

Jewish Education in England, 1944–1988

Between Integration and Separation



David S. Mendelsson

PETER LANG

Today, the dominant model for Jewish education is the community-wide, technologically advanced day school, where the Judaic subjects are taught by professional educators using student-friendly, interactive methodologies. Not so long ago, however, most Jewish education consisted of rote repetition of prayers and biblical passages and their translation into awkward English by teachers with no formal pedagogic training, in classes – often located in synagogue basements – held on Sunday or once a week after ‘ordinary’ school.

This book explains the radical reconfiguring of Jewish education in England in historical and sociocultural terms. It explores the transformations that took place in every aspect of Jewish education: curriculum, religious/ideological orientation, school format (afternoon classes vs day schools), funding (private vs state), and more. The author shows that this dramatic transition directly reflects both changes in the socioeconomic profile and self-identity of Anglo-Jewry as well as demographic and cultural changes in British society in general. Tracking the shift from integration to separation, this book maps the effect of competing societal, personal and communal agendas, pedagogic paradigms, and pragmatic constraints on the rise of the Jewish day school in England.

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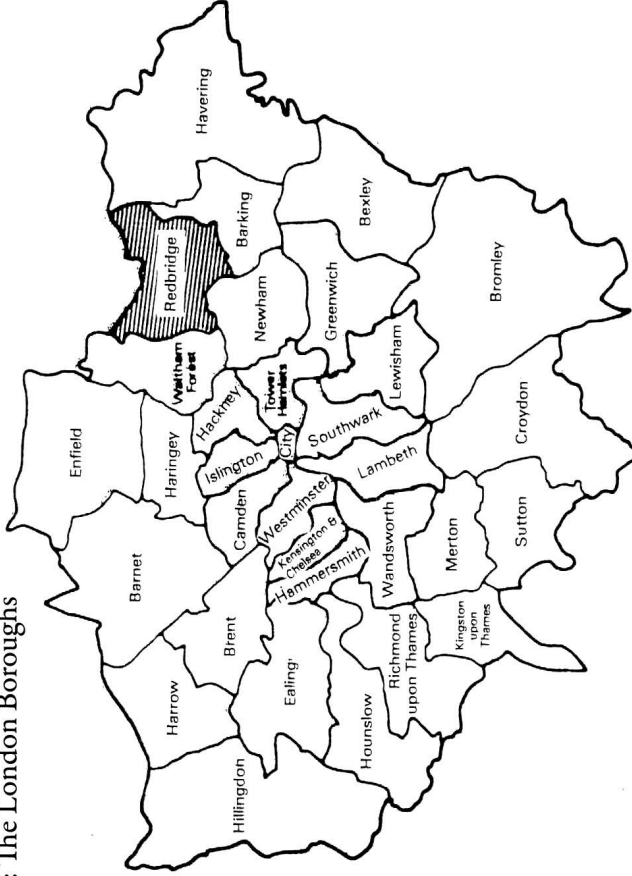
in State Schools', in H. Miller, L. Grant and A. Pomson (eds), *International Handbook of Jewish Education* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), 1105–24.

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The London Boroughs. From Barry Kosmin et al., *The Social Demography of Redbridge Jewry* (Board of Deputies of British Jews, London 1979). Reprinted with permission.

Preface

Overview

Exploring the evolving profile of Jewish education in England provides important clues to Anglo-Jewry's changing sense of identity, and how it chose to project itself to the wider society. As historians of education have amply demonstrated, schools provide a window onto a society's self-understanding. In the case of minorities, attitudes to state education, and parental recourse to other educational options, reflect deeply held views on the preferred relationship with the broader society, the two polar positions being 'integration' and 'separation'. In our context, separation entails social and cultural walls between the Jewish community and the broader society, with interaction limited chiefly to economic activity; integration entails rejection of such walls, merging into the broader society, and maintaining only a nominal or tenuous connection to the Jewish community. Anglo-Jewry overwhelmingly eschews the polar positions, and falls on the continuum between them. Yet the history of Anglo-Jewish education reveals movement along the continuum, first toward the integration pole, then away from it. As we will see, the latter movement does not attest to rejection of integration, but rather reflects a new conception of the broader society, and what membership in that society entails. In multicultural England, many Anglo-Jewish parents are comfortable sending their children to Jewish schools, and do not fear that this stigmatizes them as insular, separatist, 'unEnglish'.

