not just on the grounds of serious ill-treatment, but on grounds of incompatibility of lifestyles. Thus if a husband, against his wife's wishes, wished to change his residence from the city to the country, or vice versa, his wife was entitled to a divorce. Similarly, a man who took up a profession, such as that of a tanner, that caused him to smell badly, was compelled to release his wife from the marriage if she so wished (see Mishnah, Ketubot 7.10 and 13.10).

The Jewish attitude towards sex was much more positive and relaxed than the later Christian attitude. Either a husband or a wife could obtain a divorce if their sex life was unsatisfactory. Marriage was regarded as a contract between a man and a woman, not as an indissoluble union or sacrament. Thus if the conditions of the contract were not satisfactorily fulfilled, the marriage could be ended to avoid further misery, and a more suitable partner could be sought.

The position of women in first-century Judaism was far from perfect. Women were confined, on the whole, to the home, where, however, they had much religious responsibility. Few women played a role in the larger world of the synagogue and the academy. In a society in which large families were the rule, this was inevitable. However, respect for women was guaranteed by the Fifth Commandment,

which made honouring one's mother just as important as honouring one's father.

The Bible held up many models of revered women: the four Matriarchs, Sarah, Rebekah, Leah and Rachel, the prophetesses Miriam, Deborah and Hulda; the saviour Esther; and Ruth the exemplar of loyalty and true conversion of Judaism. The rabbis stressed the honour due to a wife. One saying is: 'He who has no wife lives without good or help or joy or blessing or atonement' (Genesis Rabbah XVII.2). Another is: 'Be careful about the honour of your wife, for blessing enters the house only because of the wife' (b. Baba Metzia 59a).



Hyam Maccoby is a Fellow of Leo Baeck College, London. His special field of study is the relationship between Judaism and Christianity, and he has lectured on this topic in the USA. In 1980, he gave the Cardinal Bea Memorial Lecture in Westminster Cathedral, London.

He is engaged in a research program for the Hewbrew University on the origins of Christian anti-semitism. Mr. Maccoby is the author of some seven books, the last of which is 'Judaism in the First Century' (Sheldon Press, 1989); the present article is an edited excerpt from this publication.

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THE CASE OF THE INNOCENT BLACKGUARD

BEN BRABER *recounts the story of a German Jew who in 1909 was sentenced to death in Edinburgh for murder.*

Eighty years ago a man who allegedly maintained himself by the ruin of men and of women stood trial in Edinburgh. This man was accused of murdering Miss Marion Gilchrist and his trial was one of Scotland's most remarkable legal proceedings.

In the words of the judge he had "lived in a way that many a blackguard would scorn to live." This man was a gambler, by no means a spotless character, and there was even a hint that he earned his living as a pimp, as one of the witnesses testified: "I had it that the man, like a great number of those who came to Glasgow, lived on the proceeds of women."

Some readers will have recognised



The victim: Marion Gilchrist, a wealthy spinster of 83.

the unfortunate figure of Oscar Slater in the person of the accused. Slater's case attracted much public attention and still does. One aspect of the proceedings, however, has been widely overlooked—the trial of this man was very much a trial by public opinion.

The alleged crime had been committed on Christmas eve 1908. Marion Gilchrist, a wealthy spinster of 83, was murdered in her apartment in Glasgow's West Princess Street on Monday 21st December. The crime was discovered by a neighbour, who had been alarmed by unusual noises, and Miss Gilchrist's maid returning from an errand. As they approached the front door and the maid presumably entered the flat, a man walked out, passing the neighbour. He dashed down the stairs and ran off into the street "like greased lightning." Inside they found the battered body of the

old lady.

Neither the maid nor the neighbour were able to describe the man clearly. Later a woman reported to the police that the running man had almost knocked over her adopted daughter. "Our Mary says you'll know him by a crooked nose," she told them. By that time the news about the murder had already created a sensation.

On Tuesday the newspapers carried long reports. The Glasgow Herald wrote: "Rarely have the criminal records of Glasgow been marked by a crime so peculiarly revolting." One reporter included a statement from a police surgeon that read, "Nearly every bone in the skull and forehead smashed. The brain escaped. One eye knocked out. Head practically smashed to pulp." The viciousness of the killing and the age of the victim surely appalled his readers, but what horrified Edwardian Glasgow most was that this murder had been committed in a relatively well-lit and patrolled street in what was regarded as a respectable middle-class neighbourhood.

The police came under immense pressure to catch the culprit quickly. A reward of 200 was issued. Several leads were followed and one of them looked promising. It seemed that a crescent-shaped diamond brooch was missing from Miss Gilchrist's possessions. After learning this, an informer told the police that a man had tried to sell a pawn ticket for such a brooch. On Hogmanay the police could announce that a warrant for the arrest of this man had been obtained, but that he had left for America.

The man was arrested on arrival in New York and his identity became known to the general public. He was called Oscar Slater, a German Jew, and his photograph appeared in the newspapers after the 13th January. Two female witnesses, the maid and Mary, were sent to New York and the women told a US extradition court that they recognised Slater as the man who had fled from Miss Gilchrist's apartment on the evening of the murder.

In February 1909, crowds rushed to the Clyde to see the suspect arrive from New York. Inspectors stopped the liner at Renfrew to avoid trouble,

but as Slater left the boat, he was molested by a member of the crew. In the eyes of the public Slater was guilty.

Newspaper reports and Slater's picture obviously played important parts in the public condemnation. Dozens of witnesses stepped forward, possibly attracted by the reward, claiming to be able to connect Slater and the crime. Detectives were told that he had tried to sell jewellery and he had been seen loitering in West Princess Street. A tram conductor even testified that a man like Slater had behaved suspiciously two days after the crime. The conductor had asked a boy reading a newspaper



The accused: Oscar Slater, a German Jew.

whether the murderer had been caught, when suddenly "the man rose, looked up at me with a passing glance and hurriedly left the car jostling against me as he passed."

The suspect's real name was not Oscar Slater. He had arrived in Britain some fifteen years earlier and, like so many other Jewish immigrants, his surname was changed when his original name proved difficult to pronounce. He also seemed to have a rather shady past. At first he had been employed as a London bookmaker's clerk, but after a while he started to travel, making his living by gambling and selling jewellery. He had married a Scottish woman, but he had left her and back in London he met a French girl, who was known as "Madame". The couple lived under different names.

Two police detectives from Edin-

burgh told their Glaswegian colleagues that in 1899 Slater alias Schmidt had been the "bully" of a prostitute. He had a criminal record and was convicted for disorderly conduct. One detective said: "He was of a vicious disposition and was constantly quarrelling and fighting with his associates over their gambling transactions." To which the other Edinburgh policeman added "the lowest class of foreigners." Such witness statements were echoed by the Lord Advocate, who described Slater's career as "a life which descended to the very depth of human degradation." The Lord Advocate certainly put into words feelings which existed in the middle classes of the Scottish society.

In those days it was not unusual to associate Jewish, i.e. *alien*, immigrants with crime. Following the murder of three policemen in London in 1910, The Times, for example, reported on this subject on 20th December. The question is, however, whether the anti-Slater mood in Scotland before the trial was caused by his Jewishness.

