

Our aims in the Gulf War

Overall solution to Middle East problems

Regional wealth to be shared

Wake up, WOJAC! (World Organisation of Jews from Arab Countries)

By showing commendable restraint in the face of Iraqi provocation, Israel has secured a top seat at the Gulf War peace conference table. What should be our aims and our demands?

Our enemies have cleverly manoeuvred world opinion into believing that the Middle East conflict is between Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs and that its solution can only be found in an accommodation between these two factions within the old mandated area. The truth is that the conflict is not with the Palestinians but with the neighbouring Arab countries which relentlessly waged war on Israel, incited the Palestinians not to come to terms with the Jews, encouraged the Nazis in the Final Solution, financed terrorism, persecuted and expelled their Jewish populations. There can be no peace in the Middle East unless these same Arab countries are made parties to an eventual settlement, bearing their share of the refugee problem and the cost of their settlement in their own areas.

ما يحكي السكان الا بقلب الصاهي

There is a Baghdadian saying that an inebriated person speaks with an open heart. And so it is that Saddam, drunk with power, has called for an overall solution to the problems of the region. Israel has nothing to fear and can only stand to benefit from such a "linkage."

The solution must be global, for there can be no peace for the Palestinian Arab refugees while the material and political rights of Jewish refugees from Arab lands are ignored.

The solution must be global, for there can be no peace in one corner of the Middle East while Lebanon slides to a slow death; while millions of Kurds cannot attain autonomy; while non-Arab minorities remember their massacres and their stolen lands; while the Arabs control five million square miles of territory and non-Arabs are denied any territory; while some Arab rulers pocket most of the oil wealth and Israelis keep tightening their belts. These petrobillions have made of Iraq a dangerous aggressor and of Kuwait a target for aggression. The great disparity in wealth has destabilised the region and the world economy. These are not isolated problems and must be solved together – for peace, law and order in the Middle East are indivisible.

To the PLO, who say they want to establish a free, multi-racial, democratic, secular and progressive Palestine, we say we want to establish a free, multi-racial, democratic, secular and progressive Middle East. To those who say that Zionism is responsible for all the trouble in Palestine, we say Arab imperialism is responsible for all the trouble in the Middle East.

The projected regional security structure, which shall include Israel, Egypt, Turkey and others would defend the region and ensure that the oil wealth is spread evenly to everyone. There can be no peace between Israel and Arab imperialism.

The Jews from Arab lands hold the key to any post-war search for a Middle East settlement. We only hear of Palestinian rights: we are the other side of the coin. Under pressure from President Truman, nearly a million Jews from Arab countries were allowed to leave their ancient homelands and go mainly to Israel. This was to be the first leg of a reciprocal exchange of populations that would establish peace between Jews and Arabs. But only a trickle of Palestinian Arabs were allowed in to replace them. The exchange of populations must now be completed.

Under the Mandate the Arabs managed to increase more than the Jews. After independence the mistake was continued by offering lucrative employment to the Arabs that brought more from far and wide.

Some Arabs have to go

Our future relations with Arabs is one of disengagement rather than integration. Some Arabs have to go, so that we can establish good relations with them at arm's length. Churchill used to say that Arabs unwilling to live under Jewish rule should migrate to strictly Arab countries.

Jews and Arabs are not natural enemies but natural allies. Their qualities complement each other's. Jews and Arabs always worked together at the personal level. They can also do so at the state level.

The Psalm "By the Rivers of Babylon" contains a cryptic phrase explaining why our ancestors wept in their captivity. *Al Arabim betokhah* – because of the Arabs that infiltrated into our country. We must not allow the present-day Arabs in Israel to cause us to weep again.

An Ottoman Millet

The Jews of the Ottoman Empire were recognised as a *millet*, a national and religious community, entitled to its own rights. The State of Israel embodies these Jewish rights, just as the Arabs gained a number of independent states from the Ottoman break-up. The Jews have repatriated all of the Ottoman Jewish *millet* into the land of Israel. The Arabs are refusing to repatriate their own and resettle them among the 20 Arab countries, but above all in Jordan, which, in 1921, was detached from the Palestine mandate and given over to exclusive Arab settlement. Thus Jordan is Palestine; and if this may leave King Hussein out of a job, he would be well-suited to fill the vacuum in post-Saddam Iraq.

The World Organisation of Jews from Arab Countries is also entitled to a seat at the post-war conference table.

WOJAC was constituted in 1975 to highlight the rights of Jews who left Arab lands, now numbering over 2 million.

For 40 years Israel was locked in an impossible search for a narrow solution to the "Palestinian problem". Now the Likud government shows encouraging signs of appreciating the rights of Jews from Arab lands in their countries of origin and stresses the need for a comprehensive settlement involving the neighbouring Arab countries.

WOJAC should also make a substantial claim on the Iraqi assets now frozen worldwide.

Two Clubs

The 2-Club convention (restated)
by bridge builder

The 2-club convention is essentially a slam enquiry. When a player opens two clubs this is the message he sends to his partner:

"Dear Partner, I have good news for you. I have a very strong hand, with 23 points and over. I can almost make game on my own, but I want to find out if we have slam between us. My bid is a convention and has nothing to do with clubs. YOU MUST NOT PASS!"

"With 0-7 points bid 2-diamonds, even if you have no diamonds. This is the negative response, meaning that your hand is not strong enough for a slam. All other bids are meant to give a positive response to the slam enquiry."

"With 8 or 9 points bid 2-no trumps. With 10 or 11 points bid 3-no trumps. If my hand is balanced I shall then raise in no trumps as I think fit. If I have a long suit I shall bid it."

"To give a positive response in a suit to my 2-club opening, you must have a shaded 3 tricks concentrated in that suit, even if you have only 4 cards of that suit – say, AKJx, with 8 points and over, but preferably with 5 cards. The positive response is 2-spades, 2-hearts, 3-diamonds or 3-clubs, as the case may be. I shall then decide if we can attempt going to slam."

"In any case, whatever your response, you must not stop bidding before we reach game. The only time you can pass before we reach game is when you respond 2-diamonds and I go 2-no trumps. You can pass if you cannot offer 1 trick in no trump play – i.e. 3 points."

All the above *parasha* is contained in the opening bid of 2-clubs.

Even if responder has 8 spade cards but only 8 or 9 points (but not in that suit) he must call 2-no trumps. At that stage it is more important to indicate his strength than to show his length. Then, whatever opener bids, he goes to 4-spades and leaves it to opener to take it from there.

After 2-diamonds from responder – the opener, if he has 23, 24 points calls 2-no trumps; 25, 26 points – 3-no trumps.

The 2-club opening is the strongest forcing bid in bridge, and can be used with any number of high points – 23 and over. There was a time when a balanced hand with 25-27 points opened 3-no trumps but this is now out of fashion, and 2-clubs is preferred.

