JEWISH SCHOOLING IN GREAT BRITAIN

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THE following account seeks primarily to trace the historical background to the development of the Jewish school system in Britain and to survey the facilities as they have existed since 1945. The term 'schooling' is used deliberately, since the emphasis here is not upon education in general, but rather upon the institutions providing and administering the education for the children of the community. In addition, the end of the Second World War is a most significant point with regard to this study, for, as in so many other respects, it marks the great historical watershed from which the current system directly stems. Nevertheless, a brief account such as this must also examine the broader historical background of the system, and this it must do in the context of the community as a whole.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND UP TO 1939

Since the Resettlement of 1656 the community has developed by a series of waves of immigration, starting with the original Sephardim, culminating in the great influx from Eastern Europe between 1880 and 1914, and followed by subsequent influxes of refugees from the Continent. The process has followed a marked pattern. Generally speaking, each new wave of immigration has provided a spiritual transfusion greatly needed by the community. When, for example, Jews came to these shores from Poland and Russia, their intense Judaism was incompatible with the comparative laxity of the anglicized Jews of Victorian England, of whom the Anglo-Jewish historian Lucien Wolf wrote: 'The whole intellectuality which rose above mediocrity, ran in non-Jewish channels, while the best minds left Judaism altogether.' Today it is obvious that few Jews in this country can trace their British ancestry back to anywhere near the Resettlement of 1656. Indeed the majority of Jews in present-day Britain are descended from the post-1880 immigrants.

The tradition of education in Anglo-Jewry goes back almost to the very date of the Return. There are records that in 1657 the small new

community in London established its first Talmud Torah, and in the 'Ascamoth' of 1664 of the Sephardi congregation specific provisions for the religious education of children were laid down. By the eighteenth century at least two schools were already well established by the Sephardim. One was the Shaare Tikvah school, a development of the original Talmud Torah, and the other was the Villa Real school which was founded in 1730 for the daughters of poorer members of the community.

In the eighteenth century the immigration of Ashkenazi Jews began to increase, and the newcomers, although less organized than the Sephardim, were not slow in establishing their own educational institutions. An orphan charity school was founded in 1712, and a 'Chevra Kadisha Talmud Torah' in 1732. It was the latter institution that was subsequently to develop into the famous Jews' Free School.

By the nineteenth century certain marked features were very apparent in Anglo-Jewish education. Firstly, the schools, in common with those of other religious denominations, were primarily charitable foundations meant for the poorer children of the community. The children of richer families were almost invariably taught by private tutors, whilst their Jewish education was in the hands of *melammedim* or rabbis. In addition to this feature, and what is even more important and far-reaching, the Jewish schools were then concentrating on the secular subjects of the curriculum, inevitably to the detriment of the Jewish studies. There was a significant reason for this development. By now Anglo-Jewry contained many families which had already been well established in the country for several generations. The newcomers from the Continent, with their outlandish ways and more stringent standards of Jewish observance, were a source of embarrassment to their longer-established, anglicized co-religionists. Thus the Jewish schools tended to adopt a more anglicized outlook, and to become a means of assimilating the newcomers.

The only momentous and far-reaching event to counteract this drift away from Jewish learning and culture occurred in 1860 when the Rev. Barnett Abrahams, significantly enough an immigrant from Poland, founded the Jewish Association for the Diffusion of Religious Knowledge. This was to become the parent body of the subsequent Jewish Religious Education Board, established in 1894.

In terms of quantity, the nineteenth century was one of great development in Jewish day schools, which, apart from London, were established in Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, and Hull. Moreover, with the opening in London of the Jews' Free School in 1841, in addition to the Jews' Infants Schools, the Westminster Jewish School, the Borough Jewish School, the Bayswater Jewish Schools, the Stepney Jewish Schools, the Norwood Orphanage, and the West Metropolitan Jewish Schools, Anglo-Jewry in the second half of the last century was

extremely well endowed with elementary educational institutions of a high standard.

The provision of these schools, it must be added, was not primarily for the purpose of anglicizing Jewish immigrants. In many cases they also owed their establishment to the desire to counteract the increasing activities of Christian missionaries amongst the poorer Jews. For example, the 'Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews' had established two free schools in the East End of London in 1807 and 1811.

By the middle of the last century increasing numbers of middle-class Jews were sending their children to the better non-Jewish schools, such as University College School and the City of London School, in which there was no insistence upon Christian denominational doctrine. Thus when Jews' College was established in 1855, a Grammar School attached to it survived for less than twenty-five years, largely because it lost its potential intake to such schools as the City of London.