In this connection it is noteworthy that neither the Glasgow Herald nor the Glasgow Evening Citizen or the Daily Record and Mail made much mention of Slater's descent. Maybe the fact that he was a foreigner and a German aggravated the anti-Slater feelings. At a later stage his nationality might have worked to Slater's disadvantage, but perhaps at this time it must have been mostly the news about his criminal background which portrayed him so much in such a bad light.

Doubt about his guilt in connection with the murder began to appear after the start of the trial. It was established that the brooch which Slater

had pawned could never have belonged to Miss Gilchrist. It appeared, furthermore, that the witnesses who identified him had been directed and also the Lord Advocate puzzled some observers when he subsequently heaped several inaccuracies on these errors. Several journalists realised that the evidence which was produced in Edinburgh's High Court would be too narrow a basis for a conviction. They expected a *not proven* verdict.

Slater probably anticipated *not guilty* and on the advice of his Counsel the accused had excluded himself from the witness-box.

To the public at large and, more importantly, to the jury Slater was guilty. A reporter described in the Glasgow Herald the court room scene after the foreman of the jury had spoken. "The doomed man had risen to his feet," he wrote. "In broken tones he addressed 'My Lord,' and added something which was inaudible." The judge, Lord Guthrie, answered "sit down just now." The judge seemed to be praying for a moment with "flushed face and downcast eyes." After a while he allowed Slater to speak. The reporter noted "mingled with the sobbing of a strong man, the faltering words, spoken in a foreign accent which moved to pity and tears the excited Court, 'I know nothing about the affair,' he again and again repeated." Lord Guthrie silenced his hysterical cries by pronouncing the death sentence.

Such reports again aroused public feeling, but now part of it sympathised with the condemned. Twenty thousand Glaswegians signed a controversial petition in Slater's favour, amidst scenes of turned over campaign tables, heated street debates and ripped up lists of signatures.

What strengthened Slater's case was that it became known that the Lord Advocate had possibly withheld evidence from the Defence and that Judge Lord Guthrie had perhaps directed the jury somewhat too much. However it may be, two days before the planned execution on 27th May 1909, the death sentence was changed to life imprisonment.

Several jurists and the writer Arthur Conan Doyle rallied to Slater's cause. A first attempt to re-open the proceedings was brought about by a dissident police detective, but this enquiry failed in 1914 to cause the release of Slater. It was a bad time to favour a German subject and public opinion was not really stirred.

During the 1920's, however, the position became untenable. Eventually, Slater was released and an appeal returned a *not proven* verdict in 1928. It did not clear his name, but this outcome and some financial compensation for the years in prison enabled Slater to settle down as a free man in Ayr.

Public sentiment and the fear of *aliens* laid Oscar Slater by the heels once more. On the eve of the Second World War a spy mania held Britain in its grip and in 1939 Slater was interned in prison because officially he was still a native of Germany. He did not have to wait another nineteen years for his release. German Jewish "prisoners of war" were released from Barlinnie prison within a year.

Oscar Slater died in February 1948.

Ben Braber is a Dutch historian doing research for a dissertation on integration of Jewish immigrants in Glasgow between 1880 and 1939. His studies are sponsored by the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre.

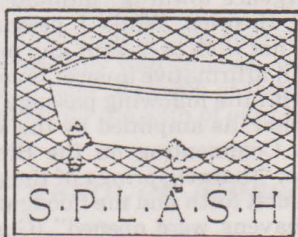
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IN THE BEGINNING . . . BIBLICAL CREATION AND SCIENCE

by Nathan Aviezer: Ktav Publishing House (1990) £9.95

Reviewer: Cyril Domb

For the observant Jew, the words of the Torah represent eternal truths, which are valid for all time. How should they be related to the general body of human knowledge? Throughout the centuries, this question has claimed the attention of Torah scholars, who made great efforts to familiarize themselves with current scientific knowledge. Where appropriate, they did not hesitate to use this knowledge to provide new interpretations of specific passages of the Torah. Professor Nathan Aviezer continues this tradition in his new book *In the Beginning . . . Biblical Creation and Science*.

For the scientist, these are exciting times. Within the past few decades, a vast wealth of new scientific data has been amassed. Major technological breakthroughs - the transistor, the computer, the laser, and others - have made possible scientific measurements that could only have been dreamed of previously. The results of all this progress have been dramatic. There is hardly a field of science which has not been fundamentally altered by these new measurements. It is important to realize that until relatively recently, many scientific theories were based on not much more than educated guesswork and speculation.

But now the situation has been radically improved. Certain branches of science - cosmology, geology, molecular biology and others - have, for the first time, been placed on a firm footing and buttressed by extensive experimental data. Hard facts have yielded new understanding, which has often led to quite unexpected results. Indeed, our view of the universe has been revolutionized. It is clearly time to ask: What are the implications of all these new scientific discoveries for one who believes in God? Professor Aviezer shows that the implications are profound.

That is what this book is all about. It is an attempt to correlate the most recent scientific data with the timeless passages of the Torah. The author has not hesitated to tackle the toughest challenge of all—he demonstrates that passage after passage can be understood in terms of the latest scientific discoveries.

Professor Aviezer has carried his

investigations into every discipline that relates to the account of Creation given in Genesis, including cosmology, astronomy, geology, meteorology, biology, anthropology and archaeology. This distinguished scientist shows that in all these disciplines, current scientific evidence fits remarkably well with a literal interpretation of the text of Genesis. Moreover, he is able to give precise meaning in terms of modern scientific knowledge to a large number of phrases in the Genesis text that had previously been obscure and indefinite.

In this book, he tells us cogently and coherently of his findings. His references are to articles in prestigious scientific journals, most of them published within the present decade. He has shown in masterly fashion how they can throw light on difficult concepts and passages in the Creation narrative. In addition, at each stage, he focuses attention on physical features of the universe which, from the secular point of view, can only be regarded as a series of fortunate coincidences, but which for the religious believer are clear evidence of a grand design. Professor Aviezer does not pretend to have solved all problems. But he has certainly provided fresh and thought-provoking insights which can contribute considerably to our understanding of this most challenging chapter of the Torah.

Following this analysis, it is natural to ask whether we are witnessing a convergence towards "ultimate" scientific theories. While I personally would not wish to hazard any prediction, an affirmative answer is consistent with the following passage from the Zohar, as amplified by the Vilna Gaon. Commenting on the Biblical phrase: "the wellsprings of the great deep burst forth and the floodgates of the heavens were opened" (Genesis 7:11), the Zohar states that in the future, the gates of knowledge above ("the heavens") and the fountains of knowledge below ("the great deep") will be opened.

The Vilna Gaon takes this passage to refer to the importance of science for the understanding of Torah. He writes that "in order to understand and acquire the wisdom of the Torah, which is bound up with the light of the

supreme wisdom, it is necessary to study also the seven wisdoms (branches of science) hidden in the lower world, the world of nature." He greatly encouraged his disciples to engage in scientific studies for this purpose.

It is appropriate to end this review with a quotation from the greatest Torah scientist of all time. In a well-known responsum, Maimonides says the following of himself: "Before ever I was formed in the womb, the Torah knew me, and before I was born, she sanctified me—and handed me over to spread far and wide her fresh waters. The Torah is my beloved spouse, the wife of my youth, for with her love I was ravished at an early age. An yet, even she had many rivals—Moabites, Amorites, Sidonians, Edomites and Hittites. But God surely knows that these additional wives were taken only that they might act as perfumers, cooks and housekeepers for her, and the better to display her beauty to the people and princes—for she is extremely lovely to behold."

