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**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON**

FACULTY OF LAW, ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES  
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES

**A Study in Institutionalism – The Jewish  
Children’s Orphanage at Norwood**

By

**Lawrence Cohen**

Thesis for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

September 2010



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON  
ABSTRACT

Faculty of Law, Arts and Social Sciences, School of Humanities  
Doctor of Philosophy

**A STUDY IN INSTITUTIONALISM – The Jewish Children’s Orphanage at Norwood 1876-1961** by Lawrence Cohen

The thesis is a study in child institutionalism focussed on the Jewish orphanage at Norwood. The chronology of institutionalism is divided into three phases. The phases correspond to periods of growth, consolidation and decline. The introductory chapter provides a brief history of Norwood as a background to the study. The sources available - archives, recollections and published works - are reviewed to reveal a significant gap in Anglo-Jewish history. *A Study in Institutionalism* is outlined in chapter 1 as a prelude to the analysis undertaken in the following chapters.

The institutional theme is initially examined by analysing the names used for Norwood in chapter 2. It is argued names are not merely external labels but are also linked with ‘internal forces’ that make the institution’s ‘personality’. This connection provides the basis for the linguistic study of name changing covering the years 1807 to 1961. In chapter 3 the expansion phase is examined as a Jewish template of institutionalism at Norwood. In chapter 4 the template of the institution is broadened to include national and international developments. The wider perspective include the new continental ideas on residential care, the parallel institution of the Poor Law system, the residential solutions of the evangelical charities sceptical of the large institution, and in America the institution’s progressive transformation into one that was more child-centred.

The second phase of institutionalism during the inter-war period is studied in chapter 5. At Norwood, on the one hand, liberal reforms were introduced to improve the lives of the children and, on the other hand, there was structural stagnation. It was a phase marked by institutional self-doubt that in American Jewish orphanages saw a movement towards the ‘child developing institution’ in which the child rather than the institution took precedence, whereas this was less developed in Britain. The theme of counter- institutionalism is examined in chapter 6. The focus is on the children and the way they adapted to institutional life. Rebelliousness was one extreme form and expressed itself in the exceptional Norwood Rebellion of 1921 as well as ongoing resistance to corporal punishment.

The penultimate chapter concludes the historical trajectory of the child institution at Norwood with its downfall and closure. The post-war period was marked by the findings of the Curtis Committee on the workings of such institutions. At Norwood the impact was seen in the structural reforms of the 1950s carried out under Edward Conway leading ultimately to the closure of the orphanage in 1961 and its replacement by family homes. The ideological transformation from institutionalism to one based on the paramount importance of the child concludes the study relating to the third phase of institutionalism.

The concluding chapter provides a judgment on institutionalism – whether Norwood was a ‘good enough’ institution for the children, and more broadly whether Norwood was ahead or behind in its outlook compared with other examples in Britain and beyond.



# **A Study in Institutionalism – The Jewish Children’s Orphanage at Norwood 1876-1961**

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## **DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP**

I, LAWRENCE COHEN declare that the thesis entitled

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and the work presented in the thesis are both my own, and have been generated by me as the result of my original research. I conform that:

- this work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
- where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has clearly been stated:
- where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
- where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
- I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
- where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
- parts of this work have been published as:

WHAT’S IN A NAME? The Changing Titles of Norwood, the Jewish Children’s Orphanage in Geoffrey Alderman (ed.) *New Directions in Anglo-Jewish History* (Academic Studies Press, Boston, MA, USA, 2010)

**Signed:** .....

**Date:** ...29/9/10.....



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## **Abbreviations**

AR	Norwood Annual Reports
CJOA	Cleveland Jewish Orphan Asylum
COS	Charity Organisation Society
ELOAS	East London Orphan Aid Society
HOA	Hebrew Orphan Asylum (New York)
HSGS	Hebrew Sheltering Guardian Society (New York)
JBG	London Jewish Board of Guardians
JC	Jewish Chronicle
JFH	Jewish Foster Home (Philadelphia)
JFS	Jews' Free School
JHOA	Jews' Hospital and Orphan Asylum
JOA	Jews' Orphan Asylum
JW	Jewish World
LCC	London County Council
LGB	Local Government Board
LJM	London Jewish Museum Archives
NA	National Archives
NC	Norwood Childcare Archives
NOSA	Norwood Old Scholars Association
USA	University of Southampton Archives

## **Note on Oral Sources**

In the interests of confidentiality contributors to the NOSA *Newsletter* and taped interviewees have been given an alpha-numeric reference.



# **A Study in Institutionalism – The Jewish Children’s Orphanage at Norwood 1876-1961**

## **Chapter 1 - Introduction**

### **A Brief History of Norwood - The Beginnings**

The topic of the thesis is *The Jewish Children’s Orphanage* (hereafter Norwood). The orphanage was purposely sited in the fashionable and healthy London suburb of West Norwood far removed from ‘the clutter and confusion’ of the East End.<sup>1</sup> It was created by the Anglo-Jewish establishment as a result of the amalgamation of two foundation charities, the Jews’ Hospital and Jews’ Orphan Asylum (hereafter JOA) in 1876 to form the conjoint Jews’ Hospital and Orphan Asylum (hereafter JHOA).

Norwood was founded as part of ‘the ‘child-saving’ movement’ of the 1860s and 1870s. It was missionary inspired and the institution of the orphanage was a type of ‘rescue home’ for lost souls. The movement inspired the establishment of a number of religious voluntary childcare societies. The best known of these were the Methodists’ National Children’s Home founded in 1869, Dr Barnardo’s in 1870 and the Church of England’s Waifs and Strays Society in 1881. In the nineteenth century there was the belief in the power of reform through education by ‘removal’ to a residential setting for a better life.<sup>2</sup> The missionary motivation of evangelical Christians contrasted with the Jewish approach of a ‘child

organisation movement'; but both movements had in common placing children in orphanages for the purpose of 'saving kids from evil – moral, physical and religious'. However, the Jewish movement differed in being more concerned that 'the slippery slope to a life of crime or pauperism would tarnish the reputation of the community and reduce the size of an already small community', than concern about 'lost souls'.<sup>3</sup>

From the late eighteenth century Jewish communal leaders established a network of charitable institutions to provide assistance to the poor. Nevertheless, as charity schemes multiplied concern was expressed in the way they operated. Growing discontent with the state of Jewish charity and the preference to treat poverty internally underpinned the charity organisation movement in the Jewish community.<sup>4</sup> Organisation meant applying scientific principles of charity in the form of amalgamation of existing charities with similar functions. One consequence was that the Jewish community established the JHOA at Norwood in 1876.

The mission statement of the JHOA spelt out that its objects were 'providing of a home for the maintaining, educating, clothing and apprenticing to industrial employment' of poor children of the Jewish religion, including orphans deprived of one or both parents.<sup>5</sup> The new institution took on a number of roles. It was an elementary school for Jewish children and operated an apprenticeship scheme

when they left. It was a place of Jewish rescue from the workhouse, a substitute for the deprived family home for the parentless orphan and also for deserving children whose respectable parents had fallen on hard times. The institutional model of the 'Asylum' was the one adopted in which these roles were carried out.

*A Brief History of Norwood* is split into seven sections. The first two sections are on the educational themes of schooling and after care. The Jewish theme is covered in the next three sections on religion, Anglicisation and denominationalism. The last two sections are on children's welfare and the construction of childhood and Norwood as a residential institution. Though not exhaustive of the areas of research (such as Norwood and gender discrimination), together they are an introduction to Norwood's history.

### *Norwood as an Educational Institution*

Education was a strong driving force in the history of the institution. The scholastic importance for Norwood was signified by its senior officer being called 'Headmaster'. It was a status that was based on a policy to provide the best educational facilities so that the children could become worthy representatives of the Jewish community.<sup>6</sup> The new institution initially had 152 children on its roll and this number progressively increased until the eve of the Second World War when it stood at 365.<sup>7</sup>

Its status moved from being at first an independent school to becoming designated a public elementary school under the control of the Board of Education in 1900. The effect of the transfer allowed the widening of the curriculum so that the school was assimilated to the ordinary work of a London Board School.<sup>8</sup> The school had a prestigious reputation in the Jewish community. The three lay headmasters up to 1939 (Abraham Raphael, Marcus Kaye and Hyman Content) were highly qualified teachers who had been headmasters of large day schools prior to their appointments; moving to Norwood was regarded as a promotion.<sup>9</sup>

The dual role of Norwood as a home and as a school was the institutional arrangement since its establishment. Slowly, however, new ideas percolated through. It was recognised that although education had been linked with the physical and psychological welfare of children, these were distinct functions which were best undertaken by separate bodies. The president Anthony de Rothschild in 1925 said that though the mission of Norwood was essentially two fold – it sought to combine home and school - this dual role was now a matter of controversy but the time had yet to come for a new conception of an orphanage that kept the two distinct. Under the existing arrangement the headmaster had a dual capacity that included being superintendent of the orphanage.<sup>10</sup>

The large institution had an educational advantage in promoting the public school image, one that Norwood was reluctant to shed. In 1927 Norwood considered sending children to local schools. The headmaster Marcus Kaye opposed the idea on the grounds that it disrupted institutional operations. The Chief Rabbi was vigorously opposed to it when it was discussed again in 1932 on grounds that religious training would suffer. It seemed religious and institutional self-interest took precedence over the educational interests of the children.<sup>11</sup> In 1929 the *Hadow Report* commissioned by the government recommended a split between primary and secondary education at the age of eleven. The effect on Norwood, whose intake ranged from 5 to 14 years of age, was to force the separation of the school from home. It was planned to build a separate education block in the grounds. This never happened before war broke out but, under an internal reorganisation in 1938, the headmaster's role as superintendent of the orphanage was split off and placed under another member of staff.<sup>12</sup> It was the external impetus of government reform that was the catalyst for realising institutional educational reform.

The time for Rothschild's new conception had come to pass with the end of the war and the return of the evacuee children to Norwood in 1945. The social changes wrought by the war meant that 'the Committee were determined as soon as possible to create

conditions at Norwood approximating as far as possible *home life*' (emphasis in the original) and that meant education was to be provided by sending the children to outside schools.<sup>13</sup> Religious education was unaffected and the children attended local primary schools for secular education. The Jewish boarding school concept had dominated Norwood thinking right from the start. Governors were now persuaded that only by the separation of school and home could the right atmosphere be introduced. The dramatic change in policy shifted the ideological balance from education to child welfare. The institutional *raison d'être* of the public school idea was gone and the question which remained to be asked was whether the same reasoning was applicable to a welfare institution. The changes made Norwood more receptive to the new post-war welfare ideas and one area where this happened was in the approach to aftercare.

### *Norwood's Aftercare System*

The mission statement of Norwood included the provision of industrial employment of the children. Just what types of employment the boys could undertake was demonstrated by the Jewish Apprentices' Industrial Exhibition organised by the Jewish Board of Guardians (hereafter JBG) in 1882. The JBG was the major relief charity for the Jewish community and its Industrial Committee

was responsible for apprenticeships. The exhibition put on in the following year was aimed to divert the poor from 'crowded and uncertain occupations' and some sixty trades were represented'. The charity was starting young people in the walk of life which enabled them to earn a living and 'to become an honour to the Jewish community and a credit to the great English people'.<sup>14</sup> The manual work ethic it promulgated was promoted by the Anglo-Jewish upper and middle classes in which virtues of frugality, cleanliness, regularity, industry and sobriety were emphasised and children in particular were exhorted to honour and obey their elders and betters.<sup>15</sup> It was a Jewish ethic that was social as well as one based on the necessity of manual work.

The example of the JBG was not lost on Norwood and in 1885 an Apprenticing Committee was set up to select suitable masters and trades and to allocate a guardian to each apprentice. The enthusiasm behind the new initiative saw the opening of a technical workshop in 1887 to teach older boys the use of simple tools so that when they left they got better apprenticeships and better masters. The boys were reminded at the official opening of the workshop that a lad 'living as a hawker, costermonger or by tailoring and shoemaking will not do; mechanical work is provided in good and remunerative trades'. The attitude of Norwood to training girls was quite different and their 'workshop' was deemed to be the asylum

where they learned to become good housewives. The JHOA joined forces with the JBG in the 1887 exhibition which allowed Norwood for the first time to show publicly the product of its own boys' technical instruction.<sup>16</sup>

The apprenticeship scheme was expanded by opening hostels for those children who had no home to go back to when they left - Norwood was concerned otherwise that all the good work would be lost. Two apprentice hostels were opened in the provinces in Stoke-on-Trent and Coventry in the 1890s and a third one opened in 1904 in North London. At the time there were good employment prospects in the provinces and the Apprenticing Committee thought that the East End was too heavily congested with Jewish employment. The committee expressed its satisfaction that the three hostels clearly showed the responsibility of the charity to look after the children when they left Norwood.<sup>17</sup>

However, the hostel system proved to be short-lived, as poor trading conditions undermined the argument for keeping them on, and it was found more economical to board out the apprentices. The provincial ones were closed by 1912 and the North London hostel situated in the healthier metropolitan employment market continued until 1922. The Norwood authorities were also becoming aware that living in hostels was not the best way of dealing with homeless lads as the accommodation was seen as a continuation of

institutional life.<sup>18</sup> The apprentices were being controlled at close quarters through the supervision of the house parents in the hostels and at arms length through the intervention of the secretary from Norwood; in a sense lads did not fully leave the institution until they were at the end of their apprenticeships.

The After Care system at Norwood was reorganised with separate committees for boys and girls in 1924. The scheme was professionalised through the employment of officers supporting the children full time and the replacement of the guardianship role of the lay governors. There was recognition that the work should fit the apprentice and not the other way round, as too often in the past, indentures (apprenticeship contracts with masters) had to be cancelled because of poor initial placements. There was also the recognition that boys could opt out of apprenticeships if they wished and be placed with employers without indentures.<sup>19</sup> Youngsters often preferred to take on more lucrative work even if it did not provide a skilled apprenticed trade for boys and respectable domestic training for girls.

The After Care function in the post-1945 period entered a new phase when the importance of a proper home environment was recognised. Norwood looked for suitable foster homes for boarded out children where they could feel that the foster parents had a real interest in their welfare. The policy was extended in 1952 to allow

leavers to spend as much time as possible with relatives whilst at Norwood or being befriended if they had no homes of their own. The approach to apprenticing had progressively changed since the 1930s. The emphasis placed on it as part of 'the total personality of young people as distinct from meeting some specific need' such as industrial employment matched the changes taking place in the field of child care.<sup>20</sup>

The function of After Care had both a training and welfare role. The religious role was less obvious and operated through the incorporation into indenture contracts facilities to be provided by masters for religious observance. The religious role was more readily controlled and promoted while the children were still at Norwood.

#### *Norwood's Religious role as a Jewish Institution*

The amalgamation of two Jewish foundation charities to form the JHOA in 1876 was also an amalgamation of their religious activities, and this was taken over and perpetuated in the new institution. Applicants had to submit their birth certificates and their parent's certificate of marriage in a synagogue as evidence of their religious credentials. The Headmaster had to be a Jew and the religious instruction was to be under the supervision of the Chief Rabbi.<sup>21</sup> The Anglo-Jewish environment in which Norwood was

established was one where in the religious sphere the Chief Rabbi embraced an acculturation that maintained religious Orthodoxy whilst living in the modern world.<sup>22</sup> It was a policy that was followed by Norwood as it served to assimilate the orphans without their loss to the Jewish community. Economic success protected the child from poverty; acculturation protected the cohesiveness of the community and countered anti-Semitism.<sup>23</sup>

It was a period that saw the emergence of the office of the Chief Rabbi which wanted to establish an Orthodox Judaism that was socially and culturally the equivalent of Anglicanism. The religious changes provided the communal impetus to reorganise the major London synagogues by bringing them together as the United Synagogue in 1870.<sup>24</sup> The first two headmasters were clergy of the Orthodox community which drew comment from the Chief Rabbi in 1879 that 'no body of men had shown more appreciation of the Jewish clergy than had the managers of the JHOA'.<sup>25</sup> Religious education was subject to rigid inspection, and one of the inspectors, Reverend Singer was the author of the Orthodox prayer book which was in use at Norwood. He said on his examination of the pupils in Religion and Hebrew in 1894 that 'the complete and continuous control over children in an Institution like yours does no doubt afford certain facilities for religious instruction which are absent

from ordinary day school'.<sup>26</sup> The facilities encompassed the imposition of a daily regime and school curriculum that gave full play to religion.

The religious part of the policy of cultural assimilation proved successful according to the headmaster who claimed in an article in the *Jewish Chronicle* (hereafter *JC*) in 1916 that 'nowhere do children worship more sincerely or with greater reverence'.<sup>27</sup> The purpose of the article was an appeal for funds and the religious integrity of Norwood was an important selling point to the Jewish public. According to the report of Inspector Rosenblum in 1931 the religious policy was continuing to be successful; he was able to write that the reputation which Norwood had always enjoyed for being thoroughly Jewish (and he meant in a religious sense) was being well maintained. This was, he claimed, because of the Jewish principles upon which the school was established and 'while this continues Norwood would have the whole-hearted support of the community'.<sup>28</sup>

Norwood was an institution that was religious to meet the special needs of keeping the dietary laws, observance of the Sabbath and Festivals, attendance at religious services, teaching a Jewish curriculum and more generally, engendering a Jewish atmosphere. That need also was found in other areas such as apprenticing where exemption from work on Sabbaths and Festivals

was insisted upon. In 1962 the Home Office inspector commented that religion at Norwood was important in all decisions. The main orphanage building had been replaced by small group homes and a community centre which was the new focus of Jewish life. The new arrangement allowed the perpetuation of Jewish learning, the Family Homes to follow dietary laws, the staff to run the Homes 'particularly from the religious angle' and crucially a new synagogue facilitated further the creation of a religious community.<sup>29</sup> The old orphanage building had gone, but the constancy and continuity of religion it contained throughout its history was transferred to the replacement Norwood model.

#### *Norwood's Anglicising Role*

Linked to the religious orthodoxy that formed the first part of the Chief Rabbi's dual policy was the second aspect that Jews should live in the modern world. It was a policy readily taken up by Norwood. In the 1925 Annual Report it declared 'it is of supreme moment that our boys and girls should be equipped in the best spirit of Judea and England staunch in their Judaism and loyal to their English heritage'. If Norwood could not send them out into the world in that spirit 'our work is a failure'. It re-affirmed Norwood's twenty first birthday promise made in 1897 'to turn out children with the same education, the same habits and the same chances in

life as any well-cared for, well-taught, English boys and girls'.<sup>30</sup>

In 1901 the Norwood secretary made the comment that 'after training our lads at Norwood they are pretty well anglicised'. However, he was concerned that all the effort made by Norwood at assimilation would be wasted by letting a lad return to people who could barely speak English.<sup>31</sup> The languages taught were Hebrew and English and deliberately excluded Yiddish. The significance of Norwood's anglicising mission was fictionalised by the Anglo-Jewish writer Israel Zangwill in the *Children of the Ghetto*. The character Benjamin went to the JHOA where he tried to forget the Yiddish spoken at home. At Norwood English was drummed into him, and 'for four years he had read and read and read English books and heard nothing but English spoken about him'. Benjamin's untiring quest to become 'English-true English' epitomises the imperative of anglicisation for Jews to be assimilated and jettison the 'foreign habits' of their origins.<sup>32</sup>

Anglicization permeated the policies of Norwood in its sports activities. Playing cricket emphasised good sportsmanship, on keeping strictly to the rules and on respect for one's opponents. The middle-class approach to the game was expressed in 'play, play up, and play the game'; part of the public school ethos. The boys playing a game of cricket on Norwood's front lawn was also the

Institution 'playing cricket' in the widest sense of being English in manners. George Faudel-Phillips, Norwood President, recalled a dream he had at the Centenary Festival in 1895 in which he saw 'some well set boys playing cricket' in the enlarged institution that he was now appealing for funds to build. Growing up in the Edwardian era Basil Henriques, a governor at Norwood, recalled in his diaries regularly playing cricket which he encouraged Norwood boys to play.<sup>33</sup>

The Norwood branch of the Jewish Lads' Brigade was run by Anglo-Jewish gentlemen 'to instil in the rising generation all that is best in the English character'. Basil Henriques was one of those Anglo-Jewish gentlemen who, in his various capacities as a Norwood governor, running a Jewish youth club, being a 'son of a great Sephardi family' and a member of the Anglo-Jewish elite, was able to exercise influence such that in 'his generation (the 1930s) Anglo-Jewry had few able missionaries to the young'. He was the personal face of anglicisation.<sup>34</sup>

Norwood was part of the Jewish community that protected its minority status in a non-Jewish world. It did this by promoting a special form of socialisation – Anglicisation, whereby the children learned to conform to English modes or usages, in speech, in manner, in mental attitude and in principles. The institution was a form of intervention of the Jewish kind in which the child removed

from the influence of parents, home and early upbringing was brought up to be culturally assimilated, and this particularly applied to the children of immigrant parents.<sup>35</sup> It was thus a total institution in that Norwood wholly controlled the daily life of the children and exceptionally had a free hand in moulding their minds. Policies on religion and education were largely dictated by outside bodies whereas policy on anglicisation was less explicit and largely determined by Norwood itself.

#### *Norwood as a Denominational Institution*

The Anglo-Jewish commitment to the dual policy brought the religious and anglicising roles together in an amalgam that made Norwood a denominational institution. The 1876 Amalgamation united two Jewish charities to form an enlarged institution that was singularly Jewish and catering for a small minority. The experience of Anglo-Jewry was that Jewish children brought up in non-Jewish institutions became lost to the community. The care of orphaned children was a local problem dealt with by the JBG with Norwood as the destitute children's charity it had recourse to. For Jews it also took on an international dimension and the issue of lost children was one repeated in other countries such as Germany and America.<sup>36</sup> Jewish international solidarity was based on an historic

identity, 'race' consciousness and religious brotherhood and on such foundations the edifice of Jewish institutionalism was built everywhere, in London, Hamburg and New York.<sup>37</sup>

The impulsion for separate denominational identity in Anglo-Jewry manifested itself in an educational response as Jewish children were being sent to Christian schools in the absence of a Jewish alternative. The community's response in the early nineteenth century was to establish the Jews' Free School (hereafter JFS) for children from 'normal' family backgrounds. Education for the destitute child was provided by the charitable Jews' Hospital and JOA which Norwood inherited on amalgamation.

The imperative for Jewish denominational separation also manifested itself in a welfare response. The JBG was established in 1859 to ameliorate the plight of poor Jews. It provided a focus of communal cohesion for Jewish welfare provision and that extended to the welfare of destitute children. The JBG secured the certification of the Jews' Hospital and JOA as recognised schools following the Certified Schools Act of 1862, and this allowed them to receive Jewish children housed in workhouses and district schools run by the Poor Law Unions.<sup>38</sup> The scheme was inherited on amalgamation and provided one of the sources of admissions of children to Norwood. The admission policy was restricted to Jews only which contrasted with the Christian charities which were willing

to take other denominations into their institutions.<sup>39</sup>

The communal urge for denominational separateness manifested itself at the time in all sorts of other institutions- Jewish hospitals in London and Manchester, Jewish homes for the aged, the Hayes Jewish reformatory, the Jewish House at Clifton public school, Jewish clubs and Jewish schools. Encouragement to separate was legally possible because amendments to the Poor Law allowed parish unions to remove Jewish children from workhouses so that they were educated in their own religion. The JBG was an active intermediary between the unions and Norwood for the removal of children and indemnified Norwood against financial loss not covered by union subventions. 'It would seem unlikely that the community would any longer permit a single Jewish child to remain in parochial schools when accommodation existed in their own denominational institutions.'<sup>40</sup> The principle of denominational separation for destitute Jewish children was established, though in reality practice fell short of this 'ideal' and not all destitute children were admitted.

The Visitation Committee of the United Synagogue, the federation of London Orthodox synagogues, visited institutions such as lunatic asylums, prisons, hospitals, workhouses and industrial schools where there were Jews and arranged to remove children

found in them to Norwood with the support of the JBG. The *JC* recorded in 1884 a debate on the need for denominational institutions. Responding to public opinion, the newspaper was in no doubt that Norwood was justified to deal with 'the indigent and the orphan of the Jewish faith' though there had been opposition to the principle of rescuing all such children.<sup>41</sup>

Pressure on the community to establish its own denominational institutions came from other quarters. Magistrates found they had to dismiss Jewish delinquents for want of suitable places as they were required to select an appropriate denominational school. The community faced pressure from the London School Board, Police Magistrates and the Home Office to do something, and in 1898 the Hayes Jewish Industrial School was built. It was an institution which Norwood made use of for its own delinquent boys.<sup>42</sup> Pressure also came from the Poor Law Guardians. Mile End Guardians in 1914 made it clear that

if the Jewish community wish to have separate homes in order to have a Jewish atmosphere then they should provide an institution or home themselves and the Guardians would contribute towards the costs as they do with Mile End children now in Norwood.<sup>43</sup>

The law allowed the transfer to a school where children received denominational education; this was exploited both by the community to provide their own religious facilities and by the

state. The London County Council (hereafter LCC) in the 1930s asked Norwood to absorb Jewish children from its own Children's Homes. The LCC had put the Jewish children in separate villas but it proved too difficult to provide the necessary Jewish environment and suggested a new Jewish orphanage be built by the Jewish community. The eventual outcome was the transfer of the double-orphaned children to Norwood.<sup>44</sup> Only a Jewish institution like Norwood could take on the responsibility of caring for Jewish children so that they were brought up with a knowledge and pride in their own faith, and this was something recognised both by the community and by outside bodies. The overall responsibility Norwood took on in caring for children was three fold: bringing up the children in a Jewish way was one; education and after care was a second; caring for their welfare was a third role.

### *Norwood as a Welfare institution and the Changing Construction of Childhood*

The 1876 mission statement of the amalgamated institution emphasised the education and training of the children. The asylum was seen as rehabilitating the child and setting an example to larger society. It was in terms of Norwood as a school that the welfare of the children was conceived, and it was a time that coincided with the introduction of compulsory universal schooling with the Education Acts of the 1870s and 1880s. The nature of childhood

underwent a change in which the notion of the 'the schooled child' was dominant. The school was an institution that took over the child and separated him or her from parents. In the school the child was subjected to institutional control and was seen as an investment in the future which at Norwood extended to making Jewish children into English Jews.<sup>45</sup>

Admission involved an education requirement to read Hebrew and English. Norwood wanted to create a good type of boarding school for intelligent children of the respectable poor.<sup>46</sup> The strength of that motive was evident when in 1914 Marcus Kaye opposed the transfer of children from the junior school at the Gabriel Home to the senior school in the main building. Those who fell well below the required educational standard were singled out as being 'detrimental alike to themselves and to those among whom they work'. These children were part of the new intake with the opening of the Gabriel Home in 1911. Educational excellence was further encouraged by scholarship endowments for children of special merit.<sup>47</sup> In addition to the educational aim Norwood had the welfare aim of making provision for destitute children who could not live at home and for rescued children from non-Jewish institutions. In the discussions leading to the amalgamation the JOA was keen to preserve the right of double-orphaned children to automatic entry

and the JBG was keen to maintain the arrangement of transferring children from workhouses. The majority of candidates, however, were required to be elected as Norwood was a voting charity.

The balance between education and welfare gradually shifted towards the latter. The abolition of the voting system in 1924 finally ended selection of candidates by subscribers based on personal choice rather than on the need of the child. In the same year in the annual report Norwood's mission still stated it was for providing 'education, both religious and secular... and after-care work'. The perspective on the role of Norwood, however, radically changed after the war. The mission of the institution, stated in the 1953 annual report, was 'to comfort and sustain the child, to win his trust and to train him to become a useful citizen and a good Jew'.<sup>48</sup> With the children now going to outside schools the secular education role had ceased and welfare based on the role of the family became preeminent. In the 1950s attempts were made to turn the institution into a surrogate family. The mission of the 'good Jew' was a potent idea throughout Norwood's history embracing gainful employment, communal loyalty and assimilation into English society. The obligations that implied changed with the coming of the Welfare State with its emphasis on the needs and rights of the child and the obligations towards him or her by the state.

The shift in balance at Norwood from the schooled child of the

post-amalgamation period to the child as a family member in the post-war period parallels the shift in the development of childhood in the nation. The schooled child became a captive audience for the subject of research by doctors, sociologists, psychologists and educationalists. The impact of the studies before the First World War was 'to position the importance of childhood in terms of education, social welfare and mental and physical health'.<sup>49</sup> The understanding of childhood widened beyond an educational concern and Norwood was not immune from these developments. One element, physical health, was increasingly emphasised in the welfare of the children with the appointment of a gymnastic teacher in 1895 and the establishment of a Norwood company of the Jewish Lads' Brigade. For the first time, girls were allowed to have their own outside game, hockey in 1898 and an Athletics Committee was set up in 1905. The 1924 mission statement was updated to include 'athletics and physical culture'.<sup>50</sup> The wider perspective on what constituted childhood more acutely exposed the problem of institutional malaise and the ways to address it through an ideology of bodily fitness.

The inter-war period saw the concept of childhood change through the new sciences of psychology and psychiatry. Understanding the mental world of childhood mattered for the efficient running of the family and for the residential institution. In

1932 Norwood appointed a psychiatrist and problem children (such as those suffering from stammering) attended a child guidance clinic.<sup>51</sup> The validity of the connection between the state of child development theory and institutional living was still unquestioned even as the psychological problems of children subject to institutional living were being exposed for the first time. Norwood stoutly defended the status quo and affirmed it was a real home and unlike others which were criticised as being 'cold barrack-like institutions' and even claimed the orphans lived like the lives of ordinary children.<sup>52</sup> The post-war period brought a new emphasis to the role of the family with the advances of psychological understanding in bringing up a child. The report of the Curtis Committee in 1946 on the condition of voluntary homes revealed the existence of the condition of 'children in care'. The lack of personal interest and affection in children's homes invalidated the benefit of psychological advances.<sup>53</sup> The connection between child development theory and institutional living was proved dysfunctional and the institutional model was to be disbanded. Over the following fifteen years the institutional basis of Norwood was progressively dismantled, and the completion of this process was achieved in 1962 when Norwood could declare that the children's lives had been transformed from an 'institutional' to 'family' way of life.<sup>54</sup>

Conjointly with this shift in the national construction of childhood was a particular Jewish construction. Norwood as a Jewish community gave the children a Jewish childhood where the kosher food laws were kept, all the weekly and seasonal rituals of the Jewish year celebrated and where a religious education was received. It was structured not by national trends in childcare but by changes in the nature of Jewishness to fit new social circumstances. The changes in Jewishness provided the children with alternatives to the original construction of 'an exclusively observance-based identity', religious orthodoxy and anglicising agenda.<sup>55</sup> The Jewish construction of Norwood childhood set in place in the 1870s and 1880s faced various challenges throughout its history. They included the influx of orthodox East European immigrants before the First World War, the influence of liberal minded ideas on religious matters in the 1930s and the non-orthodox life of the evacuated children in the early 1940s. After the war the change was a repositioning of Jewish childhood from the institutional framework of the old orphanage to a reconstructed Norwood based on a religious orthodoxy centred on the family in the 1950s and early 1960s.

### *Norwood as a Residential Institution*

At the time of the Amalgamation the institutional framework

of Norwood as the residential model of childcare that the Anglo-Jewish community adopted for the deprived child was the large voluntary institution. The size of it was determined by the child population it contained which expanded by a factor of some two and half times from that time to the outbreak of the Second World War and reached as many as four hundred children.<sup>56</sup> The philanthropic generosity of one of the governors provided the funding for building new premises for the Jews' Hospital in what was then the rural situation of Norwood. The generosity of finance brought with it a generosity of space as the new accommodation was seriously under-used. The rationale of charity organisation in vogue in the 1870s invited leading community members to amalgamate the oversized Jews' Hospital with the overcrowded JOA to form a new conjoint institution, the JHOA, in 1876.<sup>57</sup> The long term significance of the move was that it set in place the type of institution that was to be home to thousands of children over the next eighty-five years.

The 1895 centenary celebrations of the founding idea of the Jews' Hospital was the occasion for expanding the institution to house an additional one hundred children. Pressure for children to be placed in Norwood was intense and came from a number of sources: doubled-orphaned children who had automatic right of entry; those transferred under the Pauper Removal Act from parish unions; those voted for by fee paying subscribers and children

admitted using voting rights controlled by governors. The official opening of the extension in 1897 was an august affair made by the Lord Mayor and Sheriff of London who was the Norwood president, George Faudel-Phillips and was marked by a state procession from London to Norwood.<sup>58</sup> Norwood was something of a prestige community project that boasted the importance of the Anglo-Jewish elite, and its domestic gothic style smacked of architectural opulence. A further and final expansion in 1910 was the building of the junior orphanage named after the wealthy benefactors Arnold and Jane Gabriel to accommodate fifty children aged five to eight years.<sup>59</sup>

Objections were raised against the growing size of Norwood as being against the best interests of the children, but they were lone voices. The dominance of the president and his supporters on the governing board carried the day. A former headmaster John Chapman rejected the idea of building new accommodation because he realised that the massing of a large number in a barrack-type building 'institutionalised' the children.<sup>60</sup> It was a word coined in America at the time to refer to a child who was mechanical and lifeless from the effects of orphan life.<sup>61</sup>

The criticism of the 'Barracks' principle was being debated across America where institutional self-doubt had been sown by turn of the century, and many institutions stopped calling

themselves asylums or orphanages but 'homes'. Norwood was to retain the title of asylum until 1928 when it was replaced by orphanage.<sup>62</sup> Attempts at internal reform by Marcus Kaye, the headmaster, in 1916 included the reform of school holidays to allow the 'relief of monotony' that institutional life brought. When Anthony de Rothschild succeeded Faudel-Phillips as president in 1919, Kaye seized the opportunity to suggest the rebuild of the institution on more modern lines but failed to get anything done.<sup>63</sup>

At the time of the amalgamation it was well known that an alternative system, the cottage home, was operating successfully. The idea was that small groups of children were placed in cottages under the supervision of house parents. The initiative of using this residential model was taken up by the Poor Law Guardians who were encouraged to build an alternative where the claim was made that it brought for the first time 'brightness and expectation of love into the poor law establishments for children'.<sup>64</sup> It was an option also taken up by the Christian voluntary societies such as Barnardo's, the Waifs and Strays Society and Scotland's Quarrier Homes but these parallel developments had little effect on Norwood. What did alter the situation was the impact of social reform legislation after the war. The 1948 Children Act following the report of the Curtis Committee highlighted the deficiencies of voluntary children's homes. From the late 1940s the orphanage was

'dismantled' and split into small family units. The effort to eliminate all trace of institutionalism led to the construction of small family homes, the renaming of the orphanage as a Home in 1956 and the eventual demolition of the barrack building in 1962. It had taken eighty-five years to reverse the original decision made in 1876.



## **An Important Gap in the History of Institutional Life**

*A Brief History of Norwood* is a short critical narrative based on seven themes. So far, the existing literature on Norwood has been positive and celebratory. The public school idea that was suited to the institutional setting was seen as appropriate to a welfare institution. The after care system was viewed as the fulfilment of the institutional upbringing of the children. The religion was institutionalised and in reports was described as a model of inculcation. The anglicising agenda pursued in the isolating environment of an institution aimed to turn out a sub-species of 'the good Jew' as a Norwood variant. The fusion of religion and anglicisation was successful according to many scholars in producing an enduring denominational attachment that has lasted throughout later life. The portrayal of Norwood vindicated its commendation as a superior welfare institution.

In the major existing study of Anglo-Jewish philanthropy, Eugene Black asserted that 'by late Victorian standards, Norwood was an exemplary enterprise providing facilities and services far superior to any other of its kind', but there is no indication of what these standards were and how they compared with similar institutions. The secretary of Norwood in a radio interview in 1973 claimed that the Institution 'has gone down almost into Anglo-Jewish folklore as an institution, in the nicest sense, with a small

“i”.<sup>65</sup> The absence of a proper account has left the field open to uncritical historical judgements. It exposes a gap in the history of the institutional life of one specific institution, Norwood, but it is also a lacuna in the history of the Anglo-Jewish community and in a wider context the social history of the residential child care movement.

The demand for a history of Norwood to be written has come from the ‘scholars’ (former children). At the time of the first centenary celebrations in 1895, ‘An Old Boy’ expressed his regret that ‘the Committee have not availed themselves of the opportunity to compile a full and complete history of the Institution, and all its worthies for a hundred years’. His plea was not entirely in vain as *A Sketch* of its early history appeared in a series of articles in the *JC* in 1897 written by the historian Lucien Wolf.<sup>66</sup>

No further progress on the writing of a history was made until 1956 when *The Norwood Story* written by Edward Conway appeared in the *JC*.<sup>67</sup> It is a brief account later expanded into *The Origins of the Jewish Orphanage* published by the Jewish Historical Society in 1969.<sup>68</sup> It was the first serious attempt to publish a history of the institution. Conway was Principal of Norwood in the 1950s, and in 1957 wrote ‘The Institutional Care of Children, A Case History’ an unpublished PhD thesis on Norwood. He examined the impact of institutional life on the welfare of the children and concluded by

exonerating Norwood as an institution because 'the success or failure of any system must depend entirely on the people by whom it is administered'.<sup>69</sup> As the Principal he had a professional interest in supporting the institution and was a major player in the reformation of Norwood in the last decade of its institutional life.

In 1981 Riva Krut wrote a short unpublished article 'History of Norwood Orphanage'. She looked at Norwood as an example of a particular Jewish community and interviewed a number of scholars. She found from her interviewing two 'dominant tendencies'. Firstly, 'there was a terrific amount of guilt attached to anything which might harm the reputation of Norwood', and this protectiveness of a community and an institution to which they were so attached was a factor the historian had to weigh in the balance. The second tendency was revealed in the phrase, 'Oh, I could tell you some stories...' which she never gets to hear or she does but they are carefully balanced. Nevertheless, her research drew attention to the importance and potential of the recollections of the scholars.<sup>70</sup>

The London Jewish Museum extended her oral history work by undertaking further interviewing of scholars in 1994. The bicentennial anniversary in 1995 provided the occasion for the joint publication of *What About the Children? 200 Years of Norwood Child Care 1795-1995* by Norwood Child Care and the Jewish Museum. It is the only published book on Norwood and is a piece of celebratory

literature on its history traced from humble origins as a small boarding trade school in Mile End to becoming a large children's welfare organisation serving all sections of the Jewish community.<sup>71</sup> There are brief references to Norwood in a number of published works.<sup>72</sup> What still remains and is the aim of the thesis is to fill the gap with a historically critical narrative and a widely contextualised narrative. The research undertaken to fulfil this aim has involved the examination of the extant Norwood archives supplemented by looking at published works that place those records in the context of the Anglo-Jewish community, English society and beyond.

## **Review of Available Sources**

The archives held at Southampton University contain documents generated by governors and staff. The *House, Executive* and *General Court Committee Minutes* record the decisions and matters of interest on all aspects of Norwood life. They are enriched by the staff documents such as the *Housemaster's Scrapbooks* and *School Log Book* which include material that would never reach committee such as the headmaster's own private observations and daily school activities. The *Letter Books* cover the period 1887 to 1906 and contain the correspondence of the Norwood secretaries. The recipients of letters include the house parents of the apprentice hostels, Poor Law Unions, Orphan Aid Societies, subscribers, apprentices' masters, parents and apprentices themselves but rarely include their replies. What they do expose are the private comments made, some of them revealing as well as tantalisingly vague, particularly when they concern personal habits.<sup>73</sup> At this level of detail the archive reveals intimate personal information.

The *Annual Reports* held by Norwood Child Care are another institutional source for events, decisions and activities at Norwood but they are impersonal, opaque and brief documents.<sup>74</sup> Annual reports by their nature are sanitised documents only referring to significant matters that the approving committee needed to be aware of. The Norwood reports contain a lot of information on the

finances with lists of contributions from Orphan Aid Societies, lists of bequests, subscribers and investments merited by the importance of these sources of funds for the survival of the charity. Included in the annual reports are the reports of the *After Care Committees for Girls and Boys*. Their separate reporting stressed the importance that Norwood attached to the progress of the children once they left Norwood, and the letter books give an insight into the personal side of the aftercare service.

The Jewish press, especially *The JC* and *The Jewish World* (hereafter *JW*) regularly covered Norwood meetings and events. They provided a source of information from a position outside the institution as publicity organs of the Anglo-Jewish community. It was a positioning that allowed the *JC* and *JW* to support Norwood but at the same be critical and open. The community newspapers were also a source for comparing Norwood with other Jewish institutions on issues of charity amalgamations and institutional policies on voting and naming.<sup>75</sup> The Jewish press provided a continuous narrative of related events. The debate on the voting system can be followed through from the pre-Amalgamation period, through the conflicts between reformists and abolitionists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, to the eventual abolition in 1924. The *JC* provided the more extensive coverage but

the *JW* was the more outspoken in its criticisms of Norwood and together they provide an account of Norwood that was a community perspective, non-institutional and non-personal.

The recollection of scholars published by the Norwood Old Scholars Association (hereafter NOSA) since 1967 in its *Newsletter* has provided a personal perspective. The Jewish Museum holds transcripts and tapes of interviews it conducted and a number of historic interviews carried out by the *JC* have appeared in the newspaper. The recollections provide a source of information absent from the institutional records. The story of *The Norwood Rebellion* told in chapter 6 is entirely based on personal recollections and without them it would be a lost part of Norwood history. In the annual reports institutional problems are seen as being addressed by specific improvements made and in staff records an insight on what these benefits mean for the children is commented on.<sup>76</sup> The recollections are the children speaking for themselves albeit decades later and are there as one scholar put it, 'to reassure ourselves from time to time that we have a history, a past'. The stories they tell are not problems and insights but experiences which add to the historical record.<sup>77</sup>

The personal reflections of a Norwood committee chairman are revealed in the Basil Henriques' Diaries. They cover the inter-war period and record Henriques' private comments on the

workings of Norwood. They are made at the time and because they were private reflected what he personally felt about the workings of the institution which were often highly critical. He also wrote in his book *The Home Makers: The Prevention of Unhappiness in Children* (1955) views criticising institutionalism that alluded to his Norwood experience.<sup>78</sup>

## **The Institutional Theme**

*A Study in Institutionalism* is the theme and methodological approach of the thesis. The period selected is the eight-five years, 1876-1961, that is between the Amalgamation and closure of the institution. The selection of the institutional theme was in part practical because the archives are largely institutionally based and biased the research in that direction. The institutional model was one that separated the children from the outside world. Within the self-containment of that isolation the physical and mental development of the children – their Jewishness, welfare and education were moulded. The institution inevitably imparted its totalizing characteristics to the children and was fundamental to their growth. *A Study* starts from a baseline of its institutionalism which provides the common thread throughout the themed chapters.

The rise of Institutionalism had its opposite in the denudation of the family as the unique repository of child upbringing. The period of Norwood history is coincident with the change that displaced the importance of the family and enhanced the institutional approach. Absolute parental rights over the child were taken away in the 1891 Custody of Children Act and authority given for benevolent institutions to rescue children and allow them legally to take children in to care.<sup>79</sup> Subsequent legislation in the Children

Acts of 1908 and 1933 increased the role of the state in parenthood and underlined the removal of children from 'undesirable surroundings' into 'proper provision'.<sup>80</sup> The voluntary institution was brought into partnership with the state in the care of children as an acceptable alternative to the parent. The influence of an institutional ideology held sway at Norwood as in many other institutions in the face of the alternatives of the family cottage system and boarding out. The Institution accommodated the denominational need of being Jewish, the educational aspirations of a minority establishing its acceptability in English society and the housing need of destitute children.

The education and training function was an important secular role. The advance standard achieved at Norwood as reported by examination inspectors was a feature of other similar institutions. The London Foundling Hospital was well in advance of what was on offer in charity schools and like Norwood their after care of the children when they left was taken seriously.<sup>81</sup> In America a similar approach was adopted. The superintendent of the Cleveland Jewish Orphan Asylum (hereafter CJOA) in the 1870s stated that education was 'the real and main object of our Institution'.<sup>82</sup> It was an object that appealed to the state with the introduction of compulsory elementary education in Britain at the time and Norwood provided an institutional solution. It allowed the mythology of a charity public

school rather than an orphan asylum, lived in by scholars rather than inmates, to be disseminated and was a potent justification for the institution itself.<sup>83</sup> The justification was not just an educational role but critically also a religious role at Norwood.

Beatrice Potter, the Victorian social writer, was impressed by the religious morality of Judaism reflected in what she described in 1889 as the 'perfection of the Jewish family'.<sup>84</sup> The family was traditionally the centre of Jewish life, but it was a tradition challenged by the problem of child destitution in the nineteenth century when the idea of the family as the sole carer came under attack. Norwood absorbed the prevailing social ideology and accepted the institution as a family substitute. The acceptability of the institutional model on Amalgamation included a religious orthodoxy bereft of the family connection. The Chief Rabbi on the 60th anniversary of the United Synagogue in 1930 claimed by its example and influence English Judaism had advanced without loss of traditional Jewish values.<sup>85</sup> The belief in the orientation of the family based religion was not upset by the institutional exception of Norwood.

English Judaism had accommodated itself to the changing nature of charity in the nineteenth century. 'Traditional personalised charity was gradually converted into a carefully planned and impersonal system of institutions designed to solve social ills'; this

was a development in German Jewish charity in the nineteenth century.<sup>86</sup> It was a change that also took place in England. The unplanned traditional Jewish charity of *tzedaka* operated by the synagogues in the early part of the century was replaced by the institutional approach of the charity organisation movement which influenced the JBG and Norwood.

The ideology of institutionalism applied to child welfare was based on the belief in the rehabilitation of the child and set an example to larger society. It emerged at a time when 'the meaning of childhood was vague' and untied from concepts of adulthood and parental authority.<sup>87</sup> That vagueness was clarified over the next century as the separation of the child developed into a construction of childhood that gave an identity of the child being an individual 'family member'. The institutionalised child was discovered as an abnormality, and the family was resurrected by the state in its modern form by the 1948 Children Act as the unique repository of child upbringing.

## **Outline of the Chapters of the Thesis**

The following six chapters examine specific aspects of the institutional nature of Norwood. In chapter 2, *What's in a Name? The Changing Titles of Norwood*, the use of titles is traced throughout Norwood's history, in particular the institutional names – Hospital, Asylum, Orphanage and Home - adopted. The politics and ideology of these changes is looked at from the evidence available. The chapter is widened to include the religious title of Norwood, *Nvei Tzedek*, the changing titles of other Anglo-Jewish charities and the use of eponymous titles. The chapter is an introduction that examines the institutional history of Norwood through its names.

In chapter 3, *The Rise of Norwood Institutionalism – The Residential Model Adopted* is traced the evolution of the Norwood residential model from the early nineteenth century with the founding of the Jews' Hospital to the onset of the First World War. The history is chronologically split into three phases; the first one being the institutional expansion phase before the First World War. Four features of institutionalism in this first phase are examined: the environmental and architectural landscape of institutionalism; the adaptation of the institutional model as a Jewish template; the struggle within the Anglo-Jewish community to achieve the Amalgamation, and lastly the institutional expansion following the success of Amalgamation.

In chapter 4, *Norwood Institutionalism Questioned - The Residential Model under Attack*, the first phase of institutionalism is investigated in the context of the wider national and international situation. The national context is provided in the UK by the institutional development in the care of the destitute under the Poor Law and by the institutional role of the denominational charities. The international context is provided by the influence of new continental ideas in the form of the cottage home and the rise of counter-institutionalism in America. The changes taking place increasingly highlighted the disadvantages of institutionalism, but the Anglo-Jewish approach applied at Norwood remained undaunted by such developments up to the First World War and expansion of the institution continued unabated.

