

JEWISH AFFAIRS

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JEWISH AFFAIRS

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In publishing JEWISH AFFAIRS, the SA Jewish Board of Deputies aims to produce a cultural forum which caters for a wide variety of interests in the community. The journal will be a vehicle for the publication of articles of significant thought and opinion on contemporary Jewish issues, and will aim to encourage constructive debate, in the form of reasoned and researched essays, on all matters of Jewish and general interest.

JEWISH AFFAIRS aims also to publish essays of scholarly research on all subjects of Jewish interest, with special emphasis on aspects of South African Jewish life and thought. Scholarly research papers that make an original contribution to their chosen field of enquiry will be submitted to the normal processes of academic refereeing before being accepted for publication.

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The SA Jewish Board of Deputies is committed to dialogue and free enquiry. It aims to protect human rights and to strive for better relations among peoples of diverse cultural backgrounds in South Africa.

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A SOUTH AFRICAN SCULPTOR LOOKS BACK

*

Naomi Jacobson

My grandfather was the famed Yiddish writer and scholar David Goldblatt, who is best remembered today for his two-volume *Yiddish Encyclopaedia*, written (amongst other publications) after his relocation to New York in 1915. He remained in South Africa long enough, however, to make his mark on the Jewish cultural and intellectual scene. With the help of his wife, Fanny Esther, he founded and ran *Der Yiddisher Advokaat*, a Cape Town-based Yiddish weekly that lasted from 1904 to 1914. He was amongst those centrally involved in the delegation to the Cape Parliament that was successful in getting Yiddish recognised as a European language.

David's oldest child, Sarah ('Saartjie'), likewise helped in getting a new language established in South Africa. At a very young age, she became the secretary of the famed C.J. Langenhoven, the poet, writer and advocate who authored *Die Stem van Suid Afrika* and is regarded as one of the fathers of the Afrikaans language. After his death, she became his literary executrix, a role she carried out with the utmost dedication. She was also renowned as a teacher of Afrikaans, teaching foreign diplomats amongst others and relentlessly putting them through their paces.

David and Fanny Goldblatt, originally from Poland, arrived in Cape Town in 1896. They had three other children, Rebecca, Reuben and my father, Israel. All their children were educated at the German school in Cape Town, as their father wanted them to learn the language which he himself had learnt and through which he had gained so much knowledge of great writers like Goethe.

Rebecca, my "second mother", was bright as a button, sang beautifully and had a brilliant sense of humour. Because of her knowledge of German, she worked for the Censor's Board during the Great War. I never knew Reuben, who died young

in a car crash, and very little was told to us about him. Sarah, a die-hard Afrikaner nationalist, felt alienated from her more liberally-inclined family members and, being a rather hard, sometimes aggressive personality, was difficult to get close to.

My father arrived in Windhoek, South West Africa, in 1918, starting out as a public prosecutor. Later, he was admitted to the bar, where he had a long and distinguished career. My maternal grandparents, Reverend Mordecai Leib Cohen and his wife Sarah, arrived in Windhoek in 1924. Reverend Cohen was the first rabbi and opened the shul there shortly after his arrival. They had nine children, including my mother, Janet Ida. She met and married Israel that same year and they became an influential, dynamic couple, cultured, intellectual, sporty and fun. Israel was a brilliant lawyer, philosopher and writer. He started Windhoek's first chess club and, with Janet, played tennis and golf. Later, he did much to help the African community in dealing with the legal strictures that so bedevilled their everyday lives, and he was regarded as a thorn in the side of the governments of the day. My mother was a leading member of most societies and started the city's first old age home – the *Werth te Huis*, named after the administrator.

Israel and Janet had four children – myself (born in 1925), Michal, Karen and Lucian. They encouraged us to explore all kinds of avenues – music, art, sport and literature. I am what I am today because of them.

We all attended St. Georges, a very English Anglican church school, thereafter attending a government school. There were all sorts of activities, from sports to a percussion band and elocution and dancing classes. As young children we had a private German nanny, and later an Afrikaans one, so we became thoroughly trilingual. At an early age, I became very interested in painting and other art subjects. I also loved singing and took part in all music and dancing events. Besides those activities, I played tennis and golf. I was a very precocious child – I still am.

Michal married Hymie Goldblatt (no relation). In 1968, they immigrated to Israel, where Hymie worked as a doctor in Haifa. What a caring, sharing, grand couple they were! They, too, had four children. My younger sister, Karen, the youngest, married Werner Blum, with whom she had two children. She studied law and in due course became the second lady judge in South

Naomi Jacobson (née Goldblatt) is a well-known South African portrait sculptor, specialising in portraiture mainly from live settings. Her commissioned works include busts of Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo, Walter Sisulu and King Shaka. She has also studied and sculpted the San Bushmen in Namibia, where she was born and where she lived and worked for many years. Many of her works today reside in local, international and private collections, and in addition she has created a number of sculptures of birds and buck for public fountains.

Africa and the first in Namibia. Lucian also became a lawyer, practicing first in Windhoek and then in Swakopmund. In the early years he was great fun, a fine sportsman and in later years what a dancer! He took life too seriously as he matured.

When war broke out in 1939, quite a lot of local Germans were interned, and some by then had even returned to Germany. The flags with swastikas were very obvious in Kaiser Street, and there was a very active Nazi party in the town. As we were young and had many German friends we were not aware of certain activities, except that many young men and boys fought up "North". Some did not come back. In our home we had the wireless blaring forth day and night, even getting news from Germany (Zeesen was the name of the station).

After school, I studied at the Michaelis School of Art in Cape Town and had singing lessons with Al Bini Bini a well-known Italian musician. It was a sad time in many ways as the war was on and we lost quite a few friends. But I learnt so much – going to lectures, concerts etc. During this time, I met Larry Jacobson, a medical student. We married in early January 1947 and decided to go back to Windhoek. The country had excited Larry on two previous visits so, after three days and three nights on the train, we arrived "Home".

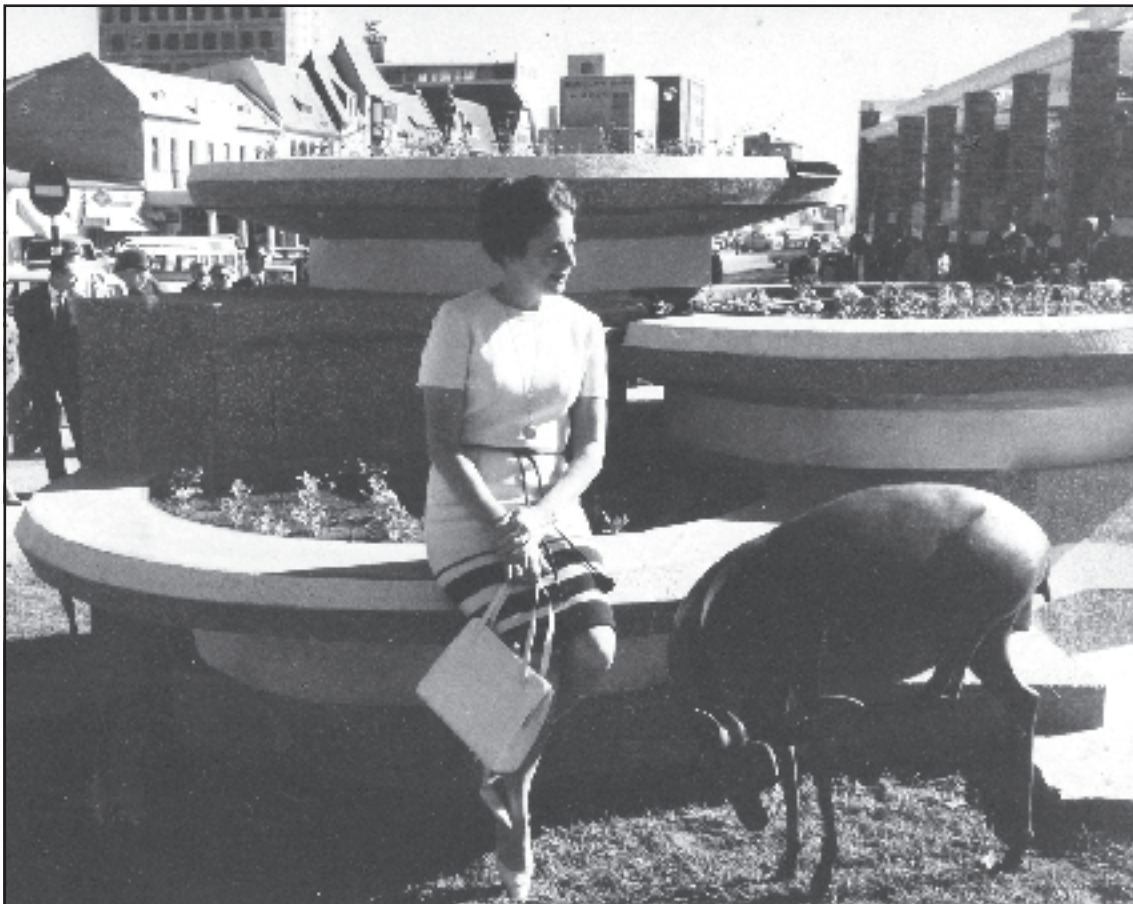
South West Africa, now Namibia, is a most

fascinating country, large but not over-populated.

The ethnic groups comprised of Bushmen, Hereros, Damaras, Namas and Ovambo peoples. I was very interested in these people, whose customs, dress and physiques were so diverse, and started a lot of my speciality portraiture depicting them.

We were extremely lucky to be surrounded by people of such diverse backgrounds, all contributing to the excitement of a young country. As a family, we took full part in all that was going on. After World War I, by which time SWA was under South African control, Windhoek and some smaller towns built sports fields, established orchestras and a range of other cultural organisations, all quite amazing for a country where there were then only a few thousand white people and one million blacks.

After our arrival in 1947, Larry began looking for a practice and we landed up in Lüderitzbucht. I hated it. As my husband said, the wind blew only twice during the five years we were there – once for two years and once for three years. There were no trees, just Skeleton Coast desert, no fresh water and no fresh milk or vegetables. Sanitation was the bucket system up amongst the rocks. When my mother came to see me she cried – imagine a nice Jewish girl in a place like this! Our essentials were brought down by lorry. Our two children, Janine and David, were born there.



The author in Windhoek next to one of her sculptures, circa. 1970.

Lüderitz was a very German town, as could be seen in the local architecture, the most beautiful German China glass on sale in the shops, the clothing people wore and so many other touches. There were only about 1500 white people and 3000 blacks. Our good friends were Wilfred and Molly Lubowski, whose son, Anton, was later assassinated by the government because of his political activities.

Luckily, I spoke German. I started the Arts Association, dabbled in clay and plaster of Paris and gave lessons in English, Scandinavian embroidering and drawing. I loved the colours of the sand dunes, the sunsets and the semi-precious stones along the beach, called Agate Beach. Today, Namibia is a great tourist destination. I understand that it has a harsh climate, but there is so much to see. There are no words to describe the desert, the rocks, the mountains and the sheer openness of the country.

I cannot say that I was sorry to leave Lüderitzbucht. Being so high spirited and excited about life in general, I had been stagnating at a still young age. A short spell followed in Umtata, Eastern Cape, where Larry went for a refresher course. It was heaven, moving from a very German to a very English environment. Certainly, it is one of the most beautiful parts of South Africa. It was there that my inspiration began to return. I joined the opera group and started sculpting and painting, sculpture being my main interest. Umtata was a small town, but very much alive. There was a wide array of different ethnic groups, whose art and craftwork were so colourful.

On my return to Windhoek, I fixed up a studio and started sculpting in earnest. As I have said people, all people, interested me. One can take a photo, but working in clay or plaster in three dimensions is really to get to the inside of the person. It also enables the artist to spend time with those they are portraying, conversing with and learning all about them. One becomes a kind of psychologist after a while. You would be staggered to learn some of the things that sitters have confided to me!

Larry was a modest, humble human being, quite opposite to me in many ways. He was completely devoted to his patients, expending a degree of time and effort on their behalf that contrasts strongly with the way the medical profession operates today. Often, he would send me patients who were depressed, bringing them into my art classes where we helped them to regain some confidence in themselves. I also used to help people who had been ill or injured get back the use of their hands by using clay. After our move to Johannesburg in 1973, Larry was in charge of looking after political detainees. It was a trying, often heart breaking time, but thank goodness they were so well treated by him. He wrote his own memoirs before his passing some seven years ago.

When we moved to Johannesburg, I never

dreamt that I would be accepted into the Golden City art scene, but with the friendship of Cecil Skotnes, Larry Scully and one or two others, my career soon took off. I knew that it was not going to be easy, but I really wanted to be a portrait sculptor. I was given an exhibition by Norma Wolfewitz, who had opened a gallery, and exhibited with an English painter. To my astonishment, I sold all fourteen of my Namibian ethnic heads. I now began getting regular commissions and never needed another exhibition.

I had some wonderful exciting times, travelling to many parts in South Africa to do my subjects. After doing a portrait, I would always put down in writing my feelings about the work just done and the characters of the people depicted.

The materials with which sculptors work vary. I was introduced to clay plaster of cement fondue, a metallic cement (it has a high aluminium content) from France, by Frank McWilliam in England. One of the top sculptors of the day, he was commissioned to do the head of the Herero Chief Hosea, to be placed in the United Nations building in New York. I was introduced to him by my father, and he became my mentor and great friend. He taught me so much and I met many interesting people through him. When I got home, I could not stop working. One of my main subjects was the Bushmen people, without whose art we would have no history of our forebears of tens of thousands of years ago. I learnt so much and had some glorious experiences with them. Anthropology is magical to me. I could easily have become an anthropologist, and also a palaeontologist. I read whatever I could lay my hands on regarding this, and as it turned out came to do the heads of Philip Tobias and Raymond Dart, two great world authorities in the field. These heads are now at the Medical School at Wits University. Philip and I remained dear friends until his passing earlier this year.

Portraiture is the orphan of the art world but make no mistake, it is exciting and exhilarating. I did my work because I loved the interaction with the subjects, not for financial gain. I honoured the people I felt were of historical importance, and money could not buy that.

I began receiving commissions from far and wide. When I was approached by Mangosuthu Buthelezi of the Zulu nation to do King Shaka, I was overjoyed. King Goodwill Zwelethini, members of the family and Buthelezi himself were constant visitors. The unveiling took place in 1979, the centenary of the Anglo Zulu War. There were many guests from the UK, and my heart was full being part of that historical event.

I was then commissioned to do Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Johnstone, Chief Scout of South Africa. This commission led to a friendship I was extremely proud of. He was the Prior of St Johns, Lt-Col of the Transvaal Scottish Regiment and head of various mining companies. His wife, Irene, became one of my very dearest friends. The

unveiling was a very rewarding experience, and as a result of that commission I went on to do busts of Lord and Lady Baden-Powell. Lady BP did not want to have herself sculpted, but was eventually inveigled to my home, and I did her as she was taping her life story. I did Lord BP from photographs. The busts were unveiled at the Cape Anglican Cathedral in a very solemn and emotional ceremony.



Lord Baden-Powell

A rather fun commission was of Sir Richard Luyt, Principal of the University of Cape Town. During the sitting, he related his wartime experiences and those from when he was Governor of Kenya. I had been told that Glenava, the Principal's house, was haunted. While working, I saw a chair move. I looked up every so often, and the damn chair kept moving. I told Sir Richard that I knew the story about the house being haunted,



Lady Baden-Powell and Head

whereupon he laughed, picked up the chair and released a turtle that had got jammed underneath it. So much for ghosts!

The Bank of England commissioned a head of King Sobhuza of Swaziland from me. I can write a book about that experience. He spoke good English and when it was completed he suggested we unveil it privately one evening. This took place on his sweeping lawn, with just the king and I present.



The author with her King Sobhuza head

One day, I was contacted by Peter Haskins of Citicom wanting to know if I would please do the heads of Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and Oliver Tambo. My shock and surprise can hardly be imagined. You cannot believe how lucky this country was to have been served by men of this calibre. There were others as well, but these three were true giants and they were now in my hands. The wonderful openness and memorable conversations we had as I worked are beyond words. Walter Sisulu, in my opinion, was the great man behind all that happened in South Africa. He was a happy, loving family man, and I knew his wife very well – we were *friends*. I also shared a very personal hour with Adelaide Tambo when Oliver died, and we cried together. He had written such a beautiful love letter to her before his death.

Then came the larger-than-life statue of Steve Biko, commissioned by Donald Woods. The latter, a gregarious and genial man, was one of the most remarkable South Africans of his time. He was the editor of the East London *Daily Dispatch*, and after Biko's murder, became the first private citizen to address the UN Security Council. He eventually fled South Africa and settled in the UK. Donald and the Biko family helped me enormously to make a sculpture worthy of Steve Biko's stature. The statue is now in the main 'piazza' of East London and was unveiled by Nelson Mandela.

Besides portraiture, I loved doing large birds – flamingos, cranes etc. – as well as buck. I was busy eight hours a day creating, listening to my



Oliver Tambo, by Naomi Jacobson

music and eating Mars bars when I got hungry. Everything beautiful fascinated me. I became interested in other arts and crafts, like beading art, needlework, went to lectures on antiques, read histories and travelled overseas to learn about different cultures. I had an abundance of energy and really drove my husband to distraction.

As you will have gathered, I have always looked for ways and means to honour, teach and help others *through* ART. After a long day's work, I would try and relax, listening to music while sewing, beading, reading and learning. I could not stop working and now, 87 years-old but still 21 in spirit, am as eager as ever to continue. There has never been a tomorrow in my life – it has always been today that counts.



With my husband, Larry, working on the Biko statue



Press report on unveiling of Steve Biko statue

APPENDIX: Select works by Naomi Jacobson

Portraiture

Alan Paton – University of Pietermaritzburg
 Sir Richard Luyt – University of Cape Town
 President Sam Nujoma of Namibia
 Harry Oppenheimer – De Beers, Kimberley
 President Museweni of Uganda
 14 heads of the Randlords – Ernest Oppenheimer Recreation Hall
 Colonel A Johnstone – head of Boy Scouts 1973
 Lord and Lady Baden Powell – Boy Scout Headquarters
 Sir Percy Fitzpatrick – The Johannesburg Zoo
 Chief Hosea Kutako – Chief of the Herero, Namibia
 Professor Raymond Dart – University of Witwatersrand
 Professor Philip Tobias – University of Witwatersrand
 Ian Player – Wilderness and Wildlife
 King Sobhuza – Swaziland
 Sir Seretse Khama – Botswana
 Chief Jonathan – Lesotho
 Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi – for the Zulu Nation
 Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo – Robben Island
 Nelson Mandela – a gift to Parliament by the Guy Martin Trust

Life-Size Statues

Shaka Zulu for the Zulu Nation – Ulundi
 Cetshwayo for the Zulu Nation
 Makontwani for Lesotho – General of Moshoeshoe
 Steve Biko – City of East London
 Chief Phatudi for Lebowa
 San Bushman – Windhoek Museum
 A tribute to women: 'The Contessa', a three metre-high sculpture, and "Gabriella", a life-size nude study in bronze – Michelangelo Hotel, Johannesburg.

DAVID GOLDBLATT: PHOTOGRAPHER EXTRAORDINAIRE

*

Frank Startz

David Goldblatt has spent much of his life as a photographer recording and chronicling many aspects of South African history as it unfolded, especially but not exclusively during the apartheid years. His objectivity, honesty and passion as an observer have been unswerving, his work has attained major recognition in several countries and, as the Appendix shows, has been recognised via numerous awards. Without doubt, he is one of this country's accomplished and influential sons. Yet he remains humble and totally unaffected by this mountainous public acclaim.

I met with David earlier this year in order to gain some personal and biographical insight preparatory to writing this piece. I had known him for many years but found that my knowledge of him was embarrassingly scant. I came away from our discussions refreshed by both his candour and his humility.

Frank Startz is a Johannesburg-based artist, with a lengthy record in the field of Jewish civil rights activism. The interview with David Goldblatt featured in this article was conducted by him in May 2012.

When I remarked that his professional biography might be too extensive to be included in this article, he furnished me with the following, abridged version:

I was born in Randfontein in 1930, the third son of Eli and Olga Goldblatt who came to South Africa as children with their parents to escape conditions in Eastern Europe.

After matriculating at Krugersdorp High in 1948, I attempted to become a magazine photographer, a field then almost unknown in South Africa. I failed and went to work for my father, who had established a men's outfitting store in Randfontein. While working in the shop, I took a B Comm. degree at the University of the Witwatersrand and maintained my interest in photography.

My father died in 1962. I sold the business in 1963 and decided to become a photographer. Gradually I built up a professional practice, mainly in the field of photo journalism, specialising in work outside the studio photographing for magazines, corporations, advertising agencies and institutions.



"Zulu women salvaging bricks for a white contractor from Indians' houses demolished under the Group Areas Act, Fietas, 3 June 1982" (David Goldblatt Fifty-One Years, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, 2001, p226)

Recognizing the need for a facility to teach visual literacy and photographic skills, particularly to people disadvantaged by apartheid, I founded the Market Photo Workshop in 1989.

I regard myself as an unlicensed, self-appointed observer and critic of South African society which I continue to explore with the camera. I live in Johannesburg with Lily my wife. Our children are Steven, Brenda and Ron. Our grandchildren are Daniel and Samuel.

On 29 March 2011, David was informed that the government was going to award him the Order of Ikhamanga - Silver. He responded by informing them that he would regretfully have to decline the honour in protest over the Protection of State Information Bill (passed in Parliament on 'Black Tuesday', 23 November). This, he said, sought to muzzle the press and was in direct conflict with spirit of our democracy and, importantly, the spirit of the award.

David's work has appeared in 24 books published internationally – mainly solo publications but also with other participants. It is represented in 17 museum and institutional collections. A solo exhibition of his work was held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City in 1998, to mention but one of many such exhibitions. In all he has participated in 66 one man exhibitions internationally as well as 35

selected group exhibitions. He has also received 10 major photographic honours.

AN INTERVIEW WITH DAVID GOLDBLATT

FS: How did your association with the Market Gallery come about?

