

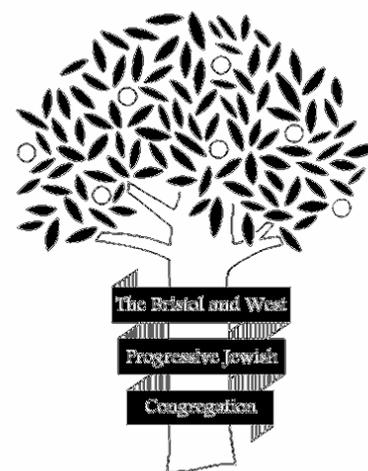


ALONIM

Newsletter of the Bristol & West
Progressive Jewish Congregation

Tevet/Shvat/Adar 5767
Jan/Feb 2007

עלונים



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Tu b'shvat Issue



Dear all,

This issue is focussing very much on our role within Liberal Judaism. As we write we are currently in the middle of Chanukah, but the secular New Year is just around the corner, bringing with it our own AGM. Indeed it is a time for us all to be reviewing our position within the community (BWPJC) which we value so much. Is it a time to withdraw a little, or can we offer more? For our part, we hope we may continue as the editors of Alonim, as we have greatly enjoyed the task over the past year.

The Editorial Team

ALONIM & E-LONIM copy date deadlines

Month	Copy date	Festivals covered, notices needed
February E-lonim	Thursday 25th January	Notices about Purim & Pesach
Mar/April Alonim	Wednesday 14th February	Purim /Pesach
April E-lonim	Tuesday 27th March	Yom Ha'Atzama'ut
May/June Alonim	Wednesday 18th April	Shavuot

Editorial and Production Team

Judith Lazarus and Malcolm Rawles

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ALONIM Contributions & Editorial Policy.

The editorial policy is to encourage contributions from all Synagogue members and  ALONIM readers, concerning any aspects of communal and Jewish life, including advertisements of forthcoming events, cultural and communal reviews, information concerning synagogue activities, letters and feedback, and articles of Jewish cultural and religious interest.

Typically, contributions that fit on one side of A4 are preferred, and PC format submission is particularly appreciated by e-mail.

The editor will NOT print anonymous or unattributed

articles. Contributors are asked to be aware of the need to protect the copyright of others. Opinions expressed in  ALONIM do not necessarily reflect those of the synagogue Council or the Editor.

Contributions and communications can be sent directly to the Editor at alonim@bwpjc.org or by post to 4 Villiers Rd, Bristol, BS5 0JQ. The copy date deadline for submissions is notified above. Submissions after this date cannot be guaranteed to appear in the next issue. If you are intending to send in unsolicited material please let the editor know ahead of the deadline.

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Newsletter of The Bristol and West Progressive Jewish Congregation



When I began as Chair, I remember saying that I wished to do everything possible to stimulate modern Jewish life both in our Synagogue and in Bristol and the surrounding region.

After three years as your Chair, I look back with satisfaction at the many achievements of the Synagogue but less so elsewhere. Despite our record number of new members there are still many unaffiliated Jews out there.

I hope that we are providing a special Jewish place in your lives and the lives of your family, at a time of increasing secularity and indifference. Busy careers spin us so fast through life that we hardly have time for close family and friends, especially when they are not in the locality. Close-knit communities were always at the very core of Judaism in former times, but they were times of great hardship and prejudice to which no-one would wish to return.

The family and synagogue are indivisible components of Jewish life and we hope that we are reinforcing that in all our activities. Our Synagogue has always been a sanctuary for prayer and contemplation and our services, varied because of a dedicated team of rabbi and leaders. In recent times it has also become a happy and productive communal house of meeting and study. It is very good to see the forging of friendships and the care and concern for one another that is the hallmark of our tradition. Other faiths

often admire this and our visitors notice it.

Some of us were fortunate to have good early grounding in Judaism and its culture. That enabled us to feel comfortable anywhere and make little or no distinction between one Jew and the next. The sure way to survive is to be inclusive. We must welcome everyone who has practised as a Jew, offer to re-educate anyone who has lapsed (at any time of life), and offer conversion to those who are sincere.

