

# THE JEWISH JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY

Published by Maurice Freedman Research Trust Ltd

VOLUME XXXVI : NUMBER 1 : JUNE 1994

## CONTENTS

Responsa and Rulings Reflecting Some South  
African Issues  
JOHN SIMON

The Incorporation of a Stranger: Analysis of a Social  
Situation in a Welsh Valley  
LEONARD MARS

Englishmen and Jews: A New Look  
MAX BELOFF

The Aliyah of Jews from Ethiopia and the Reactions of  
Absorption Agencies  
MOSHE LISSAK

Howard Brotz: 1922-1993

Interpreting Adversity: Dynamics of Commitment in a  
Messianic Redemption Campaign  
WILLIAM SHAFFIR

Book Reviews

Chronicle

Editor: Judith Freedman

ISSN 0021-6534

## OBJECTS AND SPONSORSHIP OF THE JEWISH JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY

*The Jewish Journal of Sociology* was sponsored by the Cultural Department of the World Jewish Congress from its inception in 1959 until the end of 1980. Thereafter, from the first issue of 1981 (volume 23, no. 1), the Journal has been sponsored by Maurice Freedman Research Trust Limited, which is registered as an educational charity by the Charity Commission of England and Wales (no. 326077). It has as its main purposes the encouragement of research in the sociology of the Jews and the publication of *The Jewish Journal of Sociology*. The objects of the Journal remain as stated in the Editorial of the first issue in 1959:

'This Journal has been brought into being in order to provide an international vehicle for serious writing on Jewish social affairs . . . Academically we address ourselves not only to sociologists, but to social scientists in general, to historians, to philosophers, and to students of comparative religion. . . . We should like to stress both that the Journal is editorially independent and that the opinions expressed by authors are their own responsibility.'

The founding Editor of the *JJS* was Morris Ginsberg, and the founding Managing Editor was Maurice Freedman. Morris Ginsberg, who had been Professor of Sociology at the London School of Economics, died in 1970. Maurice Freedman, who had been Professor of Social Anthropology at the London School of Economics and later at the University of Oxford, succeeded to the title of Editor in 1971, when Dr Judith Freedman (who had been Assistant Editor since 1963) became Managing Editor. Maurice Freedman died in 1975; since then the Journal has been edited by Dr Judith Freedman.

*Applications for subscriptions* and enquiries regarding back numbers should be addressed to:

THE JEWISH JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY  
187 GLOUCESTER PLACE  
LONDON NW1 6BU  
ENGLAND  
  
TELEPHONE: 071 262 8939

---

---

# THE JEWISH JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY

---

---

Volume XXXVI : Number 1 : June 1994

---

---

## CONTENTS

Responsa and Rulings Reflecting Some South African Issues JOHN SIMON	5
The Incorporation of a Stranger: Analysis of a Social Situation in a Welsh Valley LEONARD MARS	19
Englishmen and Jews: A New Look MAX BELOFF	27
The Aliyah of Jews from Ethiopia and the Reactions of Absorption Agencies MOSHE LISSAK	31
Howard Brotz: 1922-1993	37
Interpreting Adversity: Dynamics of Commitment in a Messianic Redemption Campaign WILLIAM SHAFFIR	43
Book Reviews	55
Chronicle	67
Books Received	74
Notes on Contributors	76

PUBLISHED TWICE YEARLY, IN JUNE AND DECEMBER

by Maurice Freedman Research Trust Ltd

(Published by the World Jewish Congress 1959-80)

### ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

INSTITUTIONS: £16.00 (U.S. \$30.00)

INDIVIDUALS: £12.00 (U.S. \$23.00)

SINGLE COPIES: £6.00 (U.S. \$12.00)

---

---

Applications for subscriptions should be sent to The Jewish Journal of Sociology,  
187 Gloucester Place, London NW1 6BU, England. Telephone: 071 262 8939

EDITOR Judith Freedman

ADVISORY BOARD

R. Bachi ( <i>Israel</i> )	Lloyd P. Gartner ( <i>Israel</i> )
Lord Beloff ( <i>Britain</i> )	Nathan Glazer ( <i>USA</i> ),
Percy S. Cohen ( <i>Britain</i> )	Jacques Gutwirth ( <i>France</i> )
Moshe Davis ( <i>Israel</i> )	S. J. Prais ( <i>Britain</i> )
S. N. Eisenstadt ( <i>Israel</i> )	Norman Solomon ( <i>Britain</i> )

© MAURICE FREEDMAN RESEARCH TRUST LTD 1994

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN  
BY W. S. MANEY & SON LTD, LEEDS

## BOOKS REVIEWED

<i>Author</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Reviewer</i>	<i>Page</i>
D. Feldman	<i>Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840-1914</i>	Max Beloff	27
G. Ben-Ezer	<i>Kemo Or be-Kad: Aliyatam Shel Yehudey Etiopia (Like Light in a Pitcher: The Immigration to Israel of Ethiopian Jews)</i>	Moshe Lissak	31
M. Berkowitz	<i>Zionist Culture and West European Jewry before the First World War</i>	Max Beloff	55
M. Breuer	<i>Modernity within Tradition: The Social History of Orthodox Jewry in Imperial Germany</i>	Julius Carlebach	57
I. W. Charny, ed.	<i>Genocide. A Critical Bibliographic Review</i>	Colin Holmes	59
S. Felman and D. Laub, eds.	<i>Testimony. Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History</i>	Colin Holmes	59
G. J. Horwitz	<i>In the Shadow of Death. Living Outside the Gates of Mauthausen</i>	Colin Holmes	59
D. H. Frank, ed.	<i>A People Apart: Chosenness and Ritual in Jewish Philosophical Thought</i>	Louis Jacobs	61
U. O. Schmelz <i>et al.</i>	<i>Ethnic Differences Among Israeli Jews: A New Look</i>	David Capitanchik	63
S. J. Zipperstein	<i>Elusive Prophet: Ahad Ha'am and the Origins of Zionism</i>	Max Beloff	64

## NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

Papers submitted to *The Jewish Journal of Sociology* should be addressed to the Editor at 187 Gloucester Place, London NW1 6BU, England. The papers must be original. They should not have been published previously, or be committed to publication elsewhere, in any language. When a paper has been accepted for publication, the author may not publish it elsewhere in any language, without the written consent of the Editor of the *JJS*.

Articles (please send at least two copies) should be typewritten on one side only and double-spaced with ample margins. Pages (including those containing illustrations, diagrams, or tables) should be numbered consecutively. All quotations should be within single inverted commas; quotation marks within quotations should be double inverted commas.

Notes should follow the style of this *Journal* and should be given at the end of the article in numerical sequence according to the order of their citation in the text.

### BIBLIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

#### A. *Books*

Give author, title, place of publication, year, and page reference. Underline all titles of books.

#### B. *Articles*

Place titles of articles within single inverted commas. Underline the title of the book or journal in which the article appears.

In the case of a journal, cite numbers of volume and part, and year of publication.

**PROOFS.** An author making major revisions in proof will be required to bear the cost. Unless proofs are returned to the Editor promptly, author's corrections will not be incorporated.

**OFFPRINTS.** Each contributor receives twenty free offprints of his article. If there are two or more authors, the twenty offprints are shared between them.

# RESPONSA AND RULINGS REFLECTING SOME SOUTH AFRICAN ISSUES

John Simon

**A** *SHE'ELA* (plural, *she'elot*) is a question about a halakhic matter (a point of orthodox Jewish law) which is put to a respected and authoritative religious scholar, usually a well-known rabbi. The answer is known as a *teshuvah* (plural, *teshuvot*) or *responsum* (plural, *responsa*). The practice of such consultations can be traced back to Talmudic times and covered an almost limitless range of subjects including the philosophy of religion, astronomy, mathematics, chronology, and geography — as well as the interpretation of difficult passages in the Bible, the Mishnah, and the Talmud. But it was in the Geonic period (approximately 750–1050 of the Common Era) that *responsa* began to play an increasingly important part in guiding the Jews living in the ever-widening Diaspora on matters concerning practical issues of the halakhah and on questions which arose among communities far removed from the centres of Jewish religious scholarship.

The rise of *responsa* literature in the Geonic period served two important functions in the jurisprudential development of the Jewish people. First, it represented the end of the traditional prohibition against committing the halakha to writing, coming after the redaction of the Mishnah by R. Judah ha-Nasi (c. 135–c. 220, C.E.). Second, it established the Babylonian Talmud as the principal religio-legal authority, because it was invariably to the Babylonian scholars, whose prestige had survived that of their Palestinian counterparts, that Diaspora Jews looked for guidance. During the many centuries of *responsa* literature which followed, communications on legal and ritual issues between rabbis throughout the world came to represent a rich and important body of religious law, in its own right. We often learn as much from the *she'elot*, the questions, as we do from the *teshuvot*, the replies. Indeed, a considerable body of scholarship has emerged in which the history of Jewish communities has been studied through questions and responses concerning their various localities. These include Spain, North Africa, and fifteenth-century Austria.<sup>1</sup> Clearly, rabbis from geographically

remote areas, who had no qualified or respected colleagues in their neighbourhood with whom to discuss their problems, needed to seek guidance and advice from eminent scholars in the mainstream localities and the great yeshivot. It is therefore not surprising that rabbis in South Africa should have approached such scholars, in view of the fact that until well into the twentieth century they had to contend with the following factors: 1: Europe, America, and Palestine were far away and it is only in recent decades that modern technology has made it easier to communicate quickly across the continents; 2: there were long distances within the territory itself; 3: there were no local *yeshivot* or other centres of Jewish learning; 4: there was no recognized central authority in the country and the influence of the Chief Rabbinate of the United Kingdom declined when local institutions developed and took over ecclesiastical functions — while the *beth din* (religious court) of Johannesburg and that of Cape Town were not only far removed from each other, but also operated independently and without much mutual respect or regard; 5: fully one quarter of South African Jews lived outside the two main cities — in many cases in scattered small rural communities, served by officiants who combined the functions of minister, cantor, teacher, and *shohet* without profound religious scholarship; and 6: in some cases, especially from the 1920s to the 1950s, small ultra-orthodox congregations were established and their leaders often did not recognize the orthodoxy, scholarship, or authority of other South African rabbis, even the most eminent.

Under these circumstances, one would have expected to find more than a few *responsa* to questions posed by rabbis in South Africa. It is fortunate that the Landau archives are available at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem; Dr Judah Leib Landau was Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Transvaal from 1915 to 1942. The archives show that he received questions from South African Jews, but these were almost always private individuals with a smattering of learning; he was not often approached by local rabbis. Although many of the questions were of a trivial nature, Landau labelled them all as *she'elot* — obviously to assist in filing, but perhaps also with a view to subsequent publication.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, I know of only one South African rabbi whose printed work contains *she'elot* or *responsa*: Rabbi Moses Chaim Mirvish of Cape Town, to whom I shall refer later in this paper.

However, it has been possible to trace a small body of *responsa* issued by eminent scholars of this century, dealing with the questions posed to them by a small number of rabbis from South Africa. For many years, Bar-Ilan University in Israel has been collecting and computerizing *she'elot u-teshuvot* recorded over the last century or so, and by now it has in its computer project some hundreds of thousands of such items. Arrangements were recently made to extract those *responsa* relating to South Africa and to obtain translations and transcripts.<sup>3</sup> There were



## RESPONSA AND RULINGS

only 20, but they do provide an interesting overview of some of the perplexing issues which arose in South Africa and which in some cases are probably unique to a frontier community.<sup>4</sup> It is the principal task of this paper to record these *responsa* and to attempt to place them in their context; most of them are clearly dated but those which are not can be dated from the internal evidence. The earliest *responsum* seems to have been given in 1922 and the latest in 1970.

Nearly half of them, nine, were addressed to Rabbi Yaakov Salzer of the Adath Yeshurun congregation of Johannesburg. That congregation was established in 1936 by strictly orthodox Jews, most of whom had come to South Africa from Germany to escape Nazism. They were dissatisfied with the standards of orthodoxy which they had found and some years after the Second World War, in 1953, they appointed as their religious leader Rabbi Yaakov Salzer. He was born in Pressburg, Czechoslovakia, and was a product of that town's famous yeshiva; he had emigrated to Palestine before the war and he was active in various institutions in the Holy Land, until he was offered a new position in Johannesburg. He was to serve the Adath Yeshurun congregation until his death in 1980.<sup>5</sup> The local orthodox establishment did not find favour in his eyes: he did not approve of the use of the plant which was used by most congregations in South Africa as an *arava* for the festival of Succot; he disapproved of the local *mikvaot* and had another one built for his congregation; and he made his own arrangements for the ritual slaughter (*shehita*) of animals for food. Rabbi Salzer was also instrumental in the establishment of a yeshiva high school in Johannesburg.

Under the circumstances, it is not surprising that Rabbi Salzer believed that he had to seek guidance outside South Africa on any halakhic issues which preoccupied him. Eight of the nine *responsa* which he received were from Rabbi Yitzchok Yaakov Weiss (1902–1989), who held rabbinical positions in Hungary and Rumania before coming to England in 1948. Rabbi Weiss became head of the rabbinical court in Manchester and then settled in Israel in 1970; he published his *responsa* in a volume entitled *Minchas Yitzchok*. Rabbi Salzer had approached Rabbi Weiss on two issues of *kashrut* and he received *responsa* in 1959. The first question was about cheese prepared from non-kasher milk. If a Jew does not supervise the milking process, the cheese manufactured from that milk is not kosher (*Avodah Zarah* 39); but a lenient view may be taken in cases when a Jew has observed the cheese-manufacturing process, but not the milking process, because cheese could not harden if manufactured from unclean milk (note to *Yoreh Deah*, chp. 115, parag. 2). However, Rabbi Weiss held that such leniency could apply only where an individual Jew buys milk from a non-Jew to make cheese for his own purposes; it cannot apply to cheese made by a dairy plant which buys milk from many farms.<sup>6</sup> The second question was about plastic and bakelite dishes bought from a non-Jew: must they be

regarded as similar to glass and therefore requiring immersion in a *mikveh* before use, or as similar to earthenware which does not require immersion? Rabbi Weiss ruled that since plastic can be re-melted, like glass, the dishes should be immersed — but without the applicable blessing, in view of the opinion of many that the immersion of glassware is a rabbinical injunction (*d'Rabbanan*) rather than a divine commandment (*d'Oraita*). He acknowledged, however, that many authorities held that plastic and bakelite do not require immersion at all.<sup>7</sup>

Two years later, in 1961, Rabbi Salzer raised the question of whether it was permitted to use electric knives to slice through the carcasses of the animals in an abattoir. Rabi Weiss duly went to the local abattoir in Manchester and obtained a great deal of technical information before giving his opinion that this was permissible as long as the knife does not reach 45 degrees Celsius, since that was the temperature at which it is assumed that a person's hand can get scalded.<sup>8</sup> The following year, in 1962, Rabbi Salzer asked Rabbi Weiss two further questions. The first was whether a woman suffering from 'weakness and nervousness' was permitted to take birth-control pills 'for a limited period of time until she regains her strength'. The reply was that it depended upon whether the husband had fulfilled the commandment to be fruitful and multiply<sup>9</sup> — that is, had begotten at least one son and one daughter.<sup>10</sup> If that was the case, the woman could take the pills for a limited time; but if it were not the case, she could take them only if pregnancy would pose a danger to her health.<sup>11</sup> The second question concerned a difference of opinion between a *mohel* (a ritual circumciser) and a doctor about whether it was desirable to postpone the circumcision of a child beyond the eighth day because of a yellowish colouring of the skin. The *responsum* was that the *mohel*'s opinion that the circumcision should be postponed, because there is a danger to the child in such circumstances, was to be preferred to that of the doctor who had said that there was no danger.<sup>12</sup>

The impact of the modern technological age on halakha is shown in three further *responsa*. Two were from Rabbi Weiss and the third from Rabbi Eliezer Yehudah Waldenberg. Rabbi Waldenberg was a member of the Supreme Rabbinical Court in Israel and he cited his ruling in the volume of his published *responsa*, entitled *Tzitz Eliezer*. He was consulted about whether it would be permissible to operate a transistor radio on the Sabbath: in 1966, a Johannesburg Jew had written an article widely circulated in Israel and in South Africa, claiming that it was permissible to operate a transistor radio on the Sabbath because, he argued by analogy, it was permitted to wear a hearing aid on the Sabbath. But Rabbi Waldenberg, in his ruling, drew carefully-reasoned distinctions between the two cases and firmly stated that it is forbidden to use, or even to carry, a transistor radio on the Sabbath.<sup>13</sup> As for Rabbi Weiss, he ruled that a *mezuzah* whose main text was properly written by hand, but where the Holy Name on the outside was

## RESPONSA AND RULINGS

mechanically printed, was permitted, although the scribe had been wrong to use the printing process.<sup>14</sup> Rabbi Weiss had also been asked by Rabbi Salzer whether it is permitted to shave with an electric razor; he replied that it depended on how far the blades were kept away from the skin: the nearer they came to the skin, the less desirable the electrical razor is for orthodox Jews.<sup>15</sup>

The last recorded *responsum* received by Rabbi Salzer was in 1970 and dealt with a problem which is still nowadays causing much concern: the refusal by a husband after a civil divorce to give his wife a *get* (a religious bill of divorcement) so that she could marry again if she wished and enter into a religiously-valid second union. There was at that time a proposal in South Africa to persuade the parliament to pass a law linking the granting of a *get* to the civil divorce. In that country as elsewhere, a recalcitrant Jewish husband may attempt to extract some benefit (pecuniary or otherwise) before agreeing to take the necessary steps to grant his wife a *get*. The difficulty is that the halakha requires that the husband give the *get* of his own free will; if he is coerced or acts under duress, the *get* is invalid. In his question, Rabbi Salzer put forward the case of a civil court requiring the husband to pay unusually large amounts of maintenance until the *get* was granted. Rabbi Weiss replied that this would be close to a forced *get* and therefore invalid; he suggested instead that the legislation could lay down that the civil divorce would not be binding until the *get* was granted, since in such a case the husband would not be regarded as having to act under duress to deliver the *get*.<sup>16</sup> However, there is little likelihood that South African civil courts would be prepared to attach such a caveat to their divorce orders. One formula used by some South African lawyers is to impose in the divorce order a provision compelling the husband to take the necessary steps 'to obtain a Jewish religious divorce (*get*) in the Jewish ecclesiastical court (*beth din*)'; however, some divisions of the Supreme Court of South Africa refuse to sanction this provision because they consider that they do not have the authority or jurisdiction to make an order affecting another court.<sup>17</sup>

There is a record of three *responsa* addressed to Rabbi Chaim Mirvish of Cape Town: two from Rav Kook, in 1922 and in 1935, while the third was from Chief Rabbi Isaac Ha-Levi Hertzog in 1939. Rabbi Mirvish (born in 1872 in Besagola, Lithuania) was a product of the great yeshivot of Slobodka and Telz and had received his *semikhah* (rabbinic ordination) from Rabbi Eliezer Gordon of Telz. When the Beth Hamidrash Hachodosh was established, it appointed Rabbi Mirvish; he was the first religious leader with *semikhah* to serve a Cape Town community and the first to come from Europe with such distinguished traditional qualifications. In 1904, a group of discontented members of the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation had broken away to establish a new synagogue; it had been generally accepted that their main

## JOHN SIMON

motivation was that as Jews of Eastern European origin, they disliked the Anglo-Jewish customs and mannerisms which prevailed in the mother synagogue but, surprisingly, they did not then engage a Minister from Eastern Europe.<sup>18</sup>

The Reverend A. P. Bender had been appointed Minister of the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation in 1895. He was a typical product of the Anglo-Jewish ministry and had been a student at Cambridge University. However, despite the many differences in background, training, and personality between Rabbi Mirvish and the Reverend Bender, and despite the latter's well-known antipathy towards Jews from Eastern Europe,<sup>19</sup> the two men worked amicably together in the interest of the community, particularly in connection with assistance to newcomers in dealing with difficulties with immigration and customs authorities and with naturalization procedures.<sup>20</sup>

Because of his qualifications and learning, it was to Rabbi Mirvish that requests for information and guidance on halakhic matters were usually referred. His book entitled *Droshei ve-Shut ha-Ramach* (Sermons and Responsa of the Ramah), published in 1935, contains — apart from the sermons and addresses which he had delivered on public occasions — reprints of some *responsa* which he had received from the eminent colleagues in Europe, whom he had consulted from time to time. However, only one of these *responsa* appears on the Bar-Ilan computer and it will be referred to below. In his book, Mirvish quotes a *responsum* from Rabbi Shmuel Avigdor Faivelson of Plunjan who, after a very lengthy discussion of the issues, agreed that it might be permissible to deliver a *get* to a woman in South-West Africa by registered post, because she lived so far away that it was impracticable for any witnesses to attend to perform the task. Rabbi Mirvish also quotes two *responsa* from Rav Kook concerning the plight of the *agunah*, a woman who cannot remarry because her husband refuses to give her a *get* or because he cannot be found when he is presumed to be living somewhere. One of the *responsa* examined the circumstances in which a marriage can be annulled — that is, declared to have been null and void — thus avoiding the necessity for a divorce. The other dealt with a question which was likely to arise in a frontier community, whose members may have relatives in various parts of the world. In one case, a man was very ill and his life was in great danger; he and his wife had no children, but he had living brothers — which meant that in Jewish law, his widow would be unable to remarry without first obtaining *halitza* to release her from the obligation of marrying one of the brothers (see Deuteronomy 25: 9–10). None of the brothers could be contacted and Rabbi Mirvish enquired whether it would be advisable, in the circumstances, that the sick man give his wife a *get* so that in the likely event of his death, she would not need *halitza*. The couple were happily married, and if he were to recover after the *get*, they could then resume

## RESPONSA AND RULINGS

cohabitation. In a lenient *responsum*, Rav Kook stated that the preferred course was for the wife to be given a *get* so that there would be no risk of her becoming an *agunah*; but he added that if the husband were to recover, then he and his wife would have to be prudent and discreet about their future life together.

