

# Carmel College

## Introduction

This initial history and memoir (doubtless it will be added to) concerns Carmel College, a Jewish residential school (boarding school) that was founded in England in 1948 and ultimately closed in 1997. It was founded by my father.

This is my memory, aided by archives, minutes of Governors meetings, reports that appeared in press, and Memories of Kopul Rosen, published by Carmel College in 1970. Like all history there are always 'other stories.' I have documented facts I have been able to corroborate as well as my own personal memories. Those parts of this book that refer to me must indeed be regarded as subjective (that does not mean they are all and necessarily wrong).

Kopul Rosen, founded Carmel College as a boarding school for boys in 1948. He was at the time one of the leading rabbis in Anglo Jewry. He dreamed of a school for boys that would combine the best of two worlds, Athens and Jerusalem; the positive features of the English public schools and the passion and commitment of traditional Jewish Orthodoxy. He gave up the rabbinate and devoted his life to his dream. Sadly he died at the unreasonably early age of 49 in 1962.

Carmel struggled from the outset for pupils and financial support. It began to achieve academic success in the mid 1950s, but the nature of its Jewish programme was always problematic. The vast majority of the pupils were not from religious backgrounds. Their interest in the school was academic and social Judaism rather than the practice or even study of Judaism. The result was that the school never lived up to the original ideal. This does not mean it failed. It can fairly be said that as far as the Jewish side was concerned, Carmel gave to most of its pupils information about Judaism they would not otherwise have had and an experience of living a Jewish life. In some cases it made them more observant, strengthened identity and gave a more positive impression of Judaism than they would otherwise have had. In its early years it was the example and charisma of Kopul Rosen which compensated for other shortcomings. He often said he was delighted to be told by an Israeli student that although his experience had not made him more observant at least for the first time he had an appreciation of the Jewish religion. However it is also true that some Carmel pupils ended up abandoning Jewish life. Some married out and others turned their backs on the community.

Kopul's early death robbed the school of its greatness. His inspiration lingered on but inevitably disappeared over time. The school had three headmasters after Kopul, including me, and it closed in 1997. Can it be said the dream failed? Was the model in some way faulty or just the context? Of course this history is not disinterested. But I hope it will contribute to the debate about what kind of Jewish Education best serves a varied and plural Jewish community and what Carmel College's contribution to Jewish life around the world, was.

I was involved with three phases at Carmel: my father's era from 1948 to 1962 (during all but three of which years I was also a pupil), his successor David Stamler's era from 1962 to 1970 (during which my mother tried and failed to establish herself at Carmel in her own right), and finally my own period as headmaster and principal from 1971 until the end of 1983. These phases differed in character and mood, primarily over the issue of whether Carmel was a Jewish school or a school mainly for Jews. Each period had its own heroes and anti-heroes, its saints and its devils, its successes and its failures. Each headmaster had, and continues to have his own following, and each teacher was loved by some and not by others. In some ways it is this loyalty to specific memories and persona, together with the circumstances of its closure, that prevented the alumni from uniting to help or save the school.

I have noticed that often as pupils get older they tend to romanticize and to obliterate many unhappy memories. They may come to appreciate what at the time they rejected. Yet others nurse grievances and resentment and strive to remove Carmel from their consciousness. We are all biased. As my history teacher used to say quoting, I think, Collingwood, "There is no such thing as history, there are only historians." I know my own memory is both selective and sometimes unreliable. To give just one example; I have always instinctively recoiled at corporal punishment, perhaps because it was used rather liberally on me. When I became Headmaster I found the very canes used on my still in the Headmaster's study and I vividly recall destroying them. I can think of only two incidents of my using corporal punishment. Once I had to support an ineffective teacher and bolster his authority by slipping some young rebels. And on another occasion I used it half-heartedly to try to scare a young tearaway into behaving. But many years later I met two others who claimed that had I had used the cane on them too even though I am convinced I did not. I think faulty memory is at work here, but whose?

Memories are indeed fallible. This is why I have sought archival confirmation, wherever possible, for what I have written. I know there are people, staff and pupils, I should have mentioned, but have either forgotten or chosen not to. Here too one's own biases inevitably come to the fore. So as someone who has always loved art, I have very strong and positive memories of such art masters as Michael Cox, Herman Laangmuir and Michael O'Connor, not overly significant in the history of Carmel perhaps, yet they gave me a lot personally. The same could be said of those contemporaries who mattered to me but I have chosen to omit because I did not want this to be predominantly a catalogue of names.

I played a significant part in various phases of Carmel's history and contributed poor decisions as well as good ones. At certain stages it was more successful, either religiously or academically, than at others. But it was a creature of its time, its place and the personalities who came and went. Carmel had its limitations and it failed some of its charges as did I. Nevertheless, I write this with both sadness and pride.

For my omissions and errors I apologize in advance and welcome corrections and indeed any memoirs of others that might be added to this.

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# Chapter 1 - Early Struggles (1948-1962)

“In 1946 a small meeting of private individuals was called by Rabbi Kopul Rosen in his home in London where he proposed that they investigate the possibility of establishing a Jewish Public School which would provide a general education on a level with the Public Schools of Great Britain together with a comprehensive Jewish training.”

The opening of Carmel College was announced in an advert in The Jewish Chronicle in April 1948. At that time the founder, Kopul Rosen, was the Principal Rabbi of the Federation of Synagogues of Great Britain. The announcement declared that the school would "offer a secular education on a par with the best public schools in Great Britain together with a comprehensive traditional Jewish training". The address for further information was given as Rabbi Kopul Rosen's home address in Farm Avenue, North London. By August 20th a headmaster, James Ewart, M.A., had been appointed, and in October 1948 the school opened with 22 pupils at Greenham Common, just outside Newbury, Berkshire.

The first prospectus of the school declared that its pupils would be:

*"Young men who will be learned, enlightened and observant Jews with a sense of purpose and direction in life ... we are confident that pupils passing through Carmel College will be so equipped by their knowledge and training that they will develop into natural leaders of Anglo Jewry."*

Carmel College Limited was started as a non-profit limited company and then incorporated as a charity. S. London gave a deposit of five hundred pounds, and another ten thousand pounds was raised between Joe Gilbert, Alexander Margulies, Oscar Philipp, and Leslie Paisner. A mortgage was taken out, and when Kopul sold his house in London in 1949 the money went towards reducing the debt. The founding governors were Abba Bornstein, Joe Gilbert, Doctor Bernard Homa, Alexander Margulies, and Oscar Rabinowicz. Osran Philipp and George Shipman joined the board until 1950. Kopul was both principal and initially Chairman of the Governors. Alexander Margulies and Joe Gilbert were particularly significant in 'Carmel lore' because the school was divided into two "houses" which competed with each other, mainly in sport, but in intellectual challenges too. They were named "Alexander" (whose "colour" was red) and "Gilbert" (blue). Later, as the school grew, a third house was added: "Montefiore" (yellow).

In addition to the governors, Carmel had patrons. They were Professor Sir Isaiah Berlin, Lord Cohen of Birkenhead and the Hon. Sir Seymour Karminski.

Initially Kopul commuted from London to Newbury, but after the first year he resigned from the Federation, citing his commitment to the school, and moved out to live at Carmel with his family. He took on day-to-day responsibility for the school. His wife, Bella, became the catering manager and household supervisor. He ceded chairmanship of the governors to Joe Gilbert but chose to retain the title of Principal instead Headmaster. After Ewart's departure the position of Headmaster was not filled.

## **School Uniform**

Originally the school uniform was simple and non-descript. Two silver letters C faced each other on the front of a blue cap and on the pocket of a blue blazer. The uniform was available at a department store called Daniel Neale that used to be situated just off Oxford Street. After the move to Mongewell Park the school designed a completely new outfit based on a purple blazer which was now available at Harrods. Purple was dominant, together with red, blue, silver, and gold. These were the primary colours of the Biblical Tabernacle. The central motif of the school crest was the Seven Branch Candelabrum of the Tabernacle and Temple, which initially was also the official symbol of the State of Israel. Two smaller icons on either side of candelabrum represented the Ten Commandments symbolizing the Written Law and a book representing the Talmudic tradition. Below were seven Torah scrolls, the 'Seven Pillars of Wisdom' as referred to in the Book of Proverbs. The school motto, "Know Him (God) in All Thy Ways", also came from Proverbs (3.6) and was taken to mean that one should follow the values and ideals as laid down in the Bible in whatever one did in life. The acrostic of the three Hebrew words, Bechol Derachecha Daeyhu, also stood for the term that Balaam used to describe the Israelites in Numbers 23: "A people that dwells alone (BaDaD)".

The school tie was purple with silver, gold and blue stripes. Sub prefects had ties of blue with one silver stripe and prefects had ties of silver with two blue stripes. When School Colours were given for excellence in sports, special white blazers with the school crest could be bought. Later on Prefects were able to add a golden edge to their blazers. During the Mid-Fifties a grey bomber jacket was introduced for daily use, to replace the expensive blazer. It was required weekday dress for classes below the Sixth Form. Years later, a school scarf of purple with golden stripes was added. Not only was all this expensive but the supplier, Harrods, was not a cheap store. Each term a representative would come down to the school to take measurements and orders. A crucial item of school wear was its purple cuppel, required for religious services, meals and Jewish Studies but not obligatory at other times. Most pupils chose not to.

## **The Newbury Estate**

Carmel College's first home as a beautiful estate of 70 acres outside Newbury that had been General Eisenhower's headquarters during the planning of the Normandy invasion. It was located at the edge of Greenham Common, originally an RAF base that was taken over by the USAF Ninth Division and then returned to the RAF after the war. The main building, in mock Elizabethan with a minstrel's gallery and grand staircase, was built at the turn of the century. It was reached by a half-mile long "drive" from a small lodge on the main road. The pot-holed track ended by circling around a huge oak in front of the main entrance. Behind the building, lawns reached down to a small ornamental lake surrounded by the most beautiful pink, scarlet and purple mature rhododendrons, which in the summer were home to huge flocks of starlings that wheeled and screeched as they rose and descended at dusk and dawn. Away from the main building there was a glade that had originally been a croquet lawn and tennis court. Beyond it were stables later converted to a synagogue and laboratories. There were a few staff flats above and dilapidated greenhouses to the side. The estate was bounded to the west by Greenham Common and to the north by Newbury racecourse, which was out-of-bounds, but an illegal attraction to pupils

during the season. A rough and meagre football pitch was forced out of the common to the west. Pupils were press ganged into removing stones. Foxhunts often invaded the woods to the north of the estate by the racecourse. And gypsies regularly camped along the drive.

During those early years, Carmel tried very hard to emulate aspects of the English public school system. Amongst the Spartan demands of the Ewart regime were early morning cross country runs, and cold showers before services and breakfast. Sleeping accommodation was very simple. Large open dormitories with rows of beds and lockers on the second floor accommodated the majority of pupils. Some of the older pupils lived in converted stable lofts down by the greenhouses.

### **Jewish Life**

From the start the school was run on Orthodox Jewish lines. From compulsory daily prayers, to observing Shabbat in all its strictness and of course the kashrut of the kitchens, everything ran according to the dictates of Jewish Law. Jewish studies were compulsory and they included Modern Hebrew. The school required a minimum academic commitment to Jewish studies from the average student, no more than a few hours each week. But at the same time it offered inducements and encouragement to those who wanted to study Judaica in greater depth, outside the main curriculum. The majority, having little interest or commitment to Jewish studies, left Carmel with a relatively poor Jewish education. Nevertheless many graduates did learn how to perform basic Jewish rituals, conduct services and have an awareness of the Jewish year and a sense of pride in their heritage.

The strictness of the Orthodox "constitution of the school" imposed strains on non-observant pupils from the start and always posed a challenge to the religious character of the school. Shabbat was kept publicly, but privately many pupils found ways of secretly defying the school rules. During compulsory prayers it was clear that the majority was not actively participating. Finding ways to import non-kosher food into the school became something of a game of cat-and-mouse. The fact that the school required obedience to its religious regulations helped create an atmosphere that caused tension during term time and a kind of schizophrenia during vacation time when pupils returned to non-observant homes. It was always debated whether the gains of experiencing an alternative Jewish way of life outweighed the tensions which were exacerbated by parents tacitly undermining the values of the school through their own behaviour at home. But this was the essential spiritual challenge of the school

### **Growing**

The very idea of Carmel College came in for attack through the correspondence pages of the Jewish Chronicle. Objections ranged from religious to social. It was accused of segregating Jewish children from non-Jews, of competing with the Jewish home, of not offering an intensive enough Jewish education, and of offering too much Jewish education. Kopul and parents defended the idea of the school vigorously in the Jewish Chronicle. In a later prospectus written in 1957, Kopul argued against the claim of segregation thus:

*"Some well-meaning Jewish parents have said, 'How can a child be educated to live in this country where his neighbours are non-Jewish, if the most impressionable years of his life are spent in a wholly Jewish environment?'*

"I suggest that a minority group of Jewish children attending a non-Jewish school separated during religious services and prayers, absent from school for their own Religious Holy Days and exposed to the taunts, upon which I need not elaborate, endures segregation of the worst kind. I myself attended non-Jewish schools and have often discussed my experiences with friends who were pupils at similar schools. It appears that although we were not unhappy, yet in varying degrees we felt that we were like our fellow pupils and yet unlike them. We were members of the whole and, at the same time, a minority within a majority, and in striving to belong completely to the larger community we tended to make our Judaism, which we regarded as being the cause of our difference, a sub-culture which we tried not to obtrude into our normal routine. This confidence sapping experience is the inevitable lot of the Jewish child in a non-Jewish school.

"When a Jew with a positive experience of Judaism, with a learned awareness of what his distinctive heritage is, meets his Christian fellow human being, he does so as an equal; he does not apologize either to others or to himself for being different; he does not equate difference with inferiority. The ignorant Jew, who feels that he is like his non-Jewish neighbour and yet not wholly identifiable with him, can have no pride in the distinction which separates him, he must inevitably be plagued by a sense of inferiority. It is self-delusion to comfort oneself with the half defiant cry of 'I am proud to be a Jew.' What is the nature of such pride that has its roots in ignorance?

"The authentic Jew can and will associate with his Christian neighbours with confidence and dignity; the ignorant Jew (the non-Christian of Jewish parentage) is ill at ease within himself and though he craves to be accepted in Christian circles, is in fact uncomfortable and awkward in their presence.

"Without knowledge of Judaism the Jew is defenceless. It is criminal folly to expose a child to the piercing darts of discrimination and to defend such action by the totally false notion that defenceless as he is, he will nevertheless 'get used to it' and develop some power of immunity. The child will be wounded: scarred as a Jew and a human being."

Carmel sputtered and groped towards its future in the early years. The first Speech Day was held at the school in July 1949. It was an internal affair. In January 1950, Chief Rabbi Israel Brodie officially opened the school's synagogue. J.C. Gilbert, Chairman of the Governors, spoke, as did the donor, Henry Freedman of Leeds. Malcolm Shifrin and Peter Cohen represented the pupils. The school was officially recognized by the Ministry of Education in 1950. The second Speech Day in November 1950 was in the presence of Dr. A. Cohen, President of the Board of Deputies. Maurice Lipsedge won the Jerrold Roston Cup (to be referred to in greater depth later but in effect the most prestigious award for the outstanding pupil of the year). By this time there were already 110 pupils, from age 7 to 18. Armin Krausz, Leslie Paisner, Ivan Shortt, and Jacob Braude joined the governors briefly in 1950.

The third Speech Day was held in May 1951, in the presence of Viscount Samuel. Speech Days became showcases for the school when parents and visitors would drive down to the estate. Kopul orchestrated the proceedings. He got pupils to declaim speeches or extracts from literature and classical texts, both secular and Jewish. He was anxious to grandstand them to show off the cultural mixture that Carmel wanted its pupils to aspire to. Pupils were drilled to walk in and out in a disciplined way and to sing the school song both in Hebrew and in English (see Appendix). To end the proceedings Kopul would always turn to the pupils and declaim "Carmel College, Ko LeChai". It was a quote from the Book of Samuel, a greeting that David sent to Naval, and the equivalent of saying, "This is the right way to live one's life." The pupils then responded by echoing, "Ko LeChai". Kopul always insisted it be a united roar of enthusiasm. Something not all pupils were capable of. It was often forced. But Kopul's own voice was so powerful that he made sure there was enough volume in the reply. And with that, the proceedings would always end.

Kopul was very proud of the school and visitors, educationalists from Israel and Europe came down constantly to see how the experiment was progressing. But he also invited artistes ranging from the Israeli Yemenite singer Shoshana Damari, to politicians such as Aneurin Bevan and Jennie Lee and musicians. In 1951 the artist Mane-Katz spent a day at the school and presented a large canvas which always occupied a central position in the Main Hall both in Newbury and later at Mongewell Park. Kopul's visitors reflected his eclectic tastes and loyalties.

As the school grew in 1951, Carmel bought Thatcham House, a rundown estate two miles away from the main school on Greenham Common, as a junior school. The numbers of pupils rose in the fourth year to 120. And in 1952 Carmel was recognized by the Oxford and Cambridge examining board. Just as the two schools were getting into their strides, the United States Air Force returned to Greenham Common and prepared to convert it into an air base for the huge strategic Boeing Jets that were the lynchpin of the nuclear deterrent. The school could not continue under the prospect of the constant roaring of massive bombers. It had to sell up and move.

### **The Move To Mongwell**

I remember, as a boy of 10, spending the summer holidays of 1952 driving around southern England with my father, looking at decaying stately homes and abandoned estates for a new home. I had a wonderful time exploring cellars and storerooms, with such treasures as suits of armour or piles of deer antlers and climbing up onto dilapidated roofs that housed jackdaws and crows. It was fortunate that after many false trails eventually Mongewell Park was found, across the river from Wallingford and on the banks of the Thames. It was altogether a much more suitable place than Greenham Common, with plenty of room for expansion.

The estate whose main building dated from 1890 was once the property of the Bishops of Durham. In the eighteenth century it passed to the Fraser family. Since the turn of the nineteenth century it had been the European home of American railroad magnate Jay Gould. During the Second World War it was taken over by the RAF and became the home of Number 2 Group of Bomber Command (being close to the Benson Airfield). It was at Mongewell Park that they planned the famous raid on the dams of the Ruhr valley, known as 'The Dam-busters.' After the war the estate had

been used by the RAF as a rehabilitation centre for wounded pilots. Apart from an imposing main building, it had a once-elegant sports centre with small plunge pool, gymnasium, and squash court. Around the estate, prefabricated 'Nissen' huts had been put up by the RAF, as well as concrete pillar boxes on the banks of the Thames to help thwart a possible German invasion. The boathouse on the Thames was similarly reinforced internally with heavy concrete. A trout stream ran from hatcheries below an old mill house down to an overgrown lake that flowed over a small waterfall into the Thames.

To the south of the lake stood an old church of Norman origin that had been partly renovated for occasional use but was surrounded by collapsed masonry and an old graveyard. Rumours persisted, in the minds of frightened schoolboys, of secret tunnels leading to the headmaster's imposing study and the ghost of The Green Lady who was thought to inhabit the ruins of the church. The place had been neglected since the war and the buildings were indeed ghost like.

The estate lay within the floodplain of the Thames and each year flood waters swept through the estate, including the temporary huts, by then used either as classrooms or dormitories. Only permanent buildings on raised grounds escaped the annual floods which came right up to the steps of the Main Building. Over time, all new construction was built on foundations that rose above the flood level. Despite the Spartan conditions, the school grew and flourished.

One of the unforgettable features of Carmel was the headmaster's study. All pupils at some stage stood outside that heavy carved wood door in trepidation, waiting for the lights to flash an instruction to wait or come in or a loud resonating voice calling you in to your fate. The room was large, spacious and wood panelled. Straight ahead lay a huge kidney desk fronted with bookshelves that contained books ranging from Rhadakrishnan to C.P. Snow to the Talmud. On the left was a rococo bookshelf with glass doors covering other volumes. In the eastern corner a door led to a small toilet and then down to what was originally a classroom but later became the headmaster's secretary's office. A small door to the west led out to the back gardens and tennis courts, and also internally to the library.

To the right of the desk was the famous eighteenth century Highwayman's chair with a trapdoor seat. When it was engaged if one sat down on it, it released iron clamps that dropped over ones thighs and prevented escape (until released by someone who knew the mechanism). There was a primitive safety block that prevented the seat from sinking to release the clamps but invariably it was not in place. It was the joke of the school to see which new pupil or visiting dignitary would test the chair and find himself trapped. All the furniture had been bought at local auctions when the school moved in. But nothing was as intimidating as the presence of Kopul behind his desk. The set-up of the study, the long walk in, was an excellent example of psychological intimidation. Many former parents let alone pupils have told of the trepidation with which they entered the study and walked to face the desk and the imposing presence behind it. The desk and the atmosphere of the study itself, typified the autocratic character of Public School Headmasters and the dignified and even awe-inspiring atmosphere they set out to cultivate at that time.



The move to Mongewell Park coincided with Carmel's first full 'Sixth Form.' Now its curriculum spanned, for the first time, the full range of compulsory school education in England and Wales. The first Speech and Graduation Day at the new campus was held at Mongewell Park in December 1953. It took place in the big hall of the main building, which also served as the school synagogue. Later, as the numbers outgrew the hall, huge marquees were rented, until the new cavernous dining hall was built in 1974, where big events were held subsequently. The guest of honour was the Israeli Ambassador Eliahu Eilat. By then there were several Israeli students, who welcomed him in Ivrit. In addition, George Mandel, John Fischer, Michael Goitein, Garry Borrow, Abraham Levy, Ariel Shachter and Michael Ostwind participated in the proceedings. The announcement was also made that David Perl, one of the earliest pupils and indeed one of the first to leave, was to be the founding president of the Old Carmeli Association. Kopul wanted his graduates to feel part of an Old Boy Network, sharing ideas and values and providing support for each other in careers and connections. The Old Carmeli Association, which confusingly was made up of Carmelonians (not Carmelites which was a Christian order), never really succeeded organizationally as effectively as Kopul had hoped, although informal and personal associations have persisted impressively spanning several continents.

### **Kopul Versus The Governors**

During the early years, relations between the governing body and Kopul Rosen were strained over the school's budget and administration. Because most of the founders were members of Mizrahi, the religious Zionist movement that Kopul was the president of. There was tension in the wake of his resignation when he had objected to the movement's involvement in Israeli party politics.

Funding was a serious bone of contention. The move to Mongewell required more funds, and differences emerged over Kopul's insistence that many pupils from financially modest homes be given scholarships even though the finances of the school were precarious. Kopul was disappointed that they were not helping enough with the funding of the school.

For their part, they expressed their dissatisfaction with Kopul, claiming he was not really qualified to arrogate to himself absolute authority and should confine himself to the Jewish side of the school. They were very impressed by Romney Coles and they felt that he should be the academic head of the school rather than Kopul. I never heard my father criticize Coles, so I assume he was not party to the intrigue.

In 1953, the governors sent a letter to parents expressing their disapproval of Kopul and demanding his resignation. Kopul countered with a letter of his own demanding that they resign. He carried with him the vast majority of the parents. The governors resigned and demanded their seed money back. Thanks to a loan from Isaac (later Sir Isaac) Wolfson, Kopul was able to pay back the original governing body and set up a new one under the chairmanship of Joseph (Jock) Collier. It consisted of Sam Stamler, Isaac (Norman) Cohen (Kopul's brother-in-law, not to be confused with the school accountant named Norman Cohen), Berl Wober, Israel Kleiman, Harry Hyamson, and briefly Leonard Wolfson.

The school weathered the storm. As far as the pupils were concerned the only impact was that Alexander Margulies withdrew his son from the school and one of the most impressive of the early Jewish teachers, Robin Gilbert, the son of founding Governor Joe Gilbert, left to join ORT. First he went to the ORT school in Aden and was then promoted to Head Office in Geneva. Carmel continued to grow and celebrated a well-attended Speech and Prizegiving Day on July 25th, 1954 in the presence of the new governors. Jock Collier was the guest of honour and Maurice Lipsedge received the Jerrold Roston Cup for excellence.

## **Staff**

The first headmaster of Carmel College, John Ewart, did not live up to expectations. He left in 1950 and the position of headmaster was not filled. In effect Kopul was now the head. Romney Coles, came to Carmel as Senior Master and became the most influential presence at Carmel after Kopul. He was a distinguished chemist who had been passed over for promotion at Kings School Canterbury, despite having written one of the universally accepted textbooks of the time, a collection of drawings of Industrial Chemical processes. He had left the Kings School to become head of the newly opened Headfort School, but decided not to stay. He wanted to focus on teaching more than headmastering and in addition to his appointment as senior master he was also head of chemistry. He was assured that science would become a speciality of the school which in fact it did. Everyone who was taught by him remembered him as an inspiring teacher. On the first day of every term, all the pupils gathered in the school hall. Romney Coles, over six feet tall and resplendent in his long master's gown, would read through the school rules, in sonorous upper class English, warning amongst other things that knives and other possible weapons would be confiscated, and generally striking the fear of Heaven into the hearts of the pupils, especially the new ones. He was the master of intimidation. We pupils all admired Coles and regretted that he lived off campus and treated the school as work rather than a mission.

Early pioneer teachers included Harold Nagley who had been a Physical Education Instructor in the Army and this skill was put to good use. He also filled in with teaching of both English and Judaica. He left to head the King David School in Liverpool and then went on to become headmaster of a school in Australia. His main claim to fame in student folklore, was rescuing one of the pupils 'Scottie Freedman' who got into difficulties on a school trip to the municipal swimming pool in Newbury. Gitta Cohen was the only female teacher and she was responsible for the youngest pupils. Emile Schlezinger was head of French, and Ezra Shereshevsky (who later became a distinguished academic in the USA) was in charge of Jewish Studies. Already then he looked more American than English, favouring bow ties with check jackets and sporting a luxurious mane of hair. British teachers in contrast tended to slick down their hair with Brylcreem. Towering over everyone was first head of English, Gilbert Patrick Warner, a gentle man who was so idealistic and felt an obligation to teach the disadvantaged and underprivileged that he eventually left to teach English in Ethiopia. And there he and his equally tall wife worked for many years before retiring to their native Ireland.

While Kopul was still at the Federation he had summer schemes for young men under the auspices of the Jewish Youth Study Groups organization which was an attempt to

offer a non-political alternative to the Zionist Youth Movements . Kopul quite consciously tried to groom young men to become future leaders of the community and he would seek out potential acolytes. His earliest protégé was Jerrold Roston. On one of the group's holidays in Switzerland, Jerrold tragically drowned in Lake Geneva. Later the most prestigious and coveted prize the school had to offer was named after him. The Roston Cup, for outstanding pupils, was established to recognize those who best represented the twin ideals of the school, distinction in the secular and the Jewish. It was not necessarily awarded each year, only when Kopul felt a student really deserved it.

The impact on Kopul of Jerrold's loss was profound and in looking for a replacement he focused on the less charismatic but bright and loyal David Stamler. After he finished Secondary school and before going to university, David Stamler joined the school as Kopul's aide de camp and trainee teacher. Some contemporaries compared him unfavourably with Murray Roston ( Jerrold's younger brother) who was also on the staff and a gifted English teacher. But Murray's mind was set on emigrating to Israel where he had a distinguished career teaching at Bar Ilan University. David Stamler became Kopul's understudy and Right Hand Man. Stamler started teaching at Carmel on and off during the early years before going to Reading University and then to Oxford, where he gained a 'Blue' in boxing for the University. He graduated and went on for a diploma in education. After a year at Brandeis in the US where he co-authored a book on the Middle East, he returned to become vice- principal in 1956. He was a chain smoker, read the Financial Times religiously and was an excellent teacher.

Carmel was founded at a time when many Second World War Jewish refugees were looking for work in the United Kingdom. Amongst the early staff were refugees from Germany, amongst them Messrs. Dahl, Kohn and Neuschloss, who lasted just one year. They were followed by others who stayed and contributed enormously to the school. The secretary Sophie Walker was small, efficient and dedicated, with brilliant a son, Jeffrey, at the school. The cook was the ample Miss Valerie Aarons, who always looked a mess and hurled imprecations in a German accent as she stirred the tea with her finger. And there was Nurse Reppon, a well-built, Spartan German matron who terrified everyone. Some of the teachers were just as eccentric. Even if they had never intended to become teachers, out of necessity found a haven at Carmel. They added an important cultural dimension as well as a remarkable commitment to the school and to Kopul himself.

Dr. F.M. Friedman had dreamed of a life as an actor in Germany but he escaped from Nazism and became a history teacher instead. He served the Kaiser in WW1, was wounded and decorated at Verdun. Before coming to Carmel he led some of the "Kindertransports" from Nazi Germany to the UK . After the war he took charge of a short-term reception centre for children who had survived Nazi concentration camps. He subsequently taught at a school in Kent that had moved from pre-war Germany, most of whose pupils were refugees from Germany.

At Carmel he taught histrionically, acting parts and peppering his Germanic English with malapropisms. His solecisms often invited ridicule from insensitive youngsters. I still recall his regularly saying 'albeit' to rhyme with the German word 'Arbeit', instead of the condensation of 'all be it.' Silly really what insignificant things school

children remember. But he was extremely cultured and worldly-wise, and many older more serious pupils gravitated around him. He was not at all religious, and this too gave him a cachet with the rebels of the school who found the demands of living an Orthodox life a constant struggle. They needed an outlet for their frustrations and Doc's apartment in the Old Mill at Mongewell was a haven for the intellectual dissidents, a sort of Berlin café in the Oxfordshire countryside.

He was known as "Doc" Friedman until one day he gave a talk about Jesus and as a result was given the new nickname "Yoshke" (Yiddish for Jesus). That was how Doc Friedman was affectionately known from that day on, simply "Yoshke". He had no patience for younger pupils. He did not enjoy forced teaching and was not very good at controlling the rowdier, wilder youngsters. But he inspired many with a love of history. I was the sort of pupil who hated school, and I was a disaster when it came to anything numeric or scientific. But if I was inspired I could become an absolute devotee. After his death in 1976 several former pupils contributed to a memorial volume "In Memory of F.M. Friedmann" published in 1978, 2 years after his passing, including George Mandel, Norman Feltz and Maurice Lipsedge.

Helmut Dan Schmidt, another German refugee, was a genuine academic. He was a pupil of Richard Koebner, the German political scientist who emigrated to Jerusalem before Hitler took complete power. When Koebner left Israel in 1954, Schmidt left too. He came to Carmel because it enabled him to find work and have free accommodation near Oxford University, where he would spend much of his spare time doing research. In 1964 he published a book about the thought of Richard Koebner entitled, "Imperialism: The Story and Significance of a Word 1840-1960." He was a polymath. He could teach almost any subject so long as he had a day to read up on it before starting to teach. I recall he was able to help a Swedish student to pass his GCE exams by teaching himself Swedish from a simple Swedish grammar one step ahead of his pupil. If he had a defect it was that he too had no patience for stupid or disruptive pupils. But if one wanted to study, one could not find a more impressive teacher. He inspired me as my teacher of Geography, Economics and the importance of rational analysis and research.

Helmut would never put in an appearance in the school synagogue except on the first night of Chanukah. He used to argue that Chanukah at least had a historically reliable provenance and besides it was more of a national holiday than a religious one. He seemed to harbour a degree of resentment towards Israel and he never went back. But he would never talk about it. We would argue amongst ourselves as to whether he simply opposed Nationalism or had suffered from backing the wrong political horse in Israeli academic circles.

Another significant character amongst the early teaching staff was a former Catholic priest called Kenneth Cox who had converted first to Protestantism and then to Judaism and took the name Abraham Carmel. He was a very good middle and junior school teacher of English and classics, and he encouraged his pupils to debate and to speak in public. He was also a dedicated housemaster and many pupils were very devoted to him. He was a strange character. The intonations of a priest never completely forsook him, despite his serious and on-going commitment to Orthodox Judaism. He would recite a Hebrew prayer as though it were the catechism. Eventually, he left Carmel reluctantly. He got involved in some hare brained scheme

to bring Freddie Greenwood and another Jewish white-collar fugitive from the law for financial misdemeanours. Perhaps he meant well, trying to assuage anti-Jewish sentiment but Kopul felt he was courting publicity for his own ends. He asked him to leave Carmel to "reassess his options". Abraham Carmel wrote an autobiography entitled, "So Strange My Path: A Spiritual Pilgrimage" and ended up a successful teacher in Yeshiva of Flatbush in Brooklyn. Nevertheless he always dreamed of returning to Carmel and years later contacted me about the possibility of returning to Carmel. I would not have objected but simply did not have the funds available.

It was the mathematics and science departments that shone. Carmel employed efficient and proficient professional teachers; Coles of course and the physicist John Bunney. He was a strict humourless man but very efficient and dedicated to his subject. They were joined by the biologist Dr. Gray, who looked like King George V. There was also the odd "crazy professor" such as "Doctor" Landau, who would blow smoke into milk bottles and seal them in order to inhale the stuff during Shabbat. Most of us did not know how distinguished a scientist he was and that he travelled regularly to Cambridge University to work on various technical projects. And there was the equally distinguished, scholarly Dr. Kant Rishi. An Indian, he too was an academic moonlighting. He looked and acted as if he had been part of the Raj. He was one of the gentler more dignified teachers we had at Carmel. He did not last long.

The non-Jewish dominance of the sciences was only broken by Jacky Epstein, son of the distinguished head of Jews College. He taught physics. He was a good scientist and teacher and well liked if sometimes giving the impression of being absent minded. He also helped out on the Jewish side, and was particularly effective reading from the Torah on Shabbatot and festivals. Eventually he married and moved to Haifa. And there was the stern and humourless, but very effective, head of mathematics Morris (Moshe) Elman. After a few years he left for the Hasmonean High School in London and was replaced by Ron Evans, who together with his wife Mary became the longest serving and most loyal teachers in the history of the school.

