

CHAPTER TWO

DECONSTRUCTING THE IRISH JEWISH NARRATIVE

Having surveyed its three main historical contexts, the scene is now set for a thorough re-examination of Ireland's Jewish community in its foundation period, beginning with its historiography.¹ Although Jews have always been a relatively small minority in Ireland, they have received significant and, some would argue, disproportionate attention as the subject of a host of memoirs, fiction, popular histories, academic studies and documentaries.² However, as is often the case, quantity has certainly been no indication of quality. The fascination with Irish Jewry, as an unexpected presence in a country that is so universally celebrated for entirely unrelated reasons, has contributed to the lack of introspection and rounded critical scrutiny that are the norm in other areas of academic enquiry. The resulting analytical shortfalls will now be confronted, as a prelude to the detailed study of communal history that follows in Chapters Three and Four. Section 2.1 explores the term 'Irish Jewish history' itself, highlighting the often blurred distinction between narrative and critical historical enquiry, before moving on to a thorough re-evaluation of the historical origins of the contemporary community. The rest of the chapter focuses on the way in which the historiographical issues that are identified in Section 2.1 have impacted on popular and academic interpretations of Irish Jewish history alike. In Section 2.2, the standard communal narrative is examined in respect of three key themes: antisemitism, the Jewish contribution to Irish society and the Jewish relationship with Irish nationalism. The tendency to reduce the Jewish experience in Ireland to the sum of its positive aspects at the cost of nuance and objectivity, is rejected. On the contrary, anti-Jewish prejudice together with its negation by the mainstream communal narrative are found to be central to the way in which Irish Jewish history has been constructed and interpreted over the years. Section 2.3 provides the most in-depth reconsideration to date of Ireland's most iconic symbol of

¹ With thanks to Dr. Zuleika Rodgers, for first having emphasised to me the constructedness of Irish Jewish history as it currently stands, and to Katrina Goldstone for her very helpful feedback on parts of Section 2.2.

² Ronit Lentin, Review of David Landy, *Jewish Identity and Palestinian Rights: Diaspora Jewish Opposition to Israel*, <http://www.ronitlentin.net/2011/11/14/david-landy-jewish-identity-and-palestinian-rights-diaspora-jewish-opposition-to-israel/> (accessed 21 February 2012). The Israeli-born, Dublin-based sociologist Ronit Lentin makes the unreflexive complaint that Irish Jewry 'has been researched and written about disproportionately to its number and significance'.

anti-Jewish prejudice, the Limerick Boycott of 1904, based on a wide range of sources. This section thoroughly interrogates the entire narrative of the Boycott and, especially, its function within Jewish and non-Jewish memory.

As a whole, this chapter argues for the richness and complexity of Jewish history in Ireland over and above the frequently reductive, condescending and dismissive presentations that currently prevail. The intricacies of Irish Jewish history only become fully evident upon a comprehensive re-examination of the sources, in relation to the wider Jewish historical picture. Through a fresh approach to both sources and historiography, a more holistic, balanced and inclusive understanding of the Jewish experience in Ireland can finally begin to emerge. This will then be related back to the broader Anglo-Jewish context in Chapters Three and Four.

2.1 AN ACCIDENTAL *GALUT*? IRISH JEWISH HISTORY AND ORIGINS IN CONTEXT

There is a fanciful and entirely mythical connection of the Jews with Ireland, and there is a historical and actual connection.³

As the first academic work on Ireland's Jewish community in a quarter of a century, Dermot Keogh's *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland: Refugees, Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust* has received significant worldwide acclaim.⁴ Yet, far from constituting the last word on the subject, as predicted by one reviewer,⁵ Keogh rather opened the floodgates for a renewed deluge of interest in Irish Jewry. Many of these works have been prompted by the impulse to document a community under the existential threat of snowballing emigration.⁶ However its marginality to mainstream history, whether Irish or Jewish, places Irish Jewry well beyond the interests of most scholars. Much of this surprisingly extensive material is therefore nothing more than what might politely be termed 'ephemera',⁷ which has little value beyond the insight it provides into the communal mindset. In particular, the lack of a wider *Jewish*

³ John Salmon, *Belfast Telegraph*, 24 September 1915.

⁴ Dermot Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland: Refugees, Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1998).

⁵ Robert Tracy, 'The Jews of Ireland', *Judaism: A Quarterly Journal of Jewish Life and Thought* (Summer 1999), <http://www.ucc.ie/icms/irishmigrationpolicy/Judaism%20The%20Jews%20of%20Ireland.htm> (accessed 19 October 2011).

⁶ For some recent assessments of the community's situation and future prospects, see Jason Walsh, 'The Story of Jewish Dublin: In Bloom', *The Dubliner* (Sept. 2009): 35-39; Moritz Piehler, '„Little Jerusalem“ auf der grünen Insel', *Das Jüdische Echo* 58 (Cheschwan 5770/Nov. 2009): 233-35; Cian Traynor, 'Young, Jewish and Irish', *Irish Times Weekend Review*, 11 December 2010.

⁷ Mashey Bernstein, *A Portrait of the Jews in Ireland* (Dublin, 1971).

dimension has allowed Irish Jews to be regarded as an isolated anomaly as opposed to a piece of a wider Jewish jigsaw.⁸ Like so many other small communities, the story of Irish Jewry has widely been assumed to have little to contribute to the bigger tapestry of Jewish culture and history. As a result, it is often dismissed as little more than an insignificant, straightforward and somewhat humorous footnote to larger communities, particularly those of its closest neighbour, Britain.⁹ The lack of any substantial historiographical work on the community has perpetuated folklore and communal memory under the guise of ‘history’. The institutionalisation of this uncritical and uncontroversial narrative has allowed it to dictate, virtually unchallenged, the agenda and presuppositions of scholarly and popular works alike. A central contention of this dissertation is that the failure to recognise and address this imbalance is the single-most problematic aspect of the existing historiography of Irish Jewry.

In practice, although ‘Irish Jewish history’ purports to tell the story of all Jewish settlement in Ireland, the term refers primarily to the narrative of the dominant group within Ireland’s foremost Jewish community, namely Dublin’s ‘Litvak’ (Lithuanian) contingent. This is in fact deceptive as it camouflages a range of Jewish ethnicities, as will be shown below. The foundation period of Jewish settlement in Ireland dates from *circa* 1875 when the first few east European families arrived in Dublin, and ends with the introduction of the Aliens Act in January 1906 which, as Section 1.5 has shown, curtailed immigration to the British Isles in general. In the space of a decade or two, the small communities that had been founded in Belfast and

⁸ This is the thrust of Hasia Diner, ‘The Accidental Irish: Jewish Migration to an Unlikely Place’ (paper presented at the Davis Seminar, Shelby Cullom Davis Center for Historical Studies, Princeton University, April 2003), 1-60 (used with the kind permission of Professor Diner). Specifically regarding the lack of a Jewish dimension, cf. Natalie Wynn, ‘An Accidental *Galut*? A Critical Reappraisal of Irish Jewish Foundation Myths’, special issue, *Immigrants and Minorities*, forthcoming; Wynn, ‘Irish Jewish Constructs of Tsarist Eastern Europe’, in *East of Ireland: Irish Literary and Cultural Connections to Central/Eastern Europe*, ed. Aidan O’Malley and Eve Patten (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2014), 69-84; Wynn, ‘Jews, Anti-Semitism and Irish Politics: A Tale of Two Narratives’, *PaRDeS: Zeitschrift der Vereinigung für Jüdische Studien* 18 (2012): 51-66. These articles consider in brief a number of the points that are elaborated below. Kushner (*Anglo-Jewry*, 42-47) discusses the failure within local Jewish historiography as a whole to engage sufficiently with both the wider Jewish and the local non-Jewish contexts.

⁹ Again, this point is very effectively made in Diner, ‘Accidental Irish’, 1-60. For example, Endelman comments that, as far as European Jewish history is concerned, Irish Jewry ‘is geographically and culturally marginal, hardly meriting even a footnote’ (review of Cormac Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland in the Age of Joyce*, in *Economic History Review* 60, no. 3 (August 2007): 610). Accordingly, Ireland barely gets a mention in Endelman’s *Jews of Britain*. With regard to the humorous aspect, the British writer Stanley Price somewhat condescendingly pokes fun at his Dublin relatives and at the community in general in *Somewhere to Hang My Hat: An Irish Jewish Journey* (Dublin: New Island, 2002).

Dublin by Jews mostly of west and central European origin were renewed and supplanted by the new arrivals in processes that are examined in greater detail over the next two chapters. In the 1870s Dublin's fifty-year-old 'native' community had been in danger of following its various predecessors into extinction.¹⁰ By 1911 the east European Jewish presence in Ireland had grown nearly tenfold, had spread to other major cities, towns and even villages, and boasted most of the ritual infrastructure of any thriving Orthodoxy.¹¹ As sources are scant until well into the twentieth century, oral testimony has been of vital importance in reconstructing the community's history. A lack of competition from communal minorities, smaller communities and subgroups within these sources has led to the normalisation and universalisation of the majority experience at the cost of other narratives. Perhaps the most significant consequence has been the lack of acknowledgement of the differences in political and social atmosphere north and south of the Irish border, beyond the routine assumption that Northern Ireland's sectarian conflict has been the main cause behind the disintegration of the Belfast community.¹² However the more bellicose, violent and protracted nature of Ulster's 'Troubles' constitutes a factor significant enough to demand consideration of Northern Irish Jewry in its own right.¹³ An added complication is the condescending presumption from both outside and within that Irish Jews constitute some kind of whimsical anomaly; the community is regularly depicted as a 'small and curious minority',¹⁴ a 'quaint hybrid'¹⁵ that is

¹⁰ *Jewish Chronicle*, 28 October 1870, 27 September 1872, 13 February 1874, 29 January 1875, and 27 October 1876. During the 1870s the *Jewish Chronicle* repeatedly referred to or hinted at the steady decline of Dublin's Jewish community without expressing any expectation of a change in circumstances. One article which also described the Belfast community as dwindling was promptly disputed by a Belfast resident, 'J. F.' (*Jewish Chronicle*, 12 September 1879 and 19 September 1879).

¹¹ The most thorough and authoritative historical survey of the fluctuating Jewish presence in Ireland up to and including the Litvak influx is Louis Hyman, *The Jews of Ireland: From Earliest Times to the Year 1910* (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1972). For a more recent and modern assessment that concentrates on the processes of Litvak settlement, see Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*. Both of these books focus almost exclusively, however, on the Dublin community.

¹² The wider context for the dramatic shrinkage of the Belfast community is considered in David D. Warm, 'The Jews of Northern Ireland', in *Divided Society: Ethnic Minorities and Racism in Northern Ireland*, ed. Paul Hainsworth (London: Pluto Press, 1998), 226, 234-36.

¹³ Wynn, 'Jews, Anti-Semitism and Irish Politics', 59; Wynn, 'Foundation Myths'. The difference in political atmosphere in Northern Ireland is well demonstrated in Pamela Linden, "'Indifferent to both Boyne and Rome": The Experience of Belfast's Jewish Community in the "Troubles" of 1920-1922' (paper presented at the Jews on the 'Celtic Fringe' Conference, University of Ulster, Belfast, 5-6 September 2011).

¹⁴ R. Lentin, 'Review'.

¹⁵ Ray Rivlin, *Shalom Ireland: A Social History of Jews in Modern Ireland* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2003), x.

‘defined partly by [its] romantic quirkiness’.¹⁶ This encourages the blind acceptance of communal narrative no matter how unlikely or tongue-in-cheek it may seem, obscuring many of its inherent problems and contradictions, and preventing Irish Jewry from being recognised to be part of a bigger Jewish picture.¹⁷ Leading historians of Anglo-Jewry have contributed to this by treating Ireland as just another British provincial outpost, which merits little more than a footnote – if even that – to the history of its larger and more influential sister communities. Although Irish Jewry’s initial context within the British empire is indeed crucial to appreciating wider historiographical issues and patterns (see Chapters Three and Four), overemphasising it obscures the unique political context of the Irish community. This prevents observers from viewing it as an entity in its own right with a history worthy of closer examination.

While previous, west and central European Jewish settlement in Ireland had been driven by either colonial or commercial concerns, the precise reason behind the arrival of the first east European Jews remains something of a mystery. The most likely and logical explanation, favoured by Cormac Ó Gráda, is that it constituted part of the attempted dispersal of east European immigrants by London’s Jewish authorities.¹⁸ However he fails to substantiate this assumption, which appears to originate from no more definite source than the memoirs of the author Hannah Berman.¹⁹ In the continuing absence of any direct evidence from the Board of Deputies archives, the best corroboration for this theory consists of repeated hints found in the *Jewish Chronicle*, the official organ of the Anglo-Jewish establishment.²⁰ In 1876, in commenting on the ‘gradual diminution’ of the DHC, the *Chronicle* found it ‘unaccountable’ that there had never been any significant Jewish settlement in Ireland, given its overall tolerance towards Jews.²¹ By 1895, however, the *Chronicle* viewed it as ‘especially surprising’ that such large numbers of immigrants were heading for ‘the Sister Isle’, including its smaller, less well-established communities. Its editors believed that the London Board of Guardians should ‘strongly dissuade’

¹⁶ Larry Tye, *Home Lands: Portraits of the New Jewish Diaspora* (New York: Henry Holt, 2001), 194.

¹⁷ Diner, ‘Accidental Irish’, 1-60; Wynn, ‘Foundation Myths’; Wynn, ‘Constructs’.

¹⁸ Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, 12, 25.

¹⁹ Hannah Berman, ‘Zlotover Story’, 7-8; Hannah Berman and Melisande Zlotover, *The Zlotover Story: A Dublin Story with a Difference* (Dublin: Healy Thom, 1966), 25.

²⁰ On the history of the *Jewish Chronicle*, see David Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry, 1841-1991* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

²¹ *Jewish Chronicle*, 27 October 1876.

settlement in less prosperous towns, notably including Limerick (see Section 2.3).²² An appeal in 1897 to reduce the outstanding debt that had been incurred in the building of the Adelaide Road Synagogue exhorted readers to show their appreciation ‘for [the DHC’s] taking charge of a very large body of our foreign brethren’.²³ Commenting on Leon Hühner’s 1905 paper, ‘The Jews in Ireland: An Historical Sketch’,²⁴ E. N. Adler recalled that his late father, Chief Rabbi Nathan Adler, had remarked following a pastoral visit to Ireland in 1871 ‘that he could not understand how it was that Jews did not settle there in greater numbers, and he had expressed the desire to induce Jews to do so’.²⁵ Indeed Adler had been quoted in the *Jewish Chronicle* on the occasion of this visit as having been long keen to see Ireland, partly due to its unblemished record concerning the Jews.²⁶ The strongest hints of co-operation between the Jewish authorities in Ireland and London on the matter of east European immigration, however, are items concerning the Jewish Congregational Union’s Dispersion Committee. In 1903 it was reported that up to five hundred people had recently settled in Belfast, many of whom were assisted by the Committee.²⁷ A 1904 advertisement by the Committee invited applications from artisans interested in relocating to the Provinces, but cited Dublin as one of the excepted destinations.²⁸ It is also telling that non-Jews accused the Anglo-Jewish leadership of encouraging Jewish immigration to Ireland; when non-Jewish members of the Cork Trades Council voiced their objections to Jewish economic competition, local mayor John O’Reilly wondered why the Anglo-Jewish leadership was unable to prevent such largescale Jewish immigration into so poor a country as Ireland.²⁹ Nevertheless whether or not Jewish settlement in Ireland was ever actively encouraged by the Anglo-Jewish establishment has yet to be proven conclusively.

Within a short space of time, the originally small east European presence prompted a ‘chain migration’ of relatives, friends and *landsmen* (compatriots),

²² *Jewish Chronicle*, 2 August 1895.

²³ *Jewish Chronicle*, 24 December 1897.

²⁴ Leon Hühner, ‘The Jews of Ireland: An Historical Sketch’, *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* 5 (1905): 226-42.

²⁵ *Jewish Chronicle*, 31 March 1905.

²⁶ *Jewish Chronicle*, 21 July 1871.

²⁷ *Jewish Chronicle*, 10 July 1903.

²⁸ *Jewish Chronicle*, 22 July 1904.

²⁹ *Jewish Chronicle*, 16 March 1888 and 23 March 1888; Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 19; Hyman, *Jews of Ireland*, 219-21; Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, 118. In the context of O’Reilly’s other comments, however, this might well indicate nothing more than a bent for Jewish conspiracy theories.

replicating immigrant settlement patterns in Britain as a whole.³⁰ This is clear from the sources, although it is often presented in a serendipitous light as a series of lucky encounters with relatives or countrymen. Keogh, for example, cites the family tradition that Louis Goldberg was ‘fortunate’ to bump into another Lithuanian Jew, Isaac Marcus, who regularly travelled to Queenstown (now Cobh) to help newly-arrived Jews. Marcus arranged lodgings for Goldberg in Cork, where he soon met other members of the Jewish community, including his lifelong friend Solomon Clein.³¹ Keogh is so caught up in dramatic tales of pogroms and foiled migration to the United States, that he does not pause to consider the obvious implications of these supposedly chance meetings. A number of memoirs, in contrast, state explicitly that immigrants had received positive reports of Ireland from relatives or acquaintances, whom they had been encouraged to join.³² Chain migration is further reflected in the prominence within communal folklore of a small catchment of Lithuanian *shtetlakh* in the Kovno *guberniia*, or Russian administrative province, a phenomenon that is apparently not unique to the Irish Jewish narrative.³³ This has given rise to the popular misconception that practically the entire community originated either from the town of Akmian (now Akmene), or from its immediate environs. This is not a new perception, as indicated by a piece in the *Jewish Chronicle*, written by its ironic Dublin correspondent ‘Halitvack’ (E. R. Lipsett) in 1906. Lipsett described the ‘most singular feature’ of the Dublin community as follows:

The entire Hebrew community of Dublin, excluding the few – very few – so-called ‘Englische Yidden,’ are as one family, coming from the same stock, and knowing each other from home, down to many generations past. With a few isolated exceptions they all hail from the Government of Kovno, and some time ago it used to be said that the

³⁰ Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, 12; Gartner, *Jewish Immigrant*, 33-34.

³¹ Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 10-12. Rivlin attempts to make sense of this anecdote with the implausible suggestion that Marcus regularly waited at Queenstown with the intention of assisting any needy Jewish immigrants who happened to disembark there (*Shalom Ireland*, 120).

³² Myer Joel Wigoder, *My Life*, ed. Samuel Abel, trans. Louis E Wigoder (Leeds: J. Porton & Sons, 1935), 42-48; Berman, ‘Zlotover Story’, 11-12; Jessie Spiro Bloom, ‘Reflections on Parents’ Immigration and Settlement in Ireland’, 2; Loretta Kleanthous, ‘Louis and Hanshen Wine’, 1 (with thanks to Loretta Kleanthous for sharing this family memoir and to Hilary Abrahamson for facilitating this). The case of Moses Rabbel (see below; *Jewish Chronicle*, 24 January 1908) is also illustrative of this point. By way of comparison, ninety-four per cent of Jewish immigrants to the United States between 1899 and 1914 reported that they were joining a relative (Charlotte Erickson, ‘Jewish People in the Atlantic Migration 1850-1914’, in *Patterns of Migration, 1850-1914*, ed. Aubrey Newman and Stephen W. Massil (London: Jewish Historical Society of England, 1996), 10-11).

³³ Mirella Yandoli and Hannah Holtschneider, ‘Edinburgh’s Jews – Introducing an Exhibition and Guide to Archival Resources’ (paper presented at the Annual Conference of the British Association for Jewish Studies, University of Kent, Canterbury, 7-9 July 2013).

town of Okmyan had emptied itself out into the arteries of the South Circular Road, Dublin.

Even to this day, nearly three persons out of five in the neighbourhood . . . are from Okmyan, or no farther than twenty miles around it.³⁴

The tendency of the immigrant generation to portray themselves as ‘Russian’, probably out of expediency, and that of their descendants to understand them as such, camouflages the range of ethnic identities that this represents.³⁵ This is borne out by contemporary sources. Although ‘Russia’ was indeed by far the most popular overseas birthplace recorded for Jews in the 1901 census, contrary to popular wisdom an impressive array of other locations is also revealed by the data. These range from Africa, America, Britain, Palestine and even Sweden, to various parts of central and eastern Europe, such as Austria, Courland/Latvia, Germany, Lettland (Lithuania), Poland and Romania. Occasionally, responses are even more specific, naming towns, Russian administrative provinces or regions.³⁶ Indeed Myer Joel Wigoder, the author of the only firsthand Irish Jewish migrant account, recalled that Dublin’s immigrant community hailed ‘from all parts, Russia, Poland, Galicia, Austria’.³⁷ The term ‘Litvak’ is similarly misleading, in that it applies to a far broader geographical area than corresponds to modern-day Lithuania.

Although Diner demonstrates that Jewish arrival and settlement in Ireland can and should be firmly located within the historical mainstream of the mass emigration period,³⁸ it has often been put down to trickery, accident or circumstance. Popular anecdotes, which take three main forms, hold that the migrants were actually headed for the United States. The first claims that the travellers were tricked or bullied into landing in Queenstown by duplicitous captains who had double-booked their onward

³⁴ *Jewish Chronicle*, 7 September 1906. Edward Raphael Lipsett (1869-1921) was a professional journalist, a Litvak immigrant who eventually moved on from Ireland to America where he reputedly converted to Christianity and became a missionary (Hyman, *Jews of Ireland*, 333, n.98). For Lipsett’s first impressions of New York, cf. *Jewish Chronicle*, 20 December 1907 and 19 November 1909. Although a subsequent correspondent to the *Jewish Chronicle* wondered whether Lipsett had exaggerated the ‘homogeneous origin and composition’ of the Dublin community and invited opinion on the subject (15 June 1906), none was forthcoming.

³⁵ Cf. 1901 and 1911 censuses.

³⁶ David Lenten, ‘1901 Census Ireland’ (Excel spreadsheet). With thanks to David Lenten for providing tabulated versions of the Irish census data for 1901 and 1911.

³⁷ M. J. Wigoder, *My Life*, 66. While it is now probably impossible to determine the precise mix of ethnic origins that underlies today’s community, the notion that the Kovno *guberniia* is the virtual ‘cradle of Irish Jewry’, *quâ* ‘Halitvack’, should clearly be taken with a grain of salt. It is logical to assume that a reasonable proportion of immigrants came from Galicia, as the next greatest source of Jewish emigration at this time, after the Russian empire.

³⁸ Diner, ‘Accidental Irish’, 1-60.

passage to New York. The second suggests that the migrants disembarked of their own volition thinking they had arrived in America, having mistaken cries of ‘Cork’ for ‘New York’, or ‘Ireland’ for the Yiddish *aier land* (your land). The third asserts that the ship’s supply of kosher food had run out and the strictly observant Litvaks preferred to take their chances in Ireland rather than continue their journey and starve or eat non-kosher food. In all cases, left with little financial means, the hapless voyagers were forced to stay in Ireland to earn the money they needed to complete their journey. Many, however, liked what they saw, decided to remain, and soon built up a thriving community.³⁹ The third of these tales is, unexpectedly, the only one that appears to have any tangible foundation in historical events. On a number of occasions during the 1890s, ships carrying Russian Jewish migrants to the United States were stranded in Cork for repairs.⁴⁰ At this time most transatlantic shipping lines did not, in fact, provide kosher food,⁴¹ so when the travellers’ own supplies ran out they were left with nothing to eat. In October 1891 migrants from one of these ships were found wandering the town of Passage. Reportedly approximately five hundred Jews in all were discovered on board, in a ‘most pitiable state, some of them almost starving, and in a state of nudity’. The distressed condition of these migrants was apparently the result of having been driven from their homes at short notice, in the course of the Moscow expulsions (see Section 1.4).⁴² That Cork’s Jewish community was quick to come to the aid of needy Jewish travellers probably explains why such events have been preserved in the popular memory, however distortedly. This may well also account for the role that Russian government persecution plays in Irish Jewish collective memory.⁴³

Otherwise the Irish Jewish tales of accidental arrival conflict with the historical record and the early sources on a number of points. Although similar stories exist throughout the British Isles, experts on migration at this period

³⁹ For examples, see *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 1 June 1990; *Atlanta Jewish Times*, 13 October 1989; Raithnait Long, ‘A Question of Survival: The Jewish Community in Cork’, in *Hebrews of Cork*, ed. Stuart Rosenblatt (Dublin, 2005), 44; Davida Noyek Handler, ‘Noyek Family History’ (1994 revision), 35-36. A more recent example is Renee Ghert-Zhand, ‘Irish Jews Face Uncertain Future (As Usual)’, *Times of Israel*, 17 March 2013, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/irish-jews-face-uncertain-future-as-usual> (accessed 20 March 2013).

⁴⁰ *Jewish Chronicle*, 30 October 1891, 16 November 1894, 7 June 1895, 10 February 1899, and 17 March 1899; Section 4.1.

⁴¹ Evans, ‘Transatlantic Shipping’, 29-30. By the turn of the twentieth century, an increasing number of shipping lines were catering for Jewish dietary requirements in their efforts to outdo competitors.

⁴² *Jewish Chronicle*, 30 October 1891.

⁴³ On popular perceptions of tsarist persecution among Irish Jews, see Wynn, ‘Constructs’.

unanimously discount the possibility of trickery and the double-booking of passages.⁴⁴ Contrary to popular wisdom, practical and geographical information was readily available to intending migrants through newspapers and books,⁴⁵ as well as letters. Moreover, Nancy Green has argued that there was a far greater element of calculated selection involved in emigrants' choice of destination, according to social, cultural and economic concerns, than has hitherto been recognised.⁴⁶ Significant also is the fact that, at this time, there was no direct travel between continental Europe and Ireland.⁴⁷ Many sources explicitly state that immigrants had reached Ireland *via* Britain, often after stop-offs of varying lengths.⁴⁸ A great number of migrants eventually continued onwards with the United States and South Africa being the most popular destinations. As a result Ireland has often been depicted as a financial and geographic 'waystation' for those en route to bigger and better things elsewhere.⁴⁹ This indicates that Ireland was a deliberate, popular and logical stop-off for those lacking the means to make such long journeys in one go.⁵⁰ Transience has remained a persistent feature of Irish Jewry, and this will be considered again below.

⁴⁴ Diner, 'Accidental Irish', 1-60, esp. 30-31; Nicholas Evans, email message to the author, 8 November 2011. See also David Cesarani, 'The Myth of Origins: Ethnic Memory and the Experience of Migration', in *Patterns of Migration, 1850-1914*, ed. Aubrey Newman and Stephen W. Massil (London: Jewish Historical Society of England, 1996), 247-54.

⁴⁵ Diner, 'Accidental Irish', 30-31. Feldman (*Englishmen and Jews*, 154-55) contextualises the increase in the information that was available to prospective migrants as a form of marketing, given that migration was becoming an increasingly lucrative business for shipping companies and their agents.

⁴⁶ Nancy Green, 'A Tale of Three Cities: Immigrant Jews in New York, London and Paris, 1870-1914', in *Patterns of Migration, 1850-1914*, ed. Aubrey Newman and Stephen W. Massil (London: Jewish Historical Society of England, 1996), 81-98; Green, 'The Modern Jewish Diaspora: East European Jews in New York, London, and Paris', in *Comparing Jewish Societies*, ed. Todd M. Endelman (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 113-34. On this point, see also Gartner, *Jewish Immigrant*, 46 and Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews*, 153-54.

⁴⁷ With thanks to Dr. Nicholas Evans for this information (email, 8 November 2011). This is well illustrated by a report in the *Jewish Chronicle* on the effects of the 1905 Aliens Act, which focuses on the port of Grimsby as a point of entry into the United Kingdom. The report discusses the case of Moses Rabbel, aged 23, who stated to the immigration authorities his intention of travelling onwards to Liverpool. Rabbel's real destination, however, was Dublin where his uncle, who had provided ten pounds for his passage, was already working as a pedlar. Rabbel was refused permission to land in Grimsby on the grounds that he could not speak English and his employment possibilities were considered slight. He was in the course of appealing this rejection (*Jewish Chronicle*, 24 January 1908).

⁴⁸ M. J. Wigoder, *My Life*, 45-46; Máirín Johnston, *Dublin Belles: Conversations with Dublin Women* (Dublin: Attic Press, 1988), 105; Kleanthous, 'Wine', 1; Rivlin, *Shalom Ireland*, 24, 27; Nick Harris, *Dublin's Little Jerusalem* (Dublin: A & A Farmer, 2002), 2; Evans, email, 8 November 2011.

⁴⁹ Piehler, 'Little Jerusalem', 234; Gerald Moore, 'Anti-Semitism in Ireland' (PhD dissertation, Ulster Polytechnic, 1984), 124; Clein, 'Clein Family', 11.

⁵⁰ Cesarani observes that shipping routes made it economically rational for migrants to break their journey in Britain in order to earn their onward passage ('Myth of Origins', 251-52). Ireland is, of course, the last stop between Europe and the United States.

Given their prominence in the folklore of the British Isles, it is interesting that so little academic attention has been paid to confronting Jewish myths of accidental arrival and to investigating their social and cultural functions. While David Cesarani makes some preliminary explorations into the possible purposes of these anecdotes, he offers no suggestion as to their precise origins.⁵¹ The original, unfulfilled intentions of many migrants to reach the United States are one probable influence. Another possible source is the trickery that was encountered by travellers arriving at British ports, at the hands of self-appointed ‘guides’ and ‘porters’, and other con-artists.⁵² Some of these tales of woe made their way into the Hebrew press, which had readers and occasional correspondents in Ireland.⁵³

Cesarani identifies a convergence of politics from above and below in the construction, perpetuation and constant remodelling of British-Jewish arrival myths according to changing needs. He finds that, from the very beginnings of Russian immigration, Britain’s Jewish establishment used emotive images of persecution, violence, refugees and asylum-seekers to play to British values in their efforts to protect their hard-won position and prestige against anti-alien sentiment and antisemitic stereotypes.⁵⁴ Cesarani suggests that these myths also served the newcomers by providing a rationale for newfound British patriotism and facilitating the concealment of opportunistic motives for migration. Finally, he points to the influence of popular images of Jews in contemporary literature.⁵⁵ The potential utility of arrival myths as a means of concealing the deliberate policy of dispersion that was pursued by the Anglo-Jewish authorities must also be taken into account. Tales of accidental arrival would have served all of these purposes well by counteracting

⁵¹ Cesarani, ‘Myth of Origins’, 247-54. Although the myths may well appear ridiculous and unworthy of much scholarly attention, the level to which they are cherished by their proponents in the face of all challenges would seem to give them a degree of significance that merits further examination.

⁵² Gartner, *Jewish Immigrant*, 36-37.

⁵³ With thanks to Dror Segev for his assistance on this and other points (email message to the author, 14 November 2011; personal conversation with the author, 26 November 2011). The Hebrew press carried at least one such testimony, from travellers who claimed to have been tricked into disembarking in Liverpool. This report cannot be strictly accurate in that Liverpool was actually a port of embarkation for westward travel, as opposed to debarkation for the United Kingdom (Gartner, *Jewish Immigrant*, 32). However the Jewish press was not known at this time for its reliability (Dror Segev, ‘The Correspondents and Their View from Below as Reflected in the Hebrew Press: *Ha-Maggid*, *Ha-Melits* and *Ha-Tsfira* in the 1880s’, unpublished conference paper, 2007). Furthermore, the possibility that such stories were intended as a warning against choosing the more attractive, materialistic west over Palestine or a comment on the intellectual and moral calibre of Jews who made the ‘wrong’ decision should probably not be discounted.

⁵⁴ Cesarani, ‘Myth of Origins’, 247-54; Sections 1.4 and 1.5, above.

⁵⁵ Cesarani, ‘Myth of Origins’, 247-54. Cheyette, *Constructions of ‘the Jew’* provides a detailed analysis of the Jewish literary stereotypes of this period, and their related ‘semitic discourse’.

negative popular stereotypes of calculating and devious Jews. It is possible therefore that Stanley Price's ironic assessment that Irish arrival myths sounded 'more like a malicious rumour put about by Polaks to prove how stupid Litvaks were'⁵⁶ may well have been closer to the truth than he realised. As such anecdotes tend to be the preserve of vicarious second- and third-generation accounts, their role in filling in the gaps for those who lament that their forebears never spoke of their experiences in the Russian empire is also highly relevant.⁵⁷

In the Irish case, research indicates that the small 'native' community had adopted the anglicised religious and social *mores* of its English counterpart and was keen to encourage the newcomers to do likewise.⁵⁸ As the communal narrative tends to suppress its awkward, contentious and supposedly incidental elements, the social and cultural pressures that the east European influx created for the 'natives' have been entirely disregarded by commentators and their true extent will probably never be known. As we will see in the coming sections, however, anti-Jewish prejudice took a different form in Ireland to that of mainland Britain, and did not prompt quite the same degree of aggressive self-justification and gushing patriotism. Moreover, while gratitude is expressed for the tolerance and opportunities that Ireland offered, the self-image that is presented in early memoirs is certainly not one of refugees or asylum-seekers. The whimsical, self-deprecating tendency that Diner discerns among Irish Jews, arising from their awkward and often ironic position as 'exotic' interlopers in a largely homogenous society,⁵⁹ suggests conscious or unconscious counter-stereotyping. The dissonance that can be identified between corporate and grassroots understandings of communal history is also relevant as it indicates some degree of agency in the way in which the 'official' community presents itself to the outside

⁵⁶ Stanley Price, 'In Search of Charles Beresford', *Jewish Quarterly* (Spring 1997): 41. 'Polaks', or Polish Jews, are depicted in Jewish folklore as the traditional rivals of the Litvaks due to differences in temperament and religious custom.

⁵⁷ Wynn, 'Foundation Myths'; Wynn, 'Constructs'; Evans, emails, 8 November 2011 and 11 December 2011. For example, Nick Harris explains that he was prompted to write his memoirs through an awareness of the vacuum created in his life by his parents' failure to talk about their past or family in Russia, a situation which he did not want to replicate with his grandchildren. *Irish Times*, 4 January 2002; Ken Finlay, '86 Years A-Growing', *East* (8 May 2001): 7; Harris, *Dublin's Little Jerusalem*, ix, 26. A similar lament is made in Louis Lentin, 'Grandpa . . . Speak to Me in Russian', *Translocations* 3 (Spring 2008), http://www.translocations.ie/docs/v03i01/Vol_3_Issue_1_Louis_Lentin.pdf (accessed 7 March 2011).

⁵⁸ Hyman, *Jews of Ireland*, 159, 164-65; Mark Duffy, 'A Socio-Economic Analysis of Dublin's Jewish Community 1880-1911' (MA thesis, University College Dublin, 1985), 73; Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, 95. This issue is examined in detail in Chapter Three, below.

