

# AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL



VOL. XIII 1995



PART 1

# AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL

The Australian Jewish Historical Society was founded in Sydney in August 1938. The Victorian Branch of the Society was founded in October 1949. Branches also exist in Canberra and in Western Australia.

The Journal of the Australian Jewish Historical Society has been published since 1939. From 1988, production of the Journal is being shared by the Victorian and New South Wales sections.

The Victorian-based issues of the Journal are edited and published by an Editorial Committee, whose members are

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A complete list of the Society's office-bearers is printed inside the back cover.

The Editor welcomes suggestions for articles and manuscripts by authors dealing with any aspect of the history of the Jewish people in Australia. The Journal is national in coverage and deals with the whole sweep of Australian Jewish history from 1788 to the contemporary period.

Material submitted for consideration for publication in the Journal should be presented on a 3.5inch computer disk, in DOS or Macintosh format. Please indicate the software used (Microsoft Word is preferred). The disk should be sent with a double-spaced printout or typescript, and may be accompanied by illustrations. References should be in the form of endnotes rather than footnotes. No payment can be offered for any contribution. No handwritten submissions will be accepted.

Communications regarding publication should be sent either to the Editor, Dr Malcolm J. Turnbull, or to the Honorary Secretary, Mrs. Beverley Davis OAM, PO Box 255, Camberwell 3124, from whom information about membership in the Society and its other activities and resources may also be obtained.

The Australian Jewish Historical Society — Victoria Inc., gratefully acknowledges the generous contribution towards the publication costs of this Journal by the Australian Institute of Jewish Affairs, Melbourne, Australia, and its Publication Advisory Committee (Isi J. Leibler, AO, CBE, DLitt. [Chairman], and Professor Louis Waller, AO).

*Cover: On board the 'Orama' which left London for Australia on 17 June 1939. Standing, left to right: Marion Paul (check shirt), Ilse Saunders, Margot Herschenbaum (dress with tie belt), Ellen Ostrower, Ellen Shafer (floral blouse and black skirt), Betty Midalia, Edna Samson (with hat), Jo Weinreb (hand on hip). Seated/kneeling, left to right: Larry Gould, Rolf Taylor, George Dreyfus (in front of Rolf), Richard Dreyfus, Laurie Badrian (in front of Richard), Ellen Anderson, Alfred Stocks (Courtesy Hedi Fixel) [see story Page 88]*

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*Opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Society.*



## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

The scope and variety of articles published in recent numbers of the *Journal* have reflected the diversity and richness of present-day research into Australian Jewish history. This issue is no exception; topics explored by our current batch of contributors encompass Jewish education, immigration, Zionism, colonial trade, family chronicles, and relations between Jews and the political Left. Judging by this line-up, and by the continuing volume and quality of material being submitted to us, there are no signs of declining interest in documenting the Jewish experience in this country.

Three genealogical studies "kick off" this issue. Howard Nathan takes us back to the convict era with his light-hearted and absorbing account of the remarkable Nathan/Joseph dynasty. Transportation to Australia enabled the colourful Moses Joseph to make the stunning transition from "itinerant pedlar" to "colonial naboh", while his relatives and descendants played key roles in the commercial and congregational evolution of the Australian colonies. Helen Cohn Bruinier looks at the life of her ancestor Rosa Cohn (*née* Ballin). Rosa/Röschen emigrated to Australia in the early 1860s, became a rural Mayoress in her early twenties and a partner in the Cohn Brothers Brewery following her husband's premature death, and raised eleven children singlehandedly. Joshua Greenfield contributes an affectionate memoir of his father, an agriculturalist who survived the rigours and dangers of farming in Palestine under the British Mandate, and who spent several years working as a greengrocer in Perth.

Len Henderson examines the production and use of private trade tokens and coins in the 19th century, and in doing so, sheds light on the careers of such noted Victorian (and Tasmanian) Jewish business identities as Louis Lipman, Reuben Joseph, and the Lazarus and Levy brothers. Jewish settlement on the land, specifically the orchard and market-garden projects at Shepparton and Berwick in Victoria, forms the subject of an article by Jeffrey Turnbull. (Particular attention is paid to the activities of businessman Nissim Leonard-Kanevsky on behalf of the ill-fated Berwick settlement). The second conference of the Zionist Federation of Australia was the last important public showing of Zionist fervour before the Depression of the 1930s. Eliyahu Honig summarises the proceedings of the conference; participants included such ideologically disparate figures as Rabbi Francis Lyon Cohen ("leader of the anti-Zionists in Sydney"), Dr Fanny Reading, and ZFA organising secretary Mark Ettinger.

Four articles look at aspects of Jewish education. The prestigious Wesley College has always attracted a significant Jewish enrolment (currently more than ten per cent of its students). Dr Lionel Fredman, himself an "old boy", examines the Jewish experience at Wesley, and notes that the college's alumnae have included such distinguished figures as Samuel Alexander, Dr Felix Meyer, Sir Archie Michaelis and Senator Sam Cohen. Dr Manfred Klarberg describes the campaign to have Hebrew accredited as a University Entrance subject in the 1920s. Ultimately successful, the campaign set a precedent for the introduction of public examinations in LOTE elsewhere in Australia, and it can be seen as a forerunner of the Jewish day school movement. The fact that it was initiated by members of the St Kilda congregation now seems rather ironic given that St Kilda was to lead the opposition to the establishment of Mount Scopus College two decades later. Simon Tisher documents the intense communal debate which surrounded the founding of Mount Scopus and notes that the day school project served as forum for (often impassioned) discussion on issues of Jewish identity, integration versus assimilation, anti-Semitism, and the place of religion in education. (A valuable appendix gives the breakdown of individual voting by delegates to the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies). The sterling work done on behalf of *Dunera* internees by the

Australian Student Christian Movement, and its executive officer Margaret Holmes, is the subject of an article by Dr Paul Bartrop. As well as providing teaching materials and supporting internal educational initiatives at Hay and Tatura, the ASCM helped prepare young men for school Leaving and Matriculation examinations, and for entry into university.

Dr Glen Palmer's moving paper also tackles the topic of refugee migration, in this case the experience of seventeen German-Jewish children, brought out to Australia by the Australian Jewish Welfare Society, and housed at the *Larino* hostel in Balwyn. In the latest in his important series of articles, Philip Mendes analyses traditions of philo-Semitism and anti-Semitism within the Australian political Left, and charts the deterioration of the Jewish/Left nexus since the 1967 Six Day War. In other articles, Beverley Davis contributes a useful introduction to accessing Jewish resources via the Internet; and Lorraine Freeman reviews communal preoccupations of "100 Years Ago" with her selection of extracts from the *Jewish Herald*.

1995 saw the publication of Rabbi Dr John Levi's eagerly-awaited biography of Rabbi Jacob Danglow. Sir Zelman Cowen delighted the audience at the book's Melbourne launch in August with his memories of the "uncrowned monarch of Australia's Jews", and we are extremely pleased to be able to reprise Sir Zelman's address here. Dr Hilary Rubinstein provides a detailed review of the biography, and Professor Bill Rubinstein rounds out this issue with reviews of a dozen more recently-published titles.

Bill and Hilary Rubinstein left Australia for the UK in September of this year, but remain closely associated with AJHS Victoria and its work. It is appropriate at this point to acknowledge their enormous contribution to Australian Jewish historiography in general, and to the work of this Society in particular. In addition to producing a multiplicity of articles, reports and reviews, and such publishing milestones as *The Jews in Victoria 1835–1985*, *Jews in the Sixth Continent*, *Chosen: the Jews in Australia*, and their (definitive) two-volume *The Jews in Australia: a Thematic History*, they helped ensure the ongoing prestige, quality and readability of the *AJHS Journal*. The seven substantial issues produced in Victoria since 1988 testify eloquently to Bill's editorial expertise and enthusiasm (and to Hilary's proofreading skills). On behalf of the Society I would like to take this opportunity to wish Bill and Hilary every success in their new careers, and to hope sincerely that we may continue to reap the benefits of their scholarship in the future.

Once again, our tireless Honorary Secretary, Beverley Davis OAM, has been responsible for the physical production of the *Journal*, and I am indebted to her for the efficiency, technical wizardry and characteristic commitment with which she has accomplished the task. I would also like to thank Robert Mosley and Blueprint Pty. Ltd. for their skill in realising the finished product.

Malcolm J. Turnbull  
Editor

## THE BENEFITS OF A CONVICTION

*Howard T. Nathan*

*(This paper was presented to a meeting of the AJHS Victoria Inc. on 27 April 1995)*

I am proud to write that my great-great-grandfather Moses Joseph was a convicted thief. He stole from his master and another pedlar. At the assizes of Warwick in March of 1826 he was sentenced to life imprisonment or transportation. I can record this was for a relatively decent sort of crime and not one of those dealing with *shmattas*, high-finance or the currently fashionable offences which relate to sexual misbehaviour or domestic violence. As it was good enough to warrant life imprisonment, it must be distinguished from the more pusillanimous crimes which merely attracted seven or fourteen years' transportation. Had it been a serious theft he would have been topped and I would not be here to write about it.

Perhaps even more extraordinary is the fact that Moses Joseph's father-in-law, Nathan Lyon Nathan, my grandfather three times distant, was also a convict. He was almost certainly the convict who traded under the alias Nathaniel Newton, born in London in 1783 and dying there in 1850; exactly the same life span as that of Rosetta Nathan's father, and more of her later. He was sentenced at the Old Bailey in 1799 to seven years' transportation at the age of fifteen or sixteen, for theft; he had snatched a bag from an old lady in the Cornhill. He received permission to leave New South Wales in 1807 and returned to London and married Sarah Nathan, a first cousin. The most firm evidence that this convict was the father-in-law of Moses is the Bequests Board still attached to the gallery wall in the Hohart Synagogue. It reads that Nathan Lionel Nathan bequeathed five guineas to the *shul* by a Will made in 1843 in London. His wife Sarah (known to be Rosetta's mother) also made a bequest to the same synagogue, a very likely event as one of their sons was the first president, and Nathan Lyon Nathan (with Lionel as yet another alias) was familiar with Australia. His having been a convict also accounts for the alacrity with which he permitted his daughter Rosetta to journey alone to New South Wales in 1830 to join her betrothed, the convict Moses Joseph. It is a great delight to be the progeny of two generations of petty thieves, a family tradition I hope now abandoned.

Even greater good fortune than conviction visited Moses Joseph whilst he was imprisoned awaiting transportation. That was the person of Solomon Levey. Levey was the visionary emancipist who really generated Jewish migration to the colony of New South Wales. We have not done enough to honour him. Levey was transported in 1813 for a mere seven years on account of a commercial theft. Upon obtaining his ticket of leave he went into partnership with Daniel Cooper. So much did their merchandising and warehousing business flourish, that bills drawn on their commercial house carried more credit than those issued by the banks of New South Wales and of Australasia. They had double the asset backing of the banks. In 1826 Solomon Levey returned to England on board a ship chartered for more than 4,000 guineas and loaded with colonial merchandise. His main interest was negotiating the foundation of the Swan River colony but that is another story.

He arrived with much pomp and self-promotion. Many of his former neighbours, the poor East End Jews from Stepney and Whitechapel, flocked to see him. He was shameless in puffing the good life in New South Wales and immensely proud of his transformation from white collar crook to merchant prince (maybe there is little difference). It was a lesson not lost on Moses Joseph and particularly so upon the man who was to become his uncle-in-law, Henry Moses. It is undoubted that Levey spoke

with the relatives of Moses Joseph, but more so with the family of his then fiancée and future wife, Rosetta Nathan. Her family, the Nathans, were already in the middle class. Especially so, her uncle Henry Moses, married to Esther Nathan. He had his own wholesale clothing warehouse in Monkton and Cannon Streets. The role of rich Uncle Henry cannot be understated. He staked most of his nephews and nieces, and later his own sons, £100 each when they set up businesses in the colonies.

Moses Joseph was sent out on the *Albion* and arrived in 1827. He was immediately assigned to the firm of Solomon & Levey. He had one special attribute above most of his other fellow convicts and gaolers. He was literate. This put him into a category of convicts known as "specials". They were sought after by both government departments and rich merchants merely because of that fact. "Specials" were not despatched to the out-stations, or forced onto chain gangs where discipline was maintained by the traditional British trilogy of social control, namely rum, sodomy and the lash. Moses Joseph moved immediately to a good life in a hustling new pioneer settlement, working for the largest outfit in town. A parallel is to imagine a 23 year-old clerk placed on a Community Service Order instead of prison, being directed to work in the senior management section of BHP (Broken Hill Proprietary), as a friend of the Managing Director.

When Moses Joseph arrived there were about 100 self-identifying Jews in the entire colony. There had been some efforts at religious observance, but the transient and unsettled nature of society, as convicts served their time, and moved on, and as few settlers were free, meant that the Jewish life was a haphazard affair but nevertheless a continuous one. This was to change mightily as I shall go on to tell.

I will now introduce you to his wife, Rosetta Nathan. In 1831 Moses petitioned the Governor for permission to marry her. The arcane prose of the Petition says it all:

That Petitioner was for some time before he left England acquainted with and attached to Your Excellency's other Petitioner Rosetta Nathan a reputable and mature young woman who lately arrived in the Colony by the ship "Margaret" evincing thereby the continuance of her attachment and her determination to share the fate and misfortunes of Petitioner Moses Joseph.

That your Petitioners are of the Jewish persuasion and with Your Excellency's discretion are about to be married according to the laws rights and ceremonies of that religion.

The petition is signed by Moses in a firm strong hand but that of Rosetta is untutored, an indication of their degrees of literacy. Fortunately for me, Rosetta may have been illiterate but she was not innumerate. They were married in 1832 in what was the first Jewish ceremony performed according to the appropriate rites. The civil records read according to the Jewish faith, certification was by Rev. Phillip Cohen under the authority of the "Chief Rabbi of London".

Where did these two unlikely progenitors come from? In fact their backgrounds were similar. Both were the descendants of Hollanders who had migrated across the North Sea from Amsterdam between 1710 and 1730. We know, from the family names that have been handed down through many generations, that they were originally Sephardic and carried on the tradition of Portuguese names. In fact my own middle name seems to derive from the town they lived in prior to the expulsion of the Sephardim in 1492. I have cousins in New Zealand who are still called Josè. We do know that many Spanish and Portuguese Jews obtained refuge in what was then the Spanish Bourbon lowlands of Belgium and Holland when they were expelled by Ferdinand and Isabella. Of course these were relatively congenial locations, because of the similarity in the social codes,



NAME	AGE	Widower, Widow, Bachelor, or Spinster	Ship arrived by	Year of Arrival	Business	Former Bond	Former Service	Character
Moses Joseph	28	Bachelor	Atkins	1827	4/12	Bonds	Cooper & Levey	Good
Rosetta Nathan	22	Spinster	Atkins	1827	—	due	Came free	

*Responsible of the  
the 2nd of the 1827  
discharge of the same*  
*1827*

*List of Persons applying to be married according to the Jewish Forms*

legal systems and commercial arrangements. When Cromwell lifted the prohibition against Jews in England in 1658 a desultory stream of Jews crossed the North Sea, not merely to London but to those other ports which had commercial relationships with Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Antwerp, namely the Tyneside and Hull.

Moving backwards from Moses Joseph and his five brothers and three sisters, I refer to their father who was Joseph Joseph. Joseph's brother Jacob, was the first Minister of the Sunderland Durham congregation between 1790 and 1861. Moses' father Joseph was born in 1769 and died at the age of 92. His grandfather David Joseph had been born in Holland. It is thought that he settled in Hull from which place he operated a toll gate taking payments from travellers.

I cross over now to Rosetta's parents, and their story is less rabbinic and more interesting. Rosetta's father, Nathan Lyon Nathan, was born in London in 1783. In 1850 on his death he was described as a gentleman, and left a reasonable estate of £100. Rosetta's grandfather was a Judah Nathan about whom little is known. But Rosetta's mother Sarah, also a Nathan, was the daughter of Hyam "Footman" Nathan who was a fancy tailor and maker of uniforms. Sarah was born in 1787. The costuming firm which her father founded still exists in London today as "Nathan and Berman", which fell at one stage into the orbit of Holmes a Court. Hyam "Footman" Nathan was a man of some substance, having been born in England in 1743. He was a stall holder in the Great Synagogue and left £800 when he "shuffled off the coil" in 1824. The point of all this is that the Nathans had a little money and the Josephs had a lot of dash.

So now I can return to the colony of New South Wales and 1831. Rosetta arrived free. Joseph was still assigned to Solomon Levey and was granted his ticket of leave on 7 April 1832. This enabled him to go into business on his own account, which he did, opening a tobacconist shop in George Street, Sydney (and almost certainly staked by rich Uncle Henry and "Cooper & Levey"). I hope this was his only connection with the drug trade but from then on in he embarked on four courses of action: (1) bringing out his own and Rosetta's *mishpocha*; (2) producing their own; (3) enriching Jewish life; and (4) making money. All these things the two of them did with great verve and fecundity and I shall deal with them in turn.

The most important aspect was bringing out the relatives. In this context, one has to note the social circumstances of the place from which they came, and that to which they were going. In the 1820s there were about 15,000 Jews in London, certainly less than half the number in present day Melbourne. The overwhelming majority were poor and



propertyless. Jews suffered many civic disabilities; for example, they could not be admitted to universities or sit on a jury. But in the great tradition of our people many were literate and at least had some Jewish learning. The discriminations against them, particularly the vocational ones, making it difficult for them to join guilds and trade associations, and the immense social discrimination practised by the Anglo-Protestant establishment, were barriers to wealth generation and encouragements to migrate (later most were to go but that was 30 years later). "Trade" was the only way up, but that was almost universally in clothing and small chattels. Any escape route looked a relatively good one. But the journey to Australia was the equivalent of going to the ends of the earth, in fact it was the end of the earth. The fare here was about £12 but to North America it was less than 30 shillings. It took four months to come to Australia but less than three weeks to go to America. Of course, this pre-dated the huge Jewish surge from Eastern Europe to America. America in the early nineteenth century did not welcome British subjects. The last war between them occurred in 1812. I want to concentrate on the Anglo-Australian experience.

Some London Jews had made it into the commercial middle class by 1820 but the proportion was far less than that with which we are familiar. But even those in it could not see their way out of the social, often invisible, but nevertheless enveloping, constraints of Georgian society. The Anglo establishment was, at the time, hereditary and exclusive. A limited form of parliamentary democracy did not really arrive until after the two great reform Acts of 1832 and 1838. The monarchical establishment was fearful of its position having lost the American colonies in 1776, and thereby its receptacle for unwanted convicts. The French Revolution had caused every monarch in Europe to quiver, not least the Hanoverian one. That was followed by the Napoleonic wars, which carried with them the ideas of the French Revolution, with its notions of equality and democracy. The Enlightenment was about to happen. But it was a mere glimmer to the Jews of 1820s England and even less to the Hanoverians. In this context the Jews found themselves oppressed by a xenophobic society but nevertheless an expansionist and mercantilist one. The French and the British were fighting out their imperialist ambitions in India, the West Indies, and to a lesser extent, in the Pacific. Undoubtedly one of the reasons which attracted the British government towards settling New Holland, or New South Wales as it became, was the prospect of thwarting the French who were at that time looking for convict colonies of their own. New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land were ideal places.

The greater opportunities offered here, proved by the commercial success of Solomon Levey, showed to the London Jews that the Australian colonies offered a useful prospect. Most then saw themselves as moving from one part of England to another distant part of it. It was simply not as "foreign" as going to the Americas and then much easier. There was at that time no notion of going to a new country, or unlike Solomon Levey, founding one. Rather they saw that work would bring its own commercial rewards, unfettered by social or religious constraints.

The letters home to England from Moses and Rosetta, to their brothers and sisters, really incited and then produced a coherent Jewish society in the Australasian colonies. Of Moses' five brothers, only Tobias remained in England, but all of his children came to Australia. Another brother David went to America. Israel married Rosetta Braham, came to New South Wales, and very shortly transferred to New Zealand where he went into partnership with his brother-in-law David Nathan. Together they established the merchant trading house in Auckland which still carries the family name. Nathan married Sarah Moses, a daughter of rich Uncle Henry, and settled in Maitland, New South Wales. All of his four sisters married men who were in, or came to, Australia. Sarah, to

Hyam Elias, Rosetta to Kaufman Samuel, Rachel to Asher Hyman Hart and Miriam to Melbourne Jonas Hart.

Rosetta née Nathan was one of nine, born in London in 1810. She died in 1857 after or because of giving birth to 11 children. All of her siblings came to Australasia between 1835 and 1845.

I shall deal with Rosetta's eight brothers and sisters. The first to arrive was Louis Nathan with his wife Harriette, daughter of rich Uncle Henry. They departed England in 1834, stayed for a short time with Moses and Rosetta in Sydney and then moved on to Hobart town. Their £100 worth of stock was enough to immediately set Louis up as a warehouseman and entrepreneur in Hobart and very shortly they were followed by Samuel Moses, that is Harriette's brother. He arrived, too, with his £100 worth of stock and business flourished under the title "Nathan and Moses". Those were steps in what was to become a huge inter-colonial trading arrangement and it subsequently brought prosperity to them all. For example, Louis' estate in 1886 was over £80,000. It must be recalled that communication overland was not possible at this time and each of the colonial outposts, as they were founded, were served by sea. This gave rise to an inter-colonial merchant marine in which the Joseph/Nathan/Moses families were very active. The next Nathan to arrive in Australia was Arthur Isaac who was dispatched with Uncle Henry's £100 to set up in Launceston. He added another piece to the colonial network. The next to arrive were two sisters, Rachel and Miriam. They, too, stayed with Rosetta and Moses in Sydney. Rachel was very shortly married off to Samuel Cohen of Sydney and Miriam dispatched into the arms of Solomon Benjamin of Melbourne.

What I want to contemplate for a moment is the fortitude of these young women being sent to the ends of the earth, into a small colony with not much of a Jewish community and unknown prospects. They were poorly educated. They had no idea of climate, terrain, geography, fauna or flora. Every single aspect of their lives was turned upside down. Yet such was the level of frustration and discontent in early Victorian England, they were quite anxious to leave. The next sister to arrive was Esther. She married Moses Moss, who was a brother of Samuel Moss, and they first lived in Launceston and later in Sydney. So much for the Nathan sisters.

I return to Rosetta's brothers. David, having served his apprenticeship with the effervescent Henry Moses joined his brothers and sisters in Australia, arriving on the ship *Orient*. He had intended to settle in Adelaide but that colony was depressed at the time so he moved over to New Zealand. This was in 1840. He set up firstly at Russell on the shores of the Bay of Islands, and then, as the capital moved to Auckland, he came with the Government to that site. David and indeed "Cooper & Levey" became purchasers of land at the first land sales of what was to become that country. The Nathans did not give up on South Australia entirely because the youngest son Burnett, also known as Baruch, was dispatched there in 1842, where he arrived with his wife Maryanne.

Rosetta's older brother was Jacob Nathan, blinded by a childish prank when aged about 10. He followed David to New Zealand, but set up in Wellington. He married first cousins twice.

I shall not go through any more cousinage or concubinage, as the begetting becomes more confusing than the Book of Numbers. So it is time for some generalisations. The success of Moses Joseph the convict in entering into business on his own account less than five years after his arrival in the colony, and while he was still a ticket-of-leaver, together with the previous encouraging reports he sent home, enticed out into Australia and New Zealand three of his brothers, all his sisters and all eight of Rosetta's siblings.

Not only that, but there also followed a chain of first cousins. For example, two of rich Uncle Henry's sons had come to Australia.

Between 1831 and 1841 the self-identifying Jewish population of the Australian colonies increased from 100 (in actuality about 200) to over 1200. It is not possible to state the actual number but probably about one-third more. No other decade in Australian history has ever seen a percentage increase of this order. Subtracting the native-born during that period and accounting for those who died, it is probable that about 500 to 600 Jews came to Australia during that decade. Most of that number were related to Moses or Rosetta. During this decade the self-confessing Jewish proportion of the Australian population increased from 0.4% to 0.6%. That is a fifty per cent proportional increase. The Jewish proportion of the population has never reached such a high figure since, and even these figures must be understated compared with the present time when there is some, but comparatively little, reluctance to declare one's identity. In the next decade to 1851 the Jewish population increased by only 700 and most of that was probably due to natural increase. I do not have similar figures for New Zealand.

I now want to turn to Moses and Rosetta's second attribute, that is their own fecundity. They had 11 children. I shall not trace their lines but only that of my great grandfather Hyam Moses Joseph, known as H.M., a rather appropriate pun considering my own republican bias. I need only observe that of the other siblings all went on to produce numerous offspring. So of the original 16 there were probably over 150 fertile offspring. It is difficult to trace because many married twice, some not at all, and I suspect there are a few unacknowledged progeny. I can recall being approached by a person who said his name was Gary Edwards, a surname I was unfamiliar with, but he was able to establish a direct linkage via a patriarch whom I thought had been childless.

The third attribute of Moses and Joseph was their devotion to Jewish life. Moses gave the land for the York Street synagogue and became its President between 1840 and 1848. £1000 was the purchase price. This was a considerable sum for a recently emancipated convict. He had obtained a conditional pardon in 1838 and later obtained (purchased?) an absolute one in 1848. However, he was not the only member of the family religiously committed. All the congregations in the following colonies were founded, or at least initially supported by, the Nathan/Joseph family: Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin, Hobart, Launceston, Melbourne, Sydney, Maitland and Adelaide. Particularly generous in this respect was Henry Moses, the merchant clothier, and his son Edward. Solomon Benjamin, who had married Miriam Nathan, was closely associated with the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation and as its second President, whether because of that fact or in spite of it, he went on to sire 17 children. As an example of their religious commitment I tell you of the son born to David Nathan and his wife Rosetta in 1846 in Auckland. There was no one there qualified to perform the *brit*, so she took the child to Sydney where the circumcision was performed by Samuel Moses who had come up from Hobart town to do so.

Upon this ritual observance I want to make another observation and that takes me to the fourth attribute, namely wealth generation. And that is to stress the co-operative commercial relationships between the members of the family located around the Tasman Sea. Very shortly after arrival these poor Jews, some admittedly well staked by Uncle Henry and others by the emerging wealth of Moses Joseph himself, were translated into the commercial upper middle class of Australasian society. This is to be distinguished from the latter experience in America and even in Australia. Within five to ten years these Jewish emigrants, who had been peddlers and small time jewellers and shopkeepers around Stepney and Whitechapel, had become in many instances merchant

princes and, in almost every instance, a landowner of some kind. Whereas it took our post-war migrants often 20 years or even a generation to move into the *bourgeoisie*, this generation did it in less than a decade.

Of course I am generalising and there are many exceptions. However I want to stress the congenial climate Australia offered to its Jewish voluntary and involuntary immigrants.

I continue with Moses and Rosetta's capacity to generate wealth. The small tobacco shop soon gave way to larger houses and then the move into large tracts of land. Keeping the intercolonial merchant marine going resulted in warehousing at the various sites and, as I have said, the provision of ships. For example, in 1848–49 Moses lost two international trade ships the *Elenor* and the *Rebecca Nathan*. All of this was mightily profitable. But then came the double blessing, the discovery of gold, firstly in New South Wales and then prodigiously so in Victoria. The initial discoveries around Goulburn and Kiandra brought prosperity to these towns and also the Monaro district generally where Moses Joseph had purchased an enormous run which he named "Mahratta". But it was from gold buying and selling that Moses made most of his wealth. A comment true of many other Jewish dealers.

I can now give you some measure of this wealth. In 1853 Moses was the largest licensed gold buyer in New South Wales, transferring more than 1000 ounces to London in that year alone. Rosetta died in 1859 and Moses returned to live in Bedford Square, Paddington, in circa 1863 or 1864. This was the first of a series of returns by Jewish colonial nabobs to England. They wanted to flaunt their wealth and display their prosperity in the country which had ejected them, and this they certainly did. Surprising behaviour, more so when most of their children did not follow.

Moses Joseph had extracted from Australia huge amounts of wealth, so much so that he was able to invest £250,000 in bonds of the confederate states in 1865. This has a present-day value of about \$50 million and I am glad to say he lost it all, although at the time of his death in 1889 the executor still put a face value on these bonds of £50. He left behind in Australia about 100,000 acres of freehold in the New England district, near Maitland where his brother had settled. He had further extensive land holdings along the Eden Monaro high plains and especially the station "Mahratta" at Bombala. There were huge quantities of stock in the Australian Agricultural Company, Anglo-Egyptian bonds, government stock in Honduras, Canada and even the Buenos Aires railways. When he died he had an Australian estate in excess of £200,000 and more than £100,000 in other bonds. In all, having a present-day value of about \$60 million.

Much turns on the fact that Moses Joseph was able to obtain an absolute pardon in 1848. He and others were then able to pretend he had not been convicted at all. I have often considered why Moses Joseph selected and purchased land in the cold and uncongenial uplands of New England and the Monaro. I suspect it was because the conditions were climatically familiar, and the country did not need to be cleared. There are still Joseph families living in Bombala. My cousin Peter and his wife have recently produced a daughter, which makes for the seventh generation on-site, and that must be the longest continual association of a family with the land in our history. It runs from about 1838 to the present day. Moses Joseph, by his Will, a masterpiece of legal complexities, entailed his estate and delivered to my own father a final distribution in 1960. He set up scholarships at the Stepney Jewish school and to other charities. By the time he died in 1888 he had long since moved away from the East End. He was able to make a disposition in favour of his coachman and domestic staff. Consider that mighty transposition from an itinerant pedlar and convicted felon to a benefactor of his own personal servants.



The next factor to note is the return of the colonial nabobs to England and particularly the west-end. Again, Moses Joseph led the herd but he was followed by Louis Nathan of Tasmania and his wife Harriette. They were childless and subsequently bought a house in Tavistock Square. So, too, did Asher Hart who had married Rachel Joseph, Moses' sister, in Sydney in 1840. As an aside I say that Asher Hart had brought out his two brothers Edward and Isaac to Port Phillip where they conducted the first high holy day services in 1841. He was the first president of the Melbourne Hebrew congregation and another in-law, Solomon Benjamin, was the treasurer. He left the colony of Port Phillip in 1854. So, too, did Solomon Benjamin, the second president of the Melbourne Hebrew congregation. He was able to retire in 1852 and purchased a house in Clifton Gardens. Samuel Moses who was the president of the Hobart Hebrew congregation in 1848 returned to live in England in 1858. He was the son of Jacob Moses, the brother of the rich Uncle Henry. He retained the surname Moses but some of his brothers changed their name to Moss and others to Walford. Burnett or Baruch Nathan of Adelaide picked up his whole family, which was rather unusual, and returned to England in the early 1860s. Louis Edward Nathan, who had married Sarah Marks and had gone to New Zealand, setting up the first congregation in Christchurch, sold all his business in 1881 and returned to live in England. Perhaps the most noted of the returnees were rich Uncle Henry's sons. As you know they had been in trade, a slightly disreputable activity so far as the English upper classes were concerned, and into whose ranks they were determined to enter. When all six of Uncle Henry's sons who had come to Australia returned to England, they moved out of London and into various country estates. In order to cap their process of change all changed their names to Beddington in the 1860s.

The Beddingtons married into and became scions of the Anglo establishment. Names such as Sir Herbert Samuel Leon, Arthur Seebag Montefiore, the Waley Cohens and the Montagues will be known to you all. When Hiam Leopold Beddington (nee Moses) changed his name in 1868 and entered the Stock Exchange of London as one of its first Jews, there was a large banner across the floor of the exchange which read: "And the Lord said unto Moses 'good morning Mr Beddington'."

Much of their wealth had come from the merchant marine. For example, in the mid 1850s the ship *Kate*, owned by Messrs Benjamin and Moses, exported 42,000 ounces of gold with a current day value of about \$16 million. That was simply one shipment, albeit the largest. They did not however sever all connection with orthodox Jewry. Three of these sons, Edward, Maurice and Alfred, were all founding members and officers of the Central Synagogue in Great Portland Street in London in 1870.

I shall not trace more of the returnees because I want to draw the obvious conclusion that it was their progeny who remained in Australia and New Zealand and who provided the genes and substance of much of Australasian Jewry. Not only that but these returnees took back to England immense wealth, really taking out of the colonies much more than they had brought. This was common of non-Jewish families as well. One can comfortably conclude that a great deal of the wealth which brought Britain to the forefront of nations in the latter part of the 19th century was easy capital gathered in the Australian colonies, particularly that derived from gold. The gold was simply spooned out of the creeks, and later out of the shallow shafts of single mines, and later still of deep ones. It was transported to England where it provided the credit and financial muscle for that city's enormous expansion. When one considers the great country houses that surround London and the rather poor imitations (and very few of them) around Ballarat and Bendigo, some measure of the Australian wealth sent back to England is appreciated. We forget that the successful returned with their loot, leaving behind the unsuccessful and their children who had become attached to the land as their own birthplace.



I now want to return to H.M. and the lands on the Monaro high plains. I have not been able to find any mention of the aborigines. It was simply as if they did not exist, but it must be said that, for some parts of the year on the Monaro high plains, they did not. Such blacks as there were in that district came up from the coast-land to chase the Bogong moths in the summer. Other than that it was very sparsely settled by anybody. Not so the lands in the Upper Hunter and in New England. The huge holdings accumulated by Moses Joseph were, of course, at the cost of the aborigines to whom no deference or no reference has been paid. Of course, most were wiped out before settlement. The spread of European diseases preceded the settlers so that by the time the squatters had arrived with their shepherds, influenza, measles and pox had already decimated and disrupted the pre-existing aboriginal communities. They were demoralised, disconnected and dispossessed people at the time of earliest European settlement and hence were, I suppose, easily despatched to the margins. Just as Australia sent much of its wealth to England, we should also feel a sense of obligation to those we plundered. So, too, should the British who in turn prospered from that disposition. H.M. was a rollicking good fellow and conducted the properties at Mahratta with his brother. Nevertheless, they were under the constant control and direction of their father Moses from London. In 1890 the town of Bombala was incorporated and H.M. became its first Mayor. In 1899 the town requisitioned and petitioned the premier of the colony of New South Wales to propose Bombala as a site for the federal city, and, indeed, the town was visited by one of the many visiting commissions. Of course, Canberra on the Monaro plains was eventually selected. H.M. did not possess the business acumen of his father nor did any of his other brothers. He was much more interested in riding goats as a Freemason and conducting his life as a sportsman and grazier. There were, of course, local Jewish communities at Bombala, Goulburn and Cooma, which gave some stability to the community. H.M. had married Rachel Moses, his first or second cousin, which produced in 1866 my grandmother, Ada Amelia. Ada, in line with her family tradition proceeded to marry her cousin, my grandfather, Hyam Jacob Nathan. Hyam Jacob was the son of Hyam Edward, a brother of Rosetta. It is a wonder I can even talk, so much was the degree of intermarriage. That union produced in 1892 my father, Arthur Joseph Nathan, born at Bombala. A letter to him from his grandfather, H.M., dated August 1910, tells something of the diminishing fortunes of the family. It reads, "They have started the railway line from Cooma to Nimmetybell. I expect will reach here in about two years. The government are going to resume Mahratta for closer settlement but the price cannot be decided." Closer settlement did follow. The lands were split up and the original wealth deriving from Moses Joseph was distributed amongst his 11 children and subsequently amongst those 11 children's 100 odd grandchildren. However, my father received his first share of the estate in 1913 when he attained 21 years. It was for nearly £9,000, having a current value of \$3-5 million. I can show you a deed of trust my father executed in favour of his grandfather for all of that sum. In 1915 my father enlisted in the Australian forces and granted his own father a further power of attorney over that estate. By the time he returned, most had gone, squandered in pneumatic type companies and later silent moving picture houses. My father graduated in medicine in 1923, set up in practice in a small dairying town in South Gippsland, Toora, almost as forlorn a place now as it was then. What little he had left he also squandered in large cars and the spirits they do not run on.

My father was first married to Leah Best in the St Kilda *shul*, and that union resulted in one child. Henry Joseph Moses Nathan, born in 1920, was married to Gwen Edmonds, from which there are three children. Leah died tragically in 1923. My father married Florence Amelia Sloss in 1928, and my sister was born in 1944. The maternal side is another story.

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## RÖSCHEN 1842–1902

*Helen Cohn Bruinier*

Rosa Ballin was born in Hamburg, Germany, on 10 May 1842, to merchant Samuel Joel Ballin and his second wife Amalia. Rosa was the first of Amalia's nine children, the fifth child of Samuel. To her family and the people of Talbot and Bendigo on the Victorian goldfields, she was always Röschen, "little rose".

Following Jewish custom Samuel employed his nephew, Moritz Cohn, training him in business management. Moritz worked in the Ballin counting house in Hamburg.

Röschen was promised to her cousin Moritz at the tender age of five or six years; promised in an arranged marriage to a man nineteen years her senior. Röschen was always described as Moritz's childhood sweetheart. Childhood it would have been, because when Moritz left to seek his fortune on the Victorian goldfields, Röschen was eleven years old. He did not return to claim his bride until she was eighteen and considered old enough to marry.

Moritz, accompanied by his brothers Julius and Jacob, journeyed via Liverpool to Melbourne, arriving in August 1853. Quickly they purchased items which they thought they would need in Bendigo, loaded a handcart and set off, taking it in turns to push. On arriving at the goldfields, they quickly established themselves in business and community life, soon owning a shop, brewery and hotels in Bendigo and Melbourne.

In 1860, Moritz, his businesses now well established, travelled to Europe, first visiting his parents in Denmark. Then, armed with a document which still exists today, giving him his father's permission to marry "the virgin Rosa Ballin of Hamburg", he arrived in Hamburg and married his sweetheart on 5 July 1860.

Röschen and Moritz's first born, Mathilda, was born in Bendigo the following year. Later in the year Moritz opened a branch brewery in Talbot. The substantial, sturdy brick and stone house, with the brewery behind it, where they lived and worked, and where Röschen bore six more children, stood until the 1985 bushfires. Only the row of poplars, which gave the house its name, survived.

Fully entering into public life, Moritz was elected to Amherst Shire Council in 1862. In 1865 Röschen, then aged twenty three, mother of three very small children, became the Mayoress. Röschen undertook her duties as Mayoress as well as family duties and repeated pregnancies.

Sensing the decline in the population of Talbot, Moritz sold the Talbot brewery and returned to Bendigo with Röschen and their seven children, again entering into partnership with his youngest brother Jacob.

Four more daughters had been born, the youngest, Margarita, only being three weeks old when the maid went in to set the table for breakfast and found Moritz lying on the dining room floor. "Wake up! Papa, wake up!" shrieked his distraught son who had been summoned to tend his father. Moritz did not respond. He had died of a massive stroke.

Aged thirty five, Röschen was left to raise eleven children, two sons and nine daughters. The shock not only of the loss of her beloved husband but of the trauma of an enquiry and inquest, caused Röschen's milk supply to fail. Within four weeks Margarita, her baby, joined Moritz in the family plot at the White Hills cemetery.

Moritz's Will stipulated that all of his assets had to be sold for the benefit of Röschen and the children. This caused great consternation as Moritz was in partnership with his

brother in an established and profitable business. What's more, Jacob did not have the capital to purchase Moritz's half. Jacob and Röschen continued to trade and tried to avoid the issue. Finally a court order stipulated that the terms of the Will had to be obeyed. Tenders were called for the sale of half of Cohn Bros. Victoria Brewery, half of their chain of hotels and other real estate, including half of the house occupied by Jacob and his family, for sale as one lot.

Jacob's was the only tender. Röschen loaned him the money, taking out mortgages on all of the assets: the brewery, chain of hotels, allotments and Jacob's home. Years later, when Jacob needed further capital, the brewery business was formed into a public company. Röschen's mortgages were paid out and she was able to take out a large parcel of the shares, the income from which allowed her to live and raise her family in quiet dignity.

Röschen continued to live in her substantial home in Hustlers Hill Terrace, Barkly Place, Bendigo. Her eldest son, Julius, having completed his schooling, was sent to be educated at Worms Brewing College in Germany, under the watchful eye of his uncle, Albert Ballin.

In the late 1880s Röschen sold her house and moved to Melbourne, purchasing a two storey terrace house in St Vincent's Place, Albert Park. A short time later she bought 54 Hawthorn Grove, Hawthorn. Röschen named this house "Rosmor", a contraction of both their names, and moved in with her eight unmarried children, only two of whom would subsequently marry.

Röschen managed her own affairs. Her daughters all went out to work, except Mathilda, who acted as housekeeper to her mother and sisters. The others worked as clerks in Melbourne businesses or trained as nurses. They had the example of their aunt Leah Cohn, who, after years as joint licensee of several hotels, had her own furriers shop at the corner of Collins and Queen Streets. Leah, who reared eight of her eleven children, was also widowed early. She was said to be the "mother of the fur trade in Melbourne".

On 11 August 1902, Röschen, then aged sixty, died. The five single daughters, and Henrietta, whose marriage to George Terry had failed, continued to live at "Rosmor" until the last daughter, Alice, died in 1952.

Röschen's body was returned to Bendigo to be buried beside her beloved Moritz at White Hills. She did not live to see her youngest brother Albert Ballin, industrialist, shipping magnate, Kaiser Wilhelm's friend and adviser, negotiate with Britain and its allies for the armistice which ended the Great War. Nor to hear the echo of the single shot with which he ended his life.

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## MY FATHER

*Josh Greenfield*

His name was Shalom, son of Rabbi Eliezer, born in Safed, Palestine in 1888. He was my father.

My grandfather was eleven years old when he arrived in Palestine with his parents in 1865. He married at a young age and had eleven children. The country, and especially Safed, was in a very poor state at that time. He sought opportunities in neighbouring villages. One of those was Ein-Ebel in Syria, where he started to make wines and spirits using local grapes and figs.



*Shalom Greenfield, 1908 in Ein-Ebel, aged 20*

A number of the children as they grew up made their way to America. My father was one of them, but he could not stay away for long. He was very attached to his parents and came back and together they built up the business and were supplying wines and spirits on camel-backs and mules as far as Jerusalem. In the year 1915 my father married a school teacher from Safed. Her name was Sara Bella. My brother, Moshe, was born in 1918; a year later I was born. The war was over by then. The British took over Palestine and France took over Syria. There were no trade or travel restrictions between Syria and Palestine.

Ein-Ebel was a small peaceful village comprising about sixty or seventy families, all Christian Arabs living on small farms. In 1921, hordes of Moslem Arabs attacked Ein-Ebel. They came galloping on their horses, shooting and knifing anybody in sight. "Death to the Christians!" they shouted, burning what they could not steal, and soon our winery was in flames. My grandfather was on the verge of having his throat cut when one of the Moslem leaders called out "Don't harm this man. I know him. He is a Jew." The family reunited in Safed, all their possessions lost; years of work and planning gone with the stroke of a match. My grandfather devoted the rest of his time to building up the *Chabad* synagogue in Safed. He was fully absorbed with religious studies and qualified to be a rabbi.

My father was seeking compensation from the French government for his losses; they eventually paid one thousand pounds. It was not a fortune but enough to give him a new start. There was a Jewish settlement being built not far from Safed, a place called Jewish



Ein-Zeitim. To get there you had to go through an Arab village called Ein-Zeitim. He decided to buy land and build a farm in that new settlement. There were three or four other families with similar ideas. By that time my mother had given birth to two daughters, Rachael and Ayala.

A year later the farm started to take shape. We had a couple of cows, a few chickens and geese and a nice vegetable garden. Many olive trees were there when the land was purchased so it did not take long before we sold olive oil. My father was showing great enthusiasm. He began to leave the year 1921 behind him. He could see a new bright future for himself and his family.

Then it was 1929. That year was a disaster year for hundreds of Jewish families in Palestine. The Arabs declared war on the Jewish community and many throughout the country took to arms. Our farm was vulnerable; access was through the Arab village of Ein-Zeitim. Gone were the greetings and friendly smiles of its inhabitants. Instead we had to dodge flying objects and the word "Yehudi" could be heard loud and clear.

As days went by it became clear that our lives were endangered, travelling to or staying on the farm. We had to leave. Two days later, as the sun was setting behind the mountains, we could see black smoke rising to the sky from the direction of our farm. We knew that what we saw was the end of years of hard work. History repeated itself.

That same night part of the town adjacent to the Arab quarter was in flames. The police could not guarantee our safety. They ordered the entire Jewish population to be evacuated to the police headquarters, and three thousand women, children and elderly men were marched under police protection, holding hands and clinging to each other. Some younger men stayed behind to offer resistance. My father was one of them. We left him at the front gate; he held a gun in his hand as we wished each other "good luck".

For three days and nights we were crammed in a big yard. There were limited rations and sanitation. The children's cries were dimmed by the gunfire noises coming from the surrounding town. My mother was terribly worried about what may be happening to my father. She was shedding lots of tears and so did we. I could see tears in my grandparents' eyes.

On the fourth day, news came through that the British army had arrived and taken control of the town and we were allowed to go home. Fortunately our house was spared. My father was well. We embraced each other. A year or so later, peace returned to Palestine, never complete trust between the Jews and the Arabs but a co-existence. We had to go on with our lives. There was talk about starting again, to rebuild on top of the ashes; my father decided to have another go. They say "third time lucky", so with a bit of financial assistance we built a bigger and more modern house on the farm.

My brother and I were growing up and so was the farm. We had bigger plans. We were going to form a community settlement on the farm. My parents thought it was a wonderful idea. Alas! It was destined to remain just that, because 1936 descended on us. The clouds started to gather on the horizon. You could feel the tension in the air: Arabs versus Jews. We heard of killings here and property burning somewhere else. We had another riot on our hands.

Life on the farm was reaching a critical stage. The three or four other Jewish farmers could not hold out and were endangering their lives by staying on. Once again we could see black smoke reaching to the sky and again years of hard work turned to ashes. This last blow took its toll on my parents, especially my father. How much can one man take? He wanted so much to create a future for his children, something to be proud to hold on to, but it was not to be.

A year went by and he could not settle down and start something else in Safed. His brothers and sisters in America wanted him to come over but he could not get a visa to the United States. Australia was his second choice. He had three nephews and a niece there. They invited him and sent him a visa. It was the saddest decision he had to make, to leave his family and travel overseas, but unfortunately he had run out of options, and accepted the invitation. He made his way to Australia with yet another dream to start something new in a new land. That was in 1938. He opened a fruit and vegetable shop in Cottesloe, a suburb of Perth. The future looked bright and his letters were encouraging. Life in the new land was kind to him, and he could see no reason why his family should not join him in the near future. I followed him a year later.

Little did he realise then that a long world war was ahead of us, and his plans for a bright future for himself and his family in Australia would remain another one of those dreams. After spending seven lonely years, most of them in a fruit and vegetable shop, he very much longed for his family. But with three children married in Palestine and his wife not in the best of health, there was no way that they would come and join him, and he had to go back, having achieved absolutely nothing.

I returned to Australia from Borneo at the end of the war, after serving five and a half years with the AIF, just in time to see him leave. He came home to a very sick wife. She died not many years after his return. His suffering did not end here; he also had to attend the funeral of my brother, who died at the age of 42. During the later part of the war my brother served with the British Navy in the Middle East, and at the time of his death he was in charge of security of the Israeli parliament (the *Knesset*). He was honoured with a State funeral in Jerusalem; my father recited *Kaddish*.

During the Christmas break of 1962, I paid my father a visit, and it was the last time I saw him. He was a very sick man. How painful it was for me, and I am sure for him, to say goodbye, knowing that we would not see each other again. My father found peace at last. He died in 1964 in the same place he was born, 76 years before.

## JEWISH TRADE TOKEN ISSUERS OF VICTORIA

Len Henderson

*(This paper was presented to a meeting of the AJHS Victoria Inc. on 6 October 1994)*

Over the years much has been written about the development of trade in Australia, and these various works have dealt with the economic aspects rather than the people concerned with the trades. In this article I intend to confine myself to a few Token issuers and their family lives.

With the arrival of the First Fleet there was no need for much money as there was nothing to buy from local shops — there were no shops. However, within a few years money was needed to buy goods brought in by traders who wanted our limited produce. The ships' captains needed money for the goods that they brought in return. Rum was one currency used in New South Wales, but this was not an acceptable means of exchange for foreign ships.

Small value "banknotes" were used for sums as little as threepence and sixpence, and the hope was that eventually the storekeeper would have silver to exchange for these Promissory Notes. Silver coin had to be brought in from England, but after a while almost any money was accepted — Spanish, Indian, French, Dutch, or whatever else came to hand. Gold and silver coins had an international value and the coins had to be declared to be more than they were really worth, just to keep them in the colonies.

On the occasions when the few storekeepers held a "Sale" they often did not reduce the price of the goods but advertised that "for this week only your money is worth more"! Another way of keeping the coins out here, rather than see them go back overseas, was to cut and mutilate them so that their value would be lessened outside of Australia. The Holey Dollar and its Dump falsely increased the value of a Spanish Dollar to six shillings and threepence instead of its true value of about five shillings. Dutch and Indian coins had their "value" increased by government proclamations. This was all very well for gold and silver, but it still left users short of small change. Candles and matches were frequently offered as "change" in a purchase, but this was not good enough for many shoppers and sellers.

There had been a long history of private trade tokens in England, but these had ceased after the Napoleonic Wars. It was felt that there could be a use for such an item out here. As well as supplying small change, trade tokens could be a source of free and constant advertising. The honour of producing the first private copper token goes to Victoria; it was the Annand, Smith & Co. Family Grocers of Collins Street who had tokens made in England and shipped out here. They were an instant success.

None of the colonists coming to Australia had thought of having their own coins made, but all had come with the intention of getting rich. The discovery of gold brought an enormous increase in our population and this increased the shortage of small change. The years between 1830 and 1860 were crucial ones in the development of our trade and our fledgling industry. Although many settlers brought out their capital in cash, it was in gold coins and high value silver coins. Between 1830 and 1840 speculation ran riot and everything rose alarmingly in price. The farmers and pastoralists were not used to the harsh climate and severe and drastic droughts which occurred so regularly.

Luxury items and luxury pursuits could still "flush out" the money. The following item is from the book *Port Fairey, the First Fifty Years* by L.W. Powling

... teachers were not always paid their wages, nor tradesmen their bills: yet Burton's Circus could take 200 pounds cash in a week.

So many people were in debt that they could not be confined in the prisons, and a special debtors' prison was established in the city. This was a prison without bars or walls. It extended from Spencer Street to Queen Street, and from Collins Street to Lonsdale Street. It comprised about five and a half city blocks and had an area of about twenty hectares. In one single day thirty-three small claims were heard, for sums running from £2 to £30. One thousand small debt complaints were filed for a monthly sitting of the Court of Requests. The "prisoners" confined to the debtors' prison had to give their "word of honour" they would remain within the boundaries of the prison. They could live there how they liked

... provided that all taverns, victualling houses, ale houses, or houses licensed to sell spirituous liquors, houses of entertainment, and also disorderly houses, and houses of ill-fame shall be excluded out of, and form no part of the said Rules ...

One "dehtor" rented a fully-furnished house and rode his horse about in the area where he was confined.

The time was right for private trade tokens to make their appearance to fill a need. Between 1849 and 1862, sixty-two firms issued their own money — pennies and halfpennies. From now on I will deal with just a few of these men. The firms have long since gone except for Thomas Stokes and MacEwans, but because of the tokens the other people have been remembered.

Isaac Booth kept a draper's shop at 129 Elizabeth Street in 1851. He either lived above or behind the shop. He remained in business until 1855, and must have been one of the first to issue trade tokens. He caused to be issued a pennytoken which reads "I. Booth, Draper, Outfitter, etc. Melbourne, Victoria" in five lines. The reverse bears a seated Britannia holding an olive branch. This period was the start of the gold rush and Elizabeth Street was the main thoroughfare for coaches going to the diggings. Anyone in business there was sure of a good trade, providing the differs had money before they left town and had nuggets on return.

Booth's original shop is still standing. Because it has such a small frontage (barely three metres) it cannot be rebuilt as a separate structure but would have to be incorporated into a neighbouring shop. Nothing is known of the man in any of the surviving trade organisations, either the Softgoods Club or the Chamber of Commerce. As he was in business for such a short time, and in such a good area, perhaps he made his fortune and went home. I have no proof that he was Jewish as the first name of Isaac in those days did not necessarily indicate race and religion, but I include him here just in case.

I am on surer ground with the firm of Samuel and Solomon Lazarus. The two brothers were both Londoners, and began their business here as wholesale and retail fancygoods and crockery warehousemen in Queen's Arcade, which ran through from Lonsdale Street to Little Bourke Street (between Swanston and Elizabeth Streets). Part of this arcade survives as Arcade Alley and is a delivery lane for getting goods into the present firms of Myer and David Jones.

