

Outlandish names on the provincial doors: German Jews in Victorian Bradford and their expression of identities

Lucia Morawska

Richmond, The American International University in London

MORAWSL@Richmond.ac.uk

Abstract

This paper seeks to integrate the study of the German Jewish minority in the Victorian north of England, Yorkshire in particular, within the wider context of Victorian history and Jewish and migration studies. Its aim is to contribute to English-Jewish social and cultural history by uncovering the complex relationship between German Jewish and Victorian communities in the provinces and how these affected national and religious identity formation in the modern period. The essay analyses international political and social engagements of German Jews in Bradford and the impact of those engagements on their identity. It selectively looks at two prominent German Jewish figures: Jacob Behrens (1806–1889) and Jacob Moser (1839–1922).

Keywords: Victorian Bradford, Jewish Identity, German Jews in Britain, social activism, political activism

The story of the German Jews in Victorian Bradford is one of a relatively small community of economic and social migrants and the ways in which they responded to the challenges of the modern secular era, both within and without the boundaries of the group. The conventional notion of divisions between the many local communities too often results in oversimplification. Indeed, it may be argued that German Jewish identity in Bradford, just like that of the many other German Jews in Britain, is not necessarily based on the ruptures, but predominantly on the continuities between the ideologies and cultures of Britain.¹

Furthermore, in Britain German Jews displayed multiple identities. A similar situation existed in America; German Jewish migrants were described as showing characteristics of a 'dual identity': German and Jewish, and later, 'triple identity': German, Jewish and American (Grytz, 2006: 20). Many German-Jewish migrants in Victorian Britain viewed themselves as intensely German, and associated with other German immigrants. They took a leading role in establishing institutions of German culture, promoting German music, literature and lifestyle, while often continuing to speak German at home and during social gatherings. At the same time, many of the German-Jewish migrants in Bradford displayed a rather liberal approach to their religion. A product of the European Enlightenment—and more specifically the Jewish Enlightenment (Haskalah)—much of German Jewry had already begun to develop a looser association with the synagogue. There was no real urge to stress Jewish identity through the creation of religious institutions, especially in the provinces. That is not

to say that Jewish spiritual life was non-existent outside London; yet it undoubtedly faced many challenges coming from within the German Jewish community. Despite this, participation at the synagogue remained, for many, as an instrumental way to express their identity—both Jewish and German.

The importance of the local context in shaping new Anglo-Jewish narratives in the Victorian provinces has not yet been widely disputed. Kushner's work highlights the need to construct British Jewish historiography in ways that focus on a local context outside London. At the same time, Kushner argues that 'newcomers as a whole have often been at the forefront of [...] what is distinctive about [being] local (2009: 11). The narrative would very much be in line with the assimilatory tendencies of the English Jewish community in the nineteenth century. This became even more apparent with the influx of the Eastern European Jews after 1881. In fact, the sudden appearance of a greater number of Jews in the kingdom resulted in many cases in the formation of visible community divides. The 'old', predominantly London-based, assimilated elites often looked down at their poor, 'oriental' coreligionists. Their corporate, unified by the virtue of religion and language (Yiddish), structure had been difficult to fit into the local context in general and equally the local Jewish landscape. Both the Anglo-Jewry and Christians assumed that the abandonment of 'clannishness' and softening Jewish particularism were essential elements of assimilation and acculturation (see Alderman, 2014). As a result of these changes, Eastern European tribalism, which attached Jews to their shtetls (from Yiddish: before the Holocaust a

small town in Eastern and Central Europe with a large Jewish population) and their local rabbis would have to be removed. This vision has never been specific to Britain, but has actually been at the core of the European assimilatory programme since the formal removal of the many political and economic disabilities against the Jews. The French Revolution undoubtedly kick-started the process. The turbulent wake of the nineteenth century allowed Jews to progress to becoming citizens, social and economic entities whose lives expanded far beyond traditional ghettos. This resulted in the evolution of urban identities. It can be argued that Jews played a dynamic role in the process of striving for inclusion and the abandonment of racial stigmas.

Yet, as Kushner remarks, British Jewish historiography overlooks the role of the provincial Jewry and creates the impression that Jewish communities were unimportant outside London (2009: 42). Indeed, the multitude of works on Anglo-Jewry in fact focus on the capital, creating the false impression that the majority of British Jews have always lived in London.