In the humanities, new additions included Mrs. Whitfield as head of French (despite her French Canadian accent) who was a universally respected influence. Michael Cox was an effective head of art and had his studio in the "old Mill." Dudley Cohen, who founded the Zemel Choir, was for a few years the head of music. He trained a very reasonable school choir which produced a record of various popular Hebrew and liturgical songs. Odd teachers came and went. Some like Gail Feldberg from Johannesburg were from families Kopul had a warm relationship with, or 'Pop' Gavron who went on to become a very wealthy publisher and 'Lord.' He came after Oxford to teach economics and clearly his heart was not in it. He was one of the boys not least because he cared little for formality. He was the handsome darling of all females on the estate. Actually he was a very good teacher for as long as his enthusiasm lasted.

In the early days of Mongewell Park the Music department consisted entirely of an eccentric elderly man called Colquhoun who taught the piano. He was rumoured to be a brilliant mathematician who had had a nervous breakdown. His formidable wife would drive him to the school from Wallingford in a small black Morris for his classes and hover around to make sure no pupils took advantage of him. There was Mrs Gilbert who was employed to teach elocution, a thankless task and soon gave up.

But still she instituted competitions for awards from the National Poetry Society and other worthy bodies concerned with drama, literacy and debate.

The sports department was led by Charles Marshall, ably supported by Tim Healy, ex-county cricketer. Charley recognized the potential rowing had for Carmel. He brought in Roy Hooper from the local Wallingford Rowing Club as the first part time rowing coach to get things going and then the colourful Wing Commander Hay from Benson who loved to roar obscenities through his megaphone from the temperamental school launch that, more often than not, stalled and required the rowers to tow back to base. Charlie then engaged a distinguished local oarsman Ted Field as an extra part-time coach. He was a double Henley Champion with the RAF. His coaching and enthusiasm infected the whole of the club and as a result the morale of the school. Marshall also gained status when several of his charges won events at regional athletics competitions including Anthony Burton from Leeds who won a discus event.

The younger pupils of Carmel were fortunate to have the firm but kindly secular teachers Isabel Craston and June Glover to look after them and help them adjust. Their little primary department was a protective world of its own and often had a cluster of children of teachers including Israelis who need a lot of support. When younger pupils were no longer encouraged Isabel concentrated on English as a Foreign Language. Carmel, as any educational institution, functioned effectively with a full team of non-teaching staff. There were grounds men, matrons, laundry women, lab assistants, catering staff, nurses in the Sanatorium, visiting school doctors who all contributed to a greater or lesser extent. Even the only taxi driver in Wallingford during the early years, Percy Messenger, seemed to be part of Carmel life and to know more of what was going on than many inside. For so many years Mrs Purchase was the Senior Matron and ran the laundry. Ted Wetherall, irascible, cynical and constantly swearing was, when the school moved to Mongewell Park, the groundsman, gardener, boiler man and supplier of cigarettes. He went on working well into his eighties. His son in law Bumpass was the handy man, odd job man and the middle man between Carmel and the local 'alternative society.' He was suspected of helping others remove lead from the roof of the main building and for the disappearance of equipment of all kinds but always plausibly deflected the blame. He had a hand in many pies and knew more secrets about the people on the estate and their private lives than anyone else. He seemed to be lurking behind every shadow at night and corner in the daytime. He limped, no one knew for certain if it really was a war wound or some less honourable accident. For a while he was given a small motor bike to ride around the estate but it soon disappeared. Ray Harper, the good natured, hard-working Head grounds man who took over in the mid-fifties, was universally liked. Despite having inadequate equipment he cared for all of the beautiful grounds that made living at Carmel such a special rural experience. The cricket square was his pride and joy that he tended with religious devotion for over 30 years.

### **Jewish Studies**

The Jewish studies side of the school's education was not an unreserved success. The religious life of the school revolved around Kopul. He was a brilliant charismatic teacher and occasionally he would fill in for absent teachers in anything from literature to mathematics (not his strong point). He tried hard to provide additional extracurricular Talmud to the few pupils really interested in extra study. But he was

regularly away in London and elsewhere, constantly trying to raise money for the school. For most of the Jewish studies program, Kopul had to delegate the teaching, and it suffered as a result. His magnetic personality was really felt only over weekends and festivals.

In the mid-fifties Kopul started to bring teachers over from Israel to help improve the Hebrew department. Very few of them were able to make the cultural adjustment. Secular Israelis had no notion of religious life and religious ones often found it difficult to relate to nonreligious students. None of them were at ease in an English environment. Perhaps the most successful was Israel Alexander, who tried for several years to impart a love for Judaism, Israel, and Hebrew to the pupils.

Various colourful individuals came and left the Jewish Studies Department, such as the clever but pedagogically challenged Meir Gertner, and the academically gifted but short tempered Raphael Loewe. Loewe was not a success as a schoolmaster and his military bearing, as well as his walk, affected by a war wound, were much imitated. However Loewe played an important role in interesting the more academically motivated pupils such as David Saville and Mordell Klein in Classical Hebrew, so that the latter was awarded a scholarship to Cambridge. He was far too academic for the rough and tumble of a Jewish studies curriculum that was forced on reluctant students.

The two consistent mainstays of the Jewish studies department were Alexander Tobias ("Toby"), and his nemesis, Mendel Bloch. Alexander Tobias was a brilliant man with a photographic memory and a mastery of many different disciplines, both Jewish and secular. He was, in his day, the authority on the Jewish calendar, something his mathematical brain delighted in. He had been a Minister of Religion, first in the United Synagogue in Edgware and then from 1945 to 1952 in Brixton. But he had left the ministry after a nervous breakdown and he escaped into Jewish education. The trouble was that Toby, as he was known, was really an overgrown child. He spoke his own private language with his favourites, upon whom he lavished attention and hospitality; but he could take a dislike to someone to the point of being catatonic. He would pinch pupils' cheeks and utter nonsensical cries of affection, malabush, maladendo. Most pupils were simply dismissive of him, amused but inclined to bait him, and he too often rose to the bait. I don't know why he hated Mendel Bloch as much as he did, but more often than not if he passed you on campus he would say something like, "And if you see Mr. Bloch, don't give him my regards." His childishness confined him to teaching the younger classes and I was very fond of him. He made history come alive. "Boys," he once said, "don't think that one day people woke up and said, 'Oh, goody, goody, the Renaissance has begun'." Those light-hearted observations carried within them wisdom most pupils at the school could not appreciate. He taught me how to read from the Torah and conduct services, but failed totally to interest me in Talmud. He was a sad, lonely man and suffered from severe psoriasis, which meant he was constantly twitching and scratching. Nevertheless he succeeded in turning one of his pupils John Fisher into a world expert on the calendar. It was he who encouraged John and his friend 'Owlie' Restan to take on responsibility for much of the religious ritual in the school. Both became magnificent readers of the Torah with precision and grammatical sophistication. They largely kept the religious side of the school on track.

Alex Tobias was responsible for Carmel College Publication Number 1, "BeShir VeKol Todah", "Song and the Sound of Thanks", the school songbook. It contained the songs that were sung at the Shabbat table at Carmel, Grace after Meals, the Havdalah service, and additional Jewish and Israeli popular songs. Toby annotated and added commentaries on the text. With minor modifications, it remained in use throughout the school's life. In 1964 he accepted a position as librarian in the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, where his brilliance and breadth of knowledge was really appreciated. After he left Carmel he kept in touch with those who remembered him affectionately and loyally. He died in 1996.

Mendel Bloch too had been a minister of religion, in Portsmouth. He was a portly, gruff, angry, and sad man. Once he had been an outstanding soccer player, and well into old age he turned out for the "staff" team. His remarks were always sarcastic and destructive. He rarely had a kind word to offer. He too taught in the junior classes, both Jewish and secular subjects. He was divorced and there was something of the misogynist about him. But he was immensely proud of his son, a successful lawyer and communal leader in Melbourne, Australia.

A later addition to the Jewish staff was Eric Hoffman, another refugee who had come as a child from Germany. He was pious and serious, completely devoted to his family and to teaching Judaism. Sticking to schedules or controlling classes were not his strengths, and over time was given responsibility for bar mitzvah teaching which he was excellent at and supervising the kitchens. One would always see him rushing somewhere, invariably late. He and his wife were kind, friendly, and hospitable. Many pupils owed him a lot for his humanity, morality, and concern. Another important presence on the Jewish side of the school came towards end of the 'fifties.' Morris (Moishe) Dover was the gentle and kind head of the prep school. He and his wife Zahava opened their homes and their hearts to their charges, and were devoted to the school and helped generations of youngsters cope with the adjustments to Boarding School life.

Towards the end of the sixties Hyam Maccoby joined the staff as Head of English. He was descended from an illustrious rabbinic family but had lost interest in Orthodox Judaism. He loved literature, was an excellent teacher. He had a lucrative side line in writing lyrics for popular songs. He often entertained his favoured students with examples. After a few years he left and became an academic specializing in early Christianity. He wrote a well-received play 'The Disputation' about the confrontation between Judaism and Christianity in Medieval Spain.

### **Early Pupils**

Some of the earlier pupils were unusually clever and had failed to find their places in more conventional schools. They included Charles "Charlie" Gale, school pupil "number 1" and the first Head Boy, followed in that position by Alfred Sherman, Peter Cohen (who changed his name to Burrell and enjoyed success as an actor) and Maurice Lipsedge who went up to Oxford and then became a well-known celebrity psychologist. Barry Winkelman won a place at Balliol and his cousin Anthony Oberman at Cambridge. Ivor (Aviezer) Wolfson, the brilliant was the son of one of the well-known Wolfson brothers of Great Universal stores. He won a State Scholarship to Oxford and a coveted place at Magdalen College, but gave them up to



become a rabbi, scholar, and teacher. George Mandel was awarded the Domus Scholarship to Oxford in 1954; Harry Moss, John Goldsmith and the brilliant Sparky Sperber won places at Oxford. Dov Weinberger went on to become a successful jurist in Israel. Leon Yudkin from a well-known Anglo Jewish family and was one of the stars of Carmel cultural firmament involved in Drama, Debate and editing school magazines. Michael Goitein was outstandingly talented in so many areas. He was known as 'Hippy,' a nickname Kopul gave him based on the first letters of the phrase he used of himself, a 'Highly Intelligent Person.' He received the prestigious Brackenbury Scholarship to Balliol, Oxford in 1956 and enjoyed a distinguished academic career in the US. Two of the earlier pupils, Malcolm Shifrin and Ian Caller, later returned to teach at the school. Others such as Martin Law, Norman Feltz, David Perl, and Melvyn Harris became devoted to the Old Carmeli Association of alumni. Many of the earlier pupils came from Jewish centres outside London that Kopul had held rabbinic positions in, Manchester and Glasgow.

The Dwek brothers from Manchester were proud Sephardim. Joe was nicknamed 'Yossel' a totally inappropriate name given its Ashkenazi provenance. He was 'well built,' something of a Billy Bunter in his early years but developed into one of the most popular of the early pupils and was not only a good sportsman but a hardworking science student who later became a very successful magnate and Governor of the school. Raymond was the more restrained. He became an impressive Head Boy and perhaps the most effective Captain of the Rowing Club. Later he became a world renowned biochemist, professor at Oxford, a fellow of the royal society and headed his own research laboratory. He too became a Governor.

Amongst the Israeli pupils was Benjamin, Bennie Shalit from Israel. He went on to Edinburgh to study medicine where he married and then returned to Israel. He became the symbol of the secular identity crisis in Israel. His wife was not Jewish. His Israeli born children had Israeli citizenship through their father but were not Jewish according to traditional Jewish Law. He wanted them recognized as Jewish but Israel then as now was divided between secular Jews who defined being Jewish in ways the Orthodox Jews did not. The whole issue of whether Jews are a religion, a people, an ethnic group or imply anyone who claims to be on, remains a divisive issue. Shalit's campaign came to symbolize the struggle to separate Religion from State in Israel. Although he rejected religion, Kopul was strangely proud of his former pupil's fighting spirit. Other former pupils from Israel went on to distinguish themselves. Adi Kaplan also took up the cudgels for secularism. He fought in the Israeli courts for civil marriage and the separation of state and Religion. Did all of this mean that Carmel had failed? Perhaps, in the way that some of its pupils married out and left the community. Yet it also indicated a spirit of free open enquiry and individuality. Another Israeli who went to distinguish himself was Ram Caspi, today a very senior figure in the legal profession and Johnnie Hertz whose daughter has become an influential academic in Britain.

The numbers rose steadily to 180 pupils. But the fact was that many pupils were neither particularly gifted nor even stable. Some came from broken homes. Others had been asked to leave other schools and were given a second chance at Carmel. Some were refugees from anti-Semitism. A significant number of pupils were there either because their parents could pay or do some significant favour to the school. In many senses the school was a complete cross-section of Jewish life from around the world,

foreign and local, metropolitan and provincial, rich and poor, intelligent and challenged, religious and secular, and the school really benefitted from the variety and the lessons learnt about the importance of recognizing and validating differences.

### **Mealtimes**

In preparation for meals pupils had to assemble outside according to class in a vestibule in front of the Dining Hall with long metal troughs to wash hands. Officially everyone had to wash ritually before the meal. In practise most pupils tried to avoid it on the principle that any compulsion was to be avoided if possible. Prefects lined them up and ensured that no one moved in until instructed. Marshalling the restive students was no easy matter and it became a test of effectiveness that all new prefects had to go through. Everyone eventually filed in. Meal times in the early days were dominated by the teachers sitting up on the High Table. A different master would be on duty during the week. A small hand bell was at his disposal to get the pupils' attention.

Some teachers commanded respect and could project their authority. Others struggled and a favourite pastime was to see how many pings of the bell it took to get the school to be quiet. Taking a meal was a sort of ritual blooding of new teachers who usually showed their inexperience right away. The student body was adept at testing and probing and seeing how far they could push a newcomer. One could tell whether the teacher in charge was respected or feared or not. Often the Prefects, zealous to protect authority, subtly kept control from the body of the students when teachers failed to do the necessary.

Seating was at tables of eight, arranged according to seniority. The most senior pupil, as head of table, exercised dictatorial powers and could send miscreants out and deprive them of food or dispense "seconds" to his favourites. Someone always had to do the 'piling up' of the dishes and carry them away to the kitchen hatches. Finally the meal ended with an abbreviated weekday Grace.

School food was a constant irritant. It could never compete with home cooking of course. But over the years cooks and caterers came and went, some more successful than others. The pupils just wanted 'Chips with everything.' On the other the school wanted to offer a balanced and healthy diet. Often pupils demonstrated their dissatisfaction and whenever attempts were made to establish a School or Students council or complaints committee, food always topped the list of student complaints.

### **Shabbat and Festivals**

Weekends at Carmel ran from sundown on Friday afternoons until darkness on Saturday night in accordance with Jewish tradition. Sunday was a normal working day. Members of the non-Jewish teaching staff had the Jewish Sabbath and Festivals off and an extra day off during the week. Jewish Staff had to suffice with the latter only.

The atmosphere over Shabbat was more relaxed than during the week and there was a sense of the whole school coming together as it did for religious services and meals. The relaxation of school discipline in the secular realm was balanced by religious

impositions that many pupils, coming from non-observant Jewish homes found difficult to cope with.

The synagogue services were shorter versions than those that one would find in community synagogues. They preserved the essential core. They were conducted in the main by pupils and involved communal singing and were livelier and less heavy than the norm. They were in Hebrew as was traditional and the aim of the school was to try to get every pupil to be familiar with and possibly able to conduct the services in Jewish religious life they might find outside the school. Knowledge of the tradition if not conversion to it, was the aim. Still it was for many a strain and something to be endured rather than enjoyed. Similarly reading from the Torah, something most young Jews did only for the Bar Mitzvah, was required of everyone in turn and rotas were compiled each term to ensure everyone did his duty ( though an unofficial barter system enabled reluctant students to get more eager and proficient colleagues to stand in).

The communal meals on Shabbat were of a very different character to those of weekdays. Led invariably by Kopul. His charisma, his great singing voice, his passion for a Jewish life, his way of presenting Judaism as both traditional and modern impacted on the school. He managed to blend authority with sympathy and concern and found a way to make the Shabbat meals and services both intensely traditional and yet enjoyable, even on occasion light hearted. But he turned them into learning experiences and was very conscious of the need to teach everything. The students were expected to learn and join in with traditional songs and take verses. Sometimes this was voluntary and impromptu; on other occasions victims were given a week's notice to learn a verse.

Control was exercised by Kopul clapping his hands for attention. Finding a balance was hard. The relaxed atmosphere often misled pupils into thinking they could over step the mark. If talking rose to too high a pitch Kopul would clap and insist on silence for a few minutes. Sometimes the school was held behind after the meal was over as a punishment. 'Grace after Meals' was led by one of pupils. Then everyone filed out and dispersed to their dormitories or to wander the grounds until bed time. On Friday evenings Jewish Staff on Campus would usually hold 'open house' or invite specific students to come around to enjoy a more relaxed atmosphere. This aspect of Carmel, the unofficial curriculum, was in many cases the most effective aspect of Carmel life particularly for those pupils who missed family life. It was also an opportunity to teach skills of social behaviour as well as civilized discussion. But it is true to say that many of the younger pupils had to wait till seniority before being able to benefit from this more adult activity.

Friday night bedtimes were extended and on Shabbat morning one could sleep in longer than normal. Breakfast was a light one of cake and tea or coffee and then everyone had to go to the synagogue services. Afterward, once again, teachers' homes were open but the majority of the pupils filled their time before lunch by playing games or reading. Lunch followed a similar pattern to the Friday evening meal and then the Shabbat afternoons offered more leisure time than normal, particularly in the long English summers. The temptations of the long, relaxed and less supervised Shabbat afternoons enabled plenty of pupils to disappear or sneak out of the estate illegally. Some found willing non-Jews nearby who would allow them to come in and

watch Television. Others just found ways of circumventing the Shabbat rules against doing written school work or listening to the radio. Often pupils got into trouble for breaking Shabbat. It was not easy to live a dual life with one set of habits, rules and rituals at school that were so different to the routines and the values the majority experienced home.

In general the English Public School system set up a state of conflict between authority and the 'proletariat.' In part it reflected the British Class System, in part it was built into Public School hierarchy where senior pupils enjoyed privileges and power which they exercised with enthusiasm as their recompense for having suffered in their early years. The result was a mixture of fear and admiration for senior pupils and an inherent sense of 'them and us' which automatically extended to the teachers and school authority. Some pupils responded by being outwardly conformists and obedient. Others persistently rebelled against the system. But rebelliousness itself fell into two categories. Some tested and probed and then retreated when faced with punishment and the prospect of suffering. Others, a smaller group, but more blatant, either did not care or actually courted and welcomed the ultimate punishment of expulsion from the school. These nuances played themselves out in the way different pupils reacted to the constraints and rules of Shabbat at Carmel.

### **Morning Services**

Another source of tension was the compulsory morning service. Under the best of circumstances getting out of bed when one desperately wanted to sleep would not be welcomed. In winter having to face a freezing early mornings to go to face authority first thing in the day and pray in an alien language would be a challenge to the most dedicated of students. For most of the pupils at Carmel it was a painful chore. Even if the traditional service was relatively short, some twenty minutes, many pupils, instead of using it as an opportunity to familiarize themselves with an ancient tradition found ways of showing passive resistance. They would neither open their mouths nor their prayer books. They would put on their tefillin either incorrectly or disguising an incomplete procedure. This too became a game of cat and mouse that for some pupils set a tone for the day.

After services the school went into the dining room for breakfast. Then everyone had to return to the dormitories to make beds and tidy up for the daily 'housemaster's inspection.'

The weekday afternoon and evening services at Carmel were, unlike the morning services, voluntary. The vast majority of pupils were simply not interested. Barely ten boys would turn up. Often rotas were resorted to, to ensure the presence of the minimum number required for a quorum. Sometimes attendance was a punishment. The fact that the school did not insist on these services being obligatory reflected the school's realism in not expecting too much on the religious front.

### **Tuck Shop**

The student body consisted of some children from incredibly wealthy homes and others from very poor ones. The school always tried its best not give any preferences to those from wealthy backgrounds. In the early years the school distributed pocket

money each week to pupils, a fixed amount that rose with age and status. The money came out of school fees and the intention was to equalize the rich and the poor although it never really worked because wealthier parents always found ways of supplementing the weekly allowance. Pocket money could be spent on the one afternoon a week students were allowed into town. Naturally older pupils could in more often and as between parcels sent from home and illegal arrangements always went on to import illicit food from local take away stores. But otherwise the only way to spend money was at the Tuck Shop. For many at Carmel, away from home comforts and food supplies, the Tuck Shop played a very significant role, particularly amongst the more junior pupils.

During the early years the Tuck Shop was an adjunct of the school kitchens and run by the indefatigable, outwardly tough but really soft Valerie Aarons. She and the rest of the kitchen staff were the target of the pupils' scorn and in particular the dissatisfaction with school food. Mass catering can rarely be as good as home cooking and for many, going long hours during the school day without snacks was a constant source of anguish. The school tried to balance financial and health considerations in providing a balanced diet when most youngsters just wanted chips with everything. The Tuck shop therefore was where most pupils made a bee line the moment the bell went for mid-morning or mid-afternoon break. The main items were of course chocolates, Smiths Crisps and Lemonade. After Valerie left, various senior prefects took over the Tuck Shop with varying degrees of success until Raymond Dwek in 1959 became the supremo. For the first time commercial expertise and a surprising degree of professionalism was brought into running the Tuck Shop, expanding the stock, increasing efficiency and providing a really expert service. And in time the Tuck Shop acquired a permanent home of its own, in a prefabricated building at the back of the school near the dormitories.

## **Discipline**

School discipline in the fifties was a modified version of English Public School tradition. Corporal punishment, the slipper for minor infractions, the cane for serious ones, was the norm. Initially prefects were allowed to use corporal punishment too, but over the years the frequency of caning declined. Some teachers however persisted in using corporal punishment freely and in general they were disapproved of for their devotion to hurting children. As a troublesome and rebellious pupil I was slipped and caned regularly, even by my father. It made little difference at all other than to persuade me that corporal punishment was not very effective.

The more common punishment was detention. This meant being held back after school when the rest of the students had free time. One had to sit in a classroom under supervision and either in silence, write lines or an essay, depending on which teacher or prefect was in charge. I confess that in 1955 I held the school record for twenty hours of detention in one week. Many teachers and prefects simply handed out 'lines.' One had to write out some banal sentence in English or Latin to the effect that 'I must not misbehave in school,' anything up to a thousand times. Whenever I watch the Monty Python film 'The Life of Brian,' the scene where John Cleese gets Brian, the Judean rebel, to paint the lines 'Romans Go Home' in correct Latin, it always reminds me of my youth.

One of the great benefits of the school was the large number of after school activities, ranging from extra sport, to chess, debating, model making, art, music, rambling, debating and many more. Being in detention meant one had to forgo those far more attractive options. But the worst detention was on an afternoon when one was allowed to go into town. On various afternoons different sections of the school could walk the two miles across the fields into Wallingford. There was not much to do in Wallingford. A few general stores and small shops, but there was an officially sanctioned café 'The Copper Kettle' where there was an arrangement that nothing unapproved of by the school would be served. Even if one had little or no money to spend in the small town centre, just the freedom of escaping the school meant that one looked forward to this limited release. Staying behind in detention was not something one welcomed. Any more than one did on Saturday nights when the school hired a film from a local supplier to project on to a sheet strung up in the school hall. It was primitive and the films were usually ancient. The reels often needed rewinding or fixing but this was the height of school entertainment in an era of few televisions and missing it really hurt.

At various stages saner voices pressurized for more constructive punishments such as community service. This involved picking up litter. Gangs of punished junior pupils could often be seen after school hours wandering around under the supervision of a prefect picking up leaves or any other debris. But that too had its ideological opponents who thought it ought not to be a punishment but a social service. At one stage 'Community Service Badges' with the school crest on them, were given out to pupils who helped around the school or assisted others with their work.

The school ran according to a strict timetable. Each pupil had to copy down his detailed daily program. But the timetable itself was regulated by the 'school bell' during the week. No other time piece mattered. Romney Coles was the master of a complex mechanism that linked an impressive pendulum clock to a series of bells placed at crucial locations around the estate. The clock was locked in his laboratory and regarded as a sort of hidden god that commanded ones daily actions. Reveille, meals, classes, everything was regulated by the school bell.

Despite the discipline of the school, there were abuses both by pupils and teachers, It would be wrong to think there was no bullying or victimization. No group of youngsters or adults for that matter, avoids some being more assertive, aggressive, or mean than others. At Carmel it was, I believe, relatively benign. Over the years cases of sexual abuse emerged involving both pupils and teachers. Whenever they were discovered, they were dealt with expeditiously and firmly. Sadly, there were situations that were not discovered until much later and the prevailing school culture of not 'telling' meant that sometimes serious offences were not discovered.

There was little doubt that Kopul wanted to emulate the great English public schools, combining as he put it "Jerusalem with Athens" but the question was whether he wanted this simply as a tool to give Carmel more status and make it more attractive to Anglo Jews still hung up on being fully accepted in English society, or whether he genuinely approved of the system. In 1955 the school was inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectors and was lavishly praised for its achievements under difficult conditions. In particular its science departments were singled out.

## **Sport**

Carmel's first serious open sporting victory came in 1955 with the senior rowing four's victory. The crew comprised M. Goitein, J. Goldsmith, A. Rau, A. Krebs, and M. Rudd. Another victory came at Reading where the winning crew was , Michael Goitein, Johnny Herz , Garry Burrow, John Goldsmith and D.Solomons as Cox. John Goldsmith went on to become Captain of Boats. Each subsequent year the Rowing Club progressed and won more open competitions at national regattas. In time Carmel ran its own annual Regatta.

For most of the pupils, sport was simply part of the timetable. The twice weekly 'Games Afternoons' were looked forward to as a chance for letting off steam. Most of the teaching staff were involved in sports afternoons, either coaching a sport or supervising games outside. Pupils could only get off games with an 'Off Games Slip' from the school nurse at the Sanatorium. And then they were kept in the library while the rest of the school went out to play, to do some homework or read.

In the English climate outdoor games were, as often as not, a penance for all but the most dedicated sportsmen. Pupils who wanted to and were considered dedicated enough could opt for rowing as a year round sport. For the rest, soccer was the primary winter sport and cricket in the summer. In the early days the pupils and staff were divided up into teams, the Ducks, Drakes, Coots and Moorhens and played each other in turn. It was one of the bonuses of being in a small school, playing together with staff, both proficient and clumsy ones. When the weather was good it was delightful.

There was a distinction between the afternoons of compulsory sport which were designed to engender team spirit and competitiveness and on the other hand the weekly Physical Education period, a requirement of the educational curriculum. The latter as an agony suffered at the hands of often ex-military men determined to force young muscles to do things they were not designed for. For pupils who were good at sport their position in the school pecking order or popularity stakes was guaranteed. Hero worshipping was inevitable. But for those who were neither athletic nor strong the ways to excel were more limited. Chess, music, drama and of course academic success were alternatives and indeed some fortunate pupils were good at everything.

## **Prep**

In a Peters Sellars sketch of the 1960s he has an upwardly mobile English parent going to visit a possible Boarding School for his son which is in fact a Borstal. The overbearing, conman of a Headmaster is asked about 'Prep.' He replies "Oh yes our pupils speak it like a native." Everyone at Carmel 'spoke' Prep. It was an essential part of Carmel life. After supper every weekday evening all pupils spent between one and one-and-a-half hours on 'Preparation' or 'Homework.' They had to be either in their classrooms in the case of junior pupils or in their rooms or studies if older. Every teacher was supposed to give at least one assignment a week. Conscientious ones gave more. But even without an assignment one had to read or write during Prep (and writing could include a letter home which at one stage had a period in the timetable allocated to it but in the end became absorbed into the Prep system).

There would always be a master on duty whose job was to be the first port of call for any emergency in the school that day. He or she also had to take the meals and supervise prep. But the prefects took responsibility for running of Prep and either sat in the allocated classroom or patrolled the dormitories and grounds. Apart from the Master on Duty, the reality was that after official timetable hours when most staff retired home whether on or off campus, the school was all but abandoned to its senior pupils. Of course there were those who took advantage and there were abuses but in general it worked well and it gave senior pupils a stake and a sense of involvement in the school.

### **Visiting Days**

School terms at Carmel were intense. Pupils were involved from dawn to night seven days a week. Terms were broken only by a week's Half Term and visiting days. The arrival of Tom Tappins coaches to take everyone away was always eagerly anticipated. Even those who lived abroad went either to guardians or to stay with friends. There was a time when Wallingford had its own railway station. That disappeared and the coaches left for Cholsey or to Reading. But when the dreaded Lord Beeching took his axe to the British railway system, Cholsey station closed and henceforth coaches went to and from the car park in Regents Park London. Each coach had a teacher on board to check the names and keep order. Groups of provincial or overseas students left in taxis to other transport hubs. A similar procedure of course also applied on the first day of term when coaches picked up in London for the journey out to the school, except then the mood tended to be one more of apprehension than exultation.

The only opportunities to see ones parents were 'visiting days,' usually one a term, except for the summer where in addition to the visiting day there was a Sports Day as well as the final Speech Day that usually but not always ended the school year. Visiting Days were fascinating occasions for those with a sense of the absurd and the bizarre. Pupils would either walk up the Main Drive to meet the incoming cars or on a wet day wait by the windows that overlooked the entrance drive. There was always competition as to who would arrive first and leave last. It was interesting and often surprising to see what a pupils parents were like. Wealthy parents came in their Rolls Royces, fathers smoking cigars and mothers decked in furs. It was said that some parents hired luxury cars for the day just to impress. Lesser cars brought more modest parents and families. And other parents had to make use of public transport. Some came with sisters and cousins. For hormonally excited youth spending so much time in a 'boys only' boarding school the arrival of potential girl-friends was an important and exciting part of visiting days. Visiting Days were the times in the year when difference in family wealth and status was apparent. But the beauty of Carmel was that for most of the time, within the school, such distinctions were not felt at all.

The rich parents tended to whisk their offspring off to posh watering holes like the Jolly Angler at Marlowe or elegant country hotels or pubs at Goring, Henley or Maidenhead. Others made do with a taxi into Wallingford and The George. In the summer a lot of parents bought picnics. Families gathered around food hampers and dotted the playing fields. For those who went off campus, there was something deliciously illegal about going with ones parents to eat non-kosher food in a luxurious setting as far away from the restrictions of Carmel life as possible. And this also



tended to emphasize the differences between the observant or religious pupils who were in a minority and the rest.

Sports Day was always a highly anticipated special occasion and not only by the school athletes who went through several weeks of heats and tests to narrow down the field of competitors. There was often a distinguished sporting personality to hand out the prizes and because everyone stayed on campus to watch the races it was much more of a social occasion. The school went out of its way to create a carnival atmosphere by setting up marquees both for refreshment and shelter. The English Summer weather being so unpredictable one never knew if it would pelt down with rain or be a glorious day.

### **The Cadet Corps**

In 1955 Carmel introduced an Officer Cadet Corps, under the instruction of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. At the time compulsory National Service required every able bodied UK male to serve two years in the Armed Services. All British Public Schools had Cadet Forces, sponsored and trained by different branches of the military. In many schools the Cadet Corps was the most elite and sought after of all school activities. It seems ironic that a Jewish School in the Diaspora should want to participate in this very military activity but the major selling point was that pupils who succeed would join the trainee officer corps of the armed forces when they were conscripted, with obvious status and privileges. So the Cadet Corps came to Carmel and officers from the nearby R.A.F Benson arrived at the school twice a week to train the 'squaddies' and prepare senior pupils to become 'Commanding Officers.' Pupils were taught to polish their boots till they could see their faces in them, to spend hours greasing and priming their kit with 'blanco.' They were commanded to stand to attention, "chin in, chest out." They were drilled, to 'square bash' and march up and down the main school square. Old army Enfield rifles were handed out to take apart and learn to fire and trips to the Benson shooting ranges were the highlights. The Carmel soldiers in the making competed against each other for the title of expert marksman.

Almost everyone joined the Cadet Corps at first, anxious to get on in military life. But when the Government announced in 1957 that National Service would end three years later, all but a few diehards abandoned the corps and gave its disciplines up for more pleasurable alternatives. Still the interest in things military continued and for several years Carmel had an active branch of the Jewish Lads Brigade. Over time that too gave way to modern indulgence.

### **Progress**

Alderman A. Moss of Manchester was the guest of honour at Speech Day in July of 1955. The Roston Cup was awarded to Anthony Oberman. The decision was taken to strengthen the school's administration and Henry Lunzer became the resident bursar in 1956, but found the isolation too much and moved to London after a while. In 1956 the guest of honour at Speech Day was Israel Sieff. In that year too new dormitory blocks donated by Sir Isaac Wolfson and the Matilda Marks Kennedy Trust were opened.

In May June 1957 an article appeared in the socially upper class Sphere magazine about Carmel's success, proclaiming it "The Jewish Eton". Despite continuing good publicity and a full supplement in the Jewish Chronicle a year later in November 1958, Carmel did not receive the financial support or the number of full-fee-paying applications it hoped for. It relied on increasing numbers of students from abroad. Anglo-Jewry was not that enamoured with the idea of boarding schools. The Orthodox world found Carmel placed too much emphasis on secular culture, while the non-Orthodox considered that Carmel was too Orthodox. Very few children of Orthodox parents applied and the standard of Jewish teaching was not as attractive to them as it might have been. The aim of producing well-rounded young Jews, combining the best of both worlds, reflected the dream rather than the reality. It was primarily the availability of scholarships, and they accounted for almost 30% of the student body, that attracted really able students to the school. Kopul was forced to spend more and more time away from his beloved school doing the one thing he hated, fundraising.

Nevertheless, new blood joined the governing body and increased Carmel's profile in the Jewish community. Michael Sieff, Louis Mintz, Bernard Lyons, Harold Poster, Rosser Chinn, Gerald Ronson, Cyril Domb, and Samuel Birn all joined in the mid-fifties. A development fund, under the chairmanship of Harold Poster was established and held a series of successful fundraising dinners at the Dorchester. David Stamler returned from his year at Brandeis in 1956 and was appointed Vice Principal. A year later he married Micheline Lindenbaum from New York. He worked closely with Kopul to strengthen the school's administration and the Jewish studies programme. He also began to get involved in the fund raising. Speech Day in 1957 took place in the presence of Justice Karminski.