These striking words should give encouragement and gratification to Professor Aviezer, who has also tried "the better to display her beauty to the people and princes".

Cyril Domb is professor of Physics at Bar-Ilan University and a Fellow of the Royal Society of London.

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SECOND CITY JEWRY: THE JEWS OF GLASGOW IN THE AGE OF EXPANSION 1790-1919

by Kenneth E. Collins: *Scottish Jewish Archives* (1990) £6.95

Reviewer: Julia M. Merrick

Second City Jewry refers not deferentially to the capital city forty miles to the east of Glasgow, but boldly to its second place in the British Empire. In the nineteenth century, Glasgow was a city that was developing rapidly and where there were opportunities for the enterprising immigrant. Kenneth Collins' account of life of the Jews who came, in the main from England, Poland, Russia and Lithuania to build a vibrant community there is fascinating.

The themes of discord over religious observance are familiar to many communities and they are here given local colour. Should Garnethill maintain a mixed choir; who should be allowed to sell kosher meat, and who should be buried in which cemetery? These were literally life and death issues but the story of the continued effort that was made to heal breaches and keep a united front is remarkable in this community that grew tenfold from less than 100 families.

The newcomers to Glasgow found work in tailoring and tobacco industries, so filling gaps in the existing Scottish trades, or making caps, pic-

ture frames and jewelry, small items which did not need too much capital investment. Others found work in peddling and in shopkeeping. Some prospered and encouraged their children to enter the professions.

Not all who arrived in Glasgow intended to stay, some were on their way to America, but, whether permanent residents or temporary, many had health and welfare needs which the community tried to meet. Sometimes the pressure was too great and funds were sought and obtained from London. English lessons and Jewish education had also to be organised. Of course, social events, and societies, including a drama club, for anyone with a spare moment appeared, but these activities are only mentioned briefly by the author.

My impression from this book is that Glasgow Jews formed a restless community for whom Zionism presented the goal of an ultimate Golden M'dina. For some years they accepted that Uganda could be a temporary Promised Land, but then rejoined mainstream Zionism. Money was raised and Hebrew learnt with enthusi-

asm. The Aliyah of Glaswegians is a story that begins in this book but needs a sequel.

The book ends with the end of the first world war. The community had become established, and one may look back with some amusement to the visit of the adventurous Herman Lion of Edinburgh to Glasgow in 1790 and advertised his skills in pulling teeth and extracting corns without pain. We do not have any record of his patients' opinions, despite the enormous range of sources that Kenneth Collins has drawn on to make this book.

Students of Jewish history will find the bibliography and appendices useful, though the index is rather short. It certainly does not reflect the huge amount of information packed into over 200 pages of the paperback edition and here I have a criticism. The type is too compressed on to the page and some of the pleasure of reading is taken away by such a crowded presentation. The Scottish Jewish Archives should not have spoiled this ship for a hap'orth of tar and should aim for quality of presentation in all the boats they are building.

ARLOSOROFF

by Shlomo Avineri: *Peter Halban* (1989) £5.95

Reviewer: Stefan Reif

To many, the name "Arlosoroff" means no more than a street in Tel Aviv or some other Israeli city. Numerous individuals with some knowledge of history will be aware of a controversy about who assassinated such a man at the age of thirty-four on a Tel Aviv beach in 1933. A few politically informed Jews may even recall that Dr. Chaim Arlosoroff, as Head of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, was one of the leading lights of Labour Zionism after the First World War. No one can hazard even a confident guess about what today's Jewish State might have been, had he ever guided its fortunes.

In an attractive and inexpensive new series of paperback biographies, published by Peter Halban, experts describe the lives and works of such personalities as Rashi, Ibn Gabirol

and Maimonides from the Middle Ages, and Mendelssohn, Buber and Herzl in more modern times. That Chaim Arlosoroff (1899-1933) should have been chosen for inclusion among such Jewish historical dignitaries is in itself a measure of his significance and Avineri, Professor of Political Science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, has shown himself more than worthy of the challenge to assess that significance for the contemporary reader.

The biographee's first names, Chaim Vitaly Viktor, betray the exposure to three cultures - Jewish, Russian and German - that he was to experience in the first twenty-five years of his life. Unlike many of his colleagues in the Labour Zionist movement of the day, "mostly self-educated Eastern European *cheder* drop-outs from the *shtetl*" in Avineri's

memorable phrase (p.88), Arlosoroff was a competent linguist, an impressive political thinker, and a doctoral graduate in economics from the University of Berlin by the time that he settled in Eretz Yisrael in 1924. In the little more than a decade of adult life that fate permitted him, he was the author of various books and articles describing his vision of a socialist society in a Jewish homeland. What the reader of this biography will find remarkable is just how much of what he wrote still remains interesting and challenging.

As a member of Hapoel Hatzair rather than Poalei Zion (Ben-Gurion's party), Arlosoroff argued against the slogans, class warfare and state bureaucracy that he saw as characteristic of orthodox Marxism and championed a more voluntaristic and

libertarian socialism. Strongly influenced towards "social anarchism" by the ideas of Mikhail Bakunin and Pyotr Kropotkin, he was convinced that the seeds of corruption were early sown in all imposed systems of government and himself favoured freely formed federations of associations as the basis of an organised and caring society.

For a social anarchist devoted to the restoration of the Jews to their homeland, the themes of Hebrew culture, financial planning and management, purchase and cultivation of the land, and a spirit of compromise towards the British and the Arabs were central to the blueprint of a Jewish future. Since the continuity of Jewish existence had, in the past,

been assured by Hebrew language and literature, so the Jews of the future had to "reconquer and renew Hebrew in the cultural sphere" (p.34). Rather than "wearing English cloth, consuming German chocolate, Arab vegetables, Australian butter and Romanian flour" (p.56) the Jew should personally till the soil since "so long as labour in the country is not Jewish, Palestine too remains Galuth" (p.29).

Arlosoroff was full of novel ideas. If the purchase of land in British Mandatory Palestine was confrontational vis-à-vis the Arabs, the relatively deserted areas of Transjordan should be acquired from the Emir Abdullah and cultivated by Jews. If the British had an existing system of

government in Eretz Yisrael, the Jews should participate in it rather than pursuing a policy of boycott. If the Palestinian Arabs wished to express themselves through their own form of nationalism, this should not be ignored but a compromise proposed as long as it did not weaken a firm commitment to one's own Zionist ideas and principles.

Perhaps the time for all such notions has passed, perhaps not. Maybe more dull and practical men were always destined to run society, Zionist and otherwise. Or does such a biography remind us that novel ideas and utopian visions can sometimes suggest solutions to problems when more tried and pragmatic schemes have failed?

