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Views & Reviews
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Fresh start for the orange and blue

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The Edinburgh Star

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From the Editor

What could be more tragic than to build up your hopes and dreams of a better future for your children and then to have them cruelly dashed? But cruelty did not feature in the way soldiers, overcome with emotion themselves, had to carry out their heartbreaking task. Despite the terrible possibility that lives might be lost, or that IDF rebellion could unbalance the only democracy in the Middle East, it never happened. Rather, Israels expressed their frustrations in a battle of orange and blue. Disengagement took in remarkably short space of time affording a greater chance for the wound to heal and for the desert to continue to flower under the responsibility of Mahmoud Abbas, more so than was ever possible under Yasser Arafat. You may not agree with Ariel Sharon or even like the fact that he has reneged on his original policy to encourage settlement in sensitive areas after 1967, but it takes great courage to do what he has done; like a parent who is willing to risk temporary hatred of his child in order to avoid an even deeper pain. Rabbi Rose explores this highly emotive topic in 'The knitted kippah unravels'.

It appears that in the last three months settling the world and its problems has been uppermost in the news, and it can only be to the credit of ordinary people, that they truly believe that they can persuade the powers that be. And how much more powerful can you get than the combination of eight of the most influential countries in the world coming together? Some might feel, however, that the millions of pounds spent managing this highly commendable show of solidarity, might have been better spent on the people for 'Make Poverty History' was intended. Read how MPH impressed Maurice Naftalin.

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The Editorial Board wish to thank the advertisers and the following for their support since the last edition:
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We again approach Rosh Hashanah and the beginning of a new year. The forty days between the beginning of Elul and Yom Kippur are called in Jewish tradition, ‘Days of Mercy’. During these days G-d is especially close to us and, hopefully, to Him. It was during these forty days that Moses again ascended Mt Sinai to receive the Second Tablets; symbolising the reconciliation between G-d and Israel after the sin of the Golden Calf. It is interesting, therefore, that these days are also ones of introspection and self-criticism.

Indeed, they are the essential ingredients of the reconciliation and forgiveness experienced during this period. It appears that the closer the relationship, between G-d and Israel the more it must be based on the ability to be honest and even critical of the other. Without that honesty and introspection, no change is possible. Without our ability to examine ourselves truthfully and openly we can never restore our relationship with G-d. For this reason Maimonides regards confession, i.e. self-criticism, as the central mitzvah of Yom Kippur. It is the essential ingredient in having a decent relationship with those around us and G-d. As we look at the often-disturbing events of the last year and contemplate the future; this is possibly the most important lesson we can learn. Whether as a community, a nation, only by an honest appraisal of ourselves can we hope to make things better.

The forty days are a time of history of self-appraisal and the introspective nature of these days, we can seriously and honestly look at ourselves and begin the process of change. In doing so we cannot only ensure our own salvation but even be a light to others. Let us rise to the challenge that we all may merit to see a better world in the years ahead.

A Happy and Peaceful New Year
Rabbi David Rose

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With Best Wishes

Rabbi David Rose

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Make Poverty History—what a remarkable slogan! I can remember exactly my thoughts on first seeing it: how daring and ambitious an idea it seemed, how unrealistic, and how much work was required. Two months after the extraordinarily successful Edinburgh demonstration, it is possible to review the progress so far of the campaign around this slogan, and the verdict has to be mixed. The same can be said of the Jewish contribution to it; we worked hard and achieved a great deal, more than ever before on such an issue, but in terms of concrete achievement, there is far to go.

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Rosh Hashanah Message
Rabbi David Rose
hoped for. But despite all that, I believe that the plain demand for global justice has taken root in people's minds.

Looking forward: where will the campaign go next? By the time you read this, the Millennium Development Goals Summit will already have passed. The Millennium Goals, agreed in 2000 by every member of the United Nations, would end extreme poverty and disease by 2015. Their future hangs in the balance as the new US ambassador to the UN begins to exert his influence. After the Summit, the World Trade Organisation meets in December. By now we are informed enough to know that these meetings, remote and uninteresting as they seem, actually make decisions that mean life or death to millions. Our leaders need to know that we understand this, and we expect results.

Because of the success of MPH, there is discussion of carrying it on past 2005. Unfortunately the need for it will not end in December! Similarly the MPH Jewish Coalition will continue in some form that can preserve the hard-won organisational gains of the campaign and carry it forward on issues of special interest to Jews—for instance Trade Justice, where our tradition is very strong: as Maimonides said, the highest degree of charity is setting a poor man up in business so that he is no longer dependent on outside help. We need to look at our own practice too: as consumers, there is a lot we can do to favour trade that pays a fair price instead of pennies a day for sweated labour.

So, how right were my first impressions of that slogan? Daring and ambitious, unrealistic? Hardly so in material terms:

- reduce by two thirds the number of children dying before the age of five
- halve the number of people living on less than $1 a day
- provide a full course of primary school to every boy and girl
- reduce by two thirds the number of children dying before the age of five
- reduce by three-quarters the number of women who die in giving birth

In time you read this, the Millennium Development Goals Summit will already have passed. The Millennium Goals, agreed in 2000 by every member of the United Nations, would end extreme poverty and disease by 2015. Their future hangs in the balance as the new US ambassador to the UN begins to exert his influence. After the Summit, the World Trade Organisation meets in December. By now we are informed enough to know that these meetings, remote and uninteresting as they seem, actually make decisions that mean life or death to millions. Our leaders need to know that we understand this, and we expect results.

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So, how right were my first impressions of that slogan? Daring and ambitious, unrealistic? Hardly so in material terms: it would take very little resource, relatively speaking, to make a huge impact on the the problem of world poverty. What is daring and ambitious is to imagine finding the political will to do it. Worth working for? Actually, as Jews we don’t have any choice: the Talmud tells us, “Whoever is able to protest against the transgressions of the entire world and does not do so is held responsible for the transgressions of the entire world.”

But will we succeed? I don’t know the answer to that, but I do know that it’s the wrong question to ask: “He [Rabbi Tarfon] used to say: It is not your duty to finish the work, but neither are you free to abandon it.” (Pirkei Avot, Ch 2)

You can learn more about the MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY Jewish Coalition at www.eljc.org/mpf, or by contacting World Jewish Aid at 74 Camden Street, London NW1 0EG

**The MPH weekend the logistics for the EHC**

**Hilary Rikkind**

‘.... there could be 200 Jewish people coming to Edinburgh for the MPH March and we have to feed them!!' I had just been given the news that the EHC had been asked by the Make Poverty History Jewish Coalition to host Shabbat meals for this event.

How was the Shul Events Committee going to cope?

On Friday night we wanted to provide a traditional Shabbat Dinner following the Kabbalat Shabbat services held by EHC and Sukkat Shalom; on Saturday, following the morning services, there would be a substantial Kiddush for everyone going to walk to the Meadows for 2pm; and in the evening a Seudah between Minchah and Ma'arav.

We’re a very small group, should we cater ourselves?’. ‘Holiday time - probably not many people around to help’. ‘Lots of vegetarians - need alternatives’ - ‘Be sensible - order the main food for the dinner and Kiddush from Simcha Catering in Glasgow’.

This we arranged to do; careful costings were made; a booking form was published on the Liberal Community’s web site - we were committted!

What worries then beset me?

How would I cope with heating all the food if there were more than 120 for dinner? I would rely on the late start of the meal causing a natural restriction on the numbers booking.

How would we accommodate the inevitable last minute requests for meals without incurring unnecessary expense by over-ordering? - I would prepare some extra food for the dinner for both vegetarians and chicken eaters, and I would augment the Kiddush food with big bowls of substantial salads.

Relax - we would cope!

The weekend arrived: - yes, there had been urgent emails with last-minute pleas for hospitality, the checking of numerous ‘to-do’ lists, the marathon shopping expeditions, the collection of the caterer’s food from Glasgow and the in-house food preparation.

Sixty-five people came to Friday Night dinner, liberals and orthodox eating and singing together in a wonderful atmosphere of unity and community. This rauc extended to the pre-walk kiddush/lunch at which there were about ninety people and I was wiser than I, decided to go the political route (in more ways than one) and queued up for nearly 3 hours to march with her civil service union. Good on her!

Remember the David Daiches book “Between Two Worlds”? That summed up my problem on the day of the Make Poverty History march. I spent the whole day torn between politics and religion. I started with friends who are loosely affiliated to the Green Party. However, when it became obvious that there was going to be a very long wait to march, I gave up on my idea of marching twice (which now seems ridiculous) and rushed off to meet up with the group who were marching from the shul. Apparently, I missed them by moments, and never caught up with them. By the time I got back to the Meadows there were so many queues and so many people that it was impossible to find anyone. So I was delighted to bump into Elaine Samuel, and we agreed to give up on the idea of marching, this being late in the day, and we listened to Baaba Maal, one of the few African artists appearing. Everything and everyone came together later at the Faith Zone to hear Clive Lawton lead a large and enthusiastic group of Jews and non-Jews in singing. Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation supplied refreshments, which I helped a visiting Rabbi to hand round to the impromptu choir. Despite a lack of amplification (this being Shabbat), Clive’s wonderful voice still carried to the back of the tent. Hinei ma tova u nayim shevet achim gam yachad, indeed.

In the meantime, my daughter, far wiser than I, decided to go to the political route (in more ways than one) and queued up for nearly 3 hours to march with her civil service union. Good on her!

**The Highlights from the Millennium Goals**

All UN member states pledge that they will, by 2015:

- halve the number of people living on less than $1 a day
- halve the number of people who don’t have clean drinking water
- provide a full course of primary school to every boy and girl
- reduce by two thirds the number of children dying before the age of five
- reduce by three-quarters the number of women who die in giving birth

**The Three Generations involved in Making Poverty History**

Janet Mundy

Remember the David Daiches book “Between Two Worlds”? That summed up my problem on the day of the Make Poverty History march. I spent the whole day torn between politics and religion. I started with friends who are loosely affiliated to the Green Party. However, when it became obvious that there was going to be a very long wait to march, I gave up on my idea of marching twice (which now seems ridiculous) and rushed off to meet up with the group who were marching from the shul. Apparently, I missed them by moments, and never caught up with them. By the time I got back to the Meadows there were so many queues and so many people that it was impossible to find anyone. So I was delighted to bump into Elaine Samuel, and we agreed to give up on the idea of marching, this being late in the day, and we listened to Baaba Maal, one of the few African artists appearing. Everything and everyone came together later at the Faith Zone to hear Clive Lawton lead a large and enthusiastic group of Jews and non-Jews in singing. Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation supplied refreshments, which I helped a visiting Rabbi to hand round to the impromptu choir. Despite a lack of amplification (this being Shabbat), Clive’s wonderful voice still carried to the back of the tent. Hinei ma tova u nayim shevet achim gam yachad, indeed.

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**My mother felt that she was not quite up to attending or marching herself. However, she showed that everyone could do something to help. In her own words, “I offered accommodation as a small contribution to the activities taking place and the young lady from Leeds who applied was most appreciative and a delightful companion. My flat, which is very close to the Meadows, proved to be convenient for friends popping in for cold drinks and other facilities. I thoroughly enjoyed the service on Friday evening in the Pollock Halls and it was a joy to meet up again with Rabbi (Dame) Julia Neuberger, whom I had met on several occasions.”**
Religious Zionists were those who were necessarily disagreeing with its mostly secular movement rising out of synagogues. Utter anguish and Holocaust imagery. Few of us who watched these scenes would have been left unemotioned. Our emotions probably ran the whole gamut: from sympathy to anger; resignation to relief. Yet we must ask ourselves, where did these images come from? Why were adults tearing their garments and children their hearts? Why the emotion; from where the passion? To answer the question we must realise that the disengagement from Gaza has provoked first and foremost an existential crisis in one of the most important and influential movements in Jewish history: Religious Zionism. It is an important question for all of us. Not only because many of our young Rabbis, educators and youth leaders in this country, including myself, count themselves as members of this movement, but because the very survival of Religious Zionism is vital for the future of Israel. So what is Religious Zionism, how did it get to where it is today, and where do we go from here?