Outreach work can play a very important role in welcoming back Jews into our midst. There is a place in our synagogue for all Jews; especially those who have kept away because they have been disaffected by earlier religious experiences or are ambivalent with no strong conviction. They can be invited to come along and see.

A strong Jewish community needs to embrace all the remarkable diversity and inspiring richness of Jewish culture.

Shalom,

Robert Hurst
Council Chair



Squeaks of the Scribe's Quill

At this season, between our minor festivals of *hanukkah* and *purim*, lie the cold dark days of winter. Although we know the sun rises every morning it still seems drab and we look forward to the warm bright springtime and the richness of summer to come. The 'party festivals', as opposed to our main pilgrim festivals, *pesach*, *shavuot* and *sukkot*, cheer us up with their festivities during the time when we have less sunshine.

As we look forward to winter's ending we are even taught that at the time of *purim* we should drink enough to mix up Haman and Mordechai, hero and villain and, exceptionally, are allowed to cross dress, men to wear women's clothes and women to wear men's. As we read the Book of Esther, in which the name of God is not found, we may realise that the presence of God is hidden therein, influencing every aspect of the story and by implication exposing to the light of day each detail and every development of the plot. We may begin to understand the hidden aspect of God shining unseen, like the sun before it has risen or the potential of the spring and summer we anticipate even whilst the snow is on the ground and the cold wind blows.

With the enhanced spiritual sensitivity brought by a habit of prayer, either congregational or solitary, we might add the dimension of awareness of our covenantal relationship with God as the Children of Israel; Israel being the soul of a people, the ongoing spiritual work of a people dedicated to the Service of God, in the stream of which, flowing through time, each individual is like one drop. In other words, not only are we a historical people, an entity existent upon Earth, we are

also a spiritual being, existing beyond the mundane, hidden behind the visible. The struggle with God which elevates each one of us as we try to come to grips with the *mitzvot*, the demands of heaven, are like the strength which develops in training muscles through regular exercise. As we gain spiritual strength, through ethical and ritual observances, hidden effects may come into play behind the pages of our life, affecting the details and the development of the stories of our lifetimes. We are raised to new levels of existence and we can also raise others with each act of righteousness and every word of kindness. We have a collective higher plane of existence too, which brings us into a relationship of responsibility with humanity as a whole.

The dynamic process of growth means that Israel can give expression to the spiritual aspirations of humanity. A common metaphor for this is the body; just as a body has limbs and organs so humanity has many nations and religions. But, in the words of our Bible, we are to be; 'the head and not the tail'. The implication of this is that we have to think with care and reflect upon our role in the life of humanity. I do not mean our secular function, as the clever Jew in society; whether physicist, fiddler or physician; nor our national situation, as English Jews or Israeli or American; nor our economic position as businessman or banker, though we might do well in all these ways. Rather I mean that, in our religious route through life we have to search out and think through a leadership position so as to show others the way.

This is not easy; rather is it most difficult. We are to be, 'a light unto the nations'. We have that responsibility; 'to loosen those who are bound and release those who are imprisoned'. We have a responsibility to promote



From the Rabbi continued

righteousness and peace; house the homeless, feed the hungry and clothe the naked. May we, in these ways, bring light to those living in the darkness of poverty, ignorance and

superstition and release those whose existence is clouded by intimidation, persecution and violence

Rabbi Francis Ronald Berry

Jewish Education and Trips for our Youth

Four of our young people benefited from tours organised by progressive Jewish movements last summer. Three went to Israel and one to Europe.

Financial assistance is still available for young people's Jewish educational courses, and this includes informal educational trips to Israel or places of Jewish interest in Europe or Summer Camps in Britain, organised by either the Reform Movement or Liberal Judaism.

Please contact the rabbi, in confidence, if you are interested.

Yom Kippur Appeal Fund

Donations and gift aid received so far for this year's Yom Kippur Appeal amount to £3,7000 compared to £4,600 last year.

We would like to start distributing to the many nominated, deserving charities soon so if you have not yet contributed please note that it is not too late to do so.

Please let me know if you require further copies of the Appeals letter or gift aid form.