Research into the history of Anglo-Jewish education has until recently focused on the period at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, when schools functioned primarily as agents for

anglicizing the new immigrants from Eastern Europe.¹ Apart from some pioneering early studies,² only recently have the post-World War II decades begun to receive sustained attention. But little has been written about the entry of the Zionists into the field of day-school education, the notorious ‘trust funds controversy’, or the impact of the secondary school reorganization. There has been some research into Jewish day-school enrolment statistics.³ Parental attitudes to Jewish education, however, were not surveyed until the 1960s, and even then, research was piecemeal. Articles and letters published in the Jewish press, and enrolment statistics, offered some clues as to parental thinking. Following the establishment of the Jewish Education Development Trust (JEDT) in 1969, internal studies into the provision of Jewish education were conducted;⁴ the impact of Jewish education on Jewish identity also began to receive scholarly attention.⁵ Specific schools were investigated: there is a history of the Jews’ Free School, a short article on Jewish pupils at the Hackney Downs Grammar School,⁶ and a study of the founding of the independent modern-Orthodox Immanuel School, which opened in Bushey, Hertfordshire in 1990.⁷ Prior to my doctoral

- 1 L. Gartner, *The Jewish Immigrant in England 1870–1914* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1960); E. Black, *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry 1880–1920* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), ch. 4.
- 2 See B. Steinberg, ‘Anglo-Jewry and the 1944 Education Act’, *Jewish Journal of Sociology* 31(1989), 81–108 and ‘Jewish Education in Great Britain during World War II’, *Jewish Social Studies* 29 (1967), 27–60.
- 3 Jacob Braude began this work by compiling records from 1952 to 1977; these statistics were published bi-annually in the *Jewish Chronicle*.
- 4 *Let My People Know* (London: Office of the Chief Rabbi, 1971).
- 5 B. Kosmin and C. Levy, *Jewish Identity in an Anglo-Jewish Community: The Findings of the 1978 Redbridge Survey* (London: Board of Deputies, 1983), S. Miller, ‘The Impact of Jewish Education on the Religious Behaviour and Attitudes of British Secondary School Pupils’, in J. Aviad (ed.), *Studies in Education* 3 (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1988), 161.
- 6 G. Black, *A History of the Jews’ Free School, London, since 1732* (London: Tynsder, 1998); G. Black, ‘The Jews of Hackney Downs School’, in S. Massil (ed.), *The Jewish Yearbook 2001* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2001), 53–60.
- 7 S. Caplan, ‘Immanuel College: The Beginnings of an Educational Project’, in W. Ackerman (ed.), *Studies in Education* 7 (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1995), 54–80.

research, however, the overall history of Jewish education in England, and what it reveals about Anglo-Jewish parental priorities with respect to their children's education, had not been studied. Hence the present book fills an important lacuna.

After briefly surveying the history of Jewish schools in Britain before World War II, our journey will begin with the 1944 Education Act, a.k.a. the Butler Act after R. A. Butler (1941–5), the minister popularly credited with its passage. The Education Act affected most aspects of schooling in England and Wales. The principles it set down regarding state funding of denominational schools, the daily act of worship, and religious education, remained unchanged for forty-four years, though the interpretations given to specific clauses of the Act, especially those pertaining to the religious education syllabus and the voluntary-aided sector, evolved considerably. In 1988 another Education Act was passed. Though making no major changes with respect to religious education or denominational schools, it was just as significant as the 1944 Act, in that it reduced the power of the LEA's. The Butler Education Act and its ramifications for Jewish education will be discussed in Chapter 1. Chapter 1 also presents a panoramic picture of Anglo-Jewish society at mid-century, and in particular, its access to, and views on, education, both Jewish and secular.

Between 1944 and 1988, Jewish parental preferences vis-à-vis their children's education changed dramatically. In 1944, the vast majority of parents chose non-denominational maintained schools for their children's general education, and part-time Hebrew classes for their Jewish education. Yet by 1988, more children attended Jewish day schools than Hebrew classes, despite a drop in the Jewish population. How and why this transition occurred will be explored in Chapters 3, 4 and 5. A salient causative factor, I will argue, was the government's decision to wind down selective education, and replace grammar schools with comprehensive schools. This will be analysed in detail in Chapter 4.

In Chapter 2, we will examine the historical roots and operational consequences of the ideological differences between competing organizations involved in provision of day-school and part-time Jewish education, including the United Synagogue, the Zionist Federation and the Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations. A school's value system is reflected not

merely in its course of studies, but also in more oblique indicators, such as prerequisites for hiring staff, admissions policies, assemblies and summer programs. In Chapters 5 and 6, we will revisit the ideological landscape of Anglo-Jewish education in the wake of the day-school revolution.