An opponent can sometimes interfere with the bidding by competing with 2 of a suit – even at the risk of being doubled. This sometimes stops the other side from reaching their maximum or best contract.

Recently I opened 2-clubs and my partner, Bertha Bekhor, responded 2-diamonds. With 27 points, all the aces, and long diamonds I jumped to 7-no trumps.

Kibitzers were amazed when I managed to make all 13 tricks and collect the grand slam prize. Alice Shashou, a stickler for rules, said there is no such bidding. But I countered by saying that all rules are made to be broken if you know when and how to break them!●



The Moshe Kahtan Column

**Yes, it is mine. No, it is not yours.
No, it is not mine. Yes, it is yours.**

This is not gibberish. This, in fact, is a long Middle East story in a nutshell.

On 2 August, 1990, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, a neighbouring sister Arab country on which he depended financially to a large extent during eight years of Iraq/Iran war, looted it, murdered a great number of his brothers and sisters and annexed its territory including its oil fields and then claimed that he made the sacrifice in order to liberate "Palestine". A noble deed indeed!!! Most of the world stood up to him and told him: "Kuwait is not yours!" "Yes, it is mine", he maintained.

On 30 July, 1988 the other Hussein, in Trans-Jordan, declared publicly and to the whole world that Judea and Samaria, which his country seized and annexed after it waged war on Israel in 1948 and then lost it to Israel in 1967 after another war waged by him with a view to destroy Israel, were no longer part of his kingdom and that he renounced all claims to them. "No, it is not mine!" he ascertained. "Yes, it is yours!" insisted most of the world. This time most of the world is being noble!!! Easy. It is only Israel who will pay! So why not?

As hostilities resumed on 17 January – they first started on 2 August 1990 – there is already talk from many quarters about how the U.S. will have to put heavy pressure on Israel to make concessions as a pay-off to its Arab allies, for having sided, on and off, with the allied forces in the Gulf. The Arab allies are Egypt, who was forgiven debts of over 7 billion dollars; Syria, who received a few billion dollars in cash and respectability in spite of being on the terrorist list of the U.S.; and, finally, Saudi Arabia, who graciously allowed the "infidels" including American Jews, the privilege of spilling their blood in defence of their Islamic values whatever and wherever they may be. On the other hand, the requests are being put forward to send the Debit Notes to Israel, presumably for having proved over a long period of time to be the unwavering true ally of both the Americans and, given half a chance, of Europe, both of which will prove to be unworthy if they as much as try to force Israel into a corner with a view to make it a scapegoat for the Arabs, including the P.L.O. who must have finally convinced the West of their true nature.

The fact that Tony Benn appeared to be at peace with himself and did not find Saddam Hussein at war with humanity in spite of what he did in Kuwait and to Kuwait and his threats to bomb Israel with chemical weapons regardless of whether it attacked him or not, just goes to show the low quality of some of the politicians we have in this country, and he is not alone in this category. The list is long. Much too long●

أنا صدام

ملفصة من تصيداً لتزارة القبانى

أيها الناس: لقد أصبحت سلطاناً عليكم فاكسروا أصنامكم بعد ضلال وابعدونى اننى لا أتجلى دائماً ..

فاجلسوا فوق رصيف الصبر، حتى تبصرونى اتركوا أطفالكم من غير خبز

واتركوا نسوانكم من غير بعل .. واتبعونى احمداوا الله على نعمته

فلقد أرسلنى كى أكتب التاريخ والتاريخ لا يكتب دونى

فانا حادثة ما حدثت منذ آلاف القرون ..

أيها الناس

أنا الأول والأعدل .. والأجمل ..

من بين جميع الحاكمين

وأنا بدر الدجى وبهاض الياسمين

وأنا مخترع الشنقة الأولى

وخير المرسلين ..

كلما فكرت أن أعتزل السلطة بينهاني ضميري

كلما فكرت أن أترككم ..

فاضت دموى كغمامة ..

وتوكلت على الله وقررت بأن أركب الشعب

من الآن .. الى يوم القيامة ..

أيها الناس، أنا الحجاج

ان أنزع قلبي تعرفونى

وأنا جينكينز خان .. جتكم بحرأبي وكلاهي وسجوني

لا تضيقوا أيها الناس ببطشي

فانا أقتل كى لا تظنوني

وأنا أشنق كى لا تشنقوني

وأنا أدفنكم في نلك القبر الجماعي لكيلا تدفنوني ..

أيها الناس: اشترى لى صحفا تكتب عني

انها معروضة للبيع .. انها معروضة مثل البغايا

في الشوارع

فاشترى لى شعراء يتغنون بحسني

واجعلوني نجم كل الأطفلة

فالملايين التي في بيت ماا المسلمين

هي ميراث قديم لأبي

فخذوا من ذهبى واكتبوا في أمهات الكتب

أن مصري .. مصر هارون الرشيد ..

أيها الناس، أنا المسؤول عن أحلامكم اذ تحلمون

وأنا المسؤول من كل رفيف تأكلون

ومن الشعر الذي من خلف ظهري تقرأون

فجهاز الأمن في قمري يوافيني

يوافيني بأخبار المعاصير .. وأخبار السناهل

ويوافيني بما يحدث في بطن الحوامل ..

أيها الناس، أنا سجانكم ..

وأنا مسجونكم فلتعذبوني

اننى المنفي في داخل قمري

لا أرى شما ولا نجما

ولا زهرة دفلى

منذ أن جئت الى السلطة طفلا

لم يقل لي مستشار القصر (كلا) ..

لم يقل لي وزراي أبدأ لفظة (كلا) ..

لم يقل لي سفرائي أبدأ في الوجه (كلا) ..

لم تقل احدى نسائي في سرير الحب (كلا)

انهم قد علموني أن أرى نفسي الها ..

وأرى الشعب من الشرفة رملا

فاعذبوني .. ان تحولت لهولاكو جديد

أنا لم أقتل لوجه القتل يوما

انما أقتلكم كى اتسلى ..

Host and Hostage

Host – one who lodges or entertains another in his home.

Hostage – person seized by enemy to force compliance with demands.

Protégé – person under protection or patronage of another – “*حزيل*”.

Hospitality – friendly and liberal reception of guests or strangers.

The renowned Middle East tribal hospitality derives from an old practice in the ancient world. If a person visits his friend or neighbour or finds himself in another man's territory, he looks on himself as being in the protection of his host – his protégé, his hostage, and subject to his jurisdiction. The host, in turn, is responsible for the safety and well being of his guest until he leaves the boundaries of his territory. Likewise, nowadays a person is subject to the duties and privileges imposed by the laws of the country he happens to be in.

By this token, when a guest or visitor wants to leave, he has to ask permission from his host. In Turkey we used to say *musaadanzile*; in Arabic – *min rukhsat-kum*, in French – *avec votre permission*; in English – by your leave. Saddam has carried this to the extreme by requiring an exit visa to be obtained by anyone who wants to leave Iraq – whether native or foreigner. He has taken hostages to stop retaliation for his invasion of Kuwait.

