

The SCRIBE

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The Right Solution

If I had my way, Israel would annex the West Bank and Gaza and declare all Palestinian Arabs in the "administered territories" as Jordanian citizens – not because these areas were occupied by Jordan from 1948 to 1967. That annexation was only recognised by Britain and Pakistan.

Palestinian Arabs are Jordanians because JORDAN IS PALESTINE. The concept of a State of Jordan did not exist in the minds of the League of Nations which awarded the Palestine mandate to Great Britain after World War I. The mandate included all of present day Israel and all of present day Jordan. It was in 1922 that Winston Churchill, as colonial secretary, decided to divide Palestine along the Jordan river and award the eastern portion to Emir Abdulla.

When Abdulla became King of Transjordan in 1946, he wanted to call his new country "Palestine" but the British refused, as the name would have been misleading then. But after the creation of Israel it is correct and proper to look upon Jordan (which is three times the size of Israel) as Palestine – the home of the Palestinian Arabs. As recently as 4 January 1988 King Hussein re-affirmed on Channel 4 that Jordan is Palestine.

Thus, the partition of Palestine between Jews and Arabs took place in 1922. From that date Jews were not allowed to settle in Eastern Palestine – as is the case in today's Jordan. This seems to confer on Israel the right to treat the Palestinian Arabs in a reciprocal manner in that their presence in Israel can only be tolerated a) if Jews are allowed to settle in Jordan and all other Arab countries and b) if they live at peace in Israel. Recent events have shown that the Arabs have no intention of living at peace with Israel. Therefore, Israel has to act to ensure its security and the safety of its citizens, present and future.

The world must come to realise that between Israel and Jordan there is no room for a third state for Yasser Arafat. Some may say that the UN did provide for a Palestinian State on the West Bank. Yes, that resolution was accepted by Israel but was rejected by the Arabs. They waged five wars to wipe out Israel and they failed. What they lost in the wars of their own making they cannot expect to regain at the conference table. They gambled and lost. What they lost at the roulette table they cannot regain at the conference table. Partition is past history and that is irreversible. The track record of the Arabs has always been to ask for the previous status-quo.

Since rioting started in December, Israeli public opinion has been hardening in favour of keeping the territories; the dilemma has been in not wanting to add another million Arab voters.

At present Palestinians in the West Bank are Jordanians; but this derives from Jordan's annexation of this area in 1948. If Israel annexes this territory, the Palestinians may become entitled to Israeli citizenship. But by going back to 1922 and declaring that the Palestinians are Jordanians because Jordan is Palestine, then this dilemma is overcome and Israel can thus take the land without adopting the people. Israel, however, can offer to consider Arab applications for Israeli citizenship. Each case would be treated on its merits, within a limited quota and a limited period.

What is the Jewish title to the land of Israel? Jewish rights in the Middle East do not stem from UN resolutions, nor from the terms of the Palestinian mandate, the Balfour Declaration or even Biblical promises. The Jews belong to the Middle East because we have lived in that region since time immemorial. Israel is just a token of Jewish rights in the Middle East that extend to Iraq, Syria, and Hejaz. The Arabs first welcomed the Jews' homecoming but later became intransigent, wanting to keep the whole region out of sheer greed.

What about Jerusalem? When the Second Temple was destroyed the Jews stood alone. Now the majority of the human race have come to worship the God of Israel and follow Jewish ethics. We must acknowledge that and extend the hand of brotherhood to the Christians and Moslems. Jerusalem, now holy to three

faiths, should be denationalised and elevated to become the spiritual capital of the world. This would be a signal honour to the Jewish people. The administrative capital of Israel can be moved to another place.

Ideally, Israel and Jordan, two democratic states, would be joined in a federation for common interests, with a federal capital astride the Jordan. Israel would contain many Arabs holding Jordanian citizenship and Jordan would be open to Jews who may wish to live there. Should not Jews have the same right to live in Jordan, as Arabs do in Israel?

A time will come when Israelis and Palestinians will harp on their similarities rather than on their differences. After all, the Palestinians are the most educated and enterprising among the Arabs and may indeed have a lot of ancient Jewish blood. Together the two can become a powerful force in the Middle East for the prosperity and stability of the region.●

Saudi Jews

Wild rumours are spreading that there are thousands of secret Jews in Saudi Arabia – at Yathrib, Khaybar and Nafran. Caliph Omar expelled all Jews from Arabia. However, it appears that a vast number remained by accepting Islam outwardly but retaining a separate identity, and are recognised by their lighter skin.

It may be necessary to mount a new "Operation Moses" to rescue these Jews and bring them to Israel.●

Community Radio

The Home Secretary has recently announced the Government's plans for radio following the Green Paper. The intention is to bring forward legislation for a new radio authority with responsibility for issuing licenses to community radio stations.