Of course, schools cannot be discussed in isolation from the communal politics of Jewish education: the ideological disputes and operational interaction between the various organizations that funded, oversaw, or delivered Jewish educational services. This theme is a constant throughout the book, and will be interwoven into every chapter. To what degree were the various groups prepared to cooperate with each other? From 1944 to 1988, attempts were made to establish a community-wide coordinating council that would negotiate with the national and local authorities so as to reduce duplication of effort within the community; none succeeded. In uncovering the reasons for this failure, we will trace the sorry saga of the 'trust funds' controversy, which pitted the London Board of Jewish Religious Education (LBJRE) against Rabbi Solomon Schonfeld's Jewish Secondary Schools Movement (JSSM). Ultimately, the controversy was resolved, allowing for reconstruction of the Jews' Free School (JFS). Another dispute that sheds light on the balance of power within the Jewish community during the 1950s revolved around the entry of the Zionists into the day-school arena. How did the United Synagogue and the Schonfeld community respond to the establishment of Zionist day schools? Did the Zionist Federation Education Trust (ZFET) attempt to adopt a secular and nationalist curriculum along the lines of that taught in Zionist-run schools in Israel? The role played by Chief Rabbis Brodie and Jakobovits, both in regard to specific controversies, and in regard to Jewish education generally, will also be explored. Were they neutral mediators, or did they actively seek to advance a specific agenda? We will track Chief Rabbi Jakobovits's efforts to establish the Jewish Educational Development Trust (JEDT), which was intended to tackle the 'Jewish continuity' crisis. This endeavour challenged other communal priorities, particularly funding for Israel. The response of key community philanthropists to Jakobovits's initiative, we will see, attested to the shifting dynamics of communal authority, and a new assessment of communal priorities.

The book's penultimate chapter will focus on the impact of multiculturalism on Jewish education. From the 1960s to the 1980s, England

underwent a dramatic social, demographic and cultural transformation. Its early stages took place concurrently with the shift to comprehensive secondary schools, a development that, as we will see, precipitated the rise of the day schools. Chapter 6 will discuss the impact of this confluence on Jewish education, vis-à-vis withdrawal classes, the mainstream day schools, and the ultra-Orthodox (*haredi*) educational institutions.

This book does not purport to be an exhaustive study of Anglo-Jewish education. Its scope is limited to formal education provided by primary and secondary schools, and part-time Hebrew classes under the aegis of the LBJRE and the Reform and Liberal movements. London is the main focus, given Anglo-Jewry's demographic concentration there, but developments in the provinces will be invoked where relevant.

This account of the vicissitudes of Anglo-Jewish education sheds light not only on developments in the field of Jewish education, but on the mindset and self-understanding of Anglo-Jewry more generally. Although I do not compare Jewish schools in England to their counterparts in other Diaspora communities, there are both parallels and divergences. I invite others to engage in comparative study, which should prove edifying.

Anglo-Jewry and its institutions

At mid-century, Anglo-Jewry was well on its way to extricating itself from the working class and the inner city. Its socioeconomic profile was increasingly middle-class, and upward mobility within the middle class was ongoing. Its immigrant status and East End beginnings had largely receded into the past; most members of the community were second or third generation Britons. Demographically, the community was fairly homogeneous: the forebears of most were from Russia and Poland, a far smaller group originated in Germany and Holland. A new wave of immigrants arrived in the 1930s and 1940s: refugees fleeing or displaced by World War II, many of them Orthodox.

In the first half of the twentieth century, Anglo-Jewry had gone through a process of acculturation, not only adopting the manners, speech and attire

of the wider society, but also internalizing many of its values. Anglo-Jewish parents sent their children to state schools, where they were very successful at achieving the results needed for entry into selective secondary schools and the universities. The communal leadership was transitioning from an old guard, made up of members of a few preeminent and pedigreed families in England for many generations – the Rothschilds, Samuels, Montefiores, Cohens, Henriques, Goldsmids and Montagus – to a new guard of self-made magnates, many children or grandchildren of immigrants. Though the community was well-integrated, antisemitic prejudice was quite prevalent, and Britain's Jews adopted a defensive and apologetic stance, seeking to mitigate bias by downplaying their particularism and blending in.

Anglo-Jewry's main centres of population were London, Manchester and Leeds. Within these centres, the Jewish populations had, since the 1930s, been moving out of the immigrant neighbourhoods and into the suburbs. This pattern was common to London and the provincial centres. In London, the Jewish population shifted eastward and northward.

Anglo-Jewry's central communal organs included the Board of Deputies, Anglo-Jewry's main representative body; the *Jewish Chronicle (JC)*, a newspaper that had served the community since 1841 and was widely read; the Chief Rabbi; and the United Synagogue, with which most synagogues were affiliated. Throughout our period, the majority of the community belonged to nominally Orthodox congregations affiliated with the United Synagogue or the much smaller Federation of Synagogues. A small minority of the community attended synagogues affiliated with the Reform and Liberal movements; there was also a growing ultra-Orthodox (haredi) community.

