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A Happy New Year 5732 to all our Readers

EDITORIAL POLICY

Through recent events in the Middle East, particularly within the last three years, increasing attention has been focused on the position of Jewish communities in Arab countries of the Middle East and North Africa. Their history goes back to biblical times to include the Patriarch Abraham's response to a Divine call to leave his birthplace, Ur of the Chaldees, in an area covered today by the country of Iraq, formerly known by the names of Babylon and Mesopotamia.

The majority of these communities, which before the Second World War numbered over a million Jews, have emigrated to Israel and elsewhere largely due to the insecurity of their future plight under Arab rule. Today there is less than 10 per cent of the former number of Jews still residing in these countries, and with very few exceptions, there is no guarantee as to their future status, due also to the chronic instability of several régimes.

Our purpose is not only to discuss the position of these remnants of once-flourishing Jewish communities despite intermittent periods of persecution, but also to strive to bring to light the latent spiritual and cultural treasures of a glorious past in which invaluable contributions to the development of Judaism and Jewish life had been made. In this respect this journal is a modest attempt to fill a gap long existing in Jewish journalism.

Some of those contributions date back to the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem by leaders of Babylonian Jewry including Ezra the Scribe, following a famous decree of Cyrus the Great in 538 B.C.E., the Alexandrian diaspora during the Second Temple, the evolution of the Babylonian Talmud and the period of the Gaonates, the 'Golden Age' in Spain through to more recent times.

Nevertheless no right-thinking Jew could afford to be indifferent to the position of his brethren in Israel and other parts of the world to which reference will constantly be made.

In this, our first number, whose appearance coincides with the New Year, we are indeed grateful for the inspiring message of the Haham, published on this page.

MESSAGE FROM THE VERY REV. THE HAHAM RABBI DR. S. GAON

I was very glad to hear that the Iraqi Jewish Club is about to publish a bi-monthly, *The Scribe*, which will deal with the past and present position of our fellow-Jews in the Middle East and in the Sephardi world in general.

The name of this publication has a biblical connotation as it refers to Ezra Hasopher — Ezra the Scribe. I think that our brethren who have come from Iraq and who are the bearers of the great and glorious traditions of Babylonian Jewry have chosen a very happy name for the publication which will be an expression of their sacred traditions and of their great history and contributions to world Jewry.

I congratulate the editor and all those concerned with this praiseworthy venture and I pray that the Almighty may bless their endeavours. The Sephardi Community and indeed Anglo-Jewry have been greatly enriched by our friends who have come to our midst from Iraq and who are already enriching our own life by invigorating it through their customs and deeply religious attitude to life.

I take this opportunity of sending all those who are connected with *The Scribe* my best wishes for a happy New Year and also to those who will support this worthy publication and all its readers, *Tisvu Le Shanim Rabbot*.

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ABRAHAM, THE FATHER OF THE MIDDLE EAST

by N. E. DANGOOR

In many ways Abraham is the common denominator of the Middle East or at least of that part of the region known as the Fertile Crescent. He was a Syrian (Aramaean) born in Iraq who had to migrate to Canaan for the sake of religious freedom. His compliance with the divine command which bade him to leave 'thy country, thy kindred and thy father's house', demonstrates both his obedience to God and his attachment to his native land which he did not leave out of choice: both Isaac and Jacob had to choose their wives from the old country.

Abraham spoke Aramaic (Syriac) which at the end of the eighth century B.C.E. became the *lingua franca* of the Middle East and, later, one of the official languages of the Persian Empire. From that time and for 1,200 years Aramaic was the spoken language of Jews in Palestine and Babylonia right up to the Moslem conquest of the Middle East. It remained the language of the Jews of Kurdistan until recently. The Hebrew that was used in writing the Bible and was the language of the prophets and the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah was in fact the language of Canaan (Isaiah 19 : 18). The Assyrians called Hebrew the language of the West country. It was the Israelitish dialect of Canaanitish which by the testimony of Tel El Amarna were both spoken in Palestine as early as 2000 B.C.