The Lazarus brothers opened their shops in 1853. The Arcade was the only place in Melbourne where you could walk about without falling into potholes in the mud streets. It had wooden floors, and the band of the 40th Regiment played there on the opening day. The "shops" in it were little more than stalls as none of them had glass windows. The Lazarus brothers had six of these stalls. They moved out to 21 Collins Street West and remained there until 1874. In those days Elizabeth Street was such a busy place that

street numbers were designated either East or West of Elizabeth Street. For a brief time they also had a shop in Elizabeth Street at a site later taken over by the City Hotel. Even that has now gone, but it was still there when I was much younger, although I was never in it.

The Levy brothers were another firm in Queen's Arcade. They had first been in business in Lonsdale Street, on the south side, about where Myer now has its cushions and curtain department. When the Levy brothers moved in they were able to advertise that "they held more than one quarter of the shops in the whole Arcade." There were three brothers: Goodman, Nathaniel and Lewis, who ran the Melbourne store, and there was another brother, Alfred, who was their country traveller, taking goods to the goldfields.

There was, at that time, a noted scholar named Nathaniel Levi or Levy who was extremely well thought-of in the Jewish community but I have not been able to work out if this is the same man. The *Australian Dictionary of Biography* has been of no help. Alfred Levy was murdered when travelling. It was assumed that bushrangers were responsible, as his body was found in the bush a little distance from the road. He had been returning to Melbourne from Beechworth.

Apart from their trade tokens, which traders were permitted to issue until 1862 in Victoria, the firm also issued an advertising medal. This was in 1889 and might have commemorated their being forty years in Victoria. As the piece was in white metal, and looked like the Indian double Rupee, they had to be recalled in case people mistook them for florins.

The Levy brothers commenced business in 1852, just at the start of the gold rush. They were in the busiest retail and wholesale part of the city and their enterprise lasted for many years. The partnership of the three brothers continued after the death of Alfred, and in 1867 a Walter Josephs joined the firm. Goodman Levy returned to England where he lived the rest of his life. It became necessary to move to bigger, and better, premises, as Melbourne was developing due to the gold rush and the influx of new settlers. The firm moved to Bourke Street, nearly opposite the present-day Myer store, at about the position of the Walk Arcade. The brothers took over a shop that had been Langwell & Craig, ironmongers. They next moved to the corner of Flinders Lane and Elizabeth Street, and then to 14 Little Collins Street; this would have been east of Elizabeth Street. In 1890 premises which had been built by Hugo Wertheim became available in Lonsdale Street, near where the firm had first started, so they moved back there. Just before Christmas of the same year they were burnt out, but the place was soon re-stocked and it was business as usual.

In 1896, Horace Levy, son of the senior partner, was admitted as a partner in the concern. After the death of Walter Josephs in 1907, the firm went public and traded as Levy & Son, Pty. Comp. Ltd. Goodman Levy managed the London buying side of the business right up to the First World War, when he was about ninety years of age. With a history like that you wonder why the firm has not continued to this day under its own name.

In this paper I am confining myself to Jewish trade token issuers, and, while most of them were in business in Victoria, there were such traders in the other colonies.

Across the Strait we find Lewis Abrahams, who was in business in Hobart as early as 1835, well before the trade token issuing times. Abrahams was married in the Hobart synagogue in December 1855; he was a draper, and died in 1860.

Isaac Friedman was living in Hobart as early as 1840. In 1843 he commenced business as a shopkeeper and general pawnbroker. He had two children, but I know nothing else of him.





*Obverse: tokens issued by Isaac Friedman, Lewis Abrahams, and Reuben Joseph*



*Reverse: tokens issued by Isaac Friedman, Lewis Abrahams, and Reuben Joseph*

Much more is known of Reuben Joseph. His life story was a colourful one with a series of ups and downs. He was born in London in 1790 and when he reached maturity he became a tailor. From that trade he changed to running an old clothes warehouse with a brother. This was in the period just before *Oliver Twist* and "Old Fagin", and he made the mistake of buying some old clothes that were stolen property. He was arrested, tried and found guilty at Middlesex on 25 October 1827, and sentenced to fourteen years transportation. He was sent to Van Diemen's Land on the ship *William Miles* which arrived on 29 July 1828.

He had a wife, Dina, who travelled out on the same ship as a free settler, because she was a dutiful Jewish wife who did not want to be separated from her husband. There must have been some doubt about Reuben Joseph's conviction and the authorities must have thought he was the victim rather than the cause of a crime. When Dina reported to the authorities she was told "You are an unattached woman. You will need help in settling in and will be in need of a servant. We have just the man for you, and he has the same name as yourself." Reuben was assigned to Dina and she purchased two allotments of land to build a home. She also set up a small business. Dina was in charge of Reuben and if he ever misbehaved he could be reported to the Courts; he did misbehave on one occasion but the charge was dismissed.

He was granted a Ticket of Leave on 1 July 1833 and a Conditional Pardon on 16 November 1836. His time as a prisoner was very lenient, except for the period on the ship bringing him out. On 5 November 1841 he received his Free Certificate. His fourteen years transportation had consisted of less than a few years' confinement. In 1844 his loyal wife died and he moved house from New Norfolk to Liverpool Street, Hobart. In 1856 he married a widow, Rachel Levein, at the synagogue. The Hobart synagogue is said to be the oldest in Australia, with the one at Ballarat being the oldest on the mainland.

As a businessman Josephs tendered for the toll-gate at New Town. His first government tender was not successful but his second was. He ran the toll-gate for three years. Then he took it up again for an unspecified period. He died on 21 November 1862 aged 72, well-respected in the community.

Apart from those who issued trade tokens in the great days of development, there were others who are remembered by the advertising checks and medals and discount pieces they issued. This was after trade tokens had been declared illegal.

Louis Cohen was in business from 1890 till 1931. He issued pieces for threepence, sixpence, and one-and threepence. He was a man who was prepared "to have a go" at almost anything he thought would be interesting. He commenced business as a cigarette manufacturer at 69 Swanston Street, with his residential address at 47 Wangaratta Street, Richmond. In 1895 he moved to 53 Swanston Street, and in 1910 was at 63 Swanston Street. I am not entirely sure if this was due to his moving to other buildings, or because of re-numbering of the street. In 1916 he had enlarged to "hairdresser and cigarette manufacturer, both wholesale and retail." He was obviously a man who was prepared to take a risk in business. When he was getting on in years he changed his advertising to Louis Cohen, Wireless Pty. Ltd. He could have got in on the ground floor of radio retailing but unfortunately the Great Depression struck and 1931 was his last entry in the trade and postal directories.

Louis Lipman was at 99 Bourke Street and took over the next door shop as well in 1934. He was a merchant tailor who used deposit coupons to the value of ten shillings, and is remembered because of them.

I would like to end, not with a trade token but with a medal. It is a Royal Humane Society medal for saving life. It was one that was offered to me by the widow of a friend, but I (perhaps) foolishly pointed out "You can't give that away, it was won by Paul's grandfather." The woman was amazed, looked at the front of the medal, looked at the back, turned it over and did the same again, before saying "How do you know that?" With medals there is generally a name on the edge, which the woman had not looked at.

The medal is bronze, with an inscription in Latin, and a near-nude little boy. The boy is blowing on an almost extinguished torch to represent life being re-kindled in the hope, as the wording says, "Perhaps a little spark may yet lie hid." The reverse of the medal has a civic wreath, with an abbreviated Latin inscription, "He has obtained this award for saving the life of a citizen." The medal was awarded to Albert Gottschalk Ascher for an act of bravery on 4 September 1877. Albert Ascher was a passenger on a small ship sailing off the coast of Queensland and he jumped into the water to save the life of a Chinaman named Ah Chow. This was at a time when the Chinese were hated and feared, particularly in Queensland.

Albert Ascher, a German Jew, received the medal, a British one with a Latin inscription, for saving a Chinaman, here in Australia. Here we have a real mixture of inter-racial activities. The records show that the action took place at, or near, Fitzroy River, Keppel Bay, "Sydney", but really it was off the coast of Rockhampton. Ascher is buried in the Melbourne General Cemetery. He married "out", his family married "back in", then a daughter married "out" again, but the firm of Ascher Colour Services, Blenders and Millers of Dye Stuffs to the carpet and clothing industry, is still in business in Preston.

## FROM GHETTOS TO GARDENS

*Jeffrey John Turnbull*

*[In memory of Yankel Rosenbaum]*

This paper briefly outlines the scope and nature of Jewish land settlements in Shepparton, and at Berwick, in the early twentieth-century. These two settlements provide examples in Victoria, that illuminate the processes of settlement in this country. Materials about them describe some of the social, political and economic factors and forces, which contributed to their establishment, operation and eventual demise, as coherent and cohesive communities. The fate of ethnic, cultural and formal *difference* in the context of the powerful homogeneity of the Australian way-of-life is illustrated. In Australia, cultural difference is engulfed by the values and mores of metropolitan suburbia.

The settlers at Shepparton and Berwick had been, but briefly, new arrivals to Melbourne. They had been welcomed and nurtured in that city by voluntary organisations, formed by Jews already living in Melbourne to provide comfort and assistance to new Jewish arrivals, whether immigrants or refugees. These organisations offered settlement on the land as a solution to the sudden increases in Melbourne of the numbers of refugees from Eastern Europe, mainly from villages, towns and cities of Russia. Some of these refugees came via Palestine; others fled Russia through Siberia and China, or through England and America.

The organisations raised funds from the Jewish community of Melbourne, which were used to support the establishment of two land settlement schemes, the first one begun from 1913, in Shepparton, and then another, from 1927, near Berwick. Before occupying their land at Berwick, in addition to the funds, the prospective settlers were given assistance in agricultural methods by the members of the Shepparton Jewish community. They provided the Berwick settlers with work-experience on their own farms and orchards, established fifteen years earlier. The Shepparton settlement, in fact, was to enjoy a more enduring community life than the short-lived settlement at Berwick.

Observation of the Melbourne metropolitan scene today suggests that every culturally distinct new wave of immigrants to this city, or any city in this continent, has usually tended to gather together to live in particular localities. This gathering force seems to be as though by a cultural predetermination and consent. The availability of land and building stock at the lowest cost is a determining factor in this apparent gathering. The choice of location is made however by individuals, who buy property offered in legally defined units on the open market, rather than being able to choose to settle upon land acquired in a prearranged purchase of a whole city area, for a legally determined occupation by an already constituted collective group. A culturally interactive and energetic ethnic community group is formed in a metropolitan area, it seems, when a number of individuals have in sequence chosen to live in a specific locality. One probable expectation of the individual settlers in that chosen locality is that social contact, mutual support and fraternisation will be enhanced amongst like-minded neighbours of the same cultural origins. That same culture and its values and expressions can be readily shared within a relatively close knit area. Yet advantages come to be perceived by most neighbours, for living elsewhere, as a free agent. The desire emerges, it would seem, to re-establish a home in a more affluent suburb, amongst other financially upward individuals, of any cultural origin or ethnicity. Many of the previously ethnically and culturally based newcomers eventually move away with some of their family, probably spouse and children, to live in a locality populated by other socially and culturally mobile nuclear families.

At the beginning of the twentieth century the locations that seem to have been favoured by Jews in Melbourne were Carlton and St Kilda, who were sharing these inner suburbs with similarly formed communities of new immigrants, of other ethnic and cultural origins. There was a synagogue on Bourke Street in the central city as well. In only recent times the last kosher butcher shop on Lygon Street, Carlton, has been sold to a developer, who has converted it now to the ubiquitous Lygon Street dress boutique. More recently still, one of the Jewish families from the 1927 wave of refugees from Russia, the Smorgon family, nostalgically bought back their original shop premises on Lygon Street, and reinstated it as a butcher shop. A newspaper story<sup>1</sup> features Victor Smorgon, who was 14 years of age in 1927. For a few months he attended the Faraday Street school, half a block away from the shop. Soon Victor, and his older brother and future partner, Eric, were working thirteen hours per day in their family's tiny butcher shop. The shop was sold in 1937. The Smorgons moved away, and were to no longer live in Carlton. Most Carlton Jewish families have moved away too, over the decades. Victor and Eric, with cousin David Smorgon, diversified their meat industry interests into steel, plastics and property.

During the latter half of 1913 the first steps occurred toward the establishment of the Shepparton settlement.<sup>2</sup> At a meeting on 21 July, a Trust was formed by communal leaders of Melbourne's Jewish community. Contributions were made to a fund to aid the settlement of more recent Jewish immigrants on the land. The Trustees appointed were Isaac Jacobs, Moise Schalit, and Abraham Kozminsky, the last being replaced after some time by his nephew, Dr J. Leon Jona,<sup>3</sup> who was a research physiologist and a lecturer in medicine at the University of Melbourne. The money subscribed was used to purchase land at Orrvale, in the south-eastern outskirts of Shepparton, which is located about one hundred and ninety kilometres north-east of Melbourne. As most of the settlers were already experienced as orchardists from briefly living in what was then Palestine, the settlement in this Victorian irrigation area was destined for successful establishment. This happened despite the difficulties that are experienced while waiting some years for the trees to bear fruit, before viable incomes can be achieved from the annual fruitpicking. During this eight year interval, these settlers earned incomes from working for others, such as dairy farmers, and already established orchardists in the area.

The Shepparton settlement was the first time in Australia that Jews had settled on the land, rather than in the city.<sup>4</sup> Primary produce in the Shepparton area had formerly been mutton, wool, and wheat. With an active Victorian government irrigation scheme, however, intense agriculture became possible. A network of water channels through the vast flat plains of the Goulburn River Valley was constructed. Lots were prepared for sale, approximately of 40 acres,<sup>5</sup> but varying between 30 acres and 53 acres. Initially 8 Jewish families were able to buy their own properties in close neighbourly proximity. The land was bought with the aid of Trust monies. These purchasers could also borrow against reasonable terms of repayment to the government. The blocks offered were clear sites with two-roomed government-built houses on each block. The land and temporary houses were sold on very easy terms to allcomers. The Victorian Closer Settlement Act had been amended in 1912, and sought to assist rural settlement by a government controlled, low interest, long term, conditional purchase payment scheme.

Yankel Rosenbaum<sup>6</sup> records that the Jewish Agricultural Settlement Fund was constituted on 6 March 1913, with donations by Kozminsky, Jacobs and Dr Schalit, and also by Joseph Kronheimer and Barnett H. Altson. This Fund was later secured by the Trust formed on 21 July 1913. This latter organisation petitioned the government's Closer Settlement Board, to enable the refugee settlers to purchase allotments. This petition was enthusiastically received. All applicants under this scheme were examined by a



board of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission. The Jewish applicants, with their lack of English skills, were greatly assisted by these friendly and supportive examiners.

The settlers arrived in Orrvale, on 14 April 1913, to occupy their new blocks. Their children attended the nearby State School, and in conjunction the community also taught the children about their own culture, in their own language. Meat for the families was sent from Melbourne until 1923, when a ritual slaughterer was brought in, who also participated in teaching Jewish traditions. Nearby a small piece of land was set aside, and on it a house was built to operate as a synagogue. Newman Rosenthal<sup>7</sup> has described his memory of the settlers' synagogue at Orrvale, as a small wooden structure, with "bleak interiors amid the wildest surroundings of the Australian bush [which] contrasted so vividly with the warmth and friendly atmosphere within".

Yankel Rosenbaum, in his B.A. honours essay, includes an appendix listing the names of the families and their farm acreages in the Shepparton District from 1913 to 1938. The I Rubenstein and B Bendel families held 30 acres each in 1913; B Beresinsky held 41; Bere Feiglin and Moishe Feiglin held 40 and 45 acres respectively, and they later diversified into timber milling and fruit-case production; N Rosenbaum held 46; S Gorr and also J Moritz held 53 acres each. For 1915, the listing shows that B Sonkin had possession of the I Rubenstein block, and that additional proprietors were A Dabscheck, 16 acres, and J Dabscheck, 37 acres; the brothers C, R and L Rothberg, had 21, 37, and 41 acres respectively, upon which ostrich farming was briefly attempted; and R Wynn, 32 acres. There was a terrible drought in 1916, with the irrigation channels drying up. For the 1924 listing, a *Shul* [synagogue] on a one and a half acre allotment, D16, appears beside the name of A Feiglin, and consequently beside the name of M Feiglin, in 1929, 1934 and 1938. After 1915, no new families appear to have become settlers until 1929, when the families of M Schuster, I Wolkowicki [later shortened to Wolk], and P Zimmerman are listed, and so is a Jewish Hostel on a 5-acre lot. By 1938, the new names are A Hayat and son, and M and S Snider [from the Berwick settlement], U Greenblat, J Soafkin and S Kronenberg. [see Figure 1].

Thus these Russian immigrants, some with experience of orchard growing in Palestine, came to occupy land at Orrvale. In due course they made a great success of this Jewish Land Settlement enterprise. Newman Rosenthal records the testimony of one settler

There was a moving simplicity about her story and her manner of relating it ... "We can make good farmers and orchardists... For centuries we were forced to make our living in other ways, not because we liked them, but because we weren't allowed to live in any other. But we have shown in Shepparton, that if we are given the opportunity we will make good - even on the land.... And this is much better than a lot of things we might have done had we stayed in the city ..."<sup>8</sup>

Hilary Rubinstein<sup>9</sup> claims that the success of the Shepparton Jewish settlement enabled their products to form the basis of the SPC canned fruit industry. As well, this success could then convince this scheme's detractors and the non-Jewish opponents to it, "that Jews could and would work the land and need not inevitably defect to urban centres".

The MLA for the Goulburn Valley, Mr W.J. Bouchier, wrote a letter to the *Australian Jewish Herald*, published on 29 March 1928, p.4, which praised the Shepparton settlers: "The fact is that these Settlers have become absorbed with Australians and other overseas British settlers to such an extent that, unless one spoke to them and detected their origin, one would take them for successful Australian orchardists". Cultural difference, Bouchier proposed, waned with the settler's economic and agricultural success, and they succumbed to the ideal of becoming singularly "Australians", so much

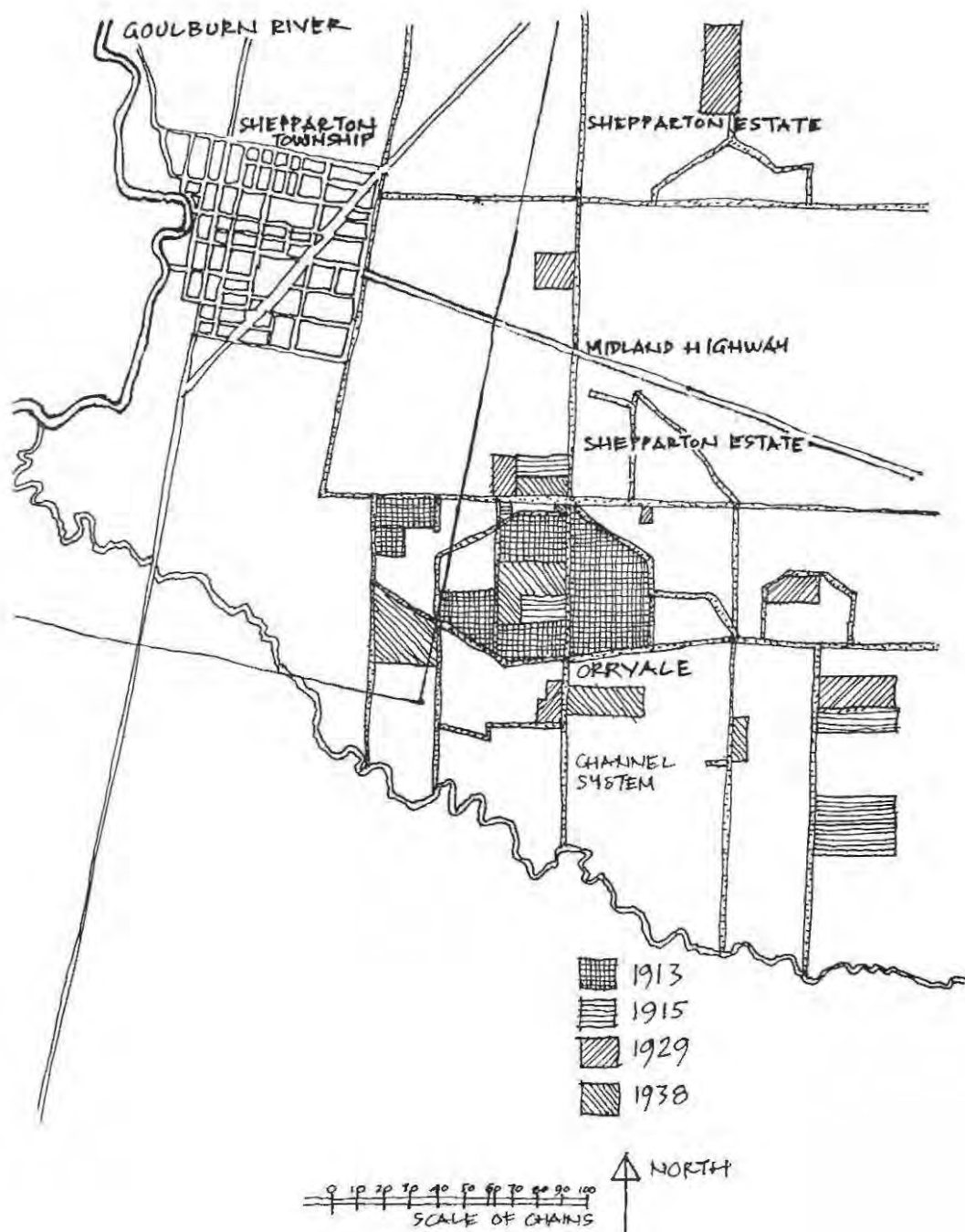


Figure 1: a diagram abstracted from Rosenbaum, "The Shepparton Jewish Community 1913-1939", showing the dispersed nature of the holdings of the Jewish settlers

so that their cultural origins could no longer be detected. Ought not there be cultural difference? "From my personal observations when visiting this Settlement on different occasions, the Jewish settlers seem to have done very well and are the possessors of some very fine orchards. They are good citizens ... their families being brought up on the land have the advantage of being better equipped with a practical knowledge of Agriculture than their fathers before them". Ironically, because they were good citizens, and because their children knew more, and therefore would leave the area, those qualities that Bouchier admired led ultimately to the loss of cultural identity during the 1930s, and the demise of this once recognisably cohesive community.

Following World War One, arrivals in Australia of Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe began to increase; 85% of all Jewish refugees landed in Melbourne. Shalom Slutzkin had created the Ukrainian Jewish Relief Fund, which sent abroad large sums of money for relief, and had a network enabling Melbourne Jews to communicate with and support relatives in Russia. This organisation became the Jewish Welcome Society, to aid those who had already escaped from Russia. The Society had to change its tactics for serving need by arranging to meet newcomers just as their ships berthed at the docks, rather than continue to send food parcels to distant ports. As well, the Victorian Jewish Advisory Board of the immediate past, became the Victorian Jewish Immigration Questions Committee [which, later still, emerged as the Australian Jewish Welfare Society]. These organisations agreed that the success of the land settlement at Shepparton could be repeated elsewhere, thereby providing newcomers with an opportunity to settle on the land. The Australian Jewish Land Settlement Trust was then formed, with Abraham Kozminsky, Archie Michaelis and Elcon Baevski Myer as provisional trustees, to give effect to this resolve: "On the advice of the closer settlement experts of the Victorian Government, land was purchased at Berwick, Victoria, upon which a number of migrants were settled".<sup>10</sup>

Samuel Wynn was a member of the very active executive of six for the Jewish Welcome Society, "whose function it was to meet ships, seek out Jewish immigrants and give help".<sup>11</sup> The Society grew out of the concerns essentially of Jews of European origin, recognising the plight of Eastern European Jewish newcomers. The Society sought to alleviate their suffering and bewilderment, and to give them comfort and a start, while the Anglo-Jews, who comprised the greater number within Melbourne's Jewish community, were not especially concerned. Alan Wynn claims this majority was not aroused enough to become involved with these pathetic, anxious, and destitute refugees. The new arrivals were often non English-speaking. The turmoil of post-war cities in Eastern Europe had deprived them of a good education, and from obtaining work skills and commercial experience. In the Society's first year sixty-seven ships were met. The 400 plus who were identified, were found temporary jobs and lodgings. Very soon 1000 had been visited at the ships, but the flow of refugees only increased.

An open meeting was held at the Montefiore Hall in Carlton on 3 August 1927. The meeting determined that the Australian Jewish Settlement Trust be formed. The purpose of the AJS Trust was "to solve the problem of the Jewish migration, through the creation of new settlers as poulterers, market gardeners, dairymen and fruitgrowers, and all sorts of other agricultural forms and means, both individually and in group partnerships".<sup>12</sup> Dr Albert E. Jones was elected chairman of this Trust, Levi Morris its treasurer, and Nisson Leonard-Kanevsky became the honorary director of the executive. Other members elected were Sydney Keith, Arthur Rose, Israel Sher, and Newman Rosenthal.<sup>13</sup> Their task was to appoint an expert panel, chosen to interview applicants wishing to settle on the land, to ascertain their reliability and suitability, and their farming skill levels. This Trust executive was also charged to find suitable land to buy.

The first undertaking by the AJS Trust, however, was building a hostel on the 5-acre Orrvale lot mentioned previously. The hostel was to provide accommodation for newcomers, so that they could gain practical agricultural work experience in Shepparton. This block had a water channel running through it, and so it was capable of being cultivated. The Jewish Welcome Society assisted in the procurement of the hostel building. On 20 March 1928, the building committee, comprising Nisson Leonard-Kanevsky, Israel Sher, Sam Wynn, and A Mushin, took over the hostel from the contractor. They gave the hostel keys to its House Committee, consisting of the President of the Shepparton Jewish Settlers, Mr Beresinsky, the Secretary, Mr B Rosenbaum, and committee, Messrs Edelman, Perelman, and J Rosenbaum, and the manager-caterer, Mr Shapiro.<sup>14</sup> Through its doors were soon to pass 1000 Jewish people, who all found work in the fields and orchards in the Shepparton district. Some were to successfully apply for land at Berwick, as purchased by the AJS Trust.

The hostel building contained 12 bedrooms, for 24 people. To make up a total of 50 persons, the sleep-out verandahs which had been insect-screened, could be closed in and occupied. The dining room could seat 75 to 100 diners. This room was also used as a reading and lecture room, and had a large fireplace in its centre. A separate adjoining building contained the bath rooms, showers, and the wash-house. This accommodation was quite splendid in the eyes of the Jewish orchardists, and compared more than favourably with the kind of quarters built to house seasonal fruitpickers on the local orchard properties. The hostel was able to act as a labour exchange during the harvest period.<sup>15</sup>

Berwick was chosen by the AJS Trust, firstly because the purchase of market garden land, in contrast to dairy farm land or orchard growing land, was going to allow the placement of the maximum number of settlers for the same amount of donations collected. Secondly, being only about 45 kilometres east from Melbourne, the AJS Trust executive could participate more readily in the establishment of the settlement, permitting greater management control and contact for advising the settlers. Thirdly, fruit growing had such a long lead time before its income earning capacity could be reached. Fruit was being sorely oversupplied at that time. Cropping greens was potentially quick and profitable, achieving a faster return of the invested capital. Water channel reticulation was in place, and piped water as well promised an endless supply. The Closer Settlement Scheme officers in nearby Melbourne, and Lands Department personnel working in the district, meant that experts were readily accessible for giving advice.

The research leading to the writing of this paper came about because the life of the prominent business identity, N.L. Kanevsky, was being investigated, for another purpose altogether.<sup>16</sup> Nisson Leonard-Kanevsky was a significant client of the architects, Walter and Marion Griffin.<sup>17</sup>

Sydney Keith was also a significant client of the Griffins.<sup>18</sup> It was James Weirick<sup>19</sup> who had noted that Kanevsky's name appeared in the index of a recent publication by Hilary Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia*.<sup>20</sup> Her book revealed that Kanevsky had been involved in both Jewish land settlements during the mid 1920s. Kanevsky's role at Shepparton was as described, as chairman of a committee providing a hostel for newly arrived Jewish refugees, some undergoing training in agrarian methods and animal husbandry skills before taking up land at Berwick. The Berwick land settlement, as an idea, was put with persuasive advocacy by Kanevsky at the Montefiore Hall meeting, 3 August 1927. Jews then fleeing from urban squalor in Europe, he maintained, could live by farming in the Victorian countryside, if given the same opportunities as had Jews at Orrvale.



Kanevsky's own story is useful in this chronicle, illuminating the kinds of forces and factors in this century that have affected newcomers in the processes of settlement in Australia. Nisson Leonard-Kanevsky was born in Kiev in 1888, a son of Joshua Kanevsky, merchant, and Rachel Leonard Novakovsky.<sup>21</sup> A pogrom against the Jews in Kiev had already occurred in 1881. In 1891 Jews were arbitrarily subjected to intense interrogation and curfew controls in that city. A Jewish uprising occurred in Kiev on 18th October 1905, which triggered a large scale pogrom, when Jews were controlled and repressed by curfews, document searches, and random house raids. A major exodus of Jews from Kiev followed. Kanevsky, aged 19, was probably expelled, rather than voluntarily migrating from Kiev, in 1907. He made his escape through Siberia, arriving for the first time in Melbourne in 1908.<sup>22</sup> He returned to Russia, however, to bring out his sister, Leah [or sometimes, Lena], and they wandered, to England, USA, New Zealand, then to Australia. As she preferred the USA, Kanevsky took her back there, where after some time she married a man surnamed Busch.



*Nisson Leonard-Kanevsky*

The likely date for Nisson Leonard-Kanevsky's second arrival in Australia was 1910, as he later talked of having obtained a construction worker's job on Flinders Street Railway Station, soon after he returned to Melbourne.<sup>23</sup> Some time later he established himself in business in Flinders Lane, such that when he was married to Vera Minerva Salome Douglas in April 1916, he was described as a "merchant" on his marriage certificate, which gave the Carlyone Hotel, Melbourne, as his address. His business address in 1919 was 241 Flinders Lane. Vera was the daughter of a Scot, Captain James Douglas, a Boer War veteran, and of Jane Minerva Bell. Nisson and Vera had two children, Gloria Rae [later, Mrs Alec Fraser] and Boris Dorian. Nisson had become a substantial success in the clothing trade, when in 1922 he commissioned the Griffins to design him "Leonard House", 44-46 Swanston Street, Melbourne. Nisson and Vera, and their son, Boris and his wife Marie and their son, Peter, lived at the Griffins' Castlecrag Estate, NSW, at various times in the 1930s, staying in the Fishwick House, designed by the Griffins in 1929. Marie was the sister of Marshall Fordham, the Griffins' principal draftsman in their Melbourne office in the 1930s. During that same decade Boris managed a Kanevsky branch office in Sydney. Nisson's business interests were diverse, indicative of his drive and energy. His changing financial fortunes collapsed a number of times, but he would endure and succeed again. After World War Two, he and

Vera raised Aberdeen Angus cattle on their property, "Fairview", at Lardner, via Warragul, Victoria. Nisson often slept overnight in his city office, but for his last three years, he had rooms at the Francis Hotel in central Melbourne. He died there on 12 May, 1954, aged 66 years. Vera died in Warragul, November 1972.

The question remains whether Kanevsky himself would have opted to join a Jewish group of newcomers establishing a community in the Victorian countryside, if such an opportunity had been available in 1908 or 1910? The assumption can be made that he might have done so, because he admired the Shepparton settlement so much. Kanevsky enthusiastically developed the idea that the Shepparton example could be beneficially followed in creating new Jewish communities on the land. He and Vera finally possessed their own farm.

Incomplete though a knowledge of his own personal history may be, the strongest impression is given of a person who was loyal to his culture and his kinfolk. Peter Leonard-Kanevsky recalls his grandfather was intensely proud of being Russian. But Nisson was also willing to engage with the Australian way-of-life, and that entailed risking a loss of a culturally different identity. He must knowingly have dared so, when he chose to break with custom in marriage. He became a devoted family man and a dynamic businessman, while he resisted conformity. He felt strongly and passionately to be Russian, and a Jew; yet he was an active citizen in another land. His empathy with the Griffins suggests he too could imagine being a new kind of individual, in a newly emerging democratic and heterogeneous society. The choices were difficult, his courage and zest for life so admirable.

Returning to the story of Berwick, the banner headline in the *Australian Jewish Herald*, 1 December 1927, tells of "Immigrants on the Land ... Jewish Market Gardeners Established at Berwick ... Only Numbers can make a Jewish life possible". The article that follows was written by that newspaper's editor at one time, Newman Rosenthal. The average size of the blocks were 19 acres for the first settlers in the Berwick area, being another irrigated subdivision scheme made by the Closer Settlement Board.<sup>24</sup> Initially blocks for four Jewish families were purchased on the usual easy terms, like those offered by the same Board at Orrvale. Rosenthal felt that the Berwick Jewish settlers were "of a very fine type. They have been through so much on the other side of the world, that the sunshine and freedom, stir by contrast. To see them—men, women and children—in a field as yet barren, in places wild and scrubby, still to be cleared, sent something of a thrill through one's veins ... There are four men to the one [one-horse] plough, for they do things in a happy spirit out there... Three children are thoroughly enjoying themselves. The freer life of the open air is obviously a luxury to these youngsters from Eastern Europe. Some day they will be strong, healthy, happy Australians. *V'chen y'hi rotzon!*"

Four months later four more Jewish settlers had been settled on their new blocks at Berwick. The area now enjoyed completed new government roadways. Many visitors were coming to see the "Jewish Colony" on Saturdays and Sundays!<sup>25</sup> ... "the place is fast taking shape, and already presents a picture ...". The settlers were often disrupted by Jewish families picnicking amongst the fields. "The newly-built [government] houses are becoming surrounded with green vegetables. Poultry pens, sheds, out-buildings, [government built] are springing up. The cackling songs of pedigreed poultry are becoming louder as their numbers increase. And the faces of the settlers are becoming brighter; the hope of soon making a living from the farm does not look so very distant now, as it did four months ago ... Mr N. Leonard-Kanevsky, one of the directors of the Land Settlement Trust, is becoming almost a resident of Berwick. One day last week he brought up a poultry expert, the second an orchardist, the third, a strawberry

grower, all giving advice and guidance to the settlers... Several Shepparton farmers have promised to come down themselves, and those who cannot do so, will send down the second generation to assist the settlers with the planting of the orchards".

The Berwick settlers held a weekly meeting, presided over by Kanevsky.<sup>26</sup> The eight initial Berwick settlers were A Hayat Snr, N Meshaloff, I Eizenberg, G Rovkin, A Sneid, H Ash, D Brown, and Hayat Jnr. At the late March meeting, in 1928, the settlers decided to form a Narre Warren and Berwick Progress Association. Kanevsky also urged them to form a Berwick Farmers' Association, which they did. In September 1928, Nisson Leonard-Kanevsky travelled with Rabbi Israel Brodie and Louis [Levi] Morris to Sydney, and spoke and answered questions at a meeting of the Jewish community.<sup>27</sup> Kanevsky reported that the new blocks at Berwick were 12 to 15 acres in area, where 5 acres was probably sufficient for one family to make a living. Jewish settlers were able to buy 11 blocks of the first 89 sold by the Closer Settlement Board, which had then been increased to 17 blocks with 63 inhabitants in all. "We are making application for another 10 or 12 blocks; the rest is occupied by other settlers. If we had more money we could take up other blocks as well".

The *Australian Jewish Herald* records that during 1929 the Berwick settlement began to fail.<sup>28</sup> In the Great Depression commodity prices rapidly plummeted. The settlers began to walk off their properties, and by 1937, only one Jewish farmer remained. In Newman Rosenthal's summary of what befell the Berwick community, he states that it was the depression which brought such grief to the enterprise: "the big misfortune [was] ... that they had funded their farms precisely at the time when the crisis, like a dark threatening cloud, descended upon economic life in Australia."<sup>29</sup> These settlers were too inexperienced to compensate their losses with greater and greater productivity, to cope with the lower and lower prices. The expert advice that was available seemed now inappropriate, the farmers feeling that they had been misled in the first instance. In despair, the farmers simply left their crops to rot in the ground, and left for the city. The sorry state of enormous debts, and even bankruptcy, experienced by the Jewish farmers of Berwick, was now symptomatic of the fortunes of farmers everywhere. The anguish of financial failure with no hope of negotiating new loans or funds, was a common occurrence among all Victorian farmers, and the Government did not escape the calamity either. The Jewish community of Berwick had to dissipate, and simply disappeared without physical trace. Kanevsky must have been bitterly disappointed.

As an irretrievable consequence of the cessation of farming activities at Berwick, the call for training Jewish newcomers at Orrvale fell away to nought. There could be little seasonal work either for fruitpickers, when it was a better economic strategy to leave the fruit on the trees. The hostel became deserted and fell into disrepair.

The committee of the Shepparton Settlers' Association, however, as conditions improved, organised the hostel to be moved to a position next to the *shul*, on lot D16. Now located in the centre of the original settlement, the hostel was enlarged and refurbished to provide sleeping accommodation for 100 people, together with a kitchen to suit, and also providing a communal hall to be used as a dining room by the hostel lodgers. As economic conditions became better, the hostel filled with young Jewish people and Jewish newcomers, who could earn very high wages during the fruitpicking season.

Although the original settled orchardists wished to expand the numbers of the Jewish community in Shepparton, for the sake of the community's survival, very few new settlers came to establish permanently. Of those that came for the seasonal work, the young were engaging in temporary work to finance their studies for the professions, and the newcomers were attempting to earn enough to return to the metropolitan area and

set up a business. "The workload and social disadvantages caused Shepparton to remain an unattractive option for the urbanised Jewish settler [and newcomer]." <sup>30</sup> Fruitpicking meant hard work from sunrise to sundown every day [except the Sabbath], leaving no time for anything else, in the way of study or socialising. By 1939 it became clear to the Jewish orchardists, that no new settlers could be attracted to live in Shepparton. The Shepparton settlers' children, as adults, were moving away, preferring the life and work available in the city. The Jewish land settlement at Shepparton had become a great economic success, but its life as a viable cultural enclave was becoming limited. Rosenbaum thought the settlement was best described as "a congregation of Jewish individuals, rather than an individual Jewish congregation." <sup>31</sup>

The establishment, the rise and then the failure of these settlements to ultimately sustain a strong Jewish community life and identity, is evidence of the social and financial factors and forces in Australia, that come to bear hard upon the maintenance of cultural difference. Despite cultural tolerance and religious freedom, and of other expressions and conditions appropriate for a pluralistic society, pressures that make minorities conform will eventually come upon settlers from any land and culture. If not upon the settlers themselves, the gradual diminution of cultural difference will certainly come then upon their children and grandchildren.

The trend is ever toward assimilation and homogeneity within the community at large, rather than toward heterogeneity, from richly diverse origins and beginnings. The ways, means and forms, for planning and building settlements in Australia were largely set, wherever, during the first wave of colonisation. They were British ways, and similarly Australian institutions were based upon British models, all perhaps modified a little by American experience. Culturally different settlers arriving later do not effect major changes to that infrastructure and built environment and its management. The Jewish settlers of Shepparton and Berwick fitted into existing conditions. They did not create a discrete and lasting Jewish place. The Jewish settlers obtained their agricultural holdings on the open market, and not through any land grant or special reservation, and their housing and other structures were designed and built by the government bureaucracy, according to local technologies, planning and taste. The settlers' ethnicity and cultural difference was not expressed in the forms of the settlement and its architecture. Nowadays there is almost no evidence that these Jewish settlements ever happened, except for these wonderful stories.

Nisson Leonard-Kanevsky did make a mark on our built environment, profoundly, some might say. In 1927, Kanevsky became interested in an invention of a reverberatory incinerator by municipal engineer, John Boadle. RIECo [Reverberatory Incinerator Engineering Company] was formed, and this company, with building designs by the Griffins, successfully tendered for thirteen municipal garbage destructors, which were fitted with RIECo equipment. While some municipal politicians and bureaucracies have neglected, mutilated or destroyed this heritage of architectural difference in the mediocrity of homogeneously planned and built Australia, some of these spectacular municipal incinerators remain as an inheritance from the Griffins and Nisson Leonard-Kanevsky.

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The author gratefully acknowledges the generous assistance of the Sydney City Council, Professor James Weirick, Peter Navaretti, Simon Reeves, Anne Russell [of Shepparton], Ziva Shavitsky, Hilary Rubinstein, Serge Liberman, Peter Leonard-Kanevsky, and Di Betts.

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The Age, Friday 29 October 1993, p.7, carries a picture of Mr Victor Smorgon standing in the re-acquired shop in Lygon Street, Carlton. There is an accompanying short article by Louise Martin. The photo shows that the Smorgon family had already reinstated it as a butcher's shop. Unhappily the family has had to close the shop again, in early 1995.

<sup>2</sup> Newman Rosenthal, *Look Back with Pride*, Nelson, Melbourne, 1971, p. 69. This book is an excellent account of the St Kilda Hebrew Congregation. After World War Two, Newman Rosenthal became a Professor at the University of Melbourne, utilising his knowledge and experience of the media and communications.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p.70. Dr Jona's brother, Jacob Jona, was once president of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, and Jacob's son, Walter Jona, became a member of the Victorian Legislative Assembly, and a Minister in a period of Liberal Party Government.

<sup>4</sup> J. Trevaks, "The success of the Shepparton Jewish orchardists", *Australian Jewish Almanac*, Melbourne, 1937. Serge Liberman very kindly translated this article in December 1993, from Yiddish into English, for my use in this paper.

<sup>5</sup> Yankel Rosenbaum, "The Shepparton Jewish Community 1913-1939", unpublished Bachelor of Arts honours essay, Department of History, University of Melbourne, 1984. Jacob Trevaks [spelt Triwax in the contents pages in English in the *Australian Jewish Almanac*, and changed here due to the advice of Dr Liberman] offers figures of 6 initial Jewish settlers buying 40-acre government prepared blocks, but Rosenbaum's figures come from documents rather than from newspaper articles.

<sup>6</sup> Yankel Rosenbaum, having graduated from the University of Melbourne, was studying for a doctoral degree in New York in 1991. He was knifed in a Brooklyn street, when black youths rioted in retaliation to a fatal road accident, involving a Jewish driver. He died the next day of his untreated wounds in the Kings County Hospital. See Penelope DeBelle, "The Heights of Injustice", *Age*, Melbourne, Saturday 21 August 1993, p.15.

<sup>7</sup> Rosenthal, *Look Back with Pride*, *loc cit*, p.69.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, p.70.

<sup>9</sup> Hilary Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria 1835-1985*, Jewish Museum of Australia, Allen & Unwin, Melbourne, 1986, p.171.

<sup>10</sup> Rosenthal, *Look Back with Pride*, *op cit*, p.71.

<sup>11</sup> Alan Wynn, *The Fortunes of Samuel Wynn*, Cassell, Australia, 1968, p.116.

<sup>12</sup> Newman Rosenthal, "An Unsuccessful Attempt to Settle Jews on the Land", *Australian Jewish Almanac*, Melbourne, 1937. Again I am most grateful to Serge Liberman for generously translating this article into English from Yiddish, December 1993.

<sup>13</sup> *Australian Jewish Herald*, 1 December 1927, p.4.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, 29 March 1928, p.4, "Australian Jewish Land Settlement Trust. Interesting Reports of Activities. Berwick. Shepparton." The citations of 'Mr' are repeated here.

<sup>15</sup> The question of whether this hostel was designed by the Griffins was asked, for reasons that become apparent in this paper. No evidence has emerged, however, to confirm that the

hostel was designed by the Griffins.

<sup>16</sup> Nisson Leonard-Kanevsky is of great interest to the Griffin Exchange Project, Faculty of Architecture Building and Planning, University of Melbourne, Parkville, Victoria 3052, tel (03) 344 6448, as are all the clients, builders, and engineers involved in projects designed by the architects, Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Lucy Mahony Griffin. The Griffins' professional colleagues and friends too, are being researched. The Griffins were also immigrants, from America, and as everyone knows, designed the most significant of all Australian country settlements: Canberra. The Griffin Exchange Project has been established between the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and the University of Melbourne.

<sup>17</sup> Kanevsky approached the Griffins in their Collins Street office, to design him an office building at 44-46 Elizabeth Street. Thus, the 8-storey "Leonard House" was built, 1922-24. Kanevsky occupied the 4th floor of the building, and the Griffins moved their Melbourne office to the 5th floor of this new building.

<sup>18</sup> Sydney Keith was managing director of Holders Pty. Ltd. in Bourke Street, Melbourne, and the Griffins made additions to his store in 1926, and also made alterations to it in 1931. Keith's parents were born in New Zealand. When a Pacific war seemed imminent, he and his wife Beatrice migrated to USA. They lived in Bel Air in Los Angeles. He died there, aged 53 years, on 26 March 1944. This research on Keith is by Peter Navaretti.

<sup>19</sup> Professor James Weirick, head of the Landscape Architecture Department, UofNSW, and Peter Navaretti, RMIT, are the two leading scholars in Australia on the Griffins' complete works in USA, Australia and India. They are directly involved with Jeff Turnbull in the production by the Griffin Exchange Project of a catalogue of the complete Australian and Indian buildings and projects of the Griffins. At Urbana-Champaign, Professors Paul Kruty and Paul Sprague are compiling a companion volume on the Griffins' American work.

<sup>20</sup> *The Jews in Australia: a thematic history*, 2 volumes, Heinemann, Port Melbourne, 1991. Volume I, 1788-1945, is written by Hilary L. Rubinstein, and Volume II, 1945 to the present, is written by W.D. [Bill] Rubinstein.

<sup>21</sup> Peter Navaretti is the basic researcher of the labyrinth of public records of many kinds from many authorities, and I thank him for making available his documentation. Simon Reeves has been during recent months a most enthusiastic assistant to Peter and myself.

<sup>22</sup> From a record of interview, by Peter Navaretti and Jeff Turnbull, with cousins Peter Leonard-Kanevsky and Di Betts, grandchildren of Nisson Leonard-Kanevsky, November 1993. Having located Kanevsky's living descendants, they proved to be very helpful, and provided invaluable facts and photos. I thank Di Betts and Peter Leonard-Kanevsky.

<sup>23</sup> "Flinders Street Station was built to the competition-winning design of Fawcett & Ashworth in 1905-10". Miles Lewis with Philip Goad and Alan Mayne, *Melbourne: The City's History and Development*, The City of Melbourne, 1994, p.96.

<sup>24</sup> Patricia Dale and Jan Botcher from the City of Casey have kindly provided information upon one of the blocks in the area, bought by the AJS Trust in 1928. The Springfield Homestead and Cheese Factory property had been acquired by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, and had been divided into smaller allotments. Lot 9 Section 4, Hallam Valley, is recorded as having been purchased by the AJS Trust, and was rated at sixty pounds per annum between 1928 to 1931, when the rate was marked down to fifty four pounds per annum. Jacob Hearn of the Closer Settlement Board became the ratepayer in 1933.

<sup>25</sup> *The Australian Jewish Herald*, 3 May 1928, p.4.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, 29 March 1928, p.4.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, 6 September 1928, p.8, "Victorian Delegates in Sydney : Land Settlement Campaign Opened in NSW: Committee Appointed to Co-operate with Victorian Committee".

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, 20 February 1930, pp.4-5, and 19 March 1931, p.3.

<sup>29</sup> Newman Rosenthal, "An Unsuccessful Attempt to Settle Jews on the Land", *Australian Jewish Almanac*, 1937.

<sup>30</sup> Rosenbaum, *op cit*, p.50.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*.







Dr. Fanny Reading read a paper on "The Jewish woman and Palestine", in which she described her visit to the Holy Land where she witnessed the pre-natal care centres recently established in various towns, as well as the modern medical services run by Hadassah in various parts of the country for the general population.

The Organising Secretary of the movement, Mark Ettinger, in addition to organising the conference and taking upon himself to write much of the material presented there, made a long and detailed presentation entitled "The Palestine Report". His lecture was to have serious repercussions far beyond the shores of Australia.

Ettinger divided his presentation into sections: Political, Practical Work in Palestine, Zionist Support, and Plans for the Next Ten Years. He covered such subjects as Customs Tariffs, Education, Public Health, Unemployment, Taxation, Immigration, Electricity, Atlith Salt and Dead Sea Concessions, Haifa Harbour, Land Purchase and so on, painting a very rosy picture of great Zionist achievement.

He made some rash statements such as "The Jews of Palestine are the only section of the population interested in industry and hence in protective tariffs. ... The Zionist Organisation is a body unique in character and complicated in its workings. It has practically all the functions and duties of a Government, but derives its strength and resources not from one territory as is the case with all governments, but from about seventy different countries. The supreme government of the organisation is in the hands of the Zionist Congress — our House of Commons ...". Ettinger went on in this vein, describing all the Zionist achievements and explaining the workings of the Zionist Organisation and all its committees.

His address was accepted without discussion as important information and the conference went on with its business. However some months later, in February 1930, the English edition of *Falastin*, the Arab national organ, published a front page banner headline

Zionism and 'Good Faith'. The End Justifies the Means. How Zion is Rebuilt.

The Arabs have always been pointing out that official Zionism had nothing in it which may justify the sympathy of the world in general ... In this issue, we are publishing in *toto* the Zionist Report delivered by Mr. Ettinger at the Zionist Conference in Sydney. We shall leave to our readers to form their own conclusion pointing out to them the scandalous way in which private influence has been exerted on the Government to undertake measures favorable to the Zionists and prejudicial to the Arabs ... The whole bears out the reputation of the Jewish genius for intrigue and is a lamentable proof how the Palestine Government has bowed to the Zionist demands.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to the entire front page, page six was also devoted to reproducing the Ettinger address. There were some significant changes and inserts made to Ettinger's original text so as to strengthen the anti-Zionist case, but without seeing the original, readers would not have been aware that such manipulation had taken place.

The matter reached the highest echelons of the Zionist Organisation headquarters in Jerusalem and F.H. Kisch,<sup>7</sup> member of the Executive of the Jewish Agency and Director of its Political Department, wrote to the Management of the *Keren Hayesod* with copies to Members of the Jewish Agency Executive

No better material for anti-Zionist and anti-Jewish propaganda can be found by the *Falastin* than that afforded by this article, which contains not only grave political indiscretions, but numerous mis-statements of fact. The Board of *Keren Hayesod* will no doubt take suitable action in the matter.

I have to urge that both the Keren Hayesod and Keren Kayemeth should take steps to ensure that propagandists and organisers should be doubly guarded in their comments, so as to avoid any statements or comments which can be turned against us ... it is hoped that Zionist propagandists will take pains that their work be governed by the limits of truth. It is a lamentable fact that the Falastin should be justified in suggesting in another place that "those who talk about the spiritual world of Israel founded on justice and truth are straying from the path."<sup>8</sup>

While this very serious criticism came months after Ettinger left Australia, his career as a Zionist emissary and propagandist for the National Fund was over, although he later worked for the Zionist movement in the London Office in an administrative capacity.

With regard to the Zionist movement in Australia, the Second Zionist Conference of 1929 was to be the last important public showing of Zionist strength for almost a decade.

The great economic Depression together with internal organisational weaknesses hindered the development of the movement during most of the 1930s. It was only when there was a clear awareness in the Australian Jewish community of the terrible dangers facing the Jews in Europe, and a new generation of Zionist leaders took over, that the Zionist message made inroads into all sections of the community and the movement gathered strength and influence.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Central Zionist Archives (CZA) KH4/292, S. Shilkin, Honorary Secretary, W.A. Zionist Association, to M. Ettinger, 11 November 1929.

<sup>2</sup> CZA KH4/296, P.J. Marks to Secretary, Keren Hayesod, Jerusalem, 17 June 1930.

<sup>3</sup> Rabbi Israel Brodie was the President of the Federation from its inception, and General Sir John Monash served as the Honorary President.

<sup>4</sup> CZA KH4/C933, M. Ettinger to Keren Hayesod, Jerusalem, 3 June 1929.

<sup>5</sup> *Reports and Proceedings of the Second Australian Zionist Conference, Sydney, May 1929*; published by the Australian Zionist Federation, 1929.

<sup>6</sup> *Falastin*, Vol. 1, No. 24, Jaffa, 22 February 1930.

<sup>7</sup> *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 10, p. 1062 for a short biography of Brigadier Frederick H. Kisch.

