GLASGOW JEWISH SCHOOLCHILDREN

Paul Vincent

HE Jewish population of the greater Glasgow area has been estimated to be 13,400,1 making it the fourth largest Jewish community in the United Kingdom (London 280,000: Manchester and Salford 28,000: Leeds 25,000^{2.3}).

The earliest records of regular Jewish settlement in Glasgow can be traced back to soon after the end of the Napoleonic Wars. This earliest settlement remained small, being estimated to consist of only 150 souls in 1850. They appear to have been on good terms with their fellow Glaswegians, as is shown by the fact that they rented a room in the College of Glasgow to serve as a synagogue and were granted a portion of land in the central Necropolis to serve as a burial ground. This Necropolis stands on a hill overlooking the Cathedral and was the most fashionable burial ground in the city.

The direct descendants of these first settlers form only a small proportion of the present population, for the majority of the Jews of Glasgow today are the descendants of migrants from eastern Europe who came to Glasgow mainly between about 1882 and 1913.

The immigrants, as is usual, tended to settle in one small central area of the city. This was on the south bank of the River Clyde in what at that time was a poor though reasonably pleasant district (Gorbals, postal district C.5) of well-built stone tenements which formed wide straight streets. The range of occupations followed by the immigrants was narrow, a large proportion of them being engaged in tailoring, cabinet-making, and various sorts of itinerant and other small trading.

By the early 1920s, a drift of population away from the Gorbals as an area of residence was beginning to take place as some members of the community achieved a higher economic status and the pace of acculturation increased. This drift was slow at first because of the fact that many of the small businesses were still located in the district. Increasingly throughout the later 1920s, however, Jewish residential and business premises moved out of the Gorbals. Business premises tended to move to the commercial centres of Glasgow north of the river, while the population drift was almost exclusively in a straight southward direction. Today a large part of the community has spilled over the central southern boundary of the City of Glasgow into those residential areas

of East Renfrewshire which now form part of the middle and outer southern suburbs of Glasgow. With the dispersion of the inter-war Jewish Gorbals population, there is now no part of Glasgow which has a distinctly Jewish flavour.

This movement of population out of the Gorbals first to the inner suburbs, then the middle suburbs, and now to the outer suburbs has reflected the increased, and increasing, economic and social status of the Glasgow Jew.

While no area of Jewish residence has a density of population which can in any way compare with that which used to exist in the Gorbals, the newer areas of Jewish residence are still well defined and restricted by choice to only some of the middle-class suburbs of Glasgow. The process of acculturation is, therefore, a modified one in that in choosing a house preference is still given to those areas in which a Jewish population and Jewish institutions are to be found. It would appear that this preference will increase rather than diminish owing to fairly ambitious plans for the building of new synagogues and communal centres to serve all organizations and age-groups in these areas. Should current plans for the middle suburb be completed, the provision of Jewish institutions and welfare services will be far greater than even that of the Gorbals in its hey-day. The first primary Jewish day-school was recently opened in the middle southern suburb, and some consideration is now being given to the possibility of building a secondary school in the area.

The statistical data given in this paper are based on information obtained through the educational authorities of the City of Glasgow, the County of Renfrewshire, the County of Lanarkshire, and the County of Dunbartonshire, these counties being immediately adjacent to the City of Glasgow. Information for those schools which do not receive funds from the local authorities has been obtained from the schools themselves.⁶

All figures refer to children whose parents have registered them at school as being Jewish. They therefore include all denominations (there is one reform synagogue among the eleven public synagogues in Glasgow) and some of the children would not be accepted as Jewish by the traditional rabbinical authorities. The figures, on the other hand, exclude those children who would be accepted by the religious authorities but whose parents have lost their Jewish identification to the extent of not registering their children at school as being Jewish. It is not possible, at the moment, to make a reasonable estimate of the numbers involved in these two groups. However, the figures for those who, not being Jewish, are registered as Jewish will to some extent compensate for those who are Jewish but who are not registered as such.

The main effect of registering a child as Jewish at school in Glasgow is that he is then allowed to be absent during Jewish festivals and to go home early on Friday afternoons in the winter when Shabbat begins

PAUL VINCENT

during school-hours or shortly after. The child is also exempted from formal periods of Christian religious instruction and prayers, and in many cases is provided with Jewish instruction during at least some of these periods.