Nineteen fifty-eight had started off ominously with a fire that destroyed the cricket pavilion during vacation time, a surprise in itself given the amount of smoking that went on around it during term time. But in February the school chess team defeated Eton in the Sunday Times Regional Championship. Colin Linton was captain and other players were R. Ettisch, M. Cohen, D. Saville, J. Benaim, and R. Eisdorfer. A victory over what was regarded as the best school in England was a significant sign of Carmel's success. The academic results of the school continued to impress. That year also saw the Old Carmelis, under Chairman David Perl, have a cocktail party at the home of Michael Marcus, at which 70 former pupils attended. . The 1959 to 60 season brought 5 open competition trophies for the Rowing Club at regattas around the country.

## **1959**

Both in Newbury and at Mongewell Park, the Rosen family had lived in a small apartment in the main building. Whatever advantages this might have had for a commanding presence at the centre of the school, it was hardly the most conducive to any personal life. In 1958 the governors authorized the building of a house for the Rosen family and a bungalow for the Stamlers across the lake at Carmel. For the first time since leaving London, Kopul and Bella Rosen had their own house.

In January 1959, Bella Rosen gave birth to Angela Faye (named after Kopul's late mother). Kopul was ecstatic after having had three boys and proclaimed a school

holiday called Faye Day which was celebrated by arranging outings to sports and cultural events. In many respects that year was the summit of Kopul's life. The school was growing, support was increasing and with a home of his own and a full family he and Bella felt as if all the rewards for their struggles were now being reaped.

In the summer, friends of Kopul brought their cruiser down the Thames to visit the Rosens and moored alongside the concrete landing stage of the Boat House. Kopul went out for a boat trip up the Thames. On the way back he jumped from the boat, missed his footing and fell heavily onto the concrete landing stage. He was hospitalized with broken collar bone, thigh, ribs, and arm. He never completely recovered. One illness followed another. He was bed ridden for almost a year and then walked a cane. But during his convalescence he completed his Ph.D. thesis for London University on "The Concept of the Mitzvah". He went on a vacation to Gibraltar, but his health deteriorated. As it did, his assistant David Stamler, began to play a more prominent role in running the school.

During this difficult period I got into trouble. I was a prefect in school at the time. It was over Purim that my parents were away and I invited some friends back to my parents' house to celebrate. We raided the drinks cabinet and feeling merry decided to play a prank. It started by pushing David Stamler's car from in front of his house into my parent's garage a few yards away. The Stamlers were sitting in their kitchen but as their car was open and it was a dark night, it was an easy matter to get in and push it away silently and hide it. After some more wet reinforcements we decided to go further. We moved five cars on the estate. Jacob Epstein's Austin ended up at the end of the playing fields. Helmut Schmidt's Messerschmidt bubble car was lifted and precariously balanced over the waterfall between the lake and the river. The sports car of Matrons boyfriend who has staying overnight went down to the nearest pub in Crowmarsh and another car ended up in North Stoke. The whole procedure took several hours. No damage was done and we parted company before dawn, mightily pleased with ourselves. The following day I was summoned to David Stamler's office. He knew, he said it was me because no one else would have dared move his car into my parent's garage. One of our party had handed in the other names. We were de-prefected and demoted to the junior ranks. It sounds laughable now. It mattered then. The Captain of the School Raymond Dwek was supportive of us and felt we had been punished too severely. When my father returned he smiled and said he thought it as innocent enough and David Stamler had over-reacted but he had to support him. A few weeks later order was restored.

Early in 1961 Albert and Henry Harris, Dickie Perl, John Freeman, Leo Graham, Lord Sieff of Brimpton (who later became chairman), and Seymour Miller added further support to the Governing body. Money began to arrive. Slowly, new buildings replaced the temporary ones. The Wix family donated a sanatorium, and plans were drawn up for a spectacular new synagogue designed by architect Tom Hancock. With unbelievable foresight, Kopul persuaded the governors to buy hundreds of acres of farmland to its north, with the idea of building a Jewish village as well as allowing for its future expansion.

## **Kopul Rosen**

Carmel was Kopul Rosen. He was not just the founder and Principal but he was an all pervading presence and influence. His presence was felt everywhere. His moods for better or for worse radiated through the school and affected everyone.

During the weekdays Kopul was often away in London or elsewhere, at meetings to raising funds for the school. When he was on campus it was rather like the Queens presence at Buckingham Palace when the Royal Standard flies overhead. His tall figure, in a billowing long black gown seemed to be everywhere. He was present at morning services, in the dining room at lunch, on the playing fields or joining in debates in after school activities. He taught Jewish and general studies and even filled in for a while to replace a sick Mathematics teacher. And by the same token, his absence left a vacuum.

When he taught during the week he was often clearly constricted by the subject matter and the curriculum. Still he was never boring. But when he held discussion groups or more free flowing classes on Shabbat and Festivals his powers of expression, breadth of sources and ability to win any argument were overwhelming. Even the most intelligent and confident teenagers felt awed and often cowed. But he was always entertaining and instructive.

Primarily it was Kopul's commanding presence on Shabbat and Festivals that had the greatest impact because every pupil in the school was under his spell and command at the same time. Pupils filed in to take their seats at tables of eight and he together with other members of staff sat behind the High Table on a raised dais. During the week a small table bell called the students to attention. On Shabbat it was a loud resounding clap. He started the meals off with the Kiddush and if any pupil deserved recognition, academic or sporting, he would call him up for some wine. This was followed by the Motzi, blessing over bread during the week. On Shabbat he would start the singing at various stages during the meal, by giving the note and saying, "Achad, Shtayim, Shalosh", "One, Two, Three", he conducted the school and made sure they followed his rhythm. Otherwise, if he was dissatisfied either with the participation or the rhythm he would clap his hands loudly and start again. Indeed, his loud clapping was always how he got attention. Sometimes he would rub his palms together slowly and ostentatiously to give notice that he was about to call for attention. He liked to pick pupils to sing verses from the table songs. Some eagerly wanted to. Others were reluctant and tried to avoid his gaze. Similarly, he would select pupils or to say the Grace after Meals, but because this was more complicated he gave a week's warning or, later, compiled a rota. He wanted everyone to know how to perform the basic rituals of Judaism. And he used mealtimes for giving spiritual pep talks.

At the end of every summer term the Friday evening meal had its own specific traditions. Those pupils who were leaving having gone through the school, each made a short farewell speech. Usually they were often humorous, complimentary, thanking teachers who had helped them. Occasionally they were critical or acerbic. There was always a frisson as rebellious seniors rose to speak and the junior pupils wondered how far they dared go in revealing their real feelings. Kopul introduced an end-of-the-year popular song from Israel: "Hayamim Cholfin, Shana Overet, VeRak HaMangina Tamid Nisheret" (The days change and the year passes and only the tune remains). The pupils always made a point of singing "monkey nuts" instead of "Mangina" and thus the "monkey nuts" song became an ingrained tradition.

In the synagogue he was 'The Rabbi.' His commanding presence was felt in the synagogue, where he sometimes led services but more often than not encouraged pupils to try. He had a lyrical voice and took services beautifully to show how to do it. On the rare occasions the school was in session for the High Holy Days his rendering of the traditional services, which he trimmed of many extraneous piyutim ( medieval poems) was unforgettable. Ironically it made going to ordinary synagogue services back home, a rather painful experience for many Carmelis. On rare occasions he gave sermons, but usually argued that in a school where one had the whole curriculum and academic year to teach Judaism , it was unnecessary to prolong religious services by adding sermons. When he was not in the synagogue or in the dining room, and some other teacher substituted, it was never the same.

It was a feature of the long summer Shabbat afternoons that he would gather the whole of the school on the grass behind the main building for what was called "Shaa Limmud", an "hour of study", but the pupils called it "Charlie's Mud". Everyone had to learn one short Hebrew saying from "Pirkei Avot", "The Ethics of the Fathers" by heart. The bright ones were away and free after a few minutes. The weaker ones stayed there for hours.

Another example of Kopul's unique style was the way the school would gather on Saturday nights for the final service of Shabbat. Between the late afternoon and the evening prayers Kopul often spoke about some current theme and afterwards there would be a period of silent contemplation. He encouraged everyone to be reflective, self-analytical and self-critical. Then Kopul would start singing softly and slowly some contemplative Musar melodies he had learnt in Mir Yeshiva in Lithuania. These, combined with moving tunes for Psalm 23, created a remarkable spiritual atmosphere all the more so as it slowly got darker as night fell. It would be followed by evening prayers and the final havdalah ceremony ending Shabbat. There too Kopul personalized the ceremony by calling pupils up to the dais to hold the Havdalah candle or the Spice box. The lights went out and the image of this tall handsome man singing, his face lit by soft candle light surrounded by students, unusually quiet and attentive was spellbinding. Then the school would sing the traditional songs to welcome in the new week and afterwards everything returned to its mundane routine as the students dashed off to hear the latest football results ( if they hadn't already clandestinely been listening on sequestered radio sets earlier ).

Shabbat and Festivals were an interesting insight into Kopul's religious position. On the one hand the school required strict adherence to orthodox law. On the other for him religion was something to be enjoyed more than suffered. Of course there were disciplines but the experience mattered and that was why singing, contemplation as well as fun and pleasure characterized his approach. Still relatively few youngsters take naturally to anything that prevents them doing what they feel like when they want to unless they have already experienced a good deal of what religion can offer that is constructive and pleasurable. Kopul tried to minimize the full force of religious obligation on the pupils. He stretched the limits of religious law to its most tolerant and permissive boundaries. Still with no family tradition of religion being anything than an out-dated collection of meaningless rituals, most pupils struggled with the religious life of the school and many only came to appreciate the value of being subjected to a religious routine years after they had left the school.

Typical of his relaxed approach was the way he allowed games on Shabbat something religious authority frowned on. He realized that the long English Summer Shabbat afternoons created a problem for those pupils who came from non-religious backgrounds or for those for whom study was not really an attractive pastime. One solution was to encourage religious teachers to have open homes. But there were not enough to cater for the hundreds of pupils at a time. Kopul allowed sports to be played, non-competitively and not in sports clothes, so as to differentiate Shabbat from the rest of the week. This certainly helped keep most of the youngsters busy. Nevertheless some of the older and more hormonally excited pupils often used Shabbat afternoons as opportunities to sneak into town and make contact with local girls.

The problems of a male boarding school were ever present. But if there were friendships and more, there was no discernable tradition of homosexuality often associated with English Public schools. That does not mean there was none at all. But these and similar issues were not ignored. Kopul made a point of discussing them openly with the older students and made it known that he was well aware of what was going on.

Although I slept in a dormitory and was treated like other pupils most of the time, when I entered the sixth form, I was privileged to be present at home on Friday nights. After most students had gone to bed Kopul and Bella held court and would invite the Jewish teachers who resided on campus to come round to his house. The conversation was always stimulating. Everyone was invited to contribute. It was an exciting intellectual experience especially for a young man like me. They would discuss currently popular books, ideas and theories but carefully avoid school matters. This was one of the ways he ensured a common spirit and sense of commitment amongst the staff.

In many ways Purim was the highlight of the year, when dignitaries and favoured parents were invited down to the school to witness or judge a fancy dress competition, followed by a revue which always included teachers making fun of pupils and vice versa. Not even Kopul was immune. His sense of fun was infectious, as was his support for the football and rowing teams, which he enthusiastically encouraged and provided good coaching for. He made a point of coming out to support the teams whenever he could. He did actually play soccer in the staff/pupil matches held each year. He was an artful forward, but lacked stamina and aggression. He was more at home on the cricket field, where he excelled as slow bowler and competent batsman. His favourite sport was swimming, but that was something he did only when no pupils were around; he would take to the River Thames and swim strongly up river to Wallingford Bridge before hitching a lift on a cruiser back downstream to the school campus.

Kopul's presence was not just felt in Jewish matters. He was constantly looking for ways to increase the cultural awareness of the pupils. He arranged for school outings to museums, stately homes, and places of historical interest. He encouraged school parties to go to the opera and theatre in London. He was eager to get pupils to appreciate classical music. He started by playing records of great classical performances during the lunchtime meal. When that did not succeed, he created an after-lunch club in the school library to listen to classical music. He was keen on

debating and created a "Union Society" and a "Junior Union Society", modelled on the Oxbridge institutions, to encourage debate and public speaking. On Saturday evenings in wintertime, there would be school films. Although many were simply popular entertainment of the sort that the Ealing Studios produced, he always intervened to ensure that quality films with a moral message, such as "Twelve Angry Men", were shown to stimulate discussion and debate. He established the "36 Society", named after the Talmudic idea that in each generation 36 unknown saintly people sustained the world. He liked "secret" or "elite" societies. He wanted pupils to aspire to join and initially election was based on intellectual interest. The club continued for many years, bringing politicians and academics down to the school to engage with the pupils. All of this animated and excited Kopul. Teaching was his delight.

The financial pressures were constant. Kopul would spend more and more time in London trying to raise funds and often returned to Carmel dispirited and depressed. I was often asked what mood he was in that day, because unfortunately his travails had an impact on all of us. One of the people who refused Kopul help was Jack Cotton, a successful property developer from Birmingham. But he did, shortly after turning Kopul down, give a lot of money to build a monkey house at London Zoo. Awhile later, Kopul spoke at a Jewish Israel Appeal fundraising dinner and referring to Cotton's donation quipped that people naturally gave money to causes closest to their heart. Cotton was present and Kopul had to apologize.

A minor incident illustrates the variety of Kopul's interest in all aspects of school life. In 1960 the pupils of Carmel were playing the staff at football and were winning 5-0 at half time. I was playing for the pupils. My father was standing on the touchline, leaning on the stick that he now used to get around. At half time he called our team over and asked if we minded his inviting a friend to join in the second half. We didn't of course. A modest looking middle aged man trotted onto the field. The sports teacher kicked off and tapped the ball to this newcomer who stood in the centre circle. He looked up aimed at our goal and shot the ball straight into the back of the net. We were stunned. Still we kicked off. The newcomer rushed at our man, took the ball off him and dribbled through our team before sidestepping the goalkeeper and netting for number 2. Ten minutes later the score was 5 -5. My father was roaring with laughter so I asked him who this great player was. He replied "Havent you ever heard of Jackie Milburn?" Jackie Milburn of course was a legend, one of the greatest English football players of his day, still a hero after his retirement. He had come to Reading, the nearest big town to us, to do some coaching at Reading FC and Kopul had engaged him to come down to Carmel once a week to coach us. He stayed for a season and then both he disappeared from the Oxfordshire countryside.

In July 1961 Kopul wrote "An Appraisal of Carmel College". I include it here in its entirety as statement of Kopul's ideas at that time:

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The Chairman of the Board of Governors asked me to write an appraisal of Carmel College; not a historical account of its growth but an expression of its philosophy, purpose, achievement and hopes.

When I began to write I tried to be impersonal but I soon realized that what I was producing was stilted and inhibited, in striving to be detached I was becoming unreal. So I decided to write about Carmel not with a clinical objectivity of which I am incapable but with complete freedom of feeling and expression. I think it was Churchill who said that all true love should be “blind, passionate and prejudiced.” My love for Carmel is undoubtedly passionate, I do not think it is prejudiced (I try to judge fairly) and it is certainly not blind (I am its severest critic). From what follows you will I hope gain a clearer picture of Carmel’s present and future than if I had attempted to present a cool analysis. Living institutions like living persons have personalities and this is a mystery that eludes analysis. Possibly through this appraisal you will sense some of Carmel’s personality and if you do, you will have no doubt about its present character or its future development.

I have not attempted to deal with subjects like the curriculum, staff or problems of administration. I have attempted to give a very general survey of the underlying purpose and those specific features of Carmel College which help delineate its pattern.

### **THE RAISON D’ETRE**

Sometimes I hear people speak in praise of Carmel College by saying that such a school is necessary because of the small quota of Jewish boys who are admitted to the well known Public Schools of this country. I want to stress that this negative reason for having a Jewish Public School was not one of the primary motives for establishing it. **Carmel College was not born out of a sense of frustration. It came into being because of a definite and positive view of the place of Anglo Jewry in the twentieth Century.** I can best express my concept by saying that the product of Carmel College should be “**learned, enlightened and observant**”. This means that he must combine a substantial knowledge of Judaism with a high level of general education, a sense of life’s purpose within the framework of traditional Jewish observances.

It is necessary to add one further comment before I proceed to an analysis of what Carmel College has achieved. Throughout the past 300 years in which Jews have been free to live in this country Anglo Jewry has mainly been an immigrant community. It is certainly true that if we go back only one generation the overwhelming mass of Jews living in this Island were either immigrant or one generation removed from immigrants. The present generation is perhaps the first in which the majority will be English born children of English born parents; there is no possibility as far as we can see of a large scale Jewish immigration into this country.

If we wish to see Jewry survive in this country (the assimilationist, of course, is not at all affected by this discussion) it follows without further argument that we must provide the highest level of Jewish and general education. **Without Jewish knowledge, Judaism becomes not a civilization but an emotional complex,** without Jewish education our so called Jewishness becomes nothing more than an awareness of anti-Semitism and social difficulties.

When I first thought of Carmel College many years ago I pictured a school that would produce young men who would be learned in Judaism, enlightened in all that was best



in modern culture, and observant of a traditional way of life; **I am convinced even more now after thirteen or fourteen years of experience in building Carmel College that it is only through this method that there is any possibility of ensuring a future for a Jewish community that will be positive in its Judaism and not consist of people who can at best be described as non-Christians of Jewish parentage.**

### **THE FUTURE LEADERS**

A community, whether it be Jewish or non-Jewish, is influenced by its elite ( this tradition is particularly strong in this country ) and since it is obviously not possible for all Jewish boys to go to Jewish schools of the highest level ( incidentally let us accept the fact that not all Jewish children are intellectually gifted to the extent of warranting Grammar School and University education ) we must concentrate to some extent on producing an elite that will accept the responsibility of service and will set the tone and pattern of Jewish life in this community. I hope that Carmel will achieve this and later in my statement when I deal with what has been accomplished I shall give my assessment of the extent to which the school has already been successful. I have stressed to every cycle of boys that an indispensable responsibility falls upon the boys who pass through Carmel College is service to the community and to the wider life of the nation. I have a picture in my mind of a Jewish community 25 or 50 years hence in which positions of major responsibility will be held by former pupils of Carmel College and who will try to influence Anglo-Jewry along the lines of a Judaism which is learned, enlightened and observant. If leadership is not intellectually equipped and qualified it degenerates into plutocracy or what is even worse, leadership by small ambitious intriguers. This is more imminent than people imagine. Carmel, I hope and believe, will be a brake against such a trend.

### **THE CRUCIAL PERIOD**

It is widely assumed that the crucial period in education is in the years of early childhood. This in my opinion is a misleading half-truth and certainly does not apply to the young Jew living in the Diaspora. Without entering into an involved discussion I will make my essential point which is that **the strains and challenges that beset a young Jew in the Diaspora present themselves most acutely in adolescence when the intellectual perplexities make themselves felt. The real problem of the Jew in the Diaspora is not one which can be grappled with in childhood.** Whilst I am full of praise for those who work in Jewish Primary Schools, I maintain that the essential problems facing Diaspora Jewry can only be satisfactorily tackled at an age when scholarship and intellectual force can be persuasive factors. Yet in Anglo Jewry today there is a lack of balance in our educational emphasis. Too little is being done for the Grammar School Jewish child ( though I would not say too much is being done for the Primary School child) and even those Grammar Schools that exist do not attain, as Carmel College does, the highest standards of general education and do not send a strong and steady stream to university.

Carmel College, and this is no biased view, is **the only school in Anglo Jewry that makes University education and a comprehensive Jewish training essential complementary features in the upbringing of the 20th century Jew.**

We are criticized by those religious extremists who consider that we are too much concerned with general education and who do not in their hearts think that general education is of primary importance and on the other hand by those of the other extreme to whom Jewish education is not of vital concern and think Carmel is over-concerned with Jewish studies.

I feel that Carmel will produce the prototype of young balanced Jew who will seek neither to assimilate nor to separate himself from all men who are not of his particular outlook. The best phrase I know to describe my mental picture of the desirable Carmelionian is "the authentic Jew." This expression was used by Jean Paul Sartre; it is an inspired phrase. The authentic Jew will be rooted in Judaism but his branches will extend into all spheres of human interest and endeavor.

**The assimilationist has no roots, the ghetto minded Jew has no branches, the authentic Jew has both. This is the pattern for Carmel.**

### **A PATTERN FOR OTHERS**

Carmel aiming as it does at the highest attainable levels sets standards for all Jewish schools. This is not the place to make the case in detail, but it can be proven that throughout the whole of Jewish history the educational structure has been built from the roof downwards. This means that the highest standard was set first by a select group and then the majority aspired to imitate the elite. This process is happening in Anglo Jewry today through the influence of Carmel College.

Unlike the Day Schools which cater for their immediate localities, **Carmel serves the whole of Anglo Jewry.** It performs a special service which is done by no other school in providing a Jewish and general education in a Jewish environment for boys who come from areas where there is no Jewish communal life.

### **THE INTAKE**

It has been said that boys who have been unable to obtain places in other schools are accepted at Carmel College. This cannot be denied, but it must be pointed out and stressed that this is true of every new school that has yet to make its reputation. It is common knowledge that in the lean years for Public Schools before the War quite a number of Public Schools lowered their standards to take in pupils to fill their vacancies. Carmel College is now happily in the position of having more applications than vacancies. We are thus becoming more and more discriminating in our choice of pupils. The quality of our intake is improving every year. There are two observations on this subject which must be made. Bearing in mind that the calibre of our pupils in the past has not been of the highest order, the standard of examination results to which I have already referred is all the more remarkable. Furthermore Carmel because of its social purpose, which I shall elaborate upon in the next paragraph finds itself in a position of responsibility which does not apply to non-Jewish schools.

### **A MORAL DUTY**

We do not find it easy to refuse a place to a boy whose need for Carmel is strong. At educational conferences a great deal is usually spoken about the "unattached child"

that is the child who does not live in an active Jewish community. The whole question of the small provincial community that cannot afford or obtain a Minister or a teacher is frequently discussed by the Rabbinate, the Board of Deputies and in the Jewish Press but so far not practical steps have been taken nearer to a solution of the problem. Clearly if a boy lives in Golders Green or Manchester and he does not measure up to the standard of Carmel we have no hesitation in refusing to accept him, but when boys from Winchester, Pontefract, Norwich, the Isle of Man, Jersey, Peterborough, Aberdeen, Kettering, Boston (Lincs) Stoke, for example apply for admission and their parents plead that we must find a place for their sons who are growing up estranged from all Jewish life, we feel under a moral obligation to take the boy into the school even if we have to become less exacting in our academic standards.

### **ISRAEL AND THE DIASPORA**

The bridge between Israel and the Diaspora is not for one way traffic only. Just as the Jew in the Diaspora must know Israel so the Sabra must not be in ignorance of his fellow Jew in the Diaspora. There have been about thirty Israeli boys at Carmel, some of them from well known and influential Israeli families. These boys have returned to Israel, have entered the Army, and some have gone to University in preparation for careers in public life. Their experience of fellow Jews from all parts of the world at Carmel will be invaluable in strengthening the bond of understanding and common ideals between Israel and the Diaspora.

It might conceivably be possible for scholarship awards to be given to outstanding boys in Israel to spend two years of their school life in England at Carmel as an essential part of their educational training, especially if they consider taking up careers which call for close contact with the Diaspora.

At the same time one can easily formulate a workable scheme in the future whereby most, if not all, boys at Carmel will spend one whole year of their school life in Israel. The results of such interchange of pupils will be incalculable.

### **THE INTERNATIONAL CHARACTER OF CARMEL**

Carmel is and must remain in keeping with the character of the English Public Schools. Having said that, I must add that it is well nigh impossible to define that character because the range of types within the system is so varied. If we compare Gordonstoun with Bryanston or Oundle with Bedales we shall see how vast are the differences among schools that are all part of the Public School system. One of the glories, in my judgment, of the British educational system is its ability to allow great diversity and yet retain a unity. But though the character of the Public School cannot easily be defined, it can be recognized.

Carmel cannot be an imitation of another school. Imitation in any creative sphere is a form of spiritual suicide but, quite apart from that, our problems are different because the tradition and background of our pupils is different. The tone and pattern however must be recognizably that of an English Public School.

This raises the problem of how many foreign boys can we accept into Carmel. Without exaggeration I can state that we could fill another small school with the applications we receive from overseas (mainly from Israel and Germany). We have had boys from twenty five different countries. In most cases school life is made more difficult for staff, there are linguistic and other problems to be faced with most foreign boys. Nevertheless there is a strong obligation to accept them. Parents plead with us to “rescue their children” and sometimes I am even abused by parents whose children I have not been able to accept, as unworthy of the title of Rabbi for “refusing to save the soul of a Jewish child.”

The interests of the school have compelled us to impose what is virtually a quota on pupils from abroad. This must be done if we wish to preserve the pattern of an English public School.

### **SCHOLARSHIPS AND BURSARIES**

Carmel has been extremely generous in its allocation of scholarships and bursaries. At one time the school was carrying a huge financial burden it could ill afford.

I would like to see the Scholarship Fund so enlarged that it would be possible to provide a far greater number of free places and bursaries. On this subject I must make two comments. There is an old Rabbinic statement, “Take good care of the children of the poor for from them comes forth Torah.” Almost all our scholarship awards at university have come from boys who had free places or bursaries at Carmel. The second comment; it must be realized that the scholarship boy gives as well as receives from the school. He acts as a leaven, he raises the whole tone and standard of the form. This is true of all schools and indeed universities. Granting scholarships, therefore, is not pure altruism, it is also enlightened self-interest. We must aim at a state of affairs in Carmel when it is possible to say that no highly talented Jewish boy in our community is denied the unique opportunity of Carmel’s training because of his parent’s inability to pay full fees.

### **WHAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED**

To what extent has Carmel achieved what it set out to do? Obviously thirteen years in the life of any educational institution is very little indeed but one can quite clearly see the line of direction which the school is taking. At the end of the report issued by H.M. Inspectors in 1955 the following is the concluding statement:

“Since its foundation six years ago Carmel College has grown in stature and it has already achieved some of its aims in spite of the disturbances caused by its enforced move from Newbury.... There is no reason why Carmel College should not achieve standards in all departments of school life which are in keeping with the tradition of the greatest English schools.”

This, I am sure everyone will agree, is a most gratifying assessment, but I should go further and say that even a greater tempo of accomplishment has taken place since 1955 than in the previous years. We have sent no less than between sixty and seventy boys to British Universities. Some boys have gone on to centres of higher Jewish education in Yeshivoth, others are in Jews College and it might well be that the Anglo

Jewish Rabbinate which at the moment is starved of personnel, will find a substantial number of recruits eventually coming from Carmel College. (I want to make it quite clear, however, that the training of Rabbis is not the function of Carmel, but there does not seem to be any great harm in producing some Rabbis (provided they are well diluted among scientists, doctors, lawyers, architects, writers and successful business men.) We have gained six Major Open Scholarships to Oxford and Cambridge and seven State Scholarships, and we know definitely from our experience with Universities that Carmel's reputation stands high.

One of the most satisfying achievements is the fact that a large number of Carmel boys who are students at University do some part time teaching at Synagogue and Hebrew Classes and a few are thinking of taking up teaching as a career.

### **THOSE WHO OBJECT**

Criticism of Carmel does not impress or even concern me unless I know that it is informed criticism and that the source of it deserves respect. At times when I have traced some criticism to its source I have come to regard the disapproval as a compliment.

There is a marked similarity in my experiences as a Zionist and as an educationist. When I started an intensely active life as a Zionist more than thirty years ago I heard from influential quarters that Zionism was a movement for cranks, that it would affect the status of Jews adversely all over the world and that in any case the ideal was quite impractical. People became reconciled to Zionism not because of any theoretical discussions but by the force of events and achievements. When I see who the people are who attack or disapprove of the idea of a Jewish Public School or Jewish schools in general I am struck by the fact that they are the identical type as those who attacked and disapproved of Zionism. The simple truth is that these are people, undoubtedly sincere, who wish to avoid all form of Jewish positive creative endeavor. They are resigned to the burden of being Jews but have no desire to perpetuate it. We who are devoted to Jewish life (not merely survival) must feel that according to our convictions, consciences and principles we are doing the right thing; whether we are praised or censured is unimportant and irrelevant.

We are not building for this generation alone, we must remember the Rabbinic saying "It is not your task to complete the work..." We must be certain of one thing-that the course along which we are going is the right one. This, I am sure, is so.

### **TO SUM UP**

1) Carmel seeks to train a learned, enlightened and observant Jew who regards himself as a 20th Century human being, a creative part of a tradition that is four thousand years old. He will regard himself as an heir of the past and an ancestor of the future; that means that a sense of communal service and the urge to transmit to others what he knows and believes is an essential part of his education. The number of former pupils who reengage in part-time Hebrew teaching proves that we have not been unsuccessful in our training.

2) Carmel has already given evidence that it can become a school of 500 or more reaching standards in all spheres in keeping with the best traditions of the great English Public Schools, serving Anglo Jewry primarily but not exclusively.

3) Carmel sets an educational standard hitherto unattained in Anglo Jewry.

4) It trains its pupils for communal leadership and service.

5) It provides the common educational denominator for Israeli and Diaspora youth from all over the world.

6) It caters for the Jewish boy who lives in a district where he is unattached to an organized community.

All this can be supported by the evidence of our past experience-we are only at the beginning of this great enterprise.

**Kopul**

**Rosen**

**1961.**

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It is a dated document, written at a time of transition in Anglo and indeed World Jewry. But it fairly describes Kopul's vision and priorities for the school and his personality and passion comes through forcibly.

In September 1961 Kopul was diagnosed with terminal leukaemia. News soon spread of the seriousness of his condition. The school was in a state of shock. Hel wrote to those closest to him describing his situation but expressing both confidence in future and acceptance of his fate. Almost daily friends, colleagues and supporters drove down to the school to spend time with Kopul before it was too late. He deteriorated progressively over the following six months, spending more and more time at the Radcliffe Infirmary in Oxford. On March 15, 1962, he died, aged 49.

The funeral was held at the school and Kopul was buried in a specially consecrated plot of land overlooking the river. It had taken a lot of negotiations by Kopul's father in law M.J.Cohen to secure this arrangement both with civil authorities as well as religious ones. Hundreds of former pupils, colleagues, friends and admirers drove down to the school for the funeral and during the week of the mourning, the Shiva. Rabbis and Lay Leaders from across the spectrum of Anglo Jewry were amongst the mourners. Suddenly it seemed Anglo Jewry had woken up to the loss of such a significant but increasingly marginalized son. For the pupils of the school the funeral and the mourning in which they played a part had a profound impact. In some cases Kopul had been a father substitute and it was as though they had actually been orphaned. Almost everyone seemed to feel a profound sense of loss to a greater or lesser extent.

Most pupils of Carmel during its first phase, whether they were successful or not, felt they were part of an exciting experiment in education. They felt they were helping to build something. There were bad moments and good ones, good teachers and bad, cruel prefects and considerate ones, bullies and carers, friends and enemies. In general the student body shared a sense of united esprit. There were of course always rebels of

one sort or another and the school tried to move them on, by agreement rather than forced expulsion whenever the tensions or the crimes became too intrusive.

Transcending it all was the magnetic personality of Kopul. He had his favourites. But somehow everyone seemed to bask in the reflected light of his persona. When he was down, the school was down and when he was up, the school was up. Whatever some might have thought, however strong or weak the involvement, I dare to say that everyone felt that he or she was in the presence of a remarkable man and touched by his greatness. Whenever he spoke he was impressive. Whatever he said carried an important ethical message. His powers of argument were sometimes overwhelming but always persuasive. Whether in the synagogue or on the sports field, his presence was tangible. It inspired awe and love. His loss was devastating.

## **Chapter 2 - Consolidation, Attrition (1962-1971)**

After Kopul Rosen died, the governing body of Carmel appointed a selection committee that initially wanted to ask Rabbi Dr. Louis Jacobs to become principal. But at the urging of Bella Rosen, they recommended the appointment David Stamler who had been acting headmaster since Kopul's death in March 1962. His position was finally agreed upon and confirmed at a meeting chaired by Leonard Wolfson on Wednesday, May 9th. He had been involved in the school one way or another since its inception, and Kopul had chosen him as his number two and left him in charge during his absences. He maintained the equilibrium of the school through the crisis and was 'in harness.'

The governing body at this stage consisted of Israel Sieff, Chairman, Henry Harris, Vice Chairman, D.J. Freeman, L. Grahame, S.D. Miller, Gerald Ronson, S. Stamler, M. Wix, D. Wolfson, and L.G. Wolfson. The headmaster, David Stamler, and accountant, N.M. Cohen, attended all governors meetings. Having appointed the new headmaster, their primary challenge now was financial. They decided to apply for building permission on the farmland bought a year earlier. The original plan had been for an orthodox commuter village in Crowmarsh. The intention was that Jews who wanted a country home near Orthodox facilities could rent or buy. But now it was to be regarded purely as a commercial venture to help fund the school.

Financial support at last began to come. A lot was out of sympathy for the premature death of Kopul Rosen. As donations started to pour in, the school campus began to be transformed into a well-equipped, modern educational, cultural, and sporting centre. Israel Sieff presided over a large memorial dinner at the Dorchester Hotel. Sir Isaac and Lady Wolfson were the guests of honour, and the dinner raised half a million pounds. Work proceeded on new dormitories, staff houses, and the synagogue.