DG: Barney Simon and Mannie Manim started the Market Theatre in 1977 and we were all involved with the project. My kids went there to sandpaper the woodwork. Everyone pitched in. I was on the periphery and then got a call from Carol Hacker. She said that she would like to start a photographic gallery. I'd never met her, but she sounded very genuine. So I spoke to Mannie and Barney and they gave the go-ahead so long as I was going to be involved with it. So I officially became Carol's advisor and we ran the Gallery for several years. We worked very hard. It was quite effective – we had an exhibition every three weeks. Despite this success, the usual nonsense started with the Market Theatre Foundation. Money and so on.

FS: Tell us about your association with the Market Art Gallery people, namely Wolf Weinek, Paul Stopforth and Mike Goldberg and how this tied in with the Market Foundation.

DG: We had very good relations with them. I need to tell you a little about that. The Art Gallery came about a short while after we started. Wolf Weinek came up with the brilliant idea of a flea



"Friends in a rooming house, Abel Road, Hillbrow, March 1973" (David Goldblatt Fifty-One Years, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, 2001, p175)

market that raised funds for the two galleries. They (The Market Theatre Foundation) were going to give us 10% from the Flea Market takings. The Flea Market was so successful that it actually saved the whole Market Foundation. And then - I don't remember the whole sequence of events, but I think I became chairman of the whole thing. I then got hold of Graeme Lindopp and told him we were being robbed - I reminded him that we, the galleries, were supposed to receive 10% of the flea market income. Things became quite unpleasant. I don't remember what the outcome was. I don't think we ever got the full amount due to us. It was very sad and showed how unappreciative of Wolf they were.

FS: Wolf was a very fine man. We worked together for many years after we'd established The Visual Arts Council of South Africa.

DG: He was indeed a very fine man and he knew a great deal about art; he really had the welfare of the Market at heart.

FS: Can you talk about the processes of your work. I imagine a lot of your photographs might be instinctive, that you don't really formulate too much about the actual photograph. Sure, elements like composition, cropping and what will finally appear in the frame are obviously important and have to be reckoned and play an important part, but as to the specific subject: how much of that is instinct and how much by design?

DG: It is hard to explain the process. I usually start off with an idea about the subject - I seldom photograph things in isolation. Say I become interested in, for example, Afrikaners or Boksburg.

I might make some forays to establish what it is I'm looking for and then, once I have an idea that eventually becomes something I can approach with a sense of what it is I'm about, the process becomes instinctive - instinctive in the sense that I look at a scene and walk around it, look at it and look at it again. I don't shoot from the hip - you know we used to have a friend, John Brett Cohen (sadly now dead) - he shot from the hip. He did some brilliant work, but it wasn't my way. So depending on what I was doing, I would shoot from a small camera - a Leica, or a large camera, a view camera. In all cases, my approach would be the same. I needed to know what I was looking for, and what my subject matter, broadly speaking, was about. I would then hone in on what fitted.

FS: On the broader aspect, do you discard much of what you shoot?

DG: Well it varies, varies a lot. I mean, most of the work I've done over the last twenty years has been on a view camera, that is quite a big instrument with a black cloth and ground glass and the film is big and very expensive. So I rarely shoot more than two sheets, one for insurance. Lately, I've been working on a project where I'm shooting too many; I've become wild - shooting four or five exposures, and it's bad - it doesn't mean I'm doing it better.

FS: How did you first become interested in photography? What was your initial impetus?

DG: I was fourteen years old. I wanted to record things for model boat building. I used to build model boats and also collected stamps - I wanted to record watermarks and things like that.



"Dominee S. M. van Vuuren of the Dutch Reformed Church (Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk), Witfield, At prayer with a family during a pastoral call, 17 June 1980" (David Goldblatt Fifty-One Years, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, 2001, p266)

Very quickly, it grew into photography itself and then I became obsessed with the ideas that came out of the magazines like *Look*, *Life*, etc. They were published every two weeks and were pushing out amazing stuff. That was the golden age of picture magazines. TV had not yet swept through Europe, so millions of people bought magazines as a sort of visual window. Once TV came in, picture magazines began to die. But during the time they were around, they published amazing stuff. It was that period that excited and provoked me. I then began to photograph more seriously, and began to photograph at school. I photographed Ronnie Friedman cribbing in a Latin class. It grew from that kind of thing into an interest in the world around.

FS: The first sign of recognition: How did this come about?

DG: Well, it depends on what you mean by recognition. The first pictures that I ever published were in a little magazine called *South African*



"Saturday afternoon rugby: South African Police versus Iscor (Iron and Steel Corporation) at Loftus Versfeld, Pretoria, 1967" (Some Afrikaners Revisited, Umuzi, Cape Town, 2007, p174)

Photography, published and owned by Cecil Holmes.

FS: How old were you then?

DG: We are talking about the late 1940s early '50s. I must have been in my late teens. Anyway, that was still amateur stuff. Then, during the ANC's Defiance Campaign of 1952, I sent some work over to *Picture Post*. When Apartheid was first introduced at the Johannesburg railway station, I did a series of pictures which I sent to the editor of *Picture Post*. The editor rejected them and sent me a polite note. But when the Defiance Campaign got into full swing, he sent me a cable to send him anything I had. There was a big meeting on Freedom Square and I photographed that very badly. I sent him some of that stuff.

Then I went to a meeting at the Trades Hall in Kerk Street. This was a mass meeting of the ANC - everybody was there. I was the only person there with a camera, my first Leica. I photographed and photographed for about two hours and thought it was a very long piece of film, so I opened the camera to find that the film hadn't engaged in the sprockets! I then began to realise that while I was interested in events as a citizen, I was less interested as a photographer. My real concern was with the conditions and values that lead to the events. Editors wanted photographs of political events - mostly those of violence. I had to accept that, as a coward, I was not able to supply the kind of photographs required. I am a coward - I abhor physical violence. I don't know how to deal with it. I became more interested in what lead to the events. That gradually permeated into what I was doing.

In the early 1960s, I sent some work to a magazine called *Town*, in England. It was quite an avant-garde publication, the male equivalent of



"Freda Fleischman and her father, Highlands North, 1973" (David Goldblatt Fifty-One Years, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, 2001, p172)

Queen, which was publishing very strong fashion work. *Town* was mostly of men's interests and they employed very fine writers, designers and photographers. So I sent some work across and then got a letter back from the assistant editor saying that they would like me to do some work around the Anglo-American Corporation, on which they were going to do a big story. I submitted my work, which they published. Then their assistant editor, Sally Angwin, came to South Africa. By that time, I had sold my father's business in Randfontein. It was in 1963 and I was now a full time photographer, with no ties to speak of. I had two Leicas and a lot of hope.

FS: How did you exist?

DG: Well, I took enough out of the business to keep us going for about a year. Anyway, Sally Angwin was a South African and she came out here to get married. She contacted me and she was then commissioned by a man called Desmond Niven (the grandson of Percy Fitzpatrick). He had bought the South African *Tatler*, which was a real social rag, and he commissioned Sally to turn it into a sort of *Queen & Town*. He wanted to make an avant-garde magazine for the South African market, and she became its editor. She was a very fine magazine editor, very accomplished. She recruited me to do a lot of work. So that was for me a major breakthrough, because then my work became known. I did some interesting stuff and she was very receptive. And so that's more or less how I started.

FS: I recall that a few years ago the SABCTV,



"Going to work: 3:30 am, Wolwekraal-Marabastad bus, standing passengers have slumped to the floor, 1983" (David Goldblatt Fifty-One Years, *Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona*, 2001, p283)

used or in this case abused, one of your photographs to misrepresent an event. Wolf (Weinek) and I got involved in an attempt to get them to set the record straight. But I think by then you had already received the benefit of legal action against them and got the matter sorted out.

DG: Yes, of course, I remember. What happened was that Lily and I were out for the night. When we got home Steven, our eldest son, said that he had seen a piece on the eight o'clock television news where they had used a photograph of mine of an *ouderling* in the N.G. Kerk. It was a mission church, the coloured church. They'd used a photograph of mine which showed the *ouderling* and his wife and daughter walking home from church – I think it was in Carnarvon – anyway it was a totally innocuous photograph and the SABC used it to illustrate some ANC insurgents who had been shot on the Swazi border. I phoned them up the next day and gave them hell and told them I was taking it further. I then got on to my lawyer, Raymond Tucker, who was a real tiger. Raymond got them to broadcast an apology on the same news programme.

FS: What are some of the processes that guide your work? How much is by design, composition, editing and so on?

DG: I don't walk about with a camera all the time. I only pick up a camera when I have a fair idea about what I'm interested in – a certain aspect of the country initially, black/white interaction or confrontation or any other subject. Then I instil the needed visual qualities. I always do a little preliminary research and afterwards, if the photograph is of interest, I will research further or commission someone else to do research. I often give context or information to my photographs. I don't regard my pictures as pristine objects but rather as part of the matrix of life here, hence the research and information.

FS: When you were photographing your now famous series "Some Afrikaners" and "Some Afrikaners Revisited", did you ever encounter any hostility?

DG: Very little among Afrikaners themselves.

FS: What are you currently working on?

DG: Post-Apartheid public sculptures in our city, landscapes in the Karoo and ex-offenders at the scene of a crime.

FS: What do you see as the standout moments in your career?

DG: I don't think in those terms, I really don't. At the moment, I'm thinking about a photograph I'm going to be doing on Monday morning.

FS: How do you handle all the worldwide acclaim and attention? It is, after all, more than most South African artists have managed to attain.

DG: Well first of all, I don't regard myself as an artist. The word 'art' is not in my vocabulary.

FS: In the world that I come from, you are regarded as an artist, one of the great social painters.¹

DG: I'm not an artist, but let's not argue about terminology. You ask me how I handle it. I don't know. I just deal with people when they come to me. It could be nice to have the ego massaged, but I really don't have an ego. It's not of great or any importance to me.

APPENDIX

DAVID GOLDBLATT – SELECT AWARDS, PUBLIC COLLECTIONS, EXHIBITIONS AND BOOKS

Prizes and Awards

Camera Austria Prize 1995; Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts, University of Cape Town 2001; Hasselblad Foundational Award in Photography 2006; Honorary Doctorate of Literature, University of the Witwatersrand, 2008; Henri Cartier-Bresson Award, 2009; Lifetime Achievement Award, Arts and Culture Trust, 2009; Lucie Lifetime Achievement Award, 2010; Kraszna-Krausz Photography Book Award (with Ivan Vladislavic), 2011; Honorary Doctorate San Francisco Art Institute, 2011.

Principal public collections

South African National Gallery, Cape Town; Johannesburg Art Gallery; University of the Witwatersrand; Museum Kunst Palast, Düsseldorf; Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Victoria and Albert Museum, London; The French National Art Collection; The Art Gallery of Western Australia; Ludwig Museum, Vienna; Huis Marseille, Amsterdam; Fotomuseum, Winterthur, Switzerland; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

Principal Exhibitions:

Photographers' Gallery, London, 1974, 1986; Side Gallery, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1985; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1975; South African National Gallery, Cape Town, 1983; Various exhibitions since 1978 at the Market Theatre Galleries, Johannesburg; Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1998; Netherlands Architecture Institute, Rotterdam, 1998-9; South African National Gallery, Cape Town, 1999; Axa Gallery, New York, 2001;

Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, 2002; Witte de With, Rotterdam, 2002; Centro Cultural de Belem-Fundacao, Lisbon, 2002; Modern Art, Oxford, 2003; Pala's des Beaux Arts, Brussels, 2003; Lenbachhaus, Munich, 2003; Museum Kunst Palast, Duesseldorf, 2005;

Johannesburg Art Gallery 2005; Arles Rencontres, 2006; Fotomuseum Winterthur, Switzerland, 2007; Fluis Marseilles, Amsterdam, 2007; Berkeley Art Museum, 2007; Serralves Museum, Porto, Portugal, 2008; Konsthall, Malmo, Sweden, 2009; New Museum, New York, 2009; Jewish Museum, New York, 2010; Jewish Museum, Cape Town, 2010; Amherst Art Museum, Massachusetts, 2010;

Various group shows including: "South Africa: the Cordoned Heart", South Africa and the LTSA, 1986;

In/Sight, African Photographers, 1940 to the Present", Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1996; "Blank Architecture, apartheid and after", Rotterdam and Berlin, 1998-99; "Home", Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, 2000; "The Short Century", Museum Villa Stuck, Munich, 2001; "Documenta 11", Kassel, Germany, 2002; "Africa Remix", Museum Kunst Palast, Duesseldorf 2003; "History, Memory, Society", with Henri Cartier Bresson and Lee Friedlander, Tate Modern, London, 2004; "Faces in the Crowd", Whitechapel, London, 2005; "Documenta 12", Kassel, Germany, 2007; "Figure & Fictions" V&A London, 2011; Venice Biennale, 2011.

Books

On The Mines with Nadine Gordimer, Struik, Cape Town, 1973

Some Afrikaners Photographed, Murray Crawford Johannesburg, 1975

In Boksburg, Gallery Press, Cape Town, 1982

Lifetimes: Under Apartheid, with Nadine Gordimer, Knopf, New York, 1986

The Transported of KwaNdebele with Brenda Goldblatt and Phillip van Niekerk, Aperture and Duke University, New York, 1989.

South Africa: The Structure of Things Then, Oxford University Press. Cape Town, and Monacelli Press, New York, 1988

David Goldblatt 55 (one of a series about photographers) Phaidon Press, London, 2001

David Goldblatt Fifty-One Years, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, 2001

Particulars, Goodman Gallery Editions, JHB, 2003 [Awarded Arles Book Prize for 2004]

Intersections, Prestel, Munich, 2005

David Goldblatt Photographs, Contrasto, Rome, 2006

David Goldblatt Hasselblad Award 2006 Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern and F-Jasselblad Center

Some Afrikaners Revisited, Umuzi, Cape Town, 2007

Intersections Intersected, Museum Serralves, Porto, 2008

Kith, Kin and Khaya, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, 2010

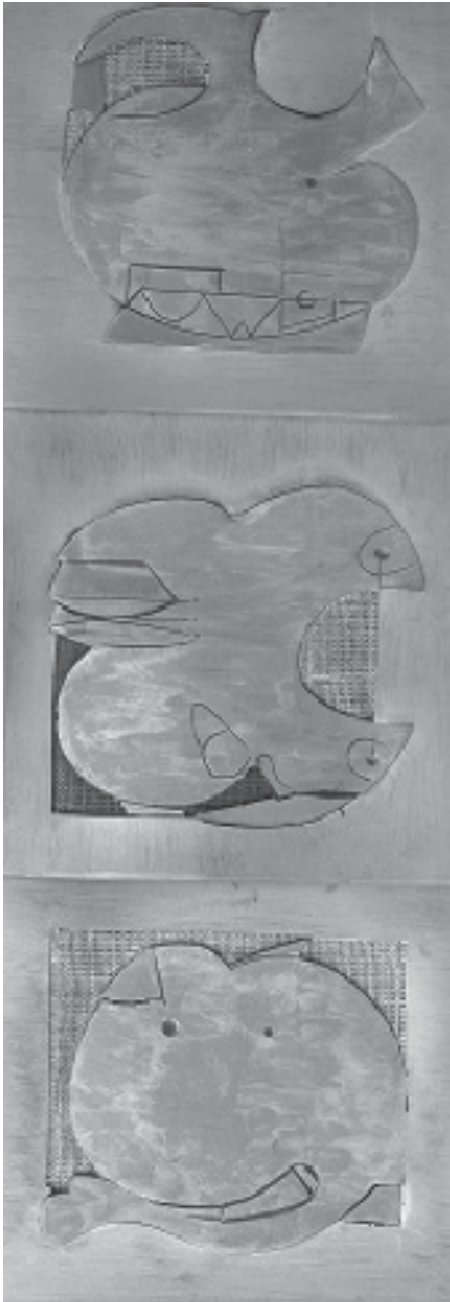
NOTES

¹ In this regard, the following independent observations are of interest: "Goldblatt's rigorous, almost rigorous attention to detail - whether it be in a seemingly innocuous comma or the Coca Cola sign in the window of the corner cafe, is one of the things that makes him the artist today" (Alex Dodd, *Mail & Guardian*, 3 July 1998) ; "Precise in description, Goldblatt's photographs are also acute in historical and political perception. They provide a sense of the texture of daily life and an important piece of missing information regarding life in Apartheid South Africa" Susan Kismaric, Associate Curator Museum of Modern Art, New York.

SIDNEY GOLDBLATT: SELECT WORKS

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***Editor's note:** The Pesach 2012 issue of Jewish Affairs featured Frank Startz's article 'Sidney Goldblatt: The Artist and the Man'. In this issue, we follow up with a selection of some noteworthy works by Goldblatt, with notes and images kindly supplied by Wendy Goldblatt.*



Linoleum on hessian. 1973

The linoleum on this panel is carved into so and mounted on Hessian. The whole panel is then lightly spray-painted with silver paint.



House in District Six, Cape Town 1968

Oil on Board. Painted just before District Six was destroyed.



"King & Queen" 1972

A large linoleum collage of two intertwined figures with carved linoleum on hessian.



Pottery in Mozambique. 1975

This rather primitive pottery studio was situated in Mozambique, North of Maputo. They made huge pots using local clay.



Basutho Ponies 1966

Done during a trip to Lesotho. Oil on Board



Self Portrait 1978

Sidney painted this self-portrait after designing one of the first-ever wine labels and the portrait was exhibited alongside the various wines bearing his label.



House with Turret, Swakopmund, Namibia
1979

Acrylic on Board of one of the old houses in Swakopmund.



Fishermen Resting on Beach, Marbella, Spain.
Oil on Canvas. Painted during time Sidney was living in Spain – 1957/8.

REMEMBERING PHILLIP TOBIAS

*

Reuben Musiker

When the distinguished Jewish American composer George Gershwin died of a brain tumour in 1937 at the unacceptably young age of 38, the eminent music critic John O'Hara remarked: "George Gershwin may be dead but I don't have to believe it if I don't want to". That sentiment sums up in a nutshell exactly how I feel about the passing of Phillip Tobias on 7 June 2012.

Unlike Gershwin, Phillip died just four months short of his 87th birthday. In fact, I drew attention to his longevity in the last letter I penned him just prior to his passing. I asked him how it came about that some of the world's most renowned anatomists and palaeo-anthropologists, including himself and his predecessor at the Wits Medical School, Raymond Dart, and his peer, Nobel Laureate Sydney Brenner (still active) had managed to 'architect' their longevity genes. Regrettably, my letter was too late, and one can only conjecture how, with his inimitable wit, he would have responded.

Phillip was born on 14 October 1925 in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, and grew up there. In his autobiography *Into the Past* (2004), he describes this period of his life in these terms:

The Durban years saw the beginning of my Jewish education. Although my parents were not deeply religious in the sense of observance, there had been a long history of involvement of the Vallentines with Jewish affairs. My great-great-grandfather, Isaac Vallentine, was born in Belgium in 1793. Shortly afterwards his family moved to London, where they established a bookshop which soon metamorphosed into an Anglo-Jewish publishing house. Apart from publishing Hebrew and English prayer books, Isaac Vallentine founded the Anglo-Jewish magazine, the *Jewish Chronicle* of London, which has been published continuously since inception to the present time. This record makes it the oldest Jewish periodical in the Vernacular. Religion and my Jewish affiliation have nevertheless remained a vital part of my consciousness throughout my life. For over half

a century I have remained a member of the Great Synagogue, formerly in Wolmarans Street and more recently in Glenhove Road, Illovo, Johannesburg, serving for a time on the Internal Management Committee.

I am aware of two major occurrences in his life when Phillip was brought to tears. On the first occasion, there were tears of disappointment when the head of the Durban Hebrew Congregation, Rabbi Freedman, who was experiencing disillusionment with his congregation, strongly discouraged the young Phillip from pursuing training for the Rabbinate. The other was the death of his sister, Valerie, at the age of twenty-one. Deeply grieved by this, Phillip decided to pursue a medical career, specialising in the field of genetics and the study of chromosomes, the material basis of heredity.

When I heard the devastating news of Phillip Tobias' passing, it marked the end of a sixty-two year association which began in the early 1950s. Following my matriculation, I conceived the ill-advised notion of becoming a dental student at Wits University. I was, after all, a man of the arts and humanities, most certainly not suitable for this discipline and, half-way through, I aborted my dental studies. The only course of action open to me was to 'salvage' my tertiary education by completing a BSc degree, with major subjects Human Anatomy and Histology (Microscopic Anatomy). It was largely due to Phillip Tobias'



SA Jewish Board of Deputies National President Marlene Bethlehem presenting Phillip Tobias with the SAJBD's Human Rights Award, August 2001.

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efforts on my behalf that this complex situation was facilitated. Thereafter, Phillip was my mentor, as he of course was to some 10 000 medical students. His tutelage was a turning point in my life and also to those many students whose names he was able to recall due to his amazingly retentive and photographic memory. He was able to hold an audience of academics, students and the public spellbound by his powerful oratory, delivered in the most eloquent language.

Phillip's academic career spanned sixty years and never really ended. He was never in denial about this. In one of his last letters to me, he mentioned that he had to give up using his computer. This must have been a painful step in the inevitable ageing process for one who was so prolific.

One of Phillip's most distinguished students was Dr Robert Simmons, educated at St Vincent's School for the Deaf. Despite his handicap, he achieved academic success and was appointed as a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Anatomy.

Phillip's interest in Makapansgat first arose when, as a Wits student in 1945, he participated in a third year science class initiative under the tutelage of Raymond Dart. The requirement for third year students to participate in the July expedition to the Makapan caves was continued when Phillip became head of the Department of Anatomy. For him it was the highlight of his teaching year. For many of us 'city dwellers', it became a feat of endurance as Tobias' stamina and feats of athleticism in scaling rock faces in order to explore the caves, left us far behind. It was equally difficult to accustom ourselves to the sharp reality of bitterly cold nights spent camping on the open Highveld.

Another memory of my student days is of my assignment to write an essay for the *South African Journal of Science* on the facial features of the Ovambo Bushman. Phillip was preparing for a journey to England at that time, but very kindly offered to meet me on the cruise liner prior to departure in order to edit my rough draft. From this experience, I learned that Phillip was a master of the English language. He was a stickler for grammatical perfection and we stayed up until the early hours of the morning as he guided me through the intricacies of my first scientific pages. It was largely due to his editing efforts that the editors of the Journal expressed admiration for the final result.

