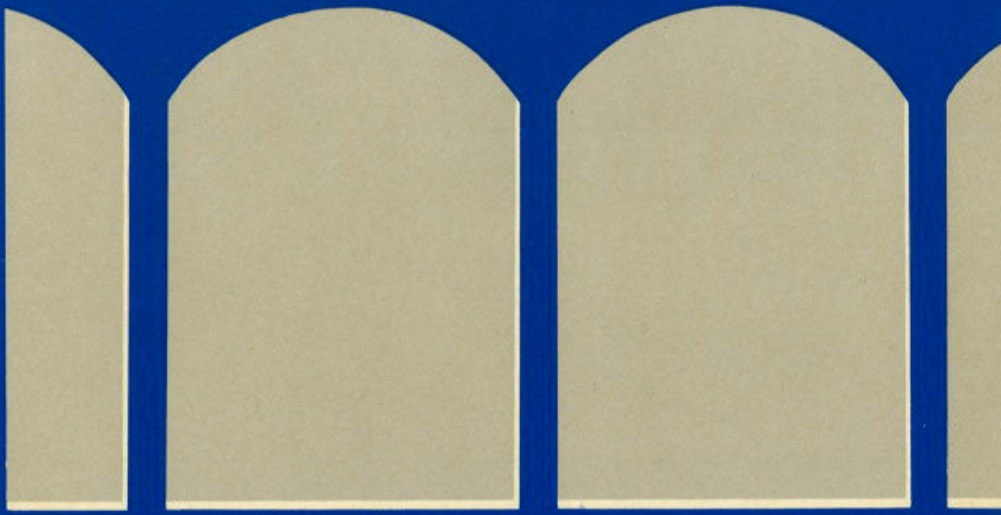


The JEWS of OXFORD

DAVID M. LEWIS



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DAVID M. LEWIS

Oxford Jewish Congregation
1992

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Published by the Oxford Jewish Congregation,
21 Richmond Road, Oxford OX1 2JL

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First published 1992

Printed in Great Britain by The Alden Press, Oxford

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

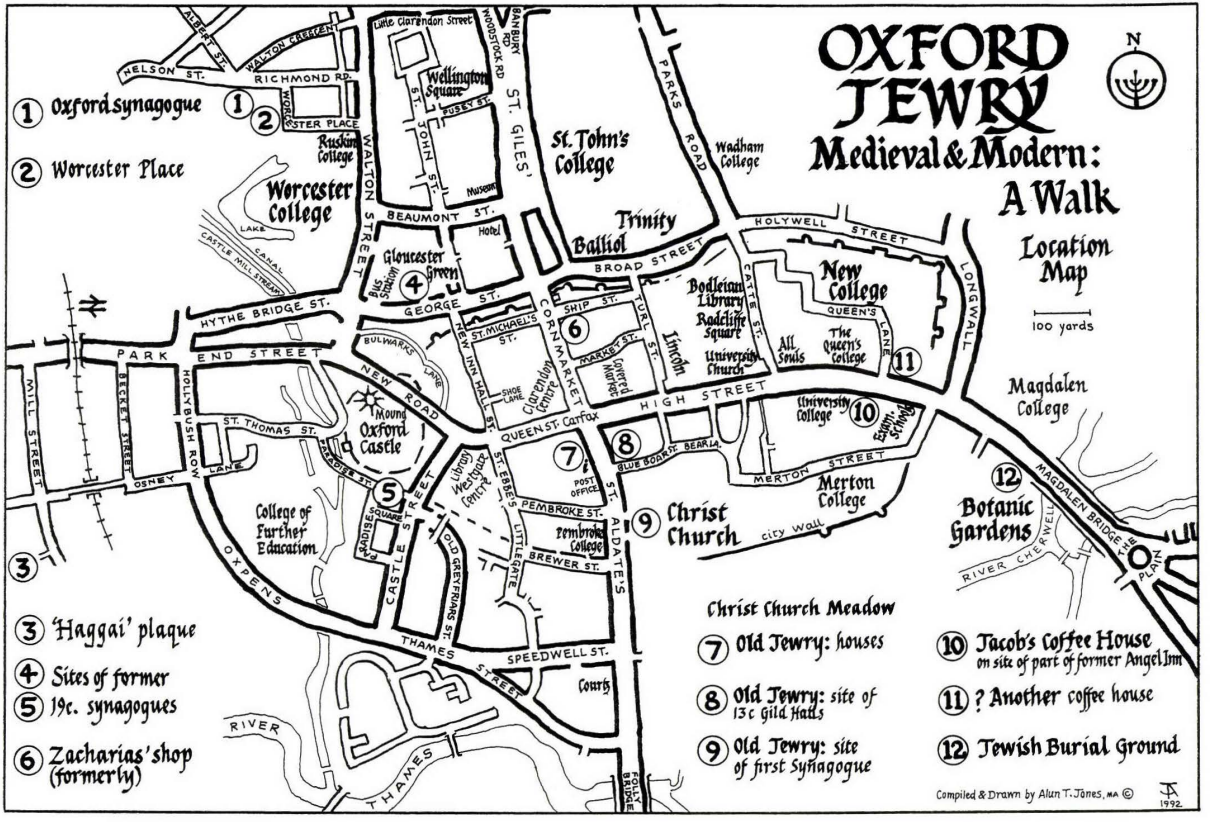
ISBN 0 9519253 0 X hardback

TO BARBARA

who always asks the right questions

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OXFORD JEWRY
Medieval & Modern: A Walk
Location Map
100 yards
N
1 Oxford synagogue
2 Worcester Place
3 'Haggai' plaque
4 Sites of former
5 19c. synagogues
6 Zacharias' shop (formerly)
7 Old Jewry: houses
8 Old Jewry: site of 13c Gild Halls
9 Old Jewry: site of first Synagogue
10 Jacob's Coffee House on site of part of former Angel Inn
11 ? Another coffee house
12 Jewish Burial Ground
Christ Church Meadow
Compiled & Drawn by Alun T. Jones, MA © 1992
Worcester College
St. John's College
Trinity
Balliol
Wadham College
Gloucester Green
Bodleian Library
Radcliffe Square
New College
Queen's Lane
All Souls
University Church
Lincoln
Magdalen College
Merton College
Christ Church
Botanic Gardens
Mound Oxford Castle
College of Further Education
Pembroke College
University College
Corn Market
High Street
Queen St.
Carfax
Broad Street
Parks Road
Longwall
Holywell Street
Beaumont St.
George St.
Hythe Bridge St.
Park End Street
New Road
St. Thomas St.
Pembroke St.
Brewer St.
Merton Street
Blue Boar St.
Speedwell St.
Thames Street
Oxpens
Castle Street
Aldates
Magdalen Bridge
River Cherwell
River Thames
Richmond Rd.
Nelson St.
Walton Crescent
Worcester Place
Ruskin College
Walton Street
St. Giles'
Banbury Rd.
Woodstock Rd.
Wellington Square
Little Clarendon Street
Museum
Hotel
Lake
Castle Mill Stream
Canal
Bus Station
Ship St.
Turl St.
Cattle St.
Market St.
Covered Market
Clarendon Centre
Shoe Lane
New Inn Hall St.
St. Michael's St.
Bulwarks Lane
Mill Street
Becket Street
Hollybush Row
Osney
Lane
Gaoler's St.
Gardiner Square
Old Greyfriars St.
St. Ebbe's
Little Gate
Post Office
Library (Westgate Centre)
Tolly Bridge
Court
Egyptology
Plain

PREFACE

As Anglo-Jewish provincial communities go, Oxford was a relatively late arrival and has not been of great importance in itself. As a market-town, Oxford had no great attractions for Jews. The City had a tightly organized corporation, which restricted the opportunities for trade, and Jews seem to have found for many years that the one Jewish talent which was of interest to the University, expertise in Hebrew, was most easily practised if they became Christians. When a small community did come together, around 1840, it was mainly founded on clothes-dealing, where contacts in other centres were of importance, though it rapidly switched to tobacco-dealing and trade in watches and jewellery. also characteristic Jewish trades of the period.

The town community thus established lasted about sixty years, without a great deal of diversification, and petered out shortly after 1900. But the Jewish character of Oxford had already been sharply affected by the arrival of Jewish undergraduates from 1869 onwards, and it was this undergraduate community which constituted Jewish Oxford until the Second World War. The story of its attitudes has a contribution to make to the dominant theme of Anglo-Jewish history, the relationship between Jewish and English identities.

The influx of German refugees and evacuees from London in 1939–40 produced a substantial community operating under wartime strains, and even after the war, the town congregation was a great deal larger than it had been in the nineteenth century. On this foundation there was gradually added a new professional community of a 'Home Counties' type, by no means only connected with the University, although the University's expansion contributed and the needs of the student body were decisive in planning and financing the new Oxford Jewish Centre. As we reach the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the Congregation, we are unusual in being a growing community. We are unusual in another respect. So far, we have largely been spared most kinds of fission, and our unique institutions provide equal rights to all denominations of Judaism.

In a desultory way, I have been collecting material to tell this story for some time. Its foundation has been the minute-books, which has some disadvantages, particularly since some of them never existed and some were destroyed by enemy action. The gaps have been partly filled by

unsystematic reading of the *Jewish Chronicle*. I am not a trained Anglo-Jewish historian, and have only realized some missed opportunities when it was too late to remedy them. Some themes have been crowded out by the shortness of time at my disposal; in particular, I have hardly taken the internal affairs of the undergraduate community beyond 1939.

I started by thinking that I had one special qualification as historian of Oxford Jewry, in that I have been President both of the University Jewish Society and of the Oxford Jewish Congregation, a distinction I share only with Neville Laski. It has not been as much of a help as I had hoped. I have come to realize that there are excellent reasons why the content of congregational histories tends to thin as they reach their end. I have not concealed anything very dreadful or embarrassing, but the need for discretion and politeness starts very soon after 1940. That my story of the most recent history is reticent about individuals is not so much a matter of discretion; it is caused rather by the impossibility of including all those whose work has gone to build the community. The gap will be filled by another book, *Then and Now: A Collection of Recollections*, edited by Freda Jackson.

I have had help of many kinds from many people. Of the dead, my greatest debt, personal and historical, is to Cecil Roth. Among the living, I single out Raphael Loewe, as a repository of oral tradition, Lionel Kochan, who always turned out to own the book I needed, Miriam Kochan, Helen Lewis, Madeleine Ginsburg and Peter Oppenheimer for encouragement and help. Ron May added to his other services a final reading of the typescript; errors of style which remain will be due to my obstinacy. I have bothered many other people. Particular advice is mostly acknowledged at appropriate places, but I also have to thank Robert Carvalho, F. Ashe Lincoln, Daphne Jacobs, and Bill Williams. Nothing would have been possible without the resources of the Bodleian Library and the Local Studies Section of the Oxfordshire County Libraries. The dedication registers a fraction of what I owe to the prime mover.

Oxford, November 1991

CHAPTER ONE

BEFORE THE CONGREGATION

Although this book is written to commemorate the foundation of the Congregation in 1842, it should not be imagined that the history of modern Oxford Jewry begins in the 1840s. This chapter will show that there is a fair amount of evidence for Jewish residence in Oxford well before then, at one time so ample as to make it likely that there was Jewish worship there, at least in private houses.

The story of the medieval Oxford Jewish Congregation is no part of my subject. It is well known, and has been fully studied by Cecil Roth.[1] I have no ability or wish to attempt to enlarge on it here. On the other hand, although the beginnings of the modern settlement have also been already studied twice, the evidence for them is steadily expanding and they are an integral part of my subject.[2]

The first reappearance of Jews in Oxford is connected with the revival of Hebrew studies in England, and those scholars and theologians who were interested always appreciated the desirability of finding Jews to teach Hebrew and assist in the purchase and cataloguing of Hebrew books.[3] In Oxford, this last became particularly important when Sir Thomas Bodley started to put his library on a firm footing; in 1607 he was looking for help from Jews. Before the official resettlement of Jews in England, these were necessarily always converts. The first known, Philip Ferdinand, a Polish Jew born in 1556, first a Catholic and then a Protestant, was admitted to the privileges of the University in 1596, and taught Hebrew in various colleges and halls before migrating to Cambridge. We cannot even put a name to the Jew whom Bodley was hoping would help in cataloguing in 1607, but in May 1608 we find a convert, Jacob Wolfgang, from Germany, admitted as a reader in the Bodleian, followed in November 1612 by a Jacob Levy. We hear rather

more of Jacob Barnett, who, after a short period of teaching, returned to Oxford in June 1613, prepared, he said, to submit himself for baptism. The date for the ceremony was fixed, but Jacob decamped; the preacher designated to deliver the baptismal sermon had to change his theme to the Perfidy of the Jews.

Others of the period are little more than names, which begin to cluster more frequently during the Commonwealth period, with the Puritans' overpowering interest in Jewish matters. Two converts were supported by the local Baptist congregation, and Jacob ben Samuel, later Reader in Hebrew at Sion College, London, though eventually converted, made a point in the 1650s of only eating meat of his own dressing.

There may have been others who were less professional. A famous entry in Anthony Wood's *Life and Times* reports that, in 1650, 'Jacob a Jew opened a Coffey House at "the Angel" in the Parish of St. Peter in the East, Oxon; and there it was by some, who delighted in noveltie, drank'. It is unfortunately not clear whether he is the same as 'Cirques Jobson, a Jew and Jacobite, borne near Mount Libanus', who, in 1654, 'sold coffee in Oxon in a house between Edmund Hall and Queen Coll: corner'. If he is, there is a serious possibility that he was not a Jew at all, but a Syrian Jacobite or Maronite, and that his customers were confused about his origins.

At this time there began Cromwell's dealings with the Jews which led to the Resettlement. Hostile gossip, not traceable to Oxford, extended to the proposition that he would have been prepared to sell, not only St. Paul's Cathedral, but also the Bodleian Library to the Jews, but they did not offer quite enough.[4]

The Restoration of Charles II did nothing to impede the process of Jewish resettlement. The first professing Oxford Jew of modern times was Isaac Abendana,[5] one of a pair of Marrano brothers from Holland. He first visited Oxford on 3 June 1662, but thereafter resided in Cambridge until 1676, where he was maintained to make a Latin translation of the Mishnah. He kept up contact with Oxford, in 1668 receiving £37 from the Bodleian for a consignment of books and manuscripts, and eventually moved there permanently. He registered at the Bodleian on 26 April 1676, but there is no consistent trace of him until he starts appearing in the Magdalen accounts as Hebrew lecturer at the end of 1689, generally paid £2 a year. He taught also for Trinity, and possibly for other colleges as well, and clearly did much else, the permanent remains of which are his almanacs of 1692–1699, notable steps in the publicizing of Jewish knowledge in the Christian world.[6] Presumably he was paid for these,

but he also had charitable supporters, notably Arthur Charlett, Master of University College, to whom we owe the account of his death in Oxford on 18 July 1699.

His death introduces us to a different kind of visitor, 'a merchant Jew, happening very fortunately in town' who 'took away his body for London'. The accounts of Bevis Marks Synagogue record the name of this merchant, Ishak Gomes, and payment to him of £9/18/0 for his expenses in bringing the body from Oxford and the burial. Mr. Edgar Samuel identifies him as Ishak Gomes Henriques, naturalized in 1694, and tells me that he seems to have been close to Alphonso Rodrigues, diamond and East India merchant. Though Gomes was described as a poor Jew in 1696, he rapidly became prosperous, contributing £7 to the rebuilding of Bevis Marks.

The next Hebrew lecturer at Magdalen from 1706 to his death in 1709 was Philip Levi, a convert. They considered one Isaac Bernard of Prague, but do not seem to have thought well of him; 'he is not only a Schmutz (as the Spanish Jews call those of Germany – but a Rogue into the Bargain'. Magdalen paid Aaron, an old Jew, £4 p.a. from 1726 to 1734, and then took on Mark Moses Vowell at the same rate between 1748 and 1751; Vowell was also Lecturer of Queen's, getting £6/10/0 p.a. from there. There has been some uncertainty whether Vowell was a Jew, but Dann, who assigns him the highest place among these Hebrew teachers, feels certain that he was and not converted. Bishop Percy, who was taught by him in spring 1750, had no doubt that he was a 'Poland Jew', converted at Oxford.[7]

Others had a wider variety of talents. There is a good deal of information about the convert David Francisco Lattes or Lates, who taught, not only Hebrew, of which he published a grammar at the Oxford University Press in 1758, but modern languages and music as well. He died in 1777, but his family can be traced for two more generations in his son, James Lates, violinist to the Duke of Marlborough, who can be claimed as the first Oxford Jewish composer, and his grandsons, John James (1770–1831), who matriculated at All Souls in 1776, subsequently becoming Rector of Sudeley, and Charles (b. 1771), another composer, who matriculated at Magdalen in 1793.

What had brought the merchant Ishak Gomes to Oxford in 1699 we do not know, and there is a long gap before we actually find professing Jews living in Oxford. A register of circumcisions in the records of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue records in 1740 the circumcision in Oxford of Joseph, son of Hyam Levy, who had two more sons

circumcised there in 1742 and 1750. Hyam Levy lived in the parish of St. Peter in the East, but we have as yet no clue to his occupation. He was in some unspecified legal trouble in 1743, which was 'discharged for incertainty' and fined 2*s*. 6*d*. in 1748 for not repairing the paving before his door. By that year, he had been joined by yet another family, since he acted as godfather in that year to Alexander, son of Saunders. A proselyte family in Oxford is recorded in the same register, without name or date.

Besides these Sephardim, there seem to have been other families in Oxford in the 1740s, perhaps Ashkenazim. When Levy Andrew Levy, already in business in America by 1760, was living in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in 1771, a stranger, son of Hyam Gast, arrived and claimed relationship with him, claiming that they had been brought up in the same street in Oxford. When it turned out that he was a 'convict', that is, had been transported to America, he was shown the door. Though Levy doubted the relationship, he did not deny the plausibility of the story.

This gives us four or five resident Jewish families for the late 1740s and, since they went to the trouble and expense of bringing a *mohel* from London for circumcisions, I find it inconceivable that they had no regard for other needs of Jewish life and did not co-operate in assuring themselves facilities for prayer and kosher meat. This is without allowing for others who might have regarded Oxford as a base. It was certainly a very suitable centre for the well-known pattern of development in Anglo-Jewish provincial history, in which pedlars frequently attached themselves to more established Jewish groups, returning to them as a base for the Sabbath.[8]

Jewish pedlars do seem to have been already familiar in the Oxfordshire countryside in 1753.[9] In that year, the Jews' Naturalization Bill caused an outburst of politically motivated antisemitic propaganda, not least in Oxfordshire, where the election of that year was particularly hard fought. The propaganda concentrated on national Jewish figures, and, although we can extract nothing from the literature about real Oxford Jews, there is a stray reference to 'all Jews wandering in Oxfordshire'.

1753 is also an important date for the local historian, since it saw the establishment of the first regular local newspaper, *Jackson's Oxford Journal*. From now on, aided up to 1790 by the indexes to be found in the Local History section of the City Library, we have the opportunity of looking for Jewish names, though the coverage is inevitably restricted to those whose business activities were substantial enough for them to

consider advertising them or to those who got into trouble or found themselves connected with it.

The haul is remarkably slim, and there seems to be no link with the community of the 1740s. Though the most recent investigator of eighteenth-century Oxford Jewry draws a picture of steady growth free of external hostility, my own present picture reverses this. It seems to me possible that the events of 1753 may have suggested to the Jews of Oxford that it was time to move on. We have already seen that by 1771 at least two of them were in America, though one had gone involuntarily, and the rest of the eighteenth century has little to suggest even the beginnings of a community.[10] It may be that, when Levy Andrew Levy was taken prisoner by Red Indians in 1763,[11] he temporarily regretted his decision to move.

There are, however, various individuals of interest. Mayer Lewis, 'operator for teeth' and perfumer, is first attested in 1767, when he was lodging with grocer Seely opposite Balliol, and treated the poor free. He later had his own premises in Pennyfarthing Street and in High Street (at the present no. 107, opposite Brasenose), before moving to London in 1774; he returned for at least two short stays. Before moving to London, he diverged from the norm for such practitioners by actually publishing a book in 1772, dedicated to the Gentlemen of the University: *An Essay on the Formation, Structure, and Use of the Teeth, with a Supplement, containing the necessary Directions and Instructions for cleaning and preserving them, wherein The Opinions of some ancient and modern Writers on the Subject, will be impartially considered.*[12]

A contemporary had a different way of making a living. Marcus Wolfe, of High Street, St. Clements, was in December 1768 forbidden all commerce with the gentlemen of the University for various offences greatly prejudicial to the youth of the place and injurious to the good order and discipline of the University. The particular offence was trying to persuade a Christ Church undergraduate to buy sugar on credit and sell it to him for cash, but various other things, suspicious dealings in chocolate and second-hand clothes, were mentioned to the Vice-Chancellor's Court.[13] It seems reasonably likely that he was the 'Jew pedlar' Wolfe, who with his brother was expected to give evidence against Lee Elkington, hatter, in January 1771, but who absconded before the trial; there was, however, ample evidence against Elkington on another charge of stealing cloth, and he was transported for seven years.[14] It looks as if Marcus Wolfe lived very close to the edge of the law, but he was still listed in the Oxford Survey of 1772.

I had originally associated him with a report that 'suspicious-looking Jews were arrested at Truro, Falmouth, and Oxford among other places' in December 1771 in the course of a hue and cry for the remnants of a Jewish gang, who had committed a famous murder at Chelsea in June, but I can as yet find no contemporary evidence for Oxford in this story.[15]

Another family low down the social scale emerges from newspaper reports. There are various references to persons called Manuel, Manell and Emanuel, who between 1765 and 1790 are found in business near Gloucester Green and 'seem to have specialized in the care of lost or strayed dogs and horses, and their return to their owners for a consideration'.[16] They provide one of the rarely identifiable cases of lower-class Sephardi assimilation,[17] since Sarah, daughter of Isaac Manuel, a servant, married Thomas Hicks, a servant, at St. Michael's Church, Oxford, on 15 July 1776.

The most substantial Jewish family in numbers and status in late eighteenth-century Oxford was the Isaacs family. The family story[18] was that a certain Dr. Raphael, 'Professor of Music', came to England in the reign of Charles II, and had a daughter Eva, who died in Oxford on 28 December 1794, allegedly at the age of 105. After a first marriage to a Mr. Davis at the age of 12. she was married again at 21 to Issachar Barnett. Her daughter Sarah Barnett (1739–1809) married Henry Isaacs of Oxford in 1762; Henry was 23.

London synagogal registers call Henry's father Meir Englander; he had another son besides Henry, David Isaacs (David ben Meir Oxford). Henry and Sarah had twenty children, who can be traced in many connections. For us, the most interesting are Rosetta (1765–1828), known to family tradition as 'the Belle of Oxford',[19] and Barnett, the most permanent resident of Oxford.

When they start appearing in the local press, Henry has evidently been living in London. In November 1784, he advertised himself as a salesman from London, who 'has removed from the Eagle and Child to his son's house in Gravel Walk, nr. Magdalen College, where he continues to buy ladies and gents cast off clothes. His son sells all kinds of foreign fruits, nuts, confectionery, etc.'[20] By 1791 Barnett Isaacs was living in Smith's Place, High Street (on the site of the Examination Schools). In 1796–7 he is on the list of subscribers to David Levi, *Form of Prayers for the Feast of Pentecost According to the Custom of the German and Polish Jews*.[21] Henry seems to be in London on that list, together with a large number of other Isaacses. Apparently he came and went. In what is probably 1794, he is the first Oxford Jew I have found in a trades directory, under the name of

Henry Isaac, 'Clothes seller'.[22] In 1797, Henry and Barnett are conjoined in an order of the Oxford Council that 'The solicitor is to write to Mr. Isaacs, sen. and his son, the jews, to cease carrying on any sort of trade within the liberties of the city'.[23] What they had done to attract the attention of the Council after so long, I have no idea.[24] But Henry continued to live in Oxford, where he died in Ship Street in 1812; 'Being an Israelite he was immediately placed in a shell and forwarded to his Synagogue for interment according to the funeral rites of that people.'[25]

We have no clue as to when Barnett Isaacs died or left Oxford. The last of the Oxford Isaacses was L. Isaacs of Oxford, who subscribed to Sailman's *The Mystery Unfolded* of 1817;[26] he appears to be the Lewis Isaacs, jeweller and pawnbroker, first attested in Cheltenham in 1823, where he took a prominent part in the foundation of the Synagogue and died in 1841.[27]

Apart from the Isaacses, the record is desperately thin. Oxford had no particular attractions for the shopkeeper compared with Cheltenham or Bath. There is an isolated report in 1808, when the Curate of Holywell reported one Jewish family in his parish,[28] and there is another possible Jewish family put together by Roth [29] from circumcision records. Jacob ben Abraham Cohen Oxford (but the reading is not certain) circumcised in 1785 and David ben Jacob of Oxford circumcised in 1824. Nothing as yet can be said about them.[30]

The interest switches back to the Hebrew teachers, fully discussed by Roth. By the early nineteenth century, they are apparently much less inclined to convert to Christianity. Moses Sailman indeed, described as of Oxford in 1804, but moving on to Southampton, published an anti-missionary book in 1817. The only other one who was certainly a resident local figure was Solomon Strassburg (1747–1817), 'a man of singular habits', who made 'occasional excursions on foot to Bath, Cheltenham, etc., and always conducted the expenses of his journeys, and of his whole system of life, on the principles of the most rigid economy. Although possessed of considerable property in the funds, he never could be induced, on any occasion to deviate from this plan; and so extreme was his penury that at the time of his death he was without a shirt.'[31] He has left no written record of his teaching.

Two more productive teachers, in terms of books, were H.V. Bolaffey and Solomon Lyon.[32] Bolaffey taught both at Oxford and at Eton, Lyon at Oxford, Eton and Cambridge. Lyon's Grammar was in use, not only in the Christian world, but also among Jews; it turns up several times in the record of Jewish education compiled for Chief Rabbi Adler in 1845.

The most interesting literary product of his family, however, was his daughter Emma's *Miscellaneous Poems*, printed for her by J. Bartlett at Oxford in 1812. The poems are correct, though not particularly inspired; there is some subdued Jewish content. The family was evidently in trouble: 'The piercing thorns which still spring in our rugged path, force me to yield to the glaring eye of day the employment of my lonely hours. It is the only means in my power of contributing to the support of a large family, the object of my tenderest solicitude.' The enterprise was surprisingly successful; she secured a subscription-list. headed by the Prince Regent, for 421 copies at 10/6 each. Though there were 120 subscribers in Oxford, there is not a single Jewish name among them. I doubt whether Emma actually resided in Oxford, as Roth thought; her father clearly moved around a great deal; in 1815 he seems to have settled in Cheltenham.[33]

The last of this sequence is Selig Newman, who is said to have taught at Oxford while Minister at Plymouth. He is evidently the 'S.N. of Oxford', who wrote to the *Voice of Jacob* in 1842;[34] by that year, Oxford Jewry had entered on a new phase.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CONGREGATION ESTABLISHED

No certain connection can yet be found between anyone mentioned in the last chapter and those visible in the first decade of the organized community in the 1840s. There is an ambiguous intermediary, Israel Levy, listed in *Pigott's Oxford Directory* of 1830 as a clothes-dealer in St. Ebb's Lane. He cannot be the same as the Israel Levi born in 1819, who is first attested in Oxford in 1846; there is at least one possibility for another linkage. That other Jews had been going and coming appears from the appearance in the Birmingham Census of 1851 of Marquis Mier, son of Joseph Mier of Swansea, born at Oxford in 1832, and Henry Harris, son of Isaac Harris of London, born there in 1839.[1]

Greater certainty comes with the first Census of 1841. I may have missed some isolated names, but it is clear that there were then only three Jewish households in Oxford. They and their families would constitute the nucleus of the Oxford community for the next twenty or thirty years. Wolf Harris, then 35 or so, perhaps Isaac's brother, had already been living in Oxford in January 1839, when his son, another Henry Harris, was circumcised by an official from Cheltenham.[2] He was born in Lambeth, and in 1841 he was living at 54 St. Ebbe's, with his father Moses aged 65, his wife Esther, born in the New Cut in Surrey in 1811, and two children. There was some family connection with Canterbury. A few steps away, at 25 Queen Street, was an older man, Harris Levi, born 1785, possibly the son of the Israel Levy of 1830. He and his wife Anne (Hannah), probably born in 1806, had married in Poland, where their two daughters had been born; they had come to England after 1826. The elder daughter, Sarah, was already married to another Pole, (Isaac) Jacob Cohen; they were both 20 and living in the house, as was the younger daughter Malca (Mathilda), now 15. The third household,

that of Isaiah Wo(o)lf, lived a few streets to the south in Pensons Gardens. The household was incomplete on Census night. Evidently, Isaiah, born in 1795, and at least one older son were away travelling, leaving Catharine Woolf to make the return for herself, her daughter Leah and two younger sons. The whole family had been born in Poland, except for the youngest son Levi, who was born in London in 1834. The family had thus come to England before that year and to Oxford since.

Two points immediately call for notice. First, the two Polish families; the conventional view is that such immigration starts in the 1840s, when the railways made travel from Eastern Europe easier. Secondly, every adult male from Moses Harris down to Jacob Cohen is described as a clothes dealer. We have already seen Marcus Wolfe and Henry Isaacs similarly engaged in the previous century. This trade was peculiarly Jewish, and fulfilled a vital function in providing clothes for the lower classes by resale or remaking, either on the spot or by sending the material back to the centres of manufacture of 'shoddy'.[3] It looks as if at least the Woolfs were searching for clothes outside Oxford. Fuller details of the Oxford Jewish trades will be found in Appendix A; it will be seen that the clothes-dealers gradually moved over to being cigar-dealers or jewellers or both at the same time, until Jews came to dominate the Oxford jewellery trade in the 1860s.

We have seen that the group was, in 1839, still dependent on Cheltenham, at least for circumcision. Until now, the date of the foundation of the congregation has been given as 1841. This date cannot be traced back beyond the first edition of the *Jewish Yearbook* in 1896. It was certainly known in the 1890s that the congregation went back fifty years or so. A more precise date was inferred by C. Duschinsky[4] from the fact that Isaac Jacob Cohen was authorized by Chief Rabbi Herschell as a *shochet* in March 1842, with the express condition that he should not function in Oxford (*gam shelo lishchot bOxfort*). It appears therefore that there was already a duly authorized functionary there, which is a criterion for the existence of an organized community. In deciding when to celebrate our 150th anniversary, we have adopted 1842 as the earliest safe date.

