





1939 — The first Iraq Army Reserve Officers training class at the Military College, Karradah, Baghdad, comprising old and young university graduates. Of 100 Cadets 23 were Jews. All Jews were failed, except one, and all Moslems were passed except one.

## Plus ça Change

### Plus c'est la même chose

THE POPE'S VISIT to a synagogue on April 13 was the first in 1900 years, but not the first ever. It is said that fisherman Simon Peter, the first pope, used to visit the Rome synagogue to seek more Jewish converts for the new Christian religion, but was finally kicked out. Judging by his careful choice of words, the present pontiff appears to have similar intentions. He deliberately refrained from mentioning Israel and reminded his audience that the Church still had some unfinished business with the Jewish people.

While Pope John Paul absolved the Jews of the collective guilt of killing Jesus he added, "It is not of course that the differences between us have now been overcome." This is in line with his earlier statement that the Israelites committed the sin of rejecting Jesus. Is this the language of a liberal pope? Is this the freedom of religion, one of the Four Freedoms for which the last war was fought? The Jews and the Christians need not overcome their doctrinal differences. We have our religion and they have theirs.

It should have been clear all along the centuries that the baseless accusation of deicide levelled against the Jews was just a mean pretext for punishing the Jews for not accepting Jesus. Now that the accusation has been disposed of, the real reason comes out.

It is sad that Christians, as well as

Moslems, see it as their duty to convert the whole world to their form of worship. In fact, existing religions are provisional creeds. The Messiah will come not when all people adhere to one of them, but when there will be as many creeds and sects as possible.

At least there was no problem with the Pope covering his head inside the Synagogue. When President Kennedy was presented with a Torah scroll his head was uncovered. When this was pointed out by Senator Arthur Goldberg, Kennedy retorted that he was "reformed" 2000 years ago. The Roman popes have retained at least one aspect of Judaism — namely, putting on a koppel like any Orthodox Jew ●

#### From Mr. K. Yentob:

THE POPE's refusal to give a certificate of acquittal to the Jewish people reminds me of the following story:

At one time judges in Baghdad used to live on the fees they charged to customers. One judge who had had a quiet day asked his usher to go out and bring in any passer by. When a well-dressed man was eventually brought in, the judge asked him: Have you committed any offence? — No. — Do you owe money to anyone? — No. — Have you any complaint against anybody? — No. — Whereupon the judge turned to his clerk and said, "Give him a clearance certificate and charge him the usual fee." ●

## Torah for Toronto

THE IRAQI JEWISH Association of Ontario, Canada, announced in its latest bulletin the arrival of the Iraqi Sefer Torah from London.

It was some 15 years ago that the late Rabbi Dr. Reinhardt of the Westminster Synagogue, London, first informed Mr. Naim Dangoor that they had this Iraqi Scroll. As they had just received nearly 1000 Sefarim from Czechoslovakia they could spare the Iraqi one. So when in 1983 the Toronto Community was looking for a Sefer Mr. Dangoor put them in touch and wrote to the Synagogue supporting their application and gave Westminster Synagogue assurance that the Sefer will be in safe hands and will be well looked after.

Last April Mr. Saleh Mukamal, honorary president of the Association wrote to Mr. Dangoor, "It was through your initial effort that we finally are getting this treasure and I want to thank you personally and on behalf of all the members of our Community, for your efforts."

We understand that the Sefer will be expertly repaired and dedicated. We wish the Toronto Community besimantob ●

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*Derech Eretz Qadma Lattora.* Our Sages have stressed that good behaviour is even more important than studying the Torah.

# Travellers in Mesopotamia

by Dr. Heskell D. Isaacs, Cambridge

LEONHARD RAUWOLF, a Bavarian physician, was among the first Europeans to travel in the Near East in the sixteenth century. His own account of his travels in the Levant from 1573 — 1575, published in 1582, provides a fascinating illustration of the difficulties and dangers of early scientific trips.

Rauwolf's three year journey took him to Tripoli, Aleppo, Baghdad and Jerusalem. In addition to his botanical investigations he observed and recorded his impression of the people he met, their customs and the sights of the Levantine trading centres. He was the first European to travel the newly opened route from Baghdad to Mosul through Kirkuk. As for companions he chose three Jewish merchants who were well-versed in the languages of the area — Arabic, Turkish and Persian. One of them had come down the Euphrates with him and the other two were from Baghdad. On the 16th of December 1575 they set out on horseback from Kirkuk. In this unchartered wilderness they lost their way and in the evening they found themselves floundering in a swamp. At this point Sabbath came upon them and Jewish religious laws forbade travel and work on that day. The whole caravan had to spend Friday night and the whole of Saturday in the bog. A week later, after an easier journey, they reached a small village near Kirkuk just before Sabbath began. They camped outside the village and Rauwolf had to light a camp fire for his Jewish companions. He was surprised that such people, despised and persecuted in his own country, can command respect here. He relates his conversation with them. They bragged about Moses and the Torah, yet of their knowledge of the intricacies of their religion Rauwolf found them lacking. The Bavarian repeated the Ten Commandments in Portuguese as well as he could, but when he talked to them of his religion they refused to listen.

