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> 'This Journal has been brought into being in order to provide an international vehicle for serious writing on Jewish social affairs . . . Academically we address ourselves not only to sociologists, but to social scientists in general, to historians, to philosophers, and to students of comparative religion. . . . We should like to stress both that the Journal is editorially independent and that the opinions expressed by authors are their own responsibility.'

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GROWING UP JEWISH IN COMMUNIST CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Alena Heitlinger

Introduction

In 2002, a Slovak-Swiss Jewish respondent, whom I had approached for my survey, commented that in October 2001 she had visited the Jewish Museum in Bratislava and added:[1]

> The history of Jews on display ended with the Holocaust. When I asked why no information is provided about Jewish life after the war — since I grew up in Bratislava when there was a Jewish sort of life of sorts then — they looked at me as if I fell from the moon. So it's great that somebody is now researching this subject.

In this article, I use the Hebrew word *Shoah* to refer to what is popularly termed 'Holocaust' of Jewry during the Second World War.

The principal aim of this paper is to analyze processes of identity-formation among the generation of Czech and Slovak Jews who were born to *Shoah* survivors — the so-called 'second generation', who grew up under the post-war communist system. The focus is on inter- and intra-generational differences, and on socio-political circumstances which have shaped an individual's consciousness and identity as a Jew, a Czech, a Slovak, or a Czechoslovak and, where relevant, as an émigré or an immigrant.

A member of a specific birth cohort or generation has a unique set of life choices and opportunities. As each cohort ages, it faces a different set of historical forces, which may entail comparative advantages or disadvantages in life chances. Birth cohorts are most sharply differentiated during periods of accelerated change. Traumatic episodes and experiences (such as ethnic genocide, war, foreign occupation) may crystallize a distinct mentality or a specific cohort, or self-identified generation.[2] Since there are structured variations in exposure to (and interpretation of) specific historical conditions and events — by social class, gender, locality, ethnicity, and kinship relations — it is essential that an analysis of whole cohorts and generations be complemented by an analysis of life course variation *within* cohorts and generations.[3] The

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present analysis relates both to those who remained in Czechoslovakia and those who emigrated after the Soviet invasion of August 1968.

Methods, Data, and Sources

The data on which this paper is based are drawn from seven main data sources: a) 195 semi-structured autobiographical replies to questionnaires which were returned to me during May-September 2002 from snow-ball sampling of 420 Czech and Slovak Jews of the 'second' generation currently living in the Czech and Slovak Republics, various countries in Western Europe, Canada, Australia, the U.S., and Israel; b) five focus group discussions with Czech and Slovak Jews of the post-war generation, which I conducted in 2002 and 2003 in Geneva, Prague, Toronto, London, and Bratislava; c) 15 interview transcripts of daughters of Czech women survivors taped in 2001 and 2002, kindly made available to me by Ms. Pavla Frýdlová, the director of the Prague-based Gender Studies-sponsored research project called 'Women's Memory — Victims of the Holocaust'; d) correspondence with some key participants in Czech and Slovak Jewish youth groups from the 1960s; e) a ten-page confidential report on Czech Jewish youth activism that my late father Ota Heitlinger submitted to the Czech Ministry of Education and Culture on 21 June 1965 in support of his request to hold educational meetings for Jewish youth at the Prague Jewish town hall (from 1961 to 1974 he was the secretary-general of both the Council of Czech Jewish Religious Communities and the Prague Jewish Religious Community); and f) secondary data from existing comparative studies, websites, and personal memoirs, including data from the Slovak/Czech Jewish website www.chaverim.sk. Last but not least, I have also relied on my personal experiences as a Prague-born Czech Jew of the 'second generation', as a member of a Prague-based Jewish youth group from the 1960s, now called '*Děti Maislovky*' ('Children of Maisel Street'),[4] and as an August 1968 emigrant to the U.K. and (in 1975) to Canada.

Historical Background

The main historical circumstances facing Czech and Slovak Jews after the Second World War were the memory of *Shoah*, the state socialist/communist transformation initiated by the communist coup in February 1948, and the creation of the State of Israel. After the Second World War, Czech and Slovak politicians sought to build a nation-state of Czechs and Slovaks, which would be ethnically monolithic. To this end, most of the ethnic Germans and ethnic Magyars were deported, and the remnants of Jewry were allowed to emigrate.[5] With 22,000–24,000 Jews, half of all Czechoslovak *Shoah* survivors, emigrating in 1945–50 to Israel, and an additional 3,000–5,000 going elsewhere, this left behind only 15,000–

18,000 Czech and Slovak Jews, less than one tenth of the pre-war figure.[6] Only nine of 153 pre-war Czech Jewish communities were re-established, and most were very small. The largest was in Prague, with approximately 2,500–3,000 members, many of whom were internal migrants from other parts of Czechoslovakia.

In Slovak cities, towns, and villages 43 Jewish communities were re-established; but most of them were very small and, like their Czech counterparts, had difficulty in forming a *minyan* — which requires a quorum of ten adult males for public prayer. However, several of the Slovak Jewish communities were sufficiently large to exhibit a 'normal'[7] religious life with a rabbi; a *shoḥet* (ritual slaughterer of meat and poultry for human consumption); a *ḥeder* (an elementary religious school); and a *ḥevra kadisha* (a burial society). However, that normal Jewish life apparently did not last long: archival sources from the Union of Slovak Jewish Religious Communities cited in Salner[8] suggest that there was a steep decline by the late 1950s. The decline in religiosity was accelerated in the 1960s by two waves of migration: legal migration to Israel in the mid-1960s and after the August 1968 Soviet invasion, a large scale migration to many countries across the globe. As older members started dying off, many Slovak communities could not be sustained: there were only 15 in 1990 and by 2000 only 11 were functioning Jewish religious communities.

Obviously, the parental generation of *Shoah* survivors (the so-called 'first' generation) experienced the war, the years immediately following the war, and the Stalinist period of communism differently from their children — the 'second' generation. The Czech and Slovak Jews who were born after the Second World War had no direct experience of concentration camps, gas chambers, or slaughter of Jews by Nazis or Nazi-sympathisers and they were too young to feel the full impact of Stalinist purges and the antisemitism evident in the communist show trials of the early 1950s. Most members of the post-war generation came of age during the de-Stalinization period of 1962–68. As I have argued elsewhere, 'in contrast with other communist countries, the Czech/Slovak Jewish community has been shaped not just by the Holocaust and by Stalinism at large, but also by the very specific experiences of de-Stalinization which eventually led to the 'Prague Spring' of 1968. There is no direct counterpart to this experience in other parts of East-Central Europe'.[9]

The opening of the Cold War borders and the communist-initiated processes of re-evaluation of official policies towards organized religion and towards youth were of particular significance to the post-war generation of Czech/Slovak Jews. The de-Stalinization process also made individual travel much easier, including visits and even emigration to Israel. However, the re-imposition of communist orthodoxy after 1969 meant that the benefits of the reform policies were not equally distributed across the

various birth cohorts. Depending on whether the young people came of age before or after the August 1968 Soviet invasion, and whether they remained or emigrated, individuals belonging to birth cohorts separated by only a few years found themselves in radically different conditions from which to conceive and renegotiate their Czech/Slovak Jewish identities. Thus like the parental generation, the 'second' generation is a heterogeneous group of people differentiated by year of birth, gender, language, cultural background, family politics, and geography.

The Demographic and Social Characteristics of the Parental Generation

Those born between the 1890s and 1930s belong to the 'first' generation of *Shoah* survivors and constitute more than 40 birth cohorts. If it were not for the war massacres, they would have belonged to two, or even three, separate generations. Many Jewish parents of children born in the aftermath of the war were older as a result of the circumstances of the war. In some cases, survivors had lost their children during the War and their post-war children belonged to their second families of procreation. Typical demographic characteristics of these families were a significant age gap between spouses; small family size (one or two children); and a lack of extended family members — since most relatives had either perished in the *Shoah* or were living abroad.

Most Slovak survivors married each other. Of the 79 self-identified Slovak Jews who completed my questionnaire, only five were of mixed parentage. However, among the 116 self-identified Czech Jews in the sample, 19 (16 per cent) had only a Jewish father (and in two of these cases, the father was himself the child of a mixed marriage) and the same number had only a Jewish mother — with five of these mothers born of mixed marriages. There were 74 respondents (64 per cent of the sample) with both Jewish parents, but in five cases these parents had a mother or a father or both parents who were the product of mixed marriages. Out-marriage among Czech Jews was already prevalent before the Second Word War. Ruth Gruber has noted that it 'was endemic (by the 1930s, about one-quarter of all Bohemian Jews married out of the Faith)'.[10]

In the post-war period, since many of the Jews who married other Jews tried to conceal their Jewishness, that endogamous selection of partners was more linked to the horror of their shared wartime experiences than with the traditional taboo against taking a Gentile spouse. Those who did marry a non-Jew often selected a strongly anti-fascist and/or philosemitic partner who had shown an earlier interest in Jewish history, culture, and personalities. One of the Prague-born female respondents stated:

> My mother is from a well-known musical family in Prague. She studied piano with Professor Kraus, and her circle included Gideon Klein. The majority of

her friends were Jews. She met my father in 1939 ... The murder of most of her musical friends made a huge impact on her.

Another Prague respondent commented about her non-Jewish father: 'After my mother passed away, it was as if he took over her Jewishness — great philosemite. He is very interested in the political situation in Israel'. Moreover, those born of mixed marriages accounted for a higher proportion of survivors: they had been the last ones to be deported and because of their stronger ties to the non-Jewish environment, they had also been less likely to emigrate after the war.

Many of the parents who were members of the 'first' generation had been traumatised by the *Shoah* and their physical and mental health had been impaired. They suffered depressions, various anxieties, migraines, were suspicious of strangers, and also had distrust and fear of authorities. They felt guilty because they had survived, and often exhibited cynicism, bitterness, and low self-esteem. They had profound ambivalence about their Jewishness — ranging from complete distancing and denial to full identification. They were devoted utterly (and according to some, excessively) to their children and family life in general and were most concerned about the education of their children. The terrifying wartime experiences strengthened their atheistic leanings (an attitude already prevalent among Czech Jews before the war) and their support for Zionism — on the grounds that it was the only possible way to escape antisemitism. They also favoured cultural and national assimilation (for those who did not emigrate), and espousing of socialism or communism.

Czech and Slovak Jews (unlike their Gentile compatriots) of the 'first' generation were frequently multilingual[11] and sometimes introduced foreign words into their country's vocabulary.[12] They also had a different sense of humour, regularly listened to foreign broadcasts, and discussed politics at home.[13] Many did not drink beer (a Czech national beverage); ate slightly different food at home; only half-heartedly celebrated mainstream holidays such as Christmas;[14] and for the most part had as close friends other Jews. By their early teens, most Jewish children recognized that they were 'different', that their parents were concealing or were ambivalent about something important, and that, as one respondent put it during a focus group discussion, 'something isn't right'. The discovery of their Jewish identity was sometimes a traumatic experience, as Jewish descent was a stigmatized identity. As Salner[15] has argued, in Slovak (and Czech) culture 'Jewish origin was commonly viewed akin to an illness, which the "afflicted" person must regard as a grave misfortune'. However, learning about one's Jewish heritage was for many also quite liberating, as it (finally!) could explain what until then was experienced as a puzzling sense of otherness.

Attitudes to Communism

Orientation towards communism is the most significant boundary which divides the 'first' from the 'second' generation. There were, of course, many anti-communists among the 'first' generation[16], but a disproportionate number were supportive of the communist ideal. The leading communist activist Eduard Goldstücker[17], who was an assimilated Slovak Jew, commented in his memoirs that the unquestioned faith which many members of the 'first' generation had in the Bolshevik Revolution and in communism is hard for subsequent generations to understand:[18]

> Many of us heard the voice of the Russian revolution. It proclaimed brotherly solidarity of all, and liberation from poverty, backwardness and mutual antipathy. This program created an enormous wave of trust, which was depleted only after a huge number of bitter disappointments, and by Stalin's cruel rule. And, strictly speaking, not even these have completely spent this trust. The force of this almost magic attraction is unexplainable and incomprehensible for young people today. Even to me, when I am putting these words on paper, it seems as if this whole episode was not lived by me, but by someone else.

Many of the *Shoah* survivors were supportive of communism out of gratitude to the Soviet army for defeating German fascism, and for liberating them from Auschwitz and the Czech Nazi Jewish ghetto and concentration camp of Terezín/Theresienstadt. As one female respondent recalled, her mother was 'a Communist Party member since 1945, after the Red army saved her life and took her in as a 25-years-old widow'. Another noted that her mother 'was basically not against communism. There was always the fact that she was liberated from Terezín by the Soviet army'. Other *Shoah* survivors supported communism out of hope that it would solve once and for all the problems of antisemitism, poverty, and social injustice. One Slovak respondent stated: 'My mother from the beginning regarded the communist movement as the only safeguard for social justice and non-recurrence of the *Shoah*. In her view, antisemitism would become extinct only in a communist society. She was mistaken in her belief, as were so many other people'. A similar explanation is offered by other respondents. One left-leaning father 'looked to communist ideas already in the concentration camp', while another 'believed that communism would improve the world and create life without violence. He wanted to build a new society to forget that the majority of his relatives did not return from concentration camps, and to forget the trauma that his mother perished in Auschwitz'. Yet another father 'identified with communism, believed in Soviet policy, believed that if it were not for the liberation by the USSR, all Jews in Europe would have been completely exterminated. (It is worth noting that none of his immediate relatives survived the war.)'

Most of those who embraced socialism/communism out of their desire 'to change the world' became profoundly disillusioned. The first 'awakening' typically occurred during the antisemitic show trials in the early 1950s, while for others it was only in August 1968 or even November 1989 that they lost their faith:

> After the war my mother worked in the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party (CCP). She lost her job after the Slánský showtrial [in the early 1950s]. She was cured from the communist worldview only gradually, and left communism completely behind only after 1968. She is one of the few of convinced communists of her generation who fully acknowledged her errors, and who warned others about the fanaticism to which she herself had once adhered.

Another respondent stated:[19]

> Did my mother change her positive view of communism? Only somebody who did not have parents who were Jewish communists can ask such a question. After the war, 90 per cent of Jews believed that the Russians, who had saved them from the concentration camps, would never allow such antisemitism. That is why those who were employed in jobs requiring a party card had no problem in joining the CCP. They were then ordinary rank and file members who could not leave the party because it would have meant destroying the future of their children. The remaining 10 per cent were genuine communists who believed in that ideology and who were in leading positions. In any case, many of those ended on the chopping block or in a camp.

One respondent said that his father was a communist and added: 'After the Slánský trials he became disillusioned. He devoted himself to medical service in the northern borderland until his premature death'. Another father's 'belief in communism collapsed only after 1989, despite the fact that he was expelled from the CCP during the show trials in the 1950s and rehabilitated in the 60s'. Yet another father 'symphatized with the communists already in the exile army and it is possible that he also co-operated with them. He joined the party in 1945 after his return to Czechoslovakia. He was active in various positions at the level of the basic party unit. He declined the offer of a position of a working class company director. He was expelled from the party after 1968'.

The 'magic attraction' (and consequent disillusionment) of socialism and communism felt by Goldstücker and so many others of his generation was not, and could not have been, passed on to the next generation. For the post-war cohorts, socialism/communism was a given, taken-for-granted socio-economic political system into which they were born, under which they grew up, and which some escaped by emigrating. Those who remained adapted to it as best as they could, along the same pragmatic lines as their non-Jewish peers.

Attitudes to Judaism

Religion was both an intra- and an inter-generational dividing line. As noted above, several sizeable Slovak Jewish communities re-established their 'normal' religious life after the Second World War. Pavel Traubman (who was born in 1940) commented that post-war intergenerational transmission of Jewish traditions and values was comparatively easy in observant families in those areas: they adhered to *kashrut*, lit candles on the Sabbath, and regularly attended synagogue:[20]

> My grandfather made sure, together with my parents, that I had a *bar mitzvah*. Because of lack of a *minyan* in Ilava, I had my *bar mitzvah* in Bratislava. As a young boy, I learned to read Hebrew letters... We kept the traditions, we had Passover matzos, for many years we had separate meat and milk dishes, but later on we abandoned that.

Children who grew up in such families always knew that they were Jewish and took it in their stride. Since they often had classmates with a similar background, they did not feel completely isolated.[21] This does not mean, however, that they did not feel singled out. The religious observance experienced at home was always in opposition to what they learned in secular schools, where teachers taught from a centralized nationwide curriculum, and promoted atheism and other communist values. Moreover, as Salner[22] notes, 'in the school curriculum the word Jews was not used, not even in connection with the Holocaust.... The state of Israel also appeared in official speeches only in negative connotations'.

Religious parents who joined the communist party exhibited conflicting attitudes towards Judaism and that puzzled their children. One Slovak respondent found his father's religiosity hard to comprehend. He was a 10-year-old who saw his father attend a communist party meeting in the afternoon and then go at dusk to take part in a religious service in a makeshift synagogue. (The Bolsheviks had demolished the existing synagogue and built a bus station in its place.) On another day at noon he would attend another communist meeting and later 'in the afternoon he tried to save with his bare hands a half-destroyed Jewish cemetery, which was being demolished by the same Bolsheviks, with whom he was at noon in a meeting'.

Other parents, fearful that open religious observance could present career difficulties both for themselves and for their children, observed Jewish rituals only secretly. During a focus group discussion, a Slovak respondent from a small town recalled a childhood experience, when he came unexpectedly early home from school to find his father covered in what he later understood to have been a *tallit* (a prayer shawl) while reciting in Hebrew. His father quickly ended what he was doing and refused to explain what had taken place. In another focus group discussion, a Czech female participant recalled her puzzlement when she

was a child and watched her mother touch the doorpost of their apartment every time they left home. The mother never explained anything about an imaginary *mezuzah*; they had none, since it would have been an obvious sign of a Jewish identity — which this particular mother was trying to conceal.

However, the majority of Czech Jews of the 'first' generation were atheists or agnostics. Their secular outlook was a reflection of trends before the Second World War, their wartime experiences, and the high degree of secularization of Czech culture. There was also no religious observance among the 'second' generation, especially in Prague. Under the heading 'What is Jewish among this Youth?' O. Heitlinger[23] noted in his report:

> Youth of the Prague Jewish Religious Community have no religion. Only very few boys have had a *barmitzvah*. Others encountered religion only during chance visits to the synagogue with their parents. Many have never set foot in a synagogue... No young person regularly attends Prague religious services.

Some members of the 'second' generation became interested in Judaism after 1968 but, for the vast majority of Czech and Slovak Jews of the post-war generation, Judaism has failed to evoke the same strong emotions which were aroused by references to the *Shoah* or to communism.

Parental Strategies of Concealment of Jewishness

The impacts of *Shoah* and state socialism/communism on the 'first' generation were also manifested in its strong desire to assimilate. The *Shoah* survivors who did not emigrate typically regarded themselves as belonging to the Czech or Slovak nation, with the result that they tended to raise their children to be culturally Czech or Slovak. As a rule, there was little if any reference to Jewish cultural and religious traditions and in many cases there was also total silence about the *Shoah*. The ambivalent or negative attitudes towards Jewishness can be largely attributed to traumas from the *Shoah*, and to the reinforcement of these traumas by new fears and traumas generated by Stalinism and its antisemitism in the 1950s. Thus, as O. Heitlinger[24] suggested in his report, some of the parents 'simply did not want their children to be Jewish, when they themselves were unable, or possibly did not want to, escape this fateful burden'. The survivors were devoted parents who often saw in assimilation the best strategy for protecting their children: ensuring that they would not be singled out as 'different' and thus marginalized in Czech and Slovak schools

The degrees of concealment varied, of course, ranging from complete denial of a Jewish heritage to partial or full identification. Some parents incorporated discussion about a variety of Jewish topics into everyday life without feeling the need to 'explain' the meaning of Jewishness, while others stressed the necessity to keep such discussions within the family

circle. Some parents left the 'explanation' of Jewish origin to other relatives or to strategically placed 'clues' in the form of books or misplaced personal documents:

> We simply always knew that we are Jews, even if we did not live a religious life. No 'explanation' took place, but conversations did. My parents discussed with me Jewish themes as a matter of course.
>
> I think he talked about it neutrally — a person is not ashamed of his origin, but neither does he boast about it. It is something which is kept among a narrow trusted circle of friends.
>
> Both parents, but especially my father, since my childhood stressed in a positive way leading Jewish personalities. Both my brother and I regarded Jewishness as a natural part of our being, as we did the fact that we do not talk about this much among strangers. In our immediate surroundings and at my school everybody knew about our Jewish origin.
>
> He changed his name so that we would not know that we are Jews. During the whole post-war period he lived in fear so that 'it' [i.e., the *Shoah*] would not happen again, but he did not have the courage to leave.
>
> He never talked about Jewish origin. Jewishness was taboo.
>
> He was fully conscious of his Jewishness and saw the solution in assimilation.
>
> He thought that he was assimilated — his name was Kohn, and most of his friends were Jews — who also thought that they are assimillated!
>
> In our family we talked very little about this. I realized only with hindsight, when I was 15, that our family contact was only with people of Jewish origin. Around that time my father tactically told his sister in Košice to take me and my sister to the cemetery where our grandparents are buried — and it was a Jewish cemetery. So gradually, and finally at the cemetery, I got it. I could also then understand why I didn't have a grandfather and a grandmother as did most of my classmates, why I had an aunt in England, and why most of the women who visited us in the summer had a tattooed number on their forearm... Gradually the talk at home became more about Jews, about their fate, a little bit about religious traditions — both parents were secular Jews — but, as I explained, I did not ask much, possibly out of fear that talking about all of this would bring more pain than relief, but mainly because of my inability to come to terms with all that suffering.
>
> I read a book about Auschwitz, which contained some statistics. Most of these were about victims of Jewish origin. I knew that my grandparents were deported to Auschwitz. So I asked my aunt if grandparents were deported because they were Jewish.[25]
>
> My identity is fully bound up with a Jewish identity, which I understand in terms of the contradictions of my childhood and adolescence. The sense of otherness, of 'I against the others', was for me always a mystery. When I was 16, I finally received an 'answer' from my brother: 'Don't you know that we are Jewish?'. I was suddenly at peace — but, unfortunately, the substance was missing and is still missing today.
>
> She never explained her or my Jewish origin, because she did not want me to be different. She told me only when I learned about it from my classmates and asked her.

Another respondent said that he was told that he had been baptized as a Protestant but that the family did not belong to any denomination. That made sense, since they were communists. However, he added:

> I have to laugh today when I remember that at least twice a month we received a letter from uncle Max from Israel. I couldn't wait for the letters because I was a passionate stamp collector. However, my mother always claimed that uncle Max lived in Poland. So that I wouldn't contradict her, she eventually stopped asserting that. However, she threatened me with the most severe punishment if I failed to say everywhere that uncle Max did not live in Israel but in Poland; otherwise the whole family would have terrible difficulties. My mother was very secretive about this, as she was about everything Jewish.

Strategies of full concealment were most frequently pursued in large cities, where urban anonymity offered the illusion that one's Jewish origin could be kept secret. As Jewish families differed in several crucial respects from their non-Jewish counterparts, attempts to conceal Jewish descent were doomed to failure, and often badly backfired. As noted above, members of the 'second' generation grew up in families with no or only very few relatives (who either perished in the *Shoah* or lived in Israel or some other Western country), and with parents whose demographic and social characteristics visibly marked them as Jews. Moreover, the Jewish parents had no control over the non-Jewish environment, and could not therefore prevent their children from learning about their Jewish descent from other sources, such as antisemitic taunts by classmates, neighbours, or by complete strangers. Thus, when confronted by antisemitic experiences of their children, or when their children brought home pejorative Jewish expressions without realizing their antisemitic character, many parents had no choice but to reveal 'the family secret'. Respondents were asked: 'Since when, and from whom do you know that you are Jewish?' and the largest number of replies were that experiences of antisemitism had led them to discover that they were Jewish. Although these experiences were not widespread, they clearly left a lasting impact, as is evident from the following replies:

> Classically, from taunts and 'persecution' by peers among other children, at school, during play. I grew up in a small village.
>
> When I pointed towards somebody at school that he is a Jew, my mother explained to me that I am also of Jewish origin.
>
> My friend sneering at me in the street and calling me a 'stinking Jew'. He said that he was a Catholic and then asked what I was and I replied that I was a bronchitic. That was a strange thing to say but I knew as little about its meaning as I did about the meaning of 'Catholic'.

Other replies were:

> I learned about it from my mother, when I asked her about the meaning of 'Jewish swine' — which a neighbour's son had called me.

When I talked slanderously about one classmate as an 'Icik', my father explained to me what it means, and that we are also Jewish.

She baptized both me and my brother. She did not talk about Jewishness until I was about eight, when children were calling us names. Only then did she carefully explain some things.

When I was seven, at school, when a boy from another class whom I didn't know started abusing me by shouting 'dirty Jewess, dirty Jewess'.

From my mother, when I was six. Children were making fun of my brother, which led to the first time that my mother explained that we were Jewish.

My first-grade teacher explained to the whole class that for sure I would know the answer, as I am (and I quote) 'a clever little Jew'.

A neigbour was shouting at me 'dirty Jew', and then I asked at home what does she mean by it.

It was written on the wall of our house.

A classmate told me. I refused to believe him at first, regarding it as a slander, but when I then asked at home, they confirmed my Jewish origin.

Under unplesant circumstances. A classmate told me that my boy-friend would not go out with me any more, because I was Jewish, and that it was she who told him. I responded that I am not Jewish, and she replied that I am, because her mother told her.

Neighbours were telling us to go to Palestine.

Others learned about their Jewish origin when they were taken to memorial services in synagogues or cemeteries, or to public commemorations of the victims of *Shoah*:

During a visit from relatives from abroad we went to the Pinkas synagogue[26] in Prague to see the names of relatives killed during the war. I was surprised to see the names of my grandfather, uncle, and so on. I said loudly that I thought that the only names here were of Jews. There was silence and then an awkward half-explanation from my mother, with the admonition that nobody should know about this.

During a visit to Hungary in the summer of 1964 in the synagogues of both pairs of my grandparents. It was very emotional as this was also the place from which my mother's parents were deported to Auschwitz (my paternal grandparents died before the war).

When a memorial plaque to the victims of *Shoah* was unveiled in Brno in 1965.

Suddenly and very traumatically while hearing a synagogue choir to commemorate 6,000,000 Jews tortured to death in concentration camps. It was a life-long shock.

A signficant number of children discovered their Jewish origin either gradually, or suddenly and unexpectedly:

I heard about Jewishness from early on. For example, when looking at my little brother, my mother used to jokingly discover characteristics which she thought were typically Jewish. .... When talking to me she often used the word *meshuge*, referred to relatives as *mishpokhe*, and so on. When we visited

relatives or friends, they endlessly spoke about those who had not returned from concentration camp.

When I was six. I think that my mother concluded that I was old enough to know about it.

When I was ten, during a TV presentation of a film about Jews. I experienced persecution only later.

We were in Vienna visiting an acquaintance and I went to the kitchen to cut for myself a piece of salami. The acquaintenance threw me out. It turned out that it was *Yom Kippur*. My mother then explained it to me.

Nothing special, general recognition that we have no grandfather and grandmother and very few relatives. And frequent recalling of the war and of their parents.

A Jewish friend noticed in the bathroom that I am circumcised.

Another respondent stated that she discovered she was Jewish when she saw a document on the table, which had been left there inadvertently and which gave her mother's origin as Jewish. Other replies were:

I was fascinated by the old photographs and wanted to know who was who. I also found in the attic old passports of relatives who did not manage to emigrate in 1939 and who perished in a concentration camp. I was also interested in a small, and for me 'strange' (Hebrew) prayer book, which my grandmother used.