The turning-point in the history of English education in the last century was the great Education Act of 1870. This, among other provisions, set up the Board Schools as non-denominational institutions which were to be supported by public rates. In addition, the 1870 Act contained the important 'Conscience Clause' which stipulated that no specific denominational doctrine should be taught in any of the Board Schools.

The effect on the already existing Jewish schools was far-reaching. Being charitable institutions and receiving only comparatively small grants from public funds, they now had to compete with schools without financial problems. This factor was indeed a difficulty that also faced the voluntary schools of the Christian denominations. In addition, the Conscience Clause now removed any remaining impediments to Jewish parents sending their children to schools not maintained by the community. The sum total of the 1870 Act, as far as Anglo-Jewry was concerned, was the beginning of a decline in its day schools. There was a marked drop in numbers on the rolls, and a lowering of Jewish standards.

Providentially, in this connexion, another great turning-point in the nineteenth century came soon after the implementation of the 1870 Act: from 1882 there was the great influx of Eastern European immigrants. The newcomers, fleeing from the notorious 1881 May Laws of Czarist Russia, brought with them an intensity of Judaism unknown to the older-established community. The newcomers were steeped in Jewish learning, and if they did not at first merge harmoniously into the existing Anglo-Jewish community, at least they provided a source of badly needed spiritual regeneration.

What is especially important is that the children of the newcomers began to fill the Jewish voluntary day schools, thus reversing the trend of falling numbers. The fact that at the turn of the century the Jews'

Free School had 4,500 pupils was a direct result of the very high proportion of children of recent arrivals. The influx of East European immigrants was the main inspiration behind the founding of the Talmud Torahs in London, Manchester, and Leeds. It is significant that the inadequate provisions for Jewish education in the day schools were supplemented for these children by classes held during weekday evenings and on Sundays.

The newcomers, more often than not in the direst poverty, willingly supported the Talmud Torahs, or paid for their children's tuition under a *melammed*. Talmud Torahs are one of the bases of the tradition of part-time Jewish education that has become such a characteristic of this community. Two other movements sponsoring part-time classes were also established about this time. These were the Jewish Religious Education Board, founded in 1894, and the Union of Hebrew and Religion Classes, inaugurated in 1907.

Henceforth, the pattern of Jewish education was largely to follow the part-time system which is all too familiar today. In the course of the earlier years of this century, as the number of new immigrants declined, so did the rolls of the Jewish voluntary schools and part-time classes.

In 1920 the Central Committee for Jewish Education was set up with the purpose of promoting and co-ordinating Jewish Education in London, the Provinces, and the Empire by means of inspections, advice, grants, and the provision of books and other equipment. The Committee provided the ideal means of establishing co-ordination in the somewhat disorganized system of the time. However, since all the organizations affiliated to it maintained complete independence, the Committee's function was merely advisory and it was thus without any real power to introduce significant innovations and reforms. A Director of Jewish Education, Herbert M. Adler, was appointed in 1922 by the Central Committee, and for the next seventeen years he diligently carried out his superhuman task of organizer, inspector, and adviser.

One need only mention such names as Rabbi Dr. Victor Schonfeld, Rev. J. K. Goldbloom, and Dr. J. S. Fox to show that there were far-sighted individuals even in the early decades of this century who realized the vital role of day schools in the preservation of the community. In 1905 Dr. Fox established the Liverpool Jewish Higher Grade School, which in the seventeen years of its existence reached a high standard both in Jewish and secular subjects. The pioneer work of J. K. Goldbloom at Redmans Road Talmud Torah in the East End of London dated back to 1901 and lasted over half a century. This Talmud Torah was the forcing ground of the *Ivrit beIvrit* system, and as such attained standards unequalled by other similar part-time institutions. Rabbi Dr. Victor Schonfeld's work in this field started in 1910, but it was not until seventeen years later that his first day school opened. A cardinal principle at Victor Schonfeld's school was the

insistence on placing the Jewish subjects at least in a position of parity with the secular ones.

Unfortunately, the work of these pioneers was carried out in a climate of growing indifference to Jewish education. The inter-war years marked a further decline both in standards and numbers. By the middle of 1939 the *Jewish Chronicle* (Editorial, 23 June) summed up the situation thus: 'Despite the devoted efforts of a number of ardent workers it is notorious that large numbers of Jewish children in this country are growing up without attending religious classes—a potential danger to the communal future. Others acquire the merest smattering of religious instruction, which will serve them ill, or not at all, in their contacts with the world.' The voluntary day schools were affected amongst other things by shifting Jewish communities as well as the indifference of parents. With the part-time system of Jewish education an established principle, there existed with it the inevitable disadvantages of such a policy.

