

FOR EVERYTHING THERE IS A TIME

Marlena Schmool and Geoffrey Alderman

This is a sad but inevitable time. To draw on *Kohelet*,¹ ‘there is a time to publish and a time to cease from publishing’. The *Jewish Journal of Sociology (JJS)* was very much a child of its time: 1959 - a time when departments of sociology were being established or extended in British universities and when sociological descriptions and analyses of many types of British community blossomed.² The *Journal* was also at the forefront of international developments in the Sociology of Jewry. This had begun to surface as a subfield in the United States with the publication in 1938 of *Jewish Social Studies* and grew from the late 1960s following the example set by Marshall Sklare³.

Inevitably given the exigencies of World War II and its local aftermath, British Jewish sociology took a little longer to emerge. Nevertheless, by the late 1950s, there was a recognised need for an initiative such as the *JJS*. When it first appeared, there were notable works of Anglo-Jewish history but only two volumes that could claim to be social analysis of British Jewry, and one of those was a social history.⁴ Indeed, in his 1954 preface to *A Minority in Britain*, *JJS* founder Maurice Freedman wrote of his hope that the book may have brought ‘the possibility of a scientific study of Jewish life in this country closer to realisation’.

The *JJS* was a move in that direction. It was the brainchild of a small but very distinguished group of young (and mainly British) Jewish intellectuals preoccupied with problems of Jewish survival and development in the post-Holocaust world. Together with Maurice Freedman, a London-born anthropologist who had studied at the London School of Economics and who returned there as a lecturer in 1949, were his Cairo-born wife, fellow anthropologist Dr Judith Freedman (née Djamour), and LSE’s renowned professor of sociology, Morris Ginsberg.

Encouraged by LSE’s director, the economist Sir Sydney Caine, the Freedmans and Ginsberg reacted positively to an invitation from Dr. Aaron Steinberg, head of the cultural department of the World Jewish Congress, to establish an interdisciplinary academic journal devoted to the study of Jewish social relations. So the *JJS* was born. Morris Ginsberg was the first editor until his death in 1970 with Maurice Freedman as first Managing Editor and subsequently Editor until his very untimely death in

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1975. From then until she died in December 2009 the *JJS* was maintained by the energy and determination of Judith Freedman. The *JJS* became her memorial to her husband's life and to the work and interests they had shared together. She produced each issue almost single-handedly, insisting until the end – completely undaunted by the advent of the digital age – on the submission by post of two typescript copies of manuscripts that were to be considered for publication.

Peer-reviewed from the outset, the *JJS* rapidly developed a reputation for excellence in the dissemination of high-quality research into, for example, problems of social formation, ethnic identity and demography amongst Jews both of the Diaspora and of Israel. *JJS* was aided here by a cadre of the high calibre international scholars who have constituted an Advisory Board, in various incarnations, throughout the Journal's life. Its international character was strongly recognised in the first two editions which included summaries of all articles in French and Hebrew.

For the *JJS*, 'Sociology' was given the widest possible interpretation, and over the decades the *JJS* has presented original papers and research on virtually every aspect of Jewish social affairs, including historical, philosophical and even economic and theological subjects – as long as they had a broad sociological dimension. It was a truly inter-disciplinary venture of high quality, a model of its kind. The contents of the first volume bear witness to this, covering for example 'The Jewish Trade Union Movement in Israel' by Ferdynand Zweig, 'Synagogal Organization in Anglo-Jewry' by V.D. Lipman and 'Jews as an Indian Caste' by Shifra Strizower. This range of geographic and subject coverage was continued throughout the 55 years of publication. The 2013 edition included articles on Elections to the 19th Knesset, 2013 (Stanley Waterman) and Jewish education in Australia (David Mittelberg) while in 2014 there was a special section on 'the relevance of The Jewish Question in the 21st Century'.

In 1980, when the WJC withdrew its sponsorship of the *Journal* on financial grounds, Judith Freedman established a Research Trust in memory of her late husband, and transferred to the Trust a capital sum that proved large enough to bear the costs of production until now, when the decision to close the *Journal* has been taken. In due course the authors of this paper, sociologist Mrs Marlena Schmool followed later by the historian and political scientist professor Geoffrey Alderman were appointed as Trustees.