Rabbi Mirvish had pointed out that he was dealing in 1933 with an actual situation in South Africa. He had to specify this, because a similar case had occurred at the end of the nineteenth century, in 1899, in the Witwatersrand Old Hebrew congregation: there was a childless couple, the husband was dangerously ill, and he had a brother living far away. In reply to a question from Joseph Herman Hertz, the rabbi of that congregation in South Africa (who, in fact, was later to become himself the Chief Rabbi of the British Empire in 1913), Chief Rabbi Hermann Adler wrote from England on 2 February 1899: 'It is my duty to point out that I would not grant a *get* myself in such circumstances as it would be contrary to the law'.<sup>21</sup> It was perhaps because he was aware of that 1899 *responsum* that Rabbi Mirvish sought another opinion from Rav Kook. In his book, Rabbi Mirvish took the opportunity of including a number of his own opinions on various halakhic issues, which do not strictly qualify as *responsa*, since they were not given in reply to questions; but taken together, they do give an interesting overview of the sort of problems with which a rabbi on the southern tip of Africa had to grapple in the earlier decades of the twentieth century.

To return to the Bar-Ilan *responsa*, it must be noted that the first of the two rulings by Rav Kook concerning South African enquiries was about a problem which does not often arise. Jewish law forbids a widow or a divorcee to remarry if she is still nursing a child by her late husband, until the child is 24 months old. The reason given for that prohibition is that if she remarries during that period, she may conceive by her new husband and in such a case, the texture and the quality of her milk may change, leading her baby to refuse to swallow it and thus perhaps to starve; her new husband would not be legally obliged to incur the expense of providing milk substitutes for the baby. The prohibition is still in force even if the baby had been weaned before the full 24 months, because of a fear that in some cases the mother may try to wean the baby too early and thus risk putting the child in danger. Rabbi Mirvish sought guidance on such a matter from both Rav Kook and Rabbi Moshe Mordecai Epstein of Slobodka. (Rabbi Epstein dealt with the question but his *responsum* is not shown on the Bar-Ilan computer; it is recorded in the book by Rabbi Mirvish). The *responsum* by Rav Kook is included in his volume entitled *Ezras Cohen*, published in 1922, and is recorded in the Bar-Ilan computer.

Rabbi Mirvish had sought guidance about the case of a widow who was poor and who had weaned her daughter shortly after the baby's birth for no ulterior motive. She now had the opportunity of marrying a

## JOHN SIMON

worthy man; he was materially able to care for her and for her child, who was only a few months old. The couple sought permission to have a religious wedding and Rabbi Mirvish expressed the fear that if that permission were refused, they might take the matter into their own hands and live together without the benefit of religious blessing. The *responsum* by Rav Kook was that he was prepared to allow a rabbi to officiate at a Jewish wedding since that was preferable to the couple living together after only a civil wedding; it was the lesser evil. The prohibition about the remarriage of a mother of a child younger than 24 months was a rabbinic but not a biblical decree and Rav Kook added that if it could be ascertained that the mother had indeed weaned her daughter for the baby's own good and not merely in order to obtain permission to remarry, then the marriage should be allowed and the woman would not be left helpless in a state of poverty; he also believed that if the baby girl could speak for herself, he was sure that she would say that she wished her mother to remarry.<sup>22</sup> Rav Kook showed in this *responsum* both his leniency and his modesty because in his concluding remarks he stated that his ruling should not be considered final until another rabbi had given a similar opinion. Fortunately, Rabbi Epstein, in the *responsum* published in Rabbi Mirvish's book, did in fact concur — which must have been a great relief to the couple in the case.

In 1935, Rabbi Mirvish approached Rav Kook about a Jewish burial for ashes. In his *responsum*, Rav Kook rules that there is a very firm and outright prohibition not only against cremation but also against the *hevra kadisha* having anything to do with the burial of ashes: 'It is forbidden for anyone to show any respect or honour to these cremated remains'. When he sought guidance, Rabbi Mirvish had indicated that a number of Jews in Cape Town had 'expressed interest in having their remains cremated'.<sup>23</sup>

The issue of cremation still surfaces among South African Jews from time to time. The chief rabbi of the British Empire, Nathan Marcus Adler, and his son and successor Hermann Adler, had ruled on the matter towards the end of the nineteenth century, with the support of the famous Rabbi Yitzchak Elchanan Spector of Kovno (1817–1896). Although they were of course totally opposed to cremation, they had permitted the interment of ashes in a Jewish cemetery. Following such rulings, and in accordance with the bylaws of the United Synagogue in Britain, Chief Rabbi Hertz replied as follows to a request for directions which he received from the Durban Jewish community of South Africa in 1923: 'Prayers may be read in the house before the removal of the body. No service of any kind is to be held at the crematorium. At the burial of the coffin containing the ashes, the ordinary service may be held and a proper tombstone erected.'<sup>24</sup>

On 6 October 1936, Dr J. L. Landau — then Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregation of the Transvaal — gave, at the request of the

## RESPONSA AND RULINGS

Jewish Burial Society in Johannesburg, his opinion about the proposed burial in the Jewish cemetery of Johannesburg of the ashes of a Jew whose body had been cremated in Paris. He did not want to create a precedent by agreeing to the burial of the ashes but he advised the family of the deceased to accept the Burial Society's offer 'of a special piece of ground [in the cemetery, for the burial of ashes] to which my colleagues of the Beth Din including Rabbi Kossowsky with whom I also discussed the matter willingly agree'.<sup>25</sup> A year later, in 1937, Rabbi Mirvish received an interesting *responsum* from Chief Rabbi Yitzhak Ha-Levi Herzog of Palestine — which the latter published in his volume entitled *Hechal Yitzhak*. It concerned the seating arrangements in the synagogue: Rabbi Mirvish had enquired whether it was compulsory to arrange the seating in the traditional manner with the elders facing the congregation on the eastern wall and the rest of the congregation facing eastwards, their faces towards the pulpit and the elders. He asked whether another arrangement would be acceptable — such as half the congregation facing northwards and the other half facing southwards — and Chief Rabbi Herzog ruled that it was permissible and indeed it can be seen in most South African synagogues.<sup>26</sup>

Shortly after the Second World War, Chief Rabbi Herzog gave another *responsum* to a question emanating from South Africa; it is published in the same volume, *Hechal Yitzhak*, but there is no information about the person who sought the ruling. The *responsum* dealt with the degree of proof required in Jewish law to consider that a member of the Air Force who had been presumed by the military to have died would be deemed as dead by Jewish religious authorities, so that his widow would be permitted to contract a valid second Jewish marriage. The man's aircraft had gone down in the Adriatic sea in July 1944, with a crew of eight. Four bodies had been recovered, but they did not include that of the Jewish officer. After a thorough investigation, the Air Force authorities concluded that the man was to be presumed dead and his widow then approached the *beth din* of Johannesburg for permission to remarry. Chief Rabbi Herzog and his colleagues in Palestine arrived at a ruling after the following considerations. They described the process thus:

- a. We must assume that he did not survive because his honour as a Jewish officer would not have allowed him to desert or to hide if he had survived.
- b. We must assume that he did not survive and become a prisoner of war, since all prisoners of war have been repatriated.
- c. It is virtually impossible that he should have survived and not been found.
- d. We must assume that he did not leave the airplane before the beginning of the fatal flight, since this would have been known to the authorities.
- e. We must accept the military reports that the plane crashed in the sea, since four bodies were washed ashore, and were identified as having been some of the passengers in the aircraft in question. The authorities are

## JOHN SIMON

experienced in these matters and go to great lengths to identify recovered bodies accurately.

The decision was that since they were 'dealing with a young woman who would otherwise be left helpless for the rest of her life, there is room for latitude to allow her to remarry'.<sup>27</sup> Such problems were sadly to arise again during the course of Israel's wars and Chief Rabbi Goren (who had formerly been Chief Chaplain in the Israeli army) laid down lenient and practical rules to be followed in such cases.

There are three computer entries in Bar-Ilan dealing with commercial issues. One of these was in answer to a question posed by Rabbi Yechiel Michael Kossovsky of Johannesburg in 1961 to the eminent Rabbi Moshe Feinstein of New York. His *responsum* is published in *Igros Moshe* (section *Yoreh Deah*), published in 1959. The case was that of an alleged breach of contract between a *shohet* and his Union of Ritual Slaughterers; he wished to take up employment with a rival organization, although the terms of his original contract appeared to prohibit this. Rabbi Feinstein ruled in favour of the Union: he deemed the contract to have been legally valid<sup>28</sup> — incidentally following the Roman Dutch principle, *pacta servanda est*.

There is one issue which did not lead to a *responsum* by an individual rabbi but about which the Rabbinical Courts of Israel gave a ruling. It was a case of alleged breach of copyright and the plaintiff was Rabbi Gad who had lived in Johannesburg. He had invested a considerable sum of money to acquire copies of the di Trani manuscripts on the Bible, and had employed printers in South Africa to publish the di Trani commentary; but he found that these printers had made a large number of mistakes. He therefore went to Jerusalem to have the text competently printed, but then discovered that meanwhile another person had obtained a copy of the Di Trani manuscripts and was about to publish that commentary. Rabbi Gad requested the Rabbinical Court in Jerusalem to prohibit that projected rival publication, claiming that he had publicized his intention to publish the text in an introduction to a book which he had published and which had been sent to a number of prominent scholars in Israel and indeed which was to be found in the library of Mosad HaRav Kook. Rabbi Gad submitted that the Defendant should have been aware of these facts. However, the Defendant contended that he had obtained a copy of the manuscripts from the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris at great expense and that he had no knowledge whatsoever of Rabbi Gad's intention to publish the di Trani commentary.

The Rabbinical Court of Israel ruled that there were two possibly applicable prohibitions in such a case: interfering with another's livelihood or 'snatching' from another something which the latter had striven to attain. It then gave the reasons why it had decided that there had been no breach of copyright and it allowed publication by the



## RESPONSA AND RULINGS

Defendant. The court explained that in a case dealing with the publishing of manuscripts, a great deal of expense and of hard work were involved and it was therefore customary that a scholar intending to publish such a text obtain a rabbinical approbation which would ban any other person from publishing the same work for a stated period of time; but the Plaintiff had not obtained such a rabbinical letter of approbation and he could not claim that there had been interference with his livelihood. As for the other prohibition, the contention of snatching something from another's hand was also not relevant in this case. There was no question of the Defendant trying to snatch away an object for himself alone or trying to prevent Rabbi Gad, the Plaintiff, from publishing the commentary. The Defendant had not benefited from any work done by Rabbi Gad, but had independently obtained a copy of the manuscripts through his own efforts.<sup>29</sup>

In quite a different type of issue, Rabbi Elijah Klatzkin of Palestine, formerly known as the Lubliner Rav, gave a short *responsum* to a question asked by a South African Jew who wished to import frozen kasher meat from Australia. He gave specific instructions about the steps which have to be taken after defrosting in order not to invalidate the *kashrut* of the meat.<sup>30</sup> It must be noted in this context that the question of importing frozen kasher meat from Australia or elsewhere had been considered by the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Empire, Hermann Adler, in 1898. He had been approached about the matter by the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation and had stated in the course of his reply dated 2 May 1898: '... on several occasions correspondence was entered into between our Board of Shechita here and companies in the Australasian colonies and in South America relative to the importation of Kosher frozen meat to England. It was found however that the matter was impracticable'.<sup>31</sup>

It is clear from at least one *responsum* that South African Jews were generally considered to be lax in their observance of religious precepts. In 1922 the eminent scholar of Vilna, Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzinsky, was asked whether the fact that the witnesses to a *get* (one of whom was a shopkeeper and the other a tavern keeper) publicly desecrated the Sabbath by keeping their respective establishments open on Saturdays would invalidate the *get*. His ruling was that the *get* was valid and he gave the following explanation: 'Since desecration of the Sabbath is so common in that place and virtually no-one sees any prohibition in opening a business on the Sabbath, the witness is not disqualified, since he is not aware that he has done an act which disqualifies him'.<sup>32</sup>

Another *responsum* which has regard to the circumstances of the place is from Rabbi Waldenberg, who permitted boys under the age of thirteen who were being prepared for their barmitzvah to be taught on the Sabbath how to lay *tephillin* (phylacteries). He commented in 1964: 'The teacher from Johannesburg may teach these youngsters who have

no other opportunity to learn how to put on tephillin even on the Sabbath . . . this ruling is made, taking into consideration the special circumstances of the children in the Diaspora who are forced by law to spend their week studying the curriculum of the public schools'.<sup>33</sup>

Finally, there are two *responsa* which dealt with the permissibility of changing from the Ashkenazi to the Sephardi pronunciation in synagogue. Rabbi Meshulam Roth, a very distinguished scholar who acted as halakhic advisor to the Supreme Rabbinic Court of Israel and to the country's Chief Rabbis, dealt in his volume entitled *Kol Mevaser* with a number of the halakhic problems which beset the State of Israel in its early years. His opinion was that one should not change from either pronunciation to the other, basing his ruling on the injunction 'do not leave the Torah of your mother'.<sup>34</sup> In a *responsum* to Chief Rabbi Louis Isaac Rabinowitz of the United Hebrew Congregation of the Transvaal in 1954, Chief Rabbi Herzog quoted two reasons given by Rav Kook against changing the pronunciation: these were, first, that when an individual switches his pronunciation, it is as if he does not enunciate his words clearly; and second, that the whole existence of the Torah depends upon it being passed *unchanged* from father to son. Chief Rabbi Herzog, whilst differing from Rav Kook's reasoning, advanced two further reasons of his own against changing the pronunciation: such a change would upset the unity of the congregation, since the majority of the members were not expert in the proper Sephardi rendering and the result would be a mixture of both pronunciations, something certainly not proper (anyone familiar with South African synagogues will know that the argument is well-founded); and the second reason he gave was that the change to the Sephardi pronunciation was begun in Europe by the Reform movement. Herzog clearly did not view with favour Reform Judaism and he took then the opportunity of making the following comment when he gave his ruling: changing to a Sephardi pronunciation 'would be allowing the Reform movement to make inroads into the community . . . since they are beginning to attract a following in your city, you would do well to influence your congregation to have as little to do with them as possible'.<sup>35</sup>

The present Chief Rabbi of South Africa, Cyril K. Harris, told me that in 1968 he and the then Chief Rabbi Jakobowitz exchanged in England differing views on the subject. Chief Rabbi Harris commented in 1991: . . . this is not a Halakhic issue, but rather a matter of policy. In other words since all our Jewish Day Schools utilise Israeli Hebrew, in order not to confuse the children, we should align synagogue procedure accordingly'.<sup>36</sup>

It must be admitted that the *responsa* which have been examined in this paper do not constitute a sufficiently large sample from which to extrapolate any firm conclusions about South African Judaism. I shall be most grateful to receive, or to be referred to, any other material

## RESPONSA AND RULINGS

which throws light on the way in which South African orthodox Judaism developed. Perhaps even the small body of data in this paper can be said to demonstrate that in Jewish religious law and practice, as in other matters, *ex Africa semper aliquid novi*.

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See by I. Epstein a) *The Responsa of Rabbi Solomon ben Adreth of Barcelona as a Source of the History of Spain*, London 1925, and b) *The Responsa of Rabbi Simon ben Zemach of Duran as a Source of the History of the Jews of North Africa*, London, 1930; and S. Eidelberg, *Jewish Life in Austria in the 15th Century as Reflected in the Legal Writings of Rabbi Israel Isserlein and his Contemporaries*, Dropsie College, Philadelphia, 1962.

<sup>2</sup> For a further account of the Landau archives and an inventory, see my paper, 'New Archival Material Relating to the Early Development of South Africa's Jewish Community: Some Preliminary Observations' in R. Musiker and J. Sherman, eds., *Waters out of the Well*, published by the Library of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1988.

<sup>3</sup> I wish to acknowledge the generosity of the late Mr S. Yach and the Mauerberger Foundation of Cape Town for providing the funds to obtain these *responsa*; and I am grateful to Rabbi Yaakov Weinberger, the head of Bar-Ilan University's Computer Project, for his co-operation.

<sup>4</sup> The *responsa* presently available on the computer are only those which were included in published collections. There must have been many more which were the subject of private communications between rabbis in South Africa and their correspondents overseas.

<sup>5</sup> I wish to thank Rabbi S. Steinhaus of Cape Town, Rabbi Salzer's son-in-law, for useful material concerning the Rabbi's career and congregation.

<sup>6</sup> Yitzchok Yaakov Weiss, *Minchas Yitzchok*, part 3, chapter 78.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, part 3, chapter 68.

<sup>9</sup> Genesis 1:28.

<sup>10</sup> This is the standard required by Beth Hillel: Babylonian Talmud, Yevamoth 61b. I am grateful to Rabbi Dr E. J. Steinhorn for this and other references.

<sup>11</sup> Weiss, *op. cit.* in Note 6 above, part 5, chapter 113.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, part 3, chapter 145.

<sup>13</sup> Eliezer Yehudah Waldenberg, *Tzitz Eliezer*, vol. 9, chapter 21.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, part 4, chapter 91.

<sup>15</sup> Weiss, *op. cit.* in Note 6 above, part 3, chapter 113.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, part 8, chapter 137.

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, *Berkowitz vs. Berkowitz* 1956 (3) *South African Law Reports* 522 (SR). For a more recent — and, it is submitted, a more correct view to the contrary — see *Raik v. Raik*, an unreported judgment of Coetzee J. delivered in the Witwatersrand Local Division of the Supreme Court of South Africa on 21 March 1991, Case no. 18278/90. Decisions such as *Berkowitz*, *supra*, are based on the mistaken impression that a *get*, like a civil divorce, is an order granted by the Beth Din. It is, of course, no such thing: a *get* is a bill of

divorcement issued to the wife by the husband; and the *p'tur* or certificate issued by the Beth Din thereafter is no more than a confirmation that a *get* has been given by a husband in a particular case. For scholarly discussions on this vexed question, which still awaits a satisfactory solution in South Africa as elsewhere, see J. David Bleich, 'Jewish Divorce: Judicial Misconceptions and Possible Means of Civil Enforcement' 16 1984 *Connecticut Law Review* 201; Nathan Segal, 'The Enforcement of an Agreement to Grant a Get or Jewish Ecclesiastical Bill of Divorce' 1988 105 *South African Law Journal* 97; and Norman Solomon, 'Jewish Divorce Law and Contemporary Society' in *The Jewish Journal of Sociology*, vol. 25, no. 2, December 1983, pp. 131–39. I am grateful to Advocate Hillel Dison of the Johannesburg Bar for making available to me copies of the Raik judgment and of the Bleich article. The South African Law Commission has prepared a Working Paper (no. 45) on the subject of Jewish divorces and has proposed to amend the Divorce Act 1979 to give some powers to civil courts to refuse to allow civil divorces unless satisfied that any religious barrier to the remarriage of a party has been removed. Representations have been received and are presently under consideration; and some form of amending legislation may be expected.

<sup>18</sup> In fact, they wrote to the Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom asking him to recommend a graduate from Jews' College as their Minister: see my paper referred to in Note 2 above. In the event, no Minister was appointed for a number of years.

