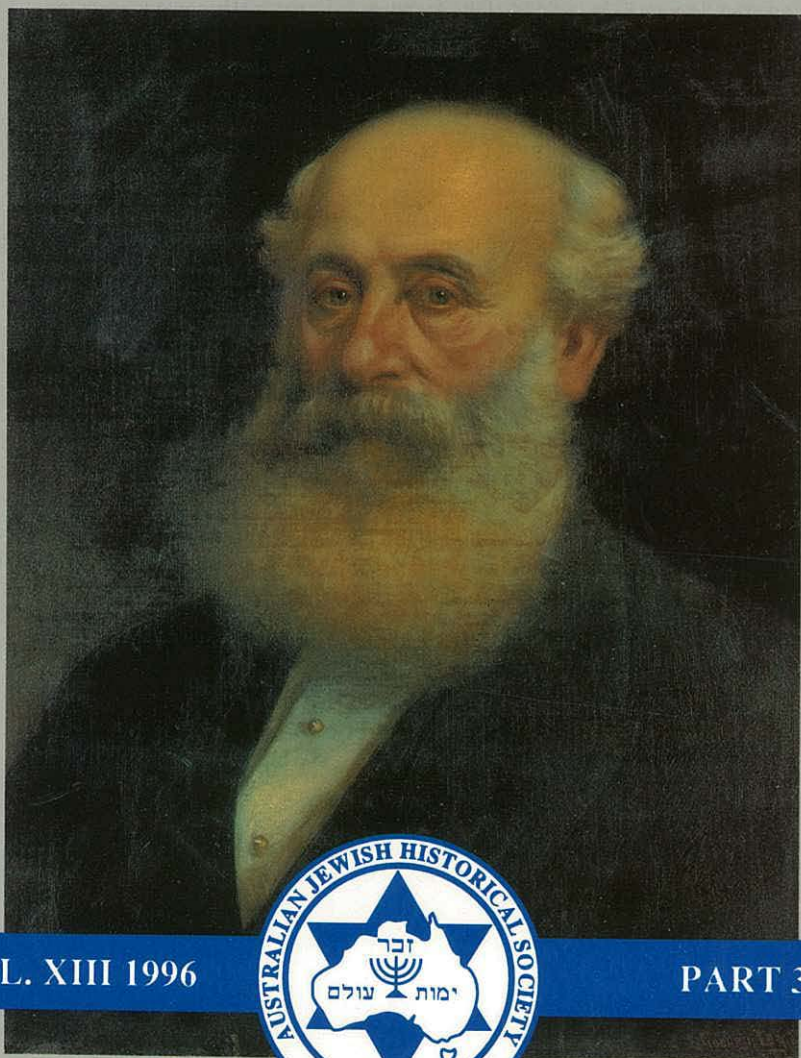


AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL



VOL. XIII 1996

PART 3

THE JOURNAL OF THE AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

Dr Malcolm J. Turnbull BA, MLitt, PhD (Editor)

Dr Paul R. Bartrop BA(Hons), MA, DipEd, PhD

Mrs Beverley Davis OAM, ARMA, Dip Archives & Records (Honorary Secretary)

Dr Howard A. Freeman BDSc, LDS (*ex-officio* as President of the Victorian Committee)

Rabbi Dr John S. Levi AM, DD, MAHL, MA, DipEd

Dr Serge Liberman MB, BS

A complete list of the Society's office-bearers is printed on 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 Macintosh or DOS format, saved as TEXT ONLY. 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.

Front cover: Moses Benjamin
(courtesy Rodney Benjamin, Melbourne)
For story, see Page 367

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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 key theme of Jewish migration to Australia links six of the eleven papers in this diverse and, I believe, most absorbing issue of the *AJHS Journal*. First off, Dr Rodney Benjamin documents the lives and careers of his illustrious forebears, the four Benjamin Brothers, and in doing so, manages to dispel a number of myths about their antipodean beginnings. The brothers realised fortunes in real estate and gold-buying, and each of them was instrumental in establishing a formal Jewish presence in the eastern Australian colonies (Moses Benjamin in Melbourne, David and Solomon in Launceston and Melbourne, and Samuel in Sydney and rural NSW). Thanks to Dr Benjamin's generosity, we have been able to reproduce the striking colour portrait of Moses Benjamin which appears on this issue's cover.

Two contemporary accounts of life and travel in the colonies highlight the rigours and hazards of the "frontier" experience, and testify, incidentally, to the treasure trove of unpublished material to be found in the Society's archives in Melbourne and Sydney. One such gem is the autobiography of Jacob Frankel, penned in 1856 (some years before the author settled permanently in New Zealand) and donated to the AJHS by his descendant, Walter Frankel. Those sections of Frankel's journal which deal with his "trials and tribulations" in Hobart and Melbourne, plus his recollections of the perils of sea voyaging in the first half of the 19th century, should prove of particular interest to our readers. (In the interests of readability, Frankel's autobiography has been edited for spelling, grammar and punctuation). Also from our Victorian archive is a short but evocative extract from the diary of German merchant Henry Lippmann, detailing time spent in Melbourne in the 1850s. The extract, translated and donated to us several years ago by Kurt Lippmann OAM (a collateral descendant of the writer), also appears in the recently-published *Our Lippmann Family*, which we review elsewhere in this issue.

Professor Ronald Taft's interesting article looks at the difficulties, discomforts and considerable dangers faced by members of his family in emigrating from the Ukraine to Melbourne in the 1920s. Elsewhere, we are pleased to be able to publish two extracts from the memoirs of the late Lou Jedwab, in this instance loving pen-portraits of his parents and recollections of their early years as immigrant "newcomers" in Carlton. (Jedwab's study of the Kadimah Youth Organisation appeared in an earlier issue of this *Journal*, and other extracts have been published by the *Melbourne Chronicle*). For good measure, George Tibbitts provides us with a tantalising and entertaining profile of one would-be immigrant, the celebrated architectural historian, Nikolaus Pevsner, who, as it turned out, did *not* end up settling in Australia.

This year marks the centenary of publication of Theodor Herzl's *Der Judenstaat*. Dr Bernard Hyams' paper details the beginnings of organised Political Zionist activity in Australia, and notes how community nervousness over the movement (as articulated by the Jewish press and clergymen Joseph Hirsch Landau, Francis Lyon Cohen and Elias Blaubaum) reflected the turbulence within international Zionist arenas. Herzl and the foundations of Political Zionism feature as well in Lorraine Freeman's regular selection of representative clippings from the *Jewish Herald* "100 Years Ago". 1996 also marks the sixtieth anniversary of the publication of *The Jews in South Australia*, and would seem an appropriate point at which to celebrate the research and writing of Hirsch Munz. The article "Two Pioneers of Australian Jewish Historiography" looks similarly at the scholarly contribution of Alfred Newton Super (who produced the first general history of Australian Jewry as an academic thesis in the 1930s), and it catalogues the surprisingly substantial body of publication which predated the foundation of the AJHS in 1938.

Yet another anniversary is celebrated by Elizabeth (Betty) Durré in her paper on the Jubilee of Kfar Monash, the settlement established in honour of Australia's greatest soldier.

Dr Hilary Rubinstein, who is currently researching a history of international philo-Semitism, offers here a substantial and important paper on the response of Australian philo-Semites to the plight of Jews in Czarist Russia during the period 1880–1905. The article notes that Gentile support for “the traduced and persecuted”, which encompassed generous contribution to relief funds and active participation in public protest meetings, “crossed political boundaries and denominational frontiers”. Bringing us right up to the present day, Philip Mendes focuses on the controversy surrounding Helen Demidenko/Darville’s novel *The Hand that Signed the Paper*, and Professor Bill Rubinstein reviews the several studies of the “Demidenko debate” which have appeared to date. Reviews of sixteen other recent publications, as well as the motion picture *Bitter Herbs and Honey*, round out this issue.

Over the past year, I have enjoyed a number of productive meetings with my Sydney counterpart, Dr Suzanne Rutland, and I look forward to our continuing collaboration to maintain the exceptionally high quality of this *Journal*. Closer to home, we are indebted once again to the Publications Advisory Committee of the Australian Institute for Jewish Affairs, for its contribution towards our publishing costs.

Finally, I am keen to express my gratitude and appreciation to our Honorary Secretary, Beverley Davis OAM, upon whose technical “know-how”, foresight, enthusiasm and good sense the physical production of Victorian numbers of the *Journal* depends. Thanks also are due to our President, Dr Howard Freeman, for his valued efforts on behalf of this issue (including negotiations over our colour cover), to Lionel Carrick of Latrobe Studios for his work on the colour transparency, and to our printers, Robert Mosley and Blueprint Pty. Ltd.

Malcolm J. Turnbull
Editor

EARLY MELBOURNE AND THE BENJAMIN BROTHERS

Rodney Benjamin

The genesis of this paper was research that I undertook preparing for a lecture to the Melbourne Jewish Museum about the brothers Benjamin in early Melbourne. The occasion was to mark the one hundred and sixtieth anniversary of the foundation of the City. I had expected the search to involve identifying the location of the draper's shop, which as tradition had it, traded under the name of D. & S. Benjamin in "Cheapside House", and was somewhere in Collins Street between Elizabeth and Queen Streets. The shop was where, in late 1840, the early Jewish community held its first religious services at which a *minyan*, the formal requirement of ten adult males, was present. In addition I would put together some detail of the family from already published Jewish histories, family archives and from other secondary sources.

As I read the columns of the Melbourne newspapers of the day, hoping to identify the location of Cheapside House by an advertisement, I became captivated by both their tone and content. The life that they reflected was that of a foreign country. The language was English but with nuances now lost to us. Their customs, their methods of trade, their sense of time and urgency, were not ours. Contemporary descriptions of Melbourne of the late 1830s made clear that this was not the city as we know it today, nor as I remember it as a child some sixty years ago, nor as my father used to talk of it, "marvellous Melbourne"¹, as it was when he was a child now over one hundred years ago. Rather, Melbourne was then a rough frontier settlement. The only water was drawn from the Yarra Yarra river, there was no sewerage, only horses and bullocks were available for transport on land, and possibly hazardous sea voyages the only way in or out of Port Phillip. Nevertheless, wherever possible all goods were transported by ship; there were few roads and these were impassable in wet weather. Communication with Europe was by sea mail, and this took at best, six or seven months for a reply to be received. Our ancestors were not ourselves dressed up in period costume.

I had hoped to find an answer to the question of why all the sons of an established English middle class Jewish family, the four Benjamin brothers, who had lived comfortably in the London West End², should have chosen to travel to this primitive life on the other side of the world during the years between 1833 and 1842. Was it related, in some way, to the chequered route to the emancipation of Jews in England during the first half of the nineteenth century? Had the Benjamin boys heard that prejudice against Jews was less in the Australian colonies? Was there a connection between this migration, if it was related to the slow emancipation of Jews in Britain, and the comparatively large number of Jews in Victoria, including my forbears, who had immersed themselves in both municipal and colonial political activities?³

The only surviving family correspondence, which is from the Cohen side of the family in Sydney, disclosed nothing relating to these questions. There was only one clue, in the many letters that still survive, to the reasons why so many members of the family had migrated to the Australian Colonies. This was an oblique reference to a Jewish neighbour who had returned to England from the Australian colonies having "failed to make his fortune". Was the answer as uncomplicated as this, that the Benjamins had come to the Australian colonies in order to make their fortunes? Two of the brothers had returned to London as wealthy men, whilst another had made a fortune and stayed. The fourth died in Sydney and there is no evidence of what his long term intentions were.

This was another aspect of my research which caught my imagination. How common was this practice of those who were lucky enough to make a fortune in Australia to return to England? It was recognised that for other parts of the British Empire, India, Singapore, Colombo, Malaysia, Hong Kong and the trading posts of China, that one went there, put up with the discomfort of life for a few years in order to retire to England with a fortune, large or small, that would not have been realised at home. There was nothing in any of the standard histories of Australia to suggest that this was a significant aspect of migration to Australia. We are led to believe that our colonies were peopled by a melange of convicts and their descendants, a few wealthy families that had taken up grants of land or had just "squatted" to take up sheep farming, and some free settlers. Most of the latter had been encouraged to migrate by a British government keen to send a surplus of population, created as a result of structural change by the industrialisation of the British economy, somewhere else. Some free settlers had come to create a small middle class, which was developing in response to a demand for service to the needs of this increasing population. All were treated in the histories as intending permanent settlers. A few were disgruntled by what they found and returned "home", but these were unhappy exceptions to the vast majority who came to stay.

Even a cursory examination showed that there had been a significant number of adventurers to Australia during the nineteenth century who had been able to retire to Britain in comfort. Only one Australian historian has written about the numbers of English people who saw Australia, as they saw other parts of the British Empire, as a remote and difficult place where one could be rewarded for a short stay by making a quick fortune; then one could return to a refined retirement in Britain. There is evidence that there were a number of such people, and that they made substantial contributions to the development of the Australian Colonies during their stays, notwithstanding their ultimate intention of returning "home".

In the process of seeking answers to these questions, several of my other assumptions concerning the Australian past had to be revised. The first was that travelling by sailing ship in the first half of the nineteenth century was so dangerous that it was undertaken only if it was absolutely necessary. Looking at the shipping lists of arrivals and departures, which were printed in each edition of all the newspapers of the time, it became obvious that the Benjamin family used inter-colonial shipping between Melbourne, Sydney, Launceston and Hobart, not only for the men to undertake business trips, but also for their women and children, as frequently as the next generation would use trains. In one seven year period the family used inter-colonial shipping on sixteen different occasions. In correspondence with the Tasmanian Archives Office the chief archivist referred to the Benjamins "commuting" between Launceston and Melbourne. I found reference to other families, during the 1840s, taking ship to England for a short visit "home".

One further aspect of the Benjamin brothers' mercantile endeavours in Melbourne attracted my attention. In the early days of the gold rush they, in common with some other Melbourne shopkeepers and enterprising businessmen set up as gold buyers. This was part of the mythology of the gold rush, which included shopkeepers on the goldfields cheating the honest diggers with faulty scales or weights, and even greasing the weighing pans so that some of the gold dust was stolen in the process of weighing. But it was also part of gold rush folklore that in due course banks had become the major buyers of gold in the Colonies. When and why had this transition taken place, and how did it affect the Benjamin brothers?

This paper will look at all of these questions in the process of unravelling the Benjamin story.

The Benjamin Family in England

Lyon Benjamin was born in London in 1779. He was the father of four sons, all of whom came to the Australian colonies, and two daughters who married and stayed in England. All four sons made major contributions to the establishment of the Jewish communities in the three Colonies on the Australian east coast. David and Solomon, the youngest sons, and the central characters of this story, were heavily involved in the development both of the Melbourne and Launceston Jewish communities, and of the retail trade of both towns. They both retired to their birthplace, London, after staying in Australia for only a little more than a dozen years.

Lyon Benjamin was a sealing wax maker. He was part of the "diaspora" of Jews who moved from the City of London to Westminster during the second half of the eighteenth century. In 1797 Lyon was one of the signatories to the lease of premises in which the Western Synagogue was established; he signed his name in English (several other signatories signed in Hebrew) and gave his address as Angel Court, The Strand.⁴ Lyon died in London in 1862.⁵ There is an excellent portrait in oil on canvas of Lyon, which is held by the family in Melbourne. It shows a handsome, fine-featured English gentleman in late middle age, elegantly and stylishly dressed, snuff box in hand, who looks out on the world with confidence. The painting is neither dated nor signed. If indeed it is a good likeness of Lyon, then he had acclimatised to the "diaspora" of the London West End remarkably well.



*Lyon Benjamin, ca 1842
(photograph
of oil painting)*

One family record, which is unconfirmed by external sources, gives Lyon's father as Abraham Benjamin who lived from 1760 to 1826. It is not shown in this record where Abraham was born. There are other family records, similarly unconfirmed, that Lyon was married three times. Samuel, the eldest, born in 1804, Moses, born in 1805, and David, born in 1815, were the sons of Lyon's first marriage to Miriam, the daughter of Samuel Moses.⁶ Miriam died shortly after David's birth and Solomon, born in 1818, was the son of Lyon's second marriage to Phirely. After her death in 1820 Lyon married a third time, to Rachel.⁷ Perhaps his portrait was a good likeness.

David and Solomon Benjamin

The first settlements on the banks of the Yarra river, in the area that was to become Melbourne, were made during 1835. In the period of the late 1830s and early 1840s Melbourne was indeed a rough frontier settlement. It was a town which served those who operated the sheep runs of the Port Phillip District with general provisions, clothing and liquor. In the view of some already living in the comparative civilisation of Van Diemens Land it was, "that dreadful Port Phillip".⁸ But it was to this place that three of the Benjamin brothers journeyed.

A contemporary author⁹ described the settlement as he saw it in January 1838 as presenting

more the appearance of the villages seen in the interior of India, a nucleus of huts embowered in the forest foliage, and peering at itself in the river stream that laved the thresholds of its tenements, than any collection of buildings formed by European hands ...

William Westgarth¹⁰ wrote of his arrival in Melbourne on 13 December 1840

We were wafted quickly up to the anchorage of Hobson's Bay on the wings of a strong southerly breeze ... a small boat came to us at the anchorage ... [and we were told] that for some days past there had been excessive heat and a hot wind, which had now reacted to this southerly blast to probably go on to have rain ... all Melbourne bound passengers were put out by their respective ship's boats upon that part of the northern beach of Port Phillip that was nearest to Melbourne, whence in straggling lines ... they trod a bush track of their own making, which, about a mile-and-a-half long, brought them to a punt just above the "Falls" where they were charged 3d. a head for the half minute's passage [across the Yarra to the settlement].

I had engaged to accompany a young friend that evening to spend the next day at his "country seat" on Richmond Flat ... it was past eleven [at night] when we started. The rain began to pour, and the night was pitch dark. We got into Collins Street, but had much difficulty in keeping its lines where there were not post-and-rail fences round the vacant allotments...excepting the very centre [of the town] there were still wide intervals between the houses ... in central Collins Street ... proceeding eastwards to Swanston Street, there was a good sprinkling of brick-built offices, stores and shops including ... the Benjamins, soft goods ...¹¹

The Benjamins' shop had been there for more than a year before Westgarth arrived in Melbourne.

There is a family record that David and Solomon Benjamin left London in March 1838 for Van Diemens Land. David was 22 years old and Solomon 19. David arrived in Launceston from London aboard the *Henry* on 6 July 1838, which confirms the sailing date in the family record. David had with him on the ship a cargo of clothing described as "21 cases and 6 bales slops". Only one Benjamin, not identified by an initial, featured in the passenger list reprinted in the Launceston newspaper, but the cargo was cited as belonging to "David Benjamin".¹² It is almost certain that Solomon was also on the same ship. They had obviously decided to settle in Launceston when they boarded the *Henry* rather than sailing for Hobart or Sydney.

By an advertisement dated 4 August, David advised that he had opened a shop at the corner of Brisbane and St John Streets, Launceston, trading under his own name only, in premises known as Tamar House. The advertisement offered a considerable variety of ready made clothing for men (slops), jackets and "trowsers", waterproof Mackintoshes, hats and caps, shirts and hosiery, and "ladies and children's boots and shoes ... and other articles too numerous to mention".¹³ I presume that because Solomon was still a minor all the transactions of these early years were in the name of David only. The name of the firm was not changed to "D. & S. Benjamin" until after Solomon had achieved legal majority. Why Solomon was not named on the passenger list is not known, other than to comment that minors were not usually named in the lists at that time but just mentioned "children" accompanying their parents.

In November that year, 1838, one of them (it cannot be determined which because, again, the ship's passenger list recorded only "Mr. Benjamin") sailed from Launceston to Melbourne in comparative luxury as one of the two cabin passengers on the schooner

Perseverance. The ship arrived in Port Phillip on 8 November after a two day trip.¹⁴ This could only have been for the purpose of a quick reconnaissance of the new settlement for "Mr. Benjamin" again boarded the *Perseverance* which arrived back in Launceston on 3 December.¹⁵

In 1837, which was three years before Westgarth's description, a survey map of Melbourne showed the only cleared area of what we now call the Central Business District was west of William Street; the whole area to the east and north was uncleared bush.¹⁶ The year before Westgarth's description, when the Benjamin shop was established, a contemporary drawing of Collins Street showed a scattered settlement of timber houses, some enclosed by wooden picket fences. Gum trees stood in the paddocks that still lined Collins Street where there were no buildings.¹⁷ Water for the town was drawn from the Yarra above a ledge of rocks, the "falls" mentioned by Westgarth, "just in front of the town" (opposite what is now Queen Street) which separated the salt tidal waters below the ledge from the fresh water above it.¹⁸ One contemporary description of the town commented that the most noticeable thing was

the almost total absence of women from the streets, as well as the paucity of old men ... anyone over thirty was spoken of as old So-and-so ... [the men] might generally be observed hurrying on horseback from one end of the little town to the other, occasionally, to avoid detours, taking their nags over the gutter chasms which intersected the streets.¹⁹

The absence of women from the streets is not surprising. At the census taken in the Port Phillip District on 31 December 1839 there were only 550 females, including children, out of a total population of the 5,000 persons in the District.²⁰

Another writer recalled that Melbourne

could hardly be called a town; nor did it even partake of the characteristics of a village or a hamlet. It was a kind of big "settlement", in groups pitched here and there, with houses, sheds, and tents in clusters, or scattered in ones and twos. There were streets marked out, and stores, shops, and counting houses, but with the exception of those in the Market Square and portions of Flinders, Little Flinders, Collins and Elizabeth Streets, so dispersed that, after dark, residents incurred not trouble but danger in moving about.²¹

The Melbourne Fire & Marine Assurance Company advertised in the *Port Phillip Herald* against "the practice of erecting haystacks within the limits of the township" as being a likely source of fire.²²

It was into this settlement, on 14 February 1839, that one of the Benjamin brothers (again the shipping lists give no initials but it was almost certainly Solomon)²³ went to Melbourne from Launceston aboard the barque *Wallaby* to set up business. The *Wallaby* was primarily a transport for livestock. This trip took five days. In addition to the six cabin passengers and as many in steerage, there were, according to the report in the *Port Phillip Gazette*, 1,000 sheep, 2 horses and 4 bullocks aboard.²⁴

The Benjamin expeditions to Melbourne must have been well known in the small town of Launceston and led to speculation that David intended to close up there and to move permanently across Bass Strait. In order to allay these fears, and to protect his existing business, David advertised in the *Launceston Advertiser* on February 14 1839, that his business in the town had been so successful that "nothing on his part shall be wanting to merit a continuance of the same".²⁵ This advertisement was repeated in the next five issues of the paper.

On 23 February 1839 one of the three Melbourne newspapers, the *Port Phillip Gazette*, carried an advertisement that David Benjamin would, in a few days, open a "Branch

Store" of his Tamar House, Launceston, business in the Collins Street, Melbourne, premises "adjoining the house lately known as the Angel Inn". As will be discussed later, the Angel Inn, which was also known as Umphelby's, was on the north east corner of Queen and Collins Streets, where it achieved some fame and a little notoriety because it housed the first billiard table in Melbourne.²⁶ The Benjamin brothers were keeping their trading base in the thirty five year old town of Launceston while the younger brother tried out the new settlement. The branch store, the advertisement continued, would be known as Cheapside House. On 2 March the *Gazette* carried a further advertisement advising that Cheapside House would open for business on 6 March 1839.

The goods that were advertised for sale were largely men's working clothes, "fustian, cord and moleskin trousers ... cloth and moleskin coats ... striped cotton, white and fancy shirts ... Macintosh's patent India-rubber waterproof cloaks and capes ... and a great variety of dark and fancy waistcoats", while for women the stock was restricted to "collars and stays ... parasols ... gloves ... boots and shoes". More stock must have arrived from England because there is a wider variety of goods, particularly for women, than David had advertised seven months earlier.

It is reasonable to ask why the brothers would have chosen to set up a branch of their business in this primitive settlement. A contemporary source probably provides the best answer. Jonathan Binns Were, the original of the present sharebroking firm of J.B. Were, arrived in Port Phillip on 15 November 1839. His diary recorded

When we cast anchor we were as completely in a little fleet at the mouth of the Yarra as if we had been at Plymouth Sound. Three ships, eight barques, five brigs and 2 schooners lay at anchor around us, and more astonishing than all, the whole of these vessels had or were delivering their goods and passengers for Melbourne. During the succeeding ten days the number of vessels were increased by new arrivals to twenty five.²⁷

There were, of course, underlying economic reasons for this movement. On the island of Van Diemens Land government land grants had fallen from 205,000 acres in 1831 to only 8,000 acres during the three year period 1834 to 1836, and to limit the practice of squatting the Governor had recently imposed rules for fencing grazing land; by 1837 wage rates had fallen to their lowest point in a decade.²⁸ In New South Wales a series of Land Regulations were introduced from 1831 concerning the sale of Crown land and squatting licenses. Under the new system total acreage of Crown lands sold at auction fell substantially from the 370,000 acres in 1837.²⁹ So for land hungry graziers the newly discovered, open, rolling rich plains of what we now call the Western District provided an irresistible opportunity for sheep grazing by squatting and leasing land under the Regulations. For those with the necessary capital, fortunes were to be made from wool. The settlers and the early Melbourne press had picked up from Major T.L. Mitchell, the Surveyor-General of New South Wales, the name for this newly developing part of the Colony of New South Wales in the District of Port Phillip, "Australia Felix".³⁰ Felix translated from Latin, means "fertile, fortunate, propitious".

So popular did the new district become that the population grew from 224 in 1836 to 11,738 in 1841, to 32,879 in 1846, and in the last pre-goldrush census in 1851, to 77,345.³¹ The number of sheep in the Port Phillip District increased from 780,000 in 1841 to over 5 million in 1851; the number of cattle rose from 51,000 to 390,000 in the same period. Exports of wool grew eighteen-fold to over 18 million pounds in weight. It is estimated that before the gold rush in 1851 the population of Melbourne was over 23,000.³² Even to a casual observer Melbourne was the boom town in Australia, but by our standards it was still a small country town.

The young Benjamins, Solomon in particular, must have been infected by the fervour of this "rush" to Port Phillip, and they had interpreted the signs of coming prosperity correctly.

A year after the Benjamins had established their shop in Melbourne, *The Port Phillip Patriot* and *Melbourne Advertiser*, on 11 June 1840, carried an advertisement in the names of both David and Solomon, in conjunction with other lessees, warning prospective purchasers that they held a four year lease in premises being sold on behalf of Mr. E. Umphelby at the corner of Collins and Queen Streets. Umphelby had bought Lot 1, Section 13, on the north east corner at the first Melbourne land sale in June 1837. An advertisement of the mortgagees' sale of Umphelby's property, in the same newspaper, describes it as having a frontage of 132 feet to Collins Street and including "an established hotel, splendid shops ... a commodious residence suitable for a merchant". These two advertisements taken together confirm that the hotel premises referred to in the Benjamin advertisement for the opening of Cheapside House were in the building on the North East corner of Collins and Queen Streets, where the ANZ "Gothic" bank now stands. Cheapside House had its frontage to Collins Street.

Throughout this period, until March 1840, all the advertisements for the store continued to be in the name of David Benjamin only as a branch of the Launceston business. In March 1840 the name of the firm was changed to "D. & S. Benjamin" in both Melbourne and Launceston.³³ Probably this step was undertaken now that Solomon had turned 21. It was in these Collins Street premises that the early Jewish community gathered in sufficient numbers to obtain the first *minyan* in Melbourne which celebrated *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur* in 1840.³⁴ Aron and Arndt recount that the services were held in the Benjamin shop, but one wonders whether Solomon was also occupying the "commodious residence" and that the services might have been held there. Indeed Aron and Arndt have recorded that Solomon "had set apart a special room in his house for worship, and Asher Hymen Hart conducted regular services there ..."³⁵

At that time stock for the Melbourne branch of the business was sent from Launceston by David rather than Solomon ordering direct from London.³⁶

Whilst the sheep population of the District increased rapidly, Melbourne was still developing only slowly. Georgiana McRae arrived there in March 1841. This is her description of how, a few days after her arrival, she and her daughter

perambulated the town ..., that is to say, we went up the north side of Collins Street, without any sign of pavement; only a rough road, with crooked gutters — the shops built of wood and raised on stumps.³⁷

In 1841 the census numbered the Jewish community at 57, and in that year there were sufficient numbers for the community to hold their New Year and Day of Atonement services in a newly built hotel.³⁸

In the *Port Phillip Herald* on 8 February 1842, the firm of D. & S. Benjamin was described as operating stores in both Melbourne and Launceston as "Haberdashers, Hosiers and Clothiers" which sold "silks and satins, ribbons laces and bonnets" as well as boots and shoes and "eight cases of water proof hats"! It was catering for more sophisticated tastes than the frontier-style basic items that were carried three years before.

The brothers bought a block of land at Williamstown in the third Port Phillip land sale which was held on 10 September 1840. They put a building on it with, it would seem, the intention that it would serve as a warehouse. Large vessels carrying cargo could not get over the bar at the mouth of the Yarra to the wharves in the town.³⁹ The only wharf

in Port Phillip was one constructed by convict labour at Williamstown. The warehouse would allow their goods to be unloaded from the overseas vessels into boats and landed in some safety at the wharf. The goods could then be stored and sent on to Melbourne by smaller vessels when the weather was suitable. The arrangement did not last long; the Yarra mouth was opened to larger ships and a shop on the site was advertised for rent in 1841.⁴⁰ In 1842 Melbourne was the size of a small country town with a population of perhaps 6,000.⁴¹ Nevertheless, in August of that year it was granted formal recognition as a City with a Corporation, a Council and a Mayor. In 1842 the Colony of New South Wales, of which the Port Phillip District was a part, was granted a system of representative government with 24 elected members and 12 appointed by the Governor. The Port Phillip District was to return six of the 24 elected members.

However, the years from 1842 to 1845 saw the first major depression in the Australian economy. The Melbourne newspapers carried a new list of bankruptcies in each issue. More than 300 bankruptcies, in this small country town, were registered by 1845.⁴² In mid-1843 the climate of business in Melbourne was described by one newspaper, with marvellous understatement, as if it was commenting on the weather, as "still continued dull".⁴³

The city of Melbourne at this time was described by another commentator in these terms

Throughout the whole of 1843 the aspect presented by the city and its inhabitants was most cheerless. The appearance of the town was scattered, the thoroughfares were unformed and studded, and traversed by ravines, even in Collins Street, from which bullock drays had to be dug; and in one instance two children were drowned in the waters at the end of Elizabeth Street.⁴⁴

Partly because of the depression and partly because retailers of those days operated by somewhat different rules, the next few years saw frenetic attempts to stimulate trade. It was in this environment that Solomon Benjamin, because at this time David was still in Launceston running the business there, ran a large display advertisement in the *Port Phillip Gazette* on 12 August 1843 which informed the citizens of Melbourne that the Benjamins were

selling off ... [from] Cheapside House ... the oldest establishment in Melbourne ... at unprecedented low prices ... for cash only ... the whole of their extensive stock ... in consequence of business of importance requiring their presence in England ...⁴⁵

For the first time in all his many advertisements in the Melbourne local press, Solomon advised his customers that no business would be done on Saturdays until after 6 pm. at the end of the Sabbath. These advertisements ran on the front page of the *Port Phillip Gazette* until the first week of November.⁴⁶ One wonders whether the opening time of the shop was made later as the hours of daylight extended into the summer.

The advertisement was successful. The *Port Phillip Gazette* reported the Benjamin "imminent departure" as a news item on 16 August 1843, and another paper reported that the Benjamin shop was crowded from morning to night with cash customers, and it was "supposed" that the shop took at least £2,000 in the last twelve days.⁴⁷ Solomon's advertisements were continued in each issue of the paper for several months.

This brought a reaction from the other retailers in town. Harris & Marks came up with an alternative reason for a forced realisation sale of their stock. On 27 August, ten days after the Benjamin advertisement appeared, the *Port Phillip Gazette* carried a full page display advertisement from Harris & Marks that their partnership was to be dissolved and that, as a consequence, the whole of their

rich and extensive stock ... was to be sold off immediately ... for ready money only ... to wind up the affairs of their establishments.

This advertisement carried a small note at its foot that a number of other firms, would be selling off their stock because of the dissolution of their partnerships.

There was a sound legal reason for the dissolution of partnerships. Such notices appeared frequently in the newspapers of the day. In order to avoid the difficulties of partners being involved in each others' financial problems, public notices in the newspapers advising of the dissolution of partnerships were required. However, the dissolution of a partnership did not, of itself, necessitate the realisation of stock. It was, said the editorial in the *Port Phillip Patriot*, the result of

all the respectable haberdashers of the town [holding] a meeting at which it was determined that all like Harris & Marks [would] "dissolve partnership", sell "for cash only" at an "immense sacrifice"

in order to compete with the Benjamins and Harris & Marks. The major retailers of Melbourne, many of whom were Jewish,⁴⁸ advertised in the *Port Phillip Gazette* on 29 August 1843 that they had dissolved their partnerships. The signatories to this advertisement included the Benjamins, Cashmore, E. & I. Hart, J. Levey & Co. and the later well-known Sydney firm of Anthony Hordern.

On 27 October 1843 Solomon Benjamin ran another large advertisement in the *Port Phillip Herald*. This advised of "further reductions in the drapery trade" due to the arrival of some new stock purchased by their London agents from a bankrupt estate. In small print at the foot of the advertisement was a small notice that

D. and S. B ... inform ... the public ... that they cannot leave the colony as soon as they anticipated on account of the above shipment.

This behaviour by Solomon raises a series of questions concerning his motives and the truthfulness of his business strategies. As mentioned earlier, Solomon was still running his "selling off" advertisements on 8 November in the *Port Phillip Gazette*, and the goods that arrived in October must have been shipped from London at least three months previously and would have been ordered at least three months before that. It is possible, but unlikely, that their London agent bought the goods and just sent this "immense quantity of goods" without quite specific instructions from his principals.

Was Solomon just undertaking a successful marketing exercise, with little regard for the truth, in order to combat a general downturn in trade because of the depression? Michael Cannon, in *Old Melbourne Town*⁴⁹ concluded, presumably from the original advertisement, that the Benjamins "closed down their 'Cheapside House' in Collins Street in 1843 rather than become insolvent. They returned from England after the depression and reopened." This is clearly inaccurate. David was still in Launceston and had in fact opened a second shop there, the Launceston Emporium in Charles Street, in addition to Tamar House⁵⁰. The continuing advertisements by Solomon in the name of "D. and S. Benjamin" throughout the succeeding years preclude such a conclusion.

One further piece of evidence intrudes. Moses Benjamin, the second eldest of the four brothers arrived in Melbourne from London with his entire family in December 1843. Such a major family move would not have occurred without extensive correspondence between Solomon, David and Moses extending over many months, taking into account the three, or more, months delay in receiving a letter from either destination. As we shall see later, Moses arrived with a large stock of his own goods. Was Solomon really intending to sell off his goods and leave the business for Moses, who would stock it

afresh? Again it is the fact of Solomon having ordered his own new stock from London which makes it unlikely that he was getting out of the business to leave it for his older brother.

The conclusion seems to be that it was just a clever piece of marketing by Solomon, but, by our standards, it is curious that he was not censured either by the press or by his competitors for this behaviour. Indeed it would seem that the community of Melbourne retailers were only concerned that they had not thought of the idea first. By late October 1843 it was being copied by others. Charles Williamson & Co. started taking front page space in the *Port Phillip Patriot* on 23 October 1843 advising that they were "selling off cheap", an advertisement that was continued in each issue of the paper until 2 November.

Concerned about the severity of the Depression,⁵¹ the New South Wales Legislative Council had appointed a Select Committee to inquire into the cause of the "Monetary Confusion". With an earnestness that has a familiar ring to the citizens of Australia one hundred and fifty years later, the Committee reported back that in their view the causes were a fall in international commodity prices (wool), high interest rates, unrealistically high prices for land, and inflated wage levels. The last was due to the cessation of convict labour. Then, as now, they just had to wait and hope that it all would pass, sooner or later.

The Benjamin business continued to prosper. The *Port Phillip Patriot* carried a small advertisement in February 1844, just a few months after the alarms and excursions of the competing sales, which advised the public that Cheapside House had now removed to new "extensive premises" in Collins Street with an "immense assortment of ready made clothing".⁵² Despite all these advertisements appearing in the name of "D. and S. Benjamin", it must be remembered that David was still in Launceston looking after the business there.

Reference must be made here to the engraving of Cheapside House which is reproduced with this article, parts of which have been reproduced elsewhere.⁵³ As can be seen from this reproduction it is of what was then called a "billhead", or what we now refer to as an invoice. The engraving was done by the firm of Thomas Ham. Ham had set up in business in Melbourne in October 1843.⁵⁴ The earliest copy of the billhead discovered is the one reproduced here; it is dated December 1844,⁵⁵ but we can date the Ham etching as March 1844. It is of the shop that Solomon moved to in February 1844 and not of the original Cheapside House near the corner of Queen Street where the religious services were held. Fawcner's *Port Phillip Patriot* of 21 March 1844 carried the following report

We have been shown a copper-plate engraving exhibiting the front view of Messrs. D. and S. Benjamin's new shop in Collins Street, as completed, which has recently been executed by Mr. Thomas Ham, and which we feel are not exaggerating in describing as superior to anything we have hitherto seen executed in the Australian Colonies.⁵⁶

This paragraph continues its fulsome praise of the etching and "the able artist" who executed it, and goes on to recommend Ham's services to the population of Melbourne. As Ham's biographer comments, there might have been some bias for Fawcner was by then a close friend of Ham's.⁵⁷

A close examination of other billheads which used Ham etchings suggest that either the Benjamin engraving became a stylised version of a shopfront used by Ham for the stationery of other shops; or other shopkeepers copied the Benjamin shopfront. The billheads prepared by Ham for the shops of Harris & Marks and William Williamson show almost identical ground floor shopfronts.⁵⁸



Engraved letterhead, Benjamin Brothers, December 1844
(acknowledgements to Dr T.A. Darragh & the Latrobe Library)

In early 1844 there was a quaint, by our standards, public exchange of insults by way of newspaper advertising between Harris & Marks and Cashmore. The former advertised in the *Port Phillip Herald* on 26 January that they had received a shipment of "Rutland Dunstable" bonnets and this meant that the existing fashion of "drawn bonnets are an article quite out". Cashmore obviously still had a substantial stock of drawn bonnets. In the next issue of the paper he advertised that the Harris & Marks advertisement was a "jumble of nonsense" and to prove "the utter falsity of the advertisement in question" referred his customers to the August and September issues of the Paris and London fashion magazines. In a separate advertisement Cashmore extolled the virtues of drawn silk bonnets.

All this was just a prelude to a further full scale battle amongst the town's retailers during that year. It was provoked by Mr. R. Spence who opened a shop in Elizabeth Street in close proximity to both the Cashmore and the Benjamin shops. Spence's method of operation was to buy the stocks from bankrupt businesses in Sydney, bring the goods to Melbourne and to sell at heavily discounted prices. The distribution of handbills and the posting of notices around the town were common methods of advertising in addition to the use of newspapers. It would seem that Solomon had suggested in his handbills that Spence's goods were not up to the Benjamin standard. In response, Spence claimed in a letter to the editor of the *Port Phillip Patriot*, dated 15 July 1844 and signed "Anti-Monopolist", that the other shops had established price rings. The letter made reference to the Benjamins, Cashmore and Harris & Marks and, no doubt, was a thinly veiled reference to the meetings of the "respectable haberdashers" of the town in August 1843 which, as already mentioned, had been disclosed by the *Patriot*. This drew an angry rejoinder from Harris & Marks that they would pay £5 to any two persons who could show that they had been involved in a price ring. Spence advertised in the *Port Phillip Herald* stressing that his establishment was not "the Benjamins"⁵⁹ and took a large display advertisement in the *Patriot*

thanking his worthy neighbour and competitor D.S. Benjamin, Esquire [sic] for giving more publicity [in his handbills] to his situation than it was possible for him to have done.⁶⁰

After an exchange of angry letters to the editor of the *Patriot* between Spence and Harris & Marks during rest of July 1844, retailing seems to have settled back into the comparative quiet of a small country town.

The movement of Cheapside House from one location to another in Collins Street continued. The already mentioned move in 1844 to the "extensive" premises previously occupied by Mr. Mason, the ironmonger,⁶¹ was followed two years later to even larger premises just two doors east of their original shop near the corner of Queen Street. This

was on Allotment 3 of the first Melbourne subdivision. The Valuation Book of property in the Port Phillip District for 1845-46 shows D. & S. Benjamin, "drapers", as occupiers of 47 Collins Street West, a property owned by Mr. Burdekin of Sydney, and described as a "large shop, four apartments, kitchen and store".⁶² The lease for these premises was signed by David, Solomon and Moses Benjamin, but it was surrendered on 23 May 1848.⁶³ It is likely that the Benjamins had purchased this property for Mr. Burdekin. In that year they were listed as the owners of very similar sounding premises, which were described as two stories in height. The description of the premises read "large shop, divided, stables, shed, large room, kitchen, cellar, upstairs four rooms".⁶⁴ However, it would seem that Cheapside House was to move yet again. In the *Melbourne Commercial and Squatters' Directory* of 1851 the business of David, Solomon and Moses Benjamin is listed at 49 Great Collins Street West. The numbers of the premises must have been changed, for this was 12 doors down from the Queen Street corner towards Elizabeth Street on the Northern side.

Moses Benjamin

Moses, the second eldest son, just one year younger than the eldest brother Samuel, ten years older than David and 13 years older than Solomon, had married in London when he was 25. He had apparently settled down there with his wife and their six children. Not, it would seem, for Moses were these adventurous journeys to the other side of the world undertaken by his brothers in search of wives and fortunes. Moses enters our story through the eyes of another emigrant to Australia, Alfred Joyce.

In 1896 Alfred Joyce wrote the reminiscences of his life in Australia which were published under the title *A Homestead History*.⁶⁵ Alfred's father, Thomas had made his fortune in London manufacturing bulls-eye lamps for the newly formed London police, and was part owner of two ships. Alfred's brother, George, had taken a free passage to Port Phillip in 1840 on one of them, the 350 ton barque *London*, having "become very much excited with the fortunes that were to be made in the new colony". Three years later Alfred, "induced" by his brother's letters, followed in the same ship. It sailed on 20 September 1843 and arrived in Port Phillip Bay on 30 December.

The *London* was not an emigrant ship offering cheap passage. It had accommodation for only 13 saloon passengers who paid £50 each, four intermediate passengers at £35 each and 12 steerage passengers at £20 each. Alfred Joyce travelled free as a saloon passenger. His reminiscences included a reference to

a Jewish family in the intermediate, consisting of father, mother and a numerous family, [who] had the adjoining cabin to us; they eventually became wealthy and prominent citizens of Melbourne. One of the boys was several times recently Mayor of Melbourne and is now Sir Benjamin Benjamin.⁶⁶

The family that Joyce referred to was that of Moses Benjamin and his wife Catherine. Moses was born in London on 11 October 1805; Catherine was born in 1801. They were married in London in 1829. Their "numerous children" were Rebecca then aged 13, Rachel 11, Benjamin 9, Elias 6, David 4 and Frances 3.⁶⁷ By our standards intermediate cabins were far from spacious. Presumably the family occupied the four berths available for intermediate passengers, but even travelling in this comparative comfort, three months in the confines of a small sailing ship with six young children to watch over and care for must have been, to say the least, a somewhat wearing experience.

Moses Benjamin's journey to Melbourne in 1843 was to join his younger half-brother, Solomon. Moses too, despite his age and young family, had been "induced" by his brothers' letters concerning the "fortunes that were to be made in the new colony" to try his hand there as well.

Moses, when he arrived in Melbourne with his family in December 1843, did not go into business with his brothers. In February 1844 he opened his own drapery and clothing shop in Albert House, Collins Street, "next door to Mr. D. Young's, Grocer". Moses advertised in several issues of the *Port Phillip Herald*⁶⁸ that he had just arrived on the *London* with a large and extensive stock of drapery and clothing. The stock included 700 dozen shirts and 2,000 pairs of trousers! Moses followed the example set recently by Solomon of not trading on the Sabbath by adding a PS. that

no business transacted between 6 o'clock on Friday and 6 o'clock on Saturday evenings.

Other Jewish traders' advertisements did not carry any comment on Saturday trading. In 1845 Moses was recorded as occupying 7 Collins Street West, a "wood house, 4 rooms and back premises".⁶⁹ This was three doors up from the corner of Elizabeth Street on the northern side. Whether this was the Albert House of Moses' advertisement is not clear. The same register mentions Michael Cashmore as occupying the premises on the North West corner of Collins and Elizabeth Streets described as "wood house, 2 small rooms".⁷⁰

For the next two years Moses continued in business in Albert House on his own. In 1846 the Melbourne newspapers were carrying advertisements, side by side, on their front pages, one by Moses and the other by D. and S. Benjamin, both proclaiming the virtues of their own latest shipment of clothing and accessories for ladies which had just arrived from London. The D. and S. Benjamin advertisements went so far as to make the point, "Observe — No connection with any other House in Port Phillip".⁷¹

In a well-regulated family such competition could not go on for ever. By a public notice dated 30 March 1846, in the *Port Phillip Herald* of 9 April, Moses announced that he was closing his shop and entering into partnership with the "firm" of D. and S. Benjamin. In the same paper a large advertisement by D. and S. advised the public of Melbourne of their partnership with Moses and that they would trade as "D. S. and M. Benjamin" at the same address, Cheapside House, "having considerably enlarged their premises". After this move the brothers stopped using the stationery with the Ham engraving referred to earlier. The billhead for the three brothers in partnership was simple printed paper showing "D. S. and M. Benjamin, Cheapside House, Collins Street."⁷²

Moses had become involved in communal activities. Within two years of his arrival he was elected treasurer of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, a position that he held for three years to 1849; later he was made a trustee of the congregation.⁷³

If the younger of the Benjamin brothers had come to the distant antipodean colonies of Van Diemens Land and the New South Wales settlement at Port Phillip in order to make a quick fortune and then to return "home" to London, it would seem that Moses had different motives. He was, by the standards of the little settlement of Melbourne, an old man of 38 when he arrived in 1843 with his wife and family. His must have been a very different decision, by comparison with his younger brothers', who were scarcely out of their teens when they made their journeys half way round the world. What sort of life Moses left behind him in London is not known, nor why he made the decision to move his family to the other end of the world.

Gold

In the family archives there is a cutting from the San Francisco Jewish newspaper *Emanuel* of 21 April 1905. It is an obituary to Benjamin Benjamin, which reads in part

In a few years the three brothers ... amassed a great fortune as the foremost merchants and principal goldbuyers in the colony ... in addition they very wisely pinned their fate in the

future of the place by purchasing real estate. David Benjamin returned to London where he died worth \$5,000,000. His brother, Solomon Benjamin also died in London worth \$3,000,000. Moses Benjamin ... died in Melbourne also worth \$3,000,000.

Determining the extent to which the brothers were involved in the gold trade of the Colony is difficult, although the size of their estates is known. The values of those estates were not quite as reported.

The gold rush began in earnest in Victoria in September 1851 when two miners arrived in Geelong with 60 pounds weight of gold (worth some \$500,000 in 1995 values) that they had mined at Buninyong near Ballarat. A month later there were some 10,000 miners on the Ballarat diggings.⁷⁴ There was no formal market for gold and it was left to the private investor, finance dealers, auctioneers, shopkeepers, and a new class of commercial men, gold brokers, to fill this void. In mid-October Melbourne newspapers were carrying advertisements from those offering to buy gold from miners. On 22 October there were advertisements in the Melbourne *Daily News* by A.H. Hart and the auctioneering firm of Francis & Cohen (Edward Cohen⁷⁵) as buyers of gold and they were joined on the following day by the Benjamin brothers. Similar advertisements appeared in the Melbourne *Morning Herald*. Other members of the Jewish community, S.H. Harris, Montefiore & Co. and E. & I. Hart also advertised as gold buyers soon afterwards. A.H. Hart usually advertised his premises as being "next to the Melbourne Club", and on other occasions as just "next to the Club".

Less than three months after these first advertisements appeared, on 16 January 1852, the ship *Brilliant* sailed from Melbourne for London carrying a substantial cargo of gold.⁷⁶ The following day the Melbourne *Morning Herald* published the names of those whose consignments made up the gold cargo. The shipment totalled 55,077 ounces of which 8,000 ounces was consigned by "Benjamin". The next largest consignor was designated as "Lane" with just half the weight of gold shipped by the Benjamins, and the next largest was Dalgety & Gole with 3,172 ounces. E. & I. Hart with 909, Montefiore & Co. 850, and A.H. Hart with 750 ounces respectively were consignors of comparatively small amounts.

The price of gold in Melbourne at that time was approximately 63 shillings an ounce⁷⁷, which would have valued the shipment at some £175,000. This represented nearly 15 per cent of the estimated gold production of all the Australian colonies for the year 1851.⁷⁸ At 1995 prices of US \$388 an ounce, the whole shipment would have been valued at \$28.5 million and the Benjamin consignment at just over \$4 million. Even A.H. Hart's comparatively modest shipment would be valued today at nearly \$400,000.

Had the Benjamin brothers been in a position to buy such a huge value of gold from the miners, or was part of the shipment being sent on behalf of other buyers? It likely that it was the latter. It is noticeable, for instance, that Francis & Cohen were not amongst those listed as consignors of gold on the *Brilliant*. Cohen was by then Moses Benjamin's son-in-law and probably his firm's gold purchases were in the Benjamin consignment. Possibly they were acting for other smaller purchasers. After the *Brilliant* had sailed the Benjamin's newspaper advertisements as gold buyers declined and then stopped. It would seem that they had withdrawn from this market. But after such a substantial entry into the field why did they stop?

For an answer it is necessary to examine the banking industry as it existed in the Australian colonies in 1851. On 17 June in that year a client of the Bank of New South Wales wrote to the Bank asking if it would purchase, or lend against, gold from Bathurst. The Bank responded that it would not buy the gold but that, in common with its practice on other commodities produced in New South Wales, it would advance money against

shipping documents for goods that were despatched to London.⁷⁹ The other banks responded in the same manner. However, as the demands on all the banks ballooned for this manner of financing gold shipments, the banks found that their note supply and coin could not keep up with demand. Furthermore the Bank of New South Wales found that it was coming close to being in breach of its Act of Incorporation by the size of the note issue allowed by the Act. The ratio of deposits to notes and advances had reached critical limits.

In January 1852 the Sydney banks met to discuss the adequacy of reserves and agreed to a position where they would assist each other if necessary. At a meeting on 13 February there was unanimous agreement that the only solution was to buy gold to supplement their cash reserves. The following week the manager of the Bank of New South Wales in Melbourne was instructed to buy gold from anyone who would open a deposit account with the Bank and to credit the amount to the depositor's account. Advances against gold were discontinued. The Bank went further; it appointed buying agents on the goldfields who were remunerated by a commission of threepence an ounce.⁸⁰

Other Australian, and English, banks followed this example sooner or later, the only difference was in their buying procedures. Some, such as the Australasia, sent bank officers to the fields to purchase gold. Ultimately branch offices were established in the gold fields. In 1855 the Assistant Superintendent of the Australasia wrote

without these branches in the gold-fields it is quite apparent that we could not have conducted our exchange business [without] the advantage derived from increased deposits and circulation of notes, and other banks are now pushing the same business and purchasing gold without the intervention of brokers.⁸¹

The direct connection between the entry of banks into gold buying and the Benjamin brothers lies in two phrases in the history of the Bank of New South Wales. The first is

Purchases of gold by the Bank continued on a heavy scale throughout 1852 ... Vallack (the Melbourne manager) and his local directors in particular were active ...⁸²

The second is that David Benjamin was "briefly" a local director of the Bank of New South Wales.⁸³ It would seem that the Bank not only was in competition with private gold dealers, it made certain that its leading competitor was firmly part of the new establishment.

Goldman tells the story, which I have been unable to confirm from other sources, that the Benjamins' gold purchase had included a nugget weighing 440 ounces, which was displayed in their shop window. This, as they had hoped, drew large crowds to the shop. It was, for those early days, a large nugget.⁸⁴ It would have looked tiny if compared to later finds like the "Welcome Stranger" nugget which weighed 2,284 ounces.⁸⁵ Although the Benjamin brothers had entered the gold market in a serious way they could not resist an opportunity to bring custom to their shop.

It has been suggested that in the mid 1850s, by which time David and Solomon had returned to England, they had a further connection with the Victorian gold trade as the owners of ships. Solomon, in partnership with the Moses family, owned a ship which carried large cargoes of gold from the Colony to England.⁸⁶

The source of the great wealth that David and Solomon accumulated during this period lay in real estate as well as in gold. A search of land titles showed that the brothers had invested their earnings from Cheapside House in a wide selection of land and buildings. In partnership they owned property at Portland, Geelong, Kyneton, Williamstown,

Dandenong, Kilmore, Derrimut and Jika in addition to extensive holdings in the heart of Melbourne. The Melbourne City Council Householders' Roll Book, 1843-44 lists D. & S. Benjamin as the owners of a block of seven shops and attached dwellings, each described as "shop and two apartments", from rating numbers 53 to 65 in Collins Street West, which appears to have been between Queen and William Streets on the north side. The shops were occupied by small tradesmen — shoemakers, a tinsmith, watchmakers, and a hairdresser. The yearly rental value of each property was recorded as £35.⁸⁷ These holdings were in addition to the valuable Collins Street and Little Collins Street properties that David and Solomon, as described later, sold to their brother Moses.

David and Solomon and the Jewish Community

Both David and Solomon were very involved with the early Jewish communities. Solomon, who had married Miriam Nathan of Sydney in 1841,⁸⁸ was elected the first vice-president of the Melbourne Jewish Congregational Society in the same year. He was 23 years old. It was Solomon who moved the motion at a meeting of the Society in 1843 to approach the Government for a piece of land on which to erect a synagogue. In 1846 he was elected president. Re-elected the following year, he laid the foundation stone of the first synagogue built in Melbourne, the original Bourke Street synagogue, on 25 August 1847.⁸⁹ Solomon returned to London with his family in 1853. A number of Solomon's and Miriam's children were born in Melbourne; Miriam in 1842, Sarah in 1844, Louis, who died at eight months of age in 1847, Samuel in 1849, Charles in 1850 and Nathaniel in 1852.⁹⁰ Several of his children came to Melbourne in later years. One son, another Louis, who was born in London in 1863, became a congregational president; other descendants include Rabbi John Levi.⁹¹

David had remained in Launceston to run Tamar House while Solomon ran Cheapside House in Melbourne. David married Esther Solomon in Hobart in December 1840.⁹² The first two of their children were born in Launceston: Miriam in 1841 and Henry in 1845.⁹³ By 1841 David's business had expanded to the point where he opened another shop in Launceston, the "Launceston Emporium" in Charles Street.⁹⁴ David was president of the Launceston congregation when the synagogue in that city was consecrated on 26 March 1846.⁹⁵

A month earlier, David had started advertising that he would be closing his business in Launceston "in a few months" as he was "shortly to visit England" and was "selling off".⁹⁶ Shades of Solomon a few years earlier! These advertisements continued for several months, but in July a new advertisement proclaimed the closure of the Benjamin brothers' business in Launceston at the end of August and that stock was being sold at "20% under London cost price".⁹⁷

This time David was serious. He and his family moved permanently to Melbourne in October 1846. The shipping lists of both the Melbourne *Argus* and the *Port Phillip Herald* have Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin and their children travelling from Launceston to Melbourne aboard the *Shamrock* which arrived on the 15th. There are no shipping records of the family returning to Launceston. David is first mentioned in the records of the Jewish community in Melbourne in late 1846.⁹⁸ Another daughter, Jessie, was born in Melbourne in 1847; a son, Alfred, was born in Melbourne in 1848, as were the couple's next sons Louis, in 1850, and Edwin, in 1852.⁹⁹ David was president of the Melbourne congregation from 1851 to 1854. In 1853 he laid the foundation stone of the new Bourke Street synagogue. In that year he allowed the use of his "extensive" Collins Street shop for overflow services for the *Yom Tovim* because the synagogue was too small to hold the whole congregation.¹⁰⁰ David also became involved in the general community; in 1849 he was elected to the committee which formed the institution to

"house the deserving poor" of Melbourne, the Melbourne Benevolent Society;¹⁰¹ he was also, as already mentioned, a local director of the Bank of New South Wales and a director of the Australian Joint Stock Bank.¹⁰² He returned to England with his family in 1854.

Both Solomon and David were substantial benefactors to the synagogue in Melbourne and to the community generally. The brothers contributed half of the £160 raised by the community for the construction of the first synagogue in 1847.¹⁰³ David commissioned the architect who designed the second Bourke Street synagogue and gave the, then, huge sum of £1,000 towards the building.¹⁰⁴

On 3 January 1853 both Solomon and the family business published public notices in the press asking for any outstanding accounts to be presented for settlement. Solomon was readying to depart from the Colony.¹⁰⁵ On 12 January 1853 Solomon was given a dinner by "about fifty of the principal members of the Hebrew persuasion at a sumptuous entertainment". David Benjamin was in the chair. Solomon was presented with a "bag of Victorian gold" with the suggestion that he should have it made into a suitable cup in London.¹⁰⁶ The newspaper did not report the size of the bag. Perhaps this was a standard measure. One of the toasts to Solomon during the evening was to

publicly thank him for his long continued zeal on behalf of the well being of his Jewish brethren in this Colony and the cause of Judaism generally during his residence among us.¹⁰⁷

David was also given a dinner prior to his departure just two years later. This was a civic function chaired by the Mayor of Melbourne and with Mr. A. Russell MLC as "croupier".¹⁰⁸

Both men continued to serve the Melbourne congregation for many years afterwards. They, together with Asher Hymen Hart, who returned to London on the same ship as David, constituted an unofficial "London Committee" for the Congregation.¹⁰⁹ In that capacity David had ordered the ark and the lamps for the new Bourke Street synagogue which were shipped from London in 1855.¹¹⁰ David never returned to Australia, although Solomon came back to Melbourne on a brief visit in 1878.¹¹¹



*David and Solomon Benjamin in middle age
photographed in England
(from the Chuck Collection; reproduced with acknowledgement
to the State Library of Victoria)*

The Question of the Returning "Nabobs"¹¹²

There are still difficult questions to explore. Did the brothers David and Solomon only decide to retire from Victoria after the gold rush? This had made them very rich men not only by their gold dealings but by the windfall increase in value of their extensive real estate holdings, which they were clever or lucky enough to realise before the deflation that was to follow. If they had always intended to return, why had Moses, come to Melbourne with his wife and large family with, apparently, a clear intention of staying?

An historian of the early settlers of the pastoral Western District of Victoria, Margaret Kiddle, wrote of two periods when British "squatters" sold up in Australia and retired "home" to England. The first was during the late 1840s and early 1850s before the gold rush, and the second was the period after the gold rush.¹¹³ A brief survey of entries in P. Mennell, *The Dictionary of Australasian Biography*, Hutchinson, London, 1892, indicates that perhaps three to four per cent of his Australian entries retired to Britain. Such important names in Australian early history as A'Beckett, Angas, Austin, Blythe, Holt, King and Westgarth are among the many who did so. Nathan, as mentioned in a previous footnote, also mentions the many members of his family who returned to England as wealthy men.

This aspect of British migration to Australia during the nineteenth century deserves closer examination than it can be accorded here.

Samuel Benjamin

Samuel, the eldest of the four Benjamin brothers, was the first to arrive in Australia. He was 29 years old when he left London for Sydney on 1 May 1833, arriving on 13 November, having first visited Hobart. He set up in business in Sydney at 44 Lower George Street, in partnership with his brother-in-law, Elias Moses; later they established branches at 321 George Street and in Windsor. The partners moved to Goulburn, New South Wales, in 1837 and later built the Argyle Store. This establishment, reputedly the last of its kind on the overland route between Sydney and Melbourne, dealt in everything of use to the early settlers, from pistols and fowling pieces to sheep shears and woolpacks. Another Argyle Store was established at Queanbeyan, and the partners built a substantial boiling-down works in Goulburn which at the height of the season employed 100 men.¹¹⁴ Samuel and Elias Moses had acquired sufficient wealth that at the 1839 Melbourne land sale they bought two blocks of city land as investments. For £75 they bought the block at the north east corner of Collins and Spring Streets, and for £80 the block on the north east corner of Flinders and Spring Streets.¹¹⁵ Samuel married Rachel, the youngest sister of his partner. They had several children who died in childhood, but one son and three daughters did survive. Samuel served on the board of the Bridge Street synagogue, was on the building committee of the York Street synagogue and then on its first board of management. He died in Sydney on 4 December 1854. Rachel also died in Sydney eight years later.¹¹⁶

Moses stayed on in Melbourne

Before Solomon and David left Melbourne they sold Moses two of the blocks of land that they held in the City. The first, in 1849 at the pre gold rush price of £195, was in the then residential section of Collins Street. It was one block west of the south-west corner of Exhibition and Collins Streets, where the Athenaeum Club now stands.