How many other European travellers actually set foot in Iraq during the 16th and 17th centuries it is impossible to say with absolute certainty. Accounts are extant of the experiences of some travellers. Michael Edwardes, in his recent book 'On Great Travellers', mentions among the pioneers John Eldred who made the difficult journey from Aleppo to Baghdad in 1583, and lived in that city

for two years. Yet, during all that period he never once recorded any encounter with Jews.

However, Pedro Teixeira, a Portuguese traveller, gave a rather full description of Baghdad as he found it in the autumn of 1604. Of this man we know little except that he belongs to one of those Jewish-Portuguese families who dared not openly avow their religion, or educate their children in the faith of their fathers. Nevertheless, we still think that we are able to infer from his narrative that, during a great part of his life, he was a Christian, and even remained a devout Catholic. To what a profession or trade he belonged we do not know for certain; but judging by his frequent references to drugs, their action and uses we may presume that he was a doctor. It is probable that Teixeira accompanied various expeditions in a medical capacity, or rather as an irregular medical practitioner, concerned in the drug trade or procuring certain exotic medicinal herbs.

He talks about the Jews of Baghdad being poor and very few were rich. They had their own quarter for a synagogue surrounded by about 300 houses. He describes them as fair and of "good appearance, nature, and manners. The men dressed richly and well while the women, many of whom are handsome, had fine eyes." Teixeira also describes how the caravan, in which he was travelling, had to be halted for the Sabbath. On another occasion, he relates, "At 3 pm on Friday we marched again leaving the Jews behind for the next day was their Sabbath ..." He also mentions visiting the tomb of Yeshua' Kohen which was situated outside the city. "It is like a great chest of masonry, and in the head of it is a copper plate, with Hebrew characters in relief as follows: Yehoshua' Kohen Gadol."

He speaks of the difficulty he had encountered in crossing the Euphrates at 'Anah "... but at night two officers of the Amir brought it (permission) over, got by the good offices of a Jew, to whom Diego Fernandes had an introduction."

Teixeira ended his life in Antwerp among his compatriots — the oldest Dutch settlement of Spanish and Portuguese Jewish exiles. Some say he died in the Jewish faith and was gathered to his fathers in a better world ●

# Lord Shinwell

by Percy Gourgey

THE DEATH AT 101 of the veteran Labour politician Lord "Manny" Shinwell marks the end of an era in British politics. In 1938 he crossed the floor of the House of Commons and punched a Conservative M.P., Commander Bower, who shouted to him in a debate "Go back to Poland." (Shinwell was born in London and his father was born in Poland.)

In 1973 after the Yom Kippur War, which I covered as a journalist, I met Shinwell in the King David Hotel in Jerusalem before he spoke at a fund-raising dinner together with General Moshe Dayan, then Defence Minister. Shinwell said, "I am going to suggest to Dayan that we should form a trade union of Defence Ministers!" ●

## Democracy in the Bible

AT THE RECENT General meeting of Yehidim of the Sephardi Congregation a comparison was made between the President of the Elders and Moshe Rabenu, to which protests were voiced.

In a similar incident during the Exodus, Moses gave his answer. It happened in the wilderness when Eldad and Medad started prophesying in the camp and Joshua asked permission to arrest them. And Moses replied, "Art thou jealous for my sake, Joshua? Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put His spirit upon them."

The fact that some people could aspire to his high position did not worry Moses. This shows both his meekness and his true greatness. Thus every individual motivated by high ideals and noble thoughts could aspire to the highest position — if only because such aspiration could be a spur to greater deeds ●

INTEREST IN The Scribe has been shown by the Minister of the Dutch Church, Austin Friars; Rev. Robertson of the Baptist Times; and the Peckham Seventh Day Adventist Church.

IN A PRIVATE ceremony the Exilarch was weighed and the gold equivalent was earmarked for charity.

What I spent I gained;  
What I gave I have;  
What I saved I lost.

# BOOKS

by N.E.D.

## "The Third Reich and the Palestine Question"

by Francis R. Nicosia. I. B. Tauris £24.50, 319 pages.

PROFESSOR NOCOSIA is a young historian who now teaches in the United States. As such he gets his information from books and documents and his detached conclusions may not coincide with the passionate impressions of those of us who lived through the period he covers.

