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Alysa Levene[1,*]

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*Correspondence: alevene@brookes.ac.uk
[1] Oxford Brookes University, UK

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Nineteenth-century provincial Jewry: a view from the Jewish press

ALYSA LEVENE

In September 1856 a brawl erupted in Plymouth's synagogue. It started when one of the congregants took offence at the way that the community's treasurer, Mr. Josiah Solomon, had handed out the communal honours for the service. Harsh words ensued, prayers had to be suspended for twenty minutes, and Solomon retreated in fear of violence. The *Plymouth Journal* described the incident in what was undoubtedly an embarrassing level of detail for the community, highlighting the "respectable" standing of the men involved in the brawl and the fact that Solomon had insisted on it going to the magistrates court rather than being dealt with internally. The hearing, which attracted many non-Jews as well as members of the congregation, resulted in an adjournment with all parties instructed to stay away from the synagogue, and the case was eventually settled out of court with the complainant (the treasurer) paying costs. The defendants, in return, "express[ed] their regret that they had used any offensive observations towards the complainant".[1]

The case had seemingly been concluded, but the controversy rumbled on in the pages of the *Jewish Chronicle*. Both sides sent in strongly worded letters to correct the way they had been represented in the press, one of the alleged brawlers, Hyman Hyman, saying that he was "desirous that those of my brethren who do not personally know me should not believe that I would so far forget myself as to quarrel in the house of God, and use language there which I would not utter anywhere".[2] Solomon, too, wrote a lengthy account, ending with a statement that he had never struck Hyman (though he did, he admitted, "on one occasion throw papers in the face of Mr Joseph").[3]

This was not the end of synagogue brawling in Plymouth, however. Two years later another violent incident came before the magistrate, this

1 *Jewish Chronicle* (hereafter, *JC*) 12 Sept. 1856, reprinting material from the *Plymouth Journal*; for the outcome, see letter, *JC* 19 Sept. 1856.

2 *JC* 19 Sept. 1856.

3 *JC* 26 Sept. 1856.

time the result of one member physically throwing another from his seat and threatening to strike him.[4] As he had on the previous occasion, the magistrate expressed disappointment that the parties had not managed to reconcile their differences themselves, "for it would do the congregation no good to have such matters brought before the public". This time, though, he went further, noting that "it would seem from what he had heard of this case, and from other facts within his knowledge, that the more liberty was conceded to the Jews, the more they were inclined to differ among themselves". The *Plymouth Herald*'s writer pushed the point home, recommending that

> the leading members of the congregation must apply themselves to the cultivation of a better feeling, or, at all events, resolutely suppress the slightest attempt at disorder within the synagogue, by causing it to be well understood that any parties offending in future shall be publicly proceeded against, with a view to the infliction of the punishment which the law awards to all such persons as shall create a disturbance in any place licensed for the performance of religious worship.[5]

The matter was swiftly settled by the parties involved with the defendant apologizing and agreeing to pay costs. The editor of the *JC* was clearly stung by and resigned to the criticism in equal measure, prefacing the published account with a note that it was reported "with extreme disgust".

The Jews of Plymouth may have been prone to high feelings, but they were not alone. The community in Bristol has been described as "notorious for its fissiparous tendencies", while in Hull threatened or actual secessions by small groups of congregants were common, as well as at least one disturbance in the synagogue over a claim to a seat – this time in the women's section.[6] Birmingham, Liverpool, and Manchester all saw longer-lived formal secessions, while even in the mid-century decades there was a lively array of small independent *hevrot* (brotherhoods) in the towns with larger numbers of immigrants.[7] What particularly marked out

4 *JC* 15 Oct. 1858; also 22 Oct. 1858.

5 *Plymouth Herald*, reported in *JC* 15 Oct. 1858.

6 *JC* 18 March 1859; Cecil Roth, "The Early Communities", in *The Rise of Provincial Jewry*, ed. Cecil Roth (1950), at https://www.jewishgen.org/jcr-uk/susser/provincialjewry/bathcamb.htm (accessed 19 Aug. 2019); Israel Finestein, "The Jews in Hull between 1766 and 1880", *Jewish Historical Studies* 35 (1996–8): 33–91.

7 Bill Williams, *The Making of Manchester Jewry, 1740–1875* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), 132–63 on schism, 271–3 on *hevrot*; Birmingham Jewish History Society (hereafter, BJHS), *Birmingham Jewry*, vol. 2: *More Aspects, 1740–1930* (Oldbury: Birmingham Jewish History Research Group, 1984), 13–14.

the Plymouth examples was the fact that their disputes had come to the attention of the secular authorities.

In other ways, though, the congregation at Plymouth was an exemplar of harmony and good service. The community dates back at least to the middle of the eighteenth century, and by 1851 there were 205 members of the synagogue, 45 of whom attended on the day that the Census of Worship was taken.[8] The *Plymouth Herald* correspondent noted that its members had long shown "loyal attachment to the institutions of the country" as well as "ready co-operation in works of charity and benevolence".[9] In the decade following the two violent incidents noted earlier, the congregation established a Hebrew School, a Ladies' Hebrew Benevolent Society, and a Hand in Hand Charitable Society.[10] Other articles in the Jewish press reveal Plymouth Jews donating money to the building funds of other congregations, as well as successfully raising money for a new burial ground, while in 1850 congratulations were offered up to a Jewish Plymothian aged fourteen who had won a prize from the Devonport Exposition of Art for his "beautiful working model of a grasshopper steam engine".[11] The community was also one of a small number who took an active stance against the excommunication issued by the Chief Rabbi against the Reform synagogue established in London in 1840.[12] They were, in short, an active congregation, engaging in wider affairs, moving to protect their own poor and the education of their children, and clearly also engaging in worship – albeit in sometimes dramatic and interrupted form.

It is events like these which help to bring the smaller communities of provincial Britain to life. While the historiography of British Jewry remains skewed towards London, there have been several excellent studies of provincial communities.[13] However, despite the move to greater

8 *JC* 23 July 1847; Vivian Lipman, "The Origins of Provincial Anglo-Jewry", in *Provincial Jewry in Victorian Britain*, ed. Cecil Roth (1975), https://www.jewishgen.org/jcr-uk/Newman_papers/Provincial_Jewry_Victorian/origins-vic.htm (accessed 19 Aug. 2019).

9 *Plymouth Herald*, reported in *JC* 15 Oct. 1858.

