

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

The Role of Jewish Women in National, Jewish Philanthropic Organisations in
Britain from c.1880 to 1945

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submitted for the degree of Ph.D.

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February, 1996

University of Southampton

ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF ARTS

HISTORY

Doctor of Philosophy

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Philanthropy has always been an important aspect of Jewish religious observance throughout the world. This was generally restricted to the men of the community, but the influence of the Christian Evangelical movement during the nineteenth century encouraged Jewish women in Britain to enter the field of philanthropy on a small scale. This work began with home visiting and minor fund-raising in conjunction with existing male-run communal organisations. From these origins Jewish women's philanthropy developed into a dynamic force that shaped the lives of all Jewish women thereafter.

Using the records of a number of Jewish women's philanthropic organisations, this thesis charts the remarkable careers pursued by many Jewish women philanthropists in Britain from the 1880s to 1945. As a result of their charity work, the domesticated ladies of the Anglo-Jewish middle classes began to play a fuller part in the life of the Jewish community and in British society as a whole. Furthermore, in providing a broad chronological outline of Jewish women's charity work during the period from c.1880 to 1945, it is hoped to promote further study in this previously neglected field, and to refute the marginalisation of Jewish women by historians.

Acknowledgements

This thesis was funded by a University of Southampton Archives Research Studentship, enabling me to use some of the valuable material held in the University Archives.

Thanks are especially due to the archivists who administer the Southampton University Library Archive and Manuscript Collections, chiefly Chris Woolgar and Karen Robson, along with the other members of the Archives staff and those who administer the Library's Special Collections, in particular the Parkes Library.

I am also indebted to Tony Kushner for his supervision of this project, although he bears no responsibility for its shortcomings.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

I.

In her study of Jewish women in Imperial Germany, Marion Kaplan attempted to incorporate German history, women's history and Jewish history.¹ In the preface, Kaplan discusses the exclusion of Jews from mainstream German history, of Jewish women from German women's history and of Jewish women from Jewish history. Her intention was to counteract the marginalisation of Jewish women in all aspects of German history and to explore the importance of ethnicity, specifically "Jewishness" in the field of women's history. Within the limited scope of this thesis it is the intention to remedy a similar imbalance in British history, whereby Jewish women have been excluded from women's history and Jewish history, as well as from more mainstream historical studies:

"while they have been exalted as wives and mothers, historically Jewish women have either been taken for granted or regarded as insignificant to the history of the Jewish community in Britain."²

The German example also involves the essential dilemma of acculturated Jewish minorities in western societies; that is, the central desire to preserve the religious, cultural and ethnic components of "Jewishness" and to promote communal identity against the onslaughts of secular society, but at the same time, evolving into a sufficiently English (or German) community to be acceptable to the "host" nation. Kaplan believes Jewish women to be

particularly successful at assuming the ambiguous roles that this situation created:

“Paradoxically for historians, but perfectly consistently and reasonably for themselves, they were agents of acculturation and tradition, of integration and apartness.”³

This study is intended to demonstrate the success with which Anglo-Jewish women pursued these opposing aims in the development of philanthropic work, as well as exploring the motives behind the diverging policies of communal acceptability and detachment.

II. Historiography.

The early historiography of the Anglo-Jewish community clearly demonstrates the marginalised position of Jewish women. The first histories of the Anglo-Jewish community, such as those by Daiches, Magnus and Picciotto, focused on communal development and administration, and excluded women because they played no part in public life at this time.⁴ But although Jewish women had begun to undertake more public duties by the end of the century, their exclusion from communal history continued until well into the twentieth century. As well as ignoring the contributions of Jewish women, relatively recent studies have also failed to acknowledge some of the more controversial episodes of communal history, most notably the less savoury aspects of the Anglo-Jewish response to Jewish immigrants from eastern Europe in the late nineteenth century. Writing in the 1950s and 1960s, Vivian Lipman and Cecil Roth are the most well-known exponents of this particular brand of Jewish history.⁵ They shared a broad emphasis on the positive, stressing the

contributions made by Anglo-Jewry to British society, and encouraging the anglicisation of the community, whilst promoting communal identity and the preservation of the Jewish faith. In excluding women from their studies such writers merely reflected the attitudes of their times, but Lipman failed to mention Jewish women in his latest work, published in 1990.⁶ In more recent years a greater diversity of work has been done on the Anglo-Jewish community. But many mainstream studies have continued in the vein of earlier historians. Chaim Bermant, for example, perpetuated the tradition of concentrating on the anglicised elite families who dominated the community.⁷ Geoffrey Alderman has done the same in his work on Jews in British politics.⁸

The field of Jewish history has expanded enormously, bringing a great variety of new perspectives onto well-studied areas such as communal politics, and opening up previously unexplored areas of interest. Anglo-Jewish history is no longer exclusively painted as a near-perfect marriage of Englishness and “Jewishness”. Todd Endelman and David Englander have investigated the assimilation of the Jewish community into British society, uncovering the various different policies of acculturation and anglicisation deliberately undertaken by Anglo-Jewry, often in response to external pressures.⁹ Bill Williams has taken a stronger view of the assimilation process, giving evidence of a deliberate policy of social control of recent immigrants by the Anglo-Jewish community in Manchester.¹⁰ Jerry White has done the same, finding the Anglo-Jewish elite in London attempting to exert powerful social pressure on immigrant Jews through philanthropy.¹¹ However, in all of these studies, the experience and influence of women is completely neglected. Even in one of the most recently-published and authoritative works on this subject, *Englishmen and Jews*, David Feldman explores all these theories in greater

depth, without mentioning the women of the community at all.¹² Earlier historians were undoubtedly influenced by the exclusion of women from most aspects of public life. No individual need be singled out for criticism on this matter given that all historians ignored the part played by Jewish women in the history of Anglo-Jewry. Unlike their predecessors, contemporary historians are aware of the important role played by Jewish women in Anglo-Jewish history, but have yet to incorporate it sufficiently into their work. Feldman explains his neglect of Jewish women's experience in his latest work by claiming that the relevant ground has been covered by other historians. Feldman cites Marks, Burman and Kuzmack in this category, although their various studies have merely begun the process of bringing Jewish women into the study of history. Indeed Marks' article on the marginalised heritage of Jewish women was specifically intended to encourage further research in the field.¹³ Despite the appearance of innovation and originality it would seem that many of the 'new school' of Jewish historians are as guilty of ignoring the role of Jewish women as were older historians.

As the exclusion of women from communal history continues, it is possible that certain historians still consider women's role to have been marginal to that of Anglo-Jewry as a whole. Furthermore, the exclusion of Jewish women from communal management may be interpreted as an indicator that they exerted no influence on Anglo-Jewish public life. It is an aim of this study to demonstrate that despite any appearances to the contrary Jewish women did play a significant part in public life, both within and beyond the Jewish community, and that their exclusion from Anglo-Jewish history is unjustifiably narrow-minded. This study is also intended to show the extent to which Jewish women were affected by anti-Semitism. Valuable work has

already been done on anti-Semitism, by Colin Holmes, Tony Kushner, Ken Lunn and David Cesarani;¹⁴ but of these only Kushner has examined Jewish women's experiences of anti-Semitism.¹⁵ However, although their marginalisation has been perpetuated by modern historians, a small, but significant body of work has been produced on the history of Jewish women. The very first example is Stella Wills' article on the work of Louisa Lady Goldsmid and Fanny Hertz in the field of women's education.¹⁶ The purpose of this article was to demonstrate the contribution made by these two individuals to the education of women in much the same way that earlier historians stressed the contribution made by the Jewish community towards British society as a whole. An additional benefit of the article is the insight it provides into the lives of the two women studied. More recently Rickie Burman led the way with a series of articles drawn from the resources of the Manchester Oral History project, reflecting for the first time on the role of Jewish women within the household, and the influence thus exerted on the community as a whole.¹⁷ Lara Marks has focused on Jewish women's experiences of healthcare, and the significance of their role as mothers.¹⁸ She also made the first attempts to explore the specific question of gender with regard to the experience of Jewish women, and the problem of women's marginalisation in the study of history.¹⁹ Susan Tananbaum, in a recent article, looked at the ambiguities of Jewish motherhood,²⁰ and the Jewish Women in London Group have recorded their own experiences of motherhood and work during the earlier years of this century.²¹ Overall, these works are concerned with working class Jewish women, mostly first or second generation immigrants. Middle class women have been even more neglected, despite being more likely to have played a major role in communal life. Indeed,

Eugene Black's study of Anglo-Jewish philanthropy is the only mainstream work to include a section on women's organisations.²² In his chapter on "Women and Social Discipline", Black discusses the contribution to communal philanthropy made by prominent individuals and explores the formation and growth of the Jewish Association and the Union of Jewish Women. He also mentions many of the smaller societies, such as the Jewish Ladies' Clothing Association, which pre-dated the larger organisations. Beyond Black's work, the history of British Jewish women has been restricted to a number of unpublished studies.²³

In contrast, there exists a wealth of material on the Jewish woman in America. Linda Kuzmack has drawn from these sources in her study of the Jewish women's movement in England and the United States.²⁴ Concentrating on the more radical aspects of Jewish women's experience, Kuzmack has pursued the the importance of gender, as well as faith and ethnicity, in the development of Jewish feminism. This is the only study that approximates to Marion Kaplan's work on Jewish women in Germany,²⁵ and to the many books on the American Jewish woman. Kuzmack's work has been extremely influential for this project. Nevertheless, the comparative nature of her study and the focus on feminism has rendered her portrayal of the English experience somewhat limited. Kuzmack's study concentrates on the small number of middle and upper middle class Jewish ladies who may be described as feminists. Most of them were extremely active in public life, often using unconventional means to pursue radical causes. But many more middle class Jewish women assumed an important role within the Anglo-Jewish community as a result of more conventional voluntary work. It is the intention of this study

to look deeper into the question of middle class women's role within the Anglo-Jewish community aside from the exploits of a minority of activists.

Material on the American Jewish woman has also been vital for this study, revealing the true extent of the marginalisation of Jewish women in British history. Many American works exist on the religious status of women in Judaism, including Saul Berman's article on women in Halakhic Judaism and Judith Hauptman's study of images of women in the Talmud.²⁶ Several volumes combine articles on the experience of both American and British Jewish women; among them Holden on women's religious experience and Rosemary Radford Reuther on women in the Jewish and Christian traditions.²⁷ The subject of Jewish women in America is sufficiently advanced to include bibliographical studies, like Aviva Zuckoff's *Bibliography of the Jewish Woman*.²⁸ Furthermore, Myra Shoub has extended the study of Jewish historiography with her article on the development of a specific methodology for Jewish women's history.²⁹ Less work has been done on the importance of class in the American Jewish experience, but relevant to the class-conscious British, are a number of books on middle class women and philanthropy.³⁰

While only a fraction of the work done on Jewish women in the United States has been repeated here in Britain, there does exist a rapidly expanding body of work on the more general topic of gender history in Britain, as well as in the USA. The application of issues of gender to the study of history has revealed the great significance of the divisions between male and female experience. Rather than just introducing the subject of women's history into the mainstream, gender history reaches further into the exploration of masculinity and femininity and male-female relationships in historical context. Although not specific to the British experience, the work of Dale Spender,

Joan Scott and Gerda Lerner has been enormously influential in the field of gender history.³¹ Among the first historians to introduce the concept of gender into British history was Sheila Rowbotham, in *Hidden from History: 300 Years of Women's Oppression and the Fight against it*.³² Inspired by Rowbotham and fuelled by Scott *et al* the issues surrounding gender and history have remained a popular topic of debate.³³ While the historiography and methodologies of gender history continue to be extensively discussed,³⁴ the intelligence thus gathered has been applied equally widely to the study of British history, especially during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The application of modern feminist perspectives to British history has produced a variety of illuminating works and a great number of these sources have been critical to this particular study, beginning with general works on feminism and the women's movement from the late nineteenth century onwards.³⁵ On the Victorian and Edwardian periods, the writings of Martha Vicinus and Jane Lewis are particularly good examples, bringing new insight to well-studied areas.³⁶ In addition to these more general studies, more specific works have been used in each chapter, and bibliographical details are given at the relevant points. Plentiful material exists on most of the subjects covered by this thesis; from women's employment to education, healthcare, religion and politics. The general theme of philanthropy in Britain has been less widely covered, beyond the biographies of individual philanthropists or the histories of particular charities. *Philanthropy and the State*, by B. Kirkman Gray,³⁷ which was published in 1908, was the only relatively modern work on the subject until Owen's study of philanthropy from 1660 to 1960, and Brian Harrison's article on Victorian philanthropy were published in the same year (1965).³⁸ More

recent work on women and philanthropy by Anne Summers and Frank Prochaska has proved invaluable to this study.³⁹

It is the aim of this project to utilise the diverse works detailed above, covering a broad spectrum of British, Anglo-Jewish and gender history, to shed new light on the primary sources on which this thesis is based. It is intended to provide an overview of the changing experience of middle class Jewish women from 1880 to 1945, through their involvement in philanthropy. To this end, the primary material that has been used falls into three categories. The first and most important of these comprises the records of a number of Jewish women's organisations; the Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls and Women and the Union of Jewish Women are the largest resources. Smaller organisations studied include the Council for the Amelioration of the Legal Position of the Jewess, the Jewish Day Nursery, the Jewish Infant Welfare Centre, the Jewish Maternity Hospital, the Jewish League for Woman Suffrage and various Jewish girls' clubs. It had been hoped that some private papers might have been available to supplement these archives, but only a limited number have been found. The most significant of these are the correspondence of Lady Battersea and Louisa, Lady Rothschild, held at the British Library and the papers of Lily Montagu held at the Liberal Jewish Synagogue, although the latter do not include much personal material. The second category consists of primary material concerning the Anglo-Jewish community; this includes the records of the Jewish Board of Guardians, the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Central British Fund for the Relief of German Jewry. Also included in this category are the *Jewish Chronicle* and *Jewish Guardian*. Finally primary sources in general British history have been used. These include the records of a number of organisations such as the

National Vigilance Association, the Travellers' Aid Society and the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene. The records of suffrage societies and women's organisations, like the National Council of Women have also been consulted, along with government sources and official surveys (full details are contained in the bibliography). It is through comparison with contemporary organisations, Jewish and non-Jewish, during the period under investigation, that the charity work of Jewish women may be placed in context, thereby revealing the full nature of their successes and failures in that field.

III. Jewish Women and Philanthropy.

This study is intended to explore the various roles played by Jewish women, previously unexplored by historians, and often unacknowledged by contemporaries. It is the contention of this thesis that middle class Jewish women, although constrained, to varying degrees, by tradition, sexism and anti-Semitism, played an exciting and frequently highly significant role in both the private and public spheres of the Anglo-Jewish community. Middle class Jewish women progressed from living purely domestic lives, to sharing more fully in all aspects of communal life. Philanthropy provided the means by which much of this development occurred, and its many facets provide the focus for this study. It is therefore the significance of philanthropy in Jewish life and the involvement of women that is the first concern here.

Philanthropy has always been an important part of Jewish religious observance. Giving alms and doing good works is one of the *mitzvot*, or religious duties, required of Jewish men:

“The obligation to help the poor and the needy and to give them gifts is stated many times in the Bible and was considered by the rabbis of all ages to be one of the cardinal *mitzvot* of Judaism.”⁴⁰

Philanthropy does not, however, comprise part of the religious duties of Jewish women. They are, in fact, required to undertake only three *mitzvot*: lighting the Sabbath candles, setting aside a portion of food as a gift to God when preparing a meal, and adhering to the laws concerning ritual purity after menstruation and childbirth.⁴¹ Women are otherwise exempt from all aspects of Jewish religious observance. They are, however, sole guardians of the Jewish household, which primarily involved the preparation of *kosher* food and the education of their offspring in the fundamentals of Judaism. Thus, excluded from outward religious observance, women were actually entrusted with the most valuable resources of the Jewish community, the next generation of Jews. In the Jewish village, or *shtetl*, of eastern Europe during the nineteenth century, it was not unusual for women to assume a role of even greater significance within the household, by becoming the family breadwinner while their husbands devoted themselves to religious study.⁴² This was not a common occurrence among Jewish families in England, but it serves to demonstrate further the division “between the spheres of the sacred and the profane, with women relegated to the latter” in the rural Jewish communities of eastern Europe.⁴³ The same laws governing religious observance applied to Jews throughout the world, but in nineteenth century Britain, the conjunction of Judaism and the Victorian cult of domesticity created a further division, between public and private spheres, with women again “relegated to the latter”.

Many historians now refute the traditional view of “separate spheres” dividing the lives of men and women in British society during the nineteenth century.⁴⁴ Arguably, many women did not live entirely domestic lives, but sought paid employment for a variety of reasons. Some needed to support themselves financially as the result of poverty, widowhood and other misfortunes, while others undoubtedly chose to work. But it remained a characteristic of the British middle and upper classes, that women did not work outside the home, instead restricting themselves to household duties and a “life of leisure”. Men who aspired to middle class status thus acquired a non-working wife as an indicator of wealth and respectability. Among this aspirant group were a large proportion of the Anglo-Jewish community, who had become increasingly wealthy during the early part of the nineteenth century. This had resulted in a correspondent rise in social status, creating a *bourgeois* community, closely imitative of the non-Jewish middle class. Endelman provides telling statistics to illustrate this process:⁴⁵ of approximately 20,000 Jews living in London in 1850, it was estimated that 35% were classed as upper or middle class in terms of their income, while 35-40% were lower middle and 25-30% were receiving occasional or regular charitable relief. By 1882, the Jewish population had more than doubled to 46,000, of whom 14.6% were upper class, or upper middle, 42.2% were middle, 19.6% lower middle and 29.6% in receipt of relief. The servant-keeping classes, or middle and upper classes, had expanded from 35% of the population to 56.8%. The proportions would actually have been much higher if figures had not been distorted by the predominance of eastern European immigrants among the poorest percentile. As well as emulating middle class economic success, the Anglo-Jewish community became increasingly anglicised during the

nineteenth century. Retaining their faith and a powerful degree of social cohesion, English Jews deliberately chose to emulate their non-Jewish counterparts in the outward exhibition of their material success, that is through the construction of their households. Viewing the domesticated woman as the most valuable sign of social status coincided comfortably with the status of women within Judaism, and was hence adopted with alacrity by the Anglo-Jewish community.⁴⁶

The ideal of the leisured wife permeated Jewish society as part of the anglicisation process, but it was also important for the continuation of the Jewish faith within British society. Although political emancipation and the removal of civil disabilities meant that conversion was no longer the only route into non-Jewish social or public life by the 1880s, inter-marriage and weakening communal bonds were leading some Jews to abandon their faith.⁴⁷ Few Jews actually went so far as to become Christians, but synagogue attendances were falling and outward observance even for the faithful was difficult, because of work and the other pressures of secular society. Jewish women's religious role thus began to assume greater value, hence the need for them to occupy a purely domestic role, leaving time to cook *kosher* meals, to prepare for the Sabbath and the celebration of festivals, and to bring up their children in the Jewish faith.⁴⁸

Lacking the rituals and duties which give evidence of outward religious observance, Anglo-Jewish women really had no public position at all, both within and outside the Jewish community. Assuming the mantle of the "angel of the hearth", Anglo-Jewish women and recent immigrants affected by the anglicising influence of the community, found their role in society to be similar to that of Christian women. Indeed, during the mid-nineteenth century,

before the foundation of exclusively female organisations, philanthropy was the only means by which women of either faith could undertake any kind of activity outside the confines of the private household. Expected to practise their religion within their immediate family, rather than in the context of the wider family of the Jewish community, philanthropy did provide Jewish women with an outwardly visible means of expressing their faith.⁴⁹ Middle class Jewish women thus imitated their non-Jewish counterparts, in conforming to the ideal of the domesticated wife, and by extending their domestic role to the care of the Jewish community, in using their leisure time for philanthropic activity.

For these Jewish and non-Jewish women, philanthropic work meant voluntary effort, ranging from occasional fund-raising through to attending committees, or home and prison visiting. The origins of women's involvement in philanthropy have been traced by Anne Summers from the home-visiting of the early nineteenth century.⁵⁰ With increased wealth and leisure, middle class women had the time and the means to undertake charity work. Through managing their own households, particularly with regard to the employment of servants, they had the experience to manage the working class families they visited. Summers also notes that the Evangelical movement, with its emphasis on the personal and the family, encouraged women to play a more important role in religious life, of which philanthropy was a major part.⁵¹ Conversely, women had actually become more marginalised within Anglo-Jewry. Although the family and domesticity were equally important to Jewish women, they were virtually excluded from the religious life of the Jewish community. Women were, however, encouraged to play an increasingly significant role in communal charity, because of the importance of philanthropy in the Jewish

tradition. The net result was therefore the same, with both Christian and Jewish women adopting a similar pattern of philanthropic activity, despite the contrary nature of their status within the two different traditions.

The suggestion that women entered the field of philanthropy at the behest of the male community implies that they were as much the victims of a policy of social control, as the working class recipients of their charity. The possibility of philanthropy being used to exert undue influence on the working classes will be explored more fully elsewhere. It is sufficient to say here that philanthropy may have performed two functions; as a means of encouraging immigrant Jews to conform to Anglo-Jewish standards, and also as a suitably respectable occupation for middle class women. But although women philanthropists were certainly encouraged by Jewish men, this need not indicate that they were merely pawns in a Machiavellian campaign of social engineering, devised by the patriarchal community. While not discounting entirely the idea that Jewish women's initial involvement in charity work was, in part, the result of male manipulation, the emergence of independent women's organisations and the vehemence with which they pursued their causes disproves the myth of Jewish women as male puppets. Although these women had no other outlet for their energies, that again need not indicate a lack of genuine interest in philanthropy, as will be illustrated throughout the thesis. Moreover, it is quite possible that many women shared the views of Jewish men regarding the care of immigrants through philanthropy, and this too cannot be dismissed as merely the result of male influence. Like their male counterparts Jewish women philanthropists were motivated by factors that varied considerably from one individual to another. But it is clear that the numerous theories concerning the motives behind Anglo-Jewish philanthropy

apply to women as well as Jewish men. The “hidden agenda” of anglicisation that coloured all relations between the resident and immigrant Jewish communities did affect women’s charitable efforts. The vital question behind this study is therefore the extent to which women were governed by these shared motives. Bearing in mind the disadvantages of generalisation, it is intended to determine whether Jewish women were as interested in achieving the same goals as male philanthropists.

IV. The Motives behind Middle Class Philanthropy.

As mentioned above, complex factors influenced Anglo-Jewry’s response to the problems of the immigrant population, and discussion continues as to the existence of deliberate policies of anglicisation and assimilation. Endelman suggests that anglicisation was an important factor in middle class charity. The established Anglo-Jewish community used philanthropic methods to not only relieve suffering but also to render eastern European Jews more acceptable to society as a whole, by encouraging them to learn English and adopt the customs of the host society.⁵² Others such as Williams suggest a more devious motive of social control. Williams considers middle class philanthropy to have been deliberately intended to keep working class Jews in their pre-ordained place. Thus philanthropic institutions were designed to prevent the Jewish working class from bettering itself.⁵³ A less extreme view is held by Black, who sees middle class charity as a means of re-modelling the working class. The best examination of the issues surrounding the mass immigration of the late nineteenth century is to be found in Feldman’s *Englishmen and Jews*. He surmises that:

“the influx of East European immigrants threatened [the] representation of Judaism as progressive and of Jews as patriotic.”⁵⁴

Thus, Feldman attempts to explain the fundamental response of the Anglo-Jewish community towards the Jewish immigrants. Furthermore, from this starting point, Feldman perceives a level of social machination that is neither overtly positive in the manner suggested by Black, nor radically negative, as Williams claims. In this respect, Feldman’s thesis coincides with the findings of this thesis regarding the apparent position of the ladies of the Anglo-Jewish community and the possible implementation of social policies through philanthropy.

The reaction of the Anglo-Jewish community to the flood of Jewish immigrants in the 1880s and 1890s has aroused a wide range of differing opinions, and Williams and Black represent the more extreme ends of the spectrum. Although both viewpoints agree on the existence of an element of control, the perceived goal is very different. In his chapter on the establishment of the Jewish Board of Guardians,⁵⁵ Black contends that from the outset, the Board sought to control the Jewish poor. It was widely felt that no Jew should tax the resources of the workhouses run by the Poor Law Union, but this left few alternative means of dealing with the undeserving. Great pains were therefore taken to promote self-help, and the avoidance of pauperisation. To prove himself deserving, the poor man was expected to open his home to the inspections of the Board’s visiting committee. At their behest dwellings were cleaned and repaired, while other deserving families were rehoused in purpose-built housing.⁵⁶ Similarly, some were given work by the Board’s industrial committee and loans were provided for others to set up their own businesses. Institutions like schools and hospitals were also used to

encourage the Jewish working class to lead respectable and law-abiding lives.⁵⁷ The aim of this policy was to avoid anti-Semitism and any suggestion that Jews were draining public resources. A pliant, obedient, and virtually invisible Jewish working class was an equally desirable goal, for which Williams apports some of the blame on the liberal middle class:

“the informal mechanisms of liberal toleration remain the quintessential means by which British society accommodates ethnic minorities: the central driving force of British racism.”⁵⁸

The implication here is that Anglo-Jewry was forced by society to render incoming Jews more tolerable to ensure their acceptance, and that powerful philanthropic institutions such as schools and hospitals were the only possible means to achieve this. Without denying the power of intolerance in British society, this seems an exaggeration of Anglo-Jewish policy, if indeed any policy existed at all. It is the intention of this study to show that, at least as far as the women of the community were concerned, philanthropy was used to ease the process of assimilation, but that if anglicisation was a result of their work, it was by no means deliberate, and in some circumstances women's organisations actually worked to counteract the anglicising effects of society. There is absolutely no evidence of any more subtle attempts at social control, beyond the limits of a public relations exercise. The women's own restricted roles precluded any likelihood of their being able to exert such pressure on others, even the immigrant population which was socially so inferior to them. With reference to social class, another motivating factor that Jewish women did share with the men of the community was that, according to Englander, philanthropic work was a means by which the middle classes consolidated their status within British society.⁵⁹ This had the additional advantage for the

Anglo-Jewish middle class of emphasising their social difference from the alien immigrant, despite their shared religion.

Social difference also explains why this common faith did not mean an equal share in one of the most significant aspects of Jewish experience in any circumstance, that is anti-Semitism. The isolating restraints of their domestic role meant that middle class Jewish women were less likely to have directly experienced anti-Semitism on a personal basis.⁶⁰ Their experience was very different from that of working class women, who lived and worked in close proximity with other Jewish and non-Jewish working class families.⁶¹ Middle class women may have been unaffected by anti-Semitism in their daily lives, but there is no question of even the most protected being unaware of its existence, on a national and particularly international level. The communal fear of growing anti-Semitism during the latter years of the nineteenth century affected men and women alike. So, women's charity work dealing with poor immigrants may equally have been governed by the desire to avoid provoking anti-Semitism, following the pattern of male philanthropy.

The formation of the Jewish Board of Guardians in London, in 1859, involved a combination of all these considerations. The Jewish immigrant population was concentrated in the East End of London, where the Unions that administered Poor Law relief were already overburdened. Lipman suggests that the Anglo-Jewish community was anxious that needy Jews should not burden the Unions, so a Jewish institution was formed, which imitated existing Boards of Guardians in its structure and activities, and which was intended to co-ordinate the efforts of charities coping with the problems of poor immigrant Jews.⁶² As well as relieving other organisations of Jewish supplicants, the Jewish Board of Guardians was also able to provide ritual requirements, such

as *kosher* food, and aid religious observance, both of which were virtually impossible in Christian institutions.⁶³ Thus, the preservation of the Jewish faith among poor immigrant families was significant to Anglo-Jewry, in tandem with an aversion to allowing Jews to accept charity from non-Jewish sources. Added to all of these motives, in the specific case of the Jewish Board of Guardians and in all aspects of philanthropy, were the more straightforward factors of genuine compassion and *noblesse oblige*. Anglo-Jewry, like other Jewish communities throughout the world, was at the forefront of new developments in charitable relief, and undoubtedly, Anglo-Jewish philanthropy was, at least in part, a laudable response to the suffering of immigrant Jews, and a desire to share some of their largesse with their less-fortunate co-religionists.

There was a romantic tendency among contemporaries, to attribute to women philanthropists the greater part of these more genuine pastoral feelings.⁶⁴ But it is clear that women were affected by all of the factors influencing Anglo-Jewish men to varying degrees, and the same generalisations apply. The motives of Jewish women's organisations, and of individuals, were certainly not wholly benevolent, and involved a definite element of self-interest, coupled with communal concerns such as anti-Semitism and the informal pressure to conform in British society. However, women also demonstrated a unique influence - that of gender solidarity. Arguably the charitable efforts of Jewish men were almost exclusively directed at their fellow men, but this does not automatically indicate gender solidarity. Jewish men were certainly not a marginalised group within the Anglo-Jewish community, indeed as far as they were concerned, they were the community, hence they felt no great need for any sense of male solidarity. As

a result of this male dominance of communal affairs, much of Jewish women's early involvement in charity work conformed to the pattern established by the male community. They began by assuming a purely pastoral role, forming subcommittees associated with existing institutions such as the Jewish Board of Guardians and the Jews' Free School.⁶⁵ Their earliest foray into formal philanthropy predated even the Jewish Board of Guardians. The Jewish Ladies' Benevolent Loan Institution was formed in 1840 and its members visited poor families in their homes, before giving them financial loans or other forms of material relief.⁶⁶ The society was unique, as an organisation created and administered by women, but it directed funds towards the family, rather than individuals, just as other the institutions did. At this stage, Jewish women do not appear to have been affected by the influences governing non-Jewish women, such as Josephine Butler, who were attempting to resolve some of the most glaring inequalities of male society.⁶⁷ These campaigners may have been admired in private by individual Jewish women, but there is absolutely no indication of any open desire to imitate them. The focus of their work, chiefly the Contagious Diseases Acts, was far too controversial to be relevant to the cultivated innocence of the domesticated Jewish lady.⁶⁸ But by the 1880s, middle class Jewish women had become aware that the needs of women, as opposed to families led by a male breadwinner, were not being met by traditional charity. This may have been due to the influence of non-Jewish pioneers in philanthropy. It is more likely that middle class women on visiting committees saw for themselves the difficulties faced by poor Jewish families, and by women in particular, on whom lay much of the responsibility for the family's well-being.

The Boards of Guardians, workhouses, schools and hospitals offered the only means of help available for the needy of the Jewish and non-Jewish communities. These institutions were run on strict, authoritarian lines, with no time for religious sensibilities, family loyalty or personal pride. Only the desperate would turn to such institutions and those on, or just below, the poverty line struggled to manage without external help. Home-visiting by middle class ladies was intended to help such families, mainly by encouraging self-help and self-sufficiency, rather than in providing material relief, which was believed to cause further pauperisation. The philanthropic interests of middle class Jewish women followed the same pattern, as they imitated the example of Evangelical Christians, by visiting Jewish families in their homes. Any suggestion of gender as an influence on these women at this early stage is dismissed by Anne Summers, who writes that middle class “lady visitors” provided “help and patronage from a social height which precluded any specific sense of female solidarity”.⁶⁹ Certainly the initial impact of home-visiting was directed at the family as a whole, and this applied in both Jewish and non-Jewish cases. But as these middle class ladies grew more aware of the problems of the families they visited, and gained experience in other aspects of philanthropy, their interest in the specific needs of women and children also grew. The very fact of their recognising that traditional charitable relief did not provide adequate help for women and children suggests a degree of concern that goes far beyond the interests of male society. To have merely identified these needs is suggestion enough that a “sense of female solidarity” did exist, and that it was another motive inspiring charity workers. The formation of women’s organisations and the focus of their work on the problems of their fellow Jewish women indicates that gender was another of the myriad

influences affecting Anglo-Jewish philanthropy. Its importance as a single motivating factor for Jewish women philanthropists is one of the major themes to be explored in this study, as is the extent to which the significance of gender as a guiding influence altered over the long period under investigation.

Jewish women may thus have entered the field of philanthropy as the result of influences that differed from those affecting male charity workers. But women's involvement in philanthropic work was widely approved of by the male community, and was actively encouraged in many quarters as a highly suitable, and desirable, extension of women's domestic role.⁷⁰ The middle class Jewish woman's concern for her immediate family was quite easily enlarged to accommodate her communal family, and the unique contributions that women could make to communal philanthropy were recognised and appreciated. However, this comfortable state of affairs was quickly challenged as women sought to create their own niche within the field, outside the limits of their pre-ordained role. The earliest work undertaken by Jewish women involved visiting institutions or families at home, and fund raising under the supervision of the male committees which ran Anglo-Jewish charities. Having become aware of the limited applications of male charitable provision, Anglo-Jewish women realised the need to administer their own brand of philanthropy, beyond these restrictions. So from its ultra respectable beginnings, women's philanthropic work soon diversified into the formation of exclusively female organisations, working in areas ranging from education and health care to the highly controversial area of rescue work. Jewish women even began to enter the political arena, seeking to publicise their causes and lobby for changes in communal politics and in parliamentary legislation. The evolution of these interests forms the backbone of this study, showing the

remarkable changes which occurred within the field of charity work as a result of women's involvement and the alterations these developments brought about in the very status of women in Anglo-Jewish and non-Jewish society. Through philanthropy, however desirable an occupation it may have been initially, Jewish women actually challenged many conventions of Victorian society, thus risking their own respectability and the approbation of others.

V. The First Women Philanthropists.

At the vanguard of women's philanthropic endeavour were several highly respectable members of Anglo-Jewry's most prominent families, leading the way into charity work, and already exhibiting early signs of the controversy that would emerge in later years. Linda Kuzmack introduces Judith Montefiore into this category.⁷¹ Her charitable work followed the most traditional pattern of alms-giving, and it was in her role of supporting her husband, Moses Montefiore, in his public life, that Lady Montefiore was most notable. But of significance here is that she was unusually assiduous in her attendance at synagogue, at a time when women were actively discouraged from attending services, as most men considered their duties to lie exclusively within the household. A census of synagogue congregations in 1903 found that women made up only 16% of those present.⁷² Kuzmack suggests that Judith Montefiore was influenced by the Christian Evangelical movement, which was undergoing a revival during the first half of the nineteenth century, and that:

“given her social distinction, Lady Montefiore's visibility during synagogue worship established a powerful incentive for other Jewish women to follow her example.”⁷³

Judith Montefiore exerted a unique influence on Jewish women in displaying a previously unheard of independence. Although in all other ways the perfect, dutiful wife, Lady Montefiore was breaking new ground in demanding acknowledgement of her personal religious beliefs and in using the synagogue as a forum for the expression of her faith. Doubtless she did not consider herself to be a pioneer and was certainly not recognised as such by her contemporaries, but her influence may be perceived to have affected successive generations of Jewish women and their standing in the community.

Another woman who set an equally compelling example to other Jewish women was Louisa Lady Rothschild, who founded the Jewish Ladies' Benevolent Loan Institution in 1840.⁷⁴ Her example was more obviously relevant to the field of philanthropy, and was no less effective in hastening the process of change in the lives of Jewish women. Her work had begun in a traditional manner, visiting poor Jews in their homes, and the experience thus gained had led in turn to an interest in more formal charitable organisation and the formation of a Ladies' Visiting Society, as well as the Loan Society. Louisa Lady Rothschild was also a manager of the Jews' Free School and had personally founded several smaller Jewish schools. Her interests became more controversial in later years, as, in response to the influx of immigrants during the 1880s, and amid widespread disapproval, she founded the West Central Girls' Club in 1885. Many Jews felt that it was wrong to distract girls from their responsibilities at home, but this was eventually to become the flagship of the Jewish Girls' Club movement under the leadership of Lily Montagu.⁷⁵ Louisa Lady Rothschild also echoed Judith Montefiore, by affecting women's philanthropy in more subtle ways. She too was a member of the "Cousinhood" which comprised the inter-related families of the Anglo-Jewish upper middle

class.⁷⁶ Her social position was thus vitually unimpeachable and her interests were shared by other “cousins” who began to follow her example. Their status also conferred on philanthropy a glamour that other Jewish women clamoured to acquire. Furthermore, Louisa Lady Rothschild brought up her two daughters to share her fervent interest in the growing tradition of women’s philanthropy, and encouraged others to do likewise. From these beginnings, Jewish women’s charity work blossomed to become a multi-generational force, dominated, like most other aspects of Anglo-Jewish life by the elite families who led the community.

From the outset, Louisa Lady Rothschild and her fellow philanthropists concentrated on charity work. They promoted reform and development in the provision of relief, but did not intentionally seek to bring about change in their own status as Jewish women. The initial progress in the improvement of the position occupied by Anglo-Jewish women resulting from their efforts was entirely fortuitous, and secondary to the main cause of philanthropy. However, among their contemporaries were others who chose more dramatic methods and more radical causes, allying with non-Jewish women, with the deliberate intention of improving women’s status in British society through political emancipation and the removal of civil disabilities. The first of these women to combine the causes of Jewish and non-Jewish women was Louisa Lady Goldsmid.⁷⁷ She had married into another elite family, who, although highly respectable, were already well-known for their less conventional interests. Isaac Goldsmid and his son Francis, Louisa’s husband, had led the campaign for Jewish political emancipation and were the most prominent members of the Anglo-Jewish Reform movement. Reform Judaism in England was not the radical force it had become in Germany. The Reform movement in central

Europe was a radical, philosophical force that had developed from the Jewish Enlightenment and Jewish emancipation. In complete contrast, English Reform Judaism was the result of social and economic change, and had evolved into a more gentle social movement.⁷⁸ The initial intention of the English Reform movement in 1840, was to build a new synagogue in the West End of London and to encourage increased attendance and a higher standard of behaviour.⁷⁹ By introducing liturgical changes and minor reform, it was hoped to render Reform Judaism both more relevant to, and more acceptable in nineteenth century London. By association, the Goldsmid family acquired a reputation of radicalism. In these circumstances Louisa Lady Goldsmid was positively encouraged to take an interest in controversial causes, and it was no doubt the influence of gender solidarity that led her to the budding women's movement. Her great passion was education, and she proved a dynamic force in the establishment of the first women's college at Cambridge. She also joined the fledgling trade union movement, campaigning for improved wages and conditions for workers, especially women, and drawing more women, Jewish and non-Jewish, into paid employment. An often exclusive interest in Anglo-Jewish causes was a characteristic of Jewish women charity workers in the late nineteenth century. By contrast Louisa Lady Goldsmid concentrated more fully on matters of general female interest, particularly education and employment, breaching communal barriers and paving the way for non-sectarian co-operation among later generations of Jewish women philanthropists.

VI. The Origins of the First Jewish Women's Organisations.

It is the subsequent generations who followed in the footsteps of these early pioneers, who will form the focus of this study. Among the most well-known of the next generation of charity workers were Constance and Annie, the daughters of Louisa Lady Rothschild. (Both are better known by their married names - Lady Battersea and Hon. Mrs Eliot Yorke, respectively, and will be referred to as such here). Their upbringing in the Jewish philanthropic tradition and their privileged social position meant that both were well-placed to play a leading role in women's charity work. Like many women of their class, they served a philanthropic apprenticeship, working alongside their mother for the Ladies' Benevolent Loan Institution, and visiting needy Jews near the Rothschild country home and in the East End. After cutting their teeth on existing charitable organisations, Lady Battersea and Mrs Eliot Yorke then went on to form their own charity, the Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls and Women, which is one of the major interests here. The formation and development of the Jewish Association will be dealt with in Chapter 2.

The Jewish Association provides the basis for the earlier part of this study. It was the first of the dynamic Jewish women's organisations to challenge the traditional interests and roles of middle class Jewish women and was instrumental in guiding women into charity work on their own terms, rather than just as fund-raisers and pastoral workers for male-run charities. It was not, however, the only women's organisation in existence during the 1880s and 1890s. The very first Jewish women's society, the Benevolent Loan Institution, continued its work, as did other small charities. In the world beyond the Jewish community similar developments were taking place, with women's organisations growing in popularity and influence, and significant

among these was the National Union of Women Workers (NUWW). Constance Battersea was a member of the NUWW from its early years and was elected President in 1901. Her involvement and subsequent election to high office indicate a lack of prejudice within women's charity work and demonstrate the enormous changes already at work in the field of philanthropy and in the opportunities available to Jewish women. Following the example set by the NUWW in organising women workers and representing their interests in the public arena, a number of Jewish women collaborated to form a similar Jewish organisation, the Union of Jewish Women.

It was the Union of Jewish Women and the Jewish Association which exerted the most significant pressure on Jewish and non-Jewish society in the development of women's roles. Their links with other organisations ensured that their influence spread beyond the boundaries of the Jewish community, and likewise, external influences seeped into Jewish life. But without belittling the results of their work and the influence they created, this study is not intended to be merely an institutional history of these two organisations. There were many other Jewish women's charities operating during the period under investigation, often sharing a limited pool of members with these larger organisations, and producing similar, if less spectacular results. The effectiveness of these various groups in dealing with their chosen causes will be explored in the relevant chapters, but it is their cumulative effects on the changing role of Jewish women that are of most interest here. This therefore is the other theme to be followed through each aspect of philanthropic work, along with the questions of motivation and interest.

It will be shown that the role of Jewish women in charitable organisations changed during the period from 1880 to 1945. These changes

resulted from external pressures and the influences of non-Jewish women's organisations, and from the achievements of the Jewish women themselves. The various chapters will show that in many different areas of interest Jewish women made significant contributions to philanthropy, benefiting at the same time from the increasingly professional nature of charity work as it evolved during the first half of the twentieth century. This is not to suggest that Jewish women became highly politicised or "liberated" during this period. In fact, with some exceptions, Jewish women as a whole remained less radical and certainly less active in the public arena than their non-Jewish sisters. No dramatic change saw a mass exodus of Jewish women from the household into the world of paid employment, but compared with the sheltered and domesticated women of the mid-nineteenth century, the Jewish woman of the mid-twentieth century was markedly different in her status within the community and in her interests. As a direct result of their achievements in charity work each generation of women found themselves making progress towards the growing independence of the next. Thus the following chapters will explore both continuity and change in the philanthropic work of the different generations of women who make up this study. In each chapter the factors of gender, class and ethnicity will be analysed with reference to a different aspect of charity work. At the same time Jewish and non-Jewish experience of philanthropy will be compared over the period under investigation, which covered nearly three-quarters of a century and was characterised by great social and economic change.

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- ⁵ See Lipman, V.D., *A Social History of the Jews in England 1850-1950*, London, 1954; idem., *A Century of Social Service 1859-1959: The Jewish Board of Guardians*, London, 1959; idem., *Three Centuries of Anglo-Jewish History*, Cambridge, 1961; Roth, Cecil, *Essays and Portraits in Anglo-Jewish History*, Philadelphia, 1962; idem., *A History of the Jews in England*, Oxford, 1964; idem., *The Challenge to Jewish History; Some Contributions to English Life*, Oxford, 1967; also Gartner, Lloyd, *The Jewish Immigrant in England 1870-1914*, London, 1960.
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¹⁴ See Holmes, Colin (ed.), *Immigrants and Minorities in British Society*, London, 1978; idem, *Anti-Semitism in British Society*, London, 1979; Kushner, T., *The Persistence of Prejudice: Anti-Semitism in Britain during the Second World War*, Manchester, 1989; Lunn, K. (ed.), *Hosts, Immigrants and Minorities*, London, 1979; Cesarani, David, "An embattled minority: the Jews in Britain during the First World War", in T. Kushner and K. Lunn (eds.), *The Politics of Marginality: Race, the Radical Right and Minorities in Twentieth Century Britain*, London, 1990, pp.61-81.

¹⁵ Kushner, Tony, "Sex and semitism: Jewish women in Britain in war and peace", in P. Panayi (ed.), *Minorities in Wartime*, Oxford, 1993, pp.118-149; women's experience of anti-Semitism is also mentioned in idem., "An alien occupation - Jewish refugees and domestic service in Britain 1933-1948", in W. Mosse (ed.), *Two Centuries of German-Speaking Jews in the United Kingdom*, Tuebingen, 1992, pp.553-578.

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- ⁴⁶ Kushner, "Sex and semitism", p.121.
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⁷³ Kuzmack, *Woman's Cause*, p.9.

⁷⁴ Ibid., pp.10-14; see also Cohen, Lucy, *Lady De Rothschild and her Daughters 1821-1931*, London, 1935; Journals of Louisa Lady De Rothschild 1837-1910, SUA, MS97; and

Battersea, Constance (ed.), *Lady De Rothschild: Extracts from her Notebooks*, London, 1912.

⁷⁵ See Montagu, Lily, *My Club and I: The Story of the West Central Girls' Club*, London, 1954.

⁷⁶ Bermant, *The Cousinhood*, p.139.

⁷⁷ Kuzmack, *Woman's Cause*, pp.14-17 and p.108; see also Wills, "The Anglo-Jewish contribution to the education movement for women in the nineteenth century", pp.270-276.

⁷⁸ Kershen, Anne, *1840 - 1990: One Hundred and Fifty Years of Progressive Judaism*, London, 1995, p.6.

⁷⁹ Romain, Jonathan, "The changing face of British reform", in A. Kershen (ed.), *One Hundred and Fifty Years of Progressive Judaism*, p.43.

Chapter 2

Rescue Work

I. Introduction.

The subject of White Slavery has already been well-researched, most notably by Edward Bristow. In his earlier work, *Vice and Vigilance*,¹ Bristow looked at purity movements in Britain. In *Prostitution and Prejudice*,² Bristow turned his attention to the specifically Jewish and anti-Semitic aspects of the perpetration and the suppression of White Slavery. He argues that many Jewish women involved in the White Slave Trade deliberately chose to work as prostitutes during the period of social dislocation and mass migration that occurred in late nineteenth century Europe. Lloyd Gartner similarly made the link between poverty and social dislocation as important motivating factors governing the choices of both prostitutes and traffickers (in his article on Anglo-Jewry and Jewish trafficking of prostitutes).³ Both Bristow and Gartner touched upon the crucial threat represented by Jewish prostitution to the rigid respectability of the Anglo-Jewish and other Jewish communities. Lara Marks has in turn explored this issue in two articles.⁴ Marks takes the significant step of considering the effects of prostitution on middle class Jewish women, providing powerful evidence of complex motivating factors behind their involvement in the fight against White Slavery. She clearly demonstrates the dual marginality of Jewish women, discriminated against within society as a whole, because they were Jews, and restricted to a position of inferiority within the Jewish community, as well as the outside world because they were

women. For Jewish prostitutes the additional factor of class added a third layer to the oppression they suffered. But as Marks suggests, the shared aspects of their marginality allowed for an element of solidarity, as Jewish prostitutes effectively symbolised the tenuous position and vulnerability of all Jewish women.⁵ This chapter is intended to build on the foundations laid by Marks, in pursuing the themes of gender, class and ethnicity in the history of Jewish women's rescue work.

As described in Chapter 1 and following on from Marks' articles, these themes of class, gender and ethnicity were important motivating factors in Jewish women's charity work. The field of rescue work can be seen as a microcosm of Jewish women's involvement in philanthropy as a whole. Furthermore, the influences governing the activities of Jewish women are of particular significance here because rescue work was the first area of philanthropy in which Jewish women became actively involved. This prompted the formation of one of the first Jewish women's organisations - the Jewish Association. The vital part played by the Jewish Association in rescue work during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had much wider implications for Jewish women's role in philanthropy altogether, and the organisation therefore forms the main focus of this chapter.