The definition of a Jewish child used here is, therefore, sociological and not rabbinical, for a Jewish child is defined as that child whose parents regard it as being Jewish. The measure of this regard is the decision taken by the parent concerning the religion of the child when this has to be given to the school authorities.

There is no indication that because a child is isolated by being the only Jewish child at a school, or one of a very few, the parents prefer not to register the child as Jewish in order to make it less conspicuous. Headmasters have told me of a few doubtful cases, but most are convinced that the numbers are negligible. The local rabbinate makes strenuous efforts to find such children and few escape their records. In the course of the study some cases were encountered of families living in areas of non-Jewish residence in isolation from the Glasgow Jewish Community. These families had no reason to register their children as Jewish if they did not wish to do so, yet the children were so registered.

All schools whether wholly or partly supported by public funds are included as well as those schools which are completely independent and which receive no grant from public funds. It was found that in the greater Glasgow area 127 schools had, at some time during the last six years, had children registered as Jewish. Thirty-five of these schools were fee-paying. The term 'fee-paying' is used in a blanket sense to cover the wide spectrum of Scottish schools which are not completely supported by the local government authorities. The only schools excluded are special schools within Glasgow and boarding schools outside the area (the number of Glasgow Jewish children at these schools is very small indeed). Children of school age who were in hospital for more than one school session are also excluded. Again this number is very small.

Table I shows the total number of Jewish children attending school in the greater Glasgow area, classified into boys and girls, for the years 1958 to 1963. The year begins with the school session which starts in the autumn of the stated year. The decrease in total numbers from 1,804 in 1958 to 1,706 in 1963 requires further research before a fully satisfactory explanation could be given. Immigration and emigration of Jews in the Glasgow area appears to have been slight during the last ten years, and although there are indications that the latter has exceeded the former, it would be difficult to attribute the drop in the number of children to the excess of emigration.

In 1938 Dr. Friedlander, who was at that time headmaster of the Glasgow Talmud Torah (Hebrew College) calculated that there were 1,900 Jewish schoolchildren in the Glasgow area.⁷ Although Dr.

Friedlander's methods of arriving at this figure are not known, the fact that in 1938 the community was still largely concentrated in the Gorbals and in an inner suburban area must have eased his task, for Jewish children were attending a relatively small number of local authority schools. The numbers attending fee-paying schools must certainly have been small and in most cases have been known personally to Dr. Friedlander.

Although this figure of 1,900 is unlikely to contain much error, it cannot be directly compared with the current data given in the tables. When Dr. Friedlander constructed his estimate, the minimum school leaving age was 14, whereas today it is 15. Further, owing to the social advances in the Jewish community and in society generally, a much higher proportion of children stay on at school today beyond the minimum leaving age than did so before the war. Thus, should one wish to compare the number of Jewish children today between the ages of 5 and approximately 16 with the number in 1938, an unknown number would have to be added to the earlier 1,900. Even though the number which would have to be added is unknown, a comparison of

TABLE I

Total Number of Jewish Boys and Girls Attending all

Schools in the Greater Glasgow Area

Year	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963
Boys Girls	961 843	95 i 885	950 875	931 841	954 782	932
Total	1,804	1,836	1,825	1,772	1,736	774

Dr. Friedlander's figure with those of Table 1 leaves little doubt that the number of Jewish children of school age has declined appreciably and, at the moment, is still declining.

An interesting feature of Table 1 is the excess in the number of boys over the number of girls. Table 2 shows this calculated as a six-year average classified into male and female children attending primary and

TABLE 2
Six Year Averages of Jewish Male and Female Children Attending
Primary and Secondary Schools in the Greater Glasgow Area

	Primary		Second	lary	Total		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Male Female	566·5 490·8	53·6 46·4	380·0 342·5	52·6 47·4	946·5 833·3	53·2 46·8	
Total	1,057.3	100.0	722.5	100.0	1,779.8	100.0	

PAUL VINCENT

secondary schools. The ratio of boys to girls is 114.6: 100, which one would hesitate to assign to a natural difference in the number of births of boys and girls or to a difference in their survival rates from birth to the age of 16.8

In order to attempt some comparison of this sex ratio, Table 3 shows

TABLE 3

All Scottish Male and Female Children of approximately School Age in 1962, thousands

	Age 5 and under 12		A 12 and t	ge under 16	Total		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Male Female	299·8 286·9	51·1 48·9	223·7 213·9	51·1 48·9	523.5 500.8	51·1 48·9	
Total	586-7	100.0	437.6	100.0	1,024.3	100.0	

a comparable breakdown for all Scottish children in 1962.9 The sex ratio for the all-Scotland data for 1962 is 104.5: 100.