<sup>8</sup> See CZA KH4/295, letter from Kisch to Keren Hayesod management, in Hebrew, 26 February 1930.

## WESLEY COLLEGE: THE JEWISH EXPERIENCE

Lionel E. Fredman

*(This paper was presented at the 9th annual conference of the Australian Association for Jewish Studies, Melbourne, on 11 July 1995)*

I hope to shed some light on ethnic awareness and educational institutions as well as the specific and rewarding relationship of Wesley College (Melbourne) and the Jewish experience.

A number of questions suggest themselves. Was the connection due to Wesley's proximity to an emergent Jewish middle class in St. Kilda? Were there early role models for the students both as scholars and members of the leading families? Did Jewish students find special recognition and stimulus? Was a quality education the main factor in choice of school? Did Wesley adopt diversity as a conscious policy? Were their aims in choice of school realised? Were their abiding recollections of school years favourable? Did Jewish students make their mark in service as well as scholarship?

The only comparable study is by Morris Forbes on Sydney Grammar School, in the *AJHS Journal*, Volume X, Part 8, 1990. Wesley is well served by historians including Felix Myer's biography of the great Headmaster, Laurence A. Adamson, in 1932; the period between 1865 to 1919 edited by Nye in 1921; the period between 1920 and 1940 edited by a former headmaster and contributor, Harold Stewart, in 1941; and Blainey, Morrissey and Hulme who celebrated the centenary in 1967 with a readable and critical work much superior to the usual school histories. Geoffrey Blainey, who has become our best-known and most versatile historian, a contemporary and old friend, last year added some specific comments. Several of the staff were helpful, particularly Margaret Taft, editor of the *Lion* and Director of Admissions and Community Relations, who belongs to a well-known Jewish family, and Bruce Gregory, an old friend, who spends his retirement from teaching by sustaining the Old Wesley (OW) Collegians Association. I obtained significant verbal and written recollections from fifteen Jewish OWs to which I might add myself and two brothers who attended between 1944 and 1956. There was some useful material as well as glimpses of a changing institutional and educational world in past issues of the school magazines, the *Chronicle* and the *Lion*. The Adamson scrapbooks, used by the author of the entry in the Australian Dictionary of Biography (ADB), were lost in the recent fire.

Blainey explains the attraction for Jewish students in the early years by referring to the standing and record of the headmaster between 1871 and 1875, Martin Howy Irving (formerly Professor of Classics at the University of Melbourne), the proximity of the school to Jewish residences, and the lack of compulsion in matters religious. We can develop these points further. The story of the Michaelis-Hallenstein families and St. Kilda Synagogue describes the upward mobility and relocation of an Anglo-Jewish middle class, including one who served them at their synagogue for over fifty years, my grandfather Joel. A former student and then headmaster of Melbourne Hebrew School between 1881 to 1886, he suddenly lost his job in 1886 when secular teaching was terminated. He made the move from his parents' home in North Melbourne across the river to St. Kilda in 1888. Moritz Michaelis had already laid the foundation stone of the St. Kilda synagogue in July 1872. That was also the year of a major Education Act and the debate encompassed the day school, Melbourne Hebrew College, opened in 1860 and operating as a Common School from 1865, and due to lose its grant. Michaelis favoured after-school Jewish instruction and criticised the concept of a day school but

not while the secular aims of the new laws were not being carried out in choice of books. In his memoirs published in 1899 he says that he lost, then recovered, his faith, but was never again strictly Orthodox. His principles and Fredman's disillusionment shaped the indifference of the St. Kilda establishment to day schools.

Moritz Michaelis sent his son, Frederick David, who in turn sent his sons, Frank and Archie, to Wesley. Joel Fredman sent his son, Stanley, there for all his secondary schooling to Matriculation because it was within easy walking distance from their residence, a short distance up Wellington Street hill from the Junction, and also because the school offered half fees to all clergy, not just Methodists. Proximity did not always apply. The next Fredman generation travelled from a residential medical practice at Northcote south, north of the river. Reflecting this social composition, St. Kilda was represented in the Legislative Assembly by Archie Michaelis between 1932–1952 and Baron Snider between 1955–1964, and adjacent Caulfield by Harold Cohen, after a period in the Legislative Council, between 1935–1943.

Wesley College, opening in 1866, was barely five years old when it attracted Irving as headmaster, presumably matching the then generous Professorial salaries, and attracting two of its most outstanding students ever, Samuel Alexander and Felix Meyer. Both were Jewish, both lived at St. Kilda, Alexander being a neighbour of the first headmaster, James Corrigan, and both obtained all three Exhibitions for the highest in the colony at Matriculation, the total number then awarded annually, in 1875 and 1876 respectively.

Alexander later won a scholarship to England, then a First at Balliol, and was chosen as a Fellow at Lincoln College, Oxford, the first Jew to be so chosen by Oxford or Cambridge. Appointed to the Chair of Philosophy at Manchester in 1893, he served for over thirty years as a distinguished and productive scholar, and recipient of the rare Order of Merit. His Gifford Lectures, published in 1920 as "Space, Time and Deity", caused a sensation. An American scholar, Michael Weinstein, says of Alexander that "he is one of the great solitaires of modern philosophy." Alexander introduced Arthur Balfour, senior politician and keen amateur philosopher, to Chaim Weizmann, Professor of Chemistry at Manchester, with important results for modern Jewry. He sat on committees which recommended the appointment of Boyce Gibson, father and son, to the Chair of Philosophy at Melbourne, so placing a significant number of Australian Jewish students in his debt. Though he lived abroad he praised his old headmaster, and remained in regular touch by letter, and praised his old school whose magazine in the later 1870s and early 1880s eagerly reported his career plans and rejoiced in his successes.

Meyer, however, remained in Melbourne, to become one of its most distinguished medical practitioners. A third early winner of the Powell scholarship for Dux in 1907 and an Exhibition in 1908 was Cecil Pincus, a grandson in the celebrated and productive family of Philip and Hannah Blashki. Rabbi Elias Blaubaum's son, Athol, won an Exhibition in 1899, when he also won Triple Colours for sport. D.V. Isaacs won the Exhibition for Physics in 1921.

Corrigan, an Inspector of National schools in Ireland, spent five hectic years in Victoria until his early death. In two ways he helped Jewish education. As a member of the Royal Commission on education in 1866 he advocated the "compromise" of ending state grants while permitting non-dogmatic religious instruction in the schools, which eventually became the modern "right-of-entry". Secondly, as a member of the Board of Education, he raised the standards of the Common schools and established scholarships which students could use at any secondary school, then a further set available at the



University, so providing a window of opportunity for many families, including Jewish families, of modest means.

Over the years, other Jewish students from Wesley have won Exhibitions and University prizes, and for some it has been the prelude to a distinguished career. When Hebrew became a Matriculation subject, Wesley boys Trevor Rapke (1926) and Norman Rose (1933) added to the Exhibition list. In 1970, HSC Distinctions replaced the Exhibitions and included Stephen Kolt and Norman Smorgon in 1976 and Mark Moshinsky in 1982. It is a long list and other Jewish students are included. Mark Moshinsky went further to win the Rhodes Scholarship for all-round excellence. Attending Wesley between 1977–1982 he became a Prefect and Dux in his final year and concluded his Arts/Law degree at the University with a First place, Supreme Court prize, and the Rhodes scholarship for 1988.

The non-government schools long retained their early prominence in secondary education, particularly in Victoria, where they enrol more than one-third of all students. Whoever provides the education, Australian Jews have utilised it with traditional zeal. By census 1986, over half (52 per cent) of Jews were classified by occupation as managers and professionals compared with less than one quarter (24 per cent) in the whole community, and 28 per cent had tertiary qualifications compared with one third of that (9.5 per cent) in the whole community.

Enrolments reached one hundred during Wesley's first year, then climbed, particularly under Irving, to reach 274. Thereafter they languished and did not recover until the early years of the new century. In the depressed 1890s, when a mere hundred names might be enrolled, the school advertised in the Jewish press in 1894 that it was "open to all denominations" and was "liberally supported by the Jewish members of the community." In the attendance list from opening until 1920, we can find eight Michaelis', two Hallensteins, eight Blaubaums, and a large number of Isaacs and Jacobs, some of whom may not be Jewish. So from the earliest years there have been effective role models for Jewish families and Jewish students at Wesley.

The oldest Victorian Public school is actually Scotch College, established in 1851 in Spring Street, soon moving to a government grant on Eastern Hill, which was not too far for any Jewish students in East Melbourne or Carlton. In 1916 the Junior school began the move to their capacious suburban site in Hawthorn. John Monash, not untypical with a hard-driving mother, was Dux and Exhibitioner in 1881, so acting as a role model for a number of prominent Old Boys. Without investigating too deeply I listed a Professor of Law and Governor-General, city solicitor and company director, his son (a barrister and MLC), a medical specialist, an MLA and Minister, academic lawyer and two medical practitioners.

The Sydney equivalent is Grammar, established by Act of Parliament and opened in 1857 as a non-denominational school, and still occupying a central city location which for long was near the favoured Jewish residential district of Darlinghurst. Of course, in Sydney the Jewish communal headquarters, including the press and museum, are still there; whereas in Melbourne, Jewish Carlton consists of memories shared with a couple of landmarks such as the Elgin Street Post Office. Darlinghurst was represented in parliament by Daniel Levy between 1904–1920. Sydney Grammar School's highest distinction is Captain, meaning Dux rather than Prefect, which was held by Levy in 1889 and earlier by Joseph Jacobs, attending between 1867–1871, the equivalent of Samuel Alexander, who made his career overseas as a Jewish historian, encyclopaedia editor and universal folklorist.



Perhaps the thrifty Methodist tradesmen who supported the infant Wesley College resembled in status and upward mobility the Jewish community rather than the more prestigious Anglicans and Presbyterians, of the established churches of England and Scotland. Just to pluck a few significant names: the Nicholas brothers, the great benefactors of the inter-regnum between Adamson and post World War Two, were sons of a Cornish miner, and so typical of thousands of Methodist emigrants. Of the two chief founders who gave their names to the most important scholarships, Walter Powell was a small ironmonger who took full advantage of the gold rushes, and Daniel Draper was a carpenter-turned-clergyman. In Blainey's words, "an expensive college ... to many of his (Reverend James Waugh) flock must have seemed little more than a status symbol."

Reverend Waugh was an Irish Methodist clergyman and son of an Irish Methodist clergyman, who decided that Colonial service was preferable to the Depression after 1848 in his native land. The first Methodist Fellowship had met for worship in 1837 in the home of a tailor. In 1841 they opened a permanent chapel and received a resident minister. By exchanging their central site in gold-rush Melbourne for the remote reaches of Lonsdale Street they could afford to build a vast Gothic Revival edifice with a spire, designed by Joseph Reed in 1858. Does it not resemble the celebrated move many years later by the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation from an overshadowed midget off Queen Street to a splendid dome in Toorak Road? Thirty years later, in 1889, the Methodists were the most active denomination by far, measured in numbers of churches and seats, but the Religion statistics still reflected the differences of status. Among the private schools called "colleges" or "grammar schools" the Wesley enrolments were clearly in third place behind both Scotch and Melbourne Grammar.

Jewish students and members of staff have served Wesley College in a variety of ways. Among the staff, the two senior English masters in my time were both Jewish — Louis Lesser and Arthur Phillips — but they did not identify. Both were active in producing the annual play, while Lesser ran the Scouts and Phillips ran the library. It was not until I had left the school that I realised Phillips' significance as a literary critic — he was of course the person who invented the potent phrase, the "cultural cringe" — and the significance of his brother, P.D. Phillips, and father, M.M. Phillips, as lawyers and public figures, and also their connection with a talented group of Jewish intellectuals and artists about the turn of the century. One of them, Louisa Henriques, married a great Australian (and OW) and MLA for St. Kilda between 1920–1927, Frederick Eggleston. We knew Phillips as "Tosh", some English slang of yesteryear, for he had a distinctive way of using that or some other expletive to expose his keen dislike of padded and unsightly prose. Geoffrey Blainey, praising his teaching, writes: "I owe him a lot and was proud to say so at his funeral."

Felix Meyer, an early and outstanding student, retained a lifelong affection for the school. He served as an early president from 1897-98 of the OW Collegians Association (founded in 1895), and many years later, in 1932, wrote a biography of L.A. Adamson, sub-titled "the story of a great headmaster." F.D. Michaelis was president in 1916. In the 1920s he made a substantial donation to the capital fund, and gave a racing VIII and a memorial prize for his son Frank, killed during World War One. Sidney Myer in the 1920s also made a substantial donation to the capital fund; his nephew Norman had attended the school. Mark Lazarus was on the first OW committee in 1895; a noted lawyer, his daughter Joan (later Rosanove) became the first woman to take Silk at the Victorian Bar.

More recently, Jack Joel donated a racing VIII and still rows with the Alan Mitchell OW Club. The many public services of Graeme Samuel include the Commission for the Future of the Jewish Community in Victoria which reported in October 1994, Chairman

of the Australian Opera since April 1995, and currently Chairman of the Wesley Foundation, key to long-term fund-raising.

In my time, Ron Rosanove rowed in the VIII and was a Prefect in 1945; a couple of years later Daryl Cohen and David Efron were Seniors in the Junior School; and in 1949 Geoffrey Harcourt was a Prefect, as was Irvin Rockman in 1955.

Representation in sport is a means of service and support as well as giving personal satisfaction. Forbes (AJHS Journal, 1990) gives a long list of Jewish students with a few prominent. His claim, that an ethos of service translates into work for the Jewish and general community after one leaves, certainly holds good for Wesley. But he adds that seldom did the Jewish students at Sydney Grammar excel at sports (though he gives some examples of those who did) and suggests that traditions of study and games on *Shabbat* acted as inhibitions. On the other hand, the sporting prowess of Jewish students at Wesley has been constant. Athol Blauhaum and Ron Rosanove have been mentioned. Without too much searching we can add R.A. Shmith (athletics), Ivan Rosanove (VIII), Lionel Efron (football), brothers Daryl and Trevor Cohen (football and Australian titles in weight-lifting), Bruce Levy (squash), father and son Clive and Joel Fredman (tennis; the latter is the other Joel's great-grandson), Graeme Sloman and Gregory Kolt (gymnastics), and Irvin Rockman (triple colours). Mark Kovacs is currently an Australian ranked tennis junior. One of those listed did say that the sporting types were more "acceptable" to the staff and their peers.

Of the considerable number of OWs engaged in parliamentary politics there are at least two well-known Jews. In the Blainey book, the photo of Sam Cohen (1934), Labor Senator between 1962–1969, sits opposite that of R.G. Menzies (1913), who of course was the Prime Minister for a record term between 1939–1941 and 1949–1966. Jews supporting the Liberal Party could be represented by (Sir) Archie Michaelis, Speaker and MLA for St. Kilda between 1932–1952. The most prominent in local government is Irvin Rockman, Lord Mayor of Melbourne in 1977–78, who joins the list of prominent past Mayors, Edward Cohen and the Centennial Lord Mayor (Sir) Benjamin Benjamin.

Almost every source I encountered rejected allegations that at the school there was anti-Semitism, whether in its strict sense or in some looser sense meaning persecution or prejudice. Some referred to verbal pinpricks or an "Establishment" mood while quick to add that this was outweighed by positive features. A prime culprit for isolated and offensive remarks was the gym master. Jewish students may have disliked the compulsion of this particular sport or exercise more than others; however, two expert Jewish gymnasts have been mentioned, one of whom, Gregory Kolt, is secretary of the OW club. One OW, a well-known academic from Adelaide (which is a gesture towards his pseudonym), in the early 1960s wrote a piece in the *Nation* alleging rampant anti-Semitism during his time there; but the only substantial evidence concerned one particular, awkward individual. Reading between the lines it seems that the author, who attended prayers and the Divinity class, found his Jewishness uncomfortable. Practical jokes involving purse-pinching or dropping coins were directed at Scots as well as at Jews. The classic *Punch* joke that "I hadn't been there more than two hours when bang went saxe-pence!" involves two Aberdeen Scots visiting London. When the headmaster, McNeil, refused to make alternative arrangements I did not sit for a school scholarship examination scheduled for the Day of Atonement. The senior assistant master expressed regret and I obtained a Junior Government scholarship. The school has been quite willing to award its own scholarships to intending Jewish students. Bearing in mind McNeil's rigid and stubborn personality — dare we risk another generalisation about the beleaguered Scots — I am unwilling to read too much into this unfortunate episode.

In his biography or memoir of Adamson in 1932, Felix Meyer tersely and forcefully said that Saturday morning detention/punishment for Jewish boys was "impossible". There was no mincing of words here.

For many years Jewish students had permission to withdraw from morning prayers, chapel services in school hours and the scheduled Divinity class. We must remember that Wesley College was a Methodist foundation, albeit becoming more diverse, and in the 1930s and 1940s the Chaplain took that class, and used a textbook denouncing in the manner of old-fashioned hard-shell Methodism the perils of drinking and dancing. Of course the boys rarely followed his advice, at least if their youthful boasts were believed.

The Chaplain required Jewish students if absent to read a textbook and face an examination in Old Testament history, a practice later followed at the sister school, Methodist Ladies College (MLC). Jewish students recalled that it was sometimes boring being left to their own devices but it was appreciated, and they responded with good marks. When Ron Rosanove became a Prefect in 1945 the Chaplain and headmaster took time to explain that it was customary for the Prefects to read an occasional Lesson and they wished to ascertain his views. He and they agreed he would do so if it were a suitable passage from the Old Testament.

When Caulfield Anglican School required all pupils to attend prayers and religious instruction, there was a protest from some Jewish parents which was reported in the daily press. The Reverend A.H. Wood, headmaster of MLC, offered places in his school for any girls who chose to leave the other school in protest.

Some respondents evaded the question of a liberal environment by emphasising practical motives such as winning a scholarship or following in father's footsteps as a student there. "Congenial enough, but not wonderful", said one cautiously, but this could reflect his own ambitions as a lawyer and public figure.

The Jewish clergy have a connection with the school; Rabbis Blaubaum and Goldman and Chazan Kowadlo sent their sons there, also my grandfather who was regarded as a clergyman for this purpose. Rabbi Sanger addressed an OW inter-faith chapel service in October 1968. Among the secular Zionist leadership, Samuel Wynn sent his three sons there including David, also a prominent vigneron.

A feature of Felix Meyer's book is not only the Jewish background of the author, but the many tributes and functions on Adamson's retirement, which he records. The headmaster told a school assembly that the Reverend Edwin Wilkin, resident president of Wesley (a former office which combined chaplain, bursar and housemaster), asked his friend Rabbi Danglow to attend his deathbed in 1916 and read the priestly benediction in Hebrew. The old and great headmaster was ecumenical, and so was his school.

The old adage of safety in numbers applies both to informal playground situations and official policy. Jewish students have been significant from the beginning. Now there are more than ten per cent, a proportion at times achieved in the past, but that is now over three hundred of a much larger student population who can thereby influence subjects and the contentment of their school years.

An essential part of the Wesley story is the rebuilding and renovation of the school in 1933-34 at an eventual cost of £200,000, or an astronomical sum in today's values, this amount being donated by the two brothers Nicholas. Almost everybody in Australia knew them as the highly successful pharmacists controlling the famous *Aspro* formula and mark, who had expanded into a corporate network and become one of our richest

families. However, few knew that Harry Shmith, pharmacist and entrepreneur, had played an essential part in their rise, and that he belonged to a prominent Jewish family who lived at St. Kilda and belonged to its congregation. Athol Shmith was a fashion photographer with a city studio who married a glamorous model, and Maurice Shmith ran York Motors and Yellow Cabs. He seemed the obvious choice for my father, son of the secretary of the St. Kilda synagogue, who needed a first car, as he had squatted as a solo GP in an outer Melbourne suburb. Unfortunately, it packed up on a country road and was towed home. My grandfather who walked to his work-place for over fifty years and never owned a car, rang up Maurice and naively asked how such things could happen.

The Company's "in-house" history by Smith and Barrie freely admits to allegations that the family treated Shmith unfairly and that it was unlikely that the brothers without his help could have produced and marketed a pure aspirin tablet. They say in extenuation that by late 1917 the firm, hut two years old, was coping with heavy losses, and Shmith and Broadby were willing to be bought out.

The press announcement in September 1915 of a licence to replace the suspended German patents described Shmith and George Nicholas as "the makers". It is surely unfair, to put it mildly, for the founders, the brothers Nicholas, to long ignore an essential person in securing the initial source of their company's massive and subsequent wealth, importance and global reach. By 1976, when Smith and Barrie appeared, its turnover was \$85million from one hundred countries. *Ex gratia* payments, even a public admission, have been made for much less.

Student numbers at Wesley College steadily increased under Adamson, headmaster between 1902 and 1932, peaking in 1927 at nearly six hundred, but falling to 505 (50 boarders) in 1932. They grew again, exceeding six hundred in 1936, seven hundred in 1940, and 745 in 1945, by which time I was on the scene. The total enrolment in my last year, 1948, was 855, in the senior and junior schools, located on one familiar St. Kilda Road campus, with four Jewish students out of forty-one in Form 6A and three out of thirty-seven in 6B, and thirty-five to forty in the whole school. In 1955, there were three Form 6 classes with ten Jewish students out of eighty-four. Now there are about 3,300 students in eleven discrete schools on three campuses (Pahran, Glen Waverley and Elsternwick), the largest Independent school in Australia. The school's Director of Admissions estimates the Jewish enrolment now at between ten and twelve per cent, varying considerably according to the campus or program. For example, her estimate is twenty per cent for Elsternwick. One recent OW estimated that nearly half his class were Jewish.

One of the features of the modern school was the successful phasing-in of a co-educational organisation between 1978 and 1987. Jewish girls and their parents responded positively; indeed my niece and her husband (Emma Fredman and Gregory Kolt) claim to be the first OWs to be married to each other. With two other Jewish girls at Glen Waverley, they were in the first class to go through.

Other features are the multi-campus and corporate organisation, and the development of the school's liberal reputation and ethnic diversity. According to one claim, forty-nine ethnic groups are represented among the students. The Divinity class with permission for Jewish students to withdraw and study Old Testament history has been replaced by the study of comparative religion in which all participate.

The arts and music programs, always a strength of the Australian Independent or "Public" schools, have added preparation for the Victorian College of the Arts and a



career path. An expanded sports list instead of the traditional colour "four" and the Arts and triple Arts awards are attempts to meet familiar allegation of excessive emphasis on sport while retaining its benefits. The school has continuing and positive attractions as in the past for Jewish parents seeking a quality education for their children, particularly at the upper-secondary level. Certainly the numbers and proportions of Jewish students are not declining. One OW, his last year being 1963, with sons at the school, declared emphatically that Jewish students have never been so comfortable at the school as now. Another, attending in the late 1970s, believes that the various ethnic groups and the majority have integrated with "no difficulty".

But the Jewish community has itself markedly changed, perhaps in no more obvious a way than in the rapid development of and high proportion attending the day schools. The first modern full-time Jewish day school in Victoria was Mount Scopus Memorial College, established in 1949. Now there are eight such schools, enrolling about seven-tenths of Jewish students of school age (compared with half in New South Wales) with a significant shrinkage from three-quarters at primary to half at secondary level. Such growth reflects greater Jewish awareness, but also community expectations in the 1960s of State Aid for non-government schools and of completion of secondary schooling as the norm. Such changes have been absorbed; meanwhile the system must cope with rising costs, conflicting aims and lack of mutual support.

There are persistent arguments among parents and students whether too much or too little time is spent on Jewish studies. Some want to lessen the narrowness of Jewish studies and the strain of a ruthlessly competitive HSC, while others argue that the survival of the Jewish community is at stake and the day school students do well in other subjects too. Some complain that there is no follow-up in the home, while others point to a familiar student expectation that "home" is where you relax after school and can suspend the curriculum, secular or Jewish.

The Commission for the Future of the Jewish Community in Victoria, reporting in October 1994 to the Jewish Community Council of Victoria (JCCV), drew attention to the large proportion of children not attending the day schools, the alternative provision in part-time classes organised by the United Jewish Education Board (UJEB), and to the positive benefits, at least as many parents see it, which an enriched and diverse environment such as Wesley provides, and the ready availability of inter-school social and sporting activities rather than heavy reliance on one system or even one individual school. They recommended also that while there are advantages in a diversity of day schools, the effects of debts, fees and an ageing community be candidly faced.

The Director of Admissions at Wesley declared that there was positive benefit and no risk to Jewish students attending Wesley as long as they were secure in their identity. Of two OWs prominent at the school, including sport, one replied that the Jewish day school system had changed his attitudes, while the other said he had received the best education possible in his time and was happy to send his sons there. It is a complex question and even brothers emerged with different school experiences, answers and expectations for the future education of their families.

In *Educating Johannah: a Year in Year 12*, Anne Henderson (Sydney, 1995) describes the atmosphere in her daughter's Year 12 at Abbotsleigh, at Wahroonga on Sydney's North Shore. "Reward for academic attainment is unquestioned" is a pithy statement many parents will be looking for. As the Hendersons are Roman Catholic and had previously sent their daughters to a private Catholic school, Genazzano, in Melbourne, their transfer to Anglican and prestigious Abbotsleigh is similar to Jewish students who transfer to Wesley from primary level at a Jewish day school, for example, the familiar



move from King David School with Years 1 to 8. Indeed "reward" is the name of the game and a vital part of this additional and strenuous rite of passage.

The motto of Wesley College appeared on the first Prospectus in 1866 and is even more appropriate for a multi-ethnic school. As the early headmasters included two distinguished classicists in Irving and Way, it is not surprising that they should cling to one of the better Latin mottos: *Sapere Aude*, or "dare to be wise" from Horace, *Epistles*, 1.2.40. Some translate it "dare to think independently". The context declares: "begun is half done, dare to begin, or procrastinate like the rustic who waits for the river to flow by, but it flows on forever." I remember Professor Boyce Gibson of the philosophy department at a school speech night long ago reminding us that it was one of the few school mottos which emphasised intelligence.

The badge, which is a lion, and the school colours of purple and gold, have some significance for Jewish students. The lion is a favourite device for decorating the breast-plate of the Torah scrolls and originates with Jacob's blessings to his sons and specifically the identification of Judah by appearance and character with the lion (Genesis XLIX, 8–9). Though not the eldest, Judah had outstanding leadership qualities.

In the days when schoolboys read Byron and memorised lines of poetry, many had by heart these lines from "The Destruction of Sennacherib" (*Hebrew Melodies*, 1814)

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,  
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;  
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,  
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

The Assyrian leader, not content with the capture of Samaria and Israel and tribute from Judah, in 701BCE besieged and demanded the surrender of Jerusalem. Isaiah was confident that reformed behaviour of His people would result in Divine intervention; however, Graetz points out that the Assyrian turned aside to meet an Egyptian invasion and fled in disarray (*Popular History of the Jews*, 5th ed., 1935, Ch. VI). The Hebrew Bible refers to additional tribute and the overnight visit by an avenging angel which belongs to a plague tradition noted by Herodatus and embellished by Byron. From this respite the weak but idealistic King Hezekiah was able to lead a new "golden age". Whatever the explanation, there is no reference to the Assyrian colours in the Bible story (II Kings, 18–19, Isaiah, 36–37). We do know that earlier, ca 1000BCE, King David's ally, the Phoenicians, had a flourishing trade in purple-dyed cloth, from the seashell *murex*, which became so popular and yet so costly that it was even then a symbol of power and high office long before Assyrian soldiers, Roman magistrates and sundry empire-builders.

The Jewish significance of the Wesley badge and colours appears to be coincidental. According to Nye's *History*, the College arms of 1877 were an attempt to illustrate the motto, and featured in one quarter a lion to signify the progress and vigilance which are parts of true daring. A vivid recollection for all OWs are the four marble lions, grasping the globe of immortality, the work of Caddori of Venice in the manner of the winged lion of his city, the personal gift of the headmaster, which are adjacent to the western facade of Adamson Hall and the panels containing the names of the fallen of World War One.

For many years the school colours were blue and white. However, many people preferred purple and gold which were the original colours, and bolder and more practicable, so they were introduced (or re-introduced) in 1903.

The Jewish experience could affect notable Methodist families, many of whom have attended Wesley or MLC. One of the oldest and most distinguished of these families are the Egglestons. One, a great Australian public figure, was Frederick William Eggleston, who at last in 1985 found an excellent and insightful biographer in Warren Osmond. It is clear that a group of middle-class, professional Anglo-Jews in the St. Kilda district played a vital part in his social and intellectual development about 1900 when he was in his twenties. He married one of them, Louisa or "Lulu" Henriques, and represented St. Kilda in the Legislative Assembly between 1920 and 1927, while later P.D. Phillips, from this circle, was prominent among the authors of Eggleston's obituaries in 1954.

Another mixed marriage involved a Jewish OW and his Presbyterian wife in Queensland, where he made his medical career; he was Sir Abraham Fryberg, who died recently in 1993 aged 92. After distinguished war service he returned to Public Health, becoming the state Director General of Health and Medical Services between 1947 to 1967. He belonged to both Brisbane Jewish congregations and joined in various Jewish activities.

With Wesley College as our focus we can thus illustrate the diversity of the Jewish experience in Australia.



## THE ACCREDITATION OF HEBREW AS A MATRICULATION SUBJECT

*Manfred Klarberg*

Nowadays the availability of a wide range of languages as subjects for university entry is taken for granted. At the onset of the twentieth century, candidates had to take at least one language other than English (LOTE) at the Public Examinations in order to matriculate in Victoria. Though the regulations changed in detail from time to time, this principle was maintained throughout the early decades of the century, but only Latin and Classical Greek, French and German could be taken as LOTE subjects for candidates desiring to present for the examinations to enter university. Today, though there is no compulsion, over thirty languages are available (VCAB, 1993).

In the early days of the University of Melbourne the teaching of Hebrew was mooted; however, the discussion was limited to university level instruction. A missionary working at converting Jews offered himself as a lecturer (Blainey, G. 1957:22).

In 1905 the University of Melbourne established the Schools Board to administer public examinations for university entry. In 1913, French, German, or Latin were included in the time-table for preparatory professional courses in the State system (Blake, L.J., 1973:467). The trends in the proportion of students presenting for these languages was as follows

Percentages							
Intermediate				Leaving			
	1912	1921	1931		1912	1921	1931
French	79	83	89		46	43	68
Latin	49	28	22		28	11	17
German	11	-	-		15	-	-
Hebrew	-	-	00.4		-	-	00.2

*(adapted from Blake p. 509)*

During this period the number of students taking French was growing, Latin was losing its following, German disappeared altogether and Hebrew emerged. While one can try to hypothesise as to the causes of these changes — the growing belief that French being a modern language had a greater instrumental value than Latin, or the anti-German sentiment of the first World War — such assumptions need to be documented.

Clyne (1991: 12-15) outlines the repression of LOTEs during the First World War and in the inter-war years. He does however indicate that this policy was not totally consistent in that the publication of German newspapers was again permitted in 1925.

It would seem that this was the period when Australian society was at its most Anglocentric. However, in the case of Hebrew we will argue that the obvious hypothesis — that this was an accommodation of the Jewish community (Musgrave, P.W., 1988:62) — is an over-simplification.

Hebrew was accredited in Victoria in October 1922. In view of the inhospitable social climate this was a significant breakthrough. It is an event in the history of the Jewish community and indeed, of Australian educational and cultural history. It is already too late to marshal oral evidence. We are restricted to those documents which we can discover.

Where did the pressure come from? Why was it accepted by the Schools Board? Was it a concession to a minority group? To date neither the historians of Australian education nor Jewish community historians have paid attention to this initiative.

Arthur E. Albiston (1866–1961) was a Methodist minister, born at South Melbourne. He attended school at Wesley College and took his M.A. at the University of Melbourne. Subsequently he taught at Wesley College but soon moved on to the ministry, serving both in Victoria and Tasmania. The bulk of his ministry was however in Melbourne. In 1919 he became President of the Methodist Conference and in 1938 President-General. In 1920 he was appointed Professor of Theology at Queen's College (Methodist Church of Australia, 1962:44–45). He is recorded as noting Biblical verses in his sermons in the original Greek and Hebrew (Pike et al; "Albiston").

Frances Barkman (1895–1946) was a French teacher at MacRobertson Girls' High School and a member of St. Kilda Hebrew Congregation. The school has seen fit to commemorate her by maintaining a prize in her name. The University Schools Board appointed her an "Intermediate French" examiner (University of Melbourne Archives Schools Board Minutes, 16 July 1919) and a member of its Standing Committee on Modern Languages (*ibid.*, 26 October 1922). This committee was in charge of the syllabus and Public Examinations for French and German. She was also honorary secretary of the Jewish Welfare Society. That organisation has seen fit to keep her memory alive by naming its children's foster homes the "Frances Barkman Homes". H. Rubinstein (1986:177) records that Frances Barkman's father was a Hebrew teacher in Carlton. At that time this meant that he taught reading of Hebrew prayers and translation of the Bible.

Jacob Danglow (1880–1962), was minister at St. Kilda Synagogue from 1905 to 1962. Born in London (Rubinstein, H., 1991: 264) and educated at Jews' College, University of London, he served as chaplain in the Australian army. Loyalty to Britain was his dominant consideration in politics. Often portrayed as anti-Zionist, it is probably more accurate to say that he suffered no sense of divided loyalty. When Zionism came into conflict with the British government he took the side of the British (for incidents see: Aron, J. and J. Arndt, 1992:226; Rubinstein, W.D., 1991:513).

A. Rule Osborn (1875–1949), a Presbyterian minister, was born at Beechworth, Victoria. He graduated from the University of Melbourne M.A., Dip. Ed., and in 1902 was ordained at Chalmers Church, Launceston, Tasmania. In 1906 he moved to Warrnambool, Victoria, and in 1921 returned to Melbourne, serving in suburban congregations at Carlton North, and then at East St. Kilda. At the Presbyterian Assembly, Melbourne, October 1922, he was a duly nominated candidate for the "Professorship of Hebrew Studies" but did not gain election by the Assembly. In 1929 he left Australia to take up a position as Professor of Theology at the Biblical Seminary, New York, USA (Uniting Church, Melbourne, archives; the *Messenger*, 1922:726). He was the author of at least nine books (State Library of Victoria, catalogue).

Shalom Judah Slutzkin (1879–1952), a Jewish businessman from eastern Europe, was a member of the traditionally Orthodox synagogue in Carlton known as “Stone’s Shul”. On moving to St. Kilda he joined the synagogue there. Following the death of his wife during childbirth in 1920, he felt moved to make major donations for Jewish education. The family chronicler, Gail Hammer (1986:80), records his donations to a *yeshiva* in Jerusalem and to St. Kilda Hebrew School. In 1924 he was president of St. Kilda Hebrew Congregation. At his warehouse in the Flinders Lane clothing trade centre he hosted weekday afternoon prayer services (*Mincha*). He also instituted services and a Talmud class (which on occasion he conducted himself) at the Montefiore Homes (Rosenthal, N., 1971:134).

E. Wade (1877–1967), an Anglican minister, was educated at Moore College, NSW, London School of Economics, and University College. He graduated from London University BA, BD (1912), and Honours, School of the Study of Religion (1932). He was ordained and served in various Victorian parishes between 1902 and 1914, and in England from 1914 to 1918. On returning to Australia he occupied a number of senior educational positions with the Church of England, including that of Lecturer of Theology at Trinity College, University of Melbourne 1918–1937 (*Year Book of Diocese of Melbourne* 1966:85; personal communication, Bishop James Grant, July, 1993).

As the University of Melbourne did not teach Hebrew during that era Albiston and Osborn must have obtained their knowledge of the language along with their theological training. Hebrew was an important part of training for the Protestant clergy.

On 5 July 1921, Slutzkin wrote to Danglow confirming an apparently oral undertaking to donate £1000 to the University of Melbourne as an endowment to establish Hebrew “as a subject” (University of Melbourne Records Services 1923:230).

Twelve days later Danglow forwarded a copy of this letter to the Registrar of the University with a covering letter asking for the inclusion of Hebrew as a subject “at least” for the Intermediate and Leaving examinations. (At the time the Public Examinations Leaving and Leaving Honours were university entrance qualifications; Intermediate was a prerequisite for Leaving.) Danglow supported his request by referring to other British universities where Hebrew was already accepted, to its official status in British Palestine, and to the fact that Jewish children and Divinity students of other faiths were already engaged in its study. He also requested the establishment of Hebrew as a university subject, claiming that about forty Jewish and non-Jewish students would enrol (*ibid.*, July 18, 1921).

This letter was discussed at the University of Melbourne Council. Council resolved that the proposal be approved in principle and that Mr Slutzkin’s offer be accepted with thanks. The proposals were referred for action to the University’s Schools Board (which controlled the syllabus and examination requirements for the Public Examinations which led to matriculation), and to the Faculty of Arts (University of Melbourne Archives, Minutes of Council, 1 August 1921). The Registrar wrote to Danglow (3 August 1921) reporting the University Council’s action (University of Melbourne Records Services *op. cit.*).

Danglow’s enthusiasm can be seen in the letter which he immediately wrote to the Dean of the Faculty of Arts offering to advise on the establishment of Hebrew as a university subject (*ibid.* 4 August 1921). It appears that he also contacted the chairman of the Schools Board (*ibid.*). However he had got in ahead of the official communication. It was not until 8 August that the Registrar wrote about this matter to the Dean of the Faculty of Arts (mentioning the offer of endowment) and to the Chairman of the Schools Board



(without mentioning the endowment - examinations in those days cost little) (*ibid*).

On 1 September Danglow anticipated success in his report to his Board of Management. He wrote

I am hopeful that the Melbourne University will soon definitely decide to include Hebrew as a subject for the Public Examinations, in which event the work of the Hebrew School will receive a very powerful stimulus. (Danglow, J. 1921:9)

At that time Melbourne's part time Hebrew schools, like similar institutions throughout the western world, had difficulties retaining their students after the age of *Bar Mitzvah* (13 years). Danglow thought that if Hebrew were a Public Examination subject its status would improve, and some children would stay at Hebrew school longer. Perhaps this idea lay behind Slutzkin's offer.

There followed a report (14 September 1921) to the Dean by the chairman of an ad hoc committee in the Faculty of Arts approving the idea and suggesting that Hebrew be taught at the University to first and second year level, subject to "suitable financial arrangements" (*ibid*). As a result the Faculty of Arts recommended to Council that though it was desirable that Hebrew be taught to Part II standard the amount of the proposed endowment was inadequate to establish a Lectureship (*ibid*). This meant that of Danglow's two requests, only the Public Examinations under the jurisdiction of the Schools Board could possibly be met.

The *Australian Jewish Herald* (30 September 1921) reporting St. Kilda Hebrew Congregation's Jubilee wrote

The president then referred with pleasure to the efforts made by the Rev. J. Danglow regarding Hebrew instruction at the Melbourne University, and to the generous offer of Mr. S. J. Slutzkin in handing the sum of 1000 pounds towards that object. (Cheers)

Slutzkin's offer may have been an important factor in Council's decision to pass the proposals on to the relevant bodies. However it had no further impact. Insufficient for the lectureship, the offer seems not to have been required for the public examinations. Indeed no evidence has been found to suggest that he ever did pay the money offered.

In the next issue the paper reports Danglow as saying

In this utilitarian age, it is certainly asking much of the Jewish child to request him to include Hebrew among the many different subjects he is asked to learn at school. But as there is now a possibility, or rather a probability, of Hebrew being recognised by the Melbourne University as a subject for the Public Examinations, I trust that Jewish parents with children of school age will encourage their children to seriously take Hebrew with a view to taking this subject for their examinations later on.

In response to Council's request, the Schools Board discussed the possibility of introducing Hebrew as a subject at the Public Examinations. The matter was deferred to the next meeting but it was not discussed there (University of Melbourne Archives, Minutes of the Schools Board, 6 October 1921 and subsequent dates).

It seems that lobbying and a search for suitable personnel to set up and control the new subject for Public Examinations proceeded during the following year. No record of these activities has been found. Eventually, when the matter was again brought up at the Board, a Jewish and Protestant coalition had been formed.

Then, without any recorded discussion, the Schools Board "resolved to recommend Hebrew as a subject" and nominated people to constitute a committee to prepare details of a syllabus (*ibid*. 26 October 1922). The composition of the committee gives an

indication of the range of denominational interest (Anglican; Jewish; Methodist; Presbyterian) in the subject and its goals. The following were appointed members

Rev. E. Wade  
 Rev. A. R. Osborn  
 Rev. J. Danglow  
 Rev. A. E. Albiston  
 Miss Barkman (sic)

(The order is that of the record. It appears to follow status: the representative of the dominant church; the scholar; the initiator of the project; the representative of the "low" church; the woman.)

Frances Barkman was closely associated with Rev. Danglow (Walter Lippman personal communication). Danglow may also have been involved in the recruitment of the Protestant ministers. He had been the Hebrew chaplain to the army since before the First World War and had established connections with Christian clergy. He would have been aware that Protestant clerics were interested in fostering the study of Hebrew as it was an important element in theological training. All the Realpolitik had taken place outside the Board.

The Registrar of the University wrote to the Rev. A. R. Osborn (University of Melbourne Records Services, *op. cit.* 3 November 1922). The letter recapitulates the abovementioned developments and invites Osborn to be convenor of a committee to draw up "the details" of the syllabus. In addition Osborn is given the names of the other people (listed above) who would be invited to "act on the committee."

In his acceptance (6 November), Osborn wrote that he presumed that the course would be similar to Latin, that is to say it would be taught as a classical language. Letters inviting Wade, Danglow, Albiston and Barkman to join the committee were written early in January 1923. Albiston's and Wade's acceptances are single-sentence notes (*ibid*). However Barkman and Danglow allow themselves some reminiscing in their replies. Danglow "is pleased" that his letter of 18 July, and interview with Professor John Smyth (Principal, Teachers' Training College, Carlton, and Chairman, University Schools Board), "have led to the above promising development" (*ibid*). Barkman mentions that she has "been deeply interested in this matter for several years." She is saying that she had thought about the idea well before Danglow wrote to the University about it eighteen months previously. Might she not have suggested it to him? Her previous involvement must explain her appointment. She was by far the youngest, the only woman, the only lay member and hardly a professional Hebraist.

Is this something of competition for credit? Frances Barkman was a secondary school teacher and an examiner in Intermediate French for the University Schools Board. She must have known the educational structures and procedures and may have coaxed Danglow to approach the University. If the idea was hers she may have been consulted for the drafting of the letter to the University initiating the accreditation procedure. In view of Danglow's promptness in responding to other letters, consultation with Barkman would explain the twelve days delay between Slutzkin's letter and Danglow's.

News of this decision was published in large print in the format of a public notice

Hebrew at the Public Examinations

We understand that the Schools Board of the Melbourne University has at last agreed to list Hebrew as a subject that may be taken for the Intermediate and Leaving Certificate

examination conducted by that body. The Board has had the matter under consideration for some considerable time, and it will be of immense satisfaction to the Melbourne Community and to Australian Jewry in general to learn that the decision has ultimately been a satisfactory one.

The recognition of Hebrew as a University subject should have far-reaching effects on our Jewish educational system; it will probably lead to standardisation of the work of our Hebrew schools - and, what is perhaps of more importance, to a considerable enhancing of the status of the sacred tongue in the eyes of our young people.

Umitowch shelow lishma bo lishma. [From study for utilitarian purposes flows dedicated learning — MFK](*Australian Jewish Herald*, 24 November 1922:13)

It seems that the journalist who wrote this piece knew something of the year long negotiations which do not appear on the record.

Eight years later, in a tribute to Danglow, the president and the secretary of St. Kilda Hebrew Congregation would write:

It was at [Danglow's] suggestion and thanks primarily to his efforts that Hebrew came to be recognised as a subject for the Public Examinations at the University of Melbourne. (Levi, and Fredman, J. 1930:3)

They knew that Danglow was not the only person who had worked for this cause and perhaps that the idea did not originate from him. Might not a very young lady teacher be entitled to more credit than appears on the record?

Osborn's report of the work of his committee opens with the credo:

The chief aim of the study of Hebrew in schools is to acquire a knowledge of the language to enable pupils to read the masterpieces of Hebrew classical literature in the Old Testament. (University of Melbourne Records Services, *op. cit.* 23 April, 1923)

Thus the classical language approach is clearly asserted. Nevertheless the possibility of teaching Hebrew as a vernacular is recognised. The report states: "Teachers who wish to adopt an oral method in teaching are recommended to use such a system as that of Yellin and Abrahams" (*ibid.*). This may reflect an awareness of the emergence of Hebrew as a vernacular in Palestine, and Frances Barkman's influence as a modern language teacher, but its incorporation in the report was mere tokenism. The syllabus which the report recommends is entirely Biblical and the ensuing examinations required the translation of some of the set texts so that a teacher who taught Hebrew as a spoken language would not have got his pupils very far. Hebrew was established as a classical and indeed as an ecclesiastical language. At senior secondary school level it would be taught by men of the cloth for many years.

In May 1923 the Committee reported with the proposed course of study. Professor Scutt and Mr Franklin, both of the Classics committee, were appointed to consult with Rev. A.R. Osborn as to whether the standard of the proposed course was equivalent to that of other subjects. This was a most unusual procedure.

Finally, the University of Melbourne *Handbook of Public Examinations* (1923) gives details of study for Intermediate and Leaving Hebrew for the following year. Both syllabi are simply lists of chapters from the Bible. A note requiring the examination to be written in square rather than in cursive script indicates input from Christian Hebraists who would be more familiar with the printed alphabet.

On learning of the accreditation of Hebrew, the Education Department wrote to the Schools Board querying the anomaly of the creation of a subject not taught at "any

school", whether Class A or Class B (University of Melbourne Schools Board minutes, April 1924). An ad hoc committee chaired by Professor Smyth (chairman of the Schools Board) found a formula to enable pupils to have Hebrew credited to their school record. The committee decided that classes run by the United Jewish Education Board and St. Kilda Hebrew School could not be inspected for designation as "approved" (enabling them to conduct internal assessment) "the difficulties in the way being too great" (University of Melbourne Records Services file No. 1924:268, Minutes of Schools Board Sub-committee, 11 April 1924). In effect this meant that the educational establishment would not recognise ethnic part time schools. At this point a neutral stance was taken. Disapproval would come later (Smolicz, J.J., 1992:27). It would be almost seventy years before ethnic part time schools would be certifiable so that they could independently assess students for a publicly issued certificate.

Hebrew was available as a public examination subject for the first time in December 1924 (University of Melbourne, Examination Booklet, 1924). It had taken over three years of activity to achieve the first public Hebrew examinations.

In 1925 Danglow reported

Now that Hebrew is recognised as a subject for the public examinations, I am anxious that our pupils should take Hebrew as one of their subjects for the Intermediate and Leaving Examinations. A class for such candidates will be immediately opened at the Hebrew School should the demand for the same be forthcoming. (Danglow, J., 1925:10)

He seems concerned that the pupils of his Hebrew School did not give the subject the enthusiastic reception that he had anticipated. In subsequent years he reported the names of pupils of the Hebrew School who had passed in the subject at the public examinations. Perhaps none presented in 1924.

In November 1925 the same people who had formed the committee to draw up the details of the subject were appointed the Standing Committee for Hebrew (University of Melbourne Archives; Schools Board Minutes, 12 November 1925). It should be noted that although there was a Classics Committee which governed Greek and Latin and also Greek and Roman History, and a Modern Languages Committee in control of French and German, a new committee had to be established. Though the expertise of both committees had been drawn on and the classical approach dominated, particular expertise was required.

It can be seen that prior to the Second World War, and in the context of public examinations, "Hebrew" meant the language of the Bible. Indeed, this explains the coalition that introduced the subject. Both wings of the lobby, the St. Kilda Hebrew Congregation and the Protestant clergy, were confronted by an entrenched secular university. The group from St. Kilda Synagogue saw the introduction of Hebrew as a means to enhance traditional studies at their religious school. The Protestant Churches saw it as an opening to overcome the University's objections to teaching Bible. It appears that the Catholic Church was not interested in Hebrew, and before the era of ecumenism, co-operation was not on its agenda. In any case the Church was heavily committed to teaching Latin and believed that commercial subjects had high priority. (Fogarty, R., 1959:360-363)

By the time that Musgrave (1988:62) wrote, Hebrew had become one of the languages catering exclusively for an ethno-religious group. He therefore perceived it as reflecting an aspect "of the demographic composition of the local population". However it has been demonstrated here that at establishment the intention of the original (Protestant and Jewish) promoters of Hebrew was the study of Biblical texts and language. This intention was fully maintained until the late forties.



Frances Barkman's participation in the standing committee was not a recognition of Hebrew as a modern language useful for communication, any more than it was an assertion of feminism. Women as language teachers had been commonplace for decades; the coincidence of her being a language teacher of high standing, a member of the Modern Languages Standing Committee and of St. Kilda Hebrew Congregation, made her an important player in this small but eventful drama in educational politics. Her multifarious contributions to society should be researched and a biography of her short life written.

During the following three decades Hebrew attracted very few candidates. Some of these were Christians preparing for the ministry and others the children of members of the Jewish community in Carlton, an inner northern suburb of Melbourne. It is therefore ironic that St. Kilda Hebrew School never developed a thriving clientele for the subject which it had helped to create.

Danglow regularly referred with disappointment to the small number of pupils taking an interest in Hebrew as an academic subject (St. Kilda Hebrew Congregation, *op. cit.* 1925–1937). Thus we learn that in 1927 St. Kilda Hebrew School conducted an Intermediate (year 10) class for “four scholars.” He also wrote the names of the successful candidates into the Annual Reports for perpetuity. A number of these pupils became eminent citizens and one, Zelman Cowen (Intermediate 1933; Leaving 1934), Governor General of Australia.

In retrospect the introduction of Hebrew as an examination subject must be seen as a forerunner to the Jewish day school movement, where Hebrew would be at the core of Jewish studies. When Mount Scopus College was established in 1948 Hebrew was already available as an accredited subject. As we have seen 1948 was also the first year that some modern Hebrew found its way onto the syllabus.

Slutzkin had attained part of his goal. Whether Barkman or Danglow was the originator of the idea, both participated in the launching of the Hebrew program. All three were associated with St. Kilda Hebrew Congregation. Clearly this congregation was the centre for the early discussions which led to Hebrew being put forward as a university entry subject.

In NSW an approach to have Hebrew accredited was made in 1936. This was renewed with the arrival in Sydney of Rabbi Porush in 1940. Accreditation was achieved in 1942.

When application was made for the accreditation of Italian in Victoria in 1935, the letter suggested that the number of potential candidates was greater than that for some already accredited languages (Special case file, 2 May 1935). The reference no doubt was to Hebrew. It was explicitly referred in the application for the accreditation of Hebrew in Western Australia. No doubt the fact that Hebrew was on the books in Victoria since 1923 encouraged the campaigners in other states for the introduction of Hebrew, Italian and Japanese in the 1930s. The availability of Hebrew as a matriculation qualifying subject in Victoria set a precedent for the accreditation of further LOTES throughout Australia.

Danglow's reference to Hebrew as a living language in the letter does not fit well with the oft asserted charge of anti-Zionism. It might be more accurate to describe him as a zealously loyal British army officer. The letter illustrates his role as a traditional Jewish *shtadlan*, a person who intercedes with the authorities on behalf of the community.

The offer of an endowment was sufficient to sway the University Council. However the Schools Board who were dealing with the application without the benefit of a similar enticement were slower in agreeing. The interruption of more than a year in the process



of dealing with the application, and the expressions "at last" and "ultimately" in the notice of the *Australian Jewish Herald* (*op. cit.* 24 November 1922:13), point to ongoing negotiations about which we have no details. From our study it emerges that the Jewish community on its own could not have moved the Board. Only when eminent scholars, who represented the three mainstream Protestant churches, joined the enterprise, was it accepted as a legitimate cause.

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## THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MOUNT SCOPUS COLLEGE: A KEY TO UNDERSTANDING A DIVIDED COMMUNITY

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*(This paper summarises parts of a thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of a  
B.A (Hons) degree in History at Monash University.)*

The establishment of Mount Scopus Memorial College in February 1949 marked the end of a long and bitter struggle. From the inception of the idea of a Jewish day school in December 1944 until its establishment, the Melbourne Jewish community, divided by ethnicity and politics, used the proposed day school project as a forum for debate about issues involving anti-Semitism, integration into the wider Australian community and religious instruction. Generally, those for the school argued that Jewish identity in Australia was waning and that a Jewish day school was the first step towards guaranteeing Jewish continuity. Those against the school claimed that a Jewish day school would "ghettoise" the local community, making it vulnerable to anti-Semitism. Opponents claimed that existing Sunday schools provided a sufficient level of Jewish education and that a Jewish day school would be expensive, conservative and incapable of selecting a religious ethos suitable to all who would attend.