After my appointment as Wits University Librarian in January 1975, I recall that during one of my visits to his then apartment at 602 Marble Arch, Hillbrow, he showed me a small hard-covered note books giving an inventory of no less than thirty-six publications in progress simultaneously. I was later to feel the effect of this extraordinary productivity when some years after being appointed, I arranged for the University Library's fine craftsman binder and restorer, Arthur Budd, to bind in a special binding

all of Phillip's copies of his own publications as well as cuttings about himself. The project had to be abandoned, partly because of financial constraints but mostly because it proved impossible to keep up with his prolific output.

I was delighted to discover that Phillip shared my passion for bibliography and was a dedicated bibliophile. He was a relative of the renowned Jewish South African author, Sarah Gertrude Millin, and possessed a complete collection of all her works, in full edition and variants, and in perfect condition.

Phillip was a man of incredible vision and foresight. In my own half century career as a university librarian, I found him to be the only distinguished academic and researcher to personally collate and organize everything authored by himself during his lifetime, for eventual deposit in the University's Archives and not to entrust this arduous, but hugely important task to the custodians of his collection.

What was to be a most significant event and crowning achievement of his career was the discovery, by one of his former students, Professor Lee Berger, of the hominid fossils *Australopithecus sediba* at the Malapa Caves. This discovery vindicated earlier research by Raymond Dart and Tobias on early australopithecines and early members of the genus *Homo*.

During his later years, Phillip produced for his legion of friends and associates seventeen annual newsletters, each averaging twenty pages and chronicling the highlights of the year. These made fascinating reading and were by no means limited to good news e.g. an ever expanding necrology section!

Phillip was certainly not a reclusive hermit. A classic example of his extroverted, outgoing nature is a party invitation of some twenty-five years ago, which is one of my treasured possessions.

It became a thrilling experience for me and a great honour to be the recipient of many of his publications, personally inscribed for me. An example is when Stella Stricke completed her bibliography (225 items) of the Published Works of Phillip V. Tobias, 1945-1969. Phillip warmed the cockles of my heart in these words: "To Reuben Musiker - my former student, loyal friend and now cherished colleague. Affectionately Phillip Tobias."

Phillip Tobias was a great credit to South Africa, to Jewry (in general and South Africa in particular), to the worlds of science and medicine and specifically palaeo-anthropology and anatomical genetics. He deserves to be remembered as unique a person as it is possible for a human being to be.

A BRIEF JOURNEY THROUGH TURKISH JEWISH HISTORY

*

Bernard Katz

The Jewish connection with Turkey dates to Biblical times. Abraham settled in Haran, where Terah died, on the way from Ur Kasdim before continuing his journey to Canaan.¹ Haran is almost universally identified with Harran, in present-day Turkey.

In June 2010, a team of archaeologists from the Hebrew University discovered intact bee hives dating back to 900 BCE and concluded that these bees were imported to Israel from Turkey where the bees produced more honey and were less aggressive than the local variety.²

Jews have lived in Turkey since ancient times as evidenced by numerous references in the New Testament. Iconium (now Konya) and Ephesus are mentioned as having synagogues.³ Emperor Constantine (312–337) was responsible for relocating the capital of the Roman Empire from Rome to Constantinople (now Istanbul), which he named after himself. This eastern part of the Roman Empire became known as Byzantium.

In 1168 Benjamin of Tudela, a Spanish Jewish traveller visited Constantinople, then the largest city on the world. He wrote a book of his travels, described by Paul Johnson as “the most sensible, objective and reliable of all travel books written in the Middle Ages.”⁴ Benjamin of Tudela was particularly impressed by Constantinople, commenting, “...there is none like it in the world except Baghdad....Wealth like that of Constantinople is not to be found in the whole world.”⁵ At the time, some 2000 Jews were living in Constantinople. About their condition, he was less impressed:

No Jew there is permitted to ride horseback. The one exception is ... the king’s physician, and through whom the Jews enjoy considerable alleviation of their oppression. For their condition is very low, and there is much hatred against them, which is fostered by the tanners, who throw out their dirty water in the streets before the doors of the Jewish houses and defile the Jews’ quarters. So the Greeks hate the Jews ... and subject them to great oppression, and beat them in the streets, and in every way treat them

with rigour. Yet the Jews are rich and good, kindly and charitable, and bear their lot with cheerfulness.⁶

The Osmanli dynasty, known to Europeans as the Ottomans, was established by Sultan Osman who began the Ottoman conquest of Asia Minor in 1299. Sultan Orhan (1326–60) added the greater part of Asia Minor and gained a foothold in Europe at Gallipoli. Murad I (1360–89) captured the eastern half of the Balkan Peninsula and Sultan Murad II (1421–1451) captured Salonika in 1430. The Ottomans kept making inroads into the Byzantine Empire until it ceased to exist in 1453 when Mehmet II (1451–1481) conquered Constantinople. Selim I (1512–20) doubled the size of the Ottoman Empire by defeating the Mamelukes in 1517 and adding Egypt, Palestine (which remained under Ottoman control for 400 years), Syria and the Arabian Peninsula. During the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent (1520–66), regarded as the greatest of the Ottoman sultans, the Ottoman Empire reached its greatest power and extent with conquests of Hungary, Tripolitania (Libya), Tunisia, Algeria, Iraq, Belgrade, Rhodes, Cyprus and Yemen.

Jews in the Ottoman Empire were well treated although subject to *dhimmi* (lit. ‘protected’, but designating discrimination against non-Muslims) regulations. Ottoman rule was tolerant and conditions for the Jews under them were significantly better than under the Christian Greek Byzantines. As a result, as the Ottomans conquered Byzantine cities, the Jewish communities welcomed and supported them. Bursa, where Jews had been living for over 500 years, and which became the Ottoman Empire’s first capital, was captured in 1326. Its Jewish community became the first Jewish community to come under Ottoman rule and this marks the beginning of a common Jewish Ottoman history. According to one tradition, the Jewish community actively helped the Ottomans capture the city. Another asserts that the city’s Jewish and Greek inhabitants fled as the Turks approached and that subsequent to its capture the Jews but not the Greeks were invited back.⁷

After the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 the city was devastated and needed to be revitalized. The Turks were good warriors and farmers but not administrators or businessmen. Sultan Mehmet II did not trust the native Greek population so the Jews became the logical solution

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to generate a commercial revival.⁸ Soon after the city's capture, therefore, he ordered the Jews in the empire to relocate there. At the time the Jews resented this forced relocation and to pacify them Mehmet II, according to tradition, issued the following proclamation using phrases from the books of Genesis and Ezra:

Who among you of all my people that is with me, may his God be with him, let him ascend to Constantinople, the site of my royal throne. Let him dwell in the best of the land, each beneath his vine and beneath his fig tree, with silver and with gold, with wealth and with cattle. Let him dwell in the land, trade in it, and take possession of it.⁹

As a result of this proclamation many Jews came to Constantinople, which became the capital of the Ottoman Empire. Whenever the sultan captured a town, he transferred its Jews to there. The Jews' economic and religious situation improved greatly by comparison with their condition during the Byzantine era: "There came into being in Constantinople splendid communities; Torah, wealth and glory increased in the congregation."¹⁰

The original Jews who lived in Turkey from Byzantine times are known as *Romaniot* – Greek-speaking Jews. Although some had been residents of Constantinople prior to the Ottoman conquest, most were settled there subsequently. Whilst they played an important role in the Jewish community during the early years of Ottoman rule their position of influence was gradually eroded by the influx of new Jewish communities.¹¹

Rabbi Isaac Tzarfati moved to the Ottoman Empire from Europe and became the chief rabbi. He wrote a letter (dated by Heinrich Graetz to 1456)¹² to the Jews of Germany, who at the time were subject to cruel persecution, encouraging them to settle in Turkey:

I Isaac Tzarfati...proclaim to you that Turkey is a land wherein nothing is lacking....Is it not better for you to live under Muslims than under Christians? Here every man may dwell at peace under his own vine and fig-tree.... Arise! And leave this accursed land for ever!¹³

This letter stimulated an influx of Ashkenazi Jews, who established communities in many Turkish towns.¹⁴ By 1478, Constantinople's Jews numbered 10 000, comprising some 10% of the city's population.¹⁵

In 1492, more than 160 000 Jews were expelled from Spain,¹⁶ and of these approximately 100 000¹⁷ ultimately settled in Turkey. Sultan Bayazid II (1481-1512) not only permitted these Jews to settle in the Ottoman Empire but according to Bernard Lewis they were "encouraged, assisted and sometimes compelled."¹⁸ Bayazid II is reputed to have said about King Ferdinand of Spain "Can

you call such a king wise and intelligent? He is impoverishing his country and enriching my kingdom."¹⁹

The migration of Sephardi Jews did not stop after the Spanish and subsequent Portuguese expulsion. It continued into the 15th and 16th Centuries as Marranos left Spain and Portugal and settled in various countries before ultimately establishing themselves in Turkey, which proved to be the safest place to return to Judaism.²⁰ Among the Sephardi Jews expelled from Portugal were Ephraim Caro and his young son Joseph Caro, who later settled in Safed and wrote the *Shulchan Aruch*.

The arrival of Sephardi Jews significantly changed the composition of the Jewish community. According to certain calculations, 40 000 Jews migrated to Constantinople and 20 000 to Salonika.²¹ Constantinople soon became the largest Jewish settlement in Europe. In time, it was rivalled and then outstripped by Salonika (now part of Greece) which became a predominantly Jewish city and remained so for four centuries.

The Jews were a heterogeneous community and the *Romanioths*, Ashkenazim and Sephardim kept separate congregations. The Sephardim even kept separate sub-communities, with congregations from different Iberian towns functioning separately. The Sephardi communities, writes Zimmels, exhibited two special features, viz. an inclination to domineer over others and to quarrel amongst themselves. The former characteristic led to the absorption of many non-Sephardi communities by the Sephardim, and the latter frequently led to secession from an existing congregation and the formation of a rival one.²²

Sephardi immigrants made an important contribution from the mercantile perspective and international trade in the eastern Mediterranean was largely Jewish controlled. They also provided the Turks with armaments and gunpowder, which according to Graetz thereby supplied Christendom's arch enemy with the weapons that enabled them to inflict on the Christians "defeat after defeat" and "humiliation on humiliation."²³

Sephardi Jews were conversant with European politics and had knowledge of European languages. Turkey was the most powerful state in Europe and for the first time since Hasdai ibn Shaprut in 10th Century Cordoba, Jews played a prominent role in international politics.

No case was more striking than that of Don Joseph Nasi (1524-79), who became one of the most influential individuals in the Turkish Empire. His aunt and mother-in-law Dona Gracia Nasi (1510-69) was the most benevolent and adored Jewish woman of her day. They were Portuguese Marranos whose significant business interests were managed by Gracia Nasi after the death of her husband with Don Joseph's assistance. Together, they built and expanded the House of

Nasi into one of the richest merchant houses in Europe. After leaving Portugal, they were unable to find a secure place to practice their Judaism and eventually sought refuge in Turkey. It would be three centuries before another Jewish dynasty, the Rothschild's, would make a similar impact on international affairs.

Perhaps Dona Gracia and Don Joseph's most memorable legacy was in relation to Palestine. Dona Gracia provided substantial funding for learning and for the first time in centuries Palestine became a truly great centre of rabbinic learning.²⁴ Don Joseph obtained a grant of the ruined city of Tiberius, which he rebuilt to be a place not only of refuge for persecuted Jews but as the kernel of a Jewish state.²⁵ Cecil Roth observed, however, that although not a failure, the Tiberius experiment certainly did not live up to its enthusiastic hopes.²⁶

The Ottoman Empire and its Jewish citizens both reached their high point during the reign of Suleiman (1520-1566). Although the situation for the Jews was generally favourable even under the relatively sympathetic sultans as Bayazid II, Suleiman, Selim I and Selim II, Jews were periodically reminded of their *dhimmi* status. But Jews were invariably grateful and thankful for their circumstances.²⁷

By the close of the 16th Century, the 300 years of Turkish vitality began to show signs of deterioration and the shift in the historic trade routes from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic had a major negative consequence. The decline in the empire coincided with the decline of the golden age of the Jews in Turkey, who no longer produced representatives of outstanding quality. The deterioration of the Jews' economic and political circumstances ultimately reflected in their communal and cultural life.²⁸

The 1648 Chmielnicki pogroms in Eastern Europe unleashed messianic expectations. Gershom Scholem observed that in the mid-17th Century, the belief that the world was on the brink of great events was universally accepted.²⁹ The period produced a number of aspirant messiahs, of whom Shabbetai Tzvi (1626-1676) was the most significant. Shabbetai Tzvi was born in Smyrna (now Izmir) in Turkey. He came under the influence of the kabbalah and exhibited signs of what today would probably be diagnosed as manic depressive. Amongst other acts, he proclaimed 18 June 1666 to be the Day of Redemption. He violated Jewish law, including pronouncing the name of God, but his undoing was his announcement that the Turkish sultan was about to be deposed. The sultan had him arrested and given the choice between the converting to Islam and death he chose conversion. The majority of rabbis were taken in by Tzvi. Later, when the charade was exposed, many insisted that they had been opposed to him, but as Scholem points out, the documents tell a different story.³⁰ Some of Tzvi's followers also converted to Islam but retained their Jewish identity in

secret. Their descendants have survived to this day as a recognised group known as Donmeh and played a significant political and economic role in Turkey. The Donmeh are referred to by some as "Jewish Muslims" and follow certain Jewish practices such as lighting candles for Shabbat.³¹ Only in Istanbul does a remnant still survive. Estimates of their numbers vary between 20 000 and 50 000, such is the veil of secrecy that surrounds this group.³²

Rabbi Berel Wein is of the view that this failed movement had long term tragic consequences for the Jewish people. He considers that "Shabbetai Tzvi was a factor in setting in motion those forces of history that introduced the onset of Reform Judaism, secularization, and assimilation of European Jewry."³³

The history of the Jews in Turkey in the 17th, 18th and 19th Centuries is principally a chronicle of decline of influence and power exacerbated by increasing competition from the Greek and Armenian communities.

Until the Damascus Blood Libel in 1840, accusations of ritual murder were very rare in the Ottoman Empire, and where they did briefly appear the sources were blood libels in Christian countries.³⁴ There are a number of instances where the sultan himself intervened to clamp down firmly and put a stop to the baseless allegations.³⁵ In the 19th Century, Turkey introduced reforms which extended equal rights to non-Muslims, including to Jews. These reforms, which are known in Turkish history as *Tanzimat*, initiated in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries a period of Jewish cultural and economic revival.³⁶ Over time, however, Turkey had been gradually losing much of the territories it had conquered. By the commencement of the 20th Century, it had become known as the "Sick Man of Europe."

The diaries of Theodor Herzl contain a fascinating account of Herzl's effort to meet with Sultan Abdul Hamid II (1876-1909) in order to promote the case for a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Herzl's first attempt to meet the sultan in 1896, a year before the First Zionist Conference, ended in failure. He was already in Constantinople in anticipation of the meeting when Nevlinski (his go between) "returned from Yildiz Kiosk with a long face and bad news" reporting "It's all off! The great lord will not hear of it!The Sultan told me: if Mr Herzl is your friend ... then advise him not to go a single step further in this matter. I cannot sell even a foot of land, for it does not belong to me but to my people. They have won this Empire and fertilized it with their blood....I can dispose no part of it. The Jews may spare their millions. When my Empire is divided, perhaps they will get Palestine for nothing. But only our corpse can be divided. I will never consent to vivisection."³⁷

Herzl recorded, "I was touched and moved by the truly lofty words of the Sultan, although for the time being they put an end to all my hopes.

There is a tragic beauty in this fatalism which foresees death and dismemberment, yet fights to the last breath, if only through passive resistance.”³⁸

In 1901, Herzl returned to Constantinople and met with the sultan at his palace at Yildiz Kiosk. The remarkable conversation he had with him is recorded in his diary.³⁹

Turkey could not, however, be persuaded to grant a national home to the Jews. Herzl’s efforts to persuade the German Kaiser to use his influence with the sultan also ended unsuccessfully, with Germany dropping this idea in the interests of pursuing an alliance with Turkey. So Herzl turned his attention to Britain, efforts that ultimately culminated in Britain issuing the November 1917 Balfour Declaration stating that the British government “viewed with favour the establishment of a Jewish Home” in Palestine.

In 1908, a group of army officers known as “Young Turks” overthrew Abdul Hamid II and restored the constitution which granted Jews equal rights. The story that the revolution was a “Jewish-Masonic plot” received wide circulation, but according to Bernard Lewis, there would seem to be “no evidence at all, in the voluminous Turkish literature on the Young Turks, that Jews played a part of any significance in their councils, either before or after the Revolution...”⁴⁰

Turkey entered World War I in October 1914 as an ally of Germany. Now commenced a difficult time for the Jews of Palestine, who were harshly treated by the Turks. Max Raisin observes that “The Turkish government whose Jewish policy in times of peace had nearly always been liberal and conciliatory, now became despotic...”⁴¹ Several thousand Jews in Palestine were taken captive and forced to work as labourers for the Turkish war effort. More than 10 000 Jews fled Palestine to the security of British-controlled Egypt.⁴² Vladimir Jabotinsky established, under British command, a Jewish regiment comprising these refugees known as the Zion Mule Corps. This Corps fought in the campaign against Turkey at Gallipoli and their valour is attested to by Colonel Patterson in his book *With the Zionists in Gallipoli*.⁴³ At the same time, 18 000 Jews served in the Ottoman army, of whom 1000 made the ultimate sacrifice.⁴⁴ British forces under the command of General Allenby liberated Jerusalem from Turkish rule in December 1917.

During the war, Arab armies rebelled against Turkish rule. Their fight was led by Emir Feisal, son of Emir Hussein, Grand Sharif of Mecca and leader of the Arabs of Hejaz and Colonel T.E. Lawrence (aka Lawrence of Arabia). Feisal was expecting to be given the throne of Syria and was supportive of the Zionist program. In 1921, he informed the British government that in return for the throne of Syria, he would “abandon all claims of his father to Palestine.”⁴⁵ But the French would not give up control of Syria, which they had won from the defeated Ottoman Empire.⁴⁶

Turkey was constituted as a republic in 1923. Its founder, Mustafa Kemal (better known as Ataturk), had been part of the Young Turk uprising and had distinguished himself as the commander in the successful Turkish defence of Gallipoli. Ataturk’s declared objective was to stamp out all signs of the religious-institutional influence of Islam and create a secular state. His assault on religion also impacted on the Jews and included a prohibition on teaching Hebrew in schools. In Ataturk’s Turkey Jews found communal institutions subject to “slow cultural strangulation”⁴⁷ and there was a dramatic decline in interest in Judaism, exacerbated by the absence of a spiritual leader.⁴⁸ After Ataturk’s death in 1938, many of these prohibitions were eased.⁴⁹ Sachar’s view is that it is doubtful that Ataturk himself was antisemitic, but his regime’s militant nationalism would not spare any minority.⁵⁰

Turkey remained neutral during World War II and was thus able to protect its Jews.⁵¹ According to Stanford Shaw, some 15000 Turkish Jews from France, and even 100 000 Jews from Eastern Europe were saved because of Turkish efforts.⁵²

But Turkey’s record in World War II is not without blemish. In December 1941 the S.S. Struma, which had departed from Romania en route to Palestine, docked in Istanbul with its engine malfunctioning and hull leaking. Britain would not permit entry to Palestine and Turkey would not permit the passengers to disembark. Eventually, in February 1942, Turkey ordered the boat to leave. Five miles out at sea in the Bosphorus, the ship sank with its 767 passengers.

During World War II, a punitive property tax known as *Varlik Vergisi* was imposed on non-Muslims. Described as a “savagely vindictive” tax, it had a particularly harsh impact on Turkish Jewry, pauperizing fully a third of them.⁵³ It was eventually abolished under pressure from the Allies in 1944.

Turkish Jewry in the Post-War Era

The population of Turkey today exceeds 70 million, of whom 13 million live in Istanbul. The Jewish population (of whom Sephardim make up 96%) is estimated at around 20 000, with 18 000 in Istanbul and about 1500 in Izmir.⁵⁴ Turkish Jewry today tends to be a fractionally more affluent group than their predecessors and, except for perhaps a thousand professionals, are businessmen.⁵⁵ The community is an aging one and numbers have steadily declined from a peak of over 100 000 in the early 20th Century.⁵⁶ Sachar claims that the *Varlik Vergisi* was as decisive a factor as Zionist idealism for the initial mass exodus of Jews to Israel after 1949.⁵⁷ In 1956, an outburst of violence provoked by the Cyprus crisis led to attacks on Greek shops and homes which then spilled over to the Armenian quarter and finally to the Jewish commercial and residential neighbourhoods. This incident caused

a further Jewish emigration.

The 1915 Armenian genocide remains a highly emotive issue and still provokes considerable debate. Turkey denies the notion of genocide, invoking arguments of Turkish self-defence and of extensive killings on both sides.⁵⁸ Sachar adds that these claims are “imaginatively buttressed” by a number of eminent Jewish scholars, including Bernard Lewis of Princeton and Stanford Shaw of UCLA (who issued a statement objecting to the use of the term ‘genocide’ and asserting that the 1915 tragedy was the “inevitable consequence” of wartime conditions).⁵⁹ According to Sachar, Jewish members of the Holocaust Commission had assured their Armenian colleague that the Armenian tragedy would be ‘substantially’ integrated into the exhibits of the Holocaust Museum in Washington, but that pledge failed to materialise. At an ‘educational’ briefing in 1983, the Turkish ambassador in Washington reputedly threatened Holocaust Commission staff that “If the Armenians are so much as mentioned in your Holocaust Museum, it will go badly for the Jews in Turkey.”⁶⁰

In the early 19th Century nearly 40 active synagogues served the more than 60,000 Jewish residents of Istanbul.⁶¹ Today some 10 synagogues hold daily services.⁶² A weekly Jewish newspaper, *Shalom*, is published in Istanbul and one page is reserved for Ladino and every month a supplement in Ladino is also published. These days, Turkish Jews speak Turkish as their native language but for those in the over 80 year generation many are more comfortable in Ladino or French.⁶³

The Ahrida Synagogue in Balat is Istanbul’s oldest synagogue and possibly it’s most outstanding. Built in the 15th Century prior to the Ottoman conquest of Istanbul, it was named after the Macedonian city from where its initial congregants originated. Its most noteworthy feature is its *bimah* – designed in the shape of a ship. Some historians say this represents Noah’s Ark while others claim it is the ships bringing the Spanish Jews to Turkey.⁶⁴ Still others are of the view that the possibility of the *bimah* being added to the synagogue during the restorations of 1694 (after it was destroyed by fire) makes both theories accurate.⁶⁵ Shabbetai Tzvi preached in this synagogue.