It was about that time, four thousand years ago, that Abraham, the first Hebrew patriarch, was born in Ur of Chaldea. His ancestors originally came to Iraq from Kuwait, that north-eastern part of the Arabian peninsula which was the cradle of the Semitic family which emigrated into the Fertile Crescent, the people who subsequently became the Hebrews, Phoenicians, Babylonians and Assyrians of history.

Travels

Abraham's travels took him first to Haran in northern Iraq and then to Damascus where he resided for some time (Josephus). He later proceeded to Canaan, which at that time was sparsely populated and consisted of a number of small city states. One of these was Salem (Jerusalem) whose king, Melchisedek, priest of the Most High God, was particularly friendly with Abraham. In Canaan Abraham witnessed the catastrophic events in the Dead Sea valley that produced the Great Rift and which are described in Genesis as the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Abraham lived to be 175 years old. He had eight sons: Ishmael by Hagar, Isaac by Sarah and six sons by Keturah. Ishmael's offspring became the Nabataeans who populated northern Arabia from the Euphrates to the Red Sea. Africa is named after Ofren, one of Abraham's grandchildren, who conquered Libya.

Qualities

Abraham's character emerges from the Biblical episodes as composed of traits still regarded as ideal in the Middle East. He is shrewd, loyal to his kin, brave in war, desirous of numerous offspring, extremely hospitable, just, a hard bargainer, and an unquestioning believer in God. Abraham's religion, according to the Bible, was the first monotheistic faith. He was the first to venture the notion that there was but one God, the Creator of the Universe. In that field of course his influence became felt throughout the civilised world, first through Judaism and then through Christianity and Islam so that today the greater part of mankind acknowledges the God of Abraham.

The Arabs chose Abraham as their head through Ishmael; Mohammed professes in the Koran his mission to renew the pure religion of Abraham.

In the Medinese suras of the Koran, Abraham becomes a Hanif, a Moslem (Sura 3 : 60). He is held as Mohammed's ideal predecessor, the spiritual ancestor of Islam (4 : 124; 3 : 61) and the founder of the Kaaba (2 : 118). The submission of Abraham and his son to the will of God in the supreme test when Abraham was ready to sacrifice his son, expressed in the verb 'aslama' (submitted themselves) (sura 37 : 103), was evidently the act that provided Mohammed with the name Islam for his faith. (*The Jewish Foundation of Islam* by C. C. Torrey, New York.)

Achievements

It is interesting to dwell further on Abraham's personality: a visionary and a prophet — he is referred to as the 'friend of God' in the Old Testament (Isa. 41 : 8; 2 Ch. 20 : 7); the New Testament (Jas. 2 : 23) and the Koran (4 : 124); a tribal chief, a merchant prince and a traveller; a warrior and a brilliant tactician — he made a night attack on the Assyrians and by a pincer movement he managed to save his nephew Lot; a magnanimous person — he refused to take anything from the booty of war; a mathematician and astronomer — he (according to Josephus) taught the Egyptians, during his travels in Egypt, the basis of astronomy which he learnt in his native Ur. He also taught them the Babylonian calendar and the seven-day week. On his return from Egypt he adopted some hieroglyphic symbols and, by making each symbol represent a particular sound, developed the first alphabet, suitable for the Hebrew nomads and which was used to record the fascinating story of the Chosen People which was beginning to unfold as well as the old sagas that go back to Noah and beyond. That simple alphabet, composed perhaps of only 16 consonants was later adopted by neighbouring peoples and, through the

(continued on page 6)