Williams's *The Making of Manchester Jewry* was probably one of the first attempts to analyse the Jewish community as an urban entity, not just as an ethnic and religious one. However, it can be argued that since its publication in 1976, there has been limited interest in provincial communities and local contexts. For example, the political ventures of the provincial Anglo-Jews and their impact on local and national identity would benefit from closer analysis.

Unlike the persecuted masses of Eastern Europe, German Jews continued their steady influx into Britain throughout the nineteenth century. Many, lured by the rapid industrial development of Britain, came looking for new business ventures, whereas others came to find social freedoms. Although many Jews in Europe pushed for social, cultural and political assimilation as well as emancipation following the Jewish Enlightenment (or Haskalah), a significant number of German states continued to discriminate against their Jewish citizens well into the nineteenth century. For example, King Friedrich Wilhelm III's edict of 1818 excluded all Jews from academic positions. In 1819 Jewish officials were ordered to leave their positions in Westphalia and the Rhineland, while Prussian Jews were actively encouraged to convert to Christianity throughout the period. Under the circumstances, many denounced their religion and heritage. Others, like the mother of Jacob Behrens, one of the subjects of this paper, turned their private salons into cultural and educational spaces—the breeding grounds of liberalism and freethinking.² These ideas of social, cultural and political aspiration later found their place in the industrial cities of Yorkshire and Lancashire. This connected them with the European mainstream and would soon become central in creating cultural capital and shaping specific urban identity (see Alderman, 2014). Inevitably, social and political obstacles that German Jews faced in the first decades of the nineteenth century had a profound impact on their identity. On the one hand, German Jews were becoming important and dynamic participants of German culture and the urban cultural landscape. On the other hand, they were

still limited by conservative laws. As a result, German Jews remained rather carefully absent from local and national politics.

Meanwhile in Britain, social and economic emancipation of the Jews preceded by a half-century the granting of full civic equality (see Alderman, 2014: 129). Since their readmission in 1656, the Jews of Britain enjoyed relative freedom and state protection. Unlike in continental Europe, their settlement was not physically limited to ghettos. Although Jews generally continued to live in clusters, they were not separated from society at large. The growth of religious diversity in Britain from the eighteenth century onwards also meant that the Jews became one of many religious denominations in Britain, and Jewish identity could no longer be defined just on the basis of faith. The ways in which British Jews began to self-identify would influence the ways in which later influxes of German Jews would see themselves. In fact, many German-Jewish immigrants would take the process of assimilation much further.

Whereas Eastern European Jews, Orthodox, and ultra-Orthodox Jews in particular, until 1939 frequently lived in large urban clusters often physically separated from the non-Jewish population, German Jews pushed for the contrary. Panikos Panayi argues that German migrants in Britain mirrored the main characteristics of native society (1996: 73). Their divides or separations did not differ from those present in British society at large. Both in mid-nineteenth-century Berlin and in Bradford one could observe many overlaps and social and cultural fluidity as well as clear examples of specific identity. This essay now focuses on two prominent

German Jewish figures: Jacob Behrens (1806–1889)—also known as ‘the Terror of the Foreign Office’—and Jacob Moser (1839–1922), a politician (he was Lord Mayor of Bradford) and one of the most active and determined though lesser-known British Zionists. Behrens and Moser displayed many similarities in the way they participated in the social, cultural and political scenes on both local and national levels. Often their activities revealed their northern character and identity. Yet, whereas Behrens tried to preserve his specific ethnic heritage through personal ties and friendships, Moser’s background would influence every part of his life, including his work in the public sphere.

Jewish community life in mid-nineteenth century Bradford was practically non-existent. Having arrived in the city in 1838—three decades earlier than Jacob Moser—Behrens did not seem too concerned with the lack of spirituality in Jewish life:

‘I’ve always found synagogue service neither impressive nor inspiring. Was it my estrangement or was it the incompetence of the Rabbi? [...] There was, at least not a spark of enthusiasm nor a ring of intelligence in his address [...] All forms of service conducted on lines strictly laid down and according to dogma find no response in me.