After her husband's death, Bella Rosen continued to live, with her family, in the house she and Kopul had lived in and she was appointed a governor. However during the course of the year she felt increasingly excluded from the school. From being at its centre, she now felt marginalized. And so she began to look for other projects she could turn her abilities towards. She was naturally aware that her husband had

actively pursued two new projects in the years before his death. One was a Carmel College in Israel. He had obtained land near Zichron Yaakov from the Jewish Agency, thanks to the intervention of Nahum Goldman. Kopul had initial meetings with architects and started to distribute a pamphlet outlining the concept. In gratitude for Goldman's support, he was planning to call it Nahum College. As Kopul ailed, so too did the project. Bella did not feel able to proceed with this scheme. It died with Kopul.

The other scheme was a school for girls. Carmel had been founded as an exclusively boys school. Kopul felt that girls too deserved a high quality Jewish school. But he also believed they required a separate educational environment, although he envisioned a lot of social interaction and shared facilities. After his death, Bella took over this dream. In 1963 she persuaded Charles Wolfson to build a girls' school on land Kopul had bought. It was a quarter of a mile north of the boys' school towards Crowmarsh.

Her intention was to become its first headmistress. To prepare herself for her role, and while the planning and building proceeded, she went back to university and graduated from Oxford University in Semitics. She followed this up with a diploma in education. She too believed that girls needed a separate environment educationally during their school years, but she intended that there would be a lot of cooperation and interschool activity.

As the school expanded, the Governors pressed for more administration. Ivor Delman was appointed as secretary to the governors and bursar in 1963. The synagogue that Kopul had planned with architect Tom Hancock finally opened in 1964. The Chief Rabbi Israel Brodie and his wife spent the weekend at the school and the synagogue was consecrated before an invited audience on the Sunday. A few months later the new science laboratories were opened thanks to a grant from the Wolfson Foundation. The sports centre, with its Olympic pool, was opened by the Earl of Harewood in July 1965.

## **Staff**

Under Headmaster David Stamler the school slowly turned from a creative, improvised yet exciting experiment into a more sedate, formal educational institution. Amongst the teaching staff, new teachers came, others left.

In 1966 the governors were presented with this list of staff: R. Coles, assistant headmaster of chemistry, J.P. Addis, senior history master, T.H. Birnberg, Spanish, M. Bloch, English and Jewish studies, J. Bucsko, English, J. Bunney, physics, I. Caller, economics and Jewish studies, C.J. Colquhoun, music, M.P. Coombe, senior biology, J. Epstein, chemistry, Mrs. K. Evans, mathematics, R.L. Evans, senior mathematics master, M. Fogel, music, J. Gabay, senior housemaster and French, C. Gilbert, classics, A.J. Healey, history, J. Hobson, senior English master, P.S. Holt, physics, E. Hoffman, Jewish studies, Rabbi S. Leperer, Jewish studies and ancient history, C. Marshall, senior physical education master, M. Limor, Modern Hebrew, R.H. Oakley, Spanish, H. Schmidt, economics and social studies, M.R. Shifrin, librarian, D.C. Slater, art, A. Barr Taylor, biology, G. Thomas, mathematics, M. Toben Jewish study, Mrs. H. Whitfield, senior French master, E. Williams, physical



education. The small preparatory school was staffed by M. Dover, master in charge and Mrs. I. Craston and Mrs J. Glover, teachers.

### **Girls School**

In 1966, the Jewish Chronicle announced that the girls' school under the Bella Rosen, would be ready for its first intake in September 1967. David Stamler, however, was unhappy. He felt that the girls' school would be a challenge to his position and authority. Relations between Stamler and Bella Rosen deteriorated and teaching staff and pupils in the school began taking sides. The governing body, too, found itself split between supporters of both contenders. Israel Sieff, who had been a strong supporter of Bella, resigned from the body in protest at the way he felt Bella was being marginalized; he was succeeded as chairman by Henry Harris.

In 1967 the governing body resolved the issue by voting to support David Stamler. The Girls School was shelved on the grounds that there were not enough applications. An announcement by the governors to that effect was made, and it also announced Bella Rosen's resignation from the board.

The Jewish Chronicle correspondence pages reflected the tensions and disagreements within the school. A letter in support of Bella was sent by a group of prefects, school captains, and past pupils. It was signed by B.M. Bloom, P. Bloom, R.A.F. Cannon, D.M Duke, J. Fachler, H. Lesser, L. Scheiner, and D.S. Rose. But it made no difference. Bella Rosen was asked to leave the campus and the girls' school project was terminated (she actually left in January 1968). In August 1967 it was announced that the building for the girls' school would instead be used for a junior boys school. Joshua Gabay, senior housemaster and teacher of French, was appointed head of the junior school.

In the fall out from the struggle over the Girl's school there were two academic casualties. Martin Dover, the much liked head of the prep school, who, with his wife Zahava and his family, had been at Carmel for seven years and had been particularly close to Bella Rosen, left to head Kerem House in London. And Rabbi Sidney and Miriam Leperer, both very popular, who had joined the school after Kopul's death, left for London where Rabbi Leperer joined the staff of Jews College.

A major change in the academic side of the main school came in 1967 with the retirement of Romney Coles, who had been such a mainstay. He was, surprisingly, succeeded by Ron Evans. Ron Evans had been with Carmel since 1953. He had started at Newbury and, with his wife Mary, had moved with the school to Wallingford. He was an international hockey referee, a proficient Maths teacher and very dedicated to the school. He was typical of those Welsh schoolmasters who together with the Scots, were the backbone of the English education system at that time. His wife, Mary Evans taught Junior and Middle School Maths. She too was a hockey player of note and later became an England selector. Their involvement in the school was completely supportive, appreciating the need to preserve its Jewish heritage and eager to participate in its ethos while at the same time being very committed Christians. If they withdrew from the school over the weekends, they were ready at the drop of a hat to offer their services whenever required. Perhaps Ron's

appointment was a tribute to his loyalty. No one else came near him in this respect. The only drawback was that he lacked the gravitas and authority of Coles.

### **Wittinghame College**

After the Second World War there had been a series of small Jewish Boarding Schools dotted around the country as well as several Jewish Houses in English Public schools that offered a social haven for Jewish pupils but usually without a structured Jewish educational programme. Slowly the demand began to dwindle and Boarding Education became less popular. Most of them had by the sixties disappeared. Wittinghame College, the only other Jewish boarding school in the UK, closed in 1967. Those of its remaining pupils and staff who wished to, were absorbed by Carmel. Altogether around seventy of them came to Carmel, most went into the junior school to help fill the space available. Many of them were very young and from outside the United Kingdom. One of the controversial features of the school was the increasing number of pupils from abroad. English parents seemed to consider this a disadvantage and it was in terms of mastery of the English language. But in most other respects, including family values, the pupils from abroad added far more to the school than any possible detraction.

### **The Music School**

In 1967, the music school donated by Roland Franklin was opened in the presence of Lord Bearsted and with a performance by Yehudi Menuhin. There was at the time, much talk of his opening his own music school in the buildings now used by the junior school and largely underused. He and his supporters toured the campus but nothing came of it.

At Speech Day in 1968, in the presence of Lord Justice Salmon it was announced that girls were to be admitted to the Sixth Form of the school and the policy decision was taken to follow the current fashion and make Carmel co-educational. Six girls joined the school in September 1968.

In October 1968 the Chief Rabbi Jakobovits gave the first annual Kopul Rosen Memorial Lecture. His subject, "Sephardi and Ashkenazi Pronunciation of the Liturgy", was regarded as inappropriate given his opposition to the Modern Hebrew pronunciation in synagogue that had been the norm at Carmel since its foundation.

David Stamler was elected to the Headmasters Conference in 1969. This was the ultimate accolade for Carmel to be recognized as a 'proper' public school. In June 1970, Lord Snowdon came to the school to open the new exhibition centre and boathouse. It had been designed by Sir Basil Spence and is now a protected heritage building. It was named after Julius Gottlieb, the father of Wing Commander Gottlieb, a parent and governor of the school.

For all the positive aspects of David Stamler's headmastership it was the Jewish side of the school that began to suffer during his period as Headmaster. Although he was religiously committed and knowledgeable, religious enthusiasm was not his forte. He had no singing voice and was unwilling to lead on Shabbat and other religious occasions. Although some of the substitutes he brought down to the school to help out

in this area were appreciated, religious inspiration at Carmel flagged as did its status within the school. Under Kopul, even the least religious pupils felt constrained to hide any disdain or alienation from religious obligations. Increasingly, being a religious Jew at Carmel became rare and even uncomfortable.

For all its successes, Carmel was in danger of becoming a school for Jews rather than a Jewish school. And the fact was that most parents and indeed Governors seemed perfectly happy with this state of affairs. In some ways indicative of this state was a minor scandal that erupted when a former Israeli teacher, Nir Barkai, gave an interview in Israel in which he claimed not only that Carmel engendered no sympathy for Israel, but on the contrary that many pupils supported Fatah. This was of course ridiculous but it did indicate a certain gap in the school's Jewish and Zionist commitment.

### **Stamler Resigns**

In the summer of 1970 David Stamler abruptly and surprisingly resigned pleading ill health. While the Governors set about finding a successor a hasty interregnum was established of senior staff; Ron Evans the senior master, Tim Healey the senior housemaster, and Joshua Gabay the head of the junior school. They were supposed to act in concert but soon split into rival camps. All three applied for the headmastership.

Tim Healey was a much loved, hale and hearty schoolmaster who had been at Carmel since the move to Mongewell. He was an Oxford graduate and had been a county cricketer. He taught history and geography from a well-used set of notes, so that year by year you knew exactly what he would teach and when. Compared to some teachers, this was a major recommendation. He was an excellent cricket coach and, together with his wife much loved wife, Margaret who was both matron and housemother to the younger pupils, they represented the best in dedicated, warm school mastering. But he was at the end of his career, close to retirement and not really interested in taking on more responsibility.

Josh Gabay was a proud, young, sybaritic Gibraltarian. Bull fighting was his passion and he approached school teaching with an attitude that Generalissimo Franco would have approved of. He was devoted to corporal punishment. He had joined Carmel from Oxford as a teacher of Spanish and French and was very popular as the master in charge of football.

When the junior school took over the buildings designated for the girls' school, Joshua Gabay was put in charge. To make it work, he had taken in an assortment of waifs and strays to fill the building and he had also begun to encourage day pupils to join in large numbers. The result was a strange mixture held together by a strict disciplinarian regime in a tightly controlled little world that saw itself as distinct and insulated from the "corrupting" influence of the main school.

People at all levels either loved or disliked Gabay (in truth you could say that of all senior staff at Carmel). He might have been a good head of a school, had old fashioned prep school values been the criteria; but for a Jewish school he lacked religious commitment. Nevertheless he was confident that he was strongest internal candidate. And those amongst the staff and the students who liked him campaigned on

his behalf. The governors were just as divided. Some objected on religious grounds, others because of his autocracy, while some supported him for those very reasons. Gabay emerged as the favoured candidate. And then he let it be known that he had been promised the position by Henry Harris. This led to crisis within the triumvirate which fractured completely and Carmel now split into independent centres of power. Discipline and control suffered and the school seemed to be in danger of tearing itself apart.

The governors had been appointed primarily to help the school financially. Few of them had been to a public school, knew anything about education, or were indeed religiously Orthodox. They had been divided over the David Stamler Bella Rosen rift, and they now lined up along similar lines. The chairman, Henry Harris, devoted as he was, knew about property and running a school as a business. Only Roland Franklin had actually been to a boarding school (Oundle), and he was to play a crucial role as kingmaker because he arrived on the scene at Carmel after the split and was regarded as a neutral arbitrator. He was also antagonistic to Gabay. He had heard reports from his sons who were at the school which had not impressed him. He felt he was too tyrannical and not Jewish enough. Franklin came from an old established Anglo Jewish family. He was not orthodox in his own life. But he had married a delightful woman from an Orthodox background who battled bravely to keep him on some sort of "straight and narrow". He was given the task of chairing the selection committee.

Professor Cyril Domb, Gerald Ronson, Lord Segal of Wytham, and Judge Bernard Gillis had remained close friends with Bella and wanted to see a 'Rosen' return to Carmel. On the other hand Henry Harris all the while had, according to Gabay, assured him that he would have the job and the search for a Headmaster was merely a formality.

### **Succession**

In September 1970 I had turned 28 years old. and I was the rabbi of the Giffnock and Newlands Hebrew Congregation, the largest Jewish synagogue in Scotland. I was revelling in my role as the rabbi of a busy and growing congregation and creating a reputation as an up-and-coming leader of the community. Gerald Ronson, the governor of the school most vociferous in support of my mother, called me to tell me that Stamler had resigned. He wanted me to put my candidacy forward, both because he wanted "The Rosens" back at the school and because he and a significant group of other governors thought that Gabay would not be an ideal headmaster. But he advised me that if I wanted the position I would need to win over the 'new' governors and I would need to be married. Almost immediately afterwards Judge Bernard Gillis called me with the same message.

I was overwhelmed. Much as I may have fantasized about succeeding my father, I never thought it a possibility because I assumed Stamler would still be in the position until he retired which would not be for another twenty years. Besides I was not a trained educationalist. I was happy in Glasgow and would not otherwise have entertained the possibility of leaving. But now my world had suddenly changed.

During the winter, the governors went through the procedure of looking for a head and interviewed several possible candidates. They seem to have been disappointed with most of those they saw. There were, of course, distinguished senior teachers of secular schools, but their expertise in general education was not matched by any Jewish commitment or knowledge. And where it existed, it was not the sort that would give a spiritual lead. Perhaps this was not surprising because at Carmel the headmaster really needed to function in two roles that in any public school were filled by separate people, those of Headmaster and School Chaplain. Conversely, the candidates who had the right kind of Jewish commitment lacked either the secular mode or an instinctive understanding of the Carmel ethos that combined two cultures.

As the search continued unsuccessfully, and as one faction blocked the other, compromises were suggested. I was approached unofficially to find out if I would agree to being invited to become the religious head of the school with a purely secular headmaster in tandem. I rejected this out of hand. I knew that in a school like Carmel there could only be one head. Most of the crucial decisions in a school related to the selection of staff, the timetables, academic subjects, allocation of resources, manpower, and discipline. These were the issues that set the tone. The prevailing tone of a school was set from the ultimate authority. If such a person was not Jewishly committed, then the Jewish side would be perceived as less important. Since anyway the majority of the parents, teachers and students regarded the Jewish side as secondary, the balance needed to be redressed. The Governors came round to the view that the Headmaster had to be someone who could set a religious tone as well as an academic one. As the winter wore on, my name was emerging as the only serious outside contender.

Against me was my name. It was felt that the Rosens had been "ousted" and it was in Carmel's interests not to be identified with one family. It was time for it to be like other public schools. Furthermore, I was young, inexperienced and had no pedagogic qualifications. In my favour was my bicultural education, Mir and Cambridge, my commitment to both worlds, my understanding of the school, both from my experience of it and my ideological standpoint. I was invited to meet the governors of the selection committee.

Professor Cyril Domb had written a letter to the Lubavitcher Rebbe, a man my father had grown very close to in the closing months of his life, to ask his opinion about my candidacy, young and unmarried as I was. He replied very positively, urging the Governors to appoint me and that time and experience would compensate for my deficiencies. But the governing body was still divided between those who opposed my candidacy on principle and those who supported me.

I made several trips down to London to meet and hopefully impress those of the governors who had been appointed after my father's death and who did not know me - men like Roland Franklin and Wing Commander Gottlieb who was in a similar position having children at the school and not being fans of Gabay. My main opponents were those who had supported Stamler against my mother, led by David (later Lord) Wolfson.

The battle dragged on within the school and without. The school itself split into rival camps and pupils; teachers and parents got involved. A few weeks before the deciding

meeting, Gerald Ronson's daughter, Benita, was married to Old Carmeli Philip Refson, on April 4, 1971. Gerald invited me to come down from Glasgow to speak. He had in mind that this would be my opportunity to impress most of the governors who would be his guests too. At the wedding reception Sam Stamler, whom I loved and admired, put his arm around me affectionately and told me I ought not to pursue the position but wait a few years. I thanked him but I was in no mind to give up this opportunity. My speech must have impressed the others for, in a narrow vote, with the chairman casting the decider, the Governors elected me headmaster in April 1971.

Almost immediately a public uproar ensued. Some parents and pupils rallied around Josh Gabay and others against. The press was involved. Letters were written. Legal action was threatened. The governors stood firm, though David Wolfson resigned.

Gabay announced that he had been betrayed by Harris. He got the prefects to mobilize student opposition, partly out of loyalty to him and partly out of fear that, as a rabbi, I would impose religious restrictions of inquisitorial fierceness. The pupil body was split. The middle school resented the arrogance and indeed the bullying of the prefects and enjoyed the prospect of challenging existing authority. They liked the idea of a "young" headmaster and probably also thought I would be more amenable to them. The junior school was Gabay's domain. The privileges and promotions in his gift ensured loyalty. The teaching staff was divided into those who resented Gabay's arrogance and those who either hoped to rise on his tide or genuinely felt he was better qualified to run the school.

I was fully aware of the problems many staff might have with me. They will have remembered me as a pupil who they will have disciplined. I was young and completely inexperienced. I might be putting their employment and prospects at risk. Perhaps I would destroy the school instead of strengthening it. I was not surprised by the negative reaction. Leading the campaign against me was Malcolm Shifrin. He was one of the earliest pupils of the school, devoted to my father. He had returned as librarian and, although quite unconventional, was a talented man who gave a lot to the school. We had been very friendly. I owed him a great deal for introducing me to areas outside the "official" curriculum in music, art, printing, and librarianship. He had actually got me to enjoy mathematics in the last desperate attempt to help me overcome the hurdle of mathematical qualifications for Cambridge. I could understand his reluctance to see a former pupil return as so young a headmaster and his desire to see a headmaster better qualified. I could not understand why he felt Gabay was the right man. Shifrin was not himself religious, yet he had known how important a factor in the school it had been to my father. Together with a clique of parents centered around the Azaz family they circulated a letter of protest to parents, governors and the press.

Azaz was a larger-than-life Israeli sculptor. My father had met him in Israel in the 1950's and invited him to come over and involve himself in art at Carmel. He was typical of many secular Israelis. Fiercely proud, not to say arrogant, he was strongly nationalist but not in any way religiously motivated. David Stamler had encouraged him to stay after my father's death. Azaz had worked on producing windows for the new synagogue out of coloured glass. Initially the impact of the windows was powerful. They were much acclaimed until the effect of heat and cold on the pieces of glass caused the glue to lose its effect and they started slipping down into a pile at the

bottom of each frame. Azaz bought a house in the vicinity and sent his children to the school. He was very friendly with Stamler and they shared an interest in art both modern and ancient. Azaz constructed a special wall in the Stamler house to house his pre-Columbian statuettes. He and his wife turned into my most virulent antagonists.

While the parents and students campaigned, Gabay shut himself up in the junior school and left Ron Evans to pick up the pieces in the main school. The student body was in open rebellion. The academic staff were divided. Against this background the governors, to their credit, stood firm. I had tried to speak to Gabay from Glasgow to ask him to work with me, but he would neither answer the phone nor return my calls. David Stamler was interviewed by the Jewish Chronicle and expressed his reservations about my appointment, but hoped that Carmel would survive it.

In late June 1971 Speech Day was held at the school and Margaret Thatcher, then Education Minister, was the guest of honour. I had recently married Vera Zippel from Milan and we were invited by the Governors to attend the event. We came into a horribly tense situation in which Gabay had commandeered the proceedings and excluded us from the reception. At the actual prize giving, he had arranged for speeches to be made in his support, and in the face of an increasingly tense situation Margaret Thatcher spoke briefly and withdrew. Henry Harris insisted that I speak. I tried to calm the situation down, but fear I did not do as good a job as I might have. Still, I was conciliatory to Gabay and suggested we could work together. I would need all the help I could get. I returned to Glasgow intending to take up residence at Carmel in July.

Henry Harris tried to calm the situation down by offering Gabay independent control over the junior school. I resisted. The last thing I wanted was a rival institution fomenting dissent on my doorstep, all the more so since many of the teachers were his friends and supporters and were already looking for ways to undermine me. The previous headmaster had left, his secretary had resigned, and there was no one there to hand over the reins or help me learn what was needed. Only Ron Evans, the senior master, and his wife Mary acted with honour and loyalty, and took it upon themselves to shepherd me in, despite both having struggled with me as a very naughty pupil barely 15 years earlier. Similarly supportive were Dr. and Mrs. Gordon, Reverend and Mrs. Segal, and Eric Hoffman, the only resident Orthodox teaching staff at the time, because they recognized the need for committed Jewish leadership of the school and were disturbed by how marginalized it had become.

I arrived back at Carmel for the last Shabbat of term and to preside over the annual staff party. The sad and empty atmosphere over Shabbat was depressing. The demoralized Jewish staff struggled to impose any degree of enthusiasm or control. It was clear that pupils were getting up to all sorts of monkey business. Some had broken into the Staff Room and trashed it. As I walked around the rounds I noticed a sort of early warning system. Pupils started to wave articles of clothing in a kind of semaphore as I approached. It was clear that its purpose was to relay to miscreants at the ends of the playing fields that authority was approaching.

On the Sunday the coaches came to pick up the remaining pupils. By the evening the campus was empty and the staff gathered for the end of year party. Ron Evans informed me that Gabay was having his rival gathering simultaneously. I was not

ready to brook competition. With the backing of Evans, I called Harris and issued my ultimatum. Either Gabay goes or I do. To his credit, Henry Harris arranged for Gabay to leave the school. However, as a kind of Quid Pro Quo, he asked in return that neither my grandfather nor my mother take up residence at Carmel, in view of the battle that had gone on five years earlier; for it would be seen as a slap in the face to those governors who had not sided with them. Under this inauspicious star, I began my regime in the autumn of 1971. When I told Roland Franklin this later of Harris's condition, he was shocked. But at the time I decided to be diplomatic. I had other priorities. The school I inherited had, until the previous year, been a very successful one, academically and athletically. Its campus was modern and its facilities were the envy of many far older and more established institutions. But the 'interregnum' had thrown it all off balance in almost every way. The first objective had to be stabilization.

## **Chapter 3 - Of Joy and Pain (1971-1984)**

My appointment was announced in May 1971, when I was 28. By the time the new term started in September, I was 29. Gabay's resignation as head of the junior school, although agreed in July, was announced in September. I was thrown in at the deep end. The Headmaster's secretary had left and so the initial support and advice I might have expected on simple day to day procedures, correspondence and continuity was withdrawn.

Having experienced the growth of the school and lived with my parents as they created and nurtured it, I had already picked up the idealism of my parents' vision. My father had made me read about Dr Arnold of Rugby and the Public School system. I had experienced first-hand the soft under belly, the negative aspects of the school it shared with any human institution and more specifically the Jewish challenges. I knew what I wanted to avoid as much as what I wanted to achieve. And during the months when my appointment was under consideration I had time to read books on education both in general including such experiments as A.S. Neill's 'Summerhill' and more influentially Ivan Illich's 'De-Schooling Society.' I also covered much of the reading list of London University's Diploma of Education.

When I returned as Headmaster to Carmel after an absence of eight years, it had nearly twice as many pupils as I remembered and a transformed campus. Only the dilapidated dining room and kitchens were exactly the same. It was as if the old corner shop I remembered as a child, had turned into a huge supermarket that looked impressive up front, but in reality was insolvent and cracking beneath the surface. I had asked Henry Harris about the finances. Having experienced the pressure on my father, the last thing I wanted was to be drawn away from the school towards the soul destroying quest for the financial Holy Grail. He assured me Carmel was financially sound and I should not worry. It would not be my concern. He proudly informed me that he had ordered a new language laboratory to be installed. If only he had been right.



Initially I had other concerns. The infighting and chaos of the previous year had left a student body ill-disciplined and barely under control. What a challenge for anyone. But in addition, I had just married a twenty-one year old Italian girl of Mediterranean temperament who herself would need a lot of attention. We were married in Italy in June. We returned after seven days to Glasgow to fulfill my final commitments, then in the first week in July travelled south to take up residence in Carmel.

I had left a warm congregation and a secure position in Glasgow where I was popular and wanted. I arrived at Carmel, unwanted except by a few, resented by most, faced with staff resignations, pupil withdrawals, a divided body of governors, a confused new young wife, and a sense of responsibility to recover my father's work. A few of the "old retainers" were happy to see me, though surprised that such a naughty boy could be so quickly transformed into a responsible headmaster. Everyone waited to see what would happen.

For me as headmaster, it was simply a case of "sink or swim". I had a chairman of the governors who was both hopeful I would succeed for his sake as much as the school's but still nervous about my capacity. I had left a warm congregation and a secure position in Glasgow where I was popular and wanted. I arrived at Carmel, unwanted except by a few, resented by most, faced with staff resignations, pupil withdrawals, a divided body of governors, a confused new young wife, and a sense of responsibility to recover my father's work. A few of the "old retainers" were happy to see me, though surprised that such a naughty boy could be so quickly transformed into a responsible headmaster. Everyone waited to see what would happen.

I knew that first and foremost I would simply have to pull the school together and survive. I would have to listen and learn as I went along. I was being watched like a hawk both by my detractors and my supporters. I had accepted petty limitations imposed by Henry Harris, such as undertaking not to push the religious side of the school too far too quickly or to bring back any teacher or member of my own family who had been excluded from the school under the previous regime. I knew what everyone's anxieties were and I believed that with time I should allay their fears. My aim was to see myself in and then see what could be done.

Henry Harris was naturally concerned that I might need extra support. He urged me to employ a new Senior Master. He recommended one of the stronger candidates he had interviewed for the Headmastership, a senior teacher at one of the major London Public Schools. He was Jewish but not in a particularly committed way and he was both experienced and a strong character. I agreed to meet him at Carmel. He might have made a good mentor. But I was worried that he might also want my position and would try either to undermine me or to act as a rival conduit to the Governors. It was important to me that be seen to succeed or not as Headmaster on the basis of my own efforts and I was too insecure ( or too wise) to feel comfortable with what might be a Trojan Horse. To Henry Harris's credit he accepted my decision without demur.

I decided to call the pupils Mister or Miss. Partly this was because I felt the traditional way of addressing them by their surnames was really too cold and impersonal. On the other hand if I called them by their first names it would take me too much time to remember some 700 first and second names. Calling them Mr. or Miss gave them a

certain dignity and it meant that to begin with I only had to remember 350 names. I gathered the pupils approved.

On my first Shabbat back at Carmel as headmaster, a small Gibraltar boy approached me and began to pour his heart out about how hard it was to be a religious pupil at Carmel. He spoke about being teased, humiliated, provoked and of all the obstacles that staff and pupils put in his way. It was so sad and moving to hear him describe an atmosphere that negated everything my father had dreamed of. I knew I had to do something to balance the scales.

Rev Segal, previously a Minister of Religion in Liverpool and no longer a young man, was the kingpin of the Jewish Department when I arrived as Headmaster. He and his wife were struggling to cope. They were both good and devoted teachers and very hospitable to the pupils. But without support they were floundering. Together with Dr and Mrs Gordon (he was head of Chemistry, she taught English and they were House parents of the largest block on the main campus) they were the Jewish presence in the school. But they were treated with condescending disdain by many of the non-Jewish Staff.

Immediate reinforcements were needed. Quite by chance a young American rabbi, John Hellman, was in Europe having graduated from Yeshivah University. I met him at my Aunt's in London and he agreed to join the school to liven up the Jewish Studies department and in particular to engage the older pupils and excite them Jewishly. He was a great success and his return to the United States after the year was a great loss. A few years later he did return for another year after he married but then left education altogether to become a psychiatrist.

On the secular front my first act as headmaster was to appoint Martin Edmonds, head of modern languages, to run the junior school temporarily, until a successor could be found. I had been warned to expect a raft of protest resignations by staff, but in fact only Ian Caller and one other teacher of little consequence resigned. Martin Edmonds did an excellent job. But he had made it clear that he wanted to be relieved as soon as possible to concentrate on academic work and more senior pupils. Later in the year I found a replacement, ironically another Gibraltar, Isaac Abensur, who was appointed in 1972. He was not a success, particularly coming after Martin Edmonds, and after a minor rebellion, I had to step in to restore order.

The staff I 'inherited' were an eclectic bunch. The Head of English, Hobson, was a gifted teacher who spent almost every lunch at the local pub and usually rolled back in to school drunk. One day he crashed his car into a tree on the main drive and that ended his career. Dr Renee Grassby was a chain smoking American classicist with a mind and temper of her own who lived on a farm near Oxford in the company of a husband, falcons and great Danes. When the classics lost their appeal she took over the Library. The science departments included Alan Edmondson who became head of Chemistry after Dr. Gordon left. We was a blunt, firm and strong teacher. Alan Iles and Tony Barr Taylor taught biology. Iles was the more academic and rigorous. Tony Barr Taylor was an affable Middle School teacher who also lived on a farm where he helped his wife and run the stables that offered horse riding to the pupils. Later on he took over liaison with the Old Carmelis. The Senior Housemaster Tim Healey, who had been my teacher once decided he had had enough of housemastering before I

arrived and had asked to be replaced. In his stead Geoff Lebens, who later became Head of English had assumed the position. He was an experienced, avuncular teacher, calm and laid back. He ran his house efficiently and interacted well with parents, although he was often rather too libertarian. Peter Lacey was in charge of Ridgeway which housed the more senior pupils because it comprised study rooms for two pupils only. In other houses accommodation was made up mainly of larger dormitories. John Browning who came to Carmel from the Haberdashers school and taught German and French together with Martin Edmonds when he returned from the Junior School were the mainstays of the "House" system in the Senior School. Amongst the successful Jewish housemasters during my 'regime' were Yoel Silver, Berel Cohen, Raymond Bloom, Alistair Falk. Amongst the non-Jews in addition to those already mentioned, Trevor Bolton was an excellent Housemaster of junior pupils. Only several years after I left reports began to circulate about his unprofessional activities and eventually he was asked to leave. Subsequently to my dismay I met former pupils who told me they were molested by him but too scared to say anything to me. Amongst the female Housemistresses after Mrs Sabel, was much admired by her charges. But as the number of girls increased she was less able to cope. As soon as I arrived I enlisted my wife to try to bolster her authority, but it backfired and she was withdrawn. Mrs Sabel soldiered on for a few more years before she was replaced. The most successful Housemistress was Penny Shield. And much later on Carol Anne Bernheim although not a teacher was an effective assistant. Mrs Evans was always involved at different times and in different ways in the Girls House.

During the "interregnum", Henry Harris had asked Howard Ronson to take an interest in the running of the school. Howard had been a contemporary of mine at Carmel; he was the son of governor Gerald Ronson. He was an affable, though not very academic, pupil and a good rower. After he left he had gone into real estate and done very well. His expertise enabled him to see what Carmel needed in the way of maintenance and he came down regularly to the school, where he made himself unpopular with pupils and staff by not standing on ceremony and saying what he really thought. I not only liked him but found him very helpful, as a source of information, as a help in running the estate, and as an ally. Henry Harris on the other hand felt he needed to placate the staff; he bowed to pressure and asked Howard to relinquish his responsibilities.

Ivor Delman, who had been secretary to the governors and onsite administrator for eight years, asked to be replaced in early 1972. Henry Harris appointed Lieutenant Colonel Peter Davis, just resigned from the Royal Marines, as bursar responsible directly to the Governors in April. He had a good military career but no experience of an academic environment. He succeeded in rubbing the staff up so badly that I suspect the muted objections to me were partly a result of their taking out their venom on him. He gave the impression he should be running the school and it was a great relief to everyone when eventually he was asked to resign in 1974. He left feeling he was hard-done by and vented his frustrations to the Jewish Chronicle.

Because of the upheavals and insecurities of the transition, the governors felt the need, in February 1972, to issue a statement saying how satisfied they were with progress at the school and the changes in curriculum I had initiated. But the truth was that they were still fending off complaints that really owed more to the time before I actually arrived than anything I had done since. Nevertheless, the strain of being

under constant scrutiny and threat was significant and stressful. Still the delight of interacting with the pupils and participating in the academic, sporting and religious life of the school was more than adequate compensation. From morning prayers, throughout the academic and sporting aspects of school life, I was completely involved and delighted in the challenges and the rewards of interaction with pupils and staff. For all the pressure and expectation, I was in as near to Heaven on Earth as was possible.

### **Roland Franklin**

I had an ally and confidant in Roland Franklin, whose support was inestimable. He was a successful merchant banker, heading the family firm Keyser Ullmann, and he was involved in the meteoric rise of Sir Jimmy Goldsmith. Another close business contact was Reginald Maudling, the Conservative government Home Secretary who was guest of honour at Speech Day in July 1972. He was the first and only chairman of the governors who had had any personal experience of how a boarding school should be run. To my surprise, Roland Franklin told me that John Addis, the head of history and a well-liked teacher, had actually gone up to London to complain to Harris about me. Harris had sent him to Roland Franklin, who, lectured him about being constructive sent him back with a flea in his ear. The governors felt committed to their decision to appoint me, whatever misgivings they had, and they were going to give me time to prove myself or not.

Franklin had persuaded Harris to resign as Chairman, which he did in September 1972 (though he remained a governor until November 1974). Roland would step in as chairman with the promise to raise a major fund for scholarships. Arrangements were initiated to invite Prince Charles to be visit the school to celebrate its 25th anniversary, which fell in 1973, and would be the launch of a fundraising campaign.

He reorganized the governing body, which had been expanding over time and had become too large and unwieldy. Governors who had been brought on to contribute, one way or another, were not any more. And tension continued between those governors who supported Bella and those who had sided against her. He decided on "kicking upstairs" the majority of the "Old Guard" into honorary life governorships. The new, slimmed-down body consisted of Roland Franklin, Leo Grahame, Cyril Stein, Dr. A. Levin, and Henry Harris, as well as two parent governors, Leslie Melville and Ramon Greene, and one former pupil, David Perl. Roland's cavalier attitude to the 'Old Guard' alienated many of them. His patrician scorn swept opposition aside, and his wealth meant that he would have the means to put his money where his mouth was. Eighteen governors were made honorary life governors and a small executive committee now ran the school. Slowly over the years new names were added to the Governing Body of people either I or other governors thought would help the school. Roland spoke in grandiose terms of establishing endowment funds to guarantee the school's future and above all its scholarship programme. The mood was very optimistic.

