

# AN ANGLO-JEWISH COMMUNITY: LEEDS<sup>1</sup>

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**T**HE Leeds Jewish community is typically the product of the persecution of Russian Jewry in the latter half of the nineteenth century. By the beginning of the present century some 10,000 Jews had settled in Leeds, and these immigrants gave rise to the third largest Jewish community in Britain, which at present numbers about 20,000 people.<sup>2</sup> As the community grew, organized Jewish life developed, and the multitude of organizations that sprang up served as a most important force of social control. Much is to be gained, therefore, from an examination of the organizational pattern and structure of the community.

We may divide the organizational field into the following sectors: religious, cultural, Zionist, political, economic, and charitable. Quite naturally there is much overlapping in both the membership and functions of the various organizations, but although this makes our division into definite fields rather artificial, it is nevertheless of great value in providing us with a clear picture of the organizational pattern.

Before dealing with those organizations that fit into the above classification, we shall examine two organizations which aim at looking after the needs of the community as a whole, rather than with any one aspect of its life. One such organization is the Leeds Jewish Representative Council which is a body that links the multitude of organizations, covers the field of organizations almost in its entirety, and gives an appearance of unity to the community. From its List of Purposes we see that its main aims are: to provide a central representative body for the community; to guide and co-ordinate communal activities; to foster good relations between Jews and non-Jews; to deal with matters of Jewish interest in general; and to be a centre of information.

In 1959 the number of affiliated organizations was 113 with some 320 delegates. Comparative figures for 1949 were 80 organizations with some 240 delegates. Jewish public representatives, e.g. Members of Parliament representing Leeds constituencies, Aldermen and Councillors, Magistrates, Members of the Board of Deputies, and heads of major institutions, are all *ex officio* members of the Council.

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The Council has been constantly trying to convince organizations and their leaders of the importance of its work. In fact it considers the duty of all to support and extend its activities. There is no doubt that during the last few years the Council has gained in status, and that the interest shown towards it has increased. It acquired its enhanced position simply because the need was felt for such a centralized organization. It is also true that the Council is the most representative of Leeds Jewish communal institutions. Moreover, it has carried out many of its functions efficiently. This is so in the field of representation, e.g. it represents Leeds Jewry upon such bodies as the Council of Social Services, the Area Churches Committee, the Leeds and District Council of the United Nations Organization, etc. Similarly, it brings about co-operation with the larger Anglo-Jewish community and world Jewry, e.g. by supporting the Conference of Provincial Representative Councils and by being affiliated to the Board of Deputies and the World Jewish Congress. Again, it provides a link between the Jewish community and the larger non-Jewish community and also it provides useful information to both organizations and individuals.

But in its most important function, namely that of co-ordinating the work of the various organizations, the powers of the Council are more apparent than real. The only sanctions the Council can take against a member organization are those of cancelling its membership and of providing bad publicity for the organization in question. Short of these acts, no organization can be deterred from taking a completely independent line. A case in point is that of raising funds for some charitable purpose. In this field the Council has attributed to itself the function of 'sole controller' and has advised members of the community to ignore appeals unless they are satisfied that the authority of the Council has been given. Yet fund-raising activities without explicit Council permission have taken place, and although most of these have been on a small scale, there is nothing much the Council could do against some grandiose and well-organized scheme.

Another clear example showing the ineffectiveness of the Council in co-ordinating work is found in connexion with the building of synagogues in the new areas of settlement. At the Annual General Meeting of 1958, the Council came out against indiscriminate and unco-ordinated synagogue building, and set up the Synagogue Advisory Board with the task of putting into effect the plan of the Council to build one large synagogue for the Moortown area, through the joint efforts of the main synagogues. In this task the Advisory Board and its instigator the Representative Council have completely failed, for in fact five separate and completely unco-ordinated synagogue building schemes have come into operation, two of which have already been completed, the others being near completion.

Similarly in other matters, the Council has very little real power and

must always rely primarily on the goodwill, voluntary work, and self-imposed control of member organizations.

Another organization that takes interest in the community as such, rather than limiting itself to any one aspect of its life, is the Bnai Brith. This fraternal organization with high humanitarian ideals, and endeavouring to unite all Jews in common brotherhood, has as its practical tasks the supplementing and promoting of the work of other organizations and the initiating of public service. Thus in Leeds it has been successful in promoting the creation of the Judean Club, the Convalescent Home, the Leeds Jewish Friendship Club, and more recently the Hillel Foundation. Generally after the creation of an organization, the latter becomes an independent body and the Bnai Brith withdraws but remains prepared to render support whenever called upon. Because of the absence of a Representative Council, at times the Bnai Brith took upon itself the task of trying to co-ordinate the work of the various organizations. It is interesting to note that it was the Bnai Brith that made possible the re-formation and reorganization of the Representative Council to which it is now affiliated.

#### RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

*The Beth Din.* This is an ecclesiastical court having an ultimate say in all religious matters. All the synagogues, with the exception of the Reform, accept its rulings, and so do many organizations, although a good number quietly disregard its requirements. Most of its work consists not merely of rulings but of actual investigatory and supervisory tasks. It is in the main concerned with marriage, divorce, *chalitza*, proselytizations, supervision of *shechita* and *kashrus*. In all these matters the Beth Din has close liaison with the Chief Rabbi's Office in London. Other functions are, for example, the adjudication of disputes (*Dinei Torah*) and the issuing of certificates upon solemn declarations to old immigrants, as regards their dates of birth or marriage.