The desire of the Jewish people to return Jewish sovereignty to the Land of Israel is a basic part of Jewish belief.

In some ways all Zionism is religious. The desire of the Jewish people to return Jewish sovereignty to the Land of Israel is a basic part of Jewish belief. Yet the modern Zionist movement that put that belief into practice was a mostly secular movement rising out of the Hashkalah or Jewish enlightenment. For this reason many Rabbis, while not necessarily disagreeing with its ultimate aims, were deeply suspicious of the movement or even hostile to it. Religious Zionists were those who were not. This stems partly from the belief that this was the solution to the parsious state of most of the Jewish people, especially in Eastern Europe; or a messianic expectation that the settlement of the Land would lead to the ultimate redemption. Rabbis such as Reines, Maimon and Kook supported the Zionist movement and took part in its institutions. They created kibbutzim and moshavim, joined the Hagannah and created their own political movement; Mizrachi, the forerunner of today’s National Religious Party. They took a full part in the establishment of the State, fighting in the War of Independence and joining the first, and successive, Labour led governments.

Yet the early years of the State were not easy ones for the National-Religious, as they were now called. Israel was dominated by a secularist-socialist Labour Party that had always tolerated the religious; provided they did as they were told. While not ostracised like Menachem Begin’s religious nationalists, they were severely patronised. Religious were always a poor second fiddle in an orchestra clearly conducted and controlled by Labour. This led to poor morale among the youth and increasing secularisation. To combat this, Religious Zionism devised in the 1960’s what has become one of its hallmarks and strongest assets: the Yeshiva High School. Here young religious Jews could be given a strong Religious Zionist identity that could compete with the secular world outside. Here youth were imbued with the idea that they were not only the equal of the ‘Zionist Vanguard’ on the kibbutzim or in the army, but even superior. What was needed was a chance to show it and in 1967 they got it.

The Six Day War of June 1967 profoundly transformed Israeli society but nowhere more so than in the Religious Zionist camp. For the first time religious youth from Zionism Yeshivas had been in the forefront of the fighting, among those who liberated Jerusalem, for example. Furthermore, the capture of large parts of the historic Jewish homeland that had been off limits to Jews for nineteen years inspired the next generation of religious youth. Many in Israel, not only the religious, had never really accepted the partition of the country in 1948. The heart of the ancient Jewish homeland; Bethlehem, Shechem, Hebron had been denied to Jews, now they were ours again. Led by the ideology of Tzvi Yehuda Kook, son of the renowned first Rabbi, Religious Zionist youth saw the opportunity of taking the Zionist mantle from the secular left. They too would settle the Land, creating Jewish settlements in inhospitable terrain just as the Labour movement had done a generation before. They would be the new vanguard of Zionism and thus make a place for themselves at the forefront rather than at the sidelines of Israeli society. This rebellion, for that is in effect what it was, profoundly changed the whole Religious Zionist movement. The National Religious Party went from being a dovish voice in a Labour cabinet in 1967, to being the most hawkish part of a Likud cabinet in 1987. Religious Zionism created Gush Emunim, one of the most successful extra-parliamentary movements in the world, which in twenty years put over 250,000 settlers in the territories captured in 1967. Religious youth also stormed the citadel of the army, so that today 30% of the officers and the majority of members of elite units come from a National-Religious background. Yet all this success hid a fatal flaw at the heart of the project; a time bomb that has exploded in recent weeks with results we all have seen.

The Religious Zionist movement has indeed proved it can settle and fight with the best of them. But in doing so it has made itself a hostage to fortune. For the new Religious Zionist identity was not based on merely settling the Land, an important Torah commandment. It created as its sole raison d’etre the settlement of all the Land captured by Israel in 1967. Ever since, for the last ten years at least, it has been clear to most Israelis that this is an impossibility. Religious Zionism finds itself in a deep crisis. A generation has grown up whose religious, political and national identity has been inextricably linked with the settlement project in the West Bank and Gaza. Their very religious faith, national credentials and even Jewish identity has been based on a Messianic-Zionist vision of the Greater Land of Israel. Now that this vision is being dismantled, we should not be surprised at the scenes we see on our television screens. We should not be shocked at the use of Holocaust imagery by youth for whom their whole identity as Jews is being undermined. We should not be astounded to see soldiers grappling with tefilin-clad men whose very religious foundations are being shaken. We should not be amazed at the passion of people for whom not only their home, but the very ethos of their existence is being destroyed. The disengagement from the territories captured by Israel in 1967 has undermined the very foundation on which Religious Zionism has been built for the last thirty years. It has destroyed the basis of their self-esteem and identity within Israeli society. It is indeed a catastrophe unparalleled in the century-old history of the movement. The question remains whether Religious Zionism can survive this disaster and reconstruct a different identity and why this is important for the future of Israel and the Jewish people.

It is clear that, whatever the final borders of the State of Israel, the vision of a Greater Israel on which Religious Zionism has built its identity, is not feasible in the foreseeable future. What sort of future therefore remains for this movement? Firstly, I would argue, one of settlement. Large areas of pre-1967 land, which may be one of the most densely populated areas of the world but the coastal plane of Israel is even more crowded. The State of Israel has a pressing strategic and environmental need to disperse its population. The highly motivated National Religious are the perfect group to be at the vanguard of this change. What they achieved in the West Bank and Gaza they can replicate in the Galilee and the Negev. Indeed the process has already begun. Communities, even of a left-wing persuasion, have thrown open their doors to evacuees from Gaza; even building synagogues where none have existed before. They understand the tremendous potential of this hard-working, idealistic and enthusiastic group of people and how they can be their saviours. Indeed, one aging moshav, whose future looked bleak, will have from this autumn a hundred new children to fill its school and give new hope for the future. There is no doubt that the National-Religious community has a vital role to play in this regard.

But it has an even more important and pressing task. Religious Zionism was always seen as a bridge between secular movement, but not very effective, and the religious community. That bridge is needed now more than ever. The most pressing internal issue facing Israel today is creating a united society. This is especially true in religious-secular relations. Reconciliation is urgently required and none are better placed to effect it than the National-Religious camp. Who they are integrated into Israeli society, at the highest echelons of the army and business, straddle both worlds. They talk the language of both sides. They are a living example of how to be fully engaged in Israeli society and yet religiously committed and knowledgeable. Yet Religious Zionism, in its fixation with settlement, has sorely neglected this historic task. By setting the West Bank and Gaza, they have created self-imposed ghettos in Bet El and Netzarim as surely as the Haredim have in Bnei Brak and Mea Shearim. They have effectively cut themselves off from Israeli society; which is why disengagement came as such a traumatic shock to so many of them. This process now needs to be reversed. Religious Zionism must re-engage with Israeli society, first of all by living among them. They must reach out to both an alienated secular Russian population and to the affected ultra-Orthodox. They must create a new compact between religious and secular, creating a definition of Israeli society that both can comfortably live with. Not only should Religious Zionism fill this role; probably, they alone can fulfil this role. This is the challenge we are now facing us. Can Religious Zionism, traumatised and perplexed, redefine its identity in a new world for the benefit of itself and the whole of the Jewish people? Can they become the catalyst for positive and vital changes in Israeli society? I believe they can and will succeed. We, indeed, must help them succeed. For, that they succeed is vital for us all.
The town square, like hundreds of others, boasted a Soviet tank, mounted on a display plinth as a memorial to the sacrifices of the Great Patriotic War against the Nazis.¹¹

We headed south stopping first in Kagarlyk. This small town, about 20 miles from Kiev, had been founded in 1135, and had a small Jewish community dating back to the eighteenth century. It was here that the family adopted the name Karazitovitch probably at the time of their migration south to Kovshevata in the 1830s. The town square, like hundreds of others, boasted a Soviet tank, mounted on a display plinth as a memorial to the sacrifices of the Great Patriotic War against the Nazis. After a brief stop we headed south once more stopping next at Boguslav, just a few miles from our destination. Boguslav is a medium size market town which in pre-war days was a lively and literary Jewish community. In earlier years there were Jewish printing presses and Hebrew schools but very little Jewish remains there today.

The information we had was that Kovshevata did not have its own Jewish cemetery and the burial grounds at Tarasha, about 5 miles beyond Kovshevata, had been destroyed during the War. The few remains from pre-war times did not support the Soviet claim. We decided to visit the Jewish cemetery in Boguslav instead. This was situated at the edge of the town overlooking a wooded valley. The cemetery itself was a shambles. Headstones at all angles, some with inscriptions that could hardly be read through weathering and age. Some from the Soviet era were inscribed in what only resembled Hebrew characters illustrating the tenacity which bound the local community to their cemetery. There was nothing there that we could identify.

A few miles later we entered Kovshevata. It was just as I had pictured it. The countryside was truly beautiful. Graceful hills and valleys, lakes and streams were spread out before us. The onion-domed Orthodox Church sat at the top of the hill and was being lovingly restored. Our guide spoke briefly to the workmen. No, the Jewish community had not been established after the war but there was a Jewish monument we should visit. We drove along the paved road past horses and carts and off into an area of simple farm houses. The original houses of Tsarist times had gone during the communist era to be replaced by standard white-washed buildings with corrugated roofs. I took a picture from the spot I remembered seeing in a photograph of the village from the 1920s. Unfortunately, when I got back home and compared the pictures I realised that I had got the domes of the church the wrong way round, so I had been standing at the other side of the village!

We stopped briefly for some refreshments and directions at a farmhouse surrounded by mulberry trees. A woman was drawing water from the well and she gave us some to drink. We followed the dirt track till the car could travel no further. We set off on foot, past barefoot children, well aware that the village probably looked little different from the day my grandfather had left over a hundred years previously. Walking gingerly past a skinny tethered cow we found ourselves in a small valley. There were stone steps cut into the hillside, opposite, and we made our way across.

There was a small stone monument at the top of the steps and we approached this with our guide before setting out we had to correct their impressions of the day ahead. The tour company had never heard of Kovshevata and presumed that we were heading towards Korsun-Shevchenko, scene of the major tank battles of the Second World War on the road to Stalingrad.

On the way to Kiev we visited the Brodsky Shul, named after the wealthy sugar magnate who had built it in the 1890s and admired not just its beautiful restoration but the Jewish activities going on within it. A lunch club, educational programmes – it was a hive of activity and we were happy just to sit at a pavement table outside the kosher snack table. We reflected on the transformation of Jewish life for the 60,000 community members that had left after the major waves of aliyah of the early 1990s and other migrations – to America and also to Moscow. The shul building had been converted by the community from the 1920s and converted into a puppet theatre but had been returned to the Jewish community and had become the centre of local Chabad activity.

Returning to Kiev on the main north-south highway that stretches from Kiev to Odessa we stopped briefly to visit a memorial celebrating the fact that the local sugar factory had run out of money to pay their workers and were paying them in bags of sugar instead.