<sup>19</sup> Interview with 'A.M.', recorded in May 1981 and available in the Oral History records of the Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies and Research, University of Cape Town. 'A.M.' knew both men.

<sup>20</sup> See by Louis Mirvish, 'Cultural Life of Cape Jewry in the Years 1899–1914', an unpublished paper in the Jewish Museum, Cape Town, 100A 311 (3).

<sup>21</sup> See Chief Rabbi's Letter-book 49, Letter 87, 2 February 1899.

<sup>22</sup> *Ezras Cohen*, section *Even Ha-Ezer*, chapter 20.

<sup>23</sup> *Da'as Cohen*, chapter 197.

<sup>24</sup> Letter from Chief Rabbi Hertz's secretary to the Honorary Secretary of Durban Hebrew Congregation, 7 March 1923.

<sup>25</sup> *Landau Archives*, 4–798/57/B, Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

<sup>26</sup> *Hechal Yitzchok*, section *Orah Hayyim*, chapter 9.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, section *Even Ha-Ezer*, chapter 1.

<sup>28</sup> *Igros Moshe*, section *Yoreh Deah* 3, chapter 75.

<sup>29</sup> *Decisions of the Rabbinical Courts of Israel*, vol. 1, p. 276.

<sup>30</sup> Rabbi A. Klatzkin, *Dvar Halakhah*, chapter 56.

<sup>31</sup> Chief Rabbi's Letter-book 49, Letter 72.

<sup>32</sup> *Ahiezer*, part 3, chapter 25.

<sup>33</sup> *Tzitz Eliezer*, vol. 1, chapter 5.

<sup>34</sup> *Kol Mevasser*, part 3, chapter 12.

<sup>35</sup> *Hechal Yitzchok*, section *Orah Hayyim*, chapter 3.

<sup>36</sup> Letter from Chief Rabbi Harris to John Simon, dated 22 March 1991.

# THE INCORPORATION OF A STRANGER: ANALYSIS OF A SOCIAL SITUATION IN A WELSH VALLEY

Leonard Mars

**T**HE study of social situations, pioneered by Max Gluckman in 1940,<sup>1</sup> has been employed by anthropologists to indicate the structural characteristics as well as the cultural values of a particular society. The ethnographer observes and describes a ceremony — such as the opening of a bridge,<sup>2</sup> the performance of a dance,<sup>3</sup> or the burial of a local notable<sup>4</sup> — and then considers, after the description of the local scene, the wider concerns of the particular group or community.

In this paper I propose to describe and analyse the ceremony which I attended in honour of Dr Lionel, a Jewish medical practitioner, who had looked after his patients in a Welsh valley for fifty years, and who had retired. I had been invited as a friend of Dr Lionel; I was not from that valley nor one of his family. Our friendship stemmed from the time I had taught him modern Hebrew during the hours when my children and his grandchildren had attended religion classes on a Sunday morning at the Swansea synagogue of which we are both members.

On 23rd March 1991, a Saturday night, the valley Welfare Committee welcomed 300 guests at the community centre, a converted cinema, which was filled to capacity with members of Dr Lionel's family, patients, and distinguished guests. The latter included the local member of parliament as well as the MP for the adjacent constituency, and the local mayor. The seats in the front row were occupied by Dr Lionel and his wife, their children, grandchildren, and other relatives; those in the next three rows were reserved in the names of specially-invited guests, and the remaining seats were available to all the rest of the attendance. (Later, it was to become apparent that the seating arrangements had been very carefully planned.)

Several smaller events to honour Dr Lionel had taken place earlier: there had been receptions and presentations at the local rugby club

## LEONARD MARS

which had used his medical services; at the St John Ambulance Brigade where he had acted as Associate Serving Officer; and at a local old people's home. The March ceremony was to be the culmination of all the meetings marking the gratitude of the local community, the final parting of Dr Lionel the local medical practitioner, and his new status as simply another inhabitant of the valley.

There was no precedent for such a ceremony, although retirement presentations are common in offices and factories, of course. The speakers were colleagues of Dr Lionel, politicians, singers, and patients. It was a formal ceremony, but there were elements of relaxed spontaneity and local intimacy. There had been no rehearsals but a local photographer and a video maker recorded the event. (I have altered the names of the principal organizers and of the doctor himself in order to preserve their privacy and at the request of the doctor who took over from Dr Lionel.) Mrs Cooper, who was the Chairman of the Welfare Committee and one of Dr Lionel's patients, chaired the proceedings and acted as a mistress of ceremonies. She stood on the stage and began by welcoming the guests, mentioning the two members of parliament. She said that this was a sad-happy event: they were losing their doctor, but he was to continue living among them after having served the community for 'fifty years, two months, three weeks, and five days'; then the mayor came forward to present a certificate on behalf of the local council and apologized for having to leave since he was obliged to attend another function. Mrs Cooper then introduced the local male voice choir, about fifty mainly middle-aged and elderly men, attired in dark blazers, white shirts, ties, and slacks. Their programme consisted of a medley of eight songs, beginning with a negro spiritual and including the well-known Hebrew song, 'Hava nagilla hava', as well as 'Softly, as I leave you' (considered appropriate for the occasion of a retirement), and ended with 'The Battle Hymn of the Republic' in which the audience joined enthusiastically.

After the choir, a semi-professional entertainer — who was a patient of Dr Lionel — came to the stage; she began by praising the doctor and noted with pretended sadness that he was gravely handicapped since he still spoke with the broad Scottish accent of his native Glasgow, even after living in the valley for 50 years. She then announced that she was going to give a lecture on the art of Wenglish (Welsh English as spoken in the valley) and cited as a particular example the local use of the word 'tidy' — such as having a 'tidy bit in the bank' and 'it is a tidy step'. As to the latter, she begged her audience not to give directions to 'foreigners' in the valley by saying 'it's a tidy step', but to warn them: 'it's a long way'. Another confusing Wenglish usage for outsiders were statements such as, 'Don't give it to me now, give it to me again' — or even more confusing, 'Don't give it to me now, give it to me next'. She also used the well-known double-entendre about a woman being 'in bed under the

## THE INCORPORATION OF A STRANGER

doctor', which was very well received by her audience, whom she urged at the end of her act to be 'kind to foreigners'.

She was followed by Mrs Cooper who recited a poem entitled 'To Lionel', which she had composed in his honour. She told the gathering that she had been both a patient of his and his seamstress and tailoress for many years.

Another item was a tape recording made by Lionel's granddaughter, a young woman of 20 who was a trainee broadcaster for a local radio station. She had recorded an interview with the well-known Welsh comedy actor, Windsor Davies, who had been starring in Cardiff at a Christmas pantomime. He recalled an occasion some years earlier when both he and Lionel had been honoured with awards for local service by the local valley council and joked that it was a pity that he could not attend the retirement ceremony, since he might then have obtained a sick note from the doctor so that he could show cause for evading a Saturday matinée performance in order to attend the Wales-England rugby match. The town's women's choir then came to the platform and sang six songs, including a Jewish lullaby 'Shlaf mein kind' (Sleep, my child) sung in Yiddish and in English. The choir leader said that Lionel himself had taught them the song for a performance at an Eisteddfod 15 years earlier. This brought to an end the first half of the celebrations.

The second half started with the presentation to Lionel's wife, Patricia, of a large bouquet of flowers given by the patients; and then a local Labour councillor, Mrs Bittle, delivered the longest speech of the evening. She reminisced about the past, when there used to be three collieries in the valley (now there were none) and Lionel would go underground to treat the sick and injured miners. General medical services were very limited at that time, before the establishment of the National Health Service, but the miners had run their own medical scheme. They could be seen in the local surgery, which had a dispensary, and the family doctor had a crucial role to play then. Lionel's services were still very greatly valued and she had to confess that when he and Patricia went to Israel for their golden wedding, they selfishly hated him for going on holiday, explaining: 'We never felt safe without you!'. A public collection had raised £1,300; £300 had bought a video recorder and a cheque for £1,000 was presented, enclosed in a tube decorated with white heather and tied with a tartan ribbon — Scottish emblems which touched Lionel (but not Patricia who is English). She stressed that the presentation was given with love and appreciation, concluding 'Well done, our good and faithful servant!'

Lionel's medical partner, Dr Patel, who is Indian and Catholic, then rose to recount that he had first encountered Lionel in a newsagent's shop in a nearby town; they each had a stethoscope protruding from a pocket, but they had not exchanged a word. A few days later, Dr Patel

had replied to an advertisement for a medical partner and knocked at the door of Dr Lionel who had invited him for an interview. Both men were amazed to recognize each other after their silent meeting at the newsagent's. Lionel accepted him into the practice and he thus became the first Indian doctor in the valley. Dr Patel greatly praised Lionel and Patricia for their kindness to him and to his children: Lionel treated the latter as if they were his own grandchildren and Dr Patel considered Lionel's family to be his own. After a partnership of 16 years, he would now greatly miss someone he had taken for granted.

Lionel concluded the ceremony with an emotional and moving speech, but he began by dropping his notes — which aroused immediate sympathy from his audience. He paid tribute to his wife, 'a modern Florence Nightingale without a lamp but with a portable telephone'. He then spoke of his school-days in Glasgow, where his geography teacher had been the father of Dr Andrews who had recruited Lionel in 1940, when all he knew about Wales was that it had four large cities and produced a great deal of coal. But in the course of time, his two daughters had been born in Cardiff and two granddaughters in Swansea. At that point, he again dropped his notes. He picked them up and recollected that he had first come to the valley in December 1940 while there was torrential rain — but then a triple rainbow appeared and he considered that to be a good omen, although he never did find a crock of gold at the end of it. He then spoke of the 'acceptance, appreciation and honour' which he had received in the valley, including his appointment as an adjudicator in a first-aid competition at the local Eisteddfod. He continued at great length about the changes in medical treatment during his career: when he came to the valley there was no penicillin; he and his patients had used goose grease as an ointment to treat chest infections; and asthma had been rife. Now there was more emphasis on the prevention of disease, life expectancy had increased, and several diseases had been eradicated. He concluded by saying that he had loved every minute of his fifty years in the valley. The audience warmly applauded him and sang 'For he's a jolly good fellow', followed by three cheers. The women kissed him and the men shook him by the hand. At the buffet supper following the presentation one of the guests — who was a great-grandmother — told me that Dr Lionel had treated six generations of her family.

#### *Commentary and Analysis*

An examination of the ceremony reveals some elements of the culture and of the society of industrial south Wales and of attitudes to a Jew who was also 'a foreigner'. As a social anthropologist, I believe that it is right to stress broad structural concerns, but I am uneasy about relegating to a secondary role the place, the people, or the culture — as



## THE INCORPORATION OF A STRANGER

some of my colleagues might recommend. The focus on the structural features of society in British anthropology and sociology has downgraded the place of culture in our studies, while American cultural anthropology has tended to focus on the nitty gritty of cultural specificity and to neglect the structural features.

One British response to the problem of combining cultural specificity with sociological generality is that of Anthony Cohen, the editor of *Belonging: Identity and Social Organization in British Rural Cultures*. Cohen argues that his concern with peripheral cultures need not be restricted to geographical peripherality but can include marginal areas — by which, presumably, he means economically and socially marginal areas.<sup>5</sup> The Welsh valley where the ceremony to mark Dr Lionel's retirement took place is one such marginal area. The audience knew that it had been difficult in 1940 to recruit and to retain doctors, that some had come but had decided not to stay. His patients were acknowledging not only his dedication and loyalty to them, but also his commitment to the valley. He had shown his identification with them and now it was hoped that he would remain among them after his retirement — unlike his predecessor and fellow Scot, Dr Andrews, who had left Wales when he retired. When he ceased practising medicine, there would be what Cohen had called 'the muting of social differentiation';<sup>6</sup> Lionel if he so chose could then be seen as a native of the valley — 'one of us' — rather than as a professional man.

Lionel had served the local community when its economy had been based on coal-mining and the men were employed in arduous, dangerous, and poorly-paid work. The miners had organized their own medical care through the Medical Health Council (MHC) before the National Health Service (NHS) was established and the gathering knew that he had actively participated in the MHC and later — unlike some other local doctors — had been an active supporter of the NHS. Whenever there was an accident, he had risked his own life by going underground to give medical help to those injured or trapped, and he had given expert evidence in court when miners had sought compensation for work accidents or for industrial diseases. Mrs Cooper, in her poem, had likened Lionel to an institution which had endured after the collieries and the working men's halls had been closed. He was so much of a fixture that they had taken him for granted but all good things came to an end. The coal-mines were no longer worked, but they were still a part of the collective folk memory, with physical reminders of their operation such as the pithead and its winding gear. Lionel was also now part of the collective memory, but moreover he was a living as well as an almost mythical figure who had cared for generations of patients in the valley.

In term of social class, ethnicity, and religion, Lionel was an outsider in a predominantly working-class Welsh, nonconformist, industrial

valley. But these points of differentiation became less significant since the community which he served assigned primacy to allegiance to the locality and to its residents. Lionel and his wife had manifested their loyalty to the valley over many decades, living among the patients, although their own children did not reside there. Indeed, even in this they were like many valley families, whose children had migrated to pursue their careers elsewhere. It was recognized that people differ and those differences were affectionately marked — as in nicknames such as ‘Jack Twice’ for a man whose name was John John. Lionel and his wife had not concealed their Jewishness but had first joined a Cardiff synagogue and later Swansea Hebrew Congregation and their Jewishness was acknowledged by singing in Hebrew and in Yiddish and by referring to their going to Jerusalem for their golden wedding. Lionel was not only Jewish, but also a Scot, and his Scots accent had been affectionately satirized during a tribute to him at the ceremony; but the very ability to tease him reflected the ‘joking relationship’ with his patients.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the fact that Lionel was not English had created a further bond, because it stressed the solidarity of the Celts vis-à-vis the English. Indeed, Lionel told me that in his early days in the valley, he had apparently not been welcome as a Jew by at least one patient — who had just approached him after the farewell ceremony to confide that 50 years earlier she had asked Dr Andrews why he had brought a Jew to his medical practice in the valley and that Dr Andrews had reassured her by saying, ‘There, there, my dear. No need to worry — remember, he’s a Scot and different to the others’. It seems, therefore, that for some valley dwellers during the Second World War a Scottish identity had been more acceptable than a Jewish one and that with the passage of time such a stranger by virtue of his commitment to the people and the place can gain acceptance and yet retain his difference(s).

Lionel’s position as a medical practitioner elevated him in terms of social status, but both he and his patients muted that difference. His fumbling and dropping of his notes during his speech did not diminish him in their eyes but on the contrary served to show that he was, like them, unaccustomed to public speaking and overcome by the occasion. The poem praising him mentioned his physical and personal characteristics, especially his short, squat stature and the consequent need to alter his ready-made clothes. This reference stressed his ordinary, man of the people, qualities. He did not distance himself from his patients. He told me that when he was starting in general practice, he was advised by experienced colleagues ‘to make the patient feel important and to remember that it’s the patient you don’t see who dies on you’, and he had therefore made a point of seeing all his patients and keeping in touch with them.

Lionel’s junior partner, Dr Patel, had been practising in the valley for 16 years, but had yet to gain the acceptance which was

## THE INCORPORATION OF A STRANGER

wholeheartedly given to Lionel. Lionel's senior partner, Dr Andrews, had apparently also not been fully accepted by the patients, although he had lived in the valley. It seems that this was because he behaved like a lord of the manor or a Scottish laird, and held banquets at his home for local dignitaries, while his wife organized embroidery classes for the wives of local professionals and of members of the gentry. He had started in general practice before the National Health Service began, when doctors were remote and powerful figures for their working-class patients; he knew his place and they knew theirs and the gulf between them was wide. Dr Patel was not only an Indian and a Catholic, but he also chose to live outside the valley, geographically distancing himself from the locality and its inhabitants. He dressed in impeccably tailored suits, in contrast to Dr Lionel who — as noted above — used the services of a local seamstress to alter the fit of his clothes. It was clear, from the confession that the patients did not feel safe when Lionel was away in Jerusalem, that Dr Patel did not enjoy the same confidence his senior partner had gained. Lionel had not forgotten his origins as a poor boy from the working-class Gorbals in Glasgow and he behaved as a man of the people, in a modest unassuming manner. The retirement ceremony itself could be considered as a rite of incorporation,<sup>8</sup> since it marked the end of his long period as a doctor and ushered in his new status as a neighbour of the valley dwellers. One of the two main organizers of the ceremony, the Labour councillor, made use of the social conditions prevailing when Dr Lionel had arrived in Wales as her main theme and chose the occasion to attack the Conservative government of the 1980s and 1990s, which had enacted legislation to compel doctors to retire when they reached the age of seventy. The Conservatives, she argued, had been responsible for much unemployment in the Welsh valleys and now even Dr Lionel had to find himself redundant, like so many of his patients.

Finally, the retirement ceremony served to celebrate local identity, and localism is a representation of group identity. In this particular case, the citizens of the valley were expressing resistance to their own communal extinction and were honouring the man who symbolized their solidarity.

### *Acknowledgements*

This paper was originally presented to a staff and postgraduate seminar in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology of the University College of Swansea. I am grateful for the contribution of all discussants, but particularly to my colleagues John Parker and John Hutson and also to the convenor of the seminar on the Sociology and Anthropology of Wales, Charlotte Davies. This paper was later delivered to the Conference of the European Association of Social Anthropologists held in Prague in August 1992.

LEONARD MARS

NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Max Gluckman, *Analysis of a Social Situation in Modern Zululand*, Rhodes-Livingstone Paper no. 28, Manchester, 1958 (first published in 1940 in *Bantu Studies* and in 1942 in *African Studies*).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2–8.

<sup>3</sup> Clyde Mitchell, *The Kalela Dance*, Rhodes-Livingstone Paper no. 27, Manchester, 1956.

<sup>4</sup> See J. B. Loudon, 'Kinship and Crisis in South Wales' in *British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 12, no. 4, 1961, pp. 333–50.

<sup>5</sup> Anthony Cohen, ed., *Belonging: Identity and Social Organization in British Rural Cultures*, Manchester, 1982, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>7</sup> A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, 'On Joking Relationships' in *Structure and Function in Primitive Society*, London, 1952, pp. 90–104. The article was first published in *Africa*, vol. 13, no. 3, 1940, pp. 195–210.

<sup>8</sup> See Meyer Fortes, 'Ritual and Office in Tribal Society' in Max Gluckman, ed., *Essays on the Ritual of Social Relations*, Manchester, 1962, p. 56.

# ENGLISHMEN AND JEWS: A NEW LOOK

Max Beloff  
(Review Article)

DAVID FELDMAN, *Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840-1914*, XII + 401 pp., Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1994, £35.00.

**D**R FELDMAN has written an important and original book on the relations between the Jewish community in the United Kingdom and the host nation during a period in which those relations underwent a series of major changes. In doing so, he challenges many of the accepted versions of this development — the versions by both contemporary writers and later historians. He has helped readers to follow the argument of the closely-documented and detailed narrative chapters by setting out in his introduction as well as in his conclusions the main thrust of his approach. But the help he offers is not enough to make the reader's task an easy one, though the book is written with a clarity of style and an absence of jargon not always found in the literature of acculturation.

No summary could do this work justice and all a reviewer can do is to suggest what is clearly both novel and significant. It is of course generally appreciated that the Jewish community itself was very different by 1914 from what it had been in 1840 — the period covered in this volume. The mid-century removal of disabilities and the opening of possibilities of wider participation in the country's general social and political life affected what was still a comparatively small minority group — with a structured and accepted hierarchical leadership, religious and secular, in both its Sephardi and its Ashkenazi components.

The new wave of immigration — which followed the Russian pogroms of the 1880s — was checked after the turn of the century by the Aliens Act and by subsequent restrictions; but by then there were new elements in Anglo-Jewry, largely concentrated in the East End of London. There were religious groups who repudiated the rituals and observances as well as what they saw as the laxity of the existing anglicized and even

anglicanized services and mores; and there were secular circles which were affected by socialist, anarchist, and eventually Zionist ideologies — all equally unpalatable to the notables of the old Jewish establishment, of what Chaim Bermant has called the 'Cousinhood'.

Dr Feldman urges us to recognize that the English themselves were changing their own perceptions of what constituted their national identity and therefore of the extent to which a Jew could be an Englishman. And these perceptions were in turn affected by the extension of the franchise after 1867, so that the national idea had to become one that all classes could subscribe to. The author does not stray outside his self-imposed chronological limits (from 1840 to 1914), but one cannot fail to be struck by the relevance of his study to the present debates in Britain about a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society's political, social, and above all educational problems.