Moses built his home there.¹¹⁷ His next door neighbour on the western side was Edward Cohen.¹¹⁸ The other block which Moses bought from his brothers was in Little Collins Street, on the southern side, just short of the Queen Street intersection, and had a

warehouse building on it. This transaction, which took place in 1852 after the start of the gold rush, was concluded at the price of £7,500.

It was in these latter premises that Moses conducted his business after his brothers' departure. He became a wholesaler rather than staying on in the retail business. In 1858 he described himself as an "importer", and was trading as "M. Benjamin & Son". The "son" in the title of the firm was his eldest son Benjamin Benjamin. Moses was still in partnership with his brothers in England who acted as his buying agents there.¹¹⁹ Moses, who became a JP., lived on in Melbourne until his death in 1885 at the "ripe age", as it was expressed in the Melbourne *Mirror* of 16 November 1888, of 80. "The figure of the venerable octogenarian was long familiar to most inhabitants of this city" continued the *Mirror*. The family holds a portrait in oils on canvas of Moses painted late in his life by Goodwyn Lewin. The painting is undated but Moses is portrayed as a fine patrician gentleman with a full beard.

Benjamin Benjamin

Whilst it is really outside the scope of this paper a brief sketch of the life of Moses' eldest son, Benjamin, is mentioned by way of a *coda*. Benjamin continued his education when he arrived in Melbourne at the age of nine in 1842 at an "academy" conducted by a Reverend W.H. Jarrett. As we have seen, he joined his father in business. On 5 August 1857 he married Fanny Cohen in Sydney. Fanny, born in Sydney in 1839, was the daughter of Abraham Cohen. When Benjamin Benjamin's father retired in 1864, Benjamin went into partnership with Edward Cohen to conduct a tea importing and general commission agency. Cohen was not only Benjamin's brother-in-law, having married Benjamin's elder sister, Rebecca, in 1847; Cohen was also Fanny Benjamin's uncle.¹²⁰ The partnership ended with Cohen's death in 1877. A year later Benjamin retired from business and devoted himself to municipal affairs, a political life and to Jewish communal affairs.¹²¹

Edward Cohen was a role model for his younger brother-in-law. Cohen was elected to the Melbourne City Council in 1854 and became Mayor in 1863. In 1861 he had entered politics as a member of the Legislative Assembly. He served twice as Commissioner (Minister) for Trade and Customs, from 1869 to 1870, and again from 1872 to 1874.¹²² Cohen was president of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation on four occasions between 1854 and 1866.¹²³

Benjamin and Fanny Benjamin were the parents of 16 children. The first child was born in 1858 and the sixteenth in 1885. Fanny was 18 when she married and bore her first child and 46 when she bore the youngest. Benjamin and his family lived first in Collins Street East, at number 170, which was further towards Spring Street than his father Moses' home, on the southern side between Exhibition and Spring Streets. As the family grew in size and number Benjamin moved in 1863 to a house at 5 Victoria Parade, Fitzroy (where St. Vincent's Hospital now stands) and then to the mansion "Canally" that he built in 1870 at the north west corner of George and Powlett Streets in East Melbourne.¹²⁴ The house was named after a grazing property near the Murray River that Benjamin and Edward Cohen had owned in partnership.

Benjamin Benjamin outdid Cohen, and indeed all other figures in the Melbourne Jewish community of the time, in his service to the congregation. He was treasurer from 1860 to 1865, president from 1868 to 1875 and president again in 1879 and in 1885. He entered municipal politics on the Melbourne City Council in 1870 serving on that body for more than twenty years. He was elected Mayor in 1887, and again in 1888.

That was the year of the Australian Centennial Exhibition which was held at the

Melbourne Exhibition Buildings. As Mayor, Benjamin played host on behalf of the City. The Exhibition was the centre-piece for the celebration of the first hundred years of white settlement in Australia. Not only were all the Australasian Colonies included in the Exhibition, but there was representation from Britain, Germany, Belgium, France, Austria, Italy and the Netherlands.¹²⁵ In recognition of the part he had played in this extravaganza, which with Garden Parties, At Homes, balls, Government House parties and Mayoral functions, lasted throughout the autumn, Benjamin Benjamin was knighted in 1888.¹²⁶ In that year, as Mayor, he opened the newly built, and still standing, Princes Bridge over the Yarra. The following year he was elected to the Legislative Council. This was the pinnacle of his career. Three years later he resigned from all his offices in both the general and the Jewish community. He had been declared a bankrupt.

The cause of his financial demise lay in his investment in, and chairmanship of, the Imperial Banking Company. In a pattern that is now familiar to us in the 1990s, all the banks in the Australian colonies had, during the late 1880s and early 1890s, lent substantial sums on the security of booming real estate and financial markets. A collapse of these markets led to a major financial crisis from which they took more than a decade to recover. By 1893 thirteen of the eighteen major banks, and many smaller ones, operating in Australia had failed.¹²⁷ Benjamin may have been able to ride out this storm if he had not been forced to realise his assets during the debacle. The coup-de-grace of Benjamin's financial crisis was his personal guarantee, given on behalf of the Imperial Bank, for a loan from the Bank of South Australia, which, it was hoped would have saved the Imperial. It did not. When, in due course, the Bank of South Australia also failed, its liquidators sought to recover from Benjamin and his fellow directors. Benjamin and the other directors fought the recovery action against them, unsuccessfully, in the Victorian Supreme Court adding plaintiff's costs to their own costs of defending the case.¹²⁸ With the depressed value of his own investments, Benjamin was unable to meet the guarantee and these commitments; he was forced into bankruptcy. There is nothing in the records of his financial demise that indicates that he did not behave at all times with the utmost probity and dignity. Nevertheless both he and his family were bitterly ashamed of what had happened. It was, to them a great social as well as a financial disaster. The latter was easier to live with than the former.¹²⁹ Benjamin retired from all his municipal, legislative and communal positions. He lived on in his retirement from public life and office until 1905.

Reprise

Moses' estate was sworn for probate in Melbourne at £201,504, a huge sum for the times.¹³⁰ David's and Solomon's estates were valued for probate at approximately £100,000 each.¹³¹

Of the four brothers who were so heavily involved with the development of colonial Australia and its Jewish communities in such an early period of its white history, the only direct line of Benjamin descendants now in Australia are from one brother, Moses. Although Samuel died in Sydney, it is believed that his male descendants went to England.

Two of the brothers used their stay in the Colonies as an economic springboard to finance a comfortable early retirement in London. Whether this was their original intention when they sailed to Van Diemens Land as youngsters is impossible to tell. Perhaps they intended to stay but found that their wealth, that was within their reach by selling off their assets during the gold rush, would fund an unexpected retreat to England, and proceeded down that path. The only conclusion that is reasonably sure is that Moses, who migrated with his wife and six children when he was nearly 40 years old, was not adventuring but was making a permanent move.

A Benjamin Family Tree (very much foreshortened)

Abraham Benjamin (b.1760; d.1826)

Lyon Benjamin (b.1779, London; d.1862, London)

Samuel	Moses	David	Solomon
b.1804, London	b.1805, London	b.1815, London	b.1818, London
d.1854, Sydney	d.1885, Melbourne	d.1893, London	d.1888, London

Benjamin

b.1834, London; d.1905, Melbourne

Oswald

b.1884, Melbourne; d.1944, Melbourne

Rodney

b.1930, Melbourne

This very abbreviated family tree is offered to highlight only the central characters mentioned in this story and to disclose the author's lineal interest in the subject. It is offered with apologies to the many women who were essential to its creation (literally). To the many children of Samuel, Moses, David and Solomon, to Sir Benjamin Benjamin's 16 off-spring and to their children, to my late brother and his four children and their children, and to my own four children and their children, I say that I am sorry that you are not all shown. The tree has been simplified and truncated to illustrate this tale for the general reader.

NOTES

1. This appellation of the post gold rush Melbourne, which is now part of the Australian vernacular, was coined by the English journalist G.A. Sala after a visit in 1885. Graeme Davison's book, *The Rise and Fall of Marvellous Melbourne*, Melbourne University Press, 1978, was responsible for the present currency of the phrase.
2. In the British Census return for 1861 (RG 9/11 Folios 86 & 87. pp. 46 and 47) David, who was then living at 86 Westbourne Terrace, Paddington, listed his birthplace as Bloomsbury, London.
3. H.T. Nathan, "The Benefits of a Conviction", *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, Vol. XIII, 1995, Part 1, suggests that English Jews were pushed by the "oppression of a xenophobic society" to emigrate to the Australian colonies and pulled by "commercial rewards, unfettered by social or religious constraints". p. 8.
4. Arthur Barnett, *The Western Synagogue Through Two Centuries, 1761-1961*, Valentine Mitchell, London, 1961, p. 41. I am grateful to Dr. Anthony Joseph for this reference, and for references to British census extracts relating to the Benjamin family used in this paper.
5. Copy of Lyon Benjamin's death certificate in the author's possession. Lyon died on 7 February 1862, aged 83, at his youngest son's (Solomon) home, at Brunswick House, Clifton Gardens, Middlesex. Lyon's own address is shown as being Harley House, New Road, Middlesex.
6. The entry for Moses in the Register of Deaths, Latrobe Library, Melbourne, gives his mother as Miriam.

7. J. Aron and J. Arndt, *The Enduring Remnant*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1992, p. 378, name Solomon's mother as Phirley; a family record gives her name as Phirely, and her date of death as February 1820.
 8. R. Broome, *The Victorians, Arriving*, Fairfax, Syme & Weldon, McMahon's Point, 1984, p. 20.
 9. G. Arden, of the *Australia Felix Gazette*, quoted by J. Bonwick, *Port Phillip Settlement*, Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, London, 1883, p. 454-5.
 10. William Westgarth, a Scot, lived in Melbourne for 17 years. In that time he took a prominent part in the movement for the separation of the Port Phillip settlement from New South Wales, campaigned vigorously against further convict transportation and was appointed chairman of the Commission appointed after Eureka to inquire into the grievances of the diggers. A financier, he settled in London where he specialised in arranging loans for the Australian colonial governments in the London market. P. Mennell, *The Dictionary of Australasian Biography*, Hutchinson, London, 1892, pp. 502-3.
 11. William Westgarth, *Personal Recollections of Early Melbourne & Victoria*, George Robertson, Melbourne, 1888. pp. 11, 17, 22.
 12. *Launceston Advertiser*, 12 July 1838.
 13. Advertisement in *Cornwall Chronicle*, 18 August 1838.
 14. *Port Phillip Gazette*, (hereafter PPG), 10 November 1838.
 15. PPG. 24 November 1838 and *Launceston Advertiser*, 6 December 1838.
 16. S. Adams and W. Bate, *Liardet's Water-colours of Early Melbourne*, Melbourne University Press, 1972, Robert Russell's Official Survey Map, plate opposite p. 10.
 17. J. Grant and G. Serle, *The Melbourne Scene 1803 - 1956*, Melbourne University Press, 1957. Sketch opposite p. 28.
 18. R.D. Murray, "A Summer at Port Phillip", quoted Grant and Serle, *op.cit.*, p. 32.
 19. E.M. Curr, "Recollections of Squatting in Victoria", quoted Grant and Serle, *op.cit.*, p. 35.
 20. M. Cannon (ed.), *Historical Records of Victoria*, Victorian Government Printing Office, Melbourne, 1984, Vol. 3, p. 432.
 21. "Garryowen", [E. Finn], *The Chronicles of Early Melbourne*, Melbourne, 1888, pp. 108-9.
 22. *Port Phillip Herald*, (hereafter PPH), 10 March 1840.
- D. and S. Benjamin were policy holders in the Company, insuring their stocks against fire. The Company failed during the depression of 1842. From the Company's records, Royal Historical Society archives, Melbourne.
23. As detailed later in this paper, it is clear that Solomon set up and ran the Benjamin shop in Melbourne. David continued the business in Launceston, and did not move to Melbourne until 1846.
 24. PPG, 16 February 1839. The *Launceston Advertiser* records the *Wallaby* leaving Georgetown for Port Phillip on an earlier trip, 11 January 1839, with 1,000 sheep aboard.
 25. *Launceston Advertiser*, No. 557, 14 February 1839, p. 2.
 26. A. Pratt, *The Centenary History of Victoria*, Robertson and Mullens, Melbourne, 1934, pp. 58, 64.

27. J.B. Were, *A Voyage from Plymouth to Melbourne in 1839*, Craftsman, Melbourne, 1990, p. 251.
28. W. Vamplew (ed.), *Australian Historical Statistics*, Fairfax Syme & Weldon, Sydney, 1987, pp. 114, 117.
29. C.M.H. Clark, *Select Documents in Australian History*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1965, Section 5.
30. C.M.H. Clark, *A History of Australia*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1979 edn. Vol.III, pp. 96-98. Mitchell was not much enamoured of Australia. When he discovered the area near what is now Hamilton in the Victorian Western District, Mitchell declared it "champagne country" and that it should be "English for thousands of years".
31. J.C. Caldwell, "Population", *Australian Historical Statistics, op.cit.*, Table POP 17-25.
32. M. Cannon, *Old Melbourne Town*, Loch Haven Books, Main Ridge, Victoria, 1991, pp. 8-10.
33. Advertisements in both *PPH* and *PPG* on 31 March 1840 and 29 March 1840 respectively; first advertisement in the *Launceston Advertiser* in the name of the partnership was 10 June 1840. In that paper David advertised the firm's "Branch Store, Cheapside House, Melbourne, Port Phillip".
34. Aron and Arndt, *op.cit.*, p. 4.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
36. *PPH*, 2 February and 23 March 1840 shipping lists both record two "cases of slops [men's working clothes]" shipped from Launceston to "Benjamin" in Melbourne.
37. H. Mcrae, *Georgiana's Journal*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1966, entry 9 March 1841.
38. Aron and Arndt, *op.cit.*, p. 5.
39. Georgiana McRae recorded that the mud bar at the mouth of the river prevented any boat drawing over seven feet from entering. Good weather was also necessary for crossing the bar. The McRaes had to wait four days before a small steam boat could take them off their ship in Port Phillip and up the river to Melbourne.
40. Advertisement in *PPG* 24 April 1841.
41. D. Garden, *Victoria, A History*, Nelson, Melbourne, 1984, p. 42. As a basis of comparison this would compare to the size of Kerang or Lakes Entrance in the mid 1990s.
42. Broome, *op.cit.*, p. 35.
43. *PPG*, 2 September 1843.
44. W. Fairfax, *Handbook to Australasia, Being a Brief Historical and Descriptive Account*, W.Fairfax & Co., Melbourne, 1859, pp. xxiv/xxv.
45. *PPG*, 16 August 1843, p. 1. There was one earlier advertisement on 12 August on an inside page of the paper.
46. *PPG*, 8 November 1843.
47. L.M. Goldman, *The Jews in Victoria in the Nineteenth Century*, published by the author, Melbourne, 1954, p. 45. Goldman quotes a newspaper article in full but does not give its source.
48. J.S. Levi and G.F.J. Bergman, *Australian Genesis, Jewish Convicts and Settlers 1788-*

1850, Rigby, Adelaide, 1974, counted 25 clothing shops owned by Jews and 22 owned by non-Jews in 1845; p. 296.

49. Cannon, *op.cit.*, p. 67.

50. *Cornwall Chronicle*, 12 June 1841.

51. Speaking generally of the Colony of New South Wales it was said that its "condition... was one of wide-spread bankruptcy ... [with] nearly 1400 insolvencies in Sydney..." Fairfax, *op.cit.*, p. xxiii.

52. *Port Phillip Patriot* (hereafter *PPP*), 19 February 1844.

53. H.L. Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria, 1835-1985*, George Allen & Unwin, North Sydney, 1986, p. 6. Rubinstein's notation to the illustration, which is not of the whole billhead, but just the building shown in the stationery, is that "Solomon Benjamin lived above this draper's shop ... Melbourne's first Jewish services were held there in 1840."

54. T.A. Darragh, *The Establishment and Development of Engraving and Lithography in Melbourne to the time of the Gold Rush*, Garravambi, Melbourne, 1990, p. 23.

55. There are a number of Benjamin bills for goods purchased by the Reverend Joseph Docker in the "Docker Papers", Latrobe Library, Melbourne. Docker established a sheep station of 100,000 acres named "Bontharambo" on the Ovens River in 1838. It was just north of where Wangaratta now stands. Docker made occasional trips to Melbourne and would make substantial purchases of goods at the Benjamin shop. Invoices totalling £29 and £33 (more than a year's wages for a labourer) are in the papers. Box 1439, envelope 5, and box 1445, envelope 3. References for the Docker family are J.M. McMillan, *The Tow Lives of Joseph Docker*, Spectrum, Melbourne, 1994, and D.M. Whittaker, *Wangaratta*, Wangaratta City Council, 1963, pp. 22-25.

56. *PPP*, 21 March 1844, p. 2C.

57. T.A. Darragh, "Thomas Ham, Pioneer Engraver, Lithographer, Map Maker, Cotton and Sugar Planter", unpublished manuscript in the possession of the author.

58. Darragh, *Engraving and Lithography*. Compare Plates 16 (Benjamin), 18 (Williamson) and 20 (Harris and Marks). Many other explanations of this similarity can be offered, but it is known that Ham used a system that enabled different denominations, illustrations and names of firms to be inserted in a master engraving of a promissory note. See plate 24.

59. *PPH*, 9 July 1844.

60. *PPP*, 11 July 1844.

61. *PPG*, 21 February 1844, p. 3. In the Melbourne City Council Householders' Roll Book, 1843-44, Victorian Public Record Office, Series No. 3108, D. and S. Benjamin were listed as the owners of three brick buildings in Collins Street, bearing rating numbers 153, 154, 155. They occupied two buildings, numbers 154 and 155. There is no description of any of the buildings, but Solomon Benjamin was listed separately as the occupier of a weatherboard house in Collins Street, rating number 165, owned by a Mr. I.T. Smith. Solomon clearly did not live on the Benjamin shop premises in 1844.

62. Melbourne City Council Valuation Book 1845-46, Victorian Public Record Office, Series No. 3108. The valuation of this property for rating purposes was £150. This was the highest valued building in Collins Street. Unfortunately the description does not include the number of storeys in the building.

63. Lease for three years from 1 July 1846 in Land Titles Office, Melbourne.

64. Melbourne City Council Valuation Book, 1847-48, Public Record Office, *op.cit.*
65. Alfred Joyce, (G.F.James ed.), *A Homestead History*, Melbourne University Press, 1949.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
67. Birth dates from family records. Confirmation that Moses and Catherine were accompanied by six children on the *London* taken from shipping lists, Victorian Public Record Office.
68. First advertisement, 6 February 1844, p. 1.
69. Melbourne City Council Valuations Book 1845-46, *op.cit.*
70. *Ibid.*
71. *PPH*, 5 February 1846.
72. Docker Papers, *op.cit.*
73. Aron and Arndt, *op.cit.*, p.404.
74. G. Serle, *The Golden Age*, Melbourne University Press, 1977, p. 12.
75. See later references to Edward Cohen and his relationship to the Benjamin family.
76. Melbourne *Argus*, 16 January 1852.
77. *Ibid.*
78. T.A. Coghlan estimated the total value at £1.32 million. Quoted by S.J.Butlin, *Australian and New Zealand Bank 1828-1951*, Longmans, Croydon, Victoria, 1961, p. 119.
79. R.F. Holder, *Bank of New South Wales, A History*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1970, p. 178.
80. *Ibid.*, pp. 179-180.
81. Butlin, *op.cit.*, p. 127.
82. Holder, *op.cit.*, p. 184.
83. *Ibid.*, p. 201.
84. Goldman, *op.cit.*, p. 90.
85. J. Flett, *The History of Gold Discovery in Victoria*, Hawthorn Press, 1970, lists the largest nuggets reported. The smallest that he records was 600 ounces.
86. Nathan, *op.cit.*, p. 12. The vessel *Kate* carried 42,000 ounces of gold.
87. Melbourne City Council Valuations Book, *op.cit.*
88. *PPG*, 25 August 1841. Refer Nathan, *op.cit.*, p. 9. Miriam was the sister of Rosetta, who had married Moses Joseph in Sydney in 1832. Rosetta's eight brothers and sisters all came to the Australian Colonies during the decade starting from 1834.
89. Aron and Arndt, *op.cit.*, pp. 6,12, 374, 378-9.
90. Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages, Latrobe Library, Melbourne.
91. Aron and Arndt, p. 379.
92. Announcement in the Hobart press, quoted by Max Gordon, *Jews in Van Diemens Land*, Privately published, Melbourne, 1965, p. 63. David was identified as being "of the Tamar House, Launceston".

⁹³. 1861 British census, RG 9/11, folios 86 & 87, pp. 46-7. David Benjamin and his family were living at 86 Westbourne Terrace, Paddington. There were eight children living in the house. Two, Miriam, then aged 19, and Henry, then aged 17, were shown as being born in Launceston. Three, Alfred born 1848, Louis born 1850 and Edmund born 1852, were listed as being born in Melbourne. The other three, Ada, Lionel and Alice, were born in London.

In the census of 1871, RG 10/25, folio 45, p. 42, David and his family are still at the same address. The eldest child, an unmarried daughter, is listed as "Marion" (Miriam?) aged 27 and born in Launceston. In the meantime David and Esther had produced another 5 children, including twins, Kate and Frank then aged 5.

To confuse the issue of the birth date and the names of the children born in Tasmania, the Tasmanian Pioneer Index, Latrobe Library, Melbourne, lists the children of David and Esther born in Launceston as an un-named daughter born on 1 October 1841 and a son Moses born 26 April 1845. It is most likely that these entries are correct and that Miriam/Marion was not being quite accurate with her age being entered in the census data. It is also interesting that David's daughter born in 1841, would have the same name as Solomon's daughter born a year later.

⁹⁴. *Cornwall Chronicle*, 13 February 1841, in an advertisement dated 23 January 1841.

⁹⁵. Letter of invitation to Mr. J.E. Calder to attend the consecration, signed by David as President of the congregation, in the Calder Papers, Latrobe Library, Melbourne. Calder was Assistant Government Surveyor of Van Diemens Land at the time. See also Levi and Bergman, *op.cit.*, p.273, and H.L. Rubinstein, *The Jews In Australia*, Heinemann, Melbourne, 1991, Vol. I, p. 244.

⁹⁶. *Cornwall Chronicle*, 20 February 1846.

⁹⁷. *Ibid.*, 18 July 1846.

⁹⁸. Aron and Arndt *op.cit.*, p. 8.

⁹⁹. Victorian Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages, La Trobe Library, Melbourne. Jessie died in Melbourne in 1851 at the age of 4. Cemetery Records, Public Record Office, Melbourne.

¹⁰⁰. Letter from Henry Harris of Melbourne to the London *Jewish Chronicle* of September 1853. Extract reproduced in *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, Vol.1, p. 43.

¹⁰¹. R.A. Cage, *Poverty Abounding, Charity Aplenty*, Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1992, p. 34.

¹⁰². Holder, *op.cit.*, p. 201. and H.J. Gibbney and A.G. Smith, *A Biographical Register, 1788-1939*, Vol. 1.

¹⁰³. Levi and Bergman, *op.cit.*, p. 302.

¹⁰⁴. Aron and Arndt, *op.cit.*, p. 379.

¹⁰⁵. *Melbourne Morning Herald*, 3 January 1853.

¹⁰⁶. *Argus*, 13 January 1853, p. 5.

¹⁰⁷. Goldman, *op.cit.*, p. 119.

¹⁰⁸. *Argus*, 22 March 1854, p. 5. "Croupier" was used at this time to refer to the assistant chairman at a public dinner, as well as to the functionary at a gaming table.

¹⁰⁹. Goldman, *op.cit.*, pp. 234-5, 120-1.

¹¹⁰. Aron and Arndt, *op.cit.*, p. 16.

111. *Ibid.*, p. 379.
112. The term "nabob" was used by Nathan, *op.cit.* p. 12, to describe those members of the Nathan family who retired to England having made their fortunes in Australia. The word is Indian in origin, meaning a governor of a town or district, and was coined in England in the mid-eighteenth century as an appellation for one who had returned from India with a large fortune.
113. M. Kiddle, *Men of Yesterday*, Melbourne University Press, 1963 edn., pp. 178 and 278-9.
114. M. Rutledge, "Samuel Benjamin", in A.G.L. Shaw and C.M.H. Clark (eds.) *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol.1, Melbourne University Press, 1966. Levi and Bergman, *op.cit.*, pp. 207, 213, 249, 250, 252. S.B. Glass, "The Jews of Goulburn", *Journal of the Australian Jewish Historical Society*, Vol. 1, pp.280-83, Vol. 2, pp.43 and 324; *New South Wales and Port Phillip Post Office Directory*, 1839.
115. *Historical Records of Victoria*, Vol.3, p. 91.
116. Rutledge, *op.cit.*
117. *Sydney Memorial Book* H. No.464, Melbourne Land Titles Office. The entry in November 1849 shows that the block of land sold to Moses had a frontage of 60 feet to Collins Street and was 80 feet deep. This block was 42 feet from what is now Exhibition Street.
118. *Sands & Kenny Melbourne Directory* 1858.
119. Holder, *op.cit.*, p. 201. David made use of the Bank of New South Wales' newly established London office to discount shipping documents on goods shipped to Australia.
120. Fanny Cohen was the daughter of Edward Cohen's eldest sister, Sophia. Sophia had married Abraham Cohen who was not related to Sophie. Information from Cohen family trees in family records.
121. *Melbourne Jewish Herald*, 10 March 1905. P. Mennell, *The Dictionary of Australasian Biography*, Hutchinson, London, 1892 (entries under Benjamin Benjamin and Edward Cohen.)
122. *Ibid.*
123. Aron and Arndt, *op.cit.*, p. 379, and Mennell. *op.cit.*
124. Benjamin bought the land in East Melbourne in 1868 and by a Deed of Settlement in December of that year transferred the title to his wife Fanny. Land Titles Office, Melbourne. See also *Sands, Kenny & Co. Melbourne Directories*.
125. Centennial International Exhibition, Melbourne, 1888, *Official Catalogue of Exhibits*, Mason, Firth & M'Cutcheon, Melbourne, 1888.
126. C.M.H. Clark, *A History of Australia*, Vol.V, Melbourne University Press, 1981, pp. 13-16.
127. N.G. Butlin, *Investment in Australian Economic Development*, 1861-1900, Chapter VI.
128. Court records of bankruptcy proceedings; and *Australasian Insurance and Banking Record*, 17 December 1892, p.891.
129. Benjamin Benjamin's youngest child, Myra, born 1885 died 1958, extracted promises from the family including her nephew D.J. Benjamin, the well known Sydney Jewish historian of the post-World War Two period, and the author, that her father's biography should not be

written until after her death. She did not wish to be further embarrassed by the re-visitation of his bankruptcy.

Benjamin Benjamin's second youngest child and youngest son was Oswald Benjamin (see Aron and Arndt, *op.cit.*, pp. 403-4, for a brief biography). The author is Oswald's youngest child.

¹³⁰. Aron and Arndt, *op.cit.*, p. 405.

¹³¹. See entries in Gibbney and Smith, *op.cit.*, which give references to entries in the *Australasian* quoting the probated value of these estates.

THE LIFE OF JACOB FRANKEL

[Introduction Jacob Frankel, colonial settler, businessman and pioneer clergyman, was born in Poland in 1812, settled in England as a young man, and served as Honorary Reader to the Greenwich Jewish community and as Secretary to Chief Rabbi Solomon Hirschell in the 1830s. He married Sarah Moses in 1835, and, at the suggestion of his brother-in-law, Elias Moses, the couple emigrated to Van Diemens Land with their three children in 1842. Frankel's business ventures in Hobart included the "Chief Slop" drapery firm; he was a foundation member of the Hobart Hebrew Congregation and served as Honorary Reader to the infant community.

Following his wife's death in 1847, he spent three years in gold-rush California, where he ministered to the Congregation Shearith Yisrael in San Francisco. Frankel returned in Australia in 1852, went into business in Melbourne, and served as honorary assistant to Reverend Moses Rintel in the 1850s.

Frankel's life story was written in 1856, during his time in Melbourne. A copy of the manuscript was donated to the AJHS Victoria by his descendant, Walter Frankel. — Ed.]

Readers,

You might be pleased to know, and yet feel sad while reading the pages of this book. It contains the history of the earliest days of my life, and the commencement of my first labouring directly after my leaving school. I shall now commence — I was born in the great town of Breslau in Prussia, 21 August 1812, of industrious parents but not over rich. I was sent to school at an early age, and left when I reached the age of thirteen. I could read and write the German and Hebrew languages very well, and also the French language; at the same time I was not lost in geography and arithmetic. I remember having a rich uncle living in the same town as we lived, and he spoke to my parents about letting me go to work for him in his warehouse. He kept and manufactured linen, calico, prints, and twist and cotton goods. The terms were for me to serve three years as an apprentice, and after that I would go to the books, and after I had gone through the books I was to be a Commercial Traveller.

My parents were very pleased at the proposal and asked me if I should like to live with my uncle. I said "yes" and then my parents signed some agreement with my uncle, and three days after I went off to work. Now my troubles commenced. It was in the midst of winter and the cold nipped my fingers as I had to take the calicoes to and fro all day. I cried but my uncle was like an overseer over me; he always used to say: "work harder and that will make you warm." My fingers got so swelled that I could not bend them. I ran home to my parents, and told them my uncle would not allow me to go near the fire all day, and that I could not stand it any longer. I then went to the Nuns and they healed my fingers so that I could go back to work. My uncle then let me go to the fire and in a very short time my fingers got better. Soon after my uncle saw that I took a delight in the business, and every week he used to take me to the factory and introduce me to the masters who showed and explained to me the use of different forms and machines. Indeed all of them had to come to my uncle for money, especially on Saturdays, and they very often used to drop me a present. After some time I got so well known in all the factories by the men, boys and masters, that I very often used to go there alone when at liberty.

My uncle was very fond of me. I got into his habits and he was very pleased with me. He now saw that I was a little advanced so he took me from the laying, hanging Calicoes, Prints &cetra, to the packing, but he always used to show me how to do it himself, and would not allow a stranger to interfere with me. I was kept at this for little more than a year. There was a great trade going on at this time, and as we dealt with all the great

merchants in all the large towns and cities of Germany, I was kept hard at work all day. But let me tell you it was very glorious in the summer, and many were the drops of sweat that fell in amongst the goods as I packed them. In the winter it was very different, it was nice and cool. I could sooner pack all day than sit by the fire.

I had to sit in an office on a stool all day, which I was not used to, so I reasoned with my uncle and told him I would rather be a commercial traveller; if not I would leave him. I was now grown a nice tall young fellow, and noticed that I was beloved by everybody who knew me. Being now very nearly five years in one place, I was a good salesman, and other merchants would have given me any money to have got hold of me. I knew everybody who came to purchase goods at our establishment both near and afar off. My uncle then appointed me Commercial Traveller, rather than lose me. It came so that I was very fortunate, and I sent a great many large orders, from different shop keepers, from the district towns, and my uncle sent their orders accordingly. It was jolly life for me; you must remember I put up at the best hotels in the city, but not at my expense. I had everything that I could wish for, and besides this I was in good health and I had the colour of a rose in my face. I was so happy that I never wished to live another life except the life I lived in, but I am sorry to say when I was in Dresden in Saxony, I received a letter from my Uncle stating that I should meet him at a great Liepzig fair, that he would be there himself and settle with me, and go through my books. I met him accordingly and he was very satisfied in every way and he was quite surprised at the way in which I had grown.

After the fair he told me that I was wanted at the home Business so I had to leave the Travelling and go home. My parents and relations and friends were very pleased to see me and I them, but six months after this the Tug of War commenced; I arrived at the age of nineteen. My parents and I feared very much that it was very near time that I should be enlisted as a soldier, and that I had better write a letter to the Mayor Adjutant General to acquaint him that I would give myself up voluntarily, to be examined and tried as to whether I was fit to be enlisted in his Majesty's service for a Soldier. At the same time, although I did write letters to that effect, I did not mean to be a soldier. It was only done to prevent them from taking me by force; I should then have been obliged to be a soldier for three years, but a volunteer has only to serve one year.

There was a Jewish lady living then, who was very great and well-known among the officers, Mayors, and Generals, and who made it her business to get all those who paid her large sums of money their discharge from being a soldier. I had now saved up from my earnings more than 200 dollars. I gave her that to intercede for me, and after a deal of trouble she got me my discharge. I was sent for by the doctor to be examined; he found some fault with my health, and pronounced me pigeon breasted; I was measured & cetra and all found faults with me. I got my discharge, and have it till this day. As soon as I got my discharge I was free and allowed to go where I liked. Young men dare not go out of the country unless they can show their discharge from his Majesty's service. Now I made up my mind to Travel again, but not in such a way as I did before. I had spent all my money, and only had a few dollars left, so I was obliged to walk. I now resolved to leave my country altogether, and go and see what the world was like, as do many young men when they come to be that age.

At last the day came that I had arranged to leave. I shall never forget that day; every one of my relations was invited to take the last glass of wine ere I started, and they did so; afterwards I embraced them all in the room, mothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, and cousins. They all dropt tears as I said my last "good bye" for they knew they might never see me again. I then took my knapsack over my shoulders and went my way. My dear Father

and Mother accompanied me for about five miles, and then thought it useless going any farther, so they both kissed me and laying their hands on my shoulders, said: "that is really the last kiss"; they then blessed me, as that is the fashion abroad. My father begged of me to think of his last words; they were: "Be honest, upright, and keep your religion. God will be then with you, and protect you." I now walked away, but as I did so I felt as though I could break my heart. Every five or ten minutes I looked back to see if I was out of sight of my parents, or the town in which I was born, but in about an hour all was out of sight.

In a few days I arrived in Berlin, the capital of Prussia. There I was stopped by a gendarm, who asked me to show him my passport and discharge, which I did. He did not believe it, so I was told that I must not quit the town until further orders. The police wrote to my town concerning me, and had an answer to say that it was all right. More than a week elapsed before I got leave to quit the town. I then left that town and went to Potsdam, about 12 miles from Berlin. This was a magnificent and handsomely built town; all the houses were the same height, and mostly built in squares. It was the cleanest town that I ever saw. In the middle of it was a Musical clock, made of alabaster; there was a Verandah large enough for a man to walk on, and every hour when the clock struck there was always music. When it struck twelve, there came out twelve apostles on one side of the clock; they went through the verandah into the other side of the clock, but they did not go in until the music left off. I stayed at Potsdam two days.

[The next portion of Frankel's manuscript, describing a "Grand Review" of 10,000 soldiers, is missing. The narrative resumes with him travelling on foot to Hanover, amid a violent electrical storm — "lightning and thundering something terrific." — Ed.]

In another instant I was lifted up from the ground and thrown down again with such force, that I laid senseless for more than an hour. I did not know whether I was dead or alive, but believe me, I soon found that out, for I was wet to my skin and shivering and trembling with cold. I began to move about with much difficulty and, feeling over my knapsack, I found a bottle of Dutch drops, of which I took a small quantity. I was then soon revived and felt as though I could eat something, as I think a good many more could have done, but night began to set in. I sat for another hour, during which time I warmed myself a little. I ate but a trifle, then the moon shone out with her usual brightness, and it appeared to me like day, so I thought to myself that it would be better to walk along slowly than to sit here all night.

I had not walked for more than three or four hours when I saw a light a mile or so before me. I was in doubts whether I should go there or not as I thought it might turn out to be a gang of robbers, but after a little consideration I put on a bold front, and resolved to go, as I had not much to lose. I came to a very small hut, and in it sat an old woman, apparently about seventy or eighty years of age, sitting before a lamp, spinning. As I entered she said: "Hallo! What brings you here?", so I told her, and then she made a fire and gave me a little to eat. I was there for about an hour when I began to feel sleepy, so I went a little way from the hut and laid down and was soon in a deep slumber. I awoke about nine or ten next day, and then pursued my journey until I came to Hanover, which is another large and fine town.

As soon as I arrived there I tried to get a situation as draper's assistant, but finding nothing available I was obliged to do anything rather than starve. While strolling about, I met a Frenchman; I don't know what made him stop me, or how he knew I could speak French, but at all events he asked me in French whether I could speak German. I said "yes". Then he asked me if I was looking for something to do. Glad of the chance, of course, I said "yes", so he agreed with me to give me so much a day. Now I have told

you all this but I have not told you what I had to do. It was this: he exhibited a little black woman, with a ring through her nose, ear-rings, necklaces, brooches, bracelets, and different kinds of jewellery about her. I had to tell the people in German where she came from, what she fed on, and the customs of her people from whence she came, all of which he told me in French. Hundreds of people daily visited our wonderful female, and amongst them was the King of Hanover. He was so well pleased with the explanation I gave him that, next day, he sent with his footman for me a silver medal. The Frenchman was also well pleased with me, and asked me if I should like to go and travel with him to different towns and countries, but I declined. I left him and made my way to Brunswick, from there I went to Magdeburg, and thence to Hamburg. I stayed in this latter place for about a month, trying to get a situation, but failed, and as my money was getting rather low I made up my mind to go to England in the first ship that was leaving. This necessitated me selling my silver medal which I regret very much now. However I took a steerage passage to London. I believe while on board ship, I reckoned myself to possess five English shillings, and with that I landed.

Before I speak of landing I have some serious occurrences to acquaint you with. Our ship was at sea for about a month, then there arose a perfect hurricane, which tossed our ship about most unmercifully; we were then driven out of our course towards the Dutch rocks. Our captain, seeing the great danger, ordered all the men to keep a sharp lookout. Night approached and the gale continued and the captain ordered a lamp to be put at the mast head as a signal of distress. But Thanks be to God, one did not want the other, the wind shifted and the gale abated which brought us more out to sea. I should say it must have been eleven or twelve o'clock. The captain then called me and told me that since I saw the light with my naked eyes, I should at once become a cabin passenger. He took me by the arm and showed me a bunk, and, as it was so late, I went into it and soon fell asleep. However, my bunk was near the pump which was at work all night. The noise, which was something terrific, combined with the noise and the bustle during the day and the anxiety of the night, turned my brain to such a degree that I actually saw visions before me. I must have been speaking very loud as it awoke nearly every person on board. After a little while I jumped out of bed and ran upon deck with the intention of drowning myself, but the mate who was on deck caught hold of me and thus saved me. I told him that the whole host of heaven were seeking to kill me. I offered him thousands of dollars to let me go, but he would not listen to me, got me in my bunk and fastened me down with ropes. There I laid, not able to move either way until twelve o'clock next day. The Captain visited me and asked me how I felt, and finding that I was all right, set me at liberty. I then went up on deck, and the captain's first mate asked me where my 5000 dollars were, that I had promised him. Every one of the sailors saw a great change in me, and asked me how I was. I remembered everything that occurred that morning. I was asked ever so many questions which I answered. Ever since that time I have never experienced such a vision nor do I ever wish to have one.

We had now a fair wind but owing to the great disease which was then raging in London, we had to put into Stungate creek, the Quarantine Station. After the expiration of a month we got to London, and when we got to the pier I went on shore. I could not speak a word of English, and had no friends or relations whatever; I was in a strange country by myself. As I stood there a man came up to me and asked me in broken German if I was looking for lodgings. I said yes, and he took me then to a very nice place, where I made every shift for about a fortnight; by then money was getting low. I began to work with three shillings, with which I bought oranges, and when I had sold them I bought more and so on, until I had earned a few pounds. Now I was master of this, I shifted my lodgings to a Scottish lady's house near the post office; she took a great interest in me and taught me how to pronounce the English words properly. I bought a dictionary and

an English and German grammar with which I studied for many a leisure hour the language I was so much in need of.

About two months afterwards I was passing the Post Office, and saw my name on the letter list outside. I went in and made enquiries about it, and found it was from my dear parents. It was the first letter I had received since I left home. I cried for joy before I opened it, but alas when I did open it, I found it contained the unhappy news of my mother's death ("may her soul rest in peace"). My father wrote saying she had died broken hearted at my leaving home. Every morning and evening she prayed that God or one of His Angels would protect me wherever I might be. This was sad news to me; by the date of the letter it seems that her death must have occurred on the same night as I wanted to throw myself overboard. I belong to the Jewish persuasion and when a child hears of his parent's or brother's death there is a duty for him to perform which he must fulfil as the last respect to the departed soul: that is, he adds a small prayer after the morning and evening prayers in the Synagogue or at another place of worship and this prayer is fixed for every Israelite the same all over the world.

This was the year 1831. I went to perform my duty at the house of the Rev. Dr Solomon Hirschell, grand chief Rabbi of the British Islands and Australasia. After I had been going there for three months, I noticed that he took a particular liking to me and every time I wanted to go he used to say "what's your hurry?" and so on. One day a Mr Aaron, one of the judges, asked me if I should like to stay as a companion to the Rabbi. He promised me plenty to eat and drink, clothing and a good bed, and that I should have everything to satisfy me, besides having the honour of living with such a learned gentleman. Now I must acquaint you with the artfulness of these gentlemen. When I first went to the Dr's house, which was free for everybody to go to, he and his suite shook hands with me and welcomed me in the usual manner that Jews do. He then asked me who I was and where I came from, and I told him that the cause of my being there was through the death of my dear mother. It seems that through the course of conversations, he got a lot out of me, and this led him to believe that I might some day become one of the priests, which I am proud to say I have been. He wrote to the head of the priesthood of my town and, having found that my parentage was good, he at once sent for me, and said it would be much better for me, and to my interest, if I would come and stay with him. He said: "Although you are a stranger I know all about you and your family." I thought to myself that this was a very good offer and I would not let it slip, as going about with oranges was out of my line altogether. I could not speak English and it would take a long time to make a fortune at what I was at.

I stayed there about two years, and during that time I saved above a hundred pounds besides keeping myself clothed in a respectable manner. From the presents I received at Marriages and Circumcisions &c, I got well known and respected by everybody. I began to speak very good English and, indeed, I was very happy and comfortable until one day when I took it into my head to leave and start business on my own accord, and so I gave notice to the Rabbi that I would leave in a week or two. I did not see the fun in staying there leading such a solemn life; I had never been to a dance, a play, or any kind of amusement the whole time I was there. The time expired and I left. The question now was what was I to do.

One day I went to a wholesale warehouse and bought fifty pounds worth of jewellery, put it nicely in a box, and next day I commenced my luck. I went to a house where there were a great many servants kept, and I was acquainted with them all. When I rang the bell they came to the door and I told them that I had left the Dr. and had commenced as they saw; as this was the first house I had called on, I hoped that they would encourage me in purchasing some thing, if it was ever so little. They asked me what I had, and I

showed them the contents of my box. The footman just happened to come in and took a fancy to a breastpin and asked me if I would take a brooch he had found in the mud in exchange. It was old fashioned and he did not like it. I said "yes" and he took the one he fancied and gave me a half crown difference. I went home and cleaned up the brooch and showed it to a man, who said he would give me three pounds for it; I showed it to another and he said he would give me five pounds for it. The stones in the brooch turned out to be diamonds. Being so fortunate, I resolved not to sell it.

I went daily about my business and, happy to say, I got on very well. I made Greenwich, five miles from London, my home as it was the centre of my travelling tour, besides being a very fine place. It was healthy and the park was near by. The towns I went to were Blackheath, Shootershill, Eltham, Woolwich, Charlton, Lewisham, Deptford and Croydon. I very soon got a connection in these places, and visited them regularly once a week, but always went home every night. I very often visited the park and spent very many pleasant hours there, amusing myself in such things as these: lying under a tree smoking my pipe, reading a book, and when tired of that, I used to get up and run up and down the hill. I was not very shy as a young man, and one day while I was in the park I saw three young ladies running up and down the lawn, so what should I do but go and run up and down with them. Although I didn't know who they were, they looked by their faces very much like Jewesses (which they turned out to be). I asked them where they resided and they told me, and before I left them, they gave me an invitation to their parents' house.

Next time I went to London, I went in search of the house. I was passing by it on the opposite side of the way, when I saw one of the young ladies standing at the gate. I went across and shook hands with her and she asked me inside. I went and was introduced to her parents, who gave me an invitation to come to the house whenever I pleased and also asked me to dine with them on the following Saturday. I did so; there were a few ladies & gents invited there to spend the evening, and there was music and dancing, and I think everyone enjoyed themselves very much. They were very familiar and could not do enough for me. Several of the ladies sang songs, and I also gave one or two songs, after which supper was prepared. I begged to be excused, as I had to go to Greenwich and it was getting rather late, but before I went they made me promise that I would come again the following Saturday. I was so well entertained and in such good company that I could not refuse. After going there for a few Saturdays, I was reckoned a constant visitor for that day. Naturally enough I began to feel rather fond of the young ladies, so one day I asked for one of them and got the parents' consent to have which ever one I chose as neither of them was engaged. I picked the one I saved from falling in the park.

I will now go on to tell you about the commencement of our courtship; I courted twelve months, and during that time I gave my intended, every time I came to Town, the whole of my week's earnings to save, to purchase necessary things for our future matrimonial requisites, and the residue, if any, to put by for a rainy day. The longer I visited her parents' house, the more I found out what a good creature she was and it made me happy to think that I met with a female with whom I should be happy for life. All passed on well till the Wedding day was fixed, and after it was all over we went home to Greenwich. We had a very comfortable little house to ourselves, and lived happily together as man and wife ought to do. This was the year 1835 and on July the 14th, 1836, my wife was confined with a daughter. I named her after my dear mother, viz:- Mary. In 1838 I was presented with another daughter:- Esther. In 1840 a son came forth:- Simeon.

Now dear readers you have no idea how happy I was. I thought no King could have been happier than I, having a good wife and three lovely angels of children round about me, and in that manner I lived till February 1842. As I and my dear wife were standing at our

shop door, we saw a coach passing by and on the outside sat a gentleman looking about as if searching for someone. My wife gave me a gentle prod, said "I believe that gentleman is my brother", and asked me to run and see. I did so and sure enough it was; when I came near him, I asked him who he was seeking and he asked me if I knew a person "by the name of Mr. Frankel." I said "it is the person you are speaking to"; he then said, "will you show me where you reside?". I did so, and the coach stopped at my door. Mr. M. [Moses], his good lady & child, having just arrived from Australia, alighted. Both brother and sister embraced each other, after which his lady and child kissed my dear wife and children, and then I commenced to welcome my new brother and sister in law.

They came to England from Australia for the sake of seeing their parents before they died. Mr. M. said to me, "Mr. F., you had better go to my parents and so as not to startle them much, say that you expect me today and after a while tell them I have arrived." I agreed to do so, and while I was delivering his message who should put in an appearance but Mr. M. himself. The old gentleman and old lady, who were about Seventy, each seemed to have a new spirit in them after embracing such a dutiful son, who not only came to see them but provided for them for the remainder of their days.

One day as we were in deep conversation he said to me, "Frankel, what is the use of you spending your young days here in hard work. I see you can get a living, but that is not sufficient; if you would go to Australia, or to any of the Colonies, you would make your fortune." Seeing that Mr. M. had made his fortune, and that he was advising me for my own benefit, I consulted my dear wife who said: "Wherever you wish to go or whatever you wish to do, I shall be satisfied, if it is to go through fire or water." So we came to the conclusion to sell off our stock and embark for Australia; we did not know which of the towns to choose, so we chose Hobart Town, Tasmania, as one of Mrs. F.'s brothers was established there.

We left London in June 1842 on the day that the fire broke out in the Royal Exchange, Cheapside. We took our departure in a ship called the *Calcutta*; there was myself, my dear wife and my three children. We were not out for more than a few days, when I had my arms full; my wife was sick, and then the children crying and sick. I myself was also a little sick for the first day and then I was allright, but the children were sick for a week and my wife was sick all the way. She never could relish anything and I may say she fell away to a skeleton, and never was the same woman after.

We had a long and tedious passage, and a great many changes in the wind until we made the Equator, when we were becalmed for a month. On the night we made towards the Line, all the sailors said that on the morrow Neptune was coming on board to stay with us for the day, and that every soul who had not crossed the Line before would be ducked. The next morning as everybody was seated at the breakfast table, there was a loud shouting on deck from all the sailors. They had thrown a barrel of pitch alight into the sea, and were screaming "Neptune is coming!" Everybody rushed up on deck to see the wonderful Neptune. I also went, carrying my son, who was about two years and a half old, in my arms. We all leaned over the bulwarks to see the sight. As we were thus engaged, the sailors threw water over us from all the yardarms and poop, and it was a great mercy from God that I did not lose my only beloved son in the affray, as he slipped right out of my arms and I caught him by the feet. I never told my wife of it, but thanked the Almighty for his merciful protection in saving him. We now all ran down below shivering and youling with the cold and wet, and in about half an hour all was quiet; everybody had found their way to their bunks, as not one had escaped being soaked to the skin.

Next morning everybody rose early, and had breakfast, and then there was a discussion of what the sailors intended doing. We all kept a sharp look-out, and we noticed that the sailors were spreading out a large sailcloth abaft the Foremast, and filling it with water. Then they prepared Tar, Pitch and other dirty muck. 12 o'clock arrived and one of the sailors was dressed up as Mr. Neptune and another as Mrs. Neptune; they began to dance and, after that, they said to the rest of the sailors: "now boys, take everyone who has never crossed the Line before and duck them well, and also shave them, so that when they come out they may be clean." When some of the passengers heard this they ran down below and shut themselves up in their respective cabins, and locked the doors. But it was of no use, as when it came their turn they were forcibly brought up, and had to go through the ceremony. The treatment was considered most cruel, but we all had to put up with it.

We went on our passage for four months when we arrived at Hobart Town, in the month of October. The weather was very hot, and we saw a bush fire extending for about ten miles around; we thought to ourselves that this was a pretty place to come to. However, we lost no time in securing a house and shop. We commenced Business in the Drapery line and were doing very well. I sent my children to Boarding School and they improved very much; everything was going on very satisfactorily, except for my dear wife, who got a complaint. What it was I could not tell; she could not stand or walk for weakness. About May 1847, a Doctor told her that she never would recover, unless she could take a sea voyage. Mrs. F. and her sister in law agreed to go to Sydney and to take two of the children with them, to visit her sister who was living there. No sooner said than done, the next day they took their passage.

They were in Sydney about three months, and every letter I received I had good news of Mrs. F.'s recovery, until the commencement of August when I had the intelligence that she was quite well and had engaged her passage. The letter ran thus: "My dear Husband, I am well aware that I have stayed away too long, but I am better now. I have taken my passage for Hobart Tn. The ship leaves here on Friday next so you may expect to see me in about a week." I was full of joy on hearing such news. I sent all my old furniture to auction, I had all the rooms newly papered, and had everything new in the house, to make ourselves as comfortable as we were before.

The day the Vessel arrived, I took a small boat to bring my wife ashore, but when I asked for her I was told that no such person was on board. I went home, thinking that it was very strange that she did not come. About an hour had elapsed when the Postman brought a letter with a black seal on it. I looked at it, and opened it — and started back — and to my deep sorrow, I found that my Dear wife was dead, and buried. The letter was written by her sister and ran thus: "Your late Dear wife went on Friday last on board the *Emma* which vessel was bound for Hobart Tn., and engaged her passage, and paid for it. She came home a little before dinner, and said she would soon be happy again with her Dear husband. She ate a very hearty dinner, and after that meal she went upstairs to dress herself as usual for the afternoon and was putting on her dress when she burst a blood vessel, and died almost instantly. When they heard the fall, the inmates of the house rushed up stairs, and saw her prostrated on the floor; they quickly sent for a Doctor, who came almost in an instant and pronounced her quite dead. She was buried on the Sunday following. It was a great shock for all the family."

Now you must remember that the two youngest children had gone with their mother, and as their Aunt was very rich, she said that she would not part with them but bring them up as her own. I consented, knowing she had no children, and that she could afford to give them a better education than I. About two months after, another brother of Mrs. F., residing in Sydney and also pretty well to do, asked for my permission to allow my eldest

daughter to go to Sydney and stay with him; he would bring her up, and educate her as one of his own children, for the sake of her Dear mother who was under ground and whose only thoughts had been for her Dear children. I thought that this offer was for my daughter's benefit, so I parted with her also. In this manner was I bereft of my wife and my three children, and was left alone like a single man upon the wide World.

My place of business was situated in Liverpool street. I had freemen and prisoners in my employ and to them I had to trust the premises whenever I went out. I was robbed by all of them, to such an extent that I was obliged to dispose of the whole of my Drapery stock, and to commence in a business where pocketing would not be so easy. So I resolved to start in the Furniture line, thinking that they could not put a Chest of Drawers or a Bedstead in their pockets; even at that game I was robbed, as I had to go out daily to different Auction sales, and of course I had a lot of business to do among private people. Whenever I had occasion to go out, goods were sold at home but they never accounted for the true amount they received. I turned one of the workers away, had him punished and also another. The free men were as bad as the prisoners. This was another misfortune: after losing my wife, my children, my goods, and my money, what was I to do?

I was obliged to go on in the best way I could, until about the latter end of 1849, when the news sprang up that gold was discovered in great quantities in California. I thought to myself, if I go on much longer in this way I shall have neither goods nor money and very likely should become a beggar. So I disposed of my stock again and made for the Gold Region. There was a vessel advertised for that place, and set to leave in about ten days, so I lost no time in engaging my passage. We started from Hobart Town about the month of November, and had a fair wind going through the heads.

After being out at sea for some little time, it began to blow hard and the sea became mountains high and altogether it became a hurricane. The passengers were sick, and we were scudding before the wind at the rate of ten knots an hour. In ten days we passed New Zealand, which part is very rough. After this another storm came, and all the portholes were closed; tons of water came across us. No one trusted themselves on deck, the galley was washed away, and parts of the bulwarks were stove in and smashed to atoms. We also lost about 30 trusses of hay and a spare spar which were deck luggage. All the fowls in the coops were drowned, and we suffered with cold, rain and hail for a week or more. When we were out about a month, the sea got very smooth, and we were becalmed. A few days afterwards we saw some oranges, cocoanuts, leaves etc. floating towards us, and in a few hours we made Tahiti, a South sea Island.

Our ship anchored in a picturesque part of the island and a lot of natives came alongside of us in their canoes, bringing with them a large assortment of fruits for sale. We purchased them, and a great treat it was for us Europeans who had not tasted such delicious fruits before. Towards evening the natives prepared to go ashore again, and gave us to understand that they wanted us to go with them. At first when we saw them coming towards us in the morning, we were rather frightened, as we did not know whether they were wild or civilised, but when they came on board we thought them very friendly towards us. They went to the galley, to the cook, who gave them meat, biscuits, potatoes, needles, thread, handkerchiefs, calico, tobacco and other such things for their fruits, and all went very agreeably on both sides.

The next day I made up my mind to go ashore by the first boat, to see what sort of a place it was. When I stepped on shore, I thanked God; I thought myself in Paradise. I was surrounded by the finest and rarest fruit trees, and as I walked along, I saw several huts here and there made of sugar-cane. Then there were groves of oranges, bananas,

pineapples, lemons and breadfruits, and on the ground round the foot of these trees lay great quantities of the above-named fruits. The day was amazingly hot, and glorious. I picked up as much as I could carry, and lay the best part of the day under the trees, as my feet were not much fit for walking. The smell of the spice trees was beautiful and quite refreshing. I saw there the French soldiers, the barracks and also a man-o-war ship lying at anchor, which was used as a hospital for the soldiers. At nine o'clock in the evening, a gun was fired nine times, as a signal for all to go to the barracks, or to their homes, as after that hour every person found roaming about would be locked up by the police.

Our boat was lying on the beach, waiting for the passengers, and after some time, the boat's crew, growing tired, pushed off with as many as they could. After reaching the ship, everybody was telling the other what a pleasant day they had spent. Then there was a cry of "boat ahoy" from the shore, and the sailors only laughed and said that they would not go ashore anymore tonight. So some of our passengers got into the boat and brought them aboard. The night was beautiful and clear, and moon and stars showed out very brilliantly, and the waters sparkled under their luminous light; it was almost like day. All the passengers were now on board, and the time was drawing nigh for all to retire to rest. The heat was extremely great, and most of them made their beds on deck. It was a pleasant concert: one was snoring, others laughing, screaming, walking about; some were covered and others uncovered. One lady actually began singing, which roused everyone; then there was a talk under the blankets, one saying to the other, "Here's a time of night for a female to be singing." Whether she had a nightmare, or did it on purpose, no one could tell; she was hooted by some and told to lay down, and when all was quiet there was fresh snoring, until it was time to rise.

We all rose very early in the morning. The perspiration was pouring down from us and, to cool ourselves, we all bathed in the sea, which made us comfortable for the day. The boat was got ready again for shore and there was a rush for it, everyone saying "I'll go", "I'll go." There was a regular row, as the boat could not hold them all; a certain number were allowed to go, and the rest had to climb up the ship's side again, and had to wait the return of the boat.

One day when we were all ashore, it happened to be Queen Pomarah's birthday, and all the natives gathered together, and formed themselves into a ring, sitting on the ground and making motions to each other according to their customs. They bent backwards and forwards, making ugly faces, putting their hands on one another, and performed all kind of athletics. Some roared like a lion, others like tigers, others whistled like birds, and other such like which was not of a very interesting character. They greased a long spar, and had it projecting out into the sea, and at the end of it was a small pig; this was really amusing, to see the men, women and children trying to get along it, and after they got a little distance, over they went into the sea. There must have been about five or six hundred of them at it, and at many other games. They are excellent swimmers; our captain threw a half-a-crown into the water, and a native dived for it and brought it up in his mouth. He tried them several times, and they were always successful in getting it. In the evening the French had a great display of fireworks, and the band played some very fine tunes.

I believe we stayed there for a fortnight, then we got under weigh and got to sea, till we made the Sandwich Islands. We had to put into this place on account of stress of weather. Our ship must have struck somewhere, and the water made its way into the hold, but from which part we could not tell. We landed at Honolulu in Owghee [Oahu]; it is reckoned one of the largest towns in the South seas. It is built in a very European style, having streets, churches, theatres and a good many other places. The population is mixed, viz:—

French, Germans, Americans, Chinamen, and other nations. The blacks are more civilised here than at Tahiti; they go out riding of an afternoon, wear clothes, and have their own magistrates, the same as the white population. They have a very large place, where they congregate together to tell their grievances, and a sight it is to see them all start jabbering together, looking like so many monkeys and so on. Our ship had to be discharged, so we had a good long spell, I may say about six or seven weeks. The cargo had to lay on the wharf near the Custom House and black armed soldiers were set to watch it. They also have their own Black King who visited us very often.

When we were in Tahiti a gentleman astronomer joined us and he foretold that on a certain day, there would be an eclipse of the Sun and the Moon and that it would only be seen in the Sandwich Islands. The day before this great event occurred, he made it known to all the inhabitants, and also the Blacks. The next morning the Sun rose as usual with all its grandness and splendour, until about eleven o'clock, when it gradually got dark; a half hour later on, the stars became visible, and the Moon sailed along until it reached the Sun, and then it got right under it, and there it remained for an hour. Then the two of them turned like a large black round spot. I never saw such a sight in all my life. That is to say, I have never witnessed it so close by, as it was right over our heads.

When some of the Blacks saw the wonderful vision, they thought that the world had come to an end. They crawled into their huts, and lay down in the open air, crying, shouting and hallooing out with fear. About one o'clock it was perceived that the Sun was gradually moving from the Moon, until two o'clock, when nothing was seen of either the Moon or the stars, and the Sun shone out again in all its grandeur. Then the Blacks saw that it was all over; they made their appearance, and jumped for joy. They began to feast, went out riding, and finished the day in merrymaking.

All the passengers stayed on board daily for their meals; we had fresh meat allowed, which was a great treat; we had sweet potatoes, and other niceties, and went to Town when we liked, and came back when we liked. Every morning before breakfast, we went to a waterfall, and bathed ourselves; our health was very good as there was not a sick person in the whole crowd. And in this way we enjoyed ourselves day after day until our ship was repaired. She was then loaded and we set sail for California. We were out about a month when we saw a lot of sea cows turning themselves round and round in the sea, like a fleet of ships ...

[The next portion of Frankel's narrative describes his arrival at the "Golden Gate" and his experiences in frontier San Francisco. Unfortunately, only fragments of this part of the original ms. have survived. What little remains indicates that Frankel established a general store but that his business suffered substantially (and repeatedly) in the series of six major fires which devastated the city in the period from 1849 to 1851. The narrative resumes with a reference to the author's association with Congregation Shearith Yisrael. — Ed.]

