

The SCRIBE

JOURNAL OF BABYLONIAN JEWRY

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Edited by: Percy S. Gourgey

A HAPPY NEW YEAR 5746 TO ALL OUR READERS AND FRIENDS

Terror in Lebanon

THE GERMAN GENERAL Klauswitz used to say that war is an extension of politics — similarly the Arabs regard terror as an extension of war and have not shirked from resorting to it throughout their history. The Arabs used terror in their wars of conquest, by means of the assassins (hashasheen) in the Middle Ages and later through piracy on the high seas, (remember how Gaddafi planned to sink the QE2).

The PLO found it only natural to use terrorism to further its aims and in dealing with Israel. Likewise the Baath regime in Iraq, by means of mass murder and hangings of innocent people, has succeeded in terrorising its opponents into submission and has hoped that poison gas and civilian bombing can do the same to Iran.

The Christians of Lebanon missed their chance of retaining political autonomy when their leaders, for greed of Arab money, rejected the peace treaty with Israel. Now the Moslems, sensing victory, use massive car bombs in Christian supermarkets to reach their goal. The epitaph to the Lebanese Christians can be: "Those who give up their principles for material gain, in the end lose both".

Events in Lebanon are a preview of the shape of things that the Arabs have in store for Israel. Even Egypt cannot be regarded as a permanent exception, witness the recent terrorist murder of Baghdad-born Israeli diplomat Albert Atrakchi in Cairo. The Arabs have rejected Zionism finally and squarely and time to reason with them is long past. The Jewish people must brace themselves to a new war of liberation from Arab monopoly of the Middle East.

International Aid

WE HEAR MUCH nowadays of the need to help Third World countries get on their feet economically speaking but the massive contribution by the governments of the West rarely reach the starving and the needy. In fact, international aid can rightly be described as a case of robbing the poor of rich countries to give to the rich of poor countries.

In the lists of international donors the Arab countries are often conspicuous by their absence.

Rabbi Solomon Sassoon

THE LOSS OF Rabbi Solomon Sassoon in Jerusalem is a great blow to Jewish Scholarship and Philanthropy. His funeral in Jerusalem in the Mount of Olives was attended by the President and Chief Rabbis of Israel amongst 10,000 other friends and admirers. Elsewhere in this issue is a full tribute to him. It is to be hoped that a foundation will be established in his name, to publish his books and continue with his charitable endeavours.

Hussein PLO 'Initiative'

THE CURRENT ATTEMPT by King Hussein of Jordan to initiate Peace Talks with the United States culminating in an International Conference in which the Soviet Union will be another major participant are hardly likely to succeed. The most important element in any kind of negotiation is the fostering of mutual confidence. The reluctance of King Hussein to engage in direct negotiations, on the contrary, will arouse the suspicion on the part of Israeli leaders that he only seeks to put Israel at a considerable disadvantage. Moreover his 'ally' Yasser Arafat the PLO Leader has neither disavowed terrorism nor the PLO covenants which call for the destruction of the State of Israel. President Reagan's Administration has already stressed that it will have no contact with the PLO unless or until it fulfills the two basic conditions. The Soviet Union's refusal to resume diplomatic relations with Israel which it severed in 1967 following the Six Day War, bodes ill for the success of any conference.

It is surprising that Western leaders such as in the European Economic Community continue to permit themselves to be duped by pro-Arab and anti-Israeli propaganda. Perhaps the smoke from the oil refineries totally blurs their vision.

Judge Sofaer in London

RECENTLY THERE WAS held in London the Annual Conference of the American Bar Association. One of its outstanding participants was Judge Abraham Sofaer of Sharon Libel case fame, whose speech condemning international terrorism was widely applauded. Presiding over his speech was Mr. Walter Mondale former US Vice President and the Democratic candidate in the 1984 Presidential election.