The Beth Din itself is a charge of the Beth Din Administration Committee, which is made up by Executive members drawn from both the Board of Shechita and the Kashrus Commission. The members of the Beth Din have, in ex officio capacity, seats on the committees of most communal organizations.

*Synagogues.* There are nineteen places of worship with a total synagogue membership of 4,640. Since this is a transitional period in that synagogues in the older areas still exist whilst new ones have already been built to cope with the needs that have arisen in the new areas of settlement, it must be stated that about half a dozen of the synagogues will be closed down shortly, although at least three new places of worship will be opened in the newer areas in the near future.

In view of the fact that the primary reason for synagogue member-

ship is the burial right that it carries with it, note must be taken of the fact that the total membership would be greater but for the existence of the Jewish Workers' Co-operative Society. This organization has a membership of 2,114 for burial rights, although of these 520 are at the same time members of a synagogue which is affiliated to the society. It appears, nevertheless, that we could add approximately 1,600 'would-be' synagogue members which would give us a total of over 6,200. However, in view of two factors: (a) the flexible nature of membership, i.e. not all members represent families; and (b) the fact that some duplication exists, i.e. some are members of more than one synagogue, the figure of 6,200 must be reduced to about 5,500, if we are to arrive at a total representing the number of Jewish families attached to synagogues and burial societies.

The synagogues are served by thirty-eight full-time and ten part-time officials, as well as by a good number of honorary functionaries. The main activities of synagogues consist of conducting religious services and services connected with burials and weddings. Not all the synagogues have daily services, and if we reduce the nineteen places of worship to sixteen, as some of them are in a transitional period, we find that only eight, i.e. 50 per cent, have regular daily services. Only three of the synagogues have special services for children, but almost all have Ladies' Guilds. The following are approximate numbers attending the various services in all the synagogues: morning, 170-180; evening, 120-130; Friday evening, 230-250; Sabbath morning, 800-850 (including some 180-200 children attending their own services); High Festivals, 7,100-7,200. Except for the latter, attendance at services is, as we see, very poor, and it is made up mainly of the older and more traditionally minded members, a small number of orthodox people, some who are more actively connected with the synagogues, and the mourners who attend for a year. Even the High Festival figure seems low, but it is explained by the fact that children and many teenagers, for whom often no seats are booked, are not accounted for.

All the synagogues are orthodox, apart from one Reform synagogue (200 members), in that congregationally they adhere to the Shulchan Aruch, although the bulk of their members do not observe the rules laid down in that code, with the exception of some of the smaller places of worship, e.g. the Yeshivah, where all the members are strictly orthodox.

In 1947 an attempt was made to bring about a certain amount of co-operation among synagogues and to co-ordinate the religious life of the community, by establishing the Council of Synagogues. The Council had some initial success but within approximately three years it became defunct. The failure of the Council can be said to have been due mainly to the following factors: (a) the vested interests in the various synagogues, especially the wish of the leaders to maintain their

respective positions of prestige; (*b*) to some extent a genuine desire on the part of many members to maintain the old group, which is associated with family links usually going back a few generations; (*c*) the fear of domination by the bigger and more powerful synagogal groups, especially the United Hebrew Congregation (2,000 members).

Whilst the smaller synagogues which do not have the financial means to acquire premises in the new areas of settlement have to amalgamate with the larger congregations, it is clear that at least five independent synagogal groups (with a number of branches) will continue to exist within the community, as well as a few smaller places of worship.

#### CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

The provision of Jewish education is a basic force of control within the community. The effectiveness of that force will depend on: (*a*) the intensiveness of the education, and (*b*) how extensively the school-going population is being covered by that education. This important force of control is mainly in the hands of the Leeds Talmud Torah Hebrew Education Board. The latter covers a vast field providing evening class tuition at six branches to 704 pupils, and withdrawal class tuition at twenty different branches of schools to 905 pupils. The Talmud Torah estimates that the maximum overlap between evening and withdrawal class pupils is 200. This gives the total of 1,409 pupils, and if we add the 145 pupils in the Jewish primary and nursery schools, and the 55 pupils at the Sinai Synagogue Hebrew classes (not under the Talmud Torah) we arrive at the grand total of 1,609 pupils receiving Hebrew tuition.

In trying to ascertain to what extent the Jewish school population is covered by Hebrew education, we encounter certain difficulties. Thus, we may base our estimate of the number of Jewish school children on general school population figures for Leeds. Since the latter is in the region of 78,000 it is over 15 per cent of a population of 512,000. Taking this percentage, with a Jewish population estimate of 18,000,<sup>3</sup> we arrive at the figure of 2,736 as the Leeds Jewish school population. Even if we consider the following factors: (*a*) that the size of the Jewish family is smaller than that of the non-Jewish family, and that therefore the above estimate of the Jewish school population is too high, and (*b*) that many Jewish children receive Hebrew tuition privately and some are away from Leeds in boarding schools, looking at the number of children receiving Hebrew tuition, which is 1,609, we find that there is an enormous gap not covered by such education. Does this mean that a substantial number of Jewish children do not receive any Hebrew education? If this is not the case, how then do we account for the above gap? The answer is as follows. The general Leeds school population figure of 78,000 includes children under 5 and over 15. However, few

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young children attend Hebrew classes, parents maintaining that it is too much of a burden for them at that age. Again, few children of over 15 receive Hebrew instruction. In some secondary schools there is no proper Hebrew instruction, the withdrawal period being used for holding some sort of a service. In fact boys after the age of 13, i.e. after Bar-Mitzvah, do not attend after-school Hebrew classes and many of them do not get instruction even in withdrawal periods. The lack of Hebrew instruction over the age of 13 applies even more so to girls.

