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Anglo-Jewish periodicals of the 1840s: The *Voice of Jacob* and two *Jewish Chronicles*

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Anglo-Jewish periodicals of the 1840s: The Voice of Jacob and two Jewish Chronicles*

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The circumstances surrounding the founding of the *Jewish Chronicle* have been ably discussed by David Cesarani in his *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry, 1841–1991* and by the author (probably Cecil Roth) of the *Jewish Chronicle's* centenary history.¹ As far as possible I will avoid repeating these accounts, which concentrated on the editors and proprietors. Instead, my main purpose is to provide a history of the Anglo-Jewish periodical press from a different perspective by placing three Jewish periodicals – the *Voice of Jacob* and two *Jewish Chronicles* – firmly in the context of periodical publishing in London in the 1840s.

The frenetic world of periodical publishing

In an oft-cited article on the ethos of his time, Thomas Carlyle wrote in 1829: “Mark, too, how every machine must have its moving power, in some of the great currents of society; every little sect among us, Unitarians, Utilitarians, Anabaptists, Phrenologists, must have its periodical, its monthly or quarterly magazine – hanging out, like its windmill, into the popularis aura, to grind meal for the society.”² The vast expansion and differentiation of the periodical press during the nineteenth century resulted in the establishment of an estimated 100,000 periodicals in

1 David Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry, 1841–1991* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); [Cecil Roth?], *The Jewish Chronicle 1841–1941: A Century of Newspaper History* (London: Jewish Chronicle, 1949). Briefer accounts can be found in such works as Geoffrey Alderman, *Modern British Jewry*, new ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 48–50; David S. Katz, *The Jews in the History of England, 1485–1850* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 356–8.

2 [Thomas Carlyle], “Signs of the Times”, *Edinburgh Review*, 49 (1829): 443.

* I am very grateful to Barbara Cantor, Michael Berkowitz, and the anonymous referees for their helpful comments on an earlier version of this paper and I would also like to thank Brian Maidment for information about Benjamin Steill. For initiating me into the history of Victorian publishing I am indebted to Jonathan Topham. For permission to reproduce the illustrations I would like to thank the *Jewish Chronicle* and the Brotherton Library, University of Leeds.

Britain.³ Josef Altholz has also estimated that in the decade 1841 to 1851 – the period covered by this paper – 845 periodicals (other than newspapers) were published in London alone. If newspapers are included, that number rises closer to a thousand.⁴

Why did the number of titles and also of readers soar in the 1830s and 40s?⁵ One factor was the substantial reduction in the taxes that had been imposed on publishers. The 1814 Stamp Act set the tax on newspapers at 4d per copy; so a newspaper that would otherwise have cost the purchaser 3d would be sold for 7d, a price that would severely limit its circulation. After much agitation the tax on newspapers was reduced to a penny in 1836, thus bringing them within the purchasing power of a much larger proportion of the population. We shall later return to the complex subject of the stamp duty on newspapers. However, in 1841 publishers were still faced with another tax – the duty on paper, which amounted to 3d per pound weight.

A second factor was the improvement of print technology. With steam-driven presses the printing of large numbers of copies became faster and cheaper. At mid-century the fastest printing press was Augustus Applegath's machine displayed at the Great Exhibition in 1851,⁶ which could produce 10,000 copies of *The Times* in an hour. However, the early Jewish periodicals to be discussed here required much shorter print runs and the earlier of the two *Jewish Chronicles* was printed on a Stanhope (or similar) manual iron press, while the other two Jewish titles were probably printed on steam-driven presses. The new iron presses were a significant advance over earlier ones and were continuously undergoing minor changes in order to improve their efficiency. During the first half of the nineteenth century innovations in print technology reduced significantly the cost of producing periodicals and thus brought them within the purchasing power of a much larger fraction of the population.

3 The third series of John North, *Waterloo Directory of English Newspapers and Periodicals: 1800–1900* (www.victorianperiodicals.com, accessed 19 Oct. 2017) contains 73,000 titles.

4 Joseph L. Altholz, *The Religious Press in Britain, 1760–1900* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989), 2.

5 A large literature exists on publishing in London during the early Victorian period including John Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2006); Alexis Weedon, *Victorian Publishing: The Economics of Book Production for a Mass Market, 1836–1916* (Burlington, VA: Ashgate, 2003); Joanne Shattock and Michael Wolff, eds., *The Victorian Periodical Press: Samplings and Soundings* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, and Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982).

6 *Illustrated London News*, 31 May 1851, 502.

Thirdly, there were new reading practices. One example stemmed from the recent and rapid development of railways that led to travellers purchasing reading materials for their journeys. To meet this demand, station kiosks carried an increasing range of newspapers and periodicals.

These factors, among others, made periodicals far more accessible to readers by the early 1840s. The number of periodicals increased significantly, as did the readership of many titles. The booming periodicals trade was also highly differentiated and every title was oriented to a specific readership. For example, *Punch*, the celebrated comic weekly that sold at 3d per issue, was aimed principally at the respectable middle-class market. There were periodicals for women, for children, for stamp collectors, for antiquarians, for cyclists, for gardeners, for spiritualists, and, of course, for Jews.

In the 1840s publishing was in a state of turmoil. Periodical titles appeared and disappeared with great rapidity. Many publishers, printers, proprietors, and others connected with the trade went bankrupt. Even *Punch* encountered financial difficulties. It was founded in July 1841 with financial contributions from its original projectors. However, it soon ran into financial difficulties and had to be rescued by its printer, Bradbury and Evans, who then also assumed the role of publisher.⁷ Many short-term alliances were made; for example, several publishers might share the cost of an expensive publication, especially if they were unsure whether it would make a profit. Small fortunes were to be made and lost on Paternoster Row, a narrow street close to St. Paul's Cathedral, where many publishers were located. Not only books were traded there but also, as one contemporary noted, the "most remarkable feature of modern bookselling is the trade in periodical literature".⁸ Paternoster Row became the hub for the distribution of periodicals. Towards the end of each week booksellers or their agents rushed to the shops on Paternoster Row to collect copies of weeklies for onward sale to their customers. The last day of each month – "Magazine Day", the day when monthlies were made available – was particularly busy and frenetic.⁹

This raised a crucial issue for the proprietors of the Jewish periodicals. Their publications were all printed and published in or near Houndsditch, an area of high Jewish population close to Bevis Marks Synagogue and

7 Patrick Leary, *The Punch Brotherhood: Table Talk and Print Culture in Mid-Victorian London* (London: British Library, 2010), 139–44.