The Exilarch's Foundation has written to the Home Secretary expressing its desire to open and operate a radio station for our community. We were advised to submit an application to the radio authority in due course.

Anyone interested in this operation should write to us.●



Mr and Mrs Moshe Nissim with Mr and Mrs Naim Dangoor at a London luncheon

Bonds Drive by Finance Minister Moshe Nissim

by Percy Gourgey

In his first visit to London, Mr. Moshe Nissim, Israel's Finance Minister, regarded as the most popular Minister in Israel today, addressed several meetings, one of which was in the beautiful home of Mr. and Mrs. Sami Shamoon. The majority of guests were of Iraqi origin.

Mr. Nissim started his address in Hebrew, switched to Arabic and then spoke mainly in English. He praised the efforts of Iraqi Jewish businessmen in London who had spearheaded the Bonds Drive in England. The main Bonds Drive was, of course, in the United States and Canada, started by Prime Minister Ben-Gurion in 1950 and which, to date, raised nearly nine billion dollars for Israel, a large proportion of which had been redeemed to maintain Israel's credibility and thus increase the sale of bonds.

Mr. Nissim appealed to his audience not only to invest in Israel but also to live in Israel (also as an antidote to assimilation). He recalled how his late father, Sephardi Chief Rabbi Itzhak Nissim, had himself made aliya to Israel from Baghdad over 70 years ago when conditions were much less favourable. Mr. Nissim stressed that buying bonds was not charity but a sound investment. He observed how in his term of office, inflation in Israel had been reduced from 400% to just under 20%, as had income tax and public expenditure, to provide the framework for rapid economic growth.

Turning to the present disturbances in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, Mr. Nissim pointed out that the Palestinian Arabs sought Israel's withdrawal not only from these territories but from Israel itself till the State ceased to exist. He deplored the unfair media treatment of Israel's handling of the situation stressing that every country, including Britain in Northern Ireland, resorted to stern measures to maintain law and order.

Dr. Davide Sala moved a vote of thanks. ●

Biographies and Bibliographies in Arabic Literature in Israel 1948-1986

by Professor Shmuel Moreh and Dr. Mahmoud Abassi

Third reprint revised and enlarged
The Harry S. Truman Research Institute
The Hebrew University, Jerusalem

This book covers 242 writers, some 23 of them Jews of Iraqi origin ●

Thoughts on the Shema

by Percy Gourgey

The "*Shema Israel*" is the central feature of Jewish prayers, morning and evening, because it expresses the fundamental principle of Judaism. Little children are taught to recite it in their first words and it is also included in the last words of dying Jews.

It is like a multi-faceted jewel and one can catch glimpses of its brilliance from time to time in contemplating its significance.

The first paragraph implies total commitment to the Almighty, the second paragraph involves the doctrine of reward and punishment, and the third paragraph enjoins constant remembering of the Almighty.

In the first paragraph Jews are enjoined to teach their children love of the Almighty (*veshenantam lebanecha* = and you shall teach your children). Some interpret this as simply providing the means for Jewish education. It is held that two of the Patriarch Jacob's sons, Issachar and Zevulun, were a scholar and merchant respectively. Zevulun, a seafarer, earned money to enable Issachar to pursue his studies of Torah, thus acquiring for himself the merit that Issachar acquired. But the sentence goes on to say *vedibarta bam*, which means "and you shall speak of them" (i.e. the opening words of the *shema*: "to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul and with all thy might").

It stands to reason that if one is "to speak of these words" one must know them, and therefore parents themselves should engage in daily study of the Torah ●

Previous issues of
The Scribe
are available on request

Tribulation of Aliya Folklore

by Abraham Ben-Jacob

Published in Israel in Hebrew –
Reviewed by J. Aslan

The first is a story about the Babylonian/Iraqi *aliyah* to the Holy Land during the early decades of this century. It describes the difficulties and hazards that one particular family had to face and overcome in its spontaneous emigration to Eretz Israel in the twenties.

The second is a collection of short stories, discussions, proverbs, jokes and anecdotes of the Jewish community of Iraq. The author put together every joke and anecdote he could hear and lay hands on, over a period of many years, in order to add it to the recorded folklore of our community.

Examples:

A man requested his neighbour to lend him his donkey. The neighbour deferred him by saying that his donkey had left for the nearby village and at the moment it is not in the house. While they were still talking the donkey brayed, and at this point the man argued "It is evident that I am hearing the sound of your donkey which must be here." "It is not nice of you to believe the donkey and trust it, and at the same time you don't believe what I said", complained the neighbour.

Rachel returned home from school and boasted to her mother saying "Mum, do you know 'I am the most diligent pupil at school and know everything they teach there!'" "Who told you this?" her mother asked repeatedly. "She expressly told me: 'I cannot teach you anymore!'"

As in Yiddish jokes, a lot of the impact is lost in translation.