Now, dear readers, I never acquainted you that I always have kept to my religion as nigh as possible. You will remember reading at the commencement of my history that I was pretty well educated and, through being a good scholar in the Hebrew Language, I was appointed as reader in the Synagogue at San Francisco in 1850. I am sorry to say the conflagrations always swept our place of worship away among the rest of the sufferers; therefore I acted graciously and would not accept any money offered to me, knowing the expenses they had in providing one place after another to meet. Besides, the congregation was not over large, as some of our brethren did not care, I am sorry to say, to attend and believe in the Law of God; all their aim was money. Sabbath, holidays, weekdays, were all alike to them.

About February 1852 I received a letter from my dear eldest daughter, stating: "Dear papa, I wish you would come to Sydney as there has been gold found here in vast quantities and thousands of persons of all nations are arriving weekly, and I shall be so happy, as I have not had the pleasure to see you these five years. You know, we have no mother; therefore return to your children, and make them happy." After receiving such a feeling letter, I made up my mind to return. When I acquainted the president and others at the head of our congregation that I was going to Sydney in a week or two, they lost no time in calling a meeting; it ended in their getting up a golden medal made out of silver, in a handsome manner, with an inscription of my name for the kind services I so voluntarily performed. The dates thereon marked the length of time I performed and the date it was given to me. On the 6th of March, the President, with about ten other gentlemen, presented me the golden medal as a token of respect. It is very handsome indeed, and I am very proud of it; on one side is the Hebrew inscription and on the other side, the English translation thereof. They thanked me in the name of the gentlemen not present, offered their warmest well wishes, shook hands with me and wished me a safe and pleasant passage. I thanked them kindly for that handsome present. I also told them: "let me be ever so poor or ever so rich, I shall always endeavour to keep that present and never part with it. Moreover it shall remain in my family, from generation to generation, with the strictest care."



Medal now in possession of Ian Frankel, great-great-grandson of Jacob Frankel

I saw a vessel advertised to sail on the 10th of March for Sydney, called the *Apparition*, a small schooner. I spoke to the Captain on board and engaged my passage. On the 10th I went on board, but we did not sail until the 12th inst. We had a fair breeze, which not only took us through the Golden Gate, but a good distance out to sea. We followed our course as ships usually do, sometimes calm and other times rough, until we came to a place called Massacre Bay, where Boyd and all his crew had been massacred. Our Captain, knowing the spot, did not wish to make for that place, as the natives are very wild. So he went further on, not above ten miles distance. When our ship was visible to the natives, they came paddling along in their canoes towards us, and boarded our vessel; among them were the chief, a missionary, and some of their brave men. They were very robust looking tall fellows, and all naked. Their skin was swarthy and glossy; they oil their bodies on account of the flies and mosquitoes, which are there in abundance, and far larger than in Australia.

Towards evening, as the sun was just losing its glimmering light, the natives got their canoes ready to return to their homes. About twenty of our passengers ventured to go ashore for the night in their canoes. I was one among them. The natives now began to sing, all one tone, and as they splashed downwards, they went like a frog, and when the paddle came up again they shrieked like a lion; the paddling of those natives was even and sure, like a trained soldier stepping his foot on the ground, where he stands firm. I should say the distance we had to go from our vessel must have been three miles. When I was alongside them about halfway, I began to funk on it, thinking, what was I to do

should they overturn their machine; they were good swimmers and might save their own lives, whereas I couldn't swim, except to the bottom. I considered that it was a great folly to trust myself with such a lot.

Thanks be to God, we got to the very spot, and we all went ashore. The place appeared to me just the same as Haity, with no large buildings, no public houses except their beautiful huts made of sugar cane. Instead of carpeting, the natives have beautiful figured matting; they have no furniture nor earthenware, they sit on mats when they are tired or take their meals. Instead of cups and saucers, as Europeans use, they cut a coconut in two; that serves them to drink out of. Fish is in abundance; they go in the water, and catch them with their hands. They also use a large leaf which is spread out like a net, and rush at the fish when they see them come, like a lion, and bring them home and cook them. There are a few sticks set on fire on the ground, and when the fire is sufficiently large, they throw the fish on the top and let them lay there until they are black like a coal; they never clean nor scale them, and eat them in that manner. Their drink is generally fresh water or cocoanut milk. As for meat, they have none, except a few fowls or pigs.

As we went ashore, there was among the natives a fine, stout, healthy-looking man who seemed to be their leader. He invited us all to come to his house, and promised to make us comfortable as he was a married man and has a large family. The missionary interpreted to us, in English, what he said in his native language. All of us passengers went ashore there that evening. As we were sitting a little while, a lot of the natives gathered. No doubt they must have been neighbours or relatives of the leader. Whether they came to see him, or for the novelty of seeing white men, we could not tell. The children in the hut began to cry, and ran away as soon as they saw us. We all sat on the mats, both Black and White, and smoked our pipes. We had brought a couple of bottles of rum with us, so we enjoyed ourselves, singing a song, and so on until it was time to retire to rest. The hut we were in could not contain us all for the night, so some of our passengers went along with some of the natives to sleep and the rest remained.

I lay myself down with the rest of the passengers, keeping my clothes and boots on. We were not laying down above an hour when we began to scratch ourselves to pieces; the mosquitoes began to bite us unmercifully through our coats, through the trousers, through the boots. Our hands and faces looked, in the morning, as if we were pock-marked. One cried out, "O Christ", another "murder"; there was not one of us who could sleep, so we spoke to each other, wishing it were daylight.

Several among our company got up and I was among them; we went a little way from our hut, among the trees, when all at once a man, with a lighted torch in his hands, made his way towards us. He gave us to understand to follow him, until he came to a hut where he invited us to go inside. We all went inside, but the mosquitoes were playing their old tricks upon us so that we were obliged to leave that place. After walking for about an hour it began to be daylight, and at a distance we saw a river running. We all made towards it, and we bathed ourselves; after that the others commenced to continue their walk, but I would not join them, as I felt rather tired.

After resting myself for an hour, I felt that I could eat a good breakfast, so I got on my legs and walked on. Going along I saw a white coloured hut; I made towards it and it turned out to be the Missionary's. I spoke to him, wished him good morning, and asked him what country man he was. He told me he was a Cockney and was born in Whitechapel. During our conversation I learned that he had been at that Island seventeen years, and was a runaway prisoner from Van Diemens Land. An American whaler on which he stowed away was stranded near that place and went to pieces, although all hands on board were saved. He had remained there ever since, married to a native

woman and with three lovely boys of a very dark complexion. Neither the mother nor the children could speak English; in time he had learnt the native language and had got in favour with the natives. He made them believe whatever he thought proper to his own interest, whereby he saved a great deal of money. He made them bring him fruits, oil and other produce, which he stored in quantities, and when a vessel made its appearance near the Island he would send a quantity of the natives on board to sell them.

He invited me to stay, and have breakfast. I accepted the invitation, and about twenty men, one after another, came in. They all sat on the ground on mats. I sat along with them, and they brought some Tarro, yams, fish, poce, and a kind of leaf of a tree which serves them as tea; when all were ready to take their meal, they put their two hands together, knelt down and prayed. I was very pleased to see that, thinking within myself what an example for white men. When they finished praying, the missionary, who seemed to be the head and manager, divided the whole before him in equal portions according to the number there and handed it round. There was not a word spoken all the time. They are no great eaters at their meals on account of eating so much fruit during the day, and as for their drink, there is not anything in the world to equal the milk of the cocoa nut as it comes down fresh from the tree. The substance thereof serves both eating and drinking, and a beautiful sight it is to see boys not bigger than a European little chimney sweep, in size and colour, running up those lofty trees, like monkeys, and throwing down the nuts. The natives take about a couple each for their wife or family and open one on the spot. How does he open it? He takes his large, fine, white and strong set of teeth and pulls off the outside shell, faster than any one of us who has to use a chopper or an axe to open it. I believe I have satisfied you with a full description of that place and their inhabitants.

When we got our fresh water and about twenty small pigs on board, we sailed away. The sea was very smooth, and the wind very calm, and we made no progress whatsoever. We saw the Island for three or four days, until a little wind sprang up in favour of our course and we lost sight entirely of it. About three or four days after, we saw a monster swimming towards us, on the surface of the sea, and the sight of that wonderful creation was worth any traveller's notice. Heretofore I had never seen one the like, and whilst I live, I don't think I shall see the fellow of it. In appearance, it was a flat and a wide substance about the size of a two storey house and all over speckled like a leopard. The spots shining through the water twinkled like stars and the colours of the spots were brilliant. We all had a good sight of it; the cook wanted to throw a large hook with a piece of meat on it, others charged their guns and revolvers to shoot at it, but the Captain would not allow anyone to molest it. He said we ought to be very thankful if it lets us pass, as should it turn itself round it might draw our vessel and ourselves to the mighty Deep. We all obeyed the Captain, and never touched it.

Two days after we saw a lot of sharks following our ship. The cook put a long rope at the back, and a hook with bait on it. All at once we caught one of the sharks, but it was too large to haul up alive so one of our passengers shot it right in the back. It struggled to get away, but got another shot; it staggered a little while, until it lost its strength, then it was pulled to the ship's side and hauled it up with two extra ropes. When on deck, the cook took a large knife and began to butcher it; he took out the liver and the brains, as they were full of oil, and the rest of the carcase he cut up for the pigs on board. What they could not eat was thrown overboard. The next morning the pigs began to call out, running about the ship as if they were mad, and falling down on deck one after another dead. Not one of them escaped dying; it seems that the shark they ate was poisoned. It was a sorrowful day for the pig eaters, who thought to make themselves comfortable for the rest of the voyage in having fresh pork when they wanted.

Now our provisions got short of every thing. Our Captain, who was part owner of the vessel, was not very rich, and had provided very scantily for our voyage. As provision in San Francisco was very expensive, he bought a couple of barrels of beef and pork and a couple of barrels of salt fish; we had occasion to haul up a barrel of fish and when we opened it, it stank so that nobody on board could eat it and we were obliged to throw it overboard. Our allowance was shortened and a great discontent arose between the passengers, the Captain and the Mate. There was not a day passed by when there was not a row with someone or another. One great mercy was that we had a good supply of sweet potatoes and yams from the last place we put in, and they helped us greatly.

We arrived at a certain degree where the breeze freshened, and we ran from six to eight knots an hour for two days and two nights continually. A squall arose, which caused the Captain to order the sail shortened; the sea rose mountains high and the white sea tossed our ship from one beam's end to another. In that affray we lost our fore top mast and sail; then a sea struck her on the side which made the water come in, about two or three inches every five minutes. We were ordered to assist, to bail the water out of the hold, which was done in rotation with pails by six passengers at a time. We went along about ten or twelve knots an hour. The Captain gave us a case of rum, to keep us quiet, and we worked as well as the sailors to get to our journey's end in safety.

About five days after, we sighted Newcastle, but during the night a gale of wind drove us entirely away at a great distance; we lost another sail that night, and there were no more sails on board except a roll of new canvas. Two days elapsed before we set sight of Newcastle again. About six o'clock in the evening, we dropped our anchor about ten miles distance in the sand. Now we were all happy on board, and one of our passengers tried to fish and caught a snapper about ten pound weight; we cooked it almost directly and before we finished eating, a nice little breeze sprang up. The Captain said that there might not be such an opportunity for some time to get us in; therefore he ordered the anchor to be hauled up and all of us went pleased to work and got in before ten o'clock that night.

Newcastle is a small town, very nicely laid out. I can't say much more about it as we only stayed there one day, until the steamer passed by for Sydney to take us on board. The day after, about ten in the morning, the steamer called the *Rose*, built of iron, came alongside our vessel and took on almost all the luggage and passengers. The steamer was expected to arrive at Sydney about eight the same evening, but sorry to say, we were not more than two hours out at sea when a gale, a wind, arose in such a quick manner that all her sails were torn to pieces. It got worse; a wave struck her bulwarks and took them clear away. All the sheep standing there were washed into the sea. The next wave which came right across washed all the luggage, boxes, carriages and merchandise into the sea. The third time was the worst of all; a wave came right across her and filled all the cabins full of water. There were no less than six tons of water in the ship, and this made the Captain afraid for her safety. The horses began to kick, the women and children cried out for mercy to God; one cried "Christ have mercy on us", another "Christ save us". We could not sit down nor lay down all the time we were on board. We were obliged to stand one behind another from the top of the stairs, as the people below had to stand in water above their knees. All the bedding, tables and chairs swam about in the cabin. No assistance could be afforded to anyone, although some fainted, some had the cramp, and some wanted a drink, but there was not a drink to be got, neither for men or horses, as the barrel of fresh water was cast in the sea. About twelve o'clock at night it commenced to rain as hard as ever I saw rain fall and there we stood, unable to move anyways for shelter. We were almost frozen from cold, soaked to our skin and trembling like a leaf; and every few minutes there came such a bounce that we expected to sink

every moment. The Captain told us that while the steam was in we were all right, but should another sea come like the one we had about twelve, we must give up all our hopes as one and all would perish. It is only a mighty little steam which keeps the ship's head above water.

We were thus standing all night, rained upon all the time, until ten o'clock the next morning, when we sighted Sydney. We actually came to the wharf about twelve. Hundreds of people were standing there to inquire the reason for our not coming in as usual the night before. The Captain said "you may thank yourselves that you see her at all, and the passengers also, as I never experienced such a gale in my life, and I am off and on this coast for the last sixteen years." All the time it rained in torrents, and all our luggage that had been saved was thrown on the wharf. We were as stiff as a poker, numbed in such a deplorable degree that some of the bystanders were paid to lead us along. We were all but dead, having nothing to eat nor to drink for twenty-four hours, standing in one position. I believe that was one of the shortest and one of the worst passages I ever had, and believe me, I never wish for another such like.

I went ashore, and kept inquiring where my brother-in-law lived, and after great exertion I found him at last. He lived in George Street. When I came there and told him I was his brother-in-law, he could not believe it, as I looked a poorly-dressed object from top to toe, trembling and shivering with cold, fainting from hunger and thirst. When I told him my name he asked me to walk into the kitchen where there was a rousing fire. He ordered tea to be got ready as quickly as possible and he lent me some of his clothing to put on, and there I shifted myself of flannels, drawers, trousers, etc. belonging to him. I washed my hands and face with hot water and after that I began to feel myself. A nephew of mine from Melbourne, who happened to be there on a visit, assisted me greatly in making me comfortable.

After I was dressed, I was asked upstairs to their drawing room, where I saw my sister-in-law, my late wife's own sister and children, and a half an hour after, my dear daughter Mary. Such a joyful meeting I never beheld before. My dear daughter clung to my neck weeping and kissing, to see her father after five years absence, and you may imagine how overjoyed I must have felt to see a daughter grown a fine and handsome young woman, as tall as myself. My brother-in-law came up also; he shook hands with me and I with him and he made me very welcome, although this was the first time in our life that we had met. The day passed by very comfortably. Some of our relatives and friends came to see me, and kept my company in conversing on different subjects until late in the evening. When bedtime came, I was shown to a room quite to myself; the four-post bedstead, mattress and feather-bed I lay on was a novelty, as I never lay on a feather-bed this five years. I pulled off the clean sheets and put them on my chair; I never slept in sheets, as they always strike cold to me, and I get a cold, and can't very easily get rid of it. It was a snug little place, handsomely carpeted, and in it furniture suitable for any prince to occupy. I went to bed, and it was not long before I was sound asleep, and what time do you think I got up? It was full eleven o'clock the next morning when a servant came knocking at my door to know whether I was awake; they thought I was dead as I did not make my appearance. When I was cleaned and dressed, and came down, my brother and sister-in-law laughed, saying come set down before the fire, we will soon have dinner. I was stunned that I had overslept, but it was excusable, as I was tired and fatigued, and had had no sleep the night before.

I stayed there about a month, and during the time I enjoyed myself very much. I had nothing else to do but go out walking or riding, go to balls and parties every evening, and when tired I had a comfortable home to go to. It is useless for me to go into any further detail, except I must say that Sydney is a very large town, handsomely laid out,

with fine gardens, a very neat wharf, pleasant walking places, fine streets and so on. I now began to think about business, as the time of my month-long spree was at an end, but I didn't exactly know whether I should make Sydney or Melbourne my place of residence. After consulting with my brother-in-law and my nephew, we agreed that Melbourne would be more suitable.

One day I saw a vessel advertised for Melbourne, called the *Cremonia*. I engaged my passage, bought a few cases and boxes of merchandise, put everything on board including my luggage, and held myself in readiness for her departure. The day arrived, and all came on board as she was to sail early the next morning. There I bid all my relatives and friends farewell again. We started at the appointed time; we cleared the heads the same day, and we were out in the open sea. Somehow I never was in a ship, among all the trips I made, where I could say we made a very quick passage, and so it was with this; although the vessel was a strong clumsy tub, she was expressly built for the ice. She would never go where her sails wanted her, she was always inclined for the leeward. We made the straits; we passed the Dromedary, Venus, Angel and the Devil Rock. There it began to blow hard; the Captain ordered to sail out at sea before it got dark. All sails were taken down except the foresail, double reefed; the sea got to a great height, and we threw out a bowser. In that disagreeable manner, we rode about for a week until we sighted a rock called Odondo. That rock can tell tales, as I saw often — I may say every day for a full week. We really got tired of it, of knocking about, by that unpleasant looking customer. I cheered some of our passengers up by forming a song of two verses about the Rock Odondo Ho, to the tune of M'gregor Ho.

As we sat down below one day at our tea, a bump hit the ship, and we all thought she must go to pieces. We ran upon deck, and there we ascertained that the bowsprit was entirely knocked away and the principal rigging of the foremast gone; besides this, she had part of her bow stove in. The poor sailors had now to work very hard to secure the foremast, whilst the carpenter had orders to overhaul the bow. All the passengers gave some of their assistance; the wind abated, the sea got down, we repaired all our damage. We lost sight of the rock Odondo, and never saw it since.

We sighted Melbourne heads but could not go in that evening, as it commenced to blow hard from Cape Howe and King Island, so we knocked about at sea for the night. The next morning we hauled up our flat for a Pilot to come on board, but the Pilot did not hurry himself until the afternoon, when he came on board and brought us as far as the lighthouse. There we dropped our anchor the next morning, quite early. The Pilot came again, saying "come boys, a fair breeze; up with the anchor". She got as far as Williams Town and there we dropped anchor again. I and a few more of our passengers went to Melbourne on board a steamer which was passing by our ship; we hailed to her, and she came and took us along. It was on a Saturday, about the latter end of August, when I stepped my foot on shore. The first place I came to was my brother and sister-in-law Benjamin's, at Collins Street east, the first time we had met with each other since both of us left England in 1842. They received me very kindly, prepared a room for me for my sole use, and I was, once more, comfortable again.

I told them that I intended to make Melbourne my place of residence. I looked out daily for a place of business, but houses and shops were very scarce at that time, and the immigration of all nations so great. People were arriving in such vast quantities that twenty or thirty men, women and children had to make shift to stay in a house together for shelter. Providence has always been very good to me as, after searching for nearly a month, I was fortunate to get hold of a wooden building formerly occupied as a cooper shop. There was nothing else exhibited in it, but a few empty waterbutts for sale, and there now stands a magnificent stone building on the same ground called McCombies

Auction Room. I commenced business in that place about the latter end of September and did first rate in it until January 1853, when I had a month's notice for to leave, and I was obliged to look out for another. I then fell in with a man who had the lease of a shop higher up in Collins Street with only six months to run. I took that, and gave £100 for the Good Will.

I did pretty fair in that shop, and stayed in it as long as time would allow. I looked out again for another and could not get one to meet my business, until I met with a man who had a lease of a house, etc., a mere wooden shed, to sell, situated in Swanston Street. He demanded no less than £1600. I thought business at that time was very good, with houses and shops daily on the rise, and likely to continue for years. So I bought that, partly cash down and the rest in Bills, but they are paid long ago.

I then commenced business in Swanston Street. All at once, business began to fail, house rent got lower, week after week got worse, so I gave up my business and my shop. Since I was always of business habits, I got a very good living by speculating until 1855. I met with a gentleman who obtained an auctioneer's license; we joined in partnership and took premises in Elizabeth Street as an Auction Room. We had a fair trial of it, and it paid us very well. In January 1856 both of us have taken out licenses and both of us are auctioneers in that establishment until this day, but I am sorry to say we cannot boast of doing well. However, one consolation is that every branch of trade is not doing any better. How things will end is not known.

[Conclusion: Frankel subsequently remarried (to Mary Marks in 1857) and fathered another five children. In 1861 he settled in New Zealand, first at Dunedin (until 1864), and then at Wellington, where he served as minister of the Hebrew Congregation for some years. He died there on 30 August 1899. Two of his sons, Philip and Simeon, were prominent in the running of the Brisbane Synagogue and the Great Synagogue, Sydney, respectively — Ed.]



*Photographed at Karori Jewish Cemetery, Wellington,
by Beverley Davis, May 1996*

SHIPBOARD DIARY OF HENRY LIPPMANN EN ROUTE TO AUSTRALIA, 1857

Translated from the German by Kurt Lippmann

It has become a custom for me to write a diary and to put on paper impressions gained when travelling. This is the fourth time that I am on board a ship — either on the way from Europe to Australia or from Australia to Europe. But it appears to me that this will be the most interesting of these trips, and it is for that reason that I feel moved to record the most worthwhile and most interesting aspects of the travel on which I am now setting out.

On 18 July 1857, my partner and my friends accompanied me to the ship *Columbien*, a steamship of 2500 tons and 530 hp., which was then getting ready to set out on the trip from Sydney to Suez. We chatted for a quarter hour, then the signal was given for visitors to leave. After farewell kisses, my friends left and boarded a small boat, which would accompany us for a while. The captain gave the signal, and we steamed ahead through the beautiful harbour of Sydney, still accompanied by our friends in the little boat, who were waving us their goodbyes with their handkerchiefs. Another half hour and we left the harbour behind us, and entered the open sea.

Unfortunately we had headwinds, and it was rather stormy, although in Sydney we had had as beautiful a morning as is only possible in the southern hemisphere. One may believe that a wind's direction and strength would be of no importance when you are on a steamship, but this is not so. For in the first instance a steamship cannot achieve the same distance when beset by headwinds, and then a steamship can also use its sails in addition to its engine power when travelling in favourable conditions. We made as much progress as possible against the wind. The waves had the effect of making me a bit sea-sick. I tried to ignore this though, and stayed constantly on deck, for this is the best way to fight sea-sickness, and by afternoon I felt again, as they say, "quite alright".

The first day of a sea-trip brings with it the big question of who are your travel companions. This is best found out at the dinner table, and I made sure to be there on time, and here made the acquaintance of ca. 30 passengers — some travelling only to Melbourne, others to India and some to Europe. We had the pleasure of four women as co-passengers. These are especially welcome on such a long trip. It is noticeable that all the passengers commence the trip in a happy mood and without fear. This is different when you leave Europe. Then people leave with heavy hearts. Many people believe the reason to be that people look forward to meeting up with those close to them in Europe. But in my case this does not apply, for I leave behind in the colonies far truer friends than expect me in Europe.

Our second day on board was a most pleasant one, as far as the weather was concerned. It was warm and the sea was quiet. We had travelled already 300 miles along the coast of New South Wales, which indeed looked beautiful. But one has to beware not to approach it too closely.

When sitting down to dinner the doctor told me that the ship had a new passenger for the last two hours. A lady had given birth to a baby boy. She is a passenger from Sydney to Melbourne only. It really surprises me that a lady in these circumstances is undertaking such a trip, particularly as the transport from ship to land at Melbourne is fraught with danger for her. I had witnessed similar occurrences at times on previous trips, but the ladies always stayed on the ship for longer periods so that they could fully recover before disembarkation.

On Monday 20 July we crossed into Victoria. We had fine weather all day long, and at 5 pm. we could see Port Phillip Heads, the entrance to Melbourne's harbour. A pilot came on board, but he did not want to take us into Melbourne that night. He stated that it was already too dark and that it would be dangerous because of the narrow channels which exist in the 40-mile-long bay. Our captain, though, was adamant and we proceeded slowly at half speed and anchored at midnight in Melbourne's harbour, Hobson Bay. We let off rockets and fired our cannon so that the Melbournites would know that we had arrived. It was too late to disembark and so we went to bed. At 9 o'clock in the morning a small boat arrived and took the passengers to the railway station. I too took the opportunity to get to Melbourne in this way. I had once previously been to this city. That was in 1854, but on that occasion there was no railway yet. I found it thus most convenient to be in Melbourne in 10 minutes time.

My first journey was to visit my sister Fanny in Collins Street. I was very surprised when, on my arrival, I found there assembled a number of gentlemen and ladies, and I found that a ceremony of *Bris Milah* (circumcision) was in progress. My sister heard me arrive. She had expected me, and called out to me, and we were thrilled to see each other again after 3 years, and particularly on such an auspicious occasion. A ceremony like this is usually linked with an excellent meal, and I duly participated in this. I then left to attend to some business which I had to perform while in Melbourne.

This city has become much more beautiful during the past three years. One can see now nice streets and attractive buildings, e.g. banks, Parliament House, Stock Exchange, churches and the Town Hall — buildings that would do credit to any European capital city.

The mail contract carries with it the obligation for the boat to stay in port for 48 hours, so that Melbournites have time to write their letters. When I went back to the boat on the second evening, I found there several new passengers who had joined us for the trip to Europe. It was 9 o'clock at night when the mail arrived at last, but at the same time a strong fog descended, which made it impossible for us to keep to our plan to leave that night. Fog still prevailed on the next morning and it was midday before we could lift anchor. At 3 o'clock we passed through Melbourne Heads.

Our course was set for King George Sound. The wind was favourable and we steamed along the South Australian coast, and on the third day we were in line with the city of Adelaide. The wind continued to be favourable and we had a beautiful view of the coast.

After we had left Melbourne, a parade of the crew of the ship had taken place. The crew consisted of 40 Europeans and 110 coloured people — Indians, Arabs, Chinese and Negroes. It is interesting for us Europeans to observe these people. Each group has its own spokesman, who speaks a bit of English and passes on in their mother-tongue the orders received from the ship's officers. Some of the crew walk around completely naked, and the various physiognomies would present a wonderful scope for a painter.

On 28 July we anchored in King George Sound, a settlement in Western Australia. It was already rather late in the day when we arrived. We had to fire rockets to indicate that we required a pilot. After 2 hours wait a pilot arrived and brought us near town, next to a coal ship. Our crew began immediately to load our boat with coal, for this was the main purpose of our landing here. The next morning we were greatly surprised to find that a storm prevented us from going on land, but by midday the weather had cleared to some extent. But I still got very wet when I took a small boat to land. King George Sound, or I should rather say Albany which is the name of the city, does not offer any special attractions. It has 2000 to 3000 inhabitants, who make their livelihood from agriculture,

sheep farming and fishing. The land along this coast is mountainous and this provides one with pretty views. It is a narrow passage that leads into the harbour. Once through this the harbour is a good one. The grouping of the buildings can be described as pretty. I stayed only two hours on land, as there was little there to interest me.

On the next morning at 11 o'clock we left the harbour, after taking on board 350 tons of coal.

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## AUSTRALIAN ZIONISM: IDEAS AND DEBATE IN THE PRE-BALFOUR PERIOD

Bernard Hyams

Although the birth of Zionism in Australia is a phenomenon of the late nineteenth century, it is notable that Australian Jewry had evinced an interest in Palestine as early as the 1850s. This interest manifested itself through *Chalukah* — concern for the distress of co-religionists throughout the world, specifically those who were suffering severe economic hardships — and the practical translation of that concern was into appeals for funds to provide relief.<sup>1</sup> Although numbers of Palestinian Jews in receipt of such charity had emigrated, or were the descendants of emigrants, from Europe, *Chalukah* was more a concept of charity for struggling Jewish communities within Palestine than for immigrant colonisation of that land. The great English philanthropist Sir Moses Montefiore had been sympathetic towards establishing agricultural settlements in Palestine and an Australian appeal for funds in 1874 was for the specific purpose of one of his schemes. However Montefiore concentrated not on immigration but on rehabilitation — settling on the land those poverty-stricken people already living there, and thus making them self-sufficient in place of the traditional dependence on charity.<sup>2</sup>

Even before this, in the early 1860s, there was public reference to Jewish settlement in Palestine among Christian gatherings as well as Jewish groups.<sup>3</sup> In fact, Australian Jews had also heard of assistance schemes whose targets were in other parts of the world. The Anglo Jewish Association, founded in 1871, had worked especially to help Jewish education and for the rights of Jews in oriental countries, and branches of the Association sprang up in Australian communities during that decade. As far as Jewish colonisation was concerned, there was some Australian Jewish awareness of the Jewish Colonisation Association, established in 1891 in Paris by Baron Maurice de Hirsch. Its major focus, however, was on land settlement in Latin America and it was not involved in agricultural colonisation of Palestine until after 1896. Yet none of these schemes fell within the definition of Zionism in its modern sense, that is, involving not merely organised settlement in Palestine but, above all, the specific political goal of the creation in that country of a national homeland for the Jews.

### CHOVEVEI ZION

Probably the first hint in Australia of such an objective came in 1885 when a circular was drafted by the Reverend Dattner Jacobson, late of the Bourke Street Synagogue, Melbourne. Jacobson anticipated Middle East events by over thirty years in predicting the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and called for the restoration of Palestine as a Jewish republic. The *Jewish Herald* was quick to heap scorn on the Jacobson pronouncement, but largely because of its author's association with Reform Judaism: "To be sure a stranger project has never been mooted by a reform congregation."<sup>4</sup> The notion advanced in 1885 had to wait until the following decade for any practical expression in Australia. The year 1893 ended with the first form of action towards a goal akin to Zionism, with steps to establish a *Chovevei Zion* (lovers of Zion) movement in Sydney. Societies of this name had emerged in Russia in the 1880s and had even established colonies in Palestine, but the immediate stimulus for the 1893 Australasian move had been the formation of *Chovevei Zion* in England only two years earlier. Branches (known as "tents") had appeared throughout that country and had espoused the aims, not only of colonisation in Palestine and neighbouring territories, but also of spreading Hebrew as a living language. A significant anticipation of the subsequent Zionist movement was the very first item in the list of objects of the new society — "To foster the National idea in Israel".<sup>5</sup>



The English development was reported to Australian Jewry and evaluated in the press. Although the only Australian Jewish newspaper of the day, the *Jewish Herald*, sympathised with the concept of colonisation as a means of alleviating the plight of oppressed Russian Jewry, it scoffed at the other objects of *Chovevei Zion*. The development of a modern Hebrew language was simply not feasible, argued the *Herald*. How would it deal with new words such as "telephone" and with countless numbers of abstract terms now in linguistic currency? As for the national ideal, that was altogether visionary. Here the attitude of the *Herald's* editor, the Reverend Elias Blaubaum, heralded a stance to be taken by much of the Australian Jewish clergy in the early days of Zionism. Jews prayed for the restoration of the Jewish nation, noted Blaubaum, but they were not supposed to take active steps towards its realisation. "That rests with God".<sup>6</sup>

Such words of caution did not prevent an Australian response to the English *Chovevei Zion*. At the beginning of 1894 Sydney shoe trader Lewis Barnett contacted the English organisation, forwarding payment for issues of its journal and seeking printed material on the situation regarding the severely oppressed Russian Jews.<sup>7</sup> Barnett's home was subsequently the venue that year (21 October) for a meeting at which J.L. Dolowitch, a Polish-born immigrant, announced the establishment of a Lovers of Zion branch in Sydney, which was to register with the London executive of the movement and to seek members at the subscription rate of six pence per week.<sup>8</sup> The result was that by the middle of the following year £15 had been amassed to hand over to the parent body in the United Kingdom. But the Australian offshoot was nevertheless very peripheral in more than just a geographical sense. The branch members knew little of how the organisation worked in Britain and badly needed printed matter for their enlightenment.<sup>9</sup> The Sydney society continued its operations quietly — in fact virtually un-noted publicly — until 1903, when, at its meeting towards the end of May, its president, J.L. Dolowitch, signalled a winding up of affairs. The few pounds still credited to its bank account were transferred to a fund for Jewish colonisation and to a new local body which had appeared on the scene in New South Wales.<sup>10</sup>

### HERZLIAN ZIONISM: THE EARLY DEBATE

The *Chovevei Zion* movement gave Australian Jewry something of a false Zionistic dawn. In substance, origins of Zionism in Australia lie in the more dramatic Herzlian movement at the end of the nineteenth century. Even before the first international Zionist congress of 1897 Australian Jews were made aware of the political dimension now being given to the ancient dream of the return to Zion. Less than a year after Theodore Herzl had propounded to the noted Jewish philanthropists, Baron de Hirsch and the Rothschilds, his ideas of a national homeland as a solution to the "Jewish problem" (of European anti-semitism) the name Herzl had appeared before readers of the Australian Jewish press. The *Jewish Herald* gave strong editorial reaction in March 1896 to Herzl's communication of his ideas to the London-based *Jewish Chronicle*. It challenged as unworkable the goal of a national state whose neutrality would be guaranteed by the great powers of Europe. Blaubaum then reiterated his earlier stance on the *Chovevei Zion* objectives, namely that the time for fulfilment of the ancient prophecy had not yet come and Jews were not in any position to speed its coming.<sup>11</sup>

What then did the local Jewish press have as its preferred solution to the dreadful plight of European Jews, especially those in Eastern Europe? In reporting the great Zionist congress which commenced in Basle, Switzerland, at the end of August 1897, the Sydney and Melbourne newspapers were in accord on the alternative to a Jewish state. Their notion was to hope for amelioration of the condition of their oppressed co-religionists staying where they were. The words of the Sydney-based *Hebrew Standard*



(established 1895) represented an unrealistically sanguine position which was actually maintained in some ministerial quarters well after it was to be abandoned by the Jewish press itself: "If a Jew has the misfortune to live in an atmosphere of anti-Semitism his duty is to stand his ground, to fight it if he can and if not to endure it till it dies a natural death."<sup>12</sup>

The press continued to inform readers on the subsequent progress of the international Zionist movement, reporting successive annual congresses and reproducing articles appearing overseas on the subject. Initially all comment was hostile to the Zionist cause, especially due to the strong Anglo orientation of Australian Jewry's leadership, both lay and spiritual. Hence Australian Jews were subjected to views filtered through the medium of the *Jewish Chronicle*, which was implacable in its opposition to the Zionist propositions. The *Jewish Herald* quite explicitly commended attention to attitudes which had firmed in the "Old Country" and pointedly summoned the pronouncements of the Chief Rabbi Dr Hermann Adler. Many of the members of the clergy in England, especially the "natives", felt obliged to follow his lead<sup>13</sup> and this obligation was echoed by a number of their colleagues in Australia. The Chief Rabbi, in a sermon printed in the *Herald* at the beginning of 1899, sought to make a distinction between religious and political Zionism, denouncing the latter in the familiar terms of its irreverence, but also on the grounds that it was impracticable. The *Herald* seized the Chief Rabbinate's cue by attacking the fourth Zionist congress of August 1900 for its utopianism, arguing that over four years there had been much fiery rhetoric, many harrowing accounts of Jewish suffering, but little offered in the way of practical remedies. A mass return to the Holy Land under such circumstances was ludicrous, since "to starve in Palestine is just as abhorrent to the victim as to starve in Roumania".<sup>14</sup>

Yet Australian Jews were not totally captive to anti-Zionist sentiments. Editor Alfred Harris in Sydney had in the meantime become persuaded of the merits of the cause and his change of attitude was reflected in the pages of his *Hebrew Standard* as early as 1898. Following his paper's reproduction of some overseas pro-Zionist articles, he added editorial support, rejecting the alleged and much quoted Biblical moratorium and countering it with referral to Biblical support for positive action in pursuit of the Zionist goal. The *Standard* gave full coverage to the Chief Rabbi's criticism of Zionism from the pulpit, although Harris later insisted that among Australians there was a misconception of Dr Adler's attitude, which, Harris claimed but did not properly explain, was not actually opposed to Zionism *per se*.<sup>15</sup>

At the turn of the century the two Jewish newspapers reflected views on the subject which were almost diametrically opposed, although neither engaged in direct attack on the other. The *Herald* continued to echo the sentiments of the *Jewish Chronicle* without question. In particular it reiterated the nervousness of British Jewry in drawing attention to itself over the question of a national homeland and thus over the loyalty of Jews to their country of residence. To raise the return to Zion in its modern manifestation would, it was feared, reinforce the view that the Jew is not properly the citizen of any country. The *Hebrew Standard* rejected that contention. It argued that little would be gained by studying the views of those enemies who accused Jews of disloyalty; on the contrary, the Jewish drive for self-emancipation would in fact gain respect from true Christians.<sup>16</sup> The *Standard* also scoffed at the notion, previously advanced by the *Herald*, that a Jewish state could not defend itself against external dangers. However, there was an area of agreement between the two newspapers on the lack of progress in the practical task of evacuating distressed European Jewry to Palestine. But whereas Blaubaum derided the Zionist body for substituting oratory for action, Harris wanted to see the Zionist campaign arouse the emotions of Australian Jews and thus engage them in practical



assistance for the plans of the successive congresses. What he was seeking and in fact anticipating was the establishment of Zionist organisations in Australia. That objective was partly achieved with the creation of the Zionist Association in Perth late in 1900, the New South Wales Zionist League and Victorian Zionist League, both near the beginning of 1902.

### THE CONTINUING DEBATE

Although infant Zionist societies had commenced in three Australian locations by 1902, much of the debate on Zionism was conducted beyond mere organisational confines. To a large extent it was determined by major developments unfolding themselves within the international body. Since the first Zionist congress, the Jewish Colonial Trust had opened in 1899 and the Jewish National Fund commenced in 1901, both for the purpose of funding settlement and developing the land for it. Herzl was striving to secure from the Sultan of Turkey a charter for a protected Jewish state within the Sultan's domain in Palestine, while a faction classified as "practical Zionists" was urging immediate activities in Palestine regardless of the political solution pursued by Herzl.<sup>17</sup> In Australia the *Jewish Herald* continued to rail against "political Zionism", characterising it as impracticable and — still taking the lead from the *Jewish Chronicle* — deriding conversion of the renowned English novelist, Israel Zangwill, to the cause. The *Herald's* counterpart in Sydney maintained its far more favourable stance, although it did allude to community nervousness over "political" Zionism and even a "charity-begins-at-home" prejudice in the reaction to the more practical aspects of Zionism.<sup>18</sup>

The main attack came from within the ranks of the clergy. This was not evenly so, since the Reverend Moses Saunders had participated in the initial collections of Melbourne Zionists and in Sydney the Chief Minister, the Reverend Alexander Barnard Davis, was to give a sermon in which he withheld approval, on Biblical grounds, although he conceded that he would not dissuade supporters from their efforts.<sup>19</sup> Far more strident were the pronouncements of Sydney's Reverend Joseph Hirsch Landau. On the invitation of the *Herald's* editor, he launched into a diatribe against the Zionist agenda, reiterating some of the now familiar arguments and adding others. He especially condemned Herzl's secularist orientation and summoned historical evidence — the Bar Kochba revolt against the Romans — as a warning against the terrible sufferings in repercussions which might follow "fanatical" political actions. Above all, he challenged the pessimistic Zionist prognosis that the plight of Jews in eastern Europe would not be alleviated.<sup>20</sup>

Landau pursued this latter point most provocatively at a meeting in May 1902 by asserting that "Zionism was a coward's scheme because it accepts the present state of affairs as inevitable." With an equally colourful turn of phrase he also denounced the Zionists' "blasphemous attempt to anticipate Providence". The forum on that occasion had been arranged by the Hebrew Mutual Benefit Society in Sydney, with a majority of non-Jews present. But there were also Zionists in the audience and Landau objected to their presence and engaged in fiery exchanges with them during the course of the meeting. Keen Zionist Percy J. Marks stormed out of the hall in disgust, and was given an opportunity at a later date to address the Hebrew Mutual Benefit Society in what was virtually a response to Landau.<sup>21</sup> Most other reactions were confined to lively rounds of correspondence in the Jewish press, with numerous points made for and against Landau's utterances.

Before 1902 had run its course it had become apparent, even to the most ardent followers in Australia, that the political goal of a national homeland in Palestine had receded. Herzl had failed to persuade the Sultan of Turkey on the matter and turned now to the



notion, which he had never quite abandoned, of alternative locations for Jewish colonisation. Henry Hockings in Sydney actually wrote to Herzl on this theme, suggesting either the New Hebrides or the Solomon Islands, which he (Hockings) had previously visited. In reply, Herzl had discounted the idea, advocating continuing efforts for Palestine, which might yet be realised for the Jewish people at the right time.<sup>22</sup> Yet Herzl had already moved towards a British offer of British East Africa. The proposition was put up for investigation to the sixth congress in 1903 and although accepted, led to great hostility and a walk-out by the Russian delegation.

Paradoxically, the cause of the split in the ranks of international Zionists temporarily strengthened the movement in Australia. The Victorian Zionist League voted to approve the East Africa proposition. Its president, Abraham Kozminsky, and his ultimate successor Nathaniel Levi, parliamentarian and wealthy English-born merchant, warmly supported the idea of a Jewish homeland which would be protected under the British flag. That prospect served to enlist support from the Anglo element in the community which had hitherto held aloof from the political prescription of the first Basle congress. This contributed to a 100 per cent increase in VZL membership in the year up to April 1904. Membership had also increased significantly in the Sydney organisation in that period.<sup>23</sup> Local sentiment against the Palestine option was probably influenced also by the role of community personalities, especially the ministerial opponents. Thus although Blaubaum, the editor of the *Herald*, had died in mid-1904, his legacy was that the newspaper continued to assail the original Basle programme and to favour its alternatives.

In Sydney there was no change in editorial personnel but a decided change in the attitude of the press. In this shift, Harris was to move closer to the position adopted by the Reverend Francis Lyon Cohen who arrived in Sydney in 1905. Although not vitriolic in the style of the Assistant Minister Landau, who left for the USA, Cohen, as new chief minister of the Great Synagogue, would be a significant element in the anti-Zionist camp. His attitude on the subject was actually known to the Zionist League even before his arrival in Sydney and it was one which he maintained with relative consistency throughout his ministry. In the earlier years after arrival he used at different times one or other of the various arguments of Chief Rabbi Hermann Adler, and even though Adler's successor in 1913, Joseph Hertz, was an ardent Zionist, this did not cause Cohen to change his stance.<sup>24</sup> It has generally been regarded that a major factor in the relative failure of the Zionist appeal to Sydney Jews was the alliance between Francis Cohen and Alfred Harris. The rabbi is said to have exerted a very strong influence on Harris, whose wife's family had actually been neighbours of Cohen in England. Certainly the *Standard's* views did alter after the arrival of the Great Synagogue's rabbi, but they did not change significantly from general opposition after Harris relinquished his editorial chair in 1908. Both of his successors, Marcus Marks (1909-15) and Herbert Wolff (1915-1919), were exposed to Cohen's influence by virtue of holding the position of assistant secretary to the Great Synagogue.<sup>25</sup>

But the course of the community debate on Zionism also reflected the turmoil in the ranks of the world body. Herzl had died in 1904 and, with the refusal of his faithful lieutenant Max Nordau to succeed him, the more cautious David Wolffsohn of Cologne took the helm. Under the new leadership the 7th Zionist Congress of 1905 rejected the East Africa plan and its erstwhile supporters convened a meeting under Israel Zangwill to form the Jewish Territorial Organisation (ITO), dedicated to the pursuit of alternative locations for settlement of persecuted European Jews. In Victoria the ITO soon found adherents. Predictably, the *Jewish Herald* endorsed the new organisation and its objectives, but even within local Zionist circles there was sympathy. At first the leadership of the VZL suggested that support for the ITO was compatible with Zionism.



The argument that Territorialism and Zionism were complementary rather than mutually antagonistic was to be pursued at public gatherings in Melbourne from 1906 to 1908, where the two movements were compared in talks or debates. This debate occurred even where no Zionist body yet existed, such as in Adelaide, but it was certainly fostered also by the formation of branches of the ITO in Perth in 1906 and Melbourne in 1908 (which the Reverend Danglow joined and actively supported). ITO advocates were given generous opportunities to air their case even within Zionist circles, particularly in the newly formed women's branch in Melbourne.<sup>26</sup>

It took intervention from outside to halt the further attraction of the Victorian Zionist League to the ITO. Samuel Goldreich, president of the large South African Zionist organisation, was at the time on an extended private visit to Australia. He quickly rejected the Zangwill agenda and urged adherence to the original Basle programme. His strong denunciation of the ITO as a false movement and its leader as being personally motivated, curbed the leadership of the VZL in its incipient sympathy for Territorialism. The Victorian president, Nathaniel Levi, consequently retreated from his earlier benign attitude, proclaiming that whilst Territorialism would assist in Jewish emigration to various parts of the world, it was no substitute for the Zionist ideal of the formation once again of a Jewish nation. Undoubtedly Goldreich's message of opposition was heard elsewhere in Australia, since he made it his business to visit all States except Western Australia.<sup>27</sup>

However, there was little tangible evidence of a Goldreich impact in Sydney, where the Zionist cause was now clearly much weaker than in Melbourne. In Sydney the Jewish press was highly vocal. Harris at first gave Territorialism only a mild welcome, pursuing instead the argument that the collapse of the idea of a Turkish concession meant that the best hope for Jews was for the gradual amelioration of their position within Russia itself. In a sermon given in mid-1906 the Reverend Francis Cohen enunciated much the same message of optimism for a gradual moral regeneration. In spite of further terrible onslaughts against Jews in Russia, Harris continued to argue that evolutionary change in Russia was the best prospect for its Jews. Nevertheless, both Cohen and Harris increasingly favoured the ITO as a prospect for dealing with the Jewish problem.<sup>28</sup> Then the bloodless revolution and acceptance of constitutional government in Turkey in 1908 led the Zionist body in Sydney to speculate optimistically on the Palestine option; the *Standard* was uncertain how it would affect future prospects, but the *Herald* was adamant in following the Zangwill line that the changes in Turkey spelled the end of political Zionist hopes. Yet "practical" Zionism had gained support in Australia in the years prior to the First World War. Francis Cohen was willing to subscribe to the Olive Tree Fund for Palestine, while the *Herald* applauded the 1909 Zionist congress confirmation of settlement and economic development in Palestine rather than emphasis on the diplomatic approach.<sup>29</sup> If Australian Jews were divided over the political aspects of a Palestine solution to the problem of eastern European Jewry, they displayed much greater consensus over the financial goals of settlement in that land.

Even in this respect, though, the various Zionist bodies, which had emerged in four of the Australian States before World War I, could not claim notable success. The Australian Zionist organisations dragged their feet on centralising fund-raising control just as they failed to develop cohesion on the political aspect. For their part, they probably shared the sentiments of the Victorian branch on what was needed to improve the Australian performance. The Victorians' proposed solution was a specific initiative from the world body to shake the Australian Jewish communities out of their indifference to the Zionist cause. In practical terms this would be achieved by sending an eminent Zionist leader to tour Australia to stimulate support. But such a solution was caught in



a vicious circle. The Australians felt that they needed an emissary to boost their movement; the Jewish National Fund (JNF) was reluctant to send someone unless the Australian movement was strong enough to ensure the success of the visit:

We would not hesitate to send off to your distant country one of our agitators, but we could only do so if a certain success could undoubtedly be expected. ... Many organisations are asking for our aid and you will understand that we are obliged to help those who have shown results that promise further and important development. This is why a visit of a member of our leadership to your country ... cannot very likely be taken into consideration for the very near future.<sup>30</sup>

That consideration was not to occur until 1920. By that time the War, the capture of Jerusalem and the Balfour Declaration on the subject of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, would serve collectively to make some impact on Zionist consciousness in what had been a rather unfavourable antipodean climate.

### NOTES

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- <sup>3</sup> A.D. Crown, "Demography, politics, and love of Zion: The Australian Jewish Community and the *Yishuv*, 1850-1948", in W.D. Rubinstein, *Jews in the Sixth Continent*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney 1987, pp. 219, 222.
- <sup>4</sup> *Jewish Herald*, 16 October 1885, p. 347.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, 1 December 1893, p. 8.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, p. 6.
- <sup>7</sup> Lewis Barnett to Chovevei Zion Society, 16 January 1894, Central Zionist Archives (CZA) A2/106.
- <sup>8</sup> *Jewish Herald*, 2 November 1894.
- <sup>9</sup> Secretary, Chovevei Zion Society (Sydney) to Chovevei Zion Headquarters (London), 29 July 1895, CZA A2/106.
- <sup>10</sup> *Hebrew Standard*, 29 May 1903, p. 8.
- <sup>11</sup> *Jewish Herald*, 6 March 1896, p. 93.
- <sup>12</sup> *Hebrew Standard*, 29 October 1897, p. 7.
- <sup>13</sup> S.A. Cohen, *English Zionist and British Jews: The Communal Politics of Anglo-Jewry 1895-1920*, Princeton University Press, 1982, pp. 188, 189.
- <sup>14</sup> *Jewish Herald*, 6 January 1899, pp. 32, 33; 12 October 1900, p. 334.
- <sup>15</sup> *Hebrew Standard*, 8 June 1898, p. 4; 1 June 1900, p. 4.
- <sup>16</sup> *Jewish Herald*, 26 October 1900, pp. 349, 350; *Hebrew Standard*, 14 December 1900, p. 2.
- <sup>17</sup> *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*, 1939, Vol. 10, p. 652.
- <sup>18</sup> *Jewish Herald*, 17 January 1902, p. 44; 31 January, p. 55; *Hebrew Standard*, 7 March 1902, p. 6.



- <sup>19</sup> *Jewish Herald*, 14 March 1902, p. 95; *Hebrew Times*, 29 August 1902, p. 6.
- <sup>20</sup> *Jewish Herald*, 25 April 1902, pp. 145, 146.
- <sup>21</sup> *Hebrew Times*, 16 May 1902, p. 7; 21 November, p. 3; *Jewish Herald*, 23 May 1902, p. 174.
- <sup>22</sup> *Hebrew Times*, 15 May 1903, p. 8; *Jewish Herald*, 22 May 1903, p. 190.
- <sup>23</sup> *Jewish Herald*, 23 October 1903, p. 373; 15 January 1904, p. 57, 8 April 1904, p. 139.
- <sup>24</sup> R. Apple, "Francis Lyon Cohen: The Passionate Patriot", *AJHS Journal*, Vol. XII, Part 4, 1995, pp. 721, 722.
- <sup>25</sup> S.D. Rutland, *Seventy Five Years: The History of a Jewish Newspaper*, AJHS, Sydney, 1970, pp. 22, 25, 26.
- <sup>26</sup> *Jewish Herald*, 1 December 1905, p. 8; 6 April, 1906, p. 156; 15 June, p. 229; 13 July, p. 264; 12 July 1907, p. 253; 21 August 1908, p. 296; *Hebrew Standard*, 15 May 1908, p. 11.
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- <sup>28</sup> *Hebrew Standard*, 1 December 1905, pp. 8; 23 February 1906, p.8; 22 June, p. 8; 23 November, p. 8; 21 February 1908 pp. 8,9; *Jewish Herald*, 13 July 1906, p. 261.
- <sup>29</sup> *Jewish Herald*, 13 November 1908, p. 396; 25 December, p. 20; 18 February 1910, p. 88; *Hebrew Standard*, 21 February 1908, p. 9; 28 October, p. 8.
- <sup>30</sup> JNF to VZA President, 13 July 1914, CZA Z3/952.



## “A NOBLE SIGHT TO SEE”: PHILO-SEMITIC RESPONSES IN LATE NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY AUSTRALIA TO JEWISH CRISES OVERSEAS

*Hilary L. Rubinstein*

In 1853 a Jewish trader of Exeter, Joseph Marks, uprooted his family and began a new life in Adelaide. Their departure from Devon did not go unregretted. Shortly before the family sailed, a group of leading citizens of Exeter gathered at the local synagogue. In an affecting ceremony they issued Marks with a handsome silver salver and an elegant cigar case. Each item was carefully inscribed: “A testimonial of respect and esteem to Mr. Joseph Marks, contributed by his friends and neighbours, on his leaving Exeter for Australia; and presented on their behalf by the Right Worshipful the Mayor, R.S. Cornish Esq., Exeter, May 1853.”<sup>1</sup>

When Cornish had concluded his kind words to Marks, another local notable, councillor and magistrate Thomas Latimer, extended the tribute. He lauded the industry, uprightness and role in the wider society of the Jewish community of Exeter and avowed that Christians owed Jews much for centuries of persecution. The occasion, declared the regional newspaper, was “gratifying ... exhibiting the cordial feeling of respect and goodwill which our respectable Hebrew fellow-citizens have gained for themselves.”<sup>2</sup>

Jewish political emancipation was in the air, amid an increasingly sympathetic public opinion.<sup>3</sup> In a few years the desperate rearguard action of bigots, reactionaries, and apologists for a “Christian constitution” would be shattered, and Jews would take their place at Westminster as they had already done in the corporation chambers of the City of London and of provincial centres across the country.<sup>4</sup>

In that climate of growing appreciation for what Jews such as Joseph Marks contributed to society, and of intensifying conviction that Jewish civil disabilities were wrong in principle, gentile tributes to and cooperation with Jews occurred not infrequently. Gentile public figures — some very high-ranking indeed — appeared at the annual meetings and banquets of Jewish institutions, to offer praise and encouragement. Gentile names peppered the lists of donors to Jewish causes. Synagogue building funds could usually count on Christian generosity.<sup>5</sup> The same held true of Australia, where Jews had sat in colonial parliaments since 1849, and enjoyed “an absence of prejudice hardly known in Europe,” to quote the *London Jewish Chronicle*.<sup>6</sup> Joseph Marks and his fellow Anglo-Jewish migrants had exchanged one land of tolerance for another.

This paper should be set in the context of a wider study of philo-Semitism in the English-speaking world on which I am engaged. My research shows that during each major overseas crisis afflicting the Jewish people, a formidable body of gentile opinion ranged itself on the side of justice for the traduced and persecuted. That was the case in Britain during the Damascus blood libel of 1840, the Mortara abduction case of 1858-59 in Bologna, the Roumanian outrages of 1872, Russian pogroms and persecutions during the 1880s, 1890s, and infant years of the twentieth century, the Dreyfus Affair of 1894-99, the Beilis ritual murder accusation of 1912-13 in Kiev, as well as during the Nazi period. During those crises, which received prominent attention in the general press, a representative portion of British public opinion demonstratively backed the Jews.<sup>7</sup>

That backing was manifested in a number of ways: by donations to funds opened on behalf of the distressed, by newspaper editorials and letters to the press, by addresses



to relevant cabinet ministers urging governmental intervention, even by petitions to offending foreign rulers requesting them to cease persecution. It was also manifested, more often than not, in public meetings of protest, attended and addressed by elite figures from across the political and religious spectrum — members of parliament, aristocrats, military figures, leaders of the banking and commercial worlds, well-known representatives of literature and the arts, and clergymen of various denominations, including prelates. In the words of the Melbourne *Jewish Herald's* London correspondent concerning one of these meetings: "The aristocracy of talent, as well as of birth, were there, and the oratory reached a scale of merit which has rarely been equalled even in the House of Commons".<sup>8</sup> Significantly, those gathered on such occasions were by no means confined to the liberal or radical wings of politics: conservatives were represented too.

In this paper I will explore comparable manifestations of philo-Semitism in Australia, and owing to considerations of space I will concentrate on the period 1881-1905. I will not treat Jewish communal reactions to overseas crises within that timespan, nor the Dreyfus Affair, having already published relevant articles in previous issues of this *Journal*.<sup>9</sup> Nor will I describe the instances of philo-Semitism which accompanied the victorious struggle, during the mid-nineteenth century, to win Jews full civic equality with Christians in the Australian colonies. Suffice it to say that pivotal to that struggle was the issue of the relationship between church and state, and that liberal and anti-clerical opinion was typically ranged on the side of the Jews. Conservatives, however, were also numbered among supporters of Jewish claims.<sup>10</sup>

This paper will show that, as in Britain, philo-Semitism in Australia during periods of crisis facing the Jewish world between 1881 and 1905 crossed political boundaries and denominational frontiers, and elite figures were identified with it. Indeed, these trends were discernible during appeals for Palestinian Jewry in the 1850s and 1860s, as described to some extent in a groundbreaking but unanalytical article in an early issue of this *Journal*.<sup>11</sup> These trends were also features of Australian protests at Nazi treatment of Jews, as seen in attendances at public meetings and other manifestations of outrage, and in the disparate backgrounds and outlooks of the public figures in Perth, Melbourne and Sydney who in 1939 and 1940 signed manifestoes supporting Jewish refugee settlement in the Kimberley region.<sup>12</sup> Such trends were, to quote a philo-Semite rejoicing in 1903 at ecumenical cooperation on behalf of the persecuted, "a noble sight to see."<sup>13</sup>

A colonial Australian Jewish minister, Reverend Isidore Myers, attributed Christian support for the Jewish cause to a combination of contrition and "the noble influence of the Bible."<sup>14</sup> There was, very definitely, a conviction that anti-Jewish prejudice belonged to another age and shamed its practitioners, and that Christians should atone for the dark deeds of the past. In many cases this attitude formed part of a broader humanitarian outlook — of an enlightened, liberal view of the world. The words of a Geelong resident, Ernest A. Trotter, in 1903, illustrate this attitude rather well: "That such dreadful conditions can exist, foul crimes be perpetrated on inoffensive peoples like the Armenians, Macedonians and Jews, in this the twentieth century, is a disgrace to all professing Christian nations. National policy may be advanced against embroiling ourselves with offending nations, as a reason that we should not interfere in matters of this kind, but the same plea could, and no doubt was, advanced when England sought the abolition of slavery..."<sup>15</sup>

Additionally, Christians were indebted to Jews for producing Jesus, as Trotter (among others) noted.<sup>16</sup> There was, indeed, a very positive element to the philo-Semitism of many people, irrespective of guilt feelings and the need to make amends. To such people



the Jews deserved support not only on account of what they had suffered, but because of what their peculiar genius had given to the world. Here, for example, is the Melbourne Methodist Reverend Edwin Iredale Watkin, a former president of Wesley College, writing in 1905 to the local Zionist activist Barnet Hyman Altson: "As I read British history, the expansion of England began when she accepted the reformed Christian faith and when she removed from her Statute Book the laws which oppressed your co-religionists ... Just as Jehovah raised up in ancient times the Assyrian 'as the rod of his anger,' so has he raised up the Japanese people to be his battleaxe and his weapons of war to punish Russia for her long continued and infamous treatment of the race which gave to the world the Founder of Christianity, and which has given to the world in every century those who, in every department of human activity, have stood foremost among men."<sup>17</sup>

There was a profound sense of marvel at the Jews' persistence despite all the odds: they were living proof of the mystery of God's purpose. Many Christians stood in awe and admiration of a people who through centuries of upheaval and torment refused to be broken. If Jews clung to Judaism despite terror and torture, some went so far as to feel, that must testify to the worth of their religion. An exemplar of this sort of thinking was W.A. Lloyd, organiser of the Immigration League of Australia. "When I remember what the world owes this martyr-race, and reflect on its ingratitude, my blood boils with indignation," he wrote in 1906 after attending a service at Sydney's Great Synagogue. There he

was never so moved in my life ... At the synagogue I saw a people deprived of the country of their fathers, scattered over the earth, having suffered for centuries for no other crime than nationality, yet still one, remembering the noble traditions of the past, filled with a hope nothing short of divine, that one day, in God's own time, Israel would emerge from the fiery furnace, the stronger and better for the ordeal...<sup>18</sup>

Church teaching might portray Jews as Christ-killers, clinging obstinately — nay, perversely — to a superseded revelation, but many Christians, steeped in the "Old Testament," inculcated a deep regard for the Law and the Prophets and for the people who produced them. Accompanying this was a tendency to perceive the followers of Judaism less as antagonists professing a redundant tradition than as guardians of a creed akin to the Christians' own. Presumably this explains donations by Christians to synagogue building funds in both Australia and Britain.<sup>19</sup> As the Sydney Unitarian cleric, Reverend George Walters, put it:

[he had] a very deep reverence for the religion and ethics of Judaism ... The branches of that national tree might ... have been rudely shaken, but by that very shaking the seeds of the living Faith had been wafted far and wide over the whole earth.<sup>20</sup>

Or, as the Methodist *Spectator* expressed it: "The Jews are the ancient and chosen people ... and that never-to-be-forgotten fact, apart from any other consideration, should touch the Christian heart and revive the Christian conscience."<sup>21</sup>

The Jews, in short, were the People of the Book, and as such there was esteem for them. "The Christian community [in Australia]," said Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne Dr Henry Lowther Clarke, "recognising that the Old Testament was one of its most precious treasures, admitted the Jews to full privileges of citizenship, and found them true and loyal citizens."<sup>22</sup> Countless Australians were seduced by the beautiful Jacobean language of the familiar Authorised Version of the Bible: as Reverend Myers observed, citing Queen Victoria, the Bible was influential among people of British stock.<sup>23</sup> There was an innate identification with the descendants of the ancient Israelites against their modern oppressors. And another strand in philo-Semitism was admiration for Jewish secular achievement, for Jewish intellectualism and conspicuous contributions to the



arts and culture: "What an enormous chasm would be made in history were the Jewish element withdrawn!" declared the *Sydney Morning Herald* in a glowingly philo-Semitic editorial in 1863.<sup>24</sup>

There was also gentile support for Zionism, exemplified by such figures as the Melbourne Presbyterian divine Dr Adam Cairns, who in 1854 produced *The Jews: Their Fall and Restoration* (which incorporated two sermons he had preached) and by the various public figures who supported fundraising quests on behalf of Palestinian Jewry and, later, the concept of a Jewish National Home.<sup>25</sup> Broadly, these gentile Zionists were of two kinds: those who from primarily humanitarian motives advocated a haven and therefore a normal existence for persecuted Jews, and those who argued that in fulfilment of scripture world Jewry should and would be restored to Zion. How Jews living in lands of tolerance fitted into the latter schema was perhaps as unclear to its advocates as it is to posterity, but more often than not those advocates were persons with a deep consciousness of prophecy and of the Jews' mission as God's Chosen People.<sup>26</sup>

Such advocates were not invariably conversionists. Although Christians themselves, they did not necessarily believe that Judaism should be forsaken by its adherents. But, undeniably, there was a type of Christian Zionism which took it for granted that once the Jews were restored to Palestine their acceptance of Christianity would ensue. Nevertheless, even here there was a strong philo-Semitic element, which regarded the Jews as indeed a unique people with a special destiny, and which expected that after embracing Christianity their group, or national, identity would be retained for the divine plan. In the meantime, individuals who had converted to Christianity were described as Jews in the "racial" sense, exhibiting all the characteristics of a separate and remarkable people.