The book deals with Nazi Jewish policy from 1933 to 1941. Its theme is that Hitler wanted to deal with the Jews by a systematic process of dissimulation. Zionism and the Zionist movement became significant instruments in the implementation of this policy. While all Jewish organisations were banned the Zionists were allowed to function, open re-training camps throughout Germany and even bring instructors from Palestine. The Zionist theory that the Jews are a separate people and should not assimilate with Gentiles coincided with Nazi doctrines. A people would never die so long as it was able to maintain its purity and uniqueness. If, however, Zionists believed in the reality of race, they did not believe in racial superiority.

Herzl identified a community of interests between Zionists and anti-Semites. He worked on the premise that the uniqueness of the Jews and their strong sense of community and separateness lay at the root of anti-Semitism, that could be contained only by emphasising that uniqueness and that separateness.

From 1933 to 1938 the Nazis encouraged the emigration of German Jews to Palestine and introduced the Haavara Mark that enabled Jews to take out part of their capital and also helped German exports.

In a letter to the Financial Times Mr. Clemens Nathan, President of the Anglo-Jewish Association, criticised the book for, in a way, vindicating Hitler by saying that the massacre of the Jews of Europe "did not become an explicit aim of his policy until 1941, and was in a sense imposed by circumstances". Mr. Nathan also points out that Hitler's cooperation with Zionist aspirations would have been inconsistent with Nazi support for Arab nationalism.

Hitler, for all his wickedness, may well have intended to deal with the Jews by deportation (mainly to Palestine) if only for it being more convenient than mass murder. He was only warned of the inconsistency of this policy with support for Arab national-

ism when he met the Mufti of Jerusalem in November 1941.

The Mufti arrived in Berlin with Rashid Ali after the latter's abortive Iraq revolt in May 1941. (I was then an officer in the Iraq army). The Mufti and Rashid Ali's government-in-exile remained in Germany for the duration of the war and influenced German policy. Before his departure from Baghdad, the Mufti sowed the seeds of the anti-Jewish pogrom there of June when hundreds of Jews were killed and thousands of homes looted.

Incidentally, historians are not generally aware of the fact that the battle for Iraq was fought by the British in Crete at the cost of heavy losses, and the island was not allowed to fall to the Germans, on 29 May 1941, until Iraq, gateway to the Indian Ocean, was safe. If Germany's sole airborne division was not destroyed in Crete it would have, in no time, linked with Iraq via Vichy Syria, cut off Russia from any future Allied aid and stretched a hand to Japan. With the loss of this easy option the German army embarked 25 days later on the Russian campaign which turned into a disaster as the invaders drove deep into Russia to reach the Persian Gulf.

Hitler opted for the Jewish genocide not under the strain of war but under pressure by Arab leaders and also because of British refusal to admit Jewish immigrants to Palestine, for post-war Middle East oil and trade considerations. The policy of mass extermination was thus adopted at the Wannsee interdepartmental conference on 20 January 1942.

All those who worked to produce the mind-boggling Holocaust should bear their share of the responsibility.

To those who wonder why the Palestinian Arabs should suffer for the Jewish experience in Europe the answer is: he who sows the storm shall reap the whirlwind. History now requires that Israeli and Palestinian should form an unstoppable alliance to establish a just order in the Middle East for the benefit of all its inhabitants.

Right up to 1940 Germany tried not to offend Britain and so avoided any overt contact with Arab nationalists. But the latter always showed their admiration for Hitler and Nazi Germany. The German ambassador in Baghdad Dr. Fritz Groba played a major role in spreading German propaganda throughout the Middle East. When my late father wanted to publish a book in Arabic dealing with Nazi atrocities Groba sent word with the Embassy's secretary Salim effendi Isaac\* not to publish the book, otherwise reprisals would be taken against a relative then living in Germany.

In the final analysis the laugh is on Hitler. He hoped that National Socialism would last 1000 years. In the event,

it lasted only 12 bloody years. Our traditions speak of 1000 generations and we are well on the way towards achieving this goal ●

\**Uncle of Dr. Heskell D. Isaacs of Cambridge University.*

## "The Lure of Zion: The Case of the Iraqi Jews"

by Abbas Shiblak (Al Saqi Books, London, 1986). Paperback 177 pp. £4.95.

By Meer S. Basri

THE AUTHOR is a Palestinian Arab who studied at the Kingston Polytechnic for his Ph.D under the guidance of Professor Sami Daniel.

ABBAS SHIBLAK came to see me when he was preparing his thesis five years ago. When I asked him why he chose the subject of Iraqi Jews, he told me that he had two Iraqi Jewish tutors, Daniel and Sami Zubaida of Birkbeck College. Furthermore, when he conducted his research in Baghdad and London, he found, as he said, that "the Jews of Iraq were the aristocracy of the Middle East."