The mere creation of the Jewish Association was a momentous step in the development of women's philanthropic role. Here for the first time was an exclusively female organisation stepping outside the limits established by the male community. Existing charities already administered by women like the Ladies' Benevolent Loan Institution or the North London Grocery Relief Fund merely represented an extension of women's traditional philanthropic role, centred on pastoral visiting and fund-raising. Even more remarkable, given the

confines of Jewish women's other charity work, was the active rescue work which the Association undertook. It was not until the late 1920s that other Jewish women's organisations took an interest in rescue work of any kind, and their limited interest in the field does not compare with the active role the Jewish Association took in dealing with prostitution and associated problems. Within the wider arena of British society as a whole the Association was unique, and outside Britain, only one other organisation occupied a similar position, the Judischer Frauenbund. The Frauenbund is described by Kuzmack as Germany's Jewish Feminist Organisation and was formed in Germany in 1904, by Bertha Pappenheim.⁶ The organisation campaigned for social and economic equality for Jewish women and fought against White Slavery. Bertha Pappenheim was the driving force behind this work and was instrumental in the creation of the international Jewish women's movement,⁷ which will be discussed later in this chapter. As Kaplan has demonstrated there were similarities between the Jewish communities in Britain and Germany at the end of the nineteenth century and the development of similar Jewish women's organisations is further evidence of this comparison.⁸

The Jewish Association also resembled the Judischer Frauenbund in its status as an essentially female organisation surrounded by male-run institutions. The Jewish Association worked alongside predominately male charities, such as the National Vigilance Association and the Travellers' Aid Society. Josephine Butler had led the campaign for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts in the 1870s, fighting for an equal moral standard for all men and women, including prostitutes. She also formed the International Abolitionist Federation in 1875, to confront the problem of the sexual exploitation of women. So, the ladies of the Jewish Association were

not the first women to take a prominent position among the British societies working for and with prostitutes. But the Association was the first exclusively female organisation to do so. This chapter is intended to develop all of these points, demonstrating the unusual nature of the Jewish Association, within and beyond the Anglo-Jewish community, and exploring the motives and influences behind its work.

But despite the unique nature of its contribution to the world of philanthropy, the fundamental problems that the Jewish Association dealt with affected Jews and non-Jews alike. During the nineteenth century the demand for prostitutes increased all over the world.⁹ As a problem associated with urbanisation, prostitution increased with the growth of the world's cities. Equally, the dearth of women among the predominately male, migrant populations in the fast-developing colonies in South America and South Africa, and in some respects, the USA, caused a great demand for prostitutes there. The transportation of European women to brothels in the Americas, South Africa and the Far East was termed the White Slave Trade. The poetic expression reflected the widespread belief that White Slavery was a peril comparable to that of the trade in black slaves. The trade flourished because of this increase in demand, exploiting a corresponding increase in the supply of prostitutes. Urbanisation and global migration were responsible for the decline of traditional, often rural-based, social structures. Social disorientation and family breakdown removed some of the barriers that kept working class girls out of prostitution. Without family and community to reinforce conventions of respectability and the preservation of a girl's reputation, prostitution appeared an attractive option, compared to unemployment or the poor remuneration and conditions offered by the few jobs available to women. It is apparent that some

women actively chose to work as prostitutes in such circumstances, while poverty and destitution forced others to choose between prostitution or the workhouse. These factors affected working class women throughout the world.¹⁰

As a global issue, prostitution affected Jews in much the same way as it affected other sectors of the world's population. Jewish brothels were to be found among migrant Jewish communities in major cities in western Europe, as well as in the cities of Russia and eastern Europe. The existence of specifically Jewish prostitution was generally ignored within the various Jewish communities, because it was a source of embarrassment to respectable European Jewry. However, the growing prominence of Jewish involvement in the White Slave Trade during the late nineteenth century began to pose a bigger threat than mere embarrassment. As described in Chapter 1, Anglo-Jewry, like other European Jewish communities became increasingly wealthy during the nineteenth century. This in turn led to upward social mobility and the *embourgeoisement* of European Jewry. But according to Kaplan, the vital respectability and civic responsibility on which middle class Jews based their social status was “not only a positive choice based on economic and political improvements, but a defensive strategy as well”.¹¹ Jewish involvement in White Slavery aroused anti-Semitism and threatened to destroy the very barriers European Jewry had constructed to protect themselves.

To the horror of respectable Jewish communities throughout Europe and the rest of the world, the traffic of young women from eastern Europe was dominated by a high proportion of Jews, among the traffickers and procurers, and among the girls themselves.¹² The first Jewish International Conference on White Slavery in 1910, found 80 Russian or Polish Jews among 93 known

South American traffickers. In 1909, there were 102 Jewish brothels in Buenos Aires, out of a total of 199, housing 265 Jewish and 272 non-Jewish prostitutes (even though none of these figures can be regarded as wholly accurate).¹³

Traffickers were able to take advantage of the migration of large numbers of Jews, especially young men, from eastern Europe and Russia to western Europe and the Americas. Mass immigration, coupled with the suffering and deprivation caused by Tsarist persecution, led to the dislocation of traditional social structures among the Jewish communities. Falling numbers of marriageable young men, and almost non-existent employment prospects for women, left many young girls without any future prospects.¹⁴ Some would therefore have already turned to prostitution, in eastern Europe, and it was they who willingly participated in the White Slave Trade. Only a small minority of girls were not trafficked out of choice. Some were migrants themselves, following family members to England or the United States, hoping to find work. Speaking little English, often travelling alone, with very little idea of their final destination, these girls were vulnerable to the influence of the unscrupulous. Other girls were lured from their homes with promises of work or marriage. Having compromised the girl's reputation, won her over by promises of future riches or worn down her resistance by threats or even violence, the trafficker was free to take his prey to South America or other countries where he could sell her to a brothel.

Jewish girls were particularly easy to exploit by means of the *stille chuppah* or religious marriage, whereby a couple could marry in secret under Jewish law, in the presence of a rabbi, (or someone pretending to be a rabbi) but were obviously not married under civil law.¹⁵ Having induced his wife to accompany him to South America, a trafficker could then repudiate her at any

time, destroying the *ketubah*, or marriage document, to ensure that she had no claims on him, and then force her into prostitution. Even if women in this predicament did not reach the brothels of South America, they were left in the unfortunate position of the abandoned wife, *agunah*. Without the *get* or permission of release that a husband had to grant his wife in order to release her from the marriage, the woman, although unmarried under civil law, was still considered to be married under religious law. Even in England, although lacking any means of financial support, the *agunah* could not turn to traditional sources of relief such as the Jewish Board of Guardians, because they expected her husband to provide for her. In this desperate situation, poverty could drive such a woman into prostitution. Furthermore, her reputation would have been severely compromised because she had no proof of her marriage, and she could be rejected by her family back in eastern Europe and by the Jewish community in her new place of residence.

Although non-Jewish girls were not widely exploited by Jewish traffickers, the involvement of Jews in the White Slave Trade was seized upon by anti-Semites, especially in England and the USA, and added fuel to the cause of anti-alienism in both countries.¹⁶ Thus, when the Anglo-Jewish community began to act upon the situation they were governed not just by altruism and the desire to relieve the suffering of fellow Jews, but primarily by the fear of anti-Semitism and the desire to purge the taint of White Slavery from Jewry worldwide. Another problem for the various Jewish communities was, however, that to acknowledge the problem openly was to lay themselves open to further attacks by their enemies. Bertha Pappenheim, a prominent worker in the German anti-White Slavery movement, eloquently summarised this dilemma;

“If we admit the existence of this traffic our enemies decry us; if we deny it they say we are trying to conceal it.”¹⁷

The Anglo-Jewish community was already becoming increasingly vulnerable to the barbs of its critics, as growing numbers of Eastern European immigrants began to enter Britain during the 1880s. Although elite Anglo-Jewish families, such as the Rothschilds, were apparently quite securely placed within British society, even they were affected by the anti-Semitism aroused by this influx of foreign Jews.¹⁸ But far from being free to counter this anti-Semitism by attempting to solve the problems of Jewish prostitution and trafficking, the Anglo-Jewish community was tightly confined by the mores and conventions of Victorian society. Having adopted with enthusiasm the lifestyle and habits of the British middle class, the Anglo-Jewish community was especially affected by the conventions of British society, and more specifically, with regard to the problem of prostitution, by Victorian attitudes to sexuality.

Governing sexuality, and every other aspect of life in Victorian Britain, were a series of double standards. Their effects were particularly felt by the middle classes, including the predominately middle class Anglo-Jewish community. Whether or not one subscribes to the theory of men and women occupying “separate spheres” in nineteenth century Britain, it is certainly true that the majority of middle class women, married or single, led extremely restricted lives, devoting their time to domestic tasks, church-going, and the care of their families. The leisured wife (or sister or daughter) was valued as a symbol of middle class status, but she was equally prized as the embodiment of virtue and perfection, the guardian of the morality of family life.¹⁹ Women were required to be the antithesis of men, among whom industry and economic success were particularly valued. This dual standard permeated the field of

education, bringing about significant changes in the ethos of the public school system, and implanting these social values more firmly in the minds of middle class men.²⁰ Even less importance was attached to the need for education for women, as the best preparation for their future role was to be found within the family home. But while public respectability was the primary purpose of the middle classes, this goal was not affected by, and did not affect itself, the existence of different moral standards for men and women. Sexual continence was widely advocated, but it was also thought unhealthy, even impossible, for a man to exercise complete sexual control. In order to preserve his wife's innocent perfection, it was considered quite acceptable, even desirable, for a Victorian man to visit prostitutes.²¹ Thus, as working class servants were required to support the leisured wife in her household duties, so working class prostitutes enabled middle class women to retain their purity both before and after marriage. The ideal of the passive, non-sexual woman appealed especially to the Anglo-Jewish community, fitting in well with the positive stereotypical role of the Jewish woman:²²

“For indeed, there is no subject upon which Judaism lays such emphatic stress as on that of stern morality. Purity is its watchword; the chastity of woman its most sacredly guarded treasure.”²³

But that is not to deny that Jewish prostitution did exist, both in London and on a global scale. Moreover, the Jewish prostitute, as Marks suggests, personified the vulnerability of all Jewish women. Worse still for middle class Jewish women, the prostitute embodied the other stereotype of the Jewess, as sexual seductress. Sander Gilman goes much further, connecting all Jews with prostitutes in anti-Semitic eyes.²⁴ He links the common perception of the disease-carrying prostitute with the myth of the Jew as polluting. While

Gilman's theories are radical, it is true that this bifurcated image of the Jewish woman as perfect mother and tempting siren did exist, and the taint of association was feared by even the most respectable of middle class women. Jewish women's public image was therefore polarised at both ends of the social spectrum. A Jewish woman was considered by the rest of Jewish and non-Jewish society to be either flawless and untainted by any hint of unrespectability or to be depraved and immoral. There was no middle ground, which meant that even the slightest lapse could result in a woman being stigmatised for life.²⁵ Her disgrace would generally have been shortlived among working class Jews, who might be more tolerant in their understanding of the circumstances which drove women into prostitution, or any kind of sexual activity. The middle classes clung to their ultra-respectable code of conduct, prolonging the suffering of the fallen woman and even driving her further into the darker world of prostitution and crime, by denying her charitable relief or any other means of economic support.

By wholly rejecting the Jewish prostitute, middle class Anglo-Jewish men had sought to deny her very existence. At least some of these men, it may be assumed, were accustomed to visiting prostitutes themselves. Middle class Jewish women, cocooned in comfortable domesticity, were less likely to have been guilty of deliberately ignoring the existence of Jewish prostitutes, but, more probably, were completely unaware of the issue. The reaction of Constance Battersea on hearing of the plight of two Jewish prostitutes from a Christian mission worker, appears to have been typical at this time;

“Alas, I was hopelessly at sea in the matter! The subject was one I had always avoided, and I had never heard, nor, indeed, did I believe, that any so-called rescue work had been needed amongst the Jewish Community.”²⁶

Lady Battersea also recorded the reluctance with which she first regarded the problem of prostitution. With the men of the community even less willing to acknowledge the situation, it is all the more astonishing that it was a group of highly respectable middle class Jewish ladies who took the first steps towards relieving the suffering of Jewish prostitutes and publicising their plight.

Mrs Herbert, the mission worker who had sought to draw Jewish attention to the problem, chose to approach Constance Battersea, through a mutual friend, precisely because of her own, and her family's, well-known devotion to philanthropic causes. Lady Battersea, a scion of the Rothschild family, had been brought up in the traditional Anglo-Jewish manner, working with her mother for the Ladies' Benevolent Loan Institution while still in her teens. In later years she became one of the first lady prison visitors to be appointed by the Home Office, and was a great worker for the Temperance movement.²⁷ Already experienced in charity work, Lady Battersea responded to Mrs Herbert's overture by gathering a group of like-minded Jewish ladies to hear more on the subject. Included in this group were Lady Battersea's sister, Mrs Eliot Yorke, and several Rothschild cousins, including Emma, Lady Rothschild. All shared her wealthy, middle class social status, and had received a similar education in communal philanthropy. Also present were a number of slightly older ladies, who had already made a name for themselves in charity work; chief among them was Helen Lucas, who was a prominent member of the Ladies' Conjoint Visiting Association and the Industrial Committee of the Jewish Board of Guardians. On the occasion of their first meeting, March 23 1885, these ladies formed the Jewish Ladies' Society for Preventive and Rescue Work.²⁸

At their opening meeting, the Jewish Society heard from Mrs Herbert that:

“these unfortunate creatures declare that no help is forthcoming to them from members of their own race, that they are looked upon as too vile even to be saved from the gutter.”²⁹

Their immediate response, to begin rescue work in the Jewish community, may be interpreted in a variety of ways. As discussed in Chapter 1, any aspect of Anglo-Jewish philanthropy was governed by a number of, often conflicting, motives. The question to be answered here is whether these different motives apply to this unusual group of ladies. It is likely that the ladies of the Society were concerned with eradicating the problem of Jewish prostitution to avoid the feelings of anti-Semitism and anti-alienism that such problems aroused among British society. Their actions may have been intended to prevent Jews from taking up the charitable resources of Christian organisations. But the ladies of the Jewish Association did more than merely echo the sentiments of the male community. Established, conventional charitable institutions declined to acknowledge the problem of Jewish prostitution, thereby perpetuating the prejudice that prostitutes were “too vile even to be saved from the gutter”.

So what encouraged the ladies of the Jewish Association to act when the men of the community consistently failed to do so? There were obviously other motives behind the formation of the Jewish Ladies' Society. There can be little doubt that altruism was a significant factor in the formation of the Ladies' Society and in the subsequent recruitment of other charity workers. In her memoirs Constance Battersea records that she and the other ladies involved were deeply affected by the evidence of Mrs Herbert.³⁰ Many were moved to tears on hearing of the plight of Jewish prostitutes in London and collectively

they felt very strongly that action to help these suffering women was greatly needed. It seems likely therefore that the ladies were also affected by gender solidarity, responding directly to the needs of other Jewish women. The very acknowledgement of a problem previously ignored by the male community indicates a new willingness to help their fellow women, however distasteful the problem.

Judith Plaskow, writing about Jewish feminism in the USA in the 1970s, described the sisterhood between Jewish women as a “far more vital community than the traditional institutions of the Jewish ‘community’”.³¹ She considers that the exclusion of Jewish women from the Jewish written tradition and from the active observance of Judaism creates a sisterhood between Jewish women that crosses all divisions of class and culture. Given their social standing within the Anglo-Jewish community, it is unlikely that that any of the Society’s members consciously felt excluded from mainstream Jewish life, but their efforts to help Jewish prostitutes in the early days of the organisation point to a feeling of sisterhood that transcended cultural and class barriers. The rescue work itself also points to the existence of such a significant motivating factor. As the first Jewish organisation addressing the issue of White Slavery, the ladies of the Society took a personal risk in associating themselves with such a cause. That they were prepared to compromise their own social standing and respectability indicates that these ladies felt very strongly about the problems of prostitution. Their work compares with that of Josephine Butler against the Contagious Diseases Acts of the 1860s.³² Both campaigns involved women addressing issues that society considered unsuitable for them to even think of, and both campaigns were directly in aid of working class women, whose needs were not being met by the rest of society.

II. The Work of the Jewish Association.

The work of the Society began with a series of letters to existing institutions asking about the extent of the Jewish problem. The ladies discovered that with the exception of Whitechapel, no other areas had any Jewish girls in their care. The numbers of Jewish prostitutes were not, therefore, large enough to warrant the planned establishment of a residential home. Instead several suitable landladies were sought, to provide lodgings for Jewish girls when necessary,³³ and the Society turned its attention to the protection of Jewish women. The early focus of their work emphasises the popular belief among middle class philanthropists that girls did not choose to work as prostitutes, but were the passive victims of exploitation and corruption by unscrupulous men. This view was shared by most workers in the field at this time, Jewish and non-Jewish. The Association felt that it was necessary to prevent girls from falling into the hands of brothel-keepers and traffickers by employing a dock agent to meet immigrant girls on their arrival in London and to ensure their safe dispersal into the care of friends and family:

“Another agent, speaking several languages, employed by the Protection and Rescue Society for Jewish Girls, watches the arrival of the boats at the London docks, and offers help to any young women seeming to require it ... there is no doubt that his continual watch at the docks has greatly increased the difficulties of those who assist in the infamous traffic carried on between London and the Continent and has thus prevented incalculable evil.”³⁴

The name of the society was changed to the Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls and Women in 1897 to reflect this emphasis,³⁵ and it was most commonly known as the Jewish Association. Gradually, as the number of unaccompanied female immigrants arriving in London increased, so did the

numbers relying on the Association, and, in April 1886, the ladies established a rescue home, Charcroft House, in Shepherd's Bush, west London.³⁶

The Association had deliberated over the choice of locality for the rescue home. Cost was obviously an important consideration for an organisation reliant on charitable donations, but the ladies evidently wanted to remove the girls from the East End, where they had been plying their trade. The ladies hoped that away from the unsavoury influences and temptations of the East End, the girls they had rescued might see the error of their ways, and be reformed. They were highly selective about the girls who were sent to Charcroft House and had no qualms about sending girls away if they failed to abide by the exacting house rules. The Charcroft regime placed great emphasis on reform and improvement, and a programme of housework, laundry work and religious instruction was intended to achieve this, at the same time preparing the girls for a future in domestic service.³⁷ The early cases taken in do not seem to have been hardened prostitutes. In fact, most of the girls appear to have been unfortunate, rather than deliberately promiscuous, falling into bad company or becoming pregnant because of innocence or stupidity, not out of choice. There was a definite punitive element to the regime at Charcroft House, as the emphasis on work indicates. However, the drudgery of domestic service was often the only prospect available to the girls after their stay in the Association's care, so that their preparation for service was realistically, rather than unduly, harsh.

It was the girls who were either pregnant or nursing a new-born baby who appeared to suffer most under the Charcroft rules. As the offspring of Jewish mothers, their infants were technically Jewish, and yet many were placed with Christian foster mothers. This is partly explained by a distinct

shortage of Jewish foster parents, but no arrangements were made to ensure that these children were brought up in the Jewish faith. Thus practical considerations help to explain the lack of religious and ethnic solidarity shown by the Jewish Association towards these children. The policy of farming out the children of Charcroft residents may have been intended to punish the mothers and certainly attempts were made to restrict the contact residents had with other members of their families for similar reasons, as well as to prevent the girls from being led astray again. But even if, in the eyes of the Jewish Association, inmates of Charcroft House did not deserve to keep their children with them, or were unfit to do so, the children themselves also suffered. By contemporary standards this policy was not unusual. It does, however, indicate the extent of the barriers which divided middle class charity workers from the working class poor and the authoritarian role that middle class philanthropy comfortably assumed in the lives of the working classes. The ladies of the Association followed in the tradition established by the Jewish Board of Guardians in adopting such a role. In the same vein, the ladies took great interest in the intimate details of the administration of Charcroft House, visiting the girls regularly, even after they had left the Association's care and providing money from their own pockets on a regular basis for individuals as well as for the rescue work as a whole.

But by 1889 the ladies had chosen to hand over responsibility for rescue work to a committee of gentlemen.³⁸ Of the six original members of this gentlemen's subcommittee, four were married to members of the ladies' committee; Reverend Singer and Messers Elkin, Lucas and Micholls. All had considerable experience of charitable work.³⁹ One of the other two members was Hermann Landau, of the Jews' Temporary Shelter. Mr Landau was a

Polish immigrant who had become a successful banker, and was particularly well-suited to the task in hand, having founded the Poor Jews' Temporary Shelter in 1885.⁴⁰ Mr Landau had established the shelter independently after the Jewish Board of Guardians had failed to act. Agents were employed to meet immigrants on their arrival in London. They were helped to reach their final destination, and several thousand transmigrants were accommodated at the shelter each year, staying for up to two weeks, before departing for other countries, such as the USA or South Africa.⁴¹ The sixth member was Arthur Moro, already experienced in rescue work with the National Vigilance Association. This organisation had also been formed in 1885, "for the enforcement and improvement of the laws for the repression of criminal vice and public immorality".⁴²

The ladies themselves also had a wide experience of philanthropic work, and it is unlikely that they turned to the gentlemen for help because of a lack of experience or ability. Relinquishing responsibility for this area of work to a gentlemen's committee indicates the severity of the situation and the threat which such work posed to the respectability of those concerned. Despite the well established tradition of slum-visiting by middle and upper class ladies, it was impossible for ladies of their position in society to visit the docks or undertake an active role in supervising the meeting of immigrant girls or for them to undertake active rescue work. Also, in October 1889, it was discovered that Finsong, the Association's dock agent, had been on friendly terms with Leibnitz, "one of the most notorious of the runners" and had directed a number of unsuspecting girls to Leibnitz's house.⁴³ He was immediately dismissed and Mr Landau lent the services of two of his workers from the Jews' Temporary Shelter to the Association so that their dock work

could continue. It was clearly necessary for provision to be made to ensure that such a dereliction of the dock worker's duty could not occur again. It was therefore proposed by the ladies of the Association that a committee of gentlemen be appointed to undertake rescue work and supervise the work of the dock agent more closely.⁴⁴

The impetus for the formation of the gentlemen's committee came from the ladies themselves. The unfortunate events surrounding the dismissal of the dock agent no doubt hastened their decision, but it is clear that it was the ladies who chose to relinquish the less savoury aspects of their work. There is no suggestion of the work being taken from them against their will. It therefore follows that the ladies of the Jewish Association deliberately chose to alter the dynamics of the organisation by inviting the gentlemen to form a sub-committee. Here is a perfect example of the limitations placed on middle class women in British society and on Jewish women in Anglo-Jewish society. Circumstances forced the ladies to rely on male help for the continuation of the Association, despite their success in originally forming the organisation.

The ladies' General Committee retained overall control of the organisation, but all of the day-to-day administration and execution of the Association's rescue work was relinquished to the gentlemen's committee. A new agent was appointed and strict guidelines were laid down for him to follow in his daily work. The Honorary Secretary of the gentlemen's committee, Arthur Moro, took much of the responsibility for supervising the new agent, and recorded this in his annual reports. These reports provide a very clear picture of the agent's duties and his success in performing them. In 1890, the agent, Sternheim, worked for ten months and during that time met 199 steamers from Hamburg. He failed to meet 27, a failure rate of 12%,

which was not felt to be an unduly large percentage, given the problems that arose when several ships arrived within a short time of each other. 95% of the 5,854 passengers on these ships were Jews, and they included 210 unprotected young women.⁴⁵ Of these, those with addresses were accompanied to their final destinations, once Sternheim was satisfied that their friends or relatives were *bona fide*. Similarly, those heading for the provinces were accompanied to the appropriate station after the addresses of their destinations were proved to be genuine. This left 55 girls, who were brought to the Association's lodging house, plus another 36 who came to the house of their own accord, making a total of 91 for the year. Of these, 44 were placed in domestic service and 6 were found employment in trade. 22 more were claimed by relatives and left after their claims were proven; another 8 went abroad, 2 were transferred to other houses, 2 went to the Travellers' Aid Society and 7 remained in the house at the end of the year. The report for 1891 shows that there were 9,606 arrivals,⁴⁶ but similar proportions of that total were dealt with as they had been in 1890. As the dock agent could not be sure of seeing all passengers before they left the ship, it was arranged for him to be warned of a ship's imminent arrival by telegraph, from Gravesend.⁴⁷ The agent's system of operation became, of necessity, more organised in 1895, when the sanitary authorities decided to end discrimination between Jewish and Christian immigrants, which meant that Jews were allowed to disembark immediately on arrival. Previously Jewish immigrants had been required to remain on board whilst their state of health had been verified by the sanitary inspectors. This and other details, such as the arrangement of a railway pass for the agent and the introduction of casebooks all improved the efficiency of the operation; and although it is not certain that the girls concerned would definitely have ended

up as victims of the White Slave Trade, Arthur Moro was convinced of the need for the work to continue:

“when we realise that many of the 264 girls we have conducted from the ships this year [1893] might, but for our intervention, have found themselves hopelessly stranded in a large city where the inhabitants speak a language they could not understand, and where unseen dangers abound, we may rest satisfied that to some extent good has come from the work we have done.”⁴⁸

During the early years of the Association’s rescue work, from 1885 until 1914, it is apparent that the Jewish Association clearly believed Jewish involvement in trafficking and prostitution to be extensive. Bristow has demonstrated that the perception of Jewish prostitutes as innocent victims was misguided so the Association was undoubtedly over-estimating the threat posed to unaccompanied women, by would-be traffickers. In other words, the vast majority of women who went to work in South American brothels chose to do so, and had generally been working as prostitutes already. In magnifying the risk posed to unaccompanied women immigrants in their estimates the Association may have accorded the problem of White Slavery greater significance than it warranted. But, more importantly, this had the effect of forcing other Jewish organisations to recognise the problem as well. Thus the Jewish Association’s major achievement during this early period was to bring the issue of White Slavery into the public arena. Non-Jewish organisations were attempting to do the same,⁴⁹ as were certain sectors of the media.⁵⁰ It was the Jewish Association’s unique contribution, prior to the First World War, to draw the Anglo-Jewish community into acknowledging, and later fighting against, the very issue the community had formerly tried so hard to ignore.

Once the Jewish Association had begun its campaign to publicise Jewish involvement in White Slavery and prostitution, it was then forced to deal with the consequences which the Jewish community had been trying to avoid by ignoring the issue in the past.⁵¹ The attitude of the Association does seem to indicate a degree of paranoia, out of proportion to the actual extent of the problem. Furthermore, by exaggerating the extent of the trafficking, the Association risked arousing anti-Semitism, and tainting the resident Jewish community and all immigrant Jews with the stain of White Slavery. Counter-acting with this fear of anti-Semitism was the genuine need for the Jewish Association's services among newly-arrived immigrants.

It is more likely, in fact, that without the Association's help, unaccompanied female travellers would merely have been robbed of their possessions by petty criminals or exploited by opportunists rather than spirited away to South American brothels. Much of the agent's work supports this. On occasion, Sternheim encountered "determined resistance"⁵² when he tried to undertake his work, but the majority of the unprotected women whom he met merely needed to be guided through London, to be reunited with their families. Others were sent to Charcroft House because they had nowhere else to go, or were warned that the addresses they had been given by fellow travellers were not suitable places for unaccompanied young women.

The case of Tilly K. was fairly typical of Sternheim's early work. Unable to find Tilly's friends in London, he brought her to Charcroft House where she stayed for a short time before being found a situation by the ladies of the Jewish Association.⁵³ Another girl, Bertha B., was brought to the Association's lodging house because she had lost her luggage and the address of her London destination, and stayed there until her friends were found.⁵⁴

Although much of this enterprise was mundane the Jewish Association evidently considered its rescue work to be necessary and therefore worth the associated risks, chief of which was the possible arousal of anti-Semitism. The work of the Travellers' Aid Society followed the same pattern and the annual reports record a similar litany of cases, where unaccompanied girls and children were helped on their various journeys.⁵⁵ Obviously, the girls whom the different agents met were vulnerable to the attentions of the unscrupulous and it is possible that they might have ended up in the hands of traffickers and brothel-keepers without the Association's intervention or that of other charities.

However, although the majority of cases dealt with by the agent were commonplace, the gentlemen's committee did encounter some serious traffickers in the course of their work. An expensive court case was undertaken on behalf of Emilia H., who had been encouraged to come to England by three conspiring traffickers, where she was robbed of most of her possessions, and the (not inconsiderable) sum of £15.⁵⁶ The Association was gratified by the resulting conviction of two of the conspirators. Often, however, it was far more difficult to press charges. The Association was informed by the father of Annie D., that a young man named Barnett Someschein had attempted to induce his daughter to accompany him to Buenos Aires. But as the girl was over the age of consent, charges could not be brought against Someschein, which is an indication of the frustrating and piecemeal nature of rescue work at this time.⁵⁷ The rescue work of the Association was also rendered more difficult by the fact that:

“recently several foreign girls who had been imprudent in their own country and who were anxious to hide their shame, had come to London, where they believed that they would be cared for by charitable Jewish ladies during the time of their trouble.”⁵⁸

The gentlemen’s committee was adamant in their advice to the ladies of the Association that they must resolve to discourage such girls from coming to England and to turn away all who approached them for help. The Association was concerned that welcoming any girls in this situation, might encourage a stream of others to follow them. On a more practical level, caring for pregnant women, and later their babies, was impossible given the Association’s limited resources. (It later became illegal for unmarried mothers to enter the country, under the terms of the Aliens Act).⁵⁹

The Jewish Association felt that caring for the offspring of Jewish girls was beyond its capabilities. In adopting this policy, the ladies of the Association were perpetuating the attitude that such women were outside the realms of the respectable. But again, in doing so, they merely echoed the views of the Anglo-Jewish community and the rest of society. In fact, in other respects, the ladies showed an unusually enlightened attitude towards rescue work. Unlike other communal organisations, the Jewish Association refused to believe that all prostitutes were beyond redemption.⁶⁰ In 1897, several police raids on brothels in Stamford Street, Waterloo highlighted the plight of Jewish prostitutes, who resisted the help offered by Christian charities for fear of being converted.⁶¹ The Jewish Association enlisted the help of the Chief Rabbi, Reverend Adler, and the United Synagogue, in responding to the needs of Jewish prostitutes, and reiterated their willingness to welcome prostitutes who wished to reform into Charcroft House. Moreover, the Jewish Association

did not categorise all Jewish women in such unfortunate circumstances as prostitutes. The gentlemen's committee sought to remove innocent girls from immoral surroundings, like Kate B., who was admitted to Charcroft House after her mother was convicted for keeping a brothel.⁶²

The Jewish Association's rescue work in London did not achieve spectacular results, but successful attempts were made to alleviate the suffering of Jewish prostitutes and those associated with them, at least on a small scale. With regard to White Slavery, the problem was of considerably greater magnitude, and the Jewish Association was less successful, though no less zealous in its efforts to tackle the issue. Despite the establishment of other committees in the ports of Liverpool, Hull, Southampton and Plymouth,⁶³ the ability of the Association, and such associated committees, to take serious action against the White Slave Trade was severely limited. In 1899, the Jewish Association was forced to acknowledge that several girls had gone from its care straight into the hands of traffickers.⁶⁴ In the same year, Arthur Moro attempted to prevent a known trafficker, Menachem Rudeman, from sailing from Liverpool, with two young girls. With the help of the Liverpool committee Moro was able to induce the girls to accompany him to the local police station, but they were powerless to do anything more than issue a serious warning to the two girls of the danger they were incurring.⁶⁵

The nature of this rescue work ensured that the Jewish Association also approached the issue of prostitution and trafficking as an international problem, and the gentlemen's committee was more successful in spreading the anti-trafficking message to continental Europe, as well as provincial England. Dr Lowy, a leading member of the Jewish community in Budapest, visited London in 1890 and addressed the Jewish Association on the subject of "the

abominable traffic of young Jewish girls from Austria, Roumania, Gallicia and Constantinople".⁶⁶ Limited resources prevented the Association from offering any direct help to the rescue efforts of Dr Lowy and his supporters in eastern Europe, but the Association was inspired to join the international campaign for the suppression of the White Slave Trade. In recognition of the work already done in the fight against White Slavery, Arthur Moro was invited to join the British National Committee, on its formation in 1899, in order to represent the Jewish community.⁶⁷ In 1900, Jewish committees were formed for the resistance of White Slavery in Russia, Austria, Paris and Antwerp.⁶⁸ Although the Association found that some countries were more sympathetic to the cause than others: the gentlemen's committee heard in 1899, that Countess Tolstoy was out of favour at the Russian court as a result of her enthusiasm for the cause, while, in complete contrast, the Dutch government had granted a police officer six months' leave in order to work for the committee there.⁶⁹ Casting their attention further afield, the gentlemen's committee was addressed by Colonel Goldsmid, visiting London from South America in June 1896, who "confirmed the worst fears of the committee, as to the traffic and houses of ill-repute in Buenos Aires".⁷⁰ The committee immediately resolved to write to the British Consul and the Chief of Police in Buenos Aires, as well as to a number of prominent Jewish residents there. A committee was formed and a clerk from the Austro-Hungarian consulate was employed as the committee's agent. Similarly, the extent of the prostitution problem in South Africa was revealed by a letter to the *Jewish Chronicle* in February 1900, where trafficking was thought to be entirely in the hands of Jews, so the Jewish Association lent their support to the formation of a vigilance committee by Jewish residents in Laurengo Marques, South Africa.⁷¹

As well as spreading its influence throughout the world, the Jewish Association, in particular the gentlemen's committee, had been greatly helped in its rescue work by links with other organisations, especially with William Coote of the National Vigilance Association and other international organisations such as the Red Cross, the International Colonisation Association and the Russo-Jewish Committee. Male and female representatives of the Jewish Association could also be found on the various committees of the National Vigilance Association, the Travellers' Aid Society, the London Council for the Promotion of Public Morality and the British National Committee for the Suppression of the White Slave Trade, transcending religious and ethnic barriers. The Jewish Association received thanks from many quarters for the work done on behalf of other societies, and was particularly well-qualified to help travellers who spoke no English:

"The Committee [of the Travellers' Aid Society] feels that their thanks are due to the Jewish Ladies' Association for their kindness in allowing non-Jewish young foreigners to lodge at one of their Homes in cases where the travellers' ignorance of English renders it impossible for them to make themselves understood in any ordinary Home."⁷²

However, despite these links, the Association was well aware of the strong feeling against the Jews as a result of Jewish involvement in white slavery, and it was resolved to produce a manifesto to demonstrate British Jewry's abhorrence of the trafficking; for, as Claude Montefiore said to the Council of the Jewish Association in February 1902:

"the fact that Jews and Jewesses are doing their utmost to combat this horrible trade would, in my opinion, be the best antidote for anti-Semitism, and against the charges levelled by the enemies of the Jews against the whole of Jewry."⁷³

Bristow believes that western anti-Semitism was such that Jews would have been the scapegoats for White Slavery, had they been involved less prominently or even if they had not been involved at all.⁷⁴ Anti-Semitism over this issue was widespread, and the fact that many traffickers were Jewish was evidently a source of considerable anxiety to the Jewish communities of Europe, which is a major factor in explaining their involvement in the anti-trafficking movement. The culmination of the Jewish Association's early international work against trafficking, and the fear of anti-Semitism thus aroused, was the first Jewish International Conference on the Suppression of the Traffic in Girls and Women, held in London, from 5th to 7th April, 1910:

“it was found that, although among the traffickers and their victims Jews and Jewesses were unfortunately to be found, an inadequate knowledge of the subject was still prevalent among a large number of our co-religionists, and consequently an inadequate interest was shown by them in the measures that were being taken to check the evil. It was thought that this lack of interest was, perhaps, specially due to an ignorance of the extent to which members of the Jewish race were affected by it, or even concerned in it. Again, the causes of the traffic among Jews are in many respects peculiar, depending, as they largely do, upon unfortunate social and political conditions which are the result of long-continued persecution and oppression. The evils due to special causes require special remedies, while many aspects of the traffic, so far as it affects Jewish victims, need to be dealt with and combated by Jewish workers from a specifically Jewish basis, and on the strength of knowledge which Jews alone can adequately collect, and then wisely employ. For all these reasons it was thought that the time had come when it was desirable, and indeed almost necessary, to convene a specifically Jewish Conference.”⁷⁵

The almost apologetic note of this introduction to the Conference is indicative of the reluctance of Jewish organisations to acknowledge trafficking as a Jewish problem. One aim of the Conference was thus to continue the work

started by the Jewish Association, in encouraging European Jewry as a whole to recognise the existence of the problem. Again, the Jewish Association was forced to choose between the lesser of two evils; the possible exacerbation of anti-Semitism by openly discussing White Slavery or the risk posed by the trade itself. Another aspect of this dilemma was the sectarian issue, of holding a specifically Jewish conference, which might alienate non-Jewish organisations working in the field. By concentrating on the Jewish aspects of the problem, the Jewish Association was jeopardising its links with organisations like the National Vigilance Association. That the Conference did not affect co-operation among Jewish and non-Jewish organisations working against White Slavery indicates the success of the Jewish Association's diplomacy in handling the specifically Jewish aspects of the issue. Further evidence of the absence of antagonism among anti-trafficking organisations is the non-sectarian International Conference on the Suppression of the White Slave Trade, held in Madrid in 1911, at which "it was satisfactory to note that no word has been said to which a member of the Jewish Community could have taken exception".⁷⁶

III. Rescue Work after the First World War.

The Conferences of 1910 and 1911 set the tone for greater co-operation among the diverse organisations working in the field. The international movement for the suppression of the White Slave Trade was thereby given a quasi-official status and new impetus. Committees inspired by the Jewish Association were formed in many of the Jewish communities on the Continent. The President and Secretary of the Jewish Association, Claude Montefiore and Mr S. Cohen,

respectively, had played an important part in both of the conferences and in the international work that followed. But their work, and that of the gentlemen's committee in general, was severely disrupted by the First World War. The immigration work stopped altogether, as international travel virtually ceased, and the committee itself met rarely, as its members were on active service or engaged in war work.⁷⁷ The Jewish Association did, however, join forces with other sectarian groups to visit military camps, and provide for the well-being of soldiers of different faiths on active service or in hospitals.⁷⁸ Work resumed immediately after the war, and the years from 1919 to 1924 were increasingly busy for the gentlemen's committee. The successes of this period may be attributable in part to the pre-war development of the Jewish Association and its links with other organisations. The international work of these groups, either individually or in co-operation, was particularly affected by the new-found vigour and efficiency thus engendered. Among all these organisations, the Jewish Association was extremely active in the international arena after the First World War.

As the war came to an end, the Association's agent in Buenos Aires, Dr Halphon, was occupied in preparing for the predicted flood of immigrants after the war, establishing links with the authorities and other organisations such as the Red Cross and providing an information service for recent immigrants. Responding to pressure from local and international organisations, including the Jewish Association, the Argentine government also began to address these problems, introducing immigration regulations in 1919, and establishing a Commission on prostitution and venereal disease in 1920. This made the agent's job easier, but he continued to encounter a lack of support from the Jewish community in Buenos Aires, which he generously ascribed to the

weight of their business obligations. Dr Halphon also compared the attitude of South Americans towards prostitution with that of the French, who saw brothels as a necessary evil. Despite such hindrances, he achieved some success, noting in 1924 that his was the only organisation to have permission to board ships immediately on arrival and the only one to employ Yiddish-speaking workers, which was a great advantage.⁸⁰ Dr Halphon helped to train agents for Rio and Montevideo, to prevent traffickers from disembarking at these other ports and then sneaking into Argentina by overland routes. Both agents followed Dr Halphon's example in initiating ladies' committees in their respective cities as well. After the death of Dr Halphon, the Association's work in South America diminished to such a degree that, in 1930 the secretary, Mr S. Cohen, felt it necessary to lead an expedition there to encourage and resurrect the fading committees.⁸¹

The White Slave Trade continued to be a problem in parts of Asia, and the Far East. The Jewish Association was alerted to the existence of many Jewish prostitutes in India (80 out of a total of 104 in Bombay), after an investigation by the India Office in 1916.⁸² This was another manifestation of the global trafficking problem, with girls knowingly travelling from Russia and eastern Europe in order to enter Asian brothels in Singapore and the Far East as well as India. It was this that the Association hoped to address by calling for action to prevent girls from leaving Russia initially, closing down India's brothels and pursuing the traffickers. It was decided to take no action against European Jewish prostitutes already in India, but support was given by the Association to the plan to help the significant minority of Asiatic Jewish women who were forced into prostitution by economic desperation. A report from the Zionist Commission in 1919 revealed a similar problem of Jewish

girls entering prostitution, out of choice and economic necessity, in Jerusalem and Jaffa.⁸³ There is no indication that the Association undertook any active work in this area, beyond encouraging the formation of local committees and offering advice where appropriate, but the Association's development and growing international standing is clearly demonstrated by its involvement in world issues and its correspondence with a variety of groups, from the Indian government to the Oriental conference of B'nai B'rith lodges. The information acquired by the Jewish Association during this period, was reinforced by the findings of the Commission of Inquiry set up by the National Council for Combating Venereal Disease in 1920, to investigate prostitution in Singapore, Hong Kong, India and Colombia.⁸⁴

The Association's European work was equally disrupted by the war, but was quickly resumed, with the revival of dormant committees throughout the continent. Links were re-formed with the Hilfsverein and the Judischer Frauenbund in Germany, and those with the International Colonisation Association, in Paris, and the Council of Jewish Women, in New York, were strengthened. It was, however, the relationship with the League of Nations that was most indicative of the Association's international reputation. After another International Conference at Geneva in 1921, the Association was invited to join a permanent advisory committee on trafficking.⁸⁵ Virtually every meeting of the General Purposes Committee thereafter involved some aspect of this work, which is some indication of its importance. In this, the Association was joined by other non-Jewish organisations, including the National Vigilance Association.⁸⁶ The Association regularly attended League of Nations conferences, including the International Bureau Conference, in 1923, and the Graz Congress, in 1924,⁸⁷ both on trafficking; and the League of Nations

Union conference on armaments and arbitration, in 1925, and supported the foundation of the International Migration Service in the same year.⁸⁸

This international work was administered by the gentlemen's committee, but had ceased to be an exclusively male interest. Representative ladies also attended several of these conferences, and at the same time, the ladies of the Jewish Association were formalising their links with other Jewish women's organisations, attending the Union of Jewish Women conference on "Women's Part in Public Life", in 1922,⁸⁹ and the Vienna Congress of Jewish Women in 1923. The Vienna Congress was described by Alice Model, in her report to the General Purposes Committee, in quasi-religious terms; "the coming-together was almost a sacrament"⁹⁰ and the event was clearly a significant step in the development of a global Jewish 'sisterhood'. But the ladies discussed only traditional women's issues; hearing papers on the Jewish woman within the home, and her influence on communal life and education. Even the dynamic Bertha Pappenheim, who led the Jewish feminist movement in Germany, took as her subject matter the role of women in maintaining the purity of the Jewish community.⁹¹ The Jewish Association was part of the World Council of Jewish Women, formed at the Vienna Congress⁹² Other congresses followed, in 1927 and 1929. Co-operation with non-Jewish organisations was not only a male prerogative, and ladies from the Jewish Association also attended the International Women's Organisations Conference on the prevention and causes of war in 1923 and sent a representative to the International Council of Women in Washington DC in 1925.

IV. The Changing Role of Women in the Jewish Association during the 1920s.

The ladies of the Jewish Association were clearly keen to establish themselves internationally, alongside the already internationally well-respected gentlemen of the Association. They were also strengthened by the growing recognition of their sisterhood with other Jewish and non-Jewish women's organisations.

This in turn was to affect their relationship with the gentlemen of the Jewish Association, with whom they had formerly colluded to create for themselves a less significant role with regard to rescue work and the anti-trafficking movement. Although the ladies had founded the Association and adopted a major, dynamic role in its administration and development, the gentlemen's subcommittee had from the outset formed a small, but very vocal minority, imposing its opinions onto the Association as a whole, especially with regard to matters relating to rescue work.

A good indicator of this, and of the attitudes of the gentlemen's committee towards women in general, is their involvement in the wartime controversy over the treatment of venereal disease among the armed forces. In 1918, the Association found itself embroiled in a correspondence with several other societies over Regulation 40D under the Defence of the Realm Act.⁹³ This regulation allowed for the compulsory examination, detention and treatment of anyone found guilty of transmitting venereal disease to a member of the armed forces. The regulation was fiercely criticised, although the soldiers and sailors themselves suffered worse penalties, including dismissal from the Forces, if they were found to be infected. Among the regulation's many opponents was the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene (AMSH).

The Jewish Association withdrew their representative from the AMSH because it disagreed on this issue, believing that:

“while we see the regulation is not perfect, we realise the great necessity to safeguard both our soldiers and our civilians from reckless contamination by unscrupulous women. We would gladly see our women equally safeguarded from unscrupulous men, who knowingly risk giving them disease. But we fail to see that the call for equal legislation for the sexes is at the present crisis sufficient ground for opposition to Regulation 40D. We have not dared to go so far. Indeed, why throw away half a loaf because you have not a whole one?”⁹⁴

The Jewish Association, in company with the National Council for Combatting Venereal Disease, continued to promote compulsory notification and treatment as a solution to the problem of venereal disease. They ignored the authoritarian nature of Regulation 40D, or of any other system of notification, with their sinister overtones of the nineteenth century Contagious Diseases Acts, and clearly felt that the end justified the means. It seems excessive to interpret this attitude as an indicator of a fundamental lack of respect for women in general. But, more specifically, this policy does suggest a failure on the part of the gentlemen’s committee to consider the problems of the sub-group of prostitutes and working class women who were directly affected by the VD legislation. It is not obvious whether any or all of the ladies of the Association actually agreed with the gentlemen about compulsory notification, but the Association presented a united front over the issue, so it is clear that any personal scruples individual lady members may have had, were set aside for the sake of unity within the organisation. The highly contentious regulation 40D was only a temporary measure introduced after the failure of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill in the Lords in 1917, and was one of the first of the wartime regulations to be withdrawn after the Armistice.

The ladies of the Jewish Association followed the gentlemen's lead with regard to Regulation 40D, but by 1919, were ready to challenge for the first time the traditional distribution of work between men and women within the organisation.⁹⁵ Since the formation of the gentlemen's committee in 1889 the ladies had restricted their work to the pastoral care of girls in the various homes and those who had been found situations by the Association. The active rescue work and much of the international work was dealt with by the gentlemen. Two women members of the Association, both experienced workers in girls' clubs in the East End, approached the gentlemen with a view to being admitted onto their committee. The gentlemen noted that their subcommittee had:

“originally started because of the cases, which in those days no lady would attempt to touch, but apparently times had changed and now even young women spoke of matters without any privacy, and therefore they were now asking to come onto this committee.”⁹⁶

The gentlemen, now aware that there was no longer any need to shield the lady members of the Association from the more unsavoury features of their work, agreed to admit the ladies in question to their newly-formed cases subcommittee. Even so, they did not let the development pass without commenting that they would have a lot to learn, as they had not had to consider the dangers of libel or the limitations of the law before. It was ironic, therefore, that at the same time several legal men joined the committee as well, so perhaps the original members were not expert in legal matters either. This change was the precursor of the major reorganisation scheme that created the International, Migratory and Parliamentary Committee in 1925, which included an equal number of male and female members.⁹⁷

This development also indicates the emergence of a new type of voluntary worker. Many women had had to take on paid employment during the First World War, and although most had relinquished their jobs afterwards, women's attitudes towards the field of paid and voluntary work had begun to alter (a theme that will be explored in greater detail in the next chapter). Voluntary organisations had also assumed far greater importance during the war, making significant contributions to the war effort. With this experience and a growing respect for the world of work, women volunteer workers had begun to play a far more professional role in philanthropy. The two women who challenged the traditional division of work within the Jewish Association represented this new breed of women charity workers, pursuing their philanthropic interests like a career, rather than a charitable obligation.

