

CHAPTER FOUR

CHARITY, SELF-HELP, INTRACOMMUNAL RELATIONS AND IRISH JEWISH IDENTITY

I would not approve of many features about the Dublin Jews – no earnest observer could; but no earnest observer could help feeling convinced that, on the whole, the communal life in Dublin would be well worth copying elsewhere – a good many elsewhere.¹

This chapter takes the findings of Chapter Three concerning acculturation and intracommunal relations in Jewish Ireland into the realm of charity and mutual aid. Chapter One has illustrated how the attitude of the western Jewish establishment towards philanthropy reflected the cultural tensions that arose as a result of mass emigration. Western Jewish philanthropy and activism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries tended, therefore, to be driven by western political and cultural exigencies as opposed to a concern for the needs of the poor, the oppressed and the newcomer. The wish to protect the hard-earned social status of the acculturated Jewish elite and to fend off the ever-present spectre of antisemitism was frequently a strong motivation in the establishment of a communal infrastructure that was intended to cater – if grudgingly – for the material needs of impoverished, unskilled, religiously traditional and very ‘foreign’ immigrants. In particular, Section 1.5 has noted the way in which Anglo-Jewish charity conformed more to British Victorian values than to customary Jewish principles.

This chapter investigates whether, given Ireland’s colonial setting, the same can be said of Jewish charity in the Irish context. The workings of the main mechanisms that were established to provide relief of various kinds to Irish Jews are examined below, with a view to determining guiding principles and influences and the overall role and function of philanthropy in Irish Jewish society. Mutual aid organisations are included in the analysis, as an important facet of the immigrant attitude towards welfare. Finally, following on from Chapter Three, the contribution of the DHC towards Jewish welfare in Dublin is further investigated. The emphasis again rests on drawing out important points of comparability and distinctiveness with respect to the broader Anglo-Jewish context of Irish Jewish philanthropy. Conflict

¹ ‘Halitvack’, *Jewish Chronicle*, 8 June 1906.

remains as an important vehicle for probing the character of intracommunal relationships and structures. Together these elements allow us further to gauge the character of Irish Jewish identity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In March 1912, in an address to the Manchester Beacon of the Order of Ancient Maccabees (OAM), J. I. Loewy named Dublin as one of a number of British provincial cities with a surplus of synagogues and charities.² Unfortunately a handful of formal records and some patchy anecdotal evidence, solely relating to Dublin, are all that remain of this intricate, once thriving communal infrastructure. For the vast majority of Irish Jewish charity and welfare organisations, all that survives are brief reports to the *Jewish Chronicle*, or names on lists in the secondary literature.³ Although this has inevitably determined my choice of organisations reference is made to Belfast, Cork and Limerick wherever possible. Where specific cases are discussed, the names of individuals and families are not disclosed due to the sensitive nature of welfare within a small and ever-shrinking community.

4.1 THE SYNAGOGUES

In traditional Jewish society, and in smaller Anglo-Jewish communities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, synagogues were central to the provision of relief to needy Jews. Although their efforts could be erratic, synagogues tended to adhere to traditional Jewish concepts of charity as a collective obligation to provide adequately for all needy individuals, in a sensitive and confidential manner.⁴ The evidence that has survived suggests that, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, all of the Irish synagogues offered financial concessions to poorer members of the community. These included reductions or waivers on fees for marriages, bar-mitzvahs, schools and seat rentals.⁵ The relief provided by synagogues was partly

² *Jewish Chronicle*, 15 March 1912; Section 1.5, above. In contrast, Loewy believed that continental towns had ‘just the necessary quantity’ of communal organisations.

³ E.g., Rivlin, *Shalom Ireland*, chap. 6.

⁴ Rozin, *Rich and Poor*, 23, 135.

⁵ On marriage fees, see BHC Minutes, 13 January 1898, 29 May 1898, 12 November 1899, 4 March 1900, 27 May 1900, 6 April 1902, and 6 September 1914; DHC Special General Meeting, 8 January 1905, in DHC Minutes, 1904-1915; Rule 61, UHC. On bar-mitzvah fees, see Rule 63, UHC. On school fees, see BHC Minutes, 17 December 1899, 6 May 1899, and 13 January 1901; Ernest W. Harris, Letter to Esther Blond, 2 May 1906, in DHC Correspondence Book No. 2. On ‘free seats’, see BHC Minutes, 3 October 1911, 29 December 1912, and 20 July 1913; CHC Minutes, 31 March 1901.

supported by ‘snoddering’ (charitable donations on being called to the Torah) and, sometimes, by collections undertaken on behalf of needy individuals.⁶

Even though the DHC started out as a prosperous congregation, its 1839 *Laws* do make some provision, albeit cautious, concerning charitable relief. During Passover, poor strangers were allowed three days’ supply of meat and *matzot* but, once travel was permissible, they were given ‘a free passage to depart’.⁷ Residents who applied to the congregation were provided with *matzot*, or the monetary equivalent.⁸ There was a strict procedure for approving charitable donations and alms from congregational funds: all gifts in excess of ten shillings were to be endorsed by the president, and anything over one pound had to be sanctioned by the free members.⁹ On the other hand, the treasurer was fully authorised to furnish applicants with a ticket to Liverpool and a gift of up to ten shillings without any prior consultation.¹⁰ Loans were not permitted from congregational funds.¹¹ Burials of the very poor were paid for by the community; in all other cases, with the exception of poor strangers who had left no property behind, any expenses that were incurred by the DHC in the course of an interment were to be recouped.¹² Although seat-holders could receive a reduction on their fees in cases of distress, any concessions were to be repaid should circumstances improve.¹³

From at least 1861 the DHC had had a Hebrew Philanthropic Society, which operated independently of DHC finances.¹⁴ No records have survived, beyond one relatively detailed item that appeared in the *Jewish Chronicle* in 1868, which reports the presentation of a testimonial to the Society’s treasurer and founder, John Davis. One of the speakers on this occasion was Henry Lazarus, who characterised the Society as having the dual purpose of protecting donors ‘from the molestations and untoward intrusion of mendicants’ while sparing recipients ‘the degrading course of going from door to door in quest of relief’. John D. Rosenthal, after outlining the

⁶ On snoddering see, e.g., HBS Minutes, 14 June 1908. BHC Minutes, 29 May 1898, is one example of a collection raised by a synagogue, in this case to provide a tombstone. Most such cases were not minuted, perhaps as it was not considered relevant to the main synagogue business, or out of sensitivity towards the recipient. Here, for example, neither the deceased nor the family is named in the minutes.

⁷ Rule 47, *Laws and Regulations*.

⁸ Rule 49, *Laws and Regulations*.

⁹ Rules 168-9, *Laws and Regulations*.

¹⁰ Rule 177, *Laws and Regulations*.

¹¹ Rule 179, *Laws and Regulations*.

¹² Rules 112 and 181, *Laws and Regulations*.

¹³ Rule 186, *Laws and Regulations*.

¹⁴ Ernest W. Harris, Letter to A. E. Sydney, 22 April 1908, in DHC Correspondence Book No. 2.

hardships endured by poor Jews in travelling to Ireland, asserted that ‘by applying to this society their sufferings are at once alleviated’. Davis referred to the willingness among members of the community to support the Society, and stated that ‘no one who called upon him for relief, showing himself worth, had been turned away’. According to him, the Society had provided relief to 153 applicants in the previous year, ‘both itinerary and resident . . . many of whom were now in a position to support themselves’. Davis described the Society’s funds as being ‘in a prosperous condition’, thus implying that the DHC’s philanthropy was equal at this time to the demands that it faced.¹⁵ The careful policies that are set out in the DHC *Laws*, which provide a stark contrast to communal generosity towards external charities and causes (see Section 3.1), no doubt played a role in ensuring the Society’s efficiency. Belfast also had a Hebrew Philanthropic Society, founded in 1878,¹⁶ but no information has survived as to its workings.

Presumably Dublin’s ‘natives’ approved of, and were relieved to see the rise of immigrant self-help initiatives such as the Dublin Jewish Board of Guardians (DJBG) and the Holy Burial Society (HBS). While a degree of co-operation was extended by the DHC, relations were frequently strained due to the existing tensions between ‘native’ and ‘foreign’ leaders that are discussed below. The apparent aspiration by the emergent immigrant elite to gain recognition as the legitimate leadership of the community as a whole (see Section 3.1) can only have further complicated matters. As Section 3.1 has shown, in accordance with its means the DHC made relatively modest annual grants to the DJBG and its special funds, as well as to other organisations such as the Hospital Aid Association, the Dublin Jewish Ladies’ Charitable Society, the HBS and the Jewish Shelter Fund.¹⁷ Despite the growing demands on its finances in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it

¹⁵ *Jewish Chronicle*, 6 March 1868. This and other reports in the *Chronicle* state that the Society was established in 1861, however Hyman, on the basis of contemporary minutebooks, mentions a Hebrew Philanthropic Society of Ireland, founded in 1846 (*Jews of Ireland*, 159). Unfortunately, as noted above, these records could not be located in the summer of 2012.

¹⁶ *Jewish Chronicle*, 19 September 1879 and 7 November 1879.

¹⁷ For annual balance sheets, see DHC Minutes, 1904-1915. The Shelter Fund, which provided temporary accommodation for needy immigrants, was taken over by the DJBG in 1906. Although some communal sources claim that it was opened in response to the 1905 pogroms, this is uncorroborated and appears to be apocryphal (Mr. and Mrs. A. Eliassoff, ‘The Dublin Jewish Board of Guardians: An Outline of Its History’, 10; Rivlin, *Shalom Ireland*, 122; cf. Bernard Shillman, ‘The Dublin Jewish Board of Guardians: A Short Historical Survey; Part I – 1889 to 1924’, *Dublin Jewish Board of Guardians Diamond Jubilee Brochure*, 1889-1952, in Asher Benson Papers, National Library of Ireland, Acc. 5734 (unsorted); Duffy, ‘Socio-Economic Analysis’, 123-24.

also continued to dispense charity to needy individuals well after the establishment of the DJBG.¹⁸

A further, little-known function of the DHC in relation to the immigrant community was the provision of liaison and pastoral care in Irish prisons. The First Minister of the DHC was obliged to report to the synagogue committee the names and condition of any known Jewish inmates in Irish gaols. In the revised ministerial duties of 1913 prison visits were set out as an explicit and vital obligation, second only to regular and punctual attendance at the *minyan* rooms.¹⁹ As time went on, prison liaison also became a function of the ministers of the immigrant community.²⁰ Although it remains a somewhat sensitive topic, and the information regarding Jewish criminal activity in Ireland in this period is not sufficient to provide any real overview, acknowledging its existence is an important step in the normalisation of Irish Jewish history and historiography.

The poverty of the Jewish community in Cork throughout its early years probably meant that it was not able to do much in terms of organised charity.²¹ Its members appear to have volunteered little financial support towards Anglo-Jewish causes, presumably due to their limited means.²² On the other hand, the Cork Hebrew Congregation (CHC) appears to have reacted promptly and spontaneously on a number of occasions in the 1890s, when ships were temporarily docked in Cork for repairs, and Russian Jewish travellers were found to be in need of clothing and kosher food.²³ Although these efforts required funding from the Anglo-Jewish authorities, the community itself appears to have gone well beyond the call of duty. In October 1891 approximately one hundred stranded migrants who made their way to Cork city

¹⁸ Ernest W. Harris, Letter to A. E. Sydney, 22 April 1908, in DHC Correspondence Book No. 2.

¹⁹ Ernest W. Harris, Letters to S. H. Douglas, General Prisons Board, 29 August 1910, and A. Gudansky, 29 August 1910, in DHC Correspondence Book No. 2; DHC Minutes, 8 May 1905 and 9 November 1913. It was agreed that the congregation would cover the cost of prison visits should the Prisons Board refuse to do so. One of the prisoners discussed in Harris's letter of 29 August 1910 was awaiting trial in Waterford Gaol on a charge of murder. For other examples of Jewish misdemeanours, see below.

²⁰ Rule 51, UHC. It is logical to take this as representative of the duties required of Ireland's immigrant ministers in general. As prison liaison involved dealings with secular officialdom, the assumption of this duty by the Jewish immigrant authorities may well form an element of their challenge to DHC hegemony and of their leadership aspirations in general.

²¹ The sole reference to charity in the communal minutebook is CHC Minutes, 13 October 1907. This reports that money donated to the president for charity, presumably over the High Holydays, was to be divided amongst poor families.

²² *Jewish Chronicle*, 24 September 1897, is a rare example of charitable donations to an Anglo-Jewish cause by members of the CHC in this period.

²³ *Jewish Chronicle*, 16 November 1894, 7 June 1895, 10 February 1899, and 17 March 1899.

were immediately provided with relief and billets by the community. Touchingly some women were so affected by their plight that they not only donated clothing belonging to their own families that they could probably ill afford to spare, but also the Shabbat meals that they had been preparing. With the assistance of the Russo-Jewish Committee in London, food, fruit, clothing and medication, as well as wines and spirits, were more widely distributed.²⁴ The most curious aspect of these incidents, which recall the recent experience of the CHC itself, is the decision to report them to the *Jewish Chronicle*. Even though they would have constituted communal ‘news’, the gestures themselves fall within the Jewish tradition of solidarity and mutual aid and to publicise them appears contrary to the discretion that is intrinsic to Jewish philanthropic convention. It is possible, therefore, that the reports were intended to make a point to the Anglo-Jewish public regarding their obligations towards transmigrants by showing that small, struggling provincial communities did not shirk their duty towards the needy, even if they could not necessarily fulfil it without outside assistance. These articles illustrate again the direct relationship that the smaller Irish communities had with the Anglo-Jewish ‘centre’ (see Section 3.1), showing that they were capable of co-operating with and mobilising the recognised Anglo-Jewish authorities. Such incidents are presumably representative of the many acts of compassion and philanthropy within Ireland’s Jewish communities that would have gone unrecorded, and of the small-scale, informal and less ostentatious charities that have left behind no records of their activities.

4.2 DUBLIN JEWISH BOARD OF GUARDIANS

The DJBG was founded in 1889 by members of the immigrant community.²⁵ According to its narrative, which was formally recorded in a manuscript composed in 1924 by Mr. and Mrs. A. Eliassoff, before this time there had not been any great need for organised charity within the Dublin community. Instead, the Eliassoffs claim, aid was dispensed by the officials of the DHC and Dublin New Hebrew Congregation

²⁴ *Jewish Chronicle*, 30 October 1891.

²⁵ Shillman names the ten founding members (‘Historical Survey’). The *Jewish Chronicle* (11 December 1885) reported that a group consisting of 150 ‘foreign Jews’ had been formed to establish a society to assist the Jewish poor of Dublin, however it is unclear what, if anything, ever came of this venture and whether it related in any way to the subsequent formation of the DJBG.

(DNHC) in what Rivlin describes as an ‘ad hoc’ fashion.²⁶ Similar to the Dublin Jewish Ladies’ Society, which is discussed below, the Board was reportedly started on an informal basis by a small number of voluntary subscriber-administrators. As demand grew, it was obliged to formalise its activities and to widen its subscription list through vigorous canvassing. According to the Eliassoffs, one of the main reasons for the systematisation of the relief provided by the DJBG was ‘so that the deserving might be helped and any imposters detected’ and to assist the committee in distinguishing between the varying levels of need among applicants.²⁷ A report to the *Jewish Chronicle*, on the other hand, indicates that existing informal arrangements became increasingly inadequate as the demand for relief snowballed. More subscribers and a proper system were needed.²⁸ Given the broader situation with regard to mass emigration that has been outlined in Section 1.5, it is conceivable that the delay in implementing formal mechanisms for the provision of relief within the community was deliberately intended to make Dublin a less attractive destination for Jewish migrants.

The Eliassoffs note two of the Board’s principal functions as the provision of coal and of Passover foods to the needy.²⁹ They also record that, in 1900, a philanthropic Loan Fund was created to extend interest-free loans to those who were embarrassed to seek charity.³⁰ This venture, which corresponded to arrangements by the Board’s leading British counterparts,³¹ was reportedly highly successful. In 1911 Ernest Harris described the Loan Fund as ‘a very useful institution . . . carefully worked so as to make advances to people to start and make a living on proper security’.³² In 1913, an address presented to one of its administrators on his departure from Dublin, stated that the Fund ‘has enabled many a deserving family to make a

²⁶ Eliassoffs, ‘DJBG’, 4; Shillman, ‘Historical Survey’; Rivlin, *Shalom Ireland*, 120.