For example, there were the ever-recurring financial crises; there was also the fact that pupils had to be drawn to the classes in the face of other attractions, such as boys' and girls' clubs. Most of the Talmud Torahs were housed in dingy premises—hardly an attraction to potential pupils.

Thus it was officially estimated in the middle 1930s that at least 50 per cent of the Jewish child population of school age in Great Britain were not receiving any Jewish education whatsoever.[1] Several Jewish day schools were on the verge of closing down, and indeed did not survive the 1939–45 war.

THE WAR-TIME CRISIS, 1939–45

From the point of view of Anglo-Jewish education alone, the war could not have come at a more critical time. The system, disorganized and inadequate as it was, now faced a new and seemingly insuperable crisis. The prospect of impending evacuation and its massive attendant problems were enough to confirm the fears of the pessimists. In May 1939 a meeting was convened of the representatives of the three main London educational organizations (The Jewish Religious Education Board, The Union of Hebrew and Religion Classes, and The Talmud Torah Trust) together with the Central Committee for Jewish Religious Education, which was the body largely concerned with education in the Provinces. Plans were drawn up to meet the challenge of the coming war-time emergency. The most radical consequence of this meeting was the decision to pool the funds, resources, and personnel of the organizations concerned. This was, incidentally, the first positive attempt at setting up a unified system of Anglo-Jewish education.

When war came, and with it evacuation, the expected difficulties

arose. The crucial problem was to trace children scattered over every part of Great Britain, sometimes in large groups, but all too often in tiny isolated groups. At the same time, during the months of the 'phoney war', with the coming and going between the safe areas and the large cities, the problem was aggravated. The struggle of the Jewish education authorities in this respect has been appositely described as a 'war on two fronts'.

In addition to all this, financial problems were becoming more and more serious; a corresponding shortage of qualified teachers and suitable premises only added to the problem, even when children were traced and brought into the classes. Great credit must be given to many teachers who voluntarily took it upon themselves to organize rudimentary facilities for Jewish education in evacuation areas. By dint of the hard work on the part of the new unified movement, progress was made in the face of appalling difficulties. By December 1939, sixty-five schools for part-time Jewish education were opened in reception areas for a total roll of approximately 3,600 children.[2] In London, new classes were opened for the increasing number of returned children, and by December 1939, thirty-seven Synagogue classes had a total attendance of about 850 pupils.

Yet the problems soon appeared insurmountable, especially in the years 1940–41, when the community at large was pre-occupied with the generally accepted priorities of war. It must be emphasized that this state of affairs was very much in accordance with conditions as they affected the general education system of the country. For example, it was officially admitted in the House of Commons in February 1940 that of about one and a half million children in London, 27·6 per cent were not receiving any schooling whatsoever.[3] Against this background the unified organization strove hard to build up a system of Jewish education.

Classes met in all manner of premises, and many teachers spent hours travelling to isolated spots all over the country. The new body, now called the Joint Emergency Committee for Jewish Religious Education, was impeded by financial difficulties which were only partially solved at the end of 1940. Yet as a result of its positive progress it had by 1942 organized 360 centres in London and the reception areas; it had 360 teachers, including ninety full-timers; it also had about 10,500 children on its rolls, and this number was steadily rising.[4] The first great lesson learned through the establishment of the J.E.C. was that a unified and co-ordinated educational system was in itself preferable to the state of affairs that had existed up to 1939.

In February 1941 there was held at Oxford an informal conference on education, attended by representatives from London and the Provinces. It was agreed to expand the work of the Joint Emergency Committee to cover the whole of Great Britain. Henceforth the J.E.C. pointed the way to a desirable post-war structure. Besides its admirable

organizational work it issued a series of useful publications and periodicals. It also organized education weeks in 1940, 1941, 1942, and 1943, coinciding with Chanukah, in order to bring home to an apathetic Jewish community the importance of education as the keystone of Anglo-Jewry and its effective survival as a thriving entity.

The best indication of the success of the Joint Emergency Committee was perhaps the number of children on its rolls; whereas this totalled 8,000 in December 1941, and 10,500 in the following year, it had increased by 1943 to over 11,000.[5] Admittedly the figure was still comparatively low, but given the difficulties of war-time conditions it represented a positive achievement. One result of the work of the J.E.C. was the formation of the Jewish Youth Study Groups, which was the first serious attempt in many years to tackle the problem of indifference towards Jewish matters among children in secondary schools. The success of the movement and the fact that it is still flourishing today are sufficient testimony of this aspect of the Committee's work.