TOWARDS A MIDDLE EAST FEDERATION

by EXILARCH

The repeated attempts of Arab leaders to unite various countries of the Middle East in a pan-Arab Federation shows clearly their imperialist intentions and their ultimate aim of having an empire extending from the Atlantic Ocean to the Persian Gulf and beyond. This movement has been fuelled sometimes by pan-Arabism, sometimes by pan-Islamism but the aim is domination. The combinations have been varied: Iraq, Syria and Jordan; Egypt and Syria; Iraq and Jordan; Egypt, Syria and Yemen; Egypt, Libya and Sudan; and just recently, Egypt, Syria and Libya with Sudan to follow, called the Federation of Arab Republics. Libya's overtures to Mr. Mintoff, ridiculous as they may seem, to establish Arab military bases in Malta and replace Nato in this vitally strategic bastion of Western defence, shows that Arab ambition knows no bounds.

Arab leaders can afford to play this game of power politics because they keep their own people under their heels as most Arab régimes are military dictatorships. Thus Arab leaders gain absolute control of vast oil revenues which they squander on arms and power adventures with complete disregard for the welfare of their people who are kept impoverished and so rendered harmless.

Over the centuries, this Arab policy of terror has tended to squeeze out non-Arab minorities and forced them to emigrate out of the region thus enabling the Arabs to consolidate their expansionist strategy.

Persecution

In the past the Arabs were sheltered by the desert. They pounced on their neighbours at the right time and used Islam to consolidate their hold. In Arabia Jews were forced to convert to Islam and those who refused were massacred. Arabia had large Jewish communities and today not a single Jew lives there or is allowed to enter even as a visitor.

The brief brilliance of Islamic civilisation was not due to the Arabs.

H. Lammens in *Berçau de l'Islam* contends that in the historical crossroads of the Middle East, the Arabs were in fact a parvenu people only just emerging out of barbarism. They relied exclusively on Greek and Persian officials. De Lacy O'Lary observes: 'It will not be unfair to say that during Omayyad régime the Arabs learned practically nothing of the act of government. They were in the position of prodigal young men who leave all details to their men of business and content themselves

with squandering the proceeds.' [Ostrower: *Language, Law and Diplomacy*—University of Pennsylvania.]

The reliance on foreign skill and culture by the Arab world existed during all stages of ascendancy and decline. With very rare exceptions, Arab philosophy, theology and law of Omayyad and Abbasid periods, though written in Arabic, were not the work of Arabs.

Arabic adopted Greek and Persian words for administrative terms and Hebrew and Syriac words for religious and theological terms while scientific words were in Greek.

Non-Arab Peoples

The claim that all Middle Eastern countries are Arab is a myth arising from the fact that Arabic is the prevailing language in that area. In fact the Middle East is multi-lingual and multi-national consisting of Arabs and Jews, Kurds, Persians, Turkomen, Lebanese Christians, Druse, Assyrians, Armenians and others.

Since the end of the First World War, the long-term plan to Arabise the Middle East has been resumed. The result has been turmoil in the area. The Assyrian massacres, the Kurdish wars, blood bath revolutions in Iraq, attempts to take over the Lebanon, 21 régimes in Syria in 21 years, civil war in Jordan.

Non-Arab Middle Eastern countries such as Israel, Persia, Turkey and Cyprus must not remain aloof from these developments and, in their own interests, should take an active part in bringing order, unity and progress to the whole area.

In these days of common markets and regional groupings, the small states of the Middle East cannot hope to develop independently or in hostile camps and the logical solution is to form a democratic federation to harness the vast natural resources of the area and its strategic and geographical importance for the benefit of all concerned.

FAMILY TREES

It is hoped to compile genealogical histories of families of Babylonian or Iraqi origin in order to maintain as accurately as possible a lasting record of the community. Readers are kindly requested to send in the necessary particulars.

Spanning the Centuries

by PERCY S. GOURGEY, M.B.E.

The martyrdom of nine Iraqi Jews publicly hanged in a Baghdad square on January 27, 1969 signified the final chapter in the 2,500-year-old history of a community, dating back to Babylonian times. The aim of this publication is, in a word, to show that that martyrdom which shook and shocked the civilised world shall not have been in vain.