In the years leading up to the establishment of Mount Scopus, neither side could accept the other's point of view and one of the purposes of this article is to discuss the substance of these arguments in some detail. However, the major objective of this article is to present the argument that the debates about Mount Scopus College reflected the changing nature of Melbourne's Jewish community and provide a means of understanding the nature of the differences in respect to the culture and Jewish identity of the various groups involved. Detailed attention will be given to the results on the vote of the proposal to establish a Jewish day school and how the voting patterns reflected ethnic origin and political belief. It will also be argued that the process and outcome of the debates showed a change in the respective power of the groups involved and that the early success of the school set the scene for greater communal unity.

From its earliest days in the nineteenth century, Melbourne's small Jewish community strived to make the best of a difficult situation. Geographically isolated from the rest of the Jewish world, Melbourne Jewry lived in a society that was far from the multicultural society it is today. Until the mid nineteenth century, Jews, like the rest of the white population, were overwhelmingly British in composition.<sup>1</sup> This trend remained a feature through the remainder of the nineteenth century, although there was a considerable influx of German Jews during the 1880s and 1890s. By the turn of the century, a new generation of Australian Jews had been born, most of whom were either of British or German descent.

The new generation, like its predecessors, recognised that minimising religious and cultural differences was a ticket to national equality. They were expected to play a full part in the life of the blossoming nation and, for their part, were proud Australians. The legacy of Sir Isaac Isaacs and Sir John Monash provided an inspiration for Jews to achieve around Australia. Jewish children often attended private schools like Scotch and Wesley; others attended state schools. It was an era when many Jews believed that mixing their children with the wider community from an early age would "quash prejudice, particularly in the form of charges of exclusiveness".<sup>2</sup>

At the same time, many Jews felt that they could affirm their Jewish heritage. They were above all else Australians, but they were also Jews. The phrase "integration without assimilation" has been coined as an approach to understanding their mentality. Jews felt that a Jewish education could revolve around their secular education. A Jewish day school known as the West Melbourne Grammar School had existed between 1855 and 1872. However, the withdrawal of government funding and new legislative measures sealed its fate in 1872 and it was replaced by the Melbourne Hebrew School. This too floundered as a result of financial difficulties and a general lack of interest. It closed in 1895 and was replaced by the United Jewish Education Board which attempted to provide Jewish education through a spectrum of Sunday and Sabbath schools.

The attitudes of Melbourne's nineteenth and early twentieth century Jews towards specific issues like education and nationalism suggest that they saw themselves as affirming their Jewish identity; however, up to one quarter of Australian Jews were marrying out of Judaism in the 1920s indicating that, by current standards, Australian Jewry was in jeopardy.<sup>3</sup>

The Melbourne Jewish community in the 1940s included three identifiable groups: Australian, Central European and Eastern European Jews. Immigration from Eastern and Central Europe had been increasing throughout the first half of the twentieth century. The Eastern Europeans immigrants usually came from tightly knit communities that were open in their display of Judaism. These immigrants, many arriving penniless, initially settled in inner city suburbs such as Carlton and introduced "Zionism, Jewish culture in general and Yiddish".<sup>4</sup> Within this broad ethnic group were individuals with a variety of political beliefs, from staunch Zionists to the Polish Social Democratic Bund. Whereas the allegiances of Australian Jews lay in the British Crown, the loyalties of Eastern European Jews lay with their religion. Having left a vibrant Jewish life in Eastern Europe, this group was intent on changing all that was wrong with the "timid and stagnant Anglo-led community which they found in Australia".<sup>5</sup>

Although many Central European Jews had experienced recent persecution under the Nazis, they were similar to their Australian Jewish counterparts in that they had been keen citizens of their country. Wishing to minimise cultural differences, many Central European Jews were intent on absorbing themselves into their new country and proving themselves as new Australians.

As if the basic divisions between these groups were not wide enough, political difference between them further widened the cultural gap. This "gap" between the groups was apparent long before the Jewish day school debates began in late 1944. For a start, there was the geographic division between the Australian Jews, who generally lived south of the Yarra, and the Eastern European immigrants, who had quickly established a tightly knit *shtetl* in Carlton, north of the Yarra. However, the differences ran deeper than this demographic division. Just as many migrants encountered an inhospitable welcome from the existing community, so the settled Anglo-Jewish elite perceived the Jewish newcomers as threats to the integration into Australian society that they had strived so hard to achieve. Some recall that the worst fear of Anglo-Australian Jews was seeing "an outlandish foreign Jew, wearing long coats and horror of horrors, speaking Yiddish in a loud voice";<sup>6</sup> others remember being embarrassed about "two blokes on the tram yabbering away in Yiddish".<sup>7</sup>

Zionism exacerbated the divisions within the Melbourne community. Eastern European Jews were often political Zionists, that is, they favoured the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine which could act as a home to Jews from around the world. Predictably, the settled Anglo-Jews often felt that a Jewish state would invite anti-Semitism and

disrupt the integration into wider society that they had worked hard to achieve. During the mid 1940s, this group found itself victims of an inner conflict as the "mother country" Britain, who had liberated Europe of the Nazis, became the oppressor over her mandate in Palestine by tightening Jewish immigration restrictions.

It was in December 1944 that one Russian Jew, Benzion Patkin, officially suggested to the Victorian Jewish Advisory Board that a Jewish day school should be created. Patkin, like other Eastern European Jews had found the state of Jewish education lacking and unsatisfactory; he claimed that "Hebrew education for children could not succeed in Sunday morning and midweek afternoon classes".<sup>8</sup> The years of debate that followed gave the divided community in Melbourne a basis for interaction. The detailed reports of the debates which fill Patkin's *Heritage and Tradition*, the *Australian Jewish Herald*, the *Australian Jewish News* and the minutes of the Victorian Jewish Advisory Board, as well as the memories of some members of the community, provide an understanding of how background and political belief influenced those involved and how the attitudes of the community towards the project were indicative of their attitudes to Jewish culture generally.

Although the four years of intensive debate about a Jewish day school may be divided into many different phases, several patterns of support and opposition are common to the general period.

The first period, from early December 1944 until March 1945, was a time of exploration of the issues involved in creating a Jewish day school. The second period, from March 1945 until late 1946, was a time of investigation; as an example, surveys were done on the success of foreign Jewish day schools. During the third period of debate, which lasted from late 1946 until mid 1947, Board politics and the introduction of other projects such as the Jewish hospital delayed the making of a decision. The fourth period of debate occurred in May and June 1947, when a vote was taken about whether the day school project should proceed. It is also acknowledged that debate continued once the decision was made to create a Jewish day school. The period between June 1947 and February 1949 was a period which tested the ability of the Melbourne Jewish community to implement an idea that had been approved on paper. It was a time when money was required to buy a school building and when all the practical difficulties of establishing a school came into being. In short, it was a time which tested the commitment of the community to this project.

Throughout these periods, support for the school was launched on the premise that it would strengthen Jewish identity and that it would be a shield that would fight assimilation. When the project was first officially introduced to the Board, one delegate, Mr Israel Sher, congratulated Benzion Patkin on an attempt to "revolutionise Jewish education in Melbourne".<sup>9</sup> Similarly, Rabbi Freedman, in a symposium of articles about the day school project, claimed the "vital necessity of a much sounder Jewish education than has hitherto been considered adequate".<sup>10</sup> Throughout the debate, Zionists and many religious organisations were highly supportive. Within these two camps of support were the views of many Eastern Europeans, who had strengthened Zionist and religious organisations alike.

In the same period, opponents of the school felt that a Jewish day school would isolate Jewish students and invite discrimination. Arnold Blashki, who was honorary secretary of the Victorian Jewish Advisory Board when the project was introduced, recently recalled that he was one "of many who were against the school" on the basis that "it was forming a ghetto for ourselves" and that Judaism in Melbourne was "surviving without it".<sup>11</sup> Others asked "what would be the religious teaching – Orthodox or Liberal"<sup>12</sup> and



were concerned about the "financial challenge" that would be inherent in setting up the school.<sup>13</sup>

Even in these early stages, patterns quickly emerged amongst those who opposed the project, namely the Australian Jews and those Jews of Central Europe. It has been suggested that it would have been "inconceivable" for Jews "born and bred" in Australia to send their children to a school "populated by foreigners".<sup>14</sup> Some Australian Jews had felt embarrassed by their fellow Jews from Eastern Europe and had gone to some lengths to see to it that "some of these Jewish arrivals avoid speaking Yiddish on the tram cars".<sup>15</sup> It was therefore not surprising that they emerged as a group who were most anxious to minimise difference between themselves and the wider Australian society. They feared that such a school would reverse the progress the community had made in terms of integrating into the wider Australian community. Though not of an established Australian family, Sir Zelman Cowen, who was born and educated in Melbourne, recalled that a Jewish day school would "preserve barriers" and would "ghettoise the community".<sup>16</sup>

Jews of Central Europe supported the views of the settled Australian Jews. In particular, many recent immigrants from Germany had been "traumatised" by being removed from secular schools in Germany in 1933; for them a new Jewish day school may have been considered "reminiscent of the Nazis".<sup>17</sup> Moreover, the opposition voiced by German Jews often overlapped with that voiced by Liberal Jews who feared that a Jewish day school might be conservative in its attitudes and would not be able to adopt a religious ethos that would be acceptable to all.

During the second period of debate, supporters of the project tried to answer the concerns raised by opponents of the idea. At a meeting of the Victorian Board in early March 1945, Ben Zion Patkin declared that neither "the Protestants, Catholics, Baptists, Seventh Day Adventists, Presbyterians, Methodists etc when establishing their own educational institutions ever spoke about self-segregation."<sup>18</sup> Similarly, Joseph Solvey, in his article in the *Australian Jewish News* of 6 April 1945, indicated that free and non-denominational education would not reduce anti-semitism.

Soon after this, several administrative achievements were undertaken that made the day school project a more realistic project. Abraham Feiglin was appointed Education Officer in March 1946. His duties commenced in June 1946, the first of which was the drawing up of a blueprint for a Jewish day school. Investigations into foreign Jewish day schools also began to pay dividends when results indicated that in Jewish communities overseas, they were extremely important.<sup>19</sup>

Nevertheless, a report of the Public Relations Committee of the Board confirmed that the groups were locked in a stalemate. In examining what effect a Jewish day school could have upon anti-Semitism and upon the status of Jewish students at Christian schools, the report found that a Jewish day school "may foster anti-Semitism" and that it could weaken the "position of Jewish students attending Church schools".<sup>20</sup>

The exchange of arguments and ideas that took place in the first three periods of debate refined those aspects of the project that were in dispute. The most major source of disagreement involved the extent to which a Jewish day school would increase anti-Semitism in Melbourne, if at all. Whereas Anglo-Australian Jews consistently argued that the admission of Jewish students to Church schools would be jeopardised, Eastern European Jews feared that higher assimilation would be inevitable if a Jewish day school was not created. A ring of smaller disputes revolved around this major disagreement. There would be the problem of finding funds within the community to build such a school.<sup>21</sup> Many felt that the Melbourne Jewish community had survived without such

a school and that Sunday and after school classes provided a satisfactory Jewish education. There was also disagreement about whether the school would be Liberal or Orthodox in its outlook and whether it would be possible to find suitable teachers.

By the end of the third period of debate, over two years of debate and deliberations had taken place. By this time, the divisions within the Jewish community at large had also made their presence felt within the Victorian Jewish Advisory Board, which assumed the role of representing the entire Jewish community. This body had already been the forum of a bitter power struggle in the 1920s and 1930s, when Eastern European Jews who had recently immigrated to Melbourne demanded greater representation in the community.<sup>22</sup>

During 1947, the spectrum of organisations represented on the Board was as divided as the wider Jewish community. Not surprisingly, the divisions were often based according to ethnicity and political belief. Those organisations which were affiliated with and controlled by settled Australian Jews, such as St Kilda Hebrew Congregation, tended to oppose the idea. Liberal Jews formed another base of opposition; just as Liberal groups within the community were inclined to oppose the project, so were their representatives on the Board, the Temple Beth Israel. Another group on the Board that showed its disapproval from an early stage was the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism.

On the other side were those groups on the Board who supported the idea from an early stage. Supporters of the project generally belonged either to a religious organisation or a Zionist group, and tended to be Eastern European in origin. Those religious groups who were affiliated with Eastern European Jewry, such as Carlton and East Melbourne Hebrew Congregations, tended to support the idea. Similarly, many Zionist groups, such as the State Zionist Council, Women's International Zionist Organisation, the National Council of Jewish Women, generally supported the project.

This was a time when support for the project was met with stern opposition. However, as Patkin strived to accommodate the requests of the Board, the community came under pressure to make a decision. The break for day school supporters was sudden; Patkin recalled that at one Executive meeting of the Victorian Jewish Advisory Board, Maurice Ashkanasy, President of the Board, asked Patkin the following question: "If I support the proposal for the day school project and the Executive should decide to bring it before the full Board, will you promise me to work as hard for the hospital project as you do for the day school project?"<sup>23</sup> Patkin replied in the affirmative and on the 22nd of May 1947 a resolution was put to the full Board, the first clause of which read

1a. That this Board approves in principle the establishment of a Jewish Day school.

The fourth period of debate consisted of the debates and discussions conducted at the meeting of 22 May and the meeting of 9 June 1947, at which a decision was actually made. At the meeting of 9 June 1947, 21 delegates voted for the proposal, 13 delegates voted against and 2 delegates abstained (see Table 1). One of the most important aspects of this stage of debate was the great diversity of groups who came together to express their views. Mr Blashki recalled that delegates who did not normally attend the meetings of the Board turned up just for the vote over the school.<sup>24</sup> At the most important stage of debate, voting patterns confirmed the extent to which the origin of those groups involved reflected their attitudes towards Jewish identity and, in turn, Jewish education.

The Anglo-Australian Jews were most influential as an opposing group (see Table 2). Other groups who voted against the project but did not exert the same influence included Jews associated with the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism,

Central European Jews and Liberal Jews. Of the 13 delegates who voted against the project at the meeting of 9 June 1947, 9 were affiliated with Anglo-Australian Jewish organisations or were Anglo-Australian Jews themselves. All within this group were of the view that levels of Jewish education were already sufficient and that a Jewish day school would do "terrible harm" and invite anti-Semitism.<sup>25</sup> This attitude was indicative of this group's desire to integrate into wider Australian society and to minimise difference; it was a view that had been moulded by their allegiances to Australia.

Voting patterns at this meeting revealed that St Kilda Hebrew Congregation was the power base of Anglo-Australian Jewry, for of the nine delegates who may be classified as being Anglo-Australian, eight were affiliated with St Kilda (see Table 2). Two of these eight were direct delegates of the Congregation, whilst another three Executive members who also voted against the project in their personal capacity were involved members of St Kilda.<sup>26</sup> Both delegates of the Young Men's Hebrew Association also voted against the project as did the delegate of the Jewish Ex-Servicemen's Association. Even though they were delegates to these organisations, these representatives were also members of, and affiliated with, St Kilda. The fact that "almost all" of the delegates who may be classified as representing Anglo-Australian Jewry were members of St Kilda confirms that this Congregation exerted a great deal of power as the major base of opposition to the school.<sup>27</sup>

The remainder of the opposition to the school was dispersed amongst those Jews who represented the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and anti-Semitism and Liberal Jews. Both delegates of the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism (also known as the "Jewish left"), namely Norman Rothfield and Max Kohane, voted against the proposal in their capacity as a group that was particularly concerned about anti-Semitism. Whilst this group had some similarities with Anglo-Australian Jewry, they differed in that they "fully supported the independence of Palestine from British rule" and for this reason should be viewed as a separate group.<sup>28</sup> Whilst this group was not numerically powerful, it was one group that was resolute in its views.

The final group of opponents who voted against the day school were the two delegates of Temple Beth Israel, namely Dr Wolf Davis and Hirsh Taft. Liberal Jews feared that the school would be an Orthodox school which would have difficulty in selecting a religious outlook acceptable to all and that it would be creating a "voluntary ghetto" in the community.<sup>29</sup> This group, which consisted of many Central European Jews, had come from countries in which they had suffered recent persecution. To voluntarily segregate Jewish students from the remainder of the community was, for them, an invitation for discrimination; in this sense, the link between the attitude of this group towards education and their ethnic origin is clearly visible.

At the meeting of 9 June 1947, the 21 delegates who voted for the resolution represented or were affiliated with Religious and Zionist groups, the two of which often overlapped. Both cited the lack of identity and the problems of assimilation and Jewish survival as reasons to support the school.<sup>30</sup>

The most influential group which voted for the proposal were those organisations that may be classified as being Zionist (see Table 3). Of the 21 delegates who voted for the project, 14 were representatives of Zionist organisations or were Zionists themselves. The influence of the Zionists was spread throughout six associations, namely the State Zionist Council, Kadimah, Womens International Zionist Organisation, Jewish Youth Council, United Jewish Overseas Relief Fund and the National Council of Jewish Women. Messrs. Ben Zion Patkin, Alec Masel and Israel Sher were other Zionists who also voted for the proposal in their capacity as Executive members. This distribution of

power across several organisations differed from the way St Kilda Hebrew Congregation dominated the Anglo-Australian organisations.

The power of the Zionists was directly linked to the increased immigration of Eastern European Jews in the early to mid-twentieth century. Although not all Eastern Europeans were Zionists, many were, and the meetings of 22 May 1947 and 9 June 1947 displayed how their origin influenced their attitudes to issues like Jewish education. This period of debate emphasised the cultural differences between the imported Zionism of many Eastern European immigrants and the national allegiances of settled Australian Jews.

Religious congregations (see Table 3) were the second largest group who supported the idea of the school, with seven delegates voting for the proposal. The overlap of this category with Zionist organisations arises in respect to East Melbourne and Carlton United Hebrew Congregations. Given that both were popular with many Eastern European Zionists, it was not surprising that both voted for the proposal.<sup>31</sup> However, unlike the tendency of Zionist organisations to vote for, and most of the Australian organisations to vote against, the project, the category of religious congregations was less consistent in its voting patterns. In the first place, St Kilda Hebrew Congregation was a religious organisation that voted against the proposal, indicating that not all religious organisations were supportive of the idea. Another congregation which might have been expected to vote against the project for reasons similar to those of St Kilda was Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, which was home to several "established families" who opposed the idea of a Jewish day school.<sup>32</sup> However, the decision of the congregation to vote for the school was influenced by the President of the Congregation and several of the congregation's leaders, such as Rabbis Brodie and Freedman who were strong Zionists.<sup>33</sup>

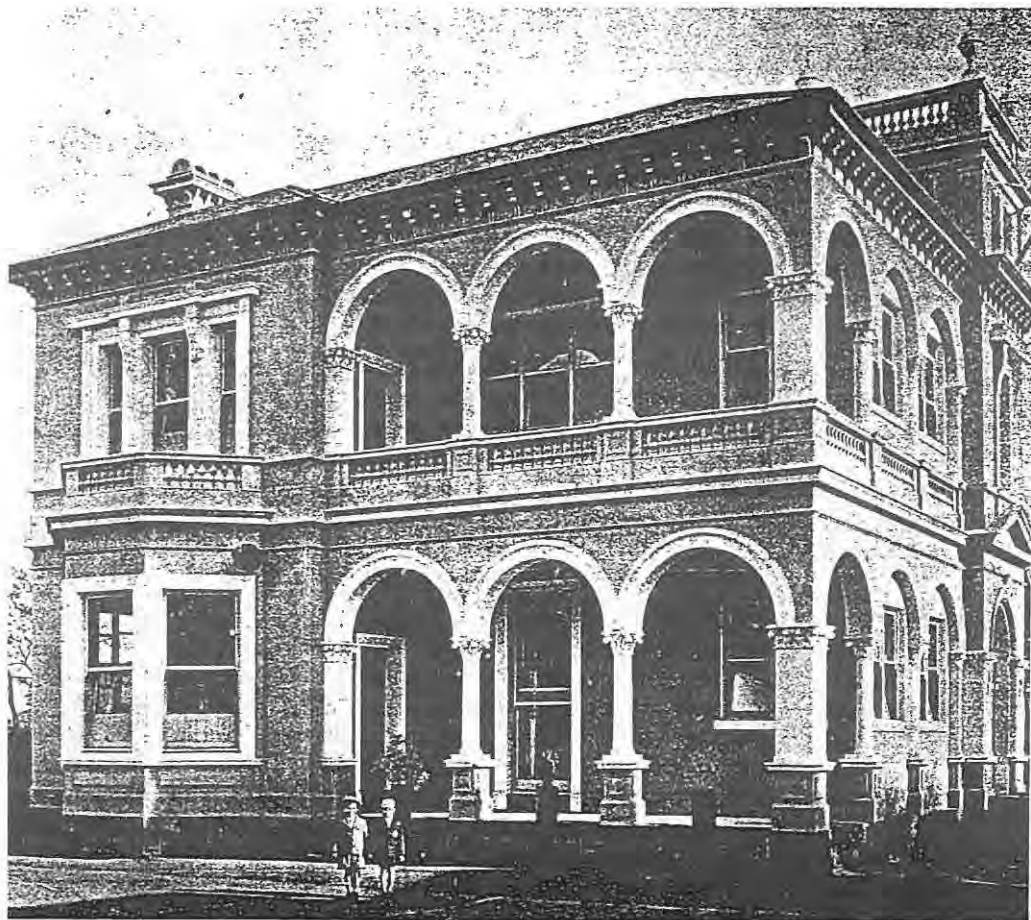
The two groups that stand out as the major power bases which opposed each other were the Zionists and the Anglo-Australian Jews. Indeed, the meeting of 9 June 1947 indicated that the wider Zionist group proved to be the most powerful of all groups involved. The same meeting shows that Anglo-Jewry, represented almost entirely by St Kilda Hebrew Congregation, did not have the same wider influence it might have wielded in the 1920s. St Kilda, despite its strength as a single congregation, could not exert the same amount of power in 1947 as it did in the 1920s. The reduced role of St Kilda was associated with the increased number of organisations that had joined the board during the period of Eastern European immigration, thereby increasing the plurality of organisations within the Jewish community and reducing the amount of power that any one organisation could exert.

The school's early successes and rapid growth brought together many of the divisions within the community. As the school gained popularity and recognition as a communal organisation, more groups within the community began to support it. Interviews with some of the persons who opposed the school in the 1940s show that they have indeed a different view forty-five years later.<sup>34</sup> There are a variety of reasons why many of those who initially opposed the school came to support it. Many now admit that Mount Scopus has not brought about the problems that were feared in the late 1940s, that is, the school has not jeopardised the entry of Jewish students to Church schools or invited higher levels of anti-Semitism. The establishment of the State of Israel and an increasing multicultural acceptance in Australia have also assisted in providing an environment in which organisations such as Mount Scopus could be openly displayed and supported with pride.

The growth of the school would suggest that it has been accepted by most, if not all, sections of the community. Indeed, since its creation, a network of Jewish day schools



has been established. Yet whilst the school quickly gained the reputation as the showpiece of Melbourne Jewry, some trends of the past have never subsided. A survey of support for the school in the late 1960s indicated that whilst many settled Australian families sent their children to Mount Scopus, they were still least supportive of the school as a group.<sup>35</sup> In this sense, almost paradoxically, Mount Scopus has achieved great success as a school whose steady growth caught the imagination of a community, but whose success still bears legacies of the past.



*Where it all began ...*



*Table 1: Vote on principle of establishment of Jewish Day School  
Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies, 9 June 1947*

**AGAINST THE SCHOOL**

NAME OF DELEGATE(S)	ORGANISATION REPRESENTED	BRIEF REASON FOR OPPOSING SCHOOL
Myer Zeltner, Shalom Slutzkin	Delegates of St Kilda Hebrew Congregation	Communal integration, anti-Semitism
Dr Wolf Davis, Hirsh Taft	Delegates of Temple Beth Israel	Segregation of Jews: success of Temple school
Norman Rothfield, Max Kohane	Delegates of Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and anti-Semitism	Anti-Semitism; Jewish education provided through home and Sunday school
Jack Sharpe, Joe Emanuel	Delegates of Young Men's Hebrew Association, both members of St Kilda Hebrew Congregation	Jewish education to be provided at home
Lewis Wilks	Delegate of Jewish Ex-Servicemen's Association, member of St Kilda Hebrew Congregation	Would segregate Jews from wider community
Ernest Joseph	Delegate of Judean League	Community should wait for a more appropriate time for such a project
EXECUTIVE MEMBER WHO VOTED	ORGANISATION AFFILIATED WITH (IF ANY)	
Archie Michaelis	Involved with St Kilda Hebrew Congregation	Would segregate Jews, invite anti-Semitism
Arnold Blashki	Member of St Kilda Hebrew Congregation	Would "ghettoise" the community, segregate it
Raymond Ellinson	Member of St Kilda Hebrew Congregation	

**ABSTAINED**

NAME OF DELEGATE(S)	ORGANISATION REPRESENTED	BRIEF COMMENT
Dr. Benfey, Mr. Krauss	Delegate of Association of Jewish immigrants	Like other immigrants from Central Europe, tried to procrastinate the decision for as long as possible

**Table 1 (cont.) : Vote on principle of establishment of Jewish Day School**  
*Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies, 9 June 1947*

**FOR THE SCHOOL**

<b>NAME OF DELEGATE(S)</b>	<b>ORGANISATION REPRESENTED</b>
Dr. Aaron Patkin, Joseph Solvey	Delegates of State Zionist Council
Mr. Roth, Mr. Pearl	Delegates of Kadimah
Walter Lippman, Mr. Pincus	Delegates of Jewish Youth Council
Mr. Fradkin, Mr. Yaffe	Delegates of East Melbourne Hebrew Congregation
Mr. Mahemoff	Delegate of United Jewish Overseas Relief Fund
Mrs. Ida Wynn, Mrs. Alice Benfey	Delegates of State Zionist Council
Abraham Feiglin, Mr Gurewicz	Delegates of Carlton United Hebrew Congregation
Leslie Abrahams, Gotal Movitz	Delegates of Melbourne Hebrew Congregation
Mr. Abrahams	Delegate of Judean League
Mrs. Simons	Delegate of National Council of Jewish Women
<b>EXECUTIVE MEMBERS WHO VOTED FOR THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>ORGANISATION AFFILIATED WITH</b>
Benzion Patkin	Highly active Executive member
Alec Masel	Involved in capacity as past President
Israel Sher	Kadimah
Joseph Feiglin	Carlton Hebrew Congregation

**Total vote**    21 Delegates **FOR** the proposal  
                     13 Delegates **AGAINST** the Proposal  
                     2 Abstentions

*Table 2: Classification of organisations and individuals  
who opposed the Day School Project*

**1. ANGLO-JEWISH ORGANISATIONS/INDIVIDUALS**

ORGANISATION	REPRESENTATIVES	FINAL VOTE	COMMENTS
St Kilda Hebrew Congregation	1. Archie Michaelis (Executive member) 2. Arnold Blashki (Executive member) 3. Raymond Ellinson (Executive member) 4. Myer Zeltner (Delegate) 5. Shalom Slutzkin (Delegate)	Voted <b>Against</b> the School	Yielded a great deal of power, as all of the people listed, even if not delegates of the Congregation, voted against the school. Accounted for almost 50% of the opposition to the school!
Melbourne Hebrew Congregation	1. Leslie Abrahams (Delegate who was instrumental in obtaining the support of the Congregation as a whole) 2. Gotal Movitz (Delegate)	Voted <b>for</b> the school	This Congregation had many Anglo- Jewish families, yet it was led by Zionistic leaders who were in favour of the school
Young Men's Hebrew Association	1. Jack Sharpe 2. Joe Emanuel	Voted <b>Against</b> the School	Although the majority of this association were in favour of the school, both delegates were members of St Kilda Hebrew Congregation
Jewish Ex- servicemen's Association	Lewis Wilks	Voted <b>Against</b> the School	Mr Wilks was an Australian-born Jew who raised the same arguments as other Australian- born Jews
Judean League	Ernie Joseph	Voted <b>Against</b> the School	Mr Joseph, Australian-born, was concerned about anti- Semitism

*Table 2 (continued)***2. LIBERAL JEWRY**

ORGANISATION	REPRESENTATIVES	FINAL VOTE	COMMENTS
Temple Beth Israel	1. Dr Wolf Davis 2. Hirsh Taft	Voted <b>Against</b> the School	Temple Beth Israel had its own school; in addition, many Liberals opposed the school on the grounds that it would be Orthodox in its Jewish outlook

**3. JEWISH COUNCIL TO COMBAT FASCISM AND ANTI-SEMITISM**

ORGANISATION	REPRESENTATIVES	FINAL VOTE	COMMENTS
Jewish Council to combat Fascism and anti-Semitism	1. Norman Rothfield (Delegate) 2. Max Kohane (Delegate)	Voted <b>Against</b> the School	Was a tireless fighter against anti-Semitism; varied from Anglo Jewry in that it supported the establishment of a Jewish State

*Table 3: Classification of organisations and individuals  
who were supportive of the Day School Project*

### 1. ZIONISM

ORGANISATION	REPRESENTATIVES	FINAL VOTE	COMMENTS
State Zionist Council	Dr. Aaron Patkin Joseph Solvey	Voted <b>for</b> the School	An established Zionist organisation, was relied on for its support
Kadimah	Mr. Roth (Delegate) Mr. Perl (Delegate)	Voted <b>for</b> the School	Another organisation that was popular with Zionist immigrants
Women's International Zionist Organisation	Mrs. Ida Wynn (Delegate) Mrs. Alice Benfey (Delegate)	Voted <b>for</b> the School	Also part of the Zionist group of organisations
Judean League (Should not be seen as a Zionist Organisation)	Ben Abrahams	Voted <b>for</b> the School	Represented the Judean League which was split in its vote. Yet Abrahams may be classified as Zionist
Jewish Youth Council	Walter Lippmann (Delegate) Mr. Pincus (Delegate)	Voted <b>for</b> the School	Mr Lippmann was heavily involved in many areas of community life
United Jewish Overseas Relief Fund	Mr. Mahemoff	Voted <b>for</b> the School	



*Table 3 (continued)*

National Council of Jewish Women	Mrs. Simons (Delegate)	Voted <b>for</b> the School	Was always Zionistic in its outlook
	Benzion Patkin (Executive member)	Voted <b>for</b> the School	The dominant proponent of the Day school project
	Israel Sher (Executive member)	Voted <b>for</b> the School	Had been heavily involved in community affairs, including the Kadimah
	Alec Masel (Executive member)	Voted <b>for</b> the School	A Zionistic leader, immediate Past President of the Board

Table 3 (continued)

## 2. RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS

ORGANISATION	REPRESENTATIVES	FINAL VOTE	COMMENTS
East Melbourne Hebrew Congregation	Mr. Fradkin Mr. Yaffe	Voted for the School	Both the East Melbourne and Carlton Congregations were popular with Eastern European immigrants, and both Zionist in their outlook
Carlton Hebrew Congregation	Abe Feiglin Mr. Gurewicz	Voted for the School	(See above)
	Joseph Feiglin (Executive member)	Voted for the school	A member of Carlton United Hebrew Congregation
Melbourne Hebrew Congregation	Gotal Movitz Leslie Abrahams	Voted for the school	(See opposition table): Was interesting that this Congregation was popular with many Anglo-Jewish families, yet still voted for the school because of its leaders.

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<sup>1</sup> Hilary L. Rubinstein. "From Jewish Non-Distinctiveness to Group Invisibility: Australian Jewish Identity and Responses, 1830–1950", in W.D. Rubinstein (ed.) *Jews in the Sixth Continent*, Sydney 1987, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Frank Fletcher, "The Victorian Jewish Community 1891–1901: its Interrelationship with the Majority Gentile Society", *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, vol. 8, Part 5, 1978, p. 232.

- <sup>3</sup> Rubinstein, "From Jewish Non-Distinctiveness to Group Invisibility", p. 23.
- <sup>4</sup> Walter Lippmann, "Melbourne Jewry: A Profile", in P. Medding (ed.) *Jews in Australian Society*, Melbourne 1973, p. 15.
- <sup>5</sup> Rubinstein, "From Jewish Non-Distinctiveness to Group Invisibility", p. 43.
- <sup>6</sup> Norman Rothfield, "Melbourne Jewry's Cold War: My Years With the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism", *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, vol. 11, Part 6, 1993, p. 957.
- <sup>7</sup> Interview conducted with Arnold Blashki, 12 September 1994.
- <sup>8</sup> Benzion Patkin, *Heritage and Tradition*, Melbourne 1972, p. 3.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.
- <sup>10</sup> *Australian Jewish Herald*, 16 February 1945.
- <sup>11</sup> Interview with Arnold Blashki, 12 September 1994.
- <sup>12</sup> Question asked by Manuel Gelman in his article in the *Australian Jewish News*, 16 March 1945.
- <sup>13</sup> Letter of Geoffrey Green to Simon Tisher, 13 October 1994.
- <sup>14</sup> Views of Rabbi John Levi in interview, 28 October 1994.
- <sup>15</sup> Rothfield, "Melbourne Jewry's Cold War", p. 957. Mr. Rothfield recalled this request being made of him by a member of the well known Michaelis family at a meeting.
- <sup>16</sup> Interview, 11 August 1994.
- <sup>17</sup> Interview with Rabbi John Levi, 28 October 1994.
- <sup>18</sup> Patkin, *Heritage and Tradition*, pp. 64-65.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 89, 90.
- <sup>21</sup> In an interview, 5 October 1994, Rose Kornan recalled that there "wasn't an awful lot of money around" at the time the project was before the community.
- <sup>22</sup> Known as the Melbourne Jewish Advisory Board until 1936, the Board traditionally consisted only of three organisations, namely St Kilda, Melbourne and East Melbourne Hebrew Congregations. As Melbourne and St Kilda were popular with many of the settled Anglo-Australian Jews, the Board was accused of not representing the newer immigrants, who by this time were arriving in greater numbers. A campaign began to increase the number of organisations which could join the Board. After a long struggle, additional organisations joined the Board in May 1938 and again in 1942.
- <sup>23</sup> Patkin, *Heritage and Tradition*, p. 104.
- <sup>24</sup> Interview with Arnold Blashki, 12 September 1994.
- <sup>25</sup> According to the *Australian Jewish Herald*, 13 June 1947, this statement was made by Archie Michaelis at the meeting of 9 June 1947.
- <sup>26</sup> The Executive members that voted against the project included Raymond Ellinson, Archie Michaelis and Arnold Blashki.
- <sup>27</sup> Statement made by Arnold Blashki in interview, 12 September 1994.

- <sup>28</sup> Rothfield, "Melbourne Jewry's Cold War", p. 960.
- <sup>29</sup> Statement made by Dr. Davis in the *Australian Jewish Herald*, 30 May 1947.
- <sup>30</sup> The *Australian Jewish Herald*, 30 May 1947, cited Dr. Aaron Patkin, of the State Zionist Council as stating that "only Jewish day schools" could "radically change the system".
- <sup>31</sup> The delegates of these Congregations are listed in Table 2.
- <sup>32</sup> Joseph Aron & Judy Arndt, *The Enduring Remnant*, Melbourne, 1992, p. 158.
- <sup>33</sup> It should be noted that pressure was exerted by the then President of the Congregation, Leslie Abrahams, who had to use his casting vote to ensure that Melbourne Hebrew Congregation would support the proposal at the meeting of 9 June 1947.
- <sup>34</sup> Zelman Cowen, Arnold Blashki, Manuel Gelman, Myer Zeltner and Ben Green, having been opposed to the school, all changed their minds and came to support the school.
- <sup>35</sup> Peter Medding, *From Assimilation to Group Survival*, Melbourne 1968, p. 123.





## EDUCATION IN ADVERSITY: THE *DUNERA* INTERNEES DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

*Paul R. Bartrop*

The story of the internee ship *Dunera*, and the fate of the two-and-a-half thousand men it carried to Australia in 1940, is by now well known.<sup>1</sup> Less well known, perhaps, is the human side of the story: the personal dramas involving family separation, fear, destroyed ambitions, career reorientations and the all-pervasive uncertainty which coloured every internee's daily life from 1940 until the granting of conditional release in 1942. The following paper looks at a single facet of this, the quest by one organisation outside the wire to ensure that the futures of the young men on the other side were not too adversely affected by their incarceration.

Reviewing the *Dunera* story can be done briefly. In Europe's dark days of summer 1940, with the Low Countries having fallen and France in imminent danger of collapse, the British government ordered that all men aged between sixteen and sixty, and of enemy nationality, should be taken into custody and temporarily interned as a security measure. The great majority of these had earlier been freed from restrictions, and included many engaged in work of national importance as scientists and educators, as well as many students from schools, colleges and universities. It did not take long for these men to realise that a wealth of intellectual talent was included among their number. Whether held temporarily at Kempton Park racecourse, Huyton Camp near Liverpool, the Kitchener Camp at Richborough, or camps on the Isle of Man, the internees rapidly formed committees for the purpose of establishing training courses and holding academic lessons for those interested.<sup>2</sup>

Many were not accorded the opportunity to take advantage of this organisation: in early July several thousand were moved and then concentrated at ports of embarkation for a possible evacuation. Accompanying the panic measures to intern all enemy aliens had been calls to deport as many as possible from Britain to places where they could do the least damage to the war effort. Consequently, a call went out from the British government to Canada and Australia to take some of these people off Britain's hands. The resultant agreement saw the departure from Liverpool of the Hired Military Transport (HMT) *Dunera* on 10 July 1940, bound for Sydney.

The drama — indeed, trauma — of the voyage has been often told in words and on film. In all accounts, instances are recorded of the most appalling injustices and mistreatment perpetrated by the guards on board the ship. A military inquiry later found verifiable proof of beatings, looting of prisoners' property, torture and numerous forms of intimidation inflicted on the prisoners, most of whom were German and Austrian Jewish refugees from Nazism who had been in Britain awaiting the opportunity to permanently migrate elsewhere. Remarkably, whilst on board the ship the same desires to teach and to learn again surfaced. Lessons on technical subjects were offered by numerous academics, though an almost total lack of paper, books and other teaching materials — as well as the physical conditions under which they were operating — hampered their efforts. There was no lack of willing teachers or students, however, as the confinement of the men below decks did not enable them easily to absent themselves.<sup>3</sup>

Upon the arrival of the ship in Melbourne on 3 September 1940, some five hundred were disembarked and sent immediately to the internment camps at Tatura; the rest, numbering about two thousand, arrived in Sydney four days later and were conveyed

to Hay. There they began to recover from the journey, take stock of their situation, and settle down, as best they could, for the duration.

Although attempts were made by Army authorities to keep the arrival of the *Dunera* internees a low-key affair, this was to prove not an easy matter. The ship's appearance was reported both in the Sydney and Melbourne newspapers, together with photographs and — amazing in a time of war — testimonies from the sailors on board. Welfare organisations and groups quickly developed an interest in the fate of the internees; examples included the Australian Jewish Welfare Society, the Society of Friends, the Victorian International Refugee Emergency Committee (VIREC) and the Catholic Church. It took some tracing, however, before the internees could be located at Hay. The intention was that they would be housed, fed and guarded by the Australian Army, but that they would remain the responsibility of the British government, and as such hermetically sealed off from the Australian public. That this was unsuccessful was largely due to the fact that news of the *Dunera* internees preceded their arrival at every juncture — even while the ship was on its way to Australia.

When their departure for Australia became known to the British public, the then Secretary of the British branch of the International Student Service (ISS), a Christian organisation dedicated to fostering the fellowship of students worldwide, cabled the Australian Student Christian Movement (ASCM) in Melbourne to inform them of the fact. The cable also sought assistance for the internees who had been associated with the ISS prior to their internment. The executive officer of the ASCM at this time, Miss Margaret Holmes, immediately made contact with the Society of Friends, whose organisation in Melbourne had received a similar request from its parent body in Britain. Miss Holmes later recalled how the most pressing requirements of the internees were ascertained and, after their arrival, despatched to the camps in question

Enquiries were immediately initiated as to the most urgent needs of the internees, and with the apparent approval of the military authorities steps were taken to send clothing and other needed comforts, and supplies of equipment for the camp schools which had quickly been set up by the internees themselves [,] first such things as paper, pens, pencils, ink, blackboards and chalk, and then text-books and books of all kinds for the camp libraries.<sup>4</sup>

What the report of Miss Holmes does not say is that most of this came on her own initiative, and much at her own expense. To fully appreciate the subsequent activities of the ASCM, it is necessary to digress a little in order to learn more of Margaret Holmes and her earlier work on the Australian student scene.

Margaret Holmes was born in Melbourne as a first-generation Australian to English parents in 1886, and attended the exclusive Tintern Ladies' College in the suburb of Hawthorn. In 1905 she enrolled at the University of Melbourne, studying classics. Her progress was indeed rapid; within three years she had graduated with an MA (Hons), and then moved on to a Diploma in Education. Whilst at the University she early developed an interest and involvement in student affairs, and participated in the activities of the Australian Student Christian Union. This involvement continued after graduation, and after holding a number of positions she finally became full-time executive officer of a reconstituted Australian Student Christian Movement.<sup>5</sup>

Margaret Holmes' approach to life rested on the twin pillars of family and church. One of four children, raised in a respectable middle-class home in Hawthorn by respectable middle-class parents, the death of her father in 1917 saw her move with her mother to a smaller home in nearby Kew. With the marriage and departure of her three brothers, tending the family home became the anchor around which Margaret organised her approach to life. This was complemented by the second pillar in her life, her involvement

with the Congregational Church. Her father had been a lay preacher with the Church, and active in the London Missionary Society. As a girl Margaret had accepted both churchgoing and church teachings as the given way to lead the best possible lifestyle, and her involvement with the ASCM could easily be seen as a natural outgrowth of this.

In the aftermath of the First World War the ASCM received a number of visits from important representatives of the World Student Christian Federation. It also found its ranks expanded through the enrolment at universities of demobilised ex-servicemen. These latter brought

An injection of maturity, radicalism and challenge; students were caught up in the missionary drive of the period, directed towards Asia, Africa and the Pacific Islands; the ecumenical movement began to emerge. ... All these developments were shaping the ASCM, of which Margaret Holmes was for twenty-five years to be the living heart, providing continuity and stability in an ever-changing student population.<sup>6</sup>

As a consequence, the ASCM became known for its internationalism and prescience, and in this Margaret Holmes, "with her vision of a universal community, played no small part".<sup>7</sup>

It was perhaps natural, therefore, that the ASCM should take an interest in students aboard the *Dunera* in 1940. This interest was stimulated even further when it was learned that there was a large number of university graduates and teachers among the internees, and that they had quickly organised themselves into a camp school offering lessons. These were on every imaginable subject, frequently of university standard, and whenever possible conducted in English. The internees did not know what their ultimate fate would be, but as refugees from Nazism they were aware that their future would be less dependent on German than on English. They could never return to Germany so long as Hitler remained in power. Margaret Holmes later recalled

As soon as it became known that we were taking responsibility for assisting in this way [through the provision of books and equipment], requests began to come from the former ISS students and others for specific books needed, also enquiries about the possibility of continuing University study in Australia.<sup>8</sup>

Subsequent activities of the ASCM saw a voluminous and ongoing correspondence between Miss Holmes and the ISS in Britain "concerning the affairs of the boys with whom they had been associated".<sup>9</sup> Contact was also established and maintained with the YMCA War Prisoners' Aid organisation (Geneva), ISS headquarters (also in Geneva) and similar agencies in the United States. The ASCM did not limit its activities only to ISS students, however, nor even to internees who were students. Anyone in need who approached the ASCM was patiently heard, and, where possible, assisted. It must also be stated here that the ASCM had interests beyond the overseas internees, offering succour and assistance to local internees who were imprisoned from within Australia.

In the camps themselves, the organisation of the schools went on regardless of the level of outside assistance. A year after the establishment of the school at Tatura — a school given the impressive title of "Collegium Taturensis" — an anniversary history was prepared which reminisced on the early days

The conditions under which we had to commence our educational work in camp were rather difficult. There were no blackboards, no chalk, no paper, no pencils, nothing of the vital implements for study. We found some sort of soft limestone, which we used as chalk to write upon the walls of the huts and the back of tables. Earth pigments were scratched from the ground and used as colours. Paper was at a premium and pencils were treasured possessions. Lectures were held in the mess hut.<sup>10</sup>

In Camp 7 at Hay, the internees rapidly established a highly organised camp administration, divided into four "Ministries": Administration, Culture, Hygiene and Maintenance, and Catering. An Education Department came under the aegis of the Culture ministry, and everyone in it had a role to play. Among its functions included the following: General Camp Library; Camp School Library; Camp Paper; Debating Society; Religious Services; Administration; Camp School; Teachers; Camp Library Orderlies; and "Quiet Hut" Orderlies, whose task it was to ensure that a reasonable academic environment was provided for those studying.<sup>11</sup> And the subjects available, being taught by some of the leading professors and teachers of pre-Nazi Germany, ensured that those enrolled for courses in the camp received a first-rate education to which they might not otherwise have had access were they not interned.<sup>12</sup>

The teachers and tutors in the camps, moreover, had a pecuniary interest in conducting lessons - though for the vast majority this would appear to have been the least of their concerns. These men were paid for their efforts at a slightly higher rate than the internees doing other jobs of a manual kind, such as those on cooking or sanitation details. The latter received fourpence an hour; the teachers were paid at the rate of sixpence an hour.<sup>13</sup> Interestingly, payment came from the Australian government, and had not originally been budgeted for in the internment appropriations. The willingness of the government to assist in this way served as a precedent for what became an ongoing sympathetic attitude shown by the Army and other government agencies towards the internees' quest for an education.

All this educational infrastructure, and the consequent teaching which took place, was more than just a means of passing the time. For the *Dunera* internees, a highly intelligent and motivated group of what would today be termed "achievers", it had to have a purpose. And, in the form of matriculation into the Universities of Sydney or Melbourne, its purpose was ready-made. The ASCM saw this, too, and in fact devoted its major efforts to the realisation of that aim. In May 1941 the internees at Hay were transferred to Tatura, meaning that now, with but few exceptions, all the *Dunera* internees were again together. Margaret Holmes saw definite advantages to this, for now firm negotiations could be entered into with the University of Melbourne "as to the acceptance of interned students under the University's External Studies scheme, and for permission for others to sit for the School Leaving examination with a view to matriculation".<sup>14</sup> ASCM approaches to the Registrar and his staff (one of whom was a member of the ISS Committee in Australia<sup>15</sup>) were met sympathetically. Students at Tatura who could give evidence that they possessed the necessary pre-requisites to sit for the School Leaving or Matriculation examinations were given the opportunity to do so. Clearly, however, in most cases any original documentation from Europe had been either left in England or lost on the voyage out, so it was more often than not necessary to rely on sworn testimonies of the teaching staff in the camp. The University, for its part, acted in a highly positive manner, making the necessary approaches to the Army for its approval. Many members of staff at the University also lent their support to the quest of the internees to matriculate.<sup>16</sup> There was thus little about which the young internees need worry with regard to their education. As the receipt of mail was permitted, and so long as ships were able to get through to Australia, younger *Dunera* boys began to receive letters from their parents and relatives in England. One father pleaded with his son along the following lines

Friends in Melbourne will guarantee your maintenance, will get you somewhere in a high school to complete your studies and your education and find you a job somewhere near them. At present no internees can be released in Australia, but a friend of mine will try to have that altered. ... Stay in Australia and do not agree to anything else unless you are advised from your father to do so ...<sup>17</sup>



There was, given the educational establishment by then in place, little cause for immediate concern, though issues of release and the future were another matter. The ASCM therefore sought to ease the pain of separation for the internees as well as providing for their educational needs. This was not an easy matter, though it does serve to illustrate the way in which the ASCM saw that it had a pastoral, as well as an educational role to adopt. Another student, grateful for this, confided to Margaret Holmes

Today I received with much pleasure your parcel. ... It is indeed very nice of you to send me a parcel with such useful things ... At present we try our best to improve conditions inside the camp. We do lots of gardening and also building of small pavilions. ... I still hope to see my parents one day. You can imagine how hard it is for a boy of 17 years of age to be without parents and help in a foreign country.<sup>18</sup>

At the end of 1941 seven students sat for matriculation into First Year Arts at Melbourne University, and forty others sat for the School Leaving examinations. Most were successful. Supervision was provided by the Education Officer of the military unit guarding the camps at Tatura. On occasions when specialist academic knowledge was required, such as for oral or practical exams, the University sent its own examiners to the camps.<sup>19</sup>

An undertaking of the kind upon which the ASCM had embarked required a great deal of work. Correspondence of a considerable size had to be dealt with; this was nearly always attended to by Margaret Holmes in her capacity as Headquarters Secretary. Other work included counselling, the provision of materials and set text books, scouring the second-hand bookshops for particular works requested by individual internees, the packaging and despatch of these items, and general clerical work. ASCM members, both students and graduates, assisted with these tasks on a voluntary basis in the evenings and on weekends.

Then, as a result of the entry of Japan into the war in December 1941 and the consequent threat to Australia in February 1942, the situation for the *Dunera* internees changed dramatically. With every available man required to do his bit in the fight against the Japanese, agricultural labour quickly became scarce. In the fruit-growing areas surrounding the Tatura camps, the usual itinerant labour required for the harvest could not be found, and certain of the internees, under special conditions, were permitted to volunteer to fill this gap. Release for fruit picking acted as a precedent for a more general enlistment of the internees into an Army labour corps, resulting, in April 1942, in the formation of the Eighth Employment Company. Although a mobile unit travelling to wherever there was a need for muscle power,<sup>20</sup> its base was at Camp Pell in Melbourne — within a short walk of the University. This not only enabled personal contact to be made with the ASCM, but also facilitated the matriculation and enrolment into the University of many more ex-*Dunera* men. Moreover, now that they were in the Army their prospects for an education were enhanced through the Army Education unit.

The opportunities thereby presented through the interest of the ASCM proved to be of immense importance for the men who arrived in Australia on the *Dunera*. And these men grabbed the chance with both hands. The case of Mike Sondheim, who enrolled at the Melbourne Technical College, is, in this regard, a typical one

Our company was transferred to Broadmeadows Army Camp, working in the stores and sidings as the Americans moved up north. I became Company driver again which gave me time to do some of my studies. After 5 pm I, like many others, rushed into town by picking up a lift near the camp or walking to the Hume Highway about 10-15 minutes distance. Then a quick meal near the Melb. Tech. and 2 or 3 hours lectures, 3 or 4 times a week, then home



to Parkville. Up at 6.30, catch a tram in Flemington Road and the train at Newmarket. ... Walk 10 minutes to the camp, breakfast, parade and work.<sup>21</sup>

Provided with an option, many of those interned and sent to Australia on the *Dunera* were thereby able to mitigate the worst effects of internment on their future careers. This was not, moreover, a small population; the Melbourne *Herald* pointed out in March 1941 that some four hundred of the internees who were between the ages of 17 and 20 had been in colleges or universities prior to their arrest in England.<sup>22</sup>

Although the Society of Friends and VIREC both played a vital role in assisting the internees' educational opportunities, it could be argued that it was Margaret Holmes (and through her the ASCM) who provided the energy and organisation required to ensure the success of such initiatives.<sup>23</sup> Her interest continued for long after the internees' release and subsequent enlistment in the Army, and extended far beyond professional contact. One former internee, writing to Margaret Holmes' biographer in 1976, remembered her in the following way

Once in Margaret's office I took to her like a mother, and felt at ease, relieved and excited to be able to share a few things with her at a deep level. ... Margaret found a job for me [and] I did treat her like home, like parents without the familiarities you indulge in ...<sup>24</sup>

All, it seems, remember Miss Holmes with great affection. The following testament would be shared by many

What the Australian nation ought to know about her was that she mobilised the goodwill of many people and brought out the best in them in a humanitarian cause which in the end produced out of a heap of dejected mankind a bunch of good Australians by any standards.<sup>25</sup>

Most of the *Dunera* men had been released by the end of 1942; some remained in camp into 1943 owing to delays in British Home Office authorisation, a lack of transport facilities to take those who wished it back to the United Kingdom, or a desire on the part of some to stay in Tatura in order to complete their studies prior to sitting for their exams. Certainly, by the end of 1943 everyone who fell under the ASCM umbrella had been released, and almost all were in employment.