Judge Sofaer was born in Bombay of parents of Baghdadian Jewish origin and emigrated to the United States as a boy with his parents. He has been appointed Legal Adviser to the US State Department on the personal recommendation of George Shultz, the Secretary of State.

We are very pleased he has asked to receive regularly copies of The Scribe and we rejoice in the pride he shows in his Baghdadian-Babylonian Jewish background.

He was accompanied by his wife, Marian, who is also a distinguished lawyer in her own right.

Gulf War

THE DEVASTATING WAR between Iran and Iraq has entered its 6th year. It will be recalled that the war started with Iraq's invasion of Iran, abrogating a treaty made with the late Shah over Shatt-Al-Arab waters. Far more lives and property have been lost in this war than in all the major 5 wars launched against Israel by her neighbours.

It is surprising that world public opinion still seems far more concerned over the current Israeli-Arab dispute than over the Gulf War with its continuing disastrous consequences. One of Iran's conditions for ending the war is, apart from the overthrow of Iraq's President Saddam, the demand for over \$200 billion by way of compensation. It is to be hoped that efforts will be continued to end this terrible war in which nearly half a million young lives have been sacrificed.

FEDERALISM AND THE MIDDLE EAST

A SEMINAR, 'BRAINCHILD', as it was called by the Jewish Chronicle, of Mr. Naim E. Dangoor, and sponsored by the Centre for Contemporary Studies and the Minority Rights Group, was held at St. Antony's College, Oxford, on April 19th 1985. The subject under discussion was 'Beyond the Middle East Conflict — A future for Federalism'. The chairmen were Prof. Raymond Carr, Warden of the College and Prof. Peter Pulzer of All Soul's College, Oxford.

The Seminar was attended by distinguished professors, journalists

and representatives of the Foreign Office, and the Egyptian and Israeli Embassies in London. Among those present we note:- Eric Moonman, Director, Centre for Contemporary Studies, Naim E. Dangoor, Representatives of the Foreign Office, the Israeli and Egyptian Embassies and the Minority Rights Group, Sulaiman al-Ferzoli, As-Sayad magazine, Hazhir Teymourian of the Times, David Kessler and Joseph Finklestone of the Jewish Chronicle, Meer S. Basri, Shaoul H. Sassoon, Maurice Jacob Elias, PHD. Int. Law, Sorbonne.

Prof. Jonathan Frankel, visiting professor at University College London, spoke on 'The Prospects for Arab-Israeli Peace'. He contended that, in general, federalism cannot be considered a realistic formula for the settlement of major international problems and solution of conflicts between well-established sovereign states. However, he conceded that Israel, Jordan and even, perhaps, Arafat could perhaps move towards a kind of autonomy for the Palestinian Arabs in the occupied areas by secret agreement and step-by-step co-operation.



Photo: Murgor Moran

Some of the participants at the Oxford Seminar.

PROF. GEORGE JOFFE, Head of the Middle East Desk of the Economic Intelligence Digest, spoke of 'Federalism and Minority Groups in the Middle East and North Africa. He discussed points relating to Islam and the temporal order, the Middle East's confrontation with Europe, the Ottoman Empire's reforms in the 19th century, modern trends in Islam, Arab nationalism and minority problems in Arab countries. He concluded that 'the Middle East and North Africa will have to overcome its long tradition of confessional patron — client relations and kin — based systems of social integration. It will have to create political institutions that find their justification in ideologies that exclude the personalised patterns of the past. Only then could it have the confidence

to consider federalism, either as a solution to its minority problems or as the means for ending the prolonged confrontation between the Arab world and Israel.

A general discussion then followed in which took part most of those present.

Mr. Teymourian, himself of Iranian Kurdish origin, spoke of the plight of the Kurds scattered in Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey.

Mr. Basri called attention to the hundreds of thousands of refugees from Arab lands absorbed by Israel and contended that there has been in fact a virtual exchange of population in the Middle East. (The full text of his address is given in this issue).

