



## Jewish Historical Studies: Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England

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### Introduction

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## INTRODUCTION

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One of the conventions of movies dealing with the newspaper business is the moment when an editor or publisher issues an order to “stop the presses!” or “hold the press!” Such an impulse emerges when an event occurs which is so important as to justify the suspension of the publication schedule. It is rare for a historical journal to have reason to deliberately upend its timetable and delay publishing for a number of weeks.

As we were nearing the point of sending issue 47 of *Jewish Historical Studies: Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* for typesetting and design, we learned of the death of our friend and colleague, Professor David Cesarani. It was a profound shock. David, at 58, was the most important public intellectual in Anglo-Jewish academia for decades. While the late Louis Jacobs represents the height of engagement with historical Judaism in Britain, David articulated a most forceful and informed perspective of the meanings of Jewish history, and historical contexts of contemporary politics, for the Jews and the non-Jewish public of Britain. Several tributes and extensive obituaries have appeared already from the hands of distinguished colleagues including Bernard Wasserstein and Lawrence Goldman. A long piece on his contributions to the understanding of, and public discourse on, the Holocaust is being prepared by Martin Dean for *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, the journal of the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM). David had enjoyed a long association with the USHMM, including a year as a Senior Fellow. Two of David’s books are in production: *Disraeli: The Novel Politician* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2016) and *Final Solution: The Fate of the Jews 1933–1949* (London: Macmillan), which is set for release in January 2016. This volume of *Transactions* begins with two recollections and tributes to David.

The first, by Bryan Cheyette, Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Reading, the leading scholar on Jewish literature in Britain, offers the perspective of an insider. But, as someone beyond the discipline of history and the circle of David’s friends from his undergraduate days at Cambridge and postgraduate studies at Oxford, Bryan felt himself to be something of an interloper in David’s intellectual universe. His description of the combined social, musical, and intellectual

whirl around David is itself a splendid work of cultural history. Bryan is the author, most recently, of *Diasporas of the Mind: Jewish and Postcolonial Writing and the Nightmare of History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013), which warmly acknowledges his dialogue with David. It is clear that Bryan was dear to David Cesarani, and his words offer keen insight about what made David remarkable.

Christopher Probst, an American who came to Royal Holloway to pursue a doctorate in the history of the Holocaust, offers further reflections on David's life and career, with particular emphasis on his relationships with students and younger scholars. Chris's research has materialized as a pathbreaking book, *Demonizing the Jews: Luther and the Protestant Church in Nazi Germany* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press in association with the USHMM, 2012). Christopher's piece reveals David's dexterity and elegance in welcoming outsiders to the inner sanctum of British academic life and Jewish history.

Some readers of *Transactions* may be baffled to find that David Cesarani was not a frequent author for this journal. Such a lacuna can be partly explained in that David was more closely involved with other publications, and he generally sought venues for his articles in either peer-reviewed journals or those that compensated its contributors. (*Transactions* adopted peer-review in 2012.) David's conspicuous absence from *Transactions* was also due to the fact that there was a weak relationship, even tension, in the 1990s and early 2000s between the Jewish Historical Society of England (JHSE) and many of the prominent scholars of Anglo-Jewry based in British universities. When I approached David in 2011 to be a member of the editorial board for *Transactions*, he wrote (in a private communication) that while he was "happy to be on the editorial board" he felt that the journal "was a sleeping dog best left snoozing." For a publication and its parent organization that had not been welcoming to him, this was a rather benign, if not generous characterization. He later expressed his desire to be increasingly involved with the journal and the JHSE, and had regularly reviewed submissions. He was a great help to me as editor. Since 2012, *Transactions* has been in the process of overcoming this unfortunate schism between the Society and many university-based historians. A mark of this transition is the appearance of the journal, beginning with the current issue, under the imprint of UCL Press.

We also wish to emphasize David's courage, creativity, and persistence in attempting to integrate Jewish history, and Anglo-Jewish history, into British academia overall. Of course he did not do this single-handed:

Geoffrey Alderman, Sharman Kadish, Tony Kushner, and Bryan Cheyette have been critical in these efforts. All of them built on the pioneering scholarship of Bill Williams and the late Bill Fishman. In introducing David Sorkin to an audience of hundreds at Royal Holloway some years ago, David Cesarani spoke personally (and with great eloquence) about his indebtedness to the American scholars who helped forge his path in Britain, and showed him what was possible, including Steven Zipperstein, David Sorkin, and John Klier.

Along with David Cesarani, we also wish to recognize the loss of our esteemed colleagues, Sir Martin Gilbert and Bill Fishman. A future issue of *Transactions* will include articles about their fascinating roles. We wish, as well, to note the death of the writer and literary scholar Dan Jacobson, and the formidable historian of medieval Jewry, Robin Mundill. While Dan was not a historian, he was unusually well grounded in history – producing one of the best memoirs, ever, on his personal return to Eastern Europe in order to illuminate his own family’s history, *Heshel’s Kingdom* (1998). Amy Simon provides a perceptive interpretation of Dan’s work from a Jewish-historical perspective. Reflections on Robin’s scholarship and teaching are offered by Joe Hillaby and Dean Irwin.

