

## MARXISM AND THE JEWISH QUESTION

David Ruben

**Deep down in the soul of each of us, revolutionaries of Jewish birth, there was a sense of hurt pride and infinite pity for our own, and many of us were strongly tempted to devote ourselves to serving our injured, humiliated and persecuted people.**

**Rosalia Bograd, wife of Plekhanov**

A number of interrelated questions about Jewry, collectively referred to as 'the Jewish question', have been discussed by many Marxists, beginning with **Marx** himself in his essay, 'On the Jewish Question'. Perhaps the phrase has been forever discredited by those who not long ago offered the world its final solution. Names aside, the substantive issues are still of great importance for historical materialism. For example, we still have no plausible comprehensive account of the causes of anti-Semitism, an account without which we cannot fully understand the nature of the Soviet Union today. In this paper, there are two other questions that I wish to discuss. The case of the Jewish people provides an extremely interesting test for the explanatory and political adequacy of historical materialism, and it is in this fact among others that one can find more than a merely parochial interest in the Jewish question. There is at least a *prima facie* inability to account for the survival of Jewry in terms available to historical materialism, for historical materialists explain in terms of classes and class relations, and Jewry does not appear to constitute a class. So the first of the two questions I shall discuss is this: (1) Can historical materialism show that appearances here, as so often elsewhere, are deceptive, that the Jews do constitute a class, and that it was as such that they were able to survive as a distinct grouping?

Marx said that, as the truly universal class, the emancipation of the proletariat was necessarily universal human emancipation—for women, blacks, oppressed nationalities, all categories of the exploited and down-trodden. The claim itself has numerous ambiguities hidden within it, but, leaving them aside, it gives rise to the second question I want to ask: (2) How, in the case of the Jews, might this claim that their emancipation is included in the emancipation of the proletariat be made good, and in what, for the historical materialist, does the emancipation of the Jews consist? The answers given to (1) and (2) are not independent of one

another. I shall not only look at how historical materialism answers the two questions, but also at how it derives an answer to (2) from its answer to (1). In answering these two questions, I think we shall be able to learn a great deal about the nature of historical materialism itself.

Zionism offers a non-Marxist answer to (2)—the idea of Jewish emancipation, in terms of a bourgeois nation state. I do not, in this essay, want to discuss Israel in particular or even Zionism more generally; there are many other aspects of the Jewish question which have as much claim to our attention. Even if Israel ceased to exist and Zionism became discredited in the eyes of world Jewry, the need to answer the questions I have posed would be greater, not less. Some of what I do say has implications for Zionism. The remarks I make at the end of the paper concerning an acceptable historical materialist answer to (2) have consequences about the ways in which Marxists ought to reply to Zionists.

### *Historical Materialism: The Classical Approach*

The most complete statement of what I call the 'classical' historical materialist approach is to be found in Abram Leon's *The Jewish Question*,<sup>1</sup> although almost every Marxist without exception who has written on the Jewish question has adopted the same line of argument. I have selected Leon's book for discussion, because it is the most complete statement of a view about Jewry that informs nearly all of the classical Marxist writers; Lenin, Kautsky, and the Austro-Marxists, to mention but a few. The outlines for such a position go back to Marx's essay, 'On the Jewish Question', but it is best to consider Leon independently of those origins. Marx's essay is very much a Hegelian work, in the sense that there Marx is speaking of the idea of Jewry, an idea developed in almost complete ignorance of the empirical reality of the Jewry of his own day or of any other epoch. His idea of Jewry is drawn, in the main, from the not very complimentary image of the Jew then current in German literature and philosophy.<sup>2</sup> I do not say that Marx's essay has no value as an analysis of demands for formal emancipation made by a group under pre-parliamentary democratic conditions. What I assert is that it has no value as a scientific work into the nature of Jewry in central Europe in the early nineteenth century, nor do I believe that Marx ever imagined that it had.

Turning now to Leon, I want to look at the way in which he answers the first of the two questions that I posed earlier, and how an answer to that first question suggests an answer to the second. Why is it, according to Leon, the Jews were able to survive as a distinct group of some kind? Sometimes it is said that Jewry survived only because of anti-Semitism. I shall want to return to this thesis in much greater depth later, but it is important to point out that this reply is not the one Leon gives, nor is it the one that the classical historical materialist takes to be central. Leon opposes his account to all accounts (like the one mentioned) which

place the explanatory onus on the human will—for example, on the will of the Jews to retain their identity or on the will of the anti-Semites to oppose Jews. Leon quotes disapprovingly the great Jewish historian Simon **Dubnow**, murdered like Leon himself by the Fascist **anti-Semites**: Jewry survived because of its 'attachment to the national idea' (p. 65). Leon rejects this explanation, and ones structurally similar to it, because he seeks to 'reject the fundamental error of all idealist schools which consists of putting under the hallmark of **free** will the cardinal question of Jewish history, namely: the preservation of Judaism'.

To this idealist mode of explanation, Leon opposes what he regards as the historical materialist mode: 'It is precisely by studying the historical function of Judaism that one is able to discover the "secret" of its survival in history' (p. 67). Briefly, Leon's 'functionalist' account is this: (1) 'The Jews constitute historically a social group with a specific economic function. They are a class, or more precisely, a people-class' (p. 74). Conversely, 'Whenever the Jews cease to constitute a class, they lose, more or less rapidly, their ethnical, religious, and linguistic characteristics; they become assimilated' (p. 81). (2) Their function is to serve as agents of exchange in a predominantly natural economy. 'So long as a natural economy reigned, the Jews were indispensable for it' (p. 132). With the decline of the natural economy in western Europe in the eleventh century and after, more serious persecutions of the Jews than they had hitherto experienced began. 'With the development of exchange economy in Europe. . . the Jews are progressively eliminated from the economic positions which they had occupied. This eviction is accompanied by a ferocious struggle of the native commercial class against the Jews' (pp. 135-7). By the end of the long lead-up to the emergence of capitalism in western Europe, the Jews had, by and large, either assimilated into the Christian bourgeoisie, or been driven eastwards, or remained only in small, impoverished pockets in the interstices of western European society. (3) Eastern Europe, to which numbers of Jews had fled in order to escape persecution in the west, lagged behind western Europe in economic development. Thus, the Jews retained there an economic function long after their economic usefulness in the life of western Europe had ended. In eastern Europe, the Jew 'represented exchange economy within a purely feudal society' (p. 183). By the middle of the sixteenth century, 'with the end of the feudal state of things in Poland the privileged position of Judaism is likewise finished' (p. 193). (4) 'Contrary to western Europe, where their assimilation was favoured by capitalism, in eastern Europe capitalism uprooted the Jews from their secular economic positions' (p. 124). Because of the 'degenerate' nature of eastern European capitalist development, assimilation of the Jews into the Christian merchant and allied classes proved to be impossible. It is this unassimilability of Jewry in late capitalism for economic reasons, both in eastern Europe (Leon is

writing before the Holocaust) and in the other places to which large sections of eastern European Jewry immigrated, often resuscitating a dying local Jewry, that constitutes 'the heart of the Jewish question today. Leon's thesis is not held only by historical materialists. In an important article, Toni Oelsner traces the theory through the tradition of German sociology, and especially through the writings of Roscher, Sombart, and Weber. This view on the historical function and nature of Jewry is very widely held *indeed*.<sup>3</sup>

Leon's thesis on why the Jews survived leads naturally to an answer to the second question that I posed: In what does the emancipation of Jewry consist? Leon himself did not draw this obvious implication, although other writers in this classical historical materialist tradition have done so. According to Leon, Jewry survived only to the extent that it had a specific economic function to perform. In western Europe, when this function no longer existed, Jewry was well on the way to extinction. If capitalism had developed a more progressive character in eastern Europe, the same pattern of events would have asserted itself there. The disappearance of Jewry once and for all was blocked only by the nature of capitalist development in eastern Europe. Under socialism, where there can be no question of exchange functions, or any specific economic functions permanently allocated to specific groups of individuals, Jewry cannot be expected to survive as a distinctive grouping. The emancipation of Jewry then means the liberation of Jewish individuals from Jewry, as Marx himself had made clear in his original essay. Along with all the other witherings to be expected under full communism, one should also speak of the withering of Jewry.

It is not uncommon to hear Jews accuse Marxists or Marxism or both of anti-Semitism. I have no doubt that there are individual Marxists who are anti-Semitic, but beyond this obvious point, I do not think that there is any truth in the accusation. Still, I think that it is true that this classical historical materialist perspective on the Jewish question tends to encourage a kind of theoretically-induced blindness to the goals and aspirations of Jews as Jews. It should not be wholly unexpected that a theory which regards a group as in the advanced stages of dissolution is unlikely to evolve a political programme sensitive to and understanding of the desires and wishes of that group.

### *So What's Wrong with the Classical Approach?*

Before we begin to assess the empirical evidence for and against Leon's classical thesis, we first need to address a conceptually prior question: What evidence is relevant to the assessment of Leon's thesis? That is, we must be clear about what in principle one would have to demonstrate in order to show that Jewry survived because of some function that it had.