⁵⁹ Diner, 'Accidental Irish', 1-60.

world.⁶⁰ Finally, it is worth considering the combined influence of the seeming unlikelihood of Ireland as a destination for Jewish immigration,⁶¹ and British and American stereotypes of the Irish. Katrina Goldstone has argued that insensitivity, ambivalence and a lack of thoroughness have caused outside commentators, often unconsciously, to objectify Irish Jewry. A general lack of introspection in approaching the research and documentation of minorities in Ireland has contributed to silencing the authentic voices of Irish Jews, distorting their history through the perpetuation of stereotypes and sweeping generalisations. Although her articles refer specifically to the presuppositions of Irish non-Jews, the same might well be said about international Jewish commentators, who are just as likely to approach Irish Jewry as some kind of ‘quaint objects of anthropological curiosity’.⁶² Unfortunately the communal establishment is, to a degree, complicit in remaining content to be portrayed and, indeed, to portray itself in the same static, one-dimensional manner for decades.⁶³

⁶⁰ In 1971 Bernstein commented that there was probably more basis for the story that the prophet Jeremiah had settled in Ireland and become the first Irish Jew than for the Litvak arrival myths (*Jews in Ireland*). Although these legends are still very prominent in Irish Jewish folklore, as evidenced by the 2013 newspaper article referred to above, the responses received by the author to recent email surveys indicate that many members of the community are, in fact, highly sceptical of them (see Appendix I). The dissonance between ‘official’ and grassroots understandings of the arrival myths is elaborated in Wynn, ‘Constructs’.

⁶¹ This point is highlighted in Diner, ‘Accidental Irish’, 1-60.

⁶² Katrina Goldstone, “‘Now You See Us, Now You Don’t’: Reflections on Jews, Historical Amnesia and the Histories of a Multi-Ethnic Dublin’, *Translocations* 4, no. 1 (2008): 102-09; Goldstone, “‘Rewriting You’’: Researching and Writing about Ethnic Minorities’, in *Cultivating Pluralism: Psychological, Social and Cultural Perspectives on a Changing Ireland*, ed. Malcolm MacLachlan and Michael O’Connell (Dublin: Oak Tree Press, 2000), 305-14.

⁶³ Natalie Wynn, ‘Ireland’s Jewish Identity Crisis’, in *Jews and non-Jews: Memories and Interactions from the Perspective of Cultural Studies*, ed. Lucyna Alexandrowich-Pedich and Jacek Partyka (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2015), 43-59; with thanks to Katrina Goldstone for her observations on televisual representations of Irish Jewry over the years. This point is well made by reference to the 2013 communal Rosh Hashanah broadcast on national television, which focused on the Irish Jewish Gathering of July 2013 (accessed 26 November 2013, http://www.rte.ie/tv/religion/avspecials_1113979.html?3062042). This was part of a government initiative to bolster the flagging Irish tourism industry by encouraging the public to organise events aimed at bringing members of the Irish diaspora ‘home’ to Ireland during 2013. The Jewish community organised a very successful week of events which capitalised on Jewish expat nostalgia. On the initiative in general, see www.thegatheringireland.com (accessed 26 November 2013); for the Irish Jewish Gathering programme of events, see <http://thegathering.uberflip.com/i/130170> (accessed 26 November 2013); for nostalgic reflections after the fact, see ‘The Irish Jewish Gathering’, *Nachlath Dublin Magazine* (5774/2013-14) commemorative pull-out. Revealingly, the *Nachlath* feature describes the Gathering as ‘perhaps the most significant event of Irish Jewry in 150 years or more – at a time when our Community truly came alive for eight days of memorable festivity’.

Although these factors may help to explain why such unflattering anecdotes remain so entrenched in communal memory,⁶⁴ even though many Irish Jews now take them with a large grain of salt, no conclusive answer can be given without extensive further research on their wider context and origins. While Diner's observations are incisive and enlightening, they are compromised by her failure to note that similar legends appear throughout Britain. Cesarani, in contrast, makes no mention whatsoever of Ireland and may not therefore even be aware that Irish Jews cherish the same myths as their British counterparts. Also, as we have seen, his observations require modification before they can be applied to the Irish setting. Neither Diner nor Cesarani considers the possibility that similar anecdotes may exist in other outwardly unlikely destinations for Jewish migration. David Landy's argument that the arrival myths are an expression of Irish Jews' unconscious sense of outsidership is, similarly, too location-specific, and too closely linked to his wider political project of discrediting Zionism as a Diaspora Jewish ideology, to be of any real significance in this respect.⁶⁵

At a more basic level, arrival myths simply represent an attempt to explain why so many Jews chose impoverished and economically stagnant parts of Ireland above the more obvious attractions of mainland Britain and the New World. Ó Gráda finds the unexpected answer in southern Ireland's underdeveloped economy itself, which provided plentiful openings for itinerant pedlars offering small loans and cheap goods on credit. Although this was a hard and meagre way of life, Ó Gráda explains that peddling held a number of attractions for the Litvaks, in requiring little in the way of start-up capital or English-language skills, in offering a reasonable prospect of eventual socio-economic advancement and in providing the freedom to observe Shabbat and the Jewish festivals.⁶⁶ On these points, Ireland would have contrasted favourably with the United States, where there was a glut of pedlars⁶⁷ and the difficulties encountered by immigrants wishing to live a traditional Jewish life have

⁶⁴ With thanks to Dr. Nathan Abrams for raising this very valid point which is noted, but not addressed, in Cesarani, 'Myths of Origin', 252.

⁶⁵ Landy goes on to present the Zionism of Ireland's Jewish community as a key factor in the construction of a complex and circular insider-outsider relationship with Irish society. However, he makes his agenda clear from the very outset in stating that, as a pro-Palestinian activist, 'I considered my Jewishness as being at most only of "strategic political value"' ('The Role of Zionism in the Production of Irish Jewish Identities', MPhil thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 2005).

⁶⁶ Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, chap. 2.

⁶⁷ Klier, *Pogroms*, 371.

been well documented.⁶⁸ It is also conceivable that migrants deliberately travelled to Ireland in order to earn the money they would need to set themselves up in more ultimately favourable locations. Ó Gráda cites the draw of peddling as a possible reason that far greater numbers of Jews chose Dublin above the more industrialised, then booming city of Belfast.⁶⁹ His contentions are borne out by the musings of ‘Halitvack’, who describes Dublin as ‘the capital of a country with a reputation for poverty ten times greater than what it actually is’. ‘Halitvack’ continues:

However, it would seem that [Jewish immigrants] turned that self-same poverty of the natives in to good account. The first Okmyaner . . . landing here, began with selling holy pictures on the instalment plan [an early form of hire-purchase]. After pictures came other more necessary though less poetic household requirements, and so in the course of years a new and generally recognised industry has sprung up.⁷⁰

However, economic ‘pull’ factors were unlikely to have been the sole element to encourage the majority of east European Jewish migrants to settle in southern Ireland. Subsequently ‘Halitvack’ alleged that sectarian conflict in Belfast was the main reason favouring Dublin,⁷¹ a claim that appears to be reflected in the obvious Jewish ambivalence regarding Irish national aspirations.⁷² This illustrates one significant weakness in Ó Gráda’s work. Whilst he makes a breakthrough in terms of questioning traditional perceptions of Russia’s ‘push factors’ and in identifying Ireland’s economic attractions,⁷³ in focusing on these Ó Gráda creates a somewhat lopsided, overly materialist picture. This does not take sufficient account either of the increasing hardship and hopelessness of life in the Pale of Jewish Settlement or, more significantly, of the political climate of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Ireland (see Section 2.2). It is almost superfluous to note that Green’s arguments regarding choice are supported by the totality of evidence regarding Irish ‘pull’ factors.

Ó Gráda buys in to the widespread exaggeration of the significance of peddling above other Jewish callings in Lithuania, which appears to be more a

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 379; Szajkowski, ‘Attitude of American Jews’, 243, 263ff; Section 1.4, below.

⁶⁹ Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, 60.

⁷⁰ *Jewish Chronicle*, 8 June 1906.

⁷¹ *Jewish Chronicle*, 21 December 1906.

⁷² This Jewish ambivalence and uncertainty regarding Irish nationalism, which is considered in greater detail in the coming sections, is evident from contemporary commentary in the *Jewish Chronicle* (e.g., 25 February 1898).

⁷³ Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, chap. 1.

retrojection of subsequent occupational patterns in Ireland than of the Lithuanian reality. Aronson and Klier cite peddling as a common, but by no means universal Jewish occupation in the Russian empire,⁷⁴ contrary to what is implied by the Irish sources. Louis Hyman, author of the most comprehensive historical survey of Irish Jewry, provides the title to one of Ó Gráda's chapters with his pronouncement that the Litvaks 'knew no trade but peddling'.⁷⁵ Berman also claims that peddling was 'a calling they brought with them from their homeland'. However her maternal Zlotover ancestors had been landowners for generations, while her father only took to peddling in desperation after the failure of his brewery.⁷⁶ 'Halitvack's claim that the men of 'Okmyan' spent most of the year travelling through the Russian empire 'following their vocations as "Landkremers" (pedlars)' is widely quoted in this respect.⁷⁷ Diner also takes up this assumption, on the basis of Derek Penslar's study of Jewish peddling, *Shylock's Children: Economics and Jewish Identity in Modern Europe*. Penslar, however, makes it clear that his primary focus is German-speaking western and central Europe, with only occasional reference to the Russian empire.⁷⁸ In contrast, Green has logically argued that immigrant trades are more a reflection of the type of employment that was available in the destination country, than of traditional occupations in the country of origin.⁷⁹ In the same vein, Fiona Carmody and Margaret Daly have suggested that Jews were attracted to Limerick and Cork by the type of economic opportunities that were available there in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and that the popularity of peddling may have been a consequence of their exclusion from other occupations on religious and ethnic grounds.⁸⁰

⁷⁴ Aronson, *Troubled Waters*, 28, 35ff; John D. Klier, 'Russian Jewry on the Eve of the Pogroms', in *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History*, ed. John D. Klier and Shlomo Lambroza (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 5-6; Segev, conversation with the author, 26 November 2011. Gartner (*Jewish Immigrant*, 57-60) notes that contemporary surveys of immigrants' previous occupations reveal a decline in Jewish peddling in eastern Europe in this period.

⁷⁵ Hyman, *Jews of Ireland*, 161; Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, chap. 3.

⁷⁶ Berman, 'Zlotover Story', 3-4, 8, 11.

⁷⁷ *Jewish Chronicle*, 7 September 1906; Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, 46.

⁷⁸ Diner, 'Accidental Irish', 31ff; Derek J. Penslar, *Shylock's Children: Economics and Jewish Identity in Modern Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 2.

⁷⁹ Green, 'Tale of Three Cities', 92-93.

⁸⁰ Fiona Carmody and Margaret Daly, 'Anti-Semitism in Limerick and Cork' (draft article, 1984); 'Jews of Limerick', <http://www.limerickcity.ie/media/jews%20of%20limerick%2033.pdf> (accessed 11 April 2014). Their observations on subsequent changes to the Jewish occupational profile in these cities do not, however, take into account the effects of urbanisation and industrialisation in the Russian context. Endelman (*Jews of Britain*, 134) has found that in London, in contrast, discrimination had little real impact on Jewish occupational choices. This is borne out by Feldman (*Englishmen and Jews*,

The so-called ‘push factors’ superficially appear to be somewhat more clearcut, claiming a basis in a universal popular wisdom that boasts a vague grounding in historical reality. Chapter One has discussed the extent to which circumstances in late imperial Russia, especially anti-Jewish violence and discriminatory legislation, have been prone over the years to misinterpretation, conspiracy theory and exaggeration. East European immigration to Ireland is therefore widely attributed to factors such as Jewish military conscription, pogroms and the May Laws. With the passage of time, current political and social discourse also shows its influence in contributing fashionable terms such as ‘refugees’, ‘asylum seekers’ and ‘ethnic cleansing’ to the narrative.⁸¹ Conscription is perhaps the most prominent, albeit anachronistic, explanation for Jewish settlement in Ireland, given that many of the early immigrants were boys in their early teens.⁸² Gerald Goldberg claims, incorrectly, that the May Laws legislated for the conscription of Jewish boys for periods of thirty years from the age of twelve or fourteen.⁸³ Author David Marcus describes, accurately but anachronistically, how ‘in the army [Jewish boys] would be stripped of their religion, forbidden their Jewish prayers, forced to eat non-kosher food, and . . . could expect constant bullying and persecution’. Both Marcus and Goldberg relate how their mutual grandfather, Louis Goldberg, whose arrival in Queenstown was discussed above, was part of a group of teenage Jewish draft evaders. Goldberg was allegedly the only one who managed to fool the Russian border police into letting him cross into Germany without identification papers, perhaps due to his fair colouring.⁸⁴ Conscription also serves as a convenient way of

Part 2), who presents economic exigencies as the main determinant of employment patterns in the Jewish East End.

⁸¹ Compare, for example, Asher Benson, *Jewish Dublin: Portraits of Life by the Liffey* (Dublin: A & A Farmer, 2007), xiv, and John D. White, *The Dublin Hebrew Congregation, Adelaide Road Synagogue, Dublin 2: 1892-1999* (commemorative booklet, 1999), 10, with Gerald Goldberg’s statement that ‘the May Laws were deliberately intended to bring about the destruction in one way or another of the Jewish community in Russia, Lithuania and Poland’ (‘A Jew, an Irish Man and a Cork Man’, transcript of TV broadcast, 1983).

⁸² This point is also raised by Cesarani with relation to mainland Britain (‘Myth of Origins’, 250). Cesarani argues that research on the age profile of immigrants, who were often either too young or too old for conscription to have been an imminent threat, would settle the matter conclusively. More recently, Kirk Hansen’s doctoral research has indicated that draft evasion does appear to have been a valid ‘push’ factor in the case of Scotland (email message to the author, 11 March 2013). This apparent contradiction again highlights the need for a more holistic, less sweeping examination of Jewish communal narrative in the British Isles. Regarding contemporary academic thinking on conscription, see Section 1.1, above.

⁸³ Goldberg, ‘Jew, Irish Man and Cork Man’.

⁸⁴ David Marcus, *Oughtobiography: Leaves from the Diary of a Hyphenated Jew* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2001), 77-78; Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 11ff.

explaining obscure Jewish surnames that cannot be humorously attributed to Irish immigration officers. For example, Davida Noyek Handler claims that ‘Noyek’ was invented on the spur of the moment as a non-Jewish-sounding surname in order to fool the *khappers* (‘catchers’) that were employed by Jewish communities to help fill military quotas by force.⁸⁵ Louis Lentin states that ‘names were changed as required, anything to avoid taxes, above all the dreaded recruiting officer’.⁸⁶ This popular wisdom conveniently conceals the unpleasant fact of Jewish communal complicity in the recruitment process, as well as assuming unrealistically slapdash record-keeping even by Russian standards. In reality changing one’s name was an arduous process which necessitated petitioning a tsar who was particularly reluctant to facilitate Jews in this respect.⁸⁷

Handler also provides us with one of the most colourful, confused and all-encompassing imaginings of conditions in imperial Russia:

Lithuania of the nineteenth century was subject to a tyranny more crushing than anything which could be imagined today. The entire Jewish population was being terrorized by the conquering Cossacks. Children were being forcibly taken from their parents for slave labour in the mines, or to the labour camps of their Czarist Masters . . . Jewish boys between twelve and twenty-five were conscripted into the Russian army for twenty-five years . . . Because of the infamous Russian ‘May Laws’ . . . Jews . . . were forced to live only within the ‘Pale of Settlement’, an area which constituted no more than 4% of Russia’s territory . . . Periodic pogroms . . . broke out in Southern Russia between 1881 and 1884, and swept across the whole country, often with the open encouragement of local officials . . . Deportation to Siberia, droughts and fires . . . added greatly to the desire for a better life. Many parents preferred the ultimate risk of abandoning their children to an oceanic voyage, in the hopes of eventually landing in a free country, to keeping them close at home.⁸⁸

Early sources, in contrast, rarely allude to extreme persecution or hardship. Although the psychological impact of the first two pogrom waves on Lithuania remains underexplored, the violence certainly did not reach the north-west from its Ukrainian epicentre many miles to the south.⁸⁹ Popular accounts claim that the past

⁸⁵ Handler, ‘Noyek Family History’ (1994), 16.

⁸⁶ L. Lentin, ‘Grandpa’, 2. Similar claims are made in Len Yodaiken, ‘The Judeikins: A Lithuanian Jewish Family in Dispersion’, 33.

⁸⁷ On the circumstances surrounding the adoption and changing of surnames in nineteenth-century Russia, see Verner, ‘What’s in a Name’: 1046-70.

⁸⁸ Handler, ‘Noyek History’ (1990), 33.

⁸⁹ Ó Gráda, referring to contemporary academic opinion, describes Lithuania as ‘virtually pogrom-free’, and having felt the effects of the violence in mostly economic terms, while Segev cautions

was consciously discarded as a result of trauma,⁹⁰ however Nicholas Evans regards this as a normal feature of the emigrant mentality of the time, which focused on the future as opposed to the past.⁹¹ This has, of course, left further gaps to be conveniently plugged with popular metanarratives that conflate traditional schemes of Jewish suffering with the more recent horrors of the Holocaust.⁹² These created appeals to popular sympathy which may well have suited an immigrant generation who faced an ongoing struggle for acceptance by the wider community, as will be shown. Indeed, following the 1881-1882 pogroms, Klier suggests that some emigrants may have exaggerated the extent of the atrocities they witnessed in order to win sympathy by asserting their status as victims.⁹³ The provisions that were made within the Irish community for assisting needy immigrants that are discussed in Chapters Three and Four constitute conclusive proof, together with the findings (above) regarding chain migration, that east European immigration predated the pogroms and was in fact a conscious decision arising from unfavourable economic conditions.

Underpinning the tenacity of persecution myths is the tendency for east European Jewish Studies to be overshadowed by the dominance of German, American and Zionist communities and thinkers due to their more universal and accessible influence. Hence Russian Jewry is often reduced to little more than a semi-positive, semi-negative catalyst within evolving American and Zionist social and intellectual matrices. This masks the complexity of nineteenth-century Russian Jewish culture

against underestimating the psychological effects of the pogroms on Litvak Jews. As Chapter One has noted, the common assumption that the tangible threat of anti-Jewish violence in Lithuania was suppressed through the prompt action of its governor-general has been dismissed by Klier. Klier instead suggests that the lack of violence in the north-west of the Russian empire might be attributable to a slower pace of socio-economic change than that of the south-west. Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, 14; Segev, conversation with the author, 26 November 2011; Klier, *Pogroms*, 54, 84. Gartner (*Jewish Immigrant*, 48-49) has observed that, despite its periodic anti-Jewish outbreaks, Ukraine did not become a major source of emigrants until the early twentieth century, and due to economic reasons as opposed to persecution. In contrast to the situation that prevailed in the Russian empire Galician Jews, who were legally emancipated and free of persecution, migrated in their droves in the late nineteenth century (see, e.g., Alderman, *Modern British Jewry*, 112).

⁹⁰ Handler, 'Noyek History' (1990), 33; L. Lentin, 'Grandpa', 3. Handler, for example, claims that when asked their experiences, the response of the immigrant generation was, 'It was terrible. You don't want to know about it!'

⁹¹ Evans, email, 11 December 2011. This is borne out by Gerald Goldberg's recollection of his father's advice, in the context of the family's experience in Limerick, to forget the past and look to the future (undated transcript of a speech on the Jewish experience in Ireland, in Gerald Goldberg Papers, Special Collections and Archives Service, UCC Library, University College, Cork, Box 8).

⁹² Wynn, 'Foundation Myths'; Wynn, 'Constructs'; Evans, email, 11 December 2011. The traditional schemes and mechanisms of Jewish memory are examined in Yosef Haim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996).

⁹³ Klier, *Pogroms*, 371.

and thought, which is amply reflected in its dedicated branch of Jewish Studies, but tends not to be appreciated by the majority of scholars. This has resulted in the widespread perseverance of outdated and simplistic assumptions among those lacking in the necessary specialist knowledge (see Section 1.1). In the Irish case, the absence of a bigger Jewish picture has left researchers dependent on presuppositions that are so universal that questioning them has rarely even been recognised as an option.⁹⁴ This is particularly unsatisfactory in Keogh's work, for example in his attributing the growth of Ireland's Jewish community to pogroms in 'southern Russia' and Poland and 'anti-Semitic' legislation,⁹⁵ which shows no grasp whatsoever of either the geography of the Russian empire or the academic nuances of such loaded terminology. This is, however, unsurprising given his use of a mere fraction of the sources for this period, and his inexplicable choice of Davitt's highly outdated and clichéd introduction to *Beyond the Pale* as opposed to one of the many modern and objective surveys of tsarist Russia. Whilst Ó Gráda shows a healthy degree of scepticism, he is ultimately hampered by his lack of knowledge of Jewish history.⁹⁶

In examining the mythical and actual origins of Ireland's Jewish community, this section has raised many of the key weaknesses that underpin the existing historiography of Irish Jewry. The coming sections will illustrate how the dominance of communal narrative in the construction of this historiography has had a deep and lasting effect on the way in which key areas of the Irish Jewish experience have traditionally been perceived and presented both within the community and to the wider world.

⁹⁴ Wynn, 'Foundation Myths'; Wynn, 'Constructs'.

⁹⁵ Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 8-12.

⁹⁶ Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, chap. 1.

2.2 'FIFTY SHADES OF GREY': ANTI-JEWISH PREJUDICE AND THE JEWISH RELATIONSHIP WITH IRISH SOCIETY

The only wonder is that the rich and influential Jewish leaders of England . . . should be unable to divert their co-religionists from trying their fortunes in an impoverished land from which the natives themselves are compelled to hasten from at the rate of ten thousand per annum, and in which the struggle for existence among those who remain is keen and bitter.⁹⁷

It has been shown in Section 2.1 that, contrary to what is widely assumed, the Irish Jewish narrative is far from being a straightforward tale with little left to add and is in fact multi-layered, nuanced and far from complete. This is nowhere more evident than in the investigation of anti-Jewish prejudice in Ireland and the types of response that it has tended to evoke within the Jewish community. Hence the title of this section is not intended as a reflection of the 'sexiness' of its theme – though communal narrative would have it otherwise – but as a reference to the general lack of clarity that surrounds the subject of Irish Jewish relations, arising from the complexity of the subject matter.

'Antisemitism' in the Irish setting is one issue which most commentators consider but few reflect upon in any great depth. I use quotation marks here as I believe that anti-Jewish prejudice in Ireland is an area that requires proper contextualisation before the appropriate terminology can be identified and applied. Where the term 'antisemitism' appears in this chapter, it is purely for the current want of a better one. Standard approaches, in contrast, show little awareness of the proliferation of scholarly discourse on the subject of antisemitism and, accordingly, the need to identify and define what precisely is being discussed. As a result, comparisons to other countries and contexts are mostly simplistic and relativised, yielding little in the way of meaningful conclusions. Goldstone stresses the need for sensitivity and introspection in approaching the topic, as she believes that scholars' personal ambivalence concerning Jews and anti-Jewish prejudice has contributed to the ongoing distortion of the Irish historical record. Goldstone argues that unconscious impulses to deny, downplay or overcompensate for anti-Jewish prejudice have influenced many existing assessments of the Irish Jewish experience.⁹⁸ While, again, she refers specifically to uninterrogated attitudes among the majority

⁹⁷ John O'Reilly, Mayor of Cork, *Jewish Chronicle*, 16 March 1888.

⁹⁸ Goldstone, 'Rewriting You', 305-14.

population, her comments are just as valid in terms of the ambivalence and confusion that are expressed by Jews themselves. The current historiography has been overly coloured by such unsatisfactory and insufficiently explored appraisals of the Jewish experience in Ireland, and the ramifications of these oversights will be investigated below. The inadequacy of the majority of existing literature underlines the need for an up-to-date, comprehensive, objective and informed survey into the significance of all forms of anti-Jewish prejudice in their *Irish* setting.

The most important assessments of Irish ‘antisemitism’, the findings of which are considered in greater detail over the course of this section, fall into two basic categories. The polarity of these perspectives is largely unhelpful to those approaching the subject without a prior agenda, and highlights the urgent need for more sophisticated scholarship. Keogh and Ó Gráda take a somewhat superficial stance which reflects the ongoing efforts of the communal establishment to downplay the extent and significance of anti-Jewish prejudice in Ireland. Neither defines precisely what he means by the term ‘antisemitism’, opting instead for the vaguest and most fluid popular conceptions which vacillate between religious, economic and racial connotations, assuming that the reader knows exactly what is under discussion. Although a similar fluidity of definition can also be a feature of scholarly studies of the phenomenon of antisemitism in general,⁹⁹ Keogh and Ó Gráda’s assessments lack the nuance of these detailed and comprehensive works. This vagueness is particularly unhelpful when it comes to confronting the narratives, on the one hand, of the Irish Catholic majority and, on the other, of the Jewish minority. Keogh’s shortcomings in this respect are particularly ironic as both of his books on Irish Jewry include ‘antisemitism’ in their subtitles; it comes as little surprise that his conclusions in this regard should be as ill-defined and ambiguous as his overall approach. Ó Gráda peddles a similarly optimistic line that is somewhat at odds with the evidence he cites, and with his findings in general, that Irish Jews shared little common ground with the Catholic majority, and remained distant and largely aloof from their non-Jewish neighbours in all areas of daily life.

⁹⁹ This is particularly noticeable in Walter Laqueur, *The Changing Face of Anti-Semitism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). Although Mosse (*Racism*) is significantly more measured in tone, he also employs a fluid concept of the term ‘antisemitism’. Neither Laqueur nor Mosse explores the potential nuances surrounding this choice of terminology.

Lentin and Moore, in contrast, strongly reject what Moore refers to as the ‘polite fiction’¹⁰⁰ that antisemitism is marginal to non-existent in Ireland and that its manifestations are rare and largely inconsequential. Lentin acknowledges the more narrow definitions of antisemitism that are common to Jewish Studies, explaining her preference for the broad classification of her fellow sociologist Helen Fein and for a non-hyphenated spelling.¹⁰¹ She is, however, undermined by what comes across as an overly sensitive, personalised and emotional approach to the subject, recalling Goldstone’s observations. Moore’s overall survey of anti-Jewish prejudice in Ireland from the late nineteenth to the mid twentieth century remains impressive, despite what is now a hopelessly outdated theoretical framework. He fearlessly tackles the Irish nationalist narrative and the political culture that it engendered, exposing prejudice and challenging complacency and denial.¹⁰² Unlike Keogh and Ó Gráda, neither Lentin nor Moore is widely cited. Remaining marginal to mainstream Irish Jewish historiography, their unpalatable findings are conveniently ignored by the majority of commentators.¹⁰³

Most commentators prefer instead to concentrate on more positive aspects of Irish Jewish history, such as the much vaunted notion that Ireland is the only country never to have persecuted her Jews. The origins of this idea – which, incidentally, also figures in other provincial Jewish narratives¹⁰⁴ – are unclear. It seems to have made its first appearance in 1828, in a letter from Daniel O’Connell to Isaac Goldsmid, then leader of the Jewish emancipation movement in Britain.¹⁰⁵ This assertion may, therefore, have originated in nineteenth-century Irish nationalist circles, which periodically championed Jewish rights. It was subsequently echoed by other leading nationalists, such as Michael Davitt, throughout the course of the nineteenth

¹⁰⁰ Moore, ‘Anti-Semitism’, 6.

¹⁰¹ Ronit Lentin, “‘Who Ever Heard of an Irish Jew?’ Racialising the Intersection of “Irishness” and “Jewishness””, in *Racism and Anti-Racism in Ireland*, ed. Ronit Lentin and Robbie McVeigh (Belfast: BTP, 2002), 153-66; esp. 154, 159-60; see also R. Lentin and McVeigh, *After Optimism*, 115-24.

¹⁰² Moore, ‘Anti-Semitism’.

¹⁰³ Goldstone believes that elements such as gender and political orientation, as well as the nature of one’s views on Irish antisemitism, contribute towards determining whether or not one falls within the communal mainstream and, consequently, whether one is acknowledged or endorsed by the Jewish establishment (email message to the author, 29 July 2013).

¹⁰⁴ Examples include Scotland and Hampshire (on the latter, see Kushner, *Anglo-Jewry*, chap. 3, 5. Such claims (including Ireland’s) may be tied in culturally with the historical notion of ‘British fair play’, which conveniently distracts from the prejudice and discrimination that existed in real life. With thanks to Harvey Kaplan for the information on Scotland and to Katrina Goldstone for her observations regarding the British self-image and its impact on Anglo-Jewish establishment discourse.

¹⁰⁵ Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 6-7.

century.¹⁰⁶ However the recipient of O’Connell’s comments is also significant, given that the ‘no persecution in Ireland’ myth was enthusiastically adopted by the Anglo-Jewish establishment. It was reiterated by leading British Jews such as chief rabbis Nathan Adler and Hermann Adler, and Sir Moses Montefiore, during the course of the nineteenth century.¹⁰⁷ From 1850 this assertion became a regular feature of *Jewish Chronicle* features on Ireland and its Jewries.¹⁰⁸ In one respect, it must be seen in the context of the positive image of British enlightenment and tolerance that was relentlessly championed by the Anglo-Jewish authorities.¹⁰⁹ At the same time, when the apparently favourable establishment views on Jewish settlement in Ireland are taken into consideration, the possibility must also be considered that the ‘no persecution’ myth formed part of the wider attempts to disperse immigrants beyond Britain’s major Jewish centres that have been discussed above and in Section 1.5. Persuading migrants to opt for the Emerald Isle would have been a convenient way of removing them from mainland Britain. Compared with America, this would have involved only minimal, largely cursory dealings with a generally compliant Jewish administration (see Section 1.4). Periodically complimentary letters concerning the Irish attitude towards the Jewish community were published in the *Jewish Chronicle*, often alongside the unfavourable commentary of others.¹¹⁰ This may well have been a deliberate effort to counter negative views that had the potential to discourage those considering relocation to Ireland.

¹⁰⁶ On Davitt, see Dermot Keogh and Andrew McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott 1904: Anti-Semitism in Ireland* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2005), 43.

¹⁰⁷ This was a repeated motif of Nathan Adler’s pastoral visit in 1871 when it was also taken up by local newspapers (*Jewish Chronicle*, 21 July 1871, 28 July 1871, and 15 September 1871). This myth was also famously asserted, and perhaps institutionalised within Irish circles, by Hermann Adler in the sermon he preached during the consecration of the Adelaide Road Synagogue in 1892 (*Jewish Chronicle*, 9 December 1892) which also refers to favourable reports in local newspapers. Montefiore’s views are discussed in Hyman’s chapter on ‘Co-operation between the Irish and the Jews in the Nineteenth Century’ (chap. 15); Hyman, *Jews of Ireland*, 123; see also *Jewish Chronicle*, 16 May 1913.

¹⁰⁸ The *Jewish Chronicle*’s first reference to this myth was an article reproduced from the Dublin journal, the *Inspector* (*Jewish Chronicle*, 4 October 1850). Other examples include 20 February 1863, 29 October 1886 (in commenting on an anti-Jewish poster campaign in Dublin), and 10 July 1908 (making a favourable contrast with England). These assessments sit uneasily with the *Chronicle*’s overt ambivalence regarding Irish attitudes towards Jews at this time especially those of Catholics, the classic example being the Limerick Boycott (see Section 2.3, below).

¹⁰⁹ *Darkest Russia* is a good example of the way in which the British reputation for progress and fair play were emphasised by the Anglo-Jewish establishment, in this case in contrast with the perceived bigotry and medieval barbarism of the Russian empire. With thanks again to Katrina Goldstone for her comments regarding the parallel attitudes of the Irish and British Jewish communal authorities.

¹¹⁰ E.g., *Jewish Chronicle*, 16 May 1913 and 23 May 1913.

That the ‘no persecution’ myth has become a form of Irish Jewish communal mantra¹¹¹ conceals a setting that is every bit as complex as any other.¹¹² This is indicated by James Joyce’s famous parody in *Ulysses*, when Mr. Deasy declares that the reason Ireland has never persecuted the Jews was because she had never let them ‘in’. Louis Lentin believes this statement to have a psychological as well as a physical dimension.¹¹³ The ambivalence that this suggests appears to be reflected on a personal level by both O’Connell and Davitt, in a way that is reminiscent of Thomas Masaryk’s position during the Hilsner Affair (see Section 1.4). O’Connell reportedly condemned Benjamin Disraeli as a Jew ‘of the lowest and most disgusting grade of moral turpitude’ who shared the unsavoury qualities of his putative forbear, ‘the impenitent thief on the cross’.¹¹⁴ Davitt is widely believed to have repudiated a stance which favoured economic antisemitism while rejecting its racial counterpart, along with his negative assessment of the Jewish role in the South African War. However the sources for Irish Jewry suggest that this is an assumption based on Davitt’s public condemnation of the Limerick Boycott as opposed to concrete evidence.¹¹⁵ It should be remembered that Davitt contributed only once to the long-drawn-out polemics of the Boycott. He declined to respond to Fr. John Creagh’s rebuttal of his comments or, indeed, to any aspect of Creagh’s second sermon. This had attempted to justify the initial call to boycott, which recalled the type of slanders that had contributed to the Kishinev pogrom, the results of which Davitt had viewed at first hand. Thus it would seem that O’Connell, Davitt and those of their fellow nationalists who lent occasional support to the Jewish cause were moved more by a sense of injustice than by any fundamental respect for Judaism or even, necessarily, by a positive perception of Jews themselves. This places them, together with Masaryk, firmly within the ambivalent

¹¹¹ The embeddedness of this notion in the communal narrative is evident from the frequency with which Hermann Adler’s sermon is cited in secondary sources; e.g., Bernard Shillman, *A Short History of the Jews in Ireland* (Dublin: Eason & Son, 1945), 100-01; Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 18-19; Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 14; Gerald Y. Goldberg, “‘Ireland Is the Only Country . . .’: Joyce and the Jewish Dimension”, *The Crane Bag* 6, no. 1 (1982): 5-6.

¹¹² To date there has been little meaningful discussion or analysis of the recorded incidents of anti-Jewish sentiment and occasional violence that occurred in Ireland during this period. For a brief consideration of some of the major issues in the context of the Limerick Boycott, see Section 2.3, below.

¹¹³ L. Lentin, ‘Grandpa’, 11.

¹¹⁴ Quoted in *Jewish Chronicle*, 17 March 2000.

¹¹⁵ Manus O’Riordan, ‘The Sinn Féin Tradition of Anti-Semitism: From Arthur Griffith to Sean South’, in *The Rise and Fall of Irish Anti-Semitism*, ed. Manus O’Riordan and Pat Feeley (Dublin: Labour History Workshop, 1984), 19. Moore, with uncharacteristic naïveté, believes that it is ‘unjust’ to accuse Davitt of antisemitism, given that he didn’t realise that the distinction he favoured was unworkable in practice (‘Anti-Semitism’, 82-83).

tradition of the European Enlightenment. Enlightenment thinking tended to distinguish between individual Jews who were considered ‘worthy’ of emancipation and the unsavoury, undesirable mass who were regarded as anything from barely assimilable to completely beyond redemption.¹¹⁶ In addition, the motivation for nationalist claims of Irish exceptionality must be seen in a political light, and recognised as not being entirely altruistic or aspirational. Keogh observes that, in the early decades of the nineteenth century, attempts by Irish and Jewish leaders to make common cause for emancipation may have been driven by their common exclusion from certain areas of British public life.¹¹⁷ As the century progressed, the aspirations of Irish nationalism became tarnished by accusations of sectarianism, which its proponents were keen to refute.¹¹⁸

For all their ambivalence, however, O’Connell and Davitt provide a convenient counterpoint to the apparently unrepentant antisemitism of their fellow nationalist icon Arthur Griffith, who played a key role in forging cultural and political principles that continue to resonate in Irish society to this day.¹¹⁹ However, this aspect of Griffith appears, so far, to have received scant attention from scholars.¹²⁰ Commentators on the Jewish community believe that Griffith’s antisemitism has been deliberately ignored in what Manus O’Riordan dubs ‘a conspiracy of silence’; they, in contrast, depict him as an extremist.¹²¹ Thus we have no idea exactly how Griffith’s very public antisemitism may have related to his subsequent close friendships with a

¹¹⁶ These Enlightenment distinctions are a recurring theme of Mosse, *Racism*.

