

Anglo-Jewry: Historical background

Introduction

The Island of Britain has absorbed waves of immigrants for over 2,000 years. Some, like the Romans, who stayed for a century or more and then the majority left when the Roman Empire collapsed. Others, like the Angles, the Saxons, the Jutes, the Danes and the Normans came and were gradually absorbed and over the centuries the different ethnic boundaries disappeared to produce a mainly homogenous mono-cultural population who thought of themselves as 'British' albeit taking pride in the area in which they lived. Since the end of the Second World War the normative mono-cultural nature of the country has been altered by large-scale immigration from countries which were former colonies of the British Empire and since the 1970s from mainland Europe when Britain joined the European Union¹. The result of this immigration is that the country, especially the larger towns and cities, has become multi-cultural and multi-ethnic but this has not generally adversely affected the identification of these newer arrivals as 'British.' Immigrants quickly learn English and have shown willingness to represent Britain; one has only to look at the sportsmen and women competing in international competition to see the range of ethnicities of the competitors. This project is looking at a small segment of the population – the Jews – which somehow seems to have defied historical precedent by largely maintaining a boundary between themselves and the general population and currently they are one of the oldest ethnic minorities in Britain (Gidley and Kahn-Harris, 2012). The specific question that this project seeks to address is, how young male Jews are negotiating their masculinity in contemporary Britain. British society has not been static and is continually evolving and the way that young Jews have thought of themselves has changed with that evolution. It is therefore necessary to examine the historical experience of the Jewish community through the lens of masculinity to understand the social dynamics that have been and are influencing these young Jewish men in order to set this empirical study in context. The Jewish community had evolved a sophisticated infrastructure prior to the mass immigration of the 1880s and the concern that the communal leaders had was to present to the general population the face of a unified law-abiding group willing to accept the standards of behaviour of the host society and not draw adverse attention to themselves. Within the community that unity was frequently lost as individuals disagreed over policy regarding the direction the community should take in response to the circumstances occurring during the 20th century. There was competition between individuals who had differing visions for the community and they vied for prestige and power within the community.

Jewish Masculinity at Different Points of Anglo-Jewish History

Although some Jews may have come to Britain with the Romans it is generally accepted that the first organised, self-professing Jews came to Britain in 1066 with the Norman conquest from Rouen and there were communities in several cities; London, York, Lincoln, Norwich and Northampton. The Jews were expelled by the king's order in 1290 and although there were a few individuals or groups of secret Jews or Marranos dissimulating their Jewish observances there was no organised community. Open Jewish resettlement was permitted by Cromwell in 1656 and by 1880 the Jewish population was about 60,000 mainly by immigration from Holland. Since 1880 there have been two major waves of Ashkenazi Jewish immigrants fleeing economic and physical persecution; a larger number (estimated between 120,000 and 150,000) at the end of the 19th century from Eastern Europe and Russia. They were mainly from non-industrialised small towns and villages mainly, but

¹ At time of writing the United Kingdom is negotiating to leave the European Union

not exclusively, fundamentalist religiously orthodox. The second wave was from central Europe escaping Nazi persecution in the decades around the second world war and the number that remained in Britain in 1950 was estimated at between 40,000 and 55,000.² These were mostly professional, successful members of society, consisting of doctors, lawyers and academics who, if they arrived before the Nazi currency restrictions were imposed in 1938, were able to bring their assets with them (Newman, 1985). Sephardi Jews came from Turkey following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire after the 1st World War and from Arab countries in North Africa, the Eastern Mediterranean, Iraq and Iran having been expelled from these countries after the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. In the last five years there has been a significant influx of Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews from France. The youth of the current Anglo-Jewish population is largely derived from the descendants of these immigrant waves and it is anticipated that the subjects for the study of this thesis, and in most cases also their parents, will have been born and educated in Britain.

Anglo-Jewry has benefitted from the fact that in the last 350 years in Britain there have been no bloody revolutions, pogroms or major civil disruption and Britain has enjoyed a settled relationship between monarchy and parliament which allowed a generally liberal public attitude. In England, in contrast to nearly all of mainland Europe, the Jews were under the protection of the law, could settle anywhere they pleased and enjoyed virtual social equality (Roth, 1978 Page 204). By describing the pre-1881 Anglo-Jewish community as bourgeois and respectable, Todd Endelman understands that the Jews had allied themselves completely with Victorian values of respectability. Vivi Lachs comments that the Anglo-Jewish elite was composed of English people with English values and mores who were practicing Judaism (Lachs, 2018 page 6). This overlooks the fact that it was only the elite that had entered high society and enjoyed its privileges. Beneath that elite there was an emerging middle class but the bulk of the population was still eking out a living as street pedlars pushing their wares or petty criminals and pickpockets and living in poverty. The models of masculinity at that time were varied, the elite trying to be indistinguishable from their Gentile neighbours in manners and attitudes but the general population had no such qualms. Athleticism was not a general feature but one notable exception was Daniel Mendoza (1764-1836), a boxer who helped transform the popular English stereotype of a Jew from a weak, defenceless person into someone deserving of respect.

English Jewry of 1880 had not expected the huge influx and showed no pleasure in their arrival (Gartner, 1973 Page 49) and there was disagreement between leading families over the attitude towards the immigrants³. There was even a call from Chief Rabbi Hermann Adler⁴ to his counterparts in Eastern Europe to prevent the continued out-movement of these migrants. This influx, untouched by bourgeois standards of decorum and respectability, shattered the calm of Anglo-Jewish life and injected a vitality without which would have caused the native community to wither and die (Endelman, 1990 Page 173). The immigrants were initially concentrated in the larger towns; in the East End of London, Strangeways in Manchester, Brownlow Hill in Liverpool, Leyland in Leeds and the Gorbals in Glasgow but moved out of the inner cities to the suburbs. This was parallel to their upward socio-economic motility and their assimilation or integration into the wider society.

² It is believed that 90,000 came but many moved on to other countries

³ Rothschild, Montefiore and Mocatta would give no encouragement and as little aid as possible but Samuel Montagu, Herbert Bentwich and Leopold Greenberg defended the cause of alien immigration.

⁴ Hermann Adler (1839-1911)

This movement has been accompanied by a tendency to re-group into the new locations and to re-create communal institutions such as synagogues, schools, and retail food outlets (Newman, 1985).

Phase 1: Anglicization of immigrants 1881 to 1920

The eastern European Jewish migrants were considered stereotypes of the wandering Jew co-opted by anti-Semitic propaganda and its ugliness symbolised a mind that lacked control over passions, honour had become cowardice and virtue was replaced by dishonesty and lustfulness. The general consensus in the ethnological literature of the late nineteenth century was that Jews had 'black' skin or at least were 'swarthy' (Gilman, 1993 Page 20). In popular culture Jews were depicted as old, dirty and disfigured and the phrase "dirty Jew" came to sum up the stereotype to contrast with the youthful beauty of true manliness. The immigrant Jews were in the main poor and exhausted by their travels having been forced to flee by persecution and adverse economic pressures. They had endured a hard, overland journey from their homes to the embarkation ports and a further journey over the North Sea in overcrowded, unsanitary boats.