Just outside Kiev and not far from an estate of dachas for the wealthy elite who have benefited most from the fall of communism we visited another small village. This collection of muddy pathways, broken down houses, collapsed wooden fences resembled the other villages we had visited. There were no signs of the zodiac round the town square, like hundreds of others, boasted a Soviet tank, mounted on a display plinth as a memorial to the sacrifices of the Great Patriotic War against the Nazis. We discovered that the local sugar factory had run out of money to pay their workers and were paying them in bags of sugar instead.

The next day we visited Babi Yar. We stepped out of the Metro into a large park area surrounded by fairly characterless tenement blocks. Our guidebook and showing pictures of the Babi Yar monument, we tried to get directions from passers by without success. Eventually some German tourists, led by the communist era monument which had been erected about a kilometre from the massacre. The monument had only been provided after the poet Yevgeny Vyshtuchenko wrote his heroic poem about Babi Yar bewailing that there was no memorial for the slain tens of thousands. When the impressive memorial was eventually built, the Jews of Kiev bewailed the absence of a Yiddish inscription which was only grudgingly added in later years.

Now there is a new memorial, in the form of a menorah, closer to the site of the massacre. There are also smaller memorials for the murdered children and a destroyed Jewish community centre. The new memorial still had a wreath of flowers from the recent visit by President Katzav from Israel and other dignitaries. We stood there a while. No other people in sight carrying a single rose, slowly walked past leaving the flower at the base of the memorial.

We had time also to visit Podil – the old ghetto leaving for home as the only functioning synagogue from Soviet times. Again we saw a lovingly restored synagogue with some new features added. The Nazis had burned the building and the walls had been restored by the twin girls (Gemini) had been replaced by a covered shop and candles; the madina (Virgo) had also been transposed into a more neutral image.

At the back of the building a small vestry with about 20 students was functioning and I joined them for mincha. We also visited the matzah factory. We were told that it was functioning through all the communist years and that the Jews were registered in large numbers to buy their matzah even in the darkest times. It certainly looked very ancient, but we were assured that it still worked efficiently and to the strictest religious requirements. The mikvah had also been restored and kosher foodstuffs were available from a small shop. At the side of the shul were several containers loaded with foodstuffs brought from Israel and America to feed the local Jewish poor.

Our trip to the Ukraine proved to be a highly emotional experience. While there is much to celebrate in the newly emergent Jewish life, especially in Kiev, the country has destroyed Jewish communities by the hundreds. Much good work is being done by organisations like the Joint, World Jewish Relief, the Jewish Agency for Israel and Chabad, but it is likely that the Jewish population will continue to leave for Israel and other destinations. The Ukrainians welcome Jewish visitors and some of the family we met were very nice and we can certainly recommend the experience.
Commemorating the Holocaust in Berlin

K. Hannah Holtschneider

Commemoration of the Holocaust is a topic regularly addressed in Jewish circles: there are annual Yom HaShoah ceremonies in Israel and the Diaspora, Jewish contributions to the recently instated British Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January (the anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz camps by the Red Army), the establishment of Holocaust memorials and museums, and thoughts about one’s own family history in relation to the years 1933-45. In some ways Scotland may seem an odd place in which to talk about the commemoration of the Holocaust, remote as it may seem from the parts of Europe where the Holocaust was perpetrated.

And yet, Scotland’s Jewish population also took in Jewish refugees from the continent, and relatives of Scottish Jews in Europe became victims of the Holocaust. Many European cities have established their own Holocaust memorials, often in reference to the local Jewish population which was affected by Nazi persecution and murder. This is the case particularly on the continent, but Britain has a national Holocaust exhibition in the Imperial War Museum (opened in 2000) – even before that, private initiatives established memorials such as the one in Hyde Park, London, and the Beth Shalom museum in Nottinghamshire. Scotland does not have its own nationally instituted Holocaust memorial, but one may speculate that this is only a matter of time. For what reasons are these memorials erected, and what could we, as Jews, expect of a Scottish memorial? From the gamut of local and national initiatives of museums, memorials, days and ceremonies, let me pick out one, controversial effort, opened to the public in May this year, The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin. As Jews living in Europe today, what does this memorial tell us about Jews in Europe and the memory of their persecution and murder?

In between the Brandenburg Gate and the Sony Centre of Potsdamer Platz, built onto the waste land formerly leading up to the east side of the Berlin Wall, lies Germany’s newly opened national Holocaust memorial. A gestation period of more than a decade, cluttered with many public rows about its appropriateness and necessity, and in particular about its design, finally, for better or worse, resulted in a memorial and an information centre. The memorial is a ‘forest of steles’ of different height, built on a sloping, uneven cobblestone surface: 2,711 pillars of concrete, ranging in height from floor level to 4.5 meters, arranged in rows on an area of 19,000 square metres. Walking through this field, one is meant to reflect on the murder of Jews during the Holocaust, a deliberately disorienting experience in which visitors are left alone with their thoughts and imagination. No commentary is offered, no visual or audio aid is given, individual contemplation is sought, the aisles between the steles being too narrow to accommodate more than one person. The memorial is accessible 24 hours a day, 365 days a week, one only needs to step off the pavement and into the forest of steles.

Attached to this is an information centre which allows visitors to access narratives about the Holocaust. Descending below the memorial, one finds a variety of textual and visual information on offer, ranging from historical narrative to points for contemplation. A timeline introduces the visitor to the development of what came to be known as the Holocaust. Thereafter narratives of and about the victims take the lead. One can read reproductions of letters and postcards of victims sent from various locations in Nazi-occupied Europe to their families and friends, or diary entries of people held in ghettos and camps. Panels with photographs and short texts illustrate the context of life for Jewish families across Europe, noting the fates of individual family members during and after the Holocaust. Here one encounters Ashkenazim and Sephardim, religious and secular, politically-active and culturally-engaged, Jews of all ages and walks of life. I am impressed by the exhibition in the documentation centre which, though not without its flaws, addresses the experiences of victims of the Holocaust through their own voices and perspectives. It is an exhibition that unabashedly does not see the need to produce lots of artefacts, or to present the process of persecution and murder as envisaged and carried out by the perpetrators. There are no original documents, no prominent images of perpetrators, no biographies of Nazis. This one can find in other Holocaust exhibitions around the world, and also nearby in Berlin at the exhibition Topography of Terror, still temporarily mounted in the place where once the headquarters of the secret police, the Gestapo, stood. In the documentation centre, the victims are people with dignity and expectations and hopes for their lives, which were interrupted and destroyed.

The visitor commemorates their lives as much as, if not more so, than their death.

Outside, in (and on) the field of steles, couples pose for each other while taking photographs. Children and teenagers jump from pillar to pillar, or play hide and seek between the steles. Even adults cannot resist the temptation to join in such activities. ‘Codes of conduct’ have been mounted on all sides of the memorial in direct response to such irreverent behaviour. The lower pillars are great places to sit on, congregate, take a break or eat one’s lunch. Naturally, reverential silence and hushed voices need not be the only appropriate way to commemorate. Conventions of remembrance are also there to be broken and reinvented in order to make sense to generations fortunate enough not to have experienced such brutality and violence. Thus a memorial can – and maybe should – break our assumptions of how we should behave when commemorating. Being built by non-Jews, with a mainly non-Jewish audience in mind, the memorial is supposed to offer non-Jews, in particular in Germany, possibilities for reflecting on what they lost through the murder of Jews in Europe. It is a memorial for the society which succeeded Nazi Germany. As a memorial it is supposed to disorientate, and in the information centre it seeks to remember the Jewish victims of a previous generation of Germans to a society in which relatively few Jews remain (now c. 120,000). This is a difficult task. One might be outraged about ‘stele jumpers’, couples posing for photos, or people playing hide-and-seek. Alternatively, one may ask whether and how these activities can be forms of Holocaust remembrance, which remains topical in German public discourse.

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Rabbi Professor Daniel Sinclair continues his theme on Halakhah

THE APPLICATION OF HALAKHAH IN ISRAELI LAW IN AREAS OTHER THAN FAMILY LAW AND JEWISH IDENTITY – MISHPAT IVRI

The dream of a number of 19th and early 20th century Zionist jurists that the legal system of the Jewish State would be based upon the halakhah did not come to pass for both practical and ideological reasons. However, the study of halakhah from the perspective of modern legal analysis (Mishpat ivri) did become a popular and dynamic field of study for academic jurists, and courses in Mishpat ivri are taught at all Israeli Law Schools. Furthermore, the selective application of halakhic rules and principles by the secular Courts to a diverse range of legal problems has always been a feature of Israeli jurisprudence, and two cases illustrating this trend will be described below.

The Foundations of Law Act, 5740-1980, also provided Mishpat ivri with an official legal basis: “Where a court finds that a question requiring a decision cannot be answered by reference to an enactment or a judicial precedent or by way of analogy, it shall decide the same in the light of the principles of freedom, justice, equity, and peace of the heritage of Israel”.

A striking illustration of the role played by Mishpat ivri in secular Israeli law is the case of Moshe Cohen v State of Israel Cr. A 9 1/80, PD.35 (3) 281, in which a husband was found guilty of raping his wife on the basis of the halakhic principles governing marital intercourse. At the time of the trial, the relevant section of the 5737-1977 Penal Code governing rape provided that a charge of rape could only be brought if the act of intercourse was an “illegal” one. This term reflected the Common law doctrine that a husband could not be charged with the rape of his wife which was, in turn, based upon the Christian concept of the wife’s obligation to provide her body to her husband. Under the Common law, his wife’s obligation to pay the ‘marital debt’ i.e. to provide her body to her husband was the essence of marriage (Maimonides, Laws of Marriage 15:17). The Supreme Court in rejecting the appeal held that the extrapolation from the realm of halakhic prohibitions to that of rape in the criminal law was perfectly legitimate, and the guilty verdict of the first instance court was upheld. It is noteworthy that only in 1991 did the House of Lords finally abolish the ancient and pernicious doctrine that a husband could not be charged with raping his wife.

In the Cohen case, the application of Mishpat ivri resulted in an unimpeachably liberal result, to the satisfaction of halakhists and secular democrats alike. The result in Kurtam v State of Israel C.A. 480/85, PD. 40 (3) 637 however, whilst not necessarily an illiberal one, would probably not be acceptable across the entire spectrum of contemporary liberal thought. In this case, the appellant, a suspected drug dealer, was operated on by a police surgeon against his express wishes, and two packages of pure heroin were removed from his stomach. The ostensible justification for the actions of the surgeon was the need to save the drug dealer’s life. Upon his recovery, he was charged with drug dealing, and the packages of drugs removed from his stomach were entered in evidence against him. His defence was that the evidence was inadmissible since he had refused to consent to the operation, and it had, therefore, been obtained by illegal means. Non-consensual life-saving medical procedures are incompatible with the right to privacy in Israeli law, and the general principles of patient autonomy. The Supreme Court ruled that the heroin was admissible evidence, and Beiski J. cited Mishpat ivri in support of the Court’s ruling. According to the halakhah, a sick person is under an obligation to accept life-saving medical treatment, and if he refuses it, coercion may be applied as in the case of any refusal to perform a positive halakhic precept (R. Jacob Emden, Mor Ukeziah, Orah Hayyim no. 328). This obligation is predicated upon the principle that bodies are owned by God, and Divine property may not be destroyed at will. Citing the Foundations of Law Act mentioned above, Beiski J. ruled that the drugs were admissible evidence since, under Jewish law, “the patient’s wishes are of no account…. and his lack of consent is irrelevant”.