This most ancient of Jewish Diasporas had clung tenaciously to the tenets of Judaism throughout an unbroken period of sojourn in a particular land lasting 25 centuries. In this whole area, sometimes referred to as the cradle of civilisation, this community made a significant and most remarkable contribution to the development of Judaism. To summarise, this was done through (1) the utterances of Prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel, (2) the mission of Ezra the Scribe who in 458 B.C.E. left Babylon for Jerusalem under the authority of a successor of Cyrus the Great, (3) the teaching of Hillel I emigrating to Jerusalem from Babylon in the first century B.C.E., (4) the evolution of the Babylonian Talmud in the Academies of Sura, Pumbeditha and Nehardea from the second to the sixth centuries C.E., (5) the period of the Geonim including the greatest of them, Saadia Gaon, (6) the fruitful interchange of scholars and learning with the Jews of Spain in its 'Golden Age', and (7) the leadership of the Nesiim of Baghdad (founded in 726 C.E. by Caliph Mansur) extending well into the Ottoman Turkish era.

Five Centres

An English theologian of the last century, C. E. Cornill, has written that 'the history of Israel begins with the migration of Abraham from the Euphrates to the Jordan; its classical period closes with the compulsory migration of the exiles from the Jordan back to the Euphrates. If Israel had been merely a race like others it would never have survived this fearful catastrophe and would have disappeared in the Babylonian exile.' The late British Chief Rabbi Hertz has observed that "it did not so disappear was due to the activity of two men — Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Jeremiah's message to his despairing brethren in Babylon, 'seek the welfare of the city wherein ye dwell, and pray unto the Lord for it; for in its welfare shall be your peace', has been of incalculable influence in the civic life of all Jews throughout the world." Nevertheless, Jewish history has proven this to be of little avail against the rule of tyrants. In short, with very few exceptions, assimilation has failed, and the classic example of our times is German Jewry under Hitler. The wheel of Jewish history has turned full circle. The martyrdom in Baghdad last January has illustrated (to coin a

phrase) the 'penta-centric history of the Jewish People', i.e. the five centres of Jewry throughout the ages — Palestine, Babylon, Spain, Poland, the U.S.A., to return once again to the first centre, Israel, which has ever been the centre of Jewish prayers and yearnings. (The centrality of these countries in terms of timing cannot be sharply defined as one period has tended to merge with another.)

After Cyrus, King of Persia, conquered Babylon in 538 B.C.E., he issued an historic decree, or Declaration, allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple destroyed by the Chaldean king, Nebuchadnezzar, some fifty years earlier. It was to these Jews that Psalm 137 referred: 'by the rivers of Babylon they hanged up their harps on its willows and wept at the remembrance of Zion'. The reign of Cyrus was marked by an unparalleled tolerance to all minorities and his decrees are comparable in our time to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is with considerable significance, therefore, that in October there will be held throughout Iran unprecedented celebrations to mark the 2,500th anniversary of the setting up of the Persian Empire by Cyrus the Great.

From the 14th century till the end of the First World War in 1918, Mesopotamia or Iraq was under the rule of the Ottoman Turks. The life of the Community alternated between periods of prosperity and adversity and it was at one such period of persecution in the 1820s that David, head of the famous Sassoon family (and son of Sheikh Sason the Nasi) fled first to Persia, thence to Bombay in India, after which his sons established themselves in England (and befriended King Edward VII). This pattern of emigration was followed subsequently by many Baghdad Jews, travelling on to China and Japan.