In May of 1973, Meir Persoff wrote a positive piece in the Jewish Chronicle about me and the school to celebrate our 25th Anniversary. In July 1973, Monty Finniston, former Head of Metallurgy at the Atomic Energy Research Establishment at Harwell, then CEO of Parsons, and later Sir Monty, by then head of British Steel, joined the

governing body. I was particularly pleased with this appointment because he and his wife, Miriam, had been very close friends of my parents.

Roland Franklin's friend and business partner Edward du Cann, MP and chairman of the Keyser Ullmann bank, was the guest of honour on Speech Day that year. His subsequent involvement in questionable financial deals was the straw in the wind of the coming financial crisis, but at that moment I began to feel the tide had turned. I now had a supportive chairman of the governors, a friendly governing body, a student population devoid of the negative attitudes of many of the old order and the changes in the academic structure of the school were beginning to produce results. An editorial in the Jewish Chronicle that year praised me and Roland Franklin for the way the school was running.

### **Financial Crisis**

Then, as often happens, just when one thought one was over the worst, the tide turned and financial issues now began to loom. The economic optimism of the previous years began to wilt in the face of serious inflation in 1973. The governors found themselves for the first time under financial pressure and raised the fees significantly, to the point where they were exceeded those of Eton College. This in turn meant that there were fewer applicants who could afford the fees, and many of those with children already at the school needed financial assistance. Franklin began to pin hopes of turning our financial position around on our 25th anniversary celebrations. A boost to morale was a highly complementary article by the well-known journalist and author Chaim Bermant that appeared in the Sunday Observer Colour Supplement with generous and attractive photographs .

During 1973, Ramon Greene who had initially joined the Governing Body as a Parent representative presented the school with a modern and impressive dining room and kitchen which he had his construction company 'donate.' This made a significant difference to school life. It introduced self-service at meal times and gave pupils a more enjoyable eating experience in really attractive conditions. The kitchens were superb and the division between the 'meat' and the 'milk' made the supervision so much easier. The Governors agreed that we would switch over to a contract catering firm instead of employing our own caterer. The old established firm of Gardner Merchant was chosen and although we were their first school with kosher catering requirements they improved the quality of the meals as well as the presentation.

Efforts to raise money now focussed exclusively on our anniversary celebrations. But it took another year until we finally completed the negotiations for Prince Charles to visit the school. He spent a full the day with us, and attend a celebratory and fundraising banquet in the evening. Carmel College's 25th anniversary of Carmel, although technically in 1973, was actually celebrated in 1974. As was "the custom", the school agreed to make a "donation" to the prince's favourite charity of some £20,000, and a massive publicity campaign was launched. The event was a great success socially. The prince was a superb professional. He arrived by helicopter landing on the cricket pitch and I took him on a tour of the school. He visited every department of the school and made each person he spoke to, feel the most interesting person in the world for the moment he spoke to him or her. He and his entourage were given the Headmaster's house as a base and he took a break before appearing as Guest

of Honour at the anniversary banquet. Roland Franklin introduced him. Robert Perlman (a past President of the Cambridge Union) spoke on behalf of former pupils. The only regret was his early departure from the evening banquet to catch the 'Royal Train.'

Roland pulled out all the stops to make it a successful event. He imported large quantities of potted plants to spruce up the school grounds and contacted all the right social media to ensure coverage of the event. He neglected the most important thing of all. He had not planned the actual fundraising. He had assumed that after the event the money would come in automatically and that he himself would be able to supplement any shortfall through his contacts.

But the Heath Government was in trouble. The economy was a mess. First came the Oil Embargo in the autumn on 1973 following the Yom Kipur War. The 'Three Day Week' of January 1974 reflected the gravity of the economic situation and this in turn coincided with the collapse of the property market and a slump that lasted into 1975. Merchant banks, particularly if they lent to Real Estate developers had hit a crisis. Roland had made many successful deals with Lonrho's Tiny Rowland and Sir James Goldsmith, but now the bank was not only affected by the global situation, it was also hit by the financial troubles of Edward du Cann and Reginald Maudling, and the suicide of a Jewish financier Sir Eric Miller, whom it was involved with. The property market collapsed. There was a shortage of money all round. It was the worst financial crisis to hit Britain in decades. It soon affected Roland Franklin's family bank, Keyser Ullmann. It collapsed. Similarly Ramon Greene's companies defaulted and he, too, was no longer in a position to help financially. The effect on the school was dramatic. Under such circumstances it was hardly a priority for the usual donors of the Jewish community who now came under greater pressure than before.

From this moment on, financial concerns became overwhelming considerations. The governors took the dramatic step of doubling the fees. This led to a protest by parents, and Roland Franklin was forced to call a public meeting in London at the Rudolf Steiner Hall to justify the school's fiscal policies. A few weeks later, an appeal in the correspondence columns of the Jewish Chronicle, signed by Roland Franklin, Ramon Greene, and myself, fell on deaf ears. As indeed did an article I wrote in the Jewish Chronicle justifying Carmel's appeal for communal support. Speech Day in 1975 was muted. Sir Monty and Lady Finniston presented the prizes.

The sudden withdrawal of charitable support, the sudden and steep rises in costs and salaries, the corresponding squeeze on parental ability to pay, and the need to repair and update buildings to greater levels of fuel economy, came together. Just as we had begun to put our staffing priorities right, to deal with the pastoral and Jewish requirements, to expand our staff and facilities, we were threatened with foreclosure by Barclays Bank. Although Cyril Stein intervened on our behalf, we were saddled with an austerity programme and massive cutbacks. We soldiered on. Success in rowing and, academically, our largest single year acceptances to Oxbridge, buoyed our spirits. We were encouraged by the guest of honour at Speech Day, the renowned educator, former Headmaster of Eton and then major figure in the campaign against Apartheid in South Africa, Sir Robert Birley. And we had an excellent concert organized by the head of music, Keith Pusey, at which our musicians were joined by the Purcell School; the main piece was the oratorio Zadok the Priest.

The pressure to raise funds began to fall on my shoulders too. I had been happy to entertain potential donors in my home. At least once a month we hosted couples who had been referred to us by governors or friends in the hope that they could be induced to support the school. Sometimes these evenings produced results either in terms of donations to the school or in establishing friendships. Often they did not. Two incidents illustrate the pitfalls of our fund raising efforts.

In 1997 ITV had asked to do a documentary comparing my life as an orthodox rabbi with the appointment of the first female rabbi by the Liberal Synagogue in the UK. The aim was to contrast life styles as well as theological differences. The Liberal rabbi's Friday evening meal paid no attention to dietary laws. The piece on our household involved a scene in our kosher kitchen. The presenter was alone with my wife and asked her what her attitude to Liberal Jews was. She replied that as far as she was concerned they were not Jewish. Whether this remark was correct or not, whether it referred only to Liberal converts or not, it was a tactless and divisive statement to make and it was broadcast. Carmel's fundraising had always been addressed to all sections of the Jewish community and the school had always tried its best neither to judge nor to differentiate whatever the personal religious opinions of staff might have been. Several important donors to Carmel who were members of Liberal community were so incensed by these remarks that they immediately withdrew their support.

A year or so later one of the pupils of the school had a Bar Mitzvah. Normally children went home to celebrate this significant event at home and in their local synagogues. Sometimes particularly when parents were abroad or as in this case divorced, we were asked to have the Bar Mitzvah at school. When we agreed it was on condition that the guests near or at the school. We had a few guest rooms available on the campus itself. And I made it very clear that no one was to drive into the school on the Sabbath. Then the visitors would be very welcome to join in the usual school Shabbat routine, have a reception after the service and join the school for the Sabbath lunch.

On this occasion the guests completely ignored my instructions. They rolled into the school in their car, talked their way through the services, disrupted the meal with no regard to the routines, standards or proprieties of the school. My pleas for decorum fell on deaf ears. I was furious. I responded by not giving a sermon, which I never normally did anyway, but I knew they were expecting to be entertained. They were furious and complained to the Governors that they had been disrespected. Amongst the guests was one particularly prominent and well off Anglo Jewish who had in fact been a friend of both my father and David Stamler and whose son had been a pupil at the school. He and they had no excuse for not knowing the schools routines and standards. He felt so miffed, I guess no one had ever had the audacity to complain about his behaviour or to stand up to him, that he withdrew his financial support too. Such were the challenges of needing support and having to Kow Tow to benefactors. I was not very good at that. My sense of justice rebelled against giving up on ones standards for the sake of financial return.

Meanwhile the economic pressures were maintained. Roland Franklin soldiered on as Chairman of the Governors, despite the pressures. We had a magnificent supplement in the Jewish Chronicle in May and he chaired a fundraising dinner at the Savoy, at which the guest speaker was Patrick Cormack MP, chairman of the All-Party

Committee on Soviet Jewry. The school also had a very successful Open Day for parents and visitors, at which several hundred came down to the school. There was also an impressive concert, again under Keith Pusey, at which Neil Elroy and Mark Schulman performed. Every year the school put on plays and concerts of a remarkably high standard directed by members of the teaching staff and the performances were always attended by large numbers of parents and visitors. Speech Day in 1977 was in the presence of Lord Goodman, and senior prize-winners were Jonathan Treitel and Tova Hoffman, daughter of teacher Eric Hoffman.

## **Cyril Stein**

In late 1977, Franklin finally resigned as chairman of the governors. His financial difficulties had taken their toll. He was planning to move to the USA and start again. He handed over the reins to Cyril Stein. Cyril and I had been friendly ever since we had worked together to raise money for Israel after the Six-Day War in 1967. Although Cyril had his two sons at Carmel and had been involved on the periphery, it was only after they had left that he agreed to join the governing body. His influence had been vital in helping the school cope with its financial crisis. Cyril maintained Roland's policy of leaving the day-to-day running of the school to me and concentrating on the financial side of things; in this he dealt directly with the bursar and the administration offices. Although the bursar, now John Simpson, was responsible to me for the daily running of the school, our contact was mainly involved with maintenance, catering, cleaning, and estate. All matters that related to the staff and pupils were my responsibility. Shortage of money did not help. There were altogether 120 employees of the college in various departments and I regarded myself as a "people person" I chose to concentrate on the human problems. And there were always plenty of them. It is easy to say with hindsight that I should have spent more time outside the school raising money. Being involved in the daily and nightly life of a residential school was demanding enough.

The Girl's House was inevitably a concern because of the social pressures on the girls and the constant low level battle to prevent hormonal young men from trying to break through the protective carapace of rules and security. Mrs. Sabel had been responsible for the girls from before my arrival. She was a cultured, intelligent, kindly woman who was neither strict nor aggressive enough to cope with the outgoing, spoilt princesses that were in her charge. Mrs. Sabel had a valuable contribution to make to the school, particularly as a teacher but also as positive Jewish influence. However although she was a likeable maiden aunt, her strength did not lie in controlling the girls.

After Roland Franklin resigned in 1977 I brought in my wife in to head the Girls' House. I knew she would be thorough and strict. Our marriage was not easy. She was a city girl. Living in the English countryside and being expected to play only a representative role as a headmaster's wife went against her nature. I thought that if I gave her a role in the school this would mitigate her resentment at living out in the wilds.

I had advertised extensively for a Jewish housemistress, to no avail. She was the best available. She brought passion, strength, volatility, and sometimes a lack of sense of proportion. She was either loved or hated. She had the uncanny knack of rubbing



people up the wrong way and she was resented because she was seen as benefitting unfairly from my protection.

Nevertheless, she was one of the most reliable members of the pastoral staff, sharing, in broad terms, my concerns for Jewish and secular standards, my desire to see something done well and thoroughly if at all. She certainly "tamed" the Girls' House, and in that was a great asset for a few years, until the burden of children, the girls and the complaints became too heavy.

During 1977 there were continuing attempts by the governors to reduce costs. Cyril was the CEO of Ladbrokes, one of the biggest gambling and hotel conglomerates at the time. He was tough businessman who was used to having his way. He brought in Old Carmeli Joe Dwek to be treasurer replacing Leo Graham who had fulfilled the role expertly and diligently for many years.

Joe had been a prefect in my pupil days and was also head of my "house." He had a jovial disposition and I had always liked him. He had also become a successful businessman and his company Bodycote was flourishing. All previous treasurers had set annual budgets. He introduced monthly management sheets showing how the expenditure (and cash flow) was progressing. These gave everyone an idea of their specific costs month by month. It was a useful management tool. Still there was a bitter backlash from governors' attempts to reduce teachers' pay and remove the additional 10% that Carmel had always offered over and above the state rates of pay. Of course teachers resisted and the atmosphere became contentious.

The general economic climate led to a significant reduction in applicants who could pay the full fees. I had already reduced the capacity of the school by lopping off the "prep" section because I did not feel educationally or morally it as right to have pupils boarding as young as six. I had also discouraged day pupils because I wanted a cohesive student body and the weekends and festivals were important tools in creating a corporate and a Jewish esprit de corps. The divide between day and boarding pupils created tensions for both. The total capacity of the school had also been reduced by providing more single rooms for senior pupils. Instead of a capacity of over 300 boarding places, there was now a boarding capacity of 250.

On the 19th of June 1978 Edward Heath was the guest of honour at a 30th anniversary dinner held in London. But that still did not raise enough money to help the school. The financial pressures got worse. The guest of honour on Speech Day that year was Chief Rabbi Immanuel Jakobovits, and his wife presented the prizes. Then Cyril Stein had his problems. In 1979 Ladbrokes was involved in a messy affair over its casinos and its illegal tactics for attracting high rolling customers. It was felt right by the Governors that he resign from the chairmanship of the board and they started to approach suitable candidates for the Chairmanship.

During the late seventies despite numbers of fee paying applicants dropping (we were always inundated with applications for scholarships and reduced fees) I was still turning pupils away. I particularly wanted to avoid having children who were being sent to Carmel because of behavioural problems as a last desperate resort or those who were being forced reluctantly and would be antagonistic to the Jewish character of the school. I was quite happy to have academically weak pupils. After all, many of

my contemporaries who had been poor performers at school had gone on to become far nicer and successful adults than many of those who had excelled in schoolwork. I tended to look for positive personalities as much as brainpower. Anyhow I wanted a smaller body of pupils because I did not have the Jewish staff to service anymore. I badly wanted Carmel to be an effective Jewish school, not just a perfunctory one. I believed I had come as near as possible to achieving my goals. I was reluctant to risk what had been achieved.

I argued strenuously with the governors and wrote a paper recommending that we further reduce numbers and make economies of scale in reverse rather than try to expand. I wanted us to do a limited job well, rather than an expanded one poorly. But I did not carry the non-Jewish staff, whose idea of the school's priorities differed from mine. The only area where admissions were rising was that of the girls.

1978 and 1979 continued to be years of academic success in which the school progressed and the quality of its education was maintained. Effective Jewish teaching had consistently improved ever since Rabbi Berel Cohen and his younger brother Avrom Moshe had joined the school. The Jewish academic curriculum was developed first by Dr Raymond Bloom who came in 1974 and then Paul Shaw who came in 1979. Teachers from Israel who hitherto had been employed for two years, now came with the option of extending their stay for four years since we undertook to cover their tax obligations. This also helped stabilize the curriculum. Still good pastoral religious staff were hard to find. Bringing in Lubavitch Hassidim from New York was successful in terms of personal hospitality and warm contact with pupils (though they had to be warned off offering vodka to pupils), less so in terms of formal teaching.

In January of 1979 John Simpson, the bursar, resigned. The pressure was too much for him. I appointed Philip Abercrombie Oakley in his stead, a likeable more forceful personality than Simpson. But if he got on well with me and the teaching staff, those under him kept expressing reservations.

### **The Royal Masonic**

In May, Cyril invited me to come up to London to discuss a project he had in mind. I arrived at his home in St. Johns Wood to discover a group had already gathered that included Chief Rabbi Jakobovits, Henry Knobil and the editor of the Jewish Chronicle Geoffrey Paul. Cyril told us that the Royal Masonic School in Bushey had closed and was on the market. Lord (Leonard) Wolfson had been approached by Lord Jakobovits to buy it in order to set up a Jewish private school in easy access of the main Jewish population in the UK which was North West London. Lord Wolfson had replied that he was willing to buy and lease the estate at a peppercorn rate with only one condition and that was that Carmel College would move, lock stock and barrel to the site. I explained my initial reservation. It was that a school so near the centre of the Jewish population would become primarily a Day School and that would be a completely different sort of institution to one essentially residential. The aim of Carmel as my father had founded it was precisely to create a little world of its own with its religious and spiritual atmosphere. It was not designed to be just an assembly line for academic qualifications. I could not understand why one was conditional on the other. Couldn't a completely new school rise in Bushey ( as indeed twelve years later it did). But I agreed I would reserve judgment until I had actually seen the estate. Before we parted

company Geoffrey Paul whispered to me that this was clearly intended to help the Chief Rabbi win over Lord Wolfson rather than what was best for Anglo Jewry or perhaps it was simply a gambit to get Lord Wolfson off the hook.

A week later I travelled with our Bursar, John Oakley, to look at the Royal Masonic. The campus was urban rather than rural. But it was in many respects a promising estate. It had provision both for Day and Residential students. However it was in no way comparable to Mongewell Park. On the other hand its proximity to North London meant it could tap into a much bigger potential student body and more Jewish Staff. It could become a major educational centre in London rather than isolated little world of its own in the countryside. There were certainly advantages including the financial. But it would mean the end of Carmel as my father had envisioned it and I suspected the end of the boarding experiment or at any rate its confinement to a few overseas and provincial students.

Oakley and I presented our conclusions. We felt the move would destroy Carmel as it was but that we would be delighted to help establish a sister school on the site. I and the academic team at Carmel would take responsibility for the academic side and Oakley for the administration. Our offer was turned down and the project failed. This didn't deter the Chief Rabbi and eventually his campaigning achieved success with the establishment of Immanuel College on another estate in Bushey. With hindsight the move might have preserved the name of Carmel College but not much of its legacy.

In January 1980, Sir Monty Finiston took over as Chairman of the Governors. Monty had "progressed" to the head of British Steel and was the most prominent public figure since Lord Sieff to take on the chairmanship of the governors. He too believed in delegation. The governing body that year consisted of, in addition to Monty: Joe Dwek (treasurer), Ruth Deech, Raymond Dwek, both academics at Oxford, Bernard Garbacz, Henry Knobil, Eric Levine, Henry Lewis, Conrad Morris, Stephen Lucas (Old Carmeli representative), Stefan Reif, the head of the Geniza Project at Cambridge, Cyril Spencer, and Cyril Stein. That year too, Dr. Rhodes Boyson, Under-Secretary of State for Education, a controversial Conservative, was guest of honour at Speech Day. Simon Myerson made the speech on behalf of the pupils. In 1980 Alistair Falk, housemaster and history teacher, arranged to use the Carmel campus to set up the first Limmud conference. The school waived any rental fee because it wanted to support the project.

The need to economize led the Governors to close the Junior School campus and integrate the younger pupils into the main school under the housemastership of Trevor Bolton. The Junior School now reclaimed the "North Court" building that had been the Girls' House, and they in turn, as their numbers had increased, moved in the Main Building. Cyril Stein had initiated the move to put the Old Junior School campus up for sale and it was put on the market by Monty in September 1980. That certainly would have helped the school's finances but it would take another four years to overcome planning objections to any sale.

Although Ron Evans was solidly dependable in his administrative and teaching, his lack of charisma meant that I felt the lack of a really effective number two. I continued to look for an assistant headmaster. I interviewed Philip Skelker, who was

head of English at the Hasmonean at the time. I liked him but did not feel he had enough charisma for the position I had in mind. I met with Dr. Ian Rabinowitz, a former head boy of Carmel and a distinguished scientist. I wanted him to come, but we could not agree on terms. It was becoming clear that I was taking on too much. Given the financial pressures perhaps I should have morphed into a fund raiser but that was not an idea I welcomed. I had seen the consequences of my father's time spent away from the school and his frustrations. I did not want to repeat them. Besides, my original understanding with the governors was that fundraising would be their function.

In 1981, Sir Monty left British Steel against a background of political disagreement. He was a bitterly disappointed man, but had the drive to fight back and set himself up as a financial consultant. Nevertheless, he seemed to lose interest in Carmel.

### **Personal tragedy**

My wife gave birth to five children while we were at Carmel. Anushka was born in 1974, Jacky in 1976, and Natalia in 1978. In January of 1981 our fourth child Avraham died in his pram of what is called "cot death". I was out coaching the junior soccer squad at the end of the playing fields and Mr. Bumpass, the maintenance manager, drove onto the fields in the school van to pick me up and take me to the Oxford hospital where he had been taken. We waited for an hour while "they" tried to resuscitate him. But apparently it had been obvious right away that there was nothing to be done.

The tiny coffin was buried at Carmel next to my father. The period of mourning reminded me of my father's; the pupils were incredibly supportive and gentle. I was numb, unable to comfort my wife, who resented the intrusions of the comforters.

It was a crucial loss. I felt I needed to escape from everything, in particular the past and its hold on me. I saw the frailty of human endeavour, my father's work had not turned out the way he envisaged it would; the Jewish community had not responded as it should have done. What was the point of pushing myself so hard? I wanted to run a Jewish school. I was committed above all else to Judaism, to teaching it and preaching it, not necessarily to modern dance and home economics classes, petty squabbles between staff, and protecting pupils from unrealistic expectations. Above all, I hated the economic pressures, the constant pressure to cut back, and the tension of having to say "no" to deserving staff and causes within the school. I was alone in too many senses. I began to question my future. My pain would be assuaged by the arrival of my son Avichai in 1982.

The guest of honour on Speech Day in 1981 was Joel Barnett MP, a government minister and a colleague of Monty's. We recorded significant academic and sporting successes. We announced a second residential building for girls. In July, Monty Finniston resigned. He had left British Steel and now had to battle for new business. He was appointed president of the school and Henry Knobil took over as chairman.

Henry was a remarkably fine example of a successful business man with a soul. He was very committed in a religious sense, a good man with a superb sense of humour. It was always a pleasure to spend time with him. We had met Henry and Renata

several years earlier and enjoyed their company and I had asked Henry to join the board. By this time the governing body under Henry consisted of Joe Dwek (treasurer), Ruth Deech, Raymond Dwek, Conrad Morris, Stephen Lucas , Stefan Reif, Cyril Stein, and Michael Phillips.

Henry said that, as friends, he wanted us to be able to confide in each other, and indeed we did. He told me he was worried at the obvious strains in my marriage. I told him that I needed a break. I had been working under pressure for over ten years and I wanted to recharge my batteries. So we agreed that I should take a Sabbatical. But then a series of events occurred that made that impractical.

The problem of my taking leave was who to leave in charge. Ron Evans continued his administrative functions, but it was Martin Edmonds who had become my effective second-in-command on the secular side. Paul Shaw was the head of Jewish studies. He believed, as I did, in the importance of status in the hierarchy. We often discussed this and I hoped that with time he might mellow into the assistant headmaster's position. But I did not feel at that point he was ready to be left as the ultimate authority. He was perfectly capable of running the Jewish side of the school in my absence, but not the whole show. I told him I wanted him to share responsibility with Martin Edmonds. In his disappointment, he said he wanted to leave. When faced with that ultimatum, I agreed to his immediate departure. I had always believed it was better to let disaffected staff go quickly. But that meant I had to step in to take over the Jewish Studies Department until a replacement could be found, so my Sabbatical had to be postponed.

At the same time, one of the longest serving members of the Jewish staff, Eric Hoffman, left to take up a position in Manchester. The financial pressures were making it difficult to offer him a suitable salary. He was not only missed, but most of his duties on the religious side, including supervising the kitchens, now fell to me, in addition to all the others.

To make matters even worse, the bursar, Philip Oakley, seemed to have an agenda of his own. In order to help with the maintenance problems, he had brought in a "buddy" called Hodges, an architect, to oversee building and forward planning. I should have been alerted by the resignation letter of the estate manager, who accused him of incompetence, but I had other problems and relied on Oakley, who reassured me. Hodges insisted that certain works were vital--a new eyesore of a tank room on top of the Edwardian main building and the reroofing of the headmaster's bungalow. The cost for the latter was so great that a renovation of the adjacent Founder's House was suggested as a more economical solution. I expressed no view. The governors agreed in principle, I left the bursar to consult with my wife on the alterations, and he left things to Hodges. The budget was significantly overrun and Hodges was accused of incompetence. The Governors sued him and eventually won the case and recovered most of the overspending.

But the incident brought home to me the fact that that I had too much to do and was simply under too much pressure. I was no longer enjoying my responsibilities as much as I had before. I could not find the "team" of people to work with without lowering my standards and I began to question what it was that was able or capable of achieving. I did not just want to be a headmaster of a school. Carmel to me had

always been a mission. But if I was being ground down in the process I wondered if it might not be time to go.

Whenever I had been asked in the past how long I would be Headmaster for, I had always replied that I would stay as long as I enjoyed it and felt I was doing a good job. Now the first part of that was no longer applicable. As for the second, I knew that I had had made mistakes, faulty judgments, wrong appointments and I could have done better, as I often wrote on school reports. I did however achieve the goals I set out to achieve. I knew I had been a very positive influence on many pupils. I was satisfied I had had done a good job. But my own state of mind now mattered more.

Amongst the governors I felt particularly close to the treasurer, Joe Dwek, with whom I began to discuss my situation and my feeling that I needed a change. I also told about an offer I had to take over a school in London. I also confided in Stefan Reif about my desire for a change and the Governors delegated him to find the right academic way of proceeding.

After consulting with Henry Knobil we agreed on a proposal to the governors that I be appointed principal and we would look for a headmaster to take over the day-to-day running of the school. The idea was that I and my family would move to London and that I would adopt a public relations and fundraising role for Carmel, as well as becoming the "Spiritual Head and Mentor".

Early in 1983, Henry Knobil was suddenly put under tremendous pressure by resignations and ill health in his own business and had to resign the chairmanship. Fortunately, by this time Cyril Stein's problems were over and he agreed to return as chairman. There was, at the time, no one better suited to the position, given his religious commitment and his financial and communal contacts. We brought Cyril up to date with the discussions about my position.

## **Principal**

In May 1983 we announced my "elevation" to principal. It might have been gratifying to have attained the title my father had used. But the fact was that this was the beginning of the end of my era at Carmel. We started to look for a new headmaster. In June I met Cyril Stein and Joe Dwek in Ladbroke's offices, where we discussed my future. I told them that, in my own mind, the position of principal, living in London and concentrating on public relations was not for me. I loved teaching and interacting with students. It was simply a cover to ensure smooth transition. I knew from the two previous experiences at Carmel how unsettling and disruptive the handover of power could be to the school. I wanted to reassure parents and pupils that everything would continue to run smoothly. I was not concerned with my own position but with a peaceful transition for the school.

I gave the governors a list of possible candidates to succeed me, none of whom I really felt completely comfortable with, but if I wanted to withdraw I would have no option but to acquiesce. In September they appointed Phillip Skelker. He was a bright, kindly man and committed. He had administrative experience as the head of a state-aided King David, a Jewish school in Liverpool. There was no better candidate "on the Market". He was scheduled to take over at the start of 1984.

In discussing the changes with the governors, I insisted on staying on in my accommodation at Carmel throughout the rest of the academic year to keep an eye on the transition. I also had in mind my children's schooling as well wanting to prepare for the next stage in my career. But I made it clear that I would stay around in the background, without casting a shadow on the new headmaster. After the public announcement of the new headmaster was made, I spoke to the pupils and staff and asked them to throw their support behind the new headmaster. Apart from a brief visit to Sydney Australia, I continued to the end of the Autumn term and then, as far as the school was concerned, I was gone.

I left with misgivings about the future direction of the school even though I felt Cyril was the best man to continue as the head of the Governing body. He was faced with the financial pressures that came from the school costing more to run than it was bringing in, either in fees or donations. He saw the solution of the school's financial problems in attracting more pupils. This was not what I and the rest of the Jewish staff at the time wanted because we had not the appropriate staff to cater to their needs in the Jewish context. We all wanted to intensify the Jewishness of the school. We wanted our students to know and appreciate what Jewish values were. Personal contact and involvement, particularly outside the curriculum and over the weekends, was absolutely crucial to this. But to do this required the right staff. Otherwise it was better to have a smaller school doing what it did effectively, albeit elite, rather than dumb down to get the numbers up.

Cyril also wanted weekly boarding introduced to increase intake. We had opposed it on the grounds that the Shabbat was a crucial part of the Jewish programme. However much pupils might have preferred to go home to discos and freedom over the weekend, in the long-term it taught an appreciation of Jewish alternative culture that was vital to a deeper understanding of what defined the Jewish way of life. Its emphasis on community togetherness, informal spirituality, and home life was important, not only for pupils who did not have a normal home experience, but also for those whose homes had no Jewish content at all. This accounted for the vast majority of the pupils, since we had continued to fail in attracting more Orthodox students.

My original objection to day pupils had been on the grounds that they enjoyed over weekends the social freedoms and liberties denied to boarders. More mature pupils could understand the long-term benefits of the religious experiences. Others saw them as restrictive burdens and resented the freedoms of their peers. Like all disciplines that had to be taught, from music to languages, the initial slog and sheer hard work had to come before the pleasure of escaping the crutches and "flying"; so it was with the religious side of the school. Judaism was not a creed one simply attested to, it was a living experience. If one removed the experience, leaving only the factual content and one would be left with dry routines and sentimentalism. One would have no more than could be looked up in an encyclopaedia. Not only but the cohesion and shared goals I believed had been achieved over the twelve year period of my regime were in danger of being lost. I feared that the primary aim of Carmel, a vision of proud, knowledgeable and committed young men and women would be watered down, if not immediately then over time. However unless I was prepared to continue I had to let go. I had taken the decision to leave and therefore I had no alternative other than to step back and allow others to steer the school in whatever way they chose. This

decision which seemed right at the time was one I often pondered subsequently and wondered if with hindsight it was the right one.

### **Resignation**

I officially ended my employment at Carmel in January 1984, after 13 years. I was nominally still Principal, but in fact it was simply a title. I was asked if I wanted to become a governor, but I declined. I would only be upset at things I could not change, and that was not a good prospect for anyone's sanity. To some I know my withdrawal and my isolation was difficult to understand. I had experienced the pain of transition after the previous headmaster had resigned. I wanted to put the school first. I thought farewell parties or presentations were unnecessary distractions and so I asked that there be none. I did not need anyone to thank me for the labour of love and obligation that had given my previous thirteen years so much pleasure and responsibility. I and my family stayed on the campus until July 1984, when we left and moved to Israel.

I look back on my period at Carmel with enormous pride and yet with regret that I did not have the peace of mind or support to go on. In one way leaving was like divorce. One has to be honest about a relationship, decide it is time to end it, in the hope that one can flourish elsewhere instead of remaining trapped in a problematic situation.

## **Chapter 4 - Policies and Ideas (1971-1984)**

This chapter is less about the school and more a record of ideas I had for progress and change. It is a rationale for some of my decisions during my time as Headmaster. In addition to being subjective it is inevitably dated. Much is a response to specific conditions at Carmel and the ethos of that time in the educational world. But I should also like to think that those interested or involved in Jewish education might find some of this relevant to their situations even though the specific circumstances and challenges will vary.

I had very definite general educational goals for Carmel, but no specific measures in mind for achieving them.

### **Public Schools**

I was not as great a fan of the English public schools as my father--perhaps because I had seen shades of it at Carmel and its products at Cambridge. I disliked its undue reverence for authority, its preoccupation with hierarchies and petty privileges. These might have been necessary qualifications for running an Empire, but they were totally inappropriate for the flexible internationalism of the second half of the twentieth century. Perhaps it was the inherent Jewish individualism and its tradition of according respect only where it had been earned (outside the family unit). This added to my distaste for young boys exercising dominant prefectorial power over their peers. However the one aspect of the better schools I did admire and wanted to emulate, was the outstanding academic standards and achievements and the rounded and varied cultural and athletic education. The variable as far as Carmel was concerned was its



desire not to be rigidly exclusive academically in only accepting brilliant students. Our desire to have a range of pupils from different backgrounds and create a more representative student body meant that the school measured its achievements not only by the success of its brightest pupils but also by the extent to which less naturally gifted entrants achieved more than they might have elsewhere.

When I entered the headmaster's study for the first time as Headmaster, I found the bamboo canes that had been used to beat me often enough, still there in the same bookcase behind the Headmaster's desk. I got rid of them. I wanted humane discipline without it being arbitrary and rigid. I was after all a poacher turned gamekeeper, for I had been at the receiving end of authority as a pupil. But that was all the more a reason why I wanted it to be sensitive to individual situations and pupil orientated rather than blind power. Of course, a school without discipline or control was as disastrous as Lord of the Flies. Having suffered through much of my schooldays, I also found it very difficult to accept the omnipotence of teachers.

I decided to take the very risky step of trying to win the pupils over before the staff. I confided my policies to the senior pupils and inviting them round to my house over Shabbat and during the week to talk and get to know each other. Some staff began to resent this apparent role reversal, although I was particular to uphold staff authority. But I calculated that as I was closer in age to the senior pupils it would be easier to win them over and if I did, they would let their parents know; it would help establish control, stability and the teachers could be won over later.

If Carmel was simply to be a school for Jews aping public schools, it was neither what I nor my father, truly, wanted. Good public school academic education was something I valued whereas superficial Public school ethos, not at all. David Stamler had been invited to join the Headmaster's Conference, the private club of the top public schools. I chose not to aspire to what at that time was more like a gentleman's club. I did not want to be part of that world, even though it could be argued that it was in the school's public relations interest. But in terms of the Jewish community I did not think it significant factor. I did not make an issue of it for I knew it would only highlight differences with some of the Governors.