In chapter 5, *The Tempering of Norwood Institutionalism - The 'Good Enough' Residential Model*, the second phase of institutionalism is examined using the concept of the 'good enough' institution. This phase of Norwood is marked by the tempering of institutionalism by the implementation of liberal reforms to improve the lives of the children, but it was also marked by the absence of structural reform to deal with the serious disadvantages of institutionalism. The position of Norwood is put in context by looking at the progressiveness of the Jewish orphanages in America in the inter-war period. In contrast to Norwood it was marked by

the transformation of the total institution into the 'child developing institution'. The failure of transformation at Norwood is analysed in terms of the internal politics between reformers and conservatives on major issues such as the separation of school and home.

In chapter 6, *Counter-Institutionalism in Anglo-Jewry: The Norwood Rebellion*, research is based on the 'narrowing influence' of institutional life with the massing of large numbers of children in one building. The children in unofficial ways sought to combat institutionalism and created a counter-culture opposed to it. Open group hostility broke out in various forms and *The Norwood Rebellion* provides an outstanding example. Four modes of adaptation by the children to institutional life are studied, of which the rebellious mode is one example. As a hidden history evidence for the rebellion relies on the fragmentary recollections of scholars. The value of memory as an authentic source for counter-institutional history is evaluated. The research on counter-institutionalism is extended from the single event of the rebellion to the ongoing resistance to corporal punishment throughout all the phases of Norwood history.

In chapter 7, *The End of Institutionalism – Revolution at Norwood*, the third and final phase of institutionalism is studied. This phase covers an examination of the progressive and functional nature of the residential model. The progressiveness was tested by

the findings of the Curtis Committee set up in 1945 which revealed the conditions inside the child institutions. At Norwood the structural reforms under Principal Edward Conway paved the way for the abandonment of the institutional model and its replacement by the family home model. Indeed, the institutional model in the post-war era was seen as incompatible with the paramount importance of the individuality of the child and led to its wholesale rejection.

The thesis researches the history of Norwood as a child care institution and as part of a wider study of institutionalism at national and international levels. It is a study of universal social significance with the focus centred on the Jewish Orphanage. In tracing its institutional history three phases – the origins and growth up to the First World War, consolidation and attenuation of the institution in the inter-war period and the decline and destruction of the institution in the post-war period – are distinguished. In addition to the analysis of the historical phases two 'special' topics are included in the thesis: institutional naming and counter-institutionalism, which together with the general theme provides the evidence for evaluating Norwood as a 'good enough' institution.

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- 71) Rickie Burman (ed.), *What About the Children? 200 Years of Norwood Child Care 1795-1995* (London Museum of Jewish Life & Norwood Child Care, London, 1995), p60.

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- 73) USA, C/33, Letter Book, 23/3/1896. An example is the case of the apprentice Slappofski who is told his habits are 'worse than ever' and 'they say he gets worse every day' so that his master refuses to accept him any longer.
- 74) JC 12/2/1909. A 1910 annual report entry merely stated the President's son Lionel Faudel-Phillips did not seek re-election as a vice-president, but behind the short reference to that decision there was the embarrassing fact that the son had married out of the faith, and his re-election was unacceptable to the Jewish community. This was revealed by the JC.
- 75) JW 29/6/1892. Frederick Mocatta a Norwood governor advocated Norwood amalgamation on grounds of 'scientific charity'. This became the cue for the subsequent amalgamation of several charities for the aged in 1892.
- 76) NC, AR 1901 – an example, 'the monotony of institutional life' is addressed by 'the relaxation of holidays'; USA, C/9, Headmaster's scrapbook: Summer Holiday Arrangements. An example of the insight of the Headmaster is his comment on the 1911 summer holidays, 'I am sure the extra freedom ... will be a means of developing their personalities'.
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## **Chapter 2: What's in a Name? – The Changing Titles of Norwood**

The name of the institution by which Norwood: the Jewish children's orphanage in south London, was known changed three times in its eighty-five year history. In 1876 the new institution was called the JHOA and the title was based on the names of the two foundation charities, the Jews' Hospital and the JOA. This chapter on the changing titles of Norwood includes the two foundation bodies and other associated Jewish charities such as the JBG. In 1928 the name was changed to the Jewish Orphanage, and in 1956 the institution was renamed for a third time becoming the Norwood Home for Jewish Children. The evolution in the changing institutional content of the titles designated by the last word – Hospital, Asylum, Orphanage and Home - provides the chronological basis for examining the theme of this chapter. The meaning attached to each term also supports a sociological framework for understanding the chronological development.

'The old Institutions cling doggedly to their original names' was the wry comment of one writer on the entrenched conservatism of some Jewish institutions; Norwood was no exception.<sup>1</sup> Their sociolinguistic importance is that 'names are not words attached only to the skin' of a body, personal or institutional, but are in themselves an accumulation of 'internal forces' that defined the

bearer and deprivation of which might damage their 'personality'.<sup>2</sup>  
Contestation over name changes and the longevity of their  
acceptance are (in other words) symptomatic of internal forces at  
work.

## **Jews' Hospital**

The title Jews' Hospital incorporated both the denominational character of the charity in the word 'Jews' as it was a place for Jewish children only and the institutional character in the word 'hospital'. The latter was an old term used to denote a charitable institution that cared for the old and destitute and housed and educated the needy young.<sup>3</sup> It was the first of the founding charities of Norwood and was established in 1807. Emblazoned on the front of the building in Mile End Road, East London where it was located, was the title in English and below it was written 'for the Aged Poor and for Education and Improvement of Youth'. It was a social message which the founding mission of the Hospital elaborated was 'to uplift the morals and occupations of the young poor' by providing for 'the education and industrial employment of youth of both sexes'.<sup>4</sup> The Hospital restricted its admission to the 'deserving cases of children from respectable families and did not cater for the homeless or destitute children'.<sup>5</sup> It was the deserving poor and not orphans that were admitted based on criteria of good background, good character and with the potential to benefit from the education provided.<sup>6</sup> The title of Jews' Hospital signified to the wider society that the Jewish community was willing to fund a charitable institution that housed and educated the needy Jewish young and emphasised its educational character.

'Hospital' was an omnibus term which in the original scheme for the Jews' Hospital proposed in 1801 was applied 'to educate the young, to restore health to the sick and to establish an asylum for old age and infirmity'.<sup>7</sup> The scheme was pared down to the more modest one of 1807 by excluding it as a hospital for the sick. During the course of the century a process of institutional differentiation emerged that identified different categories of the needy by specific institutional terms. It was matched by a terminological classification that mirrored 'the meticulousness of regulations, fussiness of inspections and attention to the smallest detail' that defined the rationality of the school, the barracks, the hospital, the workhouse and the asylum.<sup>8</sup> However, at the time the term 'hospital' had an honourable history in English institutional terminology and linking it with 'Jews' was a joining of Jews to the heart of English society.<sup>9</sup> Half a century earlier the Jewish community had established the *Beth Holim*, a charity that 'combined the offices of hospital, lying-in hospital and home for the aged poor'.<sup>10</sup> Though translated as 'the house of the sick' it had no English name and entirely subscribed to a Jewish naming tradition. By the early nineteenth century a transition was in evidence as English titles were adopted, and a dual terminology of both English and Hebrew became part of a naming ritual - one in which Hebrew took precedence.

Boldly displayed on the top parapet of the building was another message in Hebrew. The letters spelt out in the Hebrew words for the Hospital, *Nvei Tzedek*, the 'Abode of Righteousness'.<sup>11</sup> The name is biblical in origin: in *Job 8.6* God declares 'if thou were pure and upright, surely he would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous'.<sup>12</sup> The declaration of its religious character had a moral message that from the abode would emerge Jewish children with uplifted morals and indeed was 'the home of all that was good and pure'.<sup>13</sup> The name *Nvei Tzedek* with its religious and moral message was in the style of using Hebrew names in earlier Jewish charities such as the *Mahasim Tovim* or the Society of Good Deeds which was set up in 1749 for the purpose of apprenticing poor boys.<sup>14</sup> By the early nineteenth century English names were being used, but on the facade above the English words it was the Hebrew name that took precedence.

The Jews' Hospital sent out a message to the community at large both in name and in deed an importance that extended beyond its immediate social and religious concerns. It manifested the desire of Anglo-Jewry for a separate institutional identity for destitute Jewish children. Child welfare was important but Jewish child welfare helped to create and perpetuate Jewish identity. The name of the institution - the Jews' Hospital - was a mark of that identity but one that was Jewish in a moral and socially responsible way.



## **Jews' Orphan Asylum**

The second of the Norwood founding charities was the Jews' Orphan Asylum established in 1831. Its denominational and social purpose was the maintaining, clothing, educating and apprenticing of Jewish children born in lawful wedlock, deprived of both parents, and for a limited number of one parent only.<sup>15</sup> The term applied at the time for institutions caring for the children who were destitute and orphaned was orphan asylum, and in asylum terminology its occupants were called inmates. Whereas the use of the term 'hospital' was a legacy of an earlier period, the use of the name 'Orphan Asylum' was a product of the early nineteenth century, a period in institutional history called the 'age of the asylum'.<sup>16</sup> The asylum was a place of residence and work where a large number of like-minded individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life.<sup>17</sup>

The generality of the meaning of asylum at the time belied the specialism of institutions that catered for particular categories of people - i.e. the destitute, the blind, the orphan, the sick, the criminal adolescent and the mentally ill - that were established in the age of the asylum. The asylum embodied the optimistic institutionalism of the times that believed in the rehabilitation it provided. The philosopher and social reformer Jeremy Bentham in

1778 in *Pauper System Compared* argued that a system of institutional care in large establishments was 'controllable and perfectable'.<sup>18</sup> It was a combination of concepts influential in the social thinking in the first half of the nineteenth century. The workhouse and the asylum embodied the 'total institution' rationalised by the utilitarianism of its social benefits. The asylum traditionally 'a sacred refuge from the sordid persecutions of life' had become a place of reform for the outcasts of society and fuelled the growth of the institutional idea.<sup>19</sup> The JOA amalgamated with two smaller charities in 1850, the Infant Orphan Charity and the Charity for the Support of Fatherless Children.<sup>20</sup> The amalgamation, a forerunner of the creation of Norwood, was part of the Jewish approach to child welfare institutionalism with the demand for 'orderly philanthropy' to reduce the proliferation of overlapping charities.<sup>21</sup> The new name, the JOA, was in tune with the times in incorporating 'asylum' and dropping the title 'charity'.

Both the JOA and the Jews' Hospital catered for the education and welfare of deprived children. The asylum catered for the orphaned child and the hospital for the 'deserving' child. Within the overarching criterion of Jewishness they sought similar aims but were differentiated by the organisational separation of Hospital and Asylum. They were selective custodial institutions that embodied Jewish charity in the era of the asylum.

## **Jewish Board of Guardians**

The Jews' Hospital and the JOA were denominational and institutional English titles and not translations of Hebrew names that had been an earlier tradition (although the former was consecrated with the separate religious title of 'the Abode of Righteousness' whereas the JOA had no religious name). The title of the Jewish Board of Guardians followed the naming tradition of incorporating the usual 'Jewish' title but the 'Board of Guardians' was a radical departure. It represented 'the breaking of barriers that had separated Jews from non-Jews' with the copying of Poor Law nomenclature. 'The passage from tradition to modernity meant tradition', and this included traditional titles, 'was no longer sufficient to live in the modern world'.<sup>22</sup> The model adopted was that of the British statutory and voluntary philanthropies and the JBG copied its name from the Poor Law.

The Poor Law Act of 1834 worked on the premise that public relief of destitution financed out of taxes as distinct from alms was demoralising. Public relief could be minimised by restricting it to maintenance of workhouses regulated by board of guardians who worked according to the principle of 'less eligibility'. Relief was given at the cost of being inferior to what a working family could provide for themselves; it was meant to deter. The regulatory control through boards of guardians was copied by the Jewish community

as a modern means to deal with community distress – hence the JBG. Jewish relief was then directed towards self-sufficiency of the pauper and the avoidance of indiscriminate alms giving. The other major Jewish communities followed London and established their own Boards of Guardians. The English title of Guardians was adopted by the community and the Hebrew titles for charity officials were superseded. The name of the Overseer of the Poor was English and replaced the Hebrew charity terms of *gabai tzedakah* (collector of charity who combined assessor of community's members and distributor of charity) and the poor were no longer *orchim* (guests for recipients of charity).<sup>23</sup>

Anglo-Jewry responded to the impact of the Poor Law system and set up a coordinating body, the JBG, in 1859 as a new Jewish agency to deal with the excluded destitute in the nation's capital. The JBG also acted as a central body in dealing with custodial charities like the Jews' Hospital and the JOA. The separation of the two charities for children left a gap in institutional provision. Though secular in the function of child welfare they 'began with the assumption that Jews were members of a synagogue'.<sup>24</sup> 'The Jewish stranger and foreign poor', recent immigrants who were not members of the synagogues, were excluded from the charities. Jewish philanthropy was faced with the deficiency of its religious exclusiveness, as it became increasingly apparent of 'the need to

cater for a different kind of needy child – the destitute and the deserted who had no social standing and were being cared for in the Parish Institutes and Schools'.<sup>25</sup>

There was no specific Jewish institution to cater for the abandoned child who ended up in the workhouse. Jews were involved in the Poor Law arrangements and this involvement influenced the JBG being set up after the fashion of a Parochial Relief Board. The JBG 'brought together in terms of social thinking early nineteenth century ideas on social control'. It relied on the Jewish community for finance and took over from the synagogue-based Conjoint Board of Relief set up in 1834 to deal with the 'strange poor'.<sup>26</sup> However, it was not the traditional Jewish ideas on charity that it followed but the current thinking on the treatment of poverty.

The assimilation of Jewish charity, and with it the replacement of its religious bias into the mainstream national welfare movement, took place in the face of nineteenth century social evils. Traditional personal outdoor Jewish relief, *tzedakah*, was institutionalised in a system that was planned and impersonal, designed to solve the ills. The move underpinned the acceptance of an institutional solution in the age of the asylum but, it was also an ideological change signified in the new terminology.<sup>27</sup> The

nomenclature of guardianship exposed a 'latent reservoir of energies' that was released in a specifically Jewish setting of the charity organisation movement and the Norwood amalgamation.<sup>28</sup>

## **Jews' Hospital and Orphan Asylum**

In 1876 the Jews' Hospital and JOA were joined together and the name adopted for the amalgamated charity was a combination of the previous titles of the Jews' Hospital and JOA. The reason for the conjoint name was explained in the report presented to the two bodies in June 1874.

We recommend that the combined Institution should be known by some suitable name, which may tend to perpetuate the memory of the Foundation and History of each and so that each distinctive title may still be preserved.<sup>29</sup>

The suitable name chosen written into the Scheme of Amalgamation was that 'the Institution herein before named shall unite and form one institution to be called the Jews' Hospital and Orphan Asylum'.<sup>30</sup> The retention of the old names instead of devising a new one, though presented in terms of memory and history, was a political compromise between two charities that feared losing their identities.

The *JC* criticised the charities on the grounds that 'time has also had its influence on those who would fight unflinchingly for a mere name, more than the honour and renown it bears'. But the newspaper failed to realise the tremendous hold the original names had on the charities and that applied to the order of precedence in the title as well. The *JC* took the lofty view that precedence

should yield to the consideration that the truly great always conclude a procession, and the gist of a sentence far more frequently lies in its last words than in its first words.<sup>31</sup>

The outcome was a victory for the Jews' Hospital, and the JOA lost its fight for the prized position when it had declared that it should have first place.<sup>32</sup> JOA supporters in fact 'did not welcome the ideas of merging their name and experience in that of the Jews' Hospital'. Eventually a 'personal fusion' between the two charities paved the way for a 'corporate fusion', and 'it was arranged that the title of that institution should be preserved as part of the fused charities' albeit in second place.<sup>33</sup> What was lost on both charities was the chance for a simple fresh name; the conjoint name of the new charity now bore (unwittingly) the double stamp of institutionalism in the names of both Hospital and Asylum.

Preservation of outdated names was not peculiar to the Jewish community. The Foundling Hospital in London was established in 1741 for a purpose similar to Norwood – for 'the maintenance and education of deserted and exposed young children'.<sup>34</sup> At the time of the foundation the use of the term Hospital was considered appropriate as it was in 1807 when the Jews' Hospital was established. By 1849 the name Foundling Hospital was 'no longer considered accurate'. The word 'hospital' had undergone a process of 'meaning narrowing' whereby a word's sense becomes restricted. Until the eighteenth century 'hospital'

had the omnibus meaning of being 'an asylum for needy individuals – the old, the rich, the poor and where medical treatment was given'. The development of institutional differentiation for different categories of the needy in the nineteenth century restricted the meaning of hospital to its modern sense.<sup>35</sup> The proposed change of the name was defeated; the governors opted to preserve the old title which remained unchanged for another century.<sup>36</sup> In 1876 historical distinctiveness became a matter of preservation for Norwood, yet that conservatism was not matched by the amalgamation itself which was widely seen in the community as the triumph of the 'path of progress' over 'ultra-conservatism'.<sup>37</sup>

The example of Norwood combining 'the unification and scientific organisation of charity' with name conservatism was not unique. In 1876 Frederick Mocatta, who was on the committee for the Norwood amalgamation, advocated the joining of the Hand-in-Hand Asylum and the Widows' Home to have one institution for the aged Jewish poor. 'The JHOA scheme having been so successful, there was no hesitation in adopting that scheme as a basis'. The new institution was called 'the Hand-in-Hand and Widows' Home Institution', a clumsy combination of the two old names. In 1897 a further amalgamation took place with a third charity, The Jewish Home and the enlarged institution was given the shorter title, The Home for Aged Jews. The new title aptly mirrored the objective of

'having all the [aged] people in one Jewish institution with one efficient administration' and clearly was to be preferred to a triplet of three old names.<sup>38</sup>

The title 'hospital' in its modern meaning as a medical institution was still applied to an asylum for poor children. In 1873 at a time just prior to the amalgamation the philanthropist Baron de Worms suggested the name of the Jews' Hospital was hardly appropriate 'as it had nothing whatever to do with the care of the sick'.<sup>39</sup> At times the medical designation of the Jewish charity was a cause of confusion and conflict. In 1890 Norwood expressed its concern to another Jewish charity that the proposed title of Jewish Home and Hospital for Incurables might cause difficulties because of the similarity of names. The latter promptly responded a week later that it did not consider that there will be difficulties 'as by no means can the names be considered similar and incidentally mentioning that their Institution was a real Hospital'.<sup>40</sup> Norwood doggedly stuck to its name.

In 1903 an appeal was made to the Jewish community for funds in aid of the poor and orphan children. On this occasion the appeal caused a misunderstanding from one potential donor who was told why the term 'hospital' was still used. The secretary replied

our Institution is not a hospital in the accepted sense of the term but is an orphan asylum for children. The term hospital is still retained as pensions are granted to aged persons.<sup>41</sup>

The value of calling Norwood a Hospital was based not on medical grounds but referred to its historic association as a charitable institution for the old. Norwood cared for a small number of aged Jews by funding their pensions.<sup>42</sup> The use of the title Hospital was tenuous whereas the use of Orphan Asylum was more appropriate, as Norwood had the characteristics of the 'total institution' where a large number of children were physically isolated during the formative period of their development.

Confusingly, when talking about Norwood, people were accustomed to slip between various designations. In the tributes given at the funeral of Norwood governor David Henriques in 1912 the institution for Rev Harris was Norwood Orphanage whereas for Rev Morris it was the Jews' Hospital and Dr Hyamson spoke of the Norwood Home.<sup>43</sup> The Headmaster in 1916 wrote that 'the Jews' Orphanage has been almost engulfed in the wake of war'.<sup>44</sup> The medley of different terms and the more frequent reference to orphanage betokened the 'personality' change at Norwood and presaged the name change in 1928. In official documents Norwood was usually simply the 'Institution', and recognition of this was specifically mentioned with the amalgamated Home for Aged Jews which was 'to be referred to for brevity as The Institution'.<sup>45</sup>

The character of the JHOA laid down in the founding mission

was three fold: to house, educate and apprentice poor Jewish children. Boarding and maintaining the children was signified in the terms Hospital and Asylum. The educational function was not obviously included in the title though the institution was primarily regarded as a school. The Jewish lawyer George Jessel at a Jews' Hospital festival dinner in 1873 said, 'the school is the keystone of the palace' and the central role it held was taken on by the conjoint institution.<sup>46</sup> The new title with its precedence for the Jews' Hospital was a symbol of inherited institutional ideologies that carried with it the keystone of education. Apprenticing functioned after the children left and returned to their families. Those children who had no home to return to such as double orphans and where the home situation was too deplorable to allow a return were housed in a number of hostels.

The residence of boys in hostels was treated as 'a continuance of institution life' as the apprentices were still under Norwood's control.<sup>47</sup> The separation provided the opportunity for benefactors to memorialise their names in the titles of the hostels. The first hostel opened in 1891 and was the gift of the chairman of the Apprenticing Committee who named the house after his wife 'Florence House'. A second hostel opened in Stoke-on-Trent in 1898 which was also named after the benefactor's wife and called the Kate Schlesinger Home. Though there were no Norwood hostels for girls, a 'Kate

Schlesinger' room was opened at the Emily Harris Home for Girls to provide accommodation, like the hostels for boys, for double orphans or girls who could not be allowed home.<sup>48</sup>

A third hostel was opened in 1904 in North London and named after another benefactor, the Alexander Joseph Memorial Home.<sup>49</sup> The eponymous title advertised the benefactor's generosity and the terms of the bequest could be stringent on the satisfaction of public appreciation. Under the terms of the gift of the Stoke house the name was not to be changed at any time, and a memorial tablet was to be placed in the Institution recording the gift.<sup>50</sup> The name of the hostels included the title 'home', and its use was institutionalised and dissociated from the family 'home' when designating specialist accommodation that included in the Jewish community the apprentice hostels, the Emily Harris Home and the Home for Aged Jews.<sup>51</sup>

The conjoint name of the JHOA like the foundation charities included the word 'Jews', and its religious character was recognised by the LCC which classified Norwood as a voluntary aided 'denominational Boarding School'.<sup>52</sup> The Jews' Hospital's Hebrew name *Nvei Tzedek* was extended to include the conjoint institution on amalgamation.<sup>53</sup> The mantle of the Hebrew name was further extended to cover the new junior asylum with the eponymous name of the Arnold and Jane Gabriel Home named after its benefactors on

its opening in 1911. The consecration ceremony declared the new Home would also 'be the habitation of righteousness' and 'the abode of loving kindness and virtue'.<sup>54</sup> The moral message the *Nvei Tzedek* conveyed was timeless and its name was changeless remaining unaltered throughout Norwood's history. From the title emanated a moral ideal to be instilled in the children and the hope was that they would leave Norwood *Nvei Tzedek* people. Such an achievement was reached by Daniel Marks who was a child at the Jews' Hospital in the 1850s. In later life he was a generous benefactor and Treasurer of Norwood. On his death in 1904 Rev Singer described him at his memorial service

the *Nvei Tzedek* boy who grew up to be the *Nvei Tzedek* man in a place where truthful, honest, upright, self-respecting, industrious men and women are trained to take their place in the world.<sup>55</sup>

The religious name conveyed an image that transcended the institutional association. It was useful when making public appeals for money. The 1891 Appeal asserted the moral authority of Norwood that 'from every Jewish pulpit in Great Britain the claims of the *Nvei Tzedek* will be set forth'.<sup>56</sup> Its 1912 Appeal advertisement described the moral ideal of the *Nvei Tzedek* as 'the abode of righteousness, the home of all that was pure and good'.<sup>57</sup> The 1930 Appeal uplifted the institution as 'the Orphanage was really the *Nvei*

*Tzedek* under another name'.<sup>58</sup> The sentiments behind the Hebrew name were a powerful enticement for donations. The name connoted high moral principles and elevated Norwood in the public eye and contrasted it with the worldly associations of the institutional titles.



## **Jewish Orphanage**

The two founding institutions coming together under the one umbrella of a conjoint name was the starting point for an evolution in the history of Norwood to form a body with a unified purpose. In time, it called for a unitary name. The ideology of amalgamation that dominated charity organisation at the time was cushioned by a veneer of title preservation. In time that veneer wore too thin and necessitated a further title change.

In America by the turn of the century institutional self-doubt had set in as the utopianism of institutionalisation gave way to a more child-centred approach. Many institutions stopped calling themselves asylums for children.<sup>59</sup> Major Jewish orphanages transformed themselves between 1900 and 1920 from an institutional to a more home-like environment and in some cases were renamed. Thus the CJOA established in 1868 was reconstructed and renamed the Jewish Orphan Home in 1920.<sup>60</sup> Asylum as a term fell out of favour with institutions and there was a move to remove it. In an Appeal by the Lord Mayor of London in 1918 to raise money for seven London orphanages the word 'asylum' appeared in only two of the titles whereas 'orphan' and 'orphanage' were included in the titles of all the institutions.<sup>61</sup>

Recognition of the out of date use was accepted by Norwood. In 1924 it took legal advice on renaming the institution and

announced 'that the present name of the Institution was too long and out of date and they were making application to change it'.<sup>62</sup>

The chairman, Anthony de Rothschild, told the 1928 annual meeting of the JHOA that

from time to time it had been urged that the designation Jews' Hospital and Orphan Asylum was not a happy one for the Orphanage. In the interests of the children they had, therefore, decided that a change in title of the Charity was desirable, and with the sanction of the Charity Commissioners and the approval of the Governors and Subscribers propose that the new name be simply The Jewish Orphanage.<sup>63</sup>

The application was made to the Charity Commissioners who approved the splitting up of the JHOA into two charities.<sup>64</sup> Its two objects - the support of the Aged and the maintenance, education and employment of youth - were separated. Support for the aged through payment of pensions was to be called the Jewish Hospital Pension Charity and the support of children the Jewish Orphanage.<sup>65</sup> The use of Hospital in the old title because of the connection with aged pensioners was now redundant and disbanded in the new one.

At the same time the Board of Education were given the three reasons for renaming the school: first, 'the inappropriateness of the term asylum'; second, 'the fact that our institution is no longer a Hospital'; third, 'its old name caused it to be confused with the Jewish Hospital, Stepney'. So it was that the Board agreed to the change and renamed the school the 'London Lambeth Jewish

Orphanage School'.<sup>66</sup> The new name simply was an updated version of the old asylum school name with its replacement by 'orphanage' and retention of 'Jewish'. In 1930 the LCC took over responsibility for the six Children's Homes from the London Poor Law Guardians and adopted a policy of renaming them all. The term 'residential school' was applied to the cottage homes, groups of cottages housing children set in a village setting on the outskirts of London. It combined in one title the residential and educational roles. The Homes included the Lamorbey Residential School from which Jewish children housed there by the LCC were transferred to Norwood.<sup>67</sup> Norwood was a residential school but not on the cottage home model and retained the separation of the orphanage and orphanage school.

In America, the CJOA which had already changed its name in 1920 to eliminate the term asylum took a more radical step nine years later when the institution relocated to a cottage home facility. It was agreed the name of the new Home should not be a continuation of the original title because of its 'out-and-out flourish of its eleemosynary character'. Throughout the country there was a desire to break away from a designation of the institution that was 'an illuminated acknowledgement of charity' and Bellefaire was thus born out of 'its hybrid French combination to signify and do the beautiful'.<sup>68</sup> Michael Charlitt, its superintendant, saw the designation

as born out of the 'agitation for a new name' that defined the new formula for living. He wanted to bury the word 'institution' as it could not be resurrected into 'campus', the word used to describe the new institution. 'To me dropping the word "institution" was getting started properly for the journey into the new life'.<sup>69</sup>

The *JW* asked at the time Norwood became the Jewish Orphanage, *What is in a Name?*<sup>70</sup> The answer it gave, referring to Jewish personal names, was that the Jewish tradition of using pious names went back to a time when ancient Israel was a theocratic state. The use of the name *Nvei Tzedek* in this tradition signified the pretensions of maintaining a theocratic institution, an 'abode of righteousness' and the mantle of that name had now fallen on the Jewish Orphanage. The research of this chapter has answered the question posed in a wider context than that of the Hebrew title. The institutionalised names are used as the section headings but within them other forms of naming are examined. This allowed the inclusion of eponymous naming by benefactors of hostels, the Gabriel Home and the memorialising of parts of the institution such as the beds and dormitories.<sup>71</sup> The residents went under various names based on the institutional titles of inmates and orphans. The title Orphanage denoted the institutional specialisation in looking after children for the term 'orphan' was used in child care not only to describe a child with no parents but, in the broader

sense used by Dr Barnardo, to encompass children with both parents dead, one parent dead or both parents unsuitable or unable to care for the child.<sup>72</sup>

Norwood had never been just a place for parentless children. Under its founding constitution double orphans, children who had no living parents, were described as 'fitting objects' and could be admitted without election by subscribers. Non-orphans were, however, admitted though subject to election.<sup>73</sup> In the negotiations between the Jews' Hospital and the JOA in 1874 the latter was concerned that the rights of orphans were protected, and the President of the JOA at the time assured his fellow governors that 'we have taken care that the orphan children shall always have their share of the prosperity' and an allocation of places was set aside for them.<sup>74</sup>

The special treatment of parentless orphans created resentment among Jews' Hospital supporters who felt it restricted the entry of 'deserving' children. Indeed, one supporter advanced the position that

we are sorry to find the [Amalgamation] report sanctions the absurd expression "single and double orphans" an expression the accuracy of which cannot be supported on any philological grounds.<sup>75</sup>

His line of argument was not without some merit as Rev Herman Adler ('Delegate Chief Rabbi' and son of the Chief Rabbi Nathan

Adler) preached the religious view in his 1884 sermon 'The Orphan and Jewish Life' that

though there may be a distinction in name, there is none in fact between a child that has been deprived of a father's support, a mother's care by death, and one whose father or mother is disabled by mental or physical malady, or by utter destitution from providing its support. The Hebrew word for orphan *Yacombe* means literally 'one who is deserted, helpless and stands alone' and every such child has a claim upon our sympathy, protection and help and is justified in seeking the hospitality of that institution.<sup>76</sup>

The word orphan was a social category but also a religious one. The deserving child included the *yacombe*, the parentless and poor law child. Norwood named itself as an 'Abode of Righteousness' and its religious significance was the obligation that gave the child the right of admission. The saving of the social orphan Norwood restricted to the deserving poor. The saving of the righteous orphan was a pupil's plea to the Jews' Hospital that

*Oh may such bounty unremitted flow!  
Speed your own works of charity and love!  
And ever blessing this dispensed below,  
Shall gain a tenfold recompense above.*<sup>77</sup>

It was a Jewish tradition that Herman Adler urged Norwood to follow. The open door approach to taking in the orphan was practised by the evangelical Christian societies. Barnardo's policy stated - 'no destitute child ever refused admission'. Evangelicals

believed in repentance and conversion and the need to save the individual soul. To achieve this aim, it was realised that religion could not compete with hunger and despair.<sup>78</sup> Barnardo's charitable work was a successful formula that rescued both the social orphan and the soulless orphan. The wider definition of orphan more accurately included both the institutional specialism of the orphanage in dealing with children only and the broader range of children it housed. The adoption of 'orphanage' in the title signified in the childcare evolution of Norwood a shift in its purpose to one where any Jewish child was a potential applicant.

The asylum and its residents called inmates had taken on a pejorative meaning, especially in America where de-institutionalisation was taking place. 'The meaning of inmate of being "in" or "on the inside" does not exist apart from meaning "getting out" or "getting on the outside."' <sup>79</sup> Its application placed the children in the asylum and demarcated them from the normality of family life. The use of asylum for Norwood was associated in the mind of some of the children who went there with the stigma of abnormality. T40 who was at Norwood in the 1920s wrote to her sister in America and called Norwood as it was then the Jewish Orphanage Asylum. 'Her sister told her not to use that name for Norwood otherwise her boyfriend will think she came from a loony bin.' Her reaction when they changed the title a few years later was

enthusiastic. 'Oh, I was so happy, when they changed it, because when you're a kid you don't realise when you're writing, that you're writing "asylum."' <sup>80</sup> Looking back years later the Norwood secretary remarked 'at one time, it's horrifying to note, it was called the Jews' Orphan Asylum whereas Norwood is a name we intend to keep'.<sup>81</sup>

Though the title of Asylum was officially dropped in 1928, reminders of the old designation still lingered on well into the 1940s. T379, when she first arrived at Norwood in 1946, remembered she was very disappointed when she read 'on the face of the building' the word 'ASYLUM 1795'. 'In my mind I said, but we're not crazy, there's nothing wrong with any of us. Why are we coming to a place like this? I became really afraid, absolutely terrified.'<sup>82</sup> N82J recalled seeing the word asylum on the entrance on first going to Norwood; it was her first memory. 'I thought the word asylum meant it was a home for crazy people but I was assured that it wasn't.'<sup>83</sup> The term Asylum conveyed a stigmatised message to these children quite different from the institutional message of the founding fathers that believed in the benefits the asylum provided. The institution name rubbed off on the children themselves. N82S recalled her badge had the initials "O.A. & J.H." and Norwood children were nicknamed the "Oojahs".<sup>84</sup> J74 remembered at school over the loudspeaker it was announced 'the

JOs should report to so-an-so. It stood for Jewish Orphans'. They were made to wear special shoes for school and they squeaked. 'You'd hear squeaky shoes going down the corridor and you knew it was another Norwood kid.'<sup>85</sup>

The sociologist Irving Goffman wrote 'whenever an occupation carries with it a change in name, one can be sure that an important breach is involved between the person and his old world'.<sup>86</sup> The same can be said of the change in institutional name from the JHOA to the Jewish Orphanage. The unitary name of the new body was a move forward which removed the institutional double stamp of an archaic use of Hospital and pejorative use of Asylum. Marcus Kaye once boasted (no doubt in jest) that he was 'the Lord High Everything Else of Norwood as he was headmaster, superintendent, *chazzan* (the official who conducted the synagogue service) and preacher'.<sup>87</sup> The various roles gave him authority over a renamed organisation which in the inter-war period he dominated and represented a break with the institutional structure of the pre-war period.



## **Norwood Home for Jewish Children**

After the Second World War the government set in motion a 'revolutionary' transformation in the treatment of children by encouraging voluntary organisations to adopt a policy of restoring children to the community through non-custodial forms of child care and taking them out of the institutions.<sup>88</sup> The term Orphanage - like Hospital and Asylum before it - came out of favour, an unsuitability that extended to nineteenth century terms such as 'guardians' and 'relief'. It was put to the JBG that the 'existing name from a psychological point of view, the name Board of Guardians for Relief of Jewish Poor carried with it a stigma which would be as well to eliminate'.<sup>89</sup> Basil Henriques who was both a JBG and Norwood governor proposed that the name be changed to include 'welfare' as welfare had replaced relief work, and it would remove the stigma of pauperism from those it helped. However, the JBG chairman said that they could not afford to part with the words 'Board of Guardians' and rejected that stigma was attached to 'Jewish poor'.<sup>90</sup>

The truth was that the policy of admissions to orphanages had changed and was no longer based on destitution. This prompted the Waifs and Strays Society in 1946 to change its name 'in the interests of the children' to the Church of England Children's Society. The Victorian term waifs and strays had the derogatory meaning of children who were 'odds and ends, unowned and

neglected'. The Society in its reform of names went further and disbanded the use of 'home' for 'branch' as it was felt 'home' was detrimental to the children's welfare.<sup>91</sup> The reform at the JBG was delayed until 1963 when it was renamed the Jewish Welfare Board. The change was to create 'a new Board as a Social Welfare Organisation in the modern sense' but nevertheless it still met opposition from those who felt 'it would be a travesty to change the name'.<sup>92</sup> The old name had lasted 104 years and its overdue reform came in the wake of the major change in the welfare of children with the creation of the Welfare State.

The changes affected Norwood which moved towards establishing family homes for the children. In 1956 Michael Cohen, vice-president of Norwood stated that

it had been realised by the committee for some time that with the change in economic and social circumstances prevailing generally the title 'orphanage' had become something of a misnomer since only few children are orphans in the widest sense of the term having one or two parents living.<sup>93</sup>

In 1928 the title change to 'orphanage' was seen as inclusive of children who were not strictly orphans. In the post-war climate the use of 'orphan' had become unacceptable irrespective of linguistic flexibility. Norwood now accepted any Jewish child deprived of a normal home life. Edward Conway who was Principal at the time gradually abolished the institutional approach and in place of

regimentation

the “family system” has been introduced ... To indicate the change in complexion of the Home Norwood has changed its title to the Norwood Home for Jewish Children.<sup>94</sup>

At the same time the last vestiges of the asylum went. The old name Jews’ Hospital and Orphan Asylum over the front entrance, which so frightened some of the children, was removed.<sup>95</sup> Also abandoned were other reminders of the “charity school” aspect of Norwood such as memorial bedplates and plaques all over the hall that a previous headmaster had said ‘gave the appearance of a graveyard’.<sup>96</sup> Sheila Graham recalled ‘there were plaques around the walls of the dining room with the names of donors – Montifiore, Henriques, Seligman and Beaconsfield’.<sup>97</sup> Another scholar, David Golding remembered the brass plaques on the walls above the beds given by donors to commemorate someone who had died. There was a plaque at the foot of his bed with ‘an inscription upon it reminiscent to that on a tombstone over a grave’. One such plaque read ‘this bed has been consecrated to celebrate the life of Gertrude Salamon, 1851-1923’. Boys would jokingly look at the date of death and say ‘you died in 1923’.<sup>98</sup> The vestiges didn’t quite disappear as items of cutlery stamped with JHOA were still in use when the main building was demolished in 1962.<sup>99</sup>

The inclusion of Norwood in the title was a change from

tradition. The *JC* in an article *Our Institutions* in 1921 pointed out the difference between a good and bad name. 'There was never a place where one felt inclined to use that ugly word "institution" than at Norwood. Norwood! It is a charming name in itself.'<sup>100</sup> N17 wrote, 'when the word "Orphanage" is mentioned, it is immediately classified as an Institution, but to me Norwood was a "home"'.<sup>101</sup> Many scholars recalled what the name Norwood meant for them and it was not under the banner 'proud to be a Norwood orphan'.<sup>102</sup> The Norwood mission was to admit the destitute child, the supplicant orphan who suffered the 'poverty, the sorrow, the despair and the temptation' of deprivation.<sup>103</sup> She was the

*Child ... of woe, by want and suffering torn,  
Exposed to evil, by our hapless state;  
Deserted- friendless-fatherless-forlorn,  
Left to the worst extremities of fate.*<sup>104</sup>

In the age of the asylum an ideology of childhood developed based on an inferiority that stigmatised the orphan. 'The continuance of the asylum' and the orphanage 'thrived long after their original rationale' had passed but 'an uncompromising reliance on the institution remained' and allowed the perpetuation of an institutional ideology of childhood through the transmission of its values from one generation of children to the next.<sup>105</sup>

Orphanage children's reaction to the feeling of being a

stigmatised group was to convince outsiders to use 'a softer label' to avoid any association with an asylum or orphanage.<sup>106</sup> N79 dissociated the institutional name from living there because 'although an Orphanage in name, it was home for me'.<sup>107</sup> The separation of the institutional name from its association with Norwood allowed for recollections under the banner 'proud to be a Norwood scholar'. The tradition developed among ex-Norwood children of being called scholars and the Norwood Old Scholars Association which they formed published a newsletter in which they wrote their reminiscences. The scholars were expected to carry the banner of Norwood and uphold the name of the institution when they left. Letters from ex-Norwood children selectively preserved in the Headmaster's scrapbook for the years 1913-15 contain responses in this vein. D. Cate wrote to the Headmaster and promised 'to uphold the good name of the school' and Rachel Cohen wrote that 'nothing but good shall escape my mouth' about Norwood. Esther Selnick promised she will 'be good and bring credit on the institution' to repay Norwood's kindness.<sup>108</sup>

Not everyone felt inclined to write a letter of thanks. Maurice Levinson was asked by Kaye to send him one on leaving but 'somehow I couldn't bring myself to write it'.<sup>109</sup> The letters were a display of inmate belief that conveyed the impression that they were fortunate to have been in one of the best institutions of its

kind.<sup>110</sup> The banner of the orphan scholar appealed to a pupil of the Foundling Hospital. She reflected the name of the institution was a stigma that brought problems for her in her career and thought just another two words - 'boarding school' would have created a different reaction.<sup>111</sup> The school banner had universal appeal for the orphan. The American public schools Girard College and Hershey School were established for underprivileged children. Their admissions were dignified as 'scholarships' and Girard, titled a college was 'part of the pattern of dignifying the total purpose of the enterprise'.<sup>112</sup>

The protection of Norwood's reputation was a powerful consideration in scholars' recollections. One scholar in a critical vein wrote that 'most of the letters and articles seem to be full of praise for life at Norwood'.<sup>113</sup> The importance of the institutional name was made by the editor of NOSA in 1969 when he wrote

most people recapture the happy episodes of life in their early years. The past is looked at through rose-tinted spectacles and the sharp edges of that sombre picture become softened. Past and present merge there and it is no longer necessary to read between the lines. The message of NOSA is paying tribute to the happiness that has been brought into their lives, to the friendship and warmth which compensates for some of the cold blasts of the modern world.<sup>114</sup>

NOSA wanted scholars to remember Norwood for the happiness it brought and not for its sombreness. Recollections did not serve an

historical purpose but to provide psychological support for scholars in later life and collectively to validate Norwood.

Norwood took the opportunity to promote its name when the occasion demanded. In the 1925 Appeal 'the Institution' was described as being 'conducted on the most modern lines; from the educational, from the religious and from every other standpoint'.<sup>115</sup> The Jewish press added its own glowing support of Norwood. At the time of the centenary extension the *JC* claimed the institution 'leaves little room for improvement and with organisation and management perfect in detail and completely up to-date'.<sup>116</sup> In 1956 a writer in the *JC* commended that

though Norwood is an 'institution' I have never seen an institution less institutional in the pejorative sense of the word. For here are none of the features of institutionalisation that make comparable homes, however admirable their work, so cold, so absolutely divorced from what we understand by the word 'home' without its inverted commas.<sup>117</sup>

The linguistic desperation to transmute 'institution' into 'home' was forlorn whilst the institution behind the words remained in place. The internal reorganisation to carve out family units in the main building rationalised the 1956 renaming but it was only a renaming with 'Home' and not 'home'. The transmutation was at best partial. Michael Sharlitt achieved the full change twenty seven years earlier when the linguistic innovation of 'campus' was applied to the

innovatory Bellefaire project.

The Visitors' Book registered the brief comments of the many visitors to the institution. The regular visits of Poor Law Guardians to see how their charges were treated elicited much praise. Bethnal Green Guardians wrote in the book 'everything possible is being done in the best interests of the children' and Brighton Guardians found Norwood an 'excellent Institution' and were 'exceedingly satisfied' with the care bestowed on the children.<sup>118</sup> The Poor Law operated on the principle of the 'self-acting test' whereby a claimant confirmed the truth of destitution by entering the workhouse. It was not appropriate to a charity operating under the 'merit test' of financial and moral status.<sup>119</sup> The Guardians' comments were not unexpected when Norwood was compared with the workhouse. Workhouse conditions were based on 'less eligibility' when paupers including children were treated in a lesser way than children at home or in voluntary institutions.<sup>120</sup>

F le Martin, a visitor from Severalls Mental Asylum in Colchester, commented 'today, I have visited the most humane home for children that during my life I have ever seen'. This may have reflected on the treatment in mental asylums before the war. Norwood adopted a policy that excluded the physically and mentally unfit.<sup>121</sup> The superintendent of the Jewish Orphan House, Chicago as

a professional held back from any criticism in being 'confronted with a rather difficult task in making an entry in a visitors' book of a sister institution' but expressed the hope 'I have no doubt that if the right ideals of the Supt. Mr Kaye are materialised the JH&OA will before long become the model child caring institution in this country'.<sup>122</sup> The fulfilment of the ideal was progressing in America and there was recognition by Norwood that 'the American method in children's institutions is the plan' to follow.<sup>123</sup> The Visitors' Book is not where you would expect to find criticism and comments in it 'bore little relationship to some children's experiences'.<sup>124</sup> What was conspicuously absent were visitors from boarding schools, the type of institution Norwood looked up to.

The impression gained from the various sources, the Jewish press, visitors' comments, annual reports, thank you letters and scholars' recollections, was that Norwood was highly regarded. This refrain has been taken up more recently by the historian Eugene Black when he described Norwood an 'exemplary enterprise'.<sup>125</sup> Though over-stated the point is clearly made of Norwood's reputation that

with much truth ... if one cared to wait long enough every Jew of any note will pass ... the portals of the famous Jewish institution on Knight's Hill.<sup>126</sup>

The *JC*, an organ of the Anglo-Jewish establishment, regularly and

favourably reported on Norwood. Leavers in their letters of thanks acknowledged the credit Norwood brought them, and scholars in their recollections many years later often paid tribute to Norwood. Visitors in their brief well conducted tours responded generally with positive comments. The annual reports were institutional writings that recorded the achievements of Norwood. Each source contributed to building up the reputation of Norwood both at the time and retrospectively.

The 'proud name and the height it had attained' could not but fail to persuade Norwood it was a progressive institution.<sup>127</sup> The constant reminders fed the institutional ego that Norwood could claim in 1934 that though it had not yet 'attained to the perfect Foundation' the progressive nature of the work was the 'endless pursuit of the ideal'.<sup>128</sup> By the 1930s the governors believed that institutionalism as a model of child care was a success and the ideology it represented was forward thinking. Sixty years of Norwood history had created a culture of paternalism that knew no different yet, a decade later, the ideology was in full retreat. The fin de siècle confidence of the pre-war decade was replaced by a new realism that totally rejected the institutional idea and the name that went with it.

In the historical development an ideological repositioning took place. The early nineteenth century phase was dominated by

institutional signifiers - hospital, asylum, workhouse and district school (where pauper children were separated from the adults in the workhouse). The later half of the century saw the emergence of a new terminology of residential child care - cottage home, scattered home and boarding out home - that countered the institutional ascendancy. In the terminological contestation the workhouse and asylum were stigmatised by the designation of barrack and Bastille. A 'softer label', the Jewish Orphanage was adopted at Norwood to avoid any association with the former asylum. The new name was part of a continuing legacy of institutionalism but one where its dominance was embattled. The ideological repositioning taking place was advanced by the social, psychological and political considerations in the thirties on the treatment of vulnerable children and accelerated by the impact of the war. The children returning to Norwood from evacuation did not return to the 'Orphanage' with its paternal way but to an 'orphanage' where the children 'would now experience a different religion and culture'.<sup>129</sup>

In the radio interview in 1973 the secretary of Norwood Harry Altman was asked, 'Is the emphasis going to be much more on home in the future?' He replied

Yes, home with a small 'h' I hope ...The present day generation do know the name by simply Norwood and it is a name we intend to keep, even if it's in Hackney. Norwood, I suppose has a connotation in the same way as one hears Oxfam we know that they don't have to feed people in Oxford.<sup>130</sup>

The linguistic dressing down from upper to lower case signified the ideological change that Norwood now accepted. Generations of children had expressed a strong emotional attachment for a 'home' which the JHOA and Jewish Orphanage never provided. Leslie Thomas the novelist was a Barnardo boy, and he reflected on the meaning of 'Home – a strange word; call it "home" and it is the warmest syllable in the language; deep as a heartstring, satisfying as dinner, assured as love'.<sup>131</sup> The transfer of children to family homes was a move to meet the psychological need that an institution could not give.