The Neve Shalom Synagogue in Galata unfortunately became well known due to the tragedy in 1986 when Palestinian terrorists entered the synagogue and opened fire on the worshippers, killing 21.⁶⁶ The bullet marks on the *Aron Kodesh* have been retained as a memory. Under the seats, hard hats can be found in case of another incident.

The Etz Haim Synagogue in Ortakoy is in an impressive complex up the Bosphorus and next to it can be found a church and a mosque.

The Jewish Museum was opened as one of the festivities commemorating 500 years since the Sephardi immigration. One custom on display that is unfamiliar to Ashkenazi Jews is the

Fashadura. At a gathering the sheet on which the new born was conceived is cut into a dress for the new born and symbolizes the wish for its long life.

Istanbul’s Archaeological Museum’s collection on Syria and Palestine contains a treasure trove of Jewish interest collected during Turkey’s occupation of Palestine.

The Siloam Inscription is a passage of inscribed text found in a tunnel cut by King Hezekiah in the 8th Century BCE. Hezekiah’s preparations for a siege of Jerusalem by Assyria included cutting a 533 meter long tunnel through the rock linking the Gihon Spring (located outside the walls of Jerusalem) to the Siloam Pool (located within the then city walls of Jerusalem). When the two teams, tunneling from each end met, they celebrated their achievement by carving an inscription in the rock.

The inscription was discovered in 1880 by Jacob Eliahu, a 16 year-old son of Jewish converts to Christianity. He was fascinated with the biblical story of Kings II: 20.20, which motivated him to swim the length of the tunnel. A Greek trader heard about the find and roughly cut out the inscription, breaking it. He was arrested by the Ottoman police, who confiscated the inscription and sent it to Istanbul.⁶⁷

The Gezer Calendar dates to the 10th century BCE and is one of the oldest Hebrew inscriptions, poetically describes the names of the months and the harvest periods.

Between 1885-1910 a large number of excavations were carried out in Palestine, including Gezer and Megiddo and many items from those digs are on display.

Topkapi Palace contained the royal harem. Ester Kyra was a Jewish broker who sold jewels, cosmetics and clothes to the ladies of the harem and won the favour of Sultan Murad III’s mother and preferred concubine. She exercised considerable influence and was involved in political affairs. Her power and wealth spawned jealousy and she was murdered. Many gems in Topkapi palace must have been cut by Jews since they were the gem cutters in the sultan’s day.

The Hagia Sophia is supposedly among the world’s greatest architectural achievements and is more than 1400 years old. It was built by Emperor Justinian and inaugurated in 537 during Byzantine times as a church. After the church building was completed Justinian was reputed to have bragged “Solomon, I have surpassed you.” Benjamin of Tudela refers to the Hagia Sophia in his travelogue.⁶⁸ After the Ottoman conquest, the Hagia Sophia became a mosque and is now a museum. The architectural design is said to have served as the inspiration for many mosques and even for synagogues including that of Florence, San Francisco’s Temple Emanuel⁶⁹ and the Great Park Synagogue in Johannesburg.

Turkey and the State of Israel

Although Turkey voted against the 1947 United Nations resolution to establish a Jewish state, it became, in 1949, the first Muslim state to recognise Israel. A new era in Turkish-Israeli relations began after the 1991 Madrid peace conference, which led to the upgrading of the diplomatic relationship to a full ambassadorial status. The 1993 Oslo Declaration of Principles further improved the relationship. It was followed by military and economic agreements between the two countries and a significant volume of Israeli tourism to Turkey. By the end of the 1990s, Turkish public sympathy towards Israel had reached its peak.⁷⁰ For Israel, the intimacy of its relationship with Turkey ranked second only to its relations with America.⁷¹

In November 2002 the AKP [Justice and Development Party], an Islamist party under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdogan, was elected to office and Kemalist rule came to an end. One of the first indications of Turkey's new foreign policy was its rejection of an American request in 2003 to use Turkish territory for opening a northern front against Iraq. Not long afterwards, Erdogan began describing Israeli policy towards the Palestinians as "state terrorism."⁷²

In September 2007, Israeli aircraft attacked Syria (rumoured to be its nuclear facility) and on their return were accused by Turkey of violating its airspace. Notwithstanding all this, at the time and continuing into 2008, Turkey was mediating between Israel and Syria and progress in these negotiations was taking place.

The December 2008 Israeli attack on Gaza - Operation Cast Lead - was criticized by Turkey, bringing about an immediate collapse in the Syrian-Israeli initiative and resulting in a major deterioration in the Turkish-Israeli friendship. At Davos in January 2009, Erdogan walked off the stage he was sharing with President Shimon Peres, accusing Israel of committing infanticide in Gaza. This "one-minute incident," as it is called in Turkey, resulted in a further downward spiral in the deteriorating relationship.

In June 2010 the *Mavi Marmara*, a Turkish ship sailing from a Turkish port, attempted to break the Gaza blockade. Israeli soldiers bordered the ship and in the ensuing clash nine Turkish citizens were killed. A United Nations report held that the Israeli blockade of Gaza was legal in view of missile attacks launched on Israel from Gaza and the report further held that on boarding the *Mavi Marmara* Israeli troops "faced significant, organised and violent resistance...requiring them to use force for their own protection." The report did, however, urge Israel to express regret and pay compensation calling the manner of the boarding "excessive and unreasonable" and the loss of life, including some people shot at close range, "unacceptable." Israel refused to apologise despite some opinion within Israel being in favour

of an apology, most notably Defence Minister Ehud Barak who advocated expressing regret "for problems that occurred during the Marmara operation."⁷³ Turkey retaliated by expelling Israel's ambassador and suspending military ties.

Traditionally, Turkey has pursued a low profile in the Middle East but more recently is becoming a more influential participant. Soon after Erdogan came to power a marked improvement took place in Turkey's relations with Syria and Iran (although the Syrian relationship has subsequently imploded with Turkey calling for Assad's resignation). In August 2008, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad paid a state visit to Turkey and Turkey has refused to participate in sanctions against Iran aimed at preventing it from acquiring nuclear capability.⁷⁴ In September 2011, Erdogan toured many of the Arab countries where uprisings have taken place promoting the Turkish democratic model and enhancing his popularity, profile and influence. He has declared democratisation a foreign policy objective and stressed the need for Muslim countries "to put their houses in order."⁷⁵ It is the first time in the history of the Turkish republic that Turkey has attempted to position itself as a "model" for other Muslim countries.⁷⁶

Under Kemalist government relations with its Muslim neighbours was seen as a burden on Turkey's quest to part of the West, both politically and culturally. Now the AKP views improving relations with its Muslim neighbours as important.⁷⁷ Some commentators believe the AKP leadership harbours a genuine dislike of Israel and Jews. In October 2009 Erdogan, speaking at Istanbul University made some antisemitic remarks.⁷⁸

Relations between Turkey and Israel have reached an all-time low and most commentators are pessimistic about the possibility of a short to medium term improvement. While some Israelis are unconcerned about the deterioration others such as Alon Liel, a former Israeli ambassador to South Africa who previously held a diplomatic post in Turkey, argues that for Israel to lose Turkey's friendship could have devastating regional consequences for Israel and even America.⁷⁹

Jews have lived in the area now known as Turkey since antiquity and the common Jewish-Turkish history goes back almost 700 years. Turkey welcomed and gave refuge to Sephardi Jews who in turn contributed significantly to the country. On the whole the Turks have treated the Jews sympathetically, especially when compared to their treatment in Europe and in Arab countries. Hopefully, in time the rift between Turkey and Israel will be healed and the cordial relations of previous years restored.

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OBSERVATIONS ON SERBS, JEWS AND ISRAELIS: A PLEA FOR UNDERSTANDING

*

Richard Burns

The geo-historical zone of the Balkans is notoriously full of contradictions. Yet, a fuller understanding of current and recent attitudes and policies in each of the Balkan nations vis-à-vis both Jews and Israel is called for. In order to create an intelligible composite picture, it is necessary to develop a series of studies of each of the Balkan nations, including and most important the newly independent political entities that emerged during the 1990s on the ruins of Yugoslavia.

As if anyone needed reminding, the paradigmatic relevance of the Balkans to global politics is indelibly marked by the fact that the World War I was triggered in 1914 by the assassination of the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand by the Yugoslav nationalist Gavrilo Princip on a Sarajevo street corner. In what follows, however complex the issues, it is argued that the Balkans needs to remain a key region for Israel-watchers to watch, especially bearing in mind the expansion of strict Wahabi and extremist Islam in Bosnia-Herzegovina since the 1990s.

When it comes to the Balkans, there has never been much value in making sweeping generalisations. For example, truths that apply to the contemporary (Former Yugoslav Republic of) Macedonia are evidently irrelevant to contemporary Bosnia. Details, even if not exactly possessors of proverbial devils, are vitally important both historically and in the contemporary context and should never be underestimated or dismissed as 'merely local' phenomena. The Balkans have always been a patchwork quilt, and therefore notoriously difficult to understand in terms of languages, religions, cultures and politics. And never more so than today, for the evident reason that, since the collapse of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, the Balkans have been systematically *re-balkanised*, both by their indigenous political leaders and by the strenuous efforts of the determiners of NATO policies.

I believe that to build up such an understanding,

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state-by-state, is of crucial importance not only because of the geographical proximity of the Balkan Peninsula to Israel, but because each one of the various independent political entities and corresponding nationalisms that have emerged since the fall of Yugoslavia impinges in a slightly different way both on Israel and on Jews throughout the world. The situation is made all the more complex by the rapid and almost synchronous collapse, in the early 1990s, of all Communist regimes throughout the region, especially the fall of Nicolae Ceaușescu in Romania in December 1990. Hence the need to examine changes in attitude and policy in both Rumania and Bulgaria too.

Various current Western myths also need questioning and exploding, and complex situations that have been oversimplified in a facile manner, possibly for ephemeral political convenience, need to be accurately restated with proper recognition of their intricacies. Aside from the deliberate construction of myths for ideological purposes, even dialectical thinking that is honourably motivated by the search for truth all too easily gets distorted by simplification. What follows can be no more than a set of preliminary forays with these factors in mind.

Since the early 1990s, when several of the leading NATO powers were actively fostering the dissolution of Yugoslavia, notably the USA and Germany – culminating in the Rambouillet Agreement in 1999 – Serbia has tended to be misunderstood and maligned in the Western media; and an antipathetic, even evil stereotype has been fostered in the popular European and American imagination, with Slobodan Milošević figuring as the prime bogey, and the Bosnian Serb massacre of Bosnian Moslems at Srebrenica as the main emotive trigger. Since Milošević's death in 2006, this bugbear-figure has been replaced by another, also a prisoner of the International Court in The Hague, the Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić. Atrocities committed by Serbs in Kosovo and Bosnia are undeniable. However, their opponents in the various conflicts of the 1990s have also been responsible for war crimes ranging from rapes, murders and beheadings (in Bosnia-Herzegovina), to desecration of religious sites (in Bosnia and Kosovo) and forced migration of entire communities (in the Krajina). However, for reasons that in retrospect appear no less irrational, prejudiced and hard to explain than the

psycho-political nexus of antisemitism itself, negative prejudice against Serbs has become standard in the West. Consonant with this closed circuit of belief arousing suspicion, suspicion feeding accusation, and accusation creating more belief, far less attention has been paid in the West to atrocities committed by Croats, Bosnian Moslems and Albanian-speaking Kosovars against Serbs. Moreover, Serbs have been said by numerous influential Western political analysts and journalists to have a 'persecution complex', an accusation likely to be quite familiar to politically astute Israelis, and liable to raise sceptical eyebrows among such observers.¹

For these complex and circuitous reasons, in recent years many Serbs have grown increasingly sympathetic towards Jews and Israel, to the extent that they have tended actually to *identify* their own country's ostracisation, vilification and even 'demonisation' – by Western politicians, media and political theorists – with traditional antisemitism. Non-coincidentally, during this entire period, to the best of my knowledge, Serbia has striven to foster a philosemitic and pro-Israel policy.

By contrast, the first President of independent Croatia, Franjo Tudjman, who was never directly opposed by Western regimes, was an explicit antisemite and Holocaust denier and ran a government that was no more democratic than that of Milošević. His supporters included previous Ustaše members in exile in Canada, Australia, Argentina and other countries, and their families, some of whom returned to fight against Serbs during the collapse of Yugoslavia and have remained in Croatia since.

As for Bosnia-Herzegovina, an international Mujahedin regiment was assiduously assembled to fight in the Bosnian war, which lasted from 1992 to 1995. Their presence was welcomed by Bosnian president Alija Izetbegović and there are plentiful records of his meetings with Mujahedin, including members of al-Qaeda. Those Mujahedin who rallied to Bosnia included radicalised Moslem students born and educated in various European countries and bearing passports of EU member states, including the UK. Al-Qaeda leaders were clear in their policy towards the Bosnian war: they treated it as a preparation ground for international Jihad. Ayman al-Zawahiri, Osama Bin Laden's second-in-command, is reputed to have co-ordinated several Mujahedin operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina through the fronts of charity organisations, and to have visited Sarajevo. His brother Zaiman al-Zawahiri is thought to have worked for the CIA against the Serbs in Kosovo. The most superficial browsing of the Internet indicates accumulated evidence of this kind, even bearing in mind the necessity for caution about the reliability of such material. The financing for Izetbegović's overall war effort and in particular for Moslem extremists in Bosnia also needs further investigation and identification.

Fairly reliable western investigations point to banks and NGOs operating in Bosnia, with funding sources in Islamic countries including Saudi-Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Egypt, Algeria, Iran and Sudan, and with links ranging from al-Qaeda, Hamas, Hezbollah, the Egyptian terrorist group Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya and other Moslem organisations identified in the USA as 'suspected of terrorism', to the Saudi royal family and the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence & Security.²

Since the end of the Bosnian war, large investments have been made in Bosnia-Herzegovina by Saudi-Arabia, for example in the building of the large King Fahd Mosque in Sarajevo. The previously 'European', easy-going, urbane Bosnian version of Islam has been progressively radicalised by far stricter Wahabi educational programmes and conversion campaigns, sponsored primarily by investment from Saudi-Arabia and the Gulf States.³

Because the relevance of these indicators to Israel cannot be underestimated, especially those that reflect the rise of Islamic extremism, it would be salient in a series of studies such as those I propose, to explore the histories of the treatments of Jewish communities in each of the Balkan nations, with respect to patterns of both antisemitism and philosemitism.

In this context, the period of the occupation of Greece and former Yugoslavia during the Second World War by the Nazis and their Fascist Italian and Bulgarian allies needs special and careful re-examination and re-analysis. This applies likewise to the persecution of Jews, Serbs, Roma and Communists by the *Ustaša* regime in wartime Croatia, not to mention the enlistment and deployment of Bosnian, Albanian and volunteer Arab (Moslem) soldiers in Croatia in the 13th Waffen Mountain Division of the SS Handschar (1943-44), and the key role in its formation by Hitler's trusted ally, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem Haj Amin el-Husseini, who visited Bosnia on Hitler's instructions in 1943. Properly contextualised analysis of all these historical facts and their underlying patterns should inform and underpin current Israeli policies.

Here follow some relevant notes on wartime persecution of Jews in Croatia and Serbia.

In the immediate wake of the Nazi invasion and dismemberment of Yugoslavia in April 1941, the 'Independent State of Croatia' was established as a pro-Nazi government. Its ideology was concocted from a mixture of Nazism, Italian Fascism and an extremist local form of Roman Catholic fanaticism. The *Ustaša* dictatorship inaugurated its racial policies as soon as it came into power. Between August 1941 and April 1945, the systematic annihilation of all Serbs, Jews and Roma living within the Croatian borders, as well as of anti-Fascists of many ethnicities, took place at the death camp known as Jasenovac, a complex of five major and three smaller 'special' camps, spread out over 240km² in south-central Croatia.

The word *jasen* means ‘ash tree’.

Estimates of the total numbers of men, women and children killed at Jasenovac range from 70 000 to 700 000. It will never be possible to establish accurate figures. The Jasenovac regime so far exceeded that of the Nazi camps in its barbarism and savagery that even German officials claimed to be shocked. Whereas an almost predictable, factory-like, organised monotony prevailed in the camps run by Germans, the Jasenovac authorities specialised in vengeful unpredictability and ‘artistic’ variation and inventiveness in the application of torture and murder. It might even be argued that in their concentration camps across Europe, the Nazis perfected a perversion of Taylorism in their precise and impersonal organization of their ‘production lines’ – the principal ‘end-product’ being the ‘commodity’: death. In contrast, the Ustaše officers and guards who ran Jasenovac vied to refine their methods of barbaric torture and infliction of horrendous deaths with an enthusiasm tantamount to relish. One might even go so far as to suggest that they perfected a refinement of ‘cruelty for cruelty’s sake’: that is to say, a kind of extreme sadistic perversion of ‘art for art’s sake’. Thus General von Horstenau, Hitler’s representative in Zagreb, wrote in his personal diary for 1942 that the *Ustaša* camps in Croatia were “the epitome of horror” and Arthur Hefner, a German transport officer for work forces in the Reich, wrote on November 11, 1942: “The concept of the Jasenovac camp should actually be understood as several camps which are several kilometres apart, grouped around Jasenovac. Regardless of the propaganda, this is one of the most horrible of camps, which can only be compared to Dante’s *Inferno*.”⁴

The Ustaše worked in active collaboration with Catholic priests and deployed Bosnian Moslem guards as well as Croat Catholics. Those systematically exterminated were Jews, Roma, Communists and Orthodox Christian Serbs.⁵ The full story of the crimes committed at the Ustaša concentration camp of Jasenovac is unlikely ever to be told because of the razing of the site immediately after the war by Tito’s Partisans, a questionable act whose spurious and hidden political motivation has been debated ever since. Nor has the scale of Jasenovac ever been fully admitted by successive government authorities, let alone systematically investigated, either during the post-war Tito era (1945-1980) or during the post-Tito period when Croatia was still part of Yugoslavia (1980-1991). After the break-up of the Yugoslav Federation, obfuscation continued under the presidency of Croatian president Franjo Tudjman (1991-2000), who was notorious for his antisemitism, statements of Holocaust denial and revisionism. Thus, deliberate and systematic attempts to shroud or whitewash truth, destroy evidence and make the site unreadable have been made by successive authorities and regimes.

However since 2000, thanks in large part to pressure on Croatia from the European Union, under the presidency of Stipe Mesić (2000-2009), a former Communist and the final president of the Socialist Federation of Yugoslavia, some progress has been made in the direction of admitting that the crimes did take place.

While, during World War II in Croatia, the persecutors of Jews were Catholic Croats and Bosnian and Albanian Moslems, in Serbia the situation was entirely different. The persecutors, terrorisers and murderers were the Nazi occupiers, and in the south Bulgarian forces. There were many Nazi mass executions of Serbs, Jews, Roma and Communists, for example nearly 3000 men, women and boys in and around the town of Kragujevac in central Serbia between 19-21 October, 1941.⁶ A brilliantly informative and sympathetic monograph on the way of life of the Jews of Kragujevac.

The extermination of prisoners by gassing, which was later applied in Auschwitz and other Nazi concentration camps in Eastern Europe, was first tried out experimentally in Serbia. Serbian Jews, many of them, women and children, were murdered by Nazi military drivers on Serbian roads in specially designed transportation lorries. The detailed histories of the two concentration camps run in Serbia by the Nazis, Sajmište and Banjica, still need to be fully researched and documented, that is, if it is not by now too late to do so.⁷

The majority of Serbs, of widely varied and even opposed political persuasions, ranging from royalist *Četniks* to Communists, detested the Nazi occupation and opposed it whether actively or passively. Resistance by patriotic Četnik groups began in July 1941, very soon after the Nazi invasion in April 1941 and before any Communist actions. The situation was extremely complicated, however and a relatively small sector of the Serbian population was involved in active collaboration with the Nazis, including the right-wing nationalist followers of Dimitrije Ljotić, the *Srpski dobrovoljački odred* [‘Serbian Volunteer Detachment’].

In 1989, a major exhibition entitled *Jews in Yugoslavia*, toured the state capitals of Zagreb, Sarajevo and Belgrade. According to its catalogue, before the 1941 Nazi invasion 75 000 Jews lived in Yugoslavia. Of these, only 15000 survived, over half of whom later immigrated to Israel. But 5000 Jews either fought as partisans or were members of resistance organisations, that is, 6-7% of the pre-war population, a marginally higher proportion than for the country as a whole. These figures help not only to explain the high regard accorded to Yugoslavia’s Jewish community from 1945 until the collapse of the Yugoslav Federation (1989-1992), but also to give the lie to the myth that Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe simply went like lambs to the slaughter. Some Yugoslav Jews later rose to high positions of power under Tito,

for example Moše Pijade from Serbia and the Slovenian Edvard Kardelj. Conversely, I have never come across evidence to suggest that Jews suffered more repression or violation of human rights under Communism than anyone else, especially in Tito's early years before the break with Stalin in 1948 and Yugoslavia's expulsion from the Cominform.

Facts that are not known, however, and remain to be researched, are the precise fates and numbers of non-Communists of all ethnic and religious groups who, though in no way collaborators or supporters of either Fascism or Nazism, perished at the end of the war during the period of 'liberation' by Russians and Titoist partisans (1945). It is suspected that many thousands were eliminated in this way. In Serbia, to my direct personal knowledge, it has only recently become acceptable even to talk with any degree of openness about this insidious and largely invisible purge of all possible and potential opponents to Communism.

I believe that a proper understanding of the relations between Jews and speakers of Slavonic languages is unlikely to be achieved without detailed deconstruction of the etymology and concepts underlying the complex nexus of ideas embraced in the pan-Slavic word *narod*.⁸ This word is interpreted as 'people', 'race' and 'nation'. Such an analysis would need to include the enormously complex ways that Serbo-Croatian (i.e. Serbian, Bosnian and Croatian) words such as *narod* and *narodnost* (meaning not simply 'nationality' but also something approximating to 'ethnicity', 'ethno-religious group' and 'ethno-religious affiliation') have been socialized and institutionalised in individual consciousness before, during, and after Communism.⁹ In the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the terms *narod* and *narodnost* appeared in various legal decrees, in attempts to delineate citizens' rights for what we might now call 'ethnic minorities'. Exploration of terms like these would present insights into the conceptual and linguistic underpinning of attitudes about race in general and anti- and philosemitism in particular.

