

Two Nations: British and German Jews in Comparative Perspective

Edited by
MICHAEL BRENNER,
RAINER LIEDTKE and
DAVID RECHTER.

*Schriftenreihe
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des Leo Baeck Instituts*

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Co-ordinator
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Preface

A comparison between the historical experiences of British and German Jews from the eighteenth century to the 1930s was first suggested in the Spring of 1995 by Professor Werner E. Mosse, then Chairman of the London Leo Baeck Institute. Under the auspices of the Institute, a broad range of internationally renowned scholars was invited to participate in a conference entitled "Two Nations: The Historical Experience of British and German Jews in Comparison". Contributors were requested to compare the British and German cases in their specific area of historical expertise. Happily, a formidable cast of historians proved willing to be involved in this venture, and we are grateful for their commitment to the project.

Given that the Jewish presence was so widespread in the modern era, it is perhaps surprising that comparative studies in modern Jewish history are relatively rare. Resident in a multitude of different states and societies, the Jewish minority would seem to offer an ideal case study for comparative history. The range and quality of essays in this volume suggest that there is much to be gained from employing comparative perspectives and methodology. In a pioneering undertaking of this sort, some lacunae are inevitable. We very much regret, in particular, the omission of essays wholly devoted to Jewish Orthodoxy and to Jewish communal structures.

The editors wish to thank a number of people who have helped to make this volume possible. Werner Mosse was responsible not only for initiating the "Two Nations" project but also for guiding and overseeing a highly successful conference. A source of invaluable advice throughout, he kindly agreed to contribute the introductory chapter to this volume. Arnold Paucker, the Academic Director of the Leo Baeck Institute in London, was an indispensable source of support and encouragement. Thanks are also due to Ulla Weinberg, Anna Carrdus and Gabi Rahaman of the Leo Baeck Institute. At a "test run" pre-conference held at Yarnton Manor in July 1996, we enjoyed the hospitality of the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies. At the conference itself, held in September 1997 at Clare College, Cambridge, Ann Waldman and her able staff created a comfortable and productive environment.

We are very grateful for the copy editing skills of Janet Langmaid and Shayla Walmsley. Lionel de Rothschild saved us from numerous errors by his meticulous proofreading of the text, as did Gabi Rahaman, who proof-read the German footnotes. Thanks also to Friedrich Dannwolff of Mohr Siebeck for supervising the book's production.

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M.B.
R.L.
D.R.

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WERNER E. MOSSE

Introduction

Symposia, by their very nature, are fragmentary, a mosaic lacking in underlying unity. In the present collection of essays, there is at any rate one unifying feature: the Anglo-German comparison. Comparisons, however, present problems of their own. What can usefully be compared and what conclusions, if any, can be drawn? The experience of an earlier project of this kind (also sponsored by the Leo Baeck Institute)¹ suggests that wherever possible the same author should deal with both countries. Since this would require some knowledge of the languages and Jewish histories of both countries, this imposed severe limitations on the choice of author and hence of topics. Some subjects, for example Orthodox Judaism, have perforce been omitted, while others are treated separately. Many of the contributions can, however, be linked through the shared experiences of the Jewish Diaspora in the modern period: acculturation, emancipation and assimilation; partial integration, antisemitism and the search for a “post-traditional” Jewish identity. While each of these showed many common features in both Britain and Germany, there were also significant differences, the most important being the eventual Jewish fate.

Traditional historiography has drawn a sharp contrast between a liberal and tolerant British society and Britain as a haven for the persecuted on the one hand, and German illiberalism and all-pervading anti-Jewish prejudice on the other. More recently revisionist historians have been trying to qualify this picture, especially as it depicts Britain. Others have argued that the German case is not unique, and that Germany was not uniformly as malevolent as it has been painted in retrospect, partly under the impact of the Holocaust. Several of the contributions to the present volume support the view that the conventional contrast between the two countries and the experiences of their Jewish communities—valid overall, if slightly overdrawn—requires some modification in light of the details.

¹ Published in Mario Toscano (ed.), *Integrazione e Identità. L'esperienza ebraica in Germania e Italia dall'Illuminismo al Fascismo*, Milan 1998.

I.

The first relevant comparison, both in logic and chronology, involves the sequential relationship between Jewish acculturation (with its inseparable concomitant of assimilation) and the emancipation process. The conventional model sees legal emancipation as the essential starting point of Jewish "modernisation", with acculturation and partial assimilation among its necessary consequences. In fact, in both Britain and Germany, limited acculturation and assimilation preceded general civic and political emancipation—the definitive removal of formal anti-Jewish discrimination—by over a century.

Jacob Katz has described the activities, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, of Court-Jews (*Hof-Faktoren*), who had a status occasionally akin to that of the court nobility. Jacob Toury noted the emergence, notably in Prussia from the seventeenth century, of what he calls "*Adelsbürger*", Jews who had acquired wealth and consequent exemption from the restrictions to which the great majority of their co-religionists remained subject. Nor was wealth always a necessary prerequisite. Under the influence of Enlightenment rationalism, acculturated Jews were admitted to learned societies and intellectual circles. Katz described the participation of precursors of Moses Mendelssohn and of some members of his circle in the learned discussions in Berlin in the 1770s and 1780s. Thanks to successful self-education and an interest in ideas, early *maskilim* gained admission to what Katz has called a "semi-neutral" society.² Again, if the regulatory state compelled Jews to use the German language in their book-keeping, it at the same time laid the foundation for their cultural assimilation.³ As David Ruderman, following David Sorkin, shows in his contribution to this volume, comparable developments had already occurred in Britain, where several Jews had been admitted to Masonic lodges and where a Jew had been elected to the prestigious Royal Society. Britain, in early acculturation and selective acceptance, had indeed preceded Germany by the best part of a century. Moses Mendelssohn and others of his circle were still denied admission to Masonic Lodges well after some of their British co-religionists had been granted membership.

² Jacob Katz, *Out of the Ghetto*, Cambridge, Mass. 1973, pp 42ff.

³ Selma Stern, *Der preussische Staat und die Juden*, Tübingen 1962 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 24), vol. II/I, pp. 148-9, quoted in Katz, p. 32.

Significantly, in both Britain and Germany some Jewish acculturation and a form of “proto-emancipation” of initially small Jewish groups occurred well before the first official measures of emancipation. The striking career of Moses Mendelssohn unfolded, like those of other early *maskilim*, in a pre-emancipation society. Nor were acculturation and political emancipation confined to intellectuals. Economic success could also, in some cases, secure access to Gentile society. Wealthy Jews, Court Jews and their families, and Toury’s *Adelsbürger* could secure exemption from oppressive anti-Jewish laws and even obtain extensive privileges. A nascent Jewish bourgeoisie, partially acculturated and assimilated, developed in both countries well before the beginnings of the long process of formal emancipation.

The later concept of an emancipation bargain or contract in which, in exchange for *Verbesserung*, Jews would progressively be granted equal rights of citizenship, is something of a historical fiction, suggesting a much closer and more direct connection between emancipation and assimilation than in fact existed. The link between the two is both looser and less direct than either “bargain” or “contract” suggests. Who, it may be asked, were the parties to the alleged contract and what were their motives? On the Jewish side in both countries it would, if anyone, be lay rather than religious notables and, to some extent, Jewish organisations which emerged during the prolonged emancipation campaigns. It must be questioned whether the great majority of Jews in either country saw assimilation as part of a bargain or indeed a conscious process. It was highly unlikely to have been perceived either as a reward for favours received or an advance payment for favours to come. To the extent that Jewish assimilation advanced *pari passu* with the progress of emancipation, it came essentially from the Jewish side. It was largely voluntary, the result of Jewish choice. Governments did indeed seek at times to promote it with greater or lesser effect, just as, on the other side, Jewish traditionalists tried to impede, arrest, and even reverse it. There is, however, little evidence that Jewish opposition, whether intellectual or from the early inertia of the mass of the Jewish population, had any decisive effect. In so far as assimilation was part of a deliberate policy, it was, if anything, modernisation by choice.

Who, then, were the contracting partners on the Gentile side? On the one hand, but unimportantly, it was a small group of (sometimes philosemitic) Gentile protagonists, with their expectations of Jewish *Verbesserung*. They were few in number, and though their writings figure large in the history books their influence may have been limited. The great

mass of the population, on the other hand, particularly in rural areas, had (for them) weightier concerns than Jewish assimilation or *Verbesserung*. Likewise, the urban petty bourgeoisie with its tradition of anti-Jewish prejudice—whether on religious or commercial grounds—could not have cared less whether the—to them—objectionable Jews were assimilated or not. Often, especially in Catholic areas, observant Jews enjoyed greater respect than their more assimilated brethren. It was, moreover, a sentiment widely shared by conservatives of the ruling and middle classes and the majority of their elected representatives. Overall, while widespread antipathy to Jewish emancipation and concurrent assimilation was more pronounced in Germany, it was by no means absent in Britain. In short, in neither country was the bulk of the population a willing partner to the “contract”. It is more than doubtful whether many were familiar with the “emancipation project”, nor, if they had been, that they would have approved it.

How far then were governments guided in their Jewish policies by something like an emancipation contract? In both countries, the concept of the Christian State held sway in official circles and influenced administrative practice throughout the nineteenth century. To the chagrin of many Jews, effective equality in the public arena was never, at least in Germany, part of the official agenda. In Britain, it was realised in the late nineteenth century. There is no evidence to suggest that it was anywhere considered part of a bargain. It was in effect the state, represented by rulers and hereditary and elected legislators, which alone had the power to emancipate. In fact, both in Britain and Germany, governments and chambers, with greater or lesser reluctance, implemented policies of incremental emancipation. There is little to suggest in this any idea of a “deal”. Rather, such policies were often a grudging concession to the *Zeitgeist*, composed of the spread of rationalist views of polity inherited from the Enlightenment, secularisation and liberal ideologies. A correspondence quoted in Reinhard Rürup’s study of emancipation in Baden⁴ throws a revealing light on the ambivalent motives of less than enthusiastic “liberal” emancipators.

In August 1860 the recently appointed Liberal prime minister August Lamey wrote to the grand-duke that the time had come to “tackle the Jewish Question”. Although Jewish emancipation would not be popular, Lamey wrote, this was both a necessary demand of justice and a political necessity. The structure of the state no longer permitted the exclusion of a

⁴ Reinhard Rürup, ‘Die Judenemanzipation in Baden’, in *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins*, vol. 114, 1966, pp. 293-4.

class of subjects from a number of legal competencies on the grounds of a characteristic so irrelevant as their formal religious allegiance. Even if Jews stood morally below the Christian population, their exclusion from the operation of the common law would be an injustice. Partial solutions were no longer possible. The end result of new legislation could only be complete emancipation. Withal, Lamey added, one had to overcome a certain repugnance in having to accept Jews as equals. There was about them "for we Germans" something "alien and of a disagreeable nature". Jews were, however, citizens and acknowledged as such, and from this conclusions had to be drawn. In the previous decade the courage to oppose Jewish emancipation on grounds of principle had disappeared. However, what opponents no longer dared to deny from the legal side had since been called into question on grounds of *Zweckmässigkeit*.⁵

Early in 1862, government ministers in Baden argued that political ferment had abated and had now given way to calmer and more considered views about the reciprocal rights of estates and individuals living within the state. It was increasingly felt that only the freest development of individual forces could achieve the greatest perfection of the whole, while the average living standard of the population had reached a point where possible economic misgivings need no longer carry decisive weight. Freedom of movement in commerce and crafts must include the Jews, as it would pave the way for their assimilation to Christian customs and ways of life, thereby contributing mightily to the removal of "remaining violent prejudices and passions".⁶ Such were the arguments which eventually carried the day. They were a good deal more varied and sophisticated than the concept of an alleged bargain. At most, one among these arguments in this sense was that emancipation would, in due course, promote Jewish assimilation and the removal of anti-Jewish prejudice. The spate of acts of Jewish emancipation in German states in the early 1860s was almost certainly inspired by similar considerations dictated by the *Zeitgeist*. For Jewish emancipation in Germany, in spite of residual opposition and reservations, the time had come. The expectations, in accordance with earlier emancipationist arguments, about the likely beneficial effects of emancipation, were little more than the expression of a pious hope and something of an afterthought.

⁵ Lamay to Grand-Duke of Baden, n.d. [3rd August 1860]. Translations from the German are mine.

⁶ Rürup, p. 295.

The almost contemporaneous removal in Britain of remaining religious tests and procedures in Parliament and the ancient universities designed to exclude non-Anglicans was equally an expression of the spirit of the age, part of the secularisation of public life. In the acceptance of Jews in the public arena, when a baptised Jew who proudly proclaimed his ethnic origins could become leader of the Conservative Party and an acclaimed Prime Minister, there was no question of an emancipation "contract". Rather, what prevailed was a slow and partial modernisation of British public life expressed, *inter alia*, in the Reform Acts of 1867 and 1884.

There is, however, so far as Jews are concerned, a significant difference between the two countries. Whereas in Germany emancipation was both specific to Jews and the product of state legislation, in Britain matters affecting Jewish interests were often, as Christopher Clark shows in this volume, subsumed under arrangements relating to non-Anglican minorities in general. Moreover, matters of concern to Jews were often dealt with through negotiations between relevant government departments and the statutory representative body of the Jewish community, the Board of Deputies of British Jews, which had no counterpart in Germany. On the one hand, while German Jews, as represented by the *Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens* (C.V.), claimed to be a purely religious community—a claim contested by their exclusionist opponents—British Jews benefited, with others, from their religious status as non-Anglicans. At the same time, through the Board of Deputies, British Jews could make formal representations and involve themselves in negotiations—often successfully—with state authorities in matters of concern to the Jewish community. In short, the question of Jewish grievances and their possible resolution took very different forms in the two countries. What readily became in Germany semi-political issues, decided on largely political grounds by bureaucrats and elected assemblies—both, as a rule, unsympathetic to Jewish claims—were in Britain settled more quietly and often in a fashion acceptable to the Jewish community. Indeed, it might be legitimate to speak of major differences of political culture in the treatment of their Jewish communities.

II.

While the concept of an "emancipation contract" is largely an *ex post facto* construct—indeed something of a fiction—there was, of course, a connection between acculturation and assimilation on the one hand and emanci-

pation on the other. These were closely connected but distinct processes, to some extent interdependent and developing in tandem. Even early protagonists of emancipation had not made “Jewish betterment” a precondition. Rather, they had seen it as a desirable—hopefully inevitable—consequence. In fact, such expectations would be in large measure fulfilled. Within one or two generations, Jews in both countries, even the Orthodox, had become acculturated and, to a greater or lesser extent, assimilated.

Beginning with small educated and/or wealthy groups, acculturation and assimilation had filtered down to wider strata of Jewish society. One potent instrument had been the adoption by Jews from the ghetto, and by recent immigrants, of the majority language in place of Yiddish. This was essentially a voluntary process even if at times encouraged by government measures. Among its instruments were non-traditional Jewish schools—or secular schools with provision for Jewish religious instruction. With language and secular education had come increasing access to the majority culture. This was indeed eagerly sought by growing numbers of young Jews inspired by the idea of *Bildung*. *Bildung* was pursued both for its much-appreciated cultural values and as a road to respectability—both respect in the outside world and self-respect. Through *Bildung*, the values of the surrounding society would automatically be absorbed. Moreover, command of the majority language was also an economic asset, opening up professional opportunities. Knowledge of German (or English) was in fact a necessary concomitant of upward social mobility. It could also facilitate dialogue with Gentiles, however limited.

Next to language as an agent of assimilation, and partly in association with it, came the religious Reform movement. Its development in the two countries is described here by Michael Meyer. The movement was basically a two-stage process, similar in both countries. In each case—as indeed in the Christian Reformation—a conservative phase of limited innovation was followed by a more radical one. In Jewish terms, Reform Judaism was followed by Liberal Judaism. While the same pattern appears in both Britain and Germany the two phases were not chronologically synchronised. More importantly, the outcome in the two cases differed significantly. Whereas in Britain the bulk of the community opted for a moderate, middle-of-the-road Orthodoxy,⁷ in Germany the great majority

⁷ For an evaluation of Jewish Orthodoxy in Britain and its limited relations with its German counterpart see Julius Carlebach, ‘The Impact of German Jews on Anglo-Jewry. Orthodoxy 1850–1950’, in W.E. Mosse *et al.*, *Second Chance. Two Centuries of German-Speaking Jews in the United Kingdom*, Tübingen 1991 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 48), pp. 405–23.

passed on to Liberal Judaism. Interestingly, whereas the emerging British Judaism bore a rough similarity to the Church of England (or perhaps to German Lutheranism), German Liberal Judaism recalls rather British Non-conformism. In both Britain and Germany, whether in ritual or theology, the Christian churches served as a model for the Jewish Reformation.⁸ In Britain, trends within Christianity played a large role in shaping the ideology of Jewish religious reform, distinguishing it from its counterpart in Germany. In Germany, the churches “provided examples of decorum, music, religious construction and homiletics that greatly influenced the early Reform movement there”.⁹

By the end of the 1870s, economic and political emancipation had in both countries run their course. So had Jewish acculturation for the majority, with the replacement of Yiddish by the national language and the spread of secularised education. The majority cultures and many of their values had been largely absorbed. Far-reaching assimilation expressed itself in the form, among others, of extreme German or British patriotism. Only social integration had lagged behind, impeded on the one hand by Jewish endogamy and continued, if diminishing, observation of the dietary laws, and on the other by the centuries old (and probably ineradicable) anti-Judaism of the Christian (later Gentile) bulk of the population. Overall, Jews had reached a stable post-emancipatory situation, largely under the impact of liberal ideas.

The outcome of Jewish emancipation and assimilation, as Gentile proponents hopefully anticipated and Jewish opponents feared, might in the end have been the absorption of Jews into the rest of the population through intermarriage and (increasingly less important) conversion to Christianity. Long-term demographic trends also appeared to favour such a *dénouement*. Indeed, this is what might have occurred but for three concurrent phenomena: the antisemitic wave sweeping Europe from the 1880s onwards, the accompanying flight of Eastern Jews to the West, and the Jewish reaction to these developments.

III.

Though an intensification of anti-Jewish feeling was common to both countries, there were significant differences. While widespread visceral

⁸ See Michael Meyer’s contribution to this volume.

⁹ *Ibid.*

dislike of Jews was common to, and endemic in, both countries, its acute manifestations in the rising antisemitic tide differed. Exclusivism, its first active phase, while by no means unknown in Britain, was almost certainly more rigid and widespread in Germany, with its more hierarchical society and feudal survivals. While integrated in Britain by the earlier emergence of a more open capitalist society that respected wealth and commercial acumen, in mainly agricultural Germany this came later. As far as Jews were concerned, British society in general was by far the more porous of the two. Moreover, the racist doctrinaire exclusionism of German antisemites had no counterpart among the more pragmatic Britons.

The next phase, militant political antisemitism shading into violence, was entirely a German phenomenon, lacking a British counterpart. In Britain, antisemitism at this stage was deflected into nationalist xenophobia with strong anti-German overtones which did not include political violence on any considerable scale. "Exterminationist antisemitism", the German "Final Solution", was never on the cards. Internment, it need hardly be pointed out, however disagreeable, was not extermination. Despite the pleas of contemporary revisionists and the persistence of the original anti-Jewish sentiment common to both countries, the eventual outcome was, of course, dramatically different.

An analogy to the course of antisemitism in both countries can perhaps be found in the field of human pathology. While in the human body there exists a well-known predisposition to a variety of diseases, in a healthy body these are contained by the immune system. However, where the system is damaged and ceases to operate disease can develop unhindered. If the predisposition towards anti-Jewish prejudice was similar, the degree of effectiveness of the two immune systems was widely different. Herein lies, possibly, the fundamental difference in the historical experiences of British and German Jews. Whereas the British system was robust, the German one was always fragile, liable to damage in every stressful situation.

The growth of the new and, particularly in Germany, increasingly social antisemitism, brought to an end the age of emancipation and assimilation, but it nonetheless left emancipation in both countries legally intact. In neither would it be formally infringed until the advent of National Socialism in Germany. At the same time, the process of assimilation assumed a new character. While it was far advanced in the old-established Jewish communities in both countries, it would be restarted from scratch in the case of the Eastern and later Central European immigrants. The arrival of large bodies of immigrants or refugees had profound effects on the established Jewish communities in both Britain and Germany. Beyond the need

to provide immediate assistance, they also felt the need to defend the "unacculturated" aliens against antisemitic or anti-foreign attack. In fact, although many in both communities viewed the influx of Jews from the East with misgivings feelings of solidarity prevailed. The immigrants were assisted not only materially but also in dealings with the authorities. Occasional proposals for repatriation were firmly resisted, while no effort was spared to encourage the speediest possible acculturation of the newcomers. The Eastern European immigration became a continuing target of antisemitic attack, and the issues of Eastern European immigration and Gentile antisemitism were linked in both countries.

Antisemitism and the influx of Eastern Jews strongly affected what might be called the "self-awareness" of established Jews in relation to their Gentile environment. Two different responses emerged. On the one hand was the desire to attract as little attention as possible to themselves and their Jewishness, indeed, on occasion to conceal it. At the other end of the spectrum was an assertion of Jewish pride in the face of Gentile exclusionism. Jews set up their own cultural institutions, sports clubs and youth movements, often modelled on their Gentile counterparts. As Rainer Liedtke describes, they successfully supported their own separate welfare institutions and sought to retain them in the face of pressure to merge them in the existing non-Jewish systems. One expression of Jewish national self-assertion was ironically an expression of assimilation, with consciously Jewish organisations following Gentile models. Pre-1914 Jewish youth groups shared many features of the *Wandervogel*, while the Jewish Lads' Brigade recalled the Boy Scout movement. Jewish student corporations at German universities adopted many practices of their Gentile counterparts, in some cases even the practice of duelling. Jewish Masonic Lodges adopted—or adapted—the rituals of those with mixed or Gentile memberships.

Zionism spread to both Britain and Germany, though chronology and impact in the two countries were somewhat different. Until 1918 Zionism made greater headway in Germany than it did in Britain. Among the explanations for this are the greater virulence of German antisemitism and the earlier emergence of the German movement. British Zionism, while receiving some impetus from the Balfour Declaration of 1917, did not, as Stephan Wendehorst shows, gain wider support until the late 1940s. Curiously, among the more recent Eastern European immigrants Zionism gained greater support in Britain than it did in Germany. Immigrants to Britain may have been more influenced by the impact of the Balfour Declaration than their German counterparts, while a greater proportion may

have brought with them to Germany affiliations to other, non-Zionist organisations such as the *Bund*. Overall, Zionists in both countries remained a minority within a minority.

In contemporary terminology the issue raised in both countries was that of Jewish “identity”. This had first arisen during the earlier age of emancipation and assimilation over the question of what elements of Jewish tradition could be jettisoned as part of modernisation. A majority in both Germany and Britain opted to abandon *Halachic* Judaism in favour of Reform. Orthodox groups had been left in a minority in Germany, while reaching a compromise with partial (pragmatic) “modernity” in Britain in what might be described as “conservative Reform”. The majority Liberal (“biblical”) Judaism in Germany, the “Jewish” component of German-Jewish identity, owed a good deal to Protestant sectarianism, as did, to some extent, its British counterpart.

A new set of questions with regard to Jewish identity was raised in the post-emancipatory period by the growing strength of radical exclusionist antisemitism in Germany and growing anti-foreign (ironically, anti-German and partially anti-Jewish) feeling in Britain. Both were “exclusionist” in their opposition to alien immigration and immigrants. While German social “exclusivism” was specifically directed against Jews without exception, the British variant of xenophobia was directed more particularly against “aliens”. This was a decisive difference, perhaps attributable to the fact that German political ideology was deterministic, pseudo-scientific and “philosophical”, whereas the British approach was pragmatic, practical and little attuned to broad generalisation and theory. The British “immune system” provided a distaste for radical theorising, an element of common sense, and some respect for “the People of the Book”. The British system thus imposed far more effective restraints on the (possibly common) antisemitic virus than did the German. The anti-alien mood in Britain was very different from radical German antisemitism, described by Shulamit Volkov as a “cultural code.”

IV.

While for older established Jews the new anti-Jewish, indeed fundamentally anti-emancipationist, climate raised questions of their relations with the increasingly nationalistic minority, the influx of Eastern European Jews raised the issue of their Jewish affiliations. For example, were they morally obliged to show solidarity with their co-religionists, both those

beyond national frontiers and those seeking shelter in their own countries? Moreover, how far was the type of Hassidic Judaism with which Western European Jews were brought into contact a “superior” form of Jewishness to that of the westernised “modernists”? While overall the westernised view prevailed, established Jews consistently maintained Jewish solidarity and many also came to appreciate the moral and aesthetic values of Eastern European Jewish culture. Zionism became the basis of something of a cultural *rapprochement*, even if differences between established Jews and Eastern European immigrants remained.

Antisemites in the two countries raised the issue of Jewish identity in roughly similar yet essentially different terms. German racists, in accordance with their pseudo-scientific ideology, asserted that Jews could never belong to the German people, could never be Germans. In Britain, the question was presented in terms of divided loyalties. Could, for example, Jews of German origin be truly loyal to “King and Country” when Germany and Britain were rivals and even went to war? Again, what loyalty could be expected from recent, wholly “un-British” immigrants? And how far would incoming “aliens” wholeheartedly abandon their earlier affiliations?

German and British Jews sought to face the antisemitic onslaught in a somewhat different manner. While stressing their German patriotism and also their constitutional rights, German Jews argued that their Jewishness was purely a matter of religion. In all other respects they were exactly like other Germans. British Jews, attacked on somewhat different grounds, could only stress their “Englishness”, at times in exaggerated form. There was one not unimportant difference between the German and the British position. To the assertion of German racists that Jews could not be members of the German *Volk*, there was, in the terms of the antisemites, no reply. The British anti-alienism, directed more particularly against those with German connections, affected the rest only peripherally. Nor was there a systematic campaign against Eastern European immigrants, except on purely local issues. The scope for Jewish self-defence in the form of polemics, and possibly in the courts, was probably greater in Britain than in Germany.

The challenges of the post-emancipatory age forced many Jews to face the problems of their “identity”. This, a fashionable post-Freudian term, is of comparatively little use in historical discourse. What does it mean? How is it to be defined? What, in particular, is “Jewish identity”? The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines “identity” in its current sense as “individuality”. In what terms could a Jew describe his or her “identity”?

How would a Jew assess the Jewish—as against the British or German—components of his or her personality, which obviously cannot be quantified? And if it were possible, would any comparison in national terms of different Jewish “identities” be meaningful? What underlies this fashionable and pretentious term is a question easy to ask, difficult to answer: on the one hand about the degree of “Jewishness” (however measured), on the other about the elements absorbed from a non-Jewish environment. The great majority of Diaspora Jews are members of two distinct communities in terms of which they define themselves and are defined by their surroundings. In this there are infinite subjective and changeable variations, while “objective” assessments (essentially by non-Jews) must almost inevitably be superficial and are likely to be coloured by preconceptions which may well be inappropriate. And what applies to Jewish individuals is true, possibly to an even greater extent, of Jewish groups.

V.

If the attempt at Anglo-German comparison, or for that matter any comparison between Jewish (or other) groups defined in terms of political nationality, is fraught with difficulties, it has the merit of throwing into relief similarities and differences in the Jewish experience in different national environments. By helping to identify typical and specific aspects of Jews in different countries of the Diaspora, the comparative approach can throw light on the interaction between internal Jewish developments and external factors. It can, although ironically still on the basis of traditional national units, break the mould of much traditional Jewish historiography. A regional pattern can be superimposed on what is often an overly judeocentric approach, while at the same time national compartmentalisation can be transcended. In the present instance, it can help to answer the question of why, in spite of important similarities in purely Jewish terms, the eventual outcome of the two Jewish experiences was so very different. This volume, while throwing new light on the experiences themselves, should also encourage further attempts at comparative Jewish history.

DAVID B. RUDERMAN

Was there an English Parallel to the German *Haskalah*?

Judging from recent work by Jewish historians of both Germany and England, the unequivocal response to the heuristic question posed in the title of my essay should be emphatically negative. If indeed the *Haskalah* was “a socio-cultural movement powerful enough to effect a major shift in consciousness”¹ or “a new ideology to shape a new community ... a public social world informed with a new ideal of man”,² it could only have emerged within the particular political and cultural ambience of Germany. Despite Cecil Roth’s relatively feeble attempt more than three decades ago to describe what he ambiguously called “an English *Haskalah*”,³ such a notion has been generally dismissed. Michael Graetz, for example, echoes the strongly held views of Todd Endelman when he claims that a true *Haskalah* must be “more than a fleeting flare-up of ideas supported by a few isolated individuals”.⁴

There is a certain irony in the claim that the English (or the Dutch) had no *Haskalah* given the fact, pointed out by Graetz, that Jews enjoyed greater freedom under the British constitution than in Germany and thus appeared to be more open to their environment and more receptive to its modernising influence.⁵ If British Jews, at least their Sephardic and Ashkenazi elites, were more acculturated and more socially accepted than their German counterparts, why did they not produce an intellectual life, a critical forum for self-reflection, a literary outpouring, in some way equivalent to or even more substantial than that of German Jewry, at least relative to

¹ Michael Graetz, ‘The Jewish Enlightenment’, in Michael A. Meyer (ed.), *German-Jewish History in Modern Times, vol. I: Tradition and Enlightenment, 1600–1780*, New York, p. 263.

² David Sorkin, *The Transformation of German Jewry, 1780–1840*, Oxford 1987, p. 4.

³ Cecil Roth, ‘The Haskalah in England’, in Hirsch Jacob Zimmels, Joseph Rabbino-witz, and Israel Finestein (eds.), *Essays Presented to Chief Rabbi Israel Brodie on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday*, London 1967, pp. 365–376.

⁴ Graetz, p. 263.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 264.

their numbers? Why was integration into English society primarily social and hardly cognitive?

Perhaps the best response to these questions is offered by David Sorkin in the weighty conclusion of his well-known study of the "transformation" of German Jewry. Sorkin persuasively points out that social integration was not the critical factor in the emergence of the *Haskalah*. What was more significant was a critical mass of Jews, especially those living under the norms of traditional Judaism with a concomitant Judaic literacy that could sustain a literary and ideological movement expressed in both Hebrew and German. As he points out, the difference between a German-Jewish community constituting 1% to 2% of the general population and an Anglo-Jewish one making up 0.01% of the general population is a most significant factor. Equally important were the German factors of incomplete emancipation and partial integration, and the discrepancy between German Jewry's actual and idealised situation. Indeed, following this line of thought, Anglo-Jewry's more successful integration, its lack of confrontation with an absolutist government, failed to elicit any creative tension with its environment. Unlike the Jews of England, who gradually assumed they were English and entitled to the rights and privileges of this status, German Jews were obliged to assert themselves constantly in demanding a status that seemed to elude them and to define themselves and the community to which they belonged by the standards of the universal enlightened ideals of German society. Their ideological reflections and their cultural fermentation were thus a product of their incomplete integration, the gap between their real status and their social aspirations. *Haskalah* could only emerge within conditions of political dissatisfaction and social inequality on the one hand, and a cohesive and literate community with respect to Jewish culture on the other. In England, both of these conditions were relatively absent.⁶

Sorkin's analysis, which rests heavily on Endelman's findings for England,⁷ is quite useful in drawing a comparison between the two communities and their respective cultural responses to the Enlightenment. But it is hardly the last word on the subject. In making a powerful case for the unique evolution of the German *Haskalah*, it too quickly discounts the possibility that, despite the great strides in social integration in England, some English Jews remained in creative tension with their environment; that some were indeed self-reflective about their Jewish identity; and that

⁶ Sorkin, *The Transformation of German Jewry*, especially pp. 173–178.

⁷ Todd M. Endelman, *The Jews of Georgian England 1714–1830*, Philadelphia 1979.

some were quite capable of articulating their profound thoughts on Judaism and the modern world in both Hebrew and English. In other words, creative tension with the environment was never the exclusive prerogative of German Jews. Some English Jews too, despite their relatively better social acceptance, continued to feel both overt and covert forms of social rejection and sought ways to overcome it. Indeed, creative tension with the environment, while clearly a condition of German Jewry, was also one shared by almost all Jews living in modernising societies.

I completely endorse, then, the meaningful comparison offered by Sorkin and I also fully appreciate the difference between a *Haskalah* as a political and cultural movement in Germany and “a fleeting flare-up of ideas supported by a few isolated individuals” in England, to restate Graetz’s felicitous phrase.⁸ But acknowledging the difference between the two communities should not allow us to dismiss completely the intellectual life of British Jewry in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Despite the smaller number of participants, and its more limited impact on either British or other European Jews, it is of interest especially because of its uniquely English qualities. Cecil Roth was probably off the mark when he implied that Anglo-Jewish life in the era of Mendelssohn could boast a kind of *Haskalah*. But his initial description of a loose grouping of thinkers on English soil at least opened the question whether English Jews possessed an intellectual life, the product of a unique dialogue with their English environment, and whether their experience with modernity should be reduced exclusively to a mere social history of acculturation, of inarticulate and unconscious changing modes of life and behaviour.⁹

In an effort to revisit the issue of Anglo-Jewish intellectual history in the second half of the eighteenth century, I have recently argued that at least five thinkers discussed by Roth were worthy of closer scrutiny; that their literary output both in English and Hebrew reflected a sophisticated awareness of Judaism and the dynamic intellectual world of England and represented a bold attempt to grapple with the relationship between the two; and finally, that this intellectual life emerged uniquely in England and had little to do with, and in some cases pre-dated, the intellectual developments of the German *Haskalah*.¹⁰ I will not review those initial find-

⁸ See note 4.

⁹ Cf. Sorkin, *The Transformation of German Jewry*, p. 175.

¹⁰ David B. Ruderman, ‘Was there a *Haskalah* in England? Reconsidering an Old Question’ [Hebrew], in *Zion* 62 (1997), pp. 109–131.

ings here but will instead extend my analysis by offering several additional examples of the ambience of Anglo-Jewish intellectual life. These will, I hope, provide more colour and substance to my initial observations about the singularity and intrinsic value of Anglo-Jewish self-reflection; they might also provide a striking contrast to the German situation, thus further refining the comparison already articulated by Sorkin and others.

I.

Of the five thinkers I have mentioned, Abraham ben Naphtali Tang was, ironically, the least noticed but probably the most scholarly and original Anglo-Jewish thinker at the close of the eighteenth century. Most of his voluminous writings exist only in Hebrew manuscripts, including his encyclopedic but unfinished *Behinat ha-Adam*. Tang was the grandson of Abraham ben Moses Taussig Neugreschel (thus the acronym "Tang"), *dayan* of the lesser rabbinical court of Prague and the son of Naphtali, who left Prague and settled in London early in the eighteenth century. Abraham's mother was the daughter of R. Nathan Apta of Opatow, rabbi of the Hambro synagogue, and his teacher was Moses Minsk, the preacher of a small congregation called *Sha'are Zion*. Given Tang's traditional upbringing and Orthodox pedigree, it is surprising to discover his manifold and unconventional interests and views, ranging from his political analysis of rabbinic history to his Deistic reading of *Avot*, his intellectual excursions into comparative history and mythology, his citations from Voltaire, and his translation of Congrave into English.¹¹ I will discuss only one of his many works, a small pamphlet written in English, recently discovered by Shmuel Feiner in the massive collection of Anglo-Judaica at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. The work, published in London in 1770, bears the ambiguous title *A Discourse Addressed to the Minority*. Without giving his name, Tang signs the work simply "By a primitive Ebrew", exactly as he had issued his commentary on *Avot*, and probably other English works yet to be discovered.¹²

¹¹ On Tang, see Ruderman, 'Was there a Haskalah in England?', pp. 121–125; S.B. Leperer, 'Abraham ben Naphtali Tang. Precursor of the Anglo-Jewish Haskalah', in *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* 24 (1974), pp. 82–88; Roth, 'The Haskalah in England', pp. 368–372. I am currently completing a longer study of Tang which will treat in greater detail the various works and themes mentioned here.

¹² In *The Sentences and Proverbs of the Ancient Fathers ... Written originally in Ebrew ... by ... R. Jehudah the Holy ... now translated into the English language ... by a*

The reader of Tang's pamphlet who is familiar with the British political scene of 1770 cannot miss its context. It addresses the affair involving the infamous John Wilkes, the ambitious politician who had recklessly challenged the government of the Earl of Bute from the early 1760s and who had carried on a vicious press campaign against the government. Wilkes had been arrested and forced into exile in France, and had then returned to England to win re-election to Parliament despite strong opposition. He was again arrested on charges of blasphemy, despite legal protection from such action as a member of the House of Commons. To clear the way for his prosecution, government ministers manipulated the House into expelling him. The action soon precipitated a major assault from the press arguing the unconstitutionality of this expulsion, and its affront to liberty and to the independence of the House of Commons. In a period of growing conflict with the American colonies, many saw a common thread between the Wilkes affair and the constitutional rights of the Americans.¹³

Wilkes seemed to be emboldened rather than subdued by this incident. For him, the issue at stake was no less than the future of democracy in England: "If ministers can once usurp the power of declaring who shall not be your representative, the next step is very easy, and will follow speedily. It is that of telling you whom you shall send to Parliament, and then the boasted Constitution of England will be entirely torn up by the roots."¹⁴ Wilkes' supporters were chiefly small merchants and craftsmen rather than the gentry and moneyed classes. While the Rockingham Whigs, the leading group within the Parliamentary opposition, initially supported Wilkes' cause, they eventually distanced themselves from the more radical opposition connected with the Society of Supporters of the Bill of Rights. In the same year that Tang published his own statement about the affair,

primitive Ebrew, London 1772, Tang again omits his name from the cover page but later fully identifies himself in a Hebrew page inserted at the end of his English introduction. There is no doubt the unsigned *Discourse* and this work are by the same author.

¹³ There is an enormous bibliography on the Wilkes affair. I have found the following most useful: Ian R. Christie, *Wilkes, Wyvill, and Reform. The Parliamentary Reform Movement in British Politics, 1760-1785*, London-New York 1962; George Rudé, *Wilkes and Liberty. A Social Study of 1763-1774*, Oxford 1962; Peter David Garner Thomas, *John Wilkes. A Friend of Liberty*, Oxford 1996; Richard Pares, *King George III and the Politicians*, Oxford 1953; J. S. Watson, 'The Reign of George III, 1760-1815' in *The Oxford History of England*, ed. by G.N. Clarke, Oxford 1960; James E. Bradley, *Popular Politics and the American Revolution in England. Petitions, The Crown, and Public Opinion*, Macon, GA 1986; Lucy Sutherland, *The City of London and the Opposition to Government 1768-1774*, London 1959.

¹⁴ *Public Advertiser* 4, 8th February 1769, quoted in Christie, p. 32.

Edmund Burke penned his partisan ‘Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents’, a Rockinghamite view of the politics of the 1760s which condemned the political corruption of an alleged secret cabal of government ministers which had undermined the system. Burke was in turn criticised for his limited view by the more radical group among the opposition led by the historian Catherine Macaulay and the London bookseller John Almon.¹⁵

Almon had written his own version of the events leading up to Wilkes’ expulsion as early as 1765 in a book entitled *History of the Late Minority*.¹⁶ In it he excoriated the Earl of Bute as the chief villain in the undermining of England’s democracy. Lamenting the process by which the government fell into the hands of a leadership of privilege and corruption, he singled out the honest independence of the opposition, “the true friends of liberty”¹⁷ who had protested the illegality of arbitrary warrants and who had supported the just cause of John Wilkes. This “late minority”, which had resisted the power of the Earl by opposing and censuring all the arbitrary violations of his ministers, had been crushed and “broken-hearted”,¹⁸ but would receive a new lease of life only five years later when the Wilkites again challenged the unbridled power of the majority government.

Tang apparently meant the same minority that Almon had eulogised in his well-known book which, some five years later, returned to centre stage of the volatile political scene as a result of the removal of Wilkes from his elected seat in Parliament. For an obscure Jew, “a primitive Ebrew”,¹⁹ to jump into the commotion of this national debate was not merely an act of daring: it suggested a sense of participation, of identification with England and its political traditions, unparalleled in the European Jewish world of

¹⁵ For Burke’s work, see Paul Langford (ed.), *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke*, vol. 2: *Party, Parliament and the American Crisis, 1766–1774*, Oxford 1981, pp. 241–323; see also Stanley Ayling, *Edmund Burke. His Life and Opinions*, New York 1988, esp. pp. 39–53.

¹⁶ John Almon, *The History of the Late Minority Exhibiting the Conduct, Principles and Views of That Party During the Years 1762, 1763, 1764 and 1765*, London 1765, repr. 1766. I have used a copy of the original edition in the Rare Book Collection at the University of Pennsylvania library.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 310.

¹⁹ Tang probably meant by this phrase both his humble status as an outsider and also his exotic ancestry, his nobility as a primitive ancient, and one who creatively employed biblical language, like the prophets of old.

1770. Tang opens his pamphlet in a cautionary tone that soon allows him to express his own political and religious credo:

“I pray that when you come to peruse this small pamphlet, that ye divest yourselves from all prejudices, a grand and necessary object in religion, as well as politics. I do openly avow that I have done the same; be not quick in judging that my intention was to raise a tumult or to censure particular people for the sake of calumniating them; let me therefore tell you my creed. I believe in the Omnipotent supreme being, that knoweth the secrets of the heart, and to him all mysteries is ever open. I pay a due respect to my country wherein I drew my breath, as far as consistent with nature, and justifiable by law; I revere the legislature of my country, I love the king, I pray earnestly that God may ever emit that pellucid ray of truth and justice on him ...”²⁰

While underscoring his supreme religious faith, he chooses to emphasise how religion should bind humankind rather than divide it: “I earnestly wish that the word *religion* may not be impiously and craftily converted to destroy the tranquillity of men. O Lord, with thy goodness, send forth to men that happy dawn of reason, that they may love and esteem each other without any distinction to mere terms of their several Faiths. O Lord, send forth thy calming *spirit* into this land, now so fomented, and let every man dwell again in peace upon his woolpack.”²¹

His ecumenical opening, however, is soon punctured by his piercing battle cry against the enemies of liberty:

“When the heavens tremble ... when laws are no farther observed than what will answer certain ends; when a good [kin]g is surrounded by deluded ghosts of M[inister]s who sheer off and strike at *liberty*, as at the Cry of the Cock: In a time when it is even dangerous to call the culprits to an account: when flattery seemeth to be the spreading genius of the great, and reason becomes a victim to the lewdness of the impious; when the laws of our ancestors are forgotten, and new ones take their place; when M[i]n[iste]rs say to Magna Charta, ‘begone from us, and your ways we see not!’ When a nation is come to such a crisis, as to behold part of her friends betraying her ... when the common people are sacrificed to the caprice of a few tyrannical men, gratifying their own lusts at the expense of the juices of consumed Britons ... O! I lament for my people, I will mourn for her innocent youths that were slain. O! unhappy family of this island, it is high time that thy father, the [kin]g, whom God hath blessed with intellect and perspicuity, looketh forth from his window, and be roused from that opiate draught which the M[inister]s have given him to drink. The time is critical: they are, indeed Shakespeare saith, ‘out of joint’.”²²

²⁰ Tang, *A Discourse Addressed to the Minority*, pp. v–vi: “To the Reader, the Man, and the Critick”.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. vii.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 1–4.

Conspicuously displaying his Jewish affiliation, Tang proceeds to offer an inventory of biblical citations in both Hebrew and English that highlight the crisis of moral authority and the compelling religious reasons for regal intervention.²³ “It is even wrong in the eyes of Providence,” he writes, to remove “a certain great L[egislator]r”.²⁴ Evoking Isaiah’s testimony, Tang writes that even the government of Jerusalem was similarly guilty of removing honest judges and ministers. But at least there was a proper pretext for such a removal. In the case of Wilkes, there was no proper cause for his dismissal other than “the chimerical pleasure of M[inisters] to change”.²⁵ The ultimate issue was whether the British government was democratic or not; whether its representatives in the House of Commons truly represented the will of the people who elected them.

Tang returns to the theme of religion, one that unites all creeds and is devoid of ceremony or dogma:

“Friends and countrymen, be not baffled or dwindled into fright ... Remember that men, be they as great in power as they can, are but men. I would now remind you, when you come to inquire into the character and conduct of your leaders, never to intermix religion therewith; look only whether the task he hath undertaken be just ... No, be not deceived with the naked word of religion; look out for the plain meaning man for your country; and know that God judges men simply, without ceremonial or dogmatical laws.”²⁶

Transparently vindicating his own intervention into politics, he clearly asks his reader to judge him not as a Jew but as one who speaks for the simple religion of all humankind. And as a way of bolstering his credibility, he casts aspersions on both atheists and Jesuits.²⁷

But all this is merely a prelude to his gushing peroration on the glories of his English homeland:

“As directed chance hath given me my prima mobile in this blessed country; whose laws are founded on the basis of reason; That grand reason which sucked the milk of nature, formed by that stupendous hand; that glorious spot where her people will not suffer imposition; where the laws are equal to the native and the sojourner [i.e. the Christian and the Jew]; knowing that my country is armed with such noble weapons,

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 4–6.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 12–13.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 27–29

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 28, 30.

makes me truly happy, and I say with the wise: Blessed are thou, O land, where the king is free, and thy princes eat in due season."²⁸

Tang winds up in true homiletic form, drawing the direct parallel between Jeremiah's cry for righteousness and his own: "The City of Jerusalem we are told was destroyed, because of no justice being rendered there: I hope we don't labour under such circumstances. Jeremiah, who was present at the destruction of the Jews, did exhort them to be righteous, to keep to their Magna Charta ..."²⁹ The last words he ironically reserves for one of his favourites, "M. de Voltaire", on the meaning of "Country".³⁰ In a final outpouring of rallying cries, Tang finally evokes by name the victim he is championing—"Accept Wilkes' Catechism"—as he closes with the words: "For every blessing must come authorized and manifested."³¹

It is hard to conceive of a similar work written by a Jew in Germany or elsewhere in Europe at the end of the eighteenth century. Todd Endelman underscores the sense of identity many English Jews felt with their new homeland by the end of the eighteenth century. But he also reminds us that English Jews, "with a handful of exceptions, remained aloof from political activity throughout the turbulent years of the revolution".³² Anglo-Jewish writers emphasised the loyalty and political quiescence of their co-religionists. Quoting David Levi, the outspoken critic of Priestley and Paine on religious matters, Endelman points out how even this courageous defender of Jewish interests insisted that Jews remain apolitical. He mentions a "minuscule number" of English Jews in politics, such as John King and Emanuel Nunes Carvalho, who left England for America in 1799, but his conclusion is unambiguous: "Further research might reveal another nine or ten similar examples, but even then such isolated instances hardly would permit one to speak of Jewish political activity."³³

I am prepared to accept the judgment that Tang's remarkable publication, his identification with the radical Wilkites, his forceful rhetoric on behalf of democratic principles, his articulation of a Deistic faith that

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 30–31.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 33–34.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 34–35. For Tang's other citations from Voltaire, see Ruderman, "Was There a Haskalah in England?", pp. 124–125.

³¹ Tang, *A Discourse Addressed to the Minority*, pp. 35–36.

³² Endelman, *Jews of Georgian England*, pp. 272–274, quotation p. 274.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 274–276, quotation p. 276. See also Endelman's detailed study of John King: "The Checkered Career of "Jew" King. A Study in Anglo-Jewish Social History", in *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 7–8 (1982–1983), pp. 69–100.

safeguards the rights and opinions of even “primitive Ebrews”, and his emotional attachment to his British homeland, are one more isolated instance of little importance for assessing the mood of Anglo-Jewry as a whole. Nevertheless it demonstrates, at the very least, the radical potential of Anglo-Jewish self-consciousness. If it is unusual even for Anglo-Jewry, how much more singular does it appear from a continental perspective? Mendelssohn’s public meekness and Tang’s (as well as David Levi’s) brazenness remain, in the end, dramatic studies contrasting the degree of confidence each Jew had in the goodwill of his government and political culture.

II.

In a provisional list of Jewish Freemasons in England during the eighteenth and early nineteenth century prepared by Morris Rosenbaum and eventually published in 1977 by John M. Shaftesley, the name “Abraham Abrahams” appears no less than five times.³⁴ Abraham Abrahams was the name by which Abraham Tang was known in English society. Two of the entries—one listing Abrahams as a member of the Atholl Register Lodge No. 145 in 1766 and the other listing an Abrahams for the Fortitude lodge in 1771—conform precisely to the years in which Tang’s literary career was in full bloom: the late 1760s and early 1770s. It is therefore plausible to suggest that Tang was a Freemason and that his notions of natural religion, of civic life and secular fraternity, and especially his commitment to democratic principles as exemplified by his support of John Wilkes, were shaped in no small measure by his involvement in these new enclaves of society that had emerged in England by the early eighteenth century.

Of course, Freemasonry and its role in absorbing Jews into European society is hardly a new story, at least since the pioneering work of Jacob

³⁴ J. M. Shaftesley, ‘Jews in English Regular Freemasonry, 1717–1860’, in *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* 25 (1977), pp. 150–209. Rosenbaum’s list is found on pp. 169–209. The entries on Abrahams are on p. 170. Shaftesley, who was a regular Freemason, also published a companion piece entitled: ‘Jews in English Freemasonry in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries’, in *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* 92 (1979), pp. 25–63.

Katz, first published in 1968.³⁵ But Katz's book is primarily a history of the attitudes of German Freemasons to the Jews; the promise Freemasonry initially held for Jews seeking social acceptance; the obstacles constantly encountered in their struggles for civic emancipation in Germany; and, ultimately, the utter failure of these new social networks successfully to integrate their Jewish members. The primary message of Katz's research was that, despite its idealistic beginnings, in the end the principle of Christian exclusivity remained firmly entrenched in German Freemasonry.³⁶

Apart from a brief description of English Masonry, Katz did not concentrate on the British scene except to consider the impact of British policies on German lodges. Indeed, as he admitted, he could not even gain access to London's Grand Lodge and his sources were thus almost exclusively continental, reflecting a considerably different story than the English story, still to be fully told.³⁷ The subject of English Freemasonry and its attitude to Jews during the Enlightenment and beyond provides yet another dimension of the uniqueness of the English ambience and its notable contrast with that of Germany. Furthermore, there is an acute difference in the relationship between Freemasonry and Jewish self-reflection in the two societies. As Katz clearly pointed out, no relationship ever existed between the Masonic lodges and Mendelssohn's circle. Mendelssohn was not only suspicious of Lessing's involvement with Masonry; he even taunted him about the alleged secrets it preserved. Mendelssohn's primary objection to Lessing's allegiance to Freemasonry was the presumption that the latter possessed a secret knowledge which he would not even share with his faithful ally in the search for truth.³⁸ In striking contrast, Freemasonry in England appears to be an important factor in the shaping of Jewish self-consciousness. Among the Jewish thinkers I have identified in England at the end of the eighteenth century and beyond, almost all of them were active Freemasons or, at the very least, were connected to Freemasonry through close associates or relatives. I would therefore argue at least tentatively, on the basis of the limited evidence I now possess, that the new sociability afforded through English Freemasonry was not only important

³⁵ Jacob Katz, *Jews and Freemasons in Europe, 1723–1929*, Cambridge, MA 1970, first published in Hebrew as *Bonim Hofshi'im ve-Yehudim. Kishrehem ha-Amity'im ve-ha-Medumim*, Jerusalem 1968.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

as a factor in Jewish social acceptance; it also had an impact on the history of Anglo-Jewish thinking.

Margaret Jacob and others have eloquently argued for the critical role of English and Dutch Freemasonry in the formation of modern civil society.³⁹ The lodges, together with the philosophical and scientific academies, became the underpinning for republican and democratic forms of government. The culture of Freemasonry, Jacob maintains, was unrelentingly secular, offered membership often to the least socially acceptable, and identified with the British tradition that merit and not birth constitutes the foundation of the social and political order. Especially in Britain, Masonic civic life and its organisational structure actually mirrored the wider political and constitutional order. The rhetoric of liberalism, as articulated in the lodges, came to bind men of diverse social rank and power, even in times of ideological tension such as that of the Wilkes affair. Along with notions of British constitutionalism, the Bill of Rights, majority rule, and representative government, Freemasonry displayed a peculiarly English religiosity, with its emphasis on natural religion, Lockean psychology and Newtonian cosmology. This British colouring was often left behind as Freemasonry migrated from England to the Continent.⁴⁰

While Jacob has primarily emphasised the enlightened side of Masonry, others have focused more on its mysterious character, its syncretistic symbols, its hermeticism and kabbalism, and its preoccupation with ancient architecture, especially the Solomonic Temple. Perhaps its power lay in its remarkable blending of old and new meanings, its simultaneous embrace of ancient mysteries and modern science, and its uncanny ability to mediate between the traditional and the revolutionary, which, on the surface,

³⁹ See especially, Margaret Jacob, *The Radical Enlightenment. Pantheists, Freemasons, and Republicans*, London 1981; *idem*, *Living the Enlightenment. Freemasonry and Politics in Eighteenth Century Europe*, Oxford 1991. See also, on the early history of Freemasonry, David Stevenson, *The Origins of Freemasonry. Scotland's Century*, Cambridge 1989; J. Hamill, *The Craft*, London 1987; Richard W. Weisberger, *Speculative Freemasonry and the Enlightenment. A Study of the Craft in London, Paris, Prague, and Vienna* (Eastern European Monographs), New York 1992. Steven C. Bullock's recent *Revolutionary Brotherhood. Freemasonry and the Transformation of the American Social Order, 1730–1840*, Chapel Hill–London 1996, has a good opening chapter on English Freemasonry.

⁴⁰ Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment*, pp. 4–72. On the connection between the Freemasons and Wilkites, and the tensions the Wilkes affair engendered within the London lodges, see Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment*, p. 57; *idem*, *The Radical Enlightenment*, pp. 175, 263; J. Money, 'The Masonic Moment; Or, Ritual, Replica, and Credit. John Wilkes, the Macaroni Parson, and the Making of the Middle-Class Mind', in *Journal of British Studies* 32 (1993), pp. 358–395.

seemed to be rapidly diverging but which could be creatively linked in the Masonic universe of discourse.⁴¹

For English Jews, the lure of Freemasonry, as pointed out by Katz and others, was obvious.⁴² It offered the potential for meaningful relationships with non-Jews and for instant social prestige. It also offered intellectual stimulation as well as “an escape from the drudgery of everyday life into a glamorous world of exotic ritual,” as Todd Endelman put it.⁴³ Moreover, Jews could not help but be impressed by the smatterings of Jewish cultural artefacts located within the discourse and symbols of Freemasonry: Hebrew-sounding words, biblical references, obscure kabbalistic connections, and especially the lionisation of Solomon and his Temple of Perfection. When the Sephardic Jew Jacob Judah Leon of Amsterdam (1602–1675) produced a model of the Temple and a treatise on its specifications, it was eventually appropriated by Masonic circles and brought to London, where it was displayed as late as 1760, becoming an essential part of Masonic lore. Rabbi Leon, in the mind of Lawrence Dermott, the Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of the Ancients in London, writing in 1764, was a true brother of the fraternity who had accurately described the origins of the coat of arms of the Grand Lodge. No doubt even the most assimilated Jewish member of a London lodge could not help but warm to the notion that the most prestigious symbol of Masonry was of Jewish pedigree.⁴⁴

Of course, with the appearance of distinctly Jewish lodges by the mid-eighteenth century, the social and cultural utopian promise of Freemasonry had somewhat evaporated. Lodges catering to an exclusive clientele of Jewish shopkeepers and artisans, serving kosher meals and following the Jewish calendar, could never meet the expectations of those Jews who had dreamed of enhanced contacts with prominent members of London’s Christian social aristocracy. The adoption of Christian ritual and prayer by some lodges, and even occasional anti-Jewish resolutions, could also alienate potential Jewish members. Nevertheless, as John Shaftesley has already pointed out in his reaction to Jacob Katz’s book, the latter “had the

⁴¹ On the more mysterious side of Freemasonry, see Stevenson, *The Origins of Freemasonry*, and the extensive bibliography therein; see also the review by N. Hampson of Jacob’s *Living the Enlightenment*, in *Times Literary Supplement*, 12th June 1992, and the useful discussion in Bullock, pp. 20–40.

⁴² See notes 33 and 34.

⁴³ Endelman, *Jews of Georgian England*, p. 270.

⁴⁴ In addition to the two essays by Shaftesley cited in note 34, see A. L. Shane, ‘Jacob Judah Leon of Amsterdam (1602–1675) and his Models of the Temple of Solomon and the Tabernacle’, in *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* 96 (1983), pp. 145–169.

effect of directing my attention to the differences between English and German Freemasonry".⁴⁵ Despite occasional setbacks in engendering a true social mix between Christians and Jews in English Freemasonry, the experiment in England often worked. Jews and Christians could inhabit the same neutral social space and could realise to a great extent a new sociability unimagined in previous centuries. And the record of German failure at equal coexistence only leads to highlight further the incredible success of the English model. To the extent that English Freemasonry succeeded in establishing a place for Jews, it was acting out the political and social ideals embedded in the democratic vision of English society as a whole.

That so large a proportion of Jewish intellectuals—both the assimilated and the more traditional, both the Sephardim and the Ashkenazim—embraced Freemasonry provides ample testimony to the relative success of this social structure in enhancing social mobility and in providing intellectual stimulation. Notions of belonging to an elite which shared a concern for society as a whole appealed particularly to Jewish intellectuals with a cosmopolitan outlook and a social conscience. In many respects the new fraternities were only extensions of the traditions of social volunteerism embedded in the Jewish confraternities of the past. They represented the expansion of the notion of "brotherhood", an overcoming of a suffocating parochialism for the benefits of a restructured community increasingly universal in spirit if not always in practice. For in fact even the more segregationist Jewish lodges were in some form linked to a larger universal fraternity where "all Masons are as Brethren upon the same Level".⁴⁶

Rosenbaum's extensive list includes not only the name of Abraham Abrahams (Abraham Tang), but also those of David Levi and John Hart (Eliakim ben Abraham).⁴⁷ Levi and Hart, in contrast to Tang, were both conservative and strong defenders of Jewish traditional values.⁴⁸ Samuel Falk and Mordechai Schnaber Levison are not on the list but probably had connections with Freemason and Swedenborgian circles in London, as other historians have noted.⁴⁹ David Nieto's grandson, Phinoas, was a

⁴⁵ Shaftesley, 'Jews in English Freemasonry', p. 56.

⁴⁶ The line is from the Constitution of 1723, quoted in Bullock, p. 39.

⁴⁷ Shaftesley, 'Jews in English Regular Freemasonry', pp. 180, 182.

⁴⁸ See Ruderman, 'Was There a Haskalah in England?', pp. 118–121, 126–128, and the literature cited there.

⁴⁹ On Levison, see below. On Falk's possible connections with Freemasons and the Swedenborgians, see M.K. Schuchard, 'Yates and the "Unknown Superiors". Swedenborg, Falk and Cagliostro', in *Secret Texts. The Literature of Secret Societies*, ed. by Mary M. Roberts and Hugh Ormsby-Lennon, New York 1995, pp. 114–168.

Freemason, as were Joshua Van Oven, Joseph Salvador, and Meyer, Isaac, and Ralph Schomberg.⁵⁰ While Emanuel Mendes da Costa is not listed, many of his relatives, besides Salvador, are.⁵¹ Several relatives of Raphael Barukh, the Sephardic biblical scholar, are mentioned, although he is not.⁵² Many of the Jewish names are those of physicians—hardly unexpected for a fraternity that always boasted a high percentage of doctors in its ranks.⁵³ In short, Freemasonry provided a stimulating cultural environment and hospitable social setting for a wide range of Jewish intellectual figures. It could offer them either an outlet to escape from the burdens of their ancestral tradition or simply a non-threatening ambience in which their Jewish identity was respected and could even be preserved intact.

III.

Freemasonry for Jews, then, was clearly one context for advancement and intellectual excitement; the literary and scientific societies of England were another. Todd Endelman, in his skilful account of the social integration of Anglo-Jewry, has already pointed out that not all assimilated Jews felt the need completely to renounce their links with Judaism and the Jewish community while pursuing their intellectual and social contacts with non-Jews. He singles out, in particular, educated Sephardic Jews who found their way into literary and scientific circles—“religiously neutral cultural spheres,” as he calls them—where “their secular diversions took them into the non-Jewish world but their occupational concerns brought them back to the Jewish community”.⁵⁴ Endelman mentions in this regard the remarkable example of Emanuel Mendes da Costa (1717-1791), one of the most acclaimed natural historians, conchologists and mineralogists of his era, clerk and Fellow of the Royal Society, Fellow of the Society of Antiquarians, author of several important scientific texts and numerous published papers in the “Philosophical Transactions” of the Royal Society, and referred to by one of his Christian admirers as “le grand monarque des

⁵⁰ See Shaftesley, ‘Jews in English Regular Freemasonry’, pp. 185, 186, 187, 188.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 176

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 173. On Raphael Barukh, see S. Daiches, ‘The Beginnings of Anglo-Jewish Biblical Exegesis and Bible Translation’, in *Transactions of the Jewish History Society of England* 4 (1942), pp. 20–24.

⁵³ See J. R. Clarke, ‘The Medical Profession and Early Freemasonry’, in *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* 85 (1972), pp. 298–311.

⁵⁴ Endelman, *Jews in Georgian England*, pp. 262–263.

fossilistes".⁵⁵ His brilliant career was severely damaged by his dishonesty in handling the Society's funds, which led to his dismissal from that body in 1767, his arrest, and his imprisonment in the King's Bench prison. Even with his reputation irreparably tarnished by his crimes, in his later years he continued to publish and to enjoy financial and moral support from his loyal academic colleagues and friends.

Endelman has considered the entire Mendes da Costa family as a prime example of radical assimilation and has also mentioned Emanuel and his close associations with fellow Jews and non-Jews in this context.⁵⁶ I would like to look at Emanuel Mendes da Costa from a somewhat different perspective, that of Jewish intellectual history. Mendes da Costa, I shall argue, is important not only because of his extraordinary scientific achievements and his remarkable intellectual contacts with many of the major scientific figures of England and Europe throughout much of the eighteenth century, but also as an intellectual figure quite conscious of his Jewish identity, who attempted to navigate the complex byways of intense and intimate contact with non-Jewish scientists who clearly recognised him as a Jew and even came to value his Jewish affiliation. On the other hand, he maintained open and even warm relations with the leadership of the Jewish community and with individual Jews who took pride in his outstanding accomplishments and in the unusual social status he had attained.

Mendes da Costa was hardly a systematic Jewish thinker, but he thought about his Jewish identity, was knowledgeable in Hebrew and Jewish history, and took a certain pride in his Jewish expertise. David Katz has pointed out how he was perceived as a kind of specialist on Jewish affairs by his colleagues in the Royal Society.⁵⁷ I will explore this role

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 262. On Mendes da Costa, see the entry for him in the *Dictionary of National Biography* 4 (1937), pp. 1196–1197; P.J.P Whitehead, 'Emanuel Mendes da Costa (1717–91) and the *Conchology*, or *Natural History of Shells*', in *Bulletin of the British Museum of Natural History (Hist. Ser.)* 6 (1977), pp. 1–24 ; the *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Jerusalem 1971, pp. 5:986; E.R. Samuel, 'Anglo-Jewish Notaries and Scriviners', in *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* 17 (1951–1952), pp.131–132. Charles Singer apparently lectured before the Jewish Historical Society of England on "The Correspondence of Emanuel da Costa". Despite an announcement in 1941 of its forthcoming publication, it does not seem to have appeared. Isaac Romilly of Fleet Street in Add. Ms. 28542, f. 27r of the British Library referred to da Costa by the latter title.

⁵⁶ Todd M. Endelman, *Radical Assimilation in English Jewish History 1656–1945*, Bloomington, IN 1990, pp. 12–17.

⁵⁷ David Katz, 'The Chinese Jews and the Problem of Biblical Authority in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century England', in *The English Historical Review* 105 (1990), pp. 899–907, esp. p. 903, note 1, and p. 907, note 4. My sincere thanks to David Katz

more closely, in the hope of retrieving a deeper sense of his connection with Jewish intellectual life in eighteenth-century England. My starting point is the amazing font of da Costa's scientific world, the mammoth correspondence—a collection of 2,487 letters in eleven folio volumes, held in the British Library, an additional volume designated as his “common-place book”, and one more volume of specifically Jewish materials.⁵⁸ The mere fact that a Jew maintained intellectual and social contact with some of the great scientific luminaries of England and Europe (including a large number of clergymen), visited their homes, and conversed with them on both scientific and personal matters in his official capacity as the Royal Society's clerk but also unofficially, already defines da Costa's unique position in this era. Doctoral research in progress examines his role as a disseminator of scientific knowledge in the eighteenth century.⁵⁹ Within the context of Jewish history, I cannot think of any comparable eighteenth-century figure, including Mendelssohn, with such an international reputation and with so wide a network of associates. He corresponded with scholars in Russia and Eastern Europe, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and America, as well as those from England, in English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and Latin. He did not write in Hebrew but frequently used Hebrew words. Admittedly, much of the correspondence deals with fossils, but for the perceptive observer there are also nuggets of interest for Jewish cultural history to be gleaned from this massive written record.

David Katz has already described how, through da Costa's efforts, the Royal Society became involved in a search for unidentified Chinese Jews. Da Costa agreed in 1760 to write to an unnamed correspondent familiar with Chinese matters and to pass on to him the official Hebrew letter of the Jewish community, signed by Hakham Isaac Nieto, in search of Chinese of Jewish extraction. Katz also lists several other occasions where Jewish subjects are raised in his letters which might be considered more closely.⁶⁰ Note, for example, the erudite exchange between da Costa and William Stukeley, the well known antiquarian and Freemason, on the ori-

for sharing with me his notes on the da Costa correspondence and for his helpful comments on this subject.

⁵⁸ They are listed in the British Library as Add. mss. 28534–44, and arranged in alphabetical order according to name of correspondent (a selection was published by J. Nichols in *Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century*, vol. 4, London 1817); Add. ms. 29876 (selections published in *Gentleman's Magazine* 83 [1812], 1, pp. 205–207, 513–517); Add. ms. 29868 (selections published in *Gentleman's Magazine* 82 [1812] 2, pp. 329–331).

⁵⁹ Dissertation in progress by Stefan Siemer, University of Bonn.

⁶⁰ See note 57.

gin of an alleged Hebrew word, with citations from Targum Yonatan, the Talmud, Rashi, Buxdorf and Bochart.⁶¹ His letter to Lord Hugh Willoughby, the president of the Society of Antiquaries, reproduces a paper written together with a foreign clergyman (a rabbi?) on the derivation of the words *Ammaea Dea*, recently discovered on a Roman altar in England. Da Costa's erudite presentation of the Hebraic origin of the term is not only an impressive demonstration of his mastery of Hebrew and classical sources but also a subtle, or perhaps transparent, attempt to assert the priority of the Hebraic element of Western civilisation and to underscore the enduring legacy of Jewish culture in both Roman and English history.⁶² His translation from Hebrew of three thirteenth-century Jewish bonds is similarly intended to indicate the longevity and pride of ancestry of Jews living on English soil. Da Costa's message is clear: "We Jews are not newcomers; we derive from a culturally sophisticated legal culture of long duration; and, despite our medieval departure from England, our roots extend back to the formative period of English civilisation."⁶³

James Ducarel's letter to da Costa raises the potentially awkward question of whether it is appropriate to ask a Jew a question pertaining to his cultural background. Thus Ducarel timidly asks: "I hope you will not take it amiss if I desire your assistance ...", to which da Costa graciously responded: "I shall at all times with great pleasure be very ready to solve any questions you may put to me relating to our religious ceremonies, customs, etc. as far as I am capable of doing." Ducarel's query concerns the unusual subject of whether the dress and arms of a Jewish soldier were the same as those of Roman soldiers. (The fact that Ducarel proposes the subject of a Jewish military man is interesting in its own right.) Da Costa's response is also revealing: he had checked all the books he knew but without success: "And not being wise, greatly conversant in Rabbinical learning, I desired a very learned and curious student of our nation to carefully peruse all the Rabbinical authors about it." He turned to a Sephardic rabbi, Isaac Mendes Belisario, who willingly accepted the role of research assistant and who definitively concluded that they wore no special dress. Da Costa finally cited several Christian authorities on ancient Jewish history, some of whom he had not been able to consult. Thus on a subject far removed from

⁶¹ Nichols, *Illustrations*, 4, p. 505. On Stukeley, see M. Spurr, 'William Stukeley: Antiquarian and Freemason', in *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* 100 (1987), pp. 113–130.

⁶² Nichols, *Illustrations*, 4, pp. 794–797.

⁶³ *Gentleman's Magazine* 82 (1812), 2, pp. 329–331.

da Costa's scholarly expertise on fossils, his Christian interlocutor thought he might be an expert on ancient Jewish dress and rabbinic sources.⁶⁴

Despite the proper and even friendly tone with which da Costa related to his non-Jewish correspondents, neither he nor they were able to ignore his Jewish origin completely. Todd Endelman has quoted from a fascinating letter from Martin Folkes inviting da Costa to the home of the Duke of Richmond to see his fossil garden.⁶⁵ Folkes, on more than one occasion, raised the issue of Jewish dietary laws and asked whether da Costa would be able to dine "without breach of the Law of Moses". It is difficult to imagine that da Costa observed *kashrut* at all, being married to a non-Jewish wife, and conducting his affairs, at least in one case, even on a Saturday morning.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, Folkes assumes that food might present an obstacle to the visit. At the same time, one cannot miss a subtle note of disrespect in tempting da Costa with the non-kosher delicacies of the Duke's table: "... unless the lobsters of Chichester should be a temptation, by which a weaker man might be seduced." And one might sense even a touch of arrogant superiority when, after one more reference to barbecued 'shols', "and other abominations to your nation", Folkes concluded: "But we are all citizens of the world, and see different customs and different tastes without dislike or prejudice, as we do different names and colours." Da Costa, apparently because of the approaching High Holy Days, declined the invitation.⁶⁷

In a letter to James West, da Costa insinuated his Jewish identity with the following line: "wretch as I am for the sake of literature, I have even invaded the Holy Decalogue by not having a seventh day of rest, so strictly ordered by the Law of Moses."⁶⁸ To Isaac Romilly of Fleet Street he wrote: "I wish you and yours many and happy festivals and other worldly joys and when our human race is run may we meet in the glories of Heaven through the mercy of our great Creator."⁶⁹ And to Anthony Tilsington of Swenwick in Derbyshire, he launched still another subtle reminder of his particular identity: "Well at last my head is a little settled and I have entirely rid myself of the maggots in my brain of the gadding fit which pos-

⁶⁴ Nichols, *Illustrations*, 4, pp. 604–608.

⁶⁵ Endelman, *Jews of Georgian England*, p. 262.

⁶⁶ In Add. ms. 28542, fol. 220r, da Costa mentions an appointment at 10a.m. on Saturday to view fossils.

⁶⁷ Nichols, *Illustrations*, 4, pp. 635–637.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 4, p. 792.

⁶⁹ Add. ms. 28542, fol. 6r.

sessed me all the summer so that with propriety I might have been called a wandering Jew.”⁷⁰

There are several instances where either Da Costa or his correspondent acknowledge that his Jewish identity is a liability. Endelman has already referred to the letter from Thomas Birch, who admitted that “your religious profession may possibly be a prejudice to you with some persons”, but nevertheless encouraged him to present his candidacy for the librarianship of the Royal Society.⁷¹ On the same matter da Costa wrote to Dr. George Lavington, the Lord Bishop of Exeter, and to Thomas Knowlton, to whom he lamented the fact that he was passed over for someone less qualified as a natural historian since “alas not being of the established Religion of the country it was concluded I could not have a place ...”⁷² On yet another occasion, he was reminded by Edward Hasted that his desire to inspect a Hebrew inscription on the old walls of the Castle of Canterbury might be thwarted because “they [the authorities] would make great objections to admit a Stranger and a Jew to search for it”.⁷³

Much of da Costa’s correspondence is with fellow-Jews, especially Sephardic Jews in Amsterdam and elsewhere, such as his cousin Joseph Salvador, David da Fonseca, Mordecai Aboab, David Abenatar Pimentel, Isaac Belisario, Isaac da Pinto and Ives [*sic*] Rebello. There is clearly a different tone, a greater intimacy, and a playful exchange of Jewishly-coded messages, suggesting the relative absence of social barriers and cautious formality between correspondents. I conclude this section with two rich examples.

Emanuel’s exchange of letters with Dr. Ralph Schomberg has been mentioned at least twice previously by modern scholars.⁷⁴ Schomberg is certainly an interesting figure in his own right, both because of the upbringing he received from his talented but contentious father, Dr. Meyer Schomberg, and because of his own literary career and cultural interests. In many respects, his intellectual world and attenuated, but still persisting, Jewish loyalties are analogous to those of Mendes da Costa and suggest why the two friends could fully appreciate each other. Meyer’s path from Judaism, his Hebrew articulation of his Deistic philosophy, and his com-

⁷⁰ Add. ms. 28543, fol. 243r.

⁷¹ Endelman, *Jews of Georgian England*, p. 264. See also Nichols, *Illustrations*, 4, p. 540.

⁷² Add. ms. 28540, fol. 46v.

⁷³ Nichols, *Illustrations*, 4, p. 645.

⁷⁴ By Samuel in ‘Anglo-Jewish Notaries’, p. 119, and by Endelman in *Jews of Georgian England*, p. 125.

plaints about the organised Jewish community have already been studied. His contest with the College of Physicians over his credentials for the practise of medicine, his remarkably successful practice, his affiliation with Freemasonry, and the English private education he offered his sons, Ralph and Isaac, who attended the Merchant Taylor's school, have also been noted.⁷⁵ Ralph's development as an intellectual, and apparently as an unconverted Jew, despite his Christian wife and baptized children, remains unstudied. He was trained as a physician and received his medical degree from Aberdeen. Like Emanuel Mendes da Costa, he was a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and also, like him, received notarial faculty. John Nichols appears to be the only scholar to examine his assorted writings on political, medical and classical subjects. He paints a most unflattering portrait of Schomberg's work on Pindar and Horace, which appears to be completely plagiarised from a contemporary work in French. It would appear that da Costa and Schomberg had something else in common besides their intellectual interests, parallel careers and Christian families: a fatal proclivity for dishonest and deceitful behaviour.⁷⁶

Schomberg began to correspond with Mendes da Costa regarding his nomination of an old friend, John Stephen Bernard of Amsterdam, for Fellowship of the Society of Antiquaries. Schomberg had also written to James Ducarel, da Costa's colleague in the Society, about the same matter. In that letter, he offered several comments and corrections to a journal he had seen, indicating his interest in Hebrew and Aramaic words and revealing his expertise in both languages.⁷⁷ The correspondence over the course of many months between da Costa, the Sephardic Jew in London, and Schomberg, the Ashkenazi Jew in Bath, has been preserved. Their initial formality eventually gives way to a warm intimacy: "Dear Sir" soon becomes "Dear Manny" [=Emanuel] and "Dear Ralph". Emanuel spoke of an "esteem and friendship ... inculcated in our tender years, and though we have been distant from each other for a long series of time, yet my heart ever wished you well, and joyed in your welfare ..."; and Ralph re-

⁷⁵ See especially E. R. Samuel, 'Dr. Meyer Schomberg's Attack on the Jews of London, 1746', in *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* 20 (1959–1961), pp. 83–111.

⁷⁶ J. Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century*, vol. 3, London 1812, pp. 26–30. On Ralph, see also Samuel, 'Anglo-Jewish Notaries', pp. 118–119; A. Hyamson, 'The Jewish Obituaries in the Gentleman's Magazine', in *Miscellanies of the Jewish Historical Society of England* 4 (1942), p. 57; Endelman, *Radical Assimilation*, p. 48; *idem*, *Jews of Georgian England*, pp. 125, 259.

⁷⁷ Nichols, *Illustrations*, 4, p. 763.

turned the affection. “Manny” sent regards to the family in one instance, requesting that he be sent a small pot (of about three or four pounds) of “sour crout”, while Schomberg returned the warm regards from his wife and children, adding his own with the Hebrew words “amen ve-amen”. The much-quoted line follows: “Bath is at present very full and brilliant ... I am not idle. We have a good many bnai yisrael here.” The Hebrew references, of course, express more than personal friendship; they suggest a distinct sense of Jewish self-awareness. In the relatively Christian space that both intellectuals inhabited, they still continued to see themselves as Jews. This is all the more remarkable because Da Costa asked Schomberg in his next letter to “tell your Lady from me, with my sincere respects, that I wish her a merry Christmas and happy new year”, and followed this with a phrase strangely absent from the version published by John Nichols: “My compliments attend Miss Schomberg [apparently Ralph’s recently engaged or married daughter] and the young gentleman and wish them the same and you my dear Ralph a good Rosasana.” The last sentence provides ample proof that Ralph remained a Jew until the year of his death in 1761. But even more interesting is the matter-of-fact way in which both Jews acknowledged their complicated fate as spouses of Christian women with Christian offspring while at the same time adhering to their special bonds of “Jewish speech”—the Hebrew words and the Rosh Hashanah greetings—which define, no matter how faintly, who they are and what unites them as friends.⁷⁸

A second example of da Costa’s correspondence, though different, returns us directly to the comparison between Anglo- and German Jewry in the mid-eighteenth century. In 1759, writing from Paris, and then again in 1767, writing from Hamburg, Aron S. Gompertz, MD, as he signs himself, penned two letters to Mendes da Costa.⁷⁹ Gompertz, of course, was none other than Mendelssohn’s Jewish teacher. In 1751 he had received his medical degree from the University of Frankfurt an der Oder. For ten years he practised medicine in Berlin, but eventually took up residence in Hamburg, where he died in 1769. In addition to the critical impact he had on Mendelssohn, he is known for his Hebrew commentary on Abraham ibn Ezra and a short Hebrew treatise, *Ma’amar Ha-Maddah*, which was appended to the latter work.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 4, pp. 764–769. The additional line is found in Add. ms. 28542, fol. 162r.

⁷⁹ Add. ms. 78537, fols. 434r–436r.

⁸⁰ On Gompertz, see David B. Ruderman, *Jewish Thought and Scientific Discovery in Early Modern Europe*, New Haven–London 1995, pp. 334–335; Alexander Altmann, *Moses Mendelssohn. A Biographical Study*, Alabama 1973, pp. 23–25.

Rather remarkably, Gompertz wrote both letters in an adequate but somewhat unintelligible English to his scientific colleague. He might have written in German, the language of several other letters to da Costa, and he might have also written in Hebrew to a co-religionist who certainly understood the language. That he wrote in English suggests a lack of familiarity with his associate—in striking contrast to the Schomberg correspondence—despite the friendly tone and the fondness expressed for England and his English addressee. In fact, what is most strange about the letters is the distinct impression they convey that Gompertz did not consider his correspondent a Jew, or at the very least, that he was uncertain about his Jewish loyalties. At several points in his letter Gompertz openly acknowledged his own Jewish identity. In a sentence not fully comprehensible to me, he referred to “a newspaper of a witty member of my fraternity”, clearly meaning his Jewish community. Later on, he again displayed his Jewish affiliation when describing his meanderings in the Low Countries and the Netherlands: “But to the purpose, dear sir, I have rambled about, not unlike the everlasting Jew, through the low clammy countries and through the milky Dutch dominion.” In an ingratiating gesture to his English correspondent, he expressed his dislike for those countries in comparison to England “because of the sickening abundance of milk and the scarcity of roast beast”.⁸¹ Whether the meat he relished was kosher or not he did not say, but what seems oddly inexplicable about these benign pleasantries is that they could have easily been addressed to a non-Jew. It was Gompertz, like da Costa on numerous other occasions, who was “testing the waters” with his faint signals of Jewish identification, seemingly unsure how the clerk of the Royal Society and renowned English scientist might react. Unfortunately, none of da Costa’s responses have survived by which one might examine this conjecture. A potential forum for a significant exchange of views between a distinguished Anglo-Jewish intellectual and his German counterpart never materialises. In the end, we are left with a rather stiff and unsuccessful attempt on the part of the German-Jewish doctor to establish a meaningful dialogue with his colleague.

IV.

One might look elsewhere, however, to a more meaningful forum for the exchange of views between an Anglo-Jewish and German-Jewish thinker:

⁸¹ Add. ms.78537, fol. 436r.

this is the last of my examples and the final part of this paper. I refer to a thinker I have treated before, Mordechai Schnaber Levison (1741-1797), who has also been the subject of another recent study.⁸² Levison, strictly speaking, was not solely an English thinker. He was born in Germany and after a significant sojourn in London and Sweden, eventually returned to his homeland, where he practised medicine until his death. In fact, Michael Graetz, in his recent treatment of the German *Haskalah*, has identified him as one of its participants.⁸³ While acknowledging the complexity of Levison's thought and the multiple intellectual environments that nourished him, I would still argue vigorously that his primary intellectual debts were English, and that the bulk of his most significant work was produced either during or immediately after his highly stimulating encounter with Britain. This is not merely my own subjective impression; it is a sentiment Levison himself acknowledged both through the citation of his sources and in his constant references to this most formative period of his intellectual life.

In my earlier study, I sought to understand Levison's thought as reflected in his two major tomes: the *Ma'amar ha-Torah ve-ha-Hokhmah*, published in London in 1771, and his later *Shelosh Esrei Yesodei ha-Torah*, probably published in Altona in 1792 but written much earlier. I neglected to consider a third work of equal importance, a commentary on Kohelet entitled *Tokahhat Megillah*, published in Hamburg in 1784 but written around the time of his departure from England around 1780. I would like to offer here some preliminary observations on this work because of its great relevance to our subject. Levison composed his commentary after acquiring Mendelssohn's recent commentary on the same biblical book. Clearly dissatisfied with the German sage's understanding of Kohelet, he decided on a work of his own. He had read Mendelssohn's *Phaedon*, on the subject of the immortality of the soul, and was impressed by its execution. In his *Shelosh Esrei Yesodei ha-Torah*, Levison devoted a chapter to immortality in which he drew heavily from Mendelssohn's work, although not without criticising it.⁸⁴ This chapter, too, makes its way into Levison's commentary, providing an extended reaction to Men-

⁸² Ruderman, *Jewish Thought and Scientific Discovery*, pp. 332–368 (in which earlier studies are mentioned); H. M. Graupe, 'Mordechai Shnaber-Levison. The Life, Works, and Thought of a Haskalah Outsider', in *Year Book XLI of the Leo Baeck Institute*, London 1996, pp. 3–20.

⁸³ Graetz, p. 303.

⁸⁴ Levison, *Shelosh Esrei Yesodei ha-Torah*, pp. 95v–99v.

delssohn's early German and Hebrew writings.⁸⁵ Recently, through the kindness of Dr. Shlomo Sprecher of Brooklyn, New York, who has republished several of Levison's Hebrew writings, I have acquired a copy of the original text of Mendelsson's commentary owned by Levison with his extensive handwritten notes throughout.⁸⁶ If there remains any doubt about the critical impact on him of his English education, these notes, written in Hebrew and in English, which include English translations of several biblical verses, suggest how natural it was for him, at least in this instance, to think and express himself in English. To my mind, Levison's animadversions on Mendelsson's works, especially the Hebrew commentary, constitute a remarkable example of the dialogue between the two communities of thinkers, and provide a vantage point for pointing to some of the differences between these two prominent men, and particularly to some of the differences in the intellectual ambiances that nurtured them in the first place.

Levison's dedication page sets the tone for the entire volume:

"When I heard when I was in London during the past six years that there was a scholar in the capital of Berlin who had written a commentary on this pleasant book [Kohelet], I hurried to acquire it to see what he had done with it. His words did not sit well with me and I saw the need to compose a good commentary a second time with God's beneficent assistance."

Levison added that he had consulted no commentary except that of Mendelsson (whom he never mentions by name) and that he wrote it in fleeting moments "when I was travelling from place to place and from city to city and on a ship at sea". In striking contrast to the simple manner in which he introduced Mendelsson, he immodestly presented himself as a member "of the community of physicians and doctor of the hospital of the Duke of Portland [the position he had attained in London through the good services of his teacher Dr. John Hunter] and Professor [so designated by the monarch] to the King of Sweden Gustaf III", to whom the volume is dedicated.⁸⁷

Before considering what displeased Levison about Mendelsson's commentary, it might be useful to compare his more generous presentation

⁸⁵ Levison, *Tokhahat Megillah*, pp. 22r–27r.

⁸⁶ See S. Sprecher (ed.), *Mivhar Kitvei Moreinu ha-Ravi Mordechai Gumpel Schnaber Ha-Levi Levison*, Brooklyn, NY 1995, who prints the first page of Mendelsson's commentary with Levison's notes towards the back of the volume. (There is no pagination in this section.)

⁸⁷ Levison, *Tokhahat Megillah*, p. 1r.

of Mendelssohn in his chapter on immortality. In this case, he acknowledges his indebtedness to the *Phaedon*, which represents for him an excellent digest of old and new opinions on the immortality of the soul “collected by the renowned sage whose rabbinical name is our teacher and rabbi, Rabbi Moses of Dessau, in his book on the immortality of the soul called the *Phaedon* which he translated from the Greek into German”. Levison claimed that his own summary of the first two dialogues amply describe the book, although he has purposely omitted the third dialogue, to which we shall return. The only difference from Mendelssohn’s own version of the first two sections and Levison’s synopsis is that “you shall find there more expansive words, flowery and pleasant language, eloquence, a pleasant honeycomb [cf. Proverbs 16:24] for his speech is endowed with grace [cf. Psalms 45:3] since this scholar is the head of those who speak in a clear language in German”.⁸⁸ This second presentation of Mendelssohn is more complimentary than the first, which had merely identified him as a scholar from Berlin. In this instance, the emphasis is on his eloquence and clarity of presentation in the German language. Whether Levison’s obvious restraint is motivated by professional jealousy or simply by a lack of appreciation for Mendelssohn’s heroic image within German Jewry is hard to say. Levison’s acquaintance with the philosopher’s work came at a relatively early stage of Mendelssohn’s career and his impact on a Jew in far-off England was clearly limited. Mendelssohn was no more or less than a scholar from Berlin who wrote well in German and summarised (or translated) well; he was therefore not above serious criticism of his work.

Mendelssohn’s commentary, as David Sorkin has recently written, was finished in 1768 and published a year later. Its central themes on divine providence and the immortality of the soul are clearly related to the treatment of them in the *Phaedon*, which had been published two years earlier. The commentary, written for Hebrew readers, is generally conservative in format, emphasising practical knowledge. For Mendelssohn, immortality was a cardinal principle of Judaism as understood in Kohelet, since it established a foundation for morality and divine retribution. He believed the soul was a simple, imperishable substance which defines the uniqueness of man, whose quest for perfection could only be realised through a reasoned belief in the soul’s immortality. Mendelssohn attempted to overcome the challenge of the book’s many and seemingly contradictory voices on these issues by assuming that Kohelet was actually a philosophical dialogue in which a variety of speakers and viewpoints could be heard. By identifying

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 22r.

larger units of speech, rather than merely focusing on the meaning of individual words, the reader could consider the conflicting opinions of the speakers before arriving at the correct view, the authentic voice of the Preacher fully endorsing the twin notions of providence and immortality.⁸⁹

As Alexander Altmann and Allan Arkush have emphasised in their separate analyses of the *Phaedon* and its sources, Mendelssohn's overriding concern was to preserve the traditional notion of immortality against the assaults of the French materialists. Clearly acknowledging his debt to Leibniz, Wolff, Baumgarten and Reimarus, among others, Mendelssohn attempted to present a wholly rational proof of immortality, emphasising especially that the wise fulfilment of God's aims in creating the world requires an afterlife in which rational beings could continue to perfect themselves and carry out their Creator's design to the full. As Mendelssohn acknowledged, he had put his contemporary argument into the mouth of Socrates because he required a pagan to demonstrate that reason alone, without recourse to revelation, was sufficient to substantiate these essential notions. As Altmann points out, this exclusive reliance on reason was entirely in the spirit of the Enlightenment and was critical for Mendelssohn in deflecting the arguments of the sophists (read: materialists) of the eighteenth century.⁹⁰

What most irked Levison about Mendelssohn's commentary was precisely this point, and the implication that the philosopher's rational proofs of immortality were in fact synonymous with the actual position of Kohelet. What seems to be at the heart of his passionate attack, as I understand it, is the essential difference between Locke's understanding of the relation between faith and reason, as adopted by Levison, and that of Leibniz and Wolff, as adopted by Mendelssohn. Levison's objection to Mendelssohn's position can best be understood by consulting his carefully constructed chapters on "truth" and "faith" in his own *Shelosh Esre Yesodei ha-Torah*. In these chapters, he relies heavily on Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* in adopting a sensationalist epistemology, rejecting innate ideas, and assuming that all human knowledge rests on probabilities. For Levison, again following Locke, faith is a kind of trust, not contradicted by reason, which emerges within the human condition, where knowledge of the entire truth is unattainable. We can investi-

⁸⁹ See David Sorkin, *Moses Mendelssohn and the Religious Enlightenment*, Berkeley-Los Angeles 1996, pp. 33-45.

⁹⁰ Altmann, pp. 147-158; Allan Arkush, *Moses Mendelssohn and the Enlightenment*, Albany 1994, pp. 45-64.

gate only what our senses and human experience allow us to know and we should “believe only what is beyond our intelligence and what the angels of God and his prophets have related”.⁹¹

Levison opens his commentary with a two-pronged critique of Mendelssohn’s approach: the first deals with his view of the structure of *Kohelet*; the second with the substance of what the book actually says. On the first point, we recall, Mendelssohn had maintained that it constituted a conversation between many speakers upholding differing viewpoints until the correct view was spelled out by the Preacher himself. Not so for Levison. *Kohelet* rather “wanders in his examination of the issue, once approving and once disapproving, since the sage will speak according to his opinion as both a scholar and thinker who believes in God”. In Levison’s view, *Kohelet* chooses the experimental method of the scientific laboratory. He explores all options, considers one view and then its contradiction, and articulates the virtues of each position while viewing its limitation. In the end, he is led to the realisation that reason alone cannot offer him a definitive answer to the questions of providence and the immortality of the soul. At that point he concludes his investigation, abandons all the theories he has investigated, and accepts the true tradition as a matter of faith.⁹²

This leads to Levison’s second criticism. Commenting on Mendelssohn’s understanding of *Kohelet* 4:1 (“I saw the tears of the oppressors...”) both in his hand-written notes on Mendelssohn and in the printed introduction to his own work, Levison protests against Mendelssohn’s understanding of *Kohelet*’s position. He was not saying, *pace* Mendelssohn, that because the oppressed presently suffer, there should be a reward for them in the next world. On the contrary, *Kohelet* had no intention of proving immortality, nor of complaining about oppression. He understood that this question was beyond the capacity of any human being to know, and the only way to attain a certain resolution of the issue is through a belief in the Torah. In other words, what Mendelssohn presumed could be eventually proved by reason is ultimately unprovable. Immortality is only comprehensible through faith.⁹³

To be sure, Levison was not fully consistent in his Lockean sensationalism and his convenient fideism. Indeed, by summarising the first two

⁹¹ The quotation is from *Shelosh Esre Yesodei ha-Torah*, p. 13v. Levison’s views on this are expounded in Ruderman, *Jewish Thought and Scientific Discovery*, pp. 353–357.

⁹² Levison, *Tokhahat Megillah*, pp. 1r–1v.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 1v; compare also his statement on p. 40v.

dialogues of the *Phaedon*, he considered directly rational proofs of the soul's existence and of its immortality. Moreover, in suppressing the third dialogue, in which he refuted Mendelssohn's argument "from the collision of duties", he appears to have violated his own warning not to argue rationally over matters incapable of a rational resolution. In this case, Mendelssohn had offered his own argument that when the soul is not deemed immortal, the preservation of life becomes the exclusive concern of every person. One would then have the right to neglect all moral duties involving the welfare of the community in order to protect oneself. The notion of immortality is thus critical in allowing human beings to worry about a collective good greater than their own self-preservation, that is, the moral obligations of society as a whole. For Levison, who was not alone in such criticism, the argument was weak on the grounds that even without a notion of immortality, it would still be appropriate, he maintained, to punish murderers in order to protect the public from further crimes. But Levison had already vigorously claimed that such arguments—for or against—were beside the point. Ultimately they established nothing except their utter inability to establish the truth, which is unattainable except through faith.⁹⁴

Levison's other disagreements with Mendelssohn are less important but fill out a portrait of a distinct style of rationality that each man had staked out for himself. As we might expect, Levison took a more open view of the Masoretic text of the Bible, which Mendelssohn maintained was inviolable and not subject to emendations. Despite his familiarity with the English work of Raphael Barukh, his Sephardic friend from London, who had publicly defended the Masoretic text against the variants published by Kennicott, Levison was willing to consider modest emendations of the biblical text.⁹⁵ In contrast to Mendelssohn's uncompromising traditionalism, Levison quietly reveals throughout his commentary his less-than-firm commitment to ritual law and *mitzvot* in favour of a universal ethic

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 22r. On Mendelssohn's argument on "the collision of duties", and criticism of it, especially by Garve, see Altmann, pp. 155–156; Arkush, pp. 56–61.

⁹⁵ Levison, *Tokhahat Megillah*, p. 1b. He mentions his friendship with Raphael Barukh, who published his *Critica Sacra* in London in 1775, on p. 2b. One interesting comparison yet to be made is the way in which Kennicott's treatment of the biblical text was received by both English and German Jews, and the stake of each community in biblical translation. I hope to consider this issue more deeply in future studies of Raphael Barukh and David Levi.

founded on the knowledge of one God and love of all humankind.⁹⁶ Levison the physician also periodically inserts his vast medical knowledge (he devotes an entire section to excoriating Jews for their excessive eating on the Sabbath and their overindulgence in meat), as well as his ecological concerns.⁹⁷ He is quick to point out Mendelssohn's error in claiming that Solomon discovered the circulation of blood; in fact, he points out, the real discoverers of circulation were Michael Servetus and William Harvey.⁹⁸

In the end, Levison appears to accept, at least tacitly, many of Mendelssohn's conventional interpretations, or passes over them without comment. His sharp critique is reserved primarily for the issues I have raised. Surely one could also find a common universe of discourse in the parallel search of these two scholars to reconcile faith and reason, notwithstanding their different styles of rational discourse. But Levison did attack the great Mendelssohn, in no small measure because of the relative differences in their respective philosophical and scientific backgrounds, and in their diverging intellectual journeys: that of Mendelssohn from Dessau to Berlin, and that of Levison from Berlin to London to Stockholm and back to Hamburg.

Levison's challenge to Mendelssohn, together with the other snapshots of Anglo-Jewish intellectual life I have presented—the political dissent of Tang, the Masonic dimension of Anglo-Jewish thought, the partial and tentative articulations of Jewish identity of Emanuel Mendes da Costa—hardly demonstrate an English *Haskalah*. They do suggest, however, the fascination Jewish self-reflection in eighteenth-century England might hold for historians of Anglo-Jewry, even those who might have previously considered England to be a Jewish intellectual wasteland. They may even present an interesting vantage point for German-Jewish historians from which to view German intellectual developments, assuming they do not take to heart any English disrespect for their vaunted Moses Mendelssohn.

⁹⁶ See, for example, Levison's criticism of Mendelssohn's reading of Kohelet 4:17 in *Tokhahat Megillah*, p. 1b. Compare also his discussion on pp. 9v–10r, and his final discussion on p. 40b, in which he criticises both unbelieving rationalists and silly literalists.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 10r–10v, 12v–14a; see also Ruderman, *Jewish Thought and Scientific Discovery*, pp. 357–365.

⁹⁸ Levison, *Tokhahat Megillah*, pp. 36v–37v.

ANDREAS GOTZMANN

Jewish Enlighteners and Jewish Enlightenment: A Comment on David B. Ruderman

The question of whether there was a Jewish Enlightenment in Britain must be answered in two separate parts: David Ruderman addresses the question about the role of Jews in the British Enlightenment, showing that Britain not only had Jewish enlighteners but also that some of them played a prominent role in public debates. Those in Germany, by contrast, were, with few exceptions, such as Moses Mendelssohn and Salomon Maimon, perceived by their non-Jewish colleagues as spokesmen of an internal Jewish discourse. As we learn from the inclusion of British Jews in Freemasonry and even in the Royal Society, being Jewish did not play a decisive role in enlightened circles in Britain, while in Germany similar efforts to be accepted as equals were mostly unsuccessful. Moreover, many of the Anglo-Jewish enlighteners were actually living on the boundaries of the Jewish communities, something that was almost impossible in Germany. This astonishing development in Britain was an outcome of the liberal political climate and of the impact of Dutch Sephardic culture on British Jewry. Against this background, Jews such as Abraham Tang were able to involve themselves publicly in political debates, which no German Jew dared to do.

This picture of Jewish enlighteners in Britain changes if we focus on the relationship between the German-Jewish Enlightenment and what may be seen as its British counterpart. The British enlighteners should be seen against the background of the German movement since the latter was predominant in the late eighteenth century. The German *Haskalah* was an internal Jewish movement formed by a small circle of Jewish thinkers, belonging mainly to the rather insecure stratum of business clerks. With the financial assistance of some wealthy families, they rapidly created a primarily Hebrew literature. While the movement remained geographically restricted to North Germany, mainly to Berlin and Königsberg, its literary output was impressive. Even if we exclude Moses Mendelssohn's work, a

conservative estimate shows approximately fifty Hebrew monographs published in less than twenty years.¹ Despite the fact that historical research still tends to define the German *Haskalah* as the model for later developments, it is clear that its influence was limited. Most of the German *maskilim*—even after Moses Mendelssohn's death—remained rather conservative in their criticism of contemporary culture and religious authority, and personal connections to the Reform movement of the nineteenth century were minimal. The *maskilim* merely provided ideological patterns which the religious reformers could revive. In short, the ideology of the German *Haskalah* must be defined as the quest for religious and cultural regeneration of German Jews, and for their political integration. German *maskilim* addressed a predominantly Jewish audience, so creating an enlightened Jewish discourse.

In this way the differences from the Anglo-Jewish enlighteners of whom David Ruderman is speaking become clear. In Britain, they addressed a general, if enlightened, audience and did not promote ideas restricted to the Jewish sphere. It is therefore hardly surprising that contemporaries never spoke of an Anglo-Jewish Enlightenment. At the same time, we recognise the influence the German movement exerted on the Dutch *Haskalah* and even on the few enlightened Jewish authors in France. But leaving aside Mordechai Gumpel Shnaber-Levison as a migrant between the British and the German spheres, few traces of such an influence can be found in Britain. Quite a few German *maskilim* had business connections with Britain; nevertheless, only a single copy of the *Meassef* was sold there. When some of Moses Mendelssohn's writings were translated into English, there was some interest in his philosophical works, but not in his Judaic writings.

¹ The main authors and monographs are Shaul Berlin (*Arugat haBosem*, 1792; *Besamim Rosh*, 1793; *Ktav Yosher*, 1794-1795); Aron Chorin (*Imre Noam*, 1798, and other works); Isak Euchel (*Darke Noam*, 1804; *Sefat Emet*, 1782; *Gebete der hochdeutschen und polnischen Juden*, 1786); David Friedländer (*Mendelssohn Fragmente*, 1819, and other works); Juda Halevi (*Kuzari*, 1795); Marcus Herz (*Frühe Beerdigung*, 1787; *Mikhtav elMekhabre Meassef*, 1789); Herz Homberg (*Imre Shefer*, 1808); Isaac Satanow, as translator (*Hiob*, 1799); Baruch Lindau (*Reshit Limudim*, 1788), Shlomo Pappenheimer (*Yeriot Shlomo*, 1783); Isaac Satanow (*Igeret Beit Tefila*, 1773; and eleven further works up to 1802); S. Schönemann (*Minkhat Bikurim*, 1797), M. G. Schnaber-Levison (*Maamar haTora wehaKhokhma*, 1771; *Tokhekhat Megula*, 1775, and three further works); N. H. Wessely (*Khokhmat Shlomo*, 1780, and nine further works); Aron Wolfsohn (*Yeshurun*, 1804; *Avtalion*, 1806); Saul Ascher, Salomon Maimon, Moses Mendelssohn (from 1754, with their first Jewish writings appearing between the end of the 1770s and 1786); and Moses Mendelssohn (*Pne Tevel*, not published until 1872).

If we look for typical structures of the German movement, some similarities with developments in Britain can be found. In spite of what I have said, some British enterprises did follow the German lead. In 1785–1787, the printer David Levi wrote an extensive Hebrew dictionary, and called for a renewal of the Hebrew language, one of the major concerns of the German *maskilim*.² In 1787, Levi provided an English translation of the Bible with the Hebrew text printed in parallel. Not long before, he had published a compendium of Jewish religious customs for Christian readers, and between 1789 and 1796 he translated the Sephardic and Ashkenazi prayerbooks into English. These projects recall similar efforts in Germany. Levi was supported by Jewish friends who formed a Benevolent Society for the Encouragement of Literature, an organisation paralleled by the *Chevrat Dorshe Lashon Ewer* in Königsberg which financed many of the publications of the German *Haskalah*, including the *Meassef*. If we look at the members of its British counterpart we find authors such as John Hart, *alias* Eliakim ben Abraham, Joshua van Oven and Levi Barent Cohen, all of whom were Jewish enlighteners and, as David Ruderman shows, some of whom were integrated into the British Enlightenment. This small circle issued further publications reminiscent of the German *Haskalah*, and it is here that some definite connections between the two can be found. In 1810 Joshua van Oven translated a schoolbook published five years earlier in German. This book had an anonymous Yiddish predecessor, published in 1771, which had proposed educational reforms in the same vein as the German-Jewish enlighteners.³

Although some of these similarities between Britain and Germany are surprising it is evident that most of them were the outcome of contemporary discussions in Britain: David Levi's Hebrew dictionary and his Bible translation, for example, were published as a reaction to contemporary Christian mistranslations and misinterpretations.⁴ Nevertheless, the transfer of ideas may be partially explained by the fact that many of the British authors were either immigrants from the continent or had some contact

² David Levi, *A Succinct Account of the Rites and Ceremonies of the Jews*, London 1784; *idem*, *Lingua Sacra. In three parts*, London 1785–1787; *idem*, *Bibelübersetzung*, 1787.

³ Jakob Shalom Cohen, *Shorshe Emuna* (1810), transl. by Joshua van Oven as *Elements of Faith*, London 1815.

⁴ David Levi, *A Reference of the Old Testament in a Series of Letters Addressed to Thomas Paine*, London 1797; *idem*, *Letters to Dr. Priestly in Answer to Those He Addressed to the Jews. Inviting them to an Amicable Discussion of the Evidence of Christianity*, London 1793; *idem*, *Letters to Dr. Priestly in Answer to his Letters to the Jews. Part 2*, London 1789.

with the German movement. In the final analysis, however, these disparate projects can hardly be defined as part of a movement. The few spokesmen for Jewish concerns did not develop new conceptual frameworks for Jewish life, in marked contrast to the achievements of the German movement. On the other hand, some trends, like the public criticism of traditional religion and lifestyle, were stronger in Britain than in Germany. Meyer Löw Schomberg's Hebrew pamphlet *Emunat Omen* expresses a harsh critique similar to that found in the early writings of the Anglo-Jewish Reform movement around 1840.⁵ Schomberg's book was published in 1746—far too early to be compared to German counterparts. The German *maskilim* rarely dared to be quite so radical because of pressure from Jewish organisations and the state authorities. At the same time, they saw themselves as part of a religious movement, a self-perception that further limited their criticism. Again, it was the liberal situation in Britain that made possible such publications as the anonymous pamphlet *A peep in the Synagogue* and Salomon Bennett's attack on the Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi Salomon Hirschel.

Taking all of this into account, the question of whether or not an British *Haskalah* existed must be answered in the negative. While there were Jewish enlighteners closely incorporated into the external sphere of the wider Enlightenment, it would certainly be wrong to conceive of them as participants in an internal Jewish debate, still less as forming a movement.

⁵ Anonymous, *A Peep in the Synagogue or a Letter to the Jews*, London 1780; Salomon Bennett, *The Present Reign of the Synagogue of Duke's Place Displayed*, London 1818. Isaac D'Israeli's book dates from the year 1833, and appeared anonymously in German as *Geist des Judenthums. Aus dem Englischen*, Stuttgart 1836. His strong criticism of the rabbinic and oral traditions can be compared with contemporary works published in Germany, e.g. by Moses Brück.

REINHARD RÜRUP

Jewish Emancipation in Britain and Germany

The call for comparative work has become widespread in the historical profession of late.¹ This also applies to the writing of Jewish history. But here, as much if not more than in history more generally, there remains a large gap between wish and reality. As a rule historians rarely address the literature on other countries, and where attempts have been made to integrate research on the history of the Jews in various countries they are almost exclusively collections of articles in which the countries are treated one after another by different authors.² This is true both of the 1987 volume *Toward Modernity. The European Jewish Model*, edited by Jacob Katz, and the 1992 collection edited by Jonathan Frankel and Steven Zipperstein, *Assimilation and Community: The Jews in Nineteenth Century Europe*.³ This model also applies to the volume that interests us most directly here: *Paths of Emancipation. Jews, States and Citizenship*, edited by Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson and published in 1995. Here, too, the contributions on the individual European states (as well as Turkey and the United States) are merely placed side-by-side, with Werner Mosse covering Germany and Geoffrey Alderman, Britain.⁴ To be sure, the editors did provide the individual authors with some central questions, but the

¹ Cf. Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka (eds.), *Geschichte und Vergleich. Ansätze und Ergebnisse international vergleichender Geschichtsschreibung*, Frankfurt am Main 1996.

² One of the rare examples of genuine comparative work is Rainer Liedtke, *Jewish Welfare in Hamburg and Manchester, c. 1850-1914*, Oxford 1998.

³ Jacob Katz (ed.), *Toward Modernity. The European Jewish Model*, New Brunswick 1987; Jonathan Frankel and Steven J. Zipperstein (eds.), *Assimilation and Community. The Jews in Nineteenth Century Europe*, Cambridge 1992.

⁴ Werner E. Mosse, 'From "Schutzjuden" to "Deutsche Staatsbürger Jüdischen Glaubens"'. The Long and Bumpy Road of Jewish Emancipation in Germany', in Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson (eds.), *Paths of Emancipation. Jews, States, and Citizenship*, Princeton 1995, pp. 59-93; Geoffrey Alderman, 'English Jews or Jews of the English Persuasion? Reflections on the Emancipation of Anglo-Jewry', in *ibid.*, pp. 128-156.

contributors dealt with them in very different ways. In the book's favour, one should emphasise that the editors have tried to use the potential of comparison in order to question prevailing notions of the course and consequences of the emancipation process in the various countries and in Jewish history as a whole. They stress the diversity and relative openness of the historical process and are particularly keen to counteract the widespread tendency to portray the history of emancipation as a history of loss, a simple threat to Jewish existence. Instead they highlight the new possibilities for Jewish life that arose under the conditions of modern—or modernising—society. Their main questions, which may also be helpful for a comparison between Britain and Germany, are: “Was emancipation externally imposed by occupation armies and ideologies or endogenously developed? Did it occur as a result of a protracted or expeditious process? Was it early, or late, in the history of emancipation? Did political emancipation precede (and thus facilitate) or follow economic and social incorporation? Was emancipation an integral part of new nationalist assertions, or liberal political movements, to which Jews were attached? Once granted, did emancipation prove durable, or were there episodes of the restoration of ante-emancipation circumstances?”⁵ I will try to address some of these questions.

Exploring the possibilities and difficulties of a comparison between Jewish emancipation in Britain and Germany, one is immediately struck by the extraordinarily great differences.⁶ This begins with simple numbers: there were some 35,000 Jews living in Britain in the mid-nineteenth century, as compared to about half a million in Germany (that is, the German Confederation) at the same time. In Britain more than half of the Jews li-

⁵ See the editors' introductory essay 'Emancipation and the Liberal Offer', in *ibid.*, pp. 3-36, here p. 24.

⁶ For Jewish history in Britain in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries see especially Todd M. Endelman, *The Jews of Georgian England, 1714-1830. Tradition and Change in a Liberal Society*, Philadelphia 1979; David S. Katz, *The Jews in the History of England, 1485-1850*, Oxford 1994; Geoffrey Alderman, *Modern British Jewry*, Oxford 1992; Todd M. Endelman, *Radical Assimilation in English Jewish History, 1656-1945*, Bloomington, 1990. For Germany, see Michael A. Meyer (ed.), *Deutsch-jüdische Geschichte in der Neuzeit*, vol. 1: *Tradition und Aufklärung, 1600-1780*; vol. 2: *Emanzipation und Akkulturation, 1780-1871*, Munich 1996 (Publications of the Leo Baeck Institute); Reinhard Rürup, *Emanzipation und Antisemitismus. Studien zur "Judenfrage" der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*, Göttingen 1975; Jacob Katz, *Out of the Ghetto. The Social Background of Jewish Emancipation, 1770-1870*, Cambridge, Mass. 1973; David Sorkin, *The Transformation of German Jewry, 1780-1840*, New York 1987; Monika Richarz (ed.), *Jüdisches Leben in Deutschland. Selbstzeugnisse zur Sozialgeschichte, 1780-1871*, Stuttgart 1976, pp. 19-69.

ved in London, and in the entire country there were no more than forty-three Jewish communities, of which only Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool were of any size. In Germany, in contrast, the Jews were distributed over many states, regions, towns and villages, in some of which Jewish communities could look back on a long tradition. Britain was a unified territorial state with the same legal conditions for Jews wherever they lived, but also with Parliament as a clear addressee for any wishes regarding a change in legal status. In Germany 324 more or less sovereign political units existed before 1806 (not counting the 1500 territories of the imperial knights, which played a particularly important role in Jewish history), and even after the political redistributions of the Napoleonic period there were still thirty-five to forty individual states with their own governments and laws until the founding of the German *Reich* in 1871. Since the attempt to establish a uniform emancipation policy failed twice—in 1815 at the Congress of Vienna and again during the Revolution of 1848—there were close to forty attempts in Germany to define and develop a practical resolution to the problem of emancipation. In the period between 1815 and 1850 alone, bibliographies list about 2500 titles on the “Jewish Question”, not counting the printed minutes of the individual state parliaments and the massive number of petitions submitted to them. Therefore any scholar interested in Jewish emancipation in Germany must already engage in diverse comparative studies. On closer inspection, however, one soon realises that, in spite of differences in detail, the emancipation processes did have something in common all over Germany, and that there was a German model of Jewish emancipation.⁷

Perhaps more important are the extreme differences in the pre-emancipation legal situations of Jews in Britain and Germany. In Britain, unlike other European states, there were no specific “Jew laws” in the pre-emancipation period. In the words of Geoffrey Alderman: “The Resettlement [in the seventeenth century] had been permitted, but it had never been enacted. In general, therefore, the laws of England did not recognize or confer (either in a positive or in a negative sense) any special status upon ‘Jews’ as such, and discriminated against Jews only in so far as Jews, like other Dissenting minorities, were not members of the Established

⁷ On the German model of Jewish emancipation see Reinhard Rürup, ‘Jewish Emancipation and Bourgeois Society’, in *Year Book XIV of the Leo Baeck Institute*, London 1969, pp. 67-91; Reinhard Rürup, ‘The Tortuous and Thorny Path to Legal Equality. “Jew Laws” and Emancipatory Legislation in Germany from the Late Eighteenth Century’, in *Year Book XXXI of the Leo Baeck Institute*, London 1986, pp. 3-33.

Church.”⁸ Or, as David Feldman put it: “In general, Jews were not disadvantaged expressly because they were Jews, but because they were not members of the Church of England. Most of their disadvantages arose in the same way as those which burdened Catholics and Protestant Dissenters.”⁹ This meant, among other things, that Jews faced no restrictions on place of residence, occupation or trade, except in those cases— which applied to important professions such as the law and medicine— where a Christian oath was required. For the same reason Jews could not earn academic degrees at Oxford or Cambridge. As long as they were born in England, Jews were English citizens with all of the rights accorded to those who were not members of the Anglican Church.¹⁰ Unlike the situation on the Continent, from the standpoint of the British state Jewish communities were also voluntary bodies not subject to state control.

In Germany, in contrast, as everywhere else on the Continent, there were special “Jew laws” which were formulated in the laws of the different states, in “general privileges” or in “protective patents” for individual persons. Even if they had lived in the country for centuries, the law still treated Jews as foreigners who were only granted permission to reside or pursue an occupation under particular conditions. It is well known that they were subject to extreme occupational restrictions and were permitted neither to farm nor to practice a guild trade nor to engage in regular commerce. They were often organised in *Landjudenschaften*, compulsory communities mandated by the state, which bore collective responsibility for taxes and other duties. Their taxes were considerably higher than those paid by their Christian neighbours. In return they received a limited “protection”, but were not considered part of civil society. Until the absolutist state began to intervene in the traditional autonomy of the Jewish

⁸ Alderman, *Modern British Jewry*, pp. 6-7.

⁹ Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews. Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840-1914*, New Haven 1994, p. 2. Cf. Todd M. Endelman, ‘The Englishness of Jewish Modernity in England’, in Katz (ed.), *Toward Modernity*, pp. 239-240: “Britain had no statutes that spelled out what was permitted and what forbidden to Jews. There were no laws, for example, specifically barring Jews from particular occupations, certain cities, restricting the size of Jewish settlements, or regulating the management of communal organizations. In short, the Jews of England, prior to their emancipation, were not rightless aliens who had to fight for the fundamental rights of citizenship. The few obstacles of legal character to full integration affected only the Jewish upper-middle class; they were of no consequence to the great bulk of Jews living in England since they in no way interfered with their ability to earn a living, raise a family, or enjoy their leisure.”

¹⁰ There were two exceptions: Jews were unable to engage in retail trade in the City of London, and there were doubts whether Jews were legally entitled to own land.

communities, Jews lived in a largely isolated and self-contained Jewish world marked by the predominance of tradition.

These extremely divergent starting points meant that the question of emancipation was defined and discussed very differently in the two countries, both by Jews and non-Jews. In Germany the initial impetus for a fundamental change in relations between Jews and non-Jews was provided by changes within the Jewish community, particularly in Berlin: In the last decades of the eighteenth century, an economically successful stratum of Jewish entrepreneurs on the one hand and a small number of Jewish intellectuals on the other, who were at the beginning of the Jewish Enlightenment, impressively demonstrated for any unprejudiced person that Jews could participate in, and successfully help shape, economic and intellectual life in a wholly new way. Under the circumstances prevailing in Germany, however, such developments soon ran up against the restrictions imposed by the "Jew laws". Any deeper change thus had to become an object of politics and legislation.

It is no accident that the programme of "civil improvement" and legal equality for the Jews was formulated for the first time in Germany, or, more precisely, in Berlin, nearly ten years before the French Revolution of 1789.¹¹ The objective was the total integration of the Jews into an emerging civil society. Humanity and reason, as proponents of the Enlightenment argued, no longer permitted Jews to be left out of society, or on its margins, with lesser rights. Instead, they should be made into "useful subjects" or "valuable citizens". To this end, middle-class education and occupations should be opened to them, and previous legal restrictions abolished. The German theorists of emancipation never doubted that such a process could not be left to the free play of social forces, but rather had to be initiated and overseen by the state. This applied not only to Prussia but to all other German states as well. The emancipation of the Jews was viewed not as a single legal act but as an educational process that would be spread over time. This also meant that the new rights were granted only in stages, and that until the eventual achievement of legal equality, the apparent necessity (and justice) of legal inequality between Jews and non-Jews was repeatedly emphasised. The Jews were expected to prove themselves worthy of each new right by abandoning their traditional economic role

¹¹ Christian Wilhelm Dohm, *Über die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Juden*, 2 vols., Berlin 1781-1783; cf. Robert Liberles, 'From *Toleration* to *Verbesserung*: German and English Debates on the Jews in the Eighteenth Century', in *Central European History*, 22 (1989), pp. 3-32.

and way of life. For this reason non-Jewish proponents of emancipation spent decades discussing progress in the education of Jewish children, in “purging” the Jewish religion of Talmudic elements, in the approximation of Christian practice in Jewish religious services, in the abandonment of commerce and adoption of so-called “productive” occupations in the crafts or agriculture, in cultural adaptation to the non-Jewish environment (not least in language) and the overcoming of the much-lamented “separatist spirit” and allegedly “anti-social” attitudes of the Jews, who kept themselves aloof from Christians. To be sure, many Jews also supported such changes, but the demands were repeatedly proposed to Jews from outside, not least when it came to questions of religion.

Given these circumstances, it is not surprising that Germany witnessed an “age of emancipation” that was stretched out over almost an entire century, from the first programmatic discussions of the 1780s to the completion of legal equality in the new German *Reich* in 1871. In Britain, however, the notion of an “age of emancipation” appears misplaced.¹² Scholars have tended to speak more of an “emancipation controversy” which was limited to a much narrower period of time and played a far less significant role in the broader developments of Anglo-Jewish history. There was no programmatic policy of emancipation in Britain comparable to that in Germany or other European countries. The problems of social and cultural adaptation, the forms and successes of Jewish economic activity, and reforms (or lack thereof) in Jewish culture were of little or no interest to the government or Parliament. London, too, witnessed hot debates on the Jewish Reform movement, but this remained an intra-communal issue and a minority one at that, in which the state, unlike in Germany, took no part. When, in the early 1830s, Isaac d’Israeli called upon English Jews “to begin to educate their youth as the youth of Europe, and not of Palestine; let their Talmud be removed to an elevated shelf, to be consulted as a curiosity of antiquity, and not as a manual of education”, this represented an intervention in a *Jewish* controversy (even if the author had long since left the Jewish community), rather than pressure from Chri-

¹² For the history of Jewish Emancipation in Britain see in particular Abraham Gilam, *The Emancipation of the Jews in England, 1830-1860*, New York 1982; M. C. N. Salbstein, *The Emancipation of the Jews in Britain: The Question of the Admission of the Jews to Parliament, 1828-1860*, Rutherford 1982; Lloyd P. Gartner, ‘Emancipation, Social Change and Communal Reconstruction in Anglo-Jewry 1789-1881’, in *American Academy for Jewish Research*, LIV, 1987, pp. 73-116; Alderman, ‘English Jews’; Polly Pinsky, ‘English Opinion and Jewish Emancipation’, in *Jewish Social Studies*, XIV, 1952, pp. 51-94.

stian Members of Parliament or civil servants like that exerted at the same time in Germany.¹³ When the same author wrote that “The civil and political fusion of the Jews with their fellow-citizens must commence by rejecting every anti-social principle; let them only separate to hasten to the Church and to the Synagogue”, it was something wholly different from the repeated polemics of non-Jews in Germany against the supposed “anti-social” stance of the Jews and calls for total assimilation in everything outside the synagogue.¹⁴

Since the British struggle for emancipation, which was actively pursued by a Jewish elite, was largely concerned with political rights of which only a tiny proportion of British Jews could avail themselves, at the beginning of the campaign the great majority of the Jewish population was apparently not much interested in the issue.¹⁵ And even among the Jewish elite opinions varied as to the desirability of equal political rights, for fear that too great an adaptation to the majority society might endanger the continued existence of traditional forms of the Jewish religion. Moses Montefiore, one of the great authorities in the Jewish community, wrote in his diary in 1837: “I am most firmly resolved not to give up the smallest particle of our religious forms and privileges to obtain civil rights.”¹⁶ Tellingly, the discussion on emancipation was sparked by the abolition of political restrictions on Protestant Dissenters in 1828 and on Catholics in 1829. “Before 1828 the leaders of Anglo-Jewry made no attempt to gain full political emancipation, for they had little interest in entering government service, studying at the ancient universities, or gaining admission to the Inns of Court. They were content to achieve success in commerce and finance.”¹⁷ With the legislation in favour of the Protestant Dissenters and the Catholics, however, Jews were no longer in the same position as other citizens who did not belong to the Church of England. Instead, they found

¹³ Isaac d’Israeli, *The Genius of Judaism*, London 1833, quoted in Katz, *The Jews in the History of England*, p. 333.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Cf. Alderman, *Modern British Jewry*, p. 52: “To most Jews in Britain (unlike their Continental counterparts) political equality was, in short, an irrelevance; for it was not in any sense a necessary prerequisite of social and economic freedom. In Britain the campaign for Jewish emancipation ... did not touch the perceived essential interests of communal existence.” It seems, however, that at least since the 1840s not only the Jewish elite but also the Jewish middle-class strongly supported the emancipation campaign.

¹⁶ *Diaries of Sir Moses and Lady Montefiore*, ed. by L. Loewe, vol. 1, London 1890, quoted in Gartner, ‘Emancipation, Social Change and Communal Reconstruction’, p. 90; cf. Alderman, *Modern British Jewry*, p. 58.

¹⁷ Endelman, ‘The Englishness of Jewish Modernity’, p. 240.

themselves excluded and their civil rights restricted because they were non-Christians, that is, specifically as Jews.

London's Jewish elite was unwilling to accept the new situation. Thus an emancipation campaign began which was supported at first by a minority and then by a clear majority of liberals. The campaign was concerned almost exclusively with political rights (leaving aside the fact that the admission of Jews as Freemen of the City of London in 1830 also affected their economic opportunities). The political rights of the Jews were debated in Parliament from 1830 onwards, and by 1833 the Bill according full legal equality to Jews passed with a clear majority in the House of Commons, which had refused to pass it only three years earlier. Thereafter there was a Bill in each of the years 1834, 1836, 1847–1848, 1849, 1851, 1853, 1854 and 1856; and four further measures were considered in 1857 and 1858.¹⁸ The passage of these Bills was held up by the House of Lords for fifteen years, however, and Jews were therefore accorded political rights only in stages, in an arduous process which did point in a clear direction. In 1830 Jews were admitted as Freemen of the City of London, and in 1833 the first Jew (Francis Henry Goldsmid) was admitted to the bar. In 1835 Jews were granted the active suffrage that many of them had already exercised in practice for a number of years. The Jewish Municipal Relief Act of 1845 admitted them to all municipal offices. During the 1830s individual Jews were elected to the respected positions of sheriff (1835) and alderman (1839) and as a member of the City's Common Council (1846); and in 1855 David Salomon, one of the most important champions of emancipation, became Lord Mayor of the City of London. In 1828, with the prominent participation of Salomon, London University had been founded as the first non-denominational university, at which Jews could study and earn degrees, while at Oxford and Cambridge religious tests which excluded Jews from matriculation or from earning degrees existed until 1871. The Registration Act of 1836 gave statutory recognition to the London Committee of Deputies of British Jews (later the Board of Deputies).

When Lionel de Rothschild was elected to Parliament in 1847 as one of four MPs from the City of London, the pro-emancipation Conservative leader Lord George Bentinck remarked: "The City of London has settled

¹⁸ Salbstein, pp. 57-77; Gilam, pp. 72-132.

the Jew question.”¹⁹ In fact it would be another eleven years before the voters’ will became reality. Rothschild, who could not take the oath (“upon the true faith of a Christian”) demanded of him, was elected five times without being able to serve as a Member of Parliament (in 1851 David Salomon, who was also elected, unsuccessfully tried to take his seat in the House of Commons). Only in 1858 was Rothschild permitted to take the oath in a non-Christian form after both Houses had agreed that each could decide independently on the form the oath should take. (In 1866 both Houses finally agreed on a corresponding change to the oath, but it was another two decades before the first Jew—Nathaniel de Rothschild—became a member of the House of Lords.) Contemporaries regarded 28th July 1858 as the symbolic date of emancipation, and indeed a few years later there were already six Jewish MPs, so that Jewish participation in parliamentary politics soon became unremarkable.²⁰

The longer the debates about full equality for the Jews went on, the clearer it became that for the majority of liberals and the majority of the House of Commons what was at stake were not merely the Jews, but fundamental constitutional issues: the relationship between Church and State in a modern society and the relative weight of the two Houses of Parliament. The removal of denominational barriers in British politics in 1828 and 1829 must necessarily lead to equality for the Jews; of that not only Liberals but also enlightened Conservatives were convinced. As David Feldman has argued, “Jewish emancipation was part of, and contributed to, the decomposition of the confessional state in Britain”.²¹ It was for this reason that while Jewish emancipation was unavoidable, “it was attended by more friction than is often allowed”.²² The ongoing confrontation between the two Houses of Parliament meant that the question of legal equality for the Jews became part of a power struggle between the Commons and the Lords, which was the subject of intense public discussion. The

¹⁹ Bentinck to John Wilson Croker, 29th September 1847, in *The Croker Papers*, ed. by L. J. Jennings, vol. 3, London 1885, p. 138, quoted in Alderman, *Modern British Jewry*, p. 56.

²⁰ Katz, *The Jews in the History of England*, questions “the artificial border of 1858” (p. 323). He argues: “The right of Jews to sit in Parliament, misleadingly called ‘Emancipation’, despite the fact that Jews became legally able to vote more than two decades previously, was far more symbolic than anything else” (p. 318). For contemporary Jewry, and for its lay leadership in particular, 1858 meant the end of the “degrading stigma fastened upon us by the laws of our country”, about which Isaac Lyon Goldsmid spoke to the Prime Minister Sir Robert Peel in 1845; cf. Gilam, p. 15.

²¹ Feldman, p. 4

²² *Ibid.*

Upper House was accused of ignoring the will of the electorate. In regard to Rothschild's exclusion from Parliament, one journalist noted: "This is no longer a struggle between a Jew and a nobility. The City of London has been insulted—the popular will has been made of no account ..." Apparently, he warned, the House of Lords was merely testing "whether a country's will or a Lord's veto is strongest".²³ For this reason alone the Lords' resistance must be broken and the equality of the Jews finally asserted. Thus by 1848 at the latest the Jewish Question had become one of the credibility and assertiveness of Liberal politics.

Germany did not reach this stage until the early 1860s, when, under the impression of advancing industrialisation and the rapid development of a modern civil society, liberals made the lifting of all existing legal restrictions on the Jews a question of principle.²⁴ In 1848, during the "March Revolution" and subsequent constitutional debates in the German National Assembly, there had been similar arguments, but the concrete legislation developed was almost wholly lacking in determination, and with the defeat of the Revolution the liberal national constitution rapidly lost practical significance.²⁵ For decades German liberals, with few exceptions, believed that Jews could only be granted legal equality as part of a gradual process, and that their "civil improvement" was a prerequisite for, rather than a consequence of, legal equality.²⁶

While the foundations for economic improvement and the acquisition of a middle-class education were generally laid quite early in Germany, Jews were denied access to political rights, such as active and passive suffrage, and the right to hold state office until the Revolution of 1848 and in some cases even later. Progressive legislation, such as that introduced in Baden in 1809 or Prussia in 1812 was undermined in practice, and some-

²³ *Weekly Dispatch*, 4th June 1848, quoted in Feldman, p. 43-44.

²⁴ For the history of German Jewry between the revolution of 1848 and the emergence of the German nation-state see Jakob Toury, *Soziale und politische Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland 1847-1871*, Düsseldorf 1977.

²⁵ Cf. Reinhard Rürup, 'The European Revolutions of 1848 and Jewish Emancipation', in Werner E. Mosse *et al.* (eds.), *Revolution and Evolution. 1848 in German-Jewish History*, Tübingen 1981 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 39), pp. 1-53; Reinhard Rürup, 'Der Fortschritt und seine Grenzen. Die Revolution von 1848 und die europäischen Juden', in Dieter Dowe *et al.* (eds.), *Europa 1848. Revolution und Reform*, Bonn 1998, pp. 985-1005.

²⁶ Cf. Dieter Langewiesche, 'Liberalismus und Judenemanzipation im 19. Jahrhundert', in Peter Freimark *et al.* (eds.), *Juden in Deutschland. Emanzipation, Integration, Verfolgung und Vernichtung*, Hamburg 1991, pp. 148-163; Reinhard Rürup, 'German Liberalism and the Emancipation of the Jews', in *Year Book XX of the Leo Baeck Institute*, London 1975, pp. 59-68.

times amended in an anti-emancipationist spirit. In 1809 Wilhelm von Humboldt had already called upon the Prussian state to overcome “the inhumane and prejudiced mentality that judges a human being not by his specific qualities but by his descent and religion, and treats him not as an individual but rather as a member of a race with which he is considered to share certain characteristics of necessity. This the state can only do by saying loud and clear, that it no longer recognizes any difference between Jews and Christians”.²⁷ This is precisely what did not occur in Germany. Despite obvious progress in the social integration of Jews all states insisted for two or three generations that Jews could not be given full legal equality with Christians, or at least not yet. Thus people became accustomed to the idea that even with advancing modernisation, Jews were not full members of civil society. And under these circumstances it became possible to regard even the incontestable achievements and successes of Jews in the economy, scholarship and the arts less as contributions than as threats to German society as a whole.²⁸

In Germany the course taken by the emancipation process decisively shaped the development of German-Jewish history. Enlightenment theory and the politics of the early nineteenth-century reform era, German Classicism and bourgeois liberalism, remained constitutive for German Jews until the National Socialist period in a way that they did not for the majority society.²⁹ On the other hand, even after the achievement of legal equality, social relations between Jews and non-Jews generally lacked a sense of security and normality. It was also anything but an accident that the era of emancipation merged almost seamlessly into an age of modern antisemitism.³⁰ In Britain the emancipation process apparently left much less impression. This is connected with the fact that the questions central to the emancipation struggle only directly affected a small segment of the Jewish population. In Britain there was also no immediate connection between the history of emancipation and the rise and spread of modern antisemitism. What is probably more important is that the issues and continuities of

²⁷ Wilhelm von Humboldt, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 10, Berlin 1903, pp. 97-115; transl. in Rürup, ‘Jewish Emancipation and Bourgeois Society’, p. 86.