Who did Isaac Jacob Cohen learn the laws of ritual slaughter from, and whose priority was not to be infringed? The Cheltenham *shochet* is a possibility, but Cheltenham seems a little far for regular visits. It might have been his father-in-law Harris Levi, whom we shall find described as a 'Rabbi' in 1844. But the logic of the situation suggests that the tiny group may already have felt the need for reinforcement by someone with

the necessary skills. They clearly could not afford a full-time official; whoever did the job would have to combine it with other activities. The probability is that there had already been reinforcement, and there is a suitable candidate who must have arrived in Oxford very soon after the 1841 Census.

Our most vivid evidence for the young community comes from a tragedy which occurred on the night of 26–27 February 1844.[5] In 9 St. Ebbe's Street, across the road from Wolf Harris, there lived Aaron Jacob or Jacobs, aged 54. The neighbours said he had been there for two or three years, and, though he is absent from the 1841 Census, he is indeed attested in a trade directory of 1842. With him lived his wife, his son Nathan, aged 18, who had recently come from Poland and spoke no English, and two daughters, Rebecca, aged 16, and Rachel, aged 11; there was apparently a third daughter, who did not sleep at home that night. The local belief was that Mr. Jacobs was of the tribe of Levi and a Rabbi; it will appear likely that he was in fact performing some ministerial functions.

There were also two lodgers, a Mr. and Mrs. John Tubb. These slept on the first floor in a large room; the family occupied two rooms on the second floor, the mother and daughters in two beds in one room, the father and son in the other room.[6] Mr. Jacobs was described as a 'remarkably steady man, who bore the best character', keeping a sort of general warehouse; there were various estimates of his financial status, but the stock was substantial enough to be insured with the Phoenix. The groundfloor shop, which had a boarded floor, but a hearthstone and fender, stocked tea, sugar and other groceries. There was also a great quantity of ready-made and second-hand men's and women's clothes; some of these were hanging up, some on the counter, some on shelves above the fireplace. Before going to bed, Mr. Jacobs had counted out £7 and put it in his pocket, where he normally kept his money; there were two or three gold rings in a drawer and apparently some other jewellery.

Before they went to bed, Rebecca had put out the fire and taken the coals out. There was no gas in the shop, and there had only been one candle burning that evening. Nothing more is known till later that night, when Mr. Tubb woke to find flames in the shop and Mr. Jacobs saying 'Dear me, Tubb, what shall we do? Give me a light.' The fire had already alarmed the neighbours; it eventually spread to the houses on both sides. John Price, a butcher, whose stock and furniture were considerably damaged, broke open the shop-door with a cleaver, and helped Mrs. Jacobs, Rachel and Nathan out of a window; they were caught by

Edward Cutliffe, a tailor who lived opposite and knew the family well. Nathan, however, fell on his head and was badly hurt. The Tubbs also made their escape, but it was clear that Aaron and Rebecca had not.

The fire was slowly brought under control. Many years later, it was remembered[7] that 'ultimately an old rickety manual fire engine was brought into use, but it was of little service, as it was an intensely sharp frost, and the water was almost frozen before it left the engine'. But it was reported at the time that there was enough water '(no thanks to our city water works which were as usual inoperative)', but several persons were apathetic or indifferent, and declined lending a hand; the local press attributed this to the fact that they had in former fires been shabbily treated by the Fire Offices. Aaron's body was seen to be in the shop. Another 'Rabbi', a Mr. Levi (presumably Harris), had arrived, and most earnestly entreated that the body might not be touched until *he* had first touched it. A new opening was made to make this possible, and Rabbi Levi, with some peculiar ceremonial, touched the charred and smoking remains and repeated over them a 'prayer of forgiveness'. He was extremely concerned that all the mortal remains of the deceased should be collected. He claimed custody of them, placed them in a sheet and had them removed to a room in Mr. Price's house, where they were joined a few hours later by the body of Rebecca, found in two halves in the basement. Rabbi Levi and the other Jews in Oxford were anxious that the burial should take place within twenty-four hours and in London; the local press thought that the need for burial in London arose from Aaron's being a Rabbi.

Their wish was frustrated by the absence in London of the Coroner, who came in for a good deal of criticism, even in *The Times*. His story was that he had taken advice from a Rabbi Solomon the moment he heard of the disaster, and had been assured that the need to be buried within twenty-four hours would be overridden by the civil law. The inquest was held on the Wednesday, at the Horse and Chair Inn, three doors from the house. Mrs. Jacobs was too ill to give evidence, but made to appear to receive the jewellery which had been found, together with several documents chiefly in Hebrew. The main evidence was given by Rachel, in her twelfth year, in a very clear, intelligent and satisfactory manner. She gave no countenance to the earlier reports that Aaron had escaped, but gone back to secure his property, and was convinced that her father and sister had died because neither would leave without the other. The jury brought in verdicts of 'Accidental death by fire' and the bodies were at last removed to London in plain coffins for burial 'in the Jewish

burying place'.[8] A number of Jews had been waiting, feeling very acutely the loss they had sustained in the premature death of one, who, as a Rabbi or a neighbour, commanded the respect of all who knew him.

There was apparently another distressing loss, 'a Hebrew Bible, which the Jews held in particular veneration, as it had been consecrated by the High Priest. It had been lately left in Mr. Jacob's custody, and its loss is deeply regretted by Rabbi Levi and the other Jews in Oxford'. The infant community had lost its Sefer Torah. Since it was in his hands, it looks as if he had been performing some ministerial functions. It is made even more likely by the fact that, as we shall see, the Oxford *shochet* in 1845 was a Mr. Jacobs. He can only be Aaron's son Nathan, who officiated at his brother-in-law's wedding in 1848[9] and who described himself in 1851 as Reader of the synagogue. Given that they were unlikely to have been moving the Sefer Torah through the streets, we can perhaps assume that services were being held in the house, either downstairs in the shop or moving the lodgers out of their upstairs room.

Besides the vivid light thrown on the way in which Aaron Jacobs' operations spanned clothing and jewellery and on the family's way of life, we may note that the general atmosphere, besides the excitement of the tragedy, was one of sympathy, though mixed with a certain naive curiosity about the Jews. The gentile lodgers are certainly noteworthy,[10] and the behaviour of Mr. Cutliffe the tailor was throughout a good deal more than simply neighbourly; there may have been a professional connection between him and Aaron Jacobs. One's feeling of unease about the apathetic bystanders may be misplaced.

Two weeks later *Jackson's Oxford Journal* reported a meeting of the Oxford Auxiliary Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews; it does not seem to have occurred to anyone that it had any local relevance.

Later in the year, the Jacobs family satisfied Oxford curiosity about Jewish customs in a very different way. In August 'the nuptials of Mr. Nathan Jacob (son of the late unfortunate Rabbi who, in March last, with his daughter was burnt to death in St. Ebbe's) and Miss Hannah Wolf, daughter of Mr. Isaiah Wolf, of St. Peter Le Bailey, were solemnised in the garden of Mr. Kemp, mercer, Queen Street, . . . and as invitations had been sent out to large numbers of respectable inhabitants, the garden, as well as the neighbouring ones, was crowded, chiefly by ladies. Around the canopy where the marriage ceremony was performed we noticed the lady of Dr. Buckland [Canon of Christ Church] and family, Mrs. Hall (widow of the late Dr. Hall) and family, the lady of Dr. Symons, Warden of Wadham College, and many other

ladies. The ceremony was highly interesting and was performed by the Rev. Dr. Aaron Levi of London, successor to the late Dr. Herschell [he had not even been a candidate to become Chief Rabbi, whatever the local press thought], assisted by Mr. Pulver, reader of the Cheltenham Synagogue. The service was performed in the Hebrew language. Many of our readers (particularly the fair sex) will, we have no doubt, read with interest the following details of the ceremony which have been handed to us, and which commenced as follows:– The bridegroom was brought under the canopy erected for the occasion by the Rev. Dr. Levi and the father of the bride, when the bride, accompanied by two ladies, was introduced and walked round the Bridegroom three times, during which the reader chanted.' A summary of the *ketubah* follows, naming a possibly real dowry of 200 pieces of silver sterling. 'The bride and bridegroom having partaken of the wine which had been blessed by the Rev. Gentleman, and having had the usual blessings of the congregation (a great many Jews being present) bestowed on them, a glass of wine was placed on the ground, which the bridegroom broke with his foot in imitation of what is recorded in the Talmud, on the Wedding of the son of a learned man. . . . After the bride had retired several very handsome presents were given her by many ladies who were present at the marriage.'[11]

The first clear evidence for the organized community comes in August 1845, when the new Chief Rabbi, S.N. Adler, sent out a questionnaire asking for statistical information.[12] The results have not yet been printed, but are available in typescript.[13] They report for Oxford a paid shochet, Mr. Jacobs, 4 *ba'alei batim*, no seat-holders and 20 individuals. The synagogue was declared to be 'a private room'. *Mitzvot* were not sold. The answer to 'Is there a *mikveh*?' was 'Not yet' (other communities in the same position just said 'No'). Blanks or negatives were recorded for burial ground, charitable institutions and schools.

The four *ba'alei batim* of 1845 are presumably Wolf Harris, Harris Levi and Isaiah Woolf, who had moved to a better address in New Road, plus either Nathan Jacobs or Isaac Jacob Cohen. Of these Harris Levi died in 1846 or 1847, but the community was about to expand, surely because of the extension of the railway to Oxford in 1844. In 1846 another Polish couple in their late twenties, Israel and Selina Levi, had arrived; he was a cigar dealer at 11 Pembroke Street; by October 1847, they had moved to St. Giles, where he was a jeweller as well as a tobacconist, and had a thirteen-year-old maidservant, who received fatal burns while dishing up the Sunday dinner.[14] Another Pole, Abraham Davis (born 1816)

with a Surrey-born, probably non-Jewish wife, was also outside the original area of settlement as a dealer in jewellery in St. Clements; he had moved to 54 High Street by 1851. The Polish predominance was modified by Abraham Zacharias, born 1817 in Prussia, but with another Surrey-born, but certainly Jewish, wife. He is listed in 1847 as a hardwareman at 68 St. Aldates. Where he was actually living may be more interesting.

The 1851 Census enables us to be a great deal more precise. There were then ten households headed by Jews, predominantly described as jewellers, of which two were married children of the original group; these covered 22 adults and 14 children. One of the families had four Jewish lodgers, two travellers in jewellery born in Poland, one 'Hebrew writer' born in Austria, and a journeyman tailor born in Prussia. On the Sunday night in question, two public houses in Castle Street were being patronized by Jews. At the *Blucher's Head*, there were six dealers in jewellery, two London-born, three from Prussia (Nordhausen and Posen), one from Poland (probably Bialystok), as well as a general dealer born in Amsterdam and a travelling hawker born in London. The Dutchman actually appears in trade directories at that address, and it is possible that some of these 'lodgers' at the *Blucher's Head* were more permanent residents than the three 'travellers', all Polish-born jewellers, at the *Three Horseshoes* down the road. There are a few more possible names.

Paradise Square 1847–??

In 1845 there was no synagogue.[15] It is not quite clear when the first synagogue was established in Paradise Square. Roth[16] has '1847, if not earlier', which seems to be a mistaken conjecture from the return given in the *Jewish Chronicle* of 1847. There is other evidence. In 1851, for the first and last time, the national Census included a questionnaire on religious buildings. The return for the synagogue was made by Nathan Jacobs, describing himself as 'Reader'.[17] He said that the building had been 'held about 3 years'. He ought to have known, and this fits with the statement we shall shortly come to that it had been 'recently established' in 1849. Although very near the main area of Jewish occupation, Paradise Square itself was relatively new, opened up in 1838, with pretensions to gentility which it never managed to realize.[18] We cannot place the synagogue in it with any certainty,[19] though we may suspect that it was at the north end, where the Zacharias family was living in 1851. Virtually all we know of it comes from this Census return. It was

not a 'separate and entire building'; it had thirty seats, of which only six were reserved. On the morning of the Census Day, Saturday 29 March, 1851, there was a congregation of 10. We do, however, have a description of one service.[20]

OXFORD SYNAGOGUE

'To turn from the magnificent colleges, halls, churches and chapels, with their ancient splendour and majestic grandeur – with their verdant gardens and walks, rivulets and orchards – down to the lonely, humble synagogue, excites reflections of the saddest nature, but affords also a shade of consolation. The contrast between the rich and princely institutions of the church, on the one hand, and the poor synagogue, on the other, is certainly a melancholy one. In London and in some of the large provincial towns, where the Jews have respectable buildings in which to worship their God, the contrast is less glaring; but here, at Oxford, where we have stayed during this week, we could not help lamenting the smallness of the Jewish congregation in a place the name of which is synonymous with learning and knowledge. There are no more than five or six Jewish families in this place altogether; and these take no interest whatever in collegiate affairs – they are occupied with business. Our learned friend, Rabbi Hirsch Edelman, is the only one who knows anything about learned Oxford, and he works from morning to night at the Bodleian Library. When we visited that vast establishment, and there saw the two greatest collections of Jewish books and MSS which our nation ever possessed (the Oppenheim and the Michael Libraries), we could not resist exclaiming *Mah norah hamakom haze* 'How awful is this place!' But what increased its awfulness was the reflection that there could not be found a Jewish individual or a Jewish institution to purchase these treasures, which are now *buried* in Oxford.

Proceeding on the Day of Atonement to the small synagogue in Paradise Square, which was but recently established by the Jews of Oxford, we consoled ourselves with the idea that these few poor Jews – poor in comparison to the immense wealth of the great founders of the Oxford institutions – after all, congregated to worship the God of Israel, with all their heart, with all their soul, and with all their might. There was no choir, no grandeur of any kind, no show and no pomp, yet there was earnest devotion. The poor Jewish travellers in the vicinity flocked to this humble house of worship, to implore pardon from a merciful God, who has set apart this day for prayer and

humiliation. Strange, that the bishop of the diocese (no friend to the Jews, as we all know[21]) had also appointed Wednesday as a day of humiliation and prayer on account of the cholera. We cannot conclude this notice of the Oxford congregation without recording the charitable efforts of this small and humble congregation, and their benevolence to the many poor strangers who visit this town. Much praise is also due to them for their excellent management of the synagogue affairs, which require to be conducted with much economy, on account of the smallness of its income.'[22]

That Nathan Jacobs described himself as Reader, rather than *shochet*, for the 1851 Census was presumably motivated by the need for a title for the outside world. In 1858, he apparently moved as Minister to Cardiff, already a rather larger community with a new synagogue.[23]

The Paradise Square establishment only left one tradition behind it, that of a painful morning when the convert Ezekiel Margoliouth attempted to address the congregation and was howled down.[24] It is not clear how long it lasted. It is listed in a directory of 1863,[25] perhaps uncritically reprinting earlier material. Moore 1871 (see below), if taken literally, would suggest that it faded out in about 1853, which happens to be a year of reshaping in the neighbourhood, when a church and school were built. The disappearance may be connected with the move of the Zacharias family to 95 High Street, some time before 1861.

As the 1849 report in the *Jewish Chronicle* makes clear, outside interest in Jewish matters in Oxford in this period lay with the recognition of the vast resources of Hebrew manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, which hardly forms part of our subject. It was not quite true to say that local Jews took no interest in them. At least Israel Levi was interested, writing a letter urging support for Hirsch Edelman,[26] who had started as a printer and publisher in Danzig and Koenigsberg and had been in Oxford since 1847. In the 1851 Census we find him lodging with Nathan Jacobs and described as a widower of 40, born in Moldava, then part of Greater Turkey, with his trade given as 'teacher of Hebrew'. Given the number of Jewish children that year, it looks as if the congregation had acquired a second part-time official; he was getting some support for his researches from outside sources.

A strange *Jewish Chronicle* item of January 1853 describes how, not many months ago, a query was put to the Chief Rabbi about the proper day for the redemption of a first-born male child at Oxford, whose 31st day fell on First Day *Rosh Hashanah*. He seems to have got the answer wrong, but this gives us a first-born boy born on 14 August 1852, whose

father or relations cared enough to ask the question; almost certainly he was Levi, son of Lewis Solomon.

There is now a long gap, which can only be filled from scattered evidence. It is clear from the 1861 Census that growth had stopped. I have not checked the suburbs, but the main families now show 17 adults, 6 teenagers in work and 17 children. There is only one new household, formed by one of the travelling jewellers of 1851. The street directories continue to document the trend to jewellery and clock-making, often combined with cigar dealing, but of organized activity there are only occasional visible traces. The death of Isaiah Wolf around 1857 may have removed the community's mainspring. There is however sufficient evidence to demonstrate continued employment of people who were at least *shochetim*.

There was no need to look further for a successor to Nathan Jacobs than I.J. Cohen, who had been licensed as a *shochet* in 1842. We do not know if and where he had been operating as one. In the Censuses of 1851 and 1861, now widowed with four children, he was living in Church Street, St. Ebbes, and described as a jeweller. He described himself as 'Shochet and Examiner here in Oxford' in a book-annotation in the Bodleian in 1862,[27] and in June 1864, his eldest loving daughter Leah married Gustav Frankel of Sunderland at a confectioner's premises in St. Giles.[28] He also seems to have been working as a librarian. From April 1858 to April 1866 he was constantly calling up manuscript material in the Bodleian, and he published one Oppenheimer manuscript in Warsaw in 1866.[29] He left Oxford for Aldershot in that year,[30] and remained there, despite complaints about his salary, until 1888.[31] His successor in Oxford seems to have been one Nathan Aaron, as we know only from the chance that he also acted as locum for Cheltenham in 1866.[32]

St. Aldate's ?1871–8

The years of silence are broken with a strangely conscientious *Jewish Chronicle* report of the High Festivals of 1870. 'OXFORD—The attendance at the above synagogue was very good, 25 persons attending on each day of the holidays. The services were read by the shochet Mr. Kronsow, assisted by Mr. Lazarus of Leman Street, London. There was no sermon. There was a little curtailment in the service, the *yotzeh* of the *kedushah* being omitted.'

A guide-book of 1871 reports in its main text[33] 'They worshipped until within the last few years in a small synagogue in Paradise Square, but

have now no public place of assembly in the city', adding in a note at the end 'Jews' Synagogue. A room has been opened for this purpose in St. Aldate's Street, after eighteen years' lapse.' Consideration of street directories suggests that the most likely place for this 'untidy room ' (see Chaper Three) was at no. 12 or 13 over the music warehouse of M.E. Slapoffski, one of a few new arrivals of this time. Of these, at least one, Gabriel Davidson, a jeweller, was capable of conducting a service.

This evidence for 1870 or 1871 as a year of revival may be connected with a visit from the Chief Rabbi in May 1871;[34] Oxford was only one of several communities he visited for the first time that year, 26 years after his appointment. Though such visits were reported elsewhere by the local press, nothing appeared in Oxford, where the community had a lower profile than in, say, Cheltenham, and we have no details, merely a report that he had 'succeeded in obtaining from the Bishop of Oxford the grant of a site for a burial ground for the use of the Jewish inhabitants, who are at present few in number', and that had to be corrected the next week by a statement that negotiations for the cemetery land had as yet been conducted privately with the Bishop's secretary.

CHAPTER THREE

TOWN AND GOWN

1871 was not only the year of the first visit to Oxford by a Chief Rabbi; it saw the passing of the University Tests Act, which swept away the last legal bar to the full membership of Jews in the University. Admission of Jews to the University had been slower at Oxford than at Cambridge for the largely accidental reason that at Oxford religious tests had been imposed at matriculation, so that a professing Jew could not even start the course, whereas at Cambridge they only arose on taking a degree; James Joseph Sylvester, for example, had been second in the Mathematical Tripos at Cambridge in 1837 and Numa Hartog top (Senior Wrangler) in 1859. At Oxford, admission became possible after the Oxford University Reform Act of 1854, and all remaining obstacles were now, in 1871, removed. All Jews entering Oxford up to 1854 had been converts; even after that year some were particularly devious. Sackville Davis of Worcester, the first Jew to take the B.A. degree, on 4 December 1862, had not mentioned that he was Jewish until it occurred to him that the fact might be the way out of divinity examinations; an enormous row with the college followed, in which he did not behave creditably.[1]

Thereafter there was a slow beginning, in terms of numbers, though not in quality. There are a few possible Jewish names in the 1860s after Sackville Davis, but the real start should be dated to 1869, which brought the first of a long line of 'examination successes' in the *Jewish Chronicle*. On 12 March, it reported the election to an Exhibition at New College of a 'co-religionist Mr. F.D. Schloss of Manchester Grammar School'. Next week, in greater excitement, it corrected the order of his initials and reported that he had now obtained a Scholarship at Corpus, noting in a bracket that this was worth £95 p.a. for 5 years, against the £50 p.a. for 3 years of the New College award. 'The fact of his achieving

so much success in the space of a few days speaks as highly for his high attainments as it does for the liberality of the Governing Body to whom the circumstance of his being a Jew was made known. If we are not mistaken, he is the first Jew who has obtained a Scholarship at Oxford.' By May 1871, the House of Lords Committee on the University Tests Act was told that he had already been elected to the Committee of the Union. In later life he was one of the first Jews to take a serious interest in housing conditions in the East End of London.

Schloss's success was followed in December 1871 by the election of Joseph Solomon of Bristol to a Mathematics Scholarship at Balliol. In parallel with these scholarship successes for the newer generation of Anglo-Jewry, older families are also visible, though I am not sure how to classify the brothers Micholls, who came up to New College in 1869 and 1871. They were sons of a Manchester cotton-manufacturer, but their mother was a Montefiore. They were followed by Leonard Montefiore, who came up to Balliol in 1872, and got a Second in History in 1876, observing the Sabbath by abstaining from work and walking to the Oxford workhouse to talk with and entertain the old people there.[2] Between him and his younger brother Claude, who came up in 1878 and got a First in Greats in three years, there was yet another Balliol man, the first to take a recorded interest in congregational affairs. Oswald John Simon came up in 1876, a little old at 21, and only stayed for two years without taking a degree. He was the son of the Jamaican-born Sir John Simon, one of the last of the 'common serjeants', with a wide and well-known interest in Jewish affairs, particularly the Reform Synagogue and the persecution of Russian Jewry. More remarkably, a young man from Australia, named Samuel Alexander, though from a poor family, abandoned his course at the University of Melbourne and sailed to England in the hope of winning an Oxford or Cambridge Scholarship. Elected at Balliol in 1877, he had a glittering undergraduate career, and was elected a Fellow of Lincoln in 1882, the first Jew to be elected a Fellow of an Oxford or Cambridge College. There is no surviving suggestion in the college records that his Jewish origins were thought in any way to be a bar to election, and the Rev. V.H.H. Green expressed the view to me that the Fellows of Lincoln were genuinely progressive. Alexander went on with a distinguished philosophical career, was Professor of Philosophy at Manchester from 1893 to 1924, and made a member of the Order of Merit in 1930. In the next year, 1883, came the first Jewish professor. J.J. Sylvester, now renowned world wide as a mathematician, but somewhat past his best, was elected Savillian

Professor of Geometry; the *Oxford Magazine* congratulated the University on being now allowed to do itself so much honour.

That other colleges had their reservations about what they would and would not tolerate in Governing Bodies which were then very small closed societies, sometimes not going into double figures, is suggested by the case of Adolf Neubauer, who, after a preliminary stay in Oxford in 1860–2, arrived from Hungary in 1868 to become the first resident scholar who really opened up the treasures of the Bodleian Hebrew manuscripts. He too was cited to the House of Lords Committee on the University Tests Act in the evidence of C. Appleton of St. John's, who referred to him as a well-known Jewish savant, who was on the best of terms with the Professors of Divinity and Hebrew who were very glad to apply to him for help in their biblical studies.[3] He was given the M.A. degree in 1873, without any college connection at all. In 1884 the University made him Reader in Rabbinical Literature, but Readerships did not until the 1960s create any right to a College Fellowship. Neubauer was then taken in by Exeter College, which, in 1890, gave him, not the status of an ordinary Fellow, which would have admitted him into full participation in the college's affairs, but that of Honorary Fellow, normally reserved for former members of the college distinguished in public life, who were not likely to come to Oxford very often. Neubauer did come; his favourite dish was potato mayonnaise. There is little evidence that Neubauer, despite his wealth of Jewish scholarship, took any interest in the Oxford Synagogue; Raphael Loewe was told that his visits there were rare events; one happens to be recorded.

The first generation of Jewish undergraduates falls broadly into two categories. The families long established in England were mostly those affiliated with the Reform Synagogue, and mostly Sephardim; the old Ashkenazi families were slower, until the Jewish house at Clifton, founded in 1879, started to produce an effect. Alongside these were boys of newer Ashkenazi families, mostly arriving on scholarships from the great day schools, City of London, St. Paul's and Manchester Grammar School. By January 1882 the *Jewish Chronicle* could report that there were 25 Jewish undergraduates at Oxford, of whom 9 were at Balliol.[4] A fairly complete list of these can be reconstructed and repays analysis.[5] This number was fairly near the high before the First World War. A list of the University Section of the Congregation for 1908–9 has 29 names, and 43 were claimed for 1912, but some much smaller figures are recorded in between and it was always clear to contemporaries that there were more Jews at Cambridge.

Two general points may be made here, besides the obvious one that these are numbers in a much smaller undergraduate body than today's, never exceeding 3,000 before the First World War. Even before the great expansion of student grants in the 1950s, there was no absolute bar to Jewish access to Oxford for the poor student of sufficient ability and determination. The great day-schools had a substantial number of free places, and once the boy was in them, there was access to a wide range of leaving scholarships designed to assist access to the universities; private backers could be found to provide grants or a loan;[6] even without detailed investigation, individuals from very poor backgrounds can be identified. Even outside these schools, there are interesting cases. The promise of Reuben Levy, a poor boy in Bangor, was early noted by his teachers, and was amply backed;[7] he ended as Professor of Persian at Cambridge. The progress of Nita Abrahamson in the intermediate schools of Newport, Monmouthshire, was recognized by her local authority, which scraped up a group of small awards to enable her to go to Somerville.[8] This is not to say that there were not cases when students found it impossible to carry on financially.

Another striking point is the high proportion in this poorer class of the children of the Anglo-Jewish ministry and bureaucracy, not a very prosperous body. This tendency seems to start very early, with Alfred Kalisch, son of the Chief Rabbi's Secretary, in 1881. The father of Lionel Abrahams, who came up to Balliol in 1888 and ended as a luminary of the Indian Civil Service and Sir Lionel, was Secretary of the Initiation Society. The first son of a minister I have so far found was Maurice Simon in 1892; we shall see more of him in the next chapter. He was succeeded by several sons of ministers and *shochetim*, and the pre-war sequence even ends with the arrival of the daughter of a Liverpool minister at St. Hilda's in 1914. Evidently, the respect in their families for learning as a method of social advancement outweighed any doubts there might have been about the dangers of a gentile environment.

George Street, 1878–84

In the view of one of the earliest undergraduates, Oswald Simon, the state of the community in the 1870s was deplorable.[9] 'There was no synagogue and no sort of provision whatever for the religious education of the young. On Kippur day the Jews met in an untidy room for divine service, and only some of them appeared even on that day. I took the liberty of calling on every Jew in Oxford and by their kind reception of me I was fortunate in getting them to meet on occasional Sabbaths; and, subsequently, they removed their place of worship to a more suitable

quarter.'[10] Whether he was instrumental or not, there was a move in 1878. That fact has long been known, but Roth was mistaken in thinking that the new premises were already in Worcester Place. It emerges clearly from material of 1883 that they were in George Street. The entrance was 'thoroughly dirty, and, after having entered, there faces us a washhouse and stabling, and other things not pleasant to behold'.[11] The synagogue was over the stables, apparently on the site of the present Old Fire Station.[12]

The new premises were available by the High Festivals of 1878; the services were conducted by Mr. Rosenthal, assisted by Messrs Davidson and Abrahams (presumably Israel Abrahams, now 20 and at the beginning of a distinguished career).[13]

The next week saw two parallel entries;[14] I give the second. 'A new small synagogue has lately been opened in Oxford. Its size and character, though of humble description, is creditable to the few families who have honourably striven to preserve their ancient congregation under great difficulties. On Sunday, Mr. O.J. Simon of Balliol, son of Mr. Sergeant Simon, M.P., who, we believe, intends to join the Jewish ministry, delivered a sermon. He spoke from Deuteronomy 4.39 "Know this day and consider in thine heart that the Lord he is God on heaven and earth; there is none else". Adverting to the historical associations of Oxford with the Jewish people, he pointed out how the principle of his text had sustained former generations in the city, as elsewhere, under severe persecution. The present time was one of freedom and religious equality, and some sacrifice is still incumbent upon the people of the Covenant wherever their lot was cast, to show forth to the world the high moral characteristics of their faith.'

Oswald Simon had presumably sent this in himself. His personal problems are not clear, beyond the fact that he had in fact already left Balliol after two years, without a degree, but he now saw himself with a mission, in which the move to new premises was only a start. The next week he wrote the following letter, perhaps only possible for a young man of twenty-three:[15]

> SIR – Through the medium of your columns I desire to communicate with our people on the subject of this Congregation, in which I am deeply interested, and earnestly to solicit funds to aid me in erecting a Synagogue in this city. The position of the Oxford Jews is a peculiar one, and perhaps unlike that of their brethren in any other provincial place. They live under the immediate observation of a great world of intellect and culture. The notions of cultivated men

regarding Judaism and the Jews are often formed by their Oxford experiences, and it is not the mass of men who think deeply upon Religion or who interest themselves about our race. Therefore, in Oxford the Jews are specially responsible for the honour and credit of the House of Israel. The number of their families is eleven, most of whom have several children. They have a temporary place of worship, and a 'reader and killer', possessing a distinctly musical voice.