The major communal institutions of relevance to the provision of Jewish education were the following:

Board of Deputies of British Jews	The representative body of British Jewry, founded in 1760.
Federation of Synagogues	Created in 1887 by Samuel Montagu to bring together synagogues established by immigrants from Eastern Europe, who found worship in the anglicized synagogues of the United Synagogue foreign and uncongenial.
Jewish Educational Development Trust (JEDT)	Organization founded by Chief Rabbi Jakobovits in 1969 to fight assimilation and intermarriage by improving Jewish education; its primary goal was expansion of the day-school movement.
Jews' Free School (JFS)	Founded in 1732 as a Talmud Torah for orphaned boys, the JFS was attended by a third of London's Jewish children in the late nineteenth century. By 1900 it had over 4,000 pupils, mainly immigrant children, whom it expressly sought to anglicize. The Rothschilds provided financial support. The building was destroyed in World War II and the school remained closed until reopening in 1958 on Camden Road as JFS Comprehensive.
Jewish Secondary Schools Movement (JSSM)	High school network founded in 1929 by Rabbi Avigdor Schonfeld to provide day-school education for his separatist community; headed by his son Solomon from the 1940s through the 1970s.
London Board of Jewish Religious Education (LBJRE)	Founded in 1946 under the aegis of the Chief Rabbi and the United Synagogue; its main mandate was coordinating provision of part-time Jewish education and withdrawal classes ⁸ in state schools.

8 Under the various Education Acts, parents were permitted to withdraw their children from religious education. In 1946, the LBJRE established alternative classes, chiefly within state schools, to provide the 'withdrawn' children with Jewish education.

Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations (UOHC)	Founded in 1926 by Rabbi Avigdor Schonfeld as an umbrella organization for the strictly Orthodox community.
United Synagogue (US)	Founded in 1870 when England's five Ashkenazic synagogues joined together, and sanctioned by an act of Parliament. Under the jurisdiction of the Chief Rabbi in religious and ritual matters, and governed by an elected council representing the constituent congregations.
Zionist Federation Education Trust (ZFET)	Educational arm of the Zionist Federation of Great Britain, founded in 1955 to establish and operate day schools with a Zionist outlook.

Other Jewish institutions include the following:

Agudas Yisrael (Aguda)	Ultra-Orthodox communal organization active throughout the Diaspora and in Israel; non-Zionist.
Jewish Agency	Founded in 1929 to represent, and administer the internal affairs of, the Jewish community in Mandatory Palestine.
Mizrachi/Hapoel Hamizrachi	Religious Zionist movements active throughout the Diaspora and in Israel; modern-Orthodox in orientation.
World Zionist Organization (WZO)	Zionist organization founded by Herzl in 1897 to work toward establishing a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine. Among its units were the Education and Culture in the Diaspora and Torah Education in the Diaspora departments.

Personalities

A number of the individuals and families who played a significant role in the annals of Anglo-Jewish education were very prominent in their day, and their names will, even today, be recognized by many readers. Others were philanthropists, functionaries and leaders whose names are no longer widely known. I will identify these individuals here, so that readers will be better able to follow the narrative:

Lavy Bakstansky (1904–1971)	Leading British Zionist activist, general secretary of the Zionist Federation of Great Britain (ZF) from 1931 until his death.
Chaim Bermant (1929–1998)	Novelist; journalist; social historian and critic; <i>Jewish Chronicle</i> columnist, first under the pseudonym ‘Ben Azai’, then under his own name (‘On The Other Hand’).
Selig Brodetsky (1888–1954)	President of the Board of Deputies (1940–49); Hon. President of the ZF; member of the Executive of the WZO and Jewish Agency for Palestine; President of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (1949–51).
Rabbi Israel Brodie (1895–1979)	First Chief Rabbi (1948–65) to be born and educated in Britain.
Moshe Davis (1926–1987)	Executive Director, Office of the Chief Rabbi; director, JEDT. This Moshe Davis is not to be confused with Moshe Davis the historian.
I. Solomon Fox (1896–1971)	Chairman of ZF and a key figure in the ZFET day schools.
Ernest Frankel (1902–1990)	Vice President, ZF and Treasurer, ZFET.

- Levi Gertner (1908–1976) Head of the ZF's Education Dept.; director of the British branch of the Jewish Agency's Dept. of Education and Culture; initiator of ZFET schools.
- Rev. J. K. Goldbloom (1872–1961) Headmaster of the Redman's Road Talmud Torah, prominent educator; fervent Zionist; advocate for *Ivrit b'Ivrit* method of teaching Hebrew.
- Dayan Isidore Grunfeld (1900–1975) Member of London Beth Din (rabbinical court) and LBJRE.
- Rabbi Joseph Hertz (1872–1946) Chief Rabbi (1913–46).
- Rabbi Immanuel Jakobovits (1921–1999) Chief Rabbi (1967–91).
- Elsie Janner (1905–1994) Communal leader, magistrate, social welfare activist; chair of the Board of Deputies' Education Committee, wife of Labour MP Barnett Janner.
- Salmond S. Levin (1905–1999) Chairman of LBJRE (1954–68); chairman of Jews' College; President of the United Synagogue (1977–81); brother-in-law of historian Vivian Lipman.
- Ewen Montagu (1901–1985) Judge, naval intelligence officer, President of the United Synagogue (1954–62); son of Louis Samuel Montagu 2nd Baron Swaythling; nephew of Sir Robert Waley-Cohen. Described by Bermant as 'the last of the Cousinhood'.
- Nathan Morris (1890–1970) Education officer of Jewish Religious Education Board and director, Joint Emergency Committee for Jewish Religious Education (JEC); Director, Jewish Agency's Dept. of Education and Culture.
- Rabbi Kopul Rosen (1913–1962) Founded Carmel College, a Jewish boarding school modelled on the English 'public' boarding school, in 1948.