²⁷ Eliassoffs, ‘DJBG’, 6-7; Shillman, ‘Historical Survey’.

²⁸ *Jewish Chronicle*, 2 March 1900.

²⁹ Eliassoffs, ‘DJBG’, 9-13.

³⁰ Eliassoffs, ‘DJBG’, 7; *Jewish Chronicle*, 23 November 1900.

³¹ Williams, *Manchester Jewry*, 285, 290-3; Rozin, *Rich and Poor*, 177-78.

³² Ernest W. Harris, Letter to A. E. Sydney, 27 February 1911, in DHC Correspondence Book No. 2. In 1909 Louis Wine approached the DHC with a view to establishing a further philanthropic loan fund. Harris responded that Wine should organise the fund privately, by forming a committee of ‘a few good business men like yourself’ and noting that ‘there are several well established Societies in Dublin which we might take as a match’. Harris believed that if such a society was properly organised and financed ‘it would be . . . a success and I am sure . . . there would be no trouble in getting lots of members’. DHC Annual Report, 1908-1909, in DHC Minutes, 1904-1915; Ernest W. Harris, Letter to Louis Wine, 26 October 1909, in DHC Correspondence Book No. 2.

living in our midst'.³³ Although the DJBG minutes show that the Loan Fund was closely tied in with the activities of the Board, the Eliassoffs state that it was governed independently and eventually evolved into a separate institution.³⁴ They style the DJBG 'the premier Jewish Charitable Institution of Dublin', and portray it as run along equitable and democratic lines, and as fully representative of Dublin's Jewish community.³⁵

The earliest surviving minutes of the DJBG, which cover the period 1911 to 1914, show that, in fact, the Board's activities were far broader than the Eliassoffs suggest. The DJBG assisted needy members of the community in a wide variety of ways, by providing clothes and footwear,³⁶ supporting deserted and orphaned families (see below), issuing grants to buy stock, set up new businesses and revive flagging ones,³⁷ dispensing financial assistance in cases of illness and hospitalisation,³⁸ unemployment,³⁹ and difficulties in paying rent⁴⁰ and helping the unemployed to find work.⁴¹ Again like its British counterparts, the Board had a number of regular 'pensioners' whose benefits were increased over the major Jewish festivals or in case of illness.⁴² The DJBG provided annual grants to the Norwood Jewish Orphanage, and occasionally availed of its services, although the preference was to board the needy in local Jewish homes wherever possible.⁴³ This had the dual advantage of providing locally for those in need, while supplementing the income of the families that boarded them. In 1914 the Board co-ordinated the hosting of a contingent of

³³ *Jewish Chronicle*, 28 March 1913.

³⁴ E.g., DJBG Minutes, 18 May 1913, 4 January 1914, and 1 February 1914; cf. Eliassoffs, 'DJBG', 7-8; Shillman, 'Historical Survey'.

³⁵ Eliassoffs, 'DJBG', 15-16, 20.

³⁶ E.g., DJBG Minutes, 13 August 1911, 3 December 1911, 2 September 1912, 8 March 1914, and 29 March 1914.

³⁷ E.g., DJBG Minutes, 3 December 1911, 25 February 1912, 19 May 1912, 26 May 1912, and 29 October 1912.

³⁸ E.g., DJBG Minutes, 22 October 1912, 28 April 1912, 26 May 1912, 18 August 1912, 10 November 1912, 2 March 1913, and 17 May 1914. When requested the DJBG stretched, for example, to the funding of specialist treatment in London (DJBG Minutes, 19 December 1913) and a stay in a private nursing home (DJBG Minutes, 21 July 1912).

³⁹ E.g., DJBG Minutes, 12 January 1913 and 14 September 1913.

⁴⁰ E.g., DJBG Minutes, 25 February 1912, 17 March 1912, 5 May 1912, and 3 November 1912.

⁴¹ E.g., DJBG Minutes, 18 June 1911, 26 November 1911, 28 January 1912, 6 October 1912, and 16 November 1913; *Jewish Chronicle*, 22 December 1911.

⁴² DJBG Minutes, 3 December 1911, 3 March 1912, 10 March 1912, 14 July 1912, and 28 July 1912 (examples of discussions regarding the Board's pensioners). For examples of temporary increases in benefits see DJBG Minutes, 18 August 1912 (due to illness) and 8 September 1912 (for High Holydays). Gartner notes that, in its heyday, London's Board of Guardians had several hundred aged pensioners (*Jewish Immigrant*, 164).

⁴³ DJBG Minutes, 5 January 1913 and 1 February 1914 (grant to Norwood); DJBG Minutes, 8 September 1912 and 29 September 1912 (example of boarding within the local community).

Belgian refugees, who were part of a much larger group that was distributed throughout Britain's Jewish community.⁴⁴ It was, in effect, open to any reasonable appeal for aid, such as the intriguing 'special business of the day [21 July 1912]' for which fifteen pounds was granted as a loan to be repaid by March 1930, and the young bride who sought assistance in setting up her first home in May 1914.⁴⁵ The Board was occasionally asked, or undertook to arbitrate on disagreements concerning matters such as non-payment of rents and family members who were reluctant to assist each other in cases of unemployment, financial hardship, illness or old age.⁴⁶ The Board's involvement was not entirely disinterested as its resources were stretched and it was keen to avoid unnecessary financial commitments or long-term 'burdens'.⁴⁷ Nevertheless it was open to revising its decisions, when this was felt to be appropriate.⁴⁸ Whenever possible, relatives and other communal organisations, such as the DHC or the Ladies' Society, were consulted or approached for assistance.⁴⁹ The DJBG Coal Fund was supported by grants from the civic authorities, the DHC and the UHC and, more than likely, other communal organisations.⁵⁰ Relief received

⁴⁴ DJBG Minutes, 18 October 1914 and 25 October 1914; *Jewish Chronicle*, 30 October 1914. Belgian refugees were also hosted in Belfast and Cork (BHC Minutes, 7 November 1914; CHC Minutes, 8 November 1914). Ireland's hospitality towards the Belgian refugees was viewed as exemplary by the Anglo-Jewish establishment given contemporary employment concerns (*Jewish Chronicle*, 30 October 1914 and 6 November 1914).

⁴⁵ DJBG Minutes, 21 July 1912 and 10 May 1914.

⁴⁶ E.g., DJBG Minutes, 2 June 1912, 15 September 1912, 22 September 1912, 29 September 1912, 8 June 1913, 15 June 1913, 31 August 1913, 30 November 1913, and 28 June 1914.

⁴⁷ DJBG Minutes, 9 June 1912, 15 December 1912, 29 December 1912, 12 January 1913, 9 February 1913, DJBG AGM, 17 December 1911, in DJBG Minutes, 1911-1914; *Jewish Chronicle*, 2 March 1900, 22 December 1913, and 19 December 1913. Dwindling finances, and the consequent need to canvass more subscribers and higher weekly pledges periodically arose at Board meetings, but not so frequently as to indicate any particularly acute or long-term crisis.

⁴⁸ E.g., DJBG Minutes, 4 May 1913 and 1 June 1913.

⁴⁹ DJBG Minutes, 2 February 1913, 16 February 1913, 9 March 1913, and 19 October 1913 (examples of consultation or collaboration with the Ladies' Society); DJBG Minutes, 2 June 1912, 15 September 1912, 13 April 1913, and 31 August 1913 (some instances where relatives were asked to assist). Although the DHC is never mentioned in this respect in the DJBG minutes, its correspondence shows that it did provide maintenance towards at least two needy families in the community (Ernest W. Harris, Letters to I. Landau, 10 May 1911, and J. Zlotover, Hon. Sec., DJBG, 10 May 1911, in DHC Correspondence Book No. 2).

⁵⁰ *Jewish Chronicle*, 16 January 1903 (initial allocation from the Mansion House Coal Fund to the DJBG); Ernest W. Harris, Letters to Adolphe Davis, 4 March 1904 and 16 January 1906, Letter to L. Berman [?], Hon. Sec., DJBG, 5 December 1904 and 4 January 1907, and Letter to H. Khan, Hon. Sec., DJBG, 6 January 1911, in DHC Correspondence Book No. 2 (DHC support for the DJBG Coal Fund); UHC Annual Report and Balance Sheet, 1915-1916 (UHC support for the DJBG Coal Fund). Initially, DHC support for the Coal Fund appears to have been erratic due to tensions between individual members of the DHC and DJBG. Harris's comments indicate that he was personally sympathetic towards those who lacked the money for fuel, a hardship which was exacerbated by factors such as the prevailing economic climate and harsh weather conditions.

by applicants from other sources, such as friendly societies, was also taken into consideration in the awarding of grants.⁵¹

The DJBG minutes illustrate, to an extent, the mindset and philosophy of its committee in addressing need within the community. The minutes show the influence of contemporary notions of the ‘respectable’ and ‘deserving’ poor on the philosophy of organised Jewish charity in this period. These images are counterbalanced with those of the ‘undeserving’, the unmeriting, the non-genuine and the ‘burden’.⁵² This is a further indication of the steady advancement of acculturation within Dublin’s immigrant community, and of the intention to present immigrant-led organisations as conforming to contemporary anglicised conventions as discussed in Chapter Three. ‘Idling’ was disapproved of by the DJBG and, where suspected, intervention was made in order to encourage greater independence.⁵³ Disreputable or financially precarious professions were generally discouraged. So-called ‘marine stores’ were particularly frowned upon as being ‘open to suspicion and prosecution’ among the host community.⁵⁴ However, where there was absolutely no alternative, assisting applicants into undesirable occupations was regarded as preferable to incurring further burdens on the limited communal resources. This indicates that, ultimately, financial exigencies determined the actions of the Board, even when it came to situations that had the potential to tarnish the external image of the community. In 1912 assistance was reluctantly provided to one man in opening a ‘store’, presumably of the marine variety, as his only viable business option.⁵⁵ In another case, after an unsuccessful attempt to find suitable employment for a recent immigrant ‘instead of letting him drift into peddling’, a grant was provided to enable him to purchase stock and obtain a pedlar’s licence.⁵⁶ The Board was also willing to aid in the rehabilitation of Jews who had gotten on the wrong side of the law, although it was cautious where criminal proceedings were still underway. One man due for release from prison was offered

⁵¹ E.g., DJBG Minutes, 21 April 1912, 26 May 1912, and 20 December 1912.

⁵² DJBG Minutes, 31 August 1913, 7 September 1913, 14 September 1913, and 21 June 1914 (examples of the use of the word ‘burden’); DJBG Minutes, 6 August 1911, 11 February 1912, 25 August 1912, 29 October 1912, 22 February 1914, and 26 July 1914 (on the concept of ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’); DJBG Minutes, 28 May 1911 (on the perceived respectability of one applicant). For English examples of this philosophy in operation, see Rozin, *Rich and Poor*, 188ff, chap. 5 (London Board of Guardians); Liedtke, *Jewish Welfare*, chap. 3 (Manchester Board of Guardians).

⁵³ DJBG Minutes, 19 November 1911, 16 June 1912, 6 October 1912, and 26 October 1913.

⁵⁴ DJBG Minutes, 3 September 1911 and 4 May 1913.

⁵⁵ DJBG Minutes, 25 August 1912 and 1 September 1912.

⁵⁶ DJBG Minutes, 14 January 1912 and 21 January 1912.

support in making a fresh start in business on condition that he would not use his grant to open a marine store.⁵⁷

The DJBG records indicate that the Board had a flexible and constructive approach when it came to credit. When one man was struggling with his repayments to the Loan Fund, the DJBG covered the outstanding balance and redeemed the jewellery that the man had pledged as security.⁵⁸ On other occasions, the Board itself consented to act as security for individuals seeking to approach the Loan Fund.⁵⁹ While this policy would have been cost-effective, as no money actually had to be handed out unless the borrower were to default, it equally allowed people to retain their dignity by giving them access to loans as an alternative to charity. This enabled more applicants to become self-sufficient with greater speed, as opposed to becoming potential long-term financial ‘burdens’ on the DJBG. The underlying ambivalence of the Board’s policy regarding credit is indicated by the periodic use of this type of relief in a coercive manner. One apparently repeat applicant was granted a sum of two pounds to purchase stock, on condition that he would not apply to the DJBG again.⁶⁰ Another man who sought a passage to join his three brothers in South Africa was instead offered funding for his business in Ireland due to fears that, should he leave, the man’s family would become ‘a burden on the Board’.⁶¹ This was a common concern due to the difficulties that were encountered by many migrant families in finding a permanent place to settle, that offered a reasonable prospect of earning a living. Although this type of separation appears mostly to have been temporary, in London all such cases were automatically classed as ‘desertion’ by the Jewish authorities.⁶²

Although some commentators assume that the risk of default on loans that were provided within Jewish communities would have been low due to considerations such as the likelihood of ostracism and the withholding of future credit,⁶³ this was not necessarily the case. If someone neglected or refused to repay a loan there was little

⁵⁷ DJBG Minutes, 3 September 1911 and 22 October 1911.

⁵⁸ DJBG Minutes, 16 July 1911.

⁵⁹ E.g., DJBG Minutes, 20 April 1913, 16 November 1913, and 18 October 1914.

⁶⁰ DJBG Minutes, 21 April 1912.

⁶¹ DJBG Minutes, 29 September 1912.

⁶² Rozin, *Rich and Poor*, 146. Gartner notes that the London Board of Guardians periodically threatened to withhold relief from wives who had ‘colluded’ with their absent husbands in deliberately allowing themselves to become reliant on communal assistance. Occasionally ‘deserted’ families were sent overseas regardless of whether the husband was willing or able to receive them (*Jewish Immigrant*, 171).

⁶³ Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, 53; Liedtke, *Jewish Welfare*, 99.

to be done about it outside the civil courts and the committee of the DJBG was bound – nominally at least – to maintain a strict confidentiality throughout its proceedings. While there is no mention in the DJBG minutes of any legal action being considered or implemented against defaulters, this does not by any means imply that default was either rare or unheard of. Communal leaders were acutely aware that intra-Jewish court cases reflected badly on the image of the community and, as Chapter Two has noted, often attracted negative comment from within the courtroom itself, which was then reported in the press. Legal proceedings were hardly likely to have been worth the risk or effort involved, given that they may well have been ineffective in the long run in terms of recovering outstanding monies. In some instances, furthermore, loans may well have been notional with no real expectation of or requirement for repayment. Although this was certainly the case with the Brides' Aid society (see Section 4.4), it is impossible to determine in retrospect to what extent such informal or unspoken understandings may have applied to other communal philanthropic loan funds, or to the DJBG.

It is simply naïve to assume that nobody was unscrupulous enough to take advantage of the system. The DJBG minutes serve as an important reminder that Ireland's Jewish community was just as prone to social problems and undesirable personal traits as any other social or religious group. These included alcohol abuse, desertion, marriage breakdown, general callousness and straightforward dishonesty. The records also provide frequent, often poignant, glimpses of the hardships that were regularly encountered by members of the community, through illness, unemployment, old age and family problems.⁶⁴ One of the most touching cases to be outlined in the minutes involved an elderly man in ill-health whose son, living in Wales, refused to assist the Board with his father's upkeep. When the father's landlady was no longer able to look after him, the son had to be coerced into taking his father in. The Board threatened to send the father over to Cardiff whether the son liked it or not, and to withhold twenty pounds in cash that had been found in the father's possession. Finally the son met with the Board, agreed to take his father back with him to Wales, and received the twenty pounds.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ For examples, see DJBG Minutes, 5 May 1912, 26 May 1912, 23 November 1913, 30 November 1913, 14 December 1913, 26 July 1914, and 2 August 1914.

⁶⁵ DJBG Minutes, 18 May 1913, 14 September 1913, 2 November 1913, 15 March 1914, 22 March 1914, 19 April 1914, and 26 April 1914.