In post-Titoist Yugoslavia, where I lived from 1987 to 1990, I never once experienced the slightest hint of antisemitism from anybody I came in contact with. In that time, I lived mainly in Belgrade, but visited all the Republics and the two autonomous provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo. At that time, Jews were fully integrated into all aspects of civic, cultural and political life. Leading Serbian-Jewish intellectuals like the poet Oskar Davičo (1909-1989), the scholar and actor Eugen Verber (1923-1996), and novelists Danilo Kiš (1935-1989) and Filip David (b. 1940) were (and still are) honoured and admired.¹⁰ This kind of information is of more than incidental relevance.

However, attitudes to Yugoslavia's own Jews were not necessarily consonant with those towards Israel. Along with other leaders like Sukarno

(Indonesia), Nehru (India), and Nasser (Egypt), Tito had been a founder of the Non-Aligned Movement, whose first meeting took place in Belgrade in 1961. This movement was by-and-large sympathetic to the PLO. However, in the 1980s, I believe that subtle and gradual shifts occurred in Yugoslav foreign policy. The first time I visited Yugoslavia in 1981, as a lecturer on a British Council summer course for teachers of English, I witnessed a large and noisy pro-PLO demonstration in Marx and Engels Square in the centre of Belgrade, following Israel's response to rocket attacks on northern Israeli settlements by bombing PLO positions in southern Lebanon. In the following years, as a British poet, I became a regular guest at the International October Writers' Meeting in Belgrade. In 1987, for the first time since the foundation of that event in 1964, an Israeli writer, Jakov Orland, was on the guest-list. In the following October, I met two more Israeli writers, Abraham Hus and Aviv Ekroni. When it comes to international relations, cultural friendship-visits often precede political rapprochements. I am not knowledgeable enough to comment on Israel's accords with other Balkan countries, but believe that Israel would do well to continue fostering cordial relations with Serbia, as with other Balkan nations.

Notes

- 1 As a typical example, see the BBC report (consulted 26/8/2001): http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/from_our_own_correspondent/117628.stm 2010.
- 2 http://www.sina.ba/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=115:daily-reports-on-role-of-b-h-banks-in-terrorist-financing-&catid=39:archive-&Itemid=57, consulted August 26, 2010.
- 3 Gradual Islamisation, with funds being poured in from the Middle East, is not of course confined to Bosnia. It has been happening for years all over Europe, not least in the UK.
- 4 See the website of the *Jasenovac Research Institute*, accessed August 2007.
- 5 The testament of Braco Danon (2000), a prisoner who escaped in 1941 at the age of eighteen, and then joined the partisans, is among the most sickening (and moving) accounts of the Holocaust I have come across (*The Smell of Human Flesh, a Witness of the Holocaust – Memories of Jasenovac*, tr. Vidišava Janković, published in both English and Serbian versions, Belgrade, 2000). Danon, the last known Jewish survivor of Jasenovac in Serbia, died in 2009. I was privileged to meet him in Belgrade in 2007.
- 6 A brilliantly informative and sympathetic monograph on the way of life of the Jews of Kragujevac, which also deals with that community's destruction in 1941, has been written by Staniša Brkić and Milomir Milić (*Jevreji u Kragujevacu* [The Jews of Kragujevac], 2011). See also Richard Berengarten, *The Blue Butterfly*, Salt Publishing, Cambridge, 2008, especially pp. 114f
- 7 A book entitled *The Crimes of the Fascist Occupants and Their Collaborators against Jews in Yugoslavia* was published in 1957 by the Federation of Jewish

Communities of the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia, Belgrade. This volume, the so-called 'Black Book', documents Second World War atrocities throughout former Yugoslavia, and includes many graphic photographs. This book, which is a monument to patient and difficult research and a great achievement for its time, is presented from within the perspectives of Titoism. Since the demise of the Titoist regime, with all its paraphernalia of ideology and mythology, some aspects of it clearly need to be deconstructed and re-examined.

- 8 While I propose the value of such an analysis primarily vis-à-vis the development of an accurate historical understanding of 'psycho-politics' within the territories of former Yugoslavia, that is to say, within the linguistic zones of Serbo-Croat, Macedonian and Slovenian, discussion of this kind would certainly be equally relevant to all other Slavonic languages, from Russian, Belarusian, Ukrainian and Bulgarian to Polish, Slovakian, and Czech. Apart from the Baltic countries (Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia), and Hungary and Romania, the mere naming of these languages itself delineates more or less all the

zones of East Europe in which Jews lived before the Shoah.

- 9 Since the demise of Yugoslavia, the expression 'Serbo-Croat' is no longer 'politically correct' in any sense of that term. I use it here non-controversially in strict historical context. Its usage has been systematically suspended and necessarily superseded by the separate linguistic designations 'Serbian', 'Bosnian' and 'Croatian', each of which claims and has its own identity, despite more points in common than differences from a strictly linguistic point of view.
- 10 See Richard Burns, 'Belgrade Jewish writers flourish', *Jewish Chronicle*, London, 25 Nov 1988. For a comprehensive and detailed critical study of the contribution of Jewish writers to Serbian life, see Predrag Palavestra, *Jewish Writers in Serbian Literature*, tr. George Nikolic, Association of Serbian Writers Abroad (ASWA) & PEN, London, 2003.

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EUGENIO PACELLI (POPE PIUS XII): WAS HE COMPLICIT IN THE HOLOCAUST (PART I)?

*

Leon Reich

My motivation in penning this paper was the much-publicized debate regarding the proposed beatification of Eugenio Pacelli, who became Pope Pius XII.

As a Jew, I have been fascinated by the development of the Christian religion as an offshoot of Judaism. If one deducts monotheism, the Ten Commandments and what Christians call the Old Testament, from the Christian ethos, what really is left of Christianity? What is left of the concept of Jesus Christ as the Messiah without the Prophecy of Isaiah? An isolated concept of Christ as the Messiah without the Jewish content supporting it, cannot stand. I have been equally fascinated by the pivotal role which the Church played on the canvas of history over its two millennia existence.

Running parallel with the teaching orders of the Church and the contribution to knowledge and education are the medical services through the nursing orders, particularly during the Dark Ages from the 4th to 11th Centuries CE. Alongside these achievements, however, has been the persecution of, amongst others, the Jewish people, upon whose philosophy rests Christianity's very foundations.

Throughout this process of impressive contribution to humanity on the one hand and the horrific persecution of non-believers on the other there have been immensely courageous individual dissidents standing out above the crowd. Throughout the ages, these unsung heroes risked exclusion for themselves and their families from their communities, even enduring suffering or death. For them the pursuit of justice, truth and their own integrity was more precious than life itself.

This fierce intellectual honesty and powerful dedication to their own integrity is what has driven the hundreds of thousands of Roman Catholics and others who have saved Jews, often at the risk of their own lives. High upon this ladder of distinction is the scholar and writer John Cornwell, author of the book *Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII* (1999). It is from this study of Pope Pius XII, born Eugenio Pacelli, that

I have sourced the bulk of my information for this paper. Other sources used include Solomon Grayzel's *A History of the Jews*, *The Moral Reckoning* (Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, 2002), *The Righteous* (Martin Gilbert, 2002), *Italians and the Holocaust* (Susan Zuccotti, 1987), *History of the Holocaust* (Yehuda Bauer, 2002) and *The Myth of Hitler's Pope: How Pope Pius XII Rescued Jews from the Nazis* (Rabbi David G. Dalin, 2005).

The Roman Catholic Church is comparable to Sodom and Gomorrah for the Jewish people. The courageous Catholics, who risked their lives to save Jews, represent the Ten Holy Men who (had they been found) would have saved those cities. Over the centuries, the individual Catholic heroes who swam against the stream of the majority redeemed the good name and the integrity of the Roman Catholic Church.

Under normal circumstances, I would never concern myself with whom the Vatican chose to beatify. These however, are abnormal circumstances. The reason, as will be argued, is that Eugenio Pacelli personally bore a great deal of responsibility for the commencement of World War I. He also bore responsibility for the demise of the Centre Party in Germany and the crushing of its media which influenced German attitudes, resulting in Germany becoming a dictatorship.¹ Pacelli figuratively moved heaven and earth to secure Hitler's accession, even while knowing that once he became a dictator, he would pursue his antisemitic policy as reflected in *Mein Kampf*. For that reason alone, he shared responsibility for the Holocaust, and it is important for all who seek the truth about his role to clearly understand this.

Pacelli is consistently accused of not trying hard enough to save Jewish lives during World War II. My belief is that this is so, but I would go further and assert that without Pacelli's interventions, in the face of advice to act differently, both World Wars would not have taken place at all.

If the Catholic Church were to beatify Pacelli, it would signify its association with his nefarious contribution to human suffering. To my mind, both he and Hitler (himself Catholic-born) were psychopaths. Both manipulated millions of people, which led to untold suffering, in pursuance of their objectives. There is one difference however: Hitler was far cleverer than Pacelli - a smarter psychopath. He waited until the back of the Catholic Church was completely broken before

Leon Reich is a Johannesburg businessman with a long record of Jewish communal service. A popular speaker on Jewish communal platforms, he has served on the Executive of the SA Zionist Federation and was for many years President of the Grahamstown Hebrew Congregation.

he utilized the full force of his power against his enemies. Pacelli was naïve enough to believe that the *Reichskonkordat* of 1933, a signature on a sheet of paper, was enough to discipline Hitler. He was naïve enough to believe that as a Catholic, he would respect the Holy See.

Eugenio Pacelli was crowned Pope Pius XII on 12 March, 1939. Hitler became Chancellor of Germany on 21 March, 1933. Confusion arises when studying Pacelli's role whilst he was the Pope regarding his qualification for beatification. It must be remembered that Pacelli set Hitler up for dictatorship whilst he was Cardinal Secretary of State, which was years before he became Pontiff. After Pacelli was crowned and Hitler was carrying out his policy of mass murder, Pacelli was compliant because his compliance was his contribution in return for the control of schools.² This was "part of the deal".

Whilst the Church makes haste to honor those who are protagonists of their philosophy, i.e. the Christianization of planet earth, it never seeks to punish their sons with blood on their hands. Hitler was never excommunicated. Contrariwise, a special requiem was held for him on the day of his death. The antisemitic teachings of the Roman Catholic Church over the 2000 years of the Jewish dispersion, laid the foundations for the Holocaust. Pacelli was a worthy bearer of these teachings.

It is interesting to note that Hitler, Mussolini, Franco, Portugal's António de Oliveira Salazar and the Slovakian priest Josef Tiso (who headed the Slovak People's Party, a Nazi satellite) were all Fascists and all Roman Catholics. However, neither Franco nor Mussolini was antisemitic. Franco is even strongly suspected of having been a Marrano.

In Pope Benedict XVI's closing speech before his departure from Israel's Ben Gurion Airport in May 2009, he spoke of Auschwitz "where so many Jews – mothers, fathers, husbands, wives, sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and friends were brutally exterminated under a Godless regime that propagated an ideology of antisemitism and hatred. That appalling chapter of history must never be forgotten nor denied." He goes on to say "Let it be universally recognized that the State of Israel has the right to exist, and to enjoy peace and security within internationally agreed borders."³

In a meeting with Menachem Begin, President Carter expressed his affirmation of Israel's right to exist. In reply, the Israeli Prime Minister said that he appreciated the President's affirmation. However, "the Hebrew Bible established our right over our land, millennia ago. That right was never abandoned or forfeited. I shall not negotiate my existence with anybody and I need nobody's affirmation of it."⁴ The same may be said of Pope Benedict's closing speech.

Pope Benedict's statement is a huge departure from the position of a Church that believed that Christ, the Messiah, will only return to earth when all the Jews have been either exterminated

or converted. It certainly is a positive move towards peace on earth by a Pope that was compelled as a youth to first join the *Hitler Jugend* and then forced to graduate to the Wehrmacht. I do believe that "the winds of change", in the words of former British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, are blowing through the corridors of the Vatican.

Down the generations, all Jews of every generation were wrongfully held responsible for the crucifixion. Latterly, the opinion of Jews is being taken into consideration during the process of beatification. If not for Jewish pressure, Pacelli would have been beatified decades ago. Hopefully, this "wind of change" will assist in honoring the names of those who perished in the two terrible World Wars, rather than disgracefully insulting their memory.

Factors Influencing Pacelli

Christian hatred of Jews dating from the early Christian Church was borne out of the belief that the Jews had murdered Christ. They believed that the Jews had murdered G-d (one can only wonder how this might be possible). The early Fathers of the Church, the great Christian writers of the first six centuries of Christianity, showed striking evidence of antisemitism. Examples are the opinions of Origen who wrote that "the blood of Jesus falls not only on the Jews of that time, but on all generations of Jews up to the end of the world".⁵ St John Chrysostom wrote, "The synagogue is a brothel, a hiding place for unclean beasts... Never has any Jew prayed to G-d.... They are possessed by demons."⁶ The Gospel of St Mark speaks about "the hypocrites in the synagogues" to this very day.

The Emperor Constantine passed a series of imperial laws such as special taxes on Jews, a ban on new synagogues, outlawing intermarriage between Christians and Jews. During the 5th Century, Jews were regularly attacked during Holy Week; they were excluded from public office and synagogues were put to the torch. The reason that the Jews were not exterminated was epitomized in the early 13th Century by Pope Innocent III, which reflected the view of the Popes of the 1st millennium: "Their words – 'may his blood be on us and our children' – have brought inherited guilt upon the entire nation, which follows them as a curse where they live and work, when they are born and when they die."⁷

It was during the Fourth Lateran Council convened by Pope Innocent III in 1215, that the requirements were laid down compelling Jews to wear distinguishing headgear. They were denied social equality, banned from owning land and excluded from public office and most forms of trade. As a result, they had no alternative but to engage in money-lending to earn a living, an occupation forbidden to Christians under Church law. They were licensed to lend at strictly defined

rates and became cursed as 'bloodsuckers' and 'usurers' living off the debts of Christians.

Persecution of Jews during the Middle Ages was unprecedented. The Holy Crusades were unholy for the Jews. For Crusaders it was part of their mission to torment and kill Jews. There were enforced baptisms and conversions, particularly of Jewish boys. There was a dispute between the Franciscans and Dominicans over their 'right' to forcibly baptize Jewish children as an extension of their lordship over slaves within their domains.

During the 12th Century, the belief took root in England that the Jews abducted and sacrificed Christian children, using their blood for matzo at Passover. This was the infamous "blood libel". The execution of Jews accused of such ritual murders was accompanied by the destruction of entire communities.

In the 16th Century, Pope Paul IV instituted the ghetto and the wearing of the yellow badge. Empress Catherine of Russia instituted the Jewish Pale of Settlement within the Russian Empire, locking Jews into a restricted area within which they were permitted to live. The Reformation saw the reduction of repressive laws in areas not under Papal control, such as Holland and England and Protestant areas in North America. The Papal States persisted in the ghetto system until the unification of Italy in 1848. The ghetto as a residential area of choice survived until the beginning of World War II.

The Spanish Inquisition

During the rule of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, the Spanish Inquisition under the guidance of a Jesuit monk Tomas de Torquemada, the Grand Inquisitor, Jews were given the choice of losing most of their possessions and expulsion or conversion. This was a most difficult decision since the Jews had been in the Iberian Peninsula for centuries. The aged and the very young had difficulty in traveling, particularly in those days. They frequently had nowhere to go and the conditions of the Inquisition had impoverished them. Many were too ill to travel. The mere prospect of leaving Spain forever was an unmitigated tragedy. It was far worse for them than mere poverty.

A delegation consisting of Abraham Senior and Isaac Abrabanel went to see Ferdinand and Isabella to plead their case, accompanied by a bag of gold. Torquemada, eyes ablaze with anger, a cross in hand, placed the Crucifix near the bag of gold pointing to the figure of Jesus on the cross he said "here he is, sell him"

Their quest failed. Senior and his family converted and Abrabanel and his family went into exile. The last day to leave Spain was 1 August 1492. The last boats leaving with the Spanish Jews departed the following day, which coincided with Tisha B'Av.

The Portuguese were unaffected by the

Inquisition in 1492. The King of Portugal was prepared to admit the Jews temporarily and some 100 000 went there, at a very high price for admittance. Those who had nowhere to go, and who could not afford the admission price to Portugal had to choose between being sold into slavery or conversion to Christianity.

In 1495, a new king of Portugal, Manoel, ascended the throne. He wished to marry the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain. This held out the possibility of his also inheriting the throne of Spain upon the demise of the Spanish royal couple, who had no sons. The Spanish monarchy would agree to the match conditional upon Manoel expelling all non-Christians from Portugal. Manoel recognized that the Jewish subjects were important to the country's economic prosperity. He thus tried to forcibly retain them whilst ridding the country of all other non-Christians.

On the first night of Passover in 1497, all Portuguese Jewish children were forcibly dragged out of their homes from the *seder* tables. After being kept without food or water for several days, they were forcibly converted. Now that they were Christians, the King denied them permission to leave the country. Their parents were left with the choice of either leaving the country without them or likewise 'converting'.

The numbers are uncertain, but a community of at least 250 000 Jews was destroyed in the Iberian Peninsula.⁸ Of those who remained under forced conversion, a small percentage managed to escape to other lands in Europe and the Americas. The name '*Marranos*' given to these secret Jews means 'swine'. The attempt to dehumanize Jews is not new. Once a person is no longer fully human and is equated to an animal such as a baboon then one is entitled to kill him as a "sub-human". This was practiced in the early days of Berlin, where a tax was payable for animals entering the city. The only national group required to pay the same tax as an animal entering the city, were Jews. In Germany, even before Hitler got into power, there were signs on park benches and public buildings "*Juden unt hunde verboten*" - No Jews or dogs allowed. "Once, however, the victim became completely devoid of humanity in the perpetrator's eye, he could be killed. Annihilation followed."⁹ Moslem extremists today speak of Jews as pigs and monkeys.

The series of events leading to the expulsion from Spain commenced in 1391, although the final expulsion took place in 1492, there were already a large number of "New Christians" who were secretly Marranos by 1480. A number of prominent new Christians at the time were caught having a Seder during Passover. Thus were established the torture chambers in which thousands of Jews were beaten, tortured, terrorized and starved to death. The fires were kindled to burn down the centuries, right until the end of the

18th century, for Jews who were burned alive.

The name of the Public Execution was known as the Auto-da-Fe or Act of Faith. It was the occasion for a popular holiday, with spectators crowded from every roof and window of a public square, decorated appropriately. Those who confessed to practicing Judaism secretly, but now recognized the error of their ways were first strangled by the executioners. A prominent dignitary or perhaps the king himself, would set fire to the pyre. This took place in front of the other prisoners who were already bound awaiting their fate. The tolling of the bells mingled with the shrieks of the dying and the cheers of the populace and the cries of Shema Yisrael floated above the tumult.

In the whole of the Inquisition's 350 year existence, victims numbered 341 000.¹⁰ Of these, in excess of 32 000 were burned alive, 18 000 were burned after execution and 291 000 suffered lesser punishments such as penance, lashes, confiscation, imprisonment or a combination of these. Benzion Netanyahu, the late father of the current Israeli Prime Minister, argues that the Inquisition was instituted against the Marranos, as a result of growing economic power of the *conversos* (Jews forcibly converted to Catholicism), who numbered just over 7% of the Spanish population.

The historian Cecil Roth comments that although the great age of Spain came about after its establishment, the Inquisition "was pressing slowly on the vital arteries of Spanish intellectual life and the cumulative effect was felt at last... By the middle of the 18th Century, it was possible to see the result – a country drained of its inspiration, of its genius, of its wealth, in fact of everything but its orthodoxy and its pride".

Anti-Judaism survived right into the reign of Pope Leo XIII (1878 -1903). The main thrust of this was the concept that the Jews were obstinate and failed to see the error of their ways. For this reason they rejected Christianity.

Pacelli's schoolmaster, Signore Giuseppe Marchi, constantly harped on this theme whilst Pacelli was at school. In the very street in which Pacelli was born, Via Monte Gordiano, it was the custom over many centuries for a newly elected Pope in a procession en route to the Basilica of St John Lateran to perform an anti-Jewish ceremony. The Pontiff would halt the procession to receive a copy of the Pentateuch from the Chief Rabbi of Rome in the presence of the procession. The Pope returned the Pentateuch to the Chief Rabbi with the text upside down together with 20 pieces of gold. This was intended to indicate that despite the fact that the Pope respected the Law of Moses, it was the stubbornness of the Jews that prevented them from opening their hearts to see the error of their ways and convert. The concept was included in Catholic rituals performed on Good Friday, when the congregants prayed that the "perfidious Jews" would acknowledge "our Lord Jesus

Christ". This was only abolished by Pope John XXIII at the second Vatican Council in 1962.

This culture of antisemitism over the centuries made it easy for fascists like Salazar, Tiso, Franco and Hitler, to foster the belief that Jewish stubbornness made the Jews responsible for, and thus deserving of, their own misfortunes.

Eugenio Pacelli was born in 1876. In the years 1881-2, Giuseppe Oreglia de San Stefano wrote a series of articles in *Civiltà Cattolica*, a leading Jesuit journal, claiming that the killing of children for the Paschal Feast was "all too common". The use of blood of a Christian child was a general law "binding on the conscience of all Hebrews". Every year the Jews "crucify a child". In order that the blood be effective, "the child must die in torment". He further asserted that "by their cunning", the Jews had instigated the French Revolution in order to achieve equality. This would assist them to gain key positions in most economies enabling them to control and to establish "virulent campaigns against Christianity". The Jews were "the race that nauseates", and "an idle people who neither work nor produce anything; who live off the sweat of others."

The journal reflected the official stance of the Roman Catholic Church and called for the abolition of "civic equality" for Jews, which commenced with the Reformation and for the segregation of Jews from the rest of the population. Small wonder indeed that Pacelli, who grew up in such an atmosphere, found comfort in later years as Cardinal Secretary of State in assisting Hitler to crush Catholic liberal opinion in the form of its media, its many courageous enlightened Bishops and Chancellor Brüning and his Centre Party.

In the autumn of 1964, Pope Paul VI announced at a meeting of the progressive fathers of Vatican II that the Congregation for Saints was to commence formal beatification processes for both Pope Pius XII and Pope John XXIII. Father Paul Molinari and Father Peter Gumpel from the Jesuit order were tasked in 1965 with the particular responsibility for the process regarding Pope Pius XII.