Leon believes that he is required to show that most Jews have actually been engaged in occupations associated with the performance of an exchange function: 'The overwhelming majority of Jews in the Diaspora unquestionably engaged in trade' (p. 69). Weinstock, in a spirited defence of Leon, weakens this to the claim that there was merely a tendency for this to be so, that there was a tendency which increasingly pushed the majority of Diaspora Jews into these **occupations**.<sup>4</sup> In fact, I do not think that Leon, in order to make good his functionalist account, would have to show either of these two things. It is no requirement of the thesis that the Jews survived because of their economic function, either that a majority of them performed that function or that there was a tendency for this to occur. Rodinson, in his introduction to the French edition of Leon's book, cites a great deal of evidence about the occupational differentiation of numerous Jewries that renders both of these spatially and temporally unrestricted claims **unsupportable**.<sup>5</sup> Rodinson's evidence, and much other evidence, is incontrovertible. In almost every historical period and in almost every place, there have been a great number of different occupations which Jews entered, from which there was no tendency for them to be pushed, and in which they were perfectly able to survive as Jews. The idea that the majority of Jews have engaged in some specific occupation is so oblivious to the realities of Jewish history that one can understand the remark made by one non-Marxist writer that there appears to be a direct relation between ignorance of Jewish history and willingness to embrace this idea. When we consider examples as wide apart as the Byzantine **Empire**,<sup>6</sup> the Yemen, the **Falashim** of Ethiopia, the Jewish farming communities of Daghestan and Kurdistan, the Jews in Babylon under Persian rule who were an agriculturally based community, and the Jews of Cochin in India, it is clear that one cannot show that most Jews in those communities that were able to retain their identities for extended periods were engaged in trade or allied occupations, nor can it be shown that there was a tendency for this to be the case. The evidence we have about western Europe, and especially about France, in the earliest period of the Middle Ages, suggests widespread Jewish land ownership. Spanish Jewry, until the Expulsion of 1492, seems to have been remarkably differentiated in terms of its occupations. There is far too much evidence to the contrary to take seriously the idea that the majority of Jews were, or tended to be, engaged in occupations connected with exchange in those places where they were able to preserve their distinctive identity. Leon assumes that such evidence, if true, would refute his functionalist account since its truth requires the idea that the majority of Jews were connected with exchange. **Rodinson** thinks that such evidence, since true, does refute Leon's thesis as an unrestricted generalisation about the survival of all Jewries. My view is that such evidence, although true, does not refute Leon's thesis, since his

functionalist account does not require the idea that there was a connection between the majority of Jews and exchange-related occupations.

The evidence of occupational differentiation may simply be irrelevant to the classical account of the survival of Jewry, at least if that account is plausibly formulated. Leon could argue, if he wished, that Jewry survived only because of those Jews, whatever numerical proportion of the community they might have been, who were in occupations connected with exchange. Jews not in these exchange occupations might have been able to survive as Jews only because of those Jews who did have **exchange**-connected occupations, however few of the later category there were. Exchange-connected Jews may have had a 'coat-tail' effect in assuring the survival of the other Jews only because their own exchange connections may have guaranteed their own survival as Jews. Leon's thesis could be stated in such a way as to make it compatible with almost unlimited evidence about occupational differentiation within Jewries, as long as one could always find evidence of some group of Jews engaging in exchange-related occupations in each Jewry.

If Rodinson's evidence is incontrovertible but irrelevant to the classical thesis as most plausibly formulated, one might wonder what empirical constraints there then are on the classical theory. Surely, it would be insufficient for confirmation of the theory merely to find some group of Jews engaging in exchange-connected occupations. For example, there is a group of rabbis and other ecclesiastical authorities in every Jewry, but no historical materialist would accept the thesis that Jewry survived because of them.

One empirical requirement of Leon's thesis arises as a requirement that every functional explanation must meet. The idea of a functional explanation is this. In some specific set of circumstances, some system is functioning adequately or properly. The system in question might be a social system, or a biological organism, or an artefact. What is meant by 'adequate' or 'proper' function will vary, depending on the sort of system in question, but usually it is not difficult to see what is intended once the system has been specified. Moreover, the system may **function** properly in the circumstances only if some condition is satisfied. Now, suppose that we find some part of the system, such that the effect of that part is to ensure that the condition for proper **functioning** is satisfied. It is common (but, as we shall see, ultimately mistaken) to attempt to explain functionally the existence, or continued existence, of that part of the system, on the grounds that it ensures that a necessary condition for the proper functioning of the system is met.' Two examples might help to make this rather abstract account comprehensible. First, the system in question might be the human body, in normal circumstances. A human body can function properly only if an adequate blood supply **is** pumped around the body. So we might try to explain the existence

of the heart functionally on the grounds that it is the part of the body that ensures that this necessary condition, the required distribution of the blood supply, is satisfied. Second, the system in question might be a society. A society can exist only if at least some minimum level of social cohesiveness exists. We might then attempt to explain functionally the existence of some specific practice or ritual in the social life of the society on the grounds that its effect is to ensure that at least this minimum level of social cohesiveness is achieved. Those who defend the legitimacy of functional explanation need not rule out the possibility that, when we have more knowledge, these functional accounts might be replaced by, or supplemented with, more satisfying causal accounts of the origins of the heart or the ritual. What they would claim is, that at least at a certain stage of human understanding, they offer some genuine understanding of the existence of parts or items like the heart or the ritual, or whatever part of a system we are seeking to explain.

Although functional explanations might be a perfectly respectable form of explanation in general (at least at a certain stage of human knowledge), it is important to see why, in both of the examples that I have used, the functional accounts are incomplete as they stand. If we know that a body or a society are functioning adequately, and if we know that, for that to be the case, blood must be pumped or a level of social cohesiveness achieved, we can conclude that there must be something in the first system which is in fact pumping blood and that there must be something in the second system actually achieving the minimum level of social cohesiveness. But this falls importantly short of explaining the existence of the heart or the ritual, even when we know that the heart is the body's blood-pumper and that the ritual is the society's cohesiveness-achiever. This is because we may not yet know why it is the heart or the ritual which are the parts which ensure that the necessary conditions of blood-pumping and cohesiveness-making are met, rather than some organ or part which could do the same thing ('functional alternatives', as it is often put in the literature). In order to explain functionally the heart and the ritual rather than just the existence of some blood-pumper or cohesiveness-maker or other, we must show that, in the circumstances, only these things and nothing else were able to fulfill these functions, viz, that nothing else was able to pump blood or achieve the minimum level of cohesiveness. To summarise then: If there is some system which is functioning adequately or properly, and if some condition must be met in order for this to be so, we can demonstrate that there must be some part or some item or other that is actually ensuring that the condition is met. But if we wish to go further and explain the existence or continuing existence of a specific part or organ, then we must additionally show that in the circumstances the existence of that specific part is necessary for the condition being met or satisfied—that in

the circumstances, nothing else could have done so. One can easily extend the functional account in the case of the heart so that its existence can be functionally explained, since in the circumstances nothing else could have pumped the blood. It is doubtful whether the functional account could plausibly be extended in the required way in the case of the ritual, so that we could functionally explain its existence. Most commonly, if the ritual had not been ensuring that the requisite level of social cohesiveness was achieved, something else would have done so. In these cases, one does not yet know why it is that the ritual is achieving this rather than the possible alternative to it.<sup>11</sup> To show why the heart or the particular ritual exist by reference to their function, each must be necessary in the circumstances for ensuring the proper functioning of the system in which it is located, and that entails the absence of functional alternatives in the system. I do not say that there cannot be systems in which there are functional alternatives. There can be systems in which two parts do exactly the same thing. The point is that when this is so, there can be no functional explanation of the existence of either of the alternatives.

It may not always be easy to determine whether or not two things have the same function. Sometimes, one item or part of a machine is intended as a backup or **failsafe** device for another, and when this is so, these parts have different functions. In social reality, the situation is often far more complicated even than this. One ritual may provide some social cohesiveness and another ritual may provide some *more* social cohesiveness. The level of social cohesiveness they jointly provide may be in excess of what is necessary for the adequate functioning of the system, although every increment in social cohesiveness makes the system function still better. In these cases, since functional accounts depend on what is necessary for adequate functioning of the system and not on what is merely necessary for improving the system's operation, we can say that both rituals are useful for the system but neither is necessary, since in the absence of either the other would provide the minimum social cohesiveness necessary for the adequate functioning of the system. There are problems, too, in defining what adequate or proper functioning is for a social system, whereas it is a clearer notion when applied to artefacts and natural organisms. But leaving all these complications aside, for they are further complications with any functional account and hence with Leon's classical thesis on Jewry, we can say this: there may be many systems which exist with parts that are functional alternatives to one another. But one cannot explain the existence of a part of a system in terms of its function in that system if there are functional alternatives to it in that system.

With this in mind, it is easier to see what are the empirical constraints that Leon's thesis must meet. The constraints are not, as **Rodinson** and Leon himself imagined, that most Jews be in exchange-related occupations. Nor need it be the case that there was a tendency for this to be so,

as Weinstock argues. Rather, even if only a few Jews in each Jewry were engaged in occupations connected with exchange or exchange value, and the other Jews were able to retain their Jewish identity only because of these former Jews, being in exchange-related occupations (in an otherwise natural economy) must be an *exclusive* function of the Jews, one which no other group did or could do, if Leon's thesis is to be confirmed. We are meant, on Leon's functional account, to think of the societies in which Jewry found itself as the system, whose proper functioning must include some circulation of commodities or use of money, even when the dominant mode of production in the society was a natural economy. Leon's account purports to explain the existence of Jewry as a part of that system in terms of its function of ensuring that this necessary condition for the adequate working of the society is met, coupled with the additional claim that when the Jews no longer have the function of being representatives of exchange in a natural economy, because the system itself changes to one in which exchange is dominant, Jewry as a distinct grouping tends to die out. It is important to see that this last claim is additional to the functional explanation itself, because one might otherwise argue that even though the existence of Jewry in a natural economy can be explained by the role they play in the process of circulation of commodities or money, there is some other role they play in an exchange economy which can also functionally explain their continuing existence within exchange ~~economy~~.<sup>8</sup>

But consider just the first part of Leon's claim: the Jews were able to survive within a predominantly natural economy because of the role they played in the processes of exchange. If we are able to explain the survival of the Jews in a natural economy on these grounds, then the Jews must have been *necessary* in the circumstances for this exchange to have taken place. That is, it has to be something that no other group than the Jews did do or could have done. Leon in fact implicitly *recognises* this requirement when he says, 'So long as a natural economy reigned, the Jews were indispensable for it' (p. 132). Leon must show not only that at least some Jews were in exchange-related occupations, but that they were indispensable for these *occupations*—i.e., there was no other group that did or could engage in these exchange-related activities. It means that Leon must show that those individuals who were Jews could not have continued to engage in exchange-related activities had they ceased to remain Jews, for Leon's thesis attempts to account for the continuing existence of a group of individuals not *qua* the individuals they are, but *qua* members of a specific group to which they adhere.