In a later Supreme Court decision, Elon J. clarified the issue of mandatory medical treatment in the halakhah, and pointed out that the patient’s wishes certainly do possess normative weight, especially in the case of a terminally ill patient who is likely to suffer greatly as a result of any attempt to force life-sustaining treatment upon him (Yael Sheffer v State of Israel C.A. 560/88, P.D. 48 (1) 87). Coercive life-saving therapy is now a statutory option under Israeli law. Section 15 (2) of the Patient’s Rights Law, 5756-1996, provides that a hospital ethics committee is authorized to approve non-voluntary therapy if the patient is fully informed of the medical background and prognosis, all the treating doctors agree that coercive therapy is the only sure way to save the patient’s life, and “that there is a reasonable possibility that the patient will consent retroactively”. Clearly, the last requirement is an attempt to combine patient autonomy with halakhic obligation, which is, after all, the hallmark of Mishpat ivri in modern Israeli law.
My first port of call this year was to The Assembly Rooms to but, when we allocate our time to viewing performances, our chests swell a glass of water! Yes, the world's biggest Arts Festival is in town, and boy, is an extra hour, tourists take up ALL the pavement space, lunatics accost the city. Traffic snarls up in the city centre, a ten-minute bus journey takes OY! Indeed. It’s that time of year again, when Edinburghers grit their teeth, downstairs for some considerable time. Also extremely funny husband; a man with a penchant for extremely overweight humour and some pathos. Of particular note was his Scottish As ever, all his characters were brilliantly portrayed with great show. Behind The Net Curtains was a cornucopia of humour and some pathos. Behind The Net Curtains was a cornucopia of topics covered the 60s, a time of war and assassinations being Black AND Jewish, growing up “proud but guilty”! Her few zemiros thrown in for good measure. Rain appeared on newsreels of the assassinations of Kennedy, King etc., and a caves awaiting the start of the show, we heard the radio her debut in The next show was at The Smirnoff Baby Belly. Mr. Furst. I look forward to seeing him on television soon in comic, but exquisitely portrayed, as one would expect from compiler for The Ham & High. However his best character in take a journalist hostage, once kidnapped the crossword House, who in an attempt to a journalist hostage, once kidnapped the crossword compiler for The Ham & High. However his best character in this show was Queenie, a grotesque, velvet-jacketed fop, with sinister criminal tendencies and the most hideous make-up it has ever been my delight to see! The show was very darkly comic, but exquisitely portrayed, as one would expect from Mr. Furst. I look forward to seeing him on television soon in his own show, which surely must be on the cards now.

The next show was at The Smirnoff Baby Belly. Rain Pryor, the Jewish daughter of comedian Richard Pryor, was making see her show. Jackie Loeb was appearing at the Gilded Balloon Teviot. A very talented Antipodean Singer/Songwriter. One of her early triumphs was a brilliant Love Song sung in pidgin French. She took us through the world of jingle writing, did a wonderful sketch taking off a relaxation tape with ALL its sounds and music, a very funny song on text messaging whilst driving, and a wonderful piece of comedy where she shamelessly took of her top, stood there in an outrageous purple bra & less than fashionably perfect body, dancing about with gay abandon and wobbles that even put me to shame! She then pulled out a press cutting that stated that very performance AND body, and brilliantly dismissed it as obviously being some other woman who must've stolen her act!

Also at the Smirnoff Baby Belly was another great find, Andrew J. Lederer in Me And Hitler. I have to admit that I was rather intrigued as to how someone had got Hitler into the title of a comedy show, but as Mr. Lederer pointed out fairly early on, he had apparently been to see Boothby Graffoe in a previous show who had simply said, “Hitler sells tickets”, and circumstances reminded him of this! In fact it is the first question Lederer asked the audience, “Why have I got Hitler in the title of my show?” “Is he doing the encore?” asked one bright spark in the audience, and that more or less set the tone for the show. It was a very interactive comedy show, not once did Lederer sit on the chair provided on the stage, but sat amongst the audience benches at the front, almost conducting a debate.

When the Brooklyn-based comedian met the fabled Nazi documentarian Lani Reifenstah, he realised he was now only two degrees of separation from Adolf Hitler. Later, a chance encounter with the doctor who’d ministered to Hermann Goering during the Nuremberg Trials, found Andrew wearing Goering’s watch and ring. It reminded him of the time he’d worn a tuxedo that had been owned by the late Mel Blanc to an animation awards ceremony in Los Angeles. Another voice artist was complaining that he’d done many voices in Warner Bros. cartoons but that Blanc, who did Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck among others, had hogged all the credit. Andrew told him, “You’re still around to complain but all that’s here of Mel is his suit, which I’m wearing. You’ve won.” Likewise, the architect of the Jews’ extinction was gone and a Jewish comedian was wearing his ring. The Jews had won. This Jew, anyway!

In telling this tale Lederer asked many questions of the audience to trigger the debate; however, he picked on me as I was trying to blend into the background (as usual), and was rather taken aback because I’m not quite as shy as I may appear, and I ended up asking him for Equity Rates! At one point, to illustrate who survives in an argument, he told a tale of the origin of the Mars Bar. However, another Jewish lady in the audience and I sidetracked the debate to include Cadbury’s, Rowntrees’s, Nestle’s and Duncan’s. He seemed quite at ease with all the audience participation, but he did ban me from answering any more questions, saying “judging by your past record we’ll just ASSUME you know the answer!” Roll on next year’s Quiz Night I say!
Minstrel played by Thompson, served to the villain of the piece. George of Ponsonby, played by Jamie Glassman. The play was a very funny spoof of period tales and old-fashioned melodramas, almost as Panto in parts and full of wonderfully hammy acting at times. It was full of double entendres, and quite a few single ones as well! George of Ponsonby’s evil sneer EVERY time he arrived at their destination of Yerushalayim Shel Zahav as they finally make their way to Jerusalem, to go to the Prague Jewish Community, to join the masquerade. It was really impressive to tell the tale musically in just an hour or so, and the acrobatic feats of the very talented Caesar Twins (also appearing in their own sell out show at The Assembly Rooms). This was billed under comedy, and quite rightly so too. It was tremendous fun, and it was just like being a kid again (except for the bit with the naked lady - as I don’t remember THAT from Chipperfield’s Circus or The Blackpool Tower). Chairs were cleared away, a dance floor, emerged and the mellow music of Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald were played. A perfect way to end the evening!

My perusltimate show was at the Stage by Stage Edinburgh Academy, where I went to see Kit and The Widow and Dillie Keane in Tom Foolery - The Songs of Tom Lehrer. It was quite a treat to see Kit and The Widow team up with Dillie Keane (of Fascinating Aïda fame) for this showcase of Tom Lehrer’s best loved songs. They gave him a fine introduction as the greatest Jewish American creative genius in 200 years, and gave detailed and informative insights into his work. They explained his “prolonging” adolescence - “He is 79, but prefers to think of it as 26”, (degrees Centigrade)!

Furthermore, his quote got everybody in the right frame of mind to appreciate the rest of the show - “If, after hearing my songs, just one human being is inspired to say something nasty to a friend, or perhaps to strike a loved one, it will all have been worthwhile”. The second half opened with the piano playing the rich theme from the Erev Yom Kippur. I think that was rather my fault though, yelling like a banshee from the back tier!

The final show was Moishe’s Bagel at The Brunton Theatre, Musselburgh. This was a 5 piece Klezmer/Folk band based in Edinburgh and Glasgow, led from the piano by the yiddisher bit of the ensemble, Phil Alexander, with Peter Garnett on the Accordion, Greg Lawson on the Violin and Mandolin, Mario Caribe on Bass and Guy Nicolson on Percussion. They specialise in Klezmer music and Balkan Folk music with a wee smattering of tunes from all over Europe, describing themselves as a bit Jewish, but not too much. They opened with a Freilach (a frenzied dance), starting off with traditional Jewish melodies, building into a jazzy middle section and settling back to the traditional feel for the close. This first piece was about 12 minutes long but most of their pieces averaged about 10 minutes, giving them plenty of time to explore each piece’s possibilities. They played several Freilachs over the evening, Folk songs from The Balkans, France, some with a Spanish style, but all of them still retained a Jewish feel to them. The second half opened with the piano playing the rich theme from the Erev Shabbos melody Sholom Aleichem, then joined by the violin, and gradually all the rest joining in to a crescendo as the piece moved into post chuppa wedding themes. There was a piece set in the 1920s Chicago, with gunsshots, police chases in hot pursuit and the chaos that ensues, charmingly titled Flying By Jewish Radar! To be honest, I personally feel that to be proper Klezmer there has to be at least a clarinet, it was the wind instruments that lifted this performance (the end) but Moishe’s Bagel was full of extremely talented musicians and plenty of nuach, with Phil Alexander positively bouncing up and down on his piano stool, yet the ‘nisti’ from the audience were just as passionate, with the violinist, Greg Lawson looking almost possessed during some of the pieces. I had been equally carried by the more melancholy themes as I had by the upbeat themes. The whole evening was an immense success and greatly appreciated by a varied audience.

All in all there had been plenty of Jewish content in this year’s Fringe. Not all of it covered here. Some that had been advertised, only made passing reference to any form of Yiddishkeit, others made no mention at all in their information and I found them playing very well on the whole and quite good, and some not so good, which is how it should be. This was just a sample of the best that was on offer.
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Best Wishes for a Happy New Year and well over the Fast
Angela and James Brydon
3 Wellington Street
Edinburgh

Yom HaShoah
The annual Yom HaShoah took place in the attractive surroundings of Princes Street Gardens Peace Park on 5 May. The weather was pleasantly dry as the President, Dr. Philip Mason, welcomed the Lord Provost Lesley Hinds, civic dignitaries and members of the community to the short ceremony. Rabbi David Rose reminded the service and Lord Provost Hinds expressed her pleasure at being invited to attend. She commented on the strong rapport, which existed between the Jewish community and the city. Dr. Mason reminded the audience that it was exactly ten years since the City Council initiated the Memorial plaque commemorating the liberation by British forces of Bergen Belsen and which had been unveiled nearby. David Goldberg, a victim of the Holocaust, lit a candle on the memorial and, after one minute silence, recited the Kaddish.

Yom Ha’atzmaut
On 11 May a service was held in the Synagogue to celebrate Yom Ha’atzmaut. David Mendelssohn led the community and the Lord Provost, Lesley Hinds opened the service and, whilst many visitors from all over the globe. On behalf of the community and the city, the Lord Provost, city councillors and High Constables entered the Synagogue preceded by officials carrying the mace and sword of the city. In his sermon, Rabbi Rose commented on the excellent relationship, which existed between the community and the city and the opportunity given by the Festival for people of all nationalities to meet together. Interfaith meetings contributed greatly to this.

Community ramble
Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation set out on their annual rambles to raise money for the Synagogue. Starting at Aberdour golf course, the group ambled in a circuit of about five miles along the east coast spotting seals, heron, coot and deer among other delights. Returning to the clubhouse for welcome refreshments, the ramblers raised over £100 with additional sponsorship money from generous non-payers.

The Shein Scene

Around and About

The Annual General Meeting of the Edinburgh International Society occurred on 24 August when visitors and artistes from the Festival received during a busy year. His hour-long repertoire of songs, interspersed with witty and hilarious stories, made him the perfect choice for an evening of entertainment. Talented Rachel Cohen again accompanied him on the piano. Thanks were given by the President to all concerned.