8 James Grant, *Sketches of London*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Cary & Hart, 1839), vol. 2, 55.

9 *Ibid.*, 55–65.

the Great Synagogue on Duke's Place, an area covered by the ward of Bishopsgate Without and neighbouring wards. However, it is important to appreciate that this area is a mile distant from Paternoster Row. Booksellers who converged on Paternoster Row to collect copies of weeklies and monthlies for their publishers would therefore have to undertake a substantial detour in order to pick up copies of the Jewish periodicals from the Houndsditch area. The distance between these two sites was a major impediment to the distribution, and thus sales, of these Jewish publications.

Several different trades were involved in producing a periodical, including stationers, proprietors, editors, contributors, publishers, printers, compositors, and booksellers. However, an individual or company might assume more than one role; for example, many booksellers were also publishers. Printers required not only printing presses but also supplies of paper, ink, and movable type, all of which had their dedicated manufacturers and suppliers.¹⁰ The printers of the Jewish periodicals required both English and Hebrew type and a compositor familiar with the Hebrew characters. (According to one contemporary, compositors could charge double for setting type in Hebrew.¹¹) For illustrated works, artists and engravers were also employed, and they required wood or copper plates, ink, and so on. The income generated by a periodical's sale and from advertisements thus had to cover the cost of all the materials and tradesmen involved in its production. Unfortunately, the early account books of the *Voice of Jacob* and of the two *Jewish Chronicles* no longer exist.

Religious publishing was one genre among many. Altholz calculated that of the 845 periodicals published in London between 1841 and 1851, 149 (17.6%) were religious.¹² Every denomination had its periodical – often more than one – and sometimes also a newspaper. Catholics had *The Tablet* (f. 1840 and still being published); Methodists had a wide choice including the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* (f. 1778), the *Primitive Methodist Magazine* (f. 1821), and the weekly *Watchman* (f. 1835), to name but three. The Society of Friends had two monthlies that both commenced in 1843 – *The Friend* and the *British Friend* (published in London and Glasgow respectively, the latter having replaced the short-lived *Irish Friend* of 1837–42). There were also

10 Feather, *History of British Publishing*; Weedon, *Victorian Publishing*.

11 T. S. Houghton, *The Printers' Practical Every-Day-Book, Calculated to Assist the Young Printer to Work with Ease and Expedition* (London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co; Preston: H. Oakby, 1841), 75.

12 Altholz, *Religious Press*, 2; see 100–04 for the Jewish press.

numerous publications associated with the Established Church reflecting its constituent parties. Evangelicals were prominent in publishing books, periodicals, and especially tracts for widespread distribution.

One specific section of the non-Jewish religious press is particularly relevant to the present topic. Christian conversion societies were major publishers of books, tracts, and periodicals. The most prolific of these was the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews, which published and distributed several periodicals, including *Jewish Records* (f. 1818), *Jewish Intelligence* (f. 1830), the *Jewish Advocate for the Young* (f. 1845), and the *Jewish Herald* (f. 1846). The London Society had its own bookseller and publisher, a convert named Benjamin Wertheim (c. 1795–1856), whose shop was on Paternoster Row.¹³ Wertheim went into partnership with Alexander Macintosh, another publisher of evangelical and conversionist literature, to establish the firm of Wertheim and Macintosh, booksellers and publishers. A further example is the *Voice of Israel* (1845), a monthly magazine edited by the Reverend Ridley Haim Herschell, a convert who became a prominent Anglican clergyman. One of the reasons why the Jewish community wanted its own periodical(s) was to counteract this deluge of conversionist literature. Consider, for example, the opening sentence of the prospectus issued in 1841 for the (first) *Jewish Chronicle*: “We have always anticipated the appearance of a truly Jewish paper”.¹⁴ Why “a truly Jewish paper”? Because at that time the only available periodicals directed specifically at the Jewish community offered an unacceptable perspective on Judaism; they sought to convert the Jew to Christianity.

Jewish periodicals: prehistory

Prior to 1841 there had been two Anglo-Jewish periodicals. The first was a monthly entitled the *Hebrew Intelligencer* that was published in 1823, but survived for only three issues. It folded because a leading member of the Jewish community was offended by an article it published and put pressure on the printer, John Wertheimer, who then refused to print further issues;¹⁵ the first but not the last instance of *broiges* in this story. The second was the monthly *Hebrew Review and Magazine of Rabbinical Literature*, which had

13 “Obituary of Mr. B. Wertheim”, *Jewish Intelligence*, 22 (1856): 71–7.

14 *Jewish Chronicle* (hereafter, JC), 12 Nov. 1841, 1. See also the many subsequent references to the conversionists, e.g. *Voice of Jacob* (hereafter, Voj), 3 Feb. 1843, 105; 23 June 1843, 187.

15 James Picciotto, *Sketches of Anglo-Jewish History* (London: Trübner & Co, 1875), 402–4; Cesarani, *Jewish Chronicle*, 4.

greater staying power. It first appeared in October 1834 and lasted nearly three years under the editorship of an able scholar, Morris Jacob Raphall, who later served as the rabbi of the Birmingham Synagogue before departing for America.¹⁶ On the Continent there were also a number of Jewish periodical publications, such as the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums* (f. 1837 in Leipzig, which was initially published three times a week, but dropped to once a week in 1840; it “advocated moderate religious reform and closer relations with non-Jews”)¹⁷ and the monthly *Archives Israélites* (f. 1840 in Paris, often cited by the editor of the *Voj*). Esther Benbassa and Aron Rodrigue claim that eighteen Jewish newspapers were published in Europe (including Britain) between 1835 and 1841 and that the number rose to fifty-three over the next five years.¹⁸ Among these were three Anglo-Jewish periodicals, the first being the *Voice of Jacob*.

Jacob Franklin’s Voice of Jacob

As Cesarani and others have noted, the *Voice of Jacob* (*Kol Yaakov*) was the brainchild of Jacob Abraham Franklin (1809–1877), a traditional, Orthodox Jew from a prominent family with connections to the Anglo-Jewish elite. He had previously lived in Liverpool, then Manchester, but I have been unable to trace his movements in London in the early 1840s. He was committed to the expansion of education, having been a founder and director of the Manchester Mechanics’ Institute, and he was later one of the supporters responsible for the establishment of Jews’ College. Franklin realized that, while many Continental Jewish communities had established their own newspapers and periodicals, “it is extraordinary that there should exist no published organ” containing the opinions of British Jews, “or record of their proceedings”.¹⁹ He was also greatly concerned by the lack of knowledge of Judaism and of religious commitment among British Jews and he considered that a Jewish newspaper “would help to combat religious indifference, ignorance and the pursuit of worldly goals”, to quote Cesarani.²⁰ Franklin also sought to counteract the manoeuvrings of the conversionists and to encourage those who were indifferent to

16 Picciotto, *Sketches*, 404; Cesarani, *Jewish Chronicle*, 9.

17 Eziel Carlebach et al., “*Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums*”, in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, 2nd ed., 22 vols. (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), vol. 1, 670–71.