The members of the congregation are engaged in pursuits of thorough respectability, and are the social equals of their fellow-citizens. They have received the suggestion to erect a synagogue rejoicingly, and have responded to my appeal for funds to the utmost of their means. Some will give £20 and others £10; I have reason to believe that in the course of this week I shall raise £100 among them for our sacred object. Besides their own numbers. there are isolated families of our faith in the neighbourhood of the county whose co-operation I shall look for. It is said that an iron chapel or unpretentious building can be raised for a few hundred pounds in Oxford, where building is inexpensive. I shall this day put myself in communication with the Town Clerk respecting a site I have marked, and shall at once obtain a builder's estimate. In London last week I told my tale to the venerable and Rev. Chief Rabbi, Dr. Nathan Adler, who kindly gave me his hearty good wishes for the Congregation, and approval to deliver sermons from time to time. Oxford Jews are fully sensible that it is their duty to maintain a minister who shall be an educated person, able to command respect from all quarters. Until I find they are in a position to do this and have secured one, I have solemnly undertaken, with their unanimous accord, to stand by them as their minister and friend. Every interest and sympathy is evinced by my brethren of the *Alma Mater*. Support has been volunteered by one who is not of the Covenant. My friend and fellow Collegean [*sic*], Mr. Claude Montefiore, who is one with me in this work, has kindly consented to receive donations by letter addressed to him at Balliol College, Oxford. The Rev. A.L. Green will be our good medium in London, and I shall be most grateful to receive donations here.

Seeking the help of Almighty God,
I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Oswald John Simon.

Balliol College, Oxford, 21st October 1878.

How far in 1878 the local Congregation was prepared to accept this patronage and this view of their mission is unclear. It appears, from Oswald Simon's later account,[16] that £10 came in from Sir Nathaniel de Rothschild, but he himself fell ill for a long period, and the project was suspended.

The Congregation was evidently not, by its own lights, idle or unattended. Our curtain goes up in 1881 with the first congregational minute book. There has obviously been some friction, perhaps between new arrivals, Emanuel Harris a furniture-dealer and an unplaceable L.H. Goodman, and the survivors from an older generation, Israel Levi and Lewis Solomon. The 'Reader', Solomon Schapero, has some pretensions to culture, and the synagogue has been undergoing some redecoration. It was clearly felt that greater organisation was now necessary.

A first meeting on 28 August was attended by five members and the Reader. It appointed officers, L.H. Goodman as Hon. Secretary, I.M. Levi as Gabbai, L. Solomon as President, M. Harris as Treasurer, and agreed to have the Oxford Synagogue and Congregation placed under the Board of Deputies. All male adults would be invited to a meeting the next Sunday. Only two more attended this meeting, which made arrangements about finances, agreed that the male seat-holders would form the committee, and, with two objectors, that Mr. Davis of St. Clements be invited to join. Seats would be allocated by ballot. There would be 24 male seats, of which only 12 would now be taken, and 17 female seats in three rows. The rentals were to range from 2 guineas p.a. down to 5/–. One member would be asked for 3 guineas. At yet a third meeting, Mr. Solomon presented a new Shofar and Reading Desk, and it was decided to make an inventory of the property and to ask the United Synagogue how to have a constitution.

These meetings were reported in the *Jewish Chronicle* in the form that Solomon and Levi were to be Wardens, Harris Treasurer, Goodman Secretary. It was further stated that the synagogue had been redecorated throughout and that a far better feeling now existed between all parties. A further note added, inaccurately and prematurely, that the Congregation had resolved to request the Council of the United Synagogue to admit it as one of its constituents.[17]

For the moment, all went well. It was reported that the synagogue had been well attended at the recent festivals. Services had been conducted by the Rev. S. Schapero, assisted by Mr. G. Davidson. On the Day of Atonement, Mr. Schapero had even preached, rather exceptionally for

the period, taking his text from Jeremiah iv.1 and illustrating the power of man to work out his own salvation.

The era of 'far better feeling between all parties' lasted just two months. On 19 November, Oswald Simon preached a sermon. By his own account, he had not intended to spend this weekend in Oxford, and had been prevailed on at the last moment to preach impromptu. He took his text from Psalm xxxiv.5, and dwelt on the ennobling and enlightening influences of a devout life on the soul. He went on to allude to 'the peculiar circumstances of the Oxford Congregation', and was at any rate reported, in some detail, as expressing disapproval of a system of religious observance which tended to breed fanaticism and superstition and as recommending the Congregation to affiliate itself to the Reform Synagogue.

This was too much for the Rev. Mr. Schapero, who, with the Committee's support, forthwith wrote a letter, saying that he could not see any desire for a change of ritual or system among the members, and that, while they were indebted to Mr. Simon for his eloquent sermon, they had not the smallest intention of applying to the Berkeley Street authorities for either interest or support; it was their intention to make early application for affiliation to the United Synagogue.

Oswald Simon replied, in a letter long even by his standards. He said, with some justice, that it would have been illogical of him to recommend any particular affiliation, since he was at this time writing constant letters, saying that the Reform secession of 1841 was now forty years past and that what was now needed was a general structure which would cover Ashkenazim, Sephardim and Reform. He did, however, think that Oxford, like any other small congregation, needed institutional support. Unfortunately, he went on to sketch the history of his association with the Congregation more frankly than before. He had done everything he could to get them into better premises, but they had not really responded. All of them except one kept their shops open on the Sabbath, and saw no reason why they should not continue to do so. He hinted darkly at even worse, well known to people he had talked to in London, which he did not wish to divulge.

The Congregation met, and it was proposed by B.J. Franks, seconded by Joel Zacharias, that a vote of censure be passed on Mr. Oswald John Simon for his unkind and uncalled for remarks published in the *Jewish Chronicle* upon this Congregation and synagogue and that Mr. Oswald John Simon be not again invited to lecture in the synagogue. This was carried, only Israel Levi dissenting, and it was agreed that no one should

officiate or lecture without consent of the majority of the Committee. In the account of the meeting in the *Jewish Chronicle*,[18] the motion was falsely reported in the form that 'in future none other than Orthodox ministers and gentlemen be invited to officiate or assist in any service in this synagogue'; it would appear likely that Mr. Schapero was doing some manipulation of the record. Simon's observations on the report[19] were uncharacteristically short; they ended 'Whoever was the inspiring source of the unusual proceeding has strangely misled a well-meaning, though small, congregation, whom I know too well to suppose that they would have desired to hold such a meeting.'

Greater matters were claiming his attention and that of many others, among whom his father was taking a lead. The pogroms in Russia now commanded public attention. At its annual meeting the Oxford Conservative Association unanimously agreed a resolution which, after regretting the absence of liberty in Russia as shown by the terrible persecution of the Jews, expressed the hope that steps would be taken to impress on the Russian authorities the duty that is imposed on them, a presumably civilized government, to protect the interests of all classes of their subjects.[20] The Congregation, meeting at the Synagogue Chambers on 12 February, appointed a Committee and Treasurer for a Russo-Jewish Fund. They collected £10/4/6 among ten subscribers and resolved to wait upon the Mayor to propose a meeting on behalf of the persecuted Jews of Russia. This was pushing at an open door. The same number of the *Jewish Chronicle* which chronicled their efforts[21] reported a letter to the Chief Rabbi from the Vice-Chancellor and 246 heads of colleges, professors and resident graduates, an extraordinarily high proportion of the University, asking him to convey to their fellow-countrymen of the Jewish faith their sympathy with their people in Russia under the grievous sufferings and wrongs which had recently befallen them. They had heard with surprise and indignation of the outbreaks which seemed to recall the unreasoning antipathies and savage cruelties of the Middle Ages. They earnestly hoped that the day might not be long distant when in every country all loyal subjects would be equal before the law, and public opinion would secure justice to all alike without distinction of race or creed. A parallel undergraduate petition organized by Samuel Alexander and J.W. Mackail of Balliol (both, curiously enough, later to become members of the Order of Merit) went to the Lord Mayor of London, with the staggering total of 1,589 signatures.[22] Oxford's Town Hall meeting was on 2 March; it was well attended and very fully reported.[23]

Throughout these weeks the Congregation had been distracted by internal troubles. They were ready to discuss various methods of making Mr. Schapero's salary up to £1 a week, but he had been insulting the Secretary, Mr. Goodman. It was agreed that he would be dismissed if he did not apologize. In fact, he resigned to 'take up a more important post in Liverpool' and was presented with a handsome silver kiddush cup on 11 April as a token of the high esteem of the members. I have not traced this post in Liverpool and cannot find any further trace of him; if he went to Liverpool, it may have been to catch a boat.

Mr. B.J. Solomon of London was appointed to replace him.[24] However, Mr. Goodman also resigned as Secretary, and was replaced by Joel Zacharias. Not for the last time in the history of the Congregation, the advent of a powerful Secretary was marked by a suspension of minute-taking, and for the next three years we are denied the entertaining counterpoint between what the minutes actually say and what the *Jewish Chronicle* was told.

Much happened in the interim betwen the minute-books, an exceptionally crowded and eventful period for Oxford, though its events have up till now been totally lost in all accounts, published and unpublished, partly because of the gap in the minutes. It is apparent that, if Joel Zacharias was too busy to write minutes, he was active in other ways.

He was now thirty, and this year he married Rebecca, daughter of Philip Frankenstein, one of the large group of Manchester india-rubber and waterproof manufacturers. This was the foundation of a new career. In 1883 directories, the china and glass business which he had taken over from his father in the 1870s is replaced by a waterproof clothing business, which would be famous in Oxford as 'Zacks for Macs' for the next hundred years. He was determined to get on, inside and outside the Jewish community, and the *Jewish Chronicle* was kept regularly informed of a selection of his benefactions and progress in civic and masonic life.[25] Before he died in 1905, shortly before he was due to become Mayor of Oxford, he had bridged yet another social gap; his eldest son was a member of the University and a medical student.

As far as the Congregation was concerned, the first sign of coming change comes with the report of the services at the festivals of 1883[26] (conducted by the Rev. M. Schulman). 'It is in contemplation to erect a new synagogue, for which purpose a subscription list will shortly be opened.' In the same number, Samuel Montagu, the most active Jewish organizer of the day, in the course of a long article on the need for Jewish ministers, dropped the remark that 'Oxford has need of a minister who

will safeguard our young men from the danger of defection'; it is not clear whether he had any particular case in mind.

On 2 December 1883,[27] Dr. Hermann Adler, already essentially performing his ageing father's duties as Chief Rabbi, visited Oxford for the purpose of making arrangements to enable the Jewish students to join in public worship. He attended a meeting at the rooms of Samuel Alexander, now Fellow of Lincoln; Claude Montefiore and the majority of Jewish undergraduates were present. He 'afterwards met the members of the congregation at the synagogue in George Street. The room in which divine service is at present held is entirely unsuited to its purpose. As a result of these meetings resolutions were passed that strenuous efforts be made by the Jews resident at Oxford and by others to establish a proper place of worship in that city. A committee consisting of four members of the University, Mr. Samuel Alexander, Mr. Hermann Cohen, Mr. Schorstein and Mr. Moses, together with two citizens, Mr. Zacharias and Mr. Franks, was formed to take the necessary steps for repairing the present synagogue, and, if necessary, securing other premises. It was also arranged that divine service should be regularly held on Friday evenings and that a gentleman who is a graduate of the London University should be asked to preach a discourse on Sabbaths during term. We are informed that Mr. F.D. Mocatta, Mr. Samuel Montagu and Mr. Claude Montefiore, who take a deep interest in the movement, have signified their intention to contribute towards the payment of the expenses.' The needs were further expounded in the same issue by a letter from 'An Orthodox Jew', who introduced two further points: 'To do this effectually it would be as well to ignore Oxford as a mere provincial congregation, and to establish it as a constituent of the United Synagogue, have a properly appointed place of worship, so that men need not be ashamed if by any chance any of their Christian friends were to visit it. As most of the parents and friends of the Jewish undergraduates are liberal supporters of the United Synagogue, I think they have a good claim to consideration. If this were done, and suitable arrangements made so that men were able to obtain kosher dinners, well cooked and neatly served, as they are accustomed to at home, we should have the happiness of seeing in the future clever and learned men not only Jews in name but also in observance.'

It so happened that the same week saw the announcement of the election of Sylvester to his Professorship. In the next number of the *Jewish Chronicle* the editorial matter passed naturally from acclaiming his election to hopes that Dr. Adler's visit would produce practical results

and covered all the ground again. It was always desirable for the sake of congregations and of their gentile neighbours that both synagogues and the modes of conducting worship should be, as far as possible, beyond reproach. But this was particularly the case in Oxford; the students should be attracted to the synagogue and induced to form the habit of regular attendance at the services. 'The nature of their surroundings, and the circumstance that they are passing through the most critical period of life when a man's character and opinions are largely determined, render it essential that Jewish influence should be constantly brought to bear on them. No habits are more easily thrown off, or resumed with greater difficulty, than religious habits. And the truth applies with peculiar force to the Jewish students of a University, seeing that they are subjected to influences which tend rapidly to exhaust the reserve of religious feeling and habit which has been stored up within them by home training.' After recapitulating the proposals, it found them 'well calculated to keep the students attached to their ancestral religion. If the project is successfully and wisely carried out, the sharp contrast between the neglect with which the spiritual needs of the Jewish students have been treated and the efforts made to bring their Christian companions within the reach of the most effective religious influences, will be very considerably diminished.'

The same number contained two letters from Oxford, continuing the themes of 'An Orthodox Jew'. Joel Zacharias reported that arrangements had now been made to provide the students with kosher meals, but there still remained the difficulty of providing a proper place of worship. for which no funds were yet forthcoming. The present synagogue and *shochet* had been entirely supported, until quite recently,[28] by the resident citizens, only about half a dozen families; they were unable to provide the new accommodation now rendered necessary by the accession of the members of the University. These also expressed their inability to provide the three or four hundred pounds necessary to build a convenient synagogue, so he could see no way out of the difficulty but to ally themselves to the United Synagogue and to appeal to the whole Jewish community for the assistance which was so necessary for a permanent benefit to the future generations of Oxford students. Baron Franks the dentist wrote on similar lines about the smallness of the Oxford community, adding a harsh description of the present premises and a complaint that the account given of the names on the Committee had been incomplete.

A search for a more suitable building ended in Worcester Place, round

the corner from the present site,[29] and a three-year lease was taken on a 'commodious *local*'. On 7 March 1884, Hermann Adler came down to give an inaugural sermon to a crowded congregation of students and residents, including Neubauer (for once) and Alexander; Lionel L. Cohen and Claude Montefiore came down specially. After he had read the afternoon and Friday evening service, he took his text from Psalm xcii.2–3 and devoted his sermon to the importance of prayer, introducing a quotation from Plotinus in deference to the learning of his audience. It was more important to have public prayer in Oxford than anywhere else, in view of its Jewish past and its other religious importance. The students were told not to despise and set at nought these gatherings, even though the structure might be mean and different from the stately cathedral, the room small and the instruction lacking in eloquence. After expressing a hope that the gatherings might also do something for the Oxford Hebrew manuscripts, he closed with a general invocation, including a prayer that God would 'nerve the arms of our brave soldiers who fight in the cause of order and justice and peace in distant Sudan'; Gordon's position in Khartoum was becoming ever more difficult as he spoke.

The *Jewish Chronicle* gave the event ample coverage,[30] and laid heavy emphasis on the need for suitable services. 'It was clear that if the Jewish students were to be attracted to the synagogue, the existing style of worship would have to be altered for the better. The service that suited the congregation proper was quite unadapted for the requirements of a number of young men of culture, who moreover have always before their eyes the best examples of Church worship and preaching. It is essential therefore that a minister be engaged who is able to deliver discourses composed in sound English, and calculated in respect of manner and tone to satisfy the exacting needs of a university audience.'

As the report of December 1883 had hinted, the candidate in mind was Israel Abrahams, and it was on him that the burden of implementing the programme chiefly rested. In the next two terms, he gave about eight sermons on varying themes, reinforced twice each by the Rev. J. Polack of Liverpool and the Rev. G.J. Emanuel of Birmingham; the Rev. Simeon Singer came once, ingeniously using the life of King Solomon to illustrate 'the dangers which beset then as now the possessors of special talents'. That the undergraduates were not without their own resources was demonstrated when Oxford joined the celebrations of the hundredth birthday of Sir Moses Montefiore: the service was impressively read by S. Moses of Trinity and an address given by G.I. Schorstein of Christ Church.[31]

This first attempt to provide national support for the Jewish undergraduates did not last long. There was clearly difficulty in finding a suitable time for the services in the face of university engagements, and no figures for attendances were ever given to the public. After the first term the *Jewish Chronicle* felt[32] that 'some success had been attained, and the fact that we have by no means to chronicle an absolute failure is very encouraging'; that Samuel Alexander had consistently manifested interest was a very pleasing feature. After the second term, it reported[33] that the success had not been inconsiderable and more than some had anticipated, but it was not proposed to arrange for sermons on every Sabbath during ensuing terms. There was difficulty in obtaining the services of competent preachers, all of whom were occupied in their own pulpits, and Mr. Abrahams could scarcely be expected to make such frequent journeys to Oxford. He did continue to come, but at rarer and rarer intervals; there were other visitors in the first two terms of 1885, after which the operation seems to have stopped.[34] It is not clear how much demand there was for the kosher dinners to be provided daily during term by the Rev. M. Schulman at a moderate fixed tariff.[35] The whole enterprise fizzled out. By 1888, it was the Congregation which sent Joel Zacharias and Baron Franks to wait on Hermann Adler to draw attention to the numerous Jewish students at the University and the laxity of their attention to their religious duties and to suggest, not for the first time, that more money might make it possible to maintain a building worthy of the University City and to attract them to the synagogue.[36]

The other event of 1884 was the attempt, first mooted in 1881, to solve the Congregation's problems by joining the United Synagogue.[37] A formal application was made, and the Congregation also enquired, if actual membership was impractical, on what terms the United Synagogue would give its members burial rights. The *Jewish Chronicle* was consistently sympathetic, since it was in favour of extending the sphere of activity of the United Synagogue. The Executive Committee found that it had no legal power to admit a synagogue outside London, but it would be possible to make arrangements for burial; it recommended that this should be done. Lionel Cohen, the Chairman, argued that Oxford was placed in a peculiar position, in that it was as much carried on for the benefit of the students at the University belonging to London as for the local residents; in fact the synagogue was only kept open during termtime, since there were not sufficient Jews to form a *minyan* in the vacations. But even the modified recommendation was rejected by the Council; individuals could apply for burial rights themselves. The *Jewish*

Chronicle described this as a 'selfish, narrow view', but, even after a final plea from Baron Franks, looking forward to a prosperous Congregation which would provide a full *minyan* and warmly thanking Hermann Adler for providing kind support at considerable inconvenience to himself, the matter was not raised again.

Congregational minutes start again in July 1885, but most of the business for the next few years was routine. Appropriate letters were sent on major communal occasions like the peerage of Lord Rothschild and the death of Sir Moses Montefiore, for whom there was a memorial service. There were negotiations with the landlord, who agreed to take a rent of £18 p.a. if they guaranteed a further three years' occupation. It was clearly felt that there was a special relationship with Dr. Hermann Adler, and various letters passed to and fro. The Congregation needed assistance about a defective Sefer Torah; it is not clear that they received it, and, surprisingly in view of past events, they also asked Oswald Simon to find them one. Dr. Adler wrote concerning a *mikveh*; it was agreed to write back explaining the expense and their lack of funds.

What dominated the minutes and the correspondence with Dr. Adler was the provision of kosher meat: the hours at which the *shochet* was required to attend 'on meat days', the unsatisfactory service received from successive butchers, the tendency of successive *shochetim* to disappear without notice. Since the normal pay in this period seems to have been 18/- a week, the last is not surprising.[38]

The system of working *shechita* in collaboration with a local butcher, which the minutes take for granted, is mysterious to us. As it happens, we get some enlightenment from the situation at Aldershot, with which we have already seen a link.[39] There, in 1864, they ratified agreements with a local butcher to provide arrangements for the Congregation's *shochet* to attend as slaughterer. The butcher was required to send his messenger every evening to customers who were members of the Congregation to collect orders and to dispatch them between 9.30 and 10.30 the next morning when the *shochet* would be in attendance to perform his duties. This seems a bit surprising in relation to large animals; presumably the butcher simply took the unrequired portions into stock. It is clear that, at Oxford, only certain days were 'meat days'.[40] No doubt, at Oxford as at Aldershot, the *shochet* also attended at houses of members of the Congregation to kill poultry whenever required.

It was a difficult and expensive system to work, and in January 1891 Baron Franks the dentist wrote to the *Jewish Chronicle*, calling attention to the heavy financial burden which small provincial congregations had to

bear in order to obtain kosher meat. Taking Oxford, with its eight Jewish families, as a typical instance, he pointed out that it cost each individual member of the little Congregation £8 or 10 over and above his synagogue bill to have kosher meat, i.e. by maintaining a *shochet*. He suggested as a remedy the appointment of travelling *shochetim*, who would have their headquarters either in London or in important congregations, and who on application from smaller towns within a given radius should visit them once or twice a week for the purpose of killing animals. A certain sum should be paid per annum to the Congregation in whose direct employ the *shochet* may be. He held that the system he shadowed forth would not put the Shechita Board to any expense as it would be self-supporting and that congregations relieved from the expense of supporting a *shochet* would be in a better position to maintain a minister who would elevate the status of Jews in small towns. There was no response.

This period ended with a windfall. In July 1892, at the age of 105, Maria Levin, a total stranger, died, thus extinguishing her life interest in £20,000, which was now distributed, under the will of her brother Ephraim Levin, for Jewish communal purposes.[41] Oxford's share was £100, and this sum, far larger than any that the Congregation had ever commanded, might yet come in useful.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE NEW SYNAGOGUE

On 24 October 1892, I. Simon (though he did not sign himself Rev., he was then minister of the South Manchester Synagogue) wrote to the *Jewish Chronicle* as follows:

> Sir. – Knowing how generously you grant space in your valuable columns for every proposition and suggestion made in the interests of Jews and Judaism, I venture to ask the favour of your inserting my appeal – happily not for money – but for parental instructions, which may be the means of creating a closer union between high culture and religious observances.
>
> My son, who entered last week Wadham College, has been accustomed all his life to attend public worship on Sabbaths and Festivals, went last Friday evening with a fellow-student to the Synagogue of Oxford, where they found the Reader and the Treasurer of the Synagogue to be the only occupants of the House of God. Repeating his visit next morning by himself, he had the sad privilege, he says, of forming the entire congregation. No one besides the Reader had put in an appearance. I know for a fact that some of the Jewish residents refrain from coming to the Synagogue because they feel sure that there would be no 'Minyan'. If the five or six young gentlemen of our coreligionists who study at Oxford could be prevailed upon to become regular attendants, their presence would be a great acquisition, and would encourage the residents to meet more frequently for Divine Service. I can think of no better way to insure the co-operation of these gentlemen for such a holy object than by asking their parents, through your widely read organ, to make it a point of reminding their sons by letter weekly, of the duties they owe to the faith and creed of their ancestors, and of impressing upon them the

absolute necessity of devoting some hours of the sacred Sabbath to prayer and meditation.

Even if the prescribed number of ten could not be procured, the students might avail themselves of the Chief Rabbi's recommendation to have service conducted under certain modifications with a less number. They might also introduce English prayers and Bible Readings. Considering that their Christian colleagues are bound to be at Chapel at 7.30 every morning, no enlightened Israelite ought to regard himself as exempt from a duty so cheerfully and so readily performed by the noblest and most cultured members of every university.

There was a tart reply next week from 'M of M' (Laurie Magnus of Magdalen, now in his second year):

Sir – Your correspondent, Mr. I. Simon, whose son's first days in Oxford were attended with such 'sad privileges', will perhaps be surprised to learn that Divine Service has been held here on Sabbaths and Festivals for the last fifty years. How the synagogue fared before Mr. Simon, junior, came up to form 'the entire congregation ' is a point in communal history on which the residents in the town and the University students might have enlightened his father, before he attempted to dictate that weekly parental circular, which would soon go the way of all recurring stereotype.

May I further correct Mr. Simon on a point of secular history, and inform him that our 'noblest and most cultured Christian colleagues', who 'cheerfully and readily' throng the chapel at 7.30 every morning exist only in his peroration? The scanty and unwashen few who 'do' their three or four 8 o'clock chapels a week, as an alternative for the yet more perfunctory roll-call, are scarcely models for imitation for the members of a religious body.

Mr. Simon swiftly replied:

Sir – I am at a loss to find in my letter of the 24th ultimo, under the above heading, any part which could have given occasion to your correspondent 'M of M' to take the trouble of informing your readers the well-known fact 'that divine service was held in Oxford for the last fifty years'.

I did not ask the Jewish students in Oxford to *build* a place of worship, or to organise themselves into a *new* congregation, but expressed my wish that they would unite themselves with the existing community, and attend the old established synagogue.

As to the going of the weekly paternal *letter* – not circular – 'the

way of all recurring stereotype', I venture the hope that no educated son would be unmindful of the universally accepted interpretation of the commandment in Leviticus xix 3 'Ye shall fear every man his mother and father'. Parents' words should not be contradicted nor thrown away – Talmud Kedushim Fol.31.

I judge from the minute description given by 'M of M' of the number and appearance of the Christian colleagues 'who do their three or four chapels a week' that he must have been with them in the chapel to have observed their being 'scanty and somewhat unwashen'. If my surmise be not erroneous that 'M of M' is a co-religionist, may I advise him to join in future the colleagues of his own brethren-in-faith, who I trust are well washed both physically and morally: and since he has taken upon himself the task of correcting me, should urge upon his fellow-students in the fiery words of the prophet, 'Come, let us go up to the house of God, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in His paths' (Isaiah ii 3).

There are some ill-judged aspects to these letters, but the correspondence was not without result. The first move was that the Congregation summoned a Committee meeting on 13 November, and instructed the Secretary to write to students advising them that the charge for seat rental was 30/– per annum. Since their own normal seat rental was 21/–, this is ample testimony to their belief in the superior financial and social status of students and their realization that a new opportunity was opening.

At this point, Oswald Simon reappeared. On Saturday, 19 November, 'a large congregation consisting of nearly every Jew and Jewess in Oxford was present in the synagogue at Worcester Place. Apart from the fact that the remodelling of the services here has of late resulted in arousing very keen enthusiasm amongst undergraduates and others in the affairs of the congregation, the fact that Mr. Oswald Simon, one of the oldest [he was 36] and most respected members, had been announced to preach on Saturday sufficed to increase the interest and swell the attendance of Jews of the town and of the University. In the course of a most edifying discourse, Mr. Simon impressed on all his hearers the importance of appreciating and making use of the religious and spiritualising influence of the ancient University. He remarked that a great religion had been handed down to us, and it was in our power to hand it down in our turn either tarnished or embellished. Our faith must be either a finality or a development. Let us take heed, encouraged by the example of other religions, that the atmosphere and tradition of Oxford make it the latter.

Mr. Simon concluded his address with a most moving prayer. The service was conducted by Mr. Laurie Magnus of Magdalen, and the lesson of the day read by Mr. A.B. Birnbaum of Merton.'[1]

That Oswald Simon had not always been on the best of terms with the town Congregation, we saw in the last chapter.[2] What he is reported as saying is well in line with the characterization of him[3] as 'a passionate Reformer with an equally passionate yearning for conciliation with the Orthodox'. But if the University element was prepared to take a hand, the town was prepared to go along with it to the best of its ability.

On 3 December, at a General Meeting (Present: Mr. B.J. Franks in Chair, Mr. Solomon, Mr. G. Davidson, D. Davidson, Mr. S. Mitchell, V. Samuel (Magd.), R.C. Davis (Worc.), L. Magnus (Magd.), A.B. Birnbaum (Mert.), J.W. Cohen (Mert.), Q.Q. Henriques (C.C.C.), P. Eicholz (Magd.), M. Simon (Wadh.) [4]), it was agreed that the new premises of Mr. Gardiner situate 1 Nelson Street be taken on a 5 year lease at £25 p.a. plus rates, that 100 copies of the Ritual be printed and that Mr. Magnus be empowered to obtain as low a price as possible. Various sub-committees were appointed. Not more than £30 was to be expended on decoration and purchase of Rituals.

Subscriptions had already been coming in. The eventual list[5] was: Mr. F.D. Mocatta £10; Mr. C.G. Montefiore £10; Mr. N.L. Cohen £5 5*s*; Sir J. Goldsmid, Bart., M.P. £5; Mr. E.A. Franklin £5; Mrs. B. Birnbaum £2 2*s*; Mr. G. Schorstein [Claude Montefiore's brother-in-law] £2 2*s*; Lady Magnus £1 1*s*; Mr. Felix Waley £1. Besides this £41 10*s*, a further sum of £19 1*s* was collected among the undergraduates, so that the Decoration Committee hoped to be able to hand to the Treasurer a small surplus towards the higher rental. Among other gifts to the synagogue were 'a beautifully carved ark', presented by Mr. Lionel Cohen, and a handsome cover for the reading desk from Mrs. Birnbaum, to which Mr. Lewis Solomon, President of the Congregation, afterwards added a curtain of purple velvet for the ark and seven brass candlesticks. A second scroll of the law was placed at the disposal of the Congregation by Mr. P. Frankenstein, Warden of the Manchester Great Synagogue, Joel Zacharias' father-in-law, and Mr. and Mrs. F.S. Franklin gave a handsome covering for it. The main burden of fitting up the building fell on Joel Zacharias, with undergraduate help from A.B. Birnbaum.

The building itself had been built in 1891 by a local builder, John Job Gardiner, who had wide interests, on a triangular plot of about 547 sq. yds., originally part of the Great Bear Meadow, which had the tiniest of frontages between Richmond Road, then Worcester Terrace, and

Nelson Street. The site was an unused block included in the freeholds of 1–6 Nelson Street, which he had recently acquired in splitting his father's estate with his sister. It was certainly not built as 'the Jews Synagogue', as the conveyance of 1897 asserts. The application for building permission,[6] dated 20 March 1891, prepared by its architect, J.C. Gray of Blackhall Road, Oxford, describes it as a 'Proposed Mission Room', and treats it as part of a general project connected with 1 Nelson Street, which had a washhouse attached to its back at the same time. The plans in the application do not include the vestry extension on the east side, which was nevertheless already there at the time the Congregation occupied it. It seems hardly likely that Gardiner built this Mission Room without a tenant in view, but, if he had had something else in mind, it had evidently fallen through by December 1892. No light is shed, at any rate for me, by the name of the occupant of 1 Nelson Street, a Mr. Henry Jones.[7] It is perhaps not altogether impossible that Joel Zacharias had for some time been working to a private plan.