(Behrens, 1925: 11)

Behrens was certainly not the only Jewish German settler for whom Judaism played a peripheral role. In 1865, there was a sufficiently large number of Jews in Bradford for

the Chief Rabbi to include Bradford in his provincial tour, but only six people attended the meeting to consult with him. Perhaps to stimulate Jewish life in Bradford, the city was the first outside London to be chosen as an organised Jewish Reform community. In 1870, the *Jewish Chronicle* was alarmed to find that the festival of Succoth had a minyan (traditionally a quorum of ten men aged over thirteen required to conduct synagogue services and public prayers) but another festival, Rosh Ha-Shanah, did not. The Jewish newspaper went on to contend that wealthy Jews should establish a congregation to show their gratitude for the fortunes that had been made ('Echoes from the Synagogues', *Jewish Chronicle*, 21 October 1871). Unconcerned about their spiritual debt, German Jews of Bradford continued to function without a synagogue until 1880. Mainly through the initiative of Jacob Moser, the Jewish Reform Association was established and a German synagogue organised in 1880.

At this time, there were around a hundred German-Jewish families living in Bradford. Editions of the *Jewish Chronicle* from the same period show that religious services were attended by 30 to 40 people, even on High Holidays. However, this is contradicted by an 1881 census. This survey (conducted on Saturday 17 December 1881), states that while there were 116 seat-holders in the synagogue and services were held on Saturdays and Sundays, services were only attended by 23 people (men and women); an unimpressive number ('Census of public worship in Bradford', *Bradford Observer*, 18 December 1881). Although the *Bradford Observer* blamed the weather, this lack of attendance was more likely due to preoccupation with earthly matters, with

business and unorthodox approaches to Judaism contributing the most. The acculturated character of the German-Jews in Britain during the second half of the nineteenth century was undeniably facilitated by a general social, cultural and political liberty (Clark, 2007: 94). Religiousness—or sometimes the lack of it—was only one of the ways to express one’s identity. Unlike in Eastern Europe, where the majority of the world Jewry resided prior to World War Two, British Jews could count on state protection long before the Jewish Relief Act of 1858 (which removed barriers on Jews entering Parliament).

Jews could also lead their lives generally undisturbed, with or without any religious involvement. This was in stark contrast to the situation of the Eastern European Jews for whom kahal (an autonomous governing body of Jewish communities in Eastern Europe) or the synagogue was often the only form of virtual protection available for the communities. Similarly, for German Jews, Kultur and assimilation seem to be the ways to secure peaceful and prosperous existence in the country with a capricious approach to its citizens of the Mosaic faith. For many like Jacob Behrens, there was very little correlation between religion and citizenship, as the latter could only be expressed through secular engagement on local and national levels.

Interestingly, Behrens’s memoirs contain only a few scant references to his Jewish background. He admitted that his religious education had been of a rather poor standard, despite the fact that his father had insisted on some form of it. A product of

the Jewish Enlightenment or Haskalah, Nathan Behrens is mentioned in Jacob's memoirs as 'fixed, conservative and disliking the unusual, though married to a much younger and much more liberal Jewish wife' (Behrens, 1925: 22). It was Jacob's mother who introduced him to the Bildungsbürgertum, an educated class of bourgeoisie which first emerged in mid-eighteenth century Germany.

Behrens, whose journey to England first started in 1832, seemed almost overwhelmed by British social and political liberalism:

I took a liking for England, especially because it presented a picture totally different from that I had seen in the dismembered and retrogressive Germany which I have described. Not only did I feel myself a man amongst men, but the times were great.

(Behrens, 1925: 27)

It is clear that Behrens felt that England offered sanctuary from the precarious German political and social climate. He was both surprised and pleased to find that political liberalism was very much present in the English provinces. Behrens reported with astonishment and admiration the political agitations regarding the Reform Bill:

Edward Burns [of Leeds] had burnt the portrait of Queen Adelaide in the Court House yard [...] I had never seen anything similar and expressed astonishment that such things were allowed by authorities.

(Behrens, 1925: 28)

Behrens swiftly embraced Britain's political and social principles, while noting a number of business opportunities; not least the great demand for English woollen products in his native Germany.