Thanks,
Jon Webber



The Twin Edifices

The Chairman's Chat in the November edition raised once again the issue of possible amalgamation between the two progressive movements with the financial benefits this would bring. This would undoubtedly be true as so many of the central services appear to be duplicated by the two organisations and, as Robert points out, whatever the theological distinctions might be between the two groups they do not count for anything outside London, where a matter of geography determines whether one follows the Liberal or Reform persuasion.

The main difference between the two organisations at present appears to be the Reform adherence to matrilineal descent only as the basis for Judaism. It would be interesting to know whether the Reform membership as a whole still feels this can continue to be justified. I was interested find this statement on their website; "we are deeply committed to the principle of equality and there is no logic or justice to regarding the child of a Jewish mother as being Jewish and the child of a Jewish father is not." However the principle of matrilineality (is maintained) for the sake of the community." As this does not seem to be a sticking point for progressive rabbis who were trained together and move easily between Reform and Liberal communities, one wonders whether the Reform membership as a whole is of a similar mind.

It might well be that resistance to the principle of amalgamation comes more from the Liberal side. Certainly, Rabbi Danny Rich made his position very clear at the biennial conference in Cheltenham in December 2005; "...we shall

not be distracted from our task by seeking merger with partners who, whilst sharing much of our thinking, are not yet comfortable with all our principles including the self evident compassionate and logical equal treatment of the children of Jewish fathers to that of Jewish mothers, and the radical and public endorsement of the possibility of *kiddushin* for a same sex couple..."

It does not seem that these issues are irreconcilable and, even if they were not, could it not be left to individual, congregations to decide what practices they feel comfortable with? A united organisation speaking with one voice for progressive Judaism would seem to be preferable to maintaining two separate groupings, each purporting to represent more enlightened forms of Judaism. The views of the orthodox community, increasingly influenced by the ultra orthodox element in the court of the Chief Rabbi, are still presented as the mainstream voice of British Judaism. As Laura Lassman wrote in 'LJ Today' in November 2006 (on a different issue); "an era when fundamentalists of all persuasions are in the ascendancy, it is essential that liberals are visible and that their progressive values are known. People need to see and hear Progressive Jews and the voices of reason." This a similar plea to that of moderate Moslems sensing a fundamentalist 'takeover' of their faith in terms of media publicity.

Whatever the reasons were for the failure of the previous merger discussions in 1980, surely it is time for this to be reconsidered? There is already considerable cooperation and partnership between the two organisations –



New Members' Event

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On 17th December, shortly before the Chanukah party, we were able to welcome properly our newer members who have joined us since the start of 2005. It was good to see so many there and it gave them an opportunity to have their own special time in the Synagogue, with members of the Council, and to have a guided tour. My special thanks to Susan Rose for co-ordinating this event, and also

to Ruth Squire for her help. This is the second such event and we hope membership continues to increase so we can have another one in a couple of years. It was particularly heartening that people stayed on for the Chanukah party which was a huge success once again.

Linda Hurst



A big thank you to the Rabbi and the Council and other members who came on Sunday to welcome us new folk to the community. I am very aware of the quality of caring that is present here in the synagogue. I also want to take the time to offer thanks for the support to those of us studying the proselyte course. I am

enjoying my learning, be it challenging at times. I find I am surrounded by many wise and experienced people who I know will bring me many benefits. I also hope that I will make a positive contribution myself to the community. Thank you,

Aileen Westfallen

Liberal & Reform Judaism continued

for example, the sharing of day schools and the Leo Baeck College. Surely this can be pushed further forward? Does it really make sense to have two Chief Executives speaking for progressive Judaism? Indeed, does the title of 'Chief Executive' send out an appropriate message? A spiritual leader who represented the combined strength of Liberal and Reform Judaism would present a powerful and influential voice in the nation's religious and moral debates.

Rabbi Jonathan Romain has recently observed ('The Times', 18.10.06) that one of the unexpected bonuses of inter-faith dialogue has been the dialogue within individual faiths, for example amongst the orthodox and Christian sects and between the traditional and progressive branches of Judaism. This would seem to be an appropriate time to carry this further forward within our own progressive ranks to seek further strength through unity.