Nathan Rubin (1922–1996)	Worked at the London County Council (LCC) before becoming Secretary of the LBJRE; Day Schools Adviser (1950–68); Secretary of United Synagogue 1968–83.
Michael Sacher (dates unavailable)	Vice Chair of Marks and Spencer; philanthropist; chair of Joint Palestine Appeal; leading donor to ZFET.
Rabbi Solomon Schonfeld (1912–1984)	Son of Rabbi Victor (Avigdor) Schonfeld; founder of Hasmonean High School and head of JSSM; Presiding Rabbi of Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations.
(Sir) Robert Waley-Cohen (1877–1952)	President of the United Synagogue (1942–52); Vice-President of the Board of Deputies (1936–43).

Terminology

To aid readers who may be unfamiliar with the nomenclature of British education, and other terminology used in this book, let me present some historical background and define some terms.

Between 1944 and the late 1960s, state secondary schools in Britain were organized according to a ‘tripartite system’, comprising three types of schools: secondary modern schools, secondary technical schools, and grammar schools. At age eleven, pupils took an examination called the ‘11 plus’ to determine which type they would attend. The 20 per cent who passed were deemed to have academic ability, and sent to ‘grammar schools’. The remainder mainly attended ‘secondary modern schools’, which focused on basic, practical subjects; pupils were prepared for factory jobs rather than higher education. ‘Secondary technical schools’ were intended for pupils deemed to have technical but not academic aptitude; they were, however, very few in number. As we will see, the tripartite system was phased out, and replaced with a non-selective ‘comprehensive’ system of secondary education.

A 'Local Education Authority' (LEA) is the body responsible for all state schools in a given area. 'Non-provided schools' are schools that receive no state funding. 'Voluntary schools' receive state funding for operation and maintenance of the school, but a foundation or a trust (usually a religious organization) owns the school buildings, contributes to building costs, and has significant input into the running of the school. 'Public' schools are in fact independent fee-paying private schools, many of which offer boarding facilities; outside the UK, such schools would be referred to as private schools.

The terms 'strictly Orthodox' and 'fervently' or 'ultra' Orthodox (haredi) will be used to distinguish two specific sectors within Anglo-Jewry. The former term will refer to the community affiliated with the Adath Yisroel synagogue and the JSSM; during the period covered in this book, it was led by Rabbi Solomon Schonfeld; the latter terms will refer to the more separatist Hasidic and Lithuanian communities.

Education and Anglo-Jewry

From the late 1960s on, British Jewry has increasingly embraced Jewish day schools as a preferred format for the delivery of secular education. This is so despite the fact that, beginning in the 1970s, government funding for the building and maintenance of these schools has been dramatically reduced, and the burden of financing the building has been borne almost entirely by the Jewish community. Yet when legislation that encouraged the building of such schools – the Butler Education Act – was introduced in 1944, Anglo-Jewry showed little interest.¹ This chapter will explore the pervasive feeling within the community, up to the mid-1960s, that the acceptable parameters of being Jewish in Britain did not include the ‘separation’ of Jewish children from their Gentile peers during the school day. To understand these issues, acquaintance with ‘the Cousinhood’, which established the first Jewish schools in Britain, is essential.

The ‘Cousinhood’ and the founding of Jewish schools

The Cousinhood was mainly composed of Jews of Dutch and German origin who had moved to England in the second half of the eighteenth century, hoping to improve their economic situation. The second and third generations sought not only financial opportunity, but also to overcome the social and political barriers to their integration into British society.

1 See B. Steinberg, ‘Anglo-Jewry and the 1944 Education Act’, *Jewish Journal of Sociology* 31(1989), 82; G. Alderman, *Modern British Jewry* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992).

Cousinhood members took their responsibilities to Judaism and their co-religionists seriously, organizing a voluntary poor law, and later establishing the Jewish Board of Guardians. They fed the hungry and clothed the poor, so that Jews would not need to depend on the church; they established schools and set up endowment funds; they built and supported synagogues, reinforcing the rabbinate and defending both the faith and the faithful.²

