



Tales of the
British
Aristocracy

L. G. Pine

Editor of Burke's Peerage

Mary Sheldon

By the same author:

TRACE YOUR ANCESTORS
THE STORY OF HERALDRY
THEY CAME WITH THE CONQUEROR
THE STORY OF THE PEERAGE
THE MIDDLE SEA
THE GOLDEN BOOK OF THE CORONATION
TEACH YOURSELF HERALDRY AND GENEALOGY

L. G. PINE, B. A., F. S. A. SCOT.

EDITOR OF BURKE'S PEERAGE

TALES
OF THE BRITISH
ARISTOCRACY

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has by no means deserted us. The time, energy and money which he puts into his quest would enable him, usually, to secure a peerage, one of a new creation. Instead he is led on by the mirage of peerage honours, to spend weary and disappointing hours seeking a title which may elude him, because some crabbed scholar has decided that one of his ancestors had no real right to a claim. In the Dundee case to which I have referred above, the claim hung about for over 250 years. Some of the huge research work needed to prove it was undertaken by a cadet of the family who wanted to substantiate the claim, not that he would benefit by it, but for the sake of the family honour. Years later the claimant to the title entered into this man's labours.

Chapter fourteen

THE ANGLO-JEWISH PEERAGE

For reasons which are not apparent I am the recipient of a great deal of anti-Semitic propaganda, from people in Britain and also in America. One pamphlet which reached me had for its title 'Our Jewish Aristocracy'. It gave the names of 45 peers and of 54 baronets who were said to have Jewish blood. Following these were lists of hereditary title holders who had married Jewish women, of peers and baronets whose heirs were married to Jewesses, and then came a list of Jewish knights or rather of knights of Jewish blood. The author of the pamphlet remarked that 'the Jewish penetration also extends to sisters, uncles, etc. of many other Lords and Baronets, whilst in some cases British Lords have had Jews as godfathers to their children.' The pamphlet was not without illustration. A sketch showed a typical English nurse holding up a grisly looking child to its horrified father (he being portrayed as a specimen of the old aristocracy) and saying 'Dont he take after his mother, my Lord?' In the background a Jewish woman could be seen reclining in bed, while also in the background the picture of the Lord's ancestor looked down reprovingly from the wall. The whole was headed 'Assimilation'.

Another pamphlet which came to me, this time from the U.S.A. and which was called To-day's Greatest Problem was written by A. N. Field, and was printed in New Zealand. It dealt scientifically with the Jewish problem and gave many quotations from the Talmud, quotations horrible in their import for every Gentile.

These instances which I quote from booklets received by me are only two specimens of anti-Semitic literature. It is produced in most European and North American countries, and the reason behind it is the hold which powerful Jewish business interests secure on the life of ostensibly Gentile communities. I have heard that in Hollywood there is always an obstacle to the preparation and showing of a film on the life of Jesus Christ because the Moguls of the film industry are Jewish and have no desire that the life of their rejected Messiah should be publicised.

However this may be I was very interested in the smear contained in the first mentioned pamphlet, as to the nexus between the Jews and the British aristocracy. It so happened that about the time that I received this pamphlet I received also an invitation from Mr Harold Soref to hear a lecture which he was to deliver to the Jewish Historical Society of England on the very subject of the Anglo-Jewish peerage. Mr. Soref is a speaker and writer of great brilliance and I knew that any subject which he had made his own by research would be of fascinating interest. Moreover I had not studied the subject of the interrelation of the Jews with the Peerage in any great detail.

As a result I found Mr. Soref's lecture of absorbing interest. He traced the first beginnings of Jewish infiltration into the aristocracy 200 years ago. He showed that for each instance of a Rothschild or a Disraeli which is familiar to everyone, there are ten cases of Jewish connection which are now half-forgotten. One of the most curious of these was concerned with the late Lord Southwood, more usually known in business as J. S. Elias, the reviver of Odhams Press and the man who made it into the vast undertaking it now is. Soref pointed out that Southwood sedulously concealed his Jewish origin. This is a phenomenon which is not peculiar to Lord Southwood, for in many other cases Jewish origin is concealed.

The details given by Soref are of great interest. Jews were emancipated long before they were able to penetrate the peerage to any considerable extent, but once they got under way, they lost few opportunities. In 1837 Sir Moses Montefiore was

the first professing Jew to be knighted since 1700, when one of William of Orange's army contractors was so honoured. In 1846 Sir Moses became a baronet. In 1885 Nathaniel Rothschild was the first professing Jew to become a peer, although the Rothschilds in various European countries had received honours from the state, and one of them, Baron Lionel de Rothschild had been the first Jewish M.P. to take his seat.

There are at present 14 peers who are of Jewish persuasion. They are the Marquess of Reading, Viscounts Bearsted and Samuel, Lords Cohen (a Law Lord) Cohen of Birkenhead, Greenhill, Hore-Belisha, Jessel, Mancroft, Morris of Kenwood, Nathan, Rothschild, Silkin and Swaythling. But this was merely to show the purely Jewish families who had been ennobled. Soref was able to give a long list of instances of marriages into the British aristocracy on the part of Jews and Jewesses, particularly the latter. In many cases these instances occurred relatively far back in our history, sometimes as much as two hundred years ago. Few people think of members of the Jewish community playing a part in connection with the British aristocracy in the 18th century yet such is the case. Some title holders of the present day do not descend from these Anglo-Jewish alliances as the ancestor in question was what is known as collateral. Other titles have died out but their connections often still exist through the female line and they are themselves only a fraction of the number of cases quoted by Soref. These citations prove beyond doubt that the Jews, not only of English origin but also those from abroad who have settled in England, have made themselves so closely connected with the British peerage that the two classes are unlikely to suffer loss which is not mutual. So closely linked are the Jews and the lords that a blow against the Jews in this country would not be possible without injuring the aristocracy also. Conversely the destruction of the House of Lords, and the failure any longer to create hereditary titles would have its effect upon English Jewry. The wealthy Jew would no longer be able to look forward to the honours due to his power and position in the community. Those Jews who were peers would find that their titles, instead of

being an advantage to them would become a decided disadvantage.