Mark Walton

On Tuesday 12th December, Nigel Cole, the Chair of Liberal Judaism (LJ), came to speak to Council members and others who wanted to attend. This is a deliberately full account in order to convey to everyone the issues discussed.

Robert Hurst began proceedings by giving a brief history of BWPJC's history and thus its connection with LJ. He then outlined some of our recent concerns over LJ, in particular whether it represented value for money.

Nigel Cole told us that he has been the Chair since December 2004 and that ours is the 26th community that he has visited. He then told us that there had been no change of constitution when the movement changed its name. It was still a 'union' of Liberal synagogues, indeed its charitable name is still ULPS. Further he said that it was in fact a loose federation with its administrative centre at the Montagu Centre. He stressed the fact that LJ lays down no minhagim (customs) but leaves such decisions to individual communities.

He described his focus as:

1. Outreach – involving the regions and not being London-centric.

Since coming to office, Nigel has increased the range of people on LJ Council, so there are now many more from out of London. He has worked hard (and continues to work) to counter a London-centric focus.

He continued by explaining that Outreach is a significant part of the spending, with Rabbi Aaron Goldstein being involved with new communities,

including recently in Edinburgh and Manchester.

Another aspect of Aaron's work is student outreach.

2. Being a part of the Anglo-Jewish community.

Nigel told us that he works hard to be involved in all that is happening in the UK. He has a very strong friendship with his counterpart in the Reform Movement and is building relationships within the Masorti movement as well. (The three Chairs are nicknamed the Maple Street Gang, because this is where they meet). This Nigel sees as important for creating a unified Progressive 'voice'. He has also improved links with the United Synagogue and said that at times they all pull together for a unified voice of British Jewry.

3. Recognition .

He wishes Liberal Judaism to be perceived as a valid form without needing to be defensive. For this reason a PR officer has been appointed to look for opportunities to share the Progressive message.

Nigel continued by asserting that he is not into 'gesture' work and believes in eliminating cliques, sides and factions. He believes it is important to be open.

Questions were raised by others present. There was concern expressed about a sense of LJ now being very much a movement, moving rapidly ahead, selling itself, but not necessarily considering the needs of its



constituent parts. Nigel refuted this, referring to exercises that had been undertaken to establish exactly what people wanted. In particular he referred to a COSH document. Most people there had not heard of it and few knew its contents. We were concerned to know whether there is really a consensus behind the movement.

It was suggested that it is, in fact still very London-centric and suggestions were made of using technology to include more people in the regions e.g. through telephone conferencing, and the recording of events had increased regional participation during his time as Chair.

Discontent was expressed at the lack of service we received from Leo Baeck College (LBC). 36% of our contributions go to fund the College and yet we still have no curriculum for our cheder classes and no support for our cheder teachers. Nigel agreed that this has been lacking in the past. LJ has now appointed a part time education officer to work out of LBC and he hopes this will improve the future situation.

There was a strong feeling in the room that our real aim should be to establish an umbrella organisation representing Progressive Judaism. Such an organisation could find a way to respect the differing views within it when speaking publicly and would share many of the resources that we presently duplicate.

Some of this work has already begun with a pooling of our rabbi training and shared planning for some youth activities. Nigel pointed out that JABE (Jewish Association for Business Ethics) is currently in trouble because it only allowed for orthodox Jews to speak on the subject publicly. He suggested

that this was one area where a joint body could work well.

Concern was expressed about how we, in Bristol, could keep abreast with what was happening and be effective in expressing our own views. Nigel acknowledged that IJ Council Meetings were not the best form for such debate and he is intending to introduce the concept of themed meetings, discussing one topic.

Alarm was expressed when Nigel said there was no 5 year plan. He said there was a vision, but couldn't express it. Two points he mentioned were that the movement should grow by 10% in the next three years, and also that what is best done centrally should be done centrally, while that best done locally should be done locally.

We were concerned about the availability of funding for new communities and for those in trouble. We were reassured to hear that funding for new communities is raised from patrons and is kept separate from the budget. Equally, approximately 3% of the proposed annual income from communities is not received because of financial difficulties and this is budgeted for and support is given.