The popular view of these Jews, down-trodden, dirty and disreputable, does not recognise that these people had showed great initiative by their decision to leave areas in which they had lived for many generations. They had endured considerable hardship in making the arduous journey and had arrived with little knowledge of English and very few possessions. Lachs notes from a study of the Yiddish song lyrics that many families had to take in lodgers to supplement their income and that masculinity and power relations between husband and wife were affected by the migration experience (Lachs, 2018 Page 157). That they had set about making new homes and retaining their language (Yiddish), diet (multiple Kosher food outlets) and religion (the home ceremonies of the Sabbaths and Festivals and the communal mode of worship in small groups) (Kershen, 2006) demonstrates strength of character.

The desire to be Anglicised came from within the immigrant community (Lachs, 2018 Page 13) and they set great store on their children speaking English and adopting English customs (Lipman, 1954 Page 145 quoting a Royal Commission of 1902) and the host community was anxious to assist the process of anglicization. Between 1880 and 1920 the dominant concerns for the children were education (Kirsch-Greenberg, 1988 Page 111) and 'social rescue' (Bunt, 1975 Page 162). These concerns were the focus of provision of formal education and a network of out-of-school activities by various youth clubs. The engagement with young people was considered an integral part of religious community building practice (Mills, 2015).

Anglo-Jewry sought a unified Anglicized community to transform the Yiddish speaking immigrant children into English Jews. "A young Pole can be placed in the Jews' Free School and will be turned out a young Englishman."⁵ National education at the end of the 19th century was shaped by a number of Education Acts. Public secular education had expanded and Jewish children were able to attend the public and private schools without a religious test (Lipman, 1954 Page 178). The 1870 Education Act had provided non-denominational (Board) schools in areas where the Church-affiliated voluntary schools could not provide sufficient places. Subsequent acts abolished fees for these schools so that all children could receive elementary education. The Jewish Education Aid

⁵ *Jewish Chronicle* 12th August 1881

Society was established in 1896 with the aim of helping promising Jewish junior pupils go on to secondary education and later widened its scope and in 1908 it provided financial help for the artists, Mark Gertler⁶ (MacDougall, 2002 Page 27) and David Bomberg⁷ (Cork, 1987 Page 22), to attend the Slade School of Art.

Living conditions were poor with extreme overcrowding due to high fertility rates and large families were common. Lack of space at home forced children onto the streets to play where they were picking up anti-social habits such as swearing, betting and some petty crime (pickpocketing) although drinking was not a problem. Girls, especially were seen to be in moral danger. There was also the activity of Christian missionaries who were enticing children to come to church activities (Bunt, 1975 Page 16). Contrary to popular belief, the immigrant Jews were not uniformly observant in their religious practice. There had been a notable drift away from strict observance even in their previous habitations and many followed the lead of the host community who had become lax in their religiosity.

Out-of-school clubs and associations were extremely important factors in the process of socializing and Anglicizing Jewish youth. The initial focus was to occupy children and keep them off the streets and reinforce good behaviour. Boys' clubs were set up, the Brady Street Lads' Club was founded in 1898 and had a library of over 1500 books covering literature, history, sport and basic economics and the Stepney Jewish Lads' Club had set up a thrift group (Bunt, 1975 Page 19). Camping was a feature of many clubs with a 10-day large annual camp under canvas for boys (mixed camps only came in in the 1950s). This was an agency to promote personal and communal hygiene with tent inspections and helping with kitchen duties. Also discipline was instilled with extra fatigues for misdemeanours (Bunt, 1975 Page 31). A Jewish branch of the Scouts Association was set up in the early 1900s and a Jewish Athletic Association was formed in 1899 to organize Sunday sports meetings.

"The Jewish Lads' Brigade" (JLB) was officially founded by Colonel Albert Edward Goldsmid in 1895 (Voeltz, 1988; Kadish, 1995) and was directly modelled on "The Church Lads' Brigade" – one of a number of uniformed youth groups which had sprung up towards the end of the 19th century. Voeltz postulates that there was a pervading fear among the English upper and middle classes that the British race was becoming degenerate and that there would not be enough soldiers to protect the British Empire in the future, (Voeltz, 1988 Page 120) so manliness/masculinity was not a solely Jewish concern. In the case of the JLB, upper class, well-educated Jews felt an obligation as Jews and patriotic Englishmen to help "Anglicize" and assimilate into English society those Jewish boys who were now living in the poor immigrant areas. The masculinity being promoted was that of the "public school ethos" and the introduction of military drill and discipline. The JLB became increasingly militarily focussed in keeping with other Edwardian groups as Britain came to see such groups as pools of potential soldiers. JLB was also concerned about getting youth into employment and in 1902, in combination with the Jewish Board of Guardians, an initiative – the Jewish Lads' Employment Committee - was set up to arrange apprenticeships for boys and by 1907 it was arranging 300 apprenticeships a year (Bunt, 1975 Page 19). The JLB was helped considerably in the early years by The Maccabeans⁸ who gave financial support. The brigade soon enjoyed the support

⁶ Mark Gertler (1891-1939)

⁷ David Bomberg (1890-1957)

⁸ This was a society of English Jewish intellectuals and professional men who supported Jewish culture. It was formed in 1891

and encouragement of the Jewish press – the *East London Observer* called it “one of the community’s most useful institutions,” the *Jewish Chronicle*, “it is impossible to praise too highly the conduct and spirit of the boys or the loyalty and self-sacrifice of the young officers” and the *Daily Telegraph* commented that the brigade, by attending to physical exercise and fostering a spirit of loyalty was helping these “young Orientals planted in Occidental surroundings”⁹ to overcome their difficulties and improve the “physique and morale of Jewish lads throughout the land.” The JLB was active in promoting athletic contests and an annual athletics meeting was established in 1911. Sportsmanship was seen as “playing a key role in the production of an Anglicised Jew” (Voeltz, 1988 Page 121 et. sec). The military ethos was utilised with the onset of the first war and many former brigade members enlisted and 535 ex-JLB men were killed. In a review of the Jewish soldier in the British army in the Boer War and World Wars One and Two, Gavin Schaffer argues that the idea of the ‘muscle Jew’ can be better understood as a reflection of the desire for European integration, an attempt to present Jewish soldiers as equal to their non-Jewish equivalents (Schaffer, 2012). Within one generation foreigners were turned into English Jews and a study of Manchester children revealed a decline in the ability to speak Yiddish with their parents (Livshin, 1990).