By the end of the war, it has been estimated, at least fifty ex-*Dunera* men had obtained degrees from the University of Melbourne. The ASCM calculated that about twelve of those were by now actually members of the university staff, as lecturers, tutors or demonstrators.<sup>26</sup> While it had never been anticipated that the British internees sent to Australia would be permitted to remain — that they would not had been explicitly stated in Australian documents soon after the arrival of the *Dunera*<sup>27</sup> — the war service of the men of the Eighth Employment Company forced a government rethink on the permanency of their migration. By November 1945 some 785 former *Dunera* men were still in Australia, the rest having returned to England or transmigrated elsewhere. Of those left in Australia, 417 were in civilian employment and 368 were still in the Army.<sup>28</sup> The attitude of the government was that they should be offered the opportunity to remain and become Australian citizens.

At this juncture, it could be suggested that the work of the ASCM on behalf of the *Dunera* internees had successfully come to an end. Three years later, in 1948, Margaret Holmes reluctantly retired from the ASCM. Her reluctance was due to the fact that the great Australian post-war migration programme was just beginning, and new forms of assistance for far greater numbers of migrants than ever before were going to be needed. From 1950, although it is not part of our story here, she was to render great service in a comeback to migrant resettlement.<sup>29</sup>

How may we best assess the work of the Australian Student Christian Movement on behalf of the internees sent to Australia *per* the *Dunera* in 1940? Clearly, the young men who were assisted by the ASCM were presented with a golden opportunity to receive an education just at the time when the prospects of doing so would have seemed at their most remote. These internees were, after all, of enemy alien nationality, prisoners of both the British and Australian military, and separated from family and friends by 19,000 kilometres of distance. Most of them were Jewish, and the level of support available from the small Australian Jewish community was, for those on the *Dunera*, an unknown. They arrived in poor spirits, with few possessions (and some almost devoid even of clothing). It seemed as though they had nothing going for them, their fate in the hands of others.

This contained, however, both positive as well as negative possibilities - though upon their arrival few could see anything other than the latter. Organisations such as the ASCM stepped in to provide the positive opportunities and support networks which people in such genuine need required. Their work was entirely voluntary, and operated on the basis of a tiny budget and little in the way of external funding. In an environment of total war, government sources did not exist, though there were some in the bureaucracy who offered their sympathy. All in all, if bodies such as the ASCM were not available to assist the *Dunera* internees (and, in the same vein, the much-overlooked Jewish and Italian internees from Singapore who arrived in September 1940 *per* the *Queen Mary*),<sup>30</sup> their futures would have been very bleak indeed. Although it is not the place of the historian to speculate, it may be reasonably surmised that the successes experienced in the camps — provision of teaching materials, preparation for Matriculation and School Leaving exams, the opportunities to sit for those exams, entry to university and subsequent graduation — would not have been as easily facilitated were it not for the existence and efforts of the Australian Student Christian Movement.

The title of this paper refers to education in adversity. That there was any education at all is remarkable; that it achieved such marvellous results is, under the circumstances, something worthy of respect and the highest admiration. We are, as stated at the outset, considering but one facet of the internee experience; but it was on the basis of this that many were able to reconstruct their lives and, indeed, to emerge on the other side of their internment with something positive to show for it. Very, very few of those who were incarcerated behind barbed wire during the Second World War could, if they lived at all, live to make such a claim.

## NOTES

1 See, for example, the following: Benzion Patkin, *The Dunera Internees*, Sydney: Cassell, 1979; Cyril Pearl, *The Dunera Scandal: Deported by Mistake*, Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1983; Paul R. Bartrop with Gabrielle Eisen (eds), *The Dunera Affair: A Documentary Resource Book*, Melbourne: Schwartz and Wilkinson/Jewish Museum of Australia, 1990; and Paul R. Bartrop "The *Dunera* Affair: A Scandal for Whom?", in *Journal of the Australian Jewish Historical Society*, vol. XI, part 1 (November 1990), pp. 14-19.

2 Douglas Boerner (ex-*Dunera* internee) in correspondence with author, 17 August 1992.

3 *Ibid.*

4 Bartrop with Eisen, *The Dunera Affair*, Doc. 3.48. This document, Margaret Holmes' own recollection of her work on behalf of the *Dunera* internees, was entitled by her: "Note on a Piece of Work with Refugee Students and Graduates who came to Australia on the Transport *Dunera*". It is a testimony to her unpretentiousness that she described her enormous contribution as simply "a piece of work". It is not going too far to suggest that without her drive

and leadership the education of students in the camps would not have taken place - at least, not in the form it ultimately took.

An example of the extent of such aid is located in a list of materials despatched by the ASCM to Camp 3, Tatura, on 5 November 1940

4,000 sheets of paper  
1 gross pens  
1 gross pencils  
20 erasers  
1 dozen blue and red pencils  
120 sheets graph paper  
1 bottle ink  
100 drawing pins  
2 dozen exercise books  
222 books and pamphlets, in all subjects, in English and German.

State Library of Victoria, Manuscripts Collection, MS 8782 (A. C. Clarke Papers), Box 1530/2.

5 Rosalie McCutcheon, "Margaret Holmes: Larger than the Roles She Played", in Sabine Wills (ed.) *Women: Faith & Fetes. Essays in the History of Women and the Church in Australia*, Melbourne: Dove Communications/Australian Council of Churches, 1977, p. 95.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 98.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 99.

8 Bartrop with Eisen, *The Dunera Affair*, Doc. 3.48.

9 *Ibid.*

10 *The Australian Intercollegian* (monthly magazine of the Australian Student Christian Movement), 1 November 1941, p. iii.

11 Bartrop with Eisen, *The Dunera Affair*, Doc. 3.26, from the diary of internee Walter Grief.

12 Among the subjects available at Hay included: English, Czech, French, Russian, Greek, Hebrew, Latin, Portuguese and Spanish; agricultural science; natural science; civil, mechanical and electrical engineering; painting and sculpture; music; philosophy, psychology, history, Jewish studies, law, economics, political science; and, as soon as the curriculum was learned, matriculation courses for entry to the University of Sydney. See Bartrop with Eisen, *The Dunera Affair*, Doc. 3.30, from the diary of internee Walter Grief.

13 Douglas Boerner in correspondence with the author, 17 August 1992.

14 Bartrop with Eisen, *The Dunera Affair*, Doc. 3.48.

15 *Ibid.*

16 *Ibid.*

17 *The Boomerang* (camp newspaper), no. 16 (17 August 1941), reprinted in Bartrop with Eisen, *The Dunera Affair*, Doc. 3.32.

18 *The Australian Intercollegian*, 1 October 1941, p. 128.

19 Bartrop with Eisen, *The Dunera Affair*, Doc. 3.48.

20 In fact, one of the many songs composed by *Dunera* men noted that within the Eighth

Employment Company "Our only chance to travel/Is fetching sand and gravel". The Eighth Employment Company March declared

When a ship comes in and we take the freight ashore,  
And we work like hell as we've never done before.  
We shift bales and cases and we handle them with skill,  
And enjoy the daily drill  
In the evening, ching, ching,  
In the evening.

See Bartrop with Eisen, *The Dunera Affair*, pp 381-82.

21 *Ibid.*, Doc. 3.57, from the Diary of Mike Sondheim, Book 4, Postscript. The question of this soldier living away from the camp is explained thus: "We had camp accommodation but few stayed there except when on occasional duty. The work became routine, many of us being allocated to regular postings". *Ibid.*

22 *Herald* (Melbourne), 5 March 1941.

23 Tribute should here be paid to Alfred C. Clarke and Margaret Pierce, both of the Society of Friends in Melbourne, who performed much the same function through the Quakers as did Margaret Holmes through the ASCM. They have left their papers from this time with the Manuscripts Division of the La Trobe Library, State Library of Victoria (MS 8782 and MS 9250).

24 Dr Paul Eisenklamm to Rosalie McCutcheon, 3 March 1976, in McCutcheon, "Margaret Holmes", p. 106.

25 *Ibid.*

26 Bartrop with Eisen, *The Dunera Affair*, Doc. 3.48.

27 See, for example, Australian Archives (AA) MP 729/6, file 63/401/123 (Civilian Internees sent from United Kingdom to Australia), Secretary, Department of Defence Co-ordination to Secretary, Prime Minister's Department (for transmission to the Australian High Commissioner, London), 13 September 1940

The Commonwealth Government only agreed to accept prisoners of war and internees for internment in Australia. To release certain persons on arrival here would be undesirable on grounds of national security and would also involve questions including employment, sustenance and ultimate repatriation of such persons. ... Persons should not be embarked for Australia unless ... on the understanding that they will remain here until returned to the United Kingdom for release.

28 AA MP 742/1, file 255/14/228, F. M. Forde (Minister for the Army) to J. A. Beasley (Minister for Defence), A. A. Calwell (Minister for Immigration and Information) and E. J. Holloway (Minister for Labour and National Service), 20 November 1945.

29 See McCutcheon, "Margaret Holmes", pp 107-12, for an account of the post-war career of Margaret Holmes.

30 See Paul R. Bartrop, "Incompatible with Security: Enemy Alien Internees from Singapore in Australia (1940-45)", in *Journal of the Australian Jewish Historical Society*, vol. XII, part 1 (November 1993), pp. 149-69.

## SEVENTEEN CHILDREN: AUSTRALIA'S RESPONSE TO GERMAN JEWISH REFUGEE CHILDREN, 1933-1945

*Glen Palmer*

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Australian Association for Jewish Studies, Melbourne, on 10 July 1995)*

On 24 July 1939 seventeen German Jewish children, aged between seven and twelve years, disembarked from the *Orama* when it berthed in Melbourne. They had travelled from Germany via London and were under the escort of Hedi and Ferry Fixel, well known for their later involvement in the Hobart Jewish community. While there were small numbers of older Jewish children and youth admitted to Australia before the war, these seventeen were the only non-British children under twelve years of age. Why were there so few? Why were these seventeen chosen, and what happened to them after their arrival in Australia? These are some of the questions explored in this paper.

The separation of children from parents is a sad but familiar consequence of war and persecution. Where separation is voluntary it is surely an extreme sacrifice made by parents under duress. Such was the case in pre-war Nazi Germany where, from 1933, the emigration of Jewish children became commonplace. With Nazi edicts and legislation curtailing the education and career prospects of Jewish children, the emigration of youth became a priority. In 1934 Leo Baeck is quoted as saying "The only thing to do is get them out."<sup>1</sup> The enactment of the Nuremberg Laws in 1935 reaffirmed the hopeless position of Jewish youth in Germany and led to a growth in schemes and training programmes for emigration to both Palestine and other countries.

Between 1934 and 1936 Youth Aliyah sent 1,600 German Jewish children between the ages of fourteen and seventeen to Palestine.<sup>2</sup> As well, parents who could afford it often made private arrangements for their children with schools and families outside Germany. The situation was such that by late 1937 German Jews had coined the poignant expression "Children turn into letters." "There scarcely exist in Germany any Jewish parents who have not got at least one child abroad."<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, before 1938 emigration was confined mostly to older children, those at least fourteen years of age, who were beyond the compulsory years of schooling. That situation changed dramatically in 1938 as Nazi Germany expanded and persecution intensified.

The mass arrests, suicides, deportations and emigration that occurred in Germany and Austria throughout 1938 had a disastrous effect on family life. As men disappeared, women were left alone to protect their children. In numerous cases children were left to fend for themselves. Even families that remained intact after *Kristallnacht* could often no longer protect and nurture their children. Jewish children were now banned from schools, and violence on the streets meant that many were virtually under house arrest. The emigration of children now became a matter of urgency for hundreds of thousands of children of all ages.

Organised appeals to help children came rapidly in the wake of *Kristallnacht*. The response from governments was less inspired. Nevertheless, Britain set an example which it hoped other countries would emulate. Although the British government refused the admission of 10,000 children to Palestine,<sup>4</sup> it approved the temporary admission to



Britain of as many children as British refugee organisations could guarantee. Between December 1938 and September 1939, a period of ten months, the Refugee Children's Movement, a non-denominational organisation set up to manage the *kindertransports*, moved to Britain 9,354 German and Austrian children, 7,482 of whom were Jewish.<sup>5</sup> Other organisations and individuals also helped remove small numbers of children from Czechoslovakia and German children who had been deported to Poland. It was surely a sterling effort. Yet those numbers represent only a fraction of the children by then needing refuge, and whose parents were anxious to send them away.

As opportunities to remove children emerged, parents besieged refugee organisations involved. For example, a report to the Council for German Jewry from the Jewish community in Frankfurt showed parents by November 1938 so anxious that they were indifferent to the type of care provided their children:

There is a fervent desire among Jewish parents at least to see their children moved quickly; it is immaterial whether they are offered individual hospitality or accommodation in camps, so long as they are removed from Germany.<sup>6</sup>

Selections for Britain were made in Berlin and Vienna, although thousands of parents wrote directly to the Refugee Children's Movement in London or advertised in British newspapers for homes for their children. Applications were so numerous that, according to one social worker, many were never read.<sup>7</sup>

There is not a shadow of doubt in my mind that numerous parents would have sent their children anywhere for safety by late 1938. The fact that so few children came to Australia had nothing, I believe, to do with need. Numerous other parents would also have sent their children had they been given the opportunity.

Since 1933 the Australian government had received requests for the admission of older Jewish children and youth to Australia; after *Kristallnacht* these included children of all ages. From November 1938 the Executive Council of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society received many expressions of interest in refugee children; these came from its own state branches and from individuals. The Prime Minister also received unsolicited offers of help from non-Jewish Australian families. However, the Australian public, including Jewish families who were not part of the establishment, were given little opportunity to help. Decisions regarding refugee children were in the hands of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society and the Australian government. Neither seemed in a hurry to take action.

Not until February 1939, after informal meetings with government personnel and correspondence with the Council for German Jewry in London, did the Australian Jewish Welfare Society formally ask the Australian government to admit some children. The request was for the admission of 750 children over a period of three years. On 15 March the government granted this request, giving approval for "up to 250 Jewish refugee orphan children per annum" for three years, but insisted that the children be included in the 15,000 quota already announced for refugees.<sup>8</sup> Given this, the offer was scarcely a gesture of generosity or humanitarianism. Furthermore it came with severe and unrealistic restrictions: the children were to be "double orphans" — that is, neither parent living — and were to be between the ages of seven and twelve.

Despite the government restrictions, the Australian Jewish Welfare Society of the time must share the responsibility for the admission of so few children. The first year's quota of 250 children was divided among the Melbourne, Sydney and Perth branches of the Welfare Society — Melbourne one hundred, Sydney one hundred, and Perth fifty. Although it was now March 1939 there was no sense of urgency in filling the quota.

Sydney embarked on a building program and delayed the selection of children until the Isabella Lazarus Home was ready — in November 1939, by which time it was too late. Perth reneged on its earlier offer, insisting it wanted to select the children, and then only at the rate of four a month. Only Melbourne took immediate action and prepared to receive a small group of children to partially fill its quota. That even these seventeen came to Australia is probably due to Francis Barkman, then secretary of the Melbourne branch of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society. Although not remembered kindly by most of the seventeen former refugee children, it was her insistence and action which set in motion their selection and removal to Australia.

These seventeen children escaped the orphan restriction. The London and German committees responsible for their selection interpreted “orphan” as a child separated from his or her parents, as was the case for children entering England on the *kindertransports*. When the Department of the Interior discovered that the first seventeen were not orphans it insisted that future children be complete orphans. Only later, following repeated requests from the Australian Jewish Welfare Society, did the government grudgingly relax its position: “Failing complete orphans being available the balance selected should have only one living parent. The admission of any of these children to Australia cannot be used, at any time, to facilitate the entry of their relatives to the Commonwealth.”<sup>9</sup> By then war had broken out and the removal of further children from Germany became impossible.

I know many of the seventeen have pondered their selection, as no doubt does any survivor of a great tragedy. Why me? As children they represented a cross-section of German Jewish society, a “potpourri” as Jo Weinreb, one of the seventeen, described them: some from wealthy families, others from families then on welfare; some excellent students, but not all; some had relatives in Australia, but for others the destination was immaterial. “I don’t think they cared where they sent me,” Margot said. “Just to get out — England, Australia ... I don’t think they cared where ... and I am sure they would have sent my sister and my brother.” There were three couples of brothers or sisters within the group, but brothers and sisters outside the seven to twelve age range were excluded.

Thirteen of the children were living in Berlin. Most of these children found out about the scheme through their Jewish schools, where forms were distributed — possibly to likely candidates. Being young children, their response sometimes belied the seriousness of the occasion:

My teacher had said would I like to go to Australia, and I thought, “What a gas that would be!” So I went home and asked my mother. She burst into tears and I was surprised.<sup>10</sup>

Betty Midalia recalled her teacher saying,

“Hands up those who’d like to migrate to Australia.” That’s what I remember, though it might have been quite different. I thought, “This is goodo. This is good fun, to go somewhere.” So I put up my hand and I got a note to take home.

Other parents, including those not living in Berlin, found out about the scheme through connections with the national Jewish organisation in Germany, the *Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland*, or its social welfare department, the *Judische Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle*. Parents applied through the social welfare department, with the *Reichsvertretung* giving the final approval. The selection

was probably made very quickly — the Australian government approved the scheme in mid March and by mid April parents knew their children had been selected.

While it can be argued that all German Jewish children were then at risk, applicants were probably screened according to urgency, as happened for other *kindertransports*. The four children from outside Berlin were particularly vulnerable. All had experienced the terror of *Kristallnacht* — homes violated, possessions confiscated, fathers arrested or killed. In all cases, fathers had disappeared and mothers had been left to fend for their children and to make decisions and arrangements about emigration. This was also true for some of the Berlin children; for example, a child whose father had been deported to Poland; a child whose father was “stateless” — both would have been under threat of deportation. There were several other children whose fathers had emigrated. Poorer families were more likely to be intact. Without money and assets, they were of little interest to the *Reich* and the men less likely to have been incarcerated. At the same time these families were trapped, with no hope of emigrating. These children too would have been classified as urgent cases. In all probability the group consisted of some children who were considered urgent cases and others whose parents could afford to pay.

Having been selected, the children required documentation both to leave Germany and to enter Australia. For example, boys required Hitler Youth clearance before a passport would be issued. They also required landing permits for Australia, medical certificates and character references. [See Fig. 1]

The following letter, written by a father after hearing of his only child's acceptance, shows the anguish of parents as they made these decisions and went about the preparations:

17 April 1939

My dears!

Just now I came from Rabbi Singermann. He is against that L goes to Australia ... he is still too young. But now the *Reichsvertretung der Juden* has approved the admission ... and the affair can hardly be cancelled now. S has to write a character reference for L and should bring it to us tomorrow. One doesn't know now what to do ... Kathe is very much for it. I'll miss him a lot, but whatever one does in life it's always wrong. L is so clever ... He is so lovely, and him we must send so far away. Well, we'll see what fate has in store for us.

Before the departure many of the parents and children met in Berlin. For the children it was a farewell party, for the parents an opportunity to meet each other and Dr Falk who was to accompany their children to Melbourne.

The moment of parting was surely one of overwhelming sadness for parents, expressed in stoic silence or tears. Reactions from the children varied. The younger ones probably did not comprehend what was happening. “It didn't occur to me we wouldn't be back that night,” commented Edna, then a seven year old. For other children there was a sense of going on a journey, a holiday perhaps, with the accompanying emotions of sadness, excitement and anxiety. The pain of parting was eased by the belief that siblings and parents would soon follow. This was what they had been told, although it is quite clear that neither the Australian government nor the Australian Jewish Welfare Society saw any place within the Children's Scheme for parents or for siblings outside the seven to twelve age range.

The children travelled by train to Bremen, where they boarded the *Europa* for England. Few *kindertransports* left from German ports; if they did it was from Hamburg. Children going to England generally travelled by train to Holland and from there by boat to

# Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei

## Hitler-Jugend, Gebiet Berlin (3)

**Briefmarken:**  
**Berlin N 54, Elsfässer Straße 86**  
 Ferngesprächsummer 475141 Samuel-Dr.  
 Telegrammumschrift: Gebietsführung Berlin



**Postfachkonto:** Berlin 114881  
 Bankkonto Nr. 1567  
 Berliner Stadtbank, Kasse 5

Verwaltungsabteilung  
 7/10/2. Sch.

Berlin N 54, den 14. April 1939

### Bescheinigung

laut Rundverfügung des Reichs- und Preussischen Ministers des Innern vom 23. 6. 1937 über die Ausstellung von Reisepässen an Jugendlichen bescheinigen wir dem - der

Lothar Siegesmund Israel B a d r i a n  
 (Vorname) (Nachname)  
 Berlin, C 2, Neue Königstr. 24  
 geboren am: 15.2.32 in: Berlin **Arz.:**  
 daß er - sie auf Grund seiner - ihrer nichtarischen Abstammung nicht Angehöriger  
 der Hitler-Jugend (des HJ) ist.

Diese Bescheinigung gilt nur für eine Reise nach Australien v. 1. 5. 39 -  
 und ist bei der Beantragung eines Reisepasses auf dem Polizeirevier und bei den  
 deutschen Grenz- und Kontrollstellen unangefordert vorzulegen.



Leiter der Gebietsleitung  
 (Partei)

Verf. - 10/10/2. Sch.

B 10, Form. 10

Certificate issued to Laurie (formerly Lothar) Badrian by the Berlin district of the Hitler Youth, 14 April 1939. Being Jewish, Laurie was excluded from the Hitler Youth and was thus eligible to apply for a passport. From 1936, membership of the Hitler Youth was compulsory for non-Jewish German youth but it was not enforced until April 1939. Emigration for non-Jewish youth thence became extremely difficult.

Translation: According to the laws of the Minister of Internal Affairs (law of 23 June 1937) re passports to youth...Lothar Siegesmund Israel Badrian...born on 15 February 1932 in Berlin...is not a member of the Hitler Youth because he is not Aryan. This certificate is valid for one journey to Australia from 1 May 1939. This certificate must be presented when he applies for a passport and also when going through customs and crossing borders. He must present it without being asked. (Laurie Badrian)

Figure 1

England. Leaving from Bremen was by special arrangement and it is probable they paid for the privilege. On board were 300 other children who had been offered refuge in England.

On 17 June 1939, after a few days in London, the children boarded the *Orama* for Australia. It was at this point that the Fixels, an Austrian couple also travelling on the *Orama*, became involved. Dr Falk's husband had committed suicide and the London committee, fearing Dr Falk was too distraught to care for the children, asked the Fixels "to give a hand."

When the children arrived in Melbourne they were taken to a beautiful Federation-style home in Balwyn, a house which many described then and since as "like a palace." This was *Larino*, later to be renamed the Frances Barkman Home.<sup>11</sup> The house had recently been saved from demolition, renovated and rented to the Jewish Welfare Society by Samuel Meyers.

After a day to explore and settle into their new environment, the children were enrolled at Balwyn State School, an event which received front page coverage in the *Sun-News Pictorial*. Other newspapers and magazines also covered their arrival.

Most have fond memories of Balwyn State School and of the reception they were given by teachers and children. The headmaster, Mr Carter, was a particular favourite — "a darling", "an absolutely wonderful person", "we all adored him", were some of the comments his memory evoked. The fact that his daughter was on a music scholarship in Germany perhaps gave him a special interest in the children, but this in itself was a fortunate coincidence.

The Welfare Society and the women on the House Committee in charge of *Larino* also gave the children a warm reception, and in the first weeks there were picnics, visits to the zoo, etcetera. But inevitably the honeymoon period ended and, as Ellen Anderson commented, the Committee "got on with the boring job of looking after us." Originally it was intended that the children would stay at *Larino* a few months, then be fostered into families, with another group of children replacing them at *Larino*. The difficulty of finding children who met the strict government criteria, together with the outbreak of war, changed those plans. It soon became clear that most of these children would be staying at *Larino* for the duration of the war. Only Richard and George Dreyfus had the good fortune to have their parents join them in Australia, and they left within a few months. The other children had to face the fact that siblings and parents would not be joining them, although a few knew their parents had reached Shanghai. After Australia entered the war, letters between children and families in Germany became impossible, unless sent via the United States or another neutral country. Red Cross messages of twenty-five words became the only means of communication.

Hedi Fixel was matron of *Larino* during this difficult period, and remained there till mid-1941. Her husband, Ferry, lived in, and together they offered the children much kindness and support. Several other children, with parents in Melbourne or interned at Tatura, joined the original group, so there were often up to twenty children at the home. The Fixels tried hard to dull the institutional edges of group living, but inevitably life for the children soon fell into a monotonous routine. The institutional bells echo through this diary entry made by Ellen Anderson:

Thursday, 7 March 1940

After breakfast we went to school. Then the bell rang to queue up and we went into the classroom. Then it rang for the break and then it rang to march - can't remember who came first. Then we went back into class. Then the bell rang again and we went home and had lunch.



Then we went back to school. Then it rang for the break. Then it rang again for the lesson and then to go home. Then we did our homework and after we went into the garden and played. Then it rang for supper and after we played. Then it rang again for milk and we went upstairs to bathe and went to bed.

After Ferry Fixel left for Hobart, Hedi stayed on for a while. On several occasions the House Committee admonished her for indulging the children. These complaints say much about the Committee's attitudes: "On one occasion a child sucked an egg at the table and on others children had resorted to the use of their fingers and neglected to use the cutlery provided." "Apart from that they were known to lapse into German." Hedi was also taxed "with neglecting to enforce certain rules such as arranging for children to wash some of their own socks."<sup>12</sup>

When Hedi Fixel resigned the Committee advertised for a matron "with experience in institutional management," who could "take over the supervision and control of the children and the management of the staff." The matron's husband was expected to live on the premises "to help with the discipline of the boys."<sup>13</sup> This is remembered as a particularly grim period at *Larino*, especially for the boys. Fortunately it was brief and by the end of that year the children had a new matron, Ursula Kaye, herself a young German refugee, who stayed at *Larino* until 1946.

Despite the presence of kind staff, the *Larino* years are full of unpleasant memories for most of the children. Surely there was fun and laughter, but the unhappy times have generally obliterated those. As adults they acknowledge the role the Welfare Society played in saving their lives, but their memories reflect the hurt and insensitive treatment they received as children. There is no question that their physical needs were well met, but the scars of unmet social, emotional and psychological needs still plague some of the former *Larino* children. The extent to which these reflect traumas inflicted by persecution, separation from families or by the Holocaust generally, as opposed to their upbringing at *Larino*, is impossible to assess. It is obvious though that the institutional life of *Larino* did not provide the nurturing environment they needed as young children and adolescents growing up without their families.

From the moment of arrival, the Welfare Society placed great pressure on the children to assimilate — to become 100 per cent Australian and 100 per cent Jewish. Names were changed, and the children were expected to shed the past — their familiar clothing, their language, their identity. Considering this emphasis, their placement at Balwyn is curious. There they were isolated from the Jewish community. Apart from fortnightly visits to the St Kilda Synagogue, they had virtually no contact with the Jewish community and no opportunity for socialisation within a Jewish family. Nevertheless, their formal religious education was carefully planned. The Welfare Society hired a young Hebrew teacher, Miss Judd, who was from a very Orthodox family in Hamburg. She visited *Larino* weekly and from all accounts was an excellent teacher. *Larino* was run on what was described as "strictly Jewish lines." Hedi Fixel described it as "Anglo-Jewish Australian" — strict but not completely so. Children from liberal backgrounds generally adapted to this lifestyle. However, for the one Orthodox boy in the group, *Larino* was a shattering experience. There was little attempt to cater for his particular needs; for example, the other children would make the two hour journey to synagogue by tram, but for him travelling was impossible. Directors of the Welfare Society refused him permission to stay regularly on Friday nights with an Australian Jewish family who lived near the synagogue. In 1943, when an opportunity arose for him to live with an Orthodox family this too was refused, the grounds being that the family were refugees, and would not provide the right environment "for a boy for whom the Welfare Society was doing everything to make Australian."

Outside school, the children had very little opportunity to mix with Australians, Jewish or otherwise. "We were an island. We went to school and we went home. We were taken places occasionally, but always as a group." Only rarely after synagogue were they taken on outings, and occasionally in later years they would go individually or in small groups to someone's home for a meal. The memories of even those occasions are bitter-sweet:

Occasionally we would be invited to a Jewish family for lunch and I enjoyed that. Sometimes we would go to the pictures afterwards with the other children, as they would have children of their own ... That was exciting ... They were kind to us, but we felt a bit out of it. They were usually fairly young families — doctors and dentists — Australian Jewish families, and we would notice that they had new clothes. They were brought up differently from us. We had hand-me-downs. People used to send suitcases of their old clothes for us.<sup>14</sup>

Through their clothing and their treatment many of the children developed an overwhelming sense of themselves as "the poor refugee children." This perception was enhanced by verbal reminders of their status and by the expectation of perpetual gratitude:

I sensed as a child that those who had assimilated well didn't want to be associated with us particularly. I suppose they must have contributed funds ... but I don't think any of them felt any compassion for these parentless children.<sup>15</sup>

In the absence of families there was an emotional void that could not be filled in a group home. "There was a desolation because there was no love. There couldn't be ... You need to be able to say to a child, 'You're my special one'." These children had no one to cherish them, to offer them the kind of unconditional love a child needs. They had no one to hug them, to kiss them, to comfort them when they were sick. While they developed ways of coping — in solitude, study, friendships with other adults or each other — their sadness would often spill over under the bed covers at night.

When the war ended, most faced the grim fact that their parents had been murdered. Three children had parents in Shanghai, and two had a father in Palestine, but from families who had remained in Germany there were few survivors — a mother, a brother, a few distant relatives.

In preparation for the arrival of post-war refugee children, the Australian Jewish Welfare Society was anxious for the original group of children to move on. In 1946 the group began dispersing. Parents from Shanghai arrived, and boarding arrangements were made for the remaining boys. (One boy had already left at the beginning of 1945; he became a ward of the Welfare Guardian Society and moved to Wangaratta.) There was less pressure on the girls to leave, and some stayed at *Larino* until 1948.

Children with surviving parents were undoubtedly the lucky ones, yet their dreams of happy reunions were often shattered as they and their parents faced each other over an abyss of seven or more years apart. Parents and children had both changed. In most cases they no longer even shared a common language. Among interviewees for this research, both *Larino* children and others, I found the failure of post-reunion relationships a common and sad outcome. In many cases the reunions were often more stressful than the initial parting and separation.

In the aftermath of the Holocaust little attention was paid to the experiences of children who escaped overseas before the war. Because they were neither in concentration camps nor in hiding their experiences were generally overlooked. As one *Larino*-ite commented, when she is with concentration camp survivors she sums up her history in a few words: "Germany, Australia, America and then I came here (Israel)." While it is true that these children escaped terrible suffering and trauma, it is also true that separation from their

families and institutional life imposed their own trauma and suffering, and compounded the effects of the Holocaust on them.

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Lucy Davidowicz, *The War against the Jews*, 1986, p. 190.

<sup>2</sup> First Annual Report of the Council for German Jewry, 1936, pp. 12-13, file 34, reel 5, Archives of the Central British Fund.

<sup>3</sup> "The position of the Jews in Germany", October 1937, file 63, reel 12, Archives of the Central British Fund.

<sup>4</sup> Malcolm MacDonald, Secretary of State for the Colonies and Dominion Affairs, refused this request, made by the Jewish Agency for Palestine, on the grounds any additional migration to Palestine would prejudice forthcoming talks with the Arabs. At the same time he claimed the refusal was not necessarily permanent. Jewish Telegraphic Agency, *Daily News Bulletin*, 15 December 1938, Wiener Library, London.

<sup>5</sup> Movement for the Care of Children from Germany, First Annual Report, November 1938-November 1939, file 153, reel 28, Archives of the Central British Fund.

<sup>6</sup> "Report on the present position of members of the Jewish community in Frankfurt, November 1938". Document file 608, Wiener Library, London.

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Herta Souhami, Institute for Oral Documentation, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, cited by Judith Baumel, *The refugee children in Great Britain 1938-1945*, Masters thesis, Ramat-Gan University, Israel, 1981, p. 84.

<sup>8</sup> Letter from J.A. Carrodus, Department of the Interior, to H. Lesnie, Australian Jewish Welfare Society, 16 March 1939, AA433/1: 43/2/46.

<sup>9</sup> Extract from a letter from the AJWS to the Overseas Settlement Department, London, 22 December 1939, AA434/1: 49/3/3.

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Ellen Anderson, 16 July 1992.

<sup>11</sup> This occurred in 1946 after Frances Barkman's sudden death.

<sup>12</sup> Minutes of the Board of Directors of the AJWS, 15 January and 5 March 1941, Archives of the AJWS, Melbourne.

<sup>13</sup> Minutes of meetings of the Board of Directors of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society, 24 April and 14 May 1941, Archives of AJWS, Melbourne.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Marion Paul, 8 January 1993.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Edna Samson, 23 May 1993.

Further details and referencing can be found in the PhD thesis on which this article is based: Glen Palmer (1995). "Reluctant Refuge: Unaccompanied Refugee and Evacuee Children in Australia, 1933-45". PhD thesis, University of Adelaide.

## LEFT ATTITUDES TOWARDS JEWS: ANTI-SEMITISM AND PHILO-SEMITISM

*Philip Mendes*

The historical relationship between Jews and the political Left has varied between one of friendship and one of enmity. As Jacobs notes, Left attitudes towards Jews have always incorporated a "rainbow of perspectives".<sup>1</sup>

On the one hand, socialism and socialist movements have always contained a degree of anti-Semitism and anti-Semites, a phenomenon the German socialist leader Auguste Bebel aptly termed the "Socialism of Fools". On the other hand, socialist movements have a long history of philo-Semitism or sympathy for Jews, a phenomenon that accounts for the historical over-representation of Jews in the political Left. On balance, the historical scales weigh in favour of the philo-Semites. Movements of the political Left have generally been more likely to support Jewish aspirations for equality than have movements of the political Right. Nevertheless, over the last twenty-five years, the Jewish/Left nexus has declined and anti-Semitism (or at least lack of sympathy for Jewish aspirations) has become more prevalent on the political Left.

This sea change in Left attitudes dates back to the 1967 Six Day War when Israel, supported by the United States, defeated the Soviet-aligned Arab States and occupied territories inhabited by over a million Palestinians. Influenced by the Vietnam conflict, the Left interpreted this victory as a triumph for American-backed Western colonialism over third world interests, rather than as a regional struggle between Arab and Jewish national aspirations. Since that time, much of the Left has viewed Israel with hostility, if not with apocalyptic hatred. This hostility to Israel has inevitably extended to Jews in the Diaspora.

At a time when Israeli and Palestinian national aspirations appear close to conciliation with the signing of the Israeli/PLO Peace Accord, it appears opportune to reassess the history of Left attitudes towards Jews. In particular, I will identify and analyse the major anti-Semitic and philo-Semitic currents within the early socialist movement, with specific reference to the Australian experience. I will then examine the three decades from the emergence of Nazism in 1933 to the time of the Six Day War in 1967 during which Left and Jewish interests most easily converged.

Finally, I will explore the post-1967 period during which the Left/Jewish nexus has dissolved. Some consideration will also be given to the Jewish response to the Left's contemporary anti-Zionism. I will conclude with a brief discussion of the Left's response to the recent Israeli/PLO treaty and the David Irving Affair, and consider what this tells us about the likely future state of Jewish/Left relations.

### DEFINITIONS

I would like to begin by defining what I mean by the political Left and by Left anti-Semitism. I regard the Left as including a spectrum of political thought ranging from social democracy to Marxist communism to anarchism. In Australia, the Left has traditionally included the ALP, the CPA, the trade union movement, various Trotskyist and Maoist sects to the left of the CPA, and issue-base movements such as Victorian Council for Civil Liberties, the Women's Liberation Movement and so on.

A succinct definition of Left anti-Semitism is provided by British communist author Steve Cohen which carefully distinguishes it from mere anti-Zionism. Cohen identifies two phases of Left anti-Semitism. The first coincided with the emergence of the early



socialist movement at the end of the 19th century. This phase identified Jews with the onslaught of modern finance capitalism.

The second phase developed around the question of Zionism — particularly after the creation of Israel in 1948. This phase identifies Zionism with world imperialist expansion and simultaneously equates the entire Jewish experience with that of Zionism. Thus, much contemporary socialist thought combines the traditional international Jewish conspiracy theory with a concept of collective guilt. Jews worldwide are held responsible for the alleged global crimes of Zionism.<sup>2</sup>

In short, rationally argued opposition to Israeli Government policies or to the manner in which Israel was founded at the expense of the indigenous Palestinians does not constitute anti-Semitism in itself. Anti-Semitism is, however, present when this criticism is extended to include stereotypical descriptions of Jewish behaviour, when deliberate attempts are made to diminish the extent of Jewish suffering in the Holocaust by comparing Jews to Nazis or by alleging Jewish collaboration with the Nazis, and when campaigns against Israel are carried out with such relish and such obsessiveness that they cannot help but create an environment in which anti-Semites and anti-Semitism thrive.<sup>3</sup>

#### ANTI-SEMITISM IN THE EARLY AUSTRALIAN SOCIALIST MOVEMENT

As in socialist movements overseas, anti-Semitism was also present in some sections of the early Australian labour movement.<sup>4</sup> According to Rodney Goutman, this anti-Jewish feeling derived from two principal sources. The first was the imported British socialist version of the Jew as the “capitalist incarnate”. The second was the impact of American populist and radical literature, which also promoted antipathy towards Jews.<sup>5</sup>

The first example of socialist anti-Semitism can be found in the response of the Victorian union movement to the threatened flood of destitute Jewish refugees from the Russian pogroms of the 1890s. Alongside a stated concern with the threat that the refugees could pose to living standards at a time of high unemployment and economic depression, a member of the Melbourne Trades Hall Council was heard to proclaim that the Tsar was “acting as a father to his country” in ridding Russia of the Jews, since in “that part of the world as elsewhere, the Jews were usurers and reaping great benefits at the expense of the peasants”. The Council voted to send a letter to the Premier protesting the arrival of the refugees.<sup>6</sup>

Similar concern was expressed by the NSW Trades and Labour Council which opposed both Jewish refugee immigration and Asian immigration as a threat to the living standards of Australian workers.<sup>7</sup>

According to Hilary Rubinstein, the socialist anti-Semitism of the 1890s reflected the traditional stereotypes of Jews as manipulative bankers, usurers, financiers and parasitical war profiteers.<sup>8</sup>

According to the *Sydney Worker* of 4 March 1893, “Jews ... are principally bankers, loan managers, pedlars and pawnbrokers ... They dress in purple and fine linen and they fare sumptuously every day — but who knows one of them that could not be spared? Did anyone ever see a Jew work? At manual labour, no. It doesn't pay to work when others are so anxious to do it”.

Similar articles in the *Melbourne Worker*, the *Brisbane Worker* and the *New Order* alleged that Jews were robbers and plunderers whose financial interests were responsible for the slavery of Australian workers.<sup>9</sup>



The prominent socialist leader William Lane depicted the Jews as inherently exploitative and anti-working class. Lane argued that Jewish refugee immigration would corrupt the press, degrade labour and "rob the bushman of his innocence. Jews were like manure which if kept for too long poisoned the atmosphere. They undermined the work ethic on which all decent societies relied".<sup>10</sup>

Similar anti-Jewish stereotypes were present in the labour movement's analysis of the Boer War. According to *Tocsin*, the war was fought to protect the profits of the German Jewish owners of the South African gold and diamond mines.<sup>11</sup> This view was shared by William Holman, the leader of the NSW ALP, who demanded that "the German Jews who prompted the war, with a few English to back them up" pay for the work of reconstruction.<sup>12</sup> Anti-Semitic stereotypes were also employed during the monopolies referendum campaign of 1911 to depict the alleged triumph of international banking interests over the aspirations of Australian workers.<sup>13</sup>

The most infamous Australian socialist anti-Semite was the prominent ALP MP Frank Anstey, who served as deputy leader of the Federal ALP from 1921 to 1927, and as a Minister in the Scullin Government from 1929 to 31. During World War One, Anstey published an anti-war pamphlet suggestively entitled "The Kingdom of Shylock" which claimed that the war had been organised by international financiers (mainly Jewish) for their own profit. Anstey's publication contained numerous quotes and cartoons referring to the supposed Jewish propensity for usury and financial exploitation of war and suffering.

One chapter titled "The Clutching Hand" emphasised the ancestry of those who exploited war for profit: "After Medina came the Jew, Manasseh Lopez. He amassed a fortune in the panic which followed the false news that Queen Anne was dead. He 'bought on the slump and sold on the rise'. Then came Samson Gideon and the Goldsmids — Abraham and Benjamin. These were succeeded by the Rothschilds". This was followed by a history of the Rothschild family which identified them as the "Majesties of the Kingdom of Finance" who allegedly make profits from the "bloody slaughter" of war.<sup>14</sup>

Anstey later reissued his pamphlet under the title of *Money Power* and omitted most of the references to Jews. According to Communist Party leader Ralph Gibson, Anstey took this action in response to criticism from Jewish Left activist Alec Mushin who wrote to Anstey criticising the book's anti-Semitic features.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, there is some evidence that the book's original anti-Semitic stereotypes exerted some continued influence on the Labour movement including the subsequent ALP Prime Minister, John Curtin.<sup>16</sup>

Left anti-Semitism re-emerged during the Depression when Sir Otto Niemeyer, a Director of the Bank of England, visited Australia to discuss Australia's foreign debt with the Scullin Government. Stories appeared in the labour movement press claiming that Niemeyer (actually a member of a well-known Protestant Anglo-German banking family) was a Jewish banker acting on behalf of London Jewish speculators. According to the *Queensland Worker*, "Australia is not living beyond her means, despite what Niemeyer or anyone else says, but she is paying too much extortionate interest to London Jews and other War Profiteers". A Labor MHR, J.J. Cusack referred to Niemeyer as a "lounge lizard-Jew lizard, if you like" who was allegedly "mesmerizing" the Australian Government into accepting his proposal to reduce Australian living standards.<sup>17</sup>

Anti-Semitism was also prominent in the public statements of the demagogic NSW ALP leader, Jack Lang. Influenced by Frank Anstey's ideas, Lang denounced Niemeyer's

mission as being led by Jews who were allegedly in Australia to represent an international financial conspiracy at the expense of Australian wage-earners. Lang's *Labor Daily* frequently referred to the "London Jews with their fat rake-offs" and asked, "Should the men who have done the fighting now go without the necessities of life in order that the international money ring should have its pound of flesh?"

Lang's newspaper, the *Century*, consistently opposed Jewish immigration both before and after the Second World War, arguing that Jews were "parasites who dabble in black market commerce" and would "immediately create Australian ghettos".<sup>18</sup>

### AUSTRALIAN LEFT PHILO-SEMITISM AND ANTI-SEMITISM 1933-1967

Hitler's persecution of the Jews culminating in the Holocaust, plus the apparent association of fascist anti-Semitism with anti-socialism, led most of the world's Left in this period to unequivocally reject anti-Semitism.

Jews came to be regarded by the Left not only as the primary victims of fascism, but also as the strongest allies of the Left in the struggle against fascism. As Professor Bill Rubinstein has noted: "From the 1930s through the late 1960s, it is probably fair to state that the Left, true to its humanitarian creed, supported the Jews against fascism and strongly supported Israel ... By and large until the late 1960s the Jews looked upon the Left as a natural friend and ally."<sup>19</sup>

As in the international Left, philo-Semitic attitudes were prevalent within the Australian Left which viewed the struggle against anti-Semitism as part of the broader struggle against fascism.<sup>20</sup> Prominent Left philo-Semites included writers Vance and Nettie Palmer, Wilfred Burchett, Wendy Lowenstein (nee Robertson), Audrey Blake and Frank Hardy, intellectuals such as Stephen Murray-Smith, Ian Turner, John Playford, Maurice Blackburn and Brian Fitzpatrick, artists including Vic O'Connor and Noel Counihan, and leading ALP politicians including Dr Evatt and Arthur Calwell.<sup>21</sup> Left-wing journals such as *Dissent* and *Outlook* also regularly published articles sympathetic to Jewish concerns.<sup>22</sup>

Particularly vocal in his sympathy for Jews was prominent author Frank Hardy who formed close associations with left-wing Jewish writers such as Judah Waten, Stan Robe and Walter Kaufmann.<sup>23</sup> In his classic novel *Power Without Glory*, published in 1950, Hardy used sympathetic Jewish characters to warn readers of the dangers of anti-Semitism. Ben, a Jewish communist who married the central character John West's daughter Mary, denounced the Nazis for diverting "the wrath of the people away from the capitalist system which reduced them to their sorry plight, on to the Jewish people ... Jews are hounded, tortured, murdered for no other reason than they were born of their parents. Anti-Semitism is a form of cannibalism".<sup>24</sup>

In a later work, Hardy wrote: "My father held a high opinion of Jews. He often said that all the great intellectual achievements of the human race were theirs ... His favourite assertion was that the three greatest men of our time were Marx, Freud and Einstein".<sup>25</sup>

Equally notable for their philo-Semitism were Brian Fitzpatrick and Maurice Blackburn, respectively Secretary and President of the Australian Council of Civil Liberties, and the Palmers. Fitzpatrick was a strong supporter of the Jewish refugees, publishing a pamphlet outlining their contribution to the Australian war effort, and agitating for the release of the Dunera internees. He maintained close relations with the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism, and devoted his column in *Smith's Weekly* and his regular radio broadcasts on 3XY and 3AW to public relations for the Jewish refugees and their experience of anti-Semitism.<sup>26</sup> ALP politician Maurice Blackburn wrote a preface to a philo-Semitic pamphlet by Len Fox in which he explained that the

Australian League for Peace and Democracy was publishing the pamphlet "because anti-Jewish hatred can pave the way to a general attack on democratic institutions. It can lead to something like Fascism in Australia".<sup>27</sup>

The Palmers, Nettie and Vance, assisted refugees in acquiring homes and employment, and helped them adjust to Australian society and culture. According to Australian Jewish refugee Irma Schnierer, the Palmer's foremost concern was always: "How can we relieve them of their feelings of strangeness, how can we make these people happy after the ordeal they have gone through? They arranged frequent gatherings in their home, mixing 'new' with sympathetic 'old' Australians, selecting refugees with a common cultural background, with the same former homeland and the same language ... Nettie Palmer brought people together, friendships sprang up, some lasting a lifetime". She became known as the "Angel of the Refugees".<sup>28</sup>

Other left-wingers threw their weight behind the scheme to settle Jewish refugees in the Kimberley Region of Western Australia. In 1939, the Sydney Trades and Labour Council officially endorsed the Kimberley Scheme despite some opposition. Supporters argued that the labour movement had a moral obligation to assist all victims of Fascism, and rejected suggestions that Jewish refugees would undermine Australian working conditions.<sup>29</sup> Resolutions in favour of the Kimberley Scheme were also passed by other State Trades and Labour Councils and the ACTU Union leaders attacked anti-Semitism as a tool of class oppression and urged the Government to admit Jewish refugees. Prominent ALP supporters included left-wing Victorian MPE.J. Holloway, Dr William Maloney, Maurice Blackburn, Frank Brennan and John Cain, the Premier of Victoria.<sup>30</sup>

Throughout the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, numerous union movement and ALP activists assisted Jewish causes. In 1942, for example, the NSW Labor Party Conference passed a motion condemning the persecution of European Jewry. The Labor Party "expressed its profound sympathy with the suffering masses of the Jewish people which have been the first victims of the Nazi onslaught and which are standing shoulder by shoulder with the world democracies in the tremendous struggle for a new world of justice and freedom". The motion also emphasised that "the cruel treatment, the wrong and the injustice meted out to the Jewish people under the yoke of Nazis and Fascists must be duly righted".<sup>31</sup>

A similar motion was passed by the Federal ALP Conference in 1943, whilst the Victorian Trades Hall Council actively campaigned against anti-Semitic activities in Melbourne.<sup>32</sup> In 1947, the ACTU Conference passed a unanimous resolution against anti-Semitism.<sup>33</sup> In 1952 as a result of lobbying by the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism, the ACTU voted against the ratification of the migration agreement with the West German Government. Concern was expressed about the possible "Nazi leanings" of immigrants.<sup>34</sup> A couple of years later, a pamphlet condemning anti-Semitism was distributed by every Victorian union, with the sanction of the Secretary of the Trades Hall Council. Individual unions regularly published articles opposing manifestations of anti-Semitism.<sup>35</sup>

When an outbreak of anti-Semitism took place in 1960, a number of prominent left-wing figures including the ACTU President Mr Monk, ALP MHR Leslie Haylen, Victorian ALP President Albert McNolty, and author Alan Marshall participated in a public protest meeting against the events.<sup>36</sup> Shortly after, numerous ALP and trade union meetings expressed strong support for the capture and trial by Israel of Nazi leader, Adolf Eichmann.<sup>37</sup>

The Australian Left was also sympathetic to the State of Israel.<sup>38</sup> In 1948, the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism organised a petition in favour of the

immediate recognition of Israel which was signed by twenty prominent left-wing figures including Brian Fitzpatrick, Jim Healy, Jim Cairns, Doris Blackburn, Vance Palmer, Clarrie O'Shea, and Frank Crean.<sup>39</sup> Former ALP Minister Dr Moss Cass has commented that until at least the late nineteen sixties, the ALP Left was highly sympathetic to Israel's social democratic labour institutions and kibbutz movement.<sup>40</sup>

The Australian Communist Party also adopted a strong stand against anti-Semitism. As Rodney Gouttman has noted, the CPA feared that the growth of anti-Semitism could lead to a Nazi-style regime in Australia, the first victims of which would be Jews and communists.<sup>41</sup> In early 1939, the Communist Party's chief political spokesman, L. Sharkey, sharply condemned anti-Semitism "as a menace to the Labor Movement". Sharkey pointed out that anti-Semitism (despite the exploitative practices of some Jewish employers) served the purposes of political reaction by diverting the workers from the class struggle against the real capitalist enemy.<sup>42</sup> In a follow-up article, Sharkey refuted Nazi allegations of Jewish control of international capitalism and finance, noting that none of the big capitalists in Germany, the USA, Britain or Australia were Jewish.<sup>43</sup>

A similar theme was pursued in *Australia and the Jews*, published in 1939 by CPA activist Len Fox. According to Fox, Jews were primarily wage and salary earners and played very little part in Australian heavy industry, banking or media ownership. Moreover, in Australia and overseas, Jews had contributed in disproportionate numbers to the war effort. Fox concluded that anti-Semitism was a "fascist weapon" used by reactionary forces in an attempt "to destroy Australian democracy".<sup>44</sup> A similar theme was pursued in *You and the Jews* published that same year by the Left Book Club.<sup>45</sup>

The CPA's abhorrence of anti-Semitism was further demonstrated by a pamphlet published in 1944 titled *Jew-Baiting is Cannibalism*. According to a foreword by CPA President L. Sharkey, "Anti-Semitism was a fool's religion" that was "one of the most dangerous weapons in the hands of the enemies of the labour movement".<sup>46</sup>

During this period, Jews associated with the CPA felt at home. A young Jewish activist who attended a CPA youth camp in 1947, wrote: "Nowhere else in this country have I yet witnessed such a feeling of equality between gentiles of different creeds and Jews ... We felt equal — we were equal — not just merely being tolerated".<sup>47</sup>

Numerous other former CPA Jewish activists have commented on the philo-Semitic atmosphere that prevailed within the CPA at that time. One activist recalls: "Jews were viewed as a persecuted national minority similar to urbanized Aborigines". Another activist recalls that the CPA was the "one group in Australia that could be relied on to fight anti-Semitism. I remember meeting an old communist wharfie who told me that he'd belted some anti-Semites because we know that anti-Semitism is the weapon of the oppressor. He'd never met a Jew".<sup>48</sup>

The CPA extended its philo-Semitism to strong support for the creation of the State of Israel despite the traditional communist antipathy to Zionism. As early as 1945, CPA activist Ralph Gibson declared the CPA's support for the repeal of the White Paper, the free right of the Jews to enter "their historical homeland" of Palestine, and the right of Jews to found the "national home" they had been promised. Gibson qualified this support by emphasising that Palestine alone could not solve the problems of the Jewish people.<sup>49</sup>

An article in the CPA's theoretical journal *Communist Review* expressed similar sentiments: Whatever the errors of Zionism, the Jewish community in Palestine had played a progressive role in the struggle against Fascism and were entitled to national rights including unlimited immigration.<sup>50</sup>



The CPA welcomed the United Nations decision to partition Palestine into Jewish and Arab States in 1947 and consistently supported Israel during the 1948 war. In a pamphlet written by Ralph Gibson, the CPA condemned British imperialism and Arab anti-Jewish reactionaries for "barbarous attacks" on the new State of Israel. Gibson called on the Australian Government to immediately recognise Israel.<sup>51</sup> A typical *Tribune* article of the time condemned British Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin for supplying arms for the "Arab aggression" against "Jewish towns and settlements whose people seek only independence and peace".<sup>52</sup>

The major exception to this Jewish/Left embrace was the appalling persecution of Jews by the Soviet Union and its communist satellite states. As early as the late 1930s, Jewish schools and cultural organisations were closed and Jewish cultural leaders arrested and executed. There was also a clear impression that the arrests and show trials of 1936–38 were directed primarily against Jews.