Literature

The poetry of Abraham Sutzkever **Beauty and power of the Yiddish word** by Heather Valencia

*And at the end of days,
This will come to pass: the son of
man
Will not bring to his hungry
mouth
Bread or beef,
Fig or honey;
He will merely try a word or two
And will be satisfied.*

Abraham Sutzkever placed these lines at the beginning of one of his volumes of poetry, and they express the essence of his poetic credo. His poetry and his life are characterised by belief in the *word* as an almost corporeal entity with quasi-magic protective power; of the period in the Vilna ghetto, he wrote: "When the sun itself seemed to have turned to ash, I believed with perfect faith: as long as the poem does not desert me, the bullet will not destroy me." This intimate relationship with the word, more perhaps than any other feature of his work, epitomises the essential Jewishness of his inspiration.

Abraham Sutzkever's poetry spans two worlds: heir of the astonishing nineteenth century blossoming of Yiddish poetry, he also experienced the Holocaust, and had to find a new poetic identity thereafter. His poetry not only embraces these two historical periods, but also fuses

two cultures; although rooted in the ancient Jewish tradition, it is also modern and universal.

His art takes its direction from the events of his life. The development of his poetic consciousness is linked with the three places which could be called his spiritual homes—Siberia, Vilna (the 'Jerusalem of Lithuania'), and Israel symbolised by the 'new' Jerusalem which had grown out of the old, denoting for him, as for most Jews, the survival of the Jewish people and of their cultural heritage. These three places have a symbolic significance in his poetry which mirrors their importance in his life.

Early years

Sutzkever was born near Vilna, (now Vilnius), in Lithuania, in 1913. Two years later, the Jewish population fled from fierce fighting between the German and Russian armies, and Sutzkever's early years were spent in Siberia, which was one of the formative influences on his poetry. The majestic poem *Sibir* evokes the child's transformation into a poet in that vast and awesome landscape:

(...) Stars fall, green stars.
Father does not see, as out of a
clear sky

This young boy changes to - an
avalanche,
Created by a miracle of light.

The snow of Siberia and his father's violin remain as permanent symbols in his work, often denoting the essence of the poetic word.

After the war the family returned to Vilna, a city of immense importance in East European Jewish cultural history. For centuries one of the foremost centres of Jewish scholarship, it was in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in the forefront of socialist and Zionist activity. Sutzkever grew to maturity therefore in a centre of contemporary, secular Jewish culture, which was also deeply conscious of its ancient religious and scholarly tradition.

In his teenage years Sutzkever started writing poetry which was influenced by Polish Romanticism, and infused with pantheistic nature imagery. This early poetry was essentially aesthetic. The Yiddish poet Melekh Ravitsh wrote of Sutzkever that he was in his innermost core an aesthete, a poet searching for beauty, who was however catapulted into a particular town, nation and time which forced upon him the mark of a 'natsionaler etik'. From the late thir-



Abraham Sutzkever: 'He will merely try a word or two.'

ties onward his poetry is deepened by the tension between his inherently aesthetic motivation and the wider social dimension which was at least partly imposed by the outward circumstances of his life.

Vilna Ghetto

The Germans entered Vilna in 1941, and set up two ghettos. Sutzkever and other Jewish intellectuals were forced to work for Rosenberg's 'Task Force for the Occupied Territories', collecting documents destined to be either destroyed or sent to Germany, to constitute a record of Jewish culture after the planned annihilation of the Jews. Sutzkever and his colleagues were able to hide much material, which was later rescued. They also used their position in the 'paper brigade' to smuggle weapons into the ghetto.

Sutzkever was active too in the ghetto's cultural life: theatre performances, poetry readings and concerts were staged under tremendous difficulties throughout the war years. In September 1943, he and his wife escaped and joined the Jewish and Polish partisans in the woods near Vilna. They remained there until March 1944, when Ilya Ehrenburg and the Soviet Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, who had read one of Sutzkever's longer poems, *Kol-Nidre*, managed to have the Sutzkevers airlifted to Moscow.

In Moscow Sutzkever publicised the plight of the Jews in Poland and wrote his prose account, *Vilner geto*. After the liberation of Vilna, he returned and salvaged from the rubble many of the hidden documents, and poetry which he had buried there. It is significant and remarkable that throughout the war years he never stopped writing poetry.

Israel

He testified at the Nuremberg Trials in 1946, after which he and his family travelled through Europe and settled in Israel in 1947. After some opposition - for the climate of opinion in Israel at that time was deeply hostile to the Yiddish language - Sutzkever established a literary and cultural journal to foster the work of Yiddish writers throughout the world. The first issue of *Di goldene keyt* ('The golden chain') appeared in Tel Aviv in 1949, and Sutzkever has edited the journal ever since.

The image of the golden chain, taken from the title of a drama by Perets, signifies *continuity*: the very existence of the journal symbolises the survival of the Jewish people and of the Yiddish word, and an integral strand of Sutzkever's poetry is this concept of the unbreakable chain of the generations. In a poem addressed to his child, murdered by the Nazis in 1943, he says:

For you are not a stranger, not a guest,
In this world one gives birth not to another -
But to oneself. That self is like a ring,
And the rings link together to form chains.

Another significant image from the ghetto poetry is the pattern created by the rivulets of the poet's blood on the limestone pit where he was hiding: his fascination with his 'creation' eased his pain, and the experience became a poem:

The lime pit becomes dear to me.
I lie and think:
I will not cease to stare
Till night, till night,
At this most lovely sunset, by me created there.

Through powerful, often savage imagery, Sutzkever struggled towards a conviction that art overcomes death, and that his poetic *raison d'être* was to witness to and unify all generations by his word.

Through the encounter with Israel, the poetic and existential struggles reach a kind of resolution: those conflicts between past and pre-

Charred pearls

It's not because my words quiver
Like broken hands which plead for rescue,
It's not because, like teeth, they hone themselves
On flesh in darkness - craving satisfaction, -
That you fan up the flames of my great wrath,
You written word, - my substitute world;
But it's because your sounds are glimmering
Like charred pearls
In a now extinguished pyre,
And none - not even I - crushed by the days,
Can recognise the woman washed by flames,
Those only remnant now of all her joys
Are grey charred pearls in the ashes...

Vilna ghetto, 28 July, 1943

sent, between physical annihilation and the eternity of poetry, and the inner guilt conflicts of the survivor. The land of Israel symbolises for him continuity and rebirth, and the fusion of past, present, and future.

In the first poem of the collection *In fayer-vogn* ('In the fiery chariot') he speaks of being "born together with the land,/Where every tiny stone is my grandfather". All the latent imagery of Jewish tradition, which was singularly absent from his work until now, is released, and becomes a vehicle for the expression of this new inner harmony: the 'fayer-vogn' of Elijah resonates with the idea, that the poet, like Elisha, takes "the mantle of Elijah that fell from him". Past and present are reconciled in the fusion of the snow of his childhood with the fire of Israel; the poem *Snow on Mount Hermon* ends with the words, "Without the snow it would be cold in my fiery homeland."

The integration of nightmare experiences within his consciousness, liberates his creativity from the burden of the past, and the poet is free to probe ever more deeply into the essence of the poetic word. The later poems therefore are characterised by a renewed, more mature aestheticism, in which continuity can be seen in the fusion of the past with the aesthetic concerns of his poetic search.