18 Esther Benbassa and Aron Rodrigue, *Sephardi Jewry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 73.

19 *Voj*, 16 Sept. 1841, 1.

20 Cesarani, *Jewish Chronicle*, 9.



1 Masthead of the second number of the *Voice of Jacob*, 15 October 1841. The “A.M.” included in the Hebrew date means “Anno Mundi”, meaning the year (5602) since the creation of the world. Reproduced by permission of Special Collections, University of Leeds: Roth Collection 891.

their religious heritage. He particularly reviled the recently founded West London Synagogue – the new Reform congregation – which he considered a threat to traditional Judaism.

Franklin therefore met several communal leaders, including Moses Montefiore, Morris Raphall, and Abraham Benisch, an able scholar educated at the University of Vienna, who had recently settled in London and who later edited the *Jewish Chronicle*. Jacob Franklin proceeded to found and finance (with donations from Montefiore and others) a publishing organization named the Anglo-Jewish Press, which published the *Voice of Jacob*. However, he lacked experience in producing periodicals and was an outsider in the London world of publishing. His outsider status is evident from the uncertainty he created over the frequency of publication; the first number, dated 16 September 1841 (Rosh Hashanah, 5602), was headed “fortnightly” but the second number only appeared on Cheshvan 1, after a month’s delay, with the excuse that the first number had been “an ‘experimental number’”.²¹ Moreover, in the third number, dated 29 October, he claimed that as certain earlier difficulties had been overcome, the *Voice of Jacob* would now appear fortnightly. However, he added: “But so far as the sale in the country is concerned, we find ourselves compelled to yield to the ordinary regulations of the book trade”, and future issues could be obtained from Benjamin Steill of Paternoster Row and from all booksellers.²² In the fourth issue (12 November) the publisher was named

21 Voj, 16 Sept. 1841, 1; 15 Oct. 1841, 9.

22 Voj, 29 Oct. 1841, 17.

as “Steill, Paternoster Row”. It appears that Franklin initially tried to publish the *Voice of Jacob* by himself. However, he encountered difficulties and was therefore forced to seek an established publisher on Paternoster Row in order to improve the distribution of his periodical and thus increase its circulation.

One can but speculate why Franklin formed an alliance with Steill (b. c. 1792). It is likely that he approached other publishers on Paternoster Row before meeting Steill, who was not Jewish and appears not to have had any previous connection with the Jewish community. However, he had been the printer of the *Black Dwarf* (f. 1817), a notorious radical publication that had ridiculed the Church of England and the political establishment. Steill subsequently published a number of periodicals, many of which were of a progressive or radical tendency, such as the short-lived *Quartern Loaf* (1834), which agitated against the Corn Laws.²³ I have some difficulty envisaging the frum, conservative Franklin liaising with this radical publisher. However, Steill’s opposition to the Church may have made him more acceptable than many of the other publishers on Paternoster Row whose lists generally swelled with evangelical publications. Steill remained the publisher of the *Voice of Jacob* until September 1846, but he was later declared bankrupt.

The following irony should not escape us: the *Voice of Jacob* was published and sold at 20 Paternoster Row, close to Benjamin Wertheim’s establishment at number 14 that produced mountains of conversionist literature. Also on Paternoster Row were several other booksellers and/or publishers of evangelical books, tracts, and periodicals. Here were the offices of the evangelical Religious Tract Society, the *Christian Spectator*, the Christian Instruction Society, and the Sunday School Union. However, in order for the *Voice of Jacob* to succeed, Franklin must have accepted that his new Jewish periodical had to be represented by a publisher on Paternoster Row. As we shall see, the first proprietor of the *Jewish Chronicle* was forced to follow a similar path.

In founding the *Voice of Jacob* Franklin also appears to have encountered difficulties with printers. He changed printer after the second number, which was printed by “J. Wertheimer & Co., Circus Place, Finsbury Circus” who also probably printed the first issue.²⁴ John Wertheimer (1799–1883), who was of Jewish descent, was the leading expert at producing books

23 Personal communication from Brian Maidment, 29 July 2016.

24 I have not been able to locate an original of the first number, which was later reprinted by Edward Varty with the date 17 June 1842.

requiring non-English typefaces, including Hebrew type.²⁵ He printed many Christian and Jewish works, including the prayerbooks (*siddurim*) for the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue and the West London (Reform) Synagogue, as well as many occasional items that required both English and Hebrew typefaces. Why did John Wertheimer & Co., the most able and experienced printer of Hebrew texts, not print the third and subsequent numbers of the *Voice of Jacob*? Why was its printing instead handed to Edward Varty (1815–1878) of 27 Camomile Street, Bishopsgate, a young and enterprising printer who had little or no experience of setting Hebrew type? Perhaps this is another case of *broiges*? Another possibility is that Wertheimer proved too expensive and Varty made Franklin a better offer. Whatever the reason, Varty printed 132 issues of the *Voice of Jacob*, up to the end of Volume 5 in September 1846, when Franklin severed his connection with the periodical. It appears that Franklin was the principal editor during that five-year period and that he received assistance from Raphall and David Aron de Sola, the senior minister at Bevis Marks.²⁶ After Franklin's departure, the *Voice of Jacob* survived a further two years, on which more shortly.

Isaac Vallentine's Jewish Chronicle

The first periodical with the title *Jewish Chronicle* (*Sefer Zikaron*; Book of Remembrance) was founded, owned, and printed by a Jew, Isaac Vallentine (1793–1868). Unlike the well-established Wertheimer and the up-and-coming Varty, Vallentine ran a small printing business on Houndsditch. Previously he had produced a few small publications, most of which required both English and Hebrew type. While Cesarani followed Samuel Vallentine in portraying his uncle, Isaac Vallentine, as an innovative pillar of the Jewish community, the evidence indicates that he was a rather lowly and not particularly successful tradesman.²⁷ However, he had the support of “numerous friends”, including Moses Montefiore.²⁸

25 JC, 21 Dec. 1883, 5; Ruth Richardson, *The Making of Mr. Gray's Anatomy: Bodies Books Fortune Fame* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 282–3.

26 In a letter dated 11 Nov. 1841 S. Samuel offered his services to Franklin as sub-editor: Cecil Roth Collection, Ms. Roth 250/26, Brotherton Library, University of Leeds. It is not known whether his offer was accepted. This may be the Samuel Samuel who is listed as a printer at 30 Duke St., Aldgate, in the 1841 *Post Office London Directory*.

27 Samuel Vallentine's memoir of his uncle, Isaac, was published in *P. Vallentine's Hebrew and English Almanack for 5629–30* (1868), repr. in JC, 18 Sept. 1868, 7. See also JC, 4 Sept. 1868, 7; 25 Sept. 1868, 5; 2 Oct. 1868, 5; 23 Oct. 1868, 2.

