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JEVICKO (Czech **Jevičko**; Ger. **Gewitsch**), town in W. Moravia, Czech Republic. It is thought that the Jewish community was founded in the 14th century, but the first documentary mention dates from 1566. In 1657 there were 16 Jewish households in the town. A prayer room was opened in 1620, but a synagogue was not built until 1784. A fire in 1869, which destroyed the main part of the Jewish quarter, made many Jews leave the town. The Jevicko community was one of the political communities (see *politische Gemeinden). Between 1798 and 1848 there were 138 permitted families in Jevicko (see *Familiants Laws). The Jewish population fluctuated from 776 persons in 1830 to 989 in 1848, 462 in 1869, and 286 in 1890. On the territory of the political community there were 184 Jews and 33 Christians living in 1880 and 93 Jews and 75 Christians in 1900. In 1930 there were 86 Jews in Jevicko (3.1% of the total population). The community was deported to Nazi extermination camps in 1942 and the synagogue equipment sent to the Central Jewish Museum in Prague. The building is used by the Hussite church and the Czech Brethren Protestant church.

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[Meir Lamed]

JEW (Heb. יהודי, *Yehudi*).

Semantics

The word “Jew” passed into the English language from the Greek (*Ioudaios*) by way of the Latin (*Judaeus*), and is found in early English (from about the year 1000) in a variety of forms: *Iudea*, *Gyu*, *Giu*, *Iuu*, *Iuw*, *Jew* which developed into “Jew.” The word “Jew,” therefore, is ultimately traced to the Hebrew *Yehudi*, a term which originally applied to members of the tribe of Judah, the fourth son of the patriarch, Jacob. The term was also utilized for those who dwelt in the area of the tribe of Judah and thus later, during the seven years that David reigned in Hebron, his territory was called the Kingdom of Judah (11 Sam. 5:5). Later still, with the split of the kingdom during the reign of Rehoboam, the Northern Kingdom was called Israel and the Southern was called Judah, although it also encompassed the territory of the tribe of Benjamin (1 Kings 12:16–21). From that time on the term “*Yehudi*” applied to all residents of the Southern Kingdom, irrespective of their tribal status. After the destruction of Israel only Judah remained, and the term “*Yehudi*,” or “Jew,” then lost its specific connection with the Southern Kingdom. This is strikingly illustrated in Esther 2:5, 5:13, where Mordecai, although belonging to the tribe of Benjamin, is called a *Yehudi*. This term

was also utilized at that time for the Jewish religion since it is related that, after Haman’s downfall, many from among the people of the land converted to Judaism (*mityahadim*, Esth. 8:17). The term “Jew” connoted by this time a religious, political, and national entity, without differentiation between these categories. “Jew,” however, was mainly used outside the Land of Israel by Jews and non-Jews and in languages other than Hebrew. Thus Nehemiah, who was an official at the Persian court, refers to “Jews” in his personal “diary,” and the Book of Esther (see above) was almost certainly written by someone close to court circles. From the Persian and Aramaic, the word passed into Greek and from there into Latin. However, while the name “Jew” became common usage outside the Land of Israel, the Hebrew-speaking Jews within the land were particular to call themselves “Israel” (*Yisrael*: “Israelites”). It seems that this was a deliberate reaction parallel to the general intensification of ancient religious and literary values and aimed at strengthening the identification with the nation’s early history. Thus Ezra, as opposed to Nehemiah, uses the name Israel throughout, and even in the Aramaic letter given to him by the Persian king. From that period on the name “Israel” is used in all Hebrew literature: in the Hebrew books of the Apocrypha (*Judith*, *Tobit*, *I Maccabees*, etc.); in the Judean Desert Scrolls; in the Mishnah and the Hebrew parts of the Talmud; and on the coins of the 70 C.E. revolt and of that of Bar Kokhba (“the redemption of Israel”; “the freedom of Israel”). Exceptions such as “Prince of the Jews” on the copper column erected on Mt. Zion in honor of Simeon the Maccabee (1 Macc. 14:47, also 37 and 40) and “Group of the Jews” on the coins of his son, Johanan, are to be explained by the political designation, Judea, by which the gentile world knew the limited territory of the Jewish State. When, indeed, that territory was enlarged, the name “Land of Israel” came once more into use. This difference in usage is strikingly illustrated in the Gospels: the Jews are recorded as having referred (mockingly) to Jesus as “king of Israel,” whereas the Roman, Pilate, and his soldiers refer to him – both verbally and in writing – as “king of the Jews” (Mark 15:32, 2, 9, 18, 26). For Christians, the word “*Judaeus*” was early conflated with the name of the villain of the gospel story, Judas Iscariot, who was considered the typical Jew. Judas was linked with the devil (Luke 22:3), and the result was an evil triangle of devil-Jew-Judas. This relationship helped to establish the pejorative meaning of the word “Jew” in popular usage. The noun could mean “extortionate usurer, driver of hard bargains,” while the verb was defined as “to cheat by sharp business practices, to overreach.” Many attempts to root out these derogatory meanings by having the dictionary definitions revised have been made in the United States, England, and Europe; they have, however, met with little success, since the problem is not one of ill-will on the part of the lexicographers, but rather of semantics and popular usage. In order to avoid the unwelcome associations and connotations of the word, Jews began in the 19th century to call themselves “Hebrews” and “Israelites” (e.g., Alliance Israélite *Universelle, founded 1860). Nevertheless, these new names quickly

took on the same pejorative associations as “Jew,” as scores of 19th century novels testify. Recently, there has been a gradual change in the usage of the word. The brutal murder of a great part of the Jewish people during the *Holocaust has limited subsequent degrading usage of the term. Since the conclusion of the war, antisemitism is under legal scrutiny in many countries, and this covers the use of “Jew” in the pejorative sense, along with “Yid,” “Sheeny,” “Ikey” and the like.