Rescue work in the 1920s was thus dealt with in an increasingly professional manner, and by both men and women, in the Jewish Association. However, while the problem of White Slavery was becoming less acute by this time, the Association's more specific rescue work was growing in size and severity. The statistics for the early post-war years give some indication as to why the cases committee needed to be extended: 1,082 cases were seen in 1921,⁹⁸ considerably more than the 597 cases seen in the first nine months of 1918.⁹⁹ In the first half of 1923, the committee saw 724 girls; including 32 unmarried mothers, 8 probation cases, 15 prisoners visited in Holloway, 16 VD cases, 18 girls missing from home and 80 married women in difficulties, which included desertion, ill-treatment, inadequate support, ill-health or immorality.¹⁰⁰ The first ten months of 1924 brought 1316 cases, of increasing severity, to the Association, including several neglected and abused children, putting even greater pressure on staff and committees.¹⁰¹ At the same time,

enquiries by non-Jewish organisations were revealing similar problems. Throughout the early 1920s various investigations were made into social problems to encourage the introduction of new legislation to protect children and deal more effectively with criminals. The Association for Moral and Social Hygiene led several of these campaigns, publicising the need for the Street Order Bill in 1923,¹⁰² and joining the National Vigilance Association in the campaign for the Bastardy Act in 1925.¹⁰³ A focus of their campaigning was the neglect and abuse of children, and the associated problems of juvenile delinquency. The Association had become aware of these matters through the work of Montefiore House, the industrial school it had founded for Jewish girls, and through the representatives on the Home Office Juvenile Organisation Committee for Stepney.¹⁰⁴ By 1925 an investigating committee had concluded that it was necessary for the Association to employ another case worker specifically for children, rescuing them from neglect or criminal influence, as well as from prostitution or immoral circumstances.¹⁰⁵ In 1926, the Association, working in conjunction with the Jewish Board of Guardians, dealt with a serious case of neglect that resulted in the child concerned being removed from her family. This prompted an emergency meeting at which it was decided to form a Children's Committee.¹⁰⁶ In 1933, the Council met in order to ratify a second change of name, to the Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls, Women and Children.¹⁰⁷

The gentlemen conceded that no aspect of their work should remain an exclusively male domain, reflecting a change in both male and female attitudes within the Association: the women previously having colluded willingly in their exclusion from investigative work, considering it distasteful and unfitting for their status and sex. This division of labour does not, however, appear to

have been a point of contention before 1919. It was in many ways the forces of respectable society that kept the ladies from the more unsavoury work, rather than the men of the organisation. The conventions of British society as a whole may have restricted the activities of women in general with regard to rescue work. The most prominent rescue worker of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was William Coote of the National Vigilance Association, and other non-Jewish organisations concerned with rescue work and moral purity, such as the Travellers' Aid Society and the National Council for Combating VD, were all dominated by men. Their membership was not exclusive of women, but unlike the Jewish Association, women did not play a significant part in the administration of these organisations, and all had been founded by men.

The work of the ladies of the Jewish Association was further curtailed by the even tighter restrictions that Jewish society laid on women, requiring them to pursue their domestic role above all else. Their philanthropic work was therefore tailored to become an extension of their domestic role, so that the ladies of the Association concentrated on running the various lodging houses, visiting their charges and other pastoral work. Curiously, this meant that several committees remained exclusively female, notably the visiting committee and the house committees, and it was not until 1927 that any of the gentlemen were admitted to the Children's committee, despite their obvious experience in the matters which concerned this committee. Thus despite having initiated the first rescue work within the Jewish community, the ladies of the Jewish Association had passed on their ground-breaking work to a gentlemen's committee as the result of external pressures. Having taken on the responsibility for rescue work, the gentlemen's committee then came to

occupy a central role within the organisation; and their position was further strengthened by the election of Claude Montefiore as president of the Jewish Association in 1906.¹⁰⁸ But in the same way that the forces of society had restricted the role of women in the early years of the Association, changes in the position of women within society as a whole helped to bring about alterations within the Jewish Association. The expansion of women's employment during the First World War had brought many women into public life for the first time. Although almost all of the changes wrought by wartime upheaval were shortlived, it had become more acceptable for women to undertake paid employment outside the home, and this in turn affected the position of women in other areas, such as philanthropy. So not only did some women attempt to broach the barriers that divided men's work from women's, but the gentlemen themselves echoed the rest of society in agreeing to open up their work to the attentions of women. It is thus not surprising that by 1927, the gentlemen's committee was dissolved entirely, and replaced by a committee of both men and women.

The allocation of labour had clearly undergone a major change during the 1920s, as had the work itself. The Jewish Association's rescue work had developed to include prison visiting, probation work and the care of neglected children, as well as the rescue and reform of prostitutes. Other professional organisations and newly-created government agencies existed to undertake much of the Association's former responsibilities. An ageing membership and the loss of several leading members during the 1930s also meant that the Jewish Association had become far less effective. The term rescue work may be loosely applied to the activities undertaken on behalf of German refugees during the 1930s and 1940s, but overall, the Jewish Association had

relinquished its leading role within the field, and within philanthropy as a whole. In 1943, the organisation was subsumed by the Jewish Board of Guardians and ceased to operate as an independent entity.

V. Conclusions.

The bias of this chapter towards the early years of the period from 1880 to 1945 occurs because the field of rescue work had altered beyond recognition by the 1930s, and so too had its leading light - the Jewish Association. Rescue work had more or less ceased to exist at all. This was the result of two factors. The first was the professionalisation of philanthropy into secular social work. Thus charitable organisations like the Jewish Association were being replaced by professional agencies. Often established by the government and run by local authorities, these new organisations operated on non-religious grounds, without adopting the moral tone of older, sectarian charities. The other factor is less simple to define, but may be summed up as a change in society's attitude towards prostitution. Although no less prevalent and certainly not approved of, prostitution was no longer seen purely as a moral issue.¹⁰⁹ Instead it was seen as an economic and social issue, projecting blame for the problem onto society, not the individual. The Anglo-Jewish community, although to an extent insulated from such developments in public thinking, was party to this change in attitude. The Jewish Association's own policy towards former prostitutes certainly altered during the 1920s, becoming less judgemental and more focussed on rehabilitation, as opposed to reform. So even had the Jewish Association been able to continue its work in the field of rescue work on the same scale throughout the period in question, there would have been

increasingly less call for its services anyway. The organisation therefore came to a timely end. But arguably, the Jewish Association helped to bring about its own demise, as an active exponent of the professionalisation of social work. Furthermore, it was as a result of the Association's political lobbying, alongside other charitable organisations, that the State began to assume greater responsibility for rescue work, and other fields formerly occupied by voluntary philanthropists.

The Jewish Association made an inestimable contribution to philanthropy as a whole. Its methods were widely imitated, in many fields, and not just in rescue work. (They will be explored later in this thesis). The ladies of the Jewish Association had shown that it was possible for women to create and administer their own organisation. In choosing to concentrate on rescue work, the ladies challenged the Jewish community's attitude to prostitution, as well as challenging their own traditional role, as Jewish women. The involvement of a gentlemen's committee indicates, however, that there were limits within which the ladies had to operate, given the nature of their interests. The gentlemen's committee was eventually re-formed to include women, after certain ladies decided that they no longer needed to be protected from the worst aspects of rescue work. This transition was at least partially caused by the changing nature of women's position in society as a whole, and this will be followed up in later chapters. But the Association's achievements were not restricted to the Jewish community. In its links with non-Jewish organisations, the Jewish Association promoted a greater sense of unity among charities working in the same field, regardless of their religious persuasion. Particularly in its dealings with other women's organisations, such as the National Council of Women, the Jewish Association helped to create a sisterhood that

transcended religious barriers, paving the way for the development of women's role in all aspects of charity work. The early rescue work of the Jewish Association influenced Jewish women's role in philanthropy, especially in the field of employment, which forms the subject of the next chapter.

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- ⁷ Kuzmack, *Woman's Cause*, pp.74-76.
- ⁸ Kaplan, Marion, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family and Identity in Imperial Germany*, New York, 1990, pp.3-5; see also idem., *The Jewish Feminist Movement in Germany: The Campaigns of the Judischer Frauenbund 1904-1938*, passim.
- ⁹ Bristow, *Prostitution and Prejudice*, p.24.
- ¹⁰ For more general material on prostitution, see Bristow, *Vice and Vigilance*; Humphries, Steve, *A Secret World of Sex. Forbidden Fruit: The British Experience 1900-1950*, London, 1990; Walkowitz, Judith, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, Cambridge, 1981; and Weeks, Jeffrey, *Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality since 1800*, London, 1981.
- ¹¹ Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class*, p.15.
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- ¹⁵ Hauptman, Judith, "Images of women in the Talmud", in R. Reuther (ed.), *Religion and Sexism: Images of Women in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*, New York, 1974,

pp.184-212 passim; see also Gartner, "Anglo-Jewry and the Jewish international traffic in prostitution", p.154.

¹⁶ Bristow, *Prostitution and Prejudice*, p.4.

¹⁷ Jewish Association, General Purposes Committee, July 1927, University of Southampton Archives (hereafter SUA), MS173 2/4/2.

¹⁸ See Holmes, Colin, *Anti-Semitism in British Society*, London, 1979.

¹⁹ Kent, Susan Kingsley, *Sex and Suffrage in Britain 1860-1914*, London, 1990, p.24; see also Banks, J.A., and Banks, Olive, *Feminism and Family Planning in Victorian England*, Liverpool, 1964; Christ, C., "Late Victorian masculinity and the angel in the house", in M. Vicinus (ed.), *A Widening Sphere: Changing Roles of Victorian Women*, London, 1980; Cominos, Peter, "Late Victorian sexual respectability and the social system", *International Review of Social History*, 8 (1963), pp.216-250; and Lewis, Jane, *Women in England 1870-1950: Sexual Division and Social Change*, Brighton, 1984.

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²¹ *Ibid.*, pp.7-8.

²² See Burman, Rickie, "'She looketh well to the ways of her household': the changing role of Jewish women in religious life c.1880-1930" in G. Malmgreen (ed.), *Religion in the Lives of English Women*, Kent, 1986, pp.234-259; and Hyman, Paula, "The other half: women in the Jewish tradition", in E. Koltun (ed.), *The Jewish Woman: New Perspectives*, New York, 1976, pp.105-113.

²³ Address by the Very Rev. Dr Adler, Chief Rabbi, *Official Report of the Jewish International Conference*, London, 1910, p. 93.

²⁴ Gilman, Sander, *The Jew's Body*, London, 1990, p.124.

²⁵ Marks, "Gender, class and sexuality", pp.26-27.

²⁶ Battersea, Constance, *Reminiscences*, London, 1922, p.419.

²⁷ *Jewish Chronicle*, 4 April, 1902.

²⁸ Jewish Association, General Committee, 23 March 1885, SUA, MS173 2/1/1.

²⁹ Battersea, *Reminiscences*, p.421.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Plaskow, Judith, "The Jewish feminist: conflict in identities", in E. Koltun (ed.), *The Jewish Woman: New Perspectives*, p.4.

³² Kent, *Sex and Suffrage in Britain*, p.66-76.

³³ Jewish Association, General Committee, 12 June 1885, SUA, MS173 2/1/1.

³⁴ Travellers' Aid Society, *Annual Report*, 1896, pp.4-5, Fawcett Library, 4/TAS, Box 201.

³⁵ Jewish Association, General Committee, 26 March 1897, SUA, MS173 2/1/3.

³⁶ Jewish Association, General Committee, 2 April 1885, SUA, MS173 2/1/1.

³⁷ Jewish Association, Charcroft House Committee, 13 November 1885, SUA, MS173 2/8/1.

³⁸ Jewish Association, General Committee, 15 October 1889, SUA, MS173 2/1/2.

³⁹ Jewish Association, Gentlemen's Committee, 19 January 1890, SUA, MS173 2/2/1.

⁴⁰ Dinkker, Cyril, "The Jews' Temporary Shelter: a century of service", paper given to the London Museum of Jewish Life, 1985, pp.6-7.

⁴¹ Ibid., p.8.

⁴² Cutting from *The Sentinel*, August 1885, Fawcett Library, 4/NVA.

⁴³ Jewish Association, General Committee, 15 October 1889, SUA, MS173 2/1/2.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Jewish Association, Gentlemen's Committee, 8 February 1891, SUA, MS173 2/2/1.

⁴⁶ Jewish Association, Honorary Secretary's Report to the Gentlemen's Committee for 1891, SUA, MS173 2/2/3.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Jewish Association, Honorary Secretary's Report to the Gentlemen's Committee for 1893, SUA, MS173 2/2/4.

⁴⁹ Most notable in the non-Jewish campaign against White Slavery were the Travellers' Aid Society and the National Vigilance Association; records for both organisations are held at the Fawcett Library. Jews and non-Jews joined forces against White Slavery in the British National Committee, formed after the International Conference on the Suppression of the White Slave Trade, in June 1899.

⁵⁰ See especially Stead, W.T., *The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon*, London, 1885; a series of articles which first appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette* in the same year.

⁵¹ Kuzmack, *Woman's Cause*, pp.55-59.

⁵² Jewish Association, General Committee, 30 December 1889, SUA, MS173 2/1/2.

⁵³ Jewish Association, Honorary Secretary's Report to the Gentlemen's Committee for 1893, SUA, MS173 2/2/4.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Travellers' Aid Society, *Annual Reports*, 1896-1914, Fawcett Library, 4/TAS, Box 201.

⁵⁶ Jewish Association, Gentlemen's Committee, 30 March 1890, SUA, MS173 2/2/1.

⁵⁷ Jewish Association, Gentlemen's Committee, 31 May 1896, SUA, MS173 2/2/1.

⁵⁸ Jewish Association, Gentlemen's Committee, 8 November 1896, SUA, MS173 2/2/1.

⁵⁹ Marks

⁶⁰ Bristow, *Prostitution and Prejudice*, p.280.

⁶¹ Jewish Association, General Committee, 13 December 1897, SUA, MS173 2/1/3.

⁶² Jewish Association, General Committee, 9 July 1902, SUA, MS173 2/1/3.

⁶³ Jewish Association, Gentlemen's Committee, 7 June 1896 and 15 October 1899, SUA, MS173 2/2/1 and 2/2/5

⁶⁴ Jewish Association, Gentlemen's Committee, 2 July 1899, SUA, MS173 2/2/5.

⁶⁵ Jewish Association, Gentlemen's Committee, 10 December 1899, SUA, MS173 2/2/5.

⁶⁶ Jewish Association, General Committee, 25 April 1890, SUA, MS173 2/1/2.

⁶⁷ British National Committee, Executive Committee, October 1899, Fawcett Library, 4/BNC.

- ⁶⁸ Jewish Association, Gentlemen's Committee, 18 February and 18 March 1900, SUA, MS173 2/2/5.
- ⁶⁹ Jewish Association, Gentlemen's Committee, 15 November 1900, SUA, MS173 2/2/5.
- ⁷⁰ Jewish Association, Gentlemen's Committee, 21 June 1896, SUA, MS173 2/2/1.
- ⁷¹ Jewish Association, Gentlemen's Committee, 18 February 1901, SUA, MS173 2/2/1.
- ⁷² Travellers' Aid Society, *Annual Report*, 1891, p.17, Fawcett Library, 4/TAS, Box 201.
- ⁷³ Jewish Association, Council, 11 February 1902, SUA, MS173 2/3/1.
- ⁷⁴ Bristow, *Prostitution and Prejudice*, p.25.
- ⁷⁵ *Official Report of the Jewish International Conference on the Suppression of the Traffic in Girls and Women*, London, 1910, p.1.
- ⁷⁶ Jewish Association, Council, 28 February 1911, SUA, MS173 2/3/1.
- ⁷⁷ Jewish Association, Gentlemen's Committee, 31 May 1917, SUA, MS173 2/2/6.
- ⁷⁸ Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, Executive Committee, 12 February 1915, Fawcett Library, 4/AMS, Box 42.
- ⁷⁹ Jewish Association, Gentlemen's Committee, 29 April 1919, SUA, MS173 2/2/6.
- ⁸⁰ Jewish Association, Gentlemen's Committee, 7 July 1924, SUA, MS173 2/2/6.
- ⁸¹ Jewish Association, General Purposes Committee, 5 November 1930, SUA, MS173 2/4/3.
- ⁸² Jewish Association, Gentlemen's Committee, 16 January 1916, SUA, MS173 2/2/6.
- ⁸³ Jewish Association, Gentlemen's Committee, 24 June 1919, SUA, MS173 2/2/6.
- ⁸⁴ Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, Executive Committee, 10 September 1920, Fawcett Library, 4/AMS, Box 42.
- ⁸⁵ Jewish Association, Gentlemen's Committee, 8 March 1922, SUA, MS173 2/2/6.
- ⁸⁶ National Vigilance Association, Executive Committee Minutes 1886-1928, Fawcett Library, 4/NVA, Box 195.

- ⁸⁷ British National Committee, Report on the International Bureau Conference for the Suppression of the White Slave Trade, 1923, and Report on the Graz Congress for the Suppression of the White Slave Trade, 1924, Fawcett Library, 4/BNC.
- ⁸⁸ Jewish Association, Council, 2 December 1925, SUA, MS173 2/3/2.
- ⁸⁹ Union of Jewish Women, Conference on "Women's Part in Public Life", 19 February 1922, SUA, MS129 C/6/4.
- ⁹⁰ Jewish Association, General Purposes Committee, 2 July 1923, SUA, MS173 2/4/2.
- ⁹¹ Kaplan, *The Jewish Feminist Movement in Germany*, p.225.
- ⁹² Kuzmack, *Woman's Cause*, p.75; see also Rogow, Faith, *Gone to Another Meeting: The National Council of Jewish Women 1893-1993*, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 1993, p.168.
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- ⁹⁴ Jewish Association, Gentlemen's Committee, 14 October 1918, SUA, MS173 2/2/6.
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- ⁹⁶ Ibid.
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- ¹⁰² Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, Report on the Conference on the Street Order Bill, 13 March 1923, Fawcett Library, 4/AMS Box 43.
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- ¹⁰⁴ Stepney Juvenile Organisations Committee, Handbook for 1926, Tower Hamlets Library, 360.1.

¹⁰⁵ Jewish Association, General Purposes Committee, 9 June 1925, SUA, MS173 2/4/2.

¹⁰⁶ Jewish Board of Guardians, *Annual Report*, 1926, SUA, MS173 1/12/10.

¹⁰⁷ Jewish Association, Council, 25 May 1933, SUA, MS173 2/3/2.

¹⁰⁸ Jewish Association, Council, 14 June 1906, SUA, MS173 2/3/1.

¹⁰⁹ Bristow, *Prostitution and Prejudice*, p. 249; see also Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality since 1800*, and Walkowitz, Judith, "The politics of prostitution", *History Workshop*, 13 (1982), pp.79-93.

Chapter 3

Employment

I. Introduction.

The issue of women's employment was another aspect of charity work which encapsulates the fundamental matters that Jewish women encountered in the course of their philanthropic work. The purpose of this chapter, like all the others, is to relate the specific details of one area of charity work to the bigger picture of Jewish women's philanthropy as a whole. Women's employment is, however, a more complex issue than the others under investigation here, and therefore occupies a greater part of this study. This complexity derives from the dual aspect of women's employment during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. (Although this duality is essentially a class issue other factors affected women's employment and they too will be explored in this chapter.) The patterns of female employment that existed by the 1880s had been established by the middle of the nineteenth century.¹ Women in British society were divided into two camps; working class women who worked and middle class women who did not. Hence, it would appear that the term 'employment' could not be applied to middle class women such as the Jewish lady philanthropists under investigation here. The purpose of this chapter is to show that this division between work and leisure was not as clearly defined as the above statement suggests. Furthermore, over the sixty years covered by this study, women's employment changed dramatically, and these changes were, in part, brought about by women workers, both paid and voluntary. But

not only did the philanthropic work being examined here coincide with the development of women's employment in Britain, it also contributed to its transformation. Part of these Jewish ladies' legacy was their influence on working class Jewish girls through the offices of their different organisations. To demonstrate the involvement of middle class Jewish philanthropists in the developing field of women's employment, it is necessary to explore the whole area of employment, beyond the boundaries of voluntary work. Thus, this chapter is intended to incorporate a more general picture of women's employment from the 1880s to 1945, providing a background for the evolving field of middle class voluntary work embodied in an elite group of Jewish ladies.

II. Women's Employment at the End of the Nineteenth Century.

The employment and non-employment of women in British society was well-established by the end of the nineteenth century. The middle class woman was idealised as a lady of leisure, devoting all of her time and energies to her domestic duties. Within the domestic sphere motherhood was her primary role and she would generally employ servants to undertake the practical work of the household. The better-off among the working and lower middle classes aspired to the middle class ideal of the domesticated woman, particularly where the male breadwinner was able to support the entire household on his earnings. Working class women especially faced an arduous routine of housework that made work outside the home very difficult. Lack of running water made cooking and washing for a family a laborious task and similarly, cooking on a range or even on an open fire was both time-consuming and

hazardous.² The introduction of compulsory schooling and legislation that prevented children from working also encouraged women to stay at home to look after their offspring. For all these reasons it was difficult for the married woman to work outside the home, but the stay-at-home wife was an unaffordable luxury among poorer working class households. The vagaries of the male breadwinner's income particularly in seasonal trades meant that it was often impossible for many families to manage on one income.³ The majority of married women who undertook paid work did so within the confines of their own homes. Many used their domestic skills, doing laundry or mending, or taking in lodgers. Others did homework for sweatshops, taking on the more tedious tasks of tailoring, piecing and basting, hemming or making buttonholes. Other home-workers made miscellaneous items such as matchboxes or artificial flowers. These occupations enabled women to perform their domestic duties, as well as providing a pittance to supplement the family income.⁴

Some women did work outside the home, the vast majority being young single women. In 1901, 78% of working women were single, and this figure did not fall below 77% until after the Second World War.⁵ They were largely found in traditionally female-dominated trades such as textiles, dressmaking and tailoring and especially domestic service. James' figures show that in 1901, 42% of personal servants and 33% of indoor domestics were women. Women comprised 16% of the workforce making textile goods and clothing and 14% of textile workers. In no other industry did the percentage of women workers reach double figures.⁶ Most of these women worked for the few years between leaving school and getting married, and then they joined the ranks of invisible married women workers who toiled within the home. This was not

entirely through choice. Family responsibilities and the demands of a family made work outside the home problematic but industries also imposed marriage bars on women workers which persisted well into the twentieth century, forcing women to give up work on marriage. It meant that those women who did want to pursue a career (or those who were forced to by financial necessity) usually had to forgo marriage in order to do so.⁷

The assumption underlying the imposition of marriage bars was that all women were provided for by a male breadwinner, usually their husband. Public opinion, especially during the post-war depression of the 1920s, was firmly opposed to the double-income family, believing that a working wife was depriving an unemployed man of a job. This policy of preventing married women from working had an adverse effect on widows who did not fit neatly into the ideal of the domesticated married woman, but were forced by financial need to seek work where they could find it, be that within the household or outside it. In his study of the extent and causes of poverty in London in 1929, Llewellyn Smith found that one-quarter of the families studied were in poverty because of the lack of an adult male wage-earner, due to illness, incapacity or death.⁸

To answer the question as to the extent of differences between Jewish and non-Jewish experiences, it would seem that in the early years of the period under investigation, Jewish women did not differ greatly from non-Jewish women with regard to employment. Nevertheless, Jewish women tended to polarise at the extremes of women's employment, with middle class women confined to the domestic sphere, while working class Jewish women were concentrated in the most lowly-paid, least-skilled areas of women's employment in traditional industries like textiles and clothing. Thus, middle

class Anglo-Jewry had enthusiastically embraced the domestic ideal of leisured wife devoting herself to family and motherhood, because it corresponded well with the religious status of women within Judaism.⁹ Similarly, married working class Jewish women followed the example of non-Jewish women in working when they had to, mostly within the home, taking in lodgers. This was not unusual for some married Jewish women, given the eastern European tradition of married women supporting the family while their husbands were occupied with religious studies, as mentioned in Chapter 1.¹⁰ There is an alternative view that Jewish working class women did not work after marriage at all,¹¹ and certainly fewer married Jewish women worked outside the home; fewer than 3% of the Jewish families in Llewellyn Smith's study of London in 1929, included a wage-earning husband and wife, compared to 5% of non-Jewish families.¹² In reality, Jewish working class women worked just as non-Jewish women did, invisibly, within their own homes. So wage earning working women of all ethnic groups were almost invariably young, single girls working for a relatively brief period before marriage.

Jewish women were again not dissimilar from non-Jewish women in being employed in traditionally female trades, that is domestic service, tailoring and dressmaking, and textiles. But, among Jewish girls, domestic service was the least, rather than the most, significant of these areas of employment. The majority of recent immigrants to Britain were concentrated in the sweat shops of the East End, so the concentration in textiles, tailoring and dressmaking applied even more to Jewish working women. Married women emulated their non-Jewish counterparts in the work they undertook at home, taking in lodgers, and doing laundry and mending. Single and widowed

Jewish women who pursued careers were also unlikely to differ from their non-Jewish counterparts, although there were fewer of them, given the importance attached by the Jewish community to the states of matrimony and motherhood. Thus Jewish working and lower middle class women did not really differ from non-Jewish women in undertaking employment or in the occupations they chose. The only significant difference might be that fewer Jewish women worked at all; Llewellyn Smith found that there was a higher number of non-earning females aged between 18 and 65 in the Jewish community, compared to the population as a whole.¹³ The domesticated wife was a model that even the most impoverished Jewish family sought to imitate, and certainly the Jewish woman was idealised both within and beyond the Jewish community as the perfect mother, raising healthy children by staying at home with them during their formative years.¹⁴

Middle class Jewish women similarly imitated their non-Jewish counterparts. They conformed to the ideal of the domesticated wife, and devoted themselves to their families, enhancing their own and their husbands' social status in doing so. Many extended their domestic role to the care of the Jewish community, using their leisure time for philanthropic activity, as did many Christian women in Victorian society. For these women therefore, work meant voluntary effort, ranging from occasional fund-raising through to attending committees, or home and prison visiting. Indeed Jewish women often led the way in the field of communal philanthropy. The Jewish Ladies' Benevolent Loan Institution visited poor families in their homes, before giving them money loans or other forms of relief.¹⁵ It predated even the Jewish Board of Guardians, which was formed in 1859. The formation of Jewish communal institutions for the Jewish poor did not meet the needs of everyone, and home-

visiting by middle class ladies continued to help such families, on an informal basis.

Chapter 1 sets out many of the different motives behind middle class Jewish philanthropy, and it may be assumed that voluntary workers in the field of employment were equally affected by these various factors. As the numerous examples given throughout this study indicate, the middle class Jewish ladies included here did not devote themselves solely to one cause. Despite the demands of their work the vast majority pursued several interests simultaneously, a fact which demonstrates that the factors governing their interests were the same for the many different areas of their philanthropic work. But having a number of favoured causes did not stop certain individuals from making their mark on a particular aspect of charity work. One of the most influential and effective workers in the field of employment was Helen Lucas, who was one of the first women to enter the arena of Jewish philanthropy. Lady visitors had supported the work of the Jews' Free School and the Jewish Board of Guardians from the mid-nineteenth century, and formed associated ladies' committees. Helen Lucas was a member of both these committees, becoming president of the Jewish Board of Guardians Conjoint Visitation Committee in 1880. Mrs Lucas was one of the most outstanding lady workers of this period. "Foremost among the philanthropists and charitable workers of the community",¹⁶ she contributed financially to the Jewish Board of Guardians, and was president of their Workrooms department. She was honorary secretary of the Ladies' Benevolent Institution, treasurer of the Jewish Ladies' West End Charity, and a member of the Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls and Women. *The Jewish Chronicle* wrote of her, in 1902:

“The example of her life has communicated itself to hundreds of Jewish women who now are labouring in different fields of communal work.”¹⁷

One of Mrs Lucas' favoured causes was the Jewish Board of Guardians' Workrooms department, which provided training for young girls along the lines of the training provided for boys by the Apprenticeships Department of the Industrial Committee. Mrs Lucas recognised that training was not available to girls and was instrumental in amending this omission. The aim was to draw the girls away from overcrowded occupations like tailoring¹⁸ and to encourage them to better themselves by entering slightly superior areas of the textile trade like fancy work and gold embroidery. A sharp distinction was drawn by the Industrial Committee between respectable work in well-managed workshops producing higher quality work, and the definitely unrespectable and exploitative sweat-shops. Here is a clear example of middle class philanthropists recognising a problem, that is overcrowding and unemployment in traditional areas of work, and attempting to find a solution without addressing the fundamental cause of the problem. Overcrowding and unemployment had arisen because girls were not trained to work in other areas and because other work was not available to them. Mrs Lucas and her ilk did not consider it their task to address either issue. They merely diverted girls into alternative occupations within traditional trades, where some jobs for women did exist. A similar situation occurred with another of Mrs Lucas' causes; the Adult Workroom, which was administered by the Ladies' Conjoint Visiting Committee. 120 women, mostly widows and the wives of sick men, were provided with materials to make up articles of clothing in their own homes, which the workroom then bought from them.¹⁹ Again Mrs Lucas and her fellows recognised the need for help among less fortunate Jewish women. But

this need was addressed within the confines of established institutions, working alongside the Jewish Board of Guardians and along highly conventional lines. In providing what was in effect homework for needy married women and widows to undertake in their own homes, the ladies' committee did not disrupt the domestic routines of these women, particularly the care of their children. In the same way, the girls who were given training, were diverted from overcrowded trades such as tailoring, but the *status quo* was not challenged either. Instead the girls were directed towards a sideline of the dressmaking and tailoring trades, one that was less crowded, but equally arduous and underpaid. At the same time, it was recognised that these girls were not seeking lifelong careers so that vocational training was unnecessary.

This lack of recognition for the value of women's work was reflected in the attitudes of the Jewish community towards the voluntary work of middle class women. As Helen Lucas illustrated, middle class Jewish women were active in Jewish charities from the middle of the nineteenth century. But, their work was subsidiary to that of the men of the community who had founded and now administered communal institutions such as the Jews' Free School. Ladies had begun to play a more active part in communal philanthropy through home-visiting, but their role remained that of occasional visitor, fund raiser and benefactor. Crucial decisions were made by the men of the community. Charity was also administered in such a way that the needs of the women of the community were not adequately addressed. As discussed earlier, married women, Jewish and non-Jewish, were frequently forced to seek work to supplement the earnings of their husbands or to support their families entirely, if their husbands fell ill or died. This fact of life was rarely recognised by existing charitable institutions, again Jewish or non-Jewish. Helen Lucas'

recognition of the need for married women to undertake paid employment was a small but significant step in the right direction for these women. But, the confines of convention prevented her and others like her from breaking new ground in providing employment for women outside the traditionally female trades or even outside the home. Even among the young girls trained by the Workroom department, it was understood that marriage was their final goal, there was no intention that they should seek to have a career (as opposed to a job).

III. Jewish Women's Organisations and the Development of Women's Employment before the First World War.

The employment situation for women in the latter years of the nineteenth century was highly restricted, particularly for Jewish women. The early years of the twentieth century saw gradual changes that seeped slowly into the Jewish experience from the rest of society. The first step towards change in the employment of Jewish women had been taken by Helen Lucas and the other women who were becoming more interested in communal philanthropy. The next step was to extend their role beyond mere interest into the active and proactive administration of charity, not just to the family as a whole, but to its individual components, particularly women. This came about through the formation of women's societies - founded and run by women for women. The establishment and early work of the Jewish Association has been covered in Chapter 1. But, in the context of employment, the formation of a women's organisation represented a major development in Jewish women's charity

work, which was in turn to have a significant effect on the employment of all Jewish women and on their status within the Anglo-Jewish community.

There was no question, however, of female solidarity overriding other concerns.²⁰ Social divisions ensured that the other motives governing Anglo-Jewish philanthropy were not forgotten by the middle class ladies, despite their genuine concern for the plight of needy Jewish women.²¹ The focus of the Jewish Association on providing employment for the girls who entered its care clearly demonstrates the class divisions between the two groups of women and the powerful effects of public opinion regarding the employment of women. It is questionable as to whether the privileged middle class ladies of the Jewish Association genuinely understood the problems of women's unemployment in the 1880s and 1890s. They certainly recognised that the girls in their care would need to work in order to support themselves, and in 1899, the Objects of the Jewish Association were formalised, to incorporate this:

- A. To protect girls and women
- B. To provide them with temporary and permanent lodging and work
- C. To visit the girls and befriend them in their situations
- D. To train them for domestic service
- E. To rescue them from vice
- F. To reform and lead them to lead respectable lives
- G. To co-operate with societies and institutions having similar objects."²²

But, like practically everyone else involved in women's employment, they failed to see that these girls might need more than just a temporary job before they married. The Jewish Association also ignored the problems faced by married women whose husbands could not support them for whatever reason. The needs of married women did fall outside the limits of the Association's interests, but in preparing their girls for nothing more than a temporary stop-

gap, they merely perpetuated the problem of poverty for married women and widows. It is however a little unfair to criticise the Jewish Association for failing to address the root causes of women's poverty and unemployment, when so many other agencies, from the government downwards, also failed in this respect. The Jewish Association was actually following the pattern set by society as a whole in its policy towards the future employment of girls in its care, and the unequivocal terms of note D, the fourth Object of the Association, show that domestic service was considered the most appropriate occupation for these girls. As Susan Tananbaum states: "The Jewish Board of Guardians and the Jewish Association ... believed that service kept idle girls from evil."²³

The advantages of sending girls into domestic service were manifold.²⁴ Employment being necessary for the gainful occupation of these girls, the long hours and hard physical labour required of domestic servants left little time and energy for delinquency. Cocooned in the domestic environment, the foreignness of recent immigrants was rendered invisible to the rest of society and where better for the immigrant to learn the language and ways of her host society, than in constant contact with a respectable middle class English or Anglo-Jewish family? In addition, employing domestic servants was an easily acquired status symbol to which many middle class families aspired. But the rigours of the work itself, and the low pay and long hours asked of the servant, meant that demand far exceeded the supply of girls willing to take on such unattractive work. There were many jobs available, so Jewish girls could not be accused of stealing work from the English. Better still, from this point of view, middle class Jewish households often preferred to employ Jewish servants. Fear of anti-Semitism was undoubtedly an important factor. But on a

more positive note, Jewish families also tended to prefer Jewish servants because they would have been well-versed in the requirements of religious observance within the household, such as preparing *kosher* food and keeping the Sabbath. This was in turn advantageous for the preservation of the girls' faith. Many of the girls lacked family ties and derived a limited degree of financial independence from their employment, but the effects of such freedom were minimised by the strict supervision of the Jewish Association and their employers.

In the early years of the Jewish Association, domestic training in accordance with the Objects of the Association was provided for all the girls who entered the rescue home, Charcroft House, or the lodging houses. This training generally involved the running of the house:

“one girl to undertake cooking and all kitchen duties for one month to prepare her for service, and one to undertake all housecleaning duties for a week for the same reason; two to do the washing for a week and two to do ironing and folding.”²⁵

More formal training, along similar lines, was introduced with the establishment of the Domestic Training Home in 1896.²⁶ Few other occupations were considered suitable for inmates of Charcroft House and the other lodging houses. Attempts were made to find nursing training for another girl, but the Jewish Association was advised that this was not a fit occupation for a girl from a rescue home.²⁷ Candidates for nursing training tended to be from the lower middle or respectable working classes. The stigma of a rescue home was enough to render a girl unrespectable, although this particular girl was neither an unmarried mother nor a reformed prostitute. For girls who had been prostitutes or who had children opportunities were even more limited.

Two unmarried mothers were advised to seek work as wet-nurses²⁸ and there are records of light occupations being sought for those in poor health. There were also girls who found slightly superior positions as ladies' maids or companion-attendants, rather than the usual housemaid or maid-of-all-work.²⁹ But conventional positions in domestic service were found for the majority. Domestic service clearly appealed to the Jewish Association as a solution for any employment problems, and in pursuing this policy the Association imitated non-Jewish organisations who were equally attracted to the disposal of young women into domestic service.

The fact that there was a shortage of domestic labour indicates that there was a massive demand for servants and that it was an unpopular occupation among young women. Despite this, more women were employed in domestic service than in any other industry, largely for lack of opportunity elsewhere. The work of the Jewish Association's Industrial School illustrates particularly well the consistency with which both the Jewish and non-Jewish communities promoted domestic service for working class girls. In 1900 the Jewish Association agreed to take on the cases of all Jewish girls leaving St Edward's Industrial School, which would involve finding them situations and visiting them there.³⁰ As an increasing number of such girls were attending St Edward's it was eventually decided to establish a Jewish Industrial School for girls, following the example of the Hayes School for Jewish boys. Industrial schools came under Home Office jurisdiction and were closely supervised. Annual inspections were made and great pains taken to ensure that all schools adhered to Home Office guidelines, so that Montefiore House would have differed very little from other Christian and non-sectarian schools in its curriculum or methods of teaching. The emphasis of all such institutions was

on training and improvement which, for girls, meant preparation for domestic service. According to a Home Office report, dated 1912, the industrial training provided at Montefiore House consisted of needlework, machining and dressmaking; cookery and laundry, including theory; and fancy work in the girls' spare time.³¹ The Jewish Association, in its work at Montefiore House, was no different from non-Jewish organisations (and the British state itself, through the Home Office), in considering domestic service appropriate for working class girls, particularly those without families or with a history of juvenile delinquency.

But not all of the girls in the Jewish Association's care were juvenile delinquents. Many were dependent on the association merely because they lacked family support in a foreign country. When the lodging house, later Sara Pyke House, was established in 1896 many of the "better class of girls" taken in had already found themselves employment. The majority of domestic posts required the employee to live-in so only those working in other areas needed the Jewish Association's lodgings. Most of Sara Pyke House's early inmates worked, not surprisingly, in the sweated trades of tailoring, dressmaking and millinery. One girl worked as a cigarette maker as she was considered "too delicate" for service.³² The most outstanding case of this early period was that of Sara K., who came to Sara Pyke House at the age of fourteen in September 1904. She had won a scholarship to enable her to train as a pupil-teacher, and she remained at Sara Pyke House until the end of 1907 when she went on to a residential college for further training as a teacher.³³ Sara was exceptionally clever in comparison with the other residents of Sara Pyke House and her talents were recognised by the Jewish Association. The other girls were less academically gifted but they collectively demonstrated that they were very

similar to their non-Jewish counterparts in seeking, and even enjoying, paid employment, but again within traditionally female trades.

Susan Tananbaum, studying the Jewish Board of Guardians' apprenticeship programme, noted that Jewish girls were often reluctant "to go to new occupations, especially in the West End, or to any employment which they or their friends have not tried."³⁴ Despite this, by 1903, the Girls' Apprenticing subcommittee of the Jewish Board of Guardians had begun to search for new trades in which to apprentice girls. New areas of opportunity for apprentices included flower-making, wig-making and hairdressing; button-making was added to the list four years later.³⁵ Again though, none of these trades represent a significant change from traditionally female trades. Jewish girls were restricted to certain trades and industries just like non-Jewish girls, although their attachment to the East End probably deprived them of some of the opportunities available to more adventurous female workers. Generally however, employment opportunities for working women remained restricted and this affected both Jewish and non-Jewish women alike. Technological advances and the development of new jobs, in light industry and manufacturing especially, did not affect even young, single women workers to any major extent. The few jobs that did become available for women were unskilled and low-paid and confined to areas that did not impinge on the male workforce. There were even fewer opportunities for married women workers and this situation remained unchanged until the First World War.³⁶

IV. Voluntary Work before the First World War.

The paid employment of working class women remained extremely limited up to the outbreak of the First World War. But for middle class women the field of philanthropy provided increasingly exciting opportunities for voluntary workers. By founding their own philanthropic organisations middle class ladies began to create their own employment opportunities. The establishment of another Jewish women's organisation in 1902 had an even greater effect on middle class Jewish women workers. A prominent Jewish worker, Mrs Meyer Spielmann,³⁷ suggested that a conference of Jewish women be convened to bring together women from all over the country, to exchange their experiences of communal work. In a series of articles on "Jewish women's work in philanthropy and education" suggested by the forthcoming conference the *Jewish Chronicle* wrote:

"From small beginnings woman's work in our community has advanced by leaps and bounds, and the important Conference of Jewish Women which takes place May 13th and 14th next may be said to mark a definite goal reached, and, whilst standing as a landmark of progress achieved, will further serve as a stepping stone to still greater advancement."³⁸

Thus, the Union of Jewish Women was formed,

"to promote the social, moral and spiritual welfare of Jewish women and to induce practical co-operation between Jewish women workers throughout the country".³⁹

This statement suggests that the Union of Jewish Women was able to accommodate all Jewish women workers but, in reality, the organisation comprised the middle and upper class Anglo-Jewish ladies who were already active in communal philanthropy. The *Jewish Chronicle's* series of articles on

“Jewish women’s work in philanthropy and education” clearly indicate this.⁴⁰ The 22 women written about in the series are all upper-middle or even upper class Jewish ladies brought up in the heart of the Anglo-Jewish community. The articles themselves are almost hagiographic in their praise of the work these ladies undertook, and while their efforts should not be belittled, they do not reflect the realities of the gentlest regime of middle class philanthropic work, let alone the grimmer facts of rescue work or prison visiting. It is possible that in taking this line when writing about these women the *Jewish Chronicle* was trying to avoid any suggestion that the work being undertaken was in any way unsuitable for such respectable Jewish women. Given that philanthropy was viewed as an extension of their domestic and religious duties it seems unlikely that the men of the Anglo-Jewish community would have been as approving as they obviously were had they known what the women's philanthropic duties actually entailed.

Home and prison visiting, working in girls’ clubs or running employment bureaux all brought the ladies into direct contact with the poorest members of the community in the most deprived areas of the East End. Having seen at first hand the sufferings of the Jewish poor the women of the Union of Jewish Women and other bodies realised the need for improved organisation. The Union of Jewish Women was intended to professionalise the voluntary work of Jewish ladies; by attracting more volunteers and providing training for them. For the wealthy middle and upper classes there was no question of actually taking up such work professionally (for payment), but there was a great emphasis on establishing method in charitable work. Equally important was the need to attract new workers into the field, as Julia Cohen

demonstrated, in her statement to the Union of Jewish Women at their Annual General Meeting in 1909:

“due to our having led more sheltered lives than many of our Christian sisters ... so we have not allowed our young daughters to have the same advantages in technical and philanthropic training that others have enjoyed; naturally therefore there are fewer of our Jewish girls ready to take their places in the professional and communal world. I hope, however, that year by year we may find more and more educated Jewesses entering the field of employment and philanthropy and so do away with what is almost a stigma on our Race.”⁴¹

Here the Union of Jewish Women was talking about paid employment as well as voluntary philanthropic work, and there was a growing understanding among the ladies, of the need for some middle class women to seek paid employment; hence, the Union of Jewish Women’s decision to devote its energies to the care of “necessitous gentlewomen”, as opposed to other communal organisations that dealt almost exclusively with the working class poor. The Union of Jewish Women is thus the main focus of this chapter on Employment. The Union’s work in this field not only brought many working class women into paid employment, giving them a degree of economic independence, but it also brought about a major change in the attitudes of middle class Jews towards the employment of middle class women. Through the Union of Jewish Women’s efforts, middle class women began to enter the field of paid employment, albeit on a small scale. More widespread, was the gradual acceptance of voluntary work as a serious contribution to philanthropic endeavour, beyond the palliative effects of home-visiting and the occasional occupation of the would-be Lady Bountiful.

V. New Employment Opportunities for Women prior to 1914.

As the Union of Jewish Women had begun to recognise women workers included in their ranks several distinct groups: the single working class woman who worked outside the home; the married working class woman who worked for money within her own home; and the middle class worker who devoted her energies to unpaid voluntary work. Among these groups existed a fourth, far more difficult to define, group of middle class women who were forced to seek paid employment beneath their station, and these were the necessitous gentlewomen. (There was also an emerging fifth group of upwardly mobile, working and lower middle class women seeking training and vocational careers, who will be discussed later). The majority of these gentlewomen (the fourth group described) were educated to the standards customary for girls of the period and had been brought up expecting to marry and live as leisured middle class wives. When forced to seek employment they were thus only equipped to work as governesses:

“The real definition of a governess, in the English sense, is a being who is our equal in birth, manners and education, but our inferior in worldly wealth”,⁴²

and as Wanda Neff commented, in 1929:

“from all the evidence at hand it is clear that girls were governesses when financial necessity drove them to self-support”.⁴³

British society had been aware of the sufferings of the governess throughout the nineteenth century and organisations such as the Governesses' Benevolent Association (established in 1841) had been founded to help them. The foundation of Queen's College in 1847 was intended to provide a better education for future governesses, and Neff suggested that the work of figures

such as Miss Buss and Miss Beale in founding other schools for girls was also intended to relieve the sufferings of middle class girls who had to support themselves, by preparing them for other, more lucrative careers.⁴⁴

It was these women whom the Union of Jewish Women took under its wing. The majority of Jewish governesses were foreign women who were flocking to Britain during the first years of the twentieth century because of unemployment on the Continent. By 1905, the situation had become so acute that the Union of Jewish Women considered establishing a lodging house to ease the problem, but decided against doing so for fear of attracting yet more of them into the country. There was also a high level of unemployment among British governesses, as the Union of Jewish Women's figures for 1911 illustrate: in February, 96 governesses sought help from the Union and posts were found for only 7; and by October, of 62 new cases, only 14 were found work. Those seeking work as companion-attendants were also discouraged because of high levels of unemployment.⁴⁵

While discouraging women from entering overcrowded and unrewarding careers the Union of Jewish Women deliberately tried to promote other occupations that were considered by British society to be suitable for young women, as increasing numbers of women began to seek paid employment. Emigration in the late nineteenth century and wartime losses had reduced the proportion of young men in the population so nearly one-fifth of adult women did not marry during the years from 1921 to 1939.⁴⁶ If they could not marry and were unable or unwilling to depend on other male family members, for such women, a career, or long-term job was an economic necessity.⁴⁷ Of the various opportunities available for women in this position nursing was considered most suitable by Jewish and non-Jewish society alike.

The interest taken by the Union of Jewish Women in nursing as a career for women reflects a similar development in British society as a whole. Nursing was a solely female occupation comparable to domestic service in the nature of the work involved. The groundbreaking work of Florence Nightingale and her supporters in the mid-nineteenth century had established nursing as an increasingly respectable profession for middle class women, and respectable working class girls had begun to enter the profession by 1914 as well.⁴⁸ The women of the Jewish community were quick to take advantage of this. Nursing as a career for Jewish women was promoted by Alice Model, when she founded the Sick Room Helps Society in 1895.