When Judith Freedman died in December 2009 the future of the *JJS* seemed in doubt. It had not entered the digital age. It had no website and intending contributors were unable to submit copy electronically. While we recognised that much would have to change if the Journal was to

continue, we were determined that *JJS* should not simply disappear. To allow that would have been to dishonour the many people who had contributed to the *Journal's* success over very many years. We felt that publication should continue for the immediate future if at all possible.

A contract was entered into with the University of Buckingham Press, which took over the administration and annual publication of the *Journal* and gave it a much-needed internet-based presence. The Advisory Board was reconstituted. We ourselves edited the 2010 and 2011 editions. For the 2012 edition Dr Stanley Waterman (professor of geography at the University of Haifa) agreed to act as guest editor, and from 2013 the sociologist Dr Keith Kahn-Harris has been the editor. In 2014 professor David Feldman accepted an invitation to become the third director of the Research Trust that remained in overall charge of the *Journal*.

In taking over the production of the *JJS* we were obliged to recognise that the world of academic journal publication had undergone multiple revolutions over its lifetime – not least the advent of the digital age and the possibility of virtually instantaneous publication of peer-reviewed articles “on-line”. This has been accompanied by great changes in the nature of demands made upon academics both by governments and by employing educational institutions. As a result they do not have the time to dedicate to peer-reviewing or book reviews and it has been found increasingly difficult to source high-quality material that the *JJS* might publish. Pre-eminently, the *JJS* has been hampered by not having developed an academic, institutional home from which to build up a network of scholars who could bring forward material from their students and other professional contacts. And although there is a wider appreciation of Jewish sociology than there was in 1959 and despite the development of research within the organised Jewish community⁵, Britain has not witnessed the same growth in Jewish Studies departments at universities and colleges as the United States.

Furthermore, since 1975 the Association for the Social Scientific Study of Jewry (ASSJ) has published *Contemporary Jewry*, which covers very much the same disciplines as the *JJS* and has the advantage of being well-rooted in (Jewish) academic life in America. It is important to say here that relations between the two journals have always been cordial but equally it would be unrealistic to ignore the pecking order.

Early in 2015 we Trustees therefore reluctantly came to the conclusion that publication of the *JJS* was no longer viable and decided that it would not be published after 2015. We consider that the objects of the Trust might be realised in other ways – notably the institution of a triennial Maurice Freedman Lecture, the broad content of which will be developed

from the objects of the Trust and the aims of the *JJS*. Further details will be announced in due course.

And so with this volume *JJS* closes. Interestingly, in the course of background research for this review, we discovered that *JJS* has survived approximately as long as did its predecessor *Jewish Social Studies*, which appeared regularly from 1939 to 1988 and a new series of which was established at Stanford University, California, in 1994. Maybe there can be a revival of the *JJS* under future trustees.

Be that as it may, the fact that the a Journal of this nature could be published for more than half a century in Britain in the relatively minor field of Jewish social studies bears witness to the sustained interest and support of many researchers, scholars and other authors for whom such subjects were often ancillary to their professions and/or major areas of expertise. Over the years many people have served as advisors, peer and book reviewers or have provided articles on esoteric subjects. They are too numerous to list here and it would be invidious to single out any individuals. When approached, they gave readily of their scarce time; a volunteer force without which the Journal would not have survived. We close by paying tribute to them and thanking them.

Notes

¹ Ecclesiastes

² Among the best known of these are Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy*, London: Penguin, 1957 and Peter Wilmott and Michael Young, *Family and Kinship in East London*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957.

³ His initial books include, *Conservative Judaism*, Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1955, and as Editor *The Jews; Social Patterns of an American Group*, Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1958.

⁴ Maurice Freedman (ed) *A Minority in Britain*, London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1955, and V.D. Lipman *Social History of the Jews in England 1850-1950*, London: Watts, 1954.

⁵ The Statistical and Demographic Research Unit was established by the Board of Deputies of British Jews in 1964, becoming the Community Research Unit (CRU) in 1986 and closing in 2015. In 1965 the Institute of Jewish Affairs (founded in 1941 in New York) moved to London; in 1996 it was re-launched as the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR). JPR has taken over the core work of the CRU.