Surely the culmination of its activities and the criterion of this success was the fact that in the closing months of the war there were actually more children on the rolls of its classes than there were on the combined rolls of the pre-war organizations.

In addition to the work of the J.E.C., mention must be made of Solomon Schonfeld's Secondary School which maintained its independent existence in evacuation. Similarly, a number of children's hostels in country areas were opened, notably under the aegis of the Habonim movement, and these were a great success. Given the facilities to open an even wider network of hostels for evacuated children, even greater achievements might have been recorded; for example, at the existing hostels many children were brought into contact with Judaism although their own home backgrounds were devoid of any Jewish content.

At the end of the war Anglo-Jewry was presented with a unique opportunity to put its educational system into some sort of order. History has shown that one of the consequences of wars is the radical reshaping of educational systems, and of this process the 1944 Education Act stands out as a great example in Britain. By the provisions of the Act, religious denominations were able to establish and maintain schools under conditions considerably more favourable than before, and to be given voluntary-aided status for their schools. With many Jewish day schools either defunct or moribund, Anglo-Jewry could now have gone ahead with a radical programme of educational reconstruction. In the words of the late Professor Brodetsky at the beginning of 1944, with reference to the impending Education Act: 'Jewish Religious education must rise to the level prescribed for the general education of the country.'[6]

POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION

Events since 1945 have shown the extent to which the Anglo-Jewish community has taken advantage of this unique opportunity, particularly with regard to the consolidation of its day-school system. The war-time crises had shown that, given the proper control and its due priority, Anglo-Jewish education could under peace-time conditions fulfil its proper purpose. The view was indeed unanimous that there should be no return to pre-1939 conditions, with the unnecessary multiplicity of educational bodies and the ever-present financial problems.

Moreover, a further factor precluded a return to pre-war conditions. This was the drastic change in the residential pattern of the larger communities, mainly as a result of war-time air attacks. For example, London's East End was no longer the largest centre of Jewish population in the country, and similar dispersions took place in Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool, and Glasgow. One result of all this was that the Talmud Torahs and other centres in these areas became largely obsolete and were never to regain their pre-war numbers. The need now arose for establishing new centres in the new areas of Jewish population, usually the suburbs of the large cities. The task was now greatly hindered by a criticial shortage of suitably qualified teachers.

The day schools returned to London with their numbers greatly depleted. At the end of evacuation the once-great Jews' Free School was unable to return to its bombed premises, and as a result had to close down. Similarly, three other London Jewish schools—The Jews' Infants School, the Westminster Jews' Free School, and the Borough Jewish School—did not survive the war. Thus of seven state-aided Jewish day schools that existed in London in 1939, only two—the Stepney Jewish School and the Solomon Wolfson (Bayswater) School—were still functioning at the end of the war. The provincial day schools —those of Manchester, Liverpool, and Birmingham—were in a somewhat better position, but nevertheless faced falling numbers as a result of the dispersion of local Jewish communities. In brief, whereas in 1939 there were fourteen Jewish day schools with a combined roll of 4,900 pupils, in 1945 there were only seven schools with fewer than a thousand pupils.[7]

As a background to these details was the stark reality confronting Anglo-Jewry that after the annihilation of over six million of its brethren in the Nazi death camps, it remained the only substantial and intact Jewish community of Europe. No longer could the community rely, as in the past, upon the former great Jewish centres of continental Europe for its inspiration and cultural manpower to bolster up its strength against the forces of assimilation. At this crucial point, with its educational system severely disrupted after over five years of war, it was now faced with the gigantic task of reconstruction.

Coming at this point in the fortunes of Anglo-Jewish education, the 1944 Education Act impinged upon all plans and projects for the future. Yet at the end of the war the community had no unified educational authority to represent its interests, and, worse still, the signs were that Jewish interest in general was only lukewarm. Nevertheless the Joint Emergency Committee, incidentally with only a temporary mandate for its existence, sought to evolve a post-war policy and to arouse interest. In addition, the Education Committee of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, re-inaugurated in 1944, strove to achieve some unity of policy within the community.