The First World War (WW1) was a watershed that changed society and warfare. Previously wars had been fought by full-time professional soldiers who did not stop being soldiers after their battles and their home societies celebrated their exploits singing and boasting of their experiences. WW1 was fought with volunteers and conscripts who had to change their identities from civilian to soldier in a matter of weeks. They had to acquire in a short time techniques of repressing fear and guilt which professional armies instil in recruits over years (Leed, 2000). For the Jews there was a dilemma because although many wanted to demonstrate loyalty to Britain by joining the army there was reluctance to join an alliance with Russia, a country with a long history of anti-Semitism, against Germany where Jews had been relatively well treated. In the context of perceptions of masculinity, young men had been socialised in the Victorian/Edwardian models of masculinity to conceal emotion were faced with almost constant threat of death. The previous quasi-military experience in Boy’s Brigades and school cadet corps was hopelessly inadequate to prepare them for trench warfare and continuous bombardment. The normal healthy man arriving at the front showed definite signs of physical fear when first coming under fire which shortly wore off to be replaced by a type of callousness, a military mask of masculinity designed to contain fear and to suppress emotions (Leed, 2000 quoting the 1922 *Report of the War Office into Shell Shock*). George Mosse writing about the relationship between masculinity and militarism noted that for the Edwardian middle classes war was an important test of manliness (Mosse, 1996 Page 108-112). Michel Roper argues that, beginning just after the war and continuing up to the last quarter of the century, there emerged among the British middle class a means of reassessing the codes of manliness, two important aspects of this were the widespread experience of fear among frontline soldiers in the war and the post-war gradual acceptance of psychological factors affecting human behaviour and feelings (Roper, 2005). The Jewish contribution to the disillusionment with the war expressed in the field of the arts was by the poets Siegfried Sassoon¹⁰ and Isaac Rosenberg¹¹ and the artists Mark Gertler and David Bomberg. Siegfried Sassoon was from an old established Anglo-Jewish family who wrote an open letter of protest to his commanding officer complaining that the war was being prolonged and Isaac Rosenberg, the son of immigrants, who wrote of the trench conditions and also being sneered at because he was Jewish. Mark Gertler was associated with a group of conscientious

⁹ *Daily Telegraph* 22nd January 1910

¹⁰ Siegfried Sassoon (1886-1967)

¹¹ Isaac Rosenberg (1890-1918)

objectors and his painting *The Merry-Go-Round*¹² demonstrated a vision of cultural disintegration (MacDougall, 2002 Page 128) being a powerful image satirising militarism. It depicts figures in naval and military uniform spinning on fairground horses and one of them seems to be screaming silently. The painting was considered so shocking that it was never sold in his lifetime and was kept hidden for many years. David Bomberg was deeply affected by his experience as a private in the trenches and altered his style from the simple angular shapes for the human form to a more figurative impressionist technique. His pre-war (1912) painting, *Vision of Ezekiel*, showed the angular figures leaping with the ecstasy of being alive and refusing to accept the finality and deprivation of death (Cork, 1987 Page 41). In 1915 he drew *Billet* depicting a tangled heap of bodies with only one soldier depicted and his face shows grim resignation and exhaustion seemingly mourning his lost civilian freedom (Cork, 1987 Page 104). His post-war disillusionment was expressed in his 1920 painting *Ghetto Theatre* where, in contrast to his pre-war exuberance, the drably dressed spectators have mask-like faces and closed body language indicative of his dismal post-war vision.

Phase 2: First generation to have been born in Britain 1920-1940

David Cesarani characterises this period as “20 years of intra-communal strife” (Cesarani, 1990) between the old established families who controlled the Board of Deputies representing their section of the community who excluded the mass of the community derived from recent immigrants (who formed the provincial representative councils, the Jewish friendly Societies and the B’nai Brith) from representation on the Board and its sub-committees. This process of political exclusion meant that the Board had ceased to be representative of the mass of British Jewry. The rift was compounded by a change in pattern of philanthropy in the community. Previously the donations of the elite for local causes had bought prestige and authority to them but that wealth had been reduced by taxes and death duties. The new generation contained a number of entrepreneurs who contributed to Zionist and other non-British causes and they were perceived as the next generation of communal leaders.

The Jews became wealthier in the 1920s moving out of their enclaves into the suburbs and there was the fear among some of the older communal leaders that the general public would believe that the improvement had come about by dubious business practices. The youth clubs cautioned against ostentatious displays of wealth, sharp practice and aggressive behaviour which provoke anti-Semitism (Bunt, 1975 Page 162). The focus of the clubs moved from anglicisation to recreation and some political, that is, Zionist activities. Habonim came into existence in 1929 and the Maccabi movement founded in 1921 in Czechoslovakia came to Britain both aimed to strengthen Jewish inheritance (Bunt, 1975 Page 174). The interest in Zionism was an expression of an emerging Jewish Nationalism which did not necessarily require these young men to emigrate to Palestine, although a few did. The presence of Zionist youth movements was not universally welcomed as those who identified with the host society considered any form of Jewish nationalism to be opposed to emancipation (Bolchover, 2003 Page 80; Lebzelter, 1978 Pages 136-154). Basil Henriques,¹³ who had been very influential in the early club movement, did not believe that there was a place for Jewish Nationalism in Britain and he did use his influence to obstruct Zionist movements arguing that as Jews in Britain they should not divert loyalty away from Britain. In this attitude Henriques was confirming the philosophy of denationalising Jewry, defining Jewishness in terms of a purely religious affiliation. In the 1930s as the population drift to the suburbs continued the youth clubs associated

¹² See Appendix for this work and the other works mentioned

¹³ Basil Henriques (1890-1961)

with the synagogues had not moved with the times. The young people preferred city centre entertainments, expensive clothes and cars whilst the club leaders still had the mentality of charity workers. When the Jews encountered anti-Semitic refusal to being admitted to sporting clubs,¹⁴ they set up their own clubs.

The rise of Nazi theology in Germany in the 1920s with the accusation that the Jews were parasites in society and that this was due to their racial inferiority did feed into a tradition of British race science started by Francis Galton. The historian, Cecil Roth, sought to counter the racialism of the emerging Fascists by highlighting the contribution that Jews had made to civilization thereby using the very same concept of race that the Nazis had used (Lawson, 2008). Elisa Lawson claims that Roth proposed that the Jews' physiological and psychological characteristics were determined by their history of dispersion among the nations. In this model the negative aspects of their character were a result of external forces (being subject to oppression and discrimination for example) and their positive traits to internal factors (the way Jews lead their lives). Using this model Roth was very keen that Jewish youth be educated about their religious and cultural heritage to appreciate what he called "the miracle of Jewish existence" (Lawson, 2008).