Continuity and renewal are also the keynotes of the web of imagery

through which Sutzkever develops his themes. Throughout his *oeuvre* there are permanent key images which recur, develop and combine to form a complex symbolic language. Often in later poems the images seem to have an autonomous reality of their own, but they contain nevertheless the resonance of their origins and poetic history. These poems, which attempt to express the inexpressible, must be read, as Sutzkever has said "mit neshome oygn"—with the eyes of the soul.

Sutzkever's poetry fuses two cultu-

ral traditions. He is European in his links with the Romantics, in his striking affinities with Baudelaire and Rilke, and with the French Symbolist poets. His innermost core, however, is essentially Jewish. From the vantage point of the 1990's, it is justifiable to venture the assertion that he is one of the greatest poets of the twentieth century. The question whether his work will ever reach a wide enough audience to accord him his rightful place in the history of European culture, exemplifies the great dilemma of Yiddish literature.



Heather Valencia was born in Belfast in 1942. She was a lecturer in German language and literature at the University of Stirling until 1988. She has been working in the field of Yiddish studies for the past five years and is currently doing research on the poetry of Sutzkever. She lives in Thornhill, near Stirling, and is married to Michael who is a lecturer in Social Policy; they have four children.

Holocaust

MENGELE'S VICTIM

by Zoe Polanska-Palmer

It was on a February winter night of 1943, after the Germans occupied Russia, that a group of Waffen SS men rounded up children in the Odessa region and sent them to various concentration camps.

At the age of thirteen the Waffen SS dragged me away from the loving arms of my Mama, I was wrenched at gunpoint and piled into a truck already packed with screaming children. Sickened and bewildered by the tyrant's behaviour, I put on my hooded grey coat and fastened the pom-poms under my chin.

Somehow, Papa managed to stagger to his feet, badly bleeding about the mouth. Without saying a word, he

found his crutches and lashed out at the SS man's back. The SS man retaliated with a volley of bullets; Papa screamed and then dropped heavily on the snow, where he rolled pitifully, still screeching, "Let her go!"

I turned my head for the last time and shouted a desperate promise: "I will be back Mama. I will see you again."

The truck sped away leaving milky clouds of snow behind us. An hour or so later, it came to a stop at its destination. I hardly recognised Perwomaik station, as it was encircled by hundreds of both Waffen SS and Wehrmacht. The platform itself was packed with hosts of children and

adults of all ages, clinging to each other and holding hands.

The cattle trucks we were to travel in were crammed tightly with Jewish deportees towards the front of the train. The rest of us, including Jewish children, were herded into the remaining trucks. I stared at the nightmare all around me, but knew that I would have to do as I was told—any protest was futile.

Throughout the years in the concentration camps, first in Auschwitz then in Dachau, I clung to that promise, drawing from it a will to survive: the thought that I must not break my promise to Mama made me refuse to give in to those evil Nazi monsters who imprisoned me, even though there were many times when it would have been a release just to die.

Auschwitz

During one of Mengele's experiments they gouged with a scalpel on my left leg and extracted a fresh chunk of flesh—the wound has never completely disappeared.

I was suffocating in the gloom of my surroundings; for the first time I wanted to die as quickly as possible. The piercing pain and my soaring temperature made me barely notice what else they did to me after that. But nature is wonderful ... and chose to heal my weakened body; within a few days the raging fever had subsided and the pain had lessened. I tried very hard to summon some happier thoughts - a splash of colour into the grey of my existence - and formed pictures of Mama and Papa's smiling faces. I recalled my old playground, packed with my school friends—we were all so happy.

The sound of heavy boots once



Zoe Polanska-Palmer: determination to survive.

more interrupted my thoughts and I felt a sharp probe sting on my chest; it was the distinguished looking Dr. Capesius. His facial expression made me wonder for a moment whether he may show me a little kindness—but I was mistaken. Like a robot and without any word, he held my teeth apart and placed a handful of tablets in my mouth. When I could not swallow he pressed on my throat with his clumsy fat hands and when I vomited he simply started again with a different type of tablet.

Flurried screams would echo across the block as each experiment ended. For the long hours to follow not even God in heaven could save those children from his cruel hands; not until the experiments were completed.

I can never understand the workings of God, especially when it comes to children, but then no one understands these things.

At a later stage, together with Jewish children, I was transferred from Auschwitz to Dachau where against all the odds I managed to escape during an Allied bombing. I hid among goods in a train to Vienna, and then, for fear of being captured by the Gestapo I went to Italy.

Forced repatriation

After the war I joined the crowds of refugees walking back to Austria and eventually I found myself in a refugee camp run by the British for many different nationalities and for Russians who had surrendered to them as prisoners of war, having fought against the Soviets.

It is here that the pattern of my life takes one of its cruellest turns. Although innocently, I longed to go back to my own country, I soon realised that no distinction was to be made between me and those Russians whom Stalin considered as traitors. I was a victim of the Yalta Agreement made between Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt, which committed the British to repatriate the Russians by force, despite the fact that the Russians only fought against communism and Stalin was executing them on arrival.

My young friend Tonia and I came upon a huge encampment which seemed to stretch endlessly along the Drau valley. It was called Peggetz camp, Lienz, and consisted of wooden barracks long deserted by the Germans and now refilled with the sound of vibrating voices in many languages. We did not register at the main gate and walked in a forlorn mood along the grey dusty path, surveying each barrack as we passed it.

It was somehow frightening to see the Drau valley so overlaid with its

cavalcade of thousands of Cossacks and their horses of all different shapes and sizes. The horses grazed for miles over the wide green landscape. Clusters of carts littered the valley, their canvases blown by the wind, and their owners stood tensely by them in groups looking dazed and bewildered.

Images of war

I remember when one day, as I was looking over this part of Austria which had suffered little war damage if any, I could not help thinking how very different this was from the rough and battered towns and villages in the Odessa area, where Hitler caused so much destruction all over the occupied territory: the Gestapo ruled supreme and Germany fattened on the loot of the continent. Our home was not far from the frontier and lay in the advancing army's path to Odessa. It was not long before I witnessed the meaning of war, a concept which had previously been little more than abstract to my young mind.

As the German artillery drew closer, Stalin's army, ill-trained and equipped with little more than sticks and basic ammunition, were powerless to defend us. We ourselves could do little more than hide trembling and praying for the noise of the battle to cease.

When we crept outside, hours later, a horrifying sight met my eyes: our sunflower field was flattened by the Russian/Jewish dead. Even so, the German tanks relentlessly ploughed forward, their wheels clogged with corpses.

Often on my way home from school I had paused to gaze at this same field. The huge yellow sunflowers - swaying in unison - were like a beautiful poem, steeped in symbolism drawn from our folklore, of nature's cycle of life and birth. And now ... I had never seen so many dead people. I knew nothing of the carnage of war. Mama held my hand firmly; we were completely numb and speechless.

Tales were rife of the German looting, raping women and children when and how they pleased, deaf to the cries of protest from mothers and grandmothers.

We heard of people disappearing from their homes and whole families being forced into German trucks in full daylight. No one knew where they were taken. There were large Jewish communities in our area but it seemed that all our people were at risk.

It was almost dusk when the town of Pervomaisk came into sight on the day mama took me to see the doctor. Not far in front of us we could see a crowd of people being marched under

a heavy convoy of SS guards. A large number of trucks had come to a halt in the middle of a barley field. They were packed with women, children and white-headed men. The screaming women and children were unloaded and ordered to undress. Some of the smaller children tried to cling to their mothers as they marched naked, but the SS guards kicked them off before shooting them dead.