The above are yet two more books that Mr. Ben-Jacob has added to the tens of books that he wrote on every aspect of our community in Babylon, Israel and the Diaspora. ●

LETTERS

In the last issue Mr. Ezra K. Zilkha stated that there are very few Arabic-speaking Jews in the Near East. In fact, half of Israel's Jews speak Arabic and the other half are learning fast. There is even a danger that in two or three generations Arabic will become the spoken language in Israel. A similar situation happened 2500 years ago when Aramaic, the language of the region, became the spoken language in Israel, and Hebrew was almost forgotten. ●

London

L.B.N.

Thank you for the recent issues of *The Scribe*. They were interesting and reveal much about your community and its continuity. Your journal, with Spot an Ancestor, book reviews, political news, commentary and letters to the editor, certainly is an effort to be applauded. ●

Jerusalem

Susan Tourkin-Komet
Dor-le-Dor Quarterly
World Jewish Bible Society

I am glad to know through your journal of Babylonian Jewry, *The Scribe*, and some personalities in Israel, that your foundation initiated a massive programme to be called "Raise a child in Israel". As you know well many Jewish families in Israel and abroad are unable to raise a child physically because of lack of money and support from the authorities. I myself would like to have more children beside my two boys. Yet although I am in my twenties, my husband and I are unable to allow ourselves to increase the population of Israel and the number of Jewish people. This is because we can't afford having another child or children. We are both healthy and we have two healthy and good looking children, as well as intelligent. We have on our flat a mortgage of \$20,000 (twenty thousand US Dollars), and we both work overtime in order to repay it. If you could be kind enough to support and help us in this important matter, then my husband and I could concentrate on raising more children with better conditions. You may publish my letter in order to reveal to the readers of *The Scribe* the reason why many young Jewish couples in Israel are unable to raise a big family as our parents used to do abroad. I am a sabra born to Jewish parents from Iraq, and I hope that you can help me to go back to the tradition of raising an average of six children at least, as our fathers used to do. ●

Israel

Mrs. Y.S.

Lord Jakobovits of Regents Park

The following letter was sent by Mr. Dangoor to the Chief Rabbi on the occasion of his elevation to the Peerage:

On the occasion of your introduction to the House of Lords, I have pleasure in extending to your eminence, on behalf of the Babylonian (Iraqi) Jewish Community in the UK in particular, and in the Diaspora in general, heartiest congratulations and best wishes.

This is indeed an historic event, and a signal honour for the whole community. I trust that the Upper House will benefit from your wisdom on Jewish matters and also on wider issues.

The Chief Rabbi replied as follows:

Mr. Naim E. Dangoor

Exilarch - President

Iraqi Jewish Community Congregation

The Chief Rabbi joined by Lady Jakobovits expresses his profound thanks for your beautiful message on his elevation to the Peerage.

Much appreciation and warm greetings to the entire Iraqi Jewish Community.

Immanuel Jakobovits

I would like to see more religious based articles e.g. excerpts from Ben Ish Hai, our ancestors' customs, etc.

It is important for us to know our parents' heritage and customs and a journal like yours can make a great contribution towards increasing our beautiful Sephardi heritage. ●

Sydney,

Australia

Michael & Naomi Meyer

I saw a copy of your journal in the library of Jews College. It contained some most fascinating material and I would like to respectfully request you to send me a few of the back issues as well as place my name on the mailing list to receive future issues. ●

Toronto

Dr. Aaron M. Nussbaum

Director of Education

United Synagogue Day School

I was filled with pride and joy when I came across a copy of your January issue.

My name is Evelyn Shamoan Saddik, my father is Salem Shamoan, a prominent Iraqi Jew who left Iraq in 1973 and is currently residing in Israel. My husband Albert, currently the president of the "Perth Hebrew Congregation" is the son of Murad Saddik residing in Los Angeles, who was the manager of Bank Al-Shahi in Basra from the twenties to the late thirties. I have three children in the "medical field" all born here in Western Australia.

I want to offer my home and hospitality to any Iraqi Jew that will have the luck to visit Perth. ●

Perth,

W. Australia

Evelyn Shamoan Saddik

Extremely interesting and refreshing. ●

London

Dani Avneri

Thank you for the copy of *The Scribe* which we read with great interest. We are always pleased to be in contact with organisations of Jews from various communities who are trying to preserve their heritage.

Unfortunately, the conditions of the Jewish emigration from Iraq were such that the overwhelming majority of communal archives were lost. Our holdings from Iraq, therefore, are fragmentary in the extreme and I have been unable to find any material which you requested.

Would it not be possible for your journal to collect the various historical documents and records which have survived from Iraq and to send them to us? In this way we should be able to place a more respectable collection before all those interested in the history and culture of Iraqi Jewry and to preserve this heritage for future generations. ●

Jerusalem The Central Archives for
the History of the Jewish People

I was indeed pleased to receive through one of my friends in England the January issue of *The Scribe* and read the interesting news of the Babylonian Jewry in England.