This policy was further accentuated by the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in 1939. The pact was followed by the forced return to Germany of a number of anti-Nazi refugees including many Jews, and by a policy of silence regarding the persecution of Jews under Nazi rule.<sup>53</sup>

Stalin's anti-Jewish policy was to sharpen. Between 1948 and 1953, the remnants of Yiddish culture in Moscow were eradicated, the remaining leaders of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, formed by Stalin during the war to attract foreign Jewish support for the Soviet Union, were murdered, and virtually all prominent Jewish artists, scientists and intellectuals were purged.

Stalin's anti-Jewish campaign culminated in the appalling Czech Slansky show trial of 1952 and the notorious Doctors' Plot of 1953 when six prominent Jewish doctors were arrested and accused of plotting to kill Stalin and other Soviet leaders. It appears that at the time of Stalin's death, he was on the verge of implementing a plan to deport a large proportion of the Russian Jewish population to Siberia.<sup>54</sup>

Following Stalin's death, conditions eased for Soviet Jews, but they continued to suffer from some official religious and national discrimination.<sup>55</sup>

As happened overseas, the relationship between Australian communism and Jews was destroyed by the revelations of Soviet anti-Semitism. In March 1953, the *Communist Review* published verbatim extracts from *Pravda* on the Jewish Doctors Plot in the Soviet Union. *Pravda* made reference to an international Zionist organisation of "corrupt Jewish bourgeois nationalists" who had allegedly conspired to murder leading Soviet representatives. An accompanying report by Czech President Gottwald alluded to the recent Slansky anti-Jewish show trial. Gottwald accused Zionist organisations of conspiring with US intelligence to "abuse the sufferings brought upon the Jews by Hitler and other fascists" and make fortunes out of the ashes of Oswiecim and Maidanek".<sup>56</sup>

Worse was to come. In February 1953, Jack Blake, a member of the CPA's Secretariat, one of the top four leaders, addressed a public meeting in Sydney. Blake identified Zionism as "an outright reactionary bourgeois policy" and claimed that Zionists constituted an "important section of Wall Street monopolists and the American imperialist ruling class". Whilst condemning the presence of anti-Semitism within the CPA, Blake argued that some Jewish comrades had acted more like Zionists than communists. He called on party members to spy on and expose comrades who had displayed bourgeois characteristics in order to prevent the emergence into leading positions of enemies such as Slansky and the Jewish doctors.<sup>57</sup>



According to Jewish CPA leader Bernie Taft, Blake's speech shocked Jewish members. Some resigned from the Party as a result; others became inactive.<sup>58</sup> Blake later apologised to Jewish CPA members, acknowledging that the charges against Slansky and the Jewish doctors had been false and "anti-Semitic in nature". Nevertheless, Blake maintained that Soviet society per se was free of anti-Semitism, claiming that all actions to the contrary were the responsibility of individual criminals such as Stalin's security boss Beria.<sup>59</sup> Blake's emphasis — that continuing Soviet anti-Semitism was the result of individual aberrations or excesses, rather than any official policy — was to remain official CPA policy until at least the time of the 1967 Six Day War.<sup>60</sup>

Despite the CPA's denials, a significant section of the Australian Left did condemn Soviet anti-Semitism. As early as 1958, for example, the left-wing journal *Outlook* published a selection of critical documents on the position of Jews in the USSR, whilst the social democratic journal *Dissent* published a Socialist International pamphlet condemning the Soviet Union's treatment of its Jewish population.

In 1965, *Outlook* published articles by John Playford and Helen Palmer critical of Soviet discrimination against Jews. Palmer wrote: "Among the dirty words of modern times, anti-Semitism is the dirtiest, no one wants to be tagged with it. If the status of women is an index in the progress of society, the status of the Jews is a measure of its health ... Mankind is diminished by discrimination against Jews ... Their record is most notable where hardships, tyranny and poverty have been most prevalent. Of this, the authors of the Russian Revolution should be well aware". Playford called on the Australian Left to add their voice to those many "people with long records of friendship to the Soviet Union who had been voicing their indignation against anti-Jewish discrimination in the USSR".<sup>61</sup> Similar views were expressed by Stephen Murray-Smith in the left-wing literary journal *Overland*<sup>62</sup>, whilst the Marxist publication *Arena* granted space to both critics and defenders of the USSR.<sup>63</sup>

Instances of overt anti-Semitism were rare on the Australian Left during this period. One exception was the anti-Jewish utterances occasionally heard during the debate over the Kimberley Scheme. Some labour leaders expressed concern that the introduction of Jewish refugees could lead to job competition and the erosion of local working conditions.<sup>64</sup> One union leader commented: "If Steinberg's activities could benefit the worker, surely the Menzies Government would have put all obstacles in his way. The colonists prepared for Kimberley will not come from the working classes. Who will finance the colonisation? The Jewish lords in London. The Jewish race has provided itself with such types as Sir Basil Zacharov, Montagu Norman, Sir Otto Niemeyer".<sup>65</sup> However, such views were in a minority.

Another exception was the 1943 ALP Federal Conference at which a proposed resolution condemning anti-Semitism was defeated on the grounds that the treatment of Jews in Europe was not the concern of the Australian labour movement. Whilst most opponents of the motion deplored anti-Semitism, some such as prominent Queensland ALP politicians Ned Hanlon and Frank Cooper appeared to be influenced by anti-Semitic sentiments.<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, the incident appears to have been a minor one.<sup>67</sup>

### THE AUSTRALIAN JEWISH LEFT AND LEFT PHILO-SEMITISM

Throughout the post-war years, the Australian Jewish Left played a critical role in creating and maintaining philo-Semitic attitudes on the Australian Left. As Professor Bill Rubinstein has noted, the links that pro-Israel leftists such as Judah Waten, Norman and Evelyn Rothfield, and Sam Goldbloom formed with the wider Australian Left were instrumental in facilitating a political climate on the Left sympathetic to Jews and to Israel.<sup>68</sup>

The left-wing Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism was the key player in this process. Formed in 1942, the Council believed that Jews could only defeat anti-Semitism via an alliance with broader democratic forces in the Australian community. Whilst ostracised by the mainstream Jewish community due to its denial of Soviet anti-Semitism during the Cold War<sup>69</sup>, the Council was enormously effective in securing a broad range of support from the ALP, the trade union movement, the Australian Council for Civil Liberties and so on for Jewish causes.

Whether it was support for the creation of Israel in 1948, defence of the Jewish refugees, opposition to German Nazi migration, anti-Semitic incidents in factories or on public transport, the issue of German rearmament, the visit of Nazi industrialist Krupp, the outbreak of anti-Semitism in 1960, the trial of Adolf Eichmann, or the menace of the Croatian Ustashi movement, the Council was invariably successful in educating and influencing much of the Australian labour movement in a sympathetic direction.<sup>70</sup>

As late as the time of the 1967 Six Day War, Council activists Sam Goldbloom and Ernst Platz were instrumental in securing the passage of a pro-Israel motion at a Victorian ALP Conference.<sup>71</sup>

### LEFT-WING ANTI-ZIONISM IN AUSTRALIA

Following Israel's defeat of the Arab States in the 1967 Six Day War, much of the political Left revised its position on the Middle East conflict and adopted an uncompromisingly anti-Israel and anti-Zionist position.

Typical of the Left's shift to this pro-Palestinian position was the following editorial that appeared in the highly-respected *New Left Review*: "There can be few issues that have caused as much bitterness and disagreement on the Left as the nature of the State of Israel. For a long time it attracted the sympathy of many both because of Nazi genocide and because of the social character of the regimes it faced in the Middle East. However, 1956 showed it in active collusion with Western imperialism, and after 1967 the rise of the Palestinian resistance movement refocussed attention on the colonial and exploitative character of the Zionist state".<sup>72</sup>

The reasons for this sudden political volte-face appear to be threefold:

1) The Left extended its anti-imperialist critique of American involvement in Vietnam to America's support of Israel in the Middle East. According to this analysis, Tel Aviv became Saigon and the Palestinian guerillas the equivalent of the Viet Cong. Israel acted as "the agent of imperialism in the Middle East, whilst the Arabs, especially the Palestinian guerillas, were part of the third-world forces struggling for freedom and social revolution".<sup>73</sup>

The Trotskyist US Social Workers Party (SWP), for example, argued that Israel had no right to exist and should be replaced by a "democratic, secular Palestine". According to this view, the future for Israeli Jews lay in an alliance with the Palestinian and general Arab liberation movements. Only by moving in this direction could they "escape from the trap that Zionism and imperialism have set for them in the Middle East".<sup>74</sup>

The SWP's reference to Zionism as an alleged "trap" for Jews which they repeated *ad nauseam* was quoted verbatim from Trotsky's famous 1940 statement in which he warned that British Government policies could turn Palestine into a "bloody trap for several hundred thousand Jews"<sup>75</sup>. Yet, the SWP conveniently failed to publish Trotsky's other writings which clearly demonstrate that at the end of his life he believed in the creation of some sort of Jewish territorial base.<sup>76</sup>

2) The Jewish military victory in the Six Day War destroyed the post-war taboo (at least on the liberal Left) concerning public criticism of Jews. Jews were suddenly transformed from the oppressed to the oppressor. As Lipset has noted: "Before the Israeli military triumph, Jews and Israel still possessed their traditional image as victims, as the oppressed, which had been strengthened by Nazi persecution and the fact that Israel was surrounded by a hundred million hostile Arabs. Since then Israel is seen as the strong and wealthy nation, backed by the power, influence and financial resources of world Jewry, while the Arabs are weak, underdeveloped and poor".<sup>77</sup>

Thus, the SWP could blithely respond to criticism that the destruction of Israel might also entail the annihilation of the Israeli Jewish population, by denying that the Arab revolutionaries were likely to "institute a system of national oppression against the Israeli Jews".<sup>78</sup>

3) The post-1967 recognition of the Palestinians as victims of Israel. This pro-Palestinian sympathy involved not only a critique of Israel's post-Six Day War suppression of Palestinian national aspirations in the newly occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, but also a belated guilt-based recognition that the Palestinians had been dispossessed by the creation of Israel in 1948 and the Left had perhaps supported the wrong side.

Furthermore, the Left also swallowed without question the pseudo-Left rhetoric adopted by some of the Palestinian political organisations, and erroneously concluded that the Palestinian campaign against Israel was motivated by socialism, rather than by Arab nationalism. This was despite the PLO's clear statement that socialism would have to await the victory against Israel.

As with the local anti-Vietnam movement, Australian left-wing anti-Zionism was primarily derivative, a direct import from the USA.<sup>79</sup> The same authors (Buch, Weinstock, Rodinson, Deutscher, I.F. Stone, Nabil Sha'ath and so on) were cited over and over again. And the same themes were advanced:

1) The Palestinian struggle against Israel was an extension of the struggle against American imperialism in Vietnam. The popular slogan of the Left was: "From Vietnam to Palestine. One fight, one enemy".

2) Israel was a product of colonialist conquest engaged in oppressing the national rights of the Palestinians. As an oppressor nation, rather than an oppressed nation, Israel was not entitled to self-determination and had no right to exist.<sup>80</sup>

3) The Australian Left rejected a two-state solution to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict on the grounds that an independent Palestinian State in the West Bank and Gaza Strip would merely be equivalent to a South African *bantustan*. The Australian Left extensively publicised the views of PLO functionary Dr Nabil Sha'ath on this matter.<sup>81</sup> The Left blindly accepted the PLO's assurance that the destruction of Israel would not lead to the oppression or genocide of the Israeli Jewish population.<sup>82</sup>

The Left argued that the Israeli Jews, whilst subjectively supporting their government, were in fact, objectively themselves victims of Zionism. According to this argument, the Jewish working class in Palestine would play an integral part in the victory of the Palestinian liberation struggle.<sup>83</sup> However, some Left activists admitted that those "Left" Palestinians who fought for the full acceptance of Israeli Jews in a united Palestine without religious, racial or political discrimination were in a minority.<sup>84</sup>

4) Israel's treatment of the Palestinians was equated with apartheid in South Africa.<sup>85</sup>

The sole theme unique to Australia was the comparison of the Palestinian struggle with that of the Aborigines for land rights.<sup>86</sup> Yet, this comparison was a fallacy. The Aborigines were campaigning peacefully for land rights within a small section of the white Anglo-Saxon state of Australia. In contrast, the Palestinians were employing violent means in an attempt to destroy the Jewish state of Israel and replace it with another state called Palestine.<sup>87</sup>

By 1970–71, the pro-Palestinian position was virtually hegemonic within the Australian Left. All Left tendencies — the Socialist Youth Alliance, the Communist Party of Australia, the Maoist Worker/Student Alliance, and the Australian Labor Party Socialist Left faction — were represented in the Palestine–Australia Solidarity Committee. The pro-Palestinian movement was spearheaded by the Trotskyist SYA.<sup>88</sup> The SYA was affiliated with the US Socialist Workers Party and reproduced a number of pro-Palestinian articles from the SWP's monthly journal, the *International Socialist Review*. The pro-Palestinian agenda eventually became part of the political culture of the Left as a whole, becoming an issue of "central purity" by which leftist credentials could be measured.<sup>89</sup> Anti-Zionism spread not only to the radical national student union AUS, but also to the trade union movement, to various non-affiliated Left journals such as *Retrieval*, *Arena* and *Australian Left Review*, to the Left Book Club, and even to the Left-Liberal social welfare magazine, *Australian Society*.<sup>90</sup>

Twenty years later, anti-Zionism continued to be dominant within the Australian Left.<sup>91</sup> Virtually all Left groups — ranging from the ALP Left<sup>92</sup> to the various communist and Trotskyist factions such as the Communist Party of Australia (CPA), the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP), the Socialist Party of Australia (SPA), the International Socialist Organisation and the Socialist Labour League (SLL), plus the anarchists, were virulently hostile to Israel.<sup>93</sup>

Not atypical was the SLL's criticism of the "racist state of Israel" which was allegedly "supported and financed by US and world imperialism, in order that it would become a border guard for their oil interests in the Middle East".<sup>94</sup> Similarly, the DSP condemned Israel as "a sectarian Jewish settler-state established after World War II by the US and European powers against the wishes of the Arab people"<sup>95</sup>, whilst the SPA defended Israel's right to exist, but condemned "the Israeli Government's policies as motivated by Zionism which has shown itself in theory and practice as an aggressive, expansionist and racist movement allied with imperialism".<sup>96</sup>

As with the situation overseas, some Left groups and activists defied the dominant anti-Zionist trend. A number of CPA activists including John Halfpenny, Ralph Gibson, Mark Taft, Ian Fehring and Dave Davies opposed the PLO's call for a secular democratic Palestine and defended Israel's right to exist.<sup>97</sup> And during the AUS Middle East debates, Doug Kirsner, a former leader of the student anti-Vietnam War movement, explicitly criticised the dominant discourse: "It is often assumed, but is in fact by no means obvious, that those taking a neutral or pro-Israel stance on the resolutions are to be considered automatically as reactionaries and counter-revolutionaries ... The Left itself is scarcely united about its attitudes to the Palestinians' situation. In addition to a very sizeable number of social democrats and world Communist Parties, there is a good deal of New Left criticism of the Arab stand and sympathy for the continued existence of Israel ...

"Such prominent anti-imperialists as Jean-Paul Sartre, Herbert Marcuse and Noam Chomsky by no means hold with the AUS position on Palestine, yet are these leftists to be seen as agents of US imperialism? Trotskyist comrades should be made blissfully aware of Isaac Deutscher's regrets in the Non-Jewish Jew about his former anti-Israel



position ... Perhaps AUS needs to be reminded that Palestine is not Vietnam, the Israeli Government is not the Thieu Government and that the United Arab Republic scarcely resembles the Vietnamese NLF".<sup>98</sup>

In a similar vein, a group of Melbourne pro-Palestinian activists recognised the "legitimacy of a Left social democratic Zionism based on a combination of socialism and Jewish nationalism", rejected the suggestion that Israel was a colonial-settler state, and called for the recognition of Israel's legitimacy in return for an independent Arab state in part of Palestine.<sup>99</sup>

Yet such sentiments were those of a minority. The election in July 1992 of an Israeli Labour Government committed to territorial compromise was greeted without even the minutest level of enthusiasm by the Left. According to veteran pro-Palestinian campaigner David Spratt, the Labour Party "was just as callous" as the right-wing Likud "and a good deal more expansionary". Spratt contended that the Labour Government's plan was to "establish apartheid permanently in Israel by turning the West Bank into a Palestinian *bantustan*", serving "as a reserve of cheap labour for the Israeli economy".<sup>100</sup>

Not dissimilar was the left-wing *Broadside Weekly*'s contention that the Labour Party's election had been accompanied by an intensification of "collective punishments, shootings, beatings and raids" in the Occupied Territories.<sup>101</sup> A few months later, *Broadside Weekly* published an opinion piece by local PLO representative Ali Kazak in which he accused Israel of "racism, oppression, killing and violations of human rights". Kazak maintained that the Labour Government was pursuing exactly the same policies as its Likud predecessor.<sup>102</sup> The left-wing union and ALP Pledge faction paper *Frontline* promoted a similar theme, accusing the Rabin Government of killing more Palestinian children in the last six months than at any time since the *intifada* began in December 1987. According to *Frontline*, all Rabin had to offer was "more repression, harsher methods of intimidation and the institution of a de facto system of apartheid".<sup>103</sup> *Green Left Weekly* and the *Socialist* went even further, both calling for the destruction of the "racist, colonialist" state of Israel and its replacement by a secular democratic state of Palestine.<sup>104</sup>

### THE LEFT AND THE ISRAELI/PLO PEACE ACCORD

The Israeli/PLO Declaration of Principles in September 1993 evoked mixed reactions from the Australian Left. The mainstream ALP Left's *Socialist Objective Journal* welcomed the agreement, and published a sympathetic interview with veteran Jewish Left activist Bernard Rechter, who described the Rabin/Arafat handshake as "a real step towards peace in the Middle East".<sup>105</sup> The left-wing union paper *Frontline* was more cautious, publishing an article by an American Palestinian which stressed the need for the Peace Accord to incorporate the creation of an independent Palestinian State in the West Bank and Gaza with the capacity to resettle returning refugees.<sup>106</sup>

The Democratic Socialist Party was predictably sceptical, denouncing the "racist, clerical Israeli colonial-settler state", and renewing its call for a "democratic, secular state in the whole of Palestine".<sup>107</sup> *Green Left Weekly* also published an article by Palestinian journalist Rami Khoury which welcomed the agreement as a "mini-triumph" for the PLO, and forecast the end of the "fortress, imperialistic, racist" state of Israel.<sup>108</sup>

Other Left factions such as the International Socialist Organisation denounced the agreement as leading to the creation of *bantustans* similar to those set up for blacks by the South African Government.<sup>109</sup> The Socialist Labour League was even less forgiving, describing the agreement as "the end of a historic chapter in the struggle against



imperialist oppression and colonial domination". According to the SLL, the agreement transformed the PLO from a liberation movement into "armed guards of the Zionist state and the direct defenders of foreign capital".<sup>110</sup>

With the sole exception of *Socialist Objective*, none of the Left factions sought the views of any Jewish Left groups or individuals on the Peace Accord.

### AUSTRALIAN LEFT ANTI-SEMITISM AND PHILO-SEMITISM, 1967-1994

Since 1967, much of the political Left has moved from a sympathetic position to a neutral or uninterested position on Jewish concerns. Some of the Left has adopted explicit anti-Semitic ideas and stereotypes to the extent that one can now speak of anti-Semitism as being a "legitimate tendency on the Left".<sup>111</sup>

There are three main reasons for the breakdown in the Jewish/Left nexus:

1) The influence of events in the Middle East has ended the Left's perception of and sympathy for Jews as victims of racism. Instead, the Left is far more concerned with Israel's alleged racism and oppression of the Palestinians, and Diaspora Jewry's support for those actions.

2) The passing of generations: The formative experience of the Old Left was that of Nazism and the Holocaust. The formative experience of the sixties generation was that of American imperialism in Vietnam and the Third World, with which the Jewish State of Israel is allegedly associated.<sup>112</sup>

3) The gradual decline of the previously large Jewish involvement in the Left - partly a reaction to the Left's anti-Zionism, partly a consequence of unrelated internal changes within the Jewish world - has naturally reduced the Left's sensitivity to and sympathy for Jewish interests.

Much of the Left's anti-Semitism incorporates anti-Zionism, but goes way beyond mere criticism of Israel and Zionism (which is often shared by many Jews and Israelis) into hostility towards Jews and Judaism as such.<sup>113</sup> In the words of Sean Matgamna, "What much of the Left says today about Zionism, Israel and imperialism is the anti-imperialism of idiots ... It packages a comprehensive hostility to most Jews — that is, what has always been the content of anti-Semitism — in socialist and anti-imperialist verbiage ... It preaches hate for a whole people, for a nation which arose out of the ashes of the greatest mass murder in recorded history, and for its diaspora of supporters around the world who will not 'see reason'."<sup>114</sup>

Since the 1967 Six Day War, anti-Semitism, often poorly disguised as anti-Zionism, has become increasingly prevalent on the Australian Left. Authors as politically diverse as conservative Professor Bill Rubinstein, ex-new leftist Warren Osmond, and radical left-wingers Lauren Finestone, Phoebe Thorndyke and Vivian Porzolt have noted with dismay the disproportionate hostility of much of the Left to Israel and to broader Jewish aspirations, the anti-Semitic rhetoric employed by the Left in its criticism of Israel, the stereotyping of all Jews as supporters of Israel's oppression of the Palestinians, and the tendency to minimise or trivialise the reality of the Holocaust.<sup>115</sup>

Particular instances of Left anti-Semitism include:

- The association of the Federal Government Nazi War Crimes Bill with an alleged Zionist or Jewish plot to divert attention from Israel's treatment of the Palestinians. For example, a letter published in *Broadside Weekly* claimed that Australian taxpayers had wasted \$20 million on "the farce of prosecuting old men alleged to have committed war crimes 50 years ago". The letter attributed this "costly farce" to the attempt by Israel to

divert world attention from its “unending persecution and denial of human rights to 1.7 million Arabs”.<sup>116</sup>

Not dissimilar was the claim by ALP Left MP Joan Coxsedg that the War Crimes Bill had been engineered by “Israeli propagandists” and US imperialists concerned to “cover up officially organised present-day US atrocities taking place all over the world”. Coxsedg suggested that the Jewish suffering under the Nazis had been unduly emphasised at the expense of other victims of Nazism such as trade unionists, socialists and Russian prisoners-of-war.<sup>117</sup>

Equally spurious, although perhaps not anti-Semitic in intent, was the suggestion by Doug White of *Arena Magazine* that the War Crimes Bill had been engineered by the “right wing of Melbourne Jewry ... whose defence of Israeli policies depends upon the continued reminder of crimes committed upon the Jews”.<sup>118</sup> Strangely enough as noted by respondents to White, many of the most vocal supporters of the Bill were in fact left-wing Jews who had also expressed strong criticism of Israeli policies.<sup>119</sup>

- The attribution of immense power to Zionism and to Jewish supporters of Zionism in a manner reminiscent of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.<sup>120</sup> For example, a writer in the *Australian Marxist* referred to the “deep influence of Zionism in US society”, and to Zionism as the “leading force” in the US campaign against the Soviet Union.<sup>121</sup> Other Left publications have referred to the “influence of the powerful pro-Zionist lobby in this country” which acts as “a reactionary force whose existence inevitably works to conservatise all aspects of Australian politics”<sup>122</sup>; to “The International Zionist Concern” which fomented the 1968 uprising in Czechoslovakia<sup>123</sup>; to the role of Zionism “as a phenomena (sic) identical to the same imperialist transnational forces which are endeavouring to cut wages and living standards in Australia”<sup>124</sup>; to the disproportionate influence that Zionists “wield in the ruling circles of this society”<sup>125</sup>; to the “powerful Zionist lobby”<sup>126</sup>; and to the “strategic positions” held by American Jews in the “mass media, educational and financial institutions”.<sup>127</sup>

- The identification of all Jews as upper class and reactionary because of their support for Israel.<sup>128</sup>

- The identification of Zionism and Israel with Nazism and the Holocaust in a deliberate attempt to minimise and belittle Jewish suffering. For example, *Green Left Weekly* headlined an article “The other Holocaust” which referred to the 1982 massacres of Palestinians in the refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila. The suggestion was that the murder of 2750 civilians by right-wing Lebanese militias under the supervision of the Israeli army was equivalent to the murder of six million Jews by the Nazis.<sup>129</sup> As Vivienne Porzsolt has noted, such comparisons are not only totally erroneous, but also serve to trivialise the oppression of the Jewish people and thus constitute a form of Holocaust revisionism.<sup>130</sup>

Other Left publications have also attempted to trivialise the Holocaust. The La Trobe University newspaper *Rabelais* labelled Israel “a giant, self-administered concentration camp” — in effect, suggesting that Jews were responsible for their own persecution by the Nazis and that the Palestinians were somehow victims of a Jewish retribution.<sup>131</sup> An Australian Union of Students (AUS) activist Geoff Tanks equated the Jewish claim to Israel with Hitler’s cry for “Lebensraum”. According to Tanks, a Jewish student rally in support of Israel “had much of the air of the anti-Semitic Nazi torch rally in Germany of the 1930s”.<sup>132</sup> *Palestine Forum*, published by the AUS-linked Friends of Palestine, published a cartoon depicting the Israeli military hero Moshe Dayan as a soldier in the SS implementing Hitler’s final solution. The intention of the cartoon was clearly to

depict Israel as the successor to Nazi Germany.<sup>133</sup> The Maoist *Australian Communist* argued that Zionism was a fascist ideology based on the same ideas as Hitler's concept of the "master race".<sup>134</sup> A similar concept was also advanced by ALP MP George Peterson in the pages of the left-wing union paper, *Scope*.<sup>135</sup> And there was the publication of a cartoon in the mainstream Left publication the *National Times* which depicted a cloven-hooved satanic Jewish figure slicing a baby in half in a manner reminiscent of the Nazi publication, *Der Stürmer*.<sup>136</sup>

- The failure of much of the Left to seriously address or confront the existence of anti-Semitism. As Lauren Finestone notes: "Anti-Semitism is often not seen as having a valid place in the discussion of race because it has been diverted into a political issue about Zionism, where it is Israeli government policy which is racist".<sup>137</sup> Thus, the left-wing *Frontline* saw fit to reproduce without comment broadcaster Terry Lane's mocking response to allegations of anti-Semitism that had been hurled at him as a result of his pro-Palestinian views. The assumption here was that allegations of anti-Semitism are too trivial to warrant any concern on the Left.<sup>138</sup>

The Robert Pash Affair is instructive in this regard. During 1986-87, Pash, who had a long history of neo-Nazi activity as Secretary of the Australian National Vanguard, published a monthly magazine titled the *Green March* under the sponsorship of the Libyan Government. The *Green March* espoused extreme racist anti-Semitic views, condemning, for example, the International Zionist (read Jewish) conspiracy that was allegedly working to "mix the races of the earth in order to destroy them and create a one world slave state".<sup>139</sup>

What was surprising was that this piece of neo-Nazi propaganda was sold and endorsed by the Melbourne New Era Bookshop in Swanston Street, the official bookshop of the pro-Soviet Socialist Party of Australia (SPA). In response to a letter of complaint from the author, the SPA denied that the publication was either fascist or anti-Semitic, maintaining that it was only anti-Zionist.<sup>140</sup>

In 1989, Pash gained national prominence when he organised a visit to Libya for three Victorian ALP MPs — Joan Coxedge, Jean McLean and George Crawford. The visit was criticised by the Communist Party of Australia weekly, *Tribune*, which reminded readers that it had first exposed Pash's anti-Semitic and neo-Nazi activities back in 1986.<sup>141</sup> In response, *Direct Action*, the official newspaper of the Socialist Workers Party, denied the allegations of racism against Pash, claiming that they had originated from extreme right-wing sources.<sup>142</sup>

The Maoist *Vanguard* has gone even further in its tolerance of anti-Jewish racism, directly defending a violent attack on young Jewish students by pro-PLO extremists during the 1975 AUS Middle East debates. According to *Vanguard*, the attack on the students was justifiable because the demonstration against the visit of two PLO representatives constituted a "fascist provocation to democratic-minded working people and students". And here we have the inevitable identification of the Left's association of Israel with Nazism. In the view of *Vanguard*, anti-Jewish violence was legitimate because Jews were no different to Nazis. The "Jewish star" was simply the equivalent of the swastika.<sup>143</sup>

Two Australian Left sources have been particularly notable for their anti-Semitism: Community Radio 3CR and long-time ALP Left activist Bill Hartley.

From 1976-1979, Community Radio Station 3CR was dominated by a small Maoist clique. During this period, three 3CR pro-PLO programs — "Palestine Speaks", "Palestine Voice" and "Arab Liberation News" — broadcast virulent anti-Israel

propaganda. At times, the programs lapsed into outright anti-Semitism.<sup>144</sup> Examples included:

- "Palestine Speaks", 19 November 1978, "The Zionists are part of the trend that has brought down draconian laws to protect the export of uranium, the Industrial Relations Bureau, the big strengthening of the secret police apparatus in Australia and other developments".
- "Palestine Speaks" attacked "the International Zionist movement with its worldwide political influence, its financial intelligence and arms-smuggling resources".
- "Par Avion", 2 December 1978, described "Zionism as like Hitler's Germany" and called therefore for "the Zionists to be driven out of Australia".
- "Palestine Speaks", 2 December 1978, stated that Zionists aim "to suck the blood of the working man".
- "Palestine Speaks", 16 July 1978, "Zionists control the press and the media".<sup>145</sup>

3CR denied the Jewish community any right of reply. Even left-wing Jewish groups such as Norman Rothfield's Paths to Peace which supported a two-state solution to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict were denied affiliation to the station on the grounds that they were Zionist and therefore racist. Eventually, the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal decided to hold a public inquiry into allegations of anti-Semitism raised by the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies (VJBD — the mainstream Jewish community's roof body in Victoria) against 3CR. At the inquiry, Norman Rothfield stated that 3CR broadcasts had been anti-Semitic or likely to promote anti-Semitism: "It is inevitable that if this station is successful in arousing hatred against Jews who settled in Palestine that same hatred will be expressed against the Australian Jews who express as do Jews in every country support for Israel's existence".<sup>146</sup> Rothfield's testimony confirmed the VJBD's contention that Jews — even left-wing ones — were actively discriminated against by 3CR.<sup>147</sup>

As early as November 1974, Bill Hartley called for the elimination of the State of Israel and its replacement with an Arab State of Palestine. Hartley described the Palestinian resistance to Zionism as identical to that of the Jews against Nazism. He also alleged that "International Zionism" had "collaborated with Hitler".<sup>148</sup> During 1974–75, Hartley played a key role in the Victorian left-wing trade union paper, *Scope*, which published a number of explicit anti-Semitic statements during this period:

- 30 May 1974: "Pro-Israeli communities appear to extend their loyalty more to Israel than to the nation of their residence". (Shades of the perfidious Jew, always an outcast and a potential traitor to the nation).
- 1 August 1974: "The Jewish community holds political, economic, and media influence disproportionate to its numbers".

- 24 April 1975: *Scope* accused supporters of Israel of "standing over" and "manipulating" the ALP and the labour movement. According to *Scope*, "The Federal Executive has been dealing with a problem of alien influence in its consideration of manifestations of NCC penetration into the ALP. It will one day come to the realisation that manipulation can originate from more than one external force".<sup>149</sup>

When interviewed on "Four Corners" on 29 March, 1975, Hartley stated: "I am in no way anti-Semitic but it is easy to see how anti-Semitism occurs when a group (the Jews) of this type exerts political, social and especially economic pressure in a way which is far in excess of their numerical position in the Australian community".<sup>150</sup> Hartley's anti-Jewish rhetoric became even shriller during his involvement with Community Radio Station 3CR. Examples included:



- The traditional anti-Semitic imagery of Jewish financial control: "Very soon there won't be any pragmatic grounds left to support Zionism. In fact, many Western European nations have already reached that judgement, and even Britain may be headed towards it, despite the existence of heavy Zionist influence, especially in the financial lobbies of the City of London ("Par Avion", 18 August 1979).
- The reading of an anti-Jewish message from Libyan President Colonel Gaddafi addressed to American President Jimmy Carter which stated: "While continuing to belittle the Arabs and diligently humiliating them you fear and glorify the Jews. I am convinced that you are incapable of deciding your destiny in the coming election because the outcome of the elections is in the hands of the Jewish banks which are controlling Arab money" ("Par Avion", 1 September 1979).
- A reference to "Zionist interests in the meat trade" which presumably implied that the Jewish Smorgon family controlled the Australian meat trade (*National Times*, 13–19 September, 1981).
- A statement reminiscent of traditional stereotypes of an international Jewish conspiracy: "The ruling circles of Israel are well and truly linked with the Reaganite policies of whipping up war hysteria to manufacture a war economy and lay the threshold for other forms of conflict. They are linked not uncharacteristically with the more wealthy and hegemonic Zionists, with the unrelenting drive to extract maximum profits at the expense of the impoverished working class".
- At the time of the Lebanon War, Hartley indicted the whole Jewish people for the policies of the Israeli Government: "The Jewish people, in fact, face a very critical period. On balance, the judgement against them at this stage must be very severe, but the onus of indicating the basic humanity of the Jewish race can be taken up by the Jewish majority who no doubt reject, despite their silence, what has happened, and they will face the whole challenge of rehabilitating themselves in the eyes of others as a people essentially motivated by humanity" ("Par Avion", 21 August 1982).
- Associating Israel with Nazism in order to diminish Jewish suffering: "There is no apparent difference whatever between the triad of murderers who run Israel, Begin, Shamir and Sharon, and Adolf Hitler. If anything the situation is worse". ("Par Avion", 7 August 1982).<sup>151</sup>

The Australian Left has also mirrored international trends in Left anti-Semitism:

### LEFT HOLOCAUST REVISIONISM

It is pleasing to note that denial of the Holocaust has been a rarity in Australian Left circles. Yet, two such examples do come to mind:

- On 10 August, 1978, *Vanguard*, the newspaper of the Maoist Communist Party of Australia (Marxist/Leninist), stated: "The TV series *Holocaust* also tries to propagate the myth that only Jewish people suffered at the hands of the Nazis or suffered far more than any other nationality. This is false. The Guinness Book of World Records for 1975, p. 391 states that the total Jewish death count could not have exceeded 1.2 million as opposed to the widely-accepted figure of six million".<sup>152</sup>
- On 10 October, 1982, Dr Anice Morsey, the host of 3CR's Arab (Libyan) Friendship Program, told a left-wing pro-Iraqi newspaper: "Zionism fabricated and convinced the world with (a story) that there was mass killing of the Jews in furnaces and gas chambers, and even convinced the world that Germany alone killed six million Jews, while the truth is that those Jews who were killed numbered only 600,000 and they were not killed in



the gas chambers as was suggested, but they were killed in the conquest's battles or Poland and France".<sup>153</sup>

Community Radio Station 3CR went very close to endorsing or at least defending arguments for Holocaust Denial. In October 1978, Holocaust Hoax campaigner John Bennett wrote to the *Age* to protest Jewish attempts to prevent 3CR from broadcasting anti-Semitic material. In support of his argument, Bennett referred to books such as *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century* by Professor Butz which deny that the Holocaust occurred.<sup>154</sup> Bennett's support was welcomed by 3CR Secretary Bevan Ramsden, and his views, including the reference to the Butz book, were favourably quoted on three 3CR programs — "Voice of Malaya", "Palestine Speaks", and Bill Hartley's "Par Avion". Hartley strongly defended Bennett against accusations of anti-Semitism, claiming that his endorsement of Butz's book had been savagely misrepresented by the Jewish community.<sup>155</sup> Eventually after some weeks and after some significant internal lobbying by a Jewish broadcaster Steve Brook, 3CR publicly dissociated itself from John Bennett.<sup>156</sup>

### ZIONIST-NAZI COLLABORATION

Most of the political Left does not deny the reality of the Holocaust; rather it seeks to shift the blame or responsibility for the Holocaust from the Nazi perpetrators to the Jewish victims. According to this argument, the Zionist movement allegedly shared many of the racist assumptions of the Nazis and sought to accommodate, rather than confront, anti-Semitism. During the Holocaust, it is alleged, Zionist leaders conspired with or collaborated with the Nazis to facilitate the immigration of a select number of Jews to Palestine at the expense of the lives of the mass of Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe.<sup>157</sup>

The Zionist/Nazi collaboration thesis first appeared in Australia in April 1971 when the *Australian Socialist* quoted a Pravda article alleging an alliance between Zionists and Nazis during World War Two.<sup>158</sup> The thesis was re-introduced in 1974 by Bill Hartley, and soon after by the Australian Union of Students.<sup>159</sup> By the mid-seventies, the collaborationist thesis had become almost hegemonic on the radical Left and was adopted in turn by the Socialist Workers Party, the Socialist Labour League, sections of the women's movement, Friends of Palestine, the Maoist Communist Party, radio 3CR, and even the anarchists.<sup>160</sup> The general argument was that Zionist leaders had collaborated with the Nazis to enable the wealthy elite to emigrate to Palestine, leaving the poor and the workers to their fate.

The collaborationist thesis was promoted with particular enthusiasm by the Jews Against Zionism and Anti-Semitism group with the assistance of pro-PLO activist Frans Timmerman. JAZA published a 104 page booklet alleging "direct Zionist cooperation and assistance in the extermination of hundreds of thousands of Jewish people".<sup>161</sup>

### THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

During the 1970s and 1980s, one of the principal sources of Left anti-Semitism was the international feminist movement.<sup>162</sup> As Alisa Solomon has noted: "Throughout the 1970s, some in the women's movement used legitimate criticism of Israel as a smokescreen for anti-Semitic sentiments — often unaware of what they were doing. When Jewish women had the courage to call them on it, they were often insulted and charged with racism towards Arabs and Palestinians."<sup>163</sup>

A number of Jewish feminists have complained about the presence of anti-Semitism within the Australian women's movement. Sheryl Berkovich, for example, has identified a number of ways in which anti-Semitism operates among women activists: "Jews are

blamed for the death of the Goddess; Jews are blamed for the birth of patriarchy; All Jews are identified as rich and middle-class; Jews are assumed to be either Zionists or religious fanatics".<sup>164</sup> Similarly, Phoebe Thorndyke has noted the reluctance of "a movement that prides itself on its concern for all women and its commitment to fighting all forms of oppression" to address issues of Jewishness and anti-Semitism.<sup>165</sup> The matter came to a head in mid-1990 when the *Women's Liberation Newsletter* published an article considered by many Jewish women to be anti-Semitic. The article by Maria Dimopoulos, a long-time supporter of the destruction of the State of Israel<sup>166</sup>, contended that Israel had "added credibility to anti-Semitic arguments". Evoking arguments identical to those used in the British feminist movement debates, Dimopoulos also claimed that the ideologies of Zionism and feminism were incompatible.<sup>167</sup>

In response, Sheryl Berkovitch accused Dimopoulos of anti-Semitism for saying that the actions of Israel gave credibility to anti-Semitism. According to Berkovitch, "Neither the Israeli Government, nor any other Jew, Zionist or otherwise, is responsible for anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism is solely the responsibility of anti-Semites, like sexism is solely the responsibility of sexists". Berkovitch also suggested that the women's movement had "grossly minimised the anti-Semitism that gave rise to Zionism — amongst other things, the pogroms in Europe, the Nazi Holocaust that everyone wishes we would keep quiet about, and so on ... I can see, unfortunately, no evidence of a socialist or revolutionary alternative to Zionism".<sup>168</sup> Two other Jewish feminists Vera Ray and Sandra Shotlander also took Dimopoulos to task, noting that "The more people use the catchery 'I am anti-Zionist, but I'm not anti-Semitic', the easier it is for Jews to become suspicious of their arguments... The formation of a Zionist bogey is reminiscent of rhetoric, which has created a Jewish bogey throughout the ages".<sup>169</sup>

The last word belonged to Debbie Brennan of Radical Women who identified Israel "as a police state" existing solely to serve the aims of imperialism. According to Brennan, the State of Israel was "not the solution for Jews in the struggle against anti-Semitism ... Israel was a prop of anti-Semitism, just as Zionism has been its herder and bouncer".<sup>170</sup>

### THE DAVID IRVING AFFAIR

In February 1993, the Australian Government banned the planned visit of controversial British historian and neo-Nazi, David Irving. Irving is well known for his attempts to deny the Holocaust and rehabilitate Hitler.<sup>171</sup>

The banning of Irving provided the Australian Left with a unique opportunity to demonstrate its abhorrence of racism and anti-Semitism. This was particularly so for the anti-Zionist Left who were presumably concerned to demonstrate the sincerity of the claim that they were anti-Zionist and not anti-Semitic. One would have reasonably expected the Left, therefore (except for the most rigid civil libertarians), to support the ban on Irving and to expose his anti-Semitism. Yet in many cases the opposite was true.<sup>172</sup>

The tone was set by the President of the Queensland Council of Civil Liberties, Terry O'Gorman, who described the ban as "obnoxious". O'Gorman said it was "absolutely unacceptable that anyone should be denied entry to Australia on the basis that their views would offend a section of the community"<sup>173</sup>, totally ignoring the traumatic impact of Irving's Holocaust denial on Holocaust survivors. Another Left source, the literary journal *Overland*, acknowledged that Irving's views would cause great distress in Jewish communities, but still argued that Irving's banning was an "outrage against freedom of speech". According to *Overland* Editor John McLaren, "Our energies will

more profitably be directed to promoting opportunities of speech and expression than to silencing even the voices of the intolerable. Despicable views should be answered, not repressed".<sup>174</sup>

I am not aware of any attempts by *Overland* to answer Irving's views. And as Jewish Left activist Henry Zimmerman pointed out, there was a time when Irving's neo-Nazism "would have upset people of the Left" as well as Jews.<sup>175</sup> The ALP Left ginger group *Socialist Forum* gave space to views both in support of and in opposition to the ban. One contributor Henry Zimmerman exposed Irving's Nazism and Anti-Semitism and concluded that the ban was justified. Another contributor Jim O'Neill vigorously criticised Irving's views, but opposed the ban on the basis that it could set a "dangerous precedent of political acceptance to gain entry into Australia".<sup>176</sup> *Green Left Weekly* also published views supporting and opposing the ban and took no editorial position.<sup>177</sup> Most noticeable was the strong opposition to the ban voiced by pro-Palestinian activist Sean Malloy. Malloy contended that the ban would only "give the ruling class in this country more power to deny progressive speakers and ideas".<sup>178</sup> *Frontline* adopted no editorial position, but reproduced a letter by Jewish civil libertarian Peter Singer from the *Age* which opposed the ban.<sup>179</sup> Noticeably, *Frontline* elected not to reproduce a letter in response to Singer by Jewish Left activist Norman Rothfield which decisively defended the ban.<sup>180</sup>

Perhaps the most offensive contribution was that of pro-Palestinian Democratic Socialist Party activist Mike Khizam. Khizam condemned the ban on Irving "whose research has caused him to challenge the prevailing interpretation of the Holocaust". Khizam contended that the ban was inspired by the efforts of the "Jewish lobby" whose influence was also responsible for the Government's expensive prosecution of alleged Nazi war criminals.<sup>181</sup>

The only Left group to unequivocally support the ban was the radical International Socialist Organisation which stated simply: "Keep this Nazi out".<sup>182</sup> According to the ISO, free speech arguments were spurious since the only people to gain from an Irving visit would be Australian Nazis — "the people who fire-bomb Asian businesses in Perth or scrawl racist graffiti on synagogues in Melbourne".<sup>183</sup> David Glanz of ISO asked: "What about the rights of Asians, Jews or gays — who would bear the brunt of any Nazi movement — to live without fear of harassment"? <sup>184</sup>

### AUSTRALIAN LEFT PHILO-SEMITISM, 1967-1994

Amongst the indifference and the hostility, there does, however, remain a significant philo-Semitic residue on the Australian Left. In particular, older leftists such as Jim Cairns and Dave Davies, and social democrats such as Bob Hawke, John Wheeldon and Clyde Holding have remained strong supporters of Jewish causes.<sup>185</sup>

Former CPA and Socialist Forum activist Dave Davies has been a particularly vocal critic of Left anti-Semitism. In various articles, Davies has condemned anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union, defended Israel's right to exist, and criticised the presence of anti-Semitism in Left statements on the Middle East.<sup>186</sup> When the left-wing union paper *Scope* published anti-Semitic references to Jewish dual loyalties, Davies protested vigorously: "One of the least attractive features of life in Australia is the existence of national prejudice, including anti-Semitism. I thought a working class paper should set out to combat such prejudices, rather than fan them".<sup>187</sup>

Numerous Left activists have supported Jewish causes when approached to do so. For example, a 1972 petition against Nazism and racism organised by the Association of Victims of Nazi Persecution and the Jewish Radical Association was signed by Jim

Cairns, ALP MP Gordon Bryant, Professor Ian Turner, CICD Secretary John Lloyd, and many other labour movement activists.<sup>188</sup> Similarly, a 1979 petition in favour of Paths to Peace's application to join 3CR was signed by fifty leading Left activists including Noel Counihan, Caroline Hogg, Stephen Murray-Smith, Max Teichmann, John Ryan, Myra Roper, Dave Davies, Phillip Herrington and so on.<sup>189</sup> A 1989 petition organised by the Australian Jewish Democratic Society in favour of the Nazi War Crimes Bill was also signed by a number of prominent Left identities.

Other examples of Left philo-Semitism include:

- Sections of the ALP Left, including most prominently former MP Peter Steedman, have expressed strong opposition to anti-Semitism in any form and have often cooperated with Jewish groups — for example, in countering the League of Rights.<sup>190</sup>
- The radical Left has frequently condemned the anti-Semitism of far Right groups such as the League of Rights and the La Rouché Movement.<sup>191</sup>
- During the Gulf War, the now-defunct *Australian Left Review* vigorously condemned the protest that took place outside the Israeli Embassy at the time of the Iraqi missile attacks on Israel. The *ALR* contributor noted that "At a time when Israel's only direct part in the war has been to suffer repeated attacks from Iraqi missiles, the only conclusion one could draw is that the protesters deny Israel's right to respond to such attacks. This is tantamount to denying Israel's right to exist, something which even the PLO has until recently conceded".<sup>192</sup>
- The ACTU and its international officer Alan Matheson have consistently documented and condemned instances of anti-Semitism in Australia.<sup>193</sup>
- Left publications have occasionally published articles extolling the long history of Jewish involvement in political radicalism.<sup>194</sup>
- Feminist journals have published articles praising the feminist and peace movements in Israel.<sup>195</sup>

Most sections of the Left including even the radical anti-Zionist Left have welcomed the appearance of Steven Spielberg's film *Schindler's List*, and denounced attempts to deny the Holocaust.<sup>196</sup> During the premiere of *Schindler's List*, members of the ISO attended the cinema to protect Jewish film-goers against possible neo-Nazi violence.<sup>197</sup> ISO subsequently formed an alliance with Jewish students and other groups to chase Nazis off the streets of Brunswick.<sup>198</sup> The DSP, however, felt obliged to qualify its condemnation of Holocaust Denial by pointing out the danger of "concessions to Zionism, the colonialist ideology responsible for the dispossession of the Palestinians".<sup>199</sup>

What all these examples show is that there is as much philo-Semitic sentiment as anti-Semitic sentiment on the Australian Left. One of the reasons the anti-Semites appear larger and more vocal is that the organised Jewish community makes little attempt to encourage or facilitate Left sympathies for Jews. The key component here is the Jewish Left. Left-wing Jews have always played a key role in positively influencing left-wing attitudes towards Jews. Yet, as I will show in the next chapter, the mainstream Jewish community has rarely assisted (and has sometimes directly hindered) their attempts to win friends on the Left.

### THE JEWISH RESPONSE TO LEFT ANTI-ZIONISM

The rise of post-Six Day War left-wing anti-Zionism provoked a strong Jewish reaction. Many Jews saw Left anti-Zionism as a new form of anti-Semitism. Thus according to the US Anti-Defamation League's "The New Anti-Semitism", "The radical (totalitarian)



Left, embracing both old-line communist organisations and the multifaceted New Left, has taken an anti-Semitic turn away from traditional left-wing opposition to anti-Semitism and today represents a danger to world Jewry at least equal to the danger on the right".<sup>200</sup> Whilst Radical Left organisations denied that they were anti-Semitic, the ADL argued that "Manifestos and propaganda calling for the destruction of Israel are ... direct assaults against World Jewry and, along with activities supporting those sworn to destroy Israel, constitute the ultimate anti-Semitism".<sup>201</sup>

Similar concern was expressed by Australian Jews. According to Jewish communal leader Isi Leibler, alongside traditional sources of organised anti-Semitism, "significant new anti-Jewish forces had emerged" on the New Left. Leibler contrasted the relatively minor threat posed to Jews and Israel by radical Right extremists who numbered tens or at most hundreds, with this new left-wing threat which incorporated a movement with tens of thousands of potential supporters.<sup>202</sup>

The reaction of a significant section of world Jewry was to move to the political Right. As King and Berlet have noted, the US ADL moved towards a neo-conservative position which was also adopted by the prominent Jewish magazine *Commentary*.<sup>203</sup> In 1982, the ADL published "The Real Anti-Semitism" which urged a Jewish strategic alliance with the forces of the Christian Right on the basis that they were sympathetic to Zionism and to Israel, irrespective of their views on other matters of importance to Jews.<sup>204</sup>

The move to the Right was mirrored in the Australian Jewish political intelligentsia. Those who set the communal agenda, whilst holding various political allegiances and affiliations, were all associated one way or another with the conservative side of the spectrum.<sup>205</sup> The Jewish think tank *Australia/Israel Review* was particularly renowned for its close ties with sections of the political Right.<sup>206</sup>

The other side of the Jewish reaction was the almost complete failure to enter the Left debate on Zionism, that is to actively challenge or confront the anti-Zionism of the Left. Isi Leibler recognised the importance of such activity in 1974 when he emphasised the need to "systematically canvass those elements within the Left, the ALP and the Trade Unions who are potential friends and could be willing to assist us".<sup>207</sup> Yet, this was rarely done. Left-wing criticisms of Israel were simply not responded to or countered where it mattered — on the Left, in Left forums and publications. Some attempted to explain why, instead of merely penning irrelevant condemnations of the Left in right-wing publications. In 1988, for example, whilst commenting on the difficulties the Jewish community faced in influencing the Left, Professor Bill Rubinstein wrote: "I didn't know that we had stopped speaking to Bob Hawke, or that the Labour Friends of Israel had ceased to exist. Of course, if by the Left one means the extreme Left, it is hard for Jews to hold a dialogue with people who often regard Israel as an illegal entity and Israelis as the direct heirs to the Nazis".<sup>208</sup>

Herein, of course, was encapsulated the problem. Most people on the Left didn't share the philo-Semitic views of Bob Hawke or the rabid anti-Semitism of Bill Hartley and Radio 3CR. They knew little about the Middle East or Zionism and were open to persuasion or influence by both supporters of Israel and supporters of the Palestinians. And in most cases, the organised Jewish community failed to lobby the "undecided" middle mass because the conservative links and preconceptions of its leaders hindered their ability to do so.

There was, however, one group which possessed both the intellectual capacity and the connections (if not always the resources) to influence the Left towards a more sympathetic position on Israel. This was the Jewish left — whether encapsulated in organised groups such as the Jewish Radical Association, Paths to Peace or later the



Jewish Democratic Society — or in individuals such as Norman Rothfield, Henry Zimmerman and so on.