²⁸ Cf. Rainer Erb and Werner Bergmann, *Die Nachtseite der Judenemanzipation. Der Widerstand gegen die Integration der Juden in Deutschland 1780-1866*, Berlin 1989.

²⁹ Cf. George L. Mosse, *German Jews Beyond Judaism*, Bloomington, 1985.

³⁰ Reinhard Rürup, ‘Die “Judenfrage” der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft und die Entstehung des modernen Antisemitismus’, in *idem*, *Emanzipation und Antisemitismus*, pp. 74-94, 167-174; Helmut Berding, *Moderner Antisemitismus in Deutschland*, Frankfurt am Main 1988.

Anglo-Jewish history changed fundamentally with the massive immigration from Eastern Europe which began around 1880, increasing the number of Jews living in Britain from about 60,000 to 300,000 within less than two and a half decades.³¹

Let me conclude by taking up some of the questions from *Paths of Emancipation* which I cited at the beginning of this paper. It is clear that the history of emancipation in Germany began early and ended late. Germany assumed a pioneering role in theory and, if we recall the edicts of Joseph II in Austria, temporarily in practice as well. With the Prussian Emancipation Edict of 1812 it once again stood in the forefront of the movement. But then the real history of emancipation in Germany set in, one not completed until sixty years later. In Britain public debates began some fifty years later than in Germany,³² and here, too, the process, despite a much more limited agenda, took a considerably long time. External influences initially played no role in Germany, but became important during the Napoleonic period. In Britain it appears that the emancipation problem was a result of the political decisions of 1828 and 1829, but we must take into consideration that at that point the debate on Jewish emancipation was well advanced on the Continent and at least familiar in Britain. In the latter, the economic and social integration of a segment of Jewry was the basis of the demand for emancipation, while in Germany emancipation politics aimed at creating the economic and social preconditions for legal equality (the situation in Berlin in the 1780s was, however, comparable to that in London around 1830).³³ In Germany, as in Britain, it was the liberals who promoted and ultimately instituted emancipation. Finally, we may speak of a delayed emancipation process not only in Germany but also in Britain, but between 1830 and 1871 the British process experienced none of the setbacks that were so frequent in Germany.

One could easily add to this list of observations without reaching any fundamentally new insights. The decisive difference between the emanci-

³¹ See *inter alia* Lloyd P. Gartner, *The Jewish Immigrant in England, 1870-1914*, London 1960; David Cesarani (ed.), *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry*, Oxford 1990; Feldman, pp. 139-388.

³² The controversy over the "Jew Bill" in 1753 should not be forgotten, however; cf. Thomas W. Perry, *Public Opinion, Propaganda, and Politics in 18th century England. A Study of the Jew Bill of 1753*, Cambridge, Mass. 1962; Robert Liberles, 'The Jews and Their Bill: Jewish Motivations in the Controversy of 1753', in *Jewish History*, 2 (1987), pp. 29-35.

³³ Cf. Steven M. Lowenstein, *The Berlin Jewish Community. Enlightenment, Family, and Crisis, 1770-1830*, New York 1994; Reinhard Rürup (ed.), *Jüdische Geschichte in Berlin. Bilder und Dokumente*, Berlin 1995.

pation of the Jews in Britain and in Germany is that Britain did not pursue a policy of emancipation in the way the states of Continental Europe did. Unlike the situation in Germany, there was no interest in “improving” the Jews, making them middle-class, adapting their religious structures to that of the Christian churches, or teaching their children “productive” occupations such as crafts and agriculture. Instead, the discussion was limited to the question of whether, given the laws of 1828 and 1829, particular political rights should or could be withheld from the Jews alone. In Germany, in contrast, it was a matter of abolishing much more extensive “Jew laws”—and of *changing* the Jews. In Germany emancipation always meant more than merely granting rights: its objective was the integration of Jews, and the only conceivable route appeared to be assimilation, that is, changing Jews to approximate the model of the (modernising) majority society. This concept also underlay even French emancipation policy: to be sure, in France Jews were given full legal equality at the beginning of the emancipation process, but the expectation that the Jews would change was no less marked than it was in Germany, and in regard to the Jewish religion the “modernising” interventions were much more massive than those undertaken east of the Rhine. When developments proceeded more slowly than expected Napoleon did not hesitate to reimpose special laws on the Jews for “educational” reasons, and his action met with general approval. The emancipation in Britain, in contrast, was “the only unconditional emancipation in Europe”.³⁴ If France and Germany appear similar, it is clear that the history of emancipation in Britain in this respect represents the true exception in the European context, and there is every reason to speak of “the historical uniqueness of the Anglo-Jewish emancipation”.³⁵

³⁴ Gilam, p. 151.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

DAVID CESARANI

Jewish Emancipation: From Teleology to a Comparative Perspective: A Comment on Reinhard Rürup

It is certainly true that Britain in the mid-nineteenth century bore no resemblance to the patchwork of cities, principalities and states that comprised Germany at that time, but it is possible to exaggerate the unitary political and cultural character of Britain. Recent work on the formation of the United Kingdom and the construction of Britishness suggests that this structure was newer and more fragile than has previously been thought. It was as open to the question "What is Britain?" as Germany was to the perennial inquiry "What is Germany?".

However, even if such existential anxiety may have appeared in both places, Germany differed in the plethora of legal codes delimiting the rights of Jews. Reinhard Rürup is right to link the constant discussion of the "Jewish question" with the sheer number of German political units before 1870. Debate about the "Jewish question" in one legislature after another inevitably increased the volume of literature on "the Jews". But the mere fact that Britain was more centralised, and political debate was focused in one parliament, does not mean that laws specifically affecting Jews were debated more quietly. In fact, just because Parliament was the sovereign legislative body for the British Isles, its deliberations aroused great national interest. It was not possible to experiment locally with legal reforms as it was in some principalities of the German Confederation. Furthermore, because the literature in Germany often related to local debates, it frequently circulated only in one district. In Britain, the output may not have been so vast, but, in a smaller, more centralised country, one publication could have as great an effect as ten books or pamphlets with a readership limited to a specific region.

For the same reasons in Britain, as in Germany, there were many pamphlets about the Jews, or on issues related to their naturalisation, conversion, or emancipation and other matters in which Jews were involved or

perceived to play some role.¹ The law and the legislature were often at the centre of these texts because while there were no “Jew laws”, there were laws which specifically and deliberately affected Jews. For example, under the sixteenth-century blasphemy laws it was forbidden to bequeath money for the teaching of Judaism. Before 1846, Jewish religious endowments were not held to be legally valid. Jews, even if baptised, were barred from retail trade in the City of London until 1828. Since the majority of the Jewish population of Britain then lived in London, and on the outskirts of the City at that, this law distorted Jewish economic activity and condemned many to marginal occupations. Thus, until the mid-nineteenth century Jews faced legal discrimination not just because some of them were immigrants and hence aliens, or because they were not Anglicans, but simply because they were Jews.

Rürup correctly distinguishes between the voluntaristic nature of Jewish communities in Britain and the legally incorporated entities in Germany to which Jews were required to belong. But the belief that Jews needed to “improve” in order to merit equality was a *sine qua non* in both contexts. Jews in Britain were acutely conscious of strictures on their civic behaviour, morals and standards of culture. Patrick Colquhoun’s scathing comments about Jewish criminals in 1795 triggered Joshua Van Oven’s proposals to reform the system of welfare and education for the Jewish poor and contributed to the establishment of the Jews’ Free School in London in 1815. It is impossible to understand the debates about the reform of ritual and liturgy in the synagogue from the 1830s onwards without reference to the concurrent emancipation campaign. Those who, in 1840, initiated the West London Synagogue of British Jews, the Reform synagogue, which consciously drew on German-Jewish models, were the same men who led the drive for emancipation. Members of the Jewish elite were stung by accusations made in the course of the emancipation debates in Parliament that they were uncultured and interested only in money. For this reason they set up adult education programmes and tried to stimulate cultural activity. Henry Mayhew’s descriptions of indigent Jews in the early 1850s had much the same effect on the welfare and betterment programmes implemented by the Jewish elite as had Colquhoun’s asseverations in the 1790s.

¹ See, for example, F. Felsenstein, *Anti-Semitic Stereotypes. A Paradigm of Otherness in English Popular Culture, 1660–1830*, Baltimore 1995; M. Ragusa, *Figures of Conversion. “The Jewish Question” and English National Identity*, Durham, NC 1995; J. Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews*, New York 1996.

The Jewish elite in Britain drove forward a programme of bourgeoisification that was every bit as far-reaching in intention and effect as that enacted by the German states, with or without the collaboration of German Jews. If, as Rürup suggests, the emancipation debate in Britain was disentangled from questions of education, vocational training and communal organisations, then it may have been because by the 1840s much progress had already been made. To a large extent, the Napoleonic Wars and the cessation of immigration from the continent had led to the diminution in absolute numbers of the Jewish poor, and to modest upward social mobility. This was the fortuitous backdrop to the early stages of the Jewish drive for civic equality in Britain.

Despite certain similarities between “civic betterment” in Britain and in Germany there was, as Rürup notes, a fundamental distinction between political cultures as well as between political structures. In Germany, the states were directly involved in devising, regulating and implementing these projects, whereas until the late nineteenth century the British state rarely intervened. Once the British state did engage in collectivism it quickly confronted the particularism and otherness of the Jews. The Factory Acts and Education Acts, as well as general Sunday trading legislation, all caused Jews to plead for exemptions from universal legislation that assumed the Christian homogeneity of the population. In this way, the same issues that punctuated debates about the civic status of the Jews in Germany were echoed in Britain—fifty years later and more weakly, but they can be detected nonetheless.

Rürup reduces the process of political emancipation of the Jews in Britain to a “question of law”, albeit a constitutional one that involved the relationship between Church and State too. While it was not ostensibly entangled with the education and organisation of the Jewish population it inexorably brought matters of religion in its wake and hence the character of the Jewish people—whether they were a community, a denomination, a race or a nation. He maintains that by 1860 the process was completed, but in fact the status of the Jews continued to be debated regularly thereafter. Marriage laws, military service, access to universities and immigration all showed that the precise relations between Jews and the state were still unresolved. The absence of a comprehensive legislative fiat may have been merciful in one sense, but in another it left much unsaid and unregulated. Issues therefore arose on a case-by-case basis which sustained debate about the Jews even after emancipation was declared a *chose jugée*.

As a result, indigenous anti-Jewish traditions and their modern mutations found a ready purchase in British society even before the era of Jew-

ish mass immigration from Eastern Europe. This is not the place to discuss the extent of anti-Jewish stereotypes in popular culture in Britain, or the degree to which high society was shot through with anti-Jewish feeling, amply reflected in the novels of the period written by Charles Dickens and Anthony Trollope and in the writings of William Cobbett and Thomas Carlyle. That such attitudes were not permitted to flourish or did not find scope for violent expression may be more an accident of history than an inevitable result of a benevolent Anglo-Saxon political culture. Britain was never occupied, never lost a war, and was spared serious revolutionary unrest during this period. Even so, the setbacks endured in the course of the Boer War, the great depression and the adverse effects of international economic competition, and the onset of Jewish mass immigration were sufficient to prompt mass demonstrations against the Jews and legislation to control and diminish the influx of Eastern European Jews in 1905. Too often the comparison between the course of British Jewish history and that of the Jews in other countries has been afflicted by teleology. In 1900 the signs of convergence were noticeable, as some British Jews realised with anxiety at the time.²

Of course, this has to be seen in the light of powerful liberal traditions and institutions, and the entrenched defence of toleration. Ambivalence towards Jewish particularity, rather than unequivocal hostility, is probably a more useful category with which to explore such a spectrum of attitudes. This may well apply to Germany too. Genuine comparative history between Britain and Germany works best when the monolithic, teleological stereotypes of exemplars of tolerance *versus* willing executioners are set aside in favour of the kind of nuanced studies we owe to Reinhard Rürup.

² For a balanced discussion of these issues in British Jewish historiography see T.M. Endelman, 'Writing English Jewish History', in *Albion*, 27:3 (1995), pp. 629–633.

MICHAEL A. MEYER

Jewish Religious Reform in Germany and Britain

Jewish religious reform began, both in Britain and in Germany, with relative moderation, followed later by a more radical expression by those Jews who regarded the earlier efforts as insufficient. In Germany, the first reform endeavours in Westphalia during the period of French domination, as well as in Berlin and in Hamburg during the second decade of the nineteenth century, although severely condemned by traditionalists, were mild in comparison with the radical ideology and practical reforms instituted by the *Reformgemeinde* in Berlin in the late 1840s. Similarly, in Britain, the reforms of the West London Synagogue in the early 1840s seem moderate indeed in comparison with the thoroughgoing radicalism of the Liberal Judaism that began in London at the beginning of the twentieth century. I shall divide my discussion according to the British developments, dealing first with the rise of Reform Judaism in Britain. I will then turn to Liberal Judaism, the later religious expression within British Jewry. In each instance I will attempt to draw general comparisons with the Reform movement in Germany in a number of relevant areas, including the external political and religious, i.e. Christian, context of Jewish religious reform, as well as the inner context, the Jewish community. I will then deal with ideology, practice and influence. The first section will also include a brief case-study comparison of the Hamburg Temple and the West London Synagogue.

I. *The Reform Movement in Germany and the West London Synagogue*

The relation between state and religion was quite different in Germany and in Britain. German states assumed responsibility for religious life by regulating the churches and approving their officials. With regard to the Jews, the states had, as early as the eighteenth century, whittled away at the autonomy of the Jewish communities. In the nineteenth century, they pursued contradictory strategies towards the same objective. Some chose to

use state authority to further integration and the ultimate absorption of the Jews by encouraging religious reform as a step towards conversion. Others sought to suppress reform in order to make Judaism appear out of step with modernity so that Jews would be more likely to take the leap into Christianity. In both cases, they embarked upon an *Erziehungspolitik* which was to render the Jews gradually fit for the emancipation that, in Germany, they enjoyed only in part. Although the required "education" was broadly understood to include occupational redistribution and cultural attainments, it was also linked to political pressure for religious reform. Differing attitudes between state governments resulted in the suppression of religious reform in Prussia in 1823 at the same time that the government in independent Hamburg allowed it to exist alongside the established community. In contrast, although men such as Francis Goldsmid were displeased with remaining political disabilities, British Jews in the 1840s enjoyed far more equality than did their co-religionists in the German states. To be sure, one cannot entirely exclude the political motivation in Jewish religious reform in Britain. Morris Joseph, minister of the West London Synagogue, once explicitly said of its founders that they "had to prove that they deserved their liberties, and one of the proofs was their ability to set free their own minds".¹ In Britain, however, where the pressure was far less, where Nonconformity was ever more broadly tolerated within Christianity, and where the state did not interfere in internal Jewish affairs, the political factor in Jewish religious reform was far less significant. Yet even with regard to Germany it is a reductionist error to see religious reform as fundamentally, or even exclusively, motivated by political considerations.

The religious *milieux* in which Jewish religious reform developed in Germany and Britain were important in each instance. For German reformers the Protestant Reformation served as a precedent for thoroughgoing religious change; later, the *Aufklärung* theology of the eighteenth century brought enlightened Protestantism very close to the kind of enlightened Judaism advocated by Moses Mendelssohn—so close that his somewhat wayward disciple David Friedländer believed that its tenets were not at variance with a rationalised Judaism. The more historically conscious and critically oriented currents in nineteenth-century German Protestantism made scholars like David Friedrich Strauss seem to the reformer Abraham

¹ 'The Jubilee of Political Emancipation' (Protocol of a Commemorative Dinner under the Auspices of the Jewish Historical Society of England, held on 30th November 1908), *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England*, 6 (1912), p. 102.

Geiger, for example, models for a critical approach to Judaism. And, of course, the German churches provided examples of decorum, music, religious instruction and homiletics that greatly influenced the early Reform movement there. By the 1840s the German reformers were seeking to cast off some of the more obvious influences, but the success of reform efforts continued to be influenced—not surprisingly—by trends in Christianity. In southern Germany ultramontane currents for a time suppressed reform in Catholic Bavaria; in Protestant Prussia, later in the century, the increasing failure of the church to address contemporary issues slowed the process of Jewish reform.

In Britain, trends within Christianity played a large role in shaping the ideology of Jewish religious reform and differentiating it from its counterpart in Germany. It is well known that the British reformers in the 1840s, unlike the Orthodox, differentiated sharply between the authority of the Written and the Oral Law. The former, contained in the Pentateuch, was divinely revealed and binding for all time; the latter, contained in the Talmud, was worthy of reverence, but was human in origin. Both bibliocentrism (which its critics called bibliolatry) and criticism of “rabbinism” were widespread among British Christians at the time, especially among evangelicals within the Church of England. One can trace these views most easily in the writings of the missionary Alexander McCaul, who was by no means an enemy of the Jews.² (In 1840 he had written an eloquent defence of the Jews against the Damascus Blood Libel of that year.) It was likewise the high regard for the Hebrew Bible among Christians that made it much easier for the first minister of the West London Synagogue, David Woolf Marks, to defend the prophecies for the ultimate ingathering of Israel into its land—a belief that McCaul, from his Christian perspective, fully shared. Among German Jews there was also a trend to give primacy to the Bible over the Talmud, but biblical criticism gained influence in Germany much earlier, undermining fundamentalism except among the Orthodox. Moreover, the influence of historicism in Germany, derived from the universities and affecting Christianity and Judaism alike, drove toward relativisation of the Bible’s message and eroded the qualitative difference between Scripture and Talmud. Still, the British position was not so different from that of Zacharias Frankel in Germany (or Isaac Mayer

² Alexander McCaul, *The Old Paths; or a Comparison of the Principles and Doctrines of Modern Judaism with the Religion of Moses and the Prophets*, London 1837, pp. 237–240; David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews. Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840–1914*, New Haven 1994, pp. 55–65.

Wise in the United States), who sought to preserve the special sanctity of the Bible by disallowing biblical criticism *a priori* while engaging in historical study of the rabbinic traditions.

No less important than the external political and religious context for understanding Jewish religious reform is the structure of the Jewish community. As Jakob Petuchowski pointed out, there were two models of religious reform: from within and from without.³ The former became possible for the first time when Israel Jacobson assumed control of the Israelite Consistory of Westphalia during the reign of Napoleon's brother Jerome. Here religious reform, albeit of a moderate kind, was imposed upon all by a reformist religious leadership. The same occurred later with the promulgation of *Synagogenordnungen*, as in Württemberg. On the other hand, in Berlin in 1815 and in Hamburg in 1818, reform came into existence as an initiative intended only for those disposed to it and without the support of the official community.

In Britain the West London Synagogue was similarly an independent initiative undertaken only after the existing institutions had turned a deaf ear to the reformers' requests. Here, as also initially in Germany, the organised community remained Orthodox and the new institution was marginalised. Indeed, this was easier in Britain, where the centralised structure of Chief rabbinate and the Board of Deputies could effectively ostracise the West London Synagogue as a dissenting group outside British Judaism as a whole, whereas in Germany opponents of reform were forced to increase their authority by gathering condemnatory rabbinical opinions from far and wide.

Another relevant point of comparison in regard to community is the relation between Sephardim and Ashkenazim. In Germany, although the first cantor of the Hamburg Temple was named David Meldola, the Reform movement was basically an Ashkenazi affair. Sephardi Jewry, for German Reform, was not an element of its social composition but rather its internal Jewish model. The reformers in Berlin and Hamburg used the Sephardi pronunciation and Sephardi rituals (such as lifting up the Torah *before* reading it), and they incorporated elements of the Sephardi liturgy into their prayerbooks. Ashkenazi Jews suddenly became Sephardi in their practice because Sephardim were thought to be examples of a more open-minded Jewry. However, in Britain Sephardim joined Ashkenazim in creating the West London Synagogue of British Jews, which was intended, in

³ Jakob J. Petuchowski, *Prayerbook Reform in Europe. The Liturgy of European Liberal and Reform Judaism*, New York 1968, pp. 31–83.

part, to bridge the gap between the two groups, enabling families with close business and social ties to worship together. The Sephardim also brought with them a *Marrano* background, which may help to explain British Reform Judaism's inclination to give higher theological status to the biblical over the talmudic text, a tendency which Chacham Nieto had already vigorously combatted in the seventeenth century.

One must take care to exaggerate neither similarities nor differences in ideology and practice. What most clearly separated the ideology of the German reformers from those in Britain is that the Germans very soon came to the conception of a progressive Judaism, which had evolved from biblical to rabbinic to contemporary, and which would continue to evolve in the future. This conception, much influenced by contemporary continental thought, is, as far as I can determine, wholly absent from the writings of David Woolf Marks. For him, religious reform was rather a return to the pristine Judaism of the Bible. He did not perceive the Talmud to be an advance from the Bible and he saw his own reform project as completed with the inauguration of the synagogue. German Reform developed a theology based upon critical historical evaluation of the classical sources, which corresponded to efforts then being made by Christian scholars in Germany but lacking in the British *milieu*. The leading German reformer, Abraham Geiger, could claim in 1844 that "a *wissenschaftliche Theologie* is totally unknown" in Britain, where only practical and edifying doctrines could gain respect. There, in his view, Judaism must become either a rigid traditionalism, barely affected by contemporary realities, or a group of dissenters like the West London Synagogue, which merely served the practical needs of its members and did not even attempt to penetrate the depths of critical scholarship. Geiger excused this superficiality by referring to the relative newness and heterogeneity of British Jewry and its intellectual focus on textual refutation of Christian missionaries, who were more active in Britain than in Germany.⁴

And yet there are elements common to both countries which require further attention, for example, the use of subjective criteria to evaluate worship; some use of evidence for liturgical change in the past, adduced by German *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, as precedent for change in the present; and reference to the contemporary *Zeitgeist* as a motive for reform. A hitherto unremarked similarity lies in the advocacy of women's equality in the synagogue. In fact, here Marks was in the vanguard in in-

⁴ Abraham Geiger, "Nachrichten". *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift für jüdische Theologie*, 5 (1844), pp. 450–451.

cluding in the liturgy an original Hebrew and English “Prayer for a Woman on Attending Divine Service, after Child-Birth” and arguing in his consecration discourse that, in opposition to “eastern customs totally at variance with the habits and dispositions of enlightened people”, women should participate “in the full discharge of every moral and religious obligation”.⁵

In terms of practice, the West London Synagogue differed from the German reformers by being, on the one hand, more conservative in retaining the texts calling for the restoration of Israel and, on the other, more radical in eliminating celebration of second days of Holy Days and blessings without biblical foundation. But in other respects there were no great differences. Decorum, vernacular sermons and confirmation ceremonies were common to both. With the exception of the contemporary *Reformgemeinde* of Berlin, Hebrew was the language of prayer in both countries. By 1859 the West London Synagogue had an organ, almost a decade before such an instrument could be installed by the Liberals in a community synagogue in Berlin.

Influence, too, certainly existed, though it appears to have been strictly unidirectional. Regular reports in the *Jewish Chronicle* indicate that the British reformers (and their opponents) were well aware of events in Germany and that some saw the religious ferment there in the 1840s as desirable for British Judaism, even if its more radical manifestations were severely criticised.⁶ Texts by both Goldsmid and Marks indicate similar awareness, as does the fact that the British reformers first sought their minister in Germany. In 1836 there had even been a petition by members of the London Sephardi synagogue to sanction “such alterations and modifications as were in the line of the changes introduced in the reform Synagogue in Hamburg and in other places”.⁷ A generation later, when the editor of the *Jewish Chronicle*, Abraham Benisch, wrote a historical overview of Judaism in 1874, his brief treatment of the modern period was remarka-

⁵ David Woolf Marks, *Forms of Prayer*, London 5601 [1841], vol. III, p. 105; Rev. D. W. Marks, *Discourse Delivered in the West London Synagogue of British Jews on the Day of its Consecration*, London 5602 [1842], p. 19.

⁶ For example, the *Jewish Chronicle* reported on the rabbinical conferences held in Germany in the mid-1840s, clearly evidencing sympathy for the moderate position of German-speaking reformers like Zacharias Frankel and Hirsch Fassel. See *Jewish Chronicle*, 21st August 1846, pp. 197–198; 16th October 1846, pp. 1–2. See also David Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry, 1841–1991*, Cambridge 1994, pp. 3–29.

⁷ Cited in Moses Gaster, *History of the Ancient Synagogue of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews*, London 1901, p. 171.

bly Germanocentric, following Heinrich Graetz in citing the life of Moses Mendelssohn as its beginning.⁸ Finally, as has often been noted, the Reform congregations established in Manchester and Bradford were composed mostly of German-Jewish immigrants and were both clearly influenced by the German movement.

That said, the major institution of Reform Judaism in Britain, the West London Synagogue, must be seen primarily as a response to the particular British situation, both practically (for example, the founders' desire to have a synagogue close to their places of residence) and intellectually (for example, rejection of rabbinic commandments as divine), rather than as an attempt at imitation. Indeed, it was Benisch who took pride in the differing character of British Jewry when he wrote:

"Of all the nations of Europe the British is the most practical, and its Jewish section undoubtedly partakes of this characteristic ... May Germans indulge in philosophical disquisitions and hair-splitting distinctions at the enunciation of these ideas [the re-establishment of the ancient Sanhedrin, which Benisch was proposing as the only institution authorised to make major reforms] and Frenchmen in smiles and witticisms, it becomes the grave Englishman to ponder on the situation and weigh it, reject these ideas if found wanting; but take them up in earnest if deserving support."⁹

Departing briefly from thematic comparison to consider a comparison of dynamics, I would call attention to some striking similarities between the course of events in Hamburg after 1818 and in London after 1840. In each place the existing community lacked effective leadership: in Hamburg there were three elderly *dayyanim* (rabbinical judges) with no influence on the younger generation; in London, there existed a vacancy for the position of the Sephardi *Chacham* and an eighty-year-old Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi, Solomon Hirschell, a virtual recluse who never mastered the English language. Alienation from the synagogue had occurred in both places for various reasons, allowing the reformers to claim, with some justification, that they alone could address the religious needs of the younger generation. In each instance the Orthodox responded with condemnations, backed up, in Hamburg, by representations to the government. When both groups failed to stifle the new institutions, they each resorted to appoint-

⁸ A. Benisch, *Judaism Surveyed*, London 1874, p. 105. An editorial in the *Jewish Chronicle* for 25th April 1873 calls attention to the multiple "intimate associations between the Jews of England and the Jews of Germany", noting, *inter alia*, that "perhaps seventy of every hundred Jews of middle age had German grandfathers" and that "we owe many of our Anglo-Jewish clergy and literati to Germany".

⁹ Benisch, *Judaism Surveyed*, p. 132.

ing new leaders of their own: Isaac Bernays in the first case, Nathan Marcus Adler in the second. Both men were college-educated and far better able to fight the reformers on their own turf. Both instituted regular vernacular sermons and brought about decorum, taking much of the wind out of the reformers' sails. Both were hired on the understanding that they would not issue new bans against the reformers, yet both found ways to express their opposition.

II. *German and British Liberal Judaism*

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, Liberal Judaism gained, at least nominally, the adherence of the overwhelming majority of German Jews. The more radical *Reformgemeinde* in Berlin occupied a unique position, existing officially within the community but also possessing its own independent religious institutions. At the other end of the religious spectrum, strict neo-Orthodox Jews formed their own, wholly separate, *Austrittsgemeinden* in various cities, but these fringe groups were relatively small. In the *Einheitsgemeinden* Liberals almost always prevailed in community elections. In Britain, by contrast, Reform Judaism remained a peripheral stream at the edge of British Jewry. The reasons for this contrast are multiple, but perhaps the most significant of them are contextual and structural. In Germany, where some states, including Prussia, refused to give official recognition to Judaism, and where ambivalence reigned with regard to support for Orthodoxy or Reform, neither faction could gain established status. Liberals won because their party expressed ideas judged more in keeping both with the German Jews' desire for political and social acceptance and with the intellectual and aesthetic climate of modernity. In Britain, by contrast, Orthodoxy came to possess establishment status, symbolised by the Chief rabbinate. Moreover, it was an Orthodoxy that demanded only vague adherence to its principles and support of its institutions. It did not require observance.¹⁰ For Victorian Jews, nominal adherence to the established Orthodoxy provided the same "respectability" that middle- and upper-class Anglicans sought from their religion. Thus, if in Germany to be Orthodox required justification against the arguments of

¹⁰ Interestingly, it was a group of German immigrants to Britain which, in 1886, established a congregation in a northern suburb of London that required a higher standard of observance from its members. It was clearly modelled on the Frankfurt separatist community. V. D. Lipman, *Social History of the Jews in England, 1850–1950*, London 1954, p. 94.

Liberals, in Britain it was the Reform Jews who had to justify their deviance from an Orthodoxy that was widely deemed the Jewish equivalent of the Church of England. In this respect, British Jewry was more closely related to the Jews of France, who also possessed central institutions in the form of a consistorial structure and a Chief rabbinate, and where a similar formally adaptive Orthodoxy made no effective religious demands. Orthodoxy in Britain became yet more firmly established when the United Synagogue was created by an Act of Parliament in 1870, which officially gave control of Ashkenazi ritual to the Chief Rabbi. But there was also an internal reason for the failure of Reform Judaism to expand to any significant extent until the twentieth century: its own failure to respond to changes in the British intellectual environment.

As noted earlier, in Germany biblical criticism had already become a public issue by the 1830s. Although as sensitive a subject among Jews as among Christians, awareness of its ramifications doubtless played a role in the development by German-Jewish thinkers of an evolutionary, progressive theology that regarded the Bible as only one stage (however significant) in the ongoing development of Judaism. Conversely, the absence of biblical criticism as a public issue in Britain in the 1840s made it possible for the West London Synagogue to subscribe without qualms to the revelation of the Pentateuch in its totality. However, biblical criticism came to Britain with a vengeance in subsequent decades, undermining the foundation upon which Reform Judaism, no less than Orthodoxy, had been built. Earlier, criticism had been set aside as a dubious German preoccupation. However, from the 1850s onwards it made its presence strongly felt in Britain, resulting in major controversies and in actions against its proponents ranging from condemnation, to removal from academic positions, to heresy trials. As its advocates tended to be respectable clergymen, the influence was seen as all the more seditious and could less easily be explained away as originating within circles hostile to Christianity. Its leading proponents were, as one scholar has pointed out, “*believing critics*”.¹¹ By the 1890s, biblical criticism had been absorbed by most branches of Christianity, as well as by the universities. A second challenge was posed in these same years by Darwinism. It too affected the Bible, in this case with regard to the central conception of the place of humanity within crea-

¹¹ Gerald Parsons, ‘Biblical Criticism in Victorian Britain: From Controversy to Acceptance’, in Parsons (ed.), *Religion in Victorian Britain*, vol. I, Manchester 1988, p. 250; see also Josef L. Altholz, ‘The Warfare of Conscience with Theology’, in *ibid.*, vol. IV, pp.163–164.

tion. Reform Judaism, as defined by the West London Synagogue, was no more able to deal effectively with either of these challenges than was Orthodoxy.

In 1863, Abraham Benisch attempted to refute Bishop Colenso's objections to the historical character of the Pentateuch, but had to admit, somewhat ambiguously, that "our belief in the authenticity of the Pentateuch, the same as of all other books of the Bible, does not depend exclusively upon the belief, that they were necessarily, such as we possess them, written by the authors to whom they are commonly attributed, but upon our belief that their form and contents are the same as they were in the time of Ezra and his companions and successors".¹² These men, according to Benisch, purged the text of "spurious elements" and then "gave the work the sanction of their authority, considered by the Jews as divine". Not only did Benisch's slight retreat have little impact, it remained for decades an isolated example. Darwinism seems to have provoked virtually no refutation by British Jews at all.¹³

By the end of the nineteenth century, British Reform Judaism not only remained institutionally marginalised, but it had also failed to exploit its innate advantage of adapting to historical change. British Jews who were intellectually dissatisfied with Orthodoxy possessed no Jewish institution that addressed the major issues of the time. Some were drawn informally to those peripherally Christian or non-denominational movements that were most open to modernity, such as Unitarianism and the Theistic Church, founded in 1871. People began to speak of the "Jewish Unitarian" or the "Unitarian Jew".¹⁴ The last decades of the nineteenth century were in fact the "heyday of Liberal religion" in Britain, which briefly enjoyed remarkable attractive power.¹⁵ Jews, as well as Christians, were among those drawn to it as offering greater harmony with criticism and science than did

¹² A. Benisch, *Bishop Colenso's Objections to the Historical Character of the Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua Critically Examined*, London 1863, pp. ix-x; Feldman, p. 124.

¹³ The only refutation of which I am aware was written for the *Jewish Chronicle* by its editor, Michael Henry, in 1871. See Cesarani, p. 59. But neither am I aware of full treatments by German-Jewish thinkers. In the United States, Darwinism became an unavoidable and persisting issue for Reform rabbis. Kaufmann Kohler addressed it favorably in 1874. See my *Response to Modernity. A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism*, New York 1988, pp. 274-275.

¹⁴ C. G. Montefiore, 'Some Notes on the Effect of Biblical Criticism upon the Jewish Religion', in *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 4 (1892), pp. 293-306.

¹⁵ Hugh McLeod, *Class and Religion in the Late Victorian City*, London 1974, pp. 249-250.

any available form of Judaism. Unitarianism also stressed social action, which had not been a major theme in British (or German) Jewry, but which had its religious basis no less in the prophetic literature than in the life of Jesus.

Given the profoundly altered intellectual climate and the dissatisfaction of increasing numbers of British Jews, especially among the better off and better educated, with the existing Jewish religious institutions, it is not surprising that a new religious movement should emerge. Unlike Reform Judaism in Britain, Liberal Judaism began with intellectual reflection and only a decade later embarked upon a hesitant process of institutionalisation. In 1889, Claude G. Montefiore and Israel Abrahams founded the *Jewish Quarterly Review*, with the intention of publishing articles on contemporary issues as well as critical historical scholarship. In this new journal, unlike the *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums*, the scholarly flagship of German Jewry founded by Zacharias Frankel, articles by biblical critics, including the controversial W. Robertson Smith, could appear. Here, as well, Montefiore, a scion of one of the leading Jewish families, began to advocate a more radical version of Judaism than then existed in Britain. Montefiore, a student of Benjamin Jowett at Oxford and much influenced by him, became the first British Jew to argue systematically for the incorporation of biblical criticism into Judaism. According to him, the two fundamental doctrines of Judaism—theistic belief in God and belief in the moral law—remained unaffected by criticism. Although these ideas were not exclusive to Judaism, the “mission of Israel” to propagate them in unadulterated form within the world set Judaism apart and required the survival of the Jews as a separate entity. Jewish practices and rituals, in Montefiore’s view, possessed only instrumental significance.

Montefiore’s ideas, and the establishment of Liberal Judaism in Britain in the first decades of the twentieth century, were undoubtedly responses to the particular British environment of that time, just as British Reform Judaism, in its theological components, had been a response to its own intellectual and political *milieu*. Montefiore represents the orientation that Hugh McLeod has described as characteristic of the church-going gentry of the time: “Belief in Truth, and the necessity of discovering what it was, and Duty, and the necessity of following it.”¹⁶ Yet it is remarkable how far British Liberal Judaism was dependent upon ideas and practices developed in Germany. The “mission of Israel” concept, broadly enunciated by

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

Moses Mendelssohn, had become a central doctrine of German Jewry across the religious spectrum. Ethical monotheism, as the essence of Judaism, was reiterated endlessly in German-Jewish sermons, especially among the non-Orthodox. The desire to give centrality to faith and morality, while minimising religious observances, was characteristic of the radical *Reformgemeinde* in Berlin, which had no equivalent in Britain; so too was extensive use of the vernacular in the liturgy.

Montefiore, who had studied in Germany, was conscious of these connections. In the *Jewish Quarterly Review*, he described the first rabbi of the *Reformgemeinde*, Samuel Holdheim, as “a great reformer” and noted: “Without by any means agreeing with all that the Berlin *Reformgemeinde* has done, it is with the movement in which he took so leading a part that I feel the deepest and closest spiritual kinship.”¹⁷ As Holdheim in his day had been willing to take radical positions partly in response to the religious radicalism of *Deutschkatholiken* and Protestant *Lichtfreunde*, which enjoyed brief prominence in Germany during the 1840s, so did Montefiore, at the end of the century, advocate a similar radicalism in seeking to address the issues with which the left wing of British Protestantism, but not British Judaism, had come to terms.

Montefiore’s dependence on German-Jewish thought extended, however, beyond the *Reformgemeinde*. Unlike the British Reform movement, and like German reformers across the spectrum, he believed in a concept of religious progress through progressive revelation that made the Bible a stage in an ongoing evolutionary process. As Israel Zangwill pointed out, “In England the idolatry of blind Bible-worship has died out among the cultured ... The ‘Biblical’ rock of the Reform Movement is proving a quicksand”.¹⁸ Montefiore’s Liberal Judaism was largely a response to that

¹⁷ *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 1 (1889), pp. 272, 278. Montefiore must also have been responsible for the appearance of an article by Immanuel H. Ritter, current rabbi of the *Reformgemeinde*, entitled ‘Samuel Holdheim. The Jewish Reformer’, in *ibid.*, pp. 202–215. The connection is also noted in Edward Kessler, *An English Jew. The Life and Writings of Claude Montefiore*, London 1989, p. 87. Yet in a later article entitled ‘Liberal Judaism in England: Its Difficulties and its Duties’, in *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 12 (1900), pp. 618–650, Montefiore makes no specific reference to German models.

¹⁸ Israel Zangwill, ‘English Judaism. A Criticism and a Classification’, in *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 1 (1889), pp. 398–399. He also wrote of British Christianity that many of the Christian bulwarks had been swept away by “a scientific Renaissance, in which the evolution doctrine has been only one of a host of dissolvent influences...but Judaism stands, so Jews assert, untouched. The breath of new knowledge has passed through English Judaism, the wind has passed with its pollen dust; but has impregnated nothing. Even the Reform movement was more a natural and very trivial branching-out

British development, but it turned for an answer to the ideology of the German movement.

It is significant that the opening essay in the very first issue of the *Jewish Quarterly Review* was written by the prominent Jewish historian and professor at the conservative Jewish seminary in Breslau, Heinrich Graetz. Entitled 'The Significance of Judaism for the Present and Future', it presented a theology that was almost precisely that of Montefiore and would later become the basis of British Liberal Judaism.¹⁹ Like Montefiore, Graetz stressed that the essence of Judaism was ethics and the avoidance of idolatry, that Judaism was inherently rational, and that its rationalism made it "the sole stronghold of free thought in the religious sphere" and endowed it with the ongoing mission of overcoming "erroneous belief". Graetz was even ready to criticise excessive ritualism as "a fungoid growth which overlays [Jewish] ideals". Rituals, he argued, were "the means to an end, and that end is the memory of the past". In a lecture given at the Anglo-Jewish Exhibition in London in 1887, Graetz spoke favourably of the "new method of biblical inquiry ... that clears up most doubts, and makes commentary superfluous", a method regrettably only "slightly utilised" by Jews.²⁰ Montefiore was not alone in his certainty that Graetz, though perhaps inconsistent, did not regard the existing text of the Bible as Mosaic.²¹ It is therefore not surprising that Israel Zangwill, in criticising the views of both men, should group Montefiore and Graetz together as expressing similar views.²²

Graetz had a far higher regard for Britain and for the potential of British Jewry than Abraham Geiger had had earlier in the century. Although this may have been due in part to the religious stagnation of German Jewry, which preceded the appearance of a new generation of major Jewish thinkers at the end of the nineteenth century, it must also have been

from the compulsion of inner forces, than a result of any new external influences" (*Jewish Quarterly Review*, 1 [1889], p. 379).

¹⁹ *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 1 (1889), pp. 4–13; *ibid.*, 2 (1890), pp. 257–269, reprinted in Heinrich Graetz, *The Structure of Jewish History and Other Essays*, ed. by Ismar Schorsch, New York 1975, pp. 275–302.

²⁰ Graetz, *The Structure of Jewish History*, pp. 259–274.

²¹ *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 4 (1892) p. 300. In *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 2 (1890), p. 267, Graetz wrote that the part of Leviticus dealing with sacrifices "shows itself externally as well as internally to be a foreign element". L.M. Simmons reported that Graetz spoke to him of the Pentateuch as a composite work. Simmons, 'The Breslau School and Judaism', in *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 4 (1892), p. 398. But see also Graetz's critique of standard biblical criticism in the *Jewish Chronicle*, 5th August 1887, p. 9.

²² *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 1 (1889), p. 399.

influenced by the rise of antisemitism in Germany in these years. Whatever the reason, Israel Abrahams was convinced that Graetz believed the future of Judaism lay with the English-speaking Jews.²³ Indeed, during his visit, Graetz proposed that British Jewry was best qualified to establish a "Jewish academy" which would combine research with laying down guidelines for the Jewish future. In the antisemitic atmosphere of Germany such an academy would be regarded as "a piece of Jewish impertinence", but in Britain it could prosper.

The conservative Liberal²⁴ Jews of Germany and the radical Liberal Jews of Britain (who had created an independent movement within British Jewry by 1909) came together collectively for the first time in 1926 at the founding conference of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, held that year in London. The interchange at this meeting clearly reflects the similarities and differences between the movements at that time. A striking point of ideological similarity was that each movement was decidedly anti-Zionist, believing Zionism to be a retreat from the mission of Israel. But for the German Liberals, living in an antisemitic atmosphere, anti-Zionism was a much more central concern and they felt compelled to counter Zionist arguments effectively lest they nurture *Judenhass*. For many Liberals in Germany, lamented the Liberal leader Heinrich Stern, their liberalism consisted exclusively of fighting Zionism.²⁵ In Britain, with its more benign atmosphere and its responsibility for the Balfour Declaration, Zionism was less troubling an issue in 1926, just as the traditional prayers for the restoration of Zion had not troubled the founders of the West London Synagogue in the way that they did their German counterparts. Even though Montefiore, like his co-worker Lily Montagu, was opposed to Zionism, he was pleased that one of the ministers at the Liberal synagogue at that time, Maurice Perlzweig, was a fervent Zionist.²⁶ In Germany, the prominent Liberal rabbis remained cool or lukewarm towards Zionism until the Nazi period.²⁷ In neither Germany nor Britain, however, did anti-Zionism set the Liberals apart from their Orthodox co-religionists.

²³*Jewish Quarterly Review*, 4 (1892), p. 192.

²⁴ In Germany "Reform" had come to mean the radical *Reformgemeinde*.

²⁵ Heinrich Stern, 'Die Entwicklung des deutschen liberalen Judentums', in *International Conference of Liberal Jews*, London 1926, pp. 44–45.

²⁶ C. G. Montefiore, 'Liberal Judaism in England', in *ibid.*, p. 64.

²⁷ For the attitudes of German Liberal rabbis to Zionism in this period see my 'Liberal Judaism and Zionism in Germany', in Shmuel Almog *et al.* (eds.), *Zionism and Religion*, Hanover and London 1998, pp. 93–106.

A significant point of difference between German and British Liberal Jews related to social justice. Both groups frequently defined their faith as “Prophetic Judaism”, but it was the British Liberals, like their American counterparts, who took the practical implications more seriously.²⁸ In part this was due to the influence of Lily Montagu, who devoted much of her life to working with the poor. But it was undoubtedly also a reflection of different religious environments. By the 1890s the Anglican clergy had expanded its social concerns, whereas the German clergy steered clear of social issues. Still, in this regard British Liberal Judaism was far behind American Reform Judaism, which had been profoundly influenced by leading thinkers of the Protestant Social Gospel.

The attitude to Christianity was yet another point of difference. Montefiore was the leading Jewish champion of Christian-Jewish *rapprochement* in his day, stressing repeatedly that Jews needed to view the New Testament more sympathetically. This view stood in sharp contrast to that of the German-Jewish thinker Leo Baeck, who viewed Christianity, especially in its Lutheran manifestation, as the Romantic antithesis of a rational Judaism. No doubt Montefiore’s attitude was a reflection of the greater Christian friendliness towards Judaism that he had himself first encountered in Oxford. In Britain it became possible for Christian religious bodies to join with their Jewish counterparts in the discussion of social and economic questions from a religious point of view.²⁹ Such interaction in Germany occurred only among individual intellectuals, not on the level of organised religion.

Since Liberal Judaism in Germany operated within the *Einheitsgemeinde*, it was also obliged to take a more conservative stance on ritual matters, lest the Orthodox within the community be driven into one of the *Austrittsgemeinden*. Moreover, coalitions of Orthodox Jews and Zionists were sometimes able to block Liberal proposals, as happened in Berlin with regard to the institution of late Friday evening and Sunday morning services.³⁰ With only one exception (and that not until 1930), men and women sat separately at Liberal services, and when the veteran preacher Lily Montagu came to Berlin for the World Union for Progressive Judaism convention in 1928, only the independent *Reformgemeinde* invited her to speak from its pulpit. Only in Germany was the *Bar Mitzvah* ceremony re-

²⁸ *Second Conference of the World Union for Progressive Judaism*, London 1930, pp. 157–158.

²⁹ Montefiore, ‘Liberal Judaism in England’, p. 65.

³⁰ *First Bulletin of the World Union for Progressive Judaism*, December 1929, p. 13.

tained for boys while only girls underwent Confirmation. In German Liberal Judaism the service remained almost entirely in Hebrew, whereas British Liberals made do with less than half the liturgy in Hebrew and also composed new English prayers of their own. Male worshippers in Germany wore hats; most of their counterparts in Britain, except for the ministers, did not. Lay participation in conducting services, including that of women, was common among British Liberals, but not in Germany. Viewed as a whole, German Liberal Judaism was, in matters of liturgy and ritual, closer to British Reform than it was to British Liberalism.

The religious differences would become more apparent to British Jewry when German Jews, fleeing from Nazism, came to Britain in their tens of thousands during the late 1930s. Not always well treated by their British counterparts, they at first felt more at home with each other.³¹ In London they formed their own German-speaking Liberal congregation at Belsize Square in 1939,³² but the non-Orthodox among them also joined the existing Liberal and Reform congregations, and about twelve of their former rabbis were soon called to pulpits in various parts of Britain.³³ The German Jews in Britain persisted in their love for the Jewish traditions of their native land, favouring the music of Sulzer and Lewandowski and the liturgical customs with which they had been brought up, and sometimes influencing the religious life of the congregations they joined in the direction of more ceremonial, thoughtful and decorous worship. The Leo Baeck College, opened in London in 1956, was named after the symbolic figure of German Jewry and had a faculty that was in large measure composed of German-Jewish refugees; it succeeded in bringing together in a single rab-

³¹ Geoffrey Alderman, 'Anglo-Jewry and Jewish Refugees', in *AJR Information*, June 1987, p. 3. Cecil Roth reports the witticism that the British were prepared to return the colonies to Germany if Germany would return Golders Green to England (October 1962).

³² Marion Berghahn, *German-Jewish Refugees in England*, London 1984, pp. 167–169, 234. In Birmingham Liberal Jews went to the Orthodox synagogue because they were more at ease with a service mainly in Hebrew than one mostly in English. See Zoë Josephs, *Survivors. Jewish Refugees in Birmingham 1933–1945*, Warley, West Midlands 1988, pp. 174–175.

³³ Gerhard Graf, 'The Influence of German Rabbis on British Reform Judaism', in Dow Marmor (ed.), *Reform Judaism. Essays on Reform Judaism in Britain*, Oxford 1973, pp. 156–157. The influx helps to explain the growth of both Reform and Liberal Judaism in England during the 1930s. Comparing figures for 1929 and 1938, the number of weddings conducted in Reform synagogues increased from 31 to 71; in Liberal synagogues from 8 to 64. See Lipman, p. 218.

binical seminary the divided progressive movements of British Jewry.³⁴ Thus, in this last stage of their relationship, the German Jews exercised their influence more directly upon their British co-religionists, just as the German-Jewish diaspora influenced Jewish host communities wherever the refugees scattered.

³⁴ Albert H. Friedlander, 'The German Influence on Progressive Judaism in Great Britain', in Werner E. Mosse *et al.* (eds.), *Second Chance: Two Centuries of German-speaking Jews in the United Kingdom*, Tübingen 1991 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 48), pp. 425–35.

HUGH MCLEOD

Why did Orthodoxy remain dominant in Britain?
A Comment on Michael A. Meyer

I agree with most of what Michael Meyer has said. My only major disagreement would be with the familiar argument that the predominance of Orthodoxy in Britain can be explained in terms of it being “the Jewish equivalent of the Church of England”.¹ This explanation seems to beg a number of questions. First, nineteenth-century British religion was highly pluralistic—far more so than that of northern Germany, where the vast majority of the population, and certainly nearly all those in positions of power, were members of the Evangelical *Landeskirchen*. If indeed British Jews took the Church of England as their model, it needs to be asked why this should be when such a large proportion of British Christians did not. Secondly, if it is true that “adherence to the established Orthodoxy provided the same ‘respectability’ that middle- and upper-class Anglicans sought from their religion”, it is surprising that recruits to Reform were drawn from the wealthiest sections of London and Manchester Jewry and that the founders of the West London Synagogue included members of some of the most prestigious Anglo-Jewish families.² Protestant Dissent, in contrast, which, according to this argument, was the Christian counterpart of Reform, appealed most strongly to members of the lower middle class and upper working class. Thirdly, if Christianity was defined so much in terms of Anglicanism, it is also surprising that so many of those Jews who converted to Christianity became Unitarians—a trend which was already apparent at the end of the eighteenth century and continued throughout the nineteenth.³ Two variant factors may have been more relevant in explaining the fact that in the third quarter of the nineteenth cen-

¹ This point is argued more fully in Michael A. Meyer, *Response to Modernity. A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism*, Detroit 1995, pp. 178–179.

² Anne J. Kershen and Jonathan A. Romain, *Tradition and Change. A History of Reform Judaism in Britain 1840–1995*, London 1995, pp. 9–15.

³ Todd M. Endelman, *Radical Assimilation in English Jewish History 1656–1945*, Bloomington, 1990, pp. 120–123.

ture a moderate Orthodoxy was overwhelmingly dominant in Britain, while in the more pluralistic German situation a moderate liberalism was widespread—differences in communal organisation and differences in the nature of those reference groups within the Christian majority to which Jews related, whether positively or negatively.

In terms of communal organisation, there were four major differences between Germany and Britain. First, while local variations were slight in Britain, in Germany they were substantial because of the widely differing policies of the various German states. Second, the existence in Germany of many significant Jewish communities, none of which was clearly pre-eminent until very late in the nineteenth century, contrasted with the overwhelming preponderance of London in British Jewry—only challenged in a limited way by the growing importance of Manchester. Third, state intervention in the affairs of Jewish communities frequently had an important influence on religious life in Germany, but this happened much less often in Britain. Fourth, the most important of all these differences was the contrast between the British system of voluntary affiliation to a synagogue and the *Gemeinde* system which operated widely in Germany. Since, at least until 1876, all Jews within a given area belonged to the *Gemeinde* and were required to pay taxes to it, its resources were often considerable. The synagogue was an institution of the *Gemeinde*, and the character of the services reflected the views of the elected board.

A variety of factors favoured both a considerable degree of pluralism and the relative prominence of Reform in Germany. Frequent state intervention in Germany served to further local variation, since these sometimes favoured Reformers, as in Frankfurt am Main during the first half of the century, and sometimes traditionalists, as happened in many places, most decisively Mecklenburg-Schwerin, in the aftermath of 1848. The larger *Gemeinden*, with their very extensive resources, were able to provide several synagogues, providing for the needs of different sections of the community, while smaller *Gemeinden* often sought a compromise. And the elected laymen who ran the *Gemeinde* were obliged to take account of local public opinion, rather than imposing a rigid uniformity as a matter of religious principle, as successive Chief Rabbis did in Britain.⁴

In view of the relative poverty of British congregations, which depended on voluntary contributions and faced the burden of maintaining a

⁴ David Sorkin, 'Religious Reforms and Secular Trends in German-Jewish Life. An Agenda for Research,' in *Year Book XL of the Leo Baeck Institute*, London 1995, p. 175; cf. Bill Williams, *The Making of Manchester Jewry 1740–1875*, Manchester 1976, pp. 249–252.

larger proportion of poor Jews, and in the light of the rigorous policy of exclusion practised by successive Chief Rabbis against Reform synagogues and those who joined them, there were strong financial incentives to remain within the boundaries of Orthodoxy and to avoid the costs of setting up a parallel network of Jewish institutions. The heavy-handed methods of various Chief Rabbis caused considerable resentment, but the resulting protests fell short of secession. And though splits within Orthodox congregations were frequent, financial considerations provided a strong motive for reaching some kind of compromise over the disputed issues.⁵ The position of Orthodoxy was further strengthened by the historical accident that Sir Moses Montefiore, as president of the Board of Deputies, opposed the establishment of the West London Synagogue (in which his brother played a prominent part) and threw all the weight of his office behind the Chief Rabbi. This gained added significance from the fact that the Registration Act of 1836 had vested control over Jewish marriages in the president of the Board of Deputies, and thus until 1856 weddings in Reform synagogues had no legal validity. Montefiore was able further to marginalise Reform by excluding its adherents from the Board of Deputies until 1874.

Differences between the character and social position of Christianity were also significant. A first point is that in the nineteenth century cities such as London and Manchester were far more overtly pious than their counterparts in northern Germany.⁶ (Predominantly Catholic cities in southern and western Germany were in this respect closer to the British situation than were, for instance, Berlin, Hamburg or Leipzig.) Moreover, the educated bourgeoisie, whose members in northern Germany were widely regarded as the trail-blazers in the process of secularisation, were probably the most strongly church-going section of the population in nineteenth-century Britain. Secondly, there was in Germany, from about the 1820s onwards, a close association between religious and political liberalism; Pietists and orthodox Lutherans, by contrast, were generally political conservatives. In Britain such links existed only in a very limited

⁵ For opposition to Chief Rabbi Hirschel's ban on the adherents of Reform, see *ibid.*, pp. 103–106; for accounts of Orthodox congregations which split and later re-united, see *ibid.*, chapters 6, 7 and 12; for abortive attempts to start Reform congregations, see Kershner and Romain, pp. 81–89.

⁶ Hugh McLeod, *Religion and the People of Western Europe 1789–1989*, Oxford 1997, chapter 6; Gunilla-Friederike Budde, *Auf dem Weg ins Bürgerleben. Kindheit und Erziehung in deutschen und englischen Bürgerfamilien 1840–1914*, Göttingen 1994, pp. 378–399.

way. Admittedly within the Church of England there was some tendency for the most doctrinally conservative to be Tories in politics —though by the 1870s and 1880s this association was less clear, as significant numbers of High Churchmen moved over to the Liberal Party, or even joined the nascent Socialist movement. But throughout the century the Liberal Party and its various political ancestors enjoyed the support of large numbers of Dissenters and Roman Catholics, many of whom were very conservative in their theology. Insofar as Jewish religious thinking and practice were influenced by Gentile models, the messages received in British cities were very different from those received in northern German cities. In the latter case, those Gentiles who were most likely to be respected and considered worthy of emulation by middle-class Jews were often religiously sceptical or at least substantially distanced from the Church. If they were religiously active, they were likely to be strongly liberal in religious outlook.⁷ In Britain at the same time, middle-class Liberals were likely to be at least regular churchgoers; they were frequently devout, and in many cases were quite conservative in their theology. Thus in Britain there was no contradiction between the political liberalism that was more or less mandatory for middle-class Jews in the middle decades of the nineteenth century and the religious Orthodoxy which many of them espoused. Conversely, in northern Germany those sections of the Christian population that were most conspicuously devout tended also to be conservative in politics and often hostile to Jewish emancipation. Incidentally, this may be one factor in the relative lack of interest in the questions of social justice among liberal Jews in Germany, in contrast to their counterparts in Britain or the United States. American Social Gospel and British Christian Socialism had their German counterpart in the Evangelical-Social Congress founded in 1890. But the fact that initially the most prominent figure in this movement was Adolf Stoecker meant that the sympathetic interest of Jews was hardly likely to be aroused.

One final comment: Michael Meyer's account is primarily a view from above, focusing on the leaders. Would it be possible to tell the same story from below? A start has been made in the sociology of Reform, with one of the best attempts Bill Williams' history of Manchester Jewry, which demonstrates the importance of social conflicts in the various schisms that divided that community in the mid-nineteenth century. He highlights, in

⁷ For instance, the influential liberal magazine *Die Gartenlaube* favoured an anti-dogmatic and anti-ecclesiastical form of religion in which "The Christmas tree and not the Cross was the symbol of Christianity". Henry Wassermann, 'Jews and Judaism in the Gartenlaube', in *Year Book XXIII of the Leo Baeck Institute*, London 1978, p. 51.

the emergence of Reform, the division between recent immigrants from Germany, who formed the majority of the founders of Reform, and longer-established British-born merchants and shopkeepers, most of whom remained Orthodox. In Frankfurt am Main in the 1840s and 1850s there seems to have been a similar pattern, with Reform attracting newcomers to the city, while many of the well-established families joined Neo-Orthodoxy.⁸ But studies of this kind unfortunately remain rare. Even rarer are those studies which examine the religious history of the Reform synagogue from the point of view of the average member of the congregation. It may be that the sources are lacking, but perhaps the tacit assumptions of many historians also play a part. It has become axiomatic that many conventional historical sources tell us little about the working class or about women and thus provide the basis for a one-sided history. It may equally be the case that because religious conservatives tend to express their faith in the most colourful ways and to leave the most documentary sources behind them, they claim a disproportionate amount of historians' attention. Liberal forms of faith, because their expressions are less immediately visible, and because they often rest on a rejection of any sharp distinction between sacred and profane, are too often written off as "secular". It has become a commonplace that in nineteenth-century Germany especially, but to a lesser extent in Britain too, a large proportion of middle-class Jewish families were very lukewarm in the practice of their faith. Historians have acknowledged that there were strongly Orthodox minorities, and these have received some sympathetic attention. But they have tended to ignore those who were both liberal and pious.

⁸ Williams, chapter 10; Robert Liberles, *Religious Conflict in Social Context. The Resurgence of Orthodox Judaism in Frankfurt am Main 1838–1877*, Westport, Conn. 1985.

TONY KUSHNER

Comparing Antisemitisms: A Useful Exercise?

As John Breuilly states, “In comparative history the historian’s concern is not to understand *the* particular, because there is now more than one particular. Comparison which begins by regarding one particular case as the norm against which comparisons are made with other cases is flawed from the outset”. Breuilly gives classic examples from labour history, such as why there was no significant Socialist movement in the USA, why it took so long for an independent Labour Party to develop in Britain and why one developed so quickly in Germany. As he adds, “There are two problems with posing questions in these implicitly comparative terms. First, they assume that the contrasting event to that referred to in the question is the norm; what they are considering is the exception ... Second, they assume simple outcomes which can be compared”.¹

The comparative history of antisemitism at the level of nation states can easily fall into the trap outlined by Breuilly. This is particularly the case in comparisons between Britain and Germany. For those determined to show the power and pervasiveness of antisemitism in the modern era, the Nazi Holocaust is inevitably the focal point. Nations such as Britain which in the twentieth century have avoided murderous antisemitism become simply “exceptions that prove the rule”. British antisemitism is dismissed, regardless of the impact it had on society (and especially the Jewish minority), because it pales in comparison with the horrors of the “Final Solution”. There is therefore in this area a great potential danger of swallowing whole the idea of both German and British exceptionalism. This essay seeks to question such mythologies by adopting Breuilly’s emphasis “that no one case can set the terms by which comparisons are made”.² On the one hand, I reject the belief that violent antisemitism is the norm or the most important theme in modern Jewish history. On the other, I stress that

¹ John Breuilly, *Labour and Liberalism in Nineteenth-Century Europe. Essays in Comparative History*, Manchester, 1992, p. 1.

² Breuilly, p. 2.

antisemitism is a complex and varied phenomenon with strands within liberal ideology, culture and politics, as well as its more blatant expression in exclusionary, violent and illiberal forms.

Comparative history has tended to concentrate on elites, social policies and organised movements. These limitations are true of the study of antisemitism in which the experiences of “ordinary people” (Jews as well as those reacting to them) have been at best a minor consideration.³ Yet by adopting a top-down approach, a huge opportunity for meaningful comparative work has been lost. Almost alone, Nancy Green has recognised the potential of examining the comparative nature of the migration experience from the point of view of the immigrant. As she comments, “The migrant embodies an implicit comparison between past and present, between one world and another, between two languages, and two sets of cultural norms”.⁴ By examining the attitude of Jews from Britain and Germany towards the antisemitisms of these two countries, this essay highlights the insights gained from taking seriously the perspectives and mythologies of ordinary people, especially those who had experienced both countries. It is an attempt, therefore, to provide a social, as well as a comparative, history of antisemitism.

It must be emphasised that for all the developments of the past fifty years, the study of antisemitism is still in its infancy. The late development of its historiography largely reflects the failure of the non-Jewish world to understand antisemitism as other than the fault of the Jews themselves. The rise of political antisemitism from the late nineteenth century onwards prompted a slow reassessment of this assumption, with the Nazi era, and especially the Holocaust years, giving a particular impetus to a broader approach to the subject. Nevertheless, the career of the Church of England minister, James Parkes, operating in what is seen as the most tolerant of countries, illustrates how long, even after the Second World War, a re-evaluation of the causes of antisemitism took to achieve. Parkes’s premise that antisemitism was “a problem for non-Jews” did not achieve

³ For a rounded approach to the study of antisemitism and Jewish–non-Jewish relations, see the essays and introduction in David Gerber (ed.), *Anti-Semitism in American History*, Urbana–Chicago 1986. See also Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*. Vol. 1. *The Years of Persecution, 1933–1939*, London 1997. While this book is an important development in the incorporation of ordinary people’s voices, it generally reproduces such testimony without problematising its nature.

⁴ Nancy Green, ‘The Comparative Method and Poststructural Structuralism—New Perspectives for Migration Studies’, in *Journal of American Ethnic History*, vol. 13 (1994), p. 3

widespread acceptance until the last stages of his career, that is, from the 1950s until his death in 1981. Parkes was determined to illustrate the Christian roots of antisemitism and, in a series of books, charted its uneven history from the early Church onwards. In stressing continuity he did not minimise changes in direction, as with the importance of racial antisemitism from the nineteenth century, nor did he ignore periods of more positive relations between Jews and non-Jews.⁵ Nevertheless, Parkes and other pioneers of the history of antisemitism such as Leon Poliakov set a precedent for looking at the problem with a long-term perspective. As a result, most of the dynamism in the historiography relating to overviews of antisemitism has been concerned with issues of continuity and change rather than with geographical variations. Differences in place have been largely of secondary importance, contrived to fit into the chronological structure rather than taken seriously in themselves. For the modern period, countries such as Britain and the USA, if considered, are taken to show a general absence of antisemitism. Alternatively, blatant antisemitism in the forms of political organisations such as the British Union of Fascists and individuals such as Father Coughlin in the USA, are mentioned in order to fit them into the global pattern of the growth of extremist hostility in the inter-war period.⁶

Inevitably, in the light of the continental European Jewish experience in the first half of the twentieth century, antisemitism in the English-speaking world appears to be a rather pathetic and inconsequential echo of the “real thing”. As Humbert Wolfe, the Bradford poet and senior civil servant of German-Jewish origin, put it as early as 1933:

“It is the common belief that there is no anti-Semitism in the British Isles. The French may banish a Dreyfus to Devil’s Island on the ground that, if he is not a traitor, he is at

⁵ Siân Jones, Tony Kushner and Sarah Pearce, ‘Inter-disciplinary Approaches to James Parkes’, in *idem* (eds.), *Cultures of Ambivalence and Contempt. Studies in Jewish–Non-Jewish Relations* London 1997, pp. 16–24; James Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue. A Study in the Origins of Antisemitism*, London 1934; *idem*, *The Jew in the Medieval Community. A Study of his Political and Economic Situation*, London 1938; *idem*, *Antisemitism. An Enemy of the People*, Harmondsworth, Middlesex 1945; *idem*, *Antisemitism*, London 1963.

⁶ For a thoughtful overview, see Todd Endelman, ‘Comparative Perspectives on Modern Antisemitism in the West’, in David Berger (ed.), *History and Hate*, Philadelphia 1986, pp. 95–114; Leon Poliakov, *The History of Anti-Semitism. Vol. IV Suicidal Europe, 1870–1933*, Oxford 1985, chapter 6; Shmuel Almog (ed.), *Antisemitism Through the Ages*, Oxford 1988, has a mixture of chronological and country-specific essays. On a more populist level, see Dan Cohn-Sherbok, *The Crucified Jew. Twenty Centuries of Christian Antisemitism*, London 1992, which follows Poliakov’s approach.

any rate a Jew, a practically synonymous term; the Germans may advertise seaside resorts as 'Judenrein'; the Hungarians may observe 'It's a fine day, let's go out and kill something, for example, a rabbit or a Jew'; the Roumanians may quietly beat the Israelites on the head, urging, with force, that whatever else they are, they are not Roumanians ... But, as all the world knows, it is different in England."⁷

It must be stressed again that comparing antisemitisms, even—or especially—at an academic level, have often been exercises in polarised myth-making. The Holocaust has made the construction of national typologies all the more easy and apparently convincing, none more so than the virtuous British and their evil counterparts, the Germans. The liberation of Belsen, in particular, enabled a post-1945 reading of the British war effort as a battle fought to save the Jews of Europe from the evil extermination-minded Huns. As the British Zionist Max Easterman put it at the time of the Belsen Trial, "[It] was not only a trial of the Belsen beasts; it was a trial of the whole bestial Nazi system. Kramer, Klein, Grese and others were typical Germans, devotees of the German cult of force with its resultant bestial cruelty". The study of antisemitism in the comparative sphere examining national, regional and local variations has, in essence, not moved beyond crude assumptions or the creation of league tables in which the liberal democratic world occupies the lower reaches in order to show off all the more effectively the real villains. Comparisons between Britain and Germany are perhaps the most difficult to deconstruct because antisemitism, and racism more generally, has been strongly established in British culture as fundamentally un-English, meaning, at least since 1945, not German.⁸

Luisa Passerini has suggested that:

"At first sight the relationship between myth and history seems to be most adequate to describe the complex status of oral history. Two poles, one more tilted towards the symbolic, the other towards the analytic, are implied; and oral history moves along the continuum between the two. Yet, when one tries to go further, the relationship does not appear so easily defined, and the places of the two poles not clearly set along the immediate lines of common sense."⁹

⁷ Humbert Wolfe, *Now A Stranger*, London 1933, p. 116; Philip Bagguley, *Harlequin in Whitehall. A Life of Humbert Wolfe, Poet and Civil Servant, 1885–1940*, London 1997.

⁸ Max Easterman quoted in the *Jewish Gazette*, 2nd November 1945. For the refusal to see racism other than as a German problem, see Tony Kushner, 'The Fascist as "Other"? Racism and Neo-Nazism in Contemporary Britain', in *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 28, No. 1 (1994), pp. 27–45.

⁹ Luisa Passerini, 'Mythbiography in Oral History', in Raphael Samuel and Paul

As already suggested, academics have been particularly responsible for creating mythic models of national antisemitisms—their own creation of myths perhaps explaining why they have failed to do justice to the importance of myth in antisemitic discourse and behaviour. General histories of antisemitism have difficulty fitting in countries such as Britain, but specific histories of antisemitism in other European countries have been even more dismissive of the possibility of comparisons with the British case.

Peter Pulzer, in his *Jews and the German State*, has pointed to the paradox that if observers at the turn of the century had asked where European antisemitism was at its strongest they would probably have answered Russia, France or possibly Austria. He adds that “It is unlikely that he would have answered Germany [yet] there is little doubt that more has been written about the pre-1914 antisemitism of Germany than of all other countries combined”. To Pulzer, the reason is clear and “to be found in post-1933 experience”.¹⁰ The Holocaust undoubtedly acted as a stimulus to research on pre-Nazi German antisemitism, starting with Paul Massing’s account of political movements, *Rehearsal for Destruction*, published as early as 1949. In the atmosphere of shock and disgust in 1945, it is not surprising that a German exceptionalist school of antisemitism, “from Luther to Hitler”, took hold.¹¹ By the 1960s, however, more sophisticated work such as Pulzer’s had surfaced and subsequently developed. Just a few years ago it would have seemed that a balanced, nuanced approach to pre-1933 German antisemitism had now emerged that, while building upon the research stimulated by the Holocaust, had moved irretrievably from the initial post-war anti-German overstatement. But remarkably the new consensus has been challenged, on the one hand, by the *Historikerstreit* of the 1980s, in which some German conservative historians even attempted to normalise the Third Reich and, on the other, by the emergence and prominence of several Jewish historians who have tried to revive the German exceptionalist school. In 1990 and 1992 Paul Lawrence Rose, in his own words, “unashamedly tried to reintroduce into the discussion of German history a concept of national character that has virtually disappeared from the conceptual vocabulary of academic writing on Ger-

Thompson (eds.), *The Myths We Live By*, London 1990, p. 49.

¹⁰ Peter Pulzer, *Jews and the German State. The Political History of a Minority, 1848–1933*, Oxford 1992, p. 28.

¹¹ Paul Massing, *Rehearsal for Destruction. A Study of Political Antisemitism in Imperial Germany*, New York 1949; William McGovern, *From Luther to Hitler. The History of Fascist-Nazi Political Philosophy*, London 1946.

many in the last twenty years". He referred in particular to Geoff Eley and David Blackbourn's *The Peculiarities of German History* which, Rose complained, dedicated only half a page "to what any commonsense observer must see as one of the major peculiarities of German history, namely antisemitism". Perhaps more worrying has been the massive attention given to, and at least partial acceptance of, Daniel Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, which moves even further in the same direction. Rose stressed the allegedly uniform antisemitism of elite German ideology and high culture, whereas Goldhagen argues that this permeated the worldview of many ordinary Germans who both welcomed and were active participants in the processes that ended with the death of six million Jews. Other historians will once again have to carry out their work against a background in which German exceptionalism with regard to antisemitism is back on the agenda: for example, those responsible for the exhibitions in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington and its soon to be completed British counterpart are now concerned that their narratives should take Goldhagen's analysis into consideration.¹²

In the context of this volume, the implications of this new or revived school of German exceptionalism has made the difficulties of comparison all the greater. To give an example from medieval research, recent work points to the German rather than the English origins of blood libel. Yet there is some hesitation in the present climate to articulate such findings lest it add a further layer of spurious support for a chronologically expanded version of the Rose–Goldhagen thesis.¹³ Even without such recent

¹² Uriel Tal, *Christians and Jews in Germany. Religion, Politics and Ideology in the Second Reich, 1870–1914*, Jerusalem 1969; Richard Levy, *The Downfall of the Anti-Semitic Political Parties in Imperial Germany*, New Haven 1975; Peter Pulzer, *The Rise of Political Antisemitism in Germany and Austria*, rev. edn., London 1988, first published 1964. For the *Historikerstreit*, see Charles Maier, *The Unmasterable Past. Historians, Holocaust and German National Identity*, Cambridge, MA 1988; Peter Baldwin, (ed.), *Reworking the Past. Hitler, the Holocaust and the Historians' Debate*, Boston 1990; Richard Evans, *In Hitler's Shadow*, London 1988; James Knowlton and Truett Cates (eds.), *Forever in the Shadow of Hitler?*, Atlantic Highlands, NJ 1993; Paul Lawrence Rose, *German Question/Jewish Question. Revolutionary Antisemitism from Kant to Wagner*, Princeton, NJ 1992, p. 382; David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History. Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany*, Oxford 1984, p. 273; Daniel Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners. Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*, New York 1996. Oral information on the Holocaust museums.

¹³ John McCulloh, 'Jewish Ritual Murder. William of Norwich, Thomas of Monmouth, and the Early Dissemination of the Myth', in *Speculum*, vol. 72 (1997), pp. 698–740; Willis Johnson III, 'Recent Work on the English Origins of the Blood Libel',

developments, there has been much reluctance to make a direct comparison of Anglo-American and continental antisemitism before the Holocaust era. Historians like Pulzer, who have offered anything but a maximalist interpretation of pre-1933 antisemitism in Germany, see the Jewish experience in Britain and the USA as fundamentally different. Thus Pulzer argues that a “Jewish Question” did not emerge in Britain or indeed the rest of Western Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century because the relationship between nationality and citizenship *vis-à-vis* the state had been solved. In contrast, the concept of nationality was crucial in the German case. In Britain social discrimination against Jews may have been very common, and antisemitism may have existed even within the state itself, for example in the Foreign Office, but Pulzer points out that this was part of a set of unwritten rules and rarely, if ever, became a parliamentary issue. There may have been antisemitism in Western Europe, as witnessed in Britain in a limited way with the campaign against Eastern European Jews or in France more spectacularly with the Dreyfus affair. Nevertheless, argues Pulzer, there was no “Jewish Question” as there was in Germany, pre-war Russia or inter-war Poland and Romania, and further comparisons are therefore not worthwhile.¹⁴

Pierre Birnbaum, in his survey and analysis of antisemitism in France from Leon Blum to the 1980s, provides a more differentiated reading of Western democratic responses to the Jews in the twentieth century, highlighting in particular the varying role of the state in the liberal world. In France, he identifies a strong state with a powerful bureaucracy. In contrast, Britain, and even more the USA, offers a model of a weak state which enables a multiplicity of interest groups and private initiatives to arise throughout the century. The French model makes possible the existence of powerful antisemitism but, he suggests, antisemitism is of minor concern in Britain and the USA. In Birnbaum’s work, and in other studies where a comparative model is briefly employed, the ignorance and inaccuracy concerning events, not to mention the absence of reference to recent literature on British and American antisemitism, is remarkable. It is simply assumed that these countries were different—not in having their own varieties of antisemitism, but in the absolute absence of antisemitism beyond the vaguest of social prejudices or individuals such as Mosley pathetically imitating his continental role models.¹⁵

Parkes Centre Seminar Programme, 25th June 1996.

¹⁴ Pulzer, *Jews and the German State*, pp. 29, 41.

¹⁵ Pierre Birnbaum, *Antisemitism in France. A Political History from Leon Blum to*

The problem for those working on British or American antisemitism today is that the early literature on the subject confirms such a reading and, in contrast to this blanket denial of hostility, more recent work can seem overstated. The first historians of the Jewish Historical Society of England were more than willing to accept the model of British exceptionalism—the opposite of that which has developed for Germany. It is probably the case that these early historians, followed by Cecil Roth, overemphasised the prevalence of medieval English Jew-hatred in order to contrast it with the enlightened liberal attitude which emerged after readmission. As we shall see, the first to provide an alternative model were refugees from Nazism, shortly after the Second World War. Their work, however, was not accessible to a wider readership and it has been the monographs by Gisela Lebzelter and Colin Holmes, published in the late 1970s, that have dominated consideration of the subject. Although the so-called “new school” of Anglo-Jewish historians and others have written widely on the subject, directly or indirectly, since then, their work has been almost ignored by British historians working on race and immigration and by researchers considering antisemitism at an international level.¹⁶

Holmes and Lebzelter, although their work appeared almost simultaneously, adopted very different approaches. Lebzelter was more directly influenced by a German model, anxious to chart the existence of extremist racist antisemitism in inter-war Britain. Holmes employed a longer time-span, indicating that he wanted to chart a *British* tradition of antisemitism which, while not immune from foreign influences, emerged in essence from a specific stream of domestic anti-alienism. In this sense Holmes was influenced, and had himself shaped, the new work on race and immigration in British history and was not motivated, as Bill Rubinstein suggests, by “an effort to find [the Holocaust’s] echoes elsewhere”. Even so, Holmes, largely because of the vacuum in which he was working, concentrated on readily identifiable antisemitism in Britain. The only major exception was his coverage of anti-alienism at the turn of the century which, as with so many other areas of the Jewish immigrant experience in Britain, was pioneered by Lloyd Gartner. Thus, although for different reasons,

the Present, Oxford, 1992, pp. 6, 8–12.

¹⁶ On the Jewish Historical Society of England, see the essays by Kushner, Cesarani and Katz in Tony Kushner (ed.), *The Jewish Heritage in British History. Englishness and Jewishness*, London 1992, pp. 1–28, 29–41, 60–77 and 78–105; Cecil Roth, *A History of the Jews in England*, Oxford 1941; Colin Holmes, *Anti-Semitism in British Society, 1876–1939*, London 1979; Gisela Lebzelter, *Political Anti-Semitism in England, 1918–1939*, New York 1978.

Holmes, like Lebzelter, highlighted organised and extremist antisemitism, paying no sustained attention to the role of the state or popular attitudes and responses to the Jews. In such work, there is always the danger that antisemitism is connected mainly with its fascist or proto-fascist manifestations. The failure of fascism could then be linked to the alleged alien nature of antisemitism on British soil and the mythology of "Britain alone" fighting a "just war".¹⁷

The possibility, therefore, of comparative work in the area of antisemitism with regard to Britain and Germany is difficult in the extreme, and its very desirability at many levels can be legitimately questioned, especially for the Nazi era. It is significant that my own first work, *The Persistence of Prejudice*, on British antisemitism in the Second World War, has frequently been placed by reviewers and booksellers in Holocaust sections and ignored by those working on the Home Front in Britain. It is thus not surprising that, however much care and attention is taken, the accusation is levelled, for example by Stephen Wilson, that such work on British antisemitism "is in danger of getting things out of perspective". Wilson argues that "this is almost inevitable where one country is taken in isolation" and makes the plea that "we badly need a comprehensive comparative study of antisemitism across Europe".¹⁸ Whatever the merits of this enterprise, it must be suggested that such a work would further enhance the case, by default, of British exceptionalism. Indeed, the danger of comparative work on the Holocaust has been illustrated by the use, as Steve Paulsson has shown, of Denmark's role as rescuer of Jews to tell us not so much about the nature of Danish society but about the failure of others, most notably the Poles, to save "their" Jews. Helen Fein's failure to find a direct statistical correlation between the strength of antisemitism in a

¹⁷ W.D. Rubinstein, *A History of the Jews in the English-Speaking World. Great Britain*, Basingstoke 1996, p. 30. In 1982 Holmes was one of the founder editors of the journal *Immigrants & Minorities* and he continues to edit it. In his *Anti-Semitism in British Society*, p. vii, Holmes states "This book developed out of my interest in Jewish immigration in Britain, with which I began to occupy myself in the late 1960s". Lloyd Gartner, *The Jewish Immigrant in England, 1870-1914*, London 1960, *passim*. Gartner was also instrumental in one of the first detailed studies of anti-alienism: Bernard Gainer, *The Alien Invasion. The Origins of the Aliens Act of 1905*, London 1972; Tony Kushner, "'Wrong War Mate'. Fifty Years After the Holocaust and the Second World War", in *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 29, Nos. 2 and 3 (1995), pp. 3-13, on British war mythology.

¹⁸ Tony Kushner, *The Persistence of Prejudice. Antisemitism in Britain During the Second World War*, Manchester 1989; Stephen Wilson, 'Jewish Question', in *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 2nd June 1989.

country and the fate of “its” Jews during the war illustrates the impossibility of measuring antisemitism in a “scientific” manner.¹⁹

Comparative history is not about saying things are necessarily the same. But we need to be aware of the dangers of comparison when we only learn to dismiss the significance of the less blatant example. In this sense, historians of British antisemitism, on the surface, have got everything to lose by the comparative model. Bill Rubinstein has said of the younger school of Anglo-Jewish scholars that it

“seems to be engaged in a kind of Dutch auction to determine who can discover the most insidious examples of British antisemitism, reminiscent of the Four Yorkshiremen in the famous Monty Python skit who outdo one another to depict the exaggerated horrors of their youth.”

With regard to my own work, Max Beloff has written that “like those who find Jews behind the arras in all situations, Dr Kushner finds antisemitism”. On the other hand, the leading British historian David Cannadine has complained that the work is “so precise in [its] focus, so balanced in [its] judgments and so even-handed in [its] conclusions as to be positively soporific in [its] moderation and reasonableness”.²⁰

The real dilemma for the Anglo-Jewish specialist remains that the comparative goal called for by Stephen Wilson will tend to raise the question put by Rubinstein of “why Jewish life [in Britain] has been relatively undisturbed and tranquil and why antisemitism almost always comes to nothing”. This rests on two flawed assumptions: first, that Jews in Britain have felt undisturbed and tranquil, and second, that murderous antisemitism is in fact the norm not only in the manifestation of hostility to Jews (why else should one explain its absence?) but in general responses to the Jews throughout history.²¹

What follows in the remainder of this essay, is not, however, a desire to strip away mythologies to reveal the “real” picture of Britain or Germany. Instead, it re-evaluates the study of antisemitism utilising a multi- and in-

¹⁹ Gunnar S. Paulsson, ‘The Bridge over the Oresund. The Historiography on the Expulsion of the Jews from Nazi-Occupied Denmark’, in *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 30, No. 3 (July 1995), pp. 431–464; Helen Fein, *Accounting for Genocide: National Responses and Jewish Victimization during the Holocaust*, New York 1979, chapter 2: ‘The Calculus of Genocide’.

²⁰ Rubinstein, p. 32; Max Beloff, ‘Anglo-Jewry Revisited’, in *Jewish Journal of Sociology*, vol. XXXIII, No. 1 (June 1991), p. 37; David Cannadine, ‘Cousinhood’, in *London Review of Books*, 27th July 1989.

²¹ Rubinstein, p. 33.

ter-disciplinary approach that stresses the importance of subjectivity in “ordinary people’s” attitudes towards Jews and in “ordinary Jews” experience of antisemitism. On both sides of the equation, comparative approaches are not academic exercises but part of everyday history. In its founding documents of 1937, the social-anthropological organisation Mass Observation listed antisemitism as one of the subjects, along with study of the aspidistra cult, armpits and bathroom behaviour, that it wanted to investigate amongst the “tribes” of Britain. The founders were influenced by the growth of psychology and surrealism, as well as anthropology, sociology and social investigation. Their work on antisemitism, like many of their ambitious projects, remained incomplete, but their emphasis on the importance of life-stories and the significance of the irrational in day-to-day activities provide a model that has only rarely been adopted in later studies of prejudice and racism. It is perhaps no accident that one of the few scholars to do real justice to the importance of the irrational in history, Norman Cohn, was himself a Mass Observer, working on the organisation’s antisemitism project before the war.²²

Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson have chastised historians, even of the “new”, more inclusive type, for their obsession with searching for “reality”, whereas for anthropologists “taking the supernatural seriously is a fundamental precept of their discipline”. Oral history and personal testimony, they argue, have the potential not only to provide voices to previously excluded underprivileged minorities, but also have “a new and much broader potential. As soon as we recognize the value of the subjective in individual testimonies, we challenge the accepted categories of history. We reintroduce the emotionality, the fears and fantasies carried by the metaphors of memory, which historians have been so anxious to write out of their formal accounts”. They add that “at the same time the individuality of each life story ceases to be an awkward impediment to generalization, and becomes instead a vital document of the construction of consciousness, emphasizing both the variety of experience in any social group, and also how each individual story draws on a common culture, a

²² Charles Madge and Tom Harrison, *Mass-Observation*, London 1937, p. 59; *New Statesman*, 30 January 1937 and more generally Tony Kushner, ‘Observing the “Other”’: Mass-Observation and “Race”, in *Mass-Observation Archive Occasional Paper No. 2* (1995). For Cohn’s involvement, see Mass-Observation Archive: FR2515; Norman Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide*, London 1967, and Anthony Storr in *Independent on Sunday*, 14th November 1993, for an assessment of his work.

defiance of the rigid categorization of private and public, just as of memory and reality".²³

In the study of antisemitism, some of the most successful and penetrating recent work has been in the broadly-defined field of cultural studies. In particular, scholars have explored how identities have been constructed at specific times and specific places in relation to notions of the "Jew" as "other". It needs to be remembered that in this century everyday reality could encompass, as routine, mass murder carried out in anything but sanitised circumstances, as Daniel Goldhagen and Christopher Browning have shown in their very different treatments of Police Battalion 101. Much of the everyday has been far less murderous but, as Dietz Bering brilliantly illustrates in his study of *The Stigma of Names*, can still be massively important in the daily lives of Jews.²⁴

It is to the everyday and to the analysis of antisemitism as cultural code, practical problem and lived experience, that I want to try to open up the possibilities of comparison. To return to a point made at the start of this essay, in terms of lived experience, historians have generally avoided any serious consideration of the impact on ordinary Jews. It is ironic, for example, that enormous attention has been given in print and in discussion to the different interpretations offered by Christopher Browning and Daniel Goldhagen about the motives of the men of Police Battalion 101, espe-

²³ Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson, 'Introduction', in *idem* (eds.), *The Myths We Live By*, pp. 1,2. For a crude dismissal of the importance of oral and written testimony, and a remarkable inability to understand the importance of mythology, see Dorothy Stein, 'Contemporary Attempts to Define Anti-Semitism', in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 36 (1994), pp. 406-409.

²⁴ For the use of social history and cultural studies in the study of antisemitism and relations between Jews and non-Jews, see Shulamit Volkov, 'Antisemitism as Cultural Code. Reflections on the History and Historiography of Austria and Imperial Germany', in *Year Book XXIII of the Leo Baeck Institute*, London 1978, pp. 25-46; Mary Nolan, 'The *Historikerstreit* and Social History', in Baldwin (ed.), pp. 224-248, esp. p. 225; Bryan Cheyette, *Constructions of "the Jew" in English Literature and Society: Racial Representations, 1875-1945* Cambridge 1993, and many of the essays in Sander Gilman and Steven Katz (eds.), *Anti-Semitism in Times of Crisis*, New York 1991. On the importance of everyday relations, see Till van Rahden, 'Mingling, Marrying and Distancing. Jewish Integration in Wilhelminian Breslau and its Erosion in Early Weimar Germany', in Wolfgang Benz, Arnold Paucker and Peter Pulzer (eds.), *Jüdisches Leben in der Weimarer Republik/Jews in Weimar Germany*, Tübingen 1998 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 57, pp. 193-217, and the essays by Jonathan Sarna and David Gerber in Gerber, *Anti-Semitism in American History*; Goldhagen; Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men. Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*, New York 1993; Dietz Bering, *The Stigma of Names. Antisemitism in German Daily Life, 1812-1933*, Cambridge 1992.

cially with regard to their shooting of over 1,000 Jews in the village of Josefow. On the morning of the killings, Goldhagen reports,

“They had just heard from their commander that he was willing to excuse those who wanted to demur. Instead of accepting his offer, they chose to walk into a hospital, a house of healing, and to shoot the sick, who must have been cowering, begging, and screaming for mercy. They killed babies ... In all probability, a killer either shot a baby in its mother’s arms ... Perhaps the mother looked on in horror. The tiny corpse was then dropped like so much trash and left to rot”.

Browning does not indulge in such speculation and limits his prose to consideration of the testimony provided by the men at their trials in the 1960s. His approach, following his mentor Raul Hilberg, is measured and factual, but the impact is shocking nonetheless. Yet in all the discussion of the Browning–Goldhagen argument, no consideration has been given to the fact that neither author has researched other sources, particularly those from the surviving Jews of the village or the Polish bystanders. Goldhagen’s violent language becomes all the more obscene if this is taken into account.²⁵

Studies of racism that ignore the evidence of the victims may be easier to write, but they can hardly do justice to their subject matter. Inevitably, adding the experience of Jews creates further layers of complexity, but this is essential with a phenomenon such as antisemitism, which affects each individual uniquely as well as being part of global, national and local patterns that are marked much more by ambivalence, inconsistency and confusion than by undiluted and unwavering hatred. Humbert Wolfe, having listed, not without a good deal of irony, the achievements and honours achieved by British Jews, returns in his autobiography to the problems of living in a country mythically free of prejudice, in contrast to one in which the Jews were blatantly and violently attacked:

“A sense of desperate comradeship against overwhelming odds might well fire the blood and exalt the head. But it is a very different thing to be one of a minority not openly attacked but by a thousand signs, and by ways not always conscious, edged on the side, excluded, different. This form of almost automatic anti-Semitism is the most destructive of spiritual integrity ... The fact that the easy-going and good-humoured English couldn’t be bothered to carry the thing to extremes, made it all the more difficult. In the crowded Ghetto at Cracow the Jews in their kaftans and wearing their phylacteries might be drawn together in proud resistance to oppression as they waited for the tram-

²⁵ Goldhagen, pp. 215–216.; Browning, chapters 7 and 8. See also the debate in *German History*, vol. 15, No. 1 (1997), pp. 80–91 and vol. 15, No. 2 (1997), pp. 240–250.

pling feet and the hoarse cries that heralded the Pogrom ... But when the taint of Jewry means only exclusion from garden parties, refusal of certain cherished intimacies and occasional light-hearted sneers, it is difficult to maintain an attitude of racial pride."²⁶

In his autobiography, the poet and civil servant describes the childhood of Berto Wolff of 4 Mount Road, Bradford, and relates that "I am as strange in his small company as I would be if I tried to remember the inner life of Wyatt or Surrey". Such distancing and critical self-awareness is rare in autobiography: Wolfe's account of the paralysing impact of his Jewish origins is therefore unusual.²⁷ In other life histories of British Jews, the reader has to be aware of the importance of silences, the frequent avoidance of discussion of antisemitism or the dismissal of its importance in one or two sentences. In this respect, Bill Rubinstein's extensive use of autobiography and biography to prove the essential absence of hostility to Jews in British culture and society is immensely problematic, as is his failure to understand the repeated and almost obsessive praise of the alleged decency, toleration and fairness of Britain—eulogies that are anything but natural in such genres.²⁸

For refugees from Nazism, labelled by Marion Berghahn as "continental Britons", the search for "home" necessitated constant comparisons with the country they had been forced to flee. To them, the comparative approach was not an academic luxury, but an ongoing question of multi-layered identity, as articulated in the monthly journal of the Association of Jewish Refugees in Great Britain. Their accounts provide one of the richest sources for the study of antisemitism as lived experience, providing a context that melds local, national and international perspectives. Not surprisingly, there is no definitive model of antisemitism that emerges from the refugees' analysis, nor was their interpretation in any way static. Age, politics and gender, as well as the length of time in the country of refuge, shaped perceptions.²⁹

²⁶ Jehuda Reinharz (ed.), *Living With Antisemitism. Modern Jewish Responses*, Hanover 1987, is the only major study of the impact of antisemitism on the Jews and is very much a study of elite responses. Wolfe, pp. 125–126.

²⁷ Wolfe, p. 3. On the nature and construction of autobiography, see Liz Stanley, *The Auto/biographical I. The Theory and Practice of Feminist Auto/biography*, Manchester 1992.

²⁸ Rubinstein, pp. 34, 257, 288–290. For a more subtle use of autobiography, see Todd Endelman, *Radical Assimilation in English Jewish History, 1656–1945*, Bloomington, 1990, chapter 6.

²⁹ Marion Berghahn, *Continental Britons. German-Jewish Refugees from Nazi Germany*, Oxford 1988.

At one level, some of the comparisons made by refugees between Britain and Germany could be crude. A sense of gratitude, whatever the antipathy faced, generally reveals the marginality and lack of assertiveness articulated by many newcomers to Britain: "After all, have we not been spared torture and murder? The concentration camps set the standard by which we, the survivors, should measure our frustrations to the end of our life." Indeed, from the perspective of the 1990s or even the 1960s, it would seem unlikely that anything connected with the Association of Jewish Refugees would do anything other than confirm the British exceptionalism model. The organisation's successful "Thank You Britain Fund" remains perhaps the most open expression of ethnic minority gratitude. Today it has great hesitation in publishing or referring to anything that might seem to undermine this sense of obligation to the British nation. In the immediate post-war years, however, such an attitude, while not absent, was less frequent: "None of us will ever forget what a letter in a small envelope with a British stamp meant for a Jewish family in those days of utmost anxiety [after *Kristallnacht*]."³⁰

Shock and the massive sense of loss and mourning after the destruction provided one parameter which limited praise. Another was the clear bureaucratic intolerance and hypocrisy of the British state after the war. It was, on the one hand, slow and mean when it came to matters relating to the legal status of refugees from Nazism in Britain and their few scattered surviving relatives trying to enter the country. On the other hand, it allowed hundreds, if not thousands, involved with war crimes the right of free entry. If the British state had shown some compassion in the late 1930s, humanitarianism was now in short supply and the clear bias in the years 1945–1950 against *Jewish* displaced persons could not be ignored by those whose family and friendship networks had been destroyed or dispersed across Europe. First, then, there was an awareness of how, even at an official level, discrimination against Jews in Britain, as aliens, could take place. The critique was balanced: nowhere was there a belief that antisemitism against all Jews would become state policy or even part of the programme of any major political party. Yet the very sincere gratitude for the asylum granted in the 1930s did not alter the experience of relatives denied entry or those facing the insurmountable bureaucratic obstacles imposed by the British state, at home and abroad, in the 1940s. Past expe-

³⁰ Hildegard Forres, 'The Limits of Integration', in *AJR Information*, December 1960. For the "Thank You Britain Fund", see *AJR Information*, September 1964– December 1965; Diarist, 'Ten Years Ago', in *AJR Information*, November, 1948.

rience also emphasised the dangers of taking on trust the benign intentions of any state apparatus for all time. Yet there was also a resistance to labelling Germany and German culture, to which the refugees and Displaced Persons were still, to a varied extent, attached in a complex way, as fundamentally antisemitic. In 1945 and 1946, a group of young Holocaust survivors, almost all Eastern European Jews, were brought to Britain to recuperate. They were looked after mainly by those who had escaped Nazism before the war. The memoirs of one of these survivors, a Polish Jew, Perce Zylberberg, formerly from Lodz, reveals the complexity of identity and sense of belonging among the German Jews in Britain. In addition, Zylberberg's testimony emphasises, as Nancy Green suggests, how immigrants and others "become comparativists by force of circumstance":

"It became clear ... that there was a deeply ingrained sentiment [among] the German refugees for their former land and for some of their neighbours, who showed them sympathy before they left their country. For us, it was strange behaviour. Didn't those Jews know what befell us? That sort of question came up often when we talked about our immediate past experiences."³¹

The second area highlighted, but never overstressed, by the refugees was organised antisemitism in Britain. It was essentially refugees such as Caesar Aronsfeld, Louis Bondy, Robert Weltsch and Alfred Wiener himself who carried out the research linked with the Wiener Library (its *Bulletin* began in 1949) which, *inter alia*, began the historical study of Fascism in Britain. But again there was balance and perspective. As an article in *AJR Information* at the start of 1948 put it in relation to the question "Can it Happen Here?", the answer was firmly "No". The writer argued that, although there were superficial similarities between post-war Britain and post-1918 Germany, political antisemitism was not respectable in Britain. The Nazi years pointed out the need to monitor and analyse politicised racism but not to let it become more of an imagined menace than it really posed. More impressive in terms of breaking with the myth of difference was Caesar Aronsfeld's pioneering historical work on antisemitism as riot in modern British history. Group violence such as that in Tredegar, South Wales in 1911 and Leeds and East London in 1917 had

³¹ *AJR Information*: 'Disquieting Signs', July 1946; 'Distressed Relatives Scheme', December 1946; 'A Mirror of Our Times', January 1947; 'Naturalization', June 1947; 'Distressed Relatives', July 1948; 'International Refugee Organisation', October 1948; December 1949; January 1951. Green, p. 16; Perce Zylberberg, unpublished memoirs, vol. 9, p. 26.

been collectively forgotten by Anglo-Jewry. Aronsfeld provided a missing context and tradition within which to fit the riots of August 1947 which occurred in many northern British towns and which stunned Jews and non-Jews alike. His work was ignored and, significantly, these riots, not without some effort, were also subject to Anglo-Jewish and general amnesia.³²

Ultimately, however, the most nuanced observations of the refugees concerned non-organised and non-violent antisemitism in Britain. Herbert Friedenthal, analysing the subject in 1947, believed that Fascist-style activities were being carried out on the outer fringes of public life. He went further and stated that there was no discrimination against Jews but that there was “a subtle distinction between Jews and Gentiles”:

“Here, indeed, lies the crux of antisemitism among the British people: they have bestowed equality upon the Jews, they have equipped them with privileges but they do not expect them to take this for granted like other subjects of the King do. Not in a few Jew-baiter associations and Fascist journals lies the danger of antisemitism in Britain but in that unmistakable differentiation between Jewish citizens and British citizens.”³³

From such an analysis, while some refugees urged integration into British society in order to avoid aggravating domestic antisemitism, others were far more critical of such an approach, aware of the flawed logic and equivocal model provided by German Jewry. This was particularly the case for the second generation. To quote one:

“Many of us feel if not for our parents we could now have jettisoned all our ‘foreign’ ways and could ‘pass’ as English Jews or just as plain English. As soon as we state the case to ourselves in these blunt terms we realise that however much some of us may have wished to ‘be’ English, few of us would wish to ‘pass’ as something which for historical reasons we cannot be.”

This sense of marginality and ambiguity in relation to the dominant, liberal English culture was felt acutely by the refugees from Nazism and

³² Jewish Central Information Office [Caesar Aronsfeld], ‘Organized Antisemitism in Great Britain, 1942–46’; unpublished report, Wiener Library; Louis Bondy, *Racketeers of Hatred*, London 1946. On the impact of the Wiener Library, see Ben Barkow, *Alfred Wiener and the Making of the Holocaust Library*, London 1997, chapter 8; G. Warburg, ‘Can It Happen Here?’, in *AJR Information*, January 1948; Caesar Aronsfeld in *Zionist Review*, 15th August 1947 and *idem*, ‘Anti-Jewish Outbreaks in Modern Britain’, in *Gates of Zion*, vol. 6, No. 2 (July 1952), pp. 15–18, 21; Tony Kushner, ‘Anti-Semitism and Austerity.: The August 1947 Riots in Britain’, in Panikos Panayi (ed.), *Racial Violence in Britain in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, London 1996, pp. 150–170.

³³ Herbert Friedenthal, ‘Antisemitism in Britain’, in *AJR Information*, May 1947.

their children. As Werner Rosenstock, the leading light in the AJR for much of the post-war period, put it, naturalisation might eventually be achieved but the issue of acceptance, of feeling at home, would be ongoing:

“Some of us may have been asked during the summer vacations by their fellow guests “Where do you come from?”; they will also have experienced that the answer “from London” was not quite what the enquirer wanted to know.”³⁴

Jewish refugees from Nazism were aware of the similarities and differences of Jewish integration in their past and adopted homes. They had witnessed catastrophic change in Germany and more subtle shifts in British society and culture that made possible a unique but incisive analysis of living with antisemitisms. Dietz Bering has stressed the importance of names at the everyday level in the acceptance and rejection of German Jews in the period 1812–1933. After that date the Nazis attempted to clarify all ambiguities by providing standard Jewish names as part of their process of isolating the Jews and thereby distorted the reality of the “centuries-old intertwining of Jewish and German-European history”. It is a testament to the astuteness of, and an indication of the pressures operating on, Jewish refugees in Britain that within ten years of arrival they realised that it might “overdo the expression of gratitude to their new country if they adopt names like Eden or Kipling”.³⁵ Here was a comparative model without league tables but with valuable and lasting insights. Their analysis acts as a bridge between the gulf separating the myths of English and German exceptionalism but it is also one through which the importance of those myths in everyday life can be acknowledged, for all their contradictions and complexities. In this respect, it is fitting to conclude with the testimony of a Manchester Jew, Sidney Hamburger, fifty years after the antisemitic riots which occurred in the city during that most tense of years for British Jewry, 1947:

“[W]hen we saw the broken windows, when we saw the glass in the streets, when we saw mob rule, when we saw the goods lying about waiting to be looted, [then] our thoughts automatically turned back to Kristallnacht of Germany, when the Nazis under Hitler’s control, had done exactly the same thing in the main cities of Germany, where shops were boycotted, where people were assaulted in the streets. Everybody will under-

³⁴ Kenneth Ambrose, ‘The Second Generation’, in *AJR Information*, February 1949; Werner Rosenstock, ‘Looking Ahead’, in *AJR Information*, October 1949.

³⁵ Bering, p. 143; *AJR Information*, March 1949.

stand that when you have a mob running riot there is no control over what they are going to do or even what the motivation is that sparked them off. As a parent I cannot deny that I was very frightened about the future, because I had seen what had happened in Germany and I thought that this would have been eradicated from the minds of all decent people. So when I saw it on my own doorstep, and here was I, recently married, two young children, I must confess that although I was frightened, I had enough faith in the good common sense of the British public not to fear that I was going to be ending up in a gas chamber or that my children, God forbid, violently assaulted.”

Here, myth and counter-myth, and a perspective that is both highly localised and domestic but is also fundamentally comparative and international in scope, combine to explain a phenomenon that has too often been studied through the modern historian’s obsessive pursuit of objectivity, unnecessarily limited to one time and to one place.³⁶

³⁶ Hamburger on ‘On This Day’, Radio 4, 4th August 1997, and message to a meeting at Menorah Synagogue, Cheshire, 3rd August 1997.

TILL VAN RAHDEN

In Defence of Differences: A Comment on Tony Kushner

Tony Kushner's argument that conventional comparisons of British and German antisemitism are futile at best and exercises in "polarised myth-making" at worst is carefully developed. He criticises members of the historical profession for their "obsessive pursuit of objectivity", and takes them to task for making "crude assumptions" about the comparative significance of antisemitism in European countries. British historians especially, he laments, remain within the interpretative straitjacket of Whig history and therefore fail to adopt a critical view of Anglo-American history.

Kushner avoids the omniscient style and self-confident tone so often found in works of comparative history. Instead, he urges historians to study the microphysics of antisemitism by adopting an "approach that stresses the importance of subjectivity in 'ordinary people's' attitudes towards Jews and in 'ordinary Jews' experience of antisemitism". Rather than writing an *Alltagsgeschichte* of antisemites, Kushner is interested in how Jews experienced and perceived antisemitism in everyday life. He arrives at an innovative comparative history of German and British antisemitism by looking at how German-Jewish refugees experienced antisemitic exclusion in Britain and how they compared it to their experiences in pre-Nazi and Nazi Germany. According to Kushner, professional historians should document the testimonies of the victims who personally experienced German and British antisemitism, rather than creating a comparative master-narrative of antisemitism in Britain and Germany. It is in the voices of victims that we find "a comparative model ... with valuable and lasting insights".

Although I agree with much of what Kushner says, such as his call for a history of antisemitism in everyday life and the importance of seeing antisemitism from the Jewish perspective, I remain less than convinced in three respects. The first concerns his assessment of the historiography, the

second his political agenda, and the third the substance of his critique of conventional comparative history.

First, Kushner subscribes to a lachrymose conception of the historiography on modern antisemitism. While the study of antisemitism was certainly in “its infancy” in the late 1940s, numerous monographs on German, French, American and British antisemitism have since appeared, written by such prominent historians as Michael Marrus, Peter Pulzer, Reinhard Rürup and Shulamit Volkov. Although historians of modern antisemitism have often focused on questions of continuity, insightful comparisons exist of antisemitism in Germany on the one hand, and antisemitism in France, Poland, Russia and even Britain on the other. Geoffrey Field’s historiographical essay ‘Anti-Semitism with the Boots Off’ is hardly based on “crude assumptions” or a naïve Whig interpretation of British history, but is rather a carefully argued and well-balanced comparison of German and British antisemitism with which Werner Rosenstock, Sidney Hamburger or Tony Kushner would probably agree.

Second, although one may share Kushner’s concern that a comparison of Britain and Germany may lead to a rosy picture of Jewish-Gentile relations in Britain, his scepticism about conventional comparison unnecessarily limits his vision of comparative history. For Kushner, the study of British antisemitism is intrinsically linked to a critique of a complacent view of British history. His perspective is legitimate, in that it highlights the limits of British liberalism, especially its reluctance to embrace a pluralist vision of modern society. Comparing British with German antisemitism, in turn, would potentially limit Kushner’s ability to assume the role of moral critic. In contrast to German antisemitism, what is striking about British antisemitism is its relative insignificance. Much like Geoff Eley and other young left-wing British historians of the 1970s who were surprised to find German historians praising British history as a model whereas he and his colleagues regarded it as open to severe criticism, Kushner concludes that “historians of British antisemitism ... have got everything to lose by the comparative model”. Although I share Kushner’s political concern about a comparative approach which reinforces complacent notions of exceptionalism, I think there are ways in which British historians can compare British and German antisemitism without undermining their role as moral critics.

One aspect that comes to mind is the complicated relationship between antisemitism, liberalism and cultural diversity. Recent debates about multicultural liberalism have brought our attention to tensions within the liberal tradition—and here I see interesting parallels between the work of

Dagmar Herzog in Germany and David Feldman in Britain. Although liberals did support individual rights and tolerance, they also subscribed to a vision of a homogeneous, Christian nation-state. Their unwillingness to accept cultural pluralism, to include a right to be different in the liberal canon of individual rights, came to be the Achilles heel of liberalism with regard to antisemitism. It is this contradiction which explains why liberals revealed some ambivalence or sympathy towards antisemitism and were willing to place Jews outside the "Circle of the 'We'" (David Hollinger). At least in this respect I see as many parallels as differences between British and German history. It would be interesting to use the issue of Jewish emancipation and antisemitism to write a comparative history of the way in which British and German liberals have dealt with the question of difference. Although recent research indicates that liberals in both societies failed to embrace a self-conscious vision of cultural pluralism, we still know little about how liberal governments responded to specifically Jewish demands—at the state, regional or municipal level. In the last case, the picture may be less bleak in Britain and Germany, with some cities responding positively to Jewish claims for meaningful equality, pragmatically accepting diversity.

Third, and finally, I would defend a comparative perspective which includes the experiences and insights of Jews, as well as the macro- and microphysics of antisemitism. The historian's narrative and contemporaries' voices are not mutually exclusive. Claiming scholarly authority does not necessarily lead to an obsessive quest for objectivity. Part of the historian's craft is to participate actively in a dialogue with individual voices from, and experiences of, the past. At its best, this is a dialogue in which the historian's subjectivity and analytical rigour, as well as the subjectivity and alterity of the past, come into play. Moreover, it is unclear why historians of antisemitism should abandon an analysis of micro- or macro-structural context once the victims' voices are taken into account. In his fascinating testimony, Sidney Hamburger argues that British antisemitism was less dangerous than its German counterpart and he attributes the comparative insignificance of British Jew-hatred to the "good common sense of the British public". Yet "good common sense", or lack of it, surely falls into the category of "polarised myth-making" that Kushner hopes to avoid. I therefore wonder whether historians should not seek more complex explanations for the divergent paths of British and German antisemitism.

In sum, it is worth pursuing the comparative history of modern European antisemitism as part of the quest for "a deep structural explanation for the origins of Nazism" which, as Geoff Eley has recently argued, is

“more explicit, more specifically organized around manageable bi- or transnational questions, more securely grounded in the current historiographical contexts of the other countries”,¹ and which avoids the pitfalls of the *Sonderweg* concept, stopping short of a teleology of German exceptionalism. Both the advocates and the critics of the *Sonderweg* concept addressed a broad array of institutional and structural characteristics of modern German society: a failed bourgeois revolution, a hierarchical society, a pre-industrial, authoritarian value-system, and a rejection of democratic politics. The debate is therefore very different to the “from-Luther-to-Hitler” readings of the immediate post-Holocaust era recently rehashed by Paul Lawrence Rose and Daniel J. Goldhagen. Looking back at the *Sonderweg* debate, one is struck by the fact that both the Bielefeld school and its critics have ignored antisemitism in their discussion of German peculiarities. If the Holocaust is the central event in modern German history, and if antisemitism remained a crucial factor at almost every turn of “the twisted road to Auschwitz”, then a comparative history of antisemitism that includes a comparison of British and German antisemitism remains a worthy enterprise.

Within this admittedly emotionally charged undertaking at least four questions would be central. First, what is the relationship between nationalism and antisemitism, especially in times of national crisis? Second, in the long run, how did the fact that Jewish emancipation in Germany followed a tortuous path, rather than a straight line as in Britain or France, affect Jewish integration and the course of antisemitism? Third, what was the relationship between private anti-Jewish sentiments (prevalent in Britain and the United States as well as in Germany, and resulting mainly in the exclusion of Jews from various social institutions) and ideologically-charged antisemitism in the political sphere; and what were the institutional checks that kept British antisemitism from translating into political practice? Fourth, what was the relationship between antisemitism and the increasing brutalisation of German politics in the Weimar era, when the country was swept by a wave of antisemitic violence of a very different quality from the isolated incidents which occurred in Imperial Germany (which resembled the few cases of anti-Jewish violence in British history)? Although these questions shift the focus from the history of British to that of German antisemitism, pursuing them need not lead to “crude assumptions”. In comparing British and German antisemitism from the per-

¹ Geoff Eley, ‘Introduction I’, in *idem* (ed.), *Society, Culture and the State in Germany, 1870-1930*, Ann Arbor 1998, pp. 4, 41.

spective of British history, as well as that of German, Jewish, European, and indeed world history, there is as much to learn from analysing the comparative weakness of British or American antisemitism as from focusing on its strengths. Once comparative approaches to the history of modern antisemitism abandon simplistic dichotomies between a liberal Western and an illiberal German tradition, space is left for a stimulating exploration of the ambivalences within the liberal tradition, especially the tensions between difference and equality, universalism and particularism. Such a comparative approach to “Germany’s uniquely horrific, horrifically unique history in the twentieth century” (Atina Grossmann) does not preclude or distort comparisons.

LLOYD P. GARTNER

East European Jewish Migration: Germany and Britain

The greatest migratory movement in the history of the Jewish people was the emigration from Eastern Europe between 1881 and 1914. Its pre-eminence is shown not only in absolute numbers but also in the ratio of emigrants to the Jewish population of the lands which they left. Over 2% of the Jews of Tsarist Russia left the country each year, more than balancing the abundant natural increase. This emigration was not the result of expulsion but a voluntary movement. It is true that there were local expulsions from time to time, such as that from Moscow in 1890, which compelled their victims to find alternative domiciles. Otherwise, the Jews, whatever their reasons, left Russia and Galicia of their own volition. Any compulsion lay in the conditions which impelled them to go. To present the reasons why Jews left Eastern Europe practically invites a history of the Jews in those countries. Long subject to the Tsarist regime's oppressive and restrictive laws, only the growing but still small Jewish middle class derived benefit from the era of reform in the decade after 1855. However, a different era opened with the events of 1881. The assassination of Tsar Alexander II by revolutionaries brought his son, the harsh autocrat and Jew-hater Alexander III, to the throne. Over 300 large and small pogroms, and new restrictive edicts concerning the Jews, were personally decreed by the Tsar as "temporary laws". The Russian autocracy became a police state and hopes for Jewish emancipation, or even for improved status, had to be set aside.

Besides their degraded political status, the Russian Jews lived under trying demographic conditions. Thanks to a high birth rate and relatively low infant mortality their numbers increased at an astonishing rate. The birth rate within the general population was higher, but its infant mortality was far beyond that of the Jews. There had been about 1.3 million Jews in the Russian empire and Galicia in 1800, and at the close of the nineteenth century over 5.2 million lived in Russia (1897 census) and over 800,000 in Galicia (1900 census). It is not certain why such an increase occurred. It was not because of the medical and sanitary improvements which were

then benefiting Western Europe but which had not yet reached the East. We do not know of any changes in marital habits, but there is evidence that the age at which women married was rising. The rapidly increasing young Jewish population, its median age approximately 19.5 in 1897, was with few exceptions confined to the Pale of Settlement. Except in Russian Poland, the Jewish population was shut out of the new industrial cities and subjected to arbitrary rules and chicaneries. The notorious pogroms played a role in stimulating emigration, especially in the wake of 1881–1882 and during and after the 1905–1906 revolution. However, it is well to recall that Galician Jews emigrated overseas in even greater proportions than from Russia, besides the large number of Jews who moved to western areas of the Habsburg Empire, especially Vienna. Yet the Jews of Habsburg Galicia enjoyed emancipation from 1867, and the government was not hostile. They suffered occasional physical molestation but no pogroms. On the other hand, Galician Jewish poverty was perhaps deeper than that in Russia.

At the peak of Jewish emigration during the decade before the outbreak of war in 1914, the 2.1%–2.8% annual rate of Russian Jewish emigration was three to four times higher than in such lands of heavy emigration as Norway and Sweden; only Ireland's emigration rate was greater than that of Russian Jews.¹ The Russian Jewish emigration virtually equalled the rate of natural increase, so that the Jewish population of the Russian Empire scarcely, if at all, increased after 1900. Unfortunately, there are no reliable population figures for the later years. Of the 47 million Europeans, including Jews, who emigrated from Europe between 1847 and 1914, 22 million entered the United States after 1880. The nineteenth century revolutions in transportation and communication enabled the international movement of masses of people. Conditions of freedom to depart and enter created a veritable *laissez-faire* in human movement and allowed people to emigrate with a minimum of papers. The great majority of Russian Jews left Russia and entered a western country with no official documents and very little money. While Jewish immigration attained mass proportions only after 1881, a significant number of Jews from Eastern Europe had

¹ Figures are presented in Simon Kuznets, 'Immigration of Russian Jews to the United States: Background and Structure,' *Perspectives in American History*, 9 (1975), pp. 49–52 and Table V. For general vital and migration statistics see B.R. Mitchell, *European Historical Statistics 1750–1975*, 2nd rev. edn., New York 1981, pp. 90–158 and United States Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States Colonial Times to 1970. Bicentennial Edition*, 2 vols., Washington DC 1975, vol. I, chapters A and C.

already settled in Germany and Britain before that date.² It is well known that the vast majority of Jewish emigrants, about 80%, headed for the United States, as did emigrants generally. No more than 8% settled in Western Europe, with Germany and Britain their main destinations, a word which must be used somewhat loosely, because few of those who reached Germany or Britain regarded these countries as their final destination. Only a small minority settled there permanently. Most saw these countries rather as stops *en route*, unless they were intending to join relatives already settled in western Europe.

The history of European Jewish emigration is connected to the continent's railroad and maritime history.³ Reaching the main emigration ports of Hamburg, Bremen and Rotterdam from Russia or Galicia required the emigrant to travel by rail through Russia and across Germany. With millions journeying, travel routes acquired considerable economic importance to shippers, who vied in drawing the vast emigrant traffic to their firms' vessels. No shipper is more significant in the history of this movement than Albert Ballin (1857–1918), a Hamburg Jew who made his start in the small family business selling tickets to emigrants and rose to become head of HAPAG, which he built into the world's foremost shipping line. Ballin became a friend and confidant of Wilhelm II, and his and his company's success were favoured by the German government. This allowed HAPAG and other German lines to exert wide influence over emigration through Germany for the purpose of directing it towards German ships. Their owners would have liked monopoly control over emigration from Eastern Europe through Germany and from their ports of Hamburg and Bremen. The German government, eager to advance its country's shipping, might well have granted this, except that to exclude British shipping from German ports risked retaliation at British ports. Clearly, a deal had to be

² Lloyd P. Gartner, *The Jewish Immigrant in England*, 2nd edn., London 1973, pp. 38–41.

³ See Lamar Cecil, *Albert Ballin. Business and Politics in Imperial Germany 1888–1918*, Princeton, NJ 1967, pp. 39–62; Gartner, *The Jewish Immigrant*, pp. 34–37; Francis E. Hyde, *Cunard and the North Atlantic. A History of Shipping and Financial Management*, London 1975, deals with the British side. The texts of the shipping agreements are given in Erich Murken, *Die großen transatlantischen Linienreederei-Verbände*, Jena 1922, pp. 644–648. See also Philip Taylor, *The Distant Magnet. European Emigration to the USA*, New York 1971, pp. 145–166; Walter Nugent, *Crossings. The Great Transatlantic Migrations, 1870–1914*, Bloomington, IN 1992, pp. 32–33, 42–43, 45, 50–51; Sir John Clapham, *An Economic History of Modern Britain. Machines and National Rivalries (1887–1914) with an Epilogue (1914–1929)*, Cambridge 1951, pp. 44, 277, 314–316, on shipping cartels.

reached between German and British shippers, and so there was. Emigrants who crossed from Russia into Germany were obliged to do so at one of eight border stations where a coarse, hectic atmosphere reigned. Travellers did not need a passport but were physically examined and compelled to undergo delousing whether or not they needed it. They had to possess a ticket for a German or British line or buy a German ticket on the spot before they could enter Germany. Emigrants then travelled by rail to the Ruhleben railway terminal near Berlin. There, a Jewish committee met the emigrants and provided them with refreshments, a function later taken over by the *Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden*. The next train took them from Berlin to the port. It is reported that when a sealed train stopped at Hanover *en route* to Rotterdam, local Zionists were permitted to board it with food and drink for the travellers.⁴ At Hamburg, by far the largest port of emigration, Jewish emigrants were required to stay in a compound close to the piers until it was time to board ship. A brass band escorted them to the gangplank. These arrangements from the border to the ship brought some benefit to emigrants, but it is clear that their main purpose was to insulate them as they passed through Germany and, above all, to profit German maritime interests.

The voyage from Germany to Britain usually took three days. If the ship docked at Harwich, passengers were taken by train to Liverpool Street station at the edge of the City of London and the East End. However, ships usually arrived in London itself and emigrants disembarked at a Thameside dock, a short distance from the East End. Representatives of the Poor Jews' Temporary Shelter, identifiable by Yiddish labels on their caps, met them and, with police co-operation, kept away waterfront crooks. The Shelter had existed from 1885 and guided new arrivals to the London addresses they had brought with them, or to railway terminals for trains to provincial destinations. Arriving immigrants could stay at the Shelter for a few days. Also at the dock was an inspector from the Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls and Women, who sought out unaccompanied girls and warned off men recognised as traffickers in prostitution.⁵

⁴ Memoirs of Henriette Hirsch (*née* Hildesheimer) and Sammy Gronemann, in Monika Richarz (ed.), *Jewish Life in Germany. Memoirs from Three Centuries*, Indianapolis 1991, pp. 177, 263–265, an abridged translation of her *Jüdisches Leben in Deutschland*, 3 vols., Stuttgart 1976–1982; the German texts are in vol. III, pp. 83, 407–410. A refugee shelter existed in 1905 at the minor port of Stettin, where work was found for refugees to pay their fare because local funds did not suffice. *Ibid.*, p. 216.

⁵ Lloyd P. Gartner, 'Anglo-Jewry and the Jewish International Traffic in Prostitution, 1885–1914', in *AJS Review*, vols. VII–VIII (1982–1983), esp. pp. 155–159.

The workings of the Anglo-German shipping cartel, known as the North Atlantic Shipping Ring, are apparent from this point.⁶ It fixed steerage fare from a North Sea port direct to North America at £7 15s., of which £2 went into a pool which the shipping companies divided. However, the fare from Hamburg via a British port to North America was only £5 16s. This was a large saving which the companies' ingenuity, whetted by avarice, sought to eliminate. Under cartel rules, the British shippers could sell transatlantic tickets in Britain only to those who had been there at least five weeks. It was presumably reckoned that five weeks was time enough to use up the money to be saved from travelling the cheaper way. To compensate British shippers, mainly Cunard, for this deal, they received most of the money in the pool and the German companies left the Scandinavian emigrant trade to them. In Britain, this cosy arrangement was circumvented by Jewish immigrants in collusion with East End ticket agents, who disregarded the five week rule and apparently changed their passengers' names when selling them tickets prematurely. In addition, the small Beaver Line was not in the cartel, and sold tickets from Britain to America to all comers. The cartel system cracked in 1902 when Beaver sold tickets at a much reduced price. This daring provoked two years of an "Atlantic rate war". It does not appear that the reconstructed cartel operated with its earlier effectiveness.

Britain and Germany thus played central roles in the flow of Jewish emigration, and some of the millions of emigrants stayed on in each country. In 1880 there were no more than 16,000 Eastern European Jews in Germany, the vast majority in Prussia, with small settlements in Saxony and Bavaria. In 1900 there were 35,000, after large-scale expulsions from Prussia during the 1880s. In 1910 the number reached almost 70,000 in a Jewish population of 615,000 among 65 million inhabitants of Germany.⁷ There were more Jewish immigrants in Britain, approximately 120,000 between 1881 and 1914, who, with their progeny, raised its Jewish population in the same period from about 60,000 to 300,000. In 1911, there were almost 41 million inhabitants in Britain, Scotland and Wales where

⁶ Besides literature cited in note 2, see my 'Eastern European Immigrants in England: A Quarter-Century's View', in *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England*, XXIX (1982-1986), pp. 297-309, quoting an important document from the Board of Deputies archives, B2/1/3. See also the illuminating testimony of Thomas Hawkey, a customs inspector, before the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration (hereafter Royal Commission), Cd. 1742, 1903, Min. 820-898, 1311-1569.

⁷ Jack Wertheimer, *Unwelcome Strangers. East European Jews in Imperial Germany*, New York 1987, pp. 78-81; Tables I, II, IV, pp. 186ff.

there had been 25 million in 1871. Eastern European immigrants remade British Jewry, but for German Jews they were only a sizeable and troubling minority.

It was not difficult to become an immigrant in these countries. In Germany one had only to pass the border station. In Britain, after 1890, a person was checked against the ship's passenger list, asked what money he or she had and whether he or she was a transmigrant. The person was classified a transmigrant only if he or she held a transatlantic ticket. As a result, intending transmigrants who did not yet have a ticket, and who constituted the great majority of arrivals, were recorded as immigrants. This obstinately continued blunder of wrongly classifying arrivals who planned to buy their transatlantic tickets in London substantially exaggerated the number of immigrants, adding fuel to the anti-alien fire.⁸ After being classified, the immigrant disembarked and went his or her way without further legal involvement. He or she possessed the civil rights of a Briton until the Aliens Act of 1905 authorised the Home Secretary and judges to deport aliens following conviction and imprisonment for certain offences. The Jewish newcomer in Germany had to obtain a police permit to settle. This was generally granted, but aliens had limited legal rights. The sting lay in the power of the police to expel any immigrant by withdrawing his permit. Expulsion could be ordered against a "troublesome" foreigner or one endangering "security" or "the public interest". Using such catch-all terms any alien could be expelled. There are instances where immigrant Jews who had lived and prospered in Germany for ten or twenty years were expelled without recourse to courts, and woe betide the immigrant who was found to be associated with radical political movements. The 2,500 to 3,000 Eastern European Jewish students at German universities, the large majority of them studying medicine, were a special target of the German police because of their supposed political radicalism.⁹ The unchecked power to expel evidently functioned as a deterrent, inhibiting immigrants from becoming conspicuous or participating in political movements disagreeable to the regime. No threat of expulsion existed in Britain, where

⁸ Lloyd P. Gartner, 'Notes on the Statistics of Jewish Immigration to England, 1870-1914', in *Jewish Social Studies*, vol. XXII, No. 2 (April 1960), pp. 97-102.

⁹ Wertheimer, *Unwelcome Strangers*, pp. 63-71, amplified in *idem*, 'The "Ausländerfrage" at Institutions of Higher Learning—A Controversy over Russian Jewish Students in Imperial Germany', in *Year Book XXVII of the Leo Baeck Institute*, London 1982, pp. 187-215, and 'Between Tsar and Kaiser—The Radicalisation of Russian Jewish University Students in Germany', in *Year Book XXVIII of the Leo Baeck Institute*, London 1983, pp. 329-350.

Jewish immigrant life of untrammelled variety and luxuriance was carried on.

Immigration was under the control of the respective German states,¹⁰ and the closer the states lay to the Russian border the more severe the supervision. While no legal obstacle prevented a Jew expelled from Saxony from resettling in, for example, Westphalia, such migration appears to have been exceptional. Those states which expelled foreign Jews protested to those which subsequently admitted them. Most expelled alien Jews left Germany. Apart from deportation following conviction, expulsion from Britain did not exist under the Aliens Act, but known criminals could be prevented from entering. On the other hand, Russian "criminals" who were actually political offenders were granted asylum. Persons who were considered to be unable to make a living were not admitted, which gave rise to appeals, mainly from Jewish communal sources, on behalf of those excluded.¹¹

For naturalisation, Britain required five years' residence, personal references, personal details, a list of places of residence during the previous five years, and a fee of £5. Jewish immigrants were reported to have an ardent desire for naturalisation, but few of them could afford £5, which was about one month's earnings of a regularly employed, moderately skilled worker. An agent's fee of £2 usually had to be added. Naturalisation societies existed to aid with these expenses: members deposited penny savings regularly and drew out £5 in turn when the fund reached that amount. Despite repeated protests from Jewish sources and widespread public support, this fee was not lowered. After 1905, a requirement was added that an applicant had to "speak, read or write English reasonably well" to be naturalised. Within these limits officials had little discretionary authority, although the language test was often administered orally in a hasty, barely comprehensible fashion. Jewish immigrants constituted a large proportion of aliens naturalised—in London, 126 out of 270 in 1900, 132 out of 250 in 1901, and 220 out of 371 in 1902.¹² The British-born children of aliens were British subjects by birth, while German-born chil-

¹⁰ On this and other aspects of Eastern European Jews in Germany, see Wertheimer, *Unwelcome Strangers*, pp. 9–75 and *passim*.

¹¹ Bernard Gainer, *The Alien Invasion. The Origins of the Aliens Act of 1905*, London 1972, pp. 199–211.

¹² Royal Commission, Min. 17363–17366, 21052–66, 21613–17. In the few lists of immigrants acquiring citizenship which I have seen, few gave East End addresses, a sign of modest prosperity. See David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews. Social Relations and Political Culture 1840–1914*, New Haven–London 1994, pp. 371–372; John A. Garrard, *The English and Immigration, 1880–1910*, Oxford 1971, pp. 125–126.

dren of foreigners were aliens like their parents. There is also a sharp contrast between British naturalisation policy and that of the German states. Granting German citizenship was an administrative decision taken by each state after due deliberation. Prussia had once been relatively liberal, but from 1881 it practically excluded Jews from becoming citizens. Interior Minister Robert von Puttkamer declared them "unwelcome strangers" in the Prussian Diet and issued a directive that "as a rule, the naturalisation of Russian subjects is to be rejected and granted only in exceptional cases".¹³ It appears plausible that many alien Jews refrained from applying because they assumed, with good reason, that their cases would be rejected, and that their applications would only call official attention to themselves and might raise the spectre of expulsion. Citizenship for married women depended on their husband's status. A German woman who married a foreigner lost her citizenship, which she might recover if her husband died. On the other hand, an alien woman who married a German man thereby acquired citizenship. A revision of the German citizenship law allowed states to veto each other's naturalisation applications, a privilege much desired by Prussia. Energetic Jewish lobbying at the time of the law's passage only achieved the right to import synagogue functionaries equally with those of churches. The law took effect in 1914, but the advent of war postponed its application.¹⁴ It may be said that, whereas in Britain the state touched only the outer framework of the approximately 120,000 Jewish immigrants' lives, in Germany state power penetrated deep into the lives of Jewish individuals and whole communities. Moreover, foreigners in Britain learned to speak out when their interests were affected. Thus they joined in the vigorous and successful lobbying against the proposed exclusion of aliens from the benefits of National Insurance in 1911.¹⁵ In German political culture such action by the foreign-born was almost impossible.

The Eastern European Jews in Britain and Germany were almost completely urbanised, although they came mainly from village or semi-rural environments. Ambitious projects for settling immigrant Jews in agriculture, familiar in the United States, Canada, Argentina and Brazil, not to mention Palestine, were not taken up in Western Europe. The European

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 54–60.

¹⁴ Wertheimer, *Unwelcome Strangers*, pp. 43–49 (quotation on p. 45), 59. Jews lobbied unsuccessfully to secure the prohibition of religious discrimination in naturalisation. Jack Wertheimer, 'Jewish Lobbyists and the German Citizenship Law of 1914: A Documentary Account', in *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, 1 (1984), pp. 140–162.