Shabbat Service
Another very successful Shabbat evening service took place on 3 June when more than 60 members of the community attended the service and the subsequent dinner organised by the Shul events committee under the convenership of Harry Rikfink. A fascinated and appreciative audience was captivated as Rabbi Rubin who, with his wife and children, had travelled from Glasgow. The following morning he gave Rabbi Rose a respite by delivering the sermon. At the Kiddush the President extended a warm welcome to the Rubin family and all other visitors.

WIZO Lunch
The Goodwin residence was again the popular venue for the annual WIZO lunch on 12 June. The summation, ever unpredictable, hid behind threatening clouds and intermittent rain, drove the 70 guests from the garden into the house on occasions, but literally failed to dampen their spirits or enjoyment. Six prominent ladies from Glasgow WIZO made the journey from West to East renewing contact with friends and participating in the pleasurable afternoon. Over £800 was realised for WIZO funds.

Cheeder Prize giving and Picnic
On Sunday 19 June, Myrna Kaplan distributed prizes marking the end of the Cheeder year. Cheeder covers were handed out for regular attendance to Morris Kaplan’s ever-popular family service. Isaac and Azriel-Forsyth were awarded the ‘cup for effort’ and Jacqueline Kahn received the ‘girls Hanukka’ donated by Sylvia Donne. Murices Griffin collected a certificate confirming a a future trip to Israel and Rabbi Rose awarded ‘The Rabbi’s prize’ in memory of his grandmother Freda Buetow, to James Hyams. A buffet picnic prepared by parents was consumed in the Shul yard, followed by teachers, parents and children, ambling, to the foot of Holyrood Park, for sports as good weather held despite adverse forecasts. Children disappeared and reappeared from beneath the colourful parachute, which was extended by Bill Simpson blowing the Shofar and the singing of Adon Olam and Hatikvah by the choir and congregation.

Afterwards the congregation moved downstairs to the community centre to be greeted with an appetising buffet of falafel, pita bread and Israeli salads. Dr. Mason introduced the entertainer David Apfel from Leeds who was reappearing by popular demand after his barnstorming performance the previous year. His hour-long repertoire of songs, interspersed with witty and hilarious stories, made him the perfect choice to end a perfect day. Talented Rachel Cohen again accompanied him on the piano. Thanks were given by the President to all concerned.

Open Day
A Festival open day took place within the Synagogue and the Community Centre on 21 August when visitors and artistes from the Festival were welcomed. Rabbi Rose and members of the community escorted visitors around the Synagogue, whilst downstairs, non-stop refreshments were served and performers from the Fringe, interviewed by David Neville. They included author Michael Mail who read extracts from his novel ‘Corallena’, Karen Fodor who sang excerpts from her show ‘The Silver Swan’ and Daniel Caiger performing from ‘The Sultilin Watherana’. Musicians David Vernon and Dick Lee displayed their plethora of musical talents in their playing Klezmer and Cajun music on clarinet and piano accord to an enthusiastic audience to round off a most pleasant and stimulating afternoon.

Musical Evening (see Society Reports for a more in depth account)
Another most entertaining evening under the auspices of the Literary Society occurred on 24 August when the Shalom Ensemble, under the leadership of Madeleine Whiteson, played a selection of music for various combinations of strings and piano. The programme, which included items by Vivaldi, Bruch and Gershwin, also featured descriptions of Jewish composers by Madeleine. She also portrayed a fascinating background to Jewish music. On behalf of an appreciative audience a vote of thanks was extended by Bill Simpson.

Best Wishes for a Happy New Year and wel over the Fast
Church was led by the late Pope John Paul II who described Now we have reached the 40th anniversary of that historic This was a historic breakthrough after a long and sad history. persecution of the Jews and all displays of anti-Semitism. 2nd Vatican Council which condemned every form of early days as a bishop. He described the developments in the Jewish community, having spoken at the synagogue in his know what went on there and developed a closeness to the Edinburgh where they worshipped at St Columba’s Upper Gray Street. Despite the proximity of the synagogue it was a priest and 20 years a bishop. His family had moved to 40 years on in Jewish Christian relations Council of Christians & Jews: Cardinal O’Brien Jews and all displays of anti-Semitism. He described the developments in the Roman Catholic attitude to the Jews over the years since the 2nd Vatican Council which condemned every form of persecution of the Jews and all displays of anti-Semitism. This was a historic breakthrough after a long and sad history. Now we have reached the 40th anniversary of that historic declaration. During the last 18 of those years, the Catholic Church was led by the late Pope John Paul II who described Jews as ‘dearly beloved brothers, older brothers’. In March 2000 Pope John Paul cemented this relationship with his pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and the Cardinal could not forget him standing at the Western Wall praying a prayer in the Wall and his visit to Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Memorial. Referring to the unforgettable honor of the Holocaust, the Cardinal moved on to consider where the dialogue is going now. He said that the relationship must be future oriented and that the World needs the common witness of Jews and Christians who have the Mandate to teach the World their shared values – such as the inalienable sanctity and dignity of every human being, rejection of immorality and idolatry, standing up for justice and peace, and family life, and testifying to the sanctity of G-d’s name in an ever more secular World. He recognised the work of Action of Churches Together in Scotland, which links Christian churches, and also the Scottish Interfaith Council, but he felt that the bond between Jews and Christians was special. Concluding, he called for an intensified dialogue which needed to discover its very existential and religious depth, and said that our ethical and spiritual common heritage requires a common stance on political issues such as human rights. In furtherance of this Pope Benedict XVI had already signalled his commitment to continuing the approach of Pope John Paul II to the Jewish people. The meeting was chaired by Rabbi David Rose in the absence of The Chair Mr Robert Munro. Best wishes to Mr Munro for a speedy recovery from illness were recorded. There were numerous questions from the floor and this was a highly successful event, as well as a moving and significant occasion for our sharing of faith. The vote of thanks was given on this occasion by Mr Michael Brannan.

Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society - A Musical Evening with the ‘Shalom Ensemble’

Bill Simpson

On Wednesday 24th August, in the Marion Oppenheim Hall, we were treated to a talk by Madeleine Whiteson. Mr. Harvey Kaplan for permission to use part of his article recently printed in the Jewish community.

The music ranged from duos, trios and the full quartet playing music from a variety of Jewish composers. Among the works performed were:-

A beautiful cello and piano duet composed by the cellist David Popper and played with feeling by Ann and Madeleine.

A string quartet by the British/Jewish Iturgal composer, Samuel Alman. Although I cannot recall the name of the piece it was my personal favourite of the evening.

Works by Ernst Bloch, the Swiss composer and Castelnuovo Tedesco the Italian composer followed.

We then heard “Hebrew Melody” perhaps the most famous work by Lithuanian composer Joseph Gershwin. This was followed by a quartet version of one of George Gershwin’s most popular tunes and the concert finished with a vigorous and beautifully performed version of the popular “Gypsy Carnival” by Yasha Krein.

The Shalom Ensemble comprising Madeleine Whiteson (violin & piano), Juliet Harev (violin & piano), Lucas White (viola) and Ann Sheffield (cello & piano) have been together for ten years and have given concerts in London and Edinburgh. They aim to present programmes varied in style, mood and instrument and provide pleasant listening to suit all musical tastes. This was certainly the case on Wednesday. A most enjoyable evening.

Answers to Star Trek Issue 51

Cousins picture taken at the wedding of Toby & Bella Cohen, Edinburgh 1933:


Middle Row LEFT TO RIGHT: Michie Morrow (Dorfman), Annie Cohen, Leah Rikkind, Bessie Rikkind, Esther Rikkind, Jeannie Wolfe, Kate Piotkin, Rebecca Sless

Front Row LEFT TO RIGHT: Esther Covit, Raa Lurie, Rose Nathan, Rachel Sless, Mille Nathan, Becky Goldberg

Family: Included the Sclares, Brodskys, Miller and Bernsteins. A Jewish woman settled in her nearby Fife town, setting up businesses in Methil and Cowdenbeath. In 1941 the community consisted of seven families who as far as possible managed to uphold Jewish traditions.

Mr. Philip Segal commented that his father, being a very moderate man, would have been astonished and delighted at the ceremony. Reverend Segal and family moved to Dundee in 1944 when the Dunfermline Synagogue closed. Here he very soon established himself within the slightly larger community of about thirty families. His appealing dry sense of humour would often pervade his thoughts and it was a delight to be in his company listening to his wise counsel. He combined sheer humanity with great insight, making for close lasting relationships with Jewish and non-Jewish citizens who knew him as the “Rabbi of Dundee”. He died in 1975 leaving a wonderful legacy of a man who inspired all within and outwith the Scottish Diaspora.

The only other occasion when a street in Scotland was named after a Jewish minister was in Edinburgh several years ago when Daiches Brae was named after Rabbi Saïs Daiches, evered Segal was a brother to Mr. Packter of a well-known Edinburgh family and great-uncle to Jonathan Robert, a member of the Edinburgh community.

Dunfermline honours its last Jewish minister
Rabbi Cohen's 90th Birthday Celebration

Honouring Rav Isaac Cohen

The quiet gardens of an elegant restaurant in central Jerusalem were recently host to a most unusual event. Some forty-six Israeli citizens, most of whom had lived in Edinburgh half a century ago, gathered together to honour Rabbi Dr Isaac and Rebbetzin Fanny Cohen and to mark their ninetieth birthdays. Isaac and Fanny Cohen had led the 300 Jewish families of the Scottish capital from 1947 until 1959, when he was appointed Chief Rabbi of Ireland.

The idea of honouring the Cohens in this way was born in the Bet Shemesh home of Shulie and Stefan Reif a few months ago when they were entertaining Nat and Arlene Gordon to dinner. Rose Elkana (née Gordon), Nat’s sister, made all the necessary enquiries in order to establish whether there would be any interest in such a function on the part of the Edinburgh expatriates in Israel, and found a very enthusiastic response.

She set about making the arrangements and a dinner was planned for 14 June, the day after Shavuot, at the Anna Ticho House in central Jerusalem.

The Cohens were very excited to meet each of the guests as they arrived and it was astonishing just how well the Rebbetzin remembered all those that she was meeting again after such a long time. Many memories and comments about Edinburgh in the late forties and early fifties were exchanged even before the formal proceedings got under way. When they did, they began with some tributes to the Cohens from Stefan Reif, who chaired the dinner party for the warmth, hospitality and guidance they had provided. He himself particularly remembered sitting on the Rebbetzin’s knee in synagogue, being introduced to “dachnau” by Rabbi Cohen, and the receiving lessons in Talmud as a teenager, keen to go to Jews’ College.

While the first course was being cleared, Asher Selig Kaufman, who thought that he was probably the most senior of those present, gave an interesting and well-planned “dvar Torah”, setting the tone for the recurrent theme of the evening. This was undoubtedly the centrality of Jewish traditional practice and learning, as well as of Zionism, identity to the identity and the future of the Jewish people. As the courses proceeded, many of the participants simply stood up and offered their reminiscences of the synagogue, the Cheder, and the kosher shops, as well as of the social functions that the Cohens had led, and the warm hospitality that they had provided in their home.

There was talk of their sukkah, of the new flavour of Simhat Torah that they had introduced, of the Cheder and its move from Sciennes to Duncan Street and eventually to the Communal Centre across the street from the Synagogue. The Cohens’ kindness to the elderly members of the community and their warm relations with such as Messrs Nathan, Rifkind, Caplan, Rubenstein, Dorfman, Fluss, Rubenstein and Rappoport were also recalled in various ways by some speakers. Others recalled the new discipline in the Cheder classes, the relations with the Synagogue officials, and how shidduchim had been inspired by the Rebbetzin.

