

# The SCRIBE

## JOURNAL OF BABYLONIAN JEWRY

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A HAPPY NEW YEAR 5747 TO ALL OUR READERS AND FRIENDS

### Herzog Praises Proud Record of Iraqi Jews

Reprinted from the Jerusalem Post 19/7/86.

NUZHAT Katzav is usually associated with consumer affairs – but last month she was present at Beit Hanassi as chairwoman of the board of directors of the Association for the Promotion of Research, Literature and Art, one of her many interests.

Founded 10 years ago by Jews from Iraq, the association encourages the intellectual and creative endeavours of the Middle Eastern communities particularly Iraq.

Speaking at the Beit Hanassi meeting, Tel Aviv University President Prof. Moshe Many said that although the number of students of Middle Eastern origin had gone up in the last 14 years, from 1,223 to 4,069, their percentage in the university student population had remained more or less the same 25 per cent at the first degree level, 14.5 at the second degree and 12.3 per cent at the doctoral level. Katzav was quick to emphasise that of the 25 percent over a quarter were Iraqi.

Author Sami Michael, chairman of the association's council, saw Iraqi immigrants' achievements here as natural. "We didn't come from a vacuum," he said. "We didn't arrive from a wilderness." He said he was proud Iraqis had fewer inferiority complexes than other immigrant groups and presented a more realistic image of themselves and their history in their books and poems.

Noting that when the Jews of Iraq had come here thousands of years of Jewish life between the Tigris and the Eurphrates had ended, President Herzog said Iraqi Jews had a better record than any other Diaspora community in responding to the call to come and build up the Jewish homeland.

**No other exodus in Jewish history, except the exodus from Egypt, was comparable in terms of its drama and spontaneity, to the story of the Iraqi Jews.** They had had very little time to prepare and they had left nearly all their material possessions behind them. But, said Herzog, they came rich in spirit and had quickly put down roots here ●



l to r: Dr M Miller MP, Prime Minister Shimon Peres, Rt. Hon. R Freeson MP, Percy Gouragey, MBE.

### Reagan to Peres

"Dear Mr Prime Minister:

"As you celebrate the 38th anniversary of the independence of the State of Israel, I would like to wish you a most joyous *mazal tov* on behalf of all Americans.

"The United States takes great pride in the glorious achievements of your country. We see our own ideals reflected in its pioneering spirit, in its sacred mission as a refuge for the oppressed, and its vision as a light unto the nations.

"May Israel continue to exhibit in its future the freshness and vigour which it has shown throughout its history, and which it proudly proclaims to the world.

Sincerely Ronald Reagan"

(Would that more Jews would share President Reagan's sentiments about Israel – Ed.) ●

**Condolences to Mr. Percy S. Gouragey for the sudden loss of his twin brother, Archie, in New York.**

### Text of Speech by Lord Hailsham, the Lord Chancellor at Bevis Marks Synagogue on 8 February 1986

I would like to thank you for the privilege of being present today with you at your impressive act of worship and for the generous gift of this book which will serve to remind me from time to time of my happy memories of it. I am an old man now. I have already fulfilled the three score years and ten allocated to us by the Psalmist and it will not be long before I reach the four score years of which he also speaks. I have only one more thing to say. I never attend a Jewish ceremony without a sense of profound humility at the innumerable woes which have been inflicted by others on God's chosen people through countless centuries and in our own time. Those who think like me about matters of religion can offer you nothing by way of reparation. We can only reflect on the immense benefit conferred on us and all humanity by the priceless possession of your holy scriptures, and offer you from our hearts our warmest affection and respect. And that, most sincerely, I do.

(The above was obtained through the good offices of Mr Joseph Yahuda, a personal friend at the Bar of Lord Hailsham – Ed.) ●

## Books and Periodicals

# The Last Days of the Raj

THE following is an extract from "The Last Days of the Raj" by Leonard Moseley in which he referred to a remarkable statement by Maulana Azad who was a President of the Indian National Congress for some years before the independence of India and Pakistan in 1947. Azad had emigrated from Saudi Arabia many years before and was a renowned Moslem scholar, intellectual and statesman — Editor

"I have considered from every possible point of view," Maulana Abul Kalam Azad wrote, 'the scheme of Pakistan as formulated by the Muslim League. As an Indian I have examined its implications for the future of India as a whole. As a Muslim I have examined its likely effect upon the fortunes of Muslims in India. Considering the scheme in all its aspects, I have come to the conclusion that it is harmful not only for India as a whole but for Muslims in particular. And in fact it creates more problems than it solves.

"I must confess that the very term

Pakistan goes against my grain. It suggests that some portions of the world are pure while others are impure. Such a division of territories into pure and impure is un-Islamic and a repudiation of the very spirit of Islam. Islam recognises no such division and the Prophet says, 'God had made the whole world a mosque for me.' Further, it seems to me that the scheme for Pakistan is a symbol of defeatism and has been built up on the analogy of the Jewish demand for a national home. It is a confession that Indian Muslims cannot hold their own

in India as a whole and would be content to withdraw to a corner specially reserved for them. **One can sympathise with the aspirations of the Jews for such a national home, as they are scattered over the world and cannot in any region have any effective voice in the administration.** The condition of Indian Muslims is quite otherwise. Over 90 millions in number they are in quantity and quality a sufficiently important element in Indian life to influence decisively all questions of administration and policy. Nature has further helped them by concentrating them in certain areas.