The journal covered so many interesting subjects that made me read it from cover to cover. I wish to congratulate you for the magnificent effort and wish *The Scribe* every success.

Meanwhile, please include my name on your mailing list for future issues and any back numbers available. ●

Ramat Gan, Israel

G.S. Hanuka

We find your publication very interesting and would very much appreciate receiving all back issues for our library. ●

Periodicals Department

Bar-Ilan University,

Israel

(Mrs.) Batya Malik

Review by N.E.D.

Look for Abu Naji

To understand in depth Jewish history of the twentieth century one has to look for the finger, and sometimes the hand, of "Abu Naji", a mythical person, symbolising vested imperial and colonial considerations and multinational and supra-national oil interests, having strong and active lobbies in various foreign offices and working through their diplomatic missions, secret agents of all kinds, "advisers" to local governments and, in wartime, through political officers.

With the discovery of huge oil reserves in the Middle East at the turn of the century Britain staked out that region as its sphere of influence, vital for its survival. This was one of the main factors that sparked off the first world war and the dismemberment of the Ottoman empire, just as Germany started building the Berlin-Bosphorous-Baghdad railway, to rival England. Besides oil, the Middle East held great strategic and communications importance as well as trade potential as a market for British exports. A prerequisite of this policy was to develop the friendship of the Arab people.

Britain's post-war Middle East policy brought it in rivalry and conflict, one day with France, one day with America, but above all with Zionism that could result in a powerful Jewish State dominating the Middle East. Thus, the Balfour Declaration was considered a mistake that subsequent British actions tried to undo or neutralise. (It contained the ominous phrase "nothing will be done"). The only useful role a Zionist state could play in the region would be to remain a thorn in the side of the Arabs, to keep them under control.

Thus, the early sympathy of the Arabs towards Jewish aspirations and the rapport between Faisal and Weizmann in 1919 turned into open hostility and set the attitude of the Arabs to this day. In 1922 Transjordan was taken out of Palestine and given to the Arabs under Emir Abdulla, and British mandate policy was geared to minimise the meaning of the Balfour Declaration.

Thus, the architect of the Holocaust was not only Germany but also international oil interests, especially in its severe form of destroying rather than deporting the Jews of Europe. It was the Mufti of Jerusalem, who was also a British agent and who lived in Germany throughout the war, that persuaded Hitler to carry out the Final Solution. As a student in London in the thirties, as Europe was moving into a major conflict, I could see that

the main outcome and purpose of that war would be the destruction of European Jewry.

Thus, the *farhoud* of 1941 when hundreds of Jews were killed and much property looted or destroyed was the direct result of the British army decision not to enter Baghdad for a few days after Rashid Ali had fled. The shock waves of that event convinced Iraqi Jews that there was no future for them there, and was instrumental in the near total emigration of the community in 1950-51.

Thus, the Arab armies that went in 1948 to throttle the nascent state of Israel were under overall British command. Returning Iraqi officers told us that they advanced or retreated in accordance with the orders of the British officers.

Thus, the nine mail bags that the Palestine postal authorities turned over to the Iraq Army created havoc among our community.

Thus, in 1946 all Jewish passports were stamped "forbidden to enter Palestine" on orders given by Abu Naji to Bahjat Atiyya, Director General of travel.

Thus, while the Arabs sat around the same table with the Israelis to hammer out a peace treaty after the fighting of 1948, they received instructions from Abu Naji not to sign a peace treaty. Since then the Arabs have refused even to have direct negotiations with Israel or sit around the same table.

The stooges and faithful servants of British policy in Iraq were the Regent and Nuri Said who were forever grateful for being returned to power in 1941. Any action carried out by these two was in the interests of Abu Naji.

Thus, Shafiq Adas was hanged not because of his alleged involvement with Israel but because in 1943 he was suspected of handling and trading in counterfeit British £5 banknotes produced in Germany.

Thus, the law of denationalisation was drafted in Britain and provided for one witness as in Britain instead of two as in Iraq. The Jews of Iraq, although only 3% of the population were in virtual control of the country's economy. They would equally import from Japan as from Britain, if the price was right. It was decided that in the interests of British trade ambitions in Iraq and neighbouring countries that the Jews should go.

Thus, the new oil treaty with Iraq was not entered into until the Jews had left. It was feared that an earlier announcement of the treaty, with its huge oil royalties, might give Jews second thoughts about leaving.

Thus, Basri and Shalom were

hanged in 1951 not because of the flimsy charges against them but, as we who were in Iraq at the time realised, in retaliation for the two British sergeants executed by the Irgun in Palestine 4 years earlier.