10 See Newman, *Provincial Jewry*, https://www.jewishgen.org/jcr-uk/Community/ply/plymouth-vic.htm (accessed 19 Aug. 2019).

11 E.g. the Plymouth congregation donated £3 to the synagogue fund at Canterbury: *JC* 6 Oct. 1846; *JC* 6 Sept. 1850.

12 David Englander, "Anglicized not Anglican: Jews and Judaism in Victorian Britain", in *Religion in Victorian Britain*, vol. 1: *Traditions*, ed. Gerald Parsons (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 259.

13 E.g. BJHS, *Birmingham Jewry*, vol. 1: *1749–1914* (Oldbury: Birmingham Jewish History

professionalization in the historiography, these still tend not to be well contextualized in the wider economic and social setting. Those which have specifically sought to position a community study within broader historical trends have generally focused on the growing industrial towns, which saw the development of more sustained community identities and networks in this period.[14] These studies have sometimes pointed to local particularities which it will be important to bear in mind in what follows.[15] Yet there is much more to be said about the smaller congregations in particular. It is clear that their community lives were often vibrant despite their small size; that just as in Plymouth, charitable giving and patronage was active, and personal feelings and attachments could run high.

This article attempts to characterize the provincial communities in much greater detail than has been done before, highlighting their vibrant sense of identity as individual bodies, but also the part that they played in a wider community of British Jewry. It focuses on the middle decades of the nineteenth century, when a big programme of synagogue building and improvement and a burgeoning in local Jewish charities coincided with a drive for political representation on both local and national bodies. It aims to tap into both of these trends by showing how the growth of facilities in turn went with a greater sense of confidence in Jews' entitlement to citizenship. The Plymouth examples illustrate this in perfect microcosm: it was as British citizens that those involved felt able to call on the services of the law; but as British Jews that they worried about the impact of such participation on the perception of their religion.

The perspective taken on these communities is gleaned from the mid-century Jewish newspapers the *Voice of Jacob* and the *Jewish Chronicle*. These

Research Group, 1980); Murray Freedman, *Leeds Jewry: The First Hundred Years* (Leeds: Jewish Historical Society of England, 1992); Bernard Susser, *The Jews of South-West England* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1993).

14 E.g. James Appell, "The Jews of Leeds: Immigrant Identity in the Provinces 1880–1920", in *New Directions in Anglo-Jewish History*, ed. Geoffrey Alderman (Brighton, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2010), 25–48; Williams, *Making of Manchester Jewry*; Alysa Levene, *Jews in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Charity, Community and Religion* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020). For an exception to the industrial focus, see Tony Kushner, *Anglo-Jewry since 1066: Place, Locality and Memory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009) on towns in Hampshire.

15 E.g., Appel, "Jews of Leeds"; Bill Williams, "'East and West': Class and Culture in Manchester Jewry, 1850–1920", *Studia Rosenthaliana* 23 (1989): 88–106, both of which highlight the importance of shared geographical origin and social class among Jews compared with those in London; also Kushner, *Anglo-Jewry*, flagging the economic and cultural impact of the port setting and local attitudes to emancipation.

have been characterized by several historians as the public mouthpiece of British Jewry, and the means to assert their claim to a place in the public arena.[16] Their founders were, generally speaking, sympathetic to toleration across the growing spectrum of British Jewry, militant in their support for transparency and accountability from the Jewish authorities, and keenly aware of the social problems of poverty.[17] They were also a tool for education and unity, and thus a bulwark against the threats both of indifference and of conversionist societies (which maintained a lively presence in the growing market of periodical literature themselves).[18] They also give us an insight into the way that British Jewry projected themselves to wider society: "a window through which the non-Jewish world could see and engage with the Anglo-Jewish community", in the words of one historian.[19]

The *Voice of Jacob* and the *Jewish Chronicle* were both founded in 1841 and appeared fortnightly (the *JC* moved to weekly publication from 1847) at 2d per copy. This study opens with their launch onto the market, and closes in 1870, by which time the *JC* had gone through several iterations and formats, while the *Voice of Jacob* had foundered altogether (it ceased publication in 1848).[20] Although based in London, both papers had local correspondents and agents in the larger Jewish centres, and Jacob Franklin, the founder of the *Voice of Jacob*, had been prominent among Manchester Jewry before his move to London in 1841.[21] Over the course of the next few decades the *JC* kept the spread of provincial Jewry in its sights, publishing entreaties for greater unity and engagement as part of the project of modernizing and enfranchising British Jewry. In fact, a letter of October 1850 from a reader in Liverpool noted that the *JC* itself – in the absence of any Jewish seminaries or assemblies for religious discussion – was "almost the sole connecting link between the Jews in different towns of the empire".[22] Although coverage of local events was inevitably affected by community size and whether there was a local correspondent in the area, once some started sharing news others soon followed.

16 David Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry, 1841–1991* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), esp. 2–7, 9–19, 27–8, 45–8.

17 Ibid., 12–19.

18 Geoffrey Cantor, "Anglo-Jewish Periodicals of the 1840s: The *Voice of Jacob* and Two *Jewish Chronicles*", *Jewish Historical Studies: Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* (hereafter, *Transactions*) 49, no. 1 (2017): 15–16.

19 Ibid., 34.

20 Ibid., 30–31

21 Ibid., 21; Williams, *Making of Manchester Jewry*, 106.

22 *JC* 18 Oct. 1850; see also Cesarani, *Jewish Chronicle*, 3–7.

Local non-Jewish papers furnished further details and perspectives on Jewish affairs. The newspapers thus offer a uniquely self-conscious yet expansive way to examine the key characteristics of the more literate and community-minded echelons of provincial Jewry at this time of growing enfranchisement. We cannot hope to capture all elements of the wider community, but it goes a long way to bring new detail and nuance to a little-fleshed out area of British Jewish history.

This period was also one of change and movement in Jewish settlement patterns. Indeed, Lipman characterized the late 1830s and the 1840s as the beginning of a new era in provincial Anglo-Jewry.[23] The pull of opportunities in the industrial towns, and the sustained growth of immigration from Central and Eastern Europe led to large numbers of arrivals in towns like Manchester, Liverpool, and Hull. Others moved outwards from London to seek new opportunities, as itinerant pedlars, or to extend business networks in the commercial and manufacturing towns.[24] Meanwhile, community life continued in many of the long-established centres in county and port towns: in contrast with the common perception of stagnation, this article points to a significant degree of vibrancy and pride in many of these places despite often having only small numbers of Jews by this time.