Hitler's ascent to power in Germany in March 1933 was immediately followed by a wave of attacks on Jews in Germany. Jews in London responded by organising a protest march to the German embassy on 24th March (Gewirtz, 1991) and a general boycott of German goods was proposed. This was a 'grass roots' movement and it brought into focus a clash of attitudes between the mass of working-class Jews and the Anglo-Jewish establishment of the Board of Deputies of British Jews and its president Neville Laski.¹⁵ As conditions for German Jewry deteriorated the boycott movement continued in spite of Laski's opposition. Although the boycott movement failed in its stated objective of bringing down the Nazi government of Germany it nevertheless demonstrated that the mass of ordinary Jews was not content to leave matters to what they perceived as an unrepresentative elite. The emergence of organised British fascism by Oswald Mosely's formation of the British Union of Fascists constructed the 'Black shirted body' in the movement's emphasis on the embodiment of their political religion through sport, physical fitness and public display of offensive and defensive violence. The 'Blackshirts' in Britain presented a direct challenge to the Jewish population having taken their inspiration from the National Socialists of Germany with their focus on aggressive masculinity and body image (Gottlieb, 2011). This movement emerged in the 1930s at a time of mass unemployment due to economic depression which had affected the working class young male population who were also coming to terms with the recently acquired political power of women; as they had been granted the vote on the same terms as men. The stylised violence and sport display of their rallies were also racialised and gendered, as images of healthy fascist bodies were constantly juxtaposed with their stereotyped antitheses, the most frequently being the physically weak and morally diseased urban Jew. Choosing to have it both ways, fascist propagandist acknowledged the forceful physical reaction mounted by British Jews against the fascist speakers, while simultaneously repeating the anti-Semitic images of the physically frail and slovenly Jew. The *Jewish Chronicle (JC)* of October 2nd 1936 carried an 'Urgent Warning' notice advising Jews to keep away from a proposed march by the Blackshirts through the East End of London to take place on 4th

¹⁴ The *Jewish Chronicle* mentioned Jews excluded from table tennis clubs (9/12/32), motor clubs (29/12/33) and a country club (31/8/34).

¹⁵ Neville Jonas Laski 1890-1969

October (incidentally during the Festival of Tabernacles). The march was not banned in spite of a petition of 100,000 organised by The Jewish People's Council Against Fascism and Anti-Semitism and a visit to the Home Office by Laski. The following week the *JC* reported that the march had been abandoned due to obstruction by 'tens of thousands of people' Jews and non-Jews combining in spite of repeated baton charges by police¹⁶ who had been charged with forcing a route for the marchers. Eventually Sir Philip Game, Commissioner of Police, ordered the march to be stopped and the *JC* reported that immediately the tension lifted and the police strolled away and the crowds followed them in a 'sea of friendly humanity.' The London District Committee of the Communist Party issued a statement that '*East London workers, Jew, Gentile, Catholic, Protestant, Labour and Communist, determined that Fascism shall not pass here. The stay-at-home policy has been decisively rejected and victory has been won by united action.*' There was a conflict in perception of how to deal with the Fascist provocation. The Anglo-Jewish establishment were fearful that violent opposition to the fascists would play into the hands of the fascists and fuel anti-Semitism so they relied on appeals to the Home Office to ban the march. Unfortunately, the Home Secretary John Simon¹⁷ declined claiming that he did not have the power to do so and that free speech was paramount and it was only the violent opposition that caused the police to halt the march. Naomi Cohen opines that a show of Jewish special interests would adversely affect their declaration of loyalty to the state; they dreaded the label 'International Jew' used in conspiracy theories of anti-Semites (Cohen, 2002). In terms of masculinity the reliance on, and faith in the legal civil authority that Laski espoused and worked vigorously for (the *JC* reported many meetings and rallies that he addressed) was ineffective and lost out to the active aggressive force mustered by a coalition of communists, socialists, Jews and their allies.

Phase 3: The 2nd world war and its aftermath; Shoah and Israel 1940 to 1960

This period saw the Jewish community trying to cope with the 2nd war and the aftermath. The Nazi persecution of the Jews before and during the second world war was known by the British government and was widely reported in both the national press and the *Jewish Chronicle* from as early as December 1939 and Bolchover stresses that every turn and every stage of the Nazi extermination was reported in Britain (Bolchover, 2003 Page 12) but there was a deliberate government policy of downplaying the Jewish suffering (Kushner, 1996). Even though Anthony Eden¹⁸ had made a speech in Parliament on 17th December 1942 about the slaughter of Jews in the Baltic and Poland which caused the Commons to rise for a minute's silence, the general British establishment was deeply anti-Semitic at this time. Selig Brodetsky¹⁹ (president of The Board of Deputies of British Jews) claimed not to have realised the extent of annihilation of European Jewry until the Nuremberg Trials in 1945-46.²⁰ Isaiah Berlin²¹, the Jewish diplomat in Washington, made scant reference to what was known about the wholesale murder of European Jewry in his weekly dispatches back to the Foreign Office (FO) in London. He was privy to all the intelligence that had been gathered and a summary of the newspaper reports in America so he must have been aware of

¹⁶ This disorder became known as 'The Battle of Cable Street'

¹⁷ John Simon 1873-1954

¹⁸ Robert Anthony Eden (1897-1977) was Foreign Secretary for the duration of WW2

¹⁹ Selig Brodetsky (1888-1954)

²⁰ Brodetsky memoirs quoted by Bolchover

²¹ Isaiah Berlin (1909-1997)

the mass killings. David Herman opines that he was anxious not to draw attention to his Jewishness (Herman, 2018) and advances the theory that Berlin was anxious not to antagonise the FO in case that prejudiced his post-war career and that his silence over the holocaust was a reflexion of his anxiety over what sort of Jew he was; was he a Latvian *Ostjude*, an outsider to high society, or an Oxford don welcomed at High Table in England and high society in Washington? In agreeing with the general thrust of Herman's view, Michael Fleming uses the case of Isaiah Berlin as a case study of how a diplomat may isolate decision makers (in this case Winston Churchill and Anthony Eden) from pressure to alter the established FO view that only by winning the war could Europe's Jews be saved (Fleming, 2018). In the context of examination of Jewish masculinity, the behaviour of Isaiah Berlin – downplaying his Jewishness in order to advance his career and not upsetting the general thrust of his employer's policy – could be considered analogous to the medieval 'Court Jew,' useful and tolerated in society but only on the terms of his social superiors. Being pre-occupied with the difficulties of day-to-day living in wartime Britain, Anglo-Jewry as a whole, failed to appreciate the reality of what was happening in mainland Europe and there was an additional psychological avoidance as the community was disturbed by British anti-Semitism.