Hostage-taking is an act of cowardice and is contrary to the strict rules of chivalry. It is considered a *casus belli* – an act justifying waging a just war, an act of war. In the early days of the Gulf crisis, Mrs. Thatcher taunted Saddam that he was hiding behind women and children and

thus secured their release.

Hostage-taking for ransom was a traditional occupation of Arab pirates who roamed the Mediterranean. This practice has now been followed by Palestinian terrorists and, when the world took no notice, Western hostages were taken in Beirut and now in Iraq.

The Oral Law

One thousand years ago, Babylonian Talmudic Rabbis, who were engaged in unlocking the words of the Torah, were as much sought-after as present-day nuclear physicists engaged in splitting the atom. The reason for this scarcity was that neither the Talmud nor the prayers or blessings were committed to writing. An accomplished Talmudist had to carry in his head all the 2,500,000 words of the Babylonian Talmud.

At one time, only the Torah had been written down. Indeed, it was known as the Written Law, which meant that it was final and definite, sealed, and unchanging. All the interpretations of the Torah by the scholars and rabbis were repeated by memory. Finally the Oral Law became so voluminous that it was decided to record it. Likewise, in 870, Babylon Rav Amram Gaon received a request from the Jews of Barcelona for the exact order and wording of prayers. What he sent back to them was a written prayer book which has become known as “Siddur Rav Amram”, the basis of our prayer books.

Sepharad ransoms a Babylonian Rabbi

In 972 (some say 945), four distinguished Babylonian scholars from the academy of Sura – Hushiel, Shlomo, Moses ben Hanokh and another – were on a goodwill tour of Mediterranean communities. Dur-

ing a voyage from Bari, Italy, they were captured by Arab pirates. To avoid falling into the hands of her captors, Moses' wife asked her husband in Hebrew whether those who were drowned in the sea could look forward to resurrection, and when he answered, in the words of the psalm, “The Lord saith . . . I will bring them again from the depths of the sea”, she cast herself in the waters and was drowned. Self-destruction was an accepted procedure among Jews in imminent danger of falling into enemy hands.

Hanokh's scholarship

Subsequently, the three men were sold to three different countries: Shemiah to Egypt, Hushiel to Ifriqiyah (Libya) and Moses ben Hanokh was taken to Cordova with his little son, Enoch, where he was redeemed by the Jewish community. While there, he went to the schoolhouse, took his seat in a corner, and listened quietly to the Talmudic discourse of the local judge and rabbi, Nathan, not a very learned man. Some of the stranger's remarks, afterwards, attracted attention and his ready answers astonished the whole assembly. Nathan on that very day resigned his office and confessed himself Moses' pupil. The wealthy community of Cordova, headed by the statesman Hasdai ibn Shaprut, immediately elected Moses rabbi and showed him much honour. He organised an important Talmudic academy at Cordova and his responsa were regarded as authoritative as those of the Babylonian gconim. This marked the real beginning of Talmudic learning in Spain and enabled Hasdai to make the community independent of Babylonia, which was desirable in view of the hostility between the caliphates of Cordova and Baghdad.

David Elias's open house

Condensed from an article by J.F. Silverman in the *Sephardi Bulletin* of N.S. Wales, Australia

David Elias is officially known as the secretary of the Eastern Jewish Community comprising 16,000 Indian and Oriental Jews who belong to three synagogues in North London.

The man they call “Rasputin”, or “The Godfather”, and sometimes even “Robin Hood”, has for the last 35 years gone far beyond his nominal job description, with a combination of unceasing effort, and his own special charm.

Dreams

When visitors walk into his house near Stamford Hill, they are likely to encounter a long queue of people, speaking different languages, seeking help for problems. A considerable number of clients will hail from far outside the Eastern Jewish Community.

“I deal with everything from birth to death”, explained Mr. Elias, who is called upon to interpret dreams, as well as to solve visa problems.

“I never turn anybody away. I see Jews, Hindus, Moslems, Sikhs, everybody. But I tell the Moslems that they can't come to

me about politics, only for help and advice”.

He was born in Calcutta to a Persian father and an Iraqi mother whose families established a tobacco business there in 1883. When he finished school he became vice-president of the Zionist Organisation of Calcutta, which sent interested parties on aliyah.

From 1950-51, after he had moved his wife and four children to London, he went to Israel to work for David Ben-Gurion and helped new immigrants there to settle.

For the next few years in London, he supported his family by selling goods at market stalls, but in 1955 he was approached by a delegation from the Sephardi community asking him to organise the increasing number of Jewish families arriving from India and Asia.

Mr. Elias recalls: “They came and put the crown on my head. At first I refused to take it, but thank G-d that I did”.

Expansion

In 1958 the community moved into a synagogue in Golders Green which became known as the Ohel David Synagogue.

In 1968, when it became clear that the community was expanding, a building was bought in Stamford Hill Road, which now houses the Jacob Benjamin Elias Synagogue, and the Gan Eden Hotel.

A third synagogue, the Ilford Congregation of Ohel David, was acquired in the

same year.

Although the Eastern Jewish community is no longer growing, Mr. Elias has two crucial tasks in front of him.

First, since many of his congregants are poor, and have particular problems which are not readily understandable elsewhere, he wants to establish an independent welfare board and charitable trust offering a wide range of social services.

But his second project and greatest dream is to establish a community centre for the whole of London's Jewish community, both Sephardim and Ashkenazim, to fend off the tendency towards assimilation.

Young people

“We are losing the younger generation fast. Nowadays we have to have a place for people who are not religious. What have you got in Hillel House, or Maccabi House?”

“A boy meets a girl, a girl meets a guy, and damn it all, they have nothing to do. We need to build a place with a swimming pool, a restaurant, a theatre, and so on and so forth. That is what young people are looking for today.”

“The rich people can't see any further than their own noses. They're all busying themselves with their own selfish interests. I'm not envious of them – may the rich become richer.”

“But please may they wake up before it is too late. We are going to have to put our money together to keep our people”.

The martyrdom of Fouad Gabbay

Introduction

The excerpt below has been extracted from a larger article by Billie Moscona Lerman that recently appeared in the Israeli newspaper *Ma'ariv*. It tells the story of Selima Gabbay, a Jewish woman living in Basra, Iraq. Selima's husband Fouad and eight other Jews were hanged by the Iraqi Government in January 1969 after having been found guilty on trumped-up charges of "spying" for Israel.

Selima's story is tearful, but it is not desperate. Rather it is uplifting and inspiring. It is the story of an exceptionally courageous young woman who never gave up in the face of extreme suffering. With nothing and nobody to depend on except herself, Selima picked up the pieces of her shattered life after Fouad's murder. In 1971, after a long and dangerous journey across Iraq, Selima and her children managed to cross the border into Iran. They were flown from Teheran to Israel where they were settled in a rather gloomy hostel in Bat Yam. Selima joined an Ulpan but did not stay to complete her Hebrew studies; she had to find work so she could support her children.