¹⁵ Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews*, pp. 370–378.

countries lacked large tracts of unsettled arable land, their rural society was deeply traditional, and in Germany an agricultural project would have called unwanted attention to the Eastern European Jews. Very few immigrants in Britain settled in small cities. British Jewry's permanent concentration in London was only reinforced by immigration after the failure of attempts at dispersing immigrants to smaller towns. The existing Jewish communities of Manchester, Glasgow, Birmingham and Liverpool were also much enlarged, while Leeds Jewry was built almost entirely from Eastern European immigrants. For Germany, the extensive figures provided by Wertheimer show that in 1910 merely 16.16% of the country's total population lived in thirty-three large cities, but 42.72% of the German Jews lived in them as did 68.65% of alien Jews.¹⁶ The proportions of Eastern European Jews within the Jewish populations of the thirty-three cities were uneven. Thus 64.83% of Leipzig's 9,874 Jews, 52.17% of Dresden's 3,734, and 34.86% of Munich's 11,083 were counted as foreign. Closer to the average were 13.50% for both Frankfurt and Cologne. Alien Jews made up 20.77% of the 90,013 Jews in Berlin in 1910 (excluding its separately enumerated suburban towns). Besides being the capital of Prussia and Germany, Berlin had become the centre of German Jewry and particularly of the Eastern European Jews.¹⁷ However, it did not dominate German Jewry as did New York City, London and Paris in their respective countries.

Every large British city had its immigrant Jewish neighbourhood, as a rule a shabby area just off the urban centre which constituted part of a densely crowded and unsanitary urban zone.¹⁸ These areas attracted close attention from those concerned with slum housing and urban poverty. British politicians and social reformers who studied conditions of health and housing focused above all on the proletarian East End of London, especially Whitechapel, its Jewish area. Conditions of life there were poor. The East End's water supply, provided by private enterprise until 1903, was extremely bad, and housing was far below standard. The area had 8,264 houses in 1871 and only 5,735 in 1901, while its population rose from 75,552 (9.14 per house) to 78,768 (13.74 per house) in the same period.¹⁹ The East End's area of immigrant Jewish settlement continued to

¹⁶ Wertheimer, *Unwelcome Strangers*, Table IIIa, p. 193.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Table IIb, pp. 191–192.

¹⁸ Gartner, *The Jewish Immigrant*, pp. 142–165.

¹⁹ By 1901, however, many houses were actually blocks of flats containing numerous dwellings.

spread until its maximum population was reached around 1910.²⁰ Jewish streets and many Jewish houses were dirty, and the noise from the Jewish quarter was a source of constant friction with Gentile neighbours, who began to leave the area because of incompatibility with the Eastern European Jews and rising rents. Such conditions did not exist in London alone. A report on Leeds to the medical journal *The Lancet* found that its Jewish quarter

“consists of a number of small streets with red brick cottages. The sanitary accommodation is altogether inadequate. In one street, where a great number of tailors live, we found only two closets for seven houses. They were placed back to back in a little passage between two houses ... The houses on this side of the street have no back yards or windows.”²¹

In Germany, Eastern European Jews were dispersed in many cities and they did not generally reside in urban colonies. Only a few Berlin streets, called the *Scheunenviertel*, served as the residential centre of Eastern Europeans, especially recent arrivals. Both in Germany and in Britain the foreignness of the immigrant Jewish quarter aroused curiosity and some fear. A Jewish author described his walk in the *Scheunenviertel* as penetrating “ever deeper into the East of the world.... Is this Berlin? Wearers of caftans and stout women... ragged children with expectant eyes, sneaky men... incomprehensible words”.²² One assimilated, overwrought German-Jewish writer described the *Ostjuden* as “a disaster for us ... they constantly create new barriers, bring in old ghetto air, and are the greatest danger to the prosperity and harmony of the nations”.²³ Such intimations of the dangerous or sinister were rarely heard in Britain, where anti-alien complaints were concrete: they were dirty, debased labour standards, forced tenants and shopkeepers out of their premises when a neighbourhood turned Jewish, and did not respect the British sabbath.²⁴ Evidence

²⁰ *Census of England and Wales, 1901*, Cd. 875, 1902, Table 9; quoted in Gartner, *The Jewish Immigrant*, p. 147.

²¹ Report of *The Lancet* Special Sanitary Commission on the Sweating System in Leeds, *The Lancet*, 9th June 1888, p. 1148.

²² Adolf Grabowsky (1910), quoted in Steven E. Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers. The East European Jew in German and German Jewish Consciousness 1800–1923*, Madison 1982, pp. 44–45. Aschheim synthesises his admirable book in ‘The East European Jew and German Jewish Identity’, in *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, (1984), pp. 3–25.

²³ Quoted in Aschheim, ‘The East European Jew’, p. 13.

²⁴ Dozens of non-Jewish witnesses from local areas testified in these terms to the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration. See also Gartner, pp. 36–59, 74–128.

taken by the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration, an inexhaustible compendium of fact, opinion and prejudice, amply illustrates these views. A leader of the anti-alien British Brothers League declared that

“this is not a question of politics, race or religion...many thousands have come... they settle in different localities and live according to their traditions, usages and customs. We say this is wholly deleterious to the Englishman, as well as a gross injustice and hardship upon us ... This great influx is driving out the native from hearth and home ... Some of us have been born here [in the East End], others have been brought up here, educated here; some of us have old associations ... that we feel it hard to be parted from.”²⁵

The British Brothers League, founded in 1901, led the anti-alien campaign, yet it took care to avoid antisemitism. An aspiring East End politician’s speech at a mass meeting in 1897 provides a characteristic example of anti-alienism overlapping antisemitism without mentioning Jews:

“God has given me a pair of eyes in my head—and as I walk through Mile End or Cable Street, as I walk about your streets, I see names have changed; I see good old names of tradesmen have gone and in their place are foreign names—the names of those who have ousted Englishmen into the cold. (Loud cries of ‘Shame’ and ‘Wipe them out’).”²⁶

A reporter from Germany noticed mild but outright antisemitism in Leeds:

“All the people I have spoken to tell me that they are a law-abiding set, who have never given any trouble, and that they have certainly done a great deal towards the general prosperity of the town. And yet I could not help noticing on all sides a slumbering antisemitic feeling—and not in Leeds alone. I have observed the same thing all over the north. The feeling is not outspoken, sometimes indefinite, sometimes denied, but in spite of all there it is.”²⁷

Eastern European immigrant occupations were noticeably similar in both countries. Jews did not work in factories but in workshops. In Britain, cigar-making and boot and shoe production had once been major Jewish proletarian occupations but faded at the time of the Eastern European influx, evidently because of these trades’ mechanisation and their

²⁵ Royal Commission, Min. 8558.

²⁶ *Pall Mall Gazette*, 3rd November 1897; quoted in Colin Holmes, *Anti-Semitism in British Society 1876–1939*, London 1979, p. 91.

²⁷ *Daily Mail*, 28th June 1909; quoted in Holmes, p. 266, n. 38.

transition from workshops to factories. The dominant workshop occupation, especially for women, was garment-manufacturing. Ready-to-wear clothing was a well-developed German industry before the arrival of Eastern European Jews, and their contribution to it was not significant. They were prominent, however, in the production of speciality items such as handbags, hats and furs. The production of cigarettes was another important immigrant Jewish livelihood. This occupational profile was quite unlike that in Britain, where Jews were among the founders of a ready-to-wear clothing industry which employed thousands of Jewish immigrant men and women. The greatest difference between Germany and Britain lies in the place held by commerce as an occupation. In Britain, with its highly developed commercial network, opportunities for Jews in trade were limited. They might be peddlers and stallholders in street markets, exhausting and seldom lucrative work, or sellers of such goods as the ready-to-wear clothing they had manufactured, or purveyors of meat and groceries to Jewish buyers. Notwithstanding a few famous examples of mercantile success, few Jewish immigrants in Britain rose beyond the level of small shopkeepers. Most Eastern European immigrants in Germany, in contrast, made their living in commerce, selling second-hand and discarded goods and specialising, in different localities, in such items as furs and eggs.²⁸

Another difference between native Jews and immigrants with far-reaching implications lay in high immigrant fertility. Available German evidence, although inadequate, strongly suggests that the Eastern European Jews had more children than the natives and played an important role in strengthening German Jewry demographically.²⁹ We do not possess even these statistics for Britain, and must rely upon impressionistic accounts of "swarms of children" and the like. However, official figures show that

²⁸ Gartner, *The Jewish Immigrant*, pp. 57–99; Wertheimer, *Unwelcome Strangers*, pp. 89–102; Marion A. Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class. Women, Family and Identity in Imperial Germany*, New York 1991, pp. 160–162, 165–166.

²⁹ Wertheimer, *Unwelcome Strangers*, 64–66, 85 and accompanying notes. The statistical data in Heinrich Silbergleit, *Die Bevölkerungs- und Berufsverhältnisse der Juden im deutschen Reich, I: Preussen*, Berlin 1930, shows that in 1925 foreigners constituted 30.8% of Prussia's Jewish population aged 10 to 25, i.e. born before the First World War; Table 24, p. 62. The proportion of foreign Jews in the Jewish population in the same year was 18%.

Jewish immigrants in Britain had a lower infant death rate than their non-Jewish neighbours.³⁰

The size of the Jewish population in London's East End, and the varied Jewish life carried on there and in immigrant quarters throughout Britain, as well as the almost complete freedom of immigration even after the limitations imposed by the Aliens Act of 1905, suggests an appropriate parallel not with Germany but with the United States. In both Britain and the United States, but not in Germany, ambitious and creative immigrant communities reshaped their new countries' existing Jewish communities, whose agendas were dominated by problems of immigration. In authoritarian Germany, however, the Jewish community lacked the will and power to advocate the immigrants' cause. German Jewry was profoundly ambivalent about Eastern European Jews. The main bond between native German Jews and immigrants, even among the Orthodox, was not the venerable traditions they shared but social welfare—improving and elevating, “civilising” the uncouth *Ostjude*. Eastern European immigrants were not numerous enough in Germany to constitute German Jewry's central preoccupation, but in Britain there were too many of them for the Jewish community to disregard. In the British pattern of giving from above, there are numerous instances of patronage of talented young immigrant artists, writers and musicians. British Jews, more secure in their status than German Jews, did not sense any great external pressure to Anglicise their immigrants. Often, personal friendships between natives and immigrants developed. Yet, above all, immigrant acculturation was a deeply desired goal in Britain as well as in Germany.

In terms of legal status, the difference between the Jewish communities in Britain and Germany was basic. The Jewish community in Britain was voluntary and no Jew was required to belong. Indeed, “community” was more a concept than a tangible reality, since the Jewish community was not an organisation. Membership in Jewish organisations, or merely the sense of belonging, was accepted as communal affiliation. The Jewish community carried on its affairs with no need of state approval, much less participation. In Germany, the opposite was the case: Jews were required to belong to a local Jewish community (*Gemeinde*) which possessed the right to levy taxes. The community depended on state authorisation for its existence and the state had to ratify its laws. The election of leaders and

³⁰ Royal Commission, Min. 21742–21746 and Table A (p. 799) for Manchester; Appendix, vol. III, (Cd. 1741–I), Table LXXIV, to Royal Commission; *ibid.*, Min. 3949–3963 and 5785–5795 (East End).

the management of synagogues and institutions were matters overseen by the state. By government ruling, Eastern European Jewish immigrants, although excluded from naturalisation, were regular members of the Jewish communities. Attempts made by native Jews in several places to limit or prevent Jewish immigrant aliens from exercising voting rights in communal elections were in some cases vetoed by state authorities, but they were successfully disenfranchised by several Prussian Jewish communities. Where Jewish immigrants had voting rights, their support was courted, especially by community minorities such as Zionists and the Orthodox.³¹

Jewish immigrants in Britain maintained their own network of organisations, and did not usually join those of the native Jews. It may be said that to a considerable extent they maintained a community of their own, but with many points of contact with the native community. Between the wars the two drew together and merged, but not without quarrels and anger.³² Even in neighbourhoods of second settlement to which immigrants moved when their means allowed them to leave the East End, they retained some flavour of East End immigrant life. Their most distinctive institutions were the congregations they established. Although they were Orthodox, the native synagogues' style of worship, not to mention their sizeable membership fees, made them an improbable presence in immigrant neighbourhoods except for a few "English *shuls*" left over from earlier days.³³ The immigrants insisted on rabbis of their own from Eastern Europe, who were sometimes outstanding Talmudic scholars. British synagogues' ministers in clerical collars were scoffed at, and Chief Rabbi Hermann Adler was an unsympathetic figure, under whose rule the rabbinical structure reserved exclusively for him the title of rabbi, although this began to change early in the twentieth century.³⁴ Besides synagogues, the immigrants established charities and friendly societies of their own. It appears they resorted to the natives' Jewish Board of Guardians mainly when a case was beyond the scope or means of an immigrant society. The internal history of British Jewry in the first half of the twentieth century is

³¹ Jack Wertheimer, 'The Duisburg Affair. A Test Case in the Struggle for "Conquest of the Communities"', in *AJS Review*, 6 (1981), pp. 185–206, esp. p. 188, n. 6.

³² See especially David Cesarani, 'The Transformation of Communal Authority in Anglo-Jewry, 1914–1940,' in *idem* (ed.), *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry*, Oxford 1990, pp. 115–140.

³³ There was, however, the active East London Synagogue, founded in 1877 in the more native fringe of the East End.

³⁴ Gartner, *The Jewish Immigrant*, pp. 191–192, 198, 208; Michael Goulston, 'The Status of the Anglo-Jewish Rabbinate, 1840–1914', in *Jewish Journal of Sociology*, 10 (1968), pp. 55–82.

largely the often stormy process of the immigrants' and natives' accommodation with each other.

Again, in Germany the situation was different. German history did not grant natives and immigrants the time they needed to merge. However, the cultural revival after the First World War owed much, not only to the Weimar atmosphere, but also to the stimulation offered by Eastern European scholars and intellectuals.³⁵ The widely scattered Eastern Europeans had very little group expression; an inconspicuous *shtibl* seems to have been as far as they went. Zionism did not attract many of them and, of course, there was no distinct Jewish labour movement with radical political aims. Wertheimer summarises:

“By its very nature, the German structure of state-mandated religious communities required immigrants to join *Gemeinden* as full and, generally, equal members. In addition, the precariousness and instability of immigrant life in Germany discouraged Eastern Jews from creating viable and assertive communities of their own. All else followed from these two circumstances: without their own institutions, foreign Jews were forced to rely heavily upon *Gemeinde*-run agencies, and German Jews were required by law and political necessity to integrate these newcomers into their institutions.”³⁶

The divergent community structures of German and British Jewry reflect, as I have suggested, the different status of the two communities. German Jewry, like German society generally, accepted the often heavy hand of government. Since Prussia closely regulated its Lutheran state church, the idea of Protestant bureaucrats issuing directives in purely religious Jewish affairs could be understood and accepted. German Jewry felt far less confident of the finality of its emancipation than British Jewry, since the British government took no part in Jewish communal and religious affairs. By 1880 or even earlier, German Jewry had largely acculturated and was anxious to show itself German. The arrival of Eastern European Jews, conspicuously un-German in language, culture and way of life, intimated the dreaded return of the ghetto to Germany. Jews from Eastern Europe were as much targets for antisemites as they were cause for embarrassment for acculturated German Jews. In Aschheim's words,

³⁵ Michael Brenner, *The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany*, New Haven 1996.

³⁶ Wertheimer, *Unwelcome Strangers*, p. 128; Shulamit Volkov, ‘The Dynamics of Dissimilation: *Ostjuden* and German Jews’, in Jehuda Reinharz and Walter Schatzberg (eds.), *The Jewish Response to German Culture: From the Enlightenment to the Second World War*, Hanover, NH 1985, pp. 195–213.

“the Ostjuden played a central role in the genesis, mythology and disposition of pre-World War I German anti-Semitism. The Eastern European Jews were symbolically and legally alien... they made obvious and easy targets. [During the First World War] the *Ostjude*, unlike his German counterpart, was fair game for the expression of increasing anti-Jewish sentiment... But as German Jewry only gradually and fitfully began to learn, the animus against the Eastern Jew was often an implicit, and at times explicit, attack on German Jewry itself.”³⁷

Eastern European aliens in Germany thus provided additional fuel for antisemitic attacks, while in Britain hostility was called anti-alienism and treated, at least on the surface, as an aggravation of the great problem of poverty. Although the state authorities decreed the Eastern European Jews members of the Jewish community, native Jews kept a social distance from them. British Jewry did not for its part want the Eastern European Jews to come, but most of its leaders fought for free immigration and against the bill which became the Aliens Act. Far outnumbered by the newcomers, the native community employed extensive measures to make them properly British. Most of the effort was put into education and social work, and a cadre of Jewish educators and social workers, many of them children or grandchildren of immigrants, took up the task. It was common for younger members of the “best families” to devote time to volunteer work in some East End or provincial Jewish institution.

In summary, competition between British and German steamship lines for Eastern European Jewish emigrant traffic during the great migration influenced patterns of settlement in Britain and Germany. Immigrants who remained in Germany were subject to police supervision and expulsion, while in Britain their civil rights were qualified only by the Aliens Act of 1905, which authorised expulsion for specified offences. In Germany, however, the threat of expulsion, in addition to their diffusion and relatively small numbers, inhibited Jewish immigrants from developing an active community life to compare with that developed in Britain. The government’s unofficial policies put citizenship out of reach of Eastern European Jews in Germany, but naturalisation was governed in Britain by fairly objective criteria, the only obstacle being a sizeable fee. Immigrants formed an urban group engaged mainly in commerce and the workshop production of consumer goods. There was widespread hostility to them both in Britain and in Germany. Eastern European Jewish immigrants in Britain were regarded as a social problem, with a tinge of antisemitism in

³⁷ Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers*, pp. 62, 173; Volkov, ‘Dynamics of Dissimilation’, pp. 195–212.

the background, while in Germany hostility was an aspect of antisemitism. It is true that neither in Britain nor in Germany did the Jewish community welcome Eastern European Jewish immigrants, who nevertheless came to constitute the great majority of British Jewry and a sizeable minority of German Jewry. The degree of the two communities' attention to the newcomers varied with immigrant numbers, but historians of Germany pay special heed to them because of their symbolic importance for the Jews' status and ultimate fate.

TRUDE MAURER

Changing Conditions, Changing Responses: A Long-Term Perspective on Immigrant and Native Jews:
A Comment on Lloyd P. Gartner

In his pioneering study *The Jewish Immigrant in England*, Lloyd P. Gartner concentrated fully on the immigrant population itself. For his new contribution he chooses a different approach, proceeding from the organisation of transport to state policy, complaints about immigration, relations between native and immigrant Jews and the framework of their encounter, and finally the institutions set up by the immigrants themselves. Thus he offers a very clear and systematic comparative presentation of the situation in Germany and Britain. But by referring (though only in passing) to the authoritarian state, he himself suggests a perspective from which a somewhat different view can be obtained. For with the overthrow of the monarchy and the establishment of the Weimar Republic in 1918, the guiding principles for the treatment of foreigners and immigrants changed. The governments of both the *Reich* and Prussia now called for equal treatment of all foreigners and toleration of those resident in the country at the end of the war, but prevention of any further immigration. The federal structure of the *Reich*, though, made for a more complex general picture. Whereas during the Imperial era mass expulsions of Poles and Jews had characterised Prussian policy, in the 1920s it was Bavaria which took the lead. Nevertheless, as more than 70% of the Jewish foreigners lived in Prussia, it was mainly the policy of the Social Democratic Prussian government which shaped the framework for immigrant life. Some of the differences between Germany and Britain which Gartner has emphasised became less pronounced during the 1920s. General liberalisation allowed not only for the creation of many local associations of Eastern European Jews, but also for their organisation on a national level. By 1930, the *Bund ost-jüdischer Vereine*, established in 1919, comprised some 100 associations with a total membership of 20,000. Its principles were that the *Ostjuden* were not to be "objects of philanthropic charity", but the masters of their

own affairs.¹ The *Bund ostjüdischer Vereine* cultivated an Eastern European Jewish identity within a Jewish national orientation and at the same time emphasised cooperation with German Jews.

The democratisation of society also had repercussions within the Jewish community. The few attempts to disenfranchise Eastern Europeans and to give voting rights only to German Jews met with general disapproval in the Jewish press, and when contending Jewish factions appealed to state authorities, the decision was in favour of the democratic franchise. In Prussia, the Minister of the Interior had ruled as early as 1914 that German citizenship could not be made a prerequisite for the right to vote. There was also some recognition of the particular religious needs of Eastern European Jews: in Hamburg, the Jewish community built a synagogue for them. But Hamburg, of course, was a model community in which both Liberal and Orthodox Jews enjoyed the religious autonomy of separate *Kultusverbände* and the *Gemeinde* served as an umbrella organisation responsible for schooling, burial, welfare and representation of the interests of the Jewish population *vis-à-vis* non-Jewish institutions. In general, separate Eastern Jewish prayer halls existed side by side with the official synagogues and received some support from the *Gemeinde*, which either provided accommodation or contributed to the rental fees. Despite the fact that after 1918 Jews enjoyed the right to opt out in Prussia, few foreigners left the *Gemeinde*. The most important difference between Imperial Germany and the Weimar Republic was German Jewry's public stance towards the immigrants. Competing and even warring organisations cooperated in relief work for Eastern European Jewry. Their leaders and the German-Jewish press in general vigorously defended the immigrants both against antisemitic attacks and against police measures which violated the principle of equal treatment of all foreigners. Even in the immediate pre-war years (unlike in the 1880s), German Jews had opposed mass expulsions and discriminatory actions against alien Jews, and their war experience had certainly reinforced this stance.

Whereas for Britain the outbreak of the First World War ended the great immigration, for Germany the question became particularly acute during the war. While this was basically a debate about future immigration as a potential consequence of German territorial gains, the demand for border closure, combined with the fear that immigration would once again

¹ 'Zusammenschluß der Ostjuden in Deutschland', in *Jüdische Rundschau*, vol. XXIV, No. 33 (9th May 1919), pp. 256–257, quotation p. 257 (from a proclamation of the *Bund ostjüdischer Vereine*).

open up “the Jewish Question”, sharpened awareness of the issue, at least for the leadership of German Jewry. At the same time, Germany recruited Jews for work in German industry and even forcibly brought them in from occupied territories. Finally, in 1918, it denied re-entry into Germany to those who had temporarily returned home. On the grounds that Jews were the main carriers of typhus, at that time epidemic in Poland, the border was closed to Jewish workers.

The attitude of British Jews towards the immigrants also evolved over time. As in Germany, there were efforts to deflect immigrants to other shores, to move them on or repatriate them. During the 1880s, the established Jewish community had begun to think in terms of restricted immigration. But in the 1890s its mouthpiece, the *Jewish Chronicle*, abruptly changed its attitude, commenting that “practically the whole agitation against the Russian and Polish [Jewish] immigrant is the result of an antipathy towards Jews, albeit racial rather than religious”.² Thus the context in which German and British Jews decided to defend Eastern Jews was similar: they realised that they were not being attacked as aliens but as Jews. And as the leaders of Anglo-Jewry, during the struggle for political emancipation, had come “to believe ... that the full acceptance of Jews by British society depended upon their good (and very British) behaviour”,³ they made great efforts to anglicise the immigrants. Accordingly, the acceleration of this programme has been interpreted as a response to the upsurge of anti-Jewish feeling. Bill Williams’ succinct remark on good behaviour reminds any historian of German Jewry of the notion held by various leaders of the *Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens* that “stepchildren must be especially well behaved”.⁴

There were further parallels in the attitudes and actions of native Jews. In both Germany and Britain they considered it their responsibility to raise the economic, moral and cultural level of their Eastern co-religionists. In both countries, too, relief institutions emphasised work—earning a living

² Stanley Kaplan, ‘The Anglicization of the East European Jewish Immigrant as seen by the London Jewish Chronicle, 1870–1897’, in *YIVO Annual of Jewish Social Science*, 10 (1955), pp. 267–278, 271–272; quotation from the *Jewish Chronicle*, 22nd November 1885, p. 11.

³ Bill Williams, ‘Heritage and Community. The Rescue of Manchester’s Jewish Past’, in Tony Kushner (ed.), *The Jewish Heritage in British History. Englishness and Jewishness*, London 1992, p. 137.

⁴ Adolph Asch, *Die Inflationsjahre 1919–1923*, p. 5, Archives of the Leo Baeck Institute, New York; quoted by Peter Gay, ‘Der berlinisch-jüdische Geist. Zweifel an einer Legende’, in *idem, Freud, Juden und andere Deutsche. Herren und Opfer der modernen Kultur*, Hamburg 1986, p. 201.

rather than depending on welfare institutions—while at the same time attempting to direct immigrants away from overcrowded trades. Furthermore, in both countries there was little personal contact between native Jews and immigrants. As both the cultural and social backgrounds of middle-class German and British Jews differed greatly from those of the mostly lower-class immigrants, this was only to be expected, and it holds true even for those groups within the Jewish community that particularly appreciated the Eastern Jews, such as the Orthodox or Zionists. If it is true that German history did not grant natives and immigrants the time they needed to merge, it should be noted that interest in Eastern Jewry was growing. From the beginning of the century, the nationalist journal *Ost und West*, which was not edited or read exclusively by Zionists, had made efforts to bring the two groups closer together. During the Weimar Republic this interest was fuelled by tours by Yiddish and Hebrew theatre companies, concerts of Yiddish songs and articles about Jewish art. Little by little, German Jews came to appreciate Eastern European Jewish culture. But unlike British Jewry, whose world was “turned upside down by the waves of immigration”,⁵ leaving no facet of Anglo-Jewish life unaffected, German Jewry was not remade as a result of this immigration. In the process of reorientation and rebalancing an identity composed of *Deutschtum* and *Judentum*, which had begun before 1914 and had been intensified by the war experience, the encounter with Eastern Jews and some of their cultural achievements served as a major catalyst. In turn, while mass immigration opened a new epoch in Anglo-Jewish history, the same cannot be said for Germany.

On the one hand, the proportions were different, while on the other, there had been immigration from the East into Germany from the seventeenth century. Moreover, territorial changes, such as the Prussian annexations of Silesia and, in particular, the Prussian gains from the partitions of Poland, brought culturally different, more orthodox Jews into the Prussian orbit. In the German-Polish nationality conflict, these Jews by and large identified with the Germans and aspired to the same rights enjoyed by Prussian Jews, a process that helped to further their acculturation and integration into German-Jewish society. This is especially true of immigrants from Galicia, where German acculturation had made deep inroads, at least until Galicia was granted autonomy and subsequently polonised as a consequence of the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867. One should not forget, however, that the acculturation of East European Jews in Germany

⁵ Geoffrey Alderman, *Modern British Jewry*, Oxford 1992, p. 102.

has remained virtually unexamined. I wonder also whether the relationship between native and immigrants Jews in England can properly be characterised as a “merger”. It seems, rather, that there was a kind of re-education of immigrants, who both participated in the existing institutions of Anglo-Jewry but nonetheless also maintained their own institutions. Intra-Jewish relations were thus characterised by cooperation as well as “separateness”. Only in subsequent generations, born and raised in England, was there a certain degree of amalgamation evident prior to the Second World War.

Despite all the differences in state policy and the institutional frameworks of Jewish life, the parallels in the attitudes of German and British Jews towards their co-religionists from the East are striking. Since German Jews were confronted with a small immigrant population, whereas British Jews faced a major foreign influx, their similar responses point in fact to a stronger feeling of insecurity in Germany. The reason for this might be the much smoother process of emancipation in Britain. But whatever respect British Jews enjoyed within society at large, in both cases it was the minority’s awareness that equal status and social acceptance was conditional on conformity with the standards of the non-Jewish majority that shaped relations with Eastern European Jews.

DAVID FELDMAN

Jews and the State in Britain

Anyone who sets out to assess the legacy of emancipation for British Jews in the nineteenth and early twentieth century confronts an immediate challenge, namely, the wide disagreement that already exists among historians concerning how to characterise the relationship between Jews and the state. Before the late 1970s, historians addressing this issue had taken their cue from late nineteenth-century Anglo-Jewish intellectuals reflecting on the qualities of their own epoch. Lucien Wolf, for instance, writing in 1897 on the history of Jewry in the reign of Victoria, asserted that over the previous sixty years “We have won our rightful place as citizens of this great Empire without losing our contact with the glorious past of our people, and without sacrificing our faith in its still more glorious destinies”.¹ According to Wolf and many others, Jews in liberal England achieved equality as subjects without abandoning their particular inheritance. This perspective on the Anglo-Jewish past has not passed out of currency. Indeed, it has been revived in scholarly and forceful terms by W.D. Rubinstein, who argues that the history of the Jews in Britain has been a success story remarkably free of antisemitism. Like Wolf, Rubinstein presents not only an optimistic assessment of British society and political culture but also of the Jews’ collective achievements; he vindicates the history of Jewish leadership in modern Britain and highlights its support for poor immigrants at home and for persecuted Jews overseas. Rubinstein adduces a number of causes to account for this happy narrative, but central among them is “the tradition of democracy and pluralism, and especially the tradition of liberalism”, that shaped political life in Britain and invariably banished antisemitism to its margins. The Jews’ integration, he suggests, was shaped in large measure by the character of the British state.²

¹ Lucien Wolf, ‘The Queen’s Jewry’, in C. Roth (ed.), *Essays in Jewish History by Lucien Wolf*, London 1934, p. 362.

² William D. Rubinstein, *A History of the Jews in the English Speaking World: Great Britain*, London 1996, quotation p. 9.

Since the 1980s, however, a formidable body of scholarship has eroded the previous consensus and sought to establish a new and radically different interpretation of the Anglo-Jewish past. According to historians and cultural critics such as Geoffrey Alderman, David Cesarani, Bryan Cheyette, Tony Kushner and Bill Williams, liberalism in Britain, far from offering a benign solution to “the Jewish question”, was one of the principal sources of oppression and antisemitism emanating from the Gentile world.³ It was also, in their view, the source of a disabling compulsion among Jews to justify their emancipation and to demonstrate that they were worthy British subjects. Cesarani, for instance, argues that Jews were accepted not for who and what they were, but according to terms set by the British majority. The outcome, he claims, was that “the state, society and culture in Britain operated a discourse about Jews that was exclusive and oppressive, that eventuated in and legitimised discrimination ...”.⁴ In Alderman’s opinion, “The immediate post-emancipation generations felt they were on trial, that they had to prove, and to continue to prove, that they were worthy of the rights and freedoms Anglo-Christian society had extended to them, and that they must somehow conform to what they felt were Gentile expectations of acceptable Jewish behaviour”.⁵

In one tradition of interpretation, therefore, emancipation in particular, and liberalism in general, is enthroned as a benign and profound influence shaping the integration of Jews within Britain; in another it is equally significant but disparaged as a source of oppression and of a Jewish political and cultural practice that bordered on self-abnegation. This debate has been carried forward in a way that combines attention to the state and so-

³ The following are some of the most significant expositions of this view which also deal centrally with the period discussed in this paper. Geoffrey Alderman, ‘English Jews or Jews of the English Persuasion’, in Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson (eds.), *Paths of Emancipation. Jews, States and Citizenship*, Princeton 1995, pp. 128–156; David Cesarani, ‘Introduction’, in *idem* (ed.), *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry*, Oxford 1989, pp. 1–11; *idem*, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry, 1841–1991*, Cambridge 1994; Bryan Cheyette, ‘The Other Self. Anglo-Jewish Fiction and the Representation of Jews in England, 1875–1905’, in Cesarani (ed.), *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry.*, pp. 97–111; *idem*, *Constructions of the “Jew” in English Literature and Society. Racial Representations, 1875–1945*, Cambridge, 1993; Tony Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, Oxford 1994; ‘Remembering to Forget: Racism and Anti-Racism in Postwar Britain’, in Bryan Cheyette and Laura Marcus (eds.), *Modernity, Culture and “the Jew”*, Oxford 1998, pp. 226–241; Bill Williams, ‘The Anti-Semitism of Tolerance. Middle-Class Manchester and the Jews, 1870–1900’, in Alan J. Kidd and K.W. Roberts (eds.), *City, Class and Culture*, Manchester 1985, pp. 74–102.

⁴ Cesarani, ‘Introduction’, in *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry*, pp. 7–8.

⁵ Alderman, ‘English Jews’, pp. 138–139.

ciety, culture and politics. Such breadth of approach is one of the strengths of current discussions, but a weakness is that these different facets of the whole have been insufficiently distinguished. In the process of debate, discussion of Jews and the state has been neglected. There has been little direct research on how governments actually treated Jews. Above all, this is true of relations between Jews and the state in the nineteenth century if we look beyond the issue of emancipation itself.⁶ The focus of attention has been on what politicians, social investigators and propagandists said, rather than on what governments did. Yet liberalism has been a political creed *par excellence* and its translation into the practice of government must be central to our assessment of it. In other words, divergent interpretations of the Jews' relationship to the state in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Britain are central to the current debate on the legacy of Jewish emancipation, yet the substance of that relationship has passed largely unexamined. This essay presents one attempt to fill that gap and so modify our understanding of that relationship and of the legacy of Jewish emancipation.

However, it will be useful to note that, for all their disagreements, both sides of the current controversy hold some approaches and assumptions in common. First, both sides present a static view of the British state, each taking a single characteristic of the state and tending to suggest that this applies equally over a period of more than a century. In one case the state is liberal and benign, in the other it is liberal and malign. But what neither view appears to contemplate is that the relation of the state to the Jews might have fundamentally changed during this period. Second, whichever view is taken of the nature of Jewish integration in Britain, the Jews themselves are oddly passive. According to one view, they are happy beneficiaries of long-term tendencies of British history, while according to the other they are the unfortunate victims of forces over which they equally have no control. In neither case, so far as the nature of Jewish integration in Britain is concerned, are Jews seen to contribute to their own historical destiny. These are points to which we shall return.

⁶ This criticism also applies to the treatment of the nineteenth century in my own work *Englishmen and Jews. Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840–1914*, New Haven 1994. An important and neglected exception is D.C. Itzkowitz, 'Cultural Pluralism and the Board of Deputies of British Jews', in Richard W. Davis and Richard J. Helmstadter (eds.), *Religion and Irreligion in Victorian Society. Essays in Honour of R.K. Webb*, London 1992, pp. 85–101.

I.

The Jews' relationship to the state evolved within a new framework from the middle decades of the nineteenth century. Jewish emancipation was at the centre of this new dispensation. Jews were "emancipated" across Europe but the consequences were far from uniform; what was meant by Jewish equality varied from state to state.⁷ To understand the particular outcome in the British case we should consider not only the fact of emancipation but also the larger framework that further structured the relationship between the Jewish community and the state.

One part of this framework was the centralised concentration of sovereignty. For example, in the United Kingdom the limited extent to which Scotland and Ireland were separately governed was determined by Parliament in London, as was the authority exercised by county and municipal bodies. In other words, their powers were unambiguously delegated by a central sovereign authority.⁸ The situation in Germany was different. The German Empire created in 1871 was a federation of sovereign states which agreed to cede some of their sovereign authority while retaining powers of taxation and their own representative institutions. Although the new *Reich* developed imperial and more centralised institutions, it remained a federal structure until its collapse in 1918.⁹

In Britain the concentration of sovereignty proceeded hand in hand with a widespread delegation of functions both to local authorities and to voluntary associations.¹⁰ The Marriage Registration Act of 1836 expressed this tendency when it recognised the Board of Deputies of British Jews as the body competent to record Jewish marriages and ensure they were performed "according to the usages of the Jews".¹¹ For the state this arrangement was a cheap and efficient administrative convenience, but for the Jews it had larger implications: it was this recognition of the Board by the state which enabled it, credibly and repeatedly, to assert its status as the

⁷ An important set of reflections on this pattern can be found in Birnbaum and Katznelson (ed.), *Paths of Emancipation*.

⁸ H.J. Hanham, *The Nineteenth-Century Constitution 1815–1914*, Cambridge 1969, p. 3.

⁹ For an analysis of German citizenship in this light see Andreas K. Fahrmeir, 'Nineteenth-Century German Citizenship. A Reconsideration', in *Historical Journal*, 40,3 (1997), pp. 721–752.

¹⁰ Pat Thane, 'Government and Society in England and Wales, 1750–1914', in F.M.L. Thompson (ed.), *The Cambridge Social History of Britain, 1750–1950*, vol. III, Cambridge 1990, p. 1; Hanham, pp. 372–373.

¹¹ C.H. L. Emanuel, *A Century and a Half of Jewish History*, London 1910, p. 27.

body that represented British Jews “in all matters touching their political welfare”.¹² The authority of the Chief Rabbi went hand in hand with that of the Board of Deputies since it was he who would determine what fell within and outside Jewish usage. This power was notoriously used to discipline those Reform and ultra-Orthodox synagogues which challenged the writ of the Chief Rabbinate.¹³ The extent to which Jewish communal authority in Britain was centralised thus owed much to the Board’s relationship with the state. In turn, the authority conferred by the state upon that single Jewish body had important consequences for the Jews’ capacity to represent themselves to successive governments. Anglo-Jewry possessed an acknowledged voice articulating its interests—or, at any rate, what the Board of Deputies conceived those interests to be. Furthermore, the centralisation of state sovereignty meant that in many instances the Board of Deputies was able to identify a single political and administrative address to which it could direct its activities. These institutional arrangements, as well as the fact of emancipation, helped to shape the collective relationship of Victorian Jewry to the state.

But Jews also faced the state as individuals. Here it is important to point out that Jews were not notably disadvantaged and did not find themselves barred from senior civil and military positions. By 1903 there were forty-one officers in the regular army who identified themselves as Jews.¹⁴ Jews also achieved high office in the civil service and judiciary: having been Solicitor-General under Gladstone, George Jessell was appointed Master of the Rolls, at the Board of Trade, David Schloss was an expert on labour and industrial questions and, most notably, Sir Lionel Abrahams was appointed Assistant Under-Secretary for India. Three Jews—Herbert Samuel, Rufus Isaacs and Edwin Montagu—held ministerial office of Cabinet rank in Liberal governments between 1906 and 1916.

This relatively open appointments policy meant that Jews did not lobby governments, as they did in Germany, for the rights of individuals to be rewarded according to their merits. Rather, Jews asked that Jewish candidates should be able to present themselves for consideration. Requests such as these were activated by a desire for individual advancement but, paradoxically, they led Jews to request collective consideration. Accord-

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹³ Geoffrey Alderman, *Modern British Jewry*, Oxford 1992, pp. 47–48; David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews. Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840-1914*, New Haven 1994, pp. 295–297.

¹⁴ Harold Pollins, *Economic History of the Jews in England*, East Brunswick 1982, p. 180.

ingly, the Board of Deputies strove to persuade examining bodies not to hold examinations only on the Jewish Sabbath. Its efforts met with some success: the Board reached an agreement with the Cambridge Local Examination Board in 1882, and the Oxford Examination Board and the Committee of the Privy Council on Education in 1885.¹⁵

In lobbying for special arrangements for Jews, the Board of Deputies acted in ways that were characteristic of its wider activities in Victorian Britain. Similarly, in its initial disregard for pluralism and Jewish interests, as well as in its subsequent preparedness to reconsider and amend its practices, the behaviour of the Committee of the Privy Council on Education was emblematic of the practices of Victorian government. We can explore this further by examining government policy towards the Jews in what were arguably the three most important areas of social policy: education, factory and workshop legislation, and the Poor Law.

The Jewish community secured considerable financial benefit from the state's growing support for education in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. It was also able to maintain, and even extend, Jewish education in state-financed schools. But far from reflecting the spontaneous pluralism of the British state, this was in large part the outcome of the Jews' own lobbying activity. The first parliamentary grants to schools were disbursed in 1833, but no grant was awarded to a Jewish school until 1853 and then only after a lengthy correspondence between the Board of Deputies and the Committee of the Privy Council on Education. It was with evident exasperation that Sir Moses Montefiore addressed the Council on Education on behalf of the Board in November 1851. He pointed out that as early as 1847 he had written to the Prime Minister, Lord John Russell, to ask that Parliamentary grants be extended to Jewish schools and that at the time Russell had expressed himself in favour of this development. Nevertheless, in 1849 applications from schools in London and in Manchester had been refused by the Committee which stated flatly that Jewish schools could not be supported. In response, the Board argued that Jewish schools should be able to receive Parliamentary grants on the ground of "an impartial respect for the rights of conscience". Montefiore's letter had its intended effect. The Committee satisfied itself that "the Scriptures of the Old Testament will be required to be read daily in Jewish schools for which assistance is asked", and also that the schools would be open to Her

¹⁵ Board of Deputies of British Jews, Minute book 12, 19th December 1883; *Jewish Chronicle*, 13th March 1885, p. 13. The costs of the additional examinations, however, were passed on to the Jews.

Majesty's Inspectors; and thereafter it opened Parliamentary grants to applications from Jewish voluntary schools.¹⁶ The financial contribution of central government to these schools grew to provide a major portion of their income. In fact, by the early 1890s the state's contribution to the income of Jewish schools in London exceeded the income from endowments and voluntary contributions in every case except that of the Jews' Free School.¹⁷

The 1870 Education Act brought Jews new opportunities. The Act established a dual system of, on one side, voluntary denominational schools, eligible for Parliamentary maintenance grants but independent of public control and, on the other side, board schools, financed by a local education rate, administered by local school boards and responsible to the government. As the number of poor and immigrant Jews rose rapidly in the late nineteenth century, the 1870 Act enabled the Jewish community to pass the cost of educating the greater number of Jewish children on to local taxpayers. By 1901, 60% of Jewish children in London attended board schools.¹⁸

At the heart of the political controversy surrounding the 1870 Education Act was the question of what sort of religious instruction should be provided in the rate-funded board schools. Many Nonconformists, for instance, favoured a radical separation between Church and State and opposed the use of public funds for any denominational education. The compromise encoded within the 1870 Act allowed school boards to provide non-denominational religious education. This meant, in effect, reading from Scripture but without any doctrinal instruction. Within this system Jewish children were protected from Christian instruction by a "conscience clause" which allowed parents to remove their children from school during religious instruction. Further, during the passage of the Bill, John Simon secured for Jewish parents the right to withdraw their children from school on the Jewish Sabbath and on festivals.¹⁹

But in London, in predominantly Jewish areas of the East End, special attention to Jewish needs went far beyond these merely negative allowances. By 1902 as many as sixteen board schools in London, educating

¹⁶ Parliamentary Papers [hereafter PP] 1852 XXXIX *Minutes, Correspondence and Financial Statements of the Committee of the Council on Education*, pp. 31–39.

¹⁷ PP 1894 LXV, *Return Showing by Counties for each Public Elementary School in England and Wales ... Particulars of School Income and Expenditure for the Year ended 31st August 1893*, pp. 400–401.

¹⁸ PP 1903 IX, *Royal Commission on Alien Immigration*, qq. 10281–2.

¹⁹ Alderman, *Modern British Jewry*, p. 65.

more than 15,000 children, were run on what were termed “Jewish lines”.²⁰ This meant that the schools observed Jewish holidays; Jewish ladies and gentlemen sat on their boards of management; in some cases the schools had a Jewish headteacher; and in all cases at least one teacher, and often more than one, was Jewish. Indeed, the London School Board advertised specifically for “Yiddish-speaking”—in effect, Jewish—teachers. The most impressive provision was that the religious education in these schools was based not on the Old Testament content of the London School Board’s non-denominational syllabus, but on a syllabus drawn up by the Chief Rabbi that extended beyond Scripture to encompass instruction in doctrine, tradition and rabbinical law. In other words, contrary to the letter of the Education Act, “Jewish” schools in London were allowed to provide denominational instruction.²¹ The phenomenon of the “Jewish” board schools did not develop as a result of self-conscious policy, and was not even officially sanctioned by the London School Board before 1893. Rather, the practices in these schools emerged informally as a result of the initiative and preferences of Jewish parents, some of whom were reluctant to send their children to board schools which offered instruction in the New Testament, as well as Jewish teachers, school managers and educationalists.²²

The 1902 Education Act brought a further set of advantages to the Jewish community. The Act, passed by a Conservative government, placed all schools—including denominational schools—under the control of an education committee within each county or urban authority. Jewish schools gained financially from such state intervention without having to concede public control over their special characteristics. The beauty of the Act, from the point of view of the voluntary schools, was that they would henceforth be supported from the rates for the cost of secular education within them but they would retain a majority of places on the schools’

²⁰ *Royal Commission on Alien Immigration*, q. 10284

²¹ Greater London Record Office, SBL 793, Minutes of a meeting of the special sub-committee on religious instruction of Jewish children, 25th April 1894; *Jewish Chronicle*, 25th August 1893, pp. 5–6; 10th November 1893, pp. 11–13; *Parliamentary Debates*, fourth series, vol. 121, cols. 466–467, 833–834.

²² Greater London Record Office, SBL 793, Minutes of a meeting of the special sub-committee on religious instruction of Jewish children, 25th April 1894; *Jewish Chronicle*, 16th June 1893, p. 17; 28th July 1893, p. 10; 10th November 1893, p. 11. After the religious education practised in these schools became publicly known in 1893 the syllabus was modified so as to remove elements that could be seen as doctrinal. Nevertheless, children in these schools were still taught a special curriculum designed by the Chief Rabbi, Hermann Adler, and Claude Montefiore.

boards of management, which would oversee religious instruction. The schools were also able to maintain a religious test for teaching appointments.²³

The 1902 Education Act was designed by a Conservative government intent on increasing state funding for Anglican education. Roman Catholic and Jewish schools were thus beneficiaries of an attempt to prop up the Anglican Church. The Act was vehemently opposed by the Liberal Party. Jewish Liberals, loyal to their party, criticised the Act's disbursement of public funds without what they considered adequate public control.²⁴ Nevertheless, the 1902 Education Act can be seen as one outgrowth of nineteenth-century liberal reforms that had set out to break the Anglican monopoly within the state. To reverse this process was politically impossible. The use of state funds to promote only Anglican education was not even contemplated by the end of the nineteenth century. From this perspective, the Act, which happily used state funds to support Anglican, Roman Catholic and Jewish voluntary schools, was a Conservative and Anglican initiative within a framework created by nineteenth-century liberalism.

But this self-conscious, if cynical, pluralism was uncommon. More usually governments proceeded with complete unconcern for the Jews' particular requirements, only to respond with some flexibility to representations made to them by the Board of Deputies and by Jewish MPs. Nowhere was this more clear than in the treatment of Jews under Factory and Workshop legislation regulating the hours worked by women and children. Before the 1867 Factory and Workshop Acts, which prohibited the employment of women and children on Sundays, Jewish factory and workshop owners were not subject to any penalties if they employed workers on Sundays. The new legislation inevitably disadvantaged Jewish employers who kept their own Sabbath and who were thus forced to lose a working day. At this stage the Board of Deputies managed to secure an amendment which allowed Jewish occupiers to employ workers between sunset and 9 p.m. on Saturdays if they closed from sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday. But the amendment was next to useless, in part because for five months of the year the Jewish Sabbath ended too late for the concession to apply and in part because employees were extremely reluc-

²³ Eugene C. Black, *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1880–1920*, Oxford 1988, pp. 105–107.

²⁴ *Jewish Chronicle*, 31st October 1902, p. 15.

tant to work on Saturday evenings. Inevitably, a large number of prosecutions followed, brought by inspectors enforcing the law.²⁵

The London Tailors Jewish Benefit Society, an organisation with more than 1,800 members, brought their grievances in the face of the factory and workshop legislation to the notice of the Board of Deputies which, in turn, approached the Home Secretary, Henry Bruce. But while the legitimacy of the complaint was acknowledged, nothing was done to remedy it.²⁶ Matters did improve in 1871 as a result of a Jewish initiative, when Sir David Salomons successfully introduced a Bill to allow Jewish employees in workshops and cigar factories to work on Sundays if their place of employment closed on the Sabbath.²⁷ But here matters rested. In 1874 a government Bill failed to address the remaining grievances. Four years later, however, following the evidence given by the Board of Deputies to the 1876 inquiry into the operation of the Factory and Workshop Acts, Jews gained further concessions: the 1871 allowances for Sunday work were extended to all trades, as long as the factory or workshop was not open for “traffic” and further, Jewish occupiers were now also allowed the alternative of employing women and children for an extra hour every other day.²⁸ Although Jewish employers remained inconvenienced by the prohibition on “traffic”, which prevented goods or materials passing into or out of their workshops, the picture once again is one in which the state, having first shown a wide disregard for Jewish interests, moved a considerable distance to accommodate them but only as a result of the actions of the Jews themselves.

The interaction between Jews and the Poor Law reveals a similar pattern. Rate-supported poor relief was a significant resource for the Jewish community. The workhouse could be used to supplement communal relief in times of crisis and its crude accommodation was also used to discourage immigration and, more specifically, wife desertion.²⁹ Moreover, after 1867, as the Poor Law extended its range of welfare services to include medical relief outside workhouses, the Jewish Board of Guardians took the opportunity to cut its own medical expenses and pass this cost on to

²⁵ PP 1876 XXX, *Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Factory and Workshop Acts*, qq.3857, 3863

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, q. 3865.

²⁸ Emanuel, p. 106.

²⁹ Bill Williams, *The Making of Manchester Jewry 1740–1875*, Manchester 1976, p. 288.

the Poor Law.³⁰ But until the 1860s there were difficulties in the way of Jews entering the workhouse. Most obviously, there was the problem of supplying kosher food and of making arrangements to allow Jewish inmates to keep their Sabbath and festivals.

At the inception of the new Poor Law in 1834 the Board of Deputies had lobbied for satisfactory arrangements for Jews in workhouses.³¹ But it was not until the 1860s that changes were made. The Certified Schools Act of 1862 empowered Poor Law unions to send children to schools of the child's own denomination at union expense, and in 1868 the Orphans Department of Jews' Hospital was certified under the Act.³² The 1869 Poor Law Amendment Act allowed unions to group together paupers attached to the same religious denomination. This section of the Act was inserted on the initiative of Sir David Salomons, with the explicit aim of gathering Jews on indoor relief within suitable homes.³³ At this time the Poor Law Board also made clear that it approved of special treatment for Jews when they were taken into workhouses.³⁴ The decision to offer special treatment in any particular case, however, remained a local decision. In 1869, for instance, the Jewish authorities in Manchester reached an agreement with the Manchester Poor Law Guardians to allow Jewish inmates to abstain from labour on the Sabbath; for Jewish inmates to be temporarily discharged from the workhouse during festivals, during which time the Jewish community would bear the cost of relieving them; for kosher food to be taken into the workhouse; for inmates to be allowed access to a Jewish minister; and for Jewish orphans and deserted children to be sent to a Jewish residential school and for their maintenance to be paid out of the general poor rate.³⁵

The revisionist interpretation of Anglo-Jewish history sets clear expectations for what we should find when we examine the relationship between Jews and the state following emancipation. David Cesarani has stated firmly that "the contradictions between Jewish particularity and the mores of the majority were increasingly highlighted by state intervention. Mid-

³⁰ Black, pp. 76, 158; Vivian D. Lipman, *A Century of Social Service 1859–1959. The Jewish Board of Guardians*, London 1959, p. 62.

³¹ Emanuel, pp. 22–23.

³² Williams, *The Making of Manchester Jewry*, p. 289; Lipman, pp. 50–53.

³³ Emanuel, p. 87.

³⁴ Lipman, p. 51.

³⁵ Williams, *The Making of Manchester Jewry*, p. 289. In Whitechapel the local Boards of Guardians also offered to accommodate Jews (Lipman, pp. 52–53). More research is needed to discover the actions and motivations of different local authorities.

Victorian liberalism was premised on reason and universalism ... The heart of the matter lay in the tendency of the Christian majority to disguise its preferences as 'universalism' rendering the opposition of the Jewish minority as 'particularistic'.³⁶ In other words, the particular requirements and interests of Jews would be treated as so many impediments in the way of progressive reform. The evidence we have examined here does not support this interpretation. On the other hand, we have not found that ministers and officials acted on their own volition with any solicitude for the Jewish minority. Rather, the advance of state intervention in Victorian Britain presented Jews with a series of problems and with the political challenge of overcoming them. We have also seen that the efforts of the Board of Deputies met with considerable, if sometimes hard-won, success and that, conversely, ministers repeatedly were persuaded to make concessions to accommodate the Jews' needs and interests.

How can we account for this recurrent pattern? First, I have already pointed out the concentration of sovereignty in Britain, together with the recognition and authority which the state conferred upon the Board of Deputies. This meant that there was a body which possessed the capacity to interpret Jewish interests and to represent them to the state, and second, it meant that any concessions granted by central government would have national consequences. Such was the case with grants awarded by the Council on Education and the 1902 Education Act, as well as the Factory and Workshops legislation. Important as this institutional relationship was, it does not in itself account for the way in which issues were repeatedly resolved in favour of the Jews, nor for those cases in which decisions were delegated to local authorities, as with the Poor Law and the implementation of the 1870 Education Act.

The reason for the Jews' success also lies with the dominant interpretation in Britain of the principle of religious toleration. It could be interpreted as meaning toleration of worship only—as opponents of Jewish emancipation maintained—or as allowing Jews to participate fully in political and civil life. A third dimension appears where, as we have seen, Jews asked for allowances to be made for them where positive law disadvantaged Jews. It was this which the Board of Deputies promoted when it asked for government grants to Jewish schools on the ground of "an impartial respect for the rights of conscience".³⁷ Here was a version of toleration which could accommodate a degree of pluralism and did not re-

³⁶ Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle*, p. 53.

³⁷ See above.

quire conformity to the norms of the Christian majority. We can also see this understanding of toleration in the amendment to the Factory and Workshops Act—where sabbatarian legislation was altered to take account of the Jewish as well as the Christian Sabbath.

Yet, as we have seen, pluralism was not the immediate reflex of politicians and administrators. Indeed, this can be traced to the emancipation debate itself, since the supporters of Jewish emancipation believed that the entry of Jews into Parliament would not detract from its Christian character. Professing Jews had been excluded from Parliament because they could not swear the Oath of Abjuration “on the true faith of a Christian”. Both Lord John Russell and William Gladstone, for instance, argued that an alteration to the Oath of Abjuration that would allow professing Jews to swear the oath would not purge Christianity from Parliament’s legislative duties. Instead, they argued, the Christian character of Parliament and of the government would now depend on “the general opinion of the country” and not “the fag end of a declaration”.³⁸

Nevertheless, politicians and administrators did make concessions to the Jews’ appeal to, and interpretation of, religious toleration. That they did so indicates their limited expectations of what state power could or should strive to do. Mid-Victorian governments did not aspire to mould or regenerate society along Christian lines, and neither did the populace look to governments to do so. The patrician Whig leaders, for instance, who believed in the spiritual and social purpose of the established national Church, believed also that this influence could be best advanced if the Church was not militantly exclusive (as Conservatives desired) but if the exclusiveness of Catholics, Nonconformists and Jews was broken down by a policy of toleration, with the Church relinquishing some of its privileges.³⁹ For Gladstone, too, support for Jewish emancipation was a signal that he no longer believed it possible to protect Christianity as a national religion through compulsion and repression.⁴⁰ For radical Nonconformists in the Liberal Party, the same point was reached by a different route: they had long striven to emancipate themselves from the disabilities and perceived insults heaped upon dissenting Christians by the established Church. It was for them a point of high and long-standing principle that, as George Howell asserted in 1878, “religion is a matter of conscience be-

³⁸ Feldman, pp. 40–42.

³⁹ Jonathan P. Parry, *Democracy and Religion. Gladstone and the Liberal Party 1867–1875*, Cambridge 1986, pp. 86–102.

⁴⁰ Feldman, p. 42.

tween man and his Maker; it cannot be defined by statute, nor enforced by law".⁴¹ There was, then, little pressure within the Liberal Party for the state to impose itself upon society and reshape it along Christian lines. The Factory and Workshops Act, the Poor Law and the Education Acts were thus amended to accommodate Jewish interests and to operate with the grain of society, not to transform it.

As I have shown elsewhere, there were groups attached to the Liberal Party who, particularly after the 1867 Reform Act, did demand a moral and Christian transformation of public life in Britain: Nonconformists, working men and academic liberals. Their denunciations of a corrupt polity and policy could give rise to bitter criticism of Jews. This was most notable during the campaign against Disraeli's foreign policy in the late 1870s and, over the next two decades, in the assault on those financial interests said to direct British imperial policy.⁴² In so far as Jews felt under pressure to show they were worthy of their rights in the post-emancipation decades, these political campaigns gave content to their anxiety. But it is also clear that such pressure remained within the realm of political argument. If we turn to what governments did, as opposed to what some people wrote and said, then we find that the British state was notably willing to accommodate Jewish interests.

II.

In the first three decades of the twentieth century, relations between Jews and the state took a turn for the worse, although even in these years Jews were able to achieve some significant successes, such as the gains made by Jewish voluntary schools under the Education Act of 1902. Further, after extensive lobbying by the Jewish benefit societies, in 1911 non-naturalised Jewish immigrants were included within the scheme of national insurance against sickness and were eligible for the state's weekly contributions once they had been in the country for five years. There were also more negative achievements, when Jewish shopkeepers and street traders, as well as the Board of Deputies, were a part of a combination of forces that

⁴¹ Eugenio F. Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform. Popular Liberalism in the Age of Gladstone, 1860–80*, Cambridge, 1992, p. 247.

⁴² Feldman, pp. 94–120, 264–267.

blocked repeated attempts to strengthen legislation against Sunday trading.⁴³

But in other areas of policy, such as naturalisation, Jewish interests did not prevail. Whereas until 1905 it had been sufficient for applicants for naturalisation to have obeyed the law and paid the fee, the new system required them to pass a literacy test in English.⁴⁴ Most important of all, however, was the Aliens Act introduced in 1905 by a Conservative government to restrict immigration, which was intended primarily to staunch the flow to Britain of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe. The Act required immigrants to demonstrate that they were able to support themselves and their dependants “decently”. The Board of Deputies was notably unsuccessful both in attempts to insert amendments to the Bill and in efforts to modify its operation. In 1905 it managed to secure only a very narrow right of asylum for refugees from religious persecution and here it succeeded only as a result of a personal approach by the president of the Board, David Alexander, to the Prime Minister, Arthur Balfour.⁴⁵ As the Act was implemented, relations between the Board of Deputies and the Home Office became cool. The decision to admit or exclude an immigrant was vested in immigration officers; aliens could appeal against exclusion to an Immigration Board but the burden of proof was placed upon the immigrant. The Board of Deputies’ efforts to persuade the Home Office to allow legal representation for immigrants refused leave to land and the right of appeal to a court of law met with no success whatever. On the one side Jews were increasingly frustrated by their inability to correct what they saw as a manifest injustice, while on the other officials were exasperated by what they saw as special pleading. In 1908 John Pedder, the Home Office official most concerned with immigration, described the Board as hopelessly biased and advised that their letters should be discouraged by the simple device of not replying to them.⁴⁶

The Aliens Act indicates the onset of a shift in the structure of relations between Jews and the state. First, Jews had become the objects of policy as a social problem and not as a religious minority. Second, when regarded from this standpoint, the view expressed by the Conservative Party leaders was that the immigrants damaged the nation’s health and efficiency. In the aftermath of the Boer War, opposition to immigration received increasing

⁴³ *Ibid.*, chapter 15.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 371–372.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 290.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 355–358.

support from commentators concerned for the nation's health and the empire's future. Speaking in the House of Commons in support of the 1905 Aliens Act, Balfour asserted: "We have a right to keep out everybody who does not add to the strength of the community—the industrial, social and intellectual strength of the community."⁴⁷ Third, the Aliens Act lies in the mainstream of the growth of the collectivist state, as governments arrogated to themselves powers that had formerly been exercised within civil society. The Aliens Act did not restrict immigration where it had formerly been free; rather, it rendered the state responsible in an area which had previously been supervised by Jewish voluntary organisations—above all by the Russo-Jewish Committee, the Jewish Board of Guardians, and the Poor Jews' Temporary Shelter.⁴⁸ In this respect, the Act prescribed a significant departure from the nineteenth-century practice in which, as we have seen, the state delegated functions to the Board of Deputies and to Jewish welfare organisations.

The growing element of conflict and suspicion between Jews and the state became still more marked during and after the First World War. Some difficulties can be attributed to the particular circumstances of the war itself: it led, for instance, to the internment of Jews from Germany and Austria, even those who had been resident in Britain for many years, within the general round-up of enemy aliens in 1914. The development of lengthy campaigns, vast losses, recruitment drives, and finally conscription also focused attention on the status of Russian Jews in Britain. Many refugees from Tsarism were stubbornly reluctant to enlist for an allied cause which encompassed the regime from which they had fled.⁴⁹

The problem of the Russian Jews' reluctance to fight led the government to act in ways which exposed and magnified divisions among British Jews, thus weakening them in their dealings with the state. The government, supported by the leaders of Anglo-Jewry, threatened to repatriate these "shirkers"; if they did not volunteer in Britain, it suggested, they should return to Russia and do their duty there. In the East End of London, however, to the consternation of most English Jews, socialist groups, trade unions and some benefit societies joined to defend the right of asylum and resist conscription. Other government initiatives similarly stimulated and

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 287.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 299–406.

⁴⁹ On the problems created for Jews by the war, see David Cesarani, 'An Embattled Minority. The Jews in Britain During the First World War', in *Immigrants and Minorities*, March 1989, pp. 61–81.

revealed divisions among Jews.⁵⁰ The idea of creating a Jewish unit in the British army, supported by Zionists among others, was opposed by the Board of Deputies, while both groups lobbied the War Office either for or against the initiative.⁵¹ The Balfour Declaration was welcomed by the English Zionist Federation and by mass meetings of immigrant Jews, but was preceded by an anti-Zionist manifesto published in *The Times* and signed by the presidents of the Board of Deputies and the Anglo-Jewish Association.⁵² Increasingly, Jews spoke to the British government with more than one voice.

While relations between Jews and the state became more difficult during the war, some problems, though intensified by the war, also had a more long-term significance. In particular, it is possible to see increasingly exclusionist immigration and naturalisation policies stretching from the pre-war decade, through the war years and into the 1920s. In the aftermath of the war this restrictive approach to naturalisation was taken still further. In a minute prepared for Arthur Henderson, Home Secretary in the first Labour government, John Pedder explained that in the case of applications for naturalisation from Slavs, Jews and others from Eastern Europe, a period of residence well beyond the statutory period of five years was required.⁵³ Labour MPs, as well as Henderson, expressed their unhappiness with this routine discrimination. These MPs defended the right of "householders, taxpayers and ratepayers" to be naturalised. In doing so they presented nationality as a form of contract into which law-abiding, tax-paying, self-supporting subjects should be able to enter.⁵⁴ But Henderson's successor as Home Secretary, the Conservative William Joynson-Hicks, embraced a different, more elaborate and more exclusive conception of British nationality. For Joynson-Hicks, nationality required a cultural and personal transformation on the part of the alien applicant. He told the House of Commons

"The distinction I make with regard to these matters of naturalisation is, first, is the man really heart and soul a British subject? Has he made up his mind? If he has married

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 67–69; Alderman, *Modern British Jewry*, p. 238.

⁵¹ Cesarani, 'An embattled minority', pp. 69–72.

⁵² Stuart Cohen, *English Zionists and British Jews*, Princeton 1982, pp. 238, 279.

⁵³ David Cesarani, 'Anti-Alienism in England After the First World War', in *Immigrants and Minorities*, March 1987, pp. 14–18.

⁵⁴ *Parliamentary Debates*, fifth series, vol. 160, col. 1087; vol. 163, col. 2395.

an English wife, that goes a long way to convincing me that his heart is in England. If he has married a Russian or Pole or German, that rather shows his connections.”⁵⁵

In the case of immigration policy, the Aliens Act of 1919 extended into peacetime the measures introduced in 1914 for the supervision, detention and expulsion of aliens. It virtually closed the country’s ports to further immigration from outside the British Empire and dispensed with the Immigration Boards to which aliens refused entry had previously been able to take their case. The Act also imposed an onerous system of registration upon aliens already in the country, which left them liable to deportation if they did not register a change of address with the police. The protests brought by the Board of Deputies both at these changes in immigration law and in the delays and obstacles in the way of applications for naturalisation met with no success.⁵⁶

A third area in which Jewish immigrants suffered some discrimination in the immediate post-war years was welfare policy: aliens were disadvantaged in their entitlements to old age pensions and unemployment benefit.⁵⁷ Problems arose over welfare at local as well as national levels. In 1919 the London County Council excluded alien children from competing for scholarships to LCC schools; the following year it resolved to employ only British subjects; and in 1923 it determined that British subjects would be given preference over aliens in the allocation of housing on LCC estates.⁵⁸

These post-war measures were driven by a mixture of Germanophobia, by a “red scare” following the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, and by fear at the prospect of further Jewish immigration from Central and Eastern Europe. But it was the continuing levels of high unemployment during the 1920s which supplied the longer term justification for most of these anti-

⁵⁵ *Parliamentary Debates*, fifth series, vol. 187, cols. 385–386. William D. Rubinstein has pointed out that under Joynson–Hicks the number of certificates of naturalisation given annually to Russians and Poles actually increased (pp. 273–274). This is an important point but it does not conclusively support Rubinstein’s claim that there was no bias against Eastern European Jews. This is because we are told neither the number of applications made at this time that were delayed or turned down, nor how many successful applicants had merely served their time under the system described by Pedder. Without these details the testimony of both the Home Secretary and Permanent Under-secretary of State (Pedder) remains persuasive.

⁵⁶ Cesarani, ‘Anti-Alienism’, pp. 9–14.

⁵⁷ PP 1919 XXVII *Report of the Departmental Committee on Old Age Pensions*, p. 11; A. Deacon, ‘The Politics of Unemployment Insurance in the 1920s’, in Asa Briggs and John Saville (eds.), *Essays in Labour History*, London 1977, p. 16.

⁵⁸ Geoffrey Alderman, *London Jewry and London Politics*, London 1989, pp. 65–67.

immigrant laws and rules.⁵⁹ As Bill Rubinstein has observed, for all but a very brief period opposition to immigration was not driven by antisemitism but was “largely economic in nature”.⁶⁰ But it does not follow that because antisemitism was weak, traditions of pluralism, tolerance and liberalism remained at the core of British political life in the early twentieth century. Rather, an emphasis on the unchanging liberalism and tolerance of the British state can only be sustained for as long as we focus narrowly on the question of whether antisemitism was weak or strong. The lesson of the early 1920s is that the dominant perception of the nation’s economic interest led a series of governments to act in ways that were, as far as Jewish immigrants were concerned, systematically illiberal and intolerant. More generally, once we broaden our vision to encompass other ways in which the state impinged on Jews in Britain we find that they became disadvantaged in the early twentieth century.

In accounting for this change it is important to see that what the Jews asked of the state changed over time. In the nineteenth century, in the face of legislation on education, Sunday labour and the Poor Law, the Jews’ representatives focused on their claims as a religious minority. Increasingly, however, Jews were touched by legislation not because they were Jews but because they were foreigners. This happened in part because of the way in which immigration varied the composition of the Jewish minority, but also because of the way in which the state itself was undergoing change.

First, we can note an alteration in the relationship between the state and civil society. As it developed a larger, stronger central bureaucracy, the state less frequently devolved functions to voluntary organisations such as the Board of Deputies and the Jewish Board of Guardians, preferring to administer them itself. Moreover, as Christine Bellamy has demonstrated, it was in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that central government, “accepted a more active responsibility to assert the national interest in respect of a wide range of locally administered matters, particularly those relating to social welfare and the physical environment”.⁶¹ In these circumstances, it is not surprising to discover that in the early twentieth century the strengthened bureaucracy became less open to the repre-

⁵⁹ See for instance *Parliamentary Debates*, fifth series, vol.187, col. 384. p. 67.

⁶⁰ Rubinstein, p. 275.

⁶¹ Christine Bellamy, *Administering Central-Local Relations, 1871–1919. The Local Government Board and its Fiscal and Cultural Context*, Manchester 1988, p. 1.

sentations made to it by Jewish organisations over issues it conceived as concerning social welfare.

Second, the range and value of welfare services provided by both central and local government underwent a marked increase in the early twentieth century. The Aliens Act was one expression of the rise of central government intervention designed to protect the poor. It did so by seeking to exclude immigrants who were widely seen to drag down health and living standards. More generally, too, new forms of welfare required decisions to be taken on the boundaries of entitlement. As the treatment of aliens under the National Insurance Act of 1911 demonstrated, these boundaries did not have to be drawn to the immigrants' disadvantage. But increasingly, in the first quarter of the twentieth century, that is what happened.

Third, we must take account of the increasingly democratic character of politics. From the agitation of the British Brothers' League prior to the 1905 Aliens Act, through to the discriminatory policies of the London County Council in the 1920s, the aliens issue was part of a wider populist, initially anti-Liberal and subsequently anti-Socialist, platform. Conservative politicians sought to attract working-class votes and construct a populist following by claiming to protect British jobs and privileging welfare for British people.⁶² In this respect the success of the Conservative Party, and the terms of that success, were crucial to the developing relationship between Jews and the state in Britain in the years immediately after the First World War.

At the beginning of this essay I pointed out that both sides in the current controversy in Anglo-Jewish history regard the British state from emancipation to the inter-war period as essentially unchanging in its relation to the Jews, and that the Jews play only a passive part in both explanatory approaches. I have argued here that there are compelling reasons to adopt a more dynamic view of the relationship between Jews and the state, both in the sense that the Jews themselves played an important part in shaping that relationship and also in the sense that it changed over time. Above all, I have suggested that over the second half of the nineteenth century their negotiations with the state were remarkably successful. In the

⁶² M. Cowling, *The Impact of Labour*, Cambridge 1971; K. Young, *Local Politics and the Rise of Party*, Leicester 1975, pp. 118, 122; D. Jarvis, 'The Shaping of Conservative Electoral Hegemony 1918–39', in M. Taylor and J. Laurence (eds.), *Party, State and Society. Electoral Behaviour in Britain since 1820*, Aldershot 1997, pp. 131–25

first two decades of the twentieth century, however, relations between Jews and the state gradually became characterised, from the Jews' standpoint at least, less by successful negotiation and more by a series of conflicts which ended, more often than not, in failure.

CHRISTOPHER CLARK

The Jews and the German State in the Wilhelmine Era

This essay is about what German Jews expected of the state authority and how the latter's representatives responded to Jewish aspirations. Broadly speaking, German Jews, as Jews, sought three things from the German state authorities: official recognition and accommodation of the particular requirements of Jewish observance; fairness towards Jewish candidates in appointments to public service posts; and protection against the abuse, threats and violence of antisemites. This essay deals with these issues in turn. We should note at the outset, however, that it is virtually meaningless to speak of "a" relationship between "the" Jews and "the" German state. After 1871, under Imperial Germany's complex federal arrangements, German Jews were subject to a range of state administrations whose policies on matters affecting Jewish interests were anything but uniform. Even at the level of an individual federal state, it would be misleading to assume that in speaking of a "policy", one is referring to a unified and coherent convention of administrative practice. There existed no "Jewish policy" as such; those legislative measures whose impact was most keenly felt by Jews were not consciously aimed at the Jewish minority, but intended to enforce or underwrite the norms of the Christian majority. In seeking exemption from the constraints imposed by such laws, German Jews thus entered a zone of discretion and improvisation in which *Reich* or territorial laws were supplemented or qualified by local regulations.

I.

This can be observed, for example, in the treatment of Jews under *Reich* laws enforcing Sunday rest. As in Britain and elsewhere, Sunday rest regulations were an important issue, because they compromised the economic interests of religious Jews whose observance required them to close on the Saturday as well. But in contrast with Britain, where Sunday labour

regulations were supervised nationally under laws (with detailed Jewish exemptions) passed by Parliament, the corresponding German imperial legislation left the most important details of implementation to the individual communes. The *Reich* Law of 1st June 1891 (effective from 1st April 1895) stipulated that employees were not to work for more than five hours on Sundays, but added that communal authorities had the right to reduce this number or to forbid Sunday labour altogether. The principle of Sunday rest was thus enforced with varying stringency from state to state and from town to town, with important consequences for the Jewish minority. In Frankfurt, the foremost centre of strict Jewish Orthodoxy in Germany, for example, the city authorities issued a comprehensive prohibition of Sunday work in the commercial sector, despite the protests of local Jewish groups. In Munich, by contrast, where there were fruitful negotiations between the city government and a consortium of Orthodox firms, the authorities adopted a more accommodating approach.¹

Arrangements for dealing with the special requirements of Jewish students within the state education system also varied from state to state. In Baden, under a regulation issued by the Grand-Ducal *Oberschulrat* in 1877, Jewish students were free of any obligation to attend school on recognised Jewish holidays and were not to be obliged to write, draw, or carry out manual tasks when at school on the Sabbath or feast days. But a very different regime prevailed in Prussia, where Jewish parents who wished their children to be exempted from school attendance or other activities on holidays or Sabbaths were required to submit a formal request (with exact dates) either verbally or in writing to the school director at the beginning of each term.² The same diversity of enforcement practice can be seen in policy areas where individual officials were granted discretion to implement laws in the light of their own convictions. Whereas some judges, for example, issued special dispensations to Jews who were unable to serve as jurors or appear in court on the Sabbath, others imposed substantial fines for non-appearance. The legal status of Jewish communal institutions also varied from state to state. In Bavaria, Baden, Württemberg and Alsace-Lorraine, for example, the state subsidised rabbinical incomes, as well as providing aid for elderly rabbis and their widows, and assisting poorer communities. In Prussia, by contrast, and despite pressure

¹ Mordechai Breuer, *Jüdische Orthodoxie Im Deutschen Reich 1871–1918. Sozialgeschichte einer religiösen Minderheit*, Frankfurt am Main 1986, pp. 287–288.

² Chaim Schatzker, *Jüdische Jugend im Zweiten Kaiserreich. Sozialisations- und Erziehungsprozesse der jüdischen Jugend in Deutschland*, Frankfurt am Main 1988, p. 56.

from Jewish activists, the government continued throughout the pre-war era to treat Jewish communal offices and institutions as purely private corporations with no claim on public assistance.³ In sum, the state authority confronting Jewish subjects and Jewish representative bodies in Germany was heterogeneous and multilayered.

It would also be misleading, of course, to speak of a single, coherent relationship between “the” Jews and one or more states. German Jews spoke with many voices, and negotiations with the state authorities frequently divided the community against itself, precisely because Jewish “interests” were defined in very diverse and even mutually contradictory ways. Some Jews saw the quest for legal exemptions on grounds of religious practice as a means of wringing from a reluctant state authority some form of recognition of the collective rights and corporate identity of the Jewish minority, while others renounced exemptions on the grounds that such “special treatment” would merely undermine the civil equality of the Jews and their “invisibility” as German citizens. While Orthodox groups pressed for Jewish exemptions in the matter of Sunday trading, for example, many prominent Jewish commercial firms routinely opened on Saturdays and played an active role in agitating for a law enforcing Sunday rest. During a debate in the city of Frankfurt, the Jewish councillor Berthold Geiger defended his opposition to labour law exemptions on the grounds that these would constitute a “yellow badge in modern form”.⁴ For similar reasons, Reform rabbis sometimes refused to support, and even worked against, Orthodox efforts to secure exemptions for observant Jewish school pupils.

The Prussian communities were also divided over the question of whether the state should be pressed to enforce (and financially support) obligatory religious instruction for Jewish school pupils, as it did for their Christian fellows. The distinction reflected the refusal of the authorities to recognise the full entitlement of the Jewish confession on a par with the two official Christian faiths. As the Minister of Education, Count Zedlitz-Trützschler, explained in a speech to the Prussian *Landtag* in defence of Prussian government policy, the Jews constituted a merely “tolerated” sect

³ On the campaign to secure official recognition of Jewish religious and communal institutions on an equal footing with the Christian faiths in Prussia, see Marjorie Lamberti, ‘The Jewish Struggle for Legal Equality of Religions in Imperial Germany’, in *Year Book XXIII of the Leo Baeck Institute*, London 1978, pp. 101–116; *idem*, ‘The Prussian Government and the Jews. Official Behaviour and Policy-Making in the Wilhelmine Era’, in *Year Book XVII of the Leo Baeck Institute*, London 1972, pp. 5–17.

⁴ Breuer, p. 290.

in Prussia, like the Quakers, Anglicans and Baptists.⁵ But there was disagreement within the Jewish communities as to whether the harmonisation of Jewish confessional arrangements with those of the officially recognised faiths was a desirable goal. While the *Deutsch-Israelitischer Gemeindebund* pressed the Prussian government for subsidies to poor communities and called for the introduction of Jewish religious instruction in Prussian state schools, arguing that it was worth sacrificing independence in religious questions for the sake of equality of legal status, other (mainly Orthodox) spokesmen warned that it would be impossible to find a religious norm that was binding for all sectors of the community and that obligatory instruction would create “a new barrier between home and school”.⁶ These were issues that sparked off tensions between the most and the least assimilationist elements of the community. Finally, at the most local level, the financial weakness of Jewish communal institutions in Prussia encouraged competitive lobbying from within the community. In the district of Trier, for example, teachers at the Jewish elementary schools pressed the regional government for better conditions of employment in an attempt to free themselves from dependence on the synagogue councils of the communities.⁷

In contrast with negotiations of a similar kind in Britain,⁸ therefore, the “dialogue” between Jews and the state in Germany was an extremely diffuse affair, characterised by a plurality of partners on both sides. The quest for state recognition of the special character and needs of the Jewish con-

⁵ *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums*, 28th March 1890, p. 162; 22nd January 1892, p. 50. On the constitutional status of the Jewish faith in Prussia, see Jacob Toury, ‘Die bange Jahre (1887/1891). Juden in Deutschland zwischen Integrationshoffnung und Isolationsfurcht’, in Peter Freimark, Alice Jankowski and Ina S. Lorenz (eds.), *Juden in Deutschland. Emanzipation, Integration, Verfolgung und Vernichtung*, Hamburg 1991, pp. 164–185, here p. 179.

⁶ See ‘Umschau’, in *Im Deutschen Reich*, 1 (1895), p. 34; J. Schneider, ‘Sollen wir den obligatorischen Religionsunterricht an den öffentlichen Schulen erstreben?’, in *Im Deutschen Reich*, 1 (1895), pp. 231–238; here p. 231; Arnold Paucker, ‘Zur Problematik einer jüdischen Abwehrstrategie in der deutschen Gesellschaft’ in Werner E. Mosse (ed.), *Juden im Wilhelminischen Deutschland 1890–1914*, Tübingen 1976 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 33), pp. 479–548; Lamberti, ‘The Prussian Government and the Jews’, p. 6; *idem*, *Jewish Activism in Imperial Germany. The Struggle for Civil Equality*, New Haven 1978.

⁷ See for example Karl-Heinz Debus (ed.), ‘Das Verhältnis der Juden zu den christlichen Religionsgemeinschaften’, in Landesarchivverwaltung Rheinland-Pfalz, *Dokumente zur Geschichte der jüdischen Bevölkerung in Rheinland-Pfalz und im Saarland von 1800 bis 1945*, vol 4, Koblenz 1974, doc. 68, p. 262.

⁸ See David Feldman’s contribution to this volume.

fessional community was impeded both by the inflexibility of those state authorities which refused to endorse concessions from above through clear legislative statements, and by the polarisation of the Jewish community. The Prussian government, for its part, seized on these divisions as a convenient justification for withholding concessions, while at the same time obstructing Jewish efforts to establish an officially recognised and unified representative body for Prussian Jewry.⁹ The particularity of this situation is cast more sharply into relief by the comparison with Britain, where the Board of Deputies was able to function as the largely unchallenged representative of the community and where it was very successful in negotiating concessions; there was no British equivalent to the outspoken hostility of the German assimilationists to special concessions. Nor was it likely in the British context, where “non-standard” religious affiliations enjoyed much greater social prestige and political influence, that measures acknowledging the specific requirements of Jewish observance would be construed as undermining the “citizen” status of Jewish subjects.

When German Jews campaigned for special dispensations relating to the demands of their observance, they were in effect requesting that the application of general laws (such as those pertaining to Sunday rest) be suspended in particular cases. But precisely the converse principle underlay the campaign by Jewish activists to secure fair and unhindered access to public service posts for qualified Jewish candidates. Here, the claim was that general laws were being disregarded in particular cases, in other words, that principles enshrined in the constitution were being ignored or undermined in practice. It is to the debate over access to public office—one of the most protracted and influential in the history of the Jewish civil rights movement in Wilhelmine Germany—that we now turn.

II.

It was abundantly clear to Jewish contemporaries, and has not been contested since, that German governments of the Wilhelmine era discriminated against Jewish applicants for public office. For example, Jews found it exceptionally difficult to achieve promotion into the upper ranks of many of the state judiciaries, despite the disproportionate presence of Jews among lawyers, court clerks and assistant judges and the strong performance of Jewish candidates in the key state examinations; this also applied

⁹ Lamberti, ‘The Prussian Government and the Jews’, p. 15.

to most branches of the senior civil service, as well as to other important state-funded institutions of cultural significance such as primary schools, the *Gymnasien* and the universities. Between 1885 and the outbreak of the First World War, no Jew was promoted to reserve officer status in Prussia, nor in the other German states whose military contingents were subordinate to the Prussian army. (Bavaria was an exception to this arrangement and adopted a more open appointments policy.)¹⁰

The discrimination practised by the state authorities was all the more conspicuous because it represented something of an anomaly within the German political landscape. Jews had no difficulty in being elected to important political and administrative posts in many large German cities where, as high tax-payers, they benefited from a range of restrictive franchises. As a recent study has shown, Jews held a substantial proportion (as high as a quarter) of council seats in the city of Breslau and could hold any position in the city administration except for those of mayor and deputy mayor, which were in the gift of the central state authorities in Berlin.¹¹ In the words of the distinguished ethnographer and Jewish civil rights activist Moritz Lazarus in 1897: “[The Jews] are today still confronted with a reluctance on the part of the government to take emancipation truly seriously. Insofar as the *population* has had a say, it long ago granted the Jews their due. We see them in all the offices of self-administration, borne up by the confidence of their fellow citizens and acting with distinction and success. Only the *state* still has reservations about bestowing upon them the sacred distinction of certain public offices.”¹²

The inequitable handling of appointments in the state sector generated a deep sense of grievance among politically aware and active Jews, and it is not difficult to see why. German officialdom enjoyed a prestige and social status—and a purchase on the public imagination—which had no counter-

¹⁰ See Werner T. Angress, ‘Prussia’s Army and the Jewish Reserve Officer Controversy Before World War I’, in *Year Book XVII of the Leo Baeck Institute*, London 1972, pp. 19–42; Norbert Kampe, ‘Jüdische Professoren im deutschen Kaiserreich’, in Rainer Erb and M. Schmidt (eds.), *Antisemitismus und jüdische Geschichte. Studien zu Ehren von Herbert A. Strauss*, Berlin 1987, pp. 185–211.

¹¹ Till van Rahden, ‘Mingling, Marrying and Distancing. Jewish integration in Wilhelminian Breslau and its Erosion in Early Weimar Germany’ in Wolfgang Benz, Arnold Paucker and Peter Pulzer (eds.), *Jüdisches Leben in der Weimarer Republik—Jews in the Weimar Republic*, Tübingen 1998 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 57), pp. 193–216. I am grateful to Till van Rahden for letting me see a pre-publication copy of his essay.

¹² Moritz Lazarus, ‘Wie wir Staatsbürger wurden’, in *Im Deutschen Reich*, 3 (1897), pp. 239–247; here p. 246.

part in Britain. In a political system in which ministers were not party politicians recruited from the majority faction of the parliament (as in Britain) but career civil servants, entry into the civil service enjoyed a special attraction as a means of leaping the divide between civil society, with its parties and pressure groups, and the political-administrative executive. And in a highly militarised society such as Prussia, the same applied *a fortiori* to reserve officer rank, which was widely seen as a vital prerequisite not only for success in society but also for entry into the more senior civil service posts. *Heeresdienst*, as Werner Angress pointed out in his study of the Jewish reserve officer controversy, was *Ehrendienst*. To categorically deny to Jews the right to serve as reserve officers was effectively to impugn the honour and dignity of an entire class of citizens.¹³

Moreover, the protracted process of emancipation in the German states, the “tortuous and thorny path,” as Reinhard Rürup has called it, bestowed its own special significance on the issue of state appointments.¹⁴ The universities and *Gymnasien* were of special importance in this respect, because of the crucial role they had played—and continued to play—in the acculturation and bourgeoisification of German Jews. The right to serve in the military had been seen since the Wars of Liberation as a crucial component of Jewish citizenship, just as valorous Jewish service in the Fatherland’s defence was offered as an argument in favour of emancipation. Moreover, access to public office had figured from the very outset as the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow of emancipation. In his famous essay *On the Civil Improvement of the Jews*, the emancipationist Christian Wilhelm von Dohm reflected on the question of “whether in our states the Jews should be admitted to public office immediately. It seems in fact that if they are granted all civil rights, they should not be excluded from applying for the honour to serve the government, and if they are found to be capable, from being employed by the state. I think, however, that in the next generation, this capability will not yet appear frequently, and the state should make no special effort to develop it”.¹⁵ In a similar vein, Hardenberg’s Edict of March 1812 left the question of access to state appointments tantalisingly open for resolution at a later date. The implication was

¹³ Angress, p. 30.

¹⁴ Reinhard Rürup, ‘The Tortuous and Thorny Path to Legal Equality. “Jew Laws” and Emancipatory Legislation in Germany from the Late Eighteenth Century’, in *Year Book XXXI of the Leo Baeck Institute*, London 1986, pp. 3–33.

¹⁵ Christian Wilhelm Dohm, *Über die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Juden*, Berlin 1781; the quotation is from the translated excerpts in Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, *The Jew in the Modern World*, Oxford 1995, pp. 27–34; here p. 32.

that admission to the state sector would not be *part* of the emancipation process, but a prize to be awarded if and when the Jews should succeed in weaning themselves from their traditional vices. Access to state office also acquired a certain symbolic importance through the frequency and vehemence with which it was broached in anti-emancipationist pamphlets and periodicals throughout the emancipation era. Of all the entitlements to which German Jews aspired, it was the one longest withheld or, where it had been granted, most often qualified or withdrawn.

But access to public office was important above all because of the distinctive place of the state in the consolidation of a post-emancipation Jewish identity. As the forces that sought to exclude Jews from civil society gathered strength, so the right of German Jews to call themselves *Staatsbürger* grew in importance. It is no accident that the *Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens* was founded in 1893, at a time when a new and more threatening wave of political antisemitism was making itself felt. In the face of those who claimed to speak for a homogeneous German *Volk*, Jewish civil rights activists insisted on citizenship as a purely legal category defined and guaranteed by the constitutional principles of the *Rechtsstaat*. They were not, according to Article 1 of their founding resolutions, “German Jews”, but “Germans of Jewish faith” who had “no more in common with the Jews of other countries than the Catholics and Protestants of Germany with the Catholics and Protestants of other countries”.¹⁶ Indeed, they went so far as to insist that the bond that united them in their cause was neither religion nor politics, but simply *das Staatsbürgerliche*—the quality of citizenship.¹⁷ Hence the insistence of the *Centralverein* leadership that “the Jewish Question is not a racial question but a question of law, justice, right” (the three are subsumed in the German *Recht*) and that “every citizen who fulfils his moral and material obligations to the state ... must have the same rights to the beneficence of the state”.¹⁸

The legal and constitutional position regarding access to public office was clear: the Confederal Law of 3 July 1869—subsequently incorporated into *Reich* legislation—explicitly stated that all curtailments of civil and citizenship rights that derived from differences of creed were henceforth

¹⁶ Founding Resolutions 1 and 4 of the *Centralverein*, given in ‘Der Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens am Schlusse seines ersten Lustrums’, in *Im Deutschen Reich*, 4 (1898), pp. 1–6; here p. 6.

¹⁷ Anon., ‘Die Bestrebungen und Ziele des Centralvereins’, in *Im Deutschen Reich*, 1 (1895), pp. 142–158; here p. 153.

¹⁸ Anon., ‘Unsere Stellung’, in *Im Deutschen Reich*, 1 (1895), pp. 5–6.

abolished, and the Prussian constitution stated (Article 12) that all Prussians were equal before the law and (Article 4) that public offices were equally accessible to all equally qualified persons. Only in the case of public offices involving religious observance was it admissible to discriminate against non-Christian candidates. Whether these stipulations amounted to a *right* of equal opportunity vested in the individual citizen remained open to question, since the Prussian constitution also stated (Article 47) that appointments to public office were in the gift of the king unless the law stipulated otherwise, and therefore did not provide for any means of appealing against appointment procedures. Nevertheless, the principles articulated here meant at least that no government could openly adopt a policy of discrimination, as it were, on its own merits. Jewish activists were perfectly aware that the Jewish communities, unlike the Catholics, would never be able to muster the numbers to bring direct political pressure on the government. Hence the supreme importance of those constitutional principles that, in theory at least, prevented the state from becoming the instrument of any one ethnic or confessional camp. There could be no Jewish Centre Party. Nor, as one Jewish legal official put it, was there any need for one, "for the principles on whose basis we pursue our constitutional rights are the universal principles of humanity and justice".¹⁹ The surest way for the Jewish minority to safeguard its rights was to hold the state authority to the letter and spirit of its own constitution. As the Bedenese official David Hugo Mayer observed in a speech of 1904, the vulnerability of the Jews and consequent dependence on the constitution made them the surest champions of "the right of the minority" and thus of "justice *sans phrase*".²⁰ And this orientation towards the constitution, with its transcendent principles, implied in turn a dependence upon the state which at once enforced the constitution and was curtailed by it. As the Progressive *Reichstag* deputy Ludwig Haas asked at a meeting of the *Centralverein* in 1913: "If the constitution in the long run means nothing, what, then, can endure in the *Reich*, in the state?"²¹ It is impor-

¹⁹ Landgerichtsrath Wollstein, 'Unser Verhalten den Antisemitismus in politischer, sittlicher und gesellschaftlicher Beziehung', in *Im Deutschen Reich*, 6 (1900), pp. 177–191; here p. 179.

²⁰ Speech given by D.H. Mayer in Karlsruhe on 29th May 1904, cited in B. Schmitt, 'Im Spannungsfeld von Assimilation, Antisemitismus und Zionismus 1890–1918' in Heinz Schmitt, Ernst Otto Bräunche and Manfred Koch (eds.), *Juden in Karlsruhe*, Karlsruhe 1990, pp. 121–154; here p. 131.

²¹ L. Haas, *Der deutsche Jude in der Armee*, Berlin 1913, pp. 17–8, cited in Angress, pp. 30–1.

tant, in other words, not to follow the American historian Lamar Cecil and sceptical Jewish contemporaries in demoting Jewish campaigns for fair access to public office to a self-interested and unseemly hunt for status symbols.²²

III.

From the 1890s, Jews challenged discriminatory practice with increasing frequency, using petitions, official letters from Jewish organisations and, most importantly, parliamentary interpellations. The success of Jewish defence organisations in articulating a unified Jewish response to discrimination and prejudice has been variously assessed;²³ here I want instead to focus briefly on the ways in which governments—or rather the officials who represented them—sought to explain or legitimate discriminatory practice by the state. It was a conscious objective of the Jewish organisations to place the government in a position where it was obliged to formulate a defence of its practice and thus render explicit its disregard for constitutional principle. It will not be possible, given the range of cases aired and the protracted nature of the resulting controversies, some of which dragged on into the period of the First World War, to provide a comprehensive survey of government responses to challenges and interpellations. Instead, I shall identify the arguments most frequently deployed by officials across a range of disparate cases.

One of the most commonly invoked arguments used to deflect charges of systematic discrimination was the assertion that the process of appointing a judge or an officer was inherently elusive and particular and therefore resistant to the application of universal, or in this context constitutional, principles. In the debate over the so-called *Assessoren-Paragraph* in 1896, for example, the government took the view that the appointment of a judge did not depend upon examination performances and professional qualifications, but on a much broader and more nuanced palette of criteria, including social tact, outward appearance, “good family”,

²² Lamar Cecil, ‘Comments on the Papers of Marjorie Lamberti and Werner T. Angress’, in *Year Book XVII of the Leo Baeck Institute*, London 1972, pp. 54–59; here p. 59; Paucker, ‘Zur Problematik’, p. 508.

²³ See esp. Lamberti, *Jewish Activism in Imperial Germany*; Paucker, ‘Zur Problematik’; Jehuda Reinharz, *Fatherland or Promised Land. The Dilemma of the German Jew 1893–1914*, Ann Arbor 1975; Ismar Schorsch, *Jewish Reactions to German Anti-Semitism, 1870–1914*, New York 1972.

evidence of reserve and discernment in his “choice of company” and in all his “social connections”, in short, the entirety of his private and public personality and comportment. Variations of this reasoning were almost always offered during the 1890s and 1900s whenever the Jews or progressive parliamentary deputies challenged the appointments practice of the state. This argument was not, of course, inherently antisemitic, but by foregrounding the role of personal intuition and “imponderables” (to borrow the term used by Prussian Justice Minister Schönstedt) in the selection process, it placed the whole process beyond parliamentary scrutiny in the light of constitutional criteria. It also involved deferring, implicitly, to the right of powerful government bureaucracies to recruit from their own kind.

Indeed, representatives of the state authority frequently disclaimed responsibility for appointments altogether, pointing out that the real power to make them lay with the relevant departments and institutions and that to reverse such decisions on the grounds that they were discriminatory would constitute an unwarranted violation of their autonomy. When the *Centralverein* complained, for example, to the Saxon district authorities of discrimination against Jewish medical trainees at the City Hospital of Chemnitz, it was informed that “since the City Council is free, for example, to limit the circle of candidates for intern posts at the City Hospital to married doctors, doctors of a certain age, or [doctors] who have acquired a certain examination result, so it would be inadmissible for the authorities to intervene with prohibitions if [the Council] wishes to see only *Christian* doctors employed at the City Hospital. This is a matter for its free decision.” It was subsequently supported in this view by the Saxon ministry. Alternative strategies were to plead ignorance of “particular cases”, or to acknowledge the justice of Jewish grievances in principle, but to plead impotence on the grounds just mentioned, namely that the real power to make appointments lay—and must lie—with the responsible officials in the administrative or military body concerned. Thus War Minister von Einem to the *Reichstag* in 1904 on the question of the exclusion of Jews from reserve officer rank: “I can say that there exist no legal or administrative stipulations that hinder [such appointments] in any way whatsoever. I can only urge the responsible persons to proceed in accordance with these laws.”²⁴ Responding to complaints over discrimination against Jewish applicants for positions at Prussian public hospitals in 1911, the

²⁴ Cited in anon., ‘Die Juden als Soldaten’, in *Im Deutschen Reich*, 10 (1904), pp. 189–200; here p. 190.

Kultusminister expressed his concern at such misbehaviour but insisted that it was not in his power to affect the selection of candidates. In his own contribution to the same debate, Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg even declared that he saw “no reason for an intervention by the authorities in the complementary freedoms of candidates and institutions to apply [wherever] and accept [whomever] they will”. For the state to launch an initiative in this sphere would merely “create or enliven confessional tensions in a sphere—namely that of medical training—which was by nature confessionally neutral”.²⁵

Such governmental inaction ensured the continuation of discriminatory practice, since discrimination was often less a matter of ministerial policy (except by default, of course) than of an established practice that blocked Jewish aspirants at crucial informal thresholds in the promotion process: thus Jewish *Einjährige* (one-year military volunteers) generally had no difficulty gaining access to officer training courses and sitting exams with their non-Jewish colleagues—no-one stopped them (or had the wherewithal to stop them) from doing *this*—it is just that they were far less likely to have their names put forward for election as sergeants by their captains or battalion commanders, and that the very small number who did make it were certain to be dropped from the promotion list by the Colonel Blimps of the reserve officer corps. The same applied to Jewish aspirants to high judicial office in Prussia. There was nothing to prevent them entering the law faculties and acquiring disproportionately high numbers of the best results in the First State Examination (taken after three years of formal academic study); the problems began when the Jewish graduate had to find a Provincial Appeal Judge willing to shepherd him through the courts over the next four years. As the civil rights activist Gerhard Stein observed in 1895 in connection with discrimination against Jewish women seeking teaching posts in girls’ schools, the arbitrary character of discrimination made it all the more difficult to bear: “It can hardly be determined which is worse, a public injustice, which one can oppose as such, or an appearance of equality before the law which conceals the reality of a discrimination all the more harmful for the fact that many a [Jewish candidate] has been prompted thereby to take up a vocation which, had the circumstances been clearer, she would not have chosen.”²⁶

²⁵ ‘Der Reichskanzler und die Zurückweisung jüdischer Medizinalpraktikanten’, in *Im Deutschen Reich*, 17 (1911), pp. 558–560.

²⁶ G. Stein, ‘Im Verwaltungswege’, in *Im Deutschen Reich*, 1 (1895), pp. 246–250.

In addition to disclaimers and evasion, whose credibility tended to wear thin under the pressure of repeated parliamentary interpellations and press scrutiny, senior state officials also found more principled defences of discriminatory practice. One of the most widely invoked, and most significant in terms of its impact on press debate, was the argument that the authorities had an obligation to take public opinion into account when appointing individuals to important public posts. In a controversial statement before the Hessian *Landtag* in 1899, the Hessian Minister of Justice, Dr Dittmar, defended an appointments policy which had completely excluded Jews from the Hessian judiciary by pointing out that the office of judge itself would suffer if Jewish judges were appointed to districts whose "antisemitically inclined populations" would have "no confidence" in them.²⁷ Two years later in one of the more sensational debates on this question, Dittmar's Prussian colleague Karl Heinrich von Schönstedt affirmed, likewise, that he had to take account of local opinion when making judicial appointments (it was in the course of explaining his position that he made his famous reference to "imponderables").²⁸ "I cannot, when appointing notaries," Schönstedt declared, "simply treat Jewish advocates on the same basis as Christian ones, since the broadest strata of the population are not willing to have their affairs managed by Jewish notaries".²⁹ A similar argument, in which deference to mass opinion and the role of "imponderables" were characteristically blended, was advanced by the Prussian Minister of War von Heeringen in February 1910 in reply to a *Reichstag* enquiry concerning the exclusion of Jewish volunteers from reserve officer promotions: "We must not only demand that the individual possesses ability and knowledge and ... character, but we must seek additional [qualities] from a superior. The entire personality of the man concerned, the way he stands in front of the troops, must inspire respect. Now far be it from me to claim ... that this is missing in our Jewish fellow citizens. But on the other hand, we cannot deny that a different view prevails ... among the lower orders."³⁰ Since most government posts involved the provision of services of one kind or another to a part, however small, of

²⁷ 'Die Anstellung jüdischer Richter im Großherzogtum Hessen', in *Im Deutschen Reich*, 5 (1899), pp. 635–640; here p. 636.

²⁸ On the context of the remarks made by the Minister of Justice before the Prussian *Landtag* in 1901, see Ernst Hamburger, *Juden im öffentlichen Leben Deutschlands*, Tübingen 1968, p. 47.

²⁹ Cited in anon., 'Justizminister a.D. Schönstedt', in *Im Deutschen Reich*, 11 (1905), pp. 623–626.

³⁰ Speech before the *Reichstag* of 10 February 1910, cited in Angress, p. 35.

the population, the argument of public opinion could be invoked for virtually all sectors of public employment. Freiherr von Groß, acting Minister of State for the Saxon government, used exactly the same line of argument in 1902, when the issue of discrimination at the Chemnitz City Hospital was aired in the Saxon parliament: "We can't hold it against the [hospital] if, ... when it seeks to acquire a physician, it must ask itself whether the religion of same accords with that of the majority of the patients, or whether perhaps conflicts could arise ...".³¹ The same case was made for the exclusion of Jews from teaching positions in primary and secondary education.

The readiness of the state authorities to accommodate what they took to be an antisemitically-charged public opinion also left its mark on administrative practice. This can be seen in the policy adopted by the Prussian government authorities towards the rapidly growing antisemitic movement at the universities in the early 1880s, when the Ministry of the Interior intervened in support of antisemitic student associations, undercutting the predominantly liberal university administrations that were trying to suppress them.³² At about the same time, the Prussian administration also began to tighten its policy on the naturalisation of foreign Jews, initially through new and more restrictive regulations governing the appointment of synagogue functionaries, and later through wholesale discrimination against all Jewish applicants for naturalisation.³³ In both cases, government policy moved in synchrony with trends in popular opinion. The *Berliner Antisemitismusstreit* that had broken out in 1879 was still generating lively discussion in 1881; while it galvanised the Berlin professoriate into a concerted defence of the Jews, it appears to have stimulated antisemitism within the student population. And the question of Jewish immigration loomed large throughout the debate. The controversy had begun, after all, with an article in the *Preußische Jahrbücher* in which Heinrich von Treitschke commented notoriously on the "host of ambitious trouser-sell-

³¹ J. Lewy, 'Die staatsbürgerliche Gleichberechtigung und die jüdischen Ärzte', in *Im Deutschen Reich*, 9 (1903), pp. 150–156, here pp. 155–156.

³² Norbert Kampe, *Studenten und "Judenfrage" im deutschen Kaiserreich. Die Entstehung einer akademischen Trägerschicht des Antisemitismus*, Göttingen 1988, pp. 34–37.

³³ Jack Wertheimer, *Unwelcome Strangers. East European Jews in Imperial Germany*, New York 1987, pp. 43–55, 58–59, 71–73; *idem*, 'The Unwanted Element. Eastern European Jews in Imperial Germany', in *Year Book XXVI of the Leo Baeck Institute*, London 1981, pp. 23–47.

ing youths who pour across our eastern frontier ... from the inexhaustible Polish cradle".³⁴

During the 1890s, as Dietz Bering has shown in an important study, antisemitic petitions, agitation and parliamentary interpellations were successful in changing government policy on the procedure to be adopted when Jews sought to change their family names. The antisemitic position on this question was that Jewish name-changing was categorically undesirable, since it would generate confusion about who was Jewish and who was not. The irony here was that it was precisely the growing momentum of the antisemitic movement that prompted some citizens with recognisably "Jewish" names to apply to the state for permission to adopt more neutral alternatives. To the relevant administrative bodies, such procedures ought to have been a matter of the deepest indifference, provided they were properly registered and satisfied the appropriate technical and aesthetic criteria. Yet the state authorities (specifically the Minister of the Interior Botho von Eulenburg) adopted the antisemitic viewpoint, departing from established policy to discriminate specifically against Jewish applicants for an alteration of surnames. They even had the nerve to defend their policy with the circular argument that for the state to permit Jewish name-alterations would simply fan the flames of antisemitism by bestowing legitimacy upon the notion that Jewish-sounding names might carry negative connotations. The result of such partisan interventions by the state was, as Bering pointed out, the abandonment of administrative neutrality and "the establishing of the racial viewpoint as an administrative principle".³⁵

The same could be said of the infamous *Judenzählung* instigated by the Prussian Ministry of War in October 1916 with a view to establishing how many Jews were in active service on the front line.³⁶ Antisemitic organisations such as the *Reichshammerbund* (founded in 1912) had been gather-

³⁴ Heinrich von Treitschke, 'Unsere Aussichten', in *Preußische Jahrbücher*, November 1879, cited in Walter Boehlich (ed.), *Der Berliner Antisemitismus-Streit*, Frankfurt am Main 1965, pp. 7–14.

³⁵ See Dietz Bering, *The Stigma of Names. Anti-Semitism in German Daily Life, 1812–1933*, Oxford 1992, esp. pp. 87–118. For a study of naming policy in the City-State of Hamburg that comes to similar conclusions, see Hans-Dieter Loose, 'Wünsche Hamburger Juden auf Änderung ihrer Vornamen und der staatliche Umgang damit. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Antisemitismus im Hamburger Alltag', in Freimark *et al.* (eds.), pp. 58–80.

³⁶ On the *Judenzählung*, see especially Werner T. Angress, 'The German Army's "Judenzählung" of 1916. Genesis—Consequences—Significance', in *Year Book XXIII of the Leo Baeck Institute*, London 1978, pp. 117–137.

ing anecdotal information on the role played by Jews in the war effort since August 1914, arguing that such material would provide useful propaganda for the antisemitic movement after the war was over.³⁷ The antisemites consistently propagated the claim that the German Jews were war-profiteers who were not pulling their weight in defence of the Fatherland. From the outbreak of the war, and particularly from the end of 1915, the Ministry of War was bombarded with anonymous denunciations and complaints, the result of a well-planned campaign of agitation by antisemitic groups. Having for some time disregarded these protests, Minister of War Wild von Hohenborn decided to proceed with a statistical survey of Jews in the armed forces; in a formal decree of 11 October 1916 announcing the survey, the minister referred to allegations that the majority of Jewish servicemen had managed to avoid combat by securing posts well behind the front line.³⁸ With its transparent concessions to antisemitic opinion, the minister's announcement shocked and dismayed Jewish contemporaries. It was, according to one commentator, "the most indelibly shameful insult that has dishonoured our community since its emancipation".³⁹ Although the results confirmed that Jews were well represented in front-line units, the survey—and the controversy generated by it—widened the gap between Jewish soldiers and their Gentile colleagues, as well as undermining the standing and authority of Jewish officers and medical staff. Once again, and notwithstanding the *Burgfrieden* (domestic political truce) declared in 1914, the antisemites had succeeded in gaining influence over government policy.

It is easy to understand the alarm Jewish contemporaries felt at the state's capitulation before the "mood of the population". It was one thing for the traditional oligarchies to cling to their accustomed share of government patronage; it was another, somewhat more ominous, thing for government to accommodate its policy on public appointments to the vicissitudes of opinion. All of this amounted to a double abdication of the state's role to defend the rule of law and thereby "set the tone" in civil so-

³⁷ Werner Jochmann, 'Die Ausbreitung des Antisemitismus', in *Deutsches Judentum in Krieg und Revolution, 1916–1923*. Ein Sammelband herausgegeben von Werner E. Mosse unter Mitwirkung von Arnold Paucker, Tübingen 1971 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 25), pp. 409–510; here pp. 411–413.

³⁸ The text of the decree is given in Werner T. Angress, 'Das deutsche Militär und die Juden im Ersten Weltkrieg', in *Militär-geschichtliche Mitteilungen*, 19 (1976), pp. 77–146.

³⁹ R. Lewin, 'Der Krieg als jüdisches Erlebnis', in *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums*, 63 (1919), pp. 1–14, cited in Helmut Berding, *Moderner Antisemitismus in Deutschland*, Frankfurt am Main 1988, p. 169.

ciety. It was impossible to say how deeply rooted or widespread antisemitism was within the German population, and certainly highly questionable to claim that popular antisemitic passions made it impractical to appoint Jewish officials—after all there was a serving Jewish *Amtsrichter* in the constituency of the antisemite Hermann Ahlwardt in the early 1890s who seems to have performed his professional duties successfully. Nor did the relatively greater numbers of Jewish judges in the state of Bavaria give rise to complaints from the populace, even in rural areas, notwithstanding claims to the contrary by antisemites.⁴⁰ Moreover, those few episodes of public disorder that were triggered by antisemitic agitation proved easy to suppress, once the authorities resolved to take action.⁴¹ What was clear was that administrative concessions by government to antisemitism effectively endorsed and helped to legitimate the very phenomenon they were intended to address, as well as alienating the state from its own proper place and function as a neutral arbiter. Those who claimed to divine and accommodate public opinion also helped to create it. In the face of this wholesale retreat, the hard-won success of the Jewish self-defence organisations in launching public prosecutions during the 1890s against some of the most egregious antisemitic publicists could be of little avail.⁴²

IV.

Why did the state fail its Jewish citizens in these important ways? Before attempting to answer this question in the context of Imperial Germany, it is important to remind ourselves that the German states had rarely taken the initiative in the question of Jewish entitlements. Throughout the emancipation era, German states—from the senate of Hamburg to the government of Hesse Kassel—had delayed emancipatory measures on the grounds that they would undermine respect for authority, or even provoke

⁴⁰ In 1901, responding to attacks from the antisemitic peasant leader Georg Heim, the Bavarian Minister of Justice praised the “conscientiousness and modesty” of the Jewish judges and insisted that there had been no complaints from the population in areas served by them. Hamburger, p. 49. On the antisemites’ claims, see F. Schach, ‘Parität’, in *Im Deutschen Reich*, 8 (1902), pp. 1–7, here p. 5.

⁴¹ On violence against Jews incited by antisemites and government responses, see Christhard Hoffmann, ‘Politische Kultur und Gewalt gegen Minderheiten. Die antisemitischen Ausschreitungen in Pommern und Westpreußen 1881’, in *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung*, 3 (1994), pp. 93–120, esp. pp. 110–112.

⁴² On this aspect of Jewish civil rights work, see Schorsch, *Jewish Reactions*, esp. 123–131.

civic unrest, among the Christian population. One of the most striking aspects of Prussian policy-making in the post-Napoleonic period was the tendency to pass the onus of policy-making ever further down the tiers of the administration, until the decisive say rested with those local magistrates, mayors and clerical superintendents who were felt to have the best measure of “public opinion”. The result was complete paralysis and the comprehensive abandonment of the vanguard role Hardenberg had aspired to with the edict of March 1812. A striking case was that of Bavaria, where the government drafted an emancipation bill in 1848-1849, but abandoned it after an antisemitic petition campaign.⁴³

In any case, the state had never been the only agency that determined the meaning of Jewish “citizenship”: citizenship in the fullest sense depended as much upon the concession of rights within a specific municipality (*Gemeinde*) or within a particular guild-controlled profession as it did on recognition from the state; indeed it was often at the latter, local, level that emancipation took longest to be realised. In Baden, for example, as Reinhard Rürup has shown, although the Jews had formally enjoyed the status of “state citizens” since the legislation of 1809, they were excluded from residence in over 80% of Baden municipalities until the 1860s, therefore also from the “freedom of movement” theoretically enjoyed by Badense citizens. The state’s approach to Jewish policy had always been marked by timorousness and pragmatism, and it continued to be so after 1871. The habit of devolving responsibility for the practical side of policy to subordinate or even extra-governmental bodies was thus deeply ingrained, as was a tendency to secure or consolidate consent—in the absence of true parliamentary legitimacy—through the appeasement of mass opinion in key symbolic policy areas. Indeed, the latter problem posed itself in a particularly acute form during the 1890s, which saw far-reaching socio-economic and party-political transformation and the emergence of a “politics of demagogy” to which the government itself was not immune.⁴⁴ This is important, because it rather runs against the grain of a still widely-held view of the German state as a “strong state” imposing its own agenda

⁴³ James F. Harris, *The People Speak! Anti-Semitism and Emancipation in nineteenth-century Bavaria*, Ann Arbor 1994; for a general discussion of these issues, see Christopher M. Clark, ‘Jewish Emancipation in the German States’, in Rainer Liedtke and Stephan Wendehorst (eds.), *The Emancipation of Catholics, Jews and Protestants. Minorities and the Nation State in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, Manchester 1999.

⁴⁴ See especially David Blackbourn, ‘The Politics of Demagogy in Imperial Germany’, in *idem*, *Populists and Patricians. Essays in Modern German History*, London 1987, pp. 246–264.

upon a politically supine populace and embodying the authoritarian ideals of a politically transcendent “fourth estate”.

If we consider the situation in the Wilhelmine era, when the equality of Jewish civic entitlements was constitutionally guaranteed, then it seems to me that one factor above all presents itself as decisive (and what I am trying to account for here is not the rise of antisemitism as such, which raises a separate set of issues, but the absence of a strong sense of state to counterbalance it): the fissured, tribal character of German political culture, with its deep confessional and regional divides, encouraged a self-aggrandising, competitive and instrumental attitude to the state. During the first decade after unification, the hegemony of the National Liberals and their Bismarckian allies had ensured that the dominant tone in politics was statist and anti-particularist. But the electoral decline of the liberal parties and the turn to protectionism, with all the competitive corporate lobbying which that entailed, brought more parochial forces onto the scene and sharpened socio-political conflicts, just as the growing importance of the Centre Party—itsself indirectly a consequence of the rise of Social Democracy—began to threaten the traditional supremacy of the Protestant elites. The Protestant oligarchy that controlled the high ground of the Prussian-Imperial state defended its key institutions against all comers, discriminating not only against Jews, but also against Catholics, Social Democrats and other groups.⁴⁵ One consequence of this was that the Catholics soon abandoned any attachment to equality of opportunity along constitutional lines, preferring instead to fight for Catholic rights under the banner of parity (*Parität*), to acquire a slice of the action in keeping with its proportion of the population. A Centre Party publication that appeared in Cologne in the late 1890s argued the case for parity with batteries of statistics in which it was calculated exactly, on a proportional basis, how many generals, sergeants, ministers, officials and policemen should be Catholic. The book focused on Catholics and Protestants: there was, needless to say, no mention of Jews. As Peter Pulzer has pointed out, what the Centre Party wanted was not meritocracy and impartial justice, but a kind of ecclesiastical dualism that would exclude or marginalise Nonconformists and non-Christians of all stripes.⁴⁶ That left the Jews and the Left Liberals

⁴⁵ See Peter Pulzer, ‘Die jüdische Beteiligung an der Politik’, in Mosse (ed.), *Juden im Wilhelminischen Deutschland*, pp. 143–239, here pp. 163–165.

⁴⁶ Peter Pulzer, ‘Religion and Judicial Appointments in Imperial Germany’ in *idem*, *Jews and the German State*, Oxford 1992, pp. 44–68.

as virtually the only ones who believed in the state as a transcendent legal and constitutional construct.⁴⁷

In December 1901, an editorial writer for the *Centralverein* journal *Im Deutschen Reich* observed that: “Popular attitudes ebb and flood, but the Law stands fast like a rock, unshaken by the crash of waves ...”. Unfortunately, it was public attitudes that proved obdurate, and the not-so-transcendent *Rechtsstaat* that proved porous and irresolute. No-one understood this better than the antisemites, whose journals celebrated and amplified every remark by a minister or senior public servant that could be construed as remotely hostile to the Jews. Endowed with a perspicacity born of obsession, they saw quite clearly how comprehensively the authorities had allowed the antisemites to set the terms of debate.

As Jewish contemporaries understood only too well, there was a bitter irony here, because whereas the Jews were among the foremost friends of the state, the antisemites were without question among its most implacable enemies—notwithstanding their repeated declarations of loyalty to *Kaiser* and Fatherland. When the Jewish butcher accused in the Xanten ritual murder of 1892 was acquitted, the antisemitic press announced that the verdict would merely deal a “further terrible blow to the reputation of the judiciary”;⁴⁸ when the town magistrate of Kottbus changed the date of the autumn market because the original date had clashed with a Jewish holiday, the antisemitic *Staatsbürger-Zeitung* published a rhyming commentary that closed with the couplet: “Den Hut ab vor so ‘christlicher’ Behörde / O daß zum Dank sie bald ‘geschächtet’ werde!”;⁴⁹ and it was the antisemites who terrorised the government every time a Jewish applicant was appointed to a public service post, denouncing ministers and officials as “Judenfreunde”, “Judenknechte”, “Mitglieder der Judenschutztruppe” and so on.⁵⁰ In the wake of the crisis surrounding the *Daily Telegraph Af-*

⁴⁷ For suggestive reflections on the possibility that the campaign for Jewish entitlements needs to be detached from the binary paradigm of an encounter between Jews and “the state” and re-interpreted in the context of a “sociology of interests”, see Paul R. Duggan, ‘German-Jewish Relations in the Wilhelminian Period’, in *Year Book XVII of the Leo Baeck Institute*, London 1972, pp. 43–54; here pp. 53–54.

⁴⁸ Article in the *Hannoversche Post*, cited in ‘Antisemitismus—Anarchismus’, in *Im Deutschen Reich*, 1 (1895), pp. 205–226; here p. 225.

⁴⁹ “Hats off to such a ‘Christian’ authority/Let us hope that it will soon be ritually slaughtered for its pains”; *Staatsbürger-Zeitung*, cited in *Im Deutschen Reich*, 3 (1897), pp. 42–43. The paper was fined 200 Marks for this provocation after a prosecution brought by the mayor of Kottbus.

⁵⁰ “Friends of the Jews”, “Slaves of the Jews”, “Members of the Jewish Defence Troop”; for commentary, see Eugen Fuchs, ‘Rückblick auf die zehnjährige Tätigkeit des

fair in 1908, the antisemites even threatened the Imperial government with civil disobedience and organised resistance.⁵¹

The roots of this intransigence lay in a principled hostility to the state. For the antisemites, the term “state” possessed connotations of artificiality and machine-like impersonality, in contrast to the organic, natural attributes associated with the *Volk*. The only acceptable form of state organisation (Eugen Dühring described this as the “natural state”) was that which demoted the apparatus of the state to an instrument for the self-empowerment of the *Volk*.⁵² The tendency to see *Staat*—in the sense of the existing constitutional order—and *Volk* as representing diametrically opposed interests was not confined to the narrow milieu of the dedicated political antisemites, but gained ground among nationalist and right-wing circles in the later Wilhelmine Empire. It can be seen in the widespread demand for a *völkisch* foreign policy that greeted the Imperial government’s “failure” to support the Boers in South Africa during the late 1890s and in the anti-government propaganda of the Pan-German movement after 1900.⁵³ It can be discerned in more radical form during the First World War in the antisemitic, Anglophobe, annexationist movement that denounced the parliamentary order and openly accused Bethmann-Hollweg’s government in 1916 of forging a pact with the international forces of Jewish and Anglo-Saxon mammonism against the German people.⁵⁴ Lastly, it can be seen in the political utterances of Adolf Hitler, the most ruthless of the German state’s antisemitic enemies. Hitler frequently took up this theme—as, for example, in *Mein Kampf*, where he referred contemptuously to “dog-like veneration for the so-called state authority” or at the Nuremberg Party Rally of 1935, where he proclaimed: “The point of departure for National Socialist doctrine is not the State, but the *Volk*.”⁵⁵ In-

Central-Vereins deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens’, in *Im Deutschen Reich*, 9 (1903), pp. 197–208; here p. 200.

⁵¹ See Werner Jochmann, ‘Struktur und Funktion des deutschen Antisemitismus’, in Mosse (ed.), *Juden im Wilhelminischen Deutschland*, pp. 389–477; here p. 462.

⁵² See Christopher Cobet, *Der Wortschatz des Antisemitismus in der Bismarckzeit*, Munich 1973, p. 49.

⁵³ See Harald Rosenbach, *Das Deutsche Reich, Großbritannien und der Transvaal (1896–1902). Anfänge deutsch-britischer Entfremdung*, Göttingen 1993, pp. 289, 292, 302–305, 308.

⁵⁴ On this see M. Stibbe, ‘Vampire of the Continent. German Anglophobia during the First World War’, Ph.D. Diss., University of Sussex 1997, esp. pp. 138–139; Jochmann, ‘Die Ausbreitung’, *passim*.

⁵⁵ On Hitler’s view of the state, in the context of the history of theories of the state, see Hans Boldt, ‘Staat und Souveränität’, in Otto Brunner, Werner Conze and Reinhard Koselleck (eds.), *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, vol. 6, Stuttgart 1990, pp. 1–154; here

deed, it was from his conception of the primacy of the Volk over the State that Hitler derived the legitimacy of rebellion against the existing order: "If the State does not devote itself to its task [of sustaining and promoting the ethnic community], accusers will emerge ... and the resistance will one day destroy such a State structure".⁵⁶ To acknowledge the relevance of this catastrophic denouement is not necessarily to endorse a teleological or determinist view of German history; it is merely to concede that the Wilhelmine state may unwittingly have conspired in its own undoing when it neglected its friends and indulged its enemies.

pp. 94–95. Boldt points out that National Socialism is wrongly seen as having established a "total state", as if the state were thereby rendered absolute, a self-legitimizing entity. In fact the Nazi concept of the state developed in the contrary direction, tending to legitimate the state solely by reference to a higher objective (the maintenance of the Volk); see also Rainer Zitelmann, *Hitler. Selbstverständnis eines Revolutionärs*, 2nd edn., Stuttgart 1987, pp. 64–69.

⁵⁶ Speech by Hitler of 9th November 1927, cited in Zitelmann, *Hitler*, pp. 66–67.

CHRISTHARD HOFFMANN

Boundaries of Citizenship: A Comment on
David Feldman and Christopher Clark

That the relationship between Jews and the state could remain an issue at all after the achievement of Jewish emancipation would have surprised the liberal emancipationists of the early nineteenth century. For their answer to the “Jewish Question” was based on the separation of Church and State, and on the assumption that membership of a religious group was purely a private matter. This meant that in public life Jews should be active as citizens, and only as citizens, rather than as representatives of a distinct minority with specific interests. It was this doctrine that informed the self-understanding of the first generation of Jewish community leaders and politicians after emancipation. Jewish members of the British Parliament in 1906, for example, rejected the idea of establishing a caucus of Jewish MPs on the grounds that “Jewish members must remember that they represented their constituents and not their co-religionists”.¹ The “German Citizens of Jewish Faith” articulated their self-understanding in similar terms: “The Jews as a religious community do not belong to any one political party. Political ideologies, like religious ones, are the business of the individual.”² One could easily add to these quotations to show that this remained the dominant orientation of Jewish leaders and politicians well into the twentieth century. Is it not anachronistic, therefore, to pose the issue of Jews and the state in post-emancipation Europe?

There are good grounds for answering in the negative. The two excellent essays by David Feldman and Christopher Clark leave no doubt that, even after emancipation, the relationship of Jews *qua* Jews to state power

Translation from the German by A.D. Moses.

¹ *Jewish Chronicle*, 23rd November 1906, p. 17, quoted in Geoffrey Alderman, ‘English Jews or Jews of the English Persuasion? Reflections on the Emancipation of Anglo-Jewry’, in Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson (eds.), *Paths of Emancipation. Jews, States, and Citizenship*, Princeton 1995, pp. 128–156, quotation p. 148.

² Eugen Fuchs, quoted in Jehuda Reinharz, *Fatherland or Promised Land. The Dilemma of the German Jew, 1893–1914*, Ann Arbor 1975, p. 66.

in Britain and Germany (if in markedly differing intensities) remained a matter of considerable significance. In what areas was this the case, and why? In my comment, I would like to expand on the insights presented in the two papers to draw a comparison between the two countries, thereby focusing on three points of conflict: the relationship between synagogue and state; the access of Jews to the civil service; and the question of the immigration and naturalisation of foreign Jews. I conclude with a summary and explanation of the differences between Britain and Germany.

First, the question of Jewish religious institutions and the state. In contrast to liberal theory, Jews possessed a dual legal identity: they enjoyed rights and suffered discrimination not just as individual citizens but also as a collective, i.e. as members of a religious community. Even after emancipation, religion did not become fully privatised, fulfilling as it did a public function, the priorities of which were set by government policy and implemented by the bureaucracy. The relationship of the Jewish religious community to the state, therefore, must be understood in the broader context of Church–State issues. The relevant questions touched the legal status of Jewry because, unlike the Christian churches, state protection for free Jewish religious expression and religious education in public schools were not understood as self-evident.

In this regard, the differences between Britain and Germany become readily apparent, despite the fact that in neither Britain nor the various German states was the separation of Church and State effected comprehensively. Even though the enjoyment of political rights in the former was no longer linked to membership of the Anglican Church, Anglicanism continued to enjoy special status as the established church. But even without the formal equality of Jewish and Anglican clerical institutions, Jews were not particularly disadvantaged or isolated. In the struggle for emancipation, Jews were viewed as Nonconformists, and as such they found their place in the pluralistic religious landscape of Britain.

In stark contrast to Britain, the status of Jews in the German states suffered by comparison with that of the two established Christian denominations. In Prussia after 1871, for example, the relationship between Jews and the state was still regulated by the law of July 1847—a pre-emancipation stipulation which granted the local Jewish community the status of a corporation, recognised the principle of compulsory membership, and invested it with taxation powers. No Jewish representative organ was envisaged beyond the local community. Collectively, Jews were financially and politically autonomous but marginalised. Unlike their Christian counterparts they formed a tolerated rather than recognised community.

This disadvantage was not just evident in matters of legal status. It was also highlighted by the different treatment experienced by Jewish congregations in matters of state finance: pastors and priests, but not rabbis, were exempt from local taxes. While the Prussian state supported needy Protestant parishes with public funds in order to maintain religious services, it refused to do so for Jewish congregations in similarly straitened circumstances. Jews were therefore forced indirectly to subsidise Christian parishes, but could not, at least in Prussia, expect any assistance themselves. The state also regularly failed to protect Jews from religious slander.

The matter of state subsidies for Jewish education renders the difference between the two countries particularly visible. As David Feldman clearly shows, the representatives of British Jewry successfully lobbied the government to secure financial support and a measure of organisational freedom for Jewish education. He stresses that in granting such concessions, the government was not influenced by some abstract pluralist ideal, seeking rather a pragmatic solution and accordingly considering the arguments of Jewish lobbyists. This was only possible because the Jewish religious community and its educational establishment were recognised as bearing equal rights.

And this was precisely the state of affairs that did not obtain in Germany—at least not in Prussia. The Prussian state regarded itself as obliged only to guarantee and support the religious instruction of the Christian churches in state schools. It strongly objected to the attempts of some municipal school boards to introduce Jewish religious instruction as an obligatory subject. It was theoretically possible for Jewish congregations to apply for financial assistance from the local community if only Christian schools were available. But the granting of such was purely discretionary. Jewish interest and pressure groups, like the *Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens* and the *Verband der deutschen Juden*, left no stone unturned in their attempts to reverse their obvious disadvantage. In a telling contrast to the success of the Board of Deputies in England, however, their efforts met with no success. An almost impenetrable wall of bureaucratic arrogance, cynicism and energetic resistance protected the privileges enjoyed by the two Christian denominations. As long as the state bureaucracy could appeal to the “Christian character” of the state, laid down in the Prussian constitution, the ambition of the Jews for equal treatment was bound to remain unrealised, no matter how enthusiastic or forceful their efforts.

The second aspect I wish to discuss is the status, in the post-emancipation era, of Jewish individuals applying for public office. Were they seen

as equals to non-Jews in all areas of public life? Did they possess the same access to the civil service as others, or did the state continue to disadvantage them because they were Jewish? These questions pose themselves because of the glaring discrepancy between the rhetoric of equality, on the one hand, and the reality of discrimination, the legacy of an incomplete emancipation, on the other. German bureaucrats of the Empire viewed Jews as members of a disliked minority and acted accordingly, barring their access to higher bureaucratic posts and the officer corps. As a consequence, Jews were compelled to act collectively against this discrimination.

Both Feldman and Clark expressed the view that discrimination against Jews in public service and the military occurred in Germany but not in Britain. The grounds for this view lie in the same factor that accounted for disadvantaging Jewish religious institutions: the co-existence of a secular Imperial constitution and the older constitutions of the individual states, which postulated the existence of a Christian state. This resulted in an insufficient separation of Church and State in most of the German states which were, after all, responsible for appointments in the public sector. That this was decisive is evident in the fact that the virtual ban on Jewish applicants was usually lifted for those who had converted to Christianity.

Another factor was the antisemitic movement, whose programme had always included an express prohibition against Jews in public service, above all as judges and teachers. Clark has convincingly demonstrated how the mere existence of organised antisemitism opened up new possibilities for bureaucrats to justify discrimination against Jewish applicants. They could make reference to the strong antisemitic mood of the population, which would not tolerate a Jewish judge or teacher, as a means of overriding qualifications or expertise, rendering hopeless the prospects of Jewish applicants from the outset. Clark is no doubt correct when he says that the bureaucrats used such arguments as a pretext, thereby lending antisemitism state legitimacy. But there were also incidents to which they could make direct reference. The pogroms in Pomerania and West Prussia—six weeks of anti-Jewish rioting in the summer of 1881—could be trotted out as a potent example of what might happen when the “will of the people” was defied. In those pogroms, the antisemitic mood of the people was especially directed against those Jews who worked in public office as judges or local politicians.

In general, it is difficult to determine which was the more important factor: the pressure of the antisemitic movement on the government or the populism of a government attempting to harness the antisemitic public

mood for its own political purposes. What is certain, however, is that the question of Jewish access to public office in Germany (in direct contrast to the position in Britain) was politically contested. It was a matter of considerable public attention, and it therefore became a question of principle and of symbolic importance. Finally, the question of Jewish judges or reserve officers was not simply an issue of debate between Jewish lobbyists and antisemitic agitators. It touched the more fundamental issues of privilege versus merit; authoritarianism versus liberal reform; religious traditionalism versus secularism; the exclusion versus inclusion of minorities; and thereby the political and national identity of the *Kaiserreich* itself.