The failure to appreciate fully or make explicit this *indispensability-in-the-circumstances* requirement might arise through a conflation of two distinct though related questions about Jewish survival: an internal and an external question. I do not think that much progress can be made

in unravelling the problems that arise in understanding the nature of Jewry unless these two questions are clearly demarcated from one another." The external question is this: under what conditions was Jewry tolerated or permitted to survive and under what conditions was it eliminated by some means or other? Sometimes at least the answer might be that they were merely economically useful or advantageous. They might not have been indispensable in order for their usefulness to count as an appropriate answer to the external question; usefulness by itself might provide a perfectly comprehensible motive for explaining why some rulers permitted the Jews to survive as Jews. The internal question on the other hand is this: why was Jewry able to renew or reproduce itself, why did the Jews themselves tend to continue as or remain Jews? Leon does not separate very carefully these two questions. Some of the things he says are addressed to the external question. But when Leon says that Jewry tends to die out when it loses its specific function, he is certainly addressing the internal question of Jewish survival. Insofar as he is answering this internal question, usefulness by itself is insufficient; indispensability is required. I have argued this on general grounds about the nature of functional explanation, but I would like to add some further arguments about this, drawn not just from such general considerations but rather from considerations specifically about functional explanations of social phenomena. I think that it is these further considerations which will lead us to see something important about historical materialist explanations.

Perhaps one can never 'reduce' functional explanations involving social categories to explanations couched only in terms of individuals and the decisions they take. But, in spite of what some historical materialists say, the decisions taken by individuals could hardly be irrelevant to those explanations. Put it this way: even if the survival of Jewry cannot be reduced to what individual Jews did or decided, the survival of Jewry (in terms of the internal aspect; I ignore the external aspect for the present) must in some way be related to the decisions of individual Jews to remain Jews or at least to their failure to decide to cease being Jews. It is perfectly compatible with what I am saying that these individual Jews may have been unaware of the real motives or reasons for which they decided as they did. They may have mystified their decisions, enshrouding them in all sorts of theological or moralistic conceptions. It is no part of my claim to deny this. But a decision taken for real reasons hidden from the decider is a decision nonetheless. If we focus on the internal question of Jewish survival my point is that Jewry can persist only if a sufficient number of individual Jews decide to remain Jews, or at least refrain from deciding to abandon Jewry. However, if other groups in the society were also performing the same, non-exclusive exchange functions, functions shared between the Jews and those other

groups, or even if other groups were not performing those functions but could have done so and hence individual Jews could have continued their economic activity while ceasing to be Jews and joining those other groups, in such cases economic function cannot explain the persistence of Jewry. In cases of non-exclusive function, the economic activity of the Jews provides no obvious rationale for understanding why individual Jews did not cease being Jews and affiliate themselves to these other groups, since there was usually at least some pressure on Jews to do just that, all the while continuing the same economic function as before the change of group affiliation. Although it is true that some rulers at certain times established economic disincentives for Jews to cease being Jewish, due to the loss of their tax revenue, on balance, throughout almost every period of Jewish history, there were overwhelming economic disadvantages in remaining Jewish. If so, then any non-exclusive economic function of the Jews will not permit us to explain why Jewish merchants and traders did not continue in the same economic role while at the same time becoming non-Jews. There is simply no way in which the fact that the Jews had some economic function that was or could be carried out by other groups as well could provide a motive, whether conscious or unconscious, for a Jew in such an exchange-related occupation to remain Jewish. But, if the fact that Jews had some non-exclusive economic function cannot explain why any individual Jews did not decide to cease being Jews, then it cannot explain why Jewry survived, since the survival of Jewry must be in part at least a consequence, whether intended or not, of those decisions taken by individual Jews.

On the other hand, if Jews were indispensable in the economy in the sense that they performed some economic function that no other group did or could perform, one can see why at least that section of Jewry which engaged in such exclusive occupations remained Jews, since for them to have abandoned Jewry would have been for them to abandon their economic means of existence. They could not have continued doing what they were doing as non-Jews. Thus, unless the function in question is an exclusive function of the Jews, unless the Jews or some section of them are indispensable, the economic facts of occupation are **motivationally** irrelevant to understanding the survival of Jewry.

Did the Jews have an exclusive economic function, were they 'indispensable', in the natural economy or indeed at any other time when they managed to survive as a community? It seems plain that Leon's thesis fails the empirical test, once these constraints on the acceptability of the classical historical materialist thesis concerning the survival of the Jews are made clear. Let us recall that Leon's own thesis is meant to be true unrestrictedly for all historical epochs in which Diaspora Jewry existed, whatever the mode of production. Crudely, either the mode of production is a natural economy, in which case they survive because

they are the representatives of exchange, or the economy is an exchange economy, in which case they tend to die out, having lost their saving function. Leon himself cites evidence from the classical period of antiquity. Consider, then, the Jews of the Roman Empire outside Judea. We know that there was great occupational differentiation among Jews in the Roman **Diaspora**<sup>11</sup> (they were in great demand at certain periods as mercenaries) and that, among the range of occupations, trade and commerce were certainly important. But I have already agreed that evidence of occupational differentiation will not by itself refute Leon's thesis. However, we also know that Jewish merchants and traders had at all periods a great number of non-Jewish commercial rivals. A class within almost all of the other civilised nations engaged in trading—the Egyptians, the Syrians, and others. Leon plays down the extent to which the Greeks themselves engaged in trade, since they 'despised trade and industry'.<sup>12</sup> This may have been true of upper class Greeks in Greece itself, but it cannot be true of the large Greek or Hellenised colonies in the towns outside Greece. Relations between the Jews and the Greeks, or other Hellenised populations, were atrocious in the period of the Roman Empire, often leading to riots and physical extermination of the one side by the other. Josephus, in *The Jewish Wars*, gives a grim picture of the state of relations between Jews and the Hellenised populations amongst whom they lived in the period just prior to and during the revolt of the Jews of Judea in **66-70 A.D.** Nowhere were the relations worse than in Alexandria, which had the largest Jewish population outside Judea in the first century A.D., a population entirely exterminated by the Romans and the native non-Jewish population after the Jewish uprisings there, and in North Africa and Cyprus, in **115-7 A.D.** Although 'ideological' factors such as the unpopularity of the Jewish religion and the refusal of the Jews to engage in emperor worship played a minor role in arousing this hostility, the hostility took a racial (in the classical sense of that term) form. Commercial rivalry and jealousy must have played no small part in these developments; no other explanation has ever been offered for these deep social tensions. If so, one cannot say that Jewish merchants and traders had any exclusive function in the period of the Roman Empire.

In Byzantium from the division of the Roman Empire until its fall to the Turks, in Spain until the Expulsion of the Jews in **1492**, in Babylon under first Parthian and then Persian kings, in North Africa, Arabia, and the Middle East from the coming of Islam until the modern period, in India from their arrival in the second century B.C., in Oriental centres such as Bokhara and Afghanistan, we find large Jewries able to maintain and reproduce themselves, sometimes over a span of two thousand years, often it is true with the Jews either concentrated into a few professions or especially important in a few professions, but almost never in such a

way that an exclusive economic function is accorded them. Where the Jews were merchants, there were other, non-Jewish merchant groups. Where the Jews were artisans, there were other, non-Jewish groups of artisans. And where the Jews were money-lenders, there were almost always non-Jewish groups of money-lenders, with the latter groups usually being far more important in the economy. Where Jews were important in some particular industry, as were the Jewish silk workers in Byzantium, other groups worked in those industries as well, and the Jews could have continued in those industries had they apostatised. Where Jews worked the soil, as they mainly did in Babylon, other groups were also agricultural. In none of these examples that I have mentioned had the Jews an exclusive economic function, and hence there were no reasons arising from their function, whether conscious or unconscious, which could explain why Jews continued to be Jews and hence for Jewry to reproduce itself. Jews could have continued in their occupations, usually more successfully, as non-Jews.