These families, in particular the Rothschilds, Samuels, Montefiores, Cohens, Henriques, Goldsmids and Montagus, dominated Anglo-Jewry. Like their non-Jewish counterparts, they assumed leadership roles with a sense of obligation, expecting in return only deference and respect. At the Board of Deputies, British Jewry's closest institution to a representative council, Sir Stuart Samuel Montagu (the 3rd Baron Swaythling) presided from 1917 until 1922. He was succeeded by Cyril Henriques, another member of the Anglo-Jewish elite. Four years later Osmond d'Avigdor Goldsmid was elected. The vice-presidents of the Board of Deputies were drawn from the same circle, including, e.g., several Rothschilds.³ In 1871, members of the Cousinhood founded the Anglo-Jewish Association, to steer communal foreign policy stances. Its first president was Jacob Waley, who was succeeded by Baron Henry de Worms (1872–86) and Sir Julian Goldsmid (1886–95). Claude Montefiore took over in 1895, and until he resigned in 1921 was the key figure in the Association's campaign against Zionism. Osmond d'Avigdor Goldsmid held the office until 1926, when Leonard Montefiore, Claude's son, became president, a position he held until 1939.⁴ A similar leadership pattern existed at the United Synagogue, which though ostensibly committed to Orthodoxy, was led by many honorary officers whose lifestyles were decidedly un-Orthodox. Lionel

2 C. Bermant, *The Cousinhood* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1971), 1–3.

3 The one exception was Joseph Prag (1925–28), whose origins were humbler, though he had been active in communal office since the 1890s and as such was 'virtually part of the establishment', see D. Cesarani, 'The Transformation of Communal Authority in Anglo-Jewry, 1914–1940', in idem (ed.), *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 122.

4 See V. D. Lipman, *A History of the Jews in Britain since 1858* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1990).

de Rothschild was titular president until 1942, though vice president Sir Robert Waley-Cohen was effectively in charge. Ewen Montagu, from another Cousinhood family, served as president of the United Synagogue until 1962, when the plutocracy's reign finally came to a close.⁵ At the Jewish Board of Guardians, an organization originally established in 1859 to care for the Jewish poor, the Cohens were the dominant family, occupying the presidency until 1947, aside from one decade-long interregnum.⁶

The Cousinhood assumed responsibility for almost every sphere of Jewish communal affairs, including Jewish education. As with social services in general, education in England was the preserve of voluntary organizations until 1870, when the government passed legislation assuming authority in this sphere.⁷ Until then, the Cousinhood established several day schools for the growing number of poor Jews, children of illiterate, impoverished immigrants, mainly from Germany.

Six associations for founding voluntary (i.e., non state-supported) Jewish schools were established during this period. The first and largest was the Jews' Free School (JFS), which grew out of an eighteenth century Talmud Torah for poor children. In 1821 the school moved to Bell Lane, Spitafields, in the heart of the East End, and by the turn of the century had an enrolment of some 4,300, making it the largest elementary school in the country.⁸ The Rothschild family took a special interest in the school, generously supporting it as their own personal charity; in gratitude, the school emblem and colours were taken from the Rothschild family crest.

5 Bermant describes the resignation of Ewen Montagu and the election of Sir Isaac Wolfson to the presidency of the United Synagogue as a clear statement that 'the Cousinhood had retired from the Orthodox establishment', see Bermant, *Cousinhood*, 413. This retirement was, I will argue, foreshadowed in 1945 with the handing over of the trust funds to the LBJRE.

6 V. D. Lipman, *A Century of Social Service, 1859–1959: The Jewish Board of Guardians* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959), 256. From 1868 to 1955, the position of treasurer was held by members of the Rothschild, Waley, Samuel, Cohen, d'Avigdor Goldsmid and Franklin families, all Cousinhood members.

7 It is no coincidence that after 1870, no new Jewish day schools were founded for almost sixty years, until the establishment of the JSSM.

8 Gartner, *Jewish Immigrant*, 222.

The family had a representative on the school's board of governors for an uninterrupted 150 years, and several family members served as school president.⁹ To counter missionary activity in the East End, a Jews' Infants' School was established in 1841; most of its pupils then continued at the JFS.¹⁰ In the same way the Rothschilds were benefactors of the JFS, so the Infants' School was sponsored by the Montefiore family. In its early years, Nathaniel Montefiore (1819–83) served as the school's president; he was succeeded by his son Claude, leader of Liberal Judaism in Britain and avowed anti-Zionist, who in turn handed over responsibility to his son, Leonard.¹¹ Claude Montefiore, in partnership with the Waley and Davidson families, was also active in sponsoring the Westminster Jews' Free School. Initially opened for boys, the school added a girls' division in 1846. In 1905, the school had 570 pupils.¹² There were similar developments in the provinces: Jewish schools were opened in Manchester (1838), Liverpool (1840), and Birmingham (1840).

In the 1860s, three additional school associations were founded in London: the Stepney Jewish Schools, considered ahead of their time for including vocational training and physical education in the curriculum; the Bayswater Jewish Schools, whose academic achievements were such as to attract even middle-class pupils; and the South London (Borough) schools. Although these schools were not directly identified with specific families, they were supported by the wealthy. In 1905, Sir Edward Stern was president and patron of the Stepney Jewish Schools, and J. Bergtheil, a member of the Cousinhood-run Anglo-Jewish Association council, held the same position at the Bayswater Schools.