This type of philo-Semitism is so visible in an editorial entitled "The Miracle of History" which appeared in the Melbourne-based *Presbyterian Messenger* following the Kishinev pogrom of 1903, that it is worth quoting at some length:

The civilised world has been profoundly shocked by the recent persecution of the Jews in South Russia ... The shock which Christendom has received is testimony to the interest that the Christian world has in the Jew ... But must we say that ... the schemes suggested for the resettlement of the Jews in Palestine will not succeed? ... we think any such judgment would be premature. Meantime, what a history theirs has been! ... Other races persecuted half as much would have become demoralised and disappeared, but three thousand years of strife and struggle have not even obliterated their distinctive features ... There is no department of human energy and enterprise in which they have failed to excel ... [The Jew] has made a marvellous fight in all the ages, and he has done it with one hand tied behind him. They are a truly wonderful people, these Jews ...

One cannot help wondering, with an intensity that needs no apology, what will be the future of this extraordinary race, that has bulked so largely in past history, when the veil that hides the Saviour from their view is removed...<sup>27</sup>

In a consideration of what follows it should be borne in mind that support for Jews was not conditional upon their ultimate espousal of Christianity. That support was freely given, whether by overt or covert conversionists, who moreover in the course of that support made no attempts to propagandise before their Australian Jewish allies. Their solidarity with the Jewish cause was unconditional, and we need not generally seek an ulterior motive. Indeed, there is no reason to suppose that the majority of philo-Semites harboured conversionist hopes or expectations at all. Of one thing, however, I am certain: if the people who appear in this article had been anti-Semites, their attitude towards Jews would have been recorded by the historian long ago!



Sympathy and support for Jews found a fertile field in Australia. The Melbourne communal personality Asher Hymen Hart wrote in 1854 that "Many kindhearted Christians in this city had frequently requested to be allowed to assist the Jews in various undertakings..."<sup>28</sup> That same year Phineas Moss of Hobart Town observed, in the wake of Christian generosity to the Fund in Aid of the Distressed [or Famished] Jews of Palestine: "our grateful thanks are most speedily tendered, but, above all, it is most gratifying to us to reflect on this evidence of the progress of civilisation generally, and on the proof that however remote, in the British Empire no difference of opinion will ever be allowed to interfere in the relief of suffering humanity."<sup>29</sup>

Indeed, four years later, in an editorial entitled "What we might learn from our Australian colonies," the *Jewish Chronicle* reflected:

... wherever the Englishman set foot, there order, liberty, and prosperity sprang up ... Can anybody calculate the inestimable benefits thus conferred upon the Jewish nation by the Anglo-Saxon race? ... And now it is the same respect for religious liberty which the Anglo-Saxon has transferred from the banks of the Severn to those of the Murray. Whatever the causes to which the Australian colonists are indebted for their rapid rise and progress, the unrestricted exercise of religious liberty is one of them. Who will apportion the amount of prosperity due to the calm Episcopalian, the plodding Dissenter, or the enterprising Hebrew? Like bees they work together, in and for the same hive, although swarming in different directions, and deriving their honey from different blossoms; and like bees they have the right to share in the same sweetness. The Australian colonies open to the Jews a new home, in which they are called to participate in every advantage which a country can confer upon her citizens. No exceptional legislation, and no invidious class distinctions exclude them from the enjoyment of privileges which form the birthright of every citizen...

Whilst Jamaica, Canada, and Australia have completely emancipated their Jewish inhabitants, and admitted them to their due share in their legislatures, England still clings to the last rag of inveterate prejudice, as though it were the sheet anchor of her salvation.<sup>30</sup>

Sections of the press and the inevitable presence of incorrigible bigots aside, Jews encountered comparatively little anti-Semitism in Australia, and certainly none of the institutional kind.<sup>31</sup> Colonial society saw the emergence of a Jewish mercantile and civic elite, and the appointment of Jews to positions of the utmost distinction. Their fellow Australians saw Jews as a well-integrated, demonstrably patriotic, intellectually able, commercially valuable group of settlers. And when crisis struck Jewries overseas Australian gentiles made common cause with Australian Jews via, as Reverend Myers observed, "the press, the pulpit, and the platform."<sup>32</sup>

In Australia, as in Britain, there was a great deal of gentile anger at the pogroms which swept southern Russia in 1881. Indeed, it is noteworthy that public meetings of protest were held in the Australian colonies several months before comparable expressions of concern were organised in the mother country.<sup>33</sup>

Harrowing press reports in the Melbourne *Argus*<sup>34</sup> made a deep impact on Victorian colonists. The Western District pastoralist and noted philanthropist Suetonius Henry Officer saw the events reported as one of several signs that the restoration of the Jews to Palestine was imminent. He came from a family with an interest in the fate of Jewry. In 1854 his Scots-born father, the Tasmanian (Sir) Robert Officer MLC, had contributed £2 to the Palestinian Jews' relief fund. He himself had married a daughter of Reverend Adam Cairns. Now, at his own expense, he reprinted Cairns' pamphlet predicting the return of Jews to Zion, an act which drew grateful comments from the *Jewish Herald*. That newspaper wished the pamphlet a wide sale: "Arguing from the Christian interpretation of the Old Testament these discourses present, in a very good light, the



views held by those Christians who are not blinded by fanaticism and bigotry towards the Jews ..."<sup>35</sup>

The first public meeting was held on 1 August 1881 at Melbourne Town Hall. Convened at the request of prominent Jews and gentiles by the Mayor (Cornelius Job Ham who occupied the chair), the meeting attracted about 200 men of various creeds and political opinions. Gentile speakers dominated proceedings.<sup>36</sup>

Among those who conveyed apologies for absence were the Anglican Dean of Melbourne, Dr Hussey Burgh Macartney, and former premier Sir John O'Shanassy, who enclosed two and three guineas respectively. Macartney had been one of those who requested the meeting, but found he had a prior engagement. "I am sorry to send so small a subscription ... but it is as much as I can afford," he wrote to Ham. "The injuries inflicted on the Jews in the East of Europe seem to arise from the same cause as the disturbances in Ireland, the jealousy the indolent and the thriftless feel for the property won by industry, and retained by the thrift, of their neighbours; but, in the case of the Jews, I cannot but see the hand of God, who is at the same time removing the hindrances to the promised return of Israel to Palestine, and breaking up their home in other lands."<sup>37</sup>

O'Shanassy wrote to Ephraim Laman Zox MLA:

Although the Government of Russia has been very appropriately styled by Voltaire a "mild despotism tempered by assassination," and unfortunately this description has been realised in our own day in the case of the late Czar [the so-called Liberator, Alexander II], yet your co-religionists suffer as deeply as if this "tempered" plan of government did not exist. Russia has earned the undying hatred of all enlightened people for its constant practice of a persecuting spirit. As one who has always received your personal aid whenever the cause of charity was at stake in this city, I beg to send you my humble subscription in testimony of my sympathy for the cause you have undertaken. I also received your personal support last year on the Irish Famine Relief Committee, and I trust all my friends will cooperate with you on the occasion.<sup>38</sup>

The opening resolution (which passed, in common with the others), recorded the meeting's "deep regret at the severe persecutions and outrages which have recently been committed upon the Jews in Southern Russia, and ... its profound sympathy with the unfortunate sufferers." It was moved by Sir George Verdon, the barrister and politician who had served as Victorian Agent-General in London, and seconded by George David Langridge MLA, an Anglican builder. Both men made it clear that they were motivated not only by pity, but by admiration, for Jews.

Too much money, declared Verdon, could not be collected for suffering Russian Jewry. Their treatment was a disgrace to Christianity and to the age, and the ferocious anti-Jewish feeling manifested not only in Russia but in other parts of Europe was inexplicable. He could only assume that it was driven by jealousy of their success, for they were in the forefront of so many fields of endeavour. There was nothing in the Jews' religion or behaviour to account for animosity; no people were more law-abiding or keener to work peaceably alongside their fellow-citizens. Langridge observed that Jews were often accused of an obsession with making money, but in dispensing charity they frequently put Christians to shame, as the generosity of Victoria's Jews to deserving causes demonstrated. These remarks drew cheers, as did his confided astonishment that the British people and government had not (yet) spoken out on behalf of Russian Jewry.<sup>39</sup>

The next resolution, which opened the "Southern Russia Jewish Relief Fund", was moved by Nathaniel Levi seconded by the Mayor, Alderman Ham. A successful



auctioneer and prominent lay leader of the Baptist church in Victoria, Ham was to play a leading role in Melbourne's protest at the verdict of Dreyfus' Rennes court-martial in 1899.<sup>40</sup> Now, he pledged ten guineas to the fund. He said that events in Russia were incredible in the nineteenth century and seemed to have plunged them back into the dark ages. Anyone who read the reports in the *Argus* yet failed to sympathise with the persecuted must have hearts of stone. Melbourne had responded readily to previous appeals to relieve distress overseas; charity, like mercy, blessed both giver and recipient.<sup>41</sup>

The flamboyant and unorthodox medical practitioner Louis Lawrence Smith MLA, seconded by the more conventional physician and medical journalist Dr Samuel Thomas Knaggs (who pledged five guineas) moved the appointment of a committee to administer the fund. The committee's membership, a mixture of prominent Jews and gentiles, included Ham, Verdon, future Victorian Premier James Munro MLA, and John Nimmo MLA. On the motion of Professor John Simeon Elkington (who held the chair of history at the University of Melbourne) seconded by Reverend Elias Blaubaum, Ham was appointed co-Treasurer along with St. Kilda communal personality Isaac Jacobs.<sup>42</sup>

For Jews it was a reassuring occasion: Nathaniel Levi "felt proud" of the vocal support of non-Jewish men of note. His confidence "that all creeds were ready to contribute to the fund"<sup>43</sup> proved amply justified. The *Argus* reports, reinforced by graphic accounts from the London *Jewish World* read to the gathering by Blaubaum, touched hearts; £350 was collected on the spot. The meeting's organisers asked newspaper editors and country town mayors across Victoria to publicise the outrages and recommend the relief fund. As a result, almost £1400 was amassed within a fortnight. The English, Scottish and Australian Chartered Bank remitted the money to Anglo-Jewish leaders in London free of charge, and itself contributed ten guineas.<sup>44</sup>

At least one country town, Beechworth, went to the trouble of organising a public meeting for the receipt of donations. Local Jewish and non-Jewish personalities shared the platform. Of course, as elsewhere in Australia, many townsfolk undoubtedly saw the cause as another humanitarian effort worthy of support by free and successful colonists. Nevertheless, many, again as elsewhere, were conscious that this particular cause had a special claim on their generosity. As one local speaker, named Ingram, commented: "as Christ and his disciples belonged to the Jewish race, the world at large owed a great debt of gratitude to that people, who, he felt certain, were destined to yet fulfil a great purpose. Every person ought to have sympathy with the movement..."<sup>45</sup>

Reports of the Melbourne meeting inspired an anonymous self-styled "Christian Sympathizer" in Adelaide to write to his local newspaper suggesting a similar gathering at his city's Town Hall:

I am quite sure that if the tale of the brutal persecutions which the poor Jews are now undergoing at the hands of the debased and superstitious portion of the Russian people ... is laid before the colonists, that a hearty expression of sympathy and a substantial amount of aid will soon be forthcoming. Enjoying as we do in this colony the blessings of perfect liberty of conscience, it behoves us to remember those who are not so favoured; and as far as I can learn, the disgraceful treatment now being received by the Russian Jews at the hands of their fellow-countrymen is the outcome of intolerant bigotry and superstition in their worst forms. Let us, then, as South Australians, join with the other sections of the great British Empire in expressing indignation at such a blot on the civilization of the nineteenth century, and in showing practical sympathy with the persecuted Jews.<sup>46</sup>

The *Register* had already published a long editorial describing and denouncing Russian Jewry's plight, which it described as "a disgrace to the nineteenth century" — a recurrent



theme among philo-Semites. "The disabilities under which the Jews are placed in Eastern Europe have long excited reprobation among all true philanthropists ... it is anywhere contrary to the principles of enlightened humanity."<sup>47</sup>

There were certainly swift offers of "practical sympathy" on the part of gentiles in the colony. With the earliest donations sent to Jewish leaders by their own co-religionists came cheques — apparently unsolicited — from two female relatives of the conservative parliamentarian (Sir) Richard Chaffey Baker, a future colonial minister and federal senator, along with promised subscriptions from other non-Jews. Many messages of condolence from gentiles arrived.<sup>48</sup>

On 11 August 1881 a meeting convened by Reverend Abraham Tobias Boas was held on the premises of the Adelaide Hebrew Congregation under the auspices of the local branch of the Anglo-Jewish Association. The latter's president, Solomon Saunders, occupied the chair. The main speaker was the Mayor of Adelaide, (Sir) Edwin Thomas Smith, a philanthropic brewer, Congregationalist, and prominent Freemason who sat in the Legislative Assembly. In moving the chief resolution (which expressed sympathy for the Russian Jews and condemned their persecution) he revealed his surprise in not being asked to call a public meeting, and urged Jewish leaders to make the approach.<sup>49</sup>

Accordingly, a public meeting was held at Adelaide Town Hall on 19 August 1881. Evidently, three o'clock on a Friday afternoon was an inconvenient time, for while "between thirty and forty gentlemen" attended "a considerable number of apologies" were forthcoming. Among those unable to be present were the Chief Justice of South Australia (Sir Samuel Way), the Anglican Bishop of Adelaide (the aged and soon-to-retire Dr Augustus Short), and the latter's Catholic counterpart (from whom five guineas was received).<sup>50</sup> Despite that, as at comparable meetings a stellar cast was assembled on the platform, and gentile notables expressed solidarity with Jewry. They were led by the enthusiastic Smith, who read from a lengthy and disturbing newspaper report to impress on his listeners the woeful situation in the southern Pale. Indeed, Adelaide Jewry, well represented at the meeting, paid tribute to the efforts of the local press in publicising the persecution in Russia. South Australia's senior Unitarian clergyman, Reverend John Crawford Woods, maintained that the meeting should have assumed the form of a specifically Christian protest, since "the atrocities practised were so utterly opposed to anything taught by Jesus Christ."<sup>51</sup>

All the resolutions were carried. Reverend (Dr) David Paton, Minister of Chalmers Church, Adelaide, a future Moderator of the Presbyterian General Assembly of South Australia, seconded by the colony's Minister of Education John Langdon Parsons (a former Baptist cleric) moved the first: "That this meeting, feeling the deepest sympathy with the sufferings of the Jews in Southern Russia by the recent persecutions, considers that immediate steps should be taken to alleviate their distress by making a public appeal on their behalf and inaugurating a Relief Fund..." Both men invoked the duty of Christians to help their fellow human beings, and cited earlier South Australian generosity in contributing to such causes as famine relief in India and Ireland. (A Jewish speaker, Abraham Abrahams JP, added that "In no other part of the world had contributions gone to other countries to a larger extent than in South Australia," and mentioned, *inter alia*, funds raised for the Jews of Damascus and of Palestine.<sup>52</sup>

Parsons' reported remarks suggest a general liberal and humanitarian outlook — he was, after all, known for his support of aboriginal land rights — but Paton's reveal a particular appreciation of the Jewish mark on civilisation. The world owed much to ancient Greece and Rome, he acknowledged, but a still greater obligation to the Jews, who had given it "more important things, as they had done more than tongue could tell for the development of the religious feeling of all humanity." Paton was Professor of Hebrew



and Old Testament History and Theology at Union College, Adelaide, from 1879 until its dissolution in 1887; his thesis for the degree of Doctor of Divinity, received from the University of Glasgow in 1886, was on "The relation of the Old Testament to the New Testament."<sup>53</sup>

Seconded by Solomon Saunders, Dr John Michael Gunson, a medical practitioner and influential Catholic layman, moved a resolution appointing a committee to collect subscriptions for the relief fund. The committee's gentile members comprised Gunson himself, Smith, Parsons, Attorney-General (Sir) John Downer, Chief Justice Sir Samuel Way, and two parliamentarians — the mildly radical William Townsend, a Congregationalist who had once worked for Adelaide merchant Judah Moss Solomon, and Thomas Johnson. Seconded by Johnson, Downer, an essential conservative who would twice serve as Premier of the colony and became a federal senator, moved the resolution which appointed the committee's officebearers; Smith was nominated chairman.<sup>54</sup>

On 23 August 1881 a similar public meeting was held at the Masonic Hall, Sydney. Prominent Jews and gentiles shared the platform. Among those who did not speak, but lent the proceedings weight by their presence, were future Australian Prime Minister (Sir) George Houston Reid, at that time a member of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly, and several of his colleagues in that body. They were (Sir) Joseph Palmer Abbott, who became at various stages in his career Secretary of Mines, of Lands, and house Speaker; John McLaughlin, who held no ministerial office but played a leading role in the Law Institute of New South Wales; Orangeman Richard Lennon Murray; Thomas Michael Slattery, a leading Catholic layman and a future colonial Secretary for Agriculture as well as a future federal politician of note; and William Joseph Trickett, who would hold office as colonial Postmaster-General and Minister for Public Instruction. Of these men including Reid, all but Murray were lawyers, perhaps reinforced in their determination to appear on the platform out of respect for their distinguished legal colleague, former Solicitor General and future New South Wales Bar leader (Sir) Julian Salomons, who played a key part in proceedings. Several were, in the Australian context, conservatives. It is possible that, like Reid, some of these and others present evinced solidarity with Jewry because they admired Disraeli.<sup>55</sup>

Christian clergymen of all denominations attended the meeting. Among notables sending apologies for absence were former Chief Justice Sir Alfred Stephen, who regretted a prior commitment, future Premier Sir Patrick Jennings MLA, who promised a donation, and pastoralist and prominent Presbyterian Samuel Deane Gordon MLC, who forwarded £10.<sup>56</sup>

Presiding over proceedings, and "proud" that his "Jewish fellow colonists paid [him] the great compliment" of asking him to do so was Sir John Robertson MLC, one of the grand old men of the New South Wales parliamentary scene, who was shortly to become Acting Premier. A Presbyterian, Robertson was no stranger to Jewish functions; in 1863, for instance, while Secretary for Lands, he had joined the avowedly philo-Semitic John Hubert Plunkett QC and a number of non-Jewish parliamentary colleagues including Chief Secretary (Sir) Charles Cowper and other ministers at the inaugural annual dinner of Sydney Hebrew School. Now, in a heartfelt address which prompted frequent applause, he said:

It is difficult to believe that ... in great civilized countries, any section of the people should be so insulted, outraged, and persecuted, for their religious opinions... It was a reproach, and the cause of the deepest sorrow, that within the last three or four years, a people who in patience, submission, intelligence, and public virtue, are certainly not the inferiors of any others, have in their birthplaces been subjected, without having given any offence, to wrongs



and injuries which recall the tyrannies of other times... All my life it has been my privilege and happiness to possess the true friendship of many [Jews], among whom are some of the oldest, most generous, and highly respected of our fellow citizens. And when I think of their well-won position in our community, of how widely and deeply they have merited respect, I feel strongly for their sorrow in reading the accounts of the deplorable transactions which have occurred in Germany, and the disgraceful outrages in Russia ... I am here because I wish publicly to testify my sympathy with a people whom I admire, and because I desire to share in a movement of true charity.<sup>57</sup>

All the resolutions passed resoundingly. The first, moved by Reverend Alexander Barnard Davis of the Great Synagogue, ran: "That the extreme cruelty and severe persecutions recently inflicted upon the Jews in South Russia, and the great distress consequent thereon, call for universal condemnation and regret." It was seconded by a leading Anglican clergyman, Reverend Dr David Henry Ellis, Precentor of St. Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney, who cited three reasons for so doing: Jews' common humanity; indebtedness to them for the Scriptures; the obligation of Christians to support the oppressed.

The second resolution, opening a relief fund, was moved by the eminent Catholic liberal barrister-politician William Bede Dalley, seconded by the Anglican businessman and pastoralist (Sir) Thomas Buckland. "I had great pleasure in instantly accepting the invitation of my Jewish fellow-citizens to attend this meeting, and I venture to express my surprise that this movement had been so long deferred," declared Dalley, who in a speech characterised by fiery zeal and seemingly more than a passing acquaintance with Jewish history, compared anti-Semitism in Central and Eastern Europe with the persecution of Jews in Torquemada's Spain. He did not condemn Russia alone:

With mingled sentiments of shame and sorrow must all of us have been filled as we read today of the outrages perpetrated in Prussia and Austria and Russia upon the Jewish people... We had thought that the persecution of peoples was but a gloomy historical memory — and we find it as fresh and vigorous today as in the fifteenth century ... But, unfortunately, none of us are free from reproach. Who shall presume to estimate the extent of the debt of restitution which we owe to the Jewish people for all our atrocious national cruelties of former and not very remote ages? We cannot read of them, think of them, glance at the pictures of them, without sentiments of indignation, and without noble resolutions to make amends to a patient, suffering, and most richly-gifted people for centuries of wrong inflicted upon them by ignorance and barbarism. But, apart from their historic claims upon our sympathy and compassion, how intimately are they in all British communities identified with the more generous aspects and the finer impulses of our citizenship? How promptly and how gladly do they respond to the calls of our public Christian charities, and divide with us the labour and the blessing of our benevolence. And it is now on such a melancholy occasion as this that we have the privilege of testifying at the same time our indignation at their ill-treatment and our generous practical sympathy with them in their affliction, of doing that work which, in the language of the Talmud, bears interest in this world, and the capital remaineth in the world to come.<sup>58</sup>

Little wonder, perhaps, that after an address of such passion, Buckland — who died in 1947 in his ninety-ninth year and was thus one of the few people present who lived to see the Holocaust<sup>59</sup> — vowed to content himself with brief straightforward remarks. What he said, however, hit hard: if he had framed the first resolution he would have spoken not of "persecution and cruelty" but of "robbery and murder." Moreover:

Colonial people were told that they must look to the old countries of Europe for examples of progress and civilization; but these atrocities ... were only what might have been expected from the savage blackfellows of the South Seas. (Applause.) He had never, in the whole course



of his life, been so thrilled with horror as when reading in the *Times* of the persecution and ill-usage of those poor creatures (Applause)... He thought there was nothing that could show the advantages of a colonial community better than the mixture of all races and creeds at a meeting like that. (Cheers.)

The next resolution, appointing a committee of Jews and gentiles to administer the decisions of the meeting, was moved by (Sir) Julian Salomons QC, seconded by Reverend Dr Robert Steel, a prominent Presbyterian. Steel said that he had recently become interested in the idea of establishing Jewish agricultural colonies in Palestine. He hoped that the moneys collected on behalf of persecuted Russian Jewry would not merely alleviate their plight temporarily, "but might serve to put some of them in the homes of their fathers."<sup>60</sup>

That motion named twenty-five leading citizens as members of the committee: the non-Jews were Robertson, Dalley, Buckland, Jennings, Ellis, Sir John Hay, the wealthy Anglican politically radical pastoralist Edward Flood MLC (partner in several runs with Samuel Deane Gordon), and John Marks MLC, an Irish-born Presbyterian. Before the motion was carried unanimously, Daniel O'Connor MLA, a future colonial Postmaster-General active in the Catholic Association, rose to express joy that in New South Wales — where "the only passport to power and position was by the exercise of honesty and integrity, and by leaving every man's conscience to the Almighty God" — Protestants and Catholics had gathered

to lend practical aid to a people that in all ages had been one of the noblest in the world ... of great intelligence. The greatest philosophers of all time were Jews. The Jewish nation produced Meyerbeer, Weber [*sic*], Mendelssohn, and Beethoven [*sic*], men who had bequeathed to the world eternal melody (Applause).<sup>61</sup>

Although Sydneysiders had lagged behind Melburnians in organising a meeting, they outdid their southern neighbours in subscriptions from the floor. Perhaps this was because three weeks' worth of further newspaper reports had made a still greater impact. Nearly £1000 was forthcoming that evening.<sup>62</sup>

With the opening of Britain's Mansion House fund in January 1882 and the attendant publicity, Australian fundraising on behalf of Russian Jewry peaked anew. The Chief Rabbi, Dr Nathan Adler, contacted all the congregations under his jurisdiction soliciting subscriptions. But it was not from Jews alone that subscriptions flowed. In April 1882 the *Argus* printed Adler's pastoral letter and added comments of its own:

We would address to our fellow colonists the question put by Dr Adler to the Jews scattered abroad throughout the world, and living in happier circumstances: "How can we, whose lines have fallen in pleasant places, bear to hear of the sufferings of those who are without home and shelter, without raiment and bread, and forbear to open wide our hand and assist them." This appeal should go home with peculiar force to those who are not of the Hebrew faith. They cannot wash out the disgrace which has come upon the Christian name through the infamous deeds of the Muscovite rabble who claim it as their own, but they may at all events, by lifting up their voices "in solemn protest against such outrage and oppression," and by expressing sympathy with the sufferers both in words and deeds, show their detestation of the foul crimes that have been committed — crimes which are as contrary to the principles of their religion as they are degrading to common humanity. Dr Adler has in graceful words expressed his gratitude for the assistance rendered by the Christians of "dear England," and we trust that he may have to admit that the Christians of Victoria are equally zealous in well-doing.<sup>63</sup>

As in Britain, "Jews and Christians vied with one another in alleviating the distress of the sufferers," to quote Reverend Myers of the Sandhurst (Bendigo) Hebrew Congregation.<sup>64</sup> Following publication of the Chief Rabbi's appeal, which was given



extra urgency by news of Russia's dastardly May Laws which threatened to pauperise the Jews of the Pale, public meetings packed with gentile sympathisers were held in several Victorian country towns. The usual condemnation of the persecution and commiseration with its victims was expressed by speakers, along with tributes to Jewish ability, to Jewry's impact on the world, to Judaism's progeniture of Christianity, and to Jews' role as model citizens. Collections were taken and further donations sought for transmission to London. Non-Jewish notables willingly supported the cause.

A meeting took place at Sandhurst Town Hall on 22 May 1882. The Mayor, W.G. Jackson, presided, and Reverend Myers shared the platform with several gentile speakers. These included Dr (later Sir John) Quick MLA, a future federal minister who participated in the protest at the Rennes court martial's verdict in 1899,<sup>65</sup> three local clergymen, and other personalities from the area. The mainly non-Jewish membership of a committee appointed to administer the funds collected included Jackson, Quick, Robert Clark MLA (a former Mayor of the town who had served as Minister of Mines), Robert Burrowes MLA (the current holder of that ministerial office), clergymen, councillors, and medical practitioners. Fifty pounds was taken on the spot.<sup>66</sup>

One week later, despite inclement weather, between 300 and 400 people crowded into the Ballarat Mechanics' Institute for a similar meeting. It was convened by J. Noble Wilson, Mayor of Ballarat West, who took the chair, and Theophilus Williams, Mayor of Ballarat East, one of the local notables who thronged the platform. Those included the prosperous lawyer (Sir) Henry Cuthbert MLC, a leading Anglican who would become Chancellor of the Ballarat diocese; the wealthy grazier Francis Ormond MLC, a committed Presbyterian whose beneficence made possible the establishment of Ormond College, University of Melbourne; the flockmaster and merino wool specialist Phillip Russell MLC; leather merchant and mining agent George Fincham MLC; blacksmith and farmer John James MLA; mining investor William Collard Smith MLA; and pastoralist and former MLC John Cumming.<sup>67</sup>

The tone of the first resolution, while condemnatory, was in the opinion of the man who agreed to move it too restrained. He was Anglican clergyman Reverend Robert Turner Cummins, incumbent of St. Paul's Church, Ballarat East, and the motion ran: "That this meeting deeply deplores the outrages which the Jews in several parts of the Russian Empire have suffered during the last twelve months, and considers them an offence against humanity and civilisation." But Mayor Wilson warned that "in approaching a proud nation like Russia, it was necessary to do so with moderation."<sup>68</sup>

The care invested in framing the resolutions shows that the meeting's organisers took proceedings seriously. Perhaps they believed, with the inflated self-confidence of residents of a prosperous city based on gold, one of the finest settlements in the antipodes, that their deliberations were sufficiently significant to filter through to the Czarist authorities, possibly via Newman Friedel Spelvogel's reports in the Hebrew-language periodical *Hamagid* which circulated in the Pale.<sup>69</sup> For those Ballarat citizens were anxious not to embarrass Britain: "this meeting, while endorsing ... a desire of the maintenance of the most friendly relations between the two great empires, Great Britain and Russia, and disclaiming any right or desire to interfere with the internal government of another empire, feels nevertheless bound to record its conviction that the repressive laws and disabilities under which the Jews labour in Russia, are a reproach to a great nation, contributing as they do to stir up that fanaticism and oppression to which the Russian Jews have been so outrageously subjected." (As if to emphasise the meeting's evenhandedness, the Irish-born Catholic Father Robert Meade of Ararat who moved this resolution declared to applause that "if the Jews in England were repressed the people in Ballarat would assemble in that hall to raise their voices..."<sup>70</sup>) The two mayors were



requested to send copies of the resolutions via the Victorian government to Prime Minister Gladstone with a request that his ministry "might, as it deems best, exercise its friendly influence with the Russian Government towards securing protection to the Jews, as well as laws of justice in their favour."<sup>71</sup>

While the resolutions perhaps pulled punches, few speakers appeared to do so. As at so many such meetings, movers and seconders were drawn from various national backgrounds and religious heritages. There were seven clergymen spanning the denominations. There was English-born Methodist builder Henry Bell MLA, Irish-born Catholic financial agent Daniel Brophy MLA, and Welsh-born Congregationalist bookseller and former parliamentarian John Basson Humffray. Written apologies for absence, in some cases enclosing donations, were received from clergymen, parliamentarians, and others. The meeting raised £120 and opened the usual subscription fund, whose committee comprised both Jews and gentiles. In expressing appreciation to the two mayors for convening the function, Reverend Israel Moses Goldreich mentioned his gratitude to the British people for their wonderful display of support.<sup>72</sup>

Similar public meetings were held at Eaglehawk, Castlemaine, and Kyneton, on 5, 6, and 8 June respectively. Those small settlements had no organised Jewish communities and few Jewish residents, which perhaps makes their demonstrations of sympathy all the more remarkable. The usual range of leading citizens, clerical and lay, filled the halls and moved and seconded the resolutions: the common theme was that the persecutions were a disgrace to civilisation and to the nineteenth century. Reverend Myers, who described the Russian situation at each meeting, was eagerly received. Subscription lists were opened.

Public protest meetings, crammed with elite figures, became frequent features of the Australian scene at times of crises overseas facing Jews. Fundraising aside, it was felt that they served a useful purpose. As Julian Salomons observed in 1881: "The fact of such meetings ... not only of Jews and Christians, but of all sections of Christians ... would leave an impression upon those in power, not only the Government, but the rulers in the provinces of Russia, that the Jews had warm, and powerful, and influential friends in all parts of the world."<sup>73</sup>

The butchery and mutilation of Jewish men, women and children by a mob at Kishinev, Bessarabia in April 1903, shocked Australians. (It is not generally known that one of those murdered was a younger brother of a member of the Perth Hebrew Congregation; the dead boy had gone to Kishinev to spend *Pesach* with relatives.<sup>74</sup>) An appeal "to all friends of humanity" for donations to a relief fund for survivors made in the two Melbourne dailies by the ministers of the three metropolitan synagogues was answered in overwhelming fashion.<sup>75</sup>

Subscriptions from gentiles included sizeable sums from well-to-do and frequently well-known individuals, such as the five guineas from Melbourne's Lord Mayor Sir Samuel Gillott MLA, which compared favourably with amounts from the wealthiest members of the Jewish community. Tea merchant James Griffiths of Kew outdid them with the remarkable sum of £25 (about \$3000 in today's currency). He also sent an impassioned letter to the *Argus*.<sup>76</sup>

Donations poured in from Victorians in many walks of life and differing financial circumstances, professing various creeds and political ideologies, and living in a range of localities. Some, such as the future Lord Mayor (Sir) David Hennessy MLA, who gave two guineas, the conservative Senator (Sir) Robert Best, who gave a guinea, and the Labour state parliamentarian (and future member of the House of Representatives) Dr William Maloney, who gave ten shillings, were public figures.<sup>77</sup> Maloney, indeed,



was one of the most demonstrative and conspicuous of all Australian philo-Semites.<sup>78</sup> The support of such men, with different socio-political agendas and values, shows how, as at other times of crisis, support for Jews crossed party lines.

Other contributors — to select a random sample — included the merchant and former politician James Balfour, a Presbyterian who advocated temperance, Sabbatarianism, and non-denominational Biblical instruction in schools (he gave one guinea); the King Street dairy produce merchant J. Bartram (five guineas), the Flinders Street hotelier and restaurateur Antonio Basto, who counted Jewish clothing manufacturers among his neighbours (one guinea); Robert S. Bradley, principal of Queen's College, St. Kilda, and perhaps, therefore, well-acquainted with some of that suburb's Jews (ten shillings and sixpence); the retired Anglican clergyman Amos Brazier, who had charge of the Mollison Library at Melbourne's St. Paul's Cathedral (ten shillings); William Street businessman W.H. Calder (five pounds); Belgian-born Auguste De Bavay, who became well-known within the brewing industry as a chemist and bacteriologist (one guinea); C. Flemming and other members of the Victorian racing fraternity, who had Jewish colleagues and each subscribed amounts ranging from two guineas to one pound; Stawell medical practitioner Dr Raymond Fox (one pound); Hawthorn dentist George Lugg (two guineas); Albert Park coursing enthusiast and sporting identity George Mayger (two guineas); St. Kilda surgeon Dr Robert Louis McAdam, who lived close to the synagogue in Charnwood Grove (one guinea); Brunswick/Fitzroy medical practitioner Dr James Richard McInerney (one guinea); the half-Spanish cosmopolitanly inclined brewer, pastoralist and future Lord Mayor (Sir) Stephen Morell (one guinea); the colourful Collins Street surgeon Henry Michael O'Hara (one guinea); printer and publisher Henry Osment, proprietor of local newspapers serving St. Kilda, Prahran and Malvern (one guinea); Preston-based Anglican clergyman Reverend Thomas Quinton (one pound); Fitzroy furniture warehouseman Alexander Renfrew JP (one guinea); W. Rudinoff, a German born artist and baritone of apparently non-Jewish Polish origin, who wrote from the Melbourne Opera House a robust letter deploring the lot of Russian Jewry (five guineas); and Collins Street miller, pastoralist and racehorse owner John Whittingham (two guineas).<sup>79</sup>

On 28 May and 11 June 1903 Reuter's Telegram Company cabled to London free of charge the fund's major instalments of £300 each.<sup>80</sup> Subscriptions had come from solid middle class persons such as those named above, and from people in humbler circumstances; from residents of Melbourne, and from residents of country towns. Most individual donations were between five shillings and one guinea. The lowest consisted of one shilling (equivalent to about \$5 today). As the contributor of one shilling and sixpence signed themselves, "Every Little Helps." Like that person, some anonymous donors chose aliases that do not confirm a non-Jewish identity. Others were more explicit, including "Christian Sympathiser" (ten shillings), "a Christian friend [Ballarat]" (five shillings), "Math. XXV, 35, 36" (£1), "Catholic sympathiser [Ballarat]" (ten shillings and sixpence), "A Sympathiser (R.C.)" (five shillings).<sup>81</sup>

Ten guineas was subscribed by a group of Chinese Victorians: "a small contribution," explained their spokesman, Melbourne merchant W. Shi Geen, "for the persecuted Jewish people in Russia, and in order to show their sympathy with these unfortunate down-trodden people." Half the amount came from one man, Bo Leong. Their kindness was undoubtedly prompted by empathy, in view of their consciousness of the dislike and discrimination they endured in Australian society: Shi Geen himself was involved in overtures to government and public opinion on behalf of the Chinese community.<sup>82</sup>

Beleaguered by the White Australia policy, the Chinese in Australia frequently required champions. They did not necessarily find them among philo-Semites: many of the



people mentioned in this article were active in the campaign to restrict oriental immigration and almost all acquiesced in it. But the Chinese had few more stalwart champions than the redoubtable Presbyterian widow Anne Fraser Bon, owner of a pastoral property near Mansfield. A devout churchgoer, amateur hymn writer, charity worker, and member of the Aborigines' Protection Board, Mrs. Bon proudly added her voice to the Jewish cause. She sent £5 to the fund, along with a generous letter:

I cheerfully contribute my mite towards the relief of those poor, persecuted Jews in Russia, who, in this enlightened age of civilisation, are being subjected to cruelty, injustice and tyranny.

As members of a Christian community we should not forget the debt of gratitude which we owe to the children of Abraham — God's chosen people — for are we not indebted to them, not only for our Old Testament Scriptures, but also for our Messiah?

May the time not be far distant when they, as a nation, shall, according to the promise of God, be restored with all their ancient grandeur.<sup>83</sup>

Dr Alexander Leeper, Warden of Trinity College, University of Melbourne, subscribed one guinea. Later, during Archbishop Mannix's leadership of Melbourne's Catholic diocese, Leeper gained notoriety in some circles as an inveterate Catholic-baiter. But he evidently possessed a deep and abiding respect for Jews and Judaism. In 1899 he played a pivotal role in Melbourne's protest against the verdict of the Rennes court-martial.<sup>84</sup> Perhaps it is not too fanciful to suggest that for pro-Jewish militant anti-Sinn Feiners such as Leeper — Sir Robert Best in Melbourne was one, Ernest Clement Vernon Broughton MLA in Sydney another — Jews were virtually "honorary Protestants." Not only were they the people of the "Old Testament," in Australia they wore their loyalty on their sleeves. Moreover, for Protestants Popism, like Czarism for Jews, represented the forces of darkness.<sup>85</sup>

The fellow feeling thus engendered ensured the support of the Loyal Orange Institution of Victoria. At their grand lodge meeting on 3 June 1903 its members voted to send three guineas to the relief fund and passed a resolution recording their "grief and regret" at the persecution of Russian Jewry. "They desire to express their deep sympathy with the sufferers, and pray that the progress of enlightened religious civilization may soon render such events impossible."<sup>86</sup>

This is not to imply that sympathy from Catholics was unforthcoming. On the contrary, philo-Semitism was manifested in various sections of the church press, and by clergymen of all denominations. During the Dreyfus affair, Catholics in Australia tended to keep a low profile, and this reluctance to speak out, presumably through resolve not to break ranks with their clerical co-religionists in France, was also noticed in Britain.<sup>87</sup> However, at other times of Jewish crisis in the late nineteenth century and subsequently, Catholic voices could be clearly heard in the chorus of support for the aggrieved. Following news of Kishinev, a donation of five guineas from Thomas Carr, Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, was one of the first received: "I hope it may in some measure stimulate others to lend a helping hand."<sup>88</sup>

One of the most striking clerical pro-Jewish addresses was made by Reverend Mathew Graham Hart of Ballarat's Peel Street Presbyterian Church to a congregation which included a number of reportedly appreciative Jewish observers. Preceding his sermon with Isaiah Chapter Sixty-Two ("For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace...") and basing it on the Book of Esther, Hart — who donated ten shillings to the fund — declared that as God had delivered the Jews from Haman, so He would deliver them from the Czar. Deploring the ills they had suffered at the hands of Romans, Crusaders, and medieval Jew-baiters, Hart continued:



Thank God for Cromwell ... The 12th of December, 1655, was one of the grandest and greatest days for the Jewish people in the history of Britain, for on that day they were emancipated [*sic*] and given the same rights and privileges as the rest of the community ... The main cause of this [Continental] hostility was jealousy of the success of the Jewish people ... Was there no deliverance for the [Russian] Jews? Yes, God would most certainly deliver them ... the day was coming when the whole world would follow the Jews. If he had his choice as to what nation he should be born into, he would say, "Let me be a Jew" ... [He] urged his congregation to befriend and pray for the Jewish people.<sup>89</sup>

One of the most extraordinary shows of support for Jews came from Reverend Dr William Henry Fitchett, an arch-imperialist who became known throughout the Dominions for such stirring works as *Deeds That Won the Empire*. A Wesleyan minister, Fitchett was president for many years of Methodist Ladies' College in Melbourne, and editor of the *Southern Cross*, a Free Church weekly, and of W.T. Stead's *Australasian Review of Reviews*.

When sending two guineas to the relief fund Fitchett wrote of Kishinev: "This great crime is the act of a nation that professes (and disgraces) Christianity, and all honest Christians should unite to help the sufferers by way of protest against the crime, and as a debt to the good name of Christianity."<sup>90</sup> Within days, the Council of Independent Churches, meeting under his presidency in Melbourne, passed a resolution expressing "its abhorrence of the persecution and cruel treatment" to which Jews in Russia had been subjected, and "its surprise and regret that professing Christians should so completely forget the requirements both of humanity and Christianity, as well as the great obligations they owe to the Jewish race, and the inestimable gifts and blessings they have received from them."<sup>91</sup>

That same day, a letter from Fitchett in the *Argus* argued:

We are giving our money by way of protest against the Russian atrocities; but there is another form of protest which may be yet more effective. Public opinion is a force that runs far, touches strange chords of influence, and makes itself felt in strange quarters. Why should not the public conscience of the community find expression in a great public meeting? Thousands of citizens would be glad to join in ...; public men of all parties, I am sure, would make themselves our spokesmen ... It would be something to show that such acts of monstrous cruelty, even on the other side of the world, awaken echoes of indignant abhorrence here ... I am certain we would have a very striking and influential expression of the best feeling which can move a great community.<sup>92</sup>

Such a meeting was held on 4 June 1903 at Melbourne Town Hall, with Lord Mayor Sir Samuel Gillott (who convened it at the formal request of Nathaniel Levi MLC) in the chair. The occasion was a triumph of ecumenism. To quote the *Church of England Messenger*: "The composite character of the meeting was remarkable. Jew and Gentile, Romanist, Anglican, Nonconformist ... side by side with representatives of the Commonwealth, State and city — all agreed, and that unanimously, in sending a respectfully worded protest against the perpetration of these horrors in the nineteenth [*sic*] century."<sup>93</sup>

As Victoria's senior Congregational minister, Reverend Dr Llewelyn D. Bevan, who delivered a powerful speech, afterwards reflected: "Everyone present ... must have been impressed by the remarkable representation of all classes and religious denominations which the gathering afforded. Under the broad banner of civil and religious liberty, opinions and convictions of the most divergent kind were united."<sup>94</sup>

Fitchett gave an especially rousing address, which was exceedingly well received. "It was," he said *inter alia*



no stroke of rhetoric, but sober fact, to say that the world was looking at one of the greatest crimes in history. (Hear, hear) ... All Christian men and women blushed to remember that this was a Christian Government that did this thing ... If putting on sackcloth and ashes, and walking down Collins Street with lighted candles, could express the feelings of shame felt by the Christian people, they should do it ... How ignorant was the hatred against the Jews. Any man of intelligence could see that God used different races for His own ends ... The Jews He used as the religious instructors. (Hear, hear.) As citizens the Jews were generous helpers, and a larger proportion of them had served in the South African war than any other race. (Hear, hear) ...<sup>95</sup>

The principal resolutions were moved by Melbourne's two archbishops. Anglican archbishop Right Reverend Dr Lowther Clarke, seconded by the merchant, leading Anglican layman and political conservative Randal James Alcock (who had been in business with former premier James Service, himself a philo-Semite), moved the meeting's "abhorrence" of events in Kishinev and its "fervent hope that the Russian Government will take early and effectual steps to prevent a repetition of crimes which are a stain on humanity and a disgrace to civilisation." Catholic archbishop Dr Carr, seconded by prominent businessman Henry Butler moved that a copy of the previous resolution be cabled to the Lord Mayor of London (who, incidentally, had declined to call a Mansion House meeting reputedly on the grounds of his own Jewishness!) "for transmission to the proper authorities." Both resolutions were carried unanimously.<sup>96</sup>

Dr Bevan was incensed by remarks made at the meeting by (Sir) Isaac Isaacs, who had seconded Nathaniel Levi's vote of thanks to the Lord Mayor. Isaacs averred that a Government was justified in removing from its territory people with whose views it disagreed — which, to Fitchett's repeatedly voiced disgust, was being done to Jews in Kishinev province — providing the deportation proceeded humanely. Maintaining that "the rights of man ... are higher than any laws" and that Isaacs' view ran directly counter to "the entire history of British liberty", Bevan launched a spirited riposte in the *Argus*:

The freedom which has been accorded to the Jews in many parts of the world, and in gaining which they owe a debt to those who themselves often suffered from injustice, would never have been secured had not both these parties, the Nonconformist of the Christian Church and the Israelite, claimed that they must not be dispossessed of the common right of citizenship on grounds of religious and other opinions ... the political philosophy or the racial antipathy to which such sentiments belong are surely foreign to that freedom in whose name we assembled yesterday and endeavoured to give voice to a public opinion, which we hope may even reach the heart and conscience of the Czar himself...<sup>97</sup>

Isaacs joined William Alexander Watt MLA (a future premier of Victoria, who was destined to serve as federal Treasurer as well as Acting Prime Minister) as a featured speaker at a rally on 14 June at the Wesleyan Church, Lonsdale Street. The rally was convened by Reverend A.R. Edgar (who was also involved in the Rennes verdict protest)<sup>98</sup> to denounce the treatment of Jews in Russia. In the prelude to a robust address — which, however, repeated the offending assertion — Isaacs admitted that as a Jew he had been tempted to decline the invitation to participate, believing that overt protestations on the issue were best left to gentiles. But the depth of Christian sympathy displayed at the Town Hall meeting had induced him to come forward: he felt obligated to express the gratitude of his co-religionists to their non-Jewish fellow-citizens.<sup>99</sup>

In the words of the Catholic journal *Austral Light* — reflected closely by other church newspapers regarding the Town Hall meeting — "The brotherly feeling between Jews and Christians in this community, although it has always been evident, should be increased in cordiality by the evidence of Christian sympathy for the oppressed Jew, and



the spontaneous testimonies given as to the immense debt which Christianity owes to the Jewish people.<sup>100</sup>

Meanwhile, on 26 May 1903 the *Sydney Morning Herald* — unwittingly seizing the initiative from the Great Synagogue authorities — gladly complied with a suggestion by Jewish communal activist Percy J. Marks and opened a relief fund.<sup>101</sup> On 31 May a meeting called by the Great Synagogue's lay and spiritual leadership was held at the Manchester Unity Hall, Castlereagh Street, and a fund formally instituted. Not widely advertised, this so-called "public meeting" was aimed at and chiefly attracted Jews. A formal message of sympathy on behalf of the citizenry from Lord Mayor of Sydney (Sir) Thomas Hughes was read; it enclosed a donation.<sup>102</sup>

Gentile sympathisers in Sydney did not forego the opportunity to demonstrate solidarity with the Jewish cause. In mid-June a public meeting was held at the Queen's Hall on the initiative of the Parramatta-based Venerable William James Günther, Anglican Archdeacon of Camden. A Professor Harper moved the first motion, expressing "warmest sympathy with the persecuted Jews in Russia and its strongest reprobation of the cruelty exhibited towards them." Seconding this unanimously carried motion was one of Jewry's staunchest Australian champions, the Venerable John Douse Langley, Anglican Archdeacon of Cumberland. Here, Langley assumed a typical philo-Semitic position when he observed:

England for centuries past had been the friend of the people of Israel. (Cheers.) England was the first nation to give them civil liberty, and the Jews had given back the benefit to England a hundredfold more than she gave to them. The Jews had given her great statesmen, great literary men, great artists, and had embellished her public life.<sup>103</sup>

Canon Mervyn Archdall of Sydney's Anglican St. Andrew's Cathedral — whose support must have been received with mixed feelings by Jews because of his long history of conversionist activity — moved, in a respectfully worded statement calculated to give minimum offence to the Czar, that "this meeting of Christian citizens express the hope that he [Nicholas II] may be guided in the adoption of effectual measures to prevent such terrible sufferings as those which have recently shocked the civilised world being again inflicted on a people who [in common with all nations] are ... beloved for their Father's sake [and moreover] are still consecrated for the accomplishment of God's purpose in the world." Seconded by the Methodist Reverend Dr Richard Sellors, this resolution was also passed unanimously.<sup>104</sup>

During an emotional sermon at the Great Synagogue on 23 May, Reverend Joseph Hirsch Landau had cried: "We call upon the Churches of Christendom to tell the world that nineteen centuries of martyrdom are enough..."<sup>105</sup> The following day, Sunday, Sydney's Vicar-General (Archdeacon Günther) and many another Australian clergyman did so, requiring no prompting.<sup>106</sup> Throughout May and June churchmen in Sydney, as elsewhere in the land, registered support by way of donations, letters, and pulpit addresses.

The Evangelical Council of New South Wales unanimously passed a resolution condemning the outrages, proposed by Reverend G.T. Walden and seconded by Reverend J.E. Carruthers. It was sent to the Great Synagogue authorities for transmission to Russia. A similar resolution was carried by the Western Suburbs Ministerial Association. Hardly surprisingly, perhaps, given the long presence of Jewish colonists in its ranks, the Grand Lodge of Freemasons of New South Wales at its quarterly meeting in June also roundly denounced the persecutions and expressed "the earnest hope that the universal prayers of all classes" would be heeded by the Czar. And Ernest Clement Vernon Broughton MLA joined Landau and Mr. Justice John Jacob Cohen at a meeting



of the Jewish Girls' Guild to roundly condemn Kishinev. Broughton, a Sydney estate agent, was an Anglican with Liberal/Progressive political affiliations; he was also a member of the Australian Protestant Defence Association and a founder of the British Empire League in New South Wales.

He felt that he was also expressing the feelings of the great population of Sydney ... He sincerely hoped that some steps would be taken by the joint Powers to put an end to the persecutions, and to prevent a recurrence. Such an outrage as they had read of could hardly be credited, and it was a satire upon their English liberty, and should not be tolerated.<sup>107</sup>

Perhaps a trifle consoled by it all, Landau could write: "The sympathy voiced by all the Christian denominations of this country ... has shown us that if any nation in blind hatred of the Jew is prepared to outrage humanity it will find practically the whole of the civilised world championing the cause of the persecuted ..."<sup>108</sup>

On 10 June 1903 a meeting requisitioned and attended by prominent local figures and clergymen of virtually every denomination was held at Adelaide Town Hall with (Sir) Lewis Cohen presiding. The principal resolutions, carried unanimously, condemned the Kishinev atrocities and opened a relief fund. The first resolution was moved by the Catholic Archbishop of Adelaide, Dr John O'Reily, seconded by the Anglican Reverend William Gilbert Marsh, Rector of St. Luke's Church, Adelaide, and supported by the non-Anglican Reverend Joseph Robertson, President of the South Australian Council of Churches. The second was moved by the Anglican Dean of Adelaide, Very Reverend Charles Marryat. He was supported by two Baptist ministers: Reverend Alexander N. Marshall (who seconded Marryat's motion) and Reverend John Gerrard Raws (who also spoke in favour of it). The distinguished and voluble architect Rowland Rees, known for his keen interest in political issues, also addressed the meeting.<sup>109</sup>

In the course of a powerful address O'Reily recalled how, as a young priest working among aborigines in Western Australia during the 1850s, his late colleague, Spanish-born Benedictine missionary Bishop Rosendo Salvado, had run out of supplies. Aid had come unexpectedly from one of the two Jewish Samson brothers, pioneers and leading merchants in the Swan River colony. At some trouble to himself, Lionel Samson ensured that Salvado, driving his bullock-dray in search of relief, had sufficient provisions for an entire year. Samson was, declared O'Reily, "the kindest-hearted of men." Salvado had thus been brought into contact with a people for whom he developed affection and respect. He was elderly when O'Reily first encountered him:

I was young, and had all the impressionableness of youth. His words sank into my heart. I never forgot the lessons he taught me of gratitude towards those of the Jewish faith, and of kindness towards their race.<sup>110</sup>

At least one other public meeting to protest the Kishinev horrors and collect subscriptions to help the survivors was held. It occurred in the Victorian country town of Bendigo with the Mayor (James Henry Curnow) presiding. The principal speakers were the essentially conservative Joseph Henry Abbott MLC, a Congregationalist and Freemason, and the pro-temperance sawmiller John Robert Hoskins JP (both local ex-Mayors), the Anglican Dean of Bendigo, Very Reverend John Christian MacCullagh, the prominent Catholic medical practitioner Dr Charles Burke Gaffney, and a Presbyterian clergyman, Reverend J. Beattie.<sup>111</sup>

"It is as well that there should be such demonstrations here and in every other Christian community," reflected the *Argus*.

The only discernible method by which aid likely to have any wide effect can be given is by the world at large voicing its reprobation of these atrocities. It is difficult or impossible to



make outside opinion heard by the ignorant and brutalised Russian population, whose hatred of the Jews is settled by centuries of usage, and whose prejudice is consequently easily inflamed into barbarity. But a growing clamour of indignation abroad can reach the ears of Russian rulers, and on politic grounds it may give them pause. That is the true hope of those who in many lands are establishing funds, issuing appealing manifestoes, and passing condemnatory resolutions on behalf of the Hebrew subjects of the Czar.<sup>112</sup>

Similar patterns of protest followed news of the pogroms which erupted in Russia towards the close of 1905. There was a veritable groundswell of indignation in Australia, which embraced all denominations and socio-economic/political groupings. The federal government also voiced anger. Perhaps this outpouring of feeling was connected with an increased self-assertiveness on the part of Australians in the wake of Federation, and a consequent tendency to engage the political process.

As soon as news reached Australia, Jewish leaders — which in those days meant the boards of management and more especially the ministers of congregations — were inundated with messages of outrage. Various bodies, ecclesiastical and secular, passed resolutions condemning the pogroms. Public meetings took place.

The Central Council of Employers of Australia, under the presidency of Melbourne shipowner and former MLC Edmund Edmonds Smith, passed a resolution which ran: "This council, representing the Employers' Federation of Australia, expresses its abhorrence of the massacre of Jews in Russia, and its deep sympathy with the Jewish race in Australia, whose co-religionists in Russia are now suffering from the unbridled passions of mob rule."<sup>113</sup>

Rabbi Dr Abrahams of Melbourne Hebrew Congregation received a letter of sympathy from Patrick Heagney on behalf of the Political Labour Council of Victoria with an offer to cooperate in any movement for the relief of Russian Jewry. The Victorian Trades Hall Council recorded its "warmest sympathy" with the Russian Jews and maintained "that the Federal Government be asked to use its influence with the British Government to urge them to take such steps as they may deem necessary to stop such brutal and atrocious barbarities. The Workers' Council of Trades Unions at Ballarat expressed "our horror at the cruelty" towards Russian Jews and its consequent sympathy with Australian Jews."<sup>114</sup>

The Victorian Home Rule Association resolved "That the unspeakable cruelties practised on the Russian Jews are a disgrace to civilised humanity, and should, therefore, be publicly and most emphatically condemned by every section of the community, with a view to induce the Federal Government to communicate with the Imperial authorities on the matter." The motion was proposed by Dr William Maloney MHR, seconded by the radical agitator and Catholic Christian Socialist anti-atheism crusader Harry Foran, who had enjoyed a long career of soap-box oration in Sydney. James Black Ronald MHR, who had served as a Presbyterian clergyman before embarking on a political career (as a Labour member who later became a Nationalist) also spoke in favour of the motion.<sup>115</sup> A similar resolution was unanimously adopted by the Women's Political Association: "That this association deplores the massacres of the Jews in Russia, and trusts that the horror everywhere expressed will not be without its influence in inciting the Russian authorities to show common humanity towards the peace-loving long suffering Jewish race."<sup>116</sup>

Reverend William Stodhart Rolland, Moderator-General of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, promptly wrote a letter to both *Age* and *Argus* deploring the outrages. He expressed "deep sympathy" with Melbourne Jewry and added: "We hope and pray that Russia may soon enter upon a new stage of progress, that



the principles of liberty, toleration, and humanity may prevail through the whole [Czarist] empire ..."<sup>117</sup>

At the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia meeting in Melbourne, Rolland, seconded by Reverend Dr David Paton, moved "That this Assembly has heard with sorrow and abhorrence of the cruel tortures and massacres which have been perpetrated on members of the Jewish race in Russia; expresses its sympathy with the relatives and friends of the victims; and earnestly hopes that steps may be taken at once by the Government of the Czar to put an end to the present disorders; and, further, that a copy of this resolution be sent to the head of the Jewish community in this city." The resolution was carried unanimously.<sup>118</sup>

Similarly, at the Melbourne Anglican Synod the Dean of Melbourne, Very Reverend Dr George Oakley Vance, moved "That this synod cannot but regard with indignation and abhorrence the inhuman cruelty with which Jewish families are being treated throughout Russia, and desires to add its voice to that of the church in England, in the expression both of sympathy with the sufferers and of hope that the remonstrances and protests from all parts of Christendom may by God's mercy be successful in bringing to an end atrocities by which the Christian conscience is outraged and revolted." This resolution was seconded probably by the Venerable William George Hindley, Archdeacon of Melbourne and Gippsland. It too was carried unanimously, Vance having observed that while their protest might be futile, and might never even reach the relevant authorities, "they would not be doing their duty as members of the Christian church if they remained silent, and made no sign against wholesale butchery and spoliation."<sup>119</sup> Comparable resolutions were passed by other religious bodies — among them the Bendigo Anglican Synod and the Melbourne North Synod of the Methodist Church.<sup>120</sup> Reverend Pastor Herman Herlitz wrote a letter of sympathy to Rabbi Dr Abrahams on behalf of the Lutheran Synod of Victoria; although an apostate, Herlitz evidently had no intention of forsaking altogether the people from whom he sprang.<sup>121</sup> The Christadelphians of Melbourne, members of a conspicuously pro-Jewish church, sent a "very powerfully worded and sympathetic" letter to Reverend Lenzer of the East Melbourne Hebrew Congregation.<sup>122</sup>

The veteran philo-Semite Reverend Edwin Watkin wrote from his St. Kilda home that God would bring His wrath to bear against Russia for her "infamous treatment of 'His ancient people'." Watkin was impressed with the booklet *Only a Jew* sent to him by Barnet Hyman Altson:

It puts in extremely eloquent and forcible language sentiments which I have often expressed from the pulpits and platforms of the Methodist Church in Victoria during the last forty years and more ...

Fifteen years ago, when preaching in the South Melbourne Methodist Church, I remarked, "No nation has oppressed the Jew without sooner or later smarting for it ..."