The building, still fresh in the minds of many, was not without its dignity, even when put under strains which could hardly have been envisaged in 1892. The 'beautifully carved ark', which had nothing Jewish about it and appears to be of eastern wood and manufacture, gave a strong focus to the south wall and the central *bima* was well proportioned. The interior woodwork of the roof was not unpleasing, though its details were eventually masked by hanging gasfires, which never really solved the problems; the building was always either too warm or too cold. Various forms of seating were in use over the years, never particularly attractive. The roof gave periodic trouble.

By Sunday, 29 January, 1893, arrangements were far enough advanced for a visit from Hermann Adler, now Chief Rabbi in his own right, which rated a long item in the *Jewish Chronicle* of 3 February, together with an accompanying editorial. 'Until a few months ago the Oxford Synagogue had fallen into an irreverent old age. At the beginning of the academic year last October, the matter was energetically taken up by two or three undergraduates, the co-operation of the few Jewish townspeople was secured, the attendance of their fellows canvassed, and during the term a service was read every Sabbath evening and morning, which appealed to the growing congregation. The languishing flame thus kindled has not been allowed to die, and last Sunday saw the consecration by the Rev. the Chief Rabbi, in the presence of nearly fifty congregants, male and female, of a new and commodious place of worship, originally built as a lecture-room, which has been admirably fitted up for its present sacred use.

At 3 o'clock on Sunday afternoon the Rev. Dr. Adler besought God's blessing on the new building in Worcester Terrace, where it is hoped that for many years to come townsmen and gownsmen will sing God's praises together with one Jewish heart.

[Sermon]

The Chief Rabbi then offered up a prayer for the dedication of the Synagogue to God, for the Queen, for the University.

After conclusion of the Afternoon Service, Dr. Adler received the members of the congregation in the Vestry-room, and remained for some time discussing the affairs of the synagogue. An informal vote of thanks was then accorded to him for the very kind and careful address he had read, and for the trouble he had taken in coming to Oxford.'

The Ritual was printed by Wertheimer, Lea & Co. in London as *Form of Prayer for the Use of the Oxford Hebrew Congregation* (London, 1893); A.B. Birnbaum's copy, rapidly discarded, is in the Bodleian (951.f.4). Laurie Magnus and whoever else he consulted conceived it on extreme Reform lines. The Friday evening service, though not violently curtailed, only has *barechu*, the first paragraph of the *Shema*, and the *Kaddish* in Hebrew, and there is proportionately even less Hebrew in the Sabbath Morning Service, which reduces the Additional Service to a mere token and appears to envisage the regular reading of the Ten Commandments instead of a reading from the Torah. There clearly had been some innovations in the services in the term before the opening, and the editorial in the *Jewish Chronicle* says 'at present it is not proposed to read the whole ritual in Hebrew'. Laurie Magnus's background, at least, was as much in the Reform Synagogue as Oswald Simon's, and clearly even the Manchester Simons were not rigidly committed to an Orthodox service. But, even though Dr. Adler in 1892, after summoning a Preachers' Conference, had laid down some options about modifications in services which he was prepared to accept,[8] he can hardly have approved of this. His inaugural sermon dwelt strongly on the necessity of continuing the Hebrew language in the performance of the ritual and service, as had been observed in all countries from time immemorial, and it seems that the book did not have a long life. The concern of the local community, not for the last time, was that services should not be unduly protracted, and, on 26 February, it was 'agreed that the *shochet* shall commence his portion of the service at 8.15 and finish at 8.45 at *Nishmas*'. In London, the nineteenth-century demand had tended to be for a later start, but, on Oswald Simon's evidence, it is doubtful that many Oxford shopkeepers shut on Sabbath.

The new expenses were still further increased by the departure to

London in the spring of Lewis Solomon; it was agreed that the three shillings a week he had been contributing to the *shochet*'s salary be made up from congregational funds. He resigned the Presidency in June, and in September there were new elections, B.J. Franks as President, G. Davidson as Warden, J. Zacharias as Secretary and Treasurer.

The new beginning was marked by the establishment of an official marriage register and a registered Secretary for Marriages. The first marriage in the synagogue and in the register, that of Leah Goldstone to Louis Feinmesser, was celebrated on 13 June 1893. Only three succeeded it before 1939, and two of those were synagogal confirmations of registry office marriages.

Another project had been much on Joel Zacharias's mind, and it was announced in December[9] that 'he had succeeded in obtaining from the City Corporation a grant in perpetuity of a most eligible portion of land for the purpose of a cemetery for the Jewish inhabitants. Mr. Zacharias has offered personally to bear the expense of the fence around it. This is the second time of there being a Jewish cemetery in this city, the first being some seven centuries ago when Oxford was one of the most considerable residential cities for Jews in the country.' On 1 April 1894, the burial ground was consecrated in accordance with a service specially formulated by the Chief Rabbi.[10] Joel was only just in time. His father, Abraham, died on 12 April at the age of 77, to become the first occupant of the new ground.

There was evidently some friction between Franks the President and Zacharias the Secretary, and in September 1897, Zacharias took over as President, with his 14-year old son George as Assistant Secretary; Franks forthwith reduced his contribution to the *shochet* to 1/6 a week and his seat rent to 21/–. Zacharias now reported that Mr. Gardiner the landlord had written that he was willing to sell the synagogue property for £600 and to let it on a six months tenancy at £30 per annum. Mr. Zacharias was empowered to see Mr. Gardiner and get better terms. The interview was of an unsatisfactory nature, and it was briefly considered whether to move to a vacant plot in Castle Street, belonging to the City Corporation, of which Zacharias would take up half. By now, he was well entrenched in town affairs; in November he was elected to the City Council. The possibility of a move brought Gardiner's price down to £500, and the deal went through; the Levin bequest of 1892 now came in useful, and it was only necessary to take out a mortgage of £350 with a local solicitor.[11]

Thereafter, minutes became briefer and briefer as Zacharias tightened

control. An active new member arrived in 1899, only to resign almost immediately after a row with the *shochet*, who also resigned. There was a move to regularizing the position of the University members; June 1898 sees the first mention of a University sub-committee, but an even more formal-sounding arrangement of February 1900 provided that the Committee should consist of the President, the Treasurer and two members of the Congregation, one City and one University, and there be one General Meeting a year in January.

The minutes then stop again and it is doubtful whether there were ever any more minutes of the town Congregation until 1940. During the interval before minutes of 'the University Section' start, a Mr. Abrahamson, who had been appointed *shochet* in November 1899, left for Rhyl, and was succeeded in May 1901 as minister and *shochet*, at a salary of 26/– a week, by a young man of 23, ten years or so out of Lithuania, Moses H. Segal. He had been on the staff of a Yiddish newspaper and become a Zionist of the cultural school. He had met a girl after reading a poem she had written in a Hebrew journal, courted her with volumes of Dickens, and married her in 1899. He tried business to support her, without much success, and was ready to come to Oxford, where he had already helped with the services in 1900, though he disliked performing *shechita*. The home was already Hebrew-speaking,[12] and he took the opportunities provided by residence in Oxford. In 1903, he formally matriculated in the University as a Non-Collegiate Student to read a degree in Oriental Languages; though only getting a second-class degree, he won many prizes and laid the foundations of a career which would end as a revered Professor of Bible at the Hebrew University. However, at some time before 1908 *shechita* in Oxford had stopped.

The town Congregation was already going into decline, through deaths and removals from Oxford;[13] it may be that resentment of the powerful President was also a factor. The 26 seat holders declared to the Board of Deputies in 1893 must, I think, have included undergraduates; in 1900 the figure was 15. In 1901, the *Jewish Yearbook* reported 12 seat holders, 30 resident Jews and 14 University students. In 1908, a note in the University Section's minute-book reports only two old members (D. Davidson and Baron Franks) plus Joel Zacharias' widow, and five new ones, only two of whom lasted long in Oxford. It was hoped that they would bring in a total of £15 in subscriptions, without Mrs. Zacharias (now Jessel). But there was some continuity, even in this depressed state. High Festival services out of term are attested at least for 1913.

Our information now shifts almost entirely to the undergraduate point

of view, and the next minute-book starts in May 1903, with what was described as the third meeting of the University Section. This was given little information about the true financial position; in October it was noted that the accounts were incomplete, since there was no record of cash payments. It was resolved unanimously 'that this meeting of the University Section of the Oxford Hebrew Congregation expresses to Mr. Zacharias its grateful acknowledgement of the liberality with which he has provided for the upkeep of the synagogue during the past year chiefly by his private generosity and respectfully decides to place on record its opinion that it is desirable that a perfectly full, complete, accurate and detailed balance-sheet of expenditure and receipts be presented to the next meeting; that payments where possible be paid by cheque, and that the minister's full salary appear in the balance-sheet and that this meeting hopes that it will not be inconvenient to Mr. Zacharias to the amount of whose generous contributions it has already testified with gratitude to agree to this arrangement'. It was inconvenient to him, and the February 1904 meeting was told that 'Mr. Zacharias was convinced that owing to the peculiar position of the Oxford Congregation, it would be impossible to produce a complete balance-sheet – showing all the income and expenditure – without injuriously affecting the interests of the Congregation'. However, one current undergraduate, Robert Sebag-Montefiore, was this month allowed to share the cost of transferring the mortgage into Jewish hands,[14] and Nathaniel Lucas was encouraged in 1905 to raise a fund to put a handsome gate on the synagogue.[15]

The University Section had already occasionally been using its meetings for other than strictly congregational matters, and in May 1904, it was agreed that it was desirable to imitate the Schechter Society, which had been founded in Cambridge in 1902 to act as a forum to discuss religious, literary, and other Jewish matters. There was, however, no minuted meeting of what it was agreed to call the Adler Society until 10 November 1905, when 9 were present to hear Moses Segal read a paper entitled 'Jewish Ethics'.

In the meantime, Joel Zacharias, who had recently changed his name to Joel Zacharias Jessel and had suffered from heart-trouble for some time, died on 2 August 1905, and was buried in torrential rain near his parents, with an enormous attendance of city dignitaries and relations.[16] 'It was the ruling passion of his life to make the name Jew honoured and respected among his neighbours and he devoted all the energies of his richly-endowed personality to that end'.[17] I find it a little surprising that

he only left £15,000, say, £700,000 in 1991 money, but he had evidently always spent well up to his income. A joint meeting of the whole Oxford Hebrew Congregation on 30 October appointed Baron Franks and A.M. Green co-Treasurers and Secretaries, one to have control in vacation, the other in term. G.J. Zacharias Jessel, still a medical student, would pay 3/6 a week to Mr. Segal, with two town members, Mr. Franks and Mr. Davidson, paying 2/6 and 1/6 respectively. Together with subscription of University members at 10/- per term and the £14 per annum from the Chief Rabbi, this was considered sufficient to carry on the working of the synagogue. Baron Franks took over Joel Zacharias' share of the mortgage.

From 1905 to 1911 the pattern was to hold one terminal meeting of the University Section of the Synagogue; business was generally pretty formal and attendance very small. The Adler Society was supposed to meet twice a term and generally did. 23 meetings during the period show an average attendance of 17. Although 1908 was a black year, with only one meeting in its first two terms owing to insufficient attendance, the next term showed the highest attendances of the period with 21 to hear Dr. M. Epstein, Leon Simon and J.M. Myres on the work of Lewis House in the East End and 24 plus visitors to hear the Rev. A.A. Green on 'Some of our future problems'. The meetings of the period ranged fairly widely from social work, a major preoccupation of the day among Jewish and non-Jewish undergraduates, through Jewish history, ancient and modern, to aspects of Jewish philosophy and religion. There was only one paper on Zionism, Claude Montefiore in 1909 on its Pros and Cons, mostly, one may guess, its Cons. M.H. Segal attended the meetings regularly, but he was almost leaving when it was arranged that he would conduct a circle for the study of Jewish history; he had, however, long been running a 'Hebrew society'. Chief Rabbi Hermann Adler maintained his long-standing interest in Oxford; in the three years 1906–8 he came every year.

The size of attendance at these meetings can be put in context by the list of the members of the University Section for 1908–9, 29 in all plus M.H. Segal. These included the first known Jewish woman undergraduate, C. Kirschberger of Somerville (it would appear that she attended at least one meeting with a chaperone); among those prominent in later life in various fields were L.L. Cohen (New College), P. Guedalla, E. Lobel, L.N.G. Montefiore, L.J. Stein, S.N. Ziman (Balliol), and H. Dagut(ski) (Merton). A firm line has been drawn through T. Sassoon (Christ Church).

Outside the Adler Society, there ran a University Zionist Society, apparently the first such in Britain.[18] This held its inaugural meeting on 1 December 1906, when the Haham, Dr. Gaster, gave an inaugural address at a meeting presided over by Israel Rubinowitz. Its first generation, Moses Segal, Harry Sacher, Leon Simon, Leonard Stein, and Harry Dagut, got it off to a glittering start in terms of quality, if not of quantity, and it had three or four years of considerable activity, with two visits by Chaim Weizmann among others and a good deal of sponsorship of other University groups and joint activity with them.

In June 1909, Segal resigned to take up a post in Newcastle. 'I have failed to respond adequately to the great demands of my office, partly due to circumstances, partly to my inadequacy.' A meeting, under Franks' Presidency, appointed a Special Committee, which recommended the appointment of a visiting minister during term. The name in mind was Ephraim Levine. But in the event the gap left by Segal was not filled, though the undergraduates were prepared in March 1910 to pay the town section £26 towards expenses of a Reader and some help was given by B. Lieberman, a Jews' College graduate, who was up at Worcester reading Oriental Languages from 1910 to 1912.

In Michaelmas 1909 there was only one meeting of the Adler Society, in the whole of 1910 one and in the whole of 1911 two; all these seem to have been to hear visiting ministers. 1912 started with better intentions, though only 8 came to hear Dr. Gaster, the Haham, on Jewish history, and 7 (plus guests) for Redcliffe Salaman on 'Heredity and the Jew' with lantern slides, a lecture which was repeated under various titles well into the 1930s. Synagogue attendance was obviously at an all-time low. On 10 May, the *Jewish Chronicle* published a letter from N.J. Laski (CCC), B. Lieberman (Worc.), W. Cramer (Trin.), B.L.Q. Henriques and C.H. Goldsmid (Univ.), H. Alexander (Qu.). It was not without considerable reluctance that they ventured to address the community, but although undergraduate attitudes varied, they were all agreed on the tragedy of men passing through the University at a critical age. subject to impressions of every kind, being deprived of strong and continuous Jewish influence. A satisfactory end could only be attained by a recognition on the part of the whole community of its obligation to deal with the problem. The only suggestion that they were able to offer was that either a chair in some branch of Jewish learning be endowed, to be filled by a scholar of distinction, or provision be made for the residence of a Jewish minister. Either of these courses would, in their opinion, lead to the creation of an inspiring and unifying Jewish influence. The

suggestion was approved editorially the next week: 'The Haham was recently deploring the loss to the community of the young men from the Universities. What, asked Dr. Gaster, had become of those who had gone to the Universities during the last quarter century? Whither had they drifted?'

A lively correspondence followed. One writer pointed out that the Haham's complaint applied to both universities, although Cambridge had had the support now requested by Oxford. It was a pertinent point, blunted by the correspondent's apparent belief that the undergraduates were 23 or 24. A Glasgow student thought the Oxford suggestions were ineffectual. All students were anti-nationalistic. It was impossible to stimulate religion and would be needless if there were national consciousness. If Jews were more interested in their students, students would be more interested in being Jews. Nothing very visible was happening and, at the meeting of the University Section on 16 June, there was an attendance of three, Laski, Goldsmid and Henriques. 'Extreme regret was expressed as to the lack of interest in communal affairs shown by the undergraduates. Nothing was decided but it was felt to be of the greatest importance to make the synagogue services more attractive and Judaism as a whole a greater reality in Oxford.'

Although the *Jewish Chronicle* on 26 July tried to keep the pot boiling by hanging a long article on the Jews of Oxford, medieval and modern, on the thousandth anniversary of the University, then being fictitiously celebrated, 'conversations' with some of the more prominent members in metropolitan Jewry were evidently not finding financial support.[19]

Irrespective of money, opinion was, as usual, divided as to whether improvement in the surroundings or improvement in personnel would be more beneficial. It had already been resolved in October 1911 'that the Synagogue neither satisfies the needs or the dignity of a university town, that it requires complete renovation and that for this purpose an appeal be addressed to past and present Jewish Oxford men asking for their financial support'. A Committee had been appointed, with no obvious result.

Basil Henriques wrote on 20 September that there was evidently no money for a chair or a minister and, unless the right person was found, it would in any case be useless. The duty now fell on Oxford Jews themselves to go to common worship (and also engage in social work). The editorial the next week now also took the line that it was the undergraduates' own responsibility. 'If they will realise their responsibilities, they may make their influence felt in the Jewry of tomorrow and for

many a long day after. If they do not, they will add one more to the many sad and tragic pages in Jewish history.' A similar line was taken the same week by E[phraim] L[ipson], who had recently moved from Cambridge to Oxford: the situation in Oxford was in a critical phase; Cambridge Jews were better organized. On the other hand, B. Lieberman in an interview the next week on 'The Needs of Oxford' stood by the solution that a person was needed. He had never been in favour of a minister, who would not have any standing, not be an integral part of the University; there would in any case be no agreement about what form of Judaism he should profess. The real remedy was the appointment of a Lecturer or Reader in Rabbinics, who would have academic status; it was in any case desirable that the teaching of Rabbinics should be in Jewish hands.

Meanwhile, Henriques and his co-Secretary Alexander had at least got the synagogue redecorated and arranged a programme for the next term. It is doubtful whether they had given great thought to the practicalities, and the coda to the operation was a furious letter of Franks, the town President, to Alexander in March 1913, on receiving a solicitor's letter for £7 for unpaid building work. They had given their orders and then gone off without supervising the work. As for Liberal Judaism, the town members, Davidson and Freedson, would have different ideas.

However, with this stimulus and the remarkable glamour of Henriques' personality, there was a spectacular revival. 'Never has the Congregation flourished so splendidly as during this period' thought Henriques himself.[20] It was reported in January 1913 that 'at the end of the summer term there were only 12 undergraduates; the numbers have now increased to 43. Of these, four only did not take some part in the Jewish life during term, either by attendance at the Adler Society or at the Synagogue.' There was an agreement to concentrate activity by suspending services on Saturday morning. The Friday evening service was 'entirely remodelled, so as to meet the spiritual needs of Jews who are at the same time twentieth century Englishmen. Hebrew has been retained for the first part of the service, while the second part consists of Psalms in English, English prayers from Mr. Singer's prayer book together with many of the beautiful prayers used at Hill Street' (i.e. the Liberal Synagogue).[21] It was claimed that this was on the lines of a service specially sanctioned for the Congregation by Hermann Adler, now dead. In Michaelmas term, there was something happening every week, with the high spots an attendance of 22 to hear a powerful address by Leonard Stein on the Oxford movement in Judaism, calling on the

Society to cultivate Jewish sympathy and encourage Jewish study, and a visit by Claude Montefiore, when there was not seating room to hear him preach, and 23 on the same day at a paper by Mr. Levy of Hertford on 'The Mission of Judaism', at which Montefiore expressed his disapproval of the agnostic Jew, though some defended such a position. The momentum was kept up next term with a well-attended visit by Rabbi Mattuck, and the attendance at the meeting of the University Section rose to 18. Liberal Judaism, it appears, was capable of stimulating attendance, and it is interesting to notice the frequent attendance of Victor Gollancz and Harold Laski.[22] One preoccupation is revealed by the casual remark that a paper on 'Aspects of Judaism' as usual brought the discussion to the question of race.

By the time that a formal article by Ephraim Lipson on 'Jewish Life at the Universities' was published on 27 December, his criticisms were to some extent out of date. They were expressed powerfully enough. After a general eulogy of Cambridge (though he had found the Schechter Society a bit frivolous), he continued: 'At Oxford on the other hand, there is unfortunately practically no Jewish life, and the condition of things is almost the exact reverse of that at Cambridge. The attendance at the synagogue is a fiasco; about three or four men attend, with occasionally one or two more. The quorum for a Minyan is never attained, save on the infrequent occasions when a preacher comes to Oxford, and then only with the greatest difficulty. When a General Meeting of the Congregation is called, the audience consists of two. Oxford Jewry has a profound faith in the virtue of small numbers. There is a Zionist Society which suffers from the depression incidental to any body, the membership of which can perhaps be counted on the fingers of one hand. The picture of Jewish life at Oxford must indeed be drawn in very dark colours if it is to correspond to the facts.' He quite unfairly saw no hope in the present generation of undergraduates. His solution too lay in finding a personality. 'Until the deficiency is made good, Cambridge will be in a position to boast that she alone enables the Jewish undergraduate to enjoy university life and at the same time makes it possible for him to retain his Jewish sentiment in all its fullness and strength.'

It is not in fact likely that Lipson had much sympathy with Liberal Judaism, but three blasts in the letter-columns of the *Jewish Chronicle* of 3 January produced explanations from him and the Editor that the letter had been written in September and hopes from both that the revival would prove lasting. In fact, the new momentum inevitably dropped off,

and attendances in 1913–14 were patchy, except for an informal meeting, attended by more than 40 undergraduates, on the East End work of the St. George's Club, ultimately to absorb the whole of Basil Henriques' energies. 1914 saw the first debate on Zionism, unfortunately not recorded in detail, and the first visit of Chief Rabbi Hertz; only 14 members and 2 guests were curious about Hammurabi. Hertz was however taking stock of the situation. It had emerged by April 1914 that a mysterious London Committee was looking for a minister without reference to Oxford. Some religious tension was in the air. F.W. Haldinstein of Christ Church, who would be killed in 1917, produced a prayer-book *Oxford Prayers* and conducted Sunday afternoon religion classes for the children of the town section. The former members Leon Simon and Harry Sacher descended on 7 June to protest to an audience of 15 that Liberal Jews were losing Judaism and the prayer-book was un-Jewish; their later career suggests that their standpoint was Zionist rather than Orthodox. Haldinstein's line was that all thought must progress and that interchange of thought between one race and another was no harm but a good. The condemnation of the prayer-book,[23] published by the Oxford University Press and financed by Frederic Franklin and Charles Singer, seems to me exaggerated. Confessedly a compromise, it was a great deal more conventional than the Magnus prayer-book of 1893, and follows the reported practice of 1912 fairly closely in having a fairly straight Orthodox Friday evening service, ending with prayers taken from the practice of the Liberal Synagogue. There is, on the other hand, no appearance of the Kaddish, and the inclusion in a Friday night service of elements of the service for the conclusion of the Sabbath might be thought distinctly unusual.

The Chief Rabbi had by now found his solution, with which others helped, notably A.H. Jessel, formerly of Balliol, Vice-President of the United Synagogue.[24] By means which are not at all clear,[25] Herbert Loewe, from Queens' College, Cambridge, steeped in the traditions which Solomon Schechter and Israel Abrahams had established there and with varied experience in travel, archaeology, Semitics, and Rabbinics, was found a post as Lecturer in Hebrew at Exeter, Neubauer's old college. Though he did come into residence, the War intervened, and the merits of the solution would not be manifested for another six years.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Herbert Loewe came into residence at Exeter in autumn 1914, but could not do much before he left for service in India in 1915. On 31 October he was formally introduced to the Society and read a paper on archaeological research in Palestine with special reference to Gezer, passing round exhibits illustrating the results of his own excavations. Tolerant though he was, there was an immediate reaction in the forms of service; it was announced that there would be more Hebrew chanted, kiddush would be performed, and Yigdal sung; on Saturday morning there would actually be an Orthodox service. A suspicious Reuben Levy asked on whose authority the changes had been made and was told that they were only a reversion to the practice before 1912; there was talk of having a choir.

It might be thought that the outbreak of war in August 1914 would have produced an immediate exodus of undergraduates and a sharp drop in activity. In fact, for the first two years of the war, meetings had steady attendances of 10 to 13, though there were fewer of them: three in Michaelmas 1914 (besides Loewe, the Haham on the Oral Law and Brodetsky on the Jewish Outlook), one each in Hilary and Trinity 1915 (Henriques on Oxford and St. George's, Leon Simon on Nationalism and Religion); three again in Michaelmas 1915 (debates on 'Is Orthodox Judaism a fluent movement?' and on Zionism, with Leon Roth and Moshe Eliash thinking that the nationality of Jews had purely a spiritual existence, and a talk by Levy of Jesus on Liberal Judaism). Hilary 1916 saw four meetings, though with only one visitor, the Rev. S. Friedeberg of Liverpool, coming, no doubt, to see his undergraduate daughter; he spoke on 'Some Curiosities of the Higher Criticism'; no one seems to have been tactless enough to mention the *cause célèbre* of the moment, the

summary dismissal of his synagogal colleague for having shown sympathy with conscientious objection.

The first sign of hard times came in February 1916 when the synagogue was required to acquire blinds to black it out against possible air raids; since this would cost £2, the secretary was asked to go to the police station and secure immunity. A more metaphorical closing of the shutters took place in the summer, when a business meeting agreed that Ephraim Lipson would be President and Co-Treasurer, and Baron Franks, who was, apart from Daniel Davidson and Freedson, virtually the only survivor of the town community, would step down to Co-Treasurer; Franks finally left Oxford in November 1917. It therefore fell to Lipson to consider the deplorable condition of the roof. In May 1917 he got an estimate of 60/- for dealing with the guttering and a very pessimistic report about the state of the roof, for which no clear estimate was possible. There was in fact no money about. The caretaker, who was only paid 1/6 a week, wrote increasingly plaintive letters about the months she was unpaid for, and there was a bank overdraft.

For the rest of the war the Adler Society more or less turned into a discussion-group, with a very stable membership of seven or eight meeting practically every Friday evening to read and discuss pamphlets by Jewish thinkers of the day of various complexions; even this faded out after Lipson's departure to the Ministry of Food in March 1918. The group was not particularly united in its views. They considered the desirability of holding part of the service in English. There was allusion to the 'rigid orthodoxy' of Israel Brodie, a young Jews' College graduate doing a B.Litt. at Balliol, and Moshe Eliash, ultimately to become respectively Chief Rabbi and the first Ambassador of Israel in London, but even they agreed that the *haftarah* could be read in English if there was no *minyan*. There was complex thought about the relationship of the Adler Society to the synagogue, culminating in a row when Lipson ruled from the chair that a 'certain freshman who apparently combined a rabid agnosticism with a fervent sense of Jewish nationality' could not join the Society since membership of the Society without membership of the synagogue could not exist. There was some light-heartedness, however. In June 1917 Brodie brought the academic year to an end by delighting the Society with several short sermons delivered in a manner characteristic of preachers known to its members, and the break-up of a meeting by a Zeppelin warning in October 1917 was treated with calm. Whatever reservations some may have had about Zionism, a warm telegram was sent to the Prime Minister in November 1917, thanking him for the Balfour Declaration.

Some further lightening of austerity came from hospitality, above all from that of Mrs. Charles Singer (Dorothy Waley). She and her husband paid off the bank overdraft. She started to come to meetings, a particular advantage to the lady undergraduates, who could only come when she was there to chaperon them, and gave two papers herself. Until the Singers left Oxford in 1920, they had an Adler Society meeting at their house virtually every term.[1] As evacuation from London produced more private residents, others joined in.

A great number of Jews inevitably passed through Oxford during the war, on training or in hospital. The Adler Society was hardly organized to deal with them, though there was talk of getting soldiers to synagogue in autumn 1917. and 40 Jewish soldiers were entertained for Purim in 1918. Someone was around to deal with deaths. The improbably spelt Samson Phinklesttin ('particulars unknown, South African papers please copy') died in January 1917, and Lionel Phillips Lipman, formerly of Edinburgh and Bournemouth, in March 1918; the latter at least was buried in Oxford.

In 1918, the increased danger of air-raids in London certainly produced an evacuee population of some size, though it is not clear what their religious needs were. It is not even certain that there were Festival services in 1918, though at least Charles Duschinsky built a *sukkah* at his rented accommodation in Divinity Road, doubtless the first in Oxford for many years. The first sign of any kind of organization came in September, when at a meeting of Jewish residents it was decided to form a Communal Society which would have the propagation of Zionism as one of its main objects; Mr. Berger and Miss B. Davis, 36 George Street, were to be the Secretaries.[2]

They moved slowly, and it was not until early November that the 'Zionist and Social Society' held its inaugural meeting at a hall at Bridge House, Botley Road, placed at its disposal by the Messrs Berger.[3] The proceedings commenced with the singing of *Hatikvah* and an address by the Chairman, Mr. Harry Baker. Letters of congratulation were received from Dr. M. Gaster and Nahum Sokolow. A number of *shekalim* were sold, and the Chairman announced that henceforth there would be lectures, discussions, etc., on Zionism every Sunday evening at seven o'clock, but the main proceedings took the form of a concert, given by six local young ladies and two soldiers. However, the evacuee community clearly dispersed as fast as it had come, and the only other thing that we hear about this Society is in May 1919, when Mr. Baker attempted to transfer responsibility for it to the revived undergraduate community, which was unwilling.

Some form of local organization continued for a little. There was a meeting in September 1919 to organize the services for the High Festivals, which appointed L. Freedson to act as Secretary for the residents, apart from the University Section of the Congregation, and D. Davidson, senior member of the Congregation, as Warden.[4] In October, Freedson took the initiative in suggesting a war memorial, which was taken up by the Secretary of the Adler Society, who appealed for information about dead members of the University;[5] the response was evidently unsatisfactory, and the plaque which eventually resulted had no list of names. My own incomplete figures suggest a death-roll of ten to twelve. I single out two from the University, Robert Sebag-Montefiore, who had held part of the mortgage on the building and had been proposing the moving of Jews' College to Oxford or Cambridge in order to improve the quality of the Anglo-Jewish ministry, and F.W. Haldinstein of Christ Church, the editor of *Oxford Prayers*, who had left a deep impression on the generation of 1912–14 for his work for Jewish life in Oxford and at the Oxford and St. George's Club,[6] and one from the town, Victor Zacharias Jessel, youngest son of Joel Zacharias, who had enlisted at the outbreak of war at the age of 18.[7]

CHAPTER SIX

BETWEEN THE WARS

As we have seen, the history of the community between the wars is virtually entirely an undergraduate story. It has been hard to write, since minute-books for the period between June 1920 and autumn 1937 were destroyed by enemy action. More information has been coming in from the press and from reminiscence until the last minute before publication, which has done much to modify what started as a fairly impressionistic account.

