

**BRITISH SOCIETY AND THE JEWS: A STUDY INTO THE
IMPACT OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR ERA AND THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF ISRAEL, 1938-1948.**

Submitted by Nicholas Mark Burkitt to the University of Exeter
as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History in
September 2011.

This thesis is available for Library use on the understanding that it is
copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be
published without proper acknowledgement.

I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has
been identified and that no material has previously been submitted
and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other
University.

ABSTRACT

The thesis examines the relationship between Britain's Jews, both established and refugee, with the host community from 1938 to 1948. The relationship is studied in the light of events in Europe and the Near East from the 1938 *Anschluss* to the 1948 founding of Israel and the ways they impacted upon Jews in Britain. The work shows a positive reaction towards Jews in Britain, with few, but specific exceptions. Existing academic work has often concentrated on those exceptions, particularly in the East End of London. This study looks at the wider Jewish experience to show a more peaceful and tolerant coexistence than has formally been presented, especially to recently arrived Jews. The focus of the thesis is on the different personal experiences of Jews in Britain, against the more familiar high political context of the period.

The thesis does not dispute the existence of anti-Semitism, but shows that it was limited to traditional geographical areas and has been in many cases confused with a more general xenophobia towards any 'outsider' or 'foreigner'. It also deals with what the study refers to as 'pragmatic' government decisions regarding Jews and highlights some non-Jewish reactions which have been seen as discriminatory, but in fact were often born out of naive ignorance or having no realistic alternative. Using different approaches to examine a wide and fragmented cross section of Jews, the thesis shows the internal struggle many faced when dealing with the issues of what it meant to be British, a Jew and for some, a desire to have a safe homeland in Palestine. Overall, it is a study in the transformation of Jewish society in Britain from being deferential and submissive to one of assertiveness and self-reliance born out of necessity.

CONTENTS

Title	1
Abstract	2
Acknowledgements	3
Contents	4
Abbreviations	5
Introduction	6
Chapter One	42
Chapter Two	123
Chapter Three	190
Chapter Four	264
Conclusion	336
Appendices	346
Bibliography	372