The minutes also chronicle a number of cases of deserted families. One involved a father who preferred to spend his grant from the DJBG on alcohol than on the maintenance of the four children that he had virtually abandoned. To make ends meet the eldest child, aged thirteen, was forced to maintain the father's unprofitable milk round. When the father proposed a move to Belfast where, he told the Board, he could earn a better living, 'the Board welcomed the departure of this family which had been a constant source of worry', and happily granted three tickets to Belfast with up to three pounds in additional funding. However the father wavered, forcing the DJBG to continue its support of his family. Due to the father's erratic behaviour it was later decided to pay the children's rent in lieu of monetary benefit. The long-term prognosis was grim: the minutes note that one of the children would soon be old enough to work, while another had a fair chance of getting into Norwood, 'and as to the father — he could go where he liked'. The final mention of the case was a decision not to renew the father's support unless he applied for further relief.⁶⁶ It is difficult to envisage a happy outcome.

In contrast, one instance of a family of five children whose father had gone to seek his fortune in America eventually turned out positively. Despite initial efforts to get the children into Norwood, they were maintained by the DJBG in the care of a local Jewish family with the financial assistance of relatives, the DHC and, possibly, other communal organisations. When the eldest boy turned fourteen, some of the relatives withdrew their assistance on the grounds that he was old enough to earn his own living. The DJBG appears to have had considerable difficulty in finding him a suitable apprenticeship or employment, describing the boy's behaviour as 'most disappointing' and 'uncontrollable'. Shortly after this, however, the father wrote from Chicago requesting that his children be sent by the Board to join him. Although this was regarded as a good opportunity to move the children on, the Board nevertheless investigated the matter carefully before making its decision. A suitable escort was found, in a Dublin family who had appealed for assistance in emigrating to the United States. A share of the cost was then sought from local relatives and charities, including the Ladies' Society which responded with a donation of three pounds. Subsequently the father wrote from Chicago to report the happy reunification of his family. He thanked the DJBG 'most heartily . . . for their good work in looking after

⁶⁶ DJBG Minutes, 5 May 1912, 2 June 1912, 7 July 1912, 11 August 1912, 15 September 1912, 22 September 1912, 20 October 1912, 29 October 1912, and 1 June 1913.

them during his absence of nearly two years and for the great trouble and expenses they had extended on their behalf'.⁶⁷

In common with its counterparts in other major cities, the DJBG did its best to avoid intractable cases that threatened to become a 'burden' on its resources. In doing so it shared the approach of exporting the problem to other jurisdictions. Those most favoured were mainland Britain, the United States and South Africa. Very occasionally, repatriation to the Russian empire was also raised.⁶⁸ Tickets, sometimes with added financial support, were regularly given or offered to applicants without quibble or investigation.⁶⁹ Periodically this was used as an incentive to move people on to cities with much larger Jewish populations such as Glasgow or Liverpool, where they were deemed to have a better chance of employment, or would simply become someone else's problem. The following three cases are illustrative of the many that are recorded in the DJBG minutes. The first involved a lady from Inverness whose husband had deserted her while she lay ill in hospital. The minutes record that 'the facts of the case were by no means lucid but to get rid of the applicant the Board handed her the sum of twelve shillings and sixpence and offered to pay her travelling expenses to Glasgow'.⁷⁰ The second concerned a gentleman who claimed to be a recent arrival from Riga. When his proficiency in English was remarked upon, the response was that it had been acquired 'at home'. Although there was some suspicion regarding his story, the man was granted his request of a ticket to Liverpool and given three shillings and sixpence in cash.⁷¹ In the third case, the Board had been landed with an additional 'pensioner' after an unsuccessful attempt to persuade a certain gentleman to emigrate. Having taken the four pounds that was provided for this purpose, the man had stayed put in Dublin and refused to discuss the matter any further. Two years later he applied for a further grant of fifteen pounds to enable him to relocate to Palestine, by way of Liverpool. The Board offered him the choice between a grant of five pounds to relocate to Liverpool and a direct ticket to Palestine

⁶⁷ DJBG Minutes, 30 April 1911, 14 May 1911, 16 July 1911, 10 December 1911, 30 June 1912, 8 September 1912, 29 September 1912, 1 February 1914, 8 February 1914, 15 February 1914, 22 February 1914, 15 March 1914, 22 March 1914, 26 April 1914, 3 May 1914, 10 May 1914, 17 May 1914, 25 April 1914, 7 June 1914, 21 June 1914, and 6 September 1914; Ernest W. Harris, Letter to J. Zlotover, 10 May 1911, in DHC Correspondence Book No. 2 (on DHC assistance to the family).

⁶⁸ DJBG Minutes, 20 August 1911, 9 June 1912, and 16 June 1912; Sections 1.4 and 1.5, above.

⁶⁹ For some of the many examples of this policy, see DJBG Minutes, 12 May 1912, 15 September 1912, and 29 December 1912. The same strategy was implemented by the Manchester Board of Guardians (Williams, *Manchester Jewry*, 285).

⁷⁰ DJBG Minutes, 25 August 1912.

⁷¹ DJBG Minutes, 1 September 1912.

with nominal expenses. Eventually a compromise was reached that the man would receive five pounds to travel to Liverpool, with a further five pounds to be forwarded to him there *via* the communal authorities on receipt of definite information that he was leaving for Palestine. Within a few weeks the desired notification arrived from Liverpool and the additional five pounds was duly forwarded by the DJBG.⁷²

The policy of moving on potentially troublesome applicants as quickly as possible worked both ways. In 1900 complaints were aired in the *Jewish Chronicle* by the Honorary Secretary of the Bangor Hebrew Board of Guardians, Isidore Wartski, regarding the ‘abuse involved in sending the poor from town to town’. Wartski condemned the irresponsibility of communal officials in certain provincial towns – such as Dublin – in cynically encouraging professional ‘Jewish tramps’ in their arrogant and extortionate behaviour. According to Wartski, ‘Not being in the hands of any Institution they are most impudent in their demands, and threaten to remain in the town if not immediately paid to clear out’. Wartski felt that the situation urgently required attention from and co-operation between Boards of Guardians across the British Isles.⁷³ Another critic from within the DJBG, Samuel M. Parks, also deplored the policy of prioritising emigrants who, he believed, were ‘as a rule . . . well able to look after themselves’, above what he termed ‘local interests’.⁷⁴

Nevertheless the DJBG minutes suggest a somewhat more personal, humane and sensitive approach towards its applicants than that of its role model in London (see Section 1.5). The DJBG generally appears to have treated applicants – even the difficult ones – with a reasonable degree of consideration, although it is important to remember that the minutes represent only one side of the story. Personal knowledge

⁷² DJBG Minutes, 18 June 1911, 20 August 1911, 3 September 1911, 20 September 1911, 11 May 1913, 20 July 1913, 17 August 1913, 24 August 1913, and 7 September 1913.

⁷³ *Jewish Chronicle*, 19 January 1900 and 26 January 1900. Gartner has noted that beggary was more of a nuisance in the Provinces than in the ‘centre’ (*Jewish Immigrant*, 164). Some degree of co-operation clearly did exist between provincial communities, but on an informal and *ad hoc* basis. In 1905 Harris responded to an enquiry from Wartski regarding articles stolen from the Bangor synagogue by a Jewish vagrant. As Harris’s investigations had yielded no information on the individual, he advised Wartski to hand the matter over to the police commenting, ‘There is such a large Jewish population in this city now, that it is quite impossible to trace any person merely passing through and not resident here’. In 1909 Harris cautioned the secretary of the Manchester Board of Guardians against giving money to an applicant who had moved there from Dublin stating, ‘From all I learn, I am convinced that he is not in a position to marry the party referred to in your letter, and to maintain a home. . . . Mr. Gudansky . . . informs me that Mr. — has not even the money to purchase furniture’. Harris promised that Gudansky would furnish further details within a few days. Ernest W. Harris, Letter to Isidore Wartski, Hon. Sec., Bangor Hebrew Congregation, 17 August 1905, in DHC Correspondence Book No. 1; Letter to David S. Gerson, Hon. Sec., Manchester Board of Guardians, 6 October 1909, in DHC Correspondence Book No. 2.

⁷⁴ *Jewish Chronicle*, 5 February 1909.

of individual circumstances and the sponsorship of trusted referees played in an important role in the process of determining who would be granted relief, and the amount that would be awarded to any given individual or family. No doubt the committee's own experience as recent immigrants was also significant in the decision-making process.

The minutes imply that DJBG rulings were hardly ever disputed. Discord was perhaps often avoided by the frequent use of known and trusted intermediaries. One such mediator was Ada Shillman, who would have witnessed considerable hardship in the course of her work as a nurse and midwife.⁷⁵ Most applicants appear to have come away with something, although this was prone to be less – and frequently considerably less – than the amount that had been requested.⁷⁶ In these situations applicants sometimes responded by refusing the grant altogether.⁷⁷ One unusually contentious case involved three intending emigrants, two of whom were already known to the Board and were not regarded as 'deserving'. When offered tickets and the usual allowances, the men became aggressive and only agreed to leave the building when one of the committee handed them two shillings and sixpence apiece from his own pocket.⁷⁸ The minutes do not explain the men's behaviour; it is possible that they were affronted by the way in which their case was handled by the DJBG committee. The extent to which their actions may have been justifiable – or otherwise – is impossible to discern from the minutes, which assume a predictably outraged tone. Another man, who requested Passover relief and five pounds for a pedlar's licence, 'became angry and walked out' when asked where he had spent the previous Passover. The committee agreed that, should he reapply, he would be granted the relief and the sum of five shillings; as there is no further reference to the case in the minutes, it appears that he did not.⁷⁹ Occasionally assistance was offered voluntarily without having been solicited; although this was done with the very best of intentions, intended recipients were prone to be offended.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ DJBG Minutes, 14 April 1912, 29 October 1912, and 19 November 1912 (examples of Shillman's intercession). On Ada Shillman's life and tireless work both within and beyond the Jewish community, see Shillman, *Short History*, 117-18.

⁷⁶ DJBG Minutes, 1 December 1912, 8 June 1913, and 16 August 1914 (examples of rejected cases); DJBG Minutes, 5 January 1913, 26 January 1913, 2 February 1913, and 18 October 1914 (grants of lower sums than had been requested).

⁷⁷ E.g., DJBG Minutes, 23 March 1913.

⁷⁸ DJBG Minutes, 10 December 1911.

⁷⁹ DJBG Minutes, 24 March 1912.

⁸⁰ E.g., DJBG Minutes, 15 February 1914.

In considering individual cases, the Board was attentive to its image within the community. For an organisation that was entirely reliant on voluntary contributions this was crucial. For example, when contemplating the transfer of one chronically ill ‘pensioner’ into the Union Hospital with his full consent, the decision was postponed until after the High Holydays out of concern as to how this might appear.⁸¹ Although the man was so keen to be moved to the hospital that he eventually prevailed upon his landlord to make the necessary arrangements, the DJBG was condemned in the *Jewish Express* for having relocated him. The man was subsequently found to be content, well-looked after and completely satisfied with his new circumstances, however the Board decided to let the matter lie as far as the press was concerned.⁸²

The DJBG minutes imply that Board proceedings rarely became heated; indeed, one might almost be convinced of this impression were it not for the critique of Samuel Parks, which appeared in the *Jewish Chronicle* in 1909. Parks believed that the efficacy of the Board was seriously impeded by petty ‘disagreement and quarrelling’, with the consequence that ‘the poor are the sufferers’. He also censured the Board for adhering to outdated procedures and narrow and ‘stereotyped’ principles. Parks felt that enthusiastic and capable ‘new blood’ was being deliberately excluded from having any effective role. He urged local subscribers to change matters by taking a greater interest in how their pledges were spent, and by involving themselves more directly in the workings of the Board.⁸³ Harris was also critical of the DJBG, although he generally kept his views to himself. He believed that certain ‘deserving’ members of the community were reluctant to approach the Board as it did not maintain a strict enough confidentiality in its proceedings.⁸⁴ The views of Parks and Harris provide a useful and informative counterpoint to the DJBG minutes, as well as a timely reminder that small-town communal politics could be just as objectionable, self-serving and ineffectual as their metropolitan counterparts, if in different ways. Parks’ letter suggests a simple reason as to why most applicants received a grant of some description: not necessarily for reasons of compassion and concern, but by way of the compromises that were dictated by a lack of consensus among the committee. The flipside to the personal, insider knowledge that was crucial to the Board’s decision-making is the inevitability of personal bias,

⁸¹ DJBG Minutes, 10 September 1911; 11 June 1911 (background to this case).

⁸² DJBG Minutes, 28 January 1912.

⁸³ *Jewish Chronicle*, 5 February 1909.

⁸⁴ Ernest W. Harris, Letter to A. E. Sydney, 22 April 1908, in DHC Correspondence Book No. 2.

notwithstanding the purest of intentions. That applicants were, at times, offended in the course of its proceedings shows that the DJBG was not necessarily as sensitive as modern ethical standards, or the narrative of traditional Jewish philanthropy would tend to assume.⁸⁵

In the broader sense, however, there is virtually no evidence as to the way that Dublin's Jews – and especially the most needy – really felt about the Board at this time. Section 3.1 has observed that active dissent would have been a risky business in a small and close-knit community such as Dublin. In addition, Endelman has argued that the actual extent of radical influence, as opposed to rhetoric, is hard to gauge even in larger and more diverse Jewries such as London.⁸⁶ Whatever resentment or radicalism may have existed among Ireland's immigrant poor cannot have posed any significant threat to the existing communal hegemony, or to its broader public image. There is no trace in the historical record of any extreme radical elements within the community, and no evidence whatsoever for the formation of alternative immigrant relief organisations. The only real hints of popular differences with the Board are the persistence of private fundraising (see below) and regular complaints regarding the lack of financial support from the wider community.⁸⁷ The nature of these comments implies that there were sufficient people across all sectors of the community who could have afforded to subscribe regularly, but chose not to. Although both issues indicate a broader mistrust for, resentment of or lack of confidence in the Board, they may just as well be the result of nothing more than apathy. The degree to which popular attitudes were affected by the Board's treatment of its applicants is impossible to determine from the records that have survived. The Board certainly does not seem to have had any serious competitors on the charitable scene; for example, notwithstanding Harris's remarks concerning the Board's lack of discretion, far more relief was provided from the DHC's grants to it and its dedicated funds than through the DHC's own, more low-key efforts.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Irish examples of this narrative include Rivlin, *Shalom Ireland*, 119; Sylvia Crivon, Interview with Carol Weinstock, October 1987, Carol Weinstock Papers, National Library of Ireland, Acc. 5734 (unsorted).

⁸⁶ Endelman, *Jews of Britain*, 140-44.

⁸⁷ DJBG Minutes, 17 December 1911, 9 June 1912, 15 December 1912, 29 December 1912, 12 January 1913, and 9 February 1913; *Jewish Chronicle*, 2 March 1900, 22 December 1911, and 19 December 1913.

⁸⁸ Compare DHC Annual Reports, in DHC Minutes, 1904-1915, with DJBG Minutes, 1911-1914.

The situation is further complicated by the complexity of class divisions within the Dublin community, and the impossibility of ever fully unravelling these. It is certainly no straightforward matter of a culture clash between the acculturated Jewish elite and the hard-done-by immigrant as portrayed by Duffy.⁸⁹ In fact this is nothing more than an assumption based on flimsy anecdotal evidence and, as Section 3.1 has argued, potentially dubious constructions of ‘class’. The Board was an organisation that was conceived and largely run by well-to-do members of Dublin’s immigrant community who, as in other communities, were quick to emulate the elite in the way in which they catered to immigrant needs.⁹⁰ In the Irish case this appears to have resulted not only in the hybrid religious forms that have been identified in Section 3.1, but in a parallel philosophy of charity which combined Victorian philanthropic conventions with traditional Jewish values and stereotypical immigrant behavioural patterns. The Board’s choice of name and its embrace of the then fashionable principle of ‘deservingness’ – together with its converse – imply an aspiration to emulate the London Jewish Board of Guardians’ approach to charity. Nevertheless the precise way in which the Dublin Board understood the guiding philosophy of its London counterpart is not entirely clear from the DJBG minutes. The DJBG may only have had a superficial grasp of how the London Board actually operated, or might have consciously adapted London values to suit the situation in Dublin. What is more likely, however, is that its hybridity was simply a consequence of the acculturation process. In this case, it can be seen as representing a further voluntary – and therefore circumspect – adoption of the values and modes of expression of the host culture. Thus, although the notion of ‘deservingness’ is a frequent feature of DJBG proceedings, in practice this concept actually appears to have had a much broader and more liberal application in the Dublin context than in London.⁹¹ This duality had the benefit of legitimising the DJBG in the eyes, on the one hand, of the civic authorities and the Anglo-Jewish establishment. Meanwhile, in remaining true to an extent to traditional Jewish values, the Board was likewise validated among the local immigrant community. For the ‘native’ leadership, the benefits of having an organised board of guardians would far have outweighed the

⁸⁹ Duffy, ‘Socio-Economic Analysis’, 126.