... I trust that you and I may be spared to see the Russian Jews accorded political and religious liberty.<sup>123</sup>

Watkin said much the same in a special address at the Congregational Church, Alma Road, before a large audience which included the newly arrived Reverend Jacob Danglow of the nearby St. Kilda Hebrew Congregation.<sup>124</sup>

At St. Paul's Church, Ballarat East, the Archdeacon of Ballarat, Venerable William Frederic Tucker, took as his sermon "The Martyrdom of Israel," prompted by events in Russia. Dispossessed and dispersed, he observed, the Jews endured owing to their devotion to their Law. If the congregants before him were to enter a synagogue they



would hear the same speech, the same assurance of faith [as in ancient times], so marvellously had God kept His people together. Nations had used their power to destroy them, yet they remained ... The Jew was shunned and his speech was mocked, as fools mocked it now in Ballarat. He was crushed in every possible way, yet they found him that day with the same laws, the same ancient scripture, the same essential customs and the same features. God had preserved the Jew unto this day. In accordance with prophecy the Jew would never be absolutely destroyed. They should pray for the Jews that God would sustain His ancient people, and that the hearts of their persecutors might return.

On behalf of the Anglican clergy of Ballarat Tucker, who believed in the certainty of Jewish restoration to Palestine, sent Rabbi Dr Abrahams a message expressing horror and indignation at the Russian barbarities and praying for their cessation.<sup>125</sup>

The foregoing is a sample of the concern manifested in Australia. Additionally, the *Jewish Herald* could praise the large number of "trenchant leading articles in the daily papers ... in a spirit of fair play and humanity worthy of the best traditions of the British Press."<sup>126</sup>

Also, public meetings were held. The first occurred on 20 November 1905 in the Queen's Hall, Perth, under the chairmanship of the Mayor, Harry Brown MLA. He was surrounded by local dignitaries — some of whom, such as Henry Gregory, the noted Minister of Mines and an increasingly conservative future federal parliamentarian — did not take a vocal part in proceedings. They heard Elias Solomon, the former colonial and federal parliamentarian and grand old man of Fremantle Jewry, declare how much Jews appreciated "the expressions of sympathy which had been given by people in all parts of the English-speaking world."<sup>127</sup>

The first resolution, which passed unanimously, was moved by the Anglican Bishop of Perth, Right Reverend Dr Charles Owen Leaver Riley, seconded with gusto by (Sir) Henry Briggs MLC, supported by Frederick Illingworth MLA. Briggs, a prominent Freemason and Anglican who had been foundation headmaster of Fremantle Grammar School, averred that in its ferocity the Russian persecution stood out from the European anti-Semitism of the past quarter-century:

Russia ... was now reaping the whirlwind, in the total disruption of law and order ... The Talmudic legend of Titus and the gnat was being repeated, for the mighty bulk of the oppressor was convulsed with agony. The fiendish horrors, the callous infliction of pain, and the nameless atrocities endured by the Russian Jews seemed to stain humanity with indelible shame.<sup>128</sup>

The second resolution, which was also passed unanimously, urged the British government "to use its best influence with the Russian authorities to prevent further atrocities upon Jews." "If diplomacy," declared its mover, Reverend G.E. Rowe, "were not equal to the occasion, then, in God's name, let them create some power that would be equal to it." The resolution was seconded by a Catholic farmer with mining interests, Charles Joseph Moran, who had just lost his Legislative Assembly seat of Coolgardie, and who delivered a neat tribute to Jewry. It was supported by mayor-elect Sydney Stubbs, who mooted the establishment of a relief fund. (In fact, one had been opened by the Jewish community the previous evening.)<sup>129</sup>

The third resolution, also unanimously carried, requested the Mayor to forward copies of the resolutions to the state governor for transmission to the British government. It was moved by Reverend A. Deans, seconded by Councillor James Brebber, Liberal MLA for North Perth and supported by John Edward Hardwick, Liberal MLA for East Perth. Deans admitted that his hopes were pinned on intervention by the philo-Semitic King



Edward VII with the Czarist authorities rather than on faith in the British government. He regretted having to observe "that the present King represented the will of the British people better than did the Imperial Government. The Jews were their brethren, and he had come to the conclusion that the world owed more to the Jews than it had the grace to acknowledge. (Hear, hear.)"<sup>130</sup>

The next meeting was held on 23 November at noon at Adelaide Town Hall, with the Mayor, future Liberal MLC Theodore Bruce JP, presiding. Despite the time of day there was a respectable and representative attendance, which encompassed local notables and clerics of all denominations. Following a strong speech from Bruce — an Anglican who confessed that the pogroms in a supposedly Christian nation, while other Christian nations stood silently by, almost made him lose faith in God — the Premier, the socialist Thomas Price, moved the first resolution, to be forwarded to British Prime Minister Arthur James Balfour. It pledged in the name of the people of South Australia "abhorrence of the terrible massacre inflicted by popular violence on the Jewish communities in Russia, and its deepest and most heartfelt sympathy with the sufferers in their affliction ..." Price was proud to raise his voice "as a Britisher" on behalf of the oppressed, and predicted that progress would overtake Russia, placing her on the same "glorious" level as Britain.<sup>131</sup>

Liberal opposition leader and future Premier (Sir) Richard Butler, seconding the motion (which was carried unanimously) agreed with Price that Britain was the traditional protector of the oppressed:

This was a question where party politics, thank God, did not come in. They could all stand on a common platform to protect the weak, help the suffering, and uphold justice and right ... At such a time one felt particularly proud to belong to the British Empire, because England's shores had always been a haven of rest and security for the afflicted and distressed of all communities ... In England Jewish people occupied the highest ranks ... and in South Australia there were Jews who were deservedly honoured for their liberality, their patriotism and their cordial British sentiment. South Australians would be wanting in gratitude if they did not express their sympathy with their Jewish brethren in the tragedies of Russia.<sup>132</sup>

Butler was followed by the Catholic Archbishop of Adelaide, Dr O'Reilly, who as soon as he learned of the pogroms had visited Reverend Boas to register his sympathy and offer help. In a long speech of deep feeling, O'Reilly described the depressed status of Jews in the Pale and gave harrowing examples of their victimisation at Kishinev, indicating what they must have suffered in the latest outrages, details of which were as yet unreported. "In lifting our voices we shall have asserted the rights of our common humanity," declared this great and good man.

Our voice may count but for little. The chorus made up of many voices may count for much. In every quarter of the civilised world Russian wrongs to the Jews excite indignation and regret. From every quarter comes Christian expostulation — a plea for justice for a much injured race ... Remonstrance, I fear, can have but slight effect at the moment. But our words will endure; and moving in union with other words spoken in a thousand places will not be void of their effect. Some day, soon or late — God grant it may be sooner ... the sympathy of the world with an afflicted people will move the heart of Russian officialdom, and secure the Jewish subjects of Russia charity, goodwill, or, at least, fair play.<sup>133</sup>

After a speech of such passion and eloquence, further words perhaps seemed anticlimactic. The Anglican Honorary Canon of Adelaide, Reverend William Samuel Hopcraft, endorsing all that had gone before, observed that "Language failed altogether to express the emotions which raged within them as they thought of the atrocities that were perpetrated on the members of a race to whom they all owed so much."<sup>134</sup>



A secondary resolution, also carried, appointed a committee, chaired by the Mayor, to collect and administer a relief fund. The resolution was moved by Reverend W. Jeffries, President of the Council of Churches of South Australia (which had moved its own motion condemning the atrocities). Seconding, the merchant and philanthropist (Sir) Herbert Phillips, a leader of the state's Congregationalists, declared:

In every land the Jews had furnished leaders of intellect, progress, finance, commerce and legislation, and had been a more potent factor than was generally credited in the advance and life of nations. Had not the Jewish nation, then, a special claim on their reverence and their sympathy? It was their duty to assure the Jews of their heartfelt sympathy, and of their prayers that their miseries might speedily end.<sup>135</sup>

In Sydney "a public meeting of co-religionists" to express indignation and solidarity with Russian Jewry, organised by Walter D. Benjamin, took place on the premises of the Great Synagogue in November and instituted a relief fund. It was an all-Jewish occasion, although Rabbi Francis Lyon Cohen read to the gathering a supportive letter he had received from the Anglican Canon of Sydney's St. Andrew's Cathedral, the ardent imperialist Francis Bertie Boyce (instrumental that very year in instituting Empire Day in Australia). It was also announced that a strong message of encouragement had been received by the President of the Great Synagogue, Louis Phillips, from the editor of the *Australian Star* and *Sunday Sun*, a man named Saunders. The latter declared that everyone in Australia should have the opportunity of making a contribution towards the relief of the Russian Jews, and donated five guineas.<sup>136</sup>

There was a great deal of clerical sympathy in Sydney, and on 4 December an open meeting under the auspices of clergymen of various denominations was held at the Young Men's Christian Association Hall to protest the pogroms. Despite the venue, most of the 150 persons present were female; perhaps men were awaiting a public gathering convened by the Lord Mayor. Proceedings were opened by the chairman, Anglican Archbishop of Sydney (and Primate of Australia) Most Reverend Dr William Saumarez Smith, who on 30 November at the request of his diocese had sent a message of condolence to Rabbi Cohen. The cruelties in Russia, he told his audience, "ought not to be committed on criminals, much less on those who had done no wrong." Christians might believe that Judaism was "imperfect" but they felt no antipathy towards its practitioners.<sup>137</sup>

Carried unanimously, the first resolution expressed the meeting's "most emphatic protest against the atrocities committed against the Jews in Russia, which are a sin against God and a violation against the brotherhood of man." It was moved by Reverend Dr Richard Sellors, President of the Methodist Conference, and seconded by Reverend A. Thompson, chairman of the Congregational Union. Sellors declared that it was "a matter of profound regret" that the descendants of the Patriarchs should be touched with such tragedy. Jews were a remarkably law-abiding people: there were only two in Darlinghurst Gaol. (Unfortunately, Sellors also declared that the ill-usage that Jews were presently experiencing was delaying their conversion to Christianity; this might have prompted the favourite Jewish retort that since Jews were so law-abiding why did not Christian missionaries leave them alone and turn their attentions to the less law-abiding among their own people!<sup>138</sup>)

The second resolution, also carried, was moved by the Reverend John Walker, Commissioner of the Presbyterian Church, who paid tribute to the many good qualities of Jews, from whose stock sprang Jesus, the disciples, and Biblical heroes. The resolution assured "the relatives of the victims of the atrocities in Russia, and the Jewish community generally, of the sympathy of Christian people, and commends to the public



the Jewish Relief Fund." It was seconded stirringly by that staunch friend of Jewry, Archdeacon John Douse Langley:

The Jewish people had a noble history in the past, and he believed they would have a nobler history in the future, when they would take their place in the economy of the world, and exercise a greater power than they had yet exercised. *He favoured a combination of the European Powers, with the view of restoring Palestine to the Jewish people, which would for ever put an end to such horrible atrocities.* (Applause.) [Italics added.]<sup>139</sup>

No public meetings convened by their respective lord mayors were held in either Sydney or Melbourne. The reason is not far to seek. At a meeting of Melbourne City Council, which passed a motion (proposed by Councillor Jeffries, seconded by Alderman Ham) recording sympathy for Russian Jews and condolences with their Melbourne co-religionists, the Lord Mayor (Sir) Henry Weedon (whose wife had Jewish connections) explained that the action of the federal government had made such a meeting unnecessary.<sup>140</sup>

In the federal House of Representatives former Victorian parliamentarian and future High Court judge Sir Henry Bournes Higgins had asked Prime Minister Alfred Deakin whether he would be prepared to frame a resolution expressing the House's abhorrence at the pogroms and sympathy with the Russian Jews. To cheers, Deakin had replied that he would consider doing so once he became convinced of the truth of reports reaching Australia.<sup>141</sup>

Public men in Australia were mindful of Russia's response to a strongly-worded resolution forwarded to her via the British Foreign Secretary by the London Mansion House meeting in December 1890 called to protest renewed persecution of Russian Jewry. The Czarist authorities had, in high dudgeon, treated it with scorn, citing the rule of international law which disapproves of one nation interfering in another's domestic affairs.<sup>142</sup>

Nevertheless, there was general consensus with South Australian premier Price's view that "in protesting against the atrocities ... they were not in any sense wrongfully interfering with Russian affairs. British people had never hesitated to lift up their voice on other similar occasions..."<sup>143</sup> Prompted by Price's resolution at the Adelaide protest meeting, and by feeling expressed at similar gatherings, Deakin on 4 November cabled the Imperial Government with the news that Australian public opinion on the issue was unanimous and that all the state premiers were united in condemning the Russian outrages. Moreover, Deakin, New South Wales Premier (Sir) Joseph Carruthers, and other notable Australians sent messages of sympathy to Chief Rabbi Hermann Adler in London.<sup>144</sup>

Melburnians and Sydneysiders might, therefore, have been denied the chance to display their feelings at civic-sanctioned public meetings, but the relief funds for survivors of the pogroms opened in both cities attested to the strength of gentile sympathy. By the end of November the fund in Victoria totalled nearly £2000 while its counterpart in New South Wales comfortably exceeded that figure. Contributions continued until the closure of the funds a month later.<sup>145</sup>

Donors to previous funds proved their commitment to the Jewish cause. For instance, among those previously cited as examples of contributors to the Victorian Kishinev appeal, Archbishop Carr and Sir Samuel Gillott gave ten guineas each, (Sir) David Hennessy and George Lugg five guineas each, and Dr Maloney one guinea. Samuel Maugher MHR, who spoke at Melbourne's 1899 pro-Dreyfus rally, gave ten shillings and sixpence. The well-known drapery firm of Ball and Welch gave a substantial £20,



and (as before) contributions came from other non-Jewish companies. M.D. Maclean, Westmore G. Stephens, and H.B. Alston (not to be confused with members of the Jewish Altson family) each gave £20.<sup>146</sup>

Well-known names were among the donors: Janet, Lady Clarke, leader of the essentially conservative Australian Women's National League, gave £10, as did the decreasingly reactionary Frederick Sheppard Grimwade, businessman, parliamentarian, and prominent lay Anglican. The Portland-based Anglican Archdeacon of Loddon, Venerable John Charles Parrott Allnutt, sent two guineas. Again, many donors chose aliases: "A Christian (Berwick)," (ten shillings and sixpence), "A Christian friend" (the same amount), and so on.<sup>147</sup>

Notable names also appeared on the New South Wales donors' list. For instance, the eminent physician and surgeon Sir Philip Sydney Jones, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sydney and a devout Congregationalist known for his charitable nature, gave ten guineas. So did the banker Thomas Allwright Dibbs, and David Jones and Company, the famous retail firm founded by Sir Philip's father, and certain other gentile businesses contributed varying amounts. Judge Charles Gilbert Heydon, a leading Catholic layman and anti-Mannix loyalist, gave five guineas, as did Anglican woolbroker Richard Jones MLC and Sydney's Lord Mayor, (Sir) Allen Taylor. The philanthropic tobacco manufacturer and Baptist leader Sir Hugh Dixon donated £5. The accountant David Fell MLC, a Liberal crusader for the White Australia policy who would later settle in his native Britain where he worked strenuously on behalf of societies aiming to settle British ex-servicemen in Australia, gave £2, as did Canon Boyce, Reverend Dr Sellors, and the well-known architect John Francis Hennessey.<sup>148</sup>

In addition, the prominent Macquarie Street physician and future state Minister for Public Health Dr Richard Arthur determined upon a practical solution to Russian Jewry's plight. Arthur, a Liberal and Reform MLA, and son of a Church of Scotland army chaplain, had in 1905 founded and become President of the Immigration League of Australia. As I have more fully discussed elsewhere, in 1906 (fervently supported by the League's philo-Semitic secretary W.A. Lloyd) he proposed that agricultural colonies of Russian Jews be established in the Northern Territory, Western Australia, Queensland, and perhaps also — on a smaller scale — in New South Wales.<sup>149</sup>

This article could well have continued until the post-World War Two era. In particular, there was a considerable manifestation of philo-Semitism during the Nazi period, which has been documented in this *Journal*.<sup>150</sup> That forms a separate topic which cannot be covered here.

Since World War Two a paradoxical situation has emerged. Old-style anti-Semitism is discredited and interfaith organisations such as the Australian Council of Christians and Jews have come into being in the climate of Australian multiculturalism. Yet the Jewish community places far less reliance on coalition-building with non-Jewish groups than it did in the past. This situation is due to the growth of an articulate and assertive "Jewish lobby" concerned with such issues as support for Israel and for persecuted Jewries overseas (as in the former Soviet Union and in Syria), whose overtures are weighed by the Federal Government.

All recent public opinion surveys have indicated that there is almost certainly less anti-Semitism and even more genuine support for Jews by non-Jews than in the past. This trend has been augmented in recent years owing to widespread sympathy with the Jewish people because of the Holocaust, as shown in the public opinion survey "What Do Australians Know About the Holocaust?"<sup>151</sup> Its results demonstrated that the Holocaust had become one of the best known events of modern times, even to Australians who normally know little of the history of other societies.



The range and depth of philo-Semitism during Australia's comparatively early history traced in this article is a component of a surprisingly widespread sympathy throughout the world, especially the English-speaking world, for the Jewish people. In sharp contrast to hostility towards Jews, which has been closely chronicled, such sympathy has been scandalously neglected by historians. It is my firm belief that philo-Semitism has been as important as anti-Semitism to our understanding of the status of modern Jewry, especially in Australia and other English-speaking lands.

### Acknowledgment

*I am extremely grateful to Dr Ray Duplain of Deakin University, who for biographical details of various persons mentioned in this article very kindly searched sources unavailable to me in Wales.*

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Western Times*, 4 June 1853, quoted in (London) *Jewish Chronicle*, 10 June 1853. Joseph Marks made Lucifer matches. Robert Stribling Cornish was a local builder.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Thomas Latimer was a local printer. For an example of such an occasion in Australia see the Melbourne dinner to David Benjamin, *ibid.*, 9 June 1854.

<sup>3</sup> On the improving state of Jewish-gentile relations see, for example, *ibid.*, 8 January 1847: leading article entitled "Increased Liberality and Feeling Between Jews and Christians." For a little known yet useful summary of the progress of Jewish civic and political emancipation in Britain see Charles Kensington Salaman, *The Jews As They Are* (London, 1882), pp. 61-85.

<sup>4</sup> Baron Lionel de Rothschild took his seat at Westminster in 1858 following passage of the requisite enabling legislation through both Lords and Commons. He had been elected MP for the City of London in 1847, 1849, 1852 and 1857.

<sup>5</sup> The *Jewish Chronicle* and the *Voice of Jacob* (1841-46) are replete with the evidence for this statement.

<sup>6</sup> The first Jewish member of an Australian legislature was Lionel Samson, nominated to the Legislative Council of Western Australia in 1849; *Jewish Chronicle*, 6 October 1865.

<sup>7</sup> I delivered a preliminary paper summarising my findings to date, entitled "Patterns of philo-Semitism in Britain, 1840-1939," to the annual conference of the Australian Association for Jewish Studies, Melbourne, 9 July 1995.

<sup>8</sup> "Our Home Letter," *Jewish Herald*, 30 January 1891.

<sup>9</sup> Hilary L. Rubinstein, "Australian Jewish Reactions to Russian Jewish Distress," *AJHSJ*, vol. 9, part 6 (1984); Hilary L. Rubinstein, "'A Disgrace to Christendom': Australian Reactions to the Dreyfus Affair," *AJHSJ*, vol. 12, part 3 (1994), pp. 467-83.

<sup>10</sup> See the pioneering if regrettably obtuse work by Israel Getzler, *Neither Toleration Nor Favour: The Australian Chapter of Jewish Emancipation* (Melbourne, 1970). Conservative supporters of the Jews' claims included Sir Charles Nicholson and Robert Lowe (later Viscount Sherbrooke). See also Serge Liberman, "Gentile Champions of Jews in Australia," in W.D. Rubinstein, ed., *Jews in the Sixth Continent* (Sydney, 1987), pp. 76-100.

<sup>11</sup> M.Z. Forbes, "Palestine Appeals in the Fifties and Sixties," *AJHSJ*, vol. 3, part 7, (1952), pp. 315-33. See also Israel Klausner, "Haym Zvee Sneersohn's Australian Mission," *Herzl Year Book*, vol. 6, 1964-65, pp. 25-51.

<sup>12</sup> See Hilary L. Rubinstein, "Critchley Parker (1911-42): Australian Martyr for Jewish Refugees," *AJHSJ*, vol. 11, part 1 (1990), pp. 56-68; Hilary L. Rubinstein, "Sir James Barrett (1862-1945): Australian Philo-Semite," *ibid.*, vol. 12, part 1 (1993), pp. 91-100; W.D. Rubinstein, "The Attitude of the Australian Jewish Community and of Non-Jewish Opinion Leaders to the Rise of Nazi Germany and Nazi Anti-Semitism in 1933," *ibid.*, pp. 101-14. For the Kimberley manifestos and their signatories see *West Australian*, 6 September 1939; *Argus*, 1 December 1939; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 April 1940. Oddly, given his support



for the scheme, Barrett's name does not appear among the Melbourne signatories.

<sup>13</sup> *Southern Cross*, 12 June 1903. This Melbourne-based Nonconformist religious periodical was edited by W.H. Fitchett (for whom see text), who probably penned the article quoted.

<sup>14</sup> Guest sermon, 15 April 1882, Albert Street synagogue, East Melbourne, *Jewish Herald*, 21 April 1882. Myers' own congregation was at Sandhurst (Bendigo).

<sup>15</sup> *Geelong Advertiser*, 10 June 1903. Trotter's letter was prompted by the Kishinev pogrom in April. He added: 'We may all, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, Jew or Gentile, sink our individual opinions, proving that "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin."' Evidently an autodidact, Trotter was a hairdresser, information I owe to Dr Malcolm Turnbull, who very kindly searched the *Victorian Electoral Roll* for 1903 on my behalf.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Watkin to Altson, 11 November 1905, quoted in *Jewish Herald*, 1 December 1905. Compare the Presbyterian Dr John Dunmore Lang at the public meeting in 1854 chaired by Sir Charles Nicholson to support efforts for the Relief of the Famished Jews in Palestine: "They belonged to a people from whom we have derived, in one form or another, all that was good and glorious — all that had raised Great Britain to the high and honourable position she now holds among the nations of the earth." *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 September 1854, quoted in Forbes, *op.cit.*, p. 317. It is interesting that in 1845, apparently owing to his opposition to increased aid for all religious institutions, Lang objected to Jews' state aid claims, whereas Nicholson (a conservative who eventually returned to Britain deploring the extension of democracy in the Australian colonies) supported those claims. See Israel Porush, "The Story of State Aid to Jewish Establishments in New South Wales," *AJHSJ*, vol. 1, part 10, 1943, p. 344.

<sup>18</sup> *Hebrew Standard*, 20 July 1906. For a modern echo of the philo-Semitic stance based primarily not on guilt or remorse for past wrongs but on a positive appreciation of Judaism see interview with Reverend Professor Robert Anderson, *Australian Jewish News*, 19 April 1996. Compare Robert Lowe, who in 1845 argued that Jews' claims to state aid in New South Wales deserved priority because Judaism predated Christianity. He added: "Their warriors had ceased to sing, their own greatness as a nation had passed away, at least for a season, before the most prized records of ancient history had obtained an existence." Quoted in Porush, *op.cit.*, p. 345. Like Nicholson, Lowe (who also returned to Britain) was a conservative on the franchise issue. Another conservative supporter of the Jewish cause was Edward Deas Thomson, who chaired a Sydney meeting in support of Rabbi Hyam Zvee Sneerson's 1861 Mount Zion purchase appeal. Dr John West, historian of Tasmania and editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, addressed that meeting. See *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 March 1861, cited in Forbes, *op.cit.*, p. 330. For attendances at the comparable meeting in Melbourne see *ibid.*, pp. 327-29. Supporters of the Sneerson appeal in Melbourne included Chief Justice Sir William Stawell, who as a stalwart of the Christian state concept had opposed state aid to Jewish institutions. See Liberman, *op.cit.*, p. 82. The Melbourne public meeting in support of Sneerson attracted 150 people, mostly gentiles, according to the *Age*, 31 December 1861.

<sup>19</sup> The Jewish press carried lists of donors, which usually included gentile names. For an example see the front page of the *Australian Israelite*, 30 June 1871, reproduced in Malcolm J. Turnbull, "Solomon Joseph and the *Australian Israelite*," *AJHSJ*, vol. II, part 3 (1991), p. 393. The list of donors to the New Synagogue, Sydney, shown there included ten guineas apiece from Sir Daniel Cooper, the former business partner of Solomon Levey, and (Sir) Thomas Buckland (for whom see text), and £1 apiece from W. Perry and P. McMahon. The latter was probably the well-to-do Irish-born settler Patrick McMahon. For the New Synagogue and its building fund see Israel Porush, *The House of Israel* (Melbourne, 1977), pp. 36-37. In 1866 a J.S. Perry of Sydney contributed one guinea to the "Holy Land Relief Fund" (instituted by Chief Rabbi Dr Herman Adler and Sir Moses Montefiore) along with gentiles from Goulburn, Maitland, and Shoalhaven. *Jewish Chronicle*, 27 April 1866. Gentile donations to Jewish causes flourished in what Jewish leaders evidently hoped would be seen



as a culture of reciprocity: it is striking that wealthy Jews tended to donate evenhandedly to both Jewish and non-Jewish charities. Edward Cohen MLA told the 1861 Sneerson appeal meeting in Melbourne that he had always complied with requests to contribute towards the erection of Christian churches and schools, and trusted that other Jews would do likewise. *Age*, 31 December 1861.

<sup>20</sup> *Jewish Herald*, 19 June 1903. See also, for example, James Smith, "The Obligations of Christendom to Judaism" (address before Melbourne Jewish Literary Society, Pianola Hall, 8 September 1903), *ibid.*, 11 September 1903. Smith's talk was praised immediately afterwards by W.H. Fitchett and Llewelyn D. Bevan, who spoke in like vein. Smith was a veteran Melbourne journalist who in his youth had been intended for the church. He is best remembered today as editor of the three volume *Cyclopedia of Victoria* (Melbourne, 1903-5). See also remarks of Reverend Dr Arthur Elwood, *Hebrew Standard*, 24 October 1924. A somewhat different slant was taken by one minority sect: "The Christian Israelite obeys both the Law and the Gospel. He is thus, to some extent at least, Jew and Christian." See "Who and What are the Christian Israelites?", *Dunolly Express*, 22 November 1892. For the Australian Christian Israelites (or "Wroeites") see *Jewish Chronicle*, 5 June 1863.

<sup>21</sup> "The Ruffianly Russian," *Spectator* (Melbourne), 5 June 1903. See also the warmly pro-Jewish editorial in *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 March 1863. and the speeches of Reverends Watson and R. Maclean of Hobart Town, *Hobart Town Mercury*, 22 May 1862, quoted in *Jewish Chronicle* 8 August 1862.

<sup>22</sup> *Argus*, 5 June 1903.

<sup>23</sup> Guest Sermon, Albert Street synagogue, *Jewish Herald*, 21 April 1882.

<sup>24</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 March 1863. See also, for example, "The Miracle of History," *Presbyterian Messenger*, 19 June 1903; Reverend Edwin J. [sic] Watkin, letter and sermon, *Jewish Herald*, 1 December 1905; Professor C. Sauer, "The Artistic Achievement of the Jew," address before Brisbane Young People's Hebrew Association, *Hebrew Standard*, 2 November 1923.

<sup>25</sup> See Adam Cairns, *The Jews: Their Fall and Restoration. Two Discourses Preached in the Chalmers Church, on September 3rd in Behalf of the Suffering Jews of Palestine* (Melbourne, 1854). Public figures in Australia who supported proto-Zionism and Zionism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries included Victorian governor Sir Henry Barkly, Tasmanian lieutenant-governor Sir William Denison, New South Wales parliamentarian Dr Henry Grattan Douglass, New South Wales governor Sir Henry Edward Fox, Colonel George Gawler, Dr John Dunmore Lang, Melbourne Anglican Dean Dr Hussey Burgh Macartney, Sydney Catholic Archdeacon John McEncroe, Tasmanian and Western Australian governor Sir Francis Newdegate, Sir Charles Nicholson, Tasmanian parliamentarian Sir Robert Officer, Sir William Stawell, Edward Deas Thomson, Reverend John West, and Sir John Young.

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, Cairns, *op.cit.*, p. 111: "He esteems them for their Father's sake and confidently anticipates their return to the holy land, and to all the privileges of God's chosen people"; cf. his remarks in support of Sneerson's appeal. *Argus*, 31 December 1861. See also Dean Macartney's remarks at the 1861 Sneerson meeting: he supported the appeal not out of liberalism, nor philanthropy, but out of conviction that the ingathering of Israel was "a proof that the Almighty God was about to revisit the earth..." *Age*, 31 December 1861. For an example of gentile secular justice for a persecuted people see "The War and the Future of the Jewish People," *Barrier Miner* (Broken Hill, n.d.), quoted in *Jewish Herald*, 14 December 1917.

At a meeting on 30 December 1861 at the Mechanics' Institute, Melbourne, held to raise funds for Sneerson's Palestine appeal, Cairns remarked that the Jews' restoration "would do more to enlighten and reclaim the whole world than the efforts of the Missionary Societies, even if they were increased a thousandfold." Quoted in Forbes, *op.cit.*, pp. 327-28. For the full text of Cairns' speech see *Argus*, 31 December 1861; a brief *précis* appears in the *Age* (same date).



Like many people, Cairns praised Jewish commitment to charity. For example, he told the 1872 Persian Famine Relief Fund appeal meeting in Melbourne "that many Christians would do well in regard to charitable matters if they took a leaf or two out of the Jew's book." *Jewish Chronicle*, 23 August 1872. Cairns, *The Jews: Their Fall and Restoration*, p. 17, observed: "their conversion to God — as a nation — will take place not in the countries to which they have been scattered, but in their own patrimonial heritage — in Judah's repeopled land ..."

<sup>27</sup> *Presbyterian Messenger*, 19 June 1903. This editorial cited, *inter alia*, the converts Mendelssohn and Disraeli as examples of Jewish achievers. It ascribed the existence of "mean, vulgar, idle, dirty, tricky" Jews to ill-treatment by the surrounding society. See also letter from P.W. Nicholson, Bundaberg, Queensland, headed "The Downfall of the Turkish Power," *Borderland: a Quarterly Review and Index*, October 1896, pp. 486-88; "The Return of the Jews to Palestine," *Review of Reviews*, 1899, p. 242; Samuel Elyard, *Letters to a Jewess* (Nowra, NSW, 1897); cf. [*idem.*] *The Hebrews. A Work Dedicated to the Ladies of Sydney, showing Why They Do Not Believe in the Prophets. By A Christian.* (Nowra, NSW, 1853), described by M.D. Isaacs in Henry Parkes's Sydney-based *Empire* as "Written during aberration of mind, and published in moments of raving madness." *Jewish Chronicle*, 24 February 1854.

<sup>28</sup> *Argus*, 21 August 1854, quoted in *ibid.*, 2 February 1855. In 1854 "a few members of the Hebrew persuasion" had organised a presentation at the Criterion Hotel, Melbourne, to Captain B.R. Mathews of the steamship *Great Britain* "for his urbanity and kindness" towards them while passengers aboard his vessel. *Ibid.*, 24 February 1854.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* The free settler Moss was Secretary to the Hobart Town Hebrew Congregation. For Tasmanian donations to the fund, headed by Sir William Denison and other elite figures, see *ibid.*, 2 March 1855. For the fund in Victoria see L.M. Goldman, *The Jews in Victoria in the Nineteenth Century* (Melbourne, 1854), p. 112. For New South Wales contributions to the 1866 fund (including gentile names) see *Jewish Chronicle*, 27 April 1866; for a comment on Melbourne and that fund see *ibid.*, 18 May 1866. For the Hobart Town meeting supporting Sneerson in 1862, at which Murray Burgess, Secretary of the Tasmanian Board of Education, translated from the Hebrew, see *ibid.*, 8 August 1862.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 5 February 1858; cf. a later editorial, "Our Brethren in the Colonies," reproduced in *Australian Israelite*, 29 December 1871; see also note 83 *infra*, for two Jewish comments upon their comfortable status in Australia. Countless others could be cited.

<sup>31</sup> See Hilary L. Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: a Thematic History. Volume One, 1788-1945* (Melbourne, 1991), pp. 471-514. Lampooning of Jews in the satirical press and elsewhere should be kept in perspective, especially when contrasted with the grotesquely caricatured Chinese and aborigines. The indigenous Catholic Irish, presented as cloddish superstitious simpletons, were also fair game, as indeed they were in English publications of the period. It would seem that minorities and "outsiders" could routinely expect such treatment, even when "Anglo-Celts." Compare, for instance, the portrayal of Jews in British and Australian satire with English stereotypes of the Welsh. See M. Dorothy George, "Some Caricatures of Wales and Welshmen," *National Library of Wales Journal*, vol. 5, 1947-8, pp. 1-12. Dr George's revelations will surely give anyone familiar with the treatment of Jews in, for instance, Melbourne *Punch*, a sense of *déjà-vu*; cf. John J. Appel, "Jews in American Caricature: 1820-1914," *American Jewish History*, v. 71, 1981, pp. 103-33.

<sup>32</sup> Guest sermon, Albert Street synagogue, *Jewish Herald*, 21 April 1882.

<sup>33</sup> A protest meeting chaired by the Lord Mayor of London was held at the Mansion House in January 1882 in response to a formal request by thirty-eight distinguished gentiles, and a relief fund was inaugurated. Resident members of the University of Oxford sent a memorial to Chief Rabbi Dr Nathan Adler registering "surprise and indignation" at events in Russia. *Times*, 23 January, 2, 3, 7, 18 February 1882.

<sup>34</sup> *Argus*, 27 June 1881 *et seq.*



<sup>35</sup> *Jewish Herald*, 21 October 1881. The words are presumably those of editor Reverend Elias Blaubaum, who as a religious Jew could envisage the prophesied restoration to Zion so long as it was effected by *divine* means. For S.H. Officer see Alexander Sutherland, *Victoria and its Metropolis*, vol. 2B (Melbourne, 1888).

<sup>36</sup> *Argus*, 2 August 1881. The only Jewish speakers were Reverend Blaubaum, Nathaniel Levi, and E.L. Zox: *Jewish Herald*, 12 August 1881.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> O'Shanassy to Zox, 1 August 1881, quoted in *Argus*, 2 August 1881. Zox was among the requisitioners of the meeting. The conservatively inclined O'Shanassy, at that time embroiled in political rivalries, had been three times premier of Victoria.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* Langridge's point regarding Jewish charitableness was one frequently made. He sat for Collingwood, one of the working-class districts where Jewish artisans were beginning to settle, but this would appear to be an incidental factor in his appearance at the meeting.

<sup>40</sup> Ham, an active temperance worker and president of the Young Men's Christian Association, was president of the Victorian Baptist Union, 1884-85. He served in the Legislative Council, 1882-1904. See also Rubinstein, "A Disgrace to Christendom," p. 472.

<sup>41</sup> *Argus*, 2 August 1881; *Jewish Herald*, 12 August 1881. Ham cited the Lancashire Relief Fund, the India Relief Fund, and the Irish Relief Fund.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* As Victorian Premier, 1890-92, Munro witnessed the clamour from the Trades Hall Council and other groups and individuals following a false rumour that the European Jewish philanthropist Baron Maurice de Hirsch was attempting to send 500,000 impoverished Russian Jews to Australia to establish agricultural colonies. This prompted Munro to tell the Legislative Assembly in October 1891 that "any attempt to land any of these pauper Jews in Victoria would be futile." *Ibid.*, 6 November 1891. His attitude at that time was not anti-Semitic. Significantly, he had written: "While of course sympathising with these people [Russian Jews] in their present unfortunate position, I deem it right to remind you of the strong feeling which exists here against any influx of emigrants of the pauper or destitute class ... The introduction of such persons into this colony is most undesirable, not only for the sake of the colony but also for the sake of the people themselves, the conditions of whose life in Russia are not likely to have fitted them for life in these colonies, and who would find great difficulty in obtaining a means of livelihood." He cited the opposition of the local branch of the Anglo-Jewish Association to such an influx. Quoted in Legislative Council debate of 14 July 1891, *Victorian Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 66 (Melbourne, 1891), p. 388. Sir John Downer, who deplored Russia's treatment of Jews, was also worried about the rumoured influx. See Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: a Thematic History*, vol. 1, p. 117. While objections to the Russian Jews were widely seen as anti-Semitic, the adverse reaction was almost certainly spurred by fear of cheap labour, and would have greeted a rumoured influx of 500,000 destitute newcomers of any origin, not only Jews.

<sup>43</sup> *Jewish Herald*, 12 August 1881.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 August, 26 August 1881. The meeting's organisers furnished Victorian editors and mayors with reports of the outrages.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 August 1881. The motion to open a fund, moved by one Wertheim and seconded by Ingram, was carried unanimously. The fund committee consisted of four gentiles and two Jews, Wertheim and Isaacs, presumably the father of the future Governor-General.

<sup>46</sup> *South Australian Register*, 4 August 1881.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 July 1881.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 August 1881.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.* Smith cited the example of Irish colonists who had successfully requested of him a meeting concerned with hardship in Ireland. Certain Jews present criticised the fact that no public meeting on the lines of Melbourne's had been called. The advertisement for the meeting (*ibid.*, 9 August 1881) ran: "Sympathising friends are invited to attend a Public Meeting ... to advise as to the best means of raising subscriptions..." See also *Observer*



(Adelaide), 6, 13, 22, 27 August 1881.

<sup>50</sup> *South Australian Register*, 20 August 1881.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* For details on Woods see *Observer* (Adelaide), 13 August 1887 and 25 May 1889. The fourth resolution, moved by Abraham Abrahams and Moss Judah Solomon, praised the role of the press and its general "liberality in the cause of humanity."

<sup>52</sup> *South Australian Register*, 20 August 1881. Perhaps the generosity mentioned befitted residents of "the city of churches" in a free colony. It is unclear whether funds for Damascus were raised in 1840 or, as is more likely, in 1860, when the issue of the blood libel resurfaced there. Funds for the Jews of Palestine were collected in 1854 owing to the distress and famine consequent upon the Crimean War, and again with Sneerson's appeal of 1861. Regarding the "Holy Land Relief Fund" set up in 1866 by the Chief Rabbi and Sir Moses Montefiore, an anonymous correspondent wrote that Melbourne was "behind all other communities in the world. Up to the present no effort has been made to raise a fund by subscriptions, and I feel convinced both Jews and Christians would liberally respond if a subscription list was set on foot." *Jewish Chronicle*, 18 May 1866. In 1872 a public meeting under the chairmanship of Melbourne Mayor Edward Cohen had instituted a Persian Famine Relief Fund, to be distributed irrespective of race, class, or creed. *Ibid.*, 23 August 1872.

<sup>53</sup> *South Australian Register*, 20 August 1881. Parsons had served as President of the South Australian Baptist Union and the Evangelical Alliance. For details of Paton see *Observer* (Adelaide), 23 February 1907. Sincere thanks are due to Mrs P.J. Moore, Research Librarian (S.A.), Information and Research Services, State Library of South Australia, for her prompt and efficient help in locating this and other information on relevant South Australian clergymen.

<sup>54</sup> *South Australian Register*, 20 August 1881. Irish-born Gunson, bred an Anglican, converted to Catholicism, and was pro-Home Rule. Townsend had been Mayor of Adelaide, 1864-66, and in 1872 served as Acting Speaker of the Assembly. Johnson, an Adelaide shoe manufacturer, showed both his good intentions and his perhaps imperfect grasp of the legal status of Russian Jewry by declaring that Jews should bear arms, the better to defend themselves. He expressed satisfaction that in South Australia several had joined the volunteer militia (in which he served as a sergeant). Future premier Downer was a conservative in the Australian context.

<sup>55</sup> Salomons was Solicitor-General 1869-70 and was MLC 1870-71 and 1887-99. Reid later wrote that before Disraeli's resolute handling of the Eastern Question in 1878 "I never looked upon him as quite an Englishman," but that thereafter "few could be more ardent admirers than I was ... I could not think of any man who was a truer Englishman." Sir George Houston Reid, *My Reminiscences* (London, 1917), pp. 154-55. There was a public meeting in 1878 praising Disraeli's handling of the Eastern Question, in which the principal speaker was conservative former Victorian Premier James Goodall Francis MLA. E.L. Zox MLA also spoke, and 350 people attended. *Argus*, 30 July 1878. A similar meeting occurred in Sydney, with (Sir) Patrick Jennings, among others, participating. See also A. Patchett Martin, *Australia and the Empire* (Edinburgh, 1889), pp. 65-75; Roger C. Thompson, "James Service. Father of Australian Foreign Policy," *Historical Studies*, vol. 16, 1974, p. 260. The pro-Zionist and philo-Semitic Sir Francis Newdegate cited Disraeli as an exemplar of Jewish loyalty to Britain and the Empire. (Perth) *Jewish Observer*, 1 July 1920.

<sup>56</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 August 1881.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* For the Sydney Hebrew School function see *Jewish Chronicle*, 27 February 1863. Plunkett, who in 1859 had been active in the fight to secure state aid towards Jewish ministerial salaries in NSW, made a fine tribute to Jews at the function. Others present were Attorney-General E.H. Hargrave MLC, (Sir) Terence Aubrey Murray MLC (president of the Legislative Council), Secretary for Works William Munnings Arnold MLA, Colonial Treasurer Elias Carpenter Weekes MLA, and the non-portfolio holding Charles Cowper junior MLA, future Postmaster-General Daniel Daniel Egan MLA, printer and newspaper



founder Thomas Garrett MLA, and pastoralist and agricultural proprietor John Morrice MLA, as well as councillor Andrew Lenchan (a business associate of J.G. Raphael and of Edward Flood) and the Mayor of Sydney. For Plunkett in 1859 see Israel Porush, "The Story of State Aid to Jewish Establishments in New South Wales: Addendum", *AJHSJ*, vol. 2, part 1 (1944) p. 35.

<sup>58</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 May 1881.

<sup>59</sup> ADB, vol. 7, pp. 473-4.

<sup>60</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 May 1881.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> Quoted in *Jewish Herald*, 21 April 1882.

<sup>64</sup> Guest sermon, Albert Street synagogue, *ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> Rubinstein, "A Disgrace to Christendom," p. 473.

<sup>66</sup> *Jewish Herald*, 2 June 1882.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.* The source misprints Cummins' first initial.

<sup>69</sup> See Newman Rosenthal, *Formula for Survival: the Saga of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation* (Melbourne, 1979).

<sup>70</sup> *Jewish Herald*, 2 June 1882: Meade's first initial is misprinted.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 June 1882.

<sup>73</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 May 1881.

<sup>74</sup> See the sermon by Rev. D.I. Freedman, 31 May 1903, (Perth) *Western Mail*, 1903. The victim is unnamed. A list of casualties at Kishinev is given in Michael Davitt, *Within the Pale: the True Story of Anti-Semitic Persecutions in Russia* (London, 1903). David Mossenson, *Hebrew, Israelite, Jew: the History of the Jews of Western Australia* (Nedlands, W.A., 1990), p. 76, mentions a public meeting in Perth following the Kishinev pogrom, "with local dignitaries participating." The source is given as Perth Hebrew Congregation *Annual Report* for 1906. However, neither Mr. Steve Howell, Senior Librarian at the J.S. Battye Library of West Australian History in Perth, nor I can find any trace of such an event. As described in the text, a meeting occurred in Perth in 1905. There was also one in 1899, to protest the Rennes verdict.

<sup>75</sup> See letters from Joseph Abrahams, Elias Blaubaum and Jacob Lenzer, *Age and Argus*, 21 May 1903.

<sup>76</sup> See *Argus*, 23 May 1903 (Gillott) and 29 May 1903 (Griffiths). Reference to the donors' lists which continued in those newspapers well into June shows how extraordinarily generous Griffiths' contribution was, and indeed how favourably amounts of all sorts given by gentiles compared with sums from Jews. Only two Jews gave more than Griffiths: bookmaker Solomon Green (£50) and merchant Joseph Kronheimer (£31 10s.). Sincere thanks are due to Dr Malcolm Turnbull, who very kindly ascertained for me Griffiths' occupation from the *Victorian Electoral Roll* for 1903.

<sup>77</sup> For Hennessy see *Argus*, 6 June 1903; for Best and Maloney see *ibid.*, 11 June 1903.

<sup>78</sup> For a revealing philo-Semitic speech on 18 November 1938 by Maloney, in which he records his personal gratitude to Jews, see *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 158, (1938-39), pp. 1740-42.

<sup>79</sup> For Brazier (misnamed "Ames" in at least one source) see *Crockford's Clerical Directory for 1905*, (London, 1905), p. 164; *Argus*, 21 September 1910; Rudinoff's letter recorded "disgust and horror" at "the abominable and barbaric atrocities ... in Russia" where he had travelled and thus knew "the state of poverty and misery in which these poor Jews live. I think we can only admire the great strength of character shown by them in the strong belief in their religion." *Ibid.*, 29 May 1903. Rudinoff is not usually a Jewish name, nor have I encountered him in any of my researches into the history of Australian Jewry. He was evidently a visitor



to Australia. See *Leader*, 25 April 1903 (I am most grateful to Dr Malcolm Turnbull for this reference).

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 May, 12 June 1903. Reuter's decision was taken by its Australasian general manager, H.M. Collins. The residue was also transmitted without charge. Owing to the presence of other appeals such as the Bishops Court Restoration Fund (concerned with repairs to the Melbourne Anglican prelate's residence) the fund's organisers decided to close it as of 10 June 1903.

<sup>81</sup> Some of the cryptic aliases were "A Friend," "A Sympathiser," "An Australian Girl," "Israel, my Glory," "Mother and Daughter, Frankston," "Ultimate Universalist," and "Widow's Mite." It is probably no coincidence that *Israel, my Glory* was the title of a conversionist tract.

<sup>82</sup> Letter from W. Shi Geen (contributed two guineas), *Argus*, 28 May 1903. I can find no information about Bo Leong. Other amounts came from Gee Chiu (one guinea) and members of the Chung Wah Society (two guineas). In 1888 Shi Geen was a member of a committee of prominent Melbourne Chinese which issued a *Remonstrance to the Parliament and People of Victoria* in light of their well-grounded fears that the Australasian Conference in Sydney held that year would result in further anti-Chinese legislation. In 1906 he was one of the signatories to a petition of grievance regarding the Employment of Chinese in Factories or Workrooms Bill then before the Victorian Legislative Assembly. See Barry York (comp.), *Our Multicultural Heritage 1788-1945* (Canberra, 1995), pp. 9, 14.

<sup>83</sup> *Argus*, 23 May 1903. For Anne Bon (née Dougall, daughter of a Perthshire physician) see obituary, *ibid.*, 9 June 1936; P. Crosbie Morrison, "The Widow of Wappan," *ibid.*, 13 June 1936; Public Record Office (Victoria), *Ten Victorian Women* (Melbourne, 1983), pp. 21-24. Concerning Jews and the White Australia policy see letter to *Australasian Hebrew*, reproduced, unattributed and with no date given, in *Jewish Chronicle*, 4 October 1912: "Few Australians care to sneer at the Jew; they all know him too well and like him greatly." The general absence of anti-Semitism was attested by the *Jewish Herald* (5 June 1891), presumably by editor Blaubaum, who was not slow to detect examples of prejudice: Australians were not "likely to become distrustful of the Jew. They have observed him in every walk of life, and they know that, given equal rights and privileges with his fellow-citizens of other creeds, he yields to no man in patriotism and public spirit, and is at all times ready to assist in furthering the common weal."

<sup>84</sup> Rubinstein, "A Disgrace to Christendom," p. 471. Leeper's son, Geoffrey Winthrop Leeper, professor of agricultural chemistry at the University of Melbourne, supported the Kimberley Scheme.

<sup>85</sup> These attitudes are discernible in the *Vigilant*, organ of the Victorian Protestant Federation, and in various pamphlets issued by the Loyalty League of Victoria. See also Best's remarks at Wesley Church, Lonsdale Street, to Loyal Orange Lodge, *Austral Light*, 1 July 1903. The philo-Semitic Reverend A.R. Edgar was also a committed Orangeman. The philo-Semitic E.C.V. Broughton MLA was active in Protestant defence circles: he died in 1917. Another Protestant anti-Sinn Féin was Sir Thomas Henley, who was perhaps pro-Jewish. On the other hand, such Catholic anti-Mannix loyalists as Judge Heydon and Sir Thomas Hughes also supported the Jewish cause.

<sup>86</sup> *Argus*, 6 June 1903.

<sup>87</sup> *Times*, 18, 19, 20 September 1899; *Jewish Chronicle*, 20 October 1899. Some British pro-Dreyfusard writers, notably Frederick C. Conybeare, used the Affair as a stick with which to beat the Catholic Church. As in Australia, the perceived clericalist persecution of Dreyfus was regarded as an atavistic survival from an unenlightened age.

<sup>88</sup> *Argus*, 22 May 1903. Reverend Pastor Herman Herlitz, the Jewish-born head of the Lutheran Church in Victoria, subscribed two guineas, and in 1905 addressed the Melbourne meeting in support of Archbishop Carr's motion. *Ibid.*, 5 June 1905. Melbourne's Anglican Dean Vance gave two guineas to the Kishinev Fund; other individual clerical donations were forthcoming. Other donations included sums of several pounds each from the Christadelphians



of Melbourne, Traralgon, and Tyers. Small individual amounts came from members of the Prayer Union for Israel, Geelong, probably a conversionist group associated with apostate missionary Emelia Baeyertz. Strong editorials condemning Kishinev appeared in ecclesiastical periodicals: for example, the Methodist *Spectator*, 5 June 1903; the Nonconformist Southern Cross, 12 June 1903; the *Presbyterian Messenger*, 19 June 1903; the Catholic *Austral Light*, 1 July 1903; *Church of England Messenger*, 1 July 1903.

<sup>89</sup> *Ballarat Star*, 8, 9 June 1903. There is no need to assume that Hart had Jewish forebears: the surname can be English and Irish.

<sup>90</sup> *Argus*, 26 May 1903.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 May 1903.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 May 1903. Abraham Kozminsky had already advocated such a meeting in a letter to the press, *ibid.*, 22 May 1903. Ernest A. Trotter called for such a meeting to be held in Geelong. *Geelong Advertiser*, 10 June 1903. I can find no evidence that one took place.

<sup>93</sup> *Argus*, 29 May 1903; *Church of England Messenger*, 1 July 1903; *Austral Light*, 1 July 1903.

<sup>94</sup> *Argus*, 6 June 1903.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.* Alcock was a staunch supporter of the Liberal and National parties. James Service had championed the Jews' right to state aid. Getzler, *op.cit.*, p. 107. Butler was a business partner of Sir Frederick Sargood. The Lord Mayor of London was Shell Oil founder Sir Marcus Samuel (later Viscount Bearsted). See Reverend A.A. Green's scathing attack on his attitude in *Times*, 2 June 1903. The précis of Fitchett's speech in the *Jewish Chronicle*, 17 July 1903, is a little garbled.

<sup>97</sup> *Argus*, 6 June 1903.

<sup>98</sup> Rubinstein, "A Disgrace to Christendom," p. 472.

<sup>99</sup> *Argus*, 11 June 1903; *Geelong Advertiser*, 16 June 1903. Isaacs had donated three guineas to the relief fund, his father and brother one guinea each. *Age*, 25 May 1903. See also note 146 *infra*. Edgar gave a sermon warmly asserting Christian solidarity with Jews over Kishinev. *Austral Light*, 1 July 1903, described Edgar as "a stalwart" of the Loyal Orange Lodge.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, cf. *Spectator*, 5 June 1903. *Southern Cross*, 12 June 1903, described the occasion as "notable for the generous things spoken by Christian lips about Jews and the frank and eloquent assertion of the debt the whole world owes to the Jewish race ... it was very striking to notice the mingled astonishment and gratitude with which these utterances were received by the throng of Jewish hearers. They were moved by them to the point of emotion."

<sup>101</sup> See letter from "P.J.M." and appended editorial note, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 June 1903. Marks began with a donation of £1 to the cause and subsequently donated a further two guineas. Sir Julian Salomons promptly donated five guineas, but most communal notables appeared to await a cue from the Great Synagogue. *Ibid.*, 27, 29 May 1903. At the fortnightly meeting of the Sydney Jewish Literary and Debating Society held on 20 May 1903 with Great Synagogue president Neville D. Cohen in the chair, Aaron Blashki, seconded by the evening's speaker, Coleman P. Hyman, had moved a motion deploring the Kishinev pogrom. Blashki added that he hoped Jews in New South Wales would "afford practical assistance" to the sufferers. Marks was present at that meeting. *Ibid.*, 22 May 1903.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 June 1903. See Neville D. Cohen's cable to the Jewish Board of Deputies in London. *Age*, 25 May 1903.

<sup>103</sup> *Jewish Herald*, 19 June 1903 gives the names of two principal speakers only as "Professor Harper" and "Archdeacon Langley." The only Professor Harper I have hitherto tracked down was Andrew Harper, Professor of Biblical Studies, Ormond College, University of Melbourne. His involvement as a Victorian in a Sydney meeting is surprising; on the other hand, his status as a biblical scholar makes it quite appropriate and plausible. Archdeacon Langley, who was based in Sydney, should not be confused with his brother, Henry Archdall Langley, Bishop of Bendigo (1902-7), who as Archdeacon of Melbourne (1896-1902) participated in the



Victorian pro-Dreyfus campaign. See Rubinstein, "'A Disgrace to Christendom,'" pp. 472, 476. Archdeacon J.D. Langley succeeded his brother as Bishop of Bendigo and participated in the Victorian pro-Dreyfus campaign.. Like Günther, Archdeacon Langley was a Canon of Sydney's St. Andrew's Cathedral. See also note 137 *infra*.

<sup>104</sup> *Jewish Herald*, 19 June 1903. Canon Archdall was based at St. Mary's Rectory, Balmain. From 1869-73, while serving a parish in Kendal, Westmorland, he had been District Secretary of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews, and later founded a branch of that society in Sydney. *ADB*, vol. 7, pp. 85-86. According to *Crockford's Clerical Directory for 1903* (London, 1903), p. 30, he served as Secretary of the London Society 1873-82.

<sup>105</sup> Sermon, 23 May 1903, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 May 1903. The salient points of the sermon are summarised in *Age*, 25 May 1903.

<sup>106</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 May 1903; *Jewish Herald*, 19 June 1903. Günther was based at Parramatta.

<sup>107</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26, 27, 29 May 1903. For details of Broughton see *ibid.*, 16 August 1917; *Sydney Worker*, 23 August 1917.

<sup>108</sup> *Jewish Herald*, 19 June 1903; cf. Landau's remarks before Jewish Girls' Guild, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 May 1903.

<sup>109</sup> *Adelaide Advertiser*, 13 June 1903. Cohen and Reverend Boas were the only Jewish speakers. For details on Marshall see *Observer* (Adelaide), 26 July 1902; for Raws see *ibid.*, 30 March 1895; for Rees see *ibid.*, 20 October 1883, *ADB*, vol. 6 (Melbourne, 1976), pp. 15-16, and M. Page, *Sculptors in Space: South Australian Architects 1836-1986* (Adelaide, 1986), pp. 81-83.

<sup>110</sup> *Jewish Herald*, 19 June 1903. Lionel Samson is not specifically identified, but it is clear that he rather than his brother William is the "Sampson" mentioned.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 3 July 1903.

<sup>112</sup> *Argus*, 3 June 1903. *Age*, 1 June 1903, carried a similarly sympathetic editorial.

<sup>113</sup> Resolution passed 17 November; mover possibly Edmund Edmonds Smith, seconder unknown. *Jewish Herald*, 1 December 1905. In the source, Smith's middle initial is incorrect.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 November 1905. The Trades Hall Council resolution was proposed by J. Hyman and seconded by Tom Mann.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.* This association advocated Home Rule for Ireland. Irish-born Foran had returned to Melbourne from Sydney, where he had edited (1894-95) the *Irish World*. Ronald was of Scottish birth.

<sup>116</sup> Resolution passed 16 November; mover and seconder unknown.

<sup>117</sup> *Age*, *Argus*, 11 November 1905.

<sup>118</sup> *Jewish Herald*, 1 December 1905. The copy was sent to Rabbi Dr Abrahams, minister of the senior Victorian congregation and *Av Beth Din*.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.* The seconder is given as "Archdeacon Crossley." However, *Crockford's Clerical Directory for 1905* (London, 1905), pp. 325-26, lists four Anglican clergymen named Crossley, none of them archdeacons and none in Australia. "Crossley" is probably a slip of the pen for "Hindley", who was the only Archdeacon in the diocese.

<sup>120</sup> For text see *Jewish Herald*, 1 December 1905.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 November 1905. Herlitz contributed two guineas to the Kishinev appeal, and three guineas to its 1905 counterpart. *Argus*, 5 June 1903; *Jewish Herald*, 1 December 1905. See also Rubinstein, "'A Disgrace to Christendom,'" p. 472.

<sup>122</sup> *Jewish Herald*, 17 November 1905.

<sup>123</sup> Watkin to Altson, *ibid.*, 1 December 1905. Watkin thanked Altson for the booklet on behalf of himself and his family, and was anxious to obtain further copies.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.* Danglow also spoke.

<sup>125</sup> Sermon, 12 November 1905, in *ibid.*, 17 November 1905.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*



<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.* Solomon, a multi-term Mayor of Fremantle, was MLA 1892-1900, and MHR 1901-3. A major British public meeting was held in London as late as 8 January 1906. For comments see *ibid.*, 23 February 1906.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 November 1905. Briggs had also been secretary of the Fremantle Chamber of Commerce, 1883-95.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.* The Catholic Bishop of Perth, Dr Matthew Gibney, had been, to Moran's regret, unable to attend. Moran's former parliamentary constituency, Coolgardie, had Jewish residents, many of Russian origin; perhaps contact with them had a bearing on his attitude. He had lost his seat before the meeting occurred, at the October 1905 state election.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.* Both Brebber and Hardwick were real estate agents. The latter had spent time on the Coolgardie goldfield, where he undoubtedly came into contact with Jews. Reverend Freeman concluded proceedings with a vote of thanks to the Mayor, which turned into a lengthy address on the Russian situation. The King was known to have many Jewish friends. It was reported that during a visit to Marienbad he told a Jewish journalist that he was "deeply interested in the Zionist movement." *Ibid.*, 1 December, 1905, reprinted from (London) *Jewish World* (n.d.), citing Warsaw Hebrew language *Hazefirah* (n.d.).

<sup>131</sup> *Jewish Herald*, 1 December 1905.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 November 1905, 1 December 1905. O'Reilly's examples of atrocities at Kishinev were obviously derived from Davitt, *Within the Pale*, published two years previously.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.* Hopcraft believed that the "Greek Church," by which he presumably meant the Orthodox Church in Russia, did not "have clean hands" in the matter and declared that its actions brought Christians into obloquy.

<sup>135</sup> Phillips was for many years Chairman of the Congregational Union of South Australia. He was also President of the Adelaide YMCA. The Council of Churches motion also authorised Jeffries to attend the public meeting. A further unanimously carried resolution at the public meeting, moved by Boas, seconded by Adelaide Hebrew Congregation president Solomon Saunders, extended a vote of thanks to the Mayor. Boas, *inter alia*, praised the amount of gentile sympathy received. Responding, Bruce gave credit for convening the meeting to Saunders, whose letter to the local press regarding the pogroms had stimulated public interest.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.* I am uncertain of Saunders' identity: there was Paterson Saunders, who edited the *Newcastle Morning Herald* (1903-29) and the Sydney-based freelance journalist Leonard Abbott Saunders. My guess is that neither was the man concerned. The reform-minded, humanitarian Boyce, who became Archdeacon of West Sydney in 1910, was President of the British Empire League in Australia, 1901 and 1909-11. See *ADB*, vol. 7, pp. 368-69. For Saunders' letter see *Jewish Herald*, 17 November 1905. His contribution was duly recorded in the donors' list as coming from "The Australian Star." *Ibid.*, 1 December 1905.

<sup>137</sup> The request came from the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Sydney, over which the Archbishop presided. For text see *ibid.*, 15 December 1905. In 1890 Saumarez Smith had become a patron of the misdubbed "London Jews' Society." See W.T. Gidney, *The History of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews, From 1809 to 1908* (London, 1908), p. 400. His role was probably nominal, coming as a result of a push by the Anglican-connected Society to expand its list of patrons, who included Bishop H.A. Langley of Bendigo (created patron 1903) and Archbishop Lowther Clarke of Melbourne (created patron 1906). Other Australian bishops appointed patrons were Stanton of North Queensland (1879), Linton of Riverina (1885), Goe of Melbourne (1886), Marsden of Bathurst (1887), Barlow of Goulburn (1902), Pain of Gippsland (1903) and Limerick of Bunbury (1905). *Ibid.*, pp. 400, 581-82.