Mama and I had to crawl on our bellies, panic-stricken, in order to pass the guards unseen. The field was flanked with dead bodies; a plight of groaning voices assailed my ears from all directions. Mama held me tight as I felt sick. A few months later I was taken away to Auschwitz.

Peggetz camp was so different in my thoughts. The morning dew filled the Drau with transparent silver, and smouldering fires were scattered about the grassy banks. Everything was entirely and most peacefully quiet: only the insects were making their rhythmical noises.

Epilogue

A British doctor who was attending to me saved my life and thereafter I came over to England through the International Red Cross. Sixteen years later a most moving reunion with my Mama took place. In 1961 I went to Moscow, as interpreter to a company exhibiting at the British Trade Fair. Incredibly, Mama had heard about the mission on the radio and resolved to travel to Moscow to search for her stolen daughter. It was also in Moscow when Mama made me promise to write about Nazi's bestialities which forms the theme of my book *Yalta Victim*.

I feel that it is important to write down what happened to us in those years partly because I believe we must continue making the world realise how awful it was, that it should never happen again. And I also think that, even in the darkest hour, when it seems that God has deserted you, that there is not hope, it is possible to cling on. With a little hope and optimism, it is possible for miracles to happen.

I did not worry about writing until I read anti-Semitic articles that the Holocaust was a myth. I then wrote *Yalta Victim* on a river of tears—it is memorial to them all.

Zoe Polanska-Palmer was born in Odessa in 1929. She and her Canadian-born husband now live in Broughty Ferry, Dundee. She has worked as a State Enrolled Nurse, trained and practised as a beautician, and been a director of a property development company. Her book Yalta Victim, published by Mainstream, was considered by Yad Vashem of "great importance" for its being a non-Jewish account of the Holocaust.

After nearly half a century in Edinburgh

Aliyah at 75 plus

by Eva Erdelyi

When I began to think of transplanting myself from Edinburgh to Tel Aviv, I wrote a letter to my brother-in-law in Israel. In due course I received a reply, very cordial, but not exactly encouraging. He had consulted the members of our family, and the verdict was that such a transplantation at my age was risky, to say the least. They suggested a compromise: I should come to Israel for six months, living in a furnished flat, before making a final decision. This may have been excellent advice for another person, but not for me; I knew that if I did not jump now, I would never jump at all.

So I thought the next step would be to visit Israel and start looking for a flat in Tel Aviv. Why Tel Aviv, of all places, rather than Natania, or Naharia, or, and what was a real temptation, Jerusalem itself? Well, I knew that Naharia was full of German and Hungarian Jews and Natania of British ones; I wanted something more cosmopolitan, more adventurous, more pulsating with the life of the country. I wanted to be near the sea, near the international airport at Lud, and in a central position from which to visit relatives and friends scattered, as they were, from Dan to Beer-sheva. Obviously, Tel Aviv was the answer.

Lucky chances

In March 1987 I had the good fortune to participate in a study tour of Israel organized and conducted by that wonderful couple, John and Irene Eivan, of the Edinburgh Friends of Israel. This was the first of a series of lucky chances which culminated in my aliyah in October of that same year, 1987. My plan was to stay in a Tel Aviv hotel for two weeks after the Friends had returned to Edinburgh, and try to find a suitable flat. But before the end of the tour, in fact on the last evening, at the farewell party sponsored by the Zionist Organization in the Windmill Hotel in Jerusalem, my second lucky chance occurred.

I was introduced to and warmly welcomed by Uzi and Daniella Shilon. Uzi is a well known lawyer. His family has been settled in Israel for four generations. He and his charming wife speak excellent English with a faintly familiar accent

which they acquired during two years spent in Glasgow, where Uzi worked in the Jewish Agency as a "shaliach", or middle-man between Scotland and Israel (the literal translation would be, I suppose, "emissary"). They had made the journey from Ramat-Gan to Jerusalem on purpose to meet some of their Scottish friends at the Windmill Hotel party, and they were destined to become my best friends in Israel.

By the time I was introduced to this extraordinary couple I had become a little troubled, not to say daunted, by the task I was facing. How would I, a most impractical person, notorious for walking with her head in the clouds, cope unaided with the problems of choosing and

what difficult to find, but when I eventually discovered their lair in one of the more labyrinthine shopping-and-office arcades in the Namir Square, centre of Tel Aviv's tourist trade, a pretty young lady called Miriam offered to show me some three-room flats I might be interested in. It was All Fools' Day when I started flat hunting: a very suitable date. My family watched my proceedings from the side-lines, unwilling to interfere but prepared for the worst, as a parent might watch his or her child ride a bicycle 'without hands'. Put into words, the general feeling was "What a crazy idea!" But crazy ideas sometimes work, and especially so in Israel.



Eva Erdelyi (centre) with 'best friends in Israel' Uzi and Daniella Shilon.

buying a flat in a country bristling with problems of her own? Would I not encounter snares and pitfalls at every step? In fact I was up to my knees in the slough of despondency and doubt, when . . . lo and behold . . . two smiling strangers encouraged me to get in touch with them in case of need. So I lifted up my heart, stepped out of the slough of despondency and into the Hotel Concorde, armed with the address and telephone number of the Anglo-Saxon Housing Agency, and of my future friend and lawyer, Uzi Shilon.

The 'Anglosaxons' were some-

Once we found a flat, Uzi negotiated the price and drew up the contract. It was signed and finalized on the eve of Passover, and the family, forgetting their misgivings, drank to my health at the Seder table, wishing me good luck and welcoming me as a future fellow citizen.

A new life

The six months following my return to Edinburgh were not the easiest ones of my life. I had to apply for immigration through the Jewish Agency in Glasgow, I had to sell my flat in Findhorn Place, and I had to

make arrangements for shipping my possessions. Many were the delays, complications and frustrations caused by my own inexperience and by the law of inertia which acts as a brake in affairs of this kind, but I was ready to leave at the end of the High Holidays—the time limit I had decided on.

My Edinburgh friends, both Jewish and non-Jewish, had been extremely understanding and co-operative. In the end I was showered

with presents and invitations, and I did not find it easy to part from this beautiful city and from my good friends. Still, I knew that this was the necessary corollary before beginning a new life in Israel.

When I went from Vienna to Edinburgh, half a century ago, I was told that it is not customary for British people to ask personal questions. This is still true, at least to some extent; but my Edinburgh friends were not all that British, so

they asked many questions and I answered to the best of my ability. But they were too tactful to ask, and I should have found most difficult to answer, why did I embark on this adventure at my age? I never even asked myself. There were many reasons, and no reason at all. It was just a thing I had to do. And so I picked myself up, and came into the land “which the Lord swore unto our Fathers to give us.” In other words, I was hooked for better or worse.

Memories of Scots-Yiddish voices of the old days

DREI UND DREISSIG

by Lionel Daiches

Some of my most powerful and affectional memories relate to the Jewish community who flourished in Edinburgh between the two wars when I was a child, schoolboy and student. Perhaps “flourished” is not the most appropriate word because most of the characters I remember were not rich or important. But they possessed virtues and qualities which aroused in me a nostalgic affection which will always remain. Sometimes they aroused in me feelings of critical amusement which, in reflection, arose from that unconscious cruelty of youth. That amusement, however, was always tempered with a deep affection and now with the passing of the years, a profound respect.