The first part of Dr Feldman's book has a special emphasis on religion. In the middle decades of the nineteenth century, the nexus between membership of an established church and participation in public life was being severed and it was argued that what was granted to dissenters and to Catholics could not be denied to professing Jews. They paid British taxes and they were bound by British laws and they should therefore be given some recognition of their position as citizens who have the possibility of influencing decisions about the imposition of taxes and the enacting of laws — as Gentile British citizens could. That was the argument of a commercially-oriented establishment and it was affected by the absence in Britain of any of the delegated powers conferred in Central and in Eastern Europe on Jewish communal authorities (such as *consistoires*) as well as the absence of special laws as in parts of continental Europe which regulated Jewish life. From the time of their readmission under Oliver Cromwell in the seventeenth century, Jews were treated as individuals, not as part of some special minority group and their representative institutions were generated by the community itself, not conferred upon them from above.

Dr Feldman rightly points out that the emancipation of Jews was not universally welcome. Many Englishmen believed that only Christians could fully participate in public life and the dedication to this view on the part of an important section of the upper classes explains the long resistance, particularly in the House of Lords, to the admission of Jews to the House of Commons or to the upper Chamber. However, the matter was not that simple: what about those of Jewish parentage who themselves had been baptized and who regarded themselves as Christians? Had it not been for the extraordinary career of Disraeli, that question might not have been posed with such force. An added complication was that Disraeli himself did not seek to obliterate his antecedents. He regarded the Jewish contribution to Western civilization as central and he was certainly not an 'Englishman of the Jewish persuasion'.

## ENGLISHMEN AND JEWS

Dr Feldman shows that the problem was sharply brought into focus when Disraeli as Prime Minister adopted an attitude towards Balkan affairs in the late 1870s which seemed to be one of indifference to the sufferings of the region's Christian populations as well as of hostility to their patron Russia and of sympathy to their oppressors, the Turks. Disraeli was accused of being biased because of the comparatively benign attitude to the Jews shown by the Ottoman rulers since the expulsion from Spain at the end of the fifteenth century and it was claimed that he was sacrificing British interests as a result of his 'racial' sympathies for the Jews. These attacks upon Disraeli exhibit a racial interpretation of the Jewish question well before the working out on the Continent of Europe of the full ideology of modern racial-political antisemitism.

While the enactment of emancipation had been the work mainly of the Liberal wing of British politics, the opposition to Disraeli on matters of foreign policy came primarily from the same quarter — he was, after all, the head of a Conservative administration. And the attack upon Jewish influence in the political arena was renewed when a later Conservative government brought Britain into war in South Africa, allegedly to bolster the profits of the entrepreneurs in the Rand who were themselves of largely Jewish extraction. This in turn led to the familiar antisemitic agitation of the Edwardian era, even though by now it was the Liberals who were in power.

In the latter chapters of his volume, Dr Feldman does not go over this well-worn ground, but concentrates instead on the issues raised by the development of Jewish trades in the East End of London and the accusations of un-English practices brought against the immigrants by their indigenous neighbours and competitors. In this context, the Jews were assailed from two sides. There were the social reformers who believed that their 'sweated' industries and the housing conditions to which they gave rise were deleterious from the point of view of the capital city as a whole. On the other hand, there was the leadership of the 'new trade unionism' which resented the apparent unwillingness of what was perceived as the Jewish proletariat to fall in with their forms of organization and accept their leadership. At the same time, there was the attitude of the heads of the longer-established Jewish community who — while not hostile to their brethren and while willing to help provide for their material and their spiritual needs — did not believe that a large accretion of Eastern European Jews was to the advantage of Anglo-Jewry and therefore wished to facilitate their movement on to the New World — confining Britain's role to giving temporary asylum on the way.

The questions raised by the activities and attitudes of East End Jewry were not easy for outsiders to penetrate, and the social investigators on whom historians have performed relied (Beatrice Webb and

Charles Booth) had tended to seek answers to the problem in some characteristics which were believed then to be special to Jews: a willingness to accept low wages, poor housing, and the exploitation of family labour which the native-born Englishman would not tolerate. The Jews were seen as dominated by an inward appetite for competition and an indifference to social values. Dr Feldman points out that such judgements, if understandable, were in fact superficial. If we examine the internal structure of the 'Jewish' trades — clothing and tailoring, bootmaking, cigar manufacture, and furniture and cabinet-making — we can see that they were organized in ways which created a differentiation in forms of employment and contracting that provided not only a livelihood for newcomers but also the possibility of their future progress up the economic and social scale. Furthermore, while it is true that the Jews did not find what was on offer to them in the indigenous labour movement very attractive, they did create a network of their own: friendly societies, schools, and other associations — thus showing that they were not incapable of joining forces for the common good of their community.

It is only in relation to the changes in the economy and in the various industries that the internal story in both its religious and its political aspects can be understood. While 1914 seems a good point at which to break off the story, there was (as Dr Feldman points out) a new problem that had arisen to which no complete answer had as yet been given. In the 1890s, social reformers who were concerned about the situation were aware that most remedial action was the fruit of private philanthropy. But from 1906, we get the foundation of the modern welfare state with increasing social provision as well as increased regulation. Hitherto, the Jews had not needed to have much to do with the organs of the State — though they had had to see how Jewish education could be fitted into compulsory schooling. But now there was the whole question of social insurance being a matter of national policy. How far would this affect the Jews in spheres which until now had been self-regulated? How would the new distribution between national and municipal responsibilities affect them?

Later, the First World War was to bring about a new assessment of Britain's own self-image, with compulsory military service as an important component of it. One must hope that these questions will continue to interest Dr Feldman and that we may one day expect a sequel to this remarkable book. He might then insert a correction to the only error of fact which this reviewer has noted. Charles Masterman, who took up the cause of the Jewish Friendly Societies when fighting a by-election in Bethnal Green, had not been appointed 'Secretary of State at the Treasury' (p. 374), a non-existent office, but 'Financial Secretary to the Treasury'. It is comforting for other historians to know that even so careful a scholar as Dr Feldman can get something wrong!



# THE ALIYAH OF JEWS FROM ETHIOPIA AND THE REACTIONS OF ABSORPTION AGENCIES

Moshe Lissak  
(*Review Article*)

GADI BEN-EZER, *Kemo Or be-Kad: Aliyatam Shel Yehudey Etiopia* (Like Light in a Pitcher: The Immigration to Israel of Ethiopian Jews), 317 pp., Rubin Mass, Jerusalem, 1992, n.p.

**T**HE Beta Israel (Ethiopian Jews) who have come to settle in Israel are a remarkable immigrant group in their new country: their Jewish identity has been questioned; they are regarded as an alien segment by the majority of the Israelis among whom they now live; and their very dark skin colour makes them easily recognizable. On the other hand, they themselves have regarded the native Israeli Jews as strikingly different from them, not only physically, but also culturally and religiously.

The successive waves of Beta Israel immigrants — most of whom were brought to Israel in 1977–85 and in 1989–91 — attracted the attention of social scientists and intensified the interest about the origins of the community in Ethiopia, and in particular about the religious beliefs and practices of its members. Gadi Ben-Ezer's book — based on a collection of research reports, published articles, memoranda, and minutes of meetings of teachers, social workers, and supervisors — is a valuable contribution to our knowledge of Ethiopian Jewry.

The author devotes four chapters to the situation of the Beta Israel before they left Ethiopia and to the processes of their emigration to Israel. It is surprising that these chapters follow rather than precede the two chapters dealing with the psycho-cultural characteristics of the Beta Israel and with the misunderstandings which arose during their encounters with officials from agencies for immigrant absorption. Gadi Ben-Ezer is a clinical psychologist who has been engaged since 1982 in

working with immigrants from Ethiopia for Youth Aliyah and for the Israel Defence Forces. His findings and observations should help us to gain more insight into the problems which have faced both the Beta Israel and their host society in the attempts at acculturation or integration.

One of the main problems has arisen because of the persistent vacillation in the immigration policy of the State of Israel and the interpretation of its Law of Return. On the one hand, for either political or ideological reasons, there has been a policy of screening potential immigrants in their native country according to various criteria, such as age, health, economic circumstances, and antisemitism or other serious discrimination. On the other hand, there has been sometimes a decision to refrain as much as possible from a selection process before immigration. Screening usually reduces numbers and therefore slows the process of immigration; but it improves the prospect of successful acculturation in Israel, according to the policy-makers in charge of immigrant absorption. They argue that newcomers who are in several respects radically different — not only physically but also in culture and in religious tradition — from Israeli Jews will require complex systems of social services. Should priority therefore be given to younger persons, to those with special skills, or to those with pronounced Zionist ideals? And if so, what of the ethical implications of such a course of action? In the case of the Beta Israel, there was the additional and very serious consideration that their Jewish identity was not generally recognized as valid.

Before the two large-scale migrations from Ethiopia — Operation Moses in 1984 when 15,000 came to Israel and Operation Solomon in 1991 when 30,000 were air-lifted — there was only a weak trickle of immigrants from Ethiopia, perhaps because the Israeli authorities had serious doubts about their ability to integrate into Israeli society. It was only the radical political changes in Ethiopia itself, the fall of the imperial regime, which put an end to the vacillations of the Israeli government and of the Zionist establishment and obliged them to favour nonselective aliyah.

Once immigrants have been brought to the country, a decision must be made about what policy to implement: either centralized and comprehensive control over the acculturation process for a fairly long period, or decentralized control and the transfer of authority to municipal agencies and volunteer organizations. In the latter case, the immigrants themselves must assume a very great deal of responsibility to find their way as individuals in the socio-economic and political markets of Israel. In the early 1950s, the authorities in charge of immigrant absorption tried to exert maximum control in as many fields as possible for some years: in housing, education, area of settlement, health, etc. A similar policy was implemented, but over a shorter

## THE ALIYAH OF JEWS FROM ETHIOPIA

period, in the case of a large proportion of Soviet Jews, who were initially housed in absorption centres in the 1970s. However, in the 1980s there was a sharp turnabout: a shift to a policy of 'direct absorption' — but affecting only the Jews from the former Soviet Union.

As for the Beta Israel, the policy of close and comprehensive control continued unchanged and was implemented with devotion and with greater success than had been the case in the 1950s with immigrants from North Africa, because the financial and other resources of the State of Israel were now greater. The next important decision to be made was whether to hasten as much as possible the integration of the Ethiopian Jews into Israeli sub-cultures, or deliberately to slow down the process in order not to run the risk that swift and imposed cultural and religious change might seriously harm the delicate fabric of the immigrant community. Theoretically, it was that later option which was to be favoured; However, the implementation of that decision malfunctioned in many areas, largely because of the cultural gulf between the Beta Israel and the agencies in charge of absorption. At least one example of such profound misunderstanding is given by Steven Kaplan and Chaim Rosen in their article 'Ethiopian Immigrants in Israel: Between Preservation of Culture and Invention of Tradition' (published in the June 1993 issue of *The Jewish Journal of Sociology*, vol. 35, no. 1). Traditionally, it had been the women who had pottery skills in Ethiopia and they were encouraged in the early 1970s by Peace Corps volunteers in the Gondar region to produce small clay dolls for sale to tourists. Within a few years, after Operation Moses in 1984 and the later Operation Solomon, well-meaning Israeli agencies were devising programmes of cultural preservation, and training Beta Israel *men* to become potter-sculptors, and to produce figurines modelled on non-Ethiopian sub-Saharan features, including such uncharacteristic elements as bare-breasted women, all in the name of the 'traditional art' of Ethiopian Jews. The article appeared in the year after the publication of the book by Ben-Ezer, but in the December 1985 issue of *The Jewish Journal of Sociology* (vol. 27, no. 2), in a paper entitled 'The Beta Israel (Falashas): From Purity to Impurity', Emanuela Trevisan Semi reported on the basis of her own fieldwork in Israel on the very difficult problems facing the immigrants when they were obliged to go against their traditional ritual practices — for example, there were no provisions in Israel for the centuries-old Beta Israel separation of a woman from her household for several weeks after the delivery of her child.

Ben-Ezer indeed confirms the findings of these authors when he gives many examples of the frustrations and the agonies which both the newcomers and their Israeli mentors endured as they attempted to understand one another. In this context, the first two chapters of his

book are of great value with their discussion of the codes of honour of the immigrants and the problems encountered by their hosts when they try to understand these codes. The central feature is the manner in which the Beta Israel traditionally behave in the presence of authority — that is, the officials with whom they have dealings: the social worker, the Hebrew-language instructor, the absorption-centre manager, and army officers after they are conscripted. There are ritualized ways of responding when there is a need to challenge authority, but the code of honour requires that there be no direct refusal or confrontation; the ignorance of the Israeli authorities about accompanying body language and gestures, when an Ethiopian Jew believes an order must be refused, may lead to very serious distorted perceptions of the situation. Ben-Ezer comments: 'This type of inter-cultural encounter gives rise to misunderstandings which have far-reaching effects on the acculturation of Ethiopian immigrants in Israel and its future outcome' (p. 8). He describes with great skill the fears and anxieties of the Beta Israel as well as the difficulties experienced by their carers.

Ben-Ezer is aware that there is an element of xenophobia involved in the frictions between the newcomers and their hosts, but notes that proximity does not help to render the alien less of a stranger in their midst. On the contrary: when the newcomers and their carers or neighbours get closer, they may find more rather than fewer causes to feel alienated from one another, and prejudices and stereotypes become reinforced instead (p. 24). That leads to disparagement of the immigrants by giving a low estimate of their abilities, to aggression towards the newcomers, and to an over-emphasis of their 'exotic' nature. Such an emphasis, by having the effect of denying any possible similarity between the immigrants and the hosts, situates the Beta Israel as a variant human species — with the result that members of the host culture tend to notice, and to make references to, only such immigrant behaviour or attitudes and values which are remarkably different from their own.

Ben-Ezer seeks ways to overcome these defence mechanisms of the host community by offering a model, in a manner of speaking, of the psychological processes which the agents of acculturation are experiencing; it is not a case of abstract academic discussion, since there is a fairly detailed presentation of the pitfalls which can entrap these agents. For example, he explains the quandary of dealing with the difficulties and hardships which beset the Beta Israel within a group framework or context; he outlines confidence-building measures; and he recommends that the Ethiopian immigrants be given a period of care of longer duration than that provided for other immigrant Jews in Israel. That is necessary, partly because the Beta Israel are not familiar with the functions of a psychologist or of a social worker: they tend to see such persons as filling the role of teacher and therefore cast them

## THE ALIYAH OF JEWS FROM ETHIOPIA

into the teacher stereotype (p. 268). Another interesting finding by the author is that the 'internal clock' of the newcomers is different from that of the members of the host culture: 'they need more time to "warm up" for meetings. This often makes it necessary to allow more time for meetings' (p. 271).

Apart from a comprehensive discussion of the psycho-social aspects of the inter-relations between the givers and the recipients of care, the author gives details about the programmes and the agencies concerned with the educational integration of young Beta Israel: Youth Aliyah, the Israel Defence Forces, and miscellaneous projects which aim to prepare Ethiopian pupils for matriculation examinations and for university courses. The classical sociological issues in immigrant-absorption studies — housing problems, employment, health, acquiring fluency in the Hebrew language — are reviewed clearly but succinctly. The appendices include a glossary of Amharic terms and sayings which are useful for those working with the Beta Israel.

Those social scientists or field-workers who were involved with the processes of integration of the massive immigration of Diaspora Jews in the 1950s would certainly have been grateful for the type of analysis and evaluation which Ben-Ezer has provided now about the integration of Ethiopian Jews into Israeli society. However, we must not be too optimistic: we cannot assume that at least some of the mistakes and serious failure of communication which occurred in the 1950s as a result of the attitudes and of the policies of the Israeli establishment will now be easily avoided. Israel is perhaps the most experienced country when it comes to absorbing immigrants, but that has not meant that those in charge of the resettlement of yet another new wave of newcomers may not at times feel impotent or confused. The present hope is that there will be a shorter time lag between the mismanagement of the situation and the realization that shortcomings have occurred and that the errors must be swiftly corrected.

# HOWARD BROTZ

1922–1993

**H**OWARD BROTZ was a member of the Advisory Board of *The Jewish Journal of Sociology* and contributed to its first number in 1959 with an essay on the position of the Jews in English society. He was one of the authors of *A Minority in Britain: Social Studies of the Anglo-Jewish Community*, a volume edited by Maurice Freedman and published in London in 1955. He had carried out in 1949 and 1950 fieldwork research for his Ph.D. at the London School of Economics and Political Science but had not published his thesis, *An Analysis of Social Stratification within Jewish Society in London*.

Many years later, when Maurice Freedman was the editor of this Journal and had accepted in 1970 a Chair of Social Anthropology at the University of Oxford and had become a Fellow of All Souls College, he had referred to a statement by Howard Brotz about the sensitivity of Jews vis-à-vis non-Jews:

I was once at a 'Jewish' evening, *i.e.*, one consisting of an exchange of jokes, stories, and information about Jews, where one of the young men present, as an afterthought following a particularly heavy run of jokes with the Jewish-non-Jewish theme, made the remark: 'You know, I'm sure that Gentiles don't think about us nearly as much as we think about them. A friend of mine told me that they can go for days without even mentioning the word "Jew"'.<sup>1</sup>

Maurice Freedman died suddenly in 1975 and some years after his death, a colleague wrote to his wife to ask precisely where this quotation might be found because it had become part of a stock-in-trade in Jewish jokes in Oxford and had been adapted about the sensitivity of other minority groups in Britain.

Howard Brotz was what some Americans would today label 'an ethnic Jew': he was proud of being Jewish, he supported Israel by making regular financial contributions; and he organised Passover seders; but the food he ate was not usually kosher and he did not often go to synagogue. In this context, an amusing incident occurred when *A Minority in Britain* was in press: Howard had stated in a footnote on p. 185: 'Bacon and ham, as cured meats, seem to be separable from pork in general. For some curious reason bacon is less objectionable than ham in the U.S.' The printers, who were also the *Jewish Chronicle*

<sup>1</sup> *The Jewish Journal of Sociology*, vol. 36, no. 1, June 1994.

## OBITUARY

printers (but probably not printers of the Jewish religion), disliked initials and instead of 'in the U.S.' printed 'in the United Synagogue' but the editor of course promptly corrected the proofs. (Some irreligious Jews have often said they were sorry that the United Synagogue was not said in print to find bacon less objectionable than ham; but the editor and his wife dined out on the tale.)

At Howard's funeral in June 1993, Werner Dannhauser delivered the eulogy and recalled his own student days in Chicago, where

Howard Brotz was already a kind of institution among the students of Leo Strauss. . . . Howard's special place in our group was due to various factors. He was older than most of us; he already had his Ph.D. and a regular job to go with it, teaching at Wright Junior College; he was a sociologist rather than a political scientist; he had a more exotic past than most of us, having done a tour of military service in the Far East and having spent some time at the London School of Economics. . . . Mostly, it was Howard's strangeness that intrigued us: he was the most eccentric human being we had ever met. . . . He constantly insisted that he hated to travel, and he was forever taking trips. . . . Sometimes we shared adventures in far away lands. In Venice he took me to see *Summertime* at a local cinema so that we could watch Venetians watching Katharine Hepburn watching Venetians. . . . In Patras we boarded a train for Athens and I was dazed by a long talk he had with the conductor about the size of railway tracks in Greece. Howard knew more about railroads than anyone I have ever met. In Athens he took me to the races because one could see the Parthenon from an unexpected angle while playing the horses.

Howard paid a stiff price for the kind of life he chose to lead. He suffered disappointments personally and professionally but came to enjoy teaching at McMaster University in Canada. It was easy to underestimate him and his work; who else but him would publish an essay on the political philosophy of Sherlock Holmes? But *The Black Jews of Harlem*, a quirky book on a quirky topic by a quirky author, retains its charm today. Howard's genuine liking for the rabbi and the congregation he investigated shines through it, and was reciprocated by Rabbi Matthew and his flock. At a Sabbath service at the Black Jewish synagogue shortly after the publication of the book, to which I accompanied Howard, Rabbi Matthew thundered: 'That book contains 50 per cent damnable truth and 50 per cent damnable lies . . . But I say God be praised for the truth in it!'

Howard impressed us hugely by the way he reacted to his final illness. He was greatly helped by the exquisite love and care he received from his Toronto friends and with their support he ended his life without rancour and without grovelling. His sweetness came to the fore. Having lived a convoluted life, he died a simple and impressive death, doing himself proud.