<sup>138</sup> *Jewish Herald*, 15 December 1905.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.* A collection was taken at the meeting.



<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 December 1905. Weedon was presumably sympathetic. His wife was Fanny Dudley Cohen.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 November 1905. Higgins had reportedly begun to say that "He did not believe that any expression of sympathy would affect the perpetrators or those responsible for the administration of Russian affairs, but — "when he was ruled out of order by the Speaker, since it was question, not debate, time.

<sup>142</sup> *Times*, 11 December, 22 December 1890; *Jewish Chronicle*, 30 October 1896. See also Justice John Jacob Cohen's remarks, *Jewish Herald*, 17 November 1905. I am not aware of any public meetings in Australia in 1892: perhaps Russia's response to the Mansion House protest explains their apparent absence. There was, however, public sympathy for the Jews expelled from the Russian interior back into the Pale, in many cases without money or possessions. See, for instance, remarks of Patrick Moran, Catholic Archbishop of Sydney and William M. Cowper, Anglican Dean of Sydney. *Ibid.*, 5 June 1891. See also the conference of NSW and Queensland Wesleyan ministers. *Ibid.*, 8 April 1892.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 December 1905; cf. Justice Cohen, *ibid.*, 17 November 1905; Reverend Dr Sellors, *ibid.*, 15 December 1905.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 November 1905. Carruthers, a Liberal, was an ardent imperialist and staunch upholder of the White Australia policy. S.M. Deakin, perhaps a relative of the Prime Minister and possibly his daughter Stella (who married Kimberley manifesto signatory Sr David Rivett) had donated £1. 1s. 6d. to the Kishinev appeal in Melbourne. *Argus*, 30 May 1903.

<sup>145</sup> The Sydney relief fund was authorised by the meeting convened by Walter D. Benjamin. He, Aaron Blashki and (Sir) Daniel Levy MLA were official collectors. Melbourne's relief fund originated with a letter to the two metropolitan dailies from Abrahams, Lenzer and Danglow, who were "Deeply appreciative of the sympathy which has been so generously and spontaneously bestowed upon our people by our non-Jewish brethren in Australia and other parts of the civilised world ..." *Age, Argus*, 15 November 1905, reproduced in *Jewish Herald*, 17 November 1905. See also letter, *Argus*, 19 November 1905, reproduced in *Jewish Herald*, 29 December 1905. At the end of November the fund stood at over £1805 in Victoria and over £2250 in New South Wales. *Ibid.*, 1 December 1905.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.* B.H. Altson was among the Jews who gave ten guineas, an amount on the high side. The top Jewish donors were Reuben Hallenstein, Abraham Kozminsky, Joseph Kronheimer, Edward J. Michaelis, and Lasar Slutzkin (£100 each). (Sir) Isaac Isaacs MHR and A. Benjamin & Sons Pty. Ltd. gave £50 each. Alfred Gollin, S. Gollin, L.P. Jacobs, Ernest N. Michaelis, and the partners Eilenberg & Zeltner gave £25 each. Samuel Crawcour and A. Lesser & Co. gave £21 each. Barnet Glass and Charles Jacobs & Sons gave £20 each. For Mauger (pronounced Major), a social reformer who sat for Melbourne Ports, see *ADB*, vol. 10 (Melbourne, 1986), pp. 451-53; Rubinstein, "A Disgrace to Christendom," p. 372.

<sup>147</sup> *Jewish Herald*, 1 December, 15 December 1905.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.* Dibbs was General Manager of the Commercial Banking Company. Sir Allen Taylor was later involved in controversy regarding his perceived attitude to the immigration of Jewish boys. See Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: a Thematic History. Vol. 1*, p. 134. The Nowra conversionist and pamphleteer Samuel Elyard gave five shillings. Sir Hugh Dixon served as President of the Baptist Union of NSW, 1895-96, of the Baptist Home Mission Society until his death in 1926, and of the YMCA, 1900-2, 1909. He should not be confused with his nephew and one-time namesake, newspaper proprietor Sir Hugh Denison, long-serving President of the Royal Empire Society in NSW, who in the 1930s opposed the settlement in Australia of refugees from Nazism. See Rubinstein, "Sir James Barrett," pp. 97, 100. The support of a man like David Fell is perhaps instructive: advocates of White Australia and of British settlement of the Australian continent were by no means necessarily anti-Semitic, despite what some people might imagine. In fact, just as Australian Jews were largely seen as "honorary Protestants," so it might be argued that they were also regarded by many as "honorary Anglo-Celts".



<sup>149</sup> "Rubinstein, "Australian Jewish Reactions to Russian Jewish Distress," pp. 450-54; Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: a Thematic History*, vol. 1, pp. 123-30. The Immigration League of Australia is sometimes given as "of Australasia." In 1927 Arthur became Minister for Public Health under Sir Thomas Bavin.

<sup>150</sup> Rubinstein, "The Attitude of the Jewish Community and of Non-Jewish Opinion Leaders," *op.cit.*

<sup>151</sup> This survey of over 1000 randomly selected Australians was conducted in 1994 by Irving Saulwick and Associates on behalf of the Australian Institute of Jewish Affairs and the American Jewish Committee. See W.D. Rubinstein, "What Do Australians Know About the Holocaust: A Survey ...", *AJHSJ*, vol. 12, part 3 (1994), pp. 619-23.



## THE RESCUE OF THE TAFT FAMILY FROM THE UKRAINE IN 1921–22

*Ronald Taft*

In April 1978 the Taft “clan” held a picnic near Melbourne, Australia. The invitation list included 144 descendants of Abram Tafipolsky, together with their spouses. A similar invitation list today would include 209 invitees, of whom 192 are currently resident in Australia, 167 of them in Melbourne (80 per cent). These numbers reflect the effect of immigration and strong natural growth over a ninety year period since the first Taft arrived in Melbourne from Ukraine. This paper, however, is not primarily an account of the life histories of the founders of the Taft family in Australia. Its focus is on a particular dramatic event, the rescue in 1921–22 of sixteen members of the family who emigrated as a group to Melbourne after surviving eight years of dreadful hardships and life-threatening events in Ukraine, comprising the World War, epidemics, famine, pogroms, the Communist revolution and the subsequent civil war and anarchy.<sup>1</sup>

### BACKGROUND OF THE TAFIPOLSKY FAMILY

The Tafipolsky Family lived for several generations in Southern Ukraine in various communities in the area between the Sea of Azov and the city of Ekaterinoslav (now Dnepropetrovsk). Family members had been in business — small retailing or manufacturing — since the 1870s. The Tafipolskys were staunch Jews of *Haskalah* (“Enlightenment”) orientation, were Russian speakers by preference — as opposed to Yiddish — and all were well educated, particularly the females.

Prior to the emigration of the family to Melbourne in 1922, three Taft brothers, the two oldest of nine surviving children, Grisha<sup>2</sup> and Misha, and a younger brother, Isaac, had settled in Melbourne. The latter (also spelt Aisak) died in 1912 at the age of 20 and played no role in the immigration of the family. In 1906 my father, Grisha Tafipolsky (also known as Hirsh and more formally as Gregory), then aged 26, arrived in Melbourne from Kiev where he had been employed in a factory as an accountant. Within a few months he changed his name to Harry Taft and established a business in Elizabeth Street as a stationer, specialising in post-cards. Subsequently the shop was moved to the corner of Collins Street and Centreway Arcade where its scope was expanded and it became a leading centre for the sale and servicing of fountain pens. Misha (known formally in Australia as Morris Taft) was trained as a pharmacist in USA and subsequently immigrated to Australia in 1909, when he was aged 28. He was employed at Cunningham’s pharmacy in Nicholson Street, Footscray, and also had a partnership in the fountain pen business. Grisha was married to Olga Mushatsky, from Melitopol in Ukraine, and Misha to Rosie Wittner, who was born in Melbourne and was the daughter of Arnold Wittner. Several of their aunts, uncles and cousins had emigrated to USA, like most of the Jewish emigrants from the Czarist empire, but the two adventurers, Grisha and Misha, preferred to strike out independently by going to a country which was almost completely unknown to Jewish residents of Ukraine. Their success in quickly seizing the opportunities offered by Australia to immigrants enabled them to sponsor and rescue the remainder of their family, as we shall see below.

### Establishing Contact

Between 1906 and 1916, letters, postcards, and photographs were exchanged between Grisha and Misha in Australia and members of the family in Ukraine, but this was abruptly terminated when the breakdown of the Czarist regime completely interrupted postal services. It is not difficult to imagine the desperation felt by Grisha and Misha as



news filtered out of the bloody civil war in Russia, especially in Ukraine, of occupation by Germans and foreign interventions (eg. by Poles and by French), of devastating pogroms against Jews, of confiscations and persecution of the *bourgeoisie*, and of catastrophic disease and famine. There were attempts from both the Russian and the Australian ends to get letters or telegrams through but these were unsuccessful.

### Yasha

The youngest Tafipolsky brother, Yasha, born in 1893, joined the Russian Army in 1914 and was a prisoner of war for three years. Like the rest of the family, he had had no contact with his Australian brothers, nor were they aware of his fate. One can imagine the surprise, relief and excitement when Grisha and Misha received a letter from Yasha sent from Constantinople (Istanbul) on 2 June, 1921.<sup>3</sup> In that letter, addressed to "H. Taft, Collins Street, Melbourne", Yasha wrote (in Russian)<sup>4</sup>

I am writing to you from Constantinople. How I got here is not important any more. [Yasha's amazing adventures will be briefly outlined below.] I have been away from home for 6 months now. ... Our family is all right, despite many worries — coups, epidemics, and other "charms" of the Revolution. ... Do not ask me how they have managed to survive ... I am not going to write about what we have lived through, and am only going to say that the pogroms of 1905 are nothing in comparison to what happened and probably what is going to happen ... From everything we had, there are only two houses left, and one of these has probably been sold by now ... [Then follows information about various members of the family.] ... The family decided to migrate to your country but were not able to get a letter through to you ... that is why I left home ... But the family is so big and the amount of money so small that without you no action is possible ...

Yasha stresses that it would be necessary to discuss personally with Grisha and Misha the practical aspects of the possible immigration of the family and that this would require his coming to Australia. (Telephone was not considered to be an option in those days.) He stated that he would be prepared to work his passage from Port Said to Australia as a stoker or sailor and that, because of the urgency, he would attempt to get a ship as soon as possible. He had promised the family when he left them that he would return to Russia by winter in order to help them survive. "... I caused a lot of grief to my family by leaving. That is why I have to come back to them with something absolutely definite."

In the meantime Yasha kept himself alive by using gold coins which he had smuggled out of Russia in buttons on his coat, but mainly by doing odd jobs, mostly illegally, with the help of false papers and the goodwill of other refugees. He gave a postal address in Constantinople for letters and telegrams but, in view of the length of time required for his letter to reach Australia he could not expect a telegram reply for at least four weeks or a letter for eight, a very long time for a man in a hurry.

The next letter from Yasha was sent two months after the first. By this time he had clearly received a telegram from Grisha advising him strongly to stay put until they could arrange his fare to Australia and an entry visa. However, Yasha had already gone to Alexandria in Egypt in order to seek a passage to Australia. In the bold, practical style which was typical of him, he had bribed a scaman in Constantinople to allow him to stow away in the hold of a ship sailing to Egypt. This second letter, sent from Alexandria on 8 August, states: "I was not able to avoid a few misadventures, but we citizens of the 'All-powerful Free Soviet Republic' have very long ago become used to *mit tzures* (troubles), so it doesn't really matter." By a lucky accident he had met and was being hosted by an old family friend (Avram Nemirovsky) who had settled in Alexandria. Yasha was too impatient and too independent to take his brothers' advice to wait until help could arrive and he proceeded to Port Said to seek a passage to Australia.





*Yasha and Misha Taft  
in Roumania, 1922*

Yasha's third letter to Australia, sent from Port Said this time, is dated 19 October and is the final one in the series. He has just received a telegram from Nemirovsky in Alexandria reading "Come back immediately" and he speculates about the reasons for it. He concludes, incorrectly, that Grisha and Misha have decided that it is impossible to arrange for the immigration of the family to Australia and that he should just give up. Yasha expresses his determination to go to Australia anyway to discuss the matter. In desperation he writes "You do not know the whole situation. You can only see the whole situation when I am in Australia". However, he decided that he would concede and return to Alexandria. He even seriously entertained the possibility that, his mission having failed, he would then return to Russia like many refugees living illegally in Turkey and Egypt had had to do.

In Alexandria, Yasha received the most amazing news which radically changed his thinking: Misha was on his way and had requested him to meet him in Suez within a few days!

### **Grisha and Misha**

Yasha's first letter from Constantinople, dated 2 June, would presumably have been received early in July. Immediately the brothers started the process of applying for Australian immigration permits for the family with an intense sense of urgency. On 29 July 1921, Grisha (Harry Taft) swore a statutory declaration in front of the Lord Mayor of Melbourne undertaking *inter alia* "to provide an affidavit, permit and other necessary documents to enable Abram Tafipolsky and his family to land in Melbourne." With the support of this declaration, Grisha wrote an application to the Commonwealth Home and Territories Department requesting landing permits for 10 adults and 3 children.

It would seem from the contents of the documents, and from subsequent events, that Yasha had underestimated (a) the wealth of the brothers, (b) their willingness to undertake the support of the family, (c) their appreciation of the urgency of the situation and their determination to act positively, and (d) the opportunity which existed for suitably guaranteed persons to obtain permits. The speed with which the Department responded to the application is remarkable when compared with the present-day lag periods. The application by Grisha was dated 8 August and the letter from the Secretary of the Department was dated 15 August, just one week later! The speed of this response must have been partly due to the good impression which the Taft brothers made on the Australian officials, and it seems to reflect a basically sympathetic attitude towards the victims of the Russian Revolution. The positive attitude of the government could have partly reflected the success of efforts by the highly respected Jacob Danglow, Rabbi of the St Kilda Synagogue and President of the Ukrainian Jews Relief Fund, to publicise the urgent needs of the victims of the famine in Ukraine about which he, very diplomatically, drew a parallel with the great Irish famine. There appears to have been



a change of policy on the granting of visas to would-be emigrants from Russia, since, only in January 1921, the Australian Minister had stated that "the present policy is against letting into Australia migrants from Russia"<sup>5</sup> apparently due to fear of terrorists. In the meantime, the Government seems to have relented in the face of lobbying by politicians and business-men and some newspaper publicity which stressed the humanitarian side. Whatever the reason, the Home and Territories Department gave its maximum support to the Tafts' request for help. On 18 August, the Department cabled a letter to the Official Secretary in Great Britain listing the persons who had been granted the permits and requesting the Secretary to inform the British Consul in Constantinople about them. The letter also said that "If it is necessary for them to proceed to London for the purpose of joining a steamer for Australia, I shall be glad if you can arrange for them to be accorded any possible facilities."

At that time there were not many Jewish immigrants from Russia in Melbourne but they consulted with each other, exchanging information and ideas about rescuing their families.<sup>6</sup> The Taft brothers decided that, rather than bringing Yasha to Australia, Misha should go to meet him. They made the necessary arrangements as quickly as possible and Misha departed for London on the SS *Ormonde* on 22 October. This was a considerable sacrifice by him and, even more so, by his wife, Rosie, who was left with two small boys while her husband sailed off into the unknown, perhaps to be swallowed up in the maw of the Bolshevik beast. She was, not unnaturally, less than enthusiastic about the expedition. Misha, who was in fact a poor traveller, subject to sea sickness, undertook the trip at considerable personal and financial cost and was separated from his wife and children for eight months. He took with him letters of introduction from Rabbi Danglow and from the Prime Minister's Department: "Mr Taft is a well-known and highly esteemed citizen of Melbourne ... " Telegrams and letters were sent ahead to various parties, such as relatives and business connections in London, Yasha in Alexandria (see above) and to Z. Haber, representing the American Joint Distribution Committee in Bucharest. The latter were evidently able to make limited contacts with Russia and this proved to be quite valuable to Misha although they could not get through to the Tafipolskys. The Tafts' business agent in London (W. Calton) provided a useful address for communications, and sometimes for action. Another person who was contacted was Jacob Leib Komesarook (later known in Melbourne as Mendelson), who was actively working in London and other cities, to rescue his wife and child and close relatives who were, like the Tafipolskys, stranded in Ukraine and wished to join family in Melbourne. Komesarook's successful experience with various agencies, including British representatives in Russia, provided invaluable information for Misha.

One odd twist in the planning by the Taft brothers was the development by Grisha of a code for use in telegrams. It is not clear whether it was created in case the telegrams might have to be sent under the watchful eye of suspicious officials, or whether it was merely a money-saving device, but the result was a very elaborate code in which a pseudo-word was matched to each one of about 100 phrases. To illustrate: "Mush" means "Quite warm. It is cold. When dress warmly it is alright"; "Brevet" means "I have communicated with them, they know of my presence"; "Fronnd" means "O.M. est une veuve" [why French?]. In the event, the many telegrams which still exist from Misha are mainly in plain English with the occasional puzzling non-word in the middle. However, one useful function which the code performs for the historical record is to give some indication of the possibilities which the Taft brothers were entertaining at the time about the future rescue. For example, there are separate code words for "I am going through ..." Italy, London, Rumania, Galicia, Latvia, or Constantinople.



### THE TAFIPOLSKYS IN UKRAINE, 1904-1922<sup>7</sup>

It is now necessary to give a brief report about the status prior to emigration of each of the Tafipolskys who were brought from Ukraine to Australia in 1922. The immigrants consisted of Grisha and Misha Taft's parents and their seven siblings' families, a party of thirteen adults and three children in all. These represented all of the immediate family who were not then living in Australia. The individual members of this large group were

Sara, aged 39 and Sasha, 28 (Alexander Boulatoff, later Bulate);

Frieda, 37 and Samoile, 37 (Samuel Poznansky, later Posenan) and their daughters Olya, aged 11 and Raya, 10;

Borya, 35 (Boris Taft) and Ettel, 35, nee Zeigermacher;

Raya, 32 and Borya Kasanik, 28 (Ber/Bernard Casan) and Misha, aged 2; Yasha, 28 (Jacob Taft) and Sima, 23, nee Morochovsky;

Clara (Taft, later Smith), 24;

Abram Tafipolsky, 74 (Abram Taft) and Sarah, 53, Abram's second wife, the mother of Yasha and Clara, nee Lazareff.

#### Immediate History of the Tafipolskys

In 1904, Abram opened a drapery shop in the township of Bozhedarovka, about 100 kms South of Ekaterinoslav (Dnepropetrovsk) where they had previously lived for ten years. Members of the family helped full-time or part-time in the store during the periods when they were old enough and when they still lived at home. The business prospered so that after several years the Tafipolskys were regarded as the most affluent Jewish family in town. All of the boys in the family received *cheder* and Jewish day school education, while the girls all completed high school diplomas either by having tutors or attending gymnasium schools. Grisha and Misha played no part in the shop because they already lived away from home and then emigrated to Australia. The most constant and supportive of the children as far as the business was concerned was Borya. Sara helped in the shop for three years and then was sent away to Geneva to study Medicine. Frieda worked as a teacher until 1909 when she married Samoile who was a *feltshur* (a qualified medical practitioner, at a "sub-physician" level). She became a mother within a year after marriage and moved to Ekaterinoslav. Raya was trained as a midwife and nurse and married Borya Kasanik in 1919 when he came out of the Army. Yasha entered the Russian Army in 1914, was a prisoner-of-war in Hungary and could not return home until July 1918. Clara commenced Medicine at the University of Ekaterinoslav in 1917 and continued her studies to the extent that the civil disorders allowed.

The years 1917 to 1920 saw the near disintegration of the social and political institutions of Ukraine as a result of the Revolution, the collapse of the Russian Army, occupation by the German Army (one of the better periods for the Tafipolskys), the establishment and melting away of at least two conflicting Ukrainian nationalist governments, counter-revolutionary forces led by Denikin and supported by foreign expeditionary forces, "Whites", "Reds", "Greens", "Anarchists" and various roving bands of free-booters and pogromists. Like most communities in that region, Bozhedarovka was conquered and occupied by one authority after another, and sometimes there was no authority at all. As Jews and bourgeoisie in a small town, the Tafipolskys were at great risk of having their possessions looted or confiscated and, even more seriously, of being murdered or quasi-legally executed. On several occasions, only clever hiding or disguise saved the girls from being raped and more than once, they evaded roving bands



of Ukrainian terrorists and White Russian Army Cossacks who sequestered and looted their house. They lost a great deal of their belongings, but they managed to hide some of their money and possessions, inside walls and under the ground, to be used later to save their lives by buying false documents and other special favours, and to buy food. Food was a constant source of anxiety and on one occasion Yasha stole supplies from an army store at risk to his life; on another Borya T. and Borya K. together hauled home a large sack of potatoes from a farm where they had bought it by barter. On top of all this, perhaps the greatest threat of all was disease from the epidemics which raged in the area.

When the Bolsheviks gained control of Bozhedarovka they arrested Abram and demanded a huge ransom from the Jewish community to save him from execution. As happened more than once, Yasha was able to convince the local commissar of the rather doubtful proposition that he had served the cause of Russia and the Communist Revolution with great devotion, and his father was spared. Bozhedarovka had become too risky for the family, so they decided in October 1919 to move to the city of Ekaterinoslav where they would be less visible. Unfortunately the old problems of disease, starvation, looting and the danger of being murdered or killed by a stray bullet continued. The typhus epidemic struck Yasha, Frieda, Samoile and Sara, and the latter was on the verge of death. Raya was gravely ill from typhoid fever during her pregnancy and had breast abscesses after giving birth to baby Misha. But all managed to survive with the help of medical attention, nursing by family members, and the provision of food. Raya's baby was saved from starvation by Clara's devotion in obtaining cow's milk in a risky and costly expedition across town every day.

It was in Ekaterinoslav, in 1920, that the family decision was made that emigration to Australia was the only hope, but further wanderings were required before that could happen. Borya T. and Borya K. (Raya's husband) made several extended trips to Bozhedarovka at great personal danger, in order to collect or sell anything of value which could be salvaged from their abandoned property. At one stage even Sarah (mother) went there for some time in order to help.

Sara (daughter) had never returned home after qualifying as a doctor in Geneva and St. Petersburg. During the World War she had worked as a surgeon in field stations and afterwards was in charge of civilian and military (Red Army) hospitals in Ukraine, some of them quite close to where her family lived. By 1920 she was employed in an army hospital south of Kharkov, the Bolshevik capital of Ukraine. In the meantime, she had fallen in love with Sasha, a non Jew, who had been wounded while fighting in the Red Army. He also had had typhus. He was, first, Sara's patient, then her assistant, and he became her husband early in 1921.

The remaining members of the family were Frieda, her husband Samoile, and their two daughters. After having survived typhus, they moved to the city of Alexandrovsk (Zaparoze) in late 1919 where Samoile had obtained an appointment in a Jewish Hospital and a position in the Red Army as a medical officer. His hospital appointment gave the Poznanskys a privileged position which provided them with accommodation and, very importantly, food. An additional factor which proved to be very helpful in the emigration of the family was that his patients included some influential officials who felt obligated to him. By November 1920 the Communists had gained control of Ukraine and imposed a degree of law and order under the new Ukrainian Government in Kharkov but the severe famine conditions and disruption of public services continued. At least, internal communications improved.



In July 1920, the remainder of the family started moving one by one to Alexandrovsk for greater safety and to explore actively the possibility of emigrating to Australia as a unit. There they shared with the Poznanskys accommodation in the house of a *bourgeois* who now lived in his coachman's room at the end of the garden. The Tafipolskys were allowed by the Bolshevik authorities to occupy this large house because each section of the family was officially registered as a separate family. Unfortunately all attempts to communicate with Grisha and Misha in Australia failed. The family had nowhere to go and no way to get out of Russia. Some of them found employment; Yasha was employed as an electrical engineer at the power works, having managed to convince the authorities, falsely, that he was a qualified engineer on the basis of some practical experience which he had had as a POW in Hungary. Raya worked as a nursing assistant. Borya K. had employment in a government office for leather production and Borya T. still commuted to Bozhedarovka to salvage more moveable property.

### PLANNING THE RESCUE

#### Yasha's Odyssey in 1921

As we saw from his correspondence, Yasha, then aged 27, insisted that he should go to Australia to investigate the practicality of the proposed migration, although the rest of the family thought that it was too dangerous for him. He had no authority to travel, or an exit permit and other necessary papers, and he would have to leave the Soviet Union illegally. He left his job in Alexandrovsk and set out on his mission in late 1920 but, despite a fantastic degree of courage, resourcefulness, determination and *chutzpah* mixed in with a lot of luck, he took six months to reach Constantinople. His search for a permeable border took him on an epic journey, most of it in the depth of winter, through Kharkov, Rostov and Sochi to Baku on the Caspian Sea, involving falsified papers, a new name and life story, ejection from trains, riding outside in freezing conditions, former acquaintances met accidentally who were able to assist him, and employment in odd mechanical jobs which required his type of skill. He even repaired the broken typewriter which a document forger needed in order to help him. At one stage Yasha posed as a deserter from the Hungarian Army, using the few words which he had picked up in POW camp. He was not able to realise his hope of escaping through Baku to Persia, and eventually he found his way through the Caucasus Mountains to Batum in Georgia, just across the Black Sea from Turkey. There he stowed away in the coal hold of a ship going to Constantinople, was nearly killed by the coal which was being loaded, and eventually reached his goal after also disembarking illegally. He estimates that there were 300,000 Russian refugees there — perhaps an exaggeration — all both helping and competing with each other. He received assistance in finding food and shelter and obtaining odd-jobs from Jewish aid organisations and from fellow refugees, with some of whom he had had connections back home.

Naturally one of the first things that Yasha did was to write to his Australian brothers. The correspondence which commenced in June 1921 has been described above and it culminated in a telegram calling on Yasha to meet Misha in Suez on 15–16 November. He boarded the ship there and travelled with Misha to Port Said so that they would have time to exchange information and plan their strategy for extricating the rest of the family. Misha advised him to stay in Port Said or to return to Constantinople while he, Misha, went on to London where he could explore and exploit the possibilities, through Jewish relief organisations and official representatives of Britain, of contacting the family in Ukraine and arranging for them to leave. Misha was quite prepared, if necessary, to try to travel to Russia but Yasha persuaded him that this was too dangerous and that if anyone were to return there, it would have to be the one with the greater recent experience with the system, and more immunity to the epidemic diseases. No doubt it



was also relevant that Yasha was single while Misha was a husband and father. Thus, Misha made arrangements in London to create a new identity for Yasha which would enable him to travel in and out of Russia if necessary. With the help of experts in the Port Said Jewish community and a little bribery, Yasha Tafipolsky was transformed into Aron Witner [*sic*] of Australia, complete with all necessary documents.<sup>8</sup>

Misha also arranged for Yasha, or rather Aron Witner, to receive an official letter, dated London, 22 December 1921, from Freeman & Co., Melbourne and London, food and crop importers-exporters, requesting him to investigate possible arrangements for the receipt by Russia of large quantities of "wheat and other cereals" in return for "bristles, flax etc" through Odessa or other Black Sea ports. Finance for his expenses were provided by the Company which, apparently, was a respectable business enterprise, managed by Leslie H. Freeman. It is not clear what led to Yasha's appointment by the Company, or whether it was fully genuine, but the effect was that the way was now open for Yasha to apply to the Soviet authorities for permission to enter Russia and travel within it and thus expedite communication with the family. Whether Yasha ever gave any satisfaction to Freeman & Co. is doubtful, but a letter from Mr Freeman dated 23 February 1922, asking him to come to London to report progress, suggests that he had not done so by then, and probably he never did.<sup>9</sup> In the meantime Yasha went to Alexandria from Port Said and waited there for further developments.

### Misha's Mission

Misha proceeded to London where he did all he could to assist Yasha and to gain information about the best way to make it possible for the family to emigrate. To this end, Misha did a lot of travelling, almost entirely by train. In the next six months, his mission was going to take him on a strenuous series of criss-cross journeys across borders, nearly all of which required visas to be obtained before the journey was begun. His passport from that period contains visas for transit or visits from France, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Latvia, Bulgaria, Rumania, Turkey, Greece, and Italy.<sup>10</sup> He went to Berlin in December where he met Komesarook who told him that he had successfully saved his relatives through the British Commercial Mission in Moscow. This Mission, which operated in conjunction with the British Foreign Office, surprisingly was able to function in conjunction with the Bolshevik Government despite Britain's intervention in the Civil War on the side of the anti-Revolutionary forces. Misha wrote to the Mission, on 27 December, enclosing the permits for Australia, and begging it to intervene with the Ukrainian authorities to allow the departure of the family. Misha reported to the Mission that he had set up a Bank Guarantee with the British Foreign Office. "Don't lose a day and spare no expense. Hours count when one is on starvation rations."

The first two months of 1922 were the critical ones for Misha's desperate efforts to pluck the family out of their hell of disease, starvation and terrorism. He established himself in Bucharest in order to get help from the Jewish Joint Distribution (JDC) Reconstruction Department which seems to have had some facilities for communication with Russia by this time through its office in Kishinev. Misha then arranged for Yasha (as "Aron Witner") to come from Alexandria so that they could plan further strategies. Yasha came by ship to Constanza in Rumania in late January. Misha requested Rabbi Danglow in Melbourne to appoint him the Australian delegate to the Ukraine Relief Conference in place of Myer Zeltner, but whether the latter agreed to this is not clear.

Unbeknown to them, a miracle had in the meantime occurred. A telegram arrived in Bucharest a few days later from the Australian High Commissioner in London, informing him that permission had been granted for the family to depart from Ukraine.



At first the permission referred only to four adults but, after Misha had protested, it was corrected two days later to *all* of the applicants — probably a typing error, “four” instead of “your”, but frightening all the same. On 28 January 1922, Misha cabled Australia “... Hooray. Family permitted leave Russia ... Kisses all round.” The key to success was undoubtedly the intervention by the British Commercial Mission which was extraordinarily helpful. Soon after they had received the plea from Misha in Berlin, the Mission had requested the Ukrainian authorities to issue the exodus permits and this was granted almost immediately. The Mission reported to the British Foreign Office on January 10 that it had telegraphed the Tafipolskys informing them of the permits and offering them any assistance. However, it took about two weeks for the news to reach Misha in Bucharest. The British Mission also provided a document to a Black Sea shipping line guaranteeing the payment of fares for the passengers, to be paid by the British Consulate in Constantinople. Obviously, they trusted the guarantee from Misha that he would repay the costs.

On receipt of the exciting news, Misha’s next problem was how to assist with the departure of the family and how to get them to Australia. Misha discovered that the British Consulate in Latvia had contact with Russia and he went to Riga on 6 February in order to make use of this. After that, in the middle of February, he went to Constantinople. Further correspondence makes it clear that some communications were exchanged with the family, either through the British Mission or the JDC. The family had been advised to make their way to Sebastopol and to use the British Mission guarantee of payment in order to get berths across the Black Sea. Misha (or Grisha) also booked passages for them on the SS *Ormuz* departing Port Said for Australia a few weeks later, 30 March, but, as we shall see, they could not get there in time.

It is now necessary to reconstruct what was happening meanwhile with the family in Ukraine during the critical months of December 1921 and January–April, 1922.

#### DEPARTURE FOR AUSTRALIA, 1922

The first hint that the family received of the active endeavours being made to facilitate their emigration came in about September 1921, in a postcard from Misha’s father-in-law, Arnold Wittner, from London which he was visiting. He, thoughtfully, had had the card written for him in Russian and, in a guarded statement, he informed them that Misha was on his way to Europe. As a result, the family began to make plans for departure, should that become possible. Sasha and Sara wished also to be included in the possible exodus, so after Sara’s discharge from the Army hospital in the middle of 1921, they also moved to the collection point, Alexandrovsk. To overcome family resistance, Sasha apparently converted to Judaism and he and Sara had a Jewish wedding, probably in Alexandrovsk. Somehow, information about Sasha was conveyed to Misha, perhaps through the JDC, or perhaps through the Quakers who are known to have smuggled out a letter towards the end of 1921, and an entry permit for Australia was obtained for him in December. In the middle of January 1922, the big moment arrived. The family was informed by the British Mission that the permits to depart were available for collection in Kharkov and that they then should proceed to the Port of Sebastopol to get a ship to Constantinople. Samoile, using his connections as a doctor, went to Kharkov to obtain them and final preparations for departure were speeded up. All property and possessions were assembled, some from various hiding places, and those which could not be taken with them were sold. All the while the famine raged on and the family had continually to husband its food supplies.

Further problems arose; Borya T. decided to become affianced to a medical colleague and long-time friend of Sara, Ettel Zeigermacher, who had obtained a position in an



infectious diseases hospital in Alexandrovsk. She was hurriedly added to the party of would-be immigrants but it is not known whether or how she obtained a permit to leave Ukraine. It is also not clear why Borya and Ettel did not marry before they left Russia, but possibly this was because her passport was in her maiden name and it might have become invalid if she had to change it.

As though there weren't enough problems already, Clara now arrived from Ekaterinoslav with her fellow medical student, Sima Morochovsky, who wished to join in the departure as Yasha's fiancée. Apparently, Yasha had told Sima before he left nearly a year earlier that he would come back to marry her, and since he had not come for her, she would go to him. As she did not have the necessary permit, Sima took on the identity of Yasha's sister "Sara Tafipolsky" for the purpose of exiting Russia.<sup>11</sup>

There was still a big problem to be solved; how to get transport to Constantinople. Trains to Sebastopol were full and subject to priority reservations, and it was nearly impossible to book passages on a ship from as far away as Alexandrovsk. By dint of bribery, bluff and string-pulling, courtesy of Samoile's influential patients, they managed to get passages on a train and on 9 February 1922 they commenced a journey to Australia which would take them more than another four months. With the help of a "tame" stationmaster, they were able to take with them a fair amount of luggage in which they hid valuable possessions, including samovars and other silver, the deeds of their real estate and large amounts of money — in completely worthless banknotes. In Sebastopol they found temporary accommodation while they attempted to obtain berths across the Black Sea. They evidently managed to send telegrams through the British Government to Misha, who was waiting in Constantinople, and on 22 February the latter appealed to the British Consul-General there to do everything he could to help the family who "were stranded in one of the most terrible famine areas". Misha made 200 pounds sterling available as a further guarantee. He also advised Grisha to arrange more funds and to apply for Australian landing permits for Ettel and Sima.

### **Batum and Yasha**

A further momentous crisis now arose for the party in Sebastopol. Sara, Sasha, Raya and Borya K. decided in the middle of February to "make a run for it", together with the latter's infant child, because their permission to leave was about to lapse and Sasha had no permit or passport at all. This reason can explain why Sara and Sasha broke out from the united party, but the decision of Raya and Borya to go to Batum must have been sparked by panic. Raya reports in her later reminiscences that they were fearful that Misha would abandon his mission and return to Australia. The breakaway party managed to find their way by train to Batum in Georgia with the intention of attempting to smuggle themselves across the Turkish or Persian border by one means or another. Food and accommodation were available there but they did not have money to pay for it nor the know-how to escape the trap of misery into which they had rushed. Somehow the family managed to transmit the news of their plight to Yasha, who, in agreement with Misha, went to the rescue as soon as he could. In order to get permission to enter the Soviet Union, he used his persona as Aron Witner and his letter from Freeman & Co., together with a little bribery. He joined a ship in Piraeus going to Batum via Constantinople and Sebastopol.<sup>12</sup> In Batum he found his sisters, paid their debts, and in his indomitable style, managed to get extensions to their exit permits and to arrange for Sasha to become "Jacob Tafipolsky" (Yasha, of course, did not need this identity as he was "Aron Witner"). Eventually, with the help of his status as a "businessman", and the goodwill of associates who were well rewarded, Yasha was able to obtain the necessary officially authorized documents and he was able to escort the party by sea to Constantinople in early April 1922, after three weeks of frantic efforts.



## Departure

After being stalled for about three weeks in Sebastopol, the rest of the family who had remained there were able to negotiate passages on a Turkish ship, although the captain was very reluctant to take them. He was impressed, however, that Ettel could communicate with him in French and, in the end, he accepted the letter from the British Mission guaranteeing the fares on arrival and at last they were able to depart from Russia. The Tafipolskys had broken through the prison walls which they had desperately been trying to breach in every way possible for the past year and a half! The party arrived in Constantinople in early March and settled down in a Jewish owned guest house (feliculously named Hotel Jerusalem) together with their "saviour" Misha. At last the terror and the physical suffering of the past five seemingly interminable years were virtually over. Borya and Ettel were married in the Constantinople Synagogue on 10 March.

The bookings for Australia on the *Ormuz* for 30 March were cancelled and the family stayed on in Constantinople in the hopeful expectation that the party from Batum would be able to join them. This hope was fulfilled when the travellers from Batum arrived in Constantinople about four weeks after the earlier arrivals. Yasha and Sima were reunited after sixteen months separation and were married in the Synagogue on 5 April.

Misha had had the exciting experience of greeting his parents and siblings, whom he had not seen for 13 years, at the wharf in Constantinople on their two respective arrivals. He then settled down to the task of arranging transport to Australia and tying up other loose ends. It fortunately proved to be possible to obtain bookings for the whole party on the SS *Ormonde* from Port Said to Melbourne, leaving 11 May. Misha had one final act of rescue to execute, to arrange passages for the family to travel from Constantinople to Port Said. Having successfully done this, he finally left Constantinople on 19 April, while the rest of the family went on their way to Egypt to await embarkation on the *Ormonde*.

Misha once more undertook the long train journey back to London so that he could make last minute arrangements, such as purchasing kitchen utensils for the family, and to wind-up some business matters. He also had to arrange genuine passports for some members of the family. He left London on 30 April for Paris and Toulon where he boarded the *Ormonde* on 4 May. On the return trip, Misha kept a regular "diary" — in the form of a series of loving letters to his wife Rosie — which provides a direct record of his thoughts and reminiscences.<sup>13</sup> He admits to being tired and emotionally drained. After leaving Port Said, with the family on board, his introspections reveal a great deal about his sentiments: "This morning we passed Suez where nearly six months ago I met Yasha and started our campaign. What a difference! The same *Ormonde*, the same Suez, the same me and the same Yasha. But the huge difference is that the *Ormonde* has its nose pointing South-East instead of North West."

Misha and Sara, who was highly pregnant, suffered greatly from heat exhaustion and sea sickness and they disembarked in Fremantle in order to take a train for the rest of the journey across Australia. The rest of the party arrived at Station Pier, Port Melbourne on 7 June 1922 to the loving greetings of Grisha and his wife, Olya, and a warmly welcoming group of other relatives and friends. Their saga was already widely known in the Melbourne Jewish community.

## AUSTRALIA

In anticipation of the arrival of the family, Grisha had purchased and furnished a house at 654 Inkerman Road, North Caulfield,<sup>14</sup> and the arrivals were distributed between this



and the homes of Grisha and Misha. A tutor was hired to teach English to the family at Inkerman Road, and subsequently they learned from books and from their brothers. On arrival, the name Tafipolsky was changed to Taft in all cases, much to Abram's disgust. Gradually they were all settled into homes and jobs but the experiences which they had undergone together meant that, for the next 12 years or so after their arrival, their social life consisted largely of mutual visiting.



*Some members of the Taft family, ca1923*

It now remains to outline very briefly what happened subsequently to the rescued members of the family.

The wives: With the exception of Clara, all of the wives (mother Sarah, Sara, Frieda, Ettel, Raya, and Sima) were fully occupied after their arrival playing nurturant and supportive roles as home-makers and mothers. They had three children between them on arrival and within three years five more were born. To their surprise and disappointment, Sara and Ettel's medical degrees from Geneva were completely discounted in Australia, nor was any credit given for the years of medical study which Sima and Clara had completed.

Clara: Grisha and Misha offered to put Clara through a full medical course but she demurred. She lived with her parents and took in out-work in the clothing trade and later worked as an office clerk. She married Isaac Daniel Szmied (later known as Daniel Smith) in 1941.

Borya T: Was employed in Taft's Fountain pen shop and was Manager until his death in 1966.

Yasha: Qualified as an electrician, and then went into business as a contractor, sales agent, service operator, and manufacturer. Eventually his business "Electro-Mechanical Products" was most successful and many immigrants to Melbourne were helped by him to get started. He was President of the Victorian Union for Progressive Judaism.

Sasha: Qualified as a B Grade Electrician. Then he and Sara became chicken farmers, first in the Jewish Land Settlement scheme in Narre Warren, and later they had their own chicken business in Melbourne.

Borya K (Casan): Was employed by H. Taft Co., first in charge of a leather goods shop and later, until he died in 1953, he was Manager of Hillcrest Hosiery, a Taft subsidiary company. His infant son Misha became an engineer, married Fayne Sokol and died at the age of 43.



Samoile: At first was employed as a pharmaceutical assistant in a chemist shop in Footscray. Then he ran his own business in photographic developing and printing and, finally, was a health consultant in Carlton ("the Russian Herbalist"). His daughters Olya and Raya attended school, worked as clerks and married Sideris Haniotis and Abe Horvitz respectively.

Abram: He was becoming increasingly deaf at the time of his arrival and never learnt to read, let alone speak, English. He spent much of his time, until his death in 1937, engaged in prayer and other religious activities.

In the introduction to this paper, reference was made to the 209 living descendants of Abram — together with their spouses. The descendants of the party that was rescued in 1922 provide 117 of these, the other 92 being descendants of Grisha and Misha.

### OVERVIEW

In June 1947 a gathering was held at the home of Misha and Rosie to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the arrival in Australia. It was a happy occasion<sup>15</sup>; the gratitude of the family was expressed handsomely to Misha and Grisha and the miracle of survival was reiterated over and over. The family had managed to survive the most appalling hazards which beset them during the horror years 1914–1922 without the loss of one man, woman or child. What reasons can be adduced for this remarkable escape? First and foremost, credit must be given to immense and continuing good luck. The incredible goodwill and helpfulness of the Australian and British Government officials was a second most important factor. But good luck and goodwill need help. The financial resources and the networks (eg. Arnold Wittner) available to the Tafts in Russia and Australia were also very helpful since they created possibilities that would not have been available otherwise. But the most basic factor was surely the human one: the self-sacrifice, energy and determination of Misha, Yasha's courage and ability to improvise, Grisha's generosity and organisational skills behind the scenes, and the perseverance and devotion of the Russian Tafipolskys to each other in pursuing the common cause of surviving and escaping. All of these factors contributed to the success of this large-scale operation.

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>. The preparation of this paper was made possible largely through the unexpected discovery by Eugenia (Una) Blashki of a collection of relevant documents among the effects of her late father, Jacob (Yasha) Taft. These included letters, telegrams, and Australian and British official government communications. I thank Una for making them available to me.

<sup>2</sup>. The author of this paper is a son of Grisha.

<sup>3</sup>. All dates in this paper are based on the current calendar (Gregorian), not the Julian which was used in Russia until 1917.

<sup>4</sup>. The sentences have been rearranged by the author in order to make the flow more easily comprehended.

<sup>5</sup>. This quote is from unpublished diary notes made by Jacob Leib Komesarook who describes events which intervened between the refusal of his application for a permit for his mother, wife and child in January 1921 to the granting of the permits in May, together with assistance by the government to facilitate their immigration. I thank Lily and Sol Chester for making the diary available.

<sup>6</sup>. According to Price there were only 643 persons of all ages from the Russian Empire in Victoria in 1911. C.A. Price. *AJHS Journal*, 1964, Vol. 5, Statistical Appendix IIIa & IIIc.



<sup>7</sup>. The information in this section was largely obtained from the reminiscences given orally to the author and to other members of the family at various times. I have checked the contents of the paper with various descendants of the emigrants and I have interviewed Olya Posenan Haniotis, the only member of the emigrant party still alive at the time of writing. I thank them for their co-operation, especially my cousins Eric Taft, Anna Davis, Golda Isaac, Olga Bartak, and Una Blashki who have added comments to earlier drafts. One particularly rich record was a biographical essay on Yasha Taft written by the late Walter Krauss in 1983. Mr Krauss conducted several interviews with Yasha in connection with his MA degree in History at Melbourne University, 1975. Another valuable source was a set of reminiscences which Raya Casan (Kasanik) wrote down in 1962. I thank her grandson Peter Kloot for making this available.

<sup>8</sup>. Aron Wittner was the Hebrew name of Misha's Father-in-law in Melbourne; Aron almost certainly had agreed to the deception since the Wittner family were very co-operative in the rescue operation.

<sup>9</sup>. A letter in 1948 from Misha to Yasha, who was visiting England at the time, reveals that there had been recent friendly correspondence between Misha and Leslie Freeman, so apparently there was no long-lasting resentment.

<sup>10</sup>. Misha's passport from 1921-2 provides a record of his travels. My thanks to his daughter Golda Isaac for making this available.

<sup>11</sup>. There were sixteen years difference in the ages of Sima and Sara, but somehow she got away with the deception.

<sup>12</sup>. There is a family story that Yasha's ship berthed in Sebastopol just as the family was departing for Constantinople, and that Yasha recognized his mother and his fiancée, Sima, in passing.

<sup>13</sup>. This diary was kindly made available by Misha's daughter Anna Davis.

<sup>14</sup>. The funds to buy the house were advanced as a loan by Arnold Wittner.

<sup>15</sup>. Marred only by a housebreaker who looted all the women's handbags.



## MY DAD

*Lou Jedwab*

Let me tell you about my father, Frederick Jedwab, as he called himself. His real name was Yankev Faivel Jedwab. Jedwab comes from the Polish, meaning silk.

He was born in Lodz, Poland, in 1888, the eldest son of Luzer and Sarah Jedwab. The only school he attended was a Yeshiva (religious school) in Lodz. At about 16 or 17 he left the Yeshiva and went to work in an embroidery factory, owned by a distant relative.

Lodz in those days was renowned as a centre of weaving and fine embroidery. The industry had been established many years before by Jews from Western Europe, who had been encouraged by Polish authorities to migrate to Poland and bring with them their knowledge of the weaving industry.

Dad joined the Polish Socialist Party, but left just before Poland obtained independence from Russia in 1921. He left the Party (PPS) because he was opposed to their terrorist tactics to gain independence and because he resented the anti-Semitism within the ranks of the PPS.

My father had four sisters and a younger brother. Nothing was ever said about this brother because, as I heard later, he had got himself into trouble with some shady underworld characters.

My father's sisters and brother and all their families perished during the Holocaust, except for one nephew, who came to Australia after the war.

Many years ago my dad told me of his youth, when he was called up for military service in the Tsar's Russian army. (Poland was then under Russian occupation.) He was sent to Tashkent, which is a very hot area of Russia. He was issued with a leather uniform and placed under the command of anti-Semitic officers. The conditions in the camp were horrible; the food was bad, the climate hot, and the discipline severe. Can you imagine what it was like for an ex-Yeshiva student to be placed in such a situation? The term of conscription was five years.

After about three months it became unbearable, and everybody was looking for ways of getting out. One of dad's friends discovered that if you had five teeth missing you would automatically be discharged from the army. Although he was a young man my father already had three teeth missing from his mouth. So one Sunday morning, when the rest of the platoon was occupied with Sunday church service, he and two friends went to a field beyond the camp. While one friend held him down the others proceeded to extract two teeth from his mouth with a pair of ordinary metal pliers. A few weeks later he reported to the camp doctor and complained of stomach pains. When they noticed he had five teeth missing he was discharged.

My parents lived in a little village (*shtetl*) called Blashki, which was not far from Kalish, a large city on the western border of Poland. My mother was born in Blashki, and my father came to Blashki to marry her in 1915.

However, he worked in Lodz as an embroiderer. He left for work early on Sunday mornings and returned on Friday afternoons. Because most Jews did not work on Saturdays he made up for it by working on Sundays. He worked long hours, starting at about 6 o'clock in the morning. He would have breakfast at about 10 o'clock, dinner at about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, and work till late every night. When he came home at the end of the week he would always bring us little gifts from the big city, sweets or



oranges. Oranges were a luxury in Poland, and we would each get one or two segments of the whole orange.

Poland had always been a poor country; for hundreds of years she was occupied by either Germany or Russia, and during the Depression years of the 1920s and 1930s was even further impoverished. Dad lost his embroidery job in Lodz, and decided to start manufacturing wooden clogs for the farmers. I can still remember him sitting in our one-room flat, on a low stool, nails in his mouth and a hammer in his hand, nailing leather uppers into wooden soles. It could not have been a very good business, because he tried a few other ventures.

I'm not sure whether it was before or after the clogs that he travelled to Germany to try to sell chocolates. He purchased a case of sweets and travelled by train across the border to Germany. He obtained board and lodging with a German family, and next morning he ventured out to sell the sweets from house to house. He had no sooner walked a few steps from his lodgings than he was accosted by a plain-clothes policeman, who asked him very politely for his hawker's licence. My father, who spoke a reasonable German, explained that the papers were in his room, and that if *Mein Herr* would be good enough to look after his valise he would return with the necessary documents.

As soon as he came back to his room he picked up his belongings and hot-footed it out the back door, went straight to the railway station, and caught the next train home. That was the end of the chocolate venture.

Making money was a necessary evil when you had a wife and three children, but my father's real love was the Yiddish theatre and local community activities. He had a large circle of friends in Blashki, where he played a leading part in the Yiddish Theatre Group. He also belonged to the *Handarbeiterverein* (Hand Workers' Union). The union organised a successful *Turnerverein*, a gymnastic club for the young Jewish people of Blashki. Dad was also delegated by the Town Council to go to Warsaw to obtain free fuel and food for the poor and unemployed Jews, who were impoverished by the economic hardship that prevailed in Poland at that time.

He realised that his economic future in Poland was not good, and was one of the first to migrate to Australia from Blashki in 1928. He had an uncle in Australia, Isaac Jedwab, who had come before the first World War. Uncle Isaac had sent him a migration permit as early as 1921, but he had refused to leave Blashki because he believed Australia, being at the other end of the world, was primitive and uncivilised.

However, by 1928 he changed his mind and decided to emigrate by himself to Melbourne. When he first arrived he lived with his uncle and aunt in Glen Eira Road, Caulfield, and got himself a job helping a fruiterer at the Victoria Markets. After a few weeks he obtained a position with an embroidery firm in Collingwood — J. & J. Cash — who manufactured labels and monograms. He stayed with them until about 1939.

When he received his first pay of about £4 it seemed to him like a fortune compared with Polish rates of pay. He would send some to us in Poland once a month, and the rest he saved so as to be able to buy ship's tickets to enable us to travel to Australia.

We joined him in April 1932, and even after this long period of separation he still did not have enough money to pay for the ship's tickets and was forced to borrow from the Jewish Relief Society, to whom he made monthly repayments for many years.

We lived with our aunt and uncle (who had no children) for about six months, and then shifted to O'Grady Street, North Carlton. My dad felt more at home in Carlton because he was amongst many more Jewish people, who lived in some numbers in the area.



The Jewish National Library, the *Kadimah*, was nearby in Lygon Street, and Dad had already joined the *Yiddishe Bineh* (Yiddish Stage). He often took Izzy, Rae and me to their performances, and later on we often took part in the plays and concerts which the *Yiddishe Bineh* produced.

Dad was by no means a religious man, but insisted that we respect those who were religious. He would not smoke in the street on *Shabbat*, because he did not want to offend those who were on their way to or from the various *shuls* and prayer houses that existed in the area. He only went to *shul* on *Kol Nidrei* night (Eve of the Day of Atonement) because he loved the singing, particularly in the East Melbourne *shul* where the Reverend Rechter performed. He loved Yiddish folk songs, and fancied himself as a bit of a singer. He always sang to us the repertoire he had brought from Europe, and the new ones that the more recent migrants brought with them.

My dad and mum were members of the Friends of the Yiddish Schools in Poland, who would arrange frequent concert parties in the upper hall of the *Kadimah*. These were stirring, stimulating evenings. People would recite and sing, writers like Pinchas Goldhar would read chapters of their works, and others would read sections of Sholom Aleichem's works. The whole of the audience would sing, with great gusto, the old and new folk songs in Yiddish, and my sister Rae and I would be called upon to recite Yiddish poems, while my father would beam quietly in a corner. Then there would be a lavish supper prepared by the ladies, who would each bring a plate to outdo one another. After that there would be more singing till the early hours of the morning.

The words of the songs have always remained with me, the tearful lullabies, songs of poverty and struggle, of hardship and of hope for a better world. Songs which depicted the life of Jews in the ghettos, their struggles for emancipation and against discrimination; songs sad and mournful, and some joyful and uplifting.

My father was an early riser, and about 6.30, while preparing his first cup of tea, he would hum and sometimes loudly sing the various songs, or he would rehearse his lines for the current play he was in. As you can imagine, it was not well received by the rest of the family, who were trying to steal a few more hours of sleep.

On some evenings we would assist each other in learning our lines, if we were both participating in the same current play being prepared by the *Yiddishe Bineh*, or later on when they amalgamated with the *Kadimah*. Plays such as *Shver zu Sein a Yid*, *Merele Efros*, *Die Greene Felder*, *Motke Ganef*, *Drei Mol Hundert Toisen*, *Der Dybuk*, *Tevye der Milchiker* (the forerunner of "Fiddler on the Roof"), and later on when Jacob Waislitz and Rachel Holzer arrived, more modern plays such as translations from the French classics and Hebrew translations such as *Unzer Ard*, which is about the life of the pioneers in Israel.

The last play my father participated in was *Der Dybuk*. He was quite ill by then, suffering from cancer of the bladder, and had to make frequent visits to the toilet. I remember on one occasion when he had to open the scene and was nowhere to be found. I located him in the toilet in considerable pain; nevertheless he came on stage and performed as if everything was normal.

He died a few months later, on 9 June 1947. He was 59 years of age. The Yiddish press published a large obituary to his life, and in particular to his contribution to Yiddish theatre and culture in Melbourne.

My father had accumulated a large collection of Yiddish books written by Peretz, Mendele, Sholom Aleichem and Sholem Asch, and playwrights such as Gordon Ansky and others, and he would read passages from them, until I learned to read myself.



During the 1930s and until the end of 1945 Dad was constantly preoccupied with the fate of Jews in Europe. I think it was about 1941 or 1942 that we received a letter from a cousin who had escaped into Russian-occupied Poland. Cousin Shaya passed as an Aryan truck driver, and was able to get in and out of the Treblinka concentration camp, where my mother's stepmother and two step-sisters were located. My dad placed a five-pound note in an envelope and posted it to Shaya, who by some miracle received the money and was able to buy some provisions and get them to the relatives in the camp.

After a while the communication stopped, and of course they all perished in the death camp at Treblinka. Cousin Shaya now lives in Israel and is a tombstone maker. My grandfather, Mum's father, was also a tombstone maker.

My father always took me to the football, particularly when Carlton played at home, and he would buy me a "Crosco Bar", a large slab of thick, uneven, home-made chocolate, filled with peanuts. A few weeks before his death he sneaked out from our house in Drummond Street and went to the football.

I realise he was frustrated at times because he was not always able to provide us with the luxuries of life that he would have liked us to have had. But no-one went hungry, and we were always well dressed. He made up for the lack of material things by his great knowledge of Yiddish culture. He was typical of his time, which produced a large number of enlightened Yiddish-speaking workers, small shopkeepers and self-employed tailors and shoemakers in Poland and Russia.

This great mass of Jews and their families had emancipated themselves from the stultifying influence of religion and became learners, readers, amateur actors, writers and poets in the new flourishing language of Yiddish. After the turn of the century these Jews were no longer prepared to accept a religious solution to their problems. Influenced by the revolutionary fervour which took place after 1905, and in particular the 1917 revolution in Russia, they sought solutions to difficult economic problems which faced millions of Jews, who were not only victims of economic hardship but also victims of racial discrimination.

It is no wonder that they looked for political solutions and joined political groups like the *Bund*, the *Chalutz* Zionist movements and the Communist party. Together with other people who were also influenced by the political events taking place in Eastern Europe, they sought to emancipate themselves.

These Jewish political activists quickly realised the importance of Yiddish as a vehicle for their messages to their people. The great writers like Mendele, Peretz and Sholom Aleichem, who had been writing in classical Hebrew and influencing only a small number of readers, were forced to start writing in Yiddish, which was the mother tongue of the great mass of Jewish people.

My mother wanted me to have a Bar Mitzvah; my Dad agreed, and had me taught by a Mr Shabinsky, a huge man, as gentle as a lamb. He worked as a presser in a clothing factory during the day, and immersed himself in the Hebrew and Yiddish classics in the evenings. He was a cultured man, who was a great reciter and public reader of the works of Sholom Aleichem, those tragically humorous stories of the Jews in Poland and Russia.

Mr Shabinsky taught me the *parsha* for one hour a week. The lesson was terribly boring, because he made me write out parts of it while he and his wife were eating their dinner, devouring great mountains of food in front of me. Furthermore, my mind was hankering for more interesting things to learn and read, such as the left-wing books my brother Izzy



was bringing home. I had already read many of Upton Sinclair's books, which depicted the life of downtrodden American workers, and bits of Marx, which started me questioning religion.

I kept telling my father about my ideas and lack of interest in the *parsha*, which no-one ever bothered to translate to me. Dad agreed to call the whole Bar Mitzvah off, much to the sorrow of my mother. Nevertheless, we still had a large party, which lasted for two days. After the Saturday afternoon party for my friends we had a Saturday night party for my parents' friends, and another on Sunday night for the theatre crowd, because our house was too small to accommodate everyone together. The parties were happy affairs, with everybody eating and drinking around the table. People recited poems and joined in singing Yiddish songs till the early hours of the morning.

My one regret is that I did not question my father in more detail about his life.



Lou Jedwab

## MOTHER

Lou Jedwab

My mother's birth certificate from Blashki in Poland states that she was born in 1896. However, she maintained till the very end of her long life that she was born in 1898.

Her father was Avrom Leib Kawa, the *shtetl* tombstone maker; her mother's name was Rochel. My mother lost a twin brother and a sister and her mother by the time she was ten years old. Her father married again when she was twelve, and two step-sisters were added to the family — Chana and Sura-Leia.

My mother, Masha, was born in the house which her father and his brothers had built themselves. The house was near the *shul* and learning-house. In the same yard there was a collection of flats, surrounding a central courtyard. At the main gate of the courtyard stood my grandfather's house, and at the opposite side of the entrance was the baking-house. The baker supplied bread, rolls and *challahs* for *Shabbos*. The women in the neighbourhood left pots of *chulent* at the bakery on Friday afternoons. The *chulent* would slowly cook on the dying coals in the oven after the Friday baking, and would be well done for Saturday's lunch.



Except for a few years at the religious school (Beth Jacob), my mother did not have any formal schooling. At twelve she was apprenticed to be a seamstress, and went to the nearest large town, Kalish. There she lived with her aunt Rivka, her father's sister, to whom she was closely attached. She became a very good dressmaker, making all her own clothes and later all our clothes. Mine were usually cut down from my brother Izzy's. She made beautiful little dresses for my sister Rae (who was terribly fussy and for whom nothing was good enough).

Mum had been brought up in a religious atmosphere; she kept *kosher* and went to *shul* on the main religious holidays. I asked her why she had not attended *shul* on Friday nights and Saturdays. She said that women had not been encouraged to do this because there had once been a tragic fire in the *shul* in Blashki, and the men had decided that women should keep away, except for the holy days.

She and my father were married in 1915, the result of an arranged marriage. He was some sort of distant relative, and she had only met him once or twice when he visited Blashki from Lodz.

My brother Izzy was born in 1917 during the turmoil of war and revolution in Europe. According to Mum, she was 19 when he was born. The family lived in an upstairs one-room flat in the main street of Blashki, and Rae and I were born there also. Dad left for work in Lodz on Sunday morning and returned on Friday afternoon. I think he travelled by bus, although there was a railway station just outside our little town.

Times were hard, but we were always neatly dressed and there was enough food to eat. On Saturday afternoons Mum would take us for a walk along the main street and around the town square, where many other families and couples would promenade in their finest clothes. I think this must have been after Dad left for Australia in 1928. Mum always looked so serene and beautiful when she was dressed up.

Our flat was in the Kalisher Gass (street), above a small grocery located in a cellar. The proprietors were a very religious couple and very close friends of my mother's. I can recall their handing me fresh rolls filled with sprats.

Dad sent us five pounds from Australia every month, which was considerable money in those days. Nevertheless, we eventually went to live with grandfather. I think it was because it became too expensive to live separately, and I suppose it was a little frightening for a young woman to live on her own with three small children.