## **Boarding School**

Privately, I had personal reservations, educated as a critical, egalitarian liberal as I was, about boarding schools. Firstly they were (with one or two exceptions) private schools. They were a reflection of the persistence of class system and hierarchy that I felt was on its way out. In principle it was strange that in a supposedly egalitarian society there were two systems of education; one of mainly excellent fee paying private schools for a small elite (supported by charitable status and other concessions), as against a very mixed collection of State schools for the majority, some were good but most very poor academically, poorly disciplined and most pupils lacking in motivation or parental encouragement. The Educational Reforms that Harold Wilson's government had brought in under Anthony Crosland, were fine and praiseworthy in theory, giving all children equal opportunities and avoiding creaming off the top pupils, but sadly were not working in practice. The more the Government tinkered with State education the worse it seemed to get.

Another plank in the Crosland reforms was to abolish the Private Schools. But no government succeeded in achieving this. Not all Public Schools were Boarding Schools of course. Some were day schools. Nevertheless they were selective and denied entry to less gifted children. Still, the solution was not necessarily to abolish the private schools, destruction does not always achieve the best results, but it did seem ridiculous that they received benefits and support even indirectly from the State whose own system of education was in direct competition. Neither did it seem socially fair or just to perpetuate a socially divided society which the State at any rate ought to avoid if it could.

It did not make sense either for the State to fund religious education as in fact it did, Anglican, Catholic and then Jewish. The Jewish community benefitted in one way because this policy actually helped the growth of Jewish education at a time when State schools were all but disintegrating. Nevertheless. If a religious group wanted its own religious education in principle it seemed only logical that as in the USA, it should fund it itself.

My only rational argument in favour of Carmel College was that it had a religious agenda that should not be the obligation of the rest of the country. In the 1970s the Labour Party continued to threaten to abolish Public Schools. I attended various conferences of private schools to discuss what their response should be. They all tended to argue that because they were excellent educational institutions they should be allowed to continue. I felt this was not an acceptable argument. The response to them would be that such excellence should import into the State system to help improve it. The only argument I could accept and advocated was that we were offering something one could not expect the State to offer, namely a denominational one. Needless to say my arguments were not popular. Still, there I was the head of a private, public, religious school. Which paradigm did I want to imitate? The answer was no one perfect model to imitate entirely.

Carmel, during the 1960s, in line with many Prep schools that catered for younger pupils, accepted children as young as five into the Junior School. It was justified on the grounds that if the school did not offer places to such young children, others would. In all likelihood it was a commercial rather than an educational decision. However in practice there was a danger that the school would only be a depository for abandoned problem children. The very idea of almost encouraging children to come away from home so early seemed to conflict with the Jewish emphasis on family life and I argued that we should raise the entry age. This was one of the changes the governors readily acceded to, although it meant losing a number of pupils in making eleven the official minimum age of entry ( there were occasional exceptions). Even then, it did not sit well to encourage parents to send normal, healthy children away from home at such an early age. Some children were not ready to leave home at thirteen or even fifteen let alone ten years earlier. Boarding may have been a solution for some, but it was not a recipe for everyone.

On the other hand, boarding school could and in Carmel's case did offer so much more than Day Schools: tremendous onsite sporting facilities, after hour's clubs and societies, control over wasting time on television. Most children left to their own devices end up doing little constructive. Housemasters and mistresses who gave on-going pastoral care, could interact with their charges every day after school if

necessary. This was the ideal and not always the reality. Most of all, over weekends the opportunity was there to get to know the pupils better, to invite them home and to create as much of a family atmosphere as any institution could. To me, this was the greatest chance to press a thinking, educated religious position, particularly since we could educate the pupils in religious ritual and experience. This could be conveyed to children with no Jewish background through singing, informality and daily experience, a more palatable way than 'after school' religious instruction or the official institutions of Jewish religion could offer.

The Shabbat and Festival atmosphere was as close to a 'camp' atmosphere as it was possible to get in a formal institution. This existential aspect could never be achieved through a controlled pedagogic curriculum. What was called 'the Hidden Curriculum' could have as much influence on a child, as the official, stated academic programme of the school. Usually successful schools are those where there is unanimity of goals between school, parents and pupils. At Carmel there never was such unity but still great things were achieved.

### **Judaism at Carmel**

The imposition of Jewish Law and custom at Carmel was regarded by most pupils as just any other school rule, a challenge to overcome. And parental attitudes were not constructive. Most of the parents, not being Orthodox themselves, wanted their children to be in a school for Jews, where they would mix with other Jewish children. They did not want them to return home more Orthodox and impose Jewish religion on the home. If they had an agenda it was that their children to be injected with a miracle drug that would painlessly guarantee that they would not marry out of the faith, but not that they would actually become more committed to Judaism than their parents. Some parents regularly expressed their anxieties to the Governors, rarely to me, that the school was encouraging their children to be more religious. Yet if the school was unabashedly a religious institution as well as an academic one it had every right to expect parents to instruct their children to put up and shut up with this religion business while at school. Of course the sub-text would be that they could do as they pleased the moment they came home. One could expect parents to conform to the norms of the school. But in recent years Carmel had 'sold' itself as being a place where religion was incidental. Change would be difficult and slow.

My commitment to Jewish education was a positive conviction that it had something very important in the sphere of human development to offer and on the other hand because I was not blind to the limitations of "secular culture". It was a "God who failed", to use Crossman's expression. It had not, as at one stage it appeared it might, made religion redundant, although it had certainly brought it down to earth. It had helped find all manner of technical solutions, but the moral ones seemed as elusive as ever. Despite the reservations one might have about the limits of science, nevertheless science was vital for the future. No education worth its name could refrain from giving young men and women the opportunity to learn about science and prepare themselves for a career in it if they were so inclined. And as far as preparing youngsters to work and live in the modern world, it was essential to prepare them adequately and broadly. I was neither a Luddite nor a fundamentalist. The school had to have a broad curriculum without censorship of knowledge in any way. Where Secular values challenged Orthodoxy, they had to be met and answered--not avoided.

Open discussion and debate was the way forward, confident that Orthodoxy had a strong and defensible position. The "middle way" that waters down and limits two positions for the sake of compromise had never seemed an attractive option. The best way to present a case was through a total and passionate presentation of each position. Whether it was Torah or physics, the school had to do its best. The area that needed most remedy at that moment when I arrived as Headmaster, was the Jewish side of the school.

New Jewish staff were appointed but in general neither as well trained nor as competent as the non-Jewish staff and had constant disciplinary problems. They needed support all the time. Yet they resented it if they were overlooked for promotion. They felt besieged. There were some thirty non-Jewish teaching staff and only seven Jews. They had high hopes for me initially and assumed they would automatically receive preferment. But they were disappointed when I stood up for academic and disciplinary standards. Despite my preferences, in the end effectiveness was the arbiter.

There were two tasks to address, Jewish Life and the Jewish curriculum. Apart from the quality of teaching, there were no external exams in Jewish studies so they were not taken seriously. Most parents did not care about the Jewish studies and regarded them as dispensable. They conveyed this to their children. Anyway the programme was largely ad hoc and boring. Modern Hebrew was part of the Jewish curriculum, but it was a language discipline that required completely different teaching skills to the religious and evangelical aspect of Jewish studies.

In common with so many other Jewish schools Carmel employed teachers from Israel. The Israeli political system meant that education was divided up amongst parties and this perpetuated itself in the schemes they all had for sending teachers out on mission to the Diaspora through the Jewish Agency. So much in Israel depended on personal contacts. Promotion and perks such as foreign travel were usually a reward for party affiliation and services rendered. Another issue was that secular teachers tended to be good at language skills but weak on Judaica and vice versa for the religious ones. Many had no religious interest and yet they were expected to teach in and contribute to Jewish Studies. Often schools such as Carmel had to deal with rival departments and parties in Israel itself. The Israeli teachers would be employed for a maximum of two years because this way they could avoid paying UK tax and their positions and benefits were preserved in Israel for this time span. But it was too short. It often took at least a year for a teacher to adjust to the mentality as well as the system. As soon as they adjusted culturally they were already preparing physically and mentally to return home. And if a school wanted to keep a good teacher longer it would have to pay the accumulated income tax over the whole period. Yet this problem was one that almost all Jewish schools in the Diaspora faced.

Stage one of the re-organization was to move the teaching of Modern Hebrew, Ivrit, out of Jewish Studies into the Modern Language department. Then we experimented with taking the Jewish studies out of the academic rat race. The idea was to make the style of teaching more Jewish--warmer, less detached. The traditional methods of studying Torah were based more on the chavruta system, where students paired up and worked together to examine, revise, and clarify texts, as in a yeshiva. It was supposed to be a more relaxed, enjoyable and contrasting style of study to the secular

curriculum. Another aim was to attract more Orthodox pupils to the school through offering a much more intensive and traditional stream of Jewish studies, a 'Yeshivah' stream.

Like a lot of innovation, the new scheme worked well at the start precisely because it was different. But in the end pupils were in general either moved and motivated to take it seriously or else simply fell back on doing the least possible, regarding it as an obligation to be endured. If it worked well with committed and interested pupils, it was too elitist to work in a situation where most pupils were both ignorant and uninterested. The major problem always remained attracting good Jewish teaching staff. The non Orthodox Jews had neither the background nor the passion, and the few Orthodox Jews who were prepared to venture into the Oxfordshire countryside were too unpredictable and idiosyncratic to form the basis of a coherent programme. As individuals they often did a lot of good. But they were not "organization" men. They highlighted the inbuilt conflict between professional teachers committed only to their subjects and passionate evangelists less interested in educational structures than in spreading their own gospel of Jewish identity.

Typical of the issue was a teacher like Michael Tabor, a unique combination of extremely talented musician, story teller, Hasidic master and economics teacher. He was adored in his pied piper role and very effective. But being a formal teacher neither enthused him nor was it his forte. The academic staff wanted a good academic. The Jewish staff was delighted to have his influence around on campus. This was typical of the dilemma I faced when the only way of getting more Jewish teachers into the school, fiscally, was by engaging them in secular departments. It worked on one level, but it did not help create a unified body of staff.

By 1973 the school had two streams for Jewish studies: a main basic programme for the majority, who came with no Jewish background or familiarity with Hebrew, and an advanced programme. I had reservations about a 'Yeshiva stream' because where I had seen it in other schools it had generated conflict between an elite and the rest. Fortunately this tension did not materialize at Carmel. We offered a voluntary traditional and advanced curriculum based on yeshiva study for the children from religious homes and for anyone else who wanted to join in what actually turned out to be a popular option because eventually we found some really good teachers. Rabbi Berel Cohen came from Gateshead Yeshiva to head the yeshiva stream in 1973, and subsequently his brother Avram Moshe Cohen joined. Thanks to a former pupil, now an educator, Rabbi Aviezer Wolfson, we were able equip the ground floor of my parents' old home, the Founders House, as a bet hamedrash with an excellent library. Those pupils whom wanted it were able to spend as much time as they liked within the curriculum and outside of it studying in our mini-yeshivah.

For the rest, a structured curriculum with external exams was the only way to get pupils willing to take the Jewish studies seriously. Various heads of Jewish studies came and left. Dr Raymond Bloom came in 1974 and was also a Housemaster. He succeeded in establishing examinations in Jewish studies, and post-Biblical and post-Talmudic Judaism that were fully recognized by the Oxford and Cambridge Examining Board and helped add lustre to university application forms. He helped give general Jewish Studies a much more serious position in the school. When he left in 1978 Paul Shaw joined as Head of Jewish Studies and he too expanded the

department and introduced programmes and examinations recognized by the examining boards. And eventually we were fortunate to find Israeli families who combined academic expertise with religious commitment.

Still, as Jewish studies were not regarded as a priority, either by students, parents or Governors, the biggest challenge was to find a way of encouraging the older students to go on studying Judaica as they got nearer their final exams. A solution had to be found within the context of the English educational system which after ‘Ordinary Level’ examinations at the age of 16 then required students to specialize in fewer subjects that would be studied in much greater depth and usually meant pupils having to choose between sciences and arts or humanities. We were fortunate that the system allowed Jewish and Hebrew options to count as qualifying subjects for University entrance.

We negotiated with Oxford University and established ‘Advanced Level’ examinations in Post Biblical and in Modern Jewish Thought. Every sixth former had to take an A-level in a Jewish subject. Initially the science staff fought it because they put much more pressure on their candidates from the start of the Sixth Form to cover material and work hard than the humanities. Even when the evidence showed incontrovertibly that candidates did not suffer, that they could pass this exam and still excel a year later in science A-levels, they still maintained their opposition and actively dissuaded pupils from taking this "extra" subject.

The compromise was to make this extra subject a requirement during the penultimate year of school. The exam subject could be taken in the first year of the Sixth Form. It would look "good" on university application forms which had to be submitted before the final exams. Having a good result already ‘in the bag’ boosted the candidates CV. Opposition from non-Jewish teachers was then muted. Now the pupils were free to devote themselves to secular subjects in their final year, having put their efforts into passing the Jewish studies exams the year before. This issue highlighted the professional divisions between the Jewish and the non-Jewish staff. To the credit of the non-Jewish staff, they wanted to get the best academic results they could, and that was one reason they resented the increased emphasis on Jewish studies. The issue of attitudes to Jewish studies remained a factor in limiting Carmel's ultimate success in achieving an equal, two track curriculum.

### **Religious Practice at Carmel**

Religious influence was inevitably a delicate issue. It rather than any classroom subject relied on the personality of the teacher. Not every teacher was good at pastoral or ‘evangelical’ work. I had open home on Friday nights for the older pupils to come by and relax and chat and argue. They would come to play games or just to feel welcome in a family atmosphere. My wife and I would engage them in discussion, sometimes about school affairs, sometimes about Judaism. On weekdays too we would often have students round for a meal. Many of the other Jewish teachers did the same. Most of the non-Jewish teachers left the campus over the Saturdays and Festivals and in a way the school's atmosphere changed palpably. It was less academic and more of a camp.

One had to live the Carmel experience to feel the special Jewish atmosphere. Even if at the time many pupils resented having anything imposed. Every morning started off with a religious service. This was not the most popular way to start the day. The option of 'earphones' feeding constant music to one's brain is usually going to be far more attractive to most youngsters than any serious subject matter. Similarly, to be woken up early in the morning and rushed out of a warm bed to pray was never going to be welcomed. The morning services were mainly taken in rooms in each residential block under the Housemaster if he was Jewish or another member of the Jewish Staff. There were full traditional options in the synagogue area for the maximalists but abbreviated services for the rest.

I made a point of rotating between the services although in the end, focused mainly on the Girls House. In vain did I try to convey the value of ten minutes meditation first thing in the morning, of learning how to pray as a technique of relaxation, of the advantage of simply knowing how a religious tradition works. If one were a prisoner in a Buddhist monastery, I argued, would one not take advantage of the situation to at least master Buddhist ritual? I tried several times to get older pupils to experiment, to see if they could find a format for starting the day with some meditational procedure. I insisted on only one requirement, to put on Tefilin, in the case of the boys, and say the first paragraph of the Shema. Every new attempt started with enthusiasm. They tried music, poetry, sitting in silence and simple meditations.

The experiments failed for two banal reasons. Pupils found the demands of preparing something too much. I suggested alternatives, encouraged inventiveness, and cajoled. But, invariably, the effort was too much, the results unsatisfactory, and the old forms turned out to be the line of least resistance. And yet for all that I know that many graduates later on in life were glad to have learnt the skills to conduct services that they would not have picked up without some degree of compulsion.

Shabbat was special at Carmel, even though the ban on television and pop music was hard for most of the pupils to bear. Amongst the conscientious, being unable to write schoolwork was even harder. Being able to appear in one's "Shabbat Best" as opposed to the regulation school uniform and the more relaxed social atmosphere all contributed to a very special atmosphere, school but not school. There was always a very fine line between a relaxed atmosphere and chaos. One had to sense how far to let pupils play and the right moment to reign them in. Similarly the difference between strictness and unbridled exercise of power was a fine one that only a sixth sense and experience could provide. I was fortunate to have seen how father, a past master of the art, carried it off.

All pupils and some staff came together on Friday and Saturdays for synagogue services. Usually I in my dual role as Headmaster and Rabbi of the school, presided. The services were conducted mainly by the pupils themselves in the Modern Orthodox Israeli style. Observant pupils would know what to do. For pupils who had rarely if ever been to a synagogue, conducting a service or reading from the Torah, if only briefly, was not easy and took a lot of preparation. It was not a popular task for most. But it was an important part of the education nevertheless. Occasionally I conducted the services to give an example of how it should be done. And the school was in session during the Holy Days, I became the cantor as well as the rabbi. The good side of this was that I functioned in a religious role as much as I did as

Headmaster. But it meant that I had two educational jobs and a double load but in purely educational terms it was as good as it could get.

When the new Dining Hall was built meals were taken at the self- service cafeteria. Pupils could sit where they wanted to. But on Shabbat everyone sat down to eat formally and tables were arranged so that on each one there was a cross section of pupils so as to try to develop more of a sense of community. Singing zemirot, traditional songs celebrating Shabbat and saying the Grace after Meals, all required student participation. Different pupils were allocated specific tasks on rotation with the aim of familiarizing them with traditional routines. For some it was an ordeal, nevertheless, the festive atmosphere at formal meals on religious occasions, was always less strict, more relaxed except when it looked like getting out of control. They were usually appreciated and recalled with affection, even if with hindsight!

Even the synagogue services, alien and boring to most of the pupils, were experiences that many came to appreciate afterwards, if not at the time. The long summer Shabbat afternoons too had their magic, and sometimes boredom. I allowed, as my father had, playing games, provided one did not wear sports clothes (something had to make Shabbat different). Teachers' homes were open if one wanted to go wherever one felt more at home, or the food was better, or the discussion more biting. I had an open home at which we played games, chatted, debated and studied a little too. Altogether Shabbat was more leisurely with--for walks, for thought, to be alone and the pupils to relax, play, flirt, escape to the ends of the playing fields and sometimes beyond.

Shabbat late afternoons had an atmosphere of their own. We gathered in the synagogue in the dusk to say the afternoon prayers. Afterwards I would speak on some moral or ethical theme. Then we would sit in silence to meditate or a while as the day light receded. I would lead them in singing slow contemplative tunes my father had bought back from Mir Yeshiva in Lithuania, silence (not easy for youngsters to handle) and more singing or humming. Then when it was dark we would say the evening prayers and end Shabbat with the Havdalah ceremony. Lights went out and only the braided candle flickered in the dark. I would call up a girl to hold the candle and boy for the spices. Sometimes I would intentionally call up a dating couple. It was a game but one that kept the pupils in amused anticipation. Then we would sing two songs to end the Shabbat and welcome the week before everyone was released to dash back to their blocks to find out what the football scores were ( if some had not already listened illegally to their radios). Saturday night was film night and the school switched back into a weekday routine in which Sunday was a normal teaching day.

Festivals were often held at the school. The problem we faced was that if we were at school for festivals, children from observant homes missed being with their families. But these accounted for relatively few. The vast majority of pupils at home observed nothing and so in a way I felt an obligation to show them through the school what it should be like. The High Holy Days in the autumn were highlights. The sombre mood of the school, the response of the pupils was remarkable. One could actually feel an atmosphere of spirituality. It was elating. Unfortunately, these "highs" did not last. Mundane routines returned, and they were soon forgotten.



These occasions were stressful because the whole of the school was left to me and a handful of Jewish and house staff. The pressure was great, but it was worth it. It created a kind of secret bond between us. The downside in purely secular terms was that it appeared to exclude those teachers and pupils who were not part of it. But in Jewish terms these were the most valuable times of the school year.

The highlight of the Jewish calendar for most pupils was the carnival atmosphere of Purim was more like a Brazilian fiesta than a religious occasion, but this too showed the peculiar Jewish approach to religion and the fun side of what sometimes appears too austere to those who do not know better and whose only contact Jewish behaviour on occasional solemn days. Normally the non-Jewish staff withdrew over religious occasions events though I made it clear they were very welcome to attend whenever or if they wanted to. But Purim was an occasion when the non-Jewish or non-resident staff could join in and most did. There would be fancy dress competitions, parades, charity events to raise money. There were always pranks aimed at turning the tables on authority. One year pupils paid to get into a punt on the lake with me and try to hit me into the water with a pillow. Another year I ran in my underpants around the school to raise money for charity. There were auctions of lost property and always a "social" at which pupils presented "sketches" that made fun of teachers and, of course, the Head. And teachers replied with their humour at the expense of the pupils. As more girls arrived at Carmel, the pressure grew to have discos in the school. I resisted, for they had no Jewish content and Purim was still a sort of religious occasion. Besides in a mixed boarding school with far fewer girls than boys meant that too many would feel excluded. But in the end I capitulated specifically on Purim because we made sure there were plenty of other attractions going on at the same time.

The whole process of familiarization with a strange religion was an important factor in getting young Jews to confront and even respect their heritage. The downside was that religion was often confused with school discipline and seen as something to be rebelled against. That is why a Jewish school catering to predominantly non Orthodox children can only have limited success in intensifying their Jewishness. All the more so if it conflicts with home standards.

Throughout the year enforcing Jewish standards was a struggle. Pupils often found ways of getting around the rules. Part was the inevitable testing of boundaries and the struggle between authority and teenage rebelliousness. Part was an ideological opposition quite natural in rebellious teenagers. The principle of the school was that it adhered to Jewish law. By nature I hated compulsion. I did not want to have to enforce it or for it to be seen as a burden. Yet how many people will readily accept any discipline or restraint on their egos? When faced with persistent disobedience, the only argument one could use was that they could always transfer to non-Jewish schools if they found Judaism too oppressive. Carmel's uniqueness was that it was designed for those who wanted a Jewish experience and therefore the Jewish atmosphere had to be maintained.

Despite our undoubted success over the years in making the Jewish side more attractive and effective, it remained a constant concern. Given the almost complete lack of linguistic or ritual knowledge on the part of most of the pupils, how did one set about trying to give them basic familiarity with Jewish law and lore, practice and ideology as well as essential texts, and could one do this without some knowledge of

Hebrew? Secular education took up 80% of the curriculum and yet Judaism was the equivalent of a complete culture in itself.

In no other subject was there an agenda to change pupils' attitudes or to influence their behaviour and more often than not in conflict with both home and peer group pressure. We tried various alternatives including setting aside some time each week for discussion and 'persuasion' in class as well as Shabbat forums and debates. Although no global or completely effective solution was found many of the attempts bore fruit in generating a positive response. If nothing else pupils who graduated often talked about the benefits of being familiar with Jewish law and practice even if their own level of observance was weak. And I certainly felt that was an achievement. The Jewish staff often discussed the challenge. Most of us agreed that moving someone from 0% Jewish commitment to 40% was a greater achievement than moving someone else from 60% to 80%. Still there were Jewish teachers who were unhappy with anything below 90%.

In the wider scheme of things I strongly recommended spending a year at least in Israel at a yeshivah after graduation. I had after all experienced the benefits at first hand. A lot of parents were frightened of the idea and that their children would go native or return as fanatics. I had noticed that the more parents resisted the idea the greater the likelihood of the child going to extremes. However it became a feature of the Jewish Studies department to encourage further study particularly in Israel at any further education institution regardless of whether it was academic or religious. Although the school was not overtly Zionist in the sense that we did not belong to any Zionist organization, the position of Israel both historically and currently was central to the way we taught and preached. We considered Carmel to be the first base on the road to discovering Jewish identity and seeing an alternative to Anglo Jewry and indeed the Diaspora, was a crucial factor.

### **Sephardi and Ashkenazi**

The majority of pupils at Carmel came from Ashkenazi backgrounds, and the majority of them were not from religiously observant households. The same could not be said of the Sephardi boys from a more Oriental or to be more accurate, Islamic world. They tended to be more traditional, more conservative, more respectful of their elders and in general better behaved. I was always aware of the degree of social discrimination in Israel against most Jews from oriental communities. I was particularly anxious not to allow any hint of that at Carmel. The Persians were less typical than the Gibraltarians, but even there for those overindulged spoilt children of materialist families there was equal counterbalance of gentler souls. In general boys and girls from different backgrounds got on well and mixed easily and academically occupied the range from outstanding to dull. Nevertheless a typical British snobbery pervaded a lot of parental (and gubernatorial) attitudes. They somehow had got it into their heads that 'foreign' pupils lowered the academic and social cachet of school, when, if anything, the opposite was true.

By far the most impressive group of Sephardi pupils were the Gibraltarians. In typically Sephardi fashion they were well trained in the prayers and psalms of tradition and were well acquainted with the cycle of Torah reading. Although many did not come from religious homes, the close knit traditional atmosphere of the

Gibraltarian community had a noticeable and positive effect upon them. Too often, however, Gibraltarian pupils tended while at Carmel to enjoy freedom from home constraints and throw off their traditional bearing. Nevertheless a lot depended on each year and each peer group.

As the Gibraltarians no longer felt the pressure to hide their religiosity they began to feel and express such pride in their specific liturgy and customs that they campaigned to have their own services. I wanted to encourage them to preserve their traditions but at the same time did not want the school to be factionalized. So we agreed on a compromise. They would have their own daily morning services and Sephardi pupils from all the different houses and age groups who wanted to could attend. And once a month they could have their own Shabbat services. This latter arrangement lasted only a few times and then for some reason, I suspect social, they lost interest. But the separate morning services continued for a few years. In the end inertia and the line of least resistance and least responsibility seems to have prevailed.

### **Secular Curriculum**

The other educational dream I had was to bring about changes so that my pupils would not suffer those wasted years I endured in school being bored and often badly taught subjects that were of doubtful value other than as examination fodder. Carmel had been and was extremely successful in cramming weak children to pass public examinations and even getting them into university. Its academic record in this respect was outstanding. Pupils who would have been written off elsewhere were pushed, harried, and pressurized beyond their normal capacities. Many argued that this was counterproductive, but that was what "the paying customer" wanted.

A solid curriculum needed to give pupils tools as well as experiences. It should emphasize languages, scientific and artistic experiment, numeracy and literacy, self-expression, art, drama and music, as well as sporting opportunities. Even in sport, where Carmel always had a tradition of at least two obligatory afternoons of sport each week for every pupil, but there was room to balance the emphasis on team sports with far more opportunities for individuals to enjoy and explore other possibilities. To this end we invited student suggestions for extra sports and started to bring in part time specialists in 'minority' sports.

My father had always talked about Athens and Jerusalem. A broad, Athenian education required an emphasis on the intellectual and the cultural, both in the classroom and beyond. Non-academic subjects were also opportunities for pupils to shine and gain in confidence, even if their academic work was not very good. This personal development mattered to me as much as the purely academic, even though we needed academic success as a school for our reputation and to attract high calibre students.

In a dream world one would have a flexible non examination programme for the crucial years up to fourteen or so. The motivated child could set to work on formal syllabuses in good time to pass the necessary qualifying exams for further education. Too much time was wasted on syllabuses that started with eleven year olds and took them through till sixteen, the O (Ordinary) Levels as they were then called. They were followed by the A&S Levels (Advanced and Scholarship) taken two years later (

although there was flexibility to take exams earlier at both levels) . Examinations were inescapable. They were still the universal basis for progress and success. But I objected to "examinationitis", as though these were the only criteria that mattered. The preoccupation with exams meant that students often not only wanted to study exclusively what was in the syllabus but tried to confine themselves only to what they might be examined on. It excluded the 'old fashioned' romantic idea of education for its own sake. Over and above that I dreamed the fanciful dream that children should actually enjoy their education and be stimulated, not boringly crammed and suppressed.

It made sense to focus in the early years on that which young minds could more easily pick up; to emphasize foreign languages, practical skills like music, art, numeracy and literacy in a non-regimented and more experimental way. Sciences would be taught almost exclusively through experiment and laboratory practicals. Children would be given more choices in subjects like Geography and History which would be taught in less structured and more practical ways, looking at artifacts, documents, listening to stories, films and dramas. We would not start on exams and a rigid syllabus until a few years before they were due to be taken. The inspiration came from Ivan Illich's 'de-Schooling Society' with its emphasis on learning skills and apprenticing oneself to someone who inspired one for a while, without actually abolishing schools. Impractical of course, but it reiterated the faults of a regimented system for all pupils.

But there was resistance to too dramatic change. Staff or governors preferred safety and were reluctant to risk experiment in the face of the examination hurdles. It was believed that if teachers could not start preparing them early, the academically weak children, who made up the majority of the school, would never survive. One should not confuse bright, lazy kids, with weak ones who needed spoon feeding. The preoccupation with results, the carrot for prospective parents, overshadowed all else. In the two areas that needed most radical change, I had to proceed with caution. And to complicate matters offering wider choices was expensive because one had to pay extra staff or coaches. Parents who could afford it or wanted it badly enough could pay 'extras' for additional tuition but this was not the same as the school paying to have something in the curriculum.

I encouraged the staff to try different ways of doing things early on. Some worked. Others did not. We experimented with different lengths of classes. They had always been 40 minutes long and five minutes were allowed in between classes to move around the campus from one class location to the next. We experimented with one hour classes but in the end reverted to the old system.

We introduced a system of academic tutors so that every pupil had one member staff responsible for vetting his or her academic progress, liaising with Housemasters and Parents to make sure the pupil was progressing satisfactorily. Any disciplinary problems went through the tutor and then the housemaster before arriving at my desk if necessary.

And there was universal agreement to drop the system of "streaming." This traditional Public School mechanism divided pupils up supposedly according to intellectual ability. Brighter pupils were put in the "top" stream, with a full curriculum. Weaker pupils were relegated to lower, more limited programmes. The problem with this rigid

separation was that someone, say, brilliant at languages but weak in mathematics, or vice versa, would find himself in a weak stream and condemned to be with other pupils who too often did not care to study. A system where pupils would be assessed in each subject made much more sense. This way a foreign student who could deal with sciences but struggled with English could still benefit from the more rigorous teaching that went on in the higher streams. The arguments against were simply the demands of staffing and the greater complexity of the timetabling. But Ron Evans had the mathematical brain as well as the experience to cope. He played with the timetable as though it were a Sudoku puzzle. Still it was a moral victory as much as an educational one. Staff who had earlier supposed it unworkable, simply because that was how things had always been done, were happy to see the change.

The problem that all schools have to deal with is how to deal poor teachers. They remained in position either because they had been around for so long one had pity on them and they are allowed to work their way to retirement. Often they remained because the school authority had neither the will nor the power to eject them. In some cases it was possible to improve with further training and in others teachers could serve very valuable roles outside the classroom. Once upon a time it was easy to fire teachers from private schools. Nevertheless there were procedures that were required and had to be followed, documented complaints and warnings. The priority of a school had to be what was best for the pupils because in the end successful pupils, in whichever way, brought the school kudos and increased its status and reputation. It was not easy to ask teachers to leave and even the promise of a letter of recommendation did little to assuage the disappointment. Ideally one invited the person to talk and get agreement that another position elsewhere might be more suitable. But if that did not work, one of the tests of a good Head teacher was always whether he could rise to the occasion, the challenge and the responsibility.

Wanting to set a good example as a teacher, I committed myself to teaching general subjects and Jewish subjects, as well as coaching both soccer and rowing, to show my "all round" interests and that it was possible to be religious and "normal". I taught Bible, Talmud and Law within the Jewish Studies curriculum and to balance that I taught an obligatory examination for Sixth Formers called "Use of English," which combined philosophy, language and current affairs.

Despite the preconceptions, some of my early opponents had that I was only concerned with Jewish matters, I most certainly wanted excellence in every sphere, it was just that I felt there were other ways of achieving it than rigid adherence to past structures. Still there was resistance to many changes I initiated and it was not just because of the claim that I was too young and inexperienced. The academics did not want their star pupils spending too much time on "arty" pursuits. The Music department when it wanted its stars to have more practice time got support. The sportsmen felt that the academics were undermining them by debunking sports and requiring too many extra hours of lab work, and the academics could not understand why those who represented the school in sports required so much training every day of the week. The Jewish staff felt I gave too much power to the secular teachers, who in turn felt I was pushing too hard to raise the Jewish side of the school. One science teacher actually claimed to the Jewish Chronicle that he left because I was making it too difficult for Christians to teach.

In addition to the academic timetable, all pupils had to devote periods in the week to visiting sick and elderly locals, and to hobbies and alternative activities, which could include taking their art, music or drama in greater depth. Ideally Carmel wanted to contribute to Jewish society but locally there was no Jewish community. And neither Reading nor Oxford the two nearest big towns had Jewish social institutions that we could contribute to. We did arrange a weekly bus to take volunteers to Ravenswood, a Jewish home for Jews with disabilities. But it was almost an hour's drive there and an hour back. Most volunteers preferred going to local State Old Age homes and hospitals. This was one area where a Jewish and a non-Jewish educational agenda coincided completely. In addition pupils were encouraged to get involved in political issues relating to World Jewry, Anti-Semitism and support for Israel. We sent busloads of pupils to demonstrate outside the Russian Embassy in London. But Carmel's geographic isolation, a boon in general, made excursions or joining demonstrations both time consuming and expensive. Nevertheless we regarded as sufficiently important a component to subsidize such ventures which usually relied on a particularly interested member of staff to take the initiative.

### **Teaching Staff**

Relationships with many of the teaching staff were not easy. In part it was the inevitability of my position, having the power to promote and reward. The model I had seen was one in which previous headmasters had been benevolent autocrats and that was the pattern I followed. I tried to establish a less formal relationship. I invited staff to have meals with me at home. I arranged informal end of term gatherings at the Springs Hotel nearby to exchange ideas and come up with creative solutions. But the old hierarchical constraints prevented honest and open exchanges. This was true at Staff Meetings too which I wanted to make constructive rather than instructive and an opportunity to exchange ideas. I was not sure if my lack of success was due to my own personality which tended towards the individualist rather than the collegial. Or whether, simply, the assumptions and traditions of the English Public School system were to blame.

I was made aware of some resentment over my discussing my ideas about education with pupils, usually at my home on a Shabbat, before bringing them to the staff. But there was also a problem of ideology. And in truth it was not my job to try to educate or try to influence them in Judaism. The non-Jewish staff perceived the school as any other English public school in the tradition of Arnold of Rugby. It was either robustly or notionally Christian but that was only a matter that concerned the chaplain and Sundays. Some of the longer serving staff understood the idea of a total Jewish ethos, but they could not identify with it. As a result, they were, with a few notable exceptions, obstructive, sometimes even encouraging the pupils to disregard me. On outings away from the school, cultural or sporting, they would follow their standards rather than the schools on matters that concerned Jewish practice such as what to eat. On the other side Jewish staff felt my insistence on their raising their academic standards too much of a secular preoccupation. I was caught in between everyone. Non religious parents pressurized to relax standards and undermined those I established, and the few religious ones looked to me to raise them further.