Another outstanding philanthropist, Mrs Model was “for nearly 35 years identified with infant welfare and maternity work, and with all activities dealing with the well-being of girls and women”.⁴⁹ Her pioneering work began with the employment of “poor but capable women” to look after Jewish households after the mother had given birth. Providing work for needy women, often widows or older married women, was as important a social service as the care provided for the mothers themselves. Alice Model’s work was widely imitated throughout the country and paved the way for the district nurses and health visitors of today. The work of the Sick Room Helps Society will be explored more fully in the next chapter, but relevant here is the desperate need for trained nurses, especially midwives, which the Society’s work revealed. Initially grants were found by the Sick Room Helps Society to train 3 Jewish nurses. In 1906 a nurses’ home was established where 4 trainees could live whilst training at the London Hospital, and with the establishment of the Jewish Maternity Home in 1912, it became possible for Jewish nurses to be trained in a Jewish hospital.⁵⁰ Helen Lucas had also recognised a need for

Jewish district nurses and funded a small nursing staff to work in conjunction with the Jewish Board of Guardians, later providing a nurses' home for them as well.⁵¹

The dearth of Jewish nurses was a matter of concern for the ladies of the Jewish community throughout the pre-war period. Julia Cohen frequently spoke to the Union of Jewish Women about the problem. In December 1910, she told the Union of Jewish Women General Committee about the appointments of two Jewish nurses, as matron at a new convalescent home in Walton-on-the-Naze, and as head of the Sick Room Helps Society and Nurses' Home, using these examples to illustrate the need for Jewish nurses within the community.⁵² The majority of training cases funded by the Union of Jewish Women were for nursing training because of the acute need for Jewish nurses; although a Miss Joseph found herself unable to train at King's College Hospital in 1903, as all nurses were required to attend chapel.⁵³

As early as 1885, the Jewish Association had encountered problems in finding a Jewish lady to act as matron of the rescue home, later Charcroft House. The ladies of the Association were adamant that any suitable candidate must be "respectable" but she also had to be a working woman prepared to accept a salary of £15 to £20 *per annum* and be suitably qualified for such a responsible position. One solution to this problem was to find a respectable woman and train her for the post, which is what the Jewish Association did in 1887, when they engaged the services of Miss Levi. She was to be trained in rescue work and spend time at the Lock Hospital "to gain surgical knowledge", and to work at other refuges, and the Magdalen Penitentiary, before assuming her post as matron, on a salary of £50 per annum.⁵⁴ This increase in salary suggests that it was necessary to attract the right calibre of

applicant for the post, a point supported by the fact that Miss Levi was given the title "Lady Superintendent". She was obviously a middle class lady rather than a working class woman despite her need to support herself financially. The Jewish Association later benefited from the work of the Union of Jewish Women, finding several suitable workers through their offices, such as Miss Solomons, who was subsequently appointed as Lady Superintendent of Sara Pyke House in 1904.⁵⁵

Using the employment bureau of the Union of Jewish Women was another means by which other organisations could find suitably respectable staff. But the Union of Jewish Women did not just restrict their funding to nursing and related areas. Teaching was also considered to be a suitable occupation for middle class women by British society. Like nursing, teaching offered good rates of pay (although below the rates paid to male teachers) and was becoming an increasingly respected profession for single, middle class women. Upwardly-mobile working class girls could also better themselves through training as teachers, although some were caught out by the introduction of more rigorous training for teachers. The help of the Union of Jewish Women was sought by five uncertified teachers who had to retrain to avoid losing their positions at the Jews' Free School, in 1909.⁵⁶ Money was also made available for training in dressmaking and tailoring, secretarial and office work, and music, although the music subcommittee was advised to "dissuade all but the most talented".⁵⁷ In 1902 the Executive Committee heard that 6 girls were being funded for nursing training, 3 in dressmaking and 2 in music.⁵⁸ In October 1911, the General Committee placed 14 fully qualified nurses in jobs and received applications from 38 would-be nurses. At the same time 2 girls were being trained in office work, 10 secretaries had been placed

in posts, out of 40 cases outstanding, and tuition was being provided for 14 music students.⁵⁹ For less educated working class girls the Jewish Board of Guardians and the Jewish Association had both expanded their apprenticeship schemes by the 1900s. In 1909, the Jewish Board of Guardians placed 2 girls for training as civil service clerks and 2 others as telegraph operators, as well as finding jobs for others in the ever-popular trades of tailoring and dressmaking.⁶⁰

It was apparent that Jewish working girls were still concentrated in the traditionally female industries of textiles, tailoring and dressmaking, but that Jewish girls were gradually seeping into new areas of employment such as teaching, nursing and office work. This process was being encouraged by communal organisations such as the Jewish Board of Guardians and by the women of the Union of Jewish Women and the Jewish Association, but it was really only the better-educated and “better-class” Jewish girls who benefited from the new opportunities available for women in employment. However, in this the Jewish community was no different from the rest of society which was equally class-conscious, and working class girls, both Jewish and non-Jewish, continued to work in the few areas that positively welcomed them. A small number of working class girls did enter new jobs as the expansion of the Jewish Board of Guardians’ apprenticeship scheme shows, but they were the fortunate few, and only a similarly small proportion of non-Jewish working girls enjoyed the same opportunities.

VI. Women's Employment during the First World War.

The employment of Jewish women appeared to keep pace with the employment of women in general, in that they too benefited on a small scale from new opportunities. But the importance attached by the Anglo-Jewish community to marriage and the pursuit of the domestic ideal did not diminish and proportionally fewer Jewish women continued to work at all.⁶¹ These circumstances were not to change until the outbreak of the First World War which had a drastic effect on the employment of all women, from all social classes and all sectors of society.

The initial effect of the outbreak of war was an increase in unemployment with luxury trades being hardest hit. Charities such as Queen Mary's Work Fund provided needlework for unemployed women and Jewish charities did the same. The Union of Jewish Women collaborated with the Jewish Board of Guardians to establish a workroom for Jewish women for a few months. However, by 1915, the Union of Jewish Women General Committee noted that training applications had fallen considerably because "unemployment among trainable women is practically non-existent".⁶² According to Braybon, within a few months of the outbreak of war extra jobs were available in traditional women's jobs such as tailoring, and making hosiery and boots, as industries expanded to provide for the Forces. Non-industrial jobs began opening up for women in offices, shops and the transport industry for example, and by the end of 1915, women had begun to be "substituted" for male workers in unskilled, repetitive work in munitions and light engineering work.⁶³ Braybon estimates that the number of working women had risen from 3,276,000 in July 1914 to 4,507,000 by April 1917.⁶⁴

(These figures do not include domestic servants, the self-employed, or those working for very small tailoring and dressmaking workshops).

Jewish women certainly benefited from these developments and the Union of Jewish Women enthusiastically recorded new openings in women's employment. In March 1916, the Executive Committee noted new opportunities for women in advertising, archives, dental mechanics, and optical work, as well as engineering and munitions.⁶⁵ Jewish working class women concentrated in the tailoring and dressmaking trades also benefited from the improved fortunes of the industries. The Jewish Association's domestic service trainees equally had no difficulty finding work as other young women left domestic service for more lucrative factory work. So for the young and single woman worker new opportunities and the success of traditional industries presented healthy employment prospects. Married women also benefited as marriage bars were lifted, albeit temporarily, to encourage all potential workers to meet the increased need for women's labour as the war progressed. However the unfortunate governess did not enjoy a similar plenitude of jobs, probably due to the increasing numbers of schools for girls, and in 1916, the Union of Jewish Women formed a subcommittee to consider the provision of employment and maintenance for governesses, particularly elderly ladies who were unable to fend for themselves.⁶⁶

VII. Unemployment in the Aftermath of the First World War.

Yet as early as 1915, the Union of Jewish Women began to anticipate problems of unemployment for women after the war and from 1918 increased its involvement with other organisations concerned with unemployment. The

fragility of the changes in women's employment is emphasised by the almost complete reversal of the situation after the war ended. It was widely felt by the government and trade unions, and within the industries themselves, that women wartime workers should retire gracefully from what were widely considered to be men's jobs. Even women's organisations shared this view. At the Union of Jewish Women Annual General Meeting in 1921 a representative of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship (NUSEC) spoke of women's suffering after the reinstatement of men to their former jobs. She proposed that an extra year of schooling would ease the unemployment problem and emphasised the need for suitable training, even for highly educated women. In reply Mrs Eicholz of the Union of Jewish Women agreed, stressing that

“it is our duty to see that girls equip themselves for professions in which they do not come into open competition with men.”⁶⁷

It is not entirely clear whether the Union of Jewish Women's adoption of this stance was merely a tactical method of protecting women's interests by avoiding direct competition with men in the workplace or whether the Union of Jewish Women genuinely believed that women should not compete with men for jobs. Given that the popular opinion expressed vociferously by the media appeared to be the latter, it is quite possible that the Union of Jewish Women, along with other women's organisations, did actually think it wrong for women to do men's jobs. The Union of Jewish Women did also discuss whether it was appropriate for women of independent means to draw a salary which suggests that they continued to think that voluntary work was most suitable for middle class women. This does not clarify their opinions on working class women, but it seems likely that the Union of Jewish Women

was no different from the rest of society in considering it correct for women to return to their domestic duties, leaving all but the most menial occupations to men returning from the Forces. Some jobs for women remained open in the engineering and manufacturing industries, but they were unskilled and low paid. On the whole women found themselves being pushed back into traditional women's jobs, in the textile and tailoring trades, and in domestic service.⁶⁸

Government training schemes demonstrated this bias towards women's work. The Central Committee on Women's Training and Employment (CCWE), formerly the Queen's Work Fund, ran three schemes: the first gave grants for non-industrial training in careers such as teaching, midwifery, nursery nursing and cooking; the second provided training for domestic service; and the third gave general domestic training. According to Beddoe, in 1920 the CCWE was given money to train women in journalism, horticulture and hairdressing, as well as domestic service. But by the following year their grants were exclusively used for domestic training.⁶⁹ Jewish women's organisations followed suit, using needlework to relieve the distress caused by unemployment as they had done so throughout the previous century. The Jewish Association joined forces with the Jewish Board of Guardians to set up temporary workrooms similar to those run by Helen Lucas in the 1880s.⁷⁰ The Union of Jewish Women had earlier collaborated with the Jewish Board of Guardians to introduce workrooms for the relief of Belgian refugees to Britain. But needlework was not just used *in extremis*, a London County Council report on Montefiore House, dated 1922, recorded that most girls went onto jobs in blouse-making and lingerie workshops.⁷¹

But although needlework was a widely-used domestic skill, it was domestic service that apparently became even more attractive to both Jewish and non-Jewish organisations alike as a suitable occupation for the many women workers unemployed during the post-war years. Working class girls generally received an education weighted heavily towards domestic skills, preparing them for their future role “in their own home as wives and mothers or in somebody else’s as servants”.⁷² The education received by Jewish girls at schools such as Montefiore House was no different. Figures for 1923 show that of the 13 girls who left the school that year 6 went into domestic service; while the others went into women's jobs; one to washing-up in a Lyons teahouse; 2 into millinery; and 3 into dressmaking; the other girl emigrated to live with family in Canada.⁷³ But in 1922 the Jewish Association had heard that “very few [went on] to domestic service” and figures for 1924 and 1925 show that 4 out of 14 and 2 out of 7 girls respectively went on to domestic service.⁷⁴ Given that increasing numbers of working class girls were entering domestic service these figures were proportionally lower than for the population as a whole.

Domestic service was not as popular with Jewish working girls as with those who sought to help them, and in 1924, the Jewish Association Visiting Committee commented that of the 199 cases currently being visited, some were going into service, but “most are unsuitable and disinclined”.⁷⁵ Domestic service also appealed to Jewish women’s organisations concerned about the preservation of the Jewish faith among working girls:

“normal Jewish home life is so resplendent with the observance connected with fast, feast and festival, that the woman worker who is suddenly cut off from all these ceremonies finds herself in a most unenviable position.”⁷⁶

Placing a girl as a domestic servant in an Anglo-Jewish household was obviously an ideal way to encourage the preservation of her faith. Providing suitable residential accommodation was an alternative means of safeguarding the faith of women who worked in shops and factories and so the Union of Jewish Women established a housing scheme in 1927. This was also intended to relieve some of the elderly educated women whose privations continued to concern the Union of Jewish Women, as older single women were disproportionately hit by unemployment during the 1920s and 30s.⁷⁷

Domestic service appealed to middle class agencies as the perfect solution to the post-war employment problem. Pam Taylor attributes this in part to the unevenness of the economic recovery in the Twenties. Rising prosperity in some areas of the country was paralleled by deepening depression and long-term unemployment elsewhere. Domestic service enabled women, particularly young girls, to leave impoverished areas and relieve the burden on their families.⁷⁸ There was also a growing demand for domestic servants as the lower middle class began to aspire to the social status of the upper middle class lifestyle. Despite technological advances few households possessed any of the newly-available labour-saving devices and women continued to cook on old-fashioned ranges and boil water for the family laundry in the traditional copper (many working class women still did not have the luxury of running water for cooking or washing).

Even the poorest middle class family was keen to employ someone to help with these onerous tasks. "But it was abundantly clear that most working class women had no intention of submitting to the 'slavery' of service."⁷⁹ The government, paying unemployment benefit to many of these women for the

first time, was obviously reluctant to continue to do so when there was work available and attempted to push women into service, by withdrawing payment from those who refused posts as domestic servants. Given the low wages and poor conditions of most domestic service jobs it is not surprising that working class women were reluctant to take them, particularly after having enjoyed the relative freedom of factory and shop work during the war. It was almost impossible for women to manage financially on the wages offered for domestic service work. Deidre Beddoe cites the case of a girl refused unemployment benefit after turning down a job that paid only 8s for a 70 hour week.⁸⁰ Government measures limited eligibility for benefit payments to fewer and fewer women, having the desired effect of pushing them back into low-paid women's work or, as in the case of married women, back into the home. By 1931, over a third of women in paid employment were domestic servants, a total of 2.1 million workers.⁸¹

Young women from depressed areas were encouraged to travel away from home to seek training and work, by advertising and by agencies such as the CCWE. However, the National Vigilance Association found that many girls needed to be rescued from potentially or even actually dangerous situations as young innocents were exploited by the unscrupulous. Girls who escaped moral harm found themselves working extremely hard for long hours and little pay and many turned to outside agencies to help them extricate themselves from their posts. Jewish organisations became concerned about the situation after unfounded newspaper reports claimed that Jewish families were exploiting Christian girls.⁸² The Jewish Association was prompted to take an interest in the employment of girls from the provinces when it became apparent that agencies existed to deal with Christians, but not Jewish girls. The

Jewish Association was asked by the Central Council for the Social Welfare of Girls in London (CCSWG) to assist in finding lodgings for some of these girls and to act as an employment agency, which included vetting prospective employers. But despite assuming a greater role in both seeking jobs and preparing Jewish girls for paid employment, the Jewish Association continued to concentrate solely on domestic service posts. During the economic depression of the 1920s, it was one of the very few options available for working class girls.

VIII. The Development of Employment Opportunities for Women during the 1920s and 1930s.

The gains of the First World War had proved only temporary for many women, but employment prospects for a significant minority improved during the 1920s and 1930s, and the inter-war period was not one of unremitting gloom for women workers. Some women managed to avoid being pushed into domestic service and retained their jobs or found new ones, generally in the traditional women's industries, especially textiles. But the textile industry was one of the hardest hit by the depressions of the post-war years and it was married women workers who bore the brunt of cutbacks within the industry. Even where women managed to retain their jobs after marriage it became virtually impossible for them to return to work after having children. Other industries restricted the employment of married women altogether and few married women were employed in the expanding manufacturing and light engineering industries. The work that was available for women was repetitive, unskilled and low-paid. Factories preferred to employ cheap young labour,

even in some cases replacing girls when they reached 18.⁸³ Other expanding areas of employment for young women were shop and office work, both of which were considered to be of a higher status than factory work or domestic service. Records from Sara Pyke House and Montefiore House for the early 1930s show that their girls were still mostly employed in dressmaking, millinery and tailoring, with office and shop work becoming more common. In 1931, the Jewish Association decided to alter the name of Sara Pyke House from “Hostel for respectable girls” to “Hostel for working girls”, which was surely an indicator of the increasing respectability of women’s employment.⁸⁴ The Montefiore House committee even sought training places for two of its girls, one in nursing and the other in nursery nursing and in 1937 introduced a course in Vocational Guidance for its school-leavers. Women’s training and employment had clearly come a long way from the days when girls from a rescue home were not considered fit candidates for nursing training.

As the Jewish Association’s evidence shows, office work was obviously becoming increasingly available for young lower middle and working class women, although married women were largely prevented from entering this new field of employment. Again low pay, sexual segregation and low-skilled work emphasised the female worker’s lowly status. Pre-war marriage bars were resurrected and married women were forced back into domesticity and home-based working as the ideology of women as dependants persisted. But, as mentioned above, 20% of adult women did not marry between 1921 and 1939, because of the demographic imbalance caused by male emigration in the late nineteenth century and the casualties of war.⁸⁵ So paid employment was vital for the survival of many women who were unable to depend on male family members to support them. Work for working and lower middle class

women remained poorly-paid and lacked opportunities for career development, so it was

“small wonder that middle class women set their sights on gaining admission to the professions and to highly paid jobs on an equal footing with men.”⁸⁶

Summerfield has found that for young, educated middle class women, the changes wrought by the First World War were not entirely lost, and some women continued to benefit from expanding opportunities in white-collar jobs and a small number of individuals did manage to enter the professions as doctors, lawyers and civil servants.⁸⁷ But it was still the low status, least lucrative professions of nursing and teaching that were open to women. The Union of Jewish Women continued to promote nursing and teaching, adding social work and factory inspection to its list of suitable careers for women.

Employment opportunities for educated women were also increasingly available within the Jewish women's organisations themselves. As the First World War wrought changes in the work of the middle class women workers of the Union of Jewish Women and other Jewish charities, it brought them into contact with different sectors of the population; witness the Union of Jewish Women taking responsibility for the care of the “better class” of Belgian refugees, who arrived in Britain in the first year of the war.⁸⁸ In 1925, the Union of Jewish Women also assumed responsibility for the pastoral care of refugees held in the Eastleigh camp, where as many as 1200 transmigrants, mostly Jews, were held after having been refused entry to the USA.⁸⁹ Alice Model visited the camp with Otto Schiff of the Jews' Temporary Shelter and concluded that while conditions were adequate, activities and entertainment were needed. Mrs Doniack, who spoke Russian, Hebrew and Yiddish, was

engaged to organise educational classes and recreation. Her work was extended beyond the confines of the camp when the Union of Jewish Women was permitted to find jobs for 39 young girls who remained there, “provided British labour was not displaced.”⁹⁰ The Jewish Association similarly had to assist in the care of the many girls who flocked to London from the provinces in search of work after the war which involved expanding the association’s work as an employment agency.

The Jewish Association and similar organisations had had to alter significantly their attitude towards the issue of women’s employment as increasing numbers of women began to work, through necessity or preference. The meaning of the word protection in the Jewish Association’s title had been extended further and further to involve the provision of employment and education for working class girls rather than merely preventing them from coming to harm. There was a growing recognition among Jewish and non-Jewish charities of the need to treat the causes of poverty, such as unemployment and low wages, as well as the symptoms. To this end, the Jewish Association began to extend its work in the East End to include the care of Jewish children, having been enlightened as to their needs by the Stepney branch of the NSPCC and Stepney Borough Council. In 1922, the Home Office officially recognised the work of the Jewish probation officer, Miss Rosenthal, whose work was sponsored by the Jewish Association.⁹¹

From the outset, the Jewish Association’s work with children, particularly juvenile delinquents and young offenders, had brought the ladies of the organisation into contact with professionals and it was recognised by the Jewish Association that there was a need for trained workers. It is not immediately obvious why lady volunteers had begun to relinquish some of

their work to professional bodies. In the case of the Jewish Association, by the 1920s, the ladies of the organisation were becoming less active as they grew older and were distracted from their work by the pressing need to raise funds. They were also having to deal with more problematic cases, particularly in their work with children, and were more than willing to hand over cases of child abuse, for example, to agencies better-equipped to deal with them.

But the Jewish Association did not entirely hand over such work to other professional bodies and sought instead to train its own professional workers. In 1925 the Jewish Association became affiliated to the associated Children's Rescue Committees and advertised for a worker to be trained at the St Pancras Centre, which was run by London County Council. At the same time the Jewish Association's investigating committee was also having a worker trained at the centre. By 1944, despite the problems of wartime, the training of a new children's worker also included 8 weeks with the Charity Organisation Society and 6 weeks at the District Organiser's office, despite the fact that the woman concerned was a former Moral Welfare worker.⁹²

The Union of Jewish Women was equally affected by the need for better trained workers and also by the availability of properly recognised training programmes. Alice Model and Kate Halford proposed an ambitious training plan for Jewish social workers to the Executive Committee in 1927. They envisaged a scheme whereby students were based at the London School of Economics and were sent to various Jewish charitable organisations on placements during their studies. Mrs Model and Miss Halford plainly thought that the best social workers would be produced by using the traditional methods by which the ladies of the Union of Jewish Women and the Jewish Association had gained their experience, that is teaching by example within

the charities themselves, and coupling this with academic study and theoretical training. The scheme was never realised, but represents an interesting combination of teaching methods.

A slightly more successful area of development in the field of women's employment was the police force. The idea of a force of women police officers was independently proposed by the Women's Freedom League⁹³ and by the National Union of Women Workers (NUWW), and it received enthusiastic support from many women's organisations, from the political, the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (later National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship), to the pastoral, the National Union of Women's Temperance Societies.⁹⁴

The idea was particularly appealing to Jewish organisations who saw a desperate need for Jewish patrol workers in the East End. In April 1917, Mrs Carden of the NUWW Patrol Committee wrote to the Jewish Association to inform them of an increase in the numbers of Jewish girls walking the streets in the Piccadilly area for "immoral purposes", along with increasing numbers of Jewish girls in the area for "frivolous purposes".⁹⁵ Mrs Carden reiterated the NUWW's call for women police, but the Jewish Association resolved to act themselves by advertising for a Jewish patrol worker.

There was a degree of confusion amongst the Jewish Association's General Purposes Committee as to the type of woman suitable for such a post and it was generally felt amongst the committee that while their advertisement might attract a woman suitable for home-visiting, it was unlikely that they would find a suitable patrol worker. Certainly the Jewish Association hoped that a female patrol worker might assume responsibility for some of the more unsavoury aspects of their work. This specifically included the actual rescue of

girls from the streets, but included a certain amount of moral policing, to improve the behaviour of young Jews in public. Their dilemma regarding the suitability of potential patrol workers seems largely to have stemmed from the paradoxical nature of the role: the woman worker would have to be respectable so that her influence might have positive effect on those with whom she was working, but no respectable woman, middle or working class, would think of patrolling London's streets at night.

This inherent paradox obviously affected the whole issue of a women's police force, not just the question of a Jewish worker. A scheme of voluntary patrol workers was established by the NUWW during the First World War, and a force of one hundred women was eventually formed in conjunction with Scotland Yard. The Jewish Association approached the Union of Jewish Women for advice on the employment of a Jewish woman within the force,⁹⁶ and continued to discuss the thorny problem of finding a suitable candidate. It was later decided by the Jewish Association that it was necessary to offer to supplement the salary available in order to attract the type of woman needed to the post, and the help of the *Jewish Chronicle* and various ministers was enlisted to aid the search.⁹⁷ The Jewish Association's search does not appear to have been successful and although the Jewish Association and the Union of Jewish Women continued to support the cause of women police, no Jewish women were employed within the original women's force, either at the expense of the charities themselves or of Scotland Yard.

The Union of Jewish Women and the Jewish Association were not successful in establishing a force of Jewish patrol workers, but they supported the cause of women police with their customary enthusiasm. In this respect the Jewish ladies were no different from their non-Jewish counterparts, although

there were undoubtedly additional reasons for their support for women police. The Union of Jewish Women and the Jewish Association became involved in the Patrol Committee after hearing that the behaviour of some Jewish girls in London was cause for concern to the NUWW. The preservation of the good name of the Jewish community was a major factor in communal philanthropy, so the actions of the Jewish ladies are immediately explicable, but gender may also have been significant. The public bad behaviour of Jewish girls cast a shadow on the respectability of all Jewish women that the ladies of the Union of Jewish Women and the Jewish Association would have been most anxious to dispel. Even though the ladies were unable to engage Jewish patrol workers to deal with the problem their very activity would have helped to answer any questions about their respectability.

Clearly it was not absolutely necessary for such organisations to be successful in their dealings with particular problems for the value of their work to be publicly recognised, within, and beyond the Jewish community. But while the effectiveness of these organisations in promoting their favoured causes was widely recognised, so too were their successes. At the NUWW conference of 1917, the delegates discussed the need to improve and co-ordinate existing voluntary organisations, because these had been “shown to be the most effective reformatory agencies”.⁹⁸ Many of these organisations came together after the war, to form the Consultative Committee of Women’s Organisations, which “contemplated active work in important interests, such as organising all of the women who worked during the war”.⁹⁹ But although they were designed to accommodate all women workers, the efficacy of organisations of this type, that is voluntary, largely middle class women’s

organisations was generally determined by the efforts of a small number of extremely active members.

The Union of Jewish Women particularly contained some inspirational figures. Alice Model was perhaps the most famous of them. Her work, spanning some thirty five years, included the establishment of the Jewish Maternity Hospital, the Jewish Day Nursery, and several Infant Welfare Centres in the East End, as well as prominent membership of a variety of different Jewish organisations: the Union of Jewish Women and the Jewish Association, B'nai B'rith, the Jews' Temporary Shelter, the Federation of Infant Welfare Centres, the Jewish Board of Guardians and, most significantly, as the first woman to sit on the Jewish Board of Deputies.¹⁰⁰ Julia Cohen was the first president of the Union of Jewish Women and another dynamic worker. A strong exponent of women's education, she helped to establish a new course of Domestic Science at her *alma mater*, Queen's College, "helping the girl of today to become the good citizen, the ideal wife and mother".¹⁰¹ College Hall, a residence for Jewish women medical students was another of her favoured causes and she was, among many other causes, a member of the Committee of the Society for the Training of Jewish Teachers, which worked in conjunction with the Jewish Educational Board. Like Alice Model, Julia Cohen also extended her charity work beyond the boundaries of the Jewish community and was a member of the NSPCC, the Egham District Nurses' Committee and the Technical Education Committee.

The work of Julia Cohen and Alice Model indicates the variety of their interests and the capacity of the Union of Jewish Women to accommodate so many women with widely varying concerns, from maternity and infant welfare to women's education and beyond. Employment was only one of these varied

causes. Among the most conspicuous representatives of the field of women's employment was Mrs Morris Joseph, who established a Labour Bureau in the East End in 1885, continuing its work after the closure of the bureau in 1894, and:

“endeavouring to obtain employment for the many who apply to her, and especially for distressed ladies, whose plaintive letters she still receives constantly”.¹⁰²

She too had other interests, helping her husband, the Reverend Morris Joseph, to establish the Liverpool Jewish Board of Guardians and promoting the foundation of the Jewish Home for Incurables. But perhaps the most single-minded advocate of women's employment was Constance Hoster. A formidable businesswoman herself, Mrs Hoster ran a successful employment agency for office workers, training and placing highly-skilled, often well-educated women. She founded both the Educated Women Workers' Loan Training Fund, later amalgamated with the Society for Promoting the Training of Women, and the Educated Women's War Emergency Training Fund.¹⁰³ In 1921, she became the first woman to be appointed to the Chamber of Commerce.¹⁰⁴ The nature of her work, stretching from conventional philanthropy to the male-dominated world of business shows her to have been unique in her achievements, but Mrs Hoster illustrated that it was possible for a Jewish woman to be active within the Jewish community and beyond.

The predominance within the Union of Jewish Women and similar organisations of such enterprising figures explains their constant activity and a degree of their success. But as the organisations developed a more professional and successful attitude towards their work so their members became more convinced of the need for professional workers. The example of Constance

Hoster, in forging a successful professional career, also encouraged them to view more positively the work of women in paid employment. Also as women's employment became more respectable and new openings became available, the Jewish ladies were able to attract into their employ women of a more acceptable standing. This had previously been a virtually insurmountable problem as the women's police issue indicated. In other areas of their work the Jewish Association and Union of Jewish Women were able to take on respectable women who were already well-trained, such as Miss Landau, a trained nurse, who was engaged as Lady Superintendent of Sara Pyke House in 1919.¹⁰⁵ Alternatively, the Jewish Association and the Union of Jewish Women were able to offer training to potential workers. Employing professional workers to replace the voluntary efforts of their members made the Jewish Association and the Union of Jewish Women much more efficient; the Jewish Association's visiting committee employed an additional visitor in December 1917, and the committee saw the numbers of visits for the following year rise to 2721 from 419 visits made during 1917.¹⁰⁶

The process of the professionalisation of social work had begun to take effect in the 1880s and 1890s and affected both Jewish and non-Jewish middle class women. This development is clearly visible in the work of different generations of Jewish women, as the examples of Mrs Adler and her daughter Henrietta show. Mrs Adler had been brought up within the Jewish philanthropic tradition, visiting working class homes through the work of the Ladies' Benevolent Loan Institution from girlhood. She was a member of a variety of organisations, the Sick Room Helps Society committee, the Jewish Board of Guardians' Conjoint Visiting Committee, the Country Holiday Fund, and the Jewish Children's Happy Evenings Association. She was vice-

president of the Jewish Day Nursery Committee, honorary secretary to the Ladies' Committee of the Bayswater Jewish Schools and a founder member of the Ladies' Clothing Association. She was on the Council of the Anglo-Jewish Association and had assumed responsibility for the Thrift Society.¹⁰⁷ This was a Christian foundation established by the St Jude Mission to encourage families in the East End to save some money for the future, however small the amount they could afford. The management of the society had been passed onto members of the Jewish community when it became apparent that most of its applicants were Jewish.

This list of philanthropic activities fully occupied the life of Mrs Adler, in addition to her responsibilities as wife of the Chief Rabbi and mother of three children. Like many other Jewish and non-Jewish women, she had restricted her work to traditional areas of female interest, that is providing food, clothing, and occasionally money for poor families, and later on, education, childcare and healthcare for Jewish women. The work Mrs Adler undertook was quite typical of a woman of her class and upbringing, although that is not to diminish the singular success of her personal achievements. She was instrumental in the founding of several charities, including, of course, the Union of Jewish Women. She was also involved in practical work, visiting Jewish families in the East End and running the charities on a daily basis. It was the latter that assumed more of her time in later years, as she took on honorary and active offices, rather than visiting work. Her standing within the community also caused her to be in demand in later years to assist in fundraising and she was invited to address the Jewish Association at the opening of the Domestic Training Home, in 1896.

Mrs Adler's daughter, Henrietta, had a similar upbringing to that of her mother, and began her philanthropic career accompanying her mother on visits to the East End, while still very young. However, she chose to devote her time to very different causes, as the *Jewish Chronicle* put it, "industrial organisation appeals very strongly to Miss Adler".¹⁰⁸ She took the post of honorary secretary to the non-sectarian Committee on Wage-earning Children, whose work included gathering evidence on the subject of working children to present to a Parliamentary interdepartmental committee. In similar vein, Miss Adler sat on the Industrial Committee of the Jewish Board of Guardians, taking particular interest in the training and apprenticeship of young girls, so that:

"in the future the question of aiding distressed widows will not press so heavily on the Board of Guardians, for when each woman has learnt to ply a trade, the death of the breadwinner will not mean that she must be entirely dependent on charity".¹⁰⁹

Another of Miss Adler's interests was education and she was a manager on the London School Board in the East End, a member of the Religious Education Board and joint honorary secretary of the Teachers' Training Committee. She was instrumental in the establishment of a residence for Jewish students at Stockwell Training College, where she was a member of the committee, ensuring that the students were able to live as orthodox Jewesses. Miss Adler also followed her mother into membership of more traditional communal organisations, like the Jewish Board of Guardians' Conjoint Visiting Committee and the Children's Happy Evening Association. But her skills were more appropriately used in holding Study Society evenings for those interested in a more scientific approach to philanthropy, and in giving lectures on

communal work and education to the Women's Industrial Council, the National Council of Women conferences and, of course, the Conference of Jewish Women. In later years Miss Adler joined the London County Council, becoming deputy chairman in 1922. She was awarded a CBE in the 1934 New Years' Honours for her contributions to society.¹¹⁰

Clearly some of the differences between the work of mother and daughter may be ascribed to their varying personal interests and the difference in their ages. Having children of her own may have caused Mrs Adler to empathise with other mothers and therefore choose to work with them, whereas the fact that Miss Adler did not marry perhaps led her to subjects that a woman with children might not have chosen. Other differences in their work may be ascribed to the variations in upbringing. Mrs Adler's upbringing of her daughter probably echoed her own but changes in education and attitudes within the community would have encouraged Miss Adler to spread her wings towards new areas of charity work. Yet she was also undoubtedly influenced by changing perceptions of social work among women of her generation, both within and outside the Jewish community. It is also clear that Miss Adler astutely recognised the need to address the fundamental problems of the working class Jewish family, especially the women. She turned to municipal politics and parliamentary lobbying to make her mark and bring about changes in the working class situation leaving the everyday relief of the symptoms of poverty to oldguard workers such as her mother.¹¹¹ Miss Adler was also active in non-Jewish circles, crossing communal boundaries which her mother and her contemporaries had only done on a far more minor scale - witness Mrs Adler's co-operation with the St Jude Mission, who founded the Thrift Society. Other women of Miss Adler's generation followed her example by

entering municipal politics, including Miriam Moses who was appointed Alderman by Stepney Borough Council in 1934.¹¹² Others challenged the echelons of male-dominated communal politics. Alice Model was one of the first woman to sit on the Jewish Board of Deputies and Hannah Cohen was the first woman president of the Jewish Board of Guardians in 1930.¹¹³

Some of the changes embodied in the younger generations of women workers reflected changes in the community as a whole. The Jewish community had become less insular. Freed of some of their communal responsibilities with the increased prosperity and success of first and second generation immigrants, the Jewish middle class was able to relax its guard against anti-Semitism if only a little. There were increasing numbers of Jewish women who worked across communal boundaries; working, as Henrietta Adler did, for Jewish, non-Jewish and non-sectarian organisations.

The National Council of Women was a particularly good example of this situation. The 1902 Conference of Jewish Women, and therefore the Union of Jewish Women as well, were largely imitative of the National Council of Women. Lady Battersea was president of the NUWW, the forerunner of the National Council of Women, from 1901 until 1906, and remained a vice-president for many years after that. Other prominent Jewish ladies, such as Lady Desart and Lady Reading, were also active members of the National Council of Women and its component committees and there appears to have been little suggestion of anti-Semitism within the organisation. As members of the National Council of Women, Jewish women were clearly free to extend their philanthropic interests without compromising the causes they favoured within the Jewish community, or their religious beliefs.

Alice Model touched upon the complex issue of working both within and outside the Jewish community, when, speaking about the influence of English and Jewish women on the field of philanthropy, she commented, "though as English Jewesses, it is difficult to separate the two".¹¹⁴ As it had become acceptable for Jewish women to cross communal boundaries in their charity work they had become increasingly aware that, anti-Semitism aside, many of the problems experienced by the Jewish poor were shared by non-Jews. Charity organisation and increasing government involvement had also encouraged co-operation between different charities, increasing efficiency and improving results. Through umbrella organisations such as the National Council of Women and the Charity Organisation Society Jewish women were able to enter mainstream philanthropy, gaining more experience and imparting their own communally-acquired wisdom to the rest of society.

But the achievements and developments of women's organisations as a whole were not reflected in the dynamics of the various Jewish women's organisations. The upheaval of the First World War forced the Union of Jewish Women particularly to re-address the issue of women's employment. As women of all ages and classes took on paid and voluntary employment during the war the Union of Jewish Women became aware that their middle-class organisation was not representative of all Jewish women workers. In 1917, the Union of Jewish Women appointed a reconstruction subcommittee to address the need for changes within the Union:

"The plea on which the Union of Jewish Women will bring their scheme before the Community is the new position of Women and the consequent need for strengthening all women's organisations, with a view to co-operation amongst them so that they may be thoroughly representative"¹¹⁵

The aim of the reconstruction programme, spearheaded by Julia Cohen and Alice Model, was to create a more representative body of consultative committees along the lines of the National Council of Women.

“By associating itself officially with all the specialist bodies of women workers, the Union aspires to increase its powers of usefulness to all the Jewish women of the country, and in doing this to promote and facilitate Jewish women taking their due share in the work incumbent on all good citizenesses [sic] of all classes”.¹¹⁶

The Union of Jewish Women hoped to attract into its ranks, not only more young middle class women, but also the working class and less anglicised women of the community. They also sought to clarify their work, establishing philanthropic schemes and providing information rather than dispensing charity. A diluted form of reconstruction was approved by the Union of Jewish Women’s Council and was adopted as part of the Constitution in 1919. More general attempts were made during the 1920s by a number of Jewish organisations, including the Jewish Association and the Jews’ Temporary Shelter, to gather various Jewish charities under one roof, paving the way for possible amalgamation in the future, but these plans were not realised.¹¹⁷

IX. The Employment of Refugees during the 1930s and 1940s.

Having reacted with characteristic dynamism to the needs of the Jewish community in the years immediately after the First World War the work of the Jewish women’s organisations had begun to slacken its pace by the 1930s and the organisations themselves entered a period of decline. Despite major reconstruction within the Union of Jewish Women and minor alterations in the

Jewish Association both they and other similar organisations were ageing. The lack of younger members and youthful vigour, always a problem to both organisations, had become drastic. The Jewish Association had been dominated by a small group of enterprising, active people, most notably Claude Montefiore and Mildred Pyke, and as they aged, so did the organisation. The deaths of several key figures irreparably damaged the association and in 1943, the Jewish Association was amalgamated with the Jewish Board of Guardians.¹¹⁸ The Union of Jewish Women was also becoming increasingly inactive and ineffective and the privations of the First World War and the economic depression that followed made fund-raising more difficult. In a sense it may be said that these organisations had outlived their usefulness. In the announcement of their amalgamation with the Board of Guardians, the Jewish Association spoke of the overlapping that often occurred where different organisations failed to communicate and co-operate with each other. They emphasised the need for economy and reorganisation within communal organisations if they were to survive the Second World War and touched upon the possibility of government supervision of voluntary workers in the future.¹¹⁹ Successful lobbying of Parliament had brought about the introduction of innovations such as district nurses, home helps, probation officers and women police officers, and much of the practical work had already been passed on to salaried, trained workers. Training programmes and the laying-down of precedents had ensured the continuation of much of the organisations' work.

By hastening the process of professionalisation and passing on some of their responsibilities to government agencies the various organisations had virtually put themselves out of work. Their former efficiency and effectiveness

had been diminished by lack of funds and ageing membership, but the organisations did not cease to exist altogether. Their members did not cease to work as volunteers but the ladies of the Anglo-Jewish community no longer played such a significant role in communal philanthropy. Understandably, interests had changed and the greater employment opportunities for women absorbed the energies of many young Jewish women who, in previous years, would have devoted themselves to charity work. Perhaps it is not surprising therefore that those women who continued to undertake philanthropic work reverted to traditionally female aspects of philanthropy, most notably fund-raising. Nowhere is this process more apparent than in the Central British Fund for the Relief of German Jewry (Central British Fund). But furthermore, the work of the Central British Fund demonstrates that despite the apparent progress made in women's employment during the period from the 1880s to the 1940s the underlying trends remained the same. Above all, the concentration of young women workers in domestic service and their preparation for a short-term, semi-skilled occupation continued to be a significant aspect of Jewish philanthropy in the field of employment.

The Central British Fund developed from a number of diverse groups concerned with the situation of German Jewry, who met at the International Conference for the Relief of German Jewry in November 1933.¹²⁰ The Central British Fund was the focus of much Anglo-Jewish interest, and was dominated by important communal figures, which may explain why women were in the minority.¹²¹ Although fewer than one in ten members were women, a Women's Appeal Committee was formed under the chairmanship of Mrs Anthony de Rothschild to collect funds, which it did very successfully, amassing a total of £250,000 over the next five years.¹²² Other women

members contributed to the work of the Agricultural Committee and the Joint Committee on the Welfare of Internees, and the Refugee Children's Movement was dominated by successful women workers like Elaine Blond.

Within the Central British Fund women were largely restricted to traditional areas of philanthropic interest, like the welfare of children, but they did take on significant work in the field of employment. Several women sat on the Jewish Refugees Committee Executive, which had taken on a role similar to that of the Union of Jewish Women in giving grants for training and finding work for trained refugees. Constance Hoster of the Union of Jewish Women was particularly active on this committee, assuming personal responsibility for the application for, and allocation of, work permits and examining candidates for secretarial posts or training.¹²³ Some scientists and industrialists were cautiously welcomed by the government and their respective industries, and the records of the Central British Fund Academic Committee show that a few professional women were helped, including an archaeologist, a pathologist, a chemist and a psychologist.¹²⁴ But these women were the exception. The professions in Britain were largely opposed to any pro-immigrant policies, and given the minor role to which professional women were relegated, it is not surprising that the male-dominated professions were strongly opposed to welcoming immigrant women. The Central British Fund's Ladies' Hospitality Committee, which dealt with unskilled refugees, was also able to place over two hundred women as au pairs, in the first months of 1935.¹²⁵ But most accommodating to refugee and immigrant women was the domestic service industry which was not affected by the government's otherwise restrictionist policies, and of the 55,000 refugees who entered Britain before the war began, 20,000 of them, mostly women, found employment as domestic servants.¹²⁶

The Domestic Bureau, which was formed in 1938 became the most important focus of women's attention in the Central British Fund. The Executive Committee was made up of Jews and Christians and included only one man, the Reverend Edward Quinn of the Catholic Committee for German Refugees. The aim of the Domestic Bureau was to exploit a loophole in the government's immigration policy by accommodating refugee women in domestic service posts. Domestic service had been declining in popularity since before the First World War as increasing opportunities for women had opened up new areas of employment, with better pay and conditions. Shortage of labour had not resulted in noticeable improvements in either conditions or wages. However, the economic depression and unemployment of the 1920s and 1930s had forced women back into service and the industry had actually expanded in Europe during the inter-war period, although the unpopularity of the work meant that the shortage of labour persisted. As has been shown throughout this chapter, domestic service had always appealed to Jewish women's organisations as a suitable occupation for immigrant women, removing them from public sight and placing them under the anglicising influence of the English or Anglo-Jewish household. It was also an area of employment where the shortage of labour made it possible for large numbers of foreign women to be absorbed into the workforce without arousing anti-Semitic feelings among native workers. Of the women in paid employment before the outbreak of war who found new jobs in different industries after 1939, 28% had been employed as domestic servants.¹²⁷

The gaps that this exodus left exacerbated the shortage of domestic labour that had bothered middle class householders since the early years of the century. Self-interest was therefore a significant motive in the search for

replacement labour, and non-Jewish organisations such as the National Council of Women also encouraged the government's policy, indicating that the middle-class need for domestic servants overrode any qualms such women may have had about immigrants. The Domestic Bureau of the Central British Fund gradually assumed responsibility for many of the German women who were seeking employment as domestics. In 1938 the Domestic Bureau approached the Home Office and the Ministry of Labour to ask that all such cases be referred to them.¹²⁸ To increase efficiency, representatives of the Bureau made fact-finding trips to Germany, setting up schemes for inspecting and training potential domestic servants before they left the country. Domestic service was also by this time one of the very few areas of employment still open to Jewish workers still in Germany, which meant that many women had gained some experience before leaving the country.

Between January and May 1939, 6330 permits were granted and 3266 women actually entered the United Kingdom as domestic servants.¹²⁹ By July 1939, to simplify matters, the Home Office ruled that permits were no longer necessary for women intending to work in private households, but stressed that they were not permitted to change jobs after entering the country. It was also stressed that the women entering the country should be trained domestics, thus this route was not intended for other working women.¹³⁰

At the outbreak of war, anti-German feeling and economic uncertainty left 8000 foreign domestics unemployed and some were interned as enemy aliens. But because there was no doubt about their pro-British sympathies, the majority of refugee domestic servants were classed as category C and therefore avoided internment. Most of the domestics unemployed at the start of the war soon found work as employment for women expanded again.¹³¹ Having

been ejected from their work as domestic servants these Jewish women began to seek alternative employment alongside non-Jewish working class women and so their experience of employment began to coincide more closely with that of their non-Jewish counterparts.

X. Women's Employment during the Second World War.

Although the employment situation for working class women expanded again with the outbreak of the Second World War, the years up to 1939 had not been particularly successful for women workers. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the employment situation for working class women had reverted back to its pre-war state after the First World War and had in fact deteriorated during the economic depression of the post war years.¹³² In addition to severely restricted employment opportunities, working class women still bore the burden of housework and inadequate child care provision, which continued to discourage them from working. Industries and professions also persisted in using marriage bars to curb the numbers of women workers employed. This affected women from all walks of life, so that it was unlikely to find married women working on the factory floor or in the professional office. Marriage bars were introduced for the first time by many local authorities in the 1920s, restricting the numbers of women teachers. The civil service did the same, in order to protect male workers from female competition.¹³³

However, in contrast to the general picture in women's employment, a small, but significant number of women workers benefited from increased employment opportunities during the 1920s and 1930s. Women were gradually entering new areas of employment, although they were generally to be found

in the less-skilled, lower-paid jobs. This growth was most noticeable among clerical workers, where the proportion of women workers rose from only 1% in 1901 to 10% by 1931. Furthermore, as Beddoe has found, by 1931 the proportion of women workers in the traditionally female dominated industries had begun to decline - 35% of personal servants and 24% of indoor domestics were women by 1931, representing a fall of 9% over the previous decade.¹³⁴ These women workers had obviously found employment in other areas, indicating increased opportunities elsewhere.

Overall, however, the progress of economic recovery was slow and women's employment continued to develop at an equally slow pace during the early 1930s. But women workers did benefit from the expansion of the economy during the rearmament process in the latter part of the decade, along with the rest of the workforce. As might be expected, the outbreak of the Second World War also had a dramatic effect on employment, just as the First World War had done. An initial period of upheaval and unemployment at the start of the war was followed by a major increase in the workforce - from 19,750,000 in 1939 to 22,285,000 at the height of the war effort in 1943. These figures included 6,265,000 women in 1939, rising to 7,500,000 in 1943.¹³⁵

This enormous increase in numbers was also accompanied by a significant change in the distribution of women workers. During the First World War the initial *laissez faire* attitude of both government and industry had permitted the gradual substitution of female labour for male, and the same occurred during the Second World War. But as the need for labour became more acute the deliberate mobilisation of female workers brought women into all areas of employment. Industries previously dominated by male workers were the most radically changed. The number of women workers in

engineering rose from 97,000 in 1939 to 602,000 in 1943, an increase from 10% to 34% of the total workforce. The same process occurred in the metal, chemical, transport, shipbuilding, gas, electricity and water industries. Another 470,000 women had also joined the armed forces by 1943.

This process was accompanied by several changes in the composition of the female workforce. In 1931, only 16% of women in paid employment were married. By 1943, 43% of female workers were married. The demands of the wartime economy and the need for female labour effectively overcame pre-war marriage bars. Child care provision also improved in some areas, albeit on a temporary basis for the duration of the war, which also enabled women with families to re-enter the workforce.¹³⁶ An additional effect of the increase in married women workers was to alter the age profile of the female labour force. In 1931, 41% of women workers were aged between 18 and 24, and only 16% were aged between 35 and 44. By 1943, the two age groups were virtually equal, forming 27% and 26% of women workers respectively. The benefits of the expansion of women's employment during the Second World War were therefore most widely felt by the older married women who had suffered disproportionately from the economic depression and unemployment of the inter-war years.

Summerfield has also pointed out that this development of women's work was not spread evenly over the United Kingdom. Economic depression had hit certain geographical areas harder than others, and so the positive changes in the employment of women affected certain parts of the country more than others. Some of the areas worst hit in the 1920s were most successful during the war years, most notably Wales, the south-west and East Anglia. Women workers in these areas particularly gained from the expansion

of the economy. Women workers in London and the south-east meanwhile continued to enjoy the opportunities these more successful areas offered, and there was no dramatic increase in the numbers of women employed there. In fact, the evacuation of mothers and children from London and other large cities limited the numbers of women seeking employment, and the Blitz prevented any major industrial development altogether.