This is the third book published recently on the subject after Chaim Raphael's "The Road from Babylon" and Nissim Rejwan's "The Jews of Iraq".

Before proceeding to review Shiblak's book I should state, en passant, that Sami Zubaida's father, David, a well-known merchant, was abducted in Baghdad in 1971 by the security police, tortured and killed.

"The Lure of Zion" is a small but instructive and, on the whole, well-balanced history of the Jews of Iraq prior to and during the mass exodus of 1950-51. The author made an extensive research of Iraqi and official British archives of the period and had access to Israeli sources in English and Hebrew. Of special importance are the reports and dispatches of The British Embassy, Baghdad, and the Foreign Office papers published in the appendices.

While there are a number of errors in the book, and some of Shiblak's opinions and conclusions may be open to question, his facts are mainly well authenticated.

The Anti-Zionist League formed in 1946 (pp. 60-61) was shunned by the majority of Iraqi Jews as a Communist facade and never established itself, as claimed, as the outspoken representative of the Iraqi Jewish community.

The book devotes a well-documented chapter to a transfer scheme initiated after the establishment of the Jewish State according to which Arab Palestinians would be

brought to settle in Iraq in the place of the Jews.

The Peel Commission on Palestine recommended in 1936 the partition of the country (west of the River Jordan) into a Jewish State and an Arab State as well as an exchange of land and population in the Middle East. The British Labour Party officially adopted this proposal in 1944. Even ex-President Herbert Hoover called for "engineering" the transfer of the Palestinians to Iraq.

The British, in 1949, proposed various schemes to resettle the Palestinian refugees in Arab countries, mainly Iraq, an under-populated country with extensive land and water resources. The British Embassy in Baghdad prepared at the time two separate reports estimating that within ten years 100,000 Palestinians could be resettled in Iraq, provided that certain development plans are implemented in rural southern regions. However, the Iraqi authorities were not enthusiastic about this idea. They accepted a few thousand Palestinian refugees but never settled them in agricultural areas. They were mainly domiciled in urban houses and schools vacated by the departing Jews.

However, in the course of subsequent years and after the Israeli-Arab wars the proposed exchange of population was realised de facto by the hundred thousands of Jews who left the Arab countries and were rehabilitated in Israel. The other side of the bargain has not been implemented and the Palestinians remain scattered over the Arab lands in refugee camps and shacks.

It should be stated here that, in the last ten years or so, more than a million Egyptians have been admitted to Iraq. Some of them are engaged in agriculture, while, since the Iranian war years, the majority is working as substitutes for Iraqis fighting on the fronts. Iraqi agriculture declined since the enactment of the Agrarian Reform Law after the 14th July 1958 Revolution. The country, which was to a certain extent self sufficient in wheat, rice and other basic produce, is now importing grain, fruits and vegetables from abroad. With its vast arable land and water supplies, Iraq could easily settle millions of Palestinian Arabs to revive its agriculture and create again in the Twin River basin the old "Granary of the World" of which Herodotus spoke 2500 years ago. (It may be recalled that in the 1950s, Nuri Pasha, Prime Minister of Iraq, suggested to President Nasser of Egypt that Iraq could provide a home for all the Palestinian Arab refugees, but Nasser rejected the suggestion for political reasons. — Ed.)●

## LETTERS

FROM THE SIXTEENTH century up to early nineteenth Barbary Pirates threatened navigation in the Mediterranean. They attacked ships and seized them, killed the travellers, held them hostage or sold them in the slave markets of North Africa. Cervantes the famous author of Don Quixote was himself captured and taken prisoner to Algiers in 1575.

The British Navy suppressed piracy whenever the occasion presented itself. The new independent U.S.A. concluded a treaty with the Sultan of Morocco and France finally, in 1830, occupied Algiers and put an end to Corsair adventurism.

Times have changed. But a new international terrorism has erupted imperilling air travel and even sea communications and tourism. Civilised society is held to ransom by twentieth century pirates backed, trained and financed by subversive states and organisations. The United Nations is ineffective and the U.S.S.R. silent and probably acquiescent. Therefore President Reagan's action against Libya, supported by Prime Minister Thatcher, is not only legitimate but may be considered as a high moral duty.

We hope that other centres of terrorism are sought and annihilated●

M. S. Basri

### "Hebrew and Aramaic in the Language of the Jews of Iraq"

by Abraham Ben-Jacob, published by Ben-Zvi Institute and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1985, 220 pp. MR. ABRAHAM BEN-JACOB has written several books about the Jews of Iraq, their history in Mesopotamia, culture, languages, letter writers, professionals, and traders. His expert knowledge of these subjects is very wide and accurate, owing to his deep researches and diligent studies of various sources. He explains that the emigration of Iraqi Jews to Israel created a situation where, in the same family, we find, while the parents and elderly spoke their colloquial Arabic language, their sons and daughters spoke the Hebrew language with an Israeli accent.