My grandfather's house consisted of two large rooms, in one of which he and his wife Golda slept and which housed all his religious books, and a large kitchen partitioned by a tall enamelled wall, which was heated by the oven. This oven wall was white-tiled and had a seat along it, where one could sit and warm one's back on the cold, below-zero winter days.

The other larger room had been used as a bedroom for his two daughters and my great-grandmother, Booba Chava, and when he had work, as a workroom, in which he applied the gold lettering to the tombstones. This room was turned into a bedroom for our family. It contained a large cupboard which divided the room into two. Behind it were two beds; my step-aunts slept in one, and my brother and I in the other. Alongside the stone oven was another bed, where great-grandmother Chava slept. Mum and Rae slept in a large bed in front of the cupboard. Everybody seemed to get along fine.

There was no running water; water-carriers would deliver drinking water from the town pump and pour it into a large wooden wine-barrel near the kitchen oven. For washing you would fetch pails of water from the small river. There was no electricity connected,



and we used kerosene lamps. There was a communal toilet in the central courtyard for all the tenants, and at night the adults would have to disperse the rats before you went in to use it.

In 1932, after about three years of separation from her husband, my mother undertook the journey to Australia. Can you imagine this young mother in her early thirties, leaving the only world she knew, and travelling by train across Europe, with another long sea voyage to far-flung Australia!

Before leaving, we stayed for a few days with auntie Rivka in Kalish, which was the furthest any of us had ever been from Blashki. A large crowd of relatives and neighbours had gathered to see us off in Blashki, because it was not often that a family was going off to distant and unknown Australia.

There was an uncle on my father's side who had a lemonade factory in Kalish, and he accompanied us on the train to Berlin and on to Paris, where we were met by a Cook's travel agent. I can still remember my amazement in the Paris Metro, when the agent produced a coin, put it into a slot machine, and out popped a bar of chocolate.

The agent took us to Marseilles, where we stayed for a few days with a friend of Mum's. This friend had a little boy my age, and we played together every minute of the day, without a common language; he could speak only French and I could speak only Yiddish.

All the way my mother had dragged two large feather pillows, so that Rae and I could sleep on the trains. This was besides the many parcels, boxes and cases which held our clothes and other belongings, including feather quilts, sheets, towels and special cooking utensils. Also accompanying us were tins of home-made biscuits and kosher *wurst* (sausage). When we opened the *wurst* on the boat it had to be tossed into the sea, because it had gone "off".

From the first day on the ship *Saphi*, my mother took to her bed, and arose only when the ship stopped, suffering all the time from sea-sickness. She ate very little, and complained of biliousness and migraine, despite the efforts of the ship's doctor. The doctor doubled as a dentist, and when I developed an ache in a back tooth he decided to pull it out. It took what seemed hours, and the pain was terrible, but I got over it very quickly.

When we arrived in Australia we went to live with an aunt and uncle in Melbourne. Uncle Isaac was my father's uncle. I can remember my mother doing all the housework: cooking, cleaning and washing, as well as looking after a husband and three children, making our lunches and sending the three of us off to Caulfield State School every morning. She was very lonely and quite bewildered by her new surroundings, but, as always, very accepting of her lot in life. I can always remember her remarks when there appeared to be a crisis, or things were difficult: "What will happen to us will happen to all around us."; a sense of comfort in belonging to her people and humanity in general.

After about six months we shifted to O'Grady Street, North Carlton. Mum was much happier there because she could now communicate more readily with other Yiddish-speaking people in the area. Slowly she started to read a lot more, particularly the Yiddish press and Yiddish books from the *Kadimah* library. Reading and discussion evenings were an important part of the activities of the circle of friends who belonged to the Yiddish theatre group. Later she started to read the daily press in English. She became quite fluent and went on to read political journals and books.



To supplement Dad's income (which was sometimes half-pay because of the Depression), she made ladies' skirts on a sewing machine at home. Dad would cut them out at night and she would sew them during the day. They were sold to a large store in the city. By that time we had moved to Rathdowne Street, North Carlton.

About 1938 my father opened a small clothing factory in Carlton. My mother worked very hard because she was the "tradesman". After work she did her shopping and then came home and cooked tea for the family. Dad used to go to the Victoria Market on a Friday night to buy fish, fruit and vegetables, but Mum did all the housework, cooking, washing and making clothes for the children. Somehow no-one questioned the huge workload she carried.

Thursday nights were house-cleaning and cooking nights, to make everything ready for *Shabbos*. It was nothing for her after a day's work to whitewash the kitchen walls, or to paint black *Ezyworkin'* around the lino in the lounge-dining room in our house in Rathdowne Street.

I remember coming home from school and waiting for Mum and Dad to come home from work. While I waited I usually read or played with the children in the street until I was called for tea. Mum made sure I was scrubbed from head to toe before I went to bed. We only had a chip heater for the bath, so you didn't have a bath every day because you had to bring the wood upstairs and then get the thing to light. However, on the nights when my mother didn't bathe she would undress, get into the bath, and wash herself all over under the tap. When we moved to Drummond Street we had luxurious baths in hot water from a gas heater.

My father died in 1947, when my mother was only 49 years old. She stopped working, and for a while became quite withdrawn. When I got married two years later we lived with her for two years until Robyn was born, and then Molly, Robyn and I moved to Bentleigh. My mother went to live in a flat opposite her house in Drummond Street. She started to interest herself in political questions and read all the magazines and papers I brought to her home. She attended all the main peace meetings that took place in Melbourne in those days.

The 1939–45 war had an enormous influence on her political thinking. She, like many others, was a great supporter of the USSR and in particular the Red Army, which dealt such shattering blows to Hitler's Nazis. The Holocaust in Europe (in which six million Jews, including most of our uncles, aunts and cousins on both sides had been slaughtered), had a devastating effect on her. When the news first came of the murder of so many of her relatives she wept constantly, hoping against hope that a few might have been saved. A little while after the war ended in 1945, and only one or two members of her and Dad's families contacted us, she never quite accepted her enormous loss.

Her interest in political activity became even more pronounced, and she looked to the Soviet Union as an alternative to the system that she lived under, a system which erupted into wars and Depressions every few years. Even when the crimes of Stalin and failure of Communism in the USSR became obvious to most, she found it very difficult to accept the truth of the situation, and, like many of her time, hoped against hope that the Russians would somehow solve their problems and get back on the track of building a new society. She would say to me, "Is there any other way to stop racism and anti-Semitism and wars?"

Until she was about 75 years of age, Izzy and his family, Rae and her son Leonard, and our family would go to dinner at her place whenever a *Yomtov*, like *Pesach* and *Rosh Hashanah*, came around. There would sometimes be twenty people squeezed into her



tiny dining room, including one cousin, a survivor of the Holocaust, with his family, and one or two neighbours. She would prepare everything herself, and we all had great fun.

Despite her new way of thinking and her emancipation from the past, she still could not shake off her childhood upbringing, and continued to go to *shul* on the holy days. In her last few years the rabbi of the Brunswick Street *shul* allowed her to be driven to and from *shul* on *Yom Kippur*.

Shortly before she died in May 1986, she could no longer read because of her failing eyesight. She therefore found great comfort in watching television. She loved the old Hollywood films and the different news sessions. Towards the end she didn't go out too often, but until two years before her death she went shopping with Rae, and often slipped into town by tram to go to the pictures, or buy clothes for herself or presents for the little children.

When I would visit her alone during the week I would sit with my arm around her on the couch, and she would question me in detail about the news of the political world, about Simon in Israel, would there be peace there, what would happen to the little boys in the future. She wanted to know all about Jason, Matthew, Dion and Nicholas. She adored Leonard, because she had helped to raise him after his father died when he was eight years old.

My mother made very little demand on her children, and was always ready to listen and understand everybody's concerns. Without telling anybody she herself arranged for a burial plot, so that her children would be spared the problem after her death.

She died in her sleep when she was nearly 90 years old, and didn't appear to suffer, dying, without a great deal of fuss, as quietly and serenely as she had lived. Her house was neat and tidy, her kitchen gleamed, and her cupboards and drawers had everything stacked in its rightful place.

She must have known the end was near, because she started giving her children and grandchildren small gifts and money just a few months before she died.

*[Note: These memoirs were written by Lou Jedwab for his grandchildren.]*



## TWO PIONEERS OF AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORIOGRAPHY: ALFRED NEWTON SUPER AND HIRSCH MUNZ

*Malcolm J. Turnbull*

The foundation of the Australian Jewish Historical Society in Sydney on 21 August 1938 must be seen as a key event (indeed, *the* key event) in the evolution of Australian Jewish historiography. The Society's creation, and the inauguration of its Journal, marked the formal beginning of systematic bids to research, collate and preserve the experience of Jews in this country. Suzanne Rutland argues that the event, in itself, was a sign of communal maturity, reflecting shifting perceptions of Jewish identity, and testifying to "... the realisation that citizens of the Jewish faith could make a separate and different contribution which was worth recording".<sup>1</sup>

Yet it would be wrong to suggest that the A.J.H.S. emerged "out of a vacuum" (to quote M.Z. Forbes).<sup>2</sup> Communal and/or institutional chroniclers had been working in an erratic way from as early as the mid 19th century, and a handful of individuals had made modest (but not insignificant) contributions to the community's knowledge of its past over succeeding decades. This paper examines the infancy of Australian Jewish historical writing, and specifically the lives and input of two of its most important pioneers: Alfred Newton Super, who is credited with producing the first academic thesis on an Australian Jewish topic, and Hirsch Munz, whose history of South Australian Jewry was the earliest such (substantial) regional study, and one of the first monographs in the genre.

Although my survey aims at comprehensiveness, it cannot claim to be exhaustive. Inevitably, relevant early publications not uncovered (or rediscovered) to date will emerge "in the fullness of time". There are tantalising indications that Munz, in particular, provided pertinent historical analyses to now defunct overseas periodicals. My paper, accordingly, highlights milestones in the evolution of the genre. (Hopefully, some enterprising bibliographer may be inspired in the future to plough through complete runs of the various Jewish newspapers, pre-1940, and catalogue pioneer contributions in their entirety).

In 1845 the committee of the York Street Synagogue published its first Annual Report, which incorporated two pages detailing "the establishment of our ancient religion in this remote part of the world". Drawing primarily on oral sources (in the absence of "any very authentic records"), this modest document appears to have been the earliest attempt to chart the progress of Australia's "Hebrews".<sup>3</sup> Joseph Fowles utilised the Report for his description of the synagogue in the early guidebook *Sydney in 1848* (1850), while, as late as 1928, Rabbi Francis Lyon Cohen and Ernest Davis still relied on it for early detail when they compiled their Jubilee History of the Great Synagogue.<sup>4</sup>

Melbourne Jewry lagged three decades behind Sydney before producing its own pioneering congregational study. *An Historical Sketch of the Two Melbourne Synagogues*, issued in 1877 to mark the rededication (after renovation) of the Bourke Street building, and the erection and consecration of East Melbourne's new *shul* in Albert Street, included sermons by Revs Moses Rintel and Dr Dattner Jacobson, and a 12 page essay on "The Jews in their Dispersion". The historical "overview" was by prominent journalist Maurice Brodsky (1847-1919), and relied heavily on oral sources (the community's "*Historia non scripta*", of which several of the early colonists are the



repositories"). "The flame of Judaism yet burns brightly", he wrote, "... even in this 'Ultima Thule', this remote region, where the Jew must turn westward rather than eastward if he would look towards Jerusalem."<sup>5</sup> Brodzky, who served as antipodean correspondent to the *Jewish Chronicle* and would go on to found and edit *Table Talk* (and whose use of the phrase "Marvellous Melbourne" predated George Sala by at least a decade), found himself embroiled in an unseemly dispute with the spiritual leader of Melbourne's third synagogue, Elias Blaubaum of St Kilda, shortly after the booklet's publication. (He sued Blaubaum for slander — unsuccessfully — and was bankrupted as a result).<sup>6</sup>

Brodzky was author of another pamphlet which was probably the first Australian Jewish biography: *Genius, Lunacy and Knavery* (1876), a 30 page "extravaganza", purporting to recount the life and colonial experiences of the colourful Dr David Hailperin.<sup>7</sup> The booklet is of dubious accuracy, "rather sketchy and embellished" (according to Israel Porush), "half history and half *feuilleton*".<sup>8</sup> Brodzky appears to have had few qualms about letting facts interfere with an entertaining story.

Coleman Philip Hyman (1862–1929), Sydney communal identity, numismatist and editor of the shortlived *Australian Hebrew Times* (1894–5), was regarded as the leading authority on Australian Jewry's past at the turn of the century.<sup>9</sup> A noted collector, and author of *Coins, Coinage and Currency of Australia*, Hyman's most important contribution to Australian Jewish historiography was a lengthy article for the *Jewish Herald*, in which he formally (if tactfully) acknowledged the community's convict beginnings

Very little consideration of the peculiar circumstances attending the foundation of a British settlement on the eastern coast of New Holland ... will suffice to make one acquainted with the fact that among those who arrived in 'the first fleet' there were a few of our co-religionists.<sup>10</sup>

In the same article, Hyman speculated on the possible Jewish connections of Captain Arthur Phillip, Australia's first Governor. Elsewhere, in noting the inroads made by assimilation, he lamented that pioneer Jewish "zeal" had not always been passed on: "Far too numerous are those who have openly abandoned the religion of their fathers — in some cases for one the best features of which are but copied from the original, in other cases for none at all."<sup>11</sup>

Hyman settled permanently in London in 1912, and the unofficial mantle of authority on Australian Jewish history passed to Percy Joseph Marks (1870–1941), solicitor, communal leader and sometime Sydney correspondent to the *Jewish Herald*. An early demonstration of Marks' detailed knowledge of communal *minutiae* was a lengthy review of the *Jewish Encyclopaedia* for the *Hebrew Standard*, in which he systematically catalogued and corrected the multiple inaccuracies he found in his contemporaries' coverage of Australian subjects (see below). His other contributions to the press included an exhaustive statistical survey of New South Wales Jewry, based on the 1901 census. An address delivered by Marks to the Jewish Literary and Debating Society of Sydney in 1913, and subsequently published as a pamphlet, summarised the evolution of the *Australian Israelite*, *Jewish Herald*, *Hebrew Standard* and other Jewish newspapers. Another lecture, on the Bridge Street Synagogue in Sydney, was published simultaneously in the *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society* and as a booklet in 1925. Marks drew on his extensive personal collection of books, documents and ephemera as the basis for a ground-breaking bibliography *Australian Judaica* (1930; 2nd edition 1936). (The collection itself is now held at the Mitchell Library). In response to public concern about refugee immigration in the late 1930s, he provided a short summary of Jewish achievement in this country for the *Australian National Review*. His final contribution



to Australian Jewish historiography was a short analysis of the formal beginnings of Jewish education in Sydney, published in the *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* during his (foundation) presidency.<sup>12</sup>

At different times from the 1890s to the 1930s, other writers explored particular aspects of congregational or communal experience in greater or lesser detail, producing a "mixed bag" of pamphlets and newspaper articles (often to mark significant institutional anniversaries). Among the congregational studies were an unsigned "Historical Sketch" of the East Melbourne Synagogue which ran over two issues of the *Australasian Hebrew* in 1895, and catalogued the congregation's development from where Brodzky had left it two decades earlier. P.A. Phillips briefly recapitulated half a century of organised Judaism in the Australian and New Zealand colonies for the *Jewish Chronicle* in 1901. Rev A.T. Boas celebrated the Adelaide Hebrew Congregation's Diamond Jubilee with a short history published in the *Jewish Herald* in 1908. (Boas' paper remains a useful summary in spite of the "disadvantages" he encountered "in securing data"). An unsigned article, which similarly chronicled the first 75 years of organised Jewish worship in Hobart, appeared in the *Jewish Herald* in 1918.<sup>13</sup>

Two publications looked at the St Kilda Synagogue: co-founder Abraham Benjamin brought out *An Historical True Record* in 1910, hoping thus to ensure that posterity would confirm his importance in St Kilda's evolution, while Rev Jacob Danglow produced a more detailed study for the congregation's 50th anniversary in 1921.<sup>14</sup> (John Butler Cooper drew on Danglow's booklet for three pages about the congregation in his *History of St Kilda*).<sup>15</sup> David Bolot examined the establishment and progress of the Brisbane Synagogue (up until the turn of the century) over seven issues of the *Hebrew Standard* in 1925.<sup>16</sup> Rabbi Francis Lyon Cohen and Ernest L. Davis prepared a 40 page souvenir record of Sydney Jewry (dubbed by Porush "a domestic memoir") for the Great Synagogue's Golden Jubilee in 1928.<sup>17</sup> The following year, Louis S. Benjamin celebrated the foundation of Melbourne Hebrew Congregation's new Toorak Road premises with an article recalling the foundation of the Bourke Street building in 1853. Local historian Nathan Spielvogel published a short record of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation in 1934, material from which subsequently appeared in the *AJHS Journal*, while journalist and teacher Newman Rosenthal recapitulated the broad outlines of congregational development throughout Australia in a paper, translated into Yiddish, for the *Australian Jewish Almanac* (1937).<sup>18</sup>

Other contributions of interest included the memoirs of prominent businessmen and communal leaders, Moritz Michaelis (1899) and George Judah Cohen (c1937), and short biographies by Osher Silbert of Western Australian pioneers Lionel Samson and Elias Solomon (in the *Westralian Judean*). Elsewhere, Isaac Selby included a two-page account of Melbourne Jewry in his book *The Old Pioneers' Memorial History of Melbourne* (1924). Perth's Rabbi David Freedman contributed articles about the Jews in New Zealand, Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney (the last in collaboration with eminent folklorist Joseph Jacobs), as well as a summary of Jewish participation in national cultural and political life, to the *Jewish Encyclopaedia* (1901-6). (Rev Jonas M. Myers similarly traced the history of the Brisbane community). The *Australian Encyclopaedia* (1925) contained a relatively thorough survey of major milestones and personalities in the evolution of Jewish communities in each state.<sup>19</sup> A special *Rosh Hashanah* issue of the *Westralian Judean* in 1933 lauded the successes of Jews "in many spheres of our national life"; among the featured articles were an "Outline of Australian Jewish History" by energetic young co-editor Philip Masel, and brief essays on Australian Jewish contributions to Law, Journalism and Politics.<sup>20</sup>



The miscellany of material described above testifies to an ongoing desire by concerned individuals to document the community's historical experience. However, as Percy Marks observed (writing in 1913), "the complete history of Judaism in Australia has yet to be compiled",<sup>21</sup> and it was not until the 1930s that the first comprehensive national overview was attempted, in the form of a University dissertation by a young Melbourne scholar.

Alfred Newton Super was born at Great Yarmouth, England, on 16 November 1910, one of seven children of Latvian-born Rabbi Isaac Jacob Super (1881–1961) and his wife Lena (nee Bull). In 1914 the family emigrated to Melbourne, where Rabbi Super served as senior *shochet* and supervisor of the United Shechita Board (for 45 years) and as a member of the Victorian Beth Din. Alfred Newton (he was generally known as Newton) was educated at Melbourne High School (along with brothers Arthur and Monty) and at Melbourne University, where he studied History and Law. He graduated B.A. (Hons) in 1933, LL.B. in 1934, and M.A. in 1935.<sup>22</sup>



A. Newton Super

Super earned his B.A. (Hons) with a substantial thesis titled "The History of the Jews in Australia", a chronological survey from 1788 to Federation — even then an ambitious and daunting undertaking.<sup>23</sup> In 18 chapters (over 199 foolscap pages), the thesis charted "the growth of a great community, rolling away the reproach of convictism by the splendour of the achievements of the free and freed inhabitants".<sup>24</sup> Super examined each of the colonial communities but, understandably (given the records available), focused principally on NSW and Victoria; particular attention was also paid to the key issues of State Aid to Religion, Immigration and Gold-mining.<sup>25</sup>

Read today, Super's thesis seems long on detail and short on analysis; it also suffers in places from an excess of sentimentality and "purple prose". The overall tone is one of optimism, with the youthful author declaring (1920s intermarriage and assimilation rates notwithstanding)

There is little substance in the assertion that the disappearance of the Jewish community in Australia is not beyond the realms of possibility. Judaism has taken a firm hold of its adherents and the presence of distinguished spiritual leaders vibrant with Jewish consciousness, has ensured that the eternal fount of Judaism shall pour forth in Australia the crystal waters of a living faith ... The foreign immigrant who came from lands of persecution drank from this pure spring and as the refreshing waters entered his body the stains of the Ghetto were washed away, and a new personality was born free to flourish in a land that knows no distinction of class or creed.<sup>26</sup>

The thesis was most successful in its discussion of the cleavage between the 19th century establishment and foreign "newcomers" in Melbourne, as reflected in relations between the metropolitan synagogues:



... this cleavage ... showed that the worst feature of assimilation had insinuated itself into the minds of some members of the Jewish community in the brutal display of division and unrecognition of common kinship.

Super also displayed a flair for biography, particularly in his assessments of the clergy: Dattner Jacobson, for instance, who "came equipped with learning from the leading academies of Europe and infused a new spirit into the life of the community", or Joseph Abrahams, who "arrived in Australia in the first flush of his early youth, ripe with secular knowledge from the Universities of London and Leipsic and with a mind stored with Jewish knowledge from the great Jewish seminary of Hildesheimer in Berlin" and whose ministry was "illuminated by a brilliant intellect, great scholarship and wonderful oratory."<sup>27</sup>

Super turned his extensive research to practical account, with a series of articles for the Jewish press.<sup>28</sup> First was a vignette for the special Australia issue of the *Westralian Judean* (cited above), a highly romanticised account of Ikey Solomons and his wife during their first years in Van Diemen's Land.<sup>29</sup> A respectful "special interview" honoured Rabbi Dr Joseph Abrahams' 50th year as spiritual head of Melbourne Jewry. "Knowing something of the leaders of the community of over half a century ago", observed the young historian, "I realised how much the increase in the dignity of and respect for the Jewish minister was due to this man".<sup>30</sup>

In examining a century of Jewish life in Victoria for a lavishly illustrated newspaper Centenary supplement in 1934, Super assessed

The Jewish name is imperishably associated with Port Phillip from its first settlement, and the wonderful story of Victoria's progress and expansion in the hundred years of its settlement is illumined by the part played by men of our race in raising it to its present greatness.

His article paid particular tribute to Joseph Solomon, Asher Hyman Hart (as "the unwilling originator of the means which led directly to the discovery of gold in Victoria"), the clergy ("Victorian Jewry has been fortunate in the choice of its ministers"), businessmen Moritz Michaelis, David [*sic*] Tallerman, the Kronheimers, Joseph Aarons ("quite a beau in his generation") and Daniel Barnet Lazarus, Edward Cohen M.P., Sir John Monash, and so on. He concluded effusively (and ponderously)

If history is to be purposive, then assuredly the outlines of this chronicle will reveal to future legislators that the Victorian basing its civilisation on the fundamental basis of a human kinship and creed, has grown to greatness and celebrates its centenary proud in the achievement of all who have lived within its borders.<sup>31</sup>

He next reprised (for the *Australian Jewish Herald*) his interpretation of the fight by the colonial Jewish communities for their share in State Aid to religion. According to Super, the provision of Government Aid had been "... justified, as it ensured that in an atmosphere not yet freed from convict influences, there should be given opportunity for the exercise of moral influences".<sup>32</sup> In a series of five articles under the collective title "The Jew in Victorian Politics", Super highlighted the comparative ease with which Australian Jews had entered civic and political life: "The full political paradise, denied the Jew in the Mother country, lay open to him in the Australian colonies." Noting that "from 1860 until the close of the 19th century, no Victorian Parliament assembled of which at least one Jew was not a member", he looked in turn at the public lives of Nathaniel Levi, Edward Cohen, Charles Dyte and E.L. Zox. Super was clearly captivated by Zox, describing him as "one of the most lovable men who ever sat in the Victorian Parliament, whose large-hearted humanity and charitable disposition won him a permanent place in the minds of the older generation." Similarly, he praised



Cohen's "proud record of unselfish devotion to his country and his faith" at a time "when a disgusting parochialism and scramble for honours was degrading political life." He was much less impressed by Dyte, but conceded that — undistinguished though the man's political career may have been — "his identification with the liberal and advanced principles of the time [showed] how completely the Jew in the Antipodes could and did share in every phase of Australian political life." In a surprisingly incisive, "warts-and-all" account of Levi's campaign for the seat of Maryborough, he assessed that Victoria's first Jewish M.P. had exhibited an "uncommendable frankness" and "the worst political opportunism" in his frantic bid for electoral success.<sup>33</sup>

Newton Super's thesis, and the off-shoot articles described above, were the high point of his historical research and writing, although he is probably best remembered today as co-author (with Rabbi Dr Harry Freedman) of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation's centenary publication, *One Hundred Years* (1941). The 28 page booklet, advertised oddly as a "brochure", was a thoroughly-researched and attractively-printed essay which drew praise from the *AJHS Journal* for managing, "happily and successfully", to merge archival detail with "literary flavour".<sup>34</sup>

Writing history subsequently took a "back seat" to Super's career as a solicitor and the demands of family life. He married a fellow-lawyer, Sylvia Rothstadt (at the St Kilda Synagogue on 15 December 1937) and the couple had two children (Richard and Sandra). They were also partners in a successful legal practice, numbering Sir Isaac Isaacs among their clients. A prominent member of the Toorak Road Synagogue, Super served as congregational President from 1949–51, and as Honorary Solicitor from 1947–78. He was also active in the foundation and development of the Kew *Beith Nachman* Congregation in the early 1950s. He was a member of the Australian Jewish Historical Society from 1940, served on the committee of the Society's Victorian branch from its inception until 1958, and addressed two of its earliest meetings (his paper, "The Golden Fifties", was culled largely from his University thesis).<sup>35</sup>

In the mid 1950s, Newton Super was invited by the East Melbourne Synagogue committee to write a celebration of its first 100 years. He did so readily, but an internal congregational dispute over the booklet's funding meant that the manuscript was never published. This was unfortunate; Super had the advantage of having been associated with East Melbourne (through his father) from childhood, and therefore had personal memories of figures like Rev Jacob Lenzer and the prominent lay leaders of the 1920s–30s. Titled "A Century of Jewish Loyalty" (in celebration of "100 years of loyalty to traditional Judaism, 100 years of mirroring the pattern of Jewish citizenship in Australia, 100 years of faithful service by laymen to Jewish causes and institutions"), the twenty-three (foolscap) page typescript is, arguably, Super's best piece of historical writing, particularly effective in its discussion of the tensions between the community's "Anglo" and Eastern European sectors in the 19th century, and in the author's shrewd diagnosis of the congregation's outreach difficulties. In noting the death of Jacob Lenzer, for instance, Super observes

The strength of his personality, his years of devoted service, the magnificence of his *chazanos* had over-shadowed the changes that had taken place. His passing brought to the Board of Management and members the realisation of the necessity of appointing a successor who would meet the spiritual needs of the younger generation.<sup>36</sup>

Any student of Melbourne Jewry would be well-advised to consult the rarely-cited "A Century of Jewish Loyalty", a copy of which is held by the AJHS archive in Sydney.

Super lost his sight after suffering a stroke and retired to the Sydney suburb of Bellevue Hill in 1978. He dictated a short biography of Rabbi Abrahams (the subject of one of his



earliest articles) for the *Great Synagogue Journal* only a couple of months before his death on 20 December 1980. He was buried at the Rookwood Jewish Cemetery.

Remembered as a scholarly, cultured man, who held strong views about “appropriate” or “correct” behaviour in cultural and religious matters (and who tended, on occasion, to “put the brakes on” congregational actions/decisions which he found questionable), Newton Super was very much a part of Melbourne’s Anglo-Jewish establishment and his “Jewishness” was primarily synagogue-centred. Super “inherited a tradition to which he remained loyal throughout his life”, Newman Rosenthal once assessed, and his historical writing reflects this allegiance.<sup>37</sup> By contrast, his contemporary Hirsch Munz was a “secular humanist” whose Jewish identity embraced European, “Yiddishist” and Zionist cultural mores and affiliations. Hilary Rubinstein has observed that Munz strove to interpret the local Jewish experience “at a time when Australian Jewish history was regarded as irrelevant and parochial, the preserve of Anglo-Jewish notables bent at once on ancestor-worship and on preventing family skeletons in the shape of convicts from spilling out of closets.”<sup>38</sup>

Surprisingly little has been written about Munz, a remarkable man, whose activities encompassed work as a teacher, station-hand, scientist, businessman, journalist, academic, literary critic and war-time Intelligence operative. Fluent in 10 languages, and the reported possessor of a photographic memory, he was the first lecturer in Hebrew at the University of Adelaide (1934–6), taught Contemporary European Literature for University extension classes in Adelaide, Sydney and Melbourne, was prominent in Yiddish cultural activities, and served as an Intelligence Officer in the Royal Australian Navy during and after World War Two. (It was typical of the man’s talent and energy that he found time to prepare a highly detailed 120 page report on the geography of the Siberian coast whilst on active service).<sup>39</sup>



*Hirsch Munz*

Born at Krynki in Poland, on 21 April 1905, Munz was the eldest son (and one of six children) of Moses and Mary Munz (nee Iweniski), merchants. Educated at the Hebrew High School in Lvov (Lemberg), he trained as a teacher and served as Deputy Principal of a Jewish Gymnasium before deciding to emigrate to Australia.

Munz arrived in Melbourne in 1928 and worked initially for a relative, Alfred Lipshut, in a Flinders Lane clothing firm. The onset of the Depression forced him to look about for something with a more “assured” future, and he settled on the Wool trade. From 1930, he immersed himself in all aspects of the sheep and wool industry, including: two years working as a “jackaroo” on the Merungle Station in the Riverina; an “apprenticeship” as a wool-sorter for the Australian Mercantile, Land and Finance Co.; employment as a research officer for the CSIRO in Adelaide, with Sir Ian Clunies-Ross’ team at the McMaster Animal Health Laboratory in Sydney, and for the University of Melbourne; and founding and running a wool-export business, with headquarters in Bourke Street,



Melbourne (from 1947–65). As one of the pioneers of research into the microscopic structure of wool fibres, he devised the 'Munz Scale' which enabled simple comparison of international systems of fibre description. Munz's publications in the field included the pamphlets *Observations on Some Wool Samples from North-Eastern Asia* and *The Grazing of Sheep on Improved Pastures*, and a book, *The Australian Wool Industry* (1950; 2nd edition 1964), which was regarded as the authoritative work on the subject for many years. In 1951 he visited Israel and lectured on Wool production at the Hebrew University.<sup>40</sup>

According to his son, Munz's first love was literature, in particular European literature. He served as Foreign editor on the journal *Manuscripts* in the mid 1930s, and contributed scholarly studies of such esoteric topics as "Ossianic Poetry and the Polish Romanticism", the writing of Jacob Wasserman, and "Gleichschaltung" Literature.<sup>41</sup> (The articles, written less than a decade after his arrival, testify to the ease and speed with which he mastered the English language). Munz became active in the *Kadimah* and the *Hashomer* movement soon after coming to Australia, and subsequently was at the centre of Jewish cultural *milieux* in Sydney and Melbourne. He served on the foundation committee of the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism, joined Pinchas Goldhar and Aaron Patkin in fostering the *Australian Jewish News*, enthusiastically supported Dr Steinberg's campaign for a Jewish colony in the Kimberleys, co-edited the *Second Australian Jewish Almanac* in 1942, presided over the first Congress of Jewish Culture in Australia (1948–9), and edited the *Yiddische Nayess* in Melbourne for a period during the 1950s.<sup>42</sup> He married Esther Rosenblatt, a physiotherapist, in Melbourne in 1943, and the couple had one son, Martin (born in 1946).<sup>43</sup>

Munz's interest in recording the Australian Jewish experience was first stirred when an Adelaide acquaintance pointed out Montefiore Hill to him in the early 1930s. With the endorsement of the Adelaide Hebrew Congregation's President and committee, he compiled *The Jews in South Australia*, "in the hope that it will prove worthy as a record of splendid citizenship on the occasion of the Centenary of this State, with which the Jews have been connected since its inception."<sup>44</sup> Although less than one hundred pages, *The Jews in South Australia* was the longest publication in the *genre* to that date, and broke new ground as the first substantial printed record of an Australian Jewish community. Its ten chapters detailed the role of the Montefiore family in the founding of South Australia, the origins of communal life there, and pioneer Jewish contributions to commerce, pastoralism and cultural and civic affairs. A concluding chapter sketched the current state of the community (in particular, of the Adelaide Synagogue).<sup>45</sup>

Munz reprised his opening chapter as an article on the Montefiores for the *Australian Quarterly* in 1937, and later reworked the material for two articles in Yiddish. "Two Jewish Kehillot: the History of the Jews in South Australia and Victoria", in the *Second Australian Jewish Almanac* (1942), focused on the Montefiores and the beginnings of communal life in Adelaide; eighteen pages on Victoria closely paraphrased Freedman and Super's *One Hundred Years* and dealt only with the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation's first four decades. "Jewish Pioneers in Organisational Life in South Australia" appeared in the *Third Australian Jewish Almanac*.<sup>46</sup> Another article in Yiddish, a capsule history of the exploration and initial settlement of Australia for the first *Almanac*, testified to Munz's intense affection for the Australian landscape and the appreciation of its "bush ethos" which he had acquired during his early years "on the land".<sup>47</sup> (According to his son, he remained enormously attracted by, and sympathetic to, the romantic "larrikin" element in Australian culture throughout his life, and was himself a complex mixture of cosmopolitan European gentleman and "irreverent" migratory worker).<sup>48</sup>



Elsewhere Munz tackled the broad parameters of the Australian Jewish story in an informative article (one of a series of studies of international communities) for the New York-based *Contemporary Jewish Record*. The article encapsulated Jewish beginnings and the growth of congregational/institutional life in each colony (although the author made no mention of convict origins), catalogued Jewish achievement, and offered a "birds-eye" summation of the current state-of-play in Australia. "Rarely can a small community look with more pride to its social, political and cultural record in the life of a nation than Australian Jews", was Munz's verdict. Comparing the local situation with that facing European Jewry in the 1930s, he wrote: "The average Australian, who is a fair-minded, understanding person, was ... shocked and bewildered by the violent anti-Jewish excesses in fascist countries. His attitude was perhaps best reflected in the government's liberal policy of admitting 15,000 refugees during the three years, 1939–41."<sup>49</sup>

Munz is credited with being a co-founder (with Sydney Glass, Percy Marks and Rabbi L.A. Falk) of the Australian Jewish Historical Society. He moved the proposition affirming the necessity of forming such a body at the inaugural meeting in August 1938, and subsequently delivered the Society's first address (on "The Montefiores as Australian Pioneers") and helped draw up its constitution. In 1941 he contributed a short biography of the eminent Professor Samuel Alexander to the Society's Journal. Following his removal to Melbourne in the 1940s, he became a foundation member of the Victorian branch of the AJHS, serving as a foundation committee-member (1954–62), and addressing the members on "Some Aspects of Jewish History and Historiography" and "Jacob Saphir and His Travels in Australia."<sup>50</sup> (He sponsored Pinchas Goldhar's Yiddish translation of Rabbi Saphir's journal, and in 1950, edited a booklet of extracts for YIVO).<sup>51</sup> Although plagued by illness in his later years (he retired from business after suffering a stroke in 1965), he attended the Society's meetings up until his death on 22 April 1979. He was buried at the Chevra Kadisha Cemetery, Springvale.<sup>52</sup>

1996 marks the 60th anniversary of the publication of Hirsch Munz's *The Jews in South Australia*. In the years since it appeared, and since Alfred Newton Super compiled his pioneering thesis on the national community, a steady stream of academic dissertations, popular and/or scholarly articles, and monographs large and small (distinguished or otherwise), have recorded and analysed (and, in many ways, enriched) Australian Jewry's past — beginning with such milestones as Rabbi Goldman's study of the colonial Victorian community,<sup>53</sup> Levi and Bergman's *Australian Genesis*, and the twelve volumes to date of the AJHS *Journal*. Neither Super nor Munz lived to see the full flowering of scholarship within the genre in the 1980s–90s, but it seems fair to conclude that the work of the Rubinstein, Rutland, Bartrop, Mossenson, Aron and Arndt, *et al*, represents a logical progression on their earlier contributions.<sup>54</sup> Clearly, the achievements of recent years are rooted in the work of that handful of farsighted individuals — most notably Super and Munz — who recognised the vital importance of preserving and recording Australian Jewry's historical heritage.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

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#### NOTES

1. Suzanne D. Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora: Two Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia*. Sydney, 1988, p.212–3; see also, 'Rules of the Society', *Australian Jewish*



O. Silbert, "Lionel Samson: the Pioneer Merchant of Western Australia", *Westralian Judean*, 1 September 1932; O. Silbert, "Elias Solomon: a Fremantle Pioneer" *Westralian Judean*, 1 September 1933;

Isaac Selby, *The Old Pioneers' Memorial History of Melbourne*, Melbourne, 1924, p. 174–5;

David I. Freedman, articles on "New Zealand", "Adelaide", "Melbourne", "Sydney" (with Joseph Jacobs) and "Australia" in *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, New York, 1901–6;

Jonas M. Myers, "Brisbane" in *Jewish Encyclopaedia*; "Jews" in *Australian Encyclopaedia*, Sydney, 1925.

20 *Westralian Judean*, Special Rosh Hashanah Edition, 1 September 1933.

21 Marks may well have hoped to do so himself. ("Time alone will tell whether I will be able to put the undigested mass of materials in my possession into form.") Marks, "The Jewish Press, Past and Present", *AJHSJ*, 1(9), 1943, p. 302.

22 Joseph Aron & Judy Arndt, *The Enduring Remnant: the First 150 Years of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation 1841–1991*, Melbourne, 1992, p. 395–6; *Australian Jewish News*, 24 December 1980; Information from Sandra Marx (Newton Super's daughter), 1 July, 1996.

23 Alfred Newton Super, "The History of the Jews in Australia", unpublished Honours thesis, Department of History, University of Melbourne, 1934.

Some confusion exists over whether Super wrote the thesis for his Honours degree or his M.A. (partly because of its length, and because the University's records are incomplete). Helen Bersten, the AJHS archivist in Sydney, believes it was for the former.

24 *ibid.*, p. 199.

25 The "Super Papers", held by the AJHS in Sydney, indicate that he enlisted the aid of veteran Nathan Spielvogel in amassing information about Jews and the gold rush. See Letter from Nathan Spielvogel to A. Newton Super, 6 September 1932. Super Papers, AJHS archive, Sydney, Box AB 89.

26 Super, "The History of the Jews in Australia", p. 199.

27 *ibid.*, p. 177, 180, 198–9.

28 The earliest published article among Newton Super's papers at the AJHS is a sketch about *Rosh Hashanah* which he contributed to the *Australian Jewish Herald* in 1932. He subsequently provided the paper with similar pieces on *Sukkot* and *Yom Kippur* traditions.

Alfred Newton Super, "Rosh Hashanah Recollections", *Australian Jewish Herald*, 29 September 1932;

Alfred Newton Super, "Some Yom Kippur Musings", *ibid.*, 3 October 1935; Alfred Newton Super, "Succous Musings and Memories", *ibid.*, 10 October 1935.

29 Alfred Newton Super, "Romance and Tragedy in a Penal Colony", *Westralian Judean*, 1 September 1933.

30 Alfred Newton Super, "After Fifty Years: Rabbi Dr J. Abrahams Looks Back and Forwards", *Jewish Weekly News*, 3 November 1933.

31 Alfred Newton Super, "1834–1934: the Story of Victorian Jewry", *Jewish Weekly News*, 26 October 1934.



32 Alfred Newton Super, "Studies in Early Australian Jewish History: State Aid to the Jewish Religion", *Australian Jewish Herald*, 23 May 1935. The State Aid issue is examined in detail by Israel Getzler in *Neither Toleration Nor Favour: the Australian Chapter of Jewish Emancipation*, Melbourne, 1970.

33 Alfred Newton Super, "The Jew in Victorian Politics, No. 1" *Australian Jewish Herald*, 30 May 1935; Alfred Newton Super, "The Jew in Victorian Politics, No. 2: The Election of the First Jewish M.P.", *ibid.*, 27 June 1935; Alfred Newton Super, "The Jew in Victorian Politics, No. 3: The Hon Edward Cohen, the First Jewish Cabinet Minister", *ibid.*, 18 July 1935; Alfred Newton Super, "The Jew in Victorian Politics, No. 4: Charles Dyte, M.L.A.", *ibid.*, 15 August 1935; Alfred Newton Super, "The Jew in Victorian Politics, No. 5: Ephraim Lamen Zox, M.L.A., 1839-1899", *ibid.*, 19 September 1935.

34 H. Freedman & A. Newton Super, *One Hundred Years: the Story of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation 1841-1941*, Melbourne, 1941; "Review of *One Hundred Years*", *AJHSJ*, 1(10), 1943, p. 374-6.

35 Aron & Arndt, p. 395-6; Information from Isidor Solomon, 17 January 1996; Information from Sandra Marx.

36 A. Newton Super, "A Century of Jewish Loyalty", unpublished typescript [1957], p. 1, 20. Held by AJHS archive, Sydney. East Melbourne waited another 20 years before publishing *History of the East Melbourne Hebrew Congregation 'Mickva Yisrael' 1857-1977*, by Morris C. Davis, Melbourne, 1977.

37 A. Newton Super, "Rabbi Dr Joseph Abrahams", *Great Synagogue Journal*, September 1980; Information from Isidor Solomon and Sandra Marx; *Australian Jewish News*, 24 December 1980 and 2 January 1981.

38 Hilary L. Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: a Thematic History from 1788 to the Present*, Vol 1., Melbourne 1991, p. 435.

39 *Australian Jewish News*, 1 June 1962 and 27 April 1979; Allan Wynn, *The Fortunes of Samuel Wynn: Winemaker, Humanist, Zionist*, Melbourne, 1968, p. 132-3; obituary, *AJHSJ*, 8(7), 1979, p. 475-7; Information from Martin Munz, 17 January and 20 April 1996.

Munz's work for Counter-Intelligence took him to the Singapore-Batavia area, where his knowledge of German and Japanese enabled him to interrogate suspected war criminals. He compiled the case against one man, Petersen, who had been implicated in the destruction of Dutch Jewry, and but for the birth of his son in 1946, he (Munz) would probably have gone to Nuremburg. Munz's wartime papers, including a notebook listing German and Japanese Intelligence agents, were loaned to the Jewish Museum of Australia for its 1996 exhibition "Jews in the Armed Forces".

40 *Australian Jewish News*, 1 June 1962; *Who's Who in World Jewry* 1955; Information from Martin Munz.

41 Munz's contributions to *Manuscripts* were: "German and Jew: Jacob Wasserman" 10, August 1934, p. 7-12; "Post-Revolutionary Literature in Russia", 11, November 1934, p. 8-16; "Ossianic Poetry and the Polish Romanticism", 11, November 1934, p. 51-3; "'Gleichschaltung' Literature" (under pseudonym "Aschenbach"), 12, February 1935, p. 36-41; "Soviet Literature", 12, February 1935, p. 41-4; "Literary Eclecticism in French Literature", 13, May 1935, p. 90-9.

Munz also contributed to many other publications, notably the *Bulletin*, the *Melbourne Age*, the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the Dutch journal *Die Samlung*.



42 Munz was well-acquainted with all the leading Australian Jewish writers of his day, and a close friend of Abraham Cykiert and Herz Bergner, among others. A political "moderate" himself, he had little sympathy with Judah Waten's views on the Soviet Union; nonetheless, he was adamant that a man's politics had nothing to do with his creative skill, and he deeply resented attempts by Melbourne's Jewish "Right" to besmirch Waten's literary reputation. When Waten's appearance at the launch of Bergner's *Light and Shadow* provoked audible rumblings among sections of the audience, an uncharacteristically furious Munz stunned the dissenters with some impromptu remarks (generously seasoned with Australian, Yiddish and Polish expletives) on the appropriate protocol to be observed at a book launch. (Information from Martin Munz).

43 *Who's Who in World Jewry* 1955; *Australian Jewish News*, 1 June, 1962; Information from Martin Munz.

44 Hirsch Munz, *The Jews in South Australia*, Adelaide, 1936, p. 81.

45 Munz approached Newton Super for assistance with material on the South Australian community in the early stages of preparing his book. To what extent (if at all) Super allowed Munz access to his own research is uncertain. Although Munz expressed the hope that "there may be some opportunities in the future for close co-operation", no evidence exists of any subsequent collaborative interaction between the two historians. (It is worth noting that Munz drew liberally on Freedman & Super's *One Hundred Years* when writing about colonial Melbourne Jewry for the *Second Australian Jewish Almanac*).

Letter from Munz to A. Newton Super, 30 October 1935. Super Papers, AJHS, Sydney.

46 Hirsch Munz, "The Montefiores: Jews and the Centenary of South Australia", *Australian Quarterly*, March 1937, p. 83-8; Hirsch Munz, "Two Jewish Kehillot: the History of the Jews in South Australia and Victoria", in *Australian Jewish Almanac*, No. 2, ed. H. Munz, H. Bergner, P. Goldhar & B. Warszawski; Melbourne 1942; Hirsch Munz, "Jewish Pioneers in Organisational Life in South Australia", in *Australian Jewish Almanac*, No. 3, ed. L. Frydman, Melbourne 1967. (I am grateful to Serge Liberman for details of Munz's Yiddish publications).

47 Hirsch Munz, "Australia—An Historical Sketch and Her Present Status", in *Australian Jewish Almanac*, No 1, p. 17-36; Hirsch Munz, *The Australian Wool Industry*. 2nd edition, Melbourne, 1964, p. 137.

48 Information from Martin Munz.

49 Hirsch Munz, "Jews in Australia", *Contemporary Jewish Record*, 2(6), 1939, p. 31-2.

50 *AJHSJ* 1(1), 1939, p. 3-6; Hirsch Munz, "Professor Samuel Alexander, O.M., F.B.A.", *AJHSJ* 1(6), 1941, p. 171-8; Isidor Solomon, "The Australian Jewish Historical Society (Victorian Branch): a Retrospect", *AJHSJ* 10(4), 1988, p. 235-7.

51 *Jacob Saphir: Extracts from his Book "Eben Saphir" Describing his Visits to Australia and New Zealand in 1861-1862*, compiled by Hirsch Munz, Melbourne, 1950.

52 Obituary. *AJHSJ* 8(7), 1979, p. 475-7; *Australian Jewish News*, 27 April 1979; Information from Martin Munz.

53 L.M. Goldman, *Jews in Victoria in the 19th Century*, Melbourne, 1954.

54 At the time of writing, work is progressing on a new history of South Australian Jewry.



## NIKOLAUS PEVSNER AND MELBOURNE: A 1930S RESETTLEMENT SCHEME AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE FOR ACADEMICS FLEEING NAZI GERMANY

*George Tibbits*

*(This paper was presented to a meeting of the AJHS Victoria Inc. on 19 October 1995)*

For the last few years I have been studying the development of the University of Melbourne, the history of its buildings, how they were used, how they have changed, and what all this can tell one about how the university worked in the past.

While looking through the indexes of records at the University, my eye caught the name "Pevsner" among the entries for the 1930s. Perhaps to you the name "Pevsner" calls to mind the famous Zionist campaigner Bella Pevsner who visited Australia in 1923. But for an architectural historian, indeed for anyone interested in architecture, one immediately thinks of Nikolaus Pevsner, revered today as one of the foremost writers on western architecture in the English speaking world. This Pevsner, Nikolaus Pevsner, was born in Leipzig in 1902 and died in London in 1983, where he had made his home since fleeing Germany in 1935. My curiosity was so great that I asked if I might see the files. To my surprise they contained the negotiations to bring Pevsner to Melbourne from England where he was in a precarious position after leaving Germany.

I will begin with a brief outline of Pevsner's life, then deal with the post-1933 scheme that sought to find university positions in the British Empire for German academic refugees such as Pevsner and many others, then I will discuss the details of negotiations to bring Pevsner to Melbourne, and, to end, I will mention other academic refugees whose names I came across in the files.

Nikolaus Pevsner's paternal grandparents were Russian Jews. They moved to Poland and then to Germany where Pevsner's father developed a successful business in Leipzig. It was there that Pevsner was born in 1902. His mother, a cultivated woman who moved in artistic and intellectual circles in Leipzig, encouraged Pevsner into art history.

In 1924 he was awarded a doctorate from Leipzig University for his study of German Baroque architecture. Between 1924-28 he was assistant keeper of the renowned Dresden Gallery. In 1929 he took a position as lecturer in the English department at Göttingen University, where he gave lectures on English architecture. In the early 1930s he made several trips to England to lecture and to carry out research for his book *Academies of Art, past and present*, which was published in 1939 (reprinted 1973).

Before he graduated and began his career in art history, Pevsner married his Leipzig childhood sweetheart Lola, and they remained together, with three children, until her death in 1963. Her mother was Jewish, though she was brought up a Lutheran. Pevsner, at the age of nineteen, and probably influenced by the Protestant persuasion of his sweetheart and future wife, also entered the Lutheran Church.

He was again in England during the winter of 1933-34. With the disastrous turn of events in Germany he determined to move to England. A decade of uncertainty and hardship unfolded. But he was quick to grasp opportunities. The American economist P. Sargent Florence, at Birmingham University, offered him a research position to study British industrial design. Two books came out of this work, his celebrated and still widely read *Pioneers of the Modern Movement from William Morris to Walter Gropius*,



published in 1936, and the less well known book, but in its time an influential work, *An Enquiry into Industrial Art in England*, published in 1937. Pevsner became the leading spokesman on the modern architectural movement and his interpretation is still at the centre of debates on the rise of modernism in architecture.

In 1942, around the time when Pevsner had become editor of the journal *Architectural Review*, he met Allan Lane of Penguin Books and embarked on an extraordinary series of projects for Lane. His first venture for Lane was the now celebrated *An Outline of European Architecture* which appeared as a Penguin Book in 1943. It has been in print ever since and today would be in many bookshops in Melbourne. For many people I know it has been their introduction to architecture.

He set about organising, as general editor for Lane, the monumental *Pelican History of Art* in 46 volumes, the first volumes of which began to appear in the early 1950s. Numerous authors were commissioned to contribute volumes and many of these substantial books are still renowned contributions to their field. The continental authorities whom Pevsner enlisted had all, like himself, been displaced from Nazi Germany and were establishing new lives in Britain or America.

His most extraordinary venture in association with Penguin Books was the publication, between 1951 and 1974, of the 46 volumes of his *Buildings of England* series. Each volume was the result of his and his wife's untiring efforts, driving together around a chosen English county, visiting all the buildings, and writing their responses.

I should perhaps not go on further with too many details of his publications. They continued until his death. Many are still landmarks in architectural appreciation, such as *The Englishness of English Art*, developed from his Reith Lectures for the BBC and published in 1955, *The Anti-Rationalists*, which first appeared in 1973, and *A History of Building Types*, published in 1976. He held high academic positions at Cambridge and Oxford Universities, received many Honorary Doctorates, was awarded the Gold Medal of the Royal Institute of British Architects, and in 1969 was knighted. He was also loved and respected even by those who later argued against his interpretations of art and architectural history.

But, going back to the mid-1930s, things might have turned out differently. It might have been Australians who eventually came to celebrate Nikolaus Pevsner, and it might have been Australian art and architectural history that might have taken a different course. To explain this speculation, and return to Pevsner's life in the 1930s when he left Germany, I will now outline the aid program that was rapidly devised to help people like Nikolaus Pevsner, those in the first wave of academic refugees from Nazi Germany.

In May 1933 the Academic Assistance Council was formed in London with rooms in the Royal Society in Burlington House. It was formed "to assist those university teachers and investigators who on grounds of religion, political opinion or race were unable to carry out their work in their own country." Behind its aims lay an earlier scholastic catastrophe, the failure of the West to help support and relocate scholars displaced by the Russian revolution.

At first the Academic Assistance Council aimed to be an information centre through which teachers could be put in touch with institutions that might be able to help with positions. It also set out to raise funds "for the maintenance of displaced scholars." It quickly became an information centre that was officially recognised and to which other organisations turned, such as London representatives of the American Emergency Committee in aid of Displaced German Scholars and the Zurich-based *Notgemeinschaft für Deutscher Wissenschaftler im Ausland*. The Council was also in touch with two



important American organisations, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation.

Pevsner was assisted by the Academic Assistance Council and is listed in the Council's first annual report as: "(Art Historian) 'He is to investigate the organisation of Art and Design departments in British industrial firms'."

His introduction to the Council was accompanied by references which were subsequently sent to the University of Melbourne. The earliest, dated 31 May 1933, is from Dr Wilhelm Pinder in the Art Department at Munich University (Pinder had held the Chair of the History of Art at Leipzig University where Pevsner studied and gained his doctorate). The next, dated 9 July 1933, came from Taurus Borenus, Professor of the History of Art at the University of London. Another came from Professor P. E. Schramm at Göttingen and is dated 12 October 1933.

During this difficult time Pevsner applied for the Chair of Art at Edinburgh University for which he was runner up, notice of which was sent on 4 April 1934 to the Academic Assistance Council by that strong supporter of Pevsner, Professor P. Sargent Florence, Professor of Commerce at Birmingham University. Indeed the investigation of art and design departments came through Florence and was conducted from Birmingham University where Pevsner took up residence, living at 35 Duchess Road, Edgbaston in Birmingham.

It was while Pevsner was at Birmingham, working on what must have been a fixed term appointment, and with no clear future prospects, that efforts began to have him placed in a slightly more secure position at the University of Melbourne.

The Professor of Chemistry at Melbourne, Professor E.J. Hartung, was the contact for the Academic Assistance Council, which outlined the scheme to him in a letter, late in December 1934. Through Hartung the vice-chancellor, Raymond Priestley, was urged to apply to the Carnegie Foundation for support to bring some of the Council's refugee scholars to Melbourne. There must already have been some kind of network of discussion about scientist refugees because the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute, by March 1935, was keen to bring here a pharmacologist, Dr Wilhelm Feldberg and his wife and two children, and intended to apply for a three year Carnegie Fellowship. The Institute had also been promised money by the Jewish Distress Relief Committee.

The university appointed a professorial committee to deal with the issue and by March 1935 proposals had been put forward to bring out a mathematician (Dr Reinhold Baer), a chemist (Dr Erich Heymann), and an economist (Professor Plaut). In that same month the president of the Carnegie Corporation, Dr F.P. Keppel, visited the university and had a lengthy explanatory discussion about the fellowships scheme with the vice-chancellor and other professors. (The university was applying to the Carnegie Corporation for funds to help build a new library, which seems the principal reason for Keppel's visit. While he was here the university awarded him a Doctor of Laws.)

At the end of the month, on 27 March 1935, the Academic Assistance Council wrote from London to the Professor of Commerce at Melbourne, Douglas Copland, about Pevsner. From the letter it is clear that Copland had already been contacted by someone else pressing Pevsner's case. The Council suggested that the university apply to the Carnegie Corporation for support to bring Pevsner to Melbourne. The initiative for the Council letter came from Pevsner: "Dr Pevsner has asked us to send you the information which we have in this office about his personal position and his qualifications ..."; which is how copies of his references come to be in the university files.



The letter also spoke of his situation, which explains why he was keen for the support of the university: "Dr Pevsner has been working in this country with Professor Sargent Florence, and this Council has been able to make him a small grant to enable him to undertake these studies. Unfortunately the funds of the Council do not permit of a prolongation of this grant."

The responses within the university after the letter arrived suggest who it was in Melbourne who drew Pevsner to Copland's attention, who even may have helped Pevsner activate the Council in London, and who was personally acquainted with Pevsner's ability and achievements. It was the Professor of Philosophy at Melbourne, Alexander Boyce Gibson. Indeed, it seems it might have been a special mission for Gibson. Priestley recorded in his diary on 28 May 1935 that "Boyce Gibson [had called] about the German Professor we are proposing to import." By that time Pevsner had written to Boyce Gibson.

Gibson had been at Birmingham University from 1927 until 1934 and must have met Pevsner and came to know him well enough to speak of him with unwavering confidence:

I would, however, stress particularly from my private knowledge his personal fitness for the post [a Carnegie fellowship at Melbourne]. He is an almost perfect speaker of English, and has a great charm of manner and a width of general culture which can arouse the interest and affection of the most various types of people.

In the same memorandum of recommendation to the vice-chancellor, Gibson mentioned the near success of Pevsner's quest for the Edinburgh Chair of Art, and expressed his opinion that "Dr Pevsner is an outstanding authority on art and its history ..."

Gibson and Copland must have been acquainted with the program Professor Florence devised for Pevsner at Birmingham. Their proposal to the university was that Pevsner develop a course in Aesthetics for the Philosophy Department and that the Faculty of Commerce use his services to develop a study of Design in Industry. Gibson also pointed out that Pevsner's practical experience of art galleries and contacts with industry meant there would be a greater chance of "his absorption into the community outside the University than the bulk of academic refugees." This latter point was of some importance in the long term as the Carnegie grants were only for two or three years, after which the recipient had to be able to fend for himself. Gibson put it to the vice-chancellor that the university might approach "certain enlightened commercial people on a large scale who might be very willing to have on their staffs someone who made a specialty of beautifying posters and making them more effective."

The university acted quickly on Gibson's recommendation and on 10 June 1935 applied for a Carnegie grant to enable Pevsner to work for two years at Melbourne. So concerned was the vice-chancellor that the application be sent without delay that he sought approval from two other professors who were negotiating for scholars to come to their departments: Professor Hartung in Chemistry was seeking to bring Dr Erich Heymann and Professor J.N. Greenwood in Metallurgy was negotiating through a Dr Desch.

At the very time the university was so quickly moving on the matter, Pevsner wrote to Gibson from Birmingham. His long letter, of which a typed copy survives in the university files, was dated 21 May 1935. He was almost desperate for a successful outcome:

Sargent Florence received a letter from Professor Copland from which I see with great joy and hope that, owing to your kind interest, there may be a possibility of getting one of the Carnegie



Fellowships at Melbourne. I need not say how greatly I should appreciate such a chance which in fact would solve — at least for the time being — a situation (above all a financial situation) that becomes less and less bearable.

He wanted to know what might be expected of him, he was concerned to have the cost of preparing slides covered by the grant, and he felt his increasingly desperate position in Britain would prevent him bringing his wife and children from Germany, whereas the Carnegie Fellowship would make this possible. (When he came over to England he had brought his eldest daughter with him and left his wife and two other children in Germany, and they must have been still there in May 1935.)

His letter revealed other Australian contacts and supporters. He knew Keith Hancock, from Adelaide, who arrived in Birmingham as Professor of History in January 1934. This friendship must have been known to Gibson because of the familiar way Pevsner referred to it. Hancock in turn introduced Pevsner to the vice-chancellor of Adelaide University, Sir William Mitchell, and to Professor J. McK. Stewart, who had the Chair of History at Adelaide. These contacts prompted Pevsner to suggest co-operation between Melbourne and Adelaide in getting him to Australia and finding him work.

Vice-Chancellor Raymond Priestley saw Pevsner's letter and wrote to him on 10 June 1935, the same day he sent the application to the Carnegie Corporation. He assured him that the slides would be paid for, that travelling expenses for Pevsner and his family would probably be "gladly" accepted by the Corporation, and that everyone looked forward to his arrival.

If your migration to Melbourne becomes possible I hope your stay here will be in every way profitable and enjoyable to you, and I can assure you that your colleagues will do everything possible to welcome you and to make you feel at home. We are all sure that your connection with the University of Melbourne will be a great asset to us and that there is very valuable work that you can do here both in the University and outside. I shall look forward to making your personal acquaintance in due course.

On 24 October 1935, the Carnegie Corporation in New York agreed to fund a lectureship in art history at Melbourne and made available \$US4,800 for the two year appointment. Everything was thus prepared for Pevsner to take up the appointment. In anticipation of the Fellowship, the Standing Committee on Staff and Establishment in the university had agreed, on 1 August 1935, to Pevsner's lecturing and research duties to start in 1936.

Professor Gibson proposes to institute a course in Aesthetics by Dr Pevsner as part of the curriculum in the Philosophy School, the total number of lectures involved being 27. In view of the possibility of allotting further work in connection with the School of Commerce, the Extension Department [which organised university lectures for the wider community] and possibly the School of Architecture, it was resolved to appoint a sub-committee... to consider the whole question of Dr Pevsner's work next year.

And now the anti-climax. For reasons I cannot establish, Pevsner decided not to come. A year later at the university Council meeting on 24 August 1936 it was recorded that although he had been invited, he "had been unable to come to Melbourne." Perhaps the art and industry project in Birmingham was extended by more money being found from somewhere. His connection with the English magazine, the *Architectural Review*, also developed around this time and possibly offered slender hope for better things in England. His first articles (April—November 1936) were created from his art and industry research at Birmingham. Linked to that work was a commission from [Sir] Gordon Russell to advise on furniture design which carried a £500 a year fee, and Pevsner worked at that until war broke out and Russell closed the enterprise down.



