EDITORIAL

There is an ongoing political debate as to whether or to what extent the United Kingdom is a part of 'Europe'. Clearly a journal published in the UK that seeks to explore the dimensions of Jewish life throughout Europe has, from its inception, celebrated this broader aspect of British Jewish identity. But by focusing on continental Europe we have sometimes neglected aspects of Jewish life in Britain itself. This was brought home to the editor when he attended a conference in London organized by Sue Vice and Axel Stähler called: 'Writing Jews in Contemporary Britain'. When invited to publish the proceedings in the journal the organizers readily agreed and expanded the initial list of contributors. So it is with gratitude and pleasure that I hand over the editorial task to them for the bulk of this issue.

At the same conference the editor made the acquaintance of Simon Louvish, the author of masterly biographies of leading figures from the early years of Hollywood and satirical novels, including the six-volume Blok Saga. He generously offered to let us publish a chapter from his latest novel, *The Dream of Ages*, which is based on the journeys undertaken by members of his own family from Bessarabia.

Though we seldom publish fiction, in autumn 2009 we included a chapter of a novel by Larry Lefkowitz, a witty evocation of the world of Lieberman, a Yiddish-oriented, literary critic in Israel, and his hard-done-by assistant, Kunzman. We are delighted to record that the novel is now published as *The Critic, the Assistant Critic and Victoria*.

The rest of the issue touches on themes frequently addressed by the journal. Angela West explores the area of interfaith dialogue by addressing the well-known attitude of the great Orthodox halakhic authority Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik. While accepting the legitimacy of collaboration with Christians in the practical arena of life, he drew the line at theological dialogue. She examines other Orthodox voices that challenge his position.

Still on the theme of Orthodoxy, we include Gwyneth Lewis' prize-winning essay from the Leo Baeck College Education Department on the vexed question for Progressive Jewish communities and movements: Why do parents affiliated to Progressive synagogues choose to send their children to Orthodox Jewish primary schools?

In an issue that focuses on British Jewish writers it is appropriate to go wider afield. Adolfo Campoy-Cubillo, in his interview with the Moroccan-born novelist Esther Bendahan, discusses her novels which explore the Sephardic diaspora out of Spanish Morocco after the country became independent.

In our From the Tradition section Annette Boeckler tells the fascinating story of the journey of a Chumash printed in Sulzbach in 1802 that travelled via Brazil to the library of Leo Baeck College, on the way acquiring the only known signature of Israel Jacobson, the founder of Progressive Judaism.

The issue is completed with book reviews and poetry.

Jonathan Magonet