The third issue concerns the immigration and naturalisation of foreign Jews, which became acute with the mass immigration of Eastern European Jews after 1881. In both countries, Jewish organisations acted as legal representatives for foreign Jews, to ensure that they were accorded equal treatment. The points of conflict between Jewish organisations and the relevant bureaucrats in the two countries varied, however, because of the different role of the state in the immigration process. In Britain, the situation was characterised by the steadily strengthening grip of the state, through the Aliens Act, in admitting or refusing foreigners—a role that had up to then been that of private groups such as the Jewish auxiliary associations, which chose applicants according to their own criteria. Because the overwhelming majority of immigrants were Jews, state regulation of immigration procedure necessarily led to conflict between the state and Jewish organisations. But there is little evidence to suggest the existence of a particular problem with Jews *per se*. Had most of the immigrants been Poles or Italians, for example, one can easily imagine that such conflicts would have developed between the government and Catholic interests. No modern welfare state (and Britain was already developing in this direction) can permit a *laissez-faire* policy with respect to an enduring mass immigration. In this sense, the conflicts between the state and Jewish organisations, and the failure of Jewish efforts was, to a certain extent, unavoidable. It is undeniable, to be sure, that in this debate antisemitic remarks could be heard among civil servants, and that it became “ethnicised”, with the focus on the ethnicity, rather than the religion, of the Eastern European Jews. On the whole, however, it must be emphasised that, notwithstanding the polemical heat and certain antisemitic tone of the immigration debate in Britain, the legal status of domestic Jews or the achievements of emancipation were never questioned. In contrast to Germany, the immigration debate remained an immigration debate, and did not evolve into one about the “Jewish Question”.

In Germany, the role of the state in regulating immigration was never challenged. From the moment they set foot on German soil, the immigrants were under the comprehensive control of the state. Their legal status often remained uncertain for decades because of restrictive naturalisation procedures, and as foreigners they could be expelled at any time without appeal, as several thousand were. In view of this situation, the efforts of Jewish organisations were limited to publicising and denouncing discrimination against Jewish immigration applicants. Thus the *Verband der deutschen Juden* published the remarks of a Prussian bureaucrat, who had stated with regard to immigrant Jews that "as long as they remain Jews, they will not be naturalised; but when they convert to Christianity, then we will discuss the matter".³ As in the already mentioned points of conflict with the state, the Jewish organisations' first priority was the dismantling of obviously discriminatory bureaucratic practices. Shortly before the outbreak of the First World War, Jewish lobbying concentrated on a new citizenship and naturalisation bill. Although they managed to effect minor changes to the draft of the law, they did not succeed in securing non-discriminatory naturalisation procedures.

It remains to discuss the similarities and differences in the relationship between Jews and the state in Britain and Germany. I see three relevant points. First, in the post-emancipation era, the Jewish communities in both countries developed influential forms of modern political activism, lobbying, for example, to assert and defend their interests *vis-à-vis* the state. But the situation in Germany was more difficult, because no nationwide Jewish organisation existed that could be regarded by the state as the legitimate voice of German Jewry, nor was the state particularly interested in the creation of such an organisation. In contrast to Britain, the legitimacy of Jewish collective representation was not generally accepted by the state or by society. Not least for this reason, German-Jewish groups defined their activities in terms of neutral concepts: they understood themselves as general defenders of the constitutional state and the postulates of equality which it represented, and as protesters against discrimination and bureaucratic caprice. In this way, they fulfilled the role of modern civil rights organisations, which was unique in the political culture of the *Kaiserreich*. However, this concentration of Jewish activities on striving for equality and the struggle against discrimination resulted in the Jews seeking help only from the state, rather than from other social groups. This situation

³ Quoted in Jack Wertheimer, *Unwelcome Strangers. East European Jews in Imperial Germany*, New York and Oxford 1987, p. 170.

reflected a specific German inclination to view the state as the source of all social and political remedies, but it can also be interpreted as an indication of how isolated Jews were in their emancipatory ambitions.

Second, in considering the obviously contrasting situation in Germany and Britain, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, reference must be made to their markedly different historical development. In Germany, the classic questions of emancipation were still hotly contested. Should the Jews enjoy the same political rights as Christians? Should they be allowed into the upper reaches of state service? Should they be permitted to hold administrative power over Christians? Are Judaism and Christianity equal religions? In Britain, by comparison, the debate concerned the details and implementation of emancipation itself, not the principle of equality. The main conflict here developed around the immigration question, where the extent of state regulation was at issue. How does one unite the liberal traditions of asylum and open borders with the social costs of mass immigration? Is it discriminatory for state regulations to refer to the religion, ethnicity or "race" of the applicant? These remain today the typical problems for modern welfare states in an age of migration, and they differ substantially from the "pre-modern" disputes about the principles of religious equality and political emancipation that occurred in Germany at the time.

Nevertheless—and this is my third observation—the differing nature and success of Jewish interest politics can only be explained to a limited extent by this contrasting historical development. To focus exclusively on the role of the state, its constitution and the political system entails neglecting the social forces that were also at work. Here, special attention must be paid to the political and social movement of modern antisemitism, whose shrill call for a roll-back of emancipation meant that the "Jewish Question" was constantly in the air in Imperial Germany. Influential well beyond its meagre parliamentary representation, this movement was instrumental in forming an anti-liberal, anti-democratic and anti-modern worldview, in which antisemitic rhetoric became the shibboleth of "true patriotism".

Antisemitism in this form simply did not exist in Britain. This is not to say that British society was free from antisemitism. The anti-foreigner and anti-immigration movement in London's East End joined anti-Jewish resentment and nationalistic fervour in a virulent cocktail of particularism. As a popular movement, antisemitism and restrictionism influenced government policy and limited the influence of Jewish organisations. What was dangerous for the position of Jews in both countries was the creeping

ethnicisation of political discourse, in which Jews were increasingly defined by an alleged ethnic allegiance as non-British or non-German. But in the long term in Britain, the ethnic definition of the nation never prevailed over traditional state-nationalism with its focus on the institutions and process of the political system. In Germany, by contrast, *völkisch* nationalism grew in importance and popularity, especially during the 1920s when the legitimacy of the Weimar Republic's institutions was undermined by the long-term effects of war, revolution and political division. That this republic at last granted the Jews civic equality was therefore a pyrrhic victory. Neither the constitution nor the government of the Weimar Republic possessed the authority to ensure broad recognition of the Jews' new equality. On the contrary, in an antisemitic public sphere, the state guarantee and implementation of Jewish political rights led to a further delegitimisation of the hated "Jewish Republic". The growing attraction of *Volk* over "state," of ethno-nationalism over state-nationalism in the political culture of the *Kaiserreich*, and especially during the Weimar Republic, destroyed the basis of the relationship between Jews and the state. Where the state had lost its legitimacy, and where it no longer possessed the power to defend the constitution and guarantee the rule of law, the efforts of Jewish organisations were rendered virtually meaningless.

STEPHAN WENDEHORST

Zionism in Britain and Germany: A Comparison

The purpose of my paper is twofold: first, to compare Zionism in Britain and Germany, and second, to do this on the basis of the modernist theory of nationalism. The first part of the essay provides a working definition of the objects of comparison. The second part identifies criteria of comparison, that is, elements common to both objects of comparison, establishes the relation of the comparison to time and, lastly, attempts to account for differences and similarities between British and German Zionism.

I.

A necessary condition for a successful comparison is a working definition of the object of comparison. What should one understand by Zionism in Britain and Germany? The vantage point from which one looks at Zionism in the two countries determines to a large extent the answer to this question. One can distinguish between two strands in the scholarship on British and German Zionism, a close reflection of the bifurcation of the historiography of Zionism in general. One trend approaches Zionism from the perspective of its practical aspirations, the reconstitution of the Jews as a nation and the establishment of a Jewish nation-state. The diaspora complement to this trend measures the success of Zionist activity in terms of its contribution to the realisation of these aspirations, using membership figures, the results of political lobbying, *aliyah* and fundraising as criteria for the assessment of local Zionist movements. The other strand investigates Zionism within a communal frame of reference, judging its success or failure according to whether it answered the needs of the Jewish community *in situ*. The British version of the first school of thought is represented by a considerable number of works which highlight the British contribution to Jewish state- and nation-building in the Middle East and the role which

British Jews played in it.¹ While lacking the prominence which the Balfour Declaration and Britain's assumption of the Mandate bestowed on the efforts of British Zionists, the involvement of their German counterparts in the leadership echelons of the World Zionist Organisation (WZO), and their diplomatic attempts to tie the Zionist project to the interests of Wilhelmine Germany as well as *aliyah* from Germany have also been explored.² As for the second, community-oriented strand of Zionist historiography, significant differences may be found between the paradigms which informed research on the function of Zionism in Britain and Germany. British Zionism has primarily been explained by the internal workings of Anglo-Jewry, particularly in terms of the power struggle for a share in the exercise of communal authority by second-generation immigrants from Eastern Europe.³ The historiography of German Zionism, in contrast, is more diverse and, for the most part, accords greater weight to the impact of the surrounding society. Leaving aside for the moment memoirs, biographies and documentary accounts,⁴ some studies explain German

¹ Norman Bentwich, *Wanderer Between Two Worlds*, London 1941; Paul Goodman, *Zionism in England 1899–1949. A Jubilee Record*, London 1949; Israel Cohen, *A Short History of Zionism*, London 1951; *idem* (ed.), *The Rebirth of Israel. A Memorial Tribute to Paul Goodman*, London 1952; Leonard Stein, *The Balfour Declaration*, London 1961; Jacob Talmon, 'Lewis Namier', in *idem*, *The Unique and the Universal*, London 1965, pp. 296–311; Norman Rose, *Lewis Namier and Zionism*, Oxford 1980; Isaiah Berlin, 'L.B. Namier', in *idem*, *Personal Impressions*, Oxford 1982, pp. 63–82; Bernard Wasserstein, *Herbert Samuel*, Oxford 1992.

² Richard Lichtheim, *Die Geschichte des deutschen Zionismus*, Jerusalem 1954, pp. 185–217; Isaiah Friedman, *Germany, Turkey and Zionism*, Oxford 1977; Lilo Stone, 'German Zionists in Palestine before 1933', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 32 (1997), pp. 171–186.

³ David Cesarani, 'Zionism in England, 1917–1939', Ph.D. diss., University of Oxford 1986; Stuart A. Cohen, *English Zionists and British Jews. The Communal Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1895–1920*, Guildford 1982; Gideon Shimoni, 'From Anti-Zionism to Non-Zionism in Anglo-Jewry, 1917–1937', *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 28: 1 (1986), pp. 19–47; *idem*, 'The Non-Zionists in Anglo-Jewry, 1937–1948', *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 28: 2 (1986), pp. 89–115; *idem*, 'Selig Brodetsky and the Ascendancy of Zionism in Anglo-Jewry (1939–1945)', in *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 22: 2 (1980), pp. 125–161.

⁴ See for example Kurt Blumenfeld, *Erlebte Judenfrage*, Stuttgart 1962, Publication of the Leo Baeck Institute; Arthur Ruppin, *Briefe, Tagebücher, Erinnerungen*, ed. by Schlomo Krolik, Königstein/Ts 1985, Publication of the Leo Baeck Institute; Jehuda Riemer, *Fritz Perez Naphtali—Sozialdemokrat und Zionist*, Gerlingen 1991; Jehuda Reinharz (ed.), *Dokumente zur Geschichte des Deutschen Zionismus, 1882–1933*, Tübingen 1981 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 37); Yehuda Eloni, *Zionismus in Deutschland von den Anfängen bis 1914*, Gerlingen 1987.

Zionism primarily as a reaction against antisemitism⁵ or as an attempt to shape a modern Jewish identity;⁶ others investigate specific aspects such as Zionist relationships with other Jewish groups, the impact of the surrounding society on German Zionist thought, the social background of German Zionism and the effect of generational change on the radicalisation of German Zionism.⁷

The two strands of Zionist historiography which, with certain modifications, have been replicated in the scholarship on British and German Zionism, have their indisputable merits. The first highlights the focal points of the Zionist vision—the establishment of a Jewish nation-state and the national transformation of the Jews—and accounts for the direction of much of its practical activity, while the other seeks to provide answers to two decisive questions: why was Zionism attractive to certain Jews in the diaspora, and how could diaspora Zionism be rendered compatible with the requirements of the nation-state? But they also have their shortcomings. Scholarship which focuses on Zionist state- and nation-building in the Middle East tends to consider diaspora Zionism primarily in terms of its contribution to these processes, whereas the studies on Zionism in the diaspora tend to neglect the impact which factors external to local Zionism, the local Jewish community or the country of residence exerted on the development of Zionism in Jewish communities.⁸ Evyatar Friesel has pointed

⁵ Jehuda Reinharz, *Fatherland or Promised Land*, Ann Arbor 1975, pp. 1–36, 90–170; Ismar Schorsch, *Jewish Reactions against German Antisemitism, 1870–1914*, New York 1972, pp. 192–195.

⁶ Stephen Poppel, *Zionism in Germany, 1897–1933. The Shaping of a Jewish Identity*, Philadelphia 1976.

⁷ Yehoyakim Cochavi, 'Liberals and Zionists on the Eve of the National-Socialist Seizure of Power', in *Year Book XXXIX of the Leo Baeck Institute*, London 1994, pp. 113–129; Hagit Lavsky, 'German Zionists and the Emergence of Brith Shalom', in Jehuda Reinharz and Anita Shapira (eds.), *Essential Papers on Zionism*, London–New York, 1996, pp. 648–670, transl. from the Hebrew and reprinted from *Yahadut Zmanenu* 4 (1988); Joachim Doron, 'Rassenbewußtsein und naturwissenschaftliches Denken im deutschen Zionismus während der wilhelminischen Ära', in *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für Deutsche Geschichte*, 9 (1980), pp. 389–427; Moshe Zimmermann, 'The Impact of German Nationalism on Jewish Nationalism—The German Jewish Students' Organizations in Germany at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century', in *Zion* 45 (1980), pp. 299–326 [Hebrew]; *idem*, 'Social Structure and Social Expectations in German Zionism before World War One', in Shmuel Ettinger (ed.), *Nation and History—Studies in the History of the Jewish People*, vol. 2, Jerusalem 1994, pp. 177–99 [Hebrew]; Jehuda Reinharz, 'Three Generations of German Zionism', in *Jerusalem Quarterly*, 9 (1978), pp. 95–110.

⁸ For a successful attempt to break down the barriers between the two prevailing historiographical approaches, see Michael Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture and West Euro-*

out that the functionalist, community-oriented approach disregards the fact that “local Zionism anywhere drew its *raison d’être* from being part and parcel of the Zionist movement as a whole—a movement ... in spite of everything, still cohesive enough to keep its different branches together, actively directed towards the realisation of its major goals”.⁹ The community-oriented scholarship on Zionism leaves several questions open. First, it does not explain why Zionism was attractive to Jews who were unaffected by the internal workings of Jewish communal life; second, it fails to give proper weight to the impact of hostile external forces on the development of Zionism; third, it neglects the significance that participation in the world Zionist movement had for Jews in the diaspora; and, fourth, it does not account for the practical expressions of local Zionism, such as *aliyah*, political lobbying and fundraising, which had their focus in the Jewish National Home (JNH).

In order to avoid a reductionist or isolated treatment of the varied expressions of Zionism in Britain and Germany, an alternative to the traditional paradigms of interpretation appears to be desirable. My argument is that the modernist theory of nationalism offers the most promising framework of analysis for British and German Zionism, both of which are best understood as particularly complex, but not untypical, variants of the profound national transformation of human consciousness that occurred in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Whereas for a part of British and German Jewry, Zionism took on radical forms resulting in the temporary or permanent substitution of the Jewish polity for their country of residence as the main focus of national identification, for the majority it took the form of a supplemental diaspora nationalism adapted to their participation in British and German society. For most British and German Zionists, the Zionist transformation was, therefore, limited to the Jewish social and public sphere. Conceptual tools offered by existing, as well as by modified, modernist theories of nationalism allow a novel understanding of the reinvention of British and German Jews as part-time members of the Zionist national community. The concept of the disintegration of an

pean Jewry before the First World War, Cambridge 1993. Gideon Shimoni strikes a convincing balance between local and external determinants of South African Zionism in ‘Zionism in South Africa. A Historical Perspective’, in *Forum on the Jewish People, Zionism and Israel*, 37:1 (1980), pp. 71–91; *idem*, *Jews and Zionism. The South African Experience, 1910–1967*, Cape Town 1980; for an attempt to analyse German Zionism within the context of world Zionism see Hagit Lavsky, *Before Catastrophe. The Distinctive Path of German Zionism*, Detroit and Jerusalem 1996.

⁹ Evyatar Friesel, ‘Criteria and Conception in the Historiography of German and American Zionism’, in *Studies in Zionism* 1: 2 (1980), p. 301.

assumed social and religious frame of reference helps to explain the varied sets of preconditions from which Zionism emerged. The concept of the antagonistic "Other" as a catalyst of nationalism enables us to understand the extent to which the Zionist reinvention of British and German Jews was forged by recurrent confrontations which encouraged Jews to define themselves collectively against external developments. The multifarious opportunities of participation and identification offered by modern state- and nation-building provide a third category which can be fruitfully employed to account for the success of Zionism.

If the tools borrowed from modernist theories of nationalism promise a better understanding of British and German Zionism, the study of diaspora Zionism as a variant of modern nationalism also highlights unresolved problems. While general works on nationalism, as well as the scholarship on Zionism, for the most part regard Zionism as a form of nationalism, this is less the result of systematic classification than a general assumption. The former tend to treat Zionism as exceptional, making little attempt to integrate it into their concepts of nationalism. With few exceptions,¹⁰ it is either treated as *sui generis*,¹¹ forcibly assimilated to ill-fitting categories,¹² or it features as a curiosity escaping any attempt at classification, relegated to the footnotes,¹³ or it is denied a place in the debate.¹⁴ Conversely, the latter has been reluctant to explore the movement within the context of theories of nationalism. To some historians, the novelty of the emergence of a palestinocentric national Jewish

¹⁰ Hugh Seton-Watson, *Nations and States. An Enquiry into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism*, London 1977; Hugh Trevor-Roper, *Jewish and Other Nationalism*, London 1962; George L. Mosse, 'The Jews and the Civic Religion of Nationalism', in *idem*, *Confronting the Nation*, Hanover 1993, pp. 121–130; for a suggestion to study Zionism as paradigmatic for aspects of modern nationalism and for its value for comparative research on nationalism see Thomas Nipperdey, 'Nationalismus im 20. Jahrhundert. Über einige Formen des Zionismus', in Helmut Berding *et al.* (eds.), *Vom Staat des Ancien Regime zum modernen Parteienstaat. Festschrift für Theodor Schieder*, Munich and Vienna 1978, pp. 385–404.

¹¹ F.H. Hinsley, *Nationalism and the International System*, London, 1973, pp. 164–165.

¹² Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford 1983, pp. 101–109; Hinsley, p. 164.

¹³ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd edn., London 1991, p. 149, note 16.

¹⁴ Anthony Birch, *Nationalism & National Integration*, London 1989, pp. 77–137; William Bloom, *Personal Identity, National Identity and International Relations*, Cambridge 1990. The Danish minority in Schleswig is unfortunately the only diaspora nationalism taken into account in Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe*, Cambridge 1985.

consciousness has been obscured by the conviction that the longing for a Jewish home in Palestine had always been part of Jewish consciousness.¹⁵ To others, the reinvention of the Jews as a modern nation, and the creation of a Jewish nation-state, seem to have been the almost natural unfolding of the central message of Jewish history since the fall of Jerusalem, and therefore in little need of explanation.¹⁶ To the extent that scholarship on Zionism engages in theoretical discourse, two trends predominate: the primordialist approach and the interpretation of Zionism as a political ideology.¹⁷ The tendency to regard Zionism as part of an unfolding messianic or secular-national teleology has provoked criticism,¹⁸ as has the sparing use of theories of nationalism in research on the subject.¹⁹ Apart from the dearth of methodological categories in research on Zionism in general, the study of British and German Zionism is further complicated by their status as diaspora nationalisms.²⁰ To conceptualise diaspora Zionism, especially in the West, in terms of nation and nationalism runs counter to the prevailing concept of the nation (and also, one might add, to the bipolarity of Jewish historiography).²¹ Derived from the merger of the

¹⁵ Shlomo Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism*, New York 1982, p. 31; Rupert Emerson, *From Empire to Nation: The Rise to Self-Assertion of the Asian and African Peoples*, Boston 1969, pp. 106, 156; Stuart Cohen, "How shall we sing of Zion in a Strange Land?". East European Immigrants and the Challenge of Zionism in Britain, 1987–1918', in *Journal of Jewish Studies*, New Series, 1: 2 (1995), pp. 101–122.

¹⁶ David Vital, *The Future of the Jews*, Cambridge, Mass. 1990; *idem*, *Zionism. The Crucial Phase*, Oxford 1987, pp. 358–376.

¹⁷ Gideon Shimoni addresses the relationship between Zionism and nationalism in the first chapter of his study *The Zionist Ideology*, Hanover 1995, pp. 3–51, where he suggests a modified primordialist reference of analysis for the study of Zionism, but otherwise presents Zionism as an ideological platform, following an older tradition represented by Arthur Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, New York 1973 and Ben Halpern, *The Idea of the Jewish State*, Cambridge, Mass. 1969.

¹⁸ Berkowitz, pp. 5–6; Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, 'Israel, the Unexpected State. Jewish Messianism and the Zionist Revolution', unpublished lecture delivered at the Carl-Friedrich-von-Siemens Stiftung, Munich, on 7th November 1996.

¹⁹ Mitchell Cohen, 'A Preface to the Study of Jewish Nationalism', in *Journal of Jewish Studies*, New Series, 1: 1 (1994), pp. 82–89; for the suggestion that Anthony Smith's findings in *The Ethnic Revival*, Cambridge 1981, be applied to the study of Zionism, see Shulamit Volkov, 'Juden und Judentum im Zeitalter der Emanzipation', in Wolfgang Beck (ed.), *Die Juden in der europäischen Geschichte*, Munich 1992, p. 104.

²⁰ With the ironic exception of Henry Felix Srebrnik's *London Jews and British Communism, 1935–1945*, London 1995, neither British nor German Jewry have been explicitly investigated in the context of theories of nationalism.

²¹ In his careful reassessment of the East-West dichotomy in the study of Jewish history, Jonathan Frankel still contrasts the post-assimilationist, pragmatic or philanthropic Western Zionism with "real" all-embracing nationalism: 'Modern Jewish Poli-

modern sovereign territorial state and the citizen republic, the concept of the modern nation accords legitimacy to national identification only on the basis of territorialised citizenship and is, therefore, hostile to claims of self-determination advanced by religious, ethnic, regional or competing national groups whose political and territorial basis is not identical.²² Once the State of Israel had been established, one strand of Zionist thought duly adopted the notion of the territorialised nation-state as the only legitimate habitat of a nation. In Britain, Arthur Koestler and Lewis Namier took this view to an extreme by presenting diaspora Jewry with the choice of either emigrating to Israel or assimilating into the societies in which they lived. Most Zionists living in Western countries, however, were more likely to stay in their countries of residence than to make *aliyah*. A precondition for the study of British and German Zionism as part of the wider palestino-centric Jewish nationalism, extending to the respective local Jewish community and the inter-state Jewish public and social sphere of interaction, is a concept of the nation that accommodates nationalisms which cut across state boundaries. By drawing on the current legal debate on the question of which social unit is entitled to the revolutionary claim of national self-determination, and on the adequate forms of its realisation,²³ by borrowing from Hugh Seton-Watson, and by extending Benedict Anderson's analysis, concepts of nation and nationalism may be devised which are also suitable for the study of diaspora Zionism. Seton-Watson has identified the essence of nationalism as "the application to national communities of the Enlightenment doctrine of popular sovereignty",²⁴ to which he adds the cult of the individual instigated by Romanticism. His definition of the nation is primarily subjective: "a nation exists when a significant number of people in a community consider themselves to form a nation, or behave as if they formed one."²⁵ Anderson defines the nation as "an imagined political com-

tics—East and West (1840–1939)', in Zvi Gitelman (ed.), *The Quest for Utopia*, Armonk, NY 1992, p. 97.

²² Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, 2nd edn., Cambridge 1992, pp. 47–48; Dominique Schnapper, *La communauté des citoyens. Sur l'idée moderne de nation*, Paris 1994, p. 117.

²³ For the legal controversy over the right to self-determination and national self-determination see Antonio Cassese, *Self-determination of Peoples*, Cambridge 1995; *idem*, 'The Right of Peoples to Self-Determination. Historical, Political, and Legal Aspects', unpublished lecture delivered at the University of Oxford, Trinity Term 1992; James Mayall, *Nationalism and International Society*, Cambridge 1990.

²⁴ Seton-Watson, p. 445.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

munity—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign”.²⁶ What he calls “The Last Wave” comprises the profoundly modular twentieth-century nationalisms whose complexities, ambivalences and contradictions are the result of the possibility of drawing on more than a century and a half of human experience and three earlier models of nationalism, and which include the nationalism of societies which re-imagined themselves as nations only when the nation had become the norm. This category could accommodate diaspora Zionism along with other nationalisms cutting across the boundaries of the state, provided the implicit conditionality of Anderson’s definition of the nation as a territorially delimited political unit is dropped.

By radicalising Anderson’s approach and taking nationalism as a form of identity which can be projected onto any social terrain, irrespective of whether or not it coincides with a territorialised political entity, it becomes possible to explore British and German Zionism as part of a wider process of Zionist state- and nation-building. Placing British and German Zionism within a system of coordinates which includes the local Jewish, the national British and German, as well as the inter-state Jewish, public and social spheres, allows their examination in each of these three areas and the demonstration of the existence of chains of cause and effect pertaining to more than one sphere. The study of British and German Zionism as part of a wider palestinocentric national Jewish sphere, and as being refracted through the dominant British and German nationalisms, makes it necessary to take into account the impulses received from factors external to British and German Jewry, and also to account for expressions of German and British Zionism which extended to the inter-state sphere of Jewish interaction and to the wider British and German societies, rather than to the respective Jewish communities. In the inter-state public and social Jewish sphere, for example, Zionism provided avenues for “imagined” and practical forms of British and German-Jewish interaction with non-British and non-German Jews. In sum, by exploring British and German Zionism as participants in three areas—the British and German-Jewish public and social sphere, the inter-state Jewish public and social sphere, and the British and German nation-states—and by demonstrating that Zionists in both countries could respond in one sphere to developments in another, it becomes possible to sketch out a network of links between the causes and expressions of British and German Zionism, and to accommodate in a comprehensive way what would otherwise have been discrete phenomena.

²⁶ Anderson, p. 6.

II.

With a working definition of the objects of comparison in place, it remains to choose criteria of comparison and to relate the comparison to time. There are several *tertia comparationis* which could be selected—the organisational infrastructure of Zionism in the two countries, membership figures, the Zionist party spectrum, the role of cultural Zionism or the impact of the proximity of the offices of the World Zionist Organisation (WZO) on British and German Zionism. From 1905 until 1920 the WZO offices were situated in Cologne and Berlin. With the leadership of the *Zionistische Vereinigung für Deutschland* (ZVfD) and the WZO partially overlapping, and with German Zionists staffing WZO offices and publications to a considerable extent, German Zionism was particularly close to the developments of the world Zionist movement during this period.²⁷ Following the transfer of WZO headquarters to London in 1920, a comparable relationship emerged between the Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland (ZF) and the WZO, which were located side by side at 75 and 77 Great Russell Street. One could further investigate the role of students and members of the free professions in the two Zionist movements, or compare the perception of the “Arab question”, which enjoyed a prominent place on the agenda of German Zionism. A substantial segment of the German Zionist movement, typified by Robert Weltsch, editor of the *Jüdische Rundschau*, advocated a conciliatory policy towards the Arabs and supported *Brith Shalom*. In Britain, by contrast, Zionists, with the exception of the marginal *Hashomer Hatzair*, tended to dismiss “the Arab question” as the result of the machinations of Arab reactionaries and a misguided British policy on Palestine, rather than arising from the competing claims of two national movements.

Instead of selecting organisational structure, social basis or political attitude as criteria of comparison, three concepts borrowed from modernist theories of nationalism will be employed: first, the disintegration of traditional religious and social frames of reference as a precondition for the rise of palestinocentric Jewish nationalism in Britain and Germany; second, antagonistic developments against which British and German Jews identified themselves collectively and which, therefore, served as catalysts

²⁷ Reinharz., pp. 104–105; *idem*, ‘Ideology and Structure in German Zionism, 1882–1933’, in *idem* and Shapira (eds.), *Essential Papers on Zionism*, reprinted from *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 42 (1980), pp. 268–269.

of Zionism; and third, the attractions which participation in Zionist state- and nation-building held out to British and German Jews. The participation of British and German Zionists in the non-Jewish public sphere will be added as a fourth point of comparison in order to take into account the refraction of Zionism through British and German state and society. After defining the object of comparison and selecting criteria of comparison, it remains to clarify the relationship of the comparison to time.²⁸ In the following, in contrast to a synchronic comparison in the narrower sense—asking, for example, how much money the British and German *Keren Hayesod* (KH) raised within a certain period, or exploring the views of British and German Zionists during the Uganda controversy—the *tertia comparationis* will serve as the point of departure, rather than events which occurred simultaneously at a specific historical juncture. This means that the comparison will focus on the operation of those aspects of British and German Zionism that can be conceptualised with the help of categories borrowed from modernist theories of nationalism, irrespective of their occurrence in absolute historical time. Thus, while the dissolution of the ZVfD and the destruction of German Jewry limits the study of German Zionism, the impact of the Holocaust on British Zionism can be taken into account.

The modernist theory of nationalism holds that the emergence of nationalism was predicated on the dissolution of the political and social order of the *ancien régime* and traditional religious world views.²⁹ The usual Jewish counterparts to this are the break-up of the *kehilla*, the decline of traditional Orthodoxy as an encompassing lifestyle, and the integration into the fabric of the nation-state.³⁰ One could, however, alternatively apply the concept of the disintegration of traditional religious and social frames of reference as a precondition for the rise of nationalism to a post-emancipationist Jewish community, or to a specific *milieu* within it, such as that of the long-established, liberal-cum-assimilationist Jews, or that of the immigrants from Eastern Europe. The break-up of a given Jewish social and religious status quo, while sharing structural similarities, took different forms, depending on the respective *milieu*. For long-established Jews, characterised by high degrees of acculturation,

²⁸ Hroch, pp. 18–21.

²⁹ Anderson, pp. 9–36; Anthony Smith, *Theories of Nationalism*, 2nd edn., New York 1983, pp. 41–64, 109–150; *idem*, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Oxford 1986, pp. 6–13.

³⁰ Jacob Katz, *Tradition and Crisis*, transl. from the Hebrew by Bernard Cooperman, New York 1993, pp. 181–236; ‘The Contribution of the Marks “Family” to Zionism’, chap. 1, pp. 6–7, unpublished manuscript, Marks & Spencer Company Archive.

integration and assimilation, liberal optimism and corresponding forms of Judaism, Zionism provided what Kurt Blumenfeld termed a “post-assimilationist” answer to the crisis of their traditional self-perception as Jews.³¹

In Britain, the immigrants’ *milieu* showed signs of rapid disintegration from the interwar period.³² Compared with their parents’ generation, which had arrived in Britain in the late nineteenth century, second-generation immigrants could take for granted neither demographic and occupational cohesion, nor common religious and social practices. Immigrant Jews and their descendants moved out of their original areas of settlement, notably the East End of London, were upwardly mobile, less observant and only English-speaking instead of communicating in English and Yiddish. Statistical evidence for such erosion in the period from the 1930s to the 1950s is provided by the declining number of Jewish youth attending part-time religion classes of Talmud Torah and the closure of Jewish day schools.³³ With the welfare state rendering basic Jewish social work unnecessary, Jewish friendly societies and other social agencies, which had sustained a distinct social sphere of Jewish interaction, declined in importance. If in Britain the crisis of the immigrants’ *milieu* was particularly visible between the 1930s and the 1950s, signs of disintegration were not restricted to this period. The “de-Judaisation” of second-generation immigrants, which found expression in falling synagogue attendance, increasing laxity in the observance of Jewish ritual, and the diminishing inclination of Jewish parents to secure a Jewish education for their children, had its parallels in the Anglo-Jewish *milieu*.³⁴

If, in contrast to Britain, Zionism in Germany had more to do with the crisis of long-established Jewry and was of the post-assimilationist variety, two factors seem to be chiefly responsible. While the two communities were, from the end of the nineteenth century up to the Holocaust, of a roughly comparable size, with about 335,000 Jews in Britain and a little upwards of half a million in Germany at the beginning of the 1930s, the respective share of immigrants and their descendants

³¹ Blumenfeld, p. 39.

³² Geoffrey Alderman, *Modern British Jewry*, Oxford 1992, pp. 306–308.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

³⁴ *Idem*, ‘English Jews or Jews of the English Persuasion? Reflections on the Emancipation of Anglo-Jewry’, in Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson (eds.), *Paths of Emancipation. Jews, States and Citizenship*, Princeton 1995, p. 156.

differed greatly.³⁵ Although the percentage of *Ostjuden* in Germany rose from 7% in 1900 to 20% in 1933, it never assumed British proportions, where the number of immigrants dwarfed that of native Jews by roughly three to one after the mass immigration from Eastern Europe around the turn of the century.³⁶ Given the inverse proportion of the two *milieux* in Britain and Germany, one may assume that the percentages of post-assimilationist Zionists and those immigrants who came to Zionism without prior national (British or German) identification differed correspondingly. A second reason for the shortfall of Eastern European Jews in German Zionist ranks may be attributed to their comparatively late arrival. With the bulk of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe arriving in Britain before, and in Germany during and after, the First World War, the Weimar period was characterised less by second-generation than by first-generation immigrants, concerned first and foremost with establishing themselves in Germany.

The disintegration of an accepted social and religious way of life is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for the emergence of nationalism. Internal developments of the potentially national collective must be complemented by real or perceived antagonists. The existence of such antagonists within or outside the putative nation has been recognised as a crucial determinant for the development of nationalism.³⁷ English nationalism developed in response to the absolutist and Catholic aspirations of the Stuarts and to the recurrent wars with France. The nationalisms of the Americas defined themselves against Britain and Spain; French nationalism of 1789 against the representatives of the *ancien régime*; and German nationalism against France and an array of internal *Reichsfeinde*.

While local antisemitism has been recognised as crucial for the rise of Zionism in Eastern and Central Europe, it was less decisive in the development of Zionism in Britain and other Western societies. In order, therefore, to employ the concept of "the Other" to explain Zionism in Britain—as well as in Weimar Germany, to the extent that it was a liberal democracy—a more sophisticated concept is needed that includes antisemitism

³⁵ Vivian Lipman, *A History of the Jews in Britain*, Leicester 1990, p. 205; Esra Bennathan, 'Die Demographische und Wirtschaftliche Struktur der Juden', in Werner E. Mosse and Arnold Paucker (eds.), *Zur Judenfrage in der Endphase der Weimarer Republik*, 2nd edn., Tübingen 1966 (Schriftenreihe Wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 13), pp. 87–131.

³⁶ Lipman, pp. 12, 45; Trude Maurer, *Ostjuden in Deutschland 1918–1933*, Hamburg 1986, pp. 63–81.

³⁷ See for example Linda Colley, *Britons*, London 1996, p. 387.

but is not limited to it. Its meaning must be extended beyond antisemitism to cover a range of variables which, although not antisemitic themselves, differentiated Jews *qua* Jews from the surrounding society and potentially placed them at a disadvantage in relation to the majority society. Such factors will be subsumed under the term “antisemitism by default”. As well as differentiating between “antisemitism by default” and aggression directed against Jews as being responsible for the rise of Zionism in Britain and Germany, distinctions can be made between external antagonists and those internal to the supposed national body; between general and specifically British or German factors; between long-term, structural trends and temporary developments; and between developments which had an immediate impact on British or German Jews and those experienced more indirectly.

Although domestic antisemitism was much closer to mainstream British life than has been hitherto acknowledged,³⁸ and had in fact become a pressing communal concern by the 1930s, British Zionism thrived predominantly on “antisemitism by default” and antagonistic developments outside Britain. The rise and radicalisation of Zionism in Britain during the 1930s and 1940s can be explained as a reaction against a variety of factors ranging from the extermination of continental Jews during the Second World War, the disillusionment with the democracies that had failed the Jews, British obstruction of the JNH, and the pressures for conformity exerted by modern British society, to long-term, structural trends characteristic of the Jewish condition in Western countries, such as the erosion of Jewish distinctiveness. In a Western society like Britain, Jewish nationalism has therefore primarily to be explained by such variables which were bound up with, rather than being deviations from, liberal state and society. By complementing the picture of traditional, exclusive antisemitism with an inclusive version, the “antisemitism of tolerance”, Bill Williams has argued along similar lines.³⁹ In contrast to a pluralist society, the “uniforming” strand within a liberal society proved hostile to Jewish distinctiveness. Jews were not accepted *qua* Jews, but on

³⁸ David Cesarani, ‘Joynton-Hicks and the Radical Right in England after the First World War’, in Tony Kushner and Kenneth Lunn (eds.), *Traditions of Intolerance. Historical Perspectives on Fascism and Race Discourse in Britain*, Manchester 1989, pp. 118–139; Tony Kushner, *The Persistence of Prejudice. Antisemitism in British Society during the Second World War*, Manchester 1989.

³⁹ Bill Williams, ‘The Anti-Semitism of Tolerance. Middle Class Manchester and the Jews, 1870–1900’, in Alan J. Kidd and K.W. Roberts (eds.), *City, Class and Culture. Studies of Social Policy and Cultural Production in Victorian Manchester*, Manchester 1985, pp. 74–102.

the tacit understanding that they discarded their particular characteristics and conformed to the standards set by the majority.⁴⁰ With the exception of British policy on Palestine, the various external antagonistic catalysts of British Zionism were also at work in Germany. Their respective weight, however, differed considerably. In Germany, antisemitism possessed a considerable organisational infrastructure and "the Jewish question" occupied centre stage in public debate. The disemancipation of German Jews, their persecution and extermination had no parallel in Britain.

Zionism developed in response not only to external opponents, but also to opponents from within. The place of the internal villain in Zionist thought was occupied variously by the Orthodox and the liberal, assimilationist Jew. In terms of practical politics, with British radical Orthodoxy still in its formative stages in the interwar years and with German neo-Orthodoxy, though better organised and with a longer history, on the margins of German Jewry, it was more often the liberal-cum-assimilationist Jew—organised in the *Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens* (CV), the Anglo-Jewish Association, the Jewish Fellowship, or the informal New Court circle—with whom British and German Zionists competed. British and German Zionists did not reject the Jewish liberal-cum-assimilationist platform as a whole, but only specific aspects of it: the denial of a Jewish collective identity not defined in religious terms, the lack of commitment to Jewish continuity, and the opposition to a Jewish state. With the radicalisation of Zionism, a process that began in Germany prior to the First World War and in Britain during the 1930s, Zionists became more uncompromising in their denial of the legitimacy of their opponents' participation in shaping the Jewish future. The British Zionist Harry Sacher denied that the movement's assimilationist opponents stood for an authentic Jewish way of life: "They are just a herd of individuals, seeking their own individual interest without a care for anything beyond", rather than "a group animated by a common purpose, a common spirit, a common philosophy, an entity which seeks something over and beyond the interests of the individual members, something which belongs to the totality and for which the individual is willing to make some sacrifice".⁴¹

⁴⁰ For a discussion of the Jewish relationship with American liberalism and additional literature on the general ambivalence of the Enlightenment tradition towards the Jews, see Ira Katznelson, 'Between Separation and Disappearance. Jews on the Margins of American Liberalism', in Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson (eds.), pp.157–205, esp. pp. 160–170.

⁴¹ Sacher, 'Our Anti-Zionists', 9th December 1942, p. 2, Central Zionist Archives A289/65.

Typical British Zionist propaganda included allegations of assimilationist collusion with non-Jewish anti-Zionists, self-advancement at the expense of personal dignity, and the propagation of a self-defeating and self-destructive version of Jewish identity. When Rabbi Leo Baeck criticised the stance on Jewish terrorism adopted by Dr. Herzog, the Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Palestine, he was denounced in *The Gates of Zion*, the organ of the Synagogue Council of the Zionist Federation, as one of those “who, in Germany, preached the gospel that the Jews were Aryans of Jewish persuasion and who, after being ousted from Germany by the Nazis, are now in England propagating the same gospel under the new guise of ‘Jews are Englishmen of the Jewish persuasion’”.⁴² The depiction of German Jewry, widely understood to have drifted furthest from the path of Jewish national virtue and consequently heading for disaster, became a *topos* in British Zionist writing as a warning example to British Jews.⁴³

Antagonisms which made for differentiation between Jews and the larger society, or between “real” Jews and those whose membership in the national community was questioned, also played a necessary part in the rise of Zionism. In addition to antagonistic catalysts and the disintegration of social and religious certainties, the attractions Zionism held out to British and German Jews came into play as a third factor. If the reinvention of the Jews as a nation and the establishment of a national polity in the Middle East were the essence of Zionism, why should British and German Jews become Zionists? How does one account for the increase in ZF membership from approximately 5,000 in the 1930s to more than 35,000 in the mid-1940s, or that of the ZVfD which rose from 10,000 before 1914 to more than 20,000 by the end of the Weimar Republic, and which again increased after 1933?⁴⁴ The satisfaction British and German Zionists derived from their identification with Zionism may have come from answers which the Zionist analysis of the Jewish condition provided to the predicament of the modern Jew in general, and of persecuted Jews, foreign Jews, and indeed of British and German Jews. Conversely, British and German Zionists gave practical expression to their

⁴² *The Gates of Zion*, July 1947, p. 40.

⁴³ Isaiah Berlin, ‘The Life and Opinion of Moses Hess’, in *idem, Against the Current. Essays in the History of Ideas*, London 1979, p. 249; Paul Goodman, *History of the Jews*, London 1939, p. 220; Schneier Levenberg, ‘The Tercentenary Period. Retrospect and Prospect’, in Beatrice Barwell and Woolf Perry (eds.), *Aspects of Anglo-Jewish Life, 1656–1956. A Tercentenary Brochure*, London 1956, p. 6.

⁴⁴ On the expansion of the British Zionist movement see Stephan Wendehorst, *British Jewry, Zionism and the Jewish State, 1936–1956*, forthcoming Oxford 2000, part 3.

Zionist commitment through activities relating not only to British or German Jewry, but also to the inter-state Jewish sphere of interaction, particularly to the Zionist project in the Middle East. Different elements of the Zionist analysis of the Jewish condition mattered to different Zionists, sometimes in tandem, sometimes independently. British and German Jews could arrive at Zionism as a result of a sense of outraged human dignity deriving from the personal or abstract experience of antisemitism, both at home and abroad, coupled with a sense of dissatisfaction with the traditional liberal panaceas.

Two sides to the British variant of the Zionist critique of universalism will be briefly sketched. On the one hand, Zionists contested the claim that a social and political order perfected according to liberal or Communist designs would automatically result in the solution of “the Jewish Question”. Here, their main criticism of liberalism and Communism was that their solutions for the Jewish condition were predicated on the renunciation of the Jews’ particularity and their ultimate disappearance. Both before and during the Second World War, British Zionists argued that the logic of the liberal nation-state ran counter to Jewish collective continuity. In 1937 Abba Eban, then president of the Federation of Zionist Youth (FZY), bemoaned “the tragic error of the nineteenth century Jews who thought that the victory of liberalism would put an end to the Jewish problem”.⁴⁵ Paul Goodman, a leading British Zionist, elaborated on the same theme:

“It came to be recognised by ever-growing numbers that however desirable political emancipation had been at one time, this had not, and could not, achieve the object that formed the *raison d’être* of the Jewish people, viz., the full and unfettered development of its own innate forces, and that a purely legal enfranchisement could afford no solution of the Jewish social and economic problems *so long as the Jews were subject to the will and power of a necessarily dominant majority of the non-Jewish population*. It was found ... that even in free countries the Jews are subjected to intellectual and moral pressure ultimately entailing the loss of many valuable members; that the very Liberalism that stands up valiantly for the rights of the Jews hopes for the dissolution of Judaism; that this dissolution, forced by the identification of the Jewish citizens with all the aspects of the national life surrounding them, is ... a serious menace to the perpetuation of the Jewish people.”⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Aubrey [Abba] Eban, ‘Afterword’, in Lev Semenovich Pinsker, *Auto-Emancipation*, ed. by Audrey Eban, London 1937, p. 78.

⁴⁶ Paul Goodman, *History of the Jews*, London 1939, p. 204. Emphasis in the original.

Neither liberalism nor Communism would remedy the Jewish situation as an object, rather than a subject, of human history. When talking about the “emancipation of the Jewish people from what has been the greatest discrimination in history”, Selig Brodetsky, president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews (BoD) emphasised that he was referring not “to the Nazi policy against the Jews ... not ... to antisemitism ... but ... [to] the fact that for centuries the Jews have been condemned to be victims of world policy ...”. Zionism, he argued in the same speech, consisted “fundamentally in the emancipation of the Jewish people from that position of inferiority which excluded it from the counsels of the world and made it only the recipient of the kindnesses or wickednesses of the world”.⁴⁷ On the other hand, Zionists did not criticise liberalism and Communism as such, but only their inadequate sway over society.⁴⁸ Eban reminded his readers that by the late 1930s Jewish civic equality was confined to a few countries. Where it still existed, it had come under threat from domestic antisemitism, as in Britain and the USA, or from German encroachment, as in the Netherlands, Belgium and Switzerland.⁴⁹

The persecution of the Jews during the 1930s, the Holocaust and the response of the non-Jewish world, not only radicalised British Zionism but also increased acceptance among broader British Jewish circles of two arguments upon which the Zionist critique of liberalism rested. First, if the extermination of the Jews, as well as their subsequent prominence among the refugees and Displaced Persons, did not prove the Zionist claim that there was a “Jewish question” and that this question was a national one, it at least made plausible the adoption of specific measures to alleviate Jewish suffering. Second, the inadequate non-Jewish response to the Jewish catastrophe underlined the marginality of Jewish minorities in a world of nation-states. Although it was in a mediated form that British Jews confronted the persecution and extermination of Jews in Nazi Germany and those parts of the Continent under its control, more was involved than academic speculation. With the influx of refugees into Britain after 1933, the search for possible escape routes during the war, and the debate over the relocation of the survivors, the fate of European Jews had become a British Jewish concern. The task of finding a safe

⁴⁷ Zionist Federation, 41st Annual Conference, 25th January 1942, minutes, pp. 57–58, Central Zionist Archives F13/42/II.

⁴⁸ Harry Sacher to Schneier Levenberg, 16th October 1941, Weizmann Archives 2330.

⁴⁹ Eban, p. 77.

haven for persecuted Jews could serve as a justification for Zionism, and could in turn encourage British Jewish support for it.

The Zionist belief in a national Jewish collective became plausible for British Jews as a result of the experience of the Nazi persecution. If only in a negative sense, the Holocaust emphasised the collective character of the Jews, as British Zionists were quick to point out in their debates with liberal and Communist assimilationists who sought to classify the Jewish victims of Nazi terror together with the oppressed in general: "Whatever we Jews are, a nation or not, nothing can alter the fact that we have been slaughtered throughout the centuries as Jews, and that six million Jews, men, women and babies were exterminated, not as Marxists, not as exploiters, not as workers, but as Jews."⁵⁰ If British Jews could and did continue to debate the nature of a positive definition of the Jewish collective, the state-sponsored persecution of the Jews in Germany after 1933, culminating in the Holocaust, made it difficult for them to ignore the fact that the Jews' worst enemies defined, persecuted and exterminated the Jews as a collective. If they were attacked as Jews, it seemed logical to assist them as Jews. During the 1930s and 1940s, therefore, the impact of the Jewish plight under Nazi rule served as a catalyst of British Zionism. Walter Eytan, the founder of the Professional and Technical Workers' Aliyah (PATWA), reported that he became a convert to Zionism the day Hitler became Chancellor of the Reich.⁵¹ Henry and Eva Mond, who had both already been involved in Zionist matters, formally converted to Liberal Judaism in 1933.⁵² Harold Laski changed from an advocate of assimilation to a supporter of Zionism under the impact of the Holocaust.⁵³

Those who analysed the Jewish condition in Britain or Germany from a Zionist perspective were in a different category from those whose Zionism derived from their agreement with the Zionist analysis of the condition of foreign Jews. The "conversion" of Wellesly Aron, the founder of *Habonim*, to Zionism following his discovery that his Jewishness was a liability in British society exemplifies post-assimilationist Zionism affected

⁵⁰ Litvin, 'Gaster and Marx', in *The Gates of Zion*, October 1947, p. 39.

⁵¹ Transcript of interview with Walter Eytan, Institute of Contemporary Jewry, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Oral History Division, Tape No. 2354.

⁵² Eva, Marchioness of Reading, *For the Record*, London 1972, pp. 88–168; *Monthly Pioneer*, January 1933, p. 6.

⁵³ Geoffrey Alderman, *The Jewish Community in British Politics*, Oxford 1983, p. 125; Isaac Kramnick and Barry Sherman, *Harold Laski. A Life on the Left*, London 1993, pp. 263–287, 544–579.

by the personal experience of domestic antisemitism.⁵⁴ The adoption of Zionism by British and German Jews did not necessarily result from the analysis of Jewish-Gentile relations. Irrespective of non-Jewish attitudes, Jews supported Zionism because of its promise to establish a model society, both modern and Jewish. It could also provide an answer to the “de-Judaisation” of Jewishness in the wake of secularisation. To Herbert Samuel, for example, who as a student had ceased to believe in the religious precepts of Judaism, Zionism was a means of coming to terms with his Jewish heritage on a secular plane.⁵⁵ More often than taking the form of a self-reflective conversion involving a clear break with a past identity, the substitution of Zionism for Orthodoxy took the form of a gradual process which was perceived by those who underwent it as simply “natural”. This trend was a regular phenomenon among second-generation immigrants who, for the most part, had been brought up with traditional, Eastern European-style Orthodoxy, but who were even less inclined than their parents to accept the rigours of an Orthodox lifestyle. “I sometimes think as a Zionist I have forgotten how to be a Jew”,⁵⁶ commented Simon Marks, who rarely attended synagogue even on the High Holy Days, summarising the shift from the traditional, Eastern European-style Orthodoxy of his youth to Zionism as the key to his Jewish identity.

Zionist state- and nation-building, in one way or the other, appeared to be the best available solution to a multitude of problems. When it came to the realisation of the transformation of the Jews into a nation and the establishment of a national polity in Palestine, British and German Zionists faced—in addition to the complications of Zionist state- and nation-building in general: the lack of a national territory, of a national population and of coercive state power—specific problems as diaspora nationalists. While in tune with the spread of nationalism as the dominant form of identity, the Zionist commitment of Western Jews ran against the current of their social, economic and political integration, and competed with their identification with the states of which they were citizens. As Michael Berkowitz has pointed out, no-one was more conscious of the fact that the Jews were not yet a nation than Zionists in Western countries.⁵⁷ How, then, did British and German Zionists claim a share in the Zionist project? For

⁵⁴ Wellesly Aron, *Rebel with a Cause*, ed. by Helen Silman-Cheong, London 1992, pp. 16–23, 188.

⁵⁵ Norman Bentwich, *Herbert Samuel's Religious Beliefs*, London 1966; Wasserstein, pp. 200–201.

⁵⁶ Paul Bookbinder, *Simon Marks. Retail Revolutionary*, London 1993, pp. 144–145.

⁵⁷ Berkowitz, pp. 5–6.

the most part they did so by refashioning Zionism as a supplemental nationalism. As the Zionist project extended both to the Jewish polity and to Jewry as a whole, British and German Jews could relate to Zionism in two distinct ways: first, by supporting Zionist state- and nation-building in the Middle East, and second, by promoting Zionist nation-building in their respective communities. There were, therefore, a number of ways in which British and German Jews could imagine themselves as part-time members of the palestinocentric Jewish national community and underscore their identification with corresponding practical activities. In spite of the fact that Jews lived in a multitude of nation-states and were divided by numerous internal rifts, British and German Zionists could envisage a Zionist renaissance of the Jews, complete with national society, national state, national territory and national language. In order to produce a semblance of national community, British and German Zionists refashioned themselves as part-time members of the new Jewish nation by relegating to the background divisions within the national body. Zionism's selective memory operated on lines similar to the eclipse practised by other nationalisms over incidents of national dissension. When he demanded that "tout citoyen français doit avoir oublié la Saint-Barthélemy", Ernest Renan made the point that the success of nationalism was predicated as much on common oblivion as on common memory.⁵⁸

Four practical expressions of British and German Zionist support for the building of a Jewish polity in the Middle East, which served simultaneously as vehicles of their own national transformation, will be singled out for closer examination: participation in Zionist Congresses and the leadership of the world Zionist movement; fundraising; *aliyah*; and political lobbying. Representation at the Zionist Congresses was based on sale of the shekel. The number of shekel-paying German Zionists stood at almost 10,000 before the First World War, rising to more than 20,000 by the end of the Weimar Republic, and reaching more than 57,000 in 1935, entitling the German Zionists to thirty-four delegates at the Nineteenth Zionist Congress. Despite emigration, the membership of the *Berliner Zionistische Vereinigung* (BZV) stood at 6,734 in the first quarter of 1936 and at 5,888 in the first quarter of 1937.⁵⁹ The official figures for Britain are problematic, as they were artificially inflated in order to secure the delegation from the Mandatory Power a respectable representation at

⁵⁸ Ernest Renan, 'Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?', in *idem*, *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. 1, Paris 1947, p. 892; Anderson, p. 6.

⁵⁹ BZV, 'Miglieder- und Beitragsentwicklung 1935–1937', Special Archive, Moscow, 713–1–14.

Zionist Congresses.⁶⁰ In 1935 British Zionists allegedly sold almost 20,000 shekels, which entitled them to twelve Congress delegates. In terms of Zionist policy, both the ZVfD and the ZF were staunch supporters of the initiatives of the WZO leadership, and in particular of Weizmann. The General Zionists 'A' dominated the scene in both countries. As the Zionist spectrum became more diverse in the interwar period, however, they lost ground and formed alliances with Socialist Zionists.

Regarding fundraising, the German branch of the KH was more successful than its British counterpart. In the period from 1st April 1925 to 31st March 1927, the central offices in London received a total of £1,143,000: £615,358 from the USA; £80,968 from Britain, out of which £60,000 came from a single donor; £77,858 from Canada; and £48,723 from Germany. In the period from 1st April 1927 to 31st March 1929, the KH received only £85,8078: £40,2079 from the USA; £98,915 from Canada; £58,991 from Germany; and £35,782 from Britain. In 1940 the British KH raised £75,000, and in 1948 more than £2,000,000. Fundraising was not only instrumental in rendering assistance for the building of the JNH, but served simultaneously to promote Zionism among British and German Jews by reinforcing their sense of participation in the Zionist project. Every donation could count as a direct contribution to the territorial expansion of the JNH, thereby establishing a personal link between the individual British and German Jew and the wider national enterprise. In addition the *Keren Kayemet Leysrael* (KKL) and the KH, the two principal Zionist funds, provided much of the organisational infrastructure of British and German Zionism. In both countries fundraising was particularly popular with businessmen and those on the fringes of organised Zionism. Prominent examples were the Marks family in Britain and Oscar Wassermann of the Deutsche Bank.⁶¹

In considering *aliyah* from either country a distinction must be made between rhetoric and reality. In Britain the programmatic negation of the *galut* was advocated by individuals such as Koestler and Namier, and by the *Mizrachi* and the *chalutzic* youth movements, but not by the mainstream ZF.⁶² In Germany, by contrast, the rhetoric of organised Zionism was more radical. In 1912 the ZVfD passed a resolution that every

⁶⁰ Cesarani, 'Zionism in England', pp. 18–19.

⁶¹ Lichtheim, p. 232; Lothar Gall *et al.*, *Die Deutsche Bank, 1870–1995*, Munich 1995, p. 224.

⁶² Lewis Namier, *Conflicts. Studies in Contemporary History*, London 1942, p. 156; Arthur Koestler, 'The End of a Mission. The Jewish Future', in *Manchester Guardian*, 23rd December 1948, pp. 4, 6.

member should incorporate *aliyah* into his or her life-plan, a move echoed in Britain only by the *chalutzic* youth movements and the *Mizrachi*, which passed a similar resolution at its founding convention in 1918.⁶³ *Aliyah* from either country did not exceed 2,000 before 1933.⁶⁴ Of the approximately 300,000 Jews who left Germany between 1933 and 1939 an estimated 60,000 settled in Palestine.⁶⁵ If, prior to 1933, the majority of British and German Zionists acted as though they assumed the permanence of the diaspora, it was not merely on the plane of imagination that they saw themselves as forming part of a Jewish nation centred on the JNH. Having supported the training of *chalutzim* on a limited scale since the 1920s, they did not display the principled hostility of the Zionist Organisation of America towards the *aliyah* of its members.

Apart from participating in Zionist organisations and fundraising, British and German Zionists lobbied for the establishment of a Jewish state. There was both a general Zionist and a specifically British dimension to the demand of British Zionists for Jewish statehood. The demand for Jewish sovereignty was a general Zionist concern. What was specific about the British Zionist stance was the wish to see the Jewish polity exist in close association with Britain. The Mandate for Palestine exposed British Zionists to specific pressures, but provided them also with specific opportunities. Whereas the demand for Jewish statehood had been put forward formally by the WZO only with the endorsement of the Biltmore Declaration in 1942, it formed part of the ZF's agenda from the publication of the Peel report until Britain abandoned the Mandate in 1947. In contrast to the Biltmore programme, however, British Zionists had always demanded a Jewish state in association with the British Empire or Commonwealth. The prominent place that lobbying Westminster and the public occupied on the British Zionist agenda had no real parallel in Germany, despite efforts to interest the Imperial government in the Zionist project and several pro-Zionist gestures of the Weimar government which were achieved through the *Deutsches Komitee Pro Palästina*.⁶⁶ As long as British relations with the Zionist movement were amicable, the Mandate

⁶³ Reinharz, *Dokumente*, p. 106; *Report of the First Mizrahi Conference in the United Kingdom*, London 1920, p. 18.

⁶⁴ Reinharz, *Dokumente*, pp. 141–142.

⁶⁵ Lichtheim, p. 266.

⁶⁶ Joseph Walk, 'Das Deutsche Komitee Pro Palästina 1926–1933', in *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts XV* (1976), pp. 162–193; Francis Nicosia, 'Weimar Germany and the Palestine Question', in *Year Book XXIV of the Leo Baeck Institute*, London 1979, pp. 321–345.

provided the background for a dual British and Zionist national commitment which was termed by contemporaries “patriotic Zionism”. When the relationship deteriorated in the 1930s and 1940s, this commitment bestowed legitimacy on Zionist activity in Britain.

Zionist nation-building was not restricted to the JNH, but extended to the respective Jewish communities, following Herzl’s demand for conquest of the communities. Differences due to the organisational fragmentation of German Jewry notwithstanding, a similar development occurred in both countries. British and German Zionists, usually in alliance with other groups dissatisfied with the *status quo*, such as immigrants from Eastern Europe and the Orthodox, sought to overthrow the traditional liberal-cum-assimilationist leadership. In Germany the main instrument of internal Zionist nation-building was the *Jüdische Volkspartei* (JVP), which regarded the national transformation of Jewry as the main function of Zionism in the diaspora, according to the programme formulated by Max Kollenscher in which he demanded the transformation of the *KultusGemeinden* into *VolksGemeinden*.⁶⁷ Although the JVP adhered to the Basle programme, its relations with the ZVfD were not uncomplicated.⁶⁸ It was not until the 1920s that the ZVfD itself started to devote energies to *Gemeindepolitik* by founding a *Gemeindekommission*. There remained reservations in the ZVfD on the grounds that all efforts ought to be concentrated on the JNH. The JVP registered its greatest victory when it succeeded in ousting the liberal leadership of the *Gemeinde* in Berlin in 1926 and in electing Georg Kareski as president of its board of representatives in 1929.⁶⁹ Notwithstanding this success and their growing popularity during the 1920s and 1930s, German Zionists continued to occupy second place behind the CV in terms of membership and communal influence. In Britain, it was not until 1939 that the Zionists succeeded for the first time in electing a Zionist as president of the BoD, and not until 1942 that they established their control over this communal “parliament” of British Jewry. Due to the absence—until the creation of the *Reichsvertretung*—of a body representing German Jews on the national level, the conflict between Zionists and their opponents was fought out over influence in the individual *Gemeinden* and Jewish organisations.

⁶⁷ Max Kollenscher, *Aufgaben jüdischer Gemeindepolitik*, Posen 1905.

⁶⁸ The conflict over the JVP captivated the attention of German Zionists as late as 1936: ‘XXV. Delegiertentag der Z.V.f.D., 1. Tag: Sonntag, 2.2.1936’, Special Archive, Moscow, 713–1–4a.

⁶⁹ Donald Niewyk, *The Jews in Weimar Germany*, Baton Rouge 1980, pp. 148–149.

Turning to the fourth point of comparison, the participation of British and German Zionists in the public sphere, the following observations may be made. Although Kurt Blumenfeld's *Entwurzelungstheorie*, the idea that Jews had no roots in Germany and should not hold prominent positions in German state and society, was never formally endorsed by the ZVfD, German Zionism was more introspective than its British counterpart.⁷⁰ The ZVfD did not concern itself with German politics, except during the First World War and at the end of the Weimar Republic, although Zionists were to be found in prominent positions in Germany. The Weimar Republic having opened the higher echelons of the civil service to Jews, German Jews, including Zionists, seized the opportunity: for example, Hermann Badt as *Ministerialdirektor* in the Prussian Home Office, Hans Goslar as head of the information department of the Prussian government and Conrad Kaiser in the Berlin police department.⁷¹ But their Zionist commitment was not prominently displayed. In German party politics there was no equivalent to the simultaneous career of Barnett Janner as Zionist leader and Labour politician. Nor should the Zionist affiliation of an individual Socialist such as Fritz Perez Naphtali be seen as an equivalent to the British *Poale Zion*, which had been recognised as a faction of the Labour Party since 1920.⁷² How does one account for the British Zionists' greater interaction with the public? First, the Mandate not only justified British Jewish support for the JNH, but also accorded legitimacy to the intervention of Zionists in British politics. Second, a specific aspect of the Jewish experience in Britain, in comparison with other Western nation-states, notably France, was the less intense pressure on Jews to develop an exclusive and immediate relationship with the public sphere in return for civic equality. Rather, British Jews had been co-opted into a historical, multi-faceted state and society,⁷³ which also appears to have accommodated a carefully delimited degree of public collective Jewish identity. This could also serve to explain the fact that since the 1920s one Jewish MP (first Liberal, later Labour) came to be recognised as the unofficial spokesman of British Jews and Zionists in Westminster, a position that seems to have become the hereditary property of the Janner family.

⁷⁰ Lichtheim, p. 167.

⁷¹ Lichtheim, pp. 161, 242–243; for fragmentary correspondence between the BZV and Hermann Badt and Hans Goslar see BZV, Special Archive, Moscow, 713–1–6.

⁷² Joseph Gorny, *The British Labour Movement and Palestine, 1917–1948*, London 1983; Riemer, pp. 11–38.

⁷³ See Tom Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain*, London 1977, pp. 17–18, on the difference between the British and any subsequent liberal state and society.

I would like to end this paper by offering tentative conclusions and making suggestions for further research. Categories borrowed from modernist theories of nationalism not only provide a comprehensive analytical framework for the examination of British and German Zionists as part-time members of the wider palestinocentric Jewish national movement, but may also serve as criteria of comparison. By applying the concept of the disintegration of traditional religious and social frames of reference as a precondition for the rise of nationalism to British and German Jewry, structural similarities between the crisis of the immigrant *milieu* and that of the long-established Jews can be identified. Given the respective share of the two *milieux* in British and German Jewry, post-assimilationist Zionism was more likely to be found in the latter, but was not restricted to it. Antagonistic factors served as catalysts of both British and German Zionism. Whereas Zionism in Britain chiefly thrived on the indirect experience of the persecution and destruction of European Jewry, as well as on factors which were bound up with liberal state and society, its German counterpart was fuelled more by the direct experience of domestic antisemitism. As Richard Lichtheim has pointed out, it was after 1933 that the membership of the ZVfD increased considerably and that the German KH achieved its highest income.⁷⁴ The means by which British and German Zionists participated in Zionist state- and nation-building were similar, with two exceptions. After 1933, *aliyah* from Germany assumed proportions for which there was no British parallel. Intense political lobbying against the background of Britain's assumption of the Mandate for Palestine, by contrast, was a phenomenon specific to British Zionism.

The study of a minority experience is interesting not only in itself, but perhaps even more for what it reveals about the surrounding society. Such a perspective provides the historian with a vantage point from which the well-known turns of history appear in a different, less familiar, light. While the study of Jewish history provides a welcome means of challenging what is considered accepted and acceptable, there is a danger of regarding Jewish relations with the larger society as determined primarily by a dynamic specific to that relationship rather than by developments which have their origins and purposes elsewhere. Comparisons with other minorities would make it possible to distinguish between specifically Jewish experiences and Jewish variants of general

⁷⁴ Lichtheim, pp. 263–264. For Gestapo reports on the ZVfD, Zionist Congresses and interrogation protocols of individual German Zionists, see, for example, Special Archive, Moscow, R 501–1–22, 501–1–23, 501–1–26.

phenomena. How did German Jews differ from the Danish, French and Polish minorities in Wilhelmine Germany? In what respects did British Zionists differ from Welsh, Scottish and Irish nationalists, in particular those living in mainland Britain? Why not compare the Jewish condition with that of a non-dominant Christian minority? When Weizmann sought to dispel the anxieties of the Rothschild-dominated New Court circle about charges of dual loyalty by comparing the relations of Jews with the prospective Jewish state and of Catholics with the Vatican, Leonard Montefiore replied that Weizmann's analogy, rather than proving the contrary, represented the very predicament the Jews ought to avoid. The link with Rome, he argued, had compromised the standing of Catholics "certainly in France, possibly in Germany".⁷⁵ A comparison between Jewish, in particular Zionist, and Catholic student associations in Germany, for example, would indeed be a promising case study.

⁷⁵ Leonard Montefiore to Anthony de Rothschild, 25th January 1942, Rothschild Archive London, XI/35/61.

DAVID RECHTER

Looking East: Comparing German and British Zionism: A Comment on Stephan Wendehorst

Stephan Wendehorst has written an admirably ambitious paper, aspiring to nothing less than presenting a “better and novel understanding” of Zionism. He compares German and British Zionism using a radicalised version of Benedict Anderson’s ideas, “an alternative to the traditional paradigms of interpretation”. My response to this daunting display will be on a more prosaic and mundane level.

I can only agree with Wendehorst’s fundamental theoretical point: that Zionism must be considered as one example, one variant, of the wider phenomenon of nationalism. This is surely incontestable. He is also beyond reproach in his forcefully expressed wish to contextualise the history of Zionism by placing it squarely within the historiography of nationalism and nationalist movements. Again, this would seem to be absolutely correct. The novelty of this approach, however, is somewhat moot. In fact, it is perhaps more accurate to say that this has become, or at least is becoming, almost the standard way of looking at Zionism and its history. Wendehorst himself mentions Gideon Shimoni’s book *The Zionist Idea*; Shimoni certainly takes this approach, using a modified version of Anthony D. Smith’s arguments about the complex relationship between ethnicity and modernity.

By way of illustration, consider the following two examples, from two unremarkable sources, both of which draw upon the mainstream historiography of Jewish nationalism and Zionism. The first is an Open University textbook on *State, Economy and Nation in 19th-Century Europe*, in which Zionism is described as “very much an expression of European political culture in the late nineteenth century”.¹ Along the same lines, the *New York Times* recently published an article entitled ‘Nationalism with a Zionist Twist’. Written by a journalist rather than an historian, the article

¹ Richard Bessell, *State, Economy and Nation in 19th-Century Europe: Nation*, Milton Keynes 1996, p. 124.

focused on Zionism as a form of European nationalism.² My point here is simply that if this kind of framework and argument appears in these kinds of sources (and I stress that I do not intend to be pejorative about them in any way), then it is reasonable to assume that it is already relatively standard.

Perhaps one of the factors that might have led Wendehorst to focus on what he regards as the failings of the historiography of Jewish nationalism is that he draws his examples primarily from writings on German and British Zionism (which is of course what he was asked to do). I would suggest, however, that he is looking in the wrong direction, i.e., looking west, when in fact looking east would be both more beneficial and more appropriate. By this I mean that it is in Eastern and Central Europe, rather than Western and Central Europe, that we find a plethora of competing small nationalisms and consequently we also find that the kind of contextualising for which Wendehorst is searching in vain has been part of both the self-image and the historiographical construct of Zionism and of Jewish nationalism all along.

This is reflected quite well in the case of diaspora nationalism and in theories of Jewish political autonomy. And again, I need to take issue with Wendehorst's criticism of the reluctance of Zionist scholarship to conceptualise and contextualise diaspora Zionism. There may well have been such a reluctance in Germany and westwards. But in Eastern Europe, and also in the Austrian empire, diaspora nationalism—i.e., a body of ideas about Jewish corporate autonomy—was well established, both as an ideology and as an albeit minor political force. And the ideology of diaspora nationalism was explicitly and consciously drawn from examples provided by the surrounding nationalist movements in the Russian and Austrian empires. I am thinking here of people like Simon Dubnow in Russia, or the *Poale Zion* theoretician Max Rosenfeld and the Prague Zionist Siegmund Kaznelson in Austria. All of these thinkers patterned their own ideologies of Jewish autonomy on those of the Austro-Marxists Karl Renner and Otto Bauer, for whom, of course, Jews did not qualify as a national group. To paraphrase the *New York Times* article, this was very much a case of “nationalism with a Jewish twist”. Granted, this was never a dominant or even a particularly powerful strain in the Zionist movement (it is given fairly short shrift by Shimoni, for example), but it nevertheless played an interesting, and much-neglected, role in the history of Jewish nationalism and Jewish politics.

² *New York Times*, 31st August 1997.

Obviously, then, Zionism/Jewish nationalism was a very different creature in Western Europe than in Eastern Europe. Even allowing of course that neither of those categories are by any means watertight, in terms of Jewish nationalism they are still useful descriptive generalities. Viewed from this perspective, both German and British Zionism could be described as primarily “western”. For the most part, they were philanthropic in nature, concerned with fund-raising for Palestine and with assisting other, less fortunate (read: Eastern European) Jews to settle there. We should not be too insistent on this categorisation, however, since German Zionism took a radical and rather different path just prior to the outbreak of the First World War, officially adopting “negation of the diaspora” and personal commitment to *aliyah*. (I would also exclude the youth movements from this scheme.) In this sense, then, there may be interesting and useful comparisons to be made between the two movements.

Broadly speaking, the German and British forms of Zionism were part of a Western European Jewish political culture that was by and large moderate and ameliorative, rather than, as was the case in Eastern Europe, mobilised, dynamic and even revolutionary. For most German and British Zionists, Zionism formed only one part, one component, of their identity; Wendehorst expresses this well when he describes them as “part-time members of the new Jewish nation”. For Eastern European Zionists, in contrast, it was much more often a complete way of life, a complete identity, a means of thorough self-transformation. To adapt Wendehorst’s phrase, they were very often “full-time Jewish nationalists”.

These differences arise from two linked primary sources. The first is the radically different experience of Jews in Western and Eastern Europe, which needs no elaboration here. The second lies in the Jewish political culture in which these Zionisms were embedded. If Zionism was a Jewish form of general European nationalism, it is also worth keeping in mind that Zionism and other forms of Jewish nationalism were in turn elements of a broader Jewish political culture. In other words, when analysing Jewish nationalism, whether German, British, or any other sort, it is just as crucial to see it in the context of Jewish politics as it is to see it in the context of European nationalism. If we do not adequately understand the internal political structures and complexities of Jewish society (the Jewish street, as it was colloquially known), then we cannot possibly begin to understand Zionism and Jewish nationalism.

Jewish politics was in many ways a function of the “Jewish Question”, i.e., the question of the place of Jews in European society. Jewish attempts

to deal with this question were at the very heart of Jewish political movements, ideologies and political identities. It is here that the East/West dichotomy becomes somewhat blurred, rendered more ambiguous and complicated by an additional, and very significant, factor: namely, the fundamental divide between the experiences of Jews in continental Europe and those of Jews in Britain. For no matter which way you look at it, the Jewish Question in Britain was not of the same, or even of a comparable, intensity to the Jewish Question on the Continent (something that Britain shared with the New World). It was simply not as important, either for society as a whole or for the Jews. Even bearing in mind the obvious caveat that we should not generalise carelessly about the European Jewish experience as though it were a monolithic entity, the point about the Jewish Question remains valid. From this vantage point, what divided and separated German Zionism from British Zionism—their existential situation, to put it rather grandly—was greater than what united them—that they were part of the same integrationist and moderate “western” Jewish political culture. In other words, differences outweighed similarities. In this, I am echoing Wendehorst’s assessment that there are distinct limits to the comparability of the two.

To finish, I want to make a brief comment about what I referred to earlier as the fundamentally different experience of Jews in continental Europe from that of Jews in Britain. The logical corollary of this is to ask how useful an exercise it is to compare these particular experiences, these particular Jewish societies. I want to stress that I am in no way making a negative argument or judgement about the overall purpose of the comparative exercise in which we are engaged; far from it. What I am saying, however, is that in the particular instance of Zionism, and of the broader Jewish political cultures of Germany and Britain, I must admit that I am not quite convinced of the utility of the comparison.

EDGAR FEUCHTWANGER

The Jewishness of Conservative Politicians: Disraeli and Stahl

In attempting a juxtaposition, let alone a comparison, between Friedrich Julius Stahl and Benjamin Disraeli, one is entering speculative territory and dealing with tenuous concepts. There is no doubt about the hard facts that both men were of Jewish parentage and played a leading role in the conservative politics of their respective countries. The essence of the service both of them performed for the conservative cause was to enable conservatism and conservative parties or organisations to remain viable in an age of liberalism and progress. Throughout their active lives they devoted themselves to a cause that appeared to be swimming against the historical tide. It was mainly due to Disraeli that the Conservative Party in Britain ceased to be "the stupid party" and became a powerful engine for the attainment and retention of political power, while in Germany it was in no small measure due to Stahl that a combination of nationalism, Prussian conservatism and the kind of constitutionalism he specifically advocated came to hold sway. A common element in the historical task performed by both men was to expunge the taint of sheer negativity from the prevailing conservative ideology. In their hands conservatism ceased to be self-interested reaction and acquired a forward-looking quality. Much of this interpretation is naturally somewhat debatable. It was a rather circuitous route by which Disraeli came to be regarded as the originator of Tory Democracy, for which it is difficult in any case to arrive at a clear definition. The connection between Stahl and Bismarckian Germany is equally tenuous. There is no doubt a striking resemblance between what Stahl advocated in the 1850s and the kind of constitutionalism put into practice by Bismarck after 1867. In the 1850s, he suggested an Upper House, the *Bundesrat*, to represent the sovereign princes. But by the time Bismarck promulgated the constitutions of the North German Confederation, and subsequently of the *Reich*, Stahl was dead and

circumstances had been created which he never anticipated and probably would not have welcomed.

In Britain and Prussia-Germany alike the natural upholders of the conservative cause in the nineteenth century were men born to it, most obviously members of the aristocracy. Stahl and Disraeli both came from outside this charmed circle (although Jewishness was only one element, and not always the most important, in making them outsiders). It is tempting to lay stress on this in assessing their careers, but the aristocratic ruling elites of Europe were so narrowly defined that it is not difficult to find outsiders co-opted for one reason or another, and even to trace a flaw in the membership credentials of many others. As outsiders, Stahl and Disraeli have been attributed with a special quality of insight which is said to have enabled them to play their role because those with whom they worked, mostly aristocrats, lacked the detachment to see what was required. The title "The Alien Patriot" has sometimes been given to Disraeli, though he has also been called "Lord Derby's bagman". There is a temptation to see both Stahl and Disraeli, particularly because of their Jewish origins, as "hired" spokesmen or propagandists. All this is somewhat contradicted by the centrality of the positions they acquired in the conservative movements of their respective countries. They came to hold a special place in the conservative pantheon and were, for political figures, regarded with exceptional affection. In Disraeli's case this is shown by the royal favour he enjoyed later in his career, which enabled him virtually to reinvent the British monarchy as an imperial institution. The most popular Conservative mass organisation of the late 19th century, the Primrose League, is named after his favourite flower.

Stahl's path from the Judaism of his ancestors to Lutheranism has hardly anything in common with Disraeli's transition from the Jewish background of his family to Anglicanism. Stahl's grandfather, Abraham Uhlfelder, was an Orthodox, conservative Jew, who greatly influenced his grandson; he was head of the Jewish community in Munich and took a prominent role in the process of Jewish emancipation in Bavaria. Stahl underwent a genuine religious conversion at the age of seventeen to a denomination which was not the prevailing one in his native Bavaria. Five years later, Stahl's father and the rest of his family converted to Catholicism. Although, in the early 1830s, Stahl was associated with a group of "awakened" professors at Erlangen university, his conversion was not an evangelical "awakening" comparable to that experienced by the Gerlach brothers and many of those who later became his Prussian conservative associates. It was rather a slowly ripening conviction in a

gifted adolescent that Lutheran Protestantism represented a more complete and satisfying system of faith than Judaism. Stahl's religion, decisive as it was throughout his career, always had a cerebral rather than an emotional basis. Moreover, his conversion from Judaism was not a rejection but, in his own mind, more of a transcendence; he always recognised the important and lasting qualities of Jewish religious sensibilities, and that they had deeply and permanently affected his own personality and outlook. In his book *Der christliche Staat und sein Verhältnis zu Deismus und Judentum*, published in 1847, he wrote: "The innermost trait of the Jewish race is religion and religious conscientiousness, which give them their moral fibre." And again,

"religion has remained the essence of the Jewish character. Jews are human beings of seriousness and conscientiousness, also in the externals of life, especially as these are related to religion and informed by reverence towards the things that bind and govern them from above, by zeal for the law, even if often not without the passion of zeal and the obstinacy of opinion."¹

He contrasts this kind of Jewish religious feeling with "the type, repulsive beyond measure, who has lost this, his very own moral impulse, no longer has anything firm in or above himself ... is without dignity or reverence for others ... and finds his satisfaction solely in the mobility of his intellect".² We may see here an antisemitic stereotype, if not an example of Jewish self-hatred. For Stahl the future of the Jews lay in following his own path of conversion by embracing Christianity as the natural progression from Judaism, most likely in its highest Protestant form. He continued to respect Orthodox Judaism, but saw no room for Reform Judaism, which he felt must end in conversion and complete assimilation. This was a common view of the future of the Jews. The Pietist Prussian aristocrats with whom Stahl became associated put much effort into societies for the conversion of Jews, and the same phenomenon is to be found in the Church of England.³ On the evangelical wing of the

¹ Friedrich Julius Stahl, *Die Philosophie des Rechts, 1830–1837*. Eine Auswahl nach der 5. Auflage (1870), eingeleitet und herausgegeben von Henning von Arnim, Tübingen 1926, p. XVIII. See also Hans-Joachim Schoeps, 'Friedrich Julius Stahl und das Judentum', in Hans Lamm (ed.), *Vergangene Tage. Jüdische Kultur in München*, Munich 1982, pp. 151–155.

² Quoted in Christian Wiegand, *Über Friedrich Julius Stahl (1801–1862)*. *Recht, Staat und Kirche*, Paderborn 1981, p. 12, n. 5.

³ Christopher Clark, *The Politics of Conversion. Missionary Protestantism and the Jews in Prussia, 1728–1941*, Oxford 1995.

Anglican Church, Britain was often seen as the successor nation to the Jews. Most Liberals expected the future of the Jews to end in complete assimilation, including religious assimilation.

In comparing Stahl with Disraeli, similarities as well as differences in their relationship to Judaism become apparent. Disraeli was baptized into the Church of England at the age of thirteen, a decision entirely taken by his father. Isaac Disraeli, as a man of the Enlightenment, had little time for traditional Jewish ritual and observance and was an admirer of Moses Mendelssohn. But, emollient figure that he was, he had remained within the Jewish community. It seems that the demands made on him by that community, more specifically by the Congregation of Bevis Marks, had, by the time of the early adolescence of his son Benjamin, become irritating to him and he cut his ties with the synagogue, but he remained a Jew, with a religious position close to theism. He maintained an interest in the reform of Judaism and in the emancipation of the Jews, and as late as 1833 published a book on *The Genius of Judaism*. No great decision of principle was therefore involved in having his children baptized. Although it was the proverbial purchase of an entry ticket to Gentile society, in this case the price paid was not high and no crisis of conscience was involved. There is no evidence that the young Benjamin either agreed or objected to what was being done on his behalf. It was the most important decision of his early life for, had he remained a Jew, his entry into Parliament would have been so long delayed that he could never have had his great political career. There is another irony arising from the juxtaposition of Disraeli with Stahl. Disraeli, with the political courage that became his hallmark, supported the admission of Jews to Parliament as early as 1848, when his grip on a leading position in the Tory party was still very fragile and the bulk of the party was opposed to the so-called "Jew Bill", a term already current in connection with the naturalisation proposals of the 1750s. However, even his friend Baron Lionel de Rothschild, whose case was immediately at issue, was uneasy about the grounds on which Disraeli justified the admission of Jews to Parliament: "It is as a Christian that I will not take upon me the awful responsibility of excluding from the legislature those who are of the religion in the bosom of which my Lord and Saviour was born," he said in his speech.⁴ On the other hand, Stahl's project of the Christian state implied the exclusion of Jews from full citizenship. He published his *Der Christliche Staat und sein Verhältnis zu*

⁴ Quoted in W.F. Monypenny and G.E. Buckle, *The Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield*, vol. I, London 1929, pp. 885–886.

Deismus und Judentum in 1847 to support the opposition that was then being voiced to the full civic emancipation of Jews in the United Diet.

We may note here that the early views on the relationship between Church and State of Disraeli's great rival, Gladstone, were similar to Stahl's and also implied, in principle, a diminished citizenship status for all non-Anglicans. It was an unrealistic prospectus, as Gladstone came in due course to realise, for it would have relegated the members of the various dissenting denominations—about half the practising Christians in the country—to permanent second-class citizenship. Gladstone's book *The State in its Relations with the Church*, published in 1838, which earned him the notorious accolade "the rising hope of those stern and unbending Tories" from Macaulay, was much admired by the future Friedrich Wilhelm IV and his circle. The Anglican Church was seen as a model by the King and his friends. Stahl's concept of the Christian State was ultimately as unrealistic in Prussia as Gladstone's was in England, yet he retained it as the central operational concept both for Prussia's internal constitutional problems and for his proposed solution to the German question. Developments after 1858 made it largely irrelevant and Stahl lost his influence before he died in 1861. A few months before his death, he had delivered a memorial oration for the recently deceased King which has about it a poignantly valedictory ring. Both Friedrich Wilhelm and his valued adviser came to be regarded as the losers of history. One of the main reasons for Stahl's call to Berlin in 1840 had been to help with the realisation of the King's ideas for the constitutional position of the Prussian Protestant churches, and his desire to bring to full fruition the 1817 amalgamation of the Lutheran and reformed denominations.

It is much more difficult to know what Disraeli's religion really was and it was much less essential to his political role than it was to Stahl's. As a Romantic novelist, he can hardly be categorised as an agnostic when so many of his tales revolve round religion, race or ethnicity. Deeply aware of the spiritual dimension in the human condition and detesting materialism, Disraeli's religious sensibilities were part and parcel of his Romantic world view; they might perhaps be characterised as pantheistic, but they certainly involved no deep attachment to any specific denomination, religious dogma, or practice. He regarded all organised forms of religion with detachment, scepticism, even cynicism, and he was highly suspicious of any trace of clericalism. In 1861 his friend, the young Lord Stanley, later, as the fifteenth Earl of Derby, to be Foreign Secretary in Disraeli's cabinet, asked himself: "How can I reconcile his open ridicule, in private, of all religions, with his preaching of a new church-

and-state agitation?"⁵ This was one of the many occasions in Disraeli's career when he appealed to anti-Catholic prejudice by "beating the Protestant drum". He had moved away from the sympathy with Catholicism that marked his Young England days and which is evident in his novels of the 1840s. Nevertheless one of his persistent parliamentary stratagems in the 1850s was to angle for the alliance of Irish Roman Catholics who, he rightly felt, would be more at home with the Tories than with Liberals promoting an anti-papal policy in Italy. Disraeli's scepticism went side by side with a very exalted view of the social function of churches and of the Church of England in particular. The theme of the Church as the moral guide of the people pervades his novels: great social evils arise if the Church fails to fulfil her role. Disraeli coined the phrase "an alien church" as one of the main causes of Ireland's ills. In the general preface to the 1870 collected edition of his novels, he referred to his Young England days:

"The writer, and those who acted with him, looked upon the Anglican Church as a main machinery by which these results might be realised. There were few great things left in England, and the Church was one. Nor do I doubt that if a quarter of a century ago there had arisen a Churchman equal to the occasion, the position of ecclesiastical affairs in this country would have been very different from that which they now occupy. But these great matters fell into the hands of monks and schoolmen."⁶

Like Stahl, Disraeli saw Christianity as the transcendence and fulfilment of Judaism. In *Sybil, or, The Two Nations* he writes: "In all these Church discussions, we are apt to forget that the second Testament is avowedly only a supplement. Jehova-Jesus came to complete the 'law and the prophets'. Christianity is completed Judaism or it is nothing."⁷ He once famously described himself as "the blank page between the Old and the New Testaments".

Anglicanism sat lightly on Disraeli all his life. He did not belong to any of the factions in the Church—low, broad or high—and when it became an important part of his duties as prime minister to make ecclesiastical appointments, he had difficulty in finding his way around the factions and often lacked "feel" for where individuals stood or how they were viewed

⁵ J.R. Vincent (ed.), *Disraeli, Derby and the Conservative Party. The Political Journals of Lord Stanley, 1849–1869*, Hassocks 1978, p. 179.

⁶ Quoted in J.A. Froude, *The Life of the Earl of Beaconsfield*, Everyman edn., London 1914, p. 98.

⁷ B. Disraeli, *Sybil, or, The Two Nations*, Bradenham edn., London 1927, Book II, ch. 12, pp. 130–131.

by others. When, as prime minister, he was staying at Balmoral, he wrote to Monty Corry, his private secretary: "Ecclesiastical affairs rage here. Send me Crockford's directory, I must be armed."⁸

Relations between Disraeli and the High Church party, which he often called with contempt the "sacerdotal party", became decidedly chilly, but the reasons for this were political rather than religious. So many of the *frondeurs* against Disraeli's leadership within the Conservative Party from the 1850s onwards were High Churchmen, men such as the backbencher George Bentinck—not to be confused with his distant cousin Lord George Bentinck, Disraeli's friend and colleague in the Conservative leadership—habitually referred to Disraeli as "the Jew". Such sentiments were still prominent in the bitter antisemitic hostility to his foreign policy in the mid-1870s. Many of the attacks on him at this time, for example those of the historian Freeman, would nowadays be regarded as unacceptably racist. But if Disraeli was only a formal Anglican, he was certainly no Jew: he had not internalised Judaism as a religion in his youth, as Stahl had done, and even claimed later in life to have been nurtured in prejudice against Jews in his youth. In 1853 he wrote to Mrs. Brydges Williams, like himself born Jewish but baptized: "I, like you, was not bred among my race, and was nurtured in great prejudice against them." He may be referring to the distaste with which his father Isaac, as a man of the Enlightenment, looked upon traditional Jewish observances and practices; or he may be thinking of his grandmother who, by all accounts, regarded her Jewishness as a cross she had to bear. In fact Disraeli's Jewish consciousness seems to have been largely shaped by the antisemitism he encountered throughout his life. The preoccupation with his Jewish roots was sparked by his Middle Eastern tour of 1830–1831, for he showed no interest in them during an earlier Italian journey which took him past the homes of his ancestors. It is curious that antisemitism should have played so important a role in Disraeli's life, spent in allegedly tolerant and liberal England, whereas it had little influence in the later career of Stahl, spent in reactionary Prussia. This is not to imply that antisemitism was the most important element in the hostility and prejudice Disraeli often provoked. In an age increasingly ruled by respectability, the absence of the normal accoutrements of a country gentleman and the air of disreputability that clung to him from his early days were just as important. There was in any case little ideological thrust in the populist antisemitism of Victorian

⁸ Monypenny and Buckle, vol. II, p. 398.

⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 1274.

England and it was rarely part and parcel of an anti-liberal package as it came to be in Germany. It was the kind of antisemitism that greeted Disraeli with cries of "old clothes" at his early appearances on the hustings, that in the 1840s produced the remark "Disraeli is of the *Junge Judentum*, not the young England, and so may be damned",¹⁰ and that still made Lancashire operatives tell Salisbury in 1880: "We shall never have good luck under a Jew."¹¹

In his earlier days Stahl also encountered objections to his Jewish origins. Like Disraeli he was regarded as being of Jewish appearance, and was described as of

"medium, rather slight build, with a head of strikingly Jewish cast: the small, ivory-coloured face was surrounded by long black hair with a parting; the nose curved strongly to the finely formed mouth, with clever small lips, and beneath the high open forehead there shone with a wonderful glow his deep and fiery eye."¹²

A decisive moment in his life came when, on the eve of his conversion and when he was about to join the *Burschenschaft*, he was protected by his life-long friend Hermann von Rothenhan from an antisemitic attack by students at Erlangen. Even when he was already established as a leading light among Prussian Conservatives, his Jewish origins were not forgotten. There is an anecdote that Bismarck, while on record as praising Stahl as a "pearl", agonised, "O, he is only a Jew, yes, nothing more than a Jew".¹³ Both Victor Aimé Huber and Heinrich Leo, with other leading conservative intellectuals, professed prejudice against Stahl on account of his Jewish origins. Leo later admitted that "in his general antipathy to everything Jewish, he had failed to take the slightest notice of Stahl's books".¹⁴ It would be an exaggeration to claim that such sentiments affected Stahl's position when he was at the height of his political influence in the 1850s. But even then Christian von Bunsen, most of the time a political ally, who had praised Stahl to Frederick William IV for his "truly Jewish precision and clarity", complained in 1854 of Stahl's

¹⁰ Jane Ridley, *The Young Disraeli*, London 1995, p. 208.

¹¹ Quoted in Paul Smith, *Disraeli. A Brief Life*, Cambridge 1996, p. 202.

¹² Wiegand, p. 15, n. 16.

¹³ *Ibid.* See also Gerhard Masur, *Friedrich Julius Stahl. Geschichte seines Lebens: Aufstieg und Entfaltung*, Berlin 1930, pp. 330–332.

¹⁴ W. Füssl, *Professor in der Politik: Friedrich Julius Stahl (1802–1861). Das monarchische Prinzip und seine Umsetzung in die parlamentarische Praxis*, Göttingen 1988, p. 111.

“Jewish-scholastic-pietist-Lutheran *Weltanschauung*”.¹⁵ His regard for Roman Catholicism and his tendency towards an ecumenical view of the two major Christian denominations or, as some saw it, insufficiently dogmatic differentiation between Lutheranism and Catholicism, was attributed to his Jewish origins. An article by Johannes Heckel, which appeared in the *Historische Zeitschrift* in 1937 under the title *Der Einbruch des jüdischen Geistes in das deutsche Staats- und Kirchenrecht durch F.J. Stahl*, stressed the theocratic nature of Stahl’s view of the state.¹⁶ According to Heckel, writing in the Third Reich, although Stahl’s ineradicable Jewish racial traits were displaced into religious consciousness, at the root of Stahl’s Christianity there was always racially-rooted Judaism. What Heckel says differs little, however, from what Bluntschli had already said much earlier about Stahl’s system: “...at bottom the semitic view of the world, which is revived in Stahl’s theory of state and law, admittedly elevated and expanded with Aryan-European elements.”¹⁷

Religion was not at the core of Disraeli’s being. Nevertheless his reactive Jewish consciousness, if it can be called that, which was not necessarily closely linked to his innermost religious beliefs, played a central part in the construction of his personality. As a young man he was egomaniacal, narcissistic, depressive, yet limitlessly ambitious and aware that he possessed gifts amounting to genius. Such egocentrism was of the essence of the Romantic movement. In his semi-autobiographical novel *Contarini Fleming* he wrote:

“They know not, they cannot tell, the cold dull world; they cannot even remotely conceive the agony of doubt and despair which is the doom of youthful genius. To sigh for fame in obscurity is like sighing in a dungeon for light; yet the votary and the captive share an equal hope. But, to feel the strong necessity of fame, and to be conscious that without intellectual excellence life must be insupportable, to feel all this with no

¹⁵ Walter Bussmann, *Zwischen Preußen und Deutschland: Friedrich Wilhelm IV. Eine Biographie*, Berlin 1990. See also David E. Barclay, ‘The Court Camarilla and the Politics of Monarchical Restoration in Prussia, 1848–1858’, in Larry E. Jones and James Retallack (eds.), *Between Reform, Reaction, and Resistance. Studies in the History of German Conservatism from 1789 to 1945*, Providence 1993, pp. 123–156.

¹⁶ J. Heckel, ‘Der Einbruch des jüdischen Geistes in das deutsche Staats- und Kirchenrecht durch Friedrich Julius Stahl’, in *Historische Zeitschrift*, 155 (1937), pp. 506–541.

¹⁷ Johann Caspar Bluntschli, *Geschichte des allgemeinen Staatsrechts und der Politik. Seit dem 16. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart*, Munich 1864, p. 635.

simultaneous faith in your own power, these are moments of despondency for which no immortality can compensate.”¹⁸

To play the eminent role which formed the stuff of his fantasies, he had to construct a personality for himself, itself largely a fantasy. Jewishness was central to this myth. In a memoir of his father, written in 1849, when his youthful agonies were long behind him and he was already a major politician, he says: “My grandfather, who became an English denizen in 1748, was an Italian descendant from one of those Hebrew families, whom the Inquisition forced to emigrate from the Spanish Peninsula at the end of the fifteenth century, and who found a refuge in the more tolerant territories of the Venetian Republic.”¹⁹

How magnificent it all sounds, with its hints of Spanish noble ancestors, mysteries of the *Marranos* and Venetian connections. The link with reality, however, is tenuous. Had Disraeli spoken of his mother’s ancestry, his claims would have had more substance. Such myths helped Disraeli to propel himself into a leading political role, though they had no direct or necessary influence on his political strategies, which were only too thoroughly pragmatic, often to the point of opportunism. In this he was, however, not essentially different from any other successful practising politician, only more open and less hypocritical. In 1851, the young Lord Stanley reported a conversation with Disraeli during which the latter forecast, correctly in almost every detail, the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine, as enshrined in the subsequent Balfour Declaration: “Money would be forthcoming: the Rothschilds and leading Hebrew capitalists would all help: the Turkish empire was falling into ruin: the Turkish Govt would do anything for money: all that was necessary was to establish colonies, with rights over the soil, and security from ill treatment. The question of nationality might wait until these had taken hold.” Stanley commented on this episode in his diary:

“I have often recalled to mind, and been perplexed by, this very singular conversation: he never recurred to it again: his manner seemed that of a man thoroughly in earnest: and though I have many times since seen him under the influence of pleasurable excitement, this is the only instance in which he ever appeared to me to show signs of any higher emotion. There is certainly nothing in his character to render it unlikely that the whole scene was a mystification: and in the succeeding four years I have heard of no practical step taken, or attempted to be taken, by him in this matter: but which purpose

¹⁸ B. Disraeli, *Contarini Fleming. A Psychological Romance*, Bradenham edn., vol. 4, London 1927, Part I, ch. 11, p. 40.

¹⁹ Monypenny and Buckle, vol. I, p. 6.

could the mystification, if it were one, serve? Scarcely even that of amusement, for no witness was present. There is no doubt that D.s mind is frequently occupied with subjects relative to the Hebrews; he said to me once, incidentally, but with earnestness, that if he retired from politics in time enough, he should resume literature, and write the Life of Christ from a national point of view, intending it for a posthumous work."²⁰

Much of the essential Disraeli lies in this shrewd observation. It also shows that a thoroughly prosaic politician like Stanley could not follow the flights of Romantic vision or fancy that drifted through his companion's mind. Disraeli, it is clear, had a strong Jewish consciousness, part of his Byronic self-image as a man of genius imposing himself upon a hostile world. He publicised and flirted with this Jewish identity far more than he need have done had he been a mere careerist. In *Coningsby* he had already ascribed Jewish origins to a long list of prominent figures from Massena to Meyerbeer and he did the same in the conversation with Stanley. He linked this with a preposterous theory that the Jews were the only pure Caucasian race and therefore indestructible. He puts into the mouth of Sidonia, the mysterious, immensely worldly-wise and influential banker and sage, half Rothschild, half Disraeli himself, the words:

"The fact is, you cannot destroy a pure race of the Caucasian organisation. It is a physiological fact; a simple law of nature, which has baffled Egyptian and Assyrian Kings, Roman Emperors, and Christian Inquisitors. No penal laws, no physical tortures, can effect that a superior race should be absorbed in an inferior or be destroyed by it."²¹

"All is race—there is no other truth," he makes Sidonia say in another passage. No wonder that antisemites and searchers for a Jewish world-conspiracy could always find plenty of ammunition in Disraeli's writings. Not for him the low-profile conduct characteristic of most of the upper echelons of British Jewry in his day. Whole-hearted assimilationism, with its danger of self-hatred, would have been alien to his nature. He was assimilated, but needed to flaunt his Jewish origins. Only occasionally did he seek camouflage, and then early in his career, before he had become a universally recognised figure. In December 1837, when he had been in the House of Commons only a few months, he voted against an attempt to remove the obligation on those taking municipal office to subscribe to an oath which excluded practising Jews. This was in stark contrast to the line he took on the much more conspicuous "Jew Bill" a decade later. At the

²⁰ Vincent, p. 33.

²¹ B. Disraeli, *Coningsby, or, The New Generation*, London 1827 (Bradenham edn., vol. 7), Book III, ch. 15, p. 263.

time he wrote to his sister: "Nobody looked at me and I was not at all uncomfortable, but voted in the majority (only of 12) with the utmost sangfroid."²² This was at the very beginning of his parliamentary career.

A common interpretation of Disraeli's preoccupation with his Jewish ancestry is that he needed this consciousness of an ancient lineage in order to function as a leader of British aristocrats. It is not an entirely convincing explanation. He had turned to Jewish themes, in *The Wondrous Tale of Alroy*, for example, when he still saw a literary future for himself and was nowhere near assuming a leading political role. An intensely self-conscious but also highly disciplined man like Disraeli, not in the least inclined to underestimate his own genius, hardly needed to build up a somewhat specious picture of noble Sephardic ancestry in order to look his friends and colleagues among the dukes and earls of the high aristocracy in the eye. A lack of self-assertiveness was never one of his failings. What may have loomed larger in his fertile imagination was the mediatory role thrust upon him between his ancestral Judaism and his task as a ruler of Christendom. He pictured Judaism, reaching its culmination in Jesus, as the religious fount from which all the nations of the West were still drinking. He saw the Christian religion and the Anglican Church as essential to the health of the society he aspired to govern. The remarkable twenty-fourth chapter of his biography of Lord George Bentinck is probably the fullest non-fictional statement bringing all the divergent historical and theological strands together, at least to his own satisfaction. Lord George was his colleague in the leadership of the Protectionist Tories and like him, but for different reasons, voted for the "Jew Bill". In this chapter, which has hardly any link with the rest of the biography, the charge of deicide, seen as the justification for centuries of persecution and degradation of the Jews, is rebutted:

"Nor is it historically true that the small section of the Jewish race which dwelt in Palestine rejected Christ. The reverse is truth. Had it not been for the Jews of Palestine the good tidings of our Lord would have been unknown for ever to the northern and western races. The first preachers of the gospel were Jews, and none else. No one has ever been permitted to write under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit except a Jew. They nursed the sacred flame of which they were the consecrated and hereditary depositories. And when the time was ripe to diffuse the truth among the ethnicks, it was not a senator

²² Benjamin Disraeli, *Letters. Vol. II: 1835-1837*, Toronto 1982, letter 683, 5th December 1837, pp. 323-324.

of Rome or a philosopher of Athens, but a Jew of Tarsus, who founded the seven churches of Asia."²³

Here Disraeli asserts the moral and theological unity of the Old and New Testaments. It was a highly individual and unorthodox statement of faith, not to the taste of the Anglican squirearchy whose leader Disraeli had become. It was the opposite of careerism and opportunism to continue to articulate it so publicly. Another recurrent theme in Disraeli's novels is the rebuttal of the common notion that Jews are the natural supporters of revolution. The equation of Jewishness and revolution motivated the antisemitism of many conservatives. Disraeli, on the contrary, sees revolution as the apostasy of the races of Europe from the semitic principle that rules their Christian religions. In *Tancred* he wrote:

"Half a century ago, Europe made a violent and apparently successful effort to disembarass itself of its Asian faith. The most powerful and the most civilised of its kingdoms, about to conquer the rest, shut up its churches, desecrated its altars, massacred and persecuted their sacred servants, and announced that the Hebrew creeds which Simon Peter brought from Palestine, and which his successors revealed to Clovis, were a mockery and a fiction."²⁴

The roots of Disraeli's conservatism also have about them much of a deliberate construction, one that, like his Jewish consciousness, was in no way at odds with his deeper instincts and inclinations. But the Byronic, Romantic Disraeli could hardly be no more than an instinctive conservative. "My mind," he wrote in the "Mutilated Diary" in 1833, "is a continental mind. It is a revolutionary mind."²⁵ In politically advanced, relatively tolerant and liberal England, Disraeli in fact achieved an almost impossible feat in becoming the leader of the Conservative Party. He was too much of an outsider, a condition of which Jewishness was only the most visible aspect: he had not been educated at a public school; nor had he attended either of the Universities—the usual route into the political elite for those not born into the purple, and the route taken by Peel and a little later by Gladstone. The legal profession was another possible avenue, but Disraeli had turned his back on it. His feat of inserting himself into the Tory leadership was made possible only by the exceptional events of 1846, which resulted in a split in the Party and left him with a clear

²³ B. Disraeli, *Lord George Bentinck. A Political Biography*, with an introduction by Charles Whibley, London 1905, p. 316.

²⁴ Quoted in Monypenny and Buckle, vol. I, p. 876.

²⁵ Benjamin Disraeli, *Letters. Vol. I: 1815–1834*, Appendix III, p. 447.

field. Ordinary roads of advancement, however, would never do for Disraeli. He was too conscious of being exceptional and too eager to leapfrog to power. His was the pose of the outsider whose genius removes him from the ordinary ruck of humanity. Jewishness was therefore only an aspect of this pose and, I would argue, one which came more from without and from appearances than from within. Once the Jewish theme had begun to grip his imagination, his infinitely complex mind embroidered upon it and it became an integral part of his self-awareness. But for all this much-flaunted exoticism Disraeli was also a Home Counties man, who spent much of his life between Buckinghamshire and London. He was proud of his position as a squire and magistrate in his county. Nothing pleased him more than the attention which his fellow squires in Buckinghamshire had to pay to him as a leading political figure if they wanted preferment for their sons or cousins in Church or state.

In his search for a political identity, Disraeli toyed first with radicalism, then perhaps nearer to what we would now call populism. After all, 1832 was the unprecedented low point of Toryism in the nineteenth century and hardly a way forward for an impatient and ambitious young man. What came out of this mixture of personal idiosyncrasies and burning ambition is the Toryism sketched in Disraeli's most coherent piece of political philosophy, the *Vindication of the English Constitution*. This highly selective historical account of the Conservative movement from the time of Bolingbroke became his signature tune for the rest of his life. He would still sing it when, more than thirty years later, he attempted to justify his enactment of the Second Reform Bill. In the well-known speech in which he claimed that he had to educate his party, he said:

"Whenever the Tory party degenerates into an oligarchy it becomes unpopular; whenever the national institutions do not fulfil their original intention, the Tory party becomes odious; but when the people are led by their natural leaders, and when, by their united influence, the national institutions fulfil their original intention, the Tory party is triumphant, and then under Providence will secure the prosperity and power of the country."²⁶

More than Disraeli could have foreseen in the wildest dreams of his youth, he had become one of these natural leaders. But his saving grace is that he never took himself too seriously, nor expected others to do so. Rivers Wilson, Disraeli's private secretary in 1867-1868, is reported to have said of him that he was "in those days still the *farceur* he had been in

²⁶ Robert Blake, *Disraeli*, London 1966, p. 482.

his youth, having his tongue in his cheek and not pretending to be serious when behind the scenes ... It was not till after the Congress of Berlin, ten years later, that he began to take himself *au grand sérieux*.”²⁷

All this put Disraeli somewhat at odds with many aspects of Victorian society. In some ways he remained pre-Victorian, and for this reason he is also more amenable to our post-Victorian mentality than many of his contemporaries. Not taking oneself seriously is not the same as having no serious interest in ideas and principles. One could see in Disraeli’s socially concerned conservatism, to which the term “Tory Democracy” later became attached, a consequence of his Jewishness, just as Marx has often been portrayed as the last of the Hebrew prophets.²⁸ Disraeli’s interest in his Jewishness was part of this commitment to the world of ideas and remained remarkably consistent throughout his life. Its influence on his role as a pragmatic politician was of necessity limited.

Stahl and Disraeli were therefore two very different personalities, whose relationship to their Jewish origins was also very different. Equally different was the conservative situation in their respective countries. In Germany Stahl, as a professor, belonged naturally to the *Bildungsbürgertum*, which had become part of the political elite. What was unusual about him was that he, unlike most political professors, did so in the conservative camp and not as a Liberal. The conservative movement, to use a vague term, was much less organised than it was in Britain, where Disraeli had to assume a specific role. The exact mode of action for conservatives in Germany in general and Prussia in particular was still being moulded by events. After 1848, Stahl himself played a leading role in shaping the conservative cause and equipping it for action. He took a large part in forming the constitutional framework within which conservatives finally had to act. In 1848 Stahl was one of those promoting the conservative grass-roots revival through organisations like the *Vereine für König und Vaterland*. Later his influence was even more important in developing the *oktroyierte Konstitution* of December 1848 and establishing the *Fraktion Stahl*. Like Disraeli, Stahl reached the height of his influence by virtue of his abilities as a parliamentarian and political

²⁷ W.S. Blunt, *My Diaries. Being a Personal Narrative of Events 1888–1914*, vol. II, London 1921, pp. 325–326, quoted in Paul Smith, ‘Disraeli’s Politics’, in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, vol. 37 (1986), p. 65, n. 4.

²⁸ Isaiah Berlin, ‘Benjamin Disraeli, Karl Marx and the Search for Identity’, in *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England*, 22 (1970), pp. 1–20; Todd M. Endelman, ‘Disraeli’s Jewishness Reconsidered’, in *Modern Judaism*, 5 (1985), pp. 109–123.

orator, though, unlike Disraeli, he was much freer to create his own framework for action. Unlike Disraeli, he never had the opportunity to exercise direct executive power. Nevertheless, his great speeches, for example that on the future of Prussia in relation to the "German Question" in the Erfurt Union Parliament on 12th April 1850, or that on the future constitution of the Prussian Upper Chamber in the Prussian Parliament on 5th March 1852, had enormous impact.²⁹ This situation allowed Stahl to achieve a much closer alignment between his position as an ideologue and practical statesman than was ever possible for Disraeli. Stahl, unlike Disraeli, was a systematiser *par excellence*, perhaps not himself a highly original thinker but a man whose influence consisted in offering a coherent system of ideas relevant to the existing circumstances. But the period of his influence was short and after 1858 he was no longer a force to be reckoned with. Bismarck may have been influenced by Stahl, but he massively superseded him. It was Bismarck who would form the framework for Prussian-German politics and for the revival of conservatism and the result was very different both for Prussia and for Germany from the path that Stahl had envisaged.

Perhaps the last word on Stahl should be left to Ernst Ludwig von Gerlach, in his eulogy on Stahl's death:

"He was the leader of a *Fraktion*, which supported most fully the earthly as well as the heavenly King and thereby also most fully the earthly and the heavenly Fatherland. High officials, judges, administrative chiefs, barons, counts and excellencies considered it a joy and an honour to follow the flag on which was emblazoned the name of the Professor, the stranger with the South German dialect, the man of small stature and weak health."³⁰

Yet Gerlach, despite their friendship, could never wholly agree with the constitutionalism advocated by Stahl after 1848. It was precisely this adjustment to current realities that made Stahl so influential as a leader of conservatism, but it did not appeal to a man like Gerlach, who preferred to stick to his principles regardless of realities, and in 1866 legitimists like him would be driven by Bismarck into a marginalised position. By 1866,

²⁹ David E. Barclay, *Frederick William IV and the Prussian Monarchy, 1840–1861*, Cambridge 1995, pp. 201, 248–249.

³⁰ Quoted in Johann Baptist Müller, 'Der politische Professor der Konservativen — Friedrich Julius Stahl (1802–1861)', in Hans-Christof Kraus (ed.), *Konservative Politiker in Deutschland. Eine Auswahl biographischer Porträts aus zwei Jahrhunderten*, Berlin 1995, p. 69.

Gerlach could see only too clearly that Stahl's Christian state had foundered. He wrote:

“[Stahl] for the most part fell into a vulgar constitutionalism and only sought to temper it through Christian-moral feelings. In March 1848 he fled ... It is painful to write this about a dear friend who fought so bravely and in whose soul I took such delight and strength and edification His learning was weak and he had no firm ground beneath his feet; both his opponents and his more insightful friends saw this and also considered his conservative position to be relatively accidental; in 1850 he could just as easily have been a follower of Radowitz or of Bethmann.”³¹

In contrast to Stahl's failure, Disraeli's Tory Democracy ran and ran.

³¹ Robert M. Berdahl, *The Politics of the Prussian Nobility. The Development of a Conservative Ideology, 1770–1848*, Princeton 1988, p. 354.

JOHN BREUILLY

The Contexts of Nineteenth-Century
English and Prussian Conservatism:
A Comment on Edgar Feuchtwanger

There are some problems about relating the paper of Edgar Feuchtwanger on Disraeli and Stahl to the other papers and themes considered in this volume. First, there is the question of what it means to call these two men Jewish. Both had not merely formally renounced Judaism and converted to Christianity but actually practised their adopted faiths in active and significant ways. Disraeli attended Anglican services regularly and, as Prime Minister, was closely involved in the making of ecclesiastical appointments within the Church of England. Stahl had enthusiastically converted to Lutheranism and his political values were grounded in the idea of a Christian-German state.

The question, then, is whether we consider either or both of them Jewish on the basis of their parents', and especially their mothers' faith. Do we regard their childhood within a Jewish family as forming their character and views in important ways for the rest of their lives? Are they Jewish because in some sense, even if not in terms of avowed religious belief and practice, they regarded themselves as Jewish? Finally, do we call attention to their Jewishness because this was significant in the way others perceived them and acted towards them? I cannot begin to answer these questions but I think these different notions of Jewishness need to be borne in mind when considering Feuchtwanger's arguments.

A second problem is that the approach is intended to be comparative. Comparative history usually works best when comparing collectivities, be these defined as social groups or institutions, or in comparing processes such as revolutions or patterns of economic change. The very notion of an individual tends to carry with it a heavy freight of ideas about specificity, particularity, even uniqueness, and all these undermine the possibility of systematic comparison.

The bulk of the remainder of this comment will therefore shift the ground of comparison from Disraeli and Stahl to the contexts within which these two individuals acted. Here, perhaps, a more conventional kind of comparison can be made. Such an approach is intended to complement, rather than to criticise, the focus on the two individuals which characterises Feuchtwanger's paper.

I would identify three contextual dimensions within which comparison can be made. These are all touched upon by Feuchtwanger but can be considered more systematically and explicitly as the main focus rather than background features. These three dimensions I would term political-institutional, political-ideological, and chronological.

A vital difference between Britain and Germany is that, whereas Britain was a parliamentary monarchy in which the House of Commons was the dominant institution, Prussia was a monarchy—non-constitutional before December 1848 and constitutional thereafter—in which the monarch was central; the post-1848 parliament, including the Lower Chamber (the *Landtag*) must be regarded as of subordinate, if increasing, importance.

This contextual difference shapes the mode of action by which Disraeli and Stahl advanced their careers as conservatives. The first requirement for Disraeli's success was to obtain a parliamentary seat, i.e. to engage in an open political contest by being adopted as a candidate and then elected. In contrast, the key to Stahl's political influence lay in being heard at court. This applied even after electoral possibilities opened up—with the United Diet in 1847 and then with elections to the *Landtag* from December 1848 onwards. Even then, although Stahl's influence was related to his work as a parliamentarian, both through speaking in debates and playing a leading role in a political grouping, it was crucial that he should also maintain an influence at court. It was essential, too, that Frederick William IV sympathised with many of Stahl's ideas. By contrast, although Disraeli regarded his relationship with Queen Victoria as important, the relationship was predicated first upon his status as party leader and Prime Minister and was more a matter of personality than ideas. What is more, Disraeli led a political party whose history extended before and after his own political life. The Conservative Party could not have been called the "Disraeli party" in a way analogous to the "*Fraktion Stahl*".

The institutional contrast has implications for the different role of political ideas in the careers of the two men. In Disraeli's case the relationship between his practice as a politician and his ideas is problematic. Many have concluded that his ideas had virtually no impact

on his practice, that the political Romantic associated with Young England and with exotic ideas about Jews and the Semitic race is to be understood quite apart from the cynical political opportunist. The ideas are relegated to an aspect of personality (which in turn was linked to a particular kind of antisemitic objection to Disraeli as an alien figure in an earnestly Christian culture), and their contribution to Disraeli's success are made more a matter of how they shaped his political style rather than as providing intellectual guidelines.

By contrast, Stahl is politically significant precisely *because* of his political ideas. Conservatism in mid-nineteenth century Prussia was not the practice of an established parliamentary party but rather an intellectual position which, while rapidly acquiring an ideological character, was also seeking expression in political organisation. This was especially the case in response to 1848. Stahl's significance lay in the fact that he had, before the rise of popular, later to be constitutional, politics in 1848, sought to combine conservative notions of a Christian-German state with a commitment to constitutionalism. This anticipation put Stahl at the centre of political life in the construction of a constitutional order in 1848–1850 and the years immediately following.

These institutional and ideological contrasts also relate to very different chronological patterns in the two men's careers. Stahl's conservative constitutionalism had little, if any, political significance before 1848. He was simply a professor whose ideas interested the king and who therefore had some influence at court. Conservatism as a political movement was largely a response to 1848. Stahl became significant during a brief period of enforced constitutionalism following the imposed constitution of December 1848, when it could be imagined that such a politics might combine constitutionalism with anti-liberalism—an idea which also attracted Frederick William IV, who, though forced towards constitutionalism, hoped that this would not also mean a renunciation of his Christian-inspired brand of political Romanticism.

This necessarily ranged Stahl against most politically active Jews, who were firmly within the liberal camp. It also meant that his brand of politics was marginalised both when liberal influences became more important (as during the New Era from 1858) or when a *Realpolitik* was practised which did not respect the legitimacy of monarchies (as under Bismarck after 1862). When the two were combined—symbolised above all by the Indemnity Bill of 1866—this ideologically driven conservatism was rendered irrelevant. Although Stahl was by then dead, he was already marginal by 1858 when William took over as regent from his mentally unstable brother

and brought moderate liberals into a ministry. Stahl's career, therefore, was one in which his ideas and his political influence reached their peak together under the special conditions of 1848–1858.

In Disraeli's case there is a sharp break in the mid-1840s, when he had been a Member of Parliament for almost a decade. The first part of Disraeli's career is dominated by the image of the political dandy, the Byronic figure, the novelist. His major novels had been completed by the mid-1840s. Although a member of the Conservative Party, his position appeared uncertain, not only within the party but even regarding the possibility of his aligning with Whig-Liberal opponents. In 1846, with his greatest books behind him, he assumed the leadership of the Conservative Party in the House of Commons. This occurred, of course, because of the crisis brought about by the repeal of the Corn Laws, a crisis which stripped the party of almost all the talented politicians in the Lower House. Even then there was no question of Disraeli really leading the party; the dominant figure was the Earl of Derby, while the younger man functioned as his talented lieutenant in the Commons. The manner of Disraeli's rise, and the fragile character of his position, meant that his political career was thereafter shaped by the exigencies of parliamentary manoeuvre. This both forced Disraeli into more fixed, if still flexible, political positions and was responsible for his reputation as an alien, gifted, almost magical opportunist.

It does appear that ideas about Jewishness mattered much more to Disraeli than they did to Stahl. There are various interpretations of the origins of such ideas and the reasons why Disraeli expressed them as he did.¹ What is important, however, is that they had no direct or explicit connection to his political career, especially after 1846. Had Stahl held such ideas so strongly it is difficult to see how they would *not* have figured centrally in his political career and thus prevented him ever achieving importance within the conservative camp. Here again, the different relationship between political ideas and practice needs to be emphasised in comparing the two men.

Arguably the "outsider" status of Jewish origins helped both men at a time when conservatism needed to adjust to modern conditions of popular politics and more explicit, secular ideological conflict. It helped Stahl transform the values of Christianity and nationality into an explicit political doctrine that combined them with constitutionalism. More

¹ See, for example, Todd M. Endelman, 'Benjamin Disraeli and the Myth of Sephardi Superiority', in *Jewish History* 10:2 (Fall 1996), pp. 21–35.

indirectly, it sensitised Disraeli to the role of imagery in politics and, by distancing him from established political routines, made him more adept at steering a political course in the strange and unfamiliar situation obtaining after 1846.

I would disagree with Feuchtwanger's emphasis upon the antisemitism both men encountered. Surely the most obvious point is that it was not sufficiently strong to block their success. Disraeli early on acquired a country house, a parliamentary seat, a routine of Christian practice and a circle of acquaintances from the established elites. He may have been regarded as exotic but this was linked to other qualities in addition to his "Jewishness", for example his dandyism and his reputation as a Romantic novelist. Much of that was put behind him after 1846. While I know little about the personal relationships Stahl sustained at court and in his parliamentary life, I imagine that there, too, he must have had good working relationships with many Christians from the Prussian elites.

Surely, therefore, both careers, though very different, point to the political insignificance of antisemitism, or rather, perhaps, the capacity of conservative elites to set aside such prejudices at a time when it was important to receive talented converts into conservative political circles. "Ordinary" conservatives recognised their incapacity, at a time of crisis, to find novel ideas or practices to master the situation, and it is exactly here that the talented outsider could play a leading role. In the cases of Disraeli and Stahl their talent—as tactician and as ideologue respectively—mattered far more to conservative elites than did their Jewish origins.

RAINER LIEDTKE

Integration and Separation: Jewish Welfare in Hamburg and Manchester in the Nineteenth Century

Historical research on Western and Central European Jewry from the eighteenth century to the Second World War has employed numerous concepts to comprehend the enormous social, economic and cultural transformations of Jewish society. Central to the enquiry are the interrelated issues of how complete or incomplete the Jews' integration into larger society was, and how they retained their Jewish identity during the transformation. This essay seeks to contribute to the debate by examining an important aspect of everyday Jewish life: the organisation of welfare, an area to which Jewish historiography has paid little attention. A comparative perspective emerges from an analysis of Jewish welfare systems of an Anglo-Jewish and a German-Jewish community: Manchester and Hamburg. The investigation covers the "long nineteenth century", though it focuses particularly on the period from about the late 1850s to the beginning of the First World War, that is, the period when the Jews' legal emancipation had been practically accomplished everywhere in Central and Western Europe.

The investigation of Jewish welfare demonstrates that the integration of the minority into larger society cannot be judged purely in terms of success or failure but needs to be evaluated using more complex standards. In Hamburg as well as Manchester, elaborate systems of separate Jewish welfare were constructed and strengthened during the second half of the nineteenth century. This exclusively Jewish associational sphere functioned as a means of preserving Jewish identity and, at the same time, was regarded variously by Jews and non-Jews as a catalyst or obstacle to the minority's integration into society. Welfare is a particularly appropriate medium to enquire into Jewish identity and integration for at least three reasons: first, it penetrated all social strata of the Jewish community and had a strong presence in everyday life; second, its roots are in traditional, pre-modern Jewish society, which means that it was present long before Jewish life was transformed during the nineteenth

century; third, welfare, unlike organised religious practice, was not seen *a priori* as a separate Jewish activity.

This essay summarises the results of my detailed investigation into the welfare systems of Hamburg and Manchester.¹ A brief comparative description of the two cities, the historical experience of their Jews, and their general welfare systems places Jewish welfare in its historical context. This is followed by a condensed comparative survey of the Jewish support networks in each city. The concluding section attempts to place the findings of the analysis in the framework of some concepts of European Jewish historiography and draws attention to the benefits of historical comparison.

I.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Hamburg and Manchester were economically and socially diverse. Hamburg had a long-standing tradition of independence and self-rule and only reluctantly did it transfer part of its powers and responsibilities to the central authority after the foundation of the German Empire in 1871.² Manchester was traditionally embedded in a centrally governed state and did not acquire the right to communal self-government until 1838. It was an economic boom town of the nineteenth century which based its fortunes mainly on the cotton trade, but also on the manufacture of a wide range of products. Its population tripled during the first half of the century to approximately a quarter of a million.³ In Hamburg import and export trade in a large variety of goods had for centuries been the backbone of the economy. Both cities provided an environment in which Jews, oriented towards commerce and light industry, could thrive economically. Probably the most important difference in the context of this study is Manchester's heterogeneous religious structure, which contrasts sharply with the strong Protestant

¹ Rainer Liedtke, *Jewish Welfare in Hamburg and Manchester, c.1850–1914*, Oxford 1998.

² Rainer Postel, 'Hansestädte', in Kurt G. A. Jeserich, *et al.* (eds.), *Deutsche Verwaltungsgeschichte*, Stuttgart 1983–1984, vol. 2, pp. 764–811; vol. 3, pp. 833–855; see also Richard J. Evans, *Death in Hamburg. Society and Politics in the Cholera Years, 1830–1910*, 2nd edn., Harmondsworth 1990, for a general overview of Hamburg's development in the nineteenth century.

³ For a general overview of Manchester's history see Alan J. Kidd, *Manchester*, Manchester 1993; Gary S. Messinger, *Manchester in the Victorian Age. The Half-Known City*, Manchester 1985.

traditions and overwhelming Lutheran majority of the Hanseatic city. For much of the nineteenth century, more Jews than Catholics (or any other religious minority) lived in Hamburg. In contrast, a large, poor and highly visible Catholic minority, mostly of Irish descent, existed in Manchester.⁴ The Irish were joined, at the other end of the social spectrum, by a sizeable group of Nonconformists, who were particularly conspicuous for their involvement in commerce and local associational activities. Influential in culture and philanthropy, they set a Christian precedent for acceptance of the voluntary engagement of religious minorities which was unknown in Hamburg.

Jews had lived in Hamburg since the late sixteenth century and, with over 6,000 individuals, they already formed a sizeable proportion of the city's population (approximately 5%) by 1800, at which time very few Jews had settled in Manchester. Hamburg Jewry grew slowly in the following decades, reaching 14,000 in 1871 and 19,000 in 1910. Manchester Jewry, in contrast, developed comparatively rapidly into Britain's largest provincial community, with approximately 3,500 individuals in the middle of the nineteenth century; it experienced rapid growth from the 1870s, as large numbers of Eastern European Jewish immigrants settled permanently. On the eve of the First World War, Manchester counted about 30,000–35,000 Jews, most of them born abroad or descended from immigrants.

Like everywhere else in Germany and much of Central Europe, Hamburg's Jews were legally obliged to belong to a *Gemeinde*, to which they paid taxes; the *Gemeinde* preserved a degree of autonomy over religious and cultural matters.⁵ In Britain the concept of enforced membership in a communal organisation was alien to Jews, who were centred organisationally around synagogues.⁶ In both cities, Jews experienced legal and civic emancipation during much of the nineteenth century. However, the nature of this process differed significantly between Hamburg and Manchester,

⁴ Steven Fielding, 'A Separate Culture? Irish Catholics in Working-Class Manchester and Salford, c.1890–1939', in Andrew Davies and Steven Fielding (eds.), *Worker's Worlds. Cultures and Communities in Manchester and Salford, 1880–1939*, Manchester–New York 1992, pp. 23–48.

⁵ A survey of Hamburg Jewish history is provided by Helga Krohn, *Die Juden in Hamburg, 1800–1850. Ihre soziale, kulturelle und politische Entwicklung während der Emanzipationszeit*, Frankfurt am Main 1967; *idem*, *Die Juden in Hamburg. Die politische, soziale und kulturelle Entwicklung einer jüdischen Großstadtgemeinde nach der Emanzipation, 1848–1918*, Hamburg 1974.

⁶ For an excellent overview of the history of Manchester Jewry, see Bill Williams, *The Making of Manchester Jewry, 1740–1875*, Manchester 1976.

and between Germany and Britain.⁷ While the Jews of the Hanseatic city were subject to wide-ranging political, social and economic disabilities which were gradually abolished until full civic equality was reached in the 1860s, formal emancipation in Britain centred around the eligibility to hold political office and obtain a university education. Thus political emancipation was of no great relevance to the vast majority of Manchester Jews, since their daily lives were little affected by the disabilities that existed for Jews in Britain until the 1870s. In Hamburg, on the other hand, the achievement of complete equality was the issue that dominated Jewish life during the middle decades of the nineteenth century. Only after the constitutional changes of the 1860s did the Jews of Hamburg obtain the same social and economic opportunities as their Christian fellow citizens.

Finally, Eastern European mass emigration between 1880 and the First World War affected Hamburg and Manchester Jewry in markedly different ways.⁸ Because of rigid immigration laws, particularly the strict administrative practice in the granting of residence and work permits by individual German states, only a small number of the millions of Eastern European emigrants were able to settle permanently in the country. Hamburg Jewry was therefore only marginally augmented by foreign immigrants, although the city was, next to Bremen, the most important centre of transmigration for Eastern European Jews. It has been estimated that over two million passed through Hamburg between 1870 and 1914, but in 1910 only 16% of the city's Jewish residents were "foreigners", and by no means all had come from Eastern Europe. While the final destination of most migrants, Jewish and non-Jewish, was North and South America, a significant number stayed in Britain, enabled to do so by lax immigration and naturalisation laws. Immigration radically transformed Manchester Jewry, since over 80% of the city's Jewish inhabitants in the early twentieth century were first- or second-generation newcomers.

In both Hamburg and Manchester one overarching welfare agency was responsible for poor relief. The *Allgemeine Armenanstalt* (General Poor Relief) of Hamburg, founded in 1788, divided the city into individual relief districts under the guidance of overseers and applied strict standards for the distribution of relief in money or kind.⁹ In line with poor relief in England and Wales as a whole, after a major overhaul in 1834, the

⁷ See Reinhard Rürup's contribution to this volume.

⁸ See Lloyd P. Gartner's contribution to this volume.

⁹ Bernhard Mehnke, *Armut und Elend in Hamburg. Eine Untersuchung über das öffentliche Armenwesen in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Hamburg 1981.

Manchester Board of Guardians directed the business of the city's Poor Law Union. The cornerstone of the Victorian Poor Law was the workhouse. At least in theory, every able-bodied pauper was required to enter this institution as a means test in order to qualify for relief.¹⁰ No comparable nexus existed in Hamburg. The major difference between the two systems was that the Poor Law Union made no religious distinction between applicants for relief. Apart from certain residence requirements, every inhabitant of Manchester qualified for public welfare. In contrast, Hamburg's *Allgemeine Armenanstalt* explicitly excluded the Jewish poor from benefits until Jews received full civic equality in 1860s, when the Jewish community, until then obliged to care for its own paupers, was specifically asked to submit its poor to the statutory provisions. Entering the workhouse was never a condition to obtain relief in Hamburg. Under the Poor Law, British Jews were entitled to public welfare on the same basis as other subjects. Though the system was theoretically based on confinement in a workhouse, at least for the able-bodied, there were a number of mechanisms which enabled Jews, like all other applicants, to obtain out-relief. Between 1880 and 1911, both Germany and Britain built increasingly elaborate systems of social insurance. However, there was still an enormous scope for voluntary welfare initiatives which grew apace in both societies.

In the same way that it was imperative for the Jews of Hamburg to build up and maintain an elaborate and costly separate system, it would seem unnecessary for Manchester Jewry to have done so. However, both Hamburg and Manchester Jewry, despite their very different historical development, political status and socio-demographic situation, had at their disposal increasingly elaborate separate systems of welfare in the second half of the nineteenth century.

II.

The Jewish welfare systems of both cities were diverse organisms, and they developed dynamically throughout the nineteenth century in step with the changing needs of their communities. The following analysis cannot incorporate the enormous variety of charities, self-help associations and

¹⁰ Kathleen Jones, *The Making of Social Policy in Britain, 1830–1930*, London and Atlantic Heights 1991; M.A. Crowther, *The Workhouse System, 1834–1929. The History of an English Social Institution*, London 1983.

welfare institutions, such as free schools, hospitals and sick care societies, insurance agencies and friendly societies, soup kitchens and immigrant support groups, old people's homes and housing charities, that were at the disposal of Jews in both cities. Instead, only the overarching welfare structures of both communities, represented by the two most important associations which operated community-wide, are examined.