A subconscious sense of Jewishness — I think I had that without really knowing what it all means. I was once sitting in a pub and somebody from the table next to us called to me: 'You have sidelocks like some Jew'. It shook me — and I was suddenly open to Jewishness. Soon after that I moved to Prague to attend a university, and met somebody who took me to a Jewish youth group.

From Concealment and Techniques of 'Passing' to 'Coming Out' as Jews

How did the young members of the 'second' generation come to terms with their Jewishness? Like their parents, they exhibited a wide range of attitudes, ranging from complete distancing and denial to full identification. Since most of them lacked any Jewish education, they needed first to find out what it means to be Jewish. Unlike the 'sudden Jews' interviewed by Kessel[27] in the USA, the post-Holocaust generation growing up under Czechoslovak communism had few resources available for learning about their heritage. The initial resources were Jewish themes in works of fiction or autobiography, film and theatre, both indigenous and in translation. As one respondent recalled:

I was different both in appearance (black hair, black eyes) and in a difficult to define Jewish aspect. I had no idea what it actually meant. If I knew anything, it was from literature, for example Lion Feuchtwanger.

I stated at the beginning of this paper (under the heading of 'Methods, data, and sources') that one of my sources was the study by Pavla

Frýdlová; she made available to me 15 transcripts of interviews carried out in 2001 and 2002. One of the respondents is quoted as saying:

> When I was 10 years old and attending school, I used to read a great deal and my mother gave me some (Jewish) literature to read. I must say that I was quite interested in it, unlike my brother... I never knew anything about Jewishness and whatever I knew I learnt from literature, but only about Jewishness as such, not about religion.

Others, especially those who internalized the stigma associated with a Jewish identity, adopted various practices of invisibility and techniques of 'passing'. For example, a respondent from Brno recalled in a personal note to the author that, during her childhood she knew of nine Jewish children in her school, 'but none would want to be identified with their background. The word Jew was used to diminish popularity'. Another respondent had 'roughly the same number of Jewish and non-Jewish friends. I knew the Jewish friends via their parents, and I could discuss with them various Jewish issues. However, my best friend was a classmate who had a Jewish father. I knew about it from him — she never wanted to talk about it'.

Some became interested in Jewish issues only as adults. A respondent from Frýdlová's study, who came of age during the post-1968 period of communist 'normalization', learned about her mother's Jewish origin during adolescence, but started to identify with her Jewish roots only in the more favourable climate of the 1990s, after the collapse of communism (and of her marriage). By then in her mid-30s, she enrolled in a course in Yiddish, with her mother for the first time visited Terezín, began to read books with Jewish themes, became a member of the Prague Jewish community, and spent a year in Israel as a care-provider for an older Czech-speaking lady. She also commented that she now had a better understanding of her mother's anxieties, who was never satisfied if she had 'less than adequate' school marks. However, she believed that her parents had made the right decision not to worry her during her childhood with their concrete *Shoah* memories. When she had enquired about her grandparents, she was told, in a matter-of-fact-manner, that they had been killed during the war by the Germans. As a child and later as a teenager, she found that a satisfactory answer and inquired no further.

Indifference to one's Jewish roots also sometimes represented a form of teenage rebellion against parental pressure to adopt a Jewish identity. The previously cited respondent in Pava Frýdlová's study recalled:

> I remember that when I was 16 or 17 years old, my parents assumed that I would have my own circle of friends, and they very much wanted me to have a Jewish circle of friends. However, when I was 17 or 18 I preferred to take part in various sport activities. I also loved to read... I consciously decided that I

> did not want a Jewish circle of friends, and ended up in various non-Jewish circles.

However, she commented: 'I now regret that in 1968 I did not attend the [Prague Jewish] community, where there were very interesting lectures. I went there only once'. Other responses reveal that participation in a Jewish peer group was for many a crucial step in the construction of a strong and positive post-war Jewish identity. The responses also partly explain why siblings from the same family could end up with different Jewish identities:

> I managed already in childhood to have a lot of Jewish friends, and I used to move in those circles, unlike my brother, who had no Jewish friends in his immediate surroundings. So when we look at our respective attitudes to Jewishness, his attitude was formed differently from mine, despite the fact that our mutual relations are very much conditioned by our Jewish origin.

Given the paucity of Jewish classmates, associating with Jews of the same age created a powerful sense of belonging and solidarity. However, attending Jewish communal events, such as youth celebration of *Hanukkah* or *Purim*, participating in formal and informal Jewish youth groups, displaying interest in Israel, or becoming religiously observant, brought the younger generation into conflict with the Communist officials who tended to regard such activities as subversive and anti-socialist, especially in the post-1968 'normalization' period.[28] During the earlier de-Stalinization period of 1962–68, when (as noted above) many members of the 'second' generation were reaching their adolescence and young adulthood, public displays of Jewishness carried fewer risks. Moreover, since the communist authorities were generally perceived to be antisemitic and anti-Israel, having Jewish ancestors or relatives in Israel could sometimes imply automatic membership of a special clandestine organization with no known rules. The sense of belonging to such a mildly conspiratorial and subversive group had the potential of providing the young generation with an important source of empowerment and a sense of pride in their Jewish identity. This sense of pride and empowerment was strongly reinforced by the decisive Israeli victory in the 1967 Six-Day War.

Jewish Youth Groups

Criteria for joining Jewish youth groups in the 1960s were quite flexible. Any self-identified and interested Jews were welcome, including (especially in Prague) many who were of mixed parentage and did not meet *halakhic* standards. The Jewish youth groups provided an opportunity to articulate a pluralistic post-war Czech/Slovak Jewish identity, which incorporated mainly intellectual and secular conceptions of Jewishness. Participation in the youth groups turned out to be a

formative experience, and led to life-long friendships and supportive transnational networks.

A former Bratislava resident was a member of the Slovak Jewish youth group 'Kuchyna' (Kitchen) — named after the ritual kitchen in the building of the Bratislava Jewish community where during 1966–68 an informal group of Jewish students would meet every Saturday and Sunday. She described the group as follows:

> It had only a social character. What held us together was the fact that we were Jews. Several students from my high school (whom I did not know were Jewish) turned up in synagogue during *Rosh Hashanah*. We then used to meet for discussions, dancing, and sometimes we created our own celebrations of *Hanukkah* and *Purim*. There was even a rock group, in two different compositions because two of the original members emigrated.... We were also interested in Israel and whenever somebody obtained a record with Israeli songs, we listened to it and then sang the songs (for example, '*Havenu gila*' or '*Yerushalayim shel zahav*'). From the time I emigrated to the present, I have been in contact with those with whom I formed friendship ties. In 2000 I visited Australia and met there several of these old friends.

She continued:

> There was an earlier such group. It consisted of students of the pre-war generation (born during 1930–1940) from all of Slovakia. My cousin was a member and she met her husband there. During 1966–67 many young Jews moved to Bratislava to attend high school and university. We established contact with some of them, but for the most part they either kept to themselves, or they lived in student dormitories and on weekends returned home.

The Brno group, consisting of approximately 25 people, came together as a result of annual private *Seder* dinners which the then Chief Rabbi, Dr Richard Feder, organized in his apartment specifically for young people. By the early 1960s, those who attended this annual event could not all fit around his dining table, and additional seats had to be arranged. In later years, Dr Feder helped to organize exchange visits between Jewish youth groups in Prague and Brno. For example, in 1967 the Brno youth group took part in the Prague youth *Hanukkah* celebration. The group performed a programme of Israeli songs, instrumental music, and a short play by the Israeli playwright E. Kishon, to great applause.[29] Like their counterparts elsewhere in Czechoslovakia, most members of the group emigrated after August 1968. The group held its first reunion in Brno in June 2003. It was attended by both locals and émigrés.

The Prague Jewish youth group now called '*Děti Maislovky*' ('Children of Maisel Street'), mentioned earlier in this paper, also started as an informal group or, rather, as several informal groups with overlapping membership. Eventually, that youth movement became fully established. During 1963–1966, several young Prague Jews[30] who were eager to meet and

learn about their heritage, repeatedly made approaches to the leaders of the community to help them organize Jewish youth study groups and offer premises of the Prague Jewish community for youth meetings. In 1966, after year-long negotiations with the party-state authorities, the officials of the Council of Czech Jewish Religious Communities and the Prague Jewish Religious Community secured official permission to hold regular educational meetings for young Jews in the premises of the old Jewish community town hall, in Maisel street. These officially-sanctioned meetings were held every two weeks on Saturday evenings during the school year and were regularly attended by 50 to 80 young Jews whose ages ranged from 16 to 28.

After the events of August 1968 half of the group emigrated, but the ranks were replenished by new members — who had previously not known about the lectures or who had not been old enough to attend before 1968. However, in March 1974 these meetings had to come to an end, when the communist authorities forced my father to retire from his position as the secretary-general of the Council of Czech Jewish Religious Communities and of the Prague Jewish Religious Community

The educational meetings had consisted of lectures by volunteer speakers on various selected aspects of Jewish history, culture, religion, and identity. They filled important gaps in knowledge but, since they relied on volunteers with an idiosyncratic range of expertise, they could not provide a full substitute for the systematic Jewish religious education for *barmitzvah* and *batmitzvah* which is given to young Jews in Western countries.

The formal lectures were followed usually by informal gatherings of various sorts — such as socializing in pubs or cafés, trips to the mountains, or attending concerts. There were also smaller groups whose members had a shared interest in the theatre or in Jewish or Czech literature. Of particular significance was the amateur theatre group; it had been established before 1966 and one of its members said:

> I used to perform in the theatre, in particular in the play 'Modche and Rezi',[31] which was directed by Mrs. Dufková. The group, sometimes consisting of five and at other times of 20 people, used to meet (since 1964) once a week. We used to visit each other, go on trips together, attend the same parties. We formed very intense friendships, many of which survive to this day. For me, this was *the only* positive Jewish experience in Prague.

Some of the members of the theatre group belonged as children to an earlier amateur theatre group. Its importance for the formation of Jewish identity of the post-war generation was noted by O.Heitlinger.[32] In his view, the most important memories for young Czech Jews in the 1960s were not merely religious experiences:

> Several years ago children put on performances during the communal celebration of *Purim* and *Hanukkah* or they took part as spectators.[33] These

> celebrations were attended by up to 100 or even more children. However, with each year participation declined, until in the final year fewer than 30 children came.[34] At these celebrations children presented small skits, recited poems, sang, and so on. These joyous experiences gave them a fragment of awareness that there existed out there something which is uniquely Jewish, something which belonged to them, as their cultural heritage or tradition. The festivals of *Purim* and *Hanukkah* are celebrations of liberation.[35]

Since the collapse of communism in November 1989, the 'Children of Maisel Street' have held four reunions in Prague; they were highly successful. The fourth reunion took place in May 2003, when more than 130 Czech and Slovak Jews (by now middle-aged) came together; about half that total came from abroad and more reunions are planned for the future. The popularity of these gatherings shows that a Czech-Slovak Jewish identity is still important for both those of the post-war generation who remained in their native land and those who emigrated.

The group now also has members who had attended various communal events at the Prague Jewish municipal hall as children but who as adolescents had emigrated with their Zionist parents to Israel in the 1960s. The 'Children of Maisel Street' now have their own web site, with a discussion group, http://www.geocities.com/detimaislovky.

Emigration

There were many factors involved in the decision to remain in the country or to emigrate after the Soviet invasion of 1968. Some who wished to go abroad were torn between their attachments to family members, to friends, to their native language, and native land (while fearful of resurgent antisemitism) and, on the other hand, a desire to live in freedom in another country. Some who wished to emigrate worried lest the authorities would penalise their relatives who had remained in the country. Others decided to emigrate in order to solve their problems with their spouses or partners.

One respondent said:

> To some extent we were all used to thinking about emigration, in the sense of asking a question and finding an answer to it. Some, like myself, answered this question in the negative. My prevailing viewpoint was that I could not live without Prague. The thought that after work I could not go down to Wenceslas Square, or that I could not meet with somebody there under the tail[36] was unimaginable. However, this decision was conditional on (latent) antisemitism not becoming openly hostile. If the latter happened, it was clear to me what principle to follow: if they don't like me, I don't have to be here. But, basically, I didn't think that this would happen (though not that it couldn't happen). I also knew how to recognize the symptoms telling me when to leave, so as not to repeat the indecisiveness of the end of the 1930s, when Jews did not believe that things could be worse untill it was too late to

emigrate. If Jews started losing their jobs, apartments, social positions, and so on, without any reason (or openly because of that reason), then it was necessary to leave. Nevertheless, when I went in September 1968 to England (after the Warsaw Pact invasion) on a previously planned trip unconnected to the political events, I almost stayed. However, in the end I returned. Later, in 1984, I secured a transfer from my employer to work abroad, and was able to gradually prolong that stay. After 1989 I completed my move abroad and the emancipation from both my employer and officials in Czechoslovakia. However, if I am to be really honest about evaluating the reasons for my emigration, I was fleeing neither the regime nor antisemitism. ..., but my personal problems

Other respondents stated:

I would have never left because of my parents. I would have considerably shortened their lives. I have never regretted my decision.

In 1968 I was 22, studying Russian and Slovak literature, and the only thing I wanted was to devote my life to Slovak literature. I knew no other language (except Russian) and still don't know any today. I thought that when the Russians saw our solidarity and unity, they would turn around and leave, if not immediately, then in a month or so. My parents were then 60 years old. But that was not the reason. My Jewish friends' parents who were of a similar age were sending their children out. They knew what was going to happen here.[37]

For musician Peter Breiner, who in 1968 was only 11, and who emigrated to Canada only after the collapse of communism, the decision to leave was not immediate. 'There was no specific first moment. It was a gradual process, and it started a long time ago... I don't know the reasons exactly, but they lay deeply in communism and deeply in Slovakia.' Breiner delayed his emigration 'to prevent unpleasant consequences for those who would have stayed. By a lucky coincidence, the revolution came at a time, that after arriving to Canada, I didn't have to start from scratch.'[38]

The post-1968 encounter with various Western Jewish communities and the non-Jewish environment created new contexts in which to redefine and renegotiate the largely secular and intellectual Czech/Slovak Jewish identities. Migration also meant leaving behind Czech or Slovak language and culture. In turn, learning and living in new host languages and cultures required redefinitions of Czech/Slovak identity. For many, one of the most liberating aspects of migration was the unprejudiced acceptance of Jews by the non-Jewish environment. As illustrated by the quotation below, Jewish emigrants from Czechoslovakia were pleased to discover that their Jewishness was not 'a big deal', and that the adoption of a Jewish identity in a larger non-Jewish environment was genuinely a free choice rather than an issue of fate:

In Czechoslovakia I used to encounter negative reactions, but since I have lived in Germany, nobody has been interested, nobody has asked me: 'So what

> exactly are you?' Nobody has noticed or 'felt' my Jewishness like Slovaks tend to do.

Others witnessed a normal Jewish religious life for the first time. One respondent now resident in the U.K. recalled:

> I encountered a 'normal' Jewish family (the family of my father's cousin) which keeps traditions, celebrates holidays, and regards its Jewishness as a matter of course, only after emigrating. I think that before then I connected Jewishness mainly with pain, tragedy, and complexity.[39]

The encounter with joyous Jewish traditions and the visible self-confidence of British Jews helped several Czech Jewish immigrants to redefine their Jewish identity more positively. One respondent commented: 'My timorousness connected with Jewishness disappeared'.

For some, however, the encounter with Western Jewishness was marked by negative experiences. Often these were caused by a clash between the pluralistic secular post-war conceptions of Czech/Slovak Jewish identity and the narrower Western notions of Jewishness as religion. As noted above, most Czech/Slovak Jews received no Jewish religious education, and had no *barmitzvah/batmitzvah*. A significant proportion came from mixed marriages, and often had the 'wrong' Jewish parent — that is, the father. Even if the non-Jewish mother was a philosemitic communist dissident who suffered persecution on account of her identification with Jewish issues, this was regarded as irrelevant by Western Jewish officials. Moreover, many Western Jews saw the Czech/Slovak Jews only through the prism of the Cold War and anti-communism. In their view, communism made it impossible for Czech/Slovak Jews to experience 'true' Jewish life. Such an ethnocentric perspective not only failed to acknowledge the long-standing secular and atheistic belief system of Czech Jews, but failed as well to validate what many of the émigré respondents regarded as a fairly happy childhood. Thus, adapting to the Western religious conceptions of Jewishness in such a situation presented an enormous challenge.

Jews from communist Czechoslovakia who had experienced various forms of antisemitism were quite surprised to discover that they were 'insufficiently' Jewish when they tried to demonstrate their Jewish identity by joining a Western Jewish community or getting married in a synagogue. Many were astonished to learn that they had to provide a proof of their Jewishness, since they naively thought that they had left behind all forms of vetting when they emigrated from communist Czechoslovakia. Males who could show no evidence of circumcision or that they had celebrated their *barmitzvah* could provide no proof of Jewishness and both males and females whose mothers were not Jewish (although their fathers were) found that according to Orthodox Judaism, they were not Jewish. The reactions to such an unforeseen

problem differed, as seen from the following two statements from respondents:

> I wanted to join but the Jews told me that because my mother was not Jewish (because her own mother had not been Jewish), I did not qualify. They told me that I could convert; but I am not religious. If God exists, I think that the Jewish one is looking after his people so well that practically all of them have been murdered so that I am certainly not praying to such a God. In fact, I regard all those who pray to him as utter lunatics. Since this experience, Jews have ceased to interest me.

The other respondent said:

> When we moved to the West, I encountered for the first time people who believed in God and practised religion. I found it all quite strange and incomprehensible. I felt as a Jew and was offended not to be regarded as such by the Jews around me. For many years I manoeuvered between these worlds. My loves were mainly Jews, and when it started to get 'serious', inevitably the question of conversion arose. I converted only when I was 37 and that experience completely changed my life. Since I learned what Jewish religion actually entails, I was a position in which I could decide, because I knew all the alternatives. My husband is Jewish and we lead a normal life of a Jewish family. I have two children, my son had *barmitzvah*, daughter *batmitzvah*. I hope that they will find for themselves Jewish partners and that they will lead a Jewish life, be it in Germany, America, or somewhere else in the world. I wouldn't wish Israel for them or for us: I don't want them to live where there is war.

A more recent way of preserving a Jewish identity for the émigrés of the post-war generation has been the creation of Slovak/Czech Jewish groups in Toronto and London. Both groups were established as a result of focus group discussions which I conducted respectively in September 2002 and May 2003. The Toronto group has since expanded from the initial 12 participants to about 40 individuals, with a three to one ratio of Slovak to Czech Jews. It is named after the mystical Prague Jewish 'Golem' and there have been meetings every two months or so in the homes of various members. They have discussed issues relating to a) Slovak/Czech Jewish identity of the post-war generation; b) Canadian Jewry; and c) Israel, and the Middle-East conflict. Members have also watched Czech/Slovak films and documentaries with Jewish themes, listened to Jewish, Czech, and Slovak music, arranged a picnic in a Toronto park, and just enjoyed socializing. We regularly exchange e-mails on a variety of topics, and are planning more activities for the future. Some of these will also include non-Jewish or non-Slovak/Czech speaking spouses and children. Members of the group are both secular and religious, and halakhic and non-halakhic Jews. The formation of such informal groups abroad provides another data-set attesting to the

continuing significance of a broadly-articulated pluralistic Czech/Slovak Jewish identity.

Categorization of Identities

Jewish identities of the post-war generation of Czech/Slovak Jews range from negative through neutral to positive. Those who have a negative attitude are generally reacting to past suffering and to antisemitism; but they are the exception among my respondents: only two revealed such a sentiment; one said:

> I perceive my Jewish origin as an unfortunate burden, as something which for me has no positive aspects, and is only related to the tragic destiny of my parents and ancestors. I have grappled with this issue for many years — even in psychotherapy — and for the most part have come to terms with it. Jewishness is for me connected with fear and inner conflicts. I am conscious of, and have myself experienced, many of the problems related to the so-called 'children of survivors', as they have been presented in various studies and books. From a psychological perspective it is all quite interesting.

The other stated:

> Although I am assimilated, my husband is not Jewish, and very few of my friends in England are Jews, my main identity is Jewish, not Czech. This identity has a mainly negative context, by which I mean that I feel in me the burden of Jewish tragedy, the legacy of *Shoah*, and the weight of Jewish persecution. I did not want to raise my children as Jewish for this reason, and to this end was consciously looking for a non-Jewish partner.

Here it is important to bear in mind that individuals who would prefer not to be identified as Jews generally do not take part in studies about Jewish identity. Therefore, the data on their expriences and attitudes are often provided by their relatives, friends, or acquaintances. A Slovak Jew declared:

> No Slovak environment can obliterate our identity even though my brother does not always acknowledge his Jewish origin For example, right now, he has gone on a holiday to Portugal for two weeks; but this morning he telephoned me to wish me all the best for *Rosh Hashanah*. He simply cannot escape his Jewishness.

A similar comment was made by the Prague-based sibling of a Czech Jew, who found it difficult to escape his Jewish birth through assimilation:

> My brother, born in 1951, would not complete this questionnaire. He does things strictly for money, wants to be consciously assimilated, but is not always successful in this. He regularly attends the Jewish community's celebrations of *Hanukkah, Purim, Seder*, but in principle never goes to pray. He has a non-Jewish wife, dislikes any discussions about Jewish topics, and provides minimal information about Jewishness to his only daughter.

Another variation on the negative-positive continuum has been the adoption of the technique of 'passing': privately acknowledging one's Jewish identity but refraining from doing so in a non-Jewish environment. One respondent revealed:

> This concealment of mine is not particularly exciting or troublesome. I simply never bothered anybody with this, and whenever there was talk about Jews in a non-Jewish environment, be it with negative or positive connotations, I did not say anything but stayed silent and invisible. I think that this is a fairly common technique. Even in Switzerland I still have not found the courage to openly stand by my Jewishness in conflictual situations. We could simply call it an instinct for self-preservation rather than cowardice, which it perhaps deserves to be called. However, when the risk is relatively low, that is, when I know that there is no danger of antisemitic attitudes and moods — something one can never be sure about in a non-Jewish setting in Slovakia — I have no problem to openly acknowledge my Jewishness. All my friends and acquaintances know who I am.

Some respondents see their Jewish identity neither negatively nor positively, but as one aspect among many of their identities, and not necessarily the most important one:

> I have to repeat again: I neither explain nor justify my Jewish origin. I am a Jew. Period. Maybe an American or Canadian of Czech-Jewish origin can contemplate which aspect of his/her American or Canadian identity is influenced by his/her Czech-Jewish origin.
>
> If I feel anything in the way you defined the study, I most likely belong to the very heterogeneous group 'Children of the Holocaust'. Jewish identity is genuinely less important to me than several other identities. By that I mean membership in a certain family, occupation, or being with friends and sharing with them interests and exchanging viewpoints. A 'national' identity (languages which I speak, the places where I live or used to live, and passports and other personal documents which I used to own) also contributed to my individual identity. I don't think there is much point in trying to decide whether I am more Czech or Swiss, a mathematician, a statistician, an information specialist, a cyclist, moralist, tourist, a father of growing children, or a member of a family where there are more opinions than people. To be sure I am quite a conservative, middle-aged man who would like to feel everywhere at home and learn about many new things. I am, of course, not always successful in this.

The majority of participants in the study have a positive Jewish identity, which they mostly see as an important part of their being, and as something 'extra' which has enriched their life:

> I perceive my Jewish origin as some 'added value', not as something basic (I know practically no religious or other traditions, I speak neither Yiddish nor Hebrew, and I was not inculcated with a sense of Jewishness during my childhood), but as something extra, which has enriched me with another dimension.

Finally, there are Slovak and Czech Jews with a strong religious identity; they are convinced that this is the only way to guarantee Jewish survival. The respondent who now lives in Germany commented:

> Jewishness survived as religion for more than 2000 years, as a nation only during the last two centuries, and as a 'sense of belonging' only during the last century. Jewry will disapear with 'sense of belonging' Jews, because a 'sense' is both created and becomes defunct. Without the knowledge of, and faith in, Jewish religion and nation we will become extinct in subsequent generations. The majority of my friends who live in so-called mixed marriages raise their children only in the 'sense of belonging'. Most of these children do not grow up in Jewish surroundings and they select non-Jewish partners. Their children are no longer Jewish. My brother did not convert, so he is not a halakhic Jew. He feels Jewish, but it does not mean anything to his children (father's 'sense of belonging' and grandfather's concentration camp is too little). He would like his children to spend holidays with us (he lives in another city and whenever possible, his family visits us during the High Holy Days), and hopes that by some miracle Jewishness can be transmitted to them.

Thus Czech/Slovak Jewish identity rests on a fluid and pluralistic conception of Jewishness.

Conclusion

I have identified both commonality and heterogeneity of experience when analysing the complex processes which have shaped identity formation among the respondents who were part of the post-war generation of Czech and Slovak Jews who grew up under the communist regime in the period 1948-1989. The most important differences were found in a) parental background; b) the size of the towns; c) the year of birth (which in turn determined whether they came of age before or after the Soviet invasion of August 1968); d) participation in a Jewish peer group; and e) whether they had or had not emigrated. Parents considered themselves to be communist, anti-communist or politically pragmatic; consciously Jewish in religious, cultural, intellectual, or Zionist terms; assimilated or in denial of their Jewish origin; and supportive or ambivalent about their children's search for a Jewish identity. When compared with their Slovak counterparts, a higher proportion of Czech Jewish parents were secular, had only one Jewish parent, and were married to non-Jews. Their high degree of assimilation and their lack of religious observance reflect the great degree of secularization of Czech culture.

However, the differences appear to be not as significant as the similarities. The 'second' generation, like the 'first', represents a community of fate, largely brought together by politics and the non-Jewish environment. As has been noted in this paper, members of the post-war generation were in crucial aspects 'different', both from their

Czech and Slovak peers, and from fellow Jews in Western liberal democracies. What set them apart from other Czechs and Slovaks were the trans-generational (non) transmission of parental *Shoah* experiences and parental ambivalence or even concealment of their Jewishness, which created in childhood a puzzling sense of otherness. As Jews, the young Czechs and Slovaks also stood out by their infrequent but psychologically significant personal experiences of antisemitism; and an emotional identification with Israel, which automatically put them on a collision course with the strongly anti-Zionist communist regime.

What separated them from other Jews in Western liberal democracies was the unconcealed stigma attached to Jewishness in Czech and Slovak culture as well as by the communist regime. That stigma led to a) a negative sense of otherness; b) an often painful search for understanding of Jewishness while the communist authorities and many of their parents preferred them not to identify with their Jewish background; and c) an absence of systematic Jewish (religious) education. It is worth repeating here what a respondent has been cited as commenting: 'The substance was missing and is still missing today'. Thus, rather than *content*, Czech and Slovak Jews of the post-war generation remember the *circumstances* in which distinct pieces of knowledge were acquired about Jewish traditions, rituals, personalities, and various works of art. Members of the 'second' generation also have fond memories of the exhilaration of meeting Jews of the same age and interests in Jewish youth groups, and of forming life-long friendships in these groups. Other shared bonds and experiences which have set Czech and Slovak Jews of the post-war generation apart from their Jewish peers in Western liberal democracies include attendance at Czechoslovak schools with a nationwide centralized curriculum, and familiarity and identification with much of Czech and Slovak culture.

Because of the specificity and uniqueness of their common experiences in communist Czechoslovakia, Czech and Slovak Jews of the post-war generation tend to feel most comfortable among people like themselves — which, incidentally, also characterized the generation of their parents. Their commonality of experience means that they understand each other, and are tolerant of each other's choices. While a question 'When did you find out?' might seem incomprehensible to a Jew who grew up in a Western liberal democracy, Czech and Slovak Jews know immediately what it refers to; this is the case even for those who always knew that they were Jewish. Their secular identity has been shaped not by Judaism but by similar life-course experiences and by a strong sense of common fate and group belonging.

