EDITORIAL

Any plans we had for this issue of *European Judaism* were put on hold after what happened on September 11, 2001. Certain events become both personal and public landmarks which freeze moments in our lives and memories. They are often the most tragic ones. We remember where we were, whom we were with, what we were doing at the precise moment when we heard about the assassination of President Kennedy or Yitzhak Rabin. Such an experience is clearly that moment on or around September 11, when we first heard about or saw the appalling events in New York and Washington, played and replayed on our television screens.

The shock and horror could have left no one unmoved. Yet coming as it did just days before the Jewish New Year, it posed an awesome challenge to at least one group of individuals – rabbis who had to stand before the largest gathering of their congregations, swelled on this occasion even by New Year standards, and try to respond in some way on their behalf to the tragedy that affected them all. In attempting to respond ourselves to this event we invited Liberal, Reform and Conservative rabbis throughout Europe to send us the sermons they delivered on that day. Because of the sheer volume of materials we received and the varying format, from fully written texts to working notes, we publish them here in two different ways. In many cases particular themes became quite prominent and I have organised extracts around them in the survey that is the first article in this issue. If anything emerges from this particular sampling, it is the extraordinary power of the High Holy Day liturgy whose themes of the transience of life, of good and evil, of judgement and the possibility of repentance, provided both a framework for addressing this terrible event and some kind of strength for coming to terms with its impact and long-term implications.

In the second section we reproduce a number of sermons in their entirety, even though some of the themes have appeared in the survey. Two have a particular poignancy because they are by Americans. Sanford Ragins addresses his congregation, the Leo Baeck Temple in Los Angeles. Albert Friedlander, though long since settled in the UK, experiences in addition the pain of distance from friends caught up in the horror. Helen Freeman addresses the nature of fundamentalism. David Goldberg looks at the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and discusses the tension between loyalty to the Jewish people and Israel and to Jewish ethical values. Jonathan Magonet examines the prayers of the High Holy Days as a resource for coping with the transience of human life. Dow Marmur, recently retired as caretaker Executive Director of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, discusses human nature and evil actions as reflected

in the tension between *teshuvah*, 'repentance' as an act of human will, and *kapparah*, 'atonement' as an act of divine grace. Sheila Shulman considers the need to recognise the complexity of the issues raised as we live at all times with extremes of violence alongside basic human values. Alexandra Wright focuses on the challenge to faith raised by actions taken in the name of religion that seem so contrary to religious values.

A day after the event HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan produced a brief letter which we reproduce here. As one of the leaders of the Muslim world he has an outstanding record of contributing to the creation of international standards of ethical behaviour and the quest for institutional forms that give them authority.

We are pleased to print one other response. The sociologist Daniel Dayan examines the nature of this particular terrorist act and how it differs from others in the past. He uses this discussion of what he terms 'hermeneutic terrorism' to reflect on the role played in it by the media and the implications of this for understanding other contemporary issues, in particular the second Intifada and French perceptions of Israel and the Palestinians.

Though written long before the event as a contribution to the Leo Baeck College's 'Judaism and Psychotherapy' lecture series, Eduardo Pitchon's study of a disturbed young man with destructive tendencies offers a glimpse into an inner life that could lead to such acts.

It is a truism that one can hardly begin to imagine the reality of six million who died in the *Shoah*. Even the thousands murdered in New York and Washington by the terrorist attack risk being seen and mourned as statistical entities rather than as individuals with families, personal histories and hopes for the future. The death of one person does bring home to us the meaning of loss and grief, and the extraordinary value of an individual life. There are many who grieve for the loss of Irene Bloomfield who died on 23 July 2001, a few months short of her eighty-third birthday. As a regular lecturer at the Leo Baeck College's 'Judaism and Psychotherapy' lecture series, her papers have appeared frequently in this journal. We are proud to publish a number of tributes to her in this issue – which reflect her work in Jewish and Christian clergy and therapeutic circles in the UK and a special task she undertook in Prague in the last decade of her life – by Gaby Glassman, Helena Klímová and Fr. Louis Marteau, as well as personal memoirs by Lionel Blue, David Freund and Danny Smith. In looking through our files we came across an unpublished paper from the 1995 series of 'Judaism and Psychotherapy' lectures. With characteristic modesty she sent it to the College 'in case Jonathan would like to have it for *European Judaism* in about ten years' time or whenever'. The 'whenever' is now. Here, with her usual humaneness, wide reading, sensitiv-

ity and courage she addresses 'Remembering and Forgetting: A Reflection on Jewish Experience'.

The theme of Jewish experience is taken up with Jonathan Schorsch's fascinating study of the different Jewish communities of Mallorca, experienced during a study trip linked to the celebration of *Pesach*, and the broader implications about Jewish identity it raises.

This year sees several significant anniversaries in the history of 'progressive' Judaism and we are delighted to publish John Rayner's historical overview of the development of the World Union for Progressive Judaism at a celebration marking its seventy-fifth anniversary.

As usual we complete the issue with poetry and book reviews.

Jonathan Magonet