"In such context, the demand for Pakistan loses all force. As a Muslim, I for one am not prepared for a moment to give up my right to treat the whole of India as my domain and to share in the shaping of its political and economic life. To me it seems a sure sign of cowardice to give up what is my patrimony and content myself with a mere fragment of it." ●

## To Partition or not to Partition?

by N.E.D.

JUST as the partition of the Indian sub-continent into the arbitrary regions of India, Pakistan and later Bangladesh resulted in massacres, wars and famine, the partition of the Middle East into Israel and several arbitrary Arab regions has resulted in 40 years of war, terrorism and a continuous threat to world peace. But "Divide and Rule" is the name of the game and the partition solutions were imposed by the forces of imperialism. That path has resulted in further calls for Sikh separatism in India and Lebanon's struggle for survival as a separate Christian identity.

Just as the proper course for India would have been a federation recognising the rights of Indians, Moslems, and Sikhs, the true solution for the Middle East, is and always has been a confederation of the whole region in which Jews, Maronites, Kurds, Druze, etc. would have "national homes" but otherwise participate equally with the Arabs in running the area for the benefit of all.

Mankind consists of a patchwork of intermingled races, languages, religions and colour overlapping each other. It is when these groups learn to live with and respect each other that would indicate the path to world peace. But the "majority rule" syndrome has killed this option. There is an obsession in the world that in every region the majority should have the upper hand. Majority rule as an expression of democracy only holds

good in a homogeneous society.

In areas divided by colour, language, religion or race there should be no majority concept. The rights of all should be equally safeguarded. The Christians are a majority in lesser Lebanon but a minority in greater Lebanon. The Jews are a majority in Israel but would soon become a minority in greater Israel. The Protestants are a majority in Ulster but a minority in a united Ireland. The Turks are a minority in Cyprus but a majority in their part of a divided Cyprus.

In other words, we are citizens of the world and the path to peace is for the world to be governed not on the basis of regional divisions but on the basis of group divisions. The same drama is in fact being re-enacted in South Africa, where partition is again put forward as a possible option. However, the Black militants want to ride the wave of universal anti-apartheid sentiment to take over the whole country. The Nationalist Party and Mrs Thatcher have stood fast. At their recent Conference in Durban the South African Nationalist Party spokesman said: "Protection of minority rights and the entrenchment of group security are essential against the background of the bitter consequences resulting in many lands and at many times from majority domination in multi-cultural societies. For the effective protection of minority rights, participation in the political processes should be on a group basis. It is a seri-

ous misconception that political representation based on population groups (i.e. race) has anything to do with discrimination or the outdated concept of apartheid."

These are the words of justice and great significance not only for South Africa but for the whole world and all mankind. It indicates the correct approach to any idea of a future world government ●

## THE HOLOCAUST AND GENOCIDE STUDIES

an International Journal, Volume 1 Number 1 1986

Published in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Council and Yad Vashem, The Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority, Jerusalem.

Editor-in-Chief: Yehuda Bauer  
Chairman of the Editorial Board: Elie Wiesel

Published in two issues per annum by Robert Maxwell M.C., Pergamon Press, Headington Hill Hall, Oxford OX3 0BW.

FORTY years after the end of the war the memory of the Holocaust still torments the Jewish mind, while others, especially those involved with that black chapter of human history wish to forget the whole episode and even claim that it did not happen.

This 170 page journal shows that the Holocaust is still very much a hot subject. The Journal is sponsoring an international conference on the Holocaust to be held in London and Oxford 10-14 July 1988. The Preliminary Announcement states, "The

world has been reluctant to appreciate the lesson of the catastrophe, whether in terms of the consequences of fomented hatred or as an arrow pointing at the heart of all mankind. The past has not been adequately confronted, the real problems have not yet been faced. **Christianity has not admitted its role in the creation of a climate of opinion which made the Holocaust possible.**

The historical fact of the Holocaust itself is subject to an obscene, neo-Nazi outright denial."

However, such a conference should not involve itself with just debating and recording; it should end with a trial of all those responsible for that heinous crime. But who shall receive the punishment if all those involved have all disappeared? All those who incite racial hatred should be held personally responsible for all the crimes of the Holocaust and be handed out harsh sentences.

Why did it happen?

Answers given by various Jewish thinkers are:

1. The Jews were punished for supporting Zionism.
2. The Jews were punished for not fully supporting Zionism.  
(They can't both be right, but there is some truth in both.)
3. The crime was assimilation. The Jews would have disappeared in any case, and God did them a favour by allowing them to die as Jews.
4. The Holocaust was the belated revenge of the Christian Church on the Khazars, who adopted Judaism rather than Christianity.
5. The Holocaust affected mainly Ashkenazi Jews, who were of mixed origin.
6. The Holocaust was followed by the creation of the State of Israel.

But perhaps the best explanation is that the Jews are crucified in every generation by the powers of evil for we have accepted to be God's witnesses, His stake in the world, and thus have to suffer for God the wickedness of mankind. N. E. D.

"The History of Jews in Singapore 1830-1945" by Eze Nathan. HERBILU Editorial & Marketing Services (Singapore) 212 pp.