Finally, Nigel defended LJ's drive for greater publicity by stating that the more we are out there the more we become available to Jews who might not otherwise realise that there is a Liberal choice.

Clearly many issues were raised at this meeting that continue to cause concern. We hope that Danny Rich will address these topics at the AGM.



On Sunday 19th November 2006, Bannerman Road was filled with people (from both congregations and the unaffiliated), listening with rapt attention as Elkan Levy told us about the re-introduction of Jews to England.

He began by pointing out that there was never a time when there were no Jews here. After the expulsion (in 1290) a few Jews remained. Some because they pretended to have converted to Christianity (indeed many really did convert), some because they held important positions within the social network.

Elkan then led us through the change of consciousness, led by Oliver Cromwell and his negotiations to bring about a

return of Jews to England.

In the end it transpired that there was no Act of Law preventing Jews from being here, merely a Royal Edict that demanded the expulsion of the Jews who were in the country in 1290. This meant that there was also no need to pass an Act to allow re-admission, which saved Cromwell a lot of conflict.

This brief synopsis gives no sense of the wonderful presentation of Elkan Levy, his entertaining style and great wit.

A big thank you to Ruth Baker and WIZO for organising this memorable talk.

Judy Lazarus



Chanukah Party Report

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The synagogue *Chanukah* party took place on Sunday 17 December. I'd never attended such a party before. In previous years, I had celebrated *Chanukah* at home, with just my three teenage children to keep me company.

I arrived early, in a pleasant party mood, for the new members' meeting which preceded the main event, and was very warmly greeted and was introduced to some of the new faces at shul. It was good to sit and chat over tea and delicious sandwiches and cakes, and get to know fellow congregants a little better.

Undoubtedly the climax of the afternoon was the lighting of the assembled *chanukiot* in the Sanctuary. It was interesting to see the diversity of candlestick styles, some enormous, some tiny, with many lovely traditional ones, and some that were most unusual and quite beautiful. The *cheder* children had very expertly made their own, each one a unique work of art. As all the adults and children gathered round to light the candles, and everyone began to sing the traditional songs of *Chanukah*, I was struck by the happy spellbound faces shining in the light from the flames of so many *Chanukiot*. The room was crowded, and full of noise and organised chaos, but more importantly there

was a feeling of great happiness and love and vibrancy – the feeling of people very much alive, and a community evidently thriving. I felt as if I had been welcomed into a huge, lively, affectionate family.

Earlier, I had read a newspaper article that someone had pinned on to the notice board. It voiced grave concerns about the future of Jewish life in Britain. As I sat in the Sanctuary, and gazed at the *Chanukah* candles, and sang, and looked at over one hundred happy faces gathered there, ranging in age from 6 months to over 80 years, I felt glad to be a part of it all. I thought to myself that if the writer of that article could only have been there just then, he would know that he had absolutely nothing worry about. Judaism, at least in our little synagogue in Bannerman Road, was alive and kicking.

I would like to say a big thank you to those who gave time and energy to organising the part, and to everyone else for bringing along so much love, warmth, and enthusiasm. It really was a joyful afternoon, and I'll definitely be attending next year's party.

Miriam Patrick



Genesis 22 – The Akedah

For this month's Shiur Peter Walters led us into a study of the Akedah.

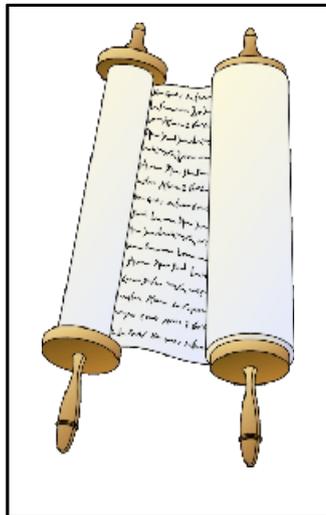
On the face of it, the account in Genesis seems straightforward enough. It was a 'test' of Abraham's faith that the Promise would be fulfilled, somehow. Once that faith was proven, there was no need to complete the sacrifice. The merit won by Abraham through his willingness to do God's will was exactly 'as if' he had actually sacrificed Isaac.