During the war the institutions of Anglo-Jewry; the Board of Deputies, the Anglo-Jewish Association and the British Section of the World Jewish Congress, due to internecine rivalry and disagreement over Zionism, failed to produce a co-ordinated pressure on the British Government to respond to the destruction of European Jewry. The chaos of the communal organisations tended to instil a degree of despair for individual Jews. A notable exception was Rabbi Dr Solomon Schonfeld²² whose attempt to lobby parliament to allow temporary refuge for endangered persons was blocked by Brodetsky. Schonfeld had prior to the war organised trains to bring Jewish children to Britain (Bolchover, 2003 Page 37 and 169). The long history of Jewish suffering frequently depicted the Jew as a powerless supplicant and this had fed into the anti-Semitic stereotype of cowardice. There was need for an alternative depiction of the Jew; one who resists his persecutors both mentally and physically.

The physical resistance to the Nazis found expression in the instances of revolts in the Warsaw Ghetto, at Bialystok and at Treblinka which, although eventually futile, drew on the example of Bar Kochba's revolt at Massada (Steinberg, 1967). The desire of British Jews to prove themselves loyal servant of the crown and to counter accusations of shirking found expression in the exploits of Jewish servicemen that were published prominently by the *Jewish Chronicle*²³ and these were psychologically important in helping to refute charges of Jewish passivity. There was pressure to form a Jewish military unit but this was resisted by the War Office due to reluctance to countenance a separate unit on religious grounds. There may also have been concerns that such a unit could be used against Britain in Palestine by the Zionists. Eventually a Jewish Brigade was formed in August 1944 and served with the British Eighth Army in Italy suffering 83 killed in action, 200 wounded, 78 mentions in dispatches and 20 decorations.²⁴ After the war the Jews who had served in the war formed the Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen (AJEX) and have a separate Jewish remembrance parade at the Cenotaph in Whitehall the Sunday after Remembrance Sunday. This parade was

²² Solomon Schonfeld (1912-1984)

²³ Five front page stories of the *Jewish Chronicle* of 27th August 1943 featured reports of awards of decorations for heroism in battle

²⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_Brigade

evidence that there could be a balance of acknowledging Jews as both part of and discrete from the generality of the military.

For Jewish education in Britain, the war was a period of extensive crisis. Before the war there had been several national and local Jewish education bodies serving both part time (after regular school) and full time Jewish schools but pupil numbers had been falling, there was chronic underfunding and educational standards were falling (Steinberg, 1967). Children were being evacuated from the cities and this caused further disruption to the part time classes but the Jewish schools fared slightly better if it had been evacuated *en-bloc*. The educational bodies realised that their fragmented organisation was inadequate and under the auspices of the Board of Deputies a single Joint Emergency Committee (JEC) was formed²⁵ and it was able to manage the situation rather better than the fragmented situation that existed pre-war. Children dispersed into regular schools were receiving Jewish education from peripatetic teachers supplied by the JEC and as the school leaving age had been raised from 13 to 15 by the 1936 Education Act, for the first time, children over 13 were receiving Jewish education on a regular basis. More Jewish adolescents were learning Hebrew and attending religious services than before the war and within groups of these adolescents, study circles formed and from these circles the Jewish Youth Study Group Movement evolved (Steinberg, 1967). The entire educational system of Britain was reshaped towards the end of the war with the 1944 Education Act and there was provision in this act for non-denominational religious instruction to be given under more favourable conditions than before.

Kushner suggests that Anglo-Jewry was left deeply shocked by the revelations and the shame of their inaction led to a silence that lasted many years. The silence caused Chief Rabbi Sacks²⁶ to describe it as one of the great silences of Jewish history (Sacks, 1992Page 25). In the aftermath the response ranged from, this was punishment by God for Israel's sins (the sin could either be Zionism for not waiting until divine release from exile – Joel Teitelbaum²⁷ - to anti-Zionism, not taking the opportunity to emigrate to Palestine when it was possible – Menachim Hartom²⁸). For Jewish men, who had served both in the forces and doing essential war work on the home front, their priorities were readjusting their lives, returning to education, starting businesses, getting married and starting families. They were resetting their masculinity to normal civilian life. The city centres which had housed a major proportion of the Jewish population had been badly damaged by the systematic bombing during the war and this accentuated a move to the suburbs

The post-war political scene was dominated by argument over the Palestine Question and the debate between Zionism and its opponents intensified. British Jewish anti-Zionism was centred around The Jewish Fellowship set up in 1944 by Basil Henriques and Sir Robert Waley-Cohen²⁹ who were members of long-standing prominent Jewish families but this petered out after the founding of the State of Israel in 1948 and was disbanded (Miller, 2000 Page 82 et.sec.). The question of 'dual-loyalties' occupied both pro and anti-Zionists who were concerned that their emancipated status might be endangered (Aridan, 2005). There were a number of Zionist organizations which had originated in Europe before the war. Hashomer Hatzair had been imported by German and Austrian

²⁵ The JEC officially came into being on 21st July 1941

²⁶ Jonathan Sacks (1948-)

²⁷ Joel Teitelbaum (1887-1979)

²⁸ Menachim Hartom (1916-1992)

²⁹ Robert Waley-Cohen (1877-1952)

refugees in 1939 which combined the scouting tradition of Baden-Powell with Socialist Zionism and Marxism (Gledhill, 2015) and this philosophy connected with the existing Jewish radicalism in London. By being autonomous from adult control the organisation allowed space for Jewish youth to form an identity which promoted the 'pioneer' model of masculinity for young Jewish men over the perceived passive models of the scholar or the victims of the Nazis who had been killed without apparently putting up any fight. Other Zionist youth organisation were Habonim, B'nei Akiva (mentioned above) and Brit Haluzim Datiim. They were all socialist in nature but Habonim was secular whereas B'nei Akiva and Brit Haluzim Datiim were religious. Idealisation of the pioneer found expression in an edition of the four sons of the Passover Haggadah; there are four archetypal personalities personified by the 'four sons' one wise, one wicked, one simple and one who does not know how to ask.³⁰ There are numerous editions of the Haggadah and many contain a picture of the four sons and the portrayal of the four types reflects the editor's view of the types of manhood.³¹ The traditional illustration of the wise son is of a scholar of various age from young Yeshiva student to an old sage. The wicked son was depicted variously as a soldier - denoting a life of violence, a gambler or other similarly unflattering character. The simple son has been shown as someone with the superficial trappings of Judaism but no serious substance behind or someone engaged with the world but no spiritual backing and the one who does not know how to ask is shown either as a simpleton or a country bumpkin. A Zionist Haggadah was produced which showed the wise son as a pioneer farmer but also very much an observant Jew and the wicked son as someone who relies on military might alone.

Phase 4: The end of deference 1960 et seq.