Selima feels that the Israeli authorities let her down at that time, when she was most in need. "Shlomo Hillel used to visit us from time to time to see how we were getting on. Golda Meir once telephoned to say they were planting a tree in Fouad's name. But that's not what I needed at the time. It didn't help me. What I needed was practical assistance, not fine words and meaningless gestures".

Selima now runs a successful business in Israel, producing fashionable children's clothes for export to the United States. She is extremely proud that all her children are highly educated. She speaks for herself below, describing the tragic events surrounding the hangings.

M.L.

Selima's Story

translated from Hebrew by Meir Lanyado

Fouad and myself were so happy together when suddenly our lives were torn apart. One day four Iraqi officers in a blue Volkswagen drove into our home in Basra. They went straight to the air conditioners and pulled out their transformers. "These are transmitters" they shouted. "You are spying for Israel!" Fouad was roughed up when he protested. Our younger son David was picked up and thrown onto the iron railings when he tried to kiss his father. He cut himself, and his face was full of blood. The blood was like an evil omen for the future. Later, many years later, David used to say: "But Mummy, they didn't separate me from Daddy . . ."

It was 1968 and I was four months pregnant. Fouad was taken away to a jail in Baghdad. Eventually he was put on trial with the other Jews, all accused of spying for Israel. The trial was broadcast live on the radio. Fouad pleaded "Not Guilty". I travelled from Basra to Baghdad to see him in prison. When I got there they pushed me into a room, beat me up and

kicked me out. In the next room, separated only by a thin wall, the warders were telling Fouad: "Your wife's on the other side of this wall. She's pregnant, right? If you don't admit your guilt we're going to rape her and afterwards open her stomach and cut up the child".

Next day on the radio, during the broadcast of the trial, I heard Fouad pleading guilty, admitting that on such and such days he was here and there, sending secrets to Israel. When I checked the dates I realised that Fouad had been with me and the children all those times. He had made up the story in order to save us.



Selima and Fouad Gabbay

On the morning of 28 January 1969 the streets of Baghdad were even more noisy and more crowded than usual. It was the day of the hangings. A day of national celebration. I could hear the neighbours shouting enthusiastically "Hang the Israeli spies". The streets were overflowing. Loudspeakers had been set up everywhere. Dancers were brought from far and wide to dance under the gallows. Free rides on the buses and trains so that people could come to celebrate under the corpses. And what was all the celebrating about? The Iraqi nation was taking its collective revenge. During the Six Day War a division of the Iraqi army serving in Jordan had taken heavy casualties. Moshe Dayan had apparently said something like "They're lucky it began to rain, otherwise we would have finished them completely!" This was an affront to the national pride which had to be avenged.

And that is how it came about that on January 28 1969, Iraqi Television was broadcasting pictures of nine hanging Jewish corpses in red pyjamas, among them that of Fouad my husband, all innocent people. The loudspeakers announced: "At four o'clock in the afternoon the bodies will be brought down so that the mob can play with them in the streets".

I returned to Basra after the burial.

People on the street didn't speak to me. Not even other Jews. They used to cross the road when they saw me for fear of being linked with my husband's "spying" activities. The Iraqis pointed at me: "There goes the spy's wife". The authorities evicted me from the big house and confiscated our lands; the servants scattered, our wealth was expropriated. Our happy family was reduced to one young woman, who had been protected all her life and indeed was not yet fully grown up and worldly wise, with three small children, a fourth on the way and a huge emptiness in her soul. I moved in with my mother.

On January 6th 1970, my mother was run down and killed by a fast car as she crossed the street. A plain clothes policeman came over and whispered in my ear "They killed your mother but it was you they were after". That's when I decided I had to somehow run away to Israel.

We left in July 1971. My three brothers, my three young children Rimon, Rita and David, baby Wilma, my sister's two daughters and myself were fleeing to Israel. I had gathered the children together, explaining only what was absolutely necessary. The children, aware of the importance of the moment, listened intently. We evaded the guards outside the house and went to the railway station. We boarded a train to the border. A high-ranking officer on the train asked David "Who are you? And who is your father?" The boy answered without a moment's hesitation: "My father is working in England and we are going to see him". The officer turned to Selima and spat. "You're raising up spies for Israel. Is that all that you do?!" And that was how the great escape began.

A few editions of *The Scribe* have been passed to me by my dear nephew Moshe Kahtan and I have enjoyed reading every item in them. My late two brothers Selim Sassoon Murad and Naim Sassoon Murad were actually two of the original founding members of the Zawra Club in Baghdad, which then contributed to a great extent to the advancement of the social life of the Baghdad Jewish community.

Givatayim

Neyazi Murad

Among the clients of the Jewish Social Services in the Netherlands we have several with Iraqi background and would appreciate receiving your journal. Please put us on your mailing list for two copies.

Amsterdam

A. van der Ven

Joods Maatschappelijk Werk

May I ask whether it would be possible for us to receive a complete, or near-complete set of *The Scribe* for our Oriental Collections (from issue No. 1). Many thanks for your consideration.

The British Library
Oriental Collections,
London

Brad Sabin Hill

Thanks continually for your timely and qualitative newsletter.

Jerusalem

The Academic Secretary
World Jewish Bible Centre

COOKERY CORNER

by Alice Shashou

Baklava

It is a Purim sweet; served in nearly every party and every occasion.

Ingredients:

1 lb filo pastry
12 oz unsalted butter or (1 packet and half)
1 lb almonds, pistachios or walnuts
2 tablespoons caster sugar
1 tablespoon cardamom
1 tablespoon rose water or more

Method:

Blanch the almonds and chop coarsely. Combine nuts, sugar, cardamom and rose water. This mixture should be moist. Spread half the filo pastry in a buttered baking tray the size of the pastry. Put one at a time, brushing every fourth sheet with melted butter. Spread the nut mixture evenly over the sheets of pastry, then cover with the remaining sheets brushing every fourth sheet with melted butter. With a sharp kitchen knife, cut in diamond shape pieces till the bottom of the tray. You may freeze at this point. Heat the rest of the butter and pour evenly on top of the pastry and place immediately in a preheated oven 350° for about 20 minutes. Decrease to 300° and bake until golden brown. When the Baklava is tepid, pour over the cold syrup. Leave for few hours or overnight to soak the syrup. Cut and transfer the pieces of the sweet to a serving dish. Baklava can be prepared days ahead stored in the freezer and baked 1 day before it is served. A good Baklava is puffed and not soggy.

Syrup for the Baklava:

Prepare 1 or 2 days in advance and use it cold.

