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WP/2/84

Research Unit

Working Paper

JEWISH EMIGRATION FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM

by

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July 1984

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Jewish Emigration from the U.K.

Over the last three centuries Britain has been an emigrant society and peopled the far corners of the world with settlers. In modern times, however, Britain has been seen by Jews largely as a country of settlement. Yet a truer picture of Jewish migration pattern in Britain is a rather more balanced one of a bath with the tap running and the plug out. Britain was an important transit point on the journey from Eastern Europe to the Americas in the period of mass emigration, 1880-1914. It retains this feature on an inter-generational level as well, whether for G.I. brides in the 1940s or for the brain-drain of the 1960s and 1970s. In both these cases, British Jews probably made up a disproportionate number of these tides of general British migration.

In the other ^{major} Jewish migration movement of this century, towards Israel, British Jews have in the 1970s also comprised a disproportionate share of aliyah from Western countries.

The figures presented in Tables 1 & 2 confirm the statement made in our recent population size study, Mortality Patterns of British Jews, 1975-1979 that 'emigration is a more important factor in the net annual decline of Anglo-Jewry than has been thought in the past'. Despite the partial nature of the data and using very conservative figures for the USA, around 1970 British Jews abroad comprised more than 12% of the resident Anglo-Jewish population. While such figures must be regarded with caution because of differences in migration patterns in these various countries since 1900, it must be emphasised that 44,000 persons identified themselves as Jews in the official Census of their adopted countries. These people and their descendants are thus a direct loss to the 'effective Jewish population' of Britain.

Table 1.

Official Statistics of British-Born Jews Abroad
1961-81

	<u>British-Born Jews</u>	<u>Difference between Censuses</u>
<u>Australia</u>		
1961	5,193	
1971	5,663	+ 470
1981	5,006	- 657
<u>Canada</u>		
1961	6,539	
1971	8,005	+ 1,466
1981	12,140	+ 4,135
<u>Israel</u>		
1961	2,790	
1972	5,558	+ 2,768
1976	6,602	+ 1,044
<u>Rhodesia</u>		
1969	433	
<u>South Africa</u>		
1970	5,109	
<u>USA</u>		
1970	19,457	
<u>(Mother tongue Yiddish)</u>		

Table 2

Official Statistics on British-Born Jews Abroad
around 1970

South Africa	1970 Census	5,109
Australia	1971 Census	5,663
Rhodesia	1969 Census	433
Canada	1971 Census	8,005
USA (Mother Tongue Yiddish)	1970 Census	19,457
Israel	1972 Census	<u>5,558</u>
Total for 6 countries		44,225
Great Britain estimated Jewish Population		
	1970	373,000

Emigrants were at least 12% of resident Jews in 1970.
To this must be added offspring,
e.g. Children of British-born fathers in Israel in 1972
numbered 2518.