This period was characterised by the children born post war challenging previous behavioural norms. Society in Britain was changing the process having started in the late 50s. The country's ethnic composition was changing with significant numbers of West Indian, Pakistani and Indian immigrants coming to Britain and settling in the larger cities; Britain was ceasing to be a monocultural society and was becoming multicultural. At the same time many of the previous prohibitions in personal behaviour and in the public space were relaxed so homosexuality was decriminalised and the law governing adultery and divorce altered. Censorship of books, theatre and cinema were all but abolished. Youth culture was much less deferential and this was reflected in taste of music, fashion, sexuality and media. An example of the way in which young people demonstrated their rejection of previous norms of synagogue dress was the fashion of 'mini-skirts' which provoked a lively correspondence in *The Jewish Chronicle* (Plant, 2015). The youth column of that paper reported an increasing widespread prevalence of pre-marital sex amongst Jewish youth in no way different from what was happening in general society. In the Jewish religious world this lack of deference was reflected in a split in the community with the 'Louis Jacobs affair' in 1964 when Chief Rabbi Israel Brodie³² barred Rabbi Louis Jacobs³³ from becoming principle of Jews' College because he had questioned the divinity of the Pentateuch. Rabbi Jacobs was also prevented from taking a position at the New North London Synagogue by Chief Rabbi Brodie. The era when a congregation would

³⁰ Mechilta d' Rabbi Yishmael

³¹ See Appendix for illustrations

³² Israel Brodie (1895-1979)

³³ Louis Jacobs (1920-2006)

have accepted such a pronouncement without question were long since gone and the congregation left the United Synagogue and formed the Masorti (lit. *Traditional*) movement.

Educational policy of Britain was profoundly changed by the election of a Labour government in the general election of 1964. It was the policy of the new administration to change the previous system of division of children at the age of 11 between those of more academic ability going to grammar schools and those who failed the 11+ going to secondary modern schools. The new policy was to accommodate all the children into much larger comprehensive schools. It was noticed that there was a sudden increased demand for places in the Jewish secondary schools as the non-denominational grammar schools were being phased out. David Mendelsson argues that the driver for the expansion in the Jewish secondary school was the concern that parents had that academic standards would be lower and the general conduct of the pupils would be worse in the larger, more impersonal comprehensive school (Mendelsson, 2009). There was also an impression that most of the teachers subscribed to a Marxist, anti-elite philosophy that was incompatible with the aspirations that Jewish parents had for their children. There was also social pressure from the parents for their children to pass the 11+ examination and Rima Roland, a columnist for the *Jewish Chronicle* asked, “Why must our children be given a complex and made to feel that they have failed themselves and brought shame on their families if they do not reach grammar school standard?”³⁴ In the 1963 Edgware Survey, 85% of Jewish parents of children under 15 wanted their child to go onto higher education (Krausz, 1969) and in Wembley a comparative study of Jewish and non-Jewish families, matched for social class, noted a significant difference between the educational and occupational aspirations between the two groups (Cromer, 1976). Prior to the government’s pressure to abolish the grammar schools, Jewish parents were happy to send their children to the non-denominational grammar schools for what they perceived as the best academic opportunity and they encouraged the children to attend Jewish youth groups and organisations to ensure that they had Jewish friends. Jewish education was catered for by Sunday morning and after-school Hebrew classes, at least until their Bar-mitzvah (for boys at 13) and Bat-mitzvah (for girls at 12).

The 1967 six-day war in the Middle East was a watershed in the perception of Israel, and by extension, the Jews (Hakim, 2015) who felt a surge of Zionist enthusiasm realised by consumption of Zionist pop cultural products (music, film, food) and visiting Israel as tourists. Jews were no longer considered passive and weak but were now powerful and Jews in Britain, bathing in the reflected glory of the Israeli armed services, became more visible in that young Jewish men felt able to wear a headcover in public whereas before they would have felt embarrassed to do so. Not only was a head covering worn but it was the knitted ‘kippa seruga’ of the Modern Israeli and not the discrete black cloth of the past. Modern Hebrew pronunciation started to be used in synagogues replacing the Ashkenazi version which was associated with Eastern Europe Yiddish culture. However the religious education for children did not benefit from the improvement in mood of the Jewish community as the children were more interested in secular extra-curricular activities than synagogue and Hebrew classes (Miller, 2001). The Jewish Educational Trust was launched in 1971 to raise the profile of Jewish education and Miller charts the rise in the proportion of Jewish children receiving full time education in Jewish schools.

³⁴ *Jewish Chronicle* 1964 November 6th P 35

An analysis of Jewish religious education in the 1970s by B. Chazan noted that 30% of the children aged 5 to 17 did not receive any Jewish education, 50% had only part-time and rather poor quality Jewish education supplementary to their regular secular school and 20% attended Jewish day schools (Chazan, 1978). The youth clubs and organisations were popular and for children who had not had much exposure to Judaism they proved an important resource for forming and confirming Jewish Identity. Chazan quotes a 1977 report on the Association of Jewish Youth that *“There is now a general dedication in the United Kingdom for turning young Englishmen into young Jews; the reverse process worked all too well.”* In 1975 approximately 20% of Jewish children (11,000) received full time Jewish education and 25 years later the number had grown to 22,620 which is 55% of the current total number of Jewish children in Britain (Miller, 2001 quoting a *Jewish Chronicle* report of December 2000). With their child(ren) attending a Jewish school there was less incentive for the child to go to out-of-school Jewish activities as they made their Jewish friends at school and there has been a noticeable decline in popularity of these activities.

The community at large was becoming increasingly secular and as secular educational standards increased more Jews were going to university and thus engaged with the non-Jewish world. In the early 1990s out-marriage rates were a cause for concern. In America a National Jewish Population Survey found that 52% of Jews were marrying outside Judaism and it was suspected that unless something dramatic was done there would be the same in Britain. In 1991 Jonathan Sacks became Chief Rabbi and he encouraged the Jewish community to face up to the challenge of declining engagement with Judaism. Ben Gidley and Keith Kahn-Harris characterise this period as a shift in emphasis of Anglo-Jewish leadership (Gidley and Kahn-Harris, 2012). Prior to 1990 the concern on Anglo-Jewish leadership was to make Jews in Britain as similar as possible to the host nation to be secure and loyal British citizens in a monocultural society; they characterise this phase as a ‘strategy of security.’ From 1990, concomitant with Britain become a multicultural society, they noted that concern had shifted to awareness of trends of anti-Semitism on the part of sections of the general population and apathy on the part of the Jewish community towards religious observance and out-marriage. By stressing the possibility of the shrinking of Anglo-Jewry, the leadership had fostered a ‘strategy of insecurity.’