Thus, it is useless to debate who threw the bombs at Jewish targets in 1950. The bombs were thrown by those who wanted the Jews out of Iraq. For, contrary to what Hillel writes, we who were in Baghdad at the time knew that these explosions hastened the process of registration for departure.

It may seem odd that someone who enjoys freedom in this country should strike out in this fashion. But the Arab policy in the Foreign Office, "the Arab Legion in the Foreign Office" as Harold Wilson called it when he was Prime Minister, is not universally known or generally approved, and may not be in the best interests of Britain, and certainly not in the best interests of Arabs and Jews. In any case Truth is the foundation of Freedom. Moreover, this Arab policy is carried out by a relatively small, determined faction. One must also not forget the help that British people gave to the Jews in Palestine and elsewhere.

Review by Meer S. Basri.

My part in the Operation

Many books have recently been published on the Jews of Iraq and their mass exodus to Israel in 1950-51. But "Operation Babylon" by Shlomo Hillel, speaker of the Knesset, is special as it recounts at firsthand the author's endeavours and experience as an active agent in the Middle East during the years 1946-51.

Hillel, scion of an old Jewish family of Baghdad, was taken to Palestine in 1934 at the tender age of eleven. Raised in a kibbutz he had a brilliant career as a diplomat, parliamentarian and minister. His reminiscences throw light on the events in Iraq after the Israeli war of 1948, but they are one-sided and the curtain should be lifted on the other side of the picture.

In 1950 the late Heskell Shemtob was president of the Jewish Community of Baghdad and I was his vice-president (both honorary). I recall he phoned me one day and asked me to come to his house on the river Tigris to meet an "emissary" who came from abroad to discuss Jewish emigration from the country. After the creation of Israel in 1948 our community was subjected to great hardships and terror. Merchants were deprived of their import and export licences, government officials dismissed and thousands imprisoned on false charges. The cli-

max came with the execution of Shafiq Adas. Many young men and women fled by way of Iran, some of them caught and detained. The leaders of the community, Rabbi Sasson Khedhoury and later Heskyl Shemtob, Senator Ezra Daniel, Deputy Abraham Haim, myself and others exerted their effort to alleviate their coreligionists' misfortunes, pleading with the Authorities, most of the time without avail.

Mr. Richard Armstrong's visit was of no great consequence as the Government had already decided to allow the Jews to leave Iraq after renouncing their nationality. I do not remember if we knew his true identity and which language we spoke with him. But after a few days the Authorities asked him to leave Baghdad.

The exodus law was passed by both Houses of Parliament. Senator Ezra Daniel made a moving speech in the Upper House. We set up the machinery to implement the necessary travel formalities in conjunction with the Nationality and Passport Department. This machinery was manned by young men from the "Tenuah" movement under the nominal supervision of the late Mr. Shemtob.

The prospects augured well at first and matters moved on smoothly. However, after a few weeks I received complaints about travel procedures. People who relinquished their Iraqi nationality and registered for emigration waited for several weeks and even months whereas others, more fortunate, were able to leave the country in a matter of days. Moreover, poor emigrants who had gold rings or extra luggage were asked to leave them with the young men arranging the voyage to carry them safely to Israel (I understand that these valuables deposited in trust were not handed back later to their owners in Israel). Many men who gave their Iraqi money to be transferred to their new abode lost their savings or most of them. I spoke to Mr. Shemtob, but he could do nothing in the matter.

In the summer he left for Beirut and Paris and I became acting Head of the Community. I was at the time Assistant Director General of the Date Association. Finding that I could not remedy the situation, I asked Salch Jabr, the Minister of the Interior, to detach the Denationalisation Services from the Community Administration. At my request he issued an order forming a special committee to supervise the emigration under the chairmanship of Sasson Abed with Abraham Elkabir and Moshi Shohet as members. I remained at the head of the community until the return of Heskyl Shemtob when I handed him my resignation.

Israel was not prepared for the coming of more than one hundred

thousand immigrants in the space of one year. Notwithstanding their social and cultural background, they were herded in tents and shacks, sometimes for many years, without the elementary amenities they had been accustomed to. A whole generation was wasted, robbed of its dignity and shabbily treated.

After the mass exodus, about thirteen thousand Jews remained in Iraq. After a while their position returned to normal. They were allowed to engage in business and the professions, to travel abroad and to educate their children in schools and colleges. The revolutionary regime under General Abdul Karim Qassem, 1958-1963, was a golden period for the remnants of Iraq's Jewry. He was killed by a coup hatched by Abdul Salem Aref and the Baath Party.

The new Regime devised restrictions and discriminatory measures against the tiny Jewish community. But the incarcerations, terrorization and repression started after the 1967 War and intensified when the Baath Party took the reins of power in the next year.