THIS is a most interesting and graphic account of the history and situation of Singapore Jewry - particularly of its momentous period under Japanese occupation during the Second World War. Mr Nathan also refers to the community's two outstanding leaders David Marshall who became the First Chief Minister in 1956, and Sir Menasseh Meyer who died in 1930. A son and

daughter of the latter married an aunt and uncle of mine and their children were on the last ship to leave Singapore before its surrender to the Japanese.

Another daughter of Sir Menasseh, Mrs Mozelle Nissim, to whom the author refers, also took refuge in Bombay during the war years with members of her family and on her return after the war she was famed for her generous hospitality and deeds of charity. Mr Marshall, a leading lawyer who is now Singapore's ambassador in France, Spain and Portugal, was born in Singapore but his father, like so many of the community, emigrated from, or originated in, Baghdad many years before.

Inevitably the existence of the community was and is bound up with the general background and position of the island-state which gained its independence from Britain in 1958. Like many Jewish communities in India and Far East countries in the aftermath of the Second World War, most of its members emigrated to Israel, Britain, Australia and North America in the post-war streams of emigration and movements abroad of the general populace. The author himself is now, not surprisingly, in view of his background and service to the community, head of his synagogue in Wales.

What is fascinating about all Jewish communities in the Far East is the way they adapted to local conditions and in Singapore to those under the dominant Chinese, Malay and Indian communities. This is reflected in their language, food and customs which the author describes in picturesque detail.

While we have had many stories of our Ashkenazi brethren under Nazi occupation in Hitler's Europe, this is perhaps the first detailed account of a Jewish community under the hardly less brutal occupation of the Nazi ally, Imperialist Japan, with its dreams of creating a "Greater Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere." Many of the community suffered death and privation in the internment camp in Changyi, which I visited when I was in Singapore in 1953, and met many of the leaders and members of the community. It is amazing to read of the attempts to maintain Jewish religious occasions in the internment camps, particularly Passover, displaying both courage and tenacity.

This book deserves a wide readership as it adds another colourful thread to the intricate tapestry of our unfolding Jewish destiny and experience.

Obtainable from E Nathan, Yigdal, 13 Canberra Crescent, Newport, Gwent, NP9 3QP, Wales at £6.50 per copy, post free. Percy S. Gourgey

## Books received for review:

*THE SIEGE* by C.C. O'Brien, published by Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 798 pp., £20.00

In this impressive work, Conor Cruise O'Brien traces the history of Zionism from its origins to the establishment of the State of Israel, and considers the development of Israel from its foundation to the present time.

*THE IRAN IRAQ WAR* Edited by M.S. El Azhary, published by Croom Helm, 144 pp., £17.95.

The focus of this book is on the historical, economic and political dimensions of the war between Iraq and Iran. It examines many aspects of what has proved to be a very complex conflict; including its long history, its present economic and political setting, the different responses to the war by outside parties and its regional and world implications.

*THE RED SEA* edited by Abdel Majid Farid, published by Croom Helm, 173 pp. £17.95.

This book reviews the economic, political and strategic prospects for the Red Sea and the countries which adjoin it. There is also discussion of the wider international implications of conflict in the Red Sea, in particular the strategic concerns of the United States and the USSR.

*HERITAGE: CIVILISATION AND THE JEWS* by Abba Eban, published by Summit Books, 1230 Avenue of Americas, New York 10020, 338 pp., £14.95.

Heritage is a story of a small people with a large place in the destiny of mankind. There is virtually no civilisation that does not have a Jewish component just as there is no Jewish civilisation that does not bear the mark of another culture. Thus states Abba Eban in this magnificently illustrated and superbly written book the companion volume to the Channel 4 Television series Heritage.

*THE BENE-ISRAEL OF INDIA* by Benjamin J. Israel

The Bene-Israel are a small and unique community of Jews who lived in India for about 2000 years on the west coast near Bombay. Until about the 18th century they were largely isolated from their fellow Jews elsewhere. This book provides a brief historical account of India's three Jewish communities, the Bene-Israel, the Baghdadian and the Cochin Jews and their relations with each other.

Full reviews will appear in future issues.

# The Jews of Shanghai

IN 1946 with the Chinese Communists sweeping the country the Jews of Shanghai prepared to leave. Baghdad Jews first came from India in 1844, when David Sassoon decided to open a branch in China, in the wake of the British-provoked Opium Wars (1839-1842) which opened China's doors to Western trade. In the intervening 100 years the Sassoons, along with the Hardoon and Kadoorie families, had made vast fortunes in commerce, banking, land speculation, transportation and construction. Their activities greatly contributed to the growth and development of both Shanghai and Hong Kong. After 1910, the Baghdadi community was officially organised as the Shanghai Jewish Community Association. Early in the 20th century magnificent synagogues were built: Ohel Rachel, by Sir Jacob Sassoon named after his wife Lady Rachel of Bombay and Beit Aharon (torn down in 1981) by Silas S Hardoon. The Ezra and Hardoon families started the Shanghai Jewish School shortly after 1900, and influential Jews founded the Shanghai Jewish Club.

On the eve of the second world war Shanghai was the only place in the whole world that did not impose restrictions on Jewish immigration and the community increased to over 26,000. The following is taken from a report on the Jews in Shanghai by the late M.E. Dangoor, then president of the Sephardi Community:

For 70 years Jews in Shanghai were all of Baghdad origin. The Jew had a splendid reputation among the Chinese and was honoured and well-respected. Between 1917 and 1925 5000 Jews came from Russia and Siberia and in the thirties 20,000 German and Austrian Jews arrived. When all the doors of the world were closed to them only Shanghai allowed them in without a passport. The Sephardi Jews were the most prosperous as they came to China for business reasons and not as refugees; but the others soon made good.