The general pattern of women's employment during the Second World War thus mirrored that of the First World War. Rearmament before the outbreak of war had stimulated the sluggish economy. Opportunities for women workers then slowly began to improve. After the war began, the male population was called up for military service and the need for female labour to replace male workers became more acute. So women's employment during the war flourished. This blossoming of employment opportunities was experienced by women of all classes and working in all fields. For those seeking economic independence the wartime economy offered a myriad possibilities. For working class women a greater variety of factory work was now available, ranging from the more traditional female enclaves of the textile and clothing industries to engineering, munitions and ship-building, areas that had been entirely peopled by male workers before. For the more educated and upwardly-mobile working and lower middle class girls increased opportunities could be found in clerical work and in the lower ranks of the professions, such as nursing or teaching. While for the better educated the professions became easier to penetrate, even welcoming. Women from all classes were accommodated in different areas of the Forces and voluntary workers from the highest ranks of society found new outlets for their attention. Even the future

queen was a member of the Women's Voluntary Service, along with one million other women.¹³⁷

Jewish women were certainly not excluded from the massive changes in women's employment that were wrought by the Second World War. As Kushner suggests, Jewish women may well have been over-represented in the armed forces, as Jewish men were. Unfortunately there are no statistics to support this view.¹³⁸ However, there is evidence that Jewish women workers continued to be concentrated in the clothing trades, because although the overall numbers employed in the clothing trade declined during the war, more Jewish women were employed to replace male workers. The clothing industry, occupying some 42% of the Jewish female workforce, continued to be the largest employer of Jewish women, even after the war.¹³⁹ Elsewhere the same patterns perpetuated themselves. Jewish women were affected by general trends in women's employment and could not have failed to experience the benefits that all working women enjoyed during the Second World War. But Jewish working class women did not flood into new areas of employment at the same rates as non-Jewish women. Instead they remained in more traditional areas of work. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, Tananbaum has demonstrated a notable degree of conservatism among Jewish women workers that explains their reluctance to enter new areas of work.¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, among the Jewish female population as a whole, proportionally fewer women worked outside the home even after the mobilisation of female labour in wartime. Jewish women continued to embrace their domestic role with more enthusiasm than their non-Jewish counterparts.

A similar process is apparent in the employment of middle class Jewish women during the Second World War. Unfortunately for the purposes of this

study, statistics do not exist to show how many Jewish women were employed in the professions, but it may be assumed to be a very small number. Some middle class women may have joined the Forces as Kushner suggests.¹⁴¹ Jewish women were undoubtedly involved in voluntary work with organisations like the Women's Voluntary Service and the Red Cross as well. But, as the decline of existing women's organisations and the minor role played by women in the Central British Fund show, even the most active members of the Jewish middle and upper middle class had relinquished the exciting role they had occupied earlier in the century. Clearly many members of this social group, especially the younger and more active women, were quietly busy in paid or voluntary employment outside the limits of the Jewish women's organisations.

Thus working class Jewish women seem to have played a lesser part in the expansion of women's employment during the Second World War, while those few middle class women who worked did benefit from the greater opportunities on offer. But overall very few middle class Jewish women did take on paid employment. Jewish women as a whole were therefore less drastically affected by post-war changes in women's employment.

Summerfield has found that women's employment opportunities continued to expand after the war along similar lines to pre-war trends. Women workers were moving away from traditional industries into the expanding service and distribution industries as well as into the engineering and manufacturing industries. As well as enjoying a greater variety of jobs in different areas of work, women benefited from a decline in the use of marriage bars and age limits. A permanent result of wartime change was the alteration in the age structure of the female workforce, with increasing numbers of older, married

women entering paid work and many more women remaining in employment after marrying and having children.¹⁴²

But this is not to suggest that women's employment had begun to offer equal opportunities for women alongside male workers, or that paid employment was now an acceptable alternative to the domestic life for women:

“It is evident ... that the expectations that marriage, home and dependency were the appropriate conditions for women not only survived the challenges of war, but were throughout major determinants of policy towards women.”¹⁴³

Non-Jewish women continued to be coerced into domesticity and motherhood, by the media, by society and by government policy. The Anglo-Jewish community similarly carried on in its zealous encouragement of women's domestic role. It was no different from the rest of society in doing so, but it had far more of an impact in terms of those returning to the home.

XI. Conclusions.

In conclusion it is the persistence of domestic ideology that forms the most striking aspect of any study of women's employment over the period from the 1880s to 1945. As stated above, the Anglo-Jewish community merely imitated the rest of British society in promoting domesticity as suitable employment for Jewish women. Nevertheless the enthusiasm with which the domestic role for women was adopted did render the Anglo-Jewish experience more extreme than that of non-Jews.

Collectively all Jewish women were sheltered from changes in women's employment by the nature of their faith and ethnicity. The ideal of the

domestic wife and mother was pursued by Jews from all social groups, from the richest to the poorest, so even among working class Jewish families, fewer Jewish women worked outside the home at all. The poorest Jewish married women did work, out of necessity, and it was such women, usually widows or those with sick husbands, whose needs were catered for by the projects of Helen Lucas and Alice Model. Other married Jewish women imitated non-Jewish married women in working within their own homes. But generally Jewish married women did not work for payment, unless they absolutely had to, and this applied to working and middle class women alike. Those Jewish girls who did work tended to be young and single, working for a relatively short period of time between leaving school and getting married.

This pattern was imitative of the female workforce as a whole, and Jewish women were generally affected by all of the changes in women's employment. But the effects of these changes were felt to a lesser extent than by non-Jewish women as Jewish experience throughout the period covered here was tempered by the insularity and innate conservatism of the Anglo-Jewish community. Thus the role of the Anglo-Jewish community ensured that religious and ethnic solidarity between Jews of different social classes and between Jewish men and women affected the employment experiences of Jewish women, both working and middle class. The most dramatic effect of this communal policy was to discourage working class women from taking paid work outside the home.

In direct contrast, voluntary philanthropy was popularly viewed as an extension of women's domestic role by Jews and non-Jews alike, and hence it was approved as a highly suitable pastime for middle class married women. The philanthropic work of middle class Jewish women that began with sedate

home-visiting soon developed into full-scale social work, bringing respectable Jewish ladies into direct contact with some of the worst aspects of East End life. Undoubtedly the ladies of organisations such as the Jewish Association, in performing acts of charity, were fulfilling the requirements of religious observance for women. But it is unlikely that the influence of middle class voluntary workers on working class Jewish women was entirely attributable to religious factors. The other side of their Jewishness was also a governing factor. Their shared ethnicity spurred them into action on behalf of working class Jews. However fear of anti-Semitism and of being labelled as disreputable as a result of the misdemeanours of a small sector of the community were equally important.

The early rescue work of the Jewish Association and later interest in issues like women police demonstrate the concern of middle class Jewish ladies to discourage Jewish girls from immoral behaviour, for fear that their own respectability might be compromised in the eyes of British society. This leads in turn to the question of class. The Evangelical Christian movement had helped to formalise a tradition of middle class philanthropy, imitative of upper class *noblesse oblige*. Middle class Victorian society thus assumed a degree of moral, as well as material responsibility for the working class poor, that the Jewish community replicated with enthusiasm. Middle class Jewish women emphasised their own social status through philanthropic work, as well as protecting their social position from the onslaughts of working class misbehaviour, and despite the value placed on respectability and social standing there is no evidence that these ladies were restricted in their activities or prevented from becoming involved in the more unsavoury side of their work.

But religious and ethnic solidarity and middle class duty do not explain fully the actions of the Jewish ladies, and neither do they explain the particular interest the ladies took in Jewish women and children. There was also a degree of gender solidarity affecting the philanthropic work of the Jewish women's organisations, and their recognition of the specific needs of Jewish women and their children was an important part of the organisations' unique achievement in Jewish philanthropy. They made a considerable contribution to women's employment, especially in their later work. The Union of Jewish Women's efforts to provide training and find jobs for Jewish women were significant in promoting the acceptability of employment for women. Within the organisations themselves middle class women sought training and advice to enable them to perform their work more professionally, and there was a distinct trend within the various organisations towards method in charitable work. In the majority of cases these middle class ladies did not work for money, but they sought to attain a status for their work comparable with that of paid workers.

The trend towards professionalisation in philanthropic work was paralleled by the gradual expansion of employment for working class women. Before the First World War, like middle class women in voluntary charity work, Jewish and non-Jewish working class women had been concentrated in traditionally female areas of employment. For married women this had meant only working within the home. The First World War brought women, married and single, into the workplace in a vast range of jobs that had previously been exclusively male. But the benefits of the wartime economy were short-lived and women were forced back into the home once the war was over. For some middle class and upwardly-mobile working and lower middle class women the

changes wrought by the First World War had persisted and the 1920s and 1930s saw the expansion of women's employment in some skilled work and in the professions.

When this process is related to the Jewish experience it is clear that Jewish girls were hampered by the persistence of domestic ideology, as the training policy of the Jewish Association at Montefiore House indicated. The middle class women's organisations continued to view domestic service as the most suitable occupation for working class Jewish girls, especially immigrants. But the inter-war years saw a growing recognition among the Jewish women's organisations of the importance of education for girls and the increasing respectability of paid employment in burgeoning areas such as the manufacturing industry or retail and office work. Working class Jewish girls, although they remained concentrated in the traditional textile and dressmaking industries, did benefit from the development of women's employment before, during and after the Second World War, and were to be found entering new jobs. As Tananbaum found, even the ultra-conservative Jewish Board of Guardians did expand its training and apprenticeship programmes for girls in the years before the First World War. But in fact, it was the girls themselves who were reluctant to investigate different opportunities and tended to seek jobs in traditional areas of work, alongside their friends and family. In contrast, middle class Jewish women had taken a far more adventurous and dynamic path in investigating and then taking on new areas of (voluntary) work.

However despite the dynamism and innovation of the Jewish Association and the Union of Jewish Women in their earlier years, both organisations had virtually ceased to exist by the outbreak of the Second

World War. Having passed on their responsibilities to other organisations and professional workers, the ladies of these charities returned to a less visible role in communal philanthropy and could be said to have lost much of the ground advanced as a result of their work before the Second World War. Obviously some of the major figures of this period had died during the years before the war and it was their loss that dramatically affected the charities. Others continued their work in different fields, witness Constance Hoster diverting her energies to the Central British Fund, but the majority of the women in the Jewish Association and the Union of Jewish Women joined other organisations like the Central British Fund in an unobtrusive way, restricting themselves to fund-raising and other sideline activities. Undoubtedly the opportunities offered by non-sectarian voluntary organisations like the Red Cross attracted some Jewish women away from Jewish organisations. Furthermore, the younger women who might have continued the work of the Jewish organisations with the dynamism characteristic of their early years, would have been distracted from these more traditional interests not only by other voluntary organisations, but also by the possibility of work in the Forces and by increased employment opportunities throughout the economy.

In some ways, this process of reversion by middle class Jewish women in 1945 to a position not dissimilar to that held by their nineteenth century counterparts was not surprising. Other changes in the field of women's employment had followed a similar cyclical pattern, most notably the expansion of the female workforce before the First World War and its contraction afterwards. There was also a trend towards the promotion of the domestic ideal within British society as a whole after the Second World War, despite the continuing increase in the number of working women. This

culminated in the “post-feminism” of figures such as Marghanita Laski, herself of Jewish origin, who claimed that women had reached the point of ultimate equality with men by the 1950s. At the same time government and media continued to promote the cult of the housewife. Clearly, in spite of major changes and developments in the field of women’s employment, women had not reached a point of working equality with men, and arguably have yet to do so, even now, fifty years on. The issue of women’s employment remains a source of contention and debate today, just as it was when the Jewish organisations were first formed at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. The next chapter explores an area that initially seemed far less controversial, but which aroused similar discussion and dissension as Jewish women challenged their traditional roles in the fields of education and healthcare.

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Chapter 4

Education and Healthcare

I. Introduction.

Excluding the specific areas of rescue work and employment, most of the many other variegated philanthropic interests of Jewish women may be incorporated under the umbrella term “education and healthcare”. This vast category includes virtually every aspect of Jewish women’s charitable work from voluntary visiting in the mid-nineteenth century, through to the semi-professional welfare work which had developed by the 1930s and 1940s. The work of larger institutions such as the Jewish Association and the Union of Jewish Women, and the various ladies’ committees of the Jewish Board of Guardians, the Jews’ Free School and the United Synagogue involved both education and healthcare to some extent. But in addition, a multitude of smaller organisations were formed by Jewish women to deal with specific problems within these fields. These ranged from highly successful welfare organisations such as the Sick Room Helps Society and the Jewish Maternity Home, to girls’ clubs, Sabbath schools and literary societies. The diversity of the work undertaken over the long period from the 1880s to 1945 renders a detailed study of individual charities problematic, but in the workings of the numerous small organisations, and in the dynamics of the larger institutions, may be seen the development of patterns and themes similar to those that affected the changing role of Jewish women in all aspects of charity work, which this chapter will explore. Above all, the process of professionalisation that was visible in both Jewish and non-Jewish charity work throughout this

period is particularly obvious in both education and health care, as much of the responsibility for this type of work was eventually assumed by the State.

From its beginnings in home visiting, women's role in philanthropy had tended towards the pastoral. Working independently or in conjunction with existing male-run charities, women had both chosen to work in the fields of healthcare and education, and had been encouraged to do so. This was obviously governed in part by women's domestic role. Having responsibility for the health and education of her family, the middle class lady would thus have been well-prepared to extend her interests to encompass the needy working classes. But more importantly, with regard to the importance of respectability in Victorian society, healthcare and education provided the most conventional route into philanthropy because it was seen as an extension of traditional domesticity. For Jewish women, perhaps more securely confined in domesticity than any other group of women in British society, the most seemly aspect of philanthropy was also the most popular. It is difficult to ascertain whether this was a deliberate policy adopted by Jewish women to avoid conflict with their families and the community. It is more likely that, with notable exceptions, women focussed their attentions on these areas of philanthropy for the reasons already stated, and because their earliest introductions to charity work led them in that direction. Even ladies who went on to break new ground in charity work began their careers conventionally enough. Helen Lucas, whose work has been described more fully in Chapter 3 on Employment, gained her first experience as a lady visitor at the Jews' Free School.¹ The guiding influence of friends and family members already working in the field was also a factor. Mrs Morris Joseph, who similarly became most active in the field of employment, was first encouraged to teach a

Sabbath school in Stepney by a cousin.² Many other Jewish women did the same, often learning their first lessons in philanthropy while accompanying their mothers on home visits, and making their own forays into the world of charity work by teaching Sabbath school classes.

Education and healthcare provided Jewish women with a forum for innovative and inspirational philanthropic work without challenging their traditional domestic role. This was very different from the fields of employment and rescue work, where both Jewish women, and their non-Jewish counterparts, found that their work brought them into conflict with the rest of society. Rescue work brought women philanthropists into contact with prostitution and the darker side of human sexuality, and it represented a threat to the workers' own respectability. The field of employment also led charity workers into conflict with the conventions of society, because they were seeking to establish women within the workforce. In contrast, education and healthcare represented most conveniently an extension of the Jewish woman's domestic role; educating her children and caring for their physical needs. An example of the value placed by the Jewish community on the mother's influential role is the Union of Jewish Women's Million Shilling Fund.³ Established as a war memorial in 1920, the fund was intended to be used for the education of Jewish children in Jewish history and religious teaching, and for the training of would-be ministers. Funds were also used to target Jewish women, to encourage them to educate their children, especially their sons, from the earliest opportunity. Ironically, given the extremely limited role women played in the religious life of the Jewish community, the mother's role was seen as an important aspect of the preparation of their sons for the clergy.

There is no denying the value attached by the Jewish community to the mother's role within the family, both as nurturer and educator. But on the whole, Jewish women from the middle or the working classes continued to receive an inadequate or even non-existent education. In this, however, Jewish families merely followed the example of the rest of middle class society. While among working class Jews, particularly among immigrant families, there was an emphasis on the role of women as the breadwinner, supporting the family through paid work, which precluded the need for education.⁴ Therefore the new interest of people such as Julia Cohen, in the question of education for girls was unusual, perhaps even contentious. Julia Cohen herself was highly unusual especially within the Jewish community, in that she had received virtually the best education available to girls of all creeds at the end of the nineteenth century. Mrs Cohen had attended Queen's College, in Harley Street,⁵ which had been founded in 1847 and was one of the first girls' schools in Britain to provide an education approximating to that of a boys' school.⁶ By the turn of the century, more girls' schools had been established on the same lines, offering new educational opportunities. Chief among them were the North London Collegiate School and Cheltenham Ladies' College, with their pioneering headmistresses, Miss Buss and Miss Beale. Their work extended beyond the limits of the classroom, bringing about major improvements in the training of women teachers.⁷ Within the ranks of the educational pioneers were two Jewish ladies; Lousia Lady Goldsmid, a founder of Girton College; and Fanny Hertz of the North of England Council for Promoting the Higher Education of Women.⁸ Yet in spite of the involvement of two prominent Jewish women, the developments in the education of girls filtered very slowly into Jewish schools so that paradoxically, Jewish girls, although perceived to

be highly significant as the educators of the next generation, were still not being educated to the highest standards at the beginning of the twentieth century. Zoe Josephs has written a history of Minerva College, a boarding school for Jewish girls that operated from 1891 to 1935. Originally situated in Dover, the school re-located to Leicester in 1915. Josephs records the old-fashioned brand of education meted out to Jewish girls attending the college:

“These changes [in the education of girls] largely passed Minerva by. The main purpose of the curriculum and the “extra” accomplishments was to turn out a marriageable product in the Anglo-Jewish context.”⁹

Many of the smaller charitable organisations involved in the education of Jewish girls helped to perpetuate the *status quo*. Girls’ clubs, for example, prepared girls to become mothers, emphasising the traditional responsibilities of the Jewish mother, and providing religious education for the preservation of Jewish faith and identity. Any training for paid employment again focussed on the traditional, training girls for “women’s work” in dressmaking, tailoring or textiles.¹⁰ In this respect working class Jewish girls fared no worse than their middle class counterparts, who were equally badly educated. The important difference was of course that the latter did not need to earn a living, whereas working class Jewish girls often did. It was to rectify this situation that the Union of Jewish Women began to take an interest in the education of girls, and this will be explored later in this chapter.

The education of Jewish girls clearly lagged behind that of other girls in Britain, although not all non-Jewish girls benefited from the developments in education either. By contrast, similarly significant developments in the field of healthcare were seized upon by the Anglo-Jewish community and were applied with exemplary efficiency to the services available to working class

Jews, both men and women. But unlike the development of girls' education which provided greater opportunities for women, both within the field of education and beyond, changes in the traditional patterns of work in charitable healthcare, instead of promoting the role of women, had an adverse effect on women workers in the field.

The health of her family had always been an important responsibility for a woman of any social class or ethnic group, just as the early education of her children was considered part of the mother's role. In addition maternity care was also an exclusively female preserve, until the advent of the male-midwife in the 1770s.¹¹ The development of the medical profession during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had effectively excluded women from medicine altogether.¹² But women had continued to work as midwives, particularly among working class populations. However, by the end of the nineteenth century, new regulations were even beginning to stamp out untrained midwives and nurses. Jewish women's organisations wanted to preserve the best of the old system, while conforming to these new regulations, hence the provision of re-training programmes, and the development of new jobs for women, as home helps and so on. Thus although education and healthcare were considered the most suitable fields for women's philanthropic work by the Anglo-Jewish community, and by society as a whole, this approval was limited to the extent of traditional boundaries. In other words, as will be illustrated throughout this chapter, Jewish women were expected to make their contribution in these areas without upsetting the *status quo*, and certainly without challenging existing conventions regarding the education or work of women. Yet while some Jewish women's organisations colluded with these restrictions, in encouraging girls to conform to the traditional role set for

them, others sought new areas in which women could work, either without challenging convention, or by flouting convention altogether. But even dramatic developments in these fields began in the customary fashion followed by the vast majority of Jewish women charity workers, and the next section illustrates the beginnings of several women's interests in education and healthcare.

II. Philanthropy in Education before 1914.

Charity work in education and healthcare was a traditional area of women's interest long before the start of this study, in the 1880s. The early work of the women under investigation here therefore began in conventional manner, conforming to all the traditions demanded of Jewish women. A prominent Jewish worker during the latter years of the century was Katie, Lady Magnus, who was typical in both the diversity of her interests and in the variety of different charities for whom she worked. Katie Magnus was the daughter of a former Mayor of Portsmouth and had married into the Anglo-Jewish cousinhood. Her husband, Sir Philip Magnus, was a minister who had tutored Claude Montefiore as a young man, and devoted much of his later career to the cause of further education. He was MP for London University and helped to launch the assimilationist *Jewish Guardian* in 1917.¹³ The interests of Lady Magnus were described in the *Jewish Chronicle's* series, "Jewish Women's Work in Philanthropy and Education", which coincided with the Conference of Jewish Women in 1902.¹⁴ As a teenager in the 1850s, Lady Magnus had taught Sabbath school classes in her home town of Portsmouth, and had begun writing Bible stories for children. After her marriage, she taught at the first

Sabbath school in the West End, which was founded by Countess d'Avigdor at the Margaret Street Synagogue in 1865. She gave religious instruction at the then newly-established Bayswater Jewish School, which led directly to the establishment of Religion Classes in association with all of the London synagogues and some of the provincial synagogues. But Lady Magnus was most widely identified with the East London Jewish Girls' Club. Founded in 1886, this was the first of the Jewish girls' clubs. Lady Magnus was Honorary Secretary from the beginning, later assuming the position of Treasurer as well. The *Jewish Chronicle* commented on the personal interest that Lady Magnus took in each member of the club, visiting the club every week and, on occasions, taking up residence in the East End. Lady Magnus was also a Manager of the Gravel Lane Board School, a member of the committee of the Jews' Infant School and Honorary Secretary of the Ladies' Committee of the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home, of which her husband was President for many years. More unusually, she also enjoyed a highly successful writing career, producing several works on Jewish history, as well as more lighthearted collections of essays and poetry.¹⁵

Lady Magnus' eclectic activities were not unusual among her contemporaries. The success of her literary career was undoubtedly a singular achievement, but there were some striking similarities between Lady Magnus and her many fellow Jewish women charity workers. She was certainly not alone in supporting a number of different causes and nor was the amazing variety of her interests exceptional. Often an individual would favour one cause above all others, as Lady Magnus devoted much of her time to the East End Girls' Club, but this did not affect her willingness to take on other causes. Another point of interest is the differing scale of these varied causes. Like

many other lady philanthropists, Lady Magnus helped to implement small-scale projects which then grew into major enterprises. In Lady Magnus' case the Sabbath Schools and Religion Classes she had founded spawned a multitude of similar schemes, which had a significant impact on the religious education of working class Jewish children. Furthermore, her innovative work with the East End Girls' Club laid the foundations for the entire Jewish girls' club movement.¹⁶

The beginnings of Lady Magnus' interest in philanthropy were typical of many of her contemporaries. She taught at Sabbath school while still at school herself, and then later helped to establish similar schools and religious education classes in Jewish communities throughout the country. Mrs Adler, the wife of the Chief Rabbi, established a Saturday Afternoon service in the East End, which was in effect a Sabbath School for children, and also held Sabbath services for women and children in the hall of the Great Synagogue, in the West End of London.¹⁷ Lady Magnus and Mrs Adler were prominent in their institution of religious education classes for children, but their fellow workers, almost without exception, could also be found teaching Sabbath school classes or giving religious instruction to Jewish children in schools. Many, such as Bella Lowy¹⁸, Charlotte Singer¹⁹ and Mrs Morris Joseph²⁰ began their philanthropic careers in this way. Teaching Sabbath school thus provided a suitable means by which a young Jewish girl could undertake charitable work outside her home, in much the same way that many Christian women taught Sunday school classes. There are similarities with home-visiting, which was an equally common means by which young girls were co-opted into philanthropic work, usually by their mother or by another female relative.²¹ Both activities were evidently considered to be highly suitable

occupations for young girls and, more importantly, they represented a most respectable extension of the domestic role of middle class women, both Jewish and non-Jewish. One of the Jewish woman's most important religious roles was to educate her children in the observance of their faith. Taking an interest in the religious education of working class children was a function for which middle class Jewish women were eminently qualified through the education of their own offspring. They were therefore encouraged in this work by the men of the community and hence, the teaching of Sabbath schools was one of the least controversial areas of womens' philanthropic work during the late nineteenth century.

Given the assured support of the male Anglo-Jewish community, it is not surprising that after the establishment of Sabbath schools in conjunction with local synagogues Jewish women began to turn their attention to the religious well-being of Jewish children at school. Some of the oldest charitable foundations within the Anglo-Jewish community were schools. Both the Sephardic and Ashkenazi communities supported schools that dated back to the late eighteenth century, while the influx of Jewish immigrants to England a century later had led to the establishment of many new Jewish Board schools.²² As specifically Jewish foundations these schools automatically provided for the religious education of the children in their care, employing teachers of religious education. Untrained, voluntary workers were somewhat restricted in the contribution they could make to the actual schooling of Jewish children and so turned their attention to their associated needs; some taught informal classes in religion or "moral welfare", others raised funds for schools and administered charity to needy pupils.²³ In addition, women volunteers were able to contribute to ensuring the observance of Jewish religious

requirements, which was clearly one of the most important aspects of Jewish schooling. In Board schools which catered for the children of poor families, these women provided kosher food for school dinners and provided the means for the strict observance of religious festivals, as well as visiting children at home to help the rest of the family where necessary.²⁴

An obvious extension of this work was the establishment of after-school care for the children of working parents and the Union of Jewish Women set up a scheme for after-school care in 1903.²⁵ Miss Mosely, along with a paid worker and several volunteers, took a room at Toynbee Hall, the East End settlement, every weekday evening from 4 until 7pm. The scheme, which offered recreation and light refreshments, was aimed specifically at girls because it was considered that boys were generally occupied with Hebrew and Religion classes after school. This gives further indication of the widespread lack of attention paid to the religious education of girls.

But it was not only the religious education of girls that was neglected. Although the nineteenth century had seen the development of education for girls at schools such as the North London Collegiate School, the majority of girls, especially among the working classes, were merely prepared for a life of domestic drudgery after completing their schooling. This was particularly so for Jewish women of every class whose domestic role was prized above all other activities. It is therefore surprising to note that a number of middle class charity workers, despite having had a minimal education at the hands of private governesses, produced a plethora of literary works, often on religious subjects. Constance Battersea wrote *The History and Literature of the Israelites*, in collaboration with her sister, while still in her teens and received favourable criticism from Disraeli, among many others.²⁶ The elder sisters of

Charlotte Singer produced a work on an early Scripture history at an equally tender age.²⁷ Lady Magnus was a highly respected writer on religious themes,²⁸ as already mentioned, and so too was Nina Davis (Mrs Redcliffe Salaman),²⁹ both of whom were widely printed in the Jewish press. Bella Lowy and Nettie Adler were more well regarded for their charity work, but both published a variety of material on the Anglo-Jewish community.³⁰

From among these women Julia Cohen stands out as one of the few charity workers at the turn of the century to have been educated to a relatively high standard, and, as the *Jewish Chronicle* noted:

“as a past pupil of Queen’s College [she is] especially eager at all times to aid those desiring educational advantages.”³¹

Mrs Cohen was most prominent as a philanthropist in her role as President of the Union of Jewish Women, from its beginnings in 1902 until 1917. But she also made a significant contribution to the education of women.³² Aware of the duties that awaited all girls after they left school, Julia Cohen helped to introduce a course in Domestic Science at Queen’s College. She was more innovative in supporting the foundation of a hall of residence for women medical students in London, and in establishing the Society for the Training of Jewish Teachers. Outside the Jewish community Mrs Cohen was also a member of the Egham Technical Education Committee.

Having been educated herself, Julia Cohen was well aware of the advantages to be gained from good schooling for girls. Many of her fellow charity workers shared her enthusiasm for education for precisely the opposite reasons, despite the success many of them had shown in overcoming the disadvantages of inadequate schooling, and the Union of Jewish Women was particularly keen in its advocacy of education for women. In 1912, the Union

of Jewish Women agreed to extend the scope of their financial assistance to include grants for school fees for girls aged between 14 and 18 years, as well as funding higher education for girls over 16.³³ The Union did not give many loans to girls under 16, because it was felt unwise to burden them with heavy debts from such an early age, and because secondary schooling alone would not necessarily prepare a girl for a job lucrative enough to enable her to repay her debts. In addition to training grants the Union also provided funding for Jewish girls who needed to learn English³⁴ and who were not able to take advantage of the Russo-Jewish Committee's programme for teaching English to adult immigrants which had been running since 1897.³⁵

To address the dual issues of the religious education of all children and the more specific education of Jewish girls, Jewish women began to seek more authority in Jewish schools. Louisa Lady Rothschild was the first woman manager on the board of the Jews' Free School,³⁶ and she was followed by others, including Hannah Hyam and Nettie Adler. Gertrude Spielmann joined the previously all-male committee of the Jewish Infant Schools at the age of 17.³⁷ As a result of her influence, the Union of Jewish Women assiduously encouraged women to work as school managers, particularly stressing the contribution they could make in non-Jewish schools.³⁸ In some ways this policy was adopted by the Union of Jewish Women as an exercise in policy, because its members wanted to break down male dominance of a traditionally female area of interest - that is, children's education. But it was also recognised that women could contribute their growing expertise in philanthropy to ensure that increasing provision was made for child welfare in schools. It was also inevitable that Jewish women's work in Jewish schools would be expanded to include Jewish children attending non-Jewish schools.

During the 1880s and 1890s, approximately half of all Jewish children attended Jewish schools, while the other half went to non-Jewish establishments.³⁹ By the early 1900s, social mobility and growing economic success had led many Jews to move away from the Jewish schools of the East End and the contribution to be made by Jewish managers in non-Jewish schools had become more important as a result. In 1909, Mrs Norden and Mrs Van Cliff of the Union of Jewish Women interceded on behalf of Jewish children at the Manor Park Board Schools so that they were able to be absent from school on religious holidays, without losing marks for prizes⁴⁰ and similar efforts were made for Jewish school children in other non-Jewish schools.

It was, however, particularly difficult to guarantee the observance of religious requirements for Jewish children committed to industrial schools, which were not administered by voluntary managers in the same way. Children were usually sent to industrial schools by magistrates because they had committed a crime or as a result of their parents' criminal activities. Until the turn of the century the few Jewish children involved in crime or neglect were dealt with by existing communal institutions, but as the Jewish population grew so did this problem. In 1899, temporary arrangements were made with certain industrial schools to accommodate Jewish pupils, at the East London Industrial School for boys,⁴¹ and at the King Edward Industrial School for girls.⁴² The Jewish Association also agreed to assume responsibility for the after-care of Jewish girls from King Edward's, which largely consisted of providing lessons in cookery and domestic management to prepare them for domestic service.⁴³ But it proved impossible to safeguard the welfare of Jewish children in non-Jewish industrial schools because of the absence of Jewish

teachers. Anti-Semitism among both staff and inmates was also a problem. Prompted by an increase in the relatively small number of children committing indictable offences, the Hayes Industrial School for Jewish boys was founded in 1901.⁴⁴ The Jewish Association considered the possibility of admitting girls to the Domestic Training Home and finally reached the conclusion that there was a need for an industrial school for Jewish girls, following the example of the Hayes School for boys.⁴⁵

Both the Hayes School and Montefiore House, the industrial school for girls, were intended to provide the specifically Jewish education that was lacking in existing institutions. But Home Office supervision ensured that industrial schools adhered to strict regulations, so the regime at Hayes and at Montefiore House was very similar to that at other Christian and non-sectarian schools. For girls, there was a very clear emphasis on preparation for domestic service. However, Montefiore House obviously differed in the religious education provided there and great pains were taken to ensure that the girls received a satisfactory religious education and took part in daily prayers. Similar effort was made to safeguard the religious welfare of a number of Protestant children who were admitted to Montefiore House for a temporary stay in 1912. The 16 children received three lessons per week from a visiting minister and were taken to church and to Sunday school.⁴⁶

Montefiore House was the first Jewish school to be founded by a women's organisation. All of the other institutions, even the few separate girls' schools, were founded and largely administered by men and it is clear that Jewish women did not play a significant role in the early development of specifically Jewish education.⁴⁷ However, as Jewish women's organisations grew, they began to recognise the importance of both education and the

pastoral care of school-children, which again leads to the question of social control. Did the ladies of the larger organisations such as the Jewish Association share the views of their smaller predecessors such as the Ladies' Benevolent Institution and the Ladies' Conjoint Visiting Committee of the Jewish Board of Guardians? Furthermore, did they seek to collaborate with the men of the Anglo-Jewish communal organisations in using schools and the care of school children as a means of imposing their own brand of restrictive authority on the growing immigrant Jewish community? The problem of defining the issue of social control arises again here. To return to the different explanation offered by Williams, social control in these circumstances may be defined as the deliberate restriction of the opportunities available to the Jewish working class by philanthropic institutions, in order to prevent any attempts at upward social mobility and the implied threat this might pose to the respectability of the established Anglo-Jewish middle and upper middle classes.⁴⁸ The alternative view is that social control was far less sinister and merely refers to the means by which charitable organisations encouraged the Jewish working class to conform to proscribed standards so as to present a favourable picture to the outside world and thereby avoid arousing anti-Semitism.⁴⁹ The debate continues as to whether either theory accurately describes the actual state of affairs at the time. But certainly as far as the women of the various organisations in this study were concerned it is the latter view that seems to be more appropriate. Exploration of the policies behind Jewish women's involvement in the education of working class Jewish children will demonstrate this.

Certainly by teaching these children English, Anglo-Jewish schools ensured that the immigrant community would become increasingly anglicised,

thereby avoiding anti-Semitism and accusations of foreignness. But it was necessary for these children to learn English in order to survive in England, and avoid becoming 'ghettoised'. There is also plenty of evidence that much trouble was taken by Jewish schools to provide religious education for children in order to preserve their faith and the outward signs of their ethnicity against the onslaughts of British secularism and popular culture. So that while the supporting efforts of Jewish women in relation to the work of Jewish schools may be said to have hastened the acculturation process for immigrant Jewish children, the more serious allegations of social control do not hold weight, at least with regard to the women alone.

It seems clear that Jewish women did not collaborate with the men of the Anglo-Jewish community for the purpose of imposing crude social control on the immigrant population or to hasten the anglicisation process, although the latter did occur as a result of their efforts. As with other areas of philanthropy, female interest was governed by complex motives, so that if anglicisation had been a motive for Jewish women's work in education, it was definitely not the only factor of significance. The most obvious of these other considerations was gender solidarity. But, unlike other aspects of Jewish women's philanthropic work, the education of Jewish children was not a specifically female interest and was dominated by the men of the community who had been establishing Jewish schools since the eighteenth century. Thus women's work in education was expanding aspects of a field already well provided for by the male community.

Some individuals did seek to challenge traditional patterns of education within the Jewish community, influenced by changes in the field of education as a whole. Julia Cohen's encouragement of Jewish teachers and the financial

support of candidates for teacher training offered by the Union of Jewish Women demonstrate that attempts were being made to improve the education of Jewish girls. That most girls continued to receive a very limited education is an indicator of class barriers more than any other factor. The Jewish Association did no more than prepare the girls in its care for domestic service, because that was one of the few career possibilities open to them and because they were predominately drawn from the very poor working class whose future options were also extremely restricted socially. Many women charity workers were not undertaking pioneering work, but they were becoming increasingly aware of the unique contribution they could make to the education of Jewish children. The care of Jewish children was a blatant extension of middle class women's domestic role, and most women working in this area chose to expand the pastoral and religious sides of education, not yet dealt with by existing (male) charities. From these beginnings, however, some Jewish women took a step into the unknown by establishing girls' clubs and pioneering the club movement throughout the country.

III. The Jewish Girls' Club Movement.

Within the field of education for Jewish children, middle class women assumed a background role, concentrating on "women's issues" such as pastoral care and religious education. But they extended this role to far greater effect in the care of young people, particularly girls, after they had left school. The Jewish club movement began with the foundation of a girls' club by Lady Magnus in 1886, which moved to premises at Leman Street in 1903, from which it took its name, and the foundation of the West Central Club in 1885, by

Louisa Lady Rothschild. The Beatrice Club began in 1901, the Butler St Club in 1902, and many other clubs for Jewish girls followed. In her study of Jewish girls' clubs, Iris Dove refutes the surprise expressed by another writer that the very first Jewish club should have been formed for girls rather than boys.⁵⁰ She considers nineteenth century concerns about sexual morality and the White Slave Trade to have been influential in the creation of the Leman Street Girls' Club in 1886. Contemporary writing on the safety and protection offered by clubs supports this view, as does the emphasis of the first girls' clubs on religious instruction. As Lady Magnus told the *Jewish Chronicle*:

“[the clubs] are designed, in short to civilize and to spiritualize rather than to stimulate these keen-witted boys and girls, as, fresh from school discipline, they enter on their university of the streets.”⁵¹

The club movement was seen by many as a means of continuing to exert a positive influence on teenagers after they left school, and this was by no means an exclusively Jewish policy. Christian organisations such as the YMCA had already begun to pursue a similar goal by the 1880s.⁵² But with the added question of social control affecting every action taken by the Anglo-Jewish middle class, it is possible that the Jewish boys' and girls' club movements were governed by motives other than merely the exertion of “positive influence”. The idea of establishing clubs for working girls and boys who had recently left school was certainly adopted with alacrity by the Jewish community. It was thought that Jewish people might have been tempted to join Christian clubs such as the YMCA in order to benefit from the programme of events on offer there. The formation of Jewish clubs would therefore have been intended to provide similar activities within a positively Jewish environment.

The Jewish Lads' Brigade fits into this mould. It was founded in 1895, in direct response to the formation of Anglican and Non-conformist boys' brigades. The number of different sectarian organisations, including the Catholic Lads' Brigade which was formed in 1896, indicates that religion was an important aspect of their existence, and hence that no two organisations could compromise their beliefs by joining forces. The brigades encouraged their members to undertake voluntary work, contributing to society as well as bettering themselves.⁵³ This was particularly attractive to the Anglo-Jewish community which saw the Jewish Lads' Brigade as a means of exerting social authority and recruited middle class officers to lead the working class rank and file. But, like the other uniformed organisations, the Jewish Lads' Brigade was secular in operation. Beyond their religious affiliations the ethos of these groups was derived from the "cult of masculinity" that permeated much of public life in the nineteenth century.⁵⁴ Girls were entirely excluded from the general club movement until 1900, when the Presbyterian Girls' Guildry was formed in Scotland.⁵⁵ Indeed, the Jewish Lads' Brigade remained almost exclusively male until the 1950s, although a small number of women charity workers were enrolled as honorary members before this, including Nettie Adler and Hannah Hyam.

Although the muscular Judaism of the Jewish Lads' Brigade was exceptional, other boys' clubs were also concerned with the religious welfare of their members. The preservation of the Jewish faith among the young of the community was of the utmost importance to Anglo-Jewry, hence the wish to remove Jewish children from the possible proselytising influence of Christian clubs. It is equally possible that there was a desire among middle class Anglo-Jewry to protect Jewish children from the prospect of anti-Semitism by

creating Jewish clubs. Many of the Jewish clubs were also geographically placed in areas of the East End that were densely populated by Jews. Like other Jewish charitable foundations these clubs were therefore used almost exclusively by Jews, not just because of overt insularity but because those living in the catchment area for that particular institution happened to be Jews. Perhaps most importantly, there was a pressing need among the Jewish young, for clubs and their associated activities and by the turn of the century, the emphasis on religion had relaxed a little to include other activities.

The first Annual Report of the Butler Street Club, dated 1903, recorded that:

“The Object of the Club shall be to provide recreation and instruction for working girls living in the north-east and east of London.”⁵⁶

Within months of opening, the club had 196 members, with up to 100 attending at weekends. The girls were offered a variety of classes, including dress-making, embroidery and millinery, along with Hebrew, letter-writing, cookery, book-keeping, music and singing. There were also regular concerts and lectures, socials and games evenings. The emphasis was clearly on self-improvement and the development of skills that might prove useful in employment, and would certainly have helped to make Jewish teenagers both more presentable and more employable. Many clubs operated savings schemes and girls' clubs often acted as informal employment agencies, helping to place members in work and providing references for employers. Some girls' clubs also extended their duties to include visiting girls at home or in their place of work. The expansion of the girls' club movement from the early work of Lady Magnus and her ilk is amply illustrated by the work of Lily Montagu who became the most prominent of club workers.

Lily Montagu was born in 1873, to one of the foremost families of the Anglo-Jewish elite.⁵⁷ Her father was Samuel Montagu, later Baron Swaythling, who was one of the first Jewish MPs. She was educated at home to the limited standards of the day and was prepared from an early age for a life of philanthropic work by her mother, Ellen Cohen, as well as by her father, both of whom were well-known philanthropists. Lily Montagu and her sister Marian began their careers by giving evening classes for working girls, which inspired her to assume leadership of the West Central Girls' Club in 1893. The Club had been founded by Louisa Lady Rothschild in 1885.⁵⁸ Aged only nineteen, Lily Montagu was opposed in this by her parents who felt that she was taking on too big a project and was perhaps endangering herself by working in the East End.⁵⁹ In spite of this and the opposition of others, the club was a great success and Miss Montagu was the first of the Jewish club workers to begin to incorporate subjects other than religion and domestic skills into the club's activities.

Lily Montagu's policy in establishing the West Central Jewish Girls' Club was:

“to help the girls to realise a complete life, to realise their physical powers and powers of brain and hand and heart, their desire for service and their capacity for enjoyment”⁶⁰

Through her work with the Women's Industrial Council and the National Council of Women, Lily Montagu became increasingly aware of the needs of working girls, and strove to alleviate some of the problems they encountered. This process began with the introduction of classes and lectures designed to help girls improve their employment prospects. The club and its workers also took a great interest in the position of their members within the workforce with

regard to issues such as minimum wages, the health and safety of workers and government legislation on working hours and holidays.⁶¹ In 1919, a Day Settlement was opened in association with the West Central Club to provide education and advice for unemployed girls.⁶²

Lily Montagu also extended her work at the West Central Club to incorporate the entire girls' club movement.⁶³ She was a prominent member of the Girls' Club Sectional Committee of the National Union of Women Workers, which amalgamated with the Clubs' Industrial Association to form the National Organisation of Girls' Clubs in 1911, of which she became Chairman. Lily Montagu's work was significant in the world beyond the Jewish community, demonstrating both her own personal abilities as a philanthropist and the relatively tolerant nature of women's philanthropy as a whole.

As the most dynamic figure in a fast-developing field, Lily Montagu was clearly an exceptional person. In her prolific writing, she described "the joys of Club work as a vocation".⁶⁴ The many tributes written after her death record that her social work stemmed from her belief in serving God through caring for her fellow men, and her philanthropic work was inspiring evidence of her personal piety.⁶⁵ But Lily Montagu took her religious fervour far beyond the limits usually placed on Jewish women. At the age of fifteen she underwent a crisis of faith, realising that the orthodox Judaism espoused by her parents did not encompass her own beliefs.⁶⁶ Her philanthropy was a clear expression of her personal faith, which she later formalised in an article, "The Spiritual Possibilities of Judaism Today".⁶⁷ This article marked the beginnings of Liberal Judaism in Britain, and Progressive Judaism worldwide. (The

religious aspects of Lily Montagu's philanthropic work will be discussed in Chapter 5).

Lily Montagu was one of the most significant figures in Anglo-Jewish philanthropy during the first half of the twentieth centuries. Furthermore she made a major contribution to the global Jewish community. Beside her most other charity workers pale into insignificance. But it is obvious that Katie Magnus and countless other Jewish women were strongly influenced by their religion, both in their philanthropic work in general and in their specific use of the girls' club movement to provide religious education for others. Other factors influenced these women too, and although Lily Montagu was primarily motivated by her religious beliefs, she was also affected by these other influences. Class undoubtedly played an important part in prompting middle class philanthropic endeavours and there is a particularly striking element of *noblesse oblige* in the work of middle class philanthropists with working class children and teenagers. That the clubs offered much-needed educational and recreational facilities in the most deprived areas of London is without question, and these facilities were provided precisely because they were needed, regardless of any reasons of social manipulation or control. With reference to girls' clubs especially, the issue of gender was also significant. Middle class Jewish women were responding to the needs of working class girls, that were not being met by existing institutions nor by the newly-emerging boys' clubs:

“Girls need recreation and instruction and guidance just as much as their brothers; they too profit by continuous opportunities for well-doing”⁶⁸

Thus as the movement developed, clubs were able to assist Jewish children in many practical ways after they had left school, as well as

continuing their religious education and encouraging the observance of their faith.⁶⁹ But there was the additional, and by no means insignificant, benefit of being able to exert influence by more subtle means. The club leader at the Leman Street Girls' Club stated in her report for 1937:

“The direction of influence exerted in the lives of club members has seemed in many respects the most vital if the least spectacular [aspect of our work]. The personal contact of those supervising the club has been more significant in the lives of the girls than they themselves can know until later years. Managers have used many opportunities of exercising a stabilising influence and helping to give the girls a generous and tolerant outlook.”⁷⁰

Evidence of the use of their influence by middle class Jewish philanthropists does not add up to proof that these clubs were intended to be a means of social control, but this quote illustrates perfectly the fine line between “influence” and more questionable motives of authority and domination. Lily Montagu was the most successful exponent of “personal influence”:

“It is to this strong personal note that I attribute any success I may have had in dealing with girls. I quite admit that the strong personal influence must very gradually be transformed and merged into the influence of religion in order that it may be permanent, but I do not think we need be afraid of starting with the personal influence, which, after all, we ourselves have got through the help of our own religion; and we feel that God acts through us, although we are conscious of being such imperfect instruments.”⁷¹

Lily Montagu's intentions towards the girls in her care were entirely honourable and any suggestion of social control would be misplaced. Her aims were to serve God and to communicate her faith to others. But as the above quote shows, she was well aware of the power of her influence and was certainly not unwilling to use it, to this end. Others working for the girls' club

movement were motivated by positive factors such as religion, duty and by gender solidarity as well, but their goals and methods seem authoritarian in comparison. Lady Magnus' aim was to create:

“religious-minded, modest, well-mannered, good wives, who were old-fashioned enough to believe that marriage was the finishing touch and the best touch of all.”⁷²

This need not be interpreted as a policy of social control, but Lady Magnus clearly wanted to change the members of the Leman Street Club into her image of the perfect Jewish woman. Thus the preservation of the traditional role of the Jewish woman was an important factor behind the Jewish girls' club movement, and yet this was combined with a more realistic attitude towards the education and employment of working class women than had hitherto been held by charity workers.

This combination of tradition and progress encouraged widespread approval of the club movement by the Jewish community, largely because of its effectiveness as a means of influence and education. Middle class favour also stemmed from the fact that clubs were a successful means of segregating boys and girls. The administration of girls' clubs continued to be undertaken entirely by women and the membership remained exclusively female. Even where clubs existed in close proximity, as was the case at the Brady Settlement, the boys' and girls' clubs only met at occasional, highly supervised, social evenings. The managers of girls' clubs evidently considered contact with boys to be undesirable and in fact the emphasis of the club movement on self-improvement for girls, and the exclusion of boys, was criticised by some members of the Jewish community. It was not that these people wanted boys and girls to attend mixed clubs, but rather that the

encouragement of independence in girls was considered to be at odds with their future roles as wives and mothers. It was feared that girls might reject their traditional role altogether for the attractions of a career, and so girls' clubs attracted criticism from some sources.

Helen Lucas was an outspoken opponent of the club movement:

"If, instead of teaching our working girls to despise their homes, the promoters of these clubs would visit the girls they desire to benefit in these homes and encourage them to help their mothers, as they can do in various ways when their day's work is over, we should not want rescue homes and societies as alas! we do now."⁷³

This letter to the *Jewish Chronicle* in March 1898, prompted a number of editorials and letters in the Jewish press over the next two months, mostly taking the opposite view in favour of girls' clubs. There is no evidence that girls' clubs ever led a girl into prostitution. It seems likely that any girl inclined towards prostitution would have taken great pains to avoid the clubs, with their emphasis on religion and self-improvement. There is again no foundation in the suggestion that girls' clubs discouraged girls from marrying in later life. No evidence exists to show that Jewish club members had a lower rate of marriage than non-club members, or even that they married later, although definitive statistics are now impossible to calculate. There were various reasons for the decline in the marriage rate during the 1920s and 1930s, and it is extremely unlikely that Jewish girls who did not marry, failed to do so because of their membership of a girls' club. If girls did not marry it was usually because they did not have a man to marry: war and migration to other parts of the British Empire had reduced the number of young men living in Britain.⁷⁴ In fact, within the Anglo-Jewish community marriage rates remained high because Jewish men were less likely to emigrate, as first or

second-generation immigrants themselves.⁷⁵ It is also true that although girls' clubs may have encouraged a degree of independent thought among their members, they also continued to provide lessons in domestic skills and household management. More significantly, the clubs played a role in the development of sex education and the preparation of girls for motherhood through parentcraft classes.