British Mandate

After the First World War, Iraq, like Palestine, came under British Mandate and after 12 years the Mandate terminated. Iraqi Jewry flourished under the Mandate and in the early years of independent Iraq, Jews held important political and governmental offices. In the mid-thirties the position began to deteriorate and during the Second World War, Rashid Ali Gilani, an ally of Hitler and under the influence of the former Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, led an anti-British revolt and headed the Government in 1941. Under his short-lived régime, overthrown by British and Indian troops, the Jews were persecuted, about 300 killed, and many fled the country. In 1948 a wealthy Jewish businessman, Shefik Ades, accused of 'spying for Israel', was hanged publicly in Basra.

At the special Knesset session held in Jerusalem on the day in January 1969 when the nine Jews were hanged, the late Prime Minister Levi Eshkol stated: 'The blood of the innocent martyrs in Babylon cries out to us and to the world from Iraqi soil . . . for 2,500 years the Jews have helped to build Babylon-Iraq with all their hearts and souls. When Israel attained statehood, we welcomed those driven out from there. . . . If there is a conscience in this world, let its voice be heard — now. Let us awaken to the immediate need to rescue the remnants of the Jewish communities in the Arab countries.' What can only be described as the workings of Divine Providence was that the large majority of Iraqi Jews — over 115,000 — had emigrated from Baghdad to Israel between 1949 and 1951 in 'Operation Ezra and Nehemia'. Although the then Iraqi government permitted this emigration, they stripped them of their assets, confiscated their property without paying any compensation and deprived them of all rights of citizenship. The remaining 10,000 dwindled to about 3,000 just before the Six Day War, and they were confronted with increasingly sever restrictions. Over half a million Jewish refugees from Arab countries are the answer, in *moral* terms, to the Arab refugees. At a conference in Paris last July Egyptian Jews decided to claim a thousand million dollars compensation for property confiscated by the Egyptian authorities from Jews who had been forced to leave.

Exchange of Information

But what further action can be taken? It is only in an exchange of information on their respective cultures and history, and on their current position that various Jewish communities in Israel and the Diaspora can develop the mutual respect and understanding essential to sound and fruitful inter-group relations. While focusing attention on the descendants of the ancient Middle Eastern Jewish communities, no right-thinking Jew can remain indifferent to events affecting other Jewish communities in situations of either distress or affluence. Thus the scope of commentary could be wide-ranging and far-reaching to include reference to the life and work of the leaders of Babylonian Jewry, also to Saadia Gaon and the Vilna Gaon, to Maimonides and Mendelssohn, the Russian historian Simon Dubnow and the Iraqi martyrs.

The romance of being a Jew consists in trying to perceive the significance of the Destruction of the First and Second Temples and the holocaust of the Second World War in the light of Ezra and Nehemiah and Herzl, the achievement of Babylon, Spain, Poland, the United States (sometimes called 'the new Babylon') in the light of the unfolding promise of Israel. Let us now indulge ourselves in this romance!

Iran's 2,500th Anniversary Celebrations of its Monarchy

The history of Iran offers a panorama of periods of national grandeur, military victories and defeats, and changes of fortune which only a country with such a prolonged history is likely to go through. Throughout these 25 centuries the wheel of fortune has kept turning — but the Iranians have always managed to hold tenaciously to one particular aspect of their nationhood. This is the institution of monarchy which has been the life-thread that has ensured national unity, and saved the Persian nation from disintegration in its darkest hours.

Nationwide celebrations are to be held in October 1971 to celebrate the 2,500th anniversary of the Iranian monarchy. The Iranian year 1350 (1971-72) will be called the Cyrus the Great Year, but actual celebrations will take place from October 12 to October 20, in the presence of many monarchs and heads of state visiting Iran at the invitation of the Shah.