Some of the most important clauses of the 1944 Act concerned the status of voluntary denominational schools, with the provision of appropriate grants. This new state aid was of special importance to the Jewish community with its depleted day-school system. To qualify for voluntary-aided status, governors or managers of such schools needed to provide half the cost of improvements and alterations necessary to bring the premises up to required standard, and maintain them as such. In return, the central authority was willing to shoulder all other financial responsibility, leaving the governing body full freedom to give religious instruction according to the original trust deed, and full freedom in selecting staff.[8] Additional clauses within the Act made provision for transferred or substituted status—this was of special relevance to Jewish schools adversely affected by migrations of Jewish communities.[9] In addition, Jewish pupils in the county primary and secondary schools were directly affected by the clauses dealing with religious instruction. These permitted withdrawal classes for this purpose to be arranged for any time of the school day, instead of the beginning or the end of each session as hitherto, although this provided additional staffing problems. These classes could now be conducted in the school premises, instead of in another building.[10] With the proposed raising of the school-leaving age to fifteen years, Jewish education by means of the withdrawal class was now within reach of a larger number of Jewish children.

Apart from this the 1944 Education Act had, of course, no direct effect upon the part-time Hebrew and Religion Classes. The community was therefore concerned mainly with two aspects: first, the more advantageous terms of state aid for existing and new denominational day schools, and second, the more favourable conditions for religious instruction for Jewish pupils in council schools.

Here indeed were two opportunities that should have been grasped. However, subsequent events have shown that whereas wholehearted endeavour went into the organization and provision of teachers for the withdrawal classes, the record of post-war revival in the day-school field was more unsatisfactory. In this connexion it is worth while contrasting the official Jewish attitude at the time with that of the Roman

Catholic community in Great Britain. Whereas the Catholics were uncompromising over the day-school issue, striving for 'Catholic schools where our Catholic children shall be educated in a Catholic atmosphere by Catholic teachers approved by a Catholic authority',[11] there was no comparable pronouncement from any official Jewish circle. A further relevant factor was the apathy and indifference within the Jewish community as a whole, of which the *Jewish Chronicle* wrote at the time: 'On the subject of Jewish education British Jewry as a whole is obstinately apathetic, however valiantly a minority strive to awaken it from its torpor.' [12]

Anglo-Jewry's reaction to the post-war challenge was thus a rather slow one. The most momentous step in this connexion was the Communal Conference on the Reconstruction of Jewish Education in Great Britain, but this did not take place until November 1945. The conference has been regarded as the most important and far-reaching event in the history of Jewish education in Britain. Prior to it a number of committees were delegated to examine such questions as finance, organization, and education, and to present their reports to the conference.

No account of the 1945 Conference can be complete without mentioning the work of Dr. Nathan Morris, Education Officer of the Joint Emergency Committee. It was he, for example, who led the campaign for communal taxation for education, as opposed to charity finance, and who also drew up many of the plans and much of the data upon which the proceedings were based.

The outcome of the conference determined the future of Anglo-Jewish education. Firstly there emerged from it two bodies, one for London and one for the Provinces, which, in theory at least, were to comprise a comprehensive system, in contrast to the unwieldy pre-war proliferation. The first of these new bodies was the London Board of Jewish Religious Education, which was to supersede and absorb the pre-war Union of Hebrew and Religion Classes, Jewish Religious Education Board, and Talmud Torah Trust. It was to take responsibility for organizing part-time Hebrew and Religion Classes, as well as withdrawal classes, in the Greater London area. In addition the London Board was to assume responsibility for the Jewish Non-Provided Schools that had closed down since the outbreak of war. The second post-war body was the new Central Council for Jewish Religious Education, whose functions were those of an advisory and co-ordinating body for provincial Jewish educational organizations, which were not necessarily obliged to be associated with the Council. In brief, its functions were 'To co-ordinate, promote and assist religious educational activities throughout the community. . . .' [13]

The second important outcome of the 1945 Conference was the official policy of communal taxation, largely by means of Synagogue

contributions, for the provision of educational facilities. This was a radical departure from pre-war conditions, when Jewish education depended largely upon the unsatisfactory and unreliable practice of charity finance.

Thirdly, the conference accepted the report of an Education Commission which had drawn up a series of comprehensive syllabuses, ranging from Infants' to Teacher Training Classes. In content the syllabuses presented nothing revolutionary, since those who compiled them were deeply conscious of the need to preserve the age-old traditions of Jewish education. It was more with method that the report took issue. In the words of Dr. Nathan Morris, one of the members of the commission, 'Let us not only recount to the children the praises of Judaism, but seize every chance to bring it within their reach and grasp.' [14]

Apart from this, many aspects of the conference were to prove eventful not so much with regard to their positive nature, but rather to their omissions. For example, the comparative underplaying of the part of the system concerned with youth and adolescents was to prove a great mistake. In addition, the absence from the conference of the more extreme orthodox elements on the one hand, and the Liberal and Reform representatives on the other, was to prove ominous. As events were to turn out, their subsequent condition of separateness was to underline the fact that the unity achieved was only partial.