At the end of the Napoleonic Wars, Hamburg Jewry began to reorganise its poor relief with the foundation of the *Israelitische Armenanstalt* (1818). This body administered much of Jewish welfare in subsequent decades and covered four different sectors: regular financial support for registered poor; temporary support in money and kind for casual paupers; the distribution of bread and soup, and medical aid; and nourishment for orphans and abandoned children. In order to facilitate this work, the city was divided into seven districts. In each of these a voluntary overseer was in charge of visiting each applicant's house and assisting him or her to fill in a detailed questionnaire containing information on the pauper's financial situation, the school attendance of children, and aid received from other sources. Regular support not exceeding four Marks was paid out weekly by the overseer at his discretion. Orphaned Jewish children were, if possible, allocated to Jewish foster parents and made to attend the community school. Sick paupers could obtain medical treatment from a doctor and, if unable to work, sick pay at the discretion of the overseers, who also decided whether a patient should enter the hospital.¹¹ The *Israelitische Armenanstalt* not only modelled itself on the structure of Hamburg's *Allgemeine Armenanstalt* but also adopted most of its terminology. As a private association, it was financed almost entirely by a subsidy from the community, as donations were meagre.¹²

Two further associations worked alongside the community's premier welfare organisation. The *Verein der jungen israelitischen Armenfreunde zur Vertheilung von Brod und Suppe*, also founded in 1818, fought street mendicancy by providing free nourishment, feeding all registered paupers in need of extra food, and providing lunch for Jewish Free School pupils. The *Vorschuß-Institut*, founded in 1819 as a branch of the *Israelitische Armenanstalt*, granted loans to community members who, while pursuing a "useful trade", had fallen on hard times. In particular, artisans and manual

¹¹ Staatsarchiv Hamburg (StAH), Jüdische Gemeinden (JG) 454: 'Armen-Ordnung der Deutsch-Israelitischen Gemeinde in Hamburg, 1846, Appendix B'.

¹² *Bericht über die finanziellen Verhältnisse der Deutsch-Israelitischen Gemeinde in Hamburg, abgestattet von dem Vorsteher-Collegium der Gemeinde, 17. Juli 1849*, pp. 50–51.

labourers, but not merchants, could hope for an advance.¹³ Thus the institute had a distinctly educational character which adhered to the *quid pro quo* of emancipation by endeavouring to restructure Jewish occupational life. The suppression of hawking, peddling, money-lending and most forms of trade in favour of “useful occupations” was a primary objective of Jewish and non-Jewish emancipationists and reformers, who were intent on “normalising” Jewish society in order to promote the granting of equality.

The array of community-wide charities was completed by the *Depositoren-Casse milder Stiftungen* (Deposit chest for benevolent foundations). This started in 1818 as a dowry commission of the community, administering funds for needy brides-to-be. Soon all the interest-bearing funds obtained by the community had to be deposited with the *Casse*, and from the mid-nineteenth century the institution could hand over an annual handsome surplus to the board of directors. Funds were especially used to cover communal debts after all demands by any beneficiary had been satisfied.¹⁴ What had started out as a traditional Jewish charitable agency had become a powerful and indispensable financial instrument of the community, with a budget of over 235,000 Marks in 1848.

Jewish welfare in Manchester began to organise itself as soon as the community was large enough to build a synagogue. The rather limited operation of the Manchester Hebrew Philanthropic Society, founded in 1826 and carried out by the synagogue, seems to have been adequate for a small but growing community. It paid out casual and Passover relief to the “resident poor”, assisted people to emigrate, and granted loans.¹⁵ During the 1840s and 1850s at least two attempts were made to organise the community’s support system along more formal lines; both failed because animosities between the city’s different congregations prevented any fruitful cooperation. Apart from the Philanthropic Society, the Congregation of British Jews, a synagogue with Reform leanings founded in 1858, operated its own winter fund. Furthermore, a Ladies’ Lying-in Society and a Ladies’ Clothing Society existed, the latter being connected with the Jews’ School of the city. Towards the late 1850s, the Hebrew Sick and Burial Benefit Society, Manchester Jewry’s first Friendly Society, was mentioned

¹³ StAH JG 485a: ‘Statuten des Israelitischen Vorschuß-Instituts, 1819’.

¹⁴ StAH JG 490 Bd. 1: ‘Revidierte Statuten der Depositoren-Casse milder Stiftungen, 1850’.

¹⁵ The records of the organisation have not been preserved. All information comes from newspaper clippings. Cf. Williams, *The Making of Manchester Jewry*, p. 51.

in the city's press as an association which promoted contributory insurance against sickness and the cost of burial.

From the 1860s onwards, however, the system of poor relief seems to have encountered problems. The first indication was the strong increase in applications for Passover relief. Most of the applicants were employed as glaziers, tailors, cap-makers or hawkers.¹⁶ This was no longer the established group of aged and infirm paupers, of widows and orphans in need of supplements for Passover, but was rather a steadily growing industrial proletariat, many of whose members had come to Manchester only very recently. From the early 1860s, the city received Eastern European Jewish immigrants in greater numbers and, contrary to earlier decades, a large proportion of the newcomers stayed permanently. The relief system was inadequate to cater for the needs of this group in addition to the resident paupers among the Jews, and reorganisation was clearly needed.

When the president of the Manchester Old Hebrew Congregation informed the members at the annual general meeting of 1867 that a Jewish Board of Guardians (MJBG) had been formed which would free the synagogue "from all care of the poor excepting the providing of *mazzot* for Pesach and funeral expenses of poor [Jews]", Manchester had become the first provincial community to streamline its welfare according to the example set by society at large.¹⁷ Through a relief committee, which met twice weekly and investigated each case, the Board provided relief in kind and money and employed a medical officer to whom the Jewish poor could turn free of charge. It also subscribed to various hospitals on behalf of Jewish paupers. Financial assistance was also given to purchase furniture, tools and trading goods, to redeem pledges and to emigrate.¹⁸ The charity's income derived from subscriptions and, to a lesser extent, from donations. Traditional Jewish means of raising funds, for example on the occasion of festivals, weddings and bar mitzvot, were rarely used. With the personal and financial backing of the Manchester Jewish elite, the MJBG immediately consolidated its position as the community's leading welfare body.

In 1873 the MJBG added to its operations an Industrial Department, which granted loans to suitable applicants and organised apprenticeships for Jewish youth. The loans, which swiftly became the most successful method of aid within the Jewish welfare system, seem to have been used primarily by the established Jewish industrial proletariat rather than by

¹⁶ Manchester Central Library (MCL) M139/6/1: 'Benevolent Relief Fund'.

¹⁷ MCL M139/1/2/1: 'Manchester Old Hebrew Congregation, Minutes of General Meeting, 1867'.

¹⁸ MCL M182/1/3/1: 'Manchester Jewish Board of Guardians, Laws 1867'.

more recent immigrants. Because Jewish welfare was always at pains to avoid the impression that it attracted paupers to Manchester, from 1887 onwards no loans were granted to anyone resident in the city for less than six months. The exclusion of recent arrivals from the charitable benefits, in conjunction with stringent application and investigation procedures, ensured a degree of success for the MJBG. The loan and apprenticeship schemes were designed to lay the foundations of a more stable economic environment for Eastern European Jewish immigrants. Aid to native-born paupers was insignificant in comparison. However, the MJBG concerned itself not only with the material but also with the moral welfare of the Jewish poor. Apart from dispensing relief, therefore, the Board tried to enforce regular school attendance among the children of applicants, investigated the condition of slum dwellings, and conducted collective vaccination schemes. This approach to welfare was based on a somewhat condescending attitude on the part of Manchester's Jewish establishment towards co-religionists from Eastern Europe. At the same time, the MJBG operated within an environment dominated by the standards of Manchester's middle class and its organisation of welfare.

In Hamburg, the 1860s were a crucial watershed not only for the organisation of Jewish welfare but for Jews generally. The revised constitution of the city state of 1860 guaranteed all inhabitants full civic equality regardless of religion. With the abolition of all remaining social and economic restrictions for Jews, the city government ruled that membership in the Jewish community was to be made voluntary and, most importantly, that separate Jewish poor relief should be dissolved and all Jewish paupers taken care of by the *Allgemeine Armenanstalt*. Community leaders active in the administration of Jewish poor relief strongly objected to this. They drafted an open letter to the board of directors, printing it as a booklet in order to make it unequivocally clear that they did not wish to see any change in the organisation of welfare. The state system of poor relief, they argued, was radically different from the Jewish one, since it helped only the most destitute and did nothing to prevent poverty. The Jewish system treated the poor much more gently, with contacts between paupers and overseers being so intimate that fraud was virtually impossible. While the city's *Armenanstalt* tried to deter the poor from applying for aid by having all their possessions stamped and forcing them to submit to a shameful pauper's burial, the Jewish institution registered its clients only as a last resort, granting temporary relief and loans in the first place. Thus the role of the Jewish overseer was described as that of an advisor who imposed himself on his charges as little as possible. While

the state had a duty to support the Jewish poor, this should be done through subsidising existing Jewish welfare institutions.¹⁹ The majority of communal leaders supported these pleas and Hamburg's government was aware of the situation when it ruled that, in future, every inhabitant of Hamburg, regardless of religious creed, should have recourse to the public welfare services of the *Allgemeine Armenanstalt*. A separate and obligatory Jewish welfare system was expressly forbidden. The government argued that it was the duty of the state to provide equality for all citizens and that the abolition of the quasi-compulsory Jewish system was therefore unavoidable. However, the Jews' desire to carry on with their very successful relief system on a voluntary basis was viewed positively. A state subsidy for this was, of course, not in order.²⁰

Accordingly, the revised statutes of the DIG of 1867 made it clear that the community intended to continue its separate poor relief system. The only reference to the new situation was the stipulation that "with regard to poor and sick relief all Israelite citizens should, if necessary, seek support from the public welfare institutions in the same way as all other citizens". The same paragraph continued: "However, the community will, according to its means, continue to care for an orderly poor and sick care within its midst."²¹ The discussion surrounding this organisational transformation demonstrated the centrality of welfare in Jewish communal life and the great reluctance on the part of most communal leaders to relinquish authority over it. While the Hamburg government intended to remove all formal constitutional aspects that made Jews conspicuous, it did not object to a continuation of their voluntary welfare system. Neither the authorities nor most Jews viewed the existence of separate Jewish poor relief as a problem affecting relations between the state and the now legally emancipated community. Both viewed the separate Jewish provisions as an advantage for the harmonious co-existence of Jews and non-Jews in Hamburg rather than as an obstacle to Jewish integration.

By the time constitutional reforms had changed the status of the Jews of the city, the Jewish welfare system was so consolidated that it was

¹⁹ StAH Senat C1. VII, Lit. Lb, No. 1, vol. 7a, Fasc. 18, fol. 8: letter dated 15th April 1863.

²⁰ StAH Senat C1. VII, Lit. Lb, No. 1, vol. 7a, Fasc. 18, fol. 19–25: 'Extractus Protocolli Senatus Hamburgensis', 9th December 1863; 'Mittheilung des Senats an die Bürgerschaft', 18th December 1863; 'Mittheilung der Bürgerschaft an den Senat', 13th April 1864.

²¹ StAH JG 279, fol. 452: 'Statuten der Hamburger deutsch-israelitischen Gemeinde', n.d., 1866.

impossible to dismantle. The arguments used in the debate about the continuation of separate arrangements in Hamburg showed that welfare was an integral part of Jewish communal life and so closely connected with the conservation of Jewishness that most Jews were not prepared to relinquish it. The controversy of the 1860s, in which arguments of ritual observance were of relatively little significance, stressed the fact that welfare was regarded as indispensable for the preservation of a post-emancipation Jewish identity. The state, which had intended to abolish every element of Jewish separateness, was in the end content with the continuation of separate Jewish welfare, certainly because it saved money, but also because a separation of Jewish welfare provision was seen as completely natural. Neither party considered that it might prevent Jewish integration. The consolidation of separateness in this important sphere of everyday life continued unquestioned into the twentieth century. Manchester Jewry, although it was under no compulsion to do so, likewise constructed a separate welfare system as soon as its community had become large enough for this purpose. It is clear that the existence of a corporate community with a duty to care for the Jewish poor was not a precondition for the inception and maintenance of a separate Jewish welfare system in the nineteenth century. It can even be argued that the Manchester Jewish Board of Guardians, in the absence of a *Gemeinde*-like body, partly assumed a similar role by virtue of its financial powers and the indispensable services it provided to the community. The historical experience of Manchester Jewry had been very different from that of their co-religionists in Hamburg, and formal emancipation had been of relatively little concern to them. The determination to maintain separation in the sphere of welfare, however, underlined both the role played by welfare in providing a Jewish identity and the fact that Manchester Jewry also felt a need to prove itself worthy of emancipation and toleration by keeping its "own poor" from becoming a burden on the public purse. Eastern European Jewish mass immigration antedated this concept but it also considerably reinforced it. The rapid anglicisation of the newcomers was the foremost concern of a Jewish establishment not yet assured of its own position in British society. Hamburg Jewry was not beset by problems caused by massive immigration and needed only to contribute its share in smoothly channelling Jewish transmigrants through the city.²² In other

²² See Michael Just, *Ost- und südosteuropäische Amerikaauswanderung, 1881–1914: Transitprobleme in Deutschland und Aufnahme in den Vereinigten Staaten*, Stuttgart 1988; and Jack Wertheimer, *Unwelcome Strangers. East European Jews in Imperial Germany*, New York–Oxford 1987, for more details on transmigration.

words, here the comparison demonstrates that the separation of welfare was upheld without having to deal with masses of impoverished Jewish newcomers.

The community-wide welfare provisions of Hamburg and Manchester Jewry oriented themselves in their structure and, to a large extent, in their operations to the systems that existed in society as a whole. The Jewish Board of Guardians and the *Israelitische Armenanstalt* were run on principles very similar to the corresponding non-Jewish welfare organisations in their cities. The Jewish Guardians provided more services than a Poor Law Union and were further distinguished by operating without a workhouse. What was apparent with the *Israelitische Armenanstalt* and the vast majority of Jewish charities and self-help organisations in Hamburg and Manchester was that traditional Jewish welfare concepts, though often quoted as an inspiration, played only a very minor role in the daily routine of these modern Jewish organisations. They were administered in the same way as were the systems of the society at large. Case by case investigation, and close supervision with little regard for the privacy of beneficiaries, determined the actions of Jewish and non-Jewish welfare in both cities. The Hamburg and Manchester Jewish middle classes financed and ran these welfare bodies, a common pattern for charitable ventures in Germany and Britain generally. Those at the top of the communal ladder, with few exceptions, kept aloof from organising Jewish welfare, confining their commitment to occasional donations. The financial contributions the Jews of both cities made towards maintaining a separate Jewish welfare system were considerable. However, in both cities those engaged in Jewish welfare were at no point satisfied with the level of financial commitment their communities displayed. It seems that both Hamburg and Manchester Jewry felt that their main welfare bodies could function without adequate regular financial contributions. This was also obviously linked to the question of accountability. In the same way as taxpayers only grudgingly paid their regular share to support an independent welfare bureaucracy that was beyond their immediate control, the Jewish middle classes preferred to support their poor as and when they thought it necessary and not by regular subscriptions. Thus, by virtue of their financial power, they maintained a certain measure of control over the managers of the communal social services.

One feature that distinguished Jewish welfare from statutory welfare in the two cities was that it endeavoured, quite successfully, to prevent poverty instead of providing palliative relief. The work of the Hamburg *Israelitische Vorschuß-Anstalt* and the loan department of the Manchester

Jewish Guardians demonstrate this most impressively, but it was also discernible in the work of a number of specialised Jewish welfare associations. The claim to prevent poverty and thus to have a system superior to that of the *Allgemeine Armenanstalt* was of great relevance, not least in the debate concerning the abolition of Hamburg's separate Jewish relief in the 1860s. Likewise, in Manchester in the 1880s, the editor of the *Jewish Record* emphasised the principle of prevention when he rejected the claim of the *St. James Gazette* that the Jewish Board of Guardians of the city had to support many more paupers than the statutory authorities and that its activities would only entice Jews to flock to the city. He argued that such people did not always represent actual paupers because "we Jews do not permit our poor to half starve to death and then offer them a dry loaf...We assist the poor when the ordinary means of subsistence is failing, or when a temporary cessation from work reduces a family to need assistance".²³ It is doubtful whether this was a specifically Jewish approach. After all, statutory welfare in Hamburg and Manchester had been constructed with this goal in mind. However, the smaller units and close-knit communities in which Jewish welfare operated made its accomplishment much easier. Within this environment a much stricter social discipline, especially crucial for the success of loan systems, could be exercised, which in turn meant that welfare bodies assumed an importance beyond their role as relief agencies. Beatrice Webb, Fabian Socialist and co-author of the "minority report" of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, made this point in an interview with the *Jewish Chronicle* in the early 1920s. In her opinion, Jewish Boards of Guardians, not only in Manchester but in Britain as a whole, were quasi-statutory bodies of British Jews. She argued that Jewish voluntary agencies had "more authority and are almost to the nature of governmental organisations with dealing with your people. You are able to [bring to] bear disciplinary forces which in the case of the Gentiles can only be exerted by public authorities".²⁴

²³ *Jewish Record*, 13th May 1887.

²⁴ *Jewish Chronicle*, 9th July 1909. Beatrice Webb was also the author of the chapter on the Jewish community in Charles Booth, *Life and Labour of the People of London*, vol. 3, London 1893, in which she praised the preventative work of the London Jewish Guardians and the high regard of Judaism for charity.

III.

The second half of the nineteenth century was a period of consolidation for Jewish welfare in Hamburg and Manchester. The Jews of both cities maintained welfare systems which were in practice completely separate from those of their societies. Jewish social services manifested themselves in large community-wide bodies and welfare institutions as well as in numerous smaller, more specialised charities and self-help associations. To a very large extent, Jewish welfare provisions were a mirror of the statutory services, charities and self-help organisations of the societies of Hamburg and Manchester. This does not mean that Jews simply copied from existing models. Rather, Jewish agencies developed in parallel with other welfare systems, sometimes conceptually preceding general developments, sometimes taking over what already existed. It is clear, however, that in both cities the Jews' situation as a developing minority in a modern industrialising society guided and determined their welfare efforts, rather than overarching Jewish tradition. The comparison underlines the importance of structure over culture. The variety of historical circumstances was far more significant than traditions and customs in the build-up and maintenance of Jewish welfare. This explains why Jewish social services in Hamburg and Manchester were significantly different, and also why manifold similarities become apparent on juxtaposing the Jewish and non-Jewish provisions of each city.

Nevertheless, one important difference between Jewish and general welfare did exist. Many Jews in both cities felt that their welfare provisions were superior to those provided by statutory agencies. This claim was based mainly on the fact that Jewish welfare endeavoured to prevent rather than to ameliorate poverty, something statutory services were much less successful in doing. The important place allocated to preventative charity in Jewish tradition is one reason for this. However, factors such as the much smaller and closer knit social unit within which Jewish welfare operated, and the comparatively large group of its well-to-do middle class supporters, were arguably more important. At least in theory, the primary goal of welfare for each society was also to prevent impoverishment. Jewish provisions in both cities were arguably more generous and, given the size of the two communities, definitely more extensive than non-Jewish ones. Both in quantity and quality they had no equivalent in what other denominations offered "their poor", but at the same time no other religious or ethnic group tried to provide separately for paupers in as many respects as possible.

In the same way that traditional Jewish welfare ethics were of relatively little significance in the daily work of most Jewish organisations, the mainstream Jewish welfare bodies of both cities were not overtly concerned with issues of ritual observance. Though often quoted by contemporaries as the prime motivation in keeping Jewish provisions separate, this cannot figure as a decisive factor in explaining the separation on most levels: many Jewish welfare ventures distinguished themselves from non-Jewish organisations by their exclusively Jewish staff and clients, rather than by their actions. There were certainly some associations in Hamburg and Manchester which tried to safeguard traditions and also standards of religious observance, but they mostly remained at the fringes of the Jewish systems.

What role, then, did welfare play in Jewish life in Hamburg and Manchester and how can one explain the existence of separate Jewish charitable and self-help networks? An assessment of the intellectual roots of the British welfare state has argued that the vast network of voluntary welfare institutions of the late nineteenth century was an integral part of the country's social structure and civic culture, since it expressed and reinforced the distribution of power and resources, class and patronage relationships, behavioural norms, and community identity.²⁵ The importance of associations in the formation and demarcation of the German middle class and its identity in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has been underlined in a number of studies.²⁶ Similarly, it has been maintained that voluntary associations in all sectors of British social life, especially in the northern cities, laid the foundation for an overarching middle-class identity.²⁷ This is also an accurate description of the role played by welfare and other associations in post-emancipation Hamburg and Manchester Jewry. They were prime instruments in the regulation of social status and relations, in the allocation of resources, and the creation of a framework in which class differences could be

²⁵ José Harris, 'Political Thought and the Welfare State, 1870–1940. An Intellectual Framework for British Social Policy', in *Past and Present*, 135 (1992), pp. 116–117.

²⁶ The trendsetting study was Thomas Nipperdey, 'Verein als soziale Struktur in Deutschland im späten 18. und frühen 19. Jahrhundert', in Hartmut Boockmann, *et al.* (eds.), *Geschichtswissenschaft und Vereinswesen im 19. Jahrhundert. Beiträge zur Geschichte historischer Forschung in Deutschland*, Göttingen 1972, esp. pp. 17–18, 42.

²⁷ Bernd Weisbrod, 'Philanthropie und bürgerliche Kultur. Zur Sozialgeschichte des viktorianischen Bürgertums', in Hartmut Berghoff and Dieter Ziegler (eds.), *Pionier und Nachzügler? Vergleichende Studien zur Geschichte Großbritanniens und Deutschlands im Zeitalter der Industrialisierung. Festschrift für Sidney Pollard zum 70. Geburtstag*, Bochum 1995, pp. 205–220.

ascertained and displayed, all within a largely separate Jewish sphere of action. Comments made by contemporaries involved in Jewish welfare to the effect that needy Jews preferred submitting themselves to organisations run by “their own people” must be seen in the context of this quest for a Jewish identity. One reason why Hamburg’s communal leaders so forcefully rejected the abolition of the separate Jewish welfare system in the 1860s was because it would have deprived them at one stroke of the framework within which social hierarchies were expressed. A partial social vacuum, very difficult to fill again, would have ensued. In Manchester, where neither a compulsion for separate Jewish welfare nor a corporate community had ever existed, the creation of the system in the nineteenth century provided the Jews with an overarching communal structure and the agencies which could determine prestige, status, and the individual’s place in the group hierarchy.

Even more important was the vital role Jewish welfare played in the preservation and redefinition of a post-emancipation Jewish identity in Hamburg and Manchester. It did not matter that Manchester Jewry had no tradition comparable to that of the two centuries of settlement of Hamburg Jewry at the beginning of the nineteenth century, nor that it had no compulsory *Gemeinde*. Separate welfare organisation offered an opportunity to hark back to Jewish traditions of the corporate community, real or imagined, if only by paying lip-service to the preservation of Jewish ethics in modern welfare practice. Providing for Jews in the company of other Jews strengthened group identity, created togetherness in an increasingly secular environment, and offered an opportunity to “be Jewish” in a socially respectable way. This should not be confused with the strengthening of collective responsibility or Jewish solidarity, something Nancy Green has argued for Jewish welfare in Paris.²⁸ The way in which welfare work was conducted, and in particular large-scale repatriation efforts or the desire to get rid of transmigrants as swiftly as possible, reflected, at most, a very selective and class-based solidarity among the Jewish middle classes of Hamburg and Manchester. An engagement in welfare was one of the crucial “alternative strategies” of identity preservation for Jews who endeavoured to be, or were, part of a multi-

²⁸ Green maintains that aid for Eastern European Jews in Paris in the late nineteenth century demonstrated that “charitable justice remains a Jewish strength and a testimony to Jewish solidarity”. See Nancy Green, ‘To Give and to Receive. Philanthropy and Collective Responsibility among Jews in Paris, 1880–1914’, in Peter Mandler (ed.), *The Uses of Charity. The Poor on Relief in the Nineteenth-Century Metropolis*, Philadelphia 1990, p. 218.

layered, increasingly secular society or, more precisely, part of the British and German bourgeoisie.²⁹

Especially before the advent of political Zionism, most Jews wanted to be seen as belonging to a denomination and they thought of religion as their only distinguishing group characteristic. Yet most of them were not religiously engaged. Synagogue attendance was low, and observance of the commandments patchy. Within Jewish families, in particular through the efforts of Jewish women, a degree of religious tradition and a measure of Jewish identity was preserved.³⁰ On a public level, however, non-religious associations assumed the primary role in the preservation of Jewishness. The consolidation of welfare preceded by several decades and afterwards strongly contributed to the “organisational renaissance” of the Jews, especially in the political and cultural spheres, at the end of the nineteenth century.³¹ Organising in associations for a variety of purposes, including Zionism, were further “alternative strategies” of identity preservation.

Accordingly, organised welfare, and Jewish associations generally, were major factors in the matrix of cohesion and dissolution that encompassed Jewish life in the post-traditional community. Welfare associations created cohesion not only among those who actively engaged in them but also for the community as a whole in relations between donors and recipients. In the absence of extensive insurance schemes for the majority of the German and British populations, this encompassed charitable assistance as well as self-help. The separateness of welfare was one important basis for communal cohesion. It worked strongly against the dissolution of the Jewish minorities of Hamburg and Manchester, not least because they were assured that a separate engagement on this level was a positive feature, and that it was just the “right kind of clannishness”, as the Earl of Derby intimated when he formally opened the new premises of the Manchester Jewish Board of Guardians in 1911.³²

The appreciation of separate Jewish welfare provisions by non-Jews leads us to another reason for their maintenance. In Germany, praise of that kind dates back to the beginning of the emancipation debate when

²⁹ Cf. Todd M. Endelman, ‘The Legitimization of the Diaspora Experience in Recent Jewish Historiography’, in *Modern Judaism*, 11 (1991), pp. 201–202.

³⁰ For Germany this is stressed in Marion A. Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class. Women, Family, and Identity in Imperial Germany*, New York–Oxford, 1991, chapters 1 and 2.

³¹ Peter Pulzer, *Jews and the German State. The Political History of a Minority, 1848–1933*, Oxford 1992, p. 13; see also Michael Brenner, *The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany*, New Haven 1996.

³² MCL M182/3/1: ‘MJBG, Annual Reports, 1911–12’.

Christian Wilhelm von Dohm, arguably the most influential non-Jewish advocate of a reconsideration of the Jews' civic status, maintained in his widely regarded *Über die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Juden* in 1781 that "poor Jews are nowhere a burden to the state; the propertied [Jews] provide for them and the whole community cares for the individual".³³ Dohm listed this among the positive characteristics of the Jews, and an argument for emancipating them. This and other praise indicates a further factor that rendered separate Jewish welfare care obligatory even when it was not legally required, since it was internalised as a *quid pro quo* of Jewish emancipation. Once the formal process of legal equalisation had ended, the persuasion among German Jews that such an exchange was an integral part of the "ideology of emancipation" lived on because the position of the minority in society was far from secure.³⁴ This was demonstrated by the very formation and maintenance of Jewish welfare in Hamburg and by the constant need to justify separate Jewish provision. Here we find another reason why the communal leadership of Hamburg Jewry was so determined to preserve the separate Jewish welfare system when the state intended to dismantle it.

The case of Manchester also shows, however, that in an environment in which civic emancipation had only peripheral significance for the majority of the Jews, and where no-one has yet argued the case for an "ideology of emancipation" of the German kind, Jews showed by and large the same patterns when it came to the formation of their welfare system. One obvious difference was that, from about the 1870s, Manchester Jewry's social services dealt primarily with large numbers of impoverished Eastern European Jews. However, it is wrong to conclude that without the influx of this group which, with its socio-economic condition and enormous cultural differences, created problems for the city's native Jews, there would have been no extensive separate Jewish welfare. Manchester Jewry stepped up its welfare system in line with the needs of a developing community that had continuously grown through immigration but only experienced an acceleration of this trend from about the mid-1860s, a trend which assumed dramatic proportions during the last three decades before the First World War. The Manchester Jewish Board of Guardians was set up to modernise the existing separate Jewish means of welfare which were under pressure from increasingly impoverished newcomers; yet, at the time, this step was

³³ Christian Wilhelm von Dohm, *Über die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Juden*, Berlin–Stettin 1781, p. 95.

³⁴ See David Sorkin, *The Transformation of German Jewry, 1780–1840*, New York 1987, p. 5.

not regarded as an emergency measure but merely as an improvement of the facilities of a community in transition.

Praise for the comprehensive separate welfare provisions of the Jews, not only in Manchester but in Britain as a whole, was plentiful. When Charles Booth, in his widely read *Life and Labour of the People in London*, assessed the “sweated labour trades” in the 1890s, which for many contemporaries were a prime reason for the contempt in which Jewish immigrants were held, he argued that the Jews were hard workers who were, if necessary, supported by their own charities rather than by public relief. In the same fashion, the 1889 report of the House of Lords Committee on “sweating” pointed out that the Jews were “thrifty and industrious, and they seldom or never come on the rates”.³⁵ The manner in which the Jewish middle class of Manchester conducted the welfare effort on behalf of Eastern Jews demonstrated that it was aware of assessments of this kind. Moreover, the engagement with welfare shows that Manchester Jewry was, like its Hamburg counterpart, ill at ease with its position in society. Keeping “one’s own poor” off the rates had always been the goal of Jewish welfare activities. With the arrival of large numbers of Eastern European Jews came the added complication that the system also had to keep the newcomers out of the public eye and anglicise them quickly in order not to harm the Jews’ status in society. The *quid pro quo*—that Jews obtained respect and could be regarded as worthy British citizens only through caring and paying for the less fortunate of their co-religionists—was a constant guide to Jewish action in the sphere of welfare.

There was an unmistakable fear among Jewish charity administrators in Manchester that, by not carrying out their work, they would fuel hostility against Jews as a whole, possibly sparked by animosities against immigrants but not stopping there. The editor of Manchester’s *Jewish Record* was one of the more outspoken community members when it came to ascertaining the potential for anti-Jewish hostility. Commenting in 1887 on the grossly exaggerated figures printed by the *Manchester City News* on the extent of Jewish poverty and charitable provisions in London he concluded that “it is curious to note that while some journals are publishing ‘facts’ showing the enormous wealth of the Jews, and others illustrating the rapidly increasing influence of the Jews, others, actuated by the same motive, seek to gratify their anti-Semitic hate by showing the extreme

³⁵ Booth and the committee report are both quoted in Gertrude Himmelfarb, *Poverty and Compassion. The Moral Imagination of the Late Victorians*, New York 1991, pp. 139–40.

poverty of the Jews".³⁶ This assessment was connected with Jewish welfare efforts but it also showed that anti-Jewish hostility ranged much wider. It is to be hoped that future research in this direction will make an effort to see antisemitism as more than an adjunct of anti-alienism, despite the undeniable connection between the two.

It would be wrong, however, to conclude from this that antisemitism as such was a primary reason for the existence of separate Jewish systems, although anti-Jewish prejudice must be counted among the reasons behind the maintenance of the separation of all levels of Jewish associational life. Any evaluation comparing Britain and Germany, however, soon reaches a limit, not because of the nature of antisemitism in either country but because of the scarcity of serious research into British antisemitism. A relatively recent large-scale survey of the history of modern antisemitism in Europe until the Nazi period, which claims both to have assembled "the most valid or recent" scholarly contributions for each country and to provide a joint comparative conceptualisation, contains eight essays in the section on Britain. Three are shortened extracts from Colin Holmes's *Antisemitism in British Society, 1876-1939*;³⁷ one is a long excerpt from Gisela Lebzelter, *Political Antisemitism in England, 1918-1939*;³⁸ and the other four are unrevised reprints from the 1970s and early 1980s.³⁹ Holmes and Lebzelter, still the two dominant studies of the subject, searched for organised and extremist antisemitism, mainly in its Fascist or proto-Fascist manifestations. They did not, however, sufficiently examine the role of the state and, in particular, popular attitudes and responses to Jews.⁴⁰ The interconnected concepts of an "antisemitism of exclusion" and an "antisemitism of tolerance" have already advanced our understanding of this issue considerably. Together, they postulate that a differentiation was made between British citizens and Jewish citizens and that it was expected that Jews should not take for granted the same privileges as non-

³⁶ *Jewish Record*, 27th May 1887.

³⁷ London 1979.

³⁸ London 1978.

³⁹ Herbert A. Strauss (ed.), *Hostages of Modernization. Studies on Modern Anti-Semitism, 1870-1933/39*, vol. 1, Berlin-New York 1993, pp. 289-451.

⁴⁰ See also Arnd Bauerkämper, *Die "radikale Rechte" in Großbritannien. Nationalistische, antisemitische und faschistische Bewegungen vom späten 19. Jahrhundert bis 1945*, Göttingen 1991, which, when dealing with antisemitism, focuses mainly on hostility towards Eastern European Jewish immigrants, providing a summary of the existing literature but no new insights into the structure and function of British antisemitism in the late nineteenth century.

Jews, but should show themselves worthy of these privileges.⁴¹ However, much more research is required in order to appreciate the relevance of antisemitism for the historical experience of the Jews of Britain.

With this in mind, the study of Jewish life in Hamburg and Manchester through the prism of welfare organisations indicates that it was not so much overt hostility and rejection, of which there is very little mention in the relevant records, but rather a constant suspicion about the tolerance of the respective societies that was behind Jewish insecurity. Tony Kushner has argued that the fear of antisemitism rather than its manifestation has been central to the experience of twentieth-century Anglo-Jewry.⁴² For the German side, Peter Pulzer's influential theory of the survival of a "Jewish Question" in the post-emancipation period focuses on the complex relation between nationality and citizenship and citizens' rights. Jews, although they possessed equal rights as citizens, were not included in the nation. Antisemitism in Imperial Germany, Pulzer argues, was as much the consequence as the cause of the continuing Jewish Question. Although antisemitism was present in other developed countries in Western Europe, there was no revival of the Jewish Question, and since the problems of citizenship had been solved in those countries, it did not become politically dangerous.⁴³

While this analytical distinction between antisemitism and a Jewish Question is valuable, the assertion that there was no Jewish Question in countries to the west of Germany should be questioned. David Feldman has recently raised the possibility that the British idea of the nation was dynamic and that this was one reason why Jewish emancipation did not resolve the problem of Jewish integration. He argued that "just as the argument over the Jews' political status before emancipation turned on contending visions of the nation, so too the reappearance of the Jewish question [during the British debate about the crisis in the Turkish Empire between 1875-78] reveals a fierce debate over the meaning of patriotism between contending doctrines of national identity".⁴⁴ These issues are not directly interchangeable, but Feldman's work does indicate that a Jewish

⁴¹ See Bill Williams, 'The Anti-Semitism of Tolerance. Middle-Class Manchester and the Jews, 1870-1900', in Alan J. Kidd and K. W. Roberts (eds.), *City, Class and Culture. Studies of Social Policy and Cultural Production*, Manchester 1985, pp. 74-102; Tony Kushner, 'The Impact of British Anti-Semitism, 1918-1945', in David Cesarani (ed.), *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry*, Oxford 1990, pp. 191-208.

⁴² Kushner, p. 206.

⁴³ Pulzer, pp. 28-43.

⁴⁴ David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews. Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840-1914*, New Haven 1994, pp. 74, 94.

Question, working on a similar level, existed in Britain also. Apart from the relationship between citizenship and nationality, Pulzer has proposed four further tests which can be used to judge whether or not a Jewish Question existed in any given country. If one applies them to the study of Jewish welfare on the community level, which regards day-to-day relations among Jews and between Jews and non-Jews, the assumption that a Jewish Question was present in Victorian and Edwardian England can be corroborated. First, there was no common agreement in Britain, just as in Germany and most other countries, about whether Jews were a race, a nation, or a religious community, and this had an important bearing on how their potential for being English or British was regarded. Jewish welfare bodies commonly referred to their efforts as those of a religious denomination; their critics, but also those non-Jews who praised efficient Jewish services, generally regarded the work as that of a separate nation or race. Second, there was great concern about the peculiar occupational distribution of Jews in Britain, not only regarding the strong presence of Eastern European immigrants in a small variety of trades but also in the spheres of commerce and finance. Efforts to change this structure and to induce more Jews to work in "useful trades" were a constant feature of Jewish welfare work in Manchester. Third, the international scattering of the Jews placed a question mark over their status as British citizens and patriots. In the sphere of welfare this was manifested in the contradiction that Jews were expected to care for their poor co-religionists from other countries, but were at the same time criticised for aiding "foreigners" to settle in Britain. If British Jews intervened politically or financially on behalf of oppressed or impoverished co-religionists in Eastern Europe or the Levant, for example through the Anglo-Jewish Association, this automatically raised a question about the nature of their group status. Fourth, the question whether Jews should be encouraged to settle elsewhere was debated in Britain as it was in Germany, by Jews and non-Jews, Zionists and non-Zionists. Israel Zangwill, British novelist and president of the Jewish Territorial Organisation,⁴⁵ neatly encapsulated these attitudes in England when he argued in 1905 that the influx of Eastern European Jews had fuelled local antisemitism in every country, and in Britain had culminated in the imposition of immigration restrictions. He proposed that a Jewish homeland be created as soon as possible, adding that Jewish philanthropy "has proved itself unequal to our emigration problem, or, at

⁴⁵ This organisation argued that Jews should settle as a group wherever a suitable territory could be found, rather than insisting on Palestine as a homeland.

least, philanthropy split into national sections".⁴⁶ This was certainly not the view of the Manchester Jewish middle class which did everything in its power to solve the immigration problem by means of welfare.

The existence of a Jewish Question in Germany and Britain, distinct from overt antisemitism, may certainly have had an important influence on the formation and maintenance of the Jewish welfare systems of Hamburg and Manchester. It is, however, insufficient to see the continuity and strengthening of Jewish voluntary action in the post-emancipation period primarily in a context of hostility and rejection. The social separation of Jewish associational life in general, and welfare in particular, ought to be regarded primarily as a positive manifestation of Jewishness. In the welfare sector, voluntary Jewish provisions were infinitely more elaborate than those which were non-sectarian or those of other denominations. They far exceeded the level required to meet the needs of the community and thus demonstrated, on the one hand, more than a mere desire to provide charitable assistance and, on the other, a commitment based on something more than just doubts about Jewish status in society. Welfare associations were at the heart of a strategy of Jewish self-preservation, though not, or at least not only, as an act of self-defence to secure "one's own people" and ultimately oneself against attacks from a hostile society.⁴⁷ Neither in Hamburg nor Manchester was this the case. "Self-preservation" in both places must be understood as an attempt to retain a secular Jewish identity while trying to come to terms with an all-embracing and rapid transformation of Jewish life during the nineteenth century. However, the preservation of parallel welfare systems prevented social contact between Jews and non-Jews and created an exclusively Jewish sphere in which status was allocated and a social equilibrium was guarded. The fact that this obstructed the integration of the minority went generally unnoticed by both Jews and non-Jews, since care for "one's own poor" or insurance provisions within the minority were perceived as befitting the condition of a people who generally "lived apart".

⁴⁶ *Jewish Chronicle*, 25 Aug. 1905. Quoted in Jehuda Reinharz and Paul Mendes-Flohr (eds.), *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History*, New York and Oxford 1980, p. 439.

⁴⁷ The aspect of self-defence has been stressed in one of the few studies of German-Jewish welfare. See Rolf Landwehr, 'Zur Geschichte der jüdischen Wohlfahrtspflege in Deutschland', in Wolfgang Dressen (ed.), *Jüdisches Leben*, Berlin 1985, pp. 44–7. This article focuses on Berlin and Jewish self-help during the Third Reich but makes this statement with reference to Jewish welfare in the nineteenth century.

Probably the most helpful concept to comprehend the condition of the Jewish minority is that of a subculture. David Sorkin has argued that German Jewry developed an “ideology of emancipation” which endeavoured to create a “new Jew” by subscribing to the *quid pro quo* of emancipation. Sorkin called the identity that emerged from this ideology a subculture which functioned as a self-contained system of ideas and symbols, though it was largely composed of elements of the majority culture. This subculture led to the formation of a German-Jewish public sphere in which the minority group was the primary community, leading a separate existence from society at large. Moreover, Sorkin has maintained that this subculture remained invisible to its members, because they failed to comprehend that the ideology of emancipation that informed it, and had been designed to foster the integration of the minority, in reality served as the basis for the continuing separation of Jews and non-Jews. In other words, the Jewish bourgeoisie, Sorkin’s primary reference group, “could not see that its acculturation made it not German but German-Jewish”.⁴⁸

Sorkin has examined German Jewry in its formative pre-emancipation period from the late eighteenth century to the 1840s, primarily from the vantage point of a cultural historian. He investigated the “public sphere” of its middle class by looking at sermons, journals and novels, i.e. the instruments of cultural production. His description of German-Jewry as a subculture was, arguably, the most widely debated research concept of recent years in this field and has generated much controversy, especially in Germany where the term *Subkultur* sounded pejorative to many. Though Sorkin does allow for shifting and permeable boundaries separating the subculture from the majority culture, it is important to keep in mind that the subculture was not all-pervasive, particularly if one turns away from ideologies, intellectual currents, and the cultural public sphere, and instead looks at everyday Jewish social life. It therefore seems more appropriate to call German Jewry a subculture of unequal strengths. In some areas, such as the workplace, housing and politics, and to an extent also in personal private contacts, there existed no unrestrained mingling and mixing but neither did there exist a condition which would warrant the notion of an entirely separate Jewish culture. A very strong detachment between Jews and non-Jews, however, was visible in associational life and, more specifically, in organised welfare. It is appropriate to speak of a separate Jewish culture of welfare, which, voluntarily or involuntarily, consciously or un-

⁴⁸ Sorkin, *Transformation of German Jewry*, pp. 3–7.

consciously, contributed significantly to the pronounced and durable social separation between Jews and non-Jews.

Moreover, the notion of a subculture of this kind, hitherto applied exclusively to the historical experience of German Jews, accurately describes not only the condition of Hamburg but also of Manchester Jewry in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as this comparison has demonstrated. A separate Jewish culture of welfare, for similar reasons, existed in both cities. Its creators and exponents were aware that this was a separation and they consciously preserved it. They did so, however, in the mistaken belief that it furthered their integration and that of their group into society. Welfare and associational activities were deemed ideal vehicles for this purpose. Associations played a key role in creating homogeneity within the German bourgeoisie, into which the Jewish middle class sought entry.⁴⁹ For Britain it has been argued that bourgeois culture was above all philanthropic and that philanthropic activities were a preferred form of the cultural production of a middle class mentality which centred around "respectability" as an integrative concept.⁵⁰ What these statements do not consider is that Jews formed a social group in Britain and Germany which structured its associational life and welfare efforts with great zeal according to these prescriptions, yet for them this was a formula that did not ensure integration but, rather, separation.

⁴⁹ Nipperdey, 'Verein als soziale Struktur', p. 42.

⁵⁰ Weisbrod, 'Philanthropie und bürgerliche Kultur', pp. 205–6, 217.

GUNNAR SVANTE PAULSSON

The Eastern Jews and Jewish Welfare: A Comment on Rainer Liedtke

I am something of an outsider in this volume, since my speciality is neither British nor German Jewry, but rather the Jews of Eastern Europe. Nevertheless, there may be value in an outsider's perspective. Let me say, first of all, that I am impressed by Rainer Liedtke's scholarship and argument, which convincingly to me explain some of the processes of Jewish integration and identity formation in Western Europe. If I dispute certain of his points in what follows, it is not because I mean to question his conclusions, but rather because I should like to explore some possibilities for further investigation, which might build on Liedtke's work and perhaps amend it in some details.

In general, scholarship on Eastern and Western Jewry has proceeded along two parallel paths, with very little interaction between them. Yet the two communities themselves have interacted in many ways, most of them little-studied. Population movements have been one of the main forms of this interaction: these have been the subject of demographic studies, but little work has been done on the cultural impact of the migrants upon, or their reception by, host communities in the West. This area is therefore a fruitful field for research, and a point where useful cross-fertilisation could take place. If, as Liedtke says, welfare provision was the main point of contact between immigrant and established Jews, it would seem the ideal place to start.

The Eastern European Jews have figured in Liedtke's presentation as the recipients of Jewish welfare in Hamburg and Manchester. He mentioned only briefly that, in Britain at any rate, immigrants from Eastern Europe numerically overwhelmed the existing Jewish community after 1881. It follows from this, however, that newcomers and their immediate descendants became not only the recipients of Jewish welfare but also figured importantly among the donors, the administrators and the volunteers. As Liedtke says, most Jews were involved in community work and, by the

turn of the century, most British Jews were first- or second-generation immigrants.¹

The character of Anglo-Jewry was bound to be affected by this influx in ways that have hardly been studied. Instead, it has generally been assumed that after the first generation, which kept to self-imposed ghettos and maintained its familiar patterns of life, the second and subsequent immigrant generations were absorbed without trace. On the face of it, of course, this was indisputably so: the descendants of the immigrants spoke English with authentic class and regional accents, were educated here, and were externally indistinguishable from Jews who had been here for generations. British institutions geared to producing anglicised colonial administrators lubricated the transition, even for the first generation. The Polish right-wing historian Jędrzej Giertych once ridiculed Lewis Namier, “*vel* Niemirowski ... a Polish Jew by origin”, for considering himself British after only eleven years in the country, to which Paul Latowski retorted that Namier was, after all, “a Balliol man”.²

Balliol man or not, Namier retained his Eastern European languages, advised the British government on Eastern European affairs, and inevitably bore the stamp of who he had been and where he had come from: he was, for example, a rabid Polonophobe. It is difficult to believe that such a large wave of immigration could have taken place without similarly leaving its stamp on the whole of the host community. Ideas, for example, travelled in both directions: *Haskalah* went East, while Zionism as a movement, like Chaim Weizmann himself, came to Britain largely from the East.³ Other aspects of the Eastern European heritage have remained hidden by the ultra-assimilationist veneer and historiography of the British Jews; but as Britain today becomes increasingly multicultural, and other ethnic groups are seen openly to display their cultural distinctiveness, so some of this hidden heritage is now beginning to re-emerge atavistically. Since I am not a scholar of Anglo-Jewry, I can offer only anecdotal evidence. I often meet Jews with plummy accents and impeccably British manners who are nevertheless proud to call themselves “Litvaks” or “Galizianers”, and who sprinkle their conversation with

¹ Liedtke has limited himself to the nineteenth century which, in a Jewish context, could reasonably be taken as ending in 1897. Here, however, I shall take it to mean the “long nineteenth century” and even, with a little licence, a few years beyond that.

² *Polin* 5 (1990), pp. 304 and 318, note 1.

³ Early British exponents of proto-Zionism such as Disraeli and George Eliot notwithstanding, Zionism as a grass-roots movement undoubtedly came to Britain with the migrants from Eastern Europe after 1903.

Yiddish expressions. In Oxford, Yiddish does a thriving trade, *The Dybbuk* is frequently performed around the country, and on a recent trip to London, what did I see but playing for the tourists in Leicester Square, a *klezmer* band. A sign of the times.

If beneath the veneer of the Balliol man there still lurked the immigrant from Poland, Lithuania or Russia, what kind of person was that? Often he was a religious traditional Jew, but the immigrant from Eastern Europe was increasingly secular and a socialist, a member or supporter of the *Bund* or *Poalei Zion*. In France and America especially, but also in Britain, he became active in the labour movement and in radical politics, to the dismay of the conservative Jewish elite. The *milieu* that he had left behind was modernising not only politically, but in other ways: in the course of the long nineteenth century, the Eastern Jews developed their own Yiddish-language literature, schools, daily press, theatre and cinema; their own traditions of secular as well as religious scholarship; and, in YIVO, their own research institute. They lived, by and large, not in the *shtetlach* of romantic imagination, but in the large cities of Warsaw, Lodz, Odessa, Vilna, Cracow, Lvov, Minsk, Riga, and so on, where they were familiar with modern European life. In short, Eastern European Jewry, especially after 1903, was not the backward medieval remnant that assimilated Western Jews imagined it to be (and many Western Jewish historians still imagine it to have been),⁴ but a society that was rapidly adapting to the modern world in its own way and on its own terms. To Western Jews, to whom modernisation and assimilation were synonymous, the idea of a modern *Ostjude* was a contradiction in terms; but they came pouring through Hamburg and into Manchester in their hundreds of thousands.

The immigrant came from a community that was increasingly sophisticated, but which was also close and mutually supportive. It had its own welfare institutions because those of the surrounding society were either non-existent, inadequate, inaccessible or not to be trusted, and also because the *kehillot* of Eastern Europe had been autonomous organs of self-government for centuries, the only institutions in a hostile or indifferent world that could be relied upon to look out for Jewish interests and meet Jewish needs. By the turn of the century, Jewish self-help was not limited to the *kehillot*. All the Jewish political parties had their own welfare ar-

⁴ As Liedtke points out, “the view that the history of German Jewry was paradigmatic for European Jews” is widespread and inappropriate; but of course, this history has never been taken as paradigmatic, or even relevant, by students of Eastern Europe. He should perhaps have written “for Western European Jews”.

rangements as well: youth groups, social clubs, trade unions, homes for the aged, soup kitchens, and help for their indigent members.

The tradition of Jewish self-help thus had its continuity in Britain—I shall consider Germany in a moment—not only through the evolution of the native Anglo-Jewish institutions considered by Liedtke, but also through the living, adapting traditions of the Jews of Eastern Europe, who came here bringing their expectations, experiences, assumptions and mind-sets with them. Jewish immigrants were suspicious of the non-Jewish *milieu* for reasons that had nothing to do with the attitudes of the host societies, and they were in any case warier and less optimistic than their Western brethren. When they looked to the West, they were aware of the universal prejudice against them as *Ostjuden*, even among their fellow Jews, and, especially after the Dreyfus affair, they knew that an apparently enlightened society could turn on them without warning. In any case, they spoke no English. They therefore naturally turned to Jews when they needed help. They found slightly less recent Jewish immigrants, or the children of Jewish immigrants, who spoke their language and were ready to help them.

Liedtke points out that, Jewish welfare institutions existed on British soil long before the large-scale arrival of immigrants from the East in the 1880s, and had adapted themselves to British models as had the Jews themselves. He draws from this the conclusion that exclusion from general welfare, a characteristic of Germany but not of Britain, was not a necessary condition for the emergence of separate Jewish welfare provision.

He is undoubtedly right. The reasons for this separateness bear closer examination, however. Liedtke has argued that the native Jews in both cities were responding not to antisemitism but rather to their social insecurity and their desire to show themselves worthy by caring for “their own poor”. Whence did this insecurity derive, however, if not from antisemitism, whether real or imagined? If the Jewish elite was concerned to promote the rapid assimilation of the immigrants out of “anxiety that failure to do so would endanger the position of Anglo-Jewry as a whole”, what was the cause of this anxiety if not antisemitism, perceived as latent and threatening in British society? Similarly, if the Hamburg Jews were embarrassed by their Eastern cousins, and wanted them to spend as little time as possible in Germany, what was the cause of their embarrassment if not German prejudices against the *Ostjuden*, shared by the German Jews themselves? One need only rehearse the catalogue of nineteenth-century German antisemites, from Fichte to Wagner, Stöcker and Chamberlain, to

realise that these fears, amplified by the imported anxieties of Jewish migrants, not to mention the whole weight of Jewish history, received constant reinforcement. Antisemitism in Britain was more genteel, but that was a difference in degree and not in kind: the British Jew needed only to look up the verb “jew” in the dictionary to realise that the same potentialities that operated on the Continent also existed in Britain. Again, the Eastern immigrants brought their own, far more vivid fears with them.

Liedtke writes that Jewish welfare was well-received by British society because of the general British belief that “the Jews were a nation or a race on its own”: in other words, because the abnegationist desires of *Haskalah* were not reciprocated. If the assimilationist project had really succeeded, then no doubt separate Jewish secular institutions would have withered away. But just as assimilation gained momentum in the latter part of the century, both the traditions and anxieties that led Anglo-Jewry to maintain its own welfare systems—not to mention the supply of needy Jews—began to receive massive reinforcements from the swelling immigrant stream. The Eastern Jews had long been accustomed to thinking of themselves as a nation or race apart. Assimilationists, of course, existed in the East as well, but these were the more prosperous and integrated Jews who were less numerous and emigrated less often. The poorer Jews who arrived in Hamburg and Manchester were determined opponents of assimilationism, and had a solidly established sense of their own identity.

Liedtke’s central thesis, as I understand it, is that welfare provision became not the channel for integration for which the Jewish elite had hoped, but rather one of the engines of modern Jewish identity formation. Here again, he is undoubtedly right. Welfare work helped to promote community cohesiveness in a way that could survive the weakening of ritual observance and religious belief, and was not perceived by the surrounding community as threatening. (One wonders, though, whether separate welfare provision did not lead to accusations that “the Jews stick together”, “only care about their own”, and so on. Antisemites will manage to see evil in anything that Jews do.) In seeking the roots both of welfare provision and of Jewish identity formation, however, we would do well to take into account the exogenous as well as the endogenous sources of both phenomena. The Eastern Jews brought with them an already secure, modernised and secularised sense of identity, of which communal self-help was an important element, but not the only one.

I should, in closing, say something more about Germany, since I have concentrated on Britain. In Germany, the paradigm of direct cross-fertilisation that I have proposed is less easy to support, since the Eastern Jews

did not stay in Germany and were in any case outnumbered by the native Jews. This may mean that Liedtke's model is applicable in a purer form to Hamburg than to Manchester. Eastern Jews were, on the other hand, present in large numbers in the Habsburg Empire, and there was also a substantial colony in Berlin. The influx of such Jews into German and Austrian society was a matter of internal, cultural, transgenerational migration rather than the product of an obvious migrant stream. Nevertheless, Eastern Jews did enter German society, no doubt bringing some of their own evolving characteristics with them. Perhaps, therefore, there are processes by which the modernising *Ostjuden* also exerted a direct influence on the identity formation of the German Jews, and which remain to be discovered.

Rainer Liedtke looks forward to the study of "Jewish integration and identity formation, detached from the issue of Eastern European immigration", but I believe that it cannot and must not be detached from that issue, since a good deal of modern Jewish identity formation took place in Eastern Europe, and the evolving Eastern Jew brought his tent with him when he moved.

YOUSSEF CASSIS

Aspects of the Jewish Business Elite in Britain and Germany

Three aspects of the Jewish business elite in Britain and Germany will be considered in this paper: number, contribution and integration. By number, I mean the preliminary quantitative approach, which is necessary to set the comparative analysis in a proper perspective. By contribution, I mean the sectoral distribution of Jewish business interests and the specific contribution of the Jewish business elite to economic development. Finally, with integration, I will consider the position of the Jewish business elite in society, in particular its relationships with non-Jewish elites. The approach will be as rigorously comparative as possible, at the risk of sacrificing grand and seductive generalisations. But, as Marc Bloch perceptively pointed out, perhaps the main benefit of the comparative method is to prevent us from addressing the wrong questions¹—an apparently modest goal but, as all historians know, a very difficult one to achieve in historical research. The period considered will stretch from the 1890s to the early 1930s.

I.

One of the main differences between the Jewish business elites in Britain and Germany lay in their number, both absolute and relative to the business elite of each country. According to Werner Mosse's estimates, Jews consistently formed between 15% and 18% of Germany's business elite. My own estimates of the situation in Britain put the figure at between 3% and 4%. These are two different orders of magnitude, whatever the margin of error. The figures concerning Germany, deriving

¹ Marc Bloch, 'Pour une histoire comparée des sociétés européennes', in *Revue des synthèses historiques* (December 1928), reprinted in Marc Bloch, *Mélanges historiques*, 2 vols., Paris 1973, vol. I, p. 24.

from Werner Mosse's systematic analysis of the country's business notables (those who were awarded the title of *Kommerzienrat* and *Geheimer Kommerzienrat*), its wealth elite (the millionaires), and its corporate elite (the directors of the largest companies), are probably more reliable.² The percentage for Britain has been calculated from the *Dictionary of Business Biography*, containing entries on 1,181 businessmen drawn from all sectors of the British economy.³ Despite the biases inherent in such undertakings, this can be considered as a convenient sample for Britain.⁴ Not surprisingly, in both countries the Jewish business elite was overrepresented in relation to the percentage of Jews in the total population, by a factor of five to six in Britain, and by a factor of probably more than ten in Germany—Jews made up 0.7% of the population in Britain, and 1% to 2% in Germany: again, two different orders of magnitude.

These differences were amplified by the fact that the business elite was a much larger group in Britain than in Germany, and this of course raises the question of definition. Without entering into unnecessary complexities, we can consider a business elite as being made up, on the one hand, of the leaders of the largest companies and, on the other, of a number of very wealthy notables, in particular private bankers, involved in large-scale business operations. As far as large companies are concerned, a share capital of £2 million or more for the pre-1914 years, and £3 million or more for the late 1920s, can be considered as the minimum size to qualify for big business status.⁵ Contrary to widely-held assumptions about the rise of large corporations in Imperial Germany and the persistence of the family firm in late Victorian and Edwardian England,⁶ big business was far more developed in Britain than in Germany. In 1907, there were ninety-three companies in Britain with a capital of £2 million or more as against forty-five in Germany; and in 1929, there were 186 companies with a capital of £3 million or more in Britain as against only fifty-five in

² Werner E. Mosse, *Jews in the German Economy. The German-Jewish Economic Elite, 1820–1935*, Oxford 1987.

³ David J. Jeremy (ed.), *Dictionary of Business Biography*, 5 vols., London 1984–1986.

⁴ Youssef Cassis, 'Jewish Entrepreneurs in England, c.1850–c.1950', in Werner E. Mosse and Hans Pohl (eds.), *Jüdische Unternehmer in Deutschland im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart 1992, pp. 24–35.

⁵ Youssef Cassis, *Big Business. The European Experience in the Twentieth Century*, Oxford 1997, pp. 3–8.

⁶ See in particular Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., *Scale and Scope. The Dynamics of Industrial Capitalism*, Cambridge, MA 1990.

Germany.⁷ On this basis, one can attempt a rough estimate of the size of the business elite in the two countries. On the reasonable assumption that there were, on average, some fifteen “leaders” per company (directors and general managers in Britain, members of the executive and supervisory boards in Germany), the business elite can be considered as roughly consisting of 1,395 people in Britain and 675 in Germany in 1907; among them, only fifty-six were Jewish in Britain (4%), as against 122 in Germany (18%). In 1929, the business elite amounted to about 2,790 in Britain and 825 in Germany; among them, 112 in Britain, and 149 in Germany, were Jewish. These figures can be considered to include notables, as no allowance has been made for multiple directorships and several of them had a seat on the board of a major company.

These quantitative differences inevitably affect the entire comparison between the Jewish business elites in Britain and Germany. In some ways it is a case of a small fish in a big pond and a big fish in a small pond, even if some of the fish in the big pond were very large indeed! Think of the Rothschilds, for example (discussed by Niall Ferguson in this volume), who played a far more significant role in Britain than in Germany. Whatever their individual weight in some sectors of the British economy, however, Jewish businessmen never had the same overall impact as their German counterparts. In particular, it is usually assumed that Jewish businessmen played a decisive role in German economic development; the same cannot be said of Britain. However, this does not mean that comparison between the two countries is meaningless. In the first place, there are a number of similarities, at the qualitative if not at the quantitative level, which are well worth exploring. And, secondly, the contrast between Britain and Germany can help the identification, in each country, of the specific features of the Jewish business elite.

II.

In both Britain and Germany, banking and finance have traditionally been the main field of activity of the Jewish business elite, in particular among its upper reaches. Of Imperial Germany’s wealthiest Jewish businessmen, 59% were bankers,⁸ and the proportion reaches 64% if one considers Prus-

⁷ Cassis, *Big Business*, pp. 10, 34.

⁸ Dolores L. Augustine, *Patricians and Parvenus. Wealth and High Society in Imperial Germany*, Oxford–Providence 1994, p. 34.

sia's twenty-five wealthiest individuals,⁹ all millionaires in pounds sterling, i.e. worth DM20 million or more. In Britain, the percentage of Jewish businessmen among non-landed millionaires born between 1800 and 1879 was as high as 17% (twenty-six out of 154),¹⁰ all of whom were engaged in banking and finance in the City of London. Despite these broad similarities, however, there were also profound differences. It could almost be said that while Jewish bankers held a dominant position in Germany, they were hardly present at all in British banking.

One should clearly distinguish here between banking and finance. As Walter Bagehot, founder-editor of *The Economist*, wrote in his celebrated *Lombard Street*: "A foreigner would be apt to think that [the Rothschilds] were bankers if anyone was. But this only illustrates the essential difference between our English notion of banking and the continental ... Messrs. Rothschild are immense capitalists, having, doubtless, much borrowed money in their hands. But they do not take £100 payable on demand, and pay it back in cheques of £5 each, and that is our English banking."¹¹ The distinction is not purely pedantic. Banks in Britain are deposit banks. These are the big four High Street banks—Barclays, Lloyds, Midland, National Westminster—which in the 1920s controlled some 80% of the country's deposits. These banks and their predecessors have always been almost entirely in non-Jewish hands, both in terms of ownership and management.¹² The only Jewish figure at the head of a major joint stock bank was Felix Schuster (1854–1936), governor of the Union Bank of London (one of the predecessors of the National Westminster Bank) between 1895 and 1918. The chairmen and general managers of the other leading joint stock banks were all Gentiles. Even among board members, Jewish businessmen were but a small minority: George Faudel-Phillips (1840–1922) at the Midland Bank, Samuel Samuel (1855–1934) at the Capital and Counties Bank, Edward Stern (1854–1933) at the London Joint Stock Bank, and Edgar Speyer (1862–1932) at the Union Bank of London. Barclays Bank, and to a certain extent Lloyds Bank, were mainly in Quaker hands. The Church of England and the Church of Scotland dominated at the Westminster Bank and the National Provincial Bank. Things were no different at the Bank of England, where

⁹ Mosse, *Jews in the German Economy*, p. 205

¹⁰ William D. Rubinstein, *Men of Property: The Very Wealthy in Britain Since the Industrial Revolution*, London 1981, p. 150

¹¹ Walter Bagehot, *Lombard Street. A Description of the Money Market*, London 1873, 2nd edn. 1910, p. 214.

¹² See Youssef Cassis, *City Bankers 1890–1914*, Cambridge 1994.

the only Jewish director before 1914 was Alfred de Rothschild (1842–1918), who was elected in 1868 and declined re-election in 1889.¹³

The Jewish presence was stronger, though still limited, within the world of private banking. British private banks consisted of deposit banks and merchant banks. The former, whose main functions were taking deposits and granting short-term credit, included such famous names as Glyn, Mills, Currie & Co., Barclay, Bevan, Tritton & Co., Smith, Payne and Smiths, Coutts & Co., and Beckett & Co, forming the very core of the English banking aristocracy. Their Jewish component was minimal, whether in the City of London or among the provincial banks. They were gradually taken over by the joint stock banks in the second half of the nineteenth century. The merchant banks, which had become an integral part of the English banking system by the turn of the century, are often thought to have been overwhelmingly Jewish. But this, again, is mistaken. There were a few distinguished Jewish merchant banks, in the first place N.M. Rothschild & Sons, which completely overshadowed its Gentile competitors (including Baring Brothers & Co., C.J. Hambro & Son, Kleinwort, Sons & Co., Morgan Grenfell & Co., and J. Henry Schröder & Co.) for most of the nineteenth century. But there were few others. Strictly speaking, merchant banks had two main activities: accepting bills of exchange—hence the name accepting houses—and issuing foreign loans and securities.¹⁴ Among the twenty-three founder-members of the Accepting House Committee in August 1914,¹⁵ only two houses were Jewish: Rothschild and Seligman Brothers. A third, Lazard Brothers, was originally Jewish, but by 1914 its two partners in London, Robert Kindersley (1871–1954) and Robert Brand (1878–1963), were Gentiles.

Most Jewish houses held a prominent position in what is usually described as international finance, including aspects of merchant banking, in particular the issuing side of the business, company promotion and arbitrage. Prominent here were firms such as Bischoffsheim and Goldschmidt, Stern Brothers, Speyer Brothers, M. Samuel & Co., Erlanger & Co., and S. Japhet & Co., and even individuals like Ernest Cassel (1853–1921). Other successful finance houses were primarily bullion brokers, in particular R. Raphael & Sons, Samuel Montagu & Co., and Mocatta & Goldschmidt.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

¹⁴ See Stanley Chapman, *The Rise of Merchant Banking*, London 1984.

¹⁵ The Accepting Houses Committee was founded at a meeting held on 5th October 1914. Its primary aim was to group together the leading merchant banks to meet the liquidity crisis which had hit some of them following the non-payment of their debts by Germany and its allies.

These international financiers were able to seize the unique opportunities offered by the position of the City of London as the world's financial centre during the three or four decades preceding the First World War. In Germany, by contrast, Jewish bankers were an integral part of domestic banking, and Jewish firms were clearly dominant in private banking, particularly within the *haute banque*, i.e. the most prestigious houses of Germany's main financial centres: in Berlin, with Mendelssohn & Co., S. Bleichröder & Co., Robert Warshauer & Co; in Frankfurt, with M.A. Rothschild & Söhne and Lazard Speyer-Ellissen & Co; in Cologne, with Sal. Oppenheim Jr. & Cie; in Hamburg, with M.M. Warburg & Co. and L. Behrens & Söhne; and several others. The Jewish presence was not so overwhelming, although it was still strong, in the lower echelons of German private banking, amongst the thousands of local and regional private banks which survived until the 1930s. Statistics are far less reliable at this level. Estimates of the total number of private banks are not available before the early twentieth century, and vary considerably according to the source of information. One estimate of the proportion of banks of "Jewish character" gives a figure of 57% for 1923, and 52% for 1928.¹⁶ This compares with hardly any Jewish private country banks in Britain.

Until the last third of the nineteenth century, the *haute banque* dominated all major financial transactions, whether on behalf of governments, railway companies or emerging large industrial concerns. Thereafter, they faced increased competition from the so-called "big banks"—Deutsche Bank, Disconto-Gesellschaft, Dresdner Bank, Darmstädter Bank and a number of others—which came to dominate the German banking scene, at least as far as international finance and the financing of large industrial undertakings were concerned. As has been shown by several authors, including Werner Mosse, Jewish bankers were extremely prominent at the top level of the big banks. In some cases they were in total control, for example at the Dresdner Bank, with the founder and managing director Eugen Gutmann (1840–1925); or at the Berliner Handelsgesellschaft, with Carl Fürstenberg (1850–1933). In others, they held senior managerial posts alongside non-Jewish colleagues, for example at the Deutsche Bank, with Hermann Wallich (1834–1928), Max Steinthal (1850–1940), Paul Mankiewitz, and Oskar Wassermann; or the Disconto-Gesellschaft, with the Salomonsohn-Solmssen dynasty. This was again in sharp contrast to

¹⁶ A. Marcus, *Die wirtschaftliche Krise der deutschen Juden*, Berlin 1931, p. 48, quoted by Rolf Walter, 'Jüdische Bankiers in Deutschland bis 1932', in Mosse and Pohl (eds.), *Jüdische Unternehmer in Deutschland*, p. 94.

British banking. It should not be forgotten, however, that the German universal banks undertook all types of banking activities, including international financial operations, while in Britain these remained the preserve of the merchant banks and finance houses.

There is one question that has not, to my knowledge, thus far been investigated. It concerns the extent of Jewish influence in the non-commercial sector of German banking—the savings banks, co-operative banks, mortgage banks and other special banks, which together accounted for as much as 69% of the country's total banking assets in 1913, and for 67% in 1929. These banks are arousing increasing interest among historians, not only in Germany but across Europe. Further research here could alter our perception of Jewish influence in German banking.

III.

Outside banking and finance, the Jewish business elites in Britain and Germany were similar, with differences mainly a matter of degree. In both countries, Jewish salaried managers were at the head of leading companies, and in both a number of large companies were predominantly Jewish. Not surprisingly, however, these phenomena were more common in Germany, if only because of the larger size of the Jewish business community. Similarities are highly visible in the so-called "new" industries of the second industrial revolution, in particular electricals, chemicals and oil. There is, for example, a striking parallel between the Allgemeine Elektrizitäts-Gesellschaft (AEG) in Germany and the General Electric Company (GEC) in Britain, although with almost a generation of difference, reflecting Britain's slower start in the new industries. Both became huge companies: AEG already employed 30,000 people in 1907, compared to GEC's 6,000, but this latter figure rose to 24,000 by 1929. Both were led by a team of highly dynamic Jewish entrepreneurs: Emil Rathenau (1838–1915), Felix Deutsch (1858–1928) and Paul Mammroth at AEG; Hugo Hirst (formerly Hirsch, 1863–1943) and the brothers Max John Railing (1868–1942) and Harry Railing (1878–1963) at GEC. And in this highly oligopolistic industry, each firm faced a major non-Jewish competitor—Siemens in Germany, the Associated Electrical Industries (AEI) in Britain (unlike AEG, GEC had the upper hand). In chemicals, Jewish management was probably stronger at Imperial Chemical Industries than at IG Farben, with Alfred Mond, later Lord Melchett (1868–1930), the company's first chairman. There were a number of Jewish

businessmen on IG Farben's various boards, but none in a leading position.¹⁷ In the same fashion, Jewish influence was stronger in the British oil industry: Marcus Samuel, later Lord Bearsted (1853–1927), was the founder and first chairman of the Shell Transport and Trading Company, a much larger company than Deutsche Petroleum, a subsidiary of the Deutsche Bank, chaired by Sally Segall (1867–1925).

Jewish salaried managers were more numerous in Germany than in Britain. In 1907, a dozen large German companies—not including banks—were run by a Jewish managing director or had at least one Jewish businessman on their executive board,¹⁸ as against only three or four in Britain. But the trend was similar in the two countries. Leaving aside Emil Rathenau, who was a founder-manager, rather than a salaried manager, of the AEG, the highest position in Germany was reached by Albert Ballin (1857–1918), managing director of the HAPAG, Europe's largest shipping company, followed by Alfred Berliner (1861–1943), managing director of Siemens Schuckertwerke from 1903 to 1912. (He was subsequently replaced by Carl von Siemens following disagreements with the family.) In Britain, Godfrey Isaacs (1866–1925) was managing director of Marconi, the wireless telegraph company, while Bernhard Baron (1850–1929) was chairman and managing director of Carreras, the highly successful tobacco manufacturer.

Parallels can also be found in the newer service industries, such as distributive trades or newspapers and publishing, where Jewish influence is usually considered to be very strong, especially in Germany. Their importance within the world of big business, however, should not be overemphasised. Before 1914, there was hardly any large company in retail trade in Germany. In 1907, the capital of the department store company Leonhard Tietz, for example, was only £625,000 (12.5 million Marks), about the same as Harrods in Britain. Retail trade reached big business status with the chain stores that were emerging in Britain rather than in continental Europe and which were not in Jewish hands. The largest was Thomas Lipton, which was floated in 1898 with £2.5 million capital. In the 1920s, the only department store group to reach truly large

¹⁷ This reflected the respective weight of the two companies' founding firms: Brunner, Mond & Co. was one of the two main constituents of ICI, whereas Leopold Cassella, where Jewish influence was especially strong, was one of the smaller firms in the merger leading to the foundation of IG Farben.

¹⁸ See Mosse, *Jews in the German Economy*, pp. 236–250. The companies included AEG, MAN, BASF, HAPAG, Continental, Agfa, Deutsche Petroleum, Oberschlesische Eisen-Industrie, Orenstein and Koppel, and Patzenhofer.

dimensions was Rudolph Karstadt, with £4 million capital, and this was not a Jewish company. In Britain, the rise of Marks and Spencer and Great Universal Stores to big business proportions dates from the 1930s, while that of Tesco dates from the 1950s. The same can be said of newspapers, where the companies of such newspaper magnates as Rudolf Mosse or Leopold Ullstein remained on the fringes of big business. No German newspaper had a circulation comparable to that attained in Britain or France. That of the *Berliner Tageblatt*, launched by Rudolf Mosse in 1872, was 230,000 on the eve of the First World War, compared with over a million for the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Mirror*, launched by Alfred Harmsworth, later Lord Northcliffe (1865–1922), another Gentile.

Comparison between the Jewish business elites in Britain and Germany must thus take into account the uneven level of big business development in the two countries. Outside banking and finance, differences were less pronounced than might be expected. Overall, the influence of Jewish businessmen was nonetheless stronger in Germany, and this was primarily due to the role played by banks in the German economy. More precisely, it was due to the number of seats held by bankers on the supervisory boards of other companies. The influence of German banks on industry is a controversial issue that cannot be discussed here.¹⁹ But multiple directorships ensured at least a nominal presence in most economic sectors, notably including the heavy industries, where Jewish entrepreneurship had traditionally been weak.

IV.

The social position of the Jewish business elite must be considered within the broader context of the social status enjoyed by top businessmen in Britain and Germany. There were differences between the two countries, which I have analysed in a previous comparative study.²⁰ The differences were not so much in the level of wealth, which was of the same order of

¹⁹ For a recent discussion, see Jeremy Edwards and Sheilagh Ogilvie, 'Universal Banks and German Industrialization. A Reappraisal', in *Economic History Review*, XLIX, No.3 (August 1996), pp. 427–446.

²⁰ Youssef Cassis, 'Wirtschaftselite und Bürgertum. England, Frankreich und Deutschland um 1900', in Jürgen Kocka (ed.), *Bürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert. Deutschland im europäischen Vergleich*, vol. 2, Munich 1988, pp. 9–34. An English translation appeared in Jürgen Kocka and Allan Mitchell (eds.), *Bourgeois Society in Nineteenth Century Europe*, Oxford–Providence 1993, pp. 103–124.

magnitude,²¹ even though very wealthy British businessmen outnumbered their German counterparts, probably by a factor of two to one.²² Nor were there significant differences in lifestyle, which at the upper echelons had become decidedly aristocratic, with a residence in the capital's best areas coupled with a seat in the country and social intercourse with the landed elite. Of course, Germany was more provincial and the social scene much quieter in Berlin than in London. But this was a matter of nuance. The main difference was in the degree of integration between the business elite and the old aristocracy. During the last decades of the nineteenth century, a segment of the British business elite, the City aristocracy, merged on equal terms with the landed aristocracy to form a renewed elite, which can be considered as the embryo of the British establishment. No such merger took place in Germany: the *Wirtschaftsbürgertum* remained isolated from the landed aristocracy as well as from other elite groups.

What was the position of the Jewish business elites in this context? In both countries, top Jewish businessmen were among the richest individuals, adopting the aristocratic way of life of their non-Jewish counterparts. Some enjoyed personal friendships with the monarch, for example Ernest Cassel with Edward VII and Albert Ballin with Wilhelm II. Full admission into the upper classes, however, required much closer social intercourse, in the first place the establishment of family relationships through marriage: the Jewish business elite could not therefore be integrated into the aristocracy. In Britain, Jewish bankers were not part of the merger between City aristocracy and old aristocracy, despite their prominence in City financial affairs. The merger was based on a series of marriages and intermarriages between a number of banking and landed families,²³ from which Jewish families were obviously excluded. The marriage patterns of the Jewish banking elite were typical of economically successful religious minorities, functioning mainly on three levels: the level of the firm, with marriages to the daughter of a partner; the level of the "nation", which extended to the Anglo-Jewish community as a whole, or at least its upper fringes, the Anglo-Jewish gentry; and, finally, the international level, through the many far-flung connections of Jewish banking. The marriage patterns of the German business elite were not, in essence, very different. Strategies, of course, could vary, depending on region (Frankfurt, for example, was more

²¹ William D. Rubinstein, 'Introduction', in *idem* (ed.), *Wealth and the Wealthy in the Modern World*, London 1980, p. 19.

²² Cassis, *Big Business*, p. 193.

²³ See Cassis, *City Bankers*, pp. 221–243.

cosmopolitan than Berlin); economic activity (for example, persons engaged in the chemical industries appear to have been less likely to preserve a Jewish identity than those in textiles); and, naturally, on individual personalities.²⁴ But, as Werner Mosse puts it: "Notwithstanding a high degree of 'assimilation' and exogamy, overall, the economic elite preserved its ethnic (and religious) identity."²⁵ Marriages with members of the old aristocratic families did take place; such marriages, however, were just as common among leading non-Jewish businessmen.²⁶

This points to an interesting difference between Britain and Germany. In both countries, the Jewish business elite remained on the whole separated from the rest of the upper and upper-middle classes. But in Germany, the Jewish business elite was basically in the same position as its Gentile counterpart: both remained on the whole excluded from the country's upper classes. In Britain, by contrast, internal distinctions within the business elite were more pronounced: some of its members were full members of the country's upper classes while others, including the leading Jewish businessmen, remained on the fringes of the inner circle. This did not mean, however, that Jewish and non-Jewish businessmen were closer in Germany. On the contrary, in Britain, the Jewish business elite enjoyed marks of social prestige rarely found in Germany, such as election to Parliament, hereditary peerages and, for the scions of the oldest dynasties, high political office. However imperfect, public recognition is an unmistakable sign of social integration.

²⁴ See Werner E. Mosse, *The German Jewish Economic Elite 1820–1935. A Socio-Cultural Profile*, Oxford 1989, pp. 161–185.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

²⁶ Augustine, *Patricians and Parvenus*, pp. 79–85.

AVRAHAM BARKAI

Elites and Communities: A Comment on Youssef Cassis

The story of Jewish business elites can be fascinating, as Youssef Cassis has demonstrated. In my opinion, however, it is not of great importance to our understanding of the common *economic fate* of the Jewish communities in Germany and Britain. The *economic role* or “contribution” of prominent Jewish bankers and financiers of industry and the railways has been investigated by social and economic historians. It has also been highly overstated by Jewish apologists and by antisemites who lamented the “Judaisation” (*Verjudung*) of the economy. With regard to Germany I have previously contended, and still believe, that industrialisation and later developments would not have been much different had no Jews at all been involved. Following the differences in magnitude Cassis has underlined, it seems obvious that the same is even truer for Britain.

My approach uses the widely recognised theoretical model of minority-group economics developed by the late Simon Kuznets. Regarding the economic fate of the Jews as a group, he refused to accord any importance to the fact that some very rich and successful entrepreneurs were Jewish by faith or descent. For Kuznets, their significance in Jewish terms depended solely on their ability or willingness to use their economic enterprise and facilities, or their political leverage, for the benefit of the entire Jewish community. I would add that this role could be ambiguous. Taking the Rothschilds, by any account the biggest Jewish fish in the pond, as an example, I would feel hard-pressed to decide whether the historical impact of this dynasty and its image on the fate of the Jews was not, in the long run, unfortunate rather than beneficial.

Allow me therefore to concentrate on only one aspect: the role played by the economic elites in their respective Jewish communities. Here, I see three main differences that deserve more detailed research and in-depth investigation. The first is that of heritage: a significant part of the German-Jewish community comprised families which had lived on German soil for many generations. British Jewry, in contrast, had a much shorter history. After 1914, the vast majority were immigrants from Eastern Europe or

first-generation Britons. This was decisive for the very different formation, composition and mentalities of the respective business elites.

The second difference, in a somewhat simplified generalisation, is that of allegiance. The first German-Jewish economic elite was made up of Court Jews. It was mainly their descendants who later established the prominent Jewish banks which for a time dominated private banking in Germany. According to Cassis, Jews “were hardly present at all in British banking ... but Jewish houses held a prominent position in ... international finance”. The distinction is based on the different structures of German and British capital markets, but this is not important in our present context. Examining the names of these prominent finance houses in the City of London, we find, beside some prominent Sephardic Jews like Mocatta or Montagu, many names of well-known German Court Jews like Bischoffsheim, Speyer or Goldschmitt, not to mention the Rothschilds. The interesting fact that stands out is that many or even most of these families continued to remain a part of what has been called the “interlocking cousinhood of wealth and privilege [which] acknowledged its Jewish heritage without asking too many questions about it”.¹ This was the Jewish “oligarchy” that consistently presided over Jewish community life in England.

Such an oligarchy did not exist in Germany. Around the middle of the nineteenth century the descendants of the Court Jews still partly belonged to an economic oligarchy, but most of them were no longer Jewish in terms of faith or communal affiliation, or even Jewish philanthropy. The reason why those scions of often the same old families, or at least the same social group, behaved differently in Britain (as also in the United States) is to be sought mainly in the differences between the respective political, social and cultural environments, rather than in the economic sphere.

The third difference is perhaps less sharp, but should nevertheless be noted. The German-Jewish business elite in the nineteenth and twentieth century, which had not severed its ties with Judaism and Jewish communal life, was essentially a class of newcomers. They had established their firms in the mid- or late nineteenth century and had benefited from the flourishing commercial opportunities of the expanding market economy in a time of rapid industrialisation. Few of them succeeded in amassing large amounts of capital, but on average they formed quite a substantial and wealthy group of upper-middle-class entrepreneurs. From their ranks

¹ Eugene C. Black, *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry 1880–1920*, Oxford 1988, p. 389.

came—up to the 1920s—the religiously liberal *Honoratioren* who presided over the Jewish *Gemeinden* and most Jewish organisations in Germany. Some or most of them anxiously guarded this position against the aspirations of later immigrant *Ostjuden* or Zionists to become part of the Establishment. Though I am less familiar with the Anglo-Jewish establishment, I tend to believe that despite the continued Jewish allegiance of the “old-money” cousinhood, most of the active leaders in the Jewish communities, congregations, and nationwide organisations were not much different. Like their German counterparts they represented the “new” middle class, but consisted, for obvious reasons, primarily of Eastern European immigrants or the first generation of their descendants.

In conclusion, I must excuse myself for not commenting on Cassis’s very detailed analysis of the business elite and its respective composition and activities in each country. This is not because I regard this comparison as unworthy of such a learned investigation, but because I believe it more important to deal with the overall economic and occupational structure and development of the Jews as a minority group with distinct characteristics, not only in terms of religious or ethnic peculiarities but also in their economic situation and conduct. From my point of view as an old-fashioned social and economic historian I regret that these comparative aspects, as well as those of demography, gender, youth and family-life—in short, the main components of Jewish *Alltagsgeschichte*—have received short shrift. The reason may be the lack of basic preliminary studies in Anglo-Jewish historiography which would allow an even tentative quantitative comparison. I am perhaps not aware of existing works that could be compared with the quite impressive body of research and publications on these subjects with regard to German Jewry from before or after 1945. However, should my impression be right, this could be an opportunity to open new avenues of scholarship for those of our British colleagues who think it worthwhile.

NIALL FERGUSON

“The Caucasian Royal Family”: The Rothschilds in National Contexts

“La dynastie Rothschild est après la famille des Cobourg la plus nombreuse de l’Europe.”

Georges Dairnvaell, 1846¹

“We are having too much Lord Rothschild,” Lloyd George memorably complained in 1909.² Specialists in nineteenth-century Jewish history may sometimes be tempted to feel that they have too much of the Rothschild family as a whole. It is possible, but not easy, to write a book about Jewish history in the period 1815–1914 which does not include the name Rothschild in the index. The obvious scholarly objection to this is that the Rothschilds were anything but typical nineteenth-century Jews. They were, as Heinrich Heine once said, “the exceptional family”.³ Whether one pictures them, as so many nineteenth-century cartoonists did, sitting on a throne of money or, as they themselves liked to be painted, riding to hounds, the Rothschilds do not easily fit into generalisations about Jewish experience.

Yet for precisely this reason the Rothschilds were an important and integral part of the historical experience of the overwhelming majority of Jews not only in Britain but throughout Europe and indeed the world in the nineteenth century. Fables like that of “the Hebrew Talisman”, which cast a composite Rothschild as the saviour who would restore the Jews to the Kingdom of Jerusalem, were extreme versions of a widespread acknowledgement in Jewish communities around the world that the Rothschilds were, in some nebulous sense, “the kings of the Jews”. Born

¹ Georges Dairnvaell (‘Satan’ [pseud.]), *Histoire édifiante et curieuse de Rothschild Ier, roi des Juifs*, Paris 1846, pp. 8–9.

² *The Times*, 25th June 1909.

³ RAL, [formerly CPHDCM] 58-1-403/6, Heinrich Heine, Paris, to Betty, Paris, 7th April 1846.

and raised in the highly restrictive *milieu* of the Frankfurt ghetto, the five sons of Mayer Amschel Rothschild, the founder of the dynasty, had become, by the 1830s if not earlier, a by-word for a new kind of financial wealth. “Money is the God of our time,” Heine declared in 1841, “and Rothschild is his prophet”.⁴ They were the supreme example of the social mobility made possible for Jews by the twin revolutions: the French political revolution, which literally smashed the walls of the Frankfurt *Judengasse*, and the British industrial revolution, which was an essential element in the Rothschilds’ economic ascent. The outward manifestations of this wealth—especially the numerous palaces and country houses which the family constructed in the course of the century—symbolised the limitless material possibilities of a world in which the legal limitations on Jews appeared obsolescent. Indeed, the political achievements of the Rothschilds—Lionel de Rothschild’s becoming the first Jewish Member of Parliament, for example—were among the milestones of the process historians call “emancipation”. The family consciously and consistently sought to use its wealth and political influence in the interests of other Jews—“our poorer co-religionists,” as they called them—and their achievements were well known to contemporaries: the purchase of citizenship for the Frankfurt Jews during the Napoleonic period; the action on behalf of the Damascus Jews in 1840; the interventions when Romanian and Russian Jews were being persecuted in the later nineteenth century; and so on to the Balfour Declaration, which famously begins “Dear Lord Rothschild ...”.

At the same time, in the eyes of Jewish as well as non-Jewish radicals on both the right and the left, the name Rothschild also came to stand for the Jew as unscrupulous “pariah” capitalist. As Chekhov suggested in his short story *Rothschild’s Violin*, even in the most obscure Russian village the peasants knew the name Rothschild and knew that it signified “rich Jew” (hence they used it to mock the poor Jews who were their neighbours). And to Zionists, they seemed the archetypal assimilationist Jews, compromising Jewish identity by adopting the social manners of the essentially Christian societies in which they lived.

The question, however, is what the *experience* of the Rothschilds—as opposed to their ambivalent reputation—can tell us about the experience of Jews in Britain and Germany during the nineteenth century. Here there is a need for geographical precision, for the Rothschilds did not in fact

⁴ S.S. Praver, *Heine’s Jewish comedy. A Study of his Portraits of Jews and Judaism*, Oxford 1983, p. 646.

have a great deal to do with Britain as a whole. Although Nathan Mayer Rothschild saw a good deal of the north of England and Scotland in the early 1800s when he was a textile exporter based in Manchester, after he settled in London he did not travel much in the rest of Britain. His children and grandchildren took advantage of the money he had left them (and they themselves made) to acquire land and houses in the country, but all their real estate was concentrated in Buckinghamshire, in the vicinity of Aylesbury. Although the first Lord Rothschild became greatly exercised by the question of Irish Home Rule in the 1880s, I have found no evidence that he ever visited Ireland, although one of his uncles (Anthony) did. As for Germany, the problems are so obvious that they barely need spelling out. The Rothschild family had its roots in the Free Imperial City of Frankfurt and continued to maintain a "house" (i.e., a branch of their financial partnership) there from the time of its annexation by Prussia in 1866–1867 until the very end of the nineteenth century. From the 1820s onwards, they also had a branch in Vienna. When members of the family began to acquire rural property in Central Europe, they bought estates not only in the vicinity of Frankfurt but also in Prussian Silesia and Habsburg Moravia.

The national categories in which modern historians habitually think were therefore of limited importance to the Rothschilds. They were at the pinnacle of the *Weltbürgertum*; their way of life was thoroughly cosmopolitan. Members of the family regularly travelled back and forth between Britain, France, Germany and Italy. The whole family was multilingual, the partners in the bank typically being able to speak, read and write German, Hebrew, English and French. Perhaps even more important was the remarkable pattern of intermarriage whereby, of twenty-one marriages involving descendants of Mayer Amschel between 1824 and 1877, no fewer than fifteen were between his direct descendants. Because the cousins involved were geographically dispersed, the effect of this was to prevent the development in later generations of any clear-cut sense of national identity. For example, Nathan's grandson Alfred liked to think of himself as (at least) half-German because his mother had been brought up in Frankfurt. (He was in fact more German than that, because his grandfathers had been born and raised there too.) When the First World War broke out, the loyalties of the family were divided in ways which few others were—with the exception perhaps of that other highly successful (and also originally German) family, the Saxe-Coburgs.

To be sure, there is no question that many individual Rothschilds came to identify themselves with particular states. Nathan's four sons, all of

whom were born in England, never ceased to think of themselves as Englishmen and made frequent jokes in their letters to one another about the pretensions of “French frogs” and the tedium of life in Frankfurt. This was especially true in the case of Nathaniel (known as Nat) despite, or possibly because of, the fact that he lived most of his adult years in Paris. Carl ran the Naples house for most of his life. His daughter Charlotte, however, spent much of her childhood in Frankfurt and moved to London when she married her cousin Lionel at the age of seventeen in 1836. The diary which she kept after 1848 is written in beautiful German and her comments on the events of that remarkable year indicate a strong emotional enthusiasm for aspects of German nationalism. Her letters to her children, however, are written in flawlessly idiomatic English. National identity was partly a matter of individual choice.

Where there was no choice was in the matter of religion. Unlike many German-Jewish families which became rich in the early nineteenth century, the Rothschilds did not convert to Christianity. Although individual members of the family varied in the degree of their religiosity—ranging from James, who did not keep kosher and often worked on the sabbath, to his nephew Wilhelm Carl, who was devoutly Orthodox—there was never any question of apostasy. Indeed, there was nothing the partners in the bank viewed with greater suspicion than a converted Jew. When Nathan’s second daughter, Hannah Mayer, converted to Christianity in order to marry Henry Fitzroy in 1839, she was ostracised by the entire family with the exception of her brother Nat, despite the fact that Fitzroy was the younger son of Lord Southampton, Deputy Lieutenant for Northamptonshire and MP for Lewes. Later marriages to non-Jews such as Hannah Rothschild’s to the Earl of Rosebery were tolerated; but there was never any question of her ceasing to be a Jew. No male Rothschild married a non-Jew until the second half of the nineteenth century.

It is partly this firm adherence to Judaism which makes the Rothschilds an almost ideal test- case for the purposes of comparative history. Here was a family running an authentically multinational partnership in five European cities and indeed in five different states. Although their personalities were very different, the five sons of Mayer Amschel had all grown up under more or less similar conditions in the Frankfurt *Judengasse*. Because of the way their partnership operated, they all grew more or less equally rich equally fast. And all branches of the family resisted the temptation to convert to which many other wealthy Jewish families succumbed. This makes it relatively straightforward to compare their experience in two or more of the locations.

But what aspects of their experience? Thanks to the family's extraordinary enthusiasm for correspondence, there are few aspects about which no written record survives; and whole books have been, or could be, written about their experience as gardeners, artistic patrons, equine enthusiasts and *bon viveurs*. Interesting though they may be, however, a comparison of these experiences in the British and German contexts would reveal fairly minor if not negligible differences. Perhaps there are more interesting things to be said about the differences between the Rothschilds' experiences as bankers or as members of Jewish communities in Britain and Germany. But these are not considered here. Instead, this article concentrates on the issue which I think remains central to any discussion of this sort: namely, the extent and nature of religious discrimination.

The starting point for any comparison is the simple fact that for most of the nineteenth century the Rothschilds were the richest family in the world. They were therefore subject to fewer *material* constraints than anyone, including the richest aristocrats. The majority of the restrictions they had to live with or overcome were therefore directly related to the fact that they were Jews. The question is therefore simple: were the Rothschilds who lived in London subject to fewer constraints due to their religion than those who lived in Frankfurt or Vienna (which must be considered part of Germany for most of the nineteenth century)? Conventional wisdom would suggest the answer "yes". This essay adds some qualifications to that answer, and perhaps goes so far as to venture a tentative "no".

Now a word about terminology. Historians have traditionally tended to talk about Jewish "emancipation"—the acquisition of civil and political rights by all Jews regardless of their religious identity. The nineteenth-century Rothschilds also thought in this way. However, a distinction needs to be made between action they took on behalf of the wider Jewish communities of Europe, Russia and the Middle East, which is not discussed here, and the action they took in their own interests. The two overlapped, of course: members of the family tended to think the same way as their Frankfurt friend Ludwig Jassoy, who half-seriously declared in 1817: "If one Jew owns a garden, every Jew owns one. If one Jew is a Baron, every Jew is a Baron."⁵ But here the question is what the Rothschilds were able to acquire for themselves in their capacity as very *rich* Jews. The things which seem to have mattered to them can be listed as follows (and the or-

⁵ RAL, T27/244, XI/109/6, Amschel, Frankfurt, to his brothers, 11th March 1817.

der is not one of priority, nor is the list exhaustive): real estate; membership of elected assemblies; higher education; aristocratic status; and access to royal courts (*Hoffähigkeit*).

All of these things, it should be noted, could be had at a price, though in some cases this was less prominently displayed than in others. But at the beginning of the nineteenth century there were obstacles which prevented European Jews from obtaining them, no matter how rich they were; at the end there were none. There were nevertheless significant regional variations, and these were definitely not such as to permit a clear distinction between a tolerant Britain and a more antisemitic Germany.

Real Estate

It is obvious enough that a Jew could live more freely in London than in Frankfurt or Vienna in the eighteenth century. Under the terms of the seventeenth-century *Stättigkeit*, which remained in force until the end of the eighteenth century, the Jewish population of Frankfurt was restricted to just five hundred families, the number of weddings to just twelve a year and the age of marriage was fixed at twenty-five. No more than two Jews from outside were allowed to settle in the ghetto each year. Jews were prohibited from farming, or from dealing in weapons, spices, wine and grain. They were forbidden to live outside the *Judengasse* and were confined to the ghetto every night, on Sundays and during Christian festivals; at other times, they were forbidden to walk in the town more than two abreast. They were barred from entering parks, inns, coffee houses and the promenades around the town's picturesque walls; they were not even allowed near the town's ancient cathedral and had to enter the town hall by a back door. They were permitted to visit the town market, but only during set hours, and were forbidden to touch vegetables and fruit there. If he appeared in court, a Jew had to swear a special oath which reminded all present of "the penalties and maledictions which God imposed on the cursed Jews". If he heard the words "*Jud, mach mores!* [Jew, do your duty!]" in the street, he was obliged—even if they were uttered by a mere boy—to take off his hat and step to one side. And if he had occasion to go outside Frankfurt—for which a special pass was required—he paid double the toll paid by a Gentile when entering the town. In return for this supposed

“protection”, every Jew also paid a poll or “body” tax.⁶ This was the world into which Mayer Amschel Rothschild’s famous five sons (and forgotten five daughters) were born.

Plainly, none of these restrictions prevented the Rothschild family from building up a successful banking business and accumulating capital worth (by 1797) at least £10,000, as well as a substantial house within the *Judengasse*. Nor were the restrictions on marriage as objectionable as might be assumed: long after these had been removed, the Rothschilds practised an even more strict endogamy in the form of cousin-marriage for their own familial reasons. But the restrictions on free movement, and especially the impossibility of living and owning property outside the cramped and unhealthy *Judengasse*, were plainly intolerable to Mayer Amschel’s sons. This can clearly be inferred from the fact that one of the first things they did on securing equal civil rights as Frankfurt *Bürger* was to invest in new homes elsewhere in the town.

The destruction of the *Judengasse* by French cannon-fire in 1796 obliged the Frankfurt Senate to relax its residence restrictions, granting permits, albeit for only six months, to the two thousand or so people left homeless to live outside the *Judengasse*. However, the new *Stättigkeit* issued in 1808 by Karl Theodor Anton von Dalberg, Prince-Primate of Napoleon’s Rhenish Confederation, reasserted the ban on Jews living permanently outside the *Judengasse*, as well as reimposing the poll tax and confirming the old restrictions on numbers of families and marriages. It was only in return for a large capital sum (440,000 gulden) that Dalberg agreed to go further.⁷ In December 1811, after negotiations with the Frankfurt Senate,⁸ Mayer Amschel was able to inform his son James, with understated satisfaction: “You are now a citizen.” Two weeks later, the decree on the “civil-legal equality of the Jewish community [*die bürgerliche*

⁶ Rachel Heuberger and Helga Krohn, *Hinaus aus dem Ghetto . . . Juden in Frankfurt am Main, 1800-1950*, Frankfurt am Main 1988, pp. 13ff.; Robert Liberles, ‘The World of Dietz’s *Stammbuch*. Frankfurt Jewry, 1349-1870’, in Alexander Dietz (ed.), *The Jewish Community of Frankfurt. A Genealogical Study*, Camelford 1988, pp. iii-v; Jacob Katz, *Out of the Ghetto. The Social Background of Jewish Emancipation, 1770-1870*, New York 1978, esp. pp. 9-27.

⁷ Isidor Kracauer, *Geschichte der Juden in Frankfurt am Main (1150-1824)*, vol. I, Frankfurt am Main 1927, pp. 414-416; Paul Arnsberg, *Die Geschichte der Frankfurter Juden seit der Französischen Revolution*, vol. I, Frankfurt am Main 1983, pp. 266ff., 279.

⁸ SAF, Judenschaft, Ugb D 62 No. 36, Vorstand der Judengemeinde in Frankfurt to Hohe Kommission des Senats, 22nd November 1811.

⁹ RAL, T27/5, XI/86/0, Mayer Amschel and Salomon to James, 13th December 1811.

Rechtsgleichheit der Judengemeinde]” came into force. No sooner had this happened than the brothers began to make use of their new rights. In 1811 the eldest of them, Amschel, bought a house in the Frankfurt suburbs on the road to Bockenheim.¹⁰

Almost as soon as he had acquired the house, Amschel resolved to buy the garden next to it as well. It should be stressed that the object of his desire was no country estate, merely a small suburban plot of at most a few acres. Nor was Amschel merely bidding for social status. He seems genuinely to have fallen in love with the garden. After all, he had spent virtually all of his forty-two years cooped up in the ghetto, working, eating and sleeping in its cramped and dingy rooms, walking up and down its crowded and pungent thoroughfare. It is not easy for a modern reader to imagine how intoxicating fresh air and vegetation were to him. On a spring night in 1815, he decided to sleep there. He described the experience in an excited and moving postscript to his brother Carl:

“Dear Carl, I am sleeping in the garden. If God allows that the accounts work out as you and I want them too, I will buy it ... There is so much space that you, God willing, and the whole family can comfortably live in it.”¹¹

As this implied, Amschel regarded his purchase of the garden as dependent on the outcome of the brothers’ business activities, which Napoleon’s return from Elba just weeks before had thrown into turmoil.¹² He was also torn between his love of open space and his brother Carl’s preference for a “large and respectable town-house”.¹³ Fortunately for Amschel, their domineering brother Nathan categorically rejected Carl’s arguments as “a lot of nonsense”, but accepted the need for a garden for the sake of Amschel’s health.¹⁴ (Carl only got his way in Frankfurt in 1818, with the purchase of a substantial town house in the Neue Mainzer Strasse.)¹⁵ By April 1816 part of the garden had been bought and Amschel was bidding

¹⁰ Dieter Bartetzko ‘Fairy Tales and Castles. On Rothschild Family Buildings in Frankfurt on Main’, in Georg Heuberger (ed.), *The Rothschilds. Essays on the History of a European Family*, Sigmaringen 1994, pp. 221–244.

¹¹ RAL, XI/109/2/1/43, Amschel, Frankfurt, to Carl, 9th April 1815.

¹² RAL, XI/109/2/2/88, Amschel, Frankfurt, to his brothers, 19th September 1815; RAL, XI/109/2/2/90, Amschel to unidentified recipient, 19th September 1815.

¹³ RAL, XI/109/2/2/203, Carl, Frankfurt, to his brother, 4th December 1815.

¹⁴ RAL, T31/1/5, Nathan, London, to Amschel, Carl and James, 2nd January 1816; RAL, T34/1, NMR 288, Nathan to Amschel, Frankfurt, 3rd January.

¹⁵ Bartetzko, ‘Fairy Tales and Castles’, pp. 224–225.

to add a further two-thirds of an acre to it.¹⁶ Now when he slept outside—in a garden he could call his own—it was “like paradise”.¹⁷ Finally, more than a year after his first night outdoors, he bought the remainder. “From today onwards the garden belongs to me and to my dear brothers,” he wrote exultantly.¹⁸

Amschel’s garden was the first of many Rothschild gardens, and its story does much to illuminate the family’s enduring passion for horticulture.¹⁹ Clearly, its significance was partly religious: now the Feast of Tabernacles could be celebrated properly in a tent amid the greenery.²⁰ But the full meaning of Amschel’s passion for what was, by later Rothschild standards, a tiny patch of land, becomes clear when his purchase is set in its political context. For the period after 1814 saw a concerted effort by the restored Frankfurt authorities once again to remove the civil rights which had been won by the Jewish community from Napoleon’s Prince-Primate Dalberg. Amschel therefore fretted that the Senate would either prevent his purchase of the garden altogether,²¹ or compel him to relinquish it if the purchase went ahead.²² When he was allowed to keep it, he still suspected “a kind of bribe” to keep him from leaving Frankfurt, or even a sop to avoid more general concessions to the Jewish community as a whole.²³ It became, in short, a symbol of the much larger question of Jewish emancipation.

Dalberg’s 1811 decree giving Jews full rights of citizenship had been effectively suspended shortly after his abdication as Grand Duke in 1814.²⁴ In March 1814 the special Jewish oath was reintroduced in the courts and

¹⁶ RAL, T34/20, Amschel, Frankfurt, to James, Paris, 6th April 1816; RAL, T31/194/3, XI/109/4, Amschel to Salomon and James, 1st May 1816.

¹⁷ RAL, T31/208/3, XI/109/4, Amschel, Frankfurt, to Salomon and James, Paris, 8th May 1816.

¹⁸ RAL, T31/229/14, XI/109/4, Amschel, Frankfurt, to Salomon, Carl and James, 25th May 1816.

¹⁹ Miriam Rothschild, Kate Garton and Lionel de Rothschild, *The Rothschild Gardens*, London 1996, pp. 16–17

²⁰ RAL, T22/254, Charlotte, Frankfurt, to [her mother] Hannah, 17th October 1832.

²¹ RAL, T31/218/4, XI/109/4, Amschel, Frankfurt, to Salomon, Carl and James, 12th May 1816; RAL, T31/224/1, XI/109/4, same to same, 29th May 1816.

²² RAL, T31/267/4, XI/109/4, Amschel, Berlin, to Salomon and Nathan, London, 18th June 1816; RAL, T61/123/2, Carl, Frankfurt, to Salomon and Nathan, 23rd April 1817; RAL, T62/63/3, XI/109/7, Amschel, Frankfurt, to Salomon, Paris, 23rd June 1817.

²³ RAL, T31/238/4, XI/109/4, Amschel, Berlin, to his mother and Carl, Frankfurt, 22nd June 1816; RAL, T32/209/1, XI/109/5B, Amschel, Frankfurt, to Salomon and Nathan, London, 19th September 1816.

²⁴ Heuberger and Krohn, *Hinaus aus dem Ghetto*, pp. 24ff.

Jews were dismissed from public sector posts. There was, however, a chance to stem this reaction at the Congress of Vienna in 1814–1815. Although the Rothschilds were mainly preoccupied with the financial aspects of the post-war settlement, which were largely decided in Paris, they nevertheless took a close interest in the debates on the German Confederation in Vienna, where a delegation had been sent by the Frankfurt Jewish community.²⁵ At first, it seemed as if a compromise could be reached. In December 1814 Carl heard that citizenship could (once again) be secured for the Frankfurt Jews in return for a cash payment.²⁶ But there was a serious setback when, at the suggestion of the Bremen *Bürgermeister* Smidt, Article 16 of the *Bundesakte* referred only to rights previously granted to Jews “by” (as opposed to the original “in”) the German states, effectively invalidating all the Napoleonic measures, and leaving future arrangements in the hands of the individual states. After the interruption of Napoleon’s Hundred Days, the brothers continued their efforts in the hope of bringing pressure to bear directly on the Frankfurt authorities, but they were unsuccessful. The debate appeared to be over in October 1816, when a revised constitution defined Jews as second-class *Schutzgenossen* (literally “protected comrades”). In a sustained rearguard action, the Rothschilds sought to use their growing financial leverage over Austria and Prussia to exert pressure on the Frankfurt authorities. However, the Senate made only the most minimal concessions. Although there was to be no return to the ghetto—in itself a cause for relief rather than rejoicing—a plethora of restrictions on Jews remained. The new law of 1824, while confirming the “private citizens’ rights” of the “Israelite citizens”, excluded the Jews from political life as before; imposed fairly minor restrictions on their economic activities; subordinated the community to a Senate commissioner; permitted, as before, only fifteen Jewish marriages a year (only two of which could be with outsiders); and confirmed the restoration of the Jewish oath in the law courts.²⁷ Most of these rules—including the restriction on marriages to Jews from outside Frankfurt—remained in place until 1848. (Indeed, the Frankfurt Jews did not secure full legal equality until 1864.)

Nevertheless, it is significant that Amschel was able to keep his garden. Indeed, even as they revoked the decree of 1811, the authorities specifi-

²⁵ Kracauer, *Geschichte der Juden*, vol. II, p. 451; Arnsberg, pp. 314f.

²⁶ RAL, T29/370, Carl, Frankfurt, to Nathan, Salomon and Davidson, London, 28th December 1814.

²⁷ Heuberger and Krohn, *Hinaus aus dem Ghetto*, p. 38.; Kracauer, *Geschichte der Juden*, vol. I, p. 509; Arnsberg, pp. 314f.

cally cited his ownership of it as evidence of their enlightened attitude towards the Jewish community.²⁸ Nor did the restrictions reimposed in 1824 prevent him and other members of the family from acquiring more real estate in and around the town in the subsequent decades. Despite their vociferous complaints, it is in fact hard to find any evidence that the law had any practical consequences for the family at all. This raises the question whether they were being given special treatment because of their great wealth, or whether the regulations were in practice relatively unburdensome for all Frankfurt Jews.

On this specific point, it is interesting to compare Frankfurt with Vienna, where Mayer Amschel's second son Salomon established a branch of the Frankfurt house during the 1820s. The position of Jews there continued to be governed by the so-called *Toleranzedikt* of 1782, under which Jews continued to be denied the right to own land anywhere in the Habsburg Empire; had to pay a special poll tax; were subject to marriage restrictions; and, if born outside the Empire, required a special "toleration permit", renewable every three years, to reside there. They were also excluded from the civil service, though they could and did serve in the army and some had even become officers during the Napoleonic wars. When Nathan's son Lionel toured Germany in 1827, it was only in Vienna that he found the position of Jews so bad as to be noteworthy: "Jews are very much oppressed, they can hold no situation under Government, nor possess any land property, not even a house in the town ... and must have a permission to hire lodgings."²⁹

All these restrictions directly affected Lionel's uncle Salomon. He could only rent accommodation in Vienna, and his request in 1831 that he and his brothers be allowed "to convert part of the wealth with which a kind providence has blessed us into a form in which it will be remunerated whatever vicissitudes may befall us" was turned down.³⁰ Salomon renewed his efforts with a special appeal to Metternich in January 1837 concerning "the destiny of my co-religionists ... the hopes of so many fathers of families and the highest aspirations of thousands of human beings".³¹ When the government once again refused to grant any general relaxation of discrimination, Salomon faced a dilemma, for Metternich made it clear that the Emperor was willing, at his own discretion and as a special privilege, to

²⁸ RAL, T32/209/1, XI/109/5B, Amschel, Frankfurt, to Salomon and Nathan, London, 19th September 1816.

²⁹ RAL, RFam AD/1/2, Lionel, Journal [copy], April 1827, p. 59.

³⁰ Count Egon Corti, *The Reign of the House of Rothschild*, London 1928, pp. 42–46.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 174f.

grant *individual* Jews permission to own houses in Vienna. It is revealing that Salomon did not rush to take advantage of this offer; but in 1842 he did so. As an “honorary citizen”, he was finally able to buy the Renngasse hotel which he had been renting, as well as the adjoining house.³² Even before this, one of his English nephews was urging him “to get permission from Prince Metternich to purchase an estate in Bohemia”.³³ Salomon took his advice in 1843, although it was in fact in neighbouring Moravia that he sought the Emperor’s permission to buy an estate for himself and his heirs.³⁴ Again, the petition was granted, despite the reservations of the Moravian estates. This, together with his property in Vienna, gave him real estate in the Empire worth two million gulden.³⁵ As he was the first to acknowledge, he had become “a privileged exception in the midst of my fellow believers”.³⁶

In this respect, the contrast between the Rothschild experiences in Germany and Britain could hardly be clearer. There was no practical obstacle to prevent Nathan Rothschild from buying real estate from the moment he arrived in England in 1798 or 1799—although it is worth noting that a statute barring Jews from doing so remained on the books until 1845. In this and other respects, Jews—even those born abroad—enjoyed greater practical economic freedom in England than in Germany in the early 1800s.³⁷ By 1804, when he was granted letters of denization, Nathan had a house in Downing Street, Ardwick, a prosperous area of the town, as well as his warehouse in Brown Street. Four years later, he owned a “large and commodious” warehouse adjoining a “spacious, modern and well built” town house at 25 Mosley Street, “the most elegant street in Manchester”.³⁸ In 1816, just five years after moving his business to London, he purchased what his sister Henrietta called “a beautiful country estate”—in fact an eight-acre property on the road between Newington and Stamford Hill in

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 230f.

³³ RAL, T23/227, XI/109/41/4/8, Anthony, Frankfurt, to Nat, Paris, 1st September 1841.

³⁴ Corti, pp. 232–234.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 251–252.

³⁶ Rudolf M. Heilbrunn, ‘Das Haus Rothschild: Wahrheit und Dichtung’, *Vortrag gehalten am 6. März 1963 im Frankfurter Verein für Geschichte und Landeskunde* (1963), p. 33.

³⁷ Jews could not formally obtain the freedom of the City of London, nor could they become members of the Stock Exchange, but this restriction did not in practice prevent them from doing business there. See *The Times*, 4th June 1879.

³⁸ Bill Williams, *The Making of Manchester Jewry, 1740-1875*, Manchester 1976, pp. 17ff.

the Parish of St John at Hackney.³⁹ Later would come the much grander house at Gunnersbury and the estates in Buckinghamshire like Mentmore, Tring and Waddesdon, where the Rothschilds built perhaps the most enduring monuments to their wealth.

On the question of property ownership, the verdict therefore seems unambiguous, although it should perhaps be noted that other German states were rather less resistant to Jewish land ownership than Frankfurt and Austria. On the other hand, when Salomon was made an honorary citizen of Vienna in 1843, his English-born nephew Anthony pointedly expressed the hope that it would “produce an effect in Old England”.⁴⁰ This brings us to some of the difficulties which the Rothschilds experienced in England.

Representative Assemblies

The role of Nathan and his sons—particularly Lionel—in the campaign to secure the admission of Jews to the British Parliament is well-known. Unfortunately, it is not easy to make a comparison with the experience of the Rothschilds who lived in Germany for the simple reason that prior to 1853 Jews did not even have the vote in Frankfurt elections, while in Vienna there was no elected assembly at all for much of the nineteenth century. True, the “Fundamental Laws of the German People” passed by the National Assembly were notionally in force in Frankfurt between 1848 and 1852, but during those years no member of the family seems to have contemplated seeking election anywhere. This is hardly surprising: the 1848 Revolution posed too serious a threat to the Rothschilds’ financial interests and stirred up too much antagonism against them from many of the more radical revolutionaries. In Britain, by contrast, the legitimacy of Parliament was not in question, and it was possible to campaign for modifications to the rules for election and admission to Parliament without aligning oneself with revolution.

Nevertheless, we need to ask why the British-based Rothschilds wished to be Members of Parliament. Nathan certainly did not, though in 1829—probably at the instigation of his wife⁴¹—he attempted unsuccessfully to persuade members of the Tory government to sponsor a measure doing away with the objectionable phrase “upon the true faith of a Christian” in

³⁹ Richard Davis, *The English Rothschilds*, London 1983, p. 36.

⁴⁰ RAL, XI/109/45a/1/17a, Anthony, Paris, to his brothers, n.d. [1843].

⁴¹ Lucien Wolf, ‘Rothschildiana’, in Cecil Roth (ed.), *Essays in Jewish History*, London 1934, p. 276.

the parliamentary oath of abjuration.⁴² But even if any of the early emancipation bills introduced to the Commons in the 1830s had been successful, it is inconceivable that a man as wedded to business as Nathan would have contemplated seeking election. What made his eldest son Lionel act differently? The strictly instrumental interpretation—that he wished to increase the family’s political influence in order to maximise their leverage over government—will certainly not do. True, many non-Jewish City families were represented in the House of Commons, most obviously the Barings. But by the 1840s the Rothschilds were firmly established as the pre-eminent private bank in the City and there was little reason to doubt that, on the rare occasions when the British government needed to borrow money on a large scale, it would turn to them. Moreover, once they did finally secure admission as MPs, the Rothschilds were far from energetic, as is documented by the parliamentary proceedings in Hansard.

It is rather more convincing to argue that Lionel wished to win hitherto denied privileges for Jews as a matter of principle. Certainly, James de Rothschild in Paris saw his nephew as fighting yet another symbolic battle on behalf of all Jews. Yet there is a need for qualification because in some ways what was really at issue was the Rothschilds’ status *within* the Anglo-Jewish community. It rankled that it was David Salomons (of the London and Westminster Bank) who, in 1835, won an early victory for the cause of Jewish political rights in England through his election as Sheriff of the City of London.⁴³ When Isaac Lyon Goldsmid became the first Jewish baronet in 1841, Anthony wrote from Paris that he “should have liked Sir Lionel de R. much better & he ought to have tried”.⁴⁴ The pressure reached a crescendo in 1845, when David Salomons scored another important point. Having won a contested City ballot for the Aldermanry of Portsoken, Salomons was confronted with the oath “upon a true faith of a Christian”; when he refused to take it, the Court of Aldermen declared his election void. Salomons complained to the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel, who instructed the Lord Chancellor to draft a Bill removing all remaining municipal disabilities as they affected Jews. The Bill was enacted on 31st July 1845.⁴⁵ Lionel had in fact played a part in securing the passage of the Act, having been one of the committee of five

⁴² M.C.N. Salbstein, *The Emancipation of the Jews in Britain. The Question of the Admission of Jews to Parliament, 1828-1860*, Rutherford, NJ 1982, esp. pp. 59–72, 87–89.

⁴³ Salbstein, pp. 115–125.

⁴⁴ RAL, XI/104/1/5/119, Anthony, Paris, to his brothers, London, 29th August 1841.

⁴⁵ Salbstein, pp. 132ff.

sent by the Board of Deputies to lobby Peel on the subject.⁴⁶ But Salomons got the glory; and this clearly irked his competitive relatives. "I shall be glad to see [you] L[or]d M[ayor] of London & M.P. for the city," wrote his brother Nat. "You ought to be canvassing for the E[ast] Ind[ia Company] direction, my dear Lionel."⁴⁷ No sooner had Peel's government collapsed than Nat was urging his brother to "stand or state officially you will stand for the City", suggesting that he "engage some clever fellow to come & read with you in the evenings for an hour or so, to be a little more at home on the different questions of political economy".⁴⁸ Still Lionel remained reluctant. While others wasted no time in entering the breach made by Salomons—among them his brother Mayer, who became High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire in February⁴⁹—Lionel did nothing. Even his final decision to stand as a Liberal candidate in the general election of 1847 was made only after hesitation⁵⁰ and probably owed something to pressure from Lord John Russell, who was himself one of the sitting City MPs and who badly needed Jewish votes to secure his own return. One contemporary at least thought Lionel would lose and that he had merely been drafted in by the Whigs to "pay the whole cost of their expenses".⁵¹

This is not the place to detail how Lionel confounded this expectation by coming third in the poll (and thus winning one of the constituency's four seats). To the rest of the family, this was the high-profile political victory they had long awaited. It was, wrote Nat, "one of the greatest triumphs for the Family, as well as of the greatest advantage to the poor Jews in Germany and all over the world".⁵² His wife called it "the beginning of a new era for the Jewish nation, having a most distinguished champion like you".⁵³ All this euphoria, of course, overlooked the fact that, if he wished to take his seat as an MP, Lionel would still have to swear the oath "upon the true faith of the Christian"—unless, of course, the government were to pass the measure which it had proved impossible to pass eleven years before, namely a Bill doing away with the oath. Russell

⁴⁶ RAL, XI/109/54a/2/118, Lionel to Anthony, 12th March 1845.

⁴⁷ RAL, XI/109/51b/2/49, Nat, Paris, to Lionel, London, n.d. [c. March 1845].

⁴⁸ RAL, XI/109/57/1/53, Nat, Wildbad, to his brothers, 8th July 1846; RAL, XI/109J/J/46B, James, Wildbad, to Lionel, London, 16th July 1846.

⁴⁹ Davis, pp. 94f.

⁵⁰ RAL, XI/109/61/2/119, Nat, Paris, to Lionel, London, c. May 1847; RAL, T/158, XI/109/63, same to same, n.d. [c. June 1847].

⁵¹ Davis, p. 72.

⁵² RAL, XI/109/62/1/2, Nat, Paris, to Lionel, London, n.d. [c. July 1847]; RAL XI/109/63/2/87, same to same, n.d. [c. July 1847].

⁵³ RAL, T7/129, Charlotte, Paris, to Lionel, London, n.d. [c. August 1847].

had already pledged to introduce one.⁵⁴ But it was not in fact until 1858, after a long and tortuous constitutional struggle, that opposition in the House of Lords was overcome and another “great triumph for the family” celebrated.⁵⁵ At the general election the following year, his brother Mayer joined him in the Commons (along with David Salomons); and in 1865 his son Natty was elected.⁵⁶ As Lionel’s wife Charlotte noted with glee, in a close vote (as in July 1864) a government could now be “saved by the Jews”.⁵⁷

Given the protracted nature of Lionel’s campaign for admission to the Commons, the contrast with the Rothschilds’ experience in Germany should not be exaggerated. In 1867, following Frankfurt’s annexation by Prussia, Carl’s eldest son Mayer Carl was persuaded to stand for election to the parliament of Bismarck’s new North German Confederation.⁵⁸ Like Lionel, he initially had reservations about entering parliamentary politics. “He will not consent,” reported Lionel’s son Natty; “he says one party here wish to get him out of the way so as to be able to transact all the business and that the others will not be thankful to him if he went to Berlin where he would have to give his advice about the German Currency and ever so many things in all of which the Prussian interest is opposed to that of Frankfurt.”⁵⁹ But, as Charlotte noted, “the town of Frankfurt will not hear of another representative: he will be elected in spite of all his protestations and he may see himself obliged to yield in the end”—a reflection of the popularity Mayer Carl had won by deflecting Prussian demands for a large war indemnity the year before.⁶⁰ To the English Rothschilds, Mayer Carl’s near-unanimous election was yet another cause for familial self-congratulation, the more piquant for having occurred in Frankfurt. What more symbolic triumph could be imagined than that a Rothschild should be “unanimously chosen by the Jew-hating city of Frankfurt to represent its

⁵⁴ Bodleian Library, MS. Eng. Lett. d.307, fol.16–18, Russell to Lionel, 24th April 1847.

⁵⁵ AN, 132 A Q 5902, James, Carlsbad, to Nat, Paris, 9th July 1858. See also the contribution by Reinhard Rürup to this volume.

⁵⁶ Davis, pp.100f.

⁵⁷ RAL, RFamC/21, Charlotte, London, to Leo, Lucerne, 8th July 1864.

⁵⁸ RAL, RFamC/21, Charlotte, London, to Leo, Cambridge, 27th August 1866; same to same, 1st December 1866; RAL, RFamC/3/42, Natty, Frankfurt, to Lionel and Charlotte, London, 3rd February 1867.

⁵⁹ RAL, RFamC/3/42, Natty, Frankfurt, to Lionel and Charlotte, London, 3rd February 1867.

⁶⁰ RAL, RFamC/21, Charlotte, London, to Leo, Cambridge, 3rd February 1867.

interests in the bosom of the German parliament”?’⁶¹ Yet it had only taken nine years longer to get a Rothschild into a German parliament than it had taken to get one into the House of Commons. And it should be reiterated that the theoretical possibility had existed ten years earlier than in England, even if no Rothschild took advantage of the political opportunities of 1848.

Higher Education

It is still harder to argue for a significant difference between Britain and Germany in the case of higher education. It may perhaps seem incongruous to regard this in the same light as the ownership of property and parliamentary representation, but in the nineteenth century *Bildung* was just as much a *desideratum* of bourgeois life. The Rothschilds, it should be stressed, did not *need* to go to university. None of Mayer Amschel’s sons did (though the youngest, James, had the benefit of a modern secondary education at the *Philanthropin* school in Frankfurt which his father helped to establish in 1804). What would now be called the primary and secondary education of their children and grandchildren was mainly entrusted to private tutors; languages were learnt by staying with relatives across the Channel; banking was learnt on the job.

Nonetheless, a number of Mayer Amschel’s grandsons and nearly all his great-grandsons were sent to university. Salomon’s son Anselm was the first: we know only that he studied “science” in Berlin.⁶² Carl sent his son Mayer Carl to Göttingen, where he studied law, and then to Berlin, where he attended the lectures of Savigny and Ranke.⁶³ In 1836, Nathan’s son Mayer spent several months studying at the University of Leipzig before going on to Heidelberg.⁶⁴ As this indicates, German universities had long been relatively open to Jewish students.

In England, however, matters were more difficult because of the religious tests at Oxford and Cambridge. Oxford was ruled out because ma-

⁶¹ RAL, RFamC/21, Charlotte, London, to Leo, Cambridge, 15th February 1867; same to same, 16th February 1867. Cf. *The Times*, 21st February 1867, p. 7.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 13th August 1874.

⁶³ Georg Heuberger, *The Rothschilds: A European Family*, Catalogue of the exhibition ‘The Rothschilds —A European Family’ in the Jewish Museum of the City of Frankfurt am Main, 11th October 1994—27th February 1995, Sigmaringen 1994, p. 179.

⁶⁴ RAL, T23/77, XI/109/34/1/3, Dr Schlemmer, Leipzig, to Nat, Paris, 15th May 1836.

triculation was conditional upon subscription to the Thirty-Nine Articles.⁶⁵ In Cambridge, Nonconformists and Jews could become members of the university (though they could not be awarded degrees, prior to 1856, scholarships or fellowships), but they had to be prepared to fulfil the obligation to attend Anglican services in their college chapels. Thus, when Mayer went up to Cambridge in 1837, he began at Magdalene but had to move to the larger and laxer Trinity when the college proved punctilious about his attendance at chapel. When Arthur Cohen, a cousin on his mother's side, resolved to read mathematics at Cambridge in the autumn of 1849, the family clearly assumed a similar arrangement would be possible. Through J. Abel Smith, one of Lionel's most active political supporters, Mayer sought to persuade the Master of Christ's to bend the chapel rules for Cohen's sake, effectively keeping his religion secret. Mayer even gave an assurance "that Mr Cohen is ready to attend divine service in the college chapel". The Master, however, was unpersuaded.⁶⁶ To Mayer, this suggested that a precedent might be set "for pointed exclusion of the members of one religious community from the benefits of a Cambridge University education". He and Moses Montefiore therefore turned to Prince Albert—then Chancellor of the University—asking him to put Cohen's case to the master of Magdalene, who was also Dean of Windsor.⁶⁷ Royal pressure succeeded where Rothschild pressure had failed. Cohen was duly admitted on the basis of a deal with the Dean who, as Cohen was able to report, "inform[ed] me that on Wednesday and Friday the Chapel only lasts 10 minutes [and] advised me to attend on these days instead of the other days, and at the same time communicated to me that my attendance on Sacrament Sundays would not be required".⁶⁸

Similar arrangements had to be negotiated at Trinity when the next generation of Rothschild men went up, beginning with Natty in 1859. By this time, the acts of 1854 and 1856 meant that Jews were now able to take degrees (except in theology). But the problem of religion persisted at the college level. Although Natty's tutor Joseph Lightfoot (who became Hulsean Professor of Divinity in 1861) "promised to do all he can about

⁶⁵ Hannah also found the atmosphere less tolerant when she went there in 1841: RAL, RFamC/1/14, Hannah, Oxford, to her daughter-in-law Charlotte, London, 22nd November 1841.

⁶⁶ RAL, XI/109/73/1, Cartmell to Smith, 14th October 1849.

⁶⁷ RA F35A/47, Mayer, London, to Prince Albert, 22nd November 1849.

⁶⁸ RAL, XI/109/73/1, Arthur Cohen, Magdalene College, to Mayer, 21st November 1849. Cf. Todd M. Endelman, *Radical Assimilation in English Jewish History, 1656-1945*, Bloomington-Indianapolis, p. 78.

Chapel” the Master, William Whewell, remained “the stumbling block in the way of reform”.⁶⁹ In 1862, as Natty reported to his parents, “the Trinity Dons ... made themselves very unpopular by threatening to gate everyone who refuses to take the sacrament in Chapel; the consequence of this new rule is that a very large number absented themselves from chapel today, and will get into trouble for breaking an important college rule”.⁷⁰ It is worth emphasising the implicit distinction being drawn here: plainly, the Rothschilds regarded passive but unbelieving attendance at chapel as tolerable, whereas taking the sacrament was not, just as they were not prepared to swear an oath “on the true faith of a Christian”.

Nor was attendance at chapel the only compromise they had to make at Cambridge. The second year examination known as the “Little Go” required a detailed knowledge of William Paley’s *Evidences of Christianity*. An irate letter from Charlotte to Leo makes it clear how much of an obstacle this presented, but also shows that he was expected to overcome it:

“[Y]our unaccountable mistake at the examination vexed and annoyed me greatly ... [A] faith, which though not your own, and indeed unknown to you, ought nevertheless to be held in respect, as the worship of the Almighty by millions of human beings ... A young man, who appears in the Senate-house, and cannot object to be examined in the evidences of Christianity, ought to make himself acquainted with the subject ... I really thought you would have had the good, natural, common sense to ask your tutors for a sketch, an outline, if not a history of the Christian faith.”⁷¹

For his part Leo was baffled by “the mysteries of theology and ... various doxies”. When he dined with a group of disputatious dons one night he felt “so mystified that I did not dare open my lips”.⁷²

The Rothschild presence at Cambridge was therefore a qualified victory: it was not in fact until 1871 that the religious tests were finally abolished at the ancient universities. With respect to higher education, then, it was clearly Germany which was the more congenial *milieu*. If any member of the family experienced difficulty at a German university on account of his religion, I have found no reference to it.

⁶⁹ RAL, RFamC/3/62, Natty, Cambridge, to his parents, London, n.d. [c. 1860].

⁷⁰ RAL, RFamC/3/83, Natty, Cambridge, to his parents, London, 16th February 1862.

⁷¹ RAL, RFamC/21, Charlotte, London, to Leo, Cambridge, 27th October 1864.

⁷² Endelman, p. 78.

Aristocratic Status

If it was easier for a Rothschild to go to university in Germany, it was even easier for him to acquire noble status, for the Rothschilds were ennobled by the Emperor Francis II as early as 1817, as a reward for their role in arranging British subsidies and French reparations payments to Austria.⁷³ The significance of this should not be exaggerated, of course. The Rothschilds were not the first Jews to be elevated in this way: six other families had been ennobled (though all had converted to Christianity by 1848).⁷⁴ Like the Austrian currency, the Austrian nobility had been debased compared with its more exclusive British counterpart. On the other hand, ennoblement gave the brothers three valuable assets: the right to the prefix “von” (“de” in France and England); a coat of arms (albeit not quite the grandiose design they had originally hoped for); and, in 1822, the title “Baron”.⁷⁵

It has often been wondered why, of all the five brothers, only Nathan made no use of these titles. The 1816 ennoblement patents conspicuously omitted Nathan, and the approved coat of arms showed four arrows instead of five. Furthermore, unlike his brothers and eldest son, he never used the title “Baron”.⁷⁶ Was this a matter of *milieu*—a desire not to be too publicly associated with reactionary Austria? Certainly his brother Amschel thought that Nathan simply “did not want” to be ennobled,⁷⁷ and when Nathan declined a Prussian decoration in 1818, he suggested that it be given to Salomon instead because “here in London I have no use for such a thing” whereas “my brother ... loves ribbons and is a Baron who intends to live in Paris, where one can decorate oneself with such things”.⁷⁸ But it has been argued that there is a more practical explanation: when Nathan applied to the Royal College of Arms for registration of the

⁷³ RAL, T30, XI/109/2/2/256, Carl, Kassel, to Amschel, Frankfurt, 30th December 1815; RAL, XI/82/9/1/59, Amschel to James, Paris, 14th March 1816. Details in Corti, pp. 192–198.