Jacob had found his Leeds premises too small (he was renting a small warehouse in Woodhouse Moor and employed three warehousemen), so in 1838 he moved to Bradford (*Sir Jacob Behrens And Sons*, 2013). He was not, of course, the first textile merchant in Bradford, which already had numerous spinning mills. He was not even the first German Jew to arrive. He was, however, one of the first to trade internationally, to reach far beyond local and even European markets. More importantly, Behrens was a pioneer of free trade and a strong advocate and close friend of Richard Cobden, a politician and statesman associated with liberalism and free trade, who was best known for his engagements in the Anti-Corn Law League and the Cobden-Chevalier Treaty. Although Behrens never became a professional politician, it would be hard to treat some of his activities and engagements as non-political. Behrens's commercial success as a wool merchant prompted his interest in international trading policies and regulations. At first, a vital part of his energy was channelled to establish Bradford Chamber of Commerce in 1851, of which he was one of the longest serving members. Although its main line of action was never political, it soon became apparent that the Chamber of Commerce was to play an important role as an advisory body to the British government. The era of free trade was yet to come

and, for the time-being, England had to resolve to mutual trade agreements, especially concerning trade barriers. From the number of letters exchanged between Bradford Chamber of Commerce, Behrens and the government, including lengthy correspondence with Disraeli, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, one may conclude that Behrens tirelessly argued against foreign tariffs, especially those imposed on French goods. He also became a commercial advisor to the government. It was this work that brought him into contact with government ministers and officials, who very quickly recognised his talents and knowledge of international trade and politics. In 1851, Behrens attended the International Free Trade Congress and, in 1860, joined Richard Cobden in playing a major part in negotiations for a commercial treaty with France.

Behrens's memoirs and his letters as chair of the Chamber of Commerce reveal a brilliant understanding of economic and political matters, first-class diplomacy and deep concern for local trade. He recalled:

Our facts and figures about the Bradford trade were never doubted. Only once Mr Baroche [son of the French minister] ventured in my presence to question a statement [...] about the value of low quality wool. I was so exasperated by his tone that I picked my papers and said that we had come to Paris to help the negotiations by our experience, and not to be insulted.

(Behrens, 1925: 32)

Behrens clearly saw himself and his colleague as fulfilling an important state mission of which every detail should be understood.

He was, of course, concerned with his own business, but the engagement and enthusiasm with which he always spoke for the wool merchants seemed to go beyond personal interests. He appeared to be personally responsible for the future of his town, which heavily depended on the prosperity of the wool-textile industry. Luckily for Bradford and other wool trading towns, negotiations resulted in good terms, an achievement that Cobden attributed to Behrens's energetic participation and extensive knowledge of trade matters. He also took part in the renewal of the treaty in 1870, this time interrupted by the outbreak of the Franco-German war.

By the mid-nineteenth century, Behrens was already integrated into British political culture as well as regional society, promoting the interests of its communities. His political engagements were typical of a middle-class Englishman. He never represented any ethno-religious group, Jews, or German Jews especially, but the people of Britain in general. This might have been because, domestically, there was little legislation directly affecting Jews in the period (Clark, 2007: 103). Politically, he also claimed to have a conservative inclination. Apparently, he felt too conservative to stand as a liberal, a faction customarily supported by the Anglo-Jewry. Yet in local and national elections he often supported liberal candidates. What may seem like a conflict of loyalties was not, in fact, unusual amongst British Jews.

Alienated by the Tories who were reluctant to allow British Jews into Parliament, they turned to the Liberal Party, despite not sharing all its views. While his memoirs refer to his 'conservatism', he did, in fact, encourage free trade, supported liberal politicians and was a member of the Anglo-Jewish Association. The latter aimed to support Jews in 'underdeveloped countries', but was friendly and supportive towards the British government and openly dismissive of Zionism. It can be argued that through his social and political engagements, Behrens created identities to accommodate his place in regional society. He clearly developed a self-conscious identity as a Bradfordian, but also as a German-Jewish-Bradfordian, although this was not as conspicuous in his public activities. Behrens's identity could be seen evolving on two different but parallel platforms: publicly, British and British German; privately, British, German and Jewish.