In contrast to America where Jews were prominent in popular culture, the British experience has been more subdued until relatively recently. Now there are a number of events which have become part of the established British Jewish scene; such as Jewish Book Week, the UK Jewish Film Festival, Limmud (which started as an educational conference and the model has now spread internationally) and JW3 a Jewish cultural centre in London NW3. Ruth Gilbert regards the current representations of British Jewishness, while in many ways reflecting a buoyant, celebratory, and often playful sense of what it means to be both British and Jewish, are also marked by a seam of underlying and deep-rooted ambivalence. In this context what a notion of visibility really means is complex (Gilbert, 2014). In the 1960s mass entertainment turned from theatre and film, where people had to make a special visit to theatres and cinemas, to television which allowed entertainment at home with less effort than heretofore. Another effect of the rise of television was that a large audience could be engaged much more rapidly than previously and thereby the influence of a particular programme or genre was that much greater. A very popular TV genre was comedy, either in isolated plays or in series of situation comedies and not infrequently Jewish characters either featured in these programmes or a specific Jewish family was the subject of the programme. In the context of a study

of contemporary Jewish masculinity, it is observed that the Jew, especially the Jewish male, was frequently depicted less favourably than the other characters for whom he was a foil although sometimes the Jewish female also suffered the same treatment. *Bar Mitzvah Boy* – a 1976 film for television depicts a working-class Jewish family in the excitement of the imminent ‘Rite of Passage’ of the young son, Eliot. His pretentious parents bicker endlessly over the smallest details of the menu for the forthcoming party but don’t hear their son’s ambivalence about entering traditional Jewish manhood. Eliot’s elder sister (Lesley) has a boyfriend (Harold) a few years older than Eliot and he is depicted as weak and trying in vain to have a more physical relationship with Lesley. Unable to cope with the pressure to perform, Eliot runs out of the synagogue just as he is about to be called upon to perform his section. That he eventually recites his section – whilst standing on his head in the park – enables the rabbi to declare that he is indeed a Bar Mitzvah allows the planned party to go ahead. Eliot is the only balanced Jewish male in the film, his father being anxious and henpecked, the boyfriend weak, ineffectual and sexually frustrated and the rabbi is at a loss in trying to help this family until he fortuitously discovers that Eliot has performed albeit in the park. The female characters are similarly unsympathetic in that mother is a snob and the daughter completely self-centred.

Suzie Gold is a 2004 film about a 24-year-old Jewish girl – Suzie Gold - in Hampstead Garden Suburb, North-West London. Her younger sister is getting married to a Jewish man with a very ostentatious wedding celebration. The family’s expectations are that she should also marry a Jew and a suitable man - Anthony Silver – is on the scene. However, he is a self-opinionated and rather shallow insensitive person and Suzie meets, and falls in love with, a non-Jewish man – Darren (his surname is not mentioned in the cast list). Whilst the film concentrates on the comedic interactions between the Jewish characters, all of whom are exaggerated stereotypes, for my project it is the contrast between Anthony Silver and Darren that is my focus. The absence of a surname for Darren makes him anonymous and thus he cannot be pigeonholed unlike Anthony and this makes Darren the mysterious ‘other’ in a Jewish milieu where it is usually the Jew who has that role in society. It is Darren’s unpretentiousness and having come from a less wealthy background that is his attraction. When Darren sees the enormous refrigerator in the Gold’s kitchen he exclaims, “*This isn’t a fridge, it’s an ecosystem!*” The young Jewish man is the unattractive foil which makes the non-Jew a more superior character.

The sitcom, *Friday Night Dinner*, started in 2011 and its fifth series concluded in June 2018. It depicts a secular Jewish family of two parents and their twenty something two sons. Its Jewish content is not obvious with only indirect references to Jewishness, such as the location in North-West London, the Friday night traditional meal with a platted loaf (challah) on the table but no other overt demonstration of Jewish ritual. Only a viewer sensitised to Jewishness would identify the Jewish references so the Jewishness is unspoken; there and not-there. This tension is explored through the eyes of the non-Jewish next-door neighbour. His intrigued ignorance thus functions as an amplified but effective comic device and perhaps also speaks to the mainstream, non-Jewish viewer who might be equally confused about what exactly it means to be Jewish in twenty-first century suburban London. In this way the program addresses the Jewish viewer, who is able to recognize the Jewishness that it presents at a subtly coded level, and the non-Jewish viewer, who might or might not see the Jewishness of the situation (Gilbert, 2014).

Phase 5: Contemporary Era

Twenty-first century society has seen a number of sociological changes from the society of late 19th century Britain and three particular factors stand out. They are attitudes towards; religion, feminism and sexuality/sexual orientation and their influence on masculinity in general and Jewish masculinity in particular cannot be ignored. Whilst these movements pose a different set of questions to young Jews there has also been something of a 'backlash' against challenge to Rabbinic Judaism in the Ba'alei Teshuva³⁵ movement and resurgence of Hasidism that has spread from Israel and America.

Attitudes towards religion

Furlong quotes a youth survey of religious attitudes which reveals a more fluid approach to religion than hitherto. They believed that religion was a choice rather than an obligation and they rejected denominational labelling. Personal integrity was more important than an externally imposed authority and they were tolerant of other views, aspects of which they occasionally adopted, to produce a hybrid identity (Furlong, 2013).

Attitudes towards feminism

The feminist movement is usually regarded as starting in the late 19th century when suffrage movements in America and England created a new political identity for women although there had been prior movements agitating for women's rights to vote since the mid-19th century. Central to this new movement were the struggles for family allowances, contraception and abortion, and welfare rights. There was also demand for acknowledgement of women's domestic labour and women's legal status (Humm, 1995 Page 98). Women, who had been working in the factories during the war, were not content to recede into the background and some men had difficulty acknowledging women's ambitions. This difficulty was also felt by young Jews who were happy to take advantage of the sexual opportunities afforded by women's liberation but were reluctant to accept that women wanted equality in all social, economic and cultural areas. In the specifically Jewish space such initiatives as; women's tefillah (lit. *prayer*) groups, Megillah Esther readings (Purim), Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance (JOFA founded in 1997), egalitarian communities and ordination of women as rabbis have been met with the full range of responses from enthusiastic acceptance to outright rejection.

Attitudes towards sexuality/sexual orientation and queer theory

The privilege that heterosexual culture claims to have to be the exclusive model of human association denies any challenge to the wide range of social institutions by people of different sexual orientations. The change in attitude towards gay people has allowed gay Jews to become more visible and challenge the presumption of heterosexuality that traditional Judaism espouses. The liberality towards sexuality and sexual orientation is linked with queer theory; a set of ideas based around the principle that identities are not fixed and do not determine who a person is. "Queer" in this context refers to "people and ideas that challenge rigid stereotypes, especially assumptions about sexual orientation and gender identity. 'Queer' doesn't simply mean homosexual but transgressive, destabilizing, and mixing up categories (Zierler, 2013). There appear to be two distinct

³⁵ Lit. *Masters of Return*

strands of thought in the 'queer camp.' On one side stand queers who link the Lesbian Gay Bi-Sexual Trans-Gender (LGBT) movements with broader social justice issues; and on the other stands a bureaucratic cadre of single issue gay assimilationist organisations who aspire to a place at the policy table (Shepard, 2010). The former envisioned their movement as a critique of social, sexual and economic social norms, subverting these norms and plotting their eventual overthrow. The latter group want to be accepted as normal, "just like everybody else," supporting law and order social policies, access to marriage and all the other rights and duties of civil society; they want to be at the table whereas the former seems to want to break up the table and subvert and challenge accepted norms of gender identification. This latter stance is taken by Michael Warner's criticism of heteronormativity (Warner, 1997 Introduction page xxi). The essays in his work "Fear of a Queer Planet" go beyond calling for tolerance of lesbians and gays that the assimilationists campaign for.