Whenever anti-Israel diatribes appeared in Left or labour movement publications, left-wing Jews did not hesitate to write in and defend Israel's right to exist. They also succeeded in engaging and activating sympathetic left-wing non-Jews on Israel's behalf.<sup>209</sup>

The Jewish Left's effectiveness as a lobby on Israel did not go unrecognised by the Jewish mainstream. In 1992, *Australia/Israel Review* editor Michael Danby wrote: "During the 1970s Norman Rothfield (within the Left in Victoria), Moss Cass (within the Federal Parliament), and Bernie Taft (who wisely closed up shop at the Communist Party), all performed honourably. They had their criticisms of Israel's treatment of the Palestinians. But they defended Israel against the invincibility of the Hartleyite Socialist Left ... The Rothfield group were probably responsible for the moderate attitude to Israel and the Jewish community of the non-Hartleyite Socialist Left members such as Joan Kirner and her colleagues".<sup>210</sup> A similar view was expressed by *Australian Jewish News* editor Sam Lipski who noted the important role played by Paths to Peace as a group with "some credibility and credentials on the Left" in countering Bill Hartley.<sup>211</sup> Yet, the Jewish mainstream rarely if ever provided resources or support to the Jewish Left to fulfil this important role. In fact, they often not only failed to help facilitate the Jewish Left's lobbying activities on the Left, but actively attempted to suppress them.<sup>212</sup>

In one sense, this was understandable since the Jewish Left's fire was directed not only at pro-Palestinian extremists, but also at perceived extremists (often mainstream conservatives) within Israel and the local Jewish community. Yet, in the early 1970s, the Australian Jewish community had not hesitated to fund the work of the left-wing Jewish magazine *Survival* (despite its criticism of the mainstream Jewish leadership) in its attempts to combat Left anti-Zionism.<sup>213</sup> The consequent failure to separate internal Jewish politics from broader Jewish interests and support the Jewish Left's campaigns on the Left was clearly short-sighted.

### CONCLUSION

Left/Jewish relations have changed radically over the last 25 years. Jews once constituted a significant proportion of the Left constituency and the Left in turn supported Jewish interests. Today, however, much of the Left is hostile to or indifferent to Jewish concerns. As is shown by the Left response to the Israeli/PLO Peace Accord and the David Irving Affair, this viewpoint is deeply ingrained.

This change in Left attitudes to Jews has been accompanied by a significant decline in Jewish involvement in the Left. This is not to deny that Jewish individuals (perhaps in large numbers) remain involved in the Left and attempt to influence Left attitudes towards Jews. But as noted earlier, the Jewish mainstream has made little or no attempt to influence the Left and is unlikely to do so in the foreseeable future. Thus, the distance between the Left and the organised Jewish community is likely to stay as is.

This is not to rule out Jewish/Left alliances on particular issues such as opposition to Nazism or support for multiculturalism. But it is obvious that whilst the Jewish community continues to distance itself from the Left, it can hardly hope to exert any influence on the priorities and sentiments of the Left.

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<sup>33</sup> Jewish Council Annual Report 1947-48, p. 2.

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<sup>174</sup> *Overland*, 130–1993 and 132–1993.

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<sup>191</sup> *Socialist*, October 1993; Deller, Bill, "Rural Right" in *Communist Intervention Magazine*, May 1993.

<sup>192</sup> *Australian Left Review*, March 1991.

<sup>193</sup> Matheson, Alan, *Combating Racism - Can We Still be Confident? An overview of Racism and Discrimination in 1993*, ACTU, Melbourne, 1993; Matheson, Alan, "Racism in Australia: What if we are Winning?" in *Without Prejudice*, May 1993.

<sup>194</sup> Stone, Janey, "The Fighting History of Radical Jews" in *Socialist Action*, September 1988; Fabian, Carol, "Reclaiming the Jewish Left Heritage" in *Socialist Objective*, February 1994.

<sup>195</sup> Elkas, Sara, "The Feminist Movement in Israel" in *Women's Liberation Newsletter*, No. 5, 1988. See also the review of a novel about Melbourne Hasidim in the same issue.

<sup>196</sup> *Socialist*, 18 February 1994 and 18 March 1994; *Green Left Weekly*, 23 February 1994.

<sup>197</sup> *Southern Cross*, 23 February 1994.

<sup>198</sup> *Australian Jewish News*, 4 March, 11 March and 18 March 1994.

<sup>199</sup> *Green Left Weekly*, 24 October 1993.

<sup>200</sup> Forster, Arnold and Epstein, Benjamin, *The New Anti-Semitism*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1974, p. 7.

<sup>201</sup> Seidman, Peter, *Socialists and the Fight Against Anti-Semitism*, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1973, p. 7.

<sup>202</sup> Leibler, Isi, "The escalation of anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic agitation in Australia" in *Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies Annual Report 1974/75*, pp. 46-48.

<sup>203</sup> King, Dennis and Berlet, Chip, "ADLgate" in *Tikkun*, July/August 1993, pp. 31-32.

<sup>204</sup> Perlmutter, Nathan and Perlmutter, Ruth Ann, *The Real Anti-Semitism in America*, Arbor House, New York, 1982, pp. 170-171.

<sup>205</sup> Frankel, Boris, *From the Prophets Deserts Come*, Arena Publishing, Melbourne, 1992, p. 146.

<sup>206</sup> Mendes, Philip, "Australia/Israel Review: The Jewish New Right?" in *Australian Jewish Democrat*, Winter 1992. Also see "Kroger's Two Candidates for Goldstein" in *Australian Left Review*, November/December 1989, p. 12.

<sup>207</sup> Leibler, Isi, *Op Cit*, p. 61. Leibler had been able to successfully lobby the Left in his earlier campaign on Soviet Jewry. See also his comments in *Catholic Worker*, February 1974.

<sup>208</sup> *Australian Jewish News*, 25 March 1988.

<sup>209</sup> A good summary of the Jewish Left's approach can be found in Rothfield, Norman. "How to work for peace and come out smiling: Reminiscences" in *Journal of the Australian Jewish Historical Society*, Vol. XII 1993, pp. 213-219. See also Mendes, Philip, "The Melbourne Jewish Left 1967-1986" in *Journal of the Australian Jewish Historical Society*, Vol. XI 1991. See also Zimmerman, Henry, "Zionism and Socialism" in *Outlook*, June 1968; the article by Norman and Evelyn Rothfield in *Scope*, 14 February 1974; the letters by Sol Marks and Bill Adler in *Scope*, 26 September 1974; the letter by David Martin in *Retrieval*, November/December 1973.

<sup>210</sup> *Australian Jewish News*, 6 March 1992.

<sup>211</sup> Interview with Sam Lipski on 22 January 1990.

<sup>212</sup> Mendes, Philip, "Dissent and Intolerance in the Melbourne Jewish Community" in *Arena* 96, 1991.

<sup>213</sup> Mendes, Philip, *The New Left, The Jews and the Vietnam War, 1965-72*, *op. cit.*, pp. 119-120.

## JEWISH RESOURCES ON THE INTERNET

*Beverley Davis*

Interest and enthusiasm in the use of the Internet and E-mail is growing rapidly around the world. Global interaction on a mind-boggling array of topics is available to those who take the plunge and join the electronic age.

This article will provide a brief explanation of the Internet and E-mail, and present an introduction to accessing information on Jewish genealogy, academic Jewish studies, Judaism, Holocaust studies, Israel, and many other topics.

No information is provided here about computer or modem hardware, the various essential software components, or choosing a suitable service provider. Please consult a computer shop or magazine for these details.

### **What is the Internet?**

Put simply, the Internet is a world-wide system that allows computer users to send messages to other computer users via telephone lines. Those sending messages to each other may be in the same city or they may be at opposite ends of the globe. The cost is the same no matter where the message is sent. Originally, the Internet was available only to university academics or students, but now is available to anyone who pays a fee to a service provider and has appropriate computer hardware and software.

### **What is E-mail?**

While the Internet is of most benefit when it is desired to send messages to large groups of people, E-mail is a more person-to-person method of sending messages. Every user of the E-mail system throughout the world has a unique E-mail address, which is typed in lower case letters. An example is `president@whitehouse.gov`, where "president" is the user's E-mail name (in this case the president of the United States), "whitehouse" is the name of the server (computer) to which the message is being sent, and "gov" stands for the "domain" name (government); some others are .edu (educational) .com (commercial) .org (nonprofit organisations) and .net (network providers). All countries other than the US have an abbreviated version of their name at the end of the address, e.g. .au is Australia, .nz is New Zealand, .de is Federal Republic of Germany.

Sending a message from a computer in, say, Melbourne to an E-mail address in, say, the USA, will bring up a message on the recipient's computer screen the next time that they connect to their server. The recipient may then read it, either while still connected, or at a later time when disconnected and therefore not paying for "on-line" charges.

### **What is the World Wide Web?**

This is a part of the Internet which uses graphics as well as text which users may read in the same way as their E-mail, either "on-line" or "downloaded" to read at another time.

### **What topics are available?**

Almost any topic can be found on the Internet, as discussion groups (sometimes "live"), conferences, mailing lists, USENET newsgroups (approximately 10,000 of these!), anonymous File Transfer Protocol (FTP), Gopher, World Wide Web, Telnet or E-mail. People with access to the Internet may "subscribe" (free of charge) to these groups.



## Subscribing

There are two "addresses" for every group: one is similar to a computerised mailing list ("listserv"). Commands to "subscribe" or "unsubscribe" are sent here. The second "address" is for sending messages to *all of the subscribers* of that particular group. This is important to remember as there may be up to several thousand subscribers, all of whom will receive your message! After your message appears and you have received a number of responses, you may then choose to communicate more privately by sending E-mail messages to the responders at their listed E-mail addresses.

To subscribe (or unsubscribe) to these groups or lists, you send an E-mail message to the listserv which runs the groups. Leave the subject line blank, then type, in the body of the message, the following formula command

Subscribe nameofgroup yourfirstname yourlastname

The listserv will, in due course, automatically process and acknowledge your subscription and will send you information on how to send, and reply to, messages.

There is a large number of resources dealing with Jewish genealogy and other related topics on the Internet at present. However, please note that Internet addresses are subject to rapid change. Also, it is vital that addresses are typed *exactly* as shown.

## Suggested addresses

*To subscribe to the "JewishGen" mail list and discussion group (see below), send an E-mail message, as described above, to*

listserv@mail.eworld.com

*to subscribe to soc.genealogy.jewish, send an E-mail message to*

listserv@gitvml.gatech.edu

*to subscribe to Holocaust newsgroup, send an E-mail message to*

listserv@uicvm.uic.edu

*to get a list of listserv lists, send an E-mail message to*

listserv@mizzoui.missouri.edu [with the request: list global]

Send an E-mail message to the following addresses

geninet@cgsg.com

*for information on genealogy resources on Internet*

russmil@cgsg.com

*military conscription in 19th century Russia*

sefard5@cgsg.com

sephardim

glynne@aol.com

*Eastern European maps available on the Internet*

jewstudies@israel.nyscnet.org

*Jewish Studies Judaica eJournal*

samelpem@aol.com

*Romania Special Interest Group (ROM-SIG)*

Some World Wide Web resources are:

[http://www.huji.ac.il/www\\_jewishn/www/servers/html](http://www.huji.ac.il/www_jewishn/www/servers/html)

*for Jewish servers archives*

<http://shamash.nysernet.org/trb/judaism/html>

*Judaism, Jewish Resources*

<http://sunsite/unc.edu/yiddish/shtetl.html>

*Virtual Shtetl: Yiddish Language and Culture Home Page on World Wide Web*

<http://www.jewishgen.cgsg.com>

*JewishGen Home Page*

<http://www.jpost.co.il>

*Jerusalem Post (updated daily)*

The Jewish Genealogy Discussion Group (JewishGen), based in the USA, is an excellent forum for beginners and more experienced researchers to find help with their work. People from all around the world log-on to this very popular group, and as will be seen from the following *partial* list of subjects downloaded over a two-day period in August 1995, a very wide range of interests is catered for. (No corrections have been made to spelling!).

Russia Ruled Poland, So Which Is My Ancestry?

Orel Or Arel

Neiman Family Lachwa Poland & Israel Dinovitz

Or Dunayevtsky, Ukraine

"Brothers Keeper" Shareware Program

Communicating With Possible Israeli Relatives

Records From LDS

Family Names Caston/Codron (Rhodes)

West Coast Immigration Anyone?

Canadian Entry

Mt Hebron Cemetery

Plotsker/Plotsky

Clamage-League Of Nations

Future International Seminars

Help Res. Family Link To Vilna Gaon

Census Form

Response To Landsmen Editor

Kornaro(Sohmer) & Neshvis?(Puntus) Slore

Carmona

Portugal Research Assistance

Hartford (Ct) Current Obit - Krugman

Looking For The Mortman Name

Researching Wartelsky

Locating Otto Schachter

Herson Family

Death Records — N.Y.C.

Brother's Keeper

Copelovitch/Rosenberg

Elakovsky/Grashevsky/Kitzewsky

Harry Arbesman

Gawronsky & Latvia Expulsion List

Converso/Marrano

NY Death Certif. Help

Hartford (Ct) Current Obit

Mel Oshins Reply To My Adler Family

Queries To Ins

NYC Death Cert

Wwow-Prusina Is Where?

Willer And Fruminovsky In Shreveport

Jewish Genealogy

New Created Soc.Genealogy.Uk+Ireland Group

Dvor - Devor Berdichev & Zhitomer

Eisakavitz/Mermelstein/Hungary?

Cyber-Marketing

Expensive Vital Records From Pol

Jews From Posen Germany

Family Isaacs And Family Hart

Need Info: Baltimore Ship Arrivals

Naiman Family/Lachwa

Nyc Death Certif & Cemete

Name Changes In Palestine

Yad Vashem Infofile (New)

Info On Rokiskis

Social Security Rec

Schonunger/Shoninger

N.Y. Census

Ireland Records

Morris Jacobson

Expensive Polish Records

Town Of Grol In Holland?

Avotaynu Magazine

Capital Idea!  
 Leaving Lithuania/Latvia  
 Places In Manhattan  
 Jakob Simon  
 Peltz And Goldwater Families  
 In Search Of Spigel Or Spiegel  
 Passenger Lists  
 City Search  
 Tabor  
 Dodge Synagogue In Stockport  
 Raskin  
 Schimmerling  
 Social Security Address  
 Immigration Via The West Coast  
 LDS Files  
 Yiskor Books Index  
 Polish Vs. Jewish Identity  
 Professional Solicitations  
 Ship's Manifest-Confusion  
 Search Bureau For Missing Relatives  
 Kuznetz - Kuznetsov?  
 Pachenker In Brooklyn  
 Observation  
 Asher, Greenberg  
 Kaganovich/Groys  
 Help - Mt Hebron Cemetery  
 Schlestein From Bessarabia  
 Gedcom Delphi Component?  
 Book With Photos Of Steamships Newsgroup  
 Soc.Genealogy.Uk+Ireland  
 Looking For Info On Cemeterie  
 Posen  
 Komarno(Sohmer) & Neshvis?(Puntus) Any Info?  
 Atlanta, Ga. 1910 Address Lookup  
 Rotterdam Departure Lists  
 Okun Family  
 Shapiro; Romania, New York, Penn.  
 My Ancestry—How I Define It  
 Location Of Kis Varda  
 Jewish Migrations  
 Brumer Family  
 Hospital Records  
 Mt Hebron Cemetery Address  
 N.Y. Jews 1665 - 1796  
 Brother's Keeper  
 Queries To INS  
 Book: Shtetl Finde

Tatelman/Zides/Paglin/Suzman/Rogoff  
 Garber  
 What Happened To The FAQs  
 Wehle, Von Wehle, Wehli, Anytime  
 Gesher Galicia Sig (New Infofile)  
 Schepps Or Szeps From Wodz (Poland)  
 Sussmann(With Umlaut Or Without)  
 Koslover/Bloch  
 Tabor In Baltimore  
 Reichman Or Klein From Muncasz  
 DC Summer Seminar  
 Research In South Africa  
 Town Of Grol In Holland?  
 German Town  
 Gutofsaly/Gofsky:Lodz,Pol.  
 Frohlich, Lemberger  
 1. J Monuments/ 2. Holocaust FAQ (FYI)  
 Converso/Marrano  
 Census Form  
 Kaminetzky, Goldfarb, Yarishetzky  
 Novigs  
 Glassberg/Feigenbaum/Rosengarten  
 Totonto Resources  
 Posen  
 Avotaynu In Israel  
 Belarus Research  
 Census Form  
 Ship Listings  
 Novgrad/Novgrad Family  
 Mt. Hebron Cem., NY  
 Cemetery Assistance  
 Chernigov Gubemiya  
 Broniatouski/Broniatowski Family Medzenich  
 Podlaski  
 Mt Moriah Cemetery New Jersey.  
 Svirsky From Svir, White Russia  
 Cemetery Addresses  
 Looking For: Zylbertal/Vant(Wand) Montreal  
 Birth Record  
 Sokolow, Hubberman, Norinsky, Hirsch  
 Family - Bucharest, Romania  
 Burial Society  
 Yiskor Books Index  
 Canadian Entry  
 Richie/Kravitz (Drohichin)  
 Research In South Africa  
 References On Rabbis

## 100 YEARS AGO: EXTRACTS FROM THE JEWISH HERALD

*Compiled by Lorraine Freeman*

1895 was the year in which standard time was introduced. In our synagogues there was a continuation of interest in reform of ritual and ceremony. At the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, a mixed choir of ladies and gentlemen was installed, and a general meeting of members of the congregation heard a debate in which the Attorney-General, the Honorable Isaac Isaacs, and Sir Benjamin Benjamin both spoke in favour of the introduction of organ music during services. The voting was also overwhelmingly in favour. However, Rabbi Dr. Abrahams refused to allow the organ to be played on Sabbaths and the Festivals, making it clear that he would have to consider whether he would remain as minister if the suggestion persisted.

During 1895 the Depression continued to affect employment and finance. Neither the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation nor the East Melbourne Congregation could make ends meet, despite stringent economies. Beset by mortgage problems and on threat of legal action by the bank, the members of the East Melbourne Congregation decided to try to solve their problems by holding a grand bazaar. The Exhibition Building was hired for the event, which was conducted as an Oriental Fair. It was an outstanding success, and so popular did it prove that the organisers had to keep it open at nights for an additional week.

In turn, the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation sought to improve its finances and also considered holding a bazaar. To instantly relieve their financial stress they dispensed with the services of Rev. Moses Saunders who had acted as *shochet* and second reader for the congregation.



### FEBRUARY 8, 1895.

Among the names of successful candidates for matriculation from Wesley College appear those of P. C. De Beer and S. Karmel, each of whom passed in eight subjects. The former took honours in physiology, the latter honours in English. Mr. De Beer has been entrusted with the editorship of the school journal, the *Wesley College Chronicle*, and it is due to his energetic and business capacity that the paper is now able to clear its expenses. These two promising boys are fresh examples of the many talented Jewish youths educated at a school which is proud to number among its alumni such men as Professor Alexander and Dr. Meyer.

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# The Jewish Herald.

FEBRUARY 8, 1895.

THE introduction of "standard time" on the first of this month gives rise to some peculiar reflections on the all-important subject of time. Tide and time, it is said, wait for no man, but in some cases time has done it—on the present occasion. In Sydney, on Thursday night, the 31st January, all the city and railway clocks were put back or stopped for five minutes. The trains which left for the suburbs at midnight were sent away by the old time, and then the clocks were all immediately put back to "standard time." Passengers, therefore, found themselves able to accomplish the journey from Sydney to Eveleigh in "less than no time." In Melbourne the public were not so fortunate, a good twenty minutes being apparently gone for ever. One would hardly imagine that the observances of Judaism could suffer any modification from the adoption of the new time, but so it is at least in Melbourne. A little reflection on the fact that our Sabbaths and holidays are regulated by the going down of the sun, and that that luminary is certain to treat any of our "standards" with the profoundest contempt, will demonstrate the fact that our comings and goings are regulated by our clocks and watches, and that several alterations—in some cases important ones—must be made in our religious time-tables. Thus, at midwinter in Melbourne it will no longer be necessary to hold Friday evening services as early as 4.30, as has been customary for some years. Sabbath will never commence sooner than five o'clock, and will never terminate much before 5.30. On the other hand, at midsummer Melbourne Jews need not commence the Sabbath till nearly 7.30 p.m., and cannot terminate it until after 8 p.m. on Saturday. The almost time-honoured "*Minyan* at 7.30," if persisted in at midsummer, would be held about a quarter of an hour before sunset—too soon for the evening service. But, more than all, we wonder what the *once-a-year Jews* of Melbourne will think of a *Kippur* service that cannot possibly terminate many minutes before seven o'clock in the evening! Taking the last twenty years we find that, as far as Melbourne is concerned, *Yom Kippur* terminated on nine different occasions at 6.30 p.m. Only on two occasions it was over at 6.10 p.m. The one was the latest, the other the earliest termination. For the future the fast-day can never be over before 6.30, but it may last, and in the majority of years will last, till 6.50. On the other hand, there is this consolation—that a day will always be a day, and if it is over at a late hour, it will also commence at a late hour. So on the whole things remain much the same as they are.



It is commonly reported that the Board of Management of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation has resolved to dispense with the services of the Rev. M. Saunders from 28th February. The reason for this step is said to be that the Board finds itself compelled to practise the most stringent economy in order to make ends meet. Mr. Saunders has been *Shouchat* and second reader of the congregation for many years, but it is now the intention of the Board to request the *Kosher* butcher to engage a competent *Shouchat* at his own expense. We hear, however, that a requisition is in course of being signed by a large number of the members, calling upon the president to convene a special general meeting of the congregation for the purpose of urging upon the Board the absolute necessity of retaining Mr. Saunders' services.

**MELBOURNE, FRIDAY, 5th APRIL, 5655—1895.**

It is with unfeigned sorrow that we find ourselves called upon to record the fact that the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, after having for close upon half a century adhered to traditional or orthodox Judaism, has now turned a Reform congregation, a majority of its members having decided in favour of instrumental music as part of the ordinary service on Sabbaths and festivals. Most of the committee had set their heart upon an organ, in addition to the ladies' choir, and they found a large number of supporters, especially amongst those who very rarely, if ever, attend on ordinary Sabbaths. The discussion which took place at the general meeting on Monday evening was noteworthy in many respects. The president read from the London *Jewish Chronicle* many favourable opinions on the admission of the organ, but, to judge from the report, he did not read the Chief Rabbi's condemnation of this proposed innovation contained in a sermon preached by him at the Hampstead synagogue, and published in the same paper. Neither did Mr. Hart read the letter which the Rev. Dr. Abrahams addressed to the committee in reference to this matter, and which most likely would have led to a very different decision. And here we may, in passing, add that Dr. Abrahams has authorised us to state that he is not in favour of instrumental music in the synagogue. Then, again, the question whether, from the Jewish standpoint, it was legal to use an organ on Sabbaths and festivals was conveniently ignored by the reform party—what do they care for Jewish law?—while the few who have still the highest regard for our time-hallowed rules and regulations—and foremost amongst whom stands Mr. Edward Marks—were simply sat upon, to use a colloquial phrase. Under these circumstances it was no wonder that the reformers carried the day, but we cannot congratulate them upon the means which they used to achieve this victory. Time alone will show the result. It would be strange indeed if reform would produce better results in this country than it has done in any other. It has been a failure everywhere, and we safely predict the same here. Of one thing we may be sure, the reformers will not be satisfied with their present achievements. They will go on breaking down till little or nothing is left. There is just one little matter which we feel it our duty to lay before our readers. In the articles which appeared in the daily papers the Chief Rabbi has been in several important points misrepresented. The Chief Rabbi has not sanctioned mixed choirs. He has allowed congregational singing, but not choirs of which ladies are members.

## ADVANCED JUDAISM.

### MEETING OF THE MELBOURNE HEBREW CONGREGATION. MIXED CHOIR AND INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC.

(From the "Argus.")

THE Melbourne Hebrew Congregation met last evening at Synagogue Chambers, Bourke-street, in response to a circular issued by direction of the president, Mr. Edward Hart, to consider the expediency of having organ music as an accompaniment to the synagogue choir on the first day of the ensuing Passover. There were about one hundred members present, and the chair was taken by Mr. Edward Hart, who explained the object of the meeting, and placed before it the views of the executive. He also read several articles, which had appeared in the Jewish Press in London during the past few months on the question of introducing organ music into the synagogue, and generally altering the ritual so as to bring it into harmony with the advanced opinions of many of the members of the Hebrew congregation.

APRIL 19, 1895

THE services at the Bourke-street Synagogue during the Passover holidays were very largely attended, many, including a large number of Christians, being attracted by the mixed choir, which, under the direction of Mr. Turner, took for the first time part in the service. The singing on the whole was considered very good, though it was only from *Howdow al eretz* that the choir took part. Very likely the earlier portions have as yet not been rehearsed. An English anthem was sung by a quartet of two ladies and two gentlemen, the Rev. Dr. Abrahams previously announcing that instead of the English prayer usually said, a quartet of the choir would sing an anthem. The rev. gentleman's sermon on the first day of the festival was on the subject, "Our improved synagogue choir; what it can and what it cannot accomplish." In the course of his discourse Dr. Abrahams said that though Ruskin was guilty of a great exaggeration when he wrote "The earnestness, sincerity, devotion and spirituality of a congregation will always be found in inverse ratio to the amount of music in any house of worship," there was an element of truth in his words which should not be overlooked. The improved choir would not make its hearers religious when religion was an unknown factor in their constitution, nor would it sow the seeds of faith in an irresponsive heart. At the same time, while it could not create, it might foster devotion and preserve its faintest trace, and aid in developing the vague, uncertain sentiment into the strong emotion directing life's path. Any influence that would enhance the solemnity and efficiency of public worship deserved a hearty and grateful welcome, and equally acceptable were all endeavours to banish gloom from the house of prayer, to lighten its atmosphere with cheerfulness and gladness, and to teach, in the language of Scripture, "to serve the Lord with joy, and to come before Him with exulting."

AFTER all the trouble and agitation, we are glad to say, there is to be no organ in the Bourke-street synagogue. We stated in our last issue that the Rev. Dr. Abrahams had addressed a letter to the general body of members, which was to be read and considered at a special general meeting to be held the following Sunday. Thus the matter stood when our last issue went to press. Since then important developments have taken place. No general meeting, but a committee meeting, was held, at which the Rev. Dr. Abrahams was present, and which proved very stormy. The rev. gentleman explained that he could not consent to the use of the organ on Sabbaths and festivals. If the congregation desired it they would have to rescind the first law of the congregation, which provides that the service shall be conducted according to *Minhag* Poland; and they would also have to sever their connection with the Chief Rabbi, who was strictly opposed to the organ. When the congregation had done this, it would then be for him to consider whether he would remain their minister. At present he was under the jurisdiction of Dr. Adler, both as their minister and as a member of the *Beth Din*, and he could not consistently act in defiance of the Chief Rabbi. Asked whether he would consent to the organ being used on the first day of Passover, Dr. Abrahams stated firmly that he could not under any circumstance whatever consent to the use of the organ on Sabbaths and festivals. Thereupon Mr. George Gollin, who seemed to think that the salvation of his soul depended on the use of the organ, got into a violent passion. He made a long and inflammatory speech, declaring that the young men—poor young men!—were driven away from the synagogue, and that he, for one, would not belong to any congregation. He forthwith resigned his seat on the committee. But crushing as the blow was, the situation had to be faced, and the Board decided that their minister's ruling was to be upheld, and so the organ was not used during the holy days, and is not likely to be used in the nearest future. Speculation has been rife as to what is to become of the congregation if permanently deprived of Mr. Gollin's wise counsel and guidance, but the oldest members seem inclined to think that as the congregation has existed for so many years without it there is some hope that it will survive the blow. Since then Mr. Alexander Marks has also resigned from the committee, but even that loss is not considered fatal to the congregation. To show how far the demand for reforms has gone, we may mention that it has been reported on good authority that Sir Benjamin Benjamin favoured the introduction of family pews. It is, however, sincerely to be hoped that the members of the congregation will now harmoniously work together to further the best interests of the congregation.

THE many friends of Mr. Marks Kozminsky, both in Melbourne and at Nhill (his late place of residence) were shocked to hear early last week that he had died on Monday evening, 6th May. The deceased had been seen about the township during the day, and nothing unusual was noticed about him; but in the morning he had eaten some mushrooms, which, as the *post mortem* afterwards showed, acted as a poison on his system and brought on paralysis of the heart, which was the cause of his death. Mr. Kozminsky was a colonist of some thirty years' standing, and a resident of Nhill for the last fourteen years. He was one of the pioneers of the place, where until lately he carried on a large business. He was of a very kindly disposition, and soon gained for himself the respect and good-will of all with whom he was brought into contact. The local paper, the *Nhill Mail*, says of him:— "Mr. Kozminsky was Nhill's pioneer, that is, commercially. He took an active part in building up the town from its beginning. He identified himself with every movement for the good of the town and district, and was foremost amongst the three or four entitled to claim the honour of founding most of our local institutions. The privileges and conveniences which we now enjoy were not obtained without a great deal of hard work, and nobody did more of this than Mr. Kozminsky. He spared no expense in his endeavours to build up the town, and nothing was looked upon by him as a personal inconvenience. He was one of the founders of the Hospital, Mechanics' Institute, Agricultural and Pastoral Society, Masonic Lodge, fire brigade and, in fact, nearly everything else we have in our midst. In the early days he interested himself deeply in providing the town with a supply of water, and it was through his efforts to a large extent that local land Boards, courts and public buildings were obtained here. Still, though generous-hearted to a fault, and enterprising to a high degree, it must be said that Mr. Kozminsky was a gentleman of somewhat unassuming habits. This opinion of him is borne out by the fact that he refused to allow himself to be made a Justice of the Peace, and several times declined requests made to him to offer himself for municipal honours. He was one of the best members of the Masonic Lodge, a capital worker and a regular attendant. The deceased was a man of rare social qualities, was straightforward in all business transactions, a gentleman who took an interest in sport as well as everything else, and, in short, a citizen whom Nhill could by no means afford to lose." The deceased leaves a widow and one child, and in accordance with the wishes of Mrs. Kozminsky and her relatives the body was taken to Melbourne and buried in the Melbourne Cemetery, the Rev. Mr. Saunders having previously proceeded to Nhill to perform the last sad rites. On leaving the town a large number of the townspeople followed the hearse to the railway station, the local band playing the "Dead March in Saul," and the fire brigade being also present. The deceased was a member of the East Melbourne Synagogue, but in the unavoidable absence of the Rev. J. Lenzer the Rev. Dr. Abrahams officiated at the grave. ה'ב'שנ"ח

MELBOURNE, FRIDAY, 26th JULY, 5655—1895.

### NOTES AND NEWS.

A MEETING of Jewish ladies, convened and presided over by the Rev. E. Blaubaum, was held in the Alfred Hall, St. Kilda, on Thursday afternoon, 18th July, for the purpose of devising means for the erection of a schoolroom in connection with the St. Kilda Hebrew Congregation. The chairman pointed out that a schoolroom in close proximity to the synagogue had become an absolute necessity, and would be of the greatest advantage to the congregation. It could be used not only for school purposes, but also as a committee room, a room for holding now and then meetings of the younger members of the congregation, and also for carrying on the sewing meetings, which had been so successful in former years. A room such as he desired to see erected would cost about £100, and the question was how to raise the money? Mr. Fredman and his pupils had already given one performance, and they were going to give another in the St. Kilda Town Hall on the 15th August. By combined efforts this performance could be made a thorough financial success; and if the proceeds, together with those of the previous concert, were not sufficient, a cake fair could be held, or something of the kind. Mr. Fredman, who was present, explained that he had been promised a good deal of support. The town hall had been granted for the occasion free of cost, and the Mayor and councillors of the city had granted their patronage. All that was necessary was that as many of the tickets as possible should be disposed of beforehand, and the success of the affair would be assured. The ladies present were in favour of concentrating their efforts upon the performance, and to consider later on what steps it was desirable to take to further augment the fund. A large number of tickets were taken by the ladies present for the purpose of disposing of them, and the meeting closed.

WE are sorry to learn that the trustees of the Albert-street Synagogue are in a very serious predicament. It was believed that the mortgage for £4500 effected in 1892 had yet two years to run, at the end of which time there would have been no difficulty to make fresh arrangements. It now appears that the term for which the money was lent expired on the 1st inst., and the mortgagees have given notice that the money will have to be paid on the 1st of August next without fail. This finds the trustees in a dilemma. They have made an offer on behalf of the congregation to pay off £500 at once, and £500 in December next, by which time a substantial sum may be confidently expected from the bazaar to be held early in November. This offer, however, has been declined, as the whole of the money is wanted.



*MELBOURNE, FRIDAY, 23rd AUGUST, 5655—1895.*

EVERY sincere Jew must deeply sympathise with the East Melbourne Hebrew Congregation. It is essentially a poor congregation. The new arrival from Russia and Poland naturally flocks to it, and finds there the welcome opportunity to worship in the manner he has been used to. But while every provision has to be made, and is made, for this class of congregants, they cannot be expected to contribute much, if anything at all, to the support of the congregation. Neither are the older members now in a position to support the synagogue as liberally as they have done hitherto, since many of them have felt the pinch of bad times most keenly. Still, to their credit be it said, they are an energetic body, doing all they can to save the institution from utter ruin. At the present moment many hands and minds are active to make the necessary preparations for holding a bazaar, the proceeds of which are to wipe out the heavy overdraft with which the congregation is burdened. While this is going on, and no effort is spared to make the undertaking the success it so richly deserves, another misfortune has befallen the hapless congregation. The mortgage on the synagogue has been unexpectedly found to have expired, and, in the present low state of the real estate market, there is no possibility of effecting a mortgage for the same amount. How this will end no one can foretell, but, unless help is forthcoming from some kindly disposed members of the community who are in a position to extend a helping hand, it is to be feared that the synagogue will be sold and the trustees called upon to make good the deficiency between the mortgage and the price realised from the sale of the property. It is sincerely to be hoped that such a calamity may be averted, and that some people may be found to assist the congregation in its hour of severe trial. It should be added that the congregation, no matter how low its funds were, has never failed to pay the interest on the money it owed, and that it has at all times manfully borne its share of the communal burdens. With the return of better times there is every reason to believe that the congregation will repay every penny that may be advanced to it at the present critical juncture.

WE would direct attention to an article under the heading, "Orthodoxy *versus* Reform," which we reprint in another column from an American contemporary. The article repays careful perusal, as it shows us what has been *de facto* the result of reform in America. The United States have been, and are still, the very hot-bed of reform. There being no recognised ecclesiastical head, every rabbi is at liberty to deal with Judaism as he pleases, or as his congregation will permit him. He may preach orthodox principles to-day, and reform ideas to-morrow; it does not matter as long as he can get followers. "Trimming," as it is called in political parlance, is not considered a weakness of a man's character. But what has been the result of all that? Certainly no improvement in religious matters. True, American Jews can point to a large number of Jewish Temples, and continually new ones springing up; but how are they attended on the Sabbath? By very few indeed, the majority being women. The men go after their business on the Sabbath. Further still, mixed marriages, as a correspondent recently told us, are very common, and there are even rabbis who think nothing of solemnising such marriages. Proselytes may be admitted with or without the prescribed rites, and rabbis who exchange pulpits with Unitarian ministers are applauded. "There is scarcely a skeleton left," says the writer of the article to which we refer, "of the original Judaism of our fathers." Some will say, that in America reform has gone too far, and that in Anstralia only a moderate measure of reform is asked for. But it is just in this that the danger lies. Once you open the flood-gates of reform you will never be able to stop the current. If one congregation has a right so to alter the service as to make it suit the taste of its members, then another has the same right, no matter how widely the tastes of the two congregations may differ. What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. This is not mere theory; it is the actual experience of our American co-religionists. The more thoughtful of them stand aghast at the results which reform has produced amongst them. No wonder that at the present time there is a strong wave in favour of orthodoxy passing over a considerable portion of our brethren in the United States, and hence we are not surprised that the before-mentioned writer sums up thus:—"Unless the radical reformers retrace their steps to a considerable extent, they must eventually lead on their followers outside of the pale of Judaism. Orthodoxy alone was, and is, the main sustenance of Israel's glorious faith, and will continue so to the end of time."

AFTER many months of patient and arduous labour on the part of a very numerous body of ladies and gentlemen, the bazaar in aid of the East Melbourne Synagogue will be opened in the Exhibition Building on Saturday evening next, and to judge from the preparations made the spectacle will be one that has never been equalled in an undertaking by Jews in this colony. Nothing that could in the least make the Oriental Carnival, for that is the name under which the bazaar is brought before the public, attractive has been overlooked, so that, as a show alone, visitors will get the full worth of the shilling which they pay for admission. They will also have an opportunity of inspecting a street in Jerusalem, which has been specially painted for the interior of the building by the well-known scenic artist, Mr. Grist. But in addition to all this a large quantity of valuable and choice goods has been brought together from almost all parts of the world, which will be offered at reasonable prices, or disposed of by art union. Artists of every description, from the modern representative of Terpsichore to the Indian juggler, from a capable orchestra, with solo singers of high ability, to a lady lion tamer, have been engaged, besides numerous side shows full of interest and novelty. The opening ceremony will be performed by Sir Benjamin Benjamin, K.B., after which a musical entertainment under the direction of Mr. Ure will be given. There will, no doubt, be a large and brilliant attendance, and we trust and hope that every well-wisher of Judaism in this colony will do his utmost to make the undertaking as successful as the efforts of the ladies and gentlemen engaged in it deserve, and as the financial position of the congregation urgently needs. We may add that an official *Oriental Carnival Courier* has been issued and largely circulated. It is full of humour, and reflects great credit upon the hon. sec., Mr. A. Davis.

### THE ORIENTAL CARNIVAL.

THE Oriental Carnival was to have come to an end on Saturday evening, 17th November, but with the enthusiasm that success generally begets, the lady stall-holders and their assistants resolved to keep it open for another week, so the fun was continued and a thriving business done until last Monday evening, when the balance of the stalls was disposed of by auction. During the additional week thousands of visitors flocked to the Exhibition Building, some not having been there before, others glad to renew the acquaintance with the fair assistants in their gorgeous Oriental costumes. Besides there was plenty to see, one of the chief attractions being the fireworks in the Exhibition grounds, a truly magnificent display of the pyrotechnic art. The labour of all those who took part in the bazaar must have been enormous, but it was cheerfully given by the ladies and gentlemen, who were determined that the affair should be a success, and to whom the word "failure" was altogether unknown. The certainty that it would be a success spurred them on to fresh efforts from day to day, and hardly was the first week over when all doubts, if any existed, were dispelled. After paying current expenses the committee had sufficient money in hand not only to pay off the overdraft of the East Melbourne Congregation, but also all accrued liabilities of the congregation, excepting, of course, the mortgage on the synagogue. Mr. B. Sniders, the president, lost no time in liquidating all that the congregation owed to the bank, thinking, no doubt—as a business man naturally would—a day's interest saved means so much saved for the benefit of the congregation.

MELBOURNE, FRIDAY, 13th DECEMBER, 5656—1895.

FOLLOWING the example of the sister synagogue the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation has decided that towards the end of 1896 it will hold a bazaar in aid of its funds. It is not so very long since Sir Benjamin Benjamin twitted the East Melbourne Congregation for "sending the hat round;" he has now come to the conclusion, and very properly so, that when necessity arises, pride must stand aside. Might Sir Benjamin not go a step further and abandon his former antipathy to the amalgamation of the two congregations? One would think that the present was a most opportune time for bringing them under one management. The East Melbourne Congregation has now considerably reduced its liabilities; what remains is no more than it is able to bear, and that with ease. Further still, according to the last annual balance-sheet, it has been able, by judicious management, to bring its expenditure within its income. The West Melbourne Congregation, however, is in a very different position. It has a heavy liability, and, according to the president's statement last Sunday week, it is to be feared that the liability will increase, and this in spite of all possible retrenchment, or, in other words, the synagogue does not at present pay its way, and has not done so for a number of years. Now, it is the general opinion that, except on one or two days in the year, two synagogues are not required in Melbourne, and, likewise, that the one in Bourke-street has outlived its usefulness, since there is hardly any Jewish population in the neighbourhood. Why continue the costly management of a place of worship that is not required? Join the two congregations; have one synagogue for the greater part of the year, and the cost of management will be considerably reduced.

## **BOOK REVIEWS**

### **RABBI JACOB DANGLOW: 'THE UNCROWNED MONARCH OF AUSTRALIA'S JEWS'**

*(Address delivered at the launch in Melbourne on 10 August 1995  
by the Rt Hon Sir Zelman Cowen AK GCMG GCVO QC DCL)*

Late in May 1982, in the closing weeks of my term as Governor-General, I attended a Sabbath Service at St Kilda Synagogue. It was an official visit and I was invited to occupy the pulpit. Though I did not realise it, it was also almost exactly twenty years since the death of the towering figure in the life of that congregation, Rabbi Jacob Danglow who died late in May 1962. I looked out from the pulpit on that occasion with eyes which saw a large congregation which included Rabbi Danglow's son, Frank, who died later; I saw it also with the inner eye of one who for years, dating back to the days when that synagogue was very new, had been a regular attendee at its services. In fact I had received book prizes for regular Friday night attendance. As I entered the pulpit, I remembered the words of introduction which Rabbi Danglow had habitually used as he entered it "My dear congregants." I looked to the *bima* and remembered how on Friday nights Rabbi Danglow would leave it, and face the door to offer words of consolation to mourners entering the synagogue to recite the *Kaddish*. I looked to the ministerial chair alongside the Ark which Rabbi Danglow occupied during Sabbath and other services, and I remembered his stern eye fixed upon a young boy — me when I was not paying sufficient attention to the service. At least I thought that it was fixed on me. I looked up at the choir above the ark, where for years I had been a mediocre but regular member. That time is fixed in what is now a historic congregational photograph of the choir at the turn of the nineteen twenties-thirties in which, in centre place, the dapper Joel Fredman (Cocky Fredman) sat with his choir boys draped around him.

In due time on that day, I spoke from the pulpit and I remembered. All of these remembrances led me back to one central figure, Rabbi Jacob this book, he has brought to it a strong scholarship, and a sense of balance. If, as it does, the book honours its subject, it is no hagiographic exercise, but a balanced scholarly judgment by a man of faith, balance and great intellectual integrity.

Perhaps to lower the temperature a little, let me thank John Levi for recording a story which I told him as an illustration of a small boy's view of the Rabbi, the Reverend Danglow as he was then. My friend, the late Monte Super, a son of the well know Rabbi I.J. Super, who was a pillar of the community, was killed in a motor accident in 1939, but long years before that, the recorded event took place. John Levi writes:

In private conversation ... [Z.C.] ... remembered standing outside the synagogue at the age of eight and being told the facts of life by a slightly older boy. The young Zelman scornfully rejected the information. "That's ridiculous" he told the young Monte Super, "Can you imagine Rabbi Danglow doing that to Mrs Danglow?" Such was the authority of Danglow that the boy thought first of the Rabbi and not of his own parents.

In my mind's eye, I can see that event and hear that conversation, and throughout the thirties, and certainly during the first half of the decade, my image of Jacob Danglow was undiminished. As I grew older, I took pride in the fact that a man of such presence,



dignity and authority should lead his own community, and should be a leading representative of his people in the wider Melbourne and Australian community.

John Levi tells another story of particular significance to me, which involved my family and Jacob Danglow. I grew up at a time when things British were of great importance to many and certainly to me. I very much wanted to go to a school which embodied those values and qualities, and Geelong Grammar appeared distinctively to have them. So, in my last year at St Kilda Park Central School, I began a correspondence with the young and vigorous Headmaster of that School, who had come from England, about scholarship entry to the School. I was then eleven; J.R. Darling, the Headmaster, answered my letters "Dear Sir". I sat the scholarship examination, which included an interview with the headmaster, and I won a scholarship, on the basis, I am sure, that a boy who wanted it so much must have it. Things progressed; all the paraphernalia was bought and assembled when, suddenly it appears, the school, from which we concealed nothing, discovered that I was Jewish. There was a rule about mandatory chapel attendance. My parents were adamant, no chapel, though my views were never sought. Jacob Danglow was invited to talk with Mr Darling. It was a friendly talk, but the basic position was maintained. So the uniforms and all went back to the source from which they came, I went to Scotch, though for quite some time I was bereaved. John Levi relates this story with the correspondence, including a feisty letter from my father to the Headmaster.

It is somewhat off track, but let me add a little more to the story. Years later, in 1940, I was elected Rhodes Scholar, and one of the first congratulatory letters to arrive was from J.R. Darling. He recalled the earlier events, said he had watched my progress in the intervening years, and wrote "we were right and you were right." Years later I established my Oxford base in the college which J.R. Darling and I shared in different generations—Oriel. Then when I returned to Melbourne in 1951, and in the years which followed, Jim Darling and I met from time to time. He was Chairman of the ABC when I gave the ABC Boyer Lectures in 1969. When I went back to Oriel as Provost after the Governor-Generalship in 1982, as I sat in the Provost's Stall in the College Chapel listening to the beautiful and serene Evensong Service, I sometimes thought of that Chapel attendance argument in the distant past. In view of his eminence and his connection with Oriel, we resolved to invite Sir James Darling to become an Honorary Fellow of the College, the highest honour we could bestow. That day I telephoned Melbourne to speak to him, and to tell him of what the College had done. There was a silence on the phone; then Darling, in his advanced eighties, said "This is the greatest day of my life". It was the happy end of a special chapter which began with far off events in which Rabbi Danglow was involved.

With the two greatest Australian Jews of the time, Danglow was closely involved: Sir Isaac Isaacs and Sir John Monash. Isaacs was a founding father of the Constitution, a brilliant lawyer and Justice and Chief Justice of the High Court, and then the first Australian Governor-General. Monash was a great soldier and engineer; he built a brilliant military reputation in the first World War, and then and thereafter stood high in the esteem of his fellow countrymen. It is an extraordinary thing that these two near contemporaries, as Jews in the small Victorian and Australian Jewish communities of their day, should have achieved such eminence and fame. Danglow knew both men well: he had served Monash as a Chaplain in the first world war, and as a great national and patriotic figure, Monash's friendship must have meant much to him. He, Monash, was for a time on the St Kilda Board of Management. There were one or two disappointments in the relationship which John Levi records, but overall it was one in which Danglow took pride and pleasure. He officiated at the funeral of the great Australian soldier, and at that solemn event a nation paid extraordinary tribute to the Australian son of immigrant Jews.

With Isaacs, Danglow's relationship was also special. John Levi had access to a body of correspondence, which I have not seen, between Danglow and Isaacs, though I have long known the general scope of their relationship. Danglow was invited to Yarralumla in 1933 when Isaacs was Governor-General; there, it appears, Isaacs poured out an enormous volume of knowledge and learning on Biblical and religious scholarship, and I wonder whether Danglow, who certainly valued the friendship, did not at times feel somewhat exhausted by the relentless flow of scholarship and commentary. In the recent new edition of my book on Isaacs, I refer to an account of Isaacs' meetings with Sir Philip Game, one of the State Governors with whom Isaacs, as Governor-General, had a sympathetic relationship. Bethia Foott in her book *Dismissal of a Premier* quotes from correspondence between Lady Game and her mother. "He [Isaacs] never speaks of Australian politics. When Philip would like to discuss [Australian political issues] with him he reverts to the Palaeolithic age" or "to some ancient cemetery in the Vale of Jehosophat". Of course, Jacob Danglow is very likely to have been involved in much more of this than Sir Philip Game. I talked to Rabbi Danglow about Isaacs, and particularly about his religious beliefs and attitudes. The Rabbi offered the view that while Isaacs had a deep interest in religious doctrines, history and writings, he was not a religious Jew in terms of the conventional sense of synagogue going and observances. Isaacs certainly saw Jewishness exclusively in religious terms and was deeply hostile to any notion of Jewish ethnicity. In 1906, when he was Attorney-General of the Commonwealth, he denounced a proposal for the establishment of a Jewish Board of Deputies to support and act on behalf of Jewish interests. His principal objection was that such a Board would emphasise the separateness of the Jewish community, and would set up an additional barrier between it and the outside world. He put his characteristic stamp upon this debate by referring to the "unwarranted arrogance" of those who advocated a representative Board.

Isaacs' later (post Governor-General) years were clouded, in his relationships with the Jewish community, by his views on "political Zionism" and on the issues and events in Palestine which led to much bitterness and ultimately to the establishment of the State of Israel. Danglow's positions were perhaps less dogmatically drawn, though on these issues, in the bad years of conflict, he came close to Isaacs' position, and there is no doubt that the two men were in close sympathy and contact. Danglow had visited Palestine first just before the first World War, and he lived to see the State of Israel substantially developed before his death in May 1962. Isaacs never had to come to grips with the reality of the State; he died, before its establishment, in February 1948.

Rabbi Danglow officiated at Isaacs' funeral, at Isaacs' wish, as he had done more than sixteen years earlier at the funeral of Monash. And John Levi records one further and happy link. Tim Cohen, the great grandson of Isaacs, married Barbara, the great granddaughter of Jacob and May Danglow, in the St Kilda Synagogue in 1980. Both ancestors, John Levi says, would have been delighted.

The book steers its way through many community issues in which Danglow was involved: involving the *Beth Din*, involving *Kashrut* and the defence of Jewish ritual slaughter of animals, involving immigration, the playing of sport on the Sabbath, involving the issue of the Jewish day school which Danglow at first opposed (as did I), involving relations with a variety of rabbinical colleagues in a changing Jewish community in Melbourne and Australia. I was particularly interested in the relationship with Israel Brodie, who subsequently became Chief Rabbi of the Commonwealth. It happened, and it is another story, that I was *barmitzvah* in the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, and I was addressed and charged by Rabbi Brodie. For years after, I was one of "Brodie's Boys" as a member of the Junior Melbourne Hebrew Society, and that

was an important and valued period of my life. But that has a peripheral connection to this story, though I don't know why there was not a comparable body based in St Kilda. To be sure there was the Third St Kilda Scout Group, "Danglow's Own", but that was different.

There is an interesting account of Jacob Danglow's rabbinic title. He came to St Kilda from Jews College, London, without it, and while in early years there was discussion with his Board about time to qualify, he remained Reverend Danglow for many years. It was not to be resolved by the ordinary processes of obtaining *S'micha*, but by the grant of the title Rabbi *honoris causa* by Chief Rabbi Hertz to mark Danglow's thirty years of service. Danglow told the Chief Rabbi that the distinction had evoked "expressions of satisfaction from members of my congregation and from many outside it, including a large number who are not of our faith." Maybe, there was a suggestion that it was overdue.

In the years which followed our first return from Oxford in 1951, I saw Rabbi Danglow on a variety of occasions and he talked with me about a range of matters. Because of the history I have recounted, I found it hard to conceive a complete unbending, but I enjoyed the friendly relationship. With him, as with a few others who died before it came about (including my father and father-in-law) I wonder; how would he, who knew Isaacs as he did, have reacted to my becoming Governor-General? I can only say that I like to think that his great surprise would have been combined with some pleasure.

Jacob Danglow was a good family man. He married May Baruch whose family links connected her closely with "the Family" — the Michaelis Hallenstein family who were, in an Australian or perhaps better a Victorian setting, the presiding nobles of Victorian Jewry of their time, and I would very much like to know something about the style of their living into which Danglow, married to "one of us", would have fitted very comfortably. His marriage with May Baruch lasted for 38 years; she predeceased him. I remember her, seated in the front of the balcony at Sabbath and other occasions. Beyond a handshake as a Sabbath greeting when she stood alongside her husband at the end of service, I do not know that I ever spoke to her. John Levi does not tell us much about her, and I turned to Jean Goulston, the second of the three Danglow children, and the only one still living. She speaks of her mother as having a central and very positive place in the life of the family, which was happy.

I knew their son Frank who was a little older than I, and who was in the synagogue when I paid my official visit as Governor-General in 1982. He became Managing Director of Michaelis Hallenstein, the family's business, and was President of the Synagogue Board of Management in 1968-9. He married Shirley Kay in 1947, and John Levi acknowledges Frank's readiness to help with materials which helped him as a biographer. Both Jean Danglow (Goulston) and Shirley are here tonight, and I am pleased.

Jacob Danglow married a second time in August 1949. Mrs Diana Rosen, "Mardi" — a lady of cheerful personality whom I knew and met, and spoke with on various occasions.