The most recent and comprehensive evidence on Jewish settlement patterns in this period comes from the 1851 Anglo-Jewish Database.[25] According to its editor, Petra Laidlaw (but in accordance with all other estimates of provincial Jewry too), Manchester was the largest of the Jewish settlements outside London by 1851, housing 1108 individuals. It was followed by Birmingham (910), and then Liverpool (861), whose Jewish population has been revised downwards according to the census figures, for reasons which are yet to be fully understood.[26] Plymouth, Hull, and Portsmouth were the only other towns housing more than 300 Jews in 1851, while there was a long tail of places with only one or two Jewish families (Bangor with 12 individuals and York with 11, for example). In total, Lipman has counted 33 "functioning" congregations in England in 1851, 2 in Wales, and 4 in the rest of the United Kingdom. A contemporary observer in 1855, meanwhile, cited 53 places of worship, 42 of which were in their own building and 16 of which had been constructed between 1841

23 Lipman, "Origins".

24 Ibid.; see also Williams, *Making of Manchester Jewry*, 67, 71–2, 81–8.

25 See www.jgsgb.org.uk/1851-database.

26 Petra Laidlaw, "Jews in the British Isles in 1851: Birthplaces, Residence and Migrations", *The Jewish Journal of Sociology* 53 (2011): 33, 42.

and 1851.[27] While the places with only a handful of Jews might not have fallen into either of these two counts, with little likelihood of designated facilities for worship, kosher food, and the celebration of marriages, even here families might still access religious networks via nearby towns, and maintain links via informal worship, sociability – or, indeed, the Jewish press.

Readership of the Jewish papers was similarly geographically diverse. A list of subscribers to the *Voice of Jacob* in September 1845 gave 118 names from London and the vicinity, 25 from Liverpool, 23 from Manchester, 9 from Birmingham, 8 from Plymouth, 7 from Bristol, and 6 from Cheltenham. A handful of individuals subscribed from Canterbury, Exeter, Glasgow, and Portsmouth, while the synagogues at Brighton and Sheerness had their own subscriptions which we might suppose were read more widely. Single individuals subscribed from a wide range of places, from Abergavenny to Truro, while almost 200 copies were sent abroad, to Gibraltar, the West Indies, and North America among other places.[28] Cantor estimates a total readership of between 800 and 1,600 people for each of the two papers through the 1840s, while others would have encountered their content via reproduction in other papers.[29] Their geographical reach was therefore fairly extensive, and while Jews outside London may have lacked the weight of numbers that their metropolitan counterparts enjoyed, they were nonetheless engaged and increasingly prepared to act in defence of Jewish rights on the local and national stage. Often younger in demographic profile than London Jewry, and of more decidedly working- and middle-class roots, they used their community networks to find positions in the local social hierarchy, and their newspapers as way to explore and assert a sense of "civic consciousness".[30] These themes of identity, self-characterization, and civic consciousness are the key areas for exploration in the rest of this article.

27 Vivian Lipman, "A Survey of Anglo-Jewry in 1851", *Transactions* 17 (1953): 186–8; Ben Schimmon, letter to the editor, *JC* 1 June 1855.

28 *Voice of Jacob* (hereafter, *VJ*) 26 Sept. 1845.

29 Cantor, "Anglo-Jewish Periodicals", 35.

30 On the role of provincial newspapers in the creation of "civic consciousness", see Carole O'Reilly, "Creating a Critical Civic Consciousness: Reporting Local Government in the C19th Provincial Press", *Media History* 26, no. 3 (2020): 249–62; also Andrew Walker, "The Development of the Provincial Press in England, c1780–1914", *Journalism Studies* 7, no. 3 (2006): 373–86. For information on the relative surplus of births over deaths in the provinces, see Board of Deputies Annual Report, *JC* 26 May 1854.

Provincial Jewry and the national community

The editors of the *Jewish Chronicle* and the *Voice of Jacob* were keen to promote a sense of shared identity and endeavour among the communities of Great Britain (indeed, in a broader sense, the Jews of the British Empire, too). In August 1848 an article in the *JC* expounded on "the nationality of the Jews", which the writer claimed consisted of a melding of British loyalty with "a certain national feeling that draws the bands of brotherhood around all the Jews of the globe, and establishes a kind of connexion between all the professors of the Mosaic dispensations".[31] In other respects, however, religious unity among British Jewry was found wanting in the early days of the newspapers' existence. This was partly because of the lack of strong representative bodies. In April 1844, for example (before the appointment of the long-serving Chief Rabbi, Nathan Adler), the *Voice of Jacob* (*VJ*) reviewed a pamphlet which called for greater unity among communities both in London and further afield. The provincial congregations, it said, "sensibly feel the want of a defined and constituted authority – to decide upon many differences that arise".[32] Lacking a strong spokesperson or governing body, rallying points were instead provided by the activities and visits of individuals like Moses Montefiore, reports of Jewish persecution and misfortune abroad, and royal births.[33]

The death of Chief Rabbi Solomon Hirschel and the appointment of a new incumbent in 1842 was used as a prompt for collective action. In November of that year both newspapers called for all provincial congregations to be involved in the election process – the first time that this had happened – and at least some readers shared their enthusiasm.[34] One correspondent wrote to the *VJ* to note that the growth of British Jewry generally, and those in the provinces in particular, made this election especially significant. In their opinion "it is quite certain, the Jews in the provinces will never again submit to be governed on any other terms, than

31 *JC* 4 Aug. 1848.

32 *VJ* 26 April 1844.

33 See e.g. *JC* 1 Oct. 1847, on a visit to Canterbury by Sir Moses Montefiore to lay the foundation stone of a new synagogue; *VJ* 16 Sept. 1841, on a collection in Manchester for the victims of a fire in the Jewish quarter at Smyrna; *JC* 12 Nov. 1841, on the birth of the Prince of Wales.