Early in 1967 I was again prevailed upon to head the Administrative Committee of Iraqi Jews which replaced the old communal council. The only voices which were raised in defence of the Jews were those of Hakham Sasson Khedhoury, President of the Community, and myself. To quash our pleadings and supplications Hakham Sasson's son, Shaul Naji, was taken into custody accused of collusion with the "spying" ring. He was tortured and then freed after several months. I was arrested without judicial warrant on January 1 1969 prior to the execution of "spies" towards the end of the month and was released in February and invited to attend the Arab Literary Conference held in Baghdad.

Rabbi Sasson Khedhoury died in May 1971 and was given a magnificent funeral attended by Government representatives, Moslem dignitaries and the Christian patriarch and bishops. I succeeded him as head of the Community in addition to the chairmanship of the Administrative Committee. My task was arduous in defending the Jews' civil rights, ensuring their safety, and pleading their cause with the President of the Republic and Government Authorities. In 1972-3 28 men were abducted and killed by the Security Police. I exerted every effort to trace their whereabouts, but I was able to save the lives of only three of them. I brought with me to London when I left Iraq original copies of the letters which I wrote to the President and ministers on this sad subject. During

all that period I assigned, from the Community's funds, monthly allowances to the needy and grants to those leaving the country whether clandestinely or by passports.

After the Yom Kippur War of 1973 Iraqi Jews were forbidden to leave the country. But I saw the Minister of Interior, Sa'dun Ghaidan, and persuaded him to rescind the ban and resume issuing passports to those who desired to leave Iraq. Relations were severed with the United Kingdom and British consular officers worked under the aegis of the Swedish Ambassador who looked after British interests. The British consul used to come to see me at my office every week or fortnight to facilitate granting visas and helping the members of our community. In the summer of 1974 he was transferred to London and came to see me to introduce his successor in Baghdad. When he left he told me: "You have served your community very well. It is time to think of yourself and your family."

I took the hint instantly. Thousands of our people had left the country by then and there only remained about 400 men, women and children. In October 1974 I left Baghdad with my family for Amsterdam. After a few months we came to settle in London.

I may add a few words on the leading Iraqi personalities during the years 1948-51 mentioned in Mr. Hill-el's *Operation Babylon*. Abdul Uah promised Senator Ezra Daniel to commute Shafiq Adas's death sentence, but was unable to do so. However, he pardoned the late Reuben Battat who was sentenced to prison and ordered his immediate release.

Nuri Sa'id was an ardent Iraqi Arab patriot, pro-British and no anti-semitic in any way. He had his country's interests at heart and was a pragmatic, machiavellian astute politician. He was genuinely distressed that the Palestinians and Arabs generally rejected the British White Paper of 1939 and the UN partition resolution of 1947. After the mass exodus of 1950-51 his attitude to the Jews who elected to remain in Iraq was benevolent.

The course of history cannot be judged simply as right or wrong. We cannot speculate how the world would have been if Hitler never rose to power, if the Allies did not win the war, if the USSR did not become the second superpower. We cannot speculate what the fate of Iraqi Jews would have been if the mass exodus did not take place. But it took place and a new chapter was written in their modern history.

Mr. Hill-el's book is a valuable contribution to the history of that eventful period ●

Spot an Ancestor

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

Ezra Menahem Saat
 Reuben Nahom Saat
 Eliahu Nahom Saat
 Yisshaq Menahem Saat
 Raphael Hayyou Sawdayee
 Dawid Hayyou Sawdayee
 Heskell Eliahu Sawdayee
 Abraham Yosef Sawdayee
 Menashe Ezra Dawid Sawdayee
 Mordechai Moshe Sawdayee
 Abraham Aharon Sagman
 Ezra Aharon Sagman
 Aharon Moshe Sagman
 Dawid Reuben Saeed
 Menashe Moshe Sweghi
 Saleh Dawid Shua Sweghi
 Menahem Reuben Sweghi
 Yosef Nessim Shua Sweghi
 Saleh Muallem Ezer
 Selman Eliahou Ezer
 Shuwa Abdel Nabi
 Shaul Shuwa Abdel Nabi
 Menashe Shuwa Abdel Nabi
 Saleh Shuwa Abdel Nabi
 Abdel Nabi Yamen Abdel Nabi & Sons
 Heskell Meir Abdel Nabi
 Saleh Yacoub Meir Abdel Nabi
 Aboudi Yosef Ezaigh
 Eliahu Saleh Ezaigh
 Yosef Aboudi Yosef Ezaigh
 Yacoub Ezra Ezaigh
 Heskell Ezra Ezaigh
 Shaul Dawid Ezair
 Sasson Daniel Abda
 Muallem Saleh Aboudi
 Heskell Aboudi
 Ezra Heskell Yosef Aboudi
 Yosef Aharon Abraham Aboudi
 Shaul Yacoub Yosef Aboudi
 Ezra Yacoub Aboudi
 Heskell Ezra Saleh Ambar
 Moshe Nessim Ambar
 Sasson Yisshaq Ambar
 Khedhoury Sasson Yisshaq Ambar
 Selman Heskell Ambar
 Saleh Heskell Ambar
 Shaul Saleh Ambar
 Eliahou Abraham Ambar
 Reuben Eliahu Yosef Ambar
 Shaul Abd Le Ezair
 Meir Abd Le Ezair
 Yacoub Abd Le Ezair Beqqal
 Eliahu Abd Le Ezair
 Shmuel Rahamim Abd Le Ezeez
 Rahamim Shmuel Abd Le Ezeez
 Aboudi Shmuel Rahamim Abd Le Ezeez
 Yehouda Shmuel Abd Le Ezeez
 Yacoub Shmuel Abd Le Ezeez
 Yisshaq Nessim Dawid Abd Le Ezeez
 Shmuel Abd Le Ezeez
 Shmuel ibn Sasson Abd Le Ezeez
 Heskell Menahem Iny
 Moshe Yamen Abdulla Iny
 Sasson Abdulla Iny
 Yosef Abdulla Iny
 Abdel Nabi Abdulla Iny
 Yacoub Yosef Abdulla Iny
 Saleh Ezra Iny
 Yamen Abdulla Iny
 Dawid Ezra Iny
 Eliahou Ezra Iny