At the beginning of the war there were three distinct communities: 800 Sephardi, 4500 Russian, 20,000 German and Austrian. Each had its own committee, synagogues, rabbis but shared hospitals and other amenities.

A year after the commencement of the war with Japan, the occupying Japanese put all British, American, Dutch and Belgians in concentration camps and the rest remained free, except that those who belonged to countries who were at war or severed diplomatic relations with the Axis countries, had to wear red arm-bands. A few months later all German Jews were compelled to live in Hongkew (the East End of Shanghai) in a ghetto. This was done at German instigation. Before the end of the war the two Sephardi synagogues were taken over by the Japanese for storing ammunitions and they put anti-aircraft guns in the Jewish cemetery.

In 1942 I was elected president of the Sephardi Community, which position I held till May 1946 as I was preparing to leave. All through the war I had to give the Japanese monthly statements of income and expenditure and was called from time to time to various departments and subjected to searching questions about the community.

The Russian Jews remained free to do business but the Sephardi Jews, being mostly so-called "semi-



The Late Mr. M.E. Dangoor

enemies", were much restricted. The British among them were put in concentration camps; the others were left free but had to wear a numbered red arm-band, giving in Japanese the name of the country which they belonged to.

During the war I had to help 210 Sephardim by monthly donations. I had to borrow from Sephardi and Russian Jews and also from Chinese.

Just before the war about 250 Polish Jews belonging to "Mirer Yeshiba" arrived in Shanghai. It was supposed to be one of the most important Yeshibas in Poland. They had a Rabbi as head of the Yeshiba and many leaders. They all used to study the Talmud the whole day and I understood that sixty or seventy of them could recite the Babylonian Talmud by heart.

The Sephardi Community gave them a Synagogue "Beth Aharon" for their studies. After the war this

Yeshiba was allowed to go and settle in America.

The Joint Distribution of America used to send to all German Jews monthly help. From the beginning of the Japanese war till the end the United States Government allowed the Joint to send through Switzerland US\$30,000 monthly. Also another American Orthodox Society used to send monthly help to the Yeshiba.

The German Jews were helped splendidly by the Joint. They had their Communal Kitchen, Hospital, Maternity Hospital, Synagogues, etc. Just before the war Mr Horace Kadoorie, the son of Sir Elly Kadoorie, collected and gave money, mostly from the Sephardis, and built for them a school in Hongkew for 600 children, which at the same time became a Communal Centre for games, concerts, and many other communal activities.

In 1944 the Presidents of the German and Russian Jews were taken to the "Bridge House" a place where they kept "selected" prisoners and subjected them to horrible questioning and mental and physical drilling.

After four months the President of the Russian Jews was released. He was a tall, hefty and strong man. When I saw him after his release he was weak and could not even walk properly. He was an absolute wreck. I thank God, I was spared being taken to the "Bridge House".

I believe that one day when the foreigners will be able to come and go freely and Shanghai will again be the fifth port in the world, an important Jewish community will establish itself there. The Jews have helped immensely in the greatness and the building of this splendid city "The Paris of the East". ●

*I hear and forget*

*I see and remember*

*I do and understand*

Chinese Proverb



## War-end Message to the Community

### Sephardic Jewish Community

Shanghai, September 1945

Dear Members of the Sephardic Jewish Community,

Now that peace has been given to the whole world by the grace of Divine Providence and now that Jews have withstood the gravest assault upon them, I take this God-given occasion of thankfulness to congratulate each and every person.

At the same time I am furnishing you with a brief report of matters concerning the Community and of duties performed for its welfare during the bitter forty-four months of the war. (in the Far East, Ed.)

In the first place it is with much regret that I have to state that we lost three great leaders and benefactors of this Jewish Community:

MR D.E.J. ABRAHAM  
SIR ELLY KADOORIE  
MR R.M. JOSEPH

and in them we truly sustained an irreparable loss.

On the other hand I have the pleasure to mention that I have been fortunate enough, from the time I took over the leadership of the Community until now, to have been able to give relief to all those who were in need. This was managed to a small extent through promises of payment after the war and some donations, and to a large degree by loans to be paid after the cessation of hostilities.

It was difficult to find the money, but I thank God that I succeeded to the very end and that at no time had I to stop giving relief, salaries and medicines.

Heartfelt gratitude especially goes out to Mr A.J. Hayim and Mr Ellis Joseph and his brother, the late Mr R.M. Joseph, for the priceless help I received from them financially and morally.

My thanks also are extended to all others who made donations, cash loans, and promises of payment after the war. Special honour goes to the Shanghai Jewish Joint Distribution Committee for their financial contribution in the late phase of the war.

I wish to record how much every one of us should be grateful to the whole of Mr I.A. Toeg's family, who helped in one form or another, as well as to Mr I.A. Toeg's sister, Mrs Mozelle Isaac.

I am highly appreciative of the unremitting services and sense of responsibility of the members of my Committee composed of Mr I.A. Toeg, Honorary Treasurer, Mr Arthur Sopher, Honorary Secretary, Mr Theodore Sopher and Mr S.I. Jacob.

I am also grateful to the "Investigation Committee" composed of Mr S. Sudka, Mr G. Raymond and Mr S.J. Moallem, who had to interview individually all those who applied for relief.