Undergraduates started to return to Oxford from the beginning of 1919, but it was not until May that a meeting, attended by twenty-two people, was able to contemplate any detailed plans for reorganization. It was agreed that arrangements for the synagogue would be in the hands of a sub-committee of the Adler Society, with Ephraim Lipson as its Treasurer, with a separate synagogue subscription of seven shillings a term. It was evidently contemplated that this sub-committee would organize Orthodox services, but that those who did not subscribe to them could have possession of the building for an alternative service at any time when it was not in use.

It was presumably this sub-committee which had the burden of facing the structural problems which Lipson had discovered in 1917; 'It was felt at the time that a minimum of expenditure should be incurred, and with the help of a generous subscription the corrugated iron roof was plugged, the walls repaired and the floor reset.'[1]

The main body of the Society would have weekly meetings on Saturday evenings, and was occupied with problems which money could not solve. A discussion meeting on assimilation in February 1919 had already revealed that the Balfour Declaration had sharpened attitudes on the Jewish future. It would be over-simplifying to talk of a split

between assimilationists and Zionists. The 'assimilationists' were not assimilationists, and genuinely believed in the possibility of an Anglo-Jewish identity, but they were now faced, as they had not been before the war, with a growing number of members who were Zionists in the most practical sense, for example, Herbert Samuel's son Edward. In May, only three weeks after the organization meeting, after two meetings oriented to Zionism, there were mass resignations, and a rump meeting passed a resolution that only non-controversial subjects such as Jewish history should be discussed and that the officers should invite speakers of all shades of opinion in the hope of inducing those members who had resigned to come back. Matters calmed down the following week, when Dr. Gaster delivered an inspiring address in the synagogue and a paper on Jewish historians from the pre-Spanish age to a very large meeting with many visitors, at which Herbert Samuel led the discussion. The term ended happily with a visit from boys from Oxford and St. George's, Basil Henriques' East End club.

The academic year 1919–20 saw some peace-making. Although a motion to confine the Society to the business of a literary circle without busying itself with any Jewish political movement, sponsored by proposers from both camps, was lost, a more acceptable formulation was found: the Society would be open to all Jewish members of the University and meet for the discussion alone of any questions of broad interest to Jews and for the collection and dissemination to its members of information on such subjects. The only remotely Zionist meeting that academic year was a report by Leonard Stein on the situation in Palestine. The gap was eventually filled, in February 1922, by the reanimation of the separate Zionist Society, under the name of the 'Erez Yisrael Society', by N. Sarif and A.S. Doniach, for the purpose of studying Zionism, the Palestine Mandate, Hebrew. and 'the Arabic language and literature'. Whether this last aim was ever carried out is extremely doubtful. In 1924, the old name of 'Zionist Society' was resumed.[2]

Although Oxford figured prominently in Jewish discussion in 1920 as a possible home for Jews' College, the subject was not formally raised in Oxford. The only notice that the Society took of proposals from the world outside was to turn down a proposal from the Central Kashrus Commission to establish a kosher restaurant and boarding house in Oxford; Mrs. Freedson was now providing kosher meals two doors from the synagogue, and this evidently satisfied what demand there was from those who were not provided by train with food from home.

In May 1920 Herbert Loewe came back from India and took up his

academic duties; dreams of a co-ordinating and inspiring personality were now fulfilled. For the eleven years he spent in Oxford, he was a much-beloved and exceptionally open-minded figure, doing his best for Jews of all persuasions and inclinations, though his own position was clear. 'He was the first person to show me', says one survivor, 'that it was possible to be orthodox without being fundamentalist.' He and his wife provided generous hospitality on Friday evening and Saturday lunch-time in his house at 29 Beaumont Street. In the afternoon there was a study-group, and at tea-time open house, followed on the short winter afternoons by the evening service and *havdalah*.

It now becomes easier to document the trend of undergraduates to come from increasingly varied backgrounds. The older families continue to be well represented, but we start to find the children of the great wave of Jewish immigration from Russia in 1890–1905. True working-class origins are attested, e.g. for Marcus Lipton of Merton, later a Labour Member of Parliament. Sons of Jewish clergy included Chaim Rabinovitch (later Raphael), son of a *hazan*, who had combined secular and talmudic education in Portsmouth, and Edgar Duschinsky (later Duchin) from St. Paul's, son of a former rabbi; he was sent to a *yeshivah* in Frankfurt for the four months between the time he left school and his arrival at Brasenose in 1928.[3]

The pre-war Liberal movement had by no means lost its impetus, and we have an account of it from its main reviver, Michael Franklin. 'In about 1923 I "gave" the garden of the synagogue to it and I started Liberal services there with the marvellously generousminded help of Herbert Loewe. Godfrey Samuel (my cousin) was I think a warden of the Orthodox and I claimed as an undergraduate of Oxford who was also Jewish the *right* to hold our Liberal services in the building and Godfrey agreed; in fact I became a co-warden of the whole synagogue. We got Dr Claude Montefiore and Rabbi Mattuck up frequently and my aunt Lily Montagu preached once – a great event. The secretary during my presidency of the congregation was Robert Henriques – no less (the novelist). Once Hertz, the then Chief Rabbi *not* known for his liberal views, came up and out of courtesy I attended his service. He proceeded to preach against me and like a Savonarola pointed to me and said "There is the man who is leading the Oxford Jews to Christianity". I felt rather flattered at the time. . . . I used to make "converts" to L.J. by having our sermons before *our* service but just after the orthodox one so that the orthodox members lingered on and listened to us – but such a devilish trick must be excused, I was only 21.'[4]

A minute book of Liberal services organized by Michael Franklin

survives from 1923. Attendances started with only 6 to hear Claude Montefiore, rose to 19 (including 5 Christians) for Rabbi Mattuck, and thereafter ran at 8, 7, 6, 12 (Perlzweig), 5, 5 ('for first time in history of Oxford Syn., a woman read from pulpit) Annie Samson read "Fires of God" by Drinkwater'), 7, 9, 15 2 (Claude Montefiore), 7, ?, 6 + 1, 5. Michaelmas Term started with 19 to hear Lily Montagu, dropped to 7 next week, but then rose to 25 and 26 without the benefit of a visiting speaker. The services were planned afresh each week, with selections from the Prayer Book, printed sermons, various readings including the more optimistic poems of Browning.

What is in fact recorded for 1925–6[5] is a union of the two sections of the community, with both the Orthodox and the Combined services being well attended. A debt of gratitude was acknowledged to R.V. Feldman and Michael Franklin for their efforts in originating and working the new scheme, as well as to Loewe for his help and advice. Addresses during the year had been given by the Revs. E. Drukker, E. Levine and Perlzweig, and Messrs. C.G. Montefiore, Lionel Jacob, and Basil Henriques. The Adler Society had also had a successful Trinity Term.

The Combined services were those on Friday evenings. when there was segregated male and female seating for those who wanted it as well as a mixed section, which disappeared for services the next morning. After a year or so, the Liberals stopped coming in the morning, not so much because of that as because of the length of the Reading of the Law.

Louis Crook, a house-furnisher now living in London, had been left as sole Trustee of the building for too long,[6] and a letter of March 1926 from the Charity Commission shows that thought was being given to reorganization. It was suggested that the mortgage be paid off, and this was duly done, though whether Louis Crook actually found all the money is unclear. He then conveyed his Trust to a purely University group, apparently designed to cover all interests: the youthful Liberal Michael Franklin, the veteran Reformer Laurie Magnus, H.D. Barnard, a recent graduate, and A.L. Emanuel, a retired Indian Civil Servant now settled in Oxford.

Even more serious was the state of the building. The incoming Wardens, Ashe Lincoln (Exeter) and Alan Mocatta (New College), in a letter to the *Jewish Chronicle*,[7] reported that the palliative measures taken immediately after the war had been ineffective. They were threatened with the collapse of the roof owing to the inroads of damp and rot. The scrolls, books, vestments, furniture, walls and floor were perishing through the excessive moisture, caused by the defective roof and

unprotected guttering. Permanently and thoroughly renovating the building would cost £520, for which they now appealed. By the autumn the work had been done and the building now presented an attractive appearance, but only £225 had yet been raised towards the cost;[8] the balance was eventually raised by A.L. Emanuel.

Activity in 1926 had become complex. There was normally a considerable overlap between synagogue attendance, of either form, and membership of the Adler Society. Those who attended the University Zionist Society are remembered as a distinct group. There was now also added an Oxford branch of the Anglo-Jewish Association. It was hoped that it would not only support the Anglo-Jewish Association, but would also serve 'as a bond to link together old Oxonians and those of the present day, to revive in their souls the ever-glowing memory of their Varsity days, by means of social functions such as Purim suppers.'[9]

Two particularly grand occasions are recalled from Herbert Loewe's closing years in Oxford. In February 1930 the 25th anniversary of the Adler Society was celebrated in full dress by 60 or so at the Randolph Hotel; an eight-course dinner (the French menu was given a Hebrew commentary) cost ten shillings and sixpence. The only discordant features were caused by the President, who had been told that Dr. Gaster was lame and Claude Montefiore deaf, but who proceeded to support Montefiore and shout at Dr. Gaster, and by Dr. Gaster himself, who, required to propose the health of the Adler Society, revealed a long-suppressed view that it should have been called the Gaster Society.[10] In June 1931 Loewe was leaving to take up a Readership in Cambridge. He ended his Oxford period by organizing a grand service, attended by the Mayor, the Vice-Chancellor, and many dignitaries of the City and the University. Though unfeeling and cynical undergraduates referred to the occasion as 'Loewe's Goodbye Party', the ostensible purpose was to celebrate the centenary of the birth of Adolf Neubauer. To this was added the ceremonial deposit of the Torah scrolls of the Canterbury Congregation, which was going into abeyance. After the service the assembled company was transported in coaches to the unveiling of three tablets commemorating the medieval Oxford Jewry, one on the Town Hall, one at the Botanical Gardens, the site of the medieval cemetery, and one at Osney at 'the scene of the martyrdom of Haggai the proselyte on 17 April 1222'. The curious will find the first two tablets easily enough, but the path to the third is not recommended; it may be some consolation to know that its historical accuracy is dubious.[11]

Loewe's departure left a grave gap, not so much in expertise as in

leadership and hospitality. Ephraim Lipson, whose sole communal function in the Loewe period had been as Oxford Representative on the Board of Deputies, resigned his Readership in 1931, on not getting a professorship which appeared to have been designed for him; he went off on a world tour and never returned to Oxford. Chaim Raphael stayed on after Schools as Cowley Lecturer in Post-Biblical Hebrew and was reinforced in 1934 by the arrival from Edinburgh of David Daiches, son of a distinguished Rabbi, to take a second degree; he recalls that he often conducted the service and did the Reading of the Law ('which required quite a lot of homework!'). There was a growing number of senior members with strong Jewish identities. Isaiah Berlin was first a Fellow of All Souls and then of New College, the first Jewish tutorial fellow since Samuel Alexander. Walter Ettinghausen was University Lecturer in German. David Daiches became Andrew Bradley Fellow of Balliol in 1936, Max Beloff Junior Research Fellow of Corpus in 1937. But these were young and not in a position to entertain. There were two occasions in 1935 when married couples entertained the Society, but this did not amount to much. The gap was partly filled by Isaac Berenblum, who arrived from Leeds in 1936 to do cancer research; in 1937 he and his wife were holding open evenings every week.

After a year without Loewe, there was a reorganization. In October 1932, the Adler Society and the Zionist Society amalgamated as the Oxford University Jewish Society, with the aim of having one society which would be representative of all the various types of Jews and could satisfy the needs of and speak for the whole of Oxford Jewry.[12] Some doubted whether this would be possible, and in fact 1932–3 and 1933–4 were not thought to be good years. Synagogue attendance seldom exceeded 14 or 15, and there were many weeks without a *minyan*. Attendances at the Society averaged 20 or so, and the Study Circle and the group which was learning Hebrew only attracted four or five each.[13]

1934–5 saw a marked improvement. Jonah Silman, writing as Warden[14] to chronicle it, attributed it to the keenness of the 'freshers', particularly the women, and even more to external circumstances. The bubble of German Jewish emancipation had been pricked by Hitler, and this had aroused grave misgivings in the minds of those who had been prepared until recently to travel the road leading to assimilation. The most potent factor of all was the stimulating effect of Jewish national rebirth in Palestine. (That the Society was Zionist in orientation this year is confirmed by its election of Nahum Sokolow, head of the World Zionist Organization, as Honorary President.) This position was attacked by an

anti-nationalist 'Law Student',[15] who doubted the reality of the revival, for which no numbers had been given, and saw no difference between Silman's language about Zionism and contemporary Nazi claims about German rebirth.

'Law Student' had asked for numbers, and, after a month, he got them.[16] If one counted everyone in Oxford who was reputed to be Jewish, whether or not they took any interest in Jewish affairs, there were 64 undergraduates and 13 undergraduettes, as well as some 23 other Jewish residents in the town (a number which by now will have included the first wave of academics from Germany). 72 of this 100 had in the last two terms shown at least some interest in Jewish activity. 35 attended the synagogue fairly regularly, with an average attendance of 22. There had been twelve meetings of the Society, with average attendances of 30, and an Annual Dinner with an attendance of 50. The Study Circle had a membership of 18 and an average attendance of 12–13, and the Hebrew Group had also doubled in size. Attendances and membership evidently continued to rise in 1935–6.[17]

In the same number as these figures appeared, Rabbi Dr. Samuel Daiches supported Silman's contentions about Jewish spirit in Oxford, and thought that too little was being done to support it. He had preached in February, and the cold in the synagogue had been so intense that it was almost impossible to sit there; he had only got warm in preaching. Besides a proper heating apparatus, Oxford needed a 'nice place' where the students could have kosher meals and where there could be a library where they could read Jewish and Hebrew books in comfort. In fact, it needed a 'Jewish Centre', and it was the duty of the leaders of the London Jewish community to devote more attention to the problem; nearly forty years were to elapse before this dream was realized.

Silman was surely right in thinking that times were changing. Whatever their own feelings about Judaism were, the rise of Nazism faced Jewish undergraduates with special problems, to which their responses were less likely to be religious than political, either on the general left or in a move towards Zionism.[18]

The sources improve in the last years before the war. First of all, we have the results of a survey of Jewish students conducted in 1936–7 on behalf of the Inter-University Jewish Federation and published in the *Jewish Year Book 1938*. Oxford reported 120 Jewish students in residence. The increase over the 77 of May 1935, which had been presented as comprehensive, is quite astonishing. It estimated that 65 of these 120 were 'conscious of their Jewishness', a somewhat vague phrase. It is not at

all clear how these figures are related to others. 33 were reported to be foreign, 12 German, 8 American, 5 Dominions, 3 Palestinians, 5 others. Of a sample of 50, 33 were doing Arts or Social Science subjects, a proportion totally different from any other British university except Cambridge; there were at the time at Oxford technically no medical students, the overwhelmingly favoured choice of Jewish students of the period.

In 1937, we once again get the assistance of the minute-books. There were two visiting ministers, one Reform and one Orthodox, in Hilary 1937, as well as six meetings, now normally on Sunday afternoon, neatly representing Zionism, the Left, Orthodoxy, Reform, Literature, and Social Work. Unfortunately, the old habit of recording attendances has died out. There are now new offices, a pair of Zionist Conveners,[19] one of them Lord Erleigh, later Marquess of Reading with little Jewish involvement, as well as a Discussion Group and a Hebrew Reading Circle under Walter Ettinghausen. But the summer is a blank, represented only by a printed circular asking for more synagogue attendance to supplement the hopelessly small congregation. Michaelmas Term was an improvement, though only four of the six speakers turned up.

In the remaining five terms before the war, the atmosphere is not unnaturally intense. Virtually every meeting began with some form of appeal, either for refugees or for Palestine; Ettinghausen was particularly firm in his belief that people should give until it hurt; every form of useless expenditure, pleasure and tinsel must be sacrificed. There were meetings which had nothing to do with the present situation, like one addressed by Isaiah Berlin on Jewish Music, but not many. The Society was lectured on and discussed every form of solving the crisis, Partition, Revisionism, Socialism, the Freeland Movement (a project to settle German refugees in Western Australia). They were given contrasting views on the strength of Arab resistance to Jewish settlement, and the Negev was presented as the most hopeful way of finding more space for settlement.

There clearly was national concern about the lack of Jewish leadership in Oxford from the social point of view. though I have found it hard to document. It was not until autumn 1938, seven years after Loewe's departure, that funds (£550 p.a.) were found to create a Readership in Post-Biblical Jewish Studies, to 'lecture and give instruction in the literature, history and social life of the Jew and . . . promote generally the study of such subjects in the University'. The understanding was that the appointment should go to Cecil Roth, now 38, an Oxford graduate with

a long list of historical publications but no permanent job, and he took up office in January 1939. The University acknowledged the benefaction as 'from Harry Sacher and certain of his friends'; the Roths themselves had no doubt that the Readership was financed by Marks and Spencer, at least for a seven-year experimental period. That a hospitality allowance came with the job, they always strenuously denied.

For the next twenty-five years or so, the Roth household, first at 1 Garford Road and then at 31 Charlbury Road, was a focus for undergraduate Jewish life. The pattern of entertainment maintained by the Loewes was restored and so was the instruction, informal and formal, based on a rather wider, but different kind of scholarship. From the undergraduate point of view, Roth's ability to listen as well as instruct was remarkable and extended to all sorts of people, though he and his wife had distinct preferences for some sorts. As will be seen, this had its disadvantages in a transformed Jewish Oxford. But my own personal debt to them is very great, and I am only one of many.[20]

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE SECOND WORLD WAR

The forty years in which the undergraduates had dominated the community came to a fairly abrupt end. Even before the war, Jewish refugees from Germany had been coming to Oxford, either more or less directly to the University, where they played a key role in transforming the University's performance in subjects from Greek literature to low-temperature physics, or because they had nowhere particular in England to go and knew about Oxford. On the whole, despite their experiences, the Jewish involvement of this first wave was not all that high. The next wave, those who were evacuated or who removed themselves from the German bombing of London, was a very different matter. Over and above this mainstream, as the war went on, other elements were added, a hostel for about 15 German Jewish children in North Oxford at 1 Linton Road and, particularly at festival times, the need for providing for Jewish servicemen, of various nationalities, stationed in the neighbourhood.

The first impact can hardly be better described than in the report of Walter Ettinghausen, Senior Treasurer of the Congregation, to an Annual General Meeting on 2 June 1940,[1] though the influx was probably gathering pace even as he wrote.

Report for the Nine Months ending May 31st 1940

General: The past nine months cover the period from the beginning of the war down to May 31st. In this period the structure of Oxford Jewry has radically altered. What barely two years ago was a tiny community consisting of perhaps half a dozen resident families and a number of undergraduate and graduate members of the University has developed into one of some thousand souls. We have to-day something like four or five hundred refugees from Germany and other

Central European countries, some two hundred children evacuated from London at the outbreak of war, and not less than two hundred permanent or temporary residents in the city. It is certainly the largest settlement of Jews in Oxford since the thirteenth century, although with the return of many individuals to London and the re-emigration of others to countries overseas it is not to be expected that our present numbers will be kept up after the end of the war.

Although many, perhaps most, of these Jews stand outside the organized Jewish community as represented by the Synagogue and the various Jewish societies existing in the city, yet a heavy burden has been thrown by this influx on the Oxford Jewish Congregation. At the outbreak of war a very large number of individuals were assisted with advisory and in some cases financial help, and many enquiries were answered. The joint Evacuation Committee in London appointed the Rev. J. Weinberg to take charge of the work that arose as a result of the transference to Oxford of schoolchildren, prisoners, blind persons, hospital patients and private individuals, and the Senior Treasurer would like to take this opportunity of recording the great help he has received from Mr. Weinberg and to suggest that the Congregation accord him his special thanks. Without his help it would have been impossible to deal efficiently with the many tasks and problems that have arisen.

It is estimated that on the New Year and the Day of Atonement between 200 and 250 persons were present in the Synagogue and the Vestry Room during the Services. The normal seating accommodation of the Synagogue is 50. There have been many other memorable occasions in the life of the community. Special children's services were held on Chanukah and on Purim; on Friday evening, November 10th, and Sabbath morning, November 11th, special services were held to commemorate the pogroms of the previous year in Germany, and sermons were delivered by Dr. K. Rosenthal and Rabbi Dr. M. Eschelbacher to crowded congregations of German Jews; on Lag B'Omer, May 26th, which had been appointed a Day of National Prayer, a special service was held and the Synagogue filled to capacity. On Pesach, apart from a Children's Seder in the Vestry Room, a communal Seder was held in St. Giles's Hall and attended by some 70 persons; it has been calculated that this year at least 200 Jews celebrated Seder in Oxford, again probably the largest number since the dispersal of the mediaeval settlement. During the period under review five Jewish deaths occurred in Oxford, and others in the

villages around. Three burials have taken place in the cemetery at Wolvercote, and two marriages have been celebrated in the Synagogue. It is interesting to record that at a marriage on December 31st the services of the Secretary for Marriages were required for the first time since the year 1905. Many circumcisions have been performed, largely as a result of the transfer of maternity cases from London.

Few changes have been made in the Synagogue building. A few small repairs have been carried out, and an expense of some magnitude was incurred when it became necessary to repair and repaint all the gutters and rain-water pipes. The Synagogue has been presented with an antique key for the Ark by Dr. Cecil Roth, and with a Besamim box by Mr. Justin Schwarz. An interesting development during this period has been the increased use made of the Synagogue buildings for other than ritual purposes. The Oxford Zionist Society has held several meetings in the Synagogue and the Vestry Room; Hebrew and religion classes have been, and are, held regularly in the Vestry Room, which has also been the weekly meeting-place on Sunday nights of a group of some forty young people. It is no exaggeration to say that the Synagogue has, certainly to a greater extent than during the past twenty years, become something of a focal point for communal activities.

Finance: The financial statement presented to-day balances at a sum approaching £80. The Congregation has had an increase in income, but at the same time a proportionally greater increase in expenditure. The increase under both heads is attributable directly to the expansion of the community, and it is to be regretted that many, indeed the majority, of the Jews now resident in Oxford have not borne their share of the communal charges. The excess of income over expenditure, which in the statement stands at £12, is more apparent than real, as the Communal Fund, which represents sums disbursed before September 1st 1939 as well as cash payments since that date, has a deficit of some £25. This deficit has been borne so far by the private purse of the Senior Treasurer, but this is clearly not a state of affairs that the Congregation should desire to see perpetuated. It will be necessary in the months and years to come to raise larger sums than have been raised up to the present.

June 2nd 1940

W.G. ETTINGHAUSEN,
Senior Treasurer

Another wave of evacuation set in in September as the blitz on London developed. Oxford was packed and its resources were stretched to the utmost. On 6 October, an Extraordinary Meeting, with about fifty persons present, was held in the synagogue at 4 p.m. Ettinghausen was in the chair until 4.45 p.m. when his place was taken by Neville Laski, an eminent K.C., until recently President of the Board of Deputies, who had held office in the Adler Society in 1910 and was a Trustee of the synagogue. He was, curiously enough, a nephew of Joel Zacharias.

After an opening statement by Ettinghausen on the problems which had arisen as a result of the evacuation of Jews from London to Oxford, a general discussion took place. The main subjects were the problem of accommodation, the provision of kosher meat, the institution of cultural activities, *shiurim*, etc. and of a Habonim group for the children. Volunteers were called for in connection with Chevra Kadisha work. It was resolved to open a Jewish Information Office on the lines of a Citizens' Advice Bureau, in order to offer help to Jewish evacuees and others with their problems and difficulties. It was agreed to form a Residents' Advisory Committee to advise the Hon. Officers on current problems: N. Laski, M. Rosette, B.I. Beckman and A. Behr. The Committee was given power to co-opt not more than three additional members.

This Residents' Advisory Committee rapidly turned into a Committee of Management, normally under the Chairmanship of Mr. Beckman. Neville Laski, made President in 1941, had lost his Presidency of the Board of Deputies to Selig Brodetsky the previous year at the hands of what was described as a Zionist caucus, but his legal practice and other communal affairs kept him busy, and he was only intermittently present. Beckman, also an Oxford graduate, had brought his young family to Oxford, but commuted to London throughout the war to maintain his solicitor's practice. Those with experience of wartime travelling can only admire the strength he brought to the affairs of the community. He is remembered in the Beckman Library of the new Centre.

Among the matters which the new Committee took in hand was the creation of a new membership scheme. Undergraduate membership before the war had been ten shillings a term. No formal 'adult' membership was created until late 1940, though seats had been sold for the High Holydays. The initial membership figure was set at £2/2/0 for members, £1/0/0 for married ladies whose husbands were members; this would give the right to a fixed seat.

As will be seen from later figures, actual membership of the Congregation never came remotely near the figures recorded as registered for kosher meat or as attending services. The impression of the present generation that there was an enormous Congregation during the war is, at least formally, false. No doubt, at least some people who were already paying to London synagogues continued to do so; a brief attempt by the United Synagogue to get some co-ordination of membership came to nothing. Membership had stood at 45 in December 1940, but something of a drive took it up the next month to 65 males and 17 ladies. By October 1941 there were 68 gentlemen and 28 ladies; 22 members had left during the year, mainly on account of returns to London. The drift back to London continued, and, in November 1942, the figure, probably not including Cowley, was 57 gentlemen and 32 ladies. The figure at November 1943 was 75 men and 45 ladies, at November 1944, 85 gentlemen and 45 ladies.

The Committee at first only controlled the old synagogue. There had already been High Holiday services in 1940 for Cowley and Headington in Tyndale House, next to the Transport and General Workers Union offices in Cowley Road and also to a British Restaurant (distracting on *Yom Kippur*) and this continued to be a venue for them for the next few years.[2] The Committee first took cognizance of other communities in December 1940, when it was reported that Rev. Blackman and Mr. Hirsch wanted to form a synagogue in Headington, Mr. Julius Cohen of Glanville Road one in Cowley. By March 1941 it had emerged that there were now two synagogues in Headington; the Committee refused to meet them until they were reunited. Cowley was another matter. In May 1941, arrangements were being made with a Cowley delegation, on the lines that members of the Cowley synagogue would become members of the Oxford Jewish Congregation, which would then assume responsibility for the rent of the Cowley synagogue in the East Oxford School, and would help in the conduct of services on special occasions, at which Mr. Weinberg would be prepared to preach; Cowley would get a seat on the Oxford Board of Management. The negotiations dragged on for many months; it is clear that part of the problem was the position of Rabbi Stransky of the Cowley *minyan*. It was not until February 1942 that Mr. J. Cowen, now Chairman of 'the Cowley and Iffley Hebrew Congregation'. reported his committee's agreement to being a *minyan* within the Oxford Jewish Synagogue, continuing, for reasons of distance, to use the hall which they were at present using, and retaining complete autonomy as to the finance and control of services and educational

facilities in that district. They would recognize Mr. Weinberg as the minister of the United Oxford Jewish Synagogue; Rabbi Stransky would be recognized as a duly appointed Teacher of Hebrew, whose salary would be the responsibility of the Cowley and Iffley *minyan*. This would get two representatives on the Board of Management. Two points remained unsettled, whether Rabbi Stransky might also be described as 'the religious guidance of the Cowley-Iffley *minyan*', and which body was to get the subscriptions of existing paying members of the Oxford Jewish Congregation who lived East of the Plain. In April these problems were resolved by the resignation of Rabbi Stransky, doubtless dissatisfied with an even more ambiguous formula which had been devised about his status, and agreement to merge the finances of the two bodies completely. Among the new members brought on to the Board of Management by the merger was a certain Mr. L. Bloom, whose energy is visible in the minutes from the first. No formal arrangements were ever entered into with the Headington communities, though Mr. Weinberg was already preaching there by December 1941. It was simply assumed, for the High Holidays of 1942, that additional services for Cowley and Headington were a central responsibility. We hear of no later service at Headington.

Various other additional services were held as the need arose, for example, one in 1942 for the 'German element of the Community' at St. Philip's and St. James' Hall, Leckford Road, and most notably at the High Holidays of 1944, when there were about 170 people in the synagogue, 160 in Cowley at the Magdalen Road Mission Hall, and an overflow in the Oxford Union Debating Hall with 350 members of the forces and 150 civilians.

What the size of normal congregations was is not clear, but those who came raised the standard unrecognizably. Rabbi Dr. Samuel Daiches, who lived in Oxford throughout the war, claimed in January 1943 in his sermon to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the synagogue that its most brilliant period had been from the end of the summer of 1940 to the autumn of 1942, two years of 'high spirituality. Never had the Synagogue had so many devout worshippers'.

It was also more Orthodox in its religious orientation than ever before. In October 1940, it was agreed, on the proposal of Dr. Roth, that 'the Oxford Jewish Congregation, being under the jurisdiction of the Chief Rabbi, follows in its statutory services the usages of the Synagogues under his guidance'. It would use for all purposes the ritual of Singer's Prayer-Book, supplemented on the Festivals by the Routledge Festival

Prayer-Book, and in cases of dispute or uncertainty would adopt the usages of the Great Synagogue, Duke's Place, London. At the same meeting, however, the possibility was raised of holding services according to the Liberal Jewish rite at special times. Nevertheless, in January 1942, the Management Committee, with Neville Laski in the chair, turned down a request from Lily Montagu for the use of the synagogue for Liberal services, though she had preached there at least in 1923 and possibly on other occasions. So much for the attempt made in 1926 to assert Liberal interests by making Michael Franklin a Trustee; if any Liberal or Reform services were held in Oxford during the war, I do not know about them, although Donald Silk does remember being sent to a Liberal Hebrew Class. On the other hand, when Laski's son was Barmitzvah in November 1944, the Committee found no difficulty in allowing a Sephardi service in the synagogue, conducted by the Rev. David Bueno de Mesquita.

An early question for the Management Committee of October 1940 was that of a minister. They had one on the spot and considered no alternative. Jacob Weinberg had been born in Vilna in 1910, and was the son of Rabbi Hirsch Weinberg, who ministered in the East End for thirty years; he had been educated at King's College, London as well as at Jews' College.[3] His career would show that he was capable of steady self-improvement, but at this stage of it some might think that he had intellectual limitations. They did not stop him getting down to jobs which had to be done, and it is not obvious that any of the disagreements which arose were of his making. Although he had already been performing many ministerial duties, he had originally been appointed from London by the Joint Emergency Committee for Jewish Education for educational purposes, and was paid for this from London (£234 per annum in 1942). He was now formally appointed minister of the Oxford Congregation, to be paid at £104 per annum from October 1940 for performing ministerial functions. He also got bonuses from time to time. This dual arrangement later caused trouble, when it was found that the London Committee had a principle against paying ministers for doing its teaching.