Middle-class immigrants like Behrens were not opposed to political and social activism and often explored such opportunities both on regional and national levels. Although Behrens's career was not overtly political, he was often seen dipping into politics. Like many other British Jews of the period, Behrens was a local and national patriot; fervently devoted to the country's needs, interests and institutions. For example, he tirelessly petitioned Disraeli to establish a separate Ministry of Commerce and Agriculture to improve control, communication and cooperation between the state and its commercial subjects. Behrens's influence extended into all spheres of local life; it was often joked that trains between London and Bradford were running on

Behrens's schedule. Indeed, he managed to influence timetables and speed up trains to accommodate Bradford's wool production. It is, then, not a surprise that the basis of his authority was derived overwhelmingly from non-Jewish sources. Nevertheless, his Britishness was expressed through political engagements, his Germanness via trading contacts with his country of origin as well as support for German culture in Bradford. Jacob Behrens was naturalised in October 1870 and knighted by Queen Victorian in October 1882. In his memoirs he wrote: 'who would have thought it possible that now just fifty years after I stepped ashore on English soil at Hull a foreigner and a Jew I should be deemed worthy of the offer of a knighthood by the Queen's Government' (Dunn, 2015). Behrens was an active proponent of German music in particular and helped to establish the Halle Orchestra and St George's Hall in Bradford.

Finally, Behrens' attempt to preserve his Jewish heritage was visible in his marital ties and friendships. In 1844, an established entrepreneur, he returned to Germany to find a wife. It is clear that German-Jewish family connections played an important role in the lives of first-generation migrants; finding a German-Jewish spouse was preferable. In the absence of the latter, a British Jew of German origins or a British Jew was desired. The tendency was less obvious amongst second generation German Jewish migrants and practically non-existent within the third generation. German Jewish difference slowly dissolved in Bradford and was replaced with even stronger British and regional identity, especially during the first decades of the

twentieth century. World War One was undoubtedly one of the contributing factors. Decreased migration from Germany, anti-German war propaganda (even Germanophobia) and progressive assimilation led to the almost complete disappearance of the German-Jewish-British nexus from public life (see Pamayi, 1995). Yet it is interesting to see that some German Jews, for example Jacob Moser, continued to exercise their 'triple identity.'

Jacob Moser was probably one of the most prominent wool merchants in Bradford, an important British Zionist, an active local politician, a philanthropist and a propagator of progressive education in Palestine. However, he seems almost entirely absent in British historiography. His social and political involvements reached beyond traditional political engagements and beyond established cultural circles. It can be argued that the extent of Moser's social and cultural participation reflected the multiple facets of his personal identity. It is fair to say that the Moser family were the Rothschilds of northern England. Like the famous French family of bankers, the Mosers came from a socially-disadvantaged background. Despite this, Jacob Moser would become one of the most influential and affluent German Jews in England, as well as one of the most prosperous Englishmen of the late nineteenth century. Moser's influence and progeny extended beyond Yorkshire, reaching Rome, Berlin and Tel Aviv. Through his international business contacts, for example, Pellegrino Pontecorvo and Company, Jacob was able to propagate Zionism and provide support for the persecuted Jews of Eastern Europe. In Berlin, Moser cooperated with local Zionists,

but also German and Jewish German manufacturers such as W. Freystadt Strausfederfabrik.³ Tel Aviv, Jaffa in particular, had become the focus of Moser's political and social activity in the early 1900s when Jacob got involved in building the first Hebrew-speaking Gymnasia in Palestine. Like many German Jews of the period, he was characterised by strong upward mobility and later used his social status to promote the interests of his chosen home – Bradford. Similarly to Behrens, Moser came to England to make money. Yet he also claimed he could no longer live in his native Schleswig-Holstein under the auspices of Prussia, so in 1863 he left for England.⁴ His decision to relocate was not made in the heat of the moment. He already had some contacts in England, especially in the industrial towns in the north; these were acquaintances obtained through his textile trading in Hamburg and Paris. Although undoubtedly important, Moser's wool-textile entrepreneurship is not the focus of the next part of this paper. Instead, it will look at some of his social and political engagements.

Figure 1

'Herzlia' postcard c. 1920. The first Hebrew Gymnasia in Palestine (Jaffa) co-founded by Jacob Moser. Source: West Yorkshire Archives in Bradford.