My thanks are also accorded to the Shanghai Ashkenazi Jewish Community who, when the Japanese Military Authorities took the premises of the Jewish School, Beth Aharon Synagogue and the Ohel Rachel Synagogue, were kind enough to put at our disposal a room in their Synagogue for our daily prayers, and in their hospital quarters housed all the teakwood benches and chairs of the Ohel Rachel Synagogue.

Thus, by the aforesaid aids, did it become possible for me and my Committee to relieve the distress of 202 persons out of a total Community of 370, outside of the Camp.

To give an idea of the degree of work my Committee and I had to undertake, I mention the fact that at the time we took over the management of the Community in April 1942 our monthly budget amounted to about \$10,000 - as against our last month's budget of a sum in excess of \$110,000,000 - (Shanghai dollars).

Touching the subject of the wider aspects of relief, it is with regret that I have to state that the youth of our Community, especially of the poor class, are mostly not a credit to us. I therefore urge our leaders to pay more attention in future to our youth. The boy or girl must be taken in hand from the moment of school leaving till the time he or she is settled. Higher education must be given to those who deserve it and a profession to others, and care given to them from the school-leaving time till 25 years of age.

The Ladies Benevolent Society, if and when it re-functions, must take charge of cases of sickness and it should be the task of a sub-Committee to look for work for those out of employment. The best help is not the money which undermines the stimulus to work and inclines people to become dependent and to be mere parasites. Our policy should always be to make the poor self-reliant and self-supporting.

Concluding, I would state that my Committee has incurred obligations in loans payable in US Dollars and Swiss Francs and I trust that the Community will rally round my Committee in an enthusiastic effort to collect enough money to meet the indebtedness due to Sephardi Jews, Ashkenazi Jews, and to Chinese.

I am confident that members of my Community, in gratefulness for their safe release from this war, will do their duty in full.

GOD BLESS YOU ALL! ☺

M.E. DANGOOR  
President

History has shown that the Jewish people cannot be wiped out by persecution. The Chinese experience proves that they can be killed by kindness. 2000 years ago some Jews found refuge in the ancient city of K'aifeng on the Yellow River, where in time they built an exquisite synagogue and increased in numbers and influence. They were respected and treated courteously. They were neither converted, persecuted, nor driven out of the country but these K'aifeng Jews were gradually absorbed into the society which had so warmly welcomed them. They have now virtually vanished.

Postscript: Forty years on, China is opening its doors again to the general tourist trade and encouraging contacts with the outside world. There may soon be a renewed Jewish settlement in Shanghai, now the commercial capital of China and the largest city in the world.

## Academic Study Group

THE Academic Study Group for Israel and the Middle East is an organisation in London made up of distinguished academics, Jewish and non-Jewish, and tries to foster academic relations between Britain and Israel. It was set up in 1978.

For further details phone 01-359 3954 ☺

## LETTERS

*From the President of the Board of Deputies*

Thank you very much for letting me have a copy of "The Scribe". The articles (on kosher meat prices, the Auschwitz convent and atomic danger to minorities) are extremely well presented, the content is detailed and accurate, and I congratulate you upon it.

(Dr.) Lionel Kopelowitz JP

WHEN my good friend Mr Shaoul Sasson visited Israel he told me a lot about your intensive efforts to organise the Iraqi Jews in London and promote their interests. My hearty congratulations to you for all your efforts in this great and noble task that you chose. God bless.

I was particularly impressed with your courageous and noble stand to defend the reputation of the late Rabbi Sasson Kadouri, whom I knew very well. I associated with him for many years in my position as Secretary of the Jewish Community in Baghdad, during his tenure as the head of that community. I hereby serve as witness to his many contributions to the welfare of this community in several stressful situations. Being familiar with the facts, I hereby declare that all the accusations directed towards the honorable and admirable Rabbi are false and should be dismissed totally ☺

Shalom Darwish

A Jewish tourist recently asked the waiter in a Shanghai restaurant, "Tell me please, are there any Chinese Jews?" The waiter said he will find out. Later he returned and said, "Sorry Sir, we only have tomato jooz and orange jooz!" ☺

## Third International Conference of WOJAC

THE World Jewish Affairs Division of the Israel Foreign Ministry have announced that the Third International Conference of the World Organisation of Jews from Arab Countries (WOJAC) will take place in Washington D.C. between the dates 9-11 March 1987.

WOJAC has already held two previous international conferences: the Founding First International Conference was held in Paris in November 1975, and the Second International Conference was held in London in November 1983.

Mr Shaul Ramati, formerly Israeli Ambassador to Brazil, has been appointed Director General of WOJAC and will undertake organising the Conference.

### The Nature of WOJAC

WOJAC was established in 1975. It seeks to represent the interests of approximately three million Jews originating from Arab countries living throughout the world, the majority of whom live today in Israel and make up approximately 45% of its population.

WOJAC came into being because of the widespread belief among the Jews originating from Arab countries that the time has come to raise the issue of their legitimate rights and to counter hostile Arab propaganda which exploited the status of the poor refugees, a problem they themselves had created. On the other hand, the Jews who had fled from Arab countries after having been humiliated, persecuted and imprisoned, have claims and rights which have long been ignored.