Education was his prior responsibility, and it took up a great deal of the Committee's time as well. The arrangement in theory was that paying for it and organizing was the responsibility of the London Committee, though Oxford was expected to make a contribution on behalf of its 'own' students. In fact, although London commanded most of the money and superior expertise, the Oxford Committee was

inevitably drawn in. It was on the spot and could, with some effort, find out what was going on; there was a sufficient pool in Oxford to find teachers if needed. In 1944, after long experience and some touchy episodes, like the sacking by London of someone thought well of in Oxford and the problem about Weinberg's dual salary, Oxford eventually took over total responsibility for Jewish education in the area, with a grant of £350 p.a. from the Joint Emergency Committee. It had been doing most of the work for a long time.

The problems were manifold. They were probably at their largest in 1940, but to take the position as revealed by investigation in May 1942, there were then in public education 260 Jewish children in Oxford City: 55 in Headington, 71 in Cowley and Iffley, 44 in New Marston, 31 in Hinksey, 59 in North Oxford. There was also thought to be enough work for a full-time teacher in Wallingford. We have no material for dividing these numbers between those with their families and those evacuated by themselves. The children attended a wide variety of schools, one or two of which taught on Saturdays. Children of primary age were mostly with their parents and could be made amenable; secondary school children, evacuated on their own, were a good deal less so. Though the Directors of Education were happy to produce lists of Jewish children, they were reluctant actually to get them to Jewish instruction. Not all those engaged in teaching were suited to the job, and Weinberg and Committee members sometimes uncovered some cases of clear inadequacy. The general trend was to centralizing the teaching, but there were transport problems.

The very first meeting of the Advisory Committee in October 1940 had seen the desirability of establishing a social and communal centre; it was said that people should be given something with which to occupy themselves and so kept off the streets. After a fortnight's investigation of possible premises, it was agreed to take the Methodist Church Hall at 94 Walton Street for a weekly donation of £1 to the funds of the Church Hall. The Communal Centre, under a Sub-committee of Mrs. Ettinghausen, Senior, Mrs. Laski, Mrs. J. Weinberg and Mr. W.G. Ettinghausen, was opened on 21 November. There were some initial problems with the staff. The first manager was not satisfactory and given one month's notice, and an employee was injured in the course of her work, which involved arranging a settlement of about £60. But things rapidly settled down, principally thanks to Mrs. Ettinghausen, Welfare Worker for the Central Jewish Committee for Evacuation, and, although there were some internal complaints about the tendency of the

attendants to split into cliques and there was sometimes a shortage of volunteer workers, the main aims were successfully fulfilled throughout the war, to the admiration of the Town Clerk, who remarked that it had eased many problems. The aim was that the Centre would be financially self-supporting, and, after its first year, when its net cost was £102/4/6, it became so.

The provision of kosher meat was mostly dealt with outside the Committee. There were several *shochetim* among the evacuees, and arrangements were entered into with a local butcher on the nineteenth century system, but on a far vaster scale. It should be explained that only ordinary meat was rationed and that on a price basis. Since kosher meat was dearer because of the costs of *shechita*, Jews got less of it, and this made chickens and offal, which were unrationed but only sporadically available, more important. In March 1941, the individuals registered for kosher meat had reached about 800 (a figure more or less maintained throughout the war), and about 150 fowls were sold every week, but by May the difficulty of obtaining live fowls had reduced the figure by more than half, with consequences for the Congregation's income. There were public relations problems, gradually solved, in the large Jewish queues in the narrow alleys of the Covered Market, and the customers themselves complained that the shop was not kept in a clean state and that fowls were killed in the shop in the presence of women and children.

There was of course a vastly increased number of burials. At a fairly early stage in the war, the City Engineer started worrying about the need for large numbers of graves in the event of air attack, and the plot at Wolvercote allotted for Jewish burials was eventually extended in late 1944. Initially, Ettinghausen turned his own hands to *taharah*, but experts were again found.

The Committee also spent a good deal of time on personal rows. One long-lasting one which developed in Cowley mostly stayed there without impinging on the main Congregation until after the war. But a great deal of time was spent on Cecil Roth. The impression conveyed by the minutes is that the Committee had enormous respect for his position and learning, but were gradually worn out by what seemed to them his unreasonable touchiness, his refusal to take Weinberg seriously as a minister, and a persistent undocumented insistence that there were massive conversionist activities attacking refugees and undergraduates alike, which the Congregation was doing too little to counter. What the scale of this problem really was I have no idea, though I do happen to know of one officer of the University Jewish Society who became a

Roman Catholic. At Roth's insistence, various series of lectures on Jewish Ethical Teaching were instituted, first at the synagogue and then at the Jewish Centre in Walton Street. It was not obvious that these had any marked effect, and they could create problems of their own, as when Isaac Berenblum gave a particularly individualistic one which caused complaint. Though Roth was on the Management Committee for most of the war, he seldom attended; he did come to half-yearly General Meetings to raise his main points and to dispute the minutes of his interventions at the previous meeting. When he was elected the Congregation's Representative on the Board of Deputies, even these attendances ceased, to create new complaints that the Congregation was getting no reports from its Representative.

Brief excursions into the pages of the *Jewish Chronicle* give another side.[4] Although his wife wrote his biography as of a 'Historian without Tears', he was by 1943 occupied on a plane which made the problems of Oxford communal organization relatively unimportant. Even before the details of the physical destruction of European Jewry became clear, he was appalled by the destruction of centre after centre of Jewish learning, the life-blood of Jewish survival. The future of Jewry rested with Britain and America, and in Britain there was rapid disintegration. The old families were declining in their commitment to public service and even financial support, and were rapidly leaving the community altogether. That trend was being enhanced by the conversionist drive; he was constantly having cases brought to his notice of undergraduates at both universities converted to Christianity. The essential organizations of Anglo-Jewry had ceased to mean anything, since they had no sincerity behind them. In the next generation there would only be a few committed Jews and they would not allow him to speak without a skull-cap. In this mood, he treated as cataclysmic a conversation with a small boy who claimed to know the story of Joseph and, when challenged, produced a fairly accurate account of the Nativity and the Massacre of the Innocents. The teacher and the Committee thought it outrageous that he had omitted to mention that the child was only four and a half and attending his second synagogue class; they were missing a good deal of his point, though they could rightly think that they were maintaining Jewish life in their own practical way.

There was another cause of conflict, the status of the undergraduates in the synagogue. He did not hold the extreme view of Herbert Loewe[5] that the position was the same as in Cambridge and that the undergraduates were entitled to full control, which would have been

hardly realistic in the circumstances, but he did think, with some reason, that they were historically entitled to joint control. However, few of the rapidly changing undergraduates were inclined to press the point; they were happy to attend the general services. He tried to initiate the occasional University service, but the Committee did not care for some of the things he said. Beckman did feel that there ought to be one service a term conducted by undergraduates, but they showed no immediate interest and it was not until autumn 1944 that it was agreed to have regular undergraduate services at 6 on Fridays.

There was a final blow-up when the undergraduates asked for a Saturday morning service in February 1945, and it simultaneously turned out that one of them had written directly to the Chief Rabbi about the affairs of the Congregation. He apologized, and the Committee agreed to the service, suggesting that they invited an outside speaker. When it turned out that they wanted Roth to address it, Beckman's original reaction was that he and Laski would resign if this happened; it is not quite clear if it did. By the time I arrived in autumn 1945, there was a sharp distinction between Friday evening University services, run by undergraduates and attended by Roth in cap and gown, and Saturday morning services which, I was given to understand, would not appeal to anyone who had any regard for dignity and decorum. Meanwhile, Laski had consulted the title-deeds of the synagogue and convinced himself that it had been established by the Jewish townspeople of Oxford and that undergraduates had no special rights in it, though they would always be welcome. Provided this was clearly understood, there would be no objection to their organizing a service and dinner in November 1945 to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the University Jewish Society and the 75th of the passing of the University Tests Act.[6]

There were many other Jewish organizations in Oxford which operated entirely outside the structures of the Congregation. Of these, the best documented is the Oxford Women's Zionist Society, of which the minute-book for 1943–5 survives. The Presidents were Lady Samuel and Lady Fitzgerald (nee Bischoffsheim); Lady Samuel at least was a good deal more than a figure-head. Mrs.I. Goldstein, Mrs M. Berlin and Mrs B. Horovitz were particularly active, but the work was spread around a good deal among a membership of 60 or so. There was a Knitting Circle, operating for the Russian Army and the R.A.F., and a great deal of fund-raising by organizing public lectures and concerts. There was a general atmosphere of grim determination and seriousness (most Committee meetings ended with readings from Zionist literature), and the minutes reflect much more fully than those of the Congregation reactions to the

growing realization of the European Jewish disaster and other events of Jewish concern. They protested against the imprisonment of Polish Jewish soldiers for seeking to join the British Army in order to escape anti-semitism in the Polish Army. They strongly disapproved of the murder of Lord Moyne and called on the Jewish Agency to adopt strong measures against such excesses. But they were always intensely practical, and activities such as providing clothes for the remnants of the concentration camps became more and more important.

We know a great deal less about the other Jewish organizations, except when their meetings got into the local or Jewish press. There was a branch of the League of Jewish Women, often blending with the Women's Zionist Society towards the end of the war, a Zionist Society, a Poale Zion Society, an Oxford Keren Hayesod Committee, quite apart from national Anglo-Jewish organizations, who frequently met in Oxford.

Youth activity calls for special attention. Some 40 young people were already meeting in the synagogue vestry on Sunday evenings before June 1940, but the formal creation of the Oxford Jewish Youth Club dates to December 1940, under the Chairmanship of Alan Silverman. For the next year it met in or next to the Jewish Centre, but it had interruptions, and, apart from the odd reference to a 'Youth Council' organizing a dance in January 1943, we lose sight of it until July 1944, when it was refounded with 25 members at its first meeting. By December it had a membership of 44, meeting for three hours on Sunday evenings. Their elders thought they should be more serious and get lectures on Jewish history and have monthly services conducted by themselves on Saturday afternoons; little came of this. Overlapping in date was the more Zionist Habonim, of which we know little.

There was a regular succession of Jewish undergraduates throughout the war, since there was more system than there had been in the First World War about giving cadets short academic courses along with their preliminary training. The University Jewish Society operated throughout the war, but there is another gap in its minute-books. In 1943, at least, it was active. It organized a public meeting in January 1943 on the plight of European Jewry, chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, and also influenced the Union to take the matter up. Both meetings resulted in resolutions urging the Government to take more active measures to halt the destruction. Laski thought that the Honorary Officers of the Congregation should have been consulted about this and an invitation to the Chief Rabbi to come to Oxford.

All this activity, it was eventually realized, needed some form of co-

ordination, and in April 1943 an Oxford Jewish Council was formed under Beckman's chairmanship, to which all organizations had delegates. Little survives about its activities except its fund-raising. By November 1943, it had raised £800 for Keren Hayesod, and over £1000 for the Board of Deputies Essential Services Appeal. Whether greater knowledge of its activities would improve our picture, I do not know.

One substantial and difficult matter remains to be discussed. It is well known that there was a great deal of anti-semitism in England during the war, substantially as a response to wartime strains. The correspondence columns of the *Jewish Chronicle* thought that the press did little to repress it and was more interested in reporting black market cases involving Jews than particulars of Jewish servicemen and deaths in service. My impression so far is that the Oxford press had an honourable record; the *Oxford Times* was retrospectively hostile to many aspects of the mass internments of summer 1940. However, its factual reports of court-cases reveal, probably only as the tip of an iceberg, some of the things which were being said. In August 1940. a lorry driver was charged with creating disaffection by telling soldiers 'You are mugs to fight for two bob a day, while enemy aliens are living in luxury in the Isle of Man', and in October a prominent Zionist official claimed to have been lured into a field by a soldier and told 'You are a Jew and you and your like will be turned out of Oxford. Now hand over all the money you have.'[7]

Much of the trouble was created by housing shortage. One correspondent claimed that he had been forced to leave his hotel because it had raised its prices, though rich aliens seemed to have no difficulty in paying either there or at other places.[8] The theme bothered more dispassionate observers. In a letter of late October 1940, Kathleen Haldane, widow of Professor J.S. Haldane and mother of Professor J.B.S. Haldane and Naomi Mitchison, wrote, 'Oxford with a normal population of 90,000 has 150,000 and no new houses. People simply won't stay in the country and drift back here, some of them back into the institutions they were drafted from, but others, with plenty of money, bribing people to take them in. There has been a good deal of that, lodgers turned out (people with work here) to make room for well-to-do East End Jews and it isn't good for anti-Semitic feeling to be allowed to spread. I never heard a murmur of it before down here.'[9] Her daughter, collecting material for Mass Observation, paid a visit to Oxford in January 1941 and noted 'Quite a bit of anti-semite feeling here, mostly against the middle-class refugees, partly from the south coast. None against the working-class ones from Coventry etc.'[10] In an even more worried mood, in an address

given in March 1942 to students of University College London evacuated to Bangor, the historian Norman Baynes, whose liberal credentials were impeccable, spoke about the need to maintain the college's traditions of tolerance. 'We look out upon the Anti-Semitism of other lands and we comfort ourselves with the soothing thought: "That could never happen here." But have we any right to be so sure of that? There are British Fascists who are prepared to inflame hostility against the Jews, and there will be many who will listen. Have you read the reports of the situation in the East End of London published in the papers of the Society of Jews and Christians? One feels there is a lot of gunpowder about. And the conduct of alien Jews in this country – if Oxford provides a fair sample – does not help: there are many in Oxford today who will tell you that Hitler in his Anti-Semitic policy has provided a model for others to follow. I have an uncomfortable feeling that a wave of Anti-Semitism in this country might be called up at short notice, without insuperable difficulty.'[11] Such worries eventually prompted a meeting of the Oxford branch of the National Council of Civil Liberties in July 1943. No Jewish organizations were invited, and the concern of the meeting was to fight against any division in the country into first and second class citizens. There was a small majority in favour of legislation to counteract libels on communities.[12]

Given the context and the nature of their concern, the observations of Baynes and Mrs. Haldane about the conduct of alien Jews in Oxford cannot be simply brushed aside, but they are hard to investigate. Oxford was in a process of rapid transformation, which had begun with a large working-class influx into the motor trade in the 1930s and was now enhanced by the strains of war and evacuation. Although they were only a fraction of the problem, the number of registered aliens in Oxford doubled from December 1939 to December 1940 to over 2000, of whom 275 males and 702 females were enemy aliens,[13] probably mostly Jews. They were an easy target on whom to blame the strains of overcrowding, and the isolated case which caused irritation, if it existed, could have been magnified many times.

Obviously, there was some simple nonsense. Ettinghausen in 1939 was called on to investigate a report that antisemitic agitation was rampant in Nettlebed on the road to Henley. Investigation showed that there were in fact no Jewish evacuees in Nettlebed. 'The explanation was simple: the manners and speech of these working-class London women and children were utterly foreign, and therefore offensive, to the simple farm-workers of Nettlebed, who had never seen a Jew in their lives. They took it for

granted that such uncouth Cockney-speaking people must be Jews, and cursed them accordingly. There was nothing we could do about it: to the good people of Nettlebed these people *were* Jews (by definition, if you like).'[14]

It may be doubted whether there were many wealthy East End Jews and there was little comfortable accommodation to be had. One East End Jew reports casually 'I arrived in August 1940 with my parents when I was a mere slip of a lad. They managed to get one room in Bullingdon Road and I shared a room with a relative in Hurst Street.'[15] There were some relatively prosperous refugees who had seen trouble coming well in advance and had settled their activities in Oxford, but those I knew will have been pretty scrupulous about their behaviour. A much larger number of refugees had been translated from security to penury. Some of them worked their way back from the humblest occupations to some form of stability and normality; some carried on with lives which were literally wrecked and lived out their time in Oxford with obsessive economy. That they were under abnormal strain was recognized in some newspaper reports. There was the wife whose husband and four sons were interned; the sons, of whom the youngest was 16, were whisked off to Canada without notice. Another of 28 died from eclampsia in pregnancy after her husband had been transported to Australia. It would be ridiculous to claim that all Jews in Oxford were saintly, but they, as well as the citizens of Oxford, had much to contend with.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE COMMUNITY REFASHIONED

The end of the war brought two contrasting movements to Oxford Jewry. The undergraduates returned in large numbers, and the evacuees from London went home; only those stayed who had established businesses in Oxford and saw no reason to abandon them. Many of the German refugees had no other base in England and also stayed.

I shall pass rapidly over the undergraduates. In the first years after the war, their main Jewish preoccupation was with what remained of the European Jews and the struggle to open the doors of Palestine which developed into the establishment of the State of Israel. It was a feverish time, as one did the rounds of all sorts of meetings to put the case, and things were seen very much in black and white. I have a vivid memory of being in the chair at a meeting of the University Jewish Society addressed by a Jewish don who thought that there was something to be said for the British Government. I was much criticized for closing the meeting before his opponents had their full say, but I suspect that he has always felt that I had not protected him enough. Only one undergraduate actually went to fight for Israel; he was not only badly wounded, but got into serious trouble with his tutor.

One local undergraduate development calls for mention now. In 1948, Passover fell in term, with consequent strains even for those who were only moderately Orthodox. The Congregation was sympathetic and provided a gas-stove in the vestry for small-scale cooking, and this developed into more extended provision for kosher meals, which gradually spread into the synagogue itself.

The Congregation was struggling with steep numerical decline, and the major wartime institutions were wound up one after the other. Mr. Laski returned to London and the office of President was not filled until

1949, when Professor S.H. Frankel was appointed. The main executive office was that of Senior Treasurer and was held, except for an interruption in 1948 and 1949, by Mr. Laurie Bloom. His furrier's shop was centrally placed opposite Balliol, and he acquired a position as representative of the Jews of Oxford comparable to that of Joel Zacharias, eventually becoming President of the Oxford Chamber of Commerce. His energy was remarkable and effective, but, again like Joel Zacharias, he liked to do things himself; if minutes were kept after his return to office in 1950, they do not survive.

The services of Mr. Weinberg, who was awarded the Rabbinical Diploma in 1947, were retained until the spring of 1948, when he left for South Africa.[1] Virtual non-recognition by the University lasted, absurdly, right until the end, and, although I was sent by the University Jewish Society to speak at his farewell party, it was hard to gloss over the fact that the Committee, unlike every other Oxford Jewish organization, had refused to make him even a token present.

For two years, the Congregation struggled with the problem of finding a successor, whom they could hardly afford. Was there to be a minister-teacher or a *shochet*-minister? A *shochet* was indeed briefly employed until was seen to be more sensible to bring meat in from outside and have the conditions under which it was sold supervised by the Reading minister. Various potential ministers were interviewed. There seems to have been sharp disagreement about their merits, and, even when one was agreed on and money even somehow found to buy a house for him, he did not like it and went elsewhere. Thereafter the search was apparently dropped, and there was a period of distinct decline. Hebrew classes were maintained, and the undergraduates conducted services during term, but vacation services, except on the High Holidays, when visiting Readers were employed, more or less came to an end.

The most lively Jewish organization of the period was the Women's Zionist Society which was active charitably and educationally. Other needs were met by a Jewish Social Circle which organized various successful major functions at irregular intervals and tried to ensure more continuous activity; at least its very large committee meetings fulfilled that purpose.

Gradually, new families arrived who had not been in Oxford during the war. Special importance attaches to two. George Silver, after wartime service feeding the army in Burma, opened Long John's Restaurant in Park End Street in 1947; he and his wife would both eventually be Presidents of the Congregation and much more besides.

Dr. Samuel Segal, son of Moses Segal, had only not been born in Oxford in 1902 because his mother had gone back to London for the confinement. After service in the R.A.F., he had been elected M.P. for Preston in 1945. He lived briefly in Oxford, but the loss of his seat in 1950 sent him back to work for the Ministry of Health until 1962, and his real involvement only starts then.

University expansion now brought in more senior Jews, and not only in the specialized posts attached to the University itself. Until 1939, only Isaiah Berlin, elected at New College in 1938, had succeeded Samuel Alexander as a college tutorial fellow, but colleges were now more welcoming. My view is that there was a period of about five years in the 1950s when colleges were more prepared to elect Jews than Roman Catholics. Not all the new appointees had Jewish involvement, but some did, and they were joined by an increasing number of Jews in the various research establishments, in general medical practice and in the hospitals. Other professionals in law and accountancy were slower to arrive, but came in due course. Many of the new arrivals had come from similar social backgrounds to those of the existing community, and relations were not difficult, though no doubt the University members were sometimes found awkward.

There were eventually two main organizational consequences. The newer generation of women had a fairly clear idea of what they wanted in the community where they were bringing up their children, and in any case felt they needed something broader to supplement the rather stiff attitudes of the Women's Zionist Society. In 1960 they formed a Women's Lodge of B'nai B'rith, thinking that they needed the support of a national organization for their aims. The men shortly followed suit; the lodges united in 1975. B'nai B'rith gradually took over various communal functions, particularly in sponsoring a Friendship Club for the elderly and, from 1970, in creating the *Oxford Menorah*, a bi-monthly newsletter allegedly for the children, but serving much wider purposes in keeping the community together.

The second change came in 1963, after Dr. Segal had retired from the Ministry of Health and moved to Oxford. He and others felt that the organizational work of the Congregation in a period of expansion should not be left to Laurie Bloom alone and needed wider involvement. The suggestion was that Mr. Bloom should become President and that the burden of work should be spread, but this was not acceptable. Segal became Secretary-Treasurer in July 1963 and in January 1964 George Silver took over as President; Professor Frankel had felt bound to support

Bloom. For the historian, the change is manifest in the changed form of the Annual Report and Balance Sheet for 1962–3. Bloom's simple typed accounts are replaced by a printed Annual Report with a good deal of detail. The task facing the new team is described in the next chapter.

CHAPTER NINE

TOWARDS A NEW BUILDING

When the minute-book covering the period from 1940 to 1949 came to an end, the Committee of the Congregation was not only occupied with finding a new minister; it was also discussing the details of refurbishing the old building. Since I have not seen any documentary material of the next ten years or so, I cannot say precisely when the conviction became established that the building was at the end of its useful life and that a new building was necessary. The degree to which undergraduate meals had taken over the synagogue had certainly done much to show that more space was needed.[1]

Various points would determine the nature of the solution. If Oxford had been an ordinary community, there is no doubt that it would have had a new building appropriate for a small community by the early 1960s. But it was not an ordinary community. The undergraduate element was a far more substantial proportion of the Anglo-Jewish student body than the resident community was of Anglo-Jewry as a whole, both in size and resources. Oxford itself could not afford to provide a building which would serve undergraduate needs, and there needed to be recognition of the fact, first enunciated in 1884, that undergraduate needs were in some sense a national responsibility. How much the undergraduates should be given was another question; some senior members felt that too ample provision would isolate them from the benefits of college life. Further complications would arise over the location of a new building. It was at first agreed by all that the area in which the old synagogue lay was so impossibly slummy and run-down that a new building there would attract nobody. But Oxford was in the throes of elaborate and far-reaching plans for redevelopment, which originally contemplated even wider reshaping than was in fact carried

out; it was thus difficult to get any firm guidance from the City authorities as to where rebuilding might be permitted and when.

The credit for getting things moving at all seems to belong to the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation, established after the war on an American model to promote social and educational activities among Jewish students. Its earlier ventures were all devoted to creating Hillel Houses in cities where there were largish Jewish communities, and it had not yet faced a situation where there was a large established Jewish student body and a small congregation, and close collaboration would be desirable. Consequently, when, early in 1959, its Chairman, J.C. Gilbert, and Executive Director, Henry Shaw, floated a plan for 'making a Hillel Centre in Oxford and using the existing site for a new Synagogue and vestry room, dining room and kitchen, and other rooms for Hillel activities', there was general goodwill with doubts about the detail from the city community, and serious undergraduate doubts as to what was seen as a threat to their independence.

Mr. Bloom had taken the matter up with some enthusiasm, but matters moved slowly, and he was reduced to near despair by correspondence with the Planning Officer in February-May 1961, from which it emerged that it was unlikely that permission would be given to rebuild on the existing site since the future of the area was under review, and that no assurances could be given as to when or even if a site could be offered in the rebuilding of St. Ebbe's. However, much needed relief to the synagogue was given in 1961, when the Hillel Foundation acquired a house next door at 1 Nelson Street and the undergraduate meals service and some of the synagogue's own classes were transferred into it.

The Hillel Foundation had many other preoccupations and calls on its limited finances, and what was needed for further progress was active workers, both national and local, with a specific interest in Oxford. By early 1963, the former had been found. Sir Alan Mocatta, a High Court Judge, and Robert Carvalho had, as undergraduates, been very much concerned in the 1926 refurbishment, and now dedicated themselves to the cause. They reported to a meeting in All Souls on 17 February 1963 that they had visited the City Architect, who now thought that there would be a site available in St. Ebbe's, possibly behind Pembroke, on which building might become possible about 1968. The meeting preferred the idea of a site in North Oxford, south of Bevington Road. Some attempt was made to look for one, but this was held up by the changes in the Congregation described in the last chapter. With George Silver as President and Dr. Segal, who became Lord Segal in 1964, as Treasurer, all the key figures were now in place.

At a London meeting at Hillel House in February 1964, nothing further was said about North Oxford; it was reported that, although the City Architect would still prefer St. Ebbe's, he would now not oppose the present site, provided that it was expanded on one side or the other, by the addition either of a builder's yard or of 2 Nelson Street. The meeting fell in with this solution, and it was agreed to set up an Executive Committee to launch an appeal. Of this Lord Cohen of Walmer would be President, N.J. Laski Chairman, Mocatta, Gilbert, and Carvalho members. Laski died soon after, and Mocatta took over the Chairmanship of the Committee, which was subsequently much expanded.

Laying the basis for an appeal took time, and it was not until late 1965 that the Wolfson Foundation promised £25,000, if not less than £100,000 were raised. It now seemed likely that the project would eventually succeed, and another essential step was taken in May 1966, when the builder's yard and 3 Nelson Street were bought.

Lord Segal, in particular, had always held the view that an appeal would be more likely to succeed if it were promised that the building would be designed by a major architect. Negotiations were now opened with the Dane, Arne Jacobsen, who had just built St. Catherine's College; he had never built a synagogue, but was distinctly interested. In June 1966, the Congregation and the University Jewish Society agreed the requirements for the building, and in October Jacobsen produced his first plans.

To speak very roughly indeed, these plans were the reverse of those which were eventually arrived at. The ark was placed in the west wall of the synagogue, in defiance of tradition; a row of classrooms would be still further west. The seating area in the main synagogue was sunk into the ground. The meeting-hall would have been to the left of the synagogue, to adopt more familiar terminology, with the dining-room behind it; kitchens and storage-space would have been lined up on the east wall. Various doubts were felt on practical grounds, but the key point was that the plans presupposed the availability of 2 Nelson Street, which was occupied by a widow of 89, who, understandably, would not sell; she did not die until late in 1969.

1967 and 1968 were essentially wasted years, in which the architect was deaf to suggestions about a re-design. There was fretting in Oxford about whether the London Committee, all busy men, were showing enough firmness and sense of urgency. In October 1968, however, another house became available on the east side of the site; the architect was now prepared to move the plans as a whole to the east. Though there were still doubts about detail, soundings of possible benefactors could

now proceed, and an appeal for £125,000 was launched in December 1969.

However, as the money started to come in, the London Committee began to share the practical doubts about the architect which had been current in Oxford for some time. He was in Copenhagen, his English office was in Newcastle, and it was never quite clear whether non-reply to questions and lack of progress on the detailed plans were due to problems of communication or unwillingness to take a serious interest in the project. In the spring of 1971, he was dismissed and died, unfortunately in that order.

In May 1971, David Stern and Partners were appointed to take over the project. David Stern had built synagogues before, and was well acquainted with the problems; he was particularly acutely aware of the dangers of dealing with committees. He moved very fast. By September, the final design drawings were approved. The last service in the old synagogue was held on 4 December and demolition began on 6 December.

For the next two years or so, the Congregation was homeless. Most services were held in the church hall of St. Aloysius Roman Catholic Church at the beginning of Woodstock Road; we shall always be grateful for its hospitality. High festival services were held in 1972 at Manchester College, with which Lord Segal's father had been connected, and in 1973, not for the first time, in Rhodes House. Yom Kippur that year has left an indelible impression; news that the Egyptians had crossed the Suez Canal gradually filtered in during the afternoon. The undergraduate meals service moved to 2 Ship Street. The classes for the children of the Congregation were widely scattered, as far as the Department of Biochemistry.

The building as originally designed had a small second storey at the west end which would have provided fixed classrooms. But 1972 was a year in which building costs went into a rapid spiral, and earlier delays were now severely punished. All the tenders which came in in the spring were well over the budget, and most of them provided for the possibility of further escalation of the costs. It was, however, possible to negotiate a fixed-price contract with Symm & Co. Ltd. of Oxford, which simply eliminated the second floor, though there was some internal unrest as to whether the architect was being properly instructed as to how to remedy what was being lost. Once this was over, construction could proceed. Lord Cohen laid the foundation stone on 22 October, and the new building was consecrated on 28 April 1974 by the Rev. Malcolm

Weisman, Jewish Chaplain to the University, amid general rejoicing and deep sighs of relief from those who had been most closely associated with the workings of the project.

Even with the cuts, it had been necessary to issue another appeal for funds in 1973, and Lord Segal and Sir Alan Mocatta in particular spent long painful hours in persuading possible donors in person and by correspondence. The total cost of the project was a shade over £200,000, plus at least one substantial donation in kind. The major donors after the Wolfson Foundation were Sir Michael Sobell and the Sherman Foundation with £10,000 each, but the list of donors runs into the hundreds and some of the smallest look as if they meant some sacrifice. I note again the contribution of the Beckman family to the library. The best estimate I can make of the amount actually raised in Oxford is £25,000, plus the same donation in kind; there should be no doubt about Oxford's debt to the wider community. There was eventually a surplus on the main operation, which came in useful at a later date when there had to be remedial work on the roof.