Mr. Dangoor gave his views as follows:

Mr. Dangoor's address

THE FOREGOING PAPERS have taken a generally sceptical view of the prospects for Middle East Federalism. There are however one or two key observations in support of Federalism in this area which should be made.

Throughout history, the Middle East has suffered more than its share of warfare and strife and has enjoyed relative calm only under Ottoman rule, with all its faults and defects. The Allies of the Great War promised self-determination to the peoples of the region only to betray the minorities when they handed over the whole region to the Arabs. Subsequently, the Arabs have pursued their policies throughout the area and it is worth noting that whilst they accuse Israel of expansionism, they openly proclaimed their dream of a pan-Arab empire from the Atlantic to the Gulf and even beyond as evident from Iraq's invasion of Iran.



Vice-Premier Itzhak Shamir and friends at a recent reception in London.

Anwar Shaul

IT IS WITH deep sorrow that we record the death, at Kiron, Israel, on December 14th, 1984, of the well-known Iraqi poet and author Anwar Shaul. A few months before his death he was given the Prime Minister's Award for Literature, handed to him by the then Prime Minister Itzhak Shamir in an impressive ceremony.

Anwar Shaul was born at Hillah on the Euphrates in 1904. He studied in Baghdad and graduated from the Law College in 1931. Having been a teacher for some time, he published in 1929 'Al-Hassid' (The Reaper) which became one of the most prominent Iraqi literary magazines. It appeared for eight years and published original poetry, short stories and essays by eminent poets and writers.

He himself published volumes of poetry (Time's Whispers, and a New Day Has Risen), short stories (The First Harvest, In the throng of the City, Stories from the West) translations (William Tell, General Printing: Art and Industry) etc. He also published his life story in 1980.

Anwar Shaul is considered as a precursor of the modern short story in

Barmitzvah

CONGRATULATIONS TO Simon Dangoor, son of Margaret and Edward Dangoor, who recently celebrated his barmitzvah.

The two important landmarks in the life of a Jewish boy are: brit-mila and marriage. Circumcision is described by the Arabic word 'khitan' and a bridegroom by the Hebrew word 'hatan', both deriving from the same root. In the pre-Abrahamic age both events took place at about the same time. Circumcision was performed, as in the case of Ishmael, at the age of 13 when a boy attained puberty and was ready to get married.

A wide gap now separates the two events in Judaism — the one taking place at 8 days and the other not until the young man reaches his twenties or thirties. In a sense, therefore, the barmitzvah ceremony recalls the two major commandments of brit mila and huppa ●

Iraq. He left Baghdad in 1971 and settled in Israel.

He is survived by his wife, a son and a daughter ●

One Man, One Vote?

THERE IS AN obsession in the world today that democracy means the rule of the majority. Majority rule as an expression of democracy only holds good in a homogeneous society where differences are over minor issues. In a society divided by race, language, religion or colour the rights of all sections have to be equally safeguarded. This formula would offer a solution to the problems of Northern Ireland, South Africa, Lebanon, Cyprus etc.

In South Africa's present crisis, if the white suppression of the blacks is wrong then the black domination of the whites is equally wrong, for the blacks clamour for nothing less than the complete transfer of power to themselves solely because they are more numerous. In siding with the black militants Western democracies are driving a nail into their own coffins. For in a future world government could they agree to apply the principle of one man, one vote whereby China and India would dominate our globe?

Are those who can breed like rabbits going to inherit the earth? ●

Arab brethren have on occasion attempted to suppress the rights of minority peoples by various federal formations: Egypt and Sudan, Egypt and Libya, Egypt and Syria, Syria and Iraq, etc. Now Muslim Fundamentalists call for a union of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine as well as Cyprus.

It seems that although the Arabs claim that Zionism is the root of all the troubles in the region, Arab imperialism is a much more pervasive factor. It is as a Jewish refugee from an Arab country, Iraq, that I came to the conclusion when I left Iraq 21 years ago that federalism is the only solution for the region and all the peoples in it.

