

Editorial

Gabriel Josipovici first contributed to *European Judaism* during its third year of publication in the Summer 1968 issue. In his role as Managing Editor, Rabbi Michael Goulston z'l sought to use the journal to provide, among other things, a place for outreach and dialogue between those who represented the religious leadership of the Jewish people, in this case rabbis of his own generation who belonged to 'progressive' movements in the UK, and Jewish 'intellectuals' perceived as being alienated from, indifferent to or somewhat marginal within their own Jewish tradition. Thus, the same issue includes the proceedings of a symposium on 'Judaism and Marxism: The First European Dialogue'.

Gabriel is represented by the article 'Freedom and Wit, the Jewish Writer and Modern Art' (Volume 3, No. 1, Summer 1968, 41–50), a study of Saul Bellow's *Herzog* and Bernard Malamud's *The Fixer*. He is described in the issue as Lecturer in English in the School of European Studies, the University of Sussex. 'He has published articles on various aspects of late mediaeval and modern literature and ideas. A first novel, *The Inventory*, will be published by Michael Joseph in the Autumn.' Fifty years later, as we publish the papers delivered at a symposium at the University of Sussex to celebrate Gabriel's 75th birthday, we would add to his biography that he is the much-translated author of over a dozen novels, of three volumes of short stories, of a number of books of criticism, and of plays performed on the radio and on stage in the UK and in continental Europe.

Gabriel was invited by Michael Goulston's successor as Managing Editor, Anthony Rudolf, to contribute to an issue of the journal marking the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Franz Kafka ('An Art for the Wilderness', *European Judaism*, Volume 8, No. 2, Summer 1974, 3–15). The current editor had the opportunity to invite Gabriel to apply his critical literary skills to the Hebrew Bible, and he lectured at the Leo Baeck College on the biblical narrative about Joseph. Gabriel set about learning Hebrew and his exploration of the Bible, 'Old' and 'New' Testament, led to the publication of his remarkable *The Book of God: A Response to the Bible*



(Yale University Press, 1988), which is discussed in this issue by Howard Cooper. The breadth and depth of his contributions to the field of literature, and the affection and admiration in which he is held, are clear from the tributes paid by his colleagues: George Craig, Sarah Crangle, Paul Davies, Dan Gunn, David Herman, Günther Jarfe and Jeremy Lane. To complete the celebration, and allow Gabriel to speak in his own voice, he agreed to the reprinting of two of his short stories, 'Brothers' and 'He Contemplates a Photograph in a Newspaper', which were published in *Heart's Wings* (Carcenet, 2010).

The long lead-in time between accepting an article for publication and its actual appearance means that the journal can rarely be topical, but sometimes a different kind of advantage or relevance may occur. We wanted to mark the centenary in 2017 of the publication of the Balfour Declaration. The article by Arie Dubnov appears a couple of years late for the anniversary, but we have space in this issue to devote to his extensive evaluation of three very different historiographical approaches to the genesis and significance of the Declaration.

Conversely, Geoffrey Bindman's article has become extremely topical, at least at the time of writing this editorial. He addresses the difficult challenges and troubled history of the search for an adequate definition of 'antisemitism', particularly as complicated by attitudes to Zionism and to the State of Israel. He focuses on the definition produced by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), and the list of 'examples' appended to the definition, some of which relate to criticism of the policies and practices of the government of Israel. The topic has taken on current public significance because of internal debates within the British Labour Party about how it should deal with antisemitic behaviour within the Party. But this political dimension also exposes deep divisions within the British Jewish community.

A personal journey to explore the history of her own family led Carol Elias on a pilgrimage to Politaniky, a village in Transnistria (Ukraine) where her mother survived in hiding. This memoir has become part of a broader project to re-examine Transnistria's Holocaust history.

A very different internal Jewish controversy, political and theological, centres around the impact of the women's movement on all aspects of Jewish tradition. One public expression of this has been in the attempts to address gender issues as reflected in Jewish liturgy. The various non-orthodox movements have responded, for example, by introducing the names of the matriarchs, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, alongside the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, into the opening blessing of the *Amidah*, the central prayer of the daily, Shabbat and festival services. Jeremy Schonfield, while accepting the legitimacy

of such attempts, questions the appropriateness of this example because of the wider associations implicit in the formulation of this blessing. He offers his own solution that he hopes might be acceptable within and beyond 'progressive' circles.

This issue is rounded out with book reviews.

Jonathan Magonet