Jacob Moser was one of the biggest benefactors to Bradford at that time. He was the founder of the City Guild of Help (1904) and the Bradford Charity Organisation Society (1880). He also sponsored Bradford Technical School, the local Children's Hospital, and founded the Herzl Hospital in Leeds. Meanwhile, he also supported Bradford Synagogue, (as noted above) Herzliya, the first Hebrew Gymnasia in Palestine, and Russian Jewish orphans during World War One. Unlike Behrens, Moser remained active in local and international Jewish matters concerning religion, politics and charity. Like Behrens, he displayed parallel identities and the nexus between Germanness, Jewishness and Britishness can be seen in all spheres of his life. Whereas Behrens remained relatively neutral towards Jewish matters and showed no interest

in a newly developing Zionist ideology, Jacob Moser embraced both with fervour. His long standing friendship with Theodor Herzl inspired Moser to propagate Zionism in the local community. Postcards of Palestine, including those of Herzliya, were reproduced and distributed amongst the Bradford congregation as a symbol of Zionist success. Children attending Jewish classes in the local synagogue would receive these 'Herzliya postcards' along with their certificates of merit proudly handed out by the Mosers. Postcards of various Palestinian cities, most obviously Jaffa or Jerusalem as well as new institutions or schools, were integrated into the world of Western Jewry not only to reinforce political ideas of Zionism but also to evoke emotions and extract donations (Steinweis, 1997: 343). Nonetheless, Moser's efforts to gain wider support for the Zionist cause in Bradford never resulted in mass interest. In a letter to Mrs Ephraimson from January 1918, Jacob Moser expressed his disappointment in her disinterest in both charitable and Jewish matters.⁵ As an executor of her late husband's will, Moser was well aware of her financial resources and pointed out that Mrs Ephraimson's reluctance to give more than £10 to support students in Herzliya had come from indifference. The widow's reply: 'Everybody has somebody to support', was taken by Moser as a personal insult and caused problems between her and the Moser family.

Jacob Moser remained actively involved in Jewish causes throughout his life, especially after 1900. Amongst many other engagements Moser supported the local Jewish Institute, which often featured Zionists speakers, and the Montefiore Zionist

Society. In 1903 he took part in the Manchester Conference of Provincial Zionist Societies, Leeds Zionist Council, and participated in the 9th Zionist Congress in Hamburg in 1909. Together with Dr Mossihson and Dr Chaim Weizmann, who later became the first President of Israel, he formed a faction challenging David Wolffsohn's political Zionism in favour of practical Zionism. Political Zionism was an extension of a programme propagated by Theodor Herzl. According to Herzl, obtaining international recognition of Jewish political rights to Palestine was instrumental in organising a Jewish owned state. On the other hand, practical Zionism stressed the importance of Jewish settlement in Palestine, especially in rural regions, regardless of its political status. It also put emphasis on modern Jewish (in Hebrew) education and cultural development of the Jews in the region. Practical Zionism had lost its momentum with the outbreak of the war in 1914, giving way to political Zionism. Moser's approach to Zionism was not very far from that shared by the majority of the established British Jewry of that time: although Jewish people should have a legal right to settle in Palestine, there was perhaps no need for the independent state of Israel. Its existence was thought to neither solve problems of the Western Jews, for whom assimilation and acculturation seems to be the only way forward, nor deal with the complex issues of the Eastern Jewry. In November 1911, the *Jewish Chronicle* reported that Rabbi Strauss, accompanied by Jacob Moser, in the Jewish Institute in Bradford had announced that:

all thinking Zionists now share the view there is no need for the independent state of Israel which would not be allowed by the Turkish Empire in first instance. Therefore, Jews who in live in Palestine or plan to re-settle should remain Turkish subjects, especially that history has proven they cannot be governed by the king of their own.

(‘Echoes from the Synagogues, Bradford’, *Jewish Chronicle*, 10 November 1911)

Moser, who had chosen Strauss to be the first religious leader of the congregation was also his close friend and undoubtedly shared his outlook on the movement: Zionism should do practical work in Palestine and the real threat for the Jews came not from the Turks but from the Russian Empire.⁶

It is interesting to see that at numerous meetings in the synagogue, including Zionist debates, Moser also appeared in his capacity as a Lord Mayor (1910–1911). From the first days of his appointment as Lord Mayor of Bradford, Jacob Moser made sure his position as an observant Jew and an active member of the Bradford Synagogue was apparent. He visited Bowland Street to celebrate his accession to Mayorship in that official capacity on the day of his appointment. According to the *Jewish Chronicle*, it was a long, official procession from the town hall to the synagogue. The procession was attended by town officials, councillors from all factions and Sir George Robertson MP, all of whom also took part in the synagogue service (‘Provinces’, *Jewish Chronicle*, 2 December 1910). It is clear that Moser was trying to

express and emphasise his Jewish as well as his local identity. His social status acquired over the decades of residence in Bradford was not only a product of great financial advancements but also of close connection to the locality in which he lived. Moser had always been willing to apply his time, energy and financial resources to support and promote the interests of the people of Bradford. His political activities, first as an independent councillor for Manningham (1896), then as a Liberal for Heaton (1901–1904) and Little Horton (1909) increased the respect that he received from his fellow citizens and added to his standing in the local society.