The group that had apparently enjoyed the most major impact from the Cohens had been the Cheder class that included Sonia (née Levinson) Cohen, Barry Fluss, Edwin Hoffenberg, and Mervyn Warner, and they all described that impact in their own ways. The other member of that class, Rosalind (née Adelman) Landy, was unable to be present but sent a delightful message from Cambridge. This was read out, together with an amusing anecdote from Arnold Rifkind, about the suit that Abe Rabstaff made Rabbi Cohen, and how the Rabbi had come to think about his tailor during the Yom Kippur service. Harold and Anne Sterne also spoke, as did Kielle (Fluss) Lerner, Ruth Fluss, Nat Gordon, Maurice Dorfman and Brenda (Bums) Habush.

In a powerful, moving and amusing response that belied his ninety years, Rabbi Cohen assured those present that the happiest ministry that he and the Rebbetzin had enjoyed, had been their years in Edinburgh. They had loved the community and had always thought of the youngsters as taking the place of the children that they had themselves had not had. They had often asked themselves whether all their efforts had been fruitful and productive, and the evening’s proceedings had brought them the satisfaction of knowing that many Edinburgh natives of that period appeared to think so. They were deeply moved by the tribute and the presentations and hoped to remain in contact with all those present.

Ninety trees were planted in Israel in their name and they were presented with a special certificate, an album of messages and a bouquet of flowers, the presentations being made by Rose Elkana and Harold Sterne. Eddie Hoffenberg led the “bentshing” and Mervyn Warner the ma’ariv service that ended the formal part of the function, but the Edinburgh “blether”, encouraged by wee drams of a single malt, continued late into the evening and it was generally agreed that we should not wait so long before another Edinburgh get-together in the Jewish homeland.

Stefan Reif

A most memorable, nostalgic and touching gathering was held at Ticho House Jerusalem on 14th June to celebrate the 90th birthday of Rabbi Isaac Cohen. About 40 ex “Avid Reaksins” travelled from all over Israel, from Tsfat in the north to kibbutz Sidda Boker in the south, to celebrate together this remarkable occasion. Both Rabbi and Mrs Cohen were immediately turned out - just as we all remember them in their Edinburgh days. It was hard to believe we were celebrating a 90th birthday. Rose Gordon, who had played a large part in the organization of the party, ushered us all into an attractive corner of the outdoor restaurant and we all had a chance to renew old acquaintances until the arrival of Rabbi and Mrs Cohen, who greeted each guest personally. Rabbi Cohen showed a memorable memory for each one of us and welcomed us warmly.

Before the meal Professor Zelik Kaufman set the tone by giving us a thoughtful dvar Torah. During the meal a number of guests mentioned the hospitality and guidance they were shown at the home of Rabbi and Mrs Cohen. Mention was made more than once of Mrs Cohen’s cooking and also her impressive hats. But the emphasis was on the love of Yiddishkeit Rabbi Cohen instilled in his congregation. The evening was informal but ably chaired by Professor Stefan Reif. At the end of the meal, Rabbi Cohen treated us to an inspiring sermon. Everyone there felt the vibes of affection and respect. It was an evening never to be forgotten.

Golda Friedler, Nee Greenstone.

Rabbi and Mrs Cohen

It is a great pleasure to have this opportunity of writing a few words about Rabbi and Mrs Cohen as our family have had a long association with them, Rabbi Cohen officiated at Joe’s brother’s Julius’s wedding to Brenda Gordon in August 1952, at Joe’s and my wedding in May 1953 and August 1952, at Joe’s and my wedding in May 1953 and August 1952.

Mention was made more than once of Mrs. Cohen’s inspiration by the Rebbetzin. At the end of the meal, Rabbi Cohen set the tone by giving us a thoughtful devar Torah. Everyone there felt the vibes of affection and respect. It was an evening never to be forgotten.

Golda Friedler, Nee Greenstone.

Honouring Rav Isaac Cohen

Some forty former Edinburgh folk and their spouses met on 14 June 2005 in the Anna Ticho restaurant, Jerusalem, to celebrate the 90th birthday of Rav Isaac Cohen. In the Jewish calendar it was Isru Hag Shavuot for people living in Israel; 2nd day Shavuot for people in the Golah.

Rav Cohen was the spiritual leader of the Community from 1947 to 1957. The gathering in the restaurant was presided over by Prof. Stefan Reif. Credit is due to Shoshanah (Rose) Elkana (née Gordon) and Nathan Gordon for the meticulous organization of the function. During the course of the meal Asher Selig Kaufman was asked to speak and below is an almost verbatim account of his Devar Torah.

‘When I look around, there are here more eloquent speakers than I could ever be. Nevertheless, I am told that I am the senior of the Edinburgh-born. So I am honored to be given the opportunity of delivering Devar Torah on the occasion of Rav Cohen having passed his 90th birthday.

Who are they? Answers on the back page.
First of all Isaac, I am going to remind you of a sermon that you gave in Edinburgh about the second day of Yom Tov. The reason for keeping the second day is no longer valid, except for Rosh Hashanah. It would seem that you were worried about how to explain to people why the second day should still be kept.

After a long discussion, you came up with the idea that on the first day, one has not overcome the transition from the weekday atmosphere. A second day is needed to enjoy the Yom Tov. At the time, I am not sure that I was convinced by this argument.

Today, I have somewhat changed my mind for people in the Golah. For what reason? By comparing with life in Israel. Here, in a Jewish country, one is aware of a Yom Tov, even weeks ahead. One of my gym classes is on Sunday morning. And so on Sunday a week ago, we were informed that there would be no class Erev Shavuot. Shortly afterwards, I heard one of the ladies of the class referring to the Giving of the Torah on Shavuot. And so this brings me to the raison d’être of my speaking.

Would it surprise you that in the original tradition of Erez Yisrael, there is no mention of the association of the Giving of the Torah with Shavuot?

Let us turn to the Mishnah, that great depository of law and custom redacted about 200 CE. In tractate Megillah the Torah reading for Shavuot is the portion beginning Deuteronomy 16/9 “You shall count off seven weeks”. There is no mention of the portion alluded to the Ten Commandments. This is confirmed by the minor tractate Soferim. Such a Torah reading befits an agricultural festival, the time of the first fruits in Israel.

My son Shmuel said to me: Why don’t you look at the Amidah (standing prayer) as given in the ancient rite of Erez Yisrael? In our Siddur we have “Season of the Giving of our Torah”. So I turned to the Cairo Genizah, of which Stefan here is the director of the Cambridge Collection. In the rite of Erez Yisrael, there is no mention of the Giving of the Torah in the Amidah.

This is not the end of the story. In the Tosefta, a later compilation of laws and customs than the Mishnah, we have the following about the Torah reading: On Shavuot, Deuteronomy 16, as is in the Mishnah. But there is an addition - and some say (in another version, others say), the portion of the Giving of the Torah should be read. This is supported by the Jerusalem Talmud, as might be expected.

The Babylonian Talmud is more explicit. On Shavuot, Deuteronomy 16, as in the Mishnah. Others say, the portion of the Giving of the Torah. This appears to be a repetition of the Tosefta statement. But then it adds: “Today, now that there are two days of Yom Tov, we read both portions, but in the reverse order”. That is, on the first day, Giving of the Torah (also in Erez Yisrael) on the second day, for the Golah, Deuteronomy 16, and this is the practice even to this very day. The Babylonian Talmud, as in the majority of cases, won the day, much to my regret.

What can one learn from all this? It may be that in ancient times there was already a tradition that the date of the Giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai coincided with that of Shavuot. For the people living in Erez Yisrael, Shavuot was a harvest festival - the wheat harvest and first fruits. No particular significance was attached to the coincidence of the Giving of the Torah.

However, in the Golah, in Babylon, conditions were quite different. The people were divorced from the land. The opportunity was given to everyone present to speak.

Many did so, especially those who were in their teens when Rav Cohen was in Edinburgh. They were very appreciative of his spiritual guidance, aided by his wife Fanny.

Asher Selig Kaufman

References
1. Mishnah Megillah 3.5.
2. Soferim 17.6.
4. Tosefta Megillah 3.5.
Janet Mundy

It is impossible to discuss the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra without reference to Middle Eastern Politics. The orchestra was formed in 1999, the brainchild of Daniel Barenboim and Edward Said, to bring together young musicians from Israel, Palestine and other Arab countries. However, most of the audience, and certainly the orchestra and conductor, gathered on Monday 15th August at the Usher Hall to listen to the music, as part of the Edinburgh International Festival which came into being, like the modern state of Israel, in 1948.

The programme commenced with Carl Maria Von Weber’s overture to his opera Abu Hassan, appropriately to say and “to see things from the other point of view”. This orchestra is not about politics but about working together in spite of political differences.

There was, of course, a standing ovation at the end of the published programme. The audience was delighted when Barenboim addressed us, unamplified, but with a clear message that this orchestra is not about politics but about working together in spite of political differences.

He said that the members have to agree to listen to what each other has to say and “to see things from the other point of view”. This lesson was not lost on me when Barenboim announced that, as a result of requests from the Israeli contingent during rehearsals, the concert would conclude with the prelude and Liebestodt from Tristan and Isolde. Barenboim’s campaign to reinstate Wagner for Jewish audiences is well known, but this particular Jew was unprepared and initially angered at having Wagner imposed.

Thus this concert had a socio-political as well as a musical significance.

There have been adverse comments by some music critics about Barenboim’s control of the orchestra, but for me the evening was totally absorbing. But then, although I am a music lover, I am not a trained musician. The sum total of my musical accomplishment is an ability to belt out a tune in the Synagogue choir, which I can just as well sing as nobody is too fastidious about my always sticking to the correct key; my singing is “can bello rather than ‘bel canto’.

The finale of the evening was the un-programmed Prelude and Liebestodt from Wagner’s Tristan and Isolde. This inclusion was surely a statement of faith by Barenboim. As Geoff Brown wrote in the Times ‘May the harmony continue’ – and so say all of us.

A concert to remember

Berl Osborne

On the 15th August I attended a remarkable concert in the Usher Hall that will live long in my memory. It was remarkable both for the music and for the sense of occasion.

A hall that was packed to the rafters stood to applaud and welcome the players as soon as they walked on to the stage and before they had played a note, how come?

Well, the international Maestro Daniel Barenboim, assisted by his friend the late Edward Said a distinguished Arab journalist, assembled the orchestra. The West-Eastern Divan Orchestra is made up of young musicians from both Israel and the Arab world. The only qualifications are a willingness to talk one to the other, and an acceptance that there can be no military solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Barenboim is ever mindful of the fact that Jews and Arabs lived together quite harmoniously for six centuries during the golden age of Spanish Jewry.

Barenboim is ever mindful of the fact that Jews and Arabs lived together quite harmoniously for six centuries.

Reviews

West, East… and Andalucia

Janet Mundy

A programme of Beethoven’s Symphony No 5 in C Minor. No matter how many times one hears the familiar four note motif at the commencement of the symphony, it never ceases to thrill, especially under the command of such an assured conductor in a live performance with young performers commencing their musical careers. Thoughts of the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip that day and all the impenetrability of the Middle Eastern conflict disappeared as the harmonies washed over the audience in a way that the political world sadly cannot match.

His orchestra is not about politics but about working together in spite of political differences.

There was, of course, a standing ovation at the end of the published programme. The audience was delighted when Barenboim addressed us, unamplified, but with a clear message that this orchestra is not about politics but about working together in spite of political differences.