**A possible explanation for it having remained an underplayed issue could be the reluctance of Israel, including its Oriental Jews themselves, to describe the immigrants from Arab countries as refugees and apply this term to them, preferring to consider them as immigrants motivated by Zionist ideals. The fact remains that even for the Israeli public, the subject had to be placed in a new focus.**

### The Structure of WOJAC

WOJAC is a voluntary, international, independent, non-governmental organisation. It includes: The Greater Israel Council, which consists of the leaders of the associations representing the communities of immigrants from the various Arab lands, as well as well-known public figures in Israel; and the Israel Executive, which acts on behalf of the Council.

On the international level, WOJAC is represented by the World Executive consisting of 23 members from eight

countries, and a Presidium with 7 members. Heading the World Organisation are Mr Leon Tamman from England who serves as Chairman of the Presidium, and Mr Mordechai Ben-Porat, former Minister of the State of Israel, who is Chairman of the World Executive – which roles interchange once a year.

The Organisation enjoys the support of an extensive lobby among Members of the Knesset, the Government of Israel and the Jewish Agency.

### WOJAC'S Claims from the Arab Countries

- (a) To initiate a new era of peace and brotherhood between our two peoples, the offspring of the same Biblical Patriarch, Abraham;
- (b) To cease immediately their persecution of the Jews still living in their countries, to grant these Jews human rights and allow for freedom of movement to those who so wish;
- (c) To fulfil their legal and moral obligation towards the Jews, to acknowledge their historical rights, to compensate them for the expropriation of their property and for damages and losses suffered in their countries of origin;
- (d) To return to Jewish hands the Jewish religious and cultural assets in ruin and neglect under their control and to guarantee their restoration and repair and freedom of access thereto;
- (e) To cease the shameful exploitation of the Arab refugee issue for political purposes;
- (f) To absorb their brethren, the Arab refugees, in their midst, within the vast areas under their rule, just as Israel has done with her own citizens who originally come from Arab countries.

As WOJAC attaches great importance to American public opinion and appreciates the American People's innate sense of fairness and traditional quest for justice, it has decided to convene its Third International Conference in the United States. The Conference will be held under the sponsorship and with the assistance of American Jewish organisations, headed by the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organisations.

The issues to be debated at the Conference are the following:

- (a) Exchanges of population which have taken place throughout the world, including the Middle East, in the past 50 years.
- (b) Sample models of groups of refugees who have been rehabilitated.

- (c) Ideas as to the possibilities of rehabilitating Arab refugees under control of the Israeli Administration, as well as refugees under the rule of Arab countries.

- (d) Formulation of the claims of Jews from Arab countries against their countries of origin.

- (e) Jews under Moslem and Arab rule.

- (f) To what extent would the Jews originating from Arab countries serve as a bridge of understanding with Arab countries, given the following conditions:

1. that it would not be done at the expense of the State of Israel's vital interests;
2. that the rights of Jews from Arab countries would be preserved.

It is hoped that the main speaker will be Vice President George Bush who will convey a message from President Reagan ●

### The Lost Sefarim

It is ironic that while WOJAC's objectives have always included the recovery of religious objects from Arab countries, most of the Torah scrolls that did leave Iraq have been dissipated.

In 1953 no less than 700 sefarim were sent out from Baghdad and were stored at Bevis Marks Synagogue. In 1961 another 350 were dispatched, through the endeavours of my late father, to the Spanish & Portuguese Congregation care of the Haham Dr Solomon Gaon. Some of these have been distributed to various synagogues but the rest have disappeared without a trace. Some sefarim were handed over to the World Sephardi Federation in London where David Avayou was its secretary. In 1973 another 25 sefarim were sent to London by Mr. M. Basri.

It was recently reported in the Israeli press that Avayou sold two scrolls for \$10,000. The Haham, Dr Solomon Gaon, who was in Jerusalem in August, positively identified the scrolls as those that were stored in the London office.

The 1000 Iraqi sefarim were not meant to be sold and their market value can be many millions. It is therefore important to trace them one by one and find out what happened to them; I have contacted the Spanish & Portuguese office and WSF to obtain clarifications. It is possible that a large claim for damages be lodged against those involved in this scandal.

Mr. Leon Tamman was criticised for picking David Avayou to head the Sephardi Communities Department of the World Zionist Organisation ●

N.E.D.

## Sir Sasson Heskell

THE eminent Iraqi statesman and financier Sasson Heskell was born in Baghdad in 1860 to an old Jewish family. His father was a Rabbi. Sasson studied at the Konsular Akademie in Vienna and subsequently in London and Berlin, and obtained his law degree in Istanbul.

Returning to his native city in 1885 he was appointed foreign secretary to the Wali (Governor-General), an important position which he held for many years.

On the proclamation of the Turkish Constitution in 1908 he was elected deputy for Baghdad. In Istanbul he was chairman of the Financial Committee of the Chamber of Deputies and under-secretary of state for Trade and Agriculture. In 1909 he was a member of a deputation sent to London with a view to strengthening friendly ties with England.

He returned to Baghdad in 1920 and was named Minister of Finance in the first Iraqi cabinet. He held this post up to 1923 and then in 1924-25. He was a member of the Iraqi Parliament until his death.