The building is nearing its twentieth year of hard use, to which on the whole it has stood up remarkably well. The exterior has enhanced its neighbourhood without dominating it, and such inconveniences as have arisen in use are largely attributable to the last-minute change of plan. The architect and all those who worked on it and for it can be well satisfied.

While building was in progress, some thought had to be given to future organization. The first question was that of its future ownership. The old synagogue was in the hands of the surviving Trustees, Michael Franklin and Isaiah Berlin; the first wanted to secure the rights of Progressive Judaism (to which no one objected), the second the rights of the University. 1 Nelson Street belonged to the Hillel Foundation. The remaining properties had been bought in the names of Samuel Segal and George Silver, sometimes (though not always) described as Trustees for the Congregation. There was a second group of questions about the actual organization and finance, which affected the first. The Congregation was an Orthodox Congregation which could hardly be entrusted with preserving the rights of Progressive Jews, and it also seemed pointless to try to maintain a fiction, never very operative after 1940, that undergraduates were members of it. For its part, the Congregation was terrified that it might have to bear responsibility for unquantifiable losses on the undergraduate meals service; there had been some nasty experiences when these had gone out of control.

The solution eventually arrived at was to form a Company Limited by Guarantee to hold the building, the Oxford Synagogue and Jewish Centre Limited. The Oxford Jewish Congregation, the Oxford University Jewish Society, and an Oxford Hillel Committee (to run the meals service) would have the right to use the building, and an unrepealable clause in the Memorandum of Association of the Company provided that the building was available for all forms of Jewish worship. The Congregation and the Hillel Foundation would each nominate three members of the Company, and the retiring Trustees nominated three more, only stipulating that the successors to these be appointed in such a way that the members of the Company would always include two resident members of the University.

Under this umbrella organization and under Rules approved by it, actual management would be in the hands of a Management Committee, with representation from the Congregation, the University Jewish Society and the Hillel Committee, and with a chairman nominated by the Company.

What was not settled in any very binding way was the distribution of costs. It seemed clear that the Congregation had no responsibility for the meals service; it continued to be unclear what the distribution of general running costs for the Centre was going to be. The difficulties arising out of this were increased by the fact that the Oxford Hillel Committee did not really work as it was intended to. The complexity of the organization has achieved some of its main objectives, but has remained bewildering to many[2].

CHAPTER TEN

THE JEWS OF OXFORD TODAY

In 1963, the Congregation had under sixty members, expressed in terms of family-units; the present figure is about four times as large. Counting is always difficult, since there is a high turnover, as visitors, chiefly academic, arrive, seldom for more than one year, and depart. Some of them have made their own special impact on Oxford Jewish life; others are not discovered until they are on the point of departure.

It is difficult to assess progress since the new building opened in 1974, without reflection on the state of Anglo-Jewry as a whole. It should be clear that what follows, even more than the book as a whole, reflects my personal views.

Oxford, like all other provincial communities of the period, has been subject to the pull of London. Some actually work there. Although Oxford is now more 'normal' in having three-generation families, the Oxford child who does not move to London or Israel when grown-up is an extreme rarity.

In terms of synagogue attendance, there has surely been an improvement. It is no longer true, as the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* states, that there are no services outside University terms, though the Congregation is by no means always self-supporting in basic skills, particularly in reading the Law. Alongside the Orthodox services, regular Progressive services are organized and well attended. Festival services, all Orthodox, have sometimes come near straining what was thought of, when the building was planned, as an improbable maximum. As has always been the case, help is sought from outside for New Year and the Day of Atonement.

On the whole, most satisfaction can be felt about the education of the young, at least, considering the size and relative isolation of the community. Teaching has normally come from permanent members.

The problems of finding enough time to do anything useful for a large number of children living over a wide area and at a wide variety of schools are enormous, and the basic goals have to be limited. Nevertheless, most of the children seem to emerge to feel at home in the synagogue services, and some go far beyond that. *Batmitzvah* classes, which began in the early 1970s, started turning into classes for O Level (now GCSE), at which we have regular good results, and some *barmitzvah* boys have done far more than the minimum expected of them and become capable of taking services themselves. Three Oxford children of the period, two boys and one girl, have gone to Jerusalem for higher Jewish studies, as well as others for youth leadership and language courses. These achievements would be commonplace in a larger town with Jewish schools; for Oxford they constitute success.

A good deal less satisfaction can be felt about adult education, which has never taken off. Most of the community derives all it gets from the activities of the Women's Zionist Society and the B'nai B'rith Lodge (now the Oxford Menorah Society), and there is little which is systematic about this. It is only a few who can take advantage of the daytime activities organized by the Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies, opened at about the same time as the Centre, which has brought many distinguished visitors to Oxford.

It could be argued that things might be different if there were more leadership. Oxford has made a cult of doing things itself, and since 1949, the question of having a minister has never been seriously raised. The reasons are not only financial; there might well be difficulty, in the present climate, in finding a suitable candidate who would tolerate the religious diversity on which Oxford prides itself. The question is what underlies that pride, and on that there can be different opinions. In 1986, an outsider summed up:[1] 'Oxonians smile upon their good fortune, bless the spirit of compromise and look pityingly upon "divided" Cambridge. Cantabrigians – or rather some of them – regard the Oxford solution as a symptom of lukewarm commitment.'

We have never tried to analyse degrees of commitment for the Congregation. For Oxford students, we at least have the results of a survey conducted in June 1970.[2] It dismissed the local community as 'negligible' and estimated the number of Jewish students as 300–400, probably on the high side. The 133 usable returned questionnaires broke down as: 109 male, 24 female; 106 undergraduates, 27 postgraduates; 98 arts, 35 sciences; 112 British, 21 foreign. 68 were born in London, 43 in the provinces, 22 abroad. 41 thought they were practising Jews, 87 did

not, but only 7 said that they ate kosher food at all times, though 15 generally did. They were overwhelmingly of the second generation born in Britain and from the urban professional and business upper class; 35% of them were from public schools. 43% of them were members of the University Jewish Society. 62% of them had visited Israel; 92% could name the Israeli Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and Defence Minister, but only 61% the Chief Rabbi. The answers to these and further questions suggested to the investigator that religion was on the way out among this group, that intermarriage was increasingly tolerated, and that interest in Israel was now a main Jewish identifier. What figures and trends would emerge from a similar survey today is a matter of speculation. There should certainly now be a higher percentage of women, and the last twenty years have seen an expansion of Jewish schools which might make a difference. I leave it open what a survey of Oxford Jews might show.

The question of leadership for the student population has recurred throughout this book. Not long after Cecil Roth left Oxford, a resident Jewish Chaplain to the University was appointed and held office for one year, but left for personal reasons. Since then the post has been held in plurality from London as one of many responsibilities. The Chaplain is always ready to help in a crisis, but he, and successive Senior Treasurers, have seen it as their main task to make it possible for the undergraduates to run their own affairs. Lord Segal, who died in 1985, was always concerned about the lack of provision for student guidance, and in 1982 created a fund in memory of his parents to bring visiting preachers for weekends. This has not worked all that well, for the same reasons as in 1884; it is hard to get busy ministers to leave their congregations.

Very recently, the Lubavitch Foundation, quite independently of the older channels for dealing with Oxford problems, has taken this need in hand and appointed a Chaplain of its own. A few weeks before this book was finished, it opened a Student Centre at Carfax, on the fringes of the medieval Jewry, next to the site of the Swyndlestock Tavern, scene of a famous battle between town and gown in 1355. It remains to be seen whether it can establish a realistic educational programme.

Meanwhile, as the generations rapidly come and go, Oxford students have varied in their capacity to shape their own affairs. The most impressive performance was the fortnightly Colloquium in Jewish Studies in the middle 1980s. Co-operation on the Centre Management Committee has been good on the whole, though with the difficulties inseparable from a situation in which the Congregational representatives

think they know the problems and continually have to expound them again.

This is a relatively small part of the burden sustained by the Management Committee and its successive Chairmen. Help from the Hillel Foundation, faced with multiple problems, has been intermittent, and financing the Centre has always been a problem. Some help has come from letting, but an ever-growing weight has fallen on the Congregation. It would not have been sustainable, if there had not been benefactions during the period. Sophie and Gertrud Singer of Nikolai, Germany, who had come to Oxford as refugees during the war, died in 1977, leaving the Congregation over £40,000; this has mainly been used for financing administrative help. Felix Sieburg, another German refugee, transferred his house to the Congregation in 1978. After his death, in 1981, this led to a dispute between students and Congregation which dwarfed the rows of 1881–2 and 1945 and reached the national press. As I myself was deeply involved and the Congregation chose not to make its case public, I merely record that the income from the sale of the house is used towards the cost of student use of the Centre. Further help has come from the George Silver Memorial Fund, set up after his death in 1984 as a fitting memorial to one whose patience, work and leadership were essential to the creation of the Centre.

He would have been the first to say that he was only one of a team. Oxford Jewry has been fortunate over the last thirty years in its possession of a group of hard workers who have done the rounds of the various tasks. The machinery has been kept going, and, quite apart from those who have maintained it, special thought must go to some, who have not been President, Secretary or Treasurer, but who have never lost sight of any Jew in Oxford. They have visited the sick, consoled the mourners, and reminded the sometimes preoccupied administrators of the purposes of a Jewish congregation.

APPENDIX A

OXFORD TRADES 1830–1900

The main purpose of this Appendix is to document the shift of trades in the Victorian period. It is heavily dependent on the trades directories of the period, of which there is nothing like a complete series, with some help from the Censuses, and neither source is necessarily very reliable. Both depend ultimately on what the trader himself thought fit to say, and the first can be further distorted by the classification followed by the compiler of the directory. Such compilers were also prone to errors in recording addresses and sometimes made such drastic messes of names as to create ghosts. Only a much fuller search of the advertising material of the period than I have so far made can solidify the picture, and that might still leave much concealed.

As we have seen in the main text, the three families of 1841 were all clothes-dealers. I follow their developments individually.

Wolf Harris, though changing his first name to William, never left 54 St. Ebbe's until he retired to Canterbury towards the end of his life, and he was always connected with clothes. There was a shift towards the retail end of the market, since his directory description changes from 'second-hand' to 'new and second-hand'. He also did a certain amount of making or remaking. In the 1851 Census he had a resident tailor's servant; in 1861 there is no servant, but his daughter Leah, aged 20, is a shopwoman, and Elizabeth aged 19 is a dressmaker. There was only expansion when his son Henry, trained as a working jeweller, began to be an effective partner in the late 1860s; the shop took over no. 55 as well and started to be described as a general dealer's. There are unfortunately so many Henry Harrises that we cannot follow this one's further progress.

Isaiah Woolf did not himself move from 4 New Road and went on being described as a clothes-dealer by the directories until he died in

about 1857, but in the 1851 Census he was a 'general dealer', as was his son Jonas of the same address; in 1853 the directories refine this to 'jewellers and dealers in cigars'. His two sons who remained in Oxford moved to more up-market addresses. Herschell was already a tobacconist (a trade which directories distinguished from the cigar-dealers) in 22 Broad Street by 1851; by 1852 he is a watch and clock maker there as well, and in 1853 the address is also listed as a register office for families and servants; by 1861 he was a jeweller at 5 Magdalen Street, where he remained till 1875. Levi Woolf's first appearance is in 1861 as a cigar merchant and jeweller at 30 1/2 Cornmarket. This venture did not last long. 1863 is the last mention of him there, and the shop was taken over first by J.G. Wangler, one of a group of brothers, all watch and clockmakers from Baden, certainly not Jewish, and then by the firm of Kirner, watchmakers and jewellers, which survived in Queen Street until very recently; I do not know if it had any Jewish origins. It looks very much as if Levi Woolf was the invalid with four motherless children and a wealthy relative in Oxford whom the London Jewish Board of Guardians declined to assist in 1873.[1] The last member of this family traceable in Oxford is perhaps the C. Woolf who was a hairdresser at 29 Walton Street in the 1880s.

Harris Levi seems to have died in 1846 or 1847; a fire in Queen Street in August 1847 did damage to the stock and effects of Widow Levi estimated at upwards of £40.[2] Ann Levi remained in second-hand clothes; she was dealing in them in St. Ebbe's in 1853 and still described as a clothier in the 1861 Census. The original premises at 25 Queen Street passed by 1851 to her son-in-law, described as a jeweller in the 1851 Census. For some years he traded under two names, Solomon Levi and Lewis Solomon, as a cigar-dealer in Queen Street, and by 1852 as a silversmith/jeweller in Cornmarket. Eventually, he was permanently Lewis Solomon, and transferred both activities to adjacent shops at 29 and 29A Cornmarket; in 1871 he has a neat double advertisement as a Masonic Jeweller and a Tobacconist and importer of Foreign Cigars, both for 25 years.[3] He had other ventures as well, including a 'city and county toy and fancy bazaar' at 39 Cornmarket, which a son ran at least for a time. His congregational activities are in the main text. Harris Levi's other son-in-law, Isaac Jacob Cohen, is sufficiently treated in the main text; he was evidently never a genuine business-man.

Of the arrivals of the 1840s Nathan Jacobs the Reader/ *shochet* is never described in the directories more particularly than as a trader. Although he described himself in the 1851 Census as a jeweller and tobacconist, he

may well have been doing the same kind of mixed business as his father was doing when he died. Israel Levi, first described in 1846 as a cigar dealer at 11 Pembroke Street, combined that trade with watch-making and jewellery first at 66 and then at 52 St. Giles without apparent expansion for the remainder of his very long stay in Oxford. It was he who set the pattern for the combination which was followed by Lewis Solomon and the Woolfs.

Abraham Davis, also first listed in 1846, was then a jeweller, in St. Clements, far away from the nucleus of the community. He rapidly moved to the High Street, and evidently rose to prosperity very rapidly, with a mixture of watches, jewellery and silver, retail and wholesale. In 1871 he was the only Jew listed as a land-owner, with two acres bringing in a rent of £47. He was, it seems, rather detached from the Jewish community, and it was proposed in 1881 that, if he did join the Congregation, to which some objected, he should pay twice as large a subscription as anyone else. He apparently did not join, but, when he died in 1888, he left £1,800 for setting up a synagogue and school in Jerusalem. He made a mess of his will in this respect, but, in the legal proceedings which followed, his widow, a second wife with a much more Jewish name than the first, declared that it was the testator's great wish that, by means of the fund, his name should be perpetuated in Jerusalem.[4]

Like Abraham Davis, the other first appearance of 1846, Abraham Zacharias, never went in for cigars. Originally listed as a hardwareman at 68 St. Aldate's, he went through a bewildering series of trade addresses in St. Aldate's and the High Street before finally settling in two shops at 2 and 27 Cornmarket. The range of trades with which he is listed is scarcely less confusing, watches and clocks, Birmingham and Sheffield warehouse, jewellery, china and glass. No doubt he changed the thrust of his activities from time to time, but eventually 2 Cornmarket was for watches and jewellery, 27 was for china and glass. It was the latter which was taken over by his son Joel in the 1870s and eventually transformed by him after his marriage into the waterproofs business which shot him so spectacularly to the heights of his congregational and civic career.

A less established figure, the Dutchman Simon Praag, is always listed at 5 1/2 Castle Street, that is, the *Blucher's Head*. He is listed from 1842 to 1852 as a cigar dealer, but in 1842 also as a Birmingham and Sheffield ware dealer; in the 1851 Census he described himself as a general dealer and stationer. It seems that he had no regular premises and probably worked the markets of the area.

As far as I have yet discovered, the Oxford combination of cigar-trading with jewellery is unique among provincial Jewish communities, and can only be accounted for by the desirability of having two strings to one's bow in a relatively small town. That Jews were prominent in the cigar-trade from the 1840s is easily accounted for; cigar-making both on a small scale and in gradually increasing concentration was a major feature of London Jewish life of the period,[5] and it would be easy for Oxford Jews to establish relations with suppliers. One possible intermediary may be suggested. Although Melchor Lopez does not appear in the 1851 Census, he is frequently listed in Oxford directories of the early 1850s as a cigar-dealer at 117 High Street and 3 Turl Street; a London address, 3 Bays Yard, Bucklersbury, is once added, and he may have been a wholesaler for the Oxford traders.

That, by the time of Mansell's 1861 Directory, most of the jewellers in Oxford were Jewish raises more complex questions. Much is to be attributed to the fact that this, together with the closely allied trade in watches and clocks, was not well established in Oxford, so that there were fewer entrenched interests than in many other fields. There was surely not much actual manufacture going on in Oxford. 'Watchmaker' and 'clockmaker' are likely to be misleading descriptions, and only one, just possibly two, Oxford Jews are described as 'working jewellers'. Where the goods were actually coming from is likely to remain unclear. Though there was an ample choice of Jewish manufacturers, jewellery manufacture was nothing like a Jewish monopoly.

The more interesting question is the relationship of the Oxford Jewish residents to the very large number of travelling Jews who were in Oxford on the Census-night, a Sunday, 30 March 1851. It is surely clear that the resident Nathan Marcks, 'itinerant jeweller', and his two lodgers, simply described as 'travellers in jewellery', were working local markets. They could have been dependent on Abraham Davis, still specifically described this year as 'Wholesale dealer in jewellery, etc.', or one of the others with shops. Greater uncertainty attaches to the six lodgers described as 'dealers in jewellery' at the *Blucher's Head* and the three travellers described as 'jewellers' at the *Three Horseshoes*. Were they too using Oxford as a base for operations elsewhere, or are they wholesale suppliers who would do the rounds of the local shops next day? Even after the coming of the railways the first weekday train from London did not get to Oxford until 11.10 a.m. The choice of Sunday trains was limited by cost. Only the morning train (London 8.00 – Oxford 11.45) had third class seats at four shillings and sixpence. It looks as if these travellers were spending at least a long Sunday in Oxford.

The thought may suggest itself that trading in jewellery and indeed in second-hand clothes could easily be combined with pawnbroking. It can only be said that, although Jewish pawnbrokers are attested as near as Banbury in the eighteenth and mid-nineteenth century, I have so far found no suggestion of the trade for any Oxford Jew after Lewis Isaacs moved to Cheltenham around 1823. But Oxford directories are sparing about listing pawnbroking as a trade; there seem to be none at all until the 1860s and those who do appear are not Jewish.

There is no great point in pursuing this investigation in detail after 1870. Of those who arrived after that year, there are some jewellers, but the spread of trades is now much wider, extending even to a sponge-seller in the 1890s. Prominent parts in the Congregation were played by furniture-dealers in St. Clements, Emanuel Harris, the Treasurer of 1881, and Louis Crook, who succeeded him about 1894. There is some trend to more 'professional' occupations. The Slapoffski family who were 'professors' of music and kept music warehouses arrived in the 1870s, and in 1881 Baron Franks, surgeon-dentist, renewed the succession to Mayer Lewis, whom we saw in the 1770s.[6]

APPENDIX B

JEWISH UNDERGRADUATES IN 1882

On 13 January 1882, the *Jewish Chronicle* reported that there were 25 Jewish undergraduates at Oxford, of whom 9 were at Balliol, which fortunately has the fullest college register. I make an attempt to reconstruct this list, though there are one or two doubtful cases at the margin. The perils of identification by name alone are well illustrated by the fact that H.E. Mocatta of Pembroke and D.B. Montefiore of St. Alban Hall, both up this year, were both sons of Christian clergymen and were themselves ordained. It must be remembered that the definition of 'undergraduate' at the time and for many years afterwards included all those who had not yet taken the M.A. I give as much material as I have so far found for assessing backgrounds and subsequent Jewish involvement. CHM = Classical Honour Moderations; LH = Literae Humaniores, the final Classical examination.

Balliol

ALEXANDER, Samuel (1859–1938). Son of saddler; see main text. Melbourne University. 1 CHM 1879, 1 Maths Mods. 1879, 1 LH 1881. Fellow of Lincoln 1882. Professor of Philosophy, Manchester 1893–1924. OM 1930. Secretary of the Congregation 1882. Unmarried. Continued to be associated with some Jewish causes and addressed the University Jewish Society on 'Beauty and Greatness' as late as 1935. Buried in South Manchester Jewish Cemetery.

BOAS, Frederick Samuel (1862–1957). Son of Hermann Boas of Belfast. Clifton. 1 CHM 1882, 1 LH 1885, 1 History 1886. Elizabethan scholar. Married daughter of S.J. Owen, Reader in Indian History.

COHEN, Benjamin Arthur (later knighted) (1862–1942). Son of Arthur Cohen, Q.C. Rugby. 2 CHM 1882, 2 LH 1885. Barrister. Married Marguerite, daughter of Nathaniel Cohen; both were buried by Church of England rites, but the date of their conversion is not known.

HALDINSTEIN (later HALDIN), Henry Hyman (1863–1931). Son of P.V. Haldinstein of Norwich, shoe manufacturer. Norwich G.S. 3 CHM 1882, 3 History 1885. Barrister. Member of Board of Deputies of British Jews. Married Mabel, daughter of Sir Herbert Leon, Bart.

JESSEL, Charles James (1860–1928). Son of Sir George Jessel, Master of the Rolls, and created first baronet on his death. Rugby. 3 CHM 1880, 2 Law 1882. Barrister and Chairman of Imperial Continental Gas Association and British North Borneo Company. Married Edith, daughter of Sir Julian Goldsmid, Bart., M.P.

KALISCH, Alfred (1863–1933). Son of Dr. Marcus Kalisch, secretary to Chief Rabbi and subsequently tutor in Rothschild family. King's College School, London. 2 CHM 1882, 3 LH 1885. Barrister and musical critic. Unmarried.

LEE, Solomon Lazarus (later Sir Sidney) (1859–1926). Son of Lazarus Lee of London. City of London School. 3 CHM 1880, 2 History 1882. Early writing on Jewish matters, then Editor of Dictionary of National Biography, author of lives of Shakespeare, Queen Victoria, etc. Unmarried. Cremated and buried at Stratford.

MONTEFIORE, Claude Joseph Goldsmid (1858–1929). Son of Nathaniel Montefiore. Educated privately. 1 LH 1881. Theologian and founder of Liberal Judaism. Married 1) Therese Schorstein, 2) Florence Ward.

WALEY, John Felix (1863–1935). Son of Jacob Waley, barrister. Harrow. 2 CHM 1883, 3 LH 1885. Barrister. Secretary to Council of Legal Education 1915–33. Married 1) Justina, daughter of Nathaniel Cohen, 2) Ethel, daughter of Daniel Schloss.

Christ Church

MONTEFIORE, Sir Francis Abraham, Bart. (1860–1935). Son of Joseph Montefiore. Wellington. No honours degree. Barrister. Chairman of Elders of Sephardi community and Hon. President of Zionist Federation. Married Marianne von Guttman, daughter of wealthy Austrian ironmaster.

SCHORSTEIN, Gustave Isidore (1863–1906). Son of Lazare Schorstein of Reuters, grandson of a Polish Rabbi, born Neuilly, Paris; two sisters went to Girton. City of London School. 1 CHM 1883, 2 LH 1885, B.M. 1889. Believed when undergraduate to be intending to enter Anglo-Jewish ministry. Physician, London Hospital. Unmarried?

Exeter

SASSOON, Alfred (1861–95). Son of Sassoon David Sassoon. No honours degree. Married Theresa Thornycroft and was father of Siegfried Sassoon.

SASSOON, Frederick Meyer (1862–????). Son of Sassoon David Sassoon. No honours degree. Married Rachel Beer.

Hertford

LEVY, Henry Albert (1860–????). Son of Albert Levy. 3 CHM 1880.

Jesus

COHEN, Hermann Joseph (1860–99?). Son of James Hermann Cohen, born Ramsgate. 1 CHM 1883, 1 LH 1885. Active in congregational affairs as undergraduate. Barrister. Co-founder of the Maccabeans, 1891.

Magdalen

LEVINSOHN, Henry Raphael (1860–????). Son of Louis Levinsohn. University College School, London. 4 Law 1882. Barrister.

ROTH, Walter Edward (1861–????). Son of Dr. M. Roth of Wimpole Street, nephew of first Jew to be cremated in England. University Coll. London. 2 Nat. Sci. 1882. Medical training, then to British Guiana and elsewhere in Colonial Service.

Merton

MOSENTHAL, Joseph (1863–????). Son of Adolphus Mosenthal. Kings College School. No honours degree. Barrister.

SENDYK, Oscar (1863–????). Son of Lewis Sendyk, born Brixton. No honours degree.

New College

BUCHHEIM, Arthur (1859–86). Son of Adolphus Buchheim of Clapham. 1 Maths Mods 1878, 1 Maths 1880, Senior Mathematical Scholar 1881.

Pembroke

LAZARUS, Adolph Max (1861–????). Son of Harry Moritz Lazarus of Manchester. 1 CHM 1881, 2 LH 1883, 2 BCL 1885. Barrister.

St. Edmund Hall

ROSENSTOCK, Rudolf (186?–????). Son of Julius Rosenstock of Kassel, Germany. 2 Nat. Sci. 1882.

St. John's

GOLDBERG, Edward Casimir (1861–1915). Son of Casimir Joseph Adam Goldberg, brewer. Merchant Taylors. 2 CHM 1881, 3 LH 1883. Assistant Master, Tonbridge School. Married Millie (surname unknown).

SILBER, Martin Albert (1863–????). Son of Albert Mark Silber of Kensington, born Leyton. Eton. Only one year at Oxford. Militia captain. Married Lady Lucy Vaughan, daughter of Earl of Lisburne.

Trinity

BARNETT, Percy A. (1858–1941). City of London School. 1 CHM 1879, 1 LH 1881. Later Professor of English, Sheffield and Chief Inspector of Schools. Married Annie, sister of the Very Rev. H.C. Beeching, with whom he had been at school.

It does not look as if more than seven of these came from the amorphous group of well-established families which has since been described as the 'Cousinhood', though there are two other professional fathers and some of the business families were surely already quite wealthy. The schools of the sons are a rough guide. Later involvement with Jewish affairs does not look impressive, but can be supplemented for some who did not hold communal office. A clear majority of known marriages were to Jewish wives, but this is a small sample. A more accurate figure can be arrived at for all Balliol Jews matriculating before 1914: 70% of them married within the Jewish community.

APPENDIX C

THE TRUST AND ITS TRUSTEES

The Richmond Road building was originally rented. On 28 December 1897, Mr. John Job Gardiner transferred the premises known as the Jews Synagogue to Joel Zacharias and Louis Crook for £500, and they mortgaged it the next day for £350 to Henry F. Galpin, solicitor, closely identified, like Joel Zacharias, with the Oxford Conservative Party. In June 1903, Galpin was repaid an initial £320 by 'Messrs Mocatta and Montefiore', and in February 1904, he formally transferred the whole mortgage to Laurie Magnus, Joel Zacharias, and Robert Sebag-Montefiore, then still an undergraduate; Baron Franks took over Joel Zacharias's share of the mortgage in November 1905, after Zacharias's death.

Up to this point, no trust had been created, but in January 1906, Louis Crook, the surviving owner of the freehold, made a false declaration that the 1897 conveyance had been to himself and Zacharias as joint tenants as Trustees for and on behalf of the members of the Congregation of the Jewish Synagogue in the City of Oxford, and now declared that he held the property as Trustee for and on behalf of the members of the said Congregation and undertook to hold and deal with it as the Committee or other proper representatives of the said Synagogue might from time to time direct.

In November 1926, at the suggestion of the Charity Commission, the mortgage was paid off, at least formally by Louis Crook, and Crook transferred the property to Laurie Magnus, A.L. Emanuel, H.D. Barnard and Michael Franklin as Trustees. In August 1936, since Magnus and Emanuel had died and Henry Barnard wished to retire from the Trust, Franklin appointed L.G. Montefiore, son of Claude Montefiore, Isaiah Berlin and Neville Laski as additional Trustees. Of

this new body of Trustees, Michael Franklin and Isaiah Berlin survived until the extended site of the new building made new arrangements necessary.

On these facts, Neville Laski in 1945, at a time when he was trying to curb undergraduate independence, told the President of the University Jewish Society that the synagogue was established by the Oxford Jewish townspeople for the Jews of Oxford and that the undergraduates had no position in it other than their membership during residence on payment of a nominal sum by way of subscription.

It is presumptuous of me to question the view of someone who afterwards held high judicial office, but I do wonder whether he could have come to this conclusion if he had known that in October 1905, just three months before Louis Crook made his declaration of Trust, what was described as a joint meeting of the whole Oxford Hebrew Congregation appointed Baron Franks and an undergraduate, A.M. Green, as co-Treasurers and Secretaries, one to have control in vacation, the other in term, and that the minutes of the Congregation had recognized the existence of a University Section since about 1898.

The arrangements arrived at in 1974 are sufficiently described in the main text, with the addition that, for reasons always mysterious to me, the Charity Commission eventually preferred to make the new Company Trustee rather than owner of the building. The original members of the Company were: Lord Segal (Chairman), Mr. G. Silver and Dr. D.M. Lewis (appointed by the Congregation); Rabbi C.K. Harris, Mr. H. Fox and Mr. M.D. Paisner (appointed by the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation); Rabbi J.D. Rayner, Dr. D. Patterson and Dr. I.P. Grant (appointed by the Retiring Trustees). In autumn 1991, the members are: Dr. I.P. Grant (Chairman), Mr. G. Baron Cohen, Mr. W. Faust, Prof. D.M. Lewis, Dr. D. Patterson, Mr. M.D. Paisner, Mr. H.H. Posner and Rev. M. Weisman; there is one vacancy.

APPENDIX D

OFFICIALS

All these lists are certainly incomplete. University officials are left for another occasion.

Ministers, etc.