I needed the teachers on my side for any changes I wanted to succeed. But I also needed time to prove myself to them. The first few years were delicate and far from

easy. To my surprise, Roland Franklin told me that a senior and well-liked teacher, had gone up to London on his 'Day Off' to speak to Harris, who had told him that the person to speak to about his complaints was Roland Franklin. To his credit, Roland sent him back with a flea in his ear. The governors felt committed to their decision to appoint me, whatever misgivings they had, and they were going to give me time to prove myself. I was sad that the person concerned had not discussed his misgivings with me but I did not hold it against him and on the contrary tried to get him more involved.

The primary role of the teaching body was always a professional one. At Carmel however each one had extra duties, whether it as in after-hours supervision, helping out with sports or taking pupils on outings. By way of compensation all teachers at Carmel were paid 10% above the nationally negotiated rate (the Burnham Scale). Naturally some were more conscientious than others. Nevertheless success in the classroom was the overriding consideration in appointing and retaining.

I used to sit in on lessons to see how teachers worked 'at the coal face.' I met staff individually to talk about their work and role in the school. Yet I felt a certain detachment on their part, a reluctance to open up. I tried to push them to be more proactive and less passive. Heads of Department had to ensure their departments were well run, the pupils were being well taught, the curriculum completed and the academic results both internal and external came up to standard. I encouraged the heads of Departments to concentrate on building up his or her little power base and rewarded success with an increased departmental budget. Each head of Department became a Baron competing with the others for resources and status. I was making a virtue out of the situation. With greater accountability, their reputation was at risk if their departments performed badly. Since academic results were published, success or failure was evident to all. I was left to take care of the overall picture and separate the warring barons when necessary. This was one model. Not necessarily ideal, but inevitable given the staff and the general ethos of the time.

### **Role of Headmaster**

I had been appointed Headmaster, even though I lacked experience and qualification, because of the importance of a Jewish school having a committed Jewish head. But I had of course an outstanding role model I had been privileged to grow up with and observe at very close quarters. I remembered because I had experienced the tremendous impact my father's personality had on the school. His charisma was overpowering and exciting. He was the undoubted head of the school and because he was also manifestly religious, this enhanced the image of Judaism in the school. I tried to model myself on him as much as I could, his impeccable dress and dignified bearing, his humour and sense of fun, his warmth and affection towards pupils as well as his gravitas. These are qualities that are not often found in Jewish educational circles and what made Carmel unique in its heyday was that charisma was the dominant spirit of the school.

I cannot overstate how important I believed it to that the supreme authority in a Jewish school should be its head teacher. Several Jewish schools I had come across had a Jewish head for the Jewish side and a non-Jewish head for the secular. The

result was that in the eyes of pupils, the non-Jewish side was respected more and valued because it determined the next stage of a child's education and aspirations.

Later on in my career I recall two schools I was invited to visit with a view to considering an appointment. I went mainly out of curiosity. The first was the Tachkemoni community school in Antwerp which had the reputation of being one of the best Jewish schools in Europe. My first impression of the school itself was of disappointment. Coming from the beautiful expanse of the English countryside to a constricted Inner City building was inevitably an anti-climax. It served the general community rather than the Ultra-Orthodox enclave that Antwerp was known for in Jewish circles. In particular it was renowned for the high standard of Ivrit and its bilingual Jewish curriculum. On the other hand, despite its location and the much higher degree of Jewish and Zionist commitment its parent body had, it was no more successful than Carmel in turning out religiously observant children. Its head, Dr. Engel had held the position for many years. But the school in effect had a secular head, a non-Jewish teacher who was responsible for the secular curriculum. In talking to some of the pupils, it transpired that in their minds Dr. Engel might have been the figurehead but he mattered to them less than the secular head. But I was struck by the fact that the pupils had in effect two different leaders, the Jewish and the secular. This precisely the sort of bifurcation I wanted to avoid and I felt was one reason for its disappointing Jewish influence.

The other school I was invited to was the Hasmonean Grammar School in North London. It had grown, with State Aid, into a large school with an excellent academic record. Officially it had been founded as the school of the right wing Orthodox Adath Movement under Rabbi Schonfeld who had run the school largely as a personal fiefdom. Yet because it now received State Aid, it was open to all North London Orthodox children including those from the less Orthodox United Synagogue. Over time the more traditional pupils had been segregated into a Yeshiva Stream which was extremely effective in teaching a Talmudic programme. The rest of the pupils were left with a rather second rate curriculum and the school effectively divided into warring camps, the religious and the opposition. Some of the schools orthodox rabbis and teachers had hijacked the school's outlook and ethos. The result was that for its religious and academic elite it was a very good school. For the rest of the students it was largely failing on all fronts. I was invited to come as a strong personality who would meld the two streams and raise the overall academic and disciplinary standards of the school just after the old regime had gone and a caretaker governing body had been imposed to put the school on a legal and professional foundation. Although the new Governors were men I admired, got on with and shared their vision for the school, the problem was that the terms of the restructuring left a group of Adath Rabbis as the religious authority of the school. They could dictate its religious standards. So that here I would have faced the opposite problem of that I saw at the Tachkemoni. The Adath rabbis, to give one example, opposed the idea of Zionism and Israel Independence Day. Whatever my reservations about secular Zionism, I would have encouraged greater involvement in Israel. Had I accepted the position they could have over-ruled me. I went to speak to one of the rabbis concerned but found I had no common language or shared idea of what the school should be like. The wonderful feature of my role at Carmel was that I could bridge the secular religious gap and was the undisputed authority on educational and religious matters. It was the perfect



position. And of course both experiences reinforced my conviction of why it was essential for me to be seen as the ultimate authority of the school.

I wanted the hierarchy of Carmel to be as Jewish or as pro Jewish as possible, to set the tone and to counterbalance the "Jew incompetent, non-Jew competent" syndrome. But sadly, however hard I tried, I could not find a Jewish teacher I thought had the personality and the strength to be my number two. That was why I left Ron Evans as Senior Master, even though Roland Franklin urged me to find a replacement. I would have preferred Doctor Addis, had he wanted the position. I encouraged him, and on several occasions sent him to represent the school at headmasters' conferences. Two years after my appointment, when he saw I was a fixture, he did agree to become senior tutor. But he did not enjoy responsibility and resigned after two years. He remained, nevertheless, an important character on the Carmel stage. I was personally indebted for his coaching me in squash. Later on he applied to other schools for headmasterships and I both encouraged and recommended him but for whatever reason, he was never successful.

When he resigned, I appointed Martin Edmonds as Senior Tutor. He was what in previous times would have been called 'a gentleman teacher.' He was a man of independent means who taught out of commitment and love for the profession. A Catholic, he had been a teacher at The Oratory School, up the road from Carmel. He was devoted and caring. I admired him most of the teachers I encountered at Carmel. He had stepped in temporarily to replace Gabay as head of the junior school. He was quietly effective, but he also lacked both the ambition and the charisma to lead the school. None of the Jewish teachers who passed through Carmel in my time, had the stature or the charisma to be the sort of Head Teacher I wanted for Carmel. In other words, the general quality of Jews going into education was clearly not what it should be to produce great head teachers and in the end there would simply have to be compromises.

### **Housemasters and Housemistresses**

In a boarding school, the role of the housemaster (or mistress) was always crucial. He or she stood in loco parentis and was the first line of contact a parent had with the school. That was the theory, though not always the reality.

The Headmaster and senior members of staff were the ultimate powers and authority figures. If the headmaster set the tone for the school, they were the ones who played a crucial role in executing it. It was the houseparent who cared for the individual in his or her charge. Particularly in boarding school their concern could make all the difference to a child if he felt he had someone to turn to, to protect his interests. Other staff members looked to the House staff to reign in, discipline and help deal with pupils who presented difficulties in class or recreational activity. The housemaster came into 'his own' when lessons ended. He had to supervise, counsel, discipline and comfort. His role combined that of psychiatrist with policeman. A good housemaster got involved but sometimes too involved and could on occasion be overprotective of his charges. A poor housemaster simply stepped back and let things run their course. But this often meant he missed what he or she really ought not to have missed either, the bullying that can happen when there is no strong control, or some crisis an individual pupil was going through that needed attention or intervention.

In some schools House staff did not teach at all and so a gap usually opened up between them and the teaching staff. Housemasters at Carmel were expected to teach, a slightly less rigorous, both to retain their position in the academic hierarchy for their own status and because it was believed that they needed to have first-hand experience of students under teaching conditions. This was the norm, even though it meant that something had to give. In general, the house suffered as exhausted teachers flopped at the end of a day and retired to their homes. Good housemasters were very hard to find even though they received free accommodation and expenses.

I wanted, ideally, to have Jewish housemasters because over the crucial weekends, when pupils had most free time, an open, warm religious home was an excellent opportunity to develop relationships and offer some substitute for family life. But effective Jewish teachers were like water in the Sahara. Nevertheless many of them were remembered for their colourful personalities as much as for their success in controlling, protecting and helping their charges. No residential school can succeed without a corps of devoted pastoral staff.

### **Coeducation**

A significant issue at Carmel was the interaction between boys and girls. Girls had been admitted into what was designed and run as a boy's school. Initially only few were introduced into the sixth form with very mixed results, and in David Stamler's final year he had opened up the whole of the school to girls. During the interregnum, when discipline collapsed, the school had acquired something of the atmosphere of a pop festival; indeed, several couples had disappeared over weekends into the local "scene". To bring the school back too much freedom and a disregard for authority was never going to be an easy task but it had to be done and it was.

Coeducational was a major issue and challenge. Many of the non-Jewish Public Schools had started admitting girls as much to spread the net of potential recruits as to provide a more balanced social environment. It had become a fashion even if a controversial one. At Carmel, initially, the girls were treated as 'boys with skirts.' There was insufficient recognition of their differences, and I was soon convinced of the problems of sexual roles interfering with academic progress in the cases of the less able girls and boys. With a handful of girls in a predominantly boys' school, the social sexual pressures were overwhelming and they needed a secure atmosphere of their own as a refuge. In a dream world I would have separated them onto a different campus for residence.

Nubile and hormonal teenagers in a residential situation found themselves under constant pressure to pair off and even more to experiment sexually. Regardless of one's religious position it was inevitably a losing battle. The constant attempt to stop couples finding secret hideaways never let up. But we did enforce a rule of no 'PDA,' public display of affection, which I also justified as an infringement of traditional Jewish values of modesty. Like any school rule, including dress codes, it was a golden opportunity for petty infringement, but in general standards worked well and were maintained.

The coeducational structure was an attraction to less observant parents. But the area of growth for potential applicants was the orthodox wing of Anglo Jewry and co-

education even further alienated Orthodox opinion. Carmel seemed bent on total isolation from the quickest growing elements of the Jewish world. In 1972 I paid a visit to the Lubavitcher Rebbe in New York who had taken an interest in the school and had supported my candidacy. The first thing he told me was that I should insist the Governors de-integrate the school and separate the sexes. I told him the Governors would not agree. He persisted and said I should try.

But the governors were not to be moved. Since the general trend amongst Public Schools was towards co-education they did not want to be seen as regressive. During the early years, the coeducational aspect was undoubtedly the major disciplinary concern. Nevertheless, I recognized that for non Orthodox children there was a lot to be said in favour of coeducation. The cliché was that "girls were a civilizing influence", and in some respects they were. Particularly in areas such as music, art and drama they added tremendously to the quality of school life. But their presence was disruptive too in terms of broken relationships, competition for favours and the need to impress.

Socially, there was a strong argument against segregated schools. But in purely academic terms I believed then, and still do, that more can be achieved by separate teaching. Later on I experimented in sciences and Jewish studies and found that girls in their mid teens, of average academic ability did far better in separate classes. So my religious biases were not the only basis for my opposition. But once the process of integration had begun it could not be stopped, for financial reasons as much as any other consideration. As I was to discover, finance usually played a greater part in deciding policy than any other factor. Resources made life easier, improved morale and enhanced relationships. When one had to cut back, everything was affected.

### **Prefects**

The 'prefectorial system' was deeply ingrained in the English Public school system as the Victorian novel 'Tom Brown's Schooldays' amply illustrates, and not always as a force for good. It made sense to encourage pupils to learn how to take on responsibility. It made sense to try to create and encourage older pupils to set an example and help encourage the values of the school. The problem was that any system has its limitations, its abuses and its failures.

I certainly encouraged, met with, taught privately, those pupils I thought could be the role models for others. If over the years it appeared I favoured certain pupils, it was only because I saw that in every society, the many are led by the few. If I could win over the crucial ones, to whom others looked up, and get them to support me, it would make my goal of influencing the student body easier. So I did promote those who set the sort of example I wanted, combining a positive attitude to Judaism with contribution to academic life. I like to think that I cared for everyone regardless of their contribution. Only those who actively undermined me succeeded in alienating me from them. And even then I tried hard not to give in. And ironically I have maintained a better relationship years later with more pupils I clashed with than with those who at the time I thought myself closest to.

One of the areas I could dictate right from the start was the system of prefects because they were my appointments even though I consulted with the staff before making the

announcement. I had experienced the system both as a victim and a head prefect in my final year as a pupil. My reservations were based on the dangers of giving youngsters too much power over other pupils, having seen the abuses myself, the victimization and bullying that often ensued. I had also seen how pupils wanting the position pretended to be what they were not in order to get chosen. The system encouraged hypocrisy. I wanted the school to encourage honesty, not pretense. I was also looking for leadership that was Jewishly committed, not just authoritarian.

Yet the fact was that prefects of some sort were needed to take care of lots of administrative or routine matters in a boarding school, from supervising homework to controlling the pupils as they came in for meals or services, and help with supervising the residential buildings after school hours. Prefects were a very useful support to teachers.

I decided, perhaps impetuously, in my second year to experiment. I abolished prefects and made all senior pupils divide up responsibilities for the duties themselves, in a democratic way. Some of the older pupils were up in arms because they had been looking forward to the privileges of seniority. Others simply did not want to take on any kind of responsibility at all either because they wanted to concentrate on their studies or simply did not want to be burdened. Some even were fearful of being identified with school authority. The younger pupils all welcomed the idea, and we tried it for a few years. But in the end, the sad fact was that even senior pupils needed rewards and status, and for all my idealism we eventually returned to something like the old system. Prefects were appointed to take on responsibilities around the school. But they were deprived of much of their old penal authorities. They were given added privileges such as more days away from school in exchange. In fact, having broken with tradition, one as able to reinvent the system and what emerged was a more humane one.

## **Discipline**

When I was appointed, many pupils thought that as a 28 year old I would be a soft touch, 'one of them.' I had to clamp down disciplinarily to overcome the laissez-faire mood that had crept in the year before I took up my appointment. I was a disciplinarian, even if one who was willing and prepared to explain and justify his positions. I tried right away to rein the recalcitrant pupils in. It took a lot of explanation to justify my approach. I could not and would not try to justify discipline for its own sake. I told the pupils that I believed in Carmel as a Jewish school and that meant adhering at least publicly to certain traditional norms of behaviour. I told the school that anyone who wanted to live by other standards could always leave amicably. Some did. Most were constrained by their parents to stay even though I never wanted any pupil to be sent to the school or to be compelled to stay against his or her wishes.

I was harsh on occasion, when I felt the need to establish my authority. One senior pupil from Israel was expelled for selling drugs that in fact turned out to be talcum powder, but I was looking to purge his negative influence anyway. The father appealed to Harris, using his wealth and influence to lean on him, but to his credit, after failing to budge me, he conceded. In another situation, two boys were caught seriously breaking several religious and social rules at the same time. I expelled one

who had a poor and disruptive record and allowed the other to stay on to complete his exams because he had done nothing untoward previously. There were those who condemned me for favouring one over the other and others who accepted my position, which I explained to the school, that past record deserved to be taken into consideration.

It was always one of my principles to treat all pupils and parents equally and refuse any attempt of rich parents to gain preferment. As a pupil I resented it when some pupils got preferential treatment because their families had donated funds or helped the school in some way. I was determined not to do that. In this I have to say the Governors supported me all the way after I stood firm at the very outset. This incidentally was also why I strongly supported the idea of school uniforms. It was not as the name implies to impose uniformity for its own sake. But it was rather to avoid some pupils spending too much on clothes and showing off. We also banned jewelry, forbade older pupils having cars, also to avoid ostentation, privilege and distinction. We wanted pupils to be judged on their own merits. This too required authority and the right to discipline.

Sex, drugs, theft, and disrespect for the religious side of the school were constant areas of preoccupation. It was after all an obligation of a school to parents as well as children to work to ensure a safe, protected and vice free atmosphere for pupils. In my first year, I stopped a "ring" of pupils who had for several years been bringing light drugs into the school. I expelled the ringleader. I had a tremendous battle to prevent the school from being turned into an experimental workshop for Masters and Johnson. Courting couples were always looking for rooms they could get the keys of or secret hideaways where they would not be caught. One year a pair of senior pupils I had thought I could trust, managed to get into the Bursar's office and make copies of keys to rooms that were 'Out of Bounds' and they would 'hire them out' to their friends. There were constant games of cat and mouse. But a series of draconian measures and examples meant that, although many pupils did things of all kinds at home, with or without parental encouragement, the mood was established that it was better not to do these things at Carmel.

Too much of the disciplinary side of the school was falling on my shoulders. The "day" teachers left the estate after lessons and the house staff were often under too much pressure to cope beyond their own buildings. With as vast an estate as Mongewell Park was, the opportunities for monkey business were legion. I ended up walking around the grounds most evenings, accompanied by my three dogs. Initially they were most helpful, running towards pupils hiding in the bushes for a quick smoke. But after a while they themselves gave warning of my approach and I was "rumbled". There was a certain mystique I intentionally cultivated of omnipresence and omniscience. Walking quietly at night around in the dark and listening to conversations from the shadows often gave me useful information. There was a rumour that a tunnel existed from the Old Norman Churchyard next to my house into my study in the main building and this explained how I was able to turn up out of nowhere so to speak at crucial moments. I did not discourage the fantasy. Neither did I discourage the story of the ghost of the Green Lady who walked the grounds at night. It helped keep some younger and more credulous pupils in the safety of their rooms, as did the story of a pack of rabid wolves that slept in the ruins of the old Church by day but roamed the countryside after dark.

Peer group pressure was an extremely powerful factor. On one occasion, I came across a "drinking" party at the end of the playing fields and instructed the fifteen-year-olds to wait outside my study the following day. I called in the most responsible girl there and expressed my disappointment. She burst into tears. "I'm fed up being the goody-goody and the swot. Everyone makes fun of me. I wanted to show I could join in." I felt sorry for her. Teenagers can be very cruel, and at Carmel girls in particular had to be exceptionally strong to survive the onslaughts of those who did not care about academic work or toeing the line. Later on, with a higher proportion of girls, it got a little easier for girls to create their own protective and support groups.

Having abandoned corporal punishment I had relative few deterrents. Detention was one, preventing pupils from enjoying their free time. Serious offenders against decorum or respect for teachers would be held for an hour or two under staff supervision doing academic work. Others would be sent around the grounds under the supervision of prefects to pick up litter and debris. Repeat offenders were brought before their tutors, and then sent to me and finally their parents would be notified.

More serious offences against the school rules could lead to suspension which meant sending the pupils home. Foreign pupils had to have guardians in England. But often suspension was an extra holiday. Still it sent a serious message that the pupil was not welcome in school society unless his or her behaviour changed.

I kept on reiterating that I regarded a Carmel education as a privilege and I only wanted pupils to stay who were willing to belong to the community. This was particularly so on matters of religious observance. If they could not or would not, I would ask their parents to withdraw them permanently and find another school. Some pupils took this as an expulsion but it was not. I saw it as an amicable parting of the ways and would often give glowing recommendations explaining that if that the rigorous demands of the school were to blame for seeking an alternative. However I got a reputation for being too cavalier with my suspensions. On the other hand there were offences I was willing to regard more tolerantly, that teachers thought should be treated more aggressively and they could not understand my strictness on matters of religion or smoking.

Expulsion was the ultimate punishment. I used it for theft, bullying, sexual offenses and for repeated and intentional violations of the religious code. Parents often objected, sometimes Governors sought to intervene. On several occasions they asked for reports on the statistics or suspensions and expulsions but given the chance to explain my decisions, I almost always carried the day. In the end my decision was final, a crucial factor in maintaining control over the school.

In fact my most powerful disciplinary tool was projection, charisma, using my persona to exercise authority, something I had seen my father and indeed Romney Coles use so effectively. Whether in the synagogue or the Dining Room, faced with hundreds of pupils, this is the most effective weapon in ones armoury. But it works only so long as one knows one has the means to enforce it if need be.

I was proud of our policy to take pupils who had failed at other schools, either academically or disciplinarily. Often Jewish children in non-Jewish societies were alienated and responded badly. Sometimes I accepted them on trial. If the trial did not

work out and they did not respond I would insist they leave. I did not regard this as an expulsion, just as a failed experiment.

I also offered foreign pupils the opportunity to try to adapt to an English academic environment. If they came too late there was no way for them to master English quickly enough to pass exams. We only offered English for Foreign Students or as a Second Language in the early years. Pupils who came at say seventeen or eighteen were at a great disadvantage. Sometimes I would give them a try but after a year explain, sadly, that our curriculum had nothing to offer them. I found out later that they often considered this a form of expulsion too.

The English system of Education drew a significant line in those days between the O Levels and the A Levels. Almost half of each "O" level year left after their exams, mainly because they were not regarded as being suitable candidates for the A Levels. Heads of Department were able to say which pupil they would accept into their Sixth Form and which not. In those days at 16 one could leave compulsory education and go to work full time, and many left to do that. Some left because they wanted to study subjects Carmel did not teach. Others left because they wanted to go to a Day School or their parents wanted to save the fees.

I was Headmaster during a period of transition in Public School disciplinary standards, when the old norms of Headmasters as absolute dictators, undisputed and unchallenged were beginning to change. I believed that everyone in authority had to be subjected to scrutiny and challenge and be able to justify and explain their actions. But at the same time the Headmaster needed to be the final authority in the running of the school and everything had to go through him or her unless they are thought to be incompetent. In which case they ought to be removed by the Governors or transferred. I worked under such conditions and with full support. I am not sure I would be able to function as a Headmaster to my own satisfaction in the current climate where much of the power and authority of Headmasters had been whittled away.

### **Non-Jews and Day Pupils**

There had always been a few day pupils at Carmel. Usually they were the children of teachers or other staff and as many were non-Jewish as Jewish. In my father's day a non-Jewish boy from Gibraltar, George Guillem, joined the school as boarder. He was universally liked. It helped that he was a good sportsman. Over the years other non-Jewish boarders from Gibraltar came. I never heard any complaints from them about being discriminated against in any way and most people seemed to think it was a healthy lesson in toleration on both sides. Occasionally the daughter of some local professional would come for a term or so or to take examinations. I recall the school doctor's attractive daughter, when I was a student, joined the school for a while, much to the excitement of the older boys. But still the numbers were small, a few each year. In principle I thought this was a good idea and an important lesson in tolerance and variety but I did not think it was Carmel's priority. There were plenty of alternative schools in the area.

When the junior school opened in place of the Girls School in 1968, a concerted effort was made to attract day pupils, both locally and from the Reading Jewish community. The problem was that, as in every school with both boarding and day pupils, there is a

danger of camps and competition between them. The day pupils felt excluded by a lot that went on over weekends. In particular, the socializing that revolved around teachers' homes, the discussion groups with the headmaster, and other Jewish staff over Shabbat and festivals played an important part in bonding, as did the socializing amongst the pupils when there was no formal curriculum. Day pupils were excluded from this, as indeed were teachers who lived off campus.

On the other hand, while boarders were subject to the religious restrictions of the school over weekends and festivals, day pupils could do as they pleased, and did. This freedom was resented by boarders. Another problem was that insufficient attention was paid administratively to day pupils. They had no specific facilities, no staff dedicated to their needs and interests. The trouble, as I saw it, was the more we catered to the needs of day pupils, the greater the danger of two classes emerging and possibly conflicting. I felt we had an obligation to help educate local Jewish families, but there were other public schools in the area that catered to the needs of Christian pupils more effectively. We provided special Christian education for those pupils who wanted it and over the years a series of local clerics would come up to the school to teach the Christian pupils.

Henry Harris had tried to spike the parental resistance to my appointment by appointing governors who were parents. Several joined the board; but, as it happened, they were parents of day pupils, and in agitating for their needs, tried to push the expansion of day pupils in the school. This brought me into conflict with them. All the more so since most parents of boarders lived a long way from the school, often abroad, they rarely tried or had the opportunity to get involved and their presence was not a problem. It was one of the benefits of being a Boarding School that most parents lived so far away. The 'problem' with local parents was, understandably that their own children were their absolute priority and no other consideration mattered. A good teacher tried to make every pupil feel listened to regardless of where someone was likely to turn up to plead his or her case or not. Local parents coming into the school whenever they felt like it, were indeed often a problem for the staff demanding their attention regardless of other commitments. It was my job to protect teachers from undue pressure.

Most non-Jewish Headmasters of public schools I encountered tried to fend off parental involvement as much as possible. It was not that they objected to parents caring or being involved in the education and life of their children. It was rather when they insisted that their child be given preference over another that the problems arose, or when they wanted special treatment. But that of course is a far bigger problem for Day School heads.

Typical of the sort of aggressive parents I had to deal with was one family from Reading. They had little sympathy with religious life and, like many nouveau riche, liked to give the impression that they knew best about everything. They acted as watchdogs, complaining about any move I made that displeased them. They wanted me to dance to every tune and turn the school into their perception of what it ought to be. They and their clique made my life doubly difficult. They insisted that rugby should be played at Carmel and donated the posts and equipment, and funded a coach. I had reluctantly agreed to let the experiment go ahead. But student resistance prevailed (they preferred soccer) and the posts were left to rot at the end of the



playing fields. Nevertheless, they were committed to the school in their fashion, and their financial resources, or appearance of them, made them attractive to some of the governors.

Another parent generously donated an elegant new dining room and kitchens to the school. Or, to be more accurate, he got his construction company to do build it which thankfully they did before going bankrupt in the changing economic conditions of the mid Seventies. The receivers tried to collect from the school. The governors invited them to come and remove the bricks if they chose to. Where parents with an agenda moved on they tended to be replaced by those who were simply concerned that everything ran smoothly and they played a much more supportive role. Eventually it struck me that it might have been the responsibility of the school to 'educate' its parents and we did institute parent days when educational issues were addressed by members of staff and constructive dialogue ensued.

## **Governors**

The Governors of Carmel College were in effect the trustees of the charity that owned the school. They were a self-perpetuating oligarchy of those willing to take on responsibility for Carmel College, usually because they were influenced or inspired by one of the headmasters or another governor.

The first governor I had to deal with as Headmaster was Henry Harris who had devoted years of service to Carmel. His involvement was the result of meeting my father and being inspired by him. His views of how the school should be run and mine often differed. He was a successful businessman, but had no pedagogic or academic experience. Like most governors, he saw the school as a commercial enterprise as much as an educational service. Of course, in one way he was right, just as the earlier governors who disagreed with Kopul were. At some stage, one had to balance the books or go under. He had had no personal experience of a public school and the nature of the headmaster's role. Still the school was fortunate to have a man of such dedication who gave a tremendous amount of time to it.

He was followed by Roland Franklin. His accession marked the beginning of what might have been a golden era had not the secondary banking and financial crisis of the mid seventies changed everything. He recognized the importance of establishing policy priorities based on educational criteria and then seeing them through despite objections. And above all he knew that one had to leave it to the dedicated educationalists and administrators to get the job done. He was aware of the nature of staffroom politics, the pettiness of small closed societies and the transient self-interest of parental involvement. This does not mean that he disregarded these elements, but that he was able to put them in perspective. Instead of each disagreement turning into a battle and then a crisis, he understood the nature of support and confidence a headmaster needed if he were to lead with authority. Roland was not much interested in religious affairs, though his wife was, but he knew that Carmel had to be a Jewish school to justify its existence. As with everything else, once we had agreed on the parameters, he left me to run the school as I saw fit.

Cyril Stein who succeeded him similarly discussed the goals and values of the school, in his case he was more involved in the Jewish and Zionist atmosphere. But once he

had the feeling that we shared a similar vision he too took the view that he did with his companies. It was the task of the CEO to run the company, deal with the issues and Cyril's role was to give him the freedom to succeed or enough rope to hang himself. He insisted on fixing budgets for all departments and wanted to know every month that they were being adhered to. And he tried to put the fund raising on a much more professional basis. Cyril had a very Right wing stance on Israeli politics and religiously he supported Chabad. I did not share some of his enthusiasms but we got on and had no conflicts.

When he resigned Monty Finniston took over. He was not really interested in getting too involved in the school. His own career was going through important changes. He was much more of a rubber stamp but offering wisdom and perception in discussion. More than any other Governor he was an Industrial Chairman, leaving it to the underlings to run the company affairs at arm's length under his stewardship. Henry Knobil on the other hand took an interest in me personally and as a result it was during his Chairmanship that I was able to start my disengagement. I regarded him as a friend and was able to unburden myself without fear of it having any negative effect. I write about these relationships because the question of managing Jewish schools is and it seems has always been controversial one. Not a few Jewish (and non-Jewish) schools around the Jewish world have experienced crises because of either confusion or conflict over the role of Governors and a lack of unity of purpose and vision.

Usually a commercial company is run by its executives. The board acts an overseeing body that ensures the company is running efficiently and will not normally intervene unless it believes that something serious is going wrong. Carmel was a charity and governed by the rules of the UK Charity Commission. This required the school to have a board of Governors or Trustees who had to ensure that school adhered to its constitution as approved by the Charity Commissioners. Perhaps the most important decision of the Governing body and the one they were most often least prepared for was the appointing and firing of the chief executive, the Head master. They were also a compliance body ensuring the school adhered to the laws of the country. The Governors were not allowed to benefit personally in any way from their position and were not paid any honorarium. It was assumed at the time by everyone, that the Governors as a body, were both the owners of the school and responsible for it in the way a Company Board was, but in fact during the prosecution of Carmel in the 1980s by the Inland Revenue the courts passed judgment that Governors were not liable. But of course that is just a legal nicety. The Governors had always accepted the obligation to see that the school was funded even if they technically had no legal obligation to.

In general such a system works well when a school is well run by its professionals. My father after the early conflict with the founding Governors had an extremely positive relationship with the succeeding governors although his stature and status gave him the paternalistic upper hand. The Governors then appointed his successor, David Stamler, and their involvement slowly became much more pro-active and interventionist up to the point of arranging his departure. The body was criticized over its handling of my appointment but in effect that boiled down to a criticism of the Chairman's trying to pre-empt the appointment committee the Board had set up. And it is true that in the issue of my mother's role and the Girls School the body was divided into rival camps. But no human system of governance is perfect. After some early adjustments in which I had to assert myself, I felt the system worked well at

Carmel throughout the period I was Headmaster other than that the Governors did not succeed in raising the money required for the school to function optimally.

Speaking now in general terms, the worst situation is where Governors try to get involved in the day to day running of the school in competition with the Head teacher. This undermines central authority and a unified spirit. It encourages rivalries and conflicting sources of information and disinformation. I have often Governors making matters worse in Day schools where they are near enough to be a constant and disturbing presence and when they tried to intervene in internal affairs very often to promote or support their own children to the detriment of others. In the worst situations, most notably in the USA, rich parents who donated large sums to the school thought this entitled them and their children to preferment.

### **Scholarships**

It had always been a policy of Carmel from the very start to have a lot of scholarship pupils. It was often said by Kopul that no gifted child would ever be turned away from Carmel for financial reasons. But it was just as much to ensure a broad social mix. Another factor was simply the Jewish value of charity, to help disadvantaged families. Many of the talented pupils, who came to Carmel, came on scholarships that were given for academic, musical or artistic brilliance or promise. Carmel in my day also gave scholarships for pupils who had a social need such as living far away from a Jewish community.

The student body during my tenure, tended to be made up roughly of 25% scholarship pupils, 25% foreign pupils, 25% from London, and 25% from the provinces. Of the British fee-payers, not a few were very weak academically and came to Carmel primarily because they could not get in anywhere else other than a poor state school. The others came for social reasons such as there being no Jewish education or company near where they lived, parents abroad or travelling, or family imbalance through death or divorce. We took some because of anti-Semitism or similar experiences at another school.

Scholarship pupils were vital to maintain the academic "tone" and the school's public relations. Academic success was the window dressing of the school. I also used scholarships to bring more Orthodox pupils into the school as well, to help establish some small Orthodox base within the student body. I had always wanted a stronger base of Orthodox students to be a powerful (but not an overwhelming) presence, but never succeeded in my goal. Partly it had to do with distance, parental reluctance to send children away from home but also the Jewish community was polarizing and for both ends of the spectrum, Carmel was either too moderate or too religious. Something I took as a compliment but it certainly restricted our potential intake.

Roland Franklin's declared aim had been to try and establish finance for at least a third of the student body to come in as scholars or on reduced fees. Up to that moment, scholarships had been funded either by the ordinary fee-paying parents--the fees contained a premium to cover this--or by the kind but arbitrary courtesy of our bankers, with whom we always had a "healthy" overdraft. But this was too risky a foundation to base our reductions on. It had to be formalized. Some effort was made to get parents to take on additional pupils, either by sponsoring them personally or by

giving a scholarship to run parallel with their regular fee commitment. But these proved both unreliable and unsatisfactory. Despite Roland Franklin's best intentions and those of the Chairmen who came after him, Carmel never succeeded in funding its scholarships effectively.