⁷⁴ William O. McCagg, Jr., *Jewish Nobles and Geniuses in Modern Hungary*, New York 1972, p. 58, note.

⁷⁵ Corti, pp. 198–201, 302f. Cf. RAL, T61/100/2, XI/109/6, Carl, Frankfurt, to Salomon and Nathan, London, 30th March 1817; RAL, T61/13/2, XI/109/6, Amschel, Frankfurt, to Nathan and Salomon, 31st March 1817; RAL, T27/142, Carl to his brothers, 13th April 1817; RAL, XI/82/9/1/100, Amschel to James, Paris, 30th April 1817; RAL, T62/169/9, XI/109/7, Carl, Berlin, to Amschel, 15th August 1817.

⁷⁶ Corti, pp. 198, 404; *The Times*, 4th August 1836.

⁷⁷ RAL, T33/299/2, XI/109/5B, Amschel, Frankfurt, to Salomon, 3rd November 1816.

⁷⁸ Heuberger, *The Rothschilds*, p. 75.

Austrian title in 1825 he was turned down—probably because he had only received his own royal letters patent of denization eight years before.⁷⁹ His sons, who had been born in England, did not hesitate to use both the prefix “de” and the title “Baron” as soon as permission was granted. The nearest British equivalent to an Austrian title “Baron”, a baronetcy, was not offered to a Rothschild until 1846, when Lionel was sounded out on the subject by Lord John Russell. Interestingly, he refused.⁸⁰ His stated reason for doing so was revealing: he was reluctant to accept an honour which had already been bestowed on two other Jews, and would be content with nothing less than a peerage (“You have nothing higher to offer me?” Prince Albert reported him as saying).⁸¹ In the end, it was his younger brother who became Sir Anthony.⁸²

The Rothschilds also secured admission to parliamentary upper houses in German states earlier than in Britain. In 1861, Salomon’s son Anselm was given a seat in the *Reichsrat* by the Emperor Franz Joseph.⁸³ Six years later, Bismarck elevated Mayer Carl to the Prussian Upper House.⁸⁴ In contrast, it was not until 1885 that Lionel’s son Natty was made a British peer, for, despite the fact that it became legally possible for a Jew to become a peer in 1866 (when the Christological oath ceased to be obligatory in the Lords), Queen Victoria proved strongly resistant to the idea in practice.

That she was reluctant to give “a title and mark of [her] approbation to a Jew” had been made clear to the Rothschilds as early as 1867 by Disraeli,⁸⁵ although it should be emphasised that Lionel himself had no desire to accept a peerage from the Conservative leader. “Our friend [Charles Villiers, the Liberal MP for Wolverhampton] is famously intrigued about the paragraph in the papers respecting my being raised to the Peerage,” he noted in a letter to his wife in March 1868:

“Just the same as everything else, the Liberals would like to carry out everything themselves. ... He could not understand nor could they at Lady P[almerston’s] that I won’t accept anything from the present Government. They all fancy Dis is under great

⁷⁹ Simone Mace, ‘From Frankfurt Jew to Lord Rothschild. The Ascent of the English Rothschilds to the Nobility’, in Heuberger (ed.), *The Rothschilds*, pp. 181–182.

⁸⁰ RA Queen Victoria’s Journal, 14th November 1846.

⁸¹ RA Y148/6, Prince Albert, Osborne, to Stockmar, 3rd December 1846; RAL, RFamC/1/99, Hannah, Frankfurt, to Lionel, London, n.d. [c. October 1846].

⁸² *The Times*, 19th December 1846.

⁸³ McCagg, p. 124.

⁸⁴ RAL, T10/49, Alphonse, Paris, to his cousins, London, 29th November 1867.

⁸⁵ RAL, RFamC/21, Charlotte, London, to Leo and Leonora, Dieppe, 5th August 1867.

obligations to us—so the best thing is to hold my tongue and let them think what they like—it is only amusing to hear all their nonsense.”⁸⁶

This was prescient, for no sooner had Gladstone become Prime Minister than he proposed Lionel as one of eleven new Liberal peers he wished the Queen to create. The idea, as expressed by Earl Granville, the Liberal leader in the Lords, was that the Rothschilds now represented “a class whose influence is great by their wealth, their intelligence, their literary connections, and their numerous seats in the House of Commons. It may be wise to attach them to the Aristocracy rather than to drive them into the democratic camp”.⁸⁷ But the Queen would have none of it.⁸⁸ Gladstone was irked at what seemed to him an inconsistency, and refused to find an alternative (Christian) “commercial man”: “The merit of Rothschild is that his position is well defined and separated,” he argued with characteristic intellectual rigour. “Her argument is null and void. If it be sound, she has been wrong in consenting to emancipate the Jews.” Lionel, he argued, stood “so much better for the promotion, than anyone whom we can put in his place”. To exclude him would be to revive through the royal prerogative a barrier which had been removed by parliament and, of course, the crown. But Granville advised Gladstone not to force the issue: “She will yield, but reluctantly, and there will be criticism enough reaching Her, to confirm her in her opinion that she was a better judge than her Govt, and make her more difficult on another occasion.” Gladstone explored every available option—giving Lionel an Irish peerage, for example—but was eventually forced to back down.⁸⁹ He sought to revive the idea again in 1873, but was again overruled. As a result, Lionel died a commoner.

Was Queen Victoria an antisemite?⁹⁰ The charge seems implausible in view of her affection for Disraeli, who made so much of his Jewish origins. True, the Queen admitted to a “feeling of which she cannot divest

⁸⁶ RAL, RFamC/4/93, Lionel, London, to Charlotte, Paris, 9th March 1868.

⁸⁷ RA R51/8, Lord Granville to Queen Victoria, 23rd August 1869. Cf. RA R51/4, Gladstone to Queen Victoria, 11th August 1869; RA R51/19, same to same, 28th October 1869.

⁸⁸ RA R51/5, Maj. Gen. Sir T[homas] M[yddleton] Biddulph to Gladstone, 15th August 1869; RA R51/7, Queen Victoria, Balmoral, to Granville, 22nd August 1869; RA R51/11, Queen Victoria to Lord Granville, 24th August 1869; RA R51/10, Biddulph to Queen Victoria, 24th August 1869.

⁸⁹ Agatha Ramm (ed.), *The Political Correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville, 1868-1876*, Camden 3rd Series (1952), vol. LXXXI, pp. 47–52, 59, 67, 70.

⁹⁰ See, for example, Endelman, p. 101.

herself, against making a Person of the Jewish religion, a Peer", but the principal stated reason for her refusal was a more general distaste for finance:

"She cannot think that one who owes his great wealth to contracts with Foreign Govts. for loans, or to successful speculations on the Stock Exchange, can fairly claim a British peerage. However high Sir [*sic*] L. Rothschild may stand personally in Public estimation, this seems to her not the less a species of gambling, because it is on a gigantic scale—and far removed from that legitimate trading which she delights to honour, in which men have raised themselves by patient industry and unswerving probity to positions of wealth and influence."⁹¹

This, however, can be dismissed as mere excuse-making, as at this date there were already three peers whose fortunes stemmed from banking. A more plausible reason for her opposition can be inferred from Granville's allusion to "the present unfortunate antagonism between the Lords and the Commons". The Lords had been the principal source of opposition to the admission of Jews into Parliament and the Queen may have feared that making Lionel a peer would lead to a repeat of the constitutional wrangles of the 1850s. Interestingly, Gladstone had deliberately raised the possibility of a "Jew peer" at the same time as that of a Roman Catholic peer (in the person of Sir John Acton).⁹² As Granville put it, when the issue resurfaced in 1873, the idea of a Rothschild peerage was intended to "be a complement to that of the Catholic".⁹³ Much more was at stake here than a simple reward to a loyal Liberal MP for services rendered.

It is worth noting that all this went on without any encouragement from the Rothschilds themselves. As we have seen, Lionel had earlier turned down the offer of a baronetcy as beneath his dignity, but by the 1860s he was evidently unwilling to chase after a peerage. "Rothschild is one of the best I know," noted Gladstone as he broached the issue at Balmoral in 1873, "and if I could but get from him a Mem[orandum] of certain services of his father as to the money during the war I think it w[oul]d carry the case over all difficulty. But though I have begged & they have promised for about 4 years, I have never been able to get this in an

⁹¹ RA R51/21, Queen Victoria to Gladstone, 1st November 1869. Cf. RA Queen Victoria's Journal, 31st October 1869.

⁹² Dermot Quinn, *Patronage and Piety. The Politics of English Roman Catholicism, 1850-1900*, Basingstoke 1993, pp. 22, 27; E.A. Smith, *The House of Lords in British Politics and Society, 1815-1911*, London 1992, pp. 52, 124.

⁹³ Ramm (ed.), *Political Correspondence of Gladstone and Granville*, vol. LXXXII, p. 403. See also p. 289.

available form".⁹⁴ Nor can it be said that Lionel's son set out to acquire a peerage for himself after his father's death. On the contrary, his politics were increasingly at odds with those of Gladstone (so much so that Alphonse assumed it was Salisbury who had secured him the peerage in 1885).

What happened between 1873 and 1885 to "overcome the strong scruples" in the Queen's mind? As far as Gladstone's private secretary Edward Hamilton was concerned, the significance of a Rothschild peerage had not changed: "[I]t removes the last remnant of religious disqualifications." Natty himself echoed the sentiment when he thanked "the greatest champion of civil and religious liberty" for "bestow[ing] for the first time a peerage on a member of our faith";⁹⁵ and he doubtless relished re-enacting his father's triumph in the Commons when, on 9th July 1885, he was sworn in with his hat on his head and his hand on a Hebrew Old Testament. Gladstone's earlier allusion to "services" may help to explain why, when the question of a Rothschild peerage was raised again in the 1880s, the Queen grumbled, but gave way.⁹⁶ Although Gladstone cited Nathan's role in the Napoleonic wars, the Rothschilds' more recent involvement in British imperial finance can really be dated from Disraeli's period in office in the mid-1870s. It seems plausible that this did not go unnoticed by the Queen—though it is too much to portray the peerage as a direct reward for financial services rendered in Egypt.⁹⁷ Elevating Natty to the Lords may even have been Gladstone's attempt to "kick upstairs" an increasingly troublesome backbench critic of his foreign policy.

The Rothschild peerage also needs to be seen as part of a more general social sea-change. The aim, as Edward Hamilton put it, was "to give an addition to commercial strength to the House of Lords", and Natty's elevation coincided with Edward Baring's becoming Lord Revelstoke. As Youssef Cassis has shown, a high percentage of City bankers were ennobled in the two and a half decades before the First World War and nearly a fifth of them acquired their peerages in the period after 1890, while most of the inherited peerages had only been created in the previous decade. The creations of 1885 were thus part of a veritable boom in City peerages. Moreover, Natty was soon joined in the Lords by other Jews: Lord Wand-

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 401.

⁹⁵ BL, Add MS Gladstone 44491 f. 189, Natty to Gladstone, 25th June 1885.

⁹⁶ RA C36/126, Gladstone to Queen Victoria, 15th June 1885; RA Add. A/12/1154, Queen Victoria to Sir Henry [Ponsonby], 17th June 1885. Victoria may also simply have liked the look of the "handsome" Natty: RA Queen Victoria's Journal, 4th May 1881.

⁹⁷ Corti, pp. 450f.

sworth (Sydney James Stern), Lord Swaythling (Samuel Montagu) and Lord Pirbright (Henry de Worms, himself a descendant of Mayer Am-schel's eldest daughter).⁹⁸

This did not mean that Natty's elevation secured the "universal welcome" predicted by Gladstone;⁹⁹ as Hamilton observed, some people "turn[ed] up their noses at the Rothschild peerage". For the Rothschilds, however, it was a fresh opportunity to express familial pride. Unlike most other business peers, and to the delight of his relations, Natty retained his surname by taking the title of Baron Rothschild of Tring.¹⁰⁰ The conclusion need not be laboured: clearly it was much harder for a Rothschild to become a British baron than to become an Austrian one.

Hoffähigkeit

There is a paradox which needs to be explained, however. Although it proved relatively easy to acquire noble status on the continent, actual access to the royal court (*Hoffähigkeit*) was easier to obtain in Britain. This strictly social access needs to be distinguished from the kind of access to princes which the Rothschilds had from the early 1800s when matters of royal finance or politics were under discussion: in the former case, meetings were (in a nineteenth-century sense) public, whereas business meetings were not.

Having been involved in the private finances of the English royal family since as early as 1805, the Rothschilds were not considered presentable until 1856, when Queen Victoria noticed the "extremely handsome" looks of one of Lionel's daughters (probably Leonora) at a royal drawing-room.¹⁰¹ True, there continued to be courtiers who were hostile towards the Rothschilds. At the time of the Prince of Wales's marriage, Charlotte complained about the family's exclusion from the festivities, blaming Lord Sydney's influence.¹⁰² Another enemy at court was Lord Spencer, who advised that the Prince and Princess should not

⁹⁸ Harold Pollins, *Economic History of the Jews in England*, East Brunswick, NJ 1982, p. 168.

⁹⁹ H.G.C. Matthew (ed.), *The Gladstone Diaries with Cabinet Minutes and Prime Ministerial Correspondence*, Oxford 1968–1994, vol. XI, p. 361.

¹⁰⁰ RAL, T13/184, Alphonse, Paris, to his cousins, London, 25th June 1885; RAL, T13/185, same to same, 26th June 1885; RAL, T13/186, 27th June 1885.

¹⁰¹ RA, Queen Victoria's Journal, 10th April 1856.

¹⁰² RAL, RFamC/21, Charlotte, London, to Leo, Cambridge, 6th May 1864.

attend a Rothschild ball as “the Prince ought only to visit those of undoubted position in Society”.¹⁰³ But the Prince of Wales himself clearly resisted such pressures. When Natty and Alfred attended a royal levee in 1865, Charlotte was able to report triumphantly

“the Prince was gracious, as usual, smiled and shook hands—but H.R.H. has accustomed them to much kindness and cordiality; what amused them, however, was the rebuke he gave to Lord Sydney, who fine gentleman and jew-hater as he is, announced Natty as Monsieur “Roshil”—“Mr. de Rothschild” was the correction he received from royal lips.”¹⁰⁴

In fact, the real social breakthrough had come at Cambridge in 1861, when Natty was introduced to the Prince by the Duke of St Albans. A common enthusiasm for hunting in turn led to introductions for Alfred and Leo.¹⁰⁵ Horse racing played a similar role: Mayer was “delighted” when the Prince “[partook] of his cake, Mayonnaise and champagne” at the Derby in 1864 and again in 1866.¹⁰⁶ Soon members of the family were regularly being invited to court functions or to aristocratic gatherings at which royalty was also present. In turn they entertained members of the royal family, principally—though not exclusively—the Prince of Wales.¹⁰⁷ In March 1868 he went stag-hunting with Mayer at Mentmore, the Rothschild residence; two months later he dined at Anthony’s;¹⁰⁸ and in 1876 he dined with Disraeli at Ferdinand’s.¹⁰⁹ He also attended Hannah’s wedding to Rosebery in 1878, along with his uncle, the Duke of Cambridge, and Leo’s wedding to Marie Perugia in 1881.¹¹⁰ “Prince Hal” (as Disraeli called him) was also entertained in the more rakish style that he preferred: Alfred, for example, could be relied on to produce popular musical stars like Adelina Patti and the dancer Sarah Bernhardt at his dinners. His private finances

¹⁰³ Anthony Allfrey, *Edward VII and his Jewish Court*, London 1991, p. 31.

¹⁰⁴ RAL, RFamC/21, Charlotte, London, to Leo, Cambridge, 8th March 1865.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 9th May 1864; 30th May 1864.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 25th May 1864; 17th May 1866.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 19th May 1865.

¹⁰⁸ RAL, RFamC/4/92, Lionel, London, to Charlotte, Paris, 6th March 1868; RAL, RFamC/3/50, Natty, London, to Charlotte, 6th March 1868; RAL, T10/86, Alphonse, Paris, to his cousins, London, 5th April 1868. See also RAL, T10/132, Mayer Carl, Berlin, to his cousins and nephews, London, 24th May 1868; RA Add. A12/13, Maj. Gen. Hon. A.E. Hardinge, Marlborough Club, to Sir Henry Frederick Ponsonby, 5th June 1871.

¹⁰⁹ W.F. Monypenny and G.E. Buckle, *The Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield*, London 1910–1920, vol. VI, p. 98.

¹¹⁰ Allfrey, pp. 35, 53.

were also looked after by the family. All this gradually wore down the elderly Victoria's resistance. Members of the Rothschild family were involved in the various commemorations of Victoria's Jubilee,¹¹¹ and in May 1890 the Queen paid a visit to Ferdinand's house at Waddesdon.¹¹² Indeed, the effete "Ferdy" became something of a royal favourite in his later years.¹¹³ The Queen also visited his sister Alice's villa at Grasse.¹¹⁴ Such contacts did not cease on Edward VII's accession to the throne; rather the reverse.¹¹⁵ Members of the Rothschild family were an integral part of Edward VII's cosmopolitan social circle.¹¹⁶

It took longer to achieve *Hoffähigkeit* on the other side of the Channel: not much longer in Prussia, but significantly longer in Austria. We know that Mayer Carl was invited to some royal functions in 1867.¹¹⁷ In March 1869, he had "a long chat with the crown Prince who takes great interest in everything and is very well informed", followed by an audience with the Queen.¹¹⁸ A year later, he was invited to "a small party" by "their majesties" to meet the Tsar's brother, Grand Duke Michael; and attended a theatrical performance at the palace that April.¹¹⁹ He and his wife's work in establishing a hospital for the war-wounded in Frankfurt in 1870–1871 undoubtedly earned the Rothschilds royal favour.¹²⁰ A still closer relationship

¹¹¹ G.E. Buckle (ed.), *The Letters of Queen Victoria, 3rd Series*, London 1932, vol. III, pp. 123, 183; Jeffrey L. Lant, *Insubstantial Pageant. Ceremony and Confusion at Queen Victoria's Court*, New York 1980, p. 135.

¹¹² RA Queen Victoria's Journal, 14th May 1890; RAL, T15/36, Alphonse, Paris, to his cousins, London, 14th May 1890; RA L11/25e, Ferdinand, Waddesdon, to Sir Henry [Ponsonby], 16th May 1890.

¹¹³ See e.g., RA F40/108, Prince of Wales to Queen Victoria [telegram], 18th December 1898.

¹¹⁴ RA Queen Victoria's Journal, 26th March 1891; 28th March 1891; 31st March 1891; 8th April 1891; 14th April 1891; 17th April 1891; 22nd April 1891.

¹¹⁵ RAL, XI/130A/0, Natty, London, to his cousins, Paris, 9th July 1906; RAL, XI/130A/1, same to same, 4th March 1907; 7th May 1907.

¹¹⁶ Allfrey.

¹¹⁷ RAL XI/109/94/2, Mayer Carl, Berlin, to his cousins and nephews, London, 30th April 1868. See also RAL XI/109/101/2, same to same, 30th March 1870.

¹¹⁸ RAL XI/109/97/1, Mayer Carl, Berlin, to his cousins and nephews, London, 14th March 1869.

¹¹⁹ RAL XI/109/101/2, Mayer Carl, Berlin, to his cousins and nephews, London, 7th March 1870; same to same, 8th March 1870; 1st April 1870.

¹²⁰ RAL XI/109/107/1, Mayer Carl, Berlin, to his cousins and nephews, London, 17th December 1871; same to same, 19th December 1871; 3rd February 1872; 8th March 1872; RAL XI/109/108/1, 2nd May 1872.

later developed between Wilhelm Carl's daughter, Hannah Mathilde, and Victoria, the widow of Kaiser Friedrich.¹²¹

In Austria, however, the right to be presented at court did not come until 1887, when Salomon Albert and his wife were formally declared *hof-fähig*. As *The Times* reported, this was "the first time that such a privilege has been conceded in Austria to persons of the Jewish religion, and the event is causing a sensation in society".¹²² It was only after this that members of the Rothschild family and members of the Austrian family began to mix socially in Austria itself.¹²³ Nathaniel in particular was accepted into Viennese aristocratic society in a way which had entirely eluded his father and grandfather. The Empress Elisabeth became friendly with Adolph's widow Julie; indeed, she was visiting the Rothschild house at Pregny in Switzerland when she was murdered by an Italian anarchist in September 1898. When Francis Joseph celebrated his diamond jubilee in 1908 with a grand reception, Salomon Albert was there—one of the few who attended in civilian dress.¹²⁴

The difference between the three courts is probably best explained by the Saxe-Coburg connection, which was absent in Vienna. Besides a fondness for inter-marriage, the two families had more in common than might be imagined: relatively obscure south German origins and a strong sense of dynastic unity and purpose. Georges Dairnvaell was one of the Rothschilds' most violent critics in the 1840s, but he had a point when he juxtaposed the two "dynasties": at times, they had an almost symbiotic relationship. Saxe-Coburgs like Leopold, King of the Belgians, and his nephew Prince Albert were not only relatively liberal in their attitudes towards Jews but also had personal financial links to the Rothschilds, as did other Saxe-Coburgs. To give just one example, it seems very likely that, during the battle over Lionel's admission to parliament, he and his brothers offered Albert financial support for his pet project, the Great Exhibition, in the hope of securing the votes of "the Court party" in the House of Lords.¹²⁵ Like father, like son: in 1874, Victoria was alarmed to hear of "a large sum owing to Sir A. de Rothschild" by the Prince of

¹²¹ Sally Bodenheimer Collection, AR 7169, 47, draft letter of condolence to Empress Frederick, n.d. [1888]. Leo Baeck Institute Archives, New York.

¹²² *The Times*, 27th December 1887, p. 3.

¹²³ The Empress Elisabeth paid a visit to Ferdinand and Alice at Waddesdon in 1876, riding and dining with them: RAL, RFamC/21, Charlotte, London, to Leo, Paris, 18th March 1876; same to same, 21st March 1876. Ferdinand also held a ball in honour of Crown Prince Rudolf when he visited London two years later.

¹²⁴ Charles S. Maier, *The Persistence of the Old Regime*, p. 142.

¹²⁵ The evidence is presented in Ferguson, chapter 17.

Wales.¹²⁶ The Saxe-Coburgs were influential not only in England but also, following the marriage of Victoria and Albert's daughter to the Prussian Crown Prince, in Prussia too (though it was an influence Bismarck did his utmost to counter). Until the late 1880s, in contrast, the Habsburgs had little or no direct contact with the family, which generally dealt only with ministers. Although the Rothschilds were vital to Habsburg public finance, they were never involved in the royal family's private affairs as they were in Britain.

However, it would be quite wrong to portray the Rothschilds as in any way in awe of royalty. Natty, for example, initially found the Prince of Wales's conversation "commonplace and very slow". "He is excessively fond of the chase," he told his parents, "very fond of riddles and strong cigars and will I suppose eventually settle down into a well-disciplined German Prince with all the narrow views of his father's family". Five years later, he had not changed his view, commenting dryly "that war and peace, and the state of politics do not occupy H.R.H. half so much as his amusements".¹²⁷ His mother shared these sentiments. Though she thought the future king "most enchantingly agreeable" with "manners ... not to be surpassed anywhere", she felt it was "to be deplored that he does not give a portion of his time to serious pursuits, nor any of his friendship or society to distinguished men in politics, art, science or literature". He had, she concluded (after he had walked out of the Commons gallery during a speech by Gladstone), "no taste for serious subjects".¹²⁸ When the Prince won "a large stake" on a Rothschild horse, Charlotte was tight-lipped: "[O]f course, I would infinitely rather he won than lost upon a Rothschild horse—but the future King of England should not go about betting."¹²⁹ Nor was it only the Prince of Wales who came in for criticism. When Lady Alice Peel lent her Queen Victoria's privately printed Highland album, Charlotte was scathing¹³⁰ and she was scandalised by the Queen's notorious affection for the Balmoral ghillie John Brown.¹³¹

The key to the Rothschild attitude was that, as the nearest thing the Jews of Europe had to a royal family, they considered themselves the near

¹²⁶ Roger Fulford (ed.), *Darling Child. Private correspondence of Queen Victoria and the German Crown Princess, 1871-1878*, London, p. 147.

¹²⁷ RAL, RFamC/3/11, Natty, Cambridge, to his parents, London, n.d. [1861]; RAL, RFamC/21, Charlotte, London, to Leo, Cambridge, 1st August 1866.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, n.d. [c. May 1866]; 1st May 1866.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 1st June 1866.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.* 26th January 1867; 28th January 1867.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 1st October 1866; Charlotte, London, to Leo and Leonora, 29th June 1867; same to same, 8th August 1867; 14th August 1867.

equals of royalty. When Charlotte heard that Prince Alfred was to visit Bonn, where Salomon Albert was studying, she sought to arrange a meeting between “the gifted scion of the Caucasian royal family ... and the clever scion of the royal family of England”.¹³² For other Jews, she noted a few weeks later, “un marriage d’ambition” meant a marriage to “a Rothschild or a Koh-i-Noor [i.e., a Cohen] ... since there are no Jewish Queens and Empresses in the 19th century”.¹³³ In a similar vein, Juliana and Hannah were “a queen and a Princess of Israel and of Mentmore”.¹³⁴ Such notions explain the Rothschilds’ striking tendency to compete with the royal family. Typically, Natty noted with satisfaction the superiority of his own hunter to the Prince’s when they hunted together at Cambridge.¹³⁵ Likewise, when Ferdinand went to Buckingham Palace, “he thought and said that no lady was to be compared to his wife”—and no equipage to the one that conveyed them there; and when an especially lavish supper was provided at Stafford House, it was “not royal but Rothschildian”.¹³⁶ Invited to dine at Buckingham Palace, Mayer set out resolved “to find fault with every thing”.¹³⁷ On at least one occasion, his sister-in-law Charlotte preferred a minor family engagement to a royal ball and sought to avoid attending royal drawing-rooms, which she found “tiring and tedious in the superlative degree”.¹³⁸ And when the Empress Elisabeth visited England in 1876, Charlotte was adamant that she had enjoyed her reception more at Waddesdon than at Windsor.¹³⁹ Contemporaries often used the phrase “kings of the Jews” when they talked about the Rothschilds: the evidence of the family’s own correspondence suggests it was not an unwelcome compliment.

¹³² RAL, RFamC/21, Charlotte, London, to Leo, Cambridge, 29th October 1864. Charlotte’s frequent use of the word “Caucasian” to mean “Jewish” is an unusual feature of her correspondence. The word was coined by the eighteenth-century anatomist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach to describe one of five racial types he discerned on the basis of measuring skull shapes; unlike Charlotte, he clearly intended the category to include all European and Middle Eastern peoples.

¹³³ RAL, RFamC/21, Charlotte, London, to Leo, Cambridge, 13th December 1864.

¹³⁴ RAL, RFamC/21, Charlotte, London, to Leo, Baden, 4th September 1871.

¹³⁵ RAL, RFamC/3/8, Natty, Cambridge, to his parents, London, n.d. [December 1861]; RAL, RFamC/3/9, same to same, 16th December 1861.

¹³⁶ RAL, RFamC/21, Charlotte, London, to Leo, Cambridge, 16th March 1866; same to same, 25th April 1866.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 3rd June 1867.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 19th May 1865.

¹³⁹ RAL, RFamC/21, Charlotte, London, to Leo, Paris, 21st March 1876.

The evidence presented here necessarily gives a far from complete picture of the historical experience of the Rothschilds in Britain and Germany. However, by considering these five *desiderata* which we know the family coveted and for which they could more than afford to pay, it is possible to conclude that the differences between Britain and the German lands were smaller than might be imagined. Indeed, they were matters of timing, with seldom more than twenty years' difference, and it was not always in Britain that the Rothschilds succeeded first. A Rothschild owned real estate around seven years earlier in England than in Germany; was elected to a parliament nine years earlier; and was admitted to court eleven years earlier. But admission to university came around seven years later in England than in Germany; and admission to the aristocracy some sixty-three years later. By the 1880s then, if not before, the differences between Britain and Germany (if not Austria) had become of minimal importance for the Rothschilds. There was nothing they could do or have in Britain which they could not do or have in Germany. This helps explain why it was that Lionel's sons Natty and Alfred became such passionate proponents of an Anglo-German diplomatic *entente* in the period before and after the turn of the century.

In 1912, the first Lord Rothschild published a heartfelt essay in a collection entitled *England and Germany* which reveals his enduring Germanophilia: "What have we ... not got in common with Germany?" he asked:

"Nothing perhaps except their army and our navy. But a combination of the most powerful military nation with the most powerful naval nation ought to be such as to command the respect of the whole world, and ensure universal peace."¹⁴⁰

With the benefit of hindsight, of course, this seems a forlorn, almost pathetic hope. Yet the question he posed was significant. What did Britain and Germany, by 1912, not have in common? From the vantage point of Jewish quasi-royalty the answer was: little. That only changed after 1918—perhaps only after 1933—for reasons which were barely foreseeable in Lord Rothschild's lifetime.

¹⁴⁰ Elie Halévy, *The Rule of Democracy*, London 1952, p. 666, note.

WOLFGANG J. MOMMSEN

The Social Acceptability of Jews in Germany, Austria and Great Britain: A Comment on Niall Ferguson

The status of the Rothschild banking family in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Europe was certainly exceptional. The family stood at the very pinnacle not only of the Jewish community in Europe but also of international, or at any rate European, banking. Hence this case perhaps does not allow any general conclusions about the social and political status of Jews in different national contexts, in this case the British on the one hand and the German on the other. Even so, the varying degrees of acceptance of Jews in these different contexts deserve scholarly inquiry, as Niall Ferguson's contribution has admirably exemplified. Perhaps a few additional observations are of interest.

Ferguson has chosen five criteria for a transnational comparative analysis: the acquisition of real estate; access to parliamentary or other representative bodies; access to higher education; the degree of acceptance in aristocratic circles; and *Hoffähigkeit*. In my opinion this choice of criteria is somewhat narrow. One could also think of Jewish status within professional peer groups; the degree of acceptance within bourgeois society, including membership in political, cultural or social associations of various sorts (typical for emerging bourgeois culture); and the accessibility of various forms of social distinction, such as titles or decorations. Ferguson confines his analysis to social eligibility within traditional society as defined by aristocratic and royal standards. These were of lesser importance in Imperial Germany which, after all, was a rather bourgeois society in spite of its semi-authoritarian political order.

Let us discuss, first, the right to acquire property. Prior to emancipation, this was restricted everywhere. It should be noted that in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Britain, all immigrants who had not been granted the status of denizen were legally deprived of the right to acquire property (though their sons, if born in the country, were not similarly disadvantaged). There were, however, ways and means to circumvent this.

I would therefore be slightly sceptical with regard to Ferguson's thesis that in this respect Jews could operate more freely in Britain than on the Continent.

Regarding the election to parliamentary assemblies, it should be noted that there were important differences between Britain, Germany and Austria. Membership of the British House of Commons, which never ceased to be a social club, bestowed considerable social prestige upon an MP, whereas in Germany parliamentary involvement was held in low social esteem. In Austria it was in any case insignificant. In Germany social prestige was associated rather with becoming, for example, a mayor or *Landrat*, that is to say, attaining a position in local or regional government. The German system of honours, such as *Geheimrat*, *Kommerzienrat* or, in the case of Austria even today, *Hofrat*, had no direct equivalent in Britain; these distinctions were given to many members of the Jewish community. However, the Rothschilds may have considered them inadequate.

It is somewhat surprising that no Rothschild was elected to the Frankfurt *Nationalversammlung* in 1848, although it was certainly accessible to Jews and Jewish bankers such as Ludwig Bamberger, who represented the city of Mainz in the *Paulskirche*. The fact that Mayer Carl Rothschild was made a representative of Frankfurt in the North German diet ought to be seen as a noteworthy exception; under conditions of universal suffrage he would have had little chance of being elected, which, in any case, usually required membership of a political party. However, there was no bar against Jews. Again, Ludwig Bamberger is a case in point—a successful banker who played a very influential role in the North-German diet and later in the *Reichstag*. For a Rothschild, however, membership in the *Reichstag* or in a regional parliament would not have been attractive; they aimed at membership of the Prussian Upper Chamber, which was attractive in both social and political terms. Indeed, Mayer Carl Rothschild became a Prussian life peer as early as 1867, whereas Lionel Nathan de Rothschild faced insurmountable difficulties in qualifying for a peerage. This would seem to indicate that opportunities for Jews, including the Rothschilds, to enter parliamentary bodies were not very different in Britain and Germany, at least until the end of the century. It was, however, a much less attractive option in Germany and Austria.

German institutions of higher education were in principle open to Jews, more so than in Britain. Contrary to Charles Ringer's argument, the German professoriate was not a mandarin class rigidly closed to outsiders, but, in a comparative European perspective, a rather open professional group. However, from the 1880s onwards, subtle restrictions on career op-

portunities for Jews grew in importance. Eventually antisemitism became endemic, and in the end scholars of Jewish origin were often denied access to senior academic posts. Otherwise, Jews could move freely in the university system.

I am not sure whether acceptance into the aristocracy is the most appropriate way of measuring the degree to which Jews were accepted as equal members of society under the conditions of an advanced industrial capitalism that developed strong bourgeois features, as was the case in Britain and Imperial Germany, although perhaps to a lesser degree in Austria-Hungary. The view has been traditionally held that the Prussian *Junker* class was rather exclusive. In reality, however, it was in fact remarkably open to intermarriage with, and inter-penetration by, the upper echelons of the bourgeoisie. In fact, the high aristocracy in Austria practised social exclusion far more rigidly. Despite this, it was fairly easy to obtain lower aristocratic titles everywhere, and perhaps easiest in Vienna. On the other hand, even the famous English "open aristocracy" was not as open as has long been assumed, as Lawrence Stone has demonstrated. Thus it would not appear to be a useful criterion whether aristocratic titles for Jews were more easily obtainable in Vienna, Berlin or London.

Membership in the Prussian *Herrenhaus* or the Bavarian Crown Council, for instance, certainly enhanced one's social status, possibly more than the acquisition of an aristocratic title. Even so, it was politically rather insignificant and did not carry the social prestige associated with a British peerage. Rather more important is the question whether and to what degree persons of Jewish descent, even those belonging to the top layer of bourgeois society like the Rothschilds, were accepted as equals in aristocratic circles. In Imperial Germany and in Austria-Hungary informal but effective social barriers operated against the unrestricted integration of Jews, even those who had converted to Christianity, into the aristocracy. Full acculturation into this group was usually unattainable. Fritz Stern has shown that the banker Gerson Bleichröder, an agent of the Rothschilds in Berlin, was never fully accepted by the Prussian aristocracy, even though he moved in high aristocratic circles and had a baronetcy bestowed upon him early in his life. Although Bleichröder, as personal banker and adviser to Bismarck in financial and political matters, was exceedingly well connected in high political and social circles, he never really "made it". Stern sums this up: "By fervently embracing an elite that defined his kind an outsider, by seeking to mould his life in accordance with these dominant values and customs, he condemned himself and his children to perpetual vulnerability. Genuine acceptance by the highest levels of German society

was a mirage that lured Gerson [Bleichröder] and his children ever deeper into a wilderness of unrealisable ambition from which there was no return.”¹ This was perhaps not quite so in the case of the Rothschilds, who consistently moved in high society all the time. But it may explain why they paid so much attention to *Hoffähigkeit*. Acceptance at court was clearly a way of overcoming reservations against them in aristocratic quarters. Access to court society depended not only on the inclinations of the monarch alone; as a rule, the royal entourage exercised a good deal of informal social control in these matters. Here the unobtrusive but widespread distrust of Jews among the aristocracy came into play, effectively restricting the access of Jews to court. It is paradoxical that William II, in spite of his strong conventional antisemitism, which was largely social in nature and directed against parvenus of Jewish origin, found Jews quite acceptable once they had reached high positions in society. He maintained fairly close relations with a number of prominent German Jews, including Albert Ballin, Karl Fürstenberg and Walther Rathenau.

The “natural” peers of the German Rothschilds were not royalty or the nobility, but the upper echelons of the German bourgeoisie, particularly the German business community and German international bankers. Indeed, the Rothschilds maintained close connections with the German banking community. In their international business operations they were always prepared to enter into joint ventures with German high finance. The London house worked closely with the German Rothschilds and other German banks, notably concerning foreign loans, sometimes against the explicit wishes of their governments.² The Rothschilds’ views on political matters were not dissimilar to those expressed within the banking community as a whole, although they may have had somewhat stronger sympathies with the authoritarian style of German politics than most of their German counterparts. On this level of German (and perhaps also Viennese) society, Jewish acculturation had made considerable headway before 1914. After all, it is not surprising that the Rothschilds felt quite comfortable in Imperial Germany and. Like the banking community as a whole, they supported a policy of Anglo-German understanding and cooperation. Undoubtedly the outbreak of the First World War was not to their liking.

¹ Fritz Stern, *Gold and Iron. Bismarck, Bleichröder and the Building of the German Empire*, New York 1986, p. 466.

² See Boris Barth, *Die deutsche Hochfinanz und die Imperialismen*, Zürich 1994.

TODD M. ENDELMAN

Jewish Self-Hatred in Britain and Germany

I.

The notion of Jewish self-hatred is provocative. To invoke it to describe or explain assimilatory behaviour is to invite controversy. From its emergence early in the twentieth century, most prominently as the title of Theodor Lessing's polemic *Der jüdische Selbsthass* (1930), it has been used more often as a term of contempt and abuse than as a well-honed analytical tool. In recent decades, right-wing circles, nationalist and religious, have invoked it in intracommunal debates to denounce those who support liberal solutions to the Arab-Israeli conflict, in the first instance, and those who reject the Orthodox interpretation of Judaism, in the second. They have also employed it to describe Jews who intermarry or who are indifferent to Jewish political and cultural concerns. Even moderate critics of the American Jewish scene, writers and academics who belong to neither of these two camps, have invoked the term in discussing the rise in intermarriage and the decline in Jewish observance and knowledge. Thus Jacob Neusner claims that American Jewry as a whole is self-hating, as its "niggardly support for the cultural, scholarly, and religious programs and institutions that make Jews Jewish" reveals.¹ When used in this fashion, the term is of little intellectual or heuristic value. It is, rather, a clumsy term of attack, intended to foreclose, not open, discussion by stigmatising certain Jews as "bad" Jews—neurotic, inauthentic and marginal—whose views are not to be taken seriously.

To make matters worse, when used in a non-polemical, academic context, the concept has been deployed in a less-than-rigorous, almost careless fashion. Historians, social scientists and literary critics have used

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¹ Jacob Neusner, 'Assimilation and Self-Hatred in Modern Jewish Life', in *Stranger at Home. "The Holocaust", Zionism, and American Judaism*, Chicago 1981, p. 56.

it as a kind of catch-all term to describe Jews who expressed negative or hostile views of Judaism and Jewish life, without regard to the context in which these views were expressed and without regard to the measures (if any) these “self-hating” Jews took to weaken or erase their ethnic and religious links. In numerous cases, they have used the term to describe Jews who did not wish to deny their Jewishness or cut their ties to other Jews, however bitter or lacerating their self-criticism. This failure to distinguish between self-hatred and self-criticism, between Jews who chastise other Jews and those who abandon them as well, has resulted in the mislabelling of nationalists, reformers and others who took an active interest in the collective future of the Jews. The critic Baruch Kurzweil, for example, describes Franz Kafka (1883–1924), the Hebrew writer and nationalist Yosef Hayim Brenner (1881–1921) and the converts Otto Weininger (1880–1903) and Karl Kraus (1874–1936) as “spiritual soul mates” and self-hating Jewish writers because they viewed Judaism as a burden or stigma or tragedy that had to be overcome, rather than as a vital source of faith and values. More recently, in his widely cited *Jewish Self-Hatred*, Sander Gilman enrolls Moses Mendelssohn (1729–1786) and Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) in the ranks of the self-hating because they internalised non-Jewish constructions of Jewishness.²

The careless and polemical uses of the notion of Jewish self-hatred have brought it into ill repute, leading some to argue that it has no place in academic discourse. Allan Janik, for example, challenges “the validity of the concept even when applied to the thinker who nearly everyone has taken to represent the very archetype of the self-hating Viennese Jewish intellectual: Otto Weininger”. For Janik, the notion is reductionist, judgmental and dismissive, obscuring more than it illuminates: “The real target in Jewish discussions of self-hatred is often assimilation, which continues to be a ticklish subject in many Jewish quarters.” (Janik seems unaware that the term “assimilation” is neither more nor less problematic than the term “self-hatred”.) In his view, it is also tainted or suspect to the extent that it is rooted in the ideas of Theodor Lessing (1872–1933), a crude racial thinker who attributed Weininger’s self-hatred to his loathing

² Baruch Kurzweil, *Sifrutenu ha-hadashah. Hemshekh o mahapekha?* (Our New Literature. Continuity or Revolution?), 2nd. rev. edn., Jerusalem 1964, part 3; Sander L. Gilman, *Jewish Self-Hatred. Anti-Semitism and the Hidden Language of the Jews*, Baltimore 1986.

of his Jewish blood.³ One way to circumvent these objections is to acknowledge, with Janik, that self-hatred is a cultural construct rather than a well-established syndrome or mix of attitudes and behaviours. This is Gilman's strategy. For him, whether Jewish self-hatred existed or not is irrelevant. Since he is writing the historiography, rather than the history, of the notion, what matters is that some Jews *believed* that there was such a thing as Jewish self-hatred. For historians, however, this is unacceptable, since it evades rather than confronts issues that the concept of Jewish self-hatred raises, especially the impact of antisemitism on Jewish behaviour and emotional states in various historical contexts.

Although the notion of Jewish self-hatred is problematic and controversial, I do not believe that it is so hopelessly tainted as to be irredeemable, and I am not willing to consign it to the dustbin of discredited historical ideas. Used with care, in circumscribed, well-defined ways, I believe it can illuminate broader patterns of acculturation and integration in modern Jewish history. But to make it do this, a few ground rules for its usage are necessary.

First, whatever the utility of the concept, it would be foolish to apply it indiscriminately to any and all Jews who attacked or derided the habits and manners of other Jews, no matter how intemperate or repellent their words. It would be foolish because self-criticism has been a hallmark of Jewish life in the modern period. Enlightenment efforts to transform the Jewish community drew on Gentile standards of beauty and value and Gentile views of Jewish shortcomings. The movements that acculturated Jews created to accelerate the transformation of the community—*hasakah*, Reform Judaism, positive-historical Judaism, neo-Orthodox Judaism, Zionism and Bundism—echoed Jewry's critics: the Jewish people was flawed and in need of repair. Self-criticism was a common feature of liberal, middle-class German-Jewish life throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century. In 1880 (that is, before the advent of political Zionism) the philosopher and psychologist Moritz Lazarus (1824–1903) dubbed the Jews "the classic people of self-criticism", and the following year Emanuel Schreiber (1852–1932) published an anthology of self-criticism, *Die Selbstkritik der Juden*, to show that the prophetic spirit of moral castigation was alive.⁴

³ Allan Janik, 'Viennese Culture and the Jewish Self-Hatred Hypothesis. A Critique', in I. Oxaal, M. Pollak and G. Botz (eds.), *Jews, Antisemitism, and Culture in Vienna*, New York 1987, pp. 75, 80, 87.

⁴ Moritz Lazarus, *Was heisst national?*, Berlin 1880, quoted in Joachim Doron, 'Classic Zionism and Modern Antisemitism. Parallels and Influences (1883-1914)', in

Given the pervasiveness of *jüdische Selbstkritik* in the modern period, it would be ludicrous to view all who censured their fellow Jews as self-hating Jews. Moses Mendelssohn was not a self-hating Jew because he believed that Yiddish was a “repulsive”, “corrupt”, “deformed” language of “stammerers” that had “contributed more than a little to the uncivilized bearing of the common man”.⁵ Nor was the *maskil* Yehudah Leib Gordon (1831–1892), who wrote of the Russian-Jewish masses:

“The bread of your house has been deceit and usury,
The insults and abuses of your adversaries are justified.”⁶

Nor the Yiddish writer Mendele Mokher Sefarim (1836–1917), who cursed and reviled Jews, describing them in his fiction as ugly, dirty, evil-smelling, unkempt and ill-mannered.⁷ Nor classical Zionists, who unsparingly denigrated the *Galut*, denouncing diaspora Jews as parasites, hucksters, shnorrers, cowards, cripples, even vermin.⁸ For however virulent their critique, Zionists who negated the Diaspora were seeking to revitalise, not erase, their Jewishness. It would make no sense to describe them and others who were committed to the collective well-being of the Jewish people as self-hating Jews.

Second, because all westernised or acculturated Jews internalised some Gentile standards, it would be a mistake to treat self-hatred as an isolated pathology, a mental illness that afflicted only the maladjusted, the disaffected and the disturbed. While self-hatred *was* pathological when it intersected with, gave expression to, or fed existing emotional problems, it was not always so. Having identified with the societies in which they lived, acculturated Jews saw themselves and other Jews through Gentile eyes at least some of the time. Inevitably, there were occasions when they experi-

Studies in Zionism, No. 8, Autumn 1983, p. 173; Emanuel Schreiber, *Die Selbstkritik der Juden*, Leipzig 1880. On Jewish self-criticism in the Imperial period, see Ismar Schorsch, *Jewish Reactions to German Anti-Semitism, 1870-1914*, New York 1972, pp. 47-48, 135-137; 227 n. 98.

⁵ Quoted in Gilman, pp. 102-103.

⁶ Yehudah Leib Gordon, ‘Derekh bat ami’ (The Way of My People), quoted in Yehezkel Kaufman, ‘Horban ha-nefesh’ (The Destruction of the Soul), in *Be-havlei hazeman* (The Pangs of the Age), Tel Aviv 1936, p. 259.

⁷ David Aberbach, *Realism, Caricature and Bias. The Fiction of Mendele Mocher Sefarim*, London 1993, pp. 48-49, 56-60.

⁸ Kaufman; Doron.

enced the behaviour of other Jews as embarrassing or shameful.⁹ Heinrich Bermann, the fictional voice of Arthur Schnitzler (1862–1931) in his novel *Der Weg ins Freie* (1908), confesses that he is “particularly sensitive to the failings of the Jews” because he and other Jews have been raised from their youth “to see precisely Jewish characteristics as especially comical or repulsive”. When a Jew behaves crudely or comically in his presence, he is ashamed: “Sometimes such a painful feeling seizes me that I want to die, to sink into the earth”.¹⁰ A common, mild way of expressing this was to make a distinction between “good” and “bad” Jews, between those who knew how to behave and those who did not.¹¹

Feelings such as these were widespread in western Jewish communities, but what is significant is how their strength varied—over time, from place to place, and between social strata—and, even more important, when and where they were so overwhelming that they burst into the public sphere, underwriting and embellishing strategies of radical assimilation. The Jewish self-hatred with which I am concerned here is the full-blown variety, the kind that Jews who wished to expunge their Jewishness translated into words or actions, rather than the occasional, half-hearted kind that was part and parcel of the ambivalence that most acculturated Jews felt. By this definition, self-hating Jews were converts, secessionists, radical assimilationists who, not content with disaffiliation from the community, felt compelled to articulate how far they had travelled from their origins by echoing antisemitic views, by proclaiming their distaste for those from whom they wished to disassociate themselves. What set them apart from other radical assimilationists was that, having cut their ties, they were unable to move on and forget their Jewishness. Instead, it became an obsession, a matter to which they returned repeatedly, disparaging, belittling and cursing their origins and fate.

Among mental health professionals there is disagreement about the aetiology and dynamics of ethnocultural self-loathing and, given the

⁹ In a psychological study of self-hatred among Jews in the Los Angeles area in the 1970s, Ronald M. Demakovsky found that Jews with various levels of Jewish identification, including students in rabbinical and communal service programs, accepted some antisemitic stereotypes about Jews. ‘Jewish Anti-Semitism and the Psychopathology of Self-Hatred’, Ph.D. diss., California School of Professional Psychology 1978, pp. 124–125.

¹⁰ Arthur Schnitzler, *The Road into the Open*, transl. by Roger Byers, Berkeley 1992, p. 114.

¹¹ Michael A. Meyer, *Jewish Identity in the Modern World*, Seattle 1990, pp. 35–37.

absence of a consensus about how the mind works, it is difficult to see how this disagreement will be resolved. For historians, however, knowing the internal determinants of self-hatred is not essential. More important is knowledge of the external ones, the political, social and cultural conditions that caused self-hatred to be more common in some historical settings than in others. Shifting the focus from the internal to the external, from psychology to history, is advantageous in another respect: it de-emphasises questions about responsibility, morality and virtue, which beclouded earlier accounts of self-hatred, and instead foregrounds historical questions. It shifts the question of “blame” from individuals to the societies and circumstances that made them and their unhappiness possible.

Self-hatred among Jews—whether in Britain or in Germany—is an outgrowth of the fundamental transformation that occurred in their political status in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. A distinctively modern phenomenon, it became possible when—and only when—Jews ceased to live within the walls of their own cultural ghetto and to believe in the superiority of their inherited way of life. In ‘Hatsi nehamah’ (Half Comfort), an essay published in *Ha-Melits* in 1892, Ahad Ha-Am (1858–1927) emphasised the peculiarly modern character and dynamics of the phenomenon:

“In earlier generations, when our ancestors believed literally in their ‘chosenness’, the abuse that the nations heaped on them had no impact on the purity of their inner self. They knew their own worth and were not affected by the conventional ideas of the world outside theirs, whose members were, in their eyes, a special kind of alien being, different in essence, with no connection or similarity between them. Thus, the Jew could listen with equanimity to the charges of ethical shortcomings and active sins that conventional opinion directed at him without feeling an inner sense of shame or humiliation. After all, what did he care about what ‘strangers’ thought about him and his worth? All he desired was that they leave him in peace! But in this generation, matters are no longer like this. ‘Our world’ has greatly expanded and European views greatly influence us in all branches of life. And since we no longer treat the outside world as a thing apart, we are influenced, against our will, by the fact that the outside world treats us as a thing apart.”¹²

¹² Ahad Ha-Am, *Kol kitvei Ahad Ha-Am*, Tel Aviv, n.d., pp. 70-71. Max Nordau made the same point five years later in 1897, in his address to the first Zionist Congress. See the abridged translation in Arthur Hertzberg (ed.), *The Zionist Idea. A Historical Analysis and Reader*, Harper Torchbook ed., New York 1966, pp. 237-239.

II.

As long as Jews viewed themselves and their world within the context of their inherited values, they were immune to what Christians thought of them. The stigma they bore was irrelevant to their own sense of worth, and their very alienation protected them from being despised, allowing them to feel, to borrow a phrase from Erving Goffman, that they were fully-fledged, normal human beings and that their persecutors were not quite human. But once they incorporated standards from the wider society, they became "intimately alive" to what others saw as their failings. Concerned with being accepted, they became self-conscious and calculating about Gentile opinion, sensitive to the impression they were making.¹³

This occurred whenever and wherever Jews abandoned the world of tradition. In both Britain and Germany, from the late eighteenth century onwards, there were Jews who found the stigma of Jewishness so overwhelming that they came to view it as the source of their unhappiness. Perhaps the earliest description of the phenomenon is Benjamin Disraeli's characterisation of his paternal grandmother, Sarah (1743–1825), who lived in the suburb of Stoke Newington, where Jews "were treated with the greatest coldness and dislike by the other inhabitants of the place, and not visited by any one".¹⁴ Not fond of Jews but unable to mix with Christians, she was "so mortified by her social position that she lived until eighty without indulging in a tender expression," Benjamin wrote in the introduction to a new edition (1858) of his father's *Curiosities of Literature*.

"My grandmother ... had imbibed that dislike for her race which the vain are too apt to adopt when they find that they are born to public contempt. The indignant feeling that should be reserved for the persecutor, in the mortification of their disturbed sensibility, is too often visited on the victim; and the cause of annoyance is recognised not in the ignorant malevolence of the powerful, but in the conscientious conviction of the innocent sufferer."¹⁵

A generation later the Berlin *salonnière* Rahel Varnhagen (1771–1833) reacted in a similar way to her failure to find a secure place outside the

¹³ Erving Goffman, *Stigma. Notes on the Management of a Spoiled Identity*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ 1963, pp. 6-7, 14.

¹⁴ Anna Letitia Le Breton, *Memories of Seventy Years*, ed. by Mrs. Herbert Martin, London 1883, p. 40.

¹⁵ Benjamin Disraeli, 'On the Life and Writings of Mr. Disraeli', in Isaac Disraeli, *Curiosities of Literature*, new edn., 3 vols., London 1858, vol. 1, p. x.

conventional Jewish world in which she was raised and from which she felt alienated. However much the external circumstances of her life differed from those of Sarah D'Israeli, she, too, blamed her Jewishness for her misery and misfortune. In 1795, she wrote to her oldest friend David Veit, then a medical student at Göttingen:

"I imagine that just as I was being thrust into this world a supernatural being plunged a dagger into my heart, with these words: 'Now, have feeling, see the world as only a few see it, be great and noble; nor can I deprive you of restless, incessant thought. But with one reservation: be a Jewess!' And now my whole life is one long bleeding. By keeping calm I can prolong it; every movement to staunch the bleeding is to die anew, and immobility is only possible to me in death itself."¹⁶

She worked hard to transform herself, to become another person, but felt trapped nonetheless, unable to avoid "defilement" from her "loathesomely degrading, offensive, insane, and low" background.¹⁷ As she wrote to her brother, Ludwig Robert (1778–1832), in summer 1806, when her salon fell victim to the Prussian defeat: "I do not forget this shame for a *single* second. I drink it in water, I drink it in wine, I drink it with the air; in every breath that is. ... The Jew within us must be extirpated; that is the sacred truth, and it must be done even if life were uprooted in the process."¹⁸

Rahel Varnhagen had a penchant for self-dramatisation, which the *Sturm und Drang* romanticism of the period encouraged. While no record exists of how Sarah D'Israeli expressed herself, it is unlikely that she did so in the same self-pitying, overwrought way, given the cultural mood of late Georgian Britain. These differences aside, however, self-hatred functioned in a similar way for both women, allowing them to voice their sense of alienation from the Jewish people, whose fate they did not wish to share. Once we move beyond this level of comparison, however, the similarities between Britain and the German states fade. In the age of emancipation (1750–1870), expressions of Jewish self-hatred were rare in Britain. Most Jews who wanted to leave the tribal fold were able to find a sufficiently comfortable niche for themselves in Gentile society to put

¹⁶ Quoted in Ellen Key, *Rahel Varnhagen. A Portrait*, transl. by Arthur G. Chater, New York 1913, p. 11.

¹⁷ Quoted in Key, p. 11.

¹⁸ Quoted in Hannah Arendt, *Rahel Varnhagen. The Life of a Jewish Woman*, rev. edn., transl. by Richard and Clara Winston, New York 1974, p. 120.

behind them the issue of their Jewishness.¹⁹ In the fiction, letters, memoirs and tracts written by British Jews during this period, examples of self-hatred are few. For example, while alive to Christian, especially conversionist, constructions of “the Jew”, the early Victorian pioneers of Anglo-Jewish literature—Grace Aguilar (1816–1847), Charlotte Montefiore (1818–1854), Celia (1819–1873) and Marion Moss (1821–1907) and Matthias Levy (1839–1918)—neither dwelled on Jewish shortcomings nor reproduced conventional Victorian stereotypes.²⁰

The one notable expression of self-hatred in imaginative literature was created by Samuel Phillips (1814–1854), the son of a prosperous London tradesman who converted to Anglicanism in his twenties and became a successful Tory journalist and literary reviewer. In his only novel, *Caleb Stukeley* (1841), he introduced a crafty Fagin-like Jewish moneylender, whose person, clothing and home are notable for their filth. But while this figure embodied characteristic features of the conventional early Victorian literary representation of “the Jew”, Phillips himself was not preoccupied with his background and rarely mentioned Jews, for good or evil, in his other work. Like other converts in Britain at this time, his conversion was successful in terms of the opportunities it made possible, and he felt no need to voice how different he was from those who remained Jewish. To be sure, authors whose work he failed to praise, like William Makepeace Thackeray, did not forget his Jewish background, alluding to it in print and in private,²¹ but these were mere pinpricks, which seem to have had little effect on Phillips. Undoubtedly there were other former Jews or deracinated Jews who experienced their Jewishness as a burden or stigma, but they did not air their views in public or leave a paper trail.

In contrast, public expressions of Jewish self-hatred in Germany in the age of emancipation were depressingly common. The poet and pamphleteer Joel Jacoby (1807–1863), who became a newspaper censor for the police after his conversion to Catholicism, characterised the Jews as a fossilised or corpse-like people, weak, tired, yearning for oblivion and the grave, its radiance and creativity having been extinguished long before. “We are not worthy of sitting in the council of the wise and the mighty,” he wrote in his *Klagen eines Juden* (1837), “and we have no

¹⁹ Todd M. Endelman, *Radical Assimilation in English Jewish History, 1656-1945*, Bloomington, 1990.

²⁰ Michael Galchinsky, *The Origin of the Modern Jewish Woman Writer. Romance and Reform in Victorian England*, Detroit 1996.

²¹ S. S. Praver, *Israel at Vanity Fair. Jews and Judaism in the Writings of W. M. Thackeray*, Leiden 1992, pp. 290, 342-343.

desire to partake in the tribunal that determines the weal and woe of peoples.”²² Friedrich Julius Stahl (1802–1855), who became the ideologist of the conservative Prussian *Kreuzzeitungspartei* after his conversion, set up Jewishness and Germanness as polar opposites in *Der Christliche Staat* (1847): “In general, the Jews lack a sense of honour, self-esteem and masculine persistence in their rights; they are lacking the beautiful way of life, notably the sense of honour, that forms the natural basis of the Germanic tribe.”²³ Karl Marx (1818–1883) was even harsher, equating *Judentum* with those oppressive forces and attributes that prevented human beings from realising their humanity: capitalism, civil society, egoism, practical need, huckstering, money, self-interest, property. Practical need and egoism were “the basis of the Jewish religion”; money, “the jealous god of Israel”; the bill of exchange, “the real god of the Jew”. Thus, “in emancipating itself from *huckstering* and *money*, ... from real and practical Judaism, our age would emancipate itself”.²⁴ On other occasions, Marx was less abstract, abusing Jews *qua* Jews in coarse, vulgar terms. The Jews of Poland were “the dirtiest of all races”. Jewish bankers were “a curse to the people”, backing oppressive tyrants, as the Jesuits backed the Pope, while ransacking the public purse. Revealingly, he was most abusive when attacking Jews who, like himself, had cut their ties with Judaism. He mocked Joseph Moses Levy (1812–1888), founder of the *Daily Telegraph* (whom he mistook for a radical assimilationist), for wanting “to be numbered among the Anglo-Saxon race” and for seeking to prove his Englishness by opposing “the un-English politics of Mr. Disraeli”. Such efforts were futile, Marx concluded, since “Mother Nature has written his pedigree in absurd block letters right in the middle of his face”. Marx also projected onto Ferdinand Lassalle (1825–1864), who liked Jews no more than Marx but was never baptised, the negative qualities commonly associated with Jews: bad manners, pushiness, sexual aggressiveness, exotic blackness. Lassalle (1825–1864) was “the Jewish

²² Quoted in Solomon Liptzin, *Germany's Stepchildren*, Philadelphia 1944, p. 52.

²³ Quoted in Eleonore Sterling, ‘Jewish Reaction to Jew-Hatred in the First Half of the 19th Century’, in *Year Book III of the Leo Baeck Institute*, London 1958, pp. 103–121, here p. 110.

²⁴ The critical text is the second of his two essays on the Jewish Question, from which these quotations are taken, ‘On the Jewish Question’, in *Karl Marx. Early Writings*, transl. and ed. by T. B. Bottomore, New York 1964, pp. 34, 36, 37. See also the exhaustive and even-handed study by Julius Carlebach, *Karl Marx and the Radical Critique of Judaism*, London 1978.

nigger”, “descended from the Negroes who joined in Moses’s flight from Egypt”, as the shape of his head and the frizziness of his hair testified.²⁵

Alongside the Marxes and the Stahls were an unknowable number of “ordinary” Jews who felt similarly about their Jewishness. There was, for example, a type of Berlin Jew, according to *Der Orient*, who was “blissfully happy when he is told that there is no longer anything Jewish about him”.²⁶ There were converts who, in their desperation to leave their Jewishness well behind, overcompensated, becoming more Christian than the Christians. These Jews “have drilled themselves into Christianity to such an extent,” Heinrich Heine wrote in 1831, “that they already denounce unbelief, defend the Trinity to the death, believe in it even in the dog-days, rage against the rationalists, creep about the country as missionaries and God’s spies, and in church are always the best at turning up their eyes and pulling sanctimonious faces”.²⁷ In Berlin, Ludwig Börne saw “elderly daughters of Israel upon the street, wearing long crucifixes from their necks, crucifixes longer even than their noses and reaching to their navels”, carrying Protestant hymnals and speaking of “the magnificent sermon they had just heard in the Church of the Trinity”.²⁸ (Or at least that is what Heine claimed that Börne had seen.) And there were free-thinking, unobservant Jews, like the parents and relatives of the young Fanny Lewald (1811–1889), who never spoke of the fact that they were Jews in her presence. She grew up thinking that Jews were both “uncanny and mysterious” and “attractive and repulsive”. By the time she was five or six, she had learned that “we were Jews and that it was bad to be a Jew”.²⁹

²⁵ Quoted in Robert S. Wistrich, *Revolutionary Jews from Marx to Trotsky*, New York 1976, pp. 37, 39, 40, 41. For more examples of Marx’s abusive treatment of Lassalle, see Edmund Silberner, *Sozialisten zur Judenfrage*, Berlin 1962, pp. 136-138. Marx erred in portraying Levy as a Jew who was ashamed of his Jewishness and his Jewish features. In fact, Levy was “extremely proud of his striking likeness to Disraeli”, bearer of the most famous “Semitic” physiognomy of the day. Paul H. Emden, *Jews of Britain. A Series of Biographies*, London 1943, p. 358.

²⁶ *Der Orient* (1843), p. 107, quoted in Sterling, p. 108.

²⁷ Heinrich Heine, ‘The Town of Lucca’, in *Heinrich Heine. Selected Prose*, ed. and transl. by Ritchie Robertson, London 1993, p. 177.

²⁸ Heinrich Heine, *Ludwig Börne*, quoted in Hugo Bieber (ed.), *Heinrich Heine. A Biographical Anthology*, transl. by Moses Hadas, Philadelphia 1956, pp. 242-243.

²⁹ Fanny Lewald, *The Education of Fanny Lewald. An Autobiography*, transl. and ed. by Hanna Ballin Lewis, Albany 1992, pp. 29, 59-60.

III.

In the seven decades of illiberalism that followed German Unification, the stigmatisation of Jewishness and the exclusion of Jews from high social circles intensified. Questions about Jews and their place in state and society were in the limelight, attracting widespread public and private comment. Jews who had ceased to believe in and observe their ancestral religion and who increasingly viewed their own Jewishness through German eyes became less optimistic about the future. Growing numbers tried to escape what had become for them a social, occupational and emotional burden. The incidence of conversion and, in Prussia after the *Austrittsgesetz* of 1873, secession from the *Gemeinde* mounted steadily.³⁰ In the five years between 1880 and 1884, 199 Jews in Germany converted to the Evangelical church per annum; two decades later, in the period 1900–1904, there were 502 conversions per annum. In Berlin, the rate soared from thirty a year in the period 1872–1881 to 149 a year in the period 1902–1906.³¹ Even more tellingly, the number of Jews who found life itself unbearable skyrocketed. In Prussia, there were 4.6 suicides per 100,000 Jews in the years 1849–1855, a rate lower than that of Protestants and Catholics. By 1925, the Jewish rate, which had mounted steadily from the mid-nineteenth century, had soared to 53.2 per 100,000, almost double that of Protestants (27.9) and quadruple that of Catholics (13.5). In Berlin in 1925, it was even higher: 67.8 per 100,000.³² This is not to claim, of course, that all Jews who killed themselves did so because they felt stigmatised and besieged. On the other hand, the stunning rise in the number of Jewish suicides relative to the population as a whole does indicate that growing numbers of German Jews were pessimistic or depressed about the future. There can be little question that growing hostility to Jews in public and private life contributed to the hopelessness and despair that led them to end their lives.

Even within broader segments of the Jewish population, among those who did not convert, secede or kill themselves, Jewishness became associated with unattractive traits and distasteful behaviour. The young Martin

³⁰ Peter Honigmann, *Die Austritte aus der Jüdischen Gemeinde Berlin, 1873-1941. Statistische Auswertung und historische Interpretation*, Frankfurt am Main 1988, p. 46.

³¹ Jacob Lestchinsky, 'Ha-shemad be-aratsot shonot' (Apostasy in Different Lands), in *Ha-olam*, vol. 5 (1911), No. 8, p. 5; No. 10, p. 6.

³² Konrad Kwiet, 'The Ultimate Refuge. Suicide in the Jewish Community under the Nazis', in *Year Book XXIX of the Leo Baeck Institute*, London 1984, pp. 135-167, here p. 140, Table 1, and p. 142, Table VI.

Buber (1878–1965) habitually used the phrase “echt jüdisch” as a scornful reproach. A friend from his student days at the University of Leipzig recalled that he was then given to “the usual Jewish antisemitism”. As a child growing up in early twentieth-century Coburg, Hans Morgenthau (1904–1980) “was told over and over not to do this or that” because “people will see you are a Jew”. To talk with one’s hands, to have a dirty face or hands or uncombed hair or bad posture, to be unruly, noisy and ill-mannered—these were “Jewish” traits. Mothers and fathers, one memoirist remembered, “found a child to be prettier if it ‘did not look Jewish’”. Naturally, parents who had escaped Judaism, whether formally or informally, were sensitive to these matters. The sociologist Reinhard Bendix (1916–1991), whose parents left the Berlin *Gemeinde* in 1919, recalled: “We children were instructed to shun what were considered ‘Jewish’ mannerisms. Evidently my parents remained conscious of their origins (as we did not) and of the need, as they saw it, to guard their children from identification with Jewishness, *as perceived by the outside world* [my emphasis].” Growing up ignorant of the most elementary aspects of Judaism, all he heard about being Jewish were “admonishing references about combing my hair properly or not gesturing with my hands while speaking”. For Theodor Lessing, whose parents neither observed Judaism nor told their children they were Jewish, and who claimed to have first discovered his background when he met with antisemitism at school, the very word *Jude* “took on a sinister meaning”: “Since I had childishly absorbed all the patriotic and religious prejudices of the school, and there was nothing to counterbalance them at home, I became convinced that being Jewish was something evil.”³³

³³ Paul Mendes-Flohr, ‘Martin Buber and the Metaphysicians of Contempt’, in Jehuda Reinharz (ed.), *Living with Antisemitism. Modern Jewish Responses*, Hanover, NH 1987, pp. 136-137; Bernard Rosenberg and Ernest Goldstein (eds.), *Creators and Disturbers. Reminiscences by Jewish Intellectuals of New York*, New York 1982, p. 76; memoir of Philipp Löwenfeld (1887-1963), in Monika Richarz (ed.), *Jüdisches Leben in Deutschland. Selbstzeugnisse zu Socialgeschichte im Kaiserreich*, Stuttgart 1979, Publication of the Leo Baeck Institute, p. 312; Reinhard Bendix, *From Berlin to Berkeley. German-Jewish Identities*, New Brunswick, NJ 1986, pp. 140-141, 179; Theodor Lessing, *Einmal und nie wieder. Lebenserinnerungen*, Gütersloh 1969, p. 112. Growing up in Berlin and Cologne in the 1930s, Peter Adam was told by his father, who was married to a Protestant and who had his children baptised as Catholics in 1934: “Don’t talk with your hands. This is Jewish.” He was also told to sit up straight to avoid a “Jewish hunch”. Peter Adam, *Not Drowning but Waving. An Autobiography*, London 1995, p. 27.

As was the case before 1870, radical assimilationists who were unsure of their success in shedding their tribal features tried to establish their authenticity by denigrating their origins in print and speech. What was new in the post-1870 German context was the sheer number of expressions of Jewish self-hatred in the *public* sphere. More and more self-hating Jews felt compelled to vent their loathing for Jewish traits in public venues (journals, newspapers, novels and pamphlets) where non-Jewish Germans would notice and admire their repudiation of and contempt for these traits. In some cases this took the extreme form of public denials of the value of all things Jewish and calls for the self-annihilation of the Jewish people. The Polish-born semiticist Jakob Fromer (1865–1938) published an essay in 1904 in *Die Zukunft*, the Berlin journal edited by Maximilian Harden (1861–1927), himself a convert, in which he identified the unnatural character of the Jews as the cause of antisemitism and argued that it would end only with their disappearance. The article, which cost him his job as librarian of the Berlin *Gemeinde*, concluded with the exhortation: “Disappear, with your Oriental physiognomies, your character at odds with your surroundings, your ‘mission’ and, above all, your exclusively ethical outlook.”³⁴ Writing under the pseudonym Benedictus Levita in the arch-conservative *Preussische Jahrbücher* in 1900, the Halle lawyer and notary Adolf Weissler (d. 1919) urged the dissolution of German Jewry through child baptism. Although believing that Judaism was morally stagnant and inferior to Christianity, he also knew that even Jews who agreed with him were unable to believe in the divinity of Jesus. Because he opposed unprincipled conversions (yet hoped that German Jews would amalgamate and disappear) he proposed that they baptise their children, who, not having been raised as Jews, could not be accused of insincerity. Weissler himself never withdrew from the Halle *Gemeinde* and, in the end, found salvation only by killing himself. His gravestone bore the inscription: “He did not wish to survive the humiliation of his people.”³⁵

These proposals for the self-destruction of the Jews were not the work of eccentrics and cranks. Published in respectable, widely read, influential periodicals, they voiced a current of thinking that was gaining ground among radical assimilationists at the turn of the century. Nor were they

³⁴ Richie Robertson, ‘From the Ghetto to Modern Culture. The Autobiographies of Solomon Maimon and Jakob Fromer’, in *Polin*, VII (1992), p. 14.

³⁵ Alan T. Levenson, ‘The Conversionary Impulse in Fin de Siècle Germany’, *Year Book XL of the Leo Baeck Institute*, London 1995, p. 112; *idem*, ‘Radical Assimilation and Radical Assimilationists in Imperial Germany’, in Marc Lee Raphael (ed.), *What Is Modern about the Modern Jewish Experience?*, Williamsburg, VA 1997, p. 40.

isolated incidents. Theodor Lessing noted an upsurge in articles like these, which he described, with some exaggeration, as “a powerful movement among German Jews advocating assimilation, mixed marriage and mass baptism”, while recent work by Alan Levenson has shown that Lessing was not too far from the mark.³⁶

More common were public endorsements of the view that Jewishness and Germanness were moral and cultural opposites, the one the antithesis of the other. Jakob Wassermann’s autobiography, *Mein Weg als Deutscher und Jude* (1921), is a classic expression of this phenomenon. In this short, self-pitying account of an unhappy life, Wassermann (1873–1934) consistently stereotyped experiences and characters from his childhood in Fürth. He associated Judaism, observant Jews and Jewish worship with decrepitude and darkness; Germans with beauty and light, serenity and spirituality. At the outset, he assured his readers that when he ventured outside the community in which he had been raised he did not encounter malicious stings and thrusts because neither his features nor his manners were typically Jewish: “My nose was straight, my demeanor quiet and modest.” He remembered his mother, who died when he was nine, in words echoing Germanic ideals—“beautiful, blonde, very gentle, very silent”, adding that her first love had been a Christian. Observant Jews were secretive, soulless old men whose religion had “degenerated into mere phrases, an empty shell”. Its teachers were cruel “bleak zealots and half-ridiculous figures” who “thrashed formulas into us, antiquated Hebrew prayers that we translated mechanically, without any knowledge of the language, what [they] taught was paltry, dead, mummified”. Its services were “a purely business-like affair, an unsanctified assembly; the noisy performance of ceremonies become habitual, devoid of symbolism, mere drill”. Even in the modern, progressive synagogue in Fürth, all he found was “empty noise, death to religious devotion, abuse of great words ... presumption, clericalism, zealotry”. He found relief only in the German sermons of “a very stately *blond* rabbi [my emphasis]”. In contrast to Jewish darkness was German Christianity’s shimmering radiance. Studying the Old Testament as a child, Wassermann decided that it lacked “true illumination”; it seemed “rigid, frequently absurd, even inhuman, and was not ennobled by any loftier outlook”. His imagination became

³⁶ Theodor Lessing, *Der Jüdische Selbsthass*, Munich 1984, p. 188; Levenson, ‘Conversionary Impulse’; *idem*, ‘Radical Assimilation’; *idem*, ‘Jewish Reactions to Inter-marriage in Nineteenth Century Germany’, Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University 1990, chapter 4.

enriched only when “a ray broke through from the New Testament, like a gleam of light through a locked door”. “Good” Jews, those whom he loved or admired, were inevitably light rather than dark, like his mother, Fürth’s Reform rabbi and a “tall, slender” school friend with “blond curls”, “the head of an Antonius” and “a gentle soul”.³⁷

The Jews whom the young Wassermann met after leaving home were unattractive “bad” Jews whose behaviour “caused” antisemitism. Those in Lower Franconia, where he did his military service, were “trade-loving, usurious Jews who still bore the mark of the ghetto”. Those in Vienna shamed and disgusted him. He was provoked by their “idiom; quick familiarity; mistrust that betrayed the ghetto left not far behind; unshakable opinions; idle meditation upon simple matters; sophistical fencing with words where a seeing eye would have sufficed; servility where pride would have been proper; boastful self-assertion where modesty was in place; lack of dignity, lack of restraint; lack of meta-physical aptitude”.

What most dismayed Wassermann in Vienna was Jewish rationalism, which found expression, among the base, in “worship of success and wealth, in self-seeking and lust for gain, in greed for power and in social opportunism”, and, among the noble, in idolatrous worship of science and “impotence in the ideal and intuitive realms”. Needless to say, Polish and Galician Jews were altogether alien to him; even when they tried to arouse his sympathy for them as individuals (rather than as fellow Jews), they repelled him.³⁸

Among the strategies that Wassermann used to set himself apart from other Jews was to belittle Heinrich Heine, *the* German-Jewish poet and the *bête noire* of German antisemites. In his youth, he recalled, “Heine was referred to whenever the talk turned to Jewish attainment, Jewish achievement, Jewish eminence”. But Wassermann made it clear that from the very beginning he disliked Heine, “indeed, abhorred him violently”. He considered his poetry to be “sweetish, frivolous and crudely sentimental”, his critical and political writings “either shallow and superficially brilliant or spurious and vain”. Wassermann was, by his own account, obsessed with Heine, viewing his influence as “harmful and destructive”. Moreover, he recognised that “the underlying cause of [his] irritation was Heine’s blood”, for the poet was, in his eyes, the archetypal rootless Jewish writer,

³⁷ Jakob Wassermann, *My Life as German and Jew*, transl. by S. N. Brainin, New York 1933, pp. 7, 9, 11, 12-13, 14, 42-43.

³⁸ Wassermann, pp. 65, 188-189, 196-197.

“a man without divine ties or true affinities, disastrously isolated, thrown entirely upon his own resources, devoid of mythic and mother elements, with no hold on either heaven or earth”.³⁹ For Wassermann and other self-hating German-Jewish writers, Heine was a frequent and convenient target. Attacking his work allowed them to demonstrate their ability to recognise what was and was not authentically German. The Viennese critic Karl Kraus, for example, also took aim at Heine, accusing him of lacking a feeling for nature, failing to shed a mercantile outlook, repudiating moral seriousness and “talking Jewish [*mauscheln*]”.⁴⁰

Public displays of Jewish self-hatred also multiplied in Britain between the 1870s and the 1930s. As in Germany, this took place against a backdrop of escalating intolerance and among those whose social position made them vulnerable to hostile Gentile opinion. Its most vigorous expression was in the explosion of Anglo-Jewish fiction towards the end of the century. In the late 1880s and early 1890s, even before the mass immigration, the Boer War and the Marconi scandal breathed new life into political antisemitism, Jewish writers with few or weak links to the community introduced “bad” Jews into their work—in a manner that was unprecedented in Anglo-Jewish literature. In the novels of Julia Frankau (1859–1916), Amy Levy (1861–1889), Cecily Ullman Sidgwick (1855–1934) and Leonard Merrick (1864–1939) in this period (novels that were written, it should be emphasised, for a largely Gentile readership), ill-mannered, morally unattractive Jewish characters figure prominently.⁴¹

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 96-101.

⁴⁰ Jacques Le Rider, *Modernity and Crises of Identity. Culture and Society in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*, transl. by Rosemary Morris, New York 1993, pp. 264-265; Frank Field, *The Last Days of Mankind. Karl Kraus and His Vienna*, London 1967, p. 69.

⁴¹ On Frankau, see Bryan Cheyette, ‘The Other Self. Anglo-Jewish Fiction and the Representation of Jews in England, 1875-1905’, in David Cesarani (ed.), *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry*, Oxford 1990, pp. 97-111; Todd M. Endelman, ‘The Frankaus of London. A Study in Radical Assimilation, 1837-1967’, in *Jewish History*, vol. VIII, Nos. 1-2 (1994), pp.117-154. On Levy, there is a richer critical literature: Bryan Cheyette, ‘From Apology to Revolt. Benjamin Farjeon, Amy Levy and the Post-Emancipation Anglo-Jewish Novel, 1880-1900’, in *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England*, vol. XXIX (1988), pp. 253-265; Linda Hunt, ‘Amy Levy and the “Jewish Novel”’: Representing Jewish Life in the Victorian Period’, in *Studies in the Novel*, vol. XXVI (Fall 1994), pp. 235-253; Meri-Jane Rochelson, ‘Jews, Gender and Genre in Late-Victorian England. Amy Levy’s Reuben Sachs’, in *Women’s Studies*, vol. XXV (1996), pp. 311-328; Cynthia Scheinberg, ‘Canonizing the Jew. Amy Levy’s Challenge to Victorian Poetic Identity’, in *Victorian Studies*, vol. XXXIX (Winter 1996), pp. 173-200. There is no secondary literature on Merrick and Sidgwick other than a few brief references in Endelman, *Radical Assimilation*, pp. 93, 99, 104, 123.

The Jews in Frankau's first novel, *Dr. Phillips* (1887), for example, are repugnant.⁴² Almost without exception they are uneducated, narrow, clan-nish, vulgar, materialistic and tasteless. They live in large over-furnished homes in London's Maida Vale, where Frankau herself grew up, homes filled "with floating suggestions of a Bond street showroom", in marked contrast to the comfortable, tasteful, Liberty-decorated rooms inhabited by Dr. Phillips's Gentile mistress. They gesticulate and talk at the top of their voices, especially in public, dance ungracefully and, in the case of the women, tend to obesity and a taste for bright colours and blazing diamonds. They are ignorant of politics, literature and art and, in general, take no interest in the world beyond their families and friends, businesses and homes. They stick together, inviting few non-Jews to their gatherings, which revolve around cards. They behave this way, according to Frankau, because of their inordinate love of money. In a passage reminiscent of Marx's identification of *Judentum* with self-interest, huckstering and money, she commented:

"The great single Deity, the 'I am the Lord thy God, and thou shalt have no other' that binds Judaism together, is as invincible now as it was when Moses had to destroy the Golden Calf on Mount Horeb. And that Deity is gain. That deity is never more ardently worshipped than at the card table. The red light played on the money, on the cards, on the diamonds, on eager faces and grasping fingers. The play went on almost in silence; no light jest or merry quip, no sacrilegious sound of laughter disturbed the devotion of Judaism to its living God."⁴³

Frankau and her husband Arthur, a cigar importer, were determined to escape the tribal fold. They quit the Reform synagogue after the birth of their first child, the future novelist Gilbert Frankau (1884–1952), when it ordered them to have him circumcised. Although Julia and Arthur remained Jews, at least in name, they had Gilbert and his three younger siblings baptised into the Church of England. They took no part in Jewish affairs and moved in social circles that were neither exclusively Jewish nor Christian. In her conversation as well as in her fiction, Julia distanced herself and her husband from their origins. She once boasted to Marie Belloc Lowndes that her husband's fine qualities were due to the German Lutheran stock from which he came and the absence of any Jewish blood. She also enjoyed gossiping to her about "unpleasing traits" in the

⁴² See Richie Robertson's contribution to this volume.

⁴³ Julia Frankau [Frank Danby], *Dr. Phillips. A Maida Vale Idyll*, London 1887, pp. 5, 15, 55, 168.

character of well-known Jews of the day, as if to demonstrate by her willingness to betray their flaws that she was not really one of them.⁴⁴

What distinguished Frankau's flight from Jewishness from its German counterparts was its non-collective or individualistic character. Escape, her personal response to the "Jewish Question", required her transformation rather than that of the community as a whole. In her mind, her own fate was not tied to the Jews' collective fate. In contrast, in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Germany, the stigmatisation of Jewishness was so pervasive, so engrained in the social and cultural fabric of life, that self-hating radical assimilationists were compelled to call on all Jews to follow in their footsteps. For Frankau and other Anglo-Jewish writers who distanced themselves from their background, it was not necessary to link their own happiness and salvation to a collective enterprise, be it mass baptism or intermarriage. The closest Frankau came to being programmatic and prescriptive was to denounce Jews who opposed intermarriage as "entirely unemancipated" and to describe interfaith romance in rapturous language: "How wide a vista opened out in the mind of the little Jewish girl, as she lay there in the arms of Christianity [her Gentile suitor]. How centuries of bigotry and generations of prejudice melted away in the flame of her passion."⁴⁵ Frankau was not exceptional in this. However much she and her fellow novelists pilloried Jewish traits, they and other self-hating British Jews showed no interest in encouraging other Jews to intermarry, convert, baptise their children at birth or, in the case of males, keep their foreskins. There were no Anglo-Jewish parallels to the collective proposals of self-hating radical assimilationists in Germany, largely because there was less handwringing about being Jewish, a reflection, in turn, of the lesser importance of Jewish issues in British public life.

IV.

A comparison of Jewish writing in Imperial Germany and Victorian and Edwardian Britain offers further evidence about the relative strength of self-hatred in the two nations. In the much read "Jewish" novels of Fritz Mauthner (1849–1923), Ludwig Jacobowski (1868–1900) and Conrad Alberti (1862–1918), a central theme is the heightened tension between Jew-

⁴⁴ Marie Belloc Lowndes, *The Merry Wives of Westminster*, London 1946, pp. 58-60.

⁴⁵ Frankau, p. 112.

ishness and Germanness in the Imperial period. In exploring Jewish responses to the upsurge in antisemitism, these writers insisted that Jewish behaviour and attitudes were preventing a successful resolution of the *Judenfrage*. In short, they blamed the Jews for their own victimisation. In their fiction they introduced stereotyped, despicable Jewish characters, whose behaviour contrasted with that of “good” Jews.⁴⁶ In Mauthner’s *Der neue Ahasver* (1882), for example, the “good” Jewish physician who treats the Jewish protagonist (also a “good” Jew—he has been wounded in the Franco-Prussian war fighting for German Unification and subsequently converts to Christianity) explains that newly enriched, social-climbing speculators—“bad” Jews—are poisoning the atmosphere in Berlin and thus endangering the future of all Jews: “Otherwise we hard-working members of the middle class would have long since been able to forget the whole thing.”⁴⁷ Mauthner despised both the wealthy Jews of Berlin’s *Tiergartenviertel* and the recently arrived *Ostjuden*, whom he blamed for delaying the absorption of authentic German Jews. In his contribution to the *Judentaufen* symposium that Werner Sombart organised in 1912, he proposed that Germany close its borders to Polish and Russian immigrants in order to accelerate the assimilation of its own Jews. He argued that, while contrary to western notions of freedom, the border closure would benefit both Germany’s antisemites and Jews. In the case of the latter, it would “create a sharp dividing line between its cultivated elements and a mass with which the educated German Jew has nothing in common”. Mauthner, who had withdrawn earlier from the *Gemeinde*, now urged the rest of the community to follow his example.⁴⁸

Alberti took the same position, not only blaming Jews for causing antisemitism but also urging them to disappear in order to combat it. In an essay in *Die Gesellschaft* in 1889, he wrote that having lost their faith, Jews had lost their right to a separate, collective existence and had become a mere “clique”, marked by its “superfluousness, harmfulness and rottenness”. Echoing *völkisch* antimodernism, he denounced Jews for their materialism, branding them as the principal contributors to the degeneration and corruption of the age. Nonetheless, he opposed the new antisemitism, believing it to be counterproductive; instead of weakening Jewishness, it strengthened it by forcing Jews to turn inward, thus heightening their col-

⁴⁶ Katherine Roper, *German Encounters with Modernity. Novels of Imperial Berlin*, Atlantic Highlands, NJ 1991, chapter 8.

⁴⁷ Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 150.

⁴⁸ Arthur A. Landsberger (ed.), *Judentaufen*, Munich 1912, pp. 75-77.

lective consciousness. Only if the pressure of antisemitism were to be relaxed would Jews be able to effect their “inner, spiritual self-disintegration”.⁴⁹ In Ludwig Jacobowski’s best seller *Werther der Jude* (1891), the protagonist is a tortured, self-hating Jew, Leo Wolff, who kills himself at the novel’s end because he is unable to live with his Jewishness. As a university student in Berlin, Leo struggles to free himself of Jewish traits and feelings of collective solidarity (*Gemeinsamkeitsgefühl*) but is still viewed and treated as a Jew. Beset with anxiety, headaches and other ills, he becomes obsessed with antisemitism and its solution, at times envisioning himself as the saviour of German Jewry, the leader of a crusade for its moral regeneration and ultimate integration into German society. However, after the collapse of a family-sponsored stock scheme, he concludes that the Jews cannot be reformed and decides to have nothing more to do with them. But when a young woman whom he has seduced and abandoned kills herself and an aristocratic fellow member of his student *Verbindung* tells him he is a despoiler of innocent German womanhood, he becomes in his own eyes no different than his relations: he, like them, is corrupting and betraying the moral order. Consumed with self-loathing, he shoots himself.

Self-criticism was not absent from Anglo-Jewish fiction, but Anglo-Jewish writers rarely foregrounded what was central to much German-Jewish fiction of this period: the bifurcation between the “good” Jew and the “bad” Jew, the struggle of the tortured, self-hating Jew to find acceptance and peace of mind, the emotional toll of living in a society that was obsessed with Jews. It is difficult to name a work of fiction that revolves around the Jewish Question or its impact on Jewish life. The Jews who populate Anglo-Jewish fiction tend to be less emotionally overwrought than their German counterparts. They may be eager to leave the tribal fold, but they do not struggle with their Jewishness, let alone kill themselves because of it. If they experience it as a burden or an embarrassment, they are nonetheless able to forget it or leave it behind them as they pursue integration and acceptance. It does not become an obsession, to be confronted repeatedly.

There are, however, two possible exceptions, each instructive in its own way. The first is Amy Levy’s short story ‘Cohen of Trinity’ (1889), the tale of an unkempt, ungainly, “desperately lonely” Cambridge undergraduate, with marked Jewish features, who is sent down from the

⁴⁹ Conrad Alberti, ‘Judentum und Antisemitismus. Eine zeitgenössische Studie’, in *Die Gesellschaft*, vol. IV, No. 12 (December 1889), pp. 1718-1733.

university for academic reasons, writes a bestseller that brings him the fame he craves and then, unable to enjoy his success, puts a bullet through his head.⁵⁰ The story is eerily prophetic. It appeared the same year that Levy, who had also been at Cambridge, ended her own life, two months before her twenty-eighth birthday, having recently won recognition for her fiction, poetry and criticism. Although it is always difficult to know the motives for suicide, there is a consensus in Levy's case that conflicting feelings about both her sexual orientation and Jewishness contributed to her unhappiness. Curiously, in the short story that foreshadowed her own death, Cohen is not a self-hating Jew and his Jewishness is not the source of his inability to establish lasting and close personal relationships. All we learn is that he "volunteered little information" on the subject of his family and his middle-class Maida Vale background. The Jewish Question is at most a muted subtext, background rather than foreground. Levy never links Cohen's problems to his Jewishness or student antisemitism. To have done so would have been to introduce a theme that would not have resonated with late Victorian British readers because it would have seemed too far-fetched or improbable.

The other exception is Pamela Frankau's portrait of a self-hating London Jewish screenwriter in her novel *The Devil We Know* (1939). Granddaughter of Julia Frankau and daughter of Gilbert and the first of his three Christian wives, Pamela (1908–1967) was a believing, practicing Christian from birth, which explains in part why her Jewishness left her untroubled. On the other hand, the unhappy protagonist of *The Devil We Know*, Philip Meyer, very much dislikes being a Jew and voices his dislike repeatedly. In fact, he is obsessed with the subject and cannot leave it alone. Tired of listening to him, his part-Jewish cousin Sally jokingly remarks, "I am going to impose a fine on you for every time you mention the race". When he asks her if he really mentions it that often, she replies, "About twice an hour". He struggles to repress those parts of him that are marked as Jewish, such as talking with his hands. In the mid-1930s, as antisemitism at home and abroad mounts, he suffers a breakdown and becomes a raving paranoid, blaming all his misfortunes on his birth. "Everyone whom I have ever known has hated me. I am not blaming them. I am only sorry that I was born with the taint at this moment when there is no escape."⁵¹ In the

⁵⁰ The story is reprinted in Melvyn New (ed.), *The Complete Novels and Selected Writings of Amy Levy, 1861-1889*, Gainesville, FL 1993, pp. 478-485.

⁵¹ Pamela Frankau, *The Devil We Know*, New York 1939, pp. 143, 367.

end, however, he is cured; his self-loathing and paranoia recede. (Exactly how this is achieved is not clear.)

Does the case of Philip Meyer weaken my contention that the theme of self-hatred was more muted in Britain than in Germany? Perhaps. Yet it may also be the exception that proves the rule, first, because Meyer is, however improbably, cured of his self-hatred, and, second, because he is not a British Jew but rather a German Jew, a native of Hamburg, who lived in Bradford, a community dominated by German-Jewish immigrants, before moving to London, the same community in which Frankau's lover, the poet and critic Humbert Wolfe (1886–1940), grew up. This is no mere incidental detail, for the most unambiguous examples of self-hatred in Anglo-Jewish history emerge from the biographies of German-Jewish merchants and manufacturers who settled in Britain in the Victorian and Edwardian periods. Just as these middle-class immigrants and their children were more likely to become Unitarians or Anglicans than native-born Jews, so too were they more likely to experience their Jewishness as a shameful blemish, given the character of the Jewish Question in Germany during their formative years.⁵² Wolfe, who as a boy and young man was bitterly ashamed of being Jewish, commented in his memoirs on the thoroughness with which the Jewish merchant families of Bradford adapted to the English environment: "They left nothing undone that the strange Island-people practised"—in spite of which, they remained outsiders. "Was it surprising that, instead of standing on their Jewry, as upon a point of honour, some, if not many, were ashamed of it?"⁵³ The German-Jewish grandparents of the *Daily Telegraph* columnist "Peter Simple" (Michael Wharton, b. 1913), who settled in Bradford in the 1860s, were actively hostile to things Jewish:

"My grandfather was said ... to have driven the visiting rabbi with imprecations from his door; my grandmother was positively anti-semitic, I believe; at any rate she was so

⁵² Todd M. Endelman, 'German-Jewish Settlement in Victorian England', in Werner E. Mosse *et al.* (eds.), *Second Chance. Two Centuries of German-Speaking Jews in the United Kingdom*, Tübingen 1991 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 48), pp. 37-56.

⁵³ Humbert Wolfe, *Now a Stranger*, London 1933, pp. 125-127. In the second volume of his memoirs, which covers his experiences between ages seventeen and twenty-two and which is written in the third person, he notes that, despite his profile, he believed that nobody could suspect his Jewish origins. "He was not ashamed of them, of course, but one need not rub them in, need one? He took good care not to rub them in." *The Upward Anguish*, London 1938, p. 47.

anxious to disavow any Jewish antecedents that she made sure that none of her children, three sons and two daughters, married people with Jewish blood.”

Wharton himself, who believed that his father’s surname, Nathan, contributed to his lack of social success at Oxford, changed it in the late 1930s (Wharton was his non-Jewish mother’s maiden name) to escape identification as a Jew—to remove a label, as he put it, that had immense potency in the eyes of others.⁵⁴

V.

To sharpen the contrast between the German and British experiences, I want to conclude by comparing the lives of two self-hating Jews who achieved political prominence in the early twentieth century—Walther Rathenau (1867–1922) and Edwin Montagu (1879–1924). The two shared much in common. Both were born into extremely wealthy families. Rathenau’s father, Emil (1838–1915), was a titan of German industry, founder of the *Allgemeine Elektrizitäts-Gesellschaft*; Montagu’s father, Samuel (1832–1911), was a bullion broker and foreign exchange banker, and Liberal MP for Whitechapel from 1885 to 1900. Both were driven, restless men who achieved high political office—Rathenau as chief of the War Raw Materials Division of the Ministry of War from September 1914 to March 1915, and as Minister of Reconstruction and then Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1921 and 1922; Montagu as Parliamentary Private Secretary to H. H. Asquith from 1906 to 1910, Parliamentary Undersecretary of State for India from 1910 to 1914, Minister of Munitions in 1916, and finally Secretary of State for India from 1917 to 1922. Both mixed with the great and the mighty (with, however, different degrees of success) and both, of course, suffered from being Jewish.

In different ways, each chose to win fame in arenas outside those in which his father had made his name and fortune. Rathenau was not content with being a successful industrialist and banker but aspired also to be known as a man of letters, social critic, moralist and prophet. In his dilettantish, overblown essays and books, he denounced mechanisation and materialism, criticising unregulated capitalism and affecting to despise luxury. (His critics derided him as “the prophet in a dinner jacket” or “Christ in evening dress”.) In life, as opposed to letters, however, he was

⁵⁴ Michael Wharton, *The Missing Will*, London 1984, pp. 4, 37, 83.

not content to remain the outsider. He cultivated the company of the powerful and, in particular, worshipped the old Prussian elite, attributing to them a nobility of spirit and character that he imagined Jews and middle-class Germans lacked. When the time came for him to do his military service, for example, he tried to join a cavalry regiment that reputedly accepted only blonds. Later (in 1908 and 1910) he worked assiduously to receive two royal decorations, this time with success. A passionate admirer of the cool, restrained Prussian architecture of the late eighteenth century, in 1910 he purchased and restored Schloss Freienwalde, a former Hohenzollern estate forty miles northeast of Berlin, furnishing it with period furniture, tapestries and portraits of the royal family.⁵⁵ Albert Einstein, who solicited Rathenau's support for Zionism, noted that "he was in love with Prussianism, its Junker class, and its militarism". In social life, in addition to cultivating aristocratic connections, he also struck up friendships with "very inconsequential people" (the phrase is Count Harry Kessler's) whose sole distinction was their blond hair, blue eyes and "Nordic" racial features. Einstein also recognised that "he was a person inwardly dependent on the recognition of men much inferior to him in their human qualities".⁵⁶

Montagu also struck out in new directions. Although his father represented Whitechapel in the House of Commons from 1885 to 1900 and was a leading spokesman on monetary policy, the focal points of his life were the City and the Jewish community, rather than Westminster. He entered Parliament because he was, first and foremost, a successful banker. His son Edwin, on the other hand, knew and loved high politics alone. He refused to pursue a career in medicine or science or at the bar, which his father encouraged him to do, and a year after taking his degree at

⁵⁵ Paul Letourneau, 'Rathenau et la question juive', in *Revue d'Allemagne*, vol. XIII, No. 3 (July-September 1981), p. 532; Peter Loewenberg, *Walther Rathenau and Henry Kissinger. The Jew as a Modern Statesman in Two Political Cultures*, Leo Baeck Memorial Lecture 24, New York 1980, pp. 4-5; *idem*, 'Walther Rathenau and German Society', Ph.D. diss., University of California 1966, pp. 59-61; David Felix, *Walther Rathenau and the Weimar Republic. The Politics of Reparation*, Baltimore 1971, pp. 44, 50.

⁵⁶ Harry Kessler, *Walther Rathenau. His Life and Work*, transl. by W. D. Robson-Scott and Lawrence Hyde, London 1929, p. 72; Albert Einstein, *On Peace*, ed. by Otto Nathan, New York 1960, pp. 52-53. His sister Edith, who converted to Christianity after their father's death, shared his admiration for blue eyes and blond hair. She wrote in her diary: "I am forever grateful that my children have so much light blood and that their children in turn will be yet much fairer, lighter, freer and blonder than they." Quoted in Loewenberg, *Rathenau*, p. 192.

Cambridge, he entered politics, standing for West Cambridgeshire in 1906. While he shared none of Rathenau's cultural and intellectual interests, he did share his taste for the prominent and the powerful. As an adult, he spent as little time as possible with his relatives (with the exception of his youngest brother, Lionel, known as Cardie [1883–1948]) or other members of the Anglo-Jewish notability, the *milieu* in which his parents socialised, preferring instead the company of well-connected, well-born non-Jews. Among his two dozen closest friends, there was not one Jew.⁵⁷

Politically and socially, Montagu had an easier go of it than Rathenau. Thanks to friendships made at Cambridge, he moved in high political circles from the start. He rapidly became a Liberal insider, being appointed Parliamentary Private Secretary to Asquith, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, in February 1906. He then went on to hold a series of high offices. This kind of public career was impossible for a Jew, whether baptised or not, in either Imperial or Weimar Germany. Rathenau shunned day-to-day politics and public life before the First World War, even though he was friendly with Kaiser Wilhelm II and two Imperial Chancellors, Bernhard von Bülow and Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg. When he attained office, it was in periods of extraordinary crisis (the First World War and the first years of the Republic) and due to his technocratic expertise rather than his political savvy, experience or connections. Moreover, at every stage of his public life, Rathenau encountered opposition based to a large extent on the fact that he was a Jew. The Imperial bureaucracy tried to thwart the awarding of royal decorations to him in recognition of memoranda he had written after touring Germany's colonies in Africa in 1907 and 1908 with Colonial Secretary Bernhard Dernburg. During the First World War, despite the importance of his contribution, securing vital raw materials that the army had neglected to stockpile, the War Ministry treated him as an interloper and pariah (he was the only Jew and the only civilian in the ministry). "One day," his friend Harry Kessler recalled, "his department was isolated by a wooden partition, which had grown up overnight, from those of the other old-established gentlemen in the War Office, as if it had been a cholera

⁵⁷ Naomi B. Levine, *Politics, Religion and Love. The Story of H. H. Asquith, Venetia Stanley and Edwin Montagu, Based on the Life and Letters of Edwin Samuel Montagu*, New York 1991, pp. 100, 324.

station".⁵⁸ As foreign minister in the Weimar period he faced vicious antisemitic attacks, which culminated in his assassination on 24th June 1922 as he drove from his home to his office in an open car.

Rathenau's social life was no less troublesome. Although he mixed with Gentiles in government, artistic and literary circles, his close friends were "almost wholly confined to people of Jewish origin". As Werner Mosse observes, the social climate at the time was "unpropitious for sustained personal relations across ethnic divides. ... Segregation, whether informal or institutionalized, was the order of the day".⁵⁹ Ironically, because his sexual interests were homoerotic, he did not have to face what would have been a vexing problem: finding a non-Jewish wife. This was an issue for German-Jewish bankers and industrialists who wanted to marry outside the fold, since few German families from the aristocracy or the *haute bourgeoisie* were willing to contract marital alliances with them, whether they were converted or not. On the basis of his close study of marital patterns among the Jewish economic elite, Mosse speculates that Rathenau would have been forced to look outside Germany for a socially appropriate mate.⁶⁰

While Montagu's integration went more smoothly than Rathenau's, it was not trouble-free. At school at Clifton he and the other Jewish boys were teased. (He told his parents that "of course" he took no notice of it, which was unlikely.)⁶¹ At Cambridge he was snubbed, which has led one historian to speculate that when he later condemned the prejudice and discrimination Indian students met at Oxbridge he was thinking back to his own experiences.⁶² His closest friends and colleagues referred repeatedly to his Jewishness and "Asiatic-oriental" background. Asquith and Venetia Stanley, whom he married in 1915, called him "Mr. Wu", "the Assyrian", "Shem" and "our Oriental friend" and referred to his home in Queen Anne's Gate as "the Silken Tent". In defending Venetia's engagement to Edwin, Raymond Asquith, eldest son of the Prime Minister, admitted that the bridegroom had "not a drop of European blood". When the War Cabi-

⁵⁸ Kessler, p. 181. One military official declared openly: "If this man Rathenau has helped us, then it is a scandal and a disgrace." Emil Ludwig, *Nine Sketches from Life*, New York 1934, p. 161.

⁵⁹ Werner E. Mosse, *The German-Jewish Economic Elite, 1820-1935. A Socio-Cultural Profile*, Oxford 1989, pp. 129, 159.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

⁶¹ Sigismund David Waley, *Edwin Montagu. A Memoir and an Account of His Visits to India*, London 1964, p. 5.

⁶² Levine, p. 57.

net was negotiating with the Zionists in 1917, Asquith's sister-in-law Cynthia wrote in her diary, "What fun if Montagu and Venetia are forced to go and live in Palestine!"⁶³ Some—but not all—of this took place behind Montagu's back, and we do not know the extent to which he was aware of it. But not all was hidden from view. Margot Asquith, the Prime Minister's wife, told him to his face in 1913 that "he had the qualities of his race, which do not include courage", a comment that he took "quite meekly", according to her report.⁶⁴ In politics, Edwardian scandalmongers on the radical Right, as well as some social Radicals, made much of Montagu's Jewishness and the Jewishness of other prominent Liberals such as Rufus Isaacs (1860–1935), Montagu's cousins Stuart (1856–1926) and Herbert Samuel (1870–1963), especially during the Indian silver scandal of 1912 and the Marconi scandal of 1912–1913. The irony was that Montagu had no direct financial interest in the family firm, which was accused of wrongdoing in the silver affair.⁶⁵

Of course, the hostility that Montagu encountered was neither as relentless nor as overt as that directed at Rathenau and other German Jews of his generation. It is difficult to imagine Montagu writing, as Rathenau did in 1911:

"In the years of his youth there is a painful moment for every German Jew that he remembers for the whole of his life—when he is struck for the first time by the consciousness that he has entered the world as a second-class citizen and that no ability and no merit can liberate him from this situation."⁶⁶

Nor is it possible to imagine Montagu confessing, as Rathenau did on his first visit to Bülow: "Your Highness, before I am worthy of the favour of being received by you, I must make an explanation that is also a confession. Your Highness, I am a Jew."⁶⁷ Nonetheless, being Jewish caused the already gloomy and insecure Montagu further anguish. From his Cambridge years on, he did what he could to escape the tribal fold, although he

⁶³ Raymond Asquith to Conrad Russell, 24th July 1915, in John Jolliffe (ed.), *Raymond Asquith. Life and Letters*, London 1980, p. 202; Cynthia Asquith, *Diaries, 1915–1918*, London 1968, p. 360.

⁶⁴ Levine, pp. 31, 57, 177, 199, 208, 211, 388–389; H. H. Asquith, *Letters to Venetia Stanley*, ed. by Michael and Eleanor Brock, Oxford 1982, pp. 29, 306, 521.

⁶⁵ G. R. Searle, *Corruption in British Politics, 1895–1930*, Oxford 1987, pp. 202–203.

⁶⁶ Walther Rathenau, 'Staat und Judentum. Eine Polemik', in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. I, Berlin 1925, pp. 188–89.

⁶⁷ Quoted in James Joll, *Intellectuals in Politics. Three Biographical Essays*, London 1960, p. 67.

was limited in how far he could go by his financial dependence on his father, an observant Jew, and, after his father's death, by the terms of his father's will, which disinherited any child who converted or married outside the faith. He gave up regular synagogue attendance and observance of *kashrut* from the time he entered Cambridge, agreeing only, after protracted negotiations, to be with his family on Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Passover.

Montagu's flight from Jewishness was more than a repudiation of his family's faith, however. He wanted to put as much distance between himself and the Jewish community as possible (unlike his cousin Herbert Samuel, who also ceased to believe in the God of Jewish tradition but continued to participate in communal life and attend synagogue). Montagu refused to take an interest in the club work that his sister Lily (1873–1963) did with Jewish girls because it was "sectarian" and strengthening "barriers" that he wanted to abolish. (That he viewed her Jewish interests as "sectarian" is telling, for Lily Montagu was a representative of the most radical and universalist wing of Reform Judaism.) He refused to consider marriage to a Jewish woman, telling his mother, "It is not only that I don't as a rule like Jewesses. It is also that I firmly believe to look for a wife in one set of people is as wrong as it would be to say that you must look for a wife among blue-eyed people".⁶⁸

Montagu's choice of spouse, the daughter of the fourth Lord Sheffield, suggests that for him being married to a well-born Gentile was the most important of the benefits that marriage bestowed. (Venetia went through a nominal Reform conversion so Edwin would not lose his income). Edwin was besotted with Venetia, but his love was not reciprocated. She was not attracted to him sexually and saw their marriage as one of convenience rather than passion. As his wife, she seldom consented to have sex with him. This soon became an issue between them, leaving him feeling angry and humiliated, and, despite the urgings of her close friends to "sacrifice herself" more often, she refused. She also insisted from the start on the right to have sex outside marriage. She slept with other men, bore a child that was not his and spent his money on travel, high fashion, drink, lavish entertainment and home decoration.⁶⁹ It is hard to know what pleasure he received from the union, other than the deep satisfaction of having done

⁶⁸ Waley, pp. 7-8, 11, 24, 47-48, 58.

⁶⁹ Artemis Cooper (ed.), *A Durable Fire. The Letters of Duff and Diana Cooper, 1913-1950*, London 1983, pp. 57, 91-93, 96-97, 133; Cynthia Asquith, pp. 74, 98; Levine, pp. 275, 386-389.

what his mother and father did not want him to do. In this sense, Venetia was a trophy wife, a symbol to be displayed to all the world of his successful escape from the communal fold—and his parents.

Yet, however much Montagu desired to be free of his Jewish ties, he never took *public* measures to demonstrate how “un-Jewish” he was. Perhaps this was because his career and wife were proof enough that he was not an outsider, or perhaps because the pressure to repudiate his Jewishness was weaker than in Germany and elsewhere. (Both reasons are linked.) Whatever the reason, his self-hatred never underwrote a public attack on Jewishness, as it did with Rathenau and other self-hating German Jews. Aside from family and close friends, it would seem, no one knew of his inner turmoil and unhappiness.

This was not the case with Rathenau, who made his Jewishness a matter of public record and intruded it into his relations with friends and correspondents. In 1897, under the pseudonym “W. Hartenau”, he published ‘Höre, Israel!’, a virulent, nine-page attack on German Jews, in Harden’s monthly journal *Die Zukunft*. (He republished it, under his own name, in a collection of essays, *Impressionen*, in 1902.) In terms borrowed from the vocabulary of racial antisemitism, he represented Berlin Jews as a strange, self-segregating, malevolent Asiatic tribe:

“Walk through the Thiergartenstrasse at noon on Sunday or spend an evening in the lobby of a Berlin theatre. What a strange sight! At the very heart of German life, a distinct tribe of foreigners, resplendently and showily dressed, hot-blooded in their deportment. An Asiatic horde on the sands of Mark Brandenburg. The affected contentment of these people does not reveal how many old, unsatisfied hates rest on their shoulders. ... Mixing intimately with each other, cut off from the world without, they live in a voluntary invisible ghetto—a foreign organism in the body of the *Volk* rather than a living part of it.”⁷⁰

Rathenau was explicit about who was responsible for the plight of the Jews. The state had made them equal citizens, allowing them to become Germans, but they had chosen to remain strangers. In the spirit of blaming the victim, he was unsparing in his criticism of their behaviour and in his prescription for their reformation. He told them to stop walking about in a loose and lethargic way that made them the laughing-stock of a race raised in a strict military fashion. He ordered them to reshape their bodies—their underdeveloped chests, narrow shoulders, awkward feet and effeminate

⁷⁰ Walther Rathenau [W. Hartenau, pseud.], ‘Höre, Israel!’, in *Die Zukunft*, vol. XVIII (6th March 1897), p. 454.

plumpness. To regain their natural beauty, he urged Jewish women to cease smothering themselves in “bales of satin, clouds of lace and nests of diamonds”. German Jews also needed to learn to speak correctly, to purge their speech of Yiddishisms, hyperbole and vocal distortions. They needed to curb their unruly ambition, abandon their pursuit of honours and decorations, content themselves with social ties within their own *milieu*, repress their cleverness and irony and cease bragging of their philanthropy.⁷¹ Rathenau ruled out mass baptism as a solution, since the converts would generate a more pernicious antisemitism than that directed at their former co-religionists. (Did he have the historical experience of the Spanish and Portuguese New Christians in mind?) Conversion, as opposed to secession from the *Gemeinde*, the solution that Rathenau himself chose, was “too Jewish”. What, then, was the solution? His response was as vague as most proposals for full assimilation: conscious self-cultivation and absorption of German ways and the shedding of tribal attributes, rather than superficial mimicry. The goal was to produce “not imitation Germans but Germanly conditioned and educated Jews”—that is, Jews very much like Rathenau’s idealised image of himself.⁷²

In later years Rathenau was more temperate when writing about Jews. Nonetheless, he continued to view Jews and Germans in a polarised fashion, each different in essence from the other, and to behave in ways that made visible his fidelity to Germanness and lack of attachment to Jews. From late 1913 until his death, he cultivated and sustained a close, even intimate, friendship with Wilhelm Schwaner, a *völkisch* publisher and youth organizer, and author of a Germanic Bible. He supported Schwaner’s work twice with the considerable sum of three thousand marks.⁷³ During the war, his racial ideals and blind admiration of the Prussian warrior caste led him to hail General Erich Ludendorff as Germany’s saviour and to believe, almost until the very end of the war, that he alone could prevent a German defeat. At the same time, when asked in 1918 to join the fight against antisemitism, he refused. While acknowledging the threat, he argued that a collective Jewish response would confirm in the minds of antisemites the solidarity of all Jews, who, in fact, were no more than a religious community, from which he had withdrawn. According to his friend Alfred Kerr (1867–1948), the well known theatre

⁷¹ Rathenau, ‘Höre, Israel!’, pp. 458-460.

⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 456-57. He offered a more principled refusal to be baptised in ‘Staat und Judentum’, pp. 189-190.

⁷³ On his ties to Schwaner, see Peter Loewenberg, ‘Antisemitismus und jüdischer Selbsthass’, in *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, vol. 5 (1979), pp. 457-464.

critic, when Rathenau was a government minister, he went out of his way to treat Jews worse than other people, as if to prove that he felt no solidarity with them.⁷⁴

The pain that Rathenau and Montagu experienced was emotional rather than material. Excepting the circumstances of Rathenau's death, neither suffered economically or physically because he was a Jew; Montagu's Jewishness did not even impede his entry into smart society. This does not mean, however, that the pain they felt was any less real or any less active in shaping their behaviour and outlook. Indeed, the very fact that they enjoyed so many other advantages—wealth, talent, intelligence, charm, influence—made their background loom even larger, magnifying its importance in their eyes, for it alone seemed to stand between them and real happiness. Jews on whom fortune smiled in other ways were especially vulnerable to the lacerating effects of self-hatred. To be sure, both men would have been unhappy whatever their birth or however mild the Jewish Question. Antisemitism did not make them tortured, anxious men.⁷⁵ Their emotional distress had complex, multiple roots, the outcome of inheritance and upbringing, as well as the temper of the times. What the stigmatisation of Jewishness did was to intensify and structure their unhappiness, providing it with an outlet and shaping the way it expressed itself. The Jewish Question both contributed to their despair and, at the same time, provided them with themes for its expression, offering them a vocabulary, a set of grievances and a way of acting out their inner conflict.

The contrast between Montagu's private self-loathing and Rathenau's public self-confession and self-flagellation points to a profound difference between the Jewish experience in the two nations. In nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Germany, Jewishness had greater political or public resonance than in Britain. It was a more ubiquitous theme, extruding itself into all manner of activities and discussions. The *Judenfrage* was more alive there than in Britain, where the emancipation debate focused on access to political office rather than the removal of a broad range of legal disabilities and the reformation of Jewish manners, social habits and occupational preferences. In other words, with state and society in Germany

⁷⁴ Loewenberg, *Rathenau*, pp. 120-22; Walther Rathenau, *Briefe*, new edn., Dresden 1927, vol. 2, No. 359, p. 10; Alfred Kerr, *Walther Rathenau. Erinnerungen eines Freundes*, Amsterdam 1935, pp. 128-129.

⁷⁵ In his discussion of Rathenau's self-hatred, Peter Loewenberg notes: "Ethnic minority self hatred is in each individual case a later socialized manifestation of a basic self hatred that existed prior to any social awareness of minority status, and that to some degree is a normal component of the human personality." Loewenberg, *Rathenau*, p. 68.

more resistant to Jewish integration, demanding that Jews prove themselves fit for citizenship by emancipating themselves from their Jewishness, radical assimilationists there had to work harder to bury their pasts. They could less easily forget that they had been born Jews, or persuade others to forget it, because the distinction between Jew and non-Jew was more salient, more charged. It carried greater weight and thus weighed more on those Jews who did not want to be Jews, forcing them to distance themselves in public fora from unconverted Jews and, in some cases, even to urge others to follow their example. For the latter, their own salvation had become inseparable from the collective salvation of the Jews, so pervasive was the obsession with Jews. In this sense, one may speak of a *Sonderweg* in Germany.

PAUL MENDES-FLOHR

Jewish Self-Hatred and the Dialectics of Assimilation: A Comment on Todd M. Endelman

Drawing upon his experience in his native Brooklyn, the American novelist Henry Miller once observed that “no one hates the Jews more than the Jew”.¹ Miller was referring to the biting, often venomous, criticism that Jews direct at their kinfolk. Indeed, it would seem that a modicum of self-hatred has become *de rigueur* for the modern Jew. The late Israeli historian Yehezkel Kaufmann has argued that even Zionism, the movement of Jewish national pride, is not free of self-hatred. Zionism, he maintained, “actually based the national movement on a rationale of charges that it took over from the antisemites and sought to justify hatred of the Jews: the *galut* or Diaspora Jews, in the countries to which they have been dispersed, really deserve to be hated ... Therefore they must leave the Diaspora”.² What Kaufmann neglected to emphasise—in contrast to Todd Endelman—is that perhaps all modern Jewish ideologies, from Reform to the *Bund*, are informed by a similar self-hatred. A self-denigrating apologia applied to the image of the Jew in the modern world, however, should be emphatically distinguished from antisemitism proper. The thin and not always clear line between self-hatred and antisemitism is suggested by the adage, so typical of the modern Jew’s ironic self-awareness, that “an antisemite is one who hates the Jews more than necessary”.

As Todd Endelman has judiciously noted in his elegant paper, self-hatred is a product of assimilation or, more properly, acculturation. Locked for a length of time in a house of distorting mirrors, and bereft of an alternative self-perception, one would perforce accept as true the phantasmagoric images in the mirrors. This has happened to the deracinated Blacks of America and in varying degrees to all minorities which, as they were

¹ Henry Miller, *Tropic of Cancer*, New York 1961, p. 3.

² Yehezkel Kaufmann, ‘The Ruin of the Soul’ (1934), in *Zionism Reconsidered*, ed. and transl. by Michael Selzer, London 1970, p. 121.

thrust into the whirlwind of the modern world, were shorn of their native cultures and self-esteem. And so it happened in varying degrees to the Jews as they sought to integrate themselves into the social and cultural fabric of Western, modernising societies. To identify the crazed victims of the house of mirrors with the proprietor only magnifies the distortion, of course. Although in the extreme it might be justified to speak of Black racists and Jewish antisemites, it is not very instructive. Rather we should speak of ambivalence towards oneself and one's brethren.

This complex emotion undoubtedly affected the Jews as they were torn from their primordial community in the accelerated process of assimilation and acculturation that characterised their entrance into the modern world. The phenomenon of self-hatred, as Endelman emphasises, must thus be understood in the context of assimilation.

A comparison of self-hatred among the Jews of Britain and Germany should, accordingly, consider the nature of assimilation and acculturation in these respective countries. This perspective, I believe, would enrich Endelman's examination, which principally seeks to highlight the contrasting nature of Jewish self-hatred in Britain and Germany. As an explanation of the differences, he focuses primarily on the political dynamics of Jewish emancipation and social integration in these countries. A comparative study of assimilation as it relates to the phenomenon of self-hatred might return to the house of distorting mirrors, and ask who the proprietor of the maze of frightening, alienating images was; and perhaps even more significantly, what were the specific images that the Jews saw themselves reflected as in the house of mirrors into which they were seemingly obliged to enter in the passage to modernity?

Confining myself to Germany, I should note that the proprietors of the house of mirrors were often metaphysicians and philosophers. They bore such noble names as Kant, Fichte and Hegel. Moreover, they were often advocates of Enlightenment and a liberal political order. In other words, they were allies of what in the eighteenth century was somewhat ambiguously called called by Christian Wilhelm Dohm and others the *bürgerliche Verbesserung der Juden*—the civil betterment of the Jews that also promised to bring about the improvement of their public morality and conduct. The progressive moment in this line of argument was that Jews were in fact capable of reformation, of *Verbesserung*. Although it was racial antisemites who would contend that the Jews were incorrigibly Jewish and irreparably diabolical, in arguing for the radical reformation of the Jews some of the liberal philosophers came rather close to saying this. In a philosophical treatise of 1793 celebrating the French Revolution, Fichte

held that while as human beings the Jews manifestly deserved human rights, he would be hesitant to grant them full civil rights unless one could “chop off all of their heads and replace them with new ones, in which there would not be one single Jewish idea”.³ The villain was Judaism, the culture and religion of the Jews. The Jews *qua* human beings must be rescued from Judaism, at least from its most egregious features. For Kant, the friend of Mendelssohn, the faults of Judaism and thus Jewish public behaviour were due to its false conception of worship, which emphasised ritual and prayer, in his judgement, at the expense of ethical service on behalf of God. As he put it in a somewhat cumbersome but oft-repeated indictment, Judaism is a heteronomous pseudo-religion. The original German, which defies translation, is much harsher: “Afterdienst.”⁴

Hence, Yehezkel Kaufmann was certainly right when he told his fellow Zionists: “We have inherited this disease of self-hatred from the Enlightenment.”⁵ This statement should not be overinterpreted. The Enlightenment, as Kaufmann readily acknowledged, did much to promote the human dignity of the Jews; its endorsement of universal human rights laid the foundation for the liberal, democratic order that eventually granted the Jews political equality. Yet it must be recalled that in the protracted debates regarding the eligibility of the Jews for civil and political parity—debates which from the 1840s were called the “Jewish Question”⁶—the votaries of the Enlightenment raised considerable objections to Judaism, and to the sensibilities it putatively engendered, even when, like Hegel and Marx, they supported Jewish emancipation. Jews were quick to learn that their acceptance would require their self-transformation, or rather *Selbstverbesserung*. So began an obsessive quest for ethical and social respectability (*Sittlichkeit*), a quest that rendered the German Jew acutely sensitive to the public image (again, particularly as refracted through liberal discourse) of virtually every aspect of Jewish culture and public behaviour.

³ Johann Gottlieb Fichte, ‘Beitrag zur Berichtigung der Urtheile des Publicums über die Französische Revolution’ [1793], in *idem, Sämtliche Werke*, ed. by J.H. Fichte, vol. 6, Berlin 1845, p. 150.

⁴ Kant, ‘Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft’ in *idem, Werkausgabe*, ed. by Wilhelm Weischedel, Frankfurt am Main 1977, pp. 838f.

⁵ Kaufmann, p. 118.

⁶ Cf. Jacob Toury, ‘“The Jewish Question”: A Semantic Approach’, in *Year Book XI of the Leo Baeck Institute*, London 1966, pp. 85–106; see also Alex Bein, *Die Judenfrage. Biographie eines Weltproblems*, Stuttgart 1980; Otto Dov Kulka, ‘Introduction’ to R.R. Auerbach (ed.), *The Jewish Question in German-Speaking Countries, 1848–1914*, New York 1994, pp. ix–xi.

What ensued was a deliberate and often demonstrative adoption of the culture and national sentiments of what German historiography was wont to call the *Wirtsvolk*, the people who served as the Jews' "hosts". As one of the lay leaders of nineteenth century German Jewry declared, "The German national education [*Bildung*] of the Jews appears as the most essential task, to which everyone who expects anything of himself must be dedicated".⁷ The author of this citation, Moritz Lazarus (1824–1903), who was brought up as a traditional Jew, applied himself to this task with such alacrity that he completed the transition to a German cultural identity, in the words of Gershom Scholem, "in a mere five years".⁸ The Jews who accepted the challenge of self-transformation and acculturation were naturally threatened when their less acculturated co-religionists reminded the *Wirtsvolk* of traditional Jewry's cultural and social particularity. A Jew in a caftan, speaking Yiddish, arriving in Berlin from the "ghettos" of Eastern Europe—"Halb-Asien," as the Austrian Jewish novelist Karl Emil Franzos ironically put it—profoundly embarrassed the city's Jewish bourgeoisie. This is the *Ostjude* syndrome discussed by Lloyd Gartner in his contribution to this volume. The embarrassment frequently engendered a splenetic impatience that, since Theodor Lessing coined the term, has been known as "Jewish self-hatred". It was not elicited exclusively by *Ostjuden*, however. In his youthful essay of 1897, 'Höre Israel', cited by Endelman, Walter Rathenau acerbically criticised the clumsy acculturation of the Jewish *Bildungsbürgertum*. With a barrage of sarcastic barbs, some bordering on racial slurs, he ridiculed what he regarded as the ostentatious display, on the part of his fellow German Jews, of bourgeois taste and culture:

"Look at yourselves in the mirror. This is the first step toward self-criticism. Nothing, unfortunately, can be done about the fact that all of you look frighteningly alike and that your individual vices, therefore, are attributed to all of you ... As soon as you recognize your unathletic build, your narrow shoulders, your clumsy feet, your sloppy roundish shape, you will resolve to dedicate a few generations to the renewal of your outer appearance. During that time you will refrain from donning the costumes of the Anglo-Saxons, in which you look like a dachshund dressed up like a greyhound ... You rarely find a middle course between wheedling subservience and vile arrogance. Self-confidence without presumption cannot be learned, of course; only he who feels himself neither creditor nor debtor to anyone will gain it ... If only you would observe yourself

⁷ Cited in Gershom Scholem, 'Jews and Germans', in *idem, On Jews and Judaism in Crisis. Selected Essays*, ed. by Werner J. Dannhauser, New York 1976, p. 80.

⁸ *Ibid.*

through the eyes of others, you sportsmen in the coach-boxes, you patrons of the studios, you directors of the board, standing on your platforms!"⁹

Mention of Rathenau's essay, which may be deemed one of the landmarks of German-Jewish self-hatred, obliges us to make a differentiation within the picture I have drawn of German-Jewish assimilation.

The perceived need for and the degree of self-reformation varied between sectors and strata of German Jewry. Among the urban bourgeois business community, which was host to the vast majority of German Jews, the Jews were, so to speak, permitted a measure of confessional and communal particularity despite the demand for acculturation. After all, the Gentile bourgeoisie had not obliterated primordial bonds and maintained a strong sense of family and church. Bourgeois society was, therefore, somewhat pluralistic and tolerated Jewish confessional and familial integrity. In more cosmopolitan circles, on the other hand, where primordial bonds were less significant, the pressure on the Jews not only to acculturate (that is, to adopt a German cultural idiom and identity) but also to assimilate (that is, to acquire a new social identity) was greater. Here we are largely speaking of intellectuals, a class to which the young Rathenau belonged or, more correctly, aspired to join. Jewish intellectuals would not only share their fellow intellectuals' antagonism to Jewish particularism but often felt obliged to distance themselves visibly, as Rathenau had, from the parochial community of their birth. The intense public expression of Jewish self-hatred that Endelman holds to be a distinguishing characteristic of German Jewry should, in my opinion, be seen in this context.

I have confined my remarks to German Jewry not only because of my ignorance of their British counterparts, but also to argue *ex silentio* that there was no British parallel to the social and cultural conditions which allowed the public expression of Jewish self-hatred to emerge, in Endelman's apt characterisation, as a quasi-literary genre unique to German Jewry.

⁹ Walter Rathenau, 'Höre Israel!', *Die Zukunft*, 18 (16th March 1897), transl. in Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz (eds.), *The Jew in the Modern World. A Documentary History*, 2nd. rev. edn., New York 1995, pp. 267-8.

SUSAN L. TANANBAUM

Jewish Feminist Organisations in Britain and Germany at the Turn of the Century

Late in the nineteenth and early in the twentieth century, Jewish women in Britain and Germany created organisations to protect women and advance their rights and status. Rarely did these Jewish organisations explicitly describe themselves as feminist, yet they sought to improve women's status and increase their opportunities, even if they left unchallenged basic assumptions about women's and men's "natural" roles. The nineteenth century saw the emergence of a wide spectrum of women's organisations whose agendas were feminist and oppositional to very different degrees. Yet perceptions of gender difference characterised much of the women's movement, even among those "who sought to obtain the same rights and roles that men had".¹ How one assesses Jewish women's groups, their goals and their programmes, and the extent of their feminism, depends very much upon the comparison group.

I.

For Jews and Gentiles, women's issues often involved competing loyalties, demands and influences. For Jewish women in particular, often living in environments antagonistic to their gender and their religion, solidarity among Jews was crucial, both among women and between men and women. Yet Orthodox women did not always share the world view and priorities of some of their more politically, and especially religiously, liberal, feminist-leaning sisters. Even those who promoted women's rights

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¹ Nancy Reagin, *A German Women's Movement*, Chapel Hill 1995, p. 1.

did so as products of a time and place which accepted that men and women had different abilities and destinies. Given the additional reinforcement of Judaism's patriarchal nature, challenges to the *status quo* seemed more radical in the context of the Jewish community than in society as a whole.

According to Richard Evans, feminism in this period had "two major characteristics: it was liberal and it was middle-class". Rooted in liberal "individualism", feminists "aimed at nothing less than the moral regeneration of society in conformity with the ideals of bourgeois liberal morality". Feminists' demands extended beyond the vote to include property rights, entrance into the professions, temperance or prohibition of alcohol, and the raising of moral standards at all levels. This "classical liberal individualist type" of British feminism that had emerged during the mid-nineteenth century did not arise in Germany until the 1890s.²

Ann Taylor Allen contests Evans's conclusion that the maternalist emphasis of German feminism, as opposed to equal rights, was rather conservative in nature and is evidence of "German political backwardness". Allen suggests that this school of thought condemns maternalism as "at best conservative and at worst an outright 'reactionary' approach to feminism" and encourages us to view the maternalism of German feminism with a "more contextual approach". She contends that the presentism of approaches such as Evans's has "tended to marginalize important aspects of women's work and experience". For Allen, "discourses on public and private motherhood encompassed the most radical as well as the most conservative positions taken by feminists in this era". Maternal feminists did not view motherhood as private and separate. In fact, their feminism provided a "rationale for women's emergence into public roles in the professions and in social reform" and expanded the rather narrow public sphere in which women functioned. Maternal feminists used their "limited authority over child-rearing and

² Richard Evans argues that generally, "the extent to which the social and political structure was dominated and controlled by the bourgeoisie" affected the success or failure of feminism. Often, in those countries where women did not gain rights, "religion played a major role", or "economic, educational, and political backwardness was the decisive factor", although these factors did not account for "the subjection of women" in Germany. Evans contends that "the social distribution of political power" and the absence of a parliamentary, constitutional political system must be considered. An extremely conservative aristocratic agrarian elite dominated the ruling class. Two key institutions, the army and the Church, undermined "the allegiance of the German middle classes to liberal values and beliefs". Richard J. Evans, *The Feminist Movement in Germany, 1894-1933*, London-Beverly Hills 1976, pp. 1-6, 30.

motherhood" to enter the public discourse on a wide range of political, social and policy issues.³

Without doubt, the Jewish women's organisations that emerged in Britain and Germany towards the end of the nineteenth century incorporated many of the maternalists' goals and were able to use these acceptable arenas of female activity to enter larger social debates and to expand opportunities for women in communal affairs, education and work. They shared many of the goals of feminists around the world, and while such aims might challenge traditional Jewish norms, both the Union of Jewish Women (UJW) in Britain, and the *Jüdischer Frauenbund* (JFB) in Germany, promoted rather conservative forms of feminism.