Some may find this claim of non-exclusive function surprising with regard to the granting of loans on interest in the Middle Ages, but the claim is nonetheless true. The Church's opposition to usury itself only developed and hardened over time, but even when it finally hardened against usury, it was never able to control it effectively. In the early middle ages, the chief moneylenders appear to have been the monasteries and the secular clergy, but later, with the rise of a merchant class, usury increasingly fell into the hands of the merchants who had money which could be lent, some of whom then became specialised in the lending of money on interest. Commentators agree that the Jews had rivals in this occupation, and that their rivals were far more important economically than were they. Parkes, in his important study of usury in the Middle Ages, claims that, 'The rivalry **between** Lombard or Cahorsin, burgher and Jew, extended over the whole field and the whole **period**'.<sup>13</sup> Both Pirenne and Parkes agree that the Jews played a subordinate role in this rivalry: 'Compared with the effectiveness and ubiquity of Italian credit, that of the Jews appears a very small affair and the part which they played in the Middle Ages has certainly been much **exaggerated**.'<sup>14</sup> '... Throughout the period the chief moneylenders were Christian, and. . . apart from short periods and particular localities, the Jew never played more than a subordinate **part**.'<sup>15</sup> Pirenne even explains the expulsions of the Jews from England and France in the thirteenth century and after as arising from the intervention of their Italian and other rivals in the granting of loans at interest. The Mosque also disapproved of usury, but **Rodinson** similarly describes the merely occasional and local ability to prevent Muslims from engaging in usury, and the Jews appear to have had no more of an exclusive economic activity of usury under Islam than they had under **Christendom**.<sup>16</sup>

In fact, Leon's thesis of an exclusive economic function fits precisely one case, that of international trade in western Europe in the period of about 700–1100 A.D., although even this has been disputed by some writers. In that period, western Europe had been forced back into a natural economy. One important reason for this was the capture of the Mediterranean by the Moors and the consequent cutting of normal trade routes between western Europe on the one hand and Byzantium and Asia on the other. In this period, the Jews were, almost without exception, the sole representatives of an exchange economy in western Europe.

It is easy to see why this should have been an exclusive function of the Jews in western Europe in this period, one that they could not have performed at all or at least not well had they ceased being Jews. The Radanites, as these traders were called, had available to them, as Jews, an international network which they could use for trading purposes, in an otherwise extremely fragmented economic situation in which the trade connections normally available to non-Jews had been broken. Moreover, being neither Muslims nor Christians, they could be considered neutrals in the state of war that existed between Islam and Christendom. These two facts, when taken together, made them not only ideal, but the only available, agents of international exchange in this period and conferred on them an exclusive (or near to exclusive) function in western Europe for this limited time. We know that these Radanites developed routes for trading goods between the Frankish and Chinese kingdoms, via Jewries in India, central Asia, Persia, and Byzantium. But this exclusivity of function never existed anywhere else at any other time. As soon as conditions permitted the generalised resumption of trade, non-Jewish merchants competed with, and soon surpassed, their Jewish trading rivals.

Leon's account is not only Eurocentric. It is western Eurocentric, because it obtains no confirmation from the course of events in eastern Europe. It is true that the Polish kings welcomed Jewish immigration in the latter half of the thirteenth century and after, since they saw that the influx of Jews would help Poland develop economically by encouraging trade and finance. This fact can help us explain the external aspect of Jewish survival, for it explains why Jews were permitted to live in Poland. But the same reason which drove the Polish kings to welcome Jews also drove them to welcome the more general settlement of Poland by German merchants and traders. Almost from the first years of significant Jewish settlement (Baron estimates a Polish Jewish population of only 30,000 in 1500), the status and fortunes of Polish Jewry resembled that of the Jews of western Europe in the period after they had lost their economic indispensability. The reason for this is quite simply that the Jews in Poland never had an indispensable economic function. Their function was non-exclusive; they always had rivals. **Dubnow** and **Baron**<sup>17</sup>

chronicle the extensive economic rivalry between the Jews on the one hand and both the German and native Polish merchants on the other, a rivalry that existed from the earliest period of significant Jewish settlement in Poland, and which almost invariably resulted in new restrictions against the trading rights of the Jews—hardly evidence for the indispensability of the Jews to Poland. Not only was there no tendency for them to be pushed into exchange-related occupations, but rather, due to this economic rivalry in which they were fated to be perpetual losers, there was a tendency for them to be pushed out of such occupations. One cannot hope to explain the near thousand-year history of Polish Jewry by their function, for Jewish merchants and traders and bankers co-existed, more or less peacefully, with their Polish and German rivals who did precisely the same things. There was no obvious economic motive for a Polish Jew to remain a Jew, that arose from his function in society, as there may well have been for the Radanite. Leon's classical thesis will not work even for the case of Poland.

I suspect that some are attracted to Leon's thesis by the following pattern of thought. The essential class relation in feudal society is that between lord and serf. There *is* no place in this essential relational structure for the Jews, for a variety of reasons, so the Jews alone had to find some other economic niche in which to fit. This they did by uniquely assuming the functions relating to exchange, functions for which the other elements of the society, lords and serfs, were unfitted. Now, although it is perfectly true that the lord-serf relation is the essential class relation of feudal society, it is a caricature of actual feudal society to think that it was so homogeneous that only the Jews stood outside that relation. In all but very limited periods, other groups existed alongside the Jews which also stood outside that social relationship. In the earlier discussion of money-lending, I mentioned Lombards and Cahorsians—foreigners were an especially noticeable group outside the feudal relations. And there were always small native merchant classes, even in the Radanite period, when they still had available regional and local trade even if cut off from long-distance trade across the religious boundaries. There was never an absence of groups in actual feudal societies which could or did provide the Jews with occupational rivals."

### *An Alternative Historical Materialist Approach*

The classical historical materialist approach to answering the first question, why Jewry survived, in terms of the survival of a class with a specific function, fails. Its account of the emancipation of Jewry in fact means the emancipation of Jews from Jewry, which is itself to disappear. With the failure of the classical approach on which it is based, the idea that Jewry is bound to disappear under socialism loses whatever support this classical thesis was thought to give it.

I stress that it does not follow from any of this that historical materialism, using a different approach, cannot provide an answer to the question of why Jewry survived. Insofar as there may be an alternative approach, available to historical materialism even if not specific to it, our view of in what Jewish emancipation consists may have to be modified **from** what it was on the classical approach. I do not think that it is a fault in this alternative account that it can also be used, in whole or part, by non-Marxists. The point is that it is usable by Marxists who want to go beyond the classical view. After all, we do not need to insist that **women** must constitute a sex-class, or blacks a race-class, in order to say that historical materialism can accept these divisions and advance a programme for liberation. Of course, the analogy is imperfect. There is some sort of biological differentiation between men and women, blacks and whites, however much one comes to see that many if not all of the consequences of these biological differences are culturally superimposed on the facts of sex and skin pigmentation. No one but a Fascist would think that there is any significant biological difference between Jews and non-Jews. The point is only that a mature historical materialism can accept that there are important differences between people that are not themselves economic ones; in this way, a different sort of approach to the question of Jewish survival might be possible other than the insistence that the Jews must form a 'class, or more precisely, a people-class'. Of course, some alternative to a biological principle of differentiation would have to be found, and this I now intend to provide.

Marx tells us: 'It will be seen how in the place of the wealth and poverty of political economy come the rich human being and rich human need. The rich human being is simultaneously the human being in need of a totality of human-life activities—the man in whom his own realisation exists as an inner necessity, as **need**.'<sup>19</sup> We can say that historical materialism is a theory about how all human needs become satisfied, thwarted, expanded, and restricted in the course of human history, in different modes of production. It may be that human beings must eat before they theorise, but this is not to deny that theorising is itself a need. Marx speaks of the need for human life-activities. One such human life-activity that Marx has in mind is labour, but he is thinking of many other activities beside labour. 'Man does not live by bread alone', says the theologian, and this is surely right. If we try to think about the various sorts of needs people have, and the activities in which they need involvement, we will think of such things as love, affection, a personal sense of worth, a sense of identity and belonging, culture, and communal activities. Why do people need cultural settings in which to act and communal activities? No doubt for numerous reasons, amongst which is the need to provide their lives with a **structure** or form that gives shape to the routine of their daily existence, and that provides them with a means of coping within

a public context with the major events of life: birth, pubescence, love and death. In part, a sense of significance in one's own life comes through the social identity and significance of one's actions. This structure and form that gives the shape to what one does is achieved by such things as a calendar, a cycle of holidays and festivals that recur throughout a lifetime, historical memories at the level of collective existence, a certain recognisable rhythm and tempo to life itself attained through the observance of customs and ceremonies, the celebration of the changing of the seasons, public occasions on which to mark events of significance to the individual and the community.

We can sum this up in an overworked metaphor from Wittgensteinian philosophy: people need a form of life. No social thinker has appreciated this more than Herder: 'It was Herder. . . who first drew wide attention to the proposition that among elementary human needs. . . is the need to belong to a particular group, united by some common links. . .'<sup>20</sup> Far from being some sort of contemporary middle-class penchant, championed by those who feel the need for community politics, this need identified by Herder is a universal need that has found expression in every human society, but found expression in countless different ways. Often, professional revolutionaries say that these things are luxuries at best, frivolities at worst. Frankly, if there really were people who could do without these things, and not just say that they could, their inhumanity would frighten me. These are neither frivolities nor luxuries for human beings, as they face life and try to collectively come to terms with it. No historical materialism should neglect **these** truths, truths not only consistent with historical materialism but actually part of what it should understand by 'rich' human need. It may seem strange that, as an exponent of a variety of historical materialism, I should cite the views of a reactionary thinker like Herder. But of course the same insights are available in **Hegel** himself. **Hegel**, more deeply than anyone since, appreciated the essential involvement of the individual with the community in which he was **placed**.<sup>21</sup> The relations between individual and society are not just relations of production; they involve a whole nexus of relations that extend beyond production and embrace many other aspects of life.