However, questions have been raised. There has been a tradition that Isaac was indeed sacrificed, and 'his ashes remain as a stored-up merit and atonement for Israel in all generations'. The same tradition has it that Isaac was miraculously restored to life.

Whatever happened, Isaac did not return home with his father and the servants. Sarah's death, recorded so soon after this episode, has led some commentators to the suggestion that it was this traumatic experience that killed her. She never saw Isaac again. He had fled to Be'er Lachai Ro'i. The Gemara relates that he was in Gan Eden for two years to heal from the wounds inflicted by his father. Today we appreciate that these were not physical but psychological.

To go back to the purpose of the aborted sacrifice - was it not the point of the whole exercise that it should NOT be carried out? The episode illustrates the realisation by our forefathers that the Eternal One, unlike the 'gods' of the surrounding nations, does not demand human sacrifice. Indeed, there is another message, very relevant today. What God does not want are human beings who are

prepared to commit acts that are immoral just because a 'holy man' has received a private communication from on high. Ours is a revealed religion, revealed to and studied by a religious community, a whole people, not privately, but publicly, and whose Law is similarly revealed, as Yehuda Halevi stated, in a written text, publicly available for scrutiny, study and acceptance by all.



We had time barely to scratch the surface of the scholarly material that Peter had so thoroughly prepared, so we were all delighted to be able to take away with us the fruits of his studies to be pondered over at leisure. Thank you, Peter.

Our next meeting will be on the first Shabbat in January, at 9.45am before the Morning Service as usual. All are most welcome.

Kate Withers



Tu b'shvat Quiz

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Test your knowledge of this issue's festival with our pop quiz.

1. On which date this year does Tu b'shvat fall?
2. What is its Hebrew date?
3. Whose New Year is this festival celebrating?
4. Where did the kabbalists, who first devised a *seder* for Tu b'shvat, live?
5. What do the words 'tu b'shvat' mean?
6. How many cups of wine are drunk during the *seder* and what are their colours?
7. What are the elements that these cups of wine represent?
8. How are the three categories of fruit described?
9. What traditionally takes place in Israel during this festival?
10. The kabbalists describe a mystical tree of life, but what else has this title in the Jewish faith?



✧ ✧ ✧ ✧ ✧ ✧ ✧

1. This year Tu b'shvat falls on Saturday 3rd February, but as with all Jewish festivals, it begins at sunset the night before.
2. The 15th Shvat.
3. The festival is a celebration of the New Year of the Trees.
4. The town of Safed above the Galilee in Israel, during the 16th C when this town was a centre of kabbalistic activity.
5. The 15th *shvat*. Numbers in Hebrew are written using letters. 15 would consist of *yud hey*, but these two letters spell a name of God (Yah) and are half of the most holy name of God. Instead *tet* and *vav* are used, having the respective values of 9 and 6, which equal 15.
6. Four. The first is white. The second is white with a dash of red. The third is half white and half red. The final cup is red.
7. Air, water, fire and earth.
8. Those that are soft both inside and out and whose seeds can be eaten. Those that are soft on the outside but have a hard inedible stone. Those that have a hard outer covering with an edible inside. The three types represent the different levels of being and equate to the final three of the elements mentioned above.
9. Tree planting.
10. The Torah is described as a tree of life. We sing of this during each Shabbat service, as the scroll is being returned to the ark, with the words of 'Etz Chaim He' (proverbs 8:3)



During a conversation with someone in shul I was asked about the history behind this distinct form of music instantly recognised as Jewish when heard. This challenged me to discover Klezmer's history, which I share with you now.



Klezmer originated in the 'shtetl' and ghettos of Eastern Europe, where itinerant Jewish musicians, known as *klezmerim*, performed at joyful events (*simchas*), particularly weddings, at least since the early middle age until the Nazi and Stalin purges.

It was initially inspired by secular melodies, popular dances, *hazanut* (Jewish liturgy) as well as with the *nigunim*, the simple and often wordless melodies intended by the Hasidim for approaching God in a kind of ecstatic communion.