⁹⁰ Rozin, *Rich and Poor*, 203; Williams, ‘Class and Community’, 15-33 (examples of immigrant emulation of the elite approach to philanthropy in the English context).

⁹¹ Williams has discerned similar traits in the Manchester Jewish Board of Guardians, observing that a combination of compassion and pragmatism occasionally left the Manchester Board financially overstretched (*Manchester Jewry*, 293-94).

stress involved in dealing with the DJBG. The designation and workings of the DJBG again demonstrate one of the most significant observations of Chapter Three that, from the very first, conscious choices were being made within Ireland's immigrant community to present traditional institutions and obligations, which continued to be conducted along largely traditional lines, in a contemporary anglicised fashion.

The Board's precise relationship to the civic authorities is tricky to determine. The DJBG minutes make scant reference to the forms of poor relief that were available within the host community. Its policy of boarding the poor within the Jewish community may imply a reluctance to deal with or trouble the secular authorities which, were this the case, should be understood as much in terms of external appearances as of communal solidarity and mutual aid. Indeed the only instance where the DJBG expresses concern regarding its relationship with outside authorities is the case of Issy Blond (see Section 2.3). Although relief was occasionally used in a coercive way there is no indication that this, or non-Jewish institutions or authorities, were employed as a means of social control as was frequently the case in mainland Britain (see Section 1.5). These two factors suggest that, while there were certainly many individual instances of deprivation and hardship within the Jewish community at this time, and while all Jewish charities struggled to meet the demands that were placed on them, these largely did not exceed the capacity of internal relief mechanisms to contain them. Poverty within Ireland's Jewish community did not, therefore, pose any significant threat to the community's image or reputation among the non-Jewish public or to its relationship with secular institutions. This can be taken cumulatively as an indication of the community's overall socio-economic standing. As Ó Gráda has shown, although most Jews were relatively poor in this period, they were never among the least well-off in Irish society.⁹²

The Board's aspirations to moderate and, where possible, assume control of the administration of relief among Dublin's Jewish community again mirrors the ambitions of its London counterpart.⁹³ The DJBG aspired to assume sole

⁹² Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, 33ff. In popular narrative, on the other hand, life at this time tends to be remembered as hard (e.g., Esther Hesselberg, Letter to Carol Weinstock, undated, Carol Weinstock Papers, National Library of Ireland, Acc. 5734 (unsorted); 'Esther Hesselberg, born 1896', undated memoir, Asher Benson Papers, National Library of Ireland, Acc. 5734 (unsorted)). For comparable observations regarding England's immigrant Jews, see Gartner, *Jewish Immigrant*, 143; Raymond Kalman, 'The Jewish Friendly Societies of London 1793-1993', *Jewish Historical Studies* 33 (1992-1994): 156.

⁹³ Rozin, *Rich and Poor*, 119.

responsibility for deciding which causes were worthy of assistance, how relief should be administered and at what level it should be capped. In the Dublin context this friction is not simply a feature of the frequently strained relations between immigrant and ‘native’ leaders, but also an indication of the power struggles that would conceivably have arisen within the immigrant community itself and for which little evidence survives. In February 1914 the Ladies’ Society received a letter requesting that all fundraising issues be referred in future to the DJBG in order to avoid overlap. The Ladies’ Society responded angrily that no cases were considered without prior consultation and, after a long discussion, the matter was dropped.⁹⁴ This was part of a concerted attempt to regulate efforts by other organisations and individuals to fundraise on behalf of needy members of the community. The DJBG regarded itself as the most appropriate conduit for charitable assistance within the community and thus aspired to replace this activity with regular subscriptions. Some grants were therefore conditional on there being no private fundraising while, in other cases, collections were used to supplement or replace the aid that was provided by the Board. In March 1914 it was proposed that circulars be posted in the synagogues to discourage members of the community from supporting what it considered to be unsanctioned collections and raffles.⁹⁵ While these efforts must partly have been driven by the wish to maintain a credible system for the distribution of aid within the Dublin community and, as was claimed, to prevent unscrupulous and ‘undeserving’ people from taking advantage of well-meaning individuals, it must also be seen as a drive to wrest control of the processes of dispensing relief within the community. This is reflected in the DJBG narrative which simultaneously depicts the organisation as the foremost Jewish charity in Dublin, while bemoaning the deplorable lack of communal interest in its good work.⁹⁶

The DJBG narrative contends that the Board was the first organisation to assume responsibility for and to systemise the giving of charity within the Dublin community. This claim to the greatest longevity is clearly aimed at the DHC which, as has been shown above, had had its own dedicated Philanthropic Society for some years before the establishment of the Board, and continued to provide relief from its

⁹⁴ DJBG Minutes, 22 February 1914.

⁹⁵ DJBG Minutes, 21 January 1912, 28 January 1912, 14 April 1912, 11 August 1912, 25 August 1912, 1 March 1914, and 27 September 1914 (examples of the DJBG attitude towards collections); DJBG Minutes, 15 December 1912 and 12 January 1913 (on the wish to stamp out private and unauthorised collections).

⁹⁶ DJBG Minutes, 23 December 1912.

own coffers for years afterwards. The DHC facilitated the work of the DJBG by allowing meetings to be held in its schoolrooms,⁹⁷ and by providing regular financial support to the Board itself, as well as its Passover and Coal Funds (see Section 4.1, above). Funds allowing, these grants were increased at times of heightened demand, such as the winter of 1903-1904.⁹⁸ Despite this apparent co-operation, the DHC records show that relations between the two organisations were prone to be strained. Its grants to the DJBG were not automatic, often having actively to be requested, and were repeatedly suspended or redirected to its designated relief funds.⁹⁹ Although the underlying reasons for these tensions are generally not explained, a lack of two-way communication appears to have been a contributory factor. In January 1906, in response to a request concerning the Coal Fund, the DHC minutes note that as no report had been received regarding the congregation's previous donation, the grant would instead be sent to the DJBG.¹⁰⁰ In seeing itself as the premier charity in the community, the DJBG may not have felt it necessary to account for its expenditure to any other communal authority, and may have resented being asked to do so by the DHC. Its failure in 1906 to acknowledge receipt of DHC support and to provide basic information as to how this funding was being deployed suggest shortcomings in matters of protocol and courtesy by the Board, which could justifiably be construed as arrogance. Occasionally the records of the DHC also imply that members of its committee were divided in their attitudes towards the DJBG, and had a certain lack of confidence in its management.¹⁰¹

The ambiguities and tensions within the relationship between the DHC and DJBG are well illustrated by the saga of the Lewis bequest. This legacy of fifteen thousand pounds was bequeathed to the Dublin community in 1901 from the estate of the self-made Jewish millionaire Samuel Lewis, whose widow, Ada Lewis-Hill, had been born in Dublin. The principal was to be invested for twenty years with the dividend to be used for the benefit of Dublin's needy Jews. When this period had

⁹⁷ *Jewish Chronicle*, 19 December 1913.

⁹⁸ DHC Minutes, 1904-1915 (on DHC support of the DJBG and its Coal Fund); DHC AGM, 8 January 1905, DHC Annual Report, 1904-1905, in DHC Minutes, 1904-1915 (examples of voted increases in DHC grants to the DJBG).

⁹⁹ DHC Annual Reports, 1908-1912, 1915, in DHC Minutes, 1904-1915; DHC Minutes, 7 March 1909, 19 April 1911, 7 March 1912, 1 December 1912, 28 March 1912, 25 January 1914, and 26 April 1914.

¹⁰⁰ DJBG Minutes, 3 December 1905.

¹⁰¹ Ernest W. Harris, Letter to L. Berman, Hon. Sec., DJBG, 5 December 1904, in DHC Correspondence Book No. 1; DHC Annual Report, 1907, in DHC Minutes, 1904-1915; DHC Minutes, 7 March 1909 and 26 April 1914.

elapsed, the fund was to revert to the recognised trustees of the Jewish poor of Dublin.¹⁰² The conditions that were attached to the bequest appear in themselves to have caused problems within the Dublin community. As a result of these, Lewis's executors were slow in forwarding the income. This led to accusations from Parks that the DJBG had not been sufficiently vigorous in demanding that the funds be put under local control.¹⁰³

Dublin's communal leadership took the decision to administer the Lewis bequest through an advisory board, which included delegates from both the DHC and the DJBG. Despite receiving the lion's share of the funds, the DJBG clearly resented not having been given full authority over its disbursement. The Eliassoffs recall the 'numerous obstacles that had to be overcome by the elected representatives of the various local charitable institutions before arriving at a working arrangement for the distribution of the monies in question'.¹⁰⁴ Parks, who describes this arrangement as 'a family party',¹⁰⁵ seems to have had a somewhat dysfunctional family in mind. Both the DJBG and the DHC feared that the money would be misused. The Eliassoffs recall the Board's anxiety that portions of the bequest would be 'frittered away'.¹⁰⁶ Meanwhile the DHC's annual report of 1907 states, 'it is to be hoped that the fund will be properly administered by the Charitable Bodies at present entrusted with the distribution thereof, so as to be of permanent advantage to the deserving poor for whose benefit alone it is to be solely applied'.¹⁰⁷

Harris occupied a pivotal but ambiguous position as honorary solicitor of the DJBG until 1911. Simultaneously, as president, he had the responsibility of communicating with Lewis's executor, A. E. Sydney, on behalf of the DHC. Notwithstanding the criticisms (above) which he voiced less than a year after he had described the Board as 'the principal Jewish charity in Dublin', he does appear to have enjoyed a cordial working relationship with the DJBG.¹⁰⁸ However, Harris did

¹⁰² *Jewish Chronicle*, 18 January 1901; Shillman, *Short History*, 114-5; Eliassoffs, 'DJBG', 14. Ada Lewis-Hill was herself a generous benefactor of the DJBG (Eliassoffs, 'DJBG', 9-10).

¹⁰³ Ernest W. Harris, Letters to A. E. Sydney, 30 May 1907, and P. Sayers, Hon. Sec., DJBG, 19 July 1907, in DHC Correspondence Book No. 2; *Jewish Chronicle*, 5 February 1909.

¹⁰⁴ Eliassoffs, 'DJBG', 14-15.

¹⁰⁵ *Jewish Chronicle*, 5 February 1909.

¹⁰⁶ Eliassoffs, 'DJBG', 15-16.

¹⁰⁷ DHC Annual Report, 1907, in DHC Minutes, 1904-1915.

¹⁰⁸ Ernest W. Harris, Letter to Charles Emmanuel, 17 January 1907, in DHC Correspondence Book No. 2. In May 1911 Harris resigned from the DJBG 'thanking all the Members for their kindness to me', and reflecting that he had been well-treated during his involvement with the Board. As Harris appears to have been a very forthright and scrupulous man, my impression is that these remarks were intended

not allow this to affect his judgement when it came to his efforts on behalf of the DHC. In March 1911 he advised Sydney against a further payment to the DJBG's Loan Fund. According to Harris, the Board had only forwarded half of the previous grant to the Fund at the time of writing despite having made an insistent plea 'that the money was then urgently required for assisting poor people to earn a living'. At the same time, Harris recommended an increase of five pounds in the DHC allocation 'as the number of applicants [to the DHC for charity] has considerably increased'.¹⁰⁹ In January 1912 he responded to a request by the DJBG for a raise in the grant from the DHC with a brusque reminder that, due to its financial commitments, the committee had capped this at ten pounds the year before.¹¹⁰

The misgivings of the DHC were evidently reciprocated by the DJBG. In 1910 an attempt, possibly engineered by the Board, had apparently taken place to oust some or all of the DHC representatives to the Lewis advisory committee; all according to Harris were 'independent and prominent Members' of the congregation.¹¹¹ Although the DHC was deploying its share of the Lewis funds for the benefit of the immigrant community, in 1911 its allocation was cited by members of the DJBG as an example of how these monies were not being appropriately disbursed. The Board resolved to request its solicitors to assert its authority and entitlement over and above rival institutions.¹¹² At the Board's annual general meeting in December 1912 a 'somewhat heated discussion' led to the unanimous decision, which was subsequently reported to the *Jewish Chronicle*, that the Board should take the necessary steps to gain control of the bequest as 'the representatives and protectors of the poor here . . . who are best able and competent to distribute the money without causing an overlapping of charitable grants as has been the case heretofore'.¹¹³

sincerely and not ironically (Ernest W. Harris, Letter to J. Zlotover, Hon. Sec., DJBG, 10 May 1911, in DHC Correspondence Book No. 2).

¹⁰⁹ Ernest W. Harris, Letter to A. E. Sydney, 24 March 1911, in DHC Correspondence Book No. 2.

¹¹⁰ Ernest W. Harris, Letter to J. Zlotover, Hon. Sec., DJBG, 9 January 1912, in DHC Correspondence Book No. 2.

¹¹¹ Ernest W. Harris, Letters to Philip Sayers, 22 November 1910, 23 November 1910, 7 December 1910, and 28 December 1910; and Letter to A. E. Sydney, 22 November 1910, in DHC Correspondence Book No. 2.

¹¹² In 1910, for example, Lewis funds were used by the DHC to alleviate the financial difficulties of the Stamer Street *heder* (DHC Annual Report, 1910, in DHC Minutes, 1904-1915); this was in addition to the grants that were made to needy members of the immigrant community that have been discussed above. On DJBG criticisms of the DHC allocation, see DJBG Minutes, 14 May 1911.

¹¹³ DJBG Minutes, 23 December 1912; *Jewish Chronicle*, 13 December 1912.

The incidents described above presumably represent only a snapshot of the tensions that arose surrounding the Lewis bequest, however they reveal that a decade after Lewis's death resentments were still running high between the rival factions of the advisory board. These conflicts also show that over twenty years after its establishment, the DJBG was still striving to assert its primacy over the other communal organisations that were involved in the dispensing of relief. Ultimately this aspiration was fulfilled as, in 1921, the DJBG was finally granted full control over the principal, in the words of the Eliassoffs 'in its recognised capacity of the premier Jewish Charitable Institution of Dublin'.¹¹⁴

As has been shown the biases and shortcomings of the DJBG leadership have been airbrushed out of the picture, together with misgivings within the community regarding the objectivity and efficacy of the Board. While nowadays the DJBG's careful and scrupulous stewardship of its archive reflects the fundamental Jewish charitable principles of discretion, sensitivity and compassion, the sources show that these values cannot simply be accepted as a given when it comes to the Board's past operations. The historical record, scant as it is, provides a counterbalance to the narrative that has been formalised by the Eliassoffs and perpetuated over the years with successive embellishments. This has resulted in the DHC being largely 'written out' of the story of Jewish philanthropy in Dublin and its role minimised. To this day, furthermore, the considerable and persistent debt that was incurred by the synagogue on behalf of the immigrant community remains unacknowledged. On the other hand, this general dismissal of the DHC may be due in part to the view in immigrant circles that its leaders had not been equal to, and had failed to meet the growing need within the community for organised and effective relief. This criticism is legitimate but nevertheless unfair, given all that the DHC authorities had been expected to cope with and their limited capacity in terms of numbers and finances. Nor does it do justice to their relatively compassionate attitude towards the immigrant community (see Section 3.1). Reductive assumptions that Dublin's 'native' Jews were a straightforward replica of their counterparts in London, and that they did not show sufficient foresight or decisiveness when it came to the needs of the immigrant poor, have created a general impression that the DHC was ineffectual, perhaps even negligent, in fulfilling its communal obligations.