Finally, over the question of the day schools the conference presaged a period of official vacillation and uncertainty, in that it readily accepted the somewhat non-committal report of its Voluntary Schools Sub-Committee. This report acknowledged the decline of the London Jewish Non-Provided Schools, which it attributed to the shift of Jewish population, the lack of enthusiasm amongst Jewish parents, and the decline in the birth-rate. In emphasizing the first two of these factors, the report advocated that they should be borne in mind when new day-school policy in London was being formulated. The report, however, recommended the establishment of a centrally situated multilateral Secondary School, and of primary schools in north and north-east London. Thus over the question of day schools, the official policy was, to say the least, one of extreme caution and deliberation. The impetus and initiative for day-school development was left largely in the hands of bodies and individuals who were not represented at the Reconstruction Conference. Of these, the most outstanding protagonist was Rabbi Dr. Solomon Schonfeld, who, as early as 1943, had written: 'It is admitted that parents will need a great deal of reorientation before they fall in with the training of their children. But in a matter which so intimately affects the Jewish future the effort is surely worthwhile. Anglo-Jewry needs fifty Jewish day schools, and Empire Jewry probably requires a similar number. British Jewry! What are you going to do

about it? You have resources for elaborate houses, private and communal, for tombstones, furs, diamonds and pleasures. What about the well-being of your children and the future of your people?' [15]

THE POST-WAR SYSTEM

Since 1945 and the Conference on Educational Reconstruction the system that has evolved has been in the form of a dichotomy. On the one hand there are the 'establishment' organizations—these are firstly the London Board of Jewish Religious Education, serving metropolitan Jewry, and secondly those provincial organizations directly connected with the Central Council for Jewish Religious Education. On the other hand, a substantial part of Anglo-Jewry's educational system has been described in such terms as 'separatist', 'independent', or 'non-conformist'. For example, the Jewish Secondary Schools Movement, the so-called 'ultra-orthodox' schools, the Zionist Day Schools, as well as the Hebrew and Religion Classes of the Reform and Liberal Movements, provide facilities for a very high proportion of the children of the community, yet they all constitute virtually self-contained and independent educational systems within Anglo-Jewry. The dichotomy extends to the fields of Teacher Training, in which together with the 'establishment' Institute for the Training of Teachers at Jews' College there also exists the 'ultra-orthodox' Gateshead Jewish Teachers' College, whilst the Liberal and Reform Synagogues each make their own arrangements.

One transcending factor in all post-war developments in Anglo-Jewish education has been the State of Israel. Since its foundation it has exerted a dynamic influence in all fields, from the planning of policy and organization, down to the content and method in the classroom.

For a dual system as described above to function with perfect smoothness and efficiency has been indeed difficult, and the post-war years have been marred even by occasional disagreement and friction. It was particularly in the field of day-school education that the 'independent' organizations provided the impetus for development. Thus, in the day-school field, the number of pupils has increased from 4,400 in 1954 to nearly 9,000 in May 1963. (See the *Jewish Chronicle*, 26 February 1954 and 3 May 1963; the statistics were collected by Dr. J. Braude.) For their part, the London Board and the education authorities of the larger provincial communities concentrated upon part-time and withdrawal classes, although they have also participated in day-school activity. The most publicized and long-drawn-out educational controversy occurred in London in the early and middle 1950s; it concerned the substantial Trust funds of the defunct pre-war Jewish day schools. The officers of the London Board intended using a large proportion of these funds towards establishing a large comprehensive school in Camden Town. In this policy they were actively opposed by a

number of 'separatist' schools under the leadership of Rabbi Dr. Schonfeld, who wanted the funds earmarked for helping their own financially weak institutions. The dispute was not settled until May 1954, when it was agreed that part of the trust funds be handed over to existing Jewish day schools.[16] These, in return, accepted the principle of establishing the new secondary school in Camden Town—it was opened in 1958 at the J.F.S. Secondary School. The delayed opening of this school was in itself an unfortunate result of the controversy, but at least as bad is the subsequent consolidation (and virtually official acceptance) of a dual educational system in London, perpetuated by the agreement of May 1954.