Cyrus' Charter

The Iranian Parliament has prepared a special plaque to be presented to the Shah. Also in preparation are replicas of baked mud tablets on which were inscribed the orders of Cyrus the Great for the liberation of the peoples in Babylonian captivity, now recognised as the first charter of human rights. A number of gold-plated replicas of old dishes from the Achaemenian and Sassanian periods will be made along with tiles from the originals now kept in the British Museum and the Louvre. Films are to be shown briefly depicting the life of the Shah as well as on historical sites such as Isfahan, Persepolis and Shiraz. Special columns will be erected in 160 Iranian cities and towns bearing bas-relief inscriptions of the twelve points of the Shah-People Revolution and also extracts from Cyrus the Great's Charter. Commemorative stamps will be issued, and since the first postal service in the world was introduced by Cyrus the Great, a special postal service using express pony riders as was done on the first occasion will be inaugurated between Teheran and Persepolis where the main celebrations will be held. The entire programme is to be televised live and sent via the Hamadan Telstar station to Europe and elsewhere.—G.

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RESTITUTION FOR JEWS FROM ARAB COUNTRIES

In the large-scale emigration of Jews from Arab countries, particularly from Egypt, Iraq, Syria, South Yemen (Aden), and Libya, much communal and private property was confiscated by the governments concerned giving little or no adequate compensation. Statements on this matter have been made at the United Nations and elsewhere from time to time, including a notable one in the Knesset by the late Mr. Moshe Sharett, as Israel Foreign Minister, on March 19, 1951 concerning the property of Jews from Iraq, over 110,000 of who had by then left Iraq for Israel. Shortly after the present revolutionary régime in Libya seized power in September 1969, it announced total confiscation of Jewish as well as Italian property.

While the survivors of the Nazi holocaust have succeeded to a large extent in obtaining restitution for their material claims against Germany, little effective action has been taken on behalf of Jews from Arab countries, doubtless due to the continuing hostility of the latter towards Israel, and Jews generally. Nevertheless there is nothing to prevent the compilation of inventories of property confiscated and the registration of claims to be presented to the governments concerned at an appropriate occasion.

Egyptian Jews

It is therefore of considerable interest to note that, as reported in the *Jerusalem Post* of August 13,

1971, 'an association of former Egyptian Jews is claiming \$1,000 million compensation for property confiscated by the Egyptian authorities from Jews who had been forced to leave. A convention of the victims, held in Paris on July 23, recommended that legal suits for compensation should be filed by all those who had been incarcerated or deported because of the Egyptian-Israel wars of 1948, 1956 and 1967. The central committee of the victims' organisation approved the resolution, after hearing a report on the Paris convention from Mr. Shlomo Cohen-Sidon, its legal adviser, as was announced in Tel-Aviv on August 12. The Association of Jewish Victims of Egyptian Persecutions estimates that Egypt owes \$500m. in personal compensation, \$300m. for confiscated Jewish community property, and \$200m. for religious articles. The association also demands that Egypt should pay a minimum of \$10,000 to families who were forced to leave their homes, while those put in jail should get \$60 per day of detention.'

That the principle of compensation for nationalisation of properties has, in some cases, been accepted is evident from the agreement signed in Cairo on September 13 by the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Alec Douglas-Home and the Egyptian Foreign Minister regulating compensation for British properties, both private and governmental, nationalised by the Egyptians.

P.S.G.

(continued from page 2)

Phoenicians, it spread to Greece and Rome and the rest of the world.

The tradition and personality of Abraham can be used as a basis to forge a democratic federation of the Fertile Crescent comprising Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, Sinai and Kuwait — all Abraham's country in which still live a score of different nationalities. Of these only the Arabs would oppose and frustrate such a union, in order that they may achieve complete Arab domination.

The ideal capital for such a federation would be at Abu-Kemal, half-way on the Euphrates and near Mari of old in which Abraham once lived. What better name can such a capital have than that of Abraham? (cf. Washington!)

Comments and articles welcomed. The views of individual contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the journal.—Ed.

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The Nature of Arab Anti - Semitism

by Y. HARKABI

Of the 160 Arab books dealing with Israel that have passed through my hands during the past two years, almost 50 are based upon the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* or quote from them. This is a high proportion.