Contemporary Models of Orthodoxy

In the last 30 years I have seen two trends emerging in the observant community, the Modern Orthodox and the Ba'ale Teshuvah movements. There has been a trend for young people to spend time in Israel, either on 'Israel tour' or for a 'gap year' learning about Judaism and Israel and attending theological institutions (yeshivot or seminaries). As the first wave of this group has grown up some of them are sending their children to Jewish schools where some of these young men do go on to university and professional qualifications thereby entering the mainstream of the Modern Orthodox community. Some of the returnees identify as Ba'ale Teshuvah and send their children to schools where the emphasis is on religious textual study to the detriment of secular subjects with the expectation that the boys from these schools would go to more advanced yeshivot and not undertake any secular professional training. The emphasis of this movement is to rebuild what was lost in the Holocaust and can thus be characterised as a response to the secularisation of the community. In the context of masculinity, those in full time yeshiva/kollel are reverting to the rabbinic model described by Boyarin referred to previously - where men would study Talmud and the family would be supported either by parents or the wife. Where the wife's educational and professional status is higher than her husbands (according to secular criteria) there may be tensions between the traditional ideal and the social reality³⁶. As self-restraint and control of emotion are principle factors in determining Haredi masculinity when the individual man feels that he cannot live up to these expectations he may become violent towards his spouse (Goldberg and Yassour-Borochowitz, 2009). Demographic surveys of the Anglo-Jewish community show that the strictly orthodox population is growing and as they tend to have more children than other groups then this trend is likely to continue (Staetsky and Boyd, 2015).

Conclusion

For men the essence of their masculinity can never be static. They have to change and adapt as the circumstances in which they live have changed. The last 140 years has seen great change both in the world political configuration and individual social circumstance. This chapter has sought to identify the macro-historical events in Britain that have caused men to re-assess what society expects of them. Britain, being an island, had a settled national identity following the union with Scotland by Acts of Union in 1706-7 and union with Ireland in 1801 so British nationalism was taken for granted.

³⁶ The *Jewish Chronicle* of 22/2/19 features an anonymous article describing the spouse abuse and depression among the Haredi community in London which has been hidden for years.

Furthermore, there is a long history of immigration into Britain from Europe by individuals seeking refuge from religious persecution or for economic reasons. The experience of mainland Europe was different and the concept of the nation state was a product of mainland European politics after the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire with the formation of Italy and Germany from previous related but separate provinces. The Jews in Europe had achieved a degree of emancipation entering into the higher ranks of society although individually were subject to anti-Semitism and frequent discrimination. An unfortunate consequence of nationalism was rivalry between the powers for exploitation of Africa and international influence accompanied by a paranoid fear of the ambitions of the neighbouring states. The First World War was a direct result of this international rivalry and the consequences of that conflict affected the rest of the twentieth century.

The nineteenth century Jewish community in Britain was completely transformed by the arrival of the migrant cohorts and the Jews proved remarkably adept at adapting to the British way of life and values. The host Jewish community was eager to see integration of the new arrivals and they in turn were eager to be accepted and to contribute to national life. Judaism combines a strong sense of communal obligation with individual responsibility to care for oneself and one's family and the Jews, now freed from the shackles of the circumstances of their previous life in Eastern and Central Europe, were able to take advantage of the general liberal philosophy of the country. Jewish men (and to a lesser extent, Jewish women) had opportunities to demonstrate their commitment to the country by their entry into public life and I have demonstrated how they have reacted to the range of events as the twentieth century unfolded.

In this chapter I have sought to give an overview of the history of the present-day Anglo-Jewish community through the lens of masculinity. I suggest that this is valid in respect of the competition between sections of the community wishing to enforce its view of behaviour. The concern that the leadership had to avoid antagonising the host community caused them to exert influence to curb the instincts of the new immigrants who threatened to disturb the delicate balance that had been achieved prior to the mass immigration. Being grateful for the freedom from state sanctioned persecution experienced in their former countries the generality of the immigrant community was initially enthusiastic in embracing British values and contributed to the religious, economic, academic and social spheres of the country. As the community developed the second generation, those born in Britain, and subsequent generations were less deferential towards the older establishment and the previous passive acceptance of their leadership was increasingly challenged as evidenced by the different responses to the rise of fascism in the 30s and in the religious domain by the split in the centre- orthodox by Rabbi Louis Jacobs. The disagreement in the community between the Zionist vision for the future of Judaism and those who opposed Jewish nationalism mirrored the contrast between an assertive nature for Jewish behaviour and those whose priority was 'fitting in' with British society. The establishment of the State of Israel has made it easier for those in the community who wish to leave Britain and make their life there but for the majority, supporting Zionism means that they are happy to support Israel politically, culturally and by tourism without formal migration.

For young Jews in today's society the collective memory of the struggles of their immigrant forebears has faded and their British identity is accepted as a matter of fact. Within their Britishness there is a second identity of being Jewish and there is a balance between these two identities, being an outsider and an insider at the same time. The reluctance of certain sections of the political establishment to accept in full the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of anti-

Semitism³⁷ and the use of anti-Semitic tropes in the public space has brought this into focus. The cultural and historical components of their Jewish identity vie with the influences of the non-Jewish world as these young men chart their path. Concomitant with the British/Jewish balance is their masculinity now that societal acceptance of certain masculine attitudes and behaviours has altered in the last 20 years. The casual, almost unthinking, sexism and misogyny that was commonplace in business, the professions and socially that was suffered by women of previous generations has only recently been challenged. This chapter sets the background to the investigation of how they are managing this process which is the subject of this project.

Word count 10,571

³⁷ <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/working-definition-antisemitism?usergroup=5>

Appendix – Illustrations

Mark Gertler 1916 *Merry-Go-Round*



David Bomberg 1912 *Vision of Ezekiel*



David Bomberg 1915 *The Billet*



David Bomberg 1920 *Ghetto Theatre*



Pre-Zionist Leipnik Passover Haggadah Altona 1740



Passover Haggadah – 1955 Four Attitudes to the Zionist Dream



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