28 JC, 19 Nov. 1841, 1.



2 Masthead of the first number of Vallentine's *Jewish Chronicle*, 12 November 1841. Reproduced by permission of the *Jewish Chronicle*.

The first issue of the *Jewish Chronicle* bears the date 12 November 1841 (Cheshvan 28), just two months after the first issue of the *Voice of Jacob* appeared. It was a weekly, price 2d – the same price as the fortnightly *Voice of Jacob*. Vallentine was the publisher and he later named the editors as David Meldola (1797–1853), the leader of the Spanish and Portuguese community at Bevis Marks, and the young Moses Angel (educated at University College London), who taught at the Jews' Free School (and soon became its illustrious head). The early numbers included a list of agents from whom the *Jewish Chronicle* could be obtained. Vallentine at the office of the *Jewish Chronicle* on Houndsditch headed this list, which also included six other London stationers and/or booksellers, and outlets in Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Cheltenham, and Bristol.²⁹ It appears that, like Franklin, Vallentine initially hoped to avoid employing a publisher. Instead, he expected that his network of agents would provide an adequate means of distributing the *Jewish Chronicle*. But his plan failed as the fourth and subsequent issues bear the name of a publisher: William Brittain (b. c. 1786) of 11 Paternoster Row, who published a number of periodicals including several temperance magazines. It seems that, like Franklin, Vallentine also had to engage a publisher in order to help extend his periodical's circulation.

Twenty-four weekly issues of the *Jewish Chronicle* were produced, the last on 22 April 1842. Then, after a fortnight's interlude, a new series of three issues appeared, printed on smaller (octavo, rather than quarto) paper, the third being dated 22 May. Even before the end of the first series it was clear that Vallentine's periodical could not be sustained. For example, in one of

29 JC, 12 Nov. 1841, 4.

his final issues he complained of “finding the circulation cramped” and he offered to send copies, post free, to those living in towns where there were few Jews.³⁰ Despite Vallentine’s desperate attempts to save the *Jewish Chronicle*, not only did they fail but he was also left with substantial debts. On 23 July the Court for Relief of Insolvent Debtors heard his plea to be released from prison; in the published report of the case, Vallentine was described as a “Provision Dealer and Printer”. Another hearing was held on 7 November involving Isaac Vallentine and his brother Benjamin.³¹ Hence it appears that he spent time in a debtors’ prison. The first attempt to establish a *Jewish Chronicle* had ended not just in failure but also in the bankruptcy and humiliation of Vallentine. The *Voice of Jacob* celebrated the demise of its rival by claiming that this was evidence that the Anglo-Jewish community could support only one periodical. Moreover, it was stated that the editor of the *Jewish Chronicle* (presumably Angel) would now “assist in editing the *Voice of Jacob* . . . bringing with him, as he does, the principal contributors of the *Chronicle*, the best features of that periodical will be superadded to ours”.³² In that specific sense, Vallentine’s *Jewish Chronicle* was absorbed into Franklin’s *Voice of Jacob*. End of story – well, almost.

Joseph Mitchell’s *Jewish Chronicle*

Thirty months after the demise of Vallentine’s *Jewish Chronicle*, Joseph Mitchell (c. 1800–1854) entered the world of publishing. He was described as “a rough diamond who sadly needed polishing”, or, as Cesarani put it, “a lively character and, one suspects, something of a rogue”.³³ His background is unclear; he may have been the schoolmaster of that name recorded in the 1841 census as living at Sadlers Hall Court, Gravel Lane, Houndsditch. In the 1851 census he was unambiguously listed as an accountant living with his wife, Jane, at 24 Houndsditch.³⁴ He was forceful, opinionated, and made enemies easily. On 18 October 1844 he launched his new fortnightly periodical with the title *The Jewish Chronicle and Working Man’s Friend* and made prudent decisions concerning the printer and editor. He employed the respected John Wertheimer of Finsbury Circus to print his paper and appointed the scholarly but prickly Marcus Bresslau (1807/8–1864) from Hamburg as its editor. Mitchell

30 JC, 25 March 1842, 111.

31 London Gazette, 26 July 1842, 2070; 14 Oct. 1842, 2839.

32 VoJ, 27 May 1842, 137.

33 Cesarani, *Jewish Chronicle*, 14.

34 Census returns for Middlesex, St. Botolph Aldgate, St. Botolph, District 16, www.ancestry.co.uk, accessed 14 Oct. 2016.



3 Masthead of the first number of Mitchell's *Jewish Chronicle and Working Man's Friend*, 18 October 1844. Reproduced by permission of the *Jewish Chronicle*.

continued in his role as proprietor until his death in 1854, but during that period my *broigesometer* rises dramatically. For example, in the summer of 1848 Mitchell and Bresslau argued bitterly, leading to Bresslau's departure; however, two months later he was reinstated as editor.³⁵ Another example of Mitchell's mode of operation occurred in his first number, which included a letter from Moses Angel who explained that he did not "desert" Vallentine's periodical but that his departure was an attempt to reduce Vallentine's financial losses. Mitchell published Angel's letter but with manifest bad grace.³⁶

The second part of the periodical's title – "*and Working Man's Friend*" – marked Mitchell's intention to direct the periodical not so much to the Jewish elite but principally to a broader readership including workers and tradesmen, particularly those (like himself) who lived in London's East End, the geographical centre of Anglo-Jewry: both Mitchell and Vallentine were involved in the Jewish Mutual Instruction Society (founded December 1847) that catered for artisans and lasted less than a year and a half.³⁷ Moreover, as previous historians have noted, the *Jewish Chronicle* was less oriented to traditional orthodoxy than its rival and was willing to accept the diversity of views within Anglo-Jewry, including those of the Reform congregation. At 2d per fortnightly issue it initially sold at the same price as the firmly established *Voice of Jacob*.

What happened to Isaac Vallentine? Initially he was named as the co-publisher alongside William Brittain of Paternoster Row. However, beginning with the issue of 2 May 1845 (issue 17), Brittain was cited as the sole publisher. In this and subsequent issues it was stated that copies of

35 Cesarani, *Jewish Chronicle*, 9; JC, 21 July 1848, 609; 22 Sept. 1848, 681; 6 Oct. 1848, 1.

36 Letter from Moses Angel to the editor, JC, 18 Oct. 1844, 6.

37 JC, 7 Jan. 1848, 386–7.



4 Masthead of Mitchell’s *Jewish Chronicle*, 25 July 1845. Note that the price is given as 2d, unstamped; 3d, stamped. Reproduced by permission of the *Jewish Chronicle*.

the *Jewish Chronicle* “may be had of I. Vallentine, at the Jewish Chronicle Office, 132, Houndsditch”.³⁸ Vallentine was no longer either the printer or the co-publisher of the *Jewish Chronicle*; instead he seems to have been transferred to a lesser role concerned primarily with sales, rather than production, perhaps an office manager. By contrast, Brittain continued as the sole publisher until the end of January 1849, when his place was taken by Edward Ward, also of Paternoster Row.