Pressure from friends must also have been important. Of course, he may not have been granted a visa, a matter yet to be investigated.

But that is not the end of Pevsner and Australia. Five years later he was to have been sent here as an "enemy alien".

After war was declared the British government moved towards identifying "enemy aliens" who should be interned or their movements restricted. After the German invasion of the Low Countries on 10 May 1940, restrictions were increased, and after the fall of France in June, Britain ordered all adult males of enemy nationality between the ages of sixteen and sixty to be interned in detention camps.

As this process unfolded Pevsner was sent to an internment camp at Huyton in Lancashire. From there he was to be transported to Australia, presumably on the *Dunera*. The spare details of this were first revealed shortly after Pevsner's death by Sir James Richards, editor of the *Architectural Review* at the time of Pevsner's internment, and then recounted by Alec Clifton-Taylor in his Address given at the Memorial Service for Pevsner on 6 December 1983.

But this second "arrangement" to come to Australia also floundered! It was overturned by the intervention of influential supporters in Britain who managed to have the detention and transportation order withdrawn.

Pevsner eventually did come to Melbourne, in July 1958. He gave a lecture in the Public Lecture Theatre at the university. He was introduced by Professor Joseph Burke who had arrived in 1946 from London to take up the foundation chair in Fine Arts. He knew Pevsner, indeed he organised the visit, but I wonder if he knew about the 1935 negotiations of 22 years earlier? There is no hint of it.

It is here that one begins to speculate. Had Pevsner come to Melbourne with the assistance of a Carnegie Fellowship and stayed, he would have been here for ten years when the Fine Arts chair was created. He would surely have been *the* contender for the appointment. Perhaps a chair would have come sooner had he been here. His time here would have coincided with the development of architectural history in Australia. Morton Herman in Sydney and Robin Boyd and Max Freeland in Melbourne would have embarked on their studies in quite a different intellectual and interpretive context had Pevsner been here.

In the January 1965 issue of the *Architectural Review*, Pevsner reviewed two books on Melbourne architecture: Freeland's *Melbourne Churches* and the book Maie Casey edited, *Early Melbourne Architecture*. From the appreciative way he wrote about these two books, he clearly had a soft spot for Melbourne, and of Robin Boyd he said: "there are not many in England today who write as perceptively on buildings of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as Mr. Robin Boyd of Melbourne." Perhaps in being so justly generous towards Boyd, Pevsner was returning some of the kindness shown by Boyce Gibson towards him from Melbourne in 1935. But there was not the slightest hint of this during his 1958 visit.

And what of the stimulus his presence might have had on the modernist tendencies of industry, commerce and housing in Melbourne from the 1930s? It was for this reason that Copland would have had him in the Commerce Faculty, following the example of Sargant Florence in Birmingham. But the commercial possibilities of his presence, that of improving products through design, is only one aspect of his presence. In time he would have been joined by modernist architects and artists who had also been displaced as the destructive tide of Nazism washed over Europe. He would no doubt have written



in his perceptive and imaginative way on what we now see as the Europeanisation of architecture in Melbourne, the architecture recently presented in the 1993 exhibition *Retrospective of works by Melbourne Jewish Architects from 1945* shown in the National Gallery of Victoria.

But what of those in Melbourne during his 1958 visit who had supported him in 1935?

Professor Alexander Boyce Gibson had only just been appointed to his chair in 1935. He retired in 1966 and died in 1972. Gibson by 1958 was one of the distinguished older professors of the university when Pevsner spoke in the Public Lecture Theatre. He was invited to the lecture and to a reception. But he was not invited to a dinner given in Pevsner's honour by Dr Leonhard Adam. Adam had come to Australia on the *Dunera* and his book *Primitive Art* had been published by Penguin under Pevsner's editorship.

There is no hint of anything about the Melbourne past being brought up, either by Pevsner in his correspondence with Burke, or by anyone else. There is a strange silence as if it had all been forgotten, or had not existed. [Sir] Douglas Copland was by then at the Australian National University in Canberra having resigned from Melbourne in 1945. Pevsner visited Canberra, but I do not know whether the past was brought up or remembered.

The vice-chancellor during the months of activity to bring Pevsner here in 1935 was [Sir] Raymond Priestley. Like Gibson, he had only just been appointed (he arrived in Melbourne in mid-February) when the exchange of correspondence started. He left Melbourne in 1938 to go, ironically, to where Pevsner had been in 1935, to the University of Birmingham where he had been appointed principal and vice-chancellor. He died in 1974. I do not know what contact he may have had with Pevsner who would by 1938 have left Birmingham.

Priestley's diaries, which are held in the University of Melbourne Archives, and university minutes of meetings, give a hint of the difficulty the university had in responding to outside calls for help. Its budget was so meagre that, for example, buildings were kept unheated. Priestley noted for 24 April 1935 that "The afternoon was marked by a committee meeting on the question whether or not we should apply to the Carnegie Corporation for one or two German refugees under their Fellowship scheme ...".

Money was the principal issue, and next to that the unknown prospects after the grant expired — would the university have a moral obligation after the grant expired, and where would it find the money to satisfy that obligation. Hence the interest in securing financial support from the Jewish community. But with Pevsner, Priestley seems to have formed the idea that he was not Jewish, perhaps being misled by his Protestant conversion, though aware that he had fled Germany because of the Nazis. He was concerned that if Pevsner were not Jewish, this might prevent the Jewish community from giving him support.

There was also the problem of how each person would fit in. With Pevsner, the concern over "integration" was dispelled by Gibson's assurance that Pevsner might be mistaken for an English gentleman, that he had, in Gibson's words, "great charm of manner and a width of general culture which can arouse the interest and affection of the most various types of people."

There seems to be only one recorded expression of misgiving or caution. It came from Sir James Barrett who had been Vice-Chancellor before Priestley arrived, and in August 1935 became Chancellor. He was a difficult man who made Priestley's term as vice-chancellor difficult. He offered the unenthusiastic observation to Priestley that the

university ought not to expect much financial support from the Jewish community because, in his opinion, it had not done much to help the Conservatorium of Music which had four Jewish men on its staff.

It seems it was the younger professors who were keen to support the few refugees who considered coming to Melbourne. At least that is my guess. They were professors who seem to have had an experience of universities wide enough for them to realise the benefits that would come to Melbourne by bringing here even one or two German trained academics. Vice-Chancellor Raymond Priestley seems to have been of that view. Of Fritz Loewe, he noted in his diary (10 July 1935) that "he has the experience and training to make a good showing here."

I should make a digression on this subject of contact with German intellectual life which contradicts my previous assertion that it was the younger professors who were receptive to the Jewish refugee scholars. Boyce Gibson's father had preceded him as Professor of Philosophy at Melbourne. William Ralph Boyce Gibson was an active participant in Continental philosophy and pioneered the introduction of the great E.J.A. Husserl's philosophical work into the English speaking world. The intriguing point in this digression is that a Dr Husserl was among the names of scholars that the university had before it in 1935. Because E.J.A. Husserl stuck it out in Germany I have concluded that it could not have been him. But it is strange that the name should appear at the university in which an important translator of his work had held a chair.

To return to my assertion about the professors involved in recruiting refugee German scholars. In addition to the younger Boyce Gibson supporting Pevsner, who had been appointed in 1935, the other professors actively involved were: Professor Ernst Hartung, was appointed in 1927; Professor John Greenwood, who was seeking the names of refugee metallurgists from a contact, Dr Desch, was appointed in 1924; and Professor Douglas Copland, was appointed in 1924. The energetic Director of the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute, Dr C.H. Kellaway, was also negotiating with the National Institute of Medical Research in London to bring out a scientist.

As a postscript to my paper I have listed the names of the refugee scholars mentioned in the university files from the mid-1930s.

In the end, three came to Melbourne from among this earliest group of refugee scholars who had left Nazi Germany immediately after Hitler came to power. One was Dr Erich Heymann who came to the Chemistry Department in 1936 and stayed until after the war ended. Another was Dr Fritz Loewe, whom Priestley strongly supported, who came as a meteorologist in 1937, taking up the grant that was to have gone to Pevsner. The third was Dr Wilhelm Felsberg, a pharmacologist, who came to the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute in 1937 and stayed for about two years.

To conclude, I should return to Nikolaus Pevsner. In the Address given at the Memorial Service [in the church of Christ the King, Bloomsbury] for Nikolaus Pevsner on 6 December 1983, the English architectural writer Alec Clifton-Taylor closed with these words:

The follies and wickedness of the Nazis deprived their country of some very choice spirits. But their loss was often our gain; and of no one is this truer than of him whose memory we are assembled here to honour ...



## NOTES

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*Names of German academic refugees mentioned in University files 1935-36. Those who came to Australia are shown in bold type.*

|                                |                                                                                             |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Art History                    | Dr Nikolaus Pevsner (invited, did not come)                                                 |
| Chemistry                      | <b>Dr Erich Heymann</b> (arr 1936 to c1946)<br>Dr Rabinowitch<br>Dr Weiss<br>Dr Farkas      |
| Pharmacology                   | <b>Dr Wilhelm Feldberg</b><br>(1937-39, Walter and Eliza Hall Institute)                    |
| Metallurgy                     | various but un-named (through Dr Desch)                                                     |
| Sanskrit, Indian Archaeology   | Dr Herman Goetz                                                                             |
| Moral Philosophy               | Dr Julius Kraft<br>Dr Hassler or Husserl<br>(?This surely is not E.G.A. Husserl, 1859-1938) |
| Mathematics                    | Dr Reinhold Baer                                                                            |
| Economics                      | Professor Plaut                                                                             |
| Sociology, Economics, Politics | Mr Herman Kranold                                                                           |
| Physics                        | <b>Dr Fritz Loewe</b> (1937, worked in meteorology)                                         |
| Germanic Studies               | <b>Richard Samuel</b> (Professor 1951-1968; +1983)                                          |
| Doctoral student               | Rado (?Erwin Rado)                                                                          |
| At University of Sydney        | Dr Lemberg                                                                                  |

## SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE DEMIDENKO AFFAIR

*Philip Mendes*

Helen Darville's award-winning novel *The Hand That Signed The Paper* has provoked unprecedented publicity — a plethora of media articles, four books already published, and two more books by Helen Daniel and the Melbourne University History Department on the way.

Yet much of this mountain of literature has failed to examine the Demidenko Affair in its broader political, historical and ethnic context.

Three issues have been particularly neglected or else considered through highly partisan or superficial glasses: 1) The direct connection between Darville's thesis and the earlier Nazi War Crimes Debate; 2) The particular role played by the chief critics of Darville — Gerard Henderson and Robert Manne — vis-a-vis the anti-defamation objectives of the Jewish community; 3) The question of Darville's Judeo-Bolshevik thesis.

### Demidenko and the Nazi War Crimes Bill Debate

Helen Darville's novel was inspired by the Australian Nazi War Crimes Bill passed by Parliament in December 1988. Darville wrote the book as part of a campaign against the War Crimes Bill.<sup>1</sup>

Whilst still at school, Darville wrote a short story praising the Ukrainian-American John Demjanjuk who was alleged (wrongly as it later turned out) to be the notorious Nazi war criminal, Ivan the Terrible. According to Darville, Ivan the Terrible's crimes could be attributed to actors and circumstances beyond his control such as Stalinism and Nazism.

As Robert Manne notes, Darville's Ivan the Terrible prefigured the character of Vitaly Kovalenko in *The Hand That Signed the Paper*. Both Ukrainian war criminals were depicted as victims as much as perpetrators. Neither were expected by Darville to show remorse for their crimes.<sup>2</sup>

As a student at the University of Queensland, Darville continued her vocal defence of alleged Nazi war criminals. At a meeting of the Young Nationals, Darville called for an amnesty on war crimes.<sup>3</sup> In her Demidenko incarnation, Darville stated that she wrote her book "because I experienced as a Ukrainian Australian person, a great deal of personal unpleasantness as a result of the war crimes trials ... I thought they were very vindictive and very sanctimonious. They seemed to be this incredible holier than thou, we are right we are going to get you, you nasty people, you shouldn't have come to Australia and polluted our holy shores, and it wasn't motivated by a sense of justice, but by a sense of revenge".<sup>4</sup>

The Miles Franklin Award judges alluded to this central motive of Darville's in their report when they wrote that "migrant experience novelists ... are incorporating into the cultural memory first-hand experience of the major historical events of the century, events from which Australia has been largely insulated, but which are a growing component of contemporary Australian life - even to the extent of requiring of us intricate moral judgements as the recent debate over the war crimes legislation highlighted".<sup>5</sup>

The first chapter of Darville's book is a subtle polemic against the validity of war crimes trials. Darville's narrator, Brisbane teenager Fiona Kovalenko (who is based on Darville herself), tells us that her Uncle Vitaly (a former SS Officer) will soon be on trial for war crimes and crimes against humanity.



Fiona is aware that her uncle did 'unspeakable things' in the war, but believes it would be wrong to try her uncle for his crimes: "Trying people for what they did in a war legitimises other wartime activities that are left untried. War is a crime of itself". According to Fiona, the Australians and Americans in Vietnam and the Americans and Iraqis in the Gulf behaved no differently. She also draws comparisons with the current atrocities in Somalia and Bosnia?<sup>6</sup>

Fiona blames the trials on the "silver budgie Zionist, bloody Bob Hawke" - the philo-Semitic then Australian Prime Minister<sup>7</sup>. Her uncle is to be represented by a left-wing legal aid lawyer who opposes war crimes trials. He is also an anti-nuclear activist<sup>8</sup>. The implication here appears to be that only Jews and their powerful friends support the trials. There is also a reference to Australia's first real war crimes trial — that of the Adelaide Ukrainian Ivan Polyukhovich<sup>9</sup> — as a "show trial".<sup>10</sup>

Although her uncle dies before coming to trial, Fiona is also concerned that her father may be charged with war crimes. She "writes letters to various Australian newspapers and magazines, protesting against the trials. But my father was never charged, and I concentrated on other things".<sup>11</sup>

In her apology for Nazi war criminals, Darville imitates many of those who argued most vigorously against the Australian war crimes trials. For example, Darville states: "I began to discover in upper primary what my uncle and father did in the war; it was one of those things. I wasn't a Nazi. None of my family were Nazis. We weren't Germans. People just did certain things that could not be prevented ... poor and hungry Ukrainians shot Jews for bread and sausage and vodka".<sup>12</sup>

According to Darville, the Ukrainian famine of the 1930s "bled into the Holocaust".<sup>13</sup> Millions of Ukrainians starved to death at the hands of Stalin and the Jewish communists. Virtually all the prominent Bolsheviks — Marx, Trotsky, Kamenev, Kaganovich and Bukharin — plus their local collaborators are described as Jews. The Ukrainians subsequently take understandable revenge on their Jewish persecutors by collaborating with the Nazis.

In defending her thesis, Darville claimed that most of her father's family, including her grandfather, were killed by Jewish Communist Party officials in Vynnytsa.

One of the most vocal opponents of the Nazi War Crimes Bill was the ultra-conservative former *Age* writer, Michael Barnard. In November 1987, Barnard commented regarding alleged Nazi war criminals: "One must struggle to understand the position of non-Jews swept or cowed by the terrible tides of war into acts they would find incomprehensible in peace".<sup>14</sup> Barnard also quoted a spokesperson for the extreme Right Captive Nations Council who implied that Nazi war crimes were vindicated by the later or earlier suffering of their perpetrators under Soviet rule.

According to Dr Anthony Endrey, "Local Jews played a prominent part in the setting up of communist regimes and the operations of the secret police in Soviet-occupied areas and this fact is well documented ... Many Jews in these countries therefore committed serious inhumanities during the period covered by the bill which would constitute war crimes under the provisions discussed".<sup>15</sup>

Another vocal opponent of the War Crimes Bill was the National Civic Council's B.A. Santamaria. In his *News Weekly* column of 12 October 1988, Santamaria quoted from an article published in the *Times Literary Supplement* on the alleged responsibility of Jewish Communists for the destruction of Romanian democracy. According to Santamaria's source, the assault on democracy "begun by the Nazis was subsequently carried on by a tiny handful of communists, 1,100 to be precise — directed from



Moscow. For Safran there was both pain and paradox in the fact that 900 of the 1,100 were lapsed Jews. Similar activities, in Poland and the Baltic nations, led to the reprisal murders of Jews after the Soviet armies were expelled from these territories later in 1941".

Some Ukrainians endorsed the Captive Nations Council's campaign against the Bill. One Australian-Ukrainian condemned the "high proportion of Jews in the first generation of Bolsheviks". According to Nestor Javorski, "Russian Jews such as Kaganovich and Yagoda were heavily over-represented in the Soviet Communist Party and secret police, and millions of Ukrainians died because of them".<sup>16</sup>

A Vice-President of the Ukrainian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations, Michael Lawriwsky, suggested a connection between Jewish commissars in the Soviet NKVD in the 1930s and Ukrainian Nazi camp guards.<sup>17</sup>

### The Left, the Right and Demidenko

Helen Darville's thesis attributing responsibility to Jewish Bolsheviks for the Ukrainian famine and, consequently, Ukrainian Jew-hatred, has provoked criticism from all sides of the Australian political spectrum.<sup>18</sup>

The critique has been led by conservative commentators, Gerard Henderson and Robert Manne. This in a sense is appropriate since Darville and many of her strongest defenders — Leonie Kramer, Paddy McGuinness, Ron Casey, R.J. Stove, and Frank Devine — are also of the Right.

Henderson's role as "the self-appointed first official Demidenko commentator"<sup>19</sup> is not surprising. He has long been a friend of the Jewish community, and was a prominent supporter of the Nazi War Crimes Bill. Henderson's political trajectory is interesting to observe. In the late 1960s/early 1970s, he worked for B.A. Santamaria's National Civic Council, and organised campaigns in favour of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War. Later, he was employed as Chief of Staff to the then Liberal Party Opposition Leader John Howard. Eventually, he was appointed Director of the Sydney Branch of the right-wing think-tank, the Institute of Public Affairs (IPA). Henderson has since broken with the IPA and renamed his organisation the Sydney Institute. The Institute has adopted a far broader and more pluralistic agenda than the IPA.

Henderson enjoys considerable influence on and access to the mainstream media. He remains a strong advocate of small government and the free market, but his social agenda is not all that different from many social democrats in the Labor Party. He is a genuine opponent of racism, and his support on the Demidenko Affair has been invaluable to the Jewish community.

Robert Manne's role has been far less predictable. Whilst of Jewish origin, Manne has gained far more notoriety for his vigorous anti-Communism<sup>20</sup> and his editorship of the prominent conservative journal, *Quadrant*. In the late 1980s, Manne was a vocal opponent of the War Crimes Bill due to his central sympathy for Ukrainian and other Eastern European victims of Stalinism and his reservations about the reliability of Soviet evidence.<sup>21</sup>

At the time, Manne was pilloried by sections of the Jewish community, and described by Professor Bill Rubinstein (himself a political conservative and former ideological ally of Manne) as a "non-Jewish Jew of the right." By this term, Rubinstein meant to imply that Manne was placing the interests of others — most notably those of his East European allies who had been accused of protecting alleged war criminals — ahead of those of his own Jewish community and survivors of the Holocaust.<sup>22</sup>



In light of the above history, Manne's vocal and passionate critique of Darville provokes some question marks in my mind. I say this not to question Manne's sincerity, nor to doubt that his own family's experience of the Holocaust makes him as well qualified as anyone to comment on the sensitivity of the issue. Nevertheless, when Manne writes that Darville's revival of the "Judeo-Bolshevik" thesis has "shaken him more deeply than he cares to admit",<sup>23</sup> I wonder why this affected Manne so deeply in 1995 but not in 1989. As I have already pointed out, Darville only duplicates in her book the anti-Semitic statements made by many opponents of the War Crimes Bill in the late 1980s. Yet, to the best of my knowledge, Manne never took public issue with any of these statements at the time.

His principal concern appeared to be that the War Crimes Bill might provoke an anti-Semitic backlash from his friends in the Eastern European communities. Yet the passion of his intervention was directed not against those who defended Nazi War criminals by employing anti-Semitic stereotypes,<sup>24</sup> but rather against those sections of the Jewish community who attempted to defend the Bill.

In his recently published book on the Demidenko Affair, Robert Manne suggests, however, that he may have changed his mind about the validity of war crimes trials. For example, he condemns Darville's argument that "the ambition to bring war criminals to trial is vengeful and unjust".<sup>25</sup> He also condemns Darville's suggestion that Jews in Australia who supported war crimes trials are "agents of vengeance, intent on extracting their pound of flesh".<sup>26</sup> Yet both these objectionable arguments were raised earlier by conservative opponents of the War Crimes Bill without any public comment or dissent by Robert Manne.<sup>27</sup> We are, therefore, left wondering about the reasons or motives for the inconsistencies in Robert Manne's position which is unfortunate since his analysis has contributed greatly to our understanding of the broader political, historical and moral concepts involved in the Demidenko Affair.

Whilst conservatives have certainly led the attack on Darville, the Left has not been silent. This contrasts with the Left's earlier relative silence on comparative issues such as the David Irving Affair and the Nazi War Crimes Bill debate.<sup>28</sup>

Prominent Left critics of Darville have included Peter Christoff in *Arena Magazine* on two occasions; Guy Rundle and Jacques Adler in the *Age*; John McLaren and Bob Weis in *Overland*; Vivienne Porzolt and Phil Shannon in *Green Left Weekly*, Kathy Laster in *Meanjin*, and Louise Adler *et al* in *Australian Book Review*. Left-liberal journalist Pamela Bone has been a particularly effective critic of Darville. Virtually the only Left-liberal writers arguing for a more tolerant view of Darville were Peter Singer, David Bowman, Morag Fraser, and Moira Rayner.

I have written elsewhere that the Left's sympathy for the Jewish community on this occasion probably reflects the fact that Darville's book is as much an attack on the Left as on the Jews. Darville does not only attempt to reduce the extraordinary history of Jewish radicalism in pre-World War Two Europe to the simple brutality of Stalin's murdering henchman in the Ukraine. She also attempts to reduce the entire history of European Left radicalism to Stalinism and the Gulag. Absent is any serious discussion of why so many Jewish and non-Jewish workers turned to socialism and communism. The vicious brutalities of tsarist anti-Semitism and early twentieth century laissez-faire capitalism do not feature in Darville's history.<sup>29</sup>

Having said all that, the veteran socialist activist Dave Nadel is probably right in arguing that much of the traditional Left has been silent on Darville.<sup>30</sup> The reason for this is that the Left today is basically not interested in Jews. The Jewish question was once a highly contentious issue on the Left. For many years, the Jews were regarded as the archetypal



victims of Nazism and Fascism. In a latter period, they became the alleged key persecutors of the Palestinians and third world peoples. Today, the gradual resolution of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict has granted them absolution. They are neither friend nor enemy any more - just forgotten.

It is for this reason that the Demidenko debate (despite the above exceptions) was largely dominated by the Right. In the 1950s and 1960s, the role of defending Australian Jews against anti-Semitism fell largely to left-wing intellectuals such as Brian Fitzpatrick, John Playford, Ian Turner, and Stephen Murray-Smith.<sup>31</sup> Today that role is played principally by centrists and conservatives such as Gerard Henderson, Greg Sheridan, and Warren Osmond. Their left-wing colleagues — whilst not necessarily unsympathetic to Jews — have other priorities.

In spite of this, the Demidenko Affair constitutes (in my opinion) a case study of best possible practice in terms of anti-defamation activities. On this occasion, in contrast to earlier comparative examples such as the David Irving Affair, the Nazi War Crimes Bill and the Racial Vilification Bill on which Jews were relatively isolated, the Jewish community enjoyed broad sympathy from both the Right and the Left of the Australian community. Moreover, the Demidenko Affair appeared to be viewed by most commentators (with the obvious exceptions of Andrew Riemer<sup>32</sup> and Frank Devine who described Isi Leibler as the “bullyboy face of anti-anti-Semitism”) as a broad question of racism and literary accountability, rather than as a narrow Jewish issue.

### **The Judeo-Bolshevik Thesis**

Darville's thesis that Jewish Communists controlled the Bolshevik Party and organised the Ukrainian famine has caused considerable anguish. The reason for this is the historical role played by the Judeo-Communist thesis in promoting anti-Semitism and ultimately genocide. The notion that Jews sought to control the world via the imposition of Communist government was at the centre of Nazi philosophy.<sup>33</sup>

Jewish approaches to this question have taken a number of trajectories. One simplistic approach on the Jewish Left is to affirm and celebrate the considerable Jewish involvement in radical movements as “an expression of Jewishness”. According to Robert Wolfe of the Jewish Radical Education Project, the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 represented “the most visible and highly organised manifestation of what was a general trend towards the mass dissemination of Jewish radical thought”.<sup>34</sup> Wolfe believes Jews should celebrate this fact rather than being intimidated by anti-Semites into denying the Jewishness of radical movements.

There are two problems with this approach. One is that many of the most prominent Jewish radicals have rejected or denied their Jewish identity. Secondly, the overwhelming majority of Jews have never embraced or promoted socialist views.

The equally simplistic approach on the Jewish Right denies any connection whatsoever between Jews and radical politics. According to Judd Teller, Jews are generally political conservatives rather than radicals. In fact, Jews have suffered most from revolutionary upheavals. Many of the leading socialists - including some self-hating Jews - have colluded with anti-Semites.<sup>35</sup> Other more recent works also suggest some natural affinity between Jews and conservative politics.<sup>36</sup>

The problem with this approach is that a disproportionate number of radicals have been of Jewish origin.<sup>37</sup> Whilst some of these radicals rejected their Jewish heritage, other mass Jewish labor movements such as the Bund were specifically based on Jewish tradition and culture. They may have never represented the majority of Jews, but they were an important and integral component of Jewish political and intellectual life.



Which leads us back to Helen Darville and her anguished detractors. There is little doubt that Jews were prominently involved in the ranks of the Bolsheviks and other radical groups in Tsarist Russia. There is also little doubt that Jews played a prominent role in the Bolshevik state apparatus, including the Cheka, in the immediate years after the revolution.

The reason why so many Jews joined radical movements is really quite simple and needs to be understood. At that time, conservative political movements were almost universally contaminated by anti-Semitic ideology. Conservatives regularly used anti-Jewish pogroms and violence as a "weapon of political mobilisation".<sup>38</sup> The sole defenders of Jews against anti-Semitism were liberals and socialists. Only Left groups promised (although they didn't always deliver) Jews a world free of discrimination and persecution.

As already noted, many of the leading Jewish radicals — Trotsky, Kamenev, Luxemburg and others — appeared to be alienated from Jewish communal life and culture, and indifferent to the fate of their own people. Yet in my opinion, this point can be overstated. Most Jewish radicals (whether they acknowledged it or not) were influenced to some extent by their Jewish origins and experience of anti-Semitism into identifying with the socialist movement. Their aim in subverting established society was almost certainly to create a world in which not only Jewishness, but also anti-Semitism, was non-existent.<sup>39</sup> Other Jewish-identifying radicals frankly sought revenge. They joined the Cheka and the Red Army to avenge themselves on those (particularly in the Ukraine) who had murdered their families and friends. This is hardly surprising nor (in my opinion) deserving of condemnation.

Commentators such as Robert Manne have correctly pointed out that the majority of Russian Jews did not sympathise with Bolshevism. They have also noted that the Bolshevik regime systematically eradicated all forms of independent Jewish national or religious life and culture, and that all the leading Jewish communists were purged by Stalin.<sup>40</sup> They appear to believe that these facts in themselves disprove Darville's theory regarding Jewish responsibility for the Ukrainian famine. Yet, this belief seems to me to miss a major point: Russian Jewish radicalism pre-1917 and Russian Jewish radicalism post-1917 (or at least post the Russian Civil War of 1918–1920) reflect two different factors at work. Prior to the Bolshevik Revolution, Jews joined radical movements because of specific Jewish concerns about anti-Semitism. After the revolution, Jews joined the Bolshevik regime not as Jews, but as ordinary Soviet citizens for reasons of ideology or expediency or both.<sup>41</sup> There was no longer a specifically Jewish reason to identify with the political Left which was now the ruling power.

Which brings us back to the question of the Ukrainian famine. I have argued elsewhere that there is no concrete evidence to suggest that Jews as an ethnic group or even Jews as individual Bolsheviks played a significant role in the Ukrainian famine.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, research by Stephen Wheatcroft suggests that the allegation of Jewish responsibility for the famine was first raised not by the Ukrainians, but rather by the Nazis in anti-Jewish propaganda published during the German invasion of the Ukraine in 1941.<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless even if some Jews did play a role in the famine, this means nothing in itself. Jewish communist apparatchiks participated as members of the Soviet regime, not as Jews or for reasons remotely connected to Jewish experiences or anti-Semitism.

Darville's book is first and foremost a continuation of the ideological campaign against the Nazi War Crimes Bill.

In her apology for Nazi war crimes, Darville also taps into a substantial body of Ukrainian (and some non-Ukrainian) historical literature which attempts to apologise for or justify Ukrainian collaboration with the Nazis.<sup>44</sup> Central to this literature is the

Judeo-Communist thesis. The long history of Ukrainian anti-Semitism that predates any Jewish involvement in socialist movements is ignored. The terrible pogroms of the 1918–1920 Petlura regime are also dismissed.<sup>45</sup>

For Darville, the thesis of powerful/conspiring Jews also serves conveniently to explain how this allegedly tyrannical War Crimes Bill was imposed without cause on the unsuspecting Australian public.

It should be noted that not all Ukrainian historians share Darville's prejudices.<sup>46</sup> And perhaps the most fascinating unsolved puzzle of this whole affair is why an Anglo-Australian teenager chose to identify with the most extreme and racist elements of a people from another time and another culture.<sup>47</sup>

*Thanks to Professor Bill Rubinstein and Professor Bernard Rechter for their comments on an earlier draft.*

## NOTES

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<sup>2</sup> Robert Manne, *The Culture of Forgetting: Helen Demidenko and the Holocaust*. Text Publishing, Melbourne 1996, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> *Australian*, 23 August 1995.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in John Jost, Gianna Totaro & Christine Tyshing (eds.) *The Demidenko File*, Penguin Books, Melbourne 1996, p. 42.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Gerard Henderson, "The winner, the judges, their supporters and the publisher — the 1995 Miles Franklin Award", *Media Watch* 34, No.3, 1995, p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Helen Darville, *The Hand that Signed the Paper*. Allen & Unwin, Sydney 1995.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, p. 81.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 81-82.

<sup>9</sup> David Bevan, *A Case to Answer*, Wakefield Press, Kent Town 1994.

<sup>10</sup> Darville, *op.cit.*, p. 82.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, p. 156.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> Michael Barnard, "War Crimes Bill Casts Wide Net", *Age*, 24 November 1987. For a critique of Barnard, see Philip Mendes, "Michael Barnard, The Jews and the Nazi War Crimes Bill", *Australian Jewish Democrat*, March 1990, pp. 13-14.

<sup>15</sup> Barnard, *Ibid*.

<sup>16</sup> *Sunday Herald*, 11 February 1990.

<sup>17</sup> Michael Lawriwsky, "Demjanjuk issues will live on", *Age*, March 1988.

<sup>18</sup> Philip Mendes, "Helen Demidenko, Jews and Ukrainians", *Current Affairs Bulletin*, December 1995/January 1996, pp. 47-51.

<sup>19</sup> Natalie Prior, *The Demidenko Diary*, Reed Books, Melbourne 1996, p. 85.



- <sup>20</sup> Robert Manne, *The Shadow of 1917: Cold War Conflict in Australia*, Text Publishing, Melbourne 1994.
- <sup>21</sup> Robert Manne, "A case against the War Crimes Act" in Rick Brown (ed.) *The Report of the Symposium on the proposed War Crimes Legislation in Australia*, Captive Nations Council of Victoria, Melbourne 1988, pp. 6-13; Robert Manne, "Defending Quadrant", *Australian Jewish News*, 18 August 1989.
- <sup>22</sup> W.D. (Bill) Rubinstein, "The Quadrant Affair: A Personal Account", *Executive Council of Australian Jewry Annual Report*, 1989.
- <sup>23</sup> Robert Manne, "Forum on the Demidenko Controversy", *Australian Book Review*, August 1995, pp. 14-15.
- <sup>24</sup> Pamela Bone, "Refugees fear war crimes bill", *Age*, 23 March 1989.
- <sup>25</sup> Robert Manne, *The Culture of Forgetting*, *op.cit.*, 116.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, p. 187.
- <sup>27</sup> See Michael Barnard, "Truth, Justice and vengeance", *Age*, 7 June 1988; Peter Ryan, "War crimes trials here would only be for show", *Australian Financial Review*, 1 June 1988.
- <sup>28</sup> Philip Mendes, "Left Attitudes Towards Jews: Anti-Semitism and Philo-Semitism", *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, 13 (1), 1995, pp. 109-116.
- <sup>29</sup> Philip Mendes, "On Demidenko, the Left and Morality", *Reconstruction*, Autumn 1996, p. 55.
- <sup>30</sup> Dave Nadel, "A Question of Morality", *Reconstruction*, Summer 1995/96, pp. 50-52.
- <sup>31</sup> Mendes, "Left Attitudes...", *op.cit.*, pp. 100-101.
- <sup>32</sup> Andrew Riemer, *The Demidenko Debate*. Allen & Unwin, Sydney 1996, pp. 232-244.
- <sup>33</sup> Andre Gerrits, "Anti-Semitism and Anti-Communism: The Myth of Judeo-Communism in Eastern Europe", *East European Jewish Affairs*, Vol. 25, No.1, 1995, pp. 49-72.
- <sup>34</sup> Robert Wolfe, *Remember to Dream: A History of Jewish Radicalism*, Jewish Radical Education Project, New York 1994.
- <sup>35</sup> Judd Teller, *Scapegoat of Revolution*. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York 1954.
- <sup>36</sup> Alan Steinberg, *American Jewry & Conservative Politics*, Shapolsky Publishers, New York 1988; Jack Wertheimer, "A Jewish Contract with America", *Commentary*, May 1995, pp. 31-35.
- <sup>37</sup> Philip Mendes, *The New Left, the Jews and the Vietnam War, 1965-72*, Lazare Press, Melbourne 1993.
- <sup>38</sup> John Klier, "Russian Jewry as the 'Little Nation' of the Russian Revolution" in Yaacov Ro'i (ed.) *Jews and Jewish Life in Russia and the Soviet Union*, Frank Cass, Essex 1995, p. 151.
- <sup>39</sup> Erich Haberer, *Jews and revolution in nineteenth-century Russia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1995, pp. 259-272.
- <sup>40</sup> Robert Manne, "The Strange Case of Helen Demidenko", *Quadrant*, September 1995, pp.27-28.
- <sup>41</sup> Arkady Vaksberg, *Stalin Against the Jews*, Alfred A.Knopf, New York 1994, pp. 36-37.
- <sup>42</sup> Mendes, "Helen Demidenko...", *op.cit.*, p. 49.

<sup>43</sup> Robert Manne, *The Culture of Forgetting*, *op.cit.*, p. 159.

<sup>44</sup> Lev Dobriansky, "The Revived Myth of Ukrainian Anti-Semitism", *Ukrainian Quarterly*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 1949, pp. 164-174; Taras Hunczak, "Ukrainian-Jewish Relations during the Soviet and Nazi Occupations" in Yury Boshyk (ed.) *Ukraine during World War II*, Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, Edmonton 1986; Malcolm Muggeridge, *Winter In Moscow*, Eyre & Spottiswoode, London 1934; Stefan Possony, "The Ukrainian-Jewish Problem: A Historical Retrospect", *Ukrainian Quarterly*, Summer 1975, pp. 139-151.

<sup>45</sup> For a Ukrainian apology for the earlier Petlura pogroms similar in nature to Darville's Nazi war crimes apology, see Saul Friedman, *Pogromchik: The Assassination of Simon Petlura*, Hart Publishing Company, New York 1976, pp. 192-195.

<sup>46</sup> Yaroslav Bilinsky, "Methodological Problems and Philosophical Issues in the Study of Jewish-Ukrainian Relations During the Second World War" in Peter Potichnyj & Howard Aster (eds.), *Ukrainian-Jewish Relations in Historical Perspective*, University of Alberta, Edmonton 1988, pp. 373-394; Miron Dolot, *Execution by Hunger: The Hidden Holocaust*, Norton & Company, New York 1985, pp. 82-84; Natalka Zolotarevich, "A Jewish Doctor Helps the Starving" in S. Pidhainy (ed.) *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin: A White Book. Volume 2*, Globe Press, Detroit 1955, p. 575.

<sup>47</sup> Andrew Riemer, "The strange story of Helen D", *24 Hours*, March 1996, pp. 38-41; Jane Hyde, "On not being ethnic", *Quadrant*, November 1995, pp. 49-52.



## JUBILEE OF KFAR MONASH 1946–96

*Elizabeth Durré*

Towards the end of last year my brother Colin and I, who are the surviving grandchildren of Sir John Monash, received an invitation to attend the 50th Anniversary celebrations of Kfar Monash, in May 1996, in Israel.

I accepted, and began a correspondence with two couples who were among the organisers. They asked me to be their guest and to make a short speech at the celebrations. My decision to accept was one of the most rewarding of my life.

Kfar Monash is built on a gentle hill a few kilometres north east of the Netanya. Sixty-eight families live there, many of whom grow high quality soft fruits, citrus and vegetables, and flowers for the European market. This intensive farming no longer supports whole families, many of them now of two and three generations, so members also work at paid jobs outside the village.

The settlement of pleasant houses, garden and orchards where I spent a few days in May had its unlikely beginnings in 1944 among a group of soldiers who were serving together on the Italian front. They were members of Unit 524 of the Palestinian British Force, which was a surveying, mapping and printing unit.

Some of the soldiers decided to stay together when the war was over and to make a settlement in Israel, using their skills as printers as a means of earning a living. Incidentally, an excellent booklet has been published on the history of the Kfar: *People, Their Land, Their Home, Kfar Monash 1946-1996*, illustrated with photographs and drawings.

Why did the Jewish Agency choose the name "Monash" for the new Kfar? Primarily, because the money to buy the land had been donated by the Jews of Australia and New Zealand through the Jewish National Fund. Sixty thousand pounds (*lirat*) was paid for the land of approximately 2680 *dunam* (about 670 acres). Secondly, these new settlers were soldiers and wished to honour a distinguished Australian Jewish soldier. Additionally Sir John Monash had been president of the Australian Zionist Federation from 1927 for some years.

Thirdly, there was a close connection between the Monasch family and the craft of printing. John Monash's grandfather, Baer Loebel Monasch of Krotoschin (then in Prussia, now in Poland) was the largest printer and distributor of Hebrew prayer books in that part of Europe in the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> To my surprise the Kfar owns 6 or 7 volumes of books printed by B.L. Monasch.<sup>2</sup>

This suggests that at least one family from which the soldiers were drawn had brought these books with them when they moved from Central Europe to Palestine before the war, so the connection between Monasch and printing was known.

In May 1946, 40 men and a few women arrived on the land where Kfar Monash now stands. There was no water, no trees and the wind blew the dusty soil. They pitched their tents and began the task of building a village. They ordered machinery, built the printery and began on their own houses. Initially they had been offered 15 housing units of two rooms, but asked instead for and got 30 houses of one room, each 20 square metres in size. Some of the original houses have been incorporated into larger homes: the first house is now a kitchen.

In those early days the members had very little and what they had they shared. However, the settlement was not a *kibbutz*, but a *moshav*, a partnership settlement. Some 23 countries of origin were represented among the inhabitants.

A *moshav* based on commercial printing in the late 1940s and early 1950s sounds like an excellent idea. The machinery had been imported, the men were skilled. Unfortunately, it failed financially, and the hopes of the group of young soldiers were not realised. One of them, who had returned for the Jubilee celebrations, said to me: "We were 40 years before our time." From 1952 onwards the exodus began and continued until all the original men and their families had left. They found work and a regular income without difficulty as printers in the towns of Israel.

The Kfar became a strictly agricultural co-operative, a *Moshav Ovdim*. In 1954, 68 farming plots were allotted, with a house, a garden, a cow, 50 chickens and agricultural tools. Some of the present inhabitants date from that time. Their children and grandchildren have grown up on the Kfar and know no other home. By natural increase the population is now between 300 and 400.

In 1989 a second crisis arose. Financially the *moshav* was not doing well as a co-operative. Some members could not keep up payments on their loans. The members decided that to stay where they were it was necessary to dissolve the partnership. Some minor co-operation in buying and selling goods still goes on when convenient to the members. Otherwise, the village is one of independent farmers and workers.

The regulations allow two houses to be built on blocks of 30 *dunam*. Usually the second of these is for the eldest son and three generations may live on a block. The affairs of the *moshav* are in the hands of two committees, one of the original 68 farming families, and the other of all residents including the original settlers, who vote in the municipal elections. Surprisingly, it works!

Recently, higher authorities have decided that 70 new blocks of land of half a *dunam* will be released. Many of these will be taken up by second sons, others by newcomers. Owners will be allowed to use land for light industry. Already some members have built small holiday villas on their blocks to be let out to visitors. This is quite legal. Up till now all members have known all other young and old. This may not continue very long, and naturally, some "old-timers" are concerned. Will the spirit of friendliness and mutual help persist in the larger community? They hope so.

The main purpose of my visit had been to join the Jubilee celebrations. These took place on the 23rd May 1996 between 5pm and midnight. There was a new garden to open, food and drink for all, indoor and outdoor exhibitions and historical mementos. One of the rooms in the offices of the Kfar is dedicated to the memory of the eleven members who have died in the Israeli wars, and their photographs are displayed.

The Kfar owns a few items of Monash memorabilia which were on show. They include Sir John's Sam-Browne belt, books and pictures. I donated some more photographs, and to mark the occasion, a scroll which I presented during my short speech that evening. The scroll was produced by Monash University; the Vice-Chancellor of Monash University, Prof Mal Logan having previously paid a visit to the Kfar. At the top are Sir John's personal crest and the crest of the University. The document is signed, on behalf of the descendants of John Monash, by my brother Colin and myself, and on behalf of Monash University by the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor.

After dark the celebrations moved to the lawn in front of a decorated stage and nearly 1000 people sat or stood for the evening performance. The school teacher was the M.C. A few speeches in English required translation — Mr Jeremy Hawson, the cultural





## 100 YEARS AGO: EXTRACTS FROM THE *JEWISH HERALD*

*Compiled by Lorraine Freeman*

In January 1896 Theodor Herzl first published in the London *Jewish Chronicle* his vision for a Zionist homeland. A paragraph from "the letter from our English correspondent" in the *Jewish Herald*, pointing out the impracticality and naivety of his plan, is included here. Blaubaum also opposed Herzl's plan, seeing it as impractical and even dangerous.

During 1896 other revolutionary ideas were put forward. In Ballarat it was proposed that women should have voting rights at congregational meetings. In general, women had not by that year been enfranchised. The first country to grant voting rights to women was New Zealand in 1893. In Victoria women were only granted the right to vote in 1908. Most other leading countries did not grant women electoral equality with men until the end of or soon after World War One.

Considerable attention was again given to the issue of conversion. The East Melbourne Hebrew Congregation called a conference of all Victorian congregations for the purpose of discussing the admission of proselytes.

Following on the improvement of the financial position of the East Melbourne Hebrew Congregation as a result of the success of the Grand Bazaar and Carnival, the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation also decided to hold a bazaar to attempt to liquidate a debt of £7000. "The Carnival of All Nations", as it was called, opened on 29 October for a period of three weeks. A set-back to financial expectations came when Isaac A. Isaacs, as Attorney-General, ordered the lotteries at the Carnival to be stopped because they were "illegal games of chance." This nearly resulted in a shortfall of £1000; however, voluntary donations were made which ensured that no great loss was sustained by the Carnival itself.

The year ended with the December issue celebrating the *Jewish Herald's* eighteenth year of existence.

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As a result of the meeting of the members of the East Melbourne Congregation, reported in our last issue, Mr. Mendel Cohen, president, Mr. Bentwitch, treasurer, and several of the committee resigned. For the purpose of dealing with these resignations, a special general meeting was held on Sunday, 12th July. The meeting was attended by about fifty members and the resignations were accepted. Mr. P. Perlstein was elected president, and Mr. A. Davis treasurer.



# The Jewish Herald.

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MELBOURNE, FRIDAY, 24th JULY, 5656—1896.

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A NOVEL and by no means unimportant question in connection with congregational meetings was decided the other day at Ballarat, and decided, we fear, in an ill-advised manner. The question was, whether ladies contributing a member's fee to the funds should be entitled to vote in matters affecting the interests of the congregation. The meeting decided that they should have no such right. We think it would have been better policy if the decision had been the other way. In matters of this kind too much stress should not be laid upon precedent, custom, or the like; but where our religion offers no objection, our changed times and environments should be taken into consideration. It does not follow that because amongst our forefathers women took no active part in congregational meetings they should not be allowed to do so now and for ever. Neither need one necessarily be an advocate of women's rights to consider such a change desirable. One has simply to look at things as they are. Is the number of our people who are anxious or willing to take an active interest in the management of our religious institutions increasing? It is not. In fact everywhere in these colonies we require workers. This being so, why should we turn members away, and for no other reason than that they belong to the female sex? There may be, and very likely there are, many women who have the necessary time, as well as the natural inclination, to engage in religious work, and why should we say to them, "Oh, no, you must do nothing of the kind, because you know you are only a woman!" when men willing to do that work are found few and far between amongst us? The man who goes on a committee, but puts in an appearance only now and then at the meetings, thinking that he has done sufficient service by giving the institution the *éclat* of his name (according to his estimation, of course), that man is of no use whatsoever, and he might well vacate his seat to an intelligent and religiously inclined woman who *will* work.

MELBOURNE, ELLUL, 5656—AUGUST 21, 1896.

Dr. Herzl has this week been the guest of the Maccabæans, and has expounded anew his fantastical scheme of the "Jewish State" circumstances—especially the circumstance of a highly-courteous reception at the Sublime Porte—having narrowed his scheme from a "Jewish State Anywhere" to "Palestine, *the* Jewish State." But Dr. Herzl, though he talks leading articles, has not only the enthusiasm, but also the *naïvete*, of youth. And the tricky, diplomatic ways of the Turk have blinded him altogether to the huge difficulties of the situation he wishes to create. The Sultan—or was it only the Grand Vizier?—has listened to his scheme and replied with honeyed platitudes, and perhaps is really not averse to striking a bargain. But the bargain would involve a financial sacrifice of millions, and where are the millions to come from? Baron Hirsch's are bespoken for the very opposite purpose. I am afraid the Dr. is a little nettled at our throwing cold water on his scheme. Why, he asks, should you oppose it? You need not go, but why hinder others? But in sober seriousness his plan is a very dangerous one. And it needed not the doubtful sponsorship of a president like Max Nordau or a witty sceptic like Zangwill to make the serious and slow-minded pause awhile before following his lead.

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GEELONG.—On Wednesday, 12th August, Mr. S. Michael, secretary of our congregation, entertained a number of friends at his residence, Moorabool-street, Geelong, to celebrate the ברית מילה of his infant son. Among those present were Mr. Morris Jacobs, president of the congregation, and Dr. Marwood. Several toasts were honoured, and the Rev. J. Jacobs, who officiated as מוהל, was highly complimented upon his skill. We regret to learn that Mr. Jacobs' wife has for the last three weeks been very ill.



# The Jewish Herald.

MELBOURNE, FRIDAY, 21st AUGUST, 5656—1896.

To judge by the views which our English correspondent expresses on Dr. Herzl's scheme of the establishment of a Jewish State, it would appear that our people at home are much of the same opinion as ourselves in this important matter. There are people who allow their zeal to run away with their discretion, without remembering that the one is as necessary as the other to the accomplishment of any object, let alone one of gigantic magnitude and the most wide-bearing consequence. We are promised, and we believe that at some future time—no one can tell how remote that time may be—the Jewish nation will be re-established on its ancestral soil; but it is

quite beyond human power to hasten that time. And any attempt in that direction on the part of our people would in all human probability end in disastrous failure. Divine Providence alone is able to accomplish, and will accomplish it, in its own good time. Look at the difficulties with which the project is surrounded. First of all you have to induce the Turks to sell Palestine, which they may or may not be willing to do. Then you have to find the purchase money, and also the money required for the transportation of the intending settlers, and for keeping them until the soil is sufficiently cultivated to yield their sustenance. Millions would be required for these purposes. And when at length you have set up a Jewish State, you have to get the European Powers to protect it not only against attacks from outside, but also, and perhaps chiefly, against internal dissensions, which may naturally be expected from people who have passed the greater part of their lives under grinding oppression, and who are therefore strangers to the amenities of full citizenship. The difficulties on all sides are overwhelming, while on the other hand the Jew is of too practical a turn of mind to spend his money on chimerical projects. We have repeatedly expressed our opinion that the solution of the Jewish question must be looked for in a different direction. The countries of which the Jews are natives, which they have served and still serve to the best of their ability, have to be brought, by the force of public opinion or otherwise, to accord them the treatment of citizens, or, at least, the rights and privileges to which every human being is entitled. To our mind there is no other way out of the difficulty, and we see no reason to alter our opinion.

# The Jewish Herald.

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MELBOURNE, FRIDAY, 30th OCTOBER, 5657—1896.

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THE conference on the proselyte question, we regret to say, was disappointing, and that in more than one respect. In the first place not all the delegates appointed attended—in fact, nearly half of them were absent. It is an old but ever true maxim that “in the multitude of counsellors there is safety;” and certainly a matter of such paramount importance—a matter that may affect the Jewish community of Victoria for many years to come—cannot be safely left in the hands of nine gentlemen, five of whom are members of the East Melbourne Congregation. It may be said that, after all, the resolutions passed by the conference will have to be ratified by the various congregations, so that it matters little whether or not those resolutions are exactly what they should be, the work being only preliminary. That, however, is a fallacy. If you place before a body of men resolutions which are not likely to meet with their approval the result will be labour in vain. It is much better to ascertain beforehand, as far as possible, what the feelings of the various bodies are on the subject; and that could have been done had all the delegates been present. But what was far more regrettable than all this was that the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation—the oldest and largest congregation of all—was not represented. It is difficult to imagine that this congregation should wish to stand aloof from a movement which is intended to benefit the Jews of Victoria in a body. Surely the Board of Management could not have given the matter sufficient consideration when they made up their minds not to send delegates to the conference. A moment's reflection should have convinced them that without unity no good can be done, and the desire to do good is certainly entitled to respect, no matter from whom it may emanate. Another mistake was that the members of the *Beth Din* were not invited to be present. No one in his senses could for a moment suppose that they are inimical to the best interests of the Jewish community. On the contrary, their own individual interests are indissolubly bound up with those of the community; and they, more than anybody else, are able to give advice as to what according to their experience in the matter of admitting proselytes should or should not be done, and that according to our established laws is or is not permissible. As it is, the greater number of the resolutions passed will have to be considerably modified before they can be brought into harmony with our laws or even be made practicable. It is useless to devise measures which ultimately will be either ruled *ultra vires*, or, reduced to practice, defeat their own ends. In a matter of this kind it requires wise and experienced heads to take the lead. Enthusiasm may be a good thing, but it is not everything.



# The Jewish Herald.

MELBOURNE, FRIDAY, 13th NOVEMBER, 5657—1896.

## THE GRAND CARNIVAL OF ALL NATIONS.

THIS rare combination of business and pleasure—of shows and art collections—has now been running for a fortnight, and thousands have flocked to see it. The Exhibition is at all times a popular resort, and it is doubly so when made lively by fair vendors of all sorts of things, both useful and ornamental, as well as by a continuous succession of entertainments which one may see at the London Crystal Palace every day, but rarely, if ever, in Melbourne. The ladies have worked hard to make the affair the success it deserves to be considering its object; but everybody will regret to learn that they have met with unexpected reverses. Early last Saturday evening the race games, which were the most profitable source of revenue, were stopped by the order of the Attorney-General. The indignation which this action produced was general and very emphatic. One of the leading members of the Executive remarked that it would mean a loss of fully £2000 to the Carnival. "Why should the Jews be debarred," remarked that gentleman, "from making profit by these games when it is done by almost every denomination, and even at the present moment?" Equally outspoken on the subject were the ladies. "What a shame! How cruel of Mr. Isaacs," observed one after the other. "Wouldn't you dissect him if you had him?" we asked a young lady who has just passed her third year of medicine at the Melbourne University, and passed with high honours, and who was assisting at one of the stalls. "Indeed, I would," was the reply. "But do you believe in vivisection?" we asked again. "No, I don't," she replied, "but I would make an exception in this case." The ladies and the members of the Executive have certainly the sympathy of the public on their side, and we should not be surprised to see an enormously increased attendance at the Carnival for the next fortnight, just to compensate the promoters for the serious loss they have sustained by Mr. Isaacs' action."

It was the same Mr. Isaacs by whose directions the race games in connection with the All Nations Carnival were stopped. We confess we have no sympathy whatever with gambling of any kind and for any purpose; but if it is to be stamped out, why not make the commencement with the Flemington racecourse, where a special space is set aside for the members of the ring, where the public may make, and do make, wagers involving thousands of pounds? Why are the daily papers allowed to publish from day to day the doings of the betting market, and the quotations ruling for the different horses? Everybody knows what is going on. Bookmakers are licensed and defaulters are expelled from the course by decision of the stewards of the V.R.C., which the law courts uphold. But we fail to see the justice in allowing the big gamblers to do as they please, and "to take it out" of the smaller concerns—to use a vulgar phrase. Besides, lotteries have so long been permitted in connection with church bazaars that it is hard to see why they should be stopped just now. The promoters of the Carnival have incurred a very heavy liability, not for their own benefit, but for the purpose of extricating a place of worship from a crushing debt. They relied to a large extent upon the lotteries, which have always been permitted, and have always been the most profitable part of the undertaking. It seems extremely hard that just in the middle of it this source of profit should be closed to them, and that probably all the labour of the ladies and gentlemen engaged in the good object should fall far short of the object in view, if it may not leave a deficit. If it was the intention of the Government to prohibit any lottery, the promoters of the Carnival should have received notice long before they opened, so that they might have devised other means of revenue; or, better still, the Government might have given notice that after a certain date no lottery of any kind will be allowed. That would have been fair play, but to take these people unawares, and pounce upon them just when they see a fair chance of accomplishing their purpose, cannot be regarded in any other light than arbitrary and harsh. And that is the act of a Government that calls itself "liberal."

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# The Jewish Herald.

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MELBOURNE, FRIDAY, 11th DECEMBER, 5657—1896.

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WITH the present issue the *Jewish Herald* enters upon the eighteenth year of its existence. It is with no small amount of satisfaction and gratitude that we note this fact. There has never been a Jewish paper in any of the Australian colonies that has celebrated its eighteenth, or for the matter of that, even its ninth birthday. From time to time our paper has had rivals, but it has outlived them all. There is no room in the Australian colonies for a second Jewish paper, and every fresh attempt to establish such a one must sooner or later end in failure. In the meantime the *Jewish Herald* has thoroughly established itself in the favour of our co-religionists in all parts of the country. It supplies a real want, and our co-religionists have come to look upon it as an important adjunct to their religious institutions, which they would be sorry to miss. Much of this gratifying success is undoubtedly due to the business tact of our publishers, who have always given our paper the best of their attention, though it is but the smallest of their publications. From time to time friends came forward with suggestions as to what our paper should be, or how it should be extended—well-meant suggestions, no doubt, but not always warranted by the experience of our publishers, who preferred to adhere to the good old rule—“Look ere thou leap, see ere thou go.” They would rather give the paper time to grow than try experiments which might endanger its existence; and the result has fully proved the soundness of this policy.

## BOOK REVIEWS

### THE RIGHT ROAD: A HISTORY OF RIGHT-WING POLITICS IN AUSTRALIA

*Andrew Moore (Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 1995)*

The extreme right in Australia certainly needs a scholarly and objective history, and, up to certain and distinct limits, this book is a useful study. There are many problems in writing such a work, most centrally problems of definition: "right-wing politics" becomes more difficult to define the closer one looks at the term. Dr Moore has offered several components of a "working definition" which include "operat[ing] from a more extreme position than that of a mainstream 'conservative' group like the Liberal Party", "embrac[ing] conspiracy theory", "nationalism", "suspicion ... for the ideas and processes of liberal parliamentary democracy".

These are, I suppose, quite defensible, but it remains to be seen how the author will treat them in practice. Here the book breaks down, examining an impossibly wide range of groups from the League of Rights and the Australian Nazi Party to "New Right" bodies like the H.R. Nicholls Society and its leaders, among them Peter Costello, Ian McLachlan and Gerard Henderson. Moore's final chapter, on "the New Right", reveals both his biases and the severe limitations of this study: not only is the implied lumping together of Jack Van Tongeren and Peter Costello utterly absurd, I would have thought that it was sailing rather close to the wind in terms of Australia's defamation laws. That Oxford University Press (of all publishers) would have allowed such nonsense in one of its books is surprising: although perhaps less surprising, given the general decline in academic publishing standards, than one might think. In fact "the New Right" demonstrates no part of Dr Moore's "working definition" of right-wing politics apart from this amorphous group being "more extreme" than Ian McPhee.

Dr Moore's chapters on anti-Semitic groups like the League of Rights are more successful, although very brief. He has also said some pertinent things about the LaRouchites, and some of his details will be new, even to scholars of the field. These sections, however, are too short to comprise more than a cursory history, while Dr Moore presents no evidence of being familiar with much of the scholarly writing in this area which one might assume would be noted in such a work. For instance — if I may be permitted to point this out — my work *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History, 1945–Present*, published in 1991, contains a 122 page chapter on anti-Semitism since the War, which Dr Moore has evidently not read. Nor, it seems, has he read the late Ken Gott's classic study of the League of Rights, among many other obvious omissions. Indeed, his inadequate research on this topic appears to be largely limited to some ephemeral magazine articles.

Dr Moore clearly does not like the political right, and often appears to make the classical mistake of persons on one extreme writing about those on the other, of lumping together very different groups, linking moderates with extremists and crackpots. When Dr Moore writes (page 76) "Albert Field, the Queensland trade unionist whose appointment to the Commonwealth Senate in June 1975 proved to be the spanner in the works of the Whitlam government, was connected with the League of Rights. This may suggest a further extreme right-wing dimension to the constitutional crisis of 1975", we enter the realms of left-wing McCarthyism. This cannot be helpful to our understanding of anything.

W.D. Rubinstein



## THE DEMIDENKO FILE

*John Jost, Gianna Totaro, and Christine Tyshing*  
(Penguin Books, Ringwood, Vic., 1996)

## THE DEMIDENKO DIARY

*Natalie Jane Prior* (Mandarin, Port Melbourne, Vic., 1996)

## THE DEMIDENKO DEBATE

*Andrew Riemer* (Allen & Unwin, St. Leonards, NSW, 1996)

The extraordinary Demidenko literary hoax has, not surprisingly, produced its volumes of commentary and explanation. Frankly, the Demidenko saga made me (and, I am sure, many others) both sick and angry. In no other Western country, perhaps, could a charlatan who had clothed herself in the garments of history's time-honoured anti-Semites be taken seriously as anything but reprehensible; the discovery that her Ukrainian 'ancestry' was a fabrication intended to provide credibility for her anti-Semitic fantasies should have immediately placed her beyond the pale. At the very least, it should have led to the withdrawal of the literary prizes she won. Darville's novel *The Hand that Signed The Paper* appears to me — no student of contemporary fiction — to be without any literary merit whatsoever, whether it had concerned Jews, Ukrainians or Peruvians. Pretentious and shallow, with characters of cardboard, *The Hand that Signed the Paper* might have won an undergraduate writing prize at a minor university if there were no competition. The Demidenko affair blew up just before I emigrated to Britain in mid-1995, and was an appropriate note on which to end my two decades in Australia.

The three books surveyed here provide differing viewpoints on this affair. *The Demidenko File*, by Jost *et al*, simply reprints some (but not all) of the commentary on the book and the author. It is a valuable reference work, especially in providing transcripts from television and radio to augment the literary reprints, and will doubtless be used by students of this affair in years to come (if there are any). Beyond that, the book does not go, and does not address any of the historical or ethical issues involved.

Natalie Jane Prior's *The Demidenko Diary* is an interesting and valuable account of Darville's inner life by a close friend (one assumes, a *former* close friend). Sparing Helen Darville nothing, Prior claims that she had made anti-Semitic comments, but was so confused as to her "persona" that nothing could be