In 1921 a Conference was convened in Cairo by Winston Churchill, the then Secretary of State for the Colonies, to settle the Middle East question. Sasson Heskell, who was subsequently knighted by King George V, represented Iraq with Sir Percy Cox, the High Commissioner, Miss Gertrude Bell, the Oriental Secretary and Ja'far pasha El-Askeri, Minister of Defence. This Conference nominated the Emir Faisal of the Hejaz as a candidate for the throne of Iraq and constituted an emirate in the Trans-Jordan part of Palestine in favour of his brother the Emir Abdullah. It was said that Sasson Heskell objected to the nomination of a Hejazi prince, who was his colleague in the Turkish Parliament, to the Kingdom of Iraq, stating that it was usual to choose a Northern prince to new thrones in Southern Europe and elsewhere (e.g. Greece, Bulgaria, Rumania, etc.) He was answered that Kinahan Cornwallis will accompany Faisal to Baghdad as adviser, and he was from a Northern country!

Sir Sasson negotiated in 1925 the oil concession with the Turkish (thereafter Iraq) Petroleum Co and insisted that royalties to the Iraqi treasury should be paid in gold sterling. When Britain left the gold standard, Iraq benefited from this clause and obtained substantial royalties for its oil.

Sir Sasson went to Paris in 1932 to spend the summer and died there on August 31st ●

M S Basri



*Sasson Heskell at the Cairo Conference, March 1921*

*1st row (seated): Sir Herbert Samuel, High Commissioner in Palestine (third from left), then Winston Churchill, Sir Percy Cox.*

*2nd row: Gertrude Bell (second from left), then Sasson Heskell (wearing a fez). Ja'far pasha appears in military uniform behind Churchill and to his side the famous T.E. Lawrence of Arabia.*

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## Jewish Mission to the Christians

IN recent years churches have closed down by the hundreds and Christians have been renouncing their faith in favour of atheism or exotic creeds as enlightened people have come to realise that Christianity is based on a trinity of fallacies, namely, the fallacy of the Virgin Birth, the fallacy that Jesus was the son of God and the fallacy of the Resurrection. These are fundamental tenets of the Christian creed and cannot be reformed. St. Paul and other Church leaders after him have stated categorically that without Resurrection there is no Christianity.

While these supernatural claims earned for Christianity millions of converts they also inevitably alienated it from mainstream Judaism resulting in a final break and open rivalry and hostility. The New Testament records that Jews asked Rabban Gamliel how to treat the new Christian faith. His reported advice was, "Leave it alone. If it is of God you can't do anything against it; if it is not of God it will wither by itself." The learned rabbi was not speaking in the short term but in the very long term. Current events are proving him right.

The Holocaust, which was an expression of the pent-up hatred of Christianity towards its mother religion – Judaism, can also be looked upon as the final death gasp of traditional Christianity. But the Christian movement has not been entirely in vain. It has brought a major section of mankind within the faith of Adam as Judaism had done before and Islam has done thereafter.

It is time therefore for these three monotheistic religions to have a dialogue with a view to stressing their common denominators instead of harping on their differences.

It must be admitted that the Jews, who were chosen as God's missionaries, did not rise to the occasion and their task had to be carried out through their offshoots the Christians and the Moslems.

It can be said, however, that the Jews conquered the world by their obstinacy – by holding fast to their faith and accepting their destiny at all costs – a stiff-necked people, as God well knew them to be. But, then, that is why they were chosen in the first place.

Both the Christians and Moslems have claimed that they supplanted the Jews as God's Chosen People. But, as the Pope pointed out at his visit to the Rome Synagogue, God's appointment of the Jews is irrevocable. We still have a continuing role, namely to provide the world, in the fulness of time, with the expected Messiah, whose seed we carry in us. On that day many will be called but only a few will be selected ●

## Cookery Corner

*The Baghdad Kitchen* by Nina Jamil-Garbutt

Published by Kingswood Press, Kingswood, Tadworth, Surrey £5.95, 91 pp.

BAGHDAD Cookery books have mainly been written by local people so it is interesting to have this product by an Englishwoman.

Before oil wealth transformed the Iraq economy some 40 years ago Baghdad was at a low ebb and we used to be amused by the impressions of Western visitors to Iraq. Some found all buildings looking half-finished and one could not tell whether they were being constructed or pulled down. Women were dressed in simple black and the men in colourful clothing. The roads were only used by wheeled traffic and beasts of burden were treated as pedestrians and had to use the pavements and were supposed to have priority over humans. At the shouts of "balak, balak" people had to make way for the laden animals. When it rained people took off their footwear so that they didn't get spoiled and walked barefoot in the muddy streets. One traveller described Baghdad as the city of 1001 smells.

Of course things have changed now and Western visitors go to Iraq in admiration and to earn high salaries. Nina Jamil-Garbutt brings out the good points of Iraq cooking, which is a branch of Middle Eastern cuisine, that is mainly Persian in origin. The three hautes cuisines of the world are Persian, Chinese and French.

The author writes, "The Baghdad kitchen today offers wholesomeness, economy and delicious results. Vegetables are quite often added to cook with the meat. This preserves the nutritional value which is often thrown away when the vegetables are cooked separately with water. Vegetables cooked in the meat stock are rich and full of flavour. A good example is the simple potato. Cooked with the meat, the potato has a completely different taste compared with the plain boiled one." "The presentation of food is important: food must look good in order to taste good. The smell of food is its best garnish because it is the smell that invigorates the senses first."