When many more immigrants from Russia and Poland began streaming in during the last decades of the nineteenth century, the need for such schools increased significantly. Evidence that various organizations were endeavouring to proselytize Jews in London's East End by tempting them with free education was another factor in the opening of these schools.¹³ A

9 Black, *JFS*, 56–7.

10 Black, *Social Politics*, 111; *Jewish Year Book 1905/6*, 75.

11 Bermant, *Cousinhood*, 226–7.

12 *Jewish Year Book 1905/6*, 79.

13 Black, *Social Politics*, 111.

statement from the constitution of the Westminster Jews' Free School well exemplifies the schools' objectives: 'that male children of the Jewish persuasion (whose parents are unable to afford them education) be instructed in Hebrew and English, writing, and arithmetic; that the principles of religion be carefully inculcated, and every exertion be used to make them good and useful members of society'.¹⁴

Yet at the same time, these schools generally sought to anglicize their pupils. The rationales for inculcation of English mores were two: 'the conviction that the majority society would not, even could not, tolerate that which made immigrant Jews different. Next was the fear that English born Jews would be lumped together with the immigrants, and that the rejection of the latter would extend to the former'.¹⁵ Anglicization was intended to protect not only the newcomers, but the old timers as well.

The JFS, as the most established of these schools, took the lead in this crusade, spearheaded by its long-serving headmaster Moses Angel, who articulated the prevailing attitude to the newcomers: 'Their parents were the refuse population of the worst parts of Europe. Until they (the children) had been anglicized or humanized it was difficult to tell what was their moral condition. They knew neither English nor any intelligible language'.¹⁶ In 1905, at the annual prize-giving ceremony, his successor, Louis Abrahams, encouraged parents and schoolchildren to throw off their 'foreign habits' and 'foreign prejudices', and 'become English – truly English.' He continued:

Strengthen the efforts of the teachers to wipe away all evidences of foreign birth and foreign proclivities, so that your (children) shall be so identified with everything that is English in thought and deed, that no shadow of anti-Semitism might exist, that (your) boys and girls may grow up devoted to the flag which they are learning within these walls to love and honour, that they may take a worthy part in the growth of this great Empire, whose shelter and protection will never be denied them.¹⁷

14 *Jewish Year Book 1905/6*, 78.

15 D. Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry 1841–1991* (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), 75.

16 Quoted in Gartner, *Jewish Immigrant*, 223.

17 Quoted in Black, *Social Politics*, 110–11.

Although the Cousinhood broadly identified with these sentiments, there was some opposition to the extreme views expressed by the headmasters, which at times provoked stormy discussions at Board of Deputies meetings.

Given the extent of Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe, there were obviously insufficient places in Jewish 'voluntary' schools, also referred to as 'non provided'. Fortuitously, under the 1870 Forster Education Act and later the Balfour Education Acts of 1902 and 1903, denominational schools were given grants and subsidies, initially on the basis of academic results. More importantly, the government began building its own schools, run by local elected school boards. Referred to as 'Board' schools, they soon won the confidence of the new immigrants. Confidence-building measures included appointment of a Jewish headmaster at Old Castle Street School and observance of Jewish holidays.¹⁸ Within a short time most Jewish children in London were enrolled in such schools, where – in immigrant neighbourhoods – they often comprised the majority of pupils.¹⁹ There was discussion about whether it might be prudent to forego Jewish day schools in favour of the Board schools, but in any event, as the Jewish population gradually dispersed to districts with no Jewish day schools, the numbers attending these schools declined. JFS enrolment, for instance, dropped from about 3,400 in 1904 to 900 in 1939. By the 1930s, there was a sense that the schools had outlived their purpose. Mass Jewish immigration had long since ended, and the anglicization policy had succeeded. The South London (Borough) School and the Westminster schools closed when their leases expired in 1940.²⁰

18 Black, *Social Politics*, 118–19.

19 In 1894, the total number of Jewish children enrolled in London schools was around 16,000, with slightly over half attending Jewish voluntary schools and the others Board schools. By 1905, the combined attendance had risen to over 40,000, of which slightly under a quarter attended Jewish schools. See *Jewish Year Book 1894*, 58; *1905/6*, 82.

20 See S. Levin, 'Changing Patterns of Jewish Education', in idem (ed.), *A Century of Anglo-Jewish Life 1870–1970* (London: 1970), 61.

Over the years, the national and local authorities took on some of the responsibility for maintaining the schools, a process that will be detailed below. In September 1944, following passage of the Education Act, the education authority of the London County Council (LCC) requested that Anglo-Jewry submit plans for the future of its day schools. In response, the Joint Emergency Committee for Jewish Religious Education (JEC), soon to become the London Board for Jewish Religious Education (LBJRE), established a committee made up of some of its members and representatives of the mainly defunct Jewish voluntary schools. The latter nominated Digby Solomon and Hyman Isaacs to represent the JFS, Leonard Montefiore for the Westminster Jews' Free School and the Jews' Infants' School, and Mr Kaye for the Bayswater Jewish Schools.²¹ Their role was to represent the interests of the trustees, who were mostly members of the Cousinhood.

