

EDITORIAL

This edition celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Leo Baeck College-Centre for Jewish Education on 30th September 1956. It is measure of the success of that new enterprise, and the calibre and commitment of its first students and lecturers, that within ten years of its founding teachers and graduates created this journal, the first to explore the newly emerging Jewish life in Europe.

The Editor must here offer a small apology. Having recently retired after twenty years as Principal of the College I have inevitably a certain amount of material relevant to this anniversary. Included here is a revised and shortened version of a lecture I delivered at Belsize Square Synagogue in 1996 in memory of their founding minister, Rabbi Dr Georg Salzberger, in which I traced something of the history of the *Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums*, the great Berlin Liberal rabbinic seminary, and the stages that led to the attempt to replant it in Britain already during, but more successfully, after the war. My second piece was also a memorial lecture, in memory of Rabbi Dr David Goldstein, who taught for many years at the College before his tragically early death. I was invited by the Liberal Jewish Synagogue, shortly before my retirement, to reflect on my years at the College, and this paper seemed a useful way of bringing the story up to date. The intervening fifty years are covered in an overview by Jonathan Romain. (For anyone wishing for a more detailed review of at least some of that period, there was a double issue of this journal (85:2–86:1) that marked the thirtieth anniversary of the College with a range of articles and an overview of the history till then by Werner van der Zyl, the College's founder, John Rayner and Albert Friedlander.) More recently the College has been enlarged to incorporate the Centre for Jewish Education, hence our hyphenated name. To complete this historical overview we have reproduced the lecture given by Professor Leon Roth at the opening of the College, some of whose challenging observations about how the College should develop and be open to a wide variety of students and views have been more than fulfilled in the intervening period.

We invited a number of graduates of the College to reflect on their time, and though not all responded we have a rich number of memoirs and anecdotes that provide depth to the surveys. While most are rabbis we are delighted to include the piece by Sister Edmée of the Sisters of the Love of God, originally published in *Manna*, the journal of the Movement for Reform Judaism, who represents one of the many Christians who have studied at the College over the years.

It seemed appropriate to provide not only memoirs from the past, but a sampling of the work of current students. From one of the Bible classes two

current students, Malcolm Cohen and Neil Janes, have written essays on King Saul which we felt were worth offering to a wider audience.

A final taste of contemporary life at the College comes from Rafiq Abdulla's article on Islamic Views on Pluralism, a reminder that for over thirty years the College has co-organised an annual Jewish–Christian–Muslim student conference in Germany attended by all on the rabbinic programme, in addition to a semester course on Islam taught over the years by a variety of Muslim lecturers.

In recent editions it has been our sad duty to memorialise a number of significant teachers at the College who have died, amongst them Professor Hyam Maccoby, Professor Ben Segal and this journal's distinguished editor for many years, Rabbi Dr Albert Friedlander. Sadly we must now add to those pioneer figures of the College Rabbi Dr John Rayner, the senior minister for many years at the Liberal Jewish Synagogue, as well as being a leading teacher and former Director of Studies, of the College. We are pleased to publish a number of tributes to him, including one prepared for a newspaper before his own death by Albert Friedlander. We had asked John to provide an article for a proposed issue on contemporary European Jewish liturgies of which many have been produced in recent years including a number he had himself edited. We publish it here as a further tribute to his scholarship and spiritual leadership.

At the rear of the grounds of the Sternberg Centre where the College is located is a Holocaust memorial created by the artist Roman Halter, himself a survivor of the concentration camps. Over a period of years he has designed the College's room of prayer, including the windows, ark, reading desk, walls and ceiling. On the front of the ark is the Hebrew word '*Zachor*', 'remember', which stands also at the top of the simple black memorial in the garden. In front of the College building is another work of art, generously donated by the artist Naomi Blake, herself also a survivor of the camps. It carries the title '*chadeish yameinu*', 'renew our days'. So the College stands symbolically between past and future, between memory and renewal. In the past fifty years it has lived up to the heavy responsibilities that come with both these vocations and tasks. May it continue to do so.

At the time of writing the post of Acting Principal of the College is occupied by Rabbi Dr Michael Shire. The full-time Principal from this summer is to be Rabbi Dr Marc Saperstein. We wish him and the College well under his stewardship.

Jonathan Magonet