A 2 × 2 chi-square test on the total number of male and female Jewish and Scottish children, as shown in Tables 2 and 3, gives $\chi^2 = 3.0$ at v = 1, 0.05 < P < 0.10.

The statistical data do not give a high level of confidence to the idea that there is a significant difference between the number of Jewish boys and girls as compared with the general population. However, some indirect evidence has been found in the course of the study which suggests that further research is needed to investigate whether, when there is a tendency for a family to weaken its ties with the community, this weakening is more readily found when the children are exclusively girls. If this were so, it would lead to a smaller proportion of girls than of boys being enrolled at the schools as being Jewish. The fact that in the 'cheders' (part-time Hebrew schools of religion which children attend outside secular school hours) the number of boys greatly exceeds the number of girls would also partly suggest that the matter is worth investigating. No attempt was made to find the attitude of inter-married parents to their male and/or female children so far as registering them as Jewish at school was concerned.

Table 4 shows the number of boys and girls attending primary schools and secondary schools. Children normally attend primary school from the age of 5 to about the age of 11. The number of Jewish primary schoolchildren has dropped from 1,175 in 1958 to 930 in 1963. This is a drop of 21 per cent. At the same time the population of Jewish secondary schoolchildren (attendance being compulsory until the age

TABLE 4

Total Number of Jewish Male and Female Children Attending all Primary and Secondary Schools in the Greater Glasgow Area

Year	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963
Primary:						
Boys	643	5 9 5	568	549	537	507
Girls	<u>532</u>	537	536	477	440	423
Total	1,175	1,132	1,104	1,026	977	930
Secondary:						
Boys	318	356	382	382	417	425
Girls	311	348	339	364	342	351
Total	629	704	721	746	759	776

of 15, beyond that age voluntary) has risen from 629 in 1958 to 776 in 1963, a rise of 23 per cent.

The children at secondary schools were mainly born in the years 1941-51. This period includes the immediate post-war years when there was a substantial increase in the birth rate in the general population of the United Kingdom. If with this there is also taken into account the social trend towards more education, which is encouraging a higher proportion of children in any age group to stay on longer at secondary school, the increased number of Jewish children at secondary schools in the Glasgow area is probably understandable.

A more serious problem arises when the children who were born between 1947 and 1958 and who constitute the figures of those attending primary schools, are considered. For the data would seem to indicate either that there has been a sharp drop in the birth rate and/or that there has been a steady decline in the number of adults in the childbearing age group. This drop in numbers would appear to be much greater than can be accounted for by the changes in the Scottish crude birth rates and fertility rates which reached their peak in 1947. Of all the schoolboys in 1958, 33 per cent were at secondary school, and this percentage had risen to 46 by 1963. The comparable percentages for girls are 37 in 1958 and 45 in 1963. The meaning of these percentages must, however, be counter-balanced against the decline in the number of primary schoolchildren described previously. Although the proportion of boys attending secondary schools has risen more rapidly than that for girls, it is merely a matter of the boys catching up until in the latest figures the proportion of boys and girls who attend secondary schools is virtually the same.

The distribution of Jewish children among the different types of secondary schools is also worth comment. In the non-fee-paying secondary schools of the City of Glasgow alone, of the 262 Jewish children attending these schools in 1963, 223 were at senior secondary schools (roughly the equivalent of grammar schools), 34 at junior secondary schools, and 5 were at comprehensive schools. The proportion of Jewish

schoolchildren of post-primary age who attend senior secondary schools (even if we exclude the number who attend fee-paying senior secondary schools) is, therefore, very high indeed, and is most significantly greater than the proportion in the non-Jewish population. No reliable statistics are available for the proportion of non-Jewish children of the same age and from comparable social strata in Glasgow who attend senior secondary schools, but informal opinions by a number of leading educationalists in Glasgow suggest that even for a middle-class group the Jewish figures are very high.