"Haman was an Arab"

The most extravagant edition of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* in Arabic was recently published—at the beginning of 1967—in Beirut. It appears in two volumes containing about 600 pages, published by Ajjaj Nuwayhd who appended to the text of the *Protocols* long explanations according to which the *Protocols* are part of the Jewish Holy Writings, in which the spirit of Judaism finds expression. As far as he is concerned, the *Protocols* are basic to the understanding of the Bible, the Talmud and Jews—as the behaviour of Jews is explained by the *Protocols*. For example: If Esther does not tell Ahausuerus that she is of Jewish descent, as Mordehai had instructed her, then, according to Nuwayhd, she is obeying the *Protocols* which recommend the use of lies and deception.

This book by Nuwayhd was not an official Government publication, but the President of Iraq sent the author a letter of congratulations on his book.

Here Nuwayhd verifies a view of the link between the *Protocols* and the idea of extermination. A long chapter is devoted to the story of Haman in the Book of Esther. According to him Haman was an Arab, for it is stated that he was a son of Hamdata, the Agagi, and Agag was the name of the King of Amalek, and the Amalekites are defined as Arabs. In this manner the Arab-Israeli conflict receives historic proportions. However, even more important is his description of the incident with Haman and his conspiracy to exterminate the Jews—described in terms of praise and identification.

Once it was impossible to clarify to what extent defamatory ideas against the Jews had become part of the framework of studies in Arab countries. Today it is, as we have copies of their books, which prove the extent to which terms of defamation in relation to Jews and Israel had penetrated their school-books.

I shall mention one book which I accidentally came across, in which the calumny reaches a high pitch. This book bears on its cover the heading "The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Ministry of Education and Culture". Its title is *The Palestine Problem*, and it is intended, as it states, for "Class 3, Secondary School, Literature". The book was printed by the Jordanian Army printing press, and published in 1964. Its author, Dhukan Al-Hindani,

was the Minister of Education of the Jordanian Government, and a member of the Jordanian Ministerial Committee whose function is to "deal" with the West Bank.

The book explains that the Jews are not content with Eretz Israel, but strive to control the whole world, in accordance with the Jewish pretention to be the Chosen People. The *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* are described as decisions of secret meetings of the first Zionist Congress. The *Protocols*, it continues, are not merely a "dead letter"; but are being implemented practically.

I doubt whether similar occurrences of such extreme animosity in school-books officially published by any Government can be found, except for those published in Nazi Germany. The fact that world condemnation of Nazism, and the moral destruction that anti-Semitism wreaked in Germany itself, did not deter the Jordanian Minister of Education from writing in this vein is of significance in regard to the attitude that the Jordanian authorities wished to impress on their pupils. Perhaps this is an especially extreme example, as this book deals specifically with the Arab-Israel conflict, whereas in many other books, the accusations thrown at the Jews are levelled in the course of the study of other subjects.

It should be mentioned that in books dealing with the Arab-Israel conflict, there is generally a strong anti-Semitic approach (Al-Aygad, Abdallah At-Tal, Ahmad Al-Jayyar and others).

Marx followed

The Arab socialist approach towards Jews draws inspiration from Karl Marx's book *On the Jewish Question*, which was published in an Arabic translation, and sometimes also from the joint essay of Marx and Engels *The Holy Family* (e.g. Adib Dimitri: *The Jewish Question and Scientific Socialism*, *Al-Katib*, Cairo, August 1967).

According to Marx's explanation the Jews are "the embodiment of capitalism". The Arabs are capable of finding condemnation of the idea of the Chosen People, and the contention that this pretension arouses selfishness among the Jews, in Marx.

One hopes that it will not take too long for the conflict between Jews and Arabs to reach an arrangement of peace and good neighbourly relations, but we must be prepared for the conflict to be protracted, and for this we must prepare ourselves spiritually and morally for which an understanding of the Arab attitude towards Jews including Arab anti-Semitism is essential.