The present editor of this Journal knew Howard since the early 1950s, when he stayed with her and her husband, Maurice Freedman, for several weeks while undergoing analysis in London and working on 'hypotheses' for a senior American sociologist, with a handsome grant twice the amount of the salary of a London University lecturer at that

## OBITUARY

time. Their friendship endured and although she did not know until after his death that he had written an essay on the political philosophy of Sherlock Holmes, she remembers vividly Howard returning to London and telling her about his experience of being invited to lecture on Sherlock Holmes in an Oxbridge college; he said with a twinkle in his eyes: 'How many people do you think came to the lecture? Well, just one!' and added that the principal of the college, with whom he was staying, invited the student for coffee and Howard then spoke informally about Sherlock Holmes.

Howard Brotz's colleagues at McMaster University, Cyril Levitt and William Shaffir, have contributed the following paragraphs for this obituary:

To those colleagues who knew Howard well, he was justifiably regarded as one of the more unique members of the McMaster faculty. Although he taught in the Department of Sociology, his broad range of interests (both within the discipline and outside it) greatly facilitated his interactions with colleagues across the university. While much of his research focused on the sociology and politics of ethnic relations — most notably in the United States and South Africa — he enjoyed listening to colleagues discussing their research. The central yardstick against which he evaluated such work was whether it was 'interesting'. Work which did not fall within the 'interesting' category was often consigned to other less savoury categories, 'Boring' and 'Who cares?' Although Howard did not regard himself as a sociologist of the Chicago School, he was, in fact, one of its chief proponents. The discipline, he claimed, was best practised by engaging persons in informal conversation in order to better understand how they made sense of their situations. Howard had far less faith in the methodology of survey research: 'Just go and talk to people', he would often tell colleagues and students.

During the last few years of his active teaching career, Howard, Peter Pinco, and we two embarked on the Hamilton Ethnicity Project. Two key elements of Howard's character shone through during the brief course of this project. The first was his academic competence. He formulated, especially in writing, the research problems and objectives clearly and crisply. The second was his remarkable ability to reformulate and reconceptualize the research all the while maintaining that he had not veered from its original course. It was his absolute unpredictability, along with his talent and aptitude for tying together seemingly unrelated strands of the study, which made the work both enjoyable and, at times, frustrating.

Howard's eccentric nature was usually reflected in his involvement in departmental politics. As serious and as committed as he appeared to be, he recognized more clearly than most that the academic side of things was but one aspect of life. While he enjoyed the capacity to single out the inanities of his colleagues, he could also laugh at himself. Above all, however, he brought to the department sets of fresh and evolving ideas, a perspective of what the discipline ought to be about, and a determination that sociological research should be both interesting and satisfying. His presence was missed



## OBITUARY

when he retired from active teaching; his absence now is felt even more deeply.

One of Howard's closest friends in London was Charles Monteith, a publisher who became chairman of Faber and Faber. In 1953, they lived in the same house in Wilfred Street, near Victoria. He writes:

It was a boarding house with a difference. Inmates were personal friends of the young woman owner, Christina Muir, or they had been recommended by reliable personal friends of hers; and the result was a family — a group of people who, by and large, got on happily together and were fond of each other, most of them remaining friends to this day in 1994.

Howard in the early fifties was at first a rather mysterious figure known to be under analysis and unable, for psychological reasons, to sleep and work at normal hours. But all that changed abruptly, as he later told me, one afternoon when he was on the consulting-room couch, suddenly glanced up, and saw that his analyst was fast asleep. He decided on the spot that psychoanalysis was bunk; and shortly afterwards decided, too, that his sleeping problems might be solved if he were to go to bed at midnight instead of 5 a.m. From then on, he became an increasingly active and integrated member of the Wilfred Street family. Over the following decades, we spent many holidays together — in Greece, Tuscany, the Middle East, Paris, Sardinia. . . . Driving through Milwaukee one Memorial Day, en route to Door County on the shores of Lake Michigan, he asked me to look at the names on the shopfronts. I obediently watched the unending ribbon of Teutonic patronyms broken only by an occasional 'Bier Keller' or 'Wein Stube'. He told me forcefully that it was a myth that the Midwest was isolationist at the beginning of the war because the inhabitants were so far away from the sea. They wanted the Germans to win.

During the last 25 years of his life, Howard Brotz became increasingly interested in race relations in South Africa and he went regularly during his vacations from McMaster to carry out a mixture of sociological and anthropological fieldwork in the country. He met many leading figures among the Africans, including Chief Buthelezi, and he also went to Soweto at a time when it was rare for whites and blacks to have friendly relations in the cramped conditions of the slums. In the last paragraph of his book, *The Politics of South Africa: Democracy and Racial Diversity*, published in 1977 by Oxford University Press, he drew something of a parallel between the situation in South Africa and Abraham Lincoln's attitude to the American negroes. He noted that shortly before his death, Lincoln had proposed a qualified franchise for those negroes who were educated and who had fought in the Union army, and he commented:

This might have got things started on a sound footing in a way which would not have invited a reaction. It might also work in South Africa at some time in the future. But no one can tell exactly when. The political success or possibility of such arrangements depends upon circumstances governing the content of public opinion. But then the task presents itself of finding the

## OBITUARY

openings which exist now, as contrasted with waiting passively for the circumstances to change. Guiding one's understanding of this task is the awareness that citizenship in a democracy consists of more than mere legal equality or equality to scream the 'little catechism of natural rights'. It presupposes a common stake in the society, loyalty, habits, civic education, and experience of self-government by discussion. Booker T. Washington summed it up in the two leading maxims of his policy. The first was that the White man could keep the Black man in the ditch only by getting down there with him. The second was that no one really becomes a free citizen by virtue of a piece of paper.

While the present obituary is being prepared for the printers in London, *all* citizens of South Africa are going to the polls. Had Howard Brotz lived for only one more year, he would have seen realized what he had long advocated and believed possible.

Howard was a loving and responsible son to his mother, who was in her nineties when he died. Before her eightieth birthday, he telephoned from Toronto a London close friend who had entertained his mother in England to ask her to send a birthday greetings card to the old lady in Florida because it would particularly touch her to be remembered after several years. When his illness was diagnosed, his main concern was that she must not be given the news without preparation and that she must not be told that the prospect was grim. He took great care to reassure her that he had great hopes that the disease could be arrested so that until the very last days she thought that he would live for much longer and surprise the doctors.

Howard Brotz has left his many friends and his kinsmen and colleagues mourning him with very great sorrow, in North America as well as in England, which was a kind of second motherland for him. He bore the news that his cancer was fatal with immense courage and dignity, at first determined to fight the disease and hopeful of success in that fight. But when the end came, he was only concerned not to cause extra work for his carers, whose admiration for him was total. The famous lines of Shakespeare spoken by Malcolm in *Macbeth* would be a most fitting epitaph for this charming, volatile, eccentric, and loyal friend, who was also a true scholar:

Nothing in his life  
Became him like the leaving it; he died  
As one that had been studied in his death  
To throw away the dearest thing he owed  
As 'twere a careless trifle.

# INTERPRETING ADVERSITY: DYNAMICS OF COMMITMENT IN A MESSIANIC REDEMPTION CAMPAIGN

William Shaffir

I N the last issue of this Journal (vol. 35, no. 2, December 1993), I gave an interim report on 'Jewish Messianism Lubavitch-Style'. I stated that the Ḥabad hassidic movement was founded in the eighteenth century in the Russian town of Lubavitch by Schneur Zalman of Lyady. Ḥabad is an acronym for *ḥokhmah*, *binah*, and *da'at* (Hebrew for intelligence or wisdom, understanding, and knowledge), and it is by means of these achievements that man may gain mastery over the universe. The Lubavitch hassidim moved to Poland during the First World War and it was in Warsaw in 1928 that the sixth charismatic leader arranged the marriage of one of his daughters to Menachem Mendel Schneerson, a direct descendant of the third Lubavitch rebbe, after whom he was named. At the outbreak of the Second World War, the then Rebbe moved his headquarters from Warsaw to Brooklyn and entrusted to his son-in-law the educational and social services departments of the movement. On the death of the sixth Rebbe, the younger man was chosen as the seventh Rebbe; his Israeli followers use the acronym Ḥabad, while the term Lubavitch is more popular in North America.

In the early 1980s, the Lubavitch began a 'We Want Moshiach' campaign to popularize their belief that the arrival of the Jewish Messiah was imminent; the campaign increased in momentum over the years, with billboards on main roads and freeways in Israel and in the United States. In June 1991, a Lubavitch full-page advertisement appeared in *The New York Times*, announcing 'The Time for Your Redemption Has Arrived' and the movement's speakers have been going across North America to deliver this message. The faithful believers in the imminence of the Messiah's arrival are convinced that it is their present Lubavitch Rebbe who is the long-awaited Messiah

WILLIAM SHAFFIR

(but this is not an official tenet of the Lubavitch) and some of his followers have begged him to 'reveal' himself. The Rebbe regularly delivered sermons and discourses in Yiddish and these were immediately translated and edited into various languages by designated officials of the movement. In *Sound the Great Shofar: Essays on the Imminence of the Redemption*, published in Brooklyn in 1992, the Rebbe is quoted as saying (p. 7):

Indeed, our Sages teach us that one of the first questions a soul will be asked in its judgement for the afterlife is, 'Did you anticipate the Redemption?'

And in the same publication (p. 11) it is recorded that at the time of the approaching Jewish New Year in 1991, the Rebbe asserted:

When the divine service of the Jewish people over the centuries is considered as a whole, everything that is necessary to bring about the Redemption has been accomplished. There is no valid explanation for the continuation of the exile.

Indeed, the Lubavitch advertisement in *The New York Times* of 19 June 1991 declared that recent events — such as the mass emigration of Soviet Jews to Israel and the defeat of Iraq in the Gulf War — were harbingers of the Redemption. Jews were entreated to 'wait for Moshiach actively' since such faith would help to hasten his arrival; and two months later, in *The New York Times* of 22 August 1991, there was another advertisement (which had appeared earlier in a large number of Jewish publications) announcing 'The Era of Moshiach is upon us'.

The Moshiach campaign had been given a dramatic momentum earlier that year, on 11 April 1991, when the Lubavitch Rebbe had delivered at his Brooklyn headquarters (770 Crown Heights) a *sichah* (public discourse) on the theme of redemption. After concluding the discourse, the Rebbe addressed his audience directly, and most unusually in the second person, saying:

What more can I do to motivate the entire Jewish people to clamor and cry out, and thus actually bring about the coming of Mashiach . . . ? All that I can possibly do is give the matter over to you. *Now do everything you can to bring Mashiach, here and now, immediately* . . . I have done whatever I can: from now on, you must do whatever you can. . . .

The Lubavitcher were apparently stunned by their Rebbe's forceful instructions and they immediately began an extensive and intensive programme of teachings about the messianic redemption; they not only published what the Rebbe had said in his talks and sermons about the Messiah, but also organized classes and public lectures. Stickers were pasted on car bumpers, apart from the large billboards on expressways and newspaper advertisements.

## INTERPRETING ADVERSITY

The Rebbe visited the grave of his predecessor and father-in-law at the old Montefiore cemetery in Queens twice a week; he did so on 2 March 1992 and suffered there a stroke which severely impaired his speech and movement. Three months later, in June 1992, he underwent gall bladder surgery. There was a very great deal of controversy within Lubavitch circles about the extent of the leader's recuperation and his physical condition remained stable, although admittedly weak. Then, in the early hours of 9 March 1994, the Rebbe suffered seizures and was rushed to the intensive care unit of a Manhattan hospital. Neurological tests were stated to show that his condition was serious but stable; but two days later, on 11 March, exactly two years to the day in the Jewish calendar after his first stroke, he suffered what one of his doctors described as a 'massive stroke'. He did not regain full consciousness and was listed as being in a critical condition. The so-called 'Moshiach hot line'<sup>1</sup> issued telephone recordings about the Rebbe's medical situation and declared that all the followers were reciting psalms and that they believed that the Rebbe would most definitely make a full recovery and that very soon he would also most definitely build the Third Holy Temple. Then a hot-line message stated that on 17 March all the residents of Crown Heights in Brooklyn assembled for prayers and for the giving of charitable donations and that the Lubavitcher rabbis had issued a rabbinic decree that the Almighty was required and had an obligation (*mekhuyev*) to grant the Rebbe a full and complete recovery and that there must be an immediate revelation that the Messiah had arrived.

This claim attracted wide media attention even among Gentiles, and not only in North America. Indeed, as the present article is being prepared for the printers, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in one of its regular programmes on Thursday 26 May 1994, had a special correspondent's report on the 92-year-old Lubavitch Rebbe and the claims of his followers that he was assuredly the long-awaited Messiah and that some of them had said that they expected 'to be transported to Jerusalem any minute', magically. However, there are Lubavitch hassidim who are uneasy about such claims and one of them said in an interview that by publicly identifying the Rebbe as the Messiah, the Lubavitcher make a 'laughing-stock of the whole thing'. A professor of Hebrew and Judaic Studies at New York University commented:<sup>2</sup>

What you risk in your messianic pretensions is not your own Jewish observance, but the continued role of Chabad-Lubavitch as a major catalyst of Jewish observance in the wider Jewish community. If you turn yourself from an outreach movement into a false messiah movement, many of those who have gained so much spiritually and religiously from your work will find themselves unwilling to follow you further . . . .

And a rabbi who is considered to be one of the rising stars of the Lubavitch movement and who runs a study centre in Minneapolis is

WILLIAM SHAFFIR

quoted as saying: 'If the Rebbe is not Moshiach, then we've got to start all over again, and that's going to be a long haul'.

*Reactions to the Rebbe's Illness*

It may be difficult for uninvolved Jews to appreciate the extent to which the lives of the Lubavitcher are interwoven with the existence of their revered Rebbe. The BBC reporter quoted above commented that the portrait of the Rebbe with his piercing blue eyes and white beard, was arresting. His followers have awed respect not only for his intellectual powers (he is a graduate of the Sorbonne in Paris) but also for the ability which he showed to form a close bond with each person who came into contact with him: they have been convinced that he is sincerely and greatly interested in their personal, individual welfare. During the many interviews and conversations which I had with the Lubavitcher, there were repeated references to his role as a parent-figure. One said:

In addition to believing the Rebbe as being Moshiach, we always believed the Rebbe as being a parent. The Rebbe was always the focal point of our life. For everything we need, for everything we wanted, we always asked the Rebbe for a *brokkeh* [blessing]. He is like a parent, he is part of our life. . . . When the Rebbe is sick, it shakes up everything you were brought up with. Like a parent . . . When a parent is in hospital, you don't function properly.

After the Rebbe's 1992 stroke, he was visibly incapacitated and his state of health grieved his followers very deeply; they found it difficult to accept the sudden and serious impairment of his ability to communicate with them. One of them told me:

It's depressing when you have to see the Rebbe that way when you're used to the Rebbe being very strong, robust, and here he is sitting, slowly moving his hand. Even when he was ninety years old, he would walk swiftly . . . And now you see the Rebbe, he's very weak, barely can move. It's very depressing. It's a very difficult time.

Another said that the contrast between the Rebbe's condition before and after the stroke was shattering: 'I've seen the Rebbe in all his glory. . . . I saw the Rebbe in the most beautiful days. And then to see the Rebbe who is your leader like this, so out of sight, out of touch. It hurts.'

A follower who had been a student at Crown Heights and had seen the Rebbe almost daily, was anguished and confided:

I miss the Rebbe's voice. . . . Especially someone like myself who has just been out of New York, and hearing the Rebbe every second day, it's difficult. I was spending so many years as a *bochur* [unmarried student] and then married in *koilel* [rabbinic seminary for married students] by the Rebbe, and living with the Rebbe . . . and suddenly having this total silence is very difficult.

## INTERPRETING ADVERSITY

Another hassid also lamented the fact that following the Rebbe's 1992 stroke and very partial recovery, he made only brief appearances on a makeshift balcony at 770 Crown Heights:

We're kind of scrambling, whatever we can get. Now the Rebbe comes out every Sunday . . . Every Sunday we have a satellite hook-up. The Rebbe comes out for *minchah* [afternoon prayer] hopefully, and you see the Rebbe for a minute and a half. . . . and it's a terrible *golus* [exile] because a year and a half ago, all I had to do is get in the car. You go to New York and see the Rebbe for two and a half hours straight — talking and singing and encouraging. Today you have to buy a dish and see him for a minute and a half a week hopefully. That's what we have to satisfy ourselves hopefully with.

Other hassidim confess that the Rebbe's absence has inevitably affected the impetus of the Lubavitch outreach activities. They miss his regular directives and encouragement, they find it more difficult to carry out their tasks: 'All of us feel that we're in a bit of a slumber. Naturally we have our programs, we have our institutions, we know what the Rebbe wants. . . . To say that we're doing it with the same enthusiasm as before, I can't'. Another one confirmed this attitude:

It's definitely tough. The only . . . motivating force to continue is because, in the back of our minds, no one has any doubt that the Rebbe would want us to continue. . . . You push yourself a little bit harder notwithstanding the encouragement that is not forthcoming. You know there always used to be a *Shabbess*, you'd hear new directives. It energized. We don't have that. It's more difficult to work without being encouraged and directed.

That follower explained further that the Rebbe in his discourses had exuded an enthusiasm which affected them all, 'there was always something new and we were pushing something new' and added: 'That's not there today, save for a few, we're probably all running empty. You know, the car is running, but we're running empty'.

Nevertheless, even those followers who are profoundly depressed by their revered Rebbe's serious ill health, even they sometimes express the belief that the Rebbe will make a full recovery: 'It is difficult to remain positive . . . but on the other hand, I know that it's going to end up in the right way'. The despair at the Rebbe's physical deterioration is also sometimes assuaged by the belief that the ill health is simply another indication that the Rebbe is the Messiah: a Lubavitcher assured me that the Rebbe had to undergo suffering because according to religious sources, the Torah, this must happen before the Messiah is revealed: ' . . . so it's not much of a surprise . . . no one's losing faith *chas vesholem* [God forbid]. There will be a recovery. There has to be a recovery . . .'

The confident expectation that the Rebbe will indeed recover is closely linked to the belief that the serious deterioration in his health

## WILLIAM SHAFFIR

was not a chance misfortune but was part of a divine master plan, of which the Rebbe was aware before his first stroke. The Rebbe's physical suffering, however, is also believed to be only one transitory phase of the process which will lead to the revelation that he is indeed the long-awaited Messiah. His followers draw attention to a series of occurrences all of which, they assert, indicate that the Rebbe himself not only expected — but even prepared his followers for — a dramatic change in his physical state.

### *The Formulation of a Vocabulary of Motives*

The Lubavitcher with whom I spoke, in both recorded interviews and in informal and apparently casual conversations, are thoroughly convinced that, as with everything in life, the outcome of all events must be understood within the context of the workings of Divine Providence. The case of the Rebbe's stroke is no exception: his illness has caused them very great sorrow and concern, but a series of rationalizations resulted in confirming faith in the imminent Redemption by their King Messiah, their present Rebbe.<sup>3</sup> The Rebbe's discourse on 11 April 1991 during which he declared that he was transferring responsibility for the Messiah's advent onto his followers had at first stunned and bewildered them. They told me that they had stayed awake the whole night, had summoned various Lubavitch emissaries, and asked themselves, 'What does it mean? How do you take this? A Rebbe to say, "I have done everything and now I give it over to you"?' They admit that they were confused: 'Because the Rebbe spoke in harsh tones. . . . So we felt like the Rebbe is abandoning the battle, and is leaving for his little officers, and the little soldiers, to finish the job. If that general with the immense ability to change the world has said, "I can do no more", then how can my being a foot soldier do what the Rebbe wants? So I could do more than the Rebbe? So there was confusion, and a feeling of what's going to happen now?' Another hassid confessed to me that the Rebbe's address on that fateful April 1991 day left him very uncomfortable, and added: 'I thought, "What's coming next? What's the Rebbe telling us? He's telling us something"'. . .

They then came to understand, after the Rebbe had his stroke in 1992, that he had been warning them and preparing them for his coming apparent incapacity. He had advance knowledge of what would happen to him, and he wanted his followers to begin to plan their own paths, since he would soon not be available to direct them: that was now as clear to them and as basic as *aleph bays*, as ABC, they explained. One hassid told me: 'The Rebbe knew this is going to happen. And a very strong proof could be the sentence itself, "I've done everything I could do"'. The Rebbe didn't say it after ten years, after twenty years, after thirty years, after forty years. . . . The Rebbe gave us



## INTERPRETING ADVERSITY

eleven months to prepare' — from April 1991 to March 1992. One woman who reveres him commented to me: 'Imagine if the Rebbe would have gotten sick back then without having given us . . . this hard preparation for when he really turned his face!' and then quickly added: 'I don't know how we would have survived it. I don't know if we would have survived it.' She stressed that it was a kindness and a blessing that the Rebbe granted them that interval. Other followers insisted that they now understood why the Rebbe had intensified the number and urgency of his discourses before his stroke: during the last nine months before his 1991 stroke, he delivered addresses nearly every single day. 'And people couldn't understand why is the Rebbe talking every single night? I think the Rebbe was trying to get as much as possible in, in the time that he was healthy. . . . If you were there, you would see that there was a great rush on the Rebbe's side to try to give us as much as possible'.