This high proportion would lend support to recent sociological investigations which have shown the importance of aspects of the home background in determining a child's chance of obtaining and making use of a particular type of education.

The inverse correlation between small family size and high I.Q. might also be relevant here. 11, 12 Although no accurate figures have so far been obtained on the average number of children in Glasgow Jewish families, there is every indication that the figure is a very low one. This, combined with the high incentive towards education found in many Jewish homes and the fact that in Glasgow a large proportion of the families are roughly middle class, could well explain the rather staggering proportion of Jewish secondary schoolchildren who are at senior secondary schools.

It would not be invalid to conclude from the data that with the great expansion in the universities and colleges being undertaken at the moment in Glasgow, an increasing proportion of Jewish children are likely in the future to obtain the necessary qualifications to enable them to enter institutions of higher education, even although not all children at senior secondary schools pursue a strictly academic course. Should the present situation be at least maintained, the social structure of Glasgow Jewry would change slowly from that of a community whose members are largely engaged in commerce to that of a community with a high proportion of its members engaged in professional and other similar occupations. The effects that this will have on the character of the community, its institutions, and the community's relationships with the majority population, are clearly of sociological interest.

Evidence of this change is further strengthened by the data in Table 5 which show the Jewish children in the greater Glasgow area who have attended non-fee-paying and fee-paying schools over the last six years, expressed in absolute numbers and as percentages. It will be seen that in 1958, 76 per cent attended non-fee-paying schools and 24 per cent fee-paying schools. By 1963 the respective proportions were 62 per cent and 38 per cent. This change followed a very steady pattern so that by 1963, four out of every ten Jewish children in the area were attending fee-paying schools. This proportion is, again, very much higher than that for the general population, and also probably significantly higher

TABLE 5

Total Number of Jewish Children at All Non-fee-paying and All Fee-paying Schools in the Greater Glasgow Area

Year	195	1958 1959		1960		1961		1962		1963		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Non-fee-paying Fee-paying	1369 435	76 24	1321 515	72 28	1299 526	71 29	1238 534	70 30	1178 558	68 32	1061 645	62 38

than for the non-Jewish section of the population of Glasgow which might be comparable to Glasgow Jewry in socio-economic status.

The data on the changing proportion of Jewish children attending fee-paying schools probably illustrate more clearly than any other piece of statistical information available the extent to which Glasgow Jewry has become middle class and is intent on changing its social status by means of education.

Table 6 shows the number of Jewish children attending all non-feepaying schools in different parts of greater Glasgow. Area I is the most

TABLE 6

The Geographical Distribution of Jewish Children at Non-Fee-paying Schools in the Greater Glasgow Area

Area	Postal District	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963
I II III IV	C.5 S.1, S.2, S.4 E. Renfrewshire S.3, S.5, S.W.1, S.W.2,	36 762 443	22 744 456	20 713 464	17 675 456	16 711 471	13 528 437
v	S.W.3, S.E., C.3, C.4 W.1, W.2, W.3, W.5, N.1, N.2, N.W.,	78	56	53	47	51	58
	N.1, N.2, N.W., E.2, E.3	27	18	23	21	11	16

central, being the older Gorbals district on the south bank of the Clyde. Area II lies south of Area I and is the older residential inner suburb. Area III lies further south still, and includes the middle suburb (mainly built in the 1930s) and the outer, somewhat more expensive, suburb (built partly pre-war and partly post-war).

Area IV contains small parts of the city just north of the river and large areas of the south-west of the city, the latter containing many extensive areas of council houses. Area V contains the residential westend, the north of the city and some eastern districts. Some of the northern and some of the western districts also contain large areas of council houses.

PAUL VINCENT

Fee-paying schools have been excluded, as most of the children attending them come from different parts of the Glasgow area. The numbers at these schools, therefore, give no direct indication of the geographical location of the homes of their pupils. The non-fee-paying schools of the local authorities, on the other hand, draw their pupils from the immediate area around the schools. Dunbartonshire and Lanarkshire are excluded as only a handful of Jewish children attend schools in these counties at the moment. The breakdown of the City of Glasgow is by postal districts.