In 1961, Jack Wagman, the last superintendant of Norwood, saw the importance of the change of title in that the word Homes carried with it an evolution in child care.

Time was when the word would have been orphanage and then the social circumstances and conscience became such that the name was changed to Home. Today, in keeping with latest trends in child care, it became Homes as we no longer herd our children in large groups. No longer do we issue them with numbers, nor do we feed them en mass. Now we have small "family" homes in a normal sized-house with house parents to foster family life with small groups of children.<sup>132</sup>

Wagman stood at a juncture between two eras: the post-orphanage era to be and the institutional era that was. Looking back he could only see children in their plurality. Constitutionally they were children but their singularity needed rediscovering.

The name changes were milestones in the history of Norwood. The permanent feature was the terms 'Jewish' and 'Jews' which always denoted the importance of the denominational character of Norwood. The *Nvei Tzedek* was retained unchanged for 155 years since the founding of the Jews' Hospital. Though unaffected by the changes in institutional names it always formed part of the institution. However, the demolition of the orphanage made it obsolete. The various institutional titles – 'Hospital', 'Orphan Asylum', 'Orphanage' and 'Home' were crucial markers that signposted the changes from early nineteenth century institutionalism to the Welfare State.

In the post-war period the change in names was linked with a change in locations. In 1945 the children returned to an institution where the orphanage school was replaced by neighbourhood schools and Norwood was just the Jewish Orphanage and *Nvei Tzedek*. In 1956 the change in name to the Norwood Home for Jewish Children signified the 'internal' move within the main building whereby family units replaced the institutional lay out. The title 'Orphanage' became 'Home' and signified the partial

de-institutionalisation of Norwood. At the same time the innovation of incorporating the name Norwood into the title was the beginning of a process of detachment of it from its geographical location.

By the time of the closure of the institutional building in 1961 the process of moving children to family homes was completed, and the term 'Home' was de-institutionalised with the adjunct of Family in the name known as Norwood Family Homes.<sup>133</sup> The term Jewish was dropped from this title, but the denominational title was not lost but was now part of the name of Norwood itself. Physically the location of Norwood had relocated to the neighbourhood. The family homes of the 1960s were in turn closed down with the new concept of communal child welfare, as 'Norwood moved its emphasis from residential to community-based services' in the 1980s and 1990s, and the new concept had a new name, Norwood Child Care.<sup>134</sup> This completed the geographical detachment of Norwood as a location.

The history of Norwood as an institution from its beginnings in 1807 to its demolition in 1962 was a microcosm of the history of the institutionalism of disadvantaged children. The rise of the institutional name as a mark of progress in the first half of the nineteenth century signalled the age of the asylum. That name became tarnished in the second half of the century with the rise of alternative models to the asylum such as the cottage home. The scientific advances of the first half century of the twentieth century

strengthened the counter-institutional forces against 'custodialism' and the institutional name became increasingly unacceptable. After the war it became a sine qua non of child welfare policy that the institutional name was damaging to children. The institution Norwood, under all its various titles, mirrored the rise and fall of child institutionalism. The name Norwood, as a sociolinguistic accumulation of 'internal forces', was detached from the institutional body and transformed in its 'personality' to become the name for the future.



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- 39) JC 13/6/1873.
- 40) USA, C/18, Letter Book, 29/5/1890, 4/6/1890, 27/6/1890.
- 41) USA, C/59, Letter Book, pp 2, 28; C/75, Letter Book, 24/9/1906: 'we do not take probationers ... the home being one for orphans and not a hospital in the medical sense of the term'.
- 42) 'Hospital' as in the Fisherman's Hospital at Great Yarmouth, founded in 1702 for retired aged fishermen.
- 43) JC 19/7/1912, 26/7/1912.
- 44) USA, C/10, Headmaster's scrapbook, 3/3/1916.
- 45) JC 29/6/1892.
- 46) JC 26/3/1875. 'Palace' was a nickname for Norwood because of its size and sumptuous gothic style.
- 47) Conway, *The Institutional Care*, p128; NC, AR 1911.
- 48) NC, AR 1891, 1898, 1910; JC 19/10/1906, 22/2/1907. The Emily Harris Home was a rescue home for Jewish women and girls who were prostitutes.
- 49) NC, AR 1904.
- 50) NC, House Committee minutes, 26/1/1904. Memorial plaques were placed in the entrance hall of the Main Building.
- 51) NC, House Committee minutes, 14/12/1899; JC 15/1/1897.
- 52) USA, C/1, Amalgamation Scheme, July 1876; C/65, Letter Book, 19/4/1904.
- 53) USA, B/8, Minute Book, 27/3/1877.
- 54) JC 21/10/1910; JW 21/10/1910.
- 55) JC 16/12/1904.
- 56) JW 6/3/1891.
- 57) JC 15/3/1912.
- 58) JC 13/6/1930.
- 59) Matthew Crenson, *Building the Invincible Orphanage – A Prehistory of the American Welfare System* (Harvard University Press, London, 1998), p117.
- 60) Reena Friedman, *These are Our Children: Jewish Orphanages in the United States, 1880-1925* (Brandeis University Press, Hanover, New Hampshire, 1994), pp 67-70, 74.
- 61) JC 19/4/1918. The institutions were the Royal British Orphan School, Brixton Orphanage, Home for Female Orphans, Royal Female Orphan Asylum, Infant Orphan Asylum, Orphan Working School and Reedham Orphanage.

- 62) NC, House Committee minutes, 29/5/1924; JC 8/10/1926.
- 63) USA, A3075/2/1, Executive minutes, 4/2/1926; JC 20/4/1928.
- 64) NC, General Court Minutes, 19/12/1927.
- 65) JC 20/4/1928.
- 66) NA, ED21/34942, 27/8/1928; USA, C/12, School Log Book, 20/8/1928.
- 67) Jad Adams and Gerry Coll, *The History of Shirley Oaks Children's Home* (Deptford Forum Publishing, London, 1999), App. 111.
- 68) Sharlitt, *As I Remember*, pp170-1.
- 69) Sharlitt, *As I Remember*, pp181-2.
- 70) JW 6/12/1928.
- 71) USA, A3075/2//1, Executive minutes, 16/11/1926. A dormitory naming was that of a benefactor who left £500 to Norwood in his will and in his memory it was named the 'B Kostorus Dormitory'.
- 72) Burman, *What About the Children?* p28.
- 73) USA, C/1, Amalgamation Scheme, July 1976.
- 74) JC 21/1/1876; USA, A1054, Amalgamation Scheme: 'the aggregate number of double and single orphans shall not be less than 120 and shall not be less than one half of the entire number of children'.
- 75) JC 19/3/1875.
- 76) JC 21/3/1884.
- 77) Burman, *What About the Children?* p9: part of a recital by a girl pupil in 1867; Alvin Schorr, *Explorations in Social Policy* (Basic Books, London, 1968), p58.
- 78) Gillian Wagner, *Barnardo* (Eyre & Spottiswoode, London, 1979), pp 38-9, 72.
- 79) Goffman, *Asylums*, pp23-4.
- 80) LJM, Interview transcript tape 40, 1981. She was at Norwood 1921-8.
- 81) NOSA *Newsletter*, no 30, Mar 1973.
- 82) LJM, Interview transcript tape 379, 1994; NOSA *Newsletter*, no 74, Apr1997. She was at Norwood 1946-51.
- 83) NOSA *Newsletter*, no 82, May 2001. She was at Norwood 1948-52.
- 84) NOSA *Newsletter*, no 82, May 2001. She was at Norwood 1923-30.
- 85) JC Supplement, 22/11/1974. She was at Norwood 1953-62.
- 86) Erving Goffman, *Stigma* (Penguin, London, 1990), p76.
- 87) JC 1/3/1912.
- 88) Jean Heywood, *Children in Care – the Development of the Service for the Deprived Child* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1970), pp147-9.
- 89) JC 26/5/1944.
- 90) JC 20/12/1946.
- 91) Mildred de Rudolf, *Everybody's Children* (Oxford University Press, London, 1950), pp193-4.
- 92) JC 20/12/1946, 8/4/1955, 26/7/1963.
- 93) JC 27/4/1956.
- 94) JC 18/5/1956.
- 95) Burman, *What About the Children?* p50.
- 96) Burman, *What About the Children?* p50.
- 97) Sheila Graham, *The Late Lily Shiel* (W H Allen, London, 1979), p26. The authoress was at Norwood 1910-17.
- 98) David Golding, *Reminiscences of a Norwood Boy* (L Stewart, London, 2005), p57. He was at Norwood 1935-43.
- 99) NOSA *Newsletter*, no 98, Apr 2009.
- 100) JC 2/12/1921.
- 101) NOSA *Newsletter*, no 17, Apr 1970.

- 102) *Guardian*, 17/11/2004: Ruth Lister in *Poverty, No more of the 'poor'* addresses the issue of collective identity of the poor and the banner under which they want to march.
- 103) *JC* 26/4/1895; NC, AR 1925.
- 104) Burman, *What About the Children?* p9. The extract is from the opening lines of an ode recited by a girl pupil at the Jews' Hospital at its anniversary fund raising dinner in 1867; see note 77.
- 105) Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum*, pp245-6.
- 106) Goffman, *Stigma*, p37.
- 107) *NOSA Newsletter*, no 79, Sept 1999. He was at Norwood 1928-36.
- 108) USA, C/10, Headmaster's scrapbook, 10/4/1913, 10/4/1914, 28/3/1915, 8/8/1915.
- 109) Maurice Levinson, *A Woman from Bessarabia* (Secker & Warburg, London, 1964), pp62-3.
- 110) Goffman, *Asylums*, pp97-8.
- 111) Pugh, *London's Forgotten Children*, p139.
- 112) Sharlitt, *As I Remember*, pp276-8.
- 113) *NOSA Newsletter*, no 92, Mar 2006, pp18-9.
- 114) *NOSA, Newsletter*, no 15, 1969.
- 115) NC, AR 1925.
- 116) *JC* 29/3/1895.
- 117) *JC* 27/1/1956.
- 118) USA, B/10, Visitors' Book, 20/6/1898, 5/7/1915.
- 119) Gertrude Himmelfarb, *Poverty and Compassion – The Moral Imagination of the Late Victorians* (Vintage, New York, 1992), pp192-3.
- 120) Nigel Middleton, *When Families Failed – The Treatment of Children in the Care of the Community during the First Half of the Twentieth Century* (Victor Gollancz, London, 1971), p68.
- 121) USA, B/10, Visitors' Book, 17/11/32; USA, A3075/3/2, House Committee minutes, 25/10/34. David Rodinsky was rejected as he was considered 'physically and mentally unsuitable for an ordinary residential school'.
- 122) USA, B/10, Visitors' Book, 25/7/1922.
- 123) NC, House Committee minutes, 1913-27, 13/5/1927.
- 124) Lynn Abrams, *Lost Childhood: Recovering Children's Experiences of Welfare in Modern Scotland* in A Fletcher & S Hussey (eds.), *Children in Question* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1999), p158.
- 125) Black, *The Social Politics*, p187.
- 126) *NOSA Newsletter*, no 89, Sept 2004, p13. The quotation came from *Wide Awake Norwood* in the Journal of the West Norwood Chamber of Commerce, vol.1, no4, Aug 1930.
- 127) *JC* 12/2/1892.
- 128) NC, AR 1934
- 129) Golding, *Reminiscences*, pp131-2.
- 130) *NOSA Newsletter* no 30, Mar 1973.
- 131) Leslie Thomas, *This Time Next Year – Memoir of a Barnardo Boy* (Constable, London, 1964), p25.
- 132) *JC*, *Children are my job*, 19/5/1961.
- 133) Burman, *What About the Children?* p55. Norwood Family Homes was a name in use though officially the old name Norwood Home for Jewish Children was pluralised as the Norwood Homes for Jewish Children.
- 134) Burman, *What About the Children?* p56. Norwood Child Care was the name adopted in 1981.

### **Chapter 3: The Rise of Norwood Institutionalism** **- The Residential Model Adopted**

The dominant view, inside and outside of academia, is that Norwood was a 'good' institution.<sup>1</sup> The historian Jerry White, who has written on another example of a particular Jewish enterprise, had this sort of perspective in mind when he criticised Anglo-Jewish history as 'entirely celebratory in tone'.<sup>2</sup> In response to the criticism of 'decorous, self-lauding' of earlier Anglo-Jewish historians the writer Israel Finestein called for a greater frankness in the examination of the socially vulnerable.<sup>3</sup> This chapter and the following ones look critically at one aspect of this neglected aspect of the Anglo-Jewish experience - childcare provision and the residential model adopted. It challenges the more celebratory reading by placing childcare provision at Norwood in the context of non-Jewish provision in Britain in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is by looking at Norwood in the wider context of national and indeed international developments rather than confining attention to within the Anglo-Jewish community that allows a fresh perspective to be taken. The subject matter of the thesis is devoted to child institutionalism, and its importance is such that the research is presented in this and the following four chapters. The final chapter ends with a conclusion on whether Norwood was a 'good enough' institutional model and whether it was ahead or behind the times in its approach.



## **The Landscape of Institutionalism - The Building and Grounds at Norwood**

The institution located in West Norwood, London was in existence as the Jewish Orphanage for 96 years from 1866 when it opened until its demolition in 1962.<sup>4</sup> It was unique in being the only Jewish orphanage in the country. At its peak it was the home to as many as 420 children.<sup>5</sup> They were housed under one roof in one large building named the Jews' Hospital and Orphan Asylum. The children from the Jews' Hospital on Mile End Road in East London were moved in 1866 to the new premises and they were joined by the orphans removed from the JOA at the Tenter Ground in the East End in 1877. It was an amalgamation of two organisations, two sites and two groups of children. The new institution at Norwood housed 152 pupils.<sup>6</sup> The model of childcare provision that the Anglo-Jewish community had decided to adopt for these deprived Jewish children was the large scale voluntary institution.

The move to Norwood was a philanthropic inspiration of Barnett Myers who was a life governor of the JOA and a vice-president of the Jews' Hospital. He donated the site on which Norwood was built. Norwood at the time was a rural location and a move to the country was regarded as a necessity in the popular mindset of Victorian England. Precedent had been set by public schools such as Charterhouse School which moved in 1872.<sup>7</sup>

It had been discovered that a strong and healthy physical condition is necessary for the development of the mind, to the formation of character, to the strengthening of purpose and the will.

The attraction was all the greater as the disease and crime of the metropolis for the pupils was 'accumulating to a morbid extreme infesting their dreams' and 'which a strong bearing on the subject was mooted by Mr Barnett Myers'.<sup>8</sup> To contemporaries, cities were synonymous with dirt and disease, overcrowding and noise which made them unhealthy and liable to epidemics. Sanitary science was to the fore and the Jewish community had 'resolved that the institution should keep abreast of the new movement'.<sup>9</sup> The contrast between city and country in the Victorian imagination made Norwood

the beautiful landscape which stretches before one who looks around him from the vantage ground afforded by the high level on which the building stands, could seldom be seen to greater perfection; and many lingered to bask in the sunshine on the spacious lawn in front of the building, their eyes wandering with delight over hill and dale far away beyond the Surry Hills.<sup>10</sup>

It was accepted that in such surroundings the health of the children, and their moral and intellectual training, would improve under the more favourable hygienic conditions and uplifting atmosphere in which they would be placed at Lower Norwood.<sup>11</sup>

In that landscape Norwood was built. Externally the

appearance of the building exuded a palatial air which the *London Illustrated News* described as constructed in the mock Elizabethan style. Inside the palatial theme was extended to the communal areas where the public was invited.<sup>12</sup> The reporter noted the Bath stone ornamented with Caen stone chimneypieces, panelled dado finishings, stained glass windows and a dining hall that boasted an open timber roof with lanterns and ventilation. In front of the mock gothic pile in the picture in the *Illustrated News* is a bucolic scene with genteel people disposed in leisurely activity. The orphanage presented as stately home was the social currency in which Anglo-Jewry expressed its philanthropy. The new hall at the JFS, rebuilt in 1883, was

described as having

a magnificent appearance. It is, perhaps, the finest hall to be found in any school of its kind. The Great Hall, with a timbered roof was constructed of varnished Oregon pine and the windows were filled with leaded lights.<sup>13</sup>

The Home and Hospital for Jewish Incurables opened in 1900 like the JHOA was also built in a mock Elizabethan style and was described as 'a noble and imposing edifice'.<sup>14</sup>

The architectural style of the newly built Norwood was in marked contrast to that of the Jews' Hospital. The plain Georgian facade of the Hospital looked inwards to exemplify the ideals of order and regularity, virtues that would bring a new discipline to the

poor housed inside. The JOA built in 1846 was also in a plain classical style but had an ornate feature: the imposing central porch.<sup>15</sup> The Elizabethan gothic style of the JHOA built in the 1860s looked outwards to the society that created it. In society at large the 'plain and forbidding' workhouse designs of the 1830s gave way to impressive buildings erected in the 1850s and 1860s. Like other civic buildings at the time, workhouses and asylums could reflect a community's growing prosperity, visibly demonstrating what it was prepared to spend on providing for the poor. The erection of institutions often brought about a change in attitude amongst Boards of Guardians, and also an increase in their local standing as managers of a now large and impressive institution.<sup>16</sup> The buildings revealed the acceptance of 'an uncompromising reliance on the institution'. The scale of their size allowed them to be turned into large scale 'holding operations', and the historian David Rothman found 'the holding operation became confused with a rehabilitative one and equated with the virtues of the institution'. There was a change in attitude by the guardians of the institutions who were left with 'the telling question - was the institution the place of first or last resort'? ; was the architectural ensemble of the institution 'a curative environment' or 'a place of congregation'? <sup>17</sup> At the time the ensemble of the asylum with its ornate facade hid the real purposefulness of its interiority.

The orphanage as stately home suggested an unbounded optimism with which Anglo-Jewry greeted this innovation. From the outside, it could be 'mistaken for a wealthy nobleman's residence', Charles Dickens observed, when looking at a similar institution. Indeed, it was a time when the Anglo-Jewish elite was sufficiently confident in building their own stately homes and grandiose synagogues.<sup>18</sup> The JHOA stood as a monument to the social respectability and wealth of Anglo-Jewry who felt sufficiently confident in providing a 'stately home' for maintaining, educating and apprenticing poor Jewish children. It boldly stood out like the other asylums and workhouses dotted across the English countryside 'as the poignant' site 'of the weeping orphans'.<sup>19</sup>



## **The Rise of the Institutional Model – the Jewish Template**

The architectural grandness of the asylum represented a high water mark for institutionalisation and for the Jewish version at Norwood. The asylum was seen as a curative environment and institutionalisation – the housing of a large number of children in one building - was the favourite form of public relief both in Britain and in America in the mid nineteenth century.<sup>20</sup> Managers of child-care institutions were confident that adoption of the 'congregate system' whereby orphans were incarcerated in large buildings provided the environment for reform. A syncretism was established between a properly structured environment and rehabilitation of children. The stately and imposing exterior of an asylum gave status to the institutional synthesis.<sup>21</sup>

The idea of the institution as a curative environment was a revolutionary concept that emerged in the late eighteenth century. In 1778 the social reformer Jeremy Bentham devised the idea of the 'panopticon' or 'inspection-house' as a model institution for criminals in which a 'controllable' all seeing regime produced the 'perfectability' of the reformed inmate.<sup>22</sup> The principle of the panopticon showed in a very concrete form how a certain spatial distribution of power made possible a more detailed knowledge of its subjects. When a person's conduct was constantly observed, it was assessed in detail and this knowledge allowed ways of

controlling inmate's behaviour, desires, aims and experiences. Each individual became a 'case' that was corrected through 'a system of discipline, excluded and normalised'.<sup>23</sup>

The formative period of institutionalism was called the 'age of the asylum'. The institution as asylum was seen as rehabilitating the inmate and setting an example to the larger society.<sup>24</sup> Bentham was aware that an institutional approach presented a special problem for Jews and suggested a separate 'labour house' to reform the Jewish poor. A separate institution would solve the problems of dietary and religious observances that prevented Jews from entering the workhouse because then 'they might have their own rabbis and their own cooks and butcher'.<sup>25</sup> The idea of a separate Jewish institutional system appealed to the Jewish community and

continuing over the next four decades, the Anglo-Jewish elite established a series of institutions and programs to educate, in the broadest sense of the term, the Jewish poor.<sup>26</sup>

Patrick Colquhoun (a well known London Magistrate and social reformer) in conjunction with Joshua van Oven (Medical Officer to the Poor for the Great Synagogue) formulated a scheme in 1801 which had the backing of the three main London Ashkenazi synagogues (of the German persuasion) and the Jewish financier Abraham Goldsmid. Van Oven was a *maskil*, a reformist Jew who attempted to modernise Judaism sharing the views of the *Haskalah*,

the Jewish enlightenment in Germany which favoured integration into the main society. He wanted a 'House of Industry' to take in the helpless poor and children – the whole arranged on a strict Judaic plan with respect to prayers, education and diet. The scheme was an attempt to incorporate contemporary educational ideas based on the moral and social failing of poverty with Jewish principles to make the Jewish poor productive. Though the initial scheme failed to gain sufficient support, a smaller scale implementation of it was successful. In 1807 the welfare institution established under the scheme was called the Jews' Hospital and provided accommodation for ten pensioners and eighteen children.<sup>27</sup> The Jews' Hospital was a 'total institution' where the inmates lived permanently under a prison-like regime with the aim to train Jewish children to lead productive lives.<sup>28</sup>

The move to establish separate Jewish institutions also took place in other communities. In Berlin at the end of the eighteenth century a sizeable number of Jewish children were brought up in orphanages that were not Jewish and 'thereby becoming lost to the Jewish community'.<sup>29</sup> Prussia as a Christian country made no special exceptions for Jews when it came to placing children in an orphanage. In Hamburg poor relief was reorganised in 1788 but excluded Jews. In 1818 The Jewish Hamburg community set up its own system of poor relief. It was seen as necessarily different from

relief available in the larger society because of religious customs, dietary laws and, in the case of Hamburg, the separate legal status of Jews.<sup>30</sup>

The care of orphaned children was a local problem for cities like Berlin and Hamburg. For the Jews the issue of lost children was repeated in other countries. In America it was the fear of lost children through Christian conversion that stirred the American Jewish establishment to found the first Jewish orphanage in New York in 1832, the Hebrew Benevolent Orphan Asylum. What the institution provided for the children was 'the need of Jewish influence and Jewish atmosphere'.<sup>31</sup> Americans took up the idea of the orphanage from the 1830s enthusiastically and a great wave of asylum building took place largely established by religious charitable societies. For Jews and Catholics it had a denominational significance, but the fervour with which the idea was taken up generally was the utopian vision that the orphanage would nurture its residents in some kind of moral rehabilitative hot house.<sup>32</sup> At the end of the eighteenth century in the Anglo-Jewish community the same fears were felt and alleviating them generated a number of institutional responses of which the Jews' Hospital was one. The development of Jewish institutionalism was rooted in Jewish self-preservation and the community's response was an educational one that served both to improve the Jewish destitute and keep them

within the Jewish fold.

The Jews' Hospital was built in East London in the moral architectural style then prevalent in society at large. Architecture was seen as a science in which the construction of asylums could lead to a moral improvement of the inmates. The interiority of its purpose was reflected in the plainness of the exterior – 'extending monotonously, window after window, corridor after corridor, pointing unmistakably to the increasing custodial quality of correctional institutions' that developed in the early nineteenth century.<sup>33</sup> Following the New Poor Law of 1834 many of the new Board of Guardians opted to build new purpose-built workhouses that were designed to be austere.<sup>34</sup> Leading social reformers Nassau Senior and Edwin Chadwick drew on the concept of the reformatory institution for the new workhouse, an architectural structure where strict surveillance, discipline and classification operated.<sup>35</sup> The Poor Law gave official sanction to the institutionalisation of the poor in the asylum and its rationale became embedded in welfare thinking for the next hundred years.

The outbreak of cholera in London in 1830 left many Jewish families destitute. At the time there was no Jewish institution to look after the destitute children. The communal response was to establish a reformatory type institution, the Jews' Orphan Asylum, which opened in the following year with an initial intake of seven

children.<sup>36</sup> Under the Poor Law children were required to be housed separately from adults in the workhouse and the JOA subscribed to the differentiation by catering for children only whereas the Jews' Hospital (established on an earlier institutional tradition of the hospital rather than the asylum) took in the aged adults as well. Institutional specialisation was a feature of the age of the asylum with the recognition for the first time that children merited separate caring. A Royal Commission in 1833 decided childhood stopped at 13 and the Factory Act in that year differentiated child hours from that of adults. As the principle of separation was being established, based on the notion that children were not adults but children in their own right, the provision for that separation in the case of disadvantaged children was firmly based in the institution.<sup>37</sup>

From the 1840s the policy of separation of children from adults in workhouses was extended to provide large district schools.<sup>38</sup> Norwood itself had one such school, Aubin's, which educated over 1,000 children at one time. It was a type of 'farm' school operated by contractors for profit where Poor Law Unions 'farmed' out their children. James Kay-Shuttleworth, a Poor Law Commissioner, found in such an environment 'the children changed to logs of wood'. In 1839 he initiated reforms to turn Aubin's into a model for guardians wishing to provide a large children's institution in their own locality; it became a showplace of public education. The effect was, he

claimed, 'a cheerful succession of instruction, recreation, work and domestic and religious duties'.<sup>39</sup> The reform carried out to combat psychological 'petrification' of the child was the supersession of the contractor's type of school, an eighteenth-century idea, by the district school directly run by the unions.<sup>40</sup> At the time, the Norwood school showed a boarding institution for destitute children could be made to work.

The idea of the public provision of children influenced the approach of the evangelical movement. The institutionalising of deprived children appealed not only to the Poor Law authorities but also to religious bodies. The state's purpose was primarily a social one to deal with the destitute in the workhouse and district school where the national religion, the Church of England was subscribed to. A different institutionalising approach was pursued by George Muller, an evangelical Christian who came from Prussia initially to undertake conversion work among the Jews. It was in part the fear of the conversionists that pushed the Jewish community to establish their own charity institutions. However, Muller changed his plans and went to Bristol and was one of the early nonconformists to open homes for destitute children.<sup>41</sup> The institution had a strong appeal because unlike the state use of the institutional idea, for him it was the opportunity to impress his evangelicalism on the destitute children. He reversed the state's priority of caring for destitute

children and saw it as secondary to the Christian mission. It was an idea that was not lost on other religious groups – Catholics, Anglicans, Nonconformists and Jews.

He opened the Ashley Down Orphanage in 1849. It was built in the large institutional style of buildings in the prevalent 'plain and forbidding' style with a regime of strict frugality and discipline. The orphanage belonged to the regime of the asylum – 'based on a set of mechanisms to deal with "problem" populations'. It was an artificial environment in which children were seen to be developing into responsible adults. It was also an environment that suited the religious intention to extend the kingdom of God. The institution was to be run on 'scriptural lines'.<sup>42</sup> In 1857 a second orphanage was completed and simply called Orphan House No.2 and together with Orphan House No.1 housed 400 children. 'They were not given fancy names but just referred to as Orphanage No.1 and Orphanage No.2.' In 1869 No.4 received 420 destitute children and in 1870 No. 5 received a further 153. The orphanages were plain-faced functional buildings and presented 'an institutional Victorian look'. Kelly's map of 1885 showed them as 'orphan asylums'. The Muller Homes were established along institutional lines caring for over 2,000 children at a time when the institutional concept of child welfare was in its heyday. The biographer of the Muller Homes

stated 'there seemed to be no other way to meet the need' and 'very few alterations were thought to be necessary until 1945'.<sup>43</sup>

The institutional idea had been firmly planted in the Muller outlook on child welfare.

The appeal of the institutional idea for Anglo-Jewry went back to the late eighteenth century. It had adopted the policy of separation for Jewish children and for that purpose had established the Hospital and the Asylum. The Jewish community ruled out the workhouse as an acceptable model as it failed to accommodate the religious needs of the children. Restrictive conditions limited entry to the 'deserving' poor and the orphaned poor which meant that many Jewish pauper children had to enter the workhouses. The communal structure proved deficient in dealing with children who could be lost to the community. The importance of the lost Jew was highlighted at the time by the sensation surrounding the *Mortara* abduction. In 1858 papal troops acting on orders from Pope Pius IX forcibly removed a six year old Jewish boy Edgar Mortara from his home in Bologna on the grounds that he had been baptised by a Catholic servant. Taken to Rome the boy became a ward of the Pope and was converted to Catholicism. The case intensified conversionist fears in Jewish communities and in New York hastened the establishment of the Hebrew Orphan Asylum (hereafter HOA) in 1860. The relief was that 'some of them were

rescued from Christian asylums and imbibed their ideas which have been happily effaced from their minds'.<sup>44</sup> In England to bring Jewish children in workhouses into the institutional fold called for a coordinating body to deal with the Poor Law authorities.

The legal remedy that allowed the children to cross the institutional barrier from workhouse to the Jews' Hospital and the JOA was the certification of the charities as schools. The Poor Law (Certified Schools) Act 1862 gave children the legal right of access to their own denominational institutions. The means of using the remedy was the creation of the JBG in 1859.<sup>45</sup> The JBG made representations to the Poor Law Unions on 'how grievous a wrong was being done to the children and to the Jews in general by the non-removal of the children to a Jewish school'.<sup>46</sup> It undertook the task of arranging the transfer of Jewish children, and this allowed the Boards of Guardians to pay for Jewish children in workhouses to be maintained in Jewish institutions. The legalised use of voluntary homes by guardians backed the principle of Jewish separation and reinforced the institutional structure. The demand for places was on a constantly rising trend once the institutional structure was in place. The Jews' Hospital and JOA started with initial small intakes of 25 inmates. Transfer of children from workhouses added to the growth in numbers.<sup>47</sup> By 1874 on the eve of the amalgamation the number had reached 180.

The tripartite structure of the JBG, Jews' Hospital and JOA provided the Jewish approach to child saving. The 'child organisation movement' rescued them not only from a life of crime or poverty that would damage the name of the community but also from being lost souls to the Christian evangelisers that would diminish the size of the community. The movement was rooted in the efficacy of institutionalism. 'The regime of the asylum rested not merely on statute and charter but also on a deep substratum of institutional practices and arrangements, solidified by the thinking that made them comprehensible.'<sup>48</sup> Its various roles – boarding school education, social indoctrination, religious inculcation, relief of pauperism and ethnic exclusiveness - were brought together under one roof providing a 'cohesiveness by anchoring the individual in a continuous and comforting fabric of institutions'.<sup>49</sup>

The institutional model was not static and the tendency was to expand it. The 1848 Poor Law Schools Act allowed Parish Unions to combine together to set up district schools in the form of large boarding schools with up to one thousand children. The children moved out of the mixed workhouse into district schools. Mr Aubin's school in Norwood, a large private establishment, provided such a model.<sup>50</sup> The Poor Law discouraged outdoor relief - the subsidising of the pauper in the community - on the basis that such relief was an incentive to improvidence. The alternative was indoor relief

supporting the destitute in the state institutions. The new institutions were not panopticons but they followed the Benthamite principles of national uniformity of practice and an economy of scale that saved public money.<sup>51</sup>

The move from outdoor to indoor relief promoted 'the creation of permanent institutions designed to provide services rather than money alone'. In Germany the Jewish community had established Jewish hospitals and orphanages and with the shift to indoor relief expanded their numbers and provided modern facilities.<sup>52</sup> In England and America the rapid growth of philanthropic institutions in the early and mid nineteenth century led to the formation of charity organisation societies that attempted to rationalise and systematise philanthropy.<sup>53</sup> On a personal level, 'scientific charity' was applied by the JBG. The four principles it adopted were visitation, investigation, keeping of case records and giving adequate relief.<sup>54</sup> On a communal level, 'child organisation' was applied by the JBG based on 'the intelligent co-operation of all classes in the community... and the co-operation of all charitable institutions in the city with one another, and with the distributors of relief'.<sup>55</sup> It acted as a coordinator of Jewish charities. The JBG antedated by ten years the Charity Organisation Society (hereafter COS) set up in 1869 which acted as a national forum for disseminating 'scientific charity'. It

was claimed that the Board was really the pioneer of the COS in England because the key note of the proposal to set up the JBG was "organisation".<sup>56</sup>

Frederick Mocatta was a prominent Jewish philanthropist who served as a member of both the JBG and the COS. He provided a channel through which the JBG kept in touch with the scientific theory and practice of charity. He was a strong supporter of the COS's aims and was 'a convinced charity organizer'.<sup>57</sup> 'Organisation' was a compelling issue at the time. Criticism was expressed of numerous 'overlapping' charities. 'Nineteenth century England spawned an increasing number of charities which rarely cooperated with each other but instead vied for funds and the favour of royal and titled patrons'.<sup>58</sup> The spawning of charities was not peculiar to England. In New York, Jews were the most prominent of the ethnic groups in establishing welfare societies.<sup>59</sup> Both the Jews' Hospital and JOA attracted the patronage of prominent Anglo-Jewish families and British royalty and the JOA maintained a close relationship with one of the leading Ashkenazi *shuls*, the Great Synagogue. The influence of the Anglo-Jewish elite whose members dominated the JBG made it a reality. They provided the important communal links that were built into the fabric of the Jewish welfare institutions and without which they could not function.<sup>60</sup>

The creation of the JBG arose from the deficiency of the three

influential Ashkenazi *shuls* (the Great, the Hambro and the New synagogues) to deal with the 'strange poor', the Jewish paupers unattached to a synagogue. They fell outside the religious based system. The defects of assistance highlighted the need for an institution having no synagogue duties to perform and operating with independent officials who alone could adequately deal with them. The organisational reforms did not stop there. Having separated out their welfare role the major Ashkenazi synagogues strengthened the religious organisation and amalgamated to form the United Synagogue in 1870. The synagogues united and created a centralised Rabbinate under elite tutelage. In 1871 they relinquished direct control of the poor. In addition to the transfer of responsibility to the JBG of the 'foreign poor' they transferred control of the 'stipendiary poor', those who were attached to the synagogues. The organisational welfare reforms now gave scope for the JBG to play the central role in communal child relief.<sup>61</sup> It became the principle welfare agency of London Jewry and accepted responsibility for all the Jewish poor including the 'undeserving' who could not be allowed to be dealt with under the Poor Law.

The reform was significant because religious patronage through synagogue membership was no longer sustainable. The community had opted to look after the welfare of its own paupers and not rely on the state system. It was recognised to do that

meant establishing an institution that was non-religious in order to cover all needy Jews. The Board was a secular organisation with no clergymen on its committees. It was an arrangement based on the tradition that the clergy were better suited to visiting rather than administering or fund raising. The United Synagogue in 1872 took on the pastoral role through its Visitation Committee and required ministers to undertake 'the visitation and religious supervision of Jewish inmates of workhouses, asylums ... on an organised system'.<sup>62</sup> At the same time the change meant an abnegation of the power of patronage as the JBG aimed to apply 'scientific charity' to its work.

The Jewish organisation of welfare won plaudits from outside observers. In 1867 J H Stallard in his study of the Poor Law, *London Pauperism among Jews and Christians*, praised the Jewish system of care. Subsequently, it has received praise from modern historians that 'the Jewish community was a model of organisation'. David Owen in a wide ranging review of English philanthropy found the JBG 'was managed with exceptional intelligence and efficiency'.<sup>63</sup> On the eve of the amalgamation an acclaimed welfare system was in place. Central to its operation was the JBG. It called on the Jews' Hospital and JOA for residential care. Post-residential care continued with apprenticing arranged by the JFS and the Jews' Hospital. In addition in 1873 the JBG set up its own arrangement with the

Industrial Committee for the apprenticeship of boys. The communal welfare structure established was based on an ideology of institutionalism developed over the previous century and adapted to Jewish circumstances. The JBG 'owing to its character as an institution representing the whole Jewish community and dealing with the Jewish poor as a whole, revolutionised the methods of Jewish charitable relief'.<sup>64</sup> The institutional model was seen as a panacea and provided a template which the community replicated.

## **The Institutional Model and Amalgamation**

The idea of amalgamation had been first suggested twenty years earlier. In 1856 the JOA applied to the Jews' Hospital to amalgamate but was refused. In the same year it was decided to erect a new building which when completed was large enough for the inmates of both institutions. Twelve years later and still with no prospect of amalgamation the philanthropist Barnett Myers wrote to the *JC* that he believed if 'it had moved with the times' the Jews' Hospital would have retained its 'lofty character'. He regretted that when the Jews' Hospital was first established its friends 'were the greatest and most influential in the community' but now the institution 'was restricted in character'. The governors of the Jews' Hospital were averse to any change but with the appointment of Frederick Goldsmid as President in 1863 a clean sweep was made of the old order. 'The administration changed hands entirely, every impediment was removed and committees of new men were appointed.' However, with the lack of movement on a merger the JOA went ahead and spent money on repairs and an extension in 1865 indicated amalgamation was not likely.<sup>65</sup> The expenditure brought criticism from Mocatta, an ardent amalgamationist who thought the proposed extension of the JOA was 'quite unnecessary, especially when so large a portion of the Jews' Hospital was not utilised'.<sup>66</sup>

Frederick Mocatta was a man who was 'the giant of Jewish charity administration'. He was a banker who had retired early with a substantial fortune. This enabled him to engage in the running of more than two hundred charities. He had the power and influence to make charity reform happen. His criticism of the JOA seemed unfair when the removal of the children from Mile End to Norwood only took place in 1866. But his outspokenness at the General Court (senior decision-making committee) of the Jews' Hospital in 1871 bore the frustration of a man for whom the idea of amalgamation was regarded as self-evidently true, a shibboleth of the Jewish community. He was in no doubt and was deeply dismayed at the action of the JOA.<sup>67</sup> The amalgamation-that-was-not was becoming a community scandal. At the Jews' Hospital Festival Dinner in 1871 it proved something of an embarrassment to the institution to admit it was 'extraordinary' that there were only 90 inmates in a building capable of accommodating 300 to 400 children. Seventy thousand pounds had been spent on the building but three times as many children could be housed in it.

The legal framework was in place as both the JOA and Jews' Hospital were receiving parochial children under the 1867 Metropolitan Poor Law Act and that 'made it very favourable to both institutions for an amalgamation'.<sup>68</sup> The chairman Lionel Cohen pointed out at the JOA Festival Dinner in 1871 that the institution

was small and full. 'He hoped that a remedy for that would be found in connection with another well-managed institution' pointing a finger at the Jews' Hospital for inaction. Further movement was caught on the horns of an ideological dilemma - centralisation versus separation. 'The science of charity taught the dangers of absolute centralisation and the actual benefits of cooperation and combination.' Jacob Waley, the JOA President concurred that 'there should not be too great a centralisation of charities, but rather that there should be a combination and cooperation to the farthest possible extent'.<sup>69</sup> The ideological groundwork was laid down that an 'amalgamation' in the spectrum of possibilities was positioned towards the axis of 'cooperation and combination' and away from that of 'centralisation'. It remained for the Jews' Hospital to see it in the same way. The conditions – legal, ideological and importantly capacity – made it ripe for the merger. The overcrowding at the JOA and the under-utilisation at Norwood revved up the engine of change. It remained for a leader to drive the change forward.

In 1874 a joint report of the JOA and Jews' Hospital commissioned under the leadership of Anthony de Rothschild showed the advantages of a 'combined institution'. Rothschild was determined to persuade the JOA which had previously been rebuffed to accept a merger. The advantages for the children were spelt out. They would benefit from 'the great moral and physical advantages'

such as 'pure country air', ample space, an infirmary, playgrounds, participating in country sports and experiencing the changing seasons 'as displayed in vegetable life' that were 'weighty advantages which it be impossible to realise in the Tenter Ground'. The attraction to staff was the prestige attached to 'a larger institution' and the better salaries that went with it. The attraction for governors was the financial savings of a merger with 'the more efficient and economical training of youth'. A cost investigation had shown them a combined institution would support 180 children or 20 more than that maintained by the two charities separately.<sup>70</sup>

There was the advantage also that

the establishment of Norwood was large enough to admit of additions being made to the buildings ... so that there is comparatively no limit to be placed to the number of children for whom the Institution may in future provide a home.

It would allow more orphans to be taken in and the approval of an enlarged institution implied the approval of future intake expansion. The two charity presidents, Benjamin Cohen for the JOA and Henry Behrend for the Jews' Hospital, showed their agreement to the merger and signed up to the report.<sup>71</sup> Rothschild made it clear that

he had always done his utmost to see if some of the charities could not with advantage be amalgamated. He saw no distinction between the Jews' Hospital and the Orphan Asylum and he should like to see an amalgamation between the two institutions whose objects were so closely allied.<sup>72</sup>

The word 'amalgamation' was unacceptable for some people as it smacked of the Jews' Hospital take over of the JOA. The ideological repositioning called for a movement away from the 'centralisation' axis and in the negotiations that followed it was the 'federation' and 'fusion' that was discussed 'by a few gentlemen who had the confidence of the entire community'. The four gentlemen: the charity organiser and philanthropist Frederick Mocatta; Rothschild as community leader; Benjamin Phillips who acted as mediator between the two bodies and Assur Moses, 'grandson of the gentlemen who established the present JOA', had taken the initiatory steps and had secured the agreement of the JOA to the 'principle of the amalgamation'.<sup>73</sup> On the face of it, of the team Mocatta represented 'organisation', Rothschild was 'influence and prestige' and Phillips was the go-between. Moses' lineage indicated that tradition and history would not be ignored. But whatever they brought to the discussions was aimed at the objective of achieving amalgamation.

When the Jews' Hospital was approached Behrend made the point that that there existed two divergent opinions as to the class of inmate the charity should be restricted to. On the one hand there were the absolute paupers. On the other hand there were those children whose parents had occupied a better position but who had

become reduced, and he quoted as an example 'country clergy who generally had to support a very large family on a very small salary'.<sup>74</sup> He said the high number of orphans that would be taken in would be to the disadvantage of the deserving poor who formed the traditional intake. Phillips pointed out to the President that the issue on amalgamation had to be looked at from a wider perspective as

governors were there not only to consider what best can be done in the interest of this or that institution, but a broader and wider principle – what is best in the interest of the entire Jewish community.<sup>75</sup>

The amalgamation was agreed after assurances were given to the JOA on the allocation of places for orphans and agreement was reached on the conjoint name as the Jews' Hospital and Orphan Asylum. At the 1884 Festival Dinner Cohen gave the toast to the 'prosperity of the JH&OA' but regarded the Jews' Hospital as 'a minor part of the toast'. His real concern was 'on behalf of the Orphan Asylum' and pointed out the JOA was the major part of Norwood with '150 orphan and poor children'.<sup>76</sup> For others, the one-sided approach of Cohen was not what the JHOA was about. Phillips defended the amalgamation that 'the union of the two charities was not 'centralisation' (i.e. a take over) but a 'fusion' calculated to preserve the traditions and to promote the objects of both

charities'.<sup>77</sup> It was a fusion that had taken more than ten years to achieve and had required the intervention of the most influential men in the community. An amalgamation between two leading Jewish child welfare institutions in America over half a century later underlined just how determined the reformers needed to be.

In 1939 the merger between Pleasantville and the Hebrew Orphan Asylum was agreed. Although it had been self-evident since 1917 it had taken 22 years of ceaseless effort to achieve. The story of that effort suggests an epic struggle between two kingdoms rather than between two child-care agencies. Four studies had recommended merger but neither home would accept the results. Each felt proud of its own name and accomplishments. Each thought it would disappear and then there were conflicting personalities.<sup>78</sup>

The American scenario was not dissimilar to the Norwood one. 'The two institutions [the Jews' Hospital and the JOA] disagreed to the proposal for their mutual extinction.'<sup>79</sup> Though both institutions could not disagree that the change was for the better 'it remained for the merger to be negotiated without either side losing face'. Phillips acted as 'a mediator...so that neither side would feel that it was being swallowed up by the other'. Mocatta, a member of the COS and with contacts in the wider society, could not fail to spell out the scientific rationality of the cause. 'Neither Home wanted a name suggesting that it had been swallowed up by the other' and

the new name the JHOA satisfied the lineal connection that Moses had a personal interest in. Above them was the towering figure of Rothschild determined to oversee the amalgamation took place.<sup>80</sup>

That determination was taken to the grave in the last wishes of Anthony de Rothschild who died before the merger was completed. His wife Louisa said of his role in the amalgamation scheme that 'he sought to bring matters into harmony with a kindred Institution in the belief that union would be beneficial to both and now union is almost completed'.<sup>81</sup> The *JC* summed up the outcome of the struggle as a triumph over 'ultra conservatism', an 'unreasoning conservatism' had yielded to the 'path of progress'.<sup>82</sup> Once the amalgamation was completed, the concern of the Jewish community to place children in need of care would be directed exclusively towards this single establishment.<sup>83</sup> Norwood was the model of childcare that the Anglo-Jewish community had decided for the deprived Jewish child - the large scale voluntary institution. The institutionalism it implied was never called into question and the case for an alternative residential model never entered the debate.

## **The Institutional Model- the Extension**

The 'uncurbed expansion' that a conjoint institution would inevitably allow did not go unnoticed. A few outside voices made noises at the time. In 1869, George Jessel, a prominent Jewish lawyer, at the annual dinner of the Jews' Hospital, prior to the amalgamation, had advocated 'personal, homely attention for each child' but such concern was drowned out by the institutional deluge that swept over the community.<sup>84</sup> The idea of 'home' was institutionalised as 'it is an Asylum where the orphan receives a home' and the family home was now the asylum.<sup>85</sup> There was a steady increase in the number of inmates; 156 in 1877, 184 in 1880, 208 in 1881 and it was expected to rise further. The total that could be accommodated was 230, and 'it would be seen that they were rapidly approaching that happy condition when the Committee would be able to rest on their laurels'.<sup>86</sup> However, pressure for admission intensified in the later part of the nineteenth century with large-scale immigration from Eastern Europe. In 1873 there were 36,295 Jews in London of which 28% were poor. This had almost doubled by 1891 when there were 67,523 of which the poor were 23%. Norwood was faced with the impact of a large increase in the Jewish poor. The pressure on places meant many had to be turned away; applicants always exceeded the number of available places.<sup>87</sup>

In 1882 a fire broke out in the premises of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, Bevis Marks. Behrend allowed the orphans housed there to stay temporarily at Norwood.<sup>88</sup> Mocatta took the opportunity to suggest to Bevis Marks Synagogue that a 'fusion' with Norwood 'is a consummation devoutly to be desired'. He argued that the welfare of the children made the advantages entirely on the side of Norwood which could provide vastly superior facilities for some twenty children. He made a numerical distinction based on institutional size in his support of the amalgamation. Mocatta was 'fully persuaded of the disadvantages of massing vast bodies of children in one educational focus' and he was thinking of the 'already vastly overgrown institution', the JFS. However, the number of children at Norwood had 'by no means reached the point at which anything is to be feared from moderate extension'. At the Spanish and Portuguese orphanage, he thought

the bringing up of a very small group and especially of orphans under one roof is a graver fault than the massing of many thousands of children in one educational establishment because it narrows the scope of their education in a manner very prejudicial to their manliness and to future well-being.<sup>89</sup>

De Levy Pinto from Bevis Marks was invited to look around Norwood. He remarked there was 'one gigantic room filled with a regiment of bedsteads, double file ... large enough for a small army and was told 'we have four such rooms'. The merger did not take

place because Bevis Marks insisted their children attend their synagogue to say the *Kaddish* (prayer for the dead) for the departed who had left no survivors.<sup>90</sup> The Sephardi heritage would be broken by moving the children to Norwood. Mocatta's numerical argument shows that at that time there was no psychological understanding of the child's individuality. His understanding appeared to have been based on a philosophical notion of the happy medium applied to institutional care – not too large, not too small. Perhaps de Pinto intuitively understood that 'small is beautiful' for a minority community dominated by the Ashkenazi religious tradition. The argument based on a 'reasonable' number had no basis as Herman Baar, superintendant at the HOA in New York, found out. By 1895 the Orphan Asylum was over crowded and the trustees considered further expansion. Baar was against 'bigness' because

with 700 children in the house, we have already in the better sense of the word a so-called 'machine-education'; if you take several hundred children more you will reduce the asylum to a mere boarding establishment.