We cannot confidently predict how many (if any at all) features of such a uniquely-constructed identity would be successfully transmitted to the next generation — which has come of age in a very different political and

socio-economic context created in the 1990s by the fall of communism and the end of the Cold War.

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NOTES

[1] The world-famous Jewish museum in Prague also provides minimal information on the communist period, as does Tomáš Pěkný's authoritative *Historie židu v Čechách a na Moravě* (The History of Jews in Bohemia and Moravia) — Praha:Sefer, 2001. The book has 702 pages, but only 12 of them are devoted to the post-war period and these contain only a chronological table with brief references to major cultural and political events with implications for Jews. Peter Salner's, *Židia na Slovensku medzi tradiciou a asimiláciou* (The Jews of Slovakia between Tradition and Assimilation) — Bratislava: Zing Print, 2000-includes an informative chapter on the communist period, but the chapter is not specifically focused on experiences of the post-war generation.

[2] Karl Mannheim, 'The Problem of Generations', in *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952; Norman B. Ryder, 'The Cohort as a Concept in the Study of Social Change', *American Sociological Review*, vol. 30, December, 1965; Carol Ryff and Victor Marshall (eds.) *The Self and Society in the Aging Process*. New York: Springer, 1999.

[3] Glen H. Elder Jr., 'Approaches to Social Change and the Family', in John Demos and Sarane Spence Boocock (eds.), *Turning Points: Historical and Sociological Essays on the Family* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978); and Alena Heitlinger and Susanna Trnka, *Young Women of Prague* (Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press, 1998).

[4] For a detailed description of the history of the group 'Children of Maisel Street', see Alena Heitlinger, 'Jewish Youth Activism and Institutional Response in Czechoslovakia in the 1960s', *East European Jewish Affairs*, vol. 32, no.2, 2002, pp. 25–42.

[5] Yeshayahu A. Jelinek, 'Historical and Actual Minority Problems in Czecho-Slovakia', *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 27, 1993, p. 93.

[6] The precise number of *Shoah* survivors who remained or emigrated is not known. The most reliable statistics come from Israeli immigration records, and from membership lists of post-war Czech and Slovak Jewish religious communities. See Kurt Wehle, 'The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia, 1945–1948', in Avigdor Dagan (ed.), *The Jews of Czechoslovakia, Historical Studies and Surveys*, vol. III (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1984), pp. 499–530; Petr Brod, 'Židé v poválečném Československu (Jews in Post-war Czechoslovakia), in V. Veber (ed.), *Židé v novodobých dějinách* (Jews in Modern History) Praha: Karolinum, 1997 pp. 147–162; Salner, op.cit.in Note 1 above, pp.

165–6, 172–78; Pěkný, op.cit. in Note 1 above, pp. 638, 657; Laurent Rucker, *Stalin, Izrael a Židé* (Praha: Rybka Publishers, 2001), translated from the French original *Staline, Israel et les Juifs* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2001), pp. 106, 108. However, many secular Jews did not belong to any Jewish religious communities, and as such were statistically invisible. All figures are therefore estimates based on records of victims and survivors of the *Shoah*. As Salner, op.cit. in Note 1 above, p. 150, states so poignantly, 'we know how many perished, but the fate of those who survived is less well known'.

[7] A completely 'normal' religious life was impossible to achieve in communist Czechoslovakia, where religion was officially tolerated but disapproved of. The official ideology and school curriculum promoted atheism, and until the early 1980s the work and school week included Saturday mornings. Moreover, any public display of religiosity could be detrimental to one's career and that of one's children.

[8] Salner, op.cit. in Note 1 above, pp. 173–8.

[9] Heitlinger, op.cit. in Note 4 above, p. 37.

[10] Ruth Ellen Gruber, *Upon the Doorposts of Thy House. Jewish Life in East Central Europe Yesterday and Today* (New York: John Willey and Son, 1994), p. 40.

[11] The majority of the parents of my respondents spoke several languages, but with their children they spoke mostly Czech or Slovak. Among themselves, especially when they did not want their children to understand the content of their conversation, they would often resort to German, Hungarian, or whatever other language their children did not know. Because of the *Shoah*, some parents refused to speak German after the war. Parental multilingualism often contributed to their children's sense of otherness.

[12] One respondent quoted below recalled several Yiddish expressions her mother used when interacting with her and her younger brother, such as *mishpokhe* (family/relatives) or *meshuge* (mad, lunatic). My parents also used these as well as several others, such as *chutzpah* or *oy vey*. I remember my surprise when as a 10-year-old child I discovered that my classmates did not know what *meshuge* meant. I thought until then that it was a Czech word.

[13] Political issues were discussed in both communist and anti-communist families. Answers to the question 'Was politics discussed in your household?' revealed that parents discussed at home 'all current topics' or 'daily political world events'. Specific issues included 'antisemitism, Zionism, foreign policy, current political events and situation (both internal and foreign)', 'differences between the theory and practice of communism', 'domestic economy, the reasons for the failure of communism', and 'fascists and former Slovak fascists who became communists'. In some cases, 'discussion about political show trials came quite late. My father was imprisoned and that is why this was not a topic of conversation'. In one case, a respondent born in 1954 revealed that her parents discussed with her 'all political topics, but only around 1968, because before then they were worried that I might say something at school'. In a similar vein, another respondent recalled that in his household politics was discussed 'politically': 'we discussed politics as such, both domestic and foreign, with emphasis on not creating for ourselves any problems or unplesantness'. Growing up in such families made members of the 'second' generation politically quite shrewd.

[14] For many secular Jews, celebrating Christmas did not pose a major problem because under the communist regime Christmas became a largely secular, materialistic holiday. Christmas was more about a Christmas tree, decorations, presents, special baking, and a traditional dinner with carp and a potato salad than about celebrating the birth of Jesus. Nevertheless, some parents felt uncomfortable by the Christian aspect of the holiday. Since they did not want their children to be singled out as 'different', they often adopted an uneasy compromise, such as having carp for dinner but doing without a Christmas tree.

[15] Peter Salner, 'Parametre židovskej identity' (The Parameters of Jewish Identity), *Židoyská ročenka* (The Jewish Yearbook), 5756/1995–96, p. 119.

[16] Their attitudes ranged from a belief that 'this cannot last', to a generalized fear, and a specific dislike of Jews who supported communism. One Prague-born respondent now living in Australia recalled his father's attitude towards communism in these terms: 'He was afraid of them and hated those Jews who tried their best to join the communists and in this way created hate against the Jews'. A most common attitude was a pragmatic one, which meant keeping one's views to oneself. As one Bratislava-born respondent put it, her father 'had his own crystallized view of socialism, but he tried to survive and safeguard his family, so he kept his views to himself'.

[17] A leading member of the Czechoslovak Communist Party already before the war, Eduard Goldstücker spent the war years in exile as a postgraduate student at Oxford University and as an official of the Czechoslovak government in exile in London. Later, he was the first Czechoslovak ambassador to Israel but became a victim of the communist purges in the 1950s and was imprisoned. After his rehabilitation, he was appointed Professor of German literature at Charles University and was a renowned expert on Franz Kafka. He played a leading role during the 'Prague Spring', and after the Soviet invasion in August 1968 went into his second British exile. He taught at the University of Sussex until his retirement and returned to Czechoslovakia after the 1989 Velvet Revolution. He died in Prague in 2001.

[18] Eduard Goldstücker, *Vzpomínky (1913–1945)* (*Memoirs*, 1913–1945) — Praha: G plus G Publishers, 2003 — p. 59.

[19] Salner, op.cit. in Note 1 above, p. 159, notes a certain paradox in social perceptions about Jewish communists: 'The mass media presented as people of Jewish origin mainly individuals who were active politically or culturally. However, most of these 'visible' Jews both verbally and in writing renounced their Jewishness, repudiated religion as prejudice, and subscribed to a 'progressive scientific ideology'. In Slovakia, where everybody knows everybody else, their Jewish origin was no secret. However, it was these 'visible' Jews who influenced the most the broad perception of the whole Jewish community. To the outside, [the Jewish communists] looked as the only representatives of Judaism, yet they themselves supported assimilation, publicly declared their support for the communist ideology and Slovak culture, and raised their children accordingly. Their external conduct was as 'non-Jews' (not as anti-Jews), and an eventual return to the identity of their ancestors was frequently forced by external pressure (Nazi or communist)'.

[20] An interview posted on www.chaverim.sk,

[21] Focus group discussions revealed that their Czech counterparts felt very isolated, since there were typically no Jews or at most only one or two among

their classmates. I was the only Jew in my class throughout my elementary school, as was my younger sister. I acquired another Jewish classmate from a mixed background in my high school, but she was not then particularly interested in exploring Jewish issues. (She is now.)

[22] Salner, op.cit. in Note 1 above, p. 252.

[23] Ota Heitlinger, 'Židovská mládež v obvodu RŽNO, její aktivizace v posledni době a problematika, která s tím souvisí' (Jewish Youth in the District of CCJRC, its Activism in the Recent Period, and Resulting Problematics). Confidential report submitted to the Czech Ministry of Education and Culture, 21 June 1965, pp. 3–4. Personal archive of Ota Heitlinger.

[24] O. Heitlinger, op.cit., p. 1.

[25] As was the case in Poland, the Czechoslovak communist school curriculum and general communist propaganda minimized the Jewish presence in Auschwitz. At the Auschwitz museum established after the war, 'informational material referred to Jews simply as one of a number of peoples deported to Auschwitz from more than two dozen countries... The official guidebook to the camp referred to "six million Polish" citizens killed in the war, not mentioning that half of these were Jews, representing nearly all of the Jewish population': Gruber, op.cit. in Note 10 above, pp. 244–5. In a similar vein, the official Czech tourist guides in Terezin used to speak of "360,000 Czech citizens killed by the Nazis", without mentioning that nearly all of them were Jews': Charles Hoffman, *Gray Dawn. The Jews of Eastern Europe in the Post-Communist Era* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992), p. 31.

[26] The Pinkas synagogue is an impressive memorial to Czech victims of the Holocaust, with a turbulent history of its own. It was established in the 1950s as part of the State Jewish Museum in a disused synagogue, where the internal walls listed all the names of the 77,297 Jews from Bohemia and Moravia killed by the Nazis. During the period of 'communist normalization' in the 1970s and 1980s the synagogue was closed, officially for renovation, and all the names inscribed on the walls were removed. However, the official guidebooks continued to list it as a memorial to the victims of Nazi persecution and there were periodic reports that the memorial would soon be reopened. In the end, the Pinkas synagogue was reopened to the public only after the fall of communism, and full reconstruction was completed only in 1996. The building unfortunately suffered extensive damage during the Prague floods in the summer of 2002: Gruber, op.cit. in Note 10 above, pp. 33–37; Brod, op.cit. in Note 6 above, p. 157.

[27] Barbara Kessel, *Suddenly Jewish. Jews Raised as Gentiles Discover their Jewish Roots* (Hanover and London: Brandeis University Press/University Press of New England, 2000).

[28] As one respondent, born in 1951, stated, 'during my university studies in Bratislava, Jewish communal life was minimal. Moreover, I was afraid to attend public events out of fear that they might expel me from the university, where life was difficult for me already on account of my brother, who emigrated in 1969'.

[29] O. Heitlinger, op.cit. in Note 23 above, p. 10; and Judith Youdell, personal communication.

[30] These included several Slovak Jews who were then students at various Prague universities. At least one Prague member of 'Children of Maisel Street' learned about the group from these Slovak Jewish students: 'I experienced a radical change in the relation to my surroundings only at the university. I met

there young Jews who attended lectures at the Jewish community. It is rather ironic that I was brought to the community by my Slovak Jewish student peers, although it was me who had the actual "home right" at the community'.

[31] 'Modche' and 'Rezi' are literary characters created by the Czech Jewish author Vojtěch Rakous (Adalbert Östreicher), who lived from 1862 to 1935. His collection of short stories, entitled *Modche and Rezi*, depicts Czech Jewish life in rural areas. This work was also published during the communist period, in 1958 and 1968.

[32] O.Heitlinger, op. cit. in Note 23 above, p. 4.

[33] Children's performances during communal celebrations of *Hanukkah* and *Purim* were also organized by the Jewish community in Bratislava. Under the direction of Mrs. Luknarová, children recited poems or acted in folk religious plays.

[34] As the children grew older, they often lost interest in a children's theatre, and because of the demographics of the *Shoah*, there were not enough other children available to take their place. Another likely reason for the diminishing numbers was the availability of legal emigration to Israel in the 1960s. O. Heitlinger op. cit. in Note 23 above, p. 3, estimates that there were 40–50 children among those who left Prague for Israel in the early to mid-1960s. Their parents were typically the most active members of the Prague Jewish community, who would attend most communal events at the Prague Jewish town hall, including those specifically designed for children.

[35] Theatre also played an important role in dissident Jewish circles during the period of normalization. In 1981, after considerable difficulty, the Jewish town hall became the setting for the performance of the play 'Ester', as part of that year's communal celebration of *Purim*. The play was written by the dissident playwright and current chief Czech rabbi Karol Sidon. He was unable to see the play himself, since shortly before *Purim* he was arrested and imprisoned. For more details about the performance, see Jiři Daníček, 'Pražský purim' (Prague Purim), *Roš chodeš*, vol. 64, April, 2002.

[36] The famous statue of St. Wenceslas by the Czech nationalist sculptor Myslbek is a favourite meeting place in Prague. The sculpted St. Wenceslas sits on a horse — hence the respondent's reference to the statue's tail.

[37] Interview with Jan Strasser. www.chaverim.sk.

[38] www.chaverim.sk.

[39] Even those who were familiar with Jewish rituals at home as children or from communal celebrations preferred religious life abroad. Communal celebrations of Jewish festivals in post-war Czechoslovakia were attended mainly by members of the 'first' generation, and often lacked joy. One respondent recalled: 'I went several times to the *Seder* dinner at the Jewish community, because I don't have my own family. I was also influenced by memories from childhood, when my father used to lead *Seder* dinners at home. Such communal dinners took place in Košice even before 1989; in fact, they took place without interruption, but the people there were predominantly old, and it was all very sad. I experienced a completely different *Seder* in Israel or with guests from Israel after 1989, with joyous songs, pleasure, children, youth'.

JEWS IN GRANDMASTER CHESS

William D. Rubinstein

BETWEEN about 1870 and 1970, about half of the world's leading chess grandmasters were Jews, including five of the ten acknowledged world chess champions. This was almost certainly the highest percentage of successful Jews in competitive activity of any kind which was freely open to Jews.[1] Since about 1980, the Jewish percentage among leading chess grandmasters has declined markedly; it is now only about 10 per cent. This essay will examine the phenomenon of the almost incredible over-representation of Jews in grandmaster chess, and will attempt to offer some explanations both for Jewish success in the century from 1870 to 1970 and its more recent decline.

Chess has many unique features as a competitive board game. Because of its complexity — there are literally tens of billions of possible moves in a game of typical length — it has been said that no two games of chess at a master level have ever been literally identical. Chess has no element of luck, only skill, and the board and pieces are in full view of both players at all times. Since the early mid-nineteenth century, tournaments and matches among the world's leading grandmasters have taken place on a regular basis, and there has been a world chess champion officially since 1886 and unofficially since about 1851.[2] Because there are only three outcomes of a chess game (win, lose, or draw), and because there is a virtually complete record of all important tournaments and matches since the early nineteenth century, it is possible to rate the ability of all chess players — even those from the nineteenth century — very accurately, and to complete very accurate historical 'league tables' of the world's leading players at any time since the 1850s. This was done in the 1970s by the Hungarian-American physicist and mathematician Professor Arpad Elo (1903–92). He gave his surname to the numerical chess system of ratings ('Elo' ratings) which is in standard use throughout the chess world. This system is expressed as a number, usually between 2000 and 2800, in which every 200-point difference (for instance, between one player rated 2600 and another rated 2400) is equal to one standard unit of deviation, so that the likelihood that a player rated 2600 will defeat a player rated 2400 in a match is about 65 per cent, with the likelihood rising to virtual

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certainty between players rated, say, 2600 and 2000.[3] A world champion or strong world champion candidate usually has a rating of about 2700–2800. Elo found a distinctive and ubiquitous ageing pattern among all (or virtually all) chess grandmasters in history, with great ability at chess manifested in every case by the time a grandmaster was in his early twenties, peaking in most cases at about the age of thirty-five, and then beginning a steady (usually relentless) decline in a player's forties. This ageing pattern clearly parallels athletic ability, with about a decade's time-lag. Great ability at chess appears to be an innate gift of some kind. There is universal agreement among experts that by constant practice, study, and lessons with outstanding players, someone can improve by about 200 points or so (that is, one interval on the 'Elo' scale), but that it is impossible to improve more dramatically than this if the inherent ability is lacking — just as it is impossible for a tennis player to improve enough by practice to compete in the finals at Wimbledon unless he or she possesses the innate tennis ability of a great player. Ability at chess is also generally manifested very young, with some famous players being recognised as 'prodigies' in their teens or even earlier.[4] Ability at chess may be generally related to ability at other intellectual activities such as proficiency at mathematics or learning languages, but this relationship, if it exists, is very general. It is, in fact, very difficult to think of any first-rate chess player who enjoyed a separate reputation in any intellectual or cultural activity whatever apart from chess, and it is often said that many chess masters would starve if chess did not exist.

While Professor Elo compiled historical graphs of the leading chess grandmasters from the mid-nineteenth century until the 1970s, more recently Jeff Sonas has drawn up much more detailed annual tables of the best chess players in the world based on a modified version of Elo's rating system. These annual tables begin in 1850 and are currently available through 2001.[5] Table One provides a list of the 10 strongest chess players in the world at 10-yearly intervals from 1851 through 2001, with Jewish players listed in capital letters.[6]

It will be seen that the Jewish percentage of the top 10 chess players at decennial intervals rose steadily in the late nineteenth century, and was almost always about one-half the total in the twentieth century until the 1980 cohort.[8] As noted, this percentage is truly remarkable, and vastly in excess of the Jewish percentage in the Western world as a whole, which probably never exceeded two or three per cent. Jewish chess grandmasters emerged from most of the geographical milieux in which Ashkenazi Jews were to be found in the Diaspora, from the Pale of Settlement and the Polish-Russian area, from Central Europe, and from the United States and the 'New Diaspora'. For most of the twentieth century, the Soviet Union and the United States were the main repositories of Jewish chess talent; interwar independent Poland produced little in the way of first-rate Jewish chess players. It will also be seen that

Table One:
Ten Top-Rated Chess Grandmasters, with Modified Elo Ratings, at Ten-Yearly Intervals, 1851–2000[7] (Jews in Capitals)

	1851		1860	
1.	Staunton	2768	Morphy	2754
2.	Kieseritzky	2701	HARRWITZ	2674
3.	Anderssen	2653	KOLISCH	2649
4.	HORWITZ	2593	LOWENTHAL	2635
5.	E. Williams	2550	Anderssen	2553
6.	von Jaenisch	2525	De Riviere	2547
7.	Szen	2512	J. Thompson	2536
8.	Bird	2495	Mongredien	2466
9.	von der Lasa	2479	P. Journoud	2462
10.	LOWENTHAL	2473	Hamppe	2366
	1870		1880	
1.	Paulsen	2725	ZUKERTORT	2705
2.	NEUMANN	2711	Paulsen	2665
3.	STEINITZ	2696	Blackburne	2640
4.	Anderssen	2690	Potter	2631
5.	Blackburne	2630	Mason	2618
6.	ZUKERTORT	2609	WINAWER	2584
7.	WINAWER	2601	SCHWARZ, A.	2572
8.	von Minckwitz	2600	Bird	2569
9.	De Vere	2524	ENGLISCH	2559
10.	ROSENTHAL	2489	ROSENTHAL	2551
	1890		1900	
1.	STEINITZ	2734	LASKER	2777
2.	Chigorin	2655	TARRASCH	2706
3.	GUNSBERG	2633	Pillsbury	2669
4.	TARRASCH	2632	Maroczy	2640
5.	WEISS, M.	2607	Schlecter	2604
6.	Mason	2602	Chigorin	2599
7.	von Bardelebon	2597	Charousek (?)	2583
8.	Blackburne	2597	Lipke	2725
9.	ENGLISCH	2593	Burn	2575
10.	Paulsen	2589	JANOWSKY	2557
	1910		1920	
1.	LASKER	2789	Capablanca	2887
2.	RUBINSTEIN	2670	RUBINSTEIN	2670
3.	Maroczy	2666	TARTAKOWER	2633
4.	Capablanca	2659	TARRASCH	2620
5.	Schlecter	2654	NIMZOVITCH	2612
6.	TARRASCH	2632	Bogolyubov	2609
7.	Terchmann	2625	RETI	2602
8.	Duras	2607	Kostic	2598
9.	BERNSTEIN	2604	Euwe	2555
10.	SPIELMANN	2584	CHAJES	2553
	1930		1940	
1.	Alekhine	2827	FINE	2700
2.	Capablanca	2747	Alekhine	2688
3.	NIMZOVITCH	2693	RESHEVSKY	2685
4.	VIDMAR	2660	BOTVINNIK	2677
5.	Bogolyubov	2658	Capablanca	2672
6.	EUWE	2642	Keres	2669
7.	KASHDAN	2636	Euwe	2659
8.	RUBINSTEIN	2626	FLOHR	2654
9.	SPIELMANN	2606	Pirc	2634
10.	TARTAKOWER	2604	LILLIENTHAL	2621

Table One (Continued)

	1950			1960	
1.	BOTVINNIK	2821	1.	TAL	2726
2.	FINE	2729	2.	Keres	2705
3.	RESHEVSKY	2724	3.	Petrosian	2701
4.	BRONSTEIN	2717	4.	Smyslov	2699
5.	Keres	2709	5.	SPASSKY	2679
6.	Smyslov	2695	6.	KORCHNOI	2679
7.	BOLESLAVSKY	2636	7.	BOTVINNIK	2676
8.	NAJDORF	2677	8.	Kholmov	2672
9.	Kotov (?)	2663	9.	RESHEVSKY	2664
10.	FURMAN	2644	10.	Gligorich	2663
	1970			1980	
1.	FISCHER	2860	1.	Karpov	2784
2.	SPASSKY	2749	2.	KORCHNOI	2748
3.	Larsen	2708	3.	Postisch	2712
4.	BOTVINNIK	2703	4.	KASPAROV	2709
5.	Keres	2694	5.	POLUGAYEVSKY	2699
6.	KORCHNOI	2690	6.	SPASSKY	2693
7.	Petrosian	2685	7.	Beliavksy	2893
8.	Postich	2680	8.	Timman	2682
9.	TAIMANOV	2677	9.	Hubner	2680
10.	POLUGAYEVSKY	2676	10.	Romanishin	2678
	1990			2000	
1.	KASPAROV	2833	1.	KASPAROV	2876
2.	Karpov	2800	2.	Kramnik	2831
3.	Ivanchuk	2741	3.	Anand	2820
4.	GELFAND	2733	4.	Shirov	2787
5.	Salov	2701	5.	Adams	2756
6.	Yudahin	2699	6.	Leko	2755
7.	Bareev	2695	7.	Ivanchuk	2753
8.	Beliavsky	2693	8.	GELFAND	2744
9.	GUREVICH	2682	9.	Morozevich	2738
10.	Short	2681	10.	Topalov	2738

the Holocaust ostensibly made little difference to the Jewish percentage on these lists: five of the 10 top-rated players in 1960 were Jews, just as was the case in 1930. This was because the Soviet Union and the United States remained the two main chess-playing nations, with the Soviet Union's post-war Jewish population of (at least) 2.2 million in 1959 providing a continuing wellspring of chess talent.

While the decline in top-flight Jewish chess players is evident by about 1980, it should be noted that most of the younger players on the 1980 list (Karpov, Beliavksy, Timman, Hubner, Romanishin) were Gentiles, with only Kasparov representing a younger Jewish chess talent.[9] It should also be stressed that since one-half of the world's top chess players were Jews in the period 1870–1970, one-half were not Jewish. Before the ascendancy of Bobby Fischer, probably the two best-known and most famous chess champions, at least in the Western world, were Gentiles: the American Paul Morphy (1837–84) whose meteoric career became legendary, and the great Cuban world champion José R. Capablanca (1888–1942), known as 'the chess machine' for his incredible speed and efficiency of play.[10] Non-Jewish chess talent in that period appears to be a 'freak'- like ability which

was almost random, bearing in mind that the Soviet Union developed disproportionate numbers of first-class players. Chess talent was not congruent with the 'geography of intellect' in terms of producing, say, Nobel Prize winners or well-known cultural innovators: for instance, for whatever reason, France never produced a single first-rate chess player during that period. Britain produced many excellent players in the mid-late nineteenth century; but it did not have another truly first-rate player until after the 1970s, when an 'English chess renaissance' began.

The central question here is why the Jews were so prominent at chess for so long. There is no easy answer and, to a remarkable extent, no literature of importance on the subject. Most writers on chess pass over this phenomenon in silence while authors on Jewish achievement in the modern world naturally regard chess as a very marginal pursuit. Several explanations, however, might be offered. Jewish predominance at chess might be genetic: Jews might, for some inexplicable reason, be disproportionately gifted at this particular game. A genetic explanation *might* be true, but there are serious obstacles to accepting it. Ability at chess confers no socio-biological advantage of any kind away from the chessboard (nor any reproductive advantages), while it is difficult to see how talent at a complex, wholly fortuitous board game can be genetically pre-programmed. Chess talent might be more generally related to ability in other areas where a socio-biological advantage might be discerned (as, for instance, in a spatially-derived 'battle' situation, such as chess seems to mirror) but, as noted, ability is certainly not directly related to an individual's notable talent in other fields. Most importantly, if Jews were genetically good at chess, that should be manifested in all times and places, but the main argument of this paper is that it is not. Some writers have suggested that chess might parallel Talmudic discourse;[11] but there are also many problems here. Few chess masters were Talmudists or even Orthodox Jews, and it is difficult to see how secular Jews can naturally be adept at Talmudic disputation. Only superficially does Talmudic discourse, an ongoing dialogue among Torah sages down the generations, resemble chess, whose aim is for one player to defeat the other in a limited time period. A psychological explanation might be helpful: psychologists have pointed to the deep psychic implications of the battle at the chessboard whose aim is to checkmate (that is, castrate) the opponent's king.[12] It could be that some Jews, especially secularised Diaspora Jews of the period when Jewish chessmasters flourished, found success at chess a psychologically satisfying alternative to success at warfare, sports, or the manly arts at which they were unsuccessful or from which they were excluded.

That last argument may be helpful in providing a sociological explanation: Jewish chess success seems to be correlated in an interesting way with antisemitism, with Jews doing well at chess in the period when they were assimilated into Western (or Soviet) society but while there were

still antisemitic barriers to their full success in the wider society. Jews turned to chess because they could not achieve success in other fields, or at least encountered serious obstacles along the way. *Most* notable Jewish chess players were in fact second-generation immigrants or products of post-ghetto acculturation: this was a common pattern in Europe, North America, and also the Soviet Union, where the antisemitic barriers which existed until the end of the USSR, combined with the high prestige enjoyed by chess players in Soviet Russia, probably accounted for their continuing success until the recent past. Success at chess, moreover, required no apprenticeship, start-up costs, or investment of capital. Except for Nazi Germany, it is remarkably difficult to identify any antisemitic barriers which existed to block the chess success of Jewish players. Neither in Czarist Russia nor in the USSR did such barriers to Jewish chess success ever exist. Indeed, Soviet Jewish chess champions such as Mikhail Botvinnik and Mikhail Tal were among the few Jews who became publicly famous and officially rewarded in any field. More generally, chess was one of the few intellectual activities (of a kind) freely permitted, and where this intellectual success was rewarded.