34 Geoffrey Alderman, "English Jews or Jews of the English Persuasion? Reflections on the Emancipation of Anglo-Jewry", in *Controversy and Crisis: Studies in the History of the Jews in Modern Britain*, ed. Geoffrey Alderman (Boston, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2008), 279.

their having a voice in the election of their chief".[35] As the election process went on representatives of the different congregations were sent to London to confer over the advertisement and the brief. Given that voting rights brought a commitment to pay into the salary fund, this was not the most democratic of processes (votes ultimately went only to Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, and Bristol[36]), but the final advertisement did make provision for the representation of all the congregations in the British Empire. The post-holder was explicitly empowered to judge on religious matters raised by any of the congregations, and was also mandated to "occasionally visit the country, to superintend the religious condition of the Provincial Congregations, at such periods as his duties in London will permit".[37] By 1842, then, the Chief Rabbi was specifically recognized as the arbiter of affairs in the provinces as well as London. This points to a moment of pause and reflection even from the London-centric community leaders in the way that British Jewry was being imagined. It also brought the provinces explicitly into a metropolitan-based ambit of authority which was to play out in dramatic form at the Board of Deputies of British Jews a decade later.

True to his brief, Adler felt his duties to the provincial congregations keenly and saw them as a key part of his plan to unify and modernize British Jewry.[38] This was seen as a change from the previous regime: a visit to Birmingham was written up in the *JC* in October 1847 prefaced with a note that in the past it would have been unheard of for the Chief Rabbi to attend public functions or travel beyond London: a "heresy", certainly a "profanation of the sanctity of his office". "Now-a-days", the author said, "he may wear no beard and no fur cap; he may go down by the rail to a provincial congregation, talk about politics, ay and even about Jewish emancipation . . . and yet be considered a learned, a pious man."[39] His visits were applauded, both for the opportunities they gave him for fact-gathering, but also because they bound the provincial communities to him in admiration and hope for the future. These sojourns were well publicized in the papers. At Portsmouth in January 1850, for example, Adler was received as the patron of the local Hebrew Benevolent

35 *VJ* 11 Nov. 1842.
36 See *VJ* 16 Aug. 1844.
37 *VJ* 3 March 1843.
38 Todd Endelman, *The Jews of Britain, 1656 to 2000* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2002), 115–21.
39 *JC* 15 Oct. 1847.

Institution, but his stay was extended so that he could also preach in the synagogue over the Sabbath, attend several social events, and visit the dockyard to visit HMS *Victory*, where he saw a machine for baking ships' biscuits using a method which was elsewhere being used to manufacture Passover *matzah*.[40] The five-page account of his visit was the leader article in the *JC*, in which it was noted that Adler not only used his sermon to preach "the duties and advantages of concord", but also managed to smooth over a dispute between several of the members to create a union which was "so sincere and perfect, that it will no more be interrupted, but be conducive to the welfare of the congregation".[41] The visit attracted attention outside the Jewish community too and was written up in the *Morning Herald* and the *Hampshire Telegraph*. Similar efforts at reconciliation took place in Southampton in August 1851, when Adler dropped in on the way back to London from Ryde.[42] While on holiday in Torquay in 1854 he took the opportunity to engage with the new community there, and also made a side trip to Exeter where he performed a marriage in the first ever visit of a Chief Rabbi to the town.[43] There seems little doubt that Adler was a unifying force for British Jewry in this period, but the frequency with which he felt the need to smooth over troubled congregations is also a testament to their strength of feeling and – sometimes – independence. The fact that his visits were so frequently featured in the Jewish press is also indicative of the status they brought to the provincial congregations.

The Board of Deputies of British Jews also featured prominently in the papers, but here, editorial and reader opinions were more divided (the third pillar of Jewish organizational life, the Beth Din, attracted less attention in the Jewish press at this time).[44] This was partly because of the perception that it was a closed shop and slow to act (one of its representative members from Manchester said in November 1848 that his impression was that it "was apparently instituted for the express purpose of doing nothing"[45]), but also because of a controversy which exploded in the early 1850s over the election of representatives from some of the provincial congregations who were also members of the excommunicated

40 *JC* 11 Jan. 1850.

41 Ibid.

42 *JC* 8 Aug. 1851; see *JC* 11 Jan. 1850 for references to the pieces in the local papers. On these schisms see Kushner, *Anglo-Jewry*, 180–82.

43 *JC* 25 Aug. 1854; 1 Sept. 1854.

44 Eugene C. Black, *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1880–1920* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 38–41.

45 *JC* 8 Dec. 1848.

Reform congregation in London. This in itself made their election controversial, but by digging their heels in so hard against their appointment the Board effectively disenfranchised and alienated several of the communities who were keen to take up the call for participation. This – interestingly for the focus of this article – was one of the key points of rancour.

The dispute, which erupted in 1853, may appear parochial, but in fact was part of a much wider movement towards liberalism and emancipation in public life.[46] According to Israel Finestein, "[n]ever before had there been a country-wide agitation on any remotely comparable scale in Anglo-Jewry", a noteworthy counterpoint to the general feeling that most Jews cared little about political matters. The specifics revolved around the status of Reform in the wider community – itself a highly contentious topic – but it was also bound up with more general rights to representation, both in the closed shop of the oligarchy of British Jewry and on the wider stage. Prior to 1853 representation on the Board from the provinces was minimal: the community at Sunderland had been the first to join (in 1838), and Bath and Norwich followed, but their participation was short-lived.[47] In 1848 there were only four Board members representing communities beyond London out of a total of twenty-eight (three from Manchester and one from Liverpool).[48] In a world of growing confidence from provincial Jewry as well as an increasing array of socio-economic problems arising from rapid immigration, this became less acceptable. A letter published in the *JC* in June 1848 from one of the Manchester deputies, David Hesse, called on other provincial congregations to take up their place "in the council of our nation", to increase the scope and efficiency of what they could achieve.[49] In their review of the year, however, the editor commented that Hesse's call had not been met "and thus we have nothing to record of a body of men, who, by their station, might effect great good".[50] It was partly a financial issue: the costs of running the Board were variable and split among all the participating congregations equally. This was clearly a huge burden for the smaller communities: in 1858 the community at

46 Israel Finestein, *Jewish Society in Victorian England* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1993), 104–29.
47 Ibid., 112, 117.
48 *JC* 30 June 1848.
49 David Hesse, letter, ibid.
50 *JC* 27 Sept. 1848.