Moshe Nessim Iny
 Abdulla Yosef Iny
 Nessim Abdulla Iny
 Yisshaq Abdulla Iny
 Ezra Abdulla Iny
 Muallem Abdulla Iny
 Yamen Abdulla Iny
 Saleh Abraham Iny
 Elia Saleh Mordechai Iny
 Selman Yosef Ettar
 Yosef Rahamim Dhiba Ettar
 Yisshaq Hayim Abdulla Ettar
 Abdulla Yisshaq Hayim Ettar
 Rahamim Moshe Yahya Ettar
 Saleh Nahom Ettar
 Yosef Yacoub Ettar
 Saleh Shabbu Ettar
 Aharon Menashe Ettar
 Heskell Menashe Ettar
 Eliahou Shabbu Ettar
 Heskell Nahom Ettar
 Aboudi Yacoub Ida
 Yisshaq Aboudi Ida
 Menashe Aboudi Ida
 Sasson Aboudi Ida
 Shaul Rahamim Yisshaq Ajmi
 Menashe Yehoshua Ajmi
 Saleh Heskell Sasson El Ajmi
 Menashe Yacoub Ajmi Qendarchi
 Eliahou Shlomo Shua Ajmi
 Abraham Yacoub Ajmi
 Yehuda Mordechai Ajmi
 Hayim Shimeon Ajmi
 Yacoub Heskell Aynachi
 Shaul Yisshaq Aynachi
 Abraham Yisshaq Heskell Aynachi
 Aharon Heskell Aynachi
 Yisshaq Heskell Aynachi
 Moshe Abraham Aynachi
 Yisshaq Hayim Heskell Arab
 Sasson Heskell Arab
 Heskell Dawid Selman Abdul Razzaq
 Yisshaq Mordechai Yisshaq Abdul Razzaq
 Eliahu Saleh Moshe Abdul Razzaq
 Menashe Dawid Selman Abdul Razzaq
 Saleh Yosef Ajouz
 Hayyu Heskell Hayyu Abada
 Moshe Hayyu Abada
 Eliahu Abraham Abada
 Heskell Moshe Dawid Abada
 Aboudi Yisshaq Hayim Endou
 Yacoub Yosef Eqaireb
 Reuben Rahamim Eqaireb
 Abdulla Saleh Eqaireb
 Meir Heskell Eqaireb
 Salem Reuben Abdou
 Yosef Yisshaq Hayim Abdou
 Aboudi Dawid Meir Abdou
 Ezra Abdou
 Nahom ibin bint Meir Abdou
 Reuben Meir Abdou
 Ezra Yisshaq Ebayyed
 Abdulla Yosef Ezzouri
 Yacoub Abdulla Ezzouri
 Ezra Moshe Saleh Iwan
 Abraham Heskell Ati
 Shaul Yahya Alike Nejjar
 Heskell Nessim Alike
 Moshe Yacoub Aqqu
 Abed Yacoub Aqqu

Bridge

by bridge builder

Sadly, we begin this feature by recording the passing of our dear friend Shalom Birshan. He was one of the leading bridge players of our community, having a complete overview of the game. He was sincere and free of guile and is missed by all his friends and acquaintances.

The Grand Slam

The grand slam is a rare commodity, and for a good reason. For, while you may gamble a small slam on the success of a finesse, you must only embark on a grand slam with certainty.

Non-vulnerable, a small slam made, scores 500; if it goes one down you lose only 50 – odds of ten to one.