The response of the trustees was to ask why 700 was still an acceptable figure and 1,200 the point at which the orphanage became 'a mere boarding establishment'. Where to draw the line appeared to be indeterminate and that indeterminacy weakened the hand of the consolidators - those who wished to call a halt to expansion.<sup>91</sup>

Norwood was faced with the issue of expansion similar to the situation with the HOA. In 1883 the Institution had reached its maximum capacity with 239 and could not admit any more. Its extreme limit was 240. In 1875 the cost of the separate Jews' Hospital and JOA was £6,600 a year with 153 inmates. Now the cost was £6,400 and 80 more children were maintained at a cost of £200, less than in 1875. 'Both as regards efficiency and economy the promises held out to the Jewish community at the time of the amalgamation had been fulfilled.' Having reached maximum capacity Norwood was faced with the decision whether to enlarge. The ruling committee, the General Court opposed the idea 'it being their wish to direct their attention to the consolidation of the institution'. It resisted pressure to expand from some 'influential members of the community' because the majority preferred to 'consolidate and improve the institution'.<sup>92</sup>

At the funeral of Barnett Myers in 1889 the Reverend Simon Singer dwelt on the childless philanthropist who adopted Norwood children as his own. His devotion to the cause of Norwood was 'imperatively demanded no less in the interests of the children than of the community at large'.<sup>93</sup> The confluence of the two interests was an assumption behind ideological institutionalism. The amalgamation was regarded as a communal victory and as Mocatta reasoned its enlargement was within the bounds of the happy

medium. But where to draw the line was not defined by the children's interests but by the community's desire for efficient organisation. The Muller Homes had grown from one to five orphanages housing 2,000 children without questioning what effect large communal living had on the children.<sup>94</sup> The growth at Norwood was not without questioning but the effect on the children was not seriously part of it.

Within two years of Myer's death the institutional assumption had to be defended by Lord Rothschild at the 1891 Festival Dinner:

It is perhaps a misfortune as regards many institutions that there is no individuality in those whom they help to succour. In a large school the individuality of the children are unknown. In the Norwood Asylum, the managers are ... interested in the individual children collected within its walls.<sup>95</sup>

Rothschild's argument that the individuality of children was compatible with them living en masse gave force to the argument of the expansionists over the consolidators. The happy medium of numerical size could be unlimited by virtue of the singularity of Norwood's managerial policy. The argument had shifted, from at what point was the boundary between smallness and largeness sensible, to at what point size undermined individuality. For one governor John Solomon there was no need for defensiveness and he presented a glowing picture that 'from the time of amalgamation the tale had always been of a continued onward march'. In the

comparison with that time 'the increase was shown to be something more than remarkable'. Indeed, that the Asylum could maintain 262 inmates 'never entered into their expectations'.<sup>96</sup> By a rearrangement of the dormitories it had been found that 280 children could be accommodated. For Solomon it would not stop there 'if the public would give them the necessary funds'.<sup>97</sup> As an expansionist the argument was reduced to the simple formula 'the bigger the better'.

Expansion was an issue that deeply affected the East End Orphan Aid Society (hereafter ELOAS). The Society was established in 1890 to support Norwood through the collection of small weekly contributions because of 'the great claim the institution has essentially on the residents of East London'. 'The East End was the cradle of the Norwood institution' and the ELOAS was vociferous in making that point.<sup>98</sup> The Society was keen on enlargement and agreed that now 'the time had arrived for the extension of the Jews' Hospital & Orphan Asylum'.<sup>99</sup> The numbers were stationary because the institution was full and new inmates could only be elected as old ones left.<sup>100</sup> With the increased support from the Orphan Aid Societies established by Jewish communities throughout the country, the JHOA president, Behrend thought it was the moment to provide additional accommodation. The support from the aid societies was directed to providing more places and was encouraged

by the Chief Rabbi who initiated his own Children's Orphan Aid Society.<sup>101</sup>

Within the Norwood establishment the first signs of opposition to expansion surfaced since Jessel's prescient comment in 1869. In 1893 in anticipation of a decision on expansion being approved, John Chapman submitted a scheme for boarding out children as a better option than enlarging Norwood.<sup>102</sup> In his letter to the *JC* titled *The Orphan Asylum – A Momentous Issue* Chapman asked

could not their object be effected more efficiently and mercifully by entirely discarding the idea of building new accommodation and thus converting the Asylum into a species of barracks filled with little human automata. The children themselves would enjoy what can never be attained in an overgrown Asylum, the inestimable influences and happiness of home life and the growth and development of family affection. It required but little effort of imagination to picture the striking contrast between the life of the child brought up under the one system or under the other.

He suggested an honest trial be given to a system of boarding out the orphans in private families with 'new fathers and mothers'.<sup>103</sup>

However, he had a particular bias because it was orphans and not children with parents he was thinking of. He wanted Norwood to be a place of 'non-orphan children of respectable families, of decayed tradesmen, and of reduced families too proud to beg or receive charity' as it used to be before the amalgamation. Boarding out was a means for him of allowing room for boarding in for the non-

orphan and maintaining Norwood in the manner of a public school. He had turned out his own two sons as 'scholars and gentlemen'.<sup>104</sup>

Chapman was speaking from experience as a former Headmaster of the Jews' Hospital and was appealing to Jewish public opinion before the decision was made 'to enlarge the present building to unwieldy proportions or to erect additional buildings on the Asylum grounds'. Three options were considered by the committee – boarding out, enlargement or erecting a separate building<sup>105</sup> In the discussions that took place it was argued that though

institutional "automatism" exists, it is the automatism of regular habits; of careful training; of simple lives; and are these advantages to be deprecated and cast aside for the danger of carelessly supervised homes.<sup>106</sup>

This statement alluded to the Norwood individualism Rothschild had expounded upon in his 1891 Festival Dinner speech. He claimed the children exceptionally experienced a beneficial automatism rather than one that was detrimental. Put this way made it more difficult to draw a line that separated the automatism from a negative form that justified a limitation of numbers. What automatism meant was never spelt out as the committee took it as axiomatic the benefits of the institution conferred on the children. Chapman did not help himself by expressing a view that was regressive in drawing the line between deserving and orphaned children, an argument that the

amalgamation itself had resolved. The committee saw no reason to dismiss the enlargement option.

The ELOAS thought Chapman's scheme was a threat to the existence of the institution. Though boarding out was not wrong in principle it considered his scheme impracticable. It saw no need for 'a re-construction of Norwood on the lines originally built' and thought 'it was impolitic to depart from those lines' as the acceptance of the institutional model was a *fait accompli*.<sup>107</sup> Chapman regarded his scheme as the only alternative to enlargement. His case was not helped by the report from the Boarding-Out Committee of the Hull JBG. It cited reasons against boarding out – Norwood provided better education, the Jewish working class were not suitable for fostering and Jewish families were too large to cope with "artificial conditions".<sup>108</sup> The partiality towards expansion and the practical difficulties raised against boarding out buried the option.

A third option was also put forward - a separate building. A correspondent signing himself "Decentralisation" wrote to the *JC* opposing expansion in favour of the last option, regional asylums 'large or small' and not just one in London.<sup>109</sup> The regional option was also one faced by another Jewish institution. The growth in the JFS had become 'an apparently unstoppable momentum' with the doubling of numbers in eight years. The Chief Rabbi Nathan Adler in

1869 advised opening branches rather an extension to the school but nothing came of it. The pressure to expand led to a rebuild option being considered in 1882. An alternative was to build a separate second school outside the East End. It was rejected in favour of enlarging the existing school and the reasons given included the financial benefit that would be lost from having two schools rather than one larger one.<sup>110</sup> It was an argument familiar from the Norwood amalgamation debate. The common denominator in the growth experience of the JHOA and JFS was the momentum to expand. In each case the expansion needed was met by a policy of enlargement. Decentralisation in the form of several separate institutions based on regional communities was rejected.

The current Headmaster Abraham Raphael and secretary Michael Green took exception to enlargement but not expansion. They wrote to the wealthy Jewish philanthropist Baron de Hirsch 'strictly unofficially' to tell him that the governors were motivated by economy for enlarging Norwood 'in a manner which we view with alarm as we know it will effectively spoil many of the architectural features of the magnificent building'. They thought the best option was to build a new wing with school rooms, a synagogue and Assembly Hall and such a venture would provide 'a lasting memorial to the man whose generosity and wealth enabled him to perpetuate his name in such a manner'.<sup>111</sup>

In their approach on such 'a momentous issue' Raphael may have asked 'is it the man who extends the buildings or spreads the estate over acres of countryside of more account than the man who merely increases the number of pupils?' He agreed that the existing capacity meant 'hundreds of destitute orphans are losing the advantage of an asylum which eventually renders them good English citizens' but as a staff subordinate, albeit headmaster he had no say in the key decision on enlargement. In public schools at the time Headmasters were all important – 'theirs was the only voice that carried weight, they stood between the schools and the outer world' but Norwood was not a public school.<sup>112</sup>

The anti-expansionist cause was further weakened by the death of Behrend in 1893. His position on enlargement had been pragmatic; to go along with public opinion and for that reason he was not opposed to expansion. However, the new president George Faudel-Phillips appointed in the following year was an ardent expansionist. He lost no time and three months after his instalment Norwood approved 'extending the benefits of the Institution to a large number of children' and the centenary year 1895 provided an appropriate moment for doing it.<sup>113</sup>

The General Court having previously supported consolidation of the institution now concluded that the extension was

the only one to pursue and the accidental fact of his holding the position of President had in no ways altered the situation. He would be doing wrong if he did not stand by the side of the committee and fight their cause. He appreciated how greatly the country itself would benefit by making the Asylum larger and stronger.<sup>114</sup>

The turnaround delighted the ELOAS which congratulated itself on being the first to suggest the time had arrived to extend Norwood.<sup>115</sup> Lewis Levy, its president had wanted a bolder scheme for Norwood rather than the limited enlargement.<sup>116</sup> In the Architect's Report there were to be additional classrooms, an extension to the Hall to allow lengthening of the tables, a gallery to allow seating for an additional 100 children and extensions to the dormitories.<sup>117</sup> The consideration of a completely new building which the ELOAS wanted was suddenly back on the agenda and the extension scheme was deferred for three months. An attempt was to be made to sell the Institution and grounds and if it did not happen the extension would go ahead. This proved to be the case because at the end of the three months it was found that 'there was no hope of selling the property within a reasonable time and at a fair price'.<sup>118</sup>

Faudel-Phillips confessed 'I did not entirely approve of the plan of the Scheme myself' but was driven by a personal association with Norwood to realise it. He was the son of a benefactor and the nephew of a past President of the Jews' Hospital. He recalled a

dream in which he found himself standing 'at the door of a most imposing structure'. He was told it was the Asylum and capable of housing 600 children. As he walked into the board room in his dream he saw the portrait of his father 'but there was a new portrait, that of myself'. 'The feelings which dwell in my heart and which surge through my mind I can hardly put into words' but he knew now 'his best efforts must be at the service of such an Institution'. He had a conversion experience as he interpreted the dream giving him a mission, 'a sacred trust'.<sup>119</sup>

At the centennial dinner chaired by the President he referred to a gentleman, representing 'a small minority, who told me that he did not approve of our scheme', probably John Chapman who was conducting a one-man campaign. The strength of the momentum behind the movement for Amalgamation and now the movement for enlargement was unstoppable. Isolated voices raised in protest could not halt the institutional enthusiasm of the community. The larger building the audience was told had all the modern requirements and would attract strangers from all over the world who would admire and copy it. The President claimed

there are many people who have dreamed that daydream of mine, many who think England ... should have a Jews' Hospital and Orphan Asylum, which should be second to none in the whole world.<sup>120</sup>

Another person who had that dream was Herman Baar superintendent at the HOA. He was 'a passionate advocate of the orphanage as a superior institution for raising children'. Ten years earlier in 1885, 370 children moved to a new home which could house 600 and was designed in the Renaissance style. 'Inside, the only term sufficient to describe its facilities was palatial' and 'the handsomest asylum in the country' though perhaps not in the world.<sup>121</sup> Baar and Faudel-Phillips were so enamoured by size to enable the fulfilment of the architectural grandeur of their dreams.

The architectural style of the enlarged Hall at Norwood was in the 'Domestic Gothic style'. The crowning glory for Faudel-Phillips was the large window above the organ. It had five panels of which the two outer ones were allegories of Charity and Education. The central one was Faudel-Phillips himself, full length in his Lord Mayor's robes flanked by medallions of the founders, the Goldsmid brothers. The window 'by associating the present President of the Institution with those who presided over its birth a hundred years ago' provided his own apotheosis and a memorial to the centenary.<sup>122</sup> The centenary celebrations of 1895 provided the philanthropic impetus for expansion. To provide an additional hundred places £20,400 was raised for the extension which the Institution asserted will 'enable us to make a glorious addition to the Norwood building'.

The completion of the extension in 1897 was marked by an opening procession by the Lord Mayor of London who was the Norwood President. The Duke of Cambridge, a royal patron, opened the Centenary Hall and new wings of the schoolhouse. Daniel Marks, an Old Boy and Treasurer, donated a marble bust of Queen Victoria placed in the Hall and the stained glass window containing portraits of past presidents.<sup>123</sup> At his memorial service in 1905 the contribution was remembered for 'it was owing in great measure to Mr Mark's energy that the extension of the school building in 1897 was possible'.<sup>124</sup> His memorialisation was enshrined in a tablet placed in the Centenary Hall to record that 'the example of the departed may profit the living'.<sup>125</sup> The example was shown by another governor Maurice Hart who 'eloquently advocated the extension of the School'. He was remembered in the name of one of the new dormitories "The Maurice Hart Dormitory" which contained 50 of the new beds 'to keep alive his work'.<sup>126</sup> The *Kadish* prayer annually recited on the death of a person ensured 'his influence will continue to be felt and will influence how the next generation acts'.<sup>127</sup> Memorialisation provided a means of embedding and perpetuating the ideology of Norwood institutionalism.

The expanded institution allowed the growth of numbers to fill the extra places; by 1899 there were 312 children and 359 by 1906.<sup>128</sup> The pressure for further expansion did not let up and the ELOAS

thought that 'the time had arrived again when they should agitate for an extension of the present building or for the erection of a new building'.<sup>129</sup> Norwood had no infant intake. In 1904 a proposal was made to use the three seaside houses it owned in Margate for use as an Infant Orphan Asylum.<sup>130</sup> The Margate Home was donated to Norwood so that the children enjoyed an annual holiday by the sea. It helped to combat 'the monotony of institutional life' and 'make the Institution at Norwood a real home to them'.<sup>131</sup> Faudel-Phillips admitted at the 1901 Festival Dinner 'we must be careful lest we make it a prison' referring to the need to give the children a regular holiday of several weeks every year.<sup>132</sup> The recreational facility that was gifted for that specific purpose was in danger of being converted by the expansionists into another extension.

The Ladies Committee reported in 1908 that 'monotony which is so unavoidable in Institution life, it cannot be overlooked that lack of home life ... must of necessity be denied to the inmates of a large school such as Norwood Orphanage'. The 'necessity' and 'unavoidability' of the institutional regime they automatically accepted was what made 'the automatism of regular habits' something positive.<sup>133</sup> That positivism was beginning to wear thin. In the 1909 annual report the psychological observation that 'dull and listless' children in institutional schools were subject to 'the deadening influence of a school year unbroken by holidays at home'

was recorded.<sup>134</sup> Felix Davis, Honorary Secretary, saw a solution not in further expansion at Norwood but in regional expansion. He supported the idea of an additional Home in the north of England. A realisation was dawning on some members of the Norwood establishment that institutional life produced negative effects on the children. Davis confessed that 'for some time it struck me it must be a very bad thing for them to remain there for six years particularly in one place'.<sup>135</sup>

The pressure on the Asylum was great. In 1904 there were 92 applicants for 18 vacancies and 95 applicants for 15 places the following year and most of the applicants came from the East End.<sup>136</sup> Levy, ELOAS chairman came up with an expansion proposal as Norwood was full again. Girls would be moved out to a separate school as 'the time had arrived when it was necessary to have another large building' and Norwood would be for boys only. In the meantime the Margate Home could temporarily provide additional places.<sup>137</sup> Pressure came from the orphan aid societies to keep expanding. The ELOAS felt Norwood had a moral duty to continue to take more children. The number of its subscribers had risen to 1,700 members with the prospect of a further 1,000. The Society was by far the largest in the UK and contributed the greatest amount. Since most of the candidates came from the East End 'it would be conceded that it was only fair that they should return a

quid pro quo on behalf of the destitute poor of the East End'. The quid pro quo for the aid societies was a financial and utilitarian nexus in order to 'spread the benefit to the poor children of the present generation'.<sup>138</sup> The nexus of the wealthy philanthropist had a different slant that emphasised the perpetuation of the memory of the donor in the eponymous naming of bricks and mortar.

The Headmaster Abraham Raphael opposed further expansion and said

it would be found impossible for one person to be the responsible head of an institution which had been designed to maintain 300 children, if the number of inmates were increased to 500 or 600. People who suggested such a course knew nothing of institutional life.<sup>139</sup>

Annie Henriques, a Jewish social worker from Manchester, advocated as an alternative to institutional expansion subsidising the mothers or fostering the children. As a professional in the new field of social work she recognised that 'institutional life has a depressing and narrowing influence'.<sup>140</sup> In her welfare role she would have dealt with the Manchester JBG which formed a part of the local community's welfare system. Indeed, the idea of a Northern asylum was raised at the time of the Norwood extension and again by Henriques and Davis when the building of an infant orphanage at Norwood was debated. The separation of Jewish welfare had long been established but the regionalisation of it in the

case of institutional care for children never happened and London remained the dominant centre. Orphans were sent from the North to Norwood.<sup>141</sup>

The debate in favour of building was won over by the generosity of donors. Jane Gabriel donated £10,000 for an adjacent building to be built as 'it was inexpedient to enlarge the present building'. 'It seemed that the decision was decided by the philanthropists' money rather than on grounds of social welfare' and that money was based in London.<sup>142</sup> Gabriel stipulated the name of the infant asylum was to be the Arnold and Jane Gabriel Home. It was to house an extra 50 children aged 5 to 8. Reminiscent of the Myers gift of the land at Norwood, it was philanthropic patronage that determined the outcome. In 1911 the Gabriel Home was opened, and the patronage bestowed on the children was reciprocated on the occasion of Faudel-Phillips' 70<sup>th</sup> birthday when 'the children took the opportunity of expressing to him their respectful thanks for his manifold kindnesses to them'.<sup>143</sup> The Home 'became an integral part of the Institution' and the number of children in total that was accommodated increased by 1913 to 395; 350 in the Main Building and 45 in the Gabriel Home.<sup>144</sup>

After the opening of the Gabriel Home there was no further expansion at Norwood. Under Behrend's presidency the 1876 Amalgamation took place to accommodate the combined intake of

the Jews' Hospital and JOA. Under Faudel-Phillips' presidency Norwood was expanded twice with the centenary extension of 1895 and the infant Home in 1911. When Marcus Kaye wrote to Anthony de Rothschild, on the occasion of his succession to Faudel-Phillips in 1919, that

we are all very much impressed by your desire to rebuild the institution on more modern lines and we are sure you will be that convinced that our building is much out of date and some radical alteration is necessary in the near future,

nothing happened.<sup>145</sup> In 1916 the Chief Rabbi in his tribute to the late Felix Davis sensed the change in mood that 'our own world – a world of tower-builders' had ended. They had said

Let us make a name – let us build something which surpasses everything built before, achieve something visible, enviable ... which outdistance everything achieved before – that became a primary duty of life and the consuming ambition of the children of our age.<sup>146</sup>

The age of expansion was over. In the period from 1876 to 1911 Norwood had pursued a policy of institutional growth with little consideration for alternative models of residential care. Implicit in its approach was a conviction that the institution was the right model for the destitute Jewish child. The strength of the conviction weakened any serious consideration of alternative models. The boarding out model implied the Norwood institutional model was wrong, and the regional decentralised model implied that unlimited

expansion of Norwood was also wrong. The advocates of the alternatives fared badly because although they were not wrong in principle they were pitted against a dominant model that was thought must be right.

It was, however, recognised that there were disadvantages with the institutional model and the notion of unlimited expansion was met with increasing reservations. Prior to 1900 the disadvantages of institutional living were never raised by governors who seemed to be totally unaware of the rising tide of opposition to the barrack-type institution. Before the First World War a slow recognition was dawning that the barrack-type institution that described Norwood was problematic though that did not detract from further expansion taking place. Norwood was seen as a good asylum by the community and by the institution itself and, therefore, it followed that it was good for the children. Under the Behrend and Faudel-Phillips presidencies the philosophy of expansionism was axiomatic and the lone voices raised against it were drowned out by the chorus in favour of it. The notion of the 'good institution' became a legacy that was passed down and the reputation of Norwood based on it was perpetuated.

Indeed, the 'goodness' of Norwood had a moral meaning. The architectural legacy of the early nineteenth century generated the notion of a remedial institutionalism. The exteriority of the

architecture was transformed by new meanings of goodness – social and economic. Ornate structures appeared from the mid nineteenth century and pointed to an institutional flowering. Anglo-Jewry effloresced in the benign social climate of the late Victorian and Edwardian period and so did its architecture. Institutional ‘goodness’ became financially sound and socially acceptable.

This chapter traced the rise of Norwood institutionalism from the early nineteenth century to the onset of the First World War. It was based on the ‘Anglo-Saxon’ experience. New ideas on child caring appeared on the continent in France and Germany and were to affect the institutional way of thinking here. At the same time the development in psychology gave a new dimension to ‘goodness’ based on the individuality of the child. The next chapter looks at the institutional model in the context of British and overseas developments.

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## **Chapter 4: The Growth of Norwood Institutionalism - the Residential Model under Attack**

The eve of the First World War marked a change in outlook towards institutionalism at Norwood. At the time, the Chief Rabbi dwelt on the passing of an age of tower builders. The institutional one-upmanship 'to outdistance everything' that had been a feature of the late Victorian period was now called into question by a new discourse that questioned the institution. At the commemoration service of Faudel-Phillips in 1923, Norwood secretary David Spero spoke of the Extension as 'a longstanding memorial of his Presidential labours'. 'He set to work on the big scale which alone contented him, no matter the task in hand.'<sup>1</sup> He had resigned in 1918 after 25 years and the measure of his success as president of a Children's Home was judged by the large sums - £21,000 for the 1895 Centenary Appeal and a further £12,000 in 1897 - he had raised in support of Norwood. Largely through him Mrs Jane Gabriel donated the money for the Gabriel Home.<sup>2</sup> Yet for all his fund raising success 'he had not lived to see his noble vision of a newer, larger, more modern orphanage realised'.<sup>3</sup>

That vision, his dream of an institution housing 600 children, was outmoded by the time of his death.<sup>4</sup> An anonymous writer in 1918 put forward 'a radical new scheme' stating that Norwood was

extravagant in upkeep and constructed on lines inconsistent with modern ideas of orphan treatment. Instead of having 350 children and a large staff under one roof, the hope has been that a series of smaller houses, after the style of the Gabriel Home might be constructed.<sup>5</sup>

The proposal was put to Faudel-Phillips and Anthony de Rothschild, the respective outgoing and ingoing presidents. The treasurer told Rothschild that an appeal for £120,000 was necessary to give effect to the suggestion of 'a friend of the Orphans'. The suggestion was not taken up and the appeal was limited to £20,000 to pay off debts.<sup>6</sup> The style of the Gabriel Home expressed the change proposed. The Home was a detached building in the grounds of Norwood and not a further extension to what was now called the Main Building.

It has been their (architects) endeavour to introduce into the design the conception of a children's home by making the treatment of a very simple character, and the broken outline of the low range of buildings and the careful blending of the colours of the various materials used have contributed to the success of the scheme.<sup>7</sup>

Compared with the architecture grandness of the Main Building, the new Home was modest in style and in size housing fifty children - half the number that the centennial expansion had catered for.

The end of the First World War was a watershed for Norwood with the year 1919 an historical mid-point between the

Amalgamation in 1876 and the closure in 1961. The great tower builder had stepped down after a reign of twenty five years and in his place the new president enthroned was Anthony de Rothschild. He was to oversee the future of Norwood for the next forty years. The previous chapter outlined the institutional history of Norwood from the late eighteenth century until completion of institution building with the Gabriel Home. In this chapter the background to the institutional growth is traced in the wider context of child development at home and abroad. The welfare of children outside the Jewish community is examined to see why disillusionment set in with the residential model of the institution, a model that Norwood had embraced.



## **Institutionalism – Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century Beginnings**

The notion of the institution in the early nineteenth century was seen in part as a utilitarian response to the inadequacy of the poorhouse. 'The common unregulated poorhouse was a mixture of paupers in a state of filth, oppression and debauchery.'<sup>8</sup> In the Jewish community charity was synagogue-based but limited. There was no comprehensive institution for destitute children until the establishment of the Jews' Hospital and the JOA.<sup>9</sup> The well regulated workhouse was seen by the commissioners responsible for the New Poor Law of 1834 as the solution for dealing with the destitute. The new concept of the workhouse 'was the first national experiment in institutional care' based on the belief in 'the boundless Benthamite optimism that malleable human material could be transformed by administrative changes'. The institution of the workhouse would cause a moral reformation of the poor.<sup>10</sup> In the social climate of the early nineteenth century the idea of the regenerative capacity of the institution gained widespread acceptance, and the 'moral philosophy' upon which it was based 'exercised a major influence on British political, social, economic and legal thought'.<sup>11</sup>

The workhouse was conceived as a utilitarian institution in which the least deserving were to receive the least rewards – the principle of 'less eligibility'. In a mixed institution holding the sick, the pauper, the deserted, lunatics and destitute children the

singularity of the child was unrecognised. The growing recognition that the child's welfare had to be treated differently provided justification for their separate treatment and the means of doing so was the specialised institution. The Jewish community had taken up the idea of specialisation with the Jews' Hospital as a mixed institution of the young and the old only and later with the JOA solely for orphaned children. The Poor Law authorities sanctioned the importance of separation with the approval of the construction of District Schools under the 1848 Poor Law (Schools) Act. Unions banded together to form large boarding schools and the children moved out of the mixed workhouses into them. Mr Aubin's at Norwood, a large private pauper school, provided a model for the district school as did Mr Drouet's at Tooting which housed 1,394 children.<sup>12</sup> The differentiation developed out of the original idea of the mixed institution. The notion of the well-regulated institution in terms of its attribute of efficiency addressed the criticism of the poorhouse. In terms of its development the institution was refined to deal with the special groups such as pauper children. What followed in the late nineteenth century was an historical process that questioned the model of residential care that best suited the specialisation.

In America the principle of the well-regulated institution, the orphanage and asylum, was initially seen as a welcomed alternative

to the mismanaged almshouses and poorhouses. The enthusiasm of the first part of the nineteenth century was reflected in the designation 'the age of the asylum'. But 'the idealistic supporters may have not realised it, their noble experiment in child saving had already failed by the time of the Civil War' in the 1860s.<sup>13</sup> The orphanages became purely custodial institutions with the needs of the resident subordinated to that of the institution. The path from reformative ideal to custodial reality was determined by the growth of institutions that took place.

Every Home started out with a small group of orphans who functioned for a while like a large family; but as admissions increased it developed into a monstrous establishment resembling a children's prison. In the process the residents were transformed into robots, their natural spontaneity extinguished by years of enforced conformity.<sup>14</sup>

This scenario was what happened at the HOA in New York. During the 1860s the HOA had grown from a small home to a congregate institution housing 150. The growth meant 'the time had come to establish administrative machinery – for the operation of the HOA as an institution'. From 1869 the regime of life began to assume the regimented quality that would characterise it until it closed, more than 70 years later.<sup>15</sup>

The salient points that make this scenario relevant to other orphan asylums were firstly, the impact of size on the running of an

institution. The institutional size appeared to be 150 upwards when additional growth began to affect the management style. At amalgamation Norwood had an intake of 156 in 1877. Secondly, the process of institutionalisation was not foreseen but became a practical issue that the institution had to address as the HOA had found. The third point is that the institution once established became permanent. The growth of Norwood provided its own justification of the importance of the institution. Whether that need was best met in the institution was a matter of debate in the wider society. Finally, the asylum developed into a model community, the 'total institution'. Children had 'limited outside contact and raised in a highly regimented environment characterised by rigid daily routines, harsh discipline and strict separation of the sexes'.<sup>16</sup> The regimented quality of the institution was not welcomed everywhere and in Europe alternative forms of residential care were being developed.

## **Institutionalism– New Continental Ideas**

Developments in child care took on a new direction when 'some enlightened people' realised that the ideal way for unwanted children was in the normal home. In 1859 a writer in the *Journal of the Workhouse Visiting Society* described the change which life in an ordinary family could bring about when girls acting 'like little machines' regained their individuality.<sup>17</sup> Dealing with the problematic child was the concern of the state and the district school was one option. It was the concern of the Jewish and other religious organisations which wanted to preserve their own religious constituencies and the asylum provided another option. In Germany a new option was pioneered by Emmanuel Wichern, a Lutheran evangelist from Hamburg who opened a home for destitute boys, the Rauhe Haus (Round House) in 1833. His enlightened approach came from finding practical Christian solutions to social problems. The Home was organised on the family system with some 12 to 14 boys who lived together as a family in a small house with house parents. Wichern built additional cottages as the place expanded including a gymnasium, schoolrooms and infirmary.<sup>18</sup> His innovation spelt out the attraction of an alternative system the idea of which was to reverberate among social reformers over the following decades and influence their thinking about the institutional approach.

The institutional treatment of the delinquent child was an area addressed by the reformatory movement. Sydney Turner, a pioneer of the English Reformatory Schools Movement, was persuaded by his experience and in 1847 wrote that

a too long continuance in the Institution placed a boy in an artificial condition and unfits him for his natural position in society accustoming to habits which he cannot adhere to in the world and impeding proper development of the boyish into the manly character.<sup>19</sup>

A year earlier Turner heard of reports of a new French institution for delinquent boys that 'promised to be useful and possibly relevant to the needs of children in this country'. He visited the agricultural colony at Mettray where inmates lived in family groups in a homely setting. The idea was 'to make the asylum not a prison but a school for education'. It was inspired by the Rauhe Haus and set up in 1839. Turner felt it was essential to have small units. He

would rather take charge of 500 boys in 20 different families of 25 each under 20 ordinary and comparatively uneducated men, than of 200 collected together ... though superintended by the best-trained

in one large establishment. He recognised in 1855 that the more centralised and rigid an institution and the larger the number of inmates, the cheaper it would be to run. This factor led to the establishment of the great institutional systems. Yet he found

the more it became recognised that the neat, orderly, rigidly controlled institutions were destructive in their effect on the growth and development of young children, the greater the revulsion became.<sup>20</sup>

Mary Carpenter another British pioneer of the reformatory movement insisted on using the methods of Mettray and the Rauhe Haus as a model of reformatory institutions. She set up reformatory schools to reform child criminals and was superintendent of the first girls' reformatory Red Lodge when it opened in 1854. Mathew Davenport Hill, Recorder of Birmingham, in 1854 visited Mettray and like Turner recommended institutions should start with very small numbers because the size set the tone of an institution.<sup>21</sup> Joseph Fletcher, a government Inspector, added to the interest and read a paper to the Statistical Society in 1853 on *The Farm School System on the Continent* in which he argued for family-sized groups for pauper children in the form of the cottage home rather than in the large institutions. He said the Rauhe Haus was based on the natural family, groups of twelve under a housefather. Nothing, however, came of the idea at the time.<sup>22</sup>

In America Charles Loring Brace, a Protestant minister and founder of the Children's Aid Society, in 1853 criticised the failure of orphanages. He opposed long term institutional care of the child and favoured fostering at a time when public opinion strongly favoured the former. Loring Brace insisted 'the longer he is in the

asylum, the less likely he is to do well in outside life'.<sup>23</sup> He advocated boarding out as an alternative to the institution. At the same time the 'Cottage System' was introduced into America in 1856 at Lancaster modelled on the German idea. It was an industrial school and the first cottage-plan institution. The cottages served as institutional approximations to family homes.<sup>24</sup> Only two years before the state of Massachusetts had built Monson State School as a general almshouse on the barrack-like plan. The state then adopted a policy of 'the unwalled institution' whereby children were boarded out. It was the start of a change of heart by Massachusetts to a position where 'the superiority of the family home over the asylum had become an article of faith'.<sup>25</sup>

The new approach to residential care of children was starting to be felt with the construction of new types of asylums. A New York reporter visited the city institutions in 1869 and aptly labelled them 'unhomelike homes', even with regard to the best of them. However, one did stand out from the others as it was the most unusual home visited - the Protestant Sheltering Alms. This new building had been designed in decentralised fashion with four separate cottage units with their own dining room, playroom and dormitory which could function like a family household. The idea was borrowed from the German cottage homes in Hamburg and provided a precedent that was to reverberate through 'the

institutional logic of the orphanage' and weaken the foundations on which it was based.<sup>26</sup> The historical trajectory of the institution was moving in a direction that included another branch – the cottage home. The main institutional branch was coming under increasing criticism. It was claimed

by the 1850s almost every major institution founded in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century had lost its original promise. The early optimism had faded ... A preoccupation with order, routine and cost replaced the founders' concern with the transformation of character and social reform. Everywhere, reform gave way to custody as the basis of institutional life.<sup>27</sup>

The custodialism of institutional life was singled out in American institutions at a time when the influx of continental ideas coincided with the criticism being made of them as the best way to care for children. The new ideas provided the formative influence in the following decades for the construction of cottage homes as an alternative to the large institution.



## **Institutionalism and the Poor Law**

The historical trajectory of the workhouse was following a different path. The change in the style of the Poor Law was one area where the special institution of the workhouse took on a new image. The direction of the Poor Law was changing its emphasis from one of deterrence to one where a curative purpose was accepted. The original workhouse design owed some influence to the panopticon principle that 'the large single building was itself an essential part of deterrence'. They were to be 'as prison-like as possible' and their appearance was intended to torment the poor and inspire a dread of them. They had the consistency that the interiority of their purpose was matched by the penal architectural exterior. However, 'by the 1870s the northern workhouses were often vast, impressive institutions fit to stand besides the new town halls'.<sup>28</sup> The outward appearance showed a change towards the role of residential institutions. What took place between the two Royal Commissions of 1832 and 1905 on the workings of the Poor Law was 'the shift in attitude towards institutions from the workhouse to the many-faceted, compulsory and curative institutions of the later nineteenth century'. Furthermore, 'the aim of the institution was not now to frighten the poor into independence, but to keep them from harming themselves and disgracing the community'.<sup>29</sup>

In the 1860s and 1870s a second wave of workhouse building

took place. The solid ornate Victorian buildings expressed the affluence and self-confidence of a generation of institution builders. The workhouse could seem a 'palace' merely by virtue of its size. The Poor Law Board had to restrain the extravagance on architectural details such as 'granite columns, terra-cotta mouldings, encaustic tile pavements and so on'. There was a trend usually towards fewer but much bigger institutions. The average size of county asylums rose from 116 inmates each in 1827 to 1,072 in 1910. 'The decades between 1860 and the Great War were the age of institutions on a scale rarely known before.'<sup>30</sup> Institutions inspired charitable enthusiasm from voluntary contributions, which financed 'well-publicised experiments in residential homes' which in the Jewish community was focussed on Norwood. The building of the 'palace' of Norwood, as it was nicknamed, followed the national trend with a dominating external appearance and an internal capacity for large-scale growth.<sup>31</sup>

The influence of the Poor Law had a more direct effect. The transfer of workhouse children to institutions of their own religion was allowed under Poor Law legislation from the 1860s. The JBG acted as the intermediary between the Poor Law Unions and Norwood which allowed the crossing of barriers between the public and voluntary sectors. The 1862 Poor Law (Certified Schools) Act, which legalised the use of voluntary homes by guardians, allowed

'the gradual blending of voluntary and statutory services'.<sup>32</sup> The new workhouses were built to hold larger numbers and the expansion expressed a new belief in the curative rather than the deterrent institution which sought to minimise numbers. There was the widespread belief that residential buildings were desirable and necessary. Their growth was a sign of welfare responsibility and was accepted across the board including: the Salvation Army, the COS and many religious organisations, particularly Catholic and Jewish.<sup>33</sup>



## **Institutionalism - Growth of the Institution**

The charities coped with the growth in the number of children – the illegitimate, the orphan and children of married couples – whose parents were unwilling to look after them by establishing orphanages. In the eighteenth century one of the earliest was the London Foundling Hospital founded to take in ‘exposed and deserted young children’.<sup>34</sup> Once established, orphanages had a ‘pull effect’ because of the advantages of food and shelter and education. They had the effect of relieving an extended family of its obligations providing an ‘instant solution’ to family problems. The writer Emmanuel Litvinoff recalled before the last war his mother had threatened him and his siblings with the Jewish Orphanage. ‘You’ll drive me to an early grave, all of you! Shall I send you to the Jewish Orphanage, like everybody says?’ Backing up the threat was the belief in the instant availability of residential care and it gave credence to the notion that the children’s home was a custodial institution that provided ‘efficient shelters’.<sup>35</sup>

The custodial effect of holding children altered as the size of the institution increased. The experience of the nineteenth century exposed an empirical relationship between the inmate population and its method of control. The empiricism of expansion was an issue that faced Samuel Wolfenstein, superintendent of the CJOA. Prior to his appointment in 1878 the numbers had increased to 217 in 1877.

The numbers continued to mount to 301 by 1884. Under the pressure of greater number of children entering the asylum the character of the institution became more controlling and 'the family-model by which Wolfenstein had hoped to run the institution, was gradually giving way to a quasi-military one'.<sup>36</sup> The size of the institution expanded when the old asylum was demolished and a new one built in 1888. This allowed further increases from 306 in 1886 to 399 in 1891. The superintendent believed the CJOA was the best environment for Jewish orphans and 'deliberately and methodically he gathered them into the asylum confines'.<sup>37</sup>

Further growth took place with 481 children in 1895 and 500 in 1897 when the institution stabilised at that level. The impact was that the 'family model' began to fade and in its place 'regimentation, uniformity, strict discipline and corporal punishment became much more common'.<sup>38</sup> The institutional trend showed a movement towards an authoritarian style of control from a family model necessitated by the size of the institution. In 1910 Wolfenstein visited New York to check out the boarding and asylum system of the HOA. He commented on seeing

over 1,000 children, very comfortably seated at their wholesome meal, all neat and clean ... how well they looked. What a difference between this sight and the sights I saw in the boarding homes.

He went on to recommend more asylums to cater for 5,000 children

or about twice those already in homes.<sup>39</sup> The expansion of the CJOA and the superintendent's commitment was not unique and in proportionate terms it mirrored the expansion of Norwood. In the same period it grew from 155 in 1877 to 395 by 1913.<sup>40</sup>

The growth in numbers was a policy of benefitting as many children as possible. It was one adopted by the JFS where Anthony de Rothschild was president. Under his presidency the JFS grew to 2,400 children by 1870 and it was regarded as the largest school in the world.<sup>41</sup> The JFS was a day school and was thought by some to be too large to be efficient. An assessment 'for an efficient boarding school was that its numbers cannot exceed 400 boys and for the highest average excellence that is too much'.<sup>42</sup> Norwood had reached a similar size but it was not a boarding school and the notion of an optimum size was not governed by educational criteria. There was no optimum figure; the only relevant figure was the one determined by the institution's accommodation capacity – in essence the number of beds. It was on that assessment that growth was seen as a sign of success. There was one index - the cost per child - that was seen as a measure of financial success. Rothschild was a banker and financial efficiency was important to him. It was the financial argument that in part persuaded governors and which Turner had commented on in 1855 that made amalgamation feasible. Figures proved that for the same costs as the two

foundations charities a conjoined institution at Norwood could provide 80 additional places.<sup>43</sup> Amalgamation made economic sense.

Despite the success of Norwood in caring for the larger number of children the disadvantages of a large institution were being recognised and in the 1897 annual report for the first time there was reference to the humdrum existence of institutional life. In the same report the centenary extension, described as 'our great communal Orphanage', was celebrated.<sup>44</sup> Both American asylums, the HOA and the CJOA, showed that numerical growth led to degradation of orphanage life and the resort to regimented life styles. By the late nineteenth century the evidence that in the massing of children together 'no account is made of the child's natural desire for home life, for affection and above all for parental love' was substantial. In America the word 'institutionalised' was used to describe the 'mechanical' helplessness of asylum life.<sup>45</sup> The 'natural desire for home life' was based on the competence of the family but the rise of institutions had stemmed from the recognised deficiencies of the family. From the viewpoint of the charities there was nothing natural about the parental abandonment of the orphan and nothing artificial about the life saving refuge of the institution. Orphanages like Norwood had a mission to educate and train its children whilst even the workhouse provided a refuge at the level of

'less eligibility'. The historical analysis is aided by treating the debate between family and institution not in isolation but related to issues of child destitution and rescue.



## **Institutionalism – The District School is Under Attack**

In the 1870s the movement to combat the institution began to take off. William Chambers, author of *Chamber's Journal*, wrote in 1877 that 'the family system is the foundation of everything that is valued in our institutions. Any attempt to rear children artificially on a wholesale principle is necessarily defective'. Chambers was condemning the large residential institutions and it heralded a change in public opinion on how government and philanthropic organisations should treat children in care. The popular option became the 'family cottages' housing twenty to forty children.<sup>46</sup> The criticism was particularly directed at the large district schools. They were popularly called barrack schools and had been established from the 1840s at a time when the principles of the well-regulated institution predominated in government thinking. But three decades later they were a source of public criticism.

In 1874 Jane Nassau Senior, an Inspector of Workhouses and Pauper Schools, officially condemned the district schools in a report.

It gave voice and authority to the growing philanthropic literature against large schools in favour of family models for poor children such as foster homes and institutions comprised of separate cottage homes.

She faced opposition from her colleague Edward Tufnell, Senior

Inspector of Poor Law Schools, who advocated the old system of large schools as an efficient means which in some cases had over a thousand children. The Tufnell-Senior dispute brought the conflict between the district and family-based models to the highest level of the Poor Law authorities.<sup>47</sup> However, the tide of opinion was moving in the direction of institutional change. Between 1874 and 1878 six boards of guardians obtained permission from the Local Government Board (hereafter LGB), which took over responsibility for the Poor Law in 1871, to build grouped cottage homes on the family system. 'Barnardo's Ilford Village home, Florence Davenport Hill's *Children of the State* in 1868 and the 1878 parliamentary *Report on Cottage Homes* added to the assault on barrack schools'.<sup>48</sup>

In 1894 a Departmental Inquiry was set up by the LGB under the chairman of Anthony Mundella to look at the workings of the Poor Law institutions - district schools and Boards of Guardians. It excluded voluntary institutions as the state had no direct responsibility in that area. The published report in 1896 indicted the barrack system and concluded 'the routine of barrack life ... was successful in crushing out every spark of ingenuity a Poor Law child might naturally possess'. Indeed, 'it proved beyond dispute, the paralysing effect of Poor Law barrack (District) schools for boys'. The building of barrack schools was stopped and children were sent

to local schools like ordinary children.<sup>49</sup> The report put forward the official position of the LGB and solidified the movement against barrack schools. They were to be broken up and new admissions placed in cottage homes. In the same year another official publication, *Report of the Departmental Committee on Reformatory and Industrial Schools*, acknowledged the 'asylum theory' for reformatory schools. This held that the decision to place a child in an asylum should be based on the best interest of the child. The statement of a child orientated policy was a rejection of the idea that held the 'environment and the institution became the new and better family for the child', and promoted the reformatory schools as offering the children 'a happy and constructive environment'.<sup>50</sup>

The residential principle of placing children in public institutions was given statutory significance by the Poor Law Act of 1899 which gave boards of guardians the power to take away parental rights of orphans.<sup>51</sup> The Act gave legal backing to the notion that children must be 'rescued' from neglectful families. In 1898 the LGB 'looked at five innovative homes run by voluntary organisations'. The homes were based on the 'family system' with children accommodated in small groups in cottages.<sup>52</sup> The Bermondsey Board of Guardians in London in 1898 decided to establish a children's orphanage, Shirley Oaks, in outer London on

the cottage home principle. The 1903 minutes stated that the guiding principle of the Home was 'a place where the children may receive kindly and homely parental care'.<sup>53</sup> The Home was praised as a model village and received visitors from Germany and America. With state backing Britain was now exporting the idea of the model children's village. 1898 also saw the opening of another children's home by Chorlton Board of Guardians at Styal in Cheshire. Of the four methods of residential child care: the workhouse school; the Barrack system (like Norwood); boarding out and the Cottage Homes system, it was the last that was considered most satisfactory. Styal included a school, workshops, laundry, stores, a swimming pool and hospital.<sup>54</sup> The extent of the change was such that 'the cottage home system was adopted by Boards of Guardians with enthusiasm'.<sup>55</sup>

## **Institutionalism – The Attack by the Charities**

The voluntary societies were not immune from these changes and indeed were the first to act. Several founders of children's homes such as the Methodist Thomas Stephenson visited the work of Wichern in Hamburg and others read about it. Stephenson was determined to create a Home in Lambeth for children in need. In 1869 he opened his first home to a small group of friendless lads. He aimed to keep the group small so that the children would have a feeling of belonging and a sense of identity. From these beginnings the family system, 'cottage homes' built together on an estate, began to be the model which English children's homes followed.<sup>56</sup>

Thomas Barnardo established the first of fourteen of his villager homes at Barkingside in East London in 1875. He wanted to avoid anything approaching institutionalism. 'He wanted family homes where the affectionate ties of family life and family love would have a chance of being created and fostered.' His Village Home for Girls was responsible for carrying the idea of the cottage homes into the sphere of voluntary organisations.<sup>57</sup> Davenport-Hill in *Children of the State* wrote that the massing of girls was worse than for boys. She argued that it was 'fatal' for girls whereas for boys it was 'dangerous'. The gender distinction was accepted by Barnardo in his Girls' Village Home.<sup>58</sup> He had the support of the

Poor Law authorities. Mundella, who was appointed to investigate Poor Law schools, also inspected voluntary organisations and found the Barnardo system was applicable to Poor Law children.<sup>59</sup>

On a trip to England, Samuel Levy, a Board member and a previous superintendent of the Hebrew Sheltering Guardian Society (hereafter HSGS) of New York, was impressed by his visit to the Barnardo village; so much so, that he persuaded the Society's superintendent, Ludwig Bernstein, that the cottage system was a superior method of child care to the existing orphanage. Within weeks a new site had been found at Pleasantville in a rural location outside the city. However, the changes at the HSGS appeared to have produced no visible impact on its sister institution, the HOA, because

while paying homage to the cottage system the Hebrew Orphan Asylum was loyal to its own system believing that it was an exception of its kind, not to be compared with others that had given institutions a bad name.<sup>60</sup>

The cottage home had widespread appeal yet the children were still kept from normal everyday life. An alternative system of 'scattered homes' built in different parts of a town was pioneered in 1893 by the Sheffield Guardians who criticised the isolation of cottage homes. Both Styal Homes and Shirley Oaks were built in rural locations. In 1893 the Sheffield Board devised the idea of placing groups of children in ordinary domestic houses spread

around the suburbs of Sheffield – ‘scattered homes’. Children attended the local schools but otherwise they were like the cottage homes. By 1896 they had established nine scattered homes indistinguishable from ordinary working-class houses in which were placed twelve children.<sup>61</sup> Unlike the Sheffield Union the idea of the scattered home was seen as isolating Jewish children, and the idea of a Jewish scattered home in London was dismissed.<sup>62</sup> The possibility of a dual institutional arrangement – the large institution and family home – was lost.