The Lubavitch who are ardent believers in the Redemption, through the agency of their Rebbe, maintain that *tsaddikim* (righteous and saintly individuals) help to shape their own destiny. I asked one of them whether he believed that the Rebbe had planned to have a stroke and he replied: 'Of course. God, with the Rebbe, are planning together everything'. He explained that the Rebbe was God's messenger or emissary and would bring about the Redemption. God and a *tsaddik* such as the Rebbe are 'working together. Everything is planned together'; then he added, 'let me put it this way: the Rebbe is a *tsaddik* of the calibre of Moishe Rabbeinu, there was never a person like that. . . . *tsaddikim* are in full control. Nothing happens to them without their will'. Much significance is read into the fact that the Rebbe was felled by a stroke while he was at the grave of his father-in-law, the previous Rebbe, and that he was 'communicating' with him at the time. Why should he have collapsed by that grave, not in his office, but there: 'It just shows that the whole thing is completed in a different realm'. Another hassid was of the same opinion and he stressed: 'Here you have the Rebbe speaking that the arrival of Moshiach is here . . . and at the same time the Rebbe should be at . . . the grave of the previous Rebbe, pleading on behalf of *klal Yisroel* [the people of Israel] and there he should receive his massive stroke. You know, all the indications are that it's part of a plan'.

A further proof of the Rebbe's foreknowledge of what was about to befall him was seen now in the fact that when he went twice a week to that grave, he did not clear his desk before doing so. There were always papers on his desk, but on that last occasion, he cleared up everything, put away everything. And when one of his secretaries saw this, he became frightened and when that man came back to the Rebbe's office, 'there was nothing to move and nothing to change to put everything away in the right place. So then he realized that the Rebbe knew'. It is

WILLIAM SHAFFIR

reported that there was, however, one item left on the Rebbe's desk on that memorable and fateful April 1991 day: the book which listed the names of the Lubavitch's emissaries — 'his family'. (It must be remembered that the Rebbe has no children of his body, no direct descendants.)

Other clear indications that the Rebbe's strokes occurred as necessary preludes to the Redemption are claimed on the following two main grounds: first, midrashic and kabbalistic sources and commentaries are said to allude to the Messiah's illness before he reveals himself; and second, the Rebbe's actual and proven infallible ability to predict the immediate future of the Jewish people. Knowledge of the former was acquired from the Rebbe's addresses which dealt with the theme of messianic redemption in the months preceding his first stroke. One follower told me with great conviction that the prophet Isaiah, when he spoke of the end of days, 'he speaks there in terms of Moshiach suffering, Moshiach being ill. Why is it there? It's telling us something'. He added that in a Midrashic source it is stated that there would be this conflict, the whole world would be shaking, and that was obviously what happened in the Gulf War, but God comforted the Jews and told them not to be afraid. And the Rebbe at the time also told the Jews not to be afraid, there would be no danger for them during the Gulf War, and the Rebbe was absolutely right in his predictions.

Another hassid said that in a midrashic passage it is stated that the Messiah 'has to go through a certain period of time of removal from society. The *medresh* gives some symptoms which are very very similar to a stroke. And it says that Moshiach won't be able to talk, and it's mentioned that he'll be locked up in jail which is very similar to the concept of a stroke. You're in jail inside yourself. . . . And there are various different reasons that the *medresh* gives why Moshiach has to go through the process'. The most common proof advanced that the Rebbe is indeed the Messiah-in-waiting was that the prophet Isaiah had described what befell the Lubavitch Rebbe: the prophet said that although ordinary human beings believed the Messiah to be sick, he was not truly sick, but took 'this upon himself to save us. . . . And at the end, he says, he will recover . . . '.

Perhaps the most convincing argument for the Lubavitcher to put forward is their passionate belief in the miraculous powers which the Rebbe had frequently shown, according to them. At the 1993 convention of the Lubavitch female emissaries, there was a question about the accuracy of the prediction by the Rebbe that the Redemption by the Messiah was imminent, and the speaker replied:

The reason we are now out on an intensive campaign is because the Rebbe has said the redemption is imminent. And if somebody will ask me, 'So what if the Rebbe says that? Maybe the Rebbe is mistaken? Why should you take that at face value?', to that I say, 'Here I take the Rebbe's track record. . . . I

## INTERPRETING ADVERSITY

see what happened during the Suez crisis, what happened at the time of the Six-Day War, what happened at the time of the Yom Kippur War, what happened at the time of the counter-revolution in Russia . . . The Rebbe went out on a limb . . . And we saw that everything that the Rebbe said and everything that the Rebbe has done, . . . and how right he was.

The speaker added that the halakhah tells us by what criteria you may recognize a prophet, and that the Rebbe — by these criteria which he reveals — gives his followers 'no choice but to accept the Rebbe's word at face value. The Rebbe's record speaks for itself'.

Virtually every hassid with whom I spoke at any length mentioned that 'track record' and claimed that no other person could match it or challenge it. A common refrain was, 'Every person knows that the Rebbe has a one hundred per cent track record'. One follower asserted: ' . . . we are the last generation of the exile and the first generation before the redemption. . . Besides that, by the Rebbe . . . we have seen 43 years of his leadership that everything he has said has come to be'. The speaker at the convention of the female emissaries, referred to above, assured the audience that at the appropriate time, when the Rebbe was to lead the Jewish people out of exile, the Rebbe would be restored to full vigour. He would be 'one hundred per cent healthy . . . This is one, two, three! What is the big deal? . . . If you believe in God, then what's the problem? God, when the time comes, will suddenly say, "O.K., Rebbe, the time has come. Go and do your job"'. And that is what will happen.'

A Lubavitcher said to me that he was pained by the Rebbe's illness, but he was not afraid for the future ('I'll be happy tomorrow') because he knew that the Rebbe would be restored to full health in the future. When another hassid made a similar assertion, I asked him why he was so absolutely certain that the Rebbe would make a complete recovery and he replied: 'It's like do I believe that the sun will come up tomorrow. It could be cloudy, but the sun will still come up tomorrow'.

### *Conclusion*

Hassidim believe with total conviction that the Torah was given by God on Mount Sinai and that the text of the Torah is therefore sacred as the unquestioned divine guide to Jewish law, ethics, and observance. Commentaries about the Messiah, based on the precepts of the Torah, are therefore to be studied with great care. A Lubavitcher with whom I had a discussion on the subject expressed a view which was representative of the position taken by the overwhelming majority of the Rebbe's followers whom I came to know during the course of my field work:

. . . I have no doubt right now that Jews were at Mount Sinai and God revealed Himself to them, there's no doubt. Why is there no doubt? . . . Because we believe in the Torah. The Torah is to us much stronger than the

fact that it's sunny outside. That it's sunny outside can change in two seconds, but the fact that God gave us the Torah cannot change. And these things that the Rebbe is saying that Moshiach is coming and the rabbis are saying that the Rebbe is Moshiach, that is based on what it says in the Torah.

When I asked another hassid, 'What perchance if the Rebbe is not the Messiah?', he uttered first a lengthy 'Oh' to indicate the matter's very great seriousness and then replied that if that were the case, it would imply that there is no Almighty. But 'if the Torah comes and says about a certain person that he is the Moshiach, so if you say that he's not the Moshiach, you can say the same thing that there is no Torah'.

For Lubavitcher to admit that there is a possibility of error in the Torah would necessitate a most distressing and horrifying revision of their worldview, since that would affect the very basis and foundation of their profound religious beliefs. The issue of 18 March 1994 of the *Forward* stated in a headline on its front page that the Rebbe had taken an 'Un-Messiah-Like Step' because he had made a will and it commented:

So the disclosure that Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson recognized his own mortality and wrote a will may challenge the deeply felt convictions of the Messiahists in Crown Heights, the seat of the Rebbe's empire.

Indeed, if the Rebbe does not in the end regain some measure of health to enable him to reveal himself to be the true Jewish Messiah, the one who will bring about the Redemption, but languishes on his sickbed until he dies and has to be buried, a great number of Lubavitcher will be shaken as by an earthquake and find it very hard to accept that their revered charismatic leader was in fact only a most sage and learned man, a *tsaddik*, but *not* the Messiah.

Meanwhile, the dissent about the whole issue of the Rebbe being a Messiah-in-waiting will remain muted while the Rebbe lives, and despite the gloomy medical prognosis. (It has been claimed that the Rebbe had ceased to be conscious; the front page of that same issue of *Forward* stated: 'As Prayers Rise, Sage Said Near Brain Death'.) It may well be that if all attempts to prolong the Rebbe's life fail and he is given a traditional Jewish burial, those followers who have resolutely maintained that their leader was undoubtedly the Messiah-in-waiting will then try to explain that the blame for the failure of the Rebbe to reveal himself as the true Messiah was precisely the result of those doubting Jews, who by being creatures of little faith, did not show enough commitment to provide the final impetus for the advent of the Redemption — so that the Rebbe had to die in despair.

**The Lubavitch rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, died in New York on 12 June 1994, and was buried.**

## INTERPRETING ADVERSITY

### *Acknowledgement*

This project is supported by a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The Moshiach 'hot line' is a daily telephone recording about the Rebbe's activities, his health, and developments within the Crown Heights Lubavitch community relating to the Moshiach; but this 'hot line' is co-ordinated by a private individual who is not a spokesperson for the Lubavitch movement.

<sup>2</sup> See Lawrence Shiffman, *Long Island Jewish World*, 29 January 1993, as cited in *Moment*, April 1993, p. 72.

<sup>3</sup> This general pattern of intensified commitment as a reaction to the doubts expressed by their critics was commented on by Leon Festinger, Henry W. Riecken, and Stanley Schachter in *When Prophecy Fails*, New York, 1956; they noted (p. 5): '... the jeering of non-believers simply makes it far more difficult for the adherents to withdraw from the movement and admit they were wrong'.

The explanations offered by the devout believers that their revered Rebbe is indeed the Messiah, that he will recover and usher in the Redemption, may be the result of what has been called a 'vocabulary of motives': see C. Wright Mills, 'Situating Actions and Vocabularies of Motive' in *American Sociological Review*, vol. 5, no. 5, 1940, pp. 904-13.

## BOOK REVIEWS

MICHAEL BERKOWITZ, *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry before the First World War*, xviii + 255 pp., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge and New York, 1993, £29.95.

The old joke that a Zionist 'is a Jew who asks another Jew for money to send a third Jew to Palestine' is given a new and interesting twist by Professor Berkowitz in his highly original and informative book. Mainstream Zionist history is by its nature teleological. How did those Jews who did go to Palestine fare when they got there? How, against all odds, did their efforts culminate in the setting up of a Jewish State? What have been that State's relations with the Arab communities in which it found itself embedded, and with the wider world?

The author's concern is with the other two Jews, the one who asks for money and the one who gives, and he confines himself to the period between 1897, when Herzl launched the modern Zionist movement at the Basel Congress, and the coming of the First World War; that war placed strains upon the unity of the movement, but at the same time provided the setting for its first major success in the Balfour Declaration. He also limits himself, despite the title, to Jews in the German-speaking areas of Western and Central Europe, though there are some side-glances at Britain, particularly in the person of Rabbi Moses Gaster. For reasons which are not quite clear, the Jewish community of France is hardly touched upon.

'Zionist culture', as used by Professor Berkowitz, is an elusive concept but broadly-speaking it meant the ability among middle-class Jews largely from the professions to combine their acceptance of the secular culture of their own countries of residence and of citizenship with adherence to the growing manifestation of Jewish self-consciousness, which in turn was partly a response to the new secular antisemitism of the time. By a paradox even more painful in retrospect, it is clear that for German-speaking Jews, emancipation as they defined it could be linked to the German nationalism of the War of Liberation at the beginning of the century. Such a complex set of attitudes did not develop entirely from the ground up, though it was fortified by individual experience particularly in Western universities — notably, in the case of Chaim Weizmann, his allies in the 'Democratic Fraction'. It was also the fruit of the policy pursued by the Zionist leaders, largely in the setting of the successive Congresses, in both their formal and increasingly large-scale 'fringe' events. As part of building-up support

## BOOK REVIEWS

for the ultimate goal seen as some way in the future, a movement was encouraged among those open to the Zionist appeal to behave in particular ways and to embrace certain values without any commitment to ultimate *aliyah*.

The instruments to this end were the encouragement of the use of Hebrew for non-liturgical purposes; the cultivation of body as well as mind, 'muscular Zionism' to get away from the stereotype of the bent-backed Jew of the ghetto; and the usual panoply of national anthems, icons, and heroes. In this connection, the use by Professor Berkowitz of iconographic materials — postcards, Congress membership cards, and works of art — is particularly fruitful: the illustrations are a key to much of the argument. The ultimate icon was the collecting-box of the Jewish National Fund and the chapter on that organization is of particular interest; but the emphasis placed upon this aspect of the movement — fund raising — obviously led to a state of affairs in which financial contributions could earn the contributor the appellation of 'Zionist' without his need to participate in the more demanding aspects of Zionist culture. A parallel study of North American Jewry, to which only passing reference is made, might help to illuminate this point.

The emphasis which was placed upon individuals — Herzl and Nordau together in the first instance, and later the memory of Herzl alone — is revealing of the attitudes that all national movements have in common. However, this major effort in creating a Jewish national movement had to face difficulties not shared by other European nationalisms. It involved making choices that would be anathema to some of its potential recruits. 'Zionist culture' spread through secular educational institutions challenged the view of the orthodox that Judaism was a matter of religion primarily, and also the livelihood of their rabbis and teachers. The campaign for the use of Hebrew, which was increasingly successful where speeches in the Congresses were concerned, was resented by those whose roots were in the Jewish masses of the Pale, where Yiddish was not only the language of daily life but also a vehicle of literary culture. The division of self-conscious European Jewry between Zionists and Bundists was the inevitable outcome. How could a national movement ignore the majority? How could Zionists, who had little to offer in Palestine itself, ignore the primary physical security and economic needs of the *Ostjuden*?

In the end, of course, the Zionists could claim that they had been right. It was Israel, their creation, which provided the ultimate refuge for the survivors of European Jewry and latterly for those in the former Soviet Union. Secular-minded Russian Jews learning Hebrew in Israel are their vindication. But where Jews live in numbers in a Western environment, all the old arguments arise again from time to time. No history is ever dead and Professor Berkowitz is to be congratulated on

## BOOK REVIEWS

his contribution to our understanding of this aspect of the matter, as well as for providing 'a very good read'.

MAX BELOFF

MORDECHAI BREUER, *Modernity Within Tradition: The Social History of Orthodox Jewry in Imperial Germany*, translated by E. Petuchowsky, xxx + 514 pp., Columbia University Press, New York, 1992, \$55.00.

In 1986, when Breuer published his massive study, *Jüdische Orthodoxie im Deutschen Reich 1871-1918*, it was immediately hailed as a masterpiece and as a definitive contribution to German-Jewish history. This acclaim was not only because of its pioneering achievement as a serious, scholarly social history of a small but vibrant sector of German Jewry (for which he had to find sources and materials almost from scratch), or because the little that had been written until then about orthodox German Jews dealt mainly with a few outstanding rabbis. Breuer sought to depict the social and economic, as well as the religious, life of ordinary German Jews who, while clinging to the beliefs and practices of former times, also strove to become and to live like good German citizens. Their ideals for *Bildung* and *Kultur* were drawn as much from Goethe and Schiller as from Moses Montefiore and Joseph Caro. The able English translation of this book will surely be as welcome in the Anglo-Saxon world as the Hebrew version had been in Israel.

The challenges facing the devout, but surprisingly self-critical, orthodox groups were in most respects similar to, and sometimes even identical with, the problems facing Jews in Germany generally. Breuer lists all of them in his sensitive introduction. The Jews as a group and the Jews as individuals had to find an accommodation with the secularism of the time, the dominance of German culture, and the growing reality of a Europeanized Jewish nationalism. The alternative to accommodation was renunciation or total isolation — an alternative which was used by some, but which has not yet been fully explored. In the event, orthodox German Jews, no less ingenious and innovative than their non-orthodox correligionists, hit on a solution which I believe to have changed not only the position of German Jews, but also the development of orthodoxy to this day. Inspired by leaders like Samson Raphael Hirsch and Esriel Hildesheimer, both of whom were profoundly influenced by German bourgeois culture and lifestyles, German-Jewish orthodoxy opted for a synthesis, for a simultaneous commitment to traditional Judaism and to German culture. It was a process which might be described today as a 'privatisation of Jewish life' — that is, home, school, and synagogue, with full participation in all aspects of social and political life to the extent that the German state,



## BOOK REVIEWS

the German people, and German culture would permit this. There was also a bridge between the private and the public spheres. The home and the synagogue were and remained closely linked. The school, always regarded as the most essential constituent, would, in the privacy of its Jewishness, transmit social and religious values as well as social and religious knowledge under the banner of *Erziehung und Bildung* — training and education. Breuer seems to see this synthesis as a problem, but I would be more inclined to see it as one of the greatest achievements of German-Jewish orthodoxy.

It has often been stated that German Jews wrote about themselves more than did any other comparable group, but very little has been written about orthodoxy; and the reluctance to do so persists to this day. Breuer offers some interesting explanations. He argues that generally speaking, orthodox Jews were less likely to be prominent in politics, the civil service, industry, or commerce; and there are few ranking orthodox artists, authors, or other public figures among Breuer's 'loyal consumers but not producers of German culture' (p. xix). He could have added that the religiously alienated Jews had an intense need to find a place, a sanctuary, in short a form of recognition for themselves which could come only from Germans, while for the orthodox Jew, to be at peace with his father in heaven was a greater need. The fact that most German-Jewish history was written by secular and alienated Jews was clearly a factor in the neglect of orthodoxy as a field of study.

Breuer apologizes for his 'audacity' in tackling this subject: the scholarly world might regard him as biased since he is a descendant of Samson Raphael Hirsch and is an orthodox Jew while the orthodox readers might believe that a scholarly, critical study 'constitutes a secularization' (p. xv) when there is an attempt to place the material in an historical context. The orthodox critics might also regard his work as 'a bringing down of what strives towards heaven' (p. xvi). It is true that most orthodox Jewish scholars have been (and still are) reluctant to write about orthodox Jewry, and above all about great rabbis and leaders, other than in terms of glowing praise in near hagiographic style. That is understandable, but it is also regrettable. One might have expected that Orthodox Jewish writers, with their Biblical and Talmudic learning, would have acknowledged that a Jacob is not diminished by his peculiar trading practices, Moses is not diminished by his violent temper, and David has lost none of his glamour because of his extra-marital adventures. To strive for holiness does not mean becoming an angel. The orthodox Jew, like any other person, can serve God best with both feet firmly on the ground and his worth can be appreciated only in the context of his human weaknesses.

In 1983, Reuven P. Bulka published an important volume entitled *Dimensions of Orthodox Judaism* in which many aspects of American orthodoxy are discussed. He pointed out that 'much of the resurgence

## BOOK REVIEWS

of orthodoxy is related to the new breed of orthodox rabbi, schooled in tradition, and at the same time, well-versed in general knowledge' (p. 18). Mordechai Breuer has shown us how much and how far European and American orthodox Jewries are indebted to German-Jewish orthodoxy for a convincing demonstration that it is possible to combine modernity with tradition.

JULIUS CARLEBACH

1. W. CHARNY, ed., *Genocide. A Critical Bibliographic Review*, vol. 2, Mansell Publishing, London, 1911, xvii + 432 pp., £50.00; G. J. Horwitz, *In the Shadow of Death. Living Outside the Gates of Mauthausen*, x + 236 pp., I. B. Tauris, London and New York, 1991, £14.95; S. Felman and D. Laub, eds., *Testimony. Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*, xiii + 294 pp., Routledge, New York and London, 1992, £35.00.