A grand slam made, scores 1000; but if it goes one down you lose 50 and 500 for the missed small slam – not such a good proposition.

Vulnerable, it is + 750 to –50 for the small, and + 1500 to –800 for the grand

The discrepancy is still great if you take into account the value of the game.

It is generally agreed that 37 high points add up to a grand slam, unless the missing card is a King. Then it becomes difficult, unless you hold extra length in another suit. Incidentally, no hand can hold more than 37 points – made up of AKQ of all four suits plus one Jack, a perfect 7 No Trumps. ♣

15 Years Ago

(From previous issues)

The Scribe

March-April 1973

In abolishing capital punishment modern society takes the view that no-one, not even the State, has the right to kill. But society did not take into consideration the terrorists who would try to free their fellow criminals. Innocent lives will continue to be endangered in attempts to free criminals held in prison.

While society may not have the right to kill, it has the duty to do so to save innocent lives. This can be done by the restoration of capital punishment (for terrorist acts) ♣

The dilemma posed by terrorists is that while they have declared total war on civilised society, civil society has not responded likewise. ♣

P.S.G.



Finance Minister Moshe Nissim and friends.

His charisma and warmth demonstrated to us why he was voted the most popular minister in Israel, unusual for finance ministers associated, as they are, with inflation and taxes.

At a large gathering recently held in Israel to raise money for the Babylonian Jewry Heritage Centre, Minister Nissim, who graduated in Law, declared that every Iraqi Jew is fit for the position of finance minister, not only in Israel but in any country.

This being the case, we venture to recommend to the Finance Minister that he abolishes all forms of direct taxation on the individual – income tax, capital gains tax, wealth tax, inheritance tax, making Israel virtually a tax haven. Such taxation is immoral as it encourages cheating, dishonesty and unemployment. It promotes the grey and black markets. Jews are individualists and do not submit to such imposition and regimentation.

*Instead, taxation should be based entirely on land values. This would yield not only enough for government expenditure but would also provide for a **National Dividend** to be paid to citizens in accordance with Israel's priorities at the time. It would also ensure that the Land of Israel remains in the ownership of the Jewish people forever●*

Jewish Population

The Arabic daily *Al-Arab*, which appears in London, has recently copied an article from a French magazine predicting that the Jews will disappear from the world by the year 3000. They point out that world Jewish population is constantly falling and will only be 8 million by the year 2000.

Jewish population does not follow a uniform pattern. 2000 years ago, Jews constituted 10% of the Roman and Persian Empires, but our numbers were decimated by Christian and, later, by Moslem persecutions.

1000 years ago there were, altogether, 1.4 million Sephardim, and that number remained constant till 1939. On the other hand, there were only 100,000 Ashkenazim 1000 years ago but in 1939 their number reached 15 million – an increase of 150 times!

Under favourable conditions, a nation can double and redouble its numbers in the space of 50 years, as we have been witnessing in many countries. But the Jews have never tried to assert themselves by sheer numbers. The proper reply to *Al-Arab* and its French source is to repeat the verse of Al-Samawal, the 6th century Jewish poet and chieftain of Arabia, that he offered in similar circumstances:

**She taunts us that we are few in numbers;
So I said to her that the virtuous are few.**

In any case we hope that the *Mashiyah* will have come by the year 3000!●

Remembering for the future

An International Conference on the Holocaust

Fifty years after the *Kristallnacht*, when Jews and their property were attacked by German savages, an international conference on the Holocaust sponsored by Mr. Robert Maxwell is being convened in Oxford and London 10-17 July 1988.

One aim of the Conference, which will be attended by hundreds of scholars from all over the world, is to point out that Christianity as a whole has not yet sufficiently recognised its co-responsibility for creating a climate of opinion that made the Holocaust possible. Nor has it become appropriately aware of the extent to which it may perpetuate that climate of opinion through its theological and liturgical traditions.

The Conference hopes to make the memory of the Holocaust a medium for developing an Early Warning System on potentially homicidal movements.

The Conference should go much further by not being afraid to indict those who by commission or omission brought about that heinous crime:

- 1) The government and people of Germany.
- 2) The governments and peoples of occupied Europe.
- 3) Western governments.
- 4) International oil interests.
- 5) The Vatican.
- 6) The mufti of Palestine and other Nazi Arabs.

In addition, the conference should declare that those who preach Hitler was right, those who promote anti-semitism, racism or genocide and those who deny the Holocaust should be treated as if they themselves had committed all the crimes of the Holocaust.

The Holocaust should not be commemorated in public parks and Jewish cemeteries but in the flesh of our oppressors and the cemeteries of our enemies.

As long as the people of Europe have not expressed proper repentance for their deeds we should neither forgive nor forget●

The Jews of Iraq between 1920 and 1970

Selections from the paper by Simha Horesh. Part 5 will appear in the next issue.