Bath had racked up arrears of more than £12, which it was unable to meet.[51] However, it also seems that a place on the Board was not considered prestigious by Jews seeking integration in their local communities.[52]

The *JC* was a firm supporter of change at the Board, both in terms of widening participation and in greater transparency for the press. By 1853, with the debate over Jewish emancipation in full flood both nationally and locally, the tide of feeling was running with them. In early August 1853 correspondents from Bristol, Sheerness, and Norwich all wrote in to report action in electing representatives. The paper's editor used the opportunity to reiterate his call for communities in places like Liverpool and Edinburgh to "act up to their duty".[53] By 26 August another twelve provincial towns had elected deputies, and another four decisions were in abeyance (on which more shortly).[54] The list of new returns in the *JC* (from Hull, Cheltenham, Canterbury, Falmouth, Penzance, Great Yarmouth, Bristol, Dover, Birmingham, Ipswich, North Shields, and Plymouth) illustrates clearly that congregations in the older and supposedly stagnant communities were still participating actively in the political life of British Jewry alongside those in the growing industrial towns. New congregations, too, were keen to take up the opportunity for engagement: the *JC*'s editor urged the newly formed body at Coventry to register themselves officially so that they could take up their place on the Board.[55]

All this action provoked a more hopeful tone in the end-of-year review.[56] Not only was the torpidity and exclusiveness of the Board being challenged, but feelings in favour of political participation were also on the rise. This was a time of growing political engagement generally in local government, and one to which Jews had been explicitly admitted in the Municipal Reform Act of 1853.[57] The birth of the Jewish press may

51 Nigel Grizzard, "The Provinces and the Board", in Newman, *Provincial Jewry*, https://www.jewishgen.org/jcr-uk/Newman_papers/Provincial_Jewry_Victorian/provinces_and_board.htm (accessed 1 Oct. 2021).

52 Michael Clark, *Albion and Jerusalem: The Anglo-Jewish Community in the Post-Emancipation Era 1858–1887* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 121–2.

53 *JC* 5 Aug. 1853.

54 *JC* 26 Aug. 1853.

55 *JC* 16 Sept. 1853.

56 *JC* 7 Oct. 1853.

57 Philip Salmon, "Local Politics and Partisanship: The Electoral Impact of Municipal Reform, 1835", *Parliamentary History* 19, no. 3 (2000): 357–76; Lipman, "Origins"; see also U. R. Q. Henriques, "The Jewish Emancipation Controversy in Nineteenth-Century Britain", *Past & Present* 40 (1968): 126–46.

have played its part here in giving British Jewry a voice and a sounding chamber in which to crystallize and gain confidence in their views, much as has been argued for the growing provincial press more broadly.[58] The *JC*'s editorials and letter pages show that the widening participation at the Board was a reflection of the fight to gain political rights and civic consciousness among British Jewry. An account of the election of a deputy in Cardiff reported that congregants "were not only willing, but anxious, to extend to others that liberty of conscience they wished to enjoy for themselves, and that they believed that they could not with justice ask for privileges from their Christian fellow countrymen, while they withheld them from their Jewish brethren".[59] Here we see a provincial congregation using the Jewish press to shape their identity within the wider community.

The move to fuller political engagement in 1853 nevertheless foundered on an internal point of order. This was the official status of the Reform West London Synagogue of British Jews and thus the legitimacy of any elections which involved its members. Four congregations found themselves in this position: Portsmouth, Chatham, Sheerness, and Norwich. It was not uncommon for provincial communities to elect a representative with whom they had connections but who lived in London.[60] However, now this became tangled up with questions of religious conformity and control over the shape of the wider Jewish community. The editor of the *JC* highlighted this in his review of the year in 1853, observing with sadness that it had "brought the question of our internal differences again prominently under public view".[61] Several of the affected congregations felt the rebuff deeply, and obstinately re-elected the same candidate (some more than once). In Sheerness, for example, the chosen representative, L. S. Magnus, wrote that he felt members had been badly treated by having their decision overturned twice previously, forcing them to go to yet another election "when the former was in perfect accordance with its constitution".[62] In Chatham, too, the same representative was re-elected, while voters at Portsmouth and Norwich spoke out against the decision to disallow their vote.[63] Feelings ran high in the *JC*'s letter pages, especially over the way that certain smaller congregations were being

58 O'Reilly, "Creating a Critical Civic Consciousness".
59 *JC*, 7 Oct. 1853.
60 Grizzard, "The Provinces", Appendix I.
61 *JC*, 7 Oct. 1853.
62 L. S. Magnus, letter, ibid.
63 *JC* 6 Jan. 1854.

characterized by other correspondents.[64] So many letters were received that in November 1853 the editor declared the matter no longer open for discussion.

In most cases, the Reform candidates had run on a liberal agenda, and sometimes against local men who were among the synagogue elite.[65] Their election was thus a specific endorsement of a liberalizing agenda both within and without British Jewry. The wider implications of the situation were not lost on the *JC*'s readership: from Chatham came the observation that if the Board excluded elected representatives, what was to stop Parliament from doing the same?[66] A month later, in February 1854, the same congregation announced that it would withhold its contribution to the Chief Rabbi's salary until their representative was allowed to take his seat, one of the few bargaining chips they held.[67] The elected deputy for Norwich eventually gave up and resigned, slinging a final shot the Board's way by noting that it was composed "in great part, of persons taken from the uneducated classes, and among which are to be found many, who, emigrating to this land from semi-barbarous and despotic countries can little understand or fraternise with that genius of freedom and toleration which characterise the people and institutions of this kingdom".[68]

The Board, as it appears in the pages of the *JC*, was hidebound by process and antagonistic to Reform with either a large or a small R. The fundamental sticking point for the admission of the four elected deputies was the fact that the Reform synagogue fell outside the constitution's definition of Judaism. To admit them would have necessitated an overhaul of the Board's constitution, and while this was keenly debated, its president, Sir Moses Montefiore, used his casting vote against it.[69] This undoubtedly prejudiced the representation of some of the provincial towns, and participation fell off significantly in subsequent years. In early 1856, reports circulated that the Board had dismissed the claims of seventeen small provincial congregations for representation, partly to slim down its size. A letter from Great Yarmouth protested against this most strongly, stating that "it has not yet been shown that this fault is more rife with the representatives of the country congregations than with those

64 E.g. *JC* 28 Oct., 4 Nov., 11 Nov. 1853.
65 Finestein, *Jewish Society*, 115–16.
66 *JC* 13 Jan. 1854.
67 *JC* 3 Feb 1854.
68 *JC* 5 May 1854.
69 Finestein, *Jewish Society*, 126.