What conclusions are we to draw from the close alliance of Jew and lord? First that from it one can understand how impossible the success of any anti-Semitic propaganda could be in present day Britain. No Fascist movement can be in the way of success while the ruling class of Britain is composed of those who have friends and relatives in Jewry. There is a great deal of latent anti-Jewish feeling in the working class of Great Britain, and in certain circumstances they would respond to the advances of a nationalist leader, who would lead them to the pillage of the Jews, as in Germany where every economic error was attributed to Jewish influence according to Hitlerite propaganda.

Then the facts of connection of the Jews with the peerage do not lend themselves to the maintenance of a good opinion of the aristocracy. A man is not usually thought the more of, because he has married a woman for her money. The majority of marriages with Jewesses into the peerage must be actuated by the desire for financial security. An ancient estate is likely to be sold unless some large sums are found. The sums are found from marriage with a Jewish heiress, and therefore she is valued accordingly. The most outstanding instance is that of the 5th Earl of Rosebery, who had three avowed aims in life, to marry an heiress, to win the Derby and to become Prime Minister. He achieved all three but laid the foundation of his success by marrying when he was 31, Hannah, the only daughter and heiress of Baron Mayer Amschel de Rothschild. She stayed in the Jewish religion but her children were educated as Christians. Her wealth brought to Rosebery the means whereby many ways to success were opened. The alliances between Jewish ladies and British lords are mostly of this type, the wife providing large sums of money while the aristocrat has the title and ancient estate. The children are able to look back upon a varied bag of ancestors.

Such alliances do certainly enliven the somewhat dull pages of genealogy, which in older days chronicled merely the marriages of persons of the same type. Some of these cases do not

shed much credit upon the British aristocracy for they indicate that there are few connections which a lord will not make in order to get this world's goods.

What is the Jewish attitude towards these marriages with the Gentiles? Largely I think it is one of satisfaction that Jews and Jewesses have been able to get into the most exclusive circles, and to mix their blood with that of the old patricians. Some Jews are inclined to quote the verses of Defoe, about 'Roman, Saxon, Dane, Norman — there you have your true born Englishman', and to show that the English are a hopelessly mixed race. In fact of course this is nonsense. The English Conquest in the 5th and 6th centuries obliterated the Romano-British provincials pretty thoroughly, and the succeeding invasions of Danes and Normans were after all only the arrival of kinsfolk of the English, albeit very hard and unpleasant kinsfolk. In the centuries following the Norman Conquest there were infiltrations of various small minorities, such as the Lombards, the Flemings, and the Huguenots, but these were not in large numbers sufficient to upset the racial content. The general remark that the English are a mongrel race is based on the idea that the names, Norman, Saxon, Dane etc. denote races widely different in blood, whereas there were really closely akin.

At first therefore there is great joy in the Jewish community at the friendliness of peers and Jews and this is reflected in the accounts of the tercentenary of the return of the Jews to England. It is often remarked that those English families which were friendly to the Jews are friendly to them still after the period of 300 years. This means of course that the great families are among the friends of the Jews, for 300 years ago only the great families had influence.

But among the deeper thinking Jews, the present connections between Jewry and the House of Lords do not always give cause for satisfaction, undiluted and untrammelled by fear. I quote from Mr. Soref's admirable paper. 'As those who have been ennobled form a cross-section of Anglo-Jewry they form an ideal group of identifiable Jewish families displaying attachment to the community or otherwise during the past 70 years.

It is a remarkable fact that those subjected to the forces of social assimilation over the period of centuries have frequently tended to retain their Jewish allegiance with greater consistency and determination than those of foreign birth or the sons of immigrants. Other marked deductions are the inter-relationship of the older peerages and their early identification with the Liberal party to whom they showed gratitude for emancipation.'

Then going on to a survey of the Jewish families, Mr. Soref adds, 'The heirs of Lords Jessel and Reading were brought up as Christians. The heirs of Lords Greenhill and Silkin have no association with the community. Lords Hore-Belisha and Man-croft are without heirs. Lord Cohen is a Law Lord and not hereditary. Of the remaining six it is doubtful whether more than three will perpetuate their ancestral faith or communal duties. Of particular interest is the case of Lord Rothschild.

'The son of the first Lord Rothschild was the recipient of the Balfour Declaration. He was the first English Rothschild to associate himself with Zionism, becoming President of the Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland. He was not a partner in the Bank, but took his Jewish responsibilities seriously. A distinguished zoologist and a Fellow of the Royal Society, the second Lord Rothschild (1868—1937) died unmarried. He was succeeded by his nephew. Also an eminent scientist and Fellow of the Royal Society, the 3rd Lord Rothschild, unlike his banking cousins, plays little or no part in Jewish affairs. His heir is the son of his first wife who was brought into Judaism. His present wife is out of the faith.'

Whatever may be the facts about the loosening of ties in the faith of Jewry, there can be no question that the British Peerage is now very much diluted with Jewish blood and has many connections among its most ancient and august families with those who only a few generations ago were inhabitants of the Ghetto. In view of the great world wide interlockings of the Jewish community this may insure to the aristocracy a stronger hold on the future. The power of money is very great and as almost every liberal newspaper is under Jewish influence it follows that the forces of revolution when directed against the peers are likely

to meet with as determined an opposition from the Jewish kinsfolk of the aristocracy as they will in any other quarter.