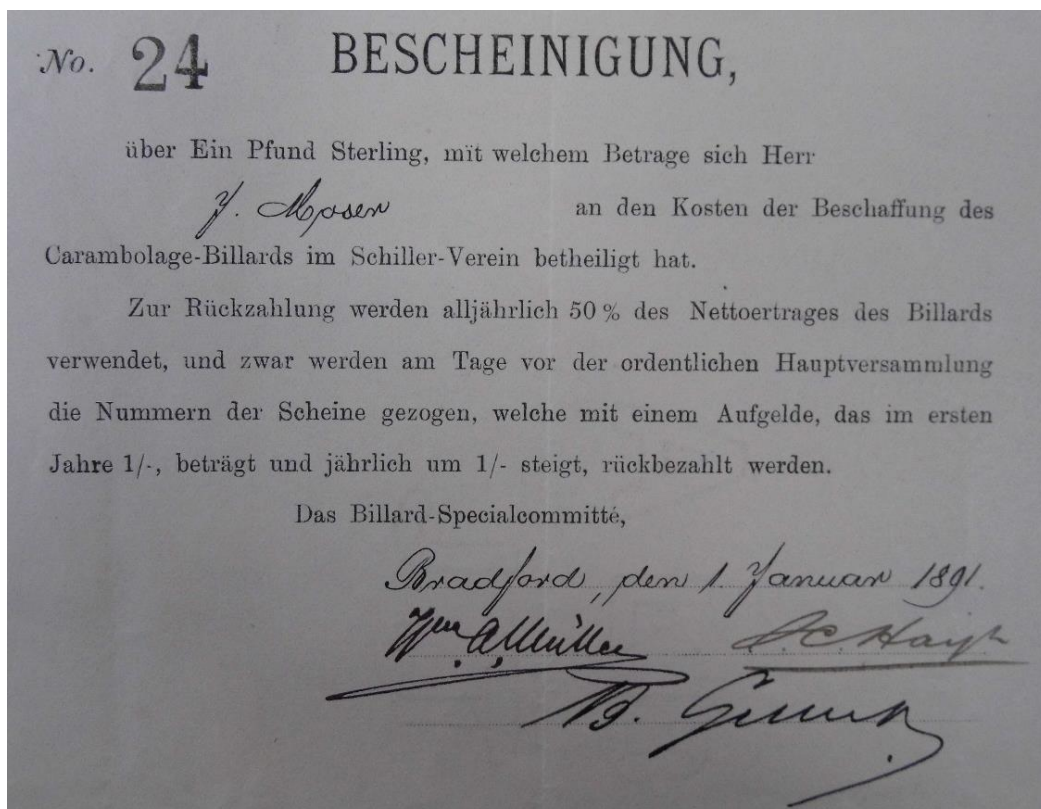
Similarly to Behrens, Jacob Moser considered German Kultur and Bildung a constituting element of high culture, a form of which have been propagated in Britain. Interestingly, these concepts played an important role in bringing German and British people together. In the provinces in particular, the Victorian middle classes developed a very positive attachment to and recognition of German culture introduced into the region predominantly by the German Jewish bourgeoisie (Westaway, 2009: 571). It later started to be associated with a middle-class lifestyle in general. Because German Jews were choosing provincial towns to settle in, their impact on the already established Jewish communities has been seen as rather insignificant. It can be argued that their influence on the Gentile part of British society was far greater. No German association formed in Bradford ever had German members or attendees only. Although organisations such as Bradford Schiller-Verein (German Institute) were supposed to provide intellectual stimulation and, indeed, speeches were made and

disputes encouraged, its main role was to simply serve as a place of middle-class gathering. For many, including Moser who used to be an active participant, Germanness meant playing German card games, Carambolage-Billard (a type of billiard game) and eating German food. For instance, on 1 January 1891 Jacob Moser received a certificate from the Billard-Specialcommitte at Bradford Schiller-Verein confirming that by making a £1 donation per annum he gained a right to play the game.