Franz Loidl commented in *Entweihte Heimat* (published in 1946, p. 21): 'What a sad achievement of our present century, this hideousness, this sinking into an unprecedented lack of civilization, and on top of that, in the heart of Europe.' At the time of writing the present review, in 1993, genocidal acts are again being committed in the heart of Europe. The second volume of *Genocide*, edited by Israel Charny, is a further attempt to understand the processes of mass killing and to document the work of those investigators who have peered into this dark abyss. It is a sensitive and carefully-constructed volume, which reminds us that an awareness of mass destruction can be derived from a variety of sources. Some people are likely to obtain knowledge and understanding from the written word, while in other cases insight can be derived from alternative sources such as museums. Sybil Milton, in her contribution entitled 'The Memorialization of the Holocaust . . .', not only draws attention to the potential of such displays but also reminds us that so far 'there is virtually no serious analytical literature in any academic discipline that discusses the comparative multinational history and evolution of these monuments and memorials since 1945'. Not that memorialization is always value-free: she offers some striking examples of differing emphases which stand revealed in the various public artefacts showing mass destruction.

*Genocide* contains material on the fate of European Jews but ranges well beyond the experience of one particular group. Leo Kuper makes a plea for the many past genocides, now 'buried in obscurity' to be considered, because to concentrate exclusively on the unique quality of the Holocaust is to go against the strong tradition of Jewish humanism. The 'catastrophic traumas of small peoples' — the fate of the Armenians under Turkish occupation — must not be neglected; the volume

## BOOK REVIEWS

therefore includes a contribution from Vahakn Dadrian based on his intensive and detailed research.

In turning from *Genocide* towards *In the Shadow of Death*, one moves from the general to the specific. Horwitz is particularly interested in the bystanders, those people who lived close to the Nazi camps. Mauthausen, like any new enterprise, had to draw 'on the material resources and skills of the surrounding community. The camp needed suppliers, drivers, carpenters, typists, foremen, and labourers, and these they recruited among the neighbouring civilian population. This did not make these persons murderers but it did succeed in drawing them into a minor, if vitally supporting role in the daily affairs of the camp'. In resurrecting the testimony of these people, Horwitz has made a substantial contribution to the history of the Holocaust. He also focuses upon the role of Austrians in the implementation of Nazi policy, an emphasis which is strikingly absent in many other accounts. His roll-call of leading Austrians who participated in the extermination programme makes a chilling impact. It is a list which includes, apart from Hitler, Eichmann, Brunner, Seyss-Inquart, Franz Stangl (the one-time commandant of Treblinka), and Franz Murer, the deputy commandant of the Vilna ghetto. Although Austrians constituted only eight per cent of the population of the Third Reich, they made up one third of all the people working for the S.S. extermination programme. Any suggestion that the Austrians were merely the victims of fascism stands in need of substantial qualification. In focusing upon his theme, Horwitz deploys a commendable blend of sources — documentary material as well as oral evidence, and the threads from this mixture are beautifully woven together into a carefully-crafted and imaginative if sombre tapestry.

One of the central problems with which Charny and Horwitz have to wrestle is: why did it happen? Deutscher said many years ago that the tragedy is on a scale which strains our powers of understanding. But try we must. Charny's continuing work (and one awaits with interest volume 3 in the series) is a successful venture to provide the resources for students and teachers in a wide variety of disciplines which will assist them in this process of understanding. The monograph by Horwitz, with its particular emphasis on bystanders, makes accessible to both an academic and a wider audience a neglected piece in the complex jigsaw of the history of concentration camps. In both books, whether implicitly or explicitly, writers struggle against the forces of repression and of forgetting. Horwitz says it well:

This collection of memories is a desperate gathering of straws blowing in the last gusts of a storm that erupted more than four decades ago. Regrettably, such efforts to resurrect the past in the fallible expressions of memory of the respondents, even when prodded, represent only a small force against a deep trend towards forgetting. The efforts are minimal

## BOOK REVIEWS

compared to the enormity of the deliberate silences, evasions and distortions of a generation that slowly, mutely falls into the grave.

The need to gather, to understand, and to communicate is pressing. Against that background, one wonders at whom *Testimony*, the third item in the collection under review here, is aimed. The book presents the Holocaust as the watershed of the twentieth century and focuses on the nature and function of testimony and of memory. A number of the contributions have appeared already as articles. *Testimony* draws on film material such as Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*, as well as the Fortunoff Video Archive at Yale University. But the language used in the chapter on Lanzmann is bizarre: '... the radical opacity of the *sight* of the dead bodies, as well as the linguistic referentiality and literality of the *word* "corpse" to the transparency of a pure form and to the pure rhetorical metamorphicity of a mere *figure*: a disembodied verbal substitute which signifies abstractly the linguistic law of infinite exchangeability and substitutability'.

The task of scholars is to transmit an informed analysis in a way which illuminates rather than obscures the essential contours of the material. The need to study and to transmit such evidence on the Holocaust is made especially clear by Jan Dorsa in his contribution to *Genocide*:

We need to teach the Holocaust because it happened. It was perpetrated, in part, by educated people, some with Ph.Ds, while individuals and nations who knew about the mass murders of millions did little or nothing to stop the killing. On the whole, the murderers were not psychopaths and criminals but 'decent' family people, businessmen, bureaucrats, doctors and lawyers. The death camps were not on another planet, but here on earth and they were built by trained engineers and architects as factories of death. Thus, the Holocaust cannot be removed from our legacy or our realm of responsibility. If there is any hope for the prevention of other catastrophic events of this nature, it lies in the study of what took place and in the knowledge that it was not inevitable. We are less powerless if we choose to know and to act.

These observations serve as a reminder of George Santayana's words: 'those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it'.

COLIN HOLMES

DANIEL H. FRANK, ed., *A People Apart: Chosenness and Ritual in Jewish Philosophical Thought* (SUNY Series in Jewish Philosophy), vi + 270 pp., State University of New York Press, Albany, 1993, \$16.95.

The eleventh annual conference of the Academy for Jewish Philosophy focused on the Chosen People idea; the twelfth annual conference

## BOOK REVIEWS

focused on Jewish ritual. The papers read at these conferences, worked into essays, are presented in this volume. The two themes are, somewhat loosely interconnected in that the distinguishing features of Israel as the Chosen People are chiefly given expression in the specific rituals of Judaism — in observances such as Tefillin (Phylacteries), Mezuzah, the Sabbath and the dietary laws rather than in the ethical and hence universalistic aspects of the Torah.

The volume is in two parts, on 'chosenness' and on 'ritual'. In Part I, David Novak writes on 'The Election of Israel: Outline of a Philosophical Analysis', Menachem Kellner on 'Chosenness, Not Chauvinism: Maimonides on the Chosen People', and Ze'ev Halevi on 'Judaism and Chosenness: On Some Controversial Aspects from Spinoza to Contemporary Jewish Thought'. In this part there is also a Response to Kellner by Norbert M. Samuelson and a Reply to this by Kellner. In the second part, L. E. Goodman writes on 'Rational Law/Ritual Law'; Moshe Sokol on '*Mitzvah* as Metaphor'; Joshua L. Golding on 'Jewish Ritual and the Experience of "Rootedness"' and Norbert M. Samuelson on: 'The Concept of Worship in Judaism'.

It can be seen that these essays cover well-trodden ground. Among the medieval thinkers, none denied that apparently irrational observances do have a meaning. For Maimonides, indeed, all the *mitzvot* are 'reasonable' in the sense that their significance can be grasped through ratiocination. Ibn Shem Tov is critical of the Maimonidean approach since when a reason is given this reduces the *mitzvot* to means rather than ends. For Ibn Shem Tov and the Kabbalists in general, the meaning of the *mitzvot* is to be found in the workings of the *Sefrot*, the powers or potencies in the Godhead which they mirror forth. This inner meaning is not fully accessible to the human mind but the *mitzvot* are not therefore to be seen as arbitrary decrees, meaningless acts to be carried out as a test of total submission, as if God had commanded the Jew to stand on his head daily in order to show that he accepts God as his Maker. A few halakhic positivists do tend to read a number of Rabbinic texts in this latter way but, as Goodman demonstrates, this constitutes a misreading of these texts.

Similarly, on chosenness there are various opinions in the classical sources. Some Jewish thinkers understand the doctrine of chosenness in terms of a special endowment of the Jewish soul, the heritage of the righteous patriarchs according to Judah Halevi or, according to Habad, as a portion of *En Sof* hidden deep in the recesses of the Jewish psyche. Other thinkers seem to have been uneasy with the whole doctrine. As Kellner remarks, the doctrine of the Chosen People does not feature in any of the lists of principles of the Jewish faith drawn up by the medieval thinkers, though it was not until Mordecai Kaplan that the doctrine was virtually negated. Kaplan's God, the power that

## BOOK REVIEWS

makes for righteousness, is not a Person able to choose the Jews or, for that matter, to choose anything at all.

This is not to say that the essayists in this volume simply repeat the old arguments. The 'philosophical thought' in the sub-title of the work refers to modern philosophical analysis, not to the Greek-influenced thinking of the medieval giants and there are some fresh insights into how the ancient problem of the oddity in the divine choice of Israel can be brought nearer to its solution. Yet, essentially, both chosenness and ritual are theological concepts and Pascal's famous distinction still holds good. 'The God of the philosophers' is, after all, not 'the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob'.

LOUIS JACOBS

UZIEL O. SCHMELZ, SERGIO DELLAPERGOLA, and URI AVNER, *Ethnic Differences Among Israeli Jews: A New Look*, vii + 204 pp., The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, 1991, n.p.

Professor Schmelz and his colleagues have written a rather interesting book, half of it devoted to statistical data meticulously laid out in tabular form page after page, and the remainder concerned to spell out, in equally meticulous but concise language, the underlying diversity of Israeli Jewish demography. We are told that the purpose of the study is to explore and elucidate the main patterns of interaction, both between and within groups and across the generations of Israeli society in order to forecast any problems which may occur in the future. However, for the present reviewer, this book serves as a useful summation of the scholarship which has occupied Israeli social scientists for the best part of four decades, rather than as a signpost to the future.

As is evident from the title, the subject of ethnicity is at the very heart of the book. The rule-of-thumb division at its simplest is between Israeli Jews of Asian-African descent and those whose origins are European-American. How potent is the primary loyalty to 'roots' in a society avowedly modern in its culture with its material well-being firmly based in industry and technological advance? The answer is that for the bulk of Israeli citizens, ethnic origins play a decreasing part in life-chances. Nuclear families, smaller households, longer periods in full-time education, political participation, and rational rather than ideologically-determined voting have brought about a society where values and norms are converging, if not already downright standardized.

Social trends in Israel broadly mirror those found in other modern industrial societies. There is a marked movement of population from rural to urban centres, with a counter-movement towards suburbia by the wealthier groups. While residential areas are increasingly mixed in their ethnic make up, town centres are vacated to be commercially

## BOOK REVIEWS

developed or left to decay and to provide dilapidated housing for the poor and elderly who cannot afford to move to more desirable neighbourhoods. Demographic convergence and the upward mobility it implies for a large number of individuals has its costs — here again, Israel mirrors the experience of other modern industrial societies. Those groups who for various reasons cannot use the twin levers of education and occupation for social advance make a stark contrast to the upwardly mobile majority; as in other modern societies, they form an underclass which coincides with ethnic affiliation, to be left behind in derelict city centres and, as in the Israeli case, rural settlements remote from opportunities for social advancement.

The authors think that the ethnic diversity of Israeli society will be replaced by social complexity based on the division of labour with its fine gradations of status groups and that individual identity will be found in national symbols and values rather than in the norms of primary grouping. They point to one significant trend, however, which may lead to conflict: the separate educational systems for ultra-orthodox and secular Jews; there will be little interaction between the two groups until either military service or participation in the labour force.

This book is a valuable source of reference not merely for those interested in Israeli studies, but for students of comparative social development in general. It is both concise and user-friendly in its presentation of statistical data. We must hope that further research will provide insight into the social consequences of the recent Soviet and Ethiopian immigrations and most importantly, into the social consequences of the peace process for Israeli society in general and the country's Arab citizens in particular.

DAVID CAPITANCHIK

STEVEN J. ZIPPERSTEIN, *Elusive Prophet: Ahad Ha'am and the Origins of Zionism*, xxv + 386 pp., Peter Halban Publishers (42 South Molton Street, London W1Y 1HB), 1993, £25.00.

Professor Zipperstein has written a most important book which casts much light on the early history of the Zionist movement — a fact all the more remarkable since, as he explains, his original interest in Ahad Ha'am arose out of his concern with the Arab-Israeli conflict and his belief that Ahad Ha'am's writing might help to guide the way to a peaceful settlement. In the course of his studies, he abandoned this belief and he came to see the importance of Ahad Ha'am as a link between the thinking and feelings of the Jewish masses of Eastern Europe and the new Zionism of Western inspiration. The author was well prepared for such a study through his earlier work on the Jews of Odessa, the only place where Ahad Ha'am ever felt truly at home with

## BOOK REVIEWS

his circle of like-minded or partially like-minded Jewish intellectuals. Indeed, when old and ill, he tried to re-create in Tel Aviv something of Odessa.

Nevertheless, the theme of what to do about the fact that the Arabs were there in the Jewish homeland and would not go away was constant in his thinking: the Utopianism of *Altneuland* like so much about Herzl never appealed to Ahad Ha'am. He was, we are reminded, 'the first Jewish nationalist to see the darker side of the relationship between Arabs and Jews in the Holy Land' (p. 60). Both then and later, when he was himself living in Palestine, his primary concern was with the behaviour of the Jews towards the Arabs, a behaviour which might be a violation of Jewish ethics. It was only with the perceptible growth of an Arab Nationalist movement after the Young Turk revolution that the possibility of a violent obstruction to the building of the Jewish National Home came to seem an imminent reality. The conflict between the two nationalisms was exacerbated in the second *aliyah*, with its accent on 'Jewish labour' which was seen as a direct threat to the livelihood of Arab workers. These circumstances caused Ahad Ha'am to be generally pessimistic, but occasionally he might record a glimpse of hope; he is quoted as writing in his diary: 'Once the cultural atmosphere of the land is shaped, in the Jewish spirit, it is possible that the Arabs too can be absorbed. For haven't they been here since ancient times, and quite possibly some of them are members of our own people?' (This diary entry seems to have been made around 1914.)

But what, one may ask, did Ahad Ha'am mean by 'our own people'? The core of Professor Zipperstein's biography is the working out of the particular form of Jewish nationalism that was Ahad Ha'am's primary goal — whether semi-secretly as in the B'nai Moshe's infiltration of the Hovevei Zion, or later in open dispute with both the Orthodox and the politicians of the Herzl-Nordau school. Since the religious definition of Jewry was rejected as incompatible with the enlightenment of modern times, a secular nationalism had to be presumed. Since in the conditions prevailing in the Diaspora, that nationalism could not be given a territorial or a linguistic basis — unlike the situation of other contemporary nationalist movements — it had to be something ingrained in, and indeed inherited by, every Jew. And that of course meant the preservation of a line of Jewish descent which assimilation (to be feared more than antisemitism) threatened to destroy.

Since Ahad Ha'am tended to find wider meanings in his own personal experience, his relations with his children came to symbolize the problems that this position involved. Thus he did not attend his son's barmitzvah, leaving Bialik to act the role of presenter, and he reacted violently against his daughter's marriage to a Gentile. For 'his daughter's decision, as he understood it, implied that a secular identity was insufficiently resilient to sustain Judaism, that an identity shorn of



## BOOK REVIEWS

its theology and embedded instead in the tribal secular attachments endorsed by Ahad Ha'am could not stem the tide of assimilation, intermarriage and conversion — that is, of national catastrophe' (p. 292).

To some extent Ahad Ha'am's analysis coincided with that of Simon Dubnow, but whereas the latter, closer to the Jewish masses, sought a solution in 'minority rights' within existing political structures in Europe, the philosophy of the Bund, Ahad Ha'am believed that his goal could be achieved nowhere else but in a Jewish State, whatever the way that statehood was defined. And this in turn made possible the collaboration with Weizmann, of particular importance in the talks leading to the Balfour Declaration. It is a pity that Professor Zipperstein, whose concentration is on the earlier years, does not tell us more about this episode. We are left to wonder about how far Ahad Ha'am himself was a party to what Steven Zipperstein believes to have been a deliberate deception of the British government in pretending that Russian Jews would help to keep Russia in the war because of their fervent Zionism and that Jewish financial circles in the United States would also be won over by a commitment to Zionism.

Apart from a couple of misprints, the book is free from obvious errors and well presented. But many readers besides this reviewer would have been helped by having Hebrew and Yiddish titles of books and articles translated; not all those interested in the history of Zionism have the author's linguistic skills and not all are Jewish. Some readers may be put off by a somewhat convoluted style and an occasional lurch from academic jargon to unacceptable colloquialisms. The word 'proof-text' which is freely used in this volume to denote books of particular importance within a given field is a word we could do without. Finally, rising antisemitism in Britain in 1915 was not due to 'the widespread criticism of Jews being underrepresented in military conscription' (p. 296). Conscription did not come into force until the following year and obviously applied to Jews like any others. What was resented in the earlier part of the war was that Russian Jewish immigrants in Britain refused to return to their native land to be conscripted in the armies of their perceived oppressor the Tsar, or to volunteer to serve in the British forces.

MAX BELOFF

## CHRONICLE

It was announced last April that on the 46th anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel, the country's population numbered almost 5.35 million. This represents a growth of more than two per cent over the previous year; the increase is largely the result of immigration. In 1990, a record year for immigration, 185,000 came from the former USSR; in 1991, there were 140,000; in 1992, 76,500; and in 1993, 69,000. It is believed that in 1994 there are about 1,500,000 Jews still living in the former Soviet Union and the head of the Jewish Agency's unit for Eastern Europe and the former USSR is reported to have stated last February in Jerusalem that about 120,000 were expected to leave in 1994 in order to go to Israel, the United States, or Europe.

It was reported last February that 3,000 Jews had left Syria since October 1993 and that a further 400 who have indicated that they wish to leave the country were expected to come to New York in the next few months. The vice-chairman of the Association of Jews from Syria and Lebanon, based in Israel, said in London that 1,000 of the 3,000 who had gone to New York had since moved to Israel; the Association helps in their absorption. The Syrian Jews are allowed to take out of the country only \$2000 per family, according to the Association vice-chairman. The Association in Israel was compiling a register of communal and private Jewish property in Syria in preparation for the time when detailed peace negotiations with Israel got under way.

\*

The Winter 1993-1994 Report of the International Center for University Teaching of Jewish Civilization (P.O.B. 4234 Jerusalem 91042, Israel) states that a delegation of five academics from Egypt, led by the Director of the Cultural Department of the Egyptian Foreign Ministry, made their first visit to Israel last September. The delegation was accompanied on the five-day visit by Emanuel Marx, director of the Israel Academic Center in Cairo and a professor of Social Anthropology at Tel Aviv University. Through that Academic Center, 'informal relations have been established with academics from countries that do not have diplomatic relations with Israel. Hebrew scholars from the University of Benghazi in Lybia and the University of Khartoum in Sudan have visited the Center'. The Center has a collection of some 13,000 books, periodicals, and documents, widely used by Egyptian students; it can also requisition books and articles from Israeli university libraries; and it holds regular academic lectures by both Egyptian and Israeli scholars, 'attracting audiences of between 60 and 100'.

The Report notes that there are now approximately 500 Egyptian students at Cairo University, Al Azhar University (the foremost institution of religious study in Egypt and the Muslim world), and Ain Shams University who follow courses in Hebrew literature and language, Judaism, Israel, and Semitic

## CHRONICLE

languages. Hebrew is also taught at the University of Assiut and the University of Tanta; some students choose to study Hebrew in order to qualify as guides for Israeli tourists. Several Egyptian students are graduates writing theses on contemporary Israeli authors (such as Amos Oz and Aharon Appelfeld) and others are carrying out research on Ibn Ezra, Maimonides, and Ibn Khaldun.

This Winter 1993-1994 Report also has a section on Jewish Studies in Australia and notes that the country has 'the world's tenth largest Jewish community with a population nearing 100,000'. There is an active Committee for Jewish Tertiary Studies and the University of Melbourne now has a Lectureship in Hebrew Language and Literature while Monash University has a Centre for Jewish Civilization.

Another item states that the Association for Israeli Studies in Moscow has informed the International Center that its 'member-scholars are specializing in economy, politics, and history and culture of Israel. Members include university faculty, diplomats and businessmen interested in developing scientific and business ties in Israel, carrying out research on Israel, and in the practical application of results. The AIS sees itself as the brainpower center for these objectives'.