They are all dead now and the number of those who remember them is rapidly decreasing. Yes; they were neither rich nor important, but the passing of the years has helped to crystallise their virtues and their worth and to sharpen my appreciation of their achievements. They were devout observers and regular supporters of the synagogue; they worshipped at the Graham Street Synagogue and the Central Synagogue in Richmond Street. They bore themselves with dignity and were respected by their neighbours. Most of them were foreign born immigrants from Lithuania and other parts of the Russian empire; they arrived in Edinburgh and starting with little or nothing succeeded in establishing a modestly successful living, educated their children and managed to integrate themselves in the life of the general community. A few became rich. But not very many.

They lived mostly in the South Side of Edinburgh in the area around about Nicholson Street, Summerhall Square and Hope Park Terrace. Quite

a number of families lived in Buccleuch Street and some of the most active among them, related to each other, lived in number 33, a tenement which was affectionately referred to by its residents as *Drei und Dreissig*. Few realised at the time that the Scots-Yiddish speaking parents in *Drei und Dreissig* would produce doctors, scientists and men of learning whose names have now become famous in the English-speaking world.

Most of these founding fathers of the Edinburgh Jewish community had Russian sounding names and I think there were, at that time, more “skys” in Edinburgh than anywhere else in Scotland. Their names still jingle in my head like some kind of crazy rhyme. There were:

Sklovsky, Kissenisky, Chussudovsky, Pinkinsky, Turiansky, Slomnitsky, Wedeklevsky, Chesarsky, Grasovsky, Poliwaysy, Rosovsky, and Peterkovsky to name but a few.

They were genuine characters and stories regarding them are legion. I remember a corpulent little gentleman whose wife was as globular as himself. He never seemed to have much money and his occupation was somewhat of a mystery. He was so small, round and fat that it was difficult, at times, to ascertain whether he was standing up or reclining on his side. He was the jolliest man I ever knew; he was perpetually bubbling with laughter and every sling and arrow of outrageous fortune produced from him a gleeful joke. He ate enough at one meal to satisfy three men. In all the long time I knew him I never saw him frown.

Many years ago, when I was a young solicitor, I met him outside the Law Courts in Edinburgh. He greeted

me with a big “Hello” and a huge smile. “What are you doing here?” I inquired. “I’m a dzury man; I’m a member from a dzury in a damages case; un let me tell you dat British jostiss is de finest jostiss in de vorlt!” he replied. “Why do you say that?” I asked. With a joyous twinkle he replied, “Ve are sitting in dis dzury box ven comes lonchtime un de foreman from de dzury says to me: ‘Excuse me vot’s de time?’ So I says to him, ‘vot’s de matter de foreman from a dzury hasn’t got a votch?’—so I sold him a gold votch before lonchtime; British jostiss is de finest in de vorlt!”

Somewhat intrigued I asked how he evaluated the arguments presented by the opposing counsel on each side. “Oozing merriment,” he said, “I listened to the big-vigs for a vile und den I told de dzury, ‘Vait a bit; is it your money, is it my money? Its de insurance company’s money, so vy not give de poor vooman a tousand pound. So ve gave her a tousand pound. British jostiss is the finest in de vorlt!’”. With that reply he burst into laughter and with a parting admonition to me “to keep vell in helt” he rolled away.

I remember going with my father and one of the venerable chazanim of the synagogue in a car to a funeral. On the journey we passed through Queen’s Park where we saw a number of ladies riding on horseback. This spectacle aroused great astonishment in the mind of the venerable chazan who expressed his surprise that ladies should be riding on horses. A passenger in the car explained that it was now a common practice and some of our respectable Jewish wives of prominent members of the Congregation were known to indulge in the sport. “Vot?!” exclaimed the chazan, “De vimmin are riding on de beks from de

horses, yiddishers weibels?" "Indeed they do" was the reply. The chazan fell into a puzzled reverie and murmured in Yiddish, "My heart bleeds for the horses."

In the early 1920's Mr Lionel de Rothschild and Sir Robert Waley Cohen visited the congregation. After suitable visits and entertainment they were seen off at the station by the office-bearers who included the late Mr. S.S. Stungo. At the time of their departure the city was enveloped in dense fog. As the distinguished guests were about to embark in their reserved first class carriage to London, Mr. Stungo turned and said, "You know, Sir Robert, when this fog is gone it won't be missed." The reply of the aristocratic President of the United Synagogue is not recorded.

In the very early days of my father's career as Rabbi in Edinburgh he was taken round the various Jewish shops which then existed in numbers. There were kosher butchers, bakers and dairies all of which came under rabbinical supervision. The chazan I have already referred to accompanied him on his various visits of inspection and informed him that the proprietor of a kosher dairy



Rabbi Dr Salis Daiches in the late 1920's.

had recently died leaving a very considering fortune. "Did he make all that money from milk" inquired my father, somewhat surprised. "Nein", came the reply, "von wasser". Perhaps it was a kind of kosher perrier water!

There is a tale for which I cannot vouch; it may well be apocryphal. It said that many years ago a member of

the community was involved in a divorce case and in the witness box he was asked sternly by counsel, "Is it not the case that on the 13 July last in the Central Hotel in Glasgow you slept all night with my client's wife?" "Not a vink, my Lord", came the reply. I did say the story may well be apocryphal!

A Jewish lady in the city, well



Edinburgh in the 1920's. View of Princes Street and the Castle.

known for her cooking skills and her superb hospitality, the mother of a large and happy family, complained to me once that she just didn't know what to do with her young Irish servant girl who, she asserted, just could not understand a word of English. "Dat little shiksa don't unnerstent a vort from English. I vos making a sponze cake. Now for a sponze cake you heff to heff ekks. Everyone knows dat you can't mek a sponze cake mit no ekks. For a sponze cake ekks is vital. So I told her, Mary go down un bring up die ekks. Un vould you believe [it] - dat meshuggana shiksa comes back mit a chopper. She don't unnerstent a vort from English". Yes; it takes a moment to see how the confusion arose!

I remember a member of the con-

gregation, one of the more affluent who had little contact with *Drei und Dreissig* Buccleuch Street, who liked to associate himself with literary gatherings and visit houses where intellectual subjects were discussed. At my father's house I remember frequently, having listened silently for a while to a literary or learned discussion, he would quietly and with great diffidence interrupt by asking, "Excuse me, Dr. Daiches, was that the Maimonides whose father kept a butcher shop in the Gorbals?", or "I beg your pardon, Dr. Daiches, but was that the Moses Mendelssohn whose daughter ran away with a West Indian and who lived for many years in Newington Road?" He was a man of great humility and it was said that whenever he accidentally bumped

into a lamppost he used to raise his hat and say "I beg your pardon." When he retired he went to live in Monte Carlo with his wife where he acquired a reputation for great erudition and humility.