Two other significant changes should be noted. First, beginning with its 21st number (27 June 1845) the title was modified; it was no longer the *Working Man’s Friend* but just the *Jewish Chronicle*, the title it has borne continuously down to the present day. The second change occurred at the start of volume 4 in October 1847 when Mitchell’s *Jewish Chronicle* changed from being a fortnightly to a weekly publication.

Contents

Having provided an outline of the early publication history of these three Jewish periodicals, this section will focus on the following specific issues: illustrations, prices and circulation, and finally the frequency of publication.

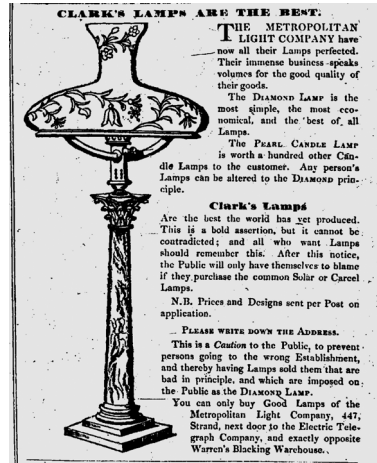
Illustrations

The *Illustrated London News*, founded in 1842, has been described by Brian Maidment as “one of the great entrepreneurial and commercial triumphs of Victorian print culture”.³⁹ Although it carried reports from around the

³⁸ JC, 2 May 1845, 160.

³⁹ B[rian] M[aidment], “Illustrated London News”, in *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism*, ed. Laurel Brake and Marysa Damoor (London: British Library, and Ghent: Academia Press, 2008), 301–3.

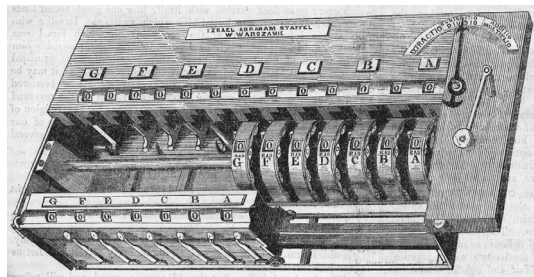
5 An early illustrated advertisement in the *Jewish Chronicle*, 18 October 1850, 16. Reproduced by permission of the *Jewish Chronicle*.



world, its principal attraction was the copious illustrations of the people, places, and events in the news. This popular weekly soon achieved a circulation of some 60,000 copies. However, illustrations required artists and engravers and such materials as wood or copper plates, which added to the cost of a periodical. Small-circulation publications that were barely viable financially could not afford extensive illustrations.

Vallentine's *Jewish Chronicle* was unillustrated but the other two Jewish periodicals occasionally included wood-engravings that formed part of advertisements at the back page of an issue. An early example is the advertisement for "Clark's Lamps" that appeared in the 18 October 1850 issue of the *Jewish Chronicle*. The first illustration within the main text was probably that of a calculating machine designed by Israel Abraham Staffel from Warsaw, which was displayed at the Great Exhibition of 1851 and was awarded a prize. After a visit to the Exhibition, Bresslau applauded Staffel's invention and declared that it demonstrated that Jews were not intellectually inferior, as some contemporaries had claimed. This engraving was published in the 18 July 1851 issue of the *Jewish Chronicle*,

6 Illustration of Israel Staffel's calculating machine displayed at the Great Exhibition, *Jewish Chronicle*, 18 July 1851, 324. Reproduced by permission of the *Jewish Chronicle*.



alongside Bresslau's report. Two months later the *Illustrated London News* carried the same illustration.⁴⁰

Prices and circulation

The pricing of periodicals was extremely sensitive; too high and the circulation could be damaged; too low and bankruptcy loomed. Initially Franklin's *Voice of Jacob* and Vallentine's *Jewish Chronicle* both sold at 2d, although the *Voice of Jacob* was better value at eight pages, against the *Jewish Chronicle*'s four pages rising to six pages with the third issue. When Mitchell launched his *Jewish Chronicle and Working Man's Friend* in October 1844, he charged 2d per eight-page issue, thus undercutting by a penny the *Voice of Jacob* – then selling at 3d. These prices must be set against, say, *Punch*, at 3d for sixteen pages and such cheap, large-circulation publications as the educational *Penny Magazine* (f. 1832) which sold for 1d unstamped, with initial sales of some 200,000 copies, a circulation that it failed to maintain.⁴¹ Individual unstamped copies of the *Voice of Jacob* and both *Jewish Chronicles* could be purchased from the printer or publisher and from certain booksellers; Mitchell's *Jewish Chronicle* was also sold at his office at 132 Houndsditch. However, both titles could be purchased by subscription. For example, in October 1847 an annual subscription for Mitchell's *Jewish Chronicle* was 10s 6d (unstamped) and 16s 6d (stamped), with half-yearly and quarterly subscriptions also available.⁴²

Like other periodicals, the Jewish press obtained its revenue not only from sales, including subscriptions, but also from advertisements. In 1847 Mitchell's *Jewish Chronicle* charged 5s for the first six lines and 6d for each additional line.⁴³ At least one page – sometimes nearly two – in each issue was devoted to advertisements, including notices of books of Jewish interest, forthcoming meetings of societies, appeals for donations for charities, advertisements for schools, and vacant positions in domestic and business establishments.

As well as remunerating the editor, printer, publisher, and other people who contributed to the production of a periodical, the proprietor paid a

40 JC, 18 July 1851, 324; *Illustrated London News*, 20 Sept. 1851, 354. See also Geoffrey Cantor, *Religion and the Great Exhibition of 1851* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 162–3.

41 For information about the *Penny Magazine* and other periodicals mentioned here see John North's *Waterloo Directory*, www.victorianperiodicals.com, accessed 19 Oct. 2017.

42 JC, 15 Oct. 1847, 265.

43 JC, 1 Oct. 1847, 249.

paper tax (mentioned earlier) and might also be eligible for stamp duty. The 1836 Stamp Act imposed on newspapers a charge of 1d per issue. For example, in 1847 each issue of the *Jewish Chronicle* sold for either 2d unstamped or 3d stamped, the stamp enabling the paper to be sent through the post. The question of which periodicals were covered under the Act turned on the further question of what counted as a newspaper. Clearly, dailies like *The Times* were newspapers as they primarily conveyed news. But what about the *Jewish Chronicle*, which contained some news but also much opinion and commentary, including commentaries on Torah, that cannot be counted as news? However, stamping could be advantageous to the proprietor and publisher since it enabled copies to be sent free of further charges throughout Britain, “the British dominions, and to all countries having a postal convention with Great Britain”,⁴⁴ and thus increase the periodical’s circulation. Both Franklin and Mitchell soon registered their periodicals with the Stamp Office in Somerset House.