As the original settlement of the Jewish population between 1882 and 1913 was in the Gorbals (Area I, postal district C.5), and even as late as the 1920s most of Glasgow Jewry still lived there, the results of the dramatic exodus of the population from the district can be seen.

The figures for 1963 suggest that most of the Jewish population live in Areas II and III. Table 7 shows a breakdown of Area II into

TABLE 7

Jewish Children Attending Primary and Secondary Non-Fee-paying Schools in Postal Districts S.1 and S.2 of Area II

Year	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963
Primary Secondary	443 238	394 268	375 259	342 258	306 226	252 204
Total	681	662	634	600	532	456

primary and secondary non-fee-paying schools for the two postal districts S.1, and S.2, i.e. the districts where most of the Jewish population is to be found.

The table shows that there has been a very rapid decrease in numbers over the six-year period. As this decrease is not matched by increases in any other parts of the Glasgow area, the drop in the number of children is unlikely to be fully explained by younger couples of childbearing age moving out of the district in fairly large numbers.

It will be seen that, once again, the greatest decline by far is in the number of primary schoolchildren. This decline is spread fairly evenly among all the primary schools in the area.

This leaves as the principal possibilities either that the 'missing' primary schoolchildren are being switched to fee-paying schools, or that districts S.1 and S.2 are populated by an ageing population. As general enquiries in the schools and among parents in the area give little indication of switching to fee-paying schools, it would appear that the population of S.1 and S.2 is an ageing one, and probably in numerical decline also. The effect of this apparent decline might prove to be one which weakens the whole Glasgow community, as the most actively Jewish youth live within this area which also supplies a high proportion of Jewish students.

From Table 8 it will be seen that the total number of Jewish children attending all schools in East Renfrewshire shows no real change or

TABLE 8

Jewish Primary and Secondary Children Attending Non-Fee-paying and Fee-paying
Schools in East Renfrewshire

Year	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963
Non-fee-paying:						
Primary	311	302	297	290	280	246
* Secondary	132	154	167	166	191	191
					<u> </u>	
Total	443	456	464	456	471	437
		_				
Fee-paying:						
Primary	67	76	85	81	71	76
Secondary	12	18	22	25	25	30
	_					
Total	79	94	107	106	96	:06
	_		 .			
Grand Total	522	550	57ī ·	562	567	543

trend. For those who know the Glasgow area this may seem surprising as, conventionally, East Renfrewshire is considered to be the area in which Jewish newly-weds try to find a home. One would, therefore, normally have expected a reasonable increase in the number of primary schoolchildren. Instead, since 1958 anyway, there has been a gentle decline in numbers followed by a sharp drop. An examination of the source tables in which the primary children are given by sex shows that, while the number of girls has been maintained, there has been an unaccountable and sharp fall in the number of boys. These missing boys have not switched in any significant numbers to fee-paying primary schools either within the county or the city.

The number attending secondary schools has increased as it has done in the whole of the Glasgow area, but the proportion of children of post-primary age who are taking senior secondary courses at non-fee-paying schools in the area is lower than the proportion for the City of Glasgow which was described previously.

Over the rest of the city, Table 6 shows that the number of Jewish children is spread very thinly and is declining: this holds for all the council housing estates, where very few Jewish families are to be found.

It is an interesting exercise to use the data on the schoolchildren which have been presented to try to estimate the Jewish population of the greater Glasgow area.

For the whole of Scotland there were in 1962, 923,200 children aged 5 and under 16 in a total population of 5,235,700, i.e. there were 176 children of this age-group to every 1,000 total population. The proportion for the general population of the City of Glasgow in 1961 was 181 per 1,000. As about one-third of the population of Glasgow

is Catholic, the all-Scottish proportions rather than the Glasgow ones will be used as the basis for estimation and comparison.

The average number of Jewish children at primary school over the six-year period 1958-63 was 1,057 and the average number at secondary school about 722. The figure for the number at secondary school does not match the age-group 12 and under 16 exactly, since no figures are available at the moment as to how many Jewish children stay on at secondary school beyond the minimum leaving age of 15. As it has been shown that a large proportion of post-primary Jewish schoolchildren in Glasgow are at senior secondary school, it is not likely that a large proportion leave at 15.