3 cups sugar
1½ cups water
2 tablespoons lemon juice
2 tablespoons rose water

Dissolve sugar in water over low fire. Add lemon juice and let it simmer until the syrup coats the back of the spoon. Add the rose water and stir for another minute or two.

Kubba Helwa (Kubba Laizmi)

Ingredients for the Kubba Shell:

1½ cup rice (1)
½ cup minced meat
Salt and water

Ingredients for the Kubba Filling:

1½ lb coarsely ground meat
1 big onion, chopped fine
2 tablespoons powdered noumi basrah (dried lime) or 1 teaspoon ground cardamom
Salt and pepper to taste
1 tablespoon margarine
1 tablespoon water

Ingredients for the Crust:

2 lbs courgettes, marrow, aubergine or pumpkin
1 glass rice (2) washed and soaked
1 whole noumi basrah (dried lime) pierced in 2 places

Method:

Soak the rice (1) in water for about 1 hour. Drain and grind finely in an electric blender. In a bowl add minced meat to the ground rice and mix. Return mixture to the blender; add salt and blend together, gradually adding water until you have a smooth paste you can use for the shell.

Mix all the ingredients for the filling in a bowl. Then divide this mixture into equal portions. Also divide the shell mixture into big walnut size balls. Wet your hands and flatten each ball in the palm of your hand. Place the filling in the centre. Wrap the paste evenly around the stuffing to make a small tangerine ball. Flatten it a little. Make round Kubbas with noumi basrah and long Kubbas with cardamom to make the different taste. You can cook both in the same pan if you like.

You can freeze or use them straight away.

Now saute the vegetable in oil. Cover with water and add tomato puree and salt and cook briefly. Add the whole noumi basrah pierced, then drop the Kubbas one by one into the boiling sauce. Cover the pan and boil until the Kubbas are cooked. Discard the noumi basrah.

Add 2 tablespoons of oil, the drained rice (2) and salt. It should have 1 cup (or a little more) of sauce in the pan to let the rice cook. Try to place most of the rice in the bottom of the pan. When the rice is cooked, put on simmer until it forms a crust (hekaka). Or you can put the pan in the oven to be toasted. When you serve, put the pan on dampened kitchen towels for about 5 minutes. Scoop portions into serving plate, toasted side uppermost. Serve hot.

تطلب من
رابطة الجامعيين اليهود النازحين من العراق
تلفون: ٠٢/٣٤١٠٤٤ - صندوق - ١١٤٧ - ميسيرت يروشلايم ١٠٨٠٥
Association for Jewish Academics from Iraq.
Box 1147
Mevaseret Jerusalem, Israel, Tel: 02/341044 - P.O. Code 90805

هنشورات الرابطة

- مكتبة الدكتور داود سلمان - سالا - مؤلفات يهود العراق.
- ١ - قصة حياتي في وادي الرافدين، بقلم انور شاول، اورشليم القدس، ١٩٨٠.
 - ٢ - كل شيء هاديء في العيادة، بقلم الدكتور سلمان دويش. علق عليه وقدمه للطبع نسيم تزان اورشليم - القدس، ١٩٨١.
 - ٣ - القصة القصيرة عند يهود العراق ١٩٢٤ - ١٩٧٨، قدم لها مع دراسة وتراجم البروفسور شموئيل موريه، اورشليم - القدس، دار النشر ي. ل. ماغنس ومسجاب يروشلايم - الجامعة العبرية ورابطة الجامعيين اليهود النازحين من العراق، ١٩٨١. (الدراسة عن الأدباء والشعراء اليهود بالعراق كتبت بثلاث لغات هي العربية والعبرية والانكليزية).
 - ٤ - وينغ فجر جديد - ديوان شعر لانور شاول، اورشليم القدس، ١٩٨٢.
 - ٥ - بيت في بغداد - رواية بقلم اسحاق بار - موشه، اورشليم القدس، ١٩٨٠.
 - ٦ - مي بصري، اعلام اليهود في العراق الحديث (تراجم)، اورشليم القدس ١٩٨٣.
 - ٧ - سمح نقاش: نزوله وخط الشيطان (رواية عراقية)، اورشليم القدس، ١٩٨٦.
 - ٨ - سمح نقاش: المقروون (مسرحة)، مع دار النشر المشرق م. ض، اورشليم القدس - شفاعمرو، ١٩٨٦.
 - ٩ - ابراهيم عويديا: صيحة من عراق العهد البائد - مع دار النشر المشرق م. ض، اورشليم القدس - شفاعمرو، ١٩٩٠.
 - ١٠ - ابراهيم عويديا: الظمأ (ديوان شعر)، مع دار النشر المشرق اورشليم القدس، شفاعمرو، ١٩٩٠.
- مؤلفات اخرى ليهود العراق يمكن الحصول عليها من رابطة الجامعيين:
- ١ - يعقوب «بلبول» ليب: عنة العقل وقصائد اخرى. تقديم البروفسور شموئيل موريه، اورشليم القدس، ١٩٧٩.
 - ٢ - عزت ساسون معلم: هل شفاب الفرات، شفاعمرو، ١٩٨٠.
 - ٣ - ابراهيم عويديا: اخي مشرق الشمس، الناصرة، ١٩٧٧.
 - ٤ - ابراهيم عويديا: امرأة في شعري، الناصرة، ١٩٨٠.
- تعلن رابطة الجامعيين اليهود النازحين من العراق عن تخفيض في اسعار جميع الكتب المذكورة اعلاه، ويمكن الحصول عليها باجمعها (ما عدا كتاب انور شاول: قصة حياتي، الذي نفذ) بمبلغ ٦٠ جنياً استرالياً او ما يقابلها بالدولار الامريكاني بما في ذلك من اجرة البريد لكل من يطلبها خلال الثلاثة اشهر القادمة. فمن كل كتاب ٦ جنيات استرالياً اذا طلبت كتب متفرقة.



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Glat Kosher Restaurant

Newly opened by Sami Gabay
(opposite 1185 Finchley Road)

Tips by Alice Shashou

Raw mushrooms added to salads are a useful source of fibre, protein and B vitamins.

We kill ourselves with work and the party lasts a few hours only.

Do not salt steaks before grilling. This causes juices to run; but meat can be peppered.

To add flavour to roast beef, rub it with dry mustard before cooking.

When the Italians first invented the pizza it was a lump of dough smothered in oil and sprinkled with a few anchovies and olives. It took 1000 years, cheese, tomatoes, mushrooms and herbs to transfer it into the pizza we eat today. This year the newest is aubergine pizza which is really delicious.

Do not keep food warm for too long after it is cooked. It loses vitamins.

Never leave milk out of the fridge when it is not in use. As light can destroy Vitamin B2.

Wash vegetables in salt water. It cleans them much quicker and better.

No lumps will form when mixing butter and flour.

Green tomatoes will ripen best in a dark warm place when placed with a red tomato.