In Scotland, William Quarrier followed Barnardo’s example in 1878 with the opening of a ‘Children’s Village’ at Bridge of Weir. He had published his views on the harmful effects of large institutions on the lives of children and advocated the cottage principle in 1870. The village was described as having ‘the appearance of a Garden City – with its broad avenues, its shrubs and flowers’. Instead of institutional buildings ‘there are cottages placed here and there amid these lovely surroundings’. In the cottages the children were housed in ‘families’ with house parents in charge.<sup>63</sup> He stated from the outset, ‘I have no faith in large institutions where hundreds are ruled with a stringent authority which cuts out the individuality of its members’. His vision was inspired by Barnardo’s Girls’ Village at Barkingside. At the village he established about 40 children’s cottages, a church, school and farms.<sup>64</sup> What he wanted was a

home 'where not more than 100 are placed together and where each individual is cared for and watched over by a motherly and fatherly love'. The creation of the Children's Village was the fulfilment of his dream but it was one where the separation of the children from their families was 'not a primary concern'.<sup>65</sup> The care of children was based on maintaining their religious and social conformity that did not touch on their individuality. The social consensus was that the cottage home was better than the large barrack-type institution against which there was a strong reaction.

These family-based institutions quickly became the prevailing ideal for state Poor Law and philanthropic children's institutions in England, replacing in public favour the workhouse and large block-style residential schools.<sup>66</sup>

Edward de Rudolf persuaded the Church of England to provide homes for destitute children. Organisations already existed for Catholic, Jewish and Methodist children but Rudolf found they often had restrictive entrance qualifications. Some, like Muller's orphan homes and Norwood, would only accept legitimate children and only Barnardo's homes would admit destitute children with no strings attached. The discovery pushed him to found the Church of England Waifs and Strays Society. It aimed to give children a home as natural as possible. At the first meeting of the Society in 1881 the resolution stated 'in providing Homes for the children family life would be preferable to the institutional life'. He wanted the homes

to be part of the local community and attend local schools.<sup>67</sup> The voluntary societies incorporated the cottage movement into their residential plans as an improvement on the barrack institutions.

The Catholic children held in district schools and workhouses did not evoke the same reaction from the Catholic Church as other children held in the Poor Law and congregate institutions did. The spur for Catholic action was not an improved residential model called for by social critics of institutional care but for an existing one that protected their children from conversion. The Catholic Church was particularly concerned about the loss of faith of children cared for by the evangelicals. Jim Jarvis, the destitute boy that inspired Barnardo's pledge that 'no destitute child ever refused admission', was a Catholic. The admission of children to Catholic rescue homes was primarily adjudged on whether the child was likely to be lost to the Church. Anti-Catholicism was seen as a threat and English Catholics had to find their own associations for educating their waifs and strays. It goaded Herbert Vaughan, Bishop of Salford, to establish a local rescue society and he extended this nationally following his appointment as Archbishop of Westminster in 1898, setting up the Crusade of Rescue.<sup>68</sup> Catholics with their own institutional tradition of the convent and the monastery adopted a different attitude to housing the destitute child. In Ireland and America Catholic women were organised in religious orders and

they provided a network of welfare institutions - schools, orphanages and asylums.<sup>69</sup> The approach to social reform was defined 'in a very traditional and conservative manner as basically carrying out the corporal works of mercy'. The name Crusade of Rescue denoted 'it was a crusade of charity and not one of social change'.<sup>70</sup> Like the Catholics, the Jewish approach to institutions was not governed by the social criticism of the institutional model.

## **Institutionalism – The Jewish Dimension**

Anglo-Jewry preferred the old barrack-style model when society in general was adopting a new model. It already had a tradition developed from the late eighteenth century that responded to welfare issues by establishing new institutions separated from the main society. Underlying this need for separation was a 'foundational ethnicity' to maintain Jewish survival.<sup>71</sup> The saving of Jewish children was to integrate them into English society and the institutional arrangements were subservient to that aim. The saving of Protestant children was an evangelical spiritual mission that did not call into play the defensive concerns of religious minorities. Protestants were integral to national identity and as the majority community it was open to them to take on board what society considered the best institutional arrangements for children's welfare.

The Jewish community accommodated itself to changes in welfare provision – the effect of the Poor Law on Jewish children, the shift from traditional Jewish charity to a secular philanthropy and the creation of an institutional Jewish welfare organisation. On the occasion of Frederick Mocatta's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1897, the *JC* celebrated his contribution to the Jewish charity movement. His philanthropic philosophy was based on 'the unification and scientific organisation of charity' which was 'a fundamental rule governing the

Charity Organisation Society'.<sup>72</sup> In his role as a Norwood governor and vice-president of the JBG and the COS he acted as the representative who liaised between Jewish and non-Jewish charities and so was able to influence the direction of Jewish charity. The Amalgamation established an example of the 'strictly regulated' charity which he promoted.

The direction of the evangelical philosophy of Barnardo based on help being extended to the 'undeserving' poor was opposed by the COS. The cottage home for the destitute child was a means of accommodating every destitute child. In time Barnardo's became the largest of the voluntary charities and achieved it without the incubus of the barrack institution.<sup>73</sup> Barnardo was inspired when he came face to face with destitution of a pauper boy in the winter of 1869-70 to set up the cottage home. An account recalls how a cucumber seller Abraham Green in 1830 took on the care of three Jewish children when he came face to face with their destitution. This Jewish 'Jim Jarvis' account met with a communal response to establish the JOA in 'the age of the asylum'.<sup>74</sup>

The personal encounters of Green and Barnardo engendered different institutional responses which took on a symbolic separation. The cottage home was a Protestant and Poor Law response but not a Jewish one. The idea of a Jewish cottage home or scattered home never received recognition. The community felt

satisfied with the institutional arrangements for the JOA and Jews' Hospital and later the JHOA. They suited its needs which the community had built up over the previous century. In 1902 the Visitation Committee of the United Synagogue visited Jewish children in scattered Homes. It was discovered that some of the Jewish children attended church and one of them was in danger of being lost as the girl was anxious to be a Christian. The Mile End Guardians suggested the Jewish community have their own Home 'not necessarily an Institution, but convert a private house into a Scattered Home as they do in the case of Roman Catholics'. Rev. Levy a member of the Visitation Committee said 'the Jewish Community were averse to having a Jewish scattered Home' and recommended 'she be immediately transferred to the Orphan Asylum at Norwood'. The removal then reinforced the argument that 'emphasised the necessity of Norwood being extended further'.<sup>75</sup>

At the 1891 festival dinner Lord Rothschild defended the status quo, believing Norwood was an exception, because it understood the individuality of the children and was unlike other gentile institutions.<sup>76</sup> The language of debate on dealing with the poor by the Anglo-Jewish community was that of the contemporary gentile discussion of the deficiencies of the system of poor relief.

But the conditions out of which they arose were unique to the community. Whatever the debt to Gentile models, the foundation of Jewish Boards owed less to new theories outside the community than to new problems within it. The chief effect of external influences was to provide convenient means to necessary ends.<sup>77</sup>

The institutional means adopted at Norwood was what suited the community but it fell behind innovative social thinking. The forward thinking was paid homage to by Rev Stern on the death of Barnardo in 1905 because of the

thousands of waifs and strays whom he had passed on from the great institution he had founded ... to the village homes scattered throughout the country where they had been equipped amid beautiful and hopeful surroundings.

But the appreciation expressed of his work did not touch the surety of Norwood's position and Stern himself opposed 'a separate institution for a small minority of about twenty children'.<sup>78</sup>

The focus on 'new problems' and the adherence to the self-help philosophy prevented the JBG from moving with the times 'to the new world of the welfare state'. From being in the forefront for the first thirty years of its existence it fell further and further behind for the next thirty years.<sup>79</sup> Myra Curtis who chaired the Committee on the Care of Children set up by the government in 1945, asked the JBG representative, 'Just what [is] the JBG? Is it in any sense a survival of the Old Board of Guardians?'<sup>80</sup> The COS and the JBG were bearers of a 'time-spirit', 'agents of the new social

consciousness who gave new meaning to 'philanthropy' and 'charity' and 'set the terms of social discourse for an entire generation'. The JBG made strong efforts to impart its social philosophy to other Jewish charities and Norwood was part of the time-spirit that dominated mid to late Victorian social thinking.<sup>81</sup> However, it lost its vitality in the face of the innovative social thinking that developed from the turn of the century and became stuck in an out dated philanthropic time-spirit. By the end of the century it was regarded as 'an entrenched institution' characterised by conservative resistance to change'.<sup>82</sup> It left Norwood vulnerable to meeting the challenge welfare institutions were to face in the new century.



## **Institutionalism – Transformation of the Institution**

The cottage home system was not unknown to the Jewish community but the shift from the large institution passed Norwood by. Barnardo homes in 1877-8 had just over 50% of in-care children in cottage homes at Barkingside Girls' Village. The boys housed in a barrack-type model at Stepney Green accounted for the remaining 49%. By 1895 he claimed less than a fifth of children were in barracks, 40% in cottages and 40% boarded out. The Poor Law authorities were slower to respond to building cottage homes. The Poor Law Board and the LGB were seen as inactive and conservative and fitfully responded to pressure from charities, progressive guardians and from the public. In 1878 only 8 Poor Law bodies built or approved cottage homes. By 1901-2 it had increased to 24. In 1894 in London 90% of children were in large institutions and only 10% in cottage homes. By 1909, 57% were in barracks and 39% in cottage homes. By the turn of the century the impact of the shift in institutional thinking was that an increasing number of children were being cared for in cottage homes.<sup>83</sup>

Henrietta Barnett, social reformer and Poor Law Guardian, founded the State Children's Association devoted to dismantling the large schools and encouraging boarding-out. The strength of opposition to the district school was evidenced by the prolonged exposure to the barrack school regime which produced a high

proportion of 'feeble-minded' children. Girls were found to be 'like machines, they are part of a large machine; they have no individuality' yet after a few months in a small home holding eleven girls and treated kindly very often an 'astonishing change came over them'. Between 1895 and 1907 the number of district school children fell by half and after 1918 Poor Law schools only undertook industrial training and all children went to local schools.<sup>84</sup>

The statistical picture of child residential care between 1900 and 1914 showed 70-80,000 children in the care of the Poor Law authorities in the UK; of these 20-24,000 were in workhouses and 12,000 in district schools. Another category was the children placed in voluntary society homes – orphanages similar to Norwood. Their numbers increased from 10,000 to 15,500 in 1914 under pressure from the Poor Law authorities to remove children from workhouse wards. Norwood made use of the Pauper Removal Act to remove Jewish children. In 1904 sixty three Jewish children were sent there by the Poor Law Guardians from all over the country.<sup>85</sup> Officially the voluntary homes were held in high regard though little was known about them and the LGB saw them as the ideal solution and called them 'Charity working in co-operation with the Poor Law'.<sup>86</sup> The approbation of the Chief Poor Law inspector stated that 'good people start these homes; we certify them, the Guardians pay for the children and we inspect them'. The switch to the voluntary

institution was motivated by the pressure to disgorge workhouse children. There were also another 8,500 children living in cottage homes and 5,000 in scattered homes and a further 10,000 children were boarded out.<sup>87</sup> The 1905 Royal Commission on the Poor Laws objected to the 'great institutions' but they did not attack institutions as such; they favoured smaller establishments for economy and segregation.<sup>88</sup> There was an acceptance of various models without any one having overriding authority.

In America by the turn of the century the seeds of institutional self-doubt had been sown. The orphanage had become the dominant form of child care for dependent children. But it was also recognised that the lack of personal attention was the chief weakness of the orphanage system and something no asylum could remedy.

Behind the idea was the growing feeling that the need to individualise the children, to give them personal attention was essential if they were leave the Hebrew Orphan Asylum as reasonably normal human beings.

This was the idea being urged by the *Messenger*, a Jewish newspaper circulated in New York.<sup>89</sup> At the HOA the numbers had reached 1,003 inmates in 1904 and the New York Catholic Protectory by 1900 had over 2,500 inmates, the largest in the country. Though over 400 orphanages were built from 1890 in America,

the new orphanages came under attack as soon as they were built as institutional care was no longer regarded in professional child welfare circles as the best way to raise dependent children.

The rallying cry for welfare workers was *Individualise the Child!*<sup>90</sup>

In 1909 President Roosevelt called a *White House Conference on the Care of Dependent Children*. Its theme was explicitly anti-institutional – ‘Home Life is the highest and finest product of civilisation. Children should not be deprived of it except for urgent and compelling reasons’. The cottage plan was praised and institutions attacked. The message was to convert. Solomon Lowenstein, HOA superintendent, whilst agreeing ‘congregate institutions should be divided into cottage groups’, nevertheless denied ‘life in a congregate institution is necessarily of a gloomy, cheerless character’.<sup>91</sup> The comments Norwood was reporting on at that time was ‘on the necessity of combating the numbing effect on mental development of the long years of school life’ and finding the children in institutional schools are apt to become ‘dull and listless’.<sup>92</sup> Lowenstein no doubt glossed over the facts arguing that many Jewish communities favoured institutional care because ‘Jewish institutions were considered superior to their gentile counterparts’. Anglo-Jewry also thought that and Rothschild had said as much when he claimed that Norwood was exceptional.<sup>93</sup>

The HOA and Norwood were content to justify the status quo based on past achievement, however, exceptional that was. The HSGS took the opposite view of what was best for the future and decided to convert from a congregate asylum to a cottage home facility christened with a new name, Pleasantville Cottage School, in 1912. The superiority of Norwood and the HOA was asserted by those in charge. The unalloyed reaction to the new home at Pleasantville by a former resident was to say, 'we were explorers in a new world'. An Old Boy at the HSGS saw its beginnings were 'an explosive separation from barracks and in a more generous interpretation of child care'. The conversion attracted a lot of attention including a visit from another American President, William Taft.<sup>94</sup> Nationwide by 1910 almost 15% of orphanages had opted for the cottage system though the Protestant and Jewish percentage would have been higher but for the fact that 'less than 3% of Catholic orphanages had adopted the cottage system'.<sup>95</sup>

The Conference concluded that dependent children should first be kept in their own homes with foster homes as second choice and put in institutions as a last resort, provided they were cottage homes.<sup>96</sup> Despite the conference's endorsement of fostering for the normal child the CJOA 'stubbornly clung to its heels and adamantly refused to ... foster care a single child' and 'continued to cling to the principle of institutionalism'. But the slow process of transformation

of the orphanage was unstoppable. Many institutions stopped calling themselves orphanages or asylums but 'homes' for children.

Moreover, Wolfenstein's successor at the CJOA, more in tune with the times, changed the name of the institution to the Jewish Orphan Home in 1919, 'the move that symbolised a genuine desire to transform the asylum into a more humane place for children to live'.<sup>97</sup>

The change towards the care of children taking place in America in the first decade of the new century also occurred in Britain. The 1908 Children Act broke new ground by giving legislative recognition to the needs of children. The Act provided for boarding out and fostering, powers to remove children from parents and to set up a system of inspection of voluntary homes. The increased official interest in children had the result that more children ended up in institutions and being removed from workhouses.<sup>98</sup> The changes taking place were turning points. The triumph of fostering at the White House conference led to the liberalising of institutional regimes in accordance with the progressive model of the 'child developing institution' to allow greater spontaneity, freedom and personal growth. The Liberal government's welfare reform was the first comprehensive Children Act and was at the time dubbed the Children's Charter. Compared with the mid-Victorian period, with its emphasis on the child in

institutional care, it 'embodied a radically new conception in the relationship between children, adults and the state'. Underlying the wider approach was the notion that 'the child' as a separate person had been 'discovered'.<sup>99</sup>

This thesis focuses on one particular institution Norwood but it also looks at other types – the workhouse and the voluntary home as well as the welfare institution in other countries. The attitude to the institution was not uniform. By 1920 the workhouse had, over the previous century, undergone a process of separation with the 'deserving' removed to institutions - schools, hospitals and asylums – leaving the 'undeserving' such as vagrants in the workhouse. Reform of the workhouse through specialisation envisaged a society with institutions even if they were 'greatly enlarged orphanages' and 'huge custodial hospitals'. The attitude to the institution depended on the relationship between those who dispensed and those who received relief.<sup>100</sup> In America there were divergent policies. 'New York and Boston represented two different paths in the evolution of the orphan asylum. Boston stood for the outward extension of the orphanage in society at large, New York for the elaboration of the institution's internal structure'.<sup>101</sup> Awareness of diversity requires that

the empirical historian will be aware of the intricate differences between institutions of different countries and the unique development of a particular institution at a particular time. It is

artificial to treat deterrent institutions (prisons, workhouses) and curative ones (hospitals, asylums) in the same way.<sup>102</sup>

The ideology of institutionalism was under attack before the First World War but the criticism did not necessarily affect a particular institution. Anglo-Jewry faced only marginal criticism from inside the community and none from outside. What was sanctioned from outside was royal patronage bestowed on the enterprise. The Duke of Cambridge opened the Extension and was told 'all members of the Jewish Community appreciate the kindly interest manifested by his RH in the welfare of the Orphanage and its inmates'.<sup>103</sup> In the climate of royal approval criticism was likely to be stifled and added to the belief that Norwood was a different institution. There was some justification in this belief as 'it was claimed Jewish charity was superior to gentile charity ... more generous and more extensive than non-Jewish provision'. The emphasis was on a preventative approach which imbued the 'time-spirit' of Victorian self-help and was noted by outside observers such as J H Stallard who praised the Jewish system of care.<sup>104</sup>

The building of the centenary extension and the Gabriel Home indicated a still vigorous belief in the institution. The belief was at variance with the trend in the philanthropic movement but the Anglo-Jewish approach was not the same because of the Jewish dimension. Norwood had its own agenda which included the

preservation of the institutional model. The deterrent institution was another case of a separate pattern that distinguished it from the ideological position of anti-institutionalism. The shift from deterrence to a curative treatment recognised that the voluntary institution was an improvement on the workhouse. In 1913 a change in terminology replaced 'workhouse' by 'Poor Law institution' and 'indoor relief' by 'institutional treatment'. The different pattern was to replace the negative meaning of the workhouse with the positive social purpose of the institution. The anti-institutionalism of the Poor Law Unions was directed at the district school and its replacement by a smaller establishment. Nevertheless, the institution as such was still supported.<sup>105</sup>

After the First World War the possibility of a replacement for Norwood was lost. The new president Rothschild did not take up the suggestions of 'a radical new scheme ... to rebuild the institution on more modern lines'.<sup>106</sup> The institutional logic of the orphanage was being called into question and that questioning was taxing the mind of the Norwood Headmaster Marcus Kaye who wanted some measure of reform. In his report on School Holidays in December 1916 he wrote, 'institutional life and especially that form of it conducted like ours on the "Barracks" principle consists so largely of routine that the inmates are always longing for some variety to relieve the monotony'. Holidays were regarded as 'red letter

occasions' when the children were away from Norwood. He allowed the Dining Hall, 'a large lofty church like room', to be transformed into the 'Domestic Girls' Ball Room' for the children who had to stay for the duration of the holiday, a de-institutionalising gesture to open up the space for parlour games and dancing. Kaye's attempt at humanising the institution with the relaxation of rules and allowing the dining room to be more like at home was showing Norwood to be an inferior substitute for child rearing.<sup>107</sup> What he was seeking to do was liberalising the regime by creating a new model of the Jewish orphanage as a 'child developing institution' to cultivate an individual child's personality and abilities.<sup>108</sup>

A comparison made in 1918 between the congregate institution and the cottage home in America argued that

it is axiomatic that the smaller the institution, the nearer to home conditions it is possible to bring the children. The cottage plan for large institutions is here to stay but many still believe that the small congregate institution sheltering not more than 75 can better simulate the private home than the large cottage system with 30 or more children in each cottage.<sup>109</sup>

The empiricism of numerical size counted in deciding which option to promote. Norwood was not a small congregate institution with its 400 children and its institutional position in this scheme excluded it. Included would have been the Gertrude Jacobson Orphanage for Jewish orphans which opened in Glasgow in 1913. It was small and

'scattered' in a semi-detached house with ten children. Later it expanded into larger premises to house 40.<sup>110</sup> The purpose of making the comparison was to ask,

if there are any definite results that are worth while that will help us either to decide that it is better to place these children in homes, or whether it is better to keep them in the really modern orphanage.

The answer given was 'we have not yet reached the point where educational, vocational and religious training are going to tell'.<sup>111</sup>

The comparison was debated on the theme of what size was best and left the large institution ideologically marginalised. In the UK the Board of Education in 1909 expressed a similar ambivalence whether 'the provision of children in their own homes or in foster-family homes' or in 'tremendous institutions' was best.

We are of the opinion that the truth lies with those who hold that more depends upon the administrator than upon the system. There is no doubt that there are advantages peculiar in every way in which the Poor Law children can be obtained – boarding-out, 'barrack' schools', cottage homes, scattered homes – all have various merits the success or failure of any system must depend entirely on the people by whom it is administered.<sup>112</sup>

The system which was best suited for the children was to be decided by advances in child development in the decades after the First World War.

The year 1919 in the institutional history of Norwood was a

turning point when the growth of the institution ended. The previous half century has been called an 'age of the institution' when the very word connoted social progress. However, the well-regulated institution became over regulated, self-justifying and a static system. The workhouse, district school and asylum were nicknamed Bastilles with their association of prison. The late nineteenth century institutions built in the mock styles of architecture were nicknamed Palaces. The split between outside appearance and inside living signified a growing anomaly. The end of the architecturally flamboyant institution was already happening with alternatives forms of residential care such as the cottage home widely accepted. The tower builders were of a past generation and the Gabriel Home was built in a more tempered style. However, the challenge for the future was the changes in the living condition of the children inside the institution. The next chapter examines the changes that took place.

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## **Chapter 5: The Tempering of Norwood** **Institutionalism– The ‘Good Enough’ Residential** **Model**

The psychologist Donald Winnicott coined the phrase ‘good enough parenting’ to refer to what is ‘good enough’ in meeting the needs of the child – that is, a parent who raises his or her child well. The ‘Good Enough’ residential model is derived from this idea and applied to the child caring institution. However, it can never be quite as satisfactory as the parent ‘because of the intensity of our emotional involvement in and with our child’. The crucial characteristic of the parents is their partiality for the individual child.<sup>1</sup> Maurice Levinson, who was at Norwood in the twenties, recalled that he thought himself lucky to get in. ‘Without the orphanage to help she [his mother] said they [the four children] would starve.’ Though the regime was totalitarian it was better than ‘the many children who haven’t got even a crust of bread to eat and yet because they have a father and mother they can’t get into an orphanage’.<sup>2</sup> The life saving refuge of the institution was preferable to inadequacy of parental support and provided an affirmation of the institution. However, he recalled that he left Norwood with ‘the mark of Cain on my forehead in the form of an orphanage upbringing’. His main quarrel with Norwood was that ‘it took away my individuality. I had been taught to act and think under

compulsion'.<sup>3</sup> Material inadequacy dictated his stay in Norwood but it was one that was replaced by a personal inadequacy when he left. The novelist George Elliot in *Daniel Deronda* wrote 'at five years old, mortals are not prepared to be citizens of the world, to be stimulated by abstract nouns, to soar above preference into impartiality'.<sup>4</sup> Though the institution cannot be the same as the parent whether it provided all round sufficient support and care is the topic of this chapter.

Three themes are examined to establish whether the institution was 'good enough'. With the end of the First World War the residential institution was still an acceptable model. There was ambivalence over the size it should be. The evidence from the impact of grouping a large number of children together had demonstrated that the larger the institution the more child unfriendly it became. The inter-war period was a time when institutional building gave way to improving internal living conditions. The first theme examined in this chapter will be the measures taken and the liberalisation introduced in order to mitigate the 'evils of institutionalism'. The second theme is the institutional features that persisted and resisted change, such as discipline and punishments. The last theme explores the impact of institutional living on the psychological development of the child. It

analyses whether the new sciences of the mind: psychology and psychiatry, supported or undermined the institution. The year 1919 'saw the beginning of a psychiatric deluge' in America when 'the new psychology emphasised the individual'. This deluge would sweep over the UK in the next two decades.<sup>5</sup> From an examination of these themes an assessment is made of whether the institution did indeed prove 'good enough'.



## **Institutionalism – Marcus Kaye’s Liberal Reforms**

Marcus Kaye was appointed to the post of headmaster in 1910 and together with his wife Esther, who held the post of matron, led Norwood for the next twenty six years. The *JC* in 1911 was impressed by the changes in their first year that had already done ‘much to brighten the lives of the children’ with treats, entertainments and ‘variations on a liberal scale have been made to the dietary sheets’ alluding to ‘an extra allowance of butter’.<sup>6</sup> The introduction of a form of self-government, a school council, had claimed ‘to sow the seeds of that independence of thought and action, the absence of which in the past has been so conspicuous in the children’.<sup>7</sup> He was making his mark on the running of Norwood. Instead of the usual reference to regular fund raising, budgets were framed to meet ‘the scientific upbringing of children’, ‘advances in existing educational systems’ and ‘the training of children’.<sup>8</sup> The scientific principles of charity organisation that were behind the creation of Norwood, Kaye claimed, were now being updated with a new science based on child development. In an interview with the *JC* in 1912 he put it to the community ‘whether they desire that progress be maintained or whether they will countenance a policy of reaction’ because of a paucity of funds.<sup>9</sup> The choice was there and in support of the cause he painted a picture of a revitalised institution.

In the interview entitled *The Cry of the Orphan*, Kaye alluded

to his charges as objects of pity. The cry of the supplicating orphan 'bereft of protection, advantages, benefits or happiness previously enjoyed' was a Victorian appeal depicted in the painting *The Children of Israel by the Waters of Babylon* that hung in the front hall above the staircase.<sup>10</sup> The orphaned children of Norwood looked to their new master for succour and Kaye conveyed a determination and appreciation of the need to change things. When asked 'what steps do you take to correct the narrowing influence of institutional life', he said, he was 'fully alive to the stunting effect of the institutional routines and we are engaged in attempts to counteract it'. His attempts at reform were recalled years later by his son who said 'my father sought to liberalise the old regime'.<sup>11</sup>

One way which Kaye's predecessor, Abraham Raphael, had initiated change was taking the children on holiday to the seaside where they stayed in a beach front house. It was 'a pleasant break' and therapeutic as 'the individual freedom which they enjoy there tends to correct the influences of institutional life'.<sup>12</sup> The 'narrowing influence' was an endemic problem that bedevilled an institution and which required a forward thinking Headmaster to fight against it. The freedom of Margate transformed the children's life when for two weeks each year they enjoyed food undreamt of at Norwood - Demerara sugar, sultanas, sardines, jam, marmalade, piccalilli and cornflower.<sup>13</sup> 'It was a holiday full of delight' looked forward to

weeks before hand enhanced by the thought of 'Mrs Chesterman's cooking' recalled N66.<sup>14</sup> He and the other children enjoyed 'country rides, swimming, excursions, sand-building competitions, crab-hunting competitions, nature study talks and games'.<sup>15</sup> The holiday was 'bliss' because 'it was a home, not an institution' and for a short while the institutional incubus was vanquished.<sup>16</sup>

When asked 'how do you manage to replace the parent in the lives of the children' Kaye admitted that the recent 'founding of the Gabriel Home has made the problem of mothering the children [from 5 to 8 years] a far more serious one than it used to be.

'These children want a "cuddle" every day!' The giving of personal attention for the fifty infants was met by the employment of two young lady-teachers who 'have assisted most materially in introducing the right kind of motherly spirit in the Home'.<sup>17</sup> It was a duty tempered by having to deal with so many children and a responsibility unheard of in the Main Building. The lack of personal attention singled out for the youngest children was evident with the oldest as well. The secretary confided to one governor

I have of late noticed that our lads lack independence to a marked degree; of course their early lives at Norwood, where so much is done for them tends to produce this; and their subsequent stay at our 'homes' rather increases this tendency.<sup>18</sup>

The 'homes' were the hostels opened in Clapton and Birmingham for apprentices after they left Norwood and it was recognised that the hostels were 'but the continuance of institution life'.<sup>19</sup>

'Cooking and cuddles', holiday breaks and personal attention represented a duality of reform – liberalising the orphanage regime and individualising the orphan – that contended with an established regime that militated against change. Kaye saw the key to unlocking the institutional deadlock was 'freedom'. He was sure that

the extra freedom has been a boon to the children and it will, I hope, be a means of developing their individuality, and of doing something to destroy the deadening influence produced by a year's unchanging routine.

Freedom was in short

70 boys at Deal Camp [Norwood Company of the JLB], 50 boys at Margate, Gabriel Home children having tea on Streatham Common, 100 older girls visiting the Festival of Empire and 409 children going to the local picture palace and the remaining 30 children playing basket ball matches.<sup>20</sup>

He hoped that through these activities the child would develop its individuality and thus be the means of attacking the deadening influence. His 'originality and energy' was appreciated by the governors.<sup>21</sup> There was a shift in institutional thinking with regard to what mattered for the children. In America by the start of the twentieth century 'the collection of disabilities that orphanages were alleged to impose on their inmates' - "institutionalism", embraced

the artificial environment and stunted emotional development of the children.<sup>22</sup> Trips and holidays were spent away from that environment and Kaye introduced clubs and established a hobby evening on Mondays when children could do drama, musicals, carpentry, chess and athletics.<sup>23</sup> The many activities to interest the children punctuated the ongoing routines of institutional living.

The Headmaster, aware that 'all our children suffer to a certain extent from the effects of institutionalism', was anxious to find other ways 'continually struggling against this influence'.<sup>24</sup> In 1921 Kaye 'struck by the evils of a system which tends to sever the bonds of union with their relatives, inaugurated a system by which they might visit their homes occasionally'; 80 children spent a month with their families.<sup>25</sup> The superintendent of the Jewish Foster Home of Philadelphia (hereafter JFH) had realised a decade earlier in 1911 that

by constant years of drifting they lose all sense of family relation and, therefore, instead of being a benefit to the family, while the institution may be a benefit to the individual child, they surely destroy the Jewish idea of home.<sup>26</sup>

The scheme had its dangers. It undermined the reasons for sending children to Norwood - poverty and unsatisfactory homes, illnesses brought back, weakening of habits of discipline and cleanliness. Its advantage was that the yearly reunion with families would be a remedy against the 'unnatural state of affairs' of separation of

children from families with the effect that 'family bonds are weakened if not destroyed altogether'.<sup>27</sup> The reform measure was radical in its newness but modest in dealing with structural faults of the institution – the unnatural state of affairs. It was thought that 'a month's holiday among friends will help to counteract this influence. In addition, it was thought it would have a sharpening effect on the child's intellect', and would 'help to reconcile them to the restraints of routine' because they will know they can have 'another spell next year'.<sup>28</sup>

The problems of emotional stunting of the children, and the artificial conditions under which they lived, were ameliorated by the reform. There was, however, to be no radical change that undermined the institution. The educational and religious objectives bound by the ideology of institutionalism outweighed the welfare option in favour of the family. The reform would not solve the structural problems but whether it was good enough would be judged by the narrowing influence being counteracted, the child's intellect being sharpened and the restraints of routine being reconciled. In his report on the new holiday arrangements, Kaye saw it as a success and one which was repeated. He wrote, 'I see many signs of awakening intelligence amongst some of the duller boys and girls owing to the contact with new influences in the

outside world.' But what he also realised was the need 'to soften the wrench from the home surroundings to institutional life' when they returned.<sup>29</sup>



## **Institutionalism–The Setback to Structural Reform**

The Kaye reforms continued, when in 1924, besides treats such as visits to a country home, a military tournament and the pantomime, he arranged for children to spend a day with relatives at Christmas,

thus taking another step towards combating that lack of close union between the children and their relatives inseparable from unrelieved residence in an Institution. It would be difficult to exaggerate the value and importance of the departure from the usual routine which these occasions provide ... Something must be given the children to take the place of the infinite variety which is part of the life even of those whose playground is the main streets of the Metropolis.<sup>30</sup>

Basil Henriques, a governor who supported the reforms, on one of his visits to Norwood in October 1923 found the 'poor little squashed children' made him feel depressed and found 'the girls especially in the lower classes seemed afraid to speak and the boys one and all to lack individuality'.<sup>31</sup> The reforms though beneficial were only scratching the surface. The awareness of defects gave impetus to the idea of 'drastic alterations to consider whether reconstruction was possible with a view to introducing reforms and economies'.<sup>32</sup>

Events, however, worked against major structural reform. In 1923 the old president George Faudel-Phillips, the great tower builder, had died and his work of construction lay all around.<sup>33</sup>

Jewish tradition has it that the recital of the *Kadish* (Jewish prayer for the dead) declares the spiritual heritage which the departed person left behind in the world and that his influence will continue to be felt in the next generation.<sup>34</sup> An inherited practise of his presidency was capital spending without endowments being provided for the upkeep; the Gabriel Home was a glaring example.<sup>35</sup> The regular appeals for funds (and there was a current one for £25,000) drew criticism of the failure of Norwood 'to take no higher or wider view of its real responsibilities' and not make 'the career of debt'.<sup>36</sup> The financial constraints were not conducive to reforms costing money and 'everything was being done to reduce expenditure'.<sup>37</sup> It caused a split between the reformers such as Henriques and conservatives including Gertrude Spielman who Henriques criticised for the 'lack of any kind of human sympathy and the whole of the older members who manage Norwood as though it was a business concern'.<sup>38</sup>

A financial shake up of the London Jewish charity organisation was a major topic of reform in the early 1920s. In New York the Jewish charities had agreed to co-ordinate their financial fund raising activities and the president of the collecting agency formed, the United Hebrew Charities, stated

for no institution, however good, can take the place of a home where individual needs of the individual character can be better met, and the nearest substitute for the original home can be

provided. The boarding system eliminated the tremendous capital outlay and the cost of running an institution.<sup>39</sup>

Fund raising at the community level removed the constraints of limiting amounts to what was expedient rather than what was best. The reform needed at Norwood required a level of finance that was more than debt repayment and the American model was seen as the one to be followed. Henriques spoke strongly in favour of it and the Jewish press were vociferous in its support.<sup>40</sup> However, the strength of the conservative opposition 'came from a few persons with hidebound opinions' which included the chairman of the JBG Leonard Cohen, who said 'he had always held to the undesirability of the new body'. The *JC* attacked the JBG as having 'always been chary about striking any new path' whilst the *JW*, in exasperation, wondered whether 'charity coordination by sheer necessity may be forced upon the charities' as Jewish charities on their own were unlikely to follow this path.<sup>41</sup>

In addition, a number of overdue reforms that were not tied to finance were completed in the 1920s. A significant change was the abolition of all sex restriction against female representation on committees. The issue had first been raised in 1895 and though 'the struggle was long and determined' it was at last achieved in 1923 and women were allowed full participation in future reforms.<sup>42</sup>

Gertrude Spielman was in the forefront of the campaign and in 1931

was appointed chair of the Executive Committee.<sup>43</sup> In 1924, another reform, the abolition of the voting system which had become 'obsolete and almost inoperative' was finally removed. It had been much hated by the reformers and calls for its abolition had been made by Frederick Mocatta as far back as 1879. Admissions were now wholly in the hands of the vetting committee without any subscriber involvement.<sup>44</sup> In 1924 steps were taken to rename the institution. Four years later the archaic 'Hospital' and Victorian 'Asylum' titles were dropped in favour of the Jewish Orphanage, but even then the new name was out of date by American standards though not by the English (non-Jewish) standards of voluntary institutions. Local authorities were more willing to adopt new names and when the LCC took over the Poor Law Guardian Homes in 1930 it introduced the title of 'residential school'.<sup>45</sup> The reforms were part of a shift towards creating a post-Victorian institution and the process of modernisation exposed the more radical structural issues remaining.

The reform of the internal organisation at Norwood had been first raised in 1920 when the LCC took over responsibility for the secular education as a public elementary school. The transfer raised the issue of Norwood being a residential school and not a day school. The LCC questioned the additional staffing levels and a proposal to split the roles of superintendent from Headmaster was

put forward.<sup>46</sup> Norwood combined two roles – a home and a school which made it costly to run and the handing over was expected to make savings of up to £3,000 a year.<sup>47</sup> In 1925 Anthony de Rothschild stated that

this dual role is a matter of controversy. Till the time comes, when home and school are completely separated, this difficult responsibility must be carried ... but the time had not yet come for the full ripening of these schemes which will keep the school distinct from the home, by a new conception of an orphanage, as a series of small private homes, in which the children will receive the care of foster parents, whilst attending the schools in the neighbourhood. Our problem now is to see that the best results are achieved under the existing system.<sup>48</sup>

The scheme was a conception that would help to address the structural problems of the institution. In the absence of its fulfilment 'endeavours would be put forward to further the possibilities of home life while remaining true to the sacred obligation to which we are committed' and it was claimed that 'the Institution now is conducted on the most approved lines from the educational, religious and from every other standpoint'.<sup>49</sup> The failure to achieve reorganisation and the consignment of the structural changes Rothschild outlined to the future was a setback for the reformers. Though the conservatives regarded the status quo as good enough the reformers were not deterred.

Dr Goldrich, Superintendent of the HSGS at Pleasantville, New

York visited Norwood in 1926. In his report he proposed a number of changes that affected the every day institutional life. The absence of crockery and table linen made an unfavourable impression and 'struck the visitor as emphasising unnecessarily the institutional character of Norwood'. He attached 'great importance to the psychological aspect of this question'. Goldrich also suggested the 'very long tables' in the dining room be changed for 'small round tables for 6 or 8 children'. In America as much privacy as possible was given to the children and he suggested 'subdividing the dormitories as far as possible into smaller rooms, allowing 3, 5 or 7 children to share small rooms'. The effect would be to give the children more individuality. He found 'the uniformity of clothing emphasised the institutional side of Norwood' and variety in their clothes would 'to a great extent militate against institutionalism'; allowing children to choose enable them to 'express their own individuality'. On the home and school issue he thought children should attend the local schools.<sup>50</sup> His proposals were supported by Henriques but failed to attract support from the conservatives. 'Mrs Spielman turned down practically the whole of Goldrich's recommendations' and the House Committee concurred in turning down his suggestions.<sup>51</sup>

The division of the big dormitories was thought to be 'difficult'.<sup>52</sup> The LGB had recommended a dormitory size up to

36ft for 'children and infants'. The 1895 extension plan showed a dormitory measuring 100ft by 25ft. In the regulations 'at the minimum of space there should be no more than 69 beds whereas there are 87' but the LGB was only responsible for laying down standards for the workhouse. Norwood felt it was 'not advisable in a scheme of extension of the Institution that it should be carried out by following closely the LGB'.<sup>53</sup> It was the vastness of the dormitories that scholars often referred to. T38 recalled 'there were 78 beds in her dormitory. It was ENORMOUS ... because it was an enormous place'.<sup>54</sup> The Curtis Committee in its survey of voluntary institutions commented on the imposing Victorian buildings. They were symbolic of Victorian philanthropy, intended to impress - outwardly grand but inwardly 'bare and comfortless' - 'Barrack type Homes'.<sup>55</sup> The 'tremendous, vast dormitories' arranged in a matrix of 25 rows by 3 rows in the girls' main dormitory gave true meaning to the word barrack.<sup>56</sup>

The retention of the large dormitories was the worst option for the reformers whereas their replacement by bedrooms as in the cottage homes was the best institutional solution. Norwood boy Alfred Michaels was hospitalised for two years and wrote of his experience. 'He lived not in wards, as you may think, but in little cottages, which consist of a bathroom, kitchen ... and two dormitories with seven boys in each'. The ward the boy expected to

be in was how one scholar described the dormitory, 'it was like a great, big hospital'.<sup>57</sup> Partitioning to break down the large spaces into personal areas was the 'good enough' option followed in the 1950s with the transition to family cottages. Before the War, however, no dividing was done.<sup>58</sup>

Another reformer, Isidore Salmon, who did not accept the status quo, put his name to a *Memorandum* in 1927 because he was

much concerned at certain results in the development in the social qualities of the children was affected by the circumstances connected with the care and education of a large number of children placed under one roof and subjected to the regulation necessary for the smooth running of the general control and for securing an equality of efficiency.<sup>59</sup>

He had never accepted that the existing system should remain as it was and recommended that the children should live in a less rigid and less confined environment, one which made them less unready to start life with confidence. He found orphanage trained children were at a distinct disadvantage and left with a serious disability. He thought many of the institutional defects could be addressed by sending the older children to local schools. It was clear to him 'the evils actually exist and should be remedied' and suggested 'the American method in children's institutions'.<sup>60</sup> The issue of attending local schools – one that had been put off by Rothschild as something for the future – was insisted on by reformers.

Nevertheless, a change in policy met opposition from Kaye.

His role as Headmaster he saw took precedence over his role as superintendent of the orphanage. Kaye believed that the Norwood ethos was built on the primacy of education where

Each [Jewish] charity distinguished between the deserving and undeserving poor. All organisations considered themselves, in a profound sense, educational institutions teaching the less fortunate what they must do.<sup>61</sup>

The education policy encouraged the abler children to enter grammar schools and scholarships were available from specific endowments. These covered the cost of lodgings or living with parents so that these children were allowed to be sent away from the institution. Boarding out was based on educational ability. The Hillier Holt fund was one of the bursaries that supported ten scholarships for children aged 13 to 18.<sup>62</sup> Whereas the more able pupils were allowed to enter higher education, the 'duller' children were discouraged from being even admitted. In 1918 Kaye complained the 'children last admitted to the institution are on the whole a more backward lot than has been for some time past'.<sup>63</sup> Soon after his appointment the ELOAS expressed concern that 'the educational tests governing admission of children should not be as arduous as they are at present'.<sup>64</sup>

The Society echoed the comments of Benjamin Cohen (former

chairman of the JOA) that the only requirement should be that the child was 'destitute and deserving' and 'there should be no educational test whatever applied to candidates'. In the hierarchy of admission criteria to the JHOA the levels of acceptability ranged from the lowest, the workhouse pauper that the Poor Law authorities supported. The next level was the deserving orphan that Cohen supported, and the highest level of acceptability was the educationally deserving that the 'other members of the committee' supported against Cohen's suggestion.<sup>65</sup> The hierarchy provides an identifiable means of understanding the distinctions made between candidates and highlights the significance of education. The new intake at the opening of the Gabriel Home in 1911 created a problem two years later when many were of an age to be transferred to the Main Building. The Headmaster reported 'a large number of Gabriel Home children were 'unfit' educationally and 'some will have to be returned unless the community provide financial assistance for special classes'.<sup>66</sup>

Kaye objected as a general policy to children going to local Central Schools and his reasons showed an institutional bias rather than one that favoured the interests of the children. He opposed the reduction in the number of domestic girls – the older girls who spent their last year in domestic duties – as it would create a need for outside labour and would take the girls away from their

'domestic training'. The 'domestic and scholastic machinery and routine' would be interfered with. Kaye also objected because 'in sending our boys and girls to Central Schools we should be depriving the Orphanage of its best scholars'.<sup>67</sup> It was an argument for keeping to the status quo used by the Poor Law Inspector of Schools Edward Tufnell in the 1870s when he objected to Jane Senior's report on district schools. She recommended sending the children to local schools which meant disbanding the residential district schools as she thought they were 'corrupting'. Tufnell argued that the presence of orphans had a 'salutary influence' and called them the 'salt of the schools' because he believed their permanent presence was beneficial.<sup>68</sup> The tide of opinion favoured Senior and the barrack-type district schools were phased out from the 1890s. The idea of sending children to local schools was accepted by the state and was a policy of the reformers - for them the continuation of institutional education was not 'good enough' even if it was at Norwood. Kaye's objections, as much as they seemed self-serving, expressed an educational ideology that 'served as one of the best weapons in the arsenal of socialization and community management'.<sup>69</sup> It was an ideology that was at odds with what the state was promoting. The idea of state schooling was also accepted by American Jewish orphanages and by the 1920s was well established.



## **Institutionalism–The Progressiveness of Jewish Orphanages in America**

Goldrich, who visited Norwood in 1926, was superintendent of the cottage facility, Pleasantville situated in Westchester County bordering New York City, which claimed to have followed 'the progressive tendencies of the times'.<sup>70</sup> There was a strong reformist attitude amongst the trustees of that institution which he inherited and wanted to impart to Norwood. His support of local schooling was not surprising as most managers in Jewish orphanages supported local schooling and as early as 1906 most Jewish children went to them. In 1913 the president of the JFH of Philadelphia said 'our children go to public school, mingle with others and get a more normal vision of the world'. Wolfenstein at the CJOA in contrast was a staunch supporter of institutional schooling. He believed schools which exercised total control over their pupils could more effectively acculturate the children. In 1920 under his successor the policy was reversed and 'public school education finally won out' with most children going to outside schools.<sup>71</sup> The situation at Norwood was backward compared with American Jewish orphanages. Nevertheless, changes in British education policy in the 1930s when primary and secondary education was separated was to force Norwood to reverse its policy.

Goldrich was in charge of what was regarded as the most

progressive institution of its kind. The HSGS had moved to the rural location of Pleasantville in 1912. The new place was based on the cottage home system with each cottage having 25 children of mixed ages under the supervision of a house mother.<sup>72</sup> In 1929 the CJOA decided to move to a cottage home facility and renamed itself Bellefaire.<sup>73</sup> 'The cottage system represented an institutional response to the charge that the orphanage stifled development of individual character. 'The homage that the orphanage paid to the home' was made a reality by two progressive Jewish institutions. However, the HOA of New York retained the belief like Norwood that it was 'an exception of its kind' not to be compared with others that gave institutions a bad name and never converted. However, 'in the second decade [it] supported outside schooling and viewed the public school curriculum as providing the best preparation for adult life'.<sup>74</sup>

The alternatives of the orphanage and cottage plan became synonymous with conservative and forward thinking respectively. The size of the cottage allowed individuality in the children's lives not easily achieved in a large institution like Norwood. In the cottage home the dormitory was replaced by the bedroom and the dining hall by the dining room. The vastness of the congregate institution was reduced to the personal dimensions of the family home. In America by 1936 there were some 15,000 'cottage

mothers'.<sup>75</sup> 'Between the years 1910 and 1930 the cottage plan institutions throughout the country gradually decreased in size of their units, from 25/30 to 12/15 youngsters.'<sup>76</sup> The smaller Gabriel Home with its fifty juniors was a substantial reduction in the size compared with the Main Building with over three and fifty children. Only in that respect can Norwood be said to have accommodated itself to the process of downsizing. Even so there was no conversion to the family cottage home until a new generation of trustees came in during the 1950s.