¹¹⁷ Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 6.

¹¹⁸ Although, in practice, this made Irish nationalism no different to any other nationalism (see below), these allegations are best understood in terms of the polemics surrounding the issue of Irish Home Rule.

¹¹⁹ For examples of Griffith’s antisemitic writings, see Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 22-23, 56. On the pivotal influence of Griffith (and his antisemitism) on nationalist politics and the significance of his ideology in the foundation of the Irish State and its official definitions of ‘Irishness’, cf. Manus O’Riordan, ‘Anti-Semitism in Irish Politics’, in *The Rise and Fall of Irish Anti-Semitism*, ed. Manus O’Riordan and Pat Feeley (Dublin: Labour History Workshop, 1984), 13; O’Riordan, ‘Sinn Féin’, 18-21; R. Lentin and McVeigh, *After Optimism*, 115-24; R. Lentin, ‘Who Ever’, 153-64; Moore, ‘Anti-Semitism’; Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, chap. 4-6. O’Riordan and Keogh, however, take a somewhat more optimistic stance overall regarding the legacy of cultural nationalism than that of Lentin and Moore.

¹²⁰ The only effort to engage in any serious way with the implications for nationalists of Griffith’s antisemitism is Richard English, *Irish Freedom: The History of Nationalism in Ireland* (London: Pan, 2007); with thanks to Kevin McCarthy for this reference.

¹²¹ Moore, ‘Anti-Semitism’, 13; see also R. Lentin and McVeigh, *After Optimism*, 116. Lentin considers Griffith’s ideas to be ‘proto-fascist’, while O’Riordan dubs them ‘racialist poison’. The only public figure who saw fit to tackle Griffith on this point was the radical socialist Frederick Ryan (Manus O’Riordan, ‘Connolly Socialism and the Jewish Worker’, *Saothar* 13 (1988): 126; O’Riordan, ‘Sinn Féin’, 19-20). Ryan’s letter to Griffith’s *United Irishman* newspaper, challenging his views, is reproduced in O’Riordan and Feeley, *Rise and Fall*, 12.

number of Jews, most famously the Republican activist Michael Noyk. In an official deposition, Noyk claimed ‘very intimate knowledge of [Griffith’s] character’, but made no allusion to Griffith’s opinions on Jews.¹²² Keogh has tentatively suggested that these were moderated by his association with Noyk¹²³ however this, like so many of Keogh’s statements, is unsubstantiated. Their friendship may simply represent the irrational distinction that is commonly drawn between individuals who happen to be Jewish, and ‘Jews’ as a construct of antisemitism.¹²⁴

One means of interpreting the apparently contradictory attitudes that were held by O’Connell, Davitt, Griffith and other leading Irish nationalists towards Jews may lie with Brian Cheyette’s identification of a ‘semitic discourse’ in Victorian and Edwardian England.¹²⁵ This discourse created sets of ideas, both positive and negative, regarding ‘the Jew’ which were related neither to observable reality nor to more conscious constructions such as ‘antisemitism’ or ‘philosemitism’. These understandings were instead fashioned in accordance with, or in opposition to a variety of fashionable cultural, social and political concerns and ideologies such as socialism, imperialism and liberalism. ‘Semitic discourse’ supported distinctions between stereotypes of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ Jews – such as the honest, hard-working Jewish masses and the ruthless capitalist Jew – enabling individuals to hold paradoxical and otherwise incoherent notions regarding Jews. ‘Good’ Jews could thus be championed on grounds of justice and fair play, while ‘bad’ Jews were simultaneously excoriated for all the perceived faults of their ‘race’. Davitt could therefore continue to censure ‘the Jews’ for their purported economic misdeeds and propose a remedy in kind, while speaking out against injustices such as the Kishinev Pogrom and the Limerick Boycott. Similarly, Griffith could spout the fashionable anti-Jewish and anti-imperialist rhetoric of the South African War and condemn

¹²² Michael Noyk, ‘Statement Regarding 1910-1921 Period’ (Military History Bureau, National Library of Ireland, MS 18,975, cf. esp. 1). Even though it could be argued that Griffith’s views on the Jewish community were not relevant in the particular context of Noyk’s statement, the issue of personal antisemitism does subsequently surface in official correspondence on a situation involving Robert Briscoe, which is discussed below.

¹²³ Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 56.

¹²⁴ With thanks to Kevin McCarthy for sharing his knowledge of Griffith, which suggests this probability, and for highlighting the fact that Robert Briscoe similarly lionised Griffith, preferring to ignore his antisemitism (personal conversation, 15 March 2012). Mosse has observed that the distinction between the positive qualities of individual Jews and generalised, negative constructs of ‘Jews’ as a critical mass has been a persistent anomaly among racist thinkers, again due to the ambivalent Enlightenment tradition. One prominent example that he discusses is Richard Wagner (Mosse, *Racism*, 101ff).

¹²⁵ Cheyette, Constructions of ‘the Jew’.

‘Jewish’ commercial activity, at the same time as he supported the cause of Jewish nationalism and maintained friendships with various individuals both Jewish and pro-Jewish. Indeed, Colum Kenny argues that Griffith’s antisemitism is more correctly understood in terms of the contemporary political discourse rather than of personal ideology, pointing out that Griffith’s anti-Jewish articles represent only a tiny fraction of his prolific literary output.¹²⁶

However, while Cheyette’s observations certainly shed light on complex, otherwise contradictory individual attitudes towards Jews they do little to advance our understanding of anti-Jewish prejudice as a broader phenomenon within Irish society. The tendency of existing research to revolve around minutiae such as the attitudes of individual public figures is simply a symptom of where the polarised and unsophisticated debate on the Jewish experience in Ireland currently stands, reflecting the rudimentary nature of Irish Jewish historiography as a whole.

The predominant Jewish consensus remains that Ireland has, on the whole, been good to her Jews, offering overall tolerance and acceptance, and plentiful opportunities in the educational, professional and cultural arenas. In this version of events, insidious and day-to-day forms of anti-Jewish prejudice are dismissed as if they barely apply in the Irish context. More discordant interludes, such as the Limerick Boycott or the obstructive official attitude towards Jewish immigrants during the 1930s and ’40s, are neatly written off as isolated aberrations in an otherwise unblemished record, before being relativised through extreme and emotive comparisons to tsarist Russia and Nazi Germany or, less dramatically, to Irish sectarian politics. Grateful for the relative tolerance and acceptance of Irish society and the social, professional and economic opportunities it bestowed, most Jews are only too happy to brush aside any negative experiences they may have had. The majority prefer instead to focus on more upbeat themes such as the putative common traits of the Jews and the Irish,¹²⁷ the supposedly disproportionate Jewish contribution to Irish culture, public life and politics,¹²⁸ or expressions of pride regarding their

¹²⁶ Colum Kenny, ‘Arthur Griffith: More Zionist than Anti-Semite’ (paper presented at the Periodicals and Journalism in Twentieth-Century Ireland Seminar, National Library of Ireland, 28 February 2015). With thanks to Colum Kenny for sharing this manuscript with me..

¹²⁷ Bernstein, *Jews in Ireland*; Tye, *Home Lands*, 199-200.

¹²⁸ Benson, *Portraits*; Rivlin: *Shalom Ireland*; Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 238-41; Brian Fallon, *An Age of Innocence: Irish Culture 1930-1960* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1999), 222-23.

twofold identity as Irish Jews.¹²⁹ Keogh and Ó Gráda both follow suit by concluding their surveys of anti-Jewish sentiment in Ireland on a positive note.¹³⁰ A careful, comprehensive and less conditioned reading of the sources reveals, as Louis Lentin suggests, a significant undercurrent of prejudice, resentment, exclusion and strained relations which is, at times, barely overlaid with the customary reflex of denial. The unacknowledged subtext that results is every bit as ambivalent and bifurcated as that of any Jewry grappling for its place within its host society. The inner tension and self-censorship of the sources has been unwittingly echoed by the majority of commentators. This has added a further layer of obfuscation, shoring up the authority of communal denials and highlighting the pitfalls of Jews assuming the right to speak for other Jews whose views are regarded to be an embarrassment. If individual representatives of the community are fortunate enough to have encountered little or no prejudice in the course of their lives, it would seem insensitive, callous and unfair to project this onto the narratives of others, and to deny, dismiss and relativise their experiences. Few pause to consider the appropriateness of negating a persistent, and sometimes considerable, undercurrent of anti-Jewish sentiment, or the overall effects of this deliberate evasion on the Irish Jewish narrative.

Although polite antisemitism rarely merits a mention, this was significant enough to lead to the establishment of the Jewish golf and motoring clubs that are now celebrated by communal chroniclers,¹³¹ and glass ceilings may have persuaded many Jewish professionals to emigrate in search of less circumscribed employment opportunities.¹³² While Ó Gráda is practically alone in giving such matters any particular consideration, he nevertheless accepts the default position in discounting them as a largely insignificant feature of a generally ‘mild’ Irish antisemitism.¹³³ On the popular level, social tensions are clearly visible in early accounts of the

¹²⁹ This is particularly emphasised by communal luminaries such as Gerald Goldberg, Bethel Solomons, Robert Briscoe and Chaim Herzog (e.g., Goldberg, ‘Jew, Irishman and Cork Man’; Bethel Solomons, *One Doctor in His Time* (London: Christopher Johnson, 1956), 155). On the role of Jewish leaders in minimising assessments of Irish antisemitism, see Katrina Goldstone, ‘Irish Government Responses to the Jewish Refugee Crisis: Policy and Public Opinion 1933-45’ (MA thesis, National University of Ireland, 1994), 129.

¹³⁰ Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 224-243, cf. Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, 178-203, chap. 4-6.

¹³¹ Rivlin, *Shalom Ireland*, chap. 10; Benson, *Portraits*, 19.

¹³² On glass ceilings and polite antisemitism, see B. Solomons, *One Doctor*, 160-61; Stanley Waterman, ‘Dublin Jewry: Thirty-Five Years in Retrospect’ (proofs from submission to *Jewish Quarterly*, Asher Benson Papers, National Library of Ireland: Acc. 5734); Tye, *Home Lands*, 208; L. Lentin, ‘Grandpa’, 10-11.

¹³³ Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, 181, 187.

interactions between Jews and non-Jews, supporting Ó Gráda's observation that some degree of mutual suspicion was inevitable.¹³⁴ The warm reception which some Jewish pedlars received from their Irish customers is counterbalanced by a host of negative reminiscences. Ray Rivlin describes how some customers took advantage of the pedlars' unfamiliarity with the language and coinage. Given the frequent ridiculing, dishonesty and defaulting they experienced, she drily observes that it was not a calling for the faint-hearted.¹³⁵ Wigoder recalls having been frequently cheated, but insists that it would be hard to find a better class of customer.¹³⁶ His grandson Geoffrey describes how, in later years, Wigoder dubbed his weekly Saturday-night walk home from work his *lange galus*, referring to the 'long exile' of the Diaspora, as Wigoder was frequently ridiculed by crowds leaving the pubs at closing time.¹³⁷ Thirteen-year-old Louis Wine was reduced to tears when the mother superior of a convent in Kilkenny had refused to accept the large consignment of religious articles which she had previously ordered from him. Wine was fortunate to be befriended by a passing priest, who confronted the mother superior on his behalf and arranged for Wine to lodge with his family as there was no Jewish community in Kilkenny to assist him.¹³⁸ The uniquely Irish epithet 'Jewman' was so synonymous with the term moneylender that it was even periodically used in this manner in the Dáil (Irish parliament) up to the 1950s. This, together with personal experience, belie Ó Gráda's suggestion that 'Jewman' is best understood as a descriptive derivative from the Irish language which has long since lost its pejorative sense.¹³⁹ Even the nickname for the main area of immigrant settlement in the streets surrounding the South Circular Road, 'Little Jerusalem', has been nostalgically adopted by contemporary Jews with no acknowledgement of its potentially negative connotations.¹⁴⁰

Friction between Ireland's new Jewish arrivals and their host community also features as a theme of contemporary fiction. The most celebrated literary comment on

¹³⁴ Ibid., 201-202.

¹³⁵ Rivlin, *Shalom Ireland*, 73-76.

¹³⁶ M. J. Wigoder, *My Life*, 48.

¹³⁷ Geoffrey Wigoder, *In Dublin's Fair City* (Jerusalem: World Zionist Organisation, 1985), 12.

¹³⁸ Kleanthous, 'Wine', 2.

¹³⁹ Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, 180-181, 258 (n.12); A. J. Leventhal, 'What it Means to Be a Jew', *The Bell* 10 (June 1945): 209-10. Leventhal likewise equates the term 'Jewman' with those of 'Frenchman' or 'Englishman' in terms of its origins, while acknowledging that it was also used as 'a contemptuous gibe'. The social and economic changes in Irish society in the latter half of the twentieth century explain why the term is much less common nowadays than in the past, but it has certainly not lost its negative connotations, among older people at least.

¹⁴⁰ Endelman, *Jews of Britain*, 157.

Dublin's hostility towards foreigners in general, through its portrayal of its half-Jewish hero is, of course, Joyce's *Ulysses*, which is set in 1904. This is encapsulated by Joyce's oft-cited comment on his choice of Bloom as its central character: 'because only a foreigner would do. Jews were foreigners at that time in Dublin. There was no hostility toward them, but contempt, yes the contempt people always show for the unknown.'¹⁴¹ However, Joyce's key points regarding the nature of identity¹⁴² and the hostile parochialism of early-twentieth-century Dublin¹⁴³ tend to be overshadowed at the communal level by a continued overemphasis on irrelevant aspects of the novel's local Jewish setting. This involves considerable speculation on obscure matters such as which real Jews gave their names to its incidental characters, whether a Jew such as Bloom could possibly have emerged from Dublin's Jewish milieu in 1904, and how he would really have been regarded by his Jewish contemporaries. Cheyette's assessment that Joyce deliberately set out to create a character so complex as to defy all attempts at categorisation, demonstrate to what extent these arcane discussions miss the actual point of the novel.¹⁴⁴

Joseph Edelstein's controversial pulp novel *The Moneylender* ran to five editions between 1908 and 1931, causing considerable embarrassment to the Jewish community. Although Edelstein's stated purpose in writing the book was 'rather to expose the causes of usury for eradication than the effects for vituperation',¹⁴⁵ the stereotyped caricature of a Jew on its cover is a fair reflection of the exaggerated portrayal of the main character, Moses Levenstein. Edelstein believed that a universal hatred of Jews led them to take revenge through the only means open to them, usury, creating a vicious circle of resentment between themselves and their host populations.¹⁴⁶ He remarked that the Jewish presence was detested as much in a democracy such as Ireland as in the autocratic Russian Empire, illustrating his point

¹⁴¹ Quoted in Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 56, crediting Ira B. Nadel.

¹⁴² Catherine Hezser, "'Are You Protestant Jews or Roman Catholic Jews?'" Literary Representations of Being Jewish in Ireland', *Modern Judaism* 25, no. 2 (May 2005): 159-88, esp. 176ff. Hezser reviews recent scholarship that finds Joyce's portrayal of identity to be ahead of its time in depicting a fluid and complex entity as opposed to something that is fixed, static and easily defined. Interestingly, she notes that the Jewish characters created by Joyce and fellow non-Jew Ita Daly represent far more complex and advanced notions of identity than those of the Jewish authors whom she surveys.

¹⁴³ John McCourt, "'The West Shall Shake the East Awake'" (*Finnegan's Wake*): Changing Images of the East in the Irish Novel from Charles Lever to Colm McCann' (paper presented at the Ireland: East and West Conference, Zagreb, September 2011); McCourt, email message to the author, 11 October 2011.

¹⁴⁴ Cheyette, *Constructions of 'the Jew'*, chap. 6.

¹⁴⁵ Joseph Edelstein, 'Author's Comment', in *The Moneylender* (Dublin: Dollard, 1908).

¹⁴⁶ Edelstein, *Moneylender*; Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, 66-67.

through repeated dramatic portrayals of pogroms as well as one reference to the Limerick Boycott.¹⁴⁷ Notwithstanding Edelstein's justifications *The Moneylender* may well best be understood in terms of contemporary literary expressions of Jewish self-hatred, which employed the crude popular stereotypes of the host community.¹⁴⁸

Reminiscences of growing familiarity and burgeoning friendships between Jews and their Irish neighbours are also tinged with ambivalence. Jessie Spiro Bloom, who was born in Dublin in 1887 and grew up with many Christian friends from both sides of the sectarian divide, recalls so much fear of intermarriage among parents that Jewish girls were berated for merely walking home with neighbouring non-Jewish boys.¹⁴⁹ She comments that, at the time, Jewish prejudice against Christian symbols was such 'that I wonder we ever got over [it]'.¹⁵⁰ This is borne out by the uncomfortable directness of Berman's description of the home of her non-Jewish neighbours in Galway:

The Murphys, next door, showed us the coloured paper streamers festooned across the ceiling in honour of Christmas. To me they were horrible – all Yoshke Pandres. And below the streamers, the house was dirty, rags everywhere; and the mother and father were drunkards – all, everywhere, Yoshke Pandres . . . Father used to bring home the best of everything; no one else knew how to bring home anything.¹⁵¹

Through a humorous anecdote of a boyhood encounter with a priest, Marcus recalls the suspicion and apprehension with which Jews regarded the clergy. This was prompted by the 'ancestral' wisdom that priests thought and behaved differently to other men, and cultivated anti-Jewish sentiment in themselves and their flock.¹⁵² A. J. Leventhal recounts a similarly stereotyped view of Irish Catholics in general: 'while the Sassenach [English] might have referred to the drunken Irish, we merely saw tipping followers of Christ'. Like Bloom, he remembers the crucifix as 'a vaguely hostile symbol from which I averted my head'. Leventhal describes the

¹⁴⁷ Edelstein, *Moneylender*, esp. 54, 62, 63, 89, 92.

¹⁴⁸ Endelman, *Jews of Britain*, 170-71.

¹⁴⁹ Bloom, 'Reflections on Growing up in Dublin', 22.

¹⁵⁰ Jessie S. Bloom, 'The Old Days in Dublin: Some Girlhood Recollections of the '90s', *Commentary* (July 1952): 30.

¹⁵¹ Hannah Berman, 'Recollections', 3. 'Yoshke Pandre' is an insulting Yiddish nickname for Jesus, which is also extended to his followers. This uses a diminutive form of Jesus' name and alludes to the rumour that he was the illegitimate son of a Roman soldier, supposedly named Pantera (Peter Manseau, 'Missionary Yiddish', *Jewcy*, http://www.jewcy.com/religion-and-beliefs/missionary_yiddish, accessed 27 February 2012). It is no surprise that these discomfiting reflections have been purged from Berman's published memoir, *The Zlotover Story*, which has been carefully updated and sanitised by her niece Melisande Zlotover.

¹⁵² Marcus, *Oughtobiography*, 156-71.

tensions between Jewish boys and their Christian counterparts in the ‘Little Jerusalem’ area. Taunts and jostling in the street and the playground often led to fisticuffs, which encouraged some Jewish boys to take up boxing.¹⁵³ A number of memoirs recall with pride the times when the tables were turned on would-be bullies,¹⁵⁴ despite some keenness to downplay these events as normal, if undesirable, childhood behaviour. Leventhal, for example, was unsure whether ‘an inherited touchiness’ had led him to exaggerate this into invisible ghetto walls and primordial racial prejudice.¹⁵⁵ Louis Wigoder dismisses ‘the usual games, throwing stones at each other as the [Jewish] boys were returning from Cheder [religion classes] and the Catholics were there’ as ‘purely family quarrels’.¹⁵⁶ Nevertheless the presuppositions that underpinned these scenarios, as well as their negative impact on less resilient children, should not necessarily be so lightly dismissed. A tribute to Arthur Newman recalled that ‘as a youngster he cringed to tread the Dublin streets for fear of attack by anti-Semitic bullies, armed with stone-filled snowballs’. As a consequence, Newman had become determined ‘to raise the standard of the Jewish child to a position of firm self-respect’.¹⁵⁷ This juvenile hostility contrasts sharply with the consideration, sensitivity and respect that Jewish children appear to have received from their non-Jewish teachers as a matter of course.¹⁵⁸

How persistent were these day-to-day tensions, and how should they appropriately be assessed? Ó Gráda believes that social barriers were rapidly broken down, especially among the younger generation, ignoring the ambivalence that is

¹⁵³ Leventhal, ‘To Be a Jew’, 3, 207ff. The street-rhyme that Leventhal goes on to quote at page 208 further underlines the reciprocal nature of Jewish/Christian prejudice at the time.

¹⁵⁴ G. Wigoder, *Dublin*, 12; Leventhal, ‘To Be a Jew’, 210; Finlay, ‘86 Years’, 7.

¹⁵⁵ Leventhal, ‘To Be a Jew’, 207-11.

¹⁵⁶ Quoted in Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, 196.

¹⁵⁷ AB, ‘Mr. Arthur Newman, PC’, *Halapid* (Sept. 1952): 15. ‘AB’ does not explain precisely how this was to be achieved. Leventhal, in contrast, remembers having gained his self-respect through learning to box from a Jewish classmate ‘who later became a distinguished Irish patriot’ (‘To Be a Jew’, 210).

¹⁵⁸ G. Wigoder, *Dublin*, 11-12; Bloom, ‘On Growing Up in Dublin’, 63, 64. For example, Geoffrey Wigoder recalled that in the Christian Brothers’ school on Westland Row, Jews were exempted from prayers, allowed to leave early on Fridays during the winter to get home before Shabbat, and that no exams were scheduled on Saturdays or Jewish festivals. One of the teachers whom he remembers as particularly well-disposed towards the Hebrew Bible and Jewish culture was none other than the future statesman Éamon de Valera. Wigoder’s father was so grateful for the consideration shown by the school and for the good education his children received there, he donated an annual prize for deserving pupils. Many years later the family was amused to discover that this had been awarded for catechism. In Cork, at the instigation of the minister, Rev. Joseph Myers, and with the assistance of the Board of Deputies, arrangements were made with the authorities of Queen’s College (now University College) to enable Jewish candidates to be examined outside Shabbat and the Jewish festivals (*Jewish Chronicle*, 2 November 1894, 23 November 1894, 25 January 1895, and 3 May 1895).

discernible in a number of his sources, such as Leventhal and Louis Wigoder.¹⁵⁹ O’Riordan and Catherine Hezser have also argued for the disappearance of anti-Jewish prejudice and feelings of Jewish ‘otherness’ apace with the growing acculturation and integration of Jews into Irish society.¹⁶⁰ Yet the weight of evidence indicates that this is certainly not the case. Surveys conducted by Mícheál Mac Gréil showed that, although Irish attitudes towards Jews had improved in many respects between the early 1970s and late 1980s, they nevertheless remained something of an anachronism. Mac Gréil identified economic stereotypes, which form an integral element of anti-Jewish prejudice everywhere, as pronounced in Irish society.¹⁶¹ This provides a stark counterpoint to Jewish establishment assertions that Ireland constitutes some kind of exception in this regard. In 1986 the absence of adequate anti-incitement legislation had prevented the Irish authorities from taking decisive action against the use of Dublin as a base for the production and distribution of antisemitic and racist literature by a European fascist organisation.¹⁶² The legislation was only updated in 1989, at which point Jews still constituted one of the main minorities in the Irish state, bearing out Ronit Lentin’s conviction that ‘Jews, and antisemitism, are simply irrelevant’ to the Irish public consciousness.¹⁶³ In 1993 the *Jewish Voice* ran an article by Joe Briscoe of the Jewish Representative Council of Ireland asking Jews to keep their criticisms of negative media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict ‘in the Family’ rather than airing them publicly.¹⁶⁴ A 1994 poll by the same magazine found that, although only ten per cent of respondents had been personally affected by antisemitism within the previous five years, twenty-four per cent believed that antisemitism was on the rise in Ireland, while forty-eight per cent felt that the Irish police and legislature were not sufficiently vigilant in dealing with it.¹⁶⁵ Lentin sets out a number of contemporary instances of antisemitism, and argues that the disproportionate local interest (both positive and negative) in Ireland’s Jewish community and Middle Eastern affairs is a measure of the endemic prejudice which she believes to exist in Irish society, and which she blames for the increasing Jewish

¹⁵⁹ Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, 194-202.

¹⁶⁰ Hezser, ‘Literary Representations’, 159-88; O’Riordan, ‘Sinn Féin’, 18-24.

¹⁶¹ Mícheál Mac Gréil, *Prejudice and Tolerance in Ireland* (Kildare: Leinster Leader, 1977), 333-47; Mac Gréil, *Prejudice in Ireland Revisited* (Kildare: Leinster Leader, 1996), 210-18. On these stereotypes and their ubiquity, cf. Laqueur, *Changing Face of Anti-Semitism*, esp. chap. 8.

¹⁶² Colm Keena, ‘The Rising Fascist Tide’, *In Dublin* (24 July 1986): 24-27.

¹⁶³ R. Lentin, ‘Who Ever’, 163.

¹⁶⁴ Joe Briscoe, ‘Media in Focus’, *The Jewish Voice*, 1, no. 4 (Autumn 1993): 4.

¹⁶⁵ Cited in R. Lentin, ‘Who Ever’, 164.

exodus of recent years. Lentin challenges the tendency among Irish Jews to downplay antisemitic jokes, comments, anonymous letters and phone calls, and the routine interpretation of such abuse as little more than a consequence of unbalanced media portrayals of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.¹⁶⁶ Landy, however, dismisses ‘Irish antisemitism’ as a construct of Zionist paranoia which is, in turn, used to justify the Islamophobia of many Irish Jews.¹⁶⁷

On the Jewish side, the first generations to be Irish-born and -bred had, and still have, an ongoing battle to reconcile the Jewish and Irish sides of their identity, postmodern theories of hybridity notwithstanding.¹⁶⁸ Marcus coins the term ‘hyphenation’ to describe these co-existing, ever-conflicting elements of his identity.¹⁶⁹ For his Jewish characters, the only solution to this irresolvable dilemma was to seek a more fulfilling Jewish identity in the Jewish homeland.¹⁷⁰ Even though he chose a different course, by remaining in Ireland, marrying a non-Jew and letting his Jewish identity lapse, his memoirs and Jewish-themed writings show that he never lost this underlying confusion. Louis Lentin takes up Marcus’s idea of ‘hyphenation’, describing himself as an ‘inside-outsider, existing under a slightly cracked glass ceiling . . . tolerated but not truly understood. Not entirely *of*.’¹⁷¹ Ambivalence, however, is at its sharpest among the children of interfaith marriages, who found themselves stranded on the social margins of two very different communities. June Levine, who although not halakhically Jewish was predominantly raised in a Jewish environment, and Katrina Goldstone, who was brought up a Roman Catholic, both felt marked out by their surnames, a phenomenon which Goldstone describes as ‘Jewification’.¹⁷² Levine, who was made to feel more of an outsider by her Catholic

¹⁶⁶ R. Lentin, ‘Who Ever’, 153-64; R. Lentin and McVeigh, *After Optimism*, 115-25. Cf. Ben Briscoe, Letter to Paschal O’Donoghue, 22 August 1991 (Asher Benson Papers). See also Michael J. McGrath, Letter to Mr. Danker, 25 November 1988 (Asher Benson Papers). McGrath styles himself the ‘Organiser’ of the National Socialist Party of Ireland and writes on the letterhead of the ‘Nationalsozialistische Irische Arbeiterpartei’, which is adorned with the Nazi eagle and a quotation attributed to Hitler. After condemning ‘this sick, pink liberal, sob-sob, “do-gooder” society’, he continues: ‘We have SS men to Protect you . . . We need PUBLIC FLOGGINGS and the Re-introduction of CAPITAL PUNISHMENT to make our island a decent place to live in for all right-thinking people . . .’. This appears to be the only example of such a letter to have been preserved in the public record.

¹⁶⁷ Landy, ‘Zionism’, 58-66.

¹⁶⁸ Wynn, ‘Ireland’s Jewish Identity Crisis’.

¹⁶⁹ Marcus, *Oughtobiography*; Ronit Lentin, ‘David Marcus and the Cultural Politics of *OY*’, *Translocations* 5, no. 1 (Autumn 2009), 1-10.

¹⁷⁰ Hezser, ‘Literary Representations’, 159-88, esp. 161-69.

¹⁷¹ L. Lentin, ‘Grandpa’, 1, 10-11.

¹⁷² Katrina Goldstone, ‘Christianity, Conversion and the Tricky Business of Names: Images of Jews and Blacks in the Nationalist Irish Catholic Discourse’, in *Racism and Anti-Racism in Ireland*, ed.

than by her Jewish peers, remarks, ‘With a name like Levine I’ve always been conscious that people don’t think of you as a Dubliner, they think of you as a Jew. Even if generations before you have lived in Dublin, they still don’t realise that you are a Dubliner.’¹⁷³ This sense of non-belonging was exacerbated by a perpetual alienation from the communal mainstream as halakhic grounds were subsequently compounded by a left-wing political orientation that was not shared by the majority.¹⁷⁴ Ronit Lentin finds that similar sentiments are visible in later generations, where a sense of ‘otherness’ and an awareness of behaving differently inside and outside the home remain pronounced.¹⁷⁵ Landy, however, believes this to be the result of a circular process of identity construction, by which Zionism is, simultaneously, both the cause and the product of latent Irish Jewish sentiments of outsidership.¹⁷⁶ What is perhaps most significant is that there has been little evolution in the way in which Irish Jewish identity has been represented over the years. The perpetual recurrence of certain themes, together with the staticness of Jewish assessments of identity over a long period indicate an ongoing, often unconscious, sense of unease among Jews concerning their place in Irish society.¹⁷⁷

While there is justification for Ó Gráda’s assessment of Lentin as extreme in her depiction of Irish antisemitism,¹⁷⁸ she is practically alone in drawing attention to a number of significant but virtually neglected issues. The manner in which these have been determinedly suppressed within the communal narrative is well illustrated by the way in which Esther Hesselberg has to be repeatedly pressed by Carol Weinstock in order finally to admit that there is plenty of ‘dormant’ prejudice in Ireland.¹⁷⁹ Lentin represents an element of the Irish Jewish narrative that has as much right to be recognised as its converse which, Ó Gráda argues, is widespread enough not to be

Ronit Lentin and Robbie McVeigh (Belfast: BTP, 2002), 167-76, esp. 172; Johnston, *Dublin Belles*, 104-11.

¹⁷³ Johnston, *Dublin Belles*, 104.

¹⁷⁴ Goldstone believes that this was the case not only for herself, but also for Levine and Ronit Lentin, all of whom became left-wing political activists (email message to the author, 29 July 2013).

¹⁷⁵ Ronit Lentin, ‘Ireland’s Other Diaspora: Jewish-Irish Within/Irish Jewish Without’, *Golem* 3 (2002), accessed <http://www.hagalil.com/golem/diaspora/ireland-e.htm> (accessed 8 March 2006); R. Lentin, ‘Who Ever’, 158; R. Lentin and McVeigh, *After Optimism*, 122-23.

¹⁷⁶ Landy, ‘Zionism’.

¹⁷⁷ Wynn, ‘Ireland’s Jewish Identity Crisis’.

¹⁷⁸ Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, 191.

¹⁷⁹ Esther Hesselberg, Interview with Carol Weinstock, 1 July 1985 (National Library of Ireland).

dismissed out of hand.¹⁸⁰ Significant also are her efforts to contextualise antisemitism within the continuum of Irish racism in general, past and present.¹⁸¹

Ó Gráda's assessment of the level and seriousness of anti-Jewish prejudice in Irish society is only one of a number of counts where his judgement is flawed in this vein.¹⁸² That Ireland was more a country of emigration than immigration¹⁸³ does not appear to have had any significant impact on the way in which Jews were regarded by Irish society *vis-à-vis* the Jewish experience elsewhere. In emphasising the atmosphere of parochialism and religious divisions that pervaded Irish society in the early twentieth century, Ó Gráda unintentionally downplays the significance of anti-Jewish prejudice in its own right from the very outset. He is, at times, over-reliant on Weinstock's judgement, failing to recognise that her interviews with older members of the community formed part of a photographic, as opposed to a historiographical, project and, as such, do not evince a sufficiently critical understanding of her subject.¹⁸⁴ His claim that antisemitism climaxed in Limerick in 1904 had, furthermore, already been proven untenable by Keogh.¹⁸⁵

Whether or not Irish sectarianism was really relevant to general attitudes towards Jews is questionable, although the precise situation of Jews within the Irish sectarian landscape would seem to merit further investigation. Contemporary sources suggest, unsurprisingly, that negative sentiment was common on both sides of the denominational divide. Anti-Jewish prejudice repeatedly went unchallenged in the courtrooms of various Irish cities and towns, while Ernest Harris, president of the DHC, felt that these negative sentiments frequently influenced officials to refuse insurance cover to 'respectable' immigrant drapers. The way in which Jews responded to the slurs they encountered in the courts indicates wavering levels of confidence regarding the Jewish position within Irish society.¹⁸⁶ While it is clearly

¹⁸⁰ Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, 197.

¹⁸¹ Goldstone, email, 29 July 2013.

¹⁸² For his analysis of antisemitism in Ireland, see Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, chap. 9.

¹⁸³ Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, 9-10. Indeed Endelman (*Jews of Britain*, 158) makes the point that England itself was not accustomed to immigration on the scale that was experienced in this period.

¹⁸⁴ Weinstock interviews (National Library of Ireland).

¹⁸⁵ Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, 191; cf. Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, chap. 3-6; Katrina Goldstone, "'Benevolent Helpfulness'?: Ireland and the International Reaction to Jewish Refugees, 1933-9", in *Irish Foreign Policy 1919-1966*, ed. Michael Kennedy and Joseph Morrison Skelly (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), 116-36; Goldstone, 'Irish Responses'.

¹⁸⁶ For examples of open anti-Jewish prejudice in Irish courts, see *Jewish Chronicle*, 24 January 1868, 20 October 1893, 24 November 1893, 8 December 1893, 22 December 1893, 15 June 1894, 17 January 1902, 12 February 1902, 27 March 1903, 8 May 1903, and 18 February 1910. In 1868 Lewis Harris had no compunction in challenging disparaging references to his religion and ethnicity that had been

incorrect that Protestants and Catholics were too busy fighting with each other to have room for antisemitism,¹⁸⁷ Ronit Lentin's suggestion that Jews were routinely scapegoated in the course of intercommunity tensions is equally untenable.¹⁸⁸ Although this is correct in the case of the Limerick Boycott, which she cites as an example, it is less apparent elsewhere, especially in Ulster, where such tensions have been far more acute.