of the metropolitan ones".[70] The proposed cut-off number was fewer than twenty people in a synagogue, again pointing to the potential vibrancy and desire for representation even in towns with only a handful of Jewish families. The proposal was not, in fact, put into force.[71] Debates over representation continued to rumble on well into the 1870s, with editorials still calling on provincial congregations to get involved.[72] Clearly, this was felt to be a matter of concern for the community as a whole; however, it also seems that the moment for more active participation in the Board had passed. It is no coincidence that national debate over Jewish emancipation was also settling down in the wake of the 1858 Jewish Disabilities Act. It was not until 1874 – the year after Montefiore's death – that members of Reform were in theory allowed to sit on the Board, and no one actually did so until 1886.[73]

Provincial identities

The discussion so far has highlighted how many of the provincial communities characterized themselves as part of a larger body of British Jewry and as participants in a set of wider debates. At the same time, however, they were often protective of their own status and reputation in ways which reveal a clear sense of local identity. In January 1842 a report printed in the *JC* from the Liverpool Hebrew Philanthropic Society noted that "Jews in such towns as ours are very differently situated to what they are in London", referring in particular to the constraints arising from their small numbers.[74] Nonetheless, as one of the largest of the provincial communities and with a notable cadre of wealthy members, Liverpool Jewry did not lack confidence or means. In November 1842, for example, they were the first community to make a public statement of their support for the new Chief Rabbi, Nathan Adler.[75] In Birmingham, too, there was a strong sense of pride in the Hebrew School and its headmaster, Dr Raphall (also the congregation's preacher and himself a one-time editor of an earlier Jewish periodical), who appeared frequently on the lecture

70 Great Yarmouth, letter, *JC* 15 Feb. 1856; see *JC* 2 Feb. 1856 for a similar protest from Exeter.
71 *JC*, 11 April 1856.
72 *JC* 17 May 1872.
73 Finestein, *Jewish Society*, 128.
74 *JC* 28 Jan. 1842.
75 *VJ* 25 Nov. 1842.

circuit in Birmingham and further afield.[76] Together these contributed to a sense of status: one of the community elders, Mr Abraham Nerwich, summed it up in a public address early in 1845 when he said that "the eyes of British Jews are on Birmingham. Other congregations may surpass you in wealth and in numbers, but none can surpass you in public spirit, zeal and enterprise".[77] Manchester, too, maintained a high profile in the Jewish newspapers, thanks not only to local correspondents who covered charity events and the activities of their officers, but also to a body of letter-writers who proudly identified themselves as Manchester men.

Other, smaller, congregations, were also quick to take up the opportunity for self-publicity. Accounts of sermons, school performances, and public examinations were ubiquitous.[78] The community in Yarmouth publicly congratulated themselves on their prosperity, generosity, and unity in April 1850, drawing attention to the common drive for fundraising across the two congregations.[79] There were occasional references, too, to Jewish individuals who gave money to Christian causes – a source of pride that Jews were able to look beyond their co-religionists to those in need.[80] Notices of marriages and deaths, as well as advertisements for jobs and schools, further drew attention to members in the provinces and the opportunities they offered to visitors.

Many of these reports were probably of passing interest to those living elsewhere. However, together they helped to contribute to a sense of collective status and pride that, while it may have been applauded by the papers' editors, clearly came from the provincial congregations themselves. A number were able to capitalize on this to raise funds for new or improved synagogues, often relying principally on their local region but also attracting support from further afield. Reports of the academic achievements of young Jews performed the same function. A prize essay fund established by the *JC* in the 1850s attracted donors from around the country (in August 1850 the list of subscribers included

76 BJHS, *Birmingham Jewry*, vol. 2, 14–15; Cantor, "Anglo-Jewish Periodicals", 16–17. Raphall had been editor of the monthly *Hebrew Review and Magazine of Rabbinical Literature*, which ran from 1834 to 1837.

77 *VJ* 17 Jan. 1845.

78 E.g. *VJ* 9 May 1845 on a discourse preached in Brighton, a Purim drama put on by school pupils in Dover, and the election of a local Jew to the Board of Highways in Penzance.

79 *JC* 19 April 1850.

80 E.g. *JC* 1 Sept. 1848 on the generosity of Elias Wolfe of Folkestone; 10 Jan. 1851 on Baron Goldsmid of Brighton.

a separate list of twenty-eight names from Birmingham alone[81]). The winning essay in 1851 was penned by Mr Henry Behrend of Liverpool, while the runner up was Mr Hertz Ben Pinchas of Manchester. The correct responses to a "Scriptural Enigma" posed in February 1852 came from youngsters all over the British Isles; Miss Julia Aaronson of Bangor was awarded the prize.[82] The academic achievements of Birmingham's young Alfred H. Louis at King Edward's School and then Cambridge University in the late 1840s were reported in breathless detail (this at a time when Jews rarely attended higher education institutions). Indeed, he was specifically lauded on several occasions as a credit to the whole of British Jewry.[83] There was also great interest and pride in the several Jews from the provinces who had their work exhibited at the 1851 Great Exhibition. Mr M. L. Lyon of Birmingham demonstrated some of his electro-plating, for instance, while Mr John Braham of Bristol showed a "great variety of useful inventions". Lyon's stand was apparently "the centre of attraction in [his] Class", and he had the privilege of explaining his instruments to the Queen herself, presenting her with a "specimen". He went on to win a prize medal for his work.[84]

A more traditional overview of provincial communities was provided in a series of brief accounts begun by the *JC* in 1842. It seems to have fizzled out before completing its aim of taking in all the "principal" congregations, but not before confirming that at this stage, anyway, in the history of British Jewry, "principal" still included many of the small congregations in dock and county towns. The first two to be featured were Woolwich and Chatham, the former consisting at that time of only five or six Jewish families, but having their own *shochet* (ritual slaughterer). Chatham's congregation, in contrast, comprised "a great number of Jews" and included members in nearby Rochester, too. Subsequent issues described the small but united congregation at Sheerness and the eight families at Dover, both in Kent. In Ipswich the Jewish community (founded more than a century previously) was historically significant enough that the Saturday market day had been changed to Tuesday.[85]

The vignettes also characterized many of the congregations in terms of spirit or outlook as well as religious facilities. The Jews at Cheltenham

81 *JC* 2 Aug. 1850.
82 *JC* 29 Aug. 1851; *JC* 27 Feb. 1852.
83 E.g. *JC* 9 July 1847, 30 June 1848, 22 June 1849.
84 *JC* 16 April; 13 June; 24 Oct. 1851.
85 *JC* 14 Jan; 4 Feb; 18 Feb. 1842.

