

Biog 12 The Kaplan Brothers

Morag Cross 13 December 2013

It has been said of one Scottish Jewish family, 'there was [no] dichotomy between the Jewish and the Scottish ... [they] inhabited both worlds simultaneously', and thus achieved a synthesis of the two. This may also have been said of the four Kaplan brothers, whose parents, Leah and Levi, married in 'Kaidan, Russian Poland' (now Kedainiai, Lithuania) in 1885, and emigrated to Scotland soon afterwards. [Sources: Personal information, Harvey L Kaplan, Glasgow; Kenneth E Collins, 2006, *Scotland's Jews: A Guide to the History ...*, Glasgow, p 7; Lazer, Moses and Abraham David Kaplan, Statutory Register of Births, at www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk].

Kaidan was within the Russian Empire's 'Pale of Settlement', a restricted corridor between the Baltic and the Black Sea, 'wherein the residence of Jews was legally authorized'. To escape such legalised discrimination, harsh restrictions on trade and travel, and Russian state-sanctioned outbreaks of mob violence (pogroms), many Jews sought a new life abroad. For Lithuanian Jews like the Kaplans, job opportunities and joining relatives who had already left, were additional incentives. [Source: 'The Pale of Settlement', *Jewish Virtual Library*, at www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org; Personal information, Harvey L Kaplan, Glasgow].

*****12.1**

These new Glaswegians commonly followed certain occupations, including tailoring, shoemaking, picture-framers and travelling salesmen ('hawkers') of assorted merchandise including jewellery, drapery and prints. One reason was that craft-skills were a portable asset, and raw materials could be obtained wherever the artisan was living. Another incentive was that self-employment enabled religious observance, and small quantities of goods for resale could also be obtained, on credit, from Glasgow warehouses. These patterns are reflected with the Kaplans; Levi Kaplan turned to different trades depending on the economic needs of the moment, and was variously a slipper seller, picture hawker, travelling draper, and master clothier. [Sources: Statutory Registers of Births (1887, 1892, 1896), Marriages (1921), 1891 Census, at www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk; Harvey L Kaplan 2006, *The Gorbals Jewish Community in 1901*, Glasgow, pp12-14; Kenneth E Collins 1990, *Second City Jewry*, Glasgow, pp59, 62, 112-3, 152-3].

*****12.2**

Lazarus (Leslie) Kaplan was born in the Gorbals in 1887, followed by Louis (Louie or Lion) in 1890, Moses (Maurie), in 1892, and Abraham David (Davie) in 1896, along with their two sisters, Dora and Rachael. As many Jews 'wanted to throw off their immigrant status by becoming British citizens', and 'it was widely recognised ... that civic responsibility was the key to wider acceptance', the Kaplans' parents became naturalised British subjects in 1896. [Sources: Lazer, Moses and Abraham David Kaplan, Statutory Register of Births, at www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk; Kenneth E Collins 1990, *Second City Jewry*, Glasgow, pp 113; Harvey L Kaplan 2006, *The Gorbals Jewish Community in 1901*, Glasgow, p12 ; Kaplan, Levi , Naturalisation Certificate HO 144/399/B22000, *National Archives Catalogue*, at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk].

*****12.3**

Levi Kaplan died in 1902, leaving his wife with a young family, whom she supported by working as a self-employed travelling drapery saleswoman. By 1911, her sons Lazarus and Louie were, likewise, drapery travellers, and Moses was a picture-frame maker, living at 45 Main (now Gorbals) St, in the Gorbals. The following year, Lazarus, 'master clothier', of 6 Caledonia Road, married clerkess Rachel Langman in the Trades House, 'according to the forms of the Jewish Church'. [Sources: Census 1911, Statutory Registers of Marriages, Deaths, at www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk].