While this essay focuses most closely on Jewish women's activities in Britain, the similarity of philosophy and approach among their organised German-Jewish counterparts offers the opportunity for an interesting cross-national comparison. Given women's restricted status in Judaism and the accompanying social and political implications, these (and several other) organisations enabled their members to focus attention on the distinct needs of girls and women. Thus, within the Jewish community, such associations contributed to an enhanced sense of competence, increased women's power and credibility within the established male leadership, and expanded opportunities for girls and women. Many women became involved in activities that represented, and therefore conferred, a degree of respectability, as defined by German and British morés of the time.

While German and British Jews shared many characteristics, the structure and status of their communities were significantly different. Unlike Jews in Germany and France, their British co-religionists could choose whether to participate. Consequently, the "structures of communal authority and cohesion had to be manufactured entirely by Jews themselves".⁴ The Board of Deputies represented British Jews to the government in some affairs, and the Chief Rabbi had a good deal of control over religion, but these relationships had the weight of tradition, not of law. Successful British Jews tended to move from immigrant neighbourhoods to more salubrious areas during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, but few began that journey in a small town or village. In contrast, until the 1870s all registered German Jews of a particular locality were legally affiliated to a *Gemeinde*, the administrative Jewish community, even if

³ Ann Taylor Allen, *Feminism and Motherhood in Germany, 1800–1914*, New Brunswick, NJ 1991, pp. 4, 5, 230–232.

⁴ David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews. Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840–1914*, New Haven 1994, p. 23.

they did not consider themselves Jews. (Thereafter, individuals could withdraw from the *Gemeinde* on grounds of "liberty of conscience", though the majority remained.)⁵ The *Gemeinde*, run by an elected male leadership, taxed its members and controlled religious ritual and communal affairs.⁶ Neither the *Gemeinde* nor the state in Britain or Germany extended suffrage to women before the First World War. Until 1908, German women could not join political parties or attend meetings at which political affairs were discussed in public.⁷ Even after 1918, when Germany extended the vote to women, the Jewish community did not.⁸

At the turn of the century, Jewish women consciously sought an enhanced role in communal affairs in both countries. The formation of the Union of Jewish Women in 1902 and the *Jüdischer Frauenbund* in 1904 were important milestones for them and the larger communities of which they were a part. The establishment and purposes of these organisations reflect a complex mix of goals and motivations. At the most conscious or intentional level, they were early attempts by women to formalise their role in, and approach to, philanthropic and social services. Both movements favoured expanded educational and work opportunities, paid and voluntary, for working-class and middle-class women. Both emphasised that women were indispensable if the Jewish community was to remain vibrant. Yet both tended to envision women's roles as essentially maternal and domestic, and indicated their acceptance, and even approval, of a concept of separate spheres common among middle- and upper-class philanthropic workers.⁹ Further, composed largely of a middle-class membership, the UJW and the JFB participated in activities that were typical of their class and that were, in fact, indicators of their Britishness and Germanness, and thus of their members' level of assimilation.¹⁰ There was much overlap in their goals and programmes,

⁵ Jehuda Reinharz, *Fatherland or Promised Land. The Dilemma of the German Jew, 1893–1914*, Ann Arbor 1975, pp. 9–11, 247, n. 49; Marion A. Kaplan, *The Jewish Feminist Movement in Germany*, Westport, CT 1979, p. 148.

⁶ Marion Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class. Women, Family, and Identity in Imperial Germany*, New York 1991, p. 12.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 18; Evans, pp. 10–11.

⁸ Kaplan, *The Jewish Feminist Movement*, p. 147.

⁹ For a discussion of the origins and implications of the concept of separate spheres, see Philippa Levine, *Victorian Feminism, 1850–1900*, Tallahassee, FL 1987, pp. 11–15.

¹⁰ By modernising and improving the status of Jewish women, the German-Jewish community would move closer to non-Jewish patterns. Arguably, such a view implied that Jewish feminists and Christians perceived Jews as backward, owing to the persistence of traditional attitudes towards women. See Kaplan, *The Jewish Feminist Movement*, p. 147.

though each organisation had priorities not shared by the other. In particular the UJW focused, until the First World War, on “gentlewomen”, initially leaving the work with immigrants to the many other Jewish philanthropic societies. The JFB was especially concerned to combat white slavery and offer rescue services to young Jewish women.¹¹ In Britain, this typical Victorian activity came under the aegis of the Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls and Women (JAPGAW). The organisations offered women leadership opportunities and more influence in communal decision-making, but tended nonetheless to reaffirm contemporary assumptions about social and biological differences between men and women.

II.

In 1900, at a drawing room meeting at the home of Lady de Rothschild, Mrs. Laurence Simmons suggested that Jewish women in Britain should organise a conference “to discuss matters concerning the social, moral, and spiritual welfare of the Jewish community, and to interchange information and experience as to various methods of communal work”.¹² The participants, generally middle- and upper-class anglicised Jews, reflected a typical mix of Victorian British and Jewish philanthropic priorities. The activities in which they involved themselves provided opportunities to demonstrate commitment to the demands of their class, country, and religious and ethnic identity.

In 1901, the organisers sent out a circular inviting women to a conference scheduled for May 1902. Some 500 women attended each day of the conference and heard papers on a wide range of issues—largely philanthropic—most of which implicitly, and some explicitly, championed particularly female spheres of activity. Julia Cohen opened the meeting by describing the distinction between male and female philanthropic work.¹³ She

¹¹ Kaplan, *The Jewish Feminist Movement*, pp. 111–113; JWB Archives, First Minute Book, Jewish Ladies Society for Prevention and Rescue Work, (hereafter, Jewish Ladies Society), 23rd March 1885.

¹² Report of the Conference of Jewish Women, 1902, p. iv.

¹³ Julia Cohen, *née* Waley, was a member of a wealthy family that gave substantial time and money to the Jewish community. The family was central to the leadership of the Jewish Board of Guardians, the most important Jewish charitable organisation in Britain. Julia Cohen’s husband, Nathaniel Cohen, the eleventh son of Louis Cohen, was also related to prominent Anglo-Jewish families such as the Montagus and Sebag-

believed that men dealt with “larger questions with wide economic bearings”, while women attended to “detail work”. Men focused their efforts on legal solutions that would make overcrowding illegal, and that would lead to lower rents and the dispersal of people living in overcrowded neighbourhoods. Women, through visiting the homes of the poor, could

“foster appreciation of decent housing. They can advise the mothers as to sanitary and hygienic rules, as to the value of fresh air for the children, &c., can encourage girls to put in practice at home the knowledge of cooking, sewing, and domestic economy acquired at school. In short, they can help to make better housewives, ready to take advantage of better housing.”

Topics presented and discussed at the conference included rescue and prevention work, philanthropy, and religion. The dangers and temptations of the streets led Mrs. Singer, another voluntary social worker, to encourage the others present to form more girls’ clubs, guilds and mothers’ meetings.¹⁴

The conference ended with a resolution to create the Union of Jewish Women, an organisation which would form “a bond between all Jewish women of all shades of opinion, religious, social and intellectual”.¹⁵ As the first national women’s organisation of its kind in the Anglo-Jewish community, a review of the UJW focuses attention on issues of interest to women at the turn of the century, their commitment to female perspectives on matters of importance to the community, and their campaigns for greater status and recognition in religious and political life. Their central priorities emerged as the matching of trained women with philanthropic work, the expansion of occupational opportunities for girls and women, and an increased role for women in communal organisations.

The Union was not a charity, but rather “essentially a Guild of Service for women, centralising and distributing the work, the experience, the energy and the sympathy of an all-embracing sisterhood”.¹⁶ The UJW set its annual subscription (2s. 6d.) at a level designed to “place Membership within the reach of every Jewish woman who is in sympathy with an organisation for giving reliable and helpful advice and information to Jewesses all over the world”.¹⁷ While most of the Union’s work was centred in

Montefiores. See for example, Chaim Bermant, *The Cousinhood*, New York 1971, pp. 358–361.

¹⁴ Report of the Conference of Jewish Women, pp. 11–12, v.

¹⁵ UJW, ‘Annual Report’, 1905, p. 9.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ UJW, ‘Annual Report’, 1904, pp. 9–10.

London and other large British cities, it encouraged women all over the Empire to join as associate members. Few immigrant women, or “working and necessitous ladies” joined the UJW, however; the membership fee was too high and the organisation's focus on job placement for educated women was quite removed from immigrant concerns. Generally, contact between the UJW and immigrant women came about through UJW efforts to place middle-class women in appropriate social service positions. The Union functioned as a co-ordinating agency and directed much of its effort towards alleviating poverty, assisting with the adaptation of immigrants and their children to life in the East End of London, and matching trained women with philanthropic work.¹⁸ The UJW sought volunteers to run mothers' meetings and recreation centres for children and clubs, and to teach sports. Even if the immigrants never moved up the socio-economic ladder, such training would create a working class of which the middle class might approve. Further, middle-class efforts would demonstrate the Jewish commitment to high moral standards, encourage the responsible use of leisure, and demonstrate a willingness to tackle difficult problems. The work had the potential to reduce sources of embarrassment in the community and stem antisemitism—or so many established Jews thought.¹⁹

Just two years after the founding of the UJW, Jewish women in Germany also created a social service organisation. The *Jüdischer Frauenbund*, founded in 1904 by Bertha Pappenheim, developed three major campaigns. It fought white slavery, pursued equality for women in Jewish communal affairs, and attempted to provide career training for women. The organisation attracted between 20% and 25% of eligible Jewish women, a much larger percentage of potential members than joined either the *Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine* (the Federation of German Women's Associations), founded in 1894, or the UJW.²⁰ The JFB, unlike the UJW, began as a grassroots federation of forty-two organisations. Generally, JFB activities took place at the local level. By 1913 it had 32,000 members belonging to about 160 affiliates; by the early 1930s it had grown to 430 organisations with 50,000 members. The UJW remained smaller and most of its activities took place in London, though there were active chapters in Manchester and elsewhere. The JFB coordinated and systematised various

¹⁸ Letter from Countess Desart, in *Jewish World*, 20th February 1911; *ibid.*, 31st January 1908.

¹⁹ On women and charity, see, for example, Jane Lewis, *Women and Social Action in Victorian and Edwardian England*, Stanford 1991; Frank Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in 19th Century England*, Oxford 1980.

²⁰ Kaplan, *The Jewish Feminist Movement*, p. 11.

welfare and cultural activities of its constituents.²¹ Such contributions—service to the state and community—typified both German and Jewish feminism. According to Richard Evans, men's rights rested on their military service to Germany. Proponents of equal rights for women argued that women also served their country, but through social service. While many observers accepted this sphere as public, they also saw it as a natural outgrowth of women's activities. Such social expectations, many of which were internalised by women as well as men, constituted the environment in which German feminism arose. Evans suggests, however, that even in the two main areas of interest to German feminists—education and admission to the medical profession—it was “characteristic that even here the German women's movement, unlike feminist movements in other countries, did not aim at equality between men and women”.²² The same ideals, undoubtedly reinforced by some of Judaism's practices and laws, explain the moderate, even conservative, tenor of German-Jewish feminism.

Like the UJW, the JFB had contacts with the German women's movement and international Jewish women's organisations, and emphasised women's central role in Jewish continuity. In particular, the JFB connected the elimination of women's inequality with the reconstruction of Jewish society, while the UJW emphasised the need for substantive Jewish education for girls and women.²³ Pappenheim, however, believed that many Jewish women felt alienated from Judaism because of their unequal treatment in Jewish law and practice.

Rooted in the era in which Pappenheim founded it, the JFB undertook projects that were generally “not a threat to their [members'] class status or to their traditionalism”. As Marion Kaplan notes, Pappenheim's “ideas were typically Victorian, but seasoned with sympathy and understanding”. She contends that “in contrast to American and British feminists, the German (and German-Jewish) tradition of feminism was built upon the assumption of certain natural differences between sexes”. As in other (non-radical) feminist organisations, the JFB's feminism reflected both internal-

²¹ Siddy Wronsky, ‘Zur Soziologie der jüdischen Frauenbewegung in Deutschland’, in *Jahrbuch für Jüdische Geschichte und Literatur* (1927), p. 91, cited in Kaplan, *The Jewish Feminist Movement*, p. 89; Else Rabin, ‘The Jewish Woman in Social Service in Germany’, in Leo Jung (ed.), *The Jewish Library*, vol. 3, London–New York 1970, p. 194.

²² Evans, pp. 8–9, 22–23, 26. This generalisation about the comparatively more radical nature of feminism outside Germany probably under-emphasises important branches of feminism that accepted essentialist views of men's and women's natures.

²³ Kaplan, *The Jewish Feminist Movement*, p. 68.

ised patriarchal views and women-centred concerns. Pappenheim favoured increased educational and career opportunities for women and promoted full participation in politics, culture and the economy as she championed “the sacredness of the family and insisted that every woman fulfil her responsibilities as a wife and mother first”.²⁴ The UJW (and large numbers of British feminists) also accepted the concept of separate spheres and the existence of inherent differences between men and women.²⁵ Both organisations viewed their programmes as extensions of maternal responsibilities, and saw their community work among immigrants, orphans, prostitutes and unmarried mothers as a natural complement to their roles in their own immediate families.

Feminist organisations reached out to, and beyond, their local and national boundaries. This served a variety of goals. For example, UJW members served as contacts for young women when they travelled to a city where an associate member lived, who could offer “the banner of help and sympathy by some member of their own faith and sex” to young women, particularly girls travelling alone.²⁶ Like their secular counterparts, Jewish women’s organisations also benefited from sharing ideas with similar organisations—Jewish and non-sectarian—in Europe and the USA. Interested in the latest approaches to services for women and children, UJW and JFB members hosted and attended international conferences when possible. In 1906, in an effort to learn about the latest work for women and children, and to share in international efforts, Miss Halford, Secretary of the UJW, travelled to an International Congress of Women to learn more about *Kinderhorte* (day care centres for children), which became the inspiration for the UJW Recreation School, where immigrant children could spend after-school hours in a supervised setting while their parents were at work. In Britain, such centres socialised the children, provided activities and often contributed to anglicisation. In the *Kinderhorte*, for example, little boys were required to “wash up the tea things, etc., the Superintendent considering that the girls assist sufficiently at home, and the boys are thus prepared for the domestic duties they have to perform when in military training”.²⁷ The Recreation School not only introduced the children to useful skills, but also played a patriotic role. The UJW

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 45, 37, 6–7, 40.

²⁵ See, for example, the discussion of Josephine Butler’s feminism in Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society. Women, Class and the State*, Cambridge 1980, pp. 116–117.

²⁶ UJW, ‘Annual Report’, 1909, p. 10.

²⁷ *Jewish World*, 8th July 1904.

established a school at the Old Montague Street Council School in the East End, where attendance was limited to the children of working women and to children who had lost their mothers. Most of the founders and children were Jewish, but any child could attend.

Ironically, international efforts aroused anxiety among some UJW members who feared such ties could generate negative perceptions about Jewish allegiances. At a 1910 meeting with Bertha Pappenheim and Sadie American (of the National Council of Jewish Women), Hannah Cohen, a future president of the British welfare organisation the Jewish Board of Guardians, raised concerns over potential charges of cosmopolitanism. Jews felt a deep patriotic commitment to Britain and Cohen presumably wanted to ensure that Jews neither reinforced negative stereotypes nor raised doubts about their loyalty.²⁸

Much of the international work of Jewish women's organisations centred on white slavery and ways in which international cooperation could stem the traffic and frustrate the efforts of procurers. Under the guidance of Bertha Pappenheim, the JFB played a key role in Jewish rescue work. Pappenheim worked diligently to expose white slavery to unbelieving co-religionists, to establish prevention programmes, and to rescue those who had been tricked or who had succumbed. She particularly feared that poor and unskilled Eastern European girls would turn to prostitution. While this area remained peripheral for the UJW, it was a central concern of the Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls and Women. Jewish women, under the leadership of Lady Battersea (*née* Constance de Rothschild), began rescue activities after a non-Jewish social worker approached Lady Battersea to discuss the problem of homeless Jewish women, explaining that two young women involved in prostitution had been brought to the East End Mission. The women, unwilling to renounce Judaism, refused to enter the shelter.²⁹ Such incidents aroused anxiety about the temptations of white slavery and the degradation of Jewish women. Since accusations of Jewish involvement in prostitution were embarrassing for the community, they led to the creation of protective services for women. Generally, JAPGAW workers viewed Jewish prostitutes and unmarried mothers as

²⁸ Union of Jewish Women, AJ 26, C1, Report of Meeting, "To consider the proposals of Miss Pappenheim and Miss Sadie American in regard to the founding of an International Council of Jewish Women", 18th April 1910, p. 3. Cohen would serve as the JBG president from 1930 to 1940.

²⁹ JWB Archives, First Minute Book, Jewish Ladies Society, 23rd March 1885.

victims of male trickery or of ignorance.³⁰ Lady Battersea, who led the crusade, called a meeting for 23rd March 1885, at which the Jewish Ladies Society for Prevention and Rescue Work, which later became the Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls, Women and Children, was established.³¹

Not only did the JFB and the JAPGAW reach out to prostitutes, and attempt to bring procurers to court and shut down brothels, they also tried to serve the needs of unmarried mothers. Working with “fallen women” was a potentially risky area for respectable women. Women such as Bertha Pappenheim in Germany and the Rothschilds in Britain had enough status and credibility to safeguard their reputations. In 1907 the JFB opened Isenburg, a home for “endangered or morally sick” girls, unmarried mothers and illegitimate children. Despite the disapproval that Pappenheim’s efforts generated, she remained steadfast in her commitment to returning unmarried Jewish girls and women to an “orderly” life. It seems that her central concern was the continuity of the Jewish community. While she shared the views of her class and era, objecting to pre-marital sex, she was more troubled by the implications of inadequate assistance for unmarried mothers who, without support, might well take to the streets, where their children would grow up in poverty or be given up for adoption to non-Jewish families. At Isenburg, mothers lived with their babies and learned to care for them. For twenty-nine years Pappenheim was house mother at the institution, which, by 1937, had cared for 1,500 people.³² In Britain, the JAPGAW coordinated rescue activities and sponsored Charcroft, a home for unmarried mothers.³³

While both organisations campaigned to eliminate the abuse of women, they believed that social attitudes and the inequality of women in Jewish law were the primary causes of white slavery and sexual vice. Kaplan sug-

³⁰ During the nineteenth century, rescue work attracted a number of non-Jewish and Jewish women who sought to purify public and private spheres. They tried to close brothels and promoted restrictive legislation—a controversial approach for feminists. Some acted out of religious ideology. See L. Bland, “Purifying” the Public World. Feminist Vigilantes in Late Victorian England’, in *Women’s History Review* 1, No. 3 (1992).

³¹ Those present at the meeting heard a “stirring address” about rescue work. The meeting closed with the passage of a resolution to begin prevention and rescue work in the Jewish community. JWB Archives, First Minute Book, Jewish Ladies Society, 23rd March 1885.

³² Kaplan, *The Jewish Feminist Movement*, pp. 171, 136.

³³ Charcroft opened c.1886. For reports of its work, see, for example, Report of the Jewish Ladies Association for Prevention and Rescue Work, for 1889, pp.11–20, and JAPGAW, ‘Annual Report’, 1898, pp. 33–39; *ibid.*, 1904, pp. 33–44.

gests that as a feminist organisation the JFB challenged traditional roles while remaining sensitive to the conservative nature of its followers.³⁴ Initially, the JAPGAW included only women, but according to Arthur Moro, one of its key leaders, once the women learned more about the nature of the work they preferred to let men handle certain branches.³⁵ The organisation used many of the same tactics as the JFB, but the “Gentlemen’s Committee” took on the task of meeting boats and trains, as well as the rather unsavoury rescue work, and left rehabilitation to the female founders.³⁶

Pappenheim in particular was not only more personally involved in rescue work than many UJW members, but viewed women’s legal disabilities and inferior status as central matters for the JFB. She was especially exasperated at Jewish religious leaders’ failure to ease the hardships faced by women under the marriage and divorce laws. She believed that the law regarding the *agunah* (a married woman who lives apart from her husband but whom Jewish law prohibits from remarrying) was discriminatory and constituted an additional cause of Jewish women’s involvement in prostitution.³⁷ Some *agunot*, deserted by their husbands and unable to remarry, became financially vulnerable. “There were,” according to the Secretary of the JAPGAW, “many cases of desertion by the husband, with the consequent abandonment of the young wife or of adolescent children, and unfortunately among these people there were some who had taken voluntarily to an immoral life or had been induced by economic conditions to do so”.³⁸ Lizzie Hands, founder of the Council for the Amelioration of the Legal Position of the Jewess, spearheaded a similar campaign in Britain.³⁹ For

³⁴ Kaplan, *The Jewish Feminist Movement*, p.136.

³⁵ Report by Arthur R. Moro, Esq., Transactions of the International Congress on the White Slave Traffic, held in London on the 21st, 22nd and 23rd of June, 1899, at the invitation of the National Vigilance Association, London 1899, pp. 147.

³⁶ JAPGAW, ‘Annual Report’, 1898, pp.14–30; ‘Annual Report’, 1907, pp. 20–25.

³⁷ The *agunah* (literally “chained”) is a woman who remains legally married because her husband has refused, or is unable, to grant a divorce and provide her with a *get*, the writ of divorce, or whose husband has disappeared or died “without direct witnesses to his death”. See Rachel Biale, *Women and Jewish Law*, New York 1984, pp. 102–120; Moshe Meiselman, *Jewish Women in Jewish Law*, New York 1978, pp. 103–115; Kaplan, *The Jewish Feminist Movement*, pp. 136–137.

³⁸ ‘Report by Mr. Cohen, Representative of the Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls and Women, for the Year 1926’, Annex 8, p. 122, in League of Nations, Advisory Commission for the Protection and Welfare of Children and Young People, Traffic in Women and Children Committee, Minutes of the Sixth Session, 25th–30th April 1927, Geneva.

³⁹ Hands founded the organisation in 1922. Her goal was to gain Orthodox approval for an improvement of Jewish women’s legal status. See University of Southampton, MS

example, she authored a paper on the legal difficulties besetting Jewesses with regard to the *get* (writ of divorce).⁴⁰ While ultimately this aspect of the campaign for equality met with little success, it drew attention to the difficulties facing women whose husbands refused to divorce them or abandoned them. It also highlighted the problems associated with the relatively common practice of having a religious marriage ceremony, but failing to register the marriage with the civil authorities. The secretary of the JAPGAW noted in 1926 that he had received reports of girls and women “who had contracted unauthorised ritual [i.e. religious] marriages with men, even with the consent of their parents, and had never been heard of afterwards”.⁴¹ Many believed the “brides” fell victim to the white slave trade. Both Hands and Pappenheim felt that Jewish marriage and divorce law left women vulnerable and both strongly favoured the equalisation of women’s status and promoted changes in this area as aims for their organisations.

III.

Given the similarity of class background and philosophies, it should come as no surprise that the UJW and JFB shared a wide range of priorities and methods. Members undertook many similar projects and regularly shared ideas. The leaders often found sustenance in knowing that their efforts and sympathies reached beyond national boundaries. In keeping with the latest approaches to philanthropy, the UJW and the JFB emphasised the importance of a “scientific” approach to charity and sought to eliminate overlap in communal services. The UJW, for example, discouraged patrons from responding to requests from individuals and encouraged all those who were willing to support worthy candidates to use agencies such as the UJW to investigate cases to ensure that funds would be well spent.

Always concerned about pauperisation of the poor, the organisers used every opportunity to encourage self-reliance. For example, they attempted to teach even very young children independence by charging them for dinners. The UJW was pleased that *The Times* praised its recreation school

123 (formerly Anglo-Jewish Archives AJ 13), Papers of the Council for the Amelioration of the Legal Position of the Jewess, 1919–1946.

⁴⁰ Only men can initiate divorce according to Jewish law. Thus a woman with an uncooperative husband, or more commonly a woman whose husband is missing or has abandoned her, cannot obtain a divorce, and therefore cannot remarry.

⁴¹ ‘Report by Mr Cohen’, Annex 8, p. 122.

where children “pass these hours as they would in an ideal working-class home”.⁴² The leadership, however, was not unanimous in its support of childcare programmes. Detractors claimed that such services enabled mothers to relinquish responsibility for their children. Charitable method remained a central concern of the UJW, and the subject of their first social study circle. The speaker, Thomas Hancock Nunn, worked for the Charity Organisation Society (COS), founded in 1869.⁴³ The COS sought to rationalise charitable relief in London; it was among the pioneers of the case-work method and was committed to “personal service as well as pecuniary aid, of involvement beyond mere almsgiving”.⁴⁴ The UJW and the COS shared many assumptions about philanthropic work. Nunn emphasised the importance of method and scientific administration, while Alice Model, also active in the UJW, urged centralisation of, and cooperation between, charitable organisations. The discussion that followed concentrated on the need for “method”.⁴⁵ The UJW's second study circle focused on the “evils of indiscriminate charity”. Thoughtless giving, noted the Rev. A. A. Green, the invited speaker, denied the really needy, “the deserving poor”, the help they needed and encouraged begging.⁴⁶

As part of their campaign to enhance the status of Jewish women and improve their ability to teach the next generation, the UJW and the JFB took up a campaign for girls' education. The UJW directed attention both to religious and secular studies. In its capacity as a coordinating agency, its members occasionally discovered “gaps in the network of communal effort”. Along with the Jewish Religious Education Board, the UJW emphasised the large number of children growing up without any Jewish education. These conditions, claimed Julia Cohen, further contributed to the need for Jewish women to take up philanthropic work.⁴⁷ The organisation also supported the creation of confirmation classes and ceremonies for girls and expressed satisfaction as the practice gained popularity. Assimilation, according to Ruth Eichholz of the UJW, “caused

⁴² *The Times*, 5th February 1906.

⁴³ The Charity Organisation Society relied on “scientific method”, with its emphasis on case-work, elimination of overlapping relief, self-help, and a determination to prevent “pauperisation”. See C. S. Loch, *Charity Organisation*, London 1892.

⁴⁴ David Owen, *English Philanthropy, 1660–1960*, Cambridge, MA 1964, p. 216. For an interesting analysis of the goals and criticisms of the COS, see esp. pp. 215–246.

⁴⁵ UJW, AJ26 C-1, Report of First Social Study Circle, 16th May 1906.

⁴⁶ *Jewish World*, 15th June 1906.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 31st January 1908.

a loosening of the link which bound them [immigrants] to Judaism, and it was women's duty to counteract this".⁴⁸

Despite concerns over assimilation, greater occupational distribution was also a central goal among leaders in the Jewish community, including the UJW and the JFB. Strikingly, the occupational structure of German-Jewish women, more than that of German-Jewish men, mirrored the host society. Both Germans and Jews thought that the Jews' distinctive occupational patterns required "normalisation", a move away from unproductive "Jewish work", and that this would indicate greater integration and successful acculturation.⁴⁹ In Britain, the Union of Jewish Women regularly encouraged young women to enter under-represented areas such as nursing, helped to place well-qualified governesses, and, like most middle-class organisations, promoted domestic service.⁵⁰ Particularly after 1900, native British Jewry attempted to divert Jewish workers from sweated trades, areas of employment associated with immigrants. Jewish leaders were certainly responding to allegations of overcrowding and insanitary conditions; such charges had a damaging effect on the reputation of Britain's Jews and bolstered contentions about the immigrants' inability to integrate. Established Jews also tried to direct poor Jews toward trades with greater stability, though not necessarily greatly increased social status. In its 1903 Annual Report, the UJW noted that "special regard has also been given to the already over-crowded state of certain industries, such as tailoring and slipper-making, and employment has been found for a number of boys and girls in other occupations where the prospects of their future are more favourable".⁵¹ The UJW was enthusiastic about growing opportunities for educated women. Expanded numbers entered teaching, social services, clerical work and medicine. Nonetheless, despite attempts to diversify occupational distribution, the vast majority of young women still entered the needle trades throughout the 1920s.⁵²

Both organisations favoured expanded training for women. This often amounted to improved domestic education, useful for those entering service and for future housewives. Beginning in 1907, for example, the UJW worked out "a plan of conjoint action" with the Education Aid Society, based on their common interest in training poor students. The UJW took

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Kaplan, *The Jewish Feminist Movement*, p. 175.

⁵⁰ UJW, 'Annual Report', 1903, 1904, 1906.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 1903, p. 14.

⁵² As late as 1928, most of the members of the Stepney Jewish Girls' Club entered the needle trades. Phyllis Gerson, Gerson Papers, 4.

responsibility for screening all female applicants. They agreed that “all such cases, and only such cases as may be recommended by the Union of Jewish Women for University or Higher Art, will be referred to the Education Aid Society.”⁵³ During the years prior to the First World War, the UJW regularly noted the demand for female employees but also pointed out the resistance in the Jewish community to taking advantage of the new opportunities. According to one speaker, perhaps Julia Cohen, at the 1909 Annual Meeting, demand for workers far exceeded supply.

“This, I think, is due to our having led more sheltered lives than many of our Christian sisters and so we have not allowed our daughters to have the same advantages in technical and philanthropic training that others have enjoyed ... I hope, however, that year by year we many find more and more educated Jewesses entering the field of employment and of philanthropy and so do away with what is almost a stigma on our Race.”

In a break with recent middle-class patterns, Cohen declared that work was not just for those who needed to earn a living; it also provided opportunities for the wealthy and those with leisure. Clever girls with free time could help others—but had to do so “ungrudgingly”.⁵⁴

From 1907 onwards, the JFB also focused on career opportunities for women. In keeping with its view of appropriate roles for women, it tended to recommend careers “compatible with economic conditions and cultural values: housework and its logical extension, social housework”. According to Dora Edinger, Pappenheim thought “that only by achievements in the field of education and social work could women prove their right to full citizenship”.⁵⁵ As in the case of the UJW, and perhaps to an even greater degree, the JFB’s home economics schools and courses constituted its major contribution to career training. German women also found that the First World War increased the numbers of women who had to support themselves. The JFB’s essentially conservative philosophy meant that while it promoted the entry of women into the labour market, it still tended to favour work that was really only a somewhat more public

⁵³ UJW, ‘Annual Report’, 1907, pp. 11–12. The Aid Society provided scholarships to promising students of both sexes and discouraged students from embarking on careers beyond their ability. *Jewish Chronicle*, 3rd January 1908.

⁵⁴ UJW, AJ26 C1, Annual Meeting of UJW, 11th February 1909, pp. 1, 2.

⁵⁵ Dora Edinger, ‘Bertha Pappenheim (1859–1936). A German-Jewish Feminist’, *Jewish Social Studies* 20 (1958): p. 181.

and extended version of women's traditional roles.⁵⁶ Known as "social housekeeping" or "social motherhood", they regarded caring for children—one's own and the community's—as a "natural responsibility". According to the JFB, appropriate posts included social work, kindergarten teaching, nursing, managing orphanages or Jewish welfare institutions, and especially domestic service. The JFB encouraged domestic training partly because it was marketable both in and beyond Germany. Like the UJW, the JFB endeavoured to alter negative attitudes towards domestic service and argued that it deserved the same respect as intellectual work, since home economics and cooking required intelligence. The JFB encouraged women to be better at their "natural" role and become professionally trained in housekeeping, thereby raising its status by identifying it as a profession, and increasing the likelihood that it would receive its due recognition from men. Like their counterparts in Britain, JFB members did not acknowledge the potential conflict of interest—actual or perceived—implied by the fact that they were the women who employed trained Jewish domestics. Though community volunteers acknowledged that domestic service failed to attract an enthusiastic response, the women of the JFB and UJW did not share the working-class woman's view of domestic work as degrading and restrictive. Factory work paid better, left women with a great deal more freedom, and tended not to place them in subordinate positions to their wealthier Jewish sisters.⁵⁷

Significant change—both in the type of work and its location—did occur during the First World War, when work was plentiful and women entered a "bewildering number" of new occupations. Organisations, the UJW among them, helped women train for new jobs.⁵⁸ The post-war era forced many women out of the market, and in the subsequent economic depression, work was reserved for ex-soldiers and "breadwinners". Women, however, had entered the widest range of employment in history and the pattern could not be completely reversed.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Numerous women's organisations sponsored domestic science courses and tried to influence working women by reforming their approaches to housekeeping and child-rearing. The Hanover branch of the JFB, for example, offered a domestic science course. Reagin, p. 77.

⁵⁷ Kaplan, *The Jewish Feminist Movement*, pp. 73, 171, 173, 177.

⁵⁸ *Daily Telegraph*, 1st February 1916.

⁵⁹ For a discussion of the impact on British women, see Gail Braybon, *Women Workers in the First World War*, London–New York 1981.

Other areas of concern to the UJW and the JFB included consideration of Jewish women's status in communal organisations. Representation of women on communal boards and votes for women seatholders in synagogues evolved as key priorities for both organisations. Owing to the different status of men and women in Judaism, support for women's suffrage was extremely difficult to obtain. German women tended to have greater success in achieving synagogue votes, though women in both countries slowly gained seats on the boards of communal agencies.⁶⁰ Some men recognised and supported the greater roles being taken by women. In Britain, Albert Jessel MP said the new experience of finding several women speaking at Jewish meetings was evidence of their progress, and he favoured the extension of synagogue votes to "lady seatholders".⁶¹ Ellen, Countess of Desart, a supporter of the UJW, was gratified that women's status had improved. She proclaimed that "The Oriental proclivity among our people of assigning a secondary place to women in the scheme of life, has steadily been superseded."⁶²

It was not until 1919 that the UJW became the first women's organisation invited to send representatives to the Jewish Board of Deputies. The same year, the Gentleman's Committee of the JAPGAW welcomed Hannah Hyam and Ida Samuel to their ranks; they acknowledged their experience and devotion to "social improvements" and noted that they would "be of great benefit to the work".⁶³

Throughout the inter-war years, the UJW continued its efforts to attain greater equality for women and to increase their power in Jewish communal affairs. After her 1924 re-election as president of the UJW, Ruth Eichholz, an active volunteer in the Jewish community, reflected on the general improvements that women had achieved. Having asked rhetorically whether Jewish women had made comparable strides, she went on: "I regret to say, and I think a good many of you will agree, that possibly the position of the Jewish women [sic] is not altogether

⁶⁰ Geoffrey Alderman notes that the role of Jewish "women more or less mirrored that which was to be found in society at large". As for formal status, "Orthodox Judaism accords almost no role in formal acts of worship to the female sex, and because of the rabbinic prohibition on women being placed in positions of authority over men, they have no part to play in the direction of synagogal affairs in Orthodox communities". Two routes to leadership roles—politics and non-orthodox religious options—were available to "Jewish women with enough ambition, motivation, and (it must be said) money". Geoffrey Alderman, *Modern British Jewry*, Oxford 1992, pp. 197–202.

⁶¹ *Jewish World*, 25th June 1909.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 20th January 1911.

⁶³ JAPGAW, 'Annual Report', 1919, p. 35.

satisfactory. It was a sad day for us when the question of giving the Franchise to women came up for discussion at the Council Meeting of the United Synagogue on the 18th December last." The United Synagogue had been discussing the franchise for "a good many years", so it came as a surprise when the idea "met with vehement opposition" at the council meeting. "We women had asked for the Franchise because we felt that it was a right which should be conceded to us and that women who were Members should have the right of voting for the representatives of Boards of Management, by which means they could do something to encourage religious life." Eichholz argued that suffrage was not an "ecclesiastical measure", although some members thought that allowing women to vote was not strictly Orthodox and that it "would be a menace to the Orthodox life of the community". According to Eichholz, many of the representatives "must have forgotten the Mandates they had previously received from their Congregations". Eichholz hoped women would promote enfranchisement by appealing to their husbands, brothers and sons who were United Synagogue members. She recalled that one speaker at the 1923 International Jewish Women's Congress in Vienna claimed women on the Continent had never asked for the franchise. Though this might lead to the conclusion that even women might consider the UJW's call for the vote extremist, Eichholz noted there was great enthusiasm for this right. In the paper she delivered in Vienna she had "mentioned that the Franchise was under consideration in Britain", which gave rise to "a storm of applause and acclamation from the hearers which shows that if they have not a Franchise on the Continent among the most cultured section, such a movement is desired, and we should be right, we in Britain, in being pioneers among the Orthodox Communities in giving this privilege".⁶⁴ A year later, at the October 1925 Council Meeting Mrs. Eichholz reported that she had, that very day, received a message from Berlin "in which it was stated that Berlin has given the franchise to women in their community, and I think it is high time we should be as advanced as Germany. They had the political franchise much later than we".⁶⁵

The JFB had also found the campaign for women's suffrage an arduous one. Unlike other religious organisations in Germany, the JFB campaigned

⁶⁴ UJW, AJ26 C-7, Report of the Annual General Meeting of the UJW, 18th February 1924, pp. 8-11.

⁶⁵ UJW, AJ26, C7, Report of the Council Meeting of the Union of Jewish Women, 12th October 1925, p. 3.

for religious as well as secular suffrage.⁶⁶ In Germany women's status improved very slowly. A number of German political parties appealed to traditional women's roles, acknowledged the need for improvements, but not for fundamental change.⁶⁷ Within the Jewish community, neither Orthodox nor Liberal community leaders responded to the JFB's call for female suffrage. Given the comprehensive structure of the *Gemeinde*, this exclusion meant women had limited influence in religious life, as well as in social welfare policy.⁶⁸ Even after the Weimar Republic extended the vote in secular elections, many Jewish communities refused to allow women to vote in their respective communal elections. This included Berlin, where 30% of Germany's Jews lived.⁶⁹ By the 1920s, a majority of German-Jewish women had the vote, but this alone did not guarantee true equality. Here again, while Jewish feminists' demands seemed conservative in comparison with secular feminists, they appeared quite radical in the Jewish religious context. The JFB, according to Kaplan, "was the only Jewish women's association in Europe or the United States to promote women's rights, challenging Jewish tradition and the monopoly of men in interpreting Jewish law".⁷⁰ Depending on the definition, however, it would seem Britain's Council for the Amelioration of the Legal Position of the Jewess and the UJW also sought changes in Jewish law, though they wanted Orthodox and rabbinical approval and support for women's rights.⁷¹

While the goals of Jewish feminist movements may have remained more traditional than secular movements, scholars have suggested that non-Jewish German women were also relatively conservative in their demands for change and that they saw the home as their appropriate arena. "The home," suggest Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz, "was to the German woman what the workshop or small business or farm was to the German man. It meant status, independence, respectability, and security. It

⁶⁶ Kaplan, *The Jewish Feminist Movement*, p. 152

⁶⁷ R. Bridenthal and C. Koonz, 'Beyond Kinder, Küche, Kirche. Weimar Women in Politics and Work', in Bridenthal, Grossman, and Kaplan (eds.), *When Biology Became Destiny. Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany*, New York 1984, p. 41.

⁶⁸ Kaplan, *The Jewish Feminist Movement*, p. 148.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 150, 159, 161–162.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 13, 151–152.

⁷¹ Marion Kaplan notes that the Association for the Improvement of the Legal Status of Jewish Women did identify with feminism, but its papers also suggest it believed in the power of rabbis to change women's legal status. See MS 123, AJ 13, Council for the Amelioration of the Legal Position of the Jewess. Materials from Miss Lizzie Hands, founder, to the JAPGAW, 1919–1927.

was, in short, territory to be defended".⁷² Although this is a controversial conclusion, a number of scholars believe the conservatism of the *Bund Deutscher Frauen*, the German women's movement, "was a legacy not only of the failure of German liberalism and the concomitant political and social timidity of the middle class, but also of the specific constraints women faced".⁷³ Nancy Reagan's recent study suggests that the political views of members of the women's movement ranged from left to right and fell along a spectrum from radical to conservative feminism. Further, while there was significant conservatism within the Hanover branch of the movement, it "was not caused by its embrace of gender difference and 'spiritual motherhood'".⁷⁴

The efforts of the UJW did not go unnoticed, suggesting that the organisation reached, at least in part, its goal of increased influence and authority for women. In the case of the UJW, its tactics, respectability and professionalism slowly began to win praise among some sections of the Jewish community. "This Union," noted the *Jewish Chronicle*,

"is, without doubt, the most important achievement of Jewish women, and, being in touch with every one of our communal institutions, as well as keeping itself closely informed of all the women movements of the day it represents a most progressive note amongst our womenfolk and is entitled to the hearty support of everyone of us."⁷⁵

Both the *Jewish Chronicle* and the *Jewish World* commended the Union for contributions to the community. Members befriended Jewish women, established a labour exchange, and helped to coordinate services and programmes for women.⁷⁶ The *Jewish Chronicle* noted that the type of work undertaken by the UJW justified the appointment of women to responsible positions in communal organisations. Occasionally the women's seriousness of purpose also brought ridicule, or a patronising response; the women's intentions and capacities for aiding the poor were not taken seriously in all circles. Had the work received its due credit, it seems unlikely that the *Jewish Chronicle* would have found it necessary to repeat its

⁷² Bridenthal and Koonz, p. 56.

⁷³ Marion Kaplan, 'Sisterhood under Siege: Feminism and Anti-Semitism in Germany, 1904-1938', in Bridenthal *et al.*, (eds), *When Biology Became Destiny*, p. 181.

⁷⁴ Reagan, pp. 6, 7.

⁷⁵ *Jewish Chronicle*, 12th February 1909.

⁷⁶ *Jewish World*, 31 January 1908; 22nd May 1908; *Jewish Chronicle*, 15th January 1904; 22nd May 1908; 18th February 1910.

words of encouragement to the Jewish community to support the activities of the UJW.⁷⁷

During the first two decades of its existence, the UJW developed expertise in nearly every area of work, health and philanthropy. As a volunteer society, it shared its knowledge and experience with Jewish and secular organisations alike. Committed to being the true representative of Britain's Jewish women, the UJW examined occupational, welfare and social concerns from a woman's perspective. Explicitly founded to aid women and children, and to increase female opportunities and respect for women's skills, it could certainly be labelled feminist in orientation. The JFB, strongly influenced by the personality and priorities of its long-serving president Bertha Pappenheim, focused Jewish attention on the difficult and barely acknowledged problem of prostitution and white slavery. Pappenheim herself made many investigative trips and campaigned tirelessly for her cause. The JFB also promoted new work and educational opportunities that challenged Jewish, and to some degree, middle-class patterns in Germany. Their efforts to secure the vote for women within the Jewish community reflected not only their desire to have a managing role in Jewish affairs, but also to make clear to everyone that women's participation was fundamental to Jewish life, and that, without improvement of women's status, many would drift away from Judaism. By the time the UJW and JFB entered their third decade, they had developed into organisations with sophisticated programmes and with national, international and secular networks, and led the Jewish community in furthering Jewish feminist activities and goals.⁷⁸ The UJW continued its work after the Second World War, but the JFB, like many Jewish organisations, never recovered after being disbanded by the Nazis in 1938.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ *Jewish Chronicle*, 5th January 1904; 12th February 1909.

⁷⁸ The JFB's development was cut short by the rise of National Socialism.

⁷⁹ Kaplan, *The Jewish Feminist Movement*, p. 11.

PAUL WEINDLING

Jews in the Medical Profession in Britain and Germany: Problems of Comparison

The assimilation of Jews into secular society coincided with the emergence of the medical profession as an autonomous and science-based occupation. Not only were there marked differences between British and German medicine, but there was also a differing pace and pattern of assimilation and antisemitism. Moreover, the size, structure and attitudes of the British and German Jewish communities must also be taken into account.

A major difference between British and German medicine was that by the late nineteenth century, German medicine had attained a world reputation for pioneering applications of experimental science to medical problems. Whereas German university professors ranked as professional leaders, in Britain (where Jews were also more uncertain about medicine as a field of professional opportunity) the status of academic medicine was far less certain. David Nachmansohn's 1979 study of *German-Jewish Pioneers of Science* emphasises the role of such factors as state investment in science and antisemitism in channelling German Jews into medicine, given that they were blocked from the civil service and army. Nachmansohn warns against over-generalisation regarding the two communities, pointing out that by the turn of the century many German Jews were secular-minded and had lost their connections with Jewish tradition and the Jewish community.¹ To search for a specifically Jewish contribution to either medical system is by no means straightforward. Many medical scientists and clinicians in modern Germany and Austria had Jewish origins, but conceived of their identities as Germans or Austrians, and above all as members of a profession.

My thanks to Aubrey Newman and Todd Endelman for assistance with the literature on British Jewry.

¹ David Nachmansohn, *German-Jewish Pioneers in Science 1900–1933. Highlights in Atomic Physics, Chemistry, Biochemistry*, Berlin 1979, p. 17.

Can Jewish participation in medicine be explained in functionalist social terms—as a permitted way of integrating in societies where there were significant obstacles to assimilation? The professions offered a socially acceptable career, despite the problems of occupational overcrowding which resulted in significant medical antisemitism. Given the broad spectrum of Jewish identities, any functionalist explanation requires modification: the extent to which specifically Jewish concerns motivated professional achievements must be dealt with on an individual basis. Some physicians found inspiration in Old Testament medicine, or sought to serve their fellows as a religious or cultural community, or held a distinctive ethical outlook. For others, being Jewish, in whatever religious or cultural sense, was a private matter, quite detached from their professional activities. Given that becoming a doctor involved mastery of a secular area of knowledge, being Jewish might be incidental, apart from extraneous handicaps that one might encounter, or more positively in drawing in patients and shaping an ethical and scientific outlook.

The literature on Jewish medical scientists, hospitals and medical organisations in Britain is sparse. Judged by the criteria of social history—the study of medical practice and provision, and health conditions in Jewish communities—there are just a handful of pioneering studies. Notable contributions include Kenneth Collins' studies of Scottish Jewish doctors, the history of the Jewish Board of Guardians by Vivian Lipman, a truly pioneering unpublished analysis by Gerald Black of health and medical care of the Jewish poor in the East End of London between 1880 and 1939, and Lara Marks' monograph on maternity provision in the East End.² While the representation of Jews in English literature has caught the attention of literary scholars (see the essay by Ritchie Robertson in this volume), little has been done to establish changes in health provision and the spectrum of medical problems among Jewish communities, in contrast to what has been achieved for British Quakers since the eighteenth century, not least because of their comprehensive records. There is no

² Kenneth E. Collins, *Go and Learn. The International Story of Jews and Medicine in Scotland*, Aberdeen 1988; Gerald David Black, 'Health and Medical Care of the Jewish Poor in the East End of London', Ph.D. diss., University of Leicester 1987; Vernon D. Lipman, *A Century of Social Service 1859–1959. The Jewish Board of Guardians*, London 1959; Lara Marks, *Model Mothers. Jewish Mothers and Maternity Provision in East London, 1870–1939*, Oxford 1994.

history of contributions to science by Jews in Britain, and here the contrast with the well-documented Quaker achievement is striking.³

In considering the implications of the professionalisation of medicine for Jews in Britain and Germany, the problem of asymmetry between the two communities, professions and societies is overwhelming. But again, for Britain the problem is compounded by the lack of research: apart from Collins' valuable data on qualifications in Scotland, and an overview by Asher Tropp, there is a dearth of studies of Jewish medical careers in Britain.⁴ The increase of Jewish doctors in British medicine seems to have involved discretion and a fair degree of invisibility. There has been scant historical interest in specifically Jewish medical associations and institutions such as the Jewish Health Organisation of Britain, or local associations such as the Liverpool Jewish Medical Society.

The development of Jewish hospitals offers a means of investigating a specific form of medical provision. Here the picture of a larger and more dynamic Jewish medical community than in Germany is confirmed. German-Jewish hospitals had roots in the Middle Ages, although the term originally designated institutions established to care for pensioners and orphans: with the transition from *Hospital* (or in Austria *Spital*) to *Krankenhaus*, notable nineteenth-century German-Jewish medical foundations or building schemes arose in Hamburg in 1843, Berlin in 1861, and Frankfurt in 1875.⁵ Breslau also had a large and distinguished Jewish hospital.⁶ In 1869 Anselm von Rothschild founded a Jewish hospital of one hundred beds in Vienna, in memory of his father Salomon von Rothschild.⁷ By way of contrast, Lord Rothschild opposed the founding of a Jewish hospital in London, preferring Jewish wards in the London Hospital. The hospital had treated Jewish patients since its foundation in 1740, and its Jewish wards were modernised shortly after 1900 with donations from Edward and

³ Geoffrey Cantor at the University of Leeds is currently studying Sephardic Jewish contributions to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century science and mathematics.

⁴ Collins; Asher Tropp, *Jews in the Professions in Great Britain 1891–1991*, London 1991.

⁵ A. Philipsborn, 'The Jewish Hospitals in Germany', in *Year Book VI of the Leo Baeck Institute*, London 1959, pp. 220–234.

⁶ Andreas Reinke, *Judentum und Wohlfahrtspflege in Deutschland: Die Israelitische Kranken-Verpflegungs-Anstalt und Beerdigungsgesellschaft zu Breslau, 1726–1944*, Hannover 1999.

⁷ *125 Jahre Rothschild-Spital—Wirkungsbereich der Wiener Medizinischen Schule, Displaced Persons Lager*, Vienna 1997. This exhibition catalogue was compiled by the Projektgruppe Memory for exhibitions between October and December 1997.

Louis Raphael.⁸ Between 1880 and 1933 there developed a Jewish nursing movement and organisations, buoyed by the growth of Jewish welfare within the rapidly developing welfare state and by the drive for women's professionalisation.⁹

Overall, I would suggest that in Britain hospital provision and nursing had a more secular ethos, in marked contrast to the importance of confessional schools in British education. The Jewish hospitals in Britain were few: there was a Spanish and Portuguese Jews' Hospital founded in London in 1747, and a Jews' Hospital and Orphan Asylum founded in 1795. Although Dr. J.C.H. Freund, one of the co-founders of the German Hospital in London in 1845, was Jewish, he resigned as directing physician in 1848. Jewish patients were to be treated on the basis of "perfect equality, perfect liberty," as Baron Bunsen stated. Numbers of German- and Yiddish-speaking Jewish patients increased to around a quarter of in- and out-patients in the decade before 1914.¹⁰ Dissent among the governors of the German Hospital prompted a scheme for a Jewish hospital in the mid-1890s, leading to support for Jewish wards in the Metropolitan Hospital from 1909. But the first Jewish hospital—in the modern sense of a therapeutic institution—was founded in Manchester in 1904. By the 1920s London Jewish institutions included the London Jewish Hospital (which opened in 1919 after a strenuous twelve-year campaign for funds, the in-patient wards opening in December 1921), a maternity home and a TB sanatorium.¹¹

The German system was distinctive, with an emphasis on medicine as an academic subject and scientific research being the requirement for a doctorate. Rudolf Virchow, the celebrated liberal politician and cellular pathologist, certainly did much to assist Jewish emancipation, and the entry of Jews into medicine was facilitated by his views on developing open structures: he considered that medicine could be practised by anyone, but that professional and scientific qualifications would guarantee a physician's clientele. This meant that German Jews could advance in medicine by demonstrating scientific distinction and clinical competence. The "scientisation" of medicine was a crucial feature of the modernisation process, and the antisemitic onslaught after the Nazi takeover can be inter-

⁸ Black, pp. 300–302.

⁹ Hilde Steppe, "...Den Kranken zum Troste und dem Judenthum zur Ehre..". *Zur Geschichte der jüdischen Krankenpflege in Deutschland*, Frankfurt am Main 1997.

¹⁰ J. Püschel, *Die Geschichte des German Hospital in London (1845 bis 1948)*, München 1980; Black, *Health and Medical Care*, pp. 226–236.

¹¹ Black, pp. 310–16.

preted as exploiting hostility to the modernisation of medicine in terms of finance, organisation and epistemology.¹²

The density of medical practitioners appears to have been far greater in Britain than in Germany; without the extensive sickness insurance system many doctors were economically hard-pressed. It has been suggested by Reinhard Spree and Claudia Huerkamp that the German medical profession was more homogeneous in organisational terms and (I would add) in its professional ethos of collegiality, which meant that when a combination of economic and ideological forces marked the Jewish physician as an alien entity in the German body politic, extreme processes of exclusion and stigmatisation were set in motion.¹³

The scientific orientation of German medicine was distinctive, even when compared to Austria, where the MD was not dependent on a dissertation. It took until the second half of the nineteenth century for German university professorships to be opened to Jews. In the 1840s and 1850s the career of Robert Remak, a medical reformer and pioneer of cellular pathology, shows the disadvantages experienced by Jews: while Virchow gained academic distinction, Remak, a Polish Jew (and politically more radical even than Virchow), was marginalised. He attained only a position as *Extraordinarius*.¹⁴ Ferdinand Cohn, a nationalist botanist at Breslau and a pioneer in the classification of bacteria, was one of the first Jewish *Ordinarii* or full professors; Cohn did much to develop public health in Silesia, and Robert Koch demonstrated his first studies in bacteriology to Cohn.¹⁵

The appointment of physicians of Jewish origin to university chairs increased only slowly, assisted from the 1890s by Friedrich Althoff, the Prussian ministerial official who appreciated the scientific qualities of medical researchers, irrespective of religion. Althoff supported the mercurial but engagingly unworldly research scientist, Paul Ehrlich, who would write the ministerial director meandering letters concerning his

¹² A comprehensive biography of Virchow has yet to be written. See, however, Heinz-Peter Schmiedebach, *Robert Remak (1815–1865). Ein jüdischer Arzt im Spannungsfeld von Wissenschaft und Politik*, Stuttgart 1995.

¹³ Reinhard Spree and Claudia Huerkamp, 'Arbeitsmarktstrategien der deutschen Ärzteschaft im späten 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert. Zur Entwicklung des Marktes für professionelle ärztliche Dienstleistungen', in Toni Pierenkamper and Richard Tilly (eds.), *Historische Arbeitsmarktforschung*, Göttingen 1982, pp. 77–116.

¹⁴ Schmiedebach, *Robert Remak*; B. Kisch, 'Forgotten Leaders in Modern Medicine. Valentin, Gruby, Remak, Auerbach', in *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 44 (1954), pp. 141–317.

¹⁵ Pauline Cohn, *Ferdinand Cohn. Blätter der Erinnerung*, Breslau 1901; Bruno Heymann, *Robert Koch. I. Teil 1843–1882*, Leipzig 1932, pp. 220–223.

immensely complex immunological theories in a modernistic style that omitted all capital letters and punctuation. Althoff saw that Ehrlich was accommodated by the state and by local Jewish philanthropist Georg Speyer, in a special institute for serum testing and pharmaceutical research in Frankfurt.¹⁶ Jewish research scientists found new opportunities for careers in state research institutions, as August von Wassermann did at Robert Koch's Prussian Institute for Infectious Diseases. After 1933 a third of the researchers at the Robert Koch Institute had to emigrate.¹⁷ Did Jews enter these new spheres because they were excluded from mainstream medicine? The conservative pathologist Otto Lubarsch, whose parents had converted to Protestantism, argued that Jewishness was no impediment; in his view Ehrlich was so hopelessly disorganised when it came to mundane administration that only a research appointment was viable.¹⁸

By the 1920s German Jews had achieved prominent positions in medical science, public health, clinical medicine and insurance-based medical practice. The nazified German medical profession energetically levered out Jewish colleagues from state-funded positions in university departments and public health, and restricted Jewish doctors—derogatively branded *Krankenbehandler*—to seeing Jewish patients. The exclusion of Jews from medical practice offered a solution to the problems of what was perceived to be an overfull profession at a time when funds for public health services, insurance medicine and medical institutions were desperately short. Since the turn of the century the German medical profession had adopted tactics of strikes and boycotts against the increasing powers of sickness insurance funds: these weapons of industrial conflict were turned against Jewish colleagues after 1933. Moreover, Nazi medical practitioners accused Jews of supporting the inhumane mechanisation of medicine in their scientific research.

In contrast, Jewish physicians had a far less prominent role in the British medical profession. There were only three Jews on the consulting staff of London teaching hospitals in 1907.¹⁹ After 1933, leaders of the

¹⁶ Adolf Lazarus, *Paul Ehrlich*, Vienna 1922; Martha Marquardt, *Paul Ehrlich*, London 1949.

¹⁷ Michael Hubenstorf, "Aber es kommt mir doch so vor, als ob Sie dabei nichts verloren hätten". Zum Exodus von Wissenschaftlern aus den staatlichen Forschungsinstituten Berlins im Bereich des öffentlichen Gesundheitswesens', in Wolfram Fischer *et al.* (eds.), *Exodus von Wissenschaften aus Berlin*, Berlin 1994, pp. 355–460.

¹⁸ Otto Lubarsch, *Ein bewegtes Gelehrtenleben*, Berlin 1931, pp. 543–545.

¹⁹ Black, pp. 154, 192.

British Medical Association (BMA) and the Royal College of Physicians (RCP) staunchly resisted the settlement of their persecuted German colleagues. In a memorable statement, Lord Dawson, the president of the RCP, said that he could count on the fingers of one hand the number of German physicians who could contribute anything to British medicine, and the restrictive position of the BMA was little better. Medical antisemitism closely intertwined with restrictive professional attitudes, and similar arguments were applied to Jews and women who aspired to a medical career. The rank-and-file Medical Practitioners Union, representing the economically low-status and financially hard-pressed general practitioners, shows that in the more stratified British profession the situation was little better at a lower level. The Professional Committee of the Board of Deputies of British Jews was cautious in supporting the admission of persecuted foreign colleagues for fear that this would jeopardise a fragile tolerance.²⁰

All of the above suggests that the position of Jews in the medical profession is highly revealing of professional structures and attitudes in Germany and Britain. Inherently restrictive professional opposition to Jews may be compared to resistance to nature therapists and other lay practitioners, and to women and other ethnic and religious groups. Jewish practitioners were vulnerable in two respects: first to attack from without—for example, by anti-vivisectionists attacking Jewish physicians as medical vivisectionists, drawing on opposition by the animal welfare lobby to kosher butchers (it is interesting to note, however, that a Jewish actuary and mathematician, Benjamin Gompertz, was one of the founders of the early Victorian animal welfare movement) and, secondly, to prejudice from within the medical profession. The British medical profession had been somewhat more liberal in its attitude towards women than the German, although during the economically strained 1920s the situation became harder rather than easier for women doctors. The British situation was one of muted and sporadic prejudice, operating at the level of admitting students and of appointments to jobs rather than the systematic viciousness of German medical antisemitism. Britain had a somewhat higher ratio of physicians per head of population: in 1911 there was one physician for every 1,439 inhabitants in England and Wales; in Germany

²⁰ Paul Weindling, 'The Contribution of Central European Jews to Medical Science and Practice in Britain, 1930–1960', in Werner Mosse *et al.*, (eds.), *Second Chance. Two Centuries of German-speaking Jews in the United Kingdom*, Tübingen 1991, (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 48), pp. 243–254.

in 1909 the ratio was 1:2,000. This meant that the profession might be regarded as equally overfull in Britain, but organised prejudice did not materialise.²¹

How many Jews were there in the German medical profession? Estimates by antisemites tended to exaggerate, so it is important to treat any statistics with considerable caution. According to Nachmansohn, 6% of all German physicians and dental surgeons were Jewish in 1907. In 1933 an estimated 6,500 doctors (out of *c.*50,000) in Germany were designated as Jewish (13%), and if other “non-Aryans”, for example the children of mixed marriages, are taken into account then the number rises to about 9,500 (19%). Of these, the highest number were in cities like Berlin and Breslau. The proportion of Jews in Viennese medicine was far higher: there were 3,200 “Jewish” doctors out of a total of 4,900 doctors in that city (about 60%). An estimated 650 German doctors managed to resettle in Britain after 1933—of these, 95% had a Jewish background, although many were not practising Jews. It is very difficult to know how many Jews there were in British medicine before 1933; I can say with some confidence, however, that the British profession gained at least 3,500 doctors with European qualifications as a result of the Second World War, though it should be noted that the largest group comprised Polish Catholics. There was also a highly innovative cohort of researchers in medicine-related disciplines such as biochemistry and pharmacology. Tropp estimates that in 1991 4% of the medical profession in the UK was Jewish: of these 3,864 were male and 927 female.²² Clearly, the proportion of Jews in British medicine was far lower than in Germany or Austria.

The problem of identity comes to the fore once the self-perceptions of Jewish doctors are scrutinised. One way forward was total assimilation—to become more German than Jewish: Otto Lubarsch, the pathologist, was a founder of the Pan-German League, and Herbert Herxheimer, the Berlin physiologist who pioneered sports medicine, was emphatically secular and national in outlook.²³ By the late nineteenth century, German-Jewish medical specialists took a leading role in public associations. For example, Oscar Lassar, the dermatologist, launched the movement for public showers, while Alfred Blaschko, the Berlin dermatologist, was secretary of the Ger-

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Tropp.

²³ For Herxheimer, see my Database of Medical Refugees in Great Britain 1930-45, School of Humanities, Oxford Brookes University.

man Society for Combatting Sexually Transmitted Diseases.²⁴ The German Society was a model for the British National Council for Combatting Venereal Diseases (later the British Social Hygiene Council). Jewish doctors played no prominent role in the British sister organisation, with a lay woman, Mrs. Neville-Rolfe, at the helm. Here the contrast is between the science-oriented German organisation and the British organisation under lay control.

In both Britain and Germany, however, Jewish doctors were prominent in the spheres of infant, child and adolescent health. The Jewish Health Organisation of Great Britain supported Emmanuel Miller as a pioneer of child guidance in establishing Britain's first clinic in Bell Lane, Spitalfields, in London's East End, in 1927. Jews became prominent in Freudian psychotherapy with the distinguished (non-medical) contribution of Anna Freud. Britain, notably, did not require a medical degree for the practise of psychotherapy.²⁵

In Britain there was a considerable number of politicians with a medical background in Parliament, but no Jewish physician of note. Jewish physicians in Britain were less politically active, preferring philanthropy and intellectual activities: examples are Redcliffe Salaman and Charles Singer. The Jewish Health Organisation of Great Britain represents a remarkable, albeit circumscribed, initiative, over which Salaman presided and which involved other medical notables like Singer. The comparable but far larger and comprehensive German organisation—the *Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle der deutschen Juden*, founded in September 1917—can be seen as the counterpart of the Protestant *Innere Mission*, the Catholic *Caritas*, and the secular *Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund*. By the 1920s these welfare associations received state subsidies as part of a system of subsidiarity, involving independence and autonomy of confessional welfare organisations, while working in cooperation with state welfare provision.²⁶ In contrast, the British organisation did not receive state subsidies, although at the East London Child Guidance Clinic the majority of cases were financed by

²⁴ C. Kolski, 'Oscar Lassar als Gründer der "Deutschen Gesellschaft für Volksbäder"', in N. Goldenbogen *et al.*, *Hygiene und Judentum*, Dresden 1995, pp. 78–89; Paul Weindling, *Alfred Blaschko (1858–1922), Dermatology and Sexually Transmitted Diseases in Imperial and Weimar Germany. A Bibliography*, Oxford 1992.

²⁵ Hugh Freeman and German E. Berrios (eds.), *150 Years of British Psychiatry. Volume II: The Aftermath*, London 1996.

²⁶ Rolf Landwehr and Rüdiger Baron, *Geschichte der Sozialarbeit*, Weinheim 1983, pp. 165–170.

London County Council.²⁷ The Jewish Health Organisation of Great Britain adopted a highly innovative approach to preventive medicine. With an active statistical committee, it came to focus on prevention of illness among children and adolescents in the East End of London. It supervised health in Jewish schools, promoted popular education about diet and health, and sponsored a dental clinic for adolescents in Cable Street. While its activities were centred in the East End, its statistical committee took a national view of Jewish health conditions. The organisation sponsored an international study of *Cancer and Race* by Maurice Sorsby, as well as publicising a new team-work approach to “the difficult child”.²⁸

In Britain there were far fewer Jewish medical researchers in a medical establishment that in any case put a lower premium on laboratory research. There had been some German-speaking immigrants to Britain who achieved distinction, such as the pharmacologist Oscar Liebreich, the ophthalmologist Felix Semon, and the Austrian bacteriologist Emanuel Klein. After the First World War the serologist Arthur Felix emigrated to Britain, having pioneered the Weil–Felix test for typhus in the Austrian army. Their migration suggests that there was a skills shortage in late nineteenth-century British medicine. Other home-grown Jewish examples in biomedical research were the physiologist Samson Wright, Redcliffe Salaman, the pioneer of potato genetics, and Charles Singer, the son of a distinguished rabbi, who excelled as a pathologist in colonial and military service before becoming Britain’s first professor in the history of medicine. Charles Myers was noted as an advocate of industrial psychology, and Charles Seligman was distinguished in anthropological research. All were characterised by a distinctive breadth of vision: Singer, a supporter of vitalism, was critical of biological reductionism of the sort espoused by such (non-Jewish) radicals as Joseph Needham, J.B.S. Haldane and J.D. Bernal. I would therefore observe that Jewish doctors and medical researchers avoided achieving prominence either in the conservative or radical camps by the 1930s, whereas other scientific radicals drew on British traditions of radical dissent. Here one looks in

²⁷ *The Jewish Health Organisation of Great Britain. Report of the Executive Committee to December 31st 1937*, London 1938, p. 23.

²⁸ Maurice Sorsby, *Cancer and Race. A Study of the Incidence of Cancer Among Jews. Conducted under the Auspices of the Jewish Health Organisation of Great Britain*, London 1931; *The Difficult Child. A Medical, Psychological and Sociological Problem. A Series of Six Lectures under the Auspices of the Jewish Health Organisation of Great Britain at Toynbee Hall, London, May 19th to June 5th, 1930, and published in 'Mother and Child'*, London [1930].

vain for analogues to the radical German-Jewish physicians in pressure groups for social medicine, like the Socialist doctor and politician Julius Moses, or the public health clinic doctor Käthe Frankenthal, who later spoke of her threefold curse of being a woman, a Socialist and a Jew.²⁹ Among the ranks of the British “visible college” of social radicals was the physicist Hyman Levy, but Harold Laski had despaired of biology and eugenics while a student at New College, Oxford.³⁰ Jewish doctors did not achieve prominence in the Socialist Medical Association, although this was founded on a radical German model. There were a few Jewish physicians who sought to advance state medicine, for example Alfred Eichholz as a Local Government Board medical officer, Samuel Leff, who wrote extensively on industrial insurance, and M.D. Eder, a pioneer of school medical services.³¹

German Jews had done much to build up peripheral specialisms of social relevance, with dermatology, sexology and psychoanalysis being classic examples. This meant that there were substantial numbers of Jews in eugenics, including Arthur Crzellitzer who worked on the genetics of eye disorders and died in Sobibor, and Max Hirsch, the social gynaecologist who died in Birmingham, or the obstetrician and geneticist Wilhelm Weinberg, who was of partly Jewish descent. A wing of the German Racial Hygiene Society was even accused of philosemitism. Magnus Hirschfeld, the campaigner for a liberalisation of legal penalties for homosexuality, was a noted example of a practitioner who used hereditarian biology for emancipatory purposes.³²

British eugenics was far less dominated by doctors and biologists, and appealed to middle-class professionals and women social activists. John Efron has portrayed Joseph Jacobs, a philosopher and statistician, as the pioneer of “Jewish Race Science”, in close contact with Francis Galton, the pioneer of eugenics. Jacobs saw the contribution of Jews to medicine as evidence of the “Jewish genius”.³³ But there were fewer Jews in British eugenics: Harold Laski flirted with eugenics while a student at Oxford,

²⁹ Käthe Frankenthal, *Der dreifache Fluch. Jüdin, Intellektuelle und Sozialistin. Lebenserinnerungen einer Ärztin in Deutschland und im Exil*, Frankfurt am Main 1981.

³⁰ Gary Werskey, *The Visible College. A Collective Biography of British Scientists and Socialists of the 1930s*, London 1978.

³¹ My thanks to John Stewart for information on the Socialist Medical Association.

³² Paul Weindling, *Health, Race and German Politics between National Unification and Nazism*, Cambridge 1989.

³³ John M. Efron, *Defenders of the Race. Jewish Doctors and Race Science in Fin-de-siècle Europe*, New Haven 1994, pp. 58–90.

and Salaman, a noted physician, biologist, author (of the classic *Social History of the Potato*) and Zionist, was on the margins of the Eugenics Society. The ophthalmologist Arnold Sorsby (brother of Maurice) criticised the eugenicists' advocacy of sterilisation, arguing that it was unlikely to decrease inherited diseases, particularly when latent or recessive.³⁴ Some Jewish refugees were supported by the Galton laboratory, for example the geneticist Hans Grüneberg and the Austrian paediatrician Christopher Tietze. A few took up sociobiological ideas in the 1950s and 1960s, such as Herbert Lehmann in serological studies of blood groups, and Hans Krebs in his views on juvenile delinquency and asocial conduct—Krebs being led into a bizarre association with the “Moonies” by the late 1970s.³⁵

The German medical migration to Britain provides a revealing interaction between the two contexts under comparison: one is confronted by scientifically well-qualified German physicians in a far less scientific British context. The case histories of the medical refugees show, firstly, that British medical antisemitism was sporadic. Certain teaching hospitals and institutes were generous in their support of Jewish colleagues. For example, Guy's Hospital in London was a centre of support, and it is interesting to note that Anglo-Jewish philanthropists had contributed substantially to this hospital's resources during the 1920s and 1930s.

British medicine was itself in a process of rapid modernisation from the 1930s, a process in which the scientific expertise of German medical researchers was appreciated as a valuable asset. A lobby of reformers from the Medical Research Council, in conjunction with leading physiologists and biochemists like Henry Dale (who had spent several months with Ehrlich) and A.V. Hill (joint Nobel Prize winner with the physiologist Otto Meyerhof in 1926), thus appreciated the potential contribution of German medical researchers. German biochemists were helpful in medical education at centres in Cambridge and Sheffield during the 1930s. But because of the opposition of the anti-scientist and anti-immigrant British Medical Association, substantial clinical responsibility was harder to attain. Ludwig Guttmann of Stoke Mandeville was an exemplary success story, and refigured the successes of immigrants in the new specialist clinical openings of the National Health Service (NHS).

³⁴ Arnold Sorsby, *Medicine and Mankind*, London 1944, p. 96.

³⁵ Jeanine Alton and Peter Harper, *Catalogue of the Papers and Correspondence of Sir Hans Adolf Krebs FRS (1900–1981)*, n.p., n.d., pp. 441, 446–447.

The situation of intense professional opposition to the foreign medical influx evened out in the later stages of the war when German qualifications were recognised at a time of extreme shortage of medical manpower. Continental medical reformers could contribute virtually nothing to the planning of the NHS, not least because of their marginality during the Second World War. But the advent of the NHS saw a demand for clinical specialists. State-supported medical research also boomed in post-war Britain. Medical researchers like the biochemist Hans Krebs and the Austrian molecular biologist Max Perutz reached positions of immense prestige in the British medical research establishment. By the 1950s, the structure of British medicine had thus come to resemble the German one, with a premium on scientific qualifications and a system for funding broad access to medical treatment—with the important difference that the British state assumed a prominent role in the finance of medical care, in contrast to the German sickness insurance funds. By the 1950s and 1960s there were prominent professional leaders like Lord (Henry) Cohen of Birkenhead (president of the British Medical Association from 1951) and Lord (Max) Rosenheim (president of the Royal College of Physicians from 1966). Yet, overall, the rise to prominence of Jews in British medicine contrasts in terms of numbers and its later timing to that in Germany: scientifically less prominent and socially less influential in the British medical establishment until 1945, the advance of Jews in British medicine was a far more informal, invisible process with a much less accessible history.

PETER ALTER

The “Modern” Jewish Doctor: A Comment on Paul Weindling

A comment should be brief. Bearing this in mind I venture to say that Paul Weindling’s wide-ranging survey makes it abundantly clear that his subject is under-researched—perhaps more so in Britain than in Germany, where the professionalisation of medicine has aroused more scholarly interest in recent years.¹ At this stage, therefore, Weindling obviously can do no more than point to open questions and areas for further investigation which, to all intents and purposes, amounts to a programme for future research on the subject. He does this brilliantly.

Given his admirable knowledge of the history of modern medicine in both Germany and Britain, no one is more competent than Weindling to single out areas or directions of comparative research work in years to come. In doing this, he puts the emphasis, if I understand him correctly, on four particular aspects.

Firstly, Weindling draws attention to the overall trend which indicates that the advance of Jews in medicine started much earlier in Germany than in Britain. By the 1920s, German Jews had achieved prominent positions in medical science, public health, clinical medicine and insurance-based medical practice. Not so in Britain: until 1945 it seems that British Jews were scientifically less distinctive and socially less influential in the medical establishment than their successful German counterparts. I find myself in complete agreement with Weindling when he says that their rise was discreet and fairly invisible. This is mirrored in the proportion of Jews in the medical profession in the two countries prior to 1933. Weindling’s estimate for Germany in the year 1933 is between 13% and 19%. In Britain the corresponding percentage seems to have been much lower.

¹ See, for example, Manfred Berg and Geoffrey Cocks (eds.), *Medicine and Modernity. Public Health and Medical Care in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Germany*, Cambridge 1996, with bibliography.

Secondly, from the nineteenth century onwards medicine had much greater prestige in Germany than in Britain, and the medical profession had been opened to Jews—not least thanks to such eminent and enlightened men as Rudolf Virchow and Friedrich Althoff, the imaginative and strong-willed civil servant in the Berlin Ministry of Cultural Affairs. This confirms the widely-held belief that medicine and law primarily attracted Jewish students, and this for obvious reasons. However, Weindling's paper also implies that the comparatively high proportion of Jews in medicine and law in Germany may have been one of the reasons for the early antisemitic onslaught. It is in any case an interesting question whether the prominence of Jews in German medicine might have led to the resentment felt by many members of this overcrowded profession and their belief that their Jewish colleagues were the driving force behind the modernisation process and the ill-received "scientisation" of medicine.

Thirdly, "medical antisemitism" (to use Weindling's term) was not wholly unknown in Britain. However, it made its appearance there later than in Germany. The influx of German and Austrian refugee physicians into Britain after 1933 provided the acid test. It triggered, as Weindling shows, ambivalent reactions, ranging from generous support to intense professional opposition. However, he stresses that some eminent men in the higher echelons of the British medical establishment (he calls them "reformers") appreciated the potential contribution to be made by the *émigré* medical scientists and physicians, almost all of them Jews. The parallel to the situation in Germany one or two generations earlier, at the time of Virchow and Althoff, is striking.

Fourthly, according to Weindling, the welcome extended to the refugees in Britain, and their eventual integration into the British medical profession, had two remarkable consequences: the refugees contributed greatly to the development of highly specialised fields of British medicine, and because of their work, the structure of British medicine after 1945 bore a marked resemblance to that of Germany before 1933. Undoubtedly, this proposition deserves more attention from future historians.

In concluding my observations on Weindling's essay I would like to emphasise that he has given a view of the medical profession in Britain and Germany from the inside. He has—I am sure on purpose—excluded, so to speak, the view from outside. He has not asked, for example, how Jewish doctors in the two countries were perceived by the general public and how far the public appreciated their professional skills. Neither has he raised the question of how the *émigrés* behaved socially and politically as

members of their respective societies. Only in passing does Weindling refer to the "Socialist doctor", mentioning Julius Moses and Käthe Frankenthal. The latter is quoted as speaking of her "threefold curse", namely of being a woman, a Socialist and a Jew.

This, in turn, gives me a welcome opportunity to illustrate my point and conclude my remarks. It is an example of "doctors in fiction". The quotation is from Theodor Fontane's famous novel *Der Stechlin* which was written between November 1895 and July 1897 and published in late 1898. At the end of the novel, when old Dubslav von Stechlin is seriously ill, his doctor, Sponholz, goes on holiday and recommends his Jewish deputy, Dr. Moscheles, to his ailing patient, praising him as a man "of the new school, a modern man". When things start to get worse, Stechlin sends for Dr. Moscheles. This is what happens:

"The visit had lasted about half an hour. Once Moscheles was on his way, Dubslav remarked, 'Engelke, when he comes back, just tell'm I'm not home. Naturally he won't believe it, after all, he knows better than anybody that I'm tied to my room and this wheelchair of mine. But all the same, I don't like him. It was a stupid thing for Sponholz to pick this particular fellow, such a know-it-all who smells of the Social Democrat crowd and carries his cane around so weirdly in the bargain, always right in the middle. And to top it off, a red tie.'

'But there's little black beetles on it.'

'Sure, they're there all right, but real little ones. They make'm that way so nobody'll notice what sort of crowd he's from and where he really belongs'".²

Having no confidence in Dr. Moscheles because he appears to be modern, slightly foreign (born in the Moravian town of Brno) and politically left-wing, and with Dr. Sponholz still on holiday, Stechlin sends for an old woman from the village, "die Buschen". You will have guessed already that Stechlin's antipathy to the "modern man" cannot have a happy end. The charms of the "real old witch" do not work. Stechlin dies—apparently a self-induced victim of his rejection of the "new school", a particular tie, and his political prejudices.

² Theodor Fontane, *The Stechlin*, New York 1995, pp. 279–280.

RITCHIE ROBERTSON

The Representation of Jews in British and German Literature: A Comparison

“Representation” is not a simple concept. Reality cannot be represented in fiction directly, but is always mediated. One set of mediations comprises genre and mode. A drama is differently constructed from a novel; the realist mode and the romance mode express different aspects of reality. Another mediation is narrative. It would be insufficient to consider Jewish figures out of context: we need to see them as actors in a narrative in which they may triumph or fail, survive or perish, be integrated or excluded. A third mediation is intertextuality. To varying degrees literature is made from literature. Literary works draw on, allude to, react against, imitate or parody previous works, often across linguistic boundaries. Thus Shakespeare’s Shylock provides a template for many subsequent representations which, like Lessing’s anti-Shylock figure Nathan, could in turn prove productive.

Despite the gap between representations and history, the comparison between British and German literature is relevant to the hotly contested question whether Britain pursued a benign *Sonderweg*, giving its Jewish citizens a degree of liberty and allowing them opportunities for social integration that were unmatched on the Continent, or whether the discrimination familiar from German history was also present here, albeit in a milder and less violent form. The wealth of material obliges me to proceed schematically, distinguishing seven areas where comparison seems meaningful. I shall treat the earlier periods briefly in order to concentrate on the “long nineteenth century”.

I. *Luther and Shakespeare*

Powerful medieval representations of the Jews in a theological context were transmitted by Luther and Shakespeare. Once the old dispensation of

the law had been superseded by the new dispensation of grace and redemption, as St. Paul explains in the Epistle to the Romans, the Jews were seen as obdurate in their adherence to the Mosaic Law. In the Middle Ages, this negative theological image corresponded to hostile and scurrilous portrayals of Jews in iconography and drama. It became associated with such anti-Jewish beliefs as the blood libel—the charge that Jews murdered Christian children in order to use their blood for ritual purposes. This charge is at the centre of Chaucer's *The Prioress's Tale*, which tells of the Jews' supposed murder of St. Hugh of Lincoln, and of the fourteenth-century ballad 'The Jew's Daughter', which was included by Bishop Thomas Percy in his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765), translated by Herder for his anthology of *Volkslieder* (1778), and quoted, with melody, by Joyce in *Ulysses*.

Luther notoriously combined theology with polemic. He distinguished between the upright patriarchs, kings and prophets of the Old Testament who had received God's special favour, and their descendants who, by rejecting the Messiah, had plunged the entire Jewish people into a miserable exile. Some contemporary Jews might indeed pray fervently, but their prayers would meet only an immense silence from God, Who, in Luther's awestruck and appalled conviction, had forgotten those who had once been His chosen people. Luther later polemicised against Jews with an obsessive scurrility and violence: "Sie müssen warlich das böse hürisch Volck, das ist kein Volck Gottes sein, Und ir Rhum vom Geblüt, Beschneittung und Gesetz mus ein kot sein."¹ He now declares the Jews incapable of conversion, and attributes their usury not (as earlier) to papal legislation but to their innate avarice. His diatribes were to be cited approvingly by nineteenth- and twentieth-century antisemites who wished to claim Luther as their precursor.² But it would be wrong to ascribe to him a peculiar antipathy to Jews, and more mistaken still to see him as founding a peculiarly German tradition of antisemitism.³ Both views simply project the Nazi image of Luther back on to the historical figure, thereby misrepresenting him. However distasteful, Luther's polemics are intended to underline a serious theological argument about the utter insufficiency of good works for redemption. Instead of boasting of the

¹ Martin Luther, *Werke*, vol. LIII, Weimar 1883–, p. 442.

² See Johannes Brosseder, *Luthers Stellung zu den Juden im Spiegel seiner Interpreten*, Munich 1972.

³ This is the argument of Paul Lawrence Rose in *Revolutionary Antisemitism from Kant to Wagner*, Princeton 1990; for sharp criticism of Rose's thesis, see Steven T. Katz, *The Holocaust in Historical Context*, vol. I, New York–Oxford 1994, p. 387.

merits of the patriarchs, one should rather approach God with a profound sense of unworthiness, for we are all born in sin and in God's wrath. Refusing to recognise this, and thinking that their circumcision makes them special in God's sight, the Jews represent a false theology of works.

Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* has a similar theological groundwork expressed through an allegory of the old law versus the new.⁴ Shylock's insistence on his bond, his rigorous demand for justice, is contrasted with Portia's speech beginning "The quality of mercy is not strained", which evokes the new dispensation of grace. By telling Shylock that in cutting out a pound of Antonio's flesh he may not spill one drop of blood, she confronts him with the literal implications of his own rigour. Shylock's enforced conversion is an act of mercy: not only is his life spared, but he is given the chance of eternal happiness. Act V then shows us the union of Christian and Jew, Lorenzo and Jessica, against a background of cosmic harmony expressed by the music of the spheres.

But the play, of course, contains counter-currents that disturb this interpretation. It intensifies the medieval stereotype of the usurer, already used by Marlowe in *The Jew of Malta*.⁵ Unlike Marlowe's Barabbas, however, Shylock is not merely vindictive: he also asserts his shared humanity. His absence from Act V—in contrast to the presence of the penitent Angelo in the *dénouement* of Shakespeare's other great allegory, *Measure for Measure*—implies discomfort at the way in which a merely formal conversion has been imposed on him. Moreover, the theological narrative can easily be transposed into terms that psychoanalysis has made familiar. On this model, the relation between Jew and Christian is one of oedipal rivalry between the old man (Shylock) and the young man (Lorenzo) for the woman (Jessica), who transfers her allegiance from the one to the other through conversion. The beautiful Jewess, *belle juive* or *schöne Jüdin* was to be a durable stereotype.⁶ She was imagined to be capable of conversion, usually through marriage, and hence an *anima naturaliter christiana*, while the male Jew was imagined as obdurate.

⁴ See Nevill Coghill, 'The Basis of Shakespearian Comedy. A Study in Medieval Affinities', in *Essays and Studies*, No. 3 (1950), pp. 1–28; Peter Milward, *Shakespeare's Religious Background*, London 1973, p. 92.

⁵ For this and much other contextual material see James Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews*, New York 1996.

⁶ See Florian Krobb, *Die schöne Jüdin. Jüdische Frauengestalten in der deutschsprachigen Erzählliteratur vom 17. Jahrhundert bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg*, Tübingen 1993.

The play's reception moves from stressing Shylock's malignity to discovering his humanity. In the early eighteenth century Shakespeare's play was current only in a much revised version entitled *The Jew of Venice*, in which Shylock was a comic character, his rage being toned down and his enforced conversion omitted. In February 1741, however, Charles Macklin restored Shakespeare's text to the stage and played Shylock as a passionate figure. In 1777 a German adaptation was performed in Hamburg with the hostile portrayal of Shylock somewhat modified by the famous actor Friedrich Ludwig Schröder. Later Shylock was to be a favourite role of another leading actor, August Wilhelm Iffland.⁷ In these interpretations of Shylock his malignity still predominated. The first defence of Shylock comes from Germany, where in 1781 the Jewish commentator Leon Gomperz argued that Shylock's vindictiveness was at least partially justified by the intolerance with which the Christian characters treated him.⁸ A century later Sir Henry Irving played Shylock as a dignified character who suffered defeat at the hands of shallow Venetian socialites and his disloyal daughter.⁹ In the same period, an Anglo-Jewish writer, in an 1882 essay entitled 'Shylock from a Jewish Point of View', interprets the play as pro-Shylock:

"That our illustrious bard comprehended, and deeply sounded the innermost nature of the proud, although oppressed Israelite, and warmly sympathised with his strictly conservative religious and national sentiments, is clearly shown in his wondrous creation of *Shylock*, whose incisive utterances [are] rich in radiant flashes of lightning scorn, bitter irony, trenchant invective, epigrammatic retort, sparkling wit, an inexorable logic, occasionally tempered by emotional allusions to his wife ... [Shakespeare has] invested the despised, but feared, Jew with a moral grandeur, an irresistible racial dignity wholly impervious to the mean gibes and arrogance of the cravens whom he condescended to honour with his 'lodged hate', his 'certain loathing', and his withering contempt."¹⁰

Between the sixteenth and the eighteenth century, anti-Jewish prejudices began to fade. The long-established notion of the *foetor judaicus*, for example, is discussed by Sir Thomas Browne in his catalogue

⁷ See John Gross, *Shylock. Four Hundred Years in the Life of a Legend*, London 1992; Simon Williams, *Shakespeare on the German Stage, vol. I: 1586–1914*, Cambridge 1990, pp. 132–135.

⁸ Gomperz' essay is paraphrased and discussed in Gunnar Och, *Imago judaica. Juden und Judentum im Spiegel der deutschen Literatur 1750–1812*, Würzburg 1995, pp. 188–190.

⁹ See Gross, pp. 127–33.

¹⁰ Charles Kensington Salaman, *Jews as They Are*, London 1882, p. 219.

of vulgar errors.¹¹ I need mention only briefly the phenomenon of seventeenth-century Christian Hebraism.¹² It was recalled that, since the Jews were the Chosen People to whom God had first revealed Himself, they played an essential and honourable part in Christian history. In seventeenth-century Protestantism, and also in Jansenism, they were especially perceived to be exemplary for the stringent piety and morality shown by their prophets and warriors in the Old Testament. Hence the dignified adoption of Jewish scenes and stories by Rembrandt, by Racine in *Esther* and *Athalie*, and by Milton in *Samson Agonistes* (published in 1671, but perhaps written as early as 1647–1653), where an Old Testament story is made the subject of a Greek-style tragedy. Scholars went beyond the Old Testament to investigate the Talmud, its rabbinical commentaries, and occasionally the mysticism of the *Kabbalah*. This search for a universal wisdom located especially in Jewish tradition was also undertaken by Central European scholars of the Counter-Reformation: Athanasius Kircher's *Oedipus Aegyptiacus* (1652–1654) seeks to reconcile the wisdom of the *Kabbalah* with that imparted to the Egyptians by Hermes Trismegistus, and both with Catholic Christianity; and Christian Knorr von Rosenroth translated and edited the major text of the *Kabbalah*, the *Zohar*, in his *Kabbalah Denudata* (1677–1684). One result was a more sympathetic attitude to actual Jews. Thus the distinguished orientalist Johann Christian Wagenseil (1633–1705), who was also a pioneer in the study of Yiddish, translated part of the *Mishnah*, described this work as superior to almost any other book except the Christian Scriptures, and argued that the Jews' practical virtues put many Christians to shame.¹³ Baroque philosemitism was linked with millenarian hopes of the conversion of the Jews, which were among the reasons why some supported their re-admission to England. Although the formal petition for their re-admission was rejected, the Jews under the Protectorate became firmly established on informal terms.¹⁴

¹¹ See Shapiro, pp. 36–37.

¹² See Frank E. Manuel, *The Changing of the Gods*, Hanover, NH–London 1983, pp. 109–112.

¹³ See Jonathan I. Israel, *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism*, Oxford 1985, pp. 230–231.

¹⁴ See David S. Katz, *Philo-Semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England, 1603–1655*, Oxford 1982; *idem*, *The Jews in the History of England, 1485–1850*, Oxford 1994, chapter 3.

II. Enlightened Philosemitism

In the eighteenth century we find anti-Jewish polemics and hostile imagery gradually yielding to a new, though often problematic, philosemitism. In 1700 the notorious compendium of slanders by Eisenmenger, *Entdecktes Judentum*, was printed in Frankfurt, but the petitions of the Jews succeeded in having it prohibited by the Emperor.¹⁵ The anti-Jewish caricatures current in England suggest that popular anti-Jewish prejudice may have been stronger in Britain than in Germany.¹⁶ The unsuccessful Bill of 1753 for the naturalisation of the Jews in Britain provoked intense but short-lived anti-Jewish feeling. The *London Journal* printed a satirical fantasy, 'News for One Hundred Years hence in the Hebrew Journal', which described how the Jews would dominate England, build a new Temple, launch a ship called the *Benjamin Salvadore*, and have Christians whipped for speaking disrespectfully about the *Mishnah*.¹⁷ Karl Philipp Moritz recounts how a Jewish stagecoach passenger encountered contempt for not wishing to travel outside: "Dieses Vorurteil und Verachtung gegen die Juden habe ich überhaupt hier in England weit häufiger, als bei uns bemerkt."¹⁸

By now anti-Jewish animus had largely lost its theological framework and was, rather, economic and sexual. Medieval associations of the Jews with the Devil linger when Friedrich "Maler" Müller (1749–1825), in *Fausts Leben* (1778), has Faust pursued by Jewish creditors called Mauschel and Itzick, whose bodies are tenanted by the devils who want Faust's soul and have entered into them in order to make them completely remorseless.¹⁹ Often we find the oedipal plot, latent in *The Merchant of Venice*, emerging when the lust of elderly Jews for Christian women is

¹⁵ See Wanda Kampmann, *Deutsche und Juden. Die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland vom Mittelalter bis zum Beginn des Ersten Weltkrieges*, Frankfurt am Main 1979, p. 93.

¹⁶ Frank Felsenstein, *Anti-Semitic Stereotypes. A Paradigm of Otherness in English Popular Culture, 1660–1830*, Baltimore–London 1995.

¹⁷ See Katz, *The Jews in the History of England*, p. 248. This fantasy curiously resembles an elaborate cartoon that appeared in Germany in 1894, which shows that by 1950 Jews would be ruling Germany and enslaving the Germans. The cartoon is reproduced and discussed in John C.G. Röhl, *The Kaiser and his Court. Wilhelm II and the Government of Germany*, transl. by Terence F. Cole, Cambridge 1994, pp. 190–193.

¹⁸ Karl Philipp Moritz, *Reisen eines Deutschen in England im Jahr 1782*, in *idem, Werke*, ed. by Horst Günther, vol. II, Frankfurt am Main 1981, p. 56.

¹⁹ *Sturm und Drang. Dramatische Schriften*, ed. by Erich Loewenthal and Lambert Schneider, 2 vols., Heidelberg, n.d., vol. II, p. 375; discussed in Och, pp. 210–214.

satirised, as with the Jewish whoremonger depicted in Hogarth's *The Harlot's Progress* (1733) and the Jewish money-lender Isaac Rapine in Smollett's *Roderick Random* (1748).

Increasingly, however, philosemitism gained the upper hand. The novel *Leben der schwedischen Gräfin von G****, first published in 1747 by the immensely popular mid-eighteenth-century writer Christian Fürchtegott Gellert, features a devout and dignified Polish Jew, who is saved from freezing to death in Siberia by the Count von G*** and who shows his gratitude by having the Count released from captivity and giving him food, clothes and money. He is held up as an exception, proof that there *can* be good Jews: "Dieser Mann ist auf die edelste Art dankbar gewesen und hat mir bewiesen, daß es auch unter dem Volke gute Herzen gibt, das sie am wenigsten zu haben scheint."²⁰ The moneylender Manasseh in Smollett's novel *Ferdinand Count Fathom* (1753) may be modelled on Gellert's Jew. Although his visitors' low expectations of him ("a rich Jew, whose wealth they considered a proof of his rapaciousness") seem confirmed by his "forbidding aspect", it turns out that his frown conceals his benevolence and his coughing and sneezing are due not, as he pretends, to "salt rheum" (the watering eyes of the conventional hideous old Jew) but to tears of sensibility.²¹ A different tactic was adopted by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing in his comedy *Die Juden* (1754), in which a traveller saves a baron from two highway robbers who are in fact the baron's own servants, disguised as Jews. The traveller, though outwardly indistinguishable from other Europeans, is himself a virtuous Jew, and is obliged to listen to antisemitic tirades before shaming his rescuer by revealing his identity. The limits of the play's philosemitism are indicated by the baron's words: "O wie achtungswürdig wären die Juden, wenn sie alle Ihnen glichen!"²² Though admirably intended, such philosemitism risks confirming anti-Jewish prejudice by implying that good Jews are exceptional.

In *Nathan der Weise* (1779), the mature Lessing produced an acknowledged masterpiece which reverses *The Merchant of Venice* by pleading for religious toleration. It is set in Jerusalem during the Crusades, where the "pious frenzy" of supposing one's own religion to possess exclusive truth, an illusion that supposedly originated with the Jews and was bequeathed to Christianity and Islam, has reached its height. Lessing presents Nathan

²⁰ C. F. Gellert, *Leben der schwedischen Gräfin von G****, Stuttgart 1968, p. 79.

²¹ Tobias Smollett, *The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom*, ed. by Damian Grant, London 1971, pp. 227–228.

²² G. E. Lessing, *Werke*, ed. by Kurt Wölfel, 3 vols., Frankfurt am Main 1967, vol. I, p. 166.

unambiguously as a Jew, invoking antisemitic stereotypes in order to lead the spectator beyond them. Nathan is a rich merchant; he shows a rabbinical subtlety and energy in argument, and sometimes in trivial logic-chopping, especially in the opening scene where he browbeats his Christian servant; but he also excels in practical benevolence, and his profound goodness fully emerges when we learn that, long before, his wife and seven sons were burnt in a pogrom by Christians, and that he accepted this as God's will and forgave his enemies.

Nathan has often been seen as the antithesis to Shylock.²³ Both suffer persecution from Christians, but whereas Shylock reacts with hatred, Nathan expresses forgiveness. Both are merchants, but Shylock is a selfish usurer, whereas Nathan is willing to help Saladin generously. While Shylock's malice seems to justify Christian bigotry, Nathan's generosity wins the initially bigoted Templar over to his conception of tolerance. Both have daughters, but Jessica takes after Shylock only biologically, while Recha, though not Nathan's biological daughter but a Christian child reared as a Jew, displays his moral influence. Moreover, Recha reverses the stereotype of the beautiful Jewess, for this figure conventionally accepts Christianity, whereas Recha shows herself naturally disposed to the enlightened benevolence inculcated under the guise of Judaism by her adoptive father.

The British counterpart to *Nathan* is the comedy *The Jew* (1794) by Richard Cumberland. Sheva, who lives in the London Jewish quarter, Duke's Place, is reputedly a miser. When alone, he exhibits a conflict between miserliness and benevolence: "I love my monies, I do love them dearly; but I love my fellow-creatures a little better."²⁴ He does in fact bestow a great deal of charity. In the play he offers three hundred pounds to a young man who has previously treated him scornfully—a reversal of Shylock's behaviour towards Antonio. All the non-Jewish characters are finally conquered by the evidence of his generosity, and he is acclaimed as "the widow's friend, the orphan's father, the poor man's protector, the universal philanthropist."²⁵ Sheva's character is hardly plausible, nor is it as flattering to Jews as Cumberland hoped: Sir Walter Scott remarked that "we cannot be surprised that the people in question felt a portrait in which

²³ Berthold Auerbach, 'Gedanken über Lessing's "Nathan"', in *Lessing-Mendelssohn-Gedenkbuch. Zur hundertfünfzigjährigen Geburtsfeier von Gotthold Ephraim Lessing und Moses Mendelssohn, sowie zur Säcularfeier von Lessing's "Nathan"*, ed. by Deutsch-Israelitischen Gemeindebund, Leipzig 1879, pp. 321–328; Och, pp. 159–162.

²⁴ Richard Cumberland, *The Jew. A Comedy*, London 1794, p. 21.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

they were rendered ludicrous as well as interesting, to be between an affront and a compliment".²⁶ Nevertheless, the play was popular in Germany, where sentimentalism was still widely acceptable. Three different translations were published in the 1790s. Its first German performance was in 1798 in the Berlin National Theatre, with Iffland in the title role. Reviewing a production of *Der Jude* in 1819, Ludwig Börne showed how impressed he was by observing: "Wie viele Tausende jenes unglücklichen Volkes muß Cumberland haben dulden sehen, bis er den ungeheuren *Judenschmerz*, einen reichen dunklen Schatz, von Geschlecht zu Geschlecht herabgeerbt, auch nur zu ahnen vermochte, bis er zu erlauschen vermochte die Leiden, die nicht klagen, weil sie kein Ohr zu finden gewohnt sind?"²⁷

In English literature, a complex piece of philosemitism, free from the exceptionalism that haunts its precursors, was produced by Maria Edgeworth, a novelist of pivotal importance in British literary history. She wished to atone for her unsympathetic portrayal of a Jewish heiress in *Castle Rackrent* (1801) and of an avaricious coach-builder in *The Absentee* (1812). To satisfy the reproaches of her American correspondent, Rachel Mordecai, she wrote *Harrington* (1817). Here she shows, in a manner curiously recalling Hoffmann's *Der Sandmann* (1816), how her hero's imagination is perverted at an early age by nursery tales about wicked Jews stealing and killing children. Young Harrington associates these tales with the actual figure of Simon the old-clothes dealer. He becomes an antisemite at a young age. At school he learns better, and acquires a fascination with Jews scarcely less extravagant than his earlier antisemitism. As Michael Ragussis has shown, Edgeworth reverses familiar plots by having Harrington tested by the moral authority of Jews and making him the victim of a Gentile conspiracy.²⁸ His schoolfellow and false friend Lord Mowbray, a violent antisemite, wants to marry the Jewish heiress Berenice Montenero and enlists the aid of Harrington's old nursemaid to convince Berenice and her father that Harrington is mad. The plot is finally exposed, and the last obstacle to Harrington's marrying Berenice is removed by the revelation that her mother was English and that she has been brought up a Protestant. This contrived happy ending is unworthy of Edgeworth's narrative ingenuity. It is unfortunate, too, that

²⁶ Sir Walter Scott, Bart., 'Richard Cumberland', in *The Miscellaneous Works of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.*, vol. III, Edinburgh 1870, pp. 191–230, esp. p. 213.

²⁷ Ludwig Börne, *Sämtliche Schriften*, ed. by Peter and Inge Rippmann, 5 vols., Dreieich 1977, vol. I, pp. 286–287.

²⁸ See Michael Ragussis, *Figures of Conversion. "The Jewish Question" and English National Identity*, Durham, NC–London 1995, chapter 2.

Mr. Montenero and his daughter should be so sublimely virtuous, while the Gentile characters are preternaturally weak or wicked. Nevertheless, *Harrington* is an interesting and creditable attempt at analysing antisemitism, and a book of historical importance, for, as Ragussis argues, it founds a tradition of novels attempting complex and largely positive representations of Jews, running from *Ivanhoe* to *Ulysses*. This tradition of British philosemitism has no real counterpart in Germany. It has to do with the construction of a British identity.²⁹ After the abolition of the Scottish Parliament in 1707, Scottish writers like Smollett and Scott tried to create a British literature in which Scotland would have its place as an important region.³⁰ Maria Edgeworth extended this endeavour to Ireland with *Castle Rackrent*, the first regional novel in which dialect is used throughout. Writers with a regional base like Edgeworth and Scott were well fitted to take a comprehensive rather than a little-England view of their culture and to consider the integration into it of aliens who might seem less assimilable, namely Jews.

III. Romantic Myth-Making

Romantic writers combine myth uneasily with history. They are fascinated by the Jew as exotic alien and as legendary figure, especially by the Wandering Jew. But their myths are often also interpretations of history: as the establishment of an ethnically pure nation that excludes the Jew; or as the defeat of feudal values at the hands of Jewish modernity.

The inclusion of Jews in *Ivanhoe* (1819) was suggested to Scott by his friend James Skene of Rubislaw, who had lived in Germany and described to Scott how German Jews before emancipation formed a distinct community that was still confined in ghettos.³¹ In *Ivanhoe* Scott continued his project, begun in *Waverley* (1814), of showing how diverse cultures became integrated into the British state. Unlike such triumphalist historians as Sharon Turner, however, Scott depicts a succession of conflicts in which the losers' culture risks submergence. In allowing his Saxon hero Wilfred of Ivanhoe to triumph over the brutal Norman Templar Sir Brian

²⁹ See Linda Colley, *Britons. Forging the Nation 1707–1837*, New Haven 1992; Robert Crawford, *Devolving English Literature*, Oxford 1992.

³⁰ On anti-Scottish prejudice, which was much more marked than antisemitism in eighteenth-century England, see Pat Rogers, *Johnson and Boswell. The Transit of Caledonia*, Oxford 1995, chapter 8.

³¹ J. G. Lockhart, *The Life of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.*, London 1893, pp. 72, 420.

de Bois-Guilbert, he anticipates the thesis of Britain's essentially Saxon character later proposed by historians such as John Kemble, who corresponded with Jakob Grimm and shared his enthusiasm for the Germanic past.³²

Scott's clash of cultures also has racial overtones. The opposition of Saxon and Norman is expressed in a physical contrast of light and dark. Rowena has "profuse hair, of a colour between brown and flaxen", whereas the Norman Bois-Guilbert reveals his alien race by having "features burnt almost into negro blackness" and "short and thick curled hair of a raven blackness, corresponding to his unusually swart complexion", and is attended by blacks who are described as Saracens and Moslems.³³ Within this discourse the Jews occupy an ambivalent place. The rich Isaac of York is presented in equivocal terms: "His features, keen and regular, with an aquiline nose, and piercing black eyes; his high and wrinkled forehead, and long grey hair and beard, would have been considered as handsome, had they not been the marks of a physiognomy peculiar to a race which, during those dark ages, was alike detested by the credulous and prejudiced vulgar, and persecuted by the greedy and rapacious nobility, and who, perhaps owing to that very hatred and persecution, had adopted a national character, in which there was much, to say the least, mean and unamiable."³⁴ Reversing *The Merchant of Venice*, however, Scott has made Isaac a helpless instead of a threatening figure and transferred Shylock's will-power to his daughter Rebecca. The beautiful and exotic Rebecca shares the Oriental associations of Bois-Guilbert. The Normans and the Jews are presented not only as antagonists, but also as potential allies. When threatened with rape by Bois-Guilbert, Rebecca so impresses him with her readiness to commit suicide that he reveals his plan to dominate the world by becoming Grand Master of the Templars. "Not the reign of your vainly-expected Messiah offers such power to your dispersed tribes as my ambition may aim at. I have sought but a kindred spirit to share it, and I have found such in thee."³⁵ Although Rebecca rejects this proposal, it represents a potent fantasy which might to Scott's readers seem to have a contemporary basis in the international

³² See Asa Briggs, 'Saxons, Normans and Victorians', in *idem*, *Collected Essays*, 2 vols., Brighton 1985, vol. II, pp. 215–235.

³³ Sir Walter Scott, Bart., *Ivanhoe*, in *idem*, *The Waverley Novels*, New Popular Edition, vol. II, London 1891, pp. 517, 509, 516. See John Sutherland, *The Life of Walter Scott*, Oxford 1995, pp. 229–232.

³⁴ Scott, *Ivanhoe*, p. 519.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 586.

power of Jewish finance, especially of the Rothschilds. At the end of the novel, Isaac and his daughter voluntarily leave England, which they find too violent and unsafe, for Spain. Unable to integrate the Jews into the national unity re-established by the novel's conclusion, the narrative expels them into the cosmopolitan limbo which is their proper place.

German, unlike British, Romanticism sharply rejected the Enlightenment. Thus the conservative Prussian nobleman Achim von Arnim, now recognised as a leading Romantic prose writer, was deeply implicated in the antisemitism that accompanied the German Romantics' nationalism. In an address delivered to the *Christlich-deutsche Tischgesellschaft* in 1811, he denounced the Jews for surreptitiously infiltrating society, and regretted that they were no longer required to wear distinctive clothing; yet he also claimed, with the illogic of conspiracy theorists, that they could be recognised by their language and their stench.³⁶ His short novel *Die Majoratsherren* (1820) surrounds Jews with magical associations. It turns on a young girl, Esther, who is really a Christian child brought up as a Jew by a hideous old woman called Vasthi. Thus Arnim's narrative adopts and alters the situation of *Nathan*, substituting for Recha's wise adoptive father a treacherous mother-figure, who eventually murders Esther in the guise of the Angel of Death. Vasthi later takes advantage of Jewish emancipation under French occupation to buy up the entailed mansion of the title and turn it into a factory for making ammonia, an image which modernises the *foetor judaicus* by combining an unpleasant smell with Jewish commercialism. The story ends by sarcastically deploring the supersession of feudal law by a utilitarian and Judaised modernity: "So erhielt das Majoratshaus eine den Nachbarn zwar unangenehme, aber doch sehr nützliche Bestimmung, und es trat der Credit an die Stelle des Lehnrechts."³⁷

IV. Dickens and Raabe

Antisemitic gibes were frequent in early Victorian England. Jews were commonly caricatured as old-clothes sellers or money-lenders with comic

³⁶ Achim von Arnim, 'Über die Kennzeichen des Judentums', in *idem, Schriften*, ed. by Roswitha Burwick *et al.*, 6 vols., Frankfurt am Main 1990–1992, vol. VI, pp. 362–387.

³⁷ Arnim, *Werke*, vol. IV, p. 147. See Peter-Philipp Riedl, "... das ist ein ewig Schachern und Zanken ...". Achim von Arnims Haltung zu den Juden in den *Majoratsherren* und anderen Schriften', in *Aurora*, 54 (1994), pp. 72–105.

voices: there are innumerable such figures in Thackeray.³⁸ Another example is the Shylock who appears in R. H. Barham's comic re-telling of *The Merchant of Venice* in *The Ingoldsby Legends* (1840):

“With a pack, Like a sack
Of old clothes at his back,
And three hats on his head, Shylock came in a crack,
Saying, ‘Rest you fair, Signior Antonio!—vat, pray,
Might your vorship be pleash’d for to vant in ma vay?’”³⁹

In the hands of Dickens, and in those of his German imitator Wilhelm Raabe, the Jew rises from a figure of caricature to a horrifying embodiment of evil, but hardly a realistic one. When we first meet Fagin in *Oliver Twist*, he is, of all things, cooking sausages: “and standing over them, with a toasting-fork in his hand, was a very old shrivelled Jew, whose villainous-looking and repulsive face was obscured by a quantity of matted red hair”.⁴⁰ Fagin does not speak conventional Jewish English—in contrast to Barney, “another Jew: younger than Fagin, but nearly as vile and repulsive in appearance”, who speaks through his nose.⁴¹ And why does he bear the Irish name Fagin? It comes from the episode in Dickens's childhood when he worked in a blacking warehouse along with a boy called Bob Fagin. The memory so horrified Dickens that it not only enabled him to evoke the subterranean hell into which Oliver is dragged but left behind the name Fagin. Rather than realism, we have here childhood terrors (as in *Harrington*) expressed in the fairy-tale mode which Franco Moretti finds characteristic of Victorian fiction.⁴² Dickens brings Fagin closer to the evil Jew of legend who steals Christian children. When Oliver escapes to the idyllic country retreat of the Maylies, Fagin haunts him like an evil father. To the young pickpockets he trains, Fagin is like a corrupting father-substitute. Nancy, in luring Oliver back, plays the role of the Jew's daughter in Percy's ballad.

³⁸ See S.S. Prawer, *Israel at Vanity Fair. Jews and Judaism in the Writings of W. M. Thackeray*, Leiden 1992.

³⁹ ‘Thomas Ingoldsby, Esq.’, *The Ingoldsby Legends*, London, n.d., p. 255.

⁴⁰ Charles Dickens, *The Adventures of Oliver Twist*, in *The Oxford Illustrated Dickens*, Oxford 1949, p. 56. See Harry Stone, ‘Dickens and the Jews’, in *Victorian Studies*, 2 (1958–1959), pp. 223–253.

⁴¹ Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, p. 105. On the speech habits of Dickens's Jews, see G.L. Brook, *The Language of Dickens*, London 1970, p. 72.

⁴² Franco Moretti, *The Way of the World. The “Bildungsroman” in European Culture*, London 1987, p. 185.

By the mid-century, however, Jews were readily accepted as British subjects. Sir Robert Peel opposed Jewish emancipation in 1830 and advocated it in 1848. Dickens's attitudes (unlike Thackeray's) changed too. In 1863 he received a letter from Mrs. Eliza Davis, wife of the Jewish banker who had bought his London home three years earlier, complaining of the portrayal of Fagin. When revising his works for the *Charles Dickens Edition* in 1867–1868, Dickens removed most of the references to Fagin as “the Jew”: for example, “The Jew's Last Night Alive” became “Fagin's Last Night Alive”.⁴³ And in a more immediate response to Mrs. Davis, he created the positive figure of Riah in *Our Mutual Friend* (1864). Mincingly called “the Jewish man” instead of “the Jew”, Riah is, as Hilaire Belloc said, “a sort of compound of an Arab Sheik and a Family Bible picture from the Old Testament”.⁴⁴ He is old, venerable, dignified, patient, and Oriental, stretching out his hands “with a graceful Eastern gesture of homage”, and spreading a carpet for his guests, “perhaps with some old instinct of his race”.⁴⁵ Stereotypical roles are reversed: Riah is genuinely poor, while his wealthy Gentile employer Fledgeby shows the “Jewish” traits of avarice and sadism. Dickens's apologia for Jews stresses the otherness of the Jew; repeats Edgeworth's mistake of representing Jews as implausibly virtuous; and remains within the fairy-tale mode while sacrificing the imaginative energies that lay behind Fagin.

In nineteenth-century Germany we also find many hostile popular stereotypes of Jews. The three references to Jews in Büchner's *Woyzeck* (1837), for example, are all unflattering and in one case disgusting. In Droste-Hülshoff's *Die Judenbuche* (1842), which turns on the difference between the Old and the New Testaments, the Jews are embodiments of justice but also strange, semi-alien beings. The most notorious portrayal of an unpleasant Jew is by Gustav Freytag in *Soll und Haben* (1855), in which the evil Veitel Itzig shadows the upright German Bürger Anton Wohlfart. A version of this antithesis appears in Wilhelm Raabe's *Der Hungerpastor* (1864), a novel which probably seeks to emulate Freytag's success but which also shows the impact of Dickens and develops his fairy-tale mode of fiction.

Der Hungerpastor turns on the antithesis between the honest, pious, dreamy German Hans Unwirsch and his school friend Moses

⁴³ These revisions are recorded in *Oliver Twist*, ed. by Kathleen Tillotson, Oxford 1966.

⁴⁴ Hilaire Belloc, *The Jews*, London 1920, p. 136.

⁴⁵ Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend*, in *The Oxford Illustrated Dickens*, Oxford 1952, pp. 275–279.

Freudenstein. Their friendship dates from an occasion when Hans protects Moses against antisemitic bullies. Raabe, as narrator, deplores the Jew-hatred of the past: "Die Alten wie die Jungen des Volkes Gottes hatten viel zu dulden von ihren christlichen Nachbarn; unendlich langsam ist das alte, schauerliche Hepphepp, welches so unsägliches Unheil anrichtete, verklungen in der Welt."⁴⁶ Yet despite his tolerance, Raabe gives Moses many stereotyped features of the Jew as a threat to traditional German values. Moses is coldly intelligent, but has been taught by his father to value learning as a weapon to protect his people. In contrast to Hans, a mystically inclined Protestant clergyman, Moses is a materialist and a Hegelian. He declares that Jews can now profit from emancipation, and are only passengers on the German ship who will rescue themselves if the Germans drown: "Ich habe das Recht, nur da ein Deutscher zu sein, wo es mir beliebt, und das Recht, diese Ehre in jedem mir beliebigen Augenblick aufzugeben. Wir Juden sind doch die wahren Kosmopoliten, die Weltbürger von Gottes Gnaden oder, wenn du willst, von Gottes Ungnaden."⁴⁷ This cynicism is, of course, quite unlike the intense loyalty to Germany that emancipated Jews actually showed. After residence in Paris, he reappears as the Catholic convert Dr. Theophile Stein and says, with unconscious irony, "Der Moses aus dem Trödeladen ... ist tot und begraben und wird nicht wieder auferstehen".⁴⁸ With dangerous sexual charm, he seduces a foolish pseudo-intellectual woman and marries her for her supposed fortune; on discovering his mistake, he maltreats her until she dies. Although Moses attains worldly success, signified by a title, he is generally despised and "*bürgerlich tot im furchtbarsten Sinne des Wortes*".⁴⁹

The novel has generated much controversy.⁵⁰ Challenged by a Jewish reader, Philippine Ullmann, in 1903, Raabe declared that Moses was not meant to be a typical Jew but a typical renegade. While the novel condemns pre-Enlightenment antisemitism, it also incorporates an array of anti-Jewish stereotypes into a fairy-tale confrontation of good and evil. Like Arnim, Raabe restores a theological framework with the Jew as

⁴⁶ Wilhelm Raabe, *Der Hungerpastor*, in *idem*, *Sämtliche Werke*, Brunswick edition, vol. X, Göttingen 1966, p. 41.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 386.

⁵⁰ For an overview, see Jeffrey L. Sammons, *Wilhelm Raabe. The Fiction of the Alternative Community*, Princeton 1987, pp. 73–87, and *idem*, *The Shifting Fortunes of Wilhelm Raabe. A History of Criticism as a Cautionary Tale*, Columbia, SC 1991, pp. 103–106.

Devil-figure, but also associates the Jew with a threatening modernity in which such protean and strong-willed types flourish.

Some years later Raabe apparently sought to make amends for Moses Freudenstein by the positive depiction of a Jewish woman in *Frau Salome* (1875). The widow of a Berlin banker and close friend of *Justizrat* Scholten (one of Raabe's lovable eccentrics), Frau Salome is depicted as an intelligent, kind, motherly figure and repeatedly called a "schöne Jüdin".⁵¹ During the fire that forms the novel's climax she quotes the Psalms, like a Hebrew prophetess. She herself speaks of "mein kühl semitisch Gehirn".⁵² Scholten alludes to her unsavoury relatives as her "krummnasige Verwandtschaft".⁵³ To distinguish her from them, Scholten compulsively associates her with the Orient. He says she would look better "unter den Palmen des Orients, auf einem Dromedar"; finding her reading the newspaper, Scholten asks if she has been studying the "Orientalische Frage"; and the narrator mentions her "orientalischen Augen".⁵⁴ We seem to have once more the problematic philosemitism of Gellert and Lessing: the good Jew is the untypical Jew, and is emphatically associated with the Orient and the world of the Old Testament, to show that as an alien she does not belong in Germany.

V. The Problem of "Race"

In the late nineteenth century "the Jew" came to be defined in racial rather than religious terms.⁵⁵ One of the first attempts to put "race" on a scientific basis was by a Scottish anatomist, Robert Knox, who asserted in 1850, "Race is everything: literature, science, art—in a word, civilisation, depends on it".⁵⁶ Culpably confusing language, culture, and physiology, Matthew Arnold wrote in *Culture and Anarchy* (1869): "Science has now

⁵¹ Raabe, *Frau Salome*, in *idem*, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. by Karl Hoppe, vol. XII, Freiburg-Brunswick 1955, pp. 23, 28, 84.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 85.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 71, 31.

⁵⁵ See the surveys by Pauline Paucker: 'Jüdische Gestalten im englischen Roman des 19. Jahrhunderts', in Herbert A. Strauss and Christhard Hoffmann (eds.), *Juden und Judentum in der Literatur*, Munich 1985, pp. 106–139, and 'The Image of the German Jew in English Fiction', in Werner E. Mosse *et al.* (eds.), *Second Chance. Two Centuries of German-Speaking Jews in the United Kingdom*, Tübingen 1991 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 48), pp. 315–333.

⁵⁶ Robert Knox, *The Races of Men. A Fragment*, London 1850, p. v.

made visible to everybody the great and pregnant elements of difference which lie in race, and in how signal a manner they make the genius and history of an Indo-European people vary from those of a Semitic people."⁵⁷

In British literature it is the racial ambiguity of the Jew that seems to matter. This corresponds to an awareness that Britain is now part of the wider world, including people of diverse origins who cannot be located in English classes or regions. "Englishness" hardens into an ideology which may be asserted defensively or satirised for its philistinism. In Trollope's later novels Englishness is threatened with infiltration by a series of foreigners—Madame Max Goesler, Joseph Emilius, Ferdinand Lopez and Augustus Melmotte—whose origins are always uncertain but probably Jewish.⁵⁸ Thus Madame Max in *Phineas Finn* (1869) is conspicuously dark, with a faint foreign accent; reputedly "the widow of an Austrian banker" and herself, according to "enemies", a "Jewess" and the "daughter of a German Jew".⁵⁹ Through her sexual allure she comes close to entrapping the elderly Duke of Omnium, arousing racial fears of miscegenation, "should it ever come to pass that a black-browed baby with yellow skin should be shown to the world as Lord Silverbridge".⁶⁰ Harder to define is Melmotte in *The Way We Live Now* (1875). Trollope gives many confusing indications of his origin.⁶¹ His wife is a Frankfurt Jew; he has lived on the Continent and in New York, has arrived in London from Paris, and is at first known as M. Melmotte; his associates include "Samuel Cohenlupe, Esq., Member of Parliament for Staines, a gentleman of the Jewish persuasion";⁶² after his suicide it emerges that his father was an Irish forger in New York by the name of Melmody. As an all-purpose foreigner, the antithesis of the English landowner Roger Carbury, Melmotte illustrates Trollope's suspicion that English society is being infiltrated by continental and Jewish swindlers, American crooks like Hamilton K. Fisker, and unsettlingly independent women like Mrs Hurtle, another American. Trollope was probably not alone in thinking Jews too

⁵⁷ R.H. Super (ed.), *The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold*, vol. 5, Ann Arbor 1965, p. 173.

⁵⁸ See Ragussis, p. 242.

⁵⁹ Anthony Trollope, *Phineas Finn*, ed. by Jacques Berthoud, World's Classics, vol. II, Oxford 1982, pp. 31, 216.

⁶⁰ Trollope, *Phineas Finn*, vol. II, p. 215.

⁶¹ See John Sutherland, 'Is Melmotte Jewish?', in *Times Literary Supplement*, 4th August 1995, 13–14, partially reprinted in *idem, Is Heathcliff a Murderer?*, Oxford 1996, pp. 156–162.

⁶² Trollope, *The Way We Live Now*, ed. by John Sutherland, World's Classics, Oxford 1982, p. 84.

powerful in British financial life. In the 1870s, when Trollope wrote his novel, Jews accounted for 14% of British non-landed millionaires.⁶³ But the important point about Melmotte is, as Bryan Cheyette says, his indeterminacy.⁶⁴

A similar uncertainty fills *Daniel Deronda* (1876), though George Eliot interprets racial hybridity in a positive manner. On discovering that he is a Jew, Deronda undertakes to create a new Jewish identity, inheriting the prophetic mantle of Mordecai and setting off for the East with Mirah Lapidus. In order to accommodate Deronda, Eliot's realism shifts to a Romantic mode, so that, as Moretti says, with the revelation of his Jewish parentage, "Deronda becomes the hero of a melodramatic fairy-tale".⁶⁵ Eliot's fairy-tale may be weaker than Dickens's tale of the evil Jew: she has adopted a different romance mode, exemplified by Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, in which utopian aspirations are offset by irony.⁶⁶ Deronda combines the spellbinding gaze of the Romantic *homme fatale* with the feminised sexuality customarily ascribed to the Jewish man, and the charisma attributed by Renan to the Jewish prophetic character. In the realistic mode, however, the novel includes another intriguing character in the pianist Klesmer, described as "a felicitous combination of the German, the Slave and the Semite".⁶⁷ He is modelled on the pianist and composer Anton Rubinstein, whom Eliot met at Weimar in 1854. His unusual surname, the Yiddish word for a musician, draws attention to the Jewish element in his hybrid identity.

Fin de siècle fiction contrasts Englishness with the artistic world of Paris. Henry James and George du Maurier associate Jewishness with aestheticism and contrast it with English philistinism. In James's *The Tragic Muse* (1890), the identity of the actress Miriam Rooth is ambiguous. She is "more than half a Jewess", the daughter of one Rudolf Roth and an Englishwoman to whom he taught music.⁶⁸ Since her mother is not Jewish, neither, technically, is Miriam. Yet, looking at *objets d'art* in Nick Dormer's studio, Mrs. Rooth conveys "the element of race", "the immemorial

⁶³ See David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews. Social Relations and Political Culture 1840–1914*, New Haven 1994, pp. 78–82.

⁶⁴ Bryan Cheyette, *Constructions of "the Jew" in English Literature and Society. Racial Representations, 1875–1945*, Cambridge 1993, p. 39.

⁶⁵ Moretti, p. 225.

⁶⁶ See Elinor S. Shaffer, "Kubla Khan" and the Fall of Jerusalem. *The Mythological School in Biblical Criticism and Secular Literature, 1770–1880*, Cambridge 1975, p. 249.

⁶⁷ George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, ed. by Terence Cave, London 1995, p. 47.

⁶⁸ Henry James, *The Tragic Muse*, ed. by Philip Horne, London 1995, p. 49.

Jewess”; the “general theory, so stoutly held by several clever people, that few of us are not under suspicion”, means that with such a husband and daughter she has, in Nick’s eyes, “good Semitic presumptions”.⁶⁹ Miriam’s ideal is the actress Rachel Félix (1820–1858), who was born to Jewish pedlars and became an international star by mid-century.⁷⁰ Others find Miriam histrionic, vulgar, “unscrupulous, nervous, capricious, wanton”.⁷¹ In her, the *fin-de-siècle* psychology of the artist is superimposed on the instability conventionally ascribed to women and Jews: like Melmotte, she is an all-purpose outsider. Like George Eliot, James accepts and welcomes hybridity. He reinterprets the psychology of the Jew as the temperament of the artist.

Another famous *fin de siècle* Jewish artist is introduced in ambiguous terms as “a tall bony individual of any age between thirty and forty-five, of Jewish aspect, well-featured but sinister”, who “went by the name of Svengali, and spoke fluent French with a German accent” in a voice that “was very thin and mean and harsh, and often broke into a disagreeable falsetto”.⁷² He is variously described as a “German Pole” and “an Oriental Israelite Hebrew Jew” who speaks “German-Hebrew-French” in a “hoarse, rasping, nasal, throaty rook’s caw”.⁷³ His real name is Adler, but his mother is a Polish singer, implying that, like Miriam, he is not halachically Jewish. Nevertheless, du Maurier piles on familiar stereotypes. Not only is Svengali ugly, dirty and sadistic towards women, but, like the “Jew” attacked in Wagner’s essay *Das Judentum in der Musik* (1850), he shows his uncreativity by being unable to sing.⁷⁴ Du Maurier’s narrative also revives the oedipal plot, for Svengali and the English art student Little Billee are rivals for Trilby O’Ferrall. Svengali gains a pseudo-victory by turning Trilby, through his magnetism, into an internationally famous singer who is really a terrified zombie, but his power is broken when, at her London début, he catches sight of Little Billee. Trilby breaks down, and her career is over, but the narrative makes clear that she is redeemed through her ability to love and to inspire love in others. We are close to the fairy-tale narratives of Dickens and Raabe.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 414.

⁷⁰ Rachel is mentioned in *ibid.*, pp. 135, 220, 229.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

⁷² George du Maurier, *Trilby* (1894), Everyman edition, London 1931, pp. 9–10.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 25, 288, 51, 105.

⁷⁴ See Richard Wagner, *Judaism in Music and Other Essays*, transl. by W. A. Ellis, Lincoln, NB–London, 1995, esp. p. 86.

In Germany, at this period, the myth of *Deutschtum* was becoming a firmer and more oppressive ideology than that of Englishness had ever been. Under the influence of such bestsellers as Julius Langbehn's anonymous *Rembrandt als Erzieher. Von einem Deutschen* (1890), writers identified the authentic German with the beleaguered farmer who was suffering at the hands of businessmen, often Jewish, based in the mushroom cities of modernity. This contrast is very clear in the influential early *Heimatroman* by Wilhelm von Polenz, *Der Büttnerbauer* (1895), in which the farmer Traugott Büttner is reduced to poverty and eventual suicide by a group of Jewish businessmen led by the red-haired, Yiddish-speaking Sam Harrassowitz. It is hard to find any positive acceptance of racial hybridity. The unease it causes is registered, more subtly than by Trollope, in the later novels of Theodor Fontane. Fontane's personal comments on the Jewish question are disturbingly negative.⁷⁵ In *Unwiederbringlich* (1891), he introduces the seductive Ebba von Rosenberg, granddaughter of a Swedish Court Jew (a counterpart to Trollope's Madame Max), to tempt the stolid hero away from his unrewarding marriage. A close reading of *Effi Briest* (1895) discloses fears which are part of Fontane's depiction and interpretation of the age in which he lived.⁷⁶ A Wagnerian and an antisemite, the Prussian bureaucrat Innstetten feels unease towards Jews and Slavs: he distrusts Crampas for being half Polish, and Crampas, in his disturbing fondness for quoting morbid passages from Heine, embodies an association between Jewishness, Slav identity, and sexual laxity. The only Jewish character in the novel is "eine sehr hübsche galizische Jüdin, von der niemand wußte, was sie eigentlich vorhatte" (chapter 32). Later, Fontane articulates a generous cosmopolitanism in *Der Stechlin* (1898), but his developing sense of Germany's place in the wider world leaves the Jews, represented by the shopkeeper Baruch Hirschfeld and his son, as small-minded provincials, intent on trying (and failing) to buy out the Prussian nobility. Similarly, a poem from the mid 1890s, *Veränderungen in der Mark (Anno 390 und 1890)*, imagines ancient Germanic chieftains visiting Prussia after Bismarck's fall and finding it overrun by Jews—"Wohin sie kommen,

⁷⁵ See Wolfgang Paulsen, 'Theodor Fontane—The Philosemitic Antisemite', in *Year Book XXVI of the Leo Baeck Institute*, London 1981, pp. 303–322.

⁷⁶ See Erika Swales, 'Private Mythologies and Public Unease. On Fontane's *Effi Briest*', in *Modern Language Review*, 75 (1980), pp. 114–123.

dieselbe Rasse".⁷⁷ This implies that the Jews have conquered Prussia as thoroughly as the ancient Germans of the *Völkerwanderungen*.

Fontane illustrates how in German realist fiction Jewishness is usually problematic. There are a few texts in which a character's Jewishness is simply a neutral attribute, including Fontane's early novel *L'Adultera* (1882); but generally a character's Jewishness is used to distinguish him sharply from his Gentile surroundings, whether the portrayal is sympathetic, as in Ferdinand von Saar's *Seligmann Hirsch* (1889) or Thomas Mann's *Wälsungenblut* (1906), or satirical, as with Naphta in *Der Zauberberg* (1924) or Breisacher in *Doktor Faustus* (1947).⁷⁸ We do not find the acceptance of hybridity demonstrated by Eliot and James.

VI. Anglo-Jewish and German-Jewish Authors on Jews

When we turn to texts in which Jews represent Jews, we find considerable differences between Britain and Germany. First, Germany has no equivalent to Disraeli and the unabashed assertiveness with which he glorifies the Jews. In *Coningsby* (1844), he introduces the character Sidonia, descended from Spanish pseudo-converts, and now "lord and master of the money-market of the world", who expounds Disraeli's own racial beliefs: "Sidonia and his brethren could claim a distinction which the Saxon and the Greek, and the rest of the Caucasian nations, have forfeited. The Hebrew is an unmixed race."⁷⁹ Later, equally bold assertions were made by Lucien Wolf in response to antisemitic agitation in Germany and Russia: "It is too little known that the Jews are as a race really superior, physically, mentally, and morally, to the people among whom they dwell."⁸⁰ He adduces statistics demonstrating Jewish fertility, low infant mortality, longevity, abstention from crime, and "notorious intellectual superiority".⁸¹ There is a remarkable contrast between Wolf's self-assurance and the obsessive conviction in the German-speaking world that

⁷⁷ Theodor Fontane, *Romane, Erzählungen, Gedichte*, 6 vols., Munich 1962, vol. VI, pp. 356–358.

⁷⁸ See Egon Schwarz, 'Die jüdischen Gestalten in Thomas Manns *Doktor Faustus*', in *Thomas Mann Jahrbuch*, 2 (1989), pp. 79–101.

⁷⁹ Benjamin Disraeli, *Coningsby, or The New Generation*, Bradenham Edition, vol. VIII, London 1927, pp. 225, 232. On Disraeli and race, see John Vincent, *Disraeli*, Oxford 1990.

⁸⁰ Lucien Wolf, 'What is Judaism? A Question of Today', in *Fortnightly Review*, vol. XLII, August 1884, pp. 237–256, esp. p. 240.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 241.