This explanation may as well go some distance towards addressing the fact that some significant groups of Jews have produced virtually no substantial chess talent. Most strikingly, no first-rate player has ever come from Israel in its history; nearly all of its best players in recent years have been Soviet immigrants. Israel has done respectably well in the international chess Olympics held every four years, but has never produced a single player either born there (or who had spent his formative years there) who ranked among the world's top 30 or 40 players. With five million Israeli Jews, this strongly suggests that chess ability is not a genetically-based attribute of Jews, but has a strong sociological dimension. Moreover, only a handful of well-known Jewish chess players ever emerged from an Orthodox background or maintained an Orthodox lifestyle, most notably Akiba Rubinstein (1882–1961), the Russian Polish-Belgian grandmaster who is often regarded as the strongest player who never became World Champion, and Samuel Reshevsky (1911–92), the Russian Polish-American player who won the American chess championship six times. Virtually all notable Jewish chess players were non-Orthodox, often secular products of the assimilated second-generation Diaspora. Finally, one can think of virtually no Sephardi Jew who demonstrated great chess ability; all or very nearly all were Ashkenazim. What each of these groups has in common is that they were arguably internally-focused groups and were not engaged in the intense race for financial and professional success (in an often hostile and prejudiced world) as were the second-generation Ashkenazim.

Viewed in this light, the apparent decline of Jewish chess talent in the past two or three decades can be readily explained. In part, it stems from a widening of the geographical areas in which chess is played, in the

context of an arguably diminishing Diaspora Jewry.[13] In large measure, however, the decline in Jewish chess talent must arguably flow from the reduction to the vanishing point of antisemitic barriers to Jewish success in mainstream professional and business pursuits, as well as the end or virtual end of barriers to mainstream Jewish higher education. Young Jews are, plainly, no longer likely to choose such a marginal, haphazard, and unrewarding career as that of a professional chess player, even if the inherent talent exists, when a successful and financially-rewarding mainstream career is highly likely and certainly most unlikely to be hampered by antisemitic barriers. It seems arguable that the number of Jews in other marginal and 'catch-penny' occupations has declined sharply in recent decades, for the same reasons. The number of well-known Jewish professional athletes probably peaked, broadly, between 1900 and 1940, and has declined since the Second World War, again in large part through the same factors. Grandmaster chess offered in the past a refuge from a world of antisemitic hostility and obstructive barriers.[14]

NOTES

[1] The only other significant field known to me in which so large a percentage of its leading exemplars were Jews was American popular songwriting in the golden age of 'Tin Pan Alley' from about 1920 to 1960. As with chess, it appears that about one-half of America's leading songwriters of that period (for example, George Gershwin, Jerome Kern, Richard Rogers, Irving Berlin) were Jews, while about one-half (for example, Cole Porter, Harry Warren, Vincent Youmans, Duke Ellington) were not. The very high Jewish percentage in such fields as winners of Nobel Prizes in the sciences (about 20 per cent) was actually much lower.

The term 'grandmaster' (presumably drawn from Freemason terminology) was first used to describe a leading chess player in the 1830s, and became universally used in about 1900.

[2] The Jewish world chess champions in the period 1870–1970 (with the date of their reigns) were: Wilhelm Steinitz (officially 1888–94; unofficially 1866–94); Emanuel Lasker (1894–1921); Mikhail Botvinnik (1948–57, 1958–60, 1961–63); Mikhail Tal (1960–61); Boris Spassky (1969–72). The non-Jewish world champions in this period were: José R. Capablanca (1921–27); Alexander Alekhine (1927–35, 1937–46); Max Euwe (1935–37); Vasily Smyslov (1957–58), and Tigran Petrosian (1963–69). Before 1948, matches for the world chess championship were arranged privately between the reigning champion and any opponent of his choosing; world champions sometimes went for years without defending their titles. Since 1948 the world chess championship has been in the hands of the International Chess Federation (FIDE), which holds regular competitions to choose the challenger, and conduct the World Championship match.

[3] Arpad Elo, *The Rating of Chessmasters, Past and Present* (London, 1970) is the standard work on this subject.

[4] In all serious chess matches and tournaments it should be noted that there is a time-limit of play in which (generally) a player must make 40 moves in two hours, with a double-faced clock in which a player starts his opponent's clock going once he had made his own move. A player who fails to make 40 moves in two hours automatically loses. (A player can take any amount of time, within the two-hour limit, for any particular move.) It should also be noted that, in serious chess, a player is strictly forbidden to touch a piece unless he intends to move it, or to take back a move.

[5] One may regularly view them at his website 'Chessmetrics' (www.chesmetrics.com). FIDE (the International Chess Federation, the body which regulates serious chess) also draws up similar Elo rating tables at six-monthly intervals.

[6] The earliest Sonas table refers to the world's top players on 31 December 1851; all subsequent tables provide similar information for 31 December in all years ending in zero. The table for 31 December 1940 does not appear to have been greatly affected by the Second World War, since all or virtually all leading players were in the Soviet Union or the United States (still neutral) or had managed to escape from Nazi-occupied Europe. In fact, only a handful of active grandmasters, none at the very top, perished in either the Holocaust or in other theatres of the Second World War.

[7] From Jeff Sonas, 'Chessmetrics' (www.chessmetrics.com). Ratings as of December 31 in each year; the first year here, 1851, is that of the earliest major international chess tournament. The numbers are modified Elo ratings.

[8] Little detailed biographical information exists about many Soviet players, especially those just below the topmost rank. It is thus not absolutely certain whether Alexander Alexandrovich Kotov (1913–81) was Jewish; it is very likely that he was not. The World Champion Boris Vasiliyevich Spassky (b.1937) had a Jewish mother, while the Championship Challenger Viktor Lvovich Korchnoi (b.1931) had several Jewish ancestors. On the other hand, some players with Jewish-sounding names were Gentiles, — for example, Carl Schlechter (1874–1918), an 'Aryan' Austrian Catholic. It is also not clear whether Rudolf Charousek (1873–1900), on the 1900 list, was Jewish.

[9] Indeed, counting Kasparov as Jewish would be disputed by some. Born Harry Weinstein in Baku in 1963, Kasparov was the son of a Jewish father and an Armenian (*nee* Kasparyan) mother; his name was russified to Kasparov at the beginning of his career, while his first name is a Western mistranslation. Kasparov became World Champion in 1985, holding the title until the FIDE system broke down in 1993.

[10] Capablanca once went eight years (1916–24) without losing a serious game of chess to anyone in a tournament match. When Capablanca finally lost a game, in the first round of the New York 1924 international tournament, it was regarded as so startling that it was reported on the front page of *The New York Times*.

[11] For instance, Gerald Abrahams, *The Jewish Mind* (London, 1961), p. 354.

[12] See, for example, Reuben Fine, *The Psychology of the Chess Player* (New York 1967). Fine, one of the strongest players of the 1930s and 1940s, became a practising psychiatrist. One prominent chess historian, it should be noted, described this work as 'inexpressibly awful', and most chess players would dismiss any Freudian psychological element in chess as fanciful. It should be noted, however, that before the very recent past very few notable women chess players

ever appeared, and virtually none who could hold their own with male grandmasters. The two best women players were probably Vera Menchik (1906–44) and Judit Polgar (b.1976). Menchik, born to a Czech (apparently non-Jewish) father and an English mother, lived in England, and defeated many strong male players including World Champion Max Euwe. (She was killed in a German bombing raid on London.) Polgar, born in Hungary, is Jewish; she is currently (late 2003) rated as the eleventh strongest player in the world.

[13] In recent years chess has become very popular in India, Pakistan, and China. On the other hand, it must be noted that only one player from a non-Western background has ever appeared on the 'top ten' lists, the Indian player Viswanathan Anand (b.1969), who was ranked third in the world in 2000.

[14] It might be worth mentioning the two best-known examples of antisemitism in chess (neither of which affected the opportunities for Jews in chess). In March 1941, Alexander Alekhine, the World Chess Champion, published a series of articles in *Pariser Zeitung*, a German-language weekly newspaper in Paris, on 'Aryan and Jewish Chess'. They were then reprinted in several other journals in Nazi-occupied Europe. The articles are venomously antisemitic, contrasting 'Jewish chess', which consisted of 'material gain at any price' and 'opportunism' with 'Aryan chess'. After the war, Alekhine strenuously denied writing them, but it now seems certain, based on interviews he gave during the war to Spanish newspapers, that he did. (These articles have been reprinted in translation several times, most recently in Ken Whyld, ed., *Alekhine Nazi Articles* (third edition, Olomouc, Czech Republic, 2002); for Alekhine's war-time interviews, see Edward Winter, *A Chess Omnibus* (Milford, Conn., 2003), pp. 277–282. Alekhine was the son of a Russian nobleman; his mother was the daughter of a wealthy Russian industrialist. Alekhine went into exile in the mid-1920s and never returned to Russia. It should be carefully noted that Alekhine showed no overt evidence of antisemitism in his relations with Jewish chess players or in his other voluminous writings on chess, and was actively negotiating with the Soviet chess authorities to play Mikhail Botvinnik (who was Jewish) for the world chess championship when he died in Portugal in 1946.

More recently there has been the strange case of Bobby Fischer (Robert J. Fischer, b.1943), certainly the best-known chess player in history and arguably the greatest. In 1972, Fischer became the first non-Soviet world chess champion since Alekhine's death by defeating Boris Spassky in a match in Reykjavik, Iceland, which attracted world-wide attention. Since winning the match, Fischer has not played a single serious chess game, with the exception of a rematch with Spassky in 1992, but has lived the life of a nomadic recluse. For much of this period Fischer has been quoted as making a series of grossly antisemitic remarks, and has also attacked both the American and Soviet governments for conspiring against him. For many years, it was believed that Fischer (who was born in Chicago but grew up in Brooklyn) was the son of a Jewish mother and an 'Aryan' father, a German scientist. Recently, through declassified FBI documents about his mother (who was a longtime campaigner for left-wing causes), it has been discovered that Fischer's father was also Jewish, a Hungarian scientist living in America, which makes Fischer's notorious antisemitism the more puzzling. In the 1970s Fischer sued the *Encyclopedia Judaica* to have his name removed from its article on Jewish chess players.

JEWS IN THE CANADIAN ARMED FORCES IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR: A STATISTICAL RESEARCH NOTE

Harold Pollins

THERE are at least three major reasons for studying the Jews who served in the Canadian armed forces in the First World War. The first is that, as explained below, facsimiles of certain pages of their attestation forms are available on the Internet for a large proportion of those who joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force. These forms provide a number of useful details which can be used, with care, for statistical analysis. The second reason is that, since there is, in the *British Jewry Book of Honour* (1922, reprinted 1997 – henceforth *BJBH*), a list of Jews who served in what it called the 'Canadian Division', the Internet material can be used as a check on the accuracy of that list.[1] At the same time, cross-checking between these two sources provides a comment on the accuracy of *BJBH*.

The third reason is a more general one. In an important sense, this is a cautionary tale of the pitfalls of relying on rolls of honour and especially on data which are on the Internet. This applies to the National Archives of Canada which are used in this paper as well as the online Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Roll of Honour (henceforth CWGC). Both are extremely useful but contain errors. For example, I have, in general, used the Canadian soldier's partial records on the National Archives of Canada's website but 'the attestation form on the data base is not the one in the individual's file but a duplicate that was stored separately... The form shown on the net may be the most recent or the only one available'.[2] There are errors in the indexing of names and numbers. Of greater importance is the fact that whoever completed the attestation forms had to accept the word of the recruit. Addresses, place of birth, occupation, and religion were not checked against other records. Alleged deficiencies in the CWGC have been exposed in a website 'The Campaign for War Grave Commemorations: Dedicated to the

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identification & commemoration of those missing from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's registers & the correction of erroneous & misleading service details.' (*http://www.cwgc.co.uk/*). This exposes errors in the original, printed registers which were published the 1920s as well as mistakes made more recently in the preparation of the registers for the Internet. The latter consist of 'Errors made by the OCR computer scanning (Optical Character Recognition) of the Commission's registers in the early 1990's. The Commission's computer database is riddled with OCR problems, all of which can be easily rectified by reference to the original (hardcopy) register entries'. Although not part of the data used here, it is worth mentioning that there are also errors in the CD-Rom of *Soldiers Died in the Great War,* based on the original publications of the 1920s and consisting of lists of those who died in the various regiments and units of the British Army. For example, there are many men who are reported to have been killed in France and Flanders *before* the war began in August 1914.

During the First World War a total of 619,636 personnel served in the Canadian Expeditionary Force (henceforth CEF).[3] These were the soldiers — whether volunteers or, after the passing of the Military Service Act in 1917, were conscripted — who were liable for overseas service in Europe. Other Canadian units were the Permanent Force (regular army) and the Active Militia which did not serve overseas. In addition to the CEF many from Canada served in the British forces. From the CD-Rom of *Soldiers Died in the Great War* one learns that at least 200 men from Canada died while serving in UK regiments and corps, undoubtedly an under-estimate. A multiplier of some size would be needed to arrive at a total of Canadians who served in UK forces. In addition, as many as 22,812 served in the UK's Royal Flying Corps and, later, the Royal Air Force.[4]

In an examination of the Jewish role in the Canadian forces one can begin with the official figures of those who attested as Jews (or Hebrews). In the 1930s Col. A. Fortescue Duguid made various statistical analyses of over 600,000 attestation papers. One part related to the question, asked at attestation, of the religion (or none) which recruits claimed. Those who attested as Jews amounted to 56 officers, one nursing sister, and 2655 NCOs and men, a total of 2712.[5] This figure is slightly different from an official return on January 1919 which gave 1856 Jewish volunteers in the CE and 718 conscripts, a total of 2574. This was before the CEF was demobilised and perhaps the paperwork was incomplete.[6] As far as I know, there has been only one study of the Jews in the CEF, that produced in 1939 by Louis Rosenberg, a historian of Canadian Jewry.[7] It is mainly a statistical analysis. He provided three sets of figures: (1) the total of attestations, as above, 2712; (2) the number recorded as having served abroad, 39 officers and 1714 'men of other ranks', a total of 1753; and (3) figures obtained from the list entitled 'Canadian Division' which is

in *BJBH*. He said that this last source and 'other records' (unspecified), give the names of Jews in the CEF 'who reported themselves to Jewish chaplains of the British Army overseas'. He also said that his figure should be increased by 400 to account for those who served in the 39th (Jewish) battalion of the Royal Fusiliers as well as 'many' British-born Canadian residents who returned to the UK and enlisted in the British forces.[8]

As to the third set of figures — this is a minor point — Rosenberg was wrong. He said that the *BJBH* list contained 98 officers and 1584 NCOs and men — a total of 1682. In fact I counted entries for 92 officers and 1625 NCOs and men, a total of 1717. However, he used his figures to estimate a theoretical number of Jews in the CEF. He assumed a similar proportion of officers to Other Ranks who had attested as Jews. Based on a figure of 98 officers he arrived at a total of 4695 Jews who served (98 divided by 56 multiplied by 2655 — although in fact this comes to 4646). The problem is that there are difficulties in using the *BJBH* list. It gives officers separately from NCOs and men, the officers having no regimental numbers, but having initial(s) of forenames and unit in which they served. For NCOs and men each entry normally gives regimental number, rank, surname, initial(s) and unit in which the man served. But for the latter group there are several drawbacks. In many cases there is no service number and no unit. There are many errors in regimental numbers, in the spellings of surnames, in the initials and also in the unit in which the man served. Moreover, the list is not in strict alphabetical order and as a result there are a number of duplications. In total one officer's name was duplicated as were those of at least 95 NCOs and men. As opposed to Rosenberg's calculation, my adjusted figure of 91 officers gives a total of 4314, that is, 91 divided by 56 multiplied by 2655. One point worth making about the (possible) number of Jews who served in the CEF is that, because a sizeable proportion — as is noted below — lived in the USA, it is fruitless to try to calculate the percentage of the Canadian Jewish population who served.

A particularly relevant approach in the present context is to check on the religion which recruits stated when they attested. Fortunately, many of the attestation papers of individual servicemen and women can be read on the Internet, on the website of the National Archives of Canada.[9] At present the attestation papers are available for most, but not all, of the personnel whose surnames began with the initial letters A-T. They amount to 1504 of the 1625 Other Ranks listed in *BJBH*, that is, almost 93 per cent. The method of obtaining data from the website is to insert a surname or service number and there appears on the screen an entry such as this:

Name	Regimental number(s)*	Reference
[an icon] Goldberg, Sam	1042431	RG150, Box 3610-38

*Some men had more than one number.

When one clicks on the icon to the left of the name further details appear including the full Reference; in this case it is RG 150, Acc 1992-93/166, Box 3610-38. This Reference refers to the location, at the National Archives of Canada, Ottawa, of the soldier's personal file.

The further information, obtained by clicking on the icon to the left of the name, includes the date of birth (or — if there is more than one regimental number — sometimes more than one and, occasionally, different, date(s) of birth) and displays a rank if it is other than Private. For many but not all entries, more is available on this second display. One or two (or multiples of these if he has more than two regimental numbers) further icons appear which when clicked produce displays of facsimiles of one or two pages of the attestation papers. It is important to note that these attestation papers were often the duplicate or triplicate copies, of the originals. When recruits attested for the second or third time, the details taken down were clearly not checked against the earlier attestation, which accounts for the variation in dates of birth and other details.

These details include place of birth and in many cases address of the soldier, his next of kin and address, his occupation, medical details, and, particularly relevant for this discussion, religion. There are spaces on the form for a number of religions and denominations (Church of England, Presbyterian, Jewish, for example). Recruits were not obliged to declare a religion and some did not.

There are some errors on the website. Sometimes the name on the printed index differs from the original on the facsimile. And one curiosity, not a mistake, is that of 660312 Sapper Michael Astrof (for whom there is also another attestation paper, number 132330). The two sets of attestation papers refer to two different dates, 7 September 1915 and 15 February 1916, the second set of papers being in the French language.. They certainly refer to the same man, the next of kin being in both cases his father, Joseph, living at 9a St Elizabeth St, Montreal. Admittedly in the first set the recruit's occupation is given as stenographer whereas in the second it is 'comptable', that is, book-keeper or accountant. However, in the first set his religion is given as Jew but in the second set, in French, his religion is given twice, as Anglican ('Oui') and 'Catholique Romain' ('Yes').

As mentioned earlier, there are numerous errors and omissions in the *BJBH* list, notably the absence of regimental numbers. To take one example. There are 17 men with the surname Harris of which five have no number. (There are two duplicates, 336227 Pte J. Harris and 336227 Gunner L. Harris and, undoubtedly, 895407 Pte H. Harris and 895409 Pte J. Harris). The NAC website has 1077 entries for the name Harris and it is thus impossible to establish an entry for any of the five who have no number. Moreover, the regimental numbers of two other Harris entries in *BJBH* cannot be found on the website, even after using wild cards. In some cases, though, while it may not be possible to locate the particular individual on the website one can establish the likelihood of the religion of

the entry. Thus the website for the surname of Cadet C. Brotman gives three entries for men named Brotman, Ben, Ernest and Harvey. All attested as Jews. On the other hand for Pte J. Chapin in the *BJBH* list, there were four men with that surname, all of whom attested as Christians. Since one cannot be sure which of the three Brotmans was the one in the *BJBH* list I have counted them (in my calculations) three times as Jews, whereas Chapin would be excluded as a Christian. Sometimes a man with the same name and a forename with the right initial would be found but with a different number. But in many cases no entry could be found on the website for some regimental numbers or names and in some cases even though there was an entry no attestation papers were on the website. In the following analysis the category Not Found includes both types, the complete absence of a *BJBH* entry from the website as well as the absence of attestation papers.

One preliminary matter is to note that 56 officers attested as Jews whereas 92 were listed in *BJBH*). The difference of 36 can be partly explained. One was a duplication, one served in the British army, and one in the Australian forces. The units of 11 officers in the *BJBH* list were given as CanAF, that is, Canadian Air Force. Yet the formation of two squadrons as the Canadian Air Force was not approved until August 1918 and mobilized in November, right at the end of the war, and came to an end in May 1919. It is unlikely that any of those marked CanAF or CAF in fact served in the Canadian Air Force and indeed two of them were killed while flying with the RAF in May 1918. Two other officers served in the Royal Air Force but one enlisted at first as an officer in the CEF. Two of the CanAF airmen enlisted initially as private soldiers in the CEF but none of the others did so. In addition, seven officers in the *BJBH* list appear as rankers on the website. Presumably they were eventually commissioned as officers. On the other hand, at least three Other Ranks in the *BJBH* list appear as officers in the CEF website. They all attested as Jews so are among the 56 officers who are known to have attested in that way. Admittedly, these details account only partially for the difference between the 56 officers who are known to have attested as Jews and the 92 officers in the *BJBH* list.

II

To obtain a general picture of the attested religions of Jewish recruits I checked, first, all the men with 14 common Jewish names.

To what extent were these attested religions true? Did soldiers with these 'Jewish' names attest as Christians for any one of a number of possible reasons? A few examples will illustrate the difficulty of deciding if the person was in reality a Jew or not. 2008453 Pte Henry Cohen attested as C. of E. (Church of England) but he was born in Minsk, and was most probably one of the mass of Jewish East European immigrants of the

Attested religion	Abrahams	Bernstein	Cohen	Feldman	Freedman	Friedman
Jews	3	11	64	7	19	7
Christians	8	3	19	1	3	5
Atheist/not stated	–	–	1	–	–	–
No papers	1	1	6	–	–	1
TOTALS	12	15	90	8	22	13

Attested religion	Ginsberg	Goldberg	Goldstein	Greenberg
Jews	7	23	13	7
Christians	–	1	1	–
Atheist/not stated	–	–	1	–
No papers	–	1	2	3
TOTALS	7	25	17	10

Attested religion	Levine	Levy	Silverman	Steinberg	TOTALS	PERCENTAGES
Jews	16	19	12	5	213	64
Christians	11	34	2	4	92	28
Atheist/not stated	–	–	–	–	2	–
No papers	3	7	–	3	28	8
TOTALS	30	60	15*	12	336*	100

*One soldier attested as 'Romanian'.

period. The mother of another C. of E. man, 808383 Pte Jack Cohen, lived in Mile End, London, in the Jewish East End. However, one C. of E. man, 340334 Driver Lord(sic) Herbert Cohen, is unlikely to have been Jewish despite his father's name being Emanuel. The soldier was born in Ormskirk, Merseyside, which has not been a district of Jewish settlement. The man who attested as a Hebrew Christian was 727844 Pte Harry Cohen. He was born in Warsaw but he gave as his next of kin Rev S.B. Rohalt, of the Christian Synagogue, Elizabeth Street, Toronto. Obviously a convert.

One soldier, 294162 Pte Thorgrimur Eirickson Steinberg, was born in Iceland, not known as a country of Jewish settlement. I have no idea how he came by his surname but it is clear that he was not a Jew. However, another soldier, also born in Iceland, and who attested as Church of England, had the more obviously 'Jewish' name of 100422 Pte Samuel Bernstein. Neither is listed in *BJBH*. Sometimes the name itself suggests that he was not Jewish. One such in the *BJBH* list was 1045823 Pte J. Iserkotakis (but really John Tseragotakis); however, there are no attestation papers for him on the website. Similarly the entry in *BJBH* of 1039089 Spr M. T. Fiske (should be 1039098 Newell Taft Fiske), whose

religion was given as Christian Science, again suggests that he was not a Jew. Another who is in the *BJBH* list is 525501 S/Sgt Norman Robert MacKenzie, but he attested, possibly truthfully, as Presbyterian. If so one wonders how he was included in the list. The inclusion of some non-Jews in the *BJBH* generally is exemplified by that of 2Lt E. Christian in the Nominal Roll of the Royal Artillery; a particularly unlikely name for a Jew. To complicate matters, some CEF recruits with 'non-Jewish' names, although in the *BJBH* list, did attest as Jews. One was 3186120 Pte Ozebille(sic) Gendron from Quebec. In fact this is a common non-Jewish name in Quebec; the CEF website contains over 100 names of soldiers with that name. Another was 40412 Pte George Oliver Greig who had served for four and a half years in the Royal Marine artillery and among the tattoo marks on his right arm was one of St George and the Dragon. A third was 2204821 Pte Morris Anthony MacKenzie. They may have changed their names, or they might have converted, or they might have attested as Jews so as to avoid the attentions of Christian chaplains for some reason. One man in the *BJBH* list with a non-Jewish name, 214222 Spr Alfred Wentworth McDonald (also known as Alfred Wentworth Wall) may or may not have attested as a Jew, but there are no attestation papers for him on the website.

But what is one to make of Sgt Thomas Flansberg who attested as Church of England but the medical report, made at the time of attestation, mentions that he was circumcised? It is difficult to know how true these attestations were but there is a check for four soldiers who died on service, and are listed in the Roll of Honour of *BJBH*. Two of them attested as Christians but were buried in Jewish cemeteries in England. 628565 Pte Philip Myers attested as Presbyterian but was buried in Dover Jewish cemetery; his brother, Isaac, serving as Lewis Smith in the British Army, also died. 113511 Pte Solomon Slonimski (wrongly spelled Slonimiski in the website list) attested as Roman Catholic but was buried in Aldershot Jewish cemetery. His funeral was reported in the *Jewish Chronicle*, 24 December 1915. The third man was Lt Eric Montague Abendana of the Canadian Engineers, who was born in Jamaica and attested as an Anglican. Indeed he attended St James's church at St Marys, near London, Ontario;[10] but the headstone of his grave in Duisans British Cemetery, France, is inscribed with a Magen David. This was obviously requested by his next of kin. The fourth casualty was 2265479 Cpl Myer Goodson who was born in Glasgow on 19 October 1889 and had served for three years in the Highland Light Infantry. He attested as Presbyterian but his parents' marriage is listed in the marriage register of the Glasgow Hebrew Congregation.[11] There were, in addition, two other men who joined the CEF, later transferring to the British Army, both attesting as C. of E., one of whom — 2Lt Crispin Asabel de Pass of 2nd Tank Corps — is listed in the Roll of Honour in *BJBH*. The de Pass family were well-known members of the Sephardi community in England.

The other, Lt Leon Asher Soman, of 6th bn Loyal North Lancashire Regt., was killed in action but is not listed in the Roll of Honour of *BJBH*. However, he is known to have belonged to a well-known Jewish family in Norfolk and his death was reported in the *Jewish Chronicle* of 30 March 1917.

III

A second approach to the study of recruits' religions is to make use of those who were killed in action or who died while on active service. The Roll of Honour in *BJBH* lists the names of Jews who died and includes those who served in Canadian units. After deducting duplicates and those who, despite being listed as having died while serving in Canadian regiments, in fact served in other than Canadian units, the total of those who died in Canadian units was 91. Three others who were listed in the Roll of Honour were found to be errors. 273165 Pte Moses Mazerkoff was wounded and had a leg amputated but otherwise survived the war. So did Sgt Cyrus Harry Mendelsohn (served as May). This information comes from photocopies of these two soldiers' papers which I have obtained.[12] The third man, Pte A. Zelinsky, could not be found at all on the NAC website; in fact his regimental number, 270158, is that of Pte Murray Norman Thomas. Neither Zelinsky nor Thomas is recorded as a casualty by the CWGC. An example of the contradictions to be found among the records is the case of 232 Pte David Marcus. He is listed in the Roll of Honour of *BJBH*, and the CWGC gives his parents as Abraham and Lottie, living in Lodz, Poland. Their names and residence strongly suggest that they were Jews, although he attested as C. of E. The CWGC state that since his next-of-kin details are in their records they must have been given to the CWGC by those next of kin. Yet his papers on the CEF website give his birthplace as Croydon, Surrey, and his next of kin is given as his mother living at The Broadway, Bromley, Kent, the latter address being also his address in the Roll of Honour of *BJBH*. I imagine a resolution to this conundrum may be that the parents went back to Poland after the war, but that is only one possibility.