The cottage home was one alternative to the congregate institution; another was 'the unwalled institution' - boarding out. 'In Massachusetts a favourable climate for de-institutionalism of children was created' whereas New York became 'the orphanage capital of America'.<sup>77</sup> Massachusetts had 'an army of volunteer and state employed visitors who investigated households' suitable for fostering. They paved the way for the emergence of social workers as 'the new, professional practitioners of outdoor charity by displacing ... institutional child-care experts'.<sup>78</sup> In the 1920s orphanages 'were increasingly under attack from social workers who were convinced fostering was far superior to orphanages for caring for dependent children'. Institutions responded and more children were fostered.<sup>79</sup> In 1910, 65% of children were in institutions and 35% in foster homes but by 1933 it was respectively 58% and

42%. At the HOA in 1916 there were 426 children boarded out and 1,329 in the institution. By 1940 there were 1,000 boarded out and 617 in the institution.<sup>80</sup>

The change was promoted through the movement to coordinate Jewish child care charities. The Clearing Bureau acted as a central agency to allocate children to various types of care rather than to go direct to the orphanages themselves. 'As an independent body admissions were assessed on need and not empty beds.' In the period 1921-4 New York, Cleveland and Philadelphia set up Children's Bureaus which 'in keeping with prevailing ideas in the social welfare field ... tended to favour foster care over institutionalism for Jewish children'.<sup>81</sup> In New York, where previously the institution was accepted as the best way, by 1937 there was 'the acceptance of the principle, that children under the age of 10 should preferably be placed in foster homes'.<sup>82</sup> In the UK the idea of the coordinating agency was rejected by the JBG and there was no body to allocate children to the most appropriate type of care. Boarding out was not the policy pursued at Norwood though the After Care Committee did so with leavers as 'experience has shown that it is more satisfactory for growing lads to be placed with approved private families, than to continue what practically amounted to institution life by residence in an Apprentices' Hostel'.<sup>83</sup> Such was the concern of the debilitating effects of

orphanage life that the Committee, in terms normally reserved for prisoners, was advised 'to let them out as much as possible on their own initiatives' to help them 'take their lives into their own hands'.<sup>84</sup>

Boarding out was seen as a threat as it was an alternative to institutional control. In 1922 the New York Bureau of Jewish Research recommended the extension of fostering and the merging of the HOA and Pleasantville as 'it concluded dependent children should be kept out of institutions'. Despite the acceptance of fostering 'the idea persisted that only a great institution could provide children with all the benefits to make them good citizens'. The system was exploited to serve institutional objectives. Fostered 'children were removed ... when beds had to be filled and the boarding-out systems were converted into feeder pipelines for their respective asylums' as they controlled boarding-out.<sup>85</sup> From the 1920s with the establishment of independent agencies controlled by social workers Jewish orphanages were gradually phased out and replaced by Jewish Child Care Associations which handled adoption and fostering.

In 1939 the Brooklyn Hebrew Orphan Asylum was the first to act, closing down its operation. 'A consensus had been reached that no matter how good institutional care was it was a doomed system', and the Brooklyn Home boasted it was 'the institution that emptied

itself'.<sup>86</sup> The HOA closed in 1941 and was replaced by the Association for Jewish Children. The JFH in 1941 became part of the Association for Jewish Children of Philadelphia. 'As they were replaced by adoption and foster home placement as the preferred methods of care for dependent children, Jewish orphanages eventually became things of the past.'<sup>87</sup> At Bellefaire, the superintendent Michael Sharlitt opposed the local coordinating body, the Federation, which wanted to promote the boarding home formula and raised funds independently of it. However, by 1939 'forward-looking Board members felt the time had arrived for a reappraisal of the institution's programme'. The Home ceased to be a place for orphans and became a centre for emotionally troubled children.<sup>88</sup>

These developments bypassed Norwood. The rejection of charity coordination by the JBG chairman in 1925 was excused on the grounds that a central authority would be 'a dictatorship', and he did not want 'the JBG associated with a scheme that might fail'. It was true that 'an agency that lost its contributors also lost most of its autonomy but community pressure [in New York] made federation inevitable'.<sup>89</sup> However, in failing to take up the American idea, Anglo-Jewish charity denied the possibility of boarding out children. Indeed, the decision was tantamount to ensuring Norwood continued to operate with admissions based on institutional capacity

when the American experience showed the trend towards its disbandment. The *JC* made the accusation that 'only the force of circumstances has compelled the JBG to adopt new measures'.<sup>90</sup> It was to take the war-time evacuation for the force of change - in location , behaviour and partners - to take place.<sup>91</sup>



## **Institutionalism – the “Child Developing Institution”**

The cottage home and fostering were considered better alternatives to living in the institution by professionals. However, where the institution was the accepted model the alternative to ‘a system of a total asylum’ was one that was reformed.<sup>92</sup> In America the Jewish orphanages developed an adapted model - the ‘child developing institution’ - based on the liberalisation of institutional regimes ‘to allow greater spontaneity, freedom and personal growth’ which was established in the inter-war period.<sup>93</sup> Because it was an internal adaptation that operated within the institution the test of its success was whether that confinement was compatible with progress in child development. Before the period of liberalisation the accepted model at the CJOA was the total asylum. Under its superintendent Wolfenstein, it became ‘firmly entrenched’ based on the belief that proper training and total control would counteract hardships of poor family life, a corrupt environment and poverty. Training meant cultivating obedience and through total obedience the superintendent believed reform could be achieved.<sup>94</sup> It was a regime based on treating children as objects of reform and not as subjects of individual attention. Under the system of the total institution the new entrant ‘is to be shaped and coded into an object that can fed into the administrative machinery to be worked on and smoothly by routine operations’. In this process the physical

boundary between the outside and inside worlds was marked by stripping the child naked to be bathed and clothed in institutional clothes. The psychological boundary was the loss of one's name and thus 'a curtailment of self' by being assigned a number.<sup>95</sup>

The total institution was based on a theory of childhood that stripped the child from inside out and literally 'reformed' it. The stripping was an erasure to form a *tabula rasa*, a template to act upon to produce the desirable social product.<sup>96</sup> It was a notion that contradicted the influence of the Jewish mother and her intensive relationship with the child.<sup>97</sup> The precedent for models of institutional care was the workhouse, prison and reformatory. In these models the child was institutionalised in an environment that was based on a punitive regime. It was a regime followed by the orphanage that went against the time honoured Jewish tradition of the family. The child to emerge from the institution as a personal subject required a transformation. The process of de-institutionalising from the end of the nineteenth century in Jewish orphanages was a gradual discovery of the inadequacies of the asylum model and its replacement by a family centred model. The regimented regimes of Rabbi Wolfenstein at the CJOA and Herman Baar at the HOA, who were both appointed in the mid 1870s, were products of the age of the asylum.<sup>98</sup>

Lionel Simmonds, superintendent at the HOA in the 1920s,

worked on de-institutionalising the asylum and in so doing rejected much of what Baar had taught. Whereas Baar kept the world outside the gates Simmonds aimed at letting the outside world in by removing barriers. He wanted to purge the institution of its nineteenth century practices.<sup>99</sup>

Between Baar's system and Simmonds' de-institutionalising work a shift took place in what it meant to care for children. Under Baar the HOA 'acquired a national reputation as one of the finest institutions of its kind in America' and was a 'golden age' for the institution. His reputation made him a leader of institutional care for children 'to every Jewish community in the nation and in Europe'. Constructed in an elaborate Renaissance style the orphanage was described as 'the handsomest asylum in the country' but life inside was 'simple, Spartan, repetitious, nearly pleasureless'.<sup>100</sup> Under Simmonds 'the twenties were also golden years for the HOA, a time when everything seemed to be going well'. In the years that had elapsed between the two eras what was golden had changed from the external lustre of its appearance with a reputation built on tower building to one where the gold was less tangible but shone in the faces of the children as 'the twenties were probably the happiest years' for them.<sup>101</sup>

A transformation took place between 1900 and 1920 at the HOA and the HSGS and was seen in a

more home-like environment, less regimentation, relaxed discipline, self-government, encouraged closer personal relationships between

children and staff, efforts to foster individuality, broader educational opportunities, a wider variety of recreational activities, better aftercare and greater professionalism.<sup>102</sup>

Michael Sharlitt, superintendent at the CJOA, saw the transformation 'inverted the fraction' and changed the conception of children as one regimented mass to one where each child was 'a big separate sovereign one'. The appointment of a psychiatrist in 1924 was significant when 'individuality' was used with new earnestness and 'the regimentation concept was getting a battle'.<sup>103</sup> The rebirth of the CJOA as a cottage home facility symbolised the liberal regime making for gentler standards 'not possible in gross barrack-like playrooms, dining room and dormitories'.<sup>104</sup> The measure of being a good enough institution at Bellefaire was through a combination of a structural conversion to a cottage facility and a liberal regime; de-institutionalising thus progressed at two levels. Sharlitt saw Bellefaire as redefining the word institutionalism 'in word and thought'.<sup>105</sup> The reinterpretation was not based on institutional living a generation ago but on a 1920s version that was 'much more based on the family model' and more in keeping with the Jewish tradition.<sup>106</sup>

Bellefaire was recognised and respected for achieving this positive turnabout. Sharlitt advocated for institutions that failed to do so and reflected negative characteristics 'the real therapy is

operation by surgery'. Moreover, 'if such an institution does not survive surgical treatment, there is the time to refer to it with discriminating bitterness'.<sup>107</sup> He reflected on the emotional damage inflicted on children through lost opportunity to change with the times. The Jewish orphanages in America judging by the standards of the time 'came in for high praise from many quarters' and one scholar recalled his experience, 'of its time, the home was progressive'.<sup>108</sup> The regimented institution was no longer good enough and managers like Simmonds and Sharlitt, both of whom had been residents as orphans, had also a personal determination to improve the lives of the children they had experienced at first hand.<sup>109</sup> Before 1900 superintendents of Jewish orphanages had been trained in other fields – they were rabbis and educators – and had little experience in child welfare. This was true of Norwood as education was pre-eminent and the superintendent's role subsidiary to the Headmaster's.<sup>110</sup> Bellefaire indicated the necessity of making the welfare role pre-eminent even if it required 'surgical treatment'.

The regimented institution of the nineteenth century had changed into the child developing institution between the wars. Sharlitt wanted to keep 'the Bellefaire formula ... as a pattern for underprivileged children'.<sup>111</sup> It was a formula that left Norwood behind in respect of structural conversion, charity coordination and school education, although liberalisation had progressed with Kaye's

reforms. It was a state of modified regimentation that 'the children in the HOA of the thirties were likely to view as a benevolent prison'.<sup>112</sup> However, the process of de-institutionalisation did not stop there and Bellefaire from 1940 served not only the social needs of orphans but also those of emotionally troubled children.<sup>113</sup> The change came 'with the psychologist and psychiatrist moving into platform leadership for the care of underprivileged children'.<sup>114</sup> The institution took on the care of the emotionally troubled and the care of 'normal' children was by boarding out. The orphan of parental incapacity became the psychiatric orphan.

It was a Victorian critic Ambrose Bierce before the Civil War who stated that a child who 'by careful cultivation of its rudimentary sense of loyalty is taught to know his place. It is then instructed in the arts of dependence and servitude'. He thus recognised early on the danger of long term institutional care.<sup>115</sup> The institution had an intoxicating hold even on reforming superintendents like Sharlitt and his predecessor Edward Lashman 'who stubbornly held fast to the principle of institutionalising dependent ghetto children' and who never seriously considered fostering which had been adopted by many Protestant reformers.<sup>116</sup> Ludwig Bernstein, a Jewish social Worker, in 1906 argued

do not think that your grand institution is going to substitute the home; those that believe it are deceiving themselves. The non-Jewish caring methods have shown us the road. Do not try to be regressive. Let us ... develop it.<sup>117</sup>

That development, the process of de-institutionalising, had thrown up the essential incompatibility between the institution and the normal child. That became apparent in America in the 1940s. Once recognised it doomed the orphanage. It was a process that Norwood was to follow after the Second World War but in the 1930s the outstanding issue facing the institution - the separation of home from school - had to be addressed.



## **Institutionalism – Reluctant Reorganisation at Norwood**

The importance of education was declared in the mission statements of the Jews' Hospital, JOA and the JHOA. Education in all its aspects – secular, religious, vocational and cultural - was the driving force led by the Headmaster to rescue the Jewish child. The notion of rescue for Christian denominations had a spiritual dimension whereas for Anglo-Jewry the concern was for the child who had the capacity to be reformed. The objective was compromised in several ways. The JOA defended the interest of the orphan at the time of Amalgamation. Though seen as 'undeserving' because of parental deficiencies the child's admission was a social necessity as the abandoned child was a reproach to the community. The JHOA described its dual admission policy in 1884 as being 'for the reception of Orphans and the children of deserving Jewish poor'.<sup>118</sup> The compromise guaranteed entry of the orphan when 'the principle [was] ... that no child shall be allowed to become a candidate who is not in every way, a deserving object of charity'.<sup>119</sup>

The policy was also compromised by the admission of the Jewish child in the workhouse and district school. Under the Poor Law though the child was not considered undeserving it was treated as such because of parental contamination. The JHOA accepted the workhouse child because it received a subvention from the Boards of Guardians, it placed the child in its own denominational

institution and it fulfilled the mission to reform the social outcast. Admission was discretionary and competed with the elective discretion of the subscribers who hoped 'in the interests of the community, that this class may at no time bear a large proportion to other inmates'.<sup>120</sup> In Manchester the local JBG took the view that the workhouse was suitable for 'incorrigible' cases 'without feeling it had placed their religious observance in jeopardy'.<sup>121</sup> Incorrigibility meant 'children of disreputable, irreligious and ignorant parents who were unlikely to develop into socially acceptable citizens'.<sup>122</sup> These were children for whom education; secular, religious and social, was futile. The symptoms of such futility were seen as the concurrence of all three defects and gave justification to Manchester's religious dismissal.

Edward Conway, Principal at Norwood in the 1950s, argued that the caring of such children was seen as a product of assimilation in gentile society and not a traditional concern. 'Jews are not a missionary people and have no evangelical zeal to reclaim lost souls.'<sup>123</sup> The English Poor Law was social legislation that the community adapted itself to Jewish familial culture. As late as 1923 the complaint was made that Norwood 'will not accept any more Poor Law boys and girls, as they say that by doing so they will prevent the building from being put to legitimate use'.<sup>124</sup> It was a struggle for the community to break from an accommodation in

which lost souls were not reclaimed. The mission of Norwood was to admit the deserving child but by the 1920s doubts were cast on its meaning. 'The connotation of 'deserving' meant orphanhood, poverty, destitution and unsuitability of the home.' The introduction of Widows' Pension allowed the possibility of the child staying with the surviving parent and opened up 'the whole question of institutional life as the best substitute for the home, a matter on which there is a diversity of opinion'.<sup>125</sup>

Welfare pensions were accepted as a state responsibility for people who previously were consigned to the workhouse. It called into question the purpose of that institution when the individualistic philosophy of the Poor Law was no longer relevant. The distinction between deserving and undeserving poor that was applied by the JHOA and the JBG in its early years was found to be untenable when many applicants were fleeing religious persecution in the late nineteenth century. The Poor Law distinction that blamed destitution on the individual was now very difficult to apply. After the First World War the impact of the depression made the distinction unworkable.<sup>126</sup> The 1929 Local Government Act and 1930 Poor Law Act dismantled the 1834 framework and the institution of the workhouse. It was a significant change as 'the inter-war period ... was in many ways a climacteric period of institutions and faith in their social importance would never be as strong again'.<sup>127</sup>

The distinction based on the deserving child was also being undermined by a new recognition of the family. The orphan as an outcast was alienated from middle class values of the family and the Jewish orphan from the traditional insistence on the importance of family life. The family unit was the means of socialising pauper children and developing their individualism. The orphanage provided an institutional environment for inculcating middle class values devoid of that individualism, but it held the child as a 'figure of promise and hope' in which no distinction was made between deserving, orphan and pauper children.<sup>128</sup> The historian Reena Friedman wrote that in America,

the study of the Jewish orphanages shatters the time honoured myth that the Jewish family emerged unscathed from the twin traumas of migration and acculturation. At the same time it affirms the strength and resilience of Jewish family bonds in new and illuminating ways.<sup>129</sup>

Norwood between the wars was a period of internal reforms. The old ideology of institutionalism was breaking down and in a period of post migration and acculturation a new one was replacing it in which the family would be reaffirmed. The role of education was one indicator of the change taking place.

Isidore Salmon, in his 1927 *Memorandum*, pointed out the development of 'social qualities' of the children at Norwood are 'in the main accepted as inseparable from the circumstances connected

with the care and education of a large number of children placed under one roof'.<sup>130</sup> The 'evils' he referred to were part of the system of education that he recognised was 'a mechanism for instituting patterns of social differentiation'. It was a differentiation 'not only between forms of knowledge but also between' the scholars and children outside and presented in the form of the curriculum as 'the natural consequence of their psychological and intellectual aptitudes'.<sup>131</sup> He thought 'the tendency of training under such conditions was to reduce to one mould the varying temperaments dealt with' and bred youngsters who were at a distinct disadvantage as compared with other children.<sup>132</sup> He had visited America and wanted to implement outside schooling like they had to deal with the 'unnatural tendency' of isolating children from the outside world.

The force for change came from outside with the government commissioned 1926 *Hadow Report* on the education of children. It proposed that primary and post-primary education be separated at the age of 11 plus and compulsory education be extended to the age of 15. The governors realised that its implementation would have 'a far-reaching effect upon the internal organisation of the Orphanage'.<sup>133</sup> In 1929 approval was given to a three year scheme of reorganisation from 1930-1 to implement the Report. The orphanage school would be divided into a senior and junior school

at the age of 11.<sup>134</sup> The implementation was delayed until 1934 when the school was split into Infants and Junior Departments with Kaye as Head of both areas supported by Ivor Rosenthal promoted to the position of Head Assistant.<sup>135</sup> The change was limited to staffing without addressing structural issues of institutionalism.

The separation of juniors and infants, the introduction of mixed classes for the under elevens, and the streaming of children between the academic and the practical minded, exposed the limitation of the building to cope with the expansion of education under the Hadow reorganisation. The system of education traditionally was the means of binding and maintaining the institutional mould. It was now a means of breaking it at a time when the defence of the institution was stronger than ever. A theme of inter-war education was the importance attached to the 'individuality' of each child and the need to provide separate accommodation for children of different ages. Norwood and other denominational schools had to respond to a new educational spirit.<sup>136</sup>

Governors appreciated that the boy 'leaves Norwood to that vast world of which he is so ignorant, easily submerged and lost'. Sending him to an outside school as Salmon had recommended was lost in the belief that they could still declare that 'we try to give him that which nothing can really replace, the loving individual attention

of at least one parent, and in many cases that of both parents'.<sup>137</sup>

The family model was accepted as the ideal and Norwood claimed it proved the lie to the assertion that

large orphanages such as ours are cold, barrack-like institutions, deadening alike to body and soul – at least efficient shelters. A visit to our Norwood orphanage and a glimpse of the happy faces of the children are the best answer to this assertion. The Orphanage at Norwood is a large one, housing some 400 children ... In spite of this we boldly affirm that it is a real home. As far as possible the girls and boys live the lives our children live.<sup>138</sup>

The affirmation was reinforced by the visit of Dr Norris and Marian Warner, the inspectors from the Children's Branch of the Home Office in 1931. The visit lasting three hours was conducted by the Headmaster and Gertrude Spielman. The report as recorded in the Norwood minutes stated that the children showed a 'complete lack of repression' and an 'absolute naturalness'. The school was evidently well run on up to-date lines and recommended others running institutions should visit Norwood for 'encouragement and inspiration'.<sup>139</sup>

Pre-arranged conducted visits to institutions according to the sociologist Erving Goffman were likely to be dressed up and 'in the guise of being shown all, visitors are likely to be shown only the cooperative inmates and the better parts of the establishment'. The fiction may be tacitly agreed by children, visitors and staff to give

an appropriate image so that 'they can see for themselves that high humane standards are being maintained'.<sup>140</sup> His strictures suggested it was a successful model of presentation. It showed to the Anglo-Jewish community and to the outside world a model of good institutionalism. Gary Polster, a CJOA orphan recognised the reforms of the 1920s and 1930s changed the institution from a military-style to one which was much more based on the family model. Nevertheless, 'despite all attempts to make the Jewish Orphan Asylum a more humane place they stubbornly held fast to the principle of institutionalising children'.<sup>141</sup> The humanity of Norwood was also tainted by its institutionalism. The assertion by governors that Norwood was a real home made it good enough for them and for the inspectors that saw it as setting an example for less acceptable Homes. But like the CJOA it clung to the retention of the notion of 'an asylum for poor Jewish orphans'.<sup>142</sup>

The orphanage was under pressure of numbers in the 1930s when it was full to capacity. Limitation of admission was no longer based on 'a pre-occupation with the social product'.<sup>143</sup> The denominational bias in admissions was used by outside agencies to push Norwood to accept Jewish children 'who have up till now, been cared for by them. The Scattered Homes, the Highbury Home, the Friendly Societies and Orphanage Committees are doing all possible to meet these demands' but saw Norwood as the place for Jewish

children.<sup>144</sup> The LCC, which ran Lamorbie Residential Home, requested the JBG to transfer children with some success to Norwood.<sup>145</sup> The ethnic basis of admissions allowed an undifferentiated intake of disadvantaged children – in all 27 categories were listed by Conway under his stewardship.<sup>146</sup>

The pressure to expand, which before 1914 led to a bigger institution, in the climate of the 1930s had different consequences to take into account the *Hadow Report*. The London Orphan Aid Societies asked, 'Is it reasonable that the accommodation should be limited to 425?' and favoured rebuilding Norwood.<sup>147</sup> It agreed it was desirable to separate the education from the domestic premises by building a new school. Basil Henriques' had recommended

the necessity of altering conditions at Norwood so as to give the children more individual attention. It was his opinion that the school should be divided into houses with a house mother and house father in charge of each house. The teaching staff should not be in charge of the children after school hours.<sup>148</sup>

Married couples were to act as foster parents for the boys and 'ladies' for the girls and the teaching staff confined entirely to scholastic duties. The houses were each to have their own dining room, quiet room and games room and the 'dormitories to be adapted'.<sup>149</sup> The governors stated in 'the Jewish Orphanage at Norwood ... our effort must needs be the endless pursuit of the

ideal'.<sup>150</sup> The pursuit was 'a greater scheme of reorganisation' and the Committee thought 'the psychological moment had arrived to give effect to it'.<sup>151</sup>

The scheme could not go ahead without sending the children to outside schools. Kaye had opposed that possibility whereas Henriques believed 'attending LCC schools – an absolute necessity for the well-being of the orphans'.<sup>152</sup> The change would reduce the role of the Headmaster and in 1932 Kaye signified his intention to resign. At the same time a committee was set up under Salmon 'to explore the possibility for improvements at the Orphanage'.<sup>153</sup> Henriques confided in his diary that it was a 'splendid idealistic scheme which will never be passed'.<sup>154</sup> His scepticism was justified as 'the President viewed with disfavour the suggestion of breaking up the present Main Building' because of the costs involved and raising the funds. An alternative site was recommended rather than a reorganisation on the same site. Such a proposition was opposed by Spielman who felt 'our children were happy and healthy and they thrive at Norwood'. The change for her was unwarranted and moving to another site was unrealistic as the 'the cottage system was most costly'. The inability to make progress was like a rerun of the setback to structural reform in the twenties with the same people involved. One governor commented on the impasse that a major change called for 'courage and initiative' by the

community.<sup>155</sup> There was no on site reorganisation and nothing came of the idea of an alternative location.

Kaye retired in 1936. In his retirement speech Dayan Feldman praised him for developing the "Home" character of the orphanage to a high degree. He claimed 'the children felt they were part of a large family and left a spirit of homeliness and Jewishness'.<sup>156</sup> Kaye left Norwood a more humane institution than when he joined it in 1910 but the institutional structure – the retention of secular education, the lack of separation of home and school and the barrack-style accommodation - remained untouched. He introduced liberal reforms which helped to reduce the narrowing influence and emotional stunting of institutional life but he opposed children going to outside schools unless they were exceptional enough to win scholarships. His commitment to institutionalism meant there was no promotion of boarding out as an alternative.

At the time of his retirement 'the emphasis on institutional and substitute family care was looking unbalanced compared with the alternative preventative social services'.<sup>157</sup> Norwood was

not exceptional and other

barrack-style public institutions in some cases resisted change and in London in 1946 eleven of them still functioned .... In one respect there was progress – a few local authorities in 1929 elected to have the children's homes taken over by their educational department. The tendency was then to develop the homes as boarding schools and this produced a happier atmosphere.<sup>158</sup>

The American Jewish experience whereby orphanages were transformed with the normal child remaining in the community through fostering and the psychologically impaired cared for by professional workers had been rejected by the Anglo-Jewish community. Norwood in 1936 was an institution still structurally based on the old JHOA and one that had yet to embrace the child based individualism that the American Jewish orphanages accepted.

Kaye's successor, Hyman Content, was faced with a situation on his appointment where the reorganisation had still not been implemented. Both the education and domestic sides were a source of disquiet. On the domestic side of the orphanage there was staff conflict over who was in charge. Ivor Rosenthal, as assistant Head, took on the role of superintendent though the control of domestic matters was largely in the hands of Matron. There was 'fearful friction' between Matron and Content and he asked for dual responsibility to cease. 'The state of things at the Orphanage was extremely unsatisfactory and the opinion of the Committee was that a thorough re-organisation was necessary.' It was agreed there was to be one authority – the Superintendent in charge of the domestic side with Matron reporting to him.<sup>159</sup> The separation of the Headmaster from the role of Superintendent was implemented in April 1938 with Content only responsible for the scholastic, secular

and religious, side of the Orphanage and Rosenthal responsible for the home.<sup>160</sup> The change was a long time in coming.

It was outside pressure that pushed Norwood to act on outside education. The Board of Education in their 1937 inspection found

the classrooms in this residential institution are anything but satisfactory. The rooms are generally full and badly lighted. Facilities for such practical activities as science, handicraft, etc. are quite inadequate and the woodwork shed is thoroughly unsatisfactory.<sup>161</sup>

The Local Education Authority approved plans for a new school with the separation of senior and junior students. The plan for a new building was overtaken by events with the outbreak of war and the evacuation of the children in 1939. The inevitable was accepted that the return to the old system could not be allowed to happen. The Butler Education Act of 1944 stated there ought to be a clear break between primary and secondary education.<sup>162</sup> Before the children returned to Norwood, it was decided it was time

to close the school so that the premises of the Orphanage are for use entirely as a home and social centre for the Children. It is the considered opinion of the Committee that the children would benefit more by attending local schools, which naturally would be better equipped for providing the types of education for our children than the Jewish Orphanage could ever hope to be.<sup>163</sup>

In the nineteenth century the COS and the JBG were bearers of a 'time-spirit' as agents of the new social consciousness. Now

there was a new time-spirit based not on a discourse of supplicants, charities and philanthropists but on a discourse of the recipient, the welfare of the child. The 1933 Children and Young Persons Act made 'paramount' the new spirit and the 1908 Children Act was its first legislative milestone.<sup>164</sup> It carried with it a force for change to reform the 'rigid conformity' that was a feature of the nineteenth century institutional system.<sup>165</sup> Reena Friedman in her study of American Jewish orphanages attributed to Jewish traditions the emphasis on education, support of the orphan and the value of children. She claimed they infused the Jewish orphanage programmes with a 'unique quality' and was a source of their progressiveness.<sup>166</sup> The picture in the UK was less positive.

By the early 1920s the world of Victorian and Edwardian Anglo-Jewry was drifting away. The generation of Jewish magnates who forged Anglo-Jewish institutions was dead or dying. Forms and institutions remained, persisting into and beyond the Second World War but the substance was eroding. The community continued to plod forward, little altered in outward form or appearance.<sup>167</sup>

Norwood in failing to tackle structural reforms had retained the outward form and appearance of the old time-spirit.

The overarching theme in this chapter looks at the liberalisation measures of the inter-war years. Though they were advances on the pre-1914 situation they had not addressed the structural issues. Sharlitt's call for surgical treatment to avoid a

'discriminating bitterness' was a poignant warning at the orphanage. Opportunities for progress at Norwood had been lost because of internal conflicts between governors and lack of external pressure for reform from within the community. The main force for change had come from the outside, led by the state. The recommendations of the Curtis Committee set up by the government reported in 1946 on the conditions in voluntary homes. It found barrack-style regimes run by voluntary institutions had big disadvantages – 'drabness and over-regimentation and 'lack of emotional support'. The 'good enough' Home had a regime based on small units of accommodation and sent children to local schools. It encouraged the range of experiences that was familiar to the family child. It was where there was no corporal punishment and deviant behaviour such as pilfering was treated as a symptom rather than a crime.<sup>168</sup>

The subject of the next chapter explores the issue of persistence and resistance to change with reference to discipline and punishment and the wider subject of deviance and a counter-institutional culture. It provides a different approach to assessing whether Norwood proved 'good enough'.



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- 51) USA, AJ220/1/5, Basil Henriques diaries, 20/10/1926, 9/12/1926, 29/9/1927.
- 52) USA, AJ220/1/5, Basil Henriques diaries, 24/3/1927.
- 53) USA, C/28, Letter Book, 6/12/1895.
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- 56) LJM, tape 52, 1981, tape 38, 1981.
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- 58) *JC* 29/1/1954.
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- 66) NC, House committee minutes, 10/8/1912, 15/5/1916; *JC* 27/2/1914.
- 67) Conway, *The Institutional Care*, p114-6.
- 68) Peters, *Orphan Texts*, pp12-13.
- 69) Black, *The Social Politics*, p118.
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- 75) Reena Friedman, *These are Our Children*, p71.
- 76) Reena Friedman, *These are Our Children*, p226.
- 77) Crenson, *Building the Invincible Orphanage*, pp 176,255; Bogen, *The Luckiest Orphan*, pp188-90.
- 78) Crenson, *Building the Invincible Orphanage*, p199.

- 79) Reena Friedman, *These are Our Children*, p187.
- 80) Jack Patten, *The Children's Institution* (McCutchan Publishing, Berkeley, California, 1968), pp15-16; Reena Friedman, *These are Our Children*, p277.
- 81) Reena Friedman, *These are Our Children*, pp187-8.
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- 83) NC, AR 1914.
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- 102) Reena Friedman, *These are Our Children*, p74.
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- 104) Sharlitt, *As I Remember*, pp181-2.
- 105) Sharlitt, *As I Remember*, pp161-4.
- 106) Polster, *A Member of the Herd*, p312.
- 107) Sharlitt, *As I Remember*, pp161-4.
- 108) Reena Friedman, *These are Our Children*, p187. In America the word used for scholar was alumnus; Sharlitt wrote the recollection in 1984.
- 109) Bogen, *The Luckiest Orphans*, p183; Polster, *A Member of the Herd*, p296.
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- 112) Bogen, *The Luckiest Orphans*, p225.
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- 144) USA, A3075, 3/9: Chairman's Report, 6/3/1933.
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- 150) NC, AR 1934.
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## **Chapter 6: Counter-Institutionalism in Anglo - Jewry - The Norwood Rebellion**

The research for this chapter relied on sources recorded by children who went to institutions, both Norwood and others – autobiographies, transcripts of interviews and articles in the *NOSA Newsletter*. Without this source a history of counter-institutionalism and the Norwood Rebellion would not have been possible. The use of oral history is supplemented by reference to research on the role of myths in life stories as explored in Samuel and Thompson's *The Myths We Live By* and the psychology of memory as analysed in Sabbagh's *Remembering Our Childhood*. In Goffman's *Asylums* the authoritarian nature of the 'total institution' provides an insight in to the character of Norwood. The organisational culture was characterised as a 'total institution' in which the children led an enclosed and disciplined life under the control of the Headmaster and a board of governors appointed from the Jewish community. Though there is little written on the counter-culture of institutions Humphries' *Hooligans or Rebels?* - a study of resistance by adolescents to agencies of control - provides a useful introduction. Information in official documentation such as annual reports and minutes are referred to but are necessarily limited in extent.<sup>1</sup>

The institutional environment created three issues unanticipated when the asylum was established - an illiberal system

of regimentation, a 'narrowing influence' that coloured institutional life with a monotonous grey existence and an 'emotional stunting' of the children deprived them of personal attention. Over the course of the 85 years of the institution's existence the institutional disadvantages were countered by two countervailing forces. Externally, the social impact of advances in child development necessitated reforms at Norwood. Internally, the children adapted by creating a counter-culture. Officially condemned it nevertheless thrived and its history was excluded from official records. This chapter examines the counter-culture and in particular the Norwood Rebellion of 1921.

Chronologically the rebellion took place several years after the First World War which was a turning point in the institution's history. The pre-war period was a time of institutional optimism and expansion and the countervailing forces were incipient. The institution was proudly displayed as an example of Anglo-Jewish integrity caring for its own. The display took on a personal dimension when 'rosy-cheeked and healthy-looking orphans' were paraded at the annual public dinner. The community found it 'good enough' to make sentimental appeals as in 'the olden days' for its project of cultural assimilation, religious orthodoxy and training for employment but 'now higher standards had to be maintained'.<sup>2</sup> The inter-war period was a time when the progress in child development

forced the institution to recognise the 'evils of institutionalism'.

Recognition came from the children most exceptionally by a revolt and from outside forces that called for liberal measures to temper the evils. What had previously had been good enough for the institution was no longer good enough for the children.

The inter-war institution at Norwood was humanised by liberal measures, but good as they were they proved not enough to counter the rising tide of social concern about the treatment of children in institutions. Activities such as field games, band-playing, lectures, trips and treats were 'unserious activities' which helped to lift the inmates out of themselves making the child oblivious for the time being to his or her actual situation. The activities were attempts to counter the 'narrowing influence' but their insufficiency left 'important deprivational effects of total institutions'.<sup>3</sup> There was the persistency of two other elements. Norwood remained unrestructured physically by retaining the congregate building and unrestructured ideologically by maintaining an authoritarian culture. The measure of its persistence was that style of living was still seen as acceptable after three quarters of a century. On the eve of the Second World War the system of child dependency

underwent a sudden and dramatic change – never to be the same again. Children who were used to living in an institution – insulated, isolated and knowing little of life in the outside world and religions other than Judaism - suddenly found themselves billeted in private homes in the wider community.<sup>4</sup>

The War changed attitudes and ideas about how to care for children. The way children were cared for such as the discipline and punishment they were subjected to - the regimented routines that controlled every aspect of their lives, the food they ate that physically sustained them but left an 'institutional taste' that is well remembered in many scholars' recollections - are aspects of the unrestructured ideology of institutional living examined in this chapter.

## **Institutionalism–Adaptation to Institutional Life**

The style of management at Norwood was characteristic of the 'total institution'. It was a style where 'control and management is based on the principle that individual children must not step out of line and discipline is very strict and conformity is insisted on'.<sup>5</sup> Norwood was a total institution 'where a large number of like-situated individuals' were congregated in one place 'cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time'.<sup>6</sup> The total institution was seen as the most effective environment for training children, and according to this approach, in such an environment children were turned into 'sober, industrious citizens'. It was based on a social theory that the children contested through a counter-institutionalism that was a culture of deviance. The fact that it was unstructured and not focussed on any specific chronological moment has meant that 'deviance history' is often lost. It was not part of Norwood official recorded history and traces of its recovery rely on the memories of scholars. Boris Cyrulnik states in his study of *Resilience* of children, 'if we attempt to understand this history ... we can associate memories that confer meaning with a disobedience to the past that encourages innovation'.<sup>7</sup> The approach adopted here is to discover the meaning of deviance culture as an innovatory response to the authoritarian regime.

The social theory in its Conservative Christian form practised

in Germany before the First World War 'maintained that by forcing the child to obey authority and habituating it to a moral way of life, the foundations for morality and for an autonomous ethical sense would be laid'.<sup>8</sup> Wilhelm Rhiel, an institution director in 1912 admitted

much of the resistance within the reformatories was grounded in bitterness, since many of the children were very fond of their homes and parents and – wrongly – believed that they had suffered an injustice in being removed from them.<sup>9</sup>

The reaction of some educators was to see such resistance as 'a stubborn refusal to bow to legitimate authority and to face up to one's own sins and weaknesses – as the unreasoning revolt of anarchic egotism against the moral order of the universe'. It gave rise to an apparently increasing resort to corporal punishment as a disciplinary method.<sup>10</sup> Resistance by the inmates was seen as socially immoral whereas the inmates perceived resistance as a legitimate form of protest.

At Norwood the 'Code of Discipline' was strict from the start and one that was inherited from the Jews' Hospital. Edward Conway, its first major historian, highlighted how the style had 'remained unchanged until the middle of the twentieth century' when he became Principal.<sup>11</sup> The Code suggested for the JHOA on amalgamation was that

the discipline is not that rigid and ridiculous ... but a ready intelligent obedience to orders, and which seems to allow full play to individuality and yet restrains within proper bounds the undue exuberance of youthful spirits.<sup>12</sup>

Conway's criticism and the experience of scholars suggested otherwise. The total institution operated in American Jewish orphanages resorted to

dehumanising treatment which included admission procedures – referring to children by numbers, hair cropped short, ill-fitting uniforms which stripped them of their individuality with a dreary existence with sterile barrack-style dormitories, silent meals on long benches in great dining halls.<sup>13</sup>

Similarly, many Norwood scholars remember the trauma of admission. David Golding recalled

In just a few hours I had been taken away from my mother and family, my home, my people, and the world that I knew, handed over at the orphanage, stripped, bathed, given a number and the Gabrielite uniform.<sup>14</sup>

He underwent a process of personal and psychological dispossession and was made number 29. With the individual, 'a name identifies, denotes and signifies something, comes to be descriptive of it, and thus takes it out of the realm of the unknown or the amorphous'.<sup>15</sup>

In the orphanage the new entrant became material 'to be shaped and coded into an object' acceptable to the Anglo-Jewish community. The child had to engage in activities that were incompatible with its conception of self such as the artificiality of a

daily regimented life.<sup>16</sup> Golding, who was at Norwood before the Second World War, recalled such a regime where children were 'forced to comply with strict discipline and having their freedom to walk in the outside world severely restricted for the duration of their childhood years'.<sup>17</sup>

The avowed objectives of the institution were straightforward such as 'providing a home for maintaining, educating and apprenticing to industrial employment of poor children of the Jewish religion'.<sup>18</sup> However, each of the official goals 'lets loose a doctrine and within institutions there seems no natural check on the licence and easy interpretation that results'. The conclusion reached by an historian of American institutions is that 'a system of incarceration seems incapable of maintaining decency throughout all its sectors'.<sup>19</sup> In America superintendents of the major Jewish orphanages were committed to moral suasion rather than corporal punishment as the ideal method of disciplining. Despite an official ban on beatings for 'major offences' such as absconding they still took place.<sup>20</sup> N26 who was at Norwood in the 1920s remembered that

the greatest crime was to jump the "wall" and run home because a child was homesick. The ultimate deterrent was a caning in front of all the boys, trousers down. It caused thick wheals on the buttocks. The boy was dressed in girl's clothes, boots and trousers confiscated.<sup>21</sup>

Against the licence of the authority, which one orphan described as based on the 'psychological use of power', the inmate was faced with the necessity of institutional adaptability.<sup>22</sup> It took on a number of forms ranging from acceptability to rejection. One form, 'colonisation' was where 'the inmate maximises his satisfactions from the system to provide a stable, relatively contented existence'.<sup>23</sup> Golding became colonised because

Although in my early days I had hated the place so much, I had now become settled and contented. I had become 'orphanage wise', that is, acquired a second sense which enabled me to gauge just how far one could go with individual boys and masters. How to schmooz for things.<sup>24</sup>

The writer Leslie Thomas was sent to a Barnardo's Home called Dickies. After a few weeks there he felt a 'settled happiness'. He colonised Dickies where 'life was never dull – life was a constant adventure keeping one move ahead of the gaffer and all authority'.<sup>25</sup>

The ideal form of adaptation for the institution was 'conversion' where 'the inmate takes the official view and acts out the role of the perfect inmate'.<sup>26</sup> Such an ideal was fictionalised by J Steinberg in an article in the Jewish Orphanage Magazine entitled *Memory Lane*. The boys showed 'great enthusiasm' for the regimented life, where there was 'never any reason to complain' and where they were 'never known to give trouble and always keep

within bounds'.<sup>27</sup> T377 from his recollections was clearly a convert.

On admission there were 'no tears or anything like that and I was quite happy to be looked after. In the Gabriel Home there was a lovely atmosphere. I had what I call a normal life'.<sup>28</sup> 'I know I settled in quite happily, was well cared for and enjoyed being spoilt by staff of the Gabriel Home.'<sup>29</sup> When he moved to the main building at 8 years of age he recalled

I soon fell into the every day way of life – up at seven o'clock, wash, brush my teeth, say early morning prayers and then down to breakfast ... I know it sounds monotonous but it was routine we just took for granted. The same applied to the food we were given. I liked most of the food offered ... I was very happy in the main building.<sup>30</sup>

He identified with Norwood as he found 'although an orphanage, it was a home for me'.<sup>31</sup> He summed up his experience using the word 'happy'. Similarly, Golding used the word 'contented'.<sup>32</sup>

Another scholar N84, 'looking back on those Norwood days [was] reminded of the sadness and fear of the system'. He recalled that

some of the children suffered psychologically and meeting them at reunions in later years, were still unable to speak of their life at Norwood. I was remembered apparently, by the staff as the child who didn't speak for a month.<sup>33</sup>

The trauma of psychological muteness was an extreme mode of 'situational withdrawal'.<sup>34</sup> His world was a far cry from the happy

and contented worlds of others. He reflected 'when a person is sent to prison they know why they are there, but we little ones could never understand what we had done to deserve this experience'.<sup>35</sup> Alienated from his world and placed in an institution that merited his admission, N84 dismissed such meritoriousness as undeserving and saw himself as 'the sad little victim'.<sup>36</sup> The story is something of a rarity in the pages of the *Newsletter* as some scholars 'were unable to speak of their life at Norwood'. Stories of 'the happiness that has been brought into their lives, to the friendship and warmth' rather than the sad tales of the outcast were more forthcoming.<sup>37</sup>

The depths of psychological alienation reached was depersonalising for Edward Dahlberg who was admitted to the CJOA in 1912. In his autobiography *Because I Was Flesh* he wrote,

I have voided the use of "I" because I was obscure unto myself ... Until my seventeenth year, when I left the orphan home, I was suffering locality rather than a person.<sup>38</sup>

The person had become part of

a separate race of stunted children [and the locality], the asylum grounds, its cinders, its junky buildings, were in their ruined infant roots.<sup>39</sup> He left the Jewish Orphan Asylum, but he was never to obliterate its hymn because all experience is holy unto the heart which feels.<sup>40</sup>

He did not suffer the obliteration with its loss of memory but gave evidence of his lot through the autobiographical act of writing.

Maurice Levinson, who went to Norwood in 1917, found 'the orphanage was no different from a prison'. The admission trauma was an emotional stunting that denied the psychological release of crying. 'Crying was frowned upon and even forbidden' and on the first night he was smacked for doing so.<sup>41</sup> On the second day he ran away back to his mother but the threat of expulsion forced his return. It was an individual act of rebellion and as an institutional adaptation the 'intransigent line' where the 'inmate challenges the system by not cooperating with staff'.<sup>42</sup> Levinson was flogged in front of all the children and the humiliation he felt made him swear 'I would get my own back on the world'.<sup>43</sup>

The imposition of such punishment was not unusual at the time. In the first decade of the century school 'sadism was considerable'. A survey of recollections showed that 'at a rough guess, a good quarter of Edwardian children left school to harbour resentments against their teachers for the rest of their lives'.<sup>44</sup> Sheila Graham who went to Norwood in 1911 thought 'the Headmaster was a sadist' after witnessing 'an absconded boy was caned in front of the whole school'. He then had to wear girl's panties and made to stand on a bench where all could see his disgrace.<sup>45</sup> The normality of such treatment at the time could not diminish the impression it left on the mind of a young girl to be remembered vividly over sixty years later.

Levinson retreated from his early intransigence into a mode of 'situational withdrawal' under the triple assaults of emotional neutralisation - 'in the end none of us really knew if we were happy or miserable'; physical deterrence - 'he developed a strong complex about Kaye for fear of being punished if he did something wrong' and the indoctrination of gratitude - 'how lucky they were to be at the orphanage'.<sup>46</sup> 'He felt he was an outcast from society - unclean and below other people'.<sup>47</sup> When he left he reasserted his defiance and rejected the invitation by the Headmaster to write a letter of thanks, 'somehow I couldn't bring myself to write it'.<sup>48</sup> His mode of adaptation was typical of

a defensive response on the part of the inmate and finds his protective response to an assault upon self is collapsed in to the situation; he cannot defend himself by distancing himself from the mortifying situation.<sup>49</sup>

When defensive responses are made 'staff may penalise inmates for sullenness, insolence, sotto voce profaning asides etc. as grounds for further punishment'.<sup>50</sup> The register of Girls' Conduct at Norwood recorded the types of misconduct:

Dirty, neglect of charges, disobedience, rudeness, calling names, impertinence, untruth, slapping charge, laziness, neglect of duty, striking little girl [in charge of], cleaning boots in dormitories, out of bounds, beating charge, shrieking.<sup>51</sup>

Such 'larking about' behaviour by the girls was 'acting as a multi-faceted means of resistance to institutional control'.<sup>52</sup> Anti-social

behaviour also included

truancy, fighting, pilfering, mimicry, parodies, etc. It loosened bonds of deference and obedience and in the final analysis larking about was one of the most effective means of opposition available to resist authoritarian control.<sup>53</sup>

The most serious forms were 'participation in collective riots, absconding, bed wetting and fights'. The opposition they provided the children had a social function of limiting 'rigidities' in the system.<sup>54</sup> They acted as a safety valve for the various modes of adaptation and constituted a counter-culture to the total institution. Scholars' recollections provide a rich source of counter-cultural activities. A 'dormitory sub-culture' incubated acts of resistance such as the appropriation of food from the kitchen and the planning of illicit relationships. In the reformatory institution 'the most secretive and dramatic form of resistance within the subculture was the planning of escape attempts'.<sup>55</sup> The most dramatic and secretive act of resistance by the older boys in Norwood was outright rebellion and through the recollections of scholars the story of the Norwood Rebellion can be pieced together.

## **Counter-Institutionalism: The Norwood Rebellion**

From the recollections of a number of Norwood scholars a specific rebellion by the boys took place about 1921. The evidence comes from the former children themselves and is imprecise in a number of ways. It is not clear just when the rebellion occurred. Indeed, there may have been several revolts by the children. It is also unclear who the leaders were as different names are mentioned. What the evidence does show is that the institutional regime was so unsatisfactory as to ignite outright opposition to the Norwood management. It illustrates in a very demonstrable way the feelings of some of the older boys towards a regime they had lived under for a number of years. The purpose of my study of Norwood history is to research the Orphanage as an institution and the topic of children's rebellion is a small, obscure part of that history. It is history from below and can be linked to the world outside Norwood and to nineteenth and twentieth century institutionalism. Looking at strikes of children in schools elsewhere provides a comparison, although Norwood was unusual in that the rebellion took place in a closely controlled institution. The strike was an action undertaken by children and unusually demonstrated openly their feelings towards the institution that 'cared' for them.

## *Taylor - An Unconventional Approach*

The revolt against the institution does not appear recorded in any of archived documents. Officially it appears there was no such action. The only references from other than the ex-children's recollections is made by Sol Taylor, a teacher at Norwood who was appointed in 1918. In a recollection in 1968, couched in guarded language, he stated that Isidore Cohen led 'an unconventional approach' to the Head and staff for improved 'permissive conditions'. Taylor admits 'in those days adults were not easily submissive, but we began to infuse into our work new trends in post-war academic and residential education'.