To clean the inside of a fridge use 1 tablespoon of bicarbonate of soda with a bowlful of hot water to get rid of the smell. If it still lingers, put a cut lemon inside.

Keep the freezer full. The frozen food helps keep the interior cold.



AT THE OPENING: Sitting - Elie Dangoor; Nicole Chitayat; Renée Dangoor; Alice & Salim Shashou. Standing - Michael & Audrey Dangoor; Sami Gabay, the owner; Naim Dangoor.

LETTERS

My friend M.E. Sadka is very fond of your writing and wishes to be on your mailing list. We have found your issue No. 45 very, very interesting●
Givatayim, Israel **Latif Khazma**

At the end of 1984, the national Palestinian committee, (all the organisations of the P.L.O.) met at Amman, Jordan and decided the following: "We shall liberate every inch of our lands from the river (Jordan) to the sea, and every inch of our land that we shall liberate we shall use as a base to liberate the rest of our lands."

The motto of the fundamental Palestinian Islam (including all its political and terroristic organisations) is a saying attributed to the prophet Mohammad: "Doomsday will come only if the Moslems will fight the Jews and kill them and the Jew will run and hide behind every tree and stone, and the tree and the stone shall shout: Oh Moslem son of the servant of God, there is a Jew hiding behind me, come and kill him".

If the aim of the national secular Palestinian movement is take all the land of Israel from the river to the sea and the aim of the religious movement is to kill all the Jews (not only in Israel) I cannot but be amazed at those of our own people who are arguing that it is possible to make peace at this stage of affair. They say that an army cannot destroy the will of a subjugated people to be free; well, we must ask ourselves, is it so? Or is it a struggle between two nations who are fighting for the same piece of land and the nation with the strongest and the longest will to survive will win eventually?

Now a few words for those who are shouting S.O.S. because of some brutal and primitive dagger assassins, and their conclusion that we must withdraw from Judea and Samaria that are the sole and only land barrier between us and our neighbours to the east – I say what if those assassins, encouraged by our withdrawal, will continue to murder in the green line, what then? Must we go back to the partition plan or to the sea?

What must we do now? We can do lots of things, but the most important thing is to make it clear and unequivocal for the Palestinians and other Arabs that we do not intend "to get tired" no matter what they will use against us: knives, daggers, Molotov bottles or hand grenades – our staunch decision is to defend ourselves and our existence until the aspired peace will come●

Ramat Hasharon **Benyamin Goor Aryeh**
Israel **Former Adviser to the**
Prime Ministers of Israel
for Arab Affairs

I recently read your November 1990 issue and very much enjoyed its content, historical information and recipes. I would like to join your mailing list as the publication represents a wonderful worldwide vehicle to share cultural experiences and history for all Babylonian Jews●

New York **Franklin H. Aghassi**



Rebecca and Meyer Edelstein (formerly of Bombay) now of Manchester who recently celebrated their golden wedding● P.S.G.

It may be useful to enlighten the new generation of Jews of Iraqi origin about some of the conditions under which their forefathers actually lived in Iraq.

The Jews who lived in Baghdad before 1951 and who are still alive will remember that the Jewish community there was a tightly-knit one. Whole quarters of the city were inhabited by Jews who felt safer in having Jewish neighbours. They had their synagogues and shopping areas in these quarters. For the same reason they preferred to do business with fellow-Jews as much as possible, so they would engage a Jewish carpenter, handyman, domestic servant, etc.

As a result of this Jewish concentration in certain parts of the city, Jewish families knew each other, and news of these families travelled fast by word of mouth. The Iraqi Jews maintained a high standard of ethics. They would do everything possible to preserve their modesty (which they called *ستخ*) and avoid social, marital or financial scandals. If you asked an Iraqi Jew in Baghdad what he wanted most from life, the reply would most likely be "modesty and making a living." *ستخ ورسولك المار*

It will be noted that modesty (decency, propriety, correct moral conduct) comes even before making a living. The worst thing that could happen to a Jewish family was to be the subject of a scandal. That family would be extremely distressed and would say: "We have become the laughing stock of the people." *مظناطاشة*

(Incidentally, the word *مظناطاشة* meaning "theatrical play" is a Persian word spelt *مظناطاشة* which has been added to the vocabulary of the Arabic language used by Iraqi Jews).

It is gratifying to see that, although the Iraqi Jews are now scattered all over the world, and although they came into contact with other nations, they still preserve their much cherished "modesty" and high standards of ethics, with very few exceptions●
Flushing, New York **Salim Khabbaza**

In your November issue No. 45 you published pages of Lucien Gubbay's book *My Origin*. It was a complete surprise for me to find my family name in that family tree. Furthermore, my best friend, Mr. Shlomo Farhi, whom I have known for 39 years, is an Israeli solicitor born in Bulgaria. You can imagine how I felt when I saw his family name also mentioned in the same family tree.

This is a marvellous example of the important work you are doing and the necessity for such a publication in keeping us Iraqi Jews together, and especially for our children and future generations●

London **J. Elia-Shaul**

I have been enjoying reading *The Scribe* for over a year. I was inspired by your "Bad Debt" article in the January edition in which the virtues of savings were extolled in Arabic using Hebrew characters. I was also moved by Albert Khabbaza's plea to save our language. I developed the idea that the Judeo-Iraqi language might have a better chance of surviving if it were transliterated into English alphabet, as many people of Judeo-Iraqi origin can speak and understand this language, but can't read Arabic or Hebrew. So here's an attempt to write Judeo-Iraqi in Roman alphabet:

KAN UMAKAN 'ALALLAHI-TTUKLAN (corrupted to 'ALALLA WETTEKLAN). (This is the start of all stories, meaning: once upon a time – in God we trust).

KAN WAIHED GHEJJAL, FATTAH DEKKAN BSUQ EL MIDAN. JETT EL FATRA WNEHBETU: GHAAH 'END MGHATU, DHEGHBETU CHAPKHA WEE'METU.

This wifely injustice bothered me to no end, so I would now like to address this unkind wife:

"HADHA ANA QBALTU 'ALAL FATRA. KAIF HAYI MEE'LUMA HADHDHU LEYHUDI, YEBNI HEW-WI WTEJI ELFATRA WTEQLEB. LAKEN MGHATU TELTEMU WTEE'MEENU HAYI ALLAH MA YE-QBALA ABADAN.

"YA DHALMI ENTI ASH SABEK TLETMAINU? KAN YEKUN 'ENDEK GHEJJAL BEL BAIT WESSAA'A NEBLAITI BWAIHED AFLAS WEAAMI WYENGHAD TEJIBAILU KALB YQUDU UBASTON KHATEGH YEKAMKESH.

QAYBAYYEN EL MEHEGH MAL ABUKI DHEYYA'U ZOJEK, UMENHAYI NEHDHAMTI UDHEY-YAA'TI MEKHKHEK WENZALTI BEENU HAIL UHAIL. ENTI KAN LAZEM THEDHNAINU WETMEW-KHAILU WETBUSSAINU MA YSEEGH TLETMAINU".