In addition to the 91 Canadians who died, according to the Roll of Honour of *BJBH*, there were another 32 who died but were not named in that list and there are a further 11 who had 'Jewish' names but for whom there was no confirmation that they were Jews. The attested religions of the 123 who died while in the Canadian forces, were as follows. There were 75 Jews, 34 of various Christian denominations — 18 being Church of England, seven Presbyterian, four Roman Catholic, three Baptist, and two Methodist — and one was a Unitarian. For 13, there were no papers on the website or they had no religion. On the papers of one of those listed as C. of E. the word 'Jewish' is crossed out and 'Church of England' written in; I have counted him as C. of E. But if a soldier was buried in a

Jewish cemetery, even if he attested as a Christian or for whom no religion is known, I have counted him as a Jew. As already mentioned, it is not possible to establish whether those who attested as Christians (but are listed in *BJBH*) were in fact Christians. But one fact is noteworthy: this is that 32 who died (and possibly another 11) are not listed in the Roll of Honour of *BJBH*. This is between 34 and 46 per cent of the 91 who are in the Roll of Honour. Interestingly, a study of 535 Leeds soldiers with Jewish names, who registered as voters in 1918, found that about 40 per cent were not listed in the Nominal Rolls in *BJBH*.[13] These figures, coincidentally similar, are an important comment on the comprehensiveness of that book and of its validity as a source.

IV

A third approach is to obtain the stated religions of all the Other Ranks in the *BJBH* list whose surnames started with the letters A-T. The figures were as follows:

Jews	820	
Christians	251	
No religion/atheists	13	
Sub-Total		1084
Not Found	328	
Duplications	92	
Sub-Total		420
TOTAL		1504

As mentioned above, in a number of cases where no regimental number was given in the *BJBH* list but where several soldiers on the NAC website had the same surnames and all attested as Jews, then the extra names have been added to the above list. In total, as a result, there was an addition of 10 to the number of Jews, making 830, and a total of 1514.

The following are analyses of the 830 who attested as Jews.

Table 1.
Year of Attestation [where a soldier attested more than once, the earliest attestation is recorded]

	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918	1919	
Total	54	146	163	254	210	3	830
Percentage	7	18	20	31	25	–	

Despite the introduction of conscription in 1917 many men continued to come forward as volunteers. Of the 464 Jews who joined in 1917 and 1918, as many as 178 were volunteers.

Table 2.
Birthplaces

	Number	Percentage
Canada	221	27
Newfoundland	4	–
USA	83	10
UK (inc Ireland)	216	26
Eastern Europe	287	35
Australia	1	–
South Africa	6	–
Europe		
Austria	4	–
Bohemia	1	–
Belgium	1	–
Malta	1	–
Norway	1	
Salonika	1	–
Egypt	1	–
Jamaica	1	–
South America	1	–
Total	830	98

Men born in three countries supplied most of the recruits (Table 2). Most came from Eastern Europe, a consequence of the mass immigration from that part of the world during the three or so decades before 1914. The UK was the next source, followed by Canada. Because of the close connection between Canada and the USA, with much cross-border travelling, it is not surprising that a number of USA-born Jews joined the CEF. Individual numbers came from a variety of countries.

The forms used for recruits in the early years of the war had no space for the recruit's current address (and are listed as Not Stated in Table 3) and although many came from the USA (even after that country entered the war) the majority lived in Canada.

Table 3.
Addresses on Attestation

	Number	Percentage	Percentage of those with Stated Address
Canada	467	56	74
USA	161	19	26
Not Stated	202	24	
Totals	830	99	100

The attestation forms contain details of the occupations of the recruits. They were those stated by them and the usual caveats apply. In some cases the name of the occupation is unclear, 'businessman', for example, may mean anything from a pedlar to someone in charge of a substantial company. One must, nevertheless, take these descriptions on trust and they are so used in this analysis.

An important conclusion is that while it is noteworthy that a high proportion of Eastern European Jewish immigrants to, for example, Britain and the USA, were employed in a limited number of trades, most

Table 4.
Occupations

Occupations	Number	Percentage
Professions	70	8
Of whom Students	41	
White Collar workers	198	24
Of whom Clerks	106	
Salesmen	76	
Metal Workers	24	3
Transport	48	6
Of whom Railwaymen	11	
Teamsters/Drivers	34	
Street Car Conductors	2	
Building workers	30	4
Food Industry	29	3
Of whom Cooks	10	
Personal Service	35	5
Of whom Waiters	8	
Barbers	7	
Public Service	7	1
Of whom Firemen	2	
Policeman	1	
Agriculture	38	5
Of whom Farmers	28	
Finance	3	0.5
Clothing Industry	120	15
Of whom Tailors &c	88	
Businessmen and Traders	56	7
Furniture Industry	4	0.5
Maritime	6	1
Of whom Sailors	4	
Other Manual Workers	120	14
Of whom Labourers	41	
Unclear/Uncertain [e.g. Collector; Businessman]	33	3
Not Stated	7	1
TOTAL	830	100

notably the clothing industry (but also cabinet-making and shoe-making) there was a much greater variety of occupations among the Jewish recruits to the CEF although 15 per cent were in clothing.

V

One final point. In the summer of 1916, a Jewish unit was formed in Canada. A news item in the *Toronto Star* was headed: 'Company made up of Jews: Enrolment in Progress in Toronto: Names of the Chief Officers'. The report stated: 'A company composed entirely of persons of Jewish faith is to be formed in Canada and added to the forces fighting Germany. It is said that this is the first unit of its kind so far to be authorized in the British Empire, although several hundred Jews belonging to Toronto already have enlisted, and a number have laid down their lives for the cause'. The officers listed were all Jews; Capt Freedman of Montreal; Lt Sterber, a barrister; and Lt Tobias.[14] Lt Sterber cannot be located on the CEF website. In practice when the unit was training there appear to have been only two officers, Capt Isidore Freedman and Capt Albert Abraham Freedman. From their entries on the CEF website it appears that they were both born in Glasgow, the former being a diamond merchant, the latter a jeweller. They were probably brothers. Two other officers joined Capt Isidore Freedman on the overseas draft (see below).

At the start of the war there had been an intensive discussion in the Anglo-Jewish community about the desirability or not of having a separate Jewish unit in the British Army. One reason proposed by its advocates was the alleged hostility to Jewish recruits in some recruiting centres. In the course of it, a report appeared in the British newspaper, *The Jewish World*, on 9 December 1914, p. 8, that 'our coreligionists in the colonies are settling the matter in the most practical fashion and with a minimum escape of verbal gas. The other day it was stated that a Jewish battalion had been formed in Toronto'. In the course of the argument the Jewish newspapers, which were in favour of it, asserted that there was a French-Jewish unit at the front, and that a Jewish unit had been formed in South Africa, as well as this Canadian one. There was no foundation for any of these claims. Similarly, in Canada, at the outbreak of war there were suggestions of forming Russian, Serbian and American Legions to serve — but no action was taken.[15] The first Jewish unit in the war was formed in 1915 in Egypt. This was the Zion Mule Corps which was composed of Jews (mostly of Russian origin) who had been deported from Turkish-run Palestine. The unit served in the Gallipoli campaign in 1915. The Canadian unit that did come into fruition in 1916 was the Infantry Draft Reinforcement Unit (Jewish). The unit was allocated serial numbers 491451–491750; it was not, therefore, a large body. I have obtained copies of two files relating to it,

one being an account of sums received and expended relating to the period ended 31 March 1917.[16] It includes details of payments made to personnel for the month of February 1917 and it lists 285 Other Ranks. Because the attestation papers of as many as 126 are not displayed on the website, I could not establish their attested religion. Of the remaining 159 only 55 attested as Jews whereas 104 attested as Christians. Of the 159 whose religion is known, Jews amounted to 35 per cent and Christians 65 per cent.

It might be thought that some at least of those who attested as Christians were in fact Jews who were concealing their religion. But their names suggest strongly that the majority were indeed Christian. For example, one was Kristian Jukam (Presbyterian), another was George Kolotano (Greek Orthodox), a third was Andrei Nikit (Greek Orthodox), and a fourth was Luka Semeraz (Greek Orthodox). Admittedly a few may have been Jewish, to judge by their names: Sam Sisnovich (C. of E.) was one and perhaps John Kamoretsky.

The payment list also includes a date against each name which, when checked with the attestation papers on the website, is the date when the soldier joined the CEF and thus the Infantry Draft Reinforcement Unit (the attestation papers are endorsed with the name of the unit). The first to sign were on 20 July 1916 and the first 37 (who were given the serial numbers 491450–491488, less two numbers not used) were Jews. The first non-Jew signed on 22 August and although Jews continued to join, the majority thereafter were non-Jews.

The second document comprises a list of three officers and 84 Other Ranks who sailed for Europe on 28 March 1917.[17] Of that number, the three officers were Jews as were 14 Other Ranks (plus two others whose names suggest they were Jews but for whom there were no attestation papers on the website). One of the officers died subsequently in the war as did three Jewish Other Ranks; two non-Jewish ORs died.[18]

It remains a mystery why so few Jews joined the unit. As the earlier evidence in this paper demonstrates, Jews were being recruited into the CEF, in the period after the unit was formed, in greater numbers than would have been required to make up its number. Whatever the reason, the preponderance of non-Jews in this supposedly Jewish unit — its badge included a Magen David and it continued to have the word 'Jewish' in its official title — is an ironic comment on the statement of the Duke of Connaught, the Governor-General of Canada, in October 1916. He is reported as having reviewed three new army units in Montreal, one of them being the 'Jewish Reinforcing Company'. The Duke on that occasion congratulated the Jewish community of Montreal for its active part in the formation of the unit.[19] He was not to know that not many in fact would join.

VI

As stated at the beginning, this is an investigation, in part at least, of the validity of the sources available, mainly on the Internet, for the study of soldiers of the First World War. The soldiers in the Canadian forces were chosen as the subjects of this inquiry because the attestation forms of a high proportion of them are available on the Internet, and they give the religion which the recruit stated. The extent to which such statements were likely to be true can be judged by other information on the attestation forms, such as place of birth, and names and addresses of next of kin. One by-product of the study, however, is that unlike the immigrant Jews in other countries who tended to concentrate in a small number of industries and occupations — notably in clothing, cabinet-making, and shoemaking — those Jews who attested in the CEF appear to have been active in a wide variety of trades. One cannot therefore so readily use occupation as an indication of their religion. A major conclusion, reverting to the beginning of this paper, is a caveat about the use of data relating to those who served in the First World War, especially its appearance on the Internet. However, while allowing for that drawback, some useful material can be obtained from such sources.

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NOTES

[1] The *British Jewry Book of Honour* is also available on the Internet at www.movinghere.org.uk

[2] Information from Richard Holt in e-mail dated 29 June 2003.

[3] Col. G.W.L. Nicholson, *Canadian Expeditionary Force*, 1962, Appendix C, p. 546.

[4] S.F. Wise, *Canadian Airmen and the First World War*, 1980, gives two figures. One is of 13,160 men who enlisted in Canada to serve in the various flying services (p. 633). Another gives 22,812 which includes members of the CEF who transferred to those services (p. 634).

[5] Desmond Morton, *When Your Number's Up: The Canadian Soldier in the First World War* (1993), Appendix 'A Statistical Profile of the CEF', pp. 277–9. This refers to the analysis, under Col. A.F. Duguid, of 619,636 attestation papers. It includes also the statistics of countries of origin.

[6] National Archives of Canada, RG vol. 858, 'File HQ 54-21-12-26, Director of Records to DAG Organization, 14 January 1919'. This also gives a total of

recruits to the CEF amounting to 608,741. These compare to the totals in notes 3 and 5 above. I owe this reference to Richard Holt.

[7] Louis Rosenberg, *Canada's Jews: A Social and Economic Study of Jews in Canada in the 1930's* (first published 1939, new edition 1993 edited by Morton Weinfeld).

[8] There is a discussion about the possible number of Canadian recruits to the Jewish battalion in Zachariah Kay, 'A Note on Canada and the Formation of the Jewish Legion', *Jewish Social Studies*, vol. 29, no. 3, July 1967, pp. 176–7.

[9] www.archives.ca/02/020106.e.html

[10] Information from Richard Holt who lives at St Marys.

[11] Information from Harvey Kaplan, Director of Scottish Jewish Archives.

[12] RG 150, Acc 1992–93/166, Box 6081 (Mazerkoff); RG 150, Acc 1992–93/166. Box 6067 (Mendelsohn).

[13] Harold Pollins. 'Leeds Absent Voters List 1914–1918', *Shemot* [Journal of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain], vol. 11, no. 3, September 2003, pp. 26–7.

[14] *Toronto Star*, 29 July 1916, p. 16. Provided by Richard Holt.

[15] Col. A. Fortescue Duguid, *Official History of the Canadian Forces in the Great War 1914–1919*, General Series, Volume 1, *From the Outbreak of War to the formation of the Canadian Corps, August 1914-September 1915* (1938), p. 53. However, the 97th battalion was composed of Americans.

[16] RG 9 II F9 volume 731; 'MD4 Infantry Reinforcement Draft Company (Jewish) August 1916-March 1917'.

[17] RG 9 II-B-9 'Jewish Infantry Reinforcement Draft (1st Reg.)'.

[18] A fourth Jewish soldier on the draft who died, 419617 Pte Michael Silverman, in fact was hospitalised in Britain on his arrival and returned to Canada and discharged as permanently insane. He was buried in the London (B'nai Brith) Jewish Cemetery, Ontario, in 1921: National Archives of Canada RG 150 Accession 1992–93/166 Box 8903-32.

[19] *Jewish Chronicle*, 27 October 1916, p. 20.

SECULAR STUDIES IN A HASSIDIC ENCLAVE: 'WHAT DO WE NEED IT FOR?'

William Shaffir

ONE of the central concerns of sociological research is the assimilation of minority groups. Ethnic communities tend to eventually succumb to the assimilative influences of the wider society while religious-based groups — who have been able to insulate themselves — may retain their distinctive identity and by so doing have been depicted (wrongly, in most cases) as a picturesque reminder of yesteryear caught in a time warp.

The resistance of hassidic communities to the cultural and other practices of the surrounding society has been noted.[1] However, they have not always succeeded in remaining immune to such influences and they have had to face serious problems.[2] Samuel Heilman rightly stated:[3]

> ... today's Hasidim are very much part of the modern world, struggling in a variety of ways against powerful social forces that threaten either to sweep them away or else transform them into something radically different from what their founders conceived or their leaders perceive.

At first, the social organization of these communities could effectively control the pace of change affecting them; but it is now unlikely that they will be able to maintain complete control. The physical and social boundaries, which sealed them from what their leaders considered to be pernicious influences, have become more porous and the impact of social change has exacted a toll.[4] The Tasher hassidim, the focus of this article, serve as a case in point. Despite their comparative isolation from the urban centre, they have been required to interact more frequently with the institutions of the municipal and provincial authorities in order to sustain their enclave and to provide for the religious and other daily needs of their members.

The Tasher enclave was established in the 1960s in Boisbriand, Quebec, some 25 kilometres north of Montreal. The 18 Tash families who

left Montreal to establish a refuge from the temptations of city life have burgeoned into a self-sufficient community of close to 250 families, or 3,000 persons. The community boasts a series of institutions — including yeshivas, schools, mikvehs, a colonnaded shopping area, and an ambulance service — which have enabled it to remain insulated from the mainstream. A new slaughter-house and matza bakery are currently nearing completion. A resident boasted to a newspaper reporter: 'We have everything here, except drugs, crime, and AIDS'.

The occupational breakdown for males has changed as the community has grown. About 20 per cent of the employable males work outside the community; a few own their own companies, while the majority work for others — for example, as a real estate agent, an electrician, or as employees in hassidic-owned industries. However, the majority of the men are engaged in religious-oriented work (as teachers, ritual slaughterers, and kashrut supervisors) and in religious study in the *kollel* (advanced Talmudic academy for married men). But there are now in the community, more than previously, small-scale, independent retail concerns which individuals operate from their homes; these include clothes alterations, photographic supplies, shoes, dry goods, jewelry, and computer hardware and software. However, as a result of the enclave's growth, more men are employed in various administrative and accounting positions; there are several bookkeepers and other personnel who are paid salaries. In the main, women remain at home to raise children; the exceptions are those who teach in the girl's school or are engaged in office-related work there, and the few who are employed in commercial enterprises in the community.

Secular education, however limited in scope, presents grave problems. I referred to that when I first wrote about the Tasher in 1987[5] in this Journal. In 2002, I decided to return to Boisbriand to discover whether the Tasher leaders remain as fully committed as they had been in the 1980s to screening and controlling all materials to which the students are given access — or whether attitudes to secular education have become more liberal. I found that although the contents of the secular programmes for boys and for girls are radically different, the underlying attitude about the relevance and importance of secular studies is almost identical for both sexes.

Outsiders who gaze upon these hassidic Jews — the men bearded with side-curls and wearing long black coats and occasionally fur-trimmed hats, while the women wear high-necked and loose-fitting dresses, with kerchiefs or traditional wigs covering their hair — may well think that their world has remained fixed and has withstood the influences of secular forces which could be detrimental to their distinctive and cloistered way of life. After an absence of five years, a returning visitor to the Tasher enclave in Boisbriand would not detect any notable change: the appearance of the hassidim is the same, women still do not drive cars,

the importation of secular newspapers in the community is forbidden, and the sexes remain separated from early childhood. However, as I noted in an earlier issue of this Journal, while '... the community appears a picturesque reminder of yesteryear caught in a time warp ... this is a gross misperception of the Tasher who are, in several respects, very much part of the modern world'.[6]

On the other hand, a great deal of change did occur since the early 1990s: many more single and multiple-family dwellings have been built and that construction has necessitated the addition of several streets. Moreover, the enclave now features a shopping complex, with a supermarket, and a variety of stores selling books and religious articles, health-care products, and children's clothes and toys. Most conspicuous, perhaps, are several new buildings: a new synagogue, an office complex, a home for the aged, and three educational establishments: a school for girls, a school for young boys, and a yeshiva *ktana* (literally, a small yeshiva) for boys. A sign by the entrance acknowledges that the Tasher benefited from a $177,000 grant from the federal and provincial governments for new sidewalks along a part of the main street, while there are new signs (in English, French, and Yiddish) about speed limits and parking restrictions.

Contextual backdrop: from the perspective of the community

The school for boys and that for girls are situated close to the opposite ends of the enclave. A central yeshiva had been built when the Tasher community was founded, to cater for unmarried males aged 18 and over. The yeshiva *ktana* is for boys from the age of bar-mitzva to 17 years. The school for boys is for pupils from nursery age till 12 years old. The school for girls is for pupils from early childhood until the age of 17 or 18 — until Grade 12.[7] It is a new building completed in 2001.[8]

Where secular studies are concerned, it is important to note that the Tasher are wary of any activity whatsoever which may detract in their view from an individual's religious obligations and commitments: such an activity must be minimized and, where possible, entirely avoided. The parameters of secular education must be determined against this orientation. The community's purpose and direction were established by the Tasher rebbe when he founded the enclave in 1963: a place for Torah study and where the pursuit of an ultra-Orthodox lifestyle would be unimpeded by conflicting distractions. Secular studies have not been allowed since then to play a significant role. There is no expectation whatsoever that the knowledge gained from these studies would be used to secure employment outside the community. Their content continues to be controlled while the texts are carefully censored to insure that undesirable influences do not penetrate the cloistered enclave.[9] At best,

skills derived from the studies are meant to facilitate the limited contacts the Tasher may have with outsiders.

As a general rule, secular education is deemed potentially dangerous. The Tasher maintain that merely reading English books could expose their children to ideas which might flatly contradict the teachings of Torah or which could lead them to question their religious upbringing. For instance, a Tasher told me that reading English books may lead to the possible desire to learn even more by actually visiting a public library, and he added:

> *Chas ve'sholem* [Heaven forbid] we don't want that. We don't want a kid to do that, that he should read that the world is 5 billion years old. That's *apikoirsus* [heresy]. First of all, a religious Jews is not supposed to read a book that doesn't have rabbinical *haskommeh* [approval]. Do you know a library in Montreal that has approval?

On another occasion, I sat with a hassid in his dining-room and discussed the topic of English books and reading; I asked specifically whether his children have ever read, or would ever read, such books and he replied:

> My son grew up in Tash and he's very good in English spelling... . But I didn't let him read books... . Look [pointing to the religious texts lined against the wall], those are my books. Do you see one book in the English language? No, not even one. English is something we don't, it's not only English, it's also French.

Among Tasher, as among other hassidic and haredi Jews, it is expected that as much time as possible will be devoted to religious study and to the enactment of the Torah's commandments. On the other hand, the Tasher recognize that practical constraints may not allow absolutely total devotion to Torah study. One of them told me:

> Our beliefs in halakha [Code of Jewish Laws] is that every minute of your life you should learn ... because this is the way we're brought up with this attitude and every minute of a man's life you should learn Torah – *v'sheenatom levoonaicho v'deebarto bam* [Teach them (commandments) thoroughly to your children and speak of them]. But because we're human, we have to eat, we have to sleep, we have to bring income for the family, there's a need to close the *saifer* [religious text] and go out. ... So our belief is that we have to do more and more Torah, we have to do more and more *mitzvess* [religious commandments].

In such an ideology, Torah is the benchmark for determining whether an activity is meritorious and therefore worthy of pursuit, while secular education does not rank very high. However, attitudes do vary in Boisbriand: at one extreme, some parents do not allow their sons to devote any time whatsoever to secular studies while others — who constitute the majority of parents — recognize the limited importance of

such studies and take advantage of the opportunity to enrol their boys in the courses available in the enclave. One of the latter told me:

> I want the boys to know a little bit of English, they should know how to write, understand. You have to do banking. You have to know a little bit. You're in an environment, in today's world, and you can't do without it.

On the other hand, since time is precious and should be used in pursuit of Torah study, it is unsurprising that secular studies are often relegated to the category of '*bitl zman*' or '*bitl Torah*': a waste of time, or a waste of the opportunity to study Torah. The Tasher generally claim that secular studies serve little or no purpose — although, as stated above, most of them do in fact allow their sons to acquire some secular knowledge. They say that it could distract men away from a life devoted to Torah study or could deflect girls from Torah-purposeful activities. One of the inhabitants told me:

> The only thing that we should learn is arithmetic, that's all. All others, I don't need. No one will become a lawyer and not a general practitioner, a doctor or a heart surgeon, so therefore what do they need it for? ... . Just to talk the language? You see, I never learned English and I'm speaking very good English.

When I suggested to another hassid that a working knowledge of English and French is useful for shopping or interacting with health care professionals, he replied:

> So because of that they should go and waste half a day? ... . They don't watch television, they don't read *The Gazette* [English-language daily newspaper], even *The Canadian Jewish News* [a weekly paper]... so why do they need English?

The Tasher do not agree with the view (common in the wider society) which links education with material success and well-being. That is not is not to say that the Tasher are impervious to the notion of success, defined either materially or otherwise; but they believe that success will be achieved with the help of the Almighty and of a lifestyle according to the precepts of the Torah. The following statement reflects the opinion of the majority of Tasher:

> We see, in fact, many very wealthy people, they don't know much English. They can barely sign their name but they're very wealthy people because they have *hatzlocheh* [success] in their work. We don't find that to be wealthy it's to have a high degree, to have studied [secular]. ... . We believe that the *brocheh* [blessing] in our health, our wealth is more because we do more for the Torah. The more we do for the Torah, the more *mitzvess* [commandments] we do, the more good we do one to another, the more that brings us what we want to have. It's not the more we study or the high degree we go for.

However, these hassidim do not deny that in the inevitable interactions with outsiders, they need at least some facility with English and French and, for those whose employment is beyond the confines of the community, at least a rudimentary knowledge of business and commercial practices. But they believe that this is best accomplished by acquiring the relevant information and knowledge as it is needed — not before. Several of them stressed this point while defending their claim that accumulating secular-based information in the absence of practical requirements is not only unnecessary: it is a waste of time. One said:

> My father came here when he was 27 years not knowing a word of English. He came to the United States and Canada and was a real successful businessman. My brother didn't learn English and he was unable to communicate in English when he became a businessman. Now he's a real successful businessman. So why spend all those time and years, for what?

I asked him whether his son knew enough English to send a letter to a bank regarding a particular problem and he replied that he himself could do so and added: 'So my son would also be. Maybe if not, he will ask his wife. And my son if he would need it, and if he would go on to a business, he would do that. When I was my son's age, I also was not able'. (It is worth noting here that the Tasher expect women to be more skilled in secular matters, as this statement shows.)

This attitude was reflected in another comment made to me:

> I never in my life learned accounting, and I needed a job. Someone offered me to be a pencil pusher on a computer with an accounting software. I told them, 'I don't know accounting. I know how to write a cheque. I know that when you write a cheque, this amount has to come out of the bank when the cheque passes the bank. I know when you sell someone some goods they send you an invoice with a delivery slip which is signed, then you have to pay for that goods. That's all I know. They said, 'You don't mind, you just enter the bills, the invoice, and here you enter the cheques, that's all'. I worked for them for two years. I prepared their financial statement after two years. The only thing that accountant had because he was going to college, was to take his stamp and put it on.

I interviewed a young father about the subject. He was sitting in his office, surrounded by an array of telephones, computers, and other electronic devices, and he said: 'I think that if you have to learn something, then you can learn it. You don't have to learn it because you think that maybe in the future you will have to know'. He pointed to his computers and added: 'I taught myself about computers. I can build computers. ... You have to know so you learn and I was thinking that maybe that's the way I would teach my son'.

Another hassid also saw no value in secular studies:

> I don't need it. What do I need it for? How will it change me? What will I know more, what will I know less?

I insisted: 'You wouldn't know more?' and he replied: 'No, I know everything you know. I know exactly what Prime Minister Chrétien says, I know exactly what President Bush wants. I know exactly. So what do I need it for?'

On the other hand, there are some other Tasher who are not of that opinion and who maintain — at least in their conversations with me — that the condemnation of secular studies is unrealistic for the majority of the community. One of those dissenters told me:

> ... people who have businesses will attempt after their children [males] get married to educate them. But it's not always successful. As a matter of fact, it's not successful. People lack a complete understanding of what office life is, what a business entity is.

However, it must be noted that the cloistered nature of the community makes it difficult to disagree with the 'official' stance. A few of the dissenters took me into their confidence: they did not condemn that official line but commented that the community would experience dramatic changes when the Tasher rebbe would no longer be capable of acquiring funds to continue to maintain the enclave and that practical necessities would compel the hassidim to be better trained and educated. When I approached a resident who was not surrounded by others and asked his opinion about secular studies in the enclave, he said that the studies were extremely limited in scope, especially for the male pupils, and indeed even for the girls: both sexes were inadequately prepared for employment which required language and office-related skills. For the present, the enclave was capable of providing employment for many of its members but that situation would surely not be sustained forever, would it? He added:

> Either the internal economy would be very successful at which point you don't really need the intervention of the outside economy to make the community profitable and sustainable. Other than that you will simply have to give and people will have to be educated. There's no other way around it.... I believe that ... it [secular education] would be fuelled by practicality.

As noted above, there is a limited programme of secular studies for boys, while the girls are offered a wider array of subjects. The Tasher assert that males and females are inherently different and that such differences must therefore be reflected in the organization of daily life. Adult males have religious duties and their prayers must take place at strictly-defined times, whereas women do not have such constraints of time.[10] Males are required to embark upon a lengthy and intensive period of study, beginning as soon as they enter *heder* — the primary religious school. A Tasher rabbi explained to me that females must also be knowledgeable about specific matters, while males are under an actual obligation to study Torah. He said: 'The mitzvah from learning is just by

the boys' and quoted from a Jewish prayer book and Hebrew words instructing: 'You should teach your sons, and not your daughters'. This rabbi is also an educator and explained further:

> You don't have to learn with the daughters Torah, they just have to know about mitzvess, the *haloochess* [laws] of shabbess [the Sabbath], they have to know about yom tov [religious holidays], they [should] know the parsha [weekly Torah reading]. They know things that they know because they have to be the mother in the house, learn with the children to make *broochess* [blessings], what [blessing] you make on this, which one on that, what's *Moishe Rabbainu* [reference to Moses, the prophet], what's *Avrohom* [Abraham, the Patriarch], they have to know everything, but it's not you have to learn it inside and know the *G'mooreh* [portion of the Talmud explaining the Mishna] and the *Mishneiyess* [refers to the book of oral laws upon which the Talmud is based] and the Rashi [author of an 11th century commentary on the Bible and the Talmud]. They don't learn all this. So [for] the Parsha they have, let's say, two hours a day. You divide the day in Parsha, secular English, secular French, they have more time. For the boys, they have to learn.