In order to make the Jewish and Scottish figures more comparable, the figure of 722 would, therefore, have to be reduced by those who are included as being at school but who are 16 years of age or over. An estimated allowance of 140 children in this school age-group is not likely to be seriously inaccurate. This would leave an estimated average number of about 580 Glasgow Jewish children under the age of 16 at secondary school, making a total of about 1,640 Jewish children between the ages of 5 and under 16.

If the proportion of Jewish children aged 5 and under 16 to the adult Jewish population were the same as that for the all-Scotland population, then by simple proportions the estimated total Jewish population of the Glasgow area would be approximately 9,300.

The Jewish population is, however, a more urban one than that for the whole of Scotland. It is also more middle class. Added to this, the population of Scotland contains a considerable Catholic minority with a high reproduction rate. Thus, the estimate of 9,300 Jews in the Glasgow area would be a minimum one.

If the Jewish population of Glasgow were 13,400, as stated in The Jewish Year Book, then the Jewish children aged 5 and under 16 would form as little as about 12.2 per cent of the population, i.e. 122 per 1,000.

If the two proportions 140 per 1,000 and 150 per 1,000 between these two extremes are taken, they yield an estimated total Jewish population for the greater Glasgow area of from 10,900 to 11,700.

Thus, either the Jewish population of the Glasgow area is between about 11,000 and 12,000 or else, if it is more than this, the children form an unusual and dangerously small proportion of the population. From this we can conclude either that the population is an old one compared with the general population, and/or that the recent reproduction rate among the Jewish population is very low.¹⁵

If we accept the probability that the Jewish population of Glasgow is an ageing one, then, given that the birth rate of the children at present being studied does not increase substantially on that of their own parents, a decrease in population may be expected in the future. This

decrease may be even more emphasized owing to the sex disproportions, for unless the excess of men in the future can find Jewish wives from areas outside Glasgow, the Jewish marriage rate is likely to decrease and the rate of intermarriage, other things being the same, to increase.

If a picture of the Glasgow Jewish community were to be made on the basis of the statistics given in this paper, it would show a community still in process of moving southwards, having abandoned its original settlement in the centre of the city and now abandoning its inner suburban settlement and concentrating more and more outside the southern boundary of the City of Glasgow: a community which is greatly increasing the amount and the quality of the secular education of its children, and, therefore, likely to change its occupational structure to that of a largely middle-class professional group-most of all, however, a community which appears to be suffering, or which is likely to suffer, first a change in age structure in which the proportion of older persons increases, and then probably a population decline.

NOTES

1 H. Harris, ed., The Jewish Year Book,

1964, London.

² See E. Krausz, *Leeds Jewry*, Cambridge, 1964, for amended estimates for

3 Harris, op. cit.

A. Levy, The Origins of Glasgow Jewry,

1812-1895, privately published, 1949.

⁶ V. D. Lipman, Social History of the Jews in England, 1850-1950, London,

1954.
6 I should like to thank the Rev. Dr. I. K. Cosgrove who kindly put much of his information on these schools at my disposal.

i The Glasgow Jewish Year Book, 1937–

1938.

8 An account of some American studies on sex ratios is given in M. Sklare, ed., The Jews: Social Patterns of an American Group, Glencoe, Ill., 1958. See particularly 'Some Aspects of Jewish Demography' by B. B. Seligman and A. Antonovsky, p. 97, 2nd edition, 1960.

9 Annual Report of the Registrar-General for Scotland, 1962 (No. 108), H.M.S.O.,

10 E.g. J. W. B. Douglas, The Home and the School, London, 1964.

11 Ibid.

- 12 J. Maxwell, The Level and Trend of National Intelligence, London, 1961.
- 13 Annual Report of the Registrar-General for Scotland, op. cit.
- 14 Census 1961, Scotland County Report, Vol. One, Part 2, City of Glasgow, H.M.S.O.,

15 M. Freedman, ed., A Minority in Britain, London, 1955. See particularly p. 72 in the demographic essay by Dr. H. Neustatter.