Of all the educational bodies of the Jewish community, the London Board of Jewish Religious Education is by far the largest. At the end of 1962 it administered eighty-nine part-time centres with a roll of 10,924 pupils; it organized withdrawal classes at twenty-three local authority schools for 2,252 pupils; it was the parent body of one day school, the J.F.S. Secondary School, with 525 pupils.[17] Being concerned primarily with providing part-time education after school hours and on Sunday mornings, the London Board has had to face most of its problems in this sphere. In any system which is non-compulsory, part-time, and independent the problem of attendance is inevitably in the forefront. The annual reports of the London Board have always acknowledged this, and the Board has constantly striven to maintain higher standards of attendance. Yet in 1962 of the combined roll of 10,924 in the part-time classes, given above, the total average weekday evening attendance was only 3,641, whereas that for Sunday mornings was 7,304.[18] The plain fact is that part-time Hebrew and Religion Classes have to contend with such counter-attractions as school homework, preparation for the omnipotent 11+ examination, ballet or elocution lessons, television, youth clubs, and a host of other activities. Another difficulty facing the London Board is the comparatively early leaving age; thus of the numbers on the rolls given above only 480 boys and 242 girls were over thirteen years of age.[19]

Further problems besetting the London Board have been the shortage of suitably qualified teachers and a series of financial crises. The above emphasis on problems is not intended to draw attention to any particular shortcomings, but rather to put in clearer perspective the positive achievements of the Board. In this connexion one important criterion is the actual education standards in the classes. Over the past few years results at examinations set by the Board in conjunction with Jews' College have shown a steady rate of improvement in standards. Nevertheless, all achievements have come about in spite of the perennial problems of the Board, and the indications are that these problems—attendance, finances, and shortage of suitable teachers, to name but the outstanding ones—are likely to persist in the future.

The withdrawal classes organized by the London Board in council schools in the Greater London area constitute a further important part of its work. In these classes the problems of attendance and the early 'leaving age' do not arise, and thus the Board has met with some success, particularly in the secondary schools.

From the geographical point of view alone the provision of Jewish schooling in the heterogeneous communities up and down Britain presents even greater difficulties than those outlined above. Thus the main function of the Central Council for Jewish Religious Education has very wisely not been one of tight control, but rather to provide assistance and advice. As part of this policy local effort and autonomy have indeed been encouraged. On the whole it has been the smaller provincial communities that have benefited from their link with the Council, notably by means of periodic visits of inspection. The larger communities—Manchester, Leeds, Glasgow, Birmingham, and Liverpool—have maintained their own composite systems, but have still availed themselves of the facilities of the Central Council.

Standards within the provincial communities naturally vary, and are difficult to gauge. However, one statistical survey on attendance carried out in 1959 by Harold Levy, the Central Council's inspector, estimated that approximately 63·4 per cent of Jewish children between the ages of five and fourteen years were on the rolls of the Hebrew and Religion Classes.[20] With regard to part-time centres in the Provinces, those hardest hit are smaller and more isolated communities.

The record of some of the larger provincial communities has been impressive, both in the field of part-time Jewish education and in the development of day schools. For example, the endeavour of the Liverpool community has preserved its Jewish state-aided primary school, and has led to the opening of the King David Bilateral Secondary School (also state-aided) in 1957. Both these schools have a proportion of non-Jewish pupils. Apart from Liverpool, state-aided Jewish day schools exist in Manchester and Birmingham.

One of the great features of post-war educational development in Anglo-Jewry has been the rise of a number of day-school movements and unattached day schools, which today contain a substantial number of pupils within the system. Several reasons for this development have been propounded. One view is that they fill the void created by the inaction of communal authorities at the end of the war. Another view is that they owe their inspiration largely to Jews who came to this country comparatively recently, 'elements who have come to England in the last thirty years', who are more anxious about the specifically Jewish aspects of the education of their children. If there is one factor that all these movements and individual schools have in common, it is a strongly determined quality of individualism on the part of their founders. In all cases the difficulties encountered—that is, with regard

to obtaining adequate funds and other resources, and attracting the sympathetic attention of the local communities—have required perseverance and determination. The prototype of such movements is the Jewish Secondary Schools Movement, comprising three primary schools and two secondary grammar schools.

Another schools system owes its existence to the Zionist Movement. Zionists in Britain have always regarded education as an important facet of their activities, but it was not until the mid-1950s that the first specifically 'Zionist' schools functioned as such. Today there are four of these schools in the Greater London area, one in Leeds, one in Glasgow, and one in Westcliff-on-Sea, which are affiliated to the Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland.

A number of other day schools were founded since the war as a result of local initiative and effort. These are perhaps the nearest approach to what can be described as Jewish parochial schools. In London and Manchester these schools, unattached to any movement, have achieved success and high esteem within the community as a whole. The epitome of their success has been in many cases the attaining of state aid, in itself a solution to many material problems, while at the same time they have preserved the Jewish purpose that inspired their foundation. One such school, the Broughton Jewish Primary School in Manchester, drew praise from Her Majesty's Inspectors, who admired the policy of close integration and correlation of Jewish and secular subjects.[21]

In 1948 the late Rabbi Dr. Kopul Rosen founded Carmel College, of which he became the Principal. Carmel is a boarding establishment which today is generally recognized as the Public School of Anglo-Jewry. Today, in addition to Carmel, there are several other boarding schools, in the main private-venture establishments.