Arab dishes were not part of Jewish cooking, which is more refined. They were not familiar to our tastes but their names were familiar to our ears, such as: hareesah, makhlama, quzi, tikka, feshafesh, qeema, tashreeb and thareed. We give below recipes for HABEET and QUZI:-

### Pot Roast Joint of Beef – Habeet

Habeet comes from a word meaning falling. The idea is that the meat cooks

until it is so tender that it falls off the bone. Season the chosen joint (e.g. rump) with a pinch each of salt, pepper and ground mixed spices (nutmeg, cloves and cardamom). Place 1 tablespoon oil in a heavy saucepan and add the meat. Brown lightly on all sides. Add 2-3 tablespoons water, cover the saucepan and allow to simmer gently until the meat is very tender. Turn once or twice during cooking and if necessary add a few drops of warm water. When all the liquids have evaporated and the meat is tender, serve hot or cold with fresh bread. Habeet will go well with all kinds of salads and pickles.

### Whole Roast Lamb – Quzi

Whole roast lamb or Quzi is the major festive dish in Iraq. It is prepared at any happy occasion when large numbers of the family or friends gather for celebration. A baby lamb is naturally more tender than a fully grown up sheep, but it is possible also to roast a whole mature sheep.

Traditionally the method of cooking is to dig a shallow hole in dry ground and fill it with dried wood for the fire. A double layer of bricks is placed around the fire to support a large tray on which the lamb is placed for roasting. (The head is usually removed and cooked separately). When the fire is settled the tray is placed on the supporting bricks over the fire and the lamb is left to cook in its own juices and fats with the addition of very little water. The lamb is turned a few times during cooking and left on the fire until the meat is very tender and the skin is golden in colour.

The lamb is served on a tray surrounded by rice and garnished with boiled eggs, spiced minced meat, fried onion slices, roasted nuts and sultanas.

### Spices for Pickles (Bharat)

Fruits and vegetables pickled in brine or vinegar can be greatly improved in taste by adding spices to them when brought to the table. The following Baghdad recipe is nearly 100 years old:

Bharat ingredients, by weight:  
4 parts mustard and one part each of the following:

Pepper, Long pepper, Turmeric, Coriander, Sugar, Cubebs, Ginger, Cardamom root.

Also salt, garlic, oil and vinegar.  
Method: grind and sift all the spices, Heat the oil and let it cool completely; then add the oil little by little to the sifted ingredients: you need enough oil to make it into a paste. Add a few cloves of garlic and leave covered overnight to mature.

Add vinegar little by little and stir to make it into a thin paste. Store in a jar and leave for a few days before using.

## Spot an Ancestor

A FURTHER SELECTION from the Register of military taxpayers of the Baghdad Community of 1892.

Heskel Ezra Habib Dabby  
Selman Saleh Dabby  
Dawid Saleh Dabby  
Menashi Rahamim Dabby  
Eliahu Yamen Dabby  
Saleh Yishaq Dabby  
Mordechai Heskel Mrad Dabby  
Daniel Yamen Dabby  
Yosef Yacoub Dabby  
Aboudi Moshi Dellal  
Meir Aharon Abdulla Dellal  
Moshi Abdulla Dellal  
Eliahu Moshi Dellal  
Reuben Yacoub Yosef Dellal  
Aghababa Eliahu Dellal  
Nessim Aghababa Dellal  
Menahem Aslan Dellal  
Yehuda Aslan Dellal  
Heskel Eliahu Abraham Dellal  
Ezra Hougi Yishaq Moshi Dellal  
Reuben Saleh Moshi Dellal  
Yishaq Semah Pinhas Dellal  
Moshi Asher Dellal  
Dawid Hayim Duri  
Abraham Heskel Ezra Duri  
Dawid Shlomo Dabora  
Eliahu Shlomo Dabora  
Heskel Shlomo Dabora  
Heskel Reuben Dabora  
Menashe Shlomo Dabora  
Reuben Selman Dabora  
Selman Reuben Dabora  
Heskel Mordechai Hakham Dawid  
Eliahu Mordechai Hakham Dawid  
Shaul Yosef Hakham Dawid  
Moshe Yamen Hakham Dawid  
Eliahu Abdulla Hakham Dawid  
Eliahu Lewi  
Lewi Eliahu Lewi  
Hougi Dawid Lewi Dellal  
Eliahu Nahom Hilali  
Raphael Heskel Hilali  
Yishaq Heskel Hayim Hilali  
Hougi Saleh Elwaya Nejjar  
Eliahu Ezra Lewi Halabi  
Selman Moshi Hallewi  
Heskel Saleh Hayim Hallewi  
Yosef Yacoub Saleh Hayim Hallewi  
Nessim Meir Hallewi  
Yacoub Meir Hallewi  
Hayim Meir Hallewi  
Heskel Saleh Hendi  
Selman Hillel Moshi Hillel  
Yishaq Moshi Hillel  
Selman Saleh Zlouf  
Yehouda Saleh Zlouf  
Moshi Yahya Zlouf  
Moshi Abraham Zlouf  
Yosef Abraham Zlouf  
Ezra Heskel Zlouf  
Heskel Yahya Zlouf  
Eliahou Yacoub Zaarur  
Yehouda Abdulla Zaarur  
Baroukh Yacoub Zaarur  
Heskel Menahem Zaarur  
Yosef Menahem Zaarur  
Yehuda Menahem Zaarur  
Abraham Yosef Zaarur  
Eliahu Elishaa Zacri  
Ezra Elishaa Zacri  
Elishaa Zacri ●