Jews were unhealthy, unmanly, neurotic, hysterical and prone to self-hatred.⁸²

The second difference between Britain and Germany is that Anglo-Jewish fiction is a relatively small body of work, whereas German-Jewish writing is an immensely rich field. What British parallels are there to the work of Schnitzler, Beer-Hofmann, Kraus, Wassermann, Joseph Roth, Feuchtwanger, Döblin, Arnold and Stefan Zweig? What British counterpart could there be to the substantial body of fiction, from Berthold Auerbach to Karl Emil Franzos, describing life in the traditional and Eastern European ghetto?⁸³ Late nineteenth-century Anglo-Jewish fiction does, however, give critical and polemical insights into Jewish life.⁸⁴ The novels give a strong impression of a Jewish subculture, such as David Sorkin describes in Germany.⁸⁵ They would confirm David Feldman's revisionist account of Anglo-Jewish acculturation, which denies "the supposed absence in England of any positive community, producing religious, cultural or racial standards, to which the Jews had to conform", and instead shows that liberals were "concerned not only with the rights of individuals but also with an image and account of the national community to which the Jews were being admitted".⁸⁶

Tensions within the Anglo-Jewish community are portrayed by its best-known writer, Israel Zangwill (1864–1926), in *Children of the Ghetto* (1892). Here older Jews remain devoted to their religion and traditions while younger Jews are steadily abandoning them. Thus Esther Ansell rejects Judaism, writing a satirical novel about the London Jewish community; Hannah Jacobs is forbidden to marry David Brandon because one is a Levi and the other a Cohen, so that rigid tradition ruins their lives; Hannah's brother Levi changes his name to Leonard James, cynically discards Judaism, eats pork, and is seen by his father, to the latter's horror, with a Gentile woman on his arm. To his girlfriend he disavows his father, de-

⁸² See Sander L. Gilman, *Jewish Self-Hatred. Anti-Semitism and the Hidden Language of the Jew*, Baltimore 1986, and *idem*, *The Jew's Body*, London 1991.

⁸³ See Gabriele von Glasenapp, *Aus der Judengasse. Zur Entstehung und Ausprägung deutschsprachiger Ghettoliteratur im 19. Jahrhundert*, Tübingen 1996.

⁸⁴ See Linda Gertner Zatlín, *The Nineteenth-Century Anglo-Jewish Novel*, Boston 1981; Bryan Cheyette, 'The Other Self. Anglo-Jewish Fiction and the Representation of Jews in England, 1875–1905', in David Cesarani (ed.), *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry*, Oxford 1990, pp. 97–111.

⁸⁵ David Sorkin, *The Transformation of German Jewry, 1780–1840*, New York–Oxford 1987.

⁸⁶ Feldman, p. 136.

scribing him as “Nobody; only an old Jew who supplies me with cash”.⁸⁷ To deny one’s father and one’s race, in order to pass as the kind of worthless Gentile who sponges on Jews, implies the extreme disintegration of the Jewish community and the corrupting effects of assimilation.

A much harsher portrayal of Anglo-Jewry occurs in two remarkable novels by Jewish women: Amy Levy’s *Reuben Sachs* (1888) and Julia Frankau’s *Dr. Phillips* (1887). In sharp contrast to Disraeli and Wolf, these novels also explore the psychopathology of the Jew, including the self-hating Jew. They may have been partly inspired by translations of ghetto fiction: Leopold Kompert’s *Scenes from the Ghetto* and Karl Emil Franzos’s *The Jews of Barnow*, both of which appeared in English in 1882.⁸⁸ Both depict the Anglo-Jewish community as vulgar, materialist, and rapidly abandoning the practice of Judaism. It forms an invisible ghetto—a commonplace of contemporary German literature, seen, for example, in the very title of Theodor Herzl’s play *Das neue Ghetto* (1894). “In a sort of jealous exclusiveness these Jews lived by and among themselves. They fancied they did so from choice. It was not so: it was a remnant of the time when the yellow cap and curiously-shaped gabardine marked them out as lepers in the crowd. The garb had been discarded, but the shrinking feeling of generations was still lingering.”⁸⁹ Yet the impossibility of escaping the community is typified by Reuben Sachs, a university graduate, barrister and rising politician, who has suffered a nervous breakdown and is unable to resolve the conflict between his political ambitions and his love for the Sephardic Judith Quixano, herself an intelligent woman frustrated by the low cultural standards of the community. Julia Frankau, writing as “Frank Danby”, depicts self-hatred in Dr. Benjamin Phillips, an unbelieving Jew, indolent, easy-going, sensual and attractive to women, who is married to a German but maintains a Gentile mistress, Mary Cameron, valuing her especially because she is a slim, fair-haired Gentile. When he loses money and falls ill, however, she tires of him, for their only real link was sexual: when his magnetism has gone, he is “an ordinary slender stooping ugly man, with flabby nerveless hands”.⁹⁰ A frequent Jewish fantasy was that the real Jew

⁸⁷ Israel Zangwill, *Children of the Ghetto*, Victorian Library, Leicester 1977, p. 324.

⁸⁸ M.F. Modder, *The Jew in the Literature of England to the End of the 19th Century*, Philadelphia 1939, pp. 331–332.

⁸⁹ “Frank Danby” [Julia Frankau], *Dr Phillips. A Maida Vale Idyll*, London 1887, p. 60.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

was the sick Jew, and that the Jew's fate was to be reduced to a sick Jew, as Heine found when confined to his "mattress grave".⁹¹ This happens to Dr. Phillips. Mary cynically discards him and marries an Englishman. Lonely, isolated and depressed, Dr. Phillips comes to hate his fellow-Jews. "And Benjamin Phillips, as others like him, from the outcast Jew, became in time the Jew-hater. Apart from them, he began to see their faults more clearly; their virtues, the clannishness, hospitality, generosity, of which he had used to boast, when no longer practised towards himself, were obliterated by their bigotry, their narrowness, their greed."⁹² He ends up as a successful surgeon with a mania for operating on his patients, not to restore their health, but from intellectual sadism and a hunger for power.

If we want a German counterpart to these novels, we must select from the rich body of German-Jewish writing a small number of novels and dramas which criticise the Jewish subculture by focusing on the family. Here we find the aporias of assimilation represented by domestic conflict and illustrated by the following types. Older Jews, parents or grandparents, remain loyal, if not to Orthodox practice, at least to traditional Jewish values, and often embarrass their children by their incomplete linguistic and social acculturation. The next generation shows merely external adherence to Judaism and is materialistic, snobbish, and amoral. Other members of this generation, or those of the next, react against empty materialism and seek to be accepted as Germans, to form friendships with Germans, or to provide a new content for their inescapable Jewish identity. Very often, too, these families have unacculturated relatives who turn up from Poland or Galicia and cause embarrassment by embodying the Gentile image of the hateful Jew from which the assimilationists are desperately trying to distance themselves.

In Herzl's *Das neue Ghetto* (written in 1894), for example, the older generation is represented by the hero's affectionate parents, the younger by his spoilt wife Hermine and her crooked financier brother; the idealistic hero Jakob, like Reuben Sachs, is fatally trapped between two cultures. In Schnitzler's *Der Weg ins Freie* (1908), old Ehrenberg, a loyal Jew, is outraged by the hyper-acculturation of his foppish son Oskar, whom he sees emerging from a Catholic church. Adolf Dessauer's *Großstadtjuden* (1910) presents Viennese Jewish society as desperate to curry favour with Gentiles. Here the bookseller Josef Kastner has recently changed his name

⁹¹ See Heinrich Heine, *Sämtliche Schriften*, ed. by Klaus Briegleb, 6 vols., Munich 1968–1976, vol. V, p. 109; and for the figure of the sick Jew, Sander L. Gilman, *Franz Kafka. The Jewish Patient*, London 1995.

⁹² "Frank Danby", p. 337.

from Kohn to please his snobbish wife and son; the latter, like Schnitzler's Oskar Ehrenberg, is a Jewish antisemite who first affects Viennese dialect, then suddenly adopts a pseudo-aristocratic way of speaking. The search for a new Jewish identity is embodied in a whole range of Schnitzler characters. Therese Golowski has exchanged one form of marginality for another by becoming a militant Socialist. Her brother Leo is a no less militant Zionist and is thus trying to construct a new Jewish identity. Heinrich Bermann, a free-floating intellectual, rejects all these solutions, yet is trapped in the futile, over-ingenious self-analysis that is represented as typically Jewish.

A painful portrayal of a Jew trapped in Jewishness is Ludwig Jacobowski's novel *Werther, der Jude* (1892). Leo Wolff, a Jewish student of philosophy in Berlin, tries to ignore his Jewishness; he belongs to a dueling fraternity, with heavy drinking sessions full of sexual boasting. Although his father is a banker in a provincial town, Leo considers himself free from all Jewish traits, and even has a blonde German girlfriend. Yet he uneasily feels an atavistic instinct linking him with Jews, even his detestable Yiddish-speaking Polish cousin Siegmund Königsberger. When the company in which his father had invested other people's savings goes bankrupt, Leo can no longer believe that his father is an exception to the general corruption of Jews. It turns out that his own family has rescued its property: his cousin Siegmund reports this with glee, laughing at "Die dummen Gojims", while Leo's father himself, breaking into a German-Jewish dialect stamped with moral depravity, considers the transaction "Ein feines, ein schlaues Börsengeschäft, was sie machen alle".⁹³ They point out that Leo has been quite happy to live off their dishonest earnings. Meanwhile, Leo gets his girlfriend pregnant; being ill, he does not see her letters, and finally, in despair at not hearing from him, she commits suicide. Thus Leo is trapped in the identity of the Jew as seen by antisemites: one who manipulates Gentiles commercially and exploits Gentile women sexually. Whatever Jacobowski's intentions may have been, his novel tends to confirm antisemitic stereotypes as severely as Frankau's *Dr Phillips*.

⁹³ Ludwig Jacobowski, *Werther, der Jude*, Berlin 1892, pp. 323, 325. See Mark M. Anderson, "'Jewish' Mimesis? Imitation and Assimilation in Thomas Mann's 'Wälsungenblut' and Ludwig Jacobowski's 'Werther, der Jude'", in *German Life and Letters*, 49 (1996), pp. 193–204.

VII. *Empire and Ethnic Diversity*

By the end of the nineteenth century, writers were not only registering, like George Eliot and Fontane, the cultural and racial diversity of modern society, but also examining the implications of ruling a world-wide empire. An imperial ruling class had to appear homogeneous, in contrast to the peoples it governed. Yet the ruling class was itself composite. Since Britain is a unity formed from several nations, an ideology of Englishness had to co-exist with the enormous part played particularly by Scotsmen in creating and governing what was always, and rightly, called the "British" Empire. The most memorable writers of imperial fiction include the Scotsman John Buchan, the swarthy, Indian-looking Rudyard Kipling, and the Pole Joseph Conrad. In the German Empire, meanwhile, an ideology of *Deutschtum* solidified, supported especially by such bodies as the *Kolonialverein* and the *Alldeutscher Verband*. This ideology found its imaginary antagonist in "the Jew", whose alleged machinations served to whip up national solidarity from the *Antisemitismusstreit* of the 1880s to the Weimar Republic and its aftermath. Yet Jews were also essential to empires which depended on business and finance that was, in part, in Jewish hands. Kaiser Wilhelm II, despite his often maniacal antisemitism, mixed socially with select *Kaiserjuden* such as the shipowner Albert Ballin, and the Prince of Wales surrounded himself with a "Jewish court".⁹⁴ Nevertheless, the virtual exclusion of Jews from German politics (with Walther Rathenau the exception that proved the rule) contrasts markedly with their prominence in the political life of Edwardian Britain. British liberalism, however, had its own mechanisms of exclusion. Social acceptance required conformity to the values and manners of bourgeois English society. Parvenus had to face a pervasive low-key antisemitism which was usually snobbish rather than ideological. The programmatic antisemitism of modernist writers (T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis, and their contemporary Hilaire Belloc) was imported from continental models.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ See W. E. Mosse, *The German-Jewish Economic Elite, 1820–1935. A Socio-Cultural Profile*, Oxford 1989; Anthony Allfrey, *Edward VII and his Jewish Court*, London 1991.

⁹⁵ See Bryan Cheyette, 'Jewish stereotyping and English literature 1875–1920. Toward a Political Analysis', in Tony Kushner and Kenneth Lunn (eds.), *Traditions of Intolerance. Historical Perspectives on Fascism and Race Discourse in Britain*, Manchester 1989, pp. 12–32.

Uncertainty about the admission of Jews to the imperial ruling class is found as early as 1827 in Scott's *The Surgeon's Daughter*, set partly in India, in which the Anglo-Saxon Adam Hartley is contrasted with the self-ish half-Jew Richard Middlemas. The latter shows his Oriental affinities by taking service with Tippoo Sahib and planning to act as a British double agent. Thus Scott founds a narrative pattern in which the innate character of the Jew is gradually exposed; and this process of disclosure is later reinforced by Darwinian notions of reversion to type. We find this narrative in Buchan's 'The Grove of Ashtaroth' (1912) and in Somerset Maugham's 'The Alien Corn' (1931). In both stories, people who claim to be carrying on British traditions involuntarily reveal their Jewish ancestry. Buchan's Lawson, who claims to be descended from a Border clan, is in fact the son of a Jewish financial journalist and an English mother. Though not halachically a Jew, he is racially one, as his "heavy-lidded eyes" reveal to the alert Gentile narrator.⁹⁶ Lawson settles in a remote Central African valley containing a grove and temple of the goddess Ashtaroth, founded by the Phoenicians. Like the ancient Hebrews who followed strange gods, Lawson worships Ashtaroth, dancing naked round her temple on the night of the full moon. The narrator, aided by Lawson's Scottish servant, who embodies the ruthless morality of the Prophets, saves him by chopping down the grove, dynamiting the temple, and spreading salt over the site, as the Romans did after destroying Phoenician Carthage. Maugham's 'The Alien Corn' is really set in Edwardian England, though most of the events ostensibly happen after the First World War.⁹⁷ The Bland family strives to conceal its Jewishness, though the narrator—again a Gentile—learns of it from an unpopular, because confessedly Jewish, relative. Alfons Bleikogel ended life as Sir Alfred Bland; his son, Sir Adolphus Bland, originally called Adolf and known as "Freddy", has bought an Elizabethan mansion in Sussex, where the Blands present themselves as an English county family, albeit with some "Jewish blood". To the narrator, the hidden language of the Jew, the concealed financial ruthlessness, and the incapacity for sport increasingly reveal the Blands as indelibly Jewish. Their son George, outwardly a slim, fair-haired Englishman, disappoints their hopes by choosing to study music in Munich, where, to their horror, he develops a nostalgic fascination for ghetto Jewry. He fails to become a pianist because his two hands are not

⁹⁶ John Buchan, 'The Grove of Ashtaroth', in *The Moon Endureth. Tales and Fancies*, Edinburgh-London 1912, pp. 169-205, esp. p. 173.

⁹⁷ W. Somerset Maugham, 'The Alien Corn', in *The Complete Short Stories of W. Somerset Maugham*, 3 vols., London 1951, vol. II, pp. 529-565.

quite synchronised, and in his disappointment he shoots himself. His physical defect conveys that there is no going back—that the effort to become assimilated has damaged the Jewishness of the Jew, leaving him unable either to return to Jewishness or to go forward into complete assimilation. More disturbingly, the infiltration of the ruling class by Jewish plutocrats is expressed in blatantly biological terms in H.G. Wells's *Tono-Bungay*, where the old country house, Bladesover, is now let furnished to Sir Reuben Lichtenstein. Wells opines that these Jewish financiers are uncreative. They represent the decay of England's social organism. "They could not have made Bladesover, they cannot replace it; they just happen to break out over it—saprophytically."⁹⁸

While James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) is too large a book to fit neatly into this paradigm, it does contain many references to the problem of Empire.⁹⁹ In the first episode, the Englishman Haines, embodying the imperial ruling class, complains of the national threat from "German jews"; in the next, the Ulster Protestant Mr. Deasy laments that "England is in the hands of the jews".¹⁰⁰ Against this paranoid fear of *Verjudung*, Joyce sets a generous cosmopolitanism and anti-nationalism that culminates in the "Cyclops" episode.¹⁰¹ Leopold Bloom's ancestors are Hungarian Jews: he is the "only born male transubstantial heir of Rudolf Virag (subsequently Rudolf Bloom) of Szombathely, Vienna, Budapest, Milan, London and Dublin and of Ellen Higgins, second daughter of Julius Higgins (born Karoly) and Fanny Higgins (born Hegarty)".¹⁰² Hence by a racial criterion he is only three-quarters Jewish, and by a rabbinic criterion not Jewish at all since his mother was not a Jew; his father converted; he has been baptised twice, once as a Protestant and once as a Catholic; he is not circumcised, and his wife is a non-Jew despite her Oriental associations; his favourite dish is pig's kidneys, which he buys from a Jewish pork-butcher; but he is regarded by all around him as a Jew and defines himself as a Jew in his confrontation with nationalist fanatics which culminates in his declaration: "Your God was a jew. Christ was a

⁹⁸ H.G. Wells, *Tono-Bungay*, London 1909, p. 52, is discussed in Cheyette, *Constructions of 'the Jew'*, p. 129, where a saprophyte is explained as an organism which lives on decayed matter.

⁹⁹ See Vincent J. Cheng, *Joyce, Race and Empire*, Cambridge 1995.

¹⁰⁰ James Joyce, *Ulysses*, ed. by Jeri Johnson, World's Classics, Oxford 1993, pp. 21, 33.

¹⁰¹ See Neil R. Davison, *James Joyce, Ulysses, and the Construction of Jewish Identity*, Cambridge 1996.

¹⁰² Joyce, p. 634.

jew like me.”¹⁰³ The familiar oedipal plot reappears here. When Bloom and Stephen Dedalus are united in the brothel and in the cabman’s shelter, Stephen is represented as Bloom’s symbolic son. Despite his anticlericalism, Stephen, named after the proto-martyr, serves as an ironic embodiment of Christianity. Thus the antithesis between the old law and the new, which formed the basis for the representation of Jews in the early modern period, is symbolically reconciled. In addition, Joyce reverses stereotypes of the weak and unmanly Jew which it seems he learnt from Weininger.¹⁰⁴ Bloom is regarded by others as unmanly because his teetotalism excludes him from the masculine culture based around pubs, which fosters the aggressive nationalism of the Citizen. Through Bloom, Joyce undertakes a humane celebration of ordinariness and explores a way of being human that moves between the rigid barriers of race and gender erected by the intolerant.

Intolerance towards Jews in modern British literature manifests itself not in the ideological antisemitism of a Maurras or a Chamberlain but in snobbish Jew-sniffing. “I am afraid I must admit to a shade of anti-jew feeling,” wrote Evelyn Waugh in 1952. “Not anti-semite.”¹⁰⁵ In Germany we find cultural Jew-sniffing in the antisemitic compendia that seek to expose the Jewishness of Lessing, Thomas Mann, Zola, George Eliot, G.H. Lewes, and innumerable others.¹⁰⁶ In Britain we find social snobbery, for example when T.S. Eliot mentions “a youth named Siegfried Sassoon (semitic)” and informs Ezra Pound that “[Lord] Burnham is a Jew merchant, named Lawson (sc. Levi-sohn?)”.¹⁰⁷ Continental antisemitism, however, underlies the concern with infiltration by Jewish finance in the fiction of Hilaire Belloc. Belloc and his friend G.K. Chesterton, opponents of free-market capitalism, were especially outraged by the Marconi scandal of 1912–1913, which centred on accusations of insider share-dealing by four government ministers, two of whom were Jews.¹⁰⁸ Belloc’s novels feature a recurring Jewish character, Mr I.Z. Barnett, originally from Frankfurt, who is described by the unreliable narrator of *Emmanuel Burden* (1904) as follows:

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 327.

¹⁰⁴ Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce*, rev. edn., Oxford–New York 1982, p. 463; Davison, pp. 139–144.

¹⁰⁵ Mark Amory (ed.), *The Letters of Evelyn Waugh*, London 1980, p. 369. Cf. pp. 52, 136, 220, 254, 274, 358.

¹⁰⁶ See, for example, Adolf Bartels, *Jüdische Herkunft und Literaturwissenschaft*, Leipzig 1925.

¹⁰⁷ Valerie Eliot (ed.), *The Letters of T.S. Eliot*, vol. I, London 1988, pp. 205, 206.

¹⁰⁸ See Feldman, p. 267.

“A photograph, taken at Mayence in 1863, shows us a mass of black crisp hair, glittering eyes, promising a singular depth and power; full and somewhat sensuous lips, comprising between them a mouth of immense tenacity; a broad, high forehead of a stately paleness; and a nose of that full pendulous type which is invariably associated with organising ability and staying-power.”¹⁰⁹

His financial successes result in his elevation to the peerage, first as Lord Lambeth and then as the Duke of Battersea. The sequel, *Mr Clutterbuck's Election* (1908), confirms that Jews are everywhere: the helpless Mr. Clutterbuck's secretary, an outwardly amiable Irishman called Charlie Fitzgerald, is the grandson of one Daniel Daniels and great-grandson of “old Moss Daniels, the Dublin sheeny”. All government affairs, it is suggested, are controlled by “the redoubtable and ubiquitous Abraham”.¹¹⁰

Such satires are tame compared with the virulent German antisemitic novels that appeared during and after the First World War, notably Artur Dinter's best-selling *Die Sünde wider das Blut* (1917), Rudolf Hans Bartsch's *Seine Jüdin* (1921), and Hermann Bahr's *Die Rotte Korahs* (1919). Dinter tells how an upright German scientist, Hermann Kämpfer, is brought low by his half-Jewish wife Elisabeth and her father, the lecherous *Kommerzienrat*, who is involved in a Jewish plot for world domination. Bartsch shows us a mystically inclined Christian officer, Christian Hebedich, brought low by his unspiritual Jewish wife. Here antisemitism combines with misogyny to depict both Jews and women as sensual, lecherous, and materialistic. Bahr tells how an Austrian officer finds to his horror that he is the natural son of a Jewish financier, but concludes that what matters is not physical descent but the Jewish spirit (*Geist*), from which, as a Catholic and an Austrian officer, he manages to free himself. His mentor, the Cathedral Canon (*Domherr*), tells him that the Jews had ceased, after the Crucifixion, to be a *Volk*, merely the ghostly memory of one. The modern Jews embody the earth-bound materialism to which modern man aspires, and that is why they are so hated.¹¹¹ By comparison with such attempts to establish an absolute difference between the German Christian and the Jew, the polemics of Belloc seem mild.

¹⁰⁹ Hilaire Belloc, *Emmanuel Burden, Merchant of Thames St., in the City of London, Exporter of Hardware. A Record of his Lineage, Speculations, Last Days and Death*, London 1904, p. 66.

¹¹⁰ Hilaire Belloc, *Mr Clutterbuck's Election*, London 1908, pp. 244, 295.

¹¹¹ Hermann Bahr, *Die Rotte Korahs*, Berlin–Vienna 1919, pp. 422–423. See Donald G. Daviau, ‘Hermann Bahr und der Antisemitismus, Zionismus und die Judenfrage’, in *Literatur und Kritik*, Nos. 221–222 (February–March 1988), pp. 21–41.

Similarly, his treatise *The Jews*, though sharing the paranoia of models like Drumont's *La France juive* (1886), is moderate when compared to Chamberlain's *Grundlagen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* (1899) or the antisemitic writings composed by respected German academics in the 1920s.¹¹²

In defence of "the Chesterbelloc" it may also be said that, far from being Establishment figures, both, as Roman Catholics, belonged to a minority which, though five times as numerous as Anglo-Jewry, was less well represented in British public life. Between 1900 and 1939 only two Catholics served in the Cabinet, compared to five Jews.¹¹³ Thorough investigation would show, I suspect, that anti-Catholic prejudice, reinforced by animus against Irish immigrants, has been much more widespread, powerful, and extreme than antisemitism in Britain; while Germany saw, in the *Kulturkampf* of the mid-1870s, an official campaign against Catholics which, though short-lived, was harsher than any antisemitic campaign before 1933. There is a need to compare, not only allied prejudices in different countries, but the relative strength and diverse character of different prejudices in the same country.

¹¹² On these, see Ritchie Robertson, 'Varieties of Antisemitism. From Herder to Fassbinder', in Edward Timms and Andrea Hammel (eds.), *The German-Jewish Dilemma*, Lampeter 1999.

¹¹³ W.D. Rubinstein, *A History of the Jews in the English-Speaking World: Great Britain*, London 1996, p. 267.

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The “Enemy Within” and the “All-Purpose Foreigner”: A Comment on Ritchie Robertson

The essay by Ritchie Robertson on ‘Jews in German and British Literary Representation’ is fascinating both in itself and for the light it sheds on some of the wider issues raised by the conference on “Two Nations”. We were warned by a number of speakers to avoid drawing simplistic contrasts between a “benevolent” Britain and a “demonised” Germany—the extreme positions exemplified by Cecil Roth and Daniel Goldhagen. Summarising the views of a group of critical historians, David Cesarani suggested that in certain periods British popular culture was so oppressively antisemitic that it was only by accident that anti-Jewish feeling in Britain did not lead to a political catastrophe.

The portrayal of Jews in British and German literature, so perceptively analysed in Robertson’s essay, provides some support for this critical position, showing that it is impossible to sustain the simplistic view of British culture as liberal and tolerant and German culture as authoritarian and racist. In certain periods popular anti-Jewish prejudice may have been stronger in Britain than in Germany, and English literature abounds in antisemitic stereotypes, from Shylock, Fagin and Svengali to the sinister figures portrayed by twentieth-century authors such as Wyndham Lewis and Hilaire Belloc, John Buchan and Graham Greene. The representation of Jews by British authors may not have been so “virulent” as in Germany, but one should not underestimate the significance of what Robertson calls “snobbish Jew-sniffing” by members of the British upper class. After all, it was the British upper class which provided the staff of the Foreign Office and the Home Office who were then in a position to influence attitudes towards Palestine and take decisions about the treatment of refugees.

Given that there has indeed been a persistent strain of antisemitism in British culture, we are bound to question why it was not converted into antisemitic policies. Was this really an historical “accident”? Some of the structural factors have been identified by other contributors to this vol-

ume: Reinhard Rürup in his analysis of discriminatory legislation, David Feldman in his account of the reformist campaigns of Jewish organisations, and Christopher Clark on the question of the opening of public office to Jews. In each of these spheres the British authorities showed themselves to be more flexible and pragmatic than their ideologically-motivated German counterparts, with positive consequences for the process of social integration.

If may be helpful to elucidate another factor: the divergent effects of German antisemitism and British xenophobia. There is no doubt that the culture of the British Empire was shaped by a pronounced hostility to foreigners, but British attitudes were xenophobic in a pluralistic way. Perhaps I may recall the books which we read in my childhood around 1945, with titles like *The Bengal Lancers* and *Deeds that Thrill the Empire*. Virtually all foreigners were represented in negative terms: the “Frogs”, the “Huns”, the “Wogs”, the “Yanks”, the “Chinks”, the “Japs”, the “Jocks”, the “Micks”, the “Yids”, the “Niggers”, the “Kaffirs” and the “Dagoes”. I seem to remember that in stories about the noble British reformers who campaigned against the slave trade, the most incorrigible villains tended to be Portuguese. Of course, these authors of adventure stories were not trying to prepare us for a war against Portugal; they were using xenophobic images to promote a pride in being British. This was a problematic ideology to transmit to young readers, but it did have one virtue: it made it difficult to demonise any single national group as *the* enemy.

It is scarcely necessary to emphasise the contrast with German ideology with its tendency to stigmatise a single enemy. The German intellectual tradition is notoriously dominated by dualistic categories, from the dizzy heights of the Hegelian dialectic, through schematic Marxism, to the nether regions of racist rhetoric. Such dualistic thinking presupposes that it is possible to identify *one* great antithetical force that has to be overcome, *one* great antagonist to be defeated. “Jewry is one of the great negative principles of world history and can thus only be understood as a parasite within the opposing principle”, German radio listeners were informed in a typical broadcast made in January 1939. “Jewry cannot be understood without being positioned within the totality of the historical process, in which God and Satan, Creation and Destruction confront each other in an eternal struggle.”¹ A hundred years earlier it was the French who had been

¹ From a radio broadcast by Walter Frank, Director of the Jewish Section of the Reich Institute for the History of the New Germany, quoted in Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany & the Jews*, London 1997, p. 314.

perceived as the great antagonist, inspiring verses about the “Wacht am Rhein” which became the anthem of German nationalism. The essential feature of this rhetoric is not the choice of enemy, but the Manichean mode of thinking which sees Germany as threatened by a single world-historical adversary. The concept of a “hereditary enemy [*Erbfeind*]”, initially applied to the French, could later be transferred to the Jews, while the bold Hegelian antithesis acquired more sinister Darwinist overtones.

Robertson’s analysis shows that such antithetical patterning was not confined to political rhetoric, but formed the controlling structure of representative literary texts, for example in the contrast between the upright German Anton Wohlfahrt and the evil Veitel Itzig (in Freytag’s *Soll und Haben*), and between the pious Hans Unwirrsch and the materialistic Moses Freudenstein (in Raabe’s *Der Hungerpastor*). In English fiction the picture is different. The hostility to foreigners in the work of nineteenth-century British novelists is characterised by a pluralistic indeterminacy. The outstanding example is the financial speculator Augustus Melmotte in Trollope’s *The Way We Live Now*—the “all-purpose foreigner”, as Robertson so memorably puts it. We are never quite sure whether Melmotte really is of Jewish origin, and there are other foreigners, such as the American entrepreneur Hamilton K. Fisker, who are regarded with almost equal suspicion. But the national group which emerges from this novel with least credit are the English themselves—the decadent aristocrats and effete men-about-town who have betrayed their heritage to the new ethos of gambling and the stock exchange. The one exception, the worthy landowner Roger Carbury, is far too ineffectual a character to sustain any sense of the steadfastness of British virtues. Trollope offers a comprehensively satirical vision of London society which anticipates James Joyce’s portrayal of Dublin in *Ulysses*, another text which thrives on the indeterminacy of the central character, Leopold Bloom. By creating an emotionally ambivalent but engagingly human character with an ethnically Jewish father and a Catholic mother, Joyce undermines the rigid barriers of race and gender. There could hardly be a greater contrast to Arthur Dinter’s *Die Sünde wider das Blut*, a concoction of racial and sexual prejudices constructed around the crude antithesis between the upright German scientist, Hermann Kämpfer, and the lecherous Jewish businessman, *Kommerzienrat* Karl Burghamer.

The divergence between these two narrative traditions, the one dualistic, the other pluralist, is echoed in the autobiographies of the most significant leaders of the two nations—Hitler’s account of his youth in Vienna and his political philosophy in *Mein Kampf*, and Churchill’s nar-

rative of his youthful exploits and political responsibilities in *My Early Life* and *The World Crisis*. In *My Early Life* Churchill makes no attempt to disguise the militaristic fervour which gripped his generation during the 1890s. His narrative conducts us through a breathless series of colonial campaigns from Cuba to India, culminating in the military reverses of the Boer War. In this global drama we never know which will be the next group to defy the overstretched resources of the Raj: intrepid Pathan tribesmen or fanatical Dervishes. There are so many lesser breeds to contend with that the animus cannot possibly be directed against any single target, and even the Boers are acknowledged to be a "good-hearted enemy".² This pluralistic perspective persists in *The World Crisis*, in which Churchill the political chronicler reconstructs the events of the Great War which transformed Germans into "Huns". While all eyes were on the Western Front, his strategic imagination characteristically led him to devise a scheme for forcing the Dardanelles in an attempt to bring about "the speedy downfall of the Turk".³

Clearly, there can be little scope for complacency about British imperial policy around 1900. British imperialism, under the leadership of Lord Salisbury, generated a jingoism which makes Bülow's German *Reich* look like a model of moderation; and Churchill's narrative of his military and journalistic exploits is just as belligerent as Hitler's commitment to the cause of the German *Volk*. The difference lies not in the intensity of their nationalism, but in its tone and psychic structure, the cheerful arrogance of the British ruling class contrasting with embittered recriminations after the humiliations inflicted on Germany by the Treaty of Versailles. Moreover, the rhetoric of British imperialism was inclusive, reaching out to embrace like-minded nations overseas, and Churchill, in his critique of the restrictive provisions of the Aliens Bill of 1904, firmly repudiated "racial prejudice against Jews".⁴ The ethos of the German *Volk*, in contrast, was exclusive, based on the concept of unalterable racial antagonisms. Hitler, in *Mein Kampf*, certainly showed an interest in geopolitics. Looking back on the defeat of the Central Powers from the vantage point of the early 1920s, he had no shortage of enemies to choose from: the British, who had been the main target of wartime hate propaganda; the Americans, whose inter-

² Winston S. Churchill, *My Early Life. A Roving Commission*, London 1930, p. 272.

³ Winston S. Churchill, *The World Crisis 1911-1918*, new edn., vol. 1, London 1938, p. 73.

⁴ Churchill in the *Manchester Guardian* of 31st May 1904, quoted in Martin Gilbert, *Churchill. A Life*, London 1991, p. 165.

vention had tipped the military balance against the Central Powers; the Bolsheviks, who threatened to spread the flames of revolution to Western Europe; the French, who had just occupied the Ruhr. An even more complex struggle between different nationalities had beset the Austro-Hungarian Empire during his student days in Vienna, as Hitler was well aware, and he recalls that the position of the Germans in Austria was threatened from all sides. Yet he superimposes on this bewilderingly complex situation a rigidly dualistic schema, attributing all German misfortunes to the machinations of a single enemy.

It was by no means inevitable that this enemy would be the Jews. Indeed, one might have expected Hitler's thinking to be shaped by the anti-Czech agitation which dominated German nationalist politics in Austria.⁵ The Vienna of his youth teemed with Czech-speaking economic migrants, who made up well over 10% of the population and were perceived as a threat to "German" jobs. It was this that led to the founding of the *Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*, one of the forerunners of Hitler's *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*. Anti-Czech agitation reached an initial climax during the crisis of 1897, when Badeni's decrees giving parity to Czech as the language of administration in Bohemia provoked violent demonstrations in the streets of Austrian cities. Folk songs like *Servus Brezina*, which mocked the behaviour of the Czechs, were just as popular as the antisemitic variety, providing a conduit for xenophobic feelings which attracted the attention of Freud and the Vienna Psychoanalytical Society. German nationalism was particularly strong among students at the University of Vienna, and there were further demonstrations in 1905 when a Czech scholar, Max Dvorak, was appointed Professor of Art History. The First World War intensified anti-Slav feelings, as some Czech units deserted to the Russians; and the creation of an independent Czechoslovakia drove a wedge between Berlin and Vienna, frustrating plans to create a German-dominated *Mittleuropa* and placing several million Sudeten Germans under foreign rule. Nevertheless, when Hitler came to write *Mein Kampf*, he virtually ignored the Czechs. For someone schooled in the dualisms of German ideology, it would have seemed absurd to blame such an insignificant national group for the catastrophe of November 1918. Hitler construed the world crisis as a dialectical confrontation between universal forces, following the example of his mentor Houston Stewart Chamberlain, who had foretold a life-and-death struggle between Teutons and

⁵ See Brigitte Hamann, *Hitlers Wien. Lehrjahre eines Diktators*, Munich 1996, esp. pp. 437–466: "Tschechen in Wien".

Jews. Setting aside the realities of foreign affairs, Hitler constructed an essentially fictional concept of “the enemy within” as the cause of the catastrophe.

The autobiographical narrative of *Mein Kampf* is “fictional” in another significant sense. Writing in 1924, the thirty-five-year-old Hitler projected his conversion to antisemitism back to his youth in pre-war Vienna. The book owes its seductive power to his account of the great “spiritual upheaval” which led a sensitive young man to become an impassioned antisemite. Hitler’s account of his “Years of Study and Suffering in Vienna” culminates in what appears to be a state of religious illumination: “by defending myself against the Jew, I am fighting for the work of the Lord”.⁶ There were certainly plenty of antisemitic agitators in Habsburg Vienna, notably the Pan-German leader, Georg von Schönerer, and the Christian Social Mayor, Karl Lueger; and the young Hitler was undoubtedly exposed to their influence. But it remains an open question whether he himself became an antisemite at that time. In *The Jew of Linz. Wittgenstein, Hitler and their Secret Battle for the Mind*, Kimberly Cornish has rather implausibly tried to trace Hitler’s antisemitism to a schoolboy encounter with Ludwig Wittgenstein, the “one Jewish boy” at his *Realschule*. But the most searching investigations have failed to uncover any anti-Jewish statements by Hitler in the period before 1914, and it seems more probable that his passionate hatred of the Jews originated during the final years of the First World War, when impending military defeat left him desperate to find a scapegoat.⁷ The earliest reference to an inner enemy occurs in a letter of February 1915 in which Hitler links the war against an “international world of enemies” with the need to crush “our inner internationalism”.⁸ But at this stage the argument is not explicitly antisemitic, and Hitler’s earliest surviving written statement about the “Jewish danger” dates from 1919.⁹ The following year, that notorious antisemitic forgery, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, was published in German, popularising the idea of a “Jewish conspiracy for world domination”. By appealing in *Mein Kampf* to the authority of the *Protocols*, he is able to construe the hostile actions of any foreign power as the consequence of devious Jewish influ-

⁶ Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 2 vols., Munich 1939, vol. 1, p. 70.

⁷ Hamann, p. 502. See also Philippe Burrin, *Hitler and the Jews. The Genesis of the Holocaust*, transl. by Patsy Southgate, London 1994, p. 30.

⁸ Hitler, in a letter of 15th February 1915, quoted in J.P. Stern, *Hitler. The Führer and the People*, London 1975, p. 184.

⁹ Joachim Fest, *Hitler*, transl. by Richard and Clara Winston, London 1974, p. 114.

ence. The danger is presented as all the more insidious when its underlying causes remain unseen. French troops may be occupying the Ruhr, but Hitler insists that he has identified a more fundamental adversary: "Before foreign enemies are conquered, the enemy within must be annihilated."¹⁰

In the aftermath of Germany's defeat and humiliation, the Manichean fantasies of the antisemitic sub-culture came into their own. Since the 1870s there had been a revival of antisemitism in Germany, but it had never become the dominant ideology of the Bismarckian *Reich*, and around 1900 there was little sign that anyone in the Berlin political establishment was planning to introduce discriminatory measures against the Jews, who indeed provided the most loyal of German citizens. During the First World War the German forces were welcomed by millions of Jews in Central Europe as liberators from Tsarist tyranny. It was the catastrophe of 1918 that led to the concentration on a single scapegoat. The devious manipulators of *Soll und Haben* and *Der Hungerpastor*, the villainous Jews who impregnate German maidens in *Die Sünde wider das Blut*, were now transformed into the hate figures of racist rhetoric, as antisemitism entered the mainstream of German politics. Its appeal lay in the fact that it offered a total explanation along world-historical lines which also incorporated a powerful emotional sub-text: if the real enemy is "within", then the most radical form of cleansing will be required. The crusade against the Jews provided an apocalyptic grand design, purporting to explain the national disaster in both "scientific" and "spiritual" terms, while incorporating the traditional anti-Jewish attitudes of the Christian churches. The achievement of Germany's evil genius was to seize on this pervasive dualism and transform it into a compelling myth of national salvation.¹¹

¹⁰ Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, vol. 2, p. 775.

¹¹ For a fuller account of Hitler's "Redemptive Anti-Semitism", see Friedländer, chapter 3.

HELGA KROHN

Jewish Culture in the Show Case: Preserving Jewish Culture and History in Germany

In 1933, four independent Jewish museums existed in Germany: in Frankfurt am Main, Mainz, Worms and Berlin. Some thirty years earlier, Jewish museums had still only been in the planning stages. Samuel Weissenberg, the Russian Jewish anthropologist, described the situation in 1907: "Only in very recent times, called 'the Jewish renaissance' by some, have the remnants of art and historical monuments from ancient times been collected and Jewish ethnography become a topic of interest. Thus in Hamburg, Vienna and Frankfurt we see Jewish museums being established. Their work will be beneficial and decisive for the future."¹ In the decade prior to Weissenberg's remarks, associations such as the *Gesellschaft zur Erforschung jüdischer Kunstdenkmäler* in Düsseldorf had been established, bringing together and exhibiting collections of Jewish art and material culture. By the beginning of the twentieth century, several public museums incorporated permanent Jewish exhibits and displayed Jewish ritual objects. Thus, within a mere forty years the preservation of Jewish material culture had become a new element in German and German-Jewish society. In order to understand this development, it is necessary on the one hand to examine the preconditions of these foundations, the motives of those involved and the content of the exhibitions and, on the other, to consider the general historical context. The history of Jewish museums began in 1895, only to be interrupted by the Nazis in 1933. The first Jewish museum in post-war Germany opened in November 1988; others soon followed. The contemporary revival of Jewish museums will be explored in the second part of this essay.

Two incidents clearly show the religious context of these developments. In 1921, the Orthodox magazine *Der Israelit* published a notice offering for sale to Jewish communities the *Aron Hakodesh* of a synagogue, dedi-

¹ Samuel Weissenberg, 'Jüdische Museen und Jüdisches in Museen, Reiseindrücke', in *Mitteilungen zur jüdischen Volkskunde*, 23 (1907), pp. 77–88.

cated in 1854 and no longer in use by the *Israelitische Religionsgesellschaft* in Frankfurt. The sellers hoped for a congregation that would “restore it to its sanctified purpose”.² Continued religious usage in a synagogue was envisaged, which indeed became the case in a small synagogue in Safed in Palestine. Some ten years later, a reconstructed synagogue incorporating the *Almemor* and the *Aron Hakodesh* of the synagogue at Schönfließ in der Mark appeared in the Jewish museum in Berlin, which had been inaugurated in 1933. Both items had been acquired by the collector Salli Kirschstein and presented to the Berlin Jewish Museum as a gift in 1932.³ In order to be displayed as ceremonial objects, they first needed to be removed from their religious context by secularisation of, and distancing from, religious traditions concerning the manner in which objects were normally preserved.

A further precondition was a shift in Jewish identity and consciousness after emancipation. The century-long struggle for civil rights and social acceptance had resulted in a general emphasis on the purely religious nature of Jewish identity and on the minor differences separating Judaism from Christianity. Incomplete integration, however, along with the rise of political and racial antisemitism in the 1870s and 1880s, led many Jews to seek new definitions and forms of Jewish identity, one important component being the recognition of the existence of a venerable Jewish culture, and its concomitant development in new, autonomous versions.

In this context there arose towards the end of the nineteenth century a multifaceted movement for the preservation and documentation of Jewish history and culture, most significantly evidenced by the *Vereine für Jüdische Geschichte und Literatur*, which appeared in the 1890s, even in small communities.⁴ The B’nai Brith also initiated a broad spectrum of cultural activity, while women’s associations no longer restricted themselves to welfare but now also organised lectures on Jewish tradition and contemporary issues.⁵ It is within this efflorescence of cultural activity, of-

² *Der Israelit*, No. 10, 10th March 1921, p. 6; No. 23, 9th June 1921, p. 6.

³ Hermann Simon, *Das Berliner Jüdische Museum in der Oranienburger Straße*, Berlin 1988, p. 32.

⁴ See Jacob Borut, ‘Vereine für Jüdische Geschichte und Literatur at the End of the Nineteenth-Century’, in *Year Book XLI of the Leo Baeck Institute*, London 1996, pp. 89–114; for the later period, see Michael Brenner, *The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany*, New Haven 1996, pp. 20–22.

⁵ See Sabine Knappe, ‘The Role of Women’s Associations in the Jewish Community. The Example of the Israelitisch-Humanistischer Frauenverein in Hamburg at the Turn of the Century’, in *Year Book XXXIX of the Leo Baeck Institute*, London 1994, pp. 153–178.

ten called a "Jewish Renaissance", that we must see the heightened interest in Jewish museums and exhibitions.

The museum projects were initiated by associations founded from the end of the nineteenth century, with programmatic names such as the *Gesellschaft zur Erforschung jüdischer Kunstdenkmäler* (Düsseldorf 1897), *Gesellschaft für jüdische Volkskunde* (Hamburg 1898), *Gesellschaft für Sammlung und Konservierung von Kunst und historischen Denkmälern des Judentums* (Vienna 1895), and the *Gesellschaft für die Geschichte der Israeliten in Elsaß-Lothringen* (Strasbourg 1904). These societies were dominated by distinguished personalities, including Heinrich Frauberger, a Gentile from the Arts and Crafts Museum in Düsseldorf,⁶ and Max Grunwald, a rabbi in Hamburg and Vienna.⁷ In the early twentieth century, and particularly after the First World War, these societies became increasingly popular, answering an intensified Jewish longing for a sense of historical and cultural identity and, more prosaically, because they could mount numerous exhibitions with accompanying publications.

The prime movers of these private societies were scholars, rabbis, teachers and collectors. Their aim was to disseminate knowledge about Jewish religious life and traditions, stressing the extraordinary contribution of Jews to German society. Exhibitions and museums were considered particularly apt for this purpose because of their ability to attract a broad public. They were viewed as educational tools, presenting "the public with a notion of the cultural development of the Jewish community",⁸ a popular aim that was contrasted with the "antiquated" and elitist Jewish *Wissenschaft*.⁹

⁶ In 1895, Heinrich Frauberger discovered a gap in the collection of the Düsseldorf Arts and Crafts Museum: "The models for the Catholic and Protestant churches numbered thousands. There were many models for the Mohammedan and Buddhist cults, although neither Mohammedans nor Buddhists live by the Rhine; there was nothing, however, on the Jews living in the Rhineland and Westphalia; only five prints (out of 30,000) pictured older synagogues." 'Zweck und Ziel der Gesellschaft zur Erforschung jüdischer Kunstdenkmäler zu Frankfurt a.M.', in *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft zur Erforschung jüdischer Kunstdenkmäler* I, October 1900, p. 3. Frauberger collected models and studied the function and use of ritual objects.

⁷ Max Grunwald established the *Gesellschaft für jüdische Volkskunde* (Society for Jewish Folklore) in Hamburg, which aimed at "promoting the understanding of the inner life of the Jews. It therefore strives for as complete as possible a collection of all popular traditions and art productions referring to Judaism and its adherents". *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für jüdische Volkskunde*, 1 (1898), p. 3.

⁸ Erich Toeplitz, 'Jüdische Museen', in *Der Jude* (1924–1925), p. 339.

⁹ *Ibid.*

The activists at first addressed the Jewish public, in particular those Jews who felt little inclination to live according to religious precepts, but who nevertheless wanted to remain part of the Jewish community and were anxious to learn more about Jewish history and tradition. For them, Jewishness was something more than merely a "confession": it was a *Schicksalsgemeinschaft*, a *Volksgemeinschaft*. In the journal *Ost und West*, for example, a 1912 contribution on Jewish antiquities in Alsace-Lorraine began:

"It may sound contradictory, but it is an indisputable fact that the modern Jew who is rightly accused of being indifferent and lax towards the tenets of his belief, generally shows more interest in and understanding of the history of his people than was the case with our fathers, who painfully adhered to the customs and commands which they had inherited from their fathers."¹⁰

The Jews' desire to preserve and display their cultural heritage was part of a broader movement to establish museums in Germany in the second half of the nineteenth century. Public societies for ancient and modern history established historical museums and art and art history museums; public and private ethnological, folklorist and local history museums were also founded. It is interesting to note that it was the ethnological museums that particularly inspired parallel Jewish activity. The industrialist Salli Kirschstein, for example, reported on his visit to the Berlin ethnographical museum:

"The variety and especially the originality of what was shown there attracted me; the way people live and the different periods in their diversity of shape and colour fascinated me ... The desire, nay the will, arose in me to establish a museum for Jewish folklore, for our own sake, for the sake of our past and in order to establish the place amongst the peoples to which we are entitled."¹¹

The Hamburg *Gesellschaft für jüdische Volkskunde* (Society for Jewish Folklore), which hoped to establish a complete collection of all Jewish traditions and folklore, as well as art objects,¹² called its collection the *Museum für jüdische Volkskunde* and exhibited from 1914 in the Hamburg

¹⁰ M. Ginsburger, 'Jüdische Altertümer in Elsaß-Lothringen', in *Ost und West. Illustrierte Monatschrift für das gesamte Judentum*, December 1912, p. 1096.

¹¹ Quoted by Hermann Simon, 'Das jüdische Museum in der Oranienburger Straße, 1933–1938', in "Tuet auf die Pforten". *Die Neue Synagoge, 1866–1995*, Berlin 1995, p. 220.

¹² *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für jüdische Volkskunde*, 1 (1898), p. 1.

Völkerkundemuseum. For Grunwald and his association, the very term “Jewish folklore” implied the existence of a cultural group united by language, literature, custom, faith and legend, prophecy and magic. Admittedly the Hamburg society considered the exhibition in the *Völkerkundemuseum* to be only a temporary solution. They were granted little space and the museum authorities wished to connect the exhibit with that of other Semitic peoples, a connection the Jewish organisers rejected. They therefore hoped instead to establish an independent Jewish museum.¹³

Within the context of the general history of German museums, Jewish museums possessed a unique vindicatory characteristic: they were intended to demonstrate to Gentiles that Jews had contributed much to folklore, the arts, theology and history: their aim, in other words, was to further the acceptance of Jews in German society. In programmatic writings, it was pointed out that such exhibitions contributed substantially towards a better understanding of Jews by non-Jews. In 1928, Salli Kirschstein expressed the hope that a “Jewish museum can be of immense help in keeping our people together. It should, however, [also] be in a position to influence substantially the attitude of non-Jews towards Jews and Judaism, as lack of knowledge of the Jewish way of life was and is a major factor in anti-Jewish sentiment”.¹⁴ “Originals are the true extracts of life,” wrote the Frankfurt art historian Erich Toeplitz; “according to them we form opinions and upon them others base their judgement of us. In this respect each additional Jewish museum is a more positive defence against denial and incitement than newspapers, brochures and books.”¹⁵

This educational and defensive aim was especially pronounced when it came to participation in a general exhibition. This was stressed, for example, during the Dresden Hygiene Exhibition of 1911. Max Grunwald, who was in charge of the section “Hygiene of the Jews” at this exhibition, wrote that “the exhibition was to take place in Dresden, and at the time I received the invitation, Saxony still maintained a state law against ritual slaughter. It appeared to me now an unavoidable duty towards Judaism to refute all arguments against ritual slaughter before the eyes of the whole world in the capital of Saxony in the international forum of the exhibition and in the presence of an international scientific audience”.¹⁶ The desire to

¹³ *Mitteilungen zur jüdischen Volkskunde*, 43.4 (1918), p. 30.

¹⁴ Simon, *Das Berliner Jüdische Museum*, p. 14.

¹⁵ Toeplitz, ‘Jüdische Museen’, p. 346.

¹⁶ Max Grunwald, *Bericht über die Gruppe “Hygiene der Juden” in der Internationalen Hygiene-Ausstellung Dresden 1911*, n.p., n.d., p. 3.

increase popular understanding concerning Jewish rites was the declared aim of the Jewish contribution. That it was also understood in this light by non-Jews was shown in the *Posen Zeitung*'s comment that "we are of the firm opinion that the Jewish section will contribute to the repudiation of many unjustified accusations against Jews and Judaism".¹⁷

The euphoric echoes of the success of the exhibition should not distract us from the fact that it received no assistance from Jewish communities and organisations in Germany, Britain or France. Many Jews were perhaps wary of presenting themselves as "exotic", perceiving in such a separate Jewish exhibition the danger of cultural isolation. There was less fear involved in local history and cultural history exhibitions, as demonstrated, for instance, by the cooperation between curators of public museums, rabbis, collectors and Jewish societies in the Cologne Millennium Exhibition.¹⁸

Having dealt with the aims involved in the establishment of the Jewish museums, I will now discuss the questions of what was to be exhibited and the source of the objects. Some museums, in Berlin and Danzig, for example, were based on large private collections. Albert Wolf, a Jewish art collector and jeweller from Dresden, presented his collection to the Jewish community of Berlin in 1907. (It was not publicly displayed for ten years.)¹⁹ In 1904, Lesser Gieldzinski donated his valuable collection of silver ceremonial objects to the Jewish community of Danzig.²⁰ In Germany, however, such collections were the exception rather than the rule, and the organisers could not rely upon their acquisition. Their aim, rather, was to start such collections themselves. They called upon individuals to donate or loan objects, and sought funds to acquire them. In addition, they inherited from small rural communities which had ceased to exist around the turn of the century because their members had migrated to towns. This latter aim, namely the "saving and preservation of the endangered Jewish heritage",²¹ became the focal point of the museums' activity in the twentieth century. Frankfurt was the most successful in this endeavour, largely due to the efforts of financier Charles Hallgarten, who

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

¹⁸ Reported by Erich Toeplitz in *Menorah* (1925), pp. 193–197.

¹⁹ See Simon, *Das Berliner Jüdische Museum*, pp. 218–226.

²⁰ This collection was brought to the USA in 1939, and was later integrated into the New York Jewish Museum. See *Danzig 1939. Schätze einer zerstörten Gemeinde*, ed. by Braunschweigisches Landesmuseum, Brunswick 1982. (First published in English, New York 1980.)

²¹ Toeplitz, 'Jüdische Museen', p. 339.

footed the bill for travel, research, publication and exhibitions. This resulted in books such as *The Construction and Decoration of Old Synagogues; Ceremonial Objects in the Synagogue and at Home; Illuminated Hebrew Manuscripts and Books; and German, Bohemian and Polish Synagogues*. (These were reissued in Israel in 1970.)²²

Over time, important collections were gathered, differing in quality and quantity but similar in content, containing, for example, *Hanukah* lamps, spice boxes, Torah ark curtains, historical documents such as letters of protection (*Schutzbriefe*) and state proclamations, medals and Hebrew books. The larger the collections grew, the more pressing was the need for the establishment of independent Jewish museums or Judaica departments. The experience with exhibitions intensified the widely felt wish "that objects concerning Jews should be kept accessible to the public as originals or at least as copies".²³

The term "Jewish museum" became increasingly common in the twentieth century, even though the initial organisations and societies retained names such as the *Gesellschaft zur Erforschung jüdischer Kunstdenkmäler*. Similarly, the first exhibitions bore titles such as *Ausstellungen von jüdischen Bauten und Kulturgegenständen für Synagoge und Haus*, while a museum opening in Frankfurt in 1922 was named *Museum jüdischer Altertümer*. The adjective "Jewish" denotes something distinct, and its clearest meaning lies in its religious connotation. What was to be displayed in a Jewish museum? The most beautiful and most valuable objects were religious and, in spite of varying intentions, medieval religious practice became the centrepiece of all exhibitions. Anachronistically, the focus was on the synagogue and the Sabbath-evening dining room. Modernity received short shrift. Historical displays focused primarily on documents from the period of social and economic ascent which culminated in emancipation.²⁴ With the inclusion of eminent Jews and Jewish art (neither concept was uncontested), a certain variety of content was achieved that at least partially offset the rigidity of the portrayal of religion.

The romanticised portrait of Jewish religious life and the emphasis on emancipation seem to have been popular and successful. In the catalogue

²² Heinrich Frauberger, *Objects of Ancient Art and Jewish Ritual Art and Ornaments of Hebrew Script and Ornaments of Printed Books*, with an introduction by Hermann M.Z. Meyer, Jerusalem 1970.

²³ Toeplitz, in *Menorah* (1925), p. 197.

²⁴ See, for example, the description of the museum established in the Mainzer Israelitischen Gemeindehaus. Peter Metz, 'Ein Gang durch das Museum Jüdischer Altertümer', in *Menorah*, 12 (December 1927), pp. 767–784.

to the exhibition *Judaism in the History of Silesia*, for example, the teacher Willy Cohn wrote:

“The sentimental value, the atmosphere which these things seem to mean for us, the aureole which surrounds them, is something which still moves us, even if the place of religion in our lives has diminished. Something stirs in us the moment we take them in our hands or even see them, similar perhaps to when we notice suddenly the great candelabra on the flanks of the Titus arch in Rome, which the victorious Romans carried as a trophy. Suddenly we feel, not symbolically, but actually, this unending line of ancestors who lead up to the present and of whom we are not always aware.”²⁵

Two directions emerge in the Jewish museum projects: on the one hand, the foundation of independent Jewish museums and, on the other, the establishment of Jewish departments in existing state and municipal museums. Strasbourg, with the Jewish department in the local history museum, is an example of the second type, and Frankfurt and Berlin, with their independent Jewish museums, of the first. An interesting mixture of both types was the *Hessisches Landesmuseum* in Kassel, opened in 1927 and run by the *Jüdischer Museumsverein*. Its founder, Rudolf Hallo, hoped for the integration of Jewish history into the history and folklore of Hesse. In 1927, he wrote:

“Frankfurt dared to give it a trial; its Jewish antiquities were removed from the Historical Museum and concentrated in a museum of their own. The consequence is that nobody looks at the objects, because only very few, and least of all the Jews, set out to see something that, in their opinion, they already know. In Kassel the question whether anything Jewish ought to be seen is not even asked—there you simply come across it.”²⁶

There was, in fact, ample justification for both approaches, although museologists generally felt that Jewish history and culture should be situated within the framework of local history. Another alternative was the establishment of small Judaica departments in state museums on the initiative of their own management. Thus, in Hamburg-Altona and in Brunswick, synagogues with ceremonial objects were exhibited in state museums.

²⁵ *Verein Jüdisches Museum zu Breslau*, Breslau, n.d. [1928]. Quoted by Bernward Deneke in ‘Das Judentum in der Geschichte Schlesiens. Ein Rückblick auf die Ausstellung Breslau 1929’, in *Schlesien. Kunst, Wissenschaft, Volkskunde*, (1989), vol. II, pp. 78–88, quotation p. 82.

²⁶ Rudolf Hallo, ‘Das jüdische Museum in Kassel’, in *Der Schild*, 12th September 1927, p. 286.

The larger exhibitions already mentioned and the opening of the first Jewish museums served as inspirations. While many Jewish communities opened small exhibition rooms with ceremonial objects, some thought was now also given to dealing with the Jewish heritage in a more professional way, and for this purpose opening a central museum in Frankfurt. Some argued for a central German-Jewish museum as part of the *Germanisches Nationalmuseum Nürnberg*; others demanded the establishment of Jewish museums within existing public museums wherever large Jewish populations were found.²⁷ In a parallel development in 1929, professionals in the field united in the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft jüdischer Kunst und Altertümer*, which hoped to secure and study Jewish documents, and publish the results in a volume on Jewish historical and cultural monuments in Germany.²⁸ This project must be seen in the context of the founding in Berlin in 1905 of the *Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden*, whose aim was to collect manuscripts and documents from Jewish communities. Along with the *Gesamtarchiv* and the publication of a Jewish encyclopaedia, which had been suggested by the historian Heinrich Graetz in 1887, the Jewish museum movement conceived of itself as part of the general study of the cultural history of the Jews in Germany. The German-Jewish museum movement succeeded in establishing more Jewish museums than anywhere else in Europe. While the early Jewish exhibition during the World Exhibition in France in 1878, the Anglo-Jewish Historical Exhibition in London in 1897, and the *Jodisk Udstilley* in Copenhagen in 1908, all exerted some influence on the movement, the strongest impetus came from Germany's own history.

Judged by their scientific and educational intent, the museums and Jewish departments instituted by 1930 were only moderately successful. The majority contained similar exhibits, often of dubious quality. There are, however, indications that had their growth been undisturbed they would have developed greater professionalism and become a major factor in German-Jewish society. Non-Jews also contributed to their development by offering professional assistance. The large exhibition *Judaism in the History of Silesia*, for example, was made possible through the efforts of the director of the *Schloßmuseum* and was held in the Silesian Museum for Art and Crafts and Antiquities. The Frankfurt Jewish Museum was

²⁷ According to Alfred Grotte (Breslau). 'Wohin mit den deutsch-jüdischen Altertümern?', in *C.V. Zeitung*, 24th June 1927. In *Ibid.*, Jakob Seifensieder argues for a central museum in Nuremberg, while Erich Toeplitz advocates the same for Frankfurt.

²⁸ Karl Ladenburg (Mainz), 'Die Gründung der Arbeitsgemeinschaft jüdischer Kunst und Altertümer', in *C.V. Zeitung*, 14th June 1929.

founded by a non-Jew and obtained valuable objects on permanent loan from the state museum. By dint of such efforts, the German-Jewish museum had attained a certain level of maturity before the *Machtergreifung* of January 1933.

I will not deal here with the Nazi era, but would only point out that the existence of these large Jewish collections and extensive Jewish libraries inspired the Nazis not only to plunder and destruction, but also to start collections and research of their own. Thus they founded the *Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage* in Frankfurt, and the Central Jewish Museum in Prague, intended as the “museum of a perished race”.

Turning now to developments after 1945, forty-three years after the end of the Holocaust the first independent Jewish museum in Germany was founded, preceded in the 1960s by a series of large exhibitions on Jewish history and culture. The exhibition *Synagoga* in Recklinghausen and Frankfurt in 1960–1961 concentrated on synagogue art, with objects from Israel, Paris and the USA.²⁹ The 1963 exhibition *Monumenta Germanica—2000 Jahre Geschichte und Kultur der Juden am Rhein* in Cologne was an extensive cultural and historical exhibition devoted to the political, economic, social and religious life of the Jews along the Rhine.³⁰ In 1982–1983 came the New York Jewish Museum’s exhibition *Danzig 1939*,³¹ displaying the Lesser Gieldzinski collection and religious objects from Danzig, which the community had given for preservation to the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in the summer of 1939.

These exhibitions were not a continuation of the former Jewish museum movement, but stood in dialectical relation to it. The museum curators—those who had survived—were living in the USA and Israel: for example, Franz Landsberger, former director of the Jewish Museum, Berlin; Hermann Gundersheimer, until 1939 curator of the *Frankfurter Museum jüdischer Altertümer*; Guido Schönberger, curator of the *Historisches Museum*, Frankfurt; and Heinrich Feuchtwanger, the Munich collector and art historian. In the museums they established, ceremonial objects rescued from Germany occupied pride of place. The Allies delivered such objects to the Jewish Restitution Successor Organisation

²⁹ *Synagoga. Jüdische Altertümer, Handschriften und Kultgeräte*. Historisches Museum Frankfurt am Main 17th May–16th July 1961, Frankfurt 1961. The Frankfurt exhibition featured ritual objects that until 1938 had been on permanent loan in the Museum Jüdischer Altertümer.

³⁰ *Monumenta Judaica. 2000 Jahre Geschichte und Kultur der Juden am Rhein*, vol. II, Catalogue and Essays, Cologne 1963.

³¹ *Danzig 1939*.

(IRSO) which, in turn, sent them to Israel and the USA.³² The *émigré* Jewish curators and financial assistance from abroad were crucial to the success of these initial efforts. To date, no research has been undertaken to try to delve into the motivations and aims of these exhibitions. According to their catalogues, first and foremost was the wish to provide information about the long history of the Jews in Germany, in addition to displaying the grandeur of Jewish art and demonstrating that the Nazis had not succeeded in entirely destroying the Jewish heritage.

The desire to establish permanent institutions dealing with Jewish history arose as a consequence of the success of such exhibitions. Clearly, though, a prerequisite for the establishment of Jewish museums was the willingness of Jews and Germans to engage in co-operative ventures, not to mention a joint interest in German-Jewish history. It was not, however, until well into the 1980s that these preconditions were in place, and even today cooperation between Jews and Germans remains fragile.

The immediate post-war period can be characterised in terms of the complete rejection of any and all relations between Jews and Germans. The Germans showed no interest in the fate of the Jews, ignoring the Jewish situation in Germany: the waiting in refugee camps, the difficulties of emigration to countries of their choice, the illness and psychological effects of confinement in concentration camps. Debates over the reparations issue caused further confrontation. The Auschwitz trial of 1963, and the testimony of numerous Jews during the trial, served to restore to public consciousness the immense suffering and horror of the Holocaust.

One of the first phenomena to bring Jews and Germans closer together was the student movement of the late 1960s, led by the first generation to be born after the war. The students' analysis of, and confrontation with, the German past and present catalysed a broader interest in the history of German Jewry, an interest that grew throughout the 1970s and 1980s and reached a peak around the fiftieth anniversary of the *Kristallnacht* in 1988. Even in this somewhat more positive atmosphere, Jews living in Germany did not actively advocate and pursue the preservation of German-Jewish

³² Of the 298 objects preserved from the Frankfurt Museum of Jewish Antiquities, fifty were entrusted to the Bezalel Museum in Jerusalem, fifty to the New York Jewish Museum, and fifty to the Jewish Museum in Cincinnati, while twenty-six were distributed to smaller collections in the USA. Guido Schönberger, 'Das ehemalige Jüdische Museum in Frankfurt am Main', in *Synagoga*. See also Jüdisches Museum (ed.), *Was übrig blieb. Das Museum Jüdischer Altertümer in Frankfurt 1922–1938*, Frankfurt am Main 1988.

history. Most were from Eastern Europe, with little relation to German history and society and, moreover, with no wish to remain in Germany. The few German Jews living in Germany by and large wanted to live “invisibly”, creating a new life unencumbered by memory.

Only in the early 1980s did a new self-confidence emerge among Jews living in Germany. In Frankfurt, the building of a new community centre displayed this self-confidence, as did the establishment of a *Jüdische Volkshochschule*. In their vocal protest against the staging of Rainer Werner Fassbinder’s play *Die Stadt, der Müll und der Tod* in 1985, Frankfurt Jews appeared for the first time publicly making demands on German society.

In the 1980s, private (non-Jewish) groups and individuals began to plan a Jewish museum in Frankfurt.³³ Well before this, however, in the 1950s, the director of the state archives had begun to organise documents relating to Jews, and had begun to make contact with *émigrés*. In founding the *Kommission zur Erforschung der Geschichte der Frankfurter Juden* in 1961, he created a mixed Jewish and non-Jewish body. With the assistance of the local councillor for cultural affairs, Hilmar Hoffmann, he established a small collection of Judaica and created replicas of former Jewish exhibits. He also organised funds for the construction of a replica of the *Judengasse* in the Frankfurt Ghetto.

Public debate over the establishment of a Jewish museum focused on whether it was justifiable to set up a separate museum on the history of Frankfurt Jewry, rather than including the subject as a part of the general history of the city within the Historical Museum. In terms of the museum’s content, it was decided that the entire history of the Jews of Frankfurt should be included, and that Frankfurt Jewry would be presented as an exemplar of Jewish life in Germany. In fixing the opening day for 9th November 1988, the fiftieth anniversary of the *Kristallnacht*, the museum was symbolically linked to the Nazi period and the Holocaust.

The Jewish community had deliberately refrained from overt involvement during the museum’s planning stages, but wished to be involved in staffing decisions. Only in 1987, when the remnants of the former *Judengasse* and the foundation of the *Börneplatz* synagogue were uncovered, did the Jewish community protest about the museum’s treatment of Jewish history. Leaving aside for the moment the emotionally charged nature of the issue, discussion revolved around the question of the “authenticity of

³³ For the following, see Cilly Kugelmann, ‘Das Jüdische Museum als Exponat der Zeitgeschichte’, in *Wiener Jahrbuch für jüdische Geschichte*, 2 (1996), pp. 43–56.

the ruins” and the “aestheticisation” of history in museums. The sophisticated debate about whether history can in fact be “experienced” was unfortunately cut short by the alleged expense incurred by the delay in construction and resulted in a compromise—the establishment of the *Museum Judengasse* as an affiliate of the Jewish Museum. Even today, many people question whether it should have been built at all, since the presentation, aimed at imparting knowledge, hinders rather than facilitates an “authentic” historical experience.³⁴ From the beginning, education was the museum’s guiding concept. Its founders took into account the absence of a collection to fall back on and, moreover, realised that it would be impossible to start a new collection of this kind. As early as 1943, it was decided at the London Conference on Restoration of Continental Jewish Museums, Libraries and Archives that all Jewish objects that could be rescued in post-Nazi Germany would be transferred either to the USA or to Palestine.³⁵ This decision was indeed implemented—as already mentioned—and is considered irrevocable, even if there is little reason today to exhibit items from German-Jewish history in New York or Jerusalem rather than in their historical context in Frankfurt or elsewhere in Germany. Many *émigrés*, too, opt to put their photos and documents at the disposal of a museum or collection in their own country in preference to German institutions.

This paucity of actual objects has led to the museums becoming overly didactic in style. Further, it has resulted in the use of objects by analogy, for example ceremonial objects from Poland being shown in the context of a German synagogue. Enough ceremonial objects exist to explain Judaism, but only when it is considered atemporally and when cultural developments are neglected. And, it should be noted, the problems confronting Frankfurt are in fact faced by all museums in Germany.

Jewish museums also struggle with problems of conceptualisation.³⁶ They must portray that which was once vivid—the entire sweep of Ger-

³⁴ See *Stationen des Vergessens. Der Börneplatz-Konflikt*, Publikationen zur Eröffnungsausstellung Museum Judengasse, Frankfurt am Main 1992; Michael Best (ed.), *Der Frankfurter Börneplatz. Zur Archäologie eines politischen Konflikts*, Frankfurt am Main 1988.

³⁵ Simon, pp. 90ff.

³⁶ There is very little literature on Jewish museums in Germany after 1945. See Otto Lohr, ‘Jüdische Museen in Bayern. Ausgrenzung oder Erinnerung einer verschwundenen Kultur?’, in *Aspekte der Museumsarbeit in Bayern: Erfahrungen—Entwicklungen—Tendenzen*, Munich 1996, pp. 35–45; Margarethe Brock-Nannestad, ‘Jüdische Museologie. Entwicklung der jüdischen Museumsarbeit im deutsch-jüdischen Kulturraum’, in *Jahrbuch des Jüdischen Museums Wien*, 1 (1994–1995), pp. 55–70; Bernhard Purin,

man-Jewish history. How is it possible to combine enlightenment with remembrance? What should be the aim and message of presenting the history of the Jews? In Germany at present there is an extensive debate on this question—a debate not confined to museums. Recent developments such as the *Historikerstreit*, growing xenophobia, a desire to close the door on *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (coming to terms with the past) following reunification—all this has exerted a major impact on the execution and reception of exhibitions. The fundamental question about conceptualisation is whether German-Jewish history should be presented as an antecedent to the Holocaust. Another basic question relates to the perspective adopted: a Jewish museum must surely look upon history from a Jewish viewpoint, yet who in Germany can do that today?

Jewish museums in Germany are established for non-Jews who know little about Jewish history, culture and religion. Because basic information about religion, the Sabbath and the feasts need ample space, most museums have opted for a division into historical and religious departments. But this has brought about another problem: most visitors are unable to see the connection between fundamental religious ideas on the one hand, and religious and social developments on the other.

Decisions concerning these problems of conceptualisation and presentation are made by museum supporters and staff. This brings us to the next difficult problem: the staff. In my view it is vital to have a mixed Jewish and non-Jewish staff in these museums since there is clearly no objective, neutral way of presenting Jewish history. Until fairly recently in Germany, it was difficult to find academically-trained Jewish historians, art historians and experts on Judaica. This situation, however, seems to be changing for the better, a development which will certainly have a positive effect on the formation and structure of future museums.

It is still too early to come to any definitive conclusions about the significance and impact of Jewish museums in Germany. It is indisputable that while they aid the preservation of memory and present a differentiated image of the Jews in Germany, they constitute an open wound in German

'Jüdische Geschichte und Kultur in österreichischen Museen und Ausstellungen. Eine Bibliographie', in *ibid.*, pp. 161–193; Bernward Denecke (ed.), 'Dokumentation und Darstellung der Geschichte und Kultur der Juden im Museum. Referate der Arbeitstagung der Arbeitsgruppe Kulturgeschichtliche Museen der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Volkskunde im Germanischen Nationalmuseum Nürnberg 29.11.–1.12.1988', in *Anzeiger des Germanischen Nationalmuseums und Berichte aus dem Forschungsinstitut für Realienkunde 1989*, Nuremberg 1990.

society. The number of Jewish museums is steadily increasing, and on a local and regional level more and more energy is being devoted to commemoration of the Jews and documentation of their history. But administrative authorities mistakenly consider Jewish museums increasingly as a form of “reparation” to the Jews, rather than a task and challenge for the non-Jewish population. I do not believe that the establishment of Jewish museums relieves other museums of their duty to incorporate Jewish life as an integral part of local history. Berlin, for example, set out to establish a Jewish museum within the Berlin Museum, conceiving of Jewish history as part of the history of Berlin, the history of the minority as an integral part of German history. The bitter controversy surrounding this project serves to highlight the advantage enjoyed by independent Jewish museums, whose work is less hampered by transient political arguments. The continuing controversy about the Jewish museum in Berlin transcends the merely local plane—it testifies to the socio-political changes taking place in a reunified Germany. The past is no longer seen as constitutive of the present—in the new capital, the gaze is set firmly towards the future.

BILL WILLIAMS

Rescuing the Anglo-Jewish Heritage: The Manchester Experience

It is now generally acknowledged, at least by academics, that a community's heritage is not a static commodity, permanently engraved, readily accessible and universally accepted. Heritage is seen rather as the consequence of a highly contested exercise in communal image-making, loaded with the values, prejudices, preconceptions and perspectives of the observer.¹ Definitions of a community's heritage depend upon who is seeking to "recover" it, for what purposes and in what circumstances. The same might be said of the importance accorded by a community to the rescue of those historical materials around which any kind of heritage might be reconstructed. The two are, in fact, closely linked. A community's view of what is and what is not important in its heritage largely dictates the kinds of historical evidence, if any, it seeks to retrieve. Only by making this connection does it become possible to understand the Anglo-Jewish community's destructive apathy, in the post-war years, towards the documents, artefacts and buildings from which its actual (as distinct from its idealised or mythological) development might properly have been deduced. Rarely has so much been lost or destroyed by so few in so short a time.

A vast gulf separates the situation facing Anglo-Jewry in the immediate post-war years from that confronting the surviving Jewish communities of continental Europe. In Europe, the vulnerability of historical evidence, documentary and physical, was almost entirely a by-product of wartime catastrophe, the very extent and drama of which was itself, in some ways, a spur to rescue. The anticipated extent of the loss had given rise, during the war, to an international committee pledged to devise strategies of retrieval. After the war, the surviving communities began themselves to take measures to rescue and preserve what remained of their historical

¹ The issues raised in this paper are dealt with more thoroughly in Tony Kushner (ed), *The Jewish Heritage in British History*, London 1992.

heritage, perhaps to remedy the processes of destruction, perhaps as a means of honouring the dead or those who had sought to save them.

In Vilnius, in Lithuania, the process took the form of a "rescue dig". In 1944 the Nazis had consigned what remained of the community's archives to a local paper mill for pulping; many of the more sacred artefacts had been stored by the Nazis prior to their destruction. These plans were fortunately spiked by the speed of the Russian advance. In October 1944, following liberation, the Jewish community in Vilnius set up a committee to rescue what remained as the basis for a new museum which would record the experience of the Vilna Ghetto and the powerful Jewish resistance movements centring on the city. Far away in Manchester, a local Jewish newspaper reported: "The Committee has salvaged tons of historical documents and volumes...Two truck loads full of this valuable material had already been delivered to the museum, among them photographs...books and letters."² There was no echo in Manchester Jewry, where the loss of heritage, probably equal in extent, was the result not of a process of violent destruction but of the forces of progress.

In 1945 Manchester Jewry, together with all the other communities of urban Britain, was in the midst of a social and economic upheaval that was gradually transforming its identity. Since the 1890s, immigrant Jewish families from the established Jewish Quarter in Cheetham Hill had been on the move from the working-class housing of such "immigrant districts" as Red Bank and Strangeways towards the fashionable outer suburb of Broughton. What began as the movement of relatively few families favoured by rapid economic success escalated in the later 1920s into a grass-roots abandonment of inner city slums for the semi-detached properties of suburban, and still semi-rural, Prestwich. As property speculators caught wind of the movement, and as the real value of working-class wages continued to increase and slum clearance policies advanced during the 1930s, the evacuation speeded up, and was accompanied by the establishment of synagogues and other communal facilities in the new areas of settlement. A further stimulus was provided by the Blitz, during which the old Jewish Quarter, close to Manchester's industrial heartland and docks complex, suffered substantial damage: its psychological effect was even more severe. By 1945 only a remnant of what had been a working-class immigrant population of some 35,000 remained in its primary area of settlement; one by one, communal institutions followed Jewish families into the suburbs.

² *Jewish Gazette* (Manchester), 20th October 1944.

From the mid-1930s, too, changes of fashion, inner conflict and foreign competition combined to eat away at the foundations of those industries upon which Jewish immigrants and their children had depended for their livelihoods: tailoring, cap-making, the manufacture of rainwear and water-proofs, and cabinet-making. By the 1950s, "Jewish" garment and furniture factories which had survived the bombing were either falling into disuse, undergoing conversion into superstores and trade warehouses, or holding out in the last phases of an unequal battle against foreign competitors.

Throughout industrial Britain Jewish communities were undergoing similar processes of transition. In Liverpool, the Jewish population was leaving the slums of Brownlow Hill and Islington for Sefton Park, Childwall and Allerton; in Glasgow, the Gorbals was abandoned; in Leeds, the Leylands; in Birmingham, the Froggeries. Everywhere the centre of gravity of the Jewish population was moving to the suburbs. The preference of Jewish immigrant families for Britain's larger centres of industry and population, evident since the 1880s, was given added emphasis during the inter-war years by the contours of economic change. After the war, smaller Jewish communities throughout Britain, their size temporarily swollen by war-time evacuees, went into what proved to be terminal decline. Departing families, lured by the wider opportunities of industrial Britain, found their way into urban suburbia. In 1945, Anglo-Jewry was in the midst of a period of unprecedented social mobility and demographic change.

In the case of records, artefacts and buildings, such change meant vulnerability. As the old Jewish Quarters in British cities were evacuated, synagogues became defunct; societies and charities sought more appropriate suburban sites; shops and factories were abandoned; the offices of Jewish trades unions closed without ceremony; and Jewish enterprises passed into other hands, sometimes, as in Manchester and Leeds, those of newer immigrants from the British Commonwealth. As the Holocaust brought the Jewish civilisation of Eastern Europe to a tragic end, so the "old world" of immigrant Anglo-Jewry disappeared under the impulse of more insidious, but equally destructive, forces. But whereas in Eastern Europe a sense of loss inspired salvage operations, however limited and episodic, in Britain few mourned the passing of the immigrant age.

Again, circumstances dictated responses. In Britain, as in Europe, an endangered heritage could be saved only if the community possessed the will to save it and the energy to set up administrative mechanisms to achieve that purpose. The Anglo-Jewish communities certainly possessed well-established centralised structures that might well have served the pur-

pose of rescue. Apart from the Board of Deputies of British Jews in London, all the major provincial communities threatened with loss had in place representative councils as capable of creating efficient mechanisms of retrieval as they had been in developing mechanisms of co-ordination and defence. What was lacking was the will to do so. Between the 1940s and the 1970s (and in many cases up to the 1980s and 1990s), neither the Board of Deputies nor any provincial council saw heritage rescue as being within their remit. Communities which were in many ways acutely sensitive to their external image did not count heritage (or, at any rate, local heritage) among the factors that might enhance their prestige. If anything, the unsightly debris of the local past was something to be tidied away. The minutes of the Jewish Representative Council in Manchester for the years 1945–1955 contain only one reference to the subject: the need to devote attention to a disused and overgrown Jewish burial ground which was giving offence to the local inhabitants of Prestwich Village. The “solution” was typical. The community struck a deal with the borough of Prestwich whereby the borough agreed to bear the cost of a wall around half the burial ground, in return for the donation of the other half for levelling and use as a local garden of rest. Before levelling, what became the borough’s half was neither photographed nor in any other way recorded.

How did it come about that a community whose “remote” heritage was so deeply enshrined in its ritual and custom displayed such apathy to its more recent past? In the case of the communal leadership, it might be argued that rescue was of little moment at a time of root and branch reconstruction. For post-war leaders, many of them British-educated members of the second generation of immigrant families, the compelling priority was the provision of institutions that would satisfy the needs of families in the new suburban concentrations, meet their higher social expectations, and take account of the new conceptions of education and charity then current in the wider society. The Manchester Homes for Sick, Aged and Incurable Jews, founded in 1898, was in 1945 still situated in ramshackle villas in the old, and now rapidly decaying, Jewish Quarter of Cheetham Hill. Not only was it inconveniently placed for families living in Prestwich, but its standards fell well below those now expected by suburban Jewry, while the concepts around which it had been built (and which retained an echo in its title) had long since been overtaken by modern ideas concerning the welfare of the elderly. In 1945, the board of governors was preoccupied with raising funds for the purchase of a more appropriate site and the development of plans to remodel its services (and

a new title). There was neither the time nor the inclination to bother about the old buildings or their records, which disappeared without trace. Such a scenario was replicated in literally hundreds of Jewish institutions in Manchester that were rethinking their futures in 1945.

In a word, communities preoccupied with comprehensive modernisation were unlikely to set much store by a disappearing past; best, perhaps, that the past did disappear, with all its inconveniences and memories, to make way for a “brave new world”. Nor were communal leaders under any pressure from the Jewish population at large to undertake rescue work. The local Jewish press occasionally carried letters, anecdotes and nostalgic articles drawing attention (and usually romanticising) the passing world of Cheetham Hill, but such imagery was never accompanied by demands from editors or readers for the preservation of the records of that disappearing world. Life in the suburbs brought its own preoccupations. Moreover, a suburban lifestyle had been chosen by most as a fitting alternative to life in the slums, memories of which were now thought better buried and forgotten. When, in 1976, the idea of a Jewish museum in Manchester first found publicity in the local Jewish press, one journalist told her readers that Manchester Jewry “needed a museum like it needed a ham sandwich”. Who wanted an institution to commemorate the slums and sweat shops of an earlier generation? Manchester Jewry had risen beyond them. In the same mood of social elevation, family records were as likely to be destroyed as institutional archives.

A sense of this elevation was a powerful motivating force. Suburban living appeared, however subconsciously, as the fulfilment of that process of Anglicisation which had been so forcefully urged upon the immigrants by their communal betters. It effectively obscured a past that was not only working-class but “foreign”. Who wanted the surviving symptoms of that foreign universe to be preserved in the midst of a new English modernity? Family correspondence, documents and institutional minutes in Yiddish, the *lingua franca* of the immigrant masses, attacked by the nineteenth-century elite as an alien patois and now largely beyond the understanding of the second and third generations, had by 1945 been rendered not only incomprehensible but irrelevant. The changing identity of Jewish families was as destructive a force as that of the organised community.

Nor were there any external pressures that might have counteracted the indifference of the new elite or their constituents. Until the 1980s, as Tony Kushner has convincingly argued,³ the institutions of the wider society

³ Kushner, pp. 1–28.

were indifferent to the histories and heritage not only of Jews but of the other ethnic minorities in British society. The mechanisms, rationale and collecting policies of public archives, museums and heritage organisations were built around a narrow and nativist perception of what constituted the “national heritage”. Ethnic diversity, while increasingly a fact on the ground, had not entered the philosophy of any sector of the national heritage industry.

Nor, in the thirty years after the Second World War, was there any pressure for preservation from the established historians of Anglo-Jewry. For the school of Cecil Roth, then dominant in Anglo-Jewish historiography, the central theme in the development of Jewry in Britain was its progressive integration into a (supposedly) tolerant native society under the auspices of a (supposedly) benevolent Jewish elite. Such a Whiggish and elitist reading, defensive in intent and substantially mythological in content, set little store by the Jewish experience (particularly the working-class and Eastern European experience) *per se*. In so far as a Jewish heritage industry had evolved in Britain before 1945 (with the foundation of the Jewish Historical Society of England in 1893, the setting up of a Jewish Museum in London in 1932, an exhibition celebrating the tercentenary of Jewish settlement in 1956 and the establishment of the Anglo-Jewish Archives at University College London in the 1960s), it was based essentially around these celebratory, elitist and dismissive premises. Very little attention was given to the contours of Eastern European settlement or to records which might reveal the inner mechanisms of immigrant settlement. No pressure was placed on public institutions to seek out Anglo-Jewish records. No mechanisms were established for the retrieval or monitoring of a threatened heritage. Branches of the Jewish Historical Society of England were not mobilised (as they might well have been) for the identification or collection of Jewish records or the monitoring of vulnerable Jewish buildings. And while the Jewish historical “establishment” put its weight behind the medieval and early modern phases of Anglo-Jewish history and, beyond that, on the more integrationist features of the Eastern European experience in Britain, the community at large, in so far as its “historical consciousness” was roused at all, sought solace either in an ancient heritage that might underpin its reviving religiosity and Zionism, or in generalised images of the past that might sustain the processes of reconstruction and continuity in a suburban society.

Apart from shoring up the conceptual, social and topographical relevance of basic communal institutions, a post-war Jewish leadership in

Manchester (and elsewhere in Britain) was engaged both in designing new institutions (like the Jewish Day School Movement) to underpin Jewish religious identity in the face of the perceived assimilatory dangers of life in the suburbs, and in seeking from the Jewish suburbs support for the Zionist enterprise in the face first, of British government policy in Palestine, and then of Israel's vulnerability. In the pursuit of both policies propagandists drew deeply on the ancient history of the Jewish people. It did not occur to them to give a thought to the records upon which the earlier history of *Manchester's* religious institutions or the early history of Zionism in *Manchester* might be based. Fables sufficed—of Manchester Jewry's exceptional religiosity in the past or of the centrality of Manchester's role in the achievement of the Balfour Declaration. Who cared about the rescue of records that might test (and perhaps substantiate) the truth of either image?

In short, for a modernising and "improving" community, slowly coming to terms with the "superior" values of the English suburb, and for a reconstructionist elite, a *tabula rasa* was preferable to a history. The building of the new was a good deal more important than the preservation of the old. Sometimes myths proved useful: their documentation was dispensable. Jewish continuity, through a period of social upheaval and in the face of powerful forces of assimilation, required some emphasis on ancient Jewish history; continuity was not seen to require the additional bolster of local communal history. Religious institutions—the Talmud Torah, the Shechita Board and the Beth Din—were no more interested in preserving their archives than communal agencies of welfare, education and social or political activity.

The consequences have been catastrophic. In Manchester, the records of all local Zionist organisations, gathered, for convenience, in the offices of the Zionist Central Council, were destroyed *en masse* by a caretaker who, in the mid-1950s, believed the offices to be unduly cluttered with useless paper. The Higher Broughton Synagogue, a major place of worship created by what was then a new immigrant elite in 1907—the synagogue of, amongst others, the Marks and Sieff families—was pulled down in 1967 and the site concreted for the construction of a new block of flats. No photographs were taken; the synagogue records were buried with the building. No records of the Jewish Working Men's Club, founded in 1884 and a major social centre for the immigrant generation, exist for the period before 1932; no pre-1929 records of the Manchester Battalion of the Jewish Lads Brigade (founded in 1899) have survived. Survival, when it occurred, was largely accidental: a single minute-book held privately by a

former secretary; a rule-book abandoned in a disused attic; a membership list retained by the last chairman of a defunct organisation; refugee records discovered in black bin bags ready for waste disposal; the minute-book of a refugee hostel discovered (barely in time) on a stall in a jumble sale; Ark curtains (from Higher Broughton) on sale at a local flea market. Buildings disappeared without trace, most of them unphotographed.

In 1976, the members of the ornate Manchester Great Synagogue (opened in 1858) decided to leave the building for more convenient premises in the suburbs. In spite of some pressure from the then promoters of the Manchester Jewish Museum, nothing was done to safeguard the building. Within ten days it had been vandalised from end to end—its copper domes, stained glass windows and candelabra had been removed, its mahogany seating smashed to splinters, its pulpit (from which the first sermons in English had been delivered in the English provinces) split in half. Attempts to interest the community as a whole, or its leaders, in preserving what remained met with abject failure. In the early 1980s, a season of high winds led to demands for the demolition of the outer shell which was by then all that remained; no-one in the community came forward with proposals for the preservation of the façade. In 1858 the building of the Great Synagogue had marked a significant moment in the early history of Manchester Jewry, reflecting the attainment by the community of that level of wealth, integration and confidence required for the siting of a major synagogue in an English middle-class suburb. It was an exercise in conspicuous display which reflected the community's "coming of age". Its passing was of almost equal significance. On the one hand, it marked the community's final abandonment of the earliest area of Jewish settlement. On the other, it symbolised the community's relationship to its past. The Great Synagogue had once expressed the community's collective identity. If there is any accuracy in the contextual interpretations of retrieval suggested here, then not only had the synagogue become irrelevant to the community's identity but so had the imperative of preserving it.

Yet the loss of the Great Synagogue also marked the beginning of the end of the community's apathy. In September 1976, when the movement to create a Jewish museum in Manchester was officially launched, the fate of the Great Synagogue was used by its propagandists as an object lesson in what could befall a defunct communal institution if no active interest were expressed in its preservation. Photographs of the vandalised building were used to promote interest in the equally threatened Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, also in Cheetham Hill, which during 1984–1985

emerged, in its restored form, as the Manchester Jewish Museum.⁴ The community was thus alerted not only to the urgency of heritage preservation, but to the scandal generated by a Cheetham Hill littered with abandoned and decaying Jewish buildings, and a community characterised by the neglect and loss of its documentary heritage. Nor was the creation of the museum simply an exercise in preservation; it was also a means of demonstrating how other Jewish buildings might be restored.

The partnership that this entailed between the community and the funding agencies of national and local government was a further exemplar. Pressure for the creation of the museum suggested to such bodies as National Heritage, Manchester City Council and Greater Manchester Council that at least one minority perceived its heritage to be part of that of the nation and the city. From the perspective of the community, it also suggested the way in which the local Jewish communities might seek national and civic support in preserving their distinctive heritage. Quite apart from buildings, public archives could be (and subsequently were) persuaded to accept, list, calendar and preserve Jewish records. Before long, more imaginative archivists saw in the collection of Jewish records a means of improving their own coverage, clientele and status. Such a relationship also offered a practical alternative to the unrealistic expectation that a local Jewish community might be able to bear the cost of creating and maintaining a communal archive equipped to collect, catalogue and conserve records, and to make them available for public research in appropriate conditions. In seeking cooperation from Manchester's city archivist, the Manchester Jewish Museum provided a model for this kind of mechanism of retrieval; in 1985, the Liverpool Jewish community appointed a communal archivist to liaise for the same purpose with the city's record office.

Other initiatives followed: a Working Party on Jewish Records was set up on the initiative of Tony Kushner in 1988; a Working Party on Jewish Monuments, inspired by Sharman Kadish, followed in 1990. In 1987, a Jewish Museum of the East End (of London) was established on the Manchester model. In October 1997, the Jewish Representative Council of Manchester and Region was persuaded to set up a Jewish Heritage Committee for the location of Jewish records and their deposit in the archives of the city and the county. Its foundation, under the chairmanship of David

⁴ The founding of the Manchester Jewish Museum is described by Bill Williams in Kushner, pp. 128–146.

Arnold, marks the first occasion upon which a community council accepted the preservation of heritage as part of its official brief.

These initiatives, as much as the apathy they sought to redeem, were a result of changing communal circumstances. One was the emergence in the Jewish suburbs of third and fourth generations of families of immigrant origin. Far from wishing to throw off a shameful foreign or working-class past (which they had not shared), the emerging generations came to share an increasing sense of dismay at the "lost histories" of their grandparents and great-grandparents, of the Eastern European immigrant past they now saw as a necessary element of their identities. This was perhaps part of a wider reaction to suburban "compromise", mirrored, in the religious sphere, by a pronounced movement of the younger generations of the north Manchester suburbs towards Jewish Orthodoxy. If the assimilatory social pressures of the suburbs had once suggested a severance with the immigrant past, the imperative of continuity now pointed to its recovery. The museum, and other mechanisms of rescue, thus found a supporting echo in the community at large.

This was underwritten by a new generation of Jewish historians in the early 1970s who, under the inspiration of the American Lloyd Gartner,⁵ mounted a challenge to the preconceptions and methodology of the Roth school. The spotlight was now turned on the Anglo-Jewish experience *per se* and particularly on the patterns of Eastern European settlement. Modern Jewish history has received increasing attention. A more critical stance has been taken towards what Roth saw as the major themes of Anglo-Jewish history. Integration, far from being accepted as progress, has become the focus for debate. The altruism of a "benevolent" elite has been called into question. Furthered by the History Workshop Movement of the late 1960s and the Oral History Society, founded in 1971, new interest has been shown not only in working-class Jewish history but in the whole notion of "history from below". Attempts have been made to set local and national Jewish history in the wider context of developments in British society. In short, the gifted amateurs and traditional mythmakers of Anglo-Jewish history have given way to a new generation of critical historians, schooled in modern methodologies, prepared to re-evaluate accepted historical wisdom, and willing to treat the history of Anglo-Jewry as a serious and rewarding element of British history.⁶ Such challenges require evidential

⁵ See especially Lloyd P. Gartner, *The Jewish Immigrant in England*, London 1960.

⁶ The work of the new wave of Anglo-Jewish historians and their approaches are summarised in David Cesarani (ed.), *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry*, Oxford 1990.

support. What also distinguished this new school of historiography from the old was its sense of responsibility towards the preservation of Anglo-Jewry's physical and documentary heritage. At Southampton University, for example, Tony Kushner laid the basis of a major Anglo-Jewish archive within the context of the university's library service. It was academics of the "new school" who in the 1980s set up the working parties on the archives and monuments of Anglo-Jewry.

More needs to be done. Large sections of the community remain indifferent to the loss of communal archives and buildings. Major losses continue. Communal authorities have not yet fully understood that safeguarding the Anglo-Jewish heritage lies within their responsibility. More pressure needs to be exerted on public archives and the national heritage industry to take Jewish history seriously. But the tide is clearly beginning to turn.

GERHARD HIRSCHFELD

The Heritage of Jewish Culture: A Comment on Helga Krohn and Bill Williams

This is a story of paradoxes, of differing perceptions and of losses, and how to come to terms with them. The story is about the heritage of Jewish culture in Britain and Germany and how the communities in both countries tried to preserve it. The starting points, however, could not have been further apart. While in Germany pre-1933 Jewish culture fell victim to the violent and intentional destruction of Nazi barbarism, the Anglo-Jewish heritage has, to a large extent, been lost through apathy, wilful neglect and the apparent “modernisation” of its environment; as Bill Williams pointedly puts it, rarely has so much been lost or destroyed by so few in so short a time.

Besides being well-known experts on Jewish history, both authors are also practitioners: Helga Krohn is Chief Curator of the Frankfurt Jewish Museum and Bill Williams was instrumental in the establishment of the Jewish Museum in Manchester. Thus they have first-hand knowledge of the difficulties involved in preserving Jewish heritage. Krohn discusses the cultural and historical preconditions for the establishment of Jewish museums in Wilhelmine and Weimar Germany before addressing the special conditions and developments in the Federal Republic concerning the foundation of Jewish museums, notably in the city of Frankfurt. The new Jewish museum there opened on 9th November 1988, linking it symbolically to the fiftieth anniversary of the November 1938 Pogrom. The post-war history of the Jews in Germany cannot be isolated from the previous history of persecution and destruction. The fact that the museum in Frankfurt contains only few genuine artefacts is a stark reminder that no collection remained after 1945 on which such a museum could be based. Moreover, the lack of appropriate originals resulted in the museum’s strong didactic orientation, with regular temporary exhibitions of objects on loan.

Bill Williams, on the other hand, draws our attention to the still prevailing “destructive apathy,” as he calls it, within the Jewish community in Britain, both collectively and individually, towards the community’s legacy of documents, artefacts and buildings. Such an attitude not only prevented the foundation of further museums or the establishment of collections for the preservation of the Anglo-Jewish heritage until the mid-1980s, but also contributed decisively to the continuing destruction of the Jewish heritage. Survival, if and when it occurred, was largely a matter of chance. Buildings disappeared without trace; in some instances, they were not even photographed. Williams argues that changes in attitude have taken place, notably within the last fifteen years or so, but that preservation is still not seen as a priority by Jewish communities or by the Anglo-Jewish leadership. And yet, as the founding of the Manchester Jewish Museum in 1984–1985 demonstrates, there is a new awareness in Britain today, a readiness “to take Jewish history seriously” (Williams) and to rescue its heritage.

Both authors, though with varying emphasis, discuss the historical context and tradition of setting up Jewish museums in Britain and Germany. While the social and spiritual conditions for establishing Jewish museums in both countries look remarkably similar—a transformed Jewish consciousness after emancipation and a certain secularised way of reflecting Judaism as a religion by taking ceremonial objects out of their religious context—the actual findings and results point in very different directions.

The reasons for these obvious differences—the establishment of a museum culture in Wilhelmine and Weimar Germany and a great reluctance to preserve and present Jewish culture in Britain—derive from the different political and social conditions and historical experiences of Jews in each country. It also has to do with the way Jewish communities and their leaders wanted to view and portray Jewish existence. At the very heart of these differing approaches, however, are questions of Jewish identity, self-image and, above all, the concepts of integration and acculturation.

In Germany, a growing interest in the preservation of Jewish history and culture developed during the last decade of the nineteenth century. Private individuals, among them prominent German rabbis and scholars, and organisations such as the Society for Jewish History and Culture, became influential in promoting German-Jewish culture in general and drawing attention to Jewish religious life and tradition in particular. This movement, popular among the Jewish elites, was, of course, part of a

prevailing tendency within bourgeois Germany (the so-called *Museumsbewegung*) during the last decades of the nineteenth century to establish historical, ethnological and folklorist museums and institutions. As such, it carried all the notions of a general educational demand for *Volksbildung*. But these manifestations also functioned as an expression of a particular German-Jewish approach to preserving and documenting Jewish cultural heritage, serving as enlightened arguments in the struggle for full social integration. Within the Jewish context, existing societies and projected or newly set-up collections (and prospective museums) were particularly directed at those Jews who had become religiously indifferent but nevertheless wished to remain within the Jewish community.

Their real target, however, was German society. Through the education and enlightenment of the German public about Jewish religious life and the manifold Jewish contributions to art and culture in general, instigators and activists of the Jewish “museum movement” hoped for a better understanding and acceptance of Jews in Germany. There was a clear defensive rationale to the establishment of Jewish museums and to holding exhibitions like the famous Dresden Hygiene Exhibition of 1911, educating the public, for example, about the religious background of ritual slaughter. The events of the First World War (particularly the discriminatory *Juden-zählung* of 1916) became a major impetus for this strategy. While the educational arguments remained, the defensive purposes of establishing Jewish museums during the Weimar years were stronger than ever.

It is arguable whether German-Jewish “museum work” (before the Nazi accession to power put an end to it) was generally accepted by the German public, as Krohn maintains, or whether the relative strength of local and regional initiatives in this respect was the result of favourable circumstances in cities like Dresden, Hamburg and Frankfurt, where they also received support from non-Jewish museologists.

The post-war history of Jewish museums in Germany has been inextricably linked with the events of the *Shoah*. This also explains the rather reticent attitude of the Jewish communities in Frankfurt and elsewhere in this matter during the first decades of the Federal Republic. Only gradually, after a period of “collective silence [*kollektives Beschweigen*]”, did the German public take an interest in the fate of the victims and survivors and begin to confront the Nazi past. I see this awareness as growing since the mid-1960s with the Auschwitz trial, an increasing media interest in the Holocaust since the late 1970s, and with the general willingness of a new generation in Germany to confront the past. While the 1980s saw the planning and realisation of most of the existing Jewish

museums, it was this gradually increasing awareness—accompanied by a decisive shift in German historiography on the *Shoah*—that laid the necessary foundations for such a development.

In Britain, the situation was dissimilar but not entirely different. As Williams states, public attitudes have begun to change, at least in part due to the influence of a new generation of historians which has focused on the Anglo-Jewish experience and particularly on patterns of Eastern European settlement. The concept of social integration, far from being accepted as progress, has once more been called into question. Since the early nineteenth century, the pressure on Jewish communities (both from the “host” society and from their own leaders) has been to integrate as fully and rapidly as possible into outside society. Both sides saw acculturation into British life as their first priority. Anglicisation and integration—as Bill Williams points out—were seen from inside and outside as the required paths to acceptance and safety. Consequently, Jewish communities turned their backs on the history and culture of the immigrants from Eastern Europe, who brought with them a highly distinctive “alien” language and culture. Anglo-Jewish history was thus written in terms of “progressive integration” (Williams) under an enlightened leadership.

Consequently, very little was done to preserve documentary evidence of an earlier existence. Neither the Jewish Museum in London nor the Jewish Historical Society of England, for example, showed much interest in the Eastern European roots of large sections of the Jewish community. This indifference was reflected in the attitudes of society at large. Ethnic minorities—such as Jews—were generally seen in the first instance not as positive contributors to British culture and life but as “problematic elements”, associated with disorder and decay. In these circumstances, British Jews came to see their separate ethnicity not as an opportunity but as a problem to which they did not want to draw further attention. The only exception to this was religion and religious life, which thus became the common denominator for Jewish identities in Britain. Religious identity, however, did not require the backing of modern historical records; hence the existing apathy and wilful neglect of buildings, artefacts and records that constituted the evidence from which Jewish heritage and historical identity might be deduced.

In addition, in the years following the Second World War, Anglo-Jewish communities, like British society as a whole, were undergoing periods of deep and lasting economic and social transition. Williams cites a number of examples, notably from his own city of Manchester, for this comprehensive process of modernisation that did away with most of the

“inconveniences” and memories of the past. The consequences for all traces of previous Jewish existence in Manchester were “catastrophic” (Williams). It was only when the derelict Great Synagogue, opened in 1858 as an expression of the community’s collective identity, was vandalised that public concern gradually began to grow. The founding of the Manchester Jewish Museum in 1984–1985, housed in the equally threatened Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, marked “the beginning of the end of the community’s apathy”. The signs are hopeful, though the battle is not over; in fact, in many respects, it is just beginning.

Another factor which has contributed decisively to a new awareness of the Jewish heritage in Britain is an increasing sense of what the *Shoah* means for modern Jewry, as well as for society at large. This is, as in Germany, a relatively recent phenomenon, although for different reasons. As Tony Kushner has convincingly analysed in his *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, British society and culture, which were always dominated by a liberal-universal framework, remained largely resistant to the particularities presented by the events of the *Shoah*. This has now changed, giving way to a universal recollection of this unique crime. The murder of European Jews and the destruction of the Jewish communities throughout Europe have become subjects of major interest, and not just for historians. Equally on the increase is the interest in Jewish culture and the Jewish heritage and, whether we like it or not, these phenomena are related, perhaps almost intrinsically linked, in both Germany and Britain.

¹ Tony Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination. A Social and Cultural History*, Oxford 1994.

BERND WEISBROD

British Jews, German Jews: Civic Culture vs. Civil Service Culture

Comparison is at the very heart of the historical project, as Marc Bloch wrote, be it comparison over time or between different cultures.¹ Comparison also usually needs a third vantage point, for as a rule we compare two sets of variables in order to perceive a pattern of particular development, the peculiarities of which can only be seen in the light of its different historical manifestations. Indeed, this is precisely what this volume is about, and little would be gained if one case were used merely as a backdrop—or as an excuse—for the other.

There is little point, for example, in discarding out of hand the tragically flawed experience of German Jewry in favour of a more-or-less preordained success story of the comparatively happy Jewish experience in the Anglo-Saxon world. Although it might be about time to suggest that the German-Jewish “saga” has served as the exclusive paradigm of modernising Jewry for too long, it is certainly wrong to try and re-establish the Anglo-Jewish success story simply by blaming the German Jews for their *Sonderweg*, while at the same time throwing out the revisionist literature on the Whig historiography of Anglo-Jewry as “essentially flawed and, indeed, fundamentally inaccurate”.² What matters is putting the two in perspective, and this is what much of the national literature fails to do. This was also the case in much of the *Sonderweg* debate in Germany. From the start, it was built around some wildly idealistic notions of the British model—and it is a clear indication of its Germanocentric assumptions that it eventually gave way to voices which spoke up for the ambivalent liberal-bourgeois character of the *Kaiserreich*,

¹ Marc Bloch, ‘Pour une histoire comparée des sociétés européennes’, in *Revue de Synthèse Historique*, 46 (1928), pp. 15–50.

² W.D. Rubinstein, *A History of the Jews in the English Speaking World: Great Britain*, London 1996, p. 32.

rather than to the ample evidence that the triumphalist view of liberal Britain had died a strange death some time before.³

So, whatever the unspoken assumptions about the German *Sonderweg* or British “peculiarities”, compare we must. Three areas of contention can be carved out in order to bring the major points of comparison more squarely into focus: the strength or weakness of liberalism; the exclusiveness or inclusiveness of nationhood; and the formative and selective character of ethnicity. These questions correspond directly with the three major concerns of this volume as a whole, that is, with questions of emancipation, assimilation and Jewishness, and will, one may hope, lead to some tentative conclusions.

The Strength of Liberalism

Liberalism has been the testing ground of much of the early work on emancipation, which in many ways—in Britain at least—has been written into the “triumph of liberalism”. As David Feldman has shown, this goes far to explain the self-congratulatory character of “the Road to 1858” kind of Whig historiography.⁴ This debunking operation loomed large in the contributions of David Cesarani, Tony Kushner and others, but looks somewhat overdone in the context of the German *Sonderweg* debate.⁵ As Reinhard Rürup’s paper makes clear, the long and symbolic fight for the removal of political disabilities has to be set in the context of a much wider discourse on the decomposition of the confessional state. And we take it from Peter Pulzer and Christopher Clark that it was the Christian character of the German states that undercut many of the liberal provisions

³ David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley (eds.), *The Peculiarities of German History. Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany*, Oxford 1984; Bernd Weisbrod, ‘Der englische Sonderweg in der neueren Geschichte’, in *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 16 (1990), pp. 233–252.

⁴ David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews. Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840–1914*, New Haven 1994; cf. Todd Endelman, ‘The Englishness of Jewish Modernity in England’, in Jacob Katz (ed.), *Toward Modernity. The European Jewish Model*, New York 1987, pp. 225–246.

⁵ For the full programme see also David Cesarani (ed.), *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry*, Oxford 1990, in which he argues that the collection of essays would show “the extent to which the state, society and culture in Britain operated a discourse about Jews that was exclusive and oppressive, that eventuated in and legitimated discrimination and that was so pervasive and well-entrenched that it resisted self-questioning even in the face of Nazi persecution of the Jews during World War II and the revelations made in its aftermath” (pp. 7–8).

of the *Reich* constitution as witnessed, for example, in judicial appointments.⁶ But then in Britain, too, it took another thirteen years after political emancipation before Jews were eligible for Oxford and Cambridge degrees.

In both countries, then, the emancipation story must be seen as a function of the relentless drive not only for civil but also for religious liberties. As a matter of fact, the much debated Christian wording of the Abjuration Oath in Britain—"upon the true faith of a Christian"—which discriminated against all non-Christian Members of Parliament, was only inserted on the occasion of Catholic emancipation. The relief of Jewish disabilities was, therefore, not only a matter of political rights but was, even after 1871, bound up with the remnants of ecclesiastical patronage in public office.⁷ As Lord Shaftesbury had feared in 1847: "If You had to concede first a Protestant House, then a Christian House, You would eventually have to fight for a male Parliament."⁸

It is doubtful in both cases, therefore, whether it was the liberal language of universalism and tolerance alone that paved the way for Jewish emancipation. Rather, the discourse on Jewish emancipation can be seen as a particular way of defining the much wider issues of extending the political nation and transforming the sacralised state of old into a guarantor of civil society. In this respect a liberal *Rechtsstaat* could have done the job just as well as the "rule of law" in Britain. The strength of liberalism in Britain was, therefore, due to its long-standing tradition of minimising the role of the state in civil society, whereas in Germany, at least after the Prussian reforms, the state played a dominant role in civil society. German Jewry was itself being transformed in this process as the standard-bearer of bourgeois emancipation, but never quite managed to emancipate itself from the state tutelage of the German *Bürgertum* at large.⁹

There is in effect a different notion of the state altogether at the bottom of it all: in Britain it is state-as-government, and minimal government at that; in Germany it is the state-as-public sector, the state as the embodi-

⁶ Cf. Peter Pulzer, *Jews and the German State. The Political History of a Minority 1848–1933*, Oxford 1992, pp. 44–68 (for judicial appointments); for a case study see Dagmar Herzog, *Intimacy and Exclusion. Religious Politics in Pre-Revolutionary Baden*, Princeton 1996.

⁷ These are the last words in the classic account of legal emancipation by H.S.Q. Henriques, *The Jews and the English Law*, London 1908, p. 305.

⁸ Hansard, XCV, col. 1278, 16th December 1847, quoted in Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews*, p. 47.

⁹ David Sorkin, *The Transformation of German Jewry, 1780–1840*, Oxford 1978.

ment of society, down to the last of its servants in uniform. In Britain large parts of social life were therefore covered only by unwritten rules and conventions, not by state regulations. This might have changed to some extent with the advent of the interventionist state later in the century. After the "Victorian revolution in government" (Oliver MacDonagh), a collectivist mood might have made up what was missing in comparison with the all-encompassing Continental nation states, but Dicey's model can surely be taken too far: the British state was certainly a strong cultural construct but, compared to the German state, it remained relatively weak in military as well as in bureaucratic terms.¹⁰

Equally, in Germany, as Wolfgang Mommsen has indicated, new openings for a liberal revival were under way in the last decade before the Great War. The civic pride movement in the larger cities was evidence of this, with some hopeful signs indeed for the Jewish middle class, as, for example, in Breslau.¹¹ But on the whole the process of emancipation seems to have been in line with this basic disposition for state formation—and liberalism, by and large, followed in its wake.¹² This, of course, provided no foregone conclusion with regard to the assimilatory effects of emancipation. A good case in point here is the French experience, where state education, bureaucratic control and the law of citizenship were put to good use in establishing a republican citizenship and eventually an inclusive state-nationhood. Germany, in contrast, held fast to its ethnocultural construction of nationhood.¹³ In both cases, however, individual rights were considered to be given either as a consequence (Germany) or as a precondition (France) of assimilation; only in the

¹⁰ Cf. the discussion in Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer, *The Great Arch. English State Formation as Cultural Revolution*, Oxford 1985, pp. 182–208; and José Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit. A Social History of Britain 1870–1914*, Oxford 1993, pp. 180–219.

¹¹ Till van Rahden, 'Mingling, Marrying, and Distancing. Jewish Integration in Wilhelmine Breslau and its Erosion in Early Weimar Germany', in Wolfgang Benz, Arnold Paucker and Peter Pulzer (eds.), *Jüdisches Leben in der Weimarer Republik/Jews in the Weimar Republic*, Tübingen 1998 (Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts 57), pp. 193–217.

¹² Reinhard Rürup, 'The Tortuous and Thorny Path to Legal Equality. "Jew Laws" and Emancipatory Legislation in Germany from the Late Eighteenth Century', in *Year Book XXXI of the Leo Baeck Institute*, London 1986, pp. 3–33; Werner E. Mosse, 'From "Schutzjuden" to "Deutsche Staatsbürger Jüdischen Glaubens". The Long and Bumpy Road of Jewish Emancipation in Germany', in Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson (eds.), *Paths of Emancipation. Jews, States and Citizenship*, Princeton 1995, pp. 59–93.

¹³ Roger Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*, London 1992.

voluntary tradition of Britain could the Jews be considered as a distinctive part of civil society outside the realm of the state. On the other hand, in terms of religious organisations, France as a laicist state does come under the voluntarist umbrella, as Michael Brenner has argued with regard to the independent position of the *consistoire*.¹⁴

The Exclusiveness of Nationhood

For all German Jewry's alleged German identity, "assimilation" did not follow emancipation, even after it had been imposed or monitored by bureaucracy. As Saul Friedländer put it in his *magnum opus*, assimilation "could still be found missing because of the ethnocultural roots of the *Volk*".¹⁵ The discourse of anti-alienism in Britain shows some surprising parallels, but there was simply no counterpart to Paul de Lagarde, who with his *Deutsche Schriften*¹⁶ established the kind of *Deutschtumsreligion* which paved the way for "redemptive antisemitism" long before the *völkisch* movement took off. But there is, in Britain too, a milder version of that "invention of tradition" that tacitly excluded the alien Jew along with other undesirable immigrants but included everything for which established Anglo-Jewry stood, even if it did not emulate the rural lifestyle of the aristocracy as did Sir Ernest Cassell.¹⁷

Fritz Stern has given us a warning in his 'The Burden of Success' that there may have been a hidden agenda behind the German-Jewish interplay: both were a people without a nation, basically insecure and craving recognition, both lacking in civil courage and enjoying all sorts of *Parteisucht*.¹⁸ But both German and British Jews were bound up with the middle classes in that great process of *Fundamentaldemokratisierung* (Hans Rosenberg)

¹⁴ Cf. Pierre Birnbaum, 'Between Social and Political Assimilation. Remarks on the History of Jews in France', in Birnbaum and Katznelson (eds.), pp. 94–127.

¹⁵ Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews, vol. 1: Years of Persecution 1933–1939*, London 1997, pp. 85f.

¹⁶ Paul de Lagarde, *Deutsche Schriften*, 2 vols., Göttingen 1878–1881.

¹⁷ Cf. David Feldman, 'The Importance of Being English. Immigration and the Decay of Liberal England', in *idem* and Gareth Stedman Jones (eds.), *Metropolis London. Histories and Representations since 1800*, London 1989, pp. 56–84; José Harris and Pat Thane, 'British and European Bankers 1880–1914', in Pat Thane, Geoffrey Crossick and Roderick Floud (eds.), *The Power of the Past. Essays in Honour of Eric Hobsbawm*, Cambridge 1984, pp. 215–234; Robert Colls and Philipp Dodd (eds.), *Englishness. Politics and Culture 1880–1920*, London 1986.

¹⁸ Fritz Stern, 'The Burden of Success. Reflections on German Jewry', in *idem*, *Dreams and Delusions. The Drama of German History*, New York 1985.

when the inclusiveness or exclusiveness of nationhood was put to the test, not just by the “great unwashed” but also, so to speak, by the “great unbaptized”—the first wave of immigrants from the East in the 1880s.

In the German case, Poles and Jews were regarded as one and the same to those manning the last line of defence against the “flood from the east”.¹⁹ Attempting to garner political popularity, anti-alienism in Britain acquired a dangerous sub-text of antisemitism, already hinted at in the context of the “Bulgarian atrocities” campaign but never explicitly spelled out. Conservative politicians went out of their way to avoid cultural or racial rationales for their popular anti-alienism, preferring instead to voice considerations of national efficiency.²⁰ The reason for this is not the missing mystical dimension of “Englishness”. Political Romanticism was a European phenomenon—witness Disraeli and Stahl—and cannot be separated from the kind of Germanophilia fashionable in some quarters of educated British society (although not necessarily among British Jews). Rather it was the state, even more than the practicalities of governance, that prevented anti-alienism from developing fully, whereas in Germany the state kept its officialdom more or less *judenfrei*, certainly at the top echelons of the civil service.²¹

This can be shown quite clearly in the case of the military, a powerful engine of assimilation as well as exclusion, which discriminated heavily against Jews, although in the German case conscription was to be the test of citizenship.²² It is true that Jews were also thin on the ground in the British colonial service and conspicuous by their absence in the Foreign Office until 1914. But the German story has a different point: the Jews who had fought in the wars of liberation were still excluded from the civil service and were refused promotion from the ranks. The Prussian king, Friedrich Wilhelm IV, even considered depriving them of their right to serve their country in the early 1840s.²³ And later on they enjoyed only minimal access to the highly desirable reserve officer corps in the *Kaiserreich*. The Prussian state, it is true, hated disorder and stamped out poten-

¹⁹ Brubaker, pp. 134–137.

²⁰ Cf. Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews*, p. 287.

²¹ Barbara Strengé, *Juden im preußischen Justizdienst 1812–1918. Der Zugang zu den juristischen Berufen als Indikator der gesellschaftlichen Emanzipation*, Munich 1996.

²² Ute Frevert, ‘Das jakobinische Modell. Allgemeine Wehrpflicht und Nationsbildung in Preußen-Deutschland’, in *idem* (ed.), *Militär und Gesellschaft im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart 1997, pp. 17–47.

²³ Horst Fischer, *Judentum, Staat und Heer in Preußen im frühen 19. Jahrhundert*, Tübingen 1968.

tial pogroms before the war. But it eventually took refuge to the notorious *Judenzählung* of 1916, perhaps the decisive green light for exclusionist strategies of antisemitism after the war was lost.²⁴

In the heyday of the *Reich*, however, German Jews, in spite of the vicious attacks by antisemites, could hold their ground by citing their nationalist credentials, certainly much more successfully than the exposed and harassed Polish minority in the eastern provinces.²⁵ In short, divided loyalties—in Jews, Socialists, Catholics and Poles alike—were emphasised not only by those hit by the uncertainties of modernity, but by the state itself.²⁶ This is a somewhat different meaning of the “instrumental state” from that used by Christopher Clark in pointing out its flexibility to public pressure in the running of local administration.

These politics of “integral nationalism” were, however, a far cry from the kind of jingoism which accompanied anti-alienism in Britain. The Aliens Act of 1905 was little more than a populist gesture of the Conservatives to a political mass market in the name of national efficiency. With its entrance fee, literacy test and enforced savings accounts to keep the riff-raff out of the insurance schemes, it offered little more than a disincentive to immigration. As a matter of fact, the majority of the Eastern European Jewish immigrants only passed through Britain on their way to the United States, speeded on by the Jewish Board of Guardians, which also repatriated a good many of the Polish and Russian newcomers to London; in any case, on a per capita basis more convicted Italians were repatriated under the Aliens Act than Eastern European Jews.²⁷ And the Anglo-Russian Military Convention of 1917 did not put the war effort of British Jewry into doubt, as the *Judenzählung* did. On the contrary, to the relief of native Jews, it made sure that Russian immigrants who could be repatriated for conscription—which most of them had hoped to avoid in fleeing their country—were led to risk their lives for their new Fatherland in the trenches.²⁸

²⁴ Werner T. Angress, ‘The German Army’s *Judenzählung* of 1916. Genesis—Consequences—Significance’, in *Year Book XXIII of the Leo Baeck Institute*, London 1978, pp. 117–137.

²⁵ William H. Hagen, *Germans, Poles and Jews. The Nationality Conflict in the Prussian East, 1772–1914*, Chicago 1980.

²⁶ Cf. David Blackbourn, *The Long Nineteenth Century*, London 1997 (Fontana History of Germany 1780–1918), pp. 424–440.

²⁷ Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews*, p. 303; Rubinstein, p. 141.

²⁸ Cf. David Cesarani, ‘An Embattled Minority. The Jews in Britain during the First World War’, in Tony Kushner and Kenneth Lunn (eds.), *The Politics of Marginality*.

It was in the Great War, I would argue, that the exclusiveness of nationhood was clearly spelled out—rather than in the German “community of descent” in the *Reichsbürgergesetz* of 1913, which did not exclude German Jews as such, until it was reread in racial terms in 1935.²⁹ Immigration laws matter, but there was more at stake in the war effort. For Germans it was a test of “organic” versus “contractual” concepts of nationhood—witness, for example, Max Scheler's idiosyncratic *Der Genius des Krieges* (1915), in which he contrasts, in a telling final chapter, the German “truespeak” with the British “cant”.³⁰ In Britain, in spite of anti-alienism, nationhood was not defined as closed, perhaps because, as José Harris argues, any “organic” idea of society was ruled out by intense localism, voluntarism and cultural diversity, as well as by the global aspect of British rule, whereas self-contained and state-centred regimes such as those of France or Germany lent themselves not only to grand “organic” theories but also to exclusive definitions of nationhood.³¹ This seems to be more congenial to the integral nationalist drive for exclusion, the almost mystical longing for unity, than to the idealistic frame of mind, as Edward Timms has indicated. There is, in short, more Tönnies and Nietzsche here than Hegel.

The Selective Character of Ethnicity

What does all this mean for the experience of Jewishness? Under these circumstances it is, perhaps, less a question of whether German or British Jews have gone further down the road of assimilationism—whether for good or ill—than a question of how they defined their minority status in reinterpreting for themselves the dominant value systems, not just of their different countries, but more particularly of the peer group targeted for social advancement. Here, a common pattern emerges: embourgeoisement in both cases was part of a selective process of ethnic identity formation, which was fought on the same ground, i.e. the liberal-nationalist version

Race, the Radical Right and Minorities in Twentieth Century Britain, London 1990, pp. 61–81.

²⁹ Brubaker, pp. 165–168.

³⁰ Max Scheler, *Der Genius des Krieges und der Deutsche Krieg*, Berlin 1915, pp. 385–443.

³¹ José Harris, ‘Platonism, Positivism and Progressivism. Aspects of British Sociological Thought in the early Twentieth Century’, in Eugenio F. Biagini (ed.), *Citizenship and Community. Liberals, Radicals and Collective Identities in the British Isles 1865–1931*, Cambridge 1996, pp. 343–360.

of German culture in the *Reichsgründungszeit* and the culture of the “Englishman and gentleman” that David Salomon professed when he claimed his seat in the Commons.³²

It was clear that the price of emancipation was to leave the ghetto behind and, with it, Judaism. But, as Andreas Gotzmann has pointed out, the *Haskalah* did not jettison Jewish identity. On the contrary, it was reinvented, just like other aspects of national life, in a new tradition in which religion continued to play a central role.³³ This was the case not only in places of worship, where Reform Judaism grew apace, but also at home, where the conventional rules of emotional religiosity remained a female preserve—and the gendered nature of *Bürgerlichkeit* as such was generally spelt out in Jewish terms.³⁴ They were “German citizens of the Jewish faith” but with a religion shorn of its external, more Oriental characteristics and in which, as in reformed Protestantism, moral law prevailed over ceremonial law, essence over ritual.³⁵

Acculturation of this sort, therefore, did not mean full assimilation. In both cases, Jews remained overwhelmingly “voluntary” (David Sorkin), with low levels of exogenous marriages and conversions—in Germany significantly only as a means of advancement in an official or academic career—and a sense of place among their co-religionists. Perhaps they felt they needed to be more bourgeois than their Gentile neighbours and yet they held on to forms of social dissociation that cannot be explained merely in terms of a defensive response to the all-pervasive “cultural code” of antisemitism.³⁶

These were signs of a selective ethnicity that was constantly being renegotiated in a strange and unavoidable double-bind: Jews’ self-representa-

³² For the concept of *situative Ethnizität* see Till van Rahden, ‘Weder Milieu noch Konfession. Die situative Ethnizität der deutschen Juden im Kaiserreich in vergleichender Perspektive’, in Olaf Blaschke and Frank-Michael Kuhlemann (eds.), *Religion im Kaiserreich. Milieus—Mentalitäten—Krisen*, Gütersloh 1996, pp. 409–434.

³³ For the German case see Shulamit Volkov, ‘Jüdische Assimilation und jüdische Eigenart im Deutschen Kaiserreich. Ein Versuch’, in *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 9 (1983), pp. 331–348; *idem*, ‘Die Erfindung einer Tradition. Zur Entstehung des modernen Judentums in Deutschland’, in *Historische Zeitschrift*, 253 (1991), pp. 603–628.

³⁴ Marion Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class. Women, Family and Identity in Imperial Germany*, Oxford 1991.

³⁵ Blackbourn, pp. 289ff; David Sorkin, ‘Religious Reforms and Secular Trends in German-Jewish Life. An Agenda for Research’, in *Year Book XL of the Leo Baeck Institute*, London 1995, pp. 170–184.

³⁶ Shulamit Volkov, ‘Anti-Semitism as a Cultural Code’, in *Year Book XXIII of the Leo Baeck Institute*, London 1978, pp. 25–46. For the *Kaiserreich* see also Olaf Blaschke, *Katholizismus und Antisemitismus im Deutschen Kaiserreich*, Göttingen 1997.

tion as cultivated Germans or respectable Victorian citizens, at the same time that they were marking out the “otherness” of Jewish experience.³⁷ The specific institutional set-up—self-governance in voluntary or approved societies, even in Jewish welfare—did set the Jews apart. But this was no protection against what has been described as “negative integration” in the case of the German Social Democrats, i.e. the slow process of integration by segregation.³⁸

It may well be that for Anglo-Jewry, too, the Great War was the watershed in this “tribal communalism”, rather than the “triumph of Zionism” and the immigrant masses. Zionism can even be seen as little more than a “vehicle”, an “ideological container”, for a new, more suburban (and more female) second-generation Jewish middle-class ethnic identity and—if one believes in ethnicity as a political programme—simply as a “surrogate and shibboleth”.³⁹ But it did not need to react to the kind of rabid antisemitism so prominent in Germany after the war, which in Britain was more-or-less contained by a conservative tradition strong enough—except in the case of Ireland—to shun the contamination of violent forms of politics.⁴⁰

It is therefore not surprising that the needs of the Eastern “brothers and strangers” thrown upon established and, in Germany, embattled Jewry were bound up in this internal Jewish process of ethnic selectivity.⁴¹ In Britain fear of antisemitism may have played an important part in the Jews’ self-effacing “low-profile political strategy”, even when their German co-religionists, driven from their homes, were interned as enemy aliens.⁴² And yet even those who owed their lives to this restrained course of action kept their “Continental ways”: at least the first generation of

³⁷ Cf. Bryan Chetty, ‘Anglo-Jewish Fiction and the Representation of Jews in England 1875–1905’, in David Cesarani (ed.), *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry*, pp. 97–111; *idem*, *Construction of “the Jew” in English Literature and Society. Racial Representations, 1875–1945*, Cambridge 1993.

³⁸ Cf. Derek Penslar, ‘Philanthropy, the “Social Question” and Jewish Identity in Imperial Germany’, in *Year Book XXXVIII of the Leo Baeck Institute*, London 1993, pp. 51–74.

³⁹ David Cesarani, ‘The Transformation of Communal Authority in Anglo-Jewry, 1914–1940’, in *idem* (ed.), *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry*, pp. 115–140; see also, for similarities among West European Zionists, Michael Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry before the First World War*, Cambridge 1993.

⁴⁰ Arnd Bauerkämper, *Die “radikale Rechte” in Großbritannien. Nationalistische, antisemitische und faschistische Bewegungen vom späten 19. Jahrhundert bis 1945*, Göttingen 1991.

⁴¹ Steven E. Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers. The East European Jew in German and German-Jewish Consciousness, 1800–1923*, Madison 1982.

⁴² Richard Bolchover, *British Jewry and the Holocaust*, Cambridge 1993.

exiled German Jews failed to become part of British Jewry, subtly replaying their old *leitmotiv* of cultural differentiation in a new, but admittedly much lower, key.⁴³

In the end, it comes down to a simple question: if Jews in Britain and Germany had underwritten an "emancipation contract", with whom was it a contract? Considering the rules of the game of selective ethnicity, it seems somewhat harsh to claim, as Hannah Arendt did, that assimilation also meant assimilation to antisemitism,⁴⁴ that antisemitism was itself a function of this contract. It does make a difference that, in the 1940 Mass Observation Survey, 17% of those polled owned up to harbouring some anti-Jewish prejudice, and that 100% of German Jews in the civil service and state-related professions were deprived of their livelihoods. It seems unhelpful, therefore, to insist on the "exclusionary" character of antisemitism in Britain, as a new history of ethnic pride would have it.⁴⁵ The real difference is surely to be seen in the different political cultures in which the emancipation deal was struck in the first place and renegotiated in and after the Great War. Why should Albert Ballin have shot himself in 1918? Was his emancipation contract with the *Kaiser*? To put it bluntly, the emancipation contract of British Jewry was worked out in a civic culture, that of German Jewry in a civil service culture. This is why antisemitism in Britain had a fair chance of remaining an "antisemitism of tolerance" (Bill Williams),⁴⁶ whereas in Germany it eventually acquired the quality of an "antisemitism of intolerance". This was no foregone conclusion, certainly not in the light of a new flowering of Jewish life in Weimar Germany,⁴⁷ but it is a difference worth remembering.

⁴³ Marion Berghahn, *Continental Britons. German-Jewish Refugees from Nazi Germany*, Oxford 1988.

⁴⁴ Hannah Arendt, *Rachel Varnhagen. Lebensgeschichte einer deutschen Jüdin aus der Romantik*, Munich 1975, p. 210.

⁴⁵ For the distinction between an (extreme or "conservative") "antisemitism of exclusion" and an "antisemitism of liberalism" in Britain see Tony Kushner, 'The Impact of British Anti-Semitism, 1918–1945', in Cesarani (ed.), *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry*, pp. 191–208.

⁴⁶ Cf. Bill Williams, 'The Anti-Semitism of Tolerance', in Alan J. Kidd and K. W. Roberts (eds.), *City, Class and Culture. Studies of Social Policy and Cultural Production in Victorian Manchester*, Manchester 1985, pp. 74–102.

⁴⁷ Michael Brenner, *The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany*, New Haven 1996; see also the recent collection of essays on 'Juden in Politik und Gesellschaft der 1920er Jahre', in *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, XXXVII (1997).

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