Before turning to the circulation figures, it should be noted that the Anglo-Jewish population at mid-century was between 30,000 and 37,000, with 20,000 to 25,000 living in London and the remainder mostly in major cities such as Manchester and Birmingham.⁴⁵ During the 1840s, the Jewish papers struggled to attract a sufficient number of readers – preferably subscribers – from this population in order to be profitable. The *Voice of Jacob*, in particular, looked further afield for subscribers.

The number of subscribers to the *Voice of Jacob* – who paid 10s 6d a year, with foreign subscribers paying 15s 6d – is known because lists of subscribers were published annually. For example, the list dated 26 September 1845 (at the end of Volume 4) shows that the subscribers, who numbered 502, included the Chief Rabbi (2 copies), Sir Moses Montefiore (who took 20 copies), Lady Montefiore (10 copies) and N. M. Rothschild & Sons (10 copies). There were a number of women subscribers – including 19 out of a total of 127 in the London area – and also some non-Jews. (In 1853 John Mills claimed that the *Jewish Chronicle* “has now a very fair circulation among Christians as well as Jews”.⁴⁶) The synagogues at Sheerness and Brighton were listed, as was the Travellers Club in Pall Mall. Copies of the *Voice of Jacob* travelled to many places where there were

44 Ibid.

45 Vivian D. Lipman, “Survey of Anglo-Jewry in 1851”, *Transactions*, 17 (1951–52): 171–88; Alderman, *Modern Jewish History*, 2–3; Todd M. Endelman, *The Jews of Britain, 1656 to 2000* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 80.

46 John Mills, *The British Jews* (London: Houlston & Stoneman, 1853), 330.

few Jewish residents, such as Abergavenny, Dumfries, Truro, Worcester, and Oswestry. Most interestingly, the number of foreign subscribers was substantial: 233 (46%) of the subscribers lived abroad, including 59 in America, 56 in Kingston, Jamaica, 22 in Gibraltar, 3 in Paris, and 5 in the Cape of Good Hope.⁴⁷ The *Voice of Jacob* had a surprisingly distant reach. It was also firmly oriented to the Anglo-Jewish establishment and gained the patronage of the Duke of Sussex.⁴⁸

It has not been possible to determine accurately the circulation figures for any of the three Jewish periodicals. However, the annual official returns to the Stamp Office enable the average number of weekly stamped copies to be calculated for the *Voice of Jacob* and Mitchell's *Jewish Chronicle*: see the second and third columns of the Table at the end of this article.⁴⁹ The rest is conjecture. I have assumed that as many unstamped copies of the *Voice of Jacob* were sold as stamped copies. Therefore the total number of copies is estimated as twice the number of stamps purchased; hence the "2" multiplier in column 5 of the Table. For Mitchell's *Jewish Chronicle* (being more oriented towards working-class Jews especially in London, who would probably have collected their copies from the Houndsditch office), I have assumed that three times as many unstamped copies were sold as stamped ones; hence the "4" multiplier in column 6. Using these assumptions the total circulation has been inferred. Finally, if each copy was read by two people, the total readership can be estimated. By way of comparison, in the fourth column, the number of stamped copies of *Punch* has been included. (Richard Altick estimated the number of copies of *Punch* sold on the assumption that there were 4 times as many unstamped copies as stamped ones. He also used a generous multiplier of 5 for the number of readers of each copy, giving a total readership of about 200,000.⁵⁰) Although these assumptions are open to question, the figures suggest firstly that the *Voice of Jacob* was, until the final year of its existence, the

47 List of annual subscribers for 5605 (ending 26 Sept. 1845) printed on the title page verso *Voj*, vol. 4. For readership in the Atlantic ports see Arthur Kiron, "An Atlantic Jewish Republic of Letters?", *Jewish History* 20 (2006): 171–211.

48 *Voj*, 2 Sept. 1842, 194; L. Loewe to Jacob Franklin, 18 August 1842, Cecil Roth Collection, Ms. Roth 250/25, Brotherton Library.

49 Based on *Return of the Number of Newspaper Stamps at One Penny, Issued to Newspapers in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, from the Year 1837 to the Year 1850*, House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, 1852 (42); Charles Mitchell, *The Newspaper Press Directory*, 4th ed. (London: C. Mitchell, 1854). For reasons that are unclear, the number of stamps is lower than the number of subscriptions.

50 Richard Altick, *Punch: The Lively Youth of a British Institution, 1841–1851* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1996), 35–9.

sturdier publication and that Mitchell's *Jewish Chronicle* only slowly caught up with it. Secondly, by the end of the decade, the circulation of Mitchell's *Jewish Chronicle* was in excess of 700. However, the figures for *Punch* are two orders of magnitude larger than for either of these Jewish titles.

Material published in the Jewish press reached far beyond those who purchased these periodicals by being reprinted in other periodical publications, since editors frequently copied articles from other periodicals (sometimes citing the source, sometimes not) in order to help fill the requisite number of pages in each issue. (The Jewish press also followed this procedure and frequently reprinted articles from other publications, including the Jewish newspapers and periodicals published on the Continent.) Two examples follow.

The first is from the *Dundee Warder and Arbroath and Forfar Journal* of 4 October 1842, whose London correspondent had encountered a copy of the *Voice of Jacob* and found an extensive description – reproduced in the *Dundee Warder* – of the silver plate that London Jews had presented to Moses Montefiore for helping to free the Jews of Damascus.⁵¹ Thus readers of this Scottish weekly, who would have included few Jews, if any, were made aware of Montefiore's exploits.

The second example indicates that the Jewish press was closely monitored by the editors of Christian periodicals, especially conversionist periodicals, that often carried articles extracted from the *Voice of Jacob* and the *Jewish Chronicle*. To cite one specific example: on 7 September 1849, the *Jewish Chronicle* carried a lead article on "The Jews of Rome" that expressed warm approval of the new pontiff, Pius IX, who, soon after his coronation in November 1846, removed many of the disabilities under which the Jewish community had long suffered. However, the Jews had subsequently endured considerable hardship during the siege and occupation of Rome by French troops in 1849. This significant news item about the community in Rome was extensively summarized, with some passages reproduced verbatim, in the October 1849 number of the *Jewish Intelligence* produced by the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews.⁵²

These examples show that material from the early Jewish periodical press was recycled in a variety of non-Jewish contexts. Thus selected items published in the *Voice of Jacob* and the *Jewish Chronicle* reached diverse readerships well beyond the Anglo-Jewish community.