The need that each person has is a need for some culture or other. This is an unspecific need, which in principle can be satisfied in an indefinitely large number of ways (I say more about this in what follows). However, there is not the slightest reason to expect, let alone hope, that sometime in the distant future of full communism, there will only be one such human culture or form of life. Of course, I speak of cultures and forms of life, not bourgeois nation-states. Full communism would be impoverished without a great plurality of traditions and cultures. Historical materialists are not obliged to sing the praises of Esperanto. Surely this, if anything, is the reconciliation of the universal with the

particular, the **cosmopolitan** with the distinctive; this is the concrete universal which was the great insight and advance of **Hegelian** philosophy over the abstract conception of humanity that he found in the philosophy of the Enlightenment. One humankind, one planned economy with everything that that entails, but one humankind realised in ever so many cultures, languages, traditions, differences, ways of doing things. This seems to me what Marxists should understand by the rich human **being**—the need for culture and community being satisfied in countless different ways. A person is richer if other persons, as members of other cultures and traditions, do things differently.

Leon called an explanation 'idealist' when it referred to free will in its explanatory principles. I think that we need to rethink the place of the will (I do not say 'free', because in the sense in which Leon means this, I do not think that the will is free) in historical materialist explanation. I said earlier that even if we are not methodological individualists who reduce the survival of Jewry to the decisions taken by individual Jews, it would be absurd to say that these individual decisions (even if they are unfree in Leon's sense) were irrelevant. Jewry could survive, as any other socio-cultural grouping, only because of the decisions taken by individuals, however little they may have been aware in making those decisions of their real meaning or significance. Now, in every period apart from western Europe from 700–1100 A.D., in those places where Jewry did survive (it did not always do so, even in the absence of external reasons mitigating against survival), this was accomplished only insofar as a sufficient number of Jews chose to remain Jews, in spite of the economic advantages that would usually have come their way by becoming Muslim or Christian. Many of course did convert, or otherwise made their exit from Jewry. Jewry survived where it did (apart from external causes of extinction) only because some significant number, for whatever reasons, did not convert or assimilate, and this is quite compatible of course with extensive conversion and assimilation. None of this presupposes free will in Leon's sense, but it does invoke in the explanatory account the concepts of human choice and deliberation. And so much the better it is for so doing. Finally, this is in no way incompatible with historical materialism as I understand it, since what no doubt made vast numbers of those Jews who chose to remain Jewish do so, was that, for them, their Jewishness was the mechanism by which their need for culture and community, a significance to their lives, was given to them. For many of them the idea of a life as a non-Jew would have presented itself as a horribly deprived life, one hardly worth living, for they would not have been able to see how some of their deepest needs could have been met. I do not think that the point is merely speculative; Jewish history books provide us with innumerable examples of this choice being made essentially for these reasons, although the language

the choosers use to explain those choices to themselves is often (but not invariably in the modern period) theological.

A requirement that all functional explanations must meet and that I have continually stressed in my discussion of Leon is indispensability in the circumstances. The need that human beings have is a need for some culture and community, but not for some specific one. Chinese are not born with a specific need for Chinese culture, nor Jews for Jewish culture and community. But, given the biography of an individual, the circumstances in which he is placed, and the memories and patterns and norms of behaviour he is taught, the general need can attach itself to a specific object. Jewry survived because a significant number of Jews found, for the satisfaction of these needs on their part, that specifically Jewry was indispensable in the circumstances of their life as it had been lived. Surely if this had not been the case, then given the slightest reason to abandon Jewry (and there have nearly always been far more than merely slight reason to do so), any sane Jew would have done so. It is a long and complicated story, hidden from sight in the vagaries of personal biography but explicable in principle, why each individual did or did not find Jewry indispensable in the circumstances of his life. Of course, it is not an all-or-nothing affair; Jews will find it of varying significance in their lives, and hence will resist varying amounts of pressure to abandon Jewry. Many Jews chose to abandon Jewry because their cultural needs and sense of belonging were satisfied by the prevailing culture. This was true of many Hellenised Jews of the classical period. It was also true of **Marx's** father, for example, who converted for opportunistic reasons, but he was, well before his conversion, thoroughly at home in the culture of the European Enlightenment, a man who drew none of his emotional sustenance from traditional Jewish sources. Historical materialism is not obliged to discover the reasons why each individual Jew chooses one way or another, although often the reasons are perfectly obvious at the level of ordinary observation. But even though we are not required to offer a theory that can account for every individual case, there are some considerations which have a general bearing on the question, and that I discuss in the next section.

### *Why Did Jewry Survive and Other Cultures Fail To Do So?*

Cultures and ways of life generally meet certain needs and desires of those who belong to them, but Jewry is distinguishable from most other examples by its extraordinary ability to survive and continue. There must be some other characteristic of Jewry that differentiates it from those other cases, since it has outlasted most of them. What feature did Jewry possess that gives it this remarkable longevity?

I introduced earlier, and will continue to work with, the distinction between internal and external factors making for cultural survival. There

is some measure of arbitrariness in this distinction, and some problematic cases (as we shall see), but roughly the internal aspect of the question concerns the choices and decisions taken by members of that culture (and of course these choices and decisions are themselves grounded in objective facts and anchored in the reality of external circumstances, if the chooser is at all rational), whereas the external aspect concerns those features of the objective situation (like physical extermination, forced conversion, expulsion) which do not manifest themselves in the choices and decisions of the participants but are conditions forced upon them whether they will it or not. A borderline case would be a situation in which a Jew was faced with a choice of expulsion or conversion (as was the whole of Spanish Jewry in 1492). Here, the Jews had a choice, but one narrowly circumscribed by external constraint over which they were powerless.

I believe that a major factor (perhaps not the only factor) that made for the differential survival of Jewry when compared to so many other forms of life was the Diaspora of the Jews. This may seem surprising, since the Diaspora of the Jews is usually thought of as an unmitigated disaster for Jewry. It had, naturally, its disastrous side. But it also made for the preservation of Jewry as a whole. The point is not novel; Leon himself makes it. Had the Jews remained in Palestine, there is no reason to believe that they would be different from the Palestinian Arabs today, many of whom are descended from the Jews who remained in Palestine and succumbed to Islam over the course of the centuries. Most cultures or ways of life that become extinct become extinct for external reasons, such as military conquest, the forcible introduction of another culture, mass immigration of peoples, and so on. History is replete with examples of the waning and waxing of cultures for these reasons: the coming of Norman culture to Anglo-Saxon Britain, of Greek culture to the world of the Greek Empire, of Aryan **culture** to the pre-existing peoples of the Indian subcontinent. There are very few examples of what I would call territorialised cultures that have survived in a single continuous line of development for the length of time Jewry has survived in the Diaspora (Chinese and Japanese cultural traditions seem an exception to this claim). It is true that Judaism changed, but it is remarkable how great a line of continuity there is between Jewish life in 200 A.D. and today. It is also something of an abstraction to speak of a Jewish culture or way of life, for there were differences between Jews of various areas in their cultural practices. There were not only the Ashkenazim and Sephardim, and important subdivisions in these categories, but other groups of Jews **who** were neither: Yemenite, Persian and Indian for example. But one should not overestimate these differences. Except for a few cases in which Jewish communities were cut off from world Jewry (the case of Chinese and Ethiopian Jewry comes to mind), there were continual contacts between these communities, and a Jew would have recognised any other

group of Jews as participating in a common form of life.

A main factor making for Jewish survival when compared with other cultures was, then, the external factor of Jewish dispersion, de-territorialisation. But it was not only the fact that they were dispersed, de-territorialised, but the pattern of this dispersion. Religious Jews say that God never prepares for chastisement of the Jews until he has also prepared the remedy, and there is a sound point hidden in this theological expression. Simmel argued<sup>22</sup> that Jewish survival was enhanced by the spatial distribution of the Jewish people in the Diaspora: 'By dispersing throughout the world the Jews insured the survival of the group because no single persecution could hit them all; at the same time the Jews in any given city assembled in ghettos in order better to defend themselves.'<sup>23</sup> The first point of Simmel's thesis is correct: Jewish life was spread sufficiently thin so that it was highly improbable that all of Jewry could ever be eliminated in a single blow. As one Jewish centre waned, another arose to take its place: Spain from Babylon; Turkey and North Africa from Spain; Germany from France and England; Poland from Germany; the United States from Poland and Russia. The second part of Simmel's thesis can be accepted with a modification. It is true that the dispersion was also not too thinly spread, not because the Jews needed some population concentration to defend themselves, but because without a sufficient concentration of population, the conditions do not exist either for establishing and maintaining a communal structure, or to make intra-group marriage a realistic possibility. In conclusion, it seems to me that the main feature that differentiated Jewry from other cultures in terms of longevity relates to the external factors of both the fact of and the spatial distribution of the Diaspora. Territorialised cultures were less able to resist external threats than were the Jews.