Japan also has an association for Jewish Studies and the Report lists an impressive number of Japanese universities and institutes whose teaching staff specialize in many fields of Jewish Studies, including Biblical Studies; Jewish Archaeology; Yiddish Language and Literature; History of European Jewry (in France, England, Germany, Poland, Russia and the Ukraine, and Spain); Jewish Thought and Jewish Philosophy; Antisemitism in Japan; the Jews of South America; Politics in Israel and International Politics in the Middle East.

\*

*Studia Judaica II* was published in 1993 in Romania. The Foreword states that it is the second issue of 'a yearly publication of the "Dr Moshe Carmilly" Institute for Hebrew and Jewish History, The "Babes-Bolyai" University of Cluj-Napoca, The Faculty of "History and Philosophy"'. Most of the articles included were 'presented as papers at the Second International Conference "Central and South-East European Jewish Literature, Art, Music and Folklore", attended by distinguished Romanian and foreign scholars'. All the contributions are printed in English.

\*

The Sociological Institute for Community Studies of Bar-Ilan University publishes *Sociological Papers* and states that the principal aim of the series 'is to provide a more rapid channel of communication for sociologists. The papers, which are refereed, are of usual length and format. They are published and distributed individually and each year are brought together in volumes, especially for library use. The areas covered by the papers include: community life, ethnic relations, problems and developments in the fields of religion, education, the family, social stratification and mobility. The papers present research and theory concerning such social frameworks and processes'. Papers

## CHRONICLE

in the second half of 1993, in volume 2 are: 'Testing Melting-Pot Theories in the Jewish Israeli Context' by Tova Benski (July 1993, vol. 2, no. 2); 'The Process of Identification among Jews in West Germany' by Alphons Silbermann and Herbert Sallen (November 1993, vol. 2, no. 3); and 'The Conjugal Division of Power in Late Adulthood in Israeli Society' by Liat Kulik (December 1993, vol. 2, no. 4). The authors of the July and of the December 1993 papers are members of the teaching staff at the Department of Sociology of Bar-Ilan University while Dr Silbermann and Dr Sallen are on the staff of Koln University in Germany.

\*

*Tel Aviv University News* in its Board of Governors Issue 1993 reports that the Chairman of the Planning and Budget Committee of the Council for Higher Education stated that the university student population of Israel 'has grown by 40% since 1980, with most of the increase taking place between 1990-93. The higher education system absorbed 16,000 students in the past three years, and will need to find places for an additional 10,000 to 15,000 by the year 2000. . . . This explosive growth resulted from the mass Soviet emigration, as well as natural population increase and an expanding interest in higher education'. The Rector of Tel Aviv University reported that the University would achieve by the end of 1994 its goal of approximately 25,000 students. That 'unprecedented expansion represents TAU's response both to the recent surge of Soviet Jewish immigration and the increased demand for higher education among Israelis'.

\*

The Winter 1993-94 issue of *Tel Aviv University News* states that President Zhelev of Bulgaria received an honorary doctorate from the University 'in recognition of the courage shown by the Bulgarian people in the face of Nazism during World War II. Led by politicians, the church, and the intelligentsia, the Bulgarians defied the fascist government's orders to deport 50,000 Jews, saving them from destruction. . . . only Bulgaria and Denmark had saved their Jews during the Nazi occupation'. The honorary degree was also awarded to President Zhelev for his 'personal valor in fighting the former Communist regime'. President Zhelev was accompanied on his visit 'by top Bulgarian officials, including the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Justice' and he met groups of Bulgarian Jews on the Tel Aviv University campus.

\*

Tel Aviv University now has a new M.Sc. programme in Ecology and Environmental Quality; it aims to solve 'some of the country's dire problems, such as over-exploitation of water resources, uncontrolled dumping of wastes, and the threat of wildlife extinction'. The students for this new course of studies are enrolled in the Faculty of Life Sciences of the University. The dean of the faculty noted that ecology is an interdisciplinary science and 'draws on innumerable fields, including animal behavior, physiology, biochemistry, molecular biology and genetics'. He added that Israel's location at the crossroads of three continents, its wide range of weather and soil types, and its

## CHRONICLE

geological history and climatic variability have given rise to unique animal and plant life; it has ecosystems ranging from snowy mountains to arid desert all within some 300 miles.

\*

The Spring 1994 issue of *Tel Aviv University News* states that the university held an International Colloquium on War Crimes attended by experts from many countries. The gathering included professors from Canada, Finland, Germany, Greece, and the United States. 'The colloquium explored the problem of judging cultural norms within the international arena; actions which could be considered as torture in one country might be perfectly acceptable in another. For instance, the starvation food rations given to allied prisoners of war by their Japanese captors were viewed as reasonable quantities by the Japanese themselves. For that reason, it was suggested that there always sit one judge of the same nationality as the accused in any international court.'

That same issue also reports on a four-day conference entitled 'Russian Jews on Three Continents'; it was sponsored by the Center for Russian and East European Studies of Tel Aviv University and by the City College and Graduate School of the City University of New York. 'Some 50 participants from Russia, the US and Israel attended the multidisciplinary forum to discuss sociological, anthropological, political and economic data on the emigration of Russian Jews over the past 20 years. . . . Research presented showed that within two to three years of immigration, most Russian Jews in Israel and the US find employment.'

Another report is about the archives of Bulgarian Jewry. An agreement has been reached between the Bulgarian State Archives and the Diaspora Research Institute of Tel Aviv University 'to videotape 12,000 crates' worth of documents pertaining to Bulgarian Jewry, spanning some 400 years . . . Numbering a quarter of a million documents, the material has never been made available for scientific work'. The head of the Tel Aviv Institute who helped to negotiate the agreement has stated: 'The documentation project is a rescue operation, since the original material is stored in such a way that its continued existence cannot be guaranteed. The material will be a critical aid in the study of Balkan Jewry at the University'. Bulgaria is the only country in the former Ottoman Empire in which continuous Jewish archival material has been preserved from the sixteenth century to the present. 'There are two reasons for this. The first is a tradition that places education high in the scale of social values; as a result, all written or printed matter was meticulously preserved. The second reason is related to the Bulgarians' refusal to surrender their Jews to the Nazis in World War Two, thereby saving both the Jewish community and its documentation. Despite the immigration of most Bulgarian Jews to Israel in 1949-50, most communal archival material and cultural treasures remained where they were, almost completely intact. In the early 1960s, two prominent members of the Jewish community in the country, who were collaborators of the Communist regime, forced the remaining Jews to give them all their documents and artwork on the pretext that "there was no longer a Jewish community in the new Bulgaria". The material was sent to Sophia [*sic*], and to this day is housed in the State Archives.'

## CHRONICLE

Photographing all the material is expected to take ten months. It has never been catalogued and includes 'manuscripts of rabbinic literature; community records; institutional archives; books; newspapers; and minutes of Jewish court proceedings, as well as those of non-Jewish courts that had bearing on Jewish affairs. In the second stage, the material will be computerized, put in order and catalogued by scholars at the Diaspora Research Institute'.

\*

The Israeli Authority for Prisoner Rehabilitation initiated five years ago a programme which brings two students of Tel Aviv University together with a released prisoner for a year to share a flat. The head of the Social Involvement Unit in the Dean of Students Office states that the goal is to consolidate the former prisoner's rehabilitation process while the students are given an insight into a side of Israeli society that they otherwise might not see. As for the ex-prisoners, most of them come from very disadvantaged backgrounds and they very greatly appreciate something as simple as the fact that their birthdays are remembered by their flatmates. The programme provides rent subsidies for the students and attracts a large number of applicants each year, but limited funds 'provide for only four or five threesomes annually. The cost is shared equally by the students, the Authority for Prisoner Rehabilitation, and the Dean's Office. The apartments must have a bedroom for each plus a common room, and be located in a good neighborhood of Tel Aviv'.

There is a strict selection process: no one convicted of murder or rape is eligible, the candidates must have been through a rehabilitation programme in prison, and they must have been off drugs for at least a year. As for students, those chosen are selected because they show strength of character, are open-minded, caring and giving, and able to share their feelings. They must be willing to spend a lot of time at home and to be of about the same age as the ex-prisoner. The programme makes efforts to 'try to match personalities as much as possible'. Couples cannot take part, because a third party would feel even more like an outsider; and unlike the popular American series of the same name, 'Three's Company', the Tel Aviv programme does not combine the sexes. There are occasional cases of flats for three women, 'but in general there are very few women in the prison population who would fit into the program'. Although the programme is designed to last for only a year, sometimes friendships develop and endure and in at least one case, the two students and the ex-prisoner got along so well that they decided to continue living together, without any subsidies.

The Social Involvement Unit of the University also sponsors other programmes which require students to help the new immigrants, the elderly, the handicapped, and disadvantaged youth. Some scholarship recipients must contribute 52 hours a year of community work. Elementary and junior high school pupils from disadvantaged areas are also helped by three-year enrichment programmes in their studies for their matriculation exams; they may thus be encouraged to consider pursuing academic careers if they can see that they are capable of passing such exams.

\*

## CHRONICLE

A Program for Excellence was established at Tel Aviv University in 1987, the first of its kind in Israel. 'It helps a select group of highly gifted students develop themselves to their full potential, with each one fashioning his or her individual program of study under the supervision of a faculty member. All of the students study directly for a master's degree, and many continue onward for their Ph.Ds. There are two tracks in the program: the single major track . . . and the interdisciplinary track.' A scholarship fund has now been established by the owner of a chain of hotels and at the ceremony of the awards to 12 recipients, the President of Tel Aviv University stated that 'one must not let misguided notions of "equality" prevent the active encouragement of excellence in higher education. If the purpose of "equality" is to advance less privileged groups, then this is a positive goal deserving of support. If, however, the purpose is to block innovation, creative thinking and originality, then we must be wary'.

\*

*Judaica Latinoamericana: Estudios Histórico-Sociales*, published in Jerusalem in 1993 and received in London last March, 'includes articles based on papers presented at the Latin American Section of the Tenth World Congress of Jewish Studies, held in Jerusalem in August 1989. The volume is the second in a series published by AMILAT, an independent association of Israeli scholars, under the auspices of the World Union of Jewish Studies. Articles are published in their original languages — Spanish, English and Portuguese'. There are seven sections in the volume: I. Colonización e Inmigración; II. Nacionalismo y Antisemitismo; III. Regímenes Políticos y Comunidades Judías; IV. Educación y Cultura; V. Sionismo; VI. América Latina y la Creación del Estado de Israel; and VII. Literatura. There are contributions on various regions: on Remire, in French Guiana; on Argentina; on Brazil; on Cuba; on Chile; on Mexico; and on Uruguay. Nine of the 19 articles are concerned with Argentina but only two out of these nine are printed in English.

The address of AMILAT is P.O.B. 71184, Jerusalem 91079, Israel.

\*

Volume 1, no. 1, 1994 of a new Journal, *Journal of Ministry in Addiction & Recovery*, published by the Haworth Pastoral Press (10 Alice Street, Binghamton, N.Y., U.S.A.) includes an article by Rabbi Kerry M. Olitzky entitled 'Moving from Codependency to Covenant: A Spiritual Counselling Model for the Jewish Community'. The Haworth Pastoral Press has also published another new Journal, *Journal of Religion in Disability & Rehabilitation*; its editors state in the first issue (vol. 1, no. 1, 1994) that they hope that the publication 'will bring religious professionals, along with those in other helping disciplines, greater knowledge and kinship so that they might join alongside each other, with confidence and assurance, in helping persons who experience disability. We believe that religious faith is a vital part of healing and rebirth. . . .'

\*

## CHRONICLE

The April 1994 issue of *Les Cahiers de l'Alliance Israélite Universelle* is a special number honouring the memory of Jules André Braunschvig (1908–1993) who succeeded to the position of president of the *Alliance* in 1976, after the death of René Cassin. The issue includes a page entitled 'Comment furent sauvées 907 personnes'. In May 1939, 907 German Jews on the Saint Louis were refused permission to land in Cuba, in spite of having valid visas. All efforts by Jewish organisations failed to find shelter for them and the ship would have to return to Europe and to Germany. When he heard the news, Braunschvig was sickened and distressed and could not sleep that night. At dawn he telephoned Baron Rothschild, the leader of French Jewry and the president of the Comité national français pour les réfugiés juifs d'Allemagne. The Baron told him that there was not the slightest hope of getting the French authorities to take in the Saint Louis passengers.

Braunschvig had just returned from the international zone of Tangiers, where he had been impressed by the efficiency of the small Comité para los Refugiados. The French consul there was his friend and in answer to his urgent telephone call, promised that if the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris was approached with a plea to give the Saint Louis Jews shelter in Tangiers, and the Ministry then sought the opinion of its consulate in Tangiers, he would give a firm opinion favourable to the refugees. Baron Rothschild and Braunschvig immediately went to the Ministry that morning; the Minister expressed his sympathy but said that France had already taken in more than 2,000 persons and could not accept a further 907. When asked, 'What about Tangiers?', he replied that he would have to seek the advice of the French consul there — who kept his promise and stated that several hundred could be accepted in Tangiers. Meanwhile, Jewish organizations had mobilized their resources and obtained from Great Britain, Belgium, and the Netherlands, permission for some of the German Jews to be given asylum.

The Minister of the Interior in Paris, Albert Sarraut, was then asked whether he would consider giving shelter in France, rather than in Tangiers, to those who had been accepted in the international zone, since the French Jewish agencies were better equipped to provide assistance, and Sarraut agreed. Maurice Tropper, the director of the Joint Distribution Committee, who had been very active during all the international negotiations, sent Jules Braunschvig a fat cigar as a token of his appreciation; but the cigar was placed in a desk drawer, to be smoked on the day of Hitler's death. However, when Hitler died, Braunschvig was a prisoner of war in Germany; and when he returned to his Paris home, he found that it had been looted during the German occupation and all his possessions had gone, including the desk where the cigar had been deposited.

That episode was described by Braunschvig in the February 1955 issue of *The Alliance Review*.



## BOOKS RECEIVED

(Books listed here may be reviewed later)

- Ben-Rafael, Eliezer, *Language, Identity, and Social Division* (Oxford Studies in Language Contact series), xi + 289 pp., Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1994, £35.00.
- Ben-Yehuda, Eliezer, *A Dream Come True* (Modern Hebrew Classics series), translated by T. Muraoka and edited by George Mandel, viii + 127 pp., Westview Press, Boulder, San Francisco, and Oxford, £21.50.
- Ben-Zadok, Efraim, ed., *Local Communities and the Israeli Polity: Conflict of Values and Interests* (SUNY Series in Israeli Studies), xvi + 285 pp., State University of New York Press, Albany, 1993, \$19.95.
- Capsali, Eliahou, *Chronique de l'Expulsion* (Toledot-Judaïsmes series), translated and annotated by Simone Sultan-Bohbot from the Hebrew *Seder Eliahou Souta* written in 1523, 184 pp., Les Éditions du Cerf, Paris, 1994, 130 francs.
- Cesarani, David, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry, 1841-1991*, xiv + 329 pp., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994, £40.00 or \$59.50.
- Cesarani, David, ed., *The Final Solution. Origins and Implementation*, x + 318 pp., Routledge, London and New York, 1994, £35.00.
- Englander, David, ed., *A Documentary History of Jewish Immigrants in Britain, 1840-1902*, xv + 380 pp., Leicester University Press, Leicester, London, and New York, 1994 (distributed in the United States and Canada by St Martin's Press), £45.00 (paperback, £14.99).
- Finestein, Israel, *Jewish Society in Victorian England: Collected Essays* xv + 365 pp., Vallentine Mitchell, London, 1993, n.p.
- Gutman, Israel, *Resistance: The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising*, xxi + 277 pp., published by Houghton Mifflin Company in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Boston and New York, 1994, \$24.95.
- Hartman, Geoffrey H., ed., *Holocaust Remembrance: The Shapes of Memory*, xii + 306 pp., Blackwell, Oxford, 1993, £45.00 (paperback, £14.99).
- Heller, Celia S. *On the Edge of Destruction: Jews of Poland Between the Two World Wars* (with a Foreword by Nathan Glazer), xv + 383 pp., first published in 1977, Wayne University Press, Detroit, 1994, n.p.
- Jacobs, Louis, *Hasidic Prayer*, with a new introduction (first published in 1972), xxv + 195 pp., The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, London and Washington, 1993, £11.95 paperback.
- Melnick, Samuel C., *A Giant Among Giants, A History of Rabbi Shmuel Kalman Melnick and the Princelet Street Synagogue*, xiii + 137 pp., Pentland Press, Edinburgh, Cambridge, and Durham, £10.75 paperback.
- Paglia, Camille, *Sex, Art and American Culture: Essays*, xiii + 335 pp. (first published in 1992), Penguin Books, London, 1993, £9.99 paperback.

## BOOKS RECEIVED

- Pétonnet, Colette and Yves Delaporte, eds., *Ferveurs Contemporaines. Textes d'anthropologie urbaine offerts à Jacques Gutwirth*, iv + 348 pp., Editions L'Harmattan, 5-7 rue de l'Ecole-Polytechnique, 75005 Paris, 1993, 170 francs.
- Polonsky, Antony, ed., *From Shtetl to Socialism. Studies from Polin*, xxiii + 581 pp., published for The Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies, Oxford (an associate centre of The Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies) by The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, London and Washington, 1993, £19.95 paperback.
- Shain, Milton, *The Roots of Antisemitism in South Africa* (Reconsiderations in Southern African History series), xii + 203 pp., University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville and London, 1994, \$45.00 (paperback, \$15.95).
- Solomon, Zahava, *Combat Stress Reaction: The Enduring Toll of War*, xvi + 284 pp., Plenum Press, New York and London, 1993, \$35.00.
- Webber, Jonathan, ed., *Jewish Identities in the New Europe*, xix + 307 pp., published for The Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies by The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, London and Washington, 1994, £16.95 paperback.

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

- BELOFF**, Professor Lord, F.B.A. Emeritus Professor of Government and Public Administration in the University of Oxford and Emeritus Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford. Chief publications: *The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia* (two volumes, 1947 and 1949); *Imperial Sunset, 1897-1942* (two volumes, 1947 and 1949); *Imperial Sunset, 1897-1942* (two volumes, 1969 and 1989); *Wars and Welfare: Britain 1914-1945*, 1984; and was the British editor of seven volumes of *L'Europe du XIX<sup>e</sup> et XX<sup>e</sup> siècles*, published between 1959 and 1967.
- LISSAK**, Moshe; Ph.D. Professor of Sociology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Chief publications: *Social Mobility in Israeli Society*, 1969; *Military Roles in Modernization: Civil-Military Relations in Thailand and Burma*, 1976; co-author of *The origins of the Israeli Polity Under the Mandate*, 1978, and of *Trouble in Utopia: The Overburdened Polity of Israel*, 1989.
- MARS**, Leonard; Ph.D. Lecturer in Social Anthropology at the University College of Swansea, University of Wales. Chief publications: *The Village and the State*, 1980; 'What was Onan's Crime?' in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 26, no. 3, 1984; 'Coming of Age Among Jews: Bar Mitzvah and Bar Mitzvah Ceremonies' in P. Spencer, ed., *Anthropology and the Riddle of the Sphinx: Paradoxes of Change in the Life Course*, 1990; and 'The Ministry of the Reverend Fyne in Swansea: 1899-1906' in *Jewish Social Studies*, vol. L, nos. 1-2, Winter-Spring 1988-1992.
- SHAFFIR**, William; Ph.D. Professor of Sociology, McMaster University. Chief publications: *Life in a Religious Community: The Lubavitcher Chassidim in Montreal*, 1974; co-editor, *Fieldwork Experience: Qualitative Approaches to Social Research*, 1980; co-editor, *The Canadian Jewish Mosaic*, 1981; 'Ritual Evaluation of Competence: The Hidden Curriculum of professionalization in an Innovative Medical School Program' in *Work and Occupations*, vol. 9, no. 2, 1982; and several articles on Hassidic communities.
- SIMON**, John; B.A. Senior partner in a Cape Town firm of attorneys and lecturer at the Practical Law School of the University of Cape Town. Chief publications: 'The Early Development of the Zionist Youth Movement' in D. Sherman, ed., *Forty Years in Retrospect*, 1984; 'New Archival Material Relating to the Early Development of South Africa's Jewish Community' in Musiker and Sherman, eds., *Waters Out of the Well*, 1988; 'The Cape Town Hebrew Congregation: The Early Years 1841-1937' in *CABO*, vol. 5, no. 2, 1991; and 'Proselytism in the South African Jewish Community' in M. Sharon, ed., *Judaism in the Context of Diverse Civilizations*, 1993.