1844	Aaron Jacobs, Harris Levi 'Rabbis'
1845–58	Nathan Jacobs, *shochet* and Reader
1858–66	I.J. Cohen
1866	Nathan Aaron
1870	Kronsow, *shochet*
1878	Rosenthal 'reader and killer'
1881–2	Solomon Schapero, Reader
1882	B.J. Solomon
1883–4?	M.Schulman
1884?–6	L. Mizrachi (a native of Jerusalem)
1886–8	Million
1888–?	Jacob Roadhouse (Rothaus)
1891?–5	Zaccheim
?	S.G. Solomon
189?–1899	Solomon Rudnitzki, *shochet*
1899–1902	Abrahamson
1902–8	M.H. Segal
1940–8	J. Weinberg

Presidents

1881–93	L. Solomon
1893–7	B.J. Franks

1897–1905	J. Zacharias
1908–16	B.J. Franks
1916–19	E. Lipson
1941–6	N.J. Laski
1949–63	S.H. Frankel
1963–75	G. Silver
1974	G. Silver and Lord Segal, Hon. Life Presidents
1975–7	A. Delcoy
1977–9	D.M. Lewis
1979–81	I.P. Grant
1981–3	Mrs. F. Silver
1983–5	W. Faust
1985–7	R.A. Dwek
1987–9	Mrs. M. Kochan
1989–91	M. Spira
1991–	L. Wollenberg

Vice-Presidents

1981–3	P.M. Oppenheimer
1985–6	W. Faust
1986–7	Mrs. M. Kochan
1987–	J. Blumenfeld

Wardens

1849	W. Harris
1881	I.M. Levi
1892	G. Davidson
1919	D. Davidson
1940–5	B.I. Beckman
1945–6	H. Levene
1946–9	S. Kaye
1949–58	L. Kemp
1958–65	D.D. Kemp
1962–8	J. Spira
1965–77	R. Koch
1969–72	R.A. May
1972–76	P. Gold

Since 1977, the office of Warden has not existed. There has been a

Religious Services Section (now Religious Affairs Committee), on which the following have served: A. Delcoy and R.A. May (1977–80); J. Webber (1977–84); J. Blumenfeld (1980–6); W. Faust (1980–); L. Wollenberg (1980–6); M. Spira (1986–7); M. Harper (1986–); R. Howard (1986–91); Mrs. H. May (1987–).

Secretaries (see also Treasurers)

1881–2	L.H. Goodman
1882–	J. Zacharias
1893–7	J. Zacharias, Secretary-Treasurer
1897	G.J. Zacharias, Assistant Secretary
1905	B.J. Franks, Co-Treasurer and Secretary
1919	L. Freedson, Secretary for Residents
1940–8	Rev. J. Weinberg
1941	V.D. Lipman
1948–9	H. Austin
1949–??	H. Shapiro
1963–4	S. Segal, Secretary and Treasurer
1964–9	A.R. Curtis, Secretary and Deputy Treasurer
1969–75	D.M. Lewis
1975–80	L. Wollenberg
1980–1	A.R. Curtis, S. Bloch
1981–3	J.E. Paton
1983–5	D. Birk
1985–7	Mrs. K. Birk, M. Cross
1987–9	M. Spira
1989–90	Mrs. P. Silver
1990–1	Mrs. M. Kochan

Treasurers (see also Secretaries)

1881	E. Harris
1897	D. Davidson
1916–17	B.J. Franks, Co-Treasurer
1939?–41	W.G. Ettinghausen, Senior Treasurer
1941–5	B.I. Beckman
1944–6	H. Levene
1946–8	L. Bloom
1949–??	S. Dimdore
19??–63	L. Bloom

1963–74	S. Segal
1968–72	B. Fidler, Assistant Treasurer
1972–82	W. Faust
1982–4	D.A. Dubin
1984–6	M. Bloom
1986–9	J. C'apek
1989–	A.R. Curtis

Chairmen of Centre Management Committee

1974–86	D.E. Blenford
1986–9	W. Faust
1988–91	J. Blumenfeld
1991–	A. Silver

APPENDIX E

SOURCES

The following material is in the Bodleian Library:

MS Top. Oxon. d. 486/1 Oxford Hebrew Congregation. Minute-book 1881–2.

d 486/3 Oxford Hebrew Congregation. Minute-book 1885–1900.

d 487/1 Oxford Hebrew Congregation (University Section) /Oxford University Adler Society. Minute-book 1903–9.

d 487/3 Oxford Hebrew Congregation (University Section) /Oxford University Adler Society. Minute-book 1911–14.

d 487/4 Oxford Hebrew Congregation (University Section) /Oxford University Adler Society. Minute-book 1914–20.

d 487/4* Miscellaneous letters, estimates and receipts. Report of Special Committee of 1909 recommending apppointment of Visiting Minister. Undated draft rules of Jewish Oxonian Association.

d 488/1 Oxford Jewish Congregation/Oxford University Jewish Society, Minute Book, Michaelmas Term 1937-Michaelmas Term 1939.

d 488/4 Oxford University Jewish Society, Minute Book, Michaelmas Term 1944-Michaelmas Term 1947.

d 488/5 Oxford University Jewish Society. Minute Book, Hilary Term 1948-Michaelmas Term 1950.

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The following are currently held by me as Archivist for the Oxford Jewish Congregation:

Photocopies of documents of title relating to Richmond Road site.

Oxford Liberal Jewish Congregation. Orders of Service 1923.

Miscellaneous notes and mementoes relating to Oxford University Adler Society *circa* 1929, presented by the Executors of Miss Joyce Weiner.

Minutes of the Oxford Jewish Congregation, May 1940-June 1949.

Oxford Women's Zionist Society, Minute-book ('IInd book'). April 1943-June 1945.

Minutes of the Social Section, May 1955-January 1962.

Correspondence of Lord Segal and Sir Alan Mocatta, and minutes relating to the Oxford Synagogue Appeal Committee, 1961–74.

Annual Reports and Accounts of Oxford Jewish Congregation, 1959–90.

Miscellaneous orders of service, correspondence, etc.

The Marriage Registers are held by Mr. D.D. Kemp, Secretary for Marriages.

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The Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem, hold a small quantity of material on the local Zionist organization, which I have not yet seen, and Mr. Lucien Harris, Jerusalem, has one minute-book of the Oxford University Zionist Society.

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This book was in a fairly advanced stage when Dr. C.M. Woolgar, Head of Special Collections at the Hartley Library, University of Southampton, drew my attention to relevant material there collected by Cecil Roth (AJA 151/3). I gratefully acknowledge the courtesy of the Library in making it available to me. It consists of:
(i) two copies of the second half of a historical address given on the Centenary of the Congregation in 1941. The first half became the article in *Oxoniensia* 15, 1950, 63–80, and the typescript of the second half was under revision as least as late as 1950. Various errors and omissions are attributable to the fact that neither the Censuses nor the index to the *Jewish Chronicle* were available to him;
(ii) a collection of miscellaneous notes, mostly connected with individuals and virtually all from published sources.

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All other material should be traceable from my notes, which, however, lack a direct reference to one substantial source containing primary material, Raphael Loewe, 'The Evolution of Jewish Student Feeding Arrangements in Oxford and Cambridge', in D. Noy (ed.). *Studies in the Cultural Life of the Jews in England* (Folklore Research Center Studies V; Jerusalem, 1975), 165–84.

NOTES

Chapter One

1. *The Jews of Medieval Oxford* (Oxford Historical Society, 1951).
2. Roth, 'Jews in Oxford after 1290', *Oxoniensia* 15, 1950, 63–80. This chapter was in a fairly advanced stage when U. Dann, 'Jews in 18th-Century Oxford: Further Observations', *Oxoniensia* 56, 1989 [1991], 345–53, appeared. I have gratefully appropriated some facts I had not already found, but often read the situation rather differently. References for undocumented statements in this chapter will be found in these two articles.
3. For Jewish teachers of Hebrew in Oxford, see, besides Roth and Dann, D.S. Katz, *Journ. Eccl. Hist.* 40, 1989, 28–52, D. Patterson in *The History of the University of Oxford* V 542–4.
4. A useful summary of the sources for this story by Lucien Wolf, *JC* 29.10.1926.
5. All previous treatments of his career are superseded by Katz, op. cit. Patterson, op. cit. 542 adds one detail, but the implication that Abendana was a convert is misleading.
6. On these, see, besides Katz, I. Abrahams, *Trans. JHSE* 8, 1915–17, 98–121.
7. *Notes and Queries* 204 (6), 1959, 404–8, hitherto missed in this context, was called to my attention by Dr. J.F.A. Mason.
8. Todd M. Endelman, *The Jews of Georgian England 1714–1830* (JPS 1979), ch. 5 'pedlars and hawkers'; C. Roth 'The Jew Peddler – An 18th Century Rural Character' in *Essays and Portraits in Anglo-Jewish History* (JPS 1962), 132 ff.
9. The earliest firmly attested one is Barnard Levy of Northampton (died 1810), who was robbed between Eynsham and Witney in January 1770, losing his money but retaining his pack of silks and jewellery (*JOJ* 23.1.1770). Three months later, he set up a shop in Woodstock (ibid. 24.4.1770); he had evidently had enough of the road.
10. With Dann, I omit most of the doubtful cases suggested by Roth 75. There was, for example, at least one Oxford Christian family called Hart in the period.
11. J.R. Marcus, *Early American Jewry* I (1951), 228.
12. Dann has discovered this book, see 348, 351, with Fig. 2, but his account of Lewis's advertisements and addresses is not quite accurate.
13. Roth 75, valuably supplemented by Dann 351.
14. *JOJ* 17.1.1771. For another probable fence, Moses Cohan, not necessarily resident in Oxford, who thought it more prudent to give evidence against those who had offered him stolen plate, see Dann 352.
15. Roth 74, evidently from N.R. Leslie-Melville, *The Life and Work of Sir John Fielding* (1935), 263, but Oxford does not appear in the latter's declared sources, *The Public Advertiser* and the *Calendar of Home Office Papers*. One of the original

gang had been arrested at Henley on his way to join the rest in Birmingham, so Oxford would not have been an implausible place to look for more.

16. Dann 352, with references, but without the marriage, which I owe to Mr. John Hicks.
17. Todd M. Endelman, *Radical Assimilation in English Jewish History, 1656–1945* (1990), 31–3.
18. Roth 77–8, quoting Lucien Wolf, in Clara Melchior, *Familienminder* (Copenhagen 1915), 96ff., which I have not yet seen; A.E. Franklin, *Records of the Franklin Family* (1935), 97, makes me very doubtful about some of the dates. A picture of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Isaacs was exhibited at the Anglo-Jewish Historical Exhibition of 1887, with the note 'Mr. Isaacs was the son of the first Jew established in Oxford after the return'; it cannot now be traced. There was also a picture of Sarah the centenarian in Liverpool in 1886 (*JC* 21.5.1886).
19. The Jewish Museum, London, possesses a miniature (no. 874) of her; she married Alexander Levy of Kidderminster.
20. *JOJ* 6.11.1784.
21. Drawn to my attention by Dr. J.M. Webber.
22. *Universal British Directory* IV (?1794). There are no Oxford Jews in *Baileys Western and Midland Directory* of 1783.
23. Hobson (ed.) *Oxford Council Acts, 1752–1801* (1962), under 28.12.1797.
24. Dann 352 thinks this simply a periodic outburst in the Council's perennial struggle against outsiders. *JOJ* did not think the matter worth reporting.
25. *Gentleman's Magazine* October 1812, *JOJ* 19.9.1812. Roth 78 quotes the record of his burial in the Brady Street Cemetery. There was another Henry Isaacs of Oxford, a stable keeper who died in London in 1795, aged near eighty (*JOJ* 14.2.1795); whether he was Jewish, I do not know.
26. Roth 76, 78; see p. 9 below.
27. Torode, *The Hebrew Community of Cheltenham, Gloucester and Stroud* (1989), 21, 23–5, 28.
28. MS. Oxf. Dioc. d571 ff. 37–8; County Hall.
29. Roth 75, 79.
30. It may be that the first is identical with Moses Jacob Cohen (alias Rosenburg) of Oxford, whose will was proved in 1822. That would break the connection with the second, already dubious, since David ben Jacob is not said to be a Cohen.
31. *JOJ* 10.5. 1817, quoted by Roth 77.
32. On Lyon (1754–1820), see, besides Roth 76, *JC* 24.11.1871 and 6.6.1879, claiming that he could have risen to great academic distinction if he had been prepared to convert.
33. Torode, *op. cit.* 20–1, 36.
34. *Voice of Jacob* 23.12.1842, 6.1.1843.

Chapter Two

1. Information from Zoe Josephs and Anthony Joseph.
2. MS Adler 2257 fol. 25r, referred to by C. Duschinsky, *Rabbinate of the Great Synagogue, London* (Oxford, 1921) 117, and checked for me by Dr. E. Reiner.

3. V.D. Lipman, *Social History of the Jews in England, 1850–1950* (1954), 32–3.
4. Op. cit. 117, followed by Roth, *Rise of Provincial Jewry* (1950), 90. It is puzzling that there is no record of an authorization for Oxford in Herschell's extensive register.
5. *Oxford University, City, and County Herald* and *JOJ*, both of 2.3.1844. The account in the *Illustrated London News* of the same date was evidently written before the inquest, and has an exaggerated view of the wealth of the household.
6. Some idea of the external appearance of the house, perhaps built early in the 17th century, can be gained from the picture of no.5, taken in 1913, in C.W. Judge, *Oxford Past and Present* (1970), 18, where the single first-floor window and the two second-floor windows are clear. The drawing in the *Illustrated London News* is of doubtful reliability.
7. *Early Recollections of Oxford* by an Old Freeman (Stephen Quelch), (Oxford 1900), 7.
8. Aaron's descendant, Denise Williams, has now traced the burial to the Brady Street cemetery.
9. *JC* 8.9.1848. A.J. Woolf, son of 'Rev.' Isaiah Woolf, marries Fanny Friedman of Romford, ceremony conducted by Rev. N. Jacobs.
10. There had also been two in the Harris household in 1841.
11. Unidentified newspaper cutting in Bodleian, G.A. Oxon b 112 (210); see also *The Times* of 3.9.1844, reprinting a report from *The Banbury Chronicle*.
12. That Oxford had taken no part in Adler's election means nothing; the well-established Cheltenham community of 18 families had not done so either.
13. Bernard Susser in A. Newman (ed.), *Provincial Jewry in Victorian Britain* (JHSE 1975). We were previously dependent on the partial publication in *JC* 23.7.1847.
14. *JOJ* and *Oxford Chronicle* 2.10.1847. There had evidently been local gossip, which the newspapers were concerned to refute, that Mrs. Levi had not tried to extinguish the flames, but she had herself sustained burns.
15. *Victoria County History* IV 425 is of course mistaken in implying that the garden wedding of 1844 suggests that there was none then.
16. Roth, *Oxoniensia* 15, 1950, 80.
17. K. Tiller (ed.), *Church and Chapel in Oxfordshire 1851. The return of the census of religious worship* (Oxfordshire Record Society 55, 1987), 77, reproducing HO 129/158/14.
18. Morris, *Oxoniensia* 36, 1971, 91–2, showing that it was also particularly unhealthy.
19. In the 1920s it was identified with a plain edifice in Cotswold stone, set back from the road, used as a bicycle repair shop, but no bicycle repair shop in Paradise Square appears in the directories of the 1920s.
20. *JC* 28.9.1849.
21. This was Samuel Wilberforce, who had made a famous speech against Jewish emancipation the previous year.
22. This complimentary account was gracefully acknowledged two weeks later by W. Harris, Warden (*JC* 12.10.1849), the first appearance of a lay official.

23. He is first mentioned there in *JC* 14.5.1858. He stayed until August 1872, and then held posts at Newport (1872–9) (where he became Nathaniel) and Bath, where he died in 1890. He and his wife Hannah (1824–99) are buried there in the Coombe Down cemetery (*JC* 17.6.1983).
24. Information from Raphael Loewe, who was told that Margoliouth had been *shochet* in Oxford before turning missionary. His son, Professor D.S. Margoliouth, evidently knew he had been a 'Rabbi', but it is hard to fit him in in Oxford.
25. *Dutton Allen and Co's Directory and Gazeteer of Oxon., Berks., and Bucks* (1863), 113.
26. *JC* 2.3.1849.
27. Discovered by Raphael Loewe in a Venice Rabbinic Bible of 1617–19 (M. 5. 13. Jur.), traced for me by Mr. R.A. May.
28. *JC* 8.7.1864. The wedding was conducted by Berthold Albu, then Reader in Cheltenham, so there was evidently no other minister available in Oxford.
29. *Sefar Chsydim* (Bodleian copy Opp. Add. quarto IV. 131 (2); this and other information from Mr. R.A. May). The obituary in *JC* 30.12.1898 of this 'profound Hebrew scholar . . . highly respected both in Jewish and non-Jewish circles for his deep scholarship and noble character' is hopelessly confused and inaccurate, placing his twenty years in Aldershot before thirty years as a librarian and Honorary *shochet* in Oxford, though naturally getting the date of his retirement to Sunderland more or less right.
30. M. Slowe, 'The Foundation of the Aldershot Synagogue', 6 in Newman (ed.) 1975 (n.19). He evidently continued to derive prestige from his twenty-five years in Oxford, since he is still described as 'formerly of Oxford' in *JC* 30.9.1881.
31. Torode (ch. 1 n.27) 42.
32. Confused statements in the index to the *JC* may conceal a Marcus Aronowitz, and a centenarian who died in 1953 thought that she was the grand-daughter of an Oxford *hazan* named Talerman (*JC* 10.10.1952, 25.12.1953).
33. J.J. Moore, *Historical Handbook and Guide to the City and University of Oxford* (1871), 12, 216: cf. J.J. Moore, *Earlier and Later Nonconformity in Oxford* (1875), 8, and *Shrimpton's Oxford Directory for 1875*, 261, for further references to St. Aldate's.
34. *JC* 26.5.1871, 2.6.1871.

Chapter Three

1. Roth, *Oxford Magazine* 7.3.1963, 230–2.
2. Endelman, *Radical Assimilation in English Jewish History, 1656–1945* (1990), 82–3.
3. Mr. Appleton further said that he would see no harm which would arise from setting up a Jewish Faculty of Theology at Oxford, if there were more Jews.
4. Out of 71 entrants to Balliol in 1881, 5 were Jewish, a tribute to the sympathy and interest of the Master, Benjamin Jowett.
5. Appendix B.
6. See the very interesting letter by 'M', *JC* 5.8.1892, suggesting that these private

benefactions, which are taken for granted, should be institutionalized in a fund for the purpose.

7. *JC* 17.1.1919.
8. *JC* 16.8.1919.
9. There is no trace whatever of Oxford in the pioneering work of A.I. Myers, *The Jewish Directory for 1874*.
10. *JC* 9.12.1881.
11. Letter from Baron Franks in *JC* 14.12.1883. In January 1882, they had considered removing a staircase and placing a lobby or division to exclude the washhouse in the entrance.
12. Reminiscences of Ada Burchell told to Dr. N. Lawrence in 1953. But her grandfather, to whom the stables belonged, seems to have lived on the south side of George Street.
13. *JC* 11.10.1878.
14. *JC* 18.10.1878, 4B and 13A.
15. *JC* 25.10.1878.
16. *JC* 9.12.1881.
17. *JC* 16.9.1881, 7.10.1881. The later entries for 1881 are 14.10, 25.11, 2.12, 9.12.
18. 13.1.1882.
19. *JC* 27.1.1882.
20. *JC* 3.2.1882.
21. 17.2.1882.
22. *JC* 3.3.1882.
23. *Oxford Times* 4.3.1882.
24. Solomon was only 19; he was subsequently minister in Middlesborough, Stockton, and finally Chatham, retiring in his old age to the Judith Lady Montefiore College in Ramsgate. Family tradition suggests that I. Simon, *shochet* in Southampton till 1883, of whom we shall see more in the next chapter, briefly considered taking the post at Oxford around that year. Instead, he went to South Manchester as minister in January 1884, and told his Oxford undergraduate sons that he had always regretted not having stayed in Oxford.
25. There are many more details of his benefactions in *JOJ* 5.8.1905.
26. *JC* 19.10.1883.
27. *JC* 7.12.1883.
28. A subsidy of £14 p.a., in principle paid by the Chief Rabbi to the Oxford Congregation, must date to this period.
29. The number is given as 15 by *The Jewish Calendar, Manual and Diary 1890-91*. This makes no sense, and a reference in the Congregation's minutes to Mr. Parker the landlord suggests that the premises were in an upstairs room on the west side of Worcester Place, near the present junction with Richmond Road, where contemporary directories put W.F. Parker's bicycle and tricycle works and J. Parker's earth-closet works. This fits the childhood recollections of A.M. Hyamson, communicated to me by Raphael Loewe.
30. 14.3.1884.
31. The *JC* believed that he was studying for the ministry, but he afterwards became a physician as well as Claude Montefiore's brother-in-law.

32. 13.6.1884.
33. 5.12.1884.
34. *JC* 30.1, 13.2, 27.2, 1.5, 29.5 of 1885. But see 19.3.1886.
35. Letter from Joel Zacharias, *JC* 27.6.1884. But, since Schulman had gone by July 1885, the promise may have come to nothing.
36. *JC* 14.9.1888, 28.9.1888.
37. *JC* 11.7, 18.7, 24.10, 7.11, 14.11, all of 1884.
38. He got extra for other duties. When acting as night-watcher for the dead, he received 10/- per night.
39. Slowe, *op. cit.* (ch.2 n.30), 5–6.
40. Minutes of 13.9.1885, which however only speak of the *shochet*'s attendance from 9 to 11 on those days to porge the meat.
41. See *JC* 1.7.1892; Oxford published an acknowledgement on 16.9.1892.

Chapter Four

1. *JC* 25.11.1892.
2. His appearance at this point is not due to a relationship with the Manchester Simons. I. Simon's granddaughter, Iona Mayer, tells me that he was no relation.
3. J.M. Shaftesley, ap. S.S. Levin (ed.), *A Century of Anglo-Jewish Life, 1870–1970* (1970), 103.
4. Of these, Birnbaum was in his third year, Eicholz and Magnus in their second year; all the rest were freshmen. There is no sign of Herbert Samuel of Balliol, who had in the previous year written to his mother that he had lost all religious faith, though not his Jewish identification. Eicholz was reading Chemistry, Cohen Law, all the rest Classics.
5. *JC* 3.2.1893.
6. Oxford Corporation New Buildings, Plan 1708, in the Local History Section, Oxford City Library.
7. There was precedent for such a building further down Nelson Street, a hall put up in 1877 as a Scottish Presbyterian Chapel, which later became a Friends' Meeting House, before ending as the Parochial Hall for the Anglican parish of St. Barnabas.
8. *JC* 1.7.1892; Shaftesley, *op. cit.* 99–101.
9. *JC* 22.12.1893. For details see the report of the Cemeteries Committee in the *Oxford Times* of 9.12.1893.
10. *JC* 6.4.1894.
11. For details of the transfer, see Appendix C.
12. His elder son, later Lord Segal, learned Hebrew before English. I owe this and many other details to Professor J.B. Segal.
13. See the obituary of Zacharias in *JC* 4.8.1905.
14. See Appendix C.
15. Lucas is the earliest character in this book whom I actually knew; I am retrospectively appalled at all the opportunities for questioning I have missed.

16. *JOJ* 5.8.1905, a long item which evades his Jewishness until reaching the graveside.
17. *JC* 4.8.1905.
18. Lucien Harris, 'Zionism at Oxford', *The Zionist Review*, July-August 1936, 92–3, drawing on minute-books then in the Mocatta Library. I am greatly indebted to Mr. Harris for sending me a copy of this.
19. Interview with B. Lieberman, *JC* 4.10.1912.
20. *JC* 16.3.1917.
21. Letter from Victor Gollancz, *JC* 3.1.1913.
22. They both managed to forget this later: see K. Martin, *Harold Laski (1893–1950)* (1953) ch. 1, and R.D. Edwards, *Victor Gollancz: A Biography* (1987), 75–6, on the different ways in which Liberal Judaism failed to hold these powerful personalities.
23. *Oxford Prayers. A Prayer Book printed for the use of the Oxford University Hebrew Congregation* (London: Humphrey Milford. Oxford: Clarendon Press Depository. 1914).
24. *JC* 12.1.1917.
25. Loewe's own exposition (*JC* 9.10.1914) of how a Semitics vacancy happened to arise in Oxford and how the Rector of Exeter invited him to fill it is surely only part of the truth, and some money-raising in London was involved; the Exeter records throw no light on the matter.

Chapter Five

1. Todd M. Endelman, *Radical Assimilation in English Jewish History, 1656–1945* (1990), 200, evidently exaggerates the implications of Charles Singer's alleged remark in 1919 that 'he was not there to look after Jewish affairs, but to lecture on the history of medicine'.
2. *JC* 6.9.1918.
3. *JC* 8.11.1918.
4. D. Davidson had been a member since 1881; he disappears from the directories soon after this, and Sydney Brookfield lists a town population of about five when he came up in 1931.
5. *JC* 31.10.1919.
6. Basil Henriques in *JC* 16.3.1917.
7. *JC* 27.4.1917.

Chapter Six

1. A. Mocatta and F.A. Lincoln in *JC* 9.7.1926.
2. See L. Harris, op. cit. (ch. 4 n. 18). It needed resuscitation again in 1926.
3. In chapters of an unfinished autobiography he sent me, Duchin left an account of his transition from Orthodoxy to Zionism in the course of his second year. Chaim Raphael has published his own account of his identities in *Memoirs of A Special Case* (1962) and *A Coat of Many Colours* (1979).

4. Michael Franklin to George Silver, 3.10.1969
5. *JC* 8.10.1926, 15.10.1926, supplemented by reminiscences.
6. See Appendix C.
7. 9.7.1926.
8. *JC* 8.10.1926.
9. Julius Stone, *JC* 3.12.1926. Something of the kind had already been contemplated in elaborate undated pre-war draft rules for an Oxonian Jewish Association.
10. Additional details from F. Ashe Lincoln.
11. For the events of 21 June 1931, I depend, not only on the printed order of service, but on the memory of Sydney Brookfield. For a denial of the identity of Robert of Reading with Haggai the proselyte, see C. Roth, *The Jews of Medieval Oxford* 20–21 n.1.
12. *JC* 21.10.1932, 9.12.1932, 5.4.1935.
13. Statistics in *JC* 10.5.1935.
14. *JC* 5.4.1935.
15. *JC* 19.4.1935.
16. C.L. Hauser, in *JC* 10.5.1935.
17. *JC* 6.12.1935.
18. I have found curiously little in print on this. Ralph Glasser, *Gorbals Boy at Oxford* (1988), has some interesting, though evidently somewhat fictionalized, material from a very unusual point of view, since he arrived at Balliol straight from the Glasgow slums in 1938 without the usual tempering by an academic school.
19. These had replaced an original office of J[ewish] N[ational] F[und] Agent or Commissioners.
20. Irene Roth has given her own vivid account of their life in Oxford in *Cecil Roth: Historian without Tears* (1982). An article by Cecil, 'Entertaining Oxford' in *The Jewish Academy* for October 1946, adds some of the better stories, though not my favourite. At one of the hardest times of the war, Lord and Lady Samuel were coming to dinner. Irene managed to acquire some fish and do her best with it. Lord Samuel went through it with enthusiasm, remarking, as he finished, 'This is the most delicious hors d'oeuvre I have ever tasted.' It was never quite clear how the conversation had continued.

Chapter Seven

1. Ettinghausen, now Eytan, covered the same ground in an account in *JC* 8.9.1989, which adds some details, but inevitably suffers from reliance on memory.
2. A. Delcoy, 25.9.1991.
3. *JC* 12.5.1989.
4. See in particular Roth's address to the Anglo-Palestine Club (*JC* 23.4.1943) and the correspondence columns of 5.3.1943, 12.3.1943, 19.3.1943.
5. See W. Frankel and H. Miller (edd.) *Gown and Tallith* (1989) 164.
6. For the constitutional question, see Appendix C.

7. *OT* 30.8.1940, 18.10.1940.
8. *OT* 11.10.1940.
9. D. Sheridan (ed.), *Among you Taking Notes. The Wartime Diary of Naomi Mitchison 1939–1945* (1985), 99–100.
10. Ibid. 112.
11. N.H. Baynes, *Byzantine Studies and Other Essays* (1960), 382–3.
12. *JC* 16.7.1943.
13. *OT* 4.4.1941.
14. *JC* 8.9.1989.
15. A. Delcoy, 25.9.1991.

Chapter Eight

1. For his subsequent career in Muizenberg and Edinburgh, see *JC* 12.5.1989.

Chapter Nine

1. I have not tried to give any documentation for this chapter, for which I have drawn entirely on my own files and those of Lord Segal and Sir Alan Mocatta in my care.
2. For the issues involved, the curious may refer to the report of the Congregation's Sub-Committee of Enquiry submitted on 13 January 1984.

Chapter Ten

1. Simon Rocker, 'Singing the Blues', *Jewish Chronicle Colour Supplement*, 28.3.1986.
2. B. Wasserstein, *Jewish Journal of Sociology* 13, 1971, 135–51.

Appendix A

1. *JC* 1.8.1873.
2. *Oxford Chronicle* 28.8.1847.
3. *Oxford Chronicle* 13.5.1871.
4. *JC* 9.8.1889.
5. H. Pollins, *Economic History of the Jews in England* (1982), 97–8, 105, 122–5.
6. There were no doctors with affiliations to the community until the Second World War and there was no Jewish solicitor in Oxford until the 1980s.

GLOSSARY

I have omitted some liturgical terms.

Ashkenazi(m). Jews descended from German/Polish families or adhering to their liturgy.

ba'alei batim. Heads of families.

barmitzvah. Ceremony of calling 13-year-old boy to the Reading of the Law.

batmitzvah. Ceremony of various forms to mark religious majority of a girl.

besamim. Spices used in service for conclusion of the Sabbath.

bima. Raised central area in a synagogue.

haftarah. Reading from the Prophets after the Reading of the Law.

Haham. The religious head of the Sephardi community of London.

Hatikvah. Song reflecting aspirations of Zionist Movement, later Israeli National Anthem.

hazan. Cantor, reader.

High Holidays. The autumn sequence of festivals including New Year and the Day of Atonement.

ketubah. Marriage-contract.

mikveh, mikvah. Ritual bath-house.

minyan. The quorum of ten adult males required for many liturgical purposes, particularly the Reading of the Law.

mitzvot (in context). The privileges of being called to the Reading of the Law.

Rosh Hashanah. The Festival of the New Year.

Seder. Formal service and meal for first two nights of Passover.

Sephardi(m). Jews descended from Spanish/Portuguese families or adhering to their liturgy.

shechita. Slaughter and preparation of kosher meat.

shekalim. 'Shekels' (contribution to Zionist Movement).

shiurim. Lectures/discussions, normally on the Talmud.

shochet(im). Slaughterer(s).

sukkah. Booth (temporary structure erected during Festival of Tabernacles).

taharah. Washing of the dead preparatory to burial.

yeshivah. Rabbinical academy.

Yom Kippur. Day of Atonement.

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