51 *Dundee Warder and Arbroath and Forfar Journal*, 4 Oct. 1842, 3.

52 "The Jews of Rome", *JC*, 7 Sept. 1849, 381–3; "The Jews of Rome", *Jewish Intelligence* 15 (1849): 325–8.

Frequency of publication

The frequency of publication of our three Jewish periodicals has an impact on the question of their viability. To appreciate this point, the schedules adopted by the wider periodical press need to be examined. At the two extremes were daily newspapers and annuals. The former were devoted to up-to-date news and possessed a 24-hour shelf-life. Dailies included the *Morning Post*, *The Times* and the *Manchester Guardian*. At the other extreme were the annuals, which principally reflected on events that had occurred during the past year and often made predictions about the coming year. For example, Thomas Hood's *Comic Annual* (f. 1830), a predecessor of *Punch*, that sold at 12s. There were also quarterlies, which were thick, expensive, and covered a wide range of subjects, typically literature, history, politics, science, and so on. The most famous was the *Edinburgh Review* (f. 1802), each issue selling at 6s.

Monthlies tended to be fairly substantial, moderately expensive, and serious publications aimed mainly at the middle classes. They carried serialized novels, poetry, detailed book reviews, and essays on politics, religion, philosophy, and so on. One example is *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (f. 1817), which sold at 2s 6d each issue. Weeklies tended to straddle the divide between newspapers and monthlies. They were usually concerned with recent events but unlike daily newspapers they tended to be more reflective and to offer interpretations of the news, often accompanied by other material, such as poetry and serialized novels. *Punch* is an example, as is Dickens's *Household Words* (f. 1850), which sold at 2d.⁵³

Both the *Voice of Jacob* and Mitchell's *Jewish Chronicle* were published fortnightly during part of the 1840s. Given that dailies, weeklies, monthlies, quarterlies, and annuals were the accepted formats to which the publishing world was geared, these fortnightly publications were anomalous. Publishers avoided that format and readers generally expected a periodical to arrive regularly on the first of the month or on a set weekday, most often Saturdays. That both of these Jewish periodicals were issued fortnightly indicates that their proprietors and publishers were unwilling to risk weekly publication as the circulation figures were not sufficiently high to maintain that frequency of publication. The failure of Vallentine's *Jewish Chronicle* was also cautionary against attempting weekly publication.

53 Brake and Damoor, *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism*, include entries for "Dailies", "Weeklies", "Monthly magazines", "Quarterly reviews", and "Annuals", but there is no entry for "Fortnightlies".

The initial publication schedule of Franklin's *Voice of Jacob* is unusual and provides a further indication of his unwillingness to accept the schedule of London publishing. The first issue was dated the first of Tishri (Rosh Hashanah), 5602, and the second issue the first of Cheshvan. This suggests that Franklin intended to publish on the first day of each Hebrew month. However, in employing the Hebrew calendar he was out of step with the publishers on Paternoster Row, who operated with the Gregorian calendar.⁵⁴ With the third issue (dated Friday, 29 October) the *Voice of Jacob* resumed fortnightly publication, on alternate Fridays.

However, for a six-week period beginning on 9 September 1842, it became a weekly, priced at 2½d (having previously been priced at 2d). At that time it did not face competition from any other Anglo-Jewish publication and therefore Franklin might have expected an increase in circulation. Yet, after just six issues it returned to being a fortnightly. According to Franklin, weekly publication could not be sustained unless the subscriber list reached five hundred names, whereas only about a hundred names appeared on the list dated September 1842.⁵⁵ A further indicator of the *Voice of Jacob*'s financial problems arising from Franklin's unsuccessful attempt to increase its frequency of publication was the decision to raise the cover price to 3d. It was also pointed out that the previous charge of 2½d per copy "caused much annoyance to the retail booksellers".⁵⁶

Aware of the failure of Vallentine's weekly periodical, Mitchell from the outset adopted the more sustainable – but less conventional – fortnightly format for his new *Jewish Chronicle*. However, it is clear that he wanted to change to the more normal weekly schedule. For example, a note appeared in the first number of volume 3 in which the "Proprietor . . . begs to inform the Subscribers, that the publication of this Journal will be continued fortnightly until further notice."⁵⁷ A year later, at the start of volume 4 in October 1847, Mitchell achieved his aim of publishing an issue in each week throughout the year, a frequency maintained to the present day. Presumably, by October 1847 the sales figures and finances justified his belief that a weekly publication schedule would be profitable and could be maintained.

54 Grant, *Sketches of London*, vol. 2, 55–65. If the last day of the month fell on a Sunday, Magazine Day was held on the previous day.

55 List of annual subscribers for 5602 (ending 4 Sept. 1842) printed on title page verso of *Voj*, vol. 1.

56 *Voj*, 14 Oct. 1842, 41.

57 *JC*, 16 Oct. 1846, 1.

While a sustainable Anglo-Jewish weekly was an objective that Mitchell achieved in October 1847, there had also been proposals to create a Jewish monthly magazine that could stand alongside the monthlies produced by many other religious groups and other publishers. Raphall's *Hebrew Review* (1834–7) was an early attempt at a Jewish monthly. In April 1842, just as Vallentine's *Jewish Chronicle* was foundering, the *Voice of Jacob* reported that Abraham Benisch "is about to edit a Jewish Monthly Magazine".⁵⁸ The report was incorrect as no such monthly was published. The idea of a "Monthly Magazine" was also proposed by Franklin a few months later when he presented to his readers his plans for the future of the Anglo-Jewish Press, including both the *Voice of Jacob* and a new monthly.⁵⁹ However, it was not until October 1848 that this objective was achieved with the publication of the *Anglo-Jewish Magazine*, which only survived for three months. It was intended as a continuation of the recently defunct *Voice of Jacob* and was produced at the *Voice of Jacob*'s offices on Camomile Street and published by "S. Solomon, 16 Bevis Marks, [and] Aylott & Jones, Paternoster Row" at 1s per issue. From a prospectus published in the final issue of the *Voice of Jacob*, the *Anglo-Jewish Magazine* promised to be a typical monthly magazine with a range of serious and substantial articles.⁶⁰

Subsequent developments

After Franklin relinquished ownership of the *Voice of Jacob* at the end of volume 5, in the autumn of 1846, it was taken over by Henry Jessel.⁶¹ Starting in early 1847, the following announcement appeared in each issue:

Printed and published at the Office of MELDOLA, CAHN, and Co., 18, St. Mary Axe, City, by SAMUEL MELDOLA, of 6, Great Alie Street, Goodman's Fields, in the County of Middlesex, and DAVID CAHN, of St. Mary Axe, in the parish of St. Andrew under-shaft, in the City of London.⁶²

Samuel Meldola (1815–1881) was the youngest son of the late Haham Raphael Meldola and a brother of David Meldola of Bevis Marks Synagogue. Samuel's printing company does not appear to have thrived

58 *Voj*, 29 April 1842, 125.