¹¹⁴ Eliassoffs, 'DJBG', 14-17.

The inadequacy of traditional internal relief mechanisms to the demands of accelerated immigration had constituted another serious gap in the communal infrastructure. As with the establishment of the *hevrot* and Talmud Torah the creation of a more appropriate, effective and modern vehicle for addressing communal need provided an outlet for the aspirations and energies of emerging immigrant leaders. In the case of the DJBG, however, the use of contemporary anglicised models afforded the rising immigrant leadership the opportunity both to emulate and reach out to acculturated Anglo-Jewry over the heads of their ‘native’ counterparts. The adoption of fashionable philanthropic principles, although circumscribed, shows that the DJBG was just as influenced by contemporary social conventions as the DHC, as opposed to being a kind of grassroots rejection of assumed DHC values.¹¹⁵ The DJBG represents a fascinating fusion of contemporary British social philosophy with traditional Jewish values and conventions. This allowed high-handed Victorian morals to co-exist with a customary Jewish concern for the welfare of the individual, based on notions of communal solidarity and mutual responsibility. This hybridity made the Board at once compassionate and condescending, generous and high-handed. Its anglicised aspects reflect the internal Jewish politics of immigrant versus ‘native’ as manifest in the Irish context, in particular the struggle by immigrant leaders to wrest credibility and authority from the established leadership of Dublin Jewry, and to gain legitimacy within the wider Anglo-Jewish world.

Before moving on, it is worth noting that there were also Jewish Boards of Guardians in Belfast, Cork and Limerick and that, from 1902, the Belfast Board operated a Benevolent Loan Society. Unfortunately the only real record of these institutions is to be found in the pages of the *Jewish Chronicle*.¹¹⁶ Obviously newspaper reports are not as informative as minutebooks and, in the early days at least, tend to contain little information of note. The risk therefore of relativising these Boards and their activities in terms of the DJBG precludes any meaningful analysis, beyond noting again the universal adoption of anglicised designations. This is

¹¹⁵ Duffy offers this class-based interpretation of the ongoing differences between the DHC and the DJBG (‘Socio-Economic Analysis’, 126).

¹¹⁶ *Jewish Chronicle*, 17 November 1893, 9 August 1895, and 23 January 1903 (founding of the Belfast Board of Guardians for the Relief of Distressed Jews and examples of its activities); *Jewish Chronicle*, 7 February 1902 (Belfast’s Benevolent Loan Society). For a rare reference to the Limerick Jewish Board of Guardians see *Jewish Chronicle*, 21 May 1915. On Cork’s Jewish Board of Guardians, see Frederick Rosehill, email message to the author, 23 November 2010. Cork also had a Hebrew Philanthropic Society (*Jewish Chronicle*, 22 December 1911), but no record of its activities has survived.

particularly significant in the case of Cork and Limerick, communities that were from the outset composed and led solely by immigrants, as further evidence that voluntary acculturation was widespread among Irish Jews.

4.3 HOLY BURIAL SOCIETY

The HBS was founded in 1884 by members of the DNHC. Robert Bradlaw was a leading figure in the society and was instrumental in fundraising for and opening the urgently-needed new cemetery in Dolphins Barn in 1898.¹¹⁷ The HBS operated as a traditional *hevra kadisha*: part friendly society, part charity.¹¹⁸ Members paid regular subscriptions, which were set at a minimum of sixpence in 1909. Interments and tombstones were charged according to the circumstances of the individual or family involved, and could range from a nominal fee to full costs of twenty pounds. Initially the least well-off members of the community were buried entirely free of charge, however in 1910 it was decided that only graves would be provided *gratis*. Contributions were sought from the extended family where the immediate family of the deceased was in straitened circumstances. From 1905 entrance fees for those ‘with reduced circumstances’ were also waived, at the discretion of the committee. All charges were agreed by the committee, which convened each time a death occurred.¹¹⁹ Like many of Ireland’s Jewish institutions, Dublin’s HBS experienced ongoing difficulties in balancing its books and in recruiting and maintaining its membership.¹²⁰ This is likely to have been due, at least in part, to poor financial management as well as internal communal divisions.¹²¹

Although the HBS was at this time officially known by its English name, and from 1898 its minutes were written in English only (as opposed to both English and

¹¹⁷ Preamble and Minutes, 21 August 1898 and 4 December 1898, in HBS Minutes, 1884-1910; *Jewish Chronicle*, 26 August 1898, 10 July 1903, and 4 March 1904.

¹¹⁸ On the origins and traditional functions of the *hevra kadisha*, see Dror Segev, ‘Enlightenment versus Religious Law: Debating Jewish Burial in the Hebrew Press of Late Imperial Russia’, in *Religion in the Mirror of Law: East European Perspectives from the Early Modern Period until 1939*, ed. Yvonne Kleinmann and Tracie Wilson (Frankfurt am Main: Max Planck Institute for European Legal History/Klostermann Verlag, forthcoming).

¹¹⁹ HBS Minutes, 1884-1910, esp. 18 May 1905 (waiver of entrance fees), 11 April 1909 (introduction of the minimum monthly subscription), and 8 May 1910 (changes to provisions for the poor).

¹²⁰ E.g., HBS Minutes, 28 August 1898, 7 February 1899, 15 February 1899, 16 November 1901, 8 May 1910, and 3 July 1910.

¹²¹ Ernest W. Harris, Letter to Hyman Goldfoot, Hon. Sec., Hevra Kadisha, [?] May 1904, in DHC Correspondence Book No. 1, and Letter to H. Silverman, 21 July 1908, in DHC Correspondence Book No. 2.

Hebrew), this was little more than a veneer for what was still, in effect, a traditional Jewish *hevra*. That it was dedicated to ‘Montifiore’ (Sir Moses Montefiore) is also indicative of the sentiments and aspirations of its founders in terms of contemporary Anglo-Jewish cultural values. The preamble describes ‘Montofiore’ as a ‘pious philanthrope’, suggesting that these were the characteristics that the HBS founders were seeking to emulate.¹²² This deference to Montefiore, and the effort to present the HBS in an acculturated manner, are indicative that the HBS was intended to conform to anglicised *mores*. On the other hand, the minutes give out a rather mixed message, wavering between the names HBS and ‘Chevra Kadusha’, with erratic English grammar and spelling – such as that of Montefiore’s name – and many corrections noted in the original. Meanwhile, in one minute, God’s name is written out in full.¹²³ Another indication of the thoroughly traditional nature of the HBS is the importance of personal knowledge of individuals and families within the community in the agreeing of fees and charges, and the complete absence of any notion of merit or ‘deservingness’. Although burial is traditionally considered to be a *mitzvah* (religious obligation), had ‘deservingness’ been a guiding principle it might be expected to have had some visible influence on the decision-making process.

Predictably, in its early days the HBS came into conflict with the DHC. It was established the year after the DNHC and can likewise be assumed to be responding to a need among the immigrant community that existing arrangements did not fulfil. Indeed the DHC *Laws* raise a number of potentially awkward issues for poorer members of the community, in connection with the payment of interment expenses and the settlement of arrears,¹²⁴ notwithstanding whatever informal concessions the DHC authorities may have been willing to accede to. The respective *mores* of ‘native’ and ‘foreigner’ may also have been a cause of disagreement, although the only potential indication in this respect is a remark made by Chief RSabbi Hermann Adler during his 1898 pastoral visit. Adler ‘pointed out to them forcibly the necessity of a union of hearts with their native-born brethren, so as to enable them to obtain the

¹²² Inscription and Preamble to HBS Minutes, 1884-1910. As well as for his activism (see Section 1.4), Montefiore was widely admired in the Jewish world for maintaining an Orthodox Jewish lifestyle and a keen interest in Judaism and world Jewry, despite having integrated into English high society. He was, therefore, able to serve as a positive role-model to Jews of all persuasions. Philanthropy, for which Montefiore was well known, would have been a guiding principle (in theory, at least – see Segev, ‘Jewish Burial’) of any *hevra* such as the HBS that was perceived to be fulfilling a sacred obligation.

¹²³ HBS Minutes, 25 December 1902. Traditionally, Orthodox Jews prefer to use an adapted form rather than writing God’s name in full.

¹²⁴ Rules 86-112, *Laws and Regulations*.

primary requisite of a Hebrew community – a suitable cemetery – and emphasised the dangers of separation’.¹²⁵ Bradlaw was commended and presented with an illuminated address by the DHC a mere three months later ‘in consideration of the very important services he has rendered to the entire Jewish population of Dublin’.¹²⁶ Thus any differences in custom and ritual that are implied by the Chief Rabbi’s remarks would seem to be diminishing in significance, at the local level at least.

Despite this endorsement of Bradlaw’s efforts, tensions between the HBS and the DHC persisted into the early 1900s. In 1898 the HBS committee met to consider whether Bradlaw should attend a meeting of DHC free members that had been convened in order to discuss the cemetery, in a private or a representative capacity. It was decided, as the HBS deemed the DHC to have no claim whatsoever on the cemetery, that the meeting was a ‘great insult’ to the HBS and therefore that Bradlaw should not attend in any capacity.¹²⁷ In 1901 when a prominent member of the DHC, Hyman Barron, was approached to contribute towards the interment of a close relative, he gave the shocking response ‘that he would not give a farthing to pay the expenses, and as she is not lying in his house the Society may do whatever they like with her’. The HBS responded by covering the full costs, as the immediate family of the deceased was not in a position to contribute.¹²⁸ In December 1902 the HBS requested a grant of five pounds from the DHC towards the purchase of a new hearse. Having deliberated the matter, the DHC forwarded the requested amount on condition that the hearse be made available *gratis* to all members of the DHC. The HBS responded that the cheque would only be accepted as a charitable donation, as the hearse could only be provided free of charge for the poor. Harris replied that, as far as the DHC was concerned, its duty ended with forwarding the cheque subject to its terms, which he regarded as ‘quite reasonable’.¹²⁹ He did, however, offer to revert to the DHC committee; unfortunately the outcome of this stalemate was not recorded by either party. In 1904 Harris objected when the HBS asked the DHC to subsidise the burial of a Jewish pauper due to the Society’s lack of funds. He responded that the matter came under the HBS remit and that its financial shortcomings were proof of a general lack of confidence in the HBS management. Harris nevertheless authorised a

¹²⁵ *Jewish Chronicle*, 20 May 1898.

¹²⁶ *Jewish Chronicle*, 26 August 1898.

¹²⁷ HBS Minutes, 15 October 1898.

¹²⁸ HBS Minutes, 21 October 1901.

¹²⁹ Ernest W. Harris, Letters to Robert Bradlaw, 20 November 1902, 10 December 1902, and 18 December 1902, in DHC Correspondence Book No. 1; HBS Minutes, 25 December 1902.

contribution of two pounds, cautioning the HBS to ‘bear in mind that I will not accede to any further applications of this character’.¹³⁰

Relations between Hyman Barron and the HBS were particularly strained. Barron led litigation on behalf of the DHC in 1903, surrounding the inauguration of a new membership scheme which had involved the appointment of two trustees each by the HBS and the DHC. Despite attempts to settle privately, the case ended up in Chancery.¹³¹ In 1908 members of the HBS objected when Barron was proposed as chair of its management committee, purportedly on the grounds that it was unprecedented for a *cohen* to hold office in any *hevra kadisha*. Instead George Wigoder was appointed by the narrow majority of seven votes to five.¹³² Despite having then refused to serve on the committee, Barron turned up to a subsequent meeting complaining that he had received no notification about it. After a ‘heated discussion’, the secretary apologised for his omission, and the minutes remark that ‘if Mr. Barron now made up his mind to serve on the Committee he is welcome to do so and will accordingly be summoned to future Committee Meetings’.¹³³ The following year, Barron objected when Wigoder was elected vice-president of the HBS on the grounds that this contravened the society’s rules, but was apparently overruled.¹³⁴ A few months later further differences, attributed to the ongoing friction between the various Dublin congregations, were reported in the *Jewish Chronicle*. These were deemed serious enough by the Anglo-Jewish authorities to merit arbitration by Rev. Hyamson.¹³⁵ In fact the matter appears to have been more of a personal nature; Harris’s exasperation Barron’s uncompromising truculence is evident from the following letter, dated June 1909:

¹³⁰ Ernest W. Harris, Letter to Hyman Goldfoot, [?] May 1904, in DHC Correspondence Book No. 1. A few years previously the *Jewish Chronicle* (9 February 1900) had printed a letter from ‘an Irish Jew’, bemoaning the injustice that ‘the struggling congregation of Dublin’ should be saddled with the costs incurred in transporting and burying the remains of poor Jews from outside the main centres of Jewish settlement in Ireland. The writer noted that the DHC was ‘scarcely able to provide for its own poor, and oppressed by a very large debt’ and threatened that, unless the English authorities offered assistance, Jewish paupers would end up being interred without rites in local Christian cemeteries. This does not appear to have elicited any response from any quarter.

¹³¹ HBS Minutes, 19 April 1903, 23 May 1903, 7 June 1903, 2 December 1903, 17 March 1904, and 1 May 1904; Ernest W. Harris, Letters to Hyman Goldfoot, 26 May 1903, John D. Rosenthal, 26 May 1903, Chief Rabbi, 14 March 1904, Scallan & Co. (solicitors), 16 March 1904 and 21 March 1904, and J. Hesselberg, 18 March 1904, in DHC Correspondence Book No. 1.

¹³² HBS Minutes, 23 February 1908. *Cohanim* (the priestly caste) are forbidden in Jewish law to have any contact with the dead.

¹³³ HBS Minutes, 12 April 1908.

¹³⁴ HBS Minutes, 14 February 1909. The precise nature of Barron’s objections is not stated.

¹³⁵ *Jewish Chronicle*, 11 June 1909.

I have not the slightest intention of taking upon myself the right to set aside the unanimous decision of the Arbitrators nominated by you and Messrs. Hesselberg and Briscoe and the opposition parties, because you do not agree with the conclusions arrived at. I have no more power to do so than the man in the street. The Arbitration was agreed to by the congregation as a compromise, and according to the minute the Award must be confirmed at next General Meeting.

If the Arbitrators desire to meet again, and vary their award in any way, I personally see no objection, but not having heard from any of them a desire to do so, I cannot convene them. What you want me to do is to throw them aside altogether, a proposition that any sensible person would know is entirely outside of my powers. They were not appointed by me and I had only to act in case of disagreement. There was, however, no disagreement.¹³⁶

Notwithstanding these ongoing tensions, the DHC and the HBS had arrived at some kind of working arrangement some years previously, however uneasy and prone to friction. In 1905 the HBS had appointed Gudansky to officiate at the funerals of those who were not affiliated to any congregation, and the DHC made a generous grant to the HBS of one hundred pounds.¹³⁷ In April 1908, despite its chronic cashflow problems, the DHC responded positively to a request from the HBS for a contribution of fifty pounds towards the building of a new mortuary.¹³⁸ In 1909, when the HBS faced litigation over the building of the mortuary, Harris and one other leading member of the DHC offered their legal services *gratis*.¹³⁹ The following year, the DHC granted the HBS the use of its vestry room for meetings.¹⁴⁰

The Hevra Kadisha in Belfast appears to exhibit a similar mix of old and new characteristics to its Dublin counterpart, insofar as the surviving records indicate. The choice to register the Hevra formally as a friendly society (see Section 3.2) was an unusual decision – for Ireland at any rate – which implies a progressive and acculturated worldview, and a shift in emphasis from the spiritual to the practical and temporal. It demonstrates again how prevailing values could influence the way in

¹³⁶ Ernest W. Harris, Letter to H. A. Barron, 25 June 1909, in DHC Correspondence Book No. 2.

¹³⁷ HBS Minutes, 18 May 1905; DHC Annual Accounts 1904-1905, in DHC Minutes, 1904-1915. For the only other mention of a grant to the HBS, of fifteen pounds, see DHC Annual Accounts, 1909-1910; Ernest W. Harris, Letter to [?] Isaacs, 8 April 1910, in DHC Correspondence Book No. 2.