Figure 2

Certificate issued for Jacob Moser by Bradford Schiller-Verein confirming his annual donation of £1. It entitled him to use the billiard table free of charge for a year.

Source: West Yorkshire Archives in Bradford 33d91/18/1



Like many other affluent German merchants in Bradford, Jacob frequently visited Germany. He also maintained a relationship with German trading partners and banks as well as contacts with his family and his home town. Over the years he donated ten thousand German Marks towards the construction of the new hospital in Kappeln, a large sum of money towards a care home for distressed and impoverished citizens, and regularly donated to the Jewish Society in Rendsburg. Jacob's brother Emil, also a wool merchant in Bradford, gave over 67,000 Marks (more than a half of the final cost) towards Kappel waterworks (Philipsen, 2007: 53). For his engagements and support of the local community Jacob received the Red Eagle Order and personal thanks from Keiser Wilhelm II.⁷

Heimat, from German, is usually translated as Fatherland but is a more complex idea than that and refers to a sense of belonging, a special relationship between a human and a social unit. It is often translated as 'home' or 'homeland' though there is no precise English equivalent. All of these cultural ties with the Heimat were part of the Germanness within the more complex German Jewish and British identity. Interestingly, Jacob Moser, one of the most prominent British Zionists, only visited Palestine twice. Like many other British Jews he supported the movement, dreamt of the Jewish State (not necessarily in a foreseeable future) but never considered making Aliyah (from Hebrew, meaning ascension; the return of the

diasporic Jews to the Land of Israel). Until his death in 1922, Jacob Moser remained actively interested in both local and international matters: Jewish, German and British.

While establishing themselves as entrepreneurs, the German Jews of Bradford developed a strong affinity with the region, its culture, people and politics. At the same time, both Behrens and Moser tried to preserve their Germanness and Jewishness. Their initial participation in local society was clearly eased by the presence of earlier connections, usually business related. The latter was also achieved by almost immediate response to local needs such as health care, education, old age and disability care, safer work places, hygiene or transport.

Both Moser and Behrens stood against lachrymose tendencies present in the earlier nineteenth-century perception of the Jewish nation and its history. As political and social activists, they engaged in communal advocacy, making a deliberate effort to promote welfare, social inclusion, philanthropy and many liberal values. The newly emerging provincial Anglo-Jewish elites of German origins were looking to re-affirm and maintain a fairly unified public image—that of the liberal, progressive, assimilated and acculturated foreigners keen to engage in regional and national matters. It is also important to note that German Jewish activism in provincial Britain during the second half of the nineteenth-century can be perceived as an expression of changing attitudes towards involvement in social and political debates. Political activism would not normally become the way to express Jewish identity, which historically has been tightly linked to the synagogue. Whereas Behrens's link to the

Jewish congregation was nominal, Moser saw it not only as a way to express his religious affiliation but more importantly as a platform for his social and political activities that aimed to connect German-Jewishness and Britishness. Open, progressive and freethinking, Behrens and Moser injected a dose of cosmopolitanism into the local socio-cultural landscape. The latter had an impact on the development of a specific urban identity in which provincialism mixed with internationalism, and local customs merged with the ideas of *Bildensbürgertum*. Finally, it can be argued that the arrival of German Jews in Bradford marked the beginning of multiculturalism in Yorkshire—a suggestion that itself invites further analysis.

Notes

1. For more about Jews in Britain see Endelman (2002), Mosse (1991) and Newman (1975).
2. More about German Jewish middle class and its development see Kaplan (1991).
3. Wilhelm Freystadt, Letter to Jacob Moser, 7 February 1905. Bradford. Jacob Moser Business Records, West Yorkshire Archives.
4. Moser left when the Second War of Schleswig started (1863). As a result of the war, Denmark lost the region to the Bismarck led Prussia.
5. Jacob Moser, Letter to Mrs Ephraimson, 24 January 1918. Bradford. Jacob Moser Collection, West Yorkshire Archives.
6. Jacob Moser, Letter, 2 July 1919. Jacob Moser Collection, West Yorkshire Archives.
7. A Prussian order of chivalry awarded for valour in combat but also for long and loyal service to the Kingdom of Prussia.

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