First let me define the region:

It is that corner of South West Asia bounded by Turkey to the north and Iran to the east. Egypt, though not included in such an area, would greatly benefit from the stability and prosperity which a regional federalism would generate.

My reasons for suggesting a federal regime are as follows:

a) This is a precise historical area being the home of the Semitic people and the fountain of the three monotheistic religions. It is still the home of many national and religious groups and the crossroads of three continents.

b) It is a precise area of physical geography being mostly plain country bordered by mountainous neighbours.

c) The nation-states of the area are too small to resist foreign invasion. Only by uniting can the region hope to compete in size and population with its neighbours.

d) The endemic problems of the region cannot be solved piecemeal but have to have an overall solution, which ensures that the region cannot be dominated by any single group.

The outbreak of the Iraq-Iran War has shown what can happen in this region when it is not subject to some regional discipline. Hundreds of thousands of people have already died in this futile war; much wealth has been squandered and the whole region is now under threat from Iran and Islamic Fundamentalism which equally alarms

Muslim Egypt and Jewish Israel.

The ancient Kurdish problem will not be solved by a union of Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran (as suggested by Mr. Teymourian) but a comprehensive regional federalism.

Mr. Joffe referred, in his paper, to "the real issue of Palestinian nationalism". I am on the other side of this coin. After the establishment of the State of Israel 850,000 Palestinian Arabs left Israel for Arab countries and 850,000 Jews left various Arab countries to return to Israel with the full co-operation of the Arab governments involved. It was recognised at the time that this was in fact an exchange of refugees similar to other exchanges which were taking place after the War between, for instance, Germany and Poland and India and Pakistan.

While Israel absorbed its refugees the Arabs kept theirs in camps largely for political and propaganda reasons. The claim that Israel alone has to solve the Palestinian problem is simply fatuous. The Arabs have the land, the resources and the money to do so. The Palestinian Arab problem is a regional one and has to be solved in a regional context.

The peoples of the Middle East who have often suffered together under foreign domination but have never been united in freedom can, if they want, organise themselves into a confederation that would seek neither to Arabise, Islamicise or Sovietise the Middle East; a confederation which would ensure autonomy, freedom and prosperity to all the people of the region. Each minority people would be free to live and work in any part of the federation — a formula which may satisfy Palestinian Arabs. A regional development board would ensure that the vast wealth of the region is utilised for the benefit of all.

Sceptics might say that it will take a very long time before this arrangement becomes acceptable to the conflicting peoples of the region. But once the solution is identified the time element becomes immaterial. There is a saying in the Middle East that "he who follows the right path will eventually reach his destination" ●

Minister Shahal in Iraqi Club

ENERGY MINISTER, MOSHE Shahal who was born in Baghdad, and emigrated to Israel in 1950, recently paid a visit to our Community in London. He described his visit to Cairo and his meeting with President Mubarak.

The journey from Baghdad to Cairo took Minister Shahal 35 years and it appears that when he arrived in Egypt he was back to square one; for Husni Mubarak requested him to speak in Arabic.

Apparently President Mubarak made no attempt to say even a few words in Hebrew or even to greet his visitor with the word Shalom for, if he did, it would soon have been reported to us ●

Visitors to London

RECENTLY THERE HAVE been three visitors to London of Baghdadian Jewish origin who have shown interest in the Scribe and the activities of the Exilarch's Foundation.

One of them is Miss Sophie Kelly, Principal of the Hill Grange School in Bombay and the main organiser of the Knesseth Eliahu Synagogue Centenary celebrations in Bombay — reported in this issue.

Every year she holds a special Seder in her house and the editor of this journal was present at that held this year. Amongst 70 other participants in the demonstration Seder there was uniquely representatives of the Film Division of the Government of India's Ministry of Information who made a special film of the proceedings.

She took back with her to Bombay

Mr. Basri's address

SINCE THE LAST World War the Middle East has been a very troubled area. The media daily reported war, uprisings, revolutions, terrorism and executions as if all the nefarious forces were unleashed to storm the Mediterranean, Red Sea and Gulf shores.