“but this particular Jew was unprepared and initially angered at having Wagner imposed”

He said that the members have to agree to listen to what each other has to say and “to see things from the other point of view”. This lesson was not lost on me when Barenboim announced that, as a result of requests from the Israeli contingent during rehearsals, the concert would conclude with the prelude and Liebestodt from Tristan and Isolde. Barenboim’s campaign to reinstate Wagner for Jewish audiences is well known, but this particular Jew was unprepared and initially angered at having Wagner imposed. But as I began to listen to the music and not just the pounding of my heart, I realised that I too have “to see things from the other point of view” – Barenboim’s, the orchestra’s and music. Taken on its own merits, I came to appreciate that the overture is an exquisite piece of music, performed with a combination of sensitivity and zest by this extraordinary grouping of young people, who will not allow personal and political differences to get in the way of the music they love.

An extraordinary, thought-provoking evening. Barenboim admits that the orchestra itself cannot solve any political problems but if it can encourage a few more people to listen “from the other point of view” it will have achieved a great deal.

And Andalucia? The only non-Middle Eastern musicians in the orchestra hail from this area of Spain where, according to the concert programme, “Muslims, Christians and Jews have lived peacefully in Andalucia for seven centuries” and where the orchestra is permanently based today.

The orchestra was formed in 1999, the brainchild of Daniel Barenboim and his friend the late Edward Said a distinguished Arab journalist, to bring together young musicians from Israel, Palestine and other Arab countries. The only qualifications are a willingness to talk one to the other, and an acceptance that there can be no military solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Barenboim is ever mindful of the fact that Jews and Arabs lived together quite harmoniously for six centuries during the golden age of Spanish Jewry.

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Karl Emil Franzos

Michael Mitchell

Karl Emil Franzos was a popular German author of the last quarter of the nineteenth century. His works, both reportage and fiction, concentrate on the multi-ethnic corner of Eastern Europe, now largely in Ukraine, where the Habsburg and Russian empires met. This area became so closely associated with his name that one critic called it “Franzos country”. A number of his books were translated into English, and Gladstone is said to have been among his admirers.

Franzos’s family came from Spanish Jews who fled the Inquisition to Holland and later settled in Lorraine. Around 1770 his great-grandfather established a factory for one of his sons in East Galicia. This was the time when the Austrian administration insisted on all Jews having “proper” surnames, so that “Franzos” became his grandfather’s name, from his French background, even though he regarded himself as German.

Franzos’s father was a highly respected doctor in Czortkow (Chernivsty). The first languages he learnt from his nurse; his first school was attached to the local Dominican abbey, where the teaching was in Latin and Polish; in Czernowitz he attended the German Gymnasium, graduating with honours in 1867. By now the family was in reduced circumstances and he supported himself by giving lessons, later, as a student, from his writing.

He would have liked to study classical philology with the aim of becoming a teacher, but no scholarships were forthcoming. Jews were not eligible for teaching posts, and even though he was non-religious, he refused to convert to advance his career. An additional reason for the refusal of a scholarship was that he did not attempt to conceal his liberal outlook, having, for example, tried to organise a celebration for the liberal poet, Ferdinand Freiligrath.

He studied law, that being a shorter course. When he graduated, he found himself in a similar situation: he did not want to become an advocate, and a position as judge was closed to him as a Jew. Having had a number of pieces published while he was a student, he went into journalism and worked for newspapers and magazines for the rest of his life, at first in Vienna, after 1866 in Berlin. The move was caused as much by the greater opportunities for publishing there as by his “Germanic” tendencies. Indeed, the increasing virulence of anti-Semitism in Germany meant that later on he had difficulty placing pieces, which were felt to be too pro-Jewish—which was often another way of saying “not sufficiently anti-Jewish”. Today Franzos is best known as the man who saved Georg Büchner’s works from oblivion, editing them from the already fading manuscripts (which is why Woyzeck first appeared as Wozzeck, giving that title to Alban Berg’s opera). He died in 1904.

Galicia was the most backward, the poorest province of the Habsburg Empire, so that Franzos saw his promotion of Germanisation as part of an attempt to improve conditions there politically and economically as well as culturally and socially. Jews made up some 12% of the population, the largest proportion of any province; two-thirds of the Empire’s Jews lived in Galicia. Besides being mostly poor, the assimilated Jews were strict, conservative Hasidim, shutting themselves off as far as possible from their Christian neighbours, who responded in kind. Poor orthodox Jews from the east were a not uncommon sight in Vienna and were probably regarded with even greater hostility by many of the westernised Jews of the city than by the Christian population.

The rigidity with which the eastern Jewish communities shut themselves off from outside influences is the theme of Franzos’s most ambitious work, Der Pojaz, completed in 1893, but not published until after his death in 1905.

The hero, Sender Glaitteis, is the son of a shoemaker, a vagrant, but is brought up by a poor washerwoman as her own child. His talent for mimicry becomes evident at an early age and brings him the name of the “pojac”, (payats: clown). He works as a carter and one evening in Czernowitz he happens to go to the German theatre. It is an event that transforms his life. He is determined to become a “proper” actor. Encouraged by the theatre director, an assimilated Jew himself (probably based on the famous German-Jewish actor Davison), he decides to learn German. He has to do this in secret; in the Jewish community only those for whose work it is absolutely essential were permitted to learn German; if he were discovered he would be excluded. He bribes the janitor of the local monastery (with schnapps) to let him secretly into the library, which the ignorant monks do not use, and is later housed by a monk who has sent him to that distant post as a punishment for suspected heresy. (The blinkered conservatism is on both sides; in his novel Judith Trachterben Franzos talks of “the stale air of the ghetto mixing with other, though not purer air heavy with the incense of fanatical belief”). Sender eventually cuts off his sidelocks, the long skirts of his caftan and his ties with the ghetto, and sets out for the city, only to die before he gets there from pneumonia; his weak chest is the result of winter hours spent in the unheated monastery library.

Why this novel, which Franzos regarded as his major work, remained unpublished during his lifetime is a mystery. It is possible that he thought his critical portrayal of the ghetto might be exploited by anti-Semitic elements which were becoming increasingly active in Germany in the 1890s.

The relations between the Christian and Jewish communities come into sharpest focus in sexual matters—as a young man Franzos fell in love with a Christian girl and announced his love to her because of the barrier between the two groups. This problem forms the subject of a number of his works, including two of his best novels, Judith Trachtenberg (1880) and Leib Weihnachtskuchen and his Child (1896). Judith Trachtenberg is the beautiful daughter of a wealthy Jew. The upper floor of their house is rented by the Polish district commissioner, whose family, Judith, as an intimate friend, Her father is well aware that this treatment is put on to ensure the favours the commissioner expects from him, such as ignoring aments of rent. Judith, however, takes it at face value. Similarly she believes the protestations of the young lord of the local estate when he falls in love with her. Count Baranowski is basically a decent man, but he is weak and gives in to the proposal of a vagabond monk, who performs a fake baptism and marriage. Judith goes through many humiliations, not least of which is the exclusion from her family and community. Even after she has shame the count into marrying her properly and accepting their son as his heir, he

brother will not recognise her. At the end she commits suicide.

In Franzos’s last novel, Leib Weihnachtskuchen and his Child, the critical picture of 19th-century Hasidic Judaism is replaced by a sympathetic portrayal of an individual Hasid. The other central male character is Janko Vygoda, a Slav peasant whose parents drink themselves happily to an early grave, leaving their farm under a burden of debt. Janko swears to keep his inheritance intact; his obsessive work to achieve this makes him an outsider among his easy-going neighbours. The man he holds responsible for his misfortune is the village innkeeper, Leib Weihnachtskuchen. When he discovers the Jew is the opposite of the bloodsucking monster he imagined, the little shenkner becomes his only friend. Gradually the Christian Janko falls in love with the Jew’s daughter. His determination to marry her is as obsessive as his determination to retain his farm and can only lead to tragedy.

In Leib, a painfully honest man who has a profound, living faith, Franzos has demonstrated his ability to portray sympathetically a person who has the religious belief he himself lacked. His depiction of anti-Semitism also goes below the surface. Like his flock, the village priest responds automatically to the word “Jew” with the common prejudices. But that does not stop him respecting Leib for the very qualities he believes Jews cannot by their very nature
possess. He is so unaware of the contradiction between his attitude to Jews in general and the way he sees individual Jews, that he can express both views almost in the same sentence. Franzos also uses the institution of the shabbos guy to show that the two communities can live together in harmony when they see and know each other as individuals.

Flora showed the attitudes of the 19th-century assimilated Jew in their best light. His conviction that Germanisation was the way forward was based on the idealistic strain in German culture and will have looked very different in his day to our post-Holocaust perspective. He believed, following the example of Schiller, that literature should have an ethical purpose, but he managed to express that purpose through a range of vivid characters who still have the power to move the modern reader.

(Michael Mitchell’s translation of Leib Wehrnahtschukenen and his Child is published by The Acasp Glog, 0-9545989-0-3, price £7.50.)

In July, he and Billie were married, without the knowledge of David’s family whom he knew would be deeply distressed by his marriage to a non-Jewish girl. Shortly afterwards he was offered a job at the University of Chicago. He accepted the position, he said, to two purposes, for the sake of his father’s sake, to save embarrassment to the family. For the same reason, in Chicago he and Billie had an orthodox Jewish marriage. In the summer of 1938 they were back in Scotland for a holiday with both their families, making real the ‘inclusive world’ they had always hoped for.

It was in the US that David’s career took off. It rapidly became apparent that he was a gifted teacher, and in addition, from 1940 to 1942 he was a bookseller, a year, mainly on modern poetry and fiction. His interests expanded to American literature. With the outbreak of war he tried in vain to return to Britain, and in 1943 he joined the British Information Service in New York, going on to Washington as Secretary at the British Embassy. He continued to write, often scribbling on the train commuting to work; the result was ‘The Light and the Levé’ – a revaluation (1947).

By this time he had accepted a position as a professor of English at Cornell University, but the intention was always to return ‘home’. Eventually, in 1951, after several unsuccessful attempts at jobs in Scotland, he took up a lecturership in Cambridge. He had added books on Robert Burns and Wills Cather to his publications, as well as numerous articles and reviews. He was a regular broadcaster in the US, and in 1949 began to write for The New Yorker.

David, Billie and their three children settled in a small village outside Cambridge, and after six years David became a Fellow of Jesus College. His early years at Cambridge were not entirely comfortable. His US reputation and manifest interests in contemporary American and Scottish literature cut little ice with Cambridge traditionalists. But as a teacher he was enormously influential, and of course he continued to publish. In 1951 came Wills Cather: A Critical Introduction; in 1956 Two Worlds: An Edinburgh Jewish Childhood, Critical Approaches to Literature and Literary Essays; in 1957 Milton; in 1960 A Critical History of English Literature. It was an extraordinarily productive period, and it was the prelude to the next chapter of his life.

But 1961 marked a change of direction for which he was more than ready. He became Professor of English and American Studies at the newly founded University of Sussex. The approach at Sussex was innovative and interdisciplinary, and David played a key role in shaping it. He responded with vigour and efficiency to the challenge, and relished the opportunity to escape from the confines of Cambridge. At the same time he became involved in developing The Norton Anthology of English Literature, with his former colleague at Cornell, M H Abrams. It would become an invaluable collection for students of English literature, still in demand over 40 years after its first publication in 1962.