His personal chronology places the date of the incident in the year 1921.<sup>56</sup> 'The unconventional approach' was a revolt by the boys. Though Taylor admits conditions improved, he attributes the improvement to the education at the school which seems an unlikely reason for a student uprising. His coded language states that the impact of the revolt changed the 'submissive' approach of the teachers towards the children and suggests discipline was a factor behind the discontent. Taylor concluded that the boys' action had good moral reasons for it led to better education and a more permissive regime. After so many years and long after his retirement in 1945 Taylor was still very secretive on the strike and it makes it difficult to write a history of it from the perspective of

the Institution. Jean Peneff, an oral historian, found with such a “cover up”

You end up with complete misunderstandings and an inversion of the story. No story should be taken a priori to be an authentic account. You have to judge the degree of distortion. Our task consists in studying the largest number of cases.<sup>57</sup>

Fortunately it is possible to take up the task with the help of former children’s accounts.

### *Kam’s Rebellion*

There are a number of cases of scholar recollections which are brief and contradictory. They are written from the perspective of the former children and provide additional important details. T40 in an interview in 1981 recalled what she called *Kam’s Rebellion*.

There was a rebellion because they weren’t getting they THOUGHT enough food to eat, they were starving. They went on hunger strike for a few days. It was about 1923 or 1924. Kam led a group of boys who wanted more food. They wanted more bread, potatoes; they just wanted more to eat. They got what they wanted and it was all over. I personally, we, had plenty to eat. Perhaps the men were hungry, they wanted more. Never had anything like that on the girls’ side.<sup>58</sup>

Though the dates and the name of the ring leader are not the same as in Taylor’s reference it is clear the ‘unconventional approach’ was a rebellion. The nature of it, a hunger strike that lasted a few days, was exceptionally long when compared with accounts of other

children's strikes - if it is to be believed.

In 1911 a wave of children's strikes took place all over the country and for a 'few hours freedom' the children, the newspapers of the time recorded, showed 'obvious signs of enjoyment'.<sup>59</sup> The strikes signified a sociological stage in the understanding of childhood. By the second half of the nineteenth century 'notable strides appear to have been made towards a more civilised treatment of children'. The social background was one of compulsory schooling and limitations on parental authority. It was increasingly realised that children pass through well-defined stages of development with different psychological characteristics.<sup>60</sup> 'By the 1890s the child had been discovered. It was defined in body and was beginning to be defined in mind.'<sup>61</sup> The wave of national strikes in 1911 provoked the first school strikes on anything like a national scale. The strikes were against corporal punishment and are said to have lasted three days in some places, having spread to over 60 towns. 'Children like adults were asserting their new status like the Labour Movement' and 'the enforcement of conformity and obedience through the cane crumbled when children felt caught up in a wider social excitement'.<sup>62</sup>

In Rosanna Basso's account of an Italian schoolchildren's strike in 1977 the whole period of the strike was compressed into a very short period of time which 'lasted just over half an hour' but it

was sufficient to cause 'a total abandonment of school for the whole morning for a few pupils'.<sup>63</sup> Because of the ephemeral nature of the strike 'once it is over it immediately disappears in to the past'. Such processes make 'it rare for a historian to be able to trace the stages of the strike'.<sup>64</sup>

Because such strikes were a source of acute embarrassment to teachers and education authorities, they were conveniently forgotten and omitted from the pages of punishment books, committee minutes and official school histories, and it is only by listening to the reminiscences of people involved that we can discover the true nature and extent of this type of resistance.<sup>65</sup>

As with the Italian strike, it has been possible to retrace the past. When asked to define the word *strike* the Italian children related it to their own experience. The strike was 'fun', 'a complaint, 'opposing an order'. It took on various meanings. The term *rebellion*, however, defined as 'the open resistance to any authority' is the descriptive term used by the scholars who wrote of the Great Rebellion, the Kahn Rebellion and the Norwood Rebellion.<sup>66</sup> The expressions used are a memory device to encapsulate a far off event and in the process shape its meaning and in its recollected form became for T40, Kam's Rebellion. The device becomes evidence and the recreated memory becomes the 'real-life' account. To elucidate the documentary value of the story can only result from 'the combined work of the narrator and the researcher'.<sup>67</sup>

This narrative is clear that the cause of the strike was insufficient food. The First World War brought hardship to Norwood. The Headmaster Marcus Kaye in March 1916 wrote in the *JC*, 'The Jews' Orphanage has been almost engulfed in the wake of war' with diminished income and increased expenditure. His comments were part of an appeal for funds and concluded 'Norwood wants to save them [the children] from suffering and want'.<sup>68</sup> In the following April, as part of the cutbacks, porridge was introduced for breakfast and this enabled a reduction in the quantity of bread eaten; 170 pounds of bread was saved by serving porridge twice a week.<sup>69</sup> The official record recorded the necessity for a change in part of the diet to save on costs and there are plenty of scholars' recollections on the insufficiency of food. N25 remembered before the First World War

We at Norwood in those distant days were always hungry so fasting to us [on Yom Kippur] was a normal everyday practise. Breakfast was two small slices of bread and a smear of margarine, and a mug of lukewarm liquid watery milk called '2 bricks and whitewash'... For 365 days, the meals were sparse and insufficient for growing children. We were always very hungry and without any hope of appeasement ... Many boys were caught pinching bread from the bins in the kitchens and scrumping apples from the trees, ravenously hungry. One took a risk of physical punishment to satisfy the pangs of young aching stomachs.<sup>70</sup>

The desperation of hunger drove him and others to individual acts of defiance - stealing food. N90 writing about her mother's experiences at Norwood before and during the First World War found

the worst thing was the constant hunger. She spent a great deal of time sneaking out whatever food she could get. She stored food in her knickers - even bread and butter. On one occasion a teacher discovered slices of bread and butter between the sheets. They were always hungry due to the shortage of food during the First World War. One girl stole two hot onions and hid them in her knickers. She had to be treated for burns on her bottom and the nurse could not understand how the girl had such blisters.<sup>71</sup>

She concluded of her mother 'perhaps it was her way to rebel'; empty stomachs were a recipe for rebellious thoughts and the boys turned such thoughts into action, as T41 recalled.

Boys went on a strike and locked themselves in the dormitories. Some ran home. Girls didn't go on strike but pinched what we could. We were very hungry during the war ... We were very undernourished as there was not enough food. The strikers flooded out the teachers' sitting room and demanded extra food. The strike didn't last very long. They were promised two slices of bread and margarine and cocoa for tea.<sup>72</sup>

One of the features of the strike action was that the situation appeared intolerable and unjust to the children. They believed they had the right to protest and could succeed. The thought of revolt was transformed into the desire for revolt and then into actual

revolt.<sup>73</sup> Girls did not go on strike but they found other ways to rebel. N27 who was at Norwood during the First World War, recalled that

We were always hungry. I often think that credit for my survival in those days is due to apples [scrumping] and country air. On one occasion a group of us went in to sit and stare at the hanging fruit in the succah [hut specially erected for the festival]. A prank was played by someone turning out the electric light outside, and when that light went on again there was not one piece of fruit hanging in that succah.<sup>74</sup>

N25 agreed with N27 that 'the apples apparently helped our mutual survival'.<sup>75</sup> The succah with its pendulous ripe fruit triggered a 'fantastic development of consciousness' to bear fruit as a collective act of defiance by the children.<sup>76</sup> They audaciously opposed the system that had forced them into 'a single egalitarian community of fate' through the sacrilege of the succah.<sup>77</sup> The fruit became a fantasy of luxury, a feast of plenty when the spectre of 'mutual survival' was imagined.<sup>78</sup> In that imagination, the scholar recalled a story that gave credence to the strike.

### *The Great Rebellion*

N15, who was at Norwood during and after the First World War, remembers what he calls *The Great Rebellion* staged by senior boys.

They barricaded themselves in an upstairs dormitory and stocked piled enough bread and water to withstand a month's siege but a truce was arranged about midnight and only after a promise of no punishment. Why did we rebel? Wish I could remember.<sup>79</sup>

The title given to the revolt glorifies the event into something of major note. The details provided of the boys stockpiling food and water, barricading themselves and planning a month's siege, adds a dimension of heroism and extravagance to the event to justify the name of the incident. The dormitory, albeit for less than a day, was transformed from a barrack of institutional control into a fortress of insurrection from which the Institution was itself challenged. It was a battle which exemplified the boys' courage and strength to resist. The fragment of memory has a breathtaking quality when recalled almost half a century later.

On its own the fragment is too brief but in conjunction with the recollections of other witnesses it takes historical shape. The rebellion was likely the same event as Kam's Rebellion. The author can be identified as the older brother of T40. His account shows the length of the revolt was not a few days but less than a day, though it is clear it was intended to last much longer. N15 could not remember the reason for the revolt but his sister well remembered the hunger that drove the boys to their action. He left Norwood in 1922 and T40 was admitted a year earlier in 1921 so it is possible

from the scholars' evidence to pinpoint the rebellion to the year 1921 which ties in with Taylor's own chronology.<sup>80</sup>

An examination of the internal evidence suggests this recollection was what N15 was told about later rather than what he experienced himself. He did not say who the ring leader was, unlike the authors of the other recollections, which may account for using the glamorous title *The Great Rebellion*. N15 admitted he did not know why the revolt took place which might seem strange for someone who was there at the time and from whom a fuller account might have been expected. A piece of external evidence that gives credence to this reasoning is that a boy of the same name was admitted to the Gabriel Home on request from the JBG in 1911. The longest permitted stay was nine years which meant this boy left before the revolt took place some ten years later.<sup>81</sup>

The terse cryptic reference mentioned by the teacher completely escapes the drama played out by the boys. Devoid of reference in official minutes and reports, the existence of the rebellion was denied by the authorities. It immediately disappeared into obscurity to remain a hidden yet significant piece of Norwood children's history until Taylor himself first mentioned it in a series of autobiographical sketches in the *Newsletter* in 1968. His article was the first revelation but after him several scholars narrated their own recollections of the event in the hazy light of distant memories. The

deviant behaviour of the boys has become accessible to the historian and only now can the rebellion be pieced together.<sup>82</sup>

### *The Kahn Rebellion*

N26, who was at Norwood after the First World War recalled his memory of *The Kahn Rebellion* with much detail.

Some older boys who had apparently been reading too many comics and wishing to bring a little colour and excitement into the everyday humdrum life, in defiance of the masters, staged a little rebellion. We co-opted one of the kitchen staff in whom we confided our plan. She gave us the key to the pantry which we raided for food after hours, taking back sufficient loaves of bread to withstand a prolonged siege. Then we ate dry bread as unfortunately we forgot to take any margarine. During the siege one of the boys cut himself, one of the beds falling against him. The attempt to break down the barricades of beds and mattresses was defended with a water hose. But, as can be expected the 'revolt' was squashed at 3am the following morning. The threat to expel the boy, Issy Khan a most likeable and popular Head Boy was withdrawn only when the boys threatened to march as in a squad, to and through the East End of London. It was not until some time later conditions in the Institution began to change but all the rebels had already left.<sup>83</sup>

This version of the strike is a more extensive account and fills out the practical details of how the boys obtained food through collusion with a member of the kitchen staff, if that is to be believed, and used the beds and mattresses to man the barricade. Forward planning went into their action with the prospect of a long siege under the

leadership of the Head Boy. The respect of his position and his likeable character endeared the other boys to follow him, no doubt to the consternation of staff now deserted by Kahn. A march through the East End, where most of the boys came from, would have horrified them as a fundamental tenet of the moral teaching was never to bring the name of the Institution into disrepute.

N26 remembered the name of the ringleader was Issy Kahn and clearly this is the same person as Sol Taylor's Isidore Cohen; Issy being a nickname for Isidore and Cohen an anglicised version of Kahn. During the First World War many English people with German sounding names anglicised them because of the possible link to the enemy. The Headmaster did just that and changed his name from Myer Kaiser to Marcus Kaye. It is most likely the name of the leader *Kam* T40 had in mind in her account of the rebellion is a corruption of Kahn. The ostensible reason given for the strike, to bring colour into the greyness of their lives, was an act of defiance and retaliation

against the adults. For the boys the situation was reached where

Habit appears not just a feature of everyday life but an existence in itself. This is the experience we call boredom, monotony, tedium and despair. On all sides there lies invitations to action ... new forms of behaviour, new locations, new partners.<sup>84</sup>

The revolt manifested the 'new forms of behaviour' – defiant action, the location of the barricaded dormitory and a partnership of

the older boys. It mocked the humdrum, narrow institutional life.

N49 who was at Norwood in the early 1920s, recalls

Sunday was known as 'Starving Day' not because we had less food but because we had lots of time on our hands. On one occasion some boys played 'Follow my Leader' to go to the 'Upper Old', the boys' top dormitory. One boy fell off the fire escape and was then given six of the best and his name entered in the punishment book as a lesson to us all.<sup>85</sup>

The escapade had all the hallmarks of a trial run – the group, the leader, the place and the motives; starving boys and starving days. It was an invitation to action.

### *The Norwood Rebellion*

N82 recollected the episode.

In the early 1920s the boys staged a rebellion. They felt they were not getting enough food and what they got was monotonous; the same fare was being served all the time. Levene wrote slogans such as WE WANT MORE FOOD on the walls. Several masters were cane-happy and enjoyed beating the boys which included the non-Jewish Mr Johnson. The rebellion was planned like a military operation and began one Sabbath morning after service. On this Sabbath some of the older boys started to fight with the masters as the column of children entered the long drive after being marched to Streatham Common. These boys then took over one of the dormitories and barricaded themselves inside. They had plenty of food and water.

The next stage was placing other boys in charge of the kitchen. The uprising was partly about food. The younger boys who did not take part found there was very little food left and had to share their beds as the older boys had commandeered their dormitory. A

hosepipe was used to spray at any unauthorised people entering and someone was placed on the fire escape to prevent anyone gaining access. The rebellion was sparked by the Kayes being on holiday. By the time he returned some boys gave themselves up, became frightened and felt things had gone too far and others had tried to climb on to the roof ... But things did improve and Johnson left. Kaye made an example of the ringleaders to avoid a repetition by caning them including Hymie Zalkin, whose idea the rebellion had been and Louis Levene.<sup>86</sup>

Some of the details clearly contradict other accounts but this version adds further details and confirms other evidence. The opportunity for the uprising was the vacation of the headmaster and his wife who was the matron at Norwood. On Saturday mornings the 'crocodile' march to Streatham Common was a regimented routine and on this rare occasion the crocodile true to its real nature snapped back at its keepers. Marching was a feature of orphanage life and on this one occasion the march was the signal for revolt.<sup>87</sup> Levene's message has the fictional quality of Oliver Twist's plea. In the absence of an official memory the corroboration relies on the other personal accounts, and 'by extrapolation from such proven credibility' are the only good evidence from an undocumented, hidden world.<sup>88</sup>

N32 who went to Norwood in 1918 paints a grim picture of conditions in which the ingredients of hunger, time on their hands and the cane made an inflammatory combination.

The midday meal was stamped with the day of the week, the same dish on the same particular day – week by week, year by year. In all that time I never felt the need for a second helping of food ... My stomach grew disciplined to the amount of food I was given ... Sundays was a particularly bad day for us. There was nothing to do, except play football, quarrel among ourselves, or wander aimlessly about ... Hunger! One boy was caught with two kippers protruding from his pockets, probably stolen. 'But I was hungry, starving, Sir', he told the master. 'Hungry, you have no right to be starving', the master replied. Nevertheless, he was caned on the hand in front of the whole school in the quadrangle. Justice had to be done.<sup>89</sup>

But justice was on the side of the children or in the words of T41's comment on Kam's Rebellion 'the strikers were in the right'. It was legitimised by the bad conditions. The justice of the master- for the boys to dare question those conditions – was anathema.

Another version of the strike was told by T377 who was admitted to Norwood in 1928. He says he spoke to members of the strike committee and in his account a strike took place in 1926.

There was a great amount of strictness during the period 24 to 26 at the time of the General Strike. At that time the level of food was very, very low. During 1926 the boys went on strike, they had a little revolution of their own and they wanted better treatment. The outcome is that during 1927/8 things did improve. They barricaded themselves into some of the classrooms. It fizzled out after about a week ... There was an improvement in the food.<sup>90</sup>

The idea of a link between the General Strike and the Norwood

strike on its own was plausible although placing it in that year gives the narrative an even more heroic, radical context – as part of something even bigger. In the 1911 school strikes

the children ... were consciously imitating - or learning from – their elders ... The children must have been listening at home to all the talk about strikes, all through the hot summer of 1911.<sup>91</sup>

Peneff advises 'no life story should be taken a priori to be an authentic account. You have to judge the degree of distortion. The scholar must give us the reasons why plausibility is attributed to one part of the history and doubt to another'.<sup>92</sup> The other accounts allow the plausibility of the Norwood Rebellion to have almost certainly to have happened, but in the case of a brief mention of another strike by N83 who was at Norwood in the early 1930s, greater doubt must exist. He wrote, 'I also remember the rebellion when the masters were locked in a room and the brave leader was Solly Danziger'.<sup>93</sup> There is an absence of any mention by other scholars of this incident and his reference is extremely brief.

## **Counter-Institutionalism: Resistance to Corporal Punishment**

The strike was an exceptional form of 'deviant' behaviour justified by the cause and necessarily arose from 'the social construction of reality' that provoked it. The total institution confronted the children with 'the reality of everyday life' that was 'paramount' and 'massive'.<sup>94</sup> N24 who was at Norwood in the 1930s thought

depending on the period one was at Norwood the staff I presume and hope must have used all the latest knowledge and ideas to help in their work. It is true that many years ago knowledge in this area was scanty and empirical. Probably the majority of staff must have reacted intuitively to their work. Thus were some kind, some harsh, some stern with strong discipline, some with weak discipline and our memories recall one or other of these attitudes and our reactions to the staff.<sup>95</sup>

The lack of uniformity of treatment by staff and their 'intuitive' conduct was conducive to the regimented style of living. At the HOA in New York in the 1920s and 1930s the children had more leisure time than previous generations with two free afternoons and weekends but they were still regimented. 'No published rules existed, monitors and counsellors were free to make up their own and the punishments that went with them.'<sup>96</sup> Institutional size and arbitrary conduct were the structural realities against which forces of liberalisation had to contest.

At Norwood the orphanage had embarked on a programme of liberalisation under Kaye yet its impact was limited by the persistence of the overwhelming reality of institutional life. It was beyond the resources of the children to change it and at most their impact could mitigate it. The revolt was the one form of collective action that contested the social structure of institutional life. It was the 'little revolution' as T377 described it whereas 'larking about' behaviour were personal acts of defiance.<sup>97</sup> The defiant acts expressed the resentment of diffuse feelings of hate and hostility born of a sense of powerlessness against the system evoking them. The persistence of such acts as remembered by generations of scholars was the re-expressing of impotent hostility which left little change in values. Just once in a while the resentment became a source of genuine transvaluation when the frustration of institutional life led to 'full denunciation of previously prized values' and rebellion broke out.<sup>98</sup> From all the accounts the rebellion was treated as a serious affair drawing on a reservoir of resentful and discontented feelings. When the institutional system is a barrier to the satisfaction of legitimate goals, such as decent food and the abolition of corporal punishment, the stage is set for rebellion as a legitimate response.

The abolition of corporal punishment was a contentious issue in institutions. At the HOA in 1934, the new dean Moses Shelesnyak

planned to abolish it. Already in the previous two years its use had been on the decline yet monitors and counsellors resisted the change as their absolute authority had been questioned. The institution was placed in a limbo of uncertainty in inculcating a new philosophy of discipline. The discipline and the injustices of it were hated by the boys yet its absence left a vacuum of control. It was a situation ripe for action and in the second oldest boys' dormitory action was triggered.

About 6.30 before breakfast one boy was still in bed when the others were dressed. The counsellor was about to batter his head against an upturned bedpost when 'an *amazing revolt* took place'. He felt a tap on his shoulder and turned round to find the entire dormitory gathered in the alcove – all 80 boys. Most were crowded around him and others were standing on beds and perched on lockers. 'Drop him' he was ordered by the boy who had tapped on the shoulder. For a moment the counsellor was stunned, not knowing what to do next. If he refused 80 boys stood ready to jump him and he knew he could not rely on the monitors to back him. At the moment the counsellor was literally saved by the bell. It gave him an excuse to get out of the crisis without loss of face. Dropping the boy, he ordered everybody to line up and march downstairs. He never struck another boy again nor did any other counsellor when the news got round.<sup>99</sup>

It marked the end of corporal punishment in the HOA and without any official proclamation. It had taken a revolt by the boys themselves to accomplish it.

The use of corporal punishment in Britain is a story of the

contest between institutions and schools where it was liberally used and social reformers who wanted to restrict it. Boarding schools and class discipline relied heavily on corporal punishment and by 1906 when Britain was 'steadfastly retaining' flogging it had been abolished in America, France and Germany. 'Teachers ... were impelled to resort to it owing to pressure of class sizes and its indiscriminate and capricious use persisted in schools before 1914.'<sup>100</sup> The empiricism of size that necessitated its use and the arbitrariness marked by the lack of rules were features of the authoritarian institution. The JHOA which inherited an authoritarian tradition of strong discipline on amalgamation exemplified such features.

At Norwood no punishment books are extant, but there is a record of a complaint received by the Whitechapel Union in 1888 from the mother of a boy at the institution who had received '32 strokes with the birch' because of bed wetting. The child had been under treatment for 'incontinence' at the Hospital for Urinary Diseases. The mother said it was involuntary, but the Headmaster, Rev Harris claimed it was 'a wilful and voluntary act'. An investigation by the Union found no entry in the punishment book. Henry Behrend, Norwood President, admitted 'that the punishment was severe' without amounting to cruelty though the Guardians defined the act as a cruel beating. Harris was instructed 'never to

exceed 6 strokes with the cane or birch' and Norwood was chided by the Union 'for their obvious insensitivity in not considering that the boy had been punished for an involuntary illness'.<sup>101</sup> The resistance of the mother countered the arbitrary use of corporal punishment by Harris who found himself challenged. A determined mother was not put off by a petulant 'I am Master here' when she wanted to see her other children. The response of the Institution achieved a change in policy that mitigated the use of the birch and cane. Harris himself was forced to resign shortly after for reasons, which may have included his excessive discipline, because of 'irregularities which have taken place into the conduct of the Institution'.<sup>102</sup>

In 1900 regulations were introduced that schools had to keep caning registers and from 1904 the Board of Education disapproved of the cane for infants and girls.<sup>103</sup> In the previous year the London School Board issued a revised code that 'emphasised all forms of punishment be kept to a minimum and corporal punishment not to be inflicted except for grave moral offences'.<sup>104</sup> However, the regulations were widely ignored by teachers and unofficial resort to corporal punishment with the hand, slipper or ruler was commonplace.<sup>105</sup> Norwood was no exception to the flouting of the regulations. In 1936 Matron's administration at the Gabriel Home was criticised; 'discipline too rigid'.<sup>106</sup> She subsequently resigned.

In the interview for new staff at the Home

it was laid down that corporal punishment must not be admitted by any member of Matron's staff. Punishment during school hours would, of course, be in accordance with the LCC regulations.<sup>107</sup>

The tradition of using the cane was strong and N31 who was at Norwood in the 1930s recalled 'the cane was in vogue at the time'.<sup>108</sup> It was claimed by Nathan Morris that 'in Jewish schools corporal punishment was almost universal'. In his lecture on 'Discipline and Punishment' he argued that

punishment was seen as expiation of sins and also of eradicating evil habits and moral and intellectual reformation. Modern ideas on punishment were not the satisfaction of the ends of justice or protection of society but reformation of character. It is generally accepted the teacher must have undivided authority in school and discipline was the means to secure it.<sup>109</sup>

His view, which was circulated within the community in the pages of the *JC*, gave support to Norwood's idea on discipline.

The Second World War was a watershed. 'It changed attitudes and ideas about how to care' for the children.<sup>110</sup> But that change did not affect corporal punishment and the vogue continued. N74 went to Norwood in 1946 and recalled on the occasion of her birthday they played the game of 'Dare, Truth or Promise'. She was to turn all 15 taps on in 15 sinks in the bathroom without spilling (letting the sinks overflow) a drop. She and the other girls were caught by

the Headmaster, Alfred Lubrun who 'systematically canned all of us'.<sup>111</sup> Caning of girls had long been banned in schools but as the incident took place in a residential institution it did not apply and continued to be used. N83 recalled Lubrun's penchant when he had been given 'many canings including with a cricket stump occasionally on my backside'.<sup>112</sup>

The use of beatings at the JHOA which had taken place under Harris, persisted sixty years later. It was an endemic problem of a large residential institution for children. The Curtis Committee set up to survey such institutions revealed for the first time the extent of their deficiencies. In the submission to the Committee it was admitted by Norwood that

we have an extremely large number of very difficult children. I would rather not look back. I think one can see one's failures in the past. In the past it was a very large institution in every sense of the word.<sup>113</sup>

The evidence showed Norwood to be too large to cope with its 'difficult' children. It used largely untrained staff who operated intuitively and coped by using discipline as their means of control.<sup>114</sup>

Scholars' recollections and the evidence to the Curtis Committee contradicted the picture presented to the governors of an institution where 'there was relatively little delinquency' and

where disciplinary treatment did not entail 'severe measures'.<sup>115</sup> The use of strong discipline endured right to the end of the orphanage's existence under the last superintendent Jack Wagman. In his obituary what NOSA remembered was the responsibility of 'a tremendous task having so many boys and girls, under one roof, so obviously there had to be house rules and discipline '.<sup>116</sup>

## Counter – Institutionalism: Memory as an Historical Source

The Norwood Rebellion was a revolt by the older boys against the Norwood management in 1921 because of poor diet and harsh discipline. The source of the event is based on the recollections of six scholars written between 1969 and 2001 and in a passing reference by one teacher. They provide a version of events absent in any official document. The picture portrayed is based on memories five to eight decades after the event. The opportunity for bringing them to light was the publication of the *NOSA Newsletter* started in 1967 to record past memories. The end of the old institution in the early 1960s created a discontinuity between the absence of its physical presence and the memories of it. The publication provided the means to memorise the past. The logo that appears at the top of the front page is the picture of the orphanage. 'Reinstating the environment in which an event has been experienced' for the *Newsletter* reader invites an entrance in to the memories it held.<sup>117</sup> The photograph picked by NOSA served to reinstate an *institutional* memory but for the individual scholar it was a *personal* invite.

Traditionally, the historian's research has been document-biased as voiced in the adage that 'the historian works with documents. There is no substitute, no history'.<sup>118</sup> Much of

Norwood's history, including that of my own, is based on such contemporary material. What is left out is the evidence of the children and for that reason; it does not provide a total history. The corpus of available material is expanded from contemporary documentary material finite in the extent of its preservation by the inclusion of oral history, the scholars' recollections, open-ended as a living source. The importance of oral evidence is that it is a source of information not covered by the others – deviancy, counter-institutional culture, personal relationships, individual behaviour and revolts. Without the oral evidence the Norwood Rebellion would not have been known to have existed. Some scholars claimed 'the whole thing was hushed up' deliberately.<sup>119</sup> Its authenticity as a real event in the memory of scholars has determined the authenticity of personal recollections as a source in its own right, a source which refutes the adage and the historian's reverence of the document.

The various descriptions of the rebellion contain different accounts in which details of the event, the motives for rebelling, the boys who were involved and even when it took place are inconsistent and for that reason a precise account will never be known. What the historian has to judge is the degree of distortion and one way of dealing with it 'consists in studying the largest number of cases'.<sup>120</sup> Providing as much detail as possible in recollections may introduce 'the kind of sensory and perceptual

associates' that can be taken as evidence that an event has been remembered rather than invented.<sup>121</sup> The seven accounts of the rebellion have been sufficient to construct an historical narrative. The documentary value of an event is an exercise in which the historian 'must provide us with the key which transforms the crude document into an historical source and must give us the reasons why plausibility is attributed to one part of the history and doubt to another'.<sup>122</sup> The key is the themes – the rebellion, larking about, deviance - and the placing of individual actions in an historical narrative. This chapter places the one known strike within the wider realm of oral history. Its plausibility derives from the comparative evaluation of the recollected accounts and the wider context of counter-institutionalism.

Oral evidence, unlike archived documents, is the product of scholars' living memories. Psychological research shows 'all memory, whatever age it is laid down or recalled, is unreliable' and over time gets less accurate.<sup>123</sup> One way memory is unreliable is that it is not chronologically organised and this explains the different dates given for the revolt. Recognising the subjective in individual testimonies is a challenge to 'the accepted categories of history'.<sup>124</sup> The 'subjectivity in oral histories is certainly not to say that we are working with memories of a false past'. A high proportion of the detail in recollections remains objectively valid

verified from other sources and provide the only good evidence we have from 'an undocumented, hidden world'.<sup>125</sup> A lot of the details are consistent in scholars' accounts such as the canings mentioned in many of them; caning was part of the disciplinary regime. The main evidence for the rebellion is the scholars' accounts but a critical analysis of it has been utilised to demonstrate its authenticity.

The invitation by NOSA for scholars' recollections was also an act by the scholar as an adult to reflect where Norwood stood in his or her personal history. Marcus Kaye asked leavers to write a letter of thanks. Such letters were constrained in their criticism of the institution. The act of writing a letter implied an avowal of the life at Norwood. Levinson in his autobiography wrote he resisted writing a letter because in his personal history it denied him being a person.<sup>126</sup> The refusal to write a letter excluded the possibility of Kaye pasting it in his scrapbook as evidence of how good Norwood was for the children.<sup>127</sup> His autobiography, *A Woman from Bessarabia* forms part of the life story of Norwood without which Levinson's side of the story would be untold.

An article appeared in the *JC* in 1974 entitled *They Asked for More and Got it* in which a number of scholars expressed criticism of Norwood. It was contradicted by a former teacher Sol Taylor and NOSA claiming 'the article gave a very unfair picture of life at

Norwood. It was a good Institution and made so by the people who administered it'.<sup>128</sup> The article's author replied, 'I gave a fair and undistorted account of what it was to be brought up in Norwood from the child's point of view'.<sup>129</sup> Taylor was criticised as showing only 'the teacher's side [which] left out the humanitarian part of school life which is just as vital as the educational side'.<sup>130</sup> The *JC* article opened up a dispute over what was the 'authentic version' of Norwood experience. There were two memories being fought over - one institutional and another by the individual scholars. At the level of an institution in historical imagery, a picture has been formed in which memory becomes part of the real life account and Norwood becomes a good institution.<sup>131</sup> But the historical narratives related by many scholars remember it was not 'good enough' for them.

The recollections rely on a remembered experience but for some scholars there was an absence of memory. N97 who went to Norwood in 1933 wrote that 'for a long time I preferred to block out the past'. It was meeting another Norwood boy that helped him to remember the forgotten years.<sup>132</sup> N71 wrote that 'he spent an unremarkable [to me] five years or so there and as far as I can remember nothing outstanding happened and I caused no ripples in the daily life there'.<sup>133</sup> Gerald Cohen who went to Norwood in 1946 said that he remembered almost nothing of his Norwood time.<sup>134</sup> There may have been many scholars like them who thus have left

no recollections.

The Newsons in their research on young children examined the importance of memory in the development of the young child. They found from their observations

The child relies on his parents' role as a memory bank to which he can refer for evidence of himself as an individual with a history. One of the means by which the ordinary child achieves a sense of personal identity is through his store of memories going back into his own past, in which he himself and his close family play central roles. But the child does not maintain this store of memories on his own, but has them repaired, added to and embroidered upon in everyday conversation with his own family, the sharers of his memory. Recollecting past experiences between child and parent establishes him as person with a past that others know about and make real by their sharing of it. In contrast, the child who is deprived of parents may in fact have no single person, who shares his own most basic and important memories, no one to confirm whether these memories are in fact correct or figments of the imagination, no one to polish up a fading memory before it is too late.<sup>135</sup>

They concluded 'we are beginning to realise now what damage can be done to children in such environments by conditions which so diminish their private image of their own individuality'.<sup>136</sup> The research shows that the institutional environment can impede the social function of memory in the child and this deprivation for some scholars results in permanent memory loss.<sup>137</sup> Oral history extends the range of historical sources but even this source is not accessible

for those scholars whose memory has been impeded by blocking out difficult elements of the past.

This study has examined the institution as it affected the children. It has largely relied on oral sources and the words of the children themselves. Their memories raise issues of authenticity - of oral evidence as a source, the content of oral evidence, 'inauthentic memory' and conflict over the 'true' memory. Despite limitations they reveal a counter-culture of deviance and expose a piece of lost history – the Norwood Rebellion. The rebellion was a single event and affected only a few older boys. Yet what was persistent and affected many generations of children was the paramount reality of a total institution. The use of corporal punishment was based on the necessity of controlling a large number of children in an 'enormous' building. These structural constraints limited the liberalising impact of particular policies to make the life of the children better at Norwood. The Second World War was the catalyst that ended the total institution. Nothing, however, 'would ever be able to transform it from being a building of caves, tunnels, high echoes and cold comfort'.<sup>138</sup>



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## **Chapter 7: The End of Institutionalism** **- Revolution at Norwood**

Deviance was the theme of child discontent in the previous chapter. It manifested itself in the exceptional rebellion of 1921 but in lesser ways was present throughout Norwood's history. The rebelliousness of the child was revealed not only through the disciplinary regime but for the first time through the psychological revelations of the new study of the Child Guidance movement. Norwood responded to this development and appointed in 1932 the psychiatrist Dr Emmanuel Miller from the East London Child Guidance Clinic.<sup>1</sup> Psychological assessment was undertaken for problem children and the report on one case, that of the girl Cissie Maister, found 'she resents the laws and rules of Institutional life and tries to rebel against them as often as possible'. It stated that her resentment was to 'poison' the general discipline in an 'Institution where kindness, understanding and discipline reigns'.<sup>2</sup> The new sciences of psychology and psychiatry developed after the First World War undermined the empirical understanding of institutional life where defiance in opposition to the institutional good was personalised as a defect of the child.

If rebellion described the discontent of the child, revolution was a manifestation of institutional discontent with the system. Its most sweeping change was signified by the demolition of the

barrack building in 1962 but the liberalisation policy under Kaye was a slow process of evolutionary change. The chronology of Norwood history has been compiled through its institutional records – especially its annual reports. It is a listing replete with the terminology of institutional progress. The 1962 entry on ‘the demolition of the Orphanage building’ was presented as a revolutionary ‘change-over’ that ‘has completely changed the children’s lives from the “institutional” to the “family” way of life’.<sup>3</sup> In this chronology the 1921 revolt finds no place. A chronology of Norwood that mirrors the institutional history based on the counter-culture of the children is yet to be compiled. In such a listing the Norwood Rebellion must stand out in the same way as 1962 does in the official version. It would single out such themes as the ‘narrowing influence’ where ‘habit appears not just as a feature of everyday life but an existence itself ... [where] on all sides there lies invitations to action’.<sup>4</sup> The action that took place is the hidden history of a counter-culture.

## **Institutionalism – Progressive and Functional Models**

The children's perspective was an institutional imposition – the reality of daily life. The institution's perspective was based on the rhetoric of intention – the ideal of a substitute home. Between the two poles rhetoric and reality curved a circle of virtuousness that formed the ideological basis of Norwood institutionalism. The intention was spelt out in 1872

to be a substitute home for the family home, to be a place of Jewish rescue from a gentile pauper school and to be a place for deserving children whose respectable parents have fallen on hard times.<sup>5</sup>

The intention was a positive one and the annual reports frequently testified to it. In the 1933 report it was affirmed that 'the modern charity must seek to render the child confident and self-reliant' and a year later added its progressiveness was marked by the 'endless pursuit of the ideal'.<sup>6</sup> The institutional philosophy incorporated a concept of goodness that was axiomatic and self-fulfilling and from these reports highlighted self-reliance and progress. They built up an historical image that fulfilled the good intention. It was an institution where there was little delinquency though certain boys required disciplinary treatment, where there was a general lack of repression and where 'the absolute naturalness of the children' generally held sway.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, Norwood was that ideal of 'a real

home' unlike the 'barrack-like' institution.<sup>8</sup>

This historical imagery does indeed conform to some scholars' recollections. Norwood was 'well meaning' and 'no matter what methods might have been used' it was 'the second best thing' [to home].<sup>9</sup> Fellow scholars were told 'to be thankful' and NOSA underlined it; 'we should all be truly thankful'.<sup>10</sup> N74 was 'personally exceedingly grateful for the five years he spent at Norwood' despite the 'tough' and 'harsh' discipline.<sup>11</sup> These memories are typical of the adaptive modes of the 'coloniser' and 'convert' - children who fitted in well.<sup>12</sup> The gratefulness of some scholars was an acknowledgement that they accepted institutional life and here the good intention of the system was matched by personal experience. It is an historical interpretation that fits in well with an 'idealist view of history' in which 'the system is capable of being humanised by good intentions'.<sup>13</sup> The institutional history is conceived as a continual process of improvements in which failures are interpreted as 'sad tales' which do not detract from 'good intentions'.<sup>14</sup> N24 was 'sure that all the staff acted and were motivated in the best interests of the children under their care'. The presumption was they used 'the latest knowledge and ideas to help in their work'. The test of their success for N24 was the annual

reunion get-togethers.<sup>15</sup> They served to reassure those present of 'our sense of who we are', a sense that served to incorporate the idealist view of history.<sup>16</sup>

'No matter what methods might have been used we see them in the white light of memory.' Through this prism the scholar blotted out the negative side of the harsh discipline.<sup>17</sup> Memory acted as a filtering process in constituting the idealist view but it was based on a wider perspective of institutional child care where

each one of these stages was a step forward in the process of development; but as we look back now, in the light of this ideal, upon the experiences of dependent and neglected children, we can see, as we could not have seen so clearly at the time, the peculiar weaknesses in each method of care, and the hardships and injustices each system brought to many children ... In the light of the same ideal we can see what a Procrustean bed of torture each of the other forms of child care – indenture, orphan asylum, foster home ... may be when it is not suited to the needs of the particular child concerned.<sup>18</sup>

The American historian Henry Thurston wrote 'successive reforms must be read as an incremental story of progress' and where what was once thought progressive and later proved unsatisfactory paved the way for the next stage.

The interpretation of the institutional solution to child destitution in terms of progress theory is at the centre of a current historical debate and is relevant in the field of Anglo-Jewish historiography. The progress theory had a particular Jewish slant

which according to the historian Geoffrey Alderman has been 'apologetic, sanitised, triumphant, uncritical and even cosy'.<sup>19</sup> His criticism is directed at the attitude of self-congratulation in 'establishment-minded' works such as Vivian Lipman's *A Century of Social Services – the History of the Jewish Board of Guardians* (1959) and Eugene Black's *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry* (1988).<sup>20</sup> In the Anglo-Jewish historiographical tradition Norwood was regarded not merely as a 'good enough' institution but 'exemplary'. Alderman contests a tradition of silence and refers to the example of the 'signal failure to explore ... the abominable treatment' meted out by the Board of Guardians to Jewish refugees.<sup>21</sup> This silence of treatment was not peculiar to Jewish institutions. Evelyn Waugh in the preface to his novel *The Loom of Youth* based on his school boy experience at Sherborne public school wrote

no book before it had accepted as part of the fabric of school life the inevitable emotional consequences of monastic herding together for eight months of the year of 13 year old children and 18 year old adolescents. On that issue such a complete conspiracy of silence had been maintained.<sup>22</sup>

It is that 'complete silence' that Alderman sees as being exposed in 'the revolution of the past thirty years in Anglo-Jewish historiography' and which the current research is part of.<sup>23</sup>

The theory of progressive stages means that each later stage

was an advance on an earlier one. Its application to Norwood was that the JHOA was an 'advance' on the foundation charities. In terms of the science of charity organisation widely accepted in the mid nineteenth century the amalgamation was progressive. Thurston identifies a linear progression of 'indenture, orphan asylum, foster home' in America over a period two centuries. The eighteenth century stage of indenturing or farming out orphans was a pre-institutional stage of child care. The nineteenth century was the age of the asylum and orphanage. The post-institutional stage of placing children in foster homes was widely adopted in America from the beginning of the twentieth century. At Norwood the institutional stage was from 1876 to 1939 when it was the unreformed barrack-style building. Alternative types of residential care such as foster homes and cottage homes were used by the major denominational child care charities like Barnardo's in this period but not by Norwood.

The linear progress theory applied over two centuries and across three stages of residential child care development was based on the American experience. The interface between the three stages – replacement of the general purpose almshouse by the asylum and the replacement of the asylum and orphanage by the foster and cottage home – represented revolutionary change in child care. In England the 1948 Children Act was described as revolutionary in

requiring local authorities to take children out of the institution and put them in a family environment.<sup>24</sup> The three stages differed from America in two respects. There was a parallel system of two types of asylums in the institutional phase – the workhouse and the charitable asylum and orphanage. The other difference was the interface between the second and third stages which took place later, after the Second World War, than in America. Progress theory is based on the good intention of child care as the impetus for advance and assumes the inevitability of progress though the timescale differed in each country.

During the institutional phase liberalisation policies were pursued but were operated within the closed environment of the total institution. The internal interaction between the reformism of liberalisation and the structuralism of the total institution did not lead along an inevitable path of progress in the face of the structural dominance. According to the historian David Rothman, the evidence of institutionalism shows there was no linear progression and that the opposite of failure had set in.

By the 1870s and clearly by the 1890s, it was obvious that asylums had degenerated into mere custodial institutions – overcrowded, corrupt and certainly not rehabilitative. The institutions were kept going because of their functionalism and the enduring power of the rhetoric of benevolence. Closed institutions hardly changed and were certainly not humanised; the new programmes became supplements, not alternatives, thus expanding the scope and reach of the system.<sup>25</sup>

Rothman's theory is based on American experience but is also applicable to England. In England investigation by the Poor Law authorities into the working of the district schools which housed workhouse children showed them to be a failure. The district school according, to Rothman's functionalism, had degenerated into a large-scale custodial institution. Already by 1873 the evidence of institutionalisation 'sounded the death knell of the large institutional traditions and began a gradual move away from the administratively convenient device of the barrack home to the family system'.<sup>26</sup> The idea behind the district school was that it separated children from the corrupting influence of the other workhouse inmates and was seen as progressive at the time. That argument was undermined by the realisation that their size, in some cases with over a thousand children, created its own problem of institutionalisation. They were to endure for some sixty years. However the 'Procrustean bed' of institutionalisation led to their disbandment from the 1890s which in terms of progress theory was an incremental step to the next stage of development.

The parallel institutionalism in the UK allowed the Poor Law authorities to transfer the children to voluntary and local authority institutions. The re-institutionalisation enhanced the acceptability of the institution before the First World War. The idealist view of the good intention did not account for the impact of institutionalisation.

The end of the district school proved 'a tragic cycle of failure arising from historical tension' – that is 'between the desirable answer to social problems and the fact that institutionalisation became the normal answer in the nineteenth century'.<sup>27</sup> A re-evaluation by 'modern historians regard the Poor Law as an egregious error, a ghastly mistake, and a dark phase in the development of social policy'.<sup>28</sup> In this view 'Poor Law history cannot be written simply as a simple progression from deterrence to treatment' and the progress model is rejected in favour of the 'benevolence gone wrong' model.<sup>29</sup>

Voluntary charities were largely left to their own devices though an inspection regime was operated by the Home Office. After the First World War the perception of 'some faint outline of the original institutional ideal seen "as through a glass darkly" brought a growing conviction of the ghastly injustice of the [institution] for any child'.<sup>30</sup> In America the counter-institutional stage developed in the first decades of the twentieth century.

As closed institutions degenerated further, a new wave of reform energy devoted itself to the search for alternatives, administrative flexibility, discretion, a greater choice of dispositions. Individual treatment, case-by-case method, entry of psychiatric doctrines produced a series of innovations – attempts to humanise the institution.<sup>31</sup>

The inter-war period saw the Jewish American orphanages moving

away from the acceptance of the institution as a means of caring for orphans into a post-institutional stage. Reena Friedman looking at the institutional period found the separation of orphanage inmates from their natural parents

constitutes one of the most tragic aspects of the history of Jewish child care institutions. It is clear, at least before the reforms of the twentieth century, the rights of the children and their families were violated in the course of institutionalisation.<sup>32</sup>

The interpretation of institutionalism as a tragedy supports a conclusion that it was not a progressive incremental stage but a failed one in child caring. Institutions were seen as the solution to immutable problems in the nineteenth century.<sup>33</sup> However, the idealist view of the good intention that justified their rise was 'captured' by the institution.

The structure might indeed only 'allow' certain ideas to dominate at any one time, but once their facilitation occurs, the ideas take on something of a life of their own, a life which generates its own social facts.<sup>34</sup>

The institution became self-fulfilling and axiomatic as

the system does not succeed or fail – the asylum invents the orphan, it cannot 'fail' because it is not intended to eliminate [dependent children] but rather to distinguish them, to distribute them, to use them.<sup>35</sup>

In America a new post-institutional idealism developed with the Second White House Conference convened by President Wilson in 1919. It reaffirmed the conclusions of the 1909 Conference based

on the rights of the child. It called for 'an orchestration of community facilities for the better care of dependent, neglected and delinquent children to suit the action of the real needs of each child'. It was important 'for many generations of our wards would thrive or suffer as the decisions were wise or mistaken'. The start towards orchestration was taken up by the New York Bureau of Jewish Social Research which conducted a survey on Jewish children in orphan asylums and foster homes. It found

1556 more children in existing institutions that in their opinion ought to be there for the good of the children involved. It recommended 749 more children that were already so placed should be put in foster homes. They found 207 children cared for in institutions or foster homes who ought to be receiving more highly specialised care elsewhere and 549 children who ought to be discharged without doubt ... In addition they found 778 children or 21.8% of the whole 3563 ought never to have been admitted to institution or placing-out agency had subsidy been granted to the mother.<sup>36</sup>

The Clearing Bureau served to allocate children to the right type of care and the survey concluded 'the boarding bureaus show an appreciably better piece of work ... than do the institutions'.<sup>37</sup> The New York Jewish community developed a clinical pattern of child guidance which carried out 'the medical, psychological and social investigation of individual children'.<sup>38</sup>

What the survey revealed was the misallocation of children and the aim was to minimise it. The idea of a co-ordinating bureau,

a Central Council of Jewish Charities, initially attractive to the Anglo-Jewish community in 1923, failed because members were influenced 'by their association with individual constituent charities' through the power of vested interests.<sup>39</sup> Norwood assessed its own admissions in conjunction with the JBG which allowed the institution to 'distinguish...distribute ... and use' them for supporting itself.<sup>40</sup> A later survey conducted in 1966 of Britain's children's institutions found 'about one third of the children in institutions were considered better off elsewhere'. The conclusion made was that institutions were not optimal for development for one third of the children and therefore 'something in the institutional system must be terribly wrong'.<sup>41</sup> The 'pull effect' of orphanages meant 'it is the availability of residential care rather an objectively determined need that lies behind many ... admissions to children's homes' and would explain the survey results.<sup>42</sup>

In the institutional stage three phases are distinguished. The good intention of the early phase was when outcomes of institutionalism were unrecognised. 'Good intentions are taken at face value and are radically separated from their outcomes.'<sup>43</sup> The effects of institutionalisation are not realised and the optimism of the institution is in evidence in the drive for expansion. The earlier phase for Norwood was the post-Amalgamation period to the First World War. The middle phase is when the total institution is

established as self-perpetuating. The institution is regarded as good enough where good intentions are justified by good enough outcomes. The barrack-style institution resisted structural change

but in the fortress-like manner of the nineteenth century they remained committing the authorities to using them. Their type of architecture and design defied modification and hampered any alterations in regime since they were planned for children en masse.<sup>44</sup>

In the middle phase 'the institutions were kept going because of their functionalism and the enduring power of the rhetoric of benevolence' despite the outcomes of institutionalism being increasingly realised.<sup>45</sup> The public image of the institution was highly regarded 'generated by the moral propaganda' to enlist funds'.<sup>46</sup> The reality was that 'the crusading spirit of the mid-Victorian founders had "evaporated" by 1908 and what remained was not much more than the "rigid conformity" of the nineteenth century system'.<sup>47</sup> In Scotland Aberlour Orphanage claimed in its Jubilee brochure in 1925 it 'aims at being a Home and not an Institution'. In some respects its history mirrored Norwood, founded a year earlier in 1875. It was denominational, an Episcopalian Home and at its peak in the 1930s housed 500 children, not much larger than Norwood. By then

no pretence at reproducing family life could be maintained. Personal experiences support the impression that the larger institutions were characterised by discipline, religion, physical violence and material and emotional deprivation,

features that characterised Norwood.<sup>48</sup> One visitor described the sensation on entering one of the institutions 'as if a technicolour film suddenly turned into black and white'. Aberlour was described in a TV programme in 1965 as 'an old fashion and forbidden institution' with a regimented life style 'inevitable in an institution of such size'. At the time it was home for 160 children. Like Norwood the old-style orphanage was closed and replaced by ten family homes.<sup>49</sup>

The sociologist Amitai Etzioni examined the functionalism in organisations and stated that, once formed, institutions tend to serve their own needs rather than the needs of those for whom they serve. The institution is likely to emphasise organisational goals such as maintaining good order and protecting the good name of the institution rather than child-centred goals.<sup>50</sup> The latter point was constantly drummed into the children – 'remember you are a Jews' Orphanage boy, and every action of yours tends to bring credit or discredit upon the whole of the Institution'.<sup>51</sup> The whole structure of the disciplinary regime was established in the name of maintaining good order. Children in institutions were singularly powerless and were prey to becoming victims of the system.