In view of the above we see that Talmud Torah Hebrew instruction is provided mainly for the age group 6-13. The latter group in the general school population of Leeds contains 53,650 children. This represents 10·4 per cent of the total population. Taking this percentage we arrive at the figure of 1,872 Jewish children in the age group 6-13. Keeping in mind that the size of the Jewish family is smaller than that of the non-Jewish one, and that a certain number of children do receive Hebrew instruction privately, and taking the figure of 1,609 receiving Hebrew tuition, we see that the gap is much narrower than as it first appeared. Nevertheless the above does show that the Jewish school population is not fully covered by Hebrew education.

As regards the number of children sent to Hebrew classes, the length of time they attend, and with what regularity, much depends on the attitude of parents. The Talmud Torah, however, is endeavouring to attract greater numbers, especially to their after-school classes, and in particular to increase the number of girl pupils. One proposal aimed at increasing the number of pupils has been to establish a 'Scholarship Centre' where the children would be helped in their secular homework by qualified tutors and then follow on in advanced Hebrew classes.

The quality of education imparted depends on whether properly qualified teachers are available, a problem that hinges on the type of salaries paid and therefore on the general financial situation. In this respect the Talmud Torah has to rely on the goodwill of synagogues, most of which have accepted the Communal Levy for Education, the periodical sums contributed by various organizations such as the Board of Shechita, and endowments, donations, etc., coming from individuals. Again, there is the problem of the time children can spend in the Talmud Torah. It is certainly a burden for young children regularly to attend evening classes lasting two to three hours after a whole day at school, whilst on the other hand it is generally agreed that withdrawal classes lasting some forty minutes, about three times a week, are inadequate. The obvious answer to the problem is the Jewish day-school, and the Leeds community made a start in this direction some three years ago. The Jewish primary and nursery schools have now a total of 145 children and progress is being made at a rapid rate.

The champions of the Jewish day-school movement, namely the

Hebrew Education Board and the Zionist Council, the two organizations which are in fact jointly responsible for the schools, met with stiff opposition from those with assimilationist tendencies. The latter pointed out that it was undesirable to segregate Jewish from non-Jewish children. Another contention was that Jewish schools may not have a high enough standard and that they may prove a stigma, factors which could hinder or even spoil completely the later career of the child. This fear of a possible effect on the future career of the child has been noticeable especially as regards boys. Thus, in the Selig Brodetsky Jewish Day School, while in the 5-6 age group 59 per cent of the pupils are boys, in the 7-8 age group only 33 per cent are boys. It remains to be seen what percentages of boys will be found in the higher classes, as these will be formed in the near future. The picture would be even more complete should a secondary Jewish school be established.

The arguments in respect of segregation and the effects of a Jewish school on the child's future career, although overcome in the committee meetings and discussions among communal leaders, are still likely to keep many children away from Jewish day-schools, and it is the general attitude towards the day-school movement that will ultimately decide in what direction Jewish education will move, and what powers it will be able to acquire.

Another matter connected with Jewish children in schools is the Kosher Meals Service which provides some 250 meals per day, of which 90 are taken up by the Jewish day-schools. A survey of children who attend Talmud Torah withdrawal classes from five schools has shown that 46.6 per cent take advantage of the provision of kosher meals. Two factors must be mentioned however. On the one hand, the number of Jewish children in the schools is often greater than the number attending withdrawal classes. On the other hand, children in some of the schools are at too great a distance from the canteen providing the kosher meals. But considering that the percentage for children from Cowper Street Schools, where the canteen is situated next door to the schools, is only 49.9 of those withdrawn, it can be safely concluded that with the best of conditions only about 50 per cent of Jewish children could be attracted to the Kosher Meals Service, unless a definite change were to take place in the attitude of parents towards it.

Here we can conveniently mention the existence of two Parents' Associations. One is the Leeds Jewish Schools Parents' Association with some 150 members. They run 'socials', handing over the proceeds to the schools, and have lectures on educational and religious problems. The other is the Moortown Talmud Torah Parent-Teacher Association, with some 300 members. Their activities are similar to the first one.

Higher religious education is traditionally provided by the Talmudical Colleges or as they are usually called the Yeshivahs. The Leeds Yeshivah provides such education to only a small number of part-time

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students. It often attracts some university students and graduates who arrange their own *shiurim* (lessons) with the teachers of the Yeshivah. It also attracts a small number of young *Baalei Teshuvah*, i.e. those returning to a religious way of life.

Jewish religious education for adults is provided mainly by the Rabbis of the town. At least three independent courses of *shiurim* are held on the Sabbath, the Bible and the Talmud being studied. Attendances vary from five to twenty and mainly those of the older generation take part. In addition, the Institute for Adult Jewish Education, whose tutors are again the few Rabbis, provides some courses held during the week, e.g. in Talmud, Midrashic Literature, Modern Hebrew and prayer book, the total number enrolled being fifty-four.