[Yehoshua M. Grintz]

Halakhic Definition

Both a child born of Jewish parents and a convert to Judaism are considered Jews, possessing both the sanctity of the Jewish people (Ex. 19:6) and the obligation to observe the commandments. The status of children from intermarriage is designated by the Mishnah and Talmud as following that of the mother (Kid. 3:12; Yad, Issurei Bi'ah 15:3–4). “Thy son by an Israelite woman is called thy son, but thy son by a heathen woman is not called thy son” (Kid. 68b). A child born of a non-Jewish mother must therefore undergo ritual conversion, even though his father is Jewish (see *Proselytes). This halakhic definition was accepted for centuries. However, in modern times and particularly since the establishment of the State of Israel, the definition has been more and more questioned. The act of conversion is of course a religious act, and thus any candidate for conversion is required to subscribe to the principles of Judaism (or dogma; see Articles of *Faith) and to practice all the *mitzvot, something which the majority of born Jews do not do. Thus it is felt in wide circles that identification with the Jewish people and its fate should constitute sufficient grounds for being considered a Jew, particularly since during the Holocaust tens – even hundreds – of thousands of Jews, who were not halakhically so considered, perished because the Nazis had considered them Jews. This problem has been especially grave in the State of Israel where the children of mixed marriages (in which the wife is not Jewish), who speak Hebrew, are educated in the spirit of Jewish history, subscribe to Israeli nationalism and serve in the army to defend it, feel discriminated against in that they are not considered Jews and are not registered as Jews in the identity cards which they are, by law, required to carry at all times. In fact, what they are campaigning for is a secular definition of Jew (see *Judaism) which is, understandably, vigorously opposed by the Rabbinat of Israel and the religious political parties. In 1958 a cabinet crisis came about over the problem of the registration of *le'om* in the identity card. This word means “nationality” or “nationhood” but its exact definition is a matter of debate. The secular Israeli political parties contended that an affirmation of national identification with the Jewish people should suffice for such registration, whereas the religious parties demanded that the halakhic guidelines be retained. David Ben-Gurion, then prime minister, elicited responsa to this question from rabbinical leaders and Jewish scholars in Israel and throughout the Diaspora; the overwhelming majority of the respondents indicated that

the State of Israel should follow the *halakhah* in this issue, and the final directives issued to the registering officers required that there must be a bona fide conversion before the applicant could be registered as Jewish. The situation reached a kind of climax in 1968 when a lieutenant commander in the Israel navy, Benjamin Shalit, requested that his two children born of a non-Jewish mother be registered on their identity cards as Jews. When the Ministry of the Interior refused to accede to this request, Shalit petitioned the Supreme Court to order the ministry to show cause why they should not so register the children. The Supreme Court, sitting for the first time in its history in a complement of nine judges, suspended the hearing in order to make a recommendation to the government to change the law requiring the entry *le'om* and thus solve the problem. The government refused to accept the recommendation and subsequently the court decided (on Jan. 23, 1970; case no. HC 58/68) by a majority of five to four that the registrar had no right to question a statement made in good faith by the applicant but was duty bound to register what he was told. Each of the judges wrote his own opinion and some stated that, to their mind, the term *le'om* admitted a secular definition. It was pointed out that the decision was only with regard to registration and had no implications as far as personal status was concerned, which would continue to be governed by the courts in whose jurisdiction it lay. Thus for matters of marriage and divorce, which are in the jurisdiction of the rabbinical courts, the Shalit children would be considered non-Jews. The decision raised a strong public protest and the law was subsequently changed to accept only those born of Jewish mothers or converted. However, it was not specified that the conversions have to be by Orthodox rabbis and thus non-Orthodox conversions performed outside the State of Israel would be admitted as sufficient for registration as a Jew. It was also legislated at that time that non-Jewish spouses or children and grandchildren of Jews arriving in Israel with their Jewish spouse or parent would be granted all the privileges of the Law of Return, including the right to automatic Israel citizenship. In a previous decision the Supreme Court decided in the case of Oswald Rufeisen, a born Jew who converted to Catholicism and joined the Carmelite order (for a full treatment of that case see *Apostasy) that, although in the opinion of the court the appellant might be a Jew halakhically, for the purpose of the Law of Return he could not be so considered. Throughout the ages the rabbinical authorities have been concerned with the problem of a person who is technically a Jew but subscribes to another religion. When a Jew merely does not subscribe to Judaism, the problem is of a lesser degree since such a person can be considered a “relapsed” Jew to whom all the laws apply. However, when that person has no connection whatsoever with Judaism and indeed considers himself to be a member of another religion, the problem is most severe. In the Middle Ages the question arose as to whether a Jew is allowed to lend money to such a person on interest or borrow from him on interest (see *Usury), something which is forbidden between two Jews. In the discussion

of this problem there were opinions that it is permitted since such a person cannot be considered a Jew at all (*Shibbolei ha-Leket*, Ha-Segullah ed., ch. 46). However, the majority of the decisors have always felt that such a person must halakhically be considered a Jew.