In addition to its circumstances, the actual effects of antisemitism on Irish Jewry have never thoroughly been investigated, in particular why the reflex of denial has been so ubiquitous and so enduring. Was it a simple matter of opting for a quiet life, hoping to be left alone and trusting that tales of persecution and accidental arrival would overshadow the negative stereotypes? Or was it deemed wise to ignore what was not a particularly serious problem, especially in the days of a closed and tightknit community? The potential impact of Irish prejudice and hostility towards Jews has, in addition, rarely been viewed as a possible factor in the creation and maintenance of the 'sieve' effect¹⁸⁹ that was visible from the very beginnings of east European Jewish settlement, forming a silent backdrop to the communal heyday of the mid twentieth century. Nor have the potential consequences of this transience ever been considered in terms of Irish Jews' perceptions of their community as a permanent and serious entity; the distorting impact of their whimsical self-image on Irish Jewish historiography, as identified by Diner, has already been noted in Section 3.1. Although the acceleration of Jewish emigration to haemorrhaging levels in the 1980s and '90s was exacerbated by economic recession, poor leadership within the Orthodox community and the growing general attraction of more secular and

made by his opponent's legal representative, a Mr. Heron, prompting the judge to rebuke Heron. Subsequently redress in these situations tended to be sought via the Jewish authorities in either Dublin or London, indicating a change in atmosphere owing to the growing Jewish presence. In another incident (*Jewish Chronicle*, 12 April 1872) which appears amusing in retrospect, Lewis Harris was again outspokenly critical during a public meeting that had been convened to respond to a smallpox epidemic in Dublin. Harris took exception to the comments of a Christian clergyman regarding 'Christian' charity and acting together as Christians, arguing that all religions emphasised the importance of charity. Despite his annoyance, Harris made a generous contribution of ten pounds to the collection that was raised at the meeting. On the perceived attitudes of insurance officers, see Ernest W. Harris, Letter to Charles Emmanuel, 4 October 1904, Dublin Hebrew Congregation Correspondence Book No. 1, 1902-1905, Irish Jewish Museum, Box m/s 1-4, Cat. 8.07, No. 2 (hereafter cited as DHC Correspondence Book No. 1).

¹⁸⁷ This claim is made, for example, in G. Wigoder, *Dublin*, 12.

¹⁸⁸ R. Lentin, 'Who Ever', 155-56; R. Lentin and McVeigh, *After Optimism*, 119.

¹⁸⁹ Diner, 'Accidental Irish', 8.

assimilated lifestyles,¹⁹⁰ it is possible that Marcus's literary characters are ultimately a truer reflection of the Irish Jewish historical reality than Hezser realised. One recent communal publication notes that Irish Jews have achieved the highest rate of *aliyah* of any European Jewish community since 1948.¹⁹¹

The unconscious internal debate on Irish Jewish integration and identity is reflected in the frequent claim that the community has made a disproportionate contribution to Irish cultural, political and professional life. Typical is Asher Benson's posthumous *Jewish Dublin: Portraits of Life by the Liffey*, which has the stated purpose to 'illustrate how a tiny wave of immigration rolling on to the shores of Ireland, creating its own predominantly self-maintained religious, educational, charitable and social institutions, has made so substantial an impact on Irish life'. The book's foreword dubs the Jewish community 'a unique aspect of Dublin's social history' which, it suggests, mirrors the contribution of the Irish diaspora to its various countries of emigration.¹⁹² Rivlin states in her introduction to *Shalom Ireland: A Social History of Jews in Modern Ireland*: 'Overcoming problems that included poverty, communal dissension and covert antisemitism, they made a remarkable contribution to Irish society, while establishing a way of life that was unique within the Diaspora'. Four of her chapters are allotted to describing the Jewish contribution to cultural, political, professional and sporting life in Ireland in painstaking detail.¹⁹³ Brian Fallon, in his survey of mid-twentieth-century Irish culture, devotes some space to reviewing 'this Jewish element', which he views as 'in its way an essential part of Dublin cultural life until well into the Fifties, when it declined steeply, for no obvious reason'. However he does qualify his encomium with the incisive but, presumably unintentionally, unflattering observations that 'it was never, of course, even remotely comparable to the Jewish presence in pre-1914 Vienna or in Berlin between the wars', and that Joyce's fictional Irish Jew was 'admittedly a poor substitute for an Irish

¹⁹⁰ On the general decline in the Orthodox community and for former Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis's unfavourable assessment of its communal leadership, see Rivlin, *Shalom Ireland*, 54-60. See also Harris, *Dublin's Little Jerusalem*, 215-16. Although the Liberal community's position remains somewhat steadier, like its European counterparts it is strongly affected by the 'missing generation' syndrome, as exemplified by Eva Handelman in Traynor, 'Young, Jewish and Irish', 1; see also Rivlin, *Shalom Ireland*, 61, and Piehler, 'Little Jerusalem', 233-34.

¹⁹¹ *Nachlath Dublin Magazine* (5774/2013): 36.

¹⁹² Benson, *Portraits*, xiv.

¹⁹³ Rivlin, *Shalom Ireland*, x; chap. 7-10. Pól Ó Dochartaigh has made the interesting observation that Jewish sporting preferences follow British as opposed to Gaelic lines, which may well be a further, subtle reflection of the community's political disposition in this period (see below).

Mahler or Schoenberg, a Wittgenstein or Einstein, a Celan or a Rothko'.¹⁹⁴ Chaim Herzog concludes his foreword to Keogh's *Jews in Twentieth-century Ireland* with the bombastic pronouncement, 'This is a story worthy of being recorded'.¹⁹⁵ Keogh duly obliges by concluding on an upbeat note with a résumé of post-war Irish Jewish attainment. He too believes that this 'reveals that the community has contributed disproportionately to its numbers'.¹⁹⁶ Neither these nor the many other works which glorify Irish Jewish achievement, reflect on the deeper implications of their contentions. Lentin believes that, despite their prominence in business, professions, politics and the arts, Jews' everyday existence in Ireland is largely obscured,¹⁹⁷ without considering that this is simply down to the fact that this has been overstated in the standard narrative.

This is confirmed by the overall lack of adverse public discourse on the place of Jews in Irish society, especially in comparison to other countries. Politics is the only field where the Jewish role has ever really been queried and continues to be interrogated. Despite some degree of media coverage, however, such criticisms attract relatively little in the way of public support. During the divorce referendum of 1995, for example, the conservative Catholic group Muintir na hÉireann argued that the Jewish TDs Alan Shatter and Mervyn Taylor were unfit to lead the pro-divorce campaign as, despite their legal and legislative expertise in family law, neither had 'a full understanding of Christian marriages'.¹⁹⁸ In the year following his appointment in 2011 as Justice Minister, Shatter was criticised for his tough stance on Irish diplomatic relations with the Vatican in the wake of clerical sex-abuse scandals,¹⁹⁹ and was accused by some of his peers of wielding undue influence over government

¹⁹⁴ Fallon, *Age of Innocence*, 222-23.

¹⁹⁵ Chaim Herzog, 'Foreword' to Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, viii.

¹⁹⁶ Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 238-41.

¹⁹⁷ This sits uneasily with Lentin's ensuing argument that 'Ireland's smallest ethnic minority' has received disproportionate attention in Irish literature and media. Her observation that as Ireland becomes increasingly cosmopolitan the Irish Jewish presence is decreasing in importance, is logical given that Jewish community is shrinking while many other minorities are growing. However, Goldstone argues that the not insignificant contribution of immigrants in general to Irish society, especially their role in building and supporting the so-called 'Celtic Tiger' economy, remains widely unacknowledged (R. Lentin, 'Who Ever', 155; R. Lentin, 'Ireland's Other Diaspora'; Goldstone, 'Now You See Us', 108).

¹⁹⁸ Quoted in R. Lentin, 'Who Ever', 158.

¹⁹⁹ 'Black Abbey Prior Asks for Pardon', *Kilkenny People* (4 August 2011) http://www.kilkennypeople.ie/news/local/black_abbey_prior_asks_for_pardon_1_2929234# (accessed 7 March 2012).

policy on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.²⁰⁰ The *Irish Independent* newspaper drew public attention to Shatter's 'property empire', a fifteen-strong portfolio, as the largest of any cabinet member. It went on to detail Shatter's declared sources of income, highlighting his role in enacting legislation in the area of property ownership and related tax relief.²⁰¹ In April 2014, Shatter was forced to resign his cabinet post following stringent public criticism for his handling of a series of controversies involving the Garda Síochána (Irish police force).²⁰² Nonetheless the days are long gone when any party leader feels they need to think twice about appointing a Jew to cabinet or when allegations of Jewish conspiracies pass unremarked into the Irish consciousness. Thus, the repeatedly controversial coverage of Shatter was widely commented upon and questioned on the internet.²⁰³

While a degree of communal pride at such brisk progress within a short space of time is admittedly justified, the validity of the suggestion that it is in any way exceptional or unique in comparison to other migrant groups in general, or to Jews in other countries has never been examined. Moreover it contrasts strongly with the common claim that the community's small size and low profile are the main grounds for the alleged lack of antisemitism in Ireland.²⁰⁴ Indeed Laqueur maintains that the manifestation of antisemitism and its intensity bear no correlation to the numbers of Jews living in any given country.²⁰⁵ The Jewish contribution to Irish society is more rationally viewed as an inevitable element of the acculturation that accompanied the community's rapid economic mobility: a logical progression and a sign of growing, if slightly troubled, integration. The real issue is, in fact, what the traditional emphasis

²⁰⁰ Alan Shatter TD, *Irish Independent* (19 January 2009), <http://www.alanshatter.ie/?p=169> (accessed 7 March 2012); Jimmy Walsh, 'Minister Has "Undue Influence" Over Policy Regarding Palestine', *Irish Times* (23 September 2011), <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/ireland/2011/0923/1224304575876.html> (accessed 7 March 2012); 'Of All the World Conflicts, Why Are We So Hostile to Israel?', *Irish Independent Weekend Review* (2 July 2011), <http://www.independent.ie/opinion/analysis/of-all-the-world-conflicts-why-are-we-so-hostile-to-israel-2811432.html> (accessed 7 March 2012).

²⁰¹ 'Shatter Loses \$500,000 as US Property Portfolio Takes a Dive', *Irish Independent* (9 November 2011), <http://www.independent.ie/national-news/shatter-loses-500000-as-us-property-portfolio-takes-a-dive-2929340.html> (accessed 7 March 2012).

²⁰² On the main criticisms of Shatter, see 'Minister Alan Shatter must be replaced', *Sunday Independent* (30 March 2014), <http://www.independent.ie/opinion/editorial/minister-alan-shatter-must-be-replaced-30138574.html> (accessed 15 April 2014).

²⁰³ 'What's behind Independent Newspapers Campaign Against Alan Shatter?', *Politics.ie*, <http://www.politics.ie/forum/media/175372-whats-behind-independent-newspapers-campaign-against-alan-shatter.html> (accessed 12 March 2012).

²⁰⁴ Paul Margolis, 'Ireland's Jews: A Fading Tribe on the Emerald Isle', *Jewish Heritage Report* 2, nos. 1-2 (Spring-Summer 1998), <http://www.isjm.org/jhr/II/nos1-2/ireland.html> (accessed 23 May 2011).

²⁰⁵ Laqueur, *Changing Face of Anti-Semitism*, chap. 8.

on Jewish achievement really represents: is it simply the impulse to chronicle that it purports to be or is it rather an unconscious reflection of deeper, unresolved issues regarding the position of Jews in Irish society?

The area of Irish Jewish historiography that has, perhaps, been most affected by the confusion and complexity surrounding Irish Jewish identity is the Jewish relationship with Irish nationalism. Here again it is necessary to clarify that the majority of the literature on this topic applies to what is now the Republic of Ireland, and to restate that the more volatile situation in Ulster requires separate, individual consideration.²⁰⁶ Most accounts suggest that Irish Jews were sympathetic towards the nationalist cause during the Irish struggle for independence and statehood, and that many were actively or passively involved on an individual level.²⁰⁷ The community even boasts a handful of almost legendary Republicans during this era, Robert Briscoe, Michael Noyk and Estella Solomons, as well as some less celebrated activists who are occasionally mentioned in passing in secondary literature. Briscoe rose to the higher echelons of the IRA during the Irish struggle for independence, and remained a lifelong friend and colleague of Éamon de Valera, one of the leading political and cultural ideologues of post-colonial Ireland. Briscoe was elected to the Irish parliament in 1927, and served two terms as lord mayor of Dublin, in 1956 and 1961.²⁰⁸ Noyk, who was a close associate of the renowned IRA leader Michael Collins as well as of Griffith, acted as a legal representative to the nationalist Sinn Féin party during the Irish War of Independence (1918-1921) and was buried in the Jewish cemetery at Dolphin's Barn with full military honours in 1966.²⁰⁹ Solomons, who hailed from one of Dublin's 'native' families, was a celebrated artist who served in the women's auxiliary movement Cumann na mBan. Solomons sheltered IRA fugitives in her studio during the War of Independence, and concealed weapons under

²⁰⁶ The history of Ulster Jewry is currently being addressed by Pamela Linden in her PhD dissertation entitled 'Jewish Identity and Community in Belfast, 1920-1948' (Queen's University, Belfast, in preparation).

²⁰⁷ Typical are Tye, *Home Lands*, 193-204; Rivlin, *Shalom Ireland*, 191-96; Thomas O'Dwyer, 'Erin go bracha', *Jerusalem Post*, 17 March 1992.

²⁰⁸ Robert Briscoe with Alden Hatch, *For the Life of Me* (London: Longmans, 1959); Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, chap. 4-6; Tye, *Home Lands*, 193-204; Benson, *Portraits*, 24. For a more nuanced analysis, cf. Kevin McCarthy, 'Researching the Political Evolution of Robert Briscoe: Sinn Féin Republican, Fianna Fáil Nationalist, Revisionist Zionist; History and Memory' (PhD dissertation, University College Cork, 2013). This is a comprehensive re-evaluation which focuses in particular on Briscoe's Zionism. See also Moore, 'Anti-Semitism', chap. 1, 5; Lukas Peacock, "'Breaking Down Barriers": An Insight into the Political Career of Robert Briscoe' (MA thesis, University College Dublin, 2010).

²⁰⁹ For thumbnail sketches of Noyk's life and career, cf. Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 72-73; Benson, *Portraits*, 27. For Noyk's own account of his Republican activities, see his 'Statement'.

the pretence of gardening.²¹⁰ Isaac Herzog, Chief Rabbi of the Irish Free State from 1919 until his appointment as Chief Rabbi of Palestine in 1937, is also widely believed to have been a Republican sympathiser and a close friend and confidante of De Valera.²¹¹

Following on from flimsy and rather debateable evidence, which again draws on only a tiny fraction of the relevant material, Keogh suggests that the Jewish involvement in radical Irish nationalism may have been more extensive than hitherto realised, flagging it as an area that merits further research.²¹² However his reliability in this respect is, again, somewhat compromised by a questionable interpretation of the sources. For example, he passes the bizarre pronouncement that Marcus's lightweight and blatantly apologetic novel, *A Land Not Theirs*, constitutes a realistic portrayal of the Cork Jewish experience during the War of Independence.²¹³ The father of Marcus's fictitious family repeatedly draws parallels between the Irish and Jewish struggles for independence and nationhood, and hides IRA weapons in his scrapyard as a favour to an acquaintance. Two of his three children are romantically involved with non-Jews embroiled in the Republican movement, while the father makes repeated appeals to his IRA contact for greater understanding towards the Jewish community and their troubled history. The novel is evidently a more accurate portrayal of subsequent communal concerns than of contemporary historical reality. The unlikeliness of its overall scenario is well illustrated by the blunt appraisal of Larry Elyan, born in Cork in 1902. Elyan lambasts *A Land Not Theirs* as 'bullshit', 'untrue' and 'rubbish', stating that 'anyone who knew the Cork that [Marcus] is talking about [knew that] it has absolutely no relation to the people who live there'.²¹⁴ Elyan's contemporary Esther Hesselberg, born in 1896, recalled no great interest in the IRA cause among Cork Jews during the 'Troubles'.²¹⁵ Although the reliability of each is compromised, Elyan by his overtly volatile temperament and Hesselberg by

²¹⁰ The most significant, albeit brief, accounts of Solomons' Republican involvement can be found in Estella Solomons, *Portraits of Patriots: With a Biographical Sketch of the Artist by Hilary Pyle* (Dublin: Figgis, 1966), 12-14, 22-23; B. Solomons, *One Doctor*, 203-04; see also Benson, *Portraits*, 14.

²¹¹ Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 76-77; Chaim Herzog, *Living History: A Memoir* (London: Phoenix, 1996), 12.

²¹² Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 54-83.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 71-72. Ronit Lentin ('David Marcus', 5) likewise believes that *A Land Not Theirs* (London: Corgi Books, 1987) represents 'magnificently' the tensions between Jewish 'pursuance of both Zionist and Irish nationalist causes'.

²¹⁴ Laurence Elyan, Interview with Carol Weinstock, July 1987 (National Library of Ireland).

²¹⁵ Hesselberg, Interview with Weinstock.

her implausible claim that the majority of Cork Jews were unable to speak English at this time, the overall implications of their testimony in terms of Keogh's assessment is clear. They are corroborated by Ó Gráda's findings regarding Irish Jewish relations in this period. In fact it is conceivable that for Hesselberg, language serves as an unconscious metaphor for the social and cultural barriers that separated Jews from Irish Catholics at this time.

Keogh's judgement is even more doubtful when it turns to Herzog and De Valera, whose putative friendship constitutes one significant plank of his survey of the Irish diplomatic response to the Jewish refugee problem of 1933 to 1945.²¹⁶ A cursory survey of the indices of a number of biographies of De Valera yields no reference to Herzog (where his name would be expected to appear between the entries for Eduard Hempel, Nazi Germany's consul to Ireland, and Hitler). Keogh's assumptions appear to be based primarily on the memoirs of Herzog's son Chaim, which have a somewhat apocryphal feel, and are infused with the sort of confusion and denial that are highlighted above.²¹⁷ On the authority of one oral source, Keogh relates that Isaac Herzog sheltered De Valera while the latter was on the run during the Irish Civil War (1922-1923), an anecdote which, tellingly, does not feature in Chaim Herzog's memoirs.²¹⁸ Further anecdotal evidence leads him to claim that this presumed relationship was reflected in consultations regarding the wording of the Irish Constitution of 1937, which explicitly enshrines the legal position of Ireland's Jewish community. Yet, as Keogh himself observes, 'Herzog's name is surprisingly absent from a comprehensive list of those [religious leaders] consulted [regarding the Constitution] in the de Valera papers'.²¹⁹ This notion is further undermined by Lentin's assessment of the Constitution's construction of 'Irishness' as exclusively Roman Catholic and ethnically homogeneous which, essentially, makes it a product of its time.²²⁰ Neither does Keogh makes any reference to the sort of personal

²¹⁶ Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, chap. 4-6. With thanks to Katrina Goldstone for her feedback on these observations (email message to the author, 29 July 2013).

²¹⁷ Herzog, *Living History*, 3-18 (on his time in Dublin). Herzog's ambivalence regarding this period is entirely in keeping with Zionist principles, which demand the negation and rejection of Diaspora life. His ambiguity arises from attempts to portray Jewish life in Ireland in a largely positive light, perhaps with an eye to his audience.

²¹⁸ Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 76-77.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 110.

²²⁰ R. Lentin and McVeigh, *After Optimism*, 117; R. Lentin, 'Who Ever', 157. The unavoidably exclusive nature of nationalism has been well documented in Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, rev'd ed. (London: Verso, 1991); John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, 2nd ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993); and

correspondence that might be expected to have taken place between close and longstanding friends. Instead he refers to a series of telegrams exchanged between 1942 and 1944, in which Herzog requests De Valera's personal intervention on behalf of a group of refugees threatened with deportation to an extermination camp, a meeting during De Valera's state visit to Israel in 1950 and two letters to De Valera from other members of the Herzog family.²²¹ Taken in sum, this does not point to a close personal friendship but, rather, to a warm, longstanding and mutually respectful – but primarily professional – relationship, that was governed to a large degree by respective political interests. This is perhaps best underlined by Chaim Herzog's somewhat paradoxical reflection, 'I grew up in a household very sympathetic to the Irish cause. My father was absolutely fearless. When asked which side he was on, he would reply: "Neither – Jewish."' ²²²

A cordial professional relationship between Herzog and De Valera represented a significant advancement of Jewish integration into Irish public life and was, therefore, noteworthy in its own right. It was however in the interest of various parties to exaggerate the extent of their association. Most importantly, these assertions wrote the Jewish community retrospectively into the national narrative by linking it to seminal events in the foundation of the Irish State. This concern, which I believe to be central to the construction of communal narrative, is analysed in greater detail below. At the same time, the putative Herzog/De Valera friendship vicariously enhanced the prestige of Chaim Herzog, while promoting the political agenda of Briscoe and the Fianna Fáil party. Both Herzog and Briscoe were astute politicians who had a stake in portraying the Jewish community in a certain light.

In assessing perhaps the most significant element of the legend of Irish Jewish nationalism, the link between De Valera and Briscoe, Keogh sticks to the safe and predictable ground that has been charted by collective memory and by Briscoe's own autobiography. Briscoe barely alludes to the uncomfortable aspects of his career, that were occasioned by the casual antisemitism endemic to Irish political life at the time.²²³ Moore, in contrast, sets out a selection of the 'attacks and innuendos' that Briscoe was subjected to between the early 1930s and the late 1950s. Repeated

Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 48, 55-57, 133. On the relationship of such notions to the evolution of racism, see Mosse, *Racism*, chap. 8.

²²¹ Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 174-92, 229-32.

²²² *Jewish Chronicle*, 29 May 1992.

²²³ Briscoe, *For the Life of Me*. Cf. Moore's more sceptical appraisal of the political climate in which Briscoe operated ('Anti-Semitism', chap. 5).

reference was made to Briscoe's religion, and he was variously styled a Freemason, a Communist and a fifth-columnist.²²⁴ Lukas Peacock describes how 'racist' remarks accompanied the announcement of Briscoe's re-election to the Dáil in 1951,²²⁵ while his appointment as Lord Mayor of Dublin in 1956 was, likewise, accompanied by a degree of antagonism within Dublin Corporation.²²⁶ In contrast, the novelty of Briscoe's Jewish background was used officially as a means of airbrushing Ireland's international reputation as a hotbed of sectarian prejudice, although his frequent absences on PR trips to the United States attracted some public criticism.²²⁷ The verbal attacks he experienced during official Corporation and parliamentary proceedings went unchallenged, not only by Briscoe but also by his colleagues, including De Valera. Most serious of these was the notorious pro-Nazi rant of the Catholic extremist TD (MP) Oliver Flanagan, which occurred in the Dáil in 1943, at the height of World War Two. Flanagan declared: 'There is one thing that Germany did and that was to rout the Jews out of their country. Until we rout the Jews out of this country it does not matter a hair's breadth what orders you make. Where the bees are there is the honey and where the Jews are there is the money.' Flanagan did eventually apologise for these remarks, but many years later, towards the end of a long and successful political career.²²⁸

Keogh's assessment of De Valera's attitude towards Irish Jewry also follows traditional lines in emphasising De Valera's links with Briscoe and Herzog, and his Constitutional nod to the community. He unintentionally rationalises alike De Valera's failure to appoint Briscoe to a senior cabinet post and his infamous official condolences to the German consul on Hitler's suicide, as features of a well-meaning but overly cautious, highly conservative and blinkered, morally rigid diplomacy. Keogh's mysticisation of De Valera's condolences as 'incomprehensible' apparently absolves him of his failure to offer any convincing insights.²²⁹ The potential

²²⁴ Moore, 'Anti-Semitism', 6-7, 125. These are, of course, classic antisemitic slurs; cf. Laqueur, *Changing Face of Anti-Semitism*, esp. chap. 8.

²²⁵ Peacock, 'Breaking Barriers', 21.

²²⁶ Moore, 'Anti-Semitism', 6-7.

²²⁷ For an overview of Briscoe's PR efforts in America on behalf of Ireland, see Peacock, 'Breaking Barriers', chap. 3; also Tye, *Home Lands*, 204.

²²⁸ Moore, 'Anti-Semitism', 125, 166-67; R. Lentin: 'Who Ever', 167; R. Lentin and McVeigh, *After Optimism*, 121; O'Riordan, 'Sinn Féin', 22; Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 172-73. According to a recent article, Flanagan was re-elected fourteen times (Alan McEaney, 'Is Ireland Obsessed with Israel?', *University Times*, 6 December 13, <http://universitytimes.ie/?p=22528>) (accessed 11 December 2013).

²²⁹ Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 89, 199-200.

significance of De Valera's friendship with the notorious antisemitic publicist Fr. Edward Cahill is dismissed as having had no influence on the purported liberal democratic philosophy of De Valera's Fianna Fáil party,²³⁰ while the obvious inference that Briscoe's background was equally irrelevant to party principles passes unremarked. Furthermore De Valera's appointment of Charles Bewley, an open fan of National Socialism with a poor diplomatic record, as Irish consul to Germany in the lead-up to World War Two warrants a mere footnote.²³¹ Nor does Keogh make any mention of Bewley's term as Sinn Féin consul to Berlin during the War of Independence. At this time his antisemitism had brought him into open conflict with Briscoe, who spent time there in 1921 on a mission to obtain weapons for the IRA. The complaints and calls for Bewley's removal by Briscoe and his colleague John Chartres are preserved in the Irish government archives.²³² Bewley's attitude had been overlooked in the tense build-up to the Civil War, particularly as he subsequently sided with the pro-Anglo-Irish Treaty government while Briscoe joined the anti-Treaty 'rebels', becoming a wanted man.²³³ In contrast Keogh's detailed exposé of Bewley's second, equally ignominious period in Berlin creates the distinct impression that Bewley is being scapegoated for his predictably overenthusiastic interpretation of the restrictive official immigration policy, and for the fact that his appointment was deemed so expedient by his government that he was left in place until 1939, despite a blatantly poor performance.²³⁴ Keogh's entire account hints at the underlying marginality of Briscoe's position within Fianna Fáil in general, and with relation to De Valera's statecraft in particular, which is completely at odds with his much vaunted outward success. This situation was largely dictated by popular anti-Jewish sentiment, and was apparently accepted by Briscoe out of a sense of pragmatism towards Catholic sensitivities.²³⁵ Briscoe's peripherality within the Irish

²³⁰ Ibid., 95.

²³¹ Ibid., 101-03, 132-38; cf. 268 (n.66).

²³² Peacock, 'Breaking Barriers', chap. 2, esp. 9ff.

²³³ Mervyn O'Driscoll, 'The "Jewish Question"', Irish Refugee Policy and Charles Bewley, 1933-39', in *Racial Discrimination and Ethnicity in European History*, ed. Gudmundur Halfdanarson (Pisa: University of Pisa, 2004), 142.

²³⁴ Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 199-201.

²³⁵ Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 88-89; Peacock, 'Breaking Barriers', 15. For example, Ben Briscoe recounts that his father was taken aside by an apologetic De Valera, who explained that he could not appoint him to a senior government position due to the general hostility that this might provoke. Briscoe reportedly accepted this without question.

political scene, especially during the Nazi era, undoubtedly influenced his increasing involvement in the Revisionist branch of Zionism.²³⁶

The attitude of Irish nationalism towards Jews also merits some brief consideration, insofar as it is discernible from Jewish sources. The determining role of anti-Jewish prejudice, especially in militant forms of nationalism, is just as evident in Ireland as it is elsewhere.²³⁷ O’Riordan and Moore in particular have charted the legacy of Griffith and his acolytes in fabricating an ‘Anglo-Jewish’ world conspiracy which blamed Jews for the faults of Ireland’s colonial oppressor, portraying England as having undesirable, purportedly ‘Jewish’ traits. Griffith’s vision of an Ireland where industry and the economy were entirely under Irish Catholic control was highly influential in determining the government’s economic policy in Ireland’s early years of independence. This built on his earlier negative stereotypes, encouraging further suspicion towards minorities in general, and leading to their virtual exclusion from certain fields of economic endeavour.²³⁸ Moore has also examined the contribution of the Roman Catholic church²³⁹ which was, in its early years, so integral to Irish cultural nationalism that Mervyn O’Driscoll regards the two as having been ‘practically interchangeable . . . in most people’s eyes’.²⁴⁰ Elements within the Irish Catholic church openly fomented popular anti-Jewish sentiment in Ireland from the late nineteenth century up to the first half of the twentieth century.²⁴¹ Nevertheless, Lentin’s contention that Jews are the ‘quintessential “others”’ of Irish nationalism, on the grounds of Griffith’s legacy of exclusivism,²⁴² is untenable. While such assertions are valid with respect to other countries, they do not sit well *vis-à-vis* the situation of Protestants within modern Irish society and politics.²⁴³ Keogh in contrast entirely

²³⁶ With thanks to Kevin McCarthy for sharing his insights on Briscoe’s political life (personal conversation, 15 March 2012).

²³⁷ Again, this is well illustrated in Mosse, *Racism*.

²³⁸ O’Riordan, ‘Anti-Semitism’, 13; O’Riordan, ‘Sinn Féin’, 18-24; Moore, ‘Anti-Semitism’, esp. chap. 1, 4, 5. Kenny’s argument that it is unfair to make Griffith ‘a scapegoat for Irish anti-semitism’ would seem to be qualified to an extent by Griffith’s political legacy (‘Arthur Griffith’). When taken with his obvious wish to exculpate Griffith, Kenny’s views would rather tend to support McCarthy’s belief that most Irish historians are reluctant to engage with the potential implications of Griffith’s pronouncements regarding Jews and the Irish economy, given his importance as a founding father of Irish nationalism (personal conversation, 15 March 2012).

²³⁹ Moore, ‘Anti-Semitism’, chap. 1, 5, 6.

²⁴⁰ O’Driscoll, ‘Jewish Question’, 141.

²⁴¹ This is best illustrated by Moore, ‘Anti-Semitism’, chap. 5, 6; see also Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 56.

²⁴² R. Lentin, ‘Who Ever’, 154; R. Lentin and McVeigh, *After Optimism*, 117. Lentin argues on the basis that Jews were the main ‘foreigners’ in Ireland at the time when these ideas were crystallising.

²⁴³ The theme of Jews as the ‘quintessential “others”’ of many central European nationalisms is considered in Mosse, *Racism*. In contrast the awkward, and largely ignored, situation of many

fails to address the roots, expressions and influence of anti-Jewish prejudice as propounded by the Roman Catholic church and the nationalist movement in Ireland, not to mention its effects on the Irish political arena. Instead of seeing the marginal Irish support for the radical antisemitism of the fascist era as a natural outgrowth of the twin forces of Catholic anti-Jewish prejudice and militant nationalism he prefers, unconvincingly, to lay the blame with agents of the German and Italian governments.²⁴⁴

Although the nationalist narratives allow little room for recognising the role of individual Jewish activists,²⁴⁵ there are a few comments that allow us some insight into how their not insignificant personal contributions were regarded. Briscoe recalled being described by some IRA associates as ‘an Irishman by conviction’ rather than by circumstance,²⁴⁶ and his memoirs repeatedly convey the impression that, during his time on the run, he was frequently regarded as something of a curiosity. Hilary Pyle’s assessment of Estella Solomons runs in a similar vein:

Estella Solomons was anything but Irish. Like the majority of her *compatriots* she was a hybrid of several races; but birth in Ireland had been enough to insure an unyielding patriotism and a lifelong devotion to all things Irish. Jewish blood too was responsible for a degree of nationalist loyalty unusual in one of her gentle temperament: the racial sense of community that might have turned her inwards . . . and thus narrowed her vision directed her outwards to the whole population of Dublin itself [emphasis added].²⁴⁷

In the same year as these lines were penned (1966), the Jewish community held a special service to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Easter Rising, where a specially-composed prayer was read to mark this ‘unforgettable blow for freedom’.²⁴⁸ It will be interesting to see, with the imminent centenary of the Rising,

Protestants in Ireland is well illustrated by the comments of my hairdresser, Jean Flower, a lady in her sixties who described how, as late as 1969, she still felt uncomfortable revealing her religion to the majority of her clients. More recently the experiences of her granddaughter in a Catholic school underline how little effort still is being made by the Catholic majority to be less exclusive towards minorities (personal conversation, 12 April 2012).

²⁴⁴ Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 99ff; compare with Goldstone, ‘Benevolent Helpfulness’, 116-36, esp. 119, 133. With regard to the role of both Catholic and Protestant churches in encouraging anti-Jewish prejudice in Europe and in advancing the racist agenda in general, cf. Mosse, *Racism*, chap. 9ff.

²⁴⁵ Moore, ‘Anti-Semitism’, 7. Moore cites Shillman in noting the virtual absence of Briscoe and Noyk from the nationalist pantheon.

²⁴⁶ Briscoe, *For the Life of Me*, 113.

²⁴⁷ E. Solomons, *Patriots*, 6. As noted above, the Solomons were one of the most longstanding ‘native’ families, tracing their arrival in Dublin back to 1824 (Hyman, *Jews of Ireland*, 99-100).

²⁴⁸ An extract from this prayer is quoted in Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, 190.

whether there will be any greater recognition of the contribution made by members of non-Catholic minorities – and, indeed, of women – to the nationalist cause. At the time of writing, there is no indication of any such development, except perhaps with regard to the gender issue.

Conversely, there is ample evidence to support Ó Gráda's findings that the Jews of Dublin were initially pro-British.²⁴⁹ Early memoirs openly profess loyalty to Britain and appreciation for the tolerance that Jews had experienced in Ireland, at the hands of its British government. Wigoder, for example, recalls 'a debt of gratitude to the sovereign under whom Jew and Christian were alike. The strong position of our people under [Queen Victoria's] rule contrasted strongly with the persecution in other lands'.²⁵⁰ On the death of Edward VII, he remarked that 'never had there been, in living memory, a ruler so closely identified with the Jewish nation . . . Jewry grieved at the passing of such an august protector'.²⁵¹ Wigoder's lack of interest in Republican politics is indicated by the fact that his only reference to the 1916 Rising concerned the difficulty it created in obtaining *matzah* for Passover.²⁵² Geoffrey Wigoder believes that 'Briscoe was indeed the exception. My grandfather was far more typical'.²⁵³ Bloom, similarly, makes repeated mention of the reverence that her mother had instilled in her children for Queen Victoria, arising from a strong sense of gratitude. Bloom recalls that 'politics was quite a problem for the Jews, who basically were loyal to the British when feeling against England was at its highest', and paints quite a vivid picture of the issues they encountered in negotiating the sectarian minefield at the ordinary, individual level.²⁵⁴ Bethel Solomons recalled that his father Maurice had remained a strong imperialist when this was a declining force in Irish life. Maurice Solomons nevertheless claimed Irish nationality although, as Diner points out, this was, at this time, often regarded as something of an extension of Britishness.²⁵⁵ Bethel's mother, Rosa, was decorated by the Red Cross for her contribution to the British war effort at the very time when his sister Estella was

²⁴⁹ Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, 188-190, 261 (n.57).

²⁵⁰ M. J. Wigoder, *My Life*, 73.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 91.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 99.

²⁵³ G. Wigoder, *Dublin*, 15.

²⁵⁴ Bloom, 'Girlhood Recollections', 22, 31-32; Bloom, 'On Growing Up in Dublin', 32-33, 98-111, 143-144, 148-151, 154-156.

²⁵⁵ B. Solomons, *One Doctor*, 18; Diner, 'Accidental Irish', 9-15. Diner believes that the widespread synonymy of Irish and British identity in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has contributed to the wider 'invisibility' of Irish Jewry as a community in its own right.

deeply involved in Republican politics.²⁵⁶ Bethel herself, despite some criticisms, had a mostly positive view of Britain, especially regarding her record on Jewish rights.²⁵⁷

At the communal level, Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee in 1897 was commemorated in synagogues in Dublin, Belfast and Cork, while the royal visits to Dublin in 1900 and 1911, by Victoria and George V respectively, were marked by illuminated addresses and professions of loyalty and affection.²⁵⁸ Special services were held in the Irish synagogues to mark royal deaths and coronations, where the qualities of the monarch in question were lauded and Jewish loyalty to the British Crown was stressed.²⁵⁹ Messages of condolence or congratulation were sent to the local ruling powers by all of the major congregations as circumstances arose.²⁶⁰ All of the major communities actively supported the war effort between 1914 and 1918 by collecting money for national relief funds, and by making clothes and contributing to cigarette funds for soldiers.²⁶¹ The Dublin community also made a public

²⁵⁶ Rosa Solomons' Red Cross certificate is preserved in the Estella Solomons papers (Trinity College Dublin, MS 4632/509e).