59 *Voj*, 5 Aug. 1842, 177; see also *Voj*, 10 May 1844, 144.

60 *Voj*, 18 Aug. 1848, 192; *Morning Advertiser*, 19 Oct. 1848, 1.

61 Henry Jessel to Jacob Franklin, 23 Sept. 1846, Cecil Roth Collection, Ms. Roth 250/22, Brotherton Library.

62 E.g. *Voj*, 12 Feb. 1847, 96.

and he had difficulty retaining partners; the firm of Meldola, Cahn and Co. separated from one partner in July 1848 – shortly before the *Voice of Jacob* crashed – and a subsequent partnership was dissolved just a year later.⁶³ More broiges, I ask?

By the summer of 1848 the *Voice of Jacob* was clearly facing financial and possibly other difficulties (probably including the breakup of Meldola, Cahn & Co.). The following advertisement appeared in the last two numbers, dated 4 and 18 August 1848:

Some Gentlemen, being of opinion that the ANGLO-JEWISH PRESS [the enterprise founded by Franklin] should be placed on a footing more consonant with the present advanced state of public opinion, and rendered more worthy of the Jewish character for intellectual acquirements, have resolved to establish a company for the better and permanent arrangement thereof, in 100 shares of £5 each.⁶⁴

This rescue package was presumably not forthcoming and the *Voice of Jacob* soon ceased publication. Then, after producing just three issues of the short-lived *Anglo-Jewish Magazine*, the Anglo-Jewish Press disappeared from sight. For the next four years Mitchell's *Jewish Chronicle* had the field to itself.

And what of Mitchell's *Jewish Chronicle*? All was not well. Probably owing to financial difficulties, Mitchell increased its price by a penny in the autumn of 1850, to 3d unstamped, 4d stamped. Then, on 26 June 1854 he died in tragic circumstances; he shot himself with a pistol at his residence, 29 Houndsditch. At the ensuing inquest it was stated that "He had been very low-spirited lately from pecuniary difficulties, and had been under medical treatment for a pain in his heart." The witness also claimed that prior to his death Mitchell "had applications made to him for payment, which no doubt had preyed on his mind".⁶⁵ As the *Jewish Chronicle* was probably Mitchell's principal financial commitment, the fickle world of publishing doubtless played some role in his depressed mental state and ultimately in his suicide. At that time, he would have been worried by the challenge posed to the *Jewish Chronicle*'s monopoly by the launch in January 1853 of a rival Jewish weekly, the *Hebrew Observer*, owned and published by his long-term enemy Abraham Benisch. As the *Hebrew Observer* purchased 22,052 stamps in 1853 from the Stamp Office in Somerset House, as

63 London Gazette, 28 July 1848, 2828; 22 Sept. 1848, 3498; 8 May 1849, 1534.

64 Voj, 4 Aug. 1848, 184.

65 Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper, 2 July 1854, 5.

against 12,460 purchased by the *Jewish Chronicle*, the *Hebrew Observer* would have posed a significant alternative to Mitchell's *Jewish Chronicle*.⁶⁶ Moreover, Bresslau, who had earlier parted company with Mitchell, became a major contributor to the *Hebrew Observer*. Rather surprisingly, no obituary of Mitchell appeared in the *Jewish Chronicle*, which continued to list him as the newspaper's proprietor for several issues after his death.

All three Jewish periodicals struggled to survive; Vallentine's *Jewish Chronicle* lasted only six months, while the *Voice of Jacob* succumbed after seven years. Yet their proponents were committed to initiating a significant change in the Anglo-Jewish community by causing it to enter the thriving, if unpredictable, world of periodical publishing. In this respect Anglo-Jewry lagged behind many other religious groups in Britain, especially the conversion societies that made extensive use of periodicals to promulgate their views. Moreover, as Franklin noted, Anglo-Jewry trailed behind many Jewish communities on the Continent that already possessed their own newspapers and periodicals.⁶⁷ However, the establishment of these Anglo-Jewish publications in the early 1840s introduced a fresh dynamic into the community; people and institutions were for the first time bound together by what Vallentine called in his prospectus "an organ of mutual communication".⁶⁸ These publications fulfilled many social functions, including raising awareness of Jewish issues, circulating knowledge of Judaism, and disseminating among their readers information about current events. The creation of Anglo-Jewish periodicals was thus a major public venture and one that, in its turn, supported other community ventures, such as the Jews' and General Literary and Scientific Institution, founded in January 1845.⁶⁹

Cesarani has pointed out that "[b]y interpreting the world to the Jews in Britain, the *Jewish Chronicle* played a fundamental role in shaping Anglo-Jewish identity".⁷⁰ Not only did the *Jewish Chronicle* and *Voice of Jacob* interpret "the world to the Jews in Britain" but these publications also provided a window through which the non-Jewish world could see and engage with the Anglo-Jewish community. Thus in the autumn of 1841 Anglo-

66 Mitchell, *Newspaper Press Directory*.

67 *VJ*, 16 Sept. 1841, 1.

68 *JC*, 12 Nov 1841, 1.

69 Geoffrey Cantor, "Sussex Hall (1845–59) and the Revival of Learning among London Jewry", *Transactions*, 38 (2002): 105–23.

70 Cesarani, *Jewish Chronicle*, ix.

Jewry took the crucial step and followed many other religious groups by producing its own periodicals, a weekly and a fortnightly, that (to quote Carlyle again) hang “out, like its windmill, into the *popularis aura*, to grind meal for the society”.⁷¹

TABLE: The estimated circulation and readership of the *Voice of Jacob* (VoJ) and Mitchell’s *Jewish Chronicle* (MJC) for the years 1844–51.

Year	CIRCULATION (STAMPED)			CIRCULATION (ALL)		READERSHIP	
	VoJ	MJC	Punch	VoJ x 2	MJC x 4	VoJ x 2	MJC x 2
1844	288		4559	~600		~1200	
1845	365	91	8644	~800	~400	~1600	~800
1846	394	136	9798	~800	~500	~1600	~1000
1847	289	174	7867	~600	~650	~1200	~1300
1848	154	157	7507	~300	~650	~600	~1300
1849		156	6651		~650		~1300
1850		164	6636		~700		~1400
1851		202	7471		~850		~1700

The second and third columns contain the average number of stamps purchased at the Stamp Office for each issue, with comparative figures for *Punch* in the fourth column. The fifth and sixth columns contain the estimated circulation figures for both stamped and unstamped copies. The final two columns give the estimated readership numbers. The multipliers for columns 5 to 8 are given in row 3.

71 [Carlyle], “Signs of the Times”, 443.