The debate continues today as to whether sex education actually encourages the sexual activity and promiscuity that it is designed to prevent, but by the 1920s, various charities had begun to recognise that immorality among children was often the result of ignorance. The Jewish Association became involved in the issue as the result of several similar cases, including that of a girl of only 14 who had become pregnant by a boy aged 15.⁷⁶ With the best intent, the possibility of introducing sex education in schools was already being discussed by Local Education Authorities and the Ministry of Health, and by the National Council of Women, the Charity Organisation Society and other organisations.⁷⁷ In 1923, the National Society for the Welfare of Infants produced an educational pamphlet intended for distribution among schoolchildren and the Jewish Association, along with the League of Health, was invited to prepare a similar leaflet in Yiddish.⁷⁸ Alice Model and Dr Sarchi of the Infant Welfare Centre were recruited to join a team of lecturers visiting girls' clubs and other educational centres. These lectures were a significant addition to the lessons in childcare and social hygiene already provided by the girls' clubs, and they illustrate the surprisingly progressive nature of the girls' club movement as a whole. Equally significant is the level of communication and co-operation between Jewish and non-Jewish organisations over the contentious issue of sex education.

The importance of religion in the girls' club movement did not prevent Jewish girls' clubs from establishing links with non-Jewish organisations over other issues as well. Lily Montagu's example as Chairman of the National Organisation of Girls' Clubs paved the way for co-operation between all girls' clubs, especially in the campaign for improved working conditions for women. Other organisations also promoted links between Jewish and non-Jewish clubs. Girls attending the Stepney Jewish Girls' Club and Settlement formed their own Brownie and Guide Packs, and some were also members of the St John's Ambulance Association.⁷⁹ The Stepney Settlement started a branch of the Townswomens' Guild for the mothers of club members. As with many other aspects of their philanthropic work, shared interests and gender solidarity enabled Jewish women to overcome differences with non-Jewish women workers, in order to achieve greater success through joint effort and co-operation.

IV. Jewish Women's Organisations and Healthcare before 1914.

The development of Jewish girls' clubs coincided with the growth of the club movement in society as a whole. There were aspects of the Jewish girls' club movement that were unique, but the very idea of establishing clubs for teenagers was not exclusive to the Jewish community. So that, although innovatory within the community, in the arena of British society as a whole girls' clubs were largely imitative of Christian and non-sectarian organisations. By contrast, in the other field with which this chapter is concerned, healthcare, the work of Jewish women philanthropists was pioneering, both within the community and beyond. There was no one more significant in the field of

healthcare than Alice Model. She was described in an address given for her 70th birthday, as:

“the pioneer in the great campaign for Mother and Infant Welfare, a movement which [she] initiated over thirty years ago at the Sick Room Helps Society, and which has grown into an organisation with a worldwide reputation.”⁸⁰

Alice Model began her philanthropic career apprenticed to Mrs Henry Nathan, who had founded a training home for Jewish domestic servants in the 1860s.⁸¹ She then went on to work for the Jews' Temporary Shelter, the Ladies' Visitation Committee of the Jewish Board of Guardians, the Grocery Relief Fund and B'nai B'rith. She was a founder member of both the Jewish Association and the Union of Jewish Women, rising to become President of the latter in 1924, and gave her attention to numerous other charities, including the Butler Street Girls' Club. She was a pioneer in the development of the communal role of Jewish women, as she became one of the first women members of both the Jewish Board of Guardians⁸² and the Jewish Board of Deputies.⁸³ She promoted the role of Jewish women beyond communal boundaries as a member of the London County Council, which she joined in 1912, as a representative on the Provincial Committee.⁸⁴ But the cause closest to her heart was that of maternal and infant welfare.

One of the most innovative aspects of Alice Model's work was the foundation of the Sick Room Helps Society in 1895. In this she was ably supported by Bella Lowy, who, as the daughter of a clergyman, had begun her career in time-honoured fashion, taking Sabbath classes at the West London Synagogue.⁸⁵ Visiting families in the East End had brought the issue of maternal and infant welfare to Miss Lowy's attention as well and she joined

forces with Mrs Model to provide home helps for women, after childbirth or when they were ill.⁸⁶ The idea was inspired by the work of the Hauspflege Verein in Frankfurt, who had found that removing responsibility for the management of the household from mothers hastened their recovery and prevented some of the long-term health problems associated with inadequate convalescence. As has been explored in Chapter 3, the employment of older married or widowed Jewish women as home helps also alleviated some of the problems of poverty and unemployment among this sector of the Jewish community. A Provident scheme was set up, whereby each family could save as little as one penny a week, to enable poor Jews to contribute to the cost of having domestic help from the Sick Room Helps Society. The scheme raised £517 in 1904, and by 1918 the number of contributors had more than doubled to 5000, who collectively saved £1527.⁸⁷ From 1899, the Sick Room Helps Society also employed two trained nurses to visit women convalescing at home.⁸⁸ From the 27 cases seen during the first year of operation, the scheme had expanded to accommodate 1543 cases in 1904. By this time the Society was beginning to consider implementing its own training programme, because the demand for nurses was increasing. In the same year, new legislation was introduced for the registration and training of midwives. Funds were raised for three trainees, who were sent to the City Lying-in Hospital and to Plaistow District Nurses' Home. In 1906, the Sick Room Helps Society established a Nurses' Home for four trainees. The Society extended its work even further, in founding the Jewish Maternity Home, in 1911, which provided additional training places. The home quickly outgrew its accommodation and was eventually extended in 1927. The hospital continued to expand, although plans to build a new hospital were halted by the outbreak of the Second World War.

The importance of Alice Model's work in this field cannot be exaggerated. The "maintenance of the integrity of the home when the mother is laid by through sickness or during the lying-in period"⁸⁹ represented a major leap forward in the care of mothers and their babies, at a time when poor working class women were still being attended by untrained local women when they gave birth, often resuming their responsibilities within the household immediately afterwards. Maintaining the "integrity" of the Jewish household also entailed cooking *kosher* food and observing religious rituals, so that the Sick Room Helps Society was encouraging the continuation of religious observance, the most important aspect of Jewish women's domestic responsibility. The same development occurred at the Jewish Maternity Home, where mothers and trainee nurses were given *kosher* food, and religious holidays and requirements were strictly observed. This was of considerable importance given that all other hospitals were Christian foundations of some form or another, where mothers could not get the necessary *kosher* food and might even find themselves prey to the proselytising attentions of Christian missionaries. The Jewish Association actually had to investigate complaints that a Salvation Army hospital was attempting to convert Jewish patients, and there was a widespread fear among working class Jewish women about entering Christian hospitals.⁹⁰

The training of Jewish nurses equally ensured that women were treated, both in hospital and at home, by other Yiddish-speaking Jewish women. This was crucial when ethical problems arose and a choice had to be made between the life of the mother or her unborn child. According to Jewish law, the life of the mother should take precedence over that of the child,⁹¹ whereas Catholic doctrine advocates the preservation of the child's life at all costs.⁹² It was

equally important therefore to employ Jewish staff at the Jewish Maternity Home. Jewish women's organisations such as the Jewish Association often employed female doctors, because of their suitability in dealing with young girls and for reasons of gender solidarity. But the entire medical staff of the Jewish Maternity Home was male, as was the medical committee. This was probably due to the scarcity of female doctors as much as any discriminatory reasons, and it was still the case in 1936, which gives some indication of the extremely slow progress of women in the medical profession. The 1911 census had recorded 1253 women doctors, and their ranks had only grown to 2810 by 1921.⁹³ It is even more unlikely that there were many Jewish women doctors, and the Jewish Maternity Home's preference for Jewish medics therefore explains this situation. However, within the organisation as a whole Jewish women still held the upper hand, and in 1936 the hospital's Management Committee included 21 women and only 2 men.

The dominant role played by women in the establishment and management of the Sick Room Helps Society and the Jewish Maternity Home goes some way to explaining the success of the organisation. Alice Model's understanding of the differing requirements of Jewish women led to her unique contribution to Jewish philanthropy, and it is to her credit that her work specifically for Jewish women did not alienate non-Jews, but actually encouraged imitation. The home helps scheme initiated by the Sick Room Helps Society was the first of its kind in this country, and it was not until 1914 that a non-Jewish charity thought to implement a similar scheme. With the Charity Organisation Society's approval, the Central Committee on Women's Employment started to provide home helps for the general population in London.⁹⁴ The Sick Room Helps Society's district nursing scheme was also

highly regarded in philanthropic circles. It had begun with the employment of two nurses by Helen Lucas in the 1890s, who worked with the Jewish Board of Guardians visiting Jewish patients at home.⁹⁵ Responsibility for providing district nurses had then been assumed by the Sick Room Helps Society. Again the project had developed as the result of enormous demand, and district nursing was considered an important part of the training of nurses at the Jewish Maternity Hospital. Although district nursing was not an exclusively Jewish innovation, the work of these nurses among the Jewish community was cited as exemplary when the state began to assume responsibility for their work.

More innovative was the introduction of ante-natal care at the Jewish Maternity Home in 1918, which was especially effective in the reduction of both maternal and infant mortality. The hospital was one of the first to respond to government guidelines recommending the introduction of ante-natal care. But not only did the Jewish Maternity Home and the Sick Room Helps Society react quickly to government recommendations, their work in many ways pre-empted, or even inspired, the introduction of state regulations regarding the care of mothers and babies. Organisations such as the Union of Jewish Women were particularly supportive of the Sick Room Helps Society in helping to promote nursing as a career for Jewish women by giving funding to trainees. They also played a role in helping untrained midwives acquire training in later life and in guiding immigrant Jewish midwives whose foreign qualifications were not recognised in this country. With the assistance of other Jewish women's organisations the Sick Room Helps Society was extremely successful at preserving the best aspects of traditional maternity care, such as the support of local women for mothers at home, while conforming to the stringent

requirements of state regulation regarding the training and registration of midwives.

The highly successful work of the Sick Room Helps Society and the Jewish Maternity Home in caring for Jewish mothers naturally entailed the care of their babies as well. Jewish women were considered to be exemplary mothers, given the low rates of infant mortality within the Jewish community.⁹⁶ Outside agencies ascribed this to the Jewish mother's willingness to give up work early in her pregnancy, to breastfeed for several months and to the communal support available to the new mother and her baby. One of the earliest forms of help available to Jewish mothers was the East End Jewish Mothers' Meetings, which were started in 1895 by Mrs E. Jacobs and by Bella Lowy (who helped to found the Sick Room Helps Society in the same year). By 1898, as many as 50 women were attending twice-weekly meetings to receive advice and lessons in childcare and needlework.⁹⁷ The Mothers' Meetings Association, inspired by the example of the St Pancras' Mothers' School which had been founded in 1907, established the Jewish Mothers' Welcome and Infant Welfare Centre in 1908. The centre continued to offer informal advice to mothers, along with classes and lectures, but in addition, salaried health visitors were employed to visit mothers at home before and after the birth of their babies. During the 1920s, a doctor was employed to run regular clinics and a dispensary and creche were started. Imitating the success of the Jewish Mothers' Welcome Centre, the Jewish Maternity Home established its own Infant Welfare Centre in 1912.⁹⁸ A similar programme of lessons in hygiene, money management and needlework was offered to mothers. The Home also placed greater emphasis on health, running regular clinics for babies and children of all ages, and providing milk,

vitamins and dietary advice. Salaried and voluntary visitors were also employed. In 1926, the Jewish Association began its own Welcome Club for former residents of Charcroft House and their babies, offering advice and educational classes.⁹⁹ The Sick Room Helps Society also began to offer classes in household management and childcare, and its officers, including Alice Model, were much in demand to give similar classes in Jewish girls' clubs and schools, such as the Domestic Training Home and Montefiore House.

Educating working class Jewish women was an effective means of improving their children's health. But the absence of adequate childcare facilities meant that the children of working mothers often did not receive satisfactory care, regardless of the mother's level of education. The promotion of women's employment by the Union of Jewish Women also created an increased need for suitable child care. It was actually the Jewish Board of Guardians who first recognised the need for pre-school care for the children of working mothers, during the 1890s, which in turn led them to approach Mrs Model regarding the establishment of a Jewish nursery school.¹⁰⁰ Alice Model founded the Jewish Day Nursery in 1897 and with her customary success saw the the project flourish. With places for 24 children aged between 5 weeks and 4 years, total attendances for the second year of operation, 1898, came to 2723.¹⁰¹ However, these figures gave no indication of the large numbers of applications for places. In response to popular demand, by 1911, the nursery had doubled in size to more than 50 places and attendances for that year totalled 9128.¹⁰² A new kindergarten had been started for older children up to the age of 5, and the nursery had begun to provide lunches for expectant and nursing mothers. The nursery also met with criticism from certain sectors of the Jewish community, including Helen Lucas, who disapproved because she

felt that it might encourage mothers to work when they should be staying at home with their children.¹⁰³ However it was widely agreed that although it was desirable for mothers to remain with their children, a nursery was a necessary evil given the numbers of women forced to work as a result of economic hardship.

Here, as elsewhere, Jewish women were working in an area of traditional and conventional interest, but were injecting into their work a unique element of innovation. Furthermore, in establishing the Jewish Day Nursery the ladies involved were responding to the acute lack of childcare provision for working class Jews, indicating the definite sense of gender solidarity between Jewish mothers of all classes that permeated much of middle class women's work in the field. This suggests that the women's organisations had reached a greater degree of understanding of working class women's needs, in addition to the fact, of which charity workers were already well aware, that helping mothers was the best way to meet the needs of entire families, and future generations of Jews. But through supporting mothers and their children, and as a result of their work with Jewish school children, the women's organisations had become increasingly aware of the extreme hardship of those children who did not receive adequate parenting. Despite their original intention to concentrate only on helping Jewish women, even organisations like the Union of Jewish Women and the Jewish Association were forced to acknowledge the extent of the problem. Instead of passing the occasional cases that came to their attention onto the Jewish Board of Guardians as had been the policy until the turn of the century, by the time of the First World War, the Jewish Association had begun to assist such children itself.

V. Jewish Women's Organisations and Child Welfare.

The many different aspects of charity work in healthcare dealt with the individual, usually a Jewish woman or her child, in the context of the family. The Jewish Day Nursery with plenty of staff and creature comforts was intended to provide a surrogate family for children temporarily left by their mothers. Even the work undertaken in the field of education was intended to influence the whole family, particularly the family that each child would raise in the future. However, where this work failed to take effect was in those cases where the family had ceased to function. The religious significance of the family, and especially the mother's domestic role within the family, meant that family unity was revered in the Jewish community. But accident and disease robbed Jewish and non-Jewish families alike of parents and children. More specific to the Jewish experience was a high level of trans-migrancy. The father would often lead the way, migrating to the USA and having to earn the money to pay for the passage before the rest of the family could join him. Arrangements like this were usually temporary but some men did use this as a means of deserting their families. Economic hardship in circumstances such as these was a major cause of Jewish criminality, particularly among children and teenagers.¹⁰⁴ The rescue work of the Jewish Association demonstrated that Jewish prostitution was a problem during the earlier part of the period under investigation. It is also extremely unlikely that procuring and prostitution were the only crimes committed by Jews, so it can be reasonably assumed that the Anglo-Jewish community harboured a criminal population, albeit relatively small. Furthermore, crime and immorality themselves caused families to breakdown; if one or other of the parents was sent to prison, the problem of caring for the children arose.

During the nineteenth century these cases would have been dealt with by the Jewish Board of Guardians as and when they occurred. No particular policy appears to have been followed. By the beginning of the twentieth century the work of the Jewish Association had led Jewish women to become involved in similar cases. Initially reluctant to even accommodate the children of inmates at Charcroft House, the Association had relented by 1917 to the extent that a scheme had been established to allow some mothers to keep their babies with them.¹⁰⁵ This change of heart was prompted by a number of factors. There was a growing recognition among all sectors of the philanthropic world that a harsh and authoritarian approach to charity work was not always appropriate or successful. Practical matters, particularly during the First World War, also forced changes of policy. Booming employment opportunities for women in wartime reduced even further the limited number of foster mothers available to take on the children of Charcroft House inmates. Allowing girls to keep their babies with them was therefore the only option possible. Never before having considered the value of “the purifying influence of maternal love”,¹⁰⁶ at least with regard to the young mothers at Charcroft House, the Association was surprised by the success of the scheme. This small project did not lead directly to a large-scale interest in child welfare, but coupled with the Association’s work at Montefiore House, it helped to bring the issue to general notice.

The problems at Montefiore House were far more serious than the relatively minor question of fostering-out babies from Charcroft House. Girls at Montefiore House had either committed crimes themselves, or were the offspring of parents guilty of crime or neglect. It was therefore felt necessary, by both magistrates and the Jewish Association, to limit parental access to the

children, and occasionally to deny access altogether. Attempts were also made to avoid releasing girls into the care of their families when they left the school. But generally, the decision about removing a child from undesirable influence was taken by a magistrate, and the Jewish Association had a number of strict Home Office guidelines to follow regarding this matter.

Difficulties arose when the Association was forced to make similar decisions for itself. In 1922, the Cases Committee was informed by the London County Council of a child who was suffering from venereal disease and neglect.¹⁰⁷ There were insufficient grounds for her to be committed to an industrial school and the London County Council favoured placing her with a foster mother. The Association was asked to fund this placement because the child was Jewish. The Association also considered providing funds to enable the entire family to move to a better area, but eventually this plan was dropped because the parents were unable to prove that they were willing to reform. The Stepney Children's Rescue Committee also encountered a number of Jewish cases during the 1920s, and in 1926 approached the Jewish Association about setting up a formal scheme of referral, as no funds were available for the Stepney committee to deal with such cases.¹⁰⁸ Dora R was one of the children involved. She had no mother and was neglected by her father, while her two elder sisters were "causing trouble".¹⁰⁹ All of the agencies concerned, including the Jewish Board of Guardians, were in favour of removing Dora from her family and placing her with a foster mother. Cases like this forced the Jewish Association to think about extending its work to include child welfare. The employment of a worker to join the Stepney Committee was considered, but the idea was rejected because without full control over the work of the Committee, any adverse publicity about the worker's performance would

reflect badly on the Association. Instead, after further consideration, a Children's Committee was formed in 1927.¹¹⁰

The work of the Children's Committee continued in similar fashion. Funds were found for a children's worker, a probation worker and for more foster parents. In addition, the Jewish Association sought to formalise the occasional visits being made by its members to the Jewish girls in Borstal, in Aylesbury.¹¹¹ The Association had been visiting adult prisoners at Aylesbury Women's Prison for many years, and through her work there Lady Battersea had become one of the first Home Office-appointed prison visitors and a member of the Aylesbury Prison Board.¹¹² Following her example a number of ladies, including Alice Model and Nettie Adler, had begun visiting the younger girls at Aylesbury. In 1928 they sought Home Office recognition and permission to arrange for religious education to be provided for the girls there. Later the same year, the Jewish Association was allowed to assume responsibility for the after-care of Jewish girls released from Aylesbury.¹¹³

The involvement of the Jewish Association in issues of child welfare went against all the principles first established by the organisation in the 1880s. The Association had been adamant about the limits of its work, refusing to make more than minimal provision even for the offspring of Charcroft House residents. These children were farmed out to foster parents. The change of heart that occurred during the early years of the twentieth century demonstrates yet again that the members of the Jewish Association, like the ladies of most other Jewish women's organisations, had created their charity in direct response to the needs of working class Jews, especially women, and that they continued to respond to these needs as they too altered over the period of this study. So that although other motives undoubtedly governed middle class

philanthropy, altruism and gender solidarity continued to play an important role in the development of the various women's organisations.

On a more practical level, the Jewish Association was also responding to requests for help from official sources, including the Jewish Board of Guardians, the NSPCC and other children's charities. This is further evidence of the high profile and well-respected position the Jewish Association held within the world of philanthropy. Equally, the Association was well-received by Aylesbury Prison and by the Home Office when approaches were made regarding visiting and providing after-care for Jewish inmates. It was clearly recognised by both the Association itself and by many outside sources that the Jewish Association was extremely well-equipped, in terms of experience and resources, to deal with the growing problems of child welfare. Indeed, this extension of the Association's maternal role seemed entirely appropriate, to those within and outside the organisation.

VI. Conclusions.

The example of the Jewish Association's Children's Committee illustrates one of the major changes that occurred in Jewish women's philanthropy in the fields of education and healthcare over the period being studied. It also demonstrates one of the most significant constant factors of their work - above all, a concern for the welfare of Jewish women and children, whatever their situation. The care of Jewish women and their children was a consistent concern for middle class women charity workers from the outset. But, as the example of the children of Charcroft House inmates shows, before the 1920s this concern had been tempered with a number of other interests.

Fear of anti-Semitism drove women philanthropists to adopt a moralising and authoritarian attitude towards the recipients of their charity. Harking back to the discussion of their motives in Chapter 1, it is debatable whether philanthropists were more concerned for the welfare of the needy or with the public image of the Anglo-Jewish community. The evidence of women's charity work suggests that a genuine consideration for the needs of poor Jews, especially women, was a unique characteristic of their involvement in communal philanthropy. But that does not automatically preclude a policy of self-interest, of preserving the good name of the community as a whole, and particularly its respectable middle class. Placing former prostitutes within the confines of a residential home was certainly an efficient way of addressing both aspects of the problem, providing for the girls' welfare and removing them from public sight. However, although it may be agreed that lady philanthropists were governed by a number of sometimes conflicting motives, their success in the fields of education and healthcare cannot be denied.

Jewish women charity workers were clearly highly successful in education and healthcare, as they were in their other fields of interest. But discrepancies appear in the comparison of these two aspects of philanthropy. Both healthcare and education were perceived as the most conventional and respectable areas of philanthropy and thus provided the means of entry into charity work for the majority of the ladies studied here. However, in the field of education this conformist approach prevailed throughout the period under investigation. Thus the only innovations brought to this area by women workers were Sabbath schools and religious education classes. These classes imitated the well-established Sunday schools run by Christian women and usually operated in conjunction with synagogues or Jewish schools. Similarly

the provision of after-care for school children and other welfare arrangements for children could not be described as an innovation. Jewish women did make a major impact on the club movement, which may be loosely defined as an aspect of education. In fact, Jewish women helped to create the club movement, particularly for girls, where Lily Montagu played such an important part. Existing communal institutions had failed to recognise the need for education and recreation among girls who had completed their schooling. Women workers were, therefore, free to implement their own ideas, bringing insight and expertise to the newly developing girls' club movement.

The variety of pioneering developments introduced into the field of healthcare by Jewish women philanthropists represent an even more dramatic expansion of charity work. Alice Model was undoubtedly the leading figure in this field and her work, in founding the Sick Room Helps Society and the Jewish Maternity Hospital, brought about a major improvement in the care of Jewish women and their new-born babies. She extended this care, through the Infant Welfare Centre, to include all pre-school children, thus ensuring that in families where a new baby was born almost annually, the ex-baby of the family also continued to receive medical attention. The success of these various organisations prompted imitation by non-Jewish charities and, more significantly, encouraged the government to make vast improvements in state provision for the welfare of all mothers and children.

Alice Model's work was remarkably innovative and its inspirational effects may clearly be surmised from the fact that it was imitated by so many other agencies. It certainly seems appropriate, therefore, to attribute the introduction of exciting developments in the field of healthcare to the efforts of a number of individuals, of whom Alice Model was the most prominent.

The Jewish Board of Guardians approached Mrs Model about establishing a nursery for Jewish children, which further demonstrates that she was one of the foremost workers in the field. But enlightened and creative individuals could be found in every field of Jewish charity work, so the efforts of Alice Model do not fully explain why the field of healthcare saw such exciting innovations, particularly in comparison with education, where Jewish women workers did not make a major impression, throughout the period of this study. It has been shown that the field of education was already dominated by men by the mid-nineteenth century, when Jewish women's organisations began to take an interest. The provision made by male-run institutions was more than adequate and women philanthropists found that their contribution to the field was, therefore, limited. However, within the field of healthcare philanthropic provision in the Jewish community was woefully inadequate. Indeed, in society as a whole, proper medical care was often only available to those who could pay for it, and even in established medical institutions standards varied considerably. The charitable institutions that did exist for the working classes were, almost without exception, Christian foundations of various denominations. There was a desperate need for improved healthcare provision for the Jewish working class, if only to remove Jews from the possibly proselytising influence of Christian charities. Alice Model and her co-workers therefore found far greater scope for their talents in the field of healthcare, and did not antagonise existing Jewish charities in introducing somewhat radical new ideas in philanthropy. This was also true of the other fields of charity work where the Jewish women's organisations achieved significant success. Thus, in healthcare, as in rescue work and women's education, the success of the Jewish women's organisations was attributable to the inspiring efforts of

the workers themselves, but also to the absence of existing organisations working in those areas. This lack of communal provision was caused by the failure of the Anglo-Jewish community to recognise the specific needs of Jewish women. It was again the unique contribution of the Jewish women's organisations to bring their enlightened views on gender solidarity and innovative philanthropy to the world of healthcare. The limiting effects of male-run communal organisations may be clearly seen in the small scale achievements of Jewish women in the field of education. The next chapter explores the role of the Jewish women's organisations in the exclusively male province of religion and politics, where restrictionist policies had to be overcome before women could even enter the field.

¹ *Jewish Chronicle*, 14 March 1902.

² *Jewish Chronicle*, 25 April 1902.

³ Union of Jewish Women, Meeting of the Million Shilling Fund, 17 October 1920, University of Southampton (hereafter SUA), C/6/1.

⁴ See Burman, Rickie, "Jewish women and the household economy in Manchester c.1890-1920", in D. Cesarani (ed.), *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry*, Oxford, 1990, pp.55-78.

⁵ *Jewish Chronicle*, 7 March 1902.

⁶ Neff, Wanda, *Victorian Working Women*, London, 1929, pp.178-180.

⁷ Roach, John, *Secondary Education in England 1870-1902: Public Activity and Private Enterprise*, London, 1991, p.235 and passim. See also Burstyn, Joan, "Women's education in England during the nineteenth century: a review of the literature 1970-1976", *History of Education*, 6 (1977), pp.11-19; idem., *Victorian Education and the Ideal of Womanhood*, London, 1980; Dyhouse, Carol, "Social Darwinistic ideas and the development of women's education", *History of Education*, 5 (1976), pp.41-58; idem., "Good wives and little mothers: social anxieties and the schoolgirls' curriculum 1890-1920", *Oxford Review of Education*, 3 (1977), pp.21-35; idem., *Girls Growing Up in Late Victorian and Edwardian England*, London, 1981; Hunt, M.F. (ed.), *Lessons for Life: The Schooling of Girls and Women 1850-1950*, Oxford, 1987; Pederson, J., *The Reform of Girls' Secondary and Higher Education in Victorian England: a Study of Elites and Educational Change*, New York, 1987.

⁸ Wills, Stella, "The Anglo-Jewish contribution to the education movement for women in the nineteenth century", *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society*, xvii (1951-2), pp. 269-281.

⁹ Josephs, Zoe, *Minerva or Fried Fish in a Sponge Bag: The Story of a Boarding School for Jewish Girls*, Birmingham, 1993, p.9.

¹⁰ Butler Street Girls' Club, *Annual Report*, 1903, Tower Hamlets Library, 360.1.

¹¹ Lawrence, Christopher, *Medicine in the Making of Modern Britain 1700-1920*, London, 1994, pp.19-20.

¹² See Bell, E.M., *Storming the Citadel: The Rise of the Woman Doctor*, London, 1953; L'Esperance, Jean, "Doctors and women in nineteenth century society: sexuality and role", in J. Woodward and D. Richards (eds.), *Healthcare and Population. Medicine in Nineteenth*

Century England: Essays in the Social History of Medicine, London, 1977, pp.105-127; Donnison, Jean, *Midwives and Medical Men: A History of the Struggle for the Control of Childbirth*, London, 1988.

¹³ Bermant, Chaim, *The Cousinhood: The Anglo-Jewish Gentry*, London, 1971, pp.279-280.

¹⁴ *Jewish Chronicle*, 11 April 1902.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Kuzmack, Linda, *Woman's Cause: The Jewish Woman's Movement in England and the United States 1881-1933*, Columbus, 1990, p.86.

¹⁷ *Jewish Chronicle*, 28 February 1902.

¹⁸ *Jewish Chronicle*, 9 May 1902.

¹⁹ *Jewish Chronicle*, 18 April 1902.

²⁰ *Jewish Chronicle*, 25 April 1902.

²¹ See Summers, Anne, "A home from home - women's philanthropic work in the nineteenth century", in S. Burman (ed.), *Fit Work for Women*, London, 1979, pp.33-63.

²² Lipman, V.D., *Social History of the Jews in England 1850-1950*, London, 1954, p.47-49.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Black, Eugene, *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry 1880-1920*, Oxford, 1988, p.112.

²⁵ Union of Jewish Women, General Committee, 27 May 1903, SUA, MS129 A/1.

²⁶ Battersea, Constance, *Reminiscences*, London, 1924, p.102; Rothschild, Annie and Rothschild, Constance, *The History and Literature of the Israelites*, London, 1870; Letter from Disraeli to Constance Rothschild, 17 July 1870, British Library, Battersea Papers, Add. 47911, vol iii.

²⁷ *Jewish Chronicle*, 18 April 1902.

²⁸ *Jewish Chronicle*, 11 April 1902; Magnus, K., *Outlines of Jewish History*, London, 1885, which was the most widely used elementary textbook on Jewish history for many years. Lady Magnus also wrote "Jewish Portraits", a series of articles which appeared in several magazines during the 1880s and 1890s; and idem., *First Makers of England*, London, 1901;

idem., *Light on the Way*, n.d., a collection of devotional writings; as well as countless articles and poems, which were regularly published in the Jewish press.

²⁹ *Jewish Chronicle*, 20 June 1902; Nina Davis was most well-known for her translations of Hebrew religious and secular poetry into English, and for a number of articles, including "An aspect of Judaism in 1901", *Jewish Quarterly Review*, (1901).

³⁰ *Jewish Chronicle*, 9 and 23 May 1902; Bella Lowy was also famous for translations, including Graetz's *History of the Jews* and Errera's *Russian Jews*. Nettie Adler wrote about the needs of the Jewish community, for example, "Jewish life and labour in East London", in Smith, H. Llewellyn, *The New Survey of London Life and Labour*, volume vi, London, 1934.

³¹ *Jewish Chronicle*, 7 March 1902.

³² Ibid.

³³ Union of Jewish Women, General Committee, 4 November 1912, SUA, MS129 A/2.

³⁴ Union of Jewish Women, Executive Committee, 3 December 1902, SUA, MS129 B/1.

³⁵ Black, *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry*, p.108.

³⁶ Kuzmack, *Woman's Cause*, p.11; and Lipman, *Social History of the Jews in England*, p.48.

³⁷ *Jewish Chronicle*, 16 May 1902.

³⁸ Union of Jewish Women, General Committee, 7 June 1905 and 14 May 1907, SUA, MS129 A/1.

³⁹ Black, *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry*, p.105 and pp.104-132 passim.

⁴⁰ Union of Jewish Women, General Committee, 22 June 1909, SUA, MS129 A/1.

⁴¹ Black, *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry*, p.238.

⁴² Jewish Association, General Committee, 8 November 1899, SUA, MS173 2/1/3.

⁴³ Jewish Association, General Committee, 8 Nov 1899 and 5 April 1900, SUA, MS173 2/1/3.

⁴⁴ Black, *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry*, pp.239-240.

- ⁴⁵ Jewish Association, Council, 14 December 1902, SUA, MS173 2/3/1.
- ⁴⁶ Jewish Association, Montefiore House Committee, 13 Feb 1912, SUA, MS173 2/8/4.
- ⁴⁷ Lipman, *Social History of the Jews in England*, p.48.
- ⁴⁸ Williams, Bill, "The anti-Semitism of tolerance", in A. Kidd and K. Roberts (eds.), *City, Class and Culture*, Manchester, 1987, pp.74-102, passim.
- ⁴⁹ Black, *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry*, pp.71-103.
- ⁵⁰ Dove, Iris, "Way of Life: the West Central and East End working girls' clubs 1880-1939", unpublished paper given to the London Museum of Jewish Life, June 1991, p.2-3.
- ⁵¹ *Jewish Chronicle*, 12 December 1902.
- ⁵² General works on youth movements in Britain include Wilkinson, Paul, "English youth movements 1908-1930", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 4 (1969), pp.3-23; and Springhall, John, *Youth, Empire and Society: British Youth Movements 1883-1940*, London, 1977. There is little on the Jewish experience apart from Bunt, Sidney, *Jewish Youth Work in Britain: Past, Present and Future*, London, 1975; with the notable exception of Kadish, Sharman, *'A Good Jew and a Good Englishman': The Jewish Lads' and Girls' Brigade 1895-1995*, London, 1995.
- ⁵³ Kadish, *A Good Jew and a Good Englishman*, p.38.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.161.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.155.
- ⁵⁶ Butler Street Girls' Club, *Annual Report*, 1903, Tower Hamlets Library, 360.1.
- ⁵⁷ *The Times*, 24 January 1963.
- ⁵⁸ Kuzmack, *Woman's Cause*, p.13.
- ⁵⁹ Dove, "Way of Life", p.3.
- ⁶⁰ Montagu, Lily, *My Club and I: the Story of the West Central Girls' Club*, London, 1950, p.72.
- ⁶¹ Report on the West Central Club, *Girls' Club News 1911-1981*, April 1912, London Museum of Jewish Life, 9-1990/11.

- ⁶² *The Times*, 24 January 1963.
- ⁶³ Dove, "Way of Life", p.3.
- ⁶⁴ Report on the West Central Girls' Club, *Girls' Club News*, 1912, London Museum of Jewish Life, 9-1990/2.
- ⁶⁵ Levy, N.G., "Lily Montagu and the West Central Club", *Liberal Jewish Monthly*, Memorial Supplement, February 1963, p.12.
- ⁶⁶ *The Guardian*, 24 April 1964.
- ⁶⁷ Montagu, Lily, "The Spiritual Possibilities of Judaism Today", *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 1899, pp.216-231. Lily Montagu's collaboration with Claude Montefiore and their role in the Liberal movement will be explored in Chapter 5.
- ⁶⁸ Report on the West Central Girls' Club, *Girls' Club News*, 1912, London Museum of Jewish Life, 9-1990/2.
- ⁶⁹ See Lipman, *Social History of the Jews in England*, pp.149-151, on the process of "Judaization".
- ⁷⁰ Leman Street Girls' Club, *Annual Report*, 1937-8, Tower Hamlets Library, 360.1.
- ⁷¹ *Girls' Club News 1911-1981*, London Museum of Jewish Life, 9-1990/11.
- ⁷² Dove, "Way of Life", p.2.
- ⁷³ *Jewish Chronicle*, 29 March 1898; cited in Black, *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry*, p.137.
- ⁷⁴ Summerfield, Penny, *Women Workers in the Second World War*, London, 1984, p.13.
- ⁷⁵ Smith, *The New Survey of London Life and Labour*, p.110.
- ⁷⁶ Jewish Association, General Purposes Committee, 17 January 1923, SUA, MS173 2/4/2.
- ⁷⁷ Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, Executive Committee, 23 July 1920, Fawcett Library, 4/AMS, Box 42.
- ⁷⁸ Jewish Association, General Purposes Committee, 17 January 1923, SUA, MS173 2/4/2.
- ⁷⁹ Stepney Jewish Girls' Club and Settlement, *What We Have Done; What We Are Doing; What We Intend To Do*, May 1947, Tower Hamlets Library, 360.1.

⁸⁰ Union of Jewish Women, Address to Alice Model on her 70th Birthday, November 1926, SUA, MS129 D/7.

⁸¹ Ibid.; see also Papers concerning Alice Model, 1927, Hertz Papers, SUA, MS175/42/9.

⁸² *Jewish Chronicle*, 17 May 1914.

⁸³ *Jewish Chronicle*, 14 March 1922.

⁸⁴ *Jewish Chronicle*, 30 April, 1943.

⁸⁵ *Jewish Chronicle*, 9 May 1902.

⁸⁶ Abrahams, Jennifer, "The Sick Room Helps Society", unpublished paper given to the London Museum of Jewish Life, n.d.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Jewish Maternity Home, *Annual Report*, 1936, Tower Hamlets Library, 621.15.

⁸⁹ *Charity Organisation Review*, 1914, p.187; cited in Marks, Lara, "'Dear Old Mother Levy's': The Jewish Maternity Home and Sick Room Helps Society 1895-1939", *Social History of Medicine*, 3 (1990), p.76.

⁹⁰ Jewish Association, General Purposes Committee, 4 February 1925, SUA, MS173 2/4/2; Marks, "Dear old Mother Levy's", p.73

⁹¹ Ibid..

⁹² St. Alphonsus Liguori, *Theologia Moralis* III, n.394; Marks, Lara, *Model Mothers: Jewish Mothers and Maternity Provision in East London 1870-1939*, Oxford, 1994, p.93

⁹³ Beddoe, Deidre, *Back to Home and Duty: Women Between the Wars 1918-1939*, London, 1989, p.77.

⁹⁴ Marks, "Dear old Mother Levy's", p.66.

⁹⁵ *Jewish Chronicle*, 14 March 1902.

⁹⁶ Marks, *Model Mothers*, p.46.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p.117.

- ⁹⁸ Jewish Maternity Home, *Annual Report*, 1936, Tower Hamlets Library, 621.15.
- ⁹⁹ Jewish Association, General Purposes Committee, 1 December 1926, SUA, MS173 2/4/2.
- ¹⁰⁰ Abrahams, Jennifer, "The Alice Model Nursery", paper given to the London Museum of Jewish Life, 1990.
- ¹⁰¹ Jewish Day Nursery, *Annual Report*, 1898, London Museum of Jewish Life, 68-1993/4.
- ¹⁰² Jewish Day Nursery, *Annual Report*, 1911, London Museum of Jewish Life, 68-1993/2.
- ¹⁰³ Black, *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry*, pp.83-84; see also *Jewish Chronicle*, 14 March 1902.
- ¹⁰⁴ See Tobias, J.J., *Crime and Industrial Society in the Nineteenth Century*, London, 1967, pp.78-96; also Holmes, Colin, "East End crime and the Jewish community 1887-1911", in A. Newman (ed.), *The Jewish East End 1840-1939*, London, 1981, pp.109-124.
- ¹⁰⁵ Jewish Association, Council, 6 December 1917, SUA, MS173 2/3/2.
- ¹⁰⁶ *Jewish Guardian*, 7 November 1919.
- ¹⁰⁷ Jewish Association, General Purposes Committee, 30 November 1922, SUA, MS173 2/4/2.
- ¹⁰⁸ Jewish Association, General Purposes Committee, 7 July 1926, SUA, MS173 2/4/2.
- ¹⁰⁹ Ibid.
- ¹¹⁰ Jewish Association, General Purposes Committee, 4 March and 6 April 1927, SUA, MS173 2/4/2.
- ¹¹¹ Jewish Association, General Purposes Committee, 1 February 1928, SUA, MS173 2/4/2.
- ¹¹² *Jewish Chronicle*, 4 April 1902; see also Cohen, Lucy, *Lady de Rothschild and her Daughters 1821-1931*, London, 1935, pp.312-314.
- ¹¹³ Jewish Association, General Purposes Committee, 6 June 1928, SUA, MS173 2/4/2.

Chapter 5

Religion and Politics

I. Introduction.

This study, by covering such a vast chronology, inevitably, offers only limited space for each subject. Even such topics as politics and religion are of necessity coupled together. This means that certain aspects of each subject are dealt with only briefly or are omitted completely. For this reason, middle class Jewish women's involvement in the Zionist movement has not been included in this chapter. The subject of Jewish women's involvement in Zionism warrants an entire thesis to itself, particularly because a number of women made a significant contribution to the movement, Rebecca Sieff being the most prominent. This absence is, however, countered by Rosalie Gassman-Sher's history of the Federation of Women Zionists which provides excellent coverage of the subject.¹ Another reason for avoiding the topic of Zionism is the women's organisations themselves. They coped with the enormous variety of religious beliefs held by their many members by ignoring potentially contentious religious and political issues and concentrating on matters of philanthropy, on which they generally agreed.

This policy will be explored in further detail later on in this chapter. Similar factors governed the stance taken by Jewish women's organisations on party political issues. The opinions of individuals obviously varied, and so party politics were not discussed within different charities. However, as will be shown in due course, some organisations did endeavour to support the cause of women's suffrage. This may be assumed to have been a policy decision taken

with the democratic support of the entire organisation. The purpose of this chapter, despite the above disclaimer, is to show that Jewish women philanthropists became involved in political life through their charity work. However, it was parliamentary lobbying, local government and communal politics that were to occupy these women, rather than party politics. Similarly, with regard to religion, Jewish women became more involved in the practice of Judaism, as a result of philanthropy, but this did not extend to major changes in their religious role, with the notable exception of women's status in Progressive Judaism.

II. Women's Role in Religion and Politics.

The statistics regarding marriage and employment rates among women in Britain in the late nineteenth century help to explode the myth that the vast majority of women devoted themselves solely to the management of the household. In fact, 31.6% of women worked outside the home in 1901, forming 29.1% of the total labour force.² These figures do not include the women who worked 'invisibly' within the confines of their own homes so that, in reality, the female workforce was even larger than the statistics suggest. Moreover, around 30% of women were single at the turn of the century and another 10% were widowed.³ Martin Pugh uses these statistics³ to suggest that women of all classes, far from living lives of quiet domestic contentment, were forced into public life in much the same way as they were forced into paid employment; that is, of necessity.⁴ A small number of women realised that it was only by entering the political arena that they could bring about significant and necessary change in the circumstances of all women. Not surprisingly, it

was leisured, middle class women who led the way into politics. It could be argued that the ordinary working woman had most to gain from political activity, but it was only wealthy, middle class women who had the time and funds to take on such a cause, and perhaps most significantly, they had the social position and unshakeable respectability to ensure that their involvement in political campaigning did not do irreparable damage to their personal reputations.

This was of considerable importance given the nature of the causes that occupied the first political campaigners in the nineteenth century. In 1856, a notorious divorce case prompted a number of middle class ladies to form the Langham Place group and the very first issue to concern them was divorce law reform. The efforts of women campaigners helped to secure property rights for women under the Married Women's Property Acts of 1870 and 1882, and rights concerning the custody of children in 1873, and judicial separation and maintenance in 1878.⁵ Women won the right to vote for local government in 1869, and were active in promoting the rise in the age of consent to 16, in 1885. Josephine Butler led the vociferous campaign that brought about the repeal of the 1860s' Contagious Diseases Acts in 1886. At the same time new educational opportunities were becoming available as schooling for girls improved and the ladies of Langham Place sought to improve education for girls, and particularly to encourage universities to accept women students. One of their number, Emily Davies, braved a storm of protest to establish the first college for women at Cambridge University, later Girton College.⁶ Educational improvements in turn affected employment prospects, and by the beginning of the twentieth century, women were beginning to enter new areas of employment; the clerical and secretarial sector expanded most rapidly, but

small numbers of women had begun to infiltrate the financial sector and even the professions.⁷

These women workers, along with the ladies of Langham Place and other political campaigners were very much in the minority, although that is not to deny the success of their efforts during the latter half of the nineteenth century. In spite of the progress made by these few early pioneers of the women's movement, the majority of women remained uninvolved in any aspect of political life in Britain. This was particularly true for the women of the Jewish community. Jewish men had only been enfranchised for a relatively short period of time, since the 1860s, and anti-semitism still restricted their political opportunities. For Jewish women the religious and cultural ties that bound them to domesticity also served to keep women firmly outside the limited Jewish political arena. The one notable exception was Louisa, Lady Goldsmid, who became one of the ladies of Langham Place in the mid-1860s, as a result of her friendship with Emily Davies and their shared interest in the education of women.⁸ The Goldsmid family was a wealthy member of the Anglo-Jewish elite, supporting the community and its institutions alongside other prominent families, and moving in the highest social circles, both Jewish and non-Jewish. The Goldsmids were also leading members of the Reform movement in England, and had helped to found the West London Synagogue in 1840.

Despite the radical example of the German Reform movement, English Reform Judaism reflected the conservative nature of the Anglo-Jewish community in both the mild manner in which reform was effected and in the reforms themselves. Initially the Reform movement was considered outrageous by the convention-bound community, with its emphasis on the

simplicity of the religious service and the expression of personal piety.⁹ But eventually, Reform Judaism became an accepted part of Anglo-Jewish life, exerting a considerable social, rather than religious, influence on the community. A highly significant aspect of the Reform movement was however the religious freedom it offered to Jewish women, in which Lily Montagu later played a leading role. Louisa, Lady Goldsmid, did not share Lily Montagu's religious vocation, but in the atmosphere of tolerance and encouragement that permeated Reform Judaism, she found the freedom to adopt her own favoured causes, chief among these being education for women. She was, however, a wise exponent of tactical manoeuvring, as well as vociferous public campaigning. When Emily Davies' plans to found a women's college met with enormous opposition, Louisa, Lady Goldsmid, although relatively radical by the standards of the Anglo-Jewish community, advised caution and encouraged Miss Davies to distance the education issue from the even more radical campaign for women's suffrage.

This apparent caution was an expedient tactic and it did not prevent Lady Goldsmid from adopting another unorthodox cause. She joined the Women's Protective and Provident League (later the Women's Trade Union League) in the early 1880s, campaigning for fair wages for women and other employment rights. Her involvement in the trade union movement brought the plight of immigrant Jewish workers to the notice of other campaigners, and drew Jewish and non-Jewish workers together through their shared cause. In 1880, the East London Tailoresses' Union was formed, the majority of its membership being Jewish. It became affiliated to the Amalgamated Society of Tailors, which was one of the few unions to admit women. Their work focused on the welfare and education of workers, as well as on increasing wages,¹⁰ and

Louisa, Lady Goldsmid lent her support, raising the profile of their cause as well as fund-raising.¹¹ In addition to these highly-publicised activities, she was a generous benefactor to more conventional causes, such as the Jewish Association, and continued the Goldsmid family's special interest in Jewish schools.

Before the turn of the century, Louisa, Lady Goldsmid remained unique among Anglo-Jewry. Her political concerns may have been shared by other Jewish women, and Jewish women workers certainly sought the same goals regarding the improvement of wages and working conditions,¹² but on the whole no other Jewish woman occupied such a position of prominence in the political arena until well into the twentieth century. The Jewish women's organisations that provide the main focus for this study reflected the views of the vast majority of Jewish women in their lack of interest, and in some cases, deliberate avoidance, of political issues. Arguably, some of the philanthropic concerns of these charities, the Jewish Association in particular, were of a political nature. The impositions of the Contagious Diseases Acts in the 1860s had not eradicated venereal disease, nor in any way reduced the numbers of prostitutes working in Britain's towns,¹³ and, as Jewish and non-Jewish rescue workers soon discovered, the question of prostitution and White Slavery could not be solved by the alleviation of the social problems of the individual. Deep-rooted social inequalities and the desperation of poverty could not be solved by amateur philanthropists, however skilled. Thus the very nature of their work brought some Jewish women's organisations into the political arena.