A huge volume of documentation has been assembled and scrutinized; hundreds of people have been asked to give evidence. The key figure, Father Peter Gumpel, is described as a man of great intelligence and very knowledgeable regarding Pacelli. However, the material that he favors is very selective and ignores scholars like Klaus Schuler, as well as Robert Katz, Guenter Lewy and Saul Friedlander who, he asserts, should "realize that they are trampling on the sensibilities of Catholics and in doing so they hinder efforts to build better relations between the Catholics and the Jews". Cornwell regards Gumpel as a Pacelli apologist.

Pacelli's Personal Background

"Thou art Peter and upon this rock shall my Church be built. Whatsoever shall be bound by

thee on earth shall be bound in Heaven. Whatsoever shall be loosed by thee on earth shall be loosed in Heaven."

This is the exhortation of Jesus of Nazareth to his disciple, Peter. He and his successors are forever to be the successors of the Master on earth. The successors of St Peter are the Popes of Rome. By their cession of their powers to the Cardinals, Bishops and Priests down the line of command, "whatsoever shall be bound by them on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatsoever shall be loosed by them on earth shall be loosed in heaven" inherited these rights and titles. This is the credo of the Roman Catholic Church. The Pope and his representatives, namely the clergy, had ultimate power over the lives of their adherents and this power was endorsed in heaven.

Eugenio Pacelli's grandfather, Marcantonio Pacelli, was a Vatican lawyer. He was a key official in the service of Giovanni Maria Mastou-Ferretti who was crowned Pope Pius IX - Pio Nino - in 1846. In 1861, Marcantonio helped to found the Vatican daily newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*. It exists to this day and is published daily in seven languages.

Marcantonio, was loyal to Pio Nino when The Papal Territories were temporarily lost during the 1848 revolution in Italy. He fled with him to the seaside fortress of Gaeta in the neighboring kingdom of Naples in November of that year and returned with him to Rome the following July. The help of French bayonets and a loan from the well-known, Jewish Rothschild family facilitated Pope Pius IX's return. He repaid the Jewish community for their assistance by forcing them back into the ghetto; compelling them to wear the infamous yellow badge (later taken over by Hitler,) and made them pay for having supported the revolution. He also became involved in the kidnapping by Papal Police of a six year-old Jewish child, Edgardo Mortara, in 1858. The child was forcibly baptized. Despite world outrage (including no less than twenty editorials in the *New York Times*), the pleas of the parents and the entreaties of both Emperor Franz Josef of Austria and Napoleon III of France, the child was never returned. Instead, he was forcibly cloistered in a monastery and eventually ordained as a priest.

During the period of the First Vatican Council, was convened by Pio Nino in late 1869 and lasting until 20 October 1870, the decree of Papal Infallibility was passed (18 July, 1870). Initially only half the Bishops supported the decree. Eventually, it was passed in the presence of 433 Bishops with two dissensions. An additional decree announcing the Pope's supreme jurisdiction over his Bishops, both individually and collectively, was also accepted. The Pope was anti-democratic as a result of the loss of his Papal lands during the unification and democratization of Italy. In 1868, he had forbidden Italian Catholics from taking part in democratic politics.

Pacelli's parents were married in 1871. His mother Virginia Graziosi, one of thirteen children, hailed from Rome and was "a pious daughter of the Church". Two of her siblings became priests and two became nuns. His father, Fillippo, performed pastoral work in the parishes of Rome. The family considered themselves a part of the Black Nobility,¹¹ who opposed and rejected the 'usurpation' of King Vittorio Emanuel. The meager remuneration earned by both Marcantonio and Fillipo, was indicative of their loyalty to the papal cause rather than of an aristocratic lifestyle.

Eugenio Pacelli was born on 2 March, 1876, two years before the death of Pio Nino. He was born into a culture where the Pope was regarded as infallible and as G-d's Vicar on earth and whose decisions were automatically endorsed in heaven. Jews were seen as being deserving of any cruelty or punishment meted out to them due to their stubbornness in refusing to accept Christ as the Messiah. They were no less than slaves and it was quite in order to kidnap their children and convert them against their parents' will. There was no clash of integrity in utilizing any financial benefit that they were able to offer, whether through loans or confiscation of assets, and immediately thereafter betraying them.

A person raised in this type of morality, which was extremely anti-democratic and where Jews were thus regarded, was indeed a candidate to be an ally of fellow Catholic Fascists such as Tiso, Franco, Salazar, Mussolini or indeed Adolf Hitler. As will be shown, there was in addition a great commonality of attitude in their joint hatred and fear of Communism. How much more did one need to bind together the Catholics and the Fascists in an allegiance? Both hated Jews, democracy and Communism.

In 1901, Pacelli was recruited by Monsignor Pietro Gaspari, the undersecretary in the Department of Extraordinary Affairs (the equivalent to the Foreign Office in the Secretariat of State). A few days after his recruitment, he was appointed an '*apprendista*' (apprentice) in the Department. He rose rapidly from part time lecturer in Canon Law in 1902 to a part time lecturer in the Academy for Nobles and Ecclesiastes, where he taught civil and Canon law. In 1904, he obtained his doctorate. His thesis dealt with the nature of Concordats, the term for special treaties between the Vatican and nation states, monarchies and empires, and the function of Canon Law, when a Concordat falls into abeyance. The importance of this qualification will be seen later in discussions regarding the First World War and the rise of Hitler.

That same year, Pacelli was promoted to the post of *minutante*, which involved writing digests of reports dispatched to the Secretariat from all over the world. He was also awarded the title of Monsignor, with the rank of Papal Chamberlain. In 1905 he was awarded the title of Domestic Prelate and two years later he was selected to

accompany the Cardinal Secretary of State to a Eucharistic Congress in London.

Anti-Democracy and Papal Diplomacy

Pope Leo XIII reigned from 1878-1903. He believed that the Papal Diplomatic Service had a crucial role to play in the implementation of internal Church discipline and the conduct of Church/State relations, and had himself been trained in diplomacy. The permanent mission of the Vatican increased from eighteen to twenty-seven diplomats, during his watch. On his death, he was succeeded by Pope Pius X. This inaugurated an era known as anti-Modernism, also called anti-Americanism. The modernists tried to bring the Catholic Church in line with democracy, and the movement was primarily driven by a disparate modernizing group in North America. 'Americanism' experienced almost immediate demise after the Papal denunciation.

The 'poison' of European Modernism spreading throughout the Church was identified as early as 1870 by Professor Louis Duchesne at the Institut Catholique in Paris. The man appointed to eradicate it by Pope Pius X was Umberto Benigni. He worked in the mornings in the Vatican in the same office of Pacelli. During the afternoons, evenings and weekends, he conducted the Secret Service known as the *Sodalitium Pium* (Sodality of Pius). Experienced in running a Catholic newspaper and news service, he used the most modern and up-to-date skills in running an internal espionage service to find 'culprits' who might be suspected of being Modernist or of having Modernist or democratic views.

Without recourse to the *audi alteram partem* (hearing the other view) rule, numerous seminarians, curates, priests, teachers, bishops and even princes of the Church were 'delated' or reported. The Cardinal Archbishops of Vienna and Paris and the entire Dominican Community of Fribourg University in Switzerland were affected and sentenced without an opportunity to defend themselves.

A comment made en passant in a refectory, being seen in the company of a suspected modernist, a sermon with unorthodox undertones were enough to result in destruction of a career, and banishment to a remote region. No one could be trusted and even students and old friends secretly reported each other. Pope Pius X, himself approved, blessed and encouraged this intellectual constriction, which spied on the hierarchy itself. In July, 1907 he published the decree *Lamentabili* condemning 65 modernist Propositions (meaning 'viewpoints'). Two months later, he published *Pascendi*, an encyclical on Modernism. This establishes for all time that intellectual questions are not a matter for scholarly or intellectual discussion but must be resolved by Papal authority. One accepted not only what the Pope proposed, but also how he interpreted it. This is contrary to

all Catholic teaching of conscience and is a form of thought control that was unrivalled even by Communist and Fascist regimes.

Thirty years after the *Lamentabili*, Pius X published a directive known as the "Anti-Modernist" oath. This required acquiescence to all papal teachings. All ordinands and all priests in administrative teaching posts must to this day take an oath in a modified form, denouncing Modernism and supporting the *Lamentabili*. The oath also includes *Pascendi*. This fear of the modern world and the fear of loss of total papal control were approved of by Pacelli, even though his mentor Gaspari vehemently disapproved.

It was Pacelli who canonized Pope Pius X on 29 May 1954, describing him as a "glowing flame of charity and shining splendor of sanctity". Clearly, he adopted the anti-Modernist philosophy of his predecessor. This made it easier for him to associate himself with the principle of "*Ein welt, ein volk, ein führer*" (one world, one nation, one leader) of Adolf Hitler.

In 1904, in strictest secrecy, the Codification of Canon Law was begun. The project took forty years to commence from the inception by Pio Nino in 1864, and was to be applied universally without local discretion or opinion. It was eventually published in 1917 and is probably the most important event in the history of the Roman Catholic Church in modern times. It finally cemented total power control, unequal and unprecedented to the Papacy of the Church. The principle architects and team leaders were Gaspari and Pacelli.

According to a distinguished Protestant canon lawyer, Ulrich Stutz, the Code gave "supreme and most complete jurisdiction" of the Church by the Pope, unlike anything that the Church had possessed in its 2000-year existence.¹² It was in many ways a unilateral declaration of total power, since there were many concordats between the Vatican and various governments over the centuries. Points of dissension between the Code and the Concordats had to be ironed out. It was Pacelli's principle task to eradicate obstacles, starting with Germany, the most powerful Catholic population in the world.

Pius X was opposed to co-operating with political parties. He did not care for them since he was unable to control their thought processes. This was the case particularly in France where, as a result of successive revolutions commencing in 1789, the monarchy had been replaced by a republican form of government, whilst the Vatican favored a more monarchist, anti-democratic approach. When the Jewish officer, Captain Alfred Dreyfus, was found guilty of selling national secrets in 1895, the Jesuit monthly *Civiltà Cattolica* proclaimed that "the Jew was created by G-d to act as a traitor everywhere." When Dreyfus was later exonerated, the Vatican came under attack by the anti-clerical Socialist Party in France because of the article.

Influenced by Pope Pius X and political events which occurred in both France and Italy, Pacelli believed in the infallibility of leadership in the case of the Church as well as in the Fascist form of Government. According to Carlo Falconi: "First he believed the mixture of politics and religion to be the most dangerous possible for the Church, secondly because at that time the Catholic Parties fostered the participation of priests in politics, and lastly because he thought them useless, for Catholics could always seek support for their religious claims from lay parties favorable to the Church or at least not hostile to it."¹³

Pacelli espoused the same view when, as Cardinal Secretary of State, he collaborated on behalf of a docile, quiescent church with the Nazi Party. He preferred to help to crush the Catholic Centre Party, which consisted of loyal Catholics but was the final obstacle on Hitler's path to dictatorship. In order to achieve control, he chose Hitler as a Chancellor, rather than Brüning who was both a Catholic and a democrat.

The Cause of World War I

Father Denis Cardon, as described by Cornwell, was "a corpulent bustling, meddlesome cleric skilled in several languages including Serbo-Croatian."¹⁴ One evening in Belgrade, he met a minister of the Serbian government to whom he suggested that a concordat between the Vatican and Serbia would be mutually beneficial. The minister expressed his doubts that the Roman Catholic Church would welcome the concept, due to the expected resistance of the Austrian government. Cardon assured the minister that he (Cardon) could introduce him to the correct personality in the Church who would welcome the concept and indeed steer it to fruition.

The minister was so impressed with this relatively unknown priest that he forthwith proceeded to appoint him as Serbian Special Agent to the Holy See. Thus it was that Cardon went to the Vatican and put the proposal to Pacelli. Never before had there been any question of the Vatican having such discussions with Serbia.

During the Colonial era, it was a familiar feature for a Catholic country to act as a Protector of Catholics in a non-Catholic country. The Catholic Austro-Hungarian Empire was therefore the protector of Catholics in non-Catholic Serbia, which numbered only 7000 at the time of the 1st Balkan War in 1912. As a result of Serbia's military success in that war, the Serbian Empire now encompassed 40 000 Catholics within its newly extended borders.

Pacelli's proposal in essence was that control of the Catholic Church in Serbia be moved from Vienna to Rome. In terms of the treaty, Rome would nominate Bishops and educate priests in the Latin rite, a right previously held by Austria. The negotiations between Serbia and the Vatican were conducted in the greatest of secrecy for a

whole year, despite Austrian representations and several approaches to the Vatican. On 15 February 1913 Archbishop Raffaele Scapinelli, the Vatican's nuncio in Vienna, wrote to Pacelli: "Austria....appears determined to deal harshly with Serbia and it is widely believed that there could be a war with that country in the spring, further complicating matters in the extreme. Would it not be better to leave the concordat negotiations for now, rather than take risks in an uncertain and perilous set of circumstances, that can only lead to military humiliation for Serbia?"¹⁵

Pacelli, however, was determined to end the protectorate status of the Austrians in the interests of Rome. His drive for control was the overriding factor which caused him to ignore all warnings and pleas and his initiative led to increased tension between Austria and Serbian which escalated into World War I. On 7 June, 1914, a final meeting of cardinals was held in the Secretariat of State where Gaspari re-echoed Archbishop Raffaele Scapinelli's warnings. Gaspari understood that the Church had been led into the trap by Pacelli's desire to exercise direct control over Catholics at the local level and thus had become involved in the complexities of local Balkan politics.

It may be argued that Pacelli could never have foreseen the implications of the papacy becoming a player on the world stage. However, the pressure cooker which was initiated and escalated by his irresponsible and self-serving conduct was sufficient indication of the price that Europe and the world paid for the meddling of amateurs in world affairs.

On 24 June 1914, the concordat with the Vatican and the Serbian government was signed. Only four days later, Austria's Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated at Sarajevo. The uncompromising position of Serbia and Rome, the volatile emotions, the Austrian outrage and the assassination made war inevitable.

Pope Pius X died on 20 August, it was said of a broken heart after realizing the role that his being manipulated by Pacelli had played in the commencement of the war. Pacelli remained alive with his heart intact. The new pope, Benedict XV, was elected on 3 September. He immediately dismissed the Secretary of State, Merry del Val, and replaced him with Gaspari. Pacelli was promoted to Secretary in the Department of Extraordinary Affairs.

Pacelli, Between the World Wars

Pacelli was tasked with dealing with the vast populations of prisoners of war, on both sides and "of all religions". He is recorded as having done an outstanding job wherein, *inter alia*, 65 000 prisoners were liberated and generous parcels containing food and medication were distributed amongst many of the hapless prisoners awaiting release. He also provided religious solace, working tirelessly for three years without a day's vacation.

He assisted in searching for news of the missing and the dead and managed funds for the relief work provided by the Holy See.

Pacelli's concern for the POWs certainly attests to his humanity and compassion. In his regular reports to Gaspari, however, he never neglected to reflect his activities in the best possible light (in which regard he was eminently skilled and experienced). His skill in taking care of his own interests extended to his arrangements when he left Rome's Stazione Termini en route to Munich to commence his term of duty in Germany in the interests of the POWs. He commandeered his own railway compartment plus an additional sealed carriage containing sixty cases of groceries pressing four ministries into service at a cost of 80 000 lire to the Holy See. This contained an enormous quantity of embargoed goods and all station masters were placed on alert from Rome to the Swiss border to ensure the safe and unhindered progress of his war rations.

Following the sudden death of Archbishop Aversa of Munich in May 1917, Pacelli was consecrated as Archbishop of Sardi by Benedict XV in the Sistine Chapel. It was a private ceremony, attended by, amongst others, Achille Ratti, the Vatican Diplomat and librarian who would become Pius XI five years later. During Pacelli's time in Germany, he vigorously set about promoting Benedict XV's peace plan. The Holy Father was indeed tormented by Christians waging war against each other and by Catholics killing Catholics.

On 30 June 1920, Pacelli presented his credentials to the Reich, as ambassador of the Holy See. He was the first diplomat to do so under the Weimar Republican Government and performed his duties with both charm and distinction.

Pacelli came to a Germany shamed and embarrassed by military defeat and whose economy was on the brink of collapse. It was inflation ridden and leaderless, and vulnerable to revolution and civil war. Here was an opportunity for a cunning strategist to wring out a benefit for the Vatican. It could appeal for moderate demands, lower compensation rates and lower interest charges. It could encourage re-establishment of diplomatic links between former enemies and recommend more agreeable borders for Germany.

Before the war, Germany had donated more funds to the Holy See than all the other Catholic communities of the world put together. The sooner Germany re-established its economy, the greater the fiscal benefit would be to the Church. The Catholic population in Germany had reached 23 million by 1930. This was approximately 35% of the nation, and was despite the fact that Germany had lost a considerable portion of its territory as a result of the war that had been heavily populated by Catholics. The German Catholic community was energetic and creative. During the 1920s, for example, monastic foundations increased from

366 to 640, members of religious orders from 7000 to 14 000 and members of women's religious orders from 60 000 to 77 000. There were some 400 daily Catholic newspapers and 420 periodicals. Two Catholic news and feature services syndicated material nationwide and a Catholic cinema review *Film-Rundschau*. Rallies of Catholic workers, scouts and other groups were frequently held. Catholicism was by far the largest single social group in the country. The Catholic Centre Party had much to do with the strength and unprecedented growth of Catholicism in Germany, and during the 1920s, provided five out of the country's ten Chancellors.

Adolf Hitler recognized at an early stage the potential for Catholic resistance to National Socialism. In *Mein Kampf*, he stated that a confrontation with the Catholic Church would be disastrous, and knew he could never succeed without the Church's cooperation.

There was considerable antagonism towards the Nazis. How was it, then, that the much-feared confrontation between the Church and Nazism never materialized? Hitler was cunning enough to realize that what the Catholic Church had in common with the Nazi philosophy of dictatorship was its Code of Canon Law. Skillfully structured by Gaspari and Pacelli in the years 1904-1917, it effectively accorded the Pope total control, with the power to make decisions over the heads of both clergy and laity without consultation. The trick was to establish common cause with the Papacy; this would create co-operation and eliminate resistance.

Pacelli's Role in Hitler's Rise to Power

Pacelli took up his position as Cardinal Secretary of State on 7 February 1930. The power of decision in the Church then rested with Pope Pius XI. However, the Pope was plagued by illness and increasingly entrusted more and more of his major decisions to the Cardinal Secretary of State in matters concerning international relations. This was perfectly natural as the portfolio of Cardinal Secretary of State is equivalent to that of a Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The crux of the whole discussion was what would be benefit to the Church. What, in other words, was to be the price of the latter's silence? The terms of Article 21 of the *Reichskonkordat* signed between the Roman Catholic Church and the National Socialist Party on 20 July 1933 included the concordat's provision on Catholic education. This was the most important area of the treaty for the Church. Hitler was to protect and underwrite the cost of educating Catholic pupils and students in every kind of institution from the commencement of primary level to the end of the secondary level. The Catholic diocesan authorities were granted the right to examine religious instruction in schools and to appoint and dismiss teachers. The Church therefore gained

control of education and the taxpayers, who constituted two-thirds Protestants and one-third Catholic, picked up the tab. The concordat was signed by Franz von Papen on behalf of the Nazis and by Pacelli representing the Church.

It should be borne in mind how Pacelli had maneuvered control of the Serbian Church, with the tab being picked up by the government of Serbia. Now he had maneuvered control of education for the whole of Germany, at the expense of the German taxpayer. In both cases the Catholic Church gained control free of charge.

According to Article 23 - and this was even more important - Catholic parents could demand the provision of Catholic schooling where it did not exist, depending on local conditions. This demand for Catholic schooling did not only apply to Catholic pupils, but to those of any religious persuasion.

It is for these supposed benefits that Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli sold the reputation of a mighty Church, with all its dedicated pastors, thinkers, academics and fighters for justice and democracy, by acquiescing in the program of a fascist murderer,

On 25 July 1933, five days after the signing of the concordat, the Law Against Overcrowding of German Schools and universities aimed at reducing the number of Jews studying at these institutions was passed. The law - known as the *Numerus Clausus* Act - laid down a strict quota for Jews of 1½% of school and university enrolments. Pacelli, as Cardinal Secretary of State, had negotiated favorable rights for Catholics with the self-same government that was simultaneously trampling on the rights of the Jewish minority. The Holy See and the German Catholic Church were thus drawn into complicity with a racist, antisemitic government. Three months before the signing of the concordat, thousands of priests across Germany had already begun supplying details of blood purity through marriage and baptism registries for purposes of the *Numerus Clausus* Act. The information was later used to enforce the Nuremberg Laws and ultimately for sending Jews to the death camps.

The Protestant Churches also co-operated in supplying this information. However, in the case of the Catholic Church, the culpability was far greater because of the centralized application of Canon Law, so skillfully crafted and enforced by Pacelli. The excuse of not believing in *active* politics as Catholics, but using concordats with political parties to advance their cause seemed the perfect excuse. Just as Cardinal Tomas de Torquemada acted to ensure that the punishment in the Spanish Inquisition were performed by the Civic Authority, so too did Eugenio Pacelli act during the Holocaust. The history of the Church enjoys a distinction for its macabre consistency. The Church is the manipulator, whilst the civic authority, either Ferdinand and Isabella or Adolf Hitler are the murderers.

There were indeed courageous priests who tried to thwart the Nazis. One had to be extremely brave to do so and they were in the minority. The story of how the mighty Catholic Church was silenced and instead helped in catapulting Hitler to power with Pacelli's assistance will be told in the second part of this paper.