By the way, I left the Alliance School in Baghdad in 1945 and lived in Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and the state of Washington. I am now on a three-year assignment in Belgium and hope to return to Bellvue, Washington, in 1992●

Waterloo, Belgium **George A. Sofer**

My name is Dr. Emile Hay from Rehovot, Israel. I was born in Baghdad, Iraq, 1954. My father, Ezra David (Abu Emile), was the accountant of the Jewish Community in Baghdad. My grandfather, Abraham Khazzoom, was one of the famous lawyers in Baghdad in the forties and fifties. I escaped from Iraq and migrated to Israel in 1971. I finished my medical education in the Hebrew University – The Hadassah Medical School – and now I am a specialist in internal medicine. I am in charge of the medical section in the emergency department of Kaplan Hospital, Rehovot, and the medical head of the intensive mobile care unit of the Magen David Adom in Rehovot.

I have been awarded a grant from the Lewis Fund to spend four months of fellowship in emergency medicine in the emergency department of the Whipps

Cross Hospital, London. The grant consists of £1,000 per month. I am planning to arrive in London with my wife and my little daughter (5½ years) at the end of March and start my fellowship in April. Due to personal reasons, I cannot leave my wife and my little daughter in Israel.

Your assistance during our stay in London will be greatly appreciated. ●
Rehovot, Israel **Dr. Emile Hay**

I endowed a Center for Research on Dyslexia at Bar-Ilan University in Israel and I am trying to get donors who can support the Center on an ongoing basis. We need through your contacts to find operational support for the Center. This Center is primarily interested in treating children with reading disabilities, especially among Sephardic Jews and Jews of Arab countries and of course others including Arab children.

I am sending you under separate cover a copy of each of my two books which appeared recently* ●

New York Prof. Heskell M. Haddad, MD
**Flight from Babylon: Iraq, Iran, Israel, America* – The story of his early life and adventures.

Jews of Arab and Islamic Countries: History, Problems, Solutions – Analysis of a people and culture that finds itself increasingly in the spotlight ●

Donors sought for:

**The Haddad Center
 For Research in Dyslexia
 and Reading Disabilities
 School of Education
 Bar-Ilan University
 Ramat-Gan, Israel**

The Haddad Center, which was established in 1988 through the generosity of the Haddad family, seeks additional financial support to cover running expenses.

Additional information can be obtained by contacting the Haddad Center or Professor H.M. Haddad, 1125 Park Avenue, New York 10128, USA.

What is Dyslexia?

Dyslexia is a disturbance of the brain which causes perceptual defects so that the brain cannot remember psychological signs and forgets sequences of letters and numbers. This is absolutely not connected to the degree of intelligence and IQ of the patient. In a child, in the pre-school and the first years of grade school, this could become very disturbing for his/her ability to read and advance in maths. Statistically speaking, one out of every five children have this problem which can interfere with their education and progress in school, but in 80% of the cases, if well researched and well treated, these children can advance and do well. The Haddad Center endeavours to advance the research on Dyslexia and help the various schools in Israel, especially in deprived areas, to diagnose and treat this condition ●

I recently came across a copy of your publication during the *limnud* conference at Oxford. I produce in my spare time a little magazine *Harakevet* (The Train) about railways in the Middle East. Interested readers can write to me for subscriptions. I

would appreciate receiving from your readers any memories or souvenirs of the railway system in Iraq.

In this tense period I only hope that one can still make contact on such mundane matters. Personally, I find that being slightly mad is the only way I can keep sane! ●

**9 Primley Gardens
 Leeds**

**Rabbi Walter
 Rothschild**



Thank you for including me among your subscribers, which has already brought this black sheep of the Soffer family from the Israeli desert back to the fold!

Keep up with this wonderful work and keep me posted through your forthcoming issues!

In praising the "process of integration" of Sephardi Jews in Israel, Mr. Arieh L. Handler, in his letter to *The Scribe* of last August, seems to have forgotten the watchword *unsere* ("ours" in Yiddish) which formed the demarcation line between the Sephardi newcomers to Israel in the early 1950s and the then "ruling" elite of Eastern European Jews.

All through the first three gruelling decades of the so-called integration, a couple of effete Sephardi cabinet members were condescendingly put in charge of such ineffectual positions as the Post Office and the Police, while a handful of latter-day vassals were assigned to represent the Sephardim in the Knesset. Surprisingly enough, those so-called representatives almost invariably had Polish wives, who may have helped them to integrate smoothly and turn a blind eye to the plight of their erstwhile countrymen.

The *intifadeh* of the Sephardim towards the beginning of the 1980s shook the entire country in general and the Labour Party – its principal cause – in particular.

The Likud fared only slightly better on this score.

The "integration" of Babylonian Jewry in Israel was a traumatic experience. Many of them still carry the scars of that ordeal. It called for remarkable resourcefulness, integrity and moral courage to come through it unscathed – let alone succeed *in the face* of that splendid, "extremely positive" integration. Many did make it: unaided, unbending, undaunted, uncompromising, unflinching and defiant. They fought their way up – smiling! ●

**Ramat Efal
 Israel**

**Ezra S. Soffer
 Lecturer on Public Relations
 and Effective Communication
 in Business**

My brother-in-law who lives in Ra'anana, Israel, sent me the January edition of *The Scribe* which both my wife and I have read with great enthusiasm. Indeed, the diaspora seems to come together as one reads the fascinating articles and letters in this quite unique Journal. I would very much appreciate being included in your circulation list ●

New York

Gordon Newman

ISRAELI BONDS our bond with Israel

Your description of the State of Israel Bonds function in the last issue was heart-warming.

Following the publication we had telephone calls and letters from people known and unknown to us – all are volunteering their generous support in units from \$250 to a thousand times more.

It has occurred to me that not all of your readers know that State of Israel Bonds are sound and profitable investments which are good for the investor.

Please publish our full address and telephone number for others who might favour this way of helping Israel.

Toda ●

**Gideon Selinger
 20a North End Road State of Israel Bonds
 London NW11 7PH Tel: 081-458 6559**

I read with great excitement the letter of Joseph and Hilda Somekh in your publication of January. As I was with the same class with Joseph and Hilda (Simha) and our pictures appeared together in that photo of the Finishing Class – June 1948 in your publication, I would be greatly glad if you can kindly send me their address in Amsterdam so that we can exchange views and learn more about other members of our class.

Thank you so much for the invaluable service you are doing to our Iraqi Jewish community ●

**Great Neck,
 New York**

Albert Khabbaza

In one of your *Scribes* (No. 38) you published the picture of a class of Alliance students of 1940. As my cousin Renée Bonfils was portrayed there, I sent her the issue. She has (a) sent me back the names that were missing or needed correction and I send it herewith. (b) She requests you to send her *The Scribe* as she found many interesting items in it.