²⁵⁷ B. Solomons, *One Doctor*, 65.

²⁵⁸ Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, 189. The *Jewish Chronicle* cites the address presented to Edward VII in 1903, which was intended 'to assure you of the loyalty to your Throne and persons of your Jewish subjects in this city' (24 July 1903). The local press and the *Jewish World* were also notified of the event by Ernest Harris in letters to the Editors of the *Daily Express* and *Daily Independent* (undated) and in a letter to the Editor of the *Jewish World* dated 22 July 1903 (DHC Correspondence Book No. 1). Regarding arrangements for the visit of George V, see DHC Minutes, 9 April 1911, and Annual Report of the Dublin Hebrew Congregation, 1911, in DHC Minutes, 1904-1915 (records that the synagogue wardens 'had the honour' of presenting the illuminated address in person to the King). For a report of the royal visit, see *Jewish Chronicle*, 21 July 1911. For personal accounts of Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee and her visit to Dublin, see Bloom, 'On Growing Up in Dublin', 98-106. On the commemoration of the jubilee in Cork, see *Jewish Chronicle*, 25 June 1897.

²⁵⁹ For a report of the memorial service held by the DHC for Queen Victoria and the condolences sent by its leaders to Edward VII 'in the name of the Jews in Dublin', see *Jewish Chronicle*, 8 February 1901. On the coronation of George V, Rev. Gudansky expounded at length in the DHC on the Jewish debt of gratitude to 'this blessed country . . . this dear, dear land of justice and liberty', while Rev. Isaac Yosselson gave an 'appropriate' sermon in the Lennox Street *hevra* (*Jewish Chronicle*, 30 June 1911).

²⁶⁰ For example, letters of condolence were sent by the DHC to the Home Secretary on the death of Edward VII in 1910 and to the chief public health officer, Sir Charles Cameron, on the occasion of a personal bereavement, while a letter of congratulation was sent to Sir Matthew Nathan on his appointment as Under-Secretary for Ireland (DHC Minutes, 29 May 1910, 22 February 1913, and 11 October 1914). The Dublin Beacon of the Order of Ancient Maccabeans (OAM) also congratulated Nathan on his appointment and sent condolences to the Lord Lieutenant on the death of Edward VII. The latter motion was 'unanimously passed in silence and all standing' and it was subsequently agreed that the Lord Lieutenant's reply should be framed and hung in the meeting room. Minutes of Beacon Meetings, 15 May 1910, 29 May 1910, and 8 October 1914, Minutebook of the Order of Ancient Maccabeans, Mount Carmel Beacon No. 10 (Dublin), 1909-1926, Irish Jewish Museum.

²⁶¹ In Dublin, for example, the children of the community collected money to provide cigarettes for the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, the DHC's Ladies' Synagogue and Dorcas Association made clothes for wounded soldiers, and the Dublin Jewish Board of Guardians (DJBG) collected over £165 for the Prince of Wales National Relief Fund (*Jewish Chronicle*, 18 September 1914, 25 September 1914, and 20 November 1914). Some members of the community also enlisted (*Jewish Chronicle*, 13 November

profession of loyalty to the Crown in 1915, which must be understood in the context of the broader Anglo-Jewish response to the anti-alien sentiment that had begun to surface during the early weeks of the conflict.²⁶² Communal events, especially those attended by non-Jewish dignitaries, the Chief Rabbi or his representatives, were regularly concluded with the singing of the British National Anthem.²⁶³ That this included the Adelaide Road National School's annual prizegivings indicates not only that the community wished to assure eminent guests of their loyalty, but also to set an appropriate example for its children.²⁶⁴

In 1887 Queen Victoria's golden jubilee was reportedly celebrated by a large congregation in the DHC, 'which included several humble co-religionists who had been driven from other countries, [who] prayed fervently for the long life of the Queen and the continuance of her dynasty. The worshippers also rejoiced at living under the free and glorious constitution of the United Kingdom'.²⁶⁵ The jubilee was

1914 and 27 November 1914). Communal opinion was apparently divided, however, as to the appropriateness of the behaviour of a number of Jewish ladies who took part in a public fundraising event one Saturday which involved riding in motorcars (*Jewish Chronicle*, 20 November 1914, 27 November 1914, and 4 December 1914). In Belfast, there was a ladies' knitting and sewing guild, and funds were raised in 1914 for the Tommies' Cigarette Fund (*Jewish Chronicle*, 28 August 1914 and 20 November 1914). Headed by Lady Paula Jaffe, the Belfast Hebrew Congregation (BHC) had also actively fundraised during the South African War (*Jewish Chronicle*, 5 January 1900 and 26 January 1900). From 1914 to 1918, the community regarded enlistment as one's patriotic duty. For further examples of support for the war effort in Belfast and in Cork, see *Jewish Chronicle* archives, 1915ff.; Minutes of the Cork Hebrew Congregation, 16 August 1914, transcribed by Ronnen Shulman, in *Hebrews of Cork*, ed. Stuart Rosenblatt (Dublin: 2005) (hereafter cited as CHC Minutes).

²⁶² Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 69, 84 (n.261) (on the Irish declaration and speculation as to its causes). Anti-alien sentiment was expressed in allegations of spying, cowardice and shirking, and in general prejudice against those with German-sounding surnames. On this and the Anglo-Jewish response, see Johnson, *Britain and Eastern Europe's Jewish Question*, chap. 5. This discourse must also have been pronounced in Ireland in order to provoke such a public display of patriotism by the Jewish community. Indeed Keogh assumes that, as Dublin's Jews lived in the working class areas that supplied much of the British army's canon-fodder, relations with non-Jewish neighbours may have become strained. However he does not provide any evidence to corroborate this and Bloom's memoir ('On Growing Up in Dublin') suggests otherwise. Sir Otto Jaffe, a leading member of the Belfast community (see Chapter Three), was a target of significant negative commentary due to his German birth. In 1914 he had been scheduled to present an illuminated address to the Lord Lieutenant, but changed his mind due to local anti-German sentiment (Minutes of the Belfast Hebrew Congregation, 18 May 1914, Special Collections and Archives, Queen's University, Belfast; hereafter cited as BHC Minutes). Jaffe, who was a dedicated anglophile and British patriot, was so hurt by the tone of popular sentiment that he moved to London in 1916 and never returned to Belfast. Gillian McIntosh, 'The Public Life of Sir Otto Jaffé, Belfast and Ireland's First Jewish Lord Mayor' (paper presented at the Jews on the 'Celtic Fringe' Conference, University of Ulster, Belfast, 5-6 September 2011).

²⁶³ E.g., a Zionist meeting attended by S. Alfred Adler, a Hanukah celebration where traditional hymns and the British National Anthem were sung with equal gusto, and the laying of the foundation stone for a new synagogue in Belfast (*Jewish Chronicle*, 18 December 1903, 22 December 1911, and 4 March 1904).

²⁶⁴ *Jewish Chronicle*, 23 March 1894, 6 March 1896, 9 April 1897, and 20 May 1898. Interestingly, from 1906 onwards, the British National Anthem no longer features in these reports.

²⁶⁵ *Jewish Chronicle*, 24 June 1887.

also commemorated in the Dublin New Hebrew Congregation (DNHC) where a special service was led by a visiting minister, Rev. Edwin Collins. Collins exhorted a congregation of almost two hundred people to be loyal to the Crown, reminded his listeners of the many privileges they owed to the Queen, and the progress made by the Jewish community in general during her reign.²⁶⁶ In 1897 the Dublin community contributed towards the donation of a lifeboat by the Jews of the British empire in honour of Victoria's diamond jubilee.²⁶⁷ Prayers were recited in the DHC and the DNHC for Edward VII when his coronation was postponed due to illness, and the DNHC received 'a gracious reply' to its telegram wishing the King a full recovery.²⁶⁸ A few weeks later, the coronation was celebrated in Dublin by a mass interdenominational excursion which was attended by approximately one hundred children from the Adelaide Road National School, and concluded with an enthusiastic general rendering of 'God Save the King'.²⁶⁹ On the King's death the DHC inserted notices of condolences and, subsequently, announced its special memorial service in three of the most popular Dublin newspapers.²⁷⁰ The communities in Cork and Belfast were similarly keen to demonstrate their loyalty to Britain at this time, with commemorative services, illuminated addresses and official letters of congratulation and condolence.²⁷¹ Subsequently, as Ulster's sectarian divisions worsened, the

²⁶⁶ *Jewish Chronicle*, 1 July 1887.

²⁶⁷ *Jewish Chronicle*, 3 December 1897.

²⁶⁸ *Jewish Chronicle*, 4 July 1902. In the DNHC, these prayers had been recited three times daily.

²⁶⁹ *Jewish Chronicle*, 25 July 1902. In his instructions to Gudansky regarding arrangements for the coronation service, Ernest Harris amusingly concludes, 'A sermon will be delivered by you' (Letter to Rev. A. Gudansky, 2 May 1911, Dublin Hebrew Congregation Correspondence Book No. 2, 1899-1912, Irish Jewish Museum, Box m/s 1-4, Cat. 8.07, No. 4; hereafter cited as DHC Correspondence Book No. 2).

²⁷⁰ Ernest W. Harris, Letters to the Editors of the *Daily Express*, *Daily Independent*, and *Irish Times*, 9 May 1910 and 13 May 1910 (DHC Correspondence Book No. 2). The service, which was attended by the JLB who stood with arms reversed, is reported in the *Jewish Chronicle* (27 May 1910). See also Ernest W. Harris, Letter to Samuel Weinstock, 12 May 1910, which requests the attendance of the JLB, in uniform, at the memorial service (DHC Correspondence Book No. 2). In a letter to Gudansky regarding the arrangements for the service, Harris states, 'I want to get someone who can sing the solo part of the National Anthem properly' (DHC Correspondence Book No. 2).

²⁷¹ Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, 189. On the commemorations of Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee in Cork and Belfast, see *Jewish Chronicle*, 25 June 1897 and 25 June 1897. On the marriage of the Prince of Wales in 1893, congratulations were communicated by the CHC, noting that prayers had been said to invoke divine blessing on the union and expressing the community's loyalty to the Queen. This reportedly elicited a telegram of sincere thanks (*Jewish Chronicle*, 14 July 1893). The CHC also sent a message of congratulation to Edward VII on his coronation, receiving 'a gracious reply' (*Jewish Chronicle*, 30 June 1911). On the presentation of illustrated addresses by the BHC on the occasion of royal visits, see *Jewish Chronicle*, 27 April 1900 (referring to the opening-up of public life to Irish Jews during Victoria's reign) and 31 July 1903. On the BHC's memorial service and the letter of condolence to the Lord Lieutenant 'for our late beloved and venerated Queen', see BHC Minutes, 27 January 1901. Jaffe gave presents to the children of the congregation to mark the coronation of

Belfast community made a determined effort to be seen to avoid taking sides, a position that is favoured up to the present day.²⁷²

Ó Gráda is clearly correct in stating that communal attitudes gradually changed over time, given the subsequent eagerness to prove ‘nationalist’ credentials. Nevertheless his implication that Jews became active supporters of the Republican cause is based on virtually no evidence, and is not supported by any reliable source.²⁷³ On the strength of Larry Elyan’s comment that his ‘first seeds of [Irish] nationalism’ were sown through the songs he learned in the Jewish school in Cork, Ó Gráda suggests that the Jews of the so-called ‘Rebel County’ had nationalist leanings from early on.²⁷⁴ If Elyan’s recollections of his schooldays are sound, he is probably referring to the legacy of members of the Catholic nationalist majority who taught in the Jewish school, as the loyalties of the communal establishment obviously lay elsewhere. However his statement is contradicted both by Hesselberg’s testimony and by his own remarks on *A Land Not Theirs*.²⁷⁵ In reality, communal opinion is likely to have been a lot more complex than either this comment, or Ó Gráda’s interpretation, suggest.

Ó Gráda cites as a further example of growing Jewish support for Irish nationalism the Judaeo-Irish Home Rule Association of 1908 which, as he recognises, was extremely short-lived and unrepresentative of the communal majority. The Association was founded against the wishes of some communal leaders, and a number of Jews attended its inaugural public meeting at the Mansion House solely in order to heckle.²⁷⁶ The formation of the Association unleashed a stream of adverse commentary in the *Jewish Chronicle*, where the general consensus held that it was unwise for Jews to ally themselves openly as Jews to any form of party politics.²⁷⁷ Philip Wigoder wrote of the ‘deep concern’ of Dublin Jewry at the Mansion House meeting which, he asserts, was ‘condemned by practically the whole community, of whom not more than sixty were present, the remainder of the audience being

George V and, on the King’s death, the half-yearly meeting was postponed out of respect for the ‘Beloved Sovereign’ (BHC Minutes, 6 April 1902 and 29 May 1910).

²⁷² Linden, ‘Indifferent to Boyne and Rome’; Warm, ‘Jews of Northern Ireland’, 237 (n.189). With thanks to Pamela Linden for emphasising this point.

²⁷³ Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, 188-91.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 188-89.

²⁷⁵ Elyan and Hesselberg, Interviews with Weinstock.

²⁷⁶ Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, 190; Hyman, *Jews of Ireland*, 200-02 (describes the Association as a minority group).

²⁷⁷ *Jewish Chronicle*, 11 September 1908 (announcing the inaugural meeting of the Association); *Jewish Chronicle*, 18 September 1908 and 25 September 1908 (commentary on the Association).

composed of ladies and non-Jews'.²⁷⁸ One of the Association's founders was none other than Joseph Edelstein, who published *The Moneylender* that very same year. Edelstein's lengthy apologia for the Association appears in a subsequent issue of the *Jewish Chronicle*. Here he argues that it would be positive in terms of Jewish political interests, and marked a departure from the community's previous position as 'outcast helots rotting in non-political obscurity'.²⁷⁹ Despite its grandiose intentions which so alarmed the communal establishment, of spreading the message of Home Rule among English sympathisers,²⁸⁰ the Association appears rapidly to have fizzled out. By 1913, on the elevation of its second founder Jacob Elyan to the magistracy, its controversial inaugural meeting was recalled as nothing more than a 'Jewish meeting in favour of Home Rule'.²⁸¹

Likewise Ó Gráda is rather optimistic in viewing Jewish electoral backing for Briscoe as a sign of growing approval for his politics.²⁸² The strong probability that this was more a measure of Briscoe's Jewishness than the community's political sympathies is well indicated by recent characterisations of Briscoe as a 'communal emissary', 'go-to-guy' or 'bridge'.²⁸³ This tallies with my own recollection that, in the 1980s, members of Dublin's Jewish community supported Jewish politicians because they believed it was important to have Jews in parliament, regardless of political affiliation, and even to the point of voting for a TD who represented a party of which they completely disapproved. It need hardly be added that Ó Gráda's assumptions in this regard yet again contradict his overall findings regarding Jews and the Catholic majority.

Given their 'outsider' status and their gratitude towards British tolerance it is unlikely that the majority of Jews would have wished to 'rock the boat' by aligning themselves to a political movement that threatened to destabilise the *status quo*, a point that is well illustrated by the actions of the Belfast community. In general, insufficient account is made of the unconventionality of the majority of prominent Jewish Republicans, Noyk excepted. Briscoe's own recollections repeatedly

²⁷⁸ *Jewish Chronicle*, 18 September 1908.

²⁷⁹ *Jewish Chronicle*, 25 September 1908. Edelstein was obviously soon forgiven for his indiscretions, as he was invited to lecture to the Jewish Literary and Social Club in February 1909 on the German Jewish satirist Heinrich Heine (*Jewish Chronicle*, 26 February 1909).

²⁸⁰ *Jewish Chronicle*, 18 September 1908.

²⁸¹ *Jewish Chronicle*, 2 May 1913.

²⁸² Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, 190.

²⁸³ Peacock, 'Breaking Barriers', 24; Tye, *Home Lands*, 203; Benson, *Portraits*, 24.

demonstrate the perceived impossibility of such a thing as a Jewish IRA man, among both British and Irish authorities, and he comments, ‘I was, perhaps, the only Jew in the IRA’.²⁸⁴ Solomons also did not lead a lifestyle that was representative of most Irish Jews, given her close involvement in non-Jewish cultural and political circles and her marriage to the non-Jewish poet Seumas O’Sullivan, which was put on hold until her parents’ death in order to spare their feelings. Edelstein spent some time in the infamous Grangegorman psychiatric hospital and is remembered in the Jewish community as an eccentric.²⁸⁵

It is simply untenable to regard the shift in sympathies among Irish Jews as a straightforward adoption of the nationalist cause. The *Jewish Chronicle* archive underlines just how complex the Jewish relationship with Irish nationalism has been. Some Irish Jews were optimistic, discerning no threat to the community whether physical, economic or social, from the nationalist movement. Many, however, were sceptical, mistrustful or politically opposed to nationalism, perceiving it to be exclusive, sectarian and hostile to Jewish interests.²⁸⁶ What has largely been missed, ignored or understated by commentators is the significant political middle ground that is revealed in the pages of the *Chronicle*. This favoured the respectable constitutional nationalism of Charles Stuart Parnell and the Irish Parliamentary Party, as opposed to the militant form of nationalism that would retrospectively be woven into the Irish narrative. This ‘tame’ branch of Irish nationalism was not at odds with the British patriotism that is evident from the overwhelming majority of primary sources for the Jewish community.²⁸⁷ Unfortunately the absence of anything approaching a reliable statistic precludes any definite pronouncement on Irish Jewish political thought in this period. Nonetheless, it is evident that the Jewish relationship with Irish nationalism has been far more ambivalent and complex than existing reductive assumptions would have us believe.

²⁸⁴ Briscoe, *Life of Me*, 4-5, 82-83, 264.

²⁸⁵ Benson, *Portraits*, 18. Marleen Wynn, who was born in 1935, remembers Edelstein from her youth as one of a number of well-known communal eccentrics.

²⁸⁶ For examples of the varying assessments by Irish Jews and non-Jews regarding Home Rule, Irish nationalism and the treatment of Jews in Ireland in general, see *Jewish Chronicle*, 4 August 1893, 11 August 1893, 8 September 1911, 15 September 1911, 28 June 1912, and 30 May 1913.

²⁸⁷ Bloom, ‘On Growing Up in Dublin’, 105-106; Briscoe, *For the Life of Me*, 18-19. Bloom’s parents, for example, were great admirers of Parnell while being staunch monarchists. Similarly, although Briscoe’s father was a declared nationalist who named one of his sons after the legendary Irish patriot Theobald Wolfe Tone, he believed in constitutional methods. This led to a breach as Robert Briscoe became increasingly militant.

The comments that were made by Jacob Sayers on the laying of the foundation stone of the new synagogue in Cork in 1913, should almost certainly be understood in light of the nationalist middle ground. Sayers declared that Irish people had shown themselves to be loyal and friendly to the Jewish community, and expressed the hope that in the coming years the Jewish community would prove itself to be an asset to the Irish nationalist movement. Those present reportedly responded with calls of ‘Hear, hear’.²⁸⁸ The changes in the Irish political narrative over the last one hundred years render this type of statement incredibly misleading to the contemporary reader. It has already been shown that neither Jewish/non-Jewish relations nor the political allegiances of the CHC were quite as straightforward as Sayers implies. This public identification of the Jewish community with the broader political groundswell is a strong indication of just how tricky these relations were.

Allegations of a general and active Jewish support for militant nationalism are in fact almost always vague and generic, such as Chaim Herzog’s and Melisande Zlotover’s assertions that the community as a whole were actively sympathetic and supportive.²⁸⁹ Rivlin claims that Jewish pedlars carried weapons for the IRA and Jews voluntarily sheltered fugitives without citing any names, dates or places.²⁹⁰ Irina Rupp Malone suggests that the Jewish Dramatic Circle’s choice of plays may have represented a conscious attempt to identify with Irish nationalism in the context of the Irish cultural revival. However, there is no real proof to support this beyond the parallels that were drawn by contemporary Irish theatre critics.²⁹¹ Concrete information is thin on the ground and prone to exaggeration, embellishment and, probably, a touch of fantasy. I have uncovered only three definite stories of ordinary members of the Jewish community assisting the IRA. The most extravagant claims that Rev. Abraham Gudansky, the minister of the DHC, assisted a disguised Michael Collins to evade police cordons in 1920. This was handed down to Sybil Fishman, who had questioned its veracity for most of her life but had eventually changed her mind for unstated reasons.²⁹² The second anecdote tells of a lady from Longwood Avenue in the South Circular Road area who reportedly sheltered an IRA man

²⁸⁸ *Jewish Chronicle*, 7 February 1913.

²⁸⁹ Quoted in Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 70, 77.

²⁹⁰ Rivlin, *Shalom Ireland*, 191-92.

²⁹¹ Irina Rupp Malone, ‘The Dublin Jewish Dramatic Society 1908-1950: A Retrospective’ (talk presented at the Irish Jewish Museum, 6 November 2011). If Malone is correct, this identification should probably be understood in the same way as Sayers’ remarks.

²⁹² *Jewish Chronicle*, 6 December 1996.

overnight. Some versions, clearly embellished, claim that the fugitive was allowed to get into the lady's bed in order to pose as her husband. Chaim Herzog, who repeats the tale in its full glory, qualifies his doubts as to its authenticity with the statement that 'nobody ever denied it'.²⁹³ Elsewhere, however, he recalls that 'physically and psychologically the Jewish community was closed in on itself. Very few Jews mingled socially with non-Jews.'²⁹⁴

The third of these stories relates that a underground Republican newspaper was produced in secret in Leon Spiro's printing works by his foreman, who was reputed to have been the well-known IRA volunteer Oscar Traynor. Whether or not Spiro was aware of this is unclear and, if so, whether he approved or, rather, considered it wise to ignore what was going on. That Ó Gráda and Rivlin give Spiro the forename Abraham, while Benson names him Leon, should arouse suspicion if nothing else does.²⁹⁵ Jessie Spiro Bloom's unpublished memoir provides a clear indication of the way in which such incidents are so easily misrepresented. She states that her father's foreman, whom she does not name, commandeered his printing press to produce IRA orders during the Civil War, while he was forcibly detained in his office. Spiro went unharmed as he and his foreman were on the best of terms, but was unhappy about the misuse of his property.²⁹⁶ Bloom does not imply that this was anything more than a once-off occurrence. The 1901 census returns and the *Jewish Chronicle's* provincial news section reveal that Abraham Spiro, who enjoyed a successful undergraduate career at Trinity College Dublin, was Leon's son and Jessie's brother, and that Leon was the printer.²⁹⁷ This explains the confusion of the anecdotal sources, as well as showing how easily distortions can occur within informal, oral narratives.

Similarly Fallon extends Estella Solomons' Republican leanings to her entire family,²⁹⁸ in clear contradiction to the overwhelming evidence of their pro-British leanings. The widespread and unquestioning acceptance of such misrepresentations

²⁹³ Chaim Herzog, Interview with Carol Weinstock, July 1987 (National Library of Ireland); cf. Hesselberg, Interview with Weinstock.

²⁹⁴ Cormac Ó Gráda, 'Just How Jewish Was Bloom?', *Irish Times* supplement: 'Bloomsday: Ulysses 1904-2004', <http://www.irishtimes.com/events/bloomsday/story4.htm> (accessed 27 February 2012).

²⁹⁵ Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, 261 (n.60); Rivlin, *Shalom Ireland*, 191-192; Benson, *Portraits*, 27.

²⁹⁶ Bloom, 'On Growing Up in Dublin', 180.

²⁹⁷ Lenten, '1901 Census'. The *Jewish Chronicle* reports Abraham Spiro's academic career at length (11 November 1898 and 18 September 1896) where Leon's trade is stated as 'publisher'. According to Bloom, her brother was the first of the Litvaks to attend university and his academic success encouraged many others to follow him into Trinity College ('Girlhood Recollections', 27).

²⁹⁸ *Irish Times*, 9 November 1999.

merely underlines the perils of reading too much into what is really little more than hearsay or legend. Changing attitudes within the Jewish community are in fact better understood as a reflection of the changing political narrative of the host society to which the Jews were gradually acculturating.²⁹⁹ Increasing anti-British sentiment among Irish Jews may, furthermore, be a consequence of British mandatory rule in Palestine, given the Irish community's record of staunch Zionism. Efforts to prove nationalist credentials are perhaps best seen as an attempt to integrate into the political narrative of a newly independent Ireland, which had little room for non-Catholics. The apparently broad communal support for moderate nationalism that has been identified above has clearly been manipulated over the years to fit these interests.

The influence of the Irish political scene on local attitudes towards Jewish nationalism should also be considered. The sources indicate that, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Zionism was virtually a mainstream ideology among all sectors of the community, including the 'native' establishment (see Section 3.1 and Chapter Four). Already by 1898 Dublin, Cork, Belfast and Limerick had Zionist societies and, within the next decade or so, multiple organisations had been formed, including women's, children's and students' branches.³⁰⁰ Irish Zionist organisations were actively represented at national and international Zionist conferences in this period.³⁰¹ What is particularly remarkable is the apparent embrace of the Zionist cause by members of the acculturated 'native' elite (see Section 3.1). One possible explanation for this broad communal consensus is the Irish political context, where the Jewish national ideology was guaranteed to appeal not only to Protestant philosemites but to Catholic nationalists, on the grounds of parallel political aspirations. As Zionism does not appear to have posed any significant social or political threat to Ireland's established Jewish leadership, it had no reason to oppose

²⁹⁹ Maurice Cohen, Chair's Report, Biennial Meeting of the Jewish Representative Council of Ireland, 30 June 2013. The cumulative effects of the national narrative on the Jewish consciousness are well illustrated by comments made in this report. In recalling his attendance at the annual commemoration of the 1916 Rising, Cohen described this event as honouring martyred patriots, a strong political statement.

³⁰⁰ *Jewish Chronicle*, 2 September 1898, 3 January 1902, 9 October 1903, 7 July 1905, 15 February 1907, 3 January 1908, 30 July 1909, and 5 November 1909; Rory Miller, 'The Look of the Irish: Irish Jews and the Zionist Project, 1900-48', *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* 43 (2011): 192. Miller notes that the Dublin Daughters of Zion was the earliest women's Zionist organisation to be formed in the British Isles and predates comparable organisations in the United States.

³⁰¹ *Jewish Chronicle*, 26 August 1898 (Irish representation at the World Zionist Congress); 25 February 1898, 4 March 1898, 6 December 1901, 3 January 1902, 27 July 1906, and 16 September 1898 (attendance of English Zionist Federation meetings by representatives from Dublin, Cork, Belfast and Limerick).

it. Moreover, if successful, Jewish nationalism had the potential to relieve the local Jewish authorities of at least some of the burden of sustained immigration.

The consequences of the concerted communal negation of anti-Jewish prejudice and Jewish alienation from Irish society have been explored in depth in this section. The reflex of denial has created a complex and jarring subtext of chronically 'hyphenated' identity, and of social and cultural marginalisation and marginality, which sits in unacknowledged tension with mainstream pronouncements. This 'cheerleading' for the success of Jewish social and economic progress and integration into Irish society has strongly influenced the existing historiography and commentary on Irish Jewry. I have argued on the basis of a range of sources that, in fact, 'antisemitism' is an integral element of the Jewish experience in Ireland. Furthermore, it is central to the way in which this experience has been represented by Irish Jews and by those who write about them. All statements concerning Jewish identity, integration and the Jewish contribution to Irish society must be evaluated in terms of anti-Jewish prejudice and its social, cultural, and sometimes economic consequences. It is crucial to interrogate the motives, whether conscious or unconscious, of anyone purporting to pronounce on the subject. The irreconcilable polarity of existing assessments of Irish 'antisemitism' underlines the need for a close, comprehensive and contextual academic study. Only then can an objective and balanced account begin to emerge. My intent is certainly not to distort the historical record any further by overstating the gravity of anti-Jewish prejudice in Irish society. Rather, I believe that an open acknowledgement of this phenomenon is the first step towards a proper understanding and analysis of its manifestations and their impact on the Irish setting.

Particular attention has been paid in this section to the role of 'antisemitism' and negative Jewish stereotypes in Irish nationalist thinking, with an eye to their broader historical context. This has shown that it is entirely mistaken to represent Ireland as some kind of unique case, in being largely free of the potential taints of either ideology. Contemporary sources point to an overwhelming British patriotism among both the communal establishment and individual members of the community, contrary to the claim of popular wisdom that many Jews were militant Irish nationalists. Although the nationalist cause did seem to enjoy considerable support among Irish Jews at this time, they favoured the mild, constitutional form that was compatible with loyalty to the British Crown. The retrospective linking of Irish Jewry

with the cause of militant nationalism constitutes a deliberate effort to weave the community into the altered political discourse of an independent Ireland. This should be seen in the context of repeated depictions of Irish Jewish history as a long continuum. Both efforts to portray the community as authentically ‘Irish’ represent the attempted ‘indigenisation’ of Irish Jewry³⁰² that has been noted in Section 2.1. The ongoing compulsion to prove the ‘Irish’ credentials of the community is evidence in itself of an unacknowledged Jewish alienation from wider Irish society that merits further interrogation.

2.3 AN ‘ACHARACTERISTIC AND ATYPICAL EPISODE’? THE LIMERICK ‘POGROM’ REAPPRAISED³⁰³

Anti-Semitic riots took place throughout the day. General boycott in force. Community in peril. Every member assaulted.

Rev. Elias Bere Levin (January 1904)³⁰⁴

The Jews are a curse to Limerick, and if I am the means of driving them out, I shall have accomplished one good thing in my life . . .

Fr. John Creagh (January 1904)³⁰⁵

It was atrocious language like [Fr. Creagh’s] which, in May last, was responsible for some of the most hideous crimes possible to perverted humanity in a Russian city [Kishinev] . . .

Michael Davitt (January 1904)³⁰⁶

[Fr. Creagh’s second sermon] contains, perhaps, the grossest insult to the Jewish religion which has been offered in any civilized country within the memory of my Board.

Charles Emmanuel, Secretary of the Board of Deputies (April 1904)³⁰⁷

[Fr. Creagh has referred in] an inadvisable and injudicious manner to the past history of the Jews, but there is no religious crusade.

District Inspector C. H. O’Hara (April 1904)³⁰⁸

An unseemly popular riot took place in Limerick . . . [a] passing outburst . . .

³⁰² This constitutes another parallel with Scottish history (Yandoli and Holtschneider, ‘Edinburgh’s Jews’). Although many of the most fanciful Irish anecdotes are quite rightly dismissed as ridiculous by those who cite them, the effort to demonstrate the ‘continuity’ of the Jewish presence in Ireland since the medieval period is a serious one.

³⁰³ Hyman, *Jews of Ireland*, 217.

³⁰⁴ *Jewish Chronicle*, 22 January 1904.

³⁰⁵ *Limerick Leader*, 20 April 1904; *Jewish Chronicle*, 29 April 1904.

³⁰⁶ *Limerick Chronicle*, 19 January 1904.

³⁰⁷ Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 81-82.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 101.

John Salmon (1915)³⁰⁹

Dr. E. W. Harris . . . assures me that in no circumstances could the [Limerick] ‘affair’ be attributed to . . . antisemitism among the people, but rather was it due to the evil and fanatical machinations of a Jesuitical crank, whose deranged views were directed against the weekly payment system of the Jewish small tradesmen.

Edward Elman Burgess (1922)³¹⁰

The Limerick Pogrom is a misnomer insofar as the vicious economic boycott instigated by Fr. Creagh was not ‘an organised massacre’ – the usual definition of the word ‘pogrom’.

Gerald Goldberg (late 1980s)³¹¹

Is the retention of the term [‘pogrom’] justified, considering nobody was killed or seriously injured? I believe it is, for the following reason: based on their experiences in Lithuania, the word pogrom came immediately to the lips of Limerick’s Jews when they found themselves under attack in January 1904.

Dermot Keogh (1998)³¹²

Ireland was the last country in Western Europe to witness a genuine pogrom.

Geoffrey Wheatcroft (2000)³¹³

[Limerick was] an aberration in an otherwise almost perfect history of Ireland and its treatment of the Jews . . .

Joe Briscoe (cited in 2003)³¹⁴

For a Jewish correspondent . . . in 1904 to use [Kishinev] in connection with the actual happenings in Limerick is absurd; for the Cork Professor [Dermot Keogh] to use it in 1998, in what professes to be an academic history of those events, is – I leave it to each reader to select the *mot juste*.

Criostóir O’Flynn (2004)³¹⁵

The anti-Semitic boycott in Limerick . . . was instigated by an influential fundamentalist Catholic priest, Fr. John Creagh of the Redemptorist Order. He was moved by his superiors to an island in the Pacific Ocean soon after . . .

Official website of the Irish Jewish Community (2013)³¹⁶

³⁰⁹ *Belfast Telegraph*, 29 September 1915.

³¹⁰ *Jewish Chronicle*, 24 February 1922.

³¹¹ Gerald Goldberg, ‘Historical Notes on the Limerick Boycott’ [late 1980s], 120 (Gerald Goldberg Papers, Special Collections and Archives Service, UCC Library, University College, Cork: Box 39).

³¹² Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 26.

³¹³ *Jewish Chronicle*, 17 March 2000.

³¹⁴ Rivlin, *Shalom Ireland*, 32.

³¹⁵ Criostóir O’Flynn, *Beautiful Limerick* (Dublin: Obelisk Books, 2004), 196.

³¹⁶ ‘History’, Official Website of the Irish Jewish Community, www.jewishireland.org/Irish-Jewish-history/history/ (accessed 10 July 2013).

The opening quotations demonstrate just how contentious the Limerick Boycott has been, and continues to be, in the collective memory on the one hand, of Anglo-Irish Jewry and, on the other, of Limerick city. The *story* itself has so frequently been retold that it might – with considerable justification – be considered to be a largely exhausted topic. In contrast, the *narratives* of the Boycott have scarcely been acknowledged, let alone examined in any great detail. The vast majority of existing material consists of retelling *ad nauseum* with little recognition of the need for any analysis at all, let alone analysis of the kind that is so patently lacking. Thus, while any serious historian of Irish Jewry might well balk at the mere mention of the Limerick Boycott, many of its most intriguing historiographical aspects remain virtually unaddressed. This section deliberately avoids rehashing the tale that began in earnest with two inflammatory sermons preached by the head of Limerick’s Redemptorist Arch-Confraternity, Fr. John Creagh, on 11 and 18 January 1904,³¹⁷ in favour of analysing the existing narratives and historiography of the Boycott. After opening with a reconsideration of the official Jewish reaction based on two previously overlooked sources, the section focuses on the memory and memorialisation of the Boycott, in an attempt to understand the evolution and purpose of its parallel narratives. Two main themes are identified within traditional Jewish representations, which I have termed the ‘pogrom’ myth and the ‘destruction’ narrative. The development of these tropes is surveyed briefly and juxtaposed with its corresponding counter-narrative. Key to this analysis is the question of how a relatively minor incident came to be remembered as a virtual pogrom which destroyed a comfortably established community. The personal stake, whether conscious or unconscious, of those central to the perpetuation and management of the public memory and discourse of the Boycott is also considered.