¹³⁸ HBS Minutes, 1 March 1908; 12 April 1908; Ernest W. Harris, Letter to H. Silverman, Sec. HBS, 11 March 1908, in DHC Correspondence Book No. 2. That June, however, when the HBS requested permission from the DHC for those receiving *aliyot* to donate towards the mortuary, this was declined, purportedly due to changes in the DHC regulations concerning offerings. Instead Harris urged the HBS to be more systematic in its collection of subscriptions (HBS Minutes, 14 June 1908; Harris, Letter to Silverman, 21 July 1908).

¹³⁹ HBS Minutes, 7 November 1909 and 3 July 1910. Harris was by this time serving on the HBS committee.

¹⁴⁰ HBS Minutes, 3 July 1910.

which an essentially traditional institution understood itself, and wished to present itself to others, both Jewish and non-Jewish. It is possible that the Hevra's decision to adopt a traditional Hebrew designation in contrast to its apparently modern outlook, may well have been intended to distinguish it from the BHC's Burial Board. On the other hand, the Belfast Hevra Kadisha was not purely a mutual aid association. It also existed to fulfil a charitable function, as provisions similar to those of Dublin's HBS were made for the burial of those in straitened financial circumstances.¹⁴¹ In 1914 two of the Hevra's trustees were censured by the BHC committee for charging a poor family more than twice the usual concessionary rate, on the grounds that they were not Hevra subscribers.¹⁴²

Limerick is the only other Irish community for which records survive concerning its burial society.¹⁴³ However, these primarily relate to the dispute between the LHC and its rivals over the purchase of the cemetery at Kilmurry (see Section 3.2), and tell us little or nothing about the actual workings of Limerick's HBS. All that can really be noted is its adoption of an English designation, which contrasts strongly with the culturally transitional nature that is indicated by the tone of its Record and the composition of the community. While the name of the Society indicates the way it wished to present itself to the outside world, the pompous self-righteousness of the Record barely masks the small-town fractiousness that earned the Limerick community such widespread notoriety. This hybridity was, as has been shown, characteristic of Irish immigrant Jewry as a whole.

4.4 JEWISH MEDICAL AID AND WOMEN'S CHARITIES

In Dublin medical aid was made available to poorer members of the community through charitable organisations such as the Hebrew Society for Visiting the Sick (established *circa* 1880),¹⁴⁴ the Jewish Hospital Aid Association (early 1900s) which provided care and medicines free of charge and provided grants to local

¹⁴¹ Draft Rules for the management of Carnmoney cemetery, Nos. V, VII, in BHC Minutes, 21 June 1914.

¹⁴² BHC Minutes, 25 October 1914 and 22 November 1914.

¹⁴³ Record of Limerick HBS.

¹⁴⁴ *Jewish Chronicle*, 9 October 1896.

non-Jewish institutions that accepted Jewish patients,¹⁴⁵ and the Jewish medical dispensary (1913). This latter was opened in Stamer Street under the auspices of the DHC, which provided nine pounds, eight shillings and sevenpence towards furniture and medicines, and was run by Bethel Solomons and Ada Shillman. From 1914, at the behest of Solomons, Shillman received an annual salary of five guineas in recognition of her valuable work at the dispensary. The DHC annual report of 1913 explains the reasons behind its establishment: ‘The Dispensary was felt to be a crying want as the only other place on the SCR [South Circular Road], where advice could be got was at the Institution under the Auspices of the Society for promoting Christianity among the Jews’.¹⁴⁶ When the opening of the dispensary was proudly announced in the *Jewish Chronicle*, members of the Hospital Aid Association took umbrage at the assumed inference that the ailing Jewish poor of Dublin had hitherto been neglected.¹⁴⁷ Again, immigrant leaders had taken the initiative in filling important gaps that had arisen in the communal infrastructure as a result of accelerated immigration.

There is little of note that can be said regarding the provision of medical aid to Dublin’s Jewish poor in the absence of any substantial sources. Nevertheless it is informative to observe that the need for this type of relief was sufficient not only to call for the establishment of formal communal mechanisms, but to attract the attention of local missionaries. When the ‘natives’ eventually recognised the urgency of the situation in a formal manner by establishing a dispensary, offence was taken at the implication that immigrant leaders had somehow been wanting in their actions. As we come to examine women’s charitable organisations, it is also pertinent to note the significant and often unacknowledged role of professional women such as Ada Shillman in Jewish communities throughout the British Isles.

¹⁴⁵ *Jewish Chronicle*, 17 January 1902, 31 January 1913, and 5 November 1909; Ernest W. Harris, Letter to [illegible] Convalescent Home Office, undated, in DHC Correspondence Book No. 1; and Letter to A. E. Sydney, 24 March 1911, in DHC Correspondence Book No. 2.

¹⁴⁶ DHC Minutes, 22 December 1912, 30 November 1913, 25 January 1914, and 26 April 1914; DHC Annual Report and Balance Sheet, 1913, in DHC Minutes, 1904-1915. On local concerns regarding missionary activity, see Section 3.2.

¹⁴⁷ *Jewish Chronicle*, 31 January 1913.

Dublin's principal female-led charity was the Dublin Jewish Ladies' Charitable Society ('Ladies' Society'). This existed from 1894 to 2012, when its activities were formally transferred to the DJBG.¹⁴⁸ As its earliest records only date back to the 1930s, our knowledge of the Society's foundation and early years is reliant on slightly conflicting anecdotal evidence.¹⁴⁹ Jessie Spiro Bloom gives the only, generally consistent, account of the Society's inauguration, on which this outline is based.¹⁵⁰ According to Bloom, the Ladies' Society evolved from the *ad hoc* response of four women friends to a number of individual situations where women and children were affected by poverty or illness that, she asserts, could not be provided for by the DJBG. In one memoir Bloom explains that the president of the DJBG mentioned the first of these cases to his wife. This involved a woman whose husband had moved to the United States in search of employment. The wife told three friends, all of whom were anxious to help. Together they decided to canvass weekly contributions from the women of the community, which supported the needy wife and child until the husband was able to send for them. As further cases of need came to the attention of the four friends, they again raised collections that provided women and children with respite care, financial and medical assistance. Subsequently the remit of the Society was extended to making new immigrants aware of the support that was available to them from within the community, and offering them whatever help they needed to acclimatise to their new surroundings. At some point, owing to

¹⁴⁸ Myra Gruson, Circular regarding cessation of Dublin Jewish Ladies' Charitable Society, 3 September 2012. Analogous women's charities existed in the other major Irish communities, such as Belfast's Hebrew Foreign Ladies' Benevolent Society, which was founded in 1897 and tended the city's Jewish sick and poor (*Jewish Chronicle*, 23 November 1894). However, the only records that survive are reports to the *Jewish Chronicle*, which are not sufficiently detailed to allow for any reconstruction. While the findings of this study regarding Ireland's Jewish communal life in general suggest that these may have operated along similar lines to Dublin's Ladies' Society, without any hard evidence, this is purely an assumption.

¹⁴⁹ Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, 186; Gruson, Circular, 3 September 2012; Bloom, 'Girlhood Recollections', 23, and Interview with Gottfried, 17; Jessie Spiro Bloom, 'Reflections on the Founding of the Dublin Jewish Ladies' Society', 5; Rivlin, *Shalom Ireland*, 128; Marleen Wynn, personal conversation with the author, 21 June 2011; Lilian Hardy, personal conversation with the author, 29 September 2011. The date given by Ó Gráda, and by the Society itself, for its establishment is 1894. Bloom, in two separate interviews, gives the apparently incorrect dates of 1898 and 1904, while Rivlin states that Bessie Gertrude Noyek, who would only have been fourteen years old in 1894, was regarded as one of the Society's founders. Bloom explains in her unpublished memoir that the society 'assumed an orderly aspect' in 1898 when its rules and procedures were formalised, and the increasing unreliability of her memory as she aged is evident on comparison of her various writings and interviews over the years. Rivlin, on the other hand, appears to be conflating the Ladies' Society with Brides' Aid, which eventually came under its auspices. Both Marleen Wynn and her cousin Lilian Hardy name Bessie Gertrude Noyek, Marleen's grandmother, as a founder of Brides' Aid (see Section 4.5, below).

¹⁵⁰ Bloom, 'Girlhood Recollections', 23-24; Bloom, 'Ladies' Society'. Rivlin's account is largely based on the former (*Shalom Ireland*, 128-30).

the ongoing expansion of its work, the Society's rules and procedures were formalised. Within a few years, according to Bloom, the Ladies' Society had around one hundred willing monthly subscribers, who contributed from their housekeeping allowances according to their means. She recalls that the Society was eager to involve younger people in its activities, as a means of awakening and harnessing their sense of communal obligation. As teenagers Bloom and her friends assisted with the collections; even though this involved hours of walking, she remembers feeling very proud and 'grown-up' to be entrusted with such a responsibility, as well as the warm welcome that was received from the subscribers. When the community began to disperse to Dublin's suburbs, official collectors were employed.¹⁵¹ In its latter years, the Ladies' Society concentrated on the needs of older members of the community.¹⁵²

Bloom's recollections largely depict the Ladies' Society as a grassroots organisation which, in its embeddedness in a combination of Jewish and female ethics of welfare, solidarity and mutual obligation, might well be interpreted as a compassionate, feminine antidote to the characteristically belligerent, masculine sphere of Jewish communal politics. However, as was the case for the DJBG, collective memory can be deceptive; the Ladies' Society was by no means immune either to the prevailing cultural values or to the weaknesses that beset its male-led counterparts. Bloom recalls that the Society eventually attained such scale and prestige within the community that volunteers competed for election to its committee, vying with an 'old guard' that was reluctant to relinquish office.¹⁵³ According to Isaac Fine, whose mother Janie Davis served for many years as honorary treasurer, issues of merit and 'deservingness' were the subject of frequent differences among the committee.¹⁵⁴ It is logical to assume that, as with other charities that have been examined above, personal knowledge played an important role in the decision-making process. Thus the Ladies' Society can be said broadly to have possessed the same respective merits and weaknesses as Dublin's male-led philanthropic organisations, and to have displayed a similar fusion of cultural *mores*. What distinguished the

¹⁵¹ Bloom, 'Girlhood Recollections', 23-24. Although this account is fairly consistent with Bloom's unpublished manuscript, these are mutually contradictory on points of chronology and detail, making it impossible to formulate any definite overview. It is unclear why exactly the DJBG would have withheld assistance in any of the situations that Bloom outlines, as these appear broadly similar to cases that are recorded in the DJBG minutebooks. Possible reasons may include hearsay, perceived 'deservingness', communal gender politics, or a combination of the three.

¹⁵² Rivlin, *Shalom Ireland*, 130.

¹⁵³ Bloom, 'Girlhood Recollections', 24.

¹⁵⁴ Rivlin, *Shalom Ireland*, 129-30.

Society, therefore, was its focus – on the needs and care of women and children – as opposed to its disposition or outlook.

Brides' Aid was an organisation that sought to assist needy women, often new immigrants, in getting married with joy and dignity.¹⁵⁵ Although it falls outside the timeframe of this thesis, having been founded in 1926,¹⁵⁶ the workings of Brides' Aid are nevertheless informative as to the attitudes and philosophies concerning charity that prevailed within Dublin's immigrant community. As no formal records remain, any account is entirely dependent on anecdotal evidence. Rivlin describes the purpose of Brides' Aid as providing grants for wedding dresses, basic *trousseaux* and receptions. This was supported by a combination of regular subscriptions and voluntary donations.¹⁵⁷ Marleen Wynn and Elaine Brown stress the importance of discretion in the workings of the society, together with a marked sensitivity towards the personal dignity of its beneficiaries. Indeed, Elaine attributes the absence of written records to the 'veil of secrecy' that shrouded the operations of Brides' Aid. Her mother, Maie Goldwater, was a dressmaker who volunteered with the society for around twenty years, from the 1940s to the mid-1960s. Elaine recalls that her mother provided material and made dresses, and sometimes full *trousseaux*, for many people during this time. Mrs. Goldwater also discreetly approached women who were considered to be too embarrassed to seek the society's assistance themselves. Elaine herself frequently acted as bridesmaid for ladies who had no relatives in Dublin to attend their weddings. She sums up the aim of the society as the aspiration to make everyone's wedding as happy an occasion as possible. To this end the beneficiaries were treated with sensitivity rather than condescension, and allowed complete freedom in selecting their own wedding dresses.¹⁵⁸ Although Marleen's grandmother, Bessie Gertrude Noyek, was a founding member of Brides' Aid and her mother, Florrie Noyek, volunteered with the society for many years, Marleen knows little of its workings. Like Elaine she stresses the importance of confidentiality, to the point that not even the bride's in-laws would necessarily be aware that she had received help from the society. Marleen also recalls that the assistance provided by Brides' Aid was nominally treated as a loan, with no preconditions attached. The beneficiary

¹⁵⁵ M. Wynn, personal conversation, 21 June 2011; Elaine Brown, personal conversation with the author, 28 July 2011.

¹⁵⁶ Rivlin, *Shalom Ireland*, 131. As Ó Gráda sets the date at 1894, he appears to be making the same mistake as Rivlin in unintentionally conflating Brides' Aid with the Ladies' Society.

¹⁵⁷ Rivlin, *Shalom Ireland*, 131.

¹⁵⁸ Brown, personal conversation, 28 July 2011.

simply had the option of repaying the society at any time should she wish – or be in the position – to do so.¹⁵⁹ Lilian Hardy, who used to collect for Brides' Aid, believes that the society made it possible for many women to marry who may not otherwise have had the means to do so. She feels that both it and the Ladies' Society played an important role in helping new and needy immigrants to adjust to life in Dublin.¹⁶⁰ Brides' Aid was eventually incorporated into the Ladies' Society and in the 1980s, when its services were no longer required in Dublin, it turned its attention to assisting new immigrants to Israel, where it funded weddings and forwarded used dresses from the Dublin community.¹⁶¹ If the anecdotal evidence is accurate, Brides' Aid would be the only one of all the communal organisations that are discussed in this chapter to remain true to the grassroots values to which all laid claim. That Brides' Aid was established at a time when the opposite might well have been expected should perhaps serve as a caution. The case of the DJBG, above, illustrates the tendency of communal narrative to retroject contemporary standards of sensitivity onto the operations of the immigrant organisations of this period, and is an indication of how attitudes towards charity have evolved within the community. Any fully comprehensive, objective and nuanced assessment of Brides' Aid is precluded by the nature and scarcity of the sources. Nevertheless the society's working principles, insofar as they can be determined, seem to indicate that Jewish acculturation in Ireland, while voluntary, was just as selective a process as it was in any other immigrant milieu, and was impeded by the continued insularity of the community just as it was elsewhere. The narratives of Brides' Aid and the DJBG suggest that the process of Jewish acculturation in Dublin may have come full circle with a return to more traditional Jewish values.

The Ladies' Synagogue and Dorcas Association is another group which appears to have been erroneously conflated with the Ladies' Society.¹⁶² Originally known simply as the Ladies' Synagogue Association, this was founded in the Adelaide Road Synagogue by Rosa Solomons in 1902, in response to Gudansky's 'entreaty' that the ladies of the DHC should form a guild to oversee the maintenance

¹⁵⁹ M. Wynn, personal conversation, 21 June 2011.

¹⁶⁰ Hardy, personal conversation, 29 September 2011.

¹⁶¹ Rivlin, *Shalom Ireland*, 131; Hardy, personal conversation, 29 September 2011.

