EDITORIAL

We celebrate in this edition two closely related events. The fortieth anniversary of this journal is a remarkable landmark, particularly given the short-lived nature of intellectual journals within the British Jewish community. That it is still around is a tribute to the commitment of a few dedicated editors and supporters, in particular Albert and Evelyn Friedlander, who between them in earlier years did almost everything from editing, to maintaining mailing lists, to posting and packing to storing large quantities of back issues in the basement of Westminster Synagogue. One reason for the survival has been the readiness of our publishers, Polak and van Gennep (1966–87), Pergamon Press (1987–93) and Berghahn Books (1994–) to support a journal with a small but influential circulation. In each case it was a particular individual who made this possible: in the early years Johan Polak, who is recalled in a memoir by Jackie Senker, the widow of Michael Goulston, the first managing editor; Dr Elisabeth Maxwell who persuaded Pergamon, one of the publishing companies of her husband Robert Maxwell, to take it on; and Marion Berghahn, who accepted it in the early stages of her own publishing venture. (Further background is recorded in an editorial in the Spring 1994 issue.) Without their recognition of the significance of such a journal and generous support it would have long since joined the ranks of other short-lived experiments.

From 1974 small sums were available to support the journal from the Michael Goulston Educational Foundation, established in memory of the creative force behind the beginning of the journal. But it was the adoption of the journal by Leo Baeck College and the provision of administrative backup since 1986, when its logo first appeared on the cover, that has given the main impetus for its continuity and provided the bulk of materials since that time. It is, therefore, appropriate to continue to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the college, begun in the last issue, by publishing the proceedings of the International Rabbinic Conference (3–6 July 2006) held to celebrate this landmark year.

The founding editor was Rabbi Dr Ignaz Maybaum, the leading theologian of the British Progressive Jewish movement. The tone of the journal was established in the first editorial, which we reproduce here. It expressed a vision of a confident European Jewry of the future as a third significant Jewish community mediating between America and Israel. A prophetic element envisaged the possibility of an emancipated Russian Jewish society. Alongside Michael Goulston, the initial editorial board

included Rabbis Lionel Blue, David Goldstein, Dow Marmur and John Rayner, all of whom went on to play leading roles in the history of progressive Judaism in the UK and abroad, and particularly in the life of Leo Baeck College. With the tragically early death of Michael Goulston, editorial responsibility was taken over by Anthony Rudolf (1972–75), who maintained and extended Michael's commitment to a dialogue between the Jewish 'establishment' and Jewish intellectuals, many of whom felt themselves to be marginal to the community. Similar hopes are described by his successor, Marcel Marcus, recalling here his years as editor (1976–78), and his personal disappointment that the kind of pan-European Jewish identity envisaged by the founders has never materialised. (A contemporary view of that issue is explored in this issue by Diana Pinto's opening lecture at the International Rabbinic Conference, 'Can there be Jewish answers to Europe's questions?')

From 1978, Albert Friedlander became the editor, with occasional editions given over to guest editors for specialist areas of interest, including Evelyn Friedlander (Women and Judaism, Winter 1981, The Hidden Legacy Autumn 1990); Jonathan Magonet (Biblical studies, Summer 1981; Judaism and Psychotherapy, Winter 1982 (with Daniel Smith), Autumn 1985, Winter 1989, Spring 1996); Julia Neuberger (Leo Baeck College's thirtieth anniversary, Winter 1985); Dorothea Magonet (Women and Interfaith Dialogue, Summer 1987); Esther Seidel (Jewish Philosophy, Autumn 1997). From 1996, I shared editorial responsibilities with Albert Friedlander, becoming co-editor from Autumn 1992.

Our initial hope in celebrating the fortieth anniversary of the journal was to publish a collection of major articles culled from past issues, but we lacked the resources to undertake such a task. Instead, we invited a number of people to evaluate certain themes that have been consistently explored over the years. In the event, three such studies have been completed: Jeffrey Newman, on the series of international 'colloquia' that were a feature of the early years of the journal; Howard Cooper, on the interface between Judaism and Psychotherapy; Michael Hilton, on the interfaith dimension. All three reveal the pioneering aspects of these explorations which represent a commitment to a variety of issues from the uniqueness of the European perspective. The vision of the founders has been maintained far beyond the modest resources available to the journal.

The same could be said of Leo Baeck College, which has taken very seriously its sense of responsibility for the spiritual leadership of post-war European Jewry. The International Rabbinic Conference brought together more than one hundred graduates of the rabbinic programme from west and central Europe, the former Soviet Union, America, Canada, Australia

and South Africa. The basis of the conference was set out in the opening address by Michael Shire, completing his year as acting principal of the college, namely to explore the contemporary significance of the legacy of Rabbi Dr Leo Baeck. Four of the papers, by David Ellenson, Tony Bayfield, Michael A Meyer and Marc Saperstein, address the subject directly. Dr Baeck's studies in the field of Jewish theology and mysticism are reflected in Arthur Green's paper, called simply 'God!' and Howard Cooper's response. His commitment to the 'greater Judaism', with its broader social commitment, is explored in the paper by Awraham Soetendorp and three responses from people directly involved in social action, Dr Edie Friedman, Lucie Russell and Benji Stanley. Contemporary religious expressions in Israel are explored by Moshe Lavee. At the end of the conference, three papers were presented on aspects of the future of rabbinic training, by myself as the recently retired principal of Leo Baeck College, and Marc Saperstein my successor, and Michael Marmur, the dean of the Jerusalem School of Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion.

Many of the participants in the conference offered workshops, though most were in the form of discussions. Because of the lack of space, we are holding them over to form a major part of the next issue.

A shadow was cast over the conference by the death at the outset of Rabbi Dr Louis Jacobs, the foremost Talmudic scholar and teacher of Anglo-Jewry. We publish a tribute to him by Jonathan Wittenberg.

The conference itself, in addition to the scholarly input, was a remarkable reminder of the rich human resource, intellectual and spiritual, offered to the Jewish world and beyond by the college. In a moving ceremony, the participants gathered at the grave of Leo Baeck in the Hoop Lane Cemetery, where other leading rabbis and teachers of the German refugee community who found a new home in Britain are also laid to rest. It was a reminder of the challenge faced by the college and this journal at their outset to help rebuild a European Jewish society still recovering from the devastation of the Shoah. These two anniversaries enable us to recognise the achievement and the new challenges that lie ahead.

As usual, we complete this issue with poems and book reviews. The Editorial Board wishes to express its gratitude to Beatrice Sayers, who brought this edition together in record time as a record of the conference.

Jonathan Magonet

European Judaism is indexed at Rambi, the index of articles
on Jewish Studies: <http://www.jnul.huji.ac.il/rambi>