Yet another important sector of the post-war system is occupied by the schools of the so-called 'ultra-orthodox' section of Anglo-Jewry. The self-contained nature of such communities as Gateshead, or the groups gravitating around the Lordship Park area of North London, reflects the desire of such Jews not to compromise their religious practices in the face of present-day conditions. As a result the curriculum of their schools places great emphasis upon Jewish studies, to the detriment, it can be said, of the secular work. Of such schools there are two in London, one in Manchester, and one in Gateshead. All acknowledge that it is the general practice of their pupils after leaving school to go on to Yeshivah in order to continue their Talmud studies. Anglo-Jewry possesses a number of Yeshivahs conducted as part-time, full-time, and boarding institutions. The most famous of these is in Gateshead, and there are others in London, Manchester, and Sunderland.

Finally, reference should be made to the part-time Hebrew and Religion Classes of the various congregations of the Liberal and Reform Movements. It is only comparatively recently that both movements

have centralized the organization of their classes; the number of their pupils has grown hand in hand with the growth in the membership of their Synagogues. By 1960 the Liberals had a total of 1,700 pupils on the rolls of their Religion and Sunday Schools.[22] No corresponding figures have been available for the Reform Synagogues, but their largest congregation, the West London Synagogue of British Jews, increased its classes roll from 122 in 1950 to 318 in 1959.[23]

CONCLUSION

This survey cannot, of course, present within such a short space a comprehensive description and historical account. Instead it has attempted firstly to trace the main outlines of the development of the system up to the present, and secondly to sketch the salient features of it as they exist today. No assessment of the Anglo-Jewish educational scene can be complete without a fuller account of the problems and controversies. For example, an examination of the attitudes of parents with regard to day schools and part-time Hebrew Classes would be most relevant. Again, since the Jewish and Catholic communities in this country have much in common with regard to aims in the provision of educational facilities, a comparative survey of their respective achievements in this field would be most enlightening. For a community of fewer than half a million souls, Anglo-Jewry has not one but really several educational systems, complex, disunited, and uncoordinated. Since it is an axiom that a community such as Anglo-Jewry flourishes or stagnates along with its educational system, it must surely re-examine its system and its acknowledged shortcomings if it is to be assured of a future as a viable entity.

NOTES

[1] Conference on Jewish Education, reported in *Jewish Chronicle*, 27 Sept. 1935.

[2] Report by Herbert Adler, Director of Jewish Education, on the work of the Central Committee, 12 Dec. 1939.

[3] H. C. Dent, *Education in Transition* (1943), pp. 18 seq.

[4] Nathan Morris, *Jewish Education in Time of Total War*, p. 41.

[5] *J.E.C. Second Report* (Aug. 1941–Dec. 1942), p. 16.

[6] *The Education Bill*, pamphlet published by the Board of Deputies of British Jews, Jan. 1944.

[7] *Communal Conference on the Reconstruction of Jewish Education in Great Britain—Report of Proceedings*, p. 24.

[8] Education Act, 1944—Part II, Section 24.

[9] Ibid., Section 16.

[10] Ibid., Sections 26–9.

[11] Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle, Advent Pastoral Letter, 1942.

[12] *Jewish Chronicle*, 10 March 1944, p. 8, Editorial 'The Price of our Future'.

[13] Draft Scheme for the Creation of a Central Council for Jewish Religious Education, para. 5.

[14] Nathan Morris, *Curriculum and Method in the Hebrew Class* (1946), p. 32.

[15] Solomon Schonfeld, 'The Call for Jewish Schools and Jewish Self-respect' (taken from *Jewish Religious Education, 1943*).

[16] 'Jewish Education in the London

Area'—agreement signed at New Court, 11 May 1954.

[17] *London Board of Jewish Religious Education, Thirteenth Report*, p. 3.

[18] Ibid., pp. 28–9.

[19] Ibid.

[20] *Central Council for Jewish Religious Education—Inspector's Report, 1958–1959*, p. 9.

[21] *Broughton Jewish Primary School—11th Anniversary Celebration Brochure*, 1959, p. 8.

[22] Union of Liberal & Progressive Synagogues—Positions of Constituent Synagogues as at 1st January 1961.

[23] *West London Synagogue of British Jews—Annual Reports, 1949–1950* and *1958–1959*.