There is little else in the way of regular adult educational activity, even of a secular Jewish content, except for some activity on the part of the adult Zionist cultural groups. There are on the other hand the occasional lectures, symposia or debates, organized by various groups, cultural, charitable, etc.

The Leeds University Jewish Students' Association has a membership of 110. It is estimated that including some twenty Israeli students, there are between 160 and 180 Jewish students at Leeds University. Since some of the 110 J.S.A. members are not now attending courses but are graduates who maintain their association with the group over many years, it could not be asserted that more than 60 per cent of Jewish students identify themselves with the Jewish Students' Association. The latter has the following main objects: 'to disseminate Jewish learning; to bring together Jewish people in the University; and to uphold Jewish traditions'. Its work consists mainly of meetings of an educational nature and of 'socials', as well as organizing and attending week-end schools. The Jewish hall of residence, the recently established Hillel House, where twenty students live, acts as a centre for the members of the Jewish Students' Association.

Although sport and other social activities take up most of their time, some educational work is undertaken by the few well-organized clubs, such as the Leeds Jewish Institute, which caters for those of over 18, and the Judean Club for those between 14 and 18. Both clubs have experienced a declining membership whilst situated in the Chapeltown area, because of the dwindling Jewish population there. Thus the Institute's membership dropped from 2,600 in 1948 to 1,500 in 1958, and that of the Judean Club from 375 in 1948 to 160 in 1956. Since the latter has moved to the Moortown area its membership has increased again to 300. The new grounds of the Judean Club have also facilitated the strengthening and expansion of the 27th North Leeds Boy Scouts' Group, one of the well-known Jewish scout groups. Similarly the Moor Allerton Golf Club situated in Moortown has been expanding, and has experienced a considerable increase in membership during the last



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three years, its total membership being now in the region of 700. This increase took place in spite of membership being very costly, i.e. over £114 in the case of a full adult member.

There are a number of cultural organizations which consider themselves to be Jewish bodies because their membership is predominantly Jewish, but which are not interested in Jewish culture as such. For example, the Jewish Music Club with a membership of 200 out of which half a dozen are non-Jews, has as its aim the furtherance of classical music. It is only occasionally that a programme is of Jewish content, the ratio being about one to fifty. Similarly, the Proscenium Players, an amateur theatrical group with sixty-five members of whom a few are non-Jews, out of forty-five plays put on only six of Jewish content. The Jewish Orchestral Society is in the same category as the above two organizations, although of late nearly 50 per cent of its members are Gentiles. The Orchestral Society and the Proscenium Players in fact get much support from non-Jewish audiences, and they in their turn help both Jewish and non-Jewish charities.

In the field of literary societies, the community shows an obvious weakness. Except for the Zionist inspired groups, e.g. the Tarbuth Association, which exists to promote the use of Hebrew and propagate Hebrew literature, no literary societies exist. Similarly, no regular Jewish literary publication of any sort is produced in Leeds, and the community has no newspaper of its own.

The Leeds Jewish Lecture Committee has as its object the provision of lectures and informal addresses on subjects of general Jewish interest, mainly to non-Jewish audiences. These are intended to promote understanding and goodwill between Jews and non-Jews.

## ZIONIST ORGANIZATIONS

The Leeds Zionist Council is the 'roof-organization' to which forty-three groups are affiliated, with a total membership of over 1,200. The Council co-ordinates the work of the various groups and provides help wherever required. In addition its main activities include Hebrew classes, special lectures, Hebrew Seminars, exhibitions and displays, library facilities, public relations work, information service, Israel Independence Day celebrations, receptions, etc. It also arranges the Yorkshire Keymen's Conference, which is an annual meeting of Zionist Councils from the surrounding region. The Council further plays its role in the larger Zionist network through its affiliation to the Zionist Federation of Great Britain, and to the Jewish Agency, which is a global Zionist body.

Within the Zionist framework we find general societies, e.g. the Leeds Zionist Society, whose membership has in the last few years declined from 400 to 120, or the Tarbuth Association with some 50 members;

political groups and their respective youth groups, e.g. Poalei Zion with Habonim, representing socialist Zionism, and Mizrachi with Bnei-Akivah, representing religious Zionism (the membership of some of the political and youth groups has declined and such organizations as the Mapam or the Revisionists are now defunct); and Women's groups, e.g. the Pioneer Women or the Women's Mizrachi, concerned mainly with fund raising for Israel (the Leeds Women's Zionist Council co-ordinates the activities of fifteen groups affiliated to the Federation of Women Zionists, which is itself a branch of the Women's International Zionist Organization).

The Jewish National Fund is the oldest organization in the field of fund raising. In Leeds the number of subscribers, mainly in the form of boxes kept on premises, is 3,680 and the amount that accrued from these during the year ending June 30th 1958 was £4,679. If we allow for some duplication in view of the fact that boxes are sometimes held by one person both in his house and his shop, we find that approximately 3,500 families subscribe to the J.N.F., which represents 63.5 per cent of the total number of Jewish families in Leeds. Other fund-raising methods are the sale of trees planted in Israel, donations for names inscribed in golden books, various functions, moneys raised by the J.N.F. Fellowship groups, and house-to-house drives undertaken by youth groups.