Notes

- 1 Cornwell, J, *Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII* (Penguin, 1999), pp 131-9, 142-7
- 2 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reichskonkordat>. Cornwell, p146.
- 3 http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2009/may/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20010515_farewell-tel-aviv_en.html
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- 6 <http://www.nobeliefs.com/ChurchesWWII.htm>
- 7 catholicinsight.com/online/reviews/films/article_45.shtml
- 8 Grayzel, S, *A History of the Jews*, p366
- 9 Bauer, Y, *A History of the Holocaust*, Institute of Contemporary Jewry Hebrew, University of Jerusalem, with the assistance of Nili Keren, New York: Franklin Watts, c1982, 2001, p92
- 10 Sources "Inquisition" Encyclopedia Judaica. "The Spanish Inquisition Gates to Jewish Heritage"
- 11 The Black Nobles were a small group of self-elected aristocrats who had continued to support the Pope, following the loss of their extensive lands in the struggle for the state of Italy
- 12 Quoted by Cornwell, p42
- 13 Quoted in C. Falconi, *Popes in the Twentieth Century*, English translation, London 1967, p76; Cornwell, p47.
- 14 Cornwell, p51
- 15 Ibid, p53



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SOME HOLOCAUST AND JUDAICA ARTEFACTS AND THE STORIES BEHIND THEM

*

Jeff Fine

Those who saw them, commented the anonymous SA Jewish Board of Deputies representative, would “become conscious of the immense tragedy hidden behind every single item which tells of the biggest robbery ever committed in history. Visitors will see the blood dripping from silver candelabra. They will see eyes opened widely with horror; they will hear the cries of agony of death, with which the silver will be connected for them.”

The above-mentioned representative had just cleared from Customs Jewish artefacts stolen by the Nazis from synagogues and homes throughout Europe. The items were distributed after the war by the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction (JCR) programme to Jewish communities round the world.

This, too, is my response when I look at the precious articles left behind by the nameless victims of the Holocaust, killed solely because they were Jewish. As a Judaica valuator and collector, I have a keen interest in such items. This article features the stories about those that have come into my possession.

In November 2009, I gave a lecture on ‘Art and Artefacts of the Holocaust as a Learning Tool’ to a group of educators who were going on a two-week course at Yad Vashem the following month. Afterwards, I was invited to join them, and grabbed the opportunity with both hands. It would give me the opportunity to learn more about the Holocaust, information I could use in future lectures. I would also be able to visit some of my contacts in Jerusalem from whom I purchase Holocaust artefacts and antique Judaica.

Little did I realize how intense this two-week course would be, and that it would leave little or no time for collecting expeditions. We were only free on a few evenings, but after an intensive eight-hour day of lectures, were too tired to go exploring.

On the first Wednesday, we had an amazing lecture on Theresienstadt. This was the camp that was housed in an 18th Century fortress and turned

into a model ghetto to deceive the outside world into believing that the rumours of European Jews being deported to death camps were false. To it were sent privileged Jews from Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Austria: prominent artists, writers, scientists, jurists, diplomats, musicians and scholars. In this ghetto, there were four concert orchestras, chamber groups and jazz ensembles. For the children, there were daily classes and sports activities; art teacher Friedl Dicker-Brandeis ran drawing classes for them.

Leo Haas

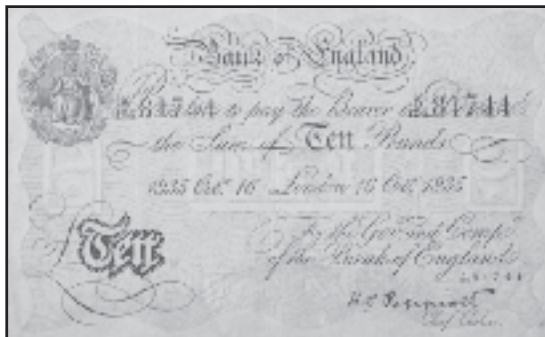
Among the artists was the Czechoslovakian Leo Haas, a portrait painter and lithographer who arrived on 30 December, 1942, and was employed in the Drawing Office of the Technical Department under fellow Czech artist, Bedrich Fritta. Other well-known artists were Karel Fleishmann, Otto Ungar, and Felix Bloch. Haas drew portraits of his colleagues and taught painting to the children, for which he received a little food. In secret, he made drawings documenting ghetto life – people searching for food, waiting to be transported, the transfer of internees from one place to another, the buildings, portraits of inmates, sketches of the elderly, the sick, the dying and the dead. His friend Fritta drew a book as a birthday gift for his son Thomas showing him what a normal birthday would be like had they not been in the ghetto, with a party, cakes, presents, and a clown, with parks, trees, flowers and birds – all things Thomas could not see in the ghetto. We were shown the book *Tommy*, which was published by Yad Vashem in Hebrew in 1999, in both adult and children’s versions.

Haas, Fritta and Ungar would often meet in the evening to work on their drawings and managed to smuggle out some of their work through an art dealer, Leo Strauss. The latter used his ‘Aryan’ family and close connections with the ghetto’s Czech police in the hope that this might rouse public opinion. It was seen by the Danish Red Cross, who asked to visit the ghetto. A carefully planned propaganda visit was prepared - buildings were painted, shops were filled with food and Jews were deported to empty the streets. Several days before the visit, the artists were warned by a co-worker in the technical department (a member of the Council of Elders), that they would be called in for interrogation. Fritta buried his pictures

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in the ground inside a metal box, Ungar hid his paintings in a depression in a wall and Haas hid his works in an attic. Immediately after the Red Cross had left, the Nazis began to search through the tools of the people in the technical department, searching for pictures. Ungar, Fritta, Haas and Bloch were arrested in July 1944, accused of distributing atrocity propaganda to outside countries and, along with Strauss who had been imprisoned several days earlier, interrogated by Adolf Eichmann. Their families were also arrested, including three-year old Thomas. In October they were sent to Auschwitz, where Haas was forced to produce portraits for the 'Angel of Death', Josef Mengele.

Haas was then sent to Sachsenhausen, where he was put to work in the forgery commando, counterfeiting English 5, 10, 20 and 50-pound notes. I have managed to acquire one of each value as well as different signatory examples.



From Sachsenhausen, Haas was sent to Ebensee before being liberated at Mauthausen. Fortunately his wife, Erna, had survived as had Frida Ungar and her daughter, but most of his friends and family had perished. Ungar had died during the Death March to Buchenwald, Bloch had been beaten to death in Theresienstadt, Fritta had died in Auschwitz and his wife in Theresienstadt. However, little Thomas Fritta had survived, although was in very poor health; the Haases adopted him and settled in Prague.

Haas returned to Theresienstadt, where he found his entire art collection. He also found many works produced by Fritta, including the manuscript of *Tommy*. These had been buried in pottery containers made by the adjoining pottery class. After his wife's death, Haas moved to East Berlin, where he worked as the editor of a caricature journal called *Eulenspiegel* and

designed movie sets for the DEFA Company and for East German television. He exhibited his works in Israel, East Germany, France, Italy, Austria, China and the United States.

The Brown Envelope

Five of Haas's sketches had been on offer at a Sotheby's auction in Tel Aviv, held 12 October 1995. I knew about this because as a collector, I rely for much of my information on old auction catalogues, and being as pedantic as I am, had bought all the back auction catalogues which I study and use for research and identification purposes. At that time, I had not been interested in these because I had not yet started collecting Holocaust art, nor had my interest been particularly roused by the above lecture.

I had arranged that evening to visit one of my dealer friends. On the way to his apartment in Mea Shearim we discussed the course at Yad Vashem, his family and mine. When we arrived, I met his parents. His father, now very ill and wheelchair-bound, had been, as his son now was, one of the foremost Judaica dealers in Israel.

I was searching through the Judaica on offer when he said to himself, "Holocaust, wait", and left the room, reappearing with a large, grubby, tattered brown envelope. "I once had to buy this along with a Judaica collection in Europe. Maybe you could use it?" He removed a piece of paper from this envelope and handed it to me to me to peruse, asking if it could be of use in my teaching about the Holocaust through my Art and Artefacts collection. My hands trembled as I gazed upon the sketch *The Roll Call* done by Leo Haas in Mauthausen concentration camp. Could I use it? What a question!

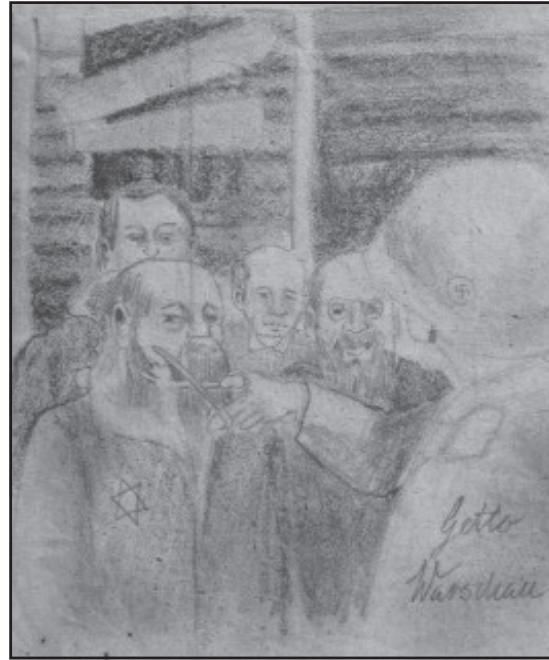


My friend's mother entered at this point. When she saw the sketch she said to me, "I am a survivor from Warsaw Ghetto." She left to return shortly afterwards clutching a flat manila file. "This was from my friend". Inside the file were seven pencil sketches on small scraps of paper protected by tissue paper. At my request, she proceeded to tell me the story of her friend and the sketches. As a young girl she had lived with her parents in a flat in Warsaw. Next door lived her best friend; they

attended the same school and played together every day. In 1938, things began to change. She was no longer allowed to go to school with her friend, nor was she allowed to play with her anymore: She was a Jew! She could not understand this. Before, they had just been two Polish schoolgirls who were friends.

Next, the family had to move from their flat into the Warsaw Ghetto. Her old flat overlooked the entrance to the ghetto, their new home. Standing near the gate, she could see her old flat and sometimes catch a glimpse of her old friend. The ghetto became smaller and smaller and more and more cramped. Soon she could no longer see her old flat.

She did not elaborate on what happened to her during her confinement in the Warsaw Ghetto and afterwards, only saying that when she was finally liberated, she made her way to New York. Because they were Belzer Chassidim, she said, they were taken care of. One day in the market in Brooklyn, she felt a tap on her shoulder. She turned around and looked into the face of her old friend. They embraced and cried, and then they went hand in hand to find a place to sit and talk. Her friend stayed near the market, so they made their way to her home. They spoke for hours about the good old days before the war. The time of the ghetto was not discussed at all. Then her friend got up and went to a cupboard under the steps, returning with a flat file.

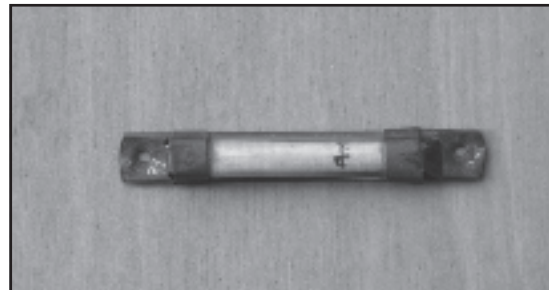


"This is for you. I drew pictures of what I could see from my flat. I now know why I kept it. You must take it to prove what happened".

My friend's mother wiped away her tears and asked me, "Could you use these drawings to teach with, so no one would ever forget what really happened?"

When his mother left to take care of her husband, her son gave me a *mezuzah* parchment in a strange holder. It was made of a tin of sorts, the writing still visible, and was revealed to be the top of a Canadian sardine can. It came from a Displaced Persons camp, he told me. Could it have belonged to his mother? I did not ask and he did not enlighten me.

Further research indicated that the Allies and the Rabbis that helped in the DP camps brought religious items for the survivors - books, *Tefillin*, *Talleisim* and *mezuzah* parchments. When the survivors received the latter, there were no holders, so medical tubing was used to hold the parchment and tin lids were shaped into holders.



When I eventually arrived back at the hotel, it was so late, I had to wake the guard to let me into the reception, and my whole group was fast asleep. I hardly slept for the rest of those few early morning hours, so much was I looking forward to sharing this amazing story and show the three precious artefacts I had acquired.

The Ghetto Doll

In 2007, the Sotheby's receptionist contacted me to say that they had been offered 'A Holocaust Doll' for their next auction, but had told the would-be seller, a Mrs Müller, that they did not deal with Holocaust items. Would I be interested? I promptly phoned Mrs Müller and then, armed with her address, set off south to buy a 'Doll'. The drive was long but distance has never been a problem to a collector and after several wrong turns I arrived at her town house and was shown into the sitting room. There, in a framed glass box, stood 'The Ghetto Doll'. It had a hand-painted wooden carved head, hands and feet, with a body of stuffed coyer, used for stuffing mattresses. The doll's clothes were handmade and could have been made by any of our grannies or *bobbas*.

What was the story?

Mrs Müller and her younger brother were born in Munich, a few years after the war. She married and moved to South Africa. Her brother remained in Germany and bought the doll at a Munich auction. The story was that this doll was one of many found in an orphanage when alterations were being done. They had belonged to little Jewish girls who had been sent to the orphanage during the Shoah.

The story of Janusz Korczak and his orphans - how the children set off for their destined place of extermination neatly dressed in their best clothes, each carrying a blue knapsack and a favourite book or toy with Korczak at their head - is well-known. Extermination was the fate of all the Jewish children in the orphanages in areas under Nazi control. Most had to leave their toys behind.

I paid what I felt this doll was worth to Mrs Müller, knowing full well that I could not lose this sale, as the doll was worth so much to me, as a Jew, than it could ever be to a German who had bought it on auction knowing full well the fate of the child who had played with it previously.



One day when the new Johannesburg Holocaust Centre comes to fruition, the theme is intended to focus on the one and a half million Jewish children murdered *Al Kiddush Hashem*. It is hoped that this Ghetto Doll, a mute survivor of the martyred children, will be part of the exhibit.

The woman who lived in a car

I have worked for a number of years with my friend Gwynne Robins [who, as Gwynne Schrire, is a frequent contributor to Jewish Affairs] in the storeroom with items from Cape Town's old Jewish Museum not needed by the new South African Jewish Museum. Whatever we could has now been put on display in new cabinets in the Cape Town Jewish Centre offices across road from the new museum.

One day, Gwynne told me that a woman had contacted the *Cape Jewish Chronicle* in connection with selling a painting of a rabbi. She had fallen on hard times and was living with her young daughter in a car on the street. She was not Jewish but owned this painting, acquired by her father circa. 1975 at a liquidation auction at a house in Houghton, Johannesburg. On moving to Cape Town from Johannesburg, she had brought the painting with her as her parents no longer wanted it and hung it in her flat. Now jobless and homeless, she wanted to sell it to buy food.

The image of the work was scanned and sent to me. Yad Vashem then identified it as having been painted by Adolf (Ari) Adler, and gave her a value. The auctioneer who was helping her to sell the painting promised me that if I bought it, he would, after deducting his handling fee, pay her rent for as many months as possible.

Adler was born in Satu-Mare, Rumania in 1917 and started painting as a child. In 1942, he was sent to a labour camp in the Ukraine, but managed to escape two years later. He made his way to Israel in 1963 and lived in Rishon Le Zion till his death in 1996. An exhibition of his works was held at the Yad Vashem Museum in January 1986.



This painting represents the Jewish artists who survived the Shoah, and continued to paint, either what they saw during this dark period or the Jewish Eastern European past they remembered,

of scholarship and tradition that was destroyed along with the communities and their scholars.

The painting, which is oil on canvas, now graces the wall in the entrance to my house. I contact the former owner sometimes when I am in Cape Town. She is now happily settled with her daughter in an apartment and is working.

The Galician Rabbi

On 29 October 2006, my very good friend Adam Goldsmith, one of South Africa's experts on Russian silver, phoned me from Shangri La House in Killarney. The house and its contents were being auctioned off. In the art section, he had seen a portrait called 'Galician Rabbi' and thought I needed to see and bid for it. I hastened to the house and made my way through the throngs of people to the back garden where the auctioneer was selling the lots. When the portrait came up for sale, the merest glimpse was enough to convince me that I just had to have it for my collection. There was a lot of interest and the bidding was brisk, but eventually it was knocked down to me.

Why had I been so possessed to buy this painting? The portrait was life size and superbly wrought; the artist had captured in the Rabbi's eyes, a look of pure saintliness. I judge how good a portrait artist is from the way he portrays the eyes and hands of the sitter, and this artist had been greatly accomplished in that regard. That much I knew. What I did not know was who he was, nor who the rabbi he had painted had been.

The Galician Rabbi was soon hanging on the wall in my lounge where he could conduct Talmudic debates with the other three rabbis hanging there, two facing left and two facing right. All that was left to do was to find out who he was so that an official introduction could be made.

The artist's signature looked like *Ben Purukawa* and was dated 1935. The letters are different to how we would write them today. As yet, I have not been able to identify this artist who I am sure is Eastern European and know is very good.

The sitter came next. I looked through books in my library, in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* and through books in the Kollel Bookshop. I asked the Rosh Beis Din Dayan Kurtstag. No luck! Someone suggested my painting was of the Gere Rebbe. They were similar but he was not my man. The years went by, lots more art came and went, but he was still the unknown *Galician Rabbi*, and it worried me.

In 2011, Shwekey fever hit Johannesburg. I had never heard of this entertainer, but he was due to perform in two concerts at Monte Casino. My friends Stan and Ingrid Seeff invited me to lunch on the Shabbat before the concert with Shwekey, his wife and their musical director Yochi. The latter, a Judaica collector, had heard of my

collection and passion for Holocaust art and artefacts, so we arranged for him to visit my house. In the course of that visit, Yochi photographed the *Galician Rabbi* and promised to send me whatever information he could find on it after his return to New York.

He was true to his word. Soon after, the information arrived along with a picture of the Rabbi. The Galician Rabbi now had a name: Rabbi Yeshaye (Shaya) Halberstam of Tschow (Czchow), 1864-1944. He was the youngest of seven sons of Rabbi Chaim of Sanz, the Divrei Chaim. My Galician Rabbi had been murdered by the Nazis *Al Kiddush Hashem* somewhere in Europe.



Yad Vashem runs a programme called *Unto Every Person There is a Name*. This comes from a poem by Israeli Zelda Schneersohn-Mishkovsky, a Ukrainian-born Orthodox Poet who belonged to a lineage of illustrious rabbis. Her father was the uncle of the late Lubavitch Rabbi Menahem Mendel Schneersohn.

Unto every person there is a name
Bestowed upon him by Hashem
And given him by his father and mother
Unto every person there is a name
Accorded him by his stature
And the manner of his smile
And given him by his style of dress...
Unto every person there is a name
Bestowed on him by the sea
And given him by his death.

Now my Rabbi, too, had a name and a Holocaust victim has an identity and is remembered. I now understood why I had felt such a strong need to purchase this portrait five years earlier for my Holocaust art collection. Maybe one day I will find information about the artist as well as where Rabbi Shaya perished; then my research on this piece of art will be complete.



RIFKA

*

Bernard Levinson

The snow is falling. Heavy indolent snowflakes. Rivers of snow slowly form between the dark wooden houses. The village of Soligalich is covered in a blanket of snow. Berel Chaitovich is a tailor. He is a small man. He has a tight crisp beard. An elaborate skull cap. Wired rimmed glasses cling to the tip of his nose. His wife Brocha is a large woman. An imposing monobosom. Solid oak thighs. Her long hair crushed into an enormous bun. They have ten children.

Rifka is the sixth child. She lives in her own world. Each day she wanders between the houses in the village. In response to a command in her secret world, Rifka takes off her clothes. The market square is her stage. Neighbours bring Rifka home smiling. Vacant. Everyone in the village knows Rifka.

The silent snow is falling. The few trees surrounding the village have become white grotesque ghosts.

On the other side of the world the city of Leeds exerts a magnetic tug on men and their families from all over Eastern Europe. The English looms are busy. England is the home of the new booming textile world. Leeds is the seething centre drawing tailors from the old world. Lithuanian tailors. Polish tailors. Russian tailors. It is snowing the night Berel Chaitovich and his wife Brocha vanish from the village of Soligalich with their ten children. He is able to pay for their passage and they arrive in the city of Leeds.

Count Boris Ignatievich Mironov is the landlord of the large Vlodavky province. Soligalich is one of the villages in his serfdom. As he passes in his elaborate sled accompanied by his soldiers it is imperative for everyone to look down. Eye contact is an aggressive act and could provoke a highly aggressive response. Count Mironov owns everything. He has all the power. He is feared by everyone.

It is snowing when his sled overturns. Turning sharply the horses stumble. The sled lurches and falls over. The sled is filled with men. Fur coats.

Bernard Levinson is a distinguished South African poet whose work has appeared in numerous scholarly publications and anthologies. Professionally, he is a psychiatrist, based in Johannesburg.

Fur hats. Enormous fur blankets. They are drunk and roar with joy as they spill into the snow. The moon dances on the bells and glass beaded harness of the horses freed from the sled. In minutes the sled is lifted. The horses re harnessed and contained. The men climb into the sled singing. The falling snow muffles the singing and shouting as the sled dissolves into the cold darkness.

The snow is falling. A frozen sun tumbles over the snow covered roofs. And then the cold moon. A single candle burns in the small cottage. Berel Chaitovich, his wife Brocha and all the children are asleep. There is a banging on the door. Berel wakes and goes to the door. Four soldiers enter the dark room. Berel is a small man. He is minute next to the soldiers. They carry long rifles. The family are all awake. They are hidden in the shadows. Berel Chaitovich stands at the door surrounded by soldiers. The spokesman steps forward.

"Last night," he shouts, "the Count lost his wallet! Someone in this village must have this wallet! The Count had an accident in his sled."

Berel Chaitovich nods. He is totally accepting. If the soldier had said that the Count was at this moment standing on the roof of their home, Berel Chaitovich would have nodded his head. Yes, everything is possible. And so....

"The count has lost his wallet. There was a lot of money in the wallet. It is most important to find the wallet. Has anyone here found the wallet?"

The soldiers look menacing. They stare into the shadows. Silence. It is so still they can hear the candle splintering light on the dark walls. Rifka steps out of the darkness.

"I found the wallet."

All eyes are on Rifka. No one is breathing. The soldiers grip their rifles. Rifka begins to undress. She has layer upon layer of clothing. Finally she is naked from the waist up. Large pendulous breasts. There is a roar of approval from the soldiers. They nudge each other. They slap their sides. They know Rifka. They have witnessed this undressing many times. They throw up their hands laughing. They slowly leave. They are laughing in the street.

Rifka continues to undress. The wallet is in her voluminous underpants.

The snow is falling over Soligalich.