As I have said, they have all gone now, these remarkable founders of our community. We are now only beginning to understand their courage, their devotion to their people, their religion and the children they cared for so successfully. They lie in Echobank and Piershill. Their children are scattered. The mezzuzas have long disappeared from the lintels of the flats of *Drei und Dreissig* Buccleuch Street. The Scots-Yiddish voices are heard no more in Edinburgh's Southside. But their memory remains for a blessing.

The Michael Adler Interview

ABE RABSTAFF

One of the most loved and most respected members of the Community, who recently celebrated his ninetieth birthday

Were you born in Edinburgh?

No, I was born in London at the end of the last century. I was one of the original boys at the London Jewish free School in Bayswater—I can even remember the name of the Headmaster, Dr. Wolf.

And where did your family come from?

My zeyde (grandfather) was brought from the Ukraine by Sir

Robert Blackfield in 1898 to make uniforms for the South African War. He was a master tailor in a very big way. Perhaps the original sweat shop was owned by my grandfather. He built a shul in Brick Lane, a hashidic *shtibl*. He brought his own Rabbi over (who later became a wine merchant) and later he brought my father over too.

Was your father also a tailor?

No, my father was a *baal sofer*—he

wrote the script of the Torah.

And how was it that your family came to Edinburgh?

When the Boer War ended in 1902, my zeyde felt a responsibility towards all the people who worked for him. He had brought all of them over from Russia, mainly from the Northern part of the Ukraine, to the East of the River Dnieper. There were a lot of little *shtetl* and that is where most of his workers came from. There was a



tailors' strike in Edinburgh and he said to his workers, "Let's go strike breaking". He came up here and got himself a house in Waverley Park with his three daughters. There were two other Jewish families there, the Beidelmans (later called Marx) and the Vinestocks.

Do I take it then that you did not live in Waverley Park?

When my grandfather came to Edinburgh in 1902, he left us in London. Later on, when we came to Edinburgh, we lived in the heart of the 'ghetto', at No. 3 East Richmond Street. There were four flats in the tenement, but I think there were only two non-Jewish families on the stair. You could get a *minyán* in your own tenement at any time. If you had *yart-sayt* you didn't need to run to the shul. *How many shuls were there at this time?*

There was a shul in Dalry with about thirty families. Then there was an Orthodox shul in the ghetto in North Richmond Street. That was the shul that we went to and then there was the Graham Street Congregation. They called us the 'greener' shul (this was a derogatory term suggesting that we were like greenhorns) and in return we referred to them as the 'englischer' shul (the lowest form of insult was to call someone an Englishman).

What was it like to grow up in the Ghetto?

We formed a Jewish Lads Club. Ronder was Secretary and Marcus, who later became a Parliamentary Private Secretary, was Treasurer—they all did well. When we got together, we conversed in Yiddish—we sang Yiddish and spoke Yiddish to each other. I remember I joined the Club as soon as it started. I was a joiner. It was very successful—we rented a property in Drummond Street, we ran a barber shop, we had a quartet, we managed to buy a piano and got a boxing instructor. In those days, it was a common thing for Jewish boys to get attacked. So we learned boxing and wrestling and some of us turned out to be quite good and we produced three excellent wrestlers. But we all knew the art of self-defence and after the *goyim* had received one or two hidings from us, they left us alone and began to respect us. At least a third of the members died in the (First World) War.

At what point did you join up?

I joined up in 1916. My father, who was actually a bit of a pacifist, believed that if a country was worth living in, it was also worth fighting for. However, because I was a bit young, he stuck two years on to my age. So when I was 16 I thought I was 18. This

was also to get me in as an articulated apprentice so that I could learn a trade properly. As it happens, this stood me in good stead later in life because I ended up as head man at R.W. Forsyth's in Princes Street. It all came out later in life when I required a passport and they couldn't trace my birth certificate. I had to get a lawyer on the job and it was only then that I gained two years of life. Even my wife was fooled into thinking that she had married a man two years older than herself!

What did you do in the War?

I spent most of the time in France and rose to the dizzy heights of Corporal. In fact, I believe that I am the only Jewish survivor in Edinburgh who fought on the Western Front in the First World War. When I was called up, my father told me that I was to write home in Yiddish because otherwise I would forget that I was a Jew. I did this to the best of my ability and in return he used to write to me in Yiddish. I can remember that I was always asking for news of who had been killed and every letter I got conveyed the news that someone else had died. I can also remember him telling me (in Yiddish) that the Congregation were so sick that they had had to bring in a Doctor. This was true, up to a point, although I didn't understand it when I read it. They had brought in Rabbi Doctor Daiches—until that point, the only Rabbi Doctors I had heard of were Chief Rabbis Adler and Hertz.

What happened after the War?

I was gassed in late 1917 and then I came home. A year after I came home, when I was 21, I got married. It was about that time that I started to realise that I wasn't going to live the same kind of life and experience, the same kind of penury as my parents, in particular, what my mother had had to put up with. My father went about looking for mitzvot, burying the dead, sitting with the dead, writing tombstones, and he did all for nothing. My mother used to get up at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning to make the bread and the rolls for us to go to work. Life was very hard, and very tough. We had no electric lights, no bath, or anything like that.

In many ways, your grandfather seems to have been much more successful?

Oh yes. He was much better off - you might almost call him middle-class - but very orthodox at the same time. He regarded Edinburgh as a *treyste shtet* which wasn't really fit for Jews to live in. On a Friday night we used to go to him for Kiddush and I can still remember some of the *naches* he gave me. He asked me what I had

learned the previous week. I told him that last week we had been taught that God created man in his own image and that this week we had been taught about ill-will and goodwill. I told him that it didn't make sense. If God created only goodwill, there would be no wars. That was how I saw it as a child. (I was 9 or 10 at the time.) He said "That's a good question and I'll give you an answer, but the answer won't make sense until you grow up". He put it to me in Yiddish that, if there was only goodwill, hens wouldn't lay eggs. I didn't laugh because it didn't make the least bit of sense at the time. I was fifteen before the penny dropped and I understood that the correct inference was that procreation entails a certain amount of pain.

So what did you do when you were demobbed?

Before the War, when I was 13-14, I was apprenticed to a man from Warsaw. I was quite good at geometry and I mastered cutting. After the War, I obtained the keys for five workshops. All I needed were the measurements and I could cut for everyone in the workshops. As a result I earned well from the start. And when I was 32, I received a letter from R.W. Forsyth's in Princes Street, where no Jew had been employed for 25 years, and I ended up as chief designer and cutter (head man)—one of the premier positions in the tailoring trade in the whole of Britain.

Looking back, what was the main difference between your childhood and the experience of childhood today?

We were tempered by the experience of adversity. Today's children have everything.

Is the experience of adversity a good thing?

It was character-building. I will give you an example. I was in Canada two years ago and the son of a cousin of mine asked me how I would describe myself. I said "I am a survivor". He looked at me with a blank stare on his face—it was clearly a phrase he had never heard before. "Well", I said, "I have had three children and have lost them all. Now I have no children at all. I had a wife for 65 years and now I have lost her. All that was dearest to me is gone". So I said "How else can I describe myself?" I am a survivor. But I have only been able to stand up to all these tragedies because I was brought up to experience adversity. Now I can open up the treasure house of treasured memories and savour those special moments. Easy living is not good for us. Nowadays, people want to give up when they have a bad time but I can say that it was much worse in the past.