¹⁶² Rivlin describes the Ladies' Synagogue and Dorcas Association as an 'extension' of the Ladies' Society (*Shalom Ireland*, 131).

of the synagogue and its vestments.¹⁶³ Within a short time the association was also making garments for distribution, together with boots, to the poor.¹⁶⁴ As a few brief reports to the *Jewish Chronicle* are practically the only records of the Association and its activities, it is unclear whether its work related to the Jewish or non-Jewish poor, or to both. By 1909 it had adopted the name ‘Dorcas’ with reference to its charitable work,¹⁶⁵ which is revealing in terms of how the Association understood itself. This was, at the time, a generic name for Christian ladies’ philanthropic societies, alluding to a figure from the New Testament.¹⁶⁶ Ironically the *Jewish Chronicle* archives show that, as early as the mid 1840s, the designation ‘Dorcas’ was being adopted by analogous Jewish organisations in mainland Britain. This reflects a general Anglo-Jewish middle class trend of imitating non-Jewish elite involvement in philanthropy, which was regarded as an appropriate and fitting antidote to female idleness, boredom and purposelessness.¹⁶⁷ The decision by Dublin’s ‘native’-led Ladies’ Synagogue Association to go by the designation of ‘Dorcas’ locates it within broader Anglo-Jewish middle class socio-cultural aspirations. Presumably the Association’s outlook reflected, to some degree, the values that accompanied these aspirations as did the DHC as a whole. In Belfast a Ladies’ Guild was formed in 1893 under Mrs. Chotzner, probably along similar lines, to distribute garments to the city’s Jewish poor.¹⁶⁸ While little more can be said regarding either association, they are

¹⁶³ *Jewish Chronicle*, 18 April 1902 and 21 November 1902; also Ernest W. Harris, Letters to Rosa Solomons, President, Ladies’ Synagogue Association, 16 January 1905, and Mrs. H. Weiner, Hon. Sec., Ladies’ Synagogue Association, 19 January 1905, in DHC Correspondence Book No. 1. Hyman (*Jews of Ireland*, 196-97) and Shillman (*Short History*, 101-02) mention the Association in passing, in connection with Rosa Solomons’ considerable contribution to Jewish communal life in Dublin.

¹⁶⁴ *Jewish Chronicle*, 15 February 1904 and 11 January 1907 (outline of the Association’s activities).

¹⁶⁵ The first instance that I have found of the name ‘Dorcas’ in connection with the DHC Ladies’ Synagogue Association is *Jewish Chronicle*, 5 February 1909.

¹⁶⁶ Acts 9:36. The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary (1973) defines a Dorcas Society as ‘a ladies’ association in a church for making and providing clothes for the poor’. The name is still used by Christian charitable organisations especially those attached to the Seventh Day Adventists, such as Dorcas Aid International (<http://www.dorcas.net/content/3/3>, accessed 19 April 2013) and Dorcas Housing and Community Support Association Ltd (<http://www.dorcashousing.co.uk>, accessed 19 April 2013). On the background to Seventh Day Adventist Dorcas Societies, see http://docs.adventistarchives.org/docs/SUW/SUW19350424-V27-17__B.pdf?q=docs/SUW/SUW19350424-V27-17__B.pdf (accessed 19 April 2013).

¹⁶⁷ On this tendency and its consequences, see Liedtke, *Jewish Welfare*, chap. 7.

¹⁶⁸ *Jewish Chronicle*, 23 November 1894. The BHC Guild presumably did not cater for the entire community whatever its intentions, given the friction that existed between Rev. Dr. Chotzner and the immigrant community, and the subsequent establishment of the Hebrew Foreign Ladies’ Benevolent Society (see Sections 3.2 and 4.4, above). Likewise, Duffy discusses the establishment of a Ladies’ Hebrew Benevolent Society in 1880, which was founded and supported by the ‘natives’ with a view to relieving sick and needy Jewish women (‘Socio-Economic Analysis’, 122). Duffy states that, despite a healthy financial position, the Society was largely ignored by the immigrant community and effectively became redundant. As I have failed to unearth any reference whatsoever to the Society or to its

nevertheless noteworthy for their replication of wider Anglo-Jewish tendencies. They can, therefore, be seen as representing a somewhat different form of acculturation to that of Dublin's immigrant-led women's charities.

4.5 JEWISH FRIENDLY SOCIETIES

Jewish friendly societies remain a largely neglected area of scholarly enquiry, even though they have much to reveal about the workings of immigrant Jewish society at the turn of the twentieth century.¹⁶⁹ This is no less the case in Ireland where, in the days before the Welfare State, Jewish mutual aid associations proliferated, possibly as a consequence of the immigrant community's tendency to fragment in response to internal conflict. Ireland's Jewish friendly societies included big international organisations such as the Grand Order of Israel (GOI),¹⁷⁰ the Order of Ancient Maccabeans (OAM)¹⁷¹ and the Independent Order of B'nai Brith,¹⁷² as well as apparently independent, local groups such as the Jewish Mutual Benefit Society¹⁷³ and the Hawkers' Hebrew Society.¹⁷⁴ Where applicable, close links were

activities in the primary sources that I have examined, it is not possible to assess the accuracy of these assertions.

¹⁶⁹ Kalman, 'Jewish Friendly Societies', 141-61 (overview and origins of Jewish friendly societies); Gartner, *Jewish Immigrant*, 179-80; Endelman, *Jews of Britain*, 148 (functions of Jewish friendly societies); Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews*, chap. 13 (role of Jewish benefit societies in London's East End).

¹⁷⁰ On its tenth anniversary in 1908, the GOI had branches throughout the United Kingdom, as well as one in Canada and two in South Africa. In 1904 the GOI became the first international Jewish friendly society to open a branch in Dublin, the Dr. Max Nordau Lodge (No. 27). This started off with thirty-six members and was originally to be named after Theodor Herzl. In 1912 a meeting was held in Belfast with a view to establishing a lodge there, however it is unclear whether or not this ever happened. Dublin's Nordau Lodge was disbanded in 1980 (*Jewish Chronicle*, 2 September 1904, 30 September 1904, 3 July 1908, and 20 December 1912; Rivlin, *Shalom Ireland*, 126).

¹⁷¹ The OAM was established in Manchester in 1892 and once had 'beacons' throughout Britain, including four in Ireland, as well as one in Palestine (Israel Philipp, 'Maccabeans, Order of Ancient', *Encyclopedia Judaica*, http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0013_0_12954.html, accessed 28 January 2013).

¹⁷² B'nai Brith was the third international Jewish friendly society to operate in Ireland. The Dr. Herzl Lodge (No. 8) was founded in Belfast in 1904. Approaches were also made to the Dublin community at this time; Harris responded that he had no time to spare for the venture due to existing commitments and undertook to forward the B'nai Brith letter to the heads of 'the Foreign Congregations', who appear to have been equally unreceptive. The King Solomon Lodge (No. 17) was eventually established in Dublin in 1909 (*Jewish Chronicle*, 3 June 1904, 3 September 1909, and 17 September 1909; Ernest W. Harris, Letter to A. Lewis, 20 June 1904, in DHC Correspondence Book No. 1).

¹⁷³ The initial references in the *Jewish Chronicle* to the Jewish Mutual Benefit Society appear in 1899 when the Society was established with 250 members and in 1900 when it was reported to be in flourishing condition (*Jewish Chronicle*, 24 November 1899 and 14 September 1900). There is no further mention until the Society's annual general meeting in January 1914. This report implies a relatively new organisation as it states that the president had promised a gold medal to any committee member who secured twenty-five new members. It is unclear whether these articles refer to two

maintained between local branches of friendly societies and their British headquarters.¹⁷⁵ Some of the smaller local groups eventually opted to affiliate to larger networks, as was the case for Cork's Zion Lodge (No. 34) of the GOI, which was consecrated in January 1906.¹⁷⁶ Although the membership of any one of Ireland's Jewish mutual aid organisations, insofar as this can be ascertained, appears to have remained relatively small, when taken as a whole the figures suggest that a high percentage of adult Jewish males belonged to some kind of friendly society.¹⁷⁷ This is informative in terms of the economic situation of Ireland's immigrant community; as Raymond Kalman notes, the regular membership fees, though modest, were beyond the means of the very poorest in society, whether Jewish or Christian.¹⁷⁸

separate societies bearing the same name, or two successive incarnations of the same society (*Jewish Chronicle*, 30 January 1914). The OAM also offered a reward to members who actively recruited others (Minutes, 6 February 1910). Former members of the Dublin Jewish community founded a Dublin Hebrew Mutual Benefit Association in Cape Town in 1903, whose activities were regularly reported to the *Jewish Chronicle*. This opened with almost one hundred members and doubled in size during its first year. In spite of the name, membership was not confined to those with a Dublin connection. In March 1904 the Association passed a resolution condemning Fr. John Creagh which, it hoped, would be forwarded to Ireland by the Archbishop of Cape Town. As the outcome of this protest was not reported, it would appear that the Archbishop did not consent to pass on the resolution. For some reports of its activities, see *Jewish Chronicle*, 29 May 1903, 18 March 1904, 7 October 1904, 4 November 1904, and 26 April 1905. On the resolution concerning Creagh, see *Jewish Chronicle*, 18 March 1904.

¹⁷⁴ HBS Minutes, 13 February 1902. One of Ó Gráda's anecdotal sources describes the Hawkers' Hebrew Society as 'a group of businessmen' who would organise a loan for 'anybody need[ing] money to start something' (Ó Gráda, *Jewish Ireland*, 53).

¹⁷⁵ The minutes of the OAM, for example, reveal close co-operation and regular communication with headquarters, and representatives from Dublin attended the OAM conventions that were held in England. The Mount Carmel Beacon did, however, have various disagreements with the central Grand Beacon, especially concerning what the Dublin committee regarded to be excessive death levies (OAM Minutes, 16 April 1911, 4 May 1911, 30 October 1911, 14 April 1912, 7 December 1913, and 21 December 1913).

¹⁷⁶ *Jewish Chronicle*, 25 August 1905, 12 January 1906, and 9 October 1914.

¹⁷⁷ It must be stressed that this statement is based purely on generalisation as definite membership statistics for Irish friendly societies are scarce. If similar membership figures to those of the OAM (see below) are assumed for the other principal societies, on the basis of the 1911 census returns (reported in *Jewish Chronicle*, 2 June 1911), up to fifty per cent of Jewish men in Ireland may have belonged to a friendly society. Some people may even have belonged simultaneously to more than one friendly society; for example, Solomon Clein is named in connection with both the OAM and the GOI in Cork (*Jewish Chronicle*, 21 August 1903 and 14 February 1913). However, as these references appear ten years apart, it is also conceivable that members changed organisations for the usual reasons of communal discord. For example, the sole reference in the sources to the Dublin Hebrew Tontine and Benefit Society (*Jewish Chronicle*, 27 March 1903) concerns a court-case arising from an internal dispute. This is, of course, supremely ironic given the principles of unity and solidarity which friendly societies propound. These observations tally with Gartner's view (*Jewish Immigrant*, 180) that the majority of London's immigrant Jews belonged to at least one friendly society, the multiplicity of which he attributes to internal dissent. Likewise Feldman estimates a membership of 50-66.66 per cent of adult males, and finds that it was common practice to belong simultaneously to more than one benefit society (*Englishmen and Jews*, 314).

¹⁷⁸ Raymond Kalman, 'The Hebrew Order of David: From Whitechapel to Hendon via South Africa', *Jewish Historical Studies* 37 (2001): 182-83; Kalman, 'Friendly Societies', 141-42. Feldman

As many of the principal organisations were staunchly Zionist in outlook, notably the GOI, OAM and B'nai Brith, these statistics are also indicative of local support for Jewish nationalism. Mutual benefit associations declined with the introduction of the Welfare State and an increase in general prosperity, and those Jewish societies that still exist are now purely social and charitable in function.¹⁷⁹

Self-help, as represented by friendly societies, was perceived by genteel Victorian society to be symbolic of the foresight and prudence of the respectable lower classes. This was contrasted with the purported profligacy of the degenerate poor, which was deemed to result in chronic dependence on charity.¹⁸⁰ While the popularity of friendly societies among Jews can thus be taken as a sign of acculturation on the one hand,¹⁸¹ mutual aid simply made good economic sense at a time when alternatives were few and far between. The character of the Jewish societies, on the other hand, was certainly indicative of acculturation. Although their primary function was the provision of welfare benefits, many affected quasi-masonic trappings. These included secret signals, passwords and initiation rites, regalia, and pledges of obedience and strict confidentiality.¹⁸² The hierarchical character of the friendly societies offered important opportunities for immigrant leaders to gain the recognition they craved.¹⁸³ Nevertheless, Feldman notes that their funds were

(*Englishmen and Jews*, 315) notes that the societies' entrance fees were kept deliberately high in order to exclude poor and 'green' members.

¹⁷⁹ The current status of many of these organisations is somewhat hazy. The GOI merged with the Shield of David friendly society in 1932 and reportedly still exists, however its website has not been updated in a number of years and no longer functions properly. Similarly, I was not able to uncover any concrete, up-to-date information regarding the OAM ('Grand Order of Israel and Shield of David Friendly Society', <http://www.goisd.org.uk/index0.htm> (accessed 18 April 2013); Jewish East End of London, 'Friendly Societies', <http://www.jewisheastend.com/brethren.html> (accessed 4 February 2013); Philipp, 'Maccabeans'). On the decline of Jewish friendly societies in general and for an outline of the contemporary function of these organisations, see Kalman, 'Friendly Societies', 159; Kalman, 'Hebrew Order', 187.

¹⁸⁰ Liedtke, *Jewish Welfare*, 211ff.

¹⁸¹ Jewish friendly societies, known as *kassy*, also existed in the Russian empire at this time and, as the Russian name suggests, constitute evidence of acculturation. See, e.g., Löwe, *Tsars*, 178-79; Nathans, *Pale*, 249-50.

¹⁸² Within the OAM, these rites were imbued with Jewish and/or Zionist significance. For example, the secret knocks, two slow knocks followed by two faster knocks, represented the long dispersal of the Jewish people and the anticipation of Jewish redemption and restoration in the land of Israel, respectively ('Barukh Habah', welcome speech on initiation of honorary member, undated, Irish Jewish Museum, Box 32, Cat. 35.05 No. 6). Other examples of initiation ritual, together with OAM regalia, can also be found in Box 32. On obedience and confidentiality, see 'Shalom', Order of Initiation, undated, Irish Jewish Museum, Box 32, Cat. 35.05 No. 5. Any member found to have disclosed OAM proceedings was censured (e.g., OAM Minutes, 1 December 1912 and 11 January 1914), but there is no record of any disciplinary action on this count in the years 1909-1914.

¹⁸³ Endelman, *Modern British Jewry*, 148; Williams, 'Class and Community', 25-26.

administered with discretion.¹⁸⁴ Some Irish Jews were also Freemasons proper, an involvement that continues to this day. Members of Dublin's Jewish community assisted in founding the Israel Lodge (No. 126) in 1865, which was described in the *Jewish Chronicle* as a 'worthy and just tribute' to friends of the Jewish persuasion,¹⁸⁵ and Maurice Solomons served as Registrar to the Masonic Order from 1882 to 1892.¹⁸⁶

The OAM, which is the only Irish Jewish mutual aid association for which records survive, appears to have been the first of the Jewish friendly societies to establish a branch in Ireland, in the city of Limerick, in the early 1900s.¹⁸⁷ The membership of Dublin's Mount Carmel Beacon (No. 10) expanded rapidly during its first five years.¹⁸⁸ Despite this apparent success, however, it took over two years before funds could be opened for half-benefit, and one further year before full benefits became available to members.¹⁸⁹ By the autumn of 1914 a substantial accumulation of membership arrears meant that penalties had to be applied to defaulters' entitlements.¹⁹⁰ This suggests that the proliferation of mutual aid associations in

¹⁸⁴ Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews*, 315-16.

¹⁸⁵ *Jewish Chronicle*, 23 February 1866. Kalman states that some non-Jewish fraternal societies, including the Freemasons, did eventually establish Jewish branches ('Hebrew Order', 183-84). However the date of the establishment of the Israel Lodge (which still exists), given the size of Dublin's Jewish population at the time, indicates that this cannot have been the case in this instance notwithstanding contemporary assertions (*Jewish Chronicle*, 11 October 1866). It is impossible, without more detailed research which is beyond the scope of this thesis, to determine the precise role of Dublin Jews in the Israel Lodge and the potential significance of the Lodge's name. With thanks to Rebecca Hayes, archivist of the Grand Masonic Lodge of Ireland, for her assistance regarding Irish Freemasonry (Rebecca Hayes, email messages to the author, 15 March 2013 and 21 March 2013). Belfast also established a Lodge of Israel (No. 74), in 1891. According to a 'trustworthy authority', by 1911 up to three-quarters of Belfast Jews were Freemasons, with a number of lodges having significant Jewish membership (*Jewish Chronicle*, 7 July 1911).