What he does show in the book is the influence of these two sister languages on the dialect spoken until recently by the Jews in Iraq only, and not in Israel. A difficulty for the writer was that he could not rely on the spoken language of Iraqi Jews who have already made their roots in the land of Israel.

We find that the author has included also, with perfect precision, a dictionary of words and pronunciations of Arabic and Aramaic as spoken by Iraqi Jews●

Joshua S. Aslan

MY WORK AS director of the Sephardic Educational Center takes me to many small Jewish communities around the world and I have been continually delighted by the contribution of Iraqi Jews to the Jewish life of these communities. In Singapore, for example, a community which has dwindled to a mere 250 souls, the Iraqi leadership has been responsible for the establishment of an elaborate system of governing community affairs. In the Philippines, a similarly tiny community headed by yet another Iraqi, a magnificent community centre has recently been built. Similar stories are to be found regarding Hong Kong, India and in larger communities such as New York.

My pride in these achievements has nevertheless been tinged with regret, for it should be the London community which leads the way, which proudly carries the flag for Iraqi Jews the world over. The London community is rich in tradition, closely-knit and a shining example of how an ethnic minority, through its hard work, initiative and business acumen can, not only adapt to a host society, but rise to take a leading position in it. The recent allocation of seats on the Board of Deputies, the incisive and penetrating articles in "The Scribe" and the major financial assistance to Jewish educational projects as well as the strengthening ties with Israel, are no small evidence of the talent and commitment of the London community.

However, not enough is being done to ensure the continuation of the Jewish identity of the next generation. The time has come to develop a self-governing community system; to appoint education and youth officers, to set up exciting projects for the young to implement, and above all, to send youth to tour and study in Israel, the heart and soul of the Jewish people●

Edwin Shuker

IT IS MY pleasure to be able to inform you that the campaign against Rabbi Menachim Gerlitz to which you gave your heartfelt support in order that my late Father's name be cleared, has been totally successful.

Rabbi Gerlitz apologised for his error and gave instructions for the removal of the offending chapter from the Hebrew and English editions of his book, as well as from the French translation under printing.

May I take this opportunity to extend to you my sincere thanks for the good spirit you have shown and the encouragement you gave me to clear the good name of my late Father who served his community and religion for more than sixty years●

Shaool Hakham Sasson

## Cookery Corner

From "Calcutta's Sephardic Cooking"

### CHICKEN AND RICE BALLS

#### Arook

I serve Arook as a main dish, or as an hors d'oeuvre with drinks before dinner. In the latter case, make them small enough to be easy-to-handle finger food.

- ½ cup long grain rice (3½ ounces, 100g), well rinsed
- 2 cups water (480ml)
- 1½ teaspoons salt
- 2 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons vegetable oil
- 1 medium garlic clove (⅓ ounce, 3g), peeled
- 1 piece fresh ginger (1 by 1 by ½-inch, 2.5 by 2.5 by 1.25 cm), peeled
- 1 small celery rib (about 1 ounce, 30g), with leaves, cut into 1-inch (2.5 cm) pieces
- 1 whole boneless, skinless chicken breast (about 8 ounces, 230 g), well chilled, cut into 1-inch (2.5 cm) pieces
- ½ teaspoon turmeric
- ½ teaspoon garam masala (see Note)
- 1 large egg

Bring the rice, water and 1 teaspoon of the salt to the boil and simmer, uncovered, for 10 minutes. Remove from the heat, cover and let stand for 2 minutes. Drain the rice well and transfer it to a large mixing bowl.

Oil an 11 by 7 by 2-inch (30 by 18 by 5 cm) glass baking pan with 2 tablespoons of the oil. Set aside.

Preheat the oven to 375°F. (190°C).

Drop the garlic and ginger through the feed tube of a food processor with the metal blade in place and the motor running. Process until finely chopped, about 15 seconds. Scrape down the work bowl. Add the celery and pulse about 6 times.

Add the chicken and pulse until finely chopped, about 10 times. Add the turmeric, garam masala, the remaining ½ teaspoon salt, 2 teaspoons oil, and the egg. Pulse 2 times to mix well. Combine the chicken mixture with the rice.

Moisten your hands with cold water and shape the mixture into 2-inch (5 cm) diameter balls (use about 2 tablespoons of the mixture for each one). Place the balls in the prepared pan (they should not touch) and bake in the preheated oven until they are golden brown on top and firm to the touch, about 30 minutes.

Makes 9 chicken and rice balls (about 2 ounces each, 55g).