***12.4

All four brothers were to serve in the armed forces during the Great War. Lazarus, or Leslie, the eldest was living with his family at 23 Devon St, in 1915; he enlisted with the Royal Army Medical Corps in a mobile field ambulance (a unit, rather than a vehicle). These groups were responsible for dressing stations and casualty evacuation facilities serving the front line. Louis married Bluma Linderman in Glasgow in 1915, joining the 38th (Labour) Battalion, The Royal Fusiliers, 'a unit manned by Jewish soldiers ... also known as the *1st Judeans*', officially created on 24 August 1917. 'Jewish observances were maintained while ... on service', and a charitable welfare committee was formed in London. [Sources: Personal information, Harvey L Kaplan, Glasgow; Valuation Roll Glasgow 1915-16, Ward 19, p213, and Statutory Register of Marriages, at www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk; Michael Adler (ed) 1922, *British Jewry Book of Honour*, London, pp9-10; 'The RAMC Field Ambulances of 1914-1918', *The Long, Long Trail, The British Army ... 1914-1918*, at www.1914-1918.net].

***12.5

The 38th Battalion was part of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, whose mission had 'evolved from a defence of Egypt to an invasion of [German-allied Turkish Ottoman] Palestine'. The 38th Royal Fusiliers landed in Alexandria in March, 1918, and Kaplan's siddur (daily prayer book) bears the deeply personally significant inscription 'Arrived Jerusalem 21st day of June 1918; Rosh Hashana 5679 (1918) in Beth Ham Jerusalem' [Jewish New Year celebration, 1918]. They also participated in Viscount Allenby's final Palestinian campaigns that September. [Source: 'The Royal Fusiliers: Other Battalions', *The Long, Long Trail, The British Army ... 1914-1918*, at www.1914-1918.net; D R Woodward, 2011, *The Middle East during World War One*, at www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwone/middle_east_01.shtml; Personal information, Harvey L Kaplan, Glasgow; Statutory Register of Marriages, at www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk; Medal Card, Lion Kaplan WO 372/11/94420, *National Archives Catalogue*, at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk].

***12.6

Maurice Kaplan served as an air mechanic, 2nd class, part of the ground support crew in the Royal Flying Corps, which in 1918 became the Royal Air Force. On his return, he married Renee Jacobson in Glasgow in 1921, and continued in business as a picture frame maker. [Sources: Maurice Kaplan, Airmen's Records, AIR 79/845/93328, *National Archives Catalogue*, at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk; Michael Adler (ed) 1922, *British Jewry Book of Honour*, London, p211; Statutory Register of Marriages, at www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk; Personal information, Harvey L Kaplan, Glasgow].

***12.7

The youngest brother, David, joined The Royal Field Artillery as a gunner, in February 1916 in Glasgow. He probably served with the 152nd Brigade (many service records were badly damaged during WW2), which took part in the Arras Offensive, and the Third Battle of Ypres, in Belgium in 1917. He is also listed among D/182nd Divisional Ammunition Column, eventually being demobilised in October 1919. [Sources: 'The 33rd Division' and The Royal Field Artillery', *The Long, Long Trail, The British Army ... 1914-1918*, at www.1914-1918.net; David Kaplan, *British Army WWI Service Records, 1914-1920*, at www.ancestry.co.uk; Michael Adler (ed) 1922, *British Jewry Book of Honour*, London, p211].

***12.8

The Jewish community of which the Kaplans were a part, turned out in force to welcome the King as he visited Glasgow in September 1917. This was a carefully-programmed morale-boosting tour of shipyards and steelworks, which doubled as a propaganda exercise, with George V meeting ordinary factory workers and wounded soldiers. 'The fervour [of the crowds] reached crescendo in the Gorbals ... Jewry lined the streets in its thousands ... their enthusiasm [led] to greater loyal fervour ... [cheering] was hearty and sustained. Jewish special constables were conspicuous along the route'. [Source: *Glasgow Herald*, 19 Sept 1917, p7].

***12.9

The British Jewry Book of Honour, (1921), a permanent record of the Jewish contribution to the national war effort, lists those who gave their lives, as well as those like Lazarus, Louis, Moses and David who served and returned home safely. [Source: Michael Adler (ed) 1922, *British Jewry Book of Honour*, London, pp 211, 258, 543].

***12.10