2.3.1 SOURCES

Two hitherto neglected yet highly significant sources have been indispensable to the development of my understanding of the Limerick Boycott. First is the *Jewish Chronicle*, which has already been noted in the Introduction as one of the most

³¹⁷ The most detailed account to date of Creagh’s sermons and the boycott that he inaugurated can be found in Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*.

important sources for Ireland's Jewish communal life in this period. The *Chronicle* also provides insight into important events and debates of the day, such as the Limerick Boycott. The DHC correspondence books, which lay forgotten in a locked room of the Adelaide Road Synagogue until its deconsecration in 1999³¹⁸ are the single-most important source to have come to light on the Boycott in recent years. These contain copies of forty-one letters relating to the Boycott, which were written by Ernest Harris between January and June 1904 to various interested parties. Although they constitute only one side of a series of dialogues, these letters shed considerable light on one of the greatest mysteries of the Boycott, the attitude of the Jewish authorities in Dublin and in London. Because of its immense importance for the historical record, the correspondence is transcribed in full in Appendix II.

2.3.2 RESPONSES TO THE BOYCOTT: THE VIEW FROM DUBLIN AND LONDON

The response of the Jewish authorities in Dublin and London has until now puzzled observers. As the Boycott barely merits a mention in the minutebook of Dublin's leading congregation, the DHC,³¹⁹ it has been suggested that Dublin's Jewish establishment was largely indifferent to events in Limerick and, perhaps, concerned to use the disbursement of relief funds for political ends.³²⁰ Although the DHC correspondence book reveals a somewhat different picture the overall position of both Dublin and London remains somewhat ambiguous, for the actions of both authorities belie their somewhat dramatic portrayal of the plight of Limerick's Jews.

Harris's letters show that he was sympathetic towards his co-religionists in Limerick, and began to act on their behalf as soon as he received the news of Creagh's initial sermon from the minister of the Limerick Hebrew Congregation (LHC), Rev. Elias Levin, on 12 January.³²¹ Harris immediately became Levin's intermediary with the Board of Deputies, and the DHC Annual Report of 1903-1904 notes that the Boycott received his constant attention.³²² His empathy, concern and sense of affront certainly come across as genuine, especially when taken alongside his

³¹⁸ Howard Freeman, personal conversations with the author, 29 March 2012 and 4 April 2012.

³¹⁹ DHC Annual Report, 1903-1904, in DHC Minutes, 1904-1915; DHC Minutes, 15 January 1904.

³²⁰ Duffy, 'Socio-Economic Analysis', chap. 7. Duffy's overly materialistic interpretation of Dublin Jewry is further discussed in Chapters Three and Four.

³²¹ Ernest W. Harris, Letter to Rev. Elias B. Levin, 12 January 1904, in DHC Correspondence Book No. 1. All subsequent references in this section to correspondence by Harris are to the same source.

³²² DHC Annual Report, 1903-1904, in DHC Minutes, 1904-1915.

outlook regarding the distribution of relief, which is discussed below. At the same time, throughout the correspondence Harris evinces a degree of reluctance as to his own role and involvement in efforts to assist the Limerick community. He repeatedly defers to the eminence and experience of the Board of Deputies in such matters,³²³ and questions how much he personally was actually in a position to achieve.³²⁴ This is particularly marked when it comes to actually visiting Limerick himself. The DHC minutes of 15 January announce that Harris intended to undertake a request by the Board of Deputies to inspect the situation as soon as possible, and that all further discussion of the Boycott was to be postponed to his return.³²⁵ Yet the correspondence book makes no mention of any personal investigation until April, an initiative that was subsequently postponed due to illness and business commitments.³²⁶ In the end this did not take place until mid-May, by which time the Board had assumed more direct involvement, which may explain why the Boycott receives no further mention in the DHC minutes. Once the Board appoints its own investigators, Joseph Prag and I. Rehfish, Harris appears to query whether it was really necessary for him to be involved in the deputation at all.³²⁷ This seems curious given his involvement with the local relief efforts co-ordinated by Sydney Jaffe,³²⁸ his initial willingness to investigate on behalf of the Board,³²⁹ and the potential benefit that a personal visit would have brought in terms of reassurance and morale.

Nevertheless, and although he was a busy man with many calls on his time,³³⁰ Harris does appear to defer to the Board out of sincerity as opposed to expedience. He professes a nervousness of aggravating the situation,³³¹ and a scepticism regarding the government's willingness to 'offend Catholic sentiments' by openly confronting this potentially inflammatory issue.³³² Harris also proposes a number of bold moves to combat the Boycott, such as an official rebuttal of Creagh's allegations by the

³²³ Harris, Letters to Charles Emmanuel, 20 January 1904; and Levin, 21 January 1904, 22 January 1904, and 3 February 1904.

³²⁴ Harris, Letters to Levin, 12 January 1904 and 25 January 1904; and M. E. Solomons, [?] May 1904.

³²⁵ DHC Minutes, 15 January 1904.

³²⁶ Harris, Letters to Emmanuel, 7 April 1904; Sydney A. Jaffe, 7 April 1904, 11 April 1904, and 18 April 1904; and Rev. Richard C. Hallows, 11 April 1904.

³²⁷ Harris, Letter to Solomons, [?] May 1904; cf. Harris, Letter to Emmanuel, 6 May 1904.

³²⁸ Harris, Letters to Jaffe, 12 March 1904 and 31 March 1904; and Emmanuel, 7 April 1904.

³²⁹ DHC Minutes, 15 January 1904; Harris, Letters to Emmanuel, 7 April 1904; Jaffe, 7 April 1904, 11 April 1904, and 18 April 1904; and Hallows, 11 April 1904.

³³⁰ Harris, Letter to Jaffe, 18 April 1904; Chapters Three and Four, below.

³³¹ Harris, Letters to Levin, 21 January 1904 and 22 January 1904.

³³² Harris, Letters to Emmanuel, 22 January 1904; and Levin, 25 January 1904.

Chief Rabbi,³³³ laying the matter before parliament³³⁴ and, on at least one occasion, the instigation of legal proceedings.³³⁵ Harris occasionally expresses frustration at the Board's lethargy and the constraints within which it operated; on 22 January, he wrote to its secretary, Charles Emmanuel, that 'unless the Board of Deputies follows some action at once, I must lay the facts before members of Parliament so that it can be brought before the House of Commons at the earliest possible moment'.³³⁶ On 7 April, Harris again wrote to Emmanuel: 'I read with feelings of disgust the letter of the Lord Lieutenant to your Board, and it does seem a strange thing that such a system of persecution can be carried on in any part of the United Kingdom, and that the Government should take no steps to prosecute the individuals who promote it'.³³⁷ These comments indicate that the Board privately shared his disappointment with the Lord Lieutenant's response³³⁸ but, presumably, neither it nor Harris saw anything to be gained in pursuing the matter. The Board probably also recognised the wisdom of the Lord Lieutenant's warning that such proceedings would be likely to reignite a situation which the authorities believed to be calming.³³⁹

Despite his periodic exasperation, Harris did ultimately accept the Board's authority and acted on its advice. For example, on 14 June he wrote to Emmanuel regarding an offensive letter that had been published by the *Munster News*: 'I have shown it to my Counsel, and he considers it a most audacious libel, and says that criminal proceedings [?] should be instituted at the instance of the Attorney General, and before taking any steps I consider it right to place the matter before you for your opinion'.³⁴⁰ On 22 June, however, his correspondence with Levin ends on the following note:

I had a long communication from the Board of Deputies, the Law and Parliamentary Committee has considered the matter very completely, and they are averse to you taking proceedings against the Munster

³³³ Harris, Letters to Levin, 20 January 1904 and 22 January 1904; and Emmanuel, 20 January 1904.

³³⁴ Harris, Letters to Levin, 15 January 1904; and Emmanuel, 22 January 1904.

³³⁵ Harris, Letters to Levin, 22 June 1904; and Emmanuel, 14 June 1904. See also Harris, Letter to Levin, 25 January 1904, however this letter implies that the idea of legal proceedings against Creagh originated with Levin as opposed to Harris.

³³⁶ Harris, Letter to Emmanuel, 22 January 1904.

³³⁷ Harris, Letter to Emmanuel, 7 April 1904.

³³⁸ On the Board's public reaction, see *Jewish Chronicle*, 25 March 1904 and 22 April 1904.

³³⁹ The Lord Lieutenant's response is cited in Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 44-45. This was based on police recommendations in late January/early February that an attempt to prosecute Creagh would do more harm than good and would, in any case, be impossible to uphold due to the difficulty in obtaining any testimony against him (Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 84-86).

³⁴⁰ Harris, Letter to Emmanuel, 14 June 1904.

News, as they consider the prospect of success in obtaining a Verdict would be [illegible] and that the whole matter would be reopened, and all the [illegible] newspapers about the country would have flowing [illegible] which would stir up the ignorant population.

On the whole [?] we had better leave the matter alone.³⁴¹

The termination of Harris's correspondence regarding the Boycott at this juncture and on this note also indicates that he was willing to accede to the Board's judgement in calling 'time' on the matter. That it wished to do so is evident from mid-June 1904 onwards, when the tone of *Jewish Chronicle* coverage switches abruptly from one of sensational melodrama to that of a palpable anxiousness to quash the story.

Throughout the Boycott the Board remained true to its usual principles in adopting a quiet, deferential, back-door approach (see Sections 1.4 and 1.5). That it did not attempt to use the profuse public outpourings of sympathy and outrage in England as leverage with the authorities is typical of the manner in which the Board tended to sit back and hope that public opinion would do its work for it. Ironically, these tactics led to other complications. Fearful that the type of action which Harris advocated would provoke further controversy, the Board had advised him to adopt a more discreet approach by recruiting influential congregants to work behind the scenes and by discreetly approaching influential public figures.³⁴² However the high-profile condemnation of the Boycott by Limerick's Protestant bishop, Dr. Thomas Bunbury, at the behest of his longstanding Jewish friend, Morris Harris, stirred up a maelstrom of resentment in the city.³⁴³

Moreover the tone of the Board's direct interventions, on the strength of exaggerated reports from Limerick, had a negative effect on the sentiments of the local police and judiciary and, in turn, on their assessment of the situation. The local Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) reports show a growing resentment at the way in which the Boycott was being misrepresented by the press, the unwillingness of the Jewish authorities to trust the police's handling of the affair, and the repeated

³⁴¹ Harris, Letter to Levin, 22 June 1904.

³⁴² Harris, Letters to Emmanuel, 20 January 1904 and 7 April 1904; Levin, 20 January 1904 and 22 January 1904; Chief Rabbi, 4 February 1904; and Jaffe, 7 April 1904.

³⁴³ Harris, Letter to Jaffe, 18 April 1904. On the furious local reaction to Bunbury's speech to the Church of Ireland General Synod on 15 April, see Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 112-13, 116-21; and Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 47-49.

investigations that were thus necessitated.³⁴⁴ Likewise a local KC, R. Adams, who on the whole appears to have been reasonably well-disposed towards Limerick's Jews, openly deplored the inflammatory publicity that ensued from press coverage of court-cases involving Jews and non-Jews. In early May, he sensationally refused to try any more of these suits until the situation calmed.³⁴⁵ Adams had previously cautioned Limerick's Jews through the *Jewish Chronicle* as to the injuriousness of their very public internal feud, on the grounds of their own individual wellbeing and of the community's reputation.³⁴⁶ Now, he commented that the distorted coverage by some newspapers created the impression 'that Limerick was another Kishineiff'.³⁴⁷

The responses of the Board and, possibly, Harris also, were probably circumscribed by the usual concerns of containment and damage limitation, that have been identified and discussed in Chapter One. On 4 February Harris had reassured the Chief Rabbi that he had no fear that 'the disgraceful bigotry and intolerance' would spread to Dublin, commenting: 'Limerick is a small city where religious toleration has never been one of the characteristics of the majority of its population'.³⁴⁸ This presumably removed much of the urgency from the situation, absolving the Board of the need to take any firm public action to counteract the Boycott. The Board's characteristic caution was also fuelled by its suspicions regarding Jewish business practices in Limerick.³⁴⁹ All along the Board had insisted that the administration of the relief fund should be entrusted to a recognised party, and does not appear to have been satisfied with Harris's suggestion of engaging 'a Known Protestant solicitor'.³⁵⁰ These concerns may have led the Board to appoint its own investigators in addition to Harris, even though it appeared to trust his judgement.³⁵¹

Harris initially shared much of the Board's ambivalence as to Jewish business methods in Limerick, which created the suspicion that the Limerick Jews had brought the situation on themselves through moral and occupational deficiencies. He

³⁴⁴ Duffy, 'Socio-Economic Analysis', 175-76, 185; Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 78-79, 100-01; Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 45.

³⁴⁵ *Limerick Chronicle*, 3 May 1904. This story made it into the English press within a few weeks (*Jewish Chronicle*, 3 June 1904).

³⁴⁶ *Jewish Chronicle*, 14 March 1902.

³⁴⁷ *Limerick Chronicle*, 3 May 1904.

³⁴⁸ Harris, Letter to Chief Rabbi, 4 February 1904.

³⁴⁹ *Jewish Chronicle*, 5 February 1904, 26 February 1904, 13 May 1904, and 13 May 1904.

³⁵⁰ Harris, Letter to Jaffe, 11 April 1904; and Emmanuel, 28 April 1904.

³⁵¹ That the Board trusted Harris is implied in the DHC correspondence; see also David Simmonds, 'Limerick 1904-1906: The Official Jewish Response', in *Limerick*, ed. Stuart Rosenblatt (Dublin, 2005), 27-28.

deprecated the popular instalment system and was anxious to stress that it was newly arrived 'Foreigners' who favoured it.³⁵² After visiting the city, however, he and Prag were adamant that the Boycott victims were 'respectable' traders who were 'in a sad plight', and both believed that Creagh was intent on maintaining the Boycott. Harris justified Jewish trading practices by pointing out that 'they are dealing with a low class of people who take every opportunity of doing them out of their money. I have great experience of the great [?] losses suffered in this weekly payment business.' Rehfisch, regrettably, disagreed and attempted to sway matters by submitting a private, independent report.³⁵³ Where the Board considered Rehfisch to be a skilled and objective investigator,³⁵⁴ Harris believed his judgement to have been 'warped' by his 'contact with the worst class of East End of London Jews'. He feared that, were Rehfisch's views to leak out, further unwarranted negative aspersions would be cast upon Limerick Jewry.³⁵⁵ Ultimately the joint report was adopted, any insinuations as regarding the community's moral disposition were refuted,³⁵⁶ and Rehfisch's unofficial report appears to have been suppressed.

Once the real scale of the Boycott was known and the appropriate relief had been doled out, the Board seems to have been content that matters were in hand and congratulated itself on a job well done. This is somewhat at odds with the picture that the Board and its deputation had painted two months previously of a community on the brink of ruin.³⁵⁷ In its annual report, published in the *Jewish Chronicle* on 12 August, the Board deemed itself to have 'energetically coped with the difficult situation'.³⁵⁸ The DHC also reported itself to be entirely satisfied with the Board's work on behalf of 'those who were unjustly robbed of their property, and deprived of their means of subsistence'.³⁵⁹ The Boycott barely merits a mention the *Jewish Chronicle* for the rest of the year, even though it was, in retrospect, deemed the worst of the three anti-Jewish 'outbreaks' to have occurred in the United Kingdom in 1904. However the other incidents had also occurred at a safe distance from London, in Wales, and the *Chronicle* was safely able to relativise the Boycott by opining that the

³⁵² Harris, Letters to Emmanuel, 21 January 1904; and Chief Rabbi, 4 February 1904.

³⁵³ Harris, Letter to Joseph Prag, 24 May 1904.

³⁵⁴ Simmonds, 'Limerick', 27-28.

³⁵⁵ Harris, Letter to Prag, 24 May 1904.

³⁵⁶ *Jewish Chronicle*, 10 June 1904.

³⁵⁷ *Jewish Chronicle*, 10 June 1904.

³⁵⁸ *Jewish Chronicle*, 12 August 1904.

³⁵⁹ DHC Annual Report, 1903-1904, in DHC Minutes, 1904-1915.

attitude of the Irish Catholic authorities meant that ‘outside the Protestant parts of the country, priest-ridden Ireland cannot become the home of a really large colony of Jews’.³⁶⁰ Subsequent coverage put Limerick firmly into perspective as an essentially minor affair when compared to Kishinev or Gomel. As Simmonds points out, even these anti-Jewish outrages would be swept into the background with the new round of pogroms that commenced in 1905 (see Section 1.4).³⁶¹ Nevertheless the Board never overtly climbed down from its initial, dramatic presentation of the situation. Presumably, as well as saving face, this served establishment efforts to garner public sympathy and counter negative, anti-alien stereotypes (see above). It is interesting also to note that the Boycott provided the Board with a useful opportunity to blackmail the city’s warring congregations into maintaining the uneasy reunion which had begun with joint relief efforts.³⁶² However, this spectacularly failed to end the communal divisions, which are considered in greater detail in Section 3.2.

As far as the distribution of relief was concerned, all interested observers, whether English, Irish, Protestant or Jewish, were anxious for funds to be appropriately disbursed and keen that the Jews should be helped to ride out the Boycott in Limerick rather than be assisted to leave.³⁶³ This probably arose as much from mercenary concerns as from the wish to call Creagh’s bluff; Harris had initially believed that poorer Jews should be assisted in getting ‘a start elsewhere’ as he could not see how they would be able to continue to make a living ‘in such a bigoted and intolerant town as Limerick’.³⁶⁴ In March, when Harris was approached by a Limerick Jew seeking assistance to enable him to join his brother in America, he wrote to the treasurer of the DHC, Adolphe Davies: ‘I am not over anxious to see our funds go this way, we may have a lot of those Limerick people coming on us and I am showing them that it is not easy to get me to sign orders’. Nevertheless he solicited Davies’ opinion as to whether or not the man should be given the two pounds he had requested.³⁶⁵ Harris had already written to Levin suggesting that the man’s brother should assist him, as ‘he appears to be a man of little intelligence’ and Harris was

³⁶⁰ *Jewish Chronicle*, 9 September 1904.

³⁶¹ Simmonds, ‘Limerick’, 29.

³⁶² *Jewish Chronicle*, 9 September 1904 and 26 May 1906; Simmonds, ‘Limerick’, 27.

³⁶³ Harris, Letters to Emmanuel, 28 April 1904; Hallowes, 19 May 1904 and 21 May 1904; and Prag, 24 May 1904; *Jewish Chronicle*, 10 June 1904.

³⁶⁴ Harris, Letter to Levin, 25 January 1904.

³⁶⁵ Harris, Letter to Adolphe Davies, 1 March 1904.

dubious as to whether ‘he can do any good in the States’.³⁶⁶ Further evidence that Harris was no pushover can be found in a letter to Emmanuel dated 28 April, where Harris cautions against over-generosity, ‘for if these people find they can exist on charity, they will make no effort to work’.³⁶⁷ The scheme that was eventually proposed by the official deputation took a practical form: victims were to be helped to restock and to take their business beyond the confines of the city where the Boycott was less severe, until such a time as they regained their financial independence.³⁶⁸ The DHC annual report of 1903-1904 notes that the circumstances, business practices and character of each applicant for relief were closely investigated by the deputation.³⁶⁹ However, there is no evidence whatsoever to support Mark Duffy’s speculation that the funds were distributed along preferential, political lines.³⁷⁰ As noted above, once Harris had actually visited Limerick his doubts as to the community’s trading practices appear to have been completely dispelled, and he displays no sign of prejudice regarding any member or section of the local community. Neither is there anything in the collective memory of the Boycott, in which members of Limerick’s breakaway congregation feature prominently, to suggest any factional discord or resentment as to either the official or the local response to the Boycott. Had this been the case, it would likely have been a spur to the public displays of righteous indignation that had already featured prominently in local and Jewish newspapers than to have been suppressed. In fact, Creagh remained the principal target of Jewish bitterness throughout the Boycott and has continued to occupy this position in its standard narratives.

³⁶⁶ Harris, Letter to Levin, 26 [?] February 1904.

³⁶⁷ Harris, Letter to Emmanuel, 28 April 1904.

³⁶⁸ Harris, Letter to Hallows, 21 May 1904; *Jewish Chronicle*, 10 June 1904.

³⁶⁹ DHC Annual Report, 1903-1904, in DHC Minutes, 1904-1915.

³⁷⁰ This is one of the central contentions of Duffy, ‘Socio-Economic Analysis’, chap. 7.

2.3.3 NARRATIVES OF THE BOYCOTT: 1904 TO PRESENT

2.3.3.1 ELIAS LEVIN AND THE BIRTH OF A NARRATIVE

A central figure of the Boycott and its narratives is Rev. Elias Levin, who served as minister to the LHC from 1882 to 1911.³⁷¹ Levin was responsible for bringing the details of Creagh's sermon and the Boycott that he instigated to the attention of Harris,³⁷² and the dramatic way in which he presented its events to the outside world has been significant in shaping contemporary and subsequent perceptions of the Boycott. Levin is also remembered for having mobilised Michael Davitt and the MP John Redmond to make public statements denouncing Creagh.³⁷³ The conflicting way in which Levin is remembered, as a hero of the 'pogrom' myth³⁷⁴ but an arch spin-doctor of counter-narrative,³⁷⁵ is indicative of the complexity of these narratives, of their wider context and of Levin's own role therein. Nevertheless these matters have hitherto received no consideration whatsoever.

Based on his dramatic telegram to Harris, which was published in the *Jewish Chronicle* on 22 January 1904,³⁷⁶ his complicity in the Protestant missionary Julian

³⁷¹ Pat Feeley, 'Rabbi Levin of Colooney Street', *Old Limerick Journal* 2 (March 1980): 35-38 (on Levin and his time in Limerick).

³⁷² Levin wrote to Harris on 12 January enclosing a cutting from the *Limerick Echo* which quoted Creagh's sermon of the previous evening (Harris, Letter to Levin, 12 January 1904). Three days later Creagh's remarks were reported briefly in the *Jewish Chronicle* without any comment or appearance of alarm. After Creagh's second sermon on 18 January, Levin sent Harris the telegram quoted in the opening of this section, which was subsequently cited in the *Jewish Chronicle* in the course of a lengthy and highly dramatic report by 'a Correspondent' which makes reference to Kishinev and the Middle Ages (15 January 1904 and 22 January 1904).

³⁷³ Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 53-54; Manus O'Riordan, 'Michael Davitt', in Benson, *Portraits*, 9; *Limerick Chronicle*, 19 January 1904 (correspondence between Levin and Davitt). Davitt's letter on the Boycott, published in the *Freeman's Journal* on 18 January, received nationwide press coverage and continues to be widely cited by historians. Redmond's much briefer and rather underwhelming reply to Levin appeared in the *Limerick Leader* on 22 January 1904. Harris was delighted with Davitt's comments, believing that they 'will assuredly have a beneficial effect', and heartily complimented Levin on his actions (Letter to Levin, 18 January 1904). However, despite his subsequent image as a champion of Irish Jewry Davitt remained silent throughout the ensuing controversy, choosing not to respond to Creagh's detailed rebuttal on the evening of 18 January. Feeley attempts to explain this by reference to the larger national issues and other controversies in which Davitt was involved at the time (Pat Feeley, 'Davitt and the Limerick Jews', *Old Limerick Journal* 14 (Spring 1983): 38).

³⁷⁴ *Jewish Chronicle*, 30 August 1912 and 12 June 1936 (Levin's obituary).

³⁷⁵ Jonathan McGee, 'The Mayoralty and the Jews of Limerick', in *Remembering Limerick: Historical Essays Celebrating the 800th Anniversary of Limerick's First Charter Granted in 1197*, ed. David Lee (Limerick: Limerick Civic Trust, 1997), 165.

³⁷⁶ *Jewish Chronicle*, 22 January 1904.

Grande's melodramatic portrayal of the impact of the Boycott,³⁷⁷ and his insistence on inflating the numbers of its victims in direct contradiction to police statistics,³⁷⁸ Levin has been accused of fostering the notion of a 'pogrom'. However, contemporary press coverage shows that it was Grande and his Protestant colleagues who were equally, or perhaps more responsible than Levin for keeping the Boycott in the public eye.³⁷⁹ Grande drew press attention back to the affair at the beginning of April with an exaggerated and sensational letter which pre-empted, perhaps intentionally, the whirlwind of controversy that was provoked by the trial and imprisonment of teenager John Rahilly for a minor assault on Levin.³⁸⁰ These exaggerations contributed to the annoyance of the local authorities both directly and indirectly, in provoking further high-level representations by the Board of Deputies that have been discussed above.³⁸¹ They also appear to have played a part in a suicide attempt by one troubled Dublin Jew, Rev. Lewis Newman.³⁸²

Why did Levin support exaggerated portrayals of the Boycott which only served to inflame local ill-will towards the Jews? Duffy's suggestion that this was purely a moneymaking venture is not supported by the *Jewish Chronicle* reports and, in fact, represents only one element of a confused and incoherent web of alleged alliances and counter-alliances. This is accompanied by little explanation of how the various parties, in particular Levin and his flock, are supposed to have profited from their putative subterfuges.³⁸³ Duffy's speculation also recalls the none-too-pleasant insinuations that were in local circulation at the time.³⁸⁴ In reality the Board of Deputies repeatedly expressed disappointment at the poor public response to its Limerick appeal and, as a result, was obliged to issue ongoing exhortations in the

³⁷⁷ *Irish Times*, 1 April 1904; *Jewish Chronicle*, 8 April 1904, 29 April 1904, and 13 May 1904; Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 93.

³⁷⁸ Moore, 'Anti-Semitism', 70; Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 125.

³⁷⁹ Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 91ff; Pól Ó Dochartaigh, 'Sectarian Point Scoring and the Limerick Riots of 1904' (paper presented at the Jews on the 'Celtic Fringe' Conference, University of Ulster, Belfast, 5-6 September 2011).

³⁸⁰ *Irish Times*, 1 April 1904; Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 105-15 (detailed account of the Rahilly/Raleigh affair and its reverberations).

³⁸¹ Duffy, 'Socio-Economic Analysis', 174-76; Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 91ff.

³⁸² *Jewish Chronicle*, 15 July 1904.

³⁸³ Duffy, 'Socio-Economic Analysis', chap. 7.

³⁸⁴ *Limerick Leader*, 15 April 1904. When Levin objected to the derisory tone of his cross-examination in the Rahilly case, he was rudely berated by a Mr. Counihan: 'Behave yourself. You are making a good profit out of it.' This allegation was repeated in a subsequent article in the same newspaper (Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 118). Regarding the influence of negative stereotyping on other areas of Duffy's analysis, see Section 3.2.

Jewish Chronicle.³⁸⁵ In the end, it only succeeded in raising four hundred pounds in addition to the Rothschild family's opening donation of one hundred pounds and, notwithstanding one hundred personal fundraising letters, the final total of the Limerick appeal was a mere eight hundred pounds.³⁸⁶ Nevertheless, despite claims in July 1904 that funds were nearly exhausted, the balance of forty-five pounds remained intact until as late as 1910.³⁸⁷ Although local Protestant individuals and organisations were reputed to have been forthcoming towards the Limerick Jews, there is little concrete evidence of this.³⁸⁸ Harris states that the Rev. Richard Hallows of Arklow, for example, had only raised a total of thirty-six pounds from his followers.³⁸⁹ Hallows, furthermore, wished to attach certain conditions to these funds, which Harris did not regard as appropriate to the disbursal of charity.³⁹⁰ He later agreed to hand his proceeds over to the Jewish relief committee and this, together with the proposed relief efforts in Dublin and Limerick,³⁹¹ probably counted towards the final total of the Limerick Fund.

It appears far more likely that Levin's actions were simply prompted by anger and frustration. Perhaps the only real clue as to what he regarded as the solution to the plight of Limerick Jewry were comments made to the *Daily Express* and the Board of Deputies in April 1904. Levin argued that, as long as Creagh remained in Limerick, Jewish business would be ruined³⁹² and the Jews would be driven out.³⁹³ To the *Daily Express*, he stated outright that the only answer was to move Creagh on.³⁹⁴ The Board agreed that Creagh's superiors should 'find employment for his

³⁸⁵ *Jewish Chronicle*, 6 May 1904 and 13 May 1904.

³⁸⁶ *Jewish Chronicle*, 22 April 1904; Simmonds, 'Limerick', 28-29. Simmonds attributes the poor response to the Limerick appeal to the worsening situation in the Russian empire, which was a cause for far greater Jewish concern (see Section 1.4).

³⁸⁷ *Jewish Chronicle*, 22 July 1904; Simmonds, 'Limerick', 29.

³⁸⁸ Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 111. For example, a Limerick 'Jewess' told the RIC that a local Protestant had given Levin ten pounds after reading a letter from Grande in the *Daily Express*. However her evidence is potentially questionable as, according to Duffy, this informant disapproved of the manner in which the Boycott had been represented to the press by certain members of the Jewish community ('Socio-Economic Analysis', 185-86).

³⁸⁹ Harris, Letters to Emmanuel, 7 April 1904 and Hallows, 11 April 1904.

³⁹⁰ Harris, Letters to Hallows, 11 April 1904 and Jaffe, 11 April 1904. Unfortunately Harris does not elaborate as to the nature of these proposals, however they can safely be assumed to be at odds with the shared approach of Harris and the Board.

³⁹¹ Harris, Letters to Hallows, 19 May 1904 and 21 May 1904; DHC Minutes, 15 January 1904; Harris, Letter to Jaffe, 11 April 1904 (proposed fundraising in Dublin); Harris, Letters to Jaffe, 12 March 1904 and 31 March 1904 (fundraising in Limerick).

³⁹² *Limerick Leader*, 22 April 1904.

³⁹³ *Jewish Chronicle*, 8 April 1904 and 20 May 1904.

³⁹⁴ *Limerick Leader*, 22 April 1904.

talents elsewhere'.³⁹⁵ It is not beyond the bounds of possibility to imagine that Levin may have wanted, in addition, some kind of public apology or proclamation from the government and/or the Roman Catholic church as the DHC correspondence indicates that he, like Harris, was keen for the Jewish authorities to act openly and assertively to challenge Creagh and his protectors. In contrast, he was confronted with the Board's cautious and conservative approach which shunned any grand public gesture, had little obvious impact on either the government or the Catholic authorities, and took its time in responding to the needs of his congregants. On top of this, Limerick's Jews had been enjoined to silence at the end of January by the city's Catholic bishop, Dr. Edward O'Dwyer. This had been on the understanding that O'Dwyer would personally take the matter in hand, however it soon became apparent that he was either unwilling or unable to do anything to alleviate the situation.³⁹⁶ As circumstances conspired effectively to tie Levin's hands, he was left to deal with the increasingly ambivalent local police whom he, in turn, may well have mistrusted.³⁹⁷ In the meantime, he and his community remained the targets of considerable hostility and little sympathy. Consequently Levin may well have appreciated the friendship of Grande and his ilk, and may have felt goaded into conspiring with them to produce exaggerated claims purely to provoke some kind of response from the Jewish authorities. The DHC correspondence indicates that Levin had a persistent and fiery temperament, and thus may have given little thought as to Grande's motives or the potential consequences of their joint actions. Although Harris was generally sympathetic and responsive towards Levin, some of the letters suggest a degree of impatience and a wish to placate.³⁹⁸ Its abrupt termination with the letter regarding the *Munster News* implies that Levin was eventually persuaded to drop the matter and

³⁹⁵ *Jewish Chronicle*, 22 April 1904. According to Moore the president of the Board of Deputies, David Alexander, asked Cardinal Logue, the Primate of Ireland, who agreed to intercede with Limerick's ecclesiastical authorities, to have Creagh either silenced or removed ('Anti-Semitism', 58).

³⁹⁶ Keogh and McCarthy believe that O'Dwyer disapproved of Creagh's actions but had little authority over an independent religious order such as the Redemptorists. They contend that O'Dwyer may have used the only means available to him to indicate his disapproval of Creagh's actions in refusing to visit the Redemptorist house between January and Autumn 1904 and in instructing the parish priests under his direction to discourage the Boycott. Nonetheless, he had declined to meet the local Jewish deputation of 29 January in person and his actual thoughts on the Boycott do not appear ever to have been recorded. Thus whatever action O'Dwyer may have taken was subtle and had little real effect on the situation, whether or not through any fault of his. In stark contrast, however, eminent English Catholics were not shy in expressing their disapproval of Creagh's agitation (Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 59-63, 142 n.97).

³⁹⁷ This is implied by the contradiction between the way in which Limerick Jews and the RIC understood the situation, which is considered in greater detail below.

³⁹⁸ Harris, Letters to Levin, 21 January 1904, 22 January 1904, and 25 January 1904.

allow it to recede from the public eye.³⁹⁹ According to the Board this was, by mid-June, the consensus among Limerick Jews, to which Grande also acceded some six weeks later.⁴⁰⁰ The local authorities had all along viewed this as the speediest way of resolving the Boycott.⁴⁰¹

2.3.3.2 LEVIN AND THE BOYCOTT: THE NARRATIVES IN CONTEXT

Subsequent portrayals of Levin have undoubtedly been coloured by contemporary sentiment, which appears to have been somewhat divided. Unlike his counterparts in Dublin and Cork, Isaac Herzog and Myer Elyan, who appear to have routinely received the same respect as priests from passers-by, Levin claims to have been no stranger to hostility and abuse.⁴⁰² Elyan, whose position as a modest local functionary was far more analogous to Levin's than that of Herzog, had glowing reminiscences of his Catholic neighbours in Cork and reportedly marvelled that the locals had regularly raised their hats 'to me, a foreigner, a *Yid*'.⁴⁰³ In contrast, Levin appears to have been assaulted a number of times during his time in Limerick,⁴⁰⁴ and he remained a target well after the initial intensity of the Boycott had waned.⁴⁰⁵ Also his good name has been questioned – albeit with little real justification – on more than one occasion.⁴⁰⁶ Levin is remembered by the Goldberg family as the firebrand who

³⁹⁹ Harris, Letter to Levin, 22 June 1904.

⁴⁰⁰ *Jewish Chronicle*, 10 June 1904 and 22 July 1904.

⁴⁰¹ Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 55, 69, 84.

⁴⁰² *Jewish Chronicle*, 29 May 1992 (on Herzog); Rivlin, *Shalom Ireland*, 29 (on Elyan). In a letter to the *Limerick Leader* in 1898 Levin had commented that it was easier to ignore daily hostilities than to make a fuss, as this exacerbated the situation. On 18 January 1904, he wrote to RIC County Inspector Thomas Hayes that the Jews had suffered little 'excepting insults and abusive language . . . to which we are no aliens'. During the Rahilly trial, Levin claimed that the boy had been pestering him for eighteen months and, when asked why he had not reported an alleged assault the previous March, he responded, 'I cannot report every case'. Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 33; Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 47; Moore, 'Anti-Semitism', 49; *Limerick Leader*, 15 April 1904; *Jewish Chronicle*, 22 April 1904.

⁴⁰³ Rivlin, *Shalom Ireland*, 29. This is according to the recollection of Elyan's grandson, Larry.

⁴⁰⁴ Des Ryan, 'The Limerick Jews', *Old Limerick Journal* 17 (Winter 1984): 28-29; Ryan, 'The Jews of Limerick: Part Two', *Old Limerick Journal* 18 (Winter 1985): 40. Although this is Ryan's contention he only details one other attack on Levin, in 1896.

⁴⁰⁵ *Jewish Chronicle*, 18 August 1905. In August 1905 two boys were charged with stoning Levin. In court, Levin contradicted recent claims by the local press that 'the Jewish troubles' in Limerick were over and alleged that Jews still needed police protection. Since the magistrate did not regard the attack as severe and the children had already been punished by the parents, they were let off with a warning.