I have said that the main causes of cultures ceasing to exist are external causes. Although there are exceptions to this, it is in the main true. I am in substantial agreement with Rodinson on this point: 'Dans ces conditions triomphait la **tendance normale des communautés à persister dans l'existence et à défendre au niveau communautaire les intérêts et les aspirations de leur membres.**'<sup>24</sup> That is, if we abstract away from external conditions that work for the disappearance of cultures, the normal condition for any culture is persistence rather than disappearance. Newtonian physics does not provide an answer to the question: why do objects remain in motion? It reverses the way this had been thought about previously, for the law of inertia asserts that unless an object is subjected to external forces, it will continue its motion or rest indefinitely. Something like this is true for cultures, although once again I admit the imperfection of the analogy. Any culture, if not interfered with by external intervention, will tend to reproduce itself. In the case of a de-territorialised culture such as Jewry, the organisation of the culture into institutional forms

becomes especially important. If cultures like Jewry are numerically strong enough, and are permitted, to organise themselves and evolve institutions such as schools, universities, law courts, meeting places, and other institutions for the transmission of its culture and values across the generations, it will hardly be surprising that sufficient Jews remain Jews to speak of the survival of Jewry. The 'tendance normale' for cultures to persist if not externally interfered with is not to postulate some hidden, mysterious force. It rests on the way in which it answers needs in the lives of its participants, and hence their making it survive through their choices and decisions. In the case of de-territorialised Jewry, in which, as I have said, the necessity of institutions to guarantee that that culture is available to each generation becomes so important, since it is not available in the larger social context, there is a connection between the degree of participation in that organised cultural life and the maintenance of the way of life itself. Although everyone knows of examples of Jews with an orthodox background who effectively leave the Jewish people, available statistics show that there is a high correlation between depth of involvement in Jewish life and facts like probability of inter-marriage.' This is of course not surprising, in the case of a de-territorialised culture. Since the need for a specifically Jewish life cannot be acquired effortlessly in society at large but must be acquired by participation in Jewish communal life (not necessarily in religious spheres), it is not surprising that Jewry can survive only if there are, in any place, sufficient Jews to establish such institutions, and that Jewry's survival is, in part, a function of the degree to which Jews participate in them.

Rodinson agrees with Otto Heller's expectation of 'la fin du Judaïsme. . . comme mode particulier de vie', and speaks of the resurgence among Jews since the establishment of the state of Israel of a certain attitude of particularism which 'manquait le plus souvent de toute base culturelle, sociale, ou même religieuse.'<sup>26</sup> In this, I think he greatly exaggerates. Of course, the extent to which Jews today outside the state of Israel rely on Jewish culture does not begin to approach the near total reliance many Jews of Poland and Russia had on Jewish culture before the Holocaust. On the other hand, this situation is not unlike other historical examples where Jews were members of both a Jewish and a more general culture simultaneously (pre-exile Spain for example). In the case of today's relatively assimilated 'Yahudim of the West', as Deutscher so contemptuously called the Jews of western Europe and North America in one of his essays, today's Jews rely on as many different combinations of Jewish and general culture as there are Jews. Most Jews, outside small, compact, orthodox communities, find at least some of their needs met by the prevailing general culture. Other Jews find their need for Jewish tradition only at crucial times in their lives—birth, circumcision, marriage, death. Others avail themselves of synagogues, law courts, Jewish education.

Importantly, there are a large number of non-religious Jewish institutions—Jewish sport, camps, youth clubs, charities and hospitals. It is estimated that 80 per cent of British Jewry actually belong to a synagogue (this is not to be confused with attendance). In most Diaspora countries, the overwhelming number of Jews, although they find many of their cultural needs answered by the prevailing culture, have not, as a matter of fact, arrived at that point where so few of those needs are met by Jewry that they have left organised Jewish life entirely. Diaspora Jewry will survive, I think, as far as any historical materialist can see into the future. Otto Heller's 'untergang des Judentums' seems very hasty prognosis.

### *On Anti-Semitism*

It may seem strange that thus far, in a paper on the Jewish question, I have said nothing whatever about anti-Semitism. That I have not done so reflects the fact that I give it much less importance in the question of Jewish survival than is usual. However, I want now to say things about anti-Semitism, not in connection with what its causes are, but rather about what its effects are on Jewish survival.

To begin with, there is something obscene about speaking of anti-Semitism as if it were merely a cause of Jewish survival in the Diaspora. Some say (I do not count myself among them) that if it had not been for anti-Semitism, Jewry would have disappeared. Whatever truth there may be in this, looked at from the external point of view, anti-Semitism has led to Jewish destruction. Even if we were to accept that there **was some** connection between anti-Semitism and Jewish survival, these effects would have to be balanced by the ways in which anti-Semitism led to the destruction of Jewry in so many places and at so many times.

Still, I do not doubt that there is some connection between anti-Semitism and Jewish survival. This connection appears if we consider the survival of Jewry from the internal point of view, and consider the connection between anti-Semitism and the choices and decisions Jews made. An obvious example is the biography of Theodore Herzl, whose belief in assimilation and the disappearance of Jewry ended when he confronted virulent anti-Semitism in France as a journalist covering the Dreyfus Affair. This type of story can be told and retold countless times for countless individuals. The following story is commonplace, and I repeat it only because it is so absolutely typical:

**Albert I Gordon tells the story of a Minneapolis Jewish family of German origin which produced three native-born generations in this country. The grandfather, born in Albany in 1862, moved to Minneapolis in 1883. His 'family associated exclusively with Jewish families...'**

**The son's story is a simple one: on his own evidence, he 'was never interested in Jewish life or Jewish organisations'. If his 'daughter were to marry out of her faith', he would not have 'seriously' objected, and he was even a member of a Christian Science Church 'for about six or seven months'. And yet, when he applied for membership in the Minneapolis Athletic Club, he was told 'that they**

don't want any Jews there'. When 'the same thing happened in the Automobile Club', he was 'very much upset about it', but he still did 'not think that there ought to be Jewish clubs'.

The granddaughter had 'no awareness of. . . Jewishness'. She 'never resented the fact that there was a quota system at school', and 'always had friends among Jews and Christians', predominantly among the latter until her days at the university. At the time she related her story, she found that her real friends were 'in the Jewish group'.

The story is typical, because it demonstrates the way in which anti-Semitism can bring back into Jewry Jews who otherwise, out of sheer indifference, would have left Jewry. Indifferent Jews, like the son and granddaughter of the story, find that they are only fully accepted in their social relations with other Jews. In this way, anti-Semitism affects how they choose to live their lives, e.g., the granddaughter's choosing to have mainly Jewish friends at university, and this means that, looking at anti-Semitism from its internal effects on Jewry alone, there is no doubt that anti-Semitism has affected the choices and decisions Jews make regarding their relationship to Jewry in such a way that it has enhanced the chances of survival of the Jewish way of life. In the case of the father, Jewry had ceased to answer his needs for culture and community altogether, for he seemed perfectly at home in a Christian Science Church. In these kinds of cases, anti-Semitism alone is able to make for the survival of these people as Jews, long after any story about culture and community has become entirely inappropriate.

Sometimes it is said that Jewry survived only because of anti-Semitism. Such a claim is far too strong, and I would like to point out some limitations on the survival-enhancing aspects of anti-Semitism that I conceded above. First, although anti-Semitism has had these survival-enhancing aspects in the modern period, these beneficial effects of anti-Semitism from the point of view of Jewish survival must be temporally restricted. The idea implicit in the story of the Minneapolis family, as indeed in **Herzls** biography, is the inability or extreme difficulty a Jew faces in voluntarily disassociating himself or withdrawing from Jewry. Anti-Semitism in this modern sense is a racist ideology, according to which the race to which one belongs is a fact about a person over which he has no control. This assumption is of course implicit in the Nazis' anti-Jewish legislation, and in the modern phenomenon of individuals who have long ceased to regard themselves as Jews still being so regarded by non-Jews. In the Warsaw ghetto, there was a Catholic Church which functioned only for those individuals considered as Jews by Nazi legislation but who were in fact practising Catholics, and who went to the same gas chambers as the other inmates of the ghetto. But this is entirely a modern phenomenon. It is difficult to date with any precision the change in attitude to the Jews from regarding them as a community from which voluntary departure

could be effected to regarding them as a race into which one was born for life, but roughly until the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, by and large, a Jew could choose to cease being Jewish by conversion. Hellenised Jews could cease being Jews by engaging in emperor worship and, by surgical means, reversing their circumcision. In the Medieval and early modern period, a Jew could leave Jewry through apostasy. There are certain exceptions to this general claim, but in the main it does distinguish the way in which Jewry was regarded differently in the late modern and earlier periods.

It is a necessary condition for anti-Jewish attitudes having a significant beneficial effect on Jewish survival that Jewry not be voluntarily escapable. Had the father's membership in the Christian Science Church made him a non-Jew in the eyes of others, and had he therefore been accepted for membership in the clubs to which he aspired, the story would have had quite a different ending. It is only in the modern period that voluntary egress from Jewry is blocked, and thus it is only in the modern period, say for the last two hundred years out of the two thousand and more history of Diaspora Jewry, that anti-Jewish attitudes have contributed to Jewish survival. Before this period, anti-Jewish attitudes had only a significant negative import for Jewish survival.

Second, even if we restrict the beneficial consequences for Jewry of anti-Semitism to the modern or late modern period, anti-Semitism cannot be a cause of Jewish survival on the same level of importance as the satisfaction of a need for community and way of life. What anti-Semitism usually does, although this is not indicated in the story of the Minneapolis family but is borne out in many of the stories of Jews who have returned to Jewish life from assimilation (I am thinking of examples such as the Bundist Vladimir Medem or the anarchist-socialist Bernard Lazare) is to force individuals to a new appraisal of the values of their own culture and way of life. Jewish assimilationists have often espoused the essentially Enlightenment rationalist ideal that is suspicious of any form of cultural or ethnic particularity; anti-Semitism often pushes an individual into questioning the ethic of universality which submerges the importance of cultural differences between people. This presupposes, however, that there is an existing Jewish way of life which is potentially able to answer these needs in people, and indeed which is actually fulfilling those needs for an existent community. I would put the matter this way: presupposed in this is that the survival of a Jewish heritage and tradition is essentially explained by the satisfaction it brings to the lives of individuals in that tradition, and that anti-Semitism works as a 'reinforcing' cause, which brings it about that more Jews, through a realistic appraisal of their life situation, will find meaning and value as Jews than would have been the case had there been no anti-Semitism.