15 – Flora Gabbay	34 – Loolou Aboudi
17 – Farha Jacob Dalah	35 – Rachel Aboudi
29 – Rachel Horesh	36 – Master Djerassi
30 – Rose Meir Nissim	39 – Madame Djerassi
31 – Alice Jacob	40 – Hanina Sadka
33 – Khatoon Dangoor	45 – Alice Abdulnabi ●

London **Irene Sala**

I just came across one of your bulletins about the Iraqi Jewry. I would like to thank you for doing such a superb job in bringing to light our heritage, background, traditions and customs. God bless you and your colleagues. I would appreciate being included in your mailing list ●

**Great Neck,
 New York**

Gourji M. Raby

Haron and I enjoyed reading *The Scribe* from cover to cover.

I love to read Naim's comments. About the "evil eye". I agree fully with his explanation. He is right ●

New York

Mrs. Daisy Iny

Thank you very much for your generous contribution for the restoration of the Main Synagogue of Budapest at Dohány Street ●

Budapest

**Central Board of
 Hungarian Jews**

I am the daughter of Jonah and Lulu Bahary. I grew up in Baghdad and learned of *The Scribe* from a friend from my old neighbourhood. I left in 1947 to Teheran and then to Israel. I read issue No. 45, November 1990, and recognised some of the family names from the photo on the back page. My children have read the November issue and also find it quite informative, incisive and enlightening. They would like to learn what Israel was like before the Exile, what led to the defeat of our country, and what had happened to the government, king and his family on the event of the Babylonian takeover. Perhaps you may answer them in a subsequent issue ●

University Park, Ill., Ilana Marsten
U.S.A.

Scribe: After the thaw of the last Ice Age 9000 years ago, the Middle East was the first region to become habitable. As mankind embarked on developing agriculture, the valleys of the Nile and of the Tigris and Euphrates assumed particular importance.

Soon the Egyptian and Babylonian empires dominated the ancient world and the fortunes of the other nations of the region depended on the rise and decline of these empires. The golden age of Israel at the time of David and Solomon happened at a time when Mesopotamian power was at an ebb.

In 733 BCE, Assyria invaded the northern kingdom of Israel and deported its population. In 587 BCE, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia marched on Jerusalem. Jewish resistance was weakened by the pacifist preachings of the prophet Jeremiah. As a result, Judah was occupied and the Jewish elite were taken captive to Babylon. King Jehoiachin became Jewish king-in-exile and later became the first Exilarch (Prince of the Captivity). Jeremiah blamed the defeat on the sins of the people and this absurdly became the standard explanation for Jewish disasters throughout the ages right down to Hitler's Holocaust. Jeremiah was lynched in Egypt by the Jewish refugees who fled there.

Very soon afterwards, Cyrus the Great of Persia conquered Babylon and gave the Jews their freedom. Many returned to Jerusalem to build the Second Temple but the majority remained in Babylon to prosper in the land of the rivers. The Babylonian Diaspora invented the Synagogue and developed the rabbinical system and the Talmud and became the blueprint for Jewish diasporas throughout the world, and their leader for many centuries. The Babylonian, Ezra the Scribe, can be regarded as the true founder of modern Judaism from which also emerged Christianity and Islam.

The office of Exilarch lasted for 1800 years and came to an end in 1270. It was revived in England in 1970 – exactly 700 years afterwards.

Today, Saddam's Babylon, having assumed added importance by its immense oil reserves, has again become a threat to the Jewish state, but a new chapter of regional history is in the making. It is hoped that Israel will play a prominent part in the post-war regional structure to ensure lasting peace in the Middle East ●

French Professor of Babylonian Jewry

Doctor Sasson Aboudi Shem-Tov, Professor of Psychiatry at the Sainte-Anne Hospital, Paris, and in private consultancy, died suddenly at his home in Paris on 14th December.

He was born in Baghdad in 1917 and after completing his National Service in the Iraq army he went to France to study medicine. During the German occupation of France he joined the Resistance movement and took active part in operations against the Germans – in fact the Germans put a price on his head dead or alive – and earned him the Resistance Medal.

Prof. Sasson Shem-Tov was loved and respected by all – some of his professional colleagues were previously his students. He was buried in Kiryat Shaul, Tel Aviv near his mother and other members of his family ●

S.A.S.

The Sephardi communities of Iraqi descent who previously lived in Rangoon, Calcutta and Bombay for many years prior to and during and after World War II, immigrated to their new homes in London, Los Angeles and Sydney in the late forties and early fifties. It wasn't too long before they organised their communities and provided places of worship. The primary objective was to continue the Sephardi/Baghdadian forms of prayer, rituals, traditions and customs as were practised in Burma and India and earlier in Baghdad and thus enable the children and grandchildren an opportunity to learn about and practice their Judaism as it was taught to their elders.

My father, J.R. Saul, of blessed memory, emigrated to the United States from Calcutta in 1950. He was, along with a few others, one of the founders of the Kahal Joseph Congregation in Los Angeles in the early fifties and its first president. The present Hazan, Sassoon Ezra, a college classmate of mine in Calcutta, was a close associate of my father in the establishment of the congregation.

Now that we find ourselves living all over the world, it is very heartwarming to realise that *The Scribe* provides a valuable cultural link with all those who cherish the memory of our rich Baghdadi heritage and gives us a sense of identity with the past, the present and the future.

Thank you for all your good work ●
Albuquerque, New Mexico Saul H. Saul

My parents, Dr. Edward and Suzette Mahlab (first cousins), were born and married in Iraq. After leaving Iraq in 1951 they settled in Israel for about 10 years; later on they moved to the United States where we presently reside.

My sisters Tikva, Hanna, Dorothy and I were brought up learning about many of the Iraqi traditions. Over the years we've heard many stories from my parents as they revealed their memories about life in



On our mailing list

Mrs. Rosemary Friedman, London
Mrs. Arabella Shamash, London
Mrs. Dinah Zelkha, London
E. Shamash, London
Dr. E. Shaoul, London
Rahmin Rabea, Kenton
Rouben H. Obadia, Mill Hill
Haron Khalastchi, Mill Hill
Mrs. Rosa S. Hakkak, London
Mrs. H. Embardji, London
A.L. Handler, London
Mrs. R. Dallal, London
Miss Lydia Collins, London
S. Balas, Edgware
Mrs. Albertine Zilkha, London
Mrs. V. Levy, London
A. Dangoor, London
Dr. A.H. Saleh, Cheshire
N. Appleton, London
Mr. & Mrs. Eli Shahmoon, Mill Hill
Sir Sigmund Sternberg, London
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Baghdad. There are many times I wish that I could see the homes my parents grew up in. As a result of reading the articles in *The Scribe* I do feel closer to my heritage. Thank you ●
Forest Hill, Zahava Mahlab
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