⁴⁰⁶ Ryan, 'Jews of Limerick: Part Two', 40; O'Flynn, *Beautiful Limerick*, 186-87. In 1898 Levin was accused of trying to cheat the railway authorities by passing a used ticket to another Jew; although this incident came to court, it turned out to be a misunderstanding. During the Boycott a leading local draper claimed to be owed 858 pounds, nine shillings and sixpence by fourteen prominent Limerick Jews. None is mentioned by name but Levin has been included in the speculations, and Duffy infers

issued a *herem* (ban) against Louis Goldberg in the course of the vicious intracomunal dispute.⁴⁰⁷ Although Elyan, likewise, was not universally well-remembered,⁴⁰⁸ this is far more easily viewed in proportion than the controversy which dogs Levin. Like the DHC correspondence this is indicative of an unrelenting, volatile and irascible personality, who would conceivably have chafed at the restraints that were imposed on him from almost all directions during the Boycott.

The role of local and national circumstances in shaping non-Jewish attitudes towards Levin and the Boycott is difficult to determine. Cork, like Limerick, had experienced periodic albeit relatively mild displays of anti-Jewish sentiment, however their overall significance has yet to be fully analysed with respect to both local and national contexts.⁴⁰⁹ As with antisemitism in general (see Section 2.2), scholars are currently divided or unclear as to what these incidents actually tell us about popular attitudes towards Jews. Some argue that they indicate a growing groundswell of anti-Jewish sentiment.⁴¹⁰ Keogh states that such occurrences together with persistent rumours of shady business dealings created widespread popular suspicion towards Jews, but then diverts the reader's attention by emphasising the outraged response of the press.⁴¹¹ Press attitudes are of course not necessarily indicative of grassroots sentiment, and Keogh's characteristically evasive approach does nothing to pin down the actual significance and nature of the episodes in question. Others, meanwhile,

from police reports that he was refused credit by many Limerick tradesmen because of this, even before the Boycott. Yet it is impossible to see how or why a minister, whether in 1904 or 2004, would have accumulated a debt of these proportions with a draper and it is possible that these allegations are simply intended as a justification for general default on Jewish traders. *Limerick Leader*, 22 April 1904; Moore, 'Anti-Semitism', 58-59; Duffy, 'Socio-Economic Analysis', 180; Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, 193.

⁴⁰⁷ David Goldberg, personal conversation with the author, 4 May 2012.

⁴⁰⁸ Bloom, 'Girlhood Recollections', 30-31; Bloom, Interview with Gottfried, 7-10; Laurence Elyan, 'The Jews of Cork', *Commentary* (December 1952), <http://www.commentarymagazine.com/article/the-jews-of-cork/> (accessed 23 June 2011). Unfavourable recollections of Myer Elyan are discussed in Section 3.2, in the context of intracomunal friction.

⁴⁰⁹ For an outline of an anti-Jewish incident that occurred in Cork in 1894, see L. Cohen, Letter to Dr. S. A. Hirsch, Secretary, Hovevei Zion Association, 9 May 1894 (Irish Jewish Museum, Box 5, Cat. 7.021 No. 10). This relates that 'our people here were bitterly attacked by the mob here on last Sunday houses and windows were broken and lots of damage done'. The *Jewish Chronicle* (11 May 1894) reported that the Jewish area had been attacked by a 'rabble' who looted a shop, stoned a house and chased and beat any passing Jews. The disturbance was apparently related to local resentments concerning Protestant street-preaching (see also *Jewish Chronicle*, 28 September 1894). On a local controversy that arose in 1881 in connection with a company owned by the Katz brothers who were, perhaps incorrectly, assumed to have been Jewish, see Hyman, *Jews of Ireland*, 219-21. In 1913 the former minister of the DHC, Lewis Mendelsohn, claimed that when he served in Dublin in the 1890s 'Jew-baiting was no uncommon thing in Limerick and Cork' (*Jewish Chronicle*, 21 March 1913).

⁴¹⁰ Duffy, 'Socio-Economic Analysis', 169-70, 194; Moore, 'Anti-Semitism', 49.

⁴¹¹ Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 19-25; Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 14-25.

suggest that these were isolated and relatively minor, passing incidents.⁴¹² Ó Gráda takes this a step further by completely omitting them from his analysis of Irish antisemitism.⁴¹³ By far the most sophisticated approach to date is that of Ó Dochartaigh, who aims to determine the extent to which Irish antisemitism was casual or active in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in order to place it and its expressions within their European context.⁴¹⁴ It goes without saying that these anti-Jewish incidents, as well as the triggers which provoked them, however minor, must have some place in any meaningful assessment.

Carmody and Daly's view that these earlier anti-Jewish occurrences were economically motivated tends to be supported by the information that we have on them, which is scarce and patchy.⁴¹⁵ However, these findings require elaboration in order to clarify the differences in setting between the major Irish centres of Jewish settlement. In Dublin, Cork and Limerick in the late nineteenth century, trade guilds and business competitors appear to have played an ongoing role in propagating anti-Jewish sentiment.⁴¹⁶ In Dublin the shortlived poster campaign of 1886, which led to some assaults on Jewish pedlars, appears to have been a one-off.⁴¹⁷ However a letter from 'A Polish Jew', published in the *Jewish Chronicle* in 1913, indicates that economic tensions continued to simmer beneath the surface.⁴¹⁸ In contrast, the string

⁴¹² Ryan, 'Limerick Jews', 27-29; Simmonds, 'Limerick', 18.

⁴¹³ Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, chap. 9.

⁴¹⁴ In preparation. Cf. Ó Dochartaigh, 'Limerick Riots'; Ó Dochartaigh, 'Reporting Jews in Irish Newspapers, 1868-1871 and 1898-1901' (paper presented at the Herzog Centre Research Seminar, Trinity College Dublin, 1 May 2012).

⁴¹⁵ Carmody and Daly, 'Anti-Semitism in Limerick and Cork'. Their suggestion of economic motivations for anti-Jewish prejudice appears to be corroborated by the Katz incident, the comments of the mayor of Cork John O'Reilly (see opening quote, Section 2.2), and concerns raised in the *Jewish Chronicle* (e.g., 18 May 1900) at the resentments that were provoked by Jewish involvement in Irish strikebreaking. Mendelsohn recalled that 'a feeling of irritation was worked up against [Jewish traders], and the epithet of "usurers" was often flung at them' (*Jewish Chronicle*, 21 March 1913).

⁴¹⁶ Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 19, citing Hyman; Carmody and Daly, 'Anti-Semitism in Limerick and Cork', 1-5. This is supported by a leaflet discussed by Manus O'Riordan which points to ongoing tensions between Jewish and non-Jewish workers ('Jewish Trade Unionism in Dublin', in *The Rise and Fall of Irish Anti-Semitism*, ed. Manus O'Riordan and Pat Feeley (Dublin: Labour History Workshop, 1984), 32-34). Katrina Goldstone believes that this aspect of Jewish/non-Jewish relations remains underexplored (review of Cormac Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland in the Age of Joyce*, in *Saothar* 32 (2006): 99).

⁴¹⁷ Hyman, *Jews of Ireland*, 161-62. Mendelsohn asserted that 'unfortunate public demonstrations [of anti-Jewish sentiment]' had never taken place in Dublin. He believed that conditions in general had 'altered for the better' in terms of non-Jewish attitudes towards Jews since his time in Ireland (*Jewish Chronicle*, 21 March 1913).

⁴¹⁸ *Jewish Chronicle*, 16 May 1913, 23 May 1913, and 30 May 1913. The writer of the letter disputes claims that had appeared in an earlier issue, that the Irish were free of anti-Jewish sentiment. He argues that Jews were only able to trade in the 'fashionable business streets' by assuming Irish names, and cites other instances of prejudice in the business world. His claims were, in turn, rebutted by Jacob Elyan.

of incidents which followed the attack on Lieb Siev's home in Limerick in 1884 was reportedly a pretext for defaulting on petty debts to local Jews.⁴¹⁹ The *Jewish Chronicle* reports this as a boycott which, together with other disturbances, persuaded some Jews to move to Cork.⁴²⁰ Hyman asserts, without any substantiation, that boycott was merely threatened at this time and that people soon returned to Limerick when this failed to materialise.⁴²¹ This dissonance suggests that the notion of a 'boycott' is, in this case, likely to be a matter of perspective. Nevertheless it is curious that the broad similarity between the events of 1884 and those of 1904 has been so widely overlooked by those attempting to identify the Boycott's 'whys' and 'wherefores'. Local tensions were obviously ongoing as, in 1887, the *Jewish Chronicle* reported an application to the Limerick Assizes to exempt Jews from jury duty due to local hostility.⁴²²

The only indication as to how these anti-Jewish incidents were perceived within the Jewish community, is the fact that they were considered significant enough to report to the Anglo-Jewish and, in one case at least, the Hebrew press.⁴²³ However as these generally brief and factual articles tend to lack in commentary, they provide little in terms of insight. From a communal perspective, the principal distinction in context between Limerick and the other major Irish cities was the readiness of its Jews to drag their internecine squabbles through the local newspapers.⁴²⁴ The role of this negative publicity in fanning the flames of the Boycott must also be taken into consideration. By 1904 Jews claimed to be on good terms with their non-Jewish neighbours,⁴²⁵ but it is impossible to establish the accuracy of such statements. In 1902, one of the reasons given for the purchasing of a cemetery in Limerick indicates the existence of tensions: 'So that we shall not be the object of derision in the eyes of

⁴¹⁹ Hyman, *Jews of Ireland*, 210-11, citing *Jewish Chronicle*, 25 April 1884; Duffy, 'Socio-Economic Analysis', 169.

⁴²⁰ *Jewish Chronicle*, 30 May 1884.

⁴²¹ Hyman, *Jews of Ireland*, 211.

⁴²² *Jewish Chronicle*, 15 July 1887.

⁴²³ *Jewish Chronicle*, 18 April 1884, 2 May 1884, 9 May 1884, and 26 August 1892. Dror Segev has found a reference in the Hebrew press from 1886 to what he describes as a 'little pogrom' in Limerick (personal conversation with the author, 26 November 2011).

⁴²⁴ For an overview of how these disputes were covered by the local press, see Des Ryan, 'Jewish Immigrants in Limerick – A Divided Community', in *Remembering Limerick: Historical Essays Celebrating the 800th Anniversary of Limerick's First Charter Granted in 1197*, ed. David Lee (Limerick: Limerick Civic Trust, 1997), 166-74; Ryan, 'Limerick Jews', 29.

⁴²⁵ *Jewish Chronicle*, 22 January 1904. Limerick's Jews argued that the Boycott had interfered with their otherwise amiable relations with their neighbours. However these interactions appear to have been of a somewhat middle class nature, such as giving to each other's charities and mingling socially, whereas the Boycott was primarily supported by Limerick's poorest inhabitants.

the gentiles in whose midst we live, who say: Is it not enough that the Hebrews be wanderers throughout their lifetime, but also after their death . . .'⁴²⁶ Also, as has been observed, Harris had previously regarded Limerick as a hotbed of bigotry and intolerance, and felt that the city's already volatile mood now placed Limerick's Jews in 'grave danger'.⁴²⁷

2.3.3.3 POST-1904: A 'POGROM' DECONSTRUCTED

Although in the ensuing century or so countless journal and newspaper articles have been devoted to the Limerick Boycott, the only detailed account is Dermot Keogh and Andrew McCarthy's *Limerick Boycott 1904: Anti-Semitism in Ireland*. This reflects the fact that there is little to be added to the generally accepted sequence of events, with which the existing literature is overwhelmingly preoccupied. Keogh and McCarthy make a useful contribution to the historical record, by setting out the chronology of the Boycott in full and by surveying it from a variety of angles, most notably through the lenses of the Irish authorities and the non-Jewish press. A useful selection of primary sources is also provided, allowing the reader to make his or her own assessments. Otherwise, however, the book represents little real advance from chapter two of Keogh's *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, as it is sorely lacking in insight and makes only tentative insinuations as to the causes of the Boycott, especially when it comes to the role of local sectarian politics. Even historian Diarmaid Ferriter, in his otherwise glowing review, has to concede that the book's analysis is 'disappointing . . . avoiding some questions that should have received more extensive treatment . . . But,' he gushes, 'the documents are wonderful.'⁴²⁸

Keogh and McCarthy are surprisingly coy about presenting outright, and standing by the implications of their findings in terms of Limerick's interdenominational friction. In January 1904, Harris had described Limerick to the editor of the *Jewish Chronicle* as 'a town where the bigotry of the lower order of Catholics against their fellow Protestants is simply shocking'.⁴²⁹ As early as May 1904, the Board of Deputies had already observed that the advocacy by benevolent

⁴²⁶ Record of the Holy Burial Society of the Limerick Hebrew Congregation, 1902, National Library of Ireland, Manuscripts Collection, MS 22,436 (hereafter cited as Record of Limerick HBS).

⁴²⁷ Harris, Letters to the Editor, *Jewish Chronicle*, 18 January 1904; Editor, *Jewish World*, 18 January 1904; Levin, 25 January 1904; and Chief Rabbi, 4 February 1904.

⁴²⁸ *Irish Times*, 5 March 2005.

⁴²⁹ Harris, Letter to Editor, *Jewish Chronicle*, 18 January 1904.

Protestants of the Jewish cause was causing misunderstanding and heightening tensions in the city.⁴³⁰ By June the Board felt that the Jewish community had ‘become a buffer between two parties striking each other through the Jew’, and tactfully noted that well-meaning Protestant interventions were unintentionally stirring the pot.⁴³¹ The following March the police also reported the situation as being manipulated by interested parties.⁴³² Subsequent scholarly examinations of a variety of primary sources have led Duffy, Simmonds and Ó Dochartaigh to precisely the same conclusion. Duffy sums up the Boycott as the reflection of a fundamental social and religious crisis, which resulted in the active manipulation of what he calls the ‘Creagh affair’ by numerous interested parties bent on harnessing the ‘Jewish Question’ to their own advantage.⁴³³ Simmonds argues that Creagh’s sermons were merely the fuse which ignited the underlying sectarian tensions that accounted for the longevity and viciousness of the Boycott. He goes so far as to suggest that the Jews may simply have been in the wrong place at the wrong time.⁴³⁴ Based on a survey of contemporary Irish newspapers, many of which were also used by Keogh and McCarthy, Ó Dochartaigh has concluded that as time progressed the Boycott became increasingly less about Limerick’s Jews and more about its interdenominational hostilities.⁴³⁵ This of course places the Boycott firmly within the pattern of the incidents that have been surveyed in Chapter One. These were likewise found to have had much more to do with wider political concerns than with ‘straightforward’ antisemitism.

Keogh and McCarthy’s main weakness is, typically, an over-reliance on oral testimony and a failure to balance this adequately against a sufficient range of other sources, particularly Jewish ones. Their embarrassing gaffe of describing Harris as ‘Chief Rabbi’ which was, presumably, taken up from a 1985 article by the local historian Des Ryan,⁴³⁶ implies that Keogh and McCarthy either did not consult the *Jewish Chronicle* at first hand or, yet again, did not take sufficient care in getting to

⁴³⁰ *Jewish Chronicle*, 20 May 1904.

⁴³¹ *Jewish Chronicle*, 10 June 1904.

⁴³² Duffy, ‘Socio-Economic Analysis’, 192.

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, 194.

⁴³⁴ Simmonds, ‘Limerick’, 20-21.

⁴³⁵ Ó Dochartaigh, ‘Limerick Riots’. Interestingly this remains the case, given the way in which the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been hijacked to local political ends in contemporary Northern Ireland. On this phenomenon, see Ithamar Handelman Smith and Eamonn Devlin, ‘Shalom Belfast’ (BBC, 2012).

⁴³⁶ Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 47; Ryan, ‘Jews of Limerick: Part Two’, 37.

grips with their Jewish context. This explains why, although they raise one of the most immediate questions surrounding the general understanding of what actually occurred in Limerick, namely the accuracy of the popular term ‘pogrom’, they spend the rest of their time avoiding the issue altogether. While Keogh and McCarthy claim that their use of the term ‘boycott’ indicates their own preference, this is immediately qualified by the continued insistence that those on the receiving end automatically understood what was happening to be a ‘pogrom’. This calls into question the sincerity of their assertion to be leaving the matter up to the reader to decide.⁴³⁷ It is moreover a contention which is never corroborated in any way, for the simple reason that, were Keogh and McCarthy to try, they would find it impossible to do so.

Section 1.3 has demonstrated that the concept of a pogrom, as it is now popularly understood, had yet to be fixed in the British mindset at the time of the Limerick Boycott. Even a cursory look at the *Jewish Chronicle* illustrates beyond all doubt how the Boycott was actually understood by contemporary Jewish observers, most notably the local correspondents who provided most of the *Chronicle’s* regional reports. Even in its most flowing and emotive commentary, almost every imaginable euphemism – besides ‘pogrom’ – features: principally ‘incident’, ‘attacks’, ‘trouble’, an ‘outburst’, an ‘affair’, ‘disturbances’, ‘agitation’ and, especially, ‘boycott’.⁴³⁸ The word ‘outrage’, which was frequently deployed at the time to describe anti-Jewish violence in the Russian empire, barely makes an appearance.⁴³⁹ Although Keogh and McCarthy regard Levin’s telegram of 18 January, when the community’s panic would have been at its height, as a prime indicator of the local Jewish response, the word ‘pogrom’ is, again, conspicuously absent.⁴⁴⁰ One member of the Board of Deputies, Jacob I. Jaffe, who describes himself as well acquainted with his co-religionists in Limerick, expressed the mood after Creagh’s second sermon as ‘indignant’ and

⁴³⁷ Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, ix-xvi; Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 26.

⁴³⁸ For how these events have typically been referred to in the *Jewish Chronicle* between 1904 and 2004, see 26 February 1904, 8 April 1904, 15 April 1904, 22 April 1904, 13 May 1904, 20 May 1904, 27 May 1904, 3 June 1904, 10 June 1904, 15 July 1904, 22 July 1904, 19 September 1904, 26 May 1905, 23 June 1905, 13 May 1910, 30 August 1912, 6 September 1912, 24 February 1922, 4 October 1929, 12 March 1936, 28 January 1966, 14 April 1989, 7 August 1992, 3 October 2003, and 13 January 2004.

⁴³⁹ *Jewish Chronicle*, 5 August 1904. This reports a relatively minor assault on David Weinronk and Louis Goldberg in April 1904, which may actually have had little to do with the Boycott given that the authorities initially ruled the perpetrator to be insane. The incident is fully set out in Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 106-07.

⁴⁴⁰ Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 47.

‘anxious’.⁴⁴¹ This is hardly the stuff of pogroms. By 29 January, the *Jewish Chronicle*, believing the situation to be calming due to the relative absence of violence, was already hopeful that ‘the entire incident may well be consigned to oblivion’.⁴⁴² Another sign of how the situation was perceived among Limerick’s Jews is the fact that Levin himself had called attention to one of Creagh’s self-proclaimed justifications in calling for a boycott, namely the expulsion of the Redemptorist Order from France, allegedly at the instigation of anti-clericalist Jewish politicians.⁴⁴³

Despite the common thread of ‘ritual murder’,⁴⁴⁴ the rarity of contemporary comparisons with Kishinev underlines how absurd these would have seemed less than a year after an atrocity that shocked the western world, and with a still volatile political situation prevailing in the Russian empire (see Section 1.4). As the Limerick community’s initial fears proved unfounded, the notion of such comparisons could only have become increasingly ludicrous to contemporary observers both within and beyond the city. For example the *Irish Times*, which in 1904 represented Protestant opinion and was, therefore, sympathetic towards the Boycott victims, makes no mention of a ‘pogrom’, even in its most melodramatic moments.⁴⁴⁵ As Seán Gannon points out, the continuing misuse of the term unintentionally belittles the seriousness of the genuine pogroms that were occurring at the time.⁴⁴⁶

The sources that Keogh and McCarthy *do* present, moreover, entirely overturn any popular notion of a ‘pogrom’, as well as underlining its complete inappropriateness in this context. Firstly it should be noted, for what it was worth, that Creagh himself repeatedly deplored violence and emphasised that he wanted the Jews to be left alone.⁴⁴⁷ More significantly, the contemporary police reports highlight that no grave violence or property damage occurred. These also confirm beyond any reasonable doubt how seriously the authorities at all levels took the situation, and how promptly and efficiently they acted in order to contain it. Although mobs periodically gathered and ugly scenes ensued, most of the cases tried in court were of a very minor

⁴⁴¹ *Jewish Chronicle*, 22 January 1904.

⁴⁴² *Jewish Chronicle*, 29 January 1904.

⁴⁴³ *Jewish Chronicle*, 15 April 1904.

⁴⁴⁴ See Creagh’s first sermon of 11 January 1904 as reported by the *Munster News* in Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 35-36.

⁴⁴⁵ *Irish Times*, 1 April 1904 and 13 April 1904.

⁴⁴⁶ Seán Gannon, ‘Ireland’s Questionable “Pogrom”’, *Magill* 1 (2008): 46.

⁴⁴⁷ This began with Creagh’s second sermon, cited in Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 53-54.

nature and attacks on property appear to have been isolated and insignificant.⁴⁴⁸ Even the two worst assaults, those on members of the Goldberg and Weinronk families, and on Elias Levin, respectively, did not result in any serious injury.⁴⁴⁹ All complaints were investigated promptly, and some were found to be groundless.⁴⁵⁰ State archives show the close contact that was maintained between the local police force and their superiors in Dublin Castle and, in turn, between Dublin and the seat of government in London. These highlight how meticulously the mood in Limerick was monitored and how effectively the local RIC contained the situation, preventing it from escalating in any serious way.⁴⁵¹ The RIC appraisal is supported by contemporary press coverage and by the DHC annual report of 1903-1904, which notes that the special protection of the authorities had prevented 'serious results'.⁴⁵² This suggests that Harris's initial understanding 'that the police only afford [the Jews] a half-hearted protection'⁴⁵³ is more a reflection of the Limerick community's own, probably instinctive, mistrust of the authorities than of the reality. The RIC was in a somewhat delicate position as too prominent a police presence was harmful for Jewish business.⁴⁵⁴ In addition its job was repeatedly made more tricky as Jewish traders insisted on pursuing their business in the city's back streets, where they would receive what the *Limerick Chronicle* described as 'a pretty hot reception' from the gathering crowds. Although it was difficult for the police to accompany them into these areas they did their best to prevent these incidents, which were reportedly infrequent.⁴⁵⁵ These circumstances further contributed to RIC exasperation and ambivalence.

⁴⁴⁸ E.g. *Limerick Leader*, 22 January 1904 (report of court-cases arising from the Boycott). Alleged attacks on the Goldberg home and the shops of the Siev and Blond families are outlined below, however the facts are, in the Blond case, disputed and, in the others, uncorroborated.

⁴⁴⁹ Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 46-47; Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 105-15.

⁴⁵⁰ Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 96-98.

⁴⁵¹ Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, xii-xiii, 42ff; Keogh, *Jews*, 32ff. Keogh and McCarthy's impression of the apparatus of policing, based on the reports of the Limerick Boycott, is that it was very professional, efficient and formidable.

⁴⁵² *Jewish Chronicle*, 29 January 1904; DHC Annual Report, 1903-1904, in DHC Minutes, 1904-1915. The *Chronicle* reported that, for example, on Monday, 25 January there had been 'no disturbance. But every Jew went about his business accompanied by a policeman.'

⁴⁵³ Harris, Letters to Emmanuel, 22 January 1904, and 7 April 1904. The claim by a 'Protestant fellow citizen' that police protection was 'totally inadequate' had also been relayed in January.

⁴⁵⁴ Duffy, 'Socio-Economic Analysis', 174; Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 43.

⁴⁵⁵ Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 33-34, 37; Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 101; *Limerick Chronicle*, 19 January 1904.

2.3.3.4 TO BOYCOTT OR NOT TO BOYCOTT?

While in reality the most serious consequence of Creagh's campaign was its toll on Jewish business in Limerick, its actual extent and impact are hard to determine. Statistics are frequently inflated and are intertwined with the folklore of the Boycott. Creagh's Confraternity boasted a large membership and significant influence in the city,⁴⁵⁶ and it is possible that members received personal visits to ensure that they were maintaining the Boycott, as claimed by local Jews.⁴⁵⁷ Furthermore there is some evidence that reluctant locals were coerced into giving up their dealings with Jews, either directly or through the fear of social ostracism.⁴⁵⁸ According to the Board of Deputies' investigation, within a few months the community was in serious difficulties due to boycott and default, and Fanny Goldberg, who was a child at the time, alleged that 'everybody had been ruined'.⁴⁵⁹

In contrast, the RIC reports indicate that Limerick's poorest Jews were the principal victims of the Boycott, as they were either unable to sustain the temporary loss of income or were laid off by employers who were no longer in a position to hire them.⁴⁶⁰ This is underlined in a letter from Harris to Emmanuel, dated 13 June, which discusses the plight of a man who had been forced to leave the city soon after the Boycott began, as his employer could no longer retain him as a hawker and he had

⁴⁵⁶ Moore, 'Anti-Semitism', 48; Keogh, *Jews*, 26-27; Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, xiv, 30, 140 (n.76); G. Goldberg, 'Historical Notes on the Limerick Boycott', 118-19. In 1903 the male membership of the Arch-Confraternity of the Holy Family numbered roughly 5,302 men and 1,226 boys, mostly working class, out of a total male population of approximately 38,151. Goldberg claims that 'non-membership virtually amounted to social suicide' within the Catholic community. The size of the Confraternity meant that meetings had to be held in sections three times a week, so Creagh would probably have repeated both of his anti-Jewish sermons at least once. John Barrett recalls that, in the 1950s, the Confraternity 'was run with authoritarian zeal . . . Its tentacles were everywhere; it functioned like the Mafia . . . looking after its members with jobs and homes and demanding loyalty in return' (*Irish Times*, 23 July 1998).

⁴⁵⁷ *Jewish Chronicle*, 15 April 1904; *Irish Times*, 23 July 1998. Reportedly Creagh himself was going door to door, threatening to denounce those who dealt with the Jews from the pulpit. This becomes more plausible when viewed in the light of Barrett's recollection that absences from the weekly Confraternity meetings were noted and followed by visits from one of the Order's prefects.

⁴⁵⁸ *Jewish Chronicle*, 15 April 1904; *Limerick Leader*, 20 April 1904; Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 71-76 (on the Keffe/Gleeson affair). At least three cases of intimidation were reported in the newspapers: the synagogue caretaker was pressured into resigning his post, an elderly lady felt obliged to cease her longstanding dealings with Jewish pedlars for fear of her neighbours' reaction and, in the countryside, there was the much cited dispute between Norah Keffe and Fr. Gleeson, which ended up in court. Feeley believes that only a small minority refused to be intimidated, and remained on good terms with their Jewish neighbours ('Levin', 37).

⁴⁵⁹ *Jewish Chronicle*, 10 June 1904; Simmonds, 'Limerick', 28 (Board of Deputies assessment); Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 50; and Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 122-23 (Fanny Goldberg's recollections).

⁴⁶⁰ Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 111, 123-25.

been unable to find any other work.⁴⁶¹ The better-off, as well as being able to downsize their operations, had more of a financial cushion to sustain them and to allow them to travel further afield in search of business.⁴⁶² As the Norah Keefe/Fr. Gleeson affair⁴⁶³ illustrates, outside the confines of the city the Redemptorists exercised less influence and the Boycott, consequently, remained less severe despite initial fears of contagion. The local RIC disputed the very notion of a ‘boycott’ as such, viewing it rather as an extremely localised fall in Jewish trade, an assessment that recalls Hyman’s interpretation of the anti-Jewish tensions of 1884. The RIC summed up the problem as an absence of new business and the difficulty in calling in some – but not all – debts. They believed that the situation would quickly reverse itself once matters calmed, as the lack of ready money to deal in shops left Limerick’s poorest inhabitants with little option but to fall back on the informal credit offered by Jewish traders. Nevertheless the police still felt that it would take some time for Jewish business to recover.⁴⁶⁴ The Board of Deputies’ investigation also found that the Boycott was in force primarily in the city.⁴⁶⁵ The general response of the Jewish authorities, furthermore, militates against the overall seriousness of the situation. Firstly it took some months to organise any formal Jewish relief efforts, and these were based in Limerick itself.⁴⁶⁶ Also, notwithstanding their report of the situation, Harris and Prag do not appear to have regarded the Boycott as overly serious or to have been unduly concerned about its long-term consequences.⁴⁶⁷

Reports as to the scope, duration and impact of the Boycott are somewhat contradictory, and often highly questionable. Moore observes that the call by ‘Lugaidh’ in October 1904 to redouble it implies that the Boycott had already lost its momentum by this time; indeed, according to Keogh, this was regarded by the Anglo-Irish authorities as an attempt to ‘kindle agitation against the Jews which had almost

⁴⁶¹ Harris, Letter to Emmanuel, 13 June 1904.

⁴⁶² Duffy, ‘Dublin’s Jewish Community’, 185.

⁴⁶³ For a detailed account of this incident, see Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 71-76.

⁴⁶⁴ Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 99-102.

⁴⁶⁵ *Jewish Chronicle*, 10 June 1904.

⁴⁶⁶ DHC Minutes, 15 January 1904; *Jewish Chronicle*, 22 April 1904; Harris, Letters to Jaffe, 31 March 1904, and 11 April 1904. According to the DHC Minutes, the Board of Deputies had immediately inaugurated a relief fund on receiving news of the Boycott but, of course, their official appeal was not launched for another three months. On 11 April, Harris mentioned having called a special meeting of the DHC with the intention of starting a collection for the Boycott victims, but there is no indication that this meeting ever took place and it may well have been pre-empted by the Board’s appeal. The first Jewish relief efforts, those of the Limerick community itself, do not appear to have commenced in earnest until the end of March.

⁴⁶⁷ *Jewish Chronicle*, 10 June 1904; Harris, Letter to Prag, 24 May 1904.

died down'.⁴⁶⁸ In March 1905 RIC County Inspector Thomas Hayes observed that city trade 'has unquestionably fallen off' but that Jews were doing 'fairly well' in rural areas.⁴⁶⁹ However, two months later, the Board of Deputies commented that the Boycott was dying a 'slow, painful, lingering death', and the incidents that were reported to the *Jewish Chronicle* imply that it remained in force throughout the year.⁴⁷⁰ That August Levin claimed that the Jews still required police protection.⁴⁷¹ Nevertheless police found that only eight families (forty-nine people) had decided to leave Limerick in the end, three of whom (seventeen people) had already been intending emigrants prior to the Boycott.⁴⁷² However, only eight of the remaining twenty-six families remained in good circumstances in May 1904, and the situation appears to have been much the same in March 1905.⁴⁷³ Yet Ryan has observed that the Boycott did not deter new families from settling in the city later on, as census returns show an overall decline in numbers of only thirty-nine people between 1901 and 1911.⁴⁷⁴ These also indicate that, by 1911, the economic position of the community had stabilised and, in some cases, improved.⁴⁷⁵ Communal numbers did not seriously decline until the 1920s by which time, as Gannon remarks, it would be perverse to blame the Boycott.⁴⁷⁶

Following the Board of Deputies 'mission' in May 1904, little further action appears to have been taken by the Jewish authorities in either London or Dublin. In July the *Jewish Chronicle* noted that further grants had been made to 'the deserving Jews of Limerick', the last mention of any relief efforts.⁴⁷⁷ No further reference is made to any payment to the community until 1907.⁴⁷⁸ The *Jewish Chronicle*

⁴⁶⁸ Moore, 'Anti-Semitism', 70; Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 50.

⁴⁶⁹ Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 123. The low-cost co-operative that Creagh established as an alternative to the weekly instalment system undoubtedly had some impact on Jewish trade in Limerick city, but to what actual extent is probably impossible to determine now.

⁴⁷⁰ *Jewish Chronicle*, 26 May 1905 (Board of Deputies assessment); *Jewish Chronicle*, 31 March 1905, 26 May 1905, 18 August 1905, 29 September 1905, and 10 November 1905.

⁴⁷¹ *Jewish Chronicle*, 18 August 1905.

⁴⁷² Moore, 'Anti-Semitism', 70; Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 123-25.

⁴⁷³ Duffy, 'Socio-Economic Analysis', 185 (n.68); Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 145 (n.152).

⁴⁷⁴ Des Ryan, 'The Jews, Fr. Creagh and the Mayor's Court of Conscience', *Old Limerick Journal* 38 (Winter 2002): 52; *Limerick Leader*, 11 November 1997. Regarding census returns, see also Moore, 'Anti-Semitism', 71.

⁴⁷⁵ Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, 192-93.

⁴⁷⁶ Gannon, 'Ireland's Questionable Pogrom', 47.

⁴⁷⁷ *Jewish Chronicle*, 22 July 1904. Note the use of the term 'deserving'; cf. Section 1.5, above (Anglo-Jewish context of the term); Chapter Four (philosophical outlook of Irish communal charities).

⁴⁷⁸ In 1907 the Board had pledged to make available to the LHC 'a sum not exceeding forty pounds out of the Limerick Fund' provided congregational affairs were ordered to their satisfaction (*Jewish*

maintained a complete silence regarding Limerick from September 1904 to March 1905, when sporadic coverage of the Boycott resumed. From 1906, when Creagh's term as head of the Confraternity ended and he left the city for good, its coverage of Limerick returned to the routine, occasional reporting of communal activities.

Taken in sum, the evidence suggests that Creagh did attempt to maintain the Boycott, but with debateable success, and mainly in Limerick city where the Redemptorists exercised most influence. For his trouble, he received a fine send-off from his flock, complete with illuminated address and a queue to shake his hand. Creagh was also applauded by the local press for having combated the 'usurious grasp of foreigners planted in our midst'.⁴⁷⁹

2.3.3.5 NARRATIVE AND COUNTER-NARRATIVE

Gerald Goldberg states that the Boycott is also known as 'the Colooney Street Outrage'.⁴⁸⁰ However, as there does not appear to be any other written record of this, it is likely that this was a purely local name which was soon eclipsed by the ubiquitous popular myth of a Limerick 'pogrom', which was clearly gathering steam behind the scenes. In keeping with the best of tradition the notion of a 'pogrom' gives the impression of being well-established by 1970, when a national controversy ensued from injudicious remarks made by the then mayor of Limerick, Stephen Coughlan. Yet a closer examination indicates otherwise. Up to 1970 the *Jewish Chronicle* had only twice referred to the events of 1904 as a 'pogrom'. In 1917 it had published a lengthy pro-Zionist letter from Sol Goldberg, in the course of which he claimed to have survived two pogroms, in Limerick and in Leeds respectively.⁴⁸¹ In 1958 the obituary of Rachel Goldberg more reservedly referred to 'what came to be known as "the Limerick Pogrom"'.⁴⁸² Since the Coughlan affair, the editors of the *Jewish Chronicle* have tended to remain sceptical and far from unanimous as to this choice of

Chronicle, 26 April 1907). However, as Simmonds has observed (see above) that the balance of this fund remained unspent until as late as 1910, the payment does not appear to have been made.

⁴⁷⁹ On the remainder of Creagh's term in Limerick and his departure, see Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 129-31; Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 51-53. Creagh continued to be controversial in his subsequent career (Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 139 n.71).

⁴⁸⁰ G. Goldberg, 'Historical Notes on the Limerick Boycott', 121.