Finally (and connected to the second point), there is a distinction

between Jewish survival and flourishing (the degree to which it survives). It is a fault of Leon's classical account, and is equally a fault in my account, that there has been no attempt to quantify any of the causal effects (which Leon and I have merely referred to as 'survival') of either economic function or need-satisfaction or anti-Semitism. Does 'survival of Jewry' mean as a large international grouping, as a major social force, as a minuscule sect (like the Donmehs of Turkey or the few surviving crypto-Jews of Portugal), or what? What I should like to assert is that satisfaction of cultural needs explains the basic survival of Jewry, but that in the modern period anti-Semitism makes it survive with greater numbers than would have otherwise been the case. What makes me diffident about this assertion is that, in our present state of knowledge of society, we are simply unable to attach any quantitative measure to the extent to which two causes which lead to the same effect contribute to that effect. I would say that we do not have the evidence available to say that in the modern period had there been no anti-Semitism, there would have been no Jewish survival (again, abstracting away from the external effects of anti-Semitism). Nor do we have reason to believe that, in the absence of anti-Semitism under genuine socialism, the satisfaction by the Jewish way of life of the need of Jews for a community and culture will be insufficient for Jewish survival. One simply does not know now whether Jewry will survive or not under socialism, but, as I said earlier, Otto Heller's expectation of the 'Untergang des Judentums' has no justification, and is nothing to which we must be committed on the basis of historical materialism.

I have not intended these three remarks as anything like a comprehensive account of anti-Semitism and its relation to Jewish survival. It should be obvious that I think that anti-Semitism is less important, although still with some importance, in answering the question of Jewish survival than is usually thought. I offer these three points as occasional remarks which should be considered in developing a more complete account of anti-Semitism and its effects on Jewish survival.

### *The Nature of Jewish Emancipation*

I want to conclude this paper with some observations about one possible course of Jewish emancipation. I have argued that the expectation of the disappearance of Jewry is unfounded, because of the inadequacy of the classical account of Jewish survival on which that expectation is based. If Jewry does survive under socialism (and this is an 'if'), in what might its emancipation consist? I am not addressing myself to the problem of Jewish emancipation in pre-socialist conditions; on this question, my views are the conventional Marxist ones. I do not think that Jewish emancipation (like that of women or blacks or the third world) is possible under capitalism, and I find disingenuous calls to oppose a Zionist solution to the contemporary Jewish problem that do not stress this impossibility.<sup>28</sup>

The great tragedy of the Jewish problem today, as Isaac Deutscher so often and so eloquently stressed, is that it is insoluble except by socialism. Yet it is a solution which may come too late, for by then barbarism may have already finished its work as far as the Jewish people is concerned.

**Trotsky** never developed what one might call a theory of the nature of Jewry and its liberation, but one can detect, in the few remarks he made after the rise of both Stalinist and Hitlerite **anti-Semitism**, the characteristic maturity of insight of the man. **Trotsky** speaks of one possible avenue of Jewish emancipation. He did not say that Jewry would or would not disappear under socialism, for who can now know the ways in which people will refashion their lives in conditions of human liberation. But his remarks make it clear that he was not committed to such disappearance of Jewry in the long run, and that he was prepared to speculate about the possibility of non-disappearance; he says that socialists must at least be prepared for the continuance of the Jewish people for an 'epoch'. 'Once socialism has become the master of our planet. . . it will have unimaginable resources in all domains. Human history has witnessed the epoch of great migrations on the basis of barbarism. Socialism will open the possibility of great migrations on the basis of the most developed technique and culture. It goes without saying that what is here involved is not compulsory displacements. . . but displacements freely consented to, or rather demanded by certain nationalities or parts of nationalities. The dispersed Jews who would want to be reassembled in the same community will find a. . . spot. . . The same possibility will be opened for the Arabs, as for all other scattered nations. *National topography will become part of the planned economy.*' 'The establishment of a territorial base for Jewry in Palestine or any other country. . . Only a triumphant socialism can take upon itself such tasks.' 'Are we not correct in saying that a world socialist federation will have to make possible the creation of a Biro-Bidzhan for those Jews who wish to have their own autonomous republic as the arena for their own culture' (TA 4106).<sup>39</sup> There would, for **Trotsky**, be no more reason to refuse to meet the felt need by Jews, if they were forthcoming, to territorialise their community under socialism than there would be to refuse to meet the needs of anyone else. Of course, **Trotsky** is thinking of a Soviet Jewry whose involvement in Jewish culture had, before its cultural destruction under Stalin and now his successors, been very deep. Jewry today almost everywhere lacks the same depth of involvement. This might mean that it is less likely that Jews as they are now would ask for territorialisation. But the point is that, whatever the depth of their involvement, if they were to ask for territorialisation, **Trotsky** appears willing to accede to these demands (assuming of course that they do not lead to the involuntary displacement of others). There is no need to operate a further criterion about the extent of Jewish culture in the lives of those who ask

for territorialisation. Territorialisation is one possible path of Jewish emancipation under socialism, one option among many.

I do not extract from this for a moment that **Trotsky** would have shown any sympathy for Zionism, the attempt to effect a territorialisation of the Jews as a solution to the Jewish question under capitalism, a solution which involves the involuntary displacement of Arabs in order to give a bourgeois national home to the Jews. **Trotsky** makes his opposition to Zionism clear, although his criticisms are often made in the spirit of sadness that Zionism holds out such false hopes for the solution to the sufferings of a people. **Trotsky** is speaking of acceding to the possibility of Jewish territorial demands under socialism, not under capitalism. Still, I think that Trotsky's remarks place certain constraints on what can count **as** an acceptable critique of Zionism from the mouths of Marxists. In particular, his remarks imply that there can be nothing 'racialist' in the desire of any group that feels itself to be sufficiently a unity to want to live together in a common territory. Long and involved discussions about whether the Jews are really a nation, an ethnic group, a people, a race, a religion, or a caste, and as one or the other, have or fail to have an entitlement to territory are irrelevant to this issue of the right of territorialisation.<sup>30</sup> Socialism **as** planned economy is about answering people's felt needs, assuming that so doing is not detrimental to the satisfaction of the needs of others. Planning to meet needs means, as **Trotsky** made so clear, planning to let the members of any sort of group live together if they desire this, without any further contorted investigation about whether they can justify those felt needs in terms of 'really' counting as a nationality (whatever precisely this is supposed to mean). If Jews under socialism say that they need or desire to live together in a common territory, **Trotsky** assumes that such demands would be legitimate. No further question about the correct categorisation of Jewry has to be raised.

What in fact is Jewry? I mentioned some of the obvious choices above, each of which has had its champion. I have not discussed this question, and will only make a few relevant remarks here, having usually taken the prudent path in this paper and used the relatively non-committal expression 'Jewry'. I confess to not being much moved by the question: What are the Jews? On reflection, there is something undialectical about the question, which insists that Jewry must be brought under one category to the exclusion of others. Reality is complex, and the Jews have some of the characteristics of a religion, some of a nationality, some of an ethnic community, and so on. The similarities and analogies are so diverse that the insistence on placing Jews in one category rather than another will distort reality sufficiently to make it useless for scientific purposes. This problem attends the classification of any single phenomenon as of a type or kind, but usually the scientific advantages of finding a general category

in which to fit the particular greatly outweigh the disadvantages. They are not outweighed in the case of Jewry. And any general category specially invented for the case of the Jews is likely to have precisely one instance only; whatever one understands by the general category will be entirely related to how one understands the specific case. Thus, it is not at all clear what would be gained by inventing such a uniquely applicable general category, except a kind of pseudo-understanding encouraged by the use of a general label.

What I would insist on, though, is that it is a mistake to argue that Jewry is only a religion, a mistake on which some leftist analyses are grounded. These analyses would find in the 'reduction' of Jewry to Judaism the reason for expecting its disappearance under socialism, since all religions are fated to vanish at that point in history. This is a very large question; it will be obvious that I am not in sympathy with this viewpoint, having spoken throughout of a Jewish way of life, culture, etc. I cannot resolve this debate here, but it might be useful to mention at least the following considerations. First, I think as historical materialists it would be wise to be agnostic about the general claim that all religions will vanish under socialism. I do not mean that we should believe that they will not vanish. Rather, like the question of the survival of Jewry without anti-Semitism, we simply are in no position to know one way or the other. Even though historical materialism gives us a general approach in answering questions, it does not give us any *a priori* knowledge about the causes of specific phenomena. We do not really know what the causes of religious belief are, and certainly vague references to class society and the ideology of ruling classes, or ignorance of natural processes, are inadequate, especially for the theologically sophisticated forms in which religious belief is put today. Second, the point I would stress is the non-identity of Jewish culture with Judaism. Being Jewish and believing in Judaism are not identical, in the way in which being Catholic and believing in Catholicism are. They are not identical, and I have stressed the social and cultural aspects of Jewry rather than the religious aspects. Since they are not identical, I believe that the possibility exists of a secular **Jewish** culture.