NOTE: Garam masala is a blend of seasonings available at most Oriental and Indian food shops ●

### GREEN LEAF FRY

#### Mofurka

*In Calcutta this is a breakfast dish. I suggest serving it as part of a vegetarian brunch, along with Curried Vegetables, Cheese Turnovers, Cucumber Salad, and Coriander and Mint Chutney.*

- 1 pound fresh spinach (450g), washed, tough stems removed
- ½ cup water (120 ml)
- 1 medium garlic clove (1/10 ounce, 3 g)
- 1 piece fresh ginger (½ inch)
- 1 medium onion (about 4 ounces, 110g), peeled, quartered
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- ¼ teaspoon turmeric
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon dry hot red pepper flakes
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten

Slice the spinach into ¾-inch (2 cm) strips. Bring the water to the boil in a large saucepot and cook the spinach, covered, for 2 minutes. Remove from the heat and let stand, covered, for 2 minutes more. Drain spinach and squeeze it gently to remove as much moisture as possible.

Drop the garlic and ginger through the feed tube of a food processor with the metal blade in place and the motor running. Process until finely chopped, about 10 seconds. Coarsely chop the onion, about 5 pulses.

Cook the onion mixture in 2 tablespoons of the oil, stirring, until lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Stir in the turmeric, salt and red pepper flakes and cook, stirring, for 2 minutes. Add the greens and cook, stirring, for 2 minutes more.

Cook the eggs in the remaining 1 tablespoon of oil until softly scrambled. Fold the eggs into the spinach and cook 1 minute more.

## Visitors to London

RECENT VISITORS TO the Exilarch's Foundation offices were Mr. and Mrs. Haim Shaul Tweg of Melbourne, Australia, who showed great interest in the family tree of the Sadka family of Baghdad to which they belong. Mrs. Tweg was formerly Mrs. J. S. Ezra of Bombay (nee Mansoor) a well-known Bombay-Baghdad Jewish family whose members achieved distinction in the medical and accountancy professions and some of whom now live in Israel. The late Mr. J. S. Ezra was a founder of the Bombay Zionist Association in 1920 together with the late Mr. E. S. Somekh (a grandson of Hakham Abdulla Somekh) and the late Mr. J. J. Gubbay, both of whom were born in Baghdad. These gentlemen subsequently became Presidents of the Zionist Association at different periods ●

## "Short Digest of Jewish Literature in the Middle Ages"

by Armin Krausz

THE AUTHOR, SCION of a distinguished Hungarian rabbinic family, who became a famous industrialist and public benefactor in Sheffield has written an admirable summary in under 100 pages of the illustrious medieval philosophers and rabbis. It is appropriate that it should appear this year which is widely celebrated as the 850th birth anniversary of the best-known of them all, Moses Maimonides. Comparable among the Ashkenazi rabbis is, of course, Rashi, whose commentaries are standard texts in all Jewish classrooms.

Of the many sidelights concerning some of the rabbis, I could refer to two.

Reference is made to Rabbi Nissim ben Reuben Gerondi in the 14th century C.E. better known as Rabbenu Nissim of Barcelona in Spain. It is interesting to note that in his work *Nomar Shira*, he wrote of the Jewish kingdom in Cochin, South India: "I longed to see an Israeli king; I travelled to Shingly, and him I saw with mine own eyes." (Shingly was the ancient name of the Jewish kingdom or autonomous district called Cranganore, and in the Paradesi Synagogue in Jew Town, Cochin, today, the leader of the community, S. S. Koder, will show visitors the replica of the two copper tablets on which are engraved the charter of independence. In 1968 the Synagogue celebrated its 400th anniversary (attended by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi). Leading members of the Jewish community in Cochin claim descent from Baghdadian Jews. This also for the famous Ezekiel Rahabi of Cochin.

In Part 1 the author refers to Meir ha-Levi Abulafia, the renowned Spanish rabbi of the first half of the 13th century. Among his literary activities was the controversy he initiated within Judaism by repudiating Maimonides' teaching on resurrection. As I was once married to a member of the family I learnt of Rabbi Hayyim Abulafia, one of his descendants, who rebuilt the city of Tiberias and the settlement around it in the 18th century, "an early Zionist", as I was informed as to how Dr. Chaim Weizmann described him.

The book displays the author's encyclopaedic knowledge and is a worthy read ● P. S. Gourgey

A reprint of "THE BEST OF BAGHDAD COOKING" by Daisy Iny is now available from Y. Z. Book Co., c/o Jay Distribution, Pindar Road, Hoddesdon, Herts, at £10.45 (including p&p).



1917 — Turkish prisoners, captured by the British, being marched through the Jewish quarter of Baghdad, at Exchange Square — nicknamed "Piccadilly Circus."