MY RIGHT HAND'S CUNNING: A JERUSALEM STORY

*

Tamar Saks

The well-known South African journalist and Zionist activist Michael Belling has written a novel which is, according to the blurb, “both a tender love story and a story of Israel in its early years”. It’s called *My Right Hand’s Cunning*, a lovely title, derived from the biblical verse “If I forget you, oh Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its cunning”. This is most fitting, not only in that it is a story about Jerusalem, but in that one of its major themes is in fact remembrance.

The story is dominated by Meir Rosen, a Holocaust survivor who protects himself from the horror of his own memories by building and maintaining a solid wall of silence around himself. His is an “airless, secluded, insulated soul”, taciturn, acerbic, blunt to the point of rudeness and, with good reason, altogether a miserable beggar. Meir is the sole survivor of his family (barring his niece, Tamar, who managed to get out of Europe before the war). The only patches of color in a life of rigidly enforced greyness are his volunteer work at the Talpott refugee camp, Tamar and her husband Avi and the only friend who survived like him, Yehuda Rabinowitz. The basic storyline of the book is how his relationship with Rachel Levy breaks the wall and releases him. Just one more Holocaust story, one might think, but this book is more than anything a story of Israel, in the years when the idealism and commitment that launched it was still fresh and vigorous.

The hope is tangible, but so is the fear. The people struggle with the paradox of Jewish survival. History both buoys them up and weighs them down. The awareness of the world’s hatred is inevitable - not only are the wounds of the

Holocaust still fresh, with the hooded, carefully blank eyes of the survivors visible on the very streets, but the evidence of past attempts at Jewish extermination are all around. This is the land, remember, where the bones of Jews can be found crushed under Roman ballistae. There are also the refugees, living proof of present hardship.

The atmosphere thrums with the magic of Israel, the layers and layers of history, the political quagmires, the heroism of the army, the curious mixture of hope and cynicism that is so peculiarly Jewish. Hebrew catch-phrases and sayings - many derived from the Bible - abound: *Taharat haneshek* - purity of arms, *Mah yiheyeh?* - What is going to happen? *Ein breira* - There is no choice. The whole is punctuated by discussions and debates that reveal the state of mind, not only of the main protagonists, but of the people in Israel’s formative years. The young are steeped in history, because “in this country, history was all around them, Biblical names were not just part of the fabric of history and legend, but interwoven in their daily lives.”

Another theme of *My Right Hand’s Cunning* is a kind of dialogue that takes place between hope and the awareness of past horrors. Hope is personified by the youth, by Avi and the pregnant Tamar. Awareness of the past is personified by Meir and Yehuda. Yet the roles are exchanged during the course of the story. Avi and Tamar are, by the very fact that they live in Israel, more than aware of the past and the hatred that the nations bear *Am Yisroel*. And Meir’s despair is eventually overcome by Rachel and their mutual love. There is a strong sense of history, and of place, throughout, and a fascination with politics (very Israeli!) that gives the book weight and authenticity. Added to this, the story and its compelling characters make for an absorbing read.

Tamar Saks matriculated at Beth Yaakov School in Johannesburg. She is currently studying at Ateres Bnos Yerushalayim girls’ seminary in Jerusalem.

My Right Hand’s Cunning: A Jerusalem Story by Michael Belling, Tange: Johannesburg, 2012, 297pp.

DRASTIC DISLOCATIONS

*

Roy Robins

Drastic Dislocations is a selection of poetry from Barry Wallenstein's six previous collections – from *Beast is a Wolf with Brown Fire* (1977) to *Tony's World* (2009) – and includes more than sixty new poems. The selection is a shrewd one, exhibiting the poet's peculiarly skewed and entirely unpredictable vision of contemporary life.

From poem to poem, stanza to stanza, Wallenstein's tone shifts smoothly from robust to restrained, jubilant to jaundiced. He is a master of the almost invisible transition, the seemingly effortless metamorphosis of meaning and mood. He writes as vividly about the simple splendour of a summer day as he does when evoking what Delmore Schwartz described as 'the famous unfathomable abyss.'

If existence is an abyss, it can best be fathomed, for Wallenstein, with family, good company, sensual experience, and, of course, the poet's beloved jazz. (Many of these poems have been performed publicly, with live jazz accompaniment.) With its elastic inflections, Wallenstein's verse is full of grace notes and blue streaks and surprising sideways turns into dreams of despair and cold-eyed self-assessment. He portrays pain authentically – which is to say, *painfully* – but also writes movingly about that most artistically unfashionable entity: human happiness.

Many of the poems in this volume are affirmative, full of an optimism that feels equal-parts European and American, simultaneously measured and carefree, open to every sensation, made buoyant by the bliss of infinite possibility. Whereas in his early work, one gets a sense of a poet who does not love quite enough, in his most recent verse Wallenstein seems to possess within him inexhaustible affection.

He writes most tenderly about his family. 'Ballad,' a conversation between the poet and his deceased mother, is especially accomplished:

What are you doing my darling son?
I'm sitting in this boat, dear mother.
And where is your boat my son, pray tell?
At sea in the distance my mother.

The poem, with its melancholic reverie, its intermingling of past and present, child and adult, memory and dream, is simple and savagely stirring. The nursery-rhyme form carries the reader a long way, but the underlying sense of loss and anguish takes one further still.

'Father at 85' is similarly poignant and probing. The poem's final line – 'He still wants more' – registers like a jolt of electricity. It is as powerful a refrain as Philip Levine's 'You can have it' or Robert Frost's 'Provide, provide!' or the words that close out Delmore Schwartz's 'America, America!': 'more: more and more: always more.'

It seems fitting to follow Wallenstein's family, his children, their history, from inception to adulthood, through the inter-leading rooms that form the house of this book. Here is Wallenstein in 'Four Weeks to Birth':

Our genes are hiding in the belly of a fish
in the skin of a belly
in the belly of a fish
floating glyphs
micro-hints of dancing ghosts.

In 'Jessie Beforehand,' he describes his daughter's foetus, which 'swims in the famous lucidity / of mother's love and our confusion.'

Wallenstein's verse veers, too, between admirable lucidity and not always artful confusion. There are times – most frequently in *Tony's World* – where he exhibits a tendency towards unnecessary abstraction. In these instances, his jazz métier begins to feel less like an asset and more like camouflage for cryptic sentiment. But it is possible to be both jazzy *and* precise; both cryptic *and* exacting.

The titular protagonist of *Tony's World* is an elusive alter ego, reminiscent of the Henry of John Berryman's *The Dream Songs*. At once urban prophet and holy fool, Tony is deliciously defiant and defiantly himself – he is Wallenstein's most memorable lyrical conceit.

Perhaps surprisingly for a poet who has spent most of his life in Manhattan, some of the finest poems in this collection concentrate on the country rather than the city. Wallenstein rarely romanticizes nature, nor does he attempt to desensitize or demolish it. He is attentive in an unpretentious manner, aspiring towards understated Impressionism and gentle self-expression. The marvellously meditative early poem, 'A House in the Mountains,' celebrates simple pleasure and a lovely calm, as its speaker

Roy Robins was a 2010-11 Gordon Institute of Performing and Creative Arts fellow. He was formerly the online editor for *Granta* magazine. He holds an MA degree in English Literature.

spends hours 'watching a valley / move through colours and into the dark.' The naturalism in later poems is poised between classical evocation and a mordant, modern wit.

Elsewhere in the collection, Wallenstein frames his verse within the Brownean dramatic monologue, subverts fairy tales and simple rhyme, and re-makes myth. Memorable poems include the wonderfully wild 'Roller Coaster Kid', and 'A Turn of Events', which feels like Robert Frost by way of Sam Peckinpah.

Wallenstein writes deftly about 'the gathering grace of – / going on.' He excels at interrogating the intersection between the earthly and the

outward-bound. Whereas many poets become weary with age, Wallenstein appears to feel both freed up and fired up, experimenting with form and unafraid to explore life's pleasures and perils. *Drastic Dislocations* demonstrates the consistently high standard of his work these past thirty-five years.

Whether one is a long-time admirer or engaging with Wallenstein's verse for the first time, this is a vibrant and valuable volume.

Drastic Dislocations by Barry Wallenstein, NYQ Books, New York, 2012.

THE ARAB LOBBY

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Gary Selikow

The pervasive myth of an all-powerful Israel lobby controlling American foreign policy has long dominated public discourse. In *The Arab Lobby: The Invisible Alliance that Undermines America's Interests in the Middle East*, Mitchell Bard shows how Arab governments use their petrodollars and control of energy supplies to control American foreign policy in favour of the Anti-Israel, pro-Arab cause. In the same way, they dominate educational institutions and the media, thereby fostering heavily one-sided pro-Palestinian public opinion.

Bard demonstrates how the discourse on the Arab-Israeli conflict is distorted due to the immense financial resources of the Arab lobby. His book highlights the latter's manipulation of American foreign policy and public opinion, usually out of public view, and in ways that have gone unnoticed that need to be exposed. In Bard's view, the Arab lobby exerts a malignant influence on American foreign policy, with the result that basic American values and American security needs are disregarded in order to bolster repressive Arab regimes and terrorist organizations.

The Arab Lobby has had much success. The Palestinians receive more capita aid than any other group in the world, indeed more than all of Sub-Saharan Africa put together. As Bard writes: "Even as hundreds of thousands of people die in Darfur, it is the Palestinians who get the world's sympathy and donations of billions of dollars".

The Arab Lobby has adopted the terminology of the Jewish people and turned it against Israel. For example, Palestinians, like Jews, now live in

the 'Diaspora'. Israelis are compared to Nazis and their actions are characterized as 'pogroms', 'ethnic cleansing' and 'genocide'. Israelis accused of creating 'ghettos' and even engaging in a 'holocaust'. The disputed territories are now termed 'occupied'. The pro-Islamic lobby has created a new term to brand all who are concerned about radical Islam, Islamization and Islamic terror, namely 'Islamophobia'.

The most successful of the lobby's campaign has been its infiltration of the educational system, including a sustained and sinister campaign to also influence students outside the classroom. The Muslim Students Association has propagated the falsehood that "Zionism is racism", and disseminated the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, while the Palestine Solidarity Movement has supported Arab terror against Israeli civilians and vigorously supported the so-called Right of Return, something aimed at demographically swamping Israel's Jewish population.

When pro-Israel students asked the PSM at their conference at Duke University in 2004 to sign a benign statement calling for civil debate that would condemn the murder of innocent civilians, support a two state solution and "recognize the difference between disagreement and hate speech", they were refused. By hosting a group that could not bring itself to object to the murder of children, Duke therefore lent support to terror sympathizers, as did other universities such as Berkely Wisconsin, Ohio State and Georgetown. In one shocking incident, an Israeli student asked Professor John Massad a question at a public lecture and Massad responded by thundering, "How many Palestinians did you kill?" Massad had also written that Israel is a "racist

Gary Selikow is a researcher and media activist. His reviews of books of Jewish and Middle East interest appear regularly online and elsewhere.

colonialist” state and that Zionists are Nazis. He argues for a ‘one-state solution’ to the conflict (that is, the abolition of Israel and its replacement by an Arab ruled Palestinian State). At American University, an anthropology professor used a comic book in the vein of *Der Stürmer* as a text. Another professor crossed out the word ‘Israel’ on a student’s exam and wrote in the margin “Zionist entity”. An especially perverse statement was made at an anti-Israel rally at Columbia University on 17 April, 2002, Israel’s Independence Day, by Professor of Latino Studies Nicholas de Genova: “The Heritage of the victims of the Holocaust belongs to the Palestinian people. The State of Israel has no claim to the heritage of the Holocaust”. Thus, according to De Genova’s grotesque thinking, a country with thousands of Holocaust survivors and hundreds of thousands of descendants of Holocaust survivors has no claim to the heritage of holocaust victims, but a people that did not suffer from the Holocaust does. So much for the great minds of academia!

Syllabi in the humanities departments of university campuses contain powerful and hateful propaganda against Israel. One of the driving forces behind this is the Middle East Studies Association (MESA), to which the centrality accorded the Palestine issue at the expense of all other peoples suffering in the Middle East is due. In a study of the three-year period following 9/11, Martin Kramer found that “For MESAns, the Palestinians are the chosen people now more than ever. Arab financial pressure has influenced universities in more ways than one. Texas A&M University effectively pressured the PBS station to cancel a screening of the movie about abuse of women in Saudi Arabia called ‘Death of a Princess’”.

The study of Israel and the Hebrew language has been marginalized, delegitimized and even demonized at universities across the USA. Furthermore, there is vociferous support for Hamas and Hezbollah at such institutions. An Israeli Arab who is the Palestinian Affairs correspondent for the *Jerusalem Post* returned from a 2009 speaking tour of American college campuses and reported, “There is more sympathy for Hamas then there is in Ramallah. Listening to some students and professors at these campuses, for a moment I thought I was sitting opposite a Hamas spokesman or would-be suicide bomber ... the so called pro-Palestinian ‘junta’ on the campuses has nothing to offer other than hatred and delegitimization of Israel. If these folks really cared about the Palestinians, they would be campaigning for good government and for the values of democracy and freedom in the West Bank and Gaza Strip”.

There is also an insidious campaign to bar all Israel academics from American universities. As Alan Dershowitz points out, “many of the people who want boycotts claim that Israel is inflicting collective punishment on the Palestinians, but a boycott is effectively punishing every Israel academic without regard to what their views may be.”

All this and more is exposed in Bard’s book, which provides a much-needed analysis of how deeply the US’s Arab lobby is impacting on public policy and intellectual trends regarding Israel, the Middle East and the phenomenon of radical Islam.

The Arab Lobby: The Invisible Alliance that Undermines America’s Interests in the Middle East by Mitchell Bard, Harper, 2010, 432pp

THE PRIME MINISTERS: AN INTIMATE NARRATIVE OF ISRAELI LEADERSHIP

*

Ralph Zulman

Ambassador Yehuda Avner was born in Manchester, England in 1928. He was a founding member of Kibbutz Lavi in the Galilee, and entered the Israel Foreign Service in the 1950s. During his lengthy diplomatic career, he served as Consul in New York, Counsellor at the Israeli Embassy in Washington D.C., Ambassador to Great Britain, Non-Resident Ambassador to Ireland, and

Mr Justice Ralph Zulman is a long-serving member of the editorial board of and regular contributor to Jewish Affairs.

Ambassador in Australia. Between overseas postings, he served as a speech writer and secretary to Prime Ministers Levi Eshkol and Gold Meir, and as adviser to Prime Ministers Yitzhak Rabin, Menachem Begin and Shimon Peres. He is a frequent guest columnist for the *Jerusalem Post*.

Given this background, Avner was well placed to write an insightful account into the Israeli leaders whom he served. This he has done with his 2010 book *The Prime Ministers: An Intimate Narrative of Israeli Leadership*. The book comprises an Author’s note, Acknowledgements,

a list of "Principal Characters" and a foreword by Sir Martin Gilbert. Its thirty chapters are divided into three parts, headed respectively 'Beginites and Anti-Beginites', 'Coalitions and Oppositions' and 'The Last Patriarch, Prime Minister Menachem Begin, Prime Minister Levi Eshkol, Prime Minister Golda Meir, Prime Minister Yitzchak Rabin'. It concludes with an Afterword, Endnotes, a Bibliography and author details.

Avner states that his book is "not a conventional biography or memoir, nor is it a work of fiction. It deals with real people..." In deed it does so, admirably. In his foreword, Gilbert correctly observes: "Anyone who is interested in the first fifty years of the history of the State of Israel will be both enlightened and entranced by this book." He concludes, "Yehuda Avner's book with its cast of fascinating characters, its insights, its vigour, and its zeal, show how right Churchill was. A State was formed, whose leaders guarded it and moved it forward. Their most recent chronicler, himself so often at the centre of the events he describes, has done them proud."

In her review of the book, US Secretary of

State Hilary Rodham Clinton describes it as "...a sweeping tome of Israeli politics and history." Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu calls it "...a fascinating account of someone who was an eye witness to many historic moments in the history of the Jewish state. It provides "insight into the actions of our nation's leaders and offers important lessons for the future." Brett Stephens in the *Wall Street Journal* regards the book as providing, "... a front-row seat to the drama of Israeli statecraft in moments of crisis and triumph, tragedy and joy." For *Jerusalem Post* editor David Horowitz, it is "one of the most remarkable accounts we are ever likely to get of how Israel has been governed over the decades...the ultimate insider's account."

I highly recommend this well-written and absorbing, if perhaps rather lengthy, book to all those who, in the words of Sir Martin Gilbert, are interested in the first fifty years of the history of the State of Israel.

The Prime Ministers: An Intimate Narrative of Israeli Leadership by Yehuda Avner, Toby Press LLC, 2010, 715pp

Wishing all our
Jewish friends a
Happy New Year
and well over the fast



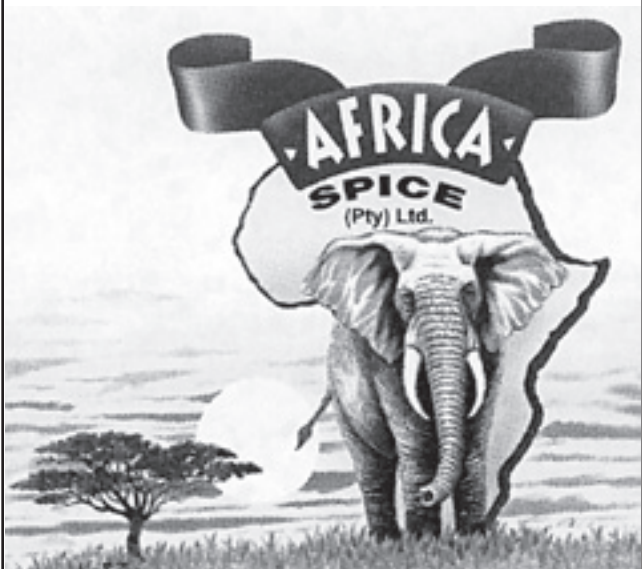
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10 WHOLE WEEKS!

It would never happen to me!
 'Pa' would live forever.
 Then the reality – cancer
 Panic, self-pity then denial,
 Hebrew – no go, Kaddish – never.
 This was me – what next?
 10 whole weeks!

Concern for his wife and family
 Fear of the great unknown.
 First nothing ... then the pain ...
 Uncontrollable – the circle had turned
 From our 'Pillar of Strength' to helplessness
 That was 'Pa' – what now?
 10 whole weeks!

Time we thought was too short.
 We discussed, spoke and learned.
 His sense of humour never waned
 But the pain ... the fear ... the helplessness
 Not knowing nor understanding ... Why?
 Was the time really so short?
 10 whole weeks!

For some there are no goodbyes,
 No time to talk or make one's peace.
 No time to say "Thank you" or
 To express their love and respect.
 No time to learn, trying to understand.
 We had the time – "Thank You, HASHEM",
 10 whole weeks.

SHIVA – The first seven days,
 Numb – confusion, pain and tears,
 Fear – my Pillar has been removed.
 SHLOSHIM – The next three weeks.
 Reality – acceptance back into the community,
 Acknowledgement – my strength has gone.
 KADDISH – Eleven months, with *DeRabanan*,
 Three times daily – every night, morning and evening
 Four seasons came and went, learning to understand.
 YORTZEIT – One year now the anniversary,
 Memories – the heart healed – but 'Pa' never forgotten.
 Thank you one and all.
 YA HOOD

Jeff Fine

*In memory of: TZAPHANYA ben YEHUDAH YOSEPH
 ha KOHEIN.
 23rd November, 1927 – 18th October, 1998.*

Devotion

Godly pure devotion,
 Deepest human emotion,
 Resides in the depth of the soul,
 And supplants your normal self-control,
 Tremendously powerful and strong,
 And pulls you mercilessly with magnetic pull
 along'
 You fall prostrate shake and cry,
 I love you Lord and for you I will die,
 You long to embrace and touch,
 The one you love so much,
 You crawl and grovel like an obedient slave,
 Before the almighty you so desperately crave,
 You pray and sing G-d's song,
 And wish to be near him where you belong.

Israel Silberhaft

BEGINNINGS & ENDINGS

Life is a series of
 Beginnings and endings
 Starts and finishes
 Cul de sacs and bendings
 Not decades or years or months or days
 That is *not* the way that destiny plays
 Chances and choices
 Cycles of seasons
 Endlessly repeating its times and its reasons

With you, without you; do's and don'ts
 Evers and nevers; wills and won'ts
 New and old; timid and bold
 Words preserved and stories untold
 Up-to-date fashion and clothing well worn
 Death and dying and the new-born.

Old contests, new races
 Old places, new faces
 A friendship finished – a relationship renewed
 Forgive and forget; or acrimony accrued
 Coming together or pulling apart
 A parting of ways or a brand-new start
 A broken promise – a reaffirmed vow
 For the happily ever after; or for the 'here and now'

Lose or win – again to begin
 Hellos and goodbyes – congratulations and sighs
 "What could I have done? What should I have done?"
 Questions and answers, 'what ifs' and why's

Remain where you landed ... keep pushing ahead
 Work a new idea – or just stay in bed
 Pick yourself up or want to lie down and die
 Wake with intent – or let the world go by

Life is a continuum of giving and taking
 Repeating its patterns again and again
 A never-ending recurrence of beginnings
 and then
 A continual closing and ending again

Charlotte Cohen

READER'S LETTER

*

I was interested to read the article by Gwynne Schrire 'Art as protest: Jewish inversions of the Crucifixion motif' in the Pesach 2012 issue of *Jewish Affairs* as it brought back memories.

I was friendly with George Lowen, QC, a refugee from Nazi Germany and a senior advocate at the Johannesburg Bar. He was visiting me one evening and noticed a painting I had by Father Frans Claerhout, the Roman Catholic missionary from Belgium, who lived in the Tweespruit mission station. The painting depicted a crucifixion, with Jesus portrayed as a horse with a crown of thorns.

He explained that he was defending Harold Rubin on a charge of blasphemy for painting a Jesus that the prosecution complained looked like a monster. Could he borrow the painting to take to the court? If a Catholic missionary could paint Jesus as a horse, then surely a Jewish artist could paint him as a man?

This he duly did and my painting was produced as evidence for the defense. Harold Rubin was found not guilty. I do not know whether it was my painting or common sense that prevailed.

'Ploni Almoni'
Johannesburg



POLO

*We wish all our Jewish customers
a sweet and blessed New Year
and well over the fast*



L'Shanah Tovah

**Wishing you health, happiness
and success in the New Year!**

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Shanah Tovah.



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