At least twelve provinces, formerly forming part of the Ottoman Empire or protectorates of the British, have emerged as independent states holding seats in the United Nations and the Arab League. Their total population is less than fifty million but they include a conglomeration of ethnic, religious and sectarian minorities living in collusion or collision with their neighbours. The Kurdish problem is the most acute and led to many uprisings and suppression as this sturdy people lives scattered in mountainous and mostly barren regions on the borders of Iraq, Iran, Syria, Turkey and even in the south of Russia. The Kurds have never had an autonomous government of their own, but their men rose to pre-eminence in all the countries where they lived.

Israel absorbed hundreds of thousands of refugees of Jewish immigrants from Arab lands. There has been in fact a virtual exchange of population in the Middle East as has happened previously between Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, East and West Germany, etc. This new state, having now a majority of Oriental Jews, should be integrated in the Middle Eastern pattern and accepted to live in peace and co-operation with her neighbours.

The present kaleidoscopic situation is quite disarrayed, but we would like to envisage a happier picture of the Middle East in the not very distant future, probably in the twenty-first century. The minorities, we hope, will be granted liberty and autonomous self-government, peace and security will be restored and a sort of federation or confederacy will unite all the States in harmony and amity to develop the area's vast resources for the benefit and welfare of all its inhabitants ●

for future use copies of the Hagadah published by the Exilarch's Foundation, with English and Arabic translations.

Another visitor was Mr. Selim Mahlab, Leader of the Baghdadian Community of New York who has just succeeded in receiving planning permission for a new Baghdadian Synagogue in the Queens District of New York despite opposition from neighbours.

Mr. Mahlab pointed out that one of the Allied aims in the Second World War was Freedom of Worship amongst the 'Four Freedoms' and this resulted in the success of his application and it is hoped that the Synagogue will be inaugurated in 1986.

The third visitor was Mr. Saleh Mukamal, Leader of the Baghdad Community in Toronto, Canada, who took journals to distribute to members of his community ●

Rabbi Solomon D. Sassoon

Speech by Percy Gourgey at the Shloshim observed at Ohel David Synagogue in London in June 1985.

RABBI SOLOMON SASSOON was a prince among men.

He had a multi-faceted personality and impressed people in different ways. He was as at once a profound scholar and thinker, author and publisher, philanthropist and businessman, pioneer and organiser. But above all he embodied those virtues extolled in 'Ethics of the Fathers' – Ohev Shalom, Rodef Shalom, Ohev haberiot, Vumkurban la Torah, be of the Disciples of Aaron, loving peace, loving your fellow beings and drawing them nearer to Torah'. Indeed it was in this 'drawing them nearer to Torah' that he excelled and so he founded this Synagogue, led in efforts to maintain the great Porath Yosef Yeshiva in Jerusalem and was prominent in spreading Torah learning amongst North Africa Jewish immigrants in France.

I remember particularly a discussion with him in 1970 before his Aliya to Israel with his wife and family and indeed in this respect he was a pioneer. He indicated to me a vision he had of a future Israel, quoting those well known words of Isaiah in our daily Amidah 'Hashiva Shofteynu, kebarishona veyoasenu kebatehila — restore our judges as of old and our councillors as in former times'. It was and still is a most desirable vision of Israel as a model state wherein justice, wisdom and peace would prevail under the continuing inspiration of Torah.

Rabbi Sassoon was also a linguist knowing an amazing variety of languages, English, of course, Hebrew, Arabic (in which he spoke to his sons at home) and French. He could have been either Sephardi or Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Israel but he preferred to concentrate on his charitable endeavour to the immense practical benefit of his fellow Jews.

Many years ago he was outstanding in the Defence of Shechita which was threatened by a bill in Parliament and his defence was a complete success.