The transfer of responsibility for day-school education from the Cousinhood to the new leadership within the community, as represented by the LBJRE, involved little animosity. Although the Cousinhood fought to preserve its control over Anglo-Jewish policy on issues relating to foreign affairs and communal defence, it had lost interest in the day schools, perceiving them as having outlived their usefulness. In effect, the old elite relinquished control of its day schools and endowment funds without a fight. As we will see, they did stipulate that their resources could not fall into the hands of religious 'extremists' such as Solomon Schonfeld of the Jewish Secondary Schools Movement (JSSM), but their acceptance of leaders like Alfred Woolf, Salmond Levin, Nathan Morris, and Nathan Rubin as the central figures in Jewish education attested to their lack of interest in this sphere of communal activity. Indeed, this acquiescence can be viewed as the Cousinhood's serving notice of its withdrawal from leadership in the educational sphere.

21 Digby Solomon was honorary architect of the Federation of Synagogues and a trustee of the JFS; Hyman Isaacs was an honorary solicitor of the United Synagogue; Leonard Montefiore was the treasurer and former president of the Anglo-Jewish Association.

Two decades later, when Ewen Montagu retired from the presidency of the United Synagogue, he was replaced by Isaac Wolfson, the Great Universal Stores magnate, who was not only a man of new wealth, having grown up in the poverty-stricken Gorbals district of Glasgow, but also an *observant* Orthodox Jew. Poignantly encapsulating the changing of the guard is the fact that by 1954, Wolfson had become the key benefactor of the former Bayswater Schools, now renamed the Solomon Wolfson School in honour of his father. While cynics might claim that no major transformation had occurred, but rather, one wealthy elite had been replaced by another, the new regime clearly reflected a shift in the socio-demographic contours of Anglo-Jewry.²²

Anglo-Jewry: An overview

In 1944, most British Jews traced their origins to the massive wave of immigration from Russia between 1881 and 1905. Though immigration declined dramatically following the 1905 Aliens Act, Jews continued to arrive until the outbreak of World War I. Initially, they lived in the poorer neighbourhoods of Britain's major cities, particularly London, Manchester, Leeds, Glasgow, and Liverpool. During the 1920s and 1930s, they began moving out of these ghettos to upper working-class and middle-class districts. This migration, though slow at the outset, intensified during and after the war, partly due to the blitz and evacuation, and ensuing drops in rental prices and property values. This mobility was encouraged by new housing developments, construction of which was accompanied by the extension of railway lines and other means of public transport. In London, the decline of the historic East End and the concomitant rise of Hackney and Dalston, Stam-

22 On the new elite, see Cesarani, 'Transformation', 115–40.

ford Hill and Stoke Newington, illustrated this process.²³ Many continued further northward to the more affluent suburbs of Golders Green, Hendon, and Edgware. With the development of the railway to East and West Ham, Leyton, and Ilford, there was also a pronounced move eastward.

The departure from the East End was not a uniquely Jewish phenomenon. Overcrowding, substandard housing, and the conversion of residential property into offices, warehouses and industrial sites led to a general pattern of relocation, epitomized by the borough of Stepney, whose population declined from close to 300,000 in 1911 to under 100,000 in 1948.²⁴ Of course, not all the London Jews left the East End: between 20,000 and 30,000 continued to reside there in the mid 1960s.²⁵ Provincial patterns of migration from the inner city to suburbia were similar: in Manchester Jews left Cheetham and Broughton for Prestwich and Whitefield; in Leeds, the old immigrant areas of Leylands and of Chapletown gave way to Moortown and Alwoodley.²⁶

These changes also reflect the changed occupational structure of Anglo-Jewry, with a shift away from manual labour to trade, business, and the professions. The first decades of the immigrant experience in England witnessed a concentration of Jewish workers in the furniture, textile, hat, boot, jewellery, and fur industries. Between the wars, tailoring remained an important trade for Jews – probably the largest single trade – though its relative importance declined. During and after World War II, the textile industry moved toward large factories, whereas the Jewish preference was to work in, manage, or own small-scale workshops.²⁷ This was more pronounced in London than in textile hub cities such as Leeds and Liverpool,

23 See V. D. Lipman, *Social History of the Jews in England 1850–1950* (London: Watts, 1954), 168–9.

24 H. Brotz, 'The Outlines of Jewish Society in London', in M. Freedman (ed.), *A Minority in Britain* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1955), 141.

25 T. Kushner, 'Jew and Non-Jew in the East End of London: Towards an Anthropology of "Everyday" Relations', in G. Alderman and C. Holmes (eds), *Outsiders and Outcasts* (London: Duckworth & Co., 1993), 51.

26 E. Krausz, *Leeds Jewry* (Cambridge: W. Heffer, 1964), 22–6.

27 Lipman, *Century*, 150 n. 2.