I believe that even in the Diaspora to some extent a Jewish secular culture already exists. I am aware that it is problematic to apply the distinction between the secular and the religious to **Judaism**,<sup>21</sup> because the distinction is basically a post-Christian Enlightenment distinction. In the Christian sense of 'religion', Judaism, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism are not religions at all, because they contain the 'secular' in themselves. They *are* as much ways of life as religions in the Christian sense. That said, it is still worth saying that in contemporary Judaism there is an essentially secular culture hidden within a misleading religious form. The religious form that Jewish life usually takes in the Diaspora is

misleading; the involvement in Jewish life today by large numbers of Jews, in spite of the fact that it has a religious form, has only a cultural and social significance. My assertion is not based only on speculation. There are certain empirical findings that support my interpretation. Since the end of the last world war, synagogue membership in Britain and America has grown significantly (about 60 per cent of American Jews are affiliated with a synagogue), and in the case of Britain, the steep rise in synagogue membership since the war is in sharp contrast to what has happened in the churches. Both in Britain and America, synagogue affiliation is the greater the further removed the individual is from large Jewish populations. This suggests that synagogues in suburbs and small communities have taken over the social and cultural function of the Jewish 'ghetto' or neighbourhood. This is further demonstrated in what one writer has called the 'secularisation' of the synagogue; the synagogue itself becomes increasingly a natural home for non-religious Jewish activities and **organisations**. 'Thus, not only have secular activities come to predominate over religious activities, but the religious activities themselves have been **secularised**.'<sup>32</sup>

I doubt whether most Jews who participate in Jewish life today, at least in western countries of the Diaspora, actually believe what they say when they repeat certain ritual words, or accept the literal theological significance of the customs and ceremonies in which they participate. Some other significance must be attached to what they say and do other than the literal theological meaning, for it is not easy to believe that modern Jews who participate in religious rituals really accept the physical resurrection of the dead, or the coming of the Messiah, or that Moses received the Talmud on Sinai along with the Torah (all of which such participants in rituals say). A good comparison is the way in which the same secularisation process can be seen at work in the religious customs and practices of non-Jewish society. The celebration of Christmas, and especially the Christmas dinner, has a social and family significance wholly detached for most people from any theological meaning. The function of the Passover Seder is similar in the lives of many Jews—it is one way in which the individual's bonds with an extended family are strengthened. Jewish life offers many other examples, and I suspect that historical materialists, especially those of Jewish origin, have missed the point because they assume that Jews generally observe as few of the rituals and ceremonies as do they. This is not true—various studies suggest widespread observance of some rituals and ceremonies on a highly selective basis, one of the criteria of that selection appearing to be the ability of the ceremony to 'express Jewish **identity**'.<sup>33</sup> This process of the **secularisation** of religion is made even easier for Jews than Christians by the fact that Judaism is not just a 'religion', but already has what one might call the secular within it. Many Jewish holidays have a minimal religious

content, since they are celebrations of historical or semi-historical events, or mark points of harvesting in the agricultural year. So, in content, if not in form, there are grounds for believing that Jews already have available, in their dispersed state, a culture or form of life that can in principle be detached from that religious form. As for a Jewry under socialism, if such there is fated to be, there is no reason to believe that it would be any less capable of evolving a strong, non-religious culture than is any other human group.

### NOTES

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Almost **none** of my critics agreed with anything I herein say.

1. Abram Leon, *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation*, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1972. In order to **minimise** footnotes, page references to this book are given in the text.
2. A discussion of the state of **Prussian** Jewry at the time of **Marx** is given by Julius Carlebach, *Karl Marx and the Radical Critique of Judaism*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1978, pp. 9-147. For a description of the cultural and philosophical image of the Jew in this period, see Leon Poliakov, *A History of Anti-Semitism*, vol. III, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1975.
3. Toni Oelsner, 'The Place of the Jews in Economic History as Viewed by German Scholars', *Yearbook of the Leo Baeck Institute*, 1962, pp. 183-212.
4. Nathan Weinstock, 'Introduction', in Leon, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-45.
5. **Maxime** Rodinson, 'Preface', in Leon, *La Conception Materialiste de la Question Juive*, Etudes et Documentation Internationales, Paris, 1968.
6. See Andrew Sharf, *Byzantine Jewry: From Justinian to the Fourth Crusade*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1971, for an account of the occupations of Byzantine Jewry.
7. Those familiar with the literature on functional explanation will **realise** my debt to Carl Hempel, *Aspects of Scientific Explanation*, The Free Press, New York and London, 1965, Essay 11. Nothing in my discussion presupposes an acceptance of **Hempel's** view that in such an explanation there must be a deductive relationship between explanans and **explanandum**.
8. See **Hempel**, *ibid.*, pp. 310-4.
9. Hannah Arendt attempts to attribute to Jews a specialised investment function (loans to the State) in nineteenth century capitalism, for example. See her *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Meridian Books, New York, 1958.
10. As I say later, there are occasions on which the internal and external aspects are inseparable.
11. See Michael Grant, *The Jews in the Roman World*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1973, for an account of the occupations of Jews outside Judea in the Roman period.
12. M.I. Finlay, *Aspects of Antiquity*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1977, describes Greek and Roman attitudes to trade and commerce. My own views are supported by remarks of Karl Kautsky, *Foundations of Christianity*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1972, pp. 245-53.
13. James Parkes, *The Jew in the Medieval Community*, Hermon Press, New York, 1976, p. 328.

14. Henri Pirenne, *Economic and Social History of Medieval Europe*, Harcourt, Brace and World, New York, paperback, undated, pp. 131-3.
15. James Parkes, *op. cit.*, p. 307.
16. Maxime Rodinson, *Islam and Capitalism*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1980, pp. 37-8 and *passim*. provides a general introduction for the position of the Jews in usury under Islam.
17. Simon Dubnow, *History of the Jews: From the Later Middle Ages to the Renaissance*, Vol. III, Thomas Yoseloff, London, 1969, pp. 374-93, pp. 746-99. Salo Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, Columbia University Press, New York, Vol. XVI, and especially pp. 214-312.
18. For example, from the fifth to the eighth centuries, the Syrians in western Europe were merchants and bankers at least as important as and perhaps more important than the Jews. This is discussed in James Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church and Synagogue*, Atheneum, New York, 1969, pp. 313-6. Parkes quotes Bréhier: 'It was the Syrians who controlled the whole of economic life' in this period in western Europe.
19. Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1967, p. 104. I mention below 'a personal sense of worth'. An interesting account of Marx's views on this is given by Allen Wood, *Karl Marx*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1981, Chapter II.
20. Isaiah Berlin, 'Benjamin Disraeli, Karl Marx, and the Search for Identity', in *Against the Current*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1981, p. 257.
21. See Russell Keat, 'Individualism and Community in Socialist Thought', in Mepham and Ruben, (eds.), *Issues in Marxist Philosophy*, vol. IV, Harvester Press, Brighton, 1981, pp. 127-52.
22. George Simmel, *Soziologie*, Berlin, Duncker and Humblot, Berlin, 1908, pp. 460 ff.
23. Jon Elster, *Logic and Society*, Wiley, Chichester, 1978, p. 141. I would stress the point about sufficient concentration of Jewish population to permit both organisational structure and the possibility of intra-marriage. Conditions of communal reproduction require a threshold level of population density. Both Leon and Rodinson dwell on the virtual assimilation and disappearance of western European Jewry before the influx of eastern European Jews. A factor they fail to mention in the miniscule size of these Jewries until the nineteenth century.
24. Maxime Rodinson, 'Preface', in Leon, *op. cit.*, p. xxxi.
25. See for instance various of the papers in *Jewish Life in Britain 1962-1977*, ed. by Sonia Lipman and Vivian Lipman, K.G. Saur, London, 1981, or S. Sharot, *Judaism A Sociology*, David and Charles, London, 1976.
26. Maxime Rodinson, 'Preface', p. xli.
27. C. Bezalel Sherman, *The Jew Within American Society*, Wayne State University Press, 1960, pp. 146-7.
28. As Moshe Machover fails to stress it in M. Machover and M. Jafar, *Zionism & War and Peace in the Middle East*, a pamphlet published by the Palestine Solidarity Committee, p. 9: '... if you believe that Jews can and should live in freedom and dignity among non-Jews in this country (and elsewhere), that anti-Semitism can be fought and beaten—then you are thinking as a progressive person'. Can be beaten under capitalism? The way in which Machover words his claim, in order to make it appear anodyne, makes it susceptible of a reformist interpretation (I have no doubt that Machover does not intend for it to be given this interpretation).
29. Leon Trotsky, 'On the Jewish Question', Pathfinder Press, New York, 1970. Quotes from pp. 20-1 and p. 18. Quote followed by 'TA 4106' is from the Trotsky Archives, Harvard University.

30. For an example of this essentially irrelevant attempt to demonstrate that the Jews are not a nationality and have no right to territorialisation, see **Maxime Rodinson**, *Israel: A Colonial-Settler State*, Monad Press, New York, 1973. Part of his argument, which I regard as incontrovertibly correct, is that Jews today cannot trace linear descent to the Jews of Judea. I wonder whether **Rodinson** supposes that French children today, sons and daughters of Portuguese immigrants or of Germans in Alsace or of Norman invaders, who learn about 'our ancestors the Gauls' can trace linear descent back to them. See especially' pp. 79-80. National 'history' is in general something imposed on individuals regardless of actual **genealogical** lineage. I would stress that my disagreement from **Rodinson** on this issue does not entail my support for Jewish claims to bourgeois national sovereignty which includes the forcible displacement of others.
31. Cf. Ernest **Vrausz**, 'The Religious Factor in Jewish Identification', *International Social Science Journal*, Vol. XXIX, No. 2, 1977, pp. 250-60.
32. S. Sharot, *op. cit.*, p. 153.
33. Marshall Sklare, *America's Jews*, Random House, New York, 1971, pp. 110-4. See also Sharot, pp. 149-50.