The thrust of this particular issue was intended to be on the theme of Christian missionary activity among the Jews in Britain, its significance, and consequences. This was the topic of the JHSE’s annual conference that was held at University College London in September 2015. Piet van Boxel, the outgoing President of the JHSE, solicited and edited the articles that initially were presented at that meeting. These penetrating contributions include Philip Alexander on “Christian Restorationism in Ireland in the early nineteenth century”, which focuses on what he deems “the strange case of Miss Marianne Nevill”. David Ruderman, who served as the first scholar-in-residence of the JHSE, contributes “a preliminary portrait of an evangelical missionary to the Jews”, exploring the complex case of Alexander McCaul (1799–1863). Expansive views on this period are undertaken by Michael Leger-Lomas, illuminating “Evangelical Protestants, Jews, and the Epistle to the Hebrews in mid-nineteenth-century Britain”, and David Feldman, analysing the history of “Evangelicals, Jews, and anti-Catholicism in Britain” from around 1840 to 1900. Although it was not presented at the conference, Jonathan Adler’s essay on “Henry Jessey, Hebraism, and Puritan Pedagogy in seventeenth-century England” further investigates and complicates the often unpredictable relationships between Jews and Gentiles in the

century of Jewry's readmission. Matthew Lagrone revisits the case of "the 'inhibition' of Morris Joseph", revealing how the larger Christian context can be used as a means to comprehend better a notable controversy over "authority and change in Victorian Anglo-Jewry".

Moving away from consideration of past lives to the world of institutions, we include a study of London's Jewish hospital by a historian of medicine, Jack Vanderhoek. While scholars often concern themselves with origins, the reasons for the demise of corporate bodies, as shown by Vanderhoek, can be just as important as understanding their emergence. Sharman Kadish, the leading historian of the Jewish built environment in Britain, surveys and scrutinizes the physical manifestations of Jewish public institutions in Scotland, which underscores both continuity and breaks with trends elsewhere in the United Kingdom. While the issue of independence for Scotland remains contentious in the wake of 2015's General Election, we are reminded that there is much to be gained by looking at Jewry in Scotland on its own terms. Jonathan Romain, in an expanded version of a lively paper presented to the Society in December 2014, discusses how communal Jewish life in Berkshire evolved from its inception in the seventeenth century up to the present day.

The book review section of *Transactions* is now being edited by Lars Fischer. We are aware that there are some important works in Anglo-Jewish history which have appeared in the last few years that have not yet been fully reviewed in this journal. The next issue will include review essays covering these and other related books, in which the work of Derek Taylor, Joe Hillaby, Susan Tananbaum, Tobias Metzler, and Sara Lipton will be featured.

In addition to the photograph credits specified within, I would like to thank Neill Perrott of Royal Holloway for the portrait of David Cesarani. The photographer Murdo Macleod graciously shared the picture of Dan Jacobson that appeared in *The Guardian*, and Jessica Jacobson, through René Weis, sent us Dan's schoolboy shot from his early teenage years. The photograph that graces the cover, spotted by Lara Speicher, shows the Frumkin family standing outside their kosher wine and spirits shop on the corner of Commercial Road and Cannon Street Road, London E1, around 1912, from the collection of the Jewish Museum London. Its closest connection with this issue of *Transactions* seems to be (alas) to the Jewish hospital in the East End. Yet it may also be related to efforts of the London missionary societies, which probably sought the demise of the Frumkins' business along with the conversion of the family.

As in past issues, I wish to record a debut of gratitude to Jeremy Schonfield, whose advice remains invaluable, and Katharine Ridler, our dedicated copy-editor. Assuming duties from John Saunders, Tony Kitzinger has taken on the design of the journal. Along with these old friends and colleagues I am happy to introduce a new team that will move *Transactions* to the next generations – that of UCL Press. Beginning with this issue, *Jewish Historical Studies: Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* will become an imprint of the UCL Press, which is now based in Senate House at the University of London in Malet Street. I wish to express my sincere thanks to Lara Speicher, Publishing Manager of the Press, along with Alison Major, who facilitated the next stage in the life of *Transactions*. In its new incarnation *Transactions* will be both peer-reviewed and open-access. It will appear both in print and electronically. We assume that this will make the journal an increasingly attractive venue for publication.

David Cesarani would smile if not cringe to hear himself compared to Moses. Although he was largely outside the life of this journal, until quite recently, it is unlikely that *Transactions* could have developed as it has without his extraordinary commitment to Anglo-Jewish history, and Jewish history generally, in Britain. David, this one is for you.

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