⁴⁸¹ *Jewish Chronicle*, 26 October 1917. Sol Goldberg alleges that 'in Limerick my body felt the pain but my soul remained untouched, because it knew the kindness of the Irish people'. This assertion is not only uncorroborated, but called into question by the Zionist agenda of the letter.

⁴⁸² *Jewish Chronicle*, 21 November 1958.

words.⁴⁸³ Likewise the term ‘pogrom’ does not appear in the *Irish Times* until years later when, like the *Jewish Chronicle*, its editors wisely remained cautious regarding the term.

Far more widespread and enduring than the ‘pogrom’ myth is what I term the ‘destruction’ narrative: the claim that the Boycott decimated the city’s small but purportedly well-established Jewish community. This presents an image of a community ‘destroyed’,⁴⁸⁴ ‘hounded out’,⁴⁸⁵ or irreversibly weakened⁴⁸⁶ as a direct consequence. The numbers who left in 1904 are frequently inflated to eighty people, or two-thirds of the Limerick community, however this has occasionally been cited as high as one hundred and eighty people, notwithstanding the fact that the city’s Jewish population only numbered one hundred and sixty-one at the time.⁴⁸⁷ In 1998, Keogh stated that the community was dealt a severe blow which threatened its viability and forced virtually the entire community to leave.⁴⁸⁸ By 2005 he and McCarthy had modified this assessment to one of irreversible decline.⁴⁸⁹ These exaggerations presumably originate in 1904, with the report of the Board of Deputies’ investigators, and with Levin’s disputing of the RIC statistics with the contention that seventy-five people had been forced to leave through the ‘boycott, violence and constant abuse brought upon us by Father Creagh’.⁴⁹⁰ Like the ‘pogrom’ myth, the ‘destruction’ narrative was relatively late in entering the Boycott discourse but, in contrast, it has enjoyed an unchallenged and unqualified prominence in the *Jewish Chronicle*, *Irish Times* and *Limerick Leader*.⁴⁹¹

The counter-narratives of the Boycott, likewise, owe their genesis to the discourse of 1904 itself. These too represent the ongoing elaboration of a set of

⁴⁸³ For an overview of the *Jewish Chronicle*’s general portrayal of the Boycott since 1970 see, e.g., *Jewish Chronicle*, 24 April 1970, 1 May 1970, 8 May 1970, 7 September 1984, 29 August 1986, 19 August 1988, 14 April 1989, 30 November 1990, 7 August 1992, 17 October 1997, 19 March 1999, 17 March 2000, 1 September 1995, 3 October 2003, 12 December 2003, and 13 January 2004. The *Jewish Chronicle* appears only rarely to have used the term ‘pogrom’ in all seriousness, on one occasion in a letter from a member of the public (17 October 1997, 19 August 1988, and 17 March 2000). In contrast, it is used sceptically in the *Jewish Chronicle* of 7 August 1992, 13 January 2004, and 30 November 1990.

⁴⁸⁴ *Jewish Chronicle*, 21 November 1958 and 24 April 1970.

⁴⁸⁵ *Jewish Chronicle*, 28 May 1965, 19 August 1988, and 17 March 2000.

⁴⁸⁶ *Jewish Chronicle*, 30 November 1990, 1 September 1995, 12 December 2003, and 13 January 2004.

⁴⁸⁷ McGee, ‘Jews of Limerick’, 160; *Limerick Leader*, 24 January 2004. Cf. *Limerick Leader*, 11 November 1997.

⁴⁸⁸ Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 50-51.

⁴⁸⁹ Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, ix, 125-26.

⁴⁹⁰ *Jewish Chronicle*, 10 June 1904; Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 125.

⁴⁹¹ *Irish Times*, 20 April 1970, 27 April 1970, 18 September 1984, and 15 September 1984; *Limerick Leader*, 20 April 1970 and 27 April 1970.

claims which become increasingly sophisticated with each public airing in debates that have repeatedly attracted countrywide publicity and inflamed sentiment on both sides of the divide. Although the Coughlan affair was neither the first nor the last of these, it was undoubtedly the most provocative and contentious, making the Boycott national headline news over six decades after the fact. Coughlan had received a hostile reception when he concluded an invited address to a National Credit Union League meeting with an impromptu and emotional attack on Jewish trading methods in Limerick in 1904, which echoed Creagh in many respects. He stood by his words, arguing that he had simply intended to set the context for the establishment by the Redemptorist Order of Limerick's first credit union. When Coughlan refused to withdraw his comments and the Labour Party administration chose to rebuke rather than to expel him, a series of very public resignations from the party brought the story onto the front pages of national newspapers. This attracted a mixed reaction, which included press releases from a variety of prominent figures and an ongoing discussion in the letters page of the *Irish Times*. The controversy finally ended with an emotional statement from Coughlan, expressing regret but not retracting the offending remarks. This was accepted on behalf of the Jewish community by the then Chief Rabbi, Isaac Cohen.⁴⁹² The Boycott made its next appearance in the *Irish Times* in 1984 when a Limerick Redemptorist, Fr. Michael Baily, used a letter which had innocently commented on the poor condition of Limerick's Jewish cemetery, as the springboard for an expanded defence of Creagh.⁴⁹³

The most recent and sophisticated presentation of these counter-arguments to date appears in chapter two of ex-Confraternity man Criostóir O'Flynn's *Beautiful Limerick*. This is a rambling, belligerent, self-indulgent and often vitriolic diatribe against what O'Flynn regards as an unjust maligning of his native city through the

⁴⁹² *Jewish Chronicle*, 24 April 1970 and 1 May 1970. This controversy received extensive coverage in the *Irish Times* during April and May 1970, in particular in the letters page where it is repeatedly referred to as a pogrom (22 April 1970, 25 April 1970, 27 April 1970, 2 May 1970, and 6 May 1970). See also *Limerick Leader*, 20 April 1970, 25 April 1970, and 27 April 1970; and *Limerick Chronicle*, 21 April 1970.

⁴⁹³ Baily's comments in August 1984 sparked another public controversy regarding the Boycott, which was played out in the letters page of the *Irish Times*. For a résumé of his arguments, see McGee, 'Jews of Limerick', 165; for a selection of letters, see Manus O'Riordan and Pat Feeley, *The Rise and Fall of Irish Anti-Semitism* (Dublin: Labour History Workshop, 1984), 14-17; and *Irish Times*, 15 September 1984, 10 August 1984, and 18 September 1984. The state of the cemetery had apparently been raised in a television documentary by Gerald Goldberg (*Jewish Chronicle*, 10 February 1984).

perpetuation of ‘this derogatory fiction’.⁴⁹⁴ The placing of this chapter within the book which, whether accidentally or not, coincided with the centenary year of the Boycott, indicates the depth of O’Flynn’s perceived need for such a lengthy and thorough repudiation.⁴⁹⁵ O’Flynn’s rebuttal comprises repeated offhand references to Keogh as ‘the Cork Professor’ and the frequent insertion of the adjective ‘Jewish’ where none is required. He depicts Levin as an unscrupulous master publicist who had intentionally distorted the truth from the very outset, and whose general dishonesty is evident from his own debt evasion. In all-too-predictable contrast, Creagh is portrayed as a man whose entire career was driven by a heartfelt devotion to the welfare of the working classes. O’Flynn echoes Creagh’s assertion that the Boycott was aimed at Jewish trading methods rather than at Jews themselves, and that these were injurious to the poor everywhere that Jews settled.⁴⁹⁶ He views the Boycott as a trivial matter which has been hugely exaggerated by Jews and anti-clericalists into ‘pro-Jewish’ spin. O’Flynn even attempts to justify Creagh’s references to ritual murder, claiming that the only genuine persecution – that of Catholics – perpetually passes uncommented on, whilst any criticism of Jews is automatically denounced as antisemitism. Indeed his only valid observation is that dictionary definitions of the word prove that what happened in Limerick cannot, in any way, be construed as a pogrom.

2.3.3.6 THE LIMERICK ‘POGROM’ AND THE POLITICS OF MEMORY

Raphael Siev related that his grandparents had been chased into their shop during the Boycott, before the shop was attacked, forcing them to put up the shutters. According to Siev, his grandparents’ many non-Jewish customers subsequently defaulted on their debts, destroying the business and forcing the family to eat their stock in order to survive.⁴⁹⁷ This is remarkably similar to an alleged attack on Marcus Blond’s shop which, at the time, the *Limerick Leader* had believed to be a gross

⁴⁹⁴ O’Flynn, *Beautiful Limerick*, 156-57. What follows is a résumé of the principal arguments of chapter 2.

⁴⁹⁵ Next to attract O’Flynn’s righteous indignation, in chapter 3, is Frank McCourt’s international bestseller, *Angela’s Ashes*, which he dismisses as ‘a gross libel’ (*Beautiful Limerick*, 225).

⁴⁹⁶ These arguments, together with O’Flynn’s portrayals of Levin and Creagh, echo those of Bailly and the Redemptorists. Regarding the general Redemptorist response to the Boycott over the years, see *Limerick Leader*, 17 April 1970, 29 November 2003, and 24 January 2004; Fr. Brendan McConvery, ‘The Confraternity and the Jews’, *Copiosa: Newsletter of the Irish Redemptorists* (Summer 2004): 3.

⁴⁹⁷ Ryan, ‘Jews: Part Two’, 40; Rivlin, *Shalom Ireland*, 32-33.

exaggeration of an episode where two passing drunks had taken down a partly open shutter from the shop window.⁴⁹⁸ One eyewitness, Isaac Siev, recalled in 1936 that ‘The panic was indescribable’.⁴⁹⁹ Clearly what we at a safe distance can afford to regard as a relatively minor unpleasantness should not be underestimated in terms of the trauma that it caused to those on the receiving end, especially when amplified and coloured by contemporaneous events in the Russian empire. Over the years the tale has been embellished and sensationalised, and this has had strong repercussions for how it has been understood and, in turn, portrayed by others. This distorted view of the Boycott has shaped the collective memory of the victims’ descendants, the wider Jewish community and, of course, of Limerick’s non-Jewish citizens.

In 1970 both Gerald Goldberg and Louis Lentin called for a comprehensive history to be written in order to bring the full details of the Boycott into the open.⁵⁰⁰ Yet, more than forty years later, its ‘history’ still consists of little more than a plethora of painfully repetitive descriptive articles. The contentiousness that has always surrounded the Boycott has encouraged a culture of evasion, creating a vicious circle in which both narrative and counter-narrative thrive and reinforce each other. Insofar as distorted traditional narrative has fanned the flames of aggressive denial, the bellicose and scornful tone of the counter-narrative has buttressed and standardised it. The sensitivity of the topic has also served the agenda of those who choose to regard the Boycott as an aberration in otherwise largely harmonious Irish Jewish relations, allowing them to persist in the fantasy that Ireland is free of anti-Jewish prejudice.⁵⁰¹ The overall consequence has been to dissuade more measured analysis, given the danger that the findings of any robust scholarly investigation might well be misrepresented as antisemitic,⁵⁰² and the widespread implication that the Boycott, as an acontextual, hermetic and stand-alone episode, has minimal wider relevance. This leads to the kind of emasculated assessment that is typical of Keogh and McCarthy,

⁴⁹⁸ *Limerick Leader* Millennium Supplement, 1 January 2000; see also *Jewish Chronicle*, 27 May 1904, which appears to be reporting the same incident.

⁴⁹⁹ *Jewish Chronicle*, 12 June 1936. However, Siev’s assessment is somewhat questionable, given that he also recalled that ‘Creagh was immediately silenced and very soon after removed from his scene of pernicious activity’, following an approach to Cardinal Merry Del Val.

⁵⁰⁰ *Irish Times*, 21 April 1970 and 2 May 1970.

⁵⁰¹ See, for example, the assertions of Joe Briscoe, which are quoted above in opening.

⁵⁰² Manus O’Riordan, ‘GAA Founder No Blooming Anti-Semite! Some Aspects of Jewish History in the Age of Joyce’, *An Fear Rua: The GAA Unplugged* (April 2007): 1-2, <http://www.anfearra.com/story.asp?id=2126> (accessed 2 December 2011). The risk of misinterpretation is exemplified by O’Riordan’s largely rhetorical question, ‘Is Cormac Ó Gráda a pogrom denier . . .?’ on the strength of Ó Gráda’s challenge to Irish Jewish arrival myths (see Section 2.1).

which reinforces a myth that stands in direct conflict with the primary evidence presented. The great unanswered question is: where, how and why these traditional narratives have arisen, and what deeper purpose they might serve.

Paradoxically, despite the claims of Creagh's would-be defenders, the 'pogrom' myth appears to be most established and accepted in the very place where it is most hotly disputed, namely in Limerick itself. The term has featured regularly and uncritically in the columns of the *Limerick Leader*, at least from the time when the Coughlan controversy made headline and front-page news in April 1970, to its reporting of a statement by the city's Redemptorists on the centenary of the Boycott in January 2004.⁵⁰³ The indigenoussness of the 'pogrom' myth is further underlined by the venomous tone of personal affront that is adopted by its most vocal deniers, as exemplified by O'Flynn. This is especially reserved for attacking local upholders of the myth, such as the late politician and amateur historian Jim Kemmy. O'Flynn dismisses Kemmy, who had been one of Baily's principal opponents in 1984, as a pro-Jewish dupe.⁵⁰⁴ As Gerald Goldberg once observed, the 'Limerick Pogrom' still haunts the city.⁵⁰⁵

An alternative interpretation of the Boycott, which is also based on local experience, is the little-known and engaging play *Borrowed Robes* by Limerickman John Barrett.⁵⁰⁶ Although Barrett acknowledges that *Borrowed Robes* is a literary interpretation 'that goes way beyond recorded fact',⁵⁰⁷ the play is illustrative of the moral dilemmas that are involved in fictionalising sensitive historical events. Barrett's research has yielded a somewhat traditional but bifurcated narrative which appears to have a lot less grounding in the realities of the Boycott than in Barrett's own troubled relationship with Catholicism, and in the parallels that he discerns with contemporary anti-immigrant sentiment in Ireland. In an interview, he explains that the play is an attempt to explore what he sees as the human side of the story, namely how 'a generally charitable and caring [priest] could launch such a vicious attack'.

⁵⁰³ *Limerick Leader*, 20 April 1970, 25 April 1970, 27 April 1970, 11 November 1997, 1 January 2000, 24 January 2004, and 6 November 2010; see also *Limerick Chronicle*, 21 April 1970. Cf. the generally more measured reportage of the *Jewish Chronicle* that has been discussed above. The manner of the *Leader's* coverage from 1970 onwards is somewhat ironic given the contemptuous timbre of its contemporary reporting of the Boycott.

⁵⁰⁴ O'Flynn, *Beautiful Limerick*, 214-22.

⁵⁰⁵ G. Goldberg, 'Historical Notes on the Limerick Boycott', 123-24.

⁵⁰⁶ John Barrett, *Borrowed Robes* (1998), *Playography Ireland*, <http://www.irishplayography.com/play.aspx?playid=34> (accessed 21 November 2011). With grateful thanks to Professor Mária Kurdi for bringing this play to my attention.

⁵⁰⁷ *Irish Times*, 23 July 1998.

Nevertheless, Barrett's intention is not to absolve Creagh; he describes Creagh's original sermons as 'just too offensive to quote' in full and views himself as having shown the Church 'in a very bad light'. He believes that the Boycott was accompanied by 'assaults, abuse, burnings and lootings . . . making it impossible for Jewish families to remain in the city and, after two years, almost all of them had left'.⁵⁰⁸ At the same time, he unintentionally paints a relatively positive picture of Creagh's superiors, by implying that they disapproved of his actions and moved to defuse the situation by first silencing and then redeploying him. In particular, the character representing Creagh's immediate superior, 'Fr. MacNamara', is a laid-back figure who advises his overly intense subordinate, 'Fr. Keane', to let his hair down occasionally and take his celibacy vows a little less seriously.⁵⁰⁹ In reality the Confraternity officials openly endorsed Creagh's views⁵¹⁰ and, as has been shown, left him in place to serve his full term as director. Furthermore, while the Redemptorists have modified their views in recent years to include increasingly forceful condemnations of Creagh and public expressions of atonement for the harm he inflicted, they continue to stop short of an open and unqualified denunciation.⁵¹¹ Typical is Fr. Brendan McConvery's article for the Order's Irish newsletter, again written in the centenary year of the Boycott. This describes it as 'a shameful chapter' which brooks no defence in light of the 'dangerous racism' and 'bitterness' which it 'unleashed in a community' – but concludes with a plea to his brethren to judge Creagh in the light of a life and career devoted to the care of the poor.⁵¹² Though no doubt well-meaning, this is ultimately not so far removed – except in tone – from the excuses of O'Flynn *et al.*

While the 'pogrom' myth is the uncomfortable preserve of Limerick, the 'destruction' narrative is conspicuously favoured by high-profile descendants of Boycott victims. As noted this has overcome contradictions, inaccuracies and challenges, effectively to become the standard narrative of 1904. Gerald Goldberg repeatedly alleged that Limerick's Jews were starved, beaten, boycotted and driven out of the city.⁵¹³ However the tone of his later comments and writings suggests that

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁹ Barrett, *Borrowed Robes*.

⁵¹⁰ Harris, Letter to Levin, 25 January 1904; Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 39-40; Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 60.

⁵¹¹ *Jewish Chronicle*, 12 December 2003; *Limerick Leader*, 29 November 2003, and 24 January 2004.

⁵¹² McConvery, 'Confraternity', 3.

⁵¹³ *Irish Times*, 21 April 1970; Rivlin, *Shalom Ireland*, 32.

he gradually moderated his views, but without ever retracting or modifying previous statements which remain in the public domain. For example, he initially maintained that Jews did not ‘need a dictionary to define a pogrom’ but, by the late 1980s, was acknowledging that ‘pogrom’ was a ‘misnomer’ according to strict definitions of the word.⁵¹⁴ In latter years, he even hinted that the real cause of the communal decline in Limerick was the ongoing communal feud which, rather than the Boycott, had persuaded his own father to leave.⁵¹⁵ In 1984 Ronit Lentin defiantly demanded, ‘Ought I to thank Michael Baily’s Limerick ancestors . . . for not taking the life, breaking the bones or burning the house of the Lentin family in 1904 . . .?’ She then neatly shifts attention to what she believes to have been Creagh’s real motivation for the Boycott: the use of antisemitism as a means of creating a rift between the Jewish and Catholic working classes of Limerick, and of diverting the latter from a plight which Creagh effectively did little to alleviate.⁵¹⁶ In a 1997 television documentary, Simon Sebag Montefiore alleged that his Jaffe relatives had been driven out of Limerick during the Boycott.⁵¹⁷ Ryan, however, contested Montefiore’s claims in the *Limerick Leader*, arguing that he had located the Jaffes in local census returns some years after the Boycott, from which others observe that they, as dentists, had actually been exempted.⁵¹⁸ Nevertheless there is little doubt as to which version of events reached the wider audience, and continues to influence collective memory in general.

Another cornerstone of the ‘destruction’ narrative is the tale of the above-mentioned Marcus Blond, who was forced to move to Dublin when his business in Limerick fell through in 1904.⁵¹⁹ Blond was depicted as Creagh’s ‘principal victim’ and ‘a modern martyr’ when he died the following year after an unsuccessful operation.⁵²⁰ Grande’s claim that Blond had died of a broken heart was recently echoed by Rivlin, who stated that at least one death was attributed by the Anglo-

⁵¹⁴ Compare comments cited in Gannon, ‘Ireland’s Questionable Pogrom’, 46, with G. Goldberg, ‘Historical Notes on the Limerick Boycott’, 120.

⁵¹⁵ Ó Dochartaigh, ‘Reporting Jews’; Price, ‘Charles Beresford’, 43.

⁵¹⁶ *Irish Times*, 10 August 1984.

⁵¹⁷ For a brief review of this programme, see *Jewish Chronicle*, 17 October 1997.

⁵¹⁸ *Limerick Leader*, 11 November 1997; Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, 192; Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, 145 (n.152).

⁵¹⁹ Blond’s letter to the *Irish Times* of 10 April 1904 in which he describes his plight is cited in Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 49-50. The *Jewish Chronicle* claimed that Blond had been ruined and forced to sell up ‘for a trifle’ (14 April 1906).

⁵²⁰ *Jewish Chronicle*, 14 April 1906 and 26 May 1905. Blond’s cause of death was, however, confirmed by a police investigation (Moore, ‘Anti-Semitism’, 53).

Jewish authorities to ‘stress and strain’.⁵²¹ Blond’s ostensibly dramatic death has received considerably more popular attention than the equally tragic predicament of his family, whom he left destitute and dependent on charity.⁵²² Blond himself was buried entirely at the expense of the Holy Burial Society, an arrangement that was reserved solely for the poorest members of the community.⁵²³ The DHC correspondence indicates that Blond’s widow, with understandable reluctance, sent two of her younger children to the Norwood Jewish Orphanage in England the following year.⁵²⁴ Harris strongly advocated sending Lily, aged ten, and Harry, aged five, to ‘one of the greatest of our Jewish Institutions’ where they would be ‘looked after by the first of our people in England’, and believed that Esther Blond should be ‘very grateful’ for the support pledged by the Board of Deputies.⁵²⁵ As demand for Norwood far exceeded its capacity and admittance was dependent on periodic elections, Harris exerted himself to get the necessary certification in time to support the children’s immediate admittance.⁵²⁶ This included persuading Levin to provide certification of the Blonds’ marriage, which he had failed to register. Harris reassured Levin that no legal repercussions would ensue from this omission as his written guarantee would satisfy Norwood’s halakhic requirements, and that he would be paid for his services.⁵²⁷ Their absence from the 1911 census returns indicates that Lily and Harry were successful in their application to Norwood. The census also shows another son Issy, aged seven, who would have been born in and around the time of the

⁵²¹ Duffy, ‘Socio-Economic Analysis’, 192-93; Rivlin, *Shalom Ireland*, 33.

⁵²² *Jewish Chronicle*, 26 May 1905.

⁵²³ Minutes of the Holy Burial Society, 3 April 1905, Asher Benson Papers, National Library of Ireland, Acc. 5734 (hereafter cited as HBS Minutes).

⁵²⁴ See DHC Correspondence Book No. 1, May to July 1906. On the history of Norwood, see Edward S. Conway, ‘The Origins of the Jewish Orphanage’, *Transactions and Miscellanies of the Jewish Historical Society of England* 22 (1968-1969): 53-66; and its website, <http://norwood.org.uk/Page/A-History-of-Norwood> (accessed 14 March 2013). Nowadays Norwood focuses on family support services, in particular those relating to disability and special needs.

⁵²⁵ Harris, Letters to Esther Blond, 2 May 1906; and Emmanuel, 2 May 1906. Harris encouraged Blond, should she decide to keep her children in Dublin after all, to send them to the Jewish national school at Adelaide Road (see Section 3.1) where, he emphasised, they would receive an excellent education entirely free of charge.

⁵²⁶ The paperwork required by Norwood appears to have consisted of birth, educational and medical certificates for each child, their parents’ marriage certificate and their father’s death certificate. See Harris, Letters to Dr. Alexander Gordon, 2 May 1906; District Registrar, Limerick, 2 May 1906; Emmanuel, 26 May 1906; Hyman Goldfoot, 1 June 1906 and 8 June 1906; D. Spiro, Secretary of Norwood, 8 June 1906 and 11 June 1906; Blond, 8 June 1906; and Levin, 1 June 1906, 5 June 1906, and 8 June 1906. On admission to Norwood and the election process, see Convery, ‘Jewish Orphanage’, esp. 55-57.

⁵²⁷ Harris, Letters to Levin, 1 June 1906 and 8 June 1906. Harris’s letter of 8 June sets out a written formula for Levin to follow, which had presumably been supplied by Norwood: ‘I hereby certify that Max Blond and Esther Blond were married at Limerick Synagogue on the 14th November 1890’.

Boycott. Esther Blond is listed as a grocer, and her two elder daughters, Gertrude and Rose, as grocer's assistants.⁵²⁸ By 1913 the Blonds were struggling to maintain this previously viable business. Financial assistance was provided from within the Dublin community, with the expectation that Gertrude and Rose would move on to London and Issy could be 'easily got in' to Norwood. However Norwood requested that support for Issy be sought from the local Poor Law Union instead. Communal representatives felt that, under Ireland's 'present political [presumably, sectarian] complication', they 'would prefer not to trespass on the generosity of Local non-Jewish charitable Institutions'. When Norwood held out, the Dublin representatives continued to protest that they could not bother the local Union again.⁵²⁹ The outcome of this impasse does not appear to be recorded, and there is no other trace of the Blonds in the communal records for this period. Esther Blond died in Dublin in 1953.⁵³⁰

Given the nebulosity of traditional narratives and the absence of any hard evidence to support them, it is hard to pinpoint precisely where and why they arose, and why they are so passionately defended by Irish Jews. Beyond the observance of traditional injunctions to remember the injustices of the past, one clue as to their function may simply be a sense of inner alienation that is belied by the outward success of its most vocal proponents. Goldberg lamented the lack of co-religionists in the highest echelons of Irish professional life, which he put down to invisible social barriers, and nourished a lifelong resentment at the Irish government's illiberal immigration policies during the Nazi period.⁵³¹ The alienation of Goldberg's cousin Louis Lentin, notwithstanding a successful career in broadcasting, has already been noted in Section 2.2.⁵³² Likewise his wife, Ronit, includes in her assessments of Irish 'antisemitism' a litany of ugly incidents that she experienced in both professional and personal settings since moving to Ireland in 1968.⁵³³ The traditional Boycott narrative provides Goldberg and the Lentins with a tangible peg on which to hang their own frustrations, a means of challenging the equally tenacious myth of 'no antisemitism in

⁵²⁸ Lentin, 'Ireland Census 1911'.

⁵²⁹ Minutes of the Dublin Jewish Board of Guardians, 15 March 1914, 24 August 1913, 26 July 1914, 9 August 1914, and 6 September 1914 (hereafter cited as DJBG Minutes).

⁵³⁰ Stuart Rosenblatt, ed., *Irish Jewish Memorial Inscriptions: Aughavanagh Road, Dolphins Barn, Dublin 8, 1898-2003* (Dublin, 2004).

⁵³¹ *Jewish Chronicle*, 30 January 2004; G. Goldberg, 'Jew, Irish Man and Cork Man'.

⁵³² L. Lentin, 'Grandpa', 1.

⁵³³ R. Lentin, 'Who Ever', 156-57.

Ireland' and an opportunity to vent their resentment at a perpetual sense of outsidership which is poorly concealed by a fig-leaf of outward integration.

Goldberg's role in particular, as the most outspoken and prominent advocate of this narrative through a string of public controversies from the 1950s on, and as one of Keogh's principal Jewish sources, is intriguing. Goldberg consistently defended the standard version of events in the face of all challenges. In the course of the Coughlan controversy, he commented to the press, 'My father was one of those who were beaten on the streets, and he carried to his grave on his head and forehead the marks of Limerick's peculiar brand of Christianity . . . Father Creagh is dead, but "Father" Coughlan lives'. The Goldberg home had, reportedly, been closest to the Confraternity church and Goldberg went on to cite his elder sisters' recollections: 'They broke the windows and smashed in the door. When our family . . . took refuge in an upstairs room, they smashed everything they could lay their hands on. For months Jews were starved into submission and beaten. My sisters, aged seven and eight, were the sole sources of food supply.'⁵³⁴ Goldberg was subsequently persuaded to retract some of his sharper comments due to public opinion.⁵³⁵ Ben Briscoe, who came out in defence of Coughlan and openly sought to distance his family from Goldberg's views, described him as 'a man with a very large chip on his shoulder'.⁵³⁶ This, in turn, provoked a defence of Goldberg's self-professed restraint by Louis Lentin.⁵³⁷ Goldberg initially criticised the Chief Rabbi's acceptance of what he regarded as Coughlan's 'limited' and 'qualified' apology, but appears to have been promptly persuaded by Cohen himself to back down.⁵³⁸

Goldberg's proclaimed reticence on the matter, and his insistent denial of rancour at his father's express instigation,⁵³⁹ sit uneasily with the strident tone of his public statements. He repeatedly referred to a promise made to the people of Limerick in the 1960s to allow the Boycott to rest, and an undertaking never to publish his own private research on the subject which, he claimed, consisted of an extensive personal archive of contemporary press reports and oral evidence.⁵⁴⁰ His

⁵³⁴ *Irish Times* 21 April 1970.

⁵³⁵ *Limerick Leader*, 25 April 1970.

⁵³⁶ *Irish Times*, 27 April 1970.

⁵³⁷ *Irish Times*, 2 May 1970.

⁵³⁸ *Irish Times*, 27 April 1970.

⁵³⁹ G. Goldberg, speech on Jewish experience in Ireland, 2.

⁵⁴⁰ *Irish Times*, 21 April 1970. Goldberg reportedly told Keogh that he had conducted extensive interviews with his parents and with the extended families of the Boycott victims (Keogh and McCarthy, *Limerick Boycott*, vii).

son David is, however, unsure as to the real extent of this archive, which has not survived.⁵⁴¹ In fact there is scarcely any material concerning Limerick and the Boycott among Gerald's papers in University College, Cork. David confirms Gerald's assertions that his caution was due to the emotiveness of the subject, in particular the fear of opening up a lengthy, emotive and difficult national debate, that could turn out to have negative repercussions for the Jewish community. This encouraged Gerald to dodge, as far as possible, the wider implications of the Limerick Boycott in terms of Irish public sentiment regarding the Jews.⁵⁴² Unfortunately the end result of his evasion, whether intended or not, has been the creation of an air of mystery which conveniently perpetuates and buttresses traditional narratives of the Boycott – that version of events which, as Gerald himself may well have realised, is the one to which objective research poses the greatest threat.

2.3.4 CONCLUSIONS

This section opened by bringing to light two new sources that have significantly expanded our knowledge of Jewish responses to the Limerick Boycott. The inadequacy of existing research on the Boycott has been demonstrated through a rigorous analysis of these together with a wide range of other sources: local and national newspapers, articles and books by professional and local historians, and the sole literary representation of the Boycott. Although nearly all of these sources have long been in the public domain, most have been almost entirely neglected by historians and commentators. By bringing them together for the first time, and by applying contemporary academic standards of critical analysis to both primary and secondary sources, it becomes clear that the existing historical account of the Boycott is, in fact, no more than undeconstructed, uncritical narrative. Hence it has been possible to trace the way in which a relatively minor local incident, which was swiftly contained by decisive and efficient police action, came to be depicted as a 'pogrom' which virtually destroyed Limerick's Jewish community. One of the principal historiographical issues to be considered has been the role of certain individuals in perpetuating the folklore of the Boycott, in forms which range from sympathetic to antagonistic towards its Jewish targets and the Jewish community in general. This

⁵⁴¹ D. Goldberg, personal conversation, 4 May 2012.

⁵⁴² *Irish Times*, 2 May 1970; D. Goldberg, personal conversation, 4 May 2012.

will hopefully mark the beginning of a more nuanced, contextualised understanding and historiography of the Boycott going forward, which will ultimately allow the incident to be laid to rest, as those on all sides of the debate so clearly would wish.

2.4 CONCLUSIONS: ‘GAELIC *GOLUS*’ OR ‘AARON GO BRAGH’? A TALE OF TWO – OR MORE – NARRATIVES

An identity in crisis is not incoherent nor episodic, but is an inescapable experience of modern life . . .⁵⁴³

This chapter has demonstrated conclusively that the small size of Ireland’s Jewish community is not, as is widely assumed, reflected in a simple and straightforward historical narrative. Through a fresh, thorough and critical re-examination of a range of sources, many of which have long been neglected or ignored, it becomes evident that the history of Irish Jewry is every bit as complex as that of any other. Much of the existing secondary literature has been found to be careless, naïve, cavalier and reductive. Traditional approaches to Irish Jewish history are irretrievably flawed, and have led to the widespread caricaturing and objectification of the community. Contemporary historiographical principles, with their strong emphasis on context, provide a far sounder analytical basis. This allows us more accurately to identify the distinctive features of Ireland’s Jewish community over and against patterns that are common to European Jewry, both past and present. The delicate balance between distinctiveness and comparability is an important aspect of Chapters Three and Four.

As Chapter Two has shown, Ireland’s Jewish establishment would argue for a quaint ‘Gaelic *golus*’.⁵⁴⁴ This is a largely uncomplicated success story of Jewish social, economic and educational achievement that is marked by integration into, and acceptance by Irish society. Although a considerable proportion of Irish Jews purport to agree with this view, many comments and memoirs indicate whether consciously or unconsciously, that the Jewish experience in Ireland has in fact tended more towards ‘Aaron go Bragh’.⁵⁴⁵ This is illustrated in a physical manner by the ongoing

⁵⁴³ Ken Koltun-Fromm, *Moses Hess and Modern Jewish Identity* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2001), 9.

⁵⁴⁴ Berman and Zlotover, *Zlotover Story*, 6.

⁵⁴⁵ Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland*, 55. This pun on the Irish saying ‘Éirinn go brách’ (Ireland forever; see the Irish Translation Forum, <http://www.irishgaelictranslator.com/translation/topic10107.html>, accessed 17 April 2014) refers to an antisemitic cartoon that originally appeared in

emigration of Irish Jews to countries with larger Jewish populations and, especially, to Israel. The ambiguities of the Jewish experience in Ireland are further underlined by the ongoing efforts of the communal establishment to ‘indigenise’ Irish Jewry. This has been attempted through the portrayal of Jews as a constant in Irish society since the medieval period. Even the tongue-in-cheek retelling of fanciful myths can be interpreted as an unconscious mysticisation of Irish Jewish communal origins. This conceals a far more prosaic truth, which is particularly uncomfortable in an era where economic migration has again become a contentious issue. This is particularly pronounced in Ireland, which has traditionally regarded itself as a country of emigration as opposed to immigration. Perhaps the most significant attempt to portray the Jewish community as authentically ‘Irish’ is the deliberate and retrospective linking of Irish Jewry with key events in the foundation of the modern Irish state. The identification of the community with the growth of militant nationalism and the formulation of the Irish Constitution represent a determined endeavour to insert it into Ireland’s contemporary political and cultural discourse.

In the standard communal narrative anti-Jewish prejudice plays a minor role, if any. Often Ireland is portrayed as being somehow exceptional in its supposedly irreproachable treatment of, and attitude towards its tiny Jewish minority. Section 2.2 has shown, however, that there is little real difference in the nature of anti-Jewish stereotyping in Ireland to that elsewhere. Similarly Irish nationalism is found, in its heyday, to have been just as exclusive as any other European nationalism of the period. The case for a comprehensive academic study of anti-Jewish prejudice in the Irish setting is irrefutable. Given the widespread official denial and negation of Irish ‘antisemitism’, the way in which the events of the Limerick Boycott have traditionally been exaggerated and sensationalised, albeit as a once-off episode, is deeply ironic. This has been closely investigated in Section 2.3.

This thesis as a whole is intended as a departure from the kind of scholarship and commentary that has been driven by the capriciousness of collective memory. The way in which a measured and nuanced approach can expand and enhance our

the *Irish Worker* on 26 August 1911, lampooning the adoption by Jews of Irish-sounding surnames. This was purportedly intended to fool honest workers and consumers into believing that Jewish businesses were ‘Irish’ rather than ‘foreign’ owned (compare with the observations of ‘A Polish Jew’ that are cited in Section 2.3). As has been shown in Section 2.2, the indigenisation of the Irish economy and industry was a key concern of Arthur Griffith’s brand of nationalism.

understanding of Irish Jewish history will be further demonstrated in the coming chapters.