The work he published by his beloved and revered father, David 'The History of the Jews in Baghdad' has become a standard work on the subject of Babylonian Jewry.

Perhaps his last contribution was that appearing in the volume produced to celebrate the Centenary of the Knesseth Eliahu Synagogue in Bombay founded by Sir Jacob Sassoon which was inaugurated by the President of India. Rabbi Sassoon's article was appropriately called 'The Torah and Land of Israel' and I am glad to hear from his family that he saw a copy of the volume before he passed away.

Friends, assembled here to mourn his death but in another sense we celebrate his life, because it was a wonderful life devoted to good deeds and Torah.

We were privileged to know him and his memory will live forever in all our hearts.

Other speakers included Dayan Halperin, Dayan Toledano, Rabbi Abraham Gubbay, Rabbi Sassoon Abraham, Rabbi Simon Silas, Rabbi Isaac Abraham, Mr. Joseph Yehuda, Mr. Ellis Meyer presided.●

Indian President Lauds Jews

'THE JEWISH COMMUNITY in India has made notable contributions to the country's business and industry, civil services and armed forces, and in the spheres of art and education,' President Giani Zail Singh of India said as he inaugurated the centenary celebrations of Bombay's Knesseth Eliahu Synagogue, last April.

He assured the country's Jews that they enjoyed the Government's continued support and the nation's gratitude.

Speaking in classical Hindi, President Singh paid glowing tribute to the Sassoon family 'which had settled in India after being persecuted by the rulers of Baghdad over a century and a half ago'.

He especially praised Mr. David Sassoon, the founder of the House of Sassoon in India, who fled Baghdad in 1828 to escape arrest and persecution and established considerable commercial interests in Bombay.

At the ceremony, a message was read out from Mr. Rajiv Gandhi the Indian Prime Minister, also praising the Jewish community, stating that the 'smallness of its numbers has not been a constraint, and members of the community have achieved prominence in many fields of activity.'

Other messages published in a special 150 page brochure came from Sir Immanuel Jakobovits and Mr. Greville Janner M.P.

Messages of congratulations were also expressed by President Chaim Herzog of Israel and Mr. Shimon Peres, the Israeli Prime Minister.

As President Zail Singh lit the menorah, I had the honour of reading out the significance of each candle.

Following the celebration, President Zail Singh toured the magnificent Exhibition of Judaica.

In this exhibition there were replicas of the Temple in Jerusalem, the Ark in Jerusalem and Noah's Ark amongst other objects which were painstakingly constructed for nearly a year by skilled non-Jewish artisans.

In the course of seeing the various exhibitions the President who is a scholar of considerable achievement remarked that "as a non-Moslem I am not allowed to visit Mecca. As a non-Jew am I allowed to visit Jerusalem?"

We assured him that he would receive a warm welcome from the Israelis and that as a student of religion he would find much of fascinating interest.

It is to be hoped that India under a new Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi who has expressed a wish to take India into the 21st Century of high technology and scientific achievement

would appreciate the need to develop close relations with Israel to the mutual benefit of both countries●

P.S.G.

New Books

WEIDENFELD & NICOLSON ARE publishing 'The Road from Babylon' by Chaim Raphael illustrating some crucial issues in Israel today by retelling Jewish history in terms of the Sephardi and Middle Eastern Jews who now constitute the majority of its population.

Another publication is 'The Jews of Iraq — History, Society and Heritage' by Nissim Rejwan who describes the three most decisive phases of the history — the period from the Assyrian captivity to the Arab Conquest (731BCE-641CE), the encounter with Islam (641-1850) and the last years in Iraq (1850-1951).