## One Hundred Years of Ben Gurion

by Percy Gourgey

FROM OCTOBER 1986 to May 1987 there will be celebrated in Israel, England and elsewhere the centenary of the birth of David Ben Gurion, first Prime Minister of Israel, who was born in Poland on October 16, 1886. Celebrations in London are being organised by a committee under the chairmanship of Lord Weidenfeld.

At a meeting of this committee I suggested that amongst the many aspects of Ben Gurion's brilliant career we should not lose sight of his wide scholarship in fields other than Judaism and Zionism. For instance, he was well-versed in the history of Buddhism, philosophy, Greek, etc. On his occasional visits to England he would often browse through famous Oxford libraries. Incidentally, it is worth noting that Ben Gurion stayed in London during the Nazi Blitz in 1940, and developed a great admiration for the magnificent heroism displayed by the British people under the leadership of Winston Churchill to whom he has rightly been compared. (A plaque marking Ben Gurion's residence in London during this period is to be unveiled later in the year.)

In a letter to me in 1954 he said that he believed that India was a prominent country amongst the newly emerging nation states of Asia and Africa and hoped for good relations between India and Israel.

To Ben Gurion's everlasting credit, in 1949 he promoted the policy of encouraging the mass emigration of Jews from Arab lands, such as, Iraq, Yemen, Morocco, etc. This was despite some opposition from Cabinet col-

leagues that this aliya could radically change Israel's demographic structure.

In his visionary outlook Ben Gurion used the phrase "kibbutz galuyoth" (ingathering of the exiles). He believed that these communities would make a considerable contribution to the up-building of the Jewish State. He also believed that this development would one day help to promote good relations between Israel and her Arab neighbours. He stressed that work remained to be done to overcome the consequent social and cultural gap. He was unremitting in his efforts to achieve peace with the Arabs and was among the first to congratulate President Nguib, Nasser's predecessor, in the revolution that occurred in 1952.

There are many aspects of Ben Gurion's immense contribution to the Jewish State and Jewish culture which are well worth recalling, both for Jews and non-Jews ●

## Syrian Hegemony

APART FROM THE fact that the Syrian government prevents 4500 Jews from emigrating in violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, thus making them hostages to fortune, she refuses to take effective action in Lebanon in which she is now a dominant power to secure the release of four Lebanese Jews held captive by Shi'ite Moslem militiamen. They have already killed four other Lebanese Jews. When the Syrian Foreign Minister was in London in March he was questioned at a public meeting by the editor about the position of Syrian and Lebanese Jews. He denied any accusation of an inequality of treatment. It should be noted that Syria is accused of being involved in promoting Arab terrorism, a recent example of which is the attempt to blow up an El Al plane in London.

It is a well-known fact that Syria is in treaty alliance with the Soviet Union from whom she receives enormous supplies of arms in the event of an attack on Israel ●



Prime Minister David Ben Gurion talking to Percy Gourgey at a Tel Aviv Conference, 1956.

## Auschwitz Revisited

by N. E. D.

EIGHT YEARS AGO a church was established at Auschwitz. It appeared to me at that time that the Catholic Church wanted to take over the Holocaust and give it a Christian interpretation. I therefore wrote to the Chief Rabbinate in Jerusalem warning them of the significance and implications of this move and adding, "we must not allow the 6 million Jewish victims of the Holocaust to become sacrificial offerings on the Christian altar, lest future generations of Christian pilgrims be told, 'this is the spot where the "murderers of God" received their just punishment.'"

The Chief Rabbinate replied that their hearts trembled when they read my letter but that they had not heard of this matter. In the event, nothing was done either by the Israel government or by Jewish organisations to challenge the moral right of establishing a church in the death camp.

It is now further planned that a Carmelite convent be established at Auschwitz, with a large cross on the site where millions of Jews perished. This time a wide chorus of protest has been made against a move which in the view of the Council of Christians & Jews can appear as an act of Christian triumphalism. What makes matters worse is that the Polish government refuses to allow a Jewish presence at Auschwitz.

If, without regard to Jewish feelings, the Catholic Church wishes to take over Auschwitz, they must also accept responsibility for what took place inside. Henceforth the Jewish people can proclaim of Auschwitz, "this is the spot where the followers of Jesus perpetrated their beastly crimes against the people of Jesus."