In the 1960s and ’70s David continued to teach and publish on literary themes, but he was moving into more wide-ranging cultural and historical areas, with Scotland continuing as a major focus. But not only Scotland. Alongside ‘The Paradox of Scottish Culture’ (1964), ‘Scotch Whisky’ (1969) and ‘Charles Edward Stuart’ (1973) were ‘More Literary Essays’ (1968), his sequel to ‘Two Worlds’, ‘A Third World’ (1971), ‘Mosses’ and ‘Wills’ (both 1975), the latter an impossible to categorise autobiographical celebration of language and diversity. He continued to write and lecture on Scottish themes at the same time as maintaining his involvement with the more mainstream canon of English literature. He would describe himself as ‘the last generalist’.

In 1977 David retired from Sussex and returned at last to Scotland. In that year Billie died of cancer. He never came to terms with her loss. But he at once took his place as a leading figure in Scotland’s cultural and academic world, becoming Professor of English at Edinburgh University’s Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities in 1980, and contributing through lectures, publishing and broadcasting to the vibrancy of Scottish life. He also contributed, in ways those who knew him will never forget, to every social occasion that he graced, with insight, wit and an inimitable penchant for puns. His family and friends will remember a man of huge intellectual capacity who was a warm and gifted communicator. A man who could turn his talents as readily to making up nonsense songs for his grandchildren as to delivering an elegant and close knit analysis of the Scottish Enlightenment.

Although David moved beyond orthodoxy, of any description, the spiritual and cultural richness of his Jewish inheritance informed his whole life. Without being tied to tradition he valued it, and maintained a very real continuity with his family’s past. His own parents had also instilled a receptiveness to the cultural and environment of Scotland. Just as the resonance of the Scottish Enlightenment influenced his father and the way he saw his role in Scotland, so the language, literature, music and intellectual climate of Scotland were profound currents throughout David’s personal and professional life. And there were tantalising analogies and correspondences: a shared respect for education, a long history of living with problematic neighbours, a shared cultural currency of Jewish pedlars in Scotland and Scottish pedlars in Poland… Both David’s Jewishness and his Scottishness travelled with him wherever he went, and it was profoundly important to him that he was able to spend the last decades of his life in the city that had nourished both.

Jenni Calder

**Obituaries**

**David Daiches**

From his boyhood David Daiches delighted in words. He was exposed to several languages. Visitors to his parents’ Edinburgh home might speak Russian, German, Yiddish, or indeed an amalgam of more than one language. With his grandfather in Leeds he could communicate only in Yiddish or Hebrew, and as a student he read literature in Scots and learnt Gaelic. He also absorbed a musical tradition: his mother, born in Vilna, that extraordinary vibrant centre of Jewish life and learning which flourished amid continual shifting of borders and rulers, was committed to the idea of synthesis, Jewish tradition in the context of European secular culture. When David grew up he evolved his own particular way of keeping faith with his inheritance and at the same time responding to the creative richness of many other cultures.

The process began with Scotland, of course. Although an early ambition was to be a second Shakespeare, he identified with a literary figure much closer to home, Robert Louis Stevenson, and as a student at the University of Edinburgh, became acquainted with a much wider range of Scottish writers. Throughout his career as scholar, critic and teacher, Scottish writing, from the Makars to the poets and novelists of the late twentieth century, claimed his attention. No one did more to revitalise interest in Scottish culture and to re-embody the country of Ferguson, Burns, Scott, Stevenson, and other less prominent figures.

In 1934 David completed his degree at Edinburgh, having collected a clutch of awards and distinctions. He also met the woman he was to marry, Isabel (Billie) Mackay, the daughter of William Mackay, an agricultural journalist, and Janet Lauder, both from farming stock. In that year he published his first two major critical articles, on John Donne and Hugh MacDiarmid. They signalled key preoccupations of his future career.

He went to Balliol College, Oxford, to research his DPhil on translating the King James VI bible, but the range of his interests soon became apparent. In 1935 his first book, The Place of Meaning in Poetry, was published, followed the next year by New Literary Values: Studies in Modern Literature. He was in his twenty-fourth year.

The following year, 1937, was a watershed, both personal and professional. He was awarded his DPhil.
Dear Editor

Gordon Highlander!

May I just say how much I look forward to and enjoy the Edinburgh Star? I was particularly interested in the article concerning the origins and history of the community in Aberdeen, which appeared in the last issue. My grandfather Barnet Gordon was a founder member of the original Shul having arrived in Aberdeen around 1850 from Janova in Lithuania along with my father, his brother and sister.

In 1914 when World War I broke out my father Alexander Gordon was called up to the army and became a ‘Gordon highlander’ and were the kill! He was sent to the trenches in France and elsewhere. There he experienced many horrors including the loss of friends and colleagues. After the war he joined his family business, which sold boots and shoes to farmers in the area until he married my mother Ada Simenoff and settled in Edinburgh. My cousin unearthed the photo showing my father in his kilt.

Brenda (Gordon) Rubin

Memories

We always look forward to our Edinburgh Star. I have spent ten years of my life in Edinburgh, five as a student and five, with my family, as a medical civil servant between 1968 and 1973. I first learned to play bridge with Berl Osborne in the students union over 60 years ago. We were delighted to see the photograph of Irene and David Hyams; they don’t look a day older. Somewhere we still have a bancher from a son’s barmitzvah.

It was with nostalgia that I read Nick Cosgrove’s memories of the Lurie Shul, shortly after their arrival in Edinburgh. It has meant the world to me to read that I am in my kilt carrying on the work that my parents started so many years ago.

Yours sincerely, and with best wishes for the New Year

Hilda Seftor

Family Roots

One early morning I discovered that I am not a “pure” Ashkenazi Jewess as I always thought; it was revealed that a larger part of my family are Sephardim and live in Cuba, Uruguay and France! Me being Yorkshire lass born in Leeds and raised in Edinburgh for the best part of my youth, suddenly discovering the family roots was a very exciting revelation that grew into a concentrated effort to search near and far for clues to discover relatives.

The story behind the Sephardim came from the fact that Napoleon’s army arrived in Jonava, a shtetel near Kovna (1812) (19th century) There were Jewish soldiers in Napoleon’s army. They made acquaintance with the local Jewish girls, the result being that my ancestors came about. Thus... the French connection! During the recent years, thousands of Jews from Russia arrived in Israel. I began to wonder if possibly I might discover some relatives amongst those families. And eventually, from the French part of the family living here in Israel (all born in Jonava) we discovered a distant cousin who had arrived in Tel-Aviv.

The possibilities are endless. There are many sites for root searches on the Internet. The surprising thing is that so many people are looking for their lost identities, some contact with family, lost parents, siblings and names.

Many search for relatives who lived in Edinburgh in the past. This brought me to suggest that The Edinburgh Star could prepare a special section to which people can write letters in search of their families.

I am offering assistance and guidance to anyone who may want to start a search over the web.

Good Luck, Brenda Habotshuv (formerly Burns) Kibbutz Sde Boker, Israel

e-mail: brent@sde-boker.org.il

Synagogues abroad

On the 19th May David and I embarked on the P&O Ship ‘Oceana’ for a 17 night Mediterranean cruise. Although we stopped at various places, the more interesting stops we made were in Dubrovnik and Corfu where we visited the Synagogues. The one in Dubrovnik is the second oldest in Europe and mainly kept as a Museum. In the museum shop one could purchase souvenirs and paintings depicting life as it was in pre-war days. The Synagogue in Corfu was well kept. Interestingly, instead of a Mechitza, seats were arranged back to back. The delightful lady who showed us around told us that services were still held on the Yom Tovim. There was also a room where the forty or so Jewish people still living in Corfu could go for Kiddush after the Service. Before the War the Congregation numbered several thousand. Although neither Synagogue was easy to find, it was interesting to note that each had many visitors, comprising English, Scottish, Israeli and American, illustrating that we all tend to gravitate towards our own People wherever they are.

Rose Orgel, Photograph by David Goldberg
Congratulations

David and Eliaheva and grandparents Irene and Philip Mason on the arrival of Netanel Menachim Peretz.

Judy Sischo on her new appointment as President of the Rotary Club of Edinburgh.

Katie Lurie who attained an LLB (Hons.) degree from Cardiff University.

Amanda Hyams who celebrated her Bat Mitzvah on Saturday 6th August. Wishing Bessie Glass a speedy recovery from her successful cataract operation at the age of 100!

Susie and Jonathan Adler on the birth of their daughter Ruth on 17 August 2005.

Thank you

Edinburgh WIZO organisers would like to thank all who supported them in their various junctions during the past year and are very pleased to report that a total of £5795 has been sent of Head Office of WIZO in London, an impressive amount from a small group!

Sylvia Donne – co chairman of Edinburgh WIZO

On behalf of the committee of the Scottish Friends of Alyn, I should like to thank all those who so generously responded to our recent appeal. Alyn Hospital is Israel’s only orthopaedic hospital and rehabilitation centre for physically handicapped children, caring for children, regardless of religion or ethnic background, suffering either from crippling diseases or from trauma after accidents.

As a result of this generosity we have been able to fund the purchase of two special mattresses to prevent pressure sores for children in the rehabilitation wing of the hospital, and a digital camera for this ward to record the progress of the children’s steps to recovery. In addition we have been able to purchase a pack of therapeutic games and toys requested by the day case centre.

I should also like to thank all those who have marked the celebration of birthdays, anniversaries and other happy events by making a donation to Alyn. This is most appreciated.

We wish all our friends and donors a happy and healthy New Year.

Clarice Osborne
Chairman of Edinburgh Alyn

Ian Shein would like to express his sincere thanks for the many cards, telephone calls and good wishes received during his stay in hospital. He is happy to say that he is now recuperating at hom.

Senior Maccabi meets on Sunday evenings in members’ homes.

For further information, contact Alice Kelpie (337 1894)

The Luncheon Club meets every Tuesday and Thursday at 12.30pm.

All meetings take place in the Community Centre, Salisbury Road, unless otherwise stated. All are subject to alteration.

Forthcoming Events

October
1 Saturday
WIZO; Theatre/Supper evening “Stones in his Pockets”; Kings Theatre
4,5 Tuesday & Wednesday
1st, 2nd day Rosh Hashanah
10 Monday
Lodge Solomon 7.00pm
12 Wednesday
Kol Nidre
13 Thursday
Yom Kippur
18 Tuesday
1st Day Succot
26 November
Simchat Torah
30 Sunday
8.00pm
EJLS; Bernard Jackson ‘History and Authority in the Halakhah: the Problem of the Agunah’

November
6 Sunday
13 Sunday 8.00pm
EJLS; Jenni Calder Professor David Daiches, personal memories of her father
21 Monday
Lodge Solomon 7.00pm
27 Sunday 8.00pm
EJLS; Literary Society Susanna Heschel will talk about the 19th century Jewish thinker, Abraham Geiger
30 Wednesday
WIZO; Lunch in Hilary Rifkind’s home

December
4 Sunday
17 Saturday
Community Centre Social Evening 7.30pm
19 Monday
Lodge Solomon 7.00pm
26 Monday
1st Day Chanukah

January 2006
16 Monday
Lodge Solomon 7.00pm
Junior Maccabi: For details please contact Jonathan Danzig on 0131 229 3054

These along with dates of future WIZO lunches to be confirmed in next edition.

Answers to Who are they?

1 Rose Elkana (nee Gordon), Nattie Gordon, Sharon Elkons/nee Reif, Stefan Reif, Shuli Reif.
2 Brenda Rubin (nee Gordon), Judith Reefe (nee Rosin), Ena Armitai (nee Dorfman), Sarah Dorfman.