### **Jewish identity**

The question of who to admit to school was never really an issue. The school was Orthodox and the application forms required parents to fill out their religious affiliation and identity but as far as entrance was concerned Carmel was a plural society. There were pupils from almost the entire spectrum of Jewish life from completely secular to Orthodox.

Kopul was remarkably liberal in his policy. He accepted students no matter what synagogue their parents belonged to. He always used to say and wrote as much in his collection of letters "Dear David" that he strongly opposed Reform as an ideology and accused its rabbinate of misleading their membership over what he called authentic Judaism, but he did not want to discriminate against any Jew no matter what the background who wanted a Jewish education. In answer to the charge that by admitting pupils not technically Jewish according to Orthodox understanding, he was creating a problem further down the line when if such pupils wanted to marry an orthodox partner they would not be recognized as Jews. His only point was that where Jewish status was in doubt, the pupil concerned needed to be made aware of the problem and encouraged to rectify it if he was amenable.

This inclusive policy continued after his death and I adopted it wholeheartedly. I insisted however that both parents should agree to their child getting a Jewish education, that the child's religious status had to be transparent. Eventually the child would have to choose what identity he or she wanted. Then within the school and even the religious activities there would be no discrimination. I was made aware on several occasions that our non-discrimination created difficulties for some congregational rabbis who assumed that a child who went to Carmel was Jewish in the halachic sense. Our response was that Carmel was a school and not an accrediting Jewish Court of Law.

Our policy was vindicated by Chief Rabbi Lord Jakobovits. In 1979 Moshe Davis, the director of the Chief Rabbis office asked me to accept two pupils whose father was Jewish but whose mother was not, yet had been given a Jewish education with the consent of the mother. The Chief Rabbi called to confirm his interest and approval. I accepted them and they turned into two of the best pupils we had in every respect. And they both rectified their religious status later on by getting an Orthodox conversion. There were other cases like those and I never regretted that this was the policy of the school.

### **Conclusion**

By the mid-seventies, the general tenor of the school was deeply gratifying to me. The antagonistic pupils with earlier and conflicting loyalties had gone. I was no longer "on trial" and the school was heading the way I wanted it to. I was proud of what I had achieved and, although I cannot say I enjoyed the constant pressures and in trying too

hard to prove myself, I had taken on far too many commitments to relax, I did feel I was doing a valuable job. I loved the challenge of the school, the experience of relating to its students and my intense participation in its daily life.

I was often asked by pupils how long I would stay at Carmel. I always replied that I would stay as long as I felt I wanted to and was enjoying the experience. The moment one loses that desire it was, I always claimed, time to move. My wife was unhappy at Carmel for lots of reasons. She would have been delighted if I had left the physical and social isolation of my position and found some urban employment. We had little social life. It was difficult to mix business with pleasure and feel at ease with people one might be in conflict with the following day in school. We were, besides, younger than most of the married staff. We entertained a lot of people from London at Carmel, but it was mainly to benefit the school by helping its public relations, governors and potential donors. After an exhausting day, it was not easy to drive over an hour into London to meet friends or go to the theatre or some other social event. And then have to return in the early hours and get up fresh as a daisy for early morning service. I worked long hours in the school and often ate my three daily meals with my pupils and staff. As the difficulties at home grew, so did my reluctance to return from one field of conflict to another. But I still did not seriously entertain any of the alternative offers of employment that that came my way, either in the rabbinate or Jewish education at that stage.

However by my twelfth year at Carmel, the strain was becoming so great that I was looking for an opportunity to escape the pressure that came from the school and my home. That, in the end, was why I resigned. Of course one looks back at decisions, good and bad, regrets opportunities missed. Yet I can say that overall it was the experience of my lifetime and rarely a day passes when I am not in touch with former pupils from Carmel days. I regret that some I failed but I am grateful for the opportunity I had and the pleasure I derived from helping and inspiring so many from all over the world.

## **Epilogue (1984-1997)**

I had, in 1984, cut the umbilical cord with Carmel College. It was not easy, but necessary. Carmel had to get on with its life, as much as I wanted to start a new era in mine. As a result, I cannot write about the school itself from 1984 until it closed in 1997. But Carmel continued to play a part in my life in ways I did not at all expect.

The Jewish Chronicle described my leaving England for Israel as "quietly slipping away". I did not want or enjoy making a fuss or having a series of farewells. I had always disliked formality and I particularly avoided 'goodbyes.' Having toyed with jobs in the Rabbinate in Sydney and Los Angeles, my family and I decided to try to make a new life for ourselves in Israel. Here my wife and I embarked upon family therapy and guidance in an attempt to salvage our marriage. I began to explore the possibilities of work in Education, Public Service and Academia. I took on various part-time jobs as I explored my prospects. Through an old friend, Pinchas Peli I did some teaching at Ben Gurion University in Beersheva and started working on a PhD in Philosophy. Through another contact I lectured at the World Union of Jewish students Post Graduate centre in Arad. I had various lecturing assignments and

became the weekend rabbi for the Kfar Shmaryahu community. It was clear to me that teaching, mainly in the sphere of adult education was what really appealed to me. But I soon realized how politicized so much of Israeli life was, polarized and conflicted. I did not find a situation in which I could both exercise control over my life and be myself. One was judged by one fitted in on the spectrum of Israeli religious or secular life. The option of establishing one's own institution would inevitably mean a burden of fund raising which was something I had always avoided because I felt it involved too much moral compromise and sycophancy.

So in the autumn of 1985 we returned to England where I became the rabbi of the independent Orthodox Western Synagogue. It had a noble history going back to the eighteenth century but was now in decline. Its location off the Edgware Road had become a predominantly Arab one. It was known as little Lebanon. Most Jews had left for the suburbs, and the nearby Marble Arch United Synagogue survived primarily because its location attracted tourists. The Western no longer had an Orthodox community to draw on. Only a few families adhered strictly to Jewish law. But it was financially secure because it owned its own burial grounds and it had a social and youth centre which was active during the week. The attraction for me was that it was independent. I would not be subject to interference from the United Synagogue and its religious authorities. It was an opportunity to return to the rabbinate and be free to focus on adult education and whatever else I wanted to do. The tolerance of its board and the friendship of its honorary officers gave me the freedom to do as I pleased.

I was living in the West End and encountering regularly those members of the governing body of Carmel who also lived in the area, such as Cyril Stein and Henry Knobil. In our friendly social encounters, what was going on at Carmel was not raised. I was happy to leave behind that part of my life to concentrate on the present, which I was enjoying immensely and finding very satisfying. New opportunities were constantly opening up.

I was looking to the future. But as often happens, those things one wishes to leave behind often find ways to pursue one. While I was in Israel in 1985 I had met Emmanuel Grodzinski, an Old Carmeli now on the board of governors, and he told me that the Inland Revenue were investigating Carmel College in respect of scholarships given to pupils that were, according to them, not genuine scholarships but ways of defrauding the tax authorities. I was not concerned because all fiscal decisions had been taken by the governors and we were simply following procedures that other English public schools were. Besides, I was no longer involved in any way.

So it came as a surprise when in September 1986 the Revenue asked to come and see me. I arranged a date and informed one of the governors, Michael Phillips, about it and asked him if he or Carmel wanted to send a lawyer or anyone else along. Apart from telling me I should have a lawyer (I could not understand why, I had nothing to fear--besides I could not afford lawyers) I heard nothing else. I met the Revenue representatives in October when they came round to the synagogue flat and took a statement from me.

I told them how proud we had been at Carmel, offering such a large number of scholarships to pupils of limited means. We offered scholarships for academic

excellence, but also for other talents, in subjects such as music and art. We also offered scholarships where there was a social need, say a pupil living outside a significant Jewish community with few opportunities for a Jewish social life. I also said that where we offered merit scholarships we would also ask if the family had any relatives who might be approached to make donations or take out charitable covenants in favour of the school. We had been given advice that this was perfectly legal so long as they were not obligatory or conditional.

My father had brought me up to have inordinate respect for British institutions. His admiration was naturally in contrast to European countries, and in particular Eastern Europe which he had heard about from his parents and experienced himself as a student when he went study in Lithuania. It would therefore have been inconceivable to me as a young man to think that corruption might exist at every level, and that contacts, friends in high places, might influence police and other governmental agencies. I believed the Inland Revenue were honest collectors of what was owed to the state. They certainly would not have their own agendas or want to gain publicity by mounting "high profile" cases. Now we know with certainty that corruption exists almost everywhere and no one in his or her right mind would blindly trust a State institution or talk to anyone from such institutions that have the capacity and the power to get one into trouble without a good lawyer. If what Carmel had done was no different to what Eton was doing, then why worry that a small Jewish school would be picked on to be made an example of rather than the best known school in the land? And if honesty was always the best policy, then why not be honest?

Two representatives of the Inland Revenue asked me to explain how scholarships and bursaries worked and what the chain of command was. I told them the procedure. The governors would fix a sum to be allocated for reductions, and I and the senior masters examined and interviewed the candidates and made allocations accordingly. I would occasionally invite successful parents to make or arrange for charitable donations to be made, if possible, to the school, quite independently of any other consideration. If they agreed I would then pass them on to discuss the details with the bursar. Sometimes parents asked for further reductions or had problems with the fees. I would also refer them on and I was called upon merely to assess their academic potential and recommend whether to help in principle or not, if there were other factors we ought to take into consideration, like social or Jewish need.

I was shown letters from some parents to the Revenue in which they suggested that I had pressurized them to take out covenants illegally. Of course I denied that totally. It was not until later that I discovered that the Inland Revenue had quite improperly threatened them with prosecution if they did not help give evidence against the school. Then they produced two letters from the treasurer of the school blaming me entirely and saying that arrangements to pay fees by covenant were my idea and now were deemed illegal. I was thunderstruck at this dishonest and immoral position, but remembered my father always telling me that the people one expected most from, one got least from.

I heard nothing more for nearly a year; then in August 1987 I heard that I was to be prosecuted, along with Joe Dwek, the treasurer, and the governors of Carmel College for cheating the Inland Revenue by procuring the payment of school fees by covenant. Michael Phillips, one of the governors I had always liked, phoned me up and

suggested I go and see David Freeman. He had a reputable firm of mainly commercial lawyers. He had been a governor of Carmel until the Franklin era, and was apparently prepared to "take me on" and "arrangements" would be taken care of.

I went to see him in his "palatial" building in Fetter Lane. He sat me down and reassured me of his friendship with my father and how he would do no less for me than he would have done for my father whom he admired. We chatted about his wife's involvement with my mother in the planning of the girls' school that eventually was blocked. He told me that I should never have talked to the Inland Revenue. But he would try his best to extricate me from a difficult position.

Over the next month we had several meetings. I tried to recall the events referred to in the indictment. The Revenue was bringing charges that related to the mid-seventies. I explained the chain of command on financial issues went from governors concerned with finance to the bursars. I could not believe that anyone who knew anything about the structure at Carmel could possibly implicate me in financial issues, or that the Inland Revenue, if they would have honestly looked into Carmel, could have thought me culpable.

Freeman quickly disabused me of my naivety. The governors and the treasurer had other priorities, themselves and Carmel. Their lawyers fancied me as a sort of sacrificial lamb. Lord Mishcon was acting for Carmel. He had, by all accounts, mishandled the Revenue by trying to use his political connections inappropriately. His interests were in conflict with mine. I heard, with growing disbelief, of the maneuverings of the others against me. I trusted Freeman to look after me. I do not say he mishandled the situation. I will say that subsequently I entertained doubts as to how well he served my cause.

Nevertheless, Freeman put me in the hands of an enthusiastic and dedicated junior in his firm, Susan Monty, and "instructed" Ian Mayes, a barrister in Michael Sherrard's chambers, to take my case. Ian was serious and laconic. He had done work for the Revenue and knew their methods and attitudes. He told me they selected a number of cases to prosecute each year, usually those with maximum publicity potential. They had dug their heels in and there was no hope of moving them. I could face a prison sentence and the case was a tough one. Not only that but I could expect both Carmel's lawyers and any other governors involved personally, to go for me and try to pass the buck. I was shocked again. Freeman assured me that was only the barrister covering himself; things were not so bad.

I went to explain my situation to the Chief Rabbi and asked him if I should resign. He laughed the idea away and said all I had done was to try to help parents give their children a Jewish Education. The law on covenants was confused, and anyway most Jewish schools were using covenants somewhere in their fundraising and income structure. I spoke to the president of the Western, Sidney Jaque, and he too reassured me and said that the matter would not even be discussed until the outcome had been established. Various friends asked if they could intervene with the Revenue. I did not discourage them, but I knew it would be useless.

The decision was taken to have an "old fashioned" full magistrate's hearing, on the grounds that this would force the Revenue to reveal their cards, even though we



would not defend ourselves. It meant a mini-trial of several weeks, but at least we would know what we were up against. Early in 1988, the case was heard at Didcot Magistrates' Court. Parents and two bursars had been given immunity from prosecution. The parents divided between those who said that they only discussed financial matters with the bursars and those who said that they discussed things with me first and then with the bursars. The bursars—Simpson, assistant at Radley College, and Oakley, now working for the university clearinghouse for applications, now known as UCAS, said that whatever they did was under instructions from the governors, and that they were uneasy about some things. Oakley said he had discussed his unease with me, but could not remember where or when.

The prosecution's case, led by an aggressive man called Igor Judge, was that I and the school needed more pupils and therefore intentionally flouted the law on covenants to attract them. Here was a private, privileged institution offering an exclusive, expensive education to an elite few at the expense of the ordinary taxpayer, "you and me". The fact that, at its best, the Revenue case concerned twenty pupils over fifteen years against a total intake of two thousand was neither here nor there. The Law was only concerned with winning cases.

Carmel's defence was that trustees could not be held responsible for the actions of other trustees and employees. There was confusion as to whether the governors were directors, trustees, or something else. A case involving Tesco was referred to at great length. The magistrate dismissed the case against the trustees on a point of law. Joe Dwek and I were committed for trial.

After the hearing, Freeman sent a bill to Phillips for £30,000. I did not know who was paying for me, whether it was Carmel or the governors or individuals. Whichever way, a letter arrived at Freeman's from Phillips saying that he and the chairman, Cyril Stein, had decided that Rabbi Rosen could henceforth take care of his own expenses. The fact that I had acted for Carmel only was irrelevant it seemed. There was never any suggestion that I, personally, had benefitted from the transactions. But Freeman reported back the opinion that I had brought my prosecution on myself by speaking to the Revenue. Once again, I cannot say I was surprised, only disappointed. Left alone, I could not afford to pay for lawyers, and the only option left was legal aid. A happy irony--since the government through its agency had got me into this mess, they could get me out. I was upset, however, when David Freeman told me that his firm did not deal with legal aid cases and therefore, sadly, he and Susan Monty would have to withdraw.

To my immense surprise and gratitude it was Ian Mayes, although not Jewish, decided to stand by me and set about trying to find a solicitor to take me on. Perhaps it was the friendship we developed on the train to and from Didcot. Perhaps it was just that he was a moral, decent fellow. He and Susan Monty did approach the Chief Rabbi's office to see if a communal fund would help, but they were told that there were other priorities.

Two other friends were very supportive. Lawrence Cartier was an old school friend who had re-established contact when I returned to Carmel as head. Later on he acted for the school over the Founders' House debacle. He offered to defend me, if no one else came forward. The other was another former pupil of Carmel, Joe Esfandi, who

promised support and indeed reassured me about and helped me "vet" the solicitor that Ian Mayes found. Their support was psychologically crucial, rather than tangible.

Ian's wife, also a barrister, had done quite a lot of work for a firm in which one of the partners was Mel Stein. Our paths had crossed in our student days in the 1960's, when we had both contributed to the communal youth magazine Mosaic. Those were the days of youthful anti-establishment, which neither of us had outgrown. Mel and his partner, David Swede, discussed my predicament and agreed to take me on as a pro bono case.

David was a streetwise, down-to-earth, no-nonsense sort of fellow. He had fought in the "famous" Playboy battle of the seventies, when it lost its casino license, and was now concentrating on the much more lucrative commercial side of things. Whereas Mel was very much part of the Jewish community and its religious life, David's connections with Judaism were linked more to coaching Jewish football sides.

Both of them were appalled at the way I had been treated. They felt that this was very much a community problem. If I, as a practicing rabbi, were found guilty, it would reflect on the whole community. Therefore it should have been a community responsibility to see that I got the best support possible. They wanted to publicize the issue and make it one of general concern. I felt uneasy. From one angle, Carmel had never been part of the Jewish community. It had always been regarded as too secular by the religious, too religious by the secular, too parochial by the assimilationists, and too cosmopolitan and liberal by the Little (Jewish) Englanders, too independent. I had got used to being a loner. Neither did I want to call on former pupils or friends. I felt that there were more important issues in world Jewry, indeed in the world, to campaign for than myself. I was uneasy about being used and I wanted to be as inconspicuous as possible.

The next six months were spent going over the details of the Revenue claim and the files and files of "evidence" adduced against everyone concerned. As we went through the actual correspondence and witness statements, there was nothing to incriminate me at all. It was clear that the actual transactions and arrangements for fees were made by the bursars. Most of the parents confirmed that they dealt directly with the bursars on financial issues. The bursars' claims that they took their instructions from me even on financial policy were neither borne out by the facts nor by anyone else's testimony. And as David researched the practices of other public schools, it became clear that Carmel was doing what everyone else was doing. So again, why pick on a Jewish school?

As the Court proceedings drew nearer, David and Ian decided I needed a "leader", a senior QC. Several top Jewish QCs were approached and turned me down. There was one law for the rich and one for people on legal aid. In the end they found Alan Suckling QC, a decent enough fellow but certainly no one to set the Thames on fire. My barristers warned me that there was a possibility of conviction and jail. Now was the time to settle, to admit, to plea bargain. I told them I was innocent. I wanted to fight, even at the risk of losing. January 1989 drew closer and my day of judgment approached.

My concern was not for myself. I was reconciled to my fate. If the Almighty wanted me to "do time" then it was obviously for the best. I was deeply concerned for my four children, both because of the publicity and the possibility of my going to prison.

## **Court Case**

The trial began at the Oxford Crown Court on January 12, 1989. David and I drove up in a car loaded with files. As we drew up outside the court, I was stunned to see TV cameramen and press photographers outside. My initial reaction was to want to run away. The enormity of my situation was suddenly brought home to me.

The atmosphere in the court was something like a cross between a college reunion and a funeral parlour. Having to stand in "the dock", a section at the back of the modern, airily designed Habitat style court was humiliating in itself, more so because a prison warder was "on duty". Everyone rose and bowed to Judge Leo Clark as he entered. He was an avuncular gentleman whom I came to loath for his antagonism and pedestrian style. The prosecution was led by John Goldring QC, less aggressive a character than Igor Judge. Dwek's front man was Tony Arlidge QC, whose crabbed exterior hid a sharp mind and a crude wit. Alan Suckling QC, who admitted that his children described him as ET in a wig, was my man, supported by Ian Mayes. And of course there was a whole battery of juniors, solicitors, solicitor's clerks, and advisors. By the end of a six week trial I still had no clear idea what all of their functions were or how they justified their pay.

First came the maneuvering. "Our" side immediately submitted various complaints against the Revenue for shifting their position, adding different evidence each time the final "bundle" was supposed to have been submitted. The totally unsympathetic response of the judge Leo Clark was a shock. It seemed he had made up his mind from the start to be obstructive to us and supportive to the IR. The lawyers had been talking about the importance of winning the judge's favour. It seemed we had lost before we had begun. At lunch time the gossip from the local "bench" was of Clark's reputation for disliking minorities and his predilection for handing out heavy sentences. Apparently there had been numerous complaints that were left in abeyance in the expectation of his early retirement. We were unlucky enough to have drawn him.

The jury looked young, inexperienced, and frighteningly naive. Only one of them, a middle-aged woman with an artistic air, refused the oath and affirmed. They seemed remarkably attentive, and followed the judge's instructions and smiled at his courting witticisms.

The clerk read out the charges. "Jeremy Rosen, between January 1976 and January 1984, with intent to defraud and to the prejudice of Her Majesty the Queen and the Commissioners of the Inland Revenue, aided and abetted, counseled or procured payments to Carmel College Limited (a registered charity) under a Deed of Covenant executed by (and the name of each parent or his company was inserted) purporting to be for charitable purposes, so that income tax deducted could be reclaimed from the Inland Revenue, whereas in truth and in fact the said payments were not for charitable purposes but were for the payment of school fees."

I was asked how I pled. I wanted to shout out, "You must be joking," but confined myself to a subdued, "Not Guilty." The prosecution case against me and the school was that there had been some twenty cases of "fake covenants" over a ten year period. The maximum loss to the Revenue over that period was £35,000. As the case wore on it boiled down to seven cases amounting to less than £20,000. This amounted to an average of £2,000, and less than one child per annum. The trial had already cost the public an amount approaching £1,000,000. And Carmel had at the outset offered to settle. I could neither believe how the Revenue could get away with such a colossal waste of public money, nor why the judge could allow the farce to proceed. That this was a criminal case at all could only be attributed to prejudiced motives.

The press had a field day. "Rabbi runs fraud at Jewish school" won the prize for the Daily Telegraph. The press filled the court for the prosecution case and then disappeared during the defence. So the papers and general media had every word of what we were alleged to have done as though it were proven fact, but nothing of the other side until the end. So every weekday I spent in Oxford in court. And when I returned to the synagogue each weekend, the reaction I received was supportive and soothing.

The first witnesses were the parents. Most of them were sympathetic to me, some could not remember my involvement at all in the financial issues; most had dealt directly with the bursars. The documentation showed that their affairs were often handled by accountants and lawyers who had raised no objections to the arrangements. One parent said that I had suggested he pay the school fees by covenant, but also agreed his children had won legitimate scholarships. Another seemed eager to incriminate me, hardly surprising since I had expelled his daughter from Carmel.

The bursars were poor witnesses. Even the judge was constrained to admit that he was not very impressed by their evidence. One by one, all the prosecution witnesses were failing to come up to proof or scratch. Finally, the tax experts were neither certain nor convincing in their knowledge of whether covenants could be used or not for the religious aspects of education, or indeed in general where the line was drawn for organizations such as the National Trust or other schools. Some people, and indeed some tax inspectors, thought it alright to use covenants for school buildings and for the purely religious side of the curriculum. In the seventies, it transpired, expert opinion was divided as to what was allowed. Had the case been judged on the facts and the witnesses, we would have had little to worry about. But the judge was hectoring and biased against the defense all the time. His feelings were transparent to the visitors in the public gallery, former pupils studying at Oxford, members of Joe's family, and Conrad Morris, the only governor to put in an appearance.

Nothing anyone had said prepared me for my cross examination--the three most gruelling days, in mental terms, that I can remember. I had been instructed not to reply other than monosyllabically. But twice I let loose. "If this was a calculated fraud, why did we not do a "decent" job of it?" And when challenged on a reply I retorted that I had taken an oath which meant something to me, if not to the QC. When I had finished, David Swede was subdued. He had hoped that I might have won over the judge. I certainly did not. Only afterwards did I discover that what lost points

with him gained credit with the jury. But I had offended the codes of the "in crowd"; I had not been the perfect witness.

We felt that an objective judge might have thrown the charges out. Eventually, and reluctantly, he reduced them, and the Revenue themselves dropped others. But they had come so far they had nothing to lose; it was not their money. So we went on to the final stages.

Goldring did his best to make a case out of it. The defense barristers all felt that his heart was not really in it. I wondered if Leo Clark ever looked himself in the mirror and pretended he was unprejudiced. The only thing to be said in favour of the English system was the jury.

The essence of his case against me was that I must surely have known what the bursars were up to and I should have probed and acted. In itself this was a reasonable point of view, highlighting the nature of responsibility. But my expertise was educational and I relied on governors to use theirs. Alan Suckling argued that I was being made a scapegoat. Ian Mayes read out a moving tribute from the Chief Rabbi and rested my case on my integrity, history, and record.

The judge's summing-up was a last ditch attempt to make some sort of case out of the prosecution's line. It was as though he was a second prosecutor, picking hole after hole in the defense, pouring scorn and antipathy, asking, inviting the jury to convict. Through his clerk he had let it be known that he would pass a stiff custodial sentence if the jury found us guilty. The warder advised me, as a friend, to prepare for jail-- what to bring along and what not. Indeed, for the last day, Friday the 17th, I packed, ready for prison. Such was our mood.

My brother Mickey who had come up previously to lend his moral support came up again for the final day. We had no idea how long it would last. Shabbat came in at five thirty, so on the possibility that the case would run over into the Saturday, I arranged with friends for food and the religious necessities for Shabbat to be brought up to Oxford.

The jury went out mid-morning. The real agony had begun. The spirit that had sustained us the previous two years and in particular the previous six weeks was ebbing. Our resistance had been savaged by the judge's summing-up. Joe, in particular, showed the strain as we waited and waited. The press was back, hovering like vultures. My brother, Mickey, had brought a mutual friend, Sue Rubin, and we waited, drank coffee, and watched the hours pass. My brother had to return to London.

The trial had lasted a month. It was now February 17th and Shabbat came in but it was not until over an hour later that the jury returned. We crept, full of foreboding, into court. I glanced briefly at the jury; the friendly, warm smiles flashed back at us. The forewoman was the most sympathetic of the jurors. I listened in trepidation. She stood to reply "not guilty" to all the charges against me. All the agony, pain and humiliation, were suddenly swept away. We all congratulated each other and everyone hurried off in their different directions to spend the weekend with their families. It was too far in Shabbat for me to travel anywhere.

I went to the nearby Randolph Hotel in the centre of town to celebrate a Shabbat of freedom. I had arranged for my family and the congregation to be informed, and besides the Saturday papers had it all. The initial relief was enormous. After Shabbat I returned to London. It took months to unwind. I was inundated with messages, letters, and visits of congratulations and relief it was over. The Jewish Chronicle published an editorial expressing anger at the Inland Revenue and sympathy for me.

### **London to Antwerp**

The effect of the trial on me was to want to get as far away from Anglo-Jewry and England as I could. I had divorced in 1987 and remarried in 1988. My new wife's family invited me to move to Antwerp, which I did in 1990. I had, during the previous year, initiated negotiations for a merger between "my" Western Synagogue and Marble Arch. I was in favour of the merger. It made sense from every point of view. Originally the new entity was going to be independent, like the Western. But that was not something the United Synagogue was prepared to concede, so the negotiations failed. But I still felt a duty to the Western Synagogue, which had been so supportive of me. So I agreed to come over to London every second week and for the festivals (which also gave me a chance to spend Shabbat with my children).

In 1991 the Western caved in and conceded its independence when it merged with Marble Arch Synagogue. The new Western Marble Arch became a United Synagogue affiliate. I stayed on only as part-time visiting rabbi until they found a permanent solution and then severed my ties altogether.

It was an interesting change, living in Antwerp. For the first time in my life I was no longer a full time rabbi or educator although I did keep on lecturing and teaching in Antwerp and mainly Brussels at the Commission.

### **Carmel closes**

In the winter of 1996 my wife and I moved from Antwerp to New York. In the spring of 1997 it was announced that Carmel had closed and its estate sold. It came as a surprise to everyone. I had had no direct contact at all with the school, but I had heard from various sources about the school's on-going difficulties. The standards were declining, the numbers were dropping and the school had massive debts.

My initial reaction was deep regret that Cyril Stein had not contacted me to ask me if I would be prepared to try to salvage the school. Stanley Cohen, a man of means and a former parent, proclaimed that he was actively trying to rally support. My brother Mickey wrote a letter to the Jewish Chronicle on behalf of my mother, who had helped found the school, expressing her dismay at the circumstances.

Some parents had contacted the Charity Commissioners to express their dismay at the closure of the school and they ordered an enquiry into the sale. The sale was rescinded. Parents and former pupils campaigned to save the school. I flew to London to see if there was any possibility of resurrecting it. Together with my mother, we convened a meeting at YAKAR to test the response. But it was clear that "the community" was not going to get involved and no one else was either. Only one Old Carmeli, Howard Ronson, offered a significant sum to help buy and reopen the

school. But despite all our efforts, we could not raise sufficient funds to buy the estate and set up a viable institution. I believe we could have done this had the opportunity been given before the school closed. To mount a fund raising campaign without offices, records and staff is no easy business. Had the schools resources still been usable there might have been a chance.

The school was put up for sale again and sold for the second time and with the approval of the Charity Commissioners to the Dangoor family's Exilarch's Foundation. Several Dangoors had been pupils at Carmel at various times. They offered to let us re-open the school on the understanding that after five years if we did raise the money to repay them, the school estate would revert to them.

It was a kind gesture. But it proved to be of no help. The school buildings were so run down that they needed a lot spent on renovation to reopen and attract "paying customers". We looked at various business plans including opening the school only as a Sixth form college for older students. But none of the plans made sense if we had to buy and renovate, or renovate with the prospect of losing the estate if could not raise the funds in the future. No major donors were willing to contribute unless the school owned its estate outright. And no one was prepared to give enough themselves to establish a new school on the ruins of the old. So that was one end of the Carmel College story.

Since then, sporadic reunions of former pupils that have taken place in London, New York, and Tel Aviv (contacts are maintained through the internet and Facebook) at which teachers , pupils and their partners from all eras of the school have come together. Whenever Carmel pupils meet they share their reminiscences and re-establish friendships and settle old rivalries, forget old enmities and forgive old grudges. They talk with regret of the school's end. It was a brave and exciting experiment in Jewish education. But it was not a universal model for replication, or indeed for survival.

### **Why Did Carmel Close?**

For most of its life Carmel struggled financially. It was always an expensive institution to run because it set itself the highest standards. It was a high maintenance model of education, offering two educational cultures that did not overlap and required additional and separate staffing. Most similar schools only offered one. Secularly it set out to rival the curriculum, facilities and standards of the best and longest established of English Public Schools on a large campus that itself required a lot to maintain in good order. The buildings themselves were not designed for fuel economy and simple maintenance. Carmel paid salaries above those of most other schools. The need to provide for kosher catering in general and the more festive meals required over weekends and festivals as well as the Jewish pastoral requirements also added to the financial burden.

To cover the budget required one of three things, fees, endowments and fund raising. The fees were always high but on the other hand the school always gave concessions and subsidized about a third of its student body. The school never had serious endowments and fund raising was unprofessional, inconsistent and subject to the foibles, strengths and weaknesses of its governing body. If by chance a Chairman of

the Governors was the sort of person who alienated one or another sector of the community, this would have a negative impact on fund raising.

Anyway Carmel appealed to a very limited clientele. The Jewish community in the United Kingdom numbered somewhere between 250,000 and 300,000. The majority of Jews inclined towards assimilation were not convinced of the need for a Jewish education. All the more so if their able children were accepted by the outstanding Christian public schools. In the major centres of Jewish population there were excellent Day Public Schools they could take advantage of. And then when Jewish schools in London and Manchester gained State aid they attracted the majority of those Jewish pupils who could not or would not go to the Public Schools. They were not the drain on family budgets that Carmel was. Being independent Carmel was not eligible for State Funding. On the other hand the growing Orthodox sector of the community was not inclined to send their children to a school where most of the pupils were not Orthodox and the type of education was too liberal for them. The home pool of potential pupils was not a large one.

Whereas once boarding education was a seriously attractive and significant feature of British Education, over the years of Carmel's existence, boarding became less and less attractive. In truth of course Jewish families anyway had always preferred to keep their children at home for as long as possible.

As the financial burdens began to increase, the attempt to encourage day pupils or weekly boarders did not make a significant difference and if anything undermined important features of Carmel life. Increasingly as costs rose the measures Carmel took increase the population and income of the school had the opposite effect. Standards began to suffer and that led to the expense of a Carmel education being less and less attractive at the very moment when more alternatives were appearing on the Anglo Jewish educational scene.

Despite selling assets, the schools financial situation deteriorated and it was almost entirely due to Cyril Stein the Chairman that the school survived as long as it did. But equally it was his inability to attract further support that made his burden all the heavier. It would seem that the moment came when he was no longer prepared to carry on shouldering the obligation and all of a sudden he announced the closure of the school and its sale. But it still was hard to accept that no serious attempt was made to alert the community or the alumni to the crisis before it was too late . Carmel closed because of a combination of circumstances and personalities. As with everything , building takes time, demolition is instantaneous.

Jeremy  
New York, 2010

Rosen

## **Addendum - Carmel School Song**

*Composed by Kopul Rosen in classical and alliterative style.  
Sung to the tune of The Palmach.*



Where'er the road leads on from Carmel  
Tread on surely as you chant this phrase  
What a fate betides us  
There's a guiding light to guide us  
'Know Him in all thy ways.'

Both in glory and in sorrow  
Faced with censure or with praise  
You'll find courage for tomorrow  
Turn again to Carmel days, remember.  
*(Instead of singing 'Remember' most Carmel pupils recall shouting out 'Not Likely' during rehearsals.)*

Passing lights shall not delude us  
*(we were always told to pronounce 'Delude' crisply and not drag it into delooooode us)*  
March on boldly with a steadfast gaze  
Facing life before us  
Chanting out the Carmel chorus  
'Know Him in all thy ways.'

### **Hebrew Transliteration**

'Bechol deracheycha daeyhoo'  
Tehegeh beOrchotav yomam vaLel  
Zo hee sismat beyt sifreynu  
Nishmor et semel degel HaCarmel

Da 'Badad' tamid yancheycha  
Yishmorcha ke'Ishon Eyno  
As taskil bechol deracheycha  
Haot hazot takoom beyncha uveyno

Bechol deracheycha daeyhoo  
Btzar lecha o beim tagel  
Azov naazov ish im re'eyhoo  
VeNihyeh ne'emanim el HaCarmel.

### **Translation of Hebrew**

'Know Him in all thy ways'  
Consider His ways day and night  
This is the motto of our school  
We will keep the sign of the flag of Carmel

Know that BADAD (*Hebrew abbreviation of "Know Him in all thy ways"*) is always before you  
To protect you like the apple of His eye

Then you will succeed in all your ways  
This is the symbol that will endure between you and it (*the school*)

‘Know him in all thy ways’  
Whether you are happy or sad  
One might abandon others  
But still remain true to Carmel.