The Joint Palestine Appeal is the premier fund-raising scheme in support of Israel. The following Tables will give us some comparative figures suggesting certain trends in this field:

TABLE I

*J.P.A. Campaigns, 1947-58<sup>a</sup>*

Year	Gross Income £	Donors
1947	25,063	1,029
1948	102,544	4,006
1949	48,549	1,121
1950	51,200	1,653
1951	60,183	2,033
1952	54,375	3,189
1953	51,430	2,599
1954	61,726	2,459
1955	62,279	3,078
1956	60,784	2,758
1957	76,076	2,610
1958	57,924	2,224
1959	64,148	2,169

Table I illustrates clearly that in times of crisis there has been an appropriate response. Thus, the extremely high figure for 1948 was due to the establishment of the State of Israel and her war of independence. Again, the next highest figure in the Table is the one for 1957 owing to

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TABLE II

*Kol Nidrei Appeals, 1950-59*

Year	Amounts Promised £	Donors
1950	1,625	697
1951	2,936	1,606
1952	3,229	1,759
1953	3,775	2,207
1954	3,665	2,245
1955	3,909	2,458
1956	3,378	2,280
1957	3,209	2,196
1958	3,055	1,931
1959	3,121	1,861

the Suez campaign at the end of 1956. Much depends, therefore, on such important events, although other factors also affect the figures.

Looking at the gross income of J.P.A. Campaigns in Table I, we must remember that the devaluation of the pound took place in 1949 (18th September), and subsequently its real value further went down as a result of inflation. Therefore the higher figures of the middle 1950's do not represent a much greater income in terms of real value, even when compared with the much lower figure for 1947. However, the number of donors did show a definite increase, the two peak years, with the exception of 1948, being 1952 and 1955. But after 1955 an annual decline in the number of donors had set in and this maintained itself till 1959, the last figure in Table I.

In Table II we find a steady increase in the number of donors from 1950 to 1955, the latter being the peak year. After this, right up to 1959, there is a steady decline. As regards the amounts promised there was also a steady decline after 1955, although in 1959 this decline was reversed. The reason for the increase in 1959, in spite of the still fewer donors, has been the change in the minimum contribution allowed, i.e. from 5s. in previous years, to 10s. 6d. in 1959.

For our estimate of changes in the degree of enthusiasm for Israel and the Zionist cause in the community, incomes or amounts promised are a rather poor guide. A more reliable guide for suggesting certain trends is given by the number of donors. In this respect both tables point to a definite decline after 1955. Table II is especially reliable since it is based on all the places of worship and so represents the community as a whole. The donors come from the largest possible number, as it is on Kol Nidrei night that the largest number of people attend synagogues or temporary places of worship. Here a more spontaneous response is measured than the donor figures in Table I would enable us to gauge, for although the latter include the Kol Nidrei Appeal donors, they also contain donors specially approached by canvassers or influenced by the leaders of the campaign.

The conclusion we have to reach is that since 1955 there appears to

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have been a general decline in enthusiasm, although it can be reasonably expected that important events would again be able to elicit a greater response.

Another important fund-raising scheme is the Blue and White Bazaar, which is held every two years. This is a joint effort of numerous Zionist groups, although non-Zionist groups such as the Bnai Brith or Synagogue Ladies' Guilds also take part. In the 1957 Blue and White Bazaar, which was held at the Leeds Town Hall, some thirty-six groups co-operated, in addition to which numerous individuals gave their assistance. The total income was £28,000, net profit being £26,000. These were the highest figures yet attained, and the Blue and White Bazaar can be expected to continue in a very successful manner. The main reason is that it has become a sort of general communal event, enjoying great popularity in view of the pleasant social atmosphere it creates. Thus, in 1957, during the three days for which it was open, more than 3,000 people visited it.

Whilst an account of Zionist organizations and their work can give us an idea of the extensive Zionist network that covers the community, it must be emphasized that the Zionist field of influence is even wider than such an account would make us believe. Thus, most of the synagogues have a Zionist inclination, evidenced for example by the use of the most important religious occasion of the year for the Zionist cause, i.e. the appeal on Kol Nidrei night. Non-Zionist organizations such as the Bnai Brith, the Committee of Jewish Market Traders, or the Friendship Club, help to raise money for the J.N.F. Again, the Jewish Students' Association has a strong Zionist bias, and it encourages lunch-time Hebrew classes, interfunctions with Zionist groups, tours to Israel, etc. In addition, many of the leaders of other organizations are leaders of Zionist groups or at least active supporters, effecting further influence in this way. In the case of education, for example, the Zionist Council together with the Talmud Torah Hebrew Education Board is responsible for the Jewish day-school movement in Leeds. This was made possible by many of the Zionist leaders being at the same time in the active leadership of the Talmud Torah Hebrew Education Board. Finally it must be mentioned that the Zionist movement can, at times of emergency for example, call upon the support of a great number of people who do not belong to any of its organizations. In fact the Representative Council itself, speaking in the name of the community as a whole, supports the Zionist cause in what seems to be a taken-for-granted manner. This is for example the pronouncement made by its President at the Annual General Meeting of March 1958: 'We in Leeds, who give so much of our time and effort to the affairs of our own community, as well as to the affairs of the non-Jewish community, are nevertheless foremost in the moral and practical assistance which we render to the State of Israel.'

## POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS

In this category we include those organizations whose main purpose is to maintain the rights of the Jewish community and to defend it against any injustice. First to be mentioned is the Leeds Jewish Representative Council which, as its 'list of purposes' shows, speaks on behalf of the community, and seeks to maintain the rights of Jews on a basis equal to all other citizens. If there are any attempts by some organization or individual to impair these rights, the Representative Council uses some of its organs in order to prevent any developments detrimental to the Jewish community. Thus, the Leeds Area Defence Committee, which is the local branch of the Jewish Defence Committee of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, but in fact operates under the auspices of the Representative Council, has as its purpose the combating of antisemitism, and its members undertake to observe the local press, indoor and outdoor meetings, films, the stage, radio, etc. The Defence Committee stresses two points: (a) that while its alertness is necessary, it must work with the minimum of publicity; (b) that its work must be carried out in a disciplined manner. It is generally believed that publicity of whatever nature, and the lack of restraint on the part of Jews however justified, can only be detrimental to the aim of defence work, which is to maintain good relationships between Jews and non-Jews. To achieve the latter, the stress is put on educational work, e.g. by providing, through the Jewish Lecture Committee and the Council of Christians and Jews, speakers to address non-Jewish audiences, in this way to reduce antisemitic prejudices.

Another organization which is concerned with defence is the local branch of the Association of Jewish Ex-Service Men and Women. The peak membership figure of 1,000 was reached in 1950, and since then membership has declined to fewer than 400. The leaders of the Association have pointed out that the drop is in direct consequence of the decrease in antisemitism. They have also said that membership and interest would increase should the need arise, but that they would rather not see the organization flourish in this way, and would not decry its disappearance should its work become unnecessary. The Association closely co-operates with the Defence Committee.

So far we have dealt with the local aspect of political activity. The community, however, takes interest further afield both in a national and global sense. As regards the former it has fourteen local representatives on the Board of Deputies of British Jews, which deals with 'the political and civil rights of Anglo-Jewry'. Regarding the latter, there is a Leeds branch of the British Section of the World Jewish Congress. The branch, which has some seventy members, has not been very active lately. As in the case of the Ex-Service Men's Association, the falling off of interest and activity is probably due to a decline in the need for such activity.

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Although the Poalei Zion, the Zionist counterpart of the Labour Party, declares its support for and solidarity with the Labour Party, and is also officially connected with the Workers' Circle, which takes an active interest in the political struggles of the Jewish working classes, the foregoing account of political organizations shows clearly that the community is mainly concerned with its own problems, especially those arising from the relationship of its own members with the general population, as well as with similar problems facing other Jewish communities in England or other parts of the world. This is obviously not to say that members of the community are not active, as individuals, in local and national general politics.

### ECONOMIC ORGANIZATIONS

The largest organization in this sphere is the Leeds Jewish Workers' Co-operative Society Ltd., which has a membership of 2,114. Men may become members at the age of 25 and one contribution covers a man, his wife, his unmarried daughters, and his sons up to the age of 25, so that the above figure of over two thousand represents mainly families. The main aims of the Society are: (a) to insure members with burial rights without any additional costs; (b) to enable members to buy kosher meat at the lowest possible cost, through its butcher shop. Membership fees and trading profits are all ploughed back and no dividends are paid out.

Although the aims and activities of the society are not purely economic, since it acts in the main as a social insurance scheme for the burial of the poorer section of the community, the Society has made constant use of the economic instrument of price competition. Whether in its membership fees for burial rights, the retailing of kosher meat, or Synagogue membership fees, it has always striven to offer the lowest terms and prices, and its success has been no doubt due mainly to this factor.

Another organization which can be listed here is the recently established Leeds Jewish Housing Association Ltd. It was initiated by the Leeds Jewish Board of Guardians in 1953, but is now an independent non-profit making organization. Its main aim is to provide at reasonable rents 'housing and associated amenities for persons of limited means'. With the aid of the Board of Guardians and the Leeds City Council a suburban site in the Moortown area has been acquired for the purpose of providing 200 dwellings, a communal hall, a place of worship, and other amenities. The scheme has been approved by the City Council and the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, who have agreed to make loans to the Association of up to 90 per cent of the capital cost of the project.

The second type of economic organization that we find in the

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community is in the form of an association of traders dealing with a specifically Jewish product, i.e. kosher meat or poultry. Thus we have the Retail Kosher Butchers' Association, and the Kosher Poultry Dealers' Association. These organizations promote the interests of their members and the trade as a whole, but at the same time give their support to various institutions in the community; e.g. they give financial aid to Jewish education.

Thirdly, we come to the Jewish professional associations, which are naturally small and exclusive groups. Although their primary aim is to bring together Jewish people of a particular profession, their objects do vary to some extent. Thus, whilst the Jewish Medical Society stresses the furtherance of scientific knowledge amongst Jewish practitioners, and engages in no charitable work, the Jewish Dental Society has a close concern for the Dental Hospital in Israel. Similarly the Jewish Pharmacists' Association raises money for the School of Pharmacy of the Hebrew University. This is not to say that the latter two neglect the promotion of scientific knowledge or the cultural aspect of the groups, and it goes without saying that all of them serve as a meeting ground of a social character. These professional bodies are also interested in maintaining a high standard of professional conduct amongst the Jewish members of the professions. The various groups have occasional inter-functions.

In industry there are no specific Jewish organizations either on the employers' or employees' side. The latter have long since ceased to have their own Jewish trade unions, but in view of the large numbers of Jewish workers in certain trades, Jews are active in some of the unions, e.g. the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers, which in fact has delegates on the Leeds Jewish Representative Council and other organizations, e.g. the Leeds Jewish Board of Guardians.

### CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Excluding Zionist groups but including friendly societies, there are some forty charitable organizations in the community. It is not necessary to describe the work of, or even mention, all these institutions, but to give some insight into charitable work the most important and typical organizations will be selected for more detailed analysis.

The Leeds Jewish Board of Guardians has recently celebrated the 80th anniversary of its foundation. Since the early days its work and purpose underwent great changes. It is no longer called upon to relieve dire poverty or distress. Its task now is to *supplement benefits* accruing from the welfare state, and to *enhance opportunities* for attaining more reasonable standards of living. The Board is especially concerned with helping the infirm and the aged. It has for this purpose a Mobile Meals Service and a Rest Centre. It also carries out family case work and often

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preventive work is done especially as regards juvenile delinquency and marriage difficulties. Voluntary workers regularly visit hospitals, old and lonely people, and the latter are also taken on country outings. Help and advice is also given for example on problems of a legal nature, child adoption, convalescence, and so on. Special assistance is given at the Holy Days which enables poorer families to celebrate these festivals in the traditional manner. Sedarim are arranged and Passover food is distributed. Elderly people are helped to obtain part-time jobs and the Loan Fund of the Board is used to prevent the complete breakdown of a family's financial structure, particularly in the case of small traders and artisans.

The total number of cases dealt with in 1957 was 408 families totalling 792 persons; 152 families were in receipt of weekly allowances and 34 loans were granted totalling £1,836. In 1957 the Board had an expenditure of £16,058 and an income of £15,129. On the income side it must be noted that the 2,600 subscribers have provided only £2,054, another £2,922 accruing from donations. On the other hand £7,303, i.e. nearly half the income, was derived from the annual concert.

The work of the Board is done through the close co-operation of the staff and the various committees, e.g. the Welfare Committee, the Loan Fund Committee, the Annual Charity Concert Committee, etc.

The Jewish Board of Guardians, which is affiliated to the Leeds Council of Social Services, co-ordinates its work with both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations, e.g. the hospitals, the Local Health Authorities, Probation Officers, the National Assistance Board, the N.S.P.C.C., the Jewish Citizen's Advice Bureau, and other Jewish Boards of Guardians in the country.

We shall deal next with the Leeds Home for Aged Jews and Home of Rest. The Home looks after forty-four old and infirm, and with the transfer to the commodious premises at Donisthorpe Hall and the new building programme costing some £55,000, an additional fifty-eight residents will be accepted. There is a heavy waiting list, especially in view of the fact that the Homes cater for not only Leeds but also other communities such as Bradford, Hull, Harrogate, Sheffield and Nottingham. Demands on the Homes are likely to increase further, as lately more middle- and upper-class people have been applying. This is no doubt a result of the better district and general surroundings to which the Homes moved some two years ago. In fact the widening of the group for which the Homes cater has brought up the question of possibly altering the constitution, so as to enable the taking in of paying residents.

At present, the main sources of income are weekly and annual subscriptions, covenants, the annual dance, ward and bed endowments, old age pensions, supplements received from Leeds Corporation Welfare Services Department, Memorial Tablets, and general donations.



The residents have, among many facilities, regular medical attention, synagogue services, occupational therapy, talks and concerts, etc.

In view of the fact that the Leeds Jewish hospital has been taken over by the Ministry of Health, the Herzl-Moser Hospital Amenities Association has been formed. The purpose of the Association is to provide those comforts and amenities to the patients in the Herzl-Moser hospital, which will produce a Jewish atmosphere and to supply those patients who need it with convalescent after-care treatment. With regard to Jewish patients in other hospitals, two organizations are active. First, the Kosher Kitchen for Hospitals supplies some seventy to eighty patients per week with kosher meals at six different hospitals. Secondly, the Jewish Ministers' Visitation Committee on which some sixteen chaplains serve, carries out not only the regular visiting of patients in hospitals and of inmates in prisons, but also sees that Jewish boys born in various maternity hospitals are circumcised, and that patients are not sent, as far as this is possible, to hospitals where no kosher food is available. The Hospital Management Committees will accept only chaplains appointed by the Visitation Committee, which is also represented on the Hospitals Voluntary Aid Committee.

In spite of the general decline in membership as a result of the National Insurance scheme, the 'friendly society' movement is still quite strong and active. There are a dozen Jewish friendly societies affiliated to the Representative Council. Their general aims can be classified as: (a) those designed to help members mainly in the form of benefits given in sickness, death, and confined mourning; and (b) those concerned with helping various worthy causes.

Finally, we must mention the Citizens' Advice Bureau, which was established by the Bnai Brith to give expert advice and guidance on legal, domestic, and current problems, and to provide information on any other matter of a practical nature. The Bureau deals with 350-400 cases a year, and it is interesting to note that whereas a number of years ago the percentage of Jews who came for advice was 80 as against 20 per cent non-Jews, now that the area where the Bureau is situated has been abandoned by many Jews, roughly half of those coming for advice are Jews and half are non-Jews.

To give some idea of the great number and variety of Jewish welfare and charitable organizations in existence, we shall just mention a few, without describing the work they do. Thus, there is the Service Committee of the Major Clive Behrens Branch of the British Legion, the Jewish Children's Convalescent Home, the Junior Organization for Leeds Jewish Charities, The Ladies' Aid Society, the Jewish Girls' Marriage Fund, the Benevolent Lending Society, the Orphan Aid Society, the Sick Aid Society, the Jewish Blind Society, the Jewish Ladies' Dorcas Society, the Keren Hatorah Relief Fund, and the Ladies' Charity Guild.