Another outstanding publication is 'From time Immemorial — the History of the Arab-Jewish Conflict' by Joan Peters who gives a full review of the case for Israel and describes in detail how Jordan is part and parcel of the Historic Palestine envisaged by the 1917 Balfour Declaration separated from Western Palestine (largely Israel today) when Britain assumed the Mandate from the League of Nations in 1922●

Eminent Jewish men of modern Iraq

THE LATEST BOOK (in Arabic) by Meir S. Basri, former President of the Jewish Community in Baghdad and former Chairman of the Jewish Council of Iraq, was published in Jerusalem by the Association of Jewish Academics from Iraq under the title of "Eminent Jewish Men of Modern Iraq". The first volume of this historical biographical compendium "Precursors of the Intellectual Awakening in Modern Iraq" by the same author was published 14 years ago by the Iraqi Ministry of Information.

The new volume contains a foreword by Prof. Shmuel Moreh of the University of Jerusalem and an introductory chapter on the history of Iraqi Jews during the last hundred years and their accomplishments in trade, Government offices, culture, religion etc. then follows biographies of prominent Jews in the last century e.g. Senators Menahem and Ezra Daniel, Sir Sassoon Heskell a Minister of Finance, David Samra Vice-President of the Court of Cassation, Ibrahim al-Kebir Director General of Accounts and Finance●

Spot an Ancestor

A FURTHER SELECTION from the register of military taxpayers of the Baghdad community of 1892.

Shaul Basri Ezra Obadiah
Shlomo Basri Ezra Obadiah
Sasson Basri Obadiah
Shuwa Hakham Eliahou Obadiah 1)
Shlomo Yacoub Shuwa Hakham Eliahou
Obadiah
Heskel Khedhoury Ezra Obadiah
Shlomo Yacoub Shuwa Obadiah
Shuwa Yacoub Obadiah
Moshi Yosef Baher 2)
Meir Moshi Yosef Baher
Yizhaq Yosef Baher
Heskel Ezra Heskel Baher
Eliahou Heskel Baher
Elisha Elia Baher
Heskel Elia Baher
Yacoub Elia Baher
Saleh Yizhaq Baher
Ezra Daniel Horesh 2)
Sasson Shuwa Hirsh 2)
Meir Shuwa Hirsh
Ezra Shuwa Hirsh
Shuwa Ezra Hirsh
Nissim Ezra Hirsh
Ezra Nissim David Hirsh
Yosef Saleh Khalifa 2)
Selman Yosef Ezra 2)
Saleh Yosef Ezra
Shaul Selman Yosef Ezra
Yehouda Selman Yosef Ezra
Yehouda Abdulla Yosef Ezra
Shaul Eliahou Yosef Ezra
Raphael Sheikh Ezra
Heskel Ezra Raphael Sheikh Ezra
Eliahou Abraham Heskel Ezra
Yizhaq Saleh Peres 2)
Yosef Elia Peres
Yacoub Elia Peres
Menashe Yosef Elia Peres
Rahamim Heskel Ezra Peres
Saleh Heskel Ezra Peres
Yizhaq Saleh Setty 2)
Yosef Saleh Setty
Abraham Saleh Setty
Saleh Yosef Saleh Setty
Saleh Yahya Setty
Yisrael Abraham Nissim Masri 2)
Yamen Abraham Nissim Masri
Shaul Nissim Masri
Yizhaq Barukh Yacoub Masri
Yosef Saleh Masri
Nissim Eliahou Masri

NOTE:

1. Hakham Eliahou Obadiah (1788-1895) was an outstanding rabbinical scholar. He was dayan in 1821 and became the spiritual leader of the community in 1837 after the death of R. Moshi Hayim, grandfather of R. Yosef Hayim.

2. Baher, Ezra and Khalifa are branches of the same family. Together with the Horesh, Peres, Setty and Masri families, they are descended from Sheikh Ezra Khalif (or Khalifa). His father, one Yosef 'Horesh' came from Vienna around 1710. There was some evidence that Yosef's name was in fact 'Hirsch' and this is amply confirmed in the 'Register' where the name appears as Hirsh rather than Horesh ●

Letters

MANY THANKS FOR sending me The Scribe. I find it most interesting and knowledgeable. I would appreciate it if you would arrange to mail future issues as well.