I was told the same by a layman, that girls need only be able to study the weekly Torah portion and basic religious laws and that their education must prepare them for their responsibilities in the home:

> They would learn how to sew clothing, sew dresses, they would learn how to cook and bake because we don't go out for dinner. ... So our girls learn to cook, to bake, to sew.

Since the girls are neither required nor, indeed, permitted to engage in intensive religious programmes, they have considerably more time for specific secular studies. Another man explained further:

> The difference is simply because boys they have a mitzvah of learning Torah, so they spend most of their time learning the Torah and taking whatever after that as a part time; whatever time we have after that we take it to learn what's needed to learn for what we need. So to take time for English and French, ... that's a lot of time. So we feel that we don't have the time to take away from the boys for so much even for the English classes.

On another occasion, I asked why girls were exposed to more hours of secular studies and I was told that this is because they need more secular skills '... because somebody needs to be educated because if they receive something or they go shopping so they should be able to talk with people'. On the other hand, secular knowledge is not always useful: 'My daughter knows exactly every country in the world where it's situated geographically. I don't know every country in the world. Would she use that in her whole life? Never ever. But it doesn't hurt. It takes time'.

SECULAR STUDIES IN A HASSIDIC ENCLAVE

The Curriculum for boys

One hassid commented about the secular studies for boys: 'It looks like a programme, but it isn't a programme. It looks to appear like it is something'. However, the school principal explained: 'This programme really just started. They had a little before, but it wasn't very organized. They just want the very basics'. His previous occupation was a charter bus driver; but he loves working with children and he asserts: '... Ha-Shem put me here for a reason'. He told me that the Tasher employed him in 2001 and that although he had no formal educational credentials, he believes that he was in fact a highly suitable choice. I asked him why that was so and he explained:

> Simple. I know the mentality over here. I went to hassidishe schools and I grew up in this kind of environment, and I know this environment very well. I know these type of boys. ... And they needed somebody that knows them and can teach them secular on their level. ... If they bring in somebody from the outside, like a person like you, go start explaining, 'This you're not allowed, this you are allowed'. What'll happen is you'll get very much discouraged, you won't understand it, and you'll be out of here in approximately a day and a half.

He added that when he was interviewed by the enclave's education committee (*Vaad Hachinuch*) they told him briefly 'in a nutshell' what his duties would be, what they expected him to accomplish. The members of that committee do not give him a budget: 'I tell them what I need and they either tell me "Yes" or "No"'. So far, they have approved all his requests. He is of course aware of the highly-cloistered nature of the enclave but does not believe that a very limited secular education would be a corrupting influence since '... there's a world out there, you need it'. On the subject of parents who believe that secular studies are entirely unnecessary, he commented:

> Some people actually don't mind that their kids are handicapped in reading so that when they go out into the world they won't be able to read all the dirty stuff. I disagree with it. I think just the opposite: He will think it's a forbidden fruit and he will want to get it. ... I had one of those parents, so I said: 'When your husband goes to the bank, how does he speak? Can he sign his name? Does he know how to fill out a cheque? Don't you think in the year 2000 that it's necessary'? I mean you're not talking that we're going to turn these kids into God knows what, but we are going to give them the fundamental thing, so that late in life they're going to be able to get along. It's all what we're talking about over here.

The school is situated at the far end of the enclave, near the small yeshiva and opposite the main yeshiva; there are some 400 boys ranging in age from nursery till bar- mitzvah: from the age of two and a half to 13 years. It is a modern building, completed in the late 1990s and plaques and inscriptions identify major donors who financed the edifice. The

number of the pupils has been increasing every year and there is an impressive array of scooters (without pedals) lining the entrances to the school. (Bicycles are not allowed in the enclave.)

From the age of six and a half years, the boys are given one hour of secular studies from Sunday to Thursday. That hour begins at 4 p.m. and since the pupils have been at school from the morning, they are naturally tired. Moreover, secular studies reflect a dramatic contrast with the school's religious tuition: they not only come at the end of the day, but the staff is completely different in both appearance and comportment. When I first met the secular teachers, four of the five men were dressed in jeans and shirts.

The teachers have their own room, adjacent to the main office; it is furnished plainly with a desk, a telephone, and a photocopying machine; there is a variety of English books on some shelves; some have apparently accumulated over the years, while others have been acquired for probable use. I asked about their provenance and was told by the principal:

> A lot come from inheritance. I also go out and shop around. But the basic curriculum I got from a school in New York. ... I had to make my own math books. If you take a look, I made it in three levels. This is Math 1. Math 1, unfortunately, the whole school is going to go through. ... In the real English school, you're going to call it kindergarten level, Grade 1. These kids don't know, so I have to teach it. Then I'm going to go to Math 2 which is a little higher and then Math 3. What I did was, just basically a *chazorreh* [repetition] to go over everything and to take them a little bit further.

The office where the teachers congregate becomes a hive of activity during the later afternoon, when the pupils surround the principal, asking about the English programme and about members of the secular staff. The boys seem eager to be helpful, willing to perform menial tasks, such as shelving books, in order to win the good graces of the secular staff.

Advertisements for teachers of secular subjects were placed in an English-language newspaper; but in the event, the teachers were recruited mainly by word of mouth. Two of them are university graduates - - which, in fact, was not an asset. The principal told me:

> I'm going towards the hassidishe teachers, the ones that don't have any license... because then you can mould exactly what you want. ... We're not professors in college.

When I asked whether the teachers had any formal training, he maintained:

> No, it's not necessary. When I interview them, I can tell if they're the teacher material or not. That's my knack. I can tell whether he can relate to kids or not, and that's what we want. We need people who can relate.

Moreover, a commitment to Orthodox Judaism is also not a formal requirement for teachers of secular studies; indeed, a few of these teachers

had not been observant Jews a few years ago. But by 2003, the entire staff observed the Sabbath and the principal commented that this had made an important difference: 'Everyone is *shoimer shabbess*, complete. Baruch Ha-Shem, the school has progressed over here at one hundred per cent'. He explained that some of the earlier teachers, who had been unobservant, had created problems:

> The pattern in Tash ... is that it's a unique community and its unique people need what they need. To give you an example of what I went through. A teacher would come in and yell at a kid and say, 'Sit down on your tush'. It's not a dirty word. ... The kids would rouse up and call the teacher '*Chazer*' [Pig]. Now he didn't know that's a bad word over here. You know, there are so many things I went through ... similar like that. The teacher would walk in and say, 'It smells over here'. They'd say the teacher is a *chazer*. So that's why I took in a few hassidishe, more *frum* [observant] teachers.

The secular-studies curriculum for boys is centred on the very basics in mathematics and the English language. A school administrator explained to me:

> They wanted, basically, that the kids should be able to do math, and they should know how to read a little bit because they have an hour a day, so just to read, sign their names, as much as they can fit in to give them the knowledge so when they finish over here, they should be able to speak and read as much as possible. ... Reading and math are number one.

One of the teachers said: 'When parents see me, maths is always number one because they know it will help their kids with Talmud. They always stress maths'. A Tasher confirmed what the school administrator told me:

> We're not interested the boys should be educated. ... We want they should know enough secular when it comes a bill, what's the bill saying, when you come in an office and the doctor is out of the office for two hours. So you have to know basic things. You go in a bank to deposit something. You want to write something. Basic things. That's it.

Since the Tasher cannot rely upon printed texts — which might include inappropriate prose and images — the principal collates material specific to the needs of the pupils. That material, culled from textbooks, is fitted into binders with covers which state *Talmud Torah Beth Yuda Elementary School* along with a title indicating the subject matter. For example, 'Reading-A'; 'Spelling-A'; or 'English-1'. The texts are sorted by academic level: in 'Reading-A', beginners are introduced to the letters of the English alphabet because the focus is on letter recognition and printing. (It must be borne in mind that the Tasher use only Hebrew characters in their Yiddish tuition.) In school exercises, pupils have to print a specific letter — an A for example — and then must choose from a variety of sketches of objects and circle those which start with the letter

A. The 'English-1' workbook, for a more advanced grade, introduces students to the days and months; to printed and cursive writing; to numbers; and to abbreviations for streets - - such as Pl. for place, Terr. for Terrace, and Sq. for Square. That 'English-1' workbook includes antonyms, synonyms, homophones, compound words, contractions, syllables, and various sounding words — such as 'ck' which is shown in words like 'back' or 'duck'. However, it is clear that even the more advanced students do not always manage to become familiar with the entire contents of that workbook. A teacher told me: 'The English, here, is very basic. Everyone starts at Grade 1. Some grades advance but not by very much. It's very basic. That's what they want'.

In 2002, all pupils were taught Grade 1 English, while by 2003, some had advanced to Grade 2 and another class, according to the principal, had even started to read English. By contrast, in mathematics the most advanced class had already reached Grades 3 and 4.

Although the secular curriculum is very elementary and (as stated earlier) restricted to only one hour in the late afternoon, some parents refuse to allow their sons to be enrolled because they believe that secular studies are unnecessary and that they are likely to have an adverse effect on their boy's religious upbringing. A school official commented:

> Some of them are really ultra-frum and think that English is not necessary. Some go a step forward ... and think it makes the boy's head *meshiggeh* [crazy], he can't learn Torah. So we have all different kinds of parents over here... . Everybody has their own needs, everybody has their own wants... . Some people think it's not necessary, some people think that English was a joke so automatically it promotes *chutzpah* [disrespect]. Some people think that the teachers are goyim, but that has stopped. And then you have kids that fall out. People think it's not important, that it's too hard for the kid... .

Since the teachers of secular studies are outsiders and require sensitization to the needs of the Tasher community, the school principal has the responsibility to instruct them on particular matters which are deemed inappropriate for discussion. This is not limited to an initial briefing at the start of the school year; the situation requires constant vigilance. The school principal commented about some former staff members: 'Some of them really mean well, but they went a little bit overboard. They started with Israel, they started with the war [the Intifada] and that's a problem over here'. The principal stressed: 'Religion and Israel are absolutely out of the question. I tell the teachers. ... religion stays outside'. A further serious difficulty arises if the secular-studies teacher does not know Yiddish. The principal explained how he had to warn:

> Well, what I tell them, basically, is that you should know that these kids come from a very *frum* environment, ... they don't know the world. And one of the things is that they're used to their own people, and you'll have a hard time

> getting close to them. They will not allow you to go into them. ... And that takes a while ... because these kids never had English. For them English is taboo. There is zero English spoken in this area, only Yiddish, and here you come in and start teaching something that's difficult. Number one, the first day of school that the teacher walks in and speaks English, the kid wants to go to the toilet. He doesn't know how to tell the teacher that. So the first week is a major problem with regular communication.

Teachers of secular studies are also instructed that some issues must not be discussed or mentioned: matters of a personal nature, religion, and the State of Israel. It is recognized that young boys are naturally curious about outsiders and their personal habits. One teacher said: 'I don't answer their questions. I just tell them it's none of their business'. Clearly, the main objective is not to introduce any materials or any ideas which may be at odds with the chosen lifestyle of the Tasher enclave.

Since the community seems to be generally satisfied with the restricted curriculum of secular studies, there is no reason to expect major changes in the immediate future — only that these studies might be more systematically organized. That has already been more than achieved in the school for girls.

Bays Tzirl: the school for girls

Bays Tzirl (named after the Tasher rebbe's mother) is an impressive modern building, with numerous one-way glass windows. There are two levels: the lower one houses the nursery school, a day- care centre, the high school, and the school's administrative offices; the upper level has the elementary school, the rooms for teachers, and other administrative offices. In 2003, Bays Tzirl had an approximate total of 500 girls from nursery and kindergarten to high school.

As stated earlier, Tasher girls (in contrast to the case for boys) are given a very limited Torah education. They therefore have much more time for general studies. At both the elementary and high school levels, these extend for three hours daily, from Sunday to Thursday inclusive. In the elementary grades, the pupils have French instruction every day for one and a half hours and science and mathematics are taught in that language. In high school, however, the time allocated to daily French-language instruction varies.

The secular curriculum for girls is not only more structured than that for boys, it is vastly more extensive — as is obvious from the fact that so many more hours are devoted to it. From Grade 3 (at the age of about eight) the curriculum includes spelling, grammar, geography (taught in French) and instruction in what an administrator describes as 'extra skills' and 'extra knowledge' — for example, safety, inventors, famous personalities (Helen Keller), or communities and their lifestyles (Eskimos). Evidence of the general programme is displayed along the walls in the

corridors where, in addition to murals and art work depicting Torah themes, there are others (in both French and English) about topics in geography and health.

Some measure of secular studies was traditionally available for girls; but now school officials are eager to claim that the curriculum has been substantially improved over the past several years. The principal is obviously proud of the progress:

> First of all, we've integrated much more French... . The English level has gone up tremendously. If we're compared to many schools in the States, or even in Montreal, we're pretty much on the level. I've had teachers coming in now to my high school from the city and they say, 'You know, your girls really write well', which wasn't when I first came in. When I first came in [in 1991], third and fourth grade were doing like second grade level, seventh grade was on like a fourth-fifth grade level... . We've come a long way. We have a very set programme. I have books for math. Spelling is a series that goes through from Grade 2 till Grade 8. We have really come a long distance and it shows.

The improvement in the French programme is also eagerly pointed out in detail; it has been implemented by a curriculum specialist who had been employed for that purpose. That programme aims to follow the pedagogical guidelines established by the Quebec Ministry of Education. A selection has been made from material approved by that Ministry, but school officials occasionally prepare (for a particular unit) contents which are more in keeping with the community's religious beliefs and norms. For example, a segment on the wars of religion in Europe after the Reformation, between Catholics and Protestants, might be replaced by another unit focusing on immigration patterns in Quebec province. For the present, a *modus vivendi* characterizes the community's relationship with the government authorities.

It is important to point out here that it is precisely because this school for girls has increased the number of hours for secular tuition, that it was qualified (and could apply) for government subsidy. The Quebec government pays some 51 per cent of the total cost of general studies in private schools — but not for the religious schools without a recognized provision for tuition in general studies. An institution may apply to the Department of Private Education in the Ministry of Education to be recognized as a private school. The school must meet the requirements laid out by the Ministry. These include, for example, if it enjoys community backing along with a credible statement of its mission and vision. If approved, it is granted a permit. All schools in the province require a permit to exist. According to the province's Private Education Act, a school is responsible for its pupils' well-being, and these include physical, social, and pedagogical dimensions.[11] Bays Tzirl has been granted eligibility to apply for a government subsidy since the mid-1990s, but it has only occasionally taken advantage of that status.

In the school for boys, the entire secular staff in charge of secular studies may be outsiders. In the school for girls, secular studies may be taught by some Bays Tzirl 12th grade graduates, employed for the purpose; but the majority of the staff come from Montreal: they are teachers specifically qualified to provide tuition in mathematics, French, and biology. The principal, a Tasher woman, said: 'I teach biology, limited, but they get to know the different parts of the body. They learn what cells are, what the skin is, the five senses, the lungs, the heart, digestive system'. Whatever else is covered in biology, reproduction is not.

In 2003, all the teachers were Jewish females, but not all were sufficiently Orthodox to observe the Sabbath, and they did not all have the same degree of formal qualifications. The teachers of French must be certificated to meet the standards of the Ministry of Education and they are therefore more difficult to recruit by the Tasher. The latter therefore are not in a position to insist that these specialist teachers must be religiously observant. The other teachers are selected with great care. Those who lack formal credentials are not entirely devoid of teaching experience. An educator told me that all the teachers of English have seminary degrees; one of them had worked in a summer camp for special children and another had been running a day care programme.

Many teachers live in Montreal and several have graduated from the Belz hassidic institution which trains teachers for girls' schools; the principal told me that such graduates 'suit our needs'. However, graduates of a local university's Faculty of Education do not. She said: 'No, I don't want them. I don't want somebody with a degree ... because they don't understand our type of children' and she added that those graduates:

> won't understand that our children are limited in their skills, in their oral skills... . I've had an experience with some teachers who have had their special degrees from Bays Yankev [an Orthodox girl's school in Montreal]. I ran into a little bit of a problem that they could not understand, and it took them quite a while till they got into understanding the mentality of Tash - - that they're not ending up in college these girls. We want them to be able to read something, to understand, to communicate... .

Clearly, 'understanding the mentality of Tash' is more important than formal teaching qualifications — which are neither necessary in all cases nor sufficiently adequate. The principal explained that teachers must be familiar with, and sensitive to, '... the needs and the understanding why the English is not on such a high level, especially in elementary'. A practical orientation is essential, as a French teacher noted:

> There's one teacher who does the practical French, what you need in order to live in our society. You learn how to read a ticket in French, learn how to read a bill, very practical things, ask for a passport, a visa. All these practical things to understand politics a little bit. They also do some reading, some literature, [but] they don't go very far as far as literature goes.

Since Tasher households are typically large and the homes are generally small, children are not expected to be given homework. A teacher explained: 'When you're doing homework you need a room where you can concentrate. [When] you have three, four siblings who are under you, it's hard to concentrate. It puts a lot of pressure on the house'. If any homework is assigned, it should require no more than 15 minutes to complete.

The school curriculum is carefully structured to complement and sustain the enclave's insulated existence; this is an increasingly challenging task as the community has expanded. A Tasher connected to the school commented: 'It's very very difficult, really, to filter everything out'. When they are appointed, teachers are told that there are specific topics which are inappropriate for classroom discussion — such as religion, Israel, boyfriends, and dating.[12] The girls, like the boys, are curious about the private lives of their teachers; but the latter are instructed not to respond to such inquiries. A school administrator told me:

> A very important point is not letting the child go into the personal life of the teacher. Even it's 'Are you married, are you not?' This child lives in a closed environment and is very curious about what's going on. And we don't want to see that curiosity. So ... we did a whole workshop about it. We came up with a lot of discussions that children might come up with, 'Oh, you got a new pair of shoes, teacher, they're so pretty'. The child is trying to initiate a personal conversation.

Moreover, teachers must not bring into the enclave any pedagogical material which has not been approved by the principal; she told me: '... some things may look innocent, and yet I may say, 'I don't like it'. I inquired whether newspapers were a case in point, and she replied:

> Newspapers, they're not allowed to bring into class the newspaper, but if they bring me an article, I will photocopy it if I approve of it. I had a teacher that brought in a poem and I just said, 'I don't like it, I don't want you to use it' . You know? So there are rules that teachers have... . No talking of evolution, no talking of reproduction, no talking of your personal life.

One way to control the infiltration of undesirable influences is to specify the range of unacceptable topics and another is to censor materials. Each text is carefully examined and inappropriate passages are blacked out. The principal was adamant; she told me: 'I censor the book. First of all, anything that deals with television or radio or reproductive system, or anything like that, we take out'. When I asked, 'How do you take it out?' she replied: 'We mark it off. We mark it out' and proceeded to show me some examples. She then commented:

> There's a lot of work involved. Here's the Grade 2 Spelling book. We've been through the book once. I have a master list of all the things that should be taken out and somebody before school is hired to do that. For example, this picture [turning to a particular page] is taken out. Why? Because it's a live picture, and we don't use anything that's a live picture. This is probably a

child at a beach, so we take that out. We fix the sleeves [as she turns to another picture] so it's pretty decent.

I was told that the master list compiled by the principal for the Skills Practice Book, used in Grade 4 (9-years-old) identifies doubtful contents on more than 50 pages. For example, the word 'movie' was replaced by 'story' while some sentences and exercises were entirely blacked out. In a sentence stating 'The speech was about a dinosaur', 'dinosaur' was replaced by the word 'food'. Other words such as 'television', 'radio', 'pork' and 'Halloween,' were also crossed out and replaced by more acceptable terms. The master list of corrections directs that several pages of the book must be torn out. In the Merrill Spelling book used by Grade 3, no fewer than 40 pictures were blacked out while words such as 'church', 'movies', and 'television' were removed from spelling exercises. In the Merrill Spelling for Grade 6, an entire exercise was crossed out in black marker: it required students to write the science words to complete a particular paragraph — words such as brontosaurus, dinosaur, tyranos, stegasaurus, and fossil. Numerous words and pictures have also been deleted. When I asked the principal whether the blacked-out material heightened a pupil's curiosity, she replied:

We used to have where the children tried to scratch it off and I just told the girls, 'Listen girls, if I covered it up, it's a picture that I don't want you seeing, or it's some words that I don't want you seeing. And if I would want you to see it, I would leave it open'. They're not bothered with it anymore.

Conclusion

The Tasher educational authorities are aware that their stringent efforts to screen the curriculum and to censor inappropriate materials can be successful only up to a point. However, since the enclave is self-contained, the administrators and religious leaders believe that they are still in a position to control both the direction and the organization of secular studies. But it is possible that changing circumstances may compel them to revise the scope and quality of secular studies within the enclave, especially as it affects boys. For example, financial problems may cause some of the teachers, religious functionaries, accountants, office workers, and others — who are currently paid salaries by the community — to need to find paid employment elsewhere. It is more likely, perhaps, that specialized training for targeted types of work will become available to married men (or even to women) which will require a basic of knowledge of selective secular studies.

While the Tasher do not expect their community to change dramatically either in the near or even long-term future, they remain vigilant against the intrusion of foreign influences. The enclave's secluded setting away from Montreal and its boundary maintenance continue to be

the envy of hassidim living in Montreal. That seclusion may also continue to be worthy of sociological inquiry — whether the Tasher will still be able to limit the content and organization of secular studies or whether (however reluctantly) they will allow some acculturation.

NOTES

[1] Despite such overall success, some studies have pointed to the strains and stresses which affected that lifestyle and threatened it. See, for example, John Hostetler, *Hutterite Society*, Baltimore, 1974; Jerome Mintz, *Hasidic People*, Cambridge, Mass., 1992; Karl Peter, *The Dynamics of Hutterite Society: An Analytical Approach*, Edmonton, 1987; Israel Rubin, *Satmar: Two Generations of an Urban Island*, New York, 1997.

[2] In the last few years, a number of them have been rocked by scandal and controversy — including acts of child and drug abuse, racism, violence, and kidnapping. See Janet Belcove-Shalin, *New World Hasidim: Ethnographic Studies Of Hasidic Jews In America*, Albany, N.Y., 1995.

[3] See Samuel Heilman, *Defenders of the Faith: Inside Ultra-Orthodox Jewry*, New York, 1992.

[4] See Janet Belcove-Shalin, op. cit. in note 2 above; Karl Peter, op. cit. in note 1 above.

[5] See William Shaffir, 'Separation From the Mainstream in Canada: The Hassidic Community of Tash', *The Jewish Journal of Sociology* vol. XXIX, no.1, June 1987, pp. 19–35.

[6] See William Shaffir, 'Still Separated from the Mainstream: A Hassidic Community Revisited', *The Jewish Journal of Sociology*, vol. XXXIX, nos. 1&2, 1997, p. 59.

[7] The yeshiva *k'tana* is not relevant in this article. Boys of that age devote their entire day to religious studies.

[8] The Tasher receive some subsidization from the Quebec government for the secular programme of the girls. Explaining how he improved relations between the Tasher hassidim and the local French Canadian population, a former member of the provincial legislature commented:

> 'I was able... to have the government recognize the school for a subsidy. They've had a girl's school since 1964, and they've never requested a cent and they pay taxes like everybody else. So we sat down with the Minister of Education and we were able to come to a compromise where both their cultural and religious upbringing would not interfere with the more regular teaching of... history, French, mathematics, and things like that. And they finally came to an understanding and now the girl's school is recognized and is subsidized.

Since this school meets most of the requirements set by the Ministry of Education, it receives some 70 per cent funding. By contrast, the boys' school receives no funding whatsoever because it chooses not to comply with the Quebec Ministry of Education's curricular guidelines for secular studies.

[9] The Tasher's overall perspective on secular studies is similar to that of ultra-Orthodox Jews in Israel. In January 2000, the religious affairs correspondent of an Israeli daily Hebrew newspaper reported that almost all the members of the

Council of Torah Sages had agreed to a binding rabbinical opinion which declared that there were inherent dangers within computers, compact disc players, the cinema, and the Internet: impressionable young people would be led astray. The Council referred to the ban ultra-Orthodox rabbis had imposed on television 30 years earlier and asserted that the Internet was a danger a thousand times greater and was liable to bring ruin and destruction upon all of Israel. For the Tasher, secular education is symbolic of the Internet and would lower the barriers which have contained acculturative threats from the outside world.

[10] This refers to an established principle in the Talmud, identified in various tractates, that women are exempt from performing time-oriented commandments — for example, those of lulav, shofar, tefillin. See Kedushim 29a.

[11] In the absence of a permit, the so-called school is identified as an Ecole Phantome, a phantom school.

[12] Indeed, the written instructions in effect when I first wrote about the community, still remain in force. The Yiddish teacher's manual distributed to the religious studies staff contains clear do's and don't's about what is considered appropriate female behavior. Under the categories of Modesty, Demeanour, Play, and Dress, teachers are offered two pages in point form — a total of 42 directives — reflecting prescribed and proscribed behaviour. These gender rules, which are provided for the religious studies staff, also set the tone for the constraints imposed upon the programme of secular studies.

CLAUDE MONTEFIORE

Geoffrey Alderman

(Review Article)

DANIEL R. LANGTON, *Claude Montefiore. His Life and Thought*, xii+347 pp., Vallentine Mitchell, London and Portland, Oregon, 2002, £45.00 (paperback, £19.50).

CLAUDE Joseph Goldsmid Montefiore was born in 1858 — the year in which professing Jews in Britain gained almost full political emancipation. On his father's side he was the great-nephew of Sir Moses Montefiore, the Sephardi colossus who dominated the lay leadership of Anglo-Jewry in the Victorian era. His mother was a daughter of Isaac Lyon Goldsmid, a founder of the 'godless' University College London and one of the most determined champions of Jewish civic rights in Britain.

In other words, Montefiore was born within the bosom of what the late Chaim Bermant termed 'The Cousinhood': the coterie of inter-related families who ruled the Jewish communities of Britain from the Cromwellian Resettlement until, according to some, the First World War; or, according to others, until the onset of the Second World War. These families were not only inter-related; they were also exceedingly wealthy. From his father, Claude Montefiore inherited the tidy sum of £1 million; from his mother a somewhat lesser fortune (£465,000) whilst other monies came his way after the death of his brother. He also benefited from the generosity of his father-in-law, Lazar Schorstein, of Reuter's.

To say that Montefiore was born with a silver spoon in his mouth would therefore be a gross understatement. He never needed to work; but he did so in a variety of ways. For example, he was a founder (and benefactor) of what is now the University of Southampton. He was a social reformer. He ventured into the world of educational politics in London and was elected to the London School Board. He was the archetypal 'gentleman scholar' (a graduate of Balliol College, Oxford) and brought to England the great German savant Rabbi Dr Solomon Schechter, who in 1890 became (at his financial sponsorship) lecturer in

Rabbinics at Cambridge University. However, what Montefiore is most remembered for, nowadays, is that at the beginning of the twentieth century, he was one of the founders of what is now termed 'Liberal Judaism'. Or was he? Although the book under review here is presented as an examination of Montefiore's life as well as of his thought, there is not much detail which one could classify as even in the broadest sense 'biographical'. Nor, in any meaningful sense, is the volume even a history of Liberal Judaism through the eyes of its chief theologian.