KING FEISAL I AND IRAQ'S JEWS

"I thank my Jewish citizens who are the mainspring of the life of the people of Iraq"—

King Feisal in Baghdad, August 1921

With these significant words, King Feisal epitomised his address to Iraq's Jews on the historic occasion of a banquet they gave him on the eve of his ascendancy to the throne of Iraq. In the *Jewish Chronicle* of 50 years ago, September 23, 1921, it was reported that in order "to commemorate the proclamation of the Emir Feisal as King of Iraq, the Jewish community of Baghdad gave a grand banquet which His Majesty honoured with his presence. The banqueting hall was decorated with Arab and English flags, and on the walls were inscriptions in both languages—"Long live King Feisal", "Long live the free Arab people". The Baghdad Jewish Boy Scouts formed a guard of honour at the entrance of the hall, and along the streets in the proximity of the building were assembled the pupils of all the Jewish schools in the city. Among the guests who were invited to meet King Feisal were the principal dignitaries of the State and foreign consuls. On the arrival of the King, he was welcomed by the Chief Rabbi, who

presented him with a copy of the Pentateuch in gold binding. In tendering his thanks for the welcome and the gift, the King said: 'I thank my Jewish citizens, who are the mainspring of the life of the people of Iraq.'"

First Finance Minister

In "A History of the Jews in Iraq" by Abraham ben Jacob, published in 1965 in Jerusalem by the Ben-Zvi Institute of the Hebrew University, it is stated that the banquet was in the hall of the Great Synagogue of which the head was Haham Ezra Dangoor and the guests included Sir Sassoon Heskail the first Finance Minister of Iraq. (According to the Arab scholar, Albert Hourani, he was also "the greatest Finance Minister Iraq ever had".)

It was King Feisal, who as Emir Feisal, concluded the significant, now almost forgotten, agreement with Dr. Chaim Weizmann on January 13, 1919, which could be the precedent in our day of Arab-Jewish co-operation for the benefit of all in the Middle East. P.S.G.

IS MOROCCO SAFE?

by 'Scribe' Observer

The lucky escape from an assassination attempt last July of King Hassan II prompts the question: how safe is Moroccan Jewry? The dramatic events at a palace reception in Rabat during which the French ambassador, amongst others, was slain in an abortive coup by disgruntled army officers and opposition elements were highlighted by the King's own courage and presence of mind which saved his life.

For some time past, and especially since the successful revolution in Libya in September 1969 organised by Col. Muamar Gaddafi who ousted the ageing King Idris I and proclaimed a republic, vigorous opposition has been manifest against Hassan II. It will be recalled that his father, the former Sultan Mohamed, led Morocco to independence from French domination in 1956, and ascended the throne as King Mohamed V.

Emigration

The position of the Jews of Morocco has been comparatively secure under the benign rule of her monarchs and the community was at one time the largest Jewish community in all the Arab states. After 1949 the majority of the country's 250,000 Jews emigrated legally to Israel so that today the community numbers approximately 40,000 and is still the largest Jewish community in the Middle East and Mediterranean regions in which (excluding Israel) there are through emigration about 80,000

Jews left from over a million before the Second World War.

In order to avoid a repetition of the 'too little and too late' story of other Jewish communities in the Middle East, should not the present community in Morocco with the co-operation of the various authorities concerned make arrangements to leave the country, especially in view of the continuing hostility of its Gaddafi-type elements now receiving active support from Libya?

Action Committee

The Action Committee for Arab Jewry of which Mr. Melvin J. Pottesman is Chairman and Mr. P. S. Gourgey is Hon. President, as indicated in recent correspondence in the press, is planning a publication and talks on the background and the position of Jews in Arab States.

ANNOUNCEMENT

"The Cellar" Dramatic Group will do two further performances of the highly-amusing sketch "The Marriage Broker", in Arabic, on Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 November at 8 p.m. For tickets please apply to "The Cellar" Secretary, 11 Russell Road, W.14.