(Those who wish to protest should write to Cardinal Willebrand at the Secretariat for Catholic Unity at the Vatican.)●

## Arms Race

WHILE IT IS true that the Western Powers and the Soviet Union and her Eastern European partners supply huge quantities of arms to the Third World countries, for which they are criticised, equally to blame in this arms trade are these governments who *buy* the arms thus diverting their meagre financial resources from constructive economic purposes. Furthermore, many of these Third World governments have now established their own arms manufacturing industries●

## Atomic Danger to Minorities

ATOMIC WAR, we are told, will not descend upon the world without warning. In the days and weeks of international crisis leading to it, the plan is to send most of the armed forces to the Continent, suspend central government and give local authorities the task of maintaining law and order. In this scenario ethnic minorities run a greater risk than the rest of the population. For with the suspension of central authority the fear is that the law of the jungle will take over. Extremist groups will take the opportunity to exterminate defenseless minorities. For these the real danger in an atomic crisis is not from nuclear bombs but from the bestiality of their fellow-men. Community leaders should deal with this problem as a matter of urgency.

A recent TV programme postulated that the present human race is all inter-related and can trace its descent from one mother, "Eve", who lived some 20,000 years ago. However, there may have been intermarriage with inferior strains of homo sapiens. Surveying the evidence of the Holocaust and its perverseness, what more proof do we need that some people are descended from the baboons? And, given half a chance, they would repeat the Holocaust all over again.

Even if the atomic crisis turns out to be a false alarm, ethnic minorities stand to lose life and property in the interim●

## Group Survival

IF INDIVIDUAL SURVIVAL is important, how much more important is the survival of one's group! In the diaspora Jews do not have the luxury of fighting as a group; hence, the rule became — "each for himself." This explains why Jews went to the gas chambers without resistance. They never intended to put up a fight — something non-Jews cannot understand.

In Israel Jews again can live as a group and follow the superior rule — "all for one and one for all."

But habits die hard and Israelis still suffer too much anguish over those lost in battle. This is not the right attitude. Those who die defending their people survive in the survival of their people. They died that we might live. There can be no greater glory than martyrdom for a good cause●

THE EDITOR would like to clarify that the quotation from S. Shamoon in the previous issue does *not* refer to Mr. Sami Shamoon.

## Spot an Ancestor

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

Eliahu Shaul Shlomo Saleh Dalah  
Heskel Saleh Dalah  
Abraham Shlomo Dalah  
Eliahu Heskel Dengour  
Meir Hakham Elishaa (Dengour)  
Heskel Nessim Dengour  
Zcharia Nessim Dengour  
Moshi Nessim Dengour  
Meir Nessim Dengour  
Ezra Heskel Dengour  
Heskel Hayyu Dengour  
Heskel Hami Dengour  
Sasson Moshi Dengour  
Hayyu Moshi Dengour  
Sion Hayyu Dengour  
Meir Eliahu Dengour  
Heskel Baruch Reuben Dengour  
Eliahu Hakham Elishaa (Dengour)  
Abraham Nessim Hakham Sasson (Dengour)  
Shaul Moshi Nessim Hakham Sasson  
Eliahu Moshi Hakham Sasson  
Selman Yacoub Eliahu Darzi  
Sasson Eliahu Darzi Saatchi  
Yentob Darzi  
Moshi Abraham Dehhan  
Heskel Nasralla Shimeon Daabul  
Saleh Hayim Daabul  
Hugi Yosef Yishaq Darwish  
Rahamim Darwish Kheyat Furfuri  
Maatuu Maatuu Darwish  
Heskel Nessim Diba  
Saleh Nessim Diba  
Khlef Salem Dekkan  
Abraham Yona Yosef Dhib  
Nessim Abraham Yona Dhib  
Saleh Abraham Yona Dhib  
Saleh Yona Yosef Dhib  
Aboudi Meir Daniel  
Ezra Heskel Dennous  
Sasson Heskel Dennous  
Eliahu Heskel Dennous  
Abraham Moshi Dennous  
Yacoub Abraham Dennous  
Selman Abraham Joory  
Saleh Abdulla Joory  
Yosef-Ezra Abraham Gubbay (Gurji)  
Mordechai Heskel Sasson Gubbay  
Menashe Mordechai Heskel Gubbay  
Shaul Mordechai Heskel Gubbay  
Eliahu Mordechai Heskel Gubbay  
Yosef Mordechai Heskel Gubbay  
Yishaq Mordechai Heskel Gubbay  
Saleh Mordechai Heskel Gubbay  
Shaul Ezra Eliahu Gubbay  
Heskel Reuben Saleh Moshi Ghazal  
Ezra Hayim Abraham Moshi Ghazal  
Shaul Yacoub Jamel  
Moshi Yishaq Jamel  
Abraham Ezra Shua Jabha  
Abraham Ghafani  
Heskel Ghafani  
Meir Heskel Gareh  
Aharon Heskel Gareh  
Selman Mordechai Gareh  
Meir Shlomo Gareh  
Reuben Yosef Saleh Gareh  
Yehuda Yosef Saleh Gareh  
Yosef Abraham Heskel Chachag  
Hayim Aharon Jweji  
Menashe Yosef Gabriel●