The weight of the book is devoted to Montefiore's thought; the man was, first and foremost, a thinker. During the decades of the 1880s and 1890s, he thought a great deal about the past, present, and future of Judaism as a religion. On the first day of February 1896, he broadcast from the pulpit of the West London [Reform] Synagogue the distilled essence of these thoughts: Jews must discard any pretensions to national self-determination (as we would now call it); the Hebrew Bible was not the revealed Word of God, nor was there any legitimacy to the claim of the rabbis of the Talmud, and their successors, that they were the chosen interpreters (so to speak) of that Word. Ritual was unimportant. What mattered (he had already declaimed) was merely that English Jews should be model English citizens, displaying 'righteousness in action and truthfulness of the heart'.[1]

I myself doubt that in 1896 Montefiore harboured any intention of founding a new synagogal organization. Like Martin Luther, who thought he could reform Roman Catholicism from within, and like John Wesley, who hoped to reform the Church of England from within, Montefiore's initial demand was for a spiritual reawakening, and reappraisal, within the existing structure. But the obstacles which he faced were far greater than those which had confronted Luther and Wesley. To begin with, there was no structure to reform. Judaism — by which I mean here, Orthodox Judaism — had lost its structure with the destruction of the Second Temple. It had become instead what it has remained ever since, a way of life. There had been, it is true, murmurings earlier in the nineteenth century about such mundane matters as synagogue decorum; and out of these murmurings had come the West London Synagogue of British Jews — the first 'Reform' synagogue in Britain, of which his grandfather (Isaac Lyon Goldsmid) had been a founding member. Indeed, Claude Montefiore had been brought up in a Reform household. But British Reform had no distinctive theology. By the 1890s, British Reform was in retreat, its membership in decline, and its services characterized by a surfeit of female worshippers. As in any orthodox house of worship, these women sat separately from the men and they took no active part whatever in the synagogue services.

Claude Montefiore wanted to change all that. He had little first-hand knowledge of Orthodoxy; what knowledge he did have came from his contact with British Orthodoxy — the so-called *Minhag Anglia* — which

was not the same thing at all. It was the Anglo-Jewish gentry at prayer: genteel services led by dog-collared Jewish 'reverends' whose pious sermons did not rock any boat. He yearned for a Judaism which did rock boats, which engaged with the issues of the day, just as (in his view) the Jew Jesus of Nazareth had done some nineteen hundred years earlier.

If there is one outstanding strength in Dr Langton's examination of Montefiore's theology, it surely lies in his frank assessment of the extent to which Montefiore saw himself — and actively and unashamedly projected himself — as a latter-day expositor of the Jewish content of the teachings of Jesus. Montefiore was indeed a great Gospel scholar. Moreover, in a lifetime of writings, he taught Christian scholars to recognize how very Jewish the views of Jesus really were. However (and Dr Langton is surely right to emphasise this also) he deliberately manipulated what we know of Jesus's views to suit his own theocratic agenda — for example, in underpinning his own anti-nationalist views.

It is one thing to declare that Judaism can learn from other religions. In 1936, two years before Claude Montefiore's death, Chief Rabbi Joseph Hertz was to state (in the introduction to his edition of the *Pentateuch and Haftorahs*) that he had 'freely drawn' on the work of non-Jewish commentators. Hertz justified himself by declaring that the maxim 'accept the truth from whatever source it come' was 'sound rabbinic doctrine — even if it [the source] be from the pages of a devout Christian expositor'. And such a statement is not so very different from the statement made by Chief Rabbi Dr Jonathan Sacks (in the first edition of *The Dignity of Difference*) that 'no one creed has a monopoly on spiritual truth'. But in trying to persuade Jews that Jesus should be regarded as a Prophet — who did no more than take forward, refine, and contextualise the writings of earlier prophets — Montefiore was on a hiding to nothing. Further, in declaring (in *Judaism and St. Paul*, 1914) that Paul's criticisms of Judaism possessed a certain legitimacy — even if they did not relate to Rabbinic Judaism, of which Paul was probably ignorant — Montefiore was bound to put himself beyond the pale.

However, the establishment in 1911 of the first Liberal Jewish Synagogue — in which a few verses were chanted from the Torah scroll, no-one was 'called' to the Reading of the Law on the Sabbath, congregants prayed to the accompaniment of an organ and a mixed choir, and men and women sat together — owed much less to Claude Montefiore than to a woman who hardly figures in the story Dr Langton tells. I refer of course to Lily Montagu who was the rebel daughter of the banker, practising orthodox Jew, and Member of Parliament for Whitechapel: Sir Samuel Montagu, first Baron Swaythling. Admittedly, Dr Langton (on page 77) pays tribute to Lily's role in 'the success of this institutional effort' and to Professor Umansky's ground-breaking study of Miss Montagu and of her role, published in 1983.[2] I would have preferred a much deeper analysis of the interaction between Lily Montagu and

Claude Montefiore, and of her role as well as of the part played by her personal and communal ambitions in the development of his ideas. If Montefiore did not originally intend to establish a separate religious institution, she made certain that he did do so, that it flourished and grew, and that it was ready to receive and (in the best sense of the word) exploit the wealth of talent represented by the influx into Britain of non-orthodox Jewish thinkers and religious leaders who had fled Nazism in the 1930s.

There are some other curious omissions in the book. The author devotes only ten pages to Montefiore's rabid opposition to Zionism (which he blamed for the rise of Nazism). Dr Langton states (on p.119): 'Towards the end of his life Montefiore seemed to recognise the ultimate failure of his doctrine of "the Englishman of the Jewish faith" and the victory of the Zionists'. But we are never told why the failure occurred, and what explanation Montefiore offered for it. Claude Montefiore's role in the affairs of the Anglo-Jewish Association is superficially treated and we are told little of his domestic life; in other words, we must still await a definitive biography.

NOTES

[1] C.G. Montefiore, 'Mystic Passages in the Psalms', *Jewish Quarterly Review*, January 1889, p. 152

[2] Ellen Umansky, *Lily Montagu and the Advancement of Liberal Judaism*, Edwin Mellen Press, New York, 1983.

BOOK REVIEWS

ANNE JOSEPH, compiler and editor, *From the Edge of the World: The Jewish Refugee Experience Through Letters and Stories*, The Library of Holocaust Testimonies, xiv + 168 pp., Vallentine Mitchell, London and Portland, Or., 2003, £11.95, paperback.

This short book, part of a Vallentine Mitchell series entitled Library of Holocaust Testimonies, is divided into three distinct but interconnected sections. The first reproduces a number of deeply touching and highly illuminating letters sent by members of one extended German-Jewish family to each other from the time of *Kristallnacht* in late 1938 until the final months of 1941. The second section includes several short stories on aspects of Jewish refugee life drawn from the experiences of the various authors. It also includes a longer extract from author and commentator Chaim Bermant's memoir *Coming Home*. The final section is made up of three official documents published in the late 1930s and early 1940s by the Central Office of Refugees to provide recently-arrived refugees in England with information on how to adapt to English society, customs, and work habits.

Of the three sections, the first is without doubt both the most interesting and important. The fifty or so letters published here are primarily the work of three members of an assimilated Leipzig Jewish family—the mother Lina Rochman, and her two children Adolf, who escaped to England in March 1939, and Berta who lived throughout this period in the Romanian town of Cetata Alba with Siyoma, her communist husband and their daughter Judith. Also included is correspondence from various members of Lina's extended family who had previously taken refuge in England. Indeed, much of the correspondence centres on the familial tensions and personal squabbles caused by the inability of Lina, a proud, tough, intelligent woman in her late fifties, to get the required visa that would enable her to travel to her son in England. The most harrowing letters reprinted here were written by Lina between early 1939 and late 1941—a period during which her home and all her worldly possessions were confiscated and she was forced to work in a garbage dump—as she begged her children, siblings, and more distant relatives to rescue her.

To this extent, one can characterise the entire correspondence as a series of personal statements by members of the Rochman family at a

time of crisis. But they are more than that. They are intelligent, informed, well written and, at times, even profound. It is worth highlighting three (of many) such examples. Following a much-publicised statement by Goebbels that the Jews were pushing the peace-loving countries to war, an almost destitute Lina asked her son 'Dear Adolf, if the Jews are so powerful and influential [as Goebbels said], why can't they get me out of here?' (p. 27).

While following his decision to change his name from Adolf to Peter after arriving in England, Lina's son noted the irony of his situation—'At home we always wanted to integrate and be seen as Germans; but for the Germans we were just Jews. Here, where we're finally identified as Germans, we want to disassociate ourselves from it' (p.33). Again following the decision of German families living in her area to stop sending their children to her for music lessons because she was Jewish, Berta expressed in a most concise and eloquent manner the feelings that many of her fellow assimilated German Jews must have experienced following the Nazi rise to power (p. 11):

> So, for the only people I have anything in common with [ethnic Germans living in Romania] I'm a Jew. For the Romanians I'm a German. For the Jews, I'm a communist [her husband was a committed communist]. For Siyoma [her husband] I'm a capitalist. For the rest of his family I'm a snob and for myself, I don't know who I am.

The letters also serve as valuable historical documents by throwing much light on the attitudes of educated, assimilated German Jews to events unfolding around them. One sees the (understandable) refusal to acknowledge that Germany, that most 'civilised' of all European nations, was capable of acting in such a barbaric way. While Berta's experience in Romania following her town's occupation by Soviet forces and Adolf's efforts to adapt to English society, both provide fascinating insights into, respectively, the antisemitism and brutality of the Red Army and the much more benign difficulties faced by German Jewish refugees on arriving in England. Another recurring theme is the increasing acknowledgement, even among those previously opposed to the Zionist project, of the importance of the Yishuv (the Jewish community in Palestine) not only as a refuge but as a beacon of pride where (in the words of Adolf) 'we [Jews] can hold [our] head up' (p. 46).

By the end of 1941 Lina had died in a cattle car on the way to an extermination camp in the East; Berta and Judith had been murdered by Romanian fascists loyal to the Nazis and Siyoma had been killed in action in eastern Crimea fighting against the German army. Adolf, the sole survivor, could only wait patiently in England for official notification of approval of Lina's visa application—which, in a cruel twist of fate, he finally received just one day after he received his mother's last letter.

It is impossible to convey the profoundly-affecting nature of the Rochman family correspondence. It is truly moving and informative and it would be unfair to judge the other two sections of the book in terms of this important collection of letters. Nevertheless, there is much to applaud in the seven short pieces contained in the second section. Written by relatively unknown authors they provide an interesting, and touching portrait of life for Jewish refugees in many different contexts. Lily Wagner's 'The Boarding House', which draws on her wartime experience running a hostel for refugees, is a wonderful tribute to the numerous characters (both good and bad) who found shelter with her—from older Austrian aristocrats trying to rebuild their life to ardent young Zionists waiting for transportation to Palestine so that they could build their country. It is also a subtle rumination on love, relationships, and the quest for happiness that transcends the refugee experience.

The first two of Irene Kirstein Watts' three short pieces recall her arrival in Britain in 1938 as part of a Kindertransport from Berlin, as well as her time in Wales with her foster family before her parents' arrival from Germany. Her final contribution is a haunting and well-written piece about her father's life in Wales following his arrival from Berlin, which culminates in his suicide. There are also moving pieces from the editor Anne Joseph's grandmother Lottie Munz and from Andrew Herskovits, a survivor of Auschwitz and Belsen and Rose Ellis a refugee from Germany, both of whom developed their writing skills in a creative writing group at a Holocaust survivors centre in north London. Indeed, the only criticism this reviewer has relates to the decision to include the long extract from Chaim Bermant's memoir. Though undoubtedly a well-written piece on a relevant topic, its length tends to overwhelm the other pieces and throws the section off-balance. Moreover, the fact that it has previously been available to a wide audience and is still carried by many libraries makes one question its inclusion in a series whose primary objective must surely be to provide space for writing on the Holocaust experience that (for commercial reasons) may well find difficultly in being published elsewhere. Despite this, all three sections taken together meet the objective set out by Sir Martin Gilbert, one of the series editors, by providing an 'extension of knowledge, and of public awareness of the crimes that had been committed against a whole people'. Moreover, this book provides a very moving insight into the refugee experience of those who were lucky enough to escape to the safety of Britain.

RORY MILLER

FELICJA KARAY, *Hasag-Leipzig Slave Labour Camp For Women: The Struggle for Survival Told by the Women and Their Poetry*, translated by Sara Kitai, viii+ 261 pp., Vallentine Mitchell, London and Portland, Oregon, 2003, £15.00 (hardback £35.00).

Hasag-Leipzig was a forced labour camp for women in the Nazi realm, a part of the B Z Buchenwald complex in Germany whose inmates were compelled to make armaments for the German military. Its 5500 prisoners from 18 countries included about 1200 Jews from Poland, who remained in the camp from its foundation in July 1944 until they were forced onto 'death marches' in the closing stages of the Second World War. Most, however, managed to survive the War. This work is an extremely interesting account, published in the Library of Holocaust Testimonies, by a former inmate who has lived in Israel since 1950. The picture she presents (although obviously unremittingly grim and horrifying) is a curiously mixed one: there was, of course, a constant fear of death and of 'deportation to the east,' but also a realization that, compared to the usual standards of Nazi concentration camps, let alone extermination camps, conditions were better, allowing most of the women to survive. Some of the narrative concerns how women of different backgrounds and nationalities reacted to these conditions, and to being thrown together. Several Jewish women wrote poetry which, remarkably, has survived (just as, thankfully, their authors managed to do) and is published here for the first time. Although the Nazi overseers comprised the usual gang of sadistic thugs, the necessity to produce armaments at a time when Germany was plainly losing the war tempered their brutality.

This is an obviously unusual, valuable, and moving work, the first to examine an exclusively female slave labour camp. Nevertheless, one would have liked to have learned more about some aspects of the author's life, and the lives of her fellow inmates, not discussed in the book–above all how the Polish-born author managed to survive the Nazi occupation before arriving at Hasag-Leipzig. This interesting book will be of particular interest to those concerned with the growing field of women's responses to the Holocaust, as well as to those concerned with the under-explored subject of Nazi wartime slave labour camps.

WILLIAM D. RUBINSTEIN

STEPHEN W. MASSIL, ed., *The Jewish Year Book 2004: 5764–5765*, xxxii + 383 pp., published by Vallentine Mitchell in association with the *Jewish Chronicle*, London and Portland, Or., 2004, £29.50 or $42.00

This Year Book is a valuable source of information on Jewish communities throughout the world but is largely concerned with Jews in the United Kingdom (pp. 1–138). 'Other Countries' are listed on pages

104–194, starting with Afghanistan and ending with Zimbabwe. There follows a brief section on 'Jewish Statistics', with tables on the populations of principal countries, on the major centres of Jewish population in all continents, and finally a table on Jews in Britain and Northern Ireland.

The 'Who's Who' section (pp. 216–317) is not exclusively concerned with residents of the United Kingdom; it is preceded by a list of Jews who are Privy Councillors, peers, members of Parliament, baronets, knights, dames, and fellows of the Roral Society and of the British Academy.

The Year Books have introductory essays and this year one of the authors is Marlena Schmool, 'Director, Community Issues Division, Board of Deputies of British Jews, with special reference to community research'. Her essay is entitled 'British Jewry in 2001: First Impressions from the Censuses' and she states (p. xv):

> The decennial censuses of England and Wales and of Scotland in 2001 ... constituted a landmark because, for the first time, they included a question on religion, albeit a voluntary question. This voluntary status was in itself unique, since the very essence of a census ... is that all questions are compulsory for everyone. This essay looks at early data about the Jewish population of Great Britain, using the information provided in the census by those who gave their religion as 'Jewish' in answer to a question which simply asked 'What is your religion?'.

She describes the many difficulties encountered and the heated debates in securing agreement for the religion question to be included. The total number of those self-identifying as Jews was 266,375. However, since the question was voluntary and since some Jews were opposed to the religion question while other Jews regard themselves as only 'ethnically' Jewish, it is reasonable to assume that there are some 300,000 Jews in Great Britain.

Mrs. Schmool writes with impressive clarity. She describes household composition, gives tables on Jews in Greater London and in locations with more than 500 Jews, and has sections on age; education, occupation, and living conditions; and general health. She concludes (p. xxix):

> The initial picture is of an older, well-educated and economically successful population, spread throughout the British Isles, but with major concentrations in suburban areas of Greater London and other metropolitan areas. Future study will allow us to refine this first likeness to see how nearly particular groups or areas meet the norm.

JUDITH FREEDMAN

HANNAH NAVEH, ed., *Gender and Israeli Society. Women's Time*, xxiii + 199 pp., Vallentine Mitchell, London and Portland, Or., 2003, £45.00 or $69.50 (paperback, £18.99 or $26.95).

HANNAH NAVEH, ed., *Israeli Family and Community. Women's Time*, xvi + 199 pp., Vallentine Mitchell, London and Portland, Or., 2003, £45.00 or $69.50 (paperback, £18.99 or $26.95).

TOBIN BELZER and JULIE PELC, eds., *Joining the Sisterhood: Young Jewish Women Write Their Lives*, ix + 227 pp., State University of New York Press, Albany, N.Y., 2003, $18.95 (hardback, $57.50).

Each of these three works is a significant, wide-ranging, and thought-provoking example of the growing genre of women's studies within the Jewish context which would benefit members of both genders to read. Seemingly more in sorrow than in anger, the contributors challenge the place of women in the generally-accepted status quo. Through the compulsive force of their narratives they demand a voice for those whom the male-dominated nature of mainstream Jewish communal structures has effectively silenced and marginalized, and a rediscovery of the female experience in the ethno-religious story of the Jewish people since the days of the Patriarchs—a story essentially remembered and celebrated only in the thoughts, deeds, and aspirations of its male participants.

This feminist agenda is implied by the derivation of the subtitle 'Women's Time' in the two scholarly books edited by Professor Hannah Naveh of Tel Aviv University. Julie Kristeva asks in her essay 'Women's Time', contained in her *New Maladies of the Soul* (New York, 1995), quoted immediately before Professor Naveh's respective introductions to each volume: 'How can we reveal our place, first as it is bequeathed to us by tradition, and then as we want to transform it?'

Gender and Israeli Society consists of seven essays, all but one of them by women. As in the companion volume, discussed below, some of these essays are so laden with sociological jargon as to be almost incomprehensible to the non-specialist. It is as if the Israeli authors are determined at all costs to demonstrate to the most exacting American academics in the field that they can talk 'sociologese' with the most fluent of them, and have consequently eschewed the plain and simple language which would have been far more appropriate and illuminating. This is indeed a pity, because the essays in both volumes are important, and deserve a wide readership. Sociologist Hanna Herzog examines the historiography of the *Yishuv* for the place of women in Herzl's vision and in the polity of *Eretz Israel* during the Mandate period, a theme linked to historian Billie Melman's exploration of the way in which collective memory of the heroic espionage agent Sarah Aaronsohn, who committed suicide in 1917, has evolved. Rachel Rojanski looks at the freedoms as well as the constraints shaping the role of Esther Mintz-Aberson within the American *Poalei Zion* organization from 1905 to 1935. Judith Tydor Baumel analyzes the images of women in Israeli military memorials, and what they tell us about attitudes to gender in Israeli society. Focusing on

the development of a West Bank settlement founded by women and called *Rehelim* ('Rachels') after two mothers killed by terrorists, and evocative, of course, of the Matriarch who by her inconsolable weeping for her lost children symbolises the sacrifices of motherhood, Michael Feige examines attitudes to femininity and gender roles among members of the Gush Emunim movement. Tsila Ratner analyzes gendered themes in literature by Orthodox Israeli women, and Tova Cohen discusses Iris Parush's Hebrew-language study of female *maskilot*, which translates as *Reading Women: The Benefit of Marginality in Nineteenth Century Eastern European Jewish Society* (Tel Aviv, 2001).

The other book edited by Professor Naveh concentrates upon the socio-economic realities of modern Israel as they affect women, and includes essays by two female Palestinian scholars, Manar Hasan and Khawla Abu Baker. The former's contribution is a courageous and searing account of the harsh repression of women in traditionally conservative Middle Eastern families, which practise male supremacism literally at its most deadly. Hardly less shocking than the, according to Arab law codes, judicially allowed 'honour killings' of women whose deemed misconduct—ranging from merely shaking hands with an unrelated male to committing adultery with him—shames their male blood-kin, is the behaviour of the Israeli authorities. Loath to provoke Palestinian unrest by interfering in the administration of Arab 'justice' when females are its victims, the Israeli police and governmental agencies in effect collude in the 'honour killings' of girls and women by regarding 'femocide' as an unchangeable if not, indeed, a permissible, feature of Arab culture which warrants scant investigation or punishment. Hence the handing over to Palestinian communal elders—and almost certain death—of girls and women who have fled to the Israeli authorities in fear of their lives, and the willingness to treat obvious murders of Palestinian girls and women at the hands of their male relatives as accidents or suicides.

Khawla Abu Baker's essay focuses on the familial expectations which prevent even the most emancipated Palestinian women working outside the home from developing fully fledged careers, though it seems fair to observe that the experience of some described does not seem to differ markedly from the uneasy compromises between work and family that many highly educated and ambitious married women have reluctantly settled for in the West. Sylvie Fogiel-Bijaoui investigates the nature of family structure and attitudes to the family and the national/religious nexus in the State of Israel and its implications for women, while Amia Lieblich—using empirical evidence she has gleaned from close and ongoing study which includes interviews with both male and female subjects—discusses the status of women in the kibbutz system. Dafna Lemish argues that by maintaining a largely demeaning image of women, limiting their visibility in general news items and restricting their presence

as serious broadcasters, the Israeli media both reflects and reinforces gender inequality in the society at large. The groundbreaking Orthodox activist Leah Shakdiel, who following the intervention of the Supreme Court became the first female member of a local religious council in Israel, studies the actual and potential impact upon the Israeli consciousness of the women who regularly meet for prayer at the Western Wall. At times her narrative is most egregiously obfuscated by the intrusion of jargon, as is the final essay in the volume, Orly Lubin's highly original, valuable and illustrated study of women in the Israeli military from the days of the Haganah.

Fortunately, no such fault of style pervades *Joining the Sisterhood*, a breezy and eclectic compilation of prose and verse edited by a young female post-doctoral research associate in Jewish studies at the University of Southern California and a young female rabbinical student at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Los Angeles. The flaw of this book is its inadequate glossary. A compelling theme unites many of the contributions, namely the implicit yearning for a pluralistic *K'lal Yisrael* that would accommodate women who have been made to feel that they are on the outside looking in or have searched for a comfortable symbiosis between their wider identity and their Jewishness and failed to find it. No accounts are more vivid or haunting than those of the seeker after spiritual awakening who found the essence of God and the purpose of prayer not in the Israeli *yeshiva* she attended but in the tranquillity of the Himalayas, the lesbian who lays *tefillin*, and the zealot for her Iraqi-Jewish paternal heritage who becomes little less than traumatised by the realisation that owing to expedient decrees which owe more to misogyny than *Halakhah*, there is no place for her, despite unrivalled knowledge of the liturgy and enthusiasm for it, in the ritual of the synagogue. What unites the diverse American individuals who tell their stories and bare their souls in this book is their loyalty to the spirit, if not necessarily to the letter, of the faith of their ancestors, and their desire to live Jewish lives, at least on their terms, and transmit their heritage to the next generation.

HILARY L. RUBINSTEIN

GIDEON SHIMONI, *Community and Conscience: The Jews in Apartheid South Africa*, xv + 337 pp., The Tauber Institute for the Study of European Jewry Series, Brandeis University Press published by University Press of New England, Lebanon, New Hampshire, 2003, $40.00 (hardback).

JONNY STEINBERG, *Midlands*, xii + 259 pp., Jonathan Ball Publishers, Johannesburg and Cape Town, 2002, Rs 189,95 (paperback).

These two books on South Africa are different in content and scope — one concentrates on the Jews in the country and is largely about the past, the other deals with the murder of the son of a white farmer and the only 'Jewish' element is the surname of the author — but the books are essentially complementary. As to the first book, those who are familiar with the writings of Professor Gideon Shimoni of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem — such as his *The Zionist Ideology* (1995), in the same Series as this book — will know what to expect from this one. It will be well-researched, lucidly-written, and replete with insightful analysis. The subject is given in the sub-title; it deals with the Jewish community of South Africa during the years 1948 to 1994 when the country experienced the regime of apartheid. In 1948 the nationalist regime came to power, instituting the apartheid system and in 1994 its end was indicated by the holding of the first non-racial election. But the author goes beyond that period by looking briefly at the earlier history of the Jews in the country and at the post-1994 events. Indeed he begins with a wonderfully succinct analysis of the community's origins which includes an account of its structure and culture.

The unique point about that community was the fact that it joined and shared in the white, that is, privileged, part of a society based on racial segregation. It was not just the whites as against the non-whites — black Africans, Indians, and the Coloureds (those of mixed race). The social structure was complicated by the division among the whites between English-speakers and the Afrikaners. How the Jewish community fitted in and responded to all of this is the subject of the book and to some extent its response depended on its history. Essentially it consisted of a core of some 40,000 Litvaks, Jews from the north-western part of the Russian Pale of Settlement, who arrived between 1880 and 1910 — although immigration was not limited until an Act of 1930 more or less brought Eastern European Jewish immigration to a halt. However, a few thousand German Jews, refugees from Nazism, entered the country in the 1930s.

The Jewish community which these Litvak immigrants joined was a small group of earlier incomers, perhaps amounting to about 4,000, who originated in Britain and Germany. They laid its structural foundations, notably the formation in 1912 of the Jewish Board of Deputies, based on the British model, but the Litvaks soon displaced the older community. And they themselves had a number of special features. First, their religiosity. The Litvak region of Russia had no experience of Reform Judaism so they brought with them a traditional approach to religion; but it was not an extreme form of Judaism for the area of origin was a centre of the *misnagdi* tradition which was in opposition to Hassidism. However, once in South Africa there was a rapid move towards secularism. He summarises the consequence. There was a 'blend of Litvak *misnagdi* religious orthodoxy, in rather lax fashion, with Anglo-Jewry's already acculturated United Synagogue form of synagogue ritual. This issued in a normative mode of religiosity that has been characterized as conservative

traditionalism and also as "non-observant orthodox," an apt description of the reality notwithstanding the apparent oxymoron' (p. 3). Towards the end of the apartheid period, though, this changed as the community became more religiously-orthodox.

A second feature was the deeply-ingrained ethnic identity of the Litvaks in South Africa which was nourished by the host society's social environment. This identity produced Zionism as the most important political movement in the community. Since there was no Reform movement in the country before 1933, there was no opposition to it from that quarter; and in any case the founder of Reform proved to be pro-Zionist. Moreover, in the early period South African political leaders, the foremost being Jan Christiaan Smuts, were sympathetic to Zionism. Even those in the Afrikaner nationalist camp were sympathetic, at any rate before the 1930s.

The book goes into much detail of the changing background of South African history including the rise of Afrikaner nationalism and the changes within that nationalism during the period of apartheid. In the 1930s some of the nationalists flirted with Nazism and adopted an antisemitic approach, some of its leaders becoming important after 1948 in the government. He notes that while in its four decades of power there continued much repression of the non-white majority population as well as of those who opposed government policies, the policies did become rather less rigid, in a period which he calls 'Reformed Apartheid'. Thus within the dominant National Party the *verkrampte* (narrow-minded) were eased out, leaving the *verligtes* (enlightened) in charge. Thus in the 1980s there was a lessening of some restrictions on the non-whites and in 1990 the new State President, Frederik Willem de Klerk, lifted the ban on the African National Congress, leading to the release of its imprisoned leaders and thus to the collapse of the apartheid system.

The author is primarily concerned, of course, with the effect of this history on the Jewish community. He deploys a considerable body of sometimes conflicting evidence but concludes, generally, that most South African Jews internalised the attitudes of most white South Africans, accepting the inferior roles of the non-whites. He pays particular attention to the role of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies. He acknowledges the difficulty of its position but demonstrates that its policy of non-involvement in party politics meant that it implicitly accepted apartheid.