III. Political Activity among the Jewish Women's Organisations.

The Jewish Association restricted its political activities to issues strictly relevant to its philanthropic work. That qualification did not stop the ladies of the Association from vociferously supporting their favoured causes, with some success. In 1902, the Jewish Association responded to a Bill being put before the Lords that would place laundries in institutions under the jurisdiction of the Factories Act. This would have required institutional laundries run by charities such as the Jewish Association to conform to strict health and safety regulations that were expensive to implement, and were excessive and unnecessary in these circumstances. As the purpose of institutional laundries was to occupy and train former prostitutes, they were more akin to reformatories or industrial schools rather than ordinary laundries or factories. The Jewish Association therefore suggested to the Home Office that they might be better placed under their Reformatory and Industrial Schools branch instead, and this suggestion was successfully implemented.¹⁴ The Jewish Association also made public its opinions on other practical matters which affected its employees and institutions, such as the 1911 Insurance Bill, and legislation on employee pension rights.

But the main political interests of the Jewish Association involved the rights and welfare of women and children. The creation of the Jewish Association had coincided with the campaign for the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885, whereby the age of consent for girls was raised to sixteen.¹⁵ But although the raising of the age of consent for girls was considered by many organisations, including the Jewish Association, to be an important step in the fight against White Slavery, and public immorality in

general, the Act of 1885 also extended the rights of the police and the courts over working class women and their children. Walkowitz takes the view that:

“Both the white-slavery and child-prostitution crusades served to assuage middle-class guilt without really implicating members of the bourgeoisie in the sexual oppression of working-class women and girls.”¹⁶

This harsh judgement of the policies of organisations like the National Vigilance Association, towards prostitution and related issues, suggests an element of self-interest in their motives. The progress of the various Criminal Law Amendment Bills that followed during the years before and after the First World War, comprised the first important campaign with which the ladies of the Jewish Association allied themselves, and the question remains as to the purity of their motives. Evidently, the Jewish Association shared the view of other organisations working in the same field that these political measures were an important part of the social purity movement. Given the social barriers that divided middle class philanthropists from the working class poor, and particularly working class prostitutes, it is possible that the organisations did not stop to consider that the legislation they sought was in any way oppressive. As discussed in Chapter 1, class divisions between middle and working class Jewish women were ever present, despite the element of gender solidarity that drove middle class women to help their needy counterparts. The insulated nature of middle class Jewish women's lives and their own sexual oppression by male Anglo-Jewish and, more general British, society also rendered them blind to the oppression of others. Thus it would seem that the ladies of the Jewish Association did not fully appreciate the situation in which working class women were placed by legislation such as the 1885 Criminal Law

Amendment Act, and that much of their political activity on issues of social purity was influenced by other organisations.

In 1909, the Jewish Association joined the Jewish Board of Deputies, the London Council for the Promotion of Public Morality and the National Vigilance Association in drafting two bills for the amendment of the Criminal Law Act of 1885 and the Vagrancy Act of 1898, which were intended to hasten the suppression of the white slave trade. The combined organisations led a deputation to the Prime Minister on 30 March of that year. In November 1909, the Association heard that neither bill had been successful, but that a third bill was to be introduced as a private member's bill with Home Office support and might become law by the following year.¹⁷ Unfortunately for the campaigners, a series of Criminal Law Amendment bills failed over the next ten years, but the ladies of the Jewish Association continued to take part in demonstrations of support and deputations to the Home Office and the Prime Minister. Several ladies even went so far as to address public meetings on the subject. Another Criminal Law Amendment Act was eventually passed in 1922, abolishing the defence of reasonable cause to believe a girl to be over the age of sixteen, except where the man himself was under the age of 23, or if this was his first offence. The age of consent for indecent assault was also raised from 13 to 16, and the period of time after the offence during which charges could be brought was extended from 6 to 9 months.¹⁸

On the issue of the treatment of venereal disease, the Jewish Association again failed to understand the oppressive nature of the policy it adopted. As discussed in Chapter 2, it is possible that on this subject the opinions of the gentlemen's committee outweighed those of the ladies. Whether or not this was the case, the ladies of the Jewish Association certainly appear to have

been somewhat naive on such matters, ignoring the authoritarian and oppressive nature of the policies they advocated and placing greater value on the imposition of social purity on the working classes over the social and legal rights of working class women especially. The Jewish Association gave evidence to the Trevethin Committee on venereal disease in 1923, advocating a scheme of modified notification, similar to that suggested by the National Council for Combatting Venereal Disease.¹⁹

But it is unjust to dismiss altogether the political work of the Jewish Association. Furthermore, the naivety demonstrated by the ladies may be directly attributed to the role of women in the Anglo-Jewish community, whereby they were isolated from much of public life. Given the restrictions of their social position and their ignorance of political matters, it is all the more surprising to note that the Jewish Association made other, more positive contributions to parliamentary legislation. In 1925 the Jewish Association gave evidence to Parliamentary committees on the registration of charities and the treatment of offenders in assaults on young people. Throughout the 1920s the Jewish Association actively campaigned for bills on the adoption and guardianship of infants and for bills on the welfare and maintenance of mothers and children.²⁰

The developments of this period after the First World War demonstrate the extent of the Association's involvement in mainstream political activity, joining forces with a variety of different organisations, including most of those concerned with public morality, as well as the NUWW (later the National Council of Women), the YWCA, and the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child. The slow progress of many of the bills supported by these charities is an indicator of the snail's pace of government machinery

rather than a sign that the lobbying was not successful,. Indeed, in July 1923, the Council of the Jewish Association actually recorded that a bill concerning the newspaper reporting of divorce proceedings had come before Parliament, as a result of “the effectiveness of protest”.²¹ In the previous year, the Jewish Association had also shared the success of a number of women’s organisations in persuading the Home Secretary to retain the services of London’s women’s police force.²²

As well as promoting new legislation, the Jewish Association responded assiduously to the introduction of new regulations under recently-passed laws. The findings of the committee on child victims of crime and assault became law in the Children and Young Persons’ Act in 1932, prompting the Jewish Association to extend the scope of the Children’s Committee to cover children up to the age of 17 as a result. Similarly, the ethos of Charcroft House was dramatically altered in 1934, when the home was certified as an approved school under the same Children’s Act. Instead of restricting entry into the home according to character, the Association agreed to accept all Jewish girls aged between 15 and 17, even those who had been before a juvenile court in the past, because they too had a potential to reform.²³ These events which occurred during the 1930s clearly illustrate the extent to which the policies of the Jewish Association had altered over the years following the First World War. The 1920s was a decade of considerable change in philanthropy as a whole, and this had a powerful effect on the Jewish Association and its work.

Changing attitudes towards the problems of unmarried and teenage motherhood help to explain the increasingly enlightened stance of the Jewish Association during the 1920s and 1930s. From the outset of their work with such girls in the 1880s, the ladies of the Association realised that even “fallen

women” were not lost forever from the ranks of the respectable, but that did not prevent them from adopting a very strict admission policy at Charcroft House. However, to restrict entry to the home was to remove any opportunity for reform for the unfortunate who were turned away. The Jewish Association became aware of the need for a less harsh policy during the first decade of the twentieth century and had begun to implement a more enlightened admissions procedure at Charcroft House by 1914. Furthermore, after the end of the First World War, the Association joined other women’s organisations in campaigning for the rights of the unmarried mother and her child, developing a more humane and less judgemental attitude to these girls in the process.²⁴ This issue exemplifies the development of the Jewish Association during the first two decades of the twentieth century. The organisation had grown from its somewhat narrow-minded beginnings in the 1880s and 1890s, when the rescue and reform of prostitutes and the protection of the innocent were its primary goals. By the 1920s, the Association had not only realised the efficacy of political campaigning in addressing these issues of rescue and reform, but moreover, had begun to appreciate the valuable contribution that could be made in initiating, supporting and adapting to new measures for the improved welfare of women and children.

Whereas the Jewish Association, although not an overtly political organisation, was a powerful force in certain political campaigns which affected its work, the Union of Jewish Women was, by contrast, deliberately apolitical. After its formation in 1902, the Union of Jewish Women devoted its attentions to the management of volunteer workers and the training and employment of paid workers. It might be expected that the issue of employment for women would have aroused some political interest within the

organisation, but despite links with other relatively politicised groups such as the NUWW, the Union of Jewish Women persisted in deliberately avoiding political comment or activity altogether. It was not until 1917 that the records show any political activity on the part of the organisation, when representatives attended a conference on the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, along with other women's organisations including the Jewish Association.²⁵

Having made this first tentative step into politics, the Union of Jewish Women turned its attention to internal matters and spent the next two years undergoing a process of reconstruction and democratisation. It was intended to extend the Union's membership to include Jewish women of all social classes, and to include affiliated societies run by, and for Jewish women. This was in itself a radical departure for a Jewish welfare organisation. Despite the successful work of many organisations among the working class Jewish population, no other organisation considered admitting working class Jews into their ranks. Arguably, the Union of Jewish Women was only extending this welcome to women workers, whom it may be presumed were improving their social and economic status through paid employment. These women were not comparable with the desperate poor who, in times of great need, were forced to turn to organisations such as the Jewish Board of Guardians or the North London Grocery Fund. But this expansion of the Union of Jewish Women to represent "the interests of the Jewish women and children of the British Empire"²⁶ was an unprecedented symbol of gender solidarity between paid and voluntary Jewish women workers from all walks of life.

This enormous ideological leap from being an exclusively middle and upper middle class charity to becoming an egalitarian organisation representing all Jewish women, did not, in reality, lead to a revolutionary

change in the membership of the Union of Jewish Women. A variety of different organisations became affiliated to the Union, including the NUWW, the Women's Industrial Council and the Women's Local Government Society, but authority within the organisation remained firmly in the hands of the middle and upper middle class ladies who had founded the Union. However, this internal change of direction may have precipitated a change of interest elsewhere, because after 1918, the Union of Jewish Women became far more involved in contemporary political issues.

This new interest in politics may also have resulted from increased pressure from other organisations, particularly NUSEC. The 1918 Representation of the People Act had enfranchised women over 30, who were already able to vote for local government or were married to men with that right.²⁷ NUSEC's response to this limited concession was to continue its campaign for equal franchise, as well as equal rights for women in employment and under the law. Importantly, it sought the help of other women's organisations in order to do so. In April 1919, the Union of Jewish Women cautiously postponed a decision on whether to support the NUSEC Emancipation Bill,²⁸ but was willing to send representatives to a mass meeting on the subject in January 1920.²⁹ By 1922, the Union of Jewish Women had agreed to back NUSEC at the annual National Council of Women conference, over resolutions on women's suffrage, the status of married women and the guardianship of infants. Later the same year, the Union of Jewish Women met Eleanor Rathbone MP, the president of NUSEC and sent a representative to the NUSEC Six Point Group promoting the Sex Disqualifications Removal Bill, as well as authorising a representative to attend the International Women's Suffrage Alliance Congress in Rome, in 1923.³⁰

Having deliberately avoided political issues in the past, why did the Union of Jewish Women therefore become more closely involved with an overtly political organisation like NUSEC? The link between the two organisations was not a close alliance, but it may be explained at least partially by the involvement of Eva Hubback, who became NUSEC's Parliamentary Secretary in 1920.³¹ Eva Hubback, nee Spielmann, was the daughter of Gertrude Spielmann, a founder member of the Union of Jewish Women, who became president of the Union in 1918. Mrs Spielmann had, like many of her contemporaries, begun her philanthropic work at a tender age, joining the previously all-male committee of the Jews' Infant Schools at the age of seventeen.³² She was also one of the first lady members of the Committee that managed the Norwood Orphanage, and became president of the Norwood Ladies' Committee, introducing the guardianship scheme to ensure continued care for Norwood girls after they left the orphanage. Mrs Spielmann had founded the Jewish Ladies' Clothing Association in the 1880s, and was also a founder member of the Jewish Study Society. Outside the Jewish community, Mrs Spielmann belonged to the Medical Aid Society and the Parents' National Educational Union. Her daughter Eva was "carefully brought up in the Jewish faith",³³ with the additional influence of her parents' charity work. But rather than following her mother's example and devoting herself to philanthropic work, Eva sought to continue her education at university. Despite her work with the Union of Jewish Women in improving education and employment prospects for women, Gertrude Spielmann initially opposed her daughter's plans, but Eva eventually took her degree at Newnham College, Cambridge. Having ceased to practise as a Jew while at university, Eva married a non-Jew and was never associated with Jewish philanthropic causes, but she did

continue in the philanthropic footsteps of her mother outside the Anglo-Jewish community, becoming Organiser of London County Council Care Committee, from 1908 to 1909 and being appointed as a Poor Law Guardian in 1910.³⁴ It was, however, the cause of women's suffrage that interested her most, and she joined the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) to play an active role in the campaign for the franchise.

Disassociating herself from the more militant activities of the WSPU, Eva Hubback did not rise to prominence within the organisation until after the First World War, when it evolved into NUSEC. As Parliamentary Secretary, under the leadership of Eleanor Rathbone MP, Eva Hubback directed the campaign for an equal franchise for women, along with other legal and political rights affecting the employment and social status of women. Her personal links with the Union of Jewish Women undoubtedly influenced the latter's policy on these political issues, and help to explain the Union's otherwise surprising interest in politics during the early 1920s (given their previous avoidance of such matters). The decline in the Union of Jewish Women's political interest coincided with a split within NUSEC over the issue of birth control in 1927, and the achievement of the equal franchise in 1928. Probably because of this split, the Union of Jewish Women curtailed its contact with NUSEC after 1927, although it retained links with some of NUSEC's former members, in the Six Point Group and the Women's Freedom League, who continued to campaign for equal rights.³⁵ The Union of Jewish Women reiterated its resolution to retain a "non-party and non-political stand on social questions" in June 1927,³⁶ and thereafter few political issues are mentioned in the Union's records.

IV. Jewish Women and the Campaigns for Women's Rights.

The ladies of the Union of Jewish Women clearly felt that they were not likely to achieve their common goals by political means. It may be assumed that they would have pursued political campaigns more assiduously if they had expected to be successful. Furthermore, the focus of their work was the creation of new areas of employment and influence for working women, rather than the challenging of existing restrictions. Thus parliamentary politics did not seem to offer the opportunities they sought. But, as has been shown, communal politics had begun to interest the Union of Jewish Women during the First World War.

Some individuals had also recognised the possibilities of municipal politics before the start of the First World War. As mentioned above, Eva Hubback had served on a London County Council Care Committee and acted as a Poor Law Guardian, before joining the WSPU. Nettie Adler was elected as a member of the London County Council for Hackney in 1910, a post she held for 19 years. She was Deputy Chairman of the London County Council from 1922 to 1923. Clearly these women felt that municipal politics complemented their work within and beyond the Jewish community. However, given the non-sectarian interests of both Miss Adler and Dr Hubback, it is unlikely that either lady sought election to these posts merely to safeguard Jewish interests. It is more probable that they saw municipal politics as an extremely efficient means by which they could work for the well-being of all the residents of London, not just the Jews. The Union of Jewish Women was more interested in the needs of the Jewish community, so did not actively seek to become involved in municipal politics. Instead, the Union focused its attention on communal politics, from which women had traditionally been

excluded. As a result of pressure from the Union of Jewish Women, but also in recognition of the increasing value of women's work within the Jewish community, Alice Model and Hannah Hyam became the first women to join the Jewish Board of Guardians, in 1914.³⁷ The Jewish Board of Guardians was clearly not a political institution, but the election of women as Guardians represented the first step towards a more significant role for Jewish women within the community altogether. In 1922, Alice Model and Gertrude Spielmann of the Union of Jewish Women were finally admitted onto the Board of Deputies of British Jews, along with Mrs Franklin of the Anglo-Jewish Association.³⁸ In 1930, Hannah Cohen became the first woman president of the Jewish Board of Guardians.³⁹ This does not mean that Jewish women had reached a state of equality with the men of the community, but it does demonstrate the increasing awareness of the contribution women could make to communal life. Furthermore, outside the Anglo-Jewish community women continued to make their mark. In 1934, Miriam Moses was elected as Alderman by Stepney Borough Council⁴⁰ and Nettie Adler received the CBE in recognition of her charity work.⁴¹

The work of Jewish women within communal institutions and in municipal politics added fuel to the campaign against Jewish women's exclusion from many aspects of communal life, which was taken up by the Union of Jewish Women after the demise of the Jewish League for Woman Suffrage during the First World War (which will be explored in more detail below). Although this campaign never turned into a major political crusade, minor battles were fought over certain issues which affected women's role in the community. A series of skirmishes erupted during the following years over the quasi-political issue of synagogue management. The question of Jewish

women becoming involved in synagogue management was first raised at the Union of Jewish Women's AGM in March 1919. Henrietta Adler addressed the meeting and spoke of the effects of "the coming of full civic women's rights" on the status of Jewish women. She believed that as custodians of the religious education of the community's children, women seatholders ought to be given the right to vote on matters of synagogue management.⁴² A sub-committee was set up to promote the cause and the first approaches were made to the United Synagogue in September 1919.⁴³ The following year, with the support of six synagogue congregations, the issue was put to the United Synagogue Council, but two years later the Union of Jewish Women was still waiting for an answer.⁴⁴

By 1923 the Union of Jewish Women had decided to alter its campaign, because "it was feared that the inclusion of electoral rights might endanger the adoption of the proposal of equal voting rights."⁴⁵ In 1925, the Golders Green, Bayswater and New West End synagogues adopted the Union of Jewish Women's resolution regarding women seatholders, but the resolution failed by 158 votes to 211 at the United Synagogue Council in November 1926.⁴⁶ The Union of Jewish Women was not daunted by this setback and the campaign continued, using more subtle means to enlist the support of male seatholders. The ladies made it clear that they did not wish to challenge orthodox teaching by playing any part in the ritual of the synagogue, restricting themselves to a purely political goal. Amid "great opposition" the United Synagogue Council finally granted women seatholders the vote in 1928. The campaign for electoral rights was not forgotten and a sub-committee was formed to revive the campaign in 1938, but its work was curtailed by the outbreak of the Second World War.

Although the issue of rights for women seatholders within the synagogue was pursued with enthusiasm by the Union of Jewish Women after the First World War, it actually originated with the shortlived Jewish League for Woman Suffrage (JLWS) in the years prior to the war. The JLWS was intended "to unite Jewish suffragists of all shades of opinions".⁴⁷ It was formed to represent Jewish interests in the suffrage movement, which were not being met by other denominational suffrage societies. All of these organisations shared an emphasis on the religious and moral aspects of the franchise issue and saw the need for women's political emancipation in combatting social issues. The JLWS considered Jewish involvement in the suffrage campaign to be particularly appropriate because Anglo-Jewry had recently experienced the "evils of disenfranchisement".⁴⁸ The interest of many Jewish ministers and other highly respectable men may be explained by this comparison of the suffrage issue with Jewish emancipation.

The membership of the JLWS was predominately male. Of its 23 vice-presidents, 20 were men and 17 of them were ministers.⁴⁹ Of the ladies involved in the JLWS most were members of other Jewish women's organisations and were firmly placed within the ranks of the Cousinhood. Mrs Gilbert Samuel and Mrs Herbert Cohen were both members of the Jewish Association, as were the mothers of Winifred Beddington, Ethel Behrens and Winifred Elkin. Hannah Hyam belonged to the Union of Jewish Women, as did Lily Montagu and her sister, Mrs Ernest Franklin. The female membership was drawn from the younger women of the community, but here they were following the lead of a group of older men, rather than acting alone as had been the case, for example, with the formation of the Jewish Association. Furthermore, the creation of the JLWS was merely imitative of other

denominational organisations. Thus the JLWS was not particularly original either as a Jewish women's organisation or as a suffrage society within the country as a whole.

Where the JLWS did take on a significant role was in extending its work beyond the issue of women's suffrage. The JLWS was unique as a Jewish suffrage organisation in combining its work for the cause of Jewish women's rights with the campaign for the enfranchisement of all women. The League was affiliated to the Council of Federated Women's Suffrage Societies in 1913 and joined many of the public demonstrations of other suffrage societies.⁵⁰ In addition to this, the League intended to work for an improvement in the position of women in Jewish communal life and for associated issues such as the enfranchisement of women seatholders in the United Synagogue. Pursuing the goal of equality for women within the Jewish community, members of the League adopted a policy of communal disobedience. They interrupted synagogue services to assert the moral and religious rights of Jewish women and used the synagogue franchise campaign as a means by which to challenge the traditional domestic role to which Jewish women were restricted. It is somewhat surprising to consider that several ministers of religion were willing to associate themselves with a campaign of communal disobedience, especially where that involved disrupting religious services. Such activities were limited to a small minority of activists, but shared membership of the JLWS implies a degree of support for their behaviour. This again demonstrates the peculiarly Jewish attitude taken towards the suffrage issue, of equating women's political emancipation with that of the Jews. The suffrage issue thereby became a religious and moral fight for justice, rather than a merely political campaign.⁵¹

The work of the League, like that of the other societies, including the WSPU, was brought to a halt by the outbreak of the First World War, and much of its work was taken up by the Union of Jewish Women after 1918. This development was not entirely unexpected because many of its female members belonged to, or later joined, the Union of Jewish Women. Chief among these common members were Lily Montagu and her sister, Henrietta, the Hon. Mrs Ernest Franklin, who became president of the Union of Jewish Women and a prominent leader in the NUWSS. Their combined influence may also help to explain, to an extent, why the Union of Jewish Women appeared to become more politicised after the end of the First World War.⁵² An important aspect of the JLWS was its coupling of the mainstream and the extreme. Orthodox ministers and respectable middle class ladies represented the more traditional membership and yet were apparently comfortable enough alongside more radical elements such as Hugh Franklin, who was imprisoned on several occasions while campaigning for women's suffrage. Other members held extreme views on the subject of suffrage while also pursuing conventional philanthropic interests. This was clearly exemplified by Lily Montagu and Henrietta Franklin. Both women were active exponents of Liberal Judaism which afforded women equal rights with men.⁵³ They thus sought to gain for Jewish and non-Jewish women some of the rights which they already enjoyed themselves. They were both devoted to causes in keeping with the traditional interests of Jewish women as well and also retained the respectability and social standing of their ultra-respectable Anglo-Jewish family. From this position, they were able to inject innovation and more enlightened attitudes into their chosen causes, as Lily Montagu did at the West Central Girls' Club.

Whereas the JLWS managed to accommodate a wide variety of opinion, from militant activists to orthodox clergymen, the only other quasi-political Jewish women's organisation in existence before the Second World War deliberately chose to avoid any suggestion of extremism in the promotion of its cause. The Council for the Amelioration of the Legal Position of the Jewess (CALPJ) shared many common members with the Union of Jewish Women, and used the influence of that organisation to promote its cause, but there any similarity with the JLWS ends. The CALPJ was a far more exclusive and one-track organisation devoted to the single issue of Jewish women's rights in marriage under religious law. It was formed by Lizzie Hands in 1922, and with the exception of the president, Constance Lesser, the other members entirely conformed to the lead given by Miss Hands.⁵⁴ This suggests that although the Council's members considered Miss Hands' work worthy of their support, none shared her extreme zeal for the cause, unlike the JLWS where personal conviction was a characteristic of the entire membership. Nevertheless, Miss Hands, as the driving force behind the organisation, did not pursue her cause with blind devotion, but carefully assembled a group of religiously orthodox women and disassociated the Council from the cause of the synagogue franchise for women to avoid alienating the ultra-orthodox.⁵⁵ This policy was important because the main focus of Miss Hands' campaign was the need for Jewish religious law regarding marriage to be brought into line with English civil law. Thus the support of the entire Rabbinical Conference was needed to bring about any change.

As discussed in Chapter 2, discrepancies between religious and civil law enabled traffickers and procurers to exploit Jewish women for the White Slave Trade with South America. Such men could marry a woman in a religious

ceremony, bogus or genuine, and then repudiate her, leaving her with her reputation compromised, but still married under Jewish law. Unless the woman could obtain a *get* or permission to divorce from her “husband”, she remained a married woman and therefore unable to turn to communal agencies who expected her husband to provide for her. The *agunah*, or abandoned wife, in this position could find herself rejected by her family and by the Jewish community in general after being compromised in such a way. She was then a prime target for exploitation by traffickers and might even turn to prostitution herself, as a result of poverty and desperation.⁵⁶ The social dislocation wrought by mass immigration from eastern Europe and by the upheaval of the First World War also added to the problem of the *agunot*, where men had either deliberately abandoned their wives after emigrating or had gone missing during the war leaving many women unable to prove themselves to be wives or widows.

The work of the CALPJ began with publicising the problem using the Jewish press and by issuing pamphlets, both in England and on the Continent, stressing the importance of undergoing a civil marriage as a well as a religious ceremony.⁵⁷ The support of other Jewish organisations, especially charities like the Jewish Association which were working in similar fields, was enlisted. The Conference of Rabbis and the Universal Rabbinate were petitioned to effect a change in Jewish law, whereby it would become compulsory for a husband to give his wife a *get* after a civil divorce. Internal divisions restricted the effectiveness of the CALPJ during the 1920s. Although Lizzie Hands had created the organisation it did not remain as pliant as she had originally intended. Her abrupt manner and overwhelming zeal for the cause alienated several members, and although she continued to promote her cause until the

Second World War, she was not dramatically successful. This lack of success was no reflection on her efforts, but rather an indication of the innate conservatism and perhaps, more contentiously, the misogyny of the Jewish community in England and the rest of Europe.

In some respects the task of the CALPJ became more complex during the 1930s, as Jews began to emigrate in greater numbers to Palestine, where it was discovered that many women were marrying in order to emigrate and then trying to obtain a divorce on arrival there.⁵⁸ Similarly, increased immigration from continental Europe in the wake of the Nazi threat at the beginning of the Second World War also caused further problems. But having learnt from the experiences of the First World War, the Council encouraged soldiers to make arrangements for their wives, to avoid the women being left as *agunot* if their husbands died in action.⁵⁹ Despite this evidence of progress being made in minimising the problem, Lizzie Hands' campaign had not succeeded by the end of the period under investigation. Indeed, the issue has only recently been resolved today, in 1996.⁶⁰ It is possible that her approach to the issue of religious marriage was ineffective because she was trying to solve a deep-rooted problem derived from crucial inequalities between the status of men and women in Judaism, using only the most conservative means and without even acknowledging the fundamental cause. Alternatively, Lizzie Hands' tactics may be seen as the most wise course to have followed, given the innate conservatism of the Anglo-Jewish community and the fact that a radical approach to other issues affecting Jewish women had also failed to achieve much success. The most obvious example in this respect was the JLWS, which gained only limited results in the campaign for the synagogue franchise, in spite of the more extreme means of protest used.

Despite their very different methods and strategies, another common characteristic of the two organisations, the JLWS and the CALPJ, was their apparent lack of success in achieving the goals they set out to gain. However the conservative, even reactionary nature of the Anglo-Jewish community not only made success unlikely, it also rendered the very existence of these organisations surprising. Jewish women had previously been restricted to a domestic role, undertaking only charity work outside the confines of the household. They had been actively excluded from the religious and political life of the Anglo-Jewish community. In these circumstances it is very surprising that organisations like the CALPJ and the JLWS were formed at all. Thus the very existence of the JLWS and the CALPJ ought to be considered evidence of their success, quite apart from their results. Similarly, with particular reference to the JLWS, the fact that the Union of Jewish Women assumed responsibility for much of the League's work after the First World War is evidence that the general issues of women's suffrage and the more specific question of communal rights for Jewish women had ceased to be the preserve of a militant minority and were becoming more acceptable to the Jewish community as a whole.

Politics was initially seen by Jewish women's organisations to be the preserve of the male establishment. These bodies failed to recognise the need to deal with the larger social and economic circumstances in which problems such as prostitution were able to develop. The earliest political campaigns run by women in the nineteenth century tended to focus on the need for the reform of existing legislation, rather than on the introduction of new laws to address rising problems. It is interesting to note that the campaign against the Contagious Diseases Acts that led to their repeal in 1886 did not consider

dealing with prostitution itself, but rather concentrated solely on the specific issue of compulsory notification and treatment.⁶¹ This same attention to the minutiae is apparent in the Jewish Association's early rescue work.

A small minority of women became involved in rescue work, which was considered a deeply disreputable matter, highly unsuitable for middle class women. Through their own efforts and as a result of changing social mores, workers in the rescue field brought the problems of trafficking and prostitution into the public eye and were able to bring about positive changes in many of the individual cases they encountered. No attempts were made to solve the bigger problems through political activity. It was not until the turn of the century that the Jewish Association began to consider joining the many other charities and organisations attempting to bring about social change through political pressure. As well as assuming politics to be an arena suitable only for men and male-run organisations, the ladies of the Jewish Association also felt excluded as a result of their Jewishness (Jewish emancipation being a relatively recent development). Certainly other more mainstream Jewish institutions, the Jewish Board of Guardians included, were not politically active either. But it seems more likely that the world of politics was irrelevant to the domestic philanthropy of the early years of the Jewish Association, and it was only as the organisation grew that its members became aware of the enormity of the problems they were contending with and of the numerous avenues they could go down in order to achieve their goals. Throughout the period up to the end of the Second World War, the Association's political activities were restricted to those matters which concerned the welfare of women and children. This may be interpreted as merely a sensible allocation of scarce resources, but it also serves to support the conclusion that even as

late as the mid-twentieth century, many middle and upper class Jewish women did not consider politics to be a suitable focus for their interests and that any political activity occurring during this period was undertaken for a specific end.

The Union of Jewish Women, as a slightly less conventional organisation, might have been expected to pursue a more political line of action, particularly because its *raison d'être* was the creation of employment and improved working conditions for Jewish women. Both of these areas were already bringing about the politicisation of many working class men and women through the trade union movement.⁶² But the Union did not become directly involved with trade union organisations, despite their shared interests.

The founders of the Union of Jewish Women did not share the Jewish Association's early innocence with regard to politics. Some had already begun to become involved in political lobbying through the Jewish Association itself by the time the Union was formed in 1902. Therefore ignorance of the possibilities of political influence was unlikely to have been a reason for the Union's deliberate policy of avoiding political issues: a policy that was really only set aside for one issue, the synagogue franchise, and that only after the demise of the JLWS and the addition of several former League members to the Union's membership. Again this suggests that the ladies of the Union of Jewish Women agreed with the Jewish Association, that politics was not a matter of concern for women.

Overall a pattern of political activity emerges from the history of Jewish women's organisations which shows that they entered the political arena only when it was expedient for their particular aims, and on those occasions they dealt exclusively with matters concerning women and children. In other more

radical organisations where Jewish women did take a more active part in political activity their interest lay with quasi-political questions particular to the Jewish experience, as well as with the general campaign for women's suffrage. Again Jewish women's attention was directed onto the rights and welfare of women in British society. The only issues of major importance in the sequence of political activity among these Jewish women's organisations concerned the synagogue franchise and communal rights for women.

V. Jewish Women and Religion.

Although the subjects of politics and religion might appear far too large to be considered together in this context, in the experience of the Jewish women's organisations there are significant parallels to be drawn between the two, with the synagogue franchise issue falling neatly into both camps. Above all, until this time, both religion and politics were most definitely seen as the preserve of the men of the community. The campaign for the synagogue franchise was thus a tremendous breakthrough by Jewish women into the political arena, and even more dramatically into Anglo-Jewish religious life. The question of votes for women seatholders was not strictly a religious issue, but it was the first intimation of female interest in religious matters shown by orthodox women, though without encroaching upon the sacrosanct rituals of the orthodox synagogues. Only in the newly-developed branches of Judaism, that is the Reform and Liberal movements, did women play any active role in religious worship. As they occupied a position of religious equality with male worshippers, it was a natural development for women in the Liberal movement to attain equality in synagogue management.

Lily Montagu, the “visionary prophet” of the Liberal movement in England, preached for the first time at the West Central Liberal Jewish Synagogue in June 1918 and was ordained a Lay Minister in 1926.⁶³ She clearly played an enormously significant role in the religious life of the congregation and there was no question of her being excluded from the management of the synagogue she had helped to found. Miss Montagu’s example was noted, if not actually imitated, by more conventional Jews. Her influence on other Jewish women, especially on her fellow charity workers must have been considerable. In orthodox circles, the impact of the franchise issue did not affect women’s participation in synagogue services, but women seatholders did eventually gain the right to vote, in 1928,⁶⁴ demonstrating a relaxation of the previously strictly-enforced exclusion of women from virtually all aspects of Jewish religious life. This success was, of course, tempered by the fact that Jewish women had still not gained electoral rights within the United Synagogue by the beginning of the Second World War. Thus the enlightened attitude of the Liberal movement exerted only a limited influence on the Jewish community as a whole.

The Liberal movement, although exhibiting a high profile within the Jewish community, comprised only a small number of people compared to the relatively orthodox majority.⁶⁵ Sheer weight of numbers at least partially explains the failure of the mainstream synagogue congregations to follow the Liberal lead. Similarly, even the minor right of women to vote in matters of synagogue management went against traditional religious teaching. The enormity of this factor was thus of equal importance in explaining the slow progress of the campaign for voting rights. Perhaps as a result of their upbringing within the Jewish tradition many women themselves did not

consider voting rights to be a necessary part of their communal duties. From a feminist perspective this may be dismissed as “brain-washing” by generations of patriarchal culture, but that would be to deny the very real considerations of the women involved.

The Jewish Association, despite its many other shared interests with the Union of Jewish Women declined to affiliate to the Union in December 1917.⁶⁶ No mention is made thereafter of any aspect of the synagogue rights campaign, and general issues of women’s rights within society as a whole were largely ignored by the Jewish Association as well. The Association was a far more conservative organisation, made up of an older and more conventional middle and upper middle class membership. The CALPJ, although comprising a younger membership, many of whom were drawn from the ranks of the Union of Jewish Women, was equally reticent about women’s rights issues. The latter case was probably a more tactical manoeuvre rather than a genuine reflection of a lack of interest among the Council’s members, particularly in light of the issue for which they were campaigning, which was in itself a question of women’s rights. But the membership of the Jewish Association clearly considered women’s rights, both within and beyond the Jewish community, to be irrelevant to their philanthropic activities. Suffrage organisations such as the JLWS and other non-denominational groups believed that voting rights for women in particular, were a vital step in the continued improvement of welfare provision for women and children.⁶⁷

The Jewish Association’s apparent refusal to recognise this possibility was perhaps naive, but there is no denying the progress made by that organisation entirely independent of any developments in the campaign for women’s rights. This same attitude may be assumed to have coloured the

Association's policy regarding communal rights. The importance of philanthropy as an active demonstration of religious observance for orthodox Jewish women goes some way to explaining why this was the case. Having found alternative means to demonstrate their faith, outside the confines of the synagogue and ritual worship, many Jewish women did not feel the need to encroach upon the male preserve of synagogue management.

The one woman who did more than just encroach upon the male world of Jewish religious observance, was Lily Montagu, who founded the World Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues:

“Thus [she] won for herself a major place in three of the great transformations of modern times. First, the revolution in the place of women in national, and Jewish, life and service. Secondly, the extending of opportunities to large groups of people who had previously been denied them. Finally, in the development of Judaism, giving contemporary expression to its age-old ideals.”⁶⁸

Many of Lily Montagu's contemporaries shared her vocational devotion to philanthropic causes, but few could match her enlightened understanding and eloquent expression of her faith “as a Jewish woman”.⁶⁹ Where others were equally ardent in their support of the club movement, Lily Montagu saw the West Central Club primarily as a focus for her religious enthusiasm. In the last of her monthly letters to the club, she wrote:

“I am glad that through the Club some of you have learned to appreciate and discover the true meaning of Judaism. I have tried all my life to share with you the thing I value most in life, JUDAISM. Do try and cling to your Faith and live it, and express it in your lives.”⁷⁰

In spite of the desire to communicate her faith to others, Lily Montagu did not use the West Central Club as a means of preaching to its members. But she did regard it her duty to encourage and nurture the religious beliefs of

those in her care, particularly where parents were neglecting to do so.⁷¹ The same was true of other Jewish women's organisations, especially because the women they were dealing with were so precious to the community, as the guardians of the next generation. The Jewish Association made provisions for the inmates of its houses to attend synagogue services regularly and gave prayerbooks and Bibles to each new arrival. Daily prayers were said, often specially written by a member of the Association, and religious festivals were celebrated with due ceremony.⁷² At Montefiore House religious education was given a high priority and provision was made for girls to attend Hebrew classes.⁷³

Smaller organisations such as the CALPJ and the JLWS avoided religious issues and concentrated on their particular campaigns, in both cases for women's rights. This does not imply a lack of religious faith among their members, but it does suggest that religious beliefs were set aside in favour of the more secular issue at hand. In other words, the focus of the two organisations' campaigns lay on secular matters, so that the ladies involved chose to concentrate on that, avoiding religious concerns on which they did not agree. Moreover, with regard to the motives behind the work of these two organisations, the expression of personal religious belief appears to have been less significant than other, again more secular factors. Thus in contrast to charities such as the Jewish Association where philanthropy was definitely an aspect of the members' religious observance, the CALPJ and the JLWS were the result of influences such as gender and ethnic solidarity.

Other Jewish women's organisations were affected by similar motives, but in these two cases, non-religious factors were more important. The Union of Jewish Women, however, combined a proportion of both the secular and the

religious in its directing forces. Formed by a number of prominent philanthropists, including Lily Montagu herself, the Union was undoubtedly a semi-vocational project for some of its members. Helen Lucas and Katie Magnus were both well-known for the strength of their support for the traditional rituals of synagogue, particularly the retention of Hebrew in religious services.⁷⁴ Others, such as Mrs Morris Joseph, were more flexible in their views on religious observance, but were equally committed to the expression of their faith through philanthropy. The *Jewish Chronicle* noted this when describing Mrs Joseph at the time of the Conference of Jewish Women in 1902:

“Her love for her religion, her absolute sincerity and earnestness, make her a power for good ... and added to this, her practical philanthropy - for she is firmly and rightly convinced that religion and philanthropy must go hand in hand, renders her a valuable addition to the list of Vice-Presidents of the coming Congress.”⁷⁵

Just like the Jewish Association, the Union of Jewish Women encouraged religious observance among the recipients of its care, supporting Hebrew classes and religious education for school children, especially girls. Particular attention was paid to the role of the Jewish women as mothers, and teachers of new generations of Jews. This found expression in the Union's Million Shilling Fund, which was established as a memorial for the Jews who had died in the First World War. It incorporated a scheme for the education of Jewish boys for the ministry. In this, their mothers were to play a significant role, in preparing their sons to play as full a part as possible in communal and religious life, from an early age.⁷⁶

The progress of the Union of Jewish Women towards a less conventional articulation of religious beliefs is demonstrated by the issue of

Confirmation for girls. Jewish girls had always received religious education of sorts, but they were generally excluded from formal classes, including Hebrew lessons, and made no official graduation from childhood to adult status within the synagogue as boys did on their *bar mitzvah*. The question of religious education for girls within the United Synagogue was raised by the Union of Jewish Women in 1921, and in 1922 the Union's Council met with representatives from the various synagogues to discuss the possibility of introducing "confirmation" services for girls, comparable to the *bar mitzvah* services for boys.⁷⁷ Some of the more liberal (as well as the Liberal) synagogues adopted the plans with alacrity and confirmation services were also offered for the first time in provincial synagogues in Manchester, Hull and Liverpool during the early 1920s.⁷⁸ This creation of a ritual for women in the synagogue was not universally adopted, but it did represent another step in the development of a more equal religious role for Jewish women, in which the Union of Jewish Women played a dominant part.

The Union of Jewish Women's active support for the confirmation of girls indicates its interest in assuming a more active position in the observance of Judaism. It is probable that not all of the Union's members shared an equal enthusiasm for this policy, but their differences were overcome in order to pursue this goal. Opposing views were not however reconciled over the more controversial issue of Zionism. The subject of women's involvement in Zionism warrants an entire study to itself, and there were several women's organisations actively promoting the cause. The largest of these organisations was the Women's Zionist Federation (WZF), later the Women's International Zionist Organisation (WIZO).⁷⁹ When invited to send a delegate to the WZF in 1919, the Union of Jewish Women felt unable to do so, because "the members

have various sympathies".⁸⁰ The same occurred within the Jewish Association. The CALPJ deliberately excluded pro-Zionist members to avoid alienating orthodox supporters of its own cause (although many orthodox Jews were Zionists).⁸¹ Zionism clearly had a dramatic polarising effect on Anglo-Jewry, which the ladies of the various middle class women's organisations wished to contain, probably for fear that it would divide their otherwise united societies. Individuals retained their personal views, without compromising their membership of these organisations. Helen Bentwich was a particularly good example, as she was a second-generation member of the Union of Jewish Women and a prominent member of the CBF, as well as being involved in the Zionist movement through her husband Norman, who was attorney-general for Palestine from 1920 to 1931.⁸² Thus the middle class women's organisations adapted to the increasing interest in religious matters of some women in the community by encouraging their members to keep their potentially radical views to themselves, or to express them in an alternative arena, thereby avoiding conflict within their ranks.

VI. Conclusions.

The approach taken by the Union of Jewish Women and the Jewish Association towards women's growing interest in religion in the Jewish community was typical of their whole attitude to politics and religion. Both organisations, along with other Jewish women's groups, were influenced by various sources (including the first British women political campaigners such as Josephine Butler and the ladies of Langham Place) which led them to acknowledge that they too could play a part in those aspects of life previously restricted only to men. Within the Jewish community, and British society as a

whole, the most significant areas gradually becoming open to women's interest were religion and politics. This is not, however, to suggest that women had not taken an interest in such matters before this time, or that women were now being given the opportunity to become actively involved: neither was the case. Instead, among Jewish women particularly, the domestic boundaries previously limiting their experience were being stretched by their philanthropic work and by the external influence of other more radical Jewish and non-Jewish women. At the same time, although hardly welcoming their interest with open arms, many men involved in matters political or religious were recognising that women did have a role to play as well.

The Jewish Association was reasonably successful in its political lobbying, encountering no opposition from within the political establishment because it was Jewish or a women's organisation. Any lack of success was not attributable to discrimination against the Association as a lobbying group. On many occasions, the Association joined forces with other organisations who were equally frustrated in the lack of progress of their campaigns. The workings of the machinery of government and party political wrangling were largely responsible for the delays encountered, particularly by the various Criminal Law Amendment Bills. But if Jewish women's organisations were relatively successful in their early forays into politics, they did not allow themselves to be carried away by their achievements. In fact, they took a very limited interest in political matters, only involving themselves in issues strictly relevant to their philanthropic work.

The Union of Jewish Women took this policy even further, by virtually avoiding political campaigning altogether. So the involvement of these groups in matters political was highly restricted, largely because of the organisations

themselves. Any radical political activity by Jewish women took place outside the confines of traditional communal philanthropy. Eva Hubback devoted herself to the suffrage movement, in the WSPU and NUSEC. Her only involvement in specifically Jewish organisations occurred when she helped to found the JLWS. After the demise of the League and the end of the First World War, Dr Hubback did not join the Union of Jewish Women despite its resumption of the former work of the JLWS and her own mother's prominent position within the Union. Dr Hubback had married a non-Jew and no longer practised as a Jew and this might perhaps have explained her reluctance to join the Union of Jewish Women.⁸³ But the Union's conventional treatment of radical issues, such as the synagogue franchise for women, was probably another reason for her lack of enthusiasm. Other former members of the JLWS did join the Union of Jewish Women and reached a workable compromise with older, more conservative members over women's rights issues (although this is not to suggest that all older members were automatically conservative, but in this case the majority were, and the lack of younger members joining the Union during the 1920s and 1930s helps to explain its increasing conservatism).⁸⁴ A similar pattern of limited interest, restricted largely by the organisations themselves, was apparent in their religious activities. Although in this instance the Union of Jewish Women was considerably more forceful and resourceful in its campaign for communal rights for women.

Linda Kuzmack suggests that Jewish political emancipation had provided a model for Jewish women whereby, like the men of the community, they could work for and achieve social and political rights, even equality, while maintaining their religious and cultural identity.⁸⁵ Kuzmack applies this model to Louisa, Lady Goldsmid and her contemporaries specifically, but

suggests that it was relevant to all Jewish women, who were in the process of extending their domestic and communal roles, at the end of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth. Certainly, some Jewish women were affected by the limited enfranchisement of women in Britain in 1918. Within the Jewish community women seat-holders were given the right to vote in synagogue elections in 1928, and the period up to the end of the Second World War saw the gradual development of Jewish women's influence in communal matters and within society as a whole, particularly in philanthropy and social work.

But the emancipation model is limited in its application; above all, the Jewish women's organisations were not working for one common goal, comparable to that of political emancipation. Women's rights were an important aspect of these organisations' activities, but the women were also aiming for a far more diverse range of objectives, including social and political reforms to improve welfare provision for women and children, as well as a greater involvement in communal and national politics. Equally, those who did achieve a degree of success along the lines set by the emancipation model did not do so within the traditional conventions of the Jewish community. Lily Montagu, who was one of the most dynamic and successful Jewish women of this period, became a lay minister in 1926 and led her own congregation, but did so within the World Union of Progressive and Liberal Judaism that she herself had founded. There was no possible means by which she could have assumed a leadership role within orthodox or Reform Judaism: a failure "rooted in the impact of patriarchal Judaism and secular society".⁸⁶ Just as Jewish emancipation was tempered by the continuing, even growing problem of anti-Semitism, so Jewish women found that their progress towards political

and communal emancipation was restricted by the traditional limits of women's interests. But like other aspects of Jewish women's philanthropic work, their involvement in political and religious matters represents a dramatic development in the role of Jewish women and demonstrates the rigidity of the confines restricting women's communal positions. The women themselves, as they had done in other areas, on the one hand colluded in their confinement by not seeking to break down all of these barriers. On the other, they instead created for themselves new areas of influence and used traditional and conventional paths with greater eloquence and to far greater effect than before.

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² Beddoe, Deidre, *Back to Home and Duty: Women between the Wars 1918-1939*, London, 1989, p.57.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Pugh, Martin, *Women and the Women's Movement in Britain 1914-1959*, London, 1992, p.1-5.

⁵ See Hollis, Patricia, *Women in Public: The Women's Movement 1850-1900*, London, 1979; Holcombe, Lee, *Wives and Property: Reform of the Married Women's Property Law in Nineteenth Century England*, Toronto, 1983; and Kent, Susan Kingsley, *Sex and Suffrage in Britain 1860-1914*, Princeton, 1987.

⁶ Delamont, Sara, "The contradictions in ladies' education", in S. Delamont and L. Duffin (eds.), *The Nineteenth Century Woman: Her Cultural and Physical World*, London, 1978, pp.139-146.

⁷ Summerfield, Penny, *Women Workers in the Second World War*, London, 1984, p.12.

⁸ Kuzmack, Linda Gordon, *Woman's Cause: The Jewish Women's Movement in England and the United States 1881-1933*, Columbus, 1990, p.15; and Wills, Stella, "The Anglo-Jewish contribution to the education movement for women in the nineteenth century", *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society*, xvii (1951-2), pp.269-281.

⁹ Kershen, Anne, *1840-1991: One Hundred and Fifty Years of Progressive Judaism*, London, 1995, p.8.

¹⁰ See Kershen, Anne, "Trade unionism amongst the Jewish tailoring workers of London and Leeds 1872-1915", in D. Cesarani (ed.), *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry*, pp.34-54; and Kuzmack, *Woman's Cause*, pp.107-114.

¹¹ *Jewish Chronicle*, 3 July and 17 July 1885.

¹² See Fishman, William, *East End Jewish Radicals 1875-1914*, London, 1975; Lewenhak, Sheila, *Women and Trade Unions: An Outline History of Women in the British Trade Union Movement*, London, 1977; Middleton, Lucy, *Women in the Labour Movement: The British Experience*, London, 1977; Solden, N.C., *Women in British Trade Unions 1874-1976*, London, 1978; White, Jerry, *Rothschild Buildings: Life in an East End Tenement Block 1887-1920*, London, 1980; Kuzmack, Linda Gordon, "Jewish working women as agents of

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¹³ Walkowitz, Judith, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class and the State*, Cambridge, 1980, p.12.