¹⁸⁶ *Jewish Chronicle*, 11 November 1892.

¹⁸⁷ All that is known about Limerick's Mount Zion Beacon of the OAM is its name and that of its commander (Sol Goldberg). Goldberg assisted in the establishment of 'beacons' in Dublin and in Cork (Mount Horeb, No. 9) in 1903. A beacon (Jochanan Ha Machbi, No. 6) was also consecrated in Belfast in January 1910, with a sizeable opening roll of 130 people. See *Jewish Chronicle*, 21 August 1903, 19 February 1904, 2 April 1909, 4 February 1910, 9 September 1910, and 15 March 1912. The term 'beacon' recalls the ancient Israelite practice of transmitting signals and information by the lighting of fires. One of the initiation speeches preserved in the Irish Jewish Museum ('Barukh Habah') states its symbolic resonance: 'Our purpose is that from every Beacon the fire of Enthusiasm and the Light of Hebrew Culture shall go forth as a sign and encouragement to our people', and expresses the hope that 'the genius of our nation, our culture, ethics and spirit may once more on Mount Zion burst into a Beacon of Light to the Glory of God and the honour of Mankind'.

¹⁸⁸ By the time of its first quarterly meeting, Beacon membership had reportedly increased from thirty to ninety-six; in April 1914 this had grown to 140 (*Jewish Chronicle*, 17 December 1909 and 17 April 1914). Due to its rapid expansion, the early minutes are mostly taken up with the processing of applications and the initiation of new members.

¹⁸⁹ OAM Minutes, 11 October 1911, 17 December 1911, and 8 December 1912; *Jewish Chronicle*, 29 December 1911.

¹⁹⁰ OAM Minutes, 13 September 1914.

Dublin, with their essentially overlapping aims and functions, had an ongoing impact on their collective viability.¹⁹¹

The main function of the OAM was to insure members and their families against visits to doctors, specialists and opticians, the purchase of prescriptions, glasses and surgical appliances, and the loss of wages through illness, unemployment or *shiva*.¹⁹² Initially the Beacon was also responsive to cases of distress among its own members and their families, and those of other beacons.¹⁹³ However as it became increasingly clear that this was a complex and often delicate matter, greater caution was exercised. After one collection was refused by the intended recipient, it was decided to investigate all such appeals in the future.¹⁹⁴ In a subsequent case one of the people in question indicated his preference for a loan to the voluntary collection that had been proposed. This was allowed from Beacon funds.¹⁹⁵ Some situations were clearly contentious; one man was granted two pounds on condition that he resign his membership.¹⁹⁶ Another proposed collection, for the family of a member who was expelled from the Order on receiving a criminal conviction, was postponed and then apparently dropped, as there is no further reference to the case in the minutebook.¹⁹⁷ By the summer of 1914 the Beacon was automatically declining appeals from its English counterparts on financial grounds.¹⁹⁸ As with other friendly societies, with

¹⁹¹ Gartner quotes from a contemporary assessment of Jewish communal organisations in Britain: ‘The societies mostly consist only of committees . . . The two or three members which every group has are often torn away from other groups . . . Their associations . . . exist only on paper’ (*Jewish Immigrant*, 265).

¹⁹² Initially an age limit of forty-four applied but, from late 1912, ‘overage’ members were accepted subject to certain provisos (OAM Minutes, 5 April 1912, 6 May 1912, and 20 October 1912). Members were expected to use the doctors and pharmacists that were endorsed by the Order wherever possible. Although its approved pharmacists were Jewish, the Order’s medical officers were not necessarily of the community, perhaps as there were not yet enough suitably qualified candidates to choose from (OAM Minutes, 9 March 1913). From 1913 medical certificates from non-approved doctors had to be countersigned by the Beacon doctor (OAM Minutes, 4 May 1913 and 8 May 1913). The OAM Minutes (8 January 1911) discuss a complaint received from one of the Order’s pharmacists, Bernard Hirson, that members were taking their prescriptions elsewhere. It was then agreed that all non-urgent prescriptions should be delivered to Hirson’s home, and that the medicines would be brought to members’ homes when ready.

¹⁹³ Compare the first instance to be cited (OAM Minutes, 27 November 1910, 4 February 1912, and 11 February 1912) with the cases discussed below. Conversely, the Beacon was swift to rule out of order the first and only appeal that it received from the Jewish Shelter and Coal Fund (OAM Minutes, 1 March 1911).

¹⁹⁴ OAM Minutes, 23 March 1913 and 13 April 1913.

¹⁹⁵ OAM Minutes, 8 February 1914 and 22 February 1914.

¹⁹⁶ OAM Minutes, 17 February 1913. Presumably the offer was accepted, as the minutes make no further mention of this case.

¹⁹⁷ OAM Minutes, 5 April 1914 and 19 April 1914. The minutes record that Maurice Baigel was sentenced to hard labour, but give no details of the crime committed or the length of the sentence.

¹⁹⁸ E.g., OAM Minutes, 26 July 1914 and 23 August 1914; compare with 6 October 1912 and 17 November 1912.

the passage of time the welfare aspect of the OAM was largely eclipsed by its social, political and cultural functions.¹⁹⁹ In 1977 it closed altogether.²⁰⁰

Members of the OAM were required to be both observant Jews and committed Zionists, and applicants who did not meet these stipulations were automatically rejected.²⁰¹ The Mount Carmel Beacon regularly lent financial and moral support to Zionist causes, such as the (Jewish) National Fund,²⁰² the Shekel Fund,²⁰³ the Zionist Central Fund²⁰⁴ and the Maccabean Land Scheme, which had unsuccessfully attempted to create a Maccabean colony in Palestine.²⁰⁵ The OAM co-operated with other local Zionist societies to organise communal ‘mass’ meetings and to bring guest speakers to Dublin.²⁰⁶ The Mount Carmel Beacon was very affronted when the Grand Beacon declined to endorse the attendance of its proposed delegate, at the Beacon’s own expense, to the Tenth Zionist Congress in 1911.²⁰⁷ On the religious and cultural side of things, the Beacon organised its own annual Hanukah celebrations²⁰⁸ and, in 1912, assumed control of the flagging Jewish Literary and Social Club. This failed, however, to improve the club’s attendance and financial outlook in the long term.²⁰⁹

¹⁹⁹ A later speech of welcome to new initiates (‘Baruch Habu’, undated, Irish Jewish Museum, Box 32) sets out the foremost aims of the Order as advancing Jewish solidarity and the welfare of the state of Israel. The Order is then described as ‘also . . . a Benefit Society for its members’.

²⁰⁰ Rivlin, *Shalom Ireland*, 126.

²⁰¹ For example, it was agreed to admit Hyman Edelstein only if it could be established that he was ‘a firm believer in the Jewish faith’, while a B. Rosenberg’s candidature was dropped as he was reputedly ‘not in sympathy with the Zionist movement’ (OAM Minutes, 5 September 1909 and 19 September 1909). Investigations were frequently carried out to determine a candidate’s suitability for membership.

²⁰² OAM Minutes, 2 October 1910, 11 December 1910, and 25 December 1910. The Beacon regularly collected for the National Fund, as it was then known. It also used National Fund stamps and telegrams in its correspondence and encouraged members to do likewise.

²⁰³ E.g., OAM Minutes, 2 October 1910 and 22 September 1912.

²⁰⁴ OAM Minutes, 24 February 1913, 21 March 1913, and 23 March 1913. In response to a circular from the Grand Beacon, it was suggested that all members contribute one shilling each Purim towards the Central Zionist Fund.

²⁰⁵ For discussions on the Maccabean Land Scheme, see OAM Minutes, 1 June 1913, 8 June 1913, 15 June 1913, 25 June 1913, 29 June 1913, 24 August 1913, 10 May 1914, 17 May 1914, 8 November 1914, and 29 November 1914; *Jewish Chronicle*, 20 June 1913. The Mount Carmel Beacon agreed to purchase an Investing Share in the Scheme of fifty pounds, at five pounds per annum. The Belfast beacon also supported the Scheme (*Jewish Chronicle*, 9 January 1914).

²⁰⁶ E.g., OAM Minutes, 25 June 1911, 8 March 1914, and 10 May 1914. Most, but not all, of the proposed guest speakers were English Zionists. Others were prominent international activists, such as Shmarya Levin and Chaim Weizmann.

²⁰⁷ OAM Minutes, 25 June 1911, 9 July 1911, and 30 July 1911.

²⁰⁸ In 1909 instructions were received from the Grand Beacon to organise a Hanukah ‘feast’ (OAM Minutes, 21 November 1909). This became an annual occasion (e.g., OAM Minutes, 15 December 1910, 25 December 1910, 3 November 1912, and 8 December 1912; *Jewish Chronicle*, 29 December 1911). The Cork beacon also organised an annual Hanukah feast (*Jewish Chronicle*, 25 December 1903).

²⁰⁹ OAM Minutes, 12 March 1912, 5 June 1912, 11 August 1912, 13 October 1912, and 20 October 1912; *Jewish Chronicle*, 20 September 1912 (examples of discussions regarding the takeover, running

The centrality of the principle of solidarity is reflected in the Order's secret password *achduth* ('unity').²¹⁰ The publication of a Maccabean trade directory, which all members were required to purchase, indicates that members were expected to support each other's businesses.²¹¹ Open invitations were regularly extended on the occasion of weddings and bar-mitzvahs; gifts were sometimes subscribed by the Order, and greetings were often communicated via National Fund telegram.²¹² Regular attendance at the weekly meetings was demanded on pain of exclusion,²¹³ and applicants who were deemed 'quarrelsome' were prone to be rejected.²¹⁴ All disputes between members were expected to be brought to the Beacon for adjudication, however its ability to enforce its rulings was evidently limited. Most of these disagreements, judging by the details that are available, revolved around financial or business – as opposed to personal – matters.²¹⁵ Some of the more unusual cases involved the civic authorities; for example one member was fined by the Order for tampering with a Corporation docket, while another was levied a substantial two guineas for having had the son of a fellow Maccabean arrested for selling jewellery without a licence, even though 'provocation' was acknowledged.²¹⁶

This survey of Jewish friendly society activity in Ireland has fleshed out the findings of Chapters Three and Four regarding the relative economic position of Irish Jewry, the negative effects of persistent communal fragmentation, and local attitudes towards Zionism. The disputes that arose within the OAM have provided further insight into the kinds of personal quarrels that beset the immigrant community, as well as the type of petty criminal activity to which some were prone. Cumulatively this shows that friendly societies are worthy of far closer scholarly attention than they

and ongoing problems of the Literary and Social Club). The inauguration of a Maccabean lecture and debating circle was also mooted around this time, but its proposed activities may well have become subsumed under the Literary and Social Club remit (OAM Minutes, 15 September 1912 and 22 September 1912).

²¹⁰ 'Barukh Habah'.

²¹¹ OAM Minutes, 25 December 1910.

²¹² E.g., OAM Minutes, 8 February 1914 and 11 December 1910.

²¹³ 'Shalom'; OAM Minutes, 15 June 1913 (instance of exclusion on grounds of non-attendance without due explanation).

²¹⁴ E.g., OAM Minutes, 5 September 1909.

²¹⁵ E.g., OAM Minutes, 17 April 1910, 15 May 1910, 21 May 1910, and 5 February 1911 (dispute between R. Weiner and B. Aronson). When this was settled 'both being satisfied they shook hands and promised to be friends', however months later Aronson had still not complied with the terms of arbitration. The Order explicitly refused to adjudicate on the recovery of bad debts (OAM Minutes, 14 December 1913).

²¹⁶ OAM Minutes, 25 February 1912 (appears to refer to the case of Maurice Baigel, discussed above); OAM Minutes, 10 December 1911 and 28 January 1912 (the two-guinea fine was subsequently reduced to five shillings).

have hitherto received, in terms of what they have to reveal about Jewish immigrant society during the mass emigration period in general, and about individual Jewish communities in particular.

4.6 CONCLUSIONS: JEWISH SOLIDARITY AND IDENTITY IN IRELAND (1881-1914)

This examination of Ireland's Jewish communal institutions and the way in which they responded to need, has proven the relevance of these organisations to any meaningful study of Irish Jewry. The nature of philanthropy in Jewish Ireland has been shown to have much to reveal regarding the economic condition of the community, its level of acculturation and the relations between its different factions. Ireland's Jewish charities reflected the hybrid, culturally transitional nature of the Irish community in general during the mass emigration period, that was identified in Chapter Three. These organisations – whether male- or female-led – were not necessarily the traditional, solidary, grassroots organisations of uncritical popular memory, but were instead run along often bureaucratic, culturally hybrid lines and riven by trivial disputes. Petty officiousness, egotism, intransigence and short-sightedness – not to mention condescending Victorian attitudes towards the poor – could be just as much a feature of organised Irish Jewish philanthropy as of its Anglo-Jewish counterpart. Nevertheless the type of relief that was provided by the synagogues, in particular the CHC, and by less formalised charities such as Brides' Aid, show that traditional Jewish values of solidarity, personal dignity and mutual aid continued to make a significant contribution to the local perception of how charity ought to be administered within the community. Collective memory indicates that, in time, these came to be the dominant principles of Irish Jewish philanthropy.

The vast majority of Irish Jewish charities were established – and largely led – from within the immigrant community. Although the founders chose to adopt anglicised designations, this does not generally represent much more than a nod to wider Anglo-Jewish society. As has been suggested in Chapter Three, the decision by immigrant leaders to represent themselves in this manner may also be an indication of their aspiration to due recognition of their energy, proactivity and capabilities by the Anglo-Jewish establishment. In this respect it is particularly relevant that they, rather than their 'native' counterparts, had led the efforts to fill the gaps that arose in the existing communal infrastructure as a result of accelerated immigration.

Charities and mutual aid associations have much to reveal regarding the socio-economic condition of Irish Jewry in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The proliferation of charities that Loewy remarked in 1912 shows that while many members of the immigrant community were in great need, many others had some kind of disposable income to support the organisations that responded to this need. While demand was pressing and the competition between the different relief organisations led to chronic financial difficulties, poverty within the Jewish community appears to have been largely contained with little need for recourse to the secular welfare authorities. The comparable abundance of friendly societies, together with the considerable popularity that they appear to have enjoyed, also corroborates Ó Gráda's argument that the Jewish community was, for the most part, not on the lowest rung of the economic ladder. This tallies with Gartner's observations concerning London's immigrant community.

The records of charities and friendly societies, where available, flesh out our understanding of the ongoing fragmentation of the community, by furnishing detail regarding the kind of issues that gave rise to these divisions. As has been shown above and in Chapter Three, dispute and fragmentation have been an inherent part of the Irish Jewish experience, from the mass emigration period right up until the present day. Evidence of discord within the charities themselves, as well as in their dealings with other individuals and communal factions, negates the comfortable, uncontroversial assumptions of existing communal narrative and the uncritical, nostalgic historiography that it has spawned.

A close study of these institutions further contributes to the normalisation of Irish Jewish history and historiography, by revealing that members of Ireland's Jewish community were prone to very human failings such as criminal activity, alcoholism, irresponsibility and callousness, causing hardship, suffering and neglect to wives, children and elderly parents. Correspondingly the response of charitable organisations to such situations and circumstances was not always ideal, and was liable to be determined by financial exigencies over and above compassion and solidarity. The sources demonstrate that, as was the case in analogous Anglo-Jewish organisations (see Section 1.5), relief was occasionally used in a coercive manner, albeit to different ends.

In sum, this chapter has corroborated my previous findings. Cumulatively these show that all of Ireland's Jewish communal institutions, whether social, cultural,

economic or religious, represented a fusion of traditional and anglicised Jewish values. The only real difference between these organisations, in terms of acculturation, was the relative degree to which these values were combined. The contemporary narratives of the DJBG and Brides' Aid suggest that the acculturation process in Ireland was accompanied by a return to traditional Jewish values and charitable conventions. By studying Irish immigrant charities closely with relation to their Anglo-Jewish context, further points of comparability and distinctiveness emerge between the mainland British and Irish settings. This underlines one of the central arguments of this thesis, regarding the individuality of each provincial Jewry and the importance of examining these communities in their own right, in order to gain a fully holistic understanding of British Jewry in the period of mass emigration.