(consisting of eighteen resident families) were described as "a very united and intelligent body, inferior to none in this country for religious zeal and devotion". The congregation at Gloucester, however, was "not now in a very flourishing condition", with only six families.[86] Thirty years later, another article on the provincial congregations in 1872 also highlighted specific characteristics. The Jews in Sheffield displayed "great energy", for example, in their campaign to build a new synagogue; the congregation in Nottingham was of a surprisingly small size given the opportunities for Jewish labour in its industries. The "ancient" congregation at Norwich, however, had fallen on hard times and was "in peril of extinction". "We hope that this danger will be avoided", wrote the editor, "if only for the sake of preserving a relic of former greatness"; the community at Falmouth had not been so fortunate and had disappeared.[87] The congregations in Kent, meanwhile, gained prominence from the country seats of two Jewish baronets and the county housed the constituencies of three of the eight Jewish MPs.

We have touched on the growing political participation by individual Jews, both nationally and locally. The pride taken in reporting their achievements was another theme which gets directly to the heart of the ways that provincial Jews felt about (and chose to publicize) themselves. Again, this underlines a dual identity as local and national citizens, albeit one which was not necessarily presented with this level of self-consciousness; it was deployed in different, and not necessarily consistent, forms at different times. We saw it in the high feelings from certain towns about their participation on the Board of Deputies, and it was played out too in the arena of wider political participation, where the papers' editors and more politically conscious readers may have acted in collaboration to create a sense of civic consciousness and activism.

The opening up of opportunities for representation with the Municipal Reform Act of 1835 ushered in considerable enthusiasm for participation, and a sense of bigger political issues being played out in individual towns.[88] Enfranchisement either as candidates or as voters was, admittedly, restricted to those with a qualifying level of wealth (interest in emancipation seems to have been generally much less among the Jews

86 *JC* 4 and 18 March 1842.

87 *JC* 17 May 1872.

88 Joanna Innes, "Forms of 'Government Growth', 1780–1830", in *Structures and Transformations in Modern British History*, ed. David Feldman and Jon Lawrence (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 80; Salmon, 'Local Politics'.

of the lower classes anyway).[89] These, however, probably included many of the readers of the Jewish papers, who by definition tended to be the more literate and engaged members of their communities, who were in turn often those who were comfortably off. For these people, political office was an important way to achieve standing beyond the religious community, as well as to represent its interests. In this respect it seems to have brought a wider sense of cachet than service on the Board of Deputies.

Individual Jews stood as municipal councillors as soon as the new Reform Act took effect, winning seats in Portsmouth, Birmingham, and Southampton in the late 1830s and early 1840s.[90] These were not the only offices taken by Jews: for example, Emanuel Lousada of Sidmouth – a man "highly esteemed in his immediate neighbourhood for his active, benevolent and charitable disposition towards his tenantry", was made High Sheriff of the county of Devonshire in February 1842, while Abraham Abraham of Southampton was elected Sheriff of the town in the same month, the notice in the *JC* reporting that "on no occasion, has he made any other declaration, than is consistent with his creed as a Jew" (a reference to the contentious oaths "on the true faith of a Christian" which prevented Jews from taking up parliamentary seats at Westminster).[91] In Hull, Mr Bethell Jacobs served as the governor of the workhouse in the 1840s and later as a town councillor; in Birmingham, there were several Jews on the local Board of Guardians.[92] In Bedford, however, Morris Lissack (one of the few Jews in the town) met opposition to his candidacy to become a churchwarden, with one local minister raising an objection which he would only withdraw if Lissack agreed to convert. The election went to a casting vote which Lissack lost, although it did not prevent him from participating in several local charities.[93]

Many of the campaigns for Jewish election to Parliament took place in the provinces too, albeit often by men resident in London. In 1847 five Jews stood for parliamentary seats (all as Liberals), three of which were

89 Israel Finestein, "Anglo-Jewish Opinion during the Struggle for Emancipation (1828–1858)", *Transactions* 20 (1959–61): 114, 133–5; Geoffrey Finlayson, "The Politics of Municipal Reform, 1835", *English Historical Review* 81 (1996): 686.

90 Lipman, "Origins"; Kushner, *Anglo-Jewry*, 152–65. They were Abraham Abraham of Southampton, David Barnett of Birmingham, Emanuel Emanuel in Portsmouth.

91 *VJ* 18 Feb. 1842; *JC* 18 Feb. 1842.

92 *JC* 24 Feb. 1842; 5 Jan. 1849; 16 April 1846.

93 *JC* 25 May 1855.

for non-metropolitan constituencies.[94] They stood as candidates keen to promote local prosperity as well as Jewish emancipation (indeed, in many cases they downplayed the latter in order to make their wider sympathies clear). Francis Goldsmid's speech on his election for Great Yarmouth in 1847 – where the Jewish community was only about sixty-strong – relayed his intentions to act on behalf of the prosperity of the town, as well as in favour of rights closer to his own faith.[95] Success rates were relatively low because they were often standing against established local candidates, but their inroads into the polls were reported with pride. The wider climate of change and political toleration which was pertinent to the fracas at the Board of Deputies in 1853 also led to many municipal authorities making positive and public statements in favour of Jewish emancipation, which were eagerly reported in the papers, both local and Jewish.[96] David Salomons's election as Lord Mayor of London in 1855 (with special dispensation to make an alternative oath[97]) elicited many congratulations from the provinces as well as the metropolis, and the announcement of Jewish emancipation for 1858 was heralded with considerable joy.[98]

Coverage of such successes shows the intense interest and pride in Jewish achievements in local politics both locally and at a wider community level. Reports extracted from local papers rarely failed to note the candidate's status as a Jew. In 1856 in Southampton, the election of Mr S. M. Emanuel to the town council, for instance, was reported in the *Hampshire Advertiser* (and reproduced in the *JC*) with a comment that "[i]t would be improper, and indeed unjust if we did not advert to the fact that the compliment paid to Mr Emanuel is the greater from the fact of his being a member of the Jewish persuasion".[99] O'Reilly comments that it was common to report on personal characteristics in coverage of political matters in the local press at this time, and we may perhaps see the references to the faith of Jewish candidates in these terms.[100] However, they also undeniably reflect the still contentious state

94 These were Baron Meyer de Rothschild at Hythe, Isaac Lyon Goldsmid at Beverley, and his son Francis Henry at Great Yarmouth.