In estimating Danglow's style, character and achievement, John Levi draws on a splendid statement by his own predecessor in the Progressive Jewish movement, Rabbi Dr Herman Sanger, then Chief Rabbi of Temple Beth Israel. Sanger, whom I knew well, offered this picture of Rabbi Danglow

[He was] something of a father image to Australian Jewry. The power of his personality, his innate good sense, his wisdom — the result of long experience, and his impressive dignity made him the ideal representative of the Jewish community everywhere. To quite a few of his congregation, loyalty to Rabbi Danglow rather than the knowledge or love of Judaism gave

strength to their attachment to the synagogue. He was not a zealot but a loyalist. He was a conservative by inclination and preference. He could disagree without being disagreeable ... In Melbourne he represented the last of those who had patterned themselves rather on the dignitaries of the Church of England than on the judge and scholar of Eastern Europe, now regarded as the prototype of an Orthodox Rabbi. Danglow had helped to guide and shape the childhood and youth of Australian Jewry which was now moving towards its majority.

That is a splendid statement, and it reminds us, appropriately, of another special man who served and represented our community with great distinction.

At the end, and I fear that I have been long, I say what must be obvious that I am deeply pleased to have been accorded the privilege of introducing this fine book. I did not know Jacob Danglow well, and I wish I had seized the opportunity to know him better. For all that, he was and remains a strong influence in my life. He remains clear and strong in my memory, he had a style which I admire; he had what the Romans called *gravitas*. The photograph on the front cover of the book represents him to me very much as I see him in my mind's eye. That picture carries the statement of his successor Rabbi Simon Herman who called him "*The uncrowned monarch of Australian Jews*". I do not think that that describes it exactly as I would do, but it is sure that he was a preeminent leader and figure in the history of Australian Jewry. Of his style and interests, I would say that it would have been in accord with his wish and outlook that on the pall at his funeral there lay his officer's sword, his cap and his medals. He was a proud, patriotic British Australian. He was keenly attuned to the spirit of his times in religious terms; he shaped and was shaped in a sense by the character of his congregation. In a sense also he was fortunate in the time of his death as in his life. By that I mean that since he died there have been significant changes in the character and style of the times which I think he would have found uncongenial. Authority is a notion that is not much respected in our day; trust and civility are not always evident virtues in our time. No doubt his very considerable flexibility would have led him to an accommodation, and in any event we don't have to speculate. He was a man in his time and, I think, satisfied with what life had given him.

At the end, let me say to the publisher, Melbourne University Press, that it has produced this book with elegance and customary high professionalism. And I offer congratulations to John Levi, the author, whose book confirms and enhances an already distinguished reputation as a historian, biographer and writer.

Sir Zelman Cowen



## RABBI JACOB DANGLOW: 'THE UNCROWNED MONARCH OF AUSTRALIA'S JEWS'

John S. Levi (Melbourne University Press, 1995. xi + 352pp., plates, notes, bibliog; \$49.95)

For over fifty years British-born Rabbi Jacob Danglow (1880-1962) was spiritual leader of the patrician and influential St. Kilda Hebrew Congregation. He was a man of considerable presence, revered by his flock and respected by gentiles, an Anglo-Jewish gentleman of the old school, a dignified ambassador of his people. He was also the focus of controversy, both in his lifetime and since, for his perceived insensitivity to the needs of European Jewish newcomers, particularly refugees from Nazism, and for his opposition to political Zionism: hence the pejorative appellation "Anglo-Danglow".

Rabbi John Levi's eagerly awaited biography of Rabbi Danglow displays the meticulous research and intelligent craftsmanship of the trained historian. Here, too, is the spare, elegant prose that characterises the author's engaging style. While the author is a Liberal rabbi and the subject was an Orthodox one, perhaps they have more in common than is suggested by those labels. Danglow regarded himself as "Conservative" rather than "Orthodox", on the lines of the celebrated Rev. Morris Joseph of London's Berkeley Street Synagogue, who wrote the influential text *Judaism as Creed and Life* (London, 1903). Levi brings to his task an insider's knowledge of the pastoral work of a rabbi as well as, owing to the Levi family's historic connection with St. Kilda, of Danglow's synagogue and suburb. But Levi's attitude to Danglow is nowhere clear: the reader can never tell whether he admires him or not.

Danglow's pre-eminence as a Jewish leader was facilitated by communal assumptions that *rabbonim* were Jewry's natural spokesmen. By the time that outlook was challenged and ultimately toppled by newcomers with pluralistic notions of Jewish identity, Danglow's reputation as Jewry's answer to Archbishop Mannix was so entrenched that to his congregants at least he seemed (in Levi's words) "immovable and immortal". Extracts from his diary during the 1950s, selected by Levi, give a fascinating glimpse of the questions that bother congregants and, as Levi observes, "reflect a Jewish community that was far more diverse than the small inter-related middle-class pre-war Australian Jewish world."

Danglow was, essentially, a supporter of cultural Zionism and of philanthropic efforts for the *yishuv*. He welcomed the Balfour Declaration, rejoiced in Britain's assumption of the Palestine Mandate and, as an imperially-minded British patriot, took his cue from British policy in the Middle East. As Levi sensibly notes: "logic and gratitude were on the side of those who believed that it was foolish to confront this benevolent empire with its enduring monarchy for the sake of a fragile dream." Once the Jewish State was a *fait accompli* Danglow, like so many Jews of his *milieu*, quickly accommodated himself to it, as indeed to the establishment of Jewish day schools. He had been impressed by what he saw of the *yishuv* in 1913, and during 1956 the highlight of his overseas trip was his visit not to his native Britain but to Israel, where he met Ben-Gurion.

When Levi's book was on my desk awaiting review, a Swiss-born visitor exclaimed: "Rabbi Danglow! He was a horrible man! I came to this country with my Austrian refugee parents, and although I was a child, I could tell instinctively that he despised us. We went to his *shule* and he made us feel like muck!" Those words echo similar robust indictments made by countless Melbourne Jews of Eastern and Central European origin. Are they justified? Levi does not satisfactorily discuss this issue. He does provide



tantalising evidence that suggests that Danglow was more sympathetic to foreign newcomers than many hold now or believed at the time. True, his English classes for Yiddish-speaking Jews in Carlton reflected the established community's preoccupation with acculturation. But Danglow travelled to Canberra in 1933 to intercede on behalf of a German Jewish refugee who faced deportation. In 1938 he and his wife sponsored two refugee families from the *Reich*. In 1942 he suggested in vain that his congregation should institute associate membership for refugees unable to afford the full fee. In 1944 he agreed with Dr. Isaac Steinberg's demand that "a small deputation" of communal leaders should vigorously protest the Federal Government's rejection of the Kimberley Scheme (the demand was stymied by Jewish Advisory Board president Alec Masel). Curiously, Levi does not mention that Danglow was one of the Melbourne notables who signed a public declaration of support for the Kimberley Scheme in 1939. Certainly, the failure adequately to explore the controversial issue of Danglow and the refugees leaves much unanswered. Oral testimony might have proved illuminating.

Generally, Levi appears to exaggerate the extent of anti-Semitism in Australia. It is nonsensical to attribute Federation era lampooning of Jews and labour movement anti-Semitism to the example of virulent continental Jew-baiting in the statement (p. 4) "the sinister influence of European political anti-Semitism and Australian nationalism walked hand in hand." The swiftly apologetic James Grice, who made clumsy yet well-intentioned jocular remarks regarding Jews in Melbourne in 1904 (p.4), does not deserve to be numbered among the anti-Semites. Contrary to what Levi implies, Victorian Governor Sir Reginald Talbot, who was present at the incident, was entirely blameless. (In the endnotes, the source is inaccurate.) Winston Churchill's remark in 1920 (p. 157) that there existed "a sinister confederacy of international Jews for the overthrow of civilization" is quoted out of context. Churchill, a lifelong philo-Semite and pro-Zionist, was arguing that there was a contest for the loyalties of Eastern European Jewry between Communism and Zionism, and that it was altogether in the interests of both gentiles and Jewish moderates to support Zionism. There was nothing whatever in Churchill's essay which Vladimir Jabotinsky could not have written. The quotation was not only misunderstood by the *Argus*; it has been used by the League of Rights and similar bodies, and it is surprising that Levi used it without checking the original.

We are told (pp. 214-5) that "the Nazi propaganda machine had done its work well", for the Department of the Interior from 1939 included the "Jewish race" clause on application forms for entry permits. Levi has not taken into account the historical debate on this issue, with some taking the view that far from being anti-Semitic the question was intended to benefit Jews. Maurice Ashkanasy defended the clause, saying that it singled out Jewish refugees so that the community could help them, and it is surely significant that the clause elicited no complaints from Jewish leaders or the Jewish community in an official capacity. The article in the *Argus* during 1937 by Sir David Rivett (p. 206) which asserted that "there are two sides to the Jewish problem" in Germany might have been balanced by the observation that in 1939 Rivett signed the Melbourne manifesto supporting Jewish refugee settlement in the Kimberley region.

Levi states (p. 238) that during the 1940s "the local anti-Semites were ubiquitous". What of philo-Semites? Danglow wrote to one newcomer who adopted a confrontationist approach towards anti-Semites and expected him to do the same: "I have always found non-Jews quite friendly towards our People." Who can honestly claim, regarding Australian society, that Danglow was not correct? Elsewhere, I have deplored what I have termed Danglow's "Anglo-Jewish blunted attitudes". Accordingly I learned with interest and satisfaction from this absorbing biography of instances when he responded

forthrightly to manifestations of anti-Semitism even if he did not respond as frequently or as forcefully as many newcomers wished. It was his conviction that "Jewish self assertiveness is irritating to non-Jews" and therefore counterproductive which caused the comparative passivity which they found infuriating.

Danglow's predecessor at St. Kilda, Rev. Elias Blaubaum, the minister, editor, trained teacher and scholar who led the congregation for the not insignificant period of thirty-one years, has been dismissed without explanation (p. 8) as "completely uninspiring". This simply will not do: understanding Blaubaum's career aids understanding of his successor's. Levi should have told us how, why and who Blaubaum failed to inspire, and what evidence supports that highly tendentious conclusion. Blaubaum's "restless energy" was described by one of his many contemporary admirers as "magnetic and contagious" and owing to his intrepid zeal and mighty pen his influence was widespread. It is regrettable that my article on Blaubaum, which shows something of his personality and accomplishments, and which was published in a previous issue of this *Journal*, has been overlooked by Danglow's biographer.

A surer editorial hand would have prevented some unfortunate lapses. Moses Moses (not "Moss", p. 28) would have been correctly named as editor of the *Jewish Herald*. That staunch friend of Jewry, Bishop Charles Venn Pilcher, would not have been transformed into "Vernon" (p. 231). The well-known British Reform/Liberal leader, Rabbi Vivian Simmons, would have been spared the indignity of emasculation as "Vivienne Simmons" (p. 97 *et seq.*). St. Kilda's Samuel Meyers Hall would not have been spelled "Myers" (p. 253). There would not have been a misnumbering of the last twenty-three footnotes to Chapter 15. It is a sexist comment, I know, but in looking at the illustrations I thought how much more handsome Myer Zeltner was than in his familiar portrait — until I realised that Zeltner has apparently been confused with B.H. Altson.

All this, of course, does not detract from the author's achievement in writing an outstanding biography of an important communal leader and public figure. This book is one of the best biographies so far written about an Australian Jew.

Dr. Hilary Rubinstein

## BIRTHPLACES OF THE AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE: COLONIAL AND COMMONWEALTH CONSENSUS, 1828-1991

*James Jupp and Barry York (Centre for Immigration and Multicultural Studies,  
Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University,  
Studies in Australian Ethnic History No. 8, Canberra, 1995)*

Professor Jupp and Dr. York, two of the best known and most productive scholars in the field of Australian multicultural history, have brought together all Census statistics on foreign-born Australians compiled between 1828 and 1991. Costing only fifteen dollars, this work provides a tremendously valuable reference tool for researchers in this field, one which will save historians endless time and energy.

The statistics are presented in two sections, the first for the colonial period (to 1901) while the second collates all post-1901 Census data of foreign birth place by state. Since information is provided on country of birth rather than on religion, historians of

Australian Jewry will use this work only indirectly and with care. Nevertheless, there is some quite surprising information to be gained from even a cursory examination of the tables in this work. For instance, the number of German-born Australians actually fell between 1933 and 1947, from 16,842 to 14,567 (can this possibly be accurate?) while those born in Czechoslovakia from 610 to 1484. This would imply that the bulk of German Jewish refugees admitted between 1933 and 1940 — estimated at 8–10,000 — were actually Austrians; while one assumes that the reduction in German-born numbers is the net result of an older wave of German-born Australians dying off in this period and being replaced by a smaller group of newer refugees. Nevertheless, the data here is curious, to say the least.

Professor W.D. Rubinstein

### E. PHILLIPS FOX, 1865-1915

*Ruth Zubans (National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1994, vi + 74 pp.)*

This is the catalogue issued to accompany an exhibition of the works of this popular turn-of-the-century artist at the National Gallery of Victoria in 1994. His Australian Jewish background and connections are explored by the author of this work, illustrated with colour reproductions of Fox's work. It is still available from the National Gallery of Victoria for \$29.95.

Professor W.D. Rubinstein

### FALSE HAVENS: THE BRITISH EMPIRE AND THE HOLOCAUST (STUDIES IN THE SHOAH, VOLUME X)

*Paul R. Bartrop (ed.) (University Press of America Inc., Lanham, Maryland, USA, 1995, xiv + 293 pp.)*

Dr. Bartrop's book is a collection of eleven essays by various historians dealing with the responses of the British Dominions to Nazi anti-Semitism and to the refugee crisis this engendered. No other such comparative study of the Commonwealth exists and, as such, this is a pioneering work whose comparative dimension is certainly to be welcomed. Three of the essays concern Australia — those by Dr. Bartrop on the Evian conference and another by him which offers a general survey of the Australian situation — and Dr. Rachael Kohn's study of the attitude of the Catholic and Anglican press in New South Wales to the Jews during the Nazi period. As well, Dr. Ann Beaglehole examines the question of Jewish refugee migration to New Zealand, 1933–1952. The other essays range widely, examining aspects of this question in Canada (three essays), Newfoundland, Eire, and South Africa. In his introductory essay Dr. Bartrop touches on the minor areas of the Empire not discussed here, as well (albeit very briefly) as on the volume's two great major omissions, Britain itself and Palestine.

While this volume is obviously to be welcomed (and does Dr. Bartrop considerable credit as an editor of a volume whose contributors span the globe), there was to me a totally predictable quality to these essays which arguably diminishes their value. I was

prepared to find evidence presented again and again of thinly-disguised anti-Semitism, political and bureaucratic obtuseness and pettifoggery, and pleas of inability to do much so long as mass unemployment existed at home, and my expectations were, as a rule, not confounded. If one accepts the propositions that the democracies should have done more, and are indictable for this failure, one will find in this volume ample evidence for one's suppositions.

The difficulty with this interpretation — and I can only state in the briefest possible way what I have said before and will say, at great length, in the future — is that it is radically unhistorical, indicting persons and governments for events only too well known to us, but unknowable to them, since the genocide of the Jews of Europe lay in the future. As well, efforts to assist the Jewish victims of Nazism concerned (until the *Anschluss*) only the 500,000 Jews of Germany. Seventy-two per cent did emigrate before this became impossible. Given that few countries had a tradition of accepting large-scale refugee migration, the rescue of Germany's Jews was not only not a failure, but arguably the most successful "rescue" effort of an oppressed people ever known up to that time. The fate of the seven million other Jews who eventually fell into Nazi hands is simply irrelevant, since they were not under Nazi rule until the War began and they were not refugees. Moreover, in those essays dealing with the War itself, there is the ubiquitous, and incomprehensible, failure to understand that after 1939 the Jews were no longer refugees — persons compelled to flee their homelands through persecution — but prisoners, who could not flee under any circumstances. Additionally, what strikes us as the incredibly meagre numbers who came to a particular country may be the result of several causes. These of course include anti-Semitism and government obstructionism, but there are others as well. Surprisingly few Jews wished to leave Germany until *Kristallnacht*. The numbers who wished to migrate to Australia or New Zealand might well have been very low until the last minute; admission to other countries, especially Britain and Palestine, but also to such places as France and Latin America, might have been both easier and more attractive. The essays here often assume that the first of these possible reasons, anti-Semitism, is the correct one, without examining the other possible causes. They also typically outline instances of anti-Semitism in the Dominions — easy enough to find, of course — without, except fleetingly, examining philo-Semitism and the revulsion felt everywhere at Nazi barbarism, especially among local elites and opinion-makers. The near-total absence from these discussions of the responses of the democracies of any analysis of philo-Semitism or outrage at Nazi brutality is arguably the most important omission of all.

There are, as well, two other related points seldom touched upon in discussions of this topic. The first is the near-complete failure of the democracies to respond to the needs of other refugee groups during the inter-war period. A comparison of the relative generosity shown toward German Jewish refugees, especially after 1938, with the complete lack of a response to Spanish Republicans fleeing Franco, to say nothing of Abyssinians fleeing Mussolini's troops, virtually compels us to conclude that the democracies demonstrated abundant and peculiar philo-Semitism during this period. Secondly, one crucial concern of the democracies was that a visibly generous policy toward Jews fleeing Nazi Germany would not serve as a public announcement to any regime anywhere that it could rid itself of any unwanted minority merely by acting toward them in an especially brutal way, and if they did so, the democracies would solve this problem for them by taking these undesirables off their hands. Real fears were expressed that Poland and Rumania would brutalize their large Jewish populations in an even more extreme way, assured that the doors to New York and London would then be open. Poland not only had three million unwanted Jews, but nine million Ukrainians, while post-1918 Rumania had two million Hungarians. The concerns underlying an



aspect of the refugee immigration policies of the democracies in this period, that generosity toward German Jews not be construed as an invitation for any regime to off-load its unwanted onto the Lower East Side of New York, was clearly reasonable, and most certainly not unreasonable. Today, Australia's policies toward the Chinese "boat people" and other refugees are animated by very similar concerns — that orderly refugee migration of a limited size will be permitted, but equally that our policies not be seen as so generous and liberal as to cause an uncontrollable flood of Third World peoples to come here, encouraged (at the very least) by their governments. This policy has the support of the entire Australian mainstream. If this policy is reasonable today, why was it unreasonable sixty years ago? Only because we know the ultimate fate of Jews under Nazi rule who could not escape. But no one knew what this fate was to be at the time, and an armchair judgment today about their lack of generosity is not only ahistorical, it is also hypocritical, given that we today enforce very similar policies.

One would also have wished for an introductory essay which examined the national differences in response to the refugee question more analytically. There were very considerable differences between Australia's relative generosity and the genuine harshness of Newfoundland or post-1937 South Africa. Chronologically too, it would seem that some initial generosity gave way to greater harshness in 1936-38, but then, in many countries, to unparalleled liberality in the year between *Kristallnacht* and the outbreak of the War, when the great bulk of the *Reich* Jews who managed to escape did so. An opportunity was lost to summarize these national differences in terms of a coherent typology.

There are, however, difficulties in doing this in a logical manner, which are illustrated by the essays in *False Havens* dealing with the local press, those by Dr. Kohn on our church press and by Cyril Levitt and William Shaffir on reports in Toronto's newspapers of Nazi brutality in 1933. In a very original essay, Dr. Kohn documents the often unsympathetic response of much of our Anglican and Catholic press. The article on Toronto, in contrast, demonstrates that press reports, frank to the extent of being lurid, about Nazi persecutions, appeared from Day One. (This was true everywhere in the English-speaking world, by the way). Yet Australia's record of accepting Jewish refugees was better than Canada's. What, therefore, is one to infer about the linkages between the influence of the press and national policies? Very little, it would seem.

As well, this work suffers from another odd deficiency, the cursory attention paid to the question of whether the Empire/Commonwealth should be viewed as a coherent unit for the purpose of assessing its treatment of these refugees. If not — if each country operated separately — what is the point of the book? But if it did function as a unit, then a very different overall picture emerges, for in all the Empire (including Britain and Palestine) accepted over 160,000 *Reich* Jews, manifestly not an insignificant number.

The essays in this volume, then, have their basis in a paradigmatic view of the treatment of the refugees by the democracies which is accurate only so long as one does not step back and place this view in a wider context. If, however, one shifts paradigms, the almost incredible inaccuracy of this viewpoint simply stares one in the face. I do not wish to conclude this review on a negative note. There is much here that is altogether praiseworthy, and I learned much about refugee policy in such places as Eire of which I knew nothing. I would be surprised if any historian of the Holocaust failed to learn a great deal from this work.

Professor W.D. Rubinstein



## A GLANCE OVER AN OLD LEFT SHOULDER

*Harry Stein (Hale and Iremonger, Sydney, 1994; 210 pp.)*

## CROSSING THE PARTY LINE

*Bernie Taft (Scribe Publications, Newham, Vic, 1994; viii + 352 pp.)*

These two books form a useful parallel, illustrating a phase of twentieth-century Diaspora Jewish life once so significant, and now so difficult to understand, the attraction of so many second generation secularized Jews from 1917 until around 1950 to Soviet Communism. There can be little doubt that Jewish Communism — a peculiar and *sui generis* ideological stance, often more Jewish and humanistic than orthodoxly Communist — was a highly typical generational manifestation of those second generation immigrant Jews who also came of age during the interwar years, especially in the dark years of facism and Depression. Whether at New York's City College, in the East End of London or in Melbourne and Sydney, account after autobiographical account has stressed the popularity of Jewish Communism for this milieu. Ideologically, it was clearly a secularized version of Orthodox Judaism (with many emerging from Orthodox immigrant backgrounds) in which the Soviet Union was seen as the Promised Land, its seeming conquest of unemployment and discrimination taking the place of reward in the next world. After the totalitarian nature of Soviet Communism became better known, book after book of a *mea culpa* nature appeared taking "the god that failed" as its theme. These two are interesting and important additions to this autobiographical *genre*, significant for their Australian setting which is so similar to those overseas.

Although I am a personal friend and admirer of Bernie Taft, I found the work by Harry Stein (whom I never met) the more interesting and livelier, especially for its wealth of anecdotal detail and incident, its cheerful sexual reminiscences, and its candour. Only occasionally does excessive self-exculpation intrude. On the other hand, Stein offers no adequate explanation of his intellectual journeyings. Bernie Taft's book seems to me to be much denser, and to be less than frank or satisfactory in explaining how a man of the author's decency and intelligence could fail to break with Communism until the 1980s. Bernie Taft was born and educated in Germany, not reaching Australia till he was around twenty in the late 1930s, and thus emerged from a background more ideological in culture than was normally the case here; as well, he experienced Nazism first-hand, his family fleeing to Palestine a few months after Hitler came to power. As a result, he maintained formal links to Communism far longer than did Stein. Throughout his autobiography Taft repeatedly notes his doubts about Soviet Communism, yet fails adequately to explain why he never broke with the movement.

In particular, I found his discussion of Soviet anti-Semitism unsatisfactory, dating his real knowledge of the continuing Soviet attitude to its Jews from the 1964 publication of the notorious *Judaism Without Embellishment*. This may be, but the question of all the irrefutable evidence of Soviet anti-Semitism before that date, such as the Doctors' Plot, was generally ignored by him, or not satisfactorily explained.

I do not wish to judge Bernie Taft or his generation too harshly. I was born after the War and was not put to the test of "taking sides" during the "Devil's Decade". Nevertheless, the great majority of Jews, including most Australian Jewish leaders, saw through Soviet Communism from the first as the false messiah it was. Indeed, every other ideology within the Jewish community — religious Jews (of every denomination),

Zionists, Bundists, liberal assimilationists — rejected Marxism from Day One. The era of Communism is now, happily, ended, and common sense has, in the long run, prevailed.

Professor W.D. Rubinstein

## MIRACLES DO HAPPEN: MEMOIRS OF FELA AND FELIX ROSENBLOOM

(Scribe Publications, Newham, Victoria, 1994; viii + 192 pp.)

This is the unusual joint memoirs of Fela and Felix Rosenbloom, Auschwitz survivors from Poland who migrated to Australia in 1952. It is of special note in being told from the viewpoint of committed Bundists, and the account given of the internal debates in Bundist circles over the establishment of Israel in 1947-48 is extremely interesting. Their son Henry is now a well-known publisher in Victoria. Like many Jewish survivors who migrated here, they never regretted their choice.

Professor W.D. Rubinstein

## A NEW AUSTRALIAN, A NEW AUSTRALIA

Paul Kraus (The Federation Press, Annandale, NSW, 1994; 148 pp.)

Paul Kraus' previous autobiographical work, *The Not So Fabulous Fifties* (1985), is regarded by many persons, including this reviewer, as a little-known classic of contemporary multi-cultural autobiography. I know of no book which brings to life in so realistic a way the experiences of post-war Jewish refugees to this country, presenting as well an outstandingly vivid depiction of early post-war Australian society. The author, born in Budapest in October 1944 to two Jewish parents who, miraculously, managed to survive the War (his birth certificate, reproduced in *A New Australian ...*, bears the swastika stamp of a Nazi official in its corner), migrated to Sydney as a child of five in 1949, and came to maturity in Australia where the long Menzies years were about to give way to the enormous cultural changes of the 1960s.

This new work is also an autobiography, but extends the material of Kraus' earlier work in two directions. First, he deals frankly and at length with the identity crisis created for him by the fact that his parents, although Jewish, had become Christians in Hungary (as many others did) and in Australia were practicing Anglicans — a topic not mentioned in his previous book — as well as the many other progenitors of marginality and isolation caused by his Hungarian Jewish immigrant origins in the Sydney of the 1950s. Secondly, he weaves his own story round an account of the historical events and changes undergone by Australian society in this era.

It is not a foregone conclusion that the resulting work would be outstanding. All autobiographies communicate either the universal — that is, the mundane — or the particular — what is experienced by only one person — to readers who are bored by one but find the other to be someone else's problem, for, as de la Rochefoucault put it so well, we all have strength enough to bear the misfortunes of others. Autobiographies which link their author's life to wider events also often fail, seeking a nexus between the infinite ambiguities of individual life and the black-and-white certainties of newspaper headlines

(while an individual's life exhibits a dynamic chronology of its own, not found in history books). Yet Mr. Kraus has navigated round these very severe challenges in an outstanding way and *A New Australian ...*, like his earlier work, is surely a classic of its kind. It should, in particular, be read by any student of recent Australian-Jewish history for the light it sheds on a surprisingly neglected group — immigrant Jewish youth in the 1950s and 1960s when, ostensibly, "nothing happened".

The chief credit for the success of this work is due to Mr. Kraus' fine writing style. His spare, precise, unalloyed prose captures the silences of Australia's empty spaces and of our own existence. Combined with his fine descriptive ability, he could certainly become an important writer of fiction if he tried to be, and he has here done his putative future biographers a service by writing his autobiography in advance.

Professor W.D. Rubinstein

## OUR MULTICULTURAL HERITAGE, 1788-1945: AN ANNOTATED GUIDE TO THE COLLECTIONS OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA

*Barry York (National Library of Australia, Canberra, 1995)*

Dr. York's enormously valuable guide contains an extremely well-designed listing, with detailed descriptions and annotations, of 1108 works held by the National Library of Australia in Canberra relating to "ethnic" groups and their history prior to the end of the Second World War. Included here are all books, pamphlets, periodicals, manuscripts, oral histories, and pictorial material about each group, provided that it is held by the National Library.

Jewish material comprises one of the more extensive sections, amounting to 100 separate items, in addition to further works classified under other headings such as "German speakers", "Internees and Internment Camps", and a separate section on the *Dunera*. This is an extremely valuable guide, costing only twenty dollars, which complements the *Bibliography of Australian Judaica* compiled by Liberman and Young. Dr. York's descriptions and comments on these works are intelligent and objective. Many Australians will still be surprised to learn of the range of "ethnic" groups here, and their long histories, when Australia was allegedly monoculturally British.

Professor W.D. Rubinstein

## RAPHAEL CILENTO: A BIOGRAPHY

*Fedora Gould Fisher (University of Queensland Press, 1994; xiii + 356 pp.)*

In 1936 Mr Hyde founded the Dante Alighieri Society, described by his biographer as "a covert propaganda organ through which Italian Fascism could be promoted discreetly." Many of its members were "covert Italian Fascists." Mr Hyde warned Australians that the immigrants from Asia would bring with them "yellow fever, small pox, cholera, dysentery, worm parasites, Japanese river fever, fluke diseases, [and] malaria", and that Australia was in greater danger "from foreign germs from Indonesia than from foreign arms." In 1952 Mr Hyde described the Jewish survivors of the concentration camps alive in DP camps in Germany as follows: "The problem of the Jews was specific, racial, religious and increasingly Zionist. It had become an anomaly early, for the various Jewish organisations, with their great resources in men and money, their influence in American politics, in UNRRA ... had begun to make them by far the most important *imperium in imperio*. ...". In the mid-1960s he joined with such extremists as Henri Fischer and Eric Butler to found *Australian International New Review*, chiefly devoted to supporting Rhodesia and South Africa.

Dr. Jekyll's career was totally different. An internationally respected expert on tropical diseases, he served as a professor at Queensland University and Director-General of Queensland's Health services. After the War, he held the position of UNRRA Zone Director in the British occupation zone in Germany, bringing relief to hundreds of thousands of refugees and displaced persons. He was knighted at the age of forty-two and received innumerable international awards for his good works.

Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde were of course, the same man, Sir Raphael Cilento (1893-1985), whose enigmatic career has puzzled observers in his lifetime and ever since. It is good finally to have a complete biography of this man. However, it must be said that the present one, by an author who served as Army Education-Officer in the Darwin area in 1943, and also came to know Cilento well in the last decade of his life, is far too apologetic for my taste, although it does go a long way to clarifying the life story of this man. I must record my own bewilderment on encountering Cilento, a right-wing extremist with strong overtones of anti-Semitism, when researching my history of the post-war Jewish community, and was glad to be able to read a full account of his career.

While this is an accomplished and informative biography, the author does not, in my opinion, fully account for the oddness of Cilento's views. To most Australians of the time, the most obvious feature of Cilento was his Italian name and background (although three of his four grandparents were Protestant Anglo-Saxon Australians), and Mrs. Fisher opens with Cilento recounting anti-Italian hostility he knew as a youth. Cilento's marginality and his equivocal ethnic position must have been of fundamental importance to shaping his outlook, but the author does not give this fact the prominence it must surely deserve.

Unfortunately, while a good biography in general, this work does not even begin to explain Cilento's anti-Semitism, and her citation of such remarks as those of Sir Walter Crocker that in the late 1940s in New York "Jews controlled or dominated the most influential press in New York and much of the mass media", as if a remark like this were not itself highly problematical if not far worse, adds nothing to our understanding of Cilento and his milieu. His anti-Semitism and racism remains as puzzling as ever, and it would be well worth a detailed study by someone who is an expert in this particular field.

Professor W.D. Rubinstein



## THE SECRET WAR AGAINST THE JEWS: HOW WESTERN ESPIONAGE BETRAYED THE JEWISH PEOPLE

*Mark Aarons and John Loftus (William Heinemann Australia, Port Melbourne,  
1994; xii + 658 pp.)*

This book, which has received wide publicity, is a curious affair indeed. Aarons and Loftus are justly renowned for their important work on bringing former Nazi war criminals to justice, with Mark Aarons responsible, virtually single-handedly, for Australia's War Crimes Act. Their previous efforts, *Sanctuary* and *Ratlines*, were fundamentally significant in piecing together the shocking story of the post-1945 escape of thousands of Nazi war criminals from justice.

*The Secret War Against the Jews* is, however, another matter entirely and I would be less than frank if I concealed my view that it seems to me to be a very dubious work, its vast panoply of footnotes notwithstanding. The basic argument of *The Secret War* is that the Jews and Israel have been the victims of a consistent policy of anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism emanating from the West's intelligence agencies and diplomatic offices, especially in America and Britain. Much of the evidence presented in this book comes from "old spies" whom (p. xi) "we cannot list" and are thus anonymous. This is, in itself, deeply suspicious in any serious political work.

To be sure, it is well-known (indeed a truism) that the British Foreign Office and the American State Department were at least moderately hostile to Israel and, prior to 1948, to Zionism, while the "Foreign Office Arabist" is a virtual stock-in-trade. Given the murkiness of secret intelligence agencies, it would be surprising if some spies were not anti-Zionists, or double agents (like James J. Angleton) or even triple agents. Setting these possibilities out is probably a worthy effort. The problem here is that Aarons and Loftus discard any historical balance by creating a vast anti-Semitic conspiracy which has now existed for eighty years or more and which in their view permeates every pore of the West's diplomatic stance toward Israel.

Such a thesis is blatantly untenable, for it fails to explain how Israel came into existence or why it has been supported, through thick and thin, by the United States and (to a lesser extent) by Britain. If the closet anti-Semites are so strong, how is it that Israel still exists? In particular, it cannot explain the evolution of such bodies as the British Foreign Office from an anti-Zionist stance (for fear of alienating the Arabs) during the years from about 1936 till 1950, to an increasingly pro-Israel one: by 1956, Israel and Britain were allies in a war against Egypt. It fails to explain the growing sympathy for Israel among the Western world's post-1945 *conservatives* (especially after 1967) and the sharp decline in old-style anti-Semitism.

This work, too, largely ignores all of the other pressures and constraints which have operated, and operate, in the relationship of the West to the Middle East, political, diplomatic, and economic. This account would, I suspect, simply be dismissed as risible by any serious academic political scientists concerned with the Arab-Israeli conflict, who know that policy formation and constraints are both more visible and more complex.

Where I have a specialist knowledge of matters discussed in this work, the author's statements appear very dubious indeed. *The Secret War* claims (p. 104) that "Edward VIII had encouraged Hitler ... to persecute the Jews". Ignoring the fact that Hitler



needed no encouragement, I am unaware of an iota of evidence to support this statement. Edward VIII was, in fact, a lifelong philo-Semite, his unfortunate visit to Nazi Germany notwithstanding. In any case, what on earth is the relevance of this claim to the book's thesis? Since Edward was forced from the throne by the British "Establishment", I would have thought it proved the very opposite of what the authors intend. On p. 105 the authors claim that John Amery — the son of the distinguished Tory politician Leo Amery, who migrated to Germany, broadcast Nazi propaganda, and was hanged for treason after the War — "knew it all, from Windsor's treason to his own father's duplicitous role in Churchill's cabinet". What this "duplicitous role" might have been we are not told, although since Leo Amery sat in Churchill's Cabinet only from 25 May to 26 July 1945, as Minister for India and Burma (i.e. after V-E Day), little confidence is inspired as to its purported nature. Amery was, in fact, a lifelong philo-Semite and ardent pro-Zionist who spent most of the 1930s as a fiercely anti-Nazi, anti-Appeasement ally of Churchill's. These facts, at least, can be ascertained from reputable works of history and standard reference books, and not from "old spies".

Professor W.D. Rubinstein

## STOKER: THE STORY OF AN AUSTRALIAN SOLDIER WHO SURVIVED AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU

*Donald Watt (Simon & Schuster Australia, East Roseville, NSW, 1995;  
xviii + 195 pp.)*

Donald Watt's book is possibly unique, since it is the autobiography of a non-Jewish *Australian* who found himself a prisoner at Auschwitz. A country boy, Watt (born in 1918) joined up at the outbreak of the 1939 War and was eventually sent to Auschwitz after an unsuccessful prisoner-of-war escape bid in April 1944. Watt remained at the death camp until liberated a year later, and thus witnessed the extermination of Hungarian Jewry which began in May 1944.

Watt's very important memoirs are deeply significant for many reasons. Most centrally, they give the absolute lie to "Holocaust denial" propaganda, being based on the eyewitness accounts of an ordinary Australian. To Anglo-Celtic Australian audiences, especially of young people, Watt's memoirs are likely to be more relevant than those of Jewish survivors, however vivid, and will have the effect of bringing the Holocaust closer to their own experiences. Watt's memoirs, it should be made clear, are horrifyingly graphic, and are not for the squeamish. Simon and Schuster must be warmly congratulated for bringing out this most unusual Holocaust testimony, one of the most important ever written by an Australian.

Professor W.D. Rubinstein

## TRIALS AND CHALLENGES

*Elchanan Blumenthal (Jerusalem Academy Publications, Jerusalem, 1994; 419 pp.)*

Rabbi Blumenthal holds a place in Australian Jewish history as the first, wartime principal of Moriah College, Sydney's first Jewish day school and arguably the earliest in Australia, although the claims of Mount Scopus, founded five or six years later, are also strong. While Rabbi Blumenthal lived in Australia comparatively briefly, from 1940 until 1949, he made an important contribution to the development of our community during this crucial period. His autobiography is thus most interesting and well worth the attention of Australian audiences for the light it sheds on our community at that time.

Rabbi Blumenthal was born in Germany and arrived in Australia as a "Dunera boy." (The *Dunera* voyage is well described here, and was marked by considerable anti-Semitic hostility by the British guards). After 1949 he lived in South Africa and, from 1951, in Jerusalem, where he became a well-known educator and commentator on Halakah. His memoirs are extremely interesting and well-written, and this work contains over 250 pages of his writings and commentaries on Jewish law and history.

Professor W.D. Rubinstein

## WITHOUT REGRET

*Louise Hoffman and Shush Masel (eds.) (Centre for Migration and Development Studies, University of Western Australia, Nedlands, WA, 1994, 399 pp., \$39.95)*

*Without Regret* contains the reminiscences of twenty-eight German and Austrian Jewish refugees and survivors who migrated to Western Australia between 1933 and 1952. Based upon an interesting oral history project and completed between 1991 and 1994, it is an outstanding work, very comparable, although more wide-ranging, to John Foster's *Community of Fate*. Those interviewed were mainly "ordinary" people unknown to the wider public, although Dr. Joseph Gentilli will be known to readers of this *Journal*, while Doron Ur (*né* Egon Stefan Rozsa) is, of course, one of the best-known contemporary Jewish leaders in Western Australia.

As a work of oral history among Holocaust survivors and refugees this is an exemplary book, richly varied and detailed, and it is also extremely well produced, with many interesting photographs. It is certainly to be hoped that *Without Regret* will become well-known in the eastern states and, indeed, internationally. Yet it also suffers from some surprising lapses. The most important is that nowhere on the cover or dust jacket is there the slightest hint as to what this book might be about, the dust jacket being taken up by potted biographies of the two editors. Similarly, nowhere in the introduction is the precise subject of this book clearly set out. The preface merely states that "an advertisement in the *West Australian* in 1991" led to \$500 being made available to the editors "to study aspects of immigration of German and Austrian Jews to Western Australia from 1933 to 1952" without explaining who actually funded the project, or what the involvement of the publishers, the Centre for Migration and Development Studies, might have been. This is simply amateurishness. A cogent subtitle such as "Twenty-Eight Jewish Refugees from Nazi Germany in Western Australia Tell Their

Stories" would have been helpful, and would probably have significantly increased sales.

As in most recent works of oral history, the interviewee's responses are recorded verbatim, but not the questions they were asked. So far as I am aware this procedure entered oral history technique in the mid-1960s with Lawrence Ritter's pioneering interviews with former American baseball players of the 1895-1930 period, *The Glory of Their Times*. The point of this was to accentuate continuity and directness, which it certainly does, but one must ask if it is equally appropriate with interviews of Holocaust survivors.

Professor W.D. Rubinstein



## OBITUARY BONO WIENER

Bono Wiener's life is best summed up for me by his unusual action in altering his birth date. He retained the year, 1920, but changed it to 8 May, this being the day he was liberated in 1945 from a concentration camp. He had been a prisoner in the dreaded Auschwitz, Matthausen and Gusen (2) camps. This day was, for him, the day of his rebirth, when he was born again and given another chance at life.

And what a life he led, in Australia and overseas, as a businessman, political activist, a founder and co-president of Melbourne's internationally-renowned Holocaust Museum and Research Centre, founder of the New Australian Council of the ALP, secretary and president of the *Bund*, a member of the World Co-ordinating Committee of the Jewish Labour *Bund*, vice-president of the World Congress for Jewish Culture, director of the Jewish Welfare Society, active Kadimah member, member of the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies, and in the forefront of Jewish education (especially for Sholem Aleichem day school, of which he was one of the founders), and in numerous other activities.

He always stressed to me that the young, the future generations, should be told in a straight-from-the-shoulder manner of just what the Nazis did and the history of the Holocaust. He never missed an opportunity to talk to young people and to try and ensure that through them the past would never be repeated. "Look," he would stress, "eleven to twelve thousand youngsters, mostly not Jewish, annually visit the Holocaust Centre. These show how our work is succeeding and how important, especially in these uncertain times, is the Holocaust Centre."

Bono and his brother Pinche (also a very active Holocaust Centre volunteer) came to Australia in 1950. They were an inseparable twosome. Bono, a qualified engineer, had been a prisoner in the Lodz Ghetto prior to being in concentration camps. The brothers determined to start a new life in Australia, especially an active Jewish life.

Many hundreds of people from a cross-section of Australian life (Jewish and non-Jewish) attended Bono's funeral at the Chevra Kadisha Cemetery, Springvale, and the *Shloshim* at the Holocaust Centre. They spoke of Bono's tireless efforts for many causes, his generosity and his deep and warm humanity. They spoke of a man with a sense of humour, a sense of history and someone who was very proud of his Jewishness and of his adopted homeland of Australia. A man who ensured that the Yiddish language was kept alive.

"This is the best country in the world" he often told me, especially after one of his numerous overseas trips to see the renowned Jewish writer Chana Rosenfarb in Montreal, with whom he had a long association. Bono died while on such a visit, on 9 July 1995, and his body was flown back to Melbourne for burial.

Barry Jones MP, at Bono's funeral, described him as "a dynamic orator, a man of passion and conviction, a unique mixture of idealism, pessimism, optimism and realism; an internationalist and an Australian patriot. He was deeply passionate. He had a great contempt for cowardly evasions, double standards and for the fellow-travellers of totalitarianism."

Bono Wiener will be missed by members of both the Jewish and non-Jewish communities of which he was a very active member.

Stan Marks

## CORRESPONDENCE

Henry Zimmerman of Melbourne writes concerning Philip Mendes' paper "Jewish Involvement in the Communist Party of Australia" (AJHSJ Volume 12, Part 3, 1994), and requests that we publish the following corrections:

1. The Jewish branch of the EYL [Eureka Youth League] was not known as the Komsomol, which was the name of the Russian Young Communist League. As the CPA was illegal at the time, the use of the word Komsomol was a signal that I could be trusted if I knew what the word meant. The EYL did not exist in 1940, when this incident occurred.

2. I was not abused by Ernest Platz. I was told at a later date that Platz had made this comment in East Germany. I had no contact with Platz.

3. I did not leave the CPA because of its "hypercritical" attitude to the invasion of Afghanistan, but rather because of its *hypocritical* attitude.

4. The University branch did not exist inside the Melbourne University Labor Club. Its members were members of the Labor Club, just as trade union members of the CPA were members of their union.

5. With all due respect to Sholem (not Shalom) Bornstein, he was not the chief theoretician of the Labor Club, or any other organisation.

6. I was never a member of the Amalgamated Metal Workers Union. I was a member of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, which later — much later — changed its name.



## MEMBERS JOINED AJHS VICTORIA INC. since November 1994

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## REPORT TO MEMBERS

Another busy year of work for the Society began with the Australia Day Honours award of the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) to two of our long-time workers: Beverley Davis of Melbourne, and Morris Forbes of Sydney. It is most gratifying to see such important official recognition of our work.

Our first meeting for the year (also our 45th Annual General Meeting), held on 21 March, hosted as guest speaker Dr Anthony P. Joseph, the newly elected president of the Jewish Historical Society of England, who presented to us his inaugural presidential address: "Anglo-Jewish history and Anglo-Jewish genealogy in the wider context — a personal view". We received with regret the resignation of David Sonenberg after many years of service to the committee, but were happy to welcome two new members. The executive and committee for 1995 are: President, Dr Howard Freeman; Honorary Secretary, Mrs Beverley Davis OAM; Honorary Treasurer, Dr Serge Liberman; Committee: Dr Paul R. Bartrop, Dr Harvey A. Cohen, Trevor S. Cohen, Rabbi John S. Levi, Mrs Judith O'Donnell, Dr Hilary L. Rubinstein, Professor W.D. Rubinstein, Isidor Solomon, and Dr Malcolm J. Turnbull.

The production of the Index to Volume XI of the *Journal* was undertaken solely by Beverley Davis, and was distributed to all AJHS members in under twelve months from its commencement. Already well under way is Beverley's work on the Index to Volume XII.

Next meeting took place on 27 April, with guest speaker the Honorable Mr Justice Howard T. Nathan on "From one side of the law to the other". An amended version of his paper appears in the current *Journal*.

In July, Bill Rubinstein announced that he had been appointed to the chair of Modern History at the University of Wales (Aberystwyth). After nineteen years in Australia Bill, with his wife Hilary, left in September to take up this new position. In 1988 Bill began to edit a yearly Victorian issue of the AJHS *Journal*, and with Hilary's expert assistance and Beverley Davis' use of computer technology promoted a remarkable upgrading of this publication into an outstanding example of modern Australian Jewish historiography. Bill's and Hilary's input and influence will be greatly missed. Malcolm Turnbull was chosen as the new Victorian editor, and we look forward to a long and fruitful working relationship. A decision was made to end Volume XII at Part 4 to enable easier binding, and this issue is therefore the first Part of Volume XIII.

Our Reference Library and Archives have continued to grow with the addition of a large number of recently published books and transfers of historical research material. A major purchase this year was a motorised microfilm/fiche reader-printer.

Most exciting was the long-awaited and carefully-planned transfer to our care and control of the complete archives of the East Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, dating from the mid-1850s. This treasure trove of material will be of invaluable assistance to future researchers. The comprehensive sorting and computer listing of EMHC correspondence files from 1885 to 1970 is now almost complete, thanks most particularly to Horst Eisfelder.

Another milestone in our activities this year was the transfer of a selection of our archives and library materials to a secure and purpose-built section of the new Jewish Museum of Australia in Alma Road, St. Kilda. This will greatly ease the burden of storage without curtailing the ease of access by scholars and researchers. Remaining at our headquarters, however, is our large collection of genealogical resources, demand for which has been growing steadily over the years.

On 10 August, we were actively involved in co-hosting, together with the St Kilda Hebrew Congregation, the launch by our Patron Sir Zelman Cowen of Rabbi John Levi's biography *Rabbi Jacob Danglow: "the Uncrowned Monarch of Australia's Jews"*.

We were especially pleased to be closely associated with the first public function held at the new Jewish Museum on 30 August, a celebration of Melbourne Foundation Day, being the 160th year since the founding of Port Phillip. This event highlighted the involvement of Jewish settlers from 1835 to 1851 and featured our president, Dr Howard Freeman, who provided an extensive overview of the development of early Melbourne, together with other speakers (direct descendants of some of those early Jewish settlers) Rodney Benjamin, Eric Cohen, and Geraldine and Mark Lazarus.

The final meeting for 1995 took place on 19th October when well-known composer, George Tibbits, an architectural historian at the University of Melbourne, spoke on "Nikolaus Pevsner and Melbourne: a 1930s resettlement scheme at the University of Melbourne for academics fleeing Nazi Germany".

We have completed the seventeenth year of continuous and regular publication of our members' *Newsletters*, in which we continue to provide items of a more personal nature than would be suitable for inclusion in the *Journal*.

Part of Victoria's involvement in the "Australia Remembers 1945-1995" project was a "Field of Remembrance" dedicated in July at Melbourne's Shrine, consisting of many hundreds of small wooden crosses (or stakes marked with a Magen David) on which people wrote simple inscriptions in memory of those who made the supreme sacrifice for their country in the Second World War. Almost sixty stakes were planted in one area by members of the Victorian Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women (VAJEX), and individual Jewish markers were to be seen in other parts of the area. After some weeks on display, all the crosses and stakes were removed to be burnt, and the ashes scattered on Remembrance Day in November.

Beverly Davis OAM, Honorary Secretary, AJHS — Victoria Inc.



## CONTRIBUTORS

**Dr Paul R. Bartrop** is a lecturer in Race Relations at the University of South Australia, and the author of *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*.

**Helen Bruinier** lives in Ballarat. Several years ago she helped to identify and restore the Cohn family gravestones in the White Hills Cemetery.

**Sir Zelman Cowen** is Patron of the AJHS Victoria Inc.

**Beverley Davis**, honorary Secretary of the AJHS Victoria Inc., was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the 1995 Australia Day honours.

**Lorraine Freeman**, a member of AJHS Victoria Inc., is a voluntary guide with the Jewish Museum of Australia. She was the former president of *Chesed*, the Jewish Bereavement Support Group.

**Dr Lionel E. Fredman** retired recently as Associate Professor of History at the University of Newcastle (New South Wales).

**Joshua Greenfield**, a retired businessman and ex-serviceman, lives in Melbourne.

**Len Henderson** is Archivist and Newsletter editor of the Numismatic Association of Victoria.

**Eliyahu Honig** is Associate Vice President, Development and Public Relations at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

**Dr Manfred Klarberg** is a senior lecturer in Humanities at the Victoria University of Technology.

**Stan Marks** is a well-known Melbourne writer.

**Philip Mendes** is the author of *The New Left, the Jews and the Vietnam War*, and a frequent contributor of articles to this *Journal*.

**The Honorable Mr Justice Howard T. Nathan** is a judge of the Supreme Court, Melbourne.

**Dr Glen Palmer** is a lecturer at the De Lissa Institute of Early Childhood and Family Studies, University of South Australia.

**Dr Hilary L. Rubinstein**, a former committee member of AJHS Victoria Inc., lives in Wales. She is currently researching a history of philo-Semitism.

**Professor W.D. (Bill) Rubinstein**, former Victorian editor of this *Journal*, recently took up the chair of Modern History at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth.

**Simon Tisher** is a fourth year Law student at Monash University.

**Jeffrey J. Turnbull** is a senior lecturer in Architecture at the University of Melbourne.



# **Australian Jewish Historical Society - Victoria, Inc.**

**Patron: The Rt Hon Sir Zelman Cowen**

**President: Dr Howard A. Freeman**

**P.O. Box 255**

**Hon. Sec: Mrs Beverley Davis OAM**

**Camberwell 3124**

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**WE REGRET TO ADVISE OUR MEMBERS THAT DUE TO AN ELECTRONIC ERROR A SECTION HAS BEEN DELETED FROM THE REVIEW ARTICLE BY SIR ZELMAN COWEN WHICH APPEARS ON PAGE 143 OF THE NOVEMBER JOURNAL.**

**THE ENCLOSED AMENDMENT SHEET SHOULD BE INSERTED AT THE APPROPRIATE PAGE.**

**WE APOLOGISE FOR THIS UNFORTUNATE OMISSION.**



*To read on from beginning of second paragraph:*

In due time on that day, I spoke from the pulpit and I remembered. All of these remembrances led me back to one central figure, Rabbi Jacob Danglow, and it was on that occasion that I spoke the words which accompany the photograph on the back of the dust cover of the book we are launching today, Rabbi John Levi's biographical study of Rabbi Jacob Danglow. I said then "He seemed to me quite the most important of men: a man of undoubted, indeed, overwhelming authority and dignity."

So it is that I am specially pleased to have been invited to launch this excellent book whose author, I know, has been researching and writing it over a long period. If it be asked why he, coming from another strand of Judaism in this city and country, has invested so much time and scholarship in this undertaking, let it be known that his own connections with the St Kilda Synagogue go back to the very early years of his life, and beyond it into family history. As he tells, his own great grandfather welcomed Jacob Danglow to his new country, home and calling when he arrived in Melbourne in 1905, thirty years before John Levi was born. Then John Levi's great uncle was thrice President of St Kilda. These are family reasons which link the author with his subject; he speaks also of personal reasons for writing the life of one who was a major figure in the life of the Jewish and general community over a long period of his life. He speaks particularly of Jacob Danglow's attempts to arrange religious services for national occasions so that both orthodox and progressive Jews might worship together. These attempts, in face of uncompromising opposition, he regretfully abandoned. This book then traces the career and evaluates the character and achievement of a remarkable man, who lived and served through a period of history which saw his country twice deeply involved in long and brutal world wars, but who overall lived in an age which remained congenial to his values. He died at a time when they, these values, were about to be challenged in a society of sharply shifting *mores*, which I am sure he would not have liked much.

We have good reason to be grateful to the author who has made his own distinctive and distinguished contribution to the religious and general life of the Melbourne and Australian communities. He inherited the pastorate of a strong Progressive Jewish congregation from a remarkable leader; he has put upon it his own distinctive shape, and has in a very real sense transformed it. In the specific context of this book, he has brought to it a strong scholarship, and a sense of balance. If, as it does, the book honours its subject, it is no hagiographic exercise, but a balanced scholarly judgment by a man of faith, balance and great intellectual integrity.



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