With regard to conversion, the strict law has been that converts should be accepted only when they come out of altruistic reasons, i.e., because they have realized the superiority of the Jewish religion. However, when they wish to convert in order to marry a Jew or for some other reason, they should not be accepted in the first instance; but if they were accepted and have undergone the full ceremony of conversion, they are, post facto, considered to be valid converts. The full ceremony of conversion as pointed out above involves the acceptance of the *mitzvot*, and the general opinion has been that without such acceptance and performance the conversion is invalid even post facto. Since the majority of conversions are not for altruistic reasons, this matter has been very problematic. Moses Feinstein in his *Iggerot Moshe* (YD (1959), no. 160) has suggested that such conversions might be valid since the lack of knowledge of the *mitzvot* does not invalidate a conversion; what would invalidate it is the nonacceptance or lack of observance of the *mitzvot* which are known to the convert. Rather ingeniously he has pointed out that, although the religious court performing the conversion told the convert the more important of the *mitzvot*, and although the convert at least verbally accepts what he or she is told, in fact the convert knows that the overwhelming majority of Jews do not observe these *mitzvot* and believes that the court's standards of observance are in fact unrealistic and not absolutely essential; for otherwise why do the Jews themselves not adhere to these standards. Thus Feinstein sees the lack of observance as a sort of lack of knowledge and, post facto, tends to accept such converts. This, of course, is quite a revolutionary step in that it is accepting – albeit post facto – the standards of Judaism as practiced in preference to the standards of Judaism as codified. It must be pointed out, however, that Feinstein's position is not one which is accepted by the majority of rabbinical authorities. With the immigration from Eastern European countries, the problem of mixed marriages has become a most serious one in the State of Israel, and efforts are being made to facilitate the speedy conversion of the non-Jewish partner and children in order to avoid problems of personal status later on. It can be said that the rabbinical courts are being more permissive in this matter than hitherto, perhaps because of the enormous social and human pressures being brought to bear and the fact that the converts will grow up in a Jewish milieu.

[Raphael Posner]

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“JEW BILL” CONTROVERSY, ENGLAND, term used to refer to the agitation which arose in England in 1753 after the passage of the Jewish Naturalisation Act. Foreign-

born persons desiring naturalization as British subjects had, as part of the process, to receive the sacrament at Anglican Holy Communion. Jews wishing to be naturalized, mainly wealthy Sephardi merchants in London, could be exempted from this requirement, although in so doing they would be granted only what was termed “endenization” rather than full citizenship, which carried with it fewer rights. In 1753 the Whig government, which was close to the Jewish commercial community, passed a bill through Parliament allowing Jews to be naturalized without participating in an Anglican service. It had no other effect on the status of British Jews and had no effect on any other group. This Act easily passed through both Houses of Parliament in May 1753. Immediately, however, great antisemitic agitation blew up which forced the government to repeal the Act in December 1753. Propaganda appeared accusing the Jews of ritual murder, of planning to turn St. Paul's Cathedral into a synagogue, and of wanting to force all British males to be circumcised, together with large numbers of broadsides and ballads aimed at the Jews. Although no violence against Jews or Jewish property occurred, several prominent Jews were hissed by crowds when they appeared in public.

The “Jew Bill” agitation had no real precedent and, significantly, no continuation, and no subsequent antisemitic agitation of any kind can be seen in Britain for many decades. It has been linked by historians with popular demagoguery by the Tory opposition just before a general election, as well as with economic fears by poorly paid Anglican clergymen, but remains a genuine puzzle to those historians who have examined it. It seems clear, however, that traditional Christian antisemitic stereotypes had little lasting resonance in Britain by the mid-18th century.

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[William D. Rubinstein (2nd ed.)]

JEWESS OF TOLEDO, the central figure in a legendary love affair of King Alfonso VIII of Castile (1155–1214), which has furnished material for innumerable plays, poems, and novels in Spanish and other languages. The essential story is that Alfonso falls in love with Fermosa (Span. *hermosa*), a beautiful Jewish girl of Toledo, and as a result of his infatuation is accused of neglecting his royal duties. To remove this “nefarious” influence, Alfonso's nobles (in some versions, urged on by the queen) conspire together and murder the unfortunate Jewess. The story must be considered legendary, since the earliest references to it (in reworkings of Alfonso X's *Crónica general* and of the *Castigos é documentos para bien vivir* attributed to Sancho IV) are several generations removed from Alfonso VIII.