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There is quite definitely a duplication of work in many respects, but especially in that of fund raising. The argument, however, is that the advantages of having numerous charitable organizations outweigh the disadvantages. The main advantages seem to be that with the existence of a great number of organizations, more money can be raised and that a greater number of voluntary workers come forward. It could be argued, however, that well-organized appeals on a grand scale for all charities might achieve better results than the numerous schemes do, whilst a sufficient number of voluntary workers could be attracted by a co-ordinating body, or an overall welfare organization, establishing many different committees. The fact remains that no co-ordinating body exists for charity work, although it is true to say that a great deal of co-operation does take place among the various charitable organizations in the community.

## CONCLUSIONS

Specific Jewish organizations, of which we have seen there is such a wide variety in the community, are effective as forces of social control in various ways. To begin with, they offer an opportunity for identification. By belonging to a synagogue, a Jewish club or a Zionist society, and by contributing to Jewish charities or parading with other Jewish ex-servicemen, the individual is able to maintain his Jewish consciousness. In this way, Jewish organizations arrest the processes of assimilation. In fact, the more assimilated a Jew is, the more eagerly he tries to sever all his contacts with Jewish organizations. We have to distinguish here, however, individual from group assimilation. Thus, while Jewish organizations may prevent individual assimilation, they often become assimilated in toto, i.e. as a group. Thus, synagogue services tend to become more akin to Church services, and there is little, for example, to distinguish the Judean Club in Leeds from a similar type of non-Jewish club in the city. Nevertheless, the mere fact that only Jewish youngsters belong to the Judean Club, tends to prevent a physical assimilation, if not a cultural one. In effect this means that Jewish organizations tend to perpetuate the segregation of the Jewish minority from the non-Jewish population.

It is important to point out that all the organizations, without any exception, are voluntary.<sup>5</sup> It is true that once an individual does become a member he will be expected to adhere to certain codes and norms. But he is free to leave the organization, and no physical<sup>6</sup> sanctions are used either to keep him in the group or to coerce him to accept group norms. Economic sanctions are used somewhat rarely. The best example is where some business men will contribute to an important charity, such as the J.P.A., rather than risk being boycotted by the more powerful economic magnates on whom they may depend for their sales and

who happen to be the leading organizers of the charity. Such a state of affairs obtains in the community we are dealing with, especially in the clothing trade, where the smaller business men would seldom risk economic penalization coming from the more substantial business men. It is, however, psychological sanctions that are most widely used. It is the opinion of others that often makes an individual contribute to the Board of Guardians, to buy kosher meat, and to belong to a synagogue. How effective the psychological sanctions are likely to be depends on a number of factors, such as attitudes and interests, family life, and so on.<sup>7</sup>

Considering the voluntary nature of membership, we find that fair numbers associate themselves with the important organizations. Thus if we take the total number of Jewish families to be 5,500<sup>8</sup> and synagogue membership representing families to be 4,200<sup>9</sup> we find that 76·3 per cent associate themselves with synagogues. If we take the number of families subscribing to the Board of Guardians to be 2,400<sup>10</sup> we find that this represents 43·6 per cent of the total number of families. Again, 63·5 per cent of the total number of families subscribe to the J.N.F.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, with very few exceptions, almost all belong at least to a burial society if not to a synagogue, and almost all at the very least contribute occasionally to some Jewish organization.

This account shows that the organizational structure covers the vast majority of Jews living in Leeds, and that with the aid of sanctions, especially psychological, it tends to arrest assimilation, tends to segregate members of the minority from the general population, and above all gives an opportunity of identification with the minority community.

NOTES

<sup>1</sup> This article and figures quoted in it, which unless otherwise stated relate to 1958, are based on material in an unpublished M.Sc.(Econ.) thesis 'Aspects of Social Control in a Minority Community—The Leeds Jewish Community' (E. Krausz, University of London, 1960).

<sup>2</sup> The Leeds Jewish population is estimated to be in the region of 18,000 to 20,000. *Ibid.*, Ch. I, pp. 3-6.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Sources for Tables I & II: Financial Reports, Auditors' Reports and Kol Nidrei Appeal Statements, J.P.A. Leeds.

<sup>5</sup> In most East and Central European countries, in contrast to Britain, membership of the community, i.e. the *Kultusgemeinde*, was obligatory, and the Governments concerned (e.g. in Hungary or Rumania) regarded it as a legal entity. In fact the *Kultussteuer*, i.e. the communal tax, was payable in the same way as income tax.

<sup>6</sup> Expulsion is at times practised, but

hardly ever is physical action needed to effect it.

<sup>7</sup> For a full discussion of various types of sanctions employed as techniques of social control, see Richard T. LaPiere, *A Theory of Social Control*, 1954, Chapters 9 and 10.

<sup>8</sup> See section on Synagogues.

<sup>9</sup> In the section on Synagogues, total synagogue membership is given as 4,640, but this must be reduced to a maximum of 4,200 in view of duplications and non-family memberships.

<sup>10</sup> The higher figure of 2,600 is given in the section on Charitable Organizations, the source being the Board of Guardians 80th Annual Report, but again in view of duplications (the full list shows that often two people of the same family contribute) the figure must be reduced to a maximum of 2,400.

<sup>11</sup> See section on Zionist Organizations.