From the closing decades of the nineteenth century up to the late 1940s not much changed in the care of institutionalised children, be they in orphanages, cottage homes or certified schools. The characteristics of the period with respect to caring for the public child were those of neglect, insensitivity and violence.<sup>52</sup>

On the eve of the Second World War the institutional care of children was found to be failing. Between 1939 and 1948 a 'silent social revolution' took place in which 'the social conditions of the people made the family approach acceptable and possible' and was to overturn the institution.<sup>53</sup> The 1930s saw the development of psychological thinking reinforced by the wartime evacuation experience. The malign effects of 'maternal deprivation' - the importance of mother-child bonding - was discovered by John Bowlby. It undermined Behaviourism as the accepted basis of child rearing, the prevalent psychological theory in the 1920s, based on the belief that children could be trained to behave in desired ways by suitable rewards and punishments. Children were to be trained in 'self-control, obedience and the recognition of authority'. The behavioural approach provided scientific support for institutional life. However, it was challenged by psychoanalysis in the 1930s and the contest was won by these putting forward psychologically informed views of childhood. The focus moved from the idea of superintending the growth of children as a scientific business to the one based on family where character and personality of children was moulded.<sup>54</sup> The 'silent revolution' paved the way for the third phase.

The history of the third phase is traced from the end of the Second World War. The final phase is marked by the failure of the

total institution, its dismantling and demolition.<sup>55</sup> In this phase the institution once thought of as good enough was shown to be deficient in its outcomes. For the first time the inside workings of the child institution was exposed to the full glare of public scrutiny. This was achieved by two investigative committees set up by the Labour government in 1945 following revelations on the lives of children in them.



## **Institutionalism Exposed – Revelation by the Curtis Committee**

Lady Allen of Hurtwood, a social observer of children's homes, drew public attention in 1944 to the inadequacies of voluntary homes. She said they were 'generations out of date' and lacked modern facilities. Her outspoken criticism led to the setting up of the Curtis Committee in England and Wales and the Clyde Committee in Scotland in 1945 'to look at the care of children deprived of normal home life'. The investigation was the third of the main official enquiries into the state of institutions for children. The Mundella Report of 1896 and the Poor Law Commission of 1909 looked at the state run institution of the workhouse and district school. Curtis found that 'there were a large number of institutional Homes of the 'barrack' variety often with imposing buildings ... In these Homes the rooms were often bare and comfortless'.<sup>56</sup> The Committee was concerned that

in many Homes there was a lack of personal interest and affection for the children. The child in these Homes was not an individual with his own rights and possessions, his own life to live. He was merely one of a crowd, eating, playing and sleeping with the rest, without any place or possession of his own or any quite room to which he could retreat. He was without the feeling that there was anyone he could turn to who was vitally interested in his welfare or who cared for him as a person. The effect on this on smaller children was reflected in their behaviour towards visitors, which took the form of an almost pathological clamouring for attention and petting. In the older children the effect appeared more in

slowness, backwardness and lack of response, and habits of destruction and want of concentration. Where individual love and care had been given, the behaviour of the children was quite different.<sup>57</sup>

Curtis singled out especially the emotional stunting that children suffered in institutions.

The findings of Curtis were borne out by the evidence submitted to the Committee by two Norwood representatives, Basil Henriques, member of its Executive and House Committees, and the secretary, Isidore Statman. Norwood in their submission was described as an institution on the "barrack system" with large dormitories with up to 75 beds. The problem in the past, they informed Curtis was that

in a large institution such as the Jewish Orphanage, it was noticeable that every child craved for individual attention. Life was necessarily monotonous where children lived and were educated in the same place and the danger of school prejudices penetrating into what ought to have been the home life. The children have in many cases a feeling of dependence which has also shown itself after they left the institution ... There are undoubtedly some who have felt they were abnormal ... Some children have shown anti-social behaviour.<sup>58</sup>

The criticism raised of 'school prejudices penetrating' into the home life did not arise

in civil society [where] audience and role segregation keeps one's avowals and implicit claims in one physical scene from being tested against conduct in other settings. In total institutions an inmate's conduct in one scene of activity is thrown up at him by staff in another context.<sup>59</sup>

It was an additional repercussion arising from institutionalisation.

Norwood's shortcomings laid bare for the first time a grim catalogue where

a) nobody was interested specifically in the well-being of the children, b) they lived in a segregated and routine life, c) infrequent visits of friends and relatives, d) children had stunted personalities, e) backward and unprepared to meet the world ..., g) they had a distorted view of life, h) they felt different from other children and did not feel part and parcel of everyday life.<sup>60</sup>

Curtis found the more progressive Homes sent children to local primary schools whereas 'some of the self-contained schools were maintained in order to secure religious teaching', a comment applicable to Norwood. The better Homes split the accommodation into small units without large dormitories. However, discipline 'generally was negative with little evidence of a code of behaviour to which they could subscribe'. Corporal punishment such as caning was not often noted, but Curtis relied on information supplied by the people in charge and this was true of Norwood.<sup>61</sup>

The social investigator Juliet Berry undertook a survey of 451 institutions in 1975. The patterns of daily care were split into three categories – 'good enough', 'more negative' and 'more positive'. In the case of discipline, she placed institutions where there was no official caning and corporal punishment in the top two categories but where resorted to a lot in the 'more negative' units. In the best

category the staff attitude on discipline was in the main quite firm and relaxed. In the more negative homes the emphasis was on strict discipline. The survey concluded strongly that 'a sizeable proportion of children in care receive less than good-enough care'.<sup>62</sup>

At Norwood, scholars tell of 'an uncompromising orphanage regime'.<sup>63</sup> T380 was moved there in 1939 from the LCC Lamorbic Homes. She remembered one teacher in particular, Jack Holtz, as being cruel who went over the top in the punishment he gave. One day for talking in classroom, 'I sat there and took the full force of his hand across my face'. The Headmistress Miss Goodman came up to her and said, 'I understand that Mr Holtz has hit you badly today'. She was going to report him to the Headmaster but Holtz apologised to the girl. She defiantly told him, 'it's a bit much when you hit a boy like that, but it's very bad that you should hit a girl like it'. Her very act of talking was transformed into an act of bravery as she 'felt quite good about it because she thought she had been brave'.<sup>64</sup> In the total institution the child normally cannot defend herself by distancing herself from the mortifying situation and staff like Holtz penalised children for chatting. Goodman's intervention broke the 'looping' that would otherwise force the child to 'collapse' the mortification into herself.<sup>65</sup> The slapping never happened again but it had occurred frequently before. T380's recollection is of a harsh disciplinary regime where staff imposed

their own punishment rules in the absence of a uniform code of practice, a criticism voiced by Curtis.<sup>66</sup>

The Curtis Committee was told by Norwood that it was 'unhappy with the current system', and Henriques admitted 'I think one can see one's failures in the past and would rather not look back'. Such an admission indicted the institution and confessed Norwood had not been good enough in the past. The Committee was told Norwood meant to start anew. The aim was to split the orphanage into four Houses, to set up a hostel for boarded out boys but 'not run on institutional lines at all', and 'as soon as practicable all children will go to local schools for secular education', and 'no dormitory will be larger than for twelve children and old girls will sleep in cubicles'.<sup>67</sup> The determination was expressed that 'as soon as the war ended to create conditions at Norwood approximating as far as possible, to home life'.<sup>68</sup> It was having to face up to the challenge of looking forward to a new era where the child as a person was what was important and no longer look backward to a time when the institution mattered more. That challenge voiced by Henriques to Curtis was articulated by a reformist governor who had long argued for change and who had a strong attachment to the children's welfare. Indeed, Henriques was affectionately called 'the Gaffer' by the children.

The concept of children's welfare and childhood was

re-conceptualised through psychology and psychiatry in the inter-war period.<sup>69</sup> 'By 1940 there was a greater knowledge of children than at any time before through advances in child psychology, child guidance and children's clinics.' The advances made it possible to understand the emotional turmoil evacuated children suffered. The social consequences of children denied family upbringing was formative in government passing the 1948 Children Act.<sup>70</sup> It placed a duty on local authorities to ensure children and parents were kept together. The research on family separation influenced professional attitudes. The view of Children's Officers that

no matter how good an institution may be, it cannot supply the atmosphere and freedom which a home can give ... where one can feel that one really has a place of one's own and an intimate place in the life of the family,

was pointed out during the reading of the Children Bill.<sup>71</sup> Curtis reflected 'the whole attitude of society to the treatment of children has been moving towards a gentler and more sympathetic approach'.<sup>72</sup>

The publicly cared for child was to be treated as an individual with rights and possessions, to be treated as a person and where ever possible to be adopted or returned home to his natural parents.<sup>73</sup>

In the post-war climate 'revolutionary' child legislative action was possible.<sup>74</sup>

The work on short stay evacuated children brought attention

to the situation of long stay children in institutional care. The psychologist John Bowlby researched the impact of maternal separation and deprivation on institutionalised children. He stated the amount of adult-child interaction is one of the biggest differences between institutions and families and for this reason the quality of care provided in the average institution is much worse than the care provided in the average family. He regarded even the care in the best institutions falls well short of the average home though the outcome from the best institution was reasonably satisfactory.<sup>75</sup> Indeed, it was only the best institution unlike those categorised as average and worse that Bowlby found good enough for residential care. Lady Allen in her evidence to the Curtis Committee referred to an example of the best institution, 'one unique home' which was

exactly like all the other villas in that particular area. They lived as a complete home life as it is possible to imagine for children who are not actually living with their parents. They were completely and absolutely free. They went to elementary schools ... The members know their children intimately ... and gave them a rich and varied life.<sup>76</sup>

She contrasted this with 'an example of the worst type' in the same town where they had no contact with the outside community.<sup>77</sup> It distressed her beyond words and it was an emotional response that motivated Bowlby to 'dedicate his work to changing common social regimes which led to untold anguish. He expressed indignation at

the damage society wreaked on the individual'.<sup>78</sup>

Norwood children, unlike evacuated children, did not suddenly experience family separation but did face sudden de-institutionalisation. The children were evacuated to Worthing at the beginning of the War and then moved to Hertford in 1940 and returned to Norwood in 1945. For almost six years they experienced a new life that N61 discovered

was a different world living with a family and accommodating to their life-styles. In Hertford we had opportunities to walk in fields, play in streams, climb trees, pat horses' noses and have pets just like other children.<sup>79</sup>

Another scholar, N93 who left Norwood in 1939 after winning a scholarship to a secondary school discovered it

allowed me to escape into the home of foster-parents. I had now moved into a new world. And what a delight it was! The exhilaration of walking each morning to freedom ... remains one of my happiest memories.<sup>80</sup>

The enclosed life of the orphanage was opened up to a new world of 'opportunities' and 'freedom'. The children did not know of the new 'psychological reality' that re-conceptualised the child but experienced the concomitant changes in the social structure – evacuation and de-institutionalisation – that actualised the new thinking. Norwood told the Curtis Committee it was 'really willing to start on a new basis' and bring into reality the new thinking.<sup>81</sup>

## **Institutionalism Abandoned - Edward Conway's Reforms**

The first of the post-War reforms after the return of the children from Hertford was to send them to local schools for their education with the exception of religious education. Shorn of the scholastic function the Committee's determination 'to create conditions at Norwood approximating as far as possible home life' became possible.<sup>82</sup> However, the reform caused an upset in religious circles. Dayan Lazarus, a member of the Beth Din (religious court) wrote to the Chief Rabbi expressing his sorrow 'on the recent changes at Norwood. The Day School has been closed to our sorrow'. The accusation was made that 'the whole religious life of the Orphanage has been changed' and Basil Henriques was attacked for his 'unorthodox' religious views. He was a leading member of the Progressive movement. Anthony de Rothschild, the Norwood President, gave a robust reply asserting 'the Judaism at Norwood is no different from what it was before' with religious education under the auspices of the London Board for Religious Education 'so that religious teaching will continue in the old tradition'.<sup>83</sup>

The religious education combined as it was with a secular curriculum had been a reason for Norwood not sending children to outside schools. The Curtis Committee criticised institutions as

having a 'less progressive form of care' because of 'the relative importance attached to those responsible to the religious training of children' though it had in mind particularly the convent schools.<sup>84</sup>

The reform was proving a success as one year later it was reported 'the children are becoming more self-reliant and confident'.

Rothschild stated 'the children going to outside school is seen as beneficial reducing the children's isolation and the hot house environment of Norwood'.<sup>85</sup> Religious education as a factor justifying the isolation of the children was unsustainable in the post-War environment.

Compared with earlier reforms such as the abolition of the voting system and the ending of sex discrimination for governors in the 1920s the school reform took seven decades to achieve. There were two earlier institutional changes to the educational system. In 1900 Norwood became a public elementary school and in 1920 the school came under the auspices of LCC.<sup>86</sup> In both cases the change of status was because the community found it difficult to support financially an independent Jewish orphanage school. The 1945 reform was part of the post-war 'revolution' as institutional schooling was regarded as detrimental to the development of the child. The children living part of their daily lives in the local community was a fissure in the totality of the institution. The cracks opening up in the institutional polity could no longer be ignored by

Governors,

as much as educational and employment matters concerned Norwood, they also took such a personal interest in the welfare of the children... they became acutely aware of the narrowing influence of the Orphanage on the development of personality. The changes introduced to minimise the stultifying effects of living within confined bounds culminated in sending out of children to local schools.<sup>87</sup>

Outside schooling freed up room and that allowed the Orphanage to make 'a better home'. The plan of 'the introduction of a home atmosphere' was to have small family groups under house parents.<sup>88</sup> In 1947 the children in the Main Building aged 8 to 15 were split into family units and the families took their meals together at their own family table. In the following year the big dormitories were partitioned to make them 'much more homely'. The 'momentum for turning Norwood into a real home' included improvements with interior decoration and more substantial furniture in order to brighten the lives of the children.<sup>89</sup> It was the beginning and with the appointment of Edward Conway as Principal in 1950

the Committee are confident that under Conway a further era of progress at Norwood is assured. The Norwood Orphanage is an institution which cannot look backwards.<sup>90</sup>

Under Conway a three pronged attack on the total institution was implemented – measures to improve daily living conditions that

included recreational and health activities; changes to the structure of the building to facilitate a more home-like environment and policies which recognised the individuality of the child.

Leisure and health activities aimed to develop the children's potential. Previously when Norwood was both a Home and School they were introduced to relieve the 'narrowing influence' and the monotony of institutional life. The range of activities were multifarious and included a cub and scout group, a Jewish Lads' Brigade company, games and athletics such as football and netball, cycling, gardening and 'general free activity'. Critically, participation in all of them was voluntary which proved attractive to the children. These activities formed part of the transformation as the

Home bore little resemblance to the kind of exclusive and inhibiting institution, which has been severely criticised for creating an 'institutional' child, who was segregated from his contemporaries who lived in normal homes, unaware of the outside world and its activities and so developed a stunted personality.<sup>91</sup>

As well as recreation activities it was reported that it has 'been possible to do much to improve the living conditions' inside the orphanage. The closure of the school had released the genie of reform out of the institutional bottle in an outpouring of enthusiasm for change to provide 'congenial surroundings, airy and comfortable bedrooms, good and appetising food, pleasant recreation and family rooms'.<sup>92</sup>

Sideboards, refectory tables and chairs have transformed the children's family rooms ... Additional cubicles in the dormitories, installation of bed-lights in the older children's dormitories, provision of individual lockers for storing personal things in the family rooms and furnishing and carpeting the television lounge in the Gabriel Home

were part of the attempt to make Norwood homely.<sup>93</sup> The improvements resonated with the post-war consumerist ideology of bringing prosperity to the 'confines of the organised control system' as well as the general population.<sup>94</sup>

A linguistic problem arose as the name of the institution itself, the Jewish Orphanage, became incompatible with the reforms that were converting Norwood into a Home. Curtis criticised descriptions such as 'Orphanage' because 'all seemed well calculated to mark off from their fellows the children thus labelled' and recommended a Home should not have a name which marks out children living in it.<sup>95</sup> The name was changed in 1956 to the Norwood Home for Jewish Children. In Curtis' thinking 'Home' was better than 'Orphanage' but still identified it as a separate institution for children. However, the inclusion of 'Children' was seen as reflecting Norwood's more inclusive policy on admissions as 'there was no longer any restriction on the type of child introduced apart from the religious denomination'.<sup>96</sup> The introduction of 'Norwood' for the first time used a locational reference to designate what was a national

institution. Nevertheless, its inclusion identified the Home as a separate body. The re-naming represented a linguistic compromise between conflicting Jewish and wider social concerns.

The second prong of the Conway reforms consisted of changes to the layout of the building. It was recognised 'the Orphanage buildings do not readily adapt themselves to all that is most up to-date in Children's Home accommodation'.<sup>97</sup> Outwardly the exterior boasted the pride of Victorian philanthropy with a drab interior but the changes following Curtis were turning the institution inside out. The exterior was a painful reminder of the barrack style whereas the interior was being transformed into a home. Just as a linguistic incompatibility necessitated renaming so the incompatibility arising between the new interiority of purpose and the exteriority of outdated form necessitated structural change. The incompatibility was made all the more obvious as the 'child' ceased to be an 'orphan' with the renaming. The residential referent of a child was 'home' which meant 'belonging to the house of the family'.<sup>98</sup> The unhomely orphanage was outside the dominant narrative of domesticity. The orphan embodied difference whereas the 'child' embraced the sameness that made it part of the wider society. The ideological facade of the building was cracking under the linguistic assault.

The assault was made more concrete by the incompatibility of

'the mass, unspecialised, factory-like architectural spaces of the barrack schools' with 'recognised forms of domesticity and individuality'.<sup>99</sup> A system was set up in the Main Building to make the child feel being a member of a large family. The children were allocated to one of ten families – four for girls (Ruth, Rachel, Naomi, Miriam) and six for boys (Alexander, Judah, David, Samson, Jonathan, Samuel) – with Jewish names chosen from the Bible. This was quite different from the names given for the boys' houses which competed against each other at sports in the 1930s – 'Pyke, Behrend, Feudal, Marks, Davis and Myers' – men who were Norwood philanthropists and governors.<sup>100</sup> The spare classrooms were converted into 'family' rooms.<sup>101</sup> A *JC* correspondent waxed lyrical that he had 'never seen an institution that was less institutional in the pejorative sense of the word'. Conditions had improved and 'in place of regimentation the "family system" had been introduced'.<sup>102</sup> However, the changes were insufficient as 'very few structural alterations were made to give effect to this change of policy apart from partitioning of dormitories'. The limitations of the building inhibited the functioning and development of the family concept so that the attempt at 'mixed aged groupings proved impractical'.<sup>103</sup>

'Making the life of the children more and more comparable

with that of children living in their own home' entailed a structural 'revolution'.<sup>104</sup> The family house system had outgrown the limitations of the building. At the 1954 prize-giving ceremony Rothschild said

they had an *ambitious scheme* to build within the grounds cottages so that children could together with their foster-parents live in them as a family group.<sup>105</sup>

It was a momentous year in Norwood's history as it came face to face seventy eight years after the Amalgamation with the reality that the building was devoid of purpose. Its exteriority had become a mere facade albeit Victorian in its architectural splendour whilst inside the re-conceptualisation of childhood was being actualised. In the same year the Jewish Gertrude Jacobson Orphanage in Glasgow was closed.<sup>106</sup> By 1954 it was accepted that 'in the near future the main task is a re-housing of the children in 'family cottages'.<sup>107</sup> It was found

with the passage of time and the many improvements in the conditions under which orphans and deprived children are housed in these days ... the buildings at Norwood are now old-fashioned and unsuitable from the point of view of the comfort of the children and of administration. In those days, when the children lived as a small self-contained community - almost isolated from the outside world - the building was considered a model of its kind: today it seems drab and uninviting. It is the opinion of the Committee that the time has come for modern 'Family Homes' to take its place.<sup>108</sup>

Initially two family homes 'experimental in nature' were built. If successful, the intention was to extend by eight more so that the majority of children would 'be given the advantage of living in conditions more like those of a true home'.<sup>109</sup> The opening of the two Family Houses signified that 'a new era had began'.<sup>110</sup> It also signified that the old building, even with the improvements made, was unsuitable.

For it to work there had to be a compatible structure and this was proved by the fact that 'the two family houses are a success beyond doubt'. Based on the experiment the scheme was extended to include all the children being placed in ten family homes. The General Court approved the scheme 'to build houses on the periphery of the orphanage site in which the children would be able to experience a normal family life'.<sup>111</sup> The two family homes were dedicated by the Chief Rabbi, Israel Brodie, and Herbert Bueno de Mesquita, chairman of the House Committee. The latter stated that 'these children will now get to know something of the real family atmosphere and family life'.<sup>112</sup> Basil Henriques, who had devoted 45 years' service to Norwood, recalled a time when 'it was very much an institution when the children wore uniforms and slept 70 in a dormitory'. In his book *The Home Makers* the theme is that the home is irreplaceable for bringing up children in a family. He condemned the old Norwood as 'the large barrack-like

Institution' <sup>113</sup> It begged the question that one boy asked.

On April 29, 1957 I helped to create history ... I ceased to be one of the crowd ... we took some time to get used to the fact that we were not in the main building, but were now being 'human pigs'. If this is how guinea pigs live, I thought, why hadn't somebody thought of it sooner? <sup>114</sup>

In fact, this had already happened - an 'Old Boy' of Norwood who in

1907 wrote of 'A Dream of the Future' fifty years on. In his dream

the home life is entrusted to men and women who preside over the cottages to give the children a treatment void of the evils of the barrack system in force in my day. The whole management has changed; the energies of all are directed to the happiness and development of the inmates solely. There are no theorists, no faddists, no patronising casual comers, who are really nothing to do with the children themselves. Those interested know that the needs of the children are best understood by a close contact with them and with the staff. <sup>115</sup>

It was a dream that presciently came true fifty years later. The boy who in 1957 had 'helped to create history' was answered by his predecessor. It had been thought of sooner.

The powerlessness of the child meant that what she thought and felt never counted. In the recollections of a girl living in Barkingside Girls' Village run by Barnardo's in the 1930s, the plea was made that

the truth is not to be found by [people] visiting homes only, or by reading, or consulting leading psychologists, who have lectured at and visited the children in these Institutions. The real truth is to be found in me, and hundreds like me. <sup>116</sup>

The truth of the child is unrecognised in the total institution. It leaves little 'space' open to councillors and residents to show initiative and autonomy.<sup>117</sup> Before the War there was no pastoral system at Norwood whereby an adult had a personal concern and paid particular attention to each child.<sup>118</sup> It only emerged with the family system and family homes as part of the process of de-institutionalisation. The process was a prerequisite for the emergence of the new role of pastoral care of the child as against the traditional roles of education, training and religion.

Conway conducted something of a public relations exercise in the Jewish community to persuade it of the merits of de-institutionalisation. He gave a number of public talks on the themes of 'The Deprived Child in Jewish Society' based on his experience of orphanage life, 'Jewish Family Life' and 'Befriending Deprived Children'.<sup>119</sup> He saw the aim of Norwood was 'to get away from the evils of institutionalism' and was anxious to introduce measures that would bring 'the greatest happiness' to the children. His own experience of dealing with Norwood children convinced him life in institutions was unnatural and tended to warp the character of the children.<sup>120</sup> 'Within the Norwood building itself [he] set about transforming a Victorian Institution into a twentieth century Home' and 'the force behind these changes' was to establish family homes.<sup>121</sup> Though he left in 1958 the fruits of his success were seen

three years later when all the children were living in the family homes. The now disused main building was demolished.<sup>122</sup> It was a social necessity in the development of childhood.

Conway was replaced by Jack Wagman, the last head of Norwood of the institution in its old form. He had worked as a house father there and later under Conway acted as vice-principal. As the new head he took on Conway's legacy that accepted 'contemporary views on social policy' and the need to 'replace the large institution by small houses'. Conway merited the epithet of 'the Innovator'.<sup>123</sup> His successor took a pragmatic approach and asked the Home Office whether there was

a trend away from small 'family' units to the older style of communal institution, away from family homes catering for 10 to 12 children under a Housemother or married couple towards large institutional types of buildings catering for perhaps 100 or more such children?<sup>124</sup>

Two family homes had already opened. There were teething problems in operating the homes as the complaints bore out. Recruitment of house parents was difficult and a source of anxiety as it was reported 'the difficulty in finding orthodox Jewish foster parents in the district is so great'. Other concerns aired were that the 'family' groups were artificial unlike 'family' life, that house parents with their own families needed accommodation that could not be provided and that their own children may 'adversely affect'

the care of children under their charge.<sup>125</sup> The introduction of the most radical structural change since Norwood was formed was not without its problems. It left staff yearning for a return to 'the older style of communal institution'.

The reference to the artificiality of family homes was out of touch with developments in the national social scene and suggested an entrenched institutional mentality still persisted amongst staff. The experience of one couple recruited as house parents in 1962 was that 'at the beginning even though they opened houses they still tried to run it as if they had the old main building'. They themselves were in no doubt 'if you are going to run a house with children and show them what home life is all about, part of it is actually doing the things everybody else would do'.<sup>126</sup> The Home Office Inspector commented that 'the organisation seems keen to keep to itself and to be cut out of the general child care scene'. However, Norwood was told that the Home Office was 'not aware of a reverse trend to large institutional buildings and indeed the trend was to favour small family homes to replace large institutions'.<sup>127</sup> There was no going back.

Within the Anglo-Jewish community Conway's efforts were successful in converting people to the changeover. The Chief Rabbi Israel Brodie commended 'the imaginative housing scheme which when carried out will promote a more intimate home atmosphere

for the boys and girls'. The new President of Norwood, Peter Samuel, praised 'our aspirations to exemplify in Norwood all that is modern and beneficial to the welfare of the children'. His appointment in 1961 followed the death of the previous President, Anthony de Rothschild.<sup>128</sup> On his appointment in 1919 the Headmaster Marcus Kaye approached Rothschild about making structural changes to the building but nothing materialised.<sup>129</sup> With his death came the fulfilment of those changes. In 1962 the Home Office Inspector was able to report that the establishment of ten small family homes at Norwood was 'a considerable achievement and an experiment which we feel sure will prove very worthwhile'. He told Norwood he was 'happy to think that at long last we have been able to dispense with out large institutional type premises'.<sup>130</sup> Wholehearted concurrence was expressed by Norwood that

the change-over shows without doubt, the wisdom of the decision to proceed with the re-housing scheme, which has completely changed the children's lives from the 'institutional' to the 'family' way of life.<sup>131</sup>

## **Institutionalism Rejected – The Individuality of the Child is Paramount**

The third prong of the Conway reforms was the policy to recognise the child as an individual. In the light of Curtis and the Children Act Norwood recognised its task was not just 'the purely physical aspect of child-care work' that was important but

the more difficult and complex stage in the care of the deprived child. Children are put in 'families' and for the first time in their lives, perhaps, they are made to feel that they really count for something, and that they belong and are really wanted.<sup>132</sup>

The doors of the institution were now opened wider to allow the outside world in. There were more frequent visits arranged for children to see their parents and relations in their homes and during school holidays. For those children who had no relations the 'Aunties and Uncles' scheme allowed them to receive visits of friends. By 1955 the use of the 'scheme means nearly one half of the children are now in touch with friends ... the scheme provides a link with friends outside and so creating a feeling of being wanted'.<sup>133</sup>

The Friends scheme was extended by the After-Care Committee to allow boys to spend as much time as possible with relatives whilst at Norwood or, alternatively, finding people to befriend if they had no homes of their own. It was hoped 'the boys do not now go out into a strange world of which they are completely

ignorant, but leave Norwood able to adapt themselves quickly to life outside'.<sup>134</sup> The importance of the Friends scheme was 'to help to rehabilitate these children and restore their self-confidence'. The fact was that children left Norwood with 'inadequate personalities' and this appears to be one of the reasons why such a high proportion of such children, in later life enter 'institutions ... for inside them they can again depend upon professional care and they are relieved of responsibilities of this work-a-day world'.<sup>135</sup>

NOSA recognised

this experience has left many of us unable to express ourselves, both physically and emotionally, it has left some of us totally lacking in social skills which leads to being withdrawn, shy, intimidated, inarticulate, inadequate, angry and at times unable to cope with the rigours of life. Some of us have been left unable to take full responsibility for what goes on in our lives.<sup>136</sup>

Susan Isaacs, one of the psychologists who investigated the effects of evacuation in her evidence to the Curtis Committee, listed 'the undesirable results' of institutional care and included

lack of adaptability, greater tendency to anti-social behaviour and delinquency, 'impoverishment of personality', behavioural problems, difficulty making friends – adverse results which tend to occur and reliably recorded.<sup>137</sup>

Conway undertook his own 'Comparison of characteristics of 'normal' and problem children living at Norwood with children who attended the same school but lived at home'. He examined 'Conduct' where he found

a) the proportion of Orphanage 'bad' girls and boys was each 2.5 times that of the ordinary school children, b) there was a higher proportion of troublesome children among those who came from the Orphanage, c) a higher proportion of children from normal homes had a good sense of discipline, and a higher proportion of Orphanage children had a bad sense of discipline.<sup>138</sup>

On 'Temperament', he found the effects of institutional living followed a consistent pattern.

a) among Orphanage boys there was proportionately three times the number who were aggressive and quick tempered than among the other children, b) there was a markedly higher proportion of Orphanage children who were non-cooperative and rebellious, c) among Orphanage boys there were twice the proportion of lazy boys and twice as few industrious workers than among the others, d) there was a higher proportion of children from normal homes who were capable of sustained effort, e) the proportion of 'good mixers' was higher among the other children than among the orphanage children, who also displayed a higher proportion of solitary children.<sup>139</sup>

He concluded orphanage boys displayed a higher proportion of 'bad conduct', quick-tempered, rebellious, aggressive and 'a major source of discipline' who resented correction.

Institutionalisation had engendered in the children a counter-cultural resentment as a means of opposition. The authoritarian principle in the form of the disciplinary regime was the means to enforce compliance and maintain the power of the dominant institutional culture. Gary Polster who went to the CJOA saw what

damage was done from the unequal relationship. He contrasted

the power of staff over children, power of monitors over other children, power of big boys over small boys and the power of wealthy benefactors over the entire institution ... with the powerlessness of the children – poor, parentless, homeless and stigmatised as orphans.<sup>140</sup>

It was a relationship that stripped the orphans of their individuality.

Individualisation of the child was incompatible with the total

institution as children were encouraged to take a much greater

control of their lives. 'We are beginning to realise now what damage

can be done to children in such environments by conditions which

so diminish their private image of their individuality.'<sup>141</sup> There was

a growing awareness of the damage that institutionalisation did to

the child. 'Now society accepts that children have the right to a

childhood that is protected, dependent and happy. But the unhappy

childhoods, we know, should never have happened.'<sup>142</sup>

The revelations of the Curtis Committee and the radical 1948

Children Act singled out the institution and from all sides it came

under attack. The social reformer William Beveridge noted 'the

[Curtis] report paints a very gloomy picture'.<sup>143</sup> His principle of the

welfare state saw the importance of helping the family and stated

that children should have the necessities of life provided in such a

way 'as to preserve parental responsibility as completely as

possible'.<sup>144</sup> The statutory authorities, the Children's Officers in local government, set up under the Act and the Home Office encouraged the support of the family.<sup>145</sup> The Children's Officer for Bournemouth in 1956 highlighted the inadequacies of Children's Homes to deal with the needs of deprived children.<sup>146</sup> The local authorities were able to reform the children's homes they controlled. The Home Office exerted pressure on the non-statutory charitable institutions to undergo reform and the Inspector was happy to think that Norwood had at last long dispensed with the large institutional premises.<sup>147</sup> In the schools there was a growth in the use of the psychological service, established under the 1944 Education Act, which took for granted the relationship between the child, school and family.

The 'realising potency of psychological theories' put forward by John Bowlby and Anna Freud altered 'elements of the social definition of reality'. 'Their reality-generating capacity' in the need for more personal care of individual children became diffused and accepted by the Curtis and Clyde Committees, by the compilers of the Children Act, by social workers and the regulatory and political bodies and 'normalised' throughout the wider society.<sup>148</sup> The new social environment generated 'the sudden and passionate interest in the child's mind, to a curiosity in discovering not only the lines of normal development but the reasons for its strange divergences'.

Emmanuel Miller, visiting psychologist at Norwood in the 1930s, wrote that 'the [Child Guidance] movement seeks to explore the evil [of maladjustment] at its roots, to destroy the causes rather than to prune the diseased branches of established neuroticism'.<sup>149</sup> That maladjustment was rooted for some Norwood children in the institution. The rebellious Cissie Meister 'described the discontent of the child' who hated the institution.<sup>150</sup> Her unsuitability there and the recommendation of her removal by the psychologist identified an institutional incompatibility rather than a child deficiency. The clinician was caught between helping the child 'and many other children at the orphanage, who like herself, seemed to be unhappy' and an institution described as kind and understanding.<sup>151</sup> The new psychology provided the fulcrum by which the institutional lever was tilted towards the child. The recognised evils of institutionalism were now comprehended as symptomatic of the institution from which the child was recommended to be removed and should never have been admitted in the first place.

The fervour against the institution had by the beginning of the 1960s become a 'destructuring impulse' to deinstitutionalise.

The whole ideological consensus about the desirability and necessity of the ... institution appeared to break. The institution was necessarily always absolutely a failure – a colossal mistake whose commission can only be redeemed by its abolition.

Abolition, not mere reform, was universally accepted.<sup>152</sup> The irrefutable result of empirical research showed asylums were ineffective and led to institutionalism. A century earlier the charity organisation movement encouraged amalgamations on grounds of cost and efficiency. But the central role of the family and the individuality of the child proved that was misguided and in the iconoclastic climate of the sixties 'organisational disestablishment' took place across the country and the orphanage disappeared. Norwood was no exception and in 1962 the 'old workhouse building' was abolished'.<sup>153</sup>



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## **Chapter 8 - Conclusion**

The research for the thesis is based on Norwood as an institution. Its purpose is to place the focus on a particular denominational orphanage within the wider context of child institutionalism. In chapter 1, *A Brief History of Norwood*, the possible areas of research – education and the After Care system, the religious and Anglicization roles, denominational identity, welfare of the children and the construction of childhood – are outlined. All the themes are relevant to the research but this thesis starts from a baseline of its institutionalism which provides the common thread throughout the themed chapters.<sup>1</sup> The period of study of the institution is from its creation in 1876 to its closure in 1961. However, to place Norwood in an historical context requires extending the research to include the earlier foundation charities, the Jews' Hospital and the JOA.

Norwood was the only significant Jewish residential child institution in the UK but was one of several hundreds that catered for non-Jewish children by the state and voluntary charities.<sup>2</sup> This thesis examines the characteristics of Norwood institutionalism but contextualises it as part of the history of child institutionalisation in Britain and abroad. The research opens a door that allows the historian to enter into the inner workings of the institution. Those workings up to now have largely been unexplored. In the case of

Norwood the research addresses an important gap in the history of institutional life. As a Jewish institution, it is a gap in Anglo-Jewish historiography. As an orphanage, it is a gap in the historiography of child caring institutions.<sup>3</sup> The inner workings of the institution suffer from a lack of research with the possible exceptions of the Poor Law institutions and Jewish American orphanages.

The thesis achieves its objective by analysing the history of Norwood within a methodological framework – an historical trajectory through three phases – pre-institutional, institutional and post-institutional. The methodology treats Norwood as a Jewish species within an institutional genus that has a national and international context. The phases are traced in the rise, the growth, the tempering and the end of institutionalism.<sup>4</sup> The historical trajectory signified by the chapter titles describes a path of institutional success and failure. The evidence revealed by the examination of successes and failures called for a new historical assessment of the child institution. The traditional model drew a straight line – the march of progress – that extended from the 1834 Poor Law through to the liberal reforms of the Children Acts and to the welfare reforms after 1945.<sup>5</sup> Its self-congratulatory tone was mirrored by the model of the ‘good enough’ Norwood institution with its march of progress from Hospital and Orphan Asylum to Orphanage and Home. In the last thirty years a ‘revolution’ in

Anglo-Jewish historiography has mirrored historiographical developments in the wider field of social history where the linear model has been challenged by new studies.<sup>6</sup>

Thurston in his 1930 study *The Dependent Child* wrote that each stage was a forward step in the process of child development. He argued that it is only by looking back in the light of the ideal that we can see what 'a Procrustean bed of torture' each form of child care may be when it is not suited to the needs of the particular child.<sup>7</sup> A 1930s historical assessment of idealist intentions was optimistic that the straight road of good intentions was not disrupted by 'imperfect realisation' with 'sad tales' of failure.<sup>8</sup> However, the Procrustean mould of institutionalism raised doubts on the continuity of progress. In the case of Poor Law history the interpretation that 'curative treatment was a natural outgrowth' is contested by modern scholars. 'They agree there was no uniform transition to a curative poor law regime and its history cannot be written simply as a simple progression from deterrence to treatment.'<sup>9</sup>

The change in historical interpretation opened up research to a new understanding that progress was punctuated by harmful failures. Englander writing on *Poverty and Poor Law Reform* (1998) concluded the Poor Law was an erroneous phase, that merited the epithets 'ghastly' and 'dark', in the development of social policy.<sup>10</sup>

Crowther in her study on *The Workhouse System* (1982) offered 'no solution to the question of whether a residential institution is a desirable answer to social problems', but pointed to R H Tawney's comment in 1909 that 'the student realises, with something like horror, that three generations of men and women have been sacrificed to what, when it is examined critically, turns out to be nothing more or less than a gigantic historical blunder'.<sup>11</sup> Reena Friedman in her study on American Jewish orphanages, *These are Our Children* (1994) concluded that the separation of children from their parents was 'a violation of the family' and 'the most tragic aspects' of Jewish child care institutionalisation in America.<sup>12</sup>

The re-evaluated 'model' of Norwood institutionalism radically alters the traditional self-congratulatory approach. The amalgamation and expansion in the 'age of the asylum' before the First World War was a cause for communal success. However, the success was short-lived as the age of the asylum was swept away by a post-war world where alternative models - the cottage home, foster home and 'child developing' institution - were widely adopted by state and non-Jewish charities. The post-war world was one where the large institution was widely attacked for the 'evils of institutionalism'.

The attack was an ideological questioning of the large institution as a 'Good Enough' residential model. The inter-war

period witnessed a turning away from the institution with a new conception of the child. At Norwood the change was signified in the Norwood Rebellion that broke out in 1921. In its own way it catalysed a re-conceptualisation of the Norwood child similar to that which was taking place in society at large. No longer would 'good enough' be for the institution alone. The certainties of institutional progress witnessed in the tower building of the philanthropists were gone. The inter-war period was marked by the attenuation of the total institution as an authoritarian stronghold. Inside its walls the implementation of liberal policies weakened its defences. However, the 'tempering of institutionalism' was constrained by the persistence of the institutional 'evils' of 'emotional stunting' and 'narrowing influence'.

Ideologically the contestation was between creating a good enough institution for the children and the structural obstacles that defied reform. At a personal level forces were joined between two parties: reformists and conservatives; in the inter-war period the conservatives held sway. Past presidents set the direction of Norwood. Behrend acknowledged the overriding wishes of the Anglo-Jewish elite on amalgamation. Faudel-Phillips was the towering face of the pre-war institutional order. Rothschild was the inheritor of an institutional tradition which he showed little sign of changing.

The path of progress with its sense of forward movement had become directionless. In its place the ideological underpinnings of the institution rested on a custodial stability merited by the status quo in which the pre-1914 optimistic expansionism had become embedded. In 1934 governors could claim they had reached an apogee of 'endeavour ... in the progressive nature of the work of the Jewish Orphanage'.<sup>13</sup> The meaning of progress had changed from being part of the general social advance to one where 'inside the gates of the institution everything continued as it always had done, as it were, standing still'.<sup>14</sup> The impetus for change came from outside. Between the 1870s and 1930s the advance in child development with the new psychological sciences had transformed childhood with the emergence of the emotionally valued child.<sup>15</sup> Hand in hand with the reconstruction of childhood was the post-war reconstruction of the Welfare State which embraced the ideology of the functional family.<sup>16</sup>

The observation made that 'if rebellion described the discontent of the child, revolution was a manifestation of institutional discontent with the system' referred to two transforming events in institutional history - the 1921 Norwood rebellion and the 1948 Children Act.<sup>17</sup> Their potent power in transforming Norwood was to redirect its historical trajectory from the institutional path that had been accepted as progressive. The

revolt and counter-cultural actions omitted from institutional records were outside the historical framework that supported linear progress theory. Their relevance in Norwood history is that they counter the long held interpretation.

The findings of the Curtis Committee, like the research of modern historians, exposed the sadness of institutional life. The children in 1921 expressed in their own way resentment at institutionalism. The exposure of that life by the Curtis Committee on a national scale paved the way for the 'revolutionary' 1948 Children Act.<sup>18</sup> It laid down the standards by which the 'good enough' institution – outside schooling, small group homes, 'progressive records' and banning of corporal punishment – was judged.<sup>19</sup> In its evidence to the Committee Norwood rejected the course of institutionalisation because of its failures and was keen to be 'starting on a new basis', one that mirrored the revolutionary path set nationally.<sup>20</sup> In following that course over the next fifteen years Norwood moved away from being an institution. By 1961 the transformation was completed and Norwood entered a post-institutional era.

The research carried out shows that Norwood cared for many thousands of Jewish children by providing an institutional home. Over time serious attempts were made to improve what became recognised as inadequate care. But those attempts were never good

enough to overcome the inherent failures of institutionalism and this was true of many non-Jewish institutions as well. Even when better alternatives were known the inherent forces of maintaining the status quo all too frequently prevailed. In particular the thesis shows those forces held back Norwood and left the institution behind the times. The Curtis Committee uniquely was able to gain an insight into the national perspective on the care of children that included such bodies as the Muller Orphan Homes, Dr Barnardo's Homes, the Catholic Child Welfare Society as well as Norwood. In the Committee's *Report*, Norwood is shown to be behind in such critical areas as type of Home, organisations and education.<sup>21</sup> In America the ideology of institutionalism was under attack from the early twentieth century and American Jewish orphanages were in the van of the movement. On every front – internal liberalisation, structural reformation and individuation of the child – they were ahead of their British counterparts.

The failures left a legacy of sadness. At the Norwood bicentenary celebrations there was the recognition that for some scholars there were

feelings of betrayal, loneliness, sadness, worthlessness, of being forgotten, abandoned, dumped, robbed, cheated of one's childhood and a real family life, suppressed of your emotions, individuality and a real lack of self-worth as a human being.

The hope was expressed that 'we could finally come to terms with

our experiences in a way that would allow us to move forward in our lives'.<sup>22</sup> For each child coming to terms with the institution was the legacy carried through life.



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- 1) Quoted from chapter 1: *The Institutional Theme*.
- 2) The less significant Jewish Homes were Gertrude Jacobson and Bevis Marks. By the time of his death in 1905 Barnardo had established 100 Homes (BBC2, 'The Do Gooders', 6/12/2010).
- 3) Discussed in chapter 1: *An Important Gap*.
- 4) The phases are extracted from the titles of chapters 3, 4, 5, and 7.
- 5) Martin Gorski, *Patterns of Philanthropy: Charity, Society in Nineteenth Century Bristol* (Boydell Press, 1999), p7.
- 6) Gorski, *Patterns of Philanthropy*, p7; Geoffrey Alderman, *Controversy and Crisis – Studies in the History of the Jews in Modern Britain* (Academic Press, Boston, 2008), p44.
- 7) Henry Thurston, *The Dependent Child - A Story of Changing Aims and Methods in the Care of Dependent Children* (Columbia University, New York, 1930), pp259-60.
- 8) Stanley Cohen, *Visions of Social Control – Crime, Punishment and Classification* (Polity Press, Cambridge, 1995), p18.
- 9) David Englander, *Poverty and Poor Law Reform in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Britain, 1834-1914 – from Chadwick to Booth* (Longman, London, 1998), pp80-3.
- 10) Englander, *Poverty and Poor Law Reform*, p80.
- 11) M Crowther, *The Workhouse System 1834-1929 – The History of an English Social Institution* (The University of Georgia Press, Athens, Georgia, 1982), p 271.
- 12) Reena Friedman, *These are Our Children: Jewish Orphanages in the United States, 1880-1925* (Brandeis University Press, Hanover, New Hampshire, 1994), p197.
- 13) NC, AR 1934.
- 14) Nigel Middleton, *When Families Failed - The Treatment of Children in the Care of the Community during the First Half of the Twentieth Century* (Victor Gollancz, London, 1971), p312.
- 15) Michael Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse – A Social History of Welfare in America* (Basic Books, New York, 1986),p116.
- 16) Phil Scraton (ed.), 'Childhood' in 'Crisis'? (Routledge, London,2004),pp13-4.
- 17) The quote is extracted from the first section of chapter 7, *The End of Institutionalism*.
- 18) Jean Heywood, *Children in Care – the Development of the Service for the Deprived Child* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1970), p158.
- 19) Curtis Committee, *Report of the Care of Children in the Community* (Cmd.6922, 1946), paras485, 488,493.
- 20) NA, MH102/1451, Curtis Committee, Part 4, Paper C31: Jewish Orphanage.
- 21) Curtis Committee, *Report of the Care of Children*, paras 230, 238, 250.
- 22) NOSA Newsletter, no 72, Apr 1996.



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