The Alliance Israelite Universelle is the educator of over 1,000,000 Jewish children. It has at the present time 15,072 students in 39 institutions.

We have been so busy in the last couple of months arranging the Alliance dinner and dance which is usually held annually — a black tie affair, and it has been very successful.

Last year we went to Israel on a mission as we inaugurated a library at the Kerem Institute in Jerusalem. It was a most successful trip as we have seen all the institutions of the Alliance in Israel, about seven of them.

It was interesting to meet Miss Mahlab, a teacher at the Alliance School in Jerusalem. She is the daughter of M. Mahlab who was a director of the school in Baghdad years back. She was sent to Paris by the Alliance then became a teacher in Jerusalem. We also met the present Director of the Alliance in Haifa. He is from Mosul. He is a young, very intelligent man and studied at the Alliance in Paris and was sent back as a Principal for the Alliance in Haifa, which has about 2,000 students.

We were very moved to see the deaf and dumb children at their school in Jerusalem, how they are teaching them with the most advanced techniques in the world.

This year President Mitterand has bestowed the Legion d'Honneur on Mr Joshua Almog who is the Director of all our institutions of the Alliance in Israel. Also he has elevated M. Jules Braunschvig who is the President of the Alliance in Paris to Commander of the Legion d'Honneur, which is one of the highest honours in France.

If any graduate of the Alliance is visiting Israel and would like to visit these institutions they can get in touch with Mr. Joshua Almog, Delegation de l'Alliance Israelite Universelle, 4 rue Chlomo Mokho, Jerusalem, Israel. Tel. 02 638 786, 02 636 171 ●

Montreal MORRIS S. CHITAYAT

THANK YOU FOR sending me copies of your informative and interesting periodical.

The Jews from Iraq should gather in the Holy City of Jerusalem next year and we will provide the facilities of the Centre as well as the logistics of the trip to Israel. This can be a very wonderful reunion, with seminars concerning the origin, history, recollections, as well as taping audio-visual materials for

prosperity. The richness of the Iraqi community should be gathered.

This is the 11th hour for Sephardic and Oriental Jews to build institutions that specialise in education and culture, otherwise we will just be a part of history when our generation passes on. Let's be wise, and let's invest our time, self and means to perpetuate values and beliefs that are eternal. Mr. Edwin Shuker our Director in Jerusalem was born in Baghdad ●

DR. JOSE A. NESSIM
Chairman of the Board
The Sephardic Educational Center
in Jerusalem

THANKS A MILLION for sending me issues 14 and 15 and the special 'WOJAC' issue. I am delighted to know your publication is alive and well, may you exist for many years.

Should any of you be passing this way please drop me a note and I will be happy to show you my Sephardi-Ladino library ●

ALBERT ADATTO
228 165th Avenue
N.E. Bellevue
W.A. 98008 U.S.A.

Reprinted from The Economist
17/23 August 1985

Israel

Sir,

In your otherwise interesting survey of Israel ("A matter of survival", July 20th), you fall for the usual trendy cliché: "a democracy built on the backs of several million dispossessed Palestinians".

Reliable figures usually quote 800,000 — one million at most — who left in 1948. This figure is matched by the number of Jews who left Arab countries: you mention them in the context of social deprivation ("Jews from Africa and Asia who flocked to Israel in the late 1950s and 1960s"), but you don't attempt to explain why they flocked.

In Iraq, for instance, out of a community of 120,000 Jews, only 300 remain. No doubt there were a few Zionist zealots among those who went to Israel, but people don't normally leave their homes en masse unless life is made intolerable for them, or there is no future for them.

The undisguised truth (suppressed by the Israeli government during the 1960s and 1970s for various reasons) is that the majority of Arab Jews left as refugees, many of them destitute. While countries like Iraq and Syria might not be built on their backs, they were certainly enriched by confiscated Jewish assets ●

Stavanger,
Norway

LYN JULIUS
(née Bekhor)