During the middle ages, Klezmer's musical instruments were used in events both sacred and profane. The early Klezmer musicians, would wander throughout Eastern Europe, from shtetl to ghetto wherever Jews were to be found. They were ready to perform whenever there was a joyful occasion such as a birthday, a wedding, or to welcome new rabbi into a community or perhaps to celebrate the arrival of a new Torah scroll. These musicians were often poor and were known for preferring alcohol and women to the study of the Torah.

They were semi-pariah on the *yikhes* (social ladder), hardly higher than *shnorrers* (beggars) and criminals. (*Klezmer*, *klezmeruke* and *klezmeriwke* were used as insults.) None of which seemed to deter people from hiring them. In fact they were always in great demand.

Klezmer music's development was probably

influenced down the years by contact with Slavonic, Greek, Ottoman, Arabic and Gypsy music; and in the American Diaspora of the 19th and early 20th C by American jazz musicians. The *klezmerim* acquired numerous tempo changes, irregular rhythms, inharmonious and maybe sometimes harsh sound, heavily laced with liberal amounts of improvisation. With the ability to generate a diversified music, Klezmer became easily recognisable and loved by many throughout the Jewish world. The rhythm offers an invitation to dance.

To understand the source of the word *klezmer* let us look at what the word means. *Klezmer* is a Yiddish term combining the Hebrew words *kley*=instrument and *zemer* =song. As time progressed instruments began to replace the voices. In Trinity College, Cambridge there is a 16th century manuscript where the word *klezmer* is used for the first time to indicate the musician instead of the instrument.

"From that time, one can distinguish between the functions of '*klezmerim*' (musicians), '*letsonim*' (public entertainers), '*badkhanim*' (wedding jesters) and '*khazonim*' (cantors).

The term '*klezmerishe musik*' was introduced 1938 in the famous musicologist Moshe Beregovski's (1892-1961) book '*Yiddishe Instrumentalishe Folksmuzik*' and adapted by Zev Feldman and Joachim Stutchevski ("musiqah qlezmerit") in Hebrew). As opposed to the respected '*muzikant*', '*klezmer*' qualified an illiterate musician, unable to read notes and playing





GUARDIAN OF THE MEMORY

Enclosed with this issue of Alonim is a leaflet from Yad Vashem UK Foundation in conjunction with the Board of Deputies.

“I should like someone to remember that there once lived a person named
David Berger”

That was the desperate plea of Polish teenager David Berger in a final letter to his friend Elsa as he faced his eventual death at the hands of the Nazis in the Lithuanian capital Vilnius in 1941.

We of the next generation to those that perished, have a duty to recall them and honour their memory and to ensure that the tragedy and their lives are never forgotten nor denied.

All Jews, and indeed people of other faiths are being asked to become a “Guardian of the Memory” of one Jew murdered in the Holocaust. Full details are on the leaflet, please fill it in and post it now. If you need extra copies, they are available.

This initiative was announced on Holocaust Memorial Day last January by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks and has the support of Liberal Judaism.

Bernard Barnett

Synagogue Deputy at the Board of Deputies.

A History of Klezmer continued

traditional music by ear.”

Michel Borzykowski (1)

For world renowned clarinetist Giora Feidman however, Klezmer means that the instruments are essentially the loudspeakers of the 'inner voice' singing in everyone's soul.

“A Klezmer doesn't make music, he speaks, prays, consoles with his instrument” (Helmut Eisel) (2)

The influence to add lyrics can be traced to the *badkhn* (the master of ceremony at weddings), to the *Purimshpil* (the play of Esther at Purim), and to the thriving Yiddish theatre.

Many of these musicians became celebrities throughout Europe. Some of these

Klezmer legends are recorded. The flute and 'shtroyfidl' (a home-made xylophone) player Mikhoel-Yosef Gusikov (1806-1837), was hailed a genius by Felix Mendelssohn 1836 in Leipzig, and both fiddlers from Berditshev: Arn-moyshe Kholodenko AKA Pedotser (1828-1902) and Yossele Drucker AKA Stempenyu (1822-1879) where said to have inspired the character 'The fiddler on the roof' and whose nickname became synonym of virtuoso.

To be continued:

Bernard Price

(1) Borzykowski, Michel: 'Roots of Klezmer', 1997

(2) <http://www.helmuteisel.de/>