It was not as simple as that. From time to time the Board's policy came under criticism and different parts of the Board had different attitudes. The Union of Jewish Women, for example, did welfare work among the blacks and the Jewish university students and the Zionist-socialist youth movements were a vociferous voice against discrimination. While most rabbis went along with the Board's policy, a small number were outspoken in their opposition to apartheid. At least one was deported for

this reason and others left the country. And in the 1980s, before the end of apartheid, the Board did pass resolutions which to some extent opposed the government. Yet most of the Jewish opposition to apartheid came from a fairly small number of men and women of Jewish origin, who were largely peripheral to the community. They were politically of the left, many were communists, even after this was outlawed in 1950. A number were prosecuted, some left the country, and some were imprisoned. The author goes into some detail in investigating this group, trying to understand whether there was anything 'Jewish' in their attitudes—it sometimes having been said that opposition to apartheid was consonant with 'Jewish values'. His discussion is based on the many volumes of autobiography and interviews of this group. He notes for example that a number of them were originally in Zionist youth movements with their emphasis on socialism and human rights. But as to the 'Jewish values' question he finds little evidence to support it. Many of the autobiographies indicate a complete severance from Judaism and the community.

An indication of the ambivalent position of South African Jewry was in connection with the various trials of the more militant opposition, notably the Ravenna trial of 1963–64. The main prosecutor was an orthodox Jew whose actions in the trial became the subject of much heated discussion. Whether he should have undertaken the task was discussed at the time and continues to be referred to in the literature. Yet after the trial he was elected president of the main Orthodox synagogue in Johannesburg. On the other hand in an earlier case, the Treason Trial of 1956, the leading defence counsel was Israel Maisels, prominent in the Board of Deputies and the Zionist Federation. He was assisted by Sydney Kentridge, son of Morris Kentridge, a parliamentarian and Jewish communal leader.

One major problem for South African Jewry was in relation to the State of Israel. The community was strongly Zionist, with very large numbers in the Zionist organisations including the youth movements, a high proportion going on *aliyah* to Israel, and providing large sums of money for Israel. Yet it was in a dilemma when Israel adopted what were seen as anti-South African policies. In the 1960s the United Nations adopted sanctions against South Africa and Israel voted in favour of that policy. This caused much anxiety among South African Jewry and for a few years there was great friction between the government and the community. Moreover, the close association between Israel and many African countries, which were becoming more strident in adopting anti-South African policies, did not find favour with the government. However, the Six-Day War of 1967 swiftly changed that. Suddenly the nationalist government became very friendly towards Israel and thus towards the Jewish community in South Africa. This was partly because, since Arab countries had developed close relations with Soviet Russia, the Israeli victory indicated that Israel was regarded as a bulwark against communism. There developed a close relationship between the two governments—diplomatic exchanges were

made and trade increased, notably that of arms. This latter did not go unnoticed among some Jews in South Africa as well as in Israel and there was much opposition towards the trade. There was the further complication that black African countries began to adopt anti-Israel policies as did the black opposition in South Africa.

There were also more problems for the South African Jewish community. Its population was declining and the Zionist element, although still strong, became somewhat less important as, for a number of reasons, the 'traditional' ethos began to change. The author dates this from the 1960s and notes the same phenomenon occurring in other Jewish communities. Various pieces of evidence 'indicate much the same motivations and influences upon *ba'alei teshuva* (the returnees or newly religious). These include a search for existential meaning in life, spiritual sustenance that reaches beyond the purely rational, value alternatives to purely materialist interests, and a yearning for the comforting embrace of a caring community' (p. 235). There was more adherence to Orthodox practices such as synagogue attendance, and, ironically in view of the *misnagdi* background of the Litvak immigrants to South Africa, there was a significant growth of *hassidic* activity in the country.

The last chapter is entitled 'After Apartheid' and more or less brings the story up to date. He describes the four years of transition between 1990 (the recognition by the government of the African National Congress) and 1994 (the election of a non-racial parliament) in which Jewish organisations by and large gave up their previous policy. Shimoni notes (p. 246):

> The Jewish communal leadership ... had by now freed itself of the self-imposed inhibitions and constraints encapsulated in the "political non-involvement" policy formula. In striking contrast to the timorous neutral posture that had been adopted in the 1961 referendum on South Africa's constitution as a republic, in 1992 Jews as a community and not only as individual citizens rallied to de Klerk's call for the white electorate approval of his intention to advance beyond apartheid reforms to negotiation of a new non-racial dispensation.

Yet the last decade has continued to be an uncomfortable period for South African Jewry. On the one hand while black leaders, such as Nelson Mandela, have shown support for the community and particularly have asserted the right of Israel to exist, on the other there has been growing opposition to Israel from Muslim organisations in the country. And there has been a great growth of crime in South Africa, leading to an accelerated emigration but not necessarily to Israel, as had been the case before.

As to the attitude of South African Jewry to apartheid — the main theme of the book — the author ends judiciously. He quotes the 1997 statement to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris (who had been appointed in 1988 and had been an opponent

of apartheid). He noted, inter alia, that 'Almost everyone in the Jewish community had a kind of awkward tension about apartheid. But most members of the Jewish community benefited in one way or another from apartheid' (p. 272) and he asked the Commission for forgiveness. The author's final words are that 'although there is nothing in this record deserving of moral pride; neither does it warrant utter self-reproach ... The record ... shows that on the whole the community's leaders, lay and religious, acted consciously but with deep pangs of conscience'. He continues: 'although whether this all qualifies as a morally redeeming factor will no doubt remain a point of contention' (p. 276).

As will be evident from this brief account, the book gives an excellent description and analysis of an important Jewish community in conditions of great stress. It is a most valuable contribution to the literature.

The reference to crime and violence in Shimoni's final chapter is taken up by Jonny Steinberg in his very different study. Steinberg is described in the book as a journalist and script-writer who was a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University. At Oxford he wrote a dissertation (D.Phil.) in 1998 on 'Post-enlightenment philosophy and liberal universalism in the political thought of Isaiah Berlin and Richard Rorty'. Back in South Africa he resumed working as a journalist but gave it up to research the subject of the murders of white farmers, a feature of the country post-1990 (he speaks of three or four violent assaults on — or even murders of — this group each week), part of the growth of crime in the period. The research was done under the auspices of the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation in Johannesburg.

The book is unlike Shimoni's macro research in being a case study, devoted to the murder of a young man, aged 28, named 'Peter Mitchell', the son of a farmer in a district which he calls 'Midlands'. He disguises the names of all the characters he interviewed as well as the names of farms and the geographical places in which they resided and which he visited. Moreover, doubtless as a result of his journalistic experience and perhaps of his academic studies, he is conscious of the methodological problems in undertaking his research. He was a white man, with an urban background, trying to understand the mores, traditions and history of a rural crime, and this is done against the convoluted history of race relations in the district. He shows that it was sometimes difficult enough to get to know the white farmers; it was even harder to approach the black tenants. He had to try to tease out the truth in what he was told.

This is primarily a piece of superior investigative journalism and, as expected from a journalist, is most readable. It could be argued that some of the details seem otiose and that perhaps the work could have been shorter but it is nevertheless a fascinating study of an aspect, an important one, of recent and current South African history.

HAROLD POLLINS

CHRONICLE

It was announced last January that Israel's population at the end of 2003 was 6,750,000; there was an increase of 1.7 per cent over the year, the lowest increase since 1986. Almost 20 per cent of the population is not Jewish. The numbers of new immigrants have also diminished; only 24,000 were registered in 2003, the lowest annual total since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990.

*

The Jewish Agency's aliyah department reported last January that there has been an increase in the number of new immigrants from the United Kingdom: 405 came to settle in Israel in 2003, compared to 306 the previous year. Most of the newcomers were young adults; about one-third were people of retirement age.

*

The Board of Deputies of British Jews published in 2003 a Report by Marlena Schmool, Rona Hart, and Frances Cohen entitled *The Relaxation of Community?*. The Introduction states:

> This Report concentrates on the situation of small Jewish communities in the United Kingdom at the end of the 20th century. Nevertheless, the patterns described may be taken as the extreme in a process that to some degree affects communities of all sizes. All communities are organic and none are static. While we are reporting here on towns and cities that have had less than 1500 Jews since 1959, the reduction in the quantity and quality of services and institutions in such places is mirrored over time in the largest British Jewish concentrations. For example, we can see that communities previously boasting one or two kosher restaurants and multiple kosher butchers and small Jewish shops, now are devoid of the former and can sustain maybe only one or two of the latter.

The Report notes that the 2001 censuses of England and Wales and of Scotland included a voluntary question on religion. Before the release of data from those censuses, communal studies indicated that almost three-quarters of the core Jewish population of the United Kingdom live in Greater London and the neighbouring counties. About 10 per cent of the total live in Greater Manchester — while Leeds, Glasgow, Brighton and Hove, Birmingham, Liverpool, Southend, and Bournemouth each has more than 3,000 Jews. The Report adds: 'Outside these main centres, approximately 17,000 Jews live in the 67 small communities that are the subject of this report...' (p.6).

*

According to the 2001 Censuses of population for England and Wales and for Scotland, the total number of persons self-identifying as Jews in the United

Kingdom was 266,375. However, since the religion question was voluntary, it is likely that some Jews, for various reasons, had decided not to answer the question on religion.

*

In July 2003 the Community Research Unit of the Board of Deputies of British Jews reported on Community Vital Statistics for 2002. It noted that the year 2000 was the most recent year for which they had data on births, because of delays 'which are out of the control of the Community Research Unit'. There were 2647 Jewish births in Great Britain in 2000 and there has been 'a persistent downward trend in births throughout the 1990s'. In 2000, 'Jewish births were some 20% fewer than they had been in 1991'.

The total number of synagogue marriages recorded in the year 2002 was 921, 76 more than in 2001, an increase of nine per cent from one year to the next. In 2002, the number of completed *gittin* (religious divorces) was 250, six lower than in 2001. Burials and cremations under Jewish religious auspices rose by 58 from 3612 in 2001 to 3670 in 2002. That increase was confined to the Progressive section of British Jewry. The reduction in the number of births is in some part related to the agedness of British Jewry. The majority of synagogue marriages were solemnized in London: 661 out of the total of 921 in 2002; that represented 72 per cent. As for burials and cremations under Jewish auspices, again the majority occurred in London: 2542 out of the total of 3670, or 69 per cent.

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Volume 51, 2004, of *Scopus*, the magazine of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, states the University has some 24,000 full-time students; they include 12,000 undergraduates; 7,600 masters students; 2,300 doctoral candidates; and 2,100 overseas and pre-academic students. There is an additional number of 14,000 in continuing education and extension courses.

*

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev has a new Centre for Research on Ladino Culture. In 2003, there were 86 students enrolled to study Ladino (Judeo-Spanish) as a language. The Inter 2002–2003 issue of the University's magazine states:

> The basis of Judeo-Spanish can be divided into three components: Medieval Spanish; Hebrew and Aramaic; and the languages of the surrounding cultures in the period following the expulsion, such as Turkish, Greek and Arabic.

The head of the Centre has commented that there is a race against time to research and document a language that is slowly disappearing and that the Centre

> will be a home to those interested in preserving Ladino. It will encourage research and attract scholars from all over the world. There will be study groups here, and we'll record people's stories, proverbs and poems.

*

The Spring 2003 issue of *Tel Aviv University News* notes that until recently, educational counsellors in Israel were trained to help pupils in elementary,

junior, and high schools. However, there were some 300,000 younger children, aged three to six years, who were in public day care and pre-school programmes and who were not receiving counselling attention. Tel Aviv University now has a Master's degree programme for early childhood counsellors. It is an intensive two-year course of studies which prepares counsellors

> to pass on their knowledge and skills to two main target groups: caregivers and kindergarten teachers working with young children, and parents. For both groups, the goals are to upgrade knowledge of developmental issues and increase early diagnosis of potential problems.

*

The Winter/Spring 2004 issue of *Tel Aviv University News* states that the University's School of Social Work has initiated a programme of Mediation and Conflict Resolution for Arab community leaders in Jaffa. The course focuses on various means of resolving conflicts, on anger management, and on processes of dialogue. A municipal city councillor who participated in the course commented:

> Violent confrontations in Jaffa have ramifications for the community at large because many families are interrelated. ... The approach we learned in the course helped reinforce the concept of *sulha*, an Arab method of reconciliation that already exists in our culture.

*

In December 2003, Bar-Ilan University reported that it had more than 22,000 undergraduate and graduate students attending its main campus and five nation-wide institutions.

> More than 6000 courses are taught by 1,300 faculty members in 38 academic departments of the Faculties of Exact Sciences, Engineering, Life Sciences, Social Science, Humanities, Jewish Studies, and Law. ... Bar-Ilan maintains co-operation agreements with more than 50 international academic and research institutions throughout Europe, the U.S., the former Soviet Union, and in Asia.

*

The November 2003 issue of *Les Cahiers de l'Alliance israélite universelle* has a first section on clothes in the Bible and in various Jewish communities. There are colour illustrations of costumes worn by Jewish men and women in the countries of the Ottoman Empire, in Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria and in Greece. There are also photographs of pupils in Alliance establishments in Paris and in Istanbul at the end of the nineteenth century, and of girls in a primary school in Tunis, all wearing school uniforms.

The March 2003 issue of the same publication states that, apart from the situation in France and in Great Britain, there are in the rest of Europe some 15,000 pupils enrolled in about 150 kindergartens, schools, and lycées providing Jewish education. About 500 teachers give courses on the Hebrew language and on Judaism. .

*

Les Cahiers du Judaïsme is another publication of the Alliance israélite universelle. One of its 2003 issues (no. 14) has a section on the Jewish theatre; there is an article on the Judeo-Spanish theatre of the Balkans and another article relates the history of the Israeli theatre from 1889 to 2001. Another 2003 issue (no. 15) is dedicated to the *Shoah* and contains many illustrations.

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The *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions* is published by the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in France. Its January–March 2003 issue has articles on the regulation of religion by the State and on the making of social links. The April–June 2003 issue has an article on 'The United States as a "Religious Exception" '. The July–September 2003 number has an article in English by Kimmy Caplan entitled 'The Internal Popular Discourse of Israeli Haredi Women' (pp. 77–100). The Abstract of the article states:

> Over the last twenty years, a popular, internal discourse has developed among Haredi women in Israel. Both male and female speakers and preachers, addressing exclusively female audiences, discuss "traditional" as well as "controversial" issues. This article focuses on three central "controversial" issues raised in their discourse — understanding the opposite sex, women's work outside the home, and family purity laws — within several social, historical and methodological contexts.

The October-December 2003 issue of the *Archives* has an article on conversions to Catholicism in France.

*

The Merseyside Jewish Community Archives were officially launched on 4th September 2003; they are housed in the Liverpool Record Office. The preparation of the catalogue was mainly funded by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the J.P. Jacobs Charitable Trust. Two archivists, working full-time for 12 months, have catalogued eight cubic metres of Jewish archives 'equating to roughly 350 boxes and 300 volumes. The catalogue entries for the Jewish archive make up 5630 entries on the data base, comprising over 250 lists. It is probably the largest single collection of any one Jewish community in Britain'.

The material was collected over a period of some 35 years but had not been previously catalogued. 'The period covered extends from the first record of Jews in Liverpool in 1742 to the present day and is still being added to. The data base is available on the Internet at www.liverpool.gov.uk (via AZ Liverpool Council Services, Archives) and the Section number is 296.'

*

In a press release dated October 2003, Saur Verlag announced that two of the first German-language newspapers from Palestine and Israel are now published comprehensively on microfiche. They are *Yediot Hadashot* (published in 1935–1973) and *Yediot Hayom* (1936–64). 'These newspapers are very rare, some years being the only remaining copies.' The press release notes that owing to

persecution in Germany, an increasing number of German Jews came to settle in Palestine in the 1930s and that by 1939, almost 55,000 had arrived.

> As only very few were able to speak Hebrew and a considerable demand existed for both information about their home country and the world, on the one hand, and support for their new life on the other hand, there was an increasing need for German literature and a German-language press. Towards the end of 1935, the 'Private Correspondence of Siegfried Blumenthal', a paper consisting of translations, was published for the first time in Tel Aviv.

Shortly afterwards, that was changed to 'Blumenthal's Latest News' with the Hebrew sub-title *Yediot Hadashot S. Blumenthal.* In 1936, Dr Friedrich Reichenstein, a lawyer from Germany, founded *Yediot Hayom* (News of the Day). Owing to the shortage of paper during the war, both papers were published jointly in one edition but in 1944 'they were issued separately once more and were soon competing heavily with each other'. *Yediot Hayom* ceased publication towards the end of 1964, leaving *Yediot Hadashot* 'as the only German-language paper available in Israel until its last edition was published in 1973'. Both newspapers provide detailed insight into Palestine and Israeli politics and society during the period from the Thirties to the Seventies. At the same time they bear witness to the history of immigration and cultural integration. ... In addition, they allow a day-to-day perspective of the fate of German-speaking Jewish immigrants and refugees. ... The difficulties of everyday life become apparent in articles, reports and commentaries as well as in small private announcements and commercial advertisements. ... Political debates on Zionism, socialism, and the kibbutz movement are covered, as are the founding of the Israeli state in 1948, and the emerging conflict between Israelis and Palestinians.

*

A Holocaust Memorial Centre was opened in April 2004 in Budapest. The President of Israel attended the ceremony and the Prime Minister of Hungary is reported to have stated of the Holocaust:

> It was a heinous crime that was committed by Hungarian people against Hungarian people. There is no excuse, no explanation, only reconciliation.

The director of the new Centre is reported to have declared: 'This is not a Jewish institution. This is a Hungarian institution intended to present the Holocaust as a Hungarian tragedy'. He commented that in 1920, Hungary restricted the admission of Jewish students to universities and that 'within 24 years, from that small-scale segregation, this country went on to wilfully assist in destroying half a million of its citizens'. The opening of that Centre was one of several days of events, including an academic conference, marking the sixtieth anniversary of the deportation of Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz.

*

The Canadian Jewish Congress last April expressed grave concern at a recent wave of vandalism in the country. During the 2004 Passover festival, a row of tombstones was toppled in a Toronto cemetery which is the oldest Jewish cemetery in Ontario Province. Another Toronto Jewish cemetery was also

desecrated as well as Jewish cemeteries in the Ontario towns of Kitchener and Brantford. A synagogue was damaged in St John, Newfoundland while a United Talmud Torah elementary school in Montreal was fire-bombed and its library destroyed.

In March 2004, B'nai Brith Canada's League for Human Rights was reported to have released its audit of antisemitic incidents for 2003; there were 584 such incidents. Two-thirds were described as harassment, 31 per cent were vandalism, and there was violence which accounted for 2.6 per cent. More than half of the total, 315, occurred in Toronto, where about half of the Canadian Jewish population live; 102 in Montreal; 45 in Ottawa; and the rest were spread out from British Columbia to Nova Scotia, where an historic synagogue was vandalised.

In January 2004, it was reported that a new public opinion poll in Italy carried out by a research institute had indicated that more than one-third of the 1,500 Italians interviewed agreed with the old stereotype that Jews 'secretly control economic and financial power and the media'. However, more than 90 per cent of the respondents defended Israel's right to exist while more than half were critical of current Israeli policy towards the Palestinians. The president of the research institute was quoted as commenting that the results showed that Italians 'know how to separate a judgement on the policies of the current government of Israel from a judgement on the Jewish people'.

*

At the end of March 2004, the Vienna-based European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia published a report based on data in the European Union's 15 member states. It stated that there has been an increase in antisemitic incidents in five of the European Union's countries: Belgium, Britain, France, Germany, and the Netherlands.

*

An exhibition entitled 'The Jews of Czestochowa' was opened in April 2004 in a gallery near the famous Jasna Gora monastery in Poland. It charts the history of the Jewish inhabitants who had lived in that city for some 400 years. To coincide with the exhibition, the authorities have renovated the Jewish cemetery, which was desecrated during the Second World War and neglected in the decades which followed.

*

It was reported in March 2004 that Turkey and Israel have signed an agreement for the sale of water from Turkey's Manavgat River to Israel. Israel is to buy 50 million cubic metres of water per year for a period of 20 years. It is expected that the delivery will start late in 2005 or early in 2006.

On editing The Jewish Journal of Sociology (continued)

In last year's Chronicle, I related some of the requests for assistance which *The Jewish Journal of Sociology* receives. In one case, it took several weeks for us to discover that an author wanted us to provide a formal letter of acceptance on printed notepaper stating that we would be publishing her article the following

year. The author, who did not live in England, first wrote to us, sending an outline of an article which she claimed to have already written. She had carried out the interesting research on which the article was based, she also claimed. It all seemed very promising, and she was recommended to us by a reputable scholar. We asked for more details and for the text of the article. She replied that she would be doing so shortly. We waited. Eventually, after more correspondence, she confessed that she needed our letter of acceptance in order to obtain research funds: she had not, as yet, carried out any research.

Last year, we received a paper which was original but which required some clarification and a great deal of editorial work. There were two authors: the senior co-author was in London on sabbatical leave and the other was abroad. We went to a very great deal of trouble to put the paper in grammatical English, asked for the missing data to be supplied, and for the article to be retyped. I agreed to write a formal letter stating that we accepted the article, subject to some conditions. I received profuse thanks and in due course a large envelope was brought to our office, which was said to contain the final text, incorporating all the required data and references. Would I now please provide a formal letter of unconditional acceptance? I replied that I could not do so before reading that final text — which seemed an unexpected response. Surely, I must accept the word of the senior author that the final version was exactly as requested? The matter was most urgent: the Appointments Board of his university was meeting very soon and it was important for him to be promoted on the strength of the publication of his article in such an important academic Journal. I asked for the date of the meeting of the Appointments Board and was told that was a secret matter: the date could not be revealed. By then, I was suspicious but I promised to read the final version that very evening. When I dutifully did so, I discovered that the 'final' version was no more than the retyped text of our draft: the missing data and references had not been supplied. When the author telephoned me a few days later, he showed no surprise when I told him that we would not be publishing his paper and that I had already written to him to tell him so.

A few years ago we were most surprised to receive a communication from a Scandinavian student. He wrote to say that he was enclosing a brief abstract of his university thesis; it was one-page long and at the foot of the page he had written that if we did print that abstract, would we please remit his fee to his bank; he gave the number of his account and the address of the bank.

In September 1998, a lady wrote to us, addressing us as 'Dear Sirs' and starting the hand-written letter with: 'Found your name and references in my local library. This is an unusual request, please.' She then proceeded to tell us that she had been looking for more than a year for 'a first-class hotel type place' for a Christmas holiday because she was 'restricted by heart disease' and was 'of very modest means indeed' and added:

> ... perhaps one of your staff might possibly know of a place I could try, noting that you write for professional people and hope you'll accept this letter as a true request for help, should anyone know of an establishment.

She had found that 'all the usual authorities and religious set-ups failed to help' because they only suggested '"charity" homes, which are doubtless O.K. but certainly none have private rooms with all mod. cons.'.

The latest item in our file of unusual requests is an appeal from a travel agency, in a Mediterranean country, to publicize the services which it could offer. (Alas, that agency would have been of no help to the lady mentioned above, since she had told us that she was very restricted in her movements.) The agency's appeal starts with 'HELP! HELP! HELP!' and:

THIS IS AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FOR YOU WE NEED ANY SORT OF HELP. The owner of the agency then tells 'Dear Sirs': 'I got your address from the B'nei Brith, in which I am a member. ... I have excellent command of the English, French, Spanish and Hebrew language. In addition, I am one of the most important Agents for El-AL' and he requests us to please be so kind as to send him any addresses of Jewish Travel Agencies in our country, so that he may 'contact them for a future cooperation'.

Do Christian owners of travel agencies make similar appeals to Christian periodicals? Or Muslim travel agents to Muslim publications? That question does not refer to requests for the insertion of paid advertisements, not commercial propositions, but direct appeals for assistance from a Jew to other Jews.

Clearly, the concept that Jews have a duty to help fellow-Jews anywhere, that it is incumbent on them to be charitable especially to their co-religionists in need, that concept is still alive and well and *The Jewish Journal of Sociology* is expected to respond to such moral exhortations.

Since kindness must be extended to those in captivity, the editor of the *JJS* granted the request of a librarian of an American penitentiary for a free subscription. For more than two decades, the Journal was sent regularly to the penitentiary. Then one day we received a postcard from that librarian: he wished to inform us that he had now been released, was settled in a Californian town, and he was writing to ask us to continue sending the Journal to him at his private address rather than to the penitentiary.

BOOKS RECEIVED

(Books listed here may be reviewed later)

Judith Tydor Baumel and Tova Cohen, eds., *Gender, Place and Memory in the Modern Jewish Experience*, xxii + 297 pp., Vallentine Mitchell, London and Portland, Or., 2003, hardback £45.00 or $64.50; paperback £18.50 or $26.50.

Andrew Buckser, *After the Rescue. Jewish Identity and Community in Contemporary Denmark*, vi + 271 pp., Palgrave Macmillan, Houndmills, Basingstoke and New York, 2003, £50.00.

Gertrude Dubrowsky, *Six From Leipzig*, xii +240 pp., Vallentine Mitchell, London and Portland, Or., 2004, paperback, £9.95.

Sylvia Barack Fishman, *Double or Nothing? Jewish Families and Mixed Marriage*, xv+196 pp., Brandeis University Press, published by University Press of New England, 2004, $24.95, hardback.

Harvey E. Goldberg, *Jewish Passages: Cycles of Jewish Life*, xiii + 379 pp., University of California Press, Berkeley and London, 2003, $27.50 or £18.95 (hardback).

Yosef Gorny, *Between Auschwitz and Jerusalem*, xii+250 pp., Vallentine Mitchell, London and Portland, Or., 2003, £24.00 or $39.50 hardback (paperback, £13.50 or $19.50).

Jacob Haberman, editor and translator, *The Microcosm of Joseph Ibn Saddiq*, 217 pp. and Hebrew text, 100pp.; Associated University Presses, Cranbury, N.J. and London, 2003, £39.50.

Patricia Hidiroglou, ed., *La Construction de la Famille Juive: Entre Héritage et Devenir*, 416 pp., Publications de la Sorbonne, Paris, 2003, 23 Euros.

Yaakov Malkin, *Secular Judaism: Faith, Values and Spirituality*, x+150 pp., Vallentine Mitchell, London and Portland, Or., 2003, £42.50 or $62.50 (paperback, £17.50 or $26.50).

Elizabeth Wyner Mark, *The Covenant of Circumcision: New Perspectives on an Ancient Jewish Rite*, xxvi+255 pp., Brandeis University Press, published by University Press of New England, 2003, $26.00 paperback (hardback, $60.00).

Rochelle L. Millen, *Women, Birth, and Death in Jewish Law and Practice*, xv+246 pp., Brandeis University Press, published by University Press of New England, 2004, $39.95.

Chaim Rapoport, *Judaism and Homosexuality. An Authentic Orthodox View*, Foreword by Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, xxiv + 231 pp., Vallentine Mitchell, London and Portland, Or., 2004, £17.50 or $24.50 (hardback, £30.00 or $49.50).

Uzi Rebhun and Chaim I. Waxman, eds., *Jews in Israel. Contemporary Social and Cultural Patterns*, xv+504 pp., Brandeis University Press, published by University Press of New England, 2004, $35.00 (paperback).

Amy L. Sales and Leonard Saxe, *"How Goodly Are Thy Tents". Summer Camps as Jewish Socializing Experiences*, xxi + 177 pp., Brandeis University Press, published by University Press of New England, 2004, $22.00 (paperback).

Linda M. Shires, *Coming Home. A Woman's Story of Conversion to Judaism*, viii + 262 pp., Westview Press, Boulder, Col. and Oxford, 2003, £18.99 or $25.00.

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