¹⁴ Jewish Association, General Committee, 25 April 1902, Southampton University Archives (hereafter SUA), MS 173 2/1/3.

¹⁵ Walkowitz, *Prostitution in Victorian Society*, p.247.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.250.

¹⁷ Jewish Association, Council, 24 March and 17 November 1909, SUA, MS173 2/3/1.

¹⁸ Pugh, *Women and the Women's Movement in Britain*, p.108.

¹⁹ Jewish Association, Council, 4 July 1923, SUA, MS173 2/3/2.

²⁰ Pugh, *Women and the Women's Movement in Britain*, p.109.

²¹ Jewish Association, Council, 4 July 1923, SUA, MS173 2/3/2.

²² Woodeson, Alison, "The first women police: a force for equality or infringement?", *Women's History Review*, 2 (1993), pp.217-232.

²³ Jewish Association, General Purposes Committee, 9 May 1934, SUA, MS173 2/4/4.

²⁴ Jewish Association, General Purposes Committee, special report of subcommittee for the care of unmarried mothers and their children, 7 December 1924, SUA, MS173 2/4/4.

²⁵ Union of Jewish Women, Executive Committee, 1 May 1917, SUA, MS129 B/4.

²⁶ Union of Jewish Women, Reconstruction Committee, 11 November 1918, SUA, MS129 C/5.

²⁷ Pugh, *Women and the Women's Movement*, p.51.

²⁸ Union of Jewish Women, Executive Committee, 1 April 1919, SUA, MS129 B/5.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 1 January 1920.

³⁰ Union of Jewish Women, Executive Committee, 27 June 1922, SUA, MS129 B/6; see also Stock, Mary, *Eleanor Rathbone*, London, 1949.

- ³¹ Pugh, *Women and the Women's Movement*, p.111.
- ³² *Jewish Chronicle*, 16 May 1902.
- ³³ Cutting, Rahelly, "The Jewish contribution to the suffrage movement", unpublished B.A. dissertation, Anglia Polytechnic, 1988, p.38.
- ³⁴ Hopkinson, Diana, *Family Inheritance: A Life of Eva Hubback*, London, 1954, p.49.
- ³⁵ Pugh, *Women and the Women's Movement*, pp.239-241.
- ³⁶ Union of Jewish Women, Executive Committee, 28 June 1927, SUA, MS129 B/6.
- ³⁷ *Jewish Chronicle*, 30 April 1943.
- ³⁸ Jewish Board of Deputies, 18 June 1922, Greater London Record Office, ACC 3121/A/18.
- ³⁹ *Jewish Chronicle*, 20 June 1930.
- ⁴⁰ *Jewish Chronicle*, 2 November 1934.
- ⁴¹ *Jewish Chronicle*, 21 April 1950.
- ⁴² Union of Jewish Women, AGM, 10 March 1919, SUA, MS129 C/4/5.
- ⁴³ Union of Jewish Women, Executive Committee, 22 September 1919, SUA, MS129 B/5.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 18 May 1920 and 4 April 1922.
- ⁴⁵ Union of Jewish Women, Executive Committee, 19 June 1923, SUA, MS129 B/6.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 2 November 1926.
- ⁴⁷ *Women's Who's Who?*, London, 1915, pp.42-44.
- ⁴⁸ Jewish League for Woman Suffrage, *Annual Report*, 1913-1914, London Museum of Jewish Life, 86-1985.
- ⁴⁹ *Women's Who's Who?*, London, 1915, pp.42.
- ⁵⁰ Jewish League for Woman Suffrage, *Annual Report*, 1913-1914, London Museum of Jewish Life, 86-1985.

⁵¹ Kuzmack, *Woman's Cause*, pp.134-136.

⁵² See Cutting, "The Jewish contribution to the suffrage movement", chapter 4, pp.28-40.

⁵³ Rayner, John D., "Montefiore, Montagu and Mattuck: pioneers of Liberal Judaism", in A. Kershen (ed.), *One Hundred and Fifty Years of Progressive Judaism*, London, 1995, pp.24-27.

⁵⁴ Council for the Amelioration of the Legal Position of the Jewess, Council, 20 July 1922, SUA, MS123 AJ13 1/1.

⁵⁵ Council for the Amelioration of the Legal Position of the Jewess, Executive Committee, 7 May 1930, SUA, MS123 AJ13.

⁵⁶ See Bristow, E., *Prostitution and Prejudice: The Jewish Fight Against White Slavery 1870-1939*, Oxford, 1983; and Gartner, Lloyd, "Anglo-Jewry and the Jewish international traffic in prostitutes 1885-1914", *American Jewish Studies Review*, 7-8 (1982-3), pp.129-178.

⁵⁷ Council for the Amelioration of the Legal Position of the Jewess, Correspondence with the Jewish Association, 11 May 1919 and 21 January 1921, SUA, MS123 AJ13 1/2; also Jewish Board of Deputies, Correspondence with the Council for the Amelioration of the Legal Position of the Jewess, ACC 3121/E3/88.

⁵⁸ *Jewish Chronicle*, 16 April 1937.

⁵⁹ Council for the Amelioration of the Legal Position of the Jewess, Miscellaneous Correspondence, 7 June 1940, SUA, MS123 AJ13 2/6.

⁶⁰ *The Guardian*, 18 October 1995.

⁶¹ Kent, *Sex and Suffrage*, pp.60-79.

⁶² See Lewenhak, *Women and Trade Unions*, passim.

⁶³ "Lily Montagu 1873-1963", *Liberal Jewish Monthly*, Memorial Supplement, February 1963, p.10.

⁶⁴ Union of Jewish Women, Executive Committee, 3 January 1928, SUA, MS129 B/7; see also *Jewish Chronicle*, 3 January 1928.

⁶⁵ Kuzmack, *Woman's Cause*, pp.136-139; see also Lily Montagu, *Liberal Jewish Monthly*, Memorial Supplement, pp.8-12; and Montefiore, Claude G., "Liberal Judaism in England: its difficulties and its duties", *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 12 (1900), pp.618-650.

⁶⁶ Jewish Association, Council, 6 December 1917, SUA, MS173 2/3/2.

⁶⁷ Cutting from *The Suffragette*, 8 November 1912, London Museum of Jewish Life, 20-1988.

⁶⁸ "Lily Montagu", *Liberal Jewish Monthly*, Memorial Supplement, p.4.

⁶⁹ See Montagu, Lily, *The Faith of a Jewish Woman*, London, 1943; and idem., *The First Fifty years: A Record of Liberal Judaism in England*, London, 1950.

⁷⁰ "Lily Montagu", *Liberal Jewish Monthly*, Memorial Supplement, p.15.

⁷¹ Montagu, Lily, *My Club and I: The Story of the West Central Girls' Club*, London, 1954, pp.41-48.

⁷² Jewish Association, General Committee, 20 November 1885; and Charcroft House Committee, 14 April 1886, SUA MS173 2/1/1.

⁷³ Jewish Association, Montefiore House Committee, 4 July 1923, SUA, MS173 2/8/5.

⁷⁴ *Jewish Chronicle*, 14 March and 11 April 1902.

⁷⁵ *Jewish Chronicle*, 25 April 1902.

⁷⁶ Union of Jewish Women, Meeting of the Million Shilling Fund, 17 October 1921, SUA, MS129 AJ26 C/6/1.

⁷⁷ Union of Jewish Women, Council, 23 May 1922, SUA, MS129 AJ26 C/6/6.

⁷⁸ Kuzmack, *Woman's Cause*, p.48.

⁷⁹ See Gassman-Sherr, *The Story of the Federation of Women Zionists*, passim.

⁸⁰ Union of Jewish Women, Executive Committee, 7 January 1919, SUA, MS129 B/5.

⁸¹ Council for the Amelioration of the Legal Position of the Jewess, Executive Committee, 7 May 1930, SUA, MS123 AJ13.

⁸² Kuzmack, *Woman's Cause*, pp.164-5.

⁸³ Cutting, "The Jewish contribution to the suffrage movement", p.39.

⁸⁴ Lily Montagu, Hannah Hyam, Mrs Gilbert Samuel and Mrs Herbert Cohen had been members of the Union of Jewish Women since its formation and also belonged to the Jewish League for Woman Suffrage. Mrs Redcliffe Salaman and Mrs Ernest Franklin (Lily Montagu's sister, Henrietta) both joined the Union of Jewish Women in 1911. Union of Jewish Women, Executive Committee, 11 January 1911, SUA, MS129 B/3.

⁸⁵ Kuzmack, *Woman's Cause*, p.186.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

Conclusion

I.

This thesis explores Jewish women's philanthropic work within Jewish national organisations in Britain during the last two decades of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. This subject has not been widely researched before, and one of the first points to be made is that the issue of Jewish women's philanthropy is multi-faceted and represents considerably more than the simple charity work it professed to be. Complex motives governed Jewish women's involvement in philanthropy throughout the period under investigation. Furthermore, through their charity work these ladies began to play a fuller part in the life of the Jewish community and in society as a whole. Thus philanthropy was significantly more than just charity work, admirable though that may be. The world of philanthropy acted as a bridge between the domestic sphere and the outside world, bringing Jewish women into contact with aspects of Anglo-Jewish and British society that they had never considered before. It has been shown throughout this thesis that philanthropy wrought changes in the lives of both those it sought to help and those doing the work itself. Philanthropy played an important part in the changes which occurred in Jewish women's communal status over the sixty-five years from 1880 onwards.

Philanthropy served to link Jewish women with the rest of society, overcoming the insulating traditions that restricted Jewish women to a purely domestic role. It also strengthened social and ethnic bonds within the Anglo-Jewish community, as middle and upper middle class women worked together

within the various women's organisations. The ladies themselves all came from similar social backgrounds and were often linked by strong social and familial ties. But as well as sharing ethnic, religious and social ties, common interests brought women workers even closer. Their work covered an enormous variety of areas, from the ground-breaking to the mundane, and levels of commitment varied widely from one individual to another.

The chronology of this thesis and the length of the period studied are also intended to throw light on this aspect of Jewish women's philanthropy. The work of these ladies covered a remarkable breadth of interests and represented major contributions to many different parts of society. Each chapter of this study warrants a thesis in itself, as do other subjects not explored here, such as Zionism or party politics. But while the length of the period under investigation places certain limits on the subject matter it does allow for patterns to be perceived in the development of philanthropy over the period from 1880 to 1945, and for the changing status of Jewish women to be revealed. The Conclusion is therefore intended to draw together the individual components of the thesis, and to demonstrate the overall trends that governed Jewish women's philanthropic work at this time.

II. Historiography.

Aside from these more specific questions, the issue of Jewish women's philanthropy has also provided a means by which the marginalisation of Jewish women may be addressed. This is in itself a dual-faceted subject. It was through their philanthropic work that Jewish women began to challenge,

intentionally or otherwise, their marginalisation within the Anglo-Jewish community and within British society as a whole. Furthermore, the subject of Jewish women's involvement in philanthropy and the contribution thus made to the field of charity work also demonstrate the futility of Jewish women's marginalisation in the study of British and Anglo-Jewish history.¹ Middle class Jewish women challenged contemporary traditions and conventions through their philanthropic work from 1880 to 1945, and indirectly, the study of their work perpetuates this challenge to conventional thought in Jewish history and historiography. As Lara Marks has stated in her study of the marginalisation of Jewish women:

“Jewish women have played a vital role in the heritage of the Jewish community in Britain. Yet while they have been revered as good wives and mothers and held up as good models to non-Jewish women, their history has been obscured by such idealizations and much of their contributions outside the sphere of motherhood has been ignored by historians.”²

One purpose of this thesis has been to demonstrate that Jewish women were indeed active beyond the domestic sphere. The myth of the Jewish woman as domestic angel is as misplaced as that which placed all Victorian women in that role. But even if Jewish women had been entirely domestic beings and their influence was restricted purely to the family, this would not justify their marginalisation in modern Jewish, or in this case, British history.

The value of women's domestic role was recognised by the various Jewish women's charities. In 1921, the Union of Jewish Women targeted mothers with the Million Shilling Fund in order to enlist their help in preparing boys for religious ministry.³ But in addition to the direct use of maternal influence for specific ends, the women's organisations believed that women

were ultimately responsible for the welfare and well-being of the family. This was absolutely contradictory to the views of existing communal institutions such as the Jewish Board of Guardians who focused their attention entirely onto the man at the head of each household.⁴ In fact, it has been shown that the secular influence of British society and the problems of religious observance within an alien and unaccommodating culture led many immigrant Jews to lapse in the practice of their religion.⁵ It was the role of women in perpetuating the Jewish faith within the home that prevented this trend from becoming a major problem. So that although women did not attend synagogue or receive religious instruction, their disguised religious role in following dietary and purity laws and in educating their children was of incalculable value to the Jewish community in Britain during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

For this reason alone it is both ignorant and imprudent of modern historians to continue in their failure to acknowledge the part played by women in the preservation and development of the Anglo-Jewish community. In doing so these historians make the classic mistake that the study of gender history is intended to remedy - in believing that only large-scale achievements in the public arena are worthy of recognition and analysis. This thesis has shown that Jewish women were not merely active within their own homes, but rather they exerted considerable and noteworthy influence on the Anglo-Jewish community and on British society in general. Thus even on "masculine" terms middle class Jewish women philanthropists achieved a significant level of success, which warrants their inclusion in all aspects of Jewish history, from the social and economic, to the cultural and political.

Having established the fact of Jewish women's success in philanthropy both on their own terms and by the standards of masculine society as well, another aim of this thesis has been to show that this was not the work of a small minority of militant activists, as Kuzmack has suggested.⁶ Philanthropy was perceived as highly respectable and women were positively encouraged to occupy themselves with charity work. All middle and upper middle class Jewish women were involved in philanthropy to some extent, especially during the earlier part of the period under investigation. Philanthropic work also encompassed an enormous variety of different interests, so that the middle class Jewish ladies who entered the field found a multitude of areas to which they could devote their attention, and each was able to develop a focus for her own personal interests. Some went further and sought new areas of work in undeveloped fields, such as rescue work and women's employment, where they created new opportunities ranging from the highly conventional to the contentious and extreme. But even those who did challenge the limitations of women's traditional role were not radical feminists. Few of the lady philanthropists studied here were even suffragettes. The whole movement was made up of respectable middle class ladies, many of whom had no intention of challenging the mores of the Jewish community and for whom public success and recognition was unexpected.

III. Jewish Women's Philanthropic Work 1880 to 1945.

In Chapter 1 it was shown that philanthropy was an important part of Jewish religious observance. Although this was generally restricted to the men of the

community, the influence of the Christian Evangelical movement in the nineteenth century encouraged Jewish women to enter the field of philanthropy on a small scale. This work began with home visiting and minor fund raising in conjunction with existing male-run organisations. But from these origins women's philanthropy developed into a dynamic force that shaped the lives of all Jewish women well into the future.

The beginnings of Jewish women's philanthropic work in the mid-nineteenth century were conventional, and continued to be so for several decades. The first women's committees were formed by communal institutions and even the first women's organisations restricted themselves to home visiting and giving small loans.⁷ In the field of education this pattern was followed throughout the period being studied. Pastoral care and religious education classes were provided for school children and Jewish women joined school management boards, attempting to meet the needs of Jewish children attending non-Jewish schools. No major steps were taken in this area and women retained their secondary role in supporting male-run institutions such as the Jews' Free School. Arguably, education was one of the areas in which the Anglo-Jewish community had already made ample provision by the mid-nineteenth century⁸ and furthermore, it was one of the first areas of philanthropy to be taken on by the State in later years. There was clearly less need for additional help from women charity workers in this area.

Elsewhere, women's early home visiting brought previously unacknowledged problems to the surface. Prostitution and the White Slave Trade, women's unemployment, the lack of healthcare provision and childcare were all issues which revealed themselves to Jewish women as a result of their increasing involvement in philanthropy during the late nineteenth century.

Obviously none of these conditions were recent developments (perhaps with the exception of White Slavery) so it was their public recognition that was new at this time. It was therefore one of the first major achievements of Jewish women philanthropists in recognising problems previously ignored by the Jewish community and in attempting to draw them to public notice, as well as relieving the associated hardship. Even more significant was the fact that it was the suffering of working class Jewish women which these lady philanthropists sought to ease. All of the aforementioned issues primarily affected women and it was for this reason that they were not dealt with by existing male-run charities. So again Jewish women philanthropists took a great step in attempting to address some of the glaring inequalities of their male-dominated society.

Having become aware of the specific needs of women not being met by the Jewish community, certain lady philanthropists went on to form their own organisations to concentrate on these problems. Within the Jewish community such independent action by middle class women was unheard of and even among the rest of society few women had done the same. Furthermore, having been founded by women to address the problems of other, working class women, the Jewish Association, and the other women's organisations that followed, were administered by women throughout their existence. Thus the ladies concerned proved the strength of their convictions and the extent of their abilities in founding the various organisations and in persevering with their work.

In forming their organisations the middle class lady philanthropists intended to deal with a number of specific concerns, concentrating on the needs of working class women, and by association, their children. In fact, the

work of the various women's organisations revealed their members to be highly competent, introducing innovation to bring about improvements in philanthropy and at the same time administering the more mundane aspects of their work with commendable efficiency. Their fellow charities recognised the success of these organisations and in various fields the aptitude of the Jewish women's organisations were utilised by other Jewish and non-Jewish charities. The Jewish Association's work in conjunction with the Travellers' Aid Society demonstrates most clearly the extent of this co-operative relationship between the Jewish women's organisations and their non-Jewish counterparts. During the early years of the Jewish Association's rescue work, the dock worker often assisted the Travellers' Aid Society in directing Christian girls to their offices and dealing with all such girls who spoke no English.⁹ As the Jewish women's organisations became more established and gathered more expertise, their members were widely sought after to join committees, and during the 1920s, representatives of the various groups could be found attending a variety of different committees, ranging from the various subcommittees of the National Council of Women, to the Stepney Branch of the NSPCC. This wider recognition forced the Anglo-Jewish community to acknowledge the abilities of its female members. Women's standing within the community was thus enhanced, which led in turn to more official recognition of their talents in later years. Thus it was through their philanthropic work and that of their predecessors that ladies such as Alice Model were eventually able to join the Jewish Board of Guardians and the Jewish Board of Deputies, which Mrs Model did in 1914 and in 1922 respectively.¹⁰

Communal recognition of the value of women's philanthropic work was slow to come, but state recognition came slightly more quickly. One of the

reasons for this was the charities' own efficiency in dealing with social ills. The Sick Room Helps Society, for example, met the needs of Jewish mothers as well as providing work for some of the middle-aged women worst hit by unemployment.¹¹ It is hardly surprising then that the society's work was emulated by non-Jewish charities of such weight as the Charity Organisation Society. The Sick Room Helps Society was also assiduous in its application of the state regulations concerning maternal and child welfare during the first half of the twentieth century, adding district nursing and ante- and post-natal care for mothers and their babies to the other services already provided for Jewish women.¹² Within the other Jewish women's organisations, especially the Jewish Association, a similar pattern of inspirational ideas and highly proficient implementation aroused imitation and respect in many quarters.

The goal of efficiency encouraged Jewish women philanthropists to seek to establish "method in charitable work",¹³ one of the aims of the Union of Jewish Women. A result of this was to bring an increasingly professional manner to philanthropy. The growing severity of the problems coming to the organisations' attention also hastened this process. By the 1920s the Jewish Association was establishing its own training programmes and was employing several paid, trained workers in addition to its many volunteer members. This was in addition to the training and funding schemes offered by the Union of Jewish Women. These schemes were also attracting an increasingly superior calibre of candidate by this time, as paid employment became both more accessible and more respectable for young middle class women. The culmination of this process was the professionalisation of social work, with the charities virtually putting themselves out of work. Trained workers, professional bodies and expanding state provision owed their existence to the

Jewish women's organisations and other Jewish and non-Jewish charities, and yet had effectively replaced them by the end of the Second World War.¹⁴

As the Central British Fund showed, there was still a great need for charitable provision during the 1940s in spite of the emergence of other agencies, and British society continues to benefit enormously from the work of charities today. However, the role of Jewish women within philanthropy had demonstrably changed again by this time. Within the Central British Fund women found themselves relegated to minor roles, while men assumed administrative responsibility. Even Constance Hoster was restricted to working for the Domestic Bureau, having run her own highly successful business, and been the first woman elected to the Chamber of Commerce, as well as working for the Union of Jewish Women.¹⁵ Arguably, this area was best suited to Mrs Hoster's talents, but she was equally well-qualified to hold an administrative post within the management of the organisation as well.

By 1945 therefore, it would seem that Jewish women had ceased to play a leading role in communal philanthropy. During the late nineteenth century, Jewish women had emerged from the confines of their households into the welcoming world of philanthropy. In the years that followed, they had wrought many changes in this arena, altering their own lives through their innovations in charity work. Philanthropy had allowed Jewish women to acquire a public voice, albeit on behalf of those even more oppressed than themselves. Younger generations of women following behind were also affected by the changing roles of women in the world outside the Jewish community, and it became increasingly acceptable for even the most privileged to pursue a career in paid employment, as Nettie Adler most admirably showed.¹⁶ But while some younger women worked outside the home, for those more interested in

voluntary work opportunities in communal philanthropy lessened as the women's organisations entered a period of decline.

Thus Jewish women underwent a process of significant social change through their philanthropic work. It is arguable whether they ultimately experienced lasting change in their status within the Anglo-Jewish community, as the innovative, but elitist Jewish women's organisations no longer existed by 1945. In 1943, the Jewish Association was amalgamated with the Jewish Board of Guardians and the Union of Jewish Women was effectively replaced by the League of Jewish Women. The League was primarily intended:

“To unite in one organisation Jewish women of every shade of opinion who are resident in the United Kingdom.”¹⁷

Furthermore, the League of Jewish Women sought to promote voluntary work among Jewish women, particularly as part of the war effort before 1945. In addition, women were encouraged to train for such work wherever possible. The emphasis of the League's work clearly lay on “method in charitable work”,¹⁸ as had the Union of Jewish Women's activities forty years earlier. But the role of the Jewish women's organisations had changed irrevocably during the 1930s and 1940s. The professionalisation of social work and the ensuing effects on the voluntary sector have already been discussed, so it is not surprising that the League of Jewish Women was not the major philanthropic force that its predecessors had been. Instead, the League of Jewish Women was a far more democratic organisation, welcoming Jewish women of all classes into its ranks and performing a series of more mundane functions:

“to enable Jewish women through their solidarity as members of the League to make an effective contribution to the solution of the problems confronting the Jewish community and the community generally.”¹⁹

Thus the dynamic Jewish women's organisations had ceased to exist by the end of the Second World War. They were replaced by a far more simplistic organisation that did not seek to innovate, but instead strove to encourage and support all Jewish women who undertook charity work.

The experience of Jewish women over the period under investigation echoes the experience of British women as a whole in the field of employment during the first half of the twentieth century. In Chapter 3, the field of women's employment was shown to have undergone a series of cyclical changes, largely influenced by the First and Second World Wars. Women were drawn into the workplace because of a shortage of male labour in wartime, but were expected to return to domesticity as soon as the male workers were demobilised after the war. Any improvements in employment prospects for women were entirely temporary during the First World War for almost all but the most highly educated women workers. Even after the Second World War a similar pattern may be discerned and the female workforce declined sharply as women returned to the home.

This cycle of temporary change followed by an almost complete reversion to the original position is discernable in Jewish women's philanthropic work. Over the sixty-five years being studied here, Jewish women slowly emerged from the confines of domesticity into the world of philanthropy. Through their charity work they found the confidence to play a bigger part in communal life and even to become involved in political lobbying and the suffrage movement.²⁰ Yet the success of their work led in turn to voluntary workers becoming redundant as growing numbers of professional workers took on much of their work. Some Jewish women became professional workers themselves and the progress made by their

mothers and grand-mothers in philanthropy was certainly significant to their own experience. But few middle class Jewish women took on paid employment as marriage and motherhood remained their designated roles. Older women particularly never considered the possibility of working outside the home, but found that opportunities for voluntary work were increasingly limited. During the Second World War voluntary labour was mobilised on a non-sectarian basis by the Red Cross and the Women's Voluntary Service, both of which attracted the membership of many Jewish ladies. Within the field of communal philanthropy, women charity workers found themselves reverting to the more traditional roles of fund-raising and socialising.

Thus Jewish women gradually retreated from the dynamic position they had grown to occupy during the earlier part of the century and by the 1940s had reverted to playing a subsidiary role in communal philanthropy. But the effects of Jewish women's achievements in philanthropy were not entirely ephemeral. Women continued to be elected to the Jewish Board of Deputies, albeit on a small scale. Others held positions of authority within the Jewish Board of Guardians and the organisations that replaced it after the Second World War. Jewish women acted as magistrates, local councillors and J.P.s. Like non-Jewish women many conformed to the ideal of motherhood and domesticity and yet pursued other interests as well. This may be ascribed to the influence of the women's movement and the effects of the campaigns for women's rights by non-Jewish women. But it was through their philanthropic work that many Jewish women came into direct contact with non-Jewish women, so that philanthropy facilitated the spread of their influence.

Philanthropy was of enormous importance in shaping the lives of Jewish women throughout the period from 1880 to 1945. Patterns may be discerned in

the changing experience of women and men in the Anglo-Jewish community. But this does not render any easier the problem of defining the motives and influences that governed philanthropy. Jewish women were certainly affected by motives that varied considerably from those of male philanthropists. Additional factors such as gender solidarity make the exploration of Jewish women's motivation far more complex. Furthermore, despite the effects of philanthropy on their own status within the community, it was not the women's original intention to bring about any change in their own circumstances.

IV. Motives and Influences.

In joining the men of the Jewish community in their social work during the nineteenth century, it is likely that many of the women involved wished merely to broaden their horizons beyond the limits of their domestic role. This continued to affect women throughout the period of study. It is no coincidence that many of the most active lady philanthropists were childless, unmarried or widowed. Their domestic duties were thus light enough to allow for the pursuit of other interests. But philanthropy represented far more than just a pastime for bored individuals.

The emphasis of the Evangelical movement on philanthropy had provided Christian women with a similar occupation in keeping with their domestic duties, but equally serving as an outward example of personal piety and religious devotion. For Jewish women the same was true, and was particularly valuable given their limited role within the observance of the Jewish faith. The vocational aspects of philanthropic work were undoubtedly

significant to women throughout the years of this investigation. Helen Lucas, for example, was widowed after only seven years of marriage and thereafter devoted her life to charity work.²¹ Her nun-like devotion to her favoured causes illustrate perfectly the existence of her personal vocation. Similarly, Lily Montagu was blessed with a more specifically religious vocation, founding an entirely new movement with the global Jewish community. But she too expressed elements of her calling through philanthropy, using the West Central Club as a means of sharing her faith with others.²² No doubt the majority of Jewish women were not inspired by divine intervention, but even the most unspectacular charity work could be seen as the open expression of quasi-religious feelings of altruism and compassion.

Equating philanthropy with religious expression implies an ethereal nature at odds with the more prosaic characteristics of the Jewish women's organisations during their later years. Other less spiritual influences guided their work, although the preservation of the Jewish faith among the working class community was an important consideration throughout the period. Safeguarding the faith of others is not quite the same as expressing one's own religious beliefs and certainly this policy had as much to do with communal cohesion and continuity as spirituality and faith. This need not be dismissed, however, for the preservation of Judaism against the onslaughts of secular society was a vital part of the life of the Jewish community. Furthermore, it was an aspect of Anglo-Jewry's response to anti-Semitism.

Anti-Semitism, both real and imaginary, was a growing problem during the late nineteenth century as immigrants flocked to the United Kingdom from eastern Europe.²³ Thus much of the Anglo-Jewish community's philanthropic work was intended to protect themselves and working class Jews from anti-

Semitism and to refute any accusations that Jews were a drain on British society, which added fuel to anti-Semitic campaigns. As far as the middle class women of the Anglo-Jewish community were concerned, anti-Semitism was a problem they encountered less frequently than the rest of Jewish society. This was largely because of their protected domestic position. Obviously all would have been aware of the problem and it would undoubtedly have affected their charity work to some extent. However, it was not as significant a motive in governing women's philanthropy as it was among the community as a whole.

It is possible, therefore, that Jewish women were more innovative in their philanthropic work because their experience of anti-Semitism differed from that of the community as a whole. This implies that Anglo-Jewish men were more concerned about the problem of anti-Semitism, and that they were at the same time more constrained in their activities as a result of their fears. Certainly the Jewish women's organisations held a far higher public profile than many of the existing communal institutions, and furthermore, the ladies themselves often courted further publicity in order to pursue their philanthropic goals. This was in direct contrast with the low profile of most other Jewish charities, which sought to deal with the problems of the community with as little public attention as possible. Obviously, this discrepancy may be explained by according to the women's organisations a more sophisticated understanding of the need for publicity in dealing with social problems. But having described the middle class ladies of the various organisations as naive elsewhere, it would be illogical to describe them as sophisticated as well. It seems that the ladies of the Jewish women's organisations were affected by the fear of anti-Semitism in a different way from Jewish men, and that this difference enabled them to pursue a more

dynamic and exciting role in philanthropy. Alternatively, women's fear of anti-Semitism may have been equal to that of Jewish men, but that the women chose to deal with the problem in a contradictory manner. The very different experience of middle and upper middle class Jewish women in dealing with anti-Semitism also affected other associated issues.

Coupled with the problems of anti-Semitism were the processes of anglicisation and assimilation. Anglo-Jewry itself had become highly assimilated during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, retaining a notable degree of social cohesion and a specifically Jewish identity, yet successfully imitating the outward characteristics of the English middle class.²⁴ In response to the discrimination suffered by the Jewish immigrant population in the 1880s and 1890s, an assimilationist policy was advocated by certain sectors of the resident Jewish community. It has been suggested that philanthropic institutions were thus employed to hasten the process of assimilation whereby the immigrant population became more integrated with the host nation. Anglicisation represented another step down this path, with the imposition of the English language and other customs onto immigrant Jews. The most drastic aspects of such a policy may be summarised as social control of incoming Jews.

Social control is described by certain historians as the deliberate restriction of the opportunities available to working class Jews, containing them within geographic and economic limits. Others have perceived a more benign movement of acculturation, which enabled working class Jews to improve their circumstances with the help of communal charities and institutions. All aspects of this process of acculturation and assimilation have been brought to bear by historians on the philanthropy of the Anglo-Jewish

community during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. But these models have only been applied to the male-dominated community as a whole. The experience of the women's organisations was actually considerably different.

The least extreme of the policies applied to Anglo-Jewry in the 1880s and 1890s may be loosely described as facilitating the absorption of immigrant Jews into British society. This process of acculturation was achieved by helping immigrants to find work and housing, and by encouraging the abandonment of the more alien aspects of eastern European Jewish culture, such as the wearing of wigs by married women. It certainly formed a recognised part of the communal policy behind mainstream philanthropy. Other policies of anglicisation and social control were more seditious and may or may not have been openly pursued. Anglicisation involved the deliberate imposition of the English language and English social behaviour onto immigrant Jews. As mentioned before, social control describes the restriction of the immigrant working classes to pre-designed limits by the established, middle class Anglo-Jewish community. It is not the place of this study to discuss this issue in relation to the community as a whole. But with regard to the specific experience of Jewish women it is clear that no discernable policy of anglicisation or social control was adopted by the organisations they formed. The acculturation of immigrant working class Jews was certainly a goal of Jewish women's philanthropic work and much of their work was intended to ease the immigrant's transition between eastern and western Europe. Language classes, after-school clubs and training schemes appear to suggest a policy more akin to anglicisation, but many attempts were made by the women's organisations to reverse or limit the effects where anglicisation

did occur as a result of these activities. In fact, in some cases the opposite result was sought, with religious education and classes in *kosher* cookery being provided to counter the secular influence of British society.

There is no question of Jewish women exerting any level of social control on the recipients of their charity. Their infinitely superior social status gave them authority and power over working class Jews, especially the young girls who sought their help. The organisations, most frequently the Jewish Association, did also adopt an authoritarian and imperious attitude towards their charges on occasion. But in this behaviour Jewish women merely imitated the vast majority of institutions and charities functioning at that time. The term social control, even in its most mild form, implies a level of self-interest that Jewish women did not exhibit in their philanthropy nor in any other aspect of their lives. Furthermore, women in British society as a whole entirely lacked the independent authority with which to control the lives of others. Without even the rights to direct their own lives, it was impossible for Jewish women to exert control over even the most lowly working class Jews.

Behind this lies the implication that women's charity work was the result of manipulation by the male community. Thus a policy of social control may have been extended to exploit middle class women as a means of controlling the working class population. The zeal with which many women philanthropists pursued their different causes and the passion with which they publicised their aims serve to refute this suggestion. Moreover, women did not confine themselves to the limits set by the men of the community for their philanthropic work. Instead they brought innovation and radical new ideas to their chosen interests, breaking with convention in even the most respectable areas of their work, such as health care, and extending their interests to the

most disreputable aspects of life, such as prostitution and the treatment of venereal disease. Middle class Jewish women were clearly not controlled in any way by the Jewish community as a whole, although individuals were undoubtedly influenced by their husbands and by other family members, as their work in similar fields demonstrates. Jewish women also derived authority from the social status and wealth of their husbands and families. Coupled with this was an element of *noblesse oblige* that infected Jewish women's work. Clearly these middle and upper middle class ladies felt obliged to share the benefits of their good-fortune with the more deserving of their fellow Jews, following the example of the men of their community.

Social status carried with it the twin factors of authority and obligation. Again women would have been less influenced by these than their menfolk, because they had no independent wealth or status apart from their husband's or father's. But in comparison with the lowly status of the working class girls in their care, the ladies of the Jewish Association and the other organisations were firmly placed on a much higher social plane. Thus philanthropy served to emphasise the social differences between the classes. Arguably, the most superior of upper middle class Jewish ladies did not need to pursue any outside interests to make this point about social difference, but philanthropic work was an important part of middle class life in Britain and was required of all who occupied, as well as those who aspired to, middle class status. For those further down the social scale, charity work bestowed on its practitioners a veneer of respectability that would have been prized by those who sought to improve their standing in society.

The issues of assimilation and acculturation, fear of anti-Semitism, class consciousness and social obligation seem strangely contradictory to the most

significant motives behind Jewish women's philanthropic work, the first of which has already been discussed. The expression of religious beliefs through charity work was one of the most significant aspects of women's earliest ventures into philanthropy and remained important thereafter. However, the professionalisation of social work and even the earlier attempts by the Jewish women's organisations themselves to establish greater method in their work, all served to limit the spiritual nature of philanthropy. The same is true of other personal factors. Altruism and the desire to relieve the sufferings of the less fortunate were certainly important motives behind women's early charity work and they continued to be reflected in philanthropy throughout the period under investigation. But again as the field became more professional and increasingly dominated by paid workers responding to government requirements, personal influences assumed less prominence. The same cannot be said of the last, but certainly not the least of the motives that affected Jewish women in their philanthropic work. Gender solidarity has, in fact, assumed greater importance in many aspects of society throughout this century, and in some respects, the work of Jewish women in promoting this issue has been invaluable to the cause of women's rights altogether.

Jewish women began their charity work in conjunction with male-run institutions and in the early days of this work, both concentrated their efforts on the family as a whole. However, as a result of their increased contact with the Jewish working classes middle class women became aware of the specific needs of Jewish women. Even the poorest working class families aspired to the ideal of the domesticated wife, and Jewish women took full responsibility for the management of the family and the household. This was also the case among non-Jewish women, but where the opportunity arose non-Jewish

women did work outside the home, whereas Jewish women rarely did so, in spite of economic hardship. In some cases, Rickie Burman has found that Jewish women not only ran the household, but also assumed responsibility for earning the family income as well.²⁵ The middle class lady philanthropists found that women's needs were not being met by communal charitable provision, especially where the household lacked a male breadwinner altogether. Widows were particularly vulnerable, as were the increasing numbers of unaccompanied young girls arriving in England from eastern Europe. The Jewish Association was unique among the Jewish community in recognising that these girls needed particular attention in addition to the help already provided by the Jews' Temporary Shelter. The Union of Jewish Women sought to address the problem of women's unemployment, paying particular attention to the needs of "necessitous gentlewomen" whose plight was especially difficult during the 1920s and 1930s.²⁶ The Sick Room Helps Society made another vital contribution to women's healthcare in providing home helps for women when they gave birth or were unwell. At a time when few working class women could even afford proper medical attention, this made an enormous improvement in women's lives and significantly improved their health, by enabling them to recover from illness or childbirth. Furthermore, the Sick Room Helps scheme provided work for older women who were unlikely to find other work, even in times of desperate need.²⁷ All of these examples demonstrate the Jewish women's organisations awareness of the needs of their fellow women and their attempts to meet those needs. Almost all of these organisations' efforts were directed towards improving the lives of working class Jewish women. Their children also benefited from this work, and in later years, the organisations began to address their needs more

directly, recognising that in these children lay the future of the Jewish community.

Middle class Jewish women's recognition of the problems faced by working class women influenced other non-Jewish charities and the state provision made in later years. The Jewish women's organisations were among the first to appoint women probation officers and to provide workers to support women attending courts, as witnesses or defendants. Their support of the first women police and their interest in the welfare of women prisoners were less original, but demonstrate the existence of gender solidarity as well as a forward-looking policy of employing women to look after the needs of other women in all walks of life. These achievements were not lost in later years and the gradual introduction of women workers into all areas of public life was in part due to the early work of Jewish and non-Jewish philanthropists. The same may not be said of Jewish women's political activities, which were equally well-intentioned but far less successful. However, lack of success need not imply any absence of effort or motivation and the interest of organisations like the Council for the Amelioration of the Legal Position of the Jewess and the Jewish League for Woman Suffrage in issues specifically concerned with women's rights affords yet more evidence of gender solidarity between Jewish women of all social classes.

V. Conclusion.

To summarise, Jewish women's charity work was characterised by an element of gender solidarity that pervaded all aspects of their work, and extended far beyond the limits of altruism and charitable feeling. Equally important was the opportunity philanthropic work provided for Jewish women to express their religious faith openly. Denied any outward expression of religious observance, philanthropy therefore assumed greater significance in women's spiritual lives. Gender solidarity served to direct this expression of personal beliefs towards the working class women and children of the Jewish community, and furthermore, enabled middle class Jewish women to communicate and co-operate with non-Jewish women's organisations working in the same fields. These two governing factors guided Jewish women's philanthropy in tandem with the more mundane and less admirable motives that affected the community as a whole. So Jewish women were prompted into charity work by the same circumstances as Jewish men as well: the desire to promote the acculturation of the immigrant population, fear of anti-Semitism and the emphasis of social standing.

These common factors waned in importance over the period being studied, as did the quasi-religious aspects of philanthropy. Instead the whole area of charity work became increasingly regulated and professional. State intervention affected all aspects of philanthropy and the establishment of the National Health Service in 1948 removed the need for most voluntary work in the field of healthcare.²⁸ This had a positive effect on women's employment, providing new opportunities for paid workers in fields previously dominated by volunteers. But, as was the case in women's employment as a whole, women found themselves being pushed back into their domestic role after the

Second World War, as men demobilised from the armed forces sought work again. Jewish women's philanthropic work followed this pattern, offering fewer opportunities to women during the 1930s and 1940s.

Jewish women had undoubtedly benefited from the development of philanthropy during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Philanthropy had provided an occupation outside the confines of the home that had later proved to be an exciting path into public life. Through philanthropy women had become involved in many new activities from political lobbying to synagogue management. Previously unknown opportunities had revealed themselves via philanthropic work and many women had devoted their lives entirely to charity work. Their efforts had led in turn to a new generation of Jewish women actually taking on paid employment, although few from the higher echelons of Jewish society pursued careers, even during the 1930s and 1940s. Philanthropy was thus a revelatory experience for Jewish women, bringing them into contact with working class Jews and with the rest of British society, and especially allowing women to play a fuller part in the life of the Jewish community. But Jewish women's domestic role remained paramount throughout the period from 1880 to 1945 and when the world of philanthropy began to contract as professional social work developed, paid employment did not assume greater significance for Jewish women.

The demise of the Jewish women's organisations coincided with the decline of philanthropy in general. Increasing state intervention during the early years of the twentieth century had rendered voluntary work less important. At the same time, social work had become a profession, akin to nursing or teaching. Within the new National Health Service particularly, opportunities for women workers had expanded considerably, but this

effectively removed many such avenues from the voluntary sector. The Jewish women's organisations were therefore redundant. Furthermore, this period of decline represented the end of the domination of Jewish women's philanthropy by the Cousinhood.

The Anglo-Jewish community had been led by the inter-related group of upper middle class families known as the Cousinhood since the eighteenth century. The economic and social successes of these families over the nineteenth century had increased their authority over their fellow Jews, and the ladies of this circle had assumed a similarly dominant position over the women of the community through their charity work. The women's organisations of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were entirely the product of the Cousinhood and its influences. Although members were also drawn from the lower ranks of the Jewish middle class, the driving force behind each organisation came from upper middle class ladies of the elite families which made up the Cousinhood. Constance Battersea, the leading light of the Jewish Association, was a Rothschild, while prominent members of the Union of Jewish Women came from the Rothschild, Spielmann, Cohen and Montefiore families, all of which have been identified as members of the Cousinhood by Chaim Bermant in his study of the Anglo-Jewish gentry.²⁹ After the Second World War Jewish women's philanthropic work presented a far more democratic picture, as the traditional dominance of the upper middle class gave way to a more representative structure of women from all ranks of society. This paralleled the general decline of the Cousinhood and the end of the domination of communal life by the upper middle class elite.

The League of Jewish Women developed from the process of democratisation that altered Jewish women's philanthropy during the 1940s. It

encompassed all aspects of voluntary work and welcomed Jewish women of all classes as members. The League embodied the new form which Jewish women's philanthropy assumed during the Second World War. Thus Jewish women's charity work had become less innovative and was far less important for the survival of the working class poor, who could now turn to professional agencies for help when necessary. But voluntary work continued to play a significant part in the well-being of the Jewish community as a whole, and persists in that role today. Furthermore, philanthropy remained a vital part of Jewish women's domestic life.

Although the outlets available for their voluntary work were limited by the 1940s, Jewish women found that their services were required within non-sectarian voluntary organisations during the Second World War. Some of their earlier achievements had also permanently changed philanthropic work, as Jewish women now played a fuller part in synagogue management and in communal institutions such as the Board of Deputies. The continued existence of a Jewish women's charitable organisation - the League of Jewish Women - demonstrates that the need for their work had not ended. Instead, philanthropy took on new forms and the versatility of Jewish women voluntary workers was again illustrated in their assumption of their new role. Within the League of Jewish Women voluntary workers turned their attention to the care of the elderly and collaborated with Local Authorities and other professional agencies to meet specific welfare needs. In addition, the League of Jewish Women assumed an important function in the promotion of women's rights within the Jewish community and in presenting the views of Jewish women to the country as a whole.³⁰

Thus the League of Jewish Women continued the campaign for Jewish women's rights that had, almost unintentionally, begun with the first Jewish women's organisations at the turn of the century. The League perpetuated the most significant aspects of Jewish women's voluntary work, in providing the means by which Jewish women were able to extend their domestic role beyond the limits of the household and in embodying the gender solidarity that characterised Jewish women's charity work throughout the period under investigation. Philanthropy had lost much of its influence in British society as social work was professionalised by the State, and the field of philanthropic work had accordingly diminished in size as well. But philanthropy did not die altogether and continues to support society today, particularly where state provision is inadequate. Jewish women therefore perpetuated many aspects of their philanthropic work, but less publicly and in tandem with the professional services now available. In the same way that the Jewish women's organisations had responded to the needs of society at the turn of the century, the League of Jewish Women reacted to changes in British society during the 1930s and 1940s, heralding a new era in Jewish women's philanthropy.

- ¹ Marks, Lara, "Carers and servers of the Jewish community: the marginalized heritage of Jewish women in Britain", in T. Kushner (ed.), *The Jewish Heritage in British History*, London, 1993, pp.106-127, passim.
- ² Ibid., p.106.
- ³ Union of Jewish Women, Meeting of the Million Shilling Fund, 17 October 1921, SUA, MS129 AJ26 C/6/1.
- ⁴ Black, Eugene, *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry 1880-1920*, Oxford, 1988, p.79.
- ⁵ Burman, Rickie, "'She looketh well to the ways of her household': the changing role of Jewish women in religious life c.1800-1930", in G. Malmgreen (ed.), *Religion in the Lives of English Women 1760-1930*, London, 1986, p.237.
- ⁶ Kuzmack, Linda Gordon, *Woman's Cause: The Jewish Woman's Movement in England and the United States 1881-1933*, Columbus, 1990, pp.44-52.
- ⁷ Black, *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry*, pp.222-224.
- ⁸ Ibid., pp.104-132; see also Lipman, V.D. *Social History of the Jews in England 1850-1950*, London, 1954, pp.47-49.
- ⁹ Travellers' Aid Society, *Annual Report*, 1896, pp.4-5, Fawcett Library, 4/TAS, Box 201.
- ¹⁰ *Jewish Chronicle*, 17 May 1914 and 14 March 1922.
- ¹¹ Abrahams, Jennifer, "The Sick Room Helps Society", unpublished paper given to the London Museum of Jewish Life, n.d.
- ¹² *Charity Organisation Review*, 1914, p.187; cited in Marks, Lara, "Dear Old Mother Levy's: the Jewish Maternity Home and Sick Room Helps Society 1895-1939", *Social History of Medicine*, 3 (1990), p.66.
- ¹³ Union of Jewish Women, Report of the Social Study Circle on "Method in Charitable Work", given by Mrs Hancock of the Charity Organisation Society and the Unemployment Committee of the National Council of Women, 16 May 1906, SUA, MS129 C/1/6.
- ¹⁴ Jewish Association, General Purposes Committee, 24 October 1943, SUA, MS173 2/4/4.

¹⁵ Central British Fund, Refugees Committee Executive, 2 January 1935, SUA, Reel 32 File 174.

¹⁶ *Jewish Chronicle*, 21 April 1950.

¹⁷ *A History of the League of Jewish Women 1943-1988*, London, 1989.

¹⁸ See note 13.

¹⁹ *A History of the League of Jewish Women 1943-1988*, p.3.

²⁰ Jewish League for Woman Suffrage, *Annual Report*, 1913-1914, London Museum of Jewish life, 86-1985.

²¹ *Jewish Chronicle*, 14 March 1902.

²² "Lily Montagu 1873-1963", *Liberal Jewish Monthly*, Memorial Supplement, February 1963.

²³ See Holmes, *Anti-Semitism in British Society*, London, 1979, passim.

²⁴ See Endelman, Todd, *Radical Assimilation in English Jewish History 1656-1945*, Bloomington, 1990, Chapter 3.

²⁵ Burman, Rickie, "The Jewish woman as breadwinner: the changing values of women's work in a Manchester immigrant community", *Oral History*, 10 (1982), pp.27-39.

²⁶ Union of Jewish Women, General Committee, 30 October 1911, SUA, MS129 AJ26 A/2.

²⁷ Abrahams, Jennifer, "The Sick Room Helps Society", unpublished paper given to the London Museum of Jewish Life, n.d.

²⁸ Holdsworth, Angela, *Out of the Doll's House: The Story of Women in the Twentieth Century*, London, 1988, p.102.

²⁹ Bermant, Chaim, *The Cousinhood: The Anglo-Jewish Gentry*, London, 1971, passim.

³⁰ *A History of the League of Jewish Women 1943-1988*, p.2.

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