95 *JC* 23 July 1847.

96 E.g. *JC* 4 April 1845 reporting from the *Leamington Spa Courier*; 8 April 1853 on declarations from Liverpool, Norwich, and Dover; 24 Dec. 1847 on a meeting held in Swansea, from the *Swansea and Glamorgan Herald*.

97 Finestein, "Anglo-Jewish Opinion", 113.

98 E.g. *JC* 9 and 16 Nov. 1855.

99 *JC* 14 Nov. 1856.

100 O'Reilly, "Creating a Critical Civic Consciousness", 255.

of political enfranchisement at this time, as well as entrenched ideas about religion, part of which centred on concerns about Jews' primary allegiance. Nonetheless, at the same time, they arguably contributed to an increased sense of entitlement to participation among more politically engaged Jews. Certainly the coverage of these events can be seen as a focal point for Jewish self-definition at this time – at least in the higher social echelons – and a way of increasing social capital and connectedness in the community. According to Kushner, they also became an important part of the "memory work" done for Jews in certain local communities (in both a positive and a negative sense), Portsmouth and Southampton being key examples.[101] It is significant here that this took place in the provinces at least as much as in London, and also that it was often in towns without large Jewish communities.[102]

Even with such successes, there is evidence to suggest that the non-metropolitan communities were still regarded as being somewhat on the periphery of British Jewry even by the last quarter of the nineteenth century. In 1872, the *JC*, running an article entitled "Provincial congregations" as part of a series on "the Synagogue question", noted that "possibly in London we do not sufficiently take into consideration the pecuniary sacrifices that may have been made to found and maintain synagogues in some of the provincial towns, where the rich are in proportion few and the poor many" (an impression enhanced by the fact that the editors only reached the provincial congregations in the sixth article in the series).[103] Attention was also still being drawn to the sharpness of schism and lack of harmony in those congregations, "which mars congregational harmony to a great and unpleasant extent".[104] In contrast, the communities at Manchester, Birmingham, and Liverpool were described as "next in importance to the metropolis", with "flourishing congregations and successful schools" and a state of religion "as animated and vigorous . . . as it is in the metropolis itself".[105] Proposed solutions to this fragmentation included the formation of congregational clusters which could be tended to by designated ministers, and (possibly less popular) that the provincial communities should be drawn into the ambit of London, as "a branch of

101 Kushner, *Anglo-Jewry*, 170–71.

102 Harry Levine, "The Jews of East Anglia", in Newman, *Provincial Jewry*, https://www.jewishgen.org/jcr-uk/Community/ipswich/ipswich-vic.htm (accessed 1 Oct. 2021).

103 *JC* 3 May 1872; discussion of the provincial congregations continued on 17 May.

104 *JC* 17 May 1872.

105 *JC* 3 May 1872.

the parent stem".[106] Either way, the role of the provincial congregations was starting to be more sensitively reflected on at least in the editorial offices of the *JC* (the *Voice of Jacob* having by this time disappeared). Nonetheless, the proposed solutions suggest that the London-based editorship was still somewhat out of step with the growing sense of independence circulating in many of the provincial communities.

Conclusions

This article has revealed several new perspectives on life in the provincial Jewish communities of the mid-nineteenth century as reflected in the Jewish press. First, it has shown their vibrancy and pride in their activities, even in towns with only small collections of Jews. Letters and reports in the papers show that individual communities often had a sense of themselves as a body which was based on their educational facilities, their charitableness, or the quality of their ministers. Pride also came from individuals who were high-profile both in Jewish activities and more broadly: towns with only a few Jews often felt that their reputation was enhanced by the political and municipal engagement of isolated individuals in the same way that the Manchesters and the Birminghams did, with a much higher concentration of Jewish families. Much of this points to the growing political engagement of certain sections of British Jewry, and a greater awareness of themselves as political citizens. This fits well with the wider characterization of the mid-century period as one of relative confidence and prosperity for British Jews, seen most prominently in the campaign for parliamentary emancipation, but also in moves towards greater egalitarianism in synagogue affairs and the growth of the communities in commercial and industrial towns.[107] These trends also encouraged a sense that British Jewry was stronger than the sum of its parts; that by encouraging participation on the Board of Deputies and a greater level of religious education, they were better able to defend their position, politically and socially, and make a stronger claim to the prize of the moment: full emancipation.

The Jewish press undoubtedly played an active part in encouraging this confidence and sense of purpose, but the themes revealed here were

106 *JC* 17 May; 31 May 1872; suggestion from a correspondent from Newcastle-upon-Tyne quoted by the editors as one which agreed with their own sentiments.

107 E.g. Finestein, "Anglo-Jewish Opinion", 113–43; for Liverpool and Manchester see Williams, *Making of Manchester Jewry*, 132–63.

reflected as much in material originating in the provinces themselves as in editorials. Together, editorials, local stories, and announcements increased readers' awareness that Jews were not the same everywhere – and yet in other respects they were. The reported schisms and unseemly behaviour in the provinces were taken as evidence of a narrow world view – and from a metropolitan perspective they probably were. But, as the *JC*'s "retrospect of the year" in September 1856 noted in the context of the establishment of a Reform congregation in Manchester, "it betokens zeal" and was thus preferable to "the silent conformity manifested in some other congregations". Nonetheless, the author said, "the discord in this ancient and highly respectable congregation is very sad. We Jews are too small a body to be divided into fractions".[108] Despite the need for further integration – a concern sharpened by the growing influx of poor and alarmingly "other'd" Jews from Eastern Europe – the editor in 1873 characterized the provincial communities as vital to the strength of British Jewry as a whole: the heart of a community, he wrote, "only beats soundly, safely and healthily if the life-blood that flows to it and from it passes into strong muscular and active limbs".[109] The Jewish papers' readership may not have been representative of the whole body of British Jewry at this time, especially in its literacy, prosperity, and political leanings. Nonetheless, while worth remembering, this should not be allowed to detract from the fact that the impression given by the Jewish papers is that the provincial communities were indeed strong and muscular; certainly, we should pay greater attention to the vital contribution they made to the vibrancy and civic consciousness of British Jewry as a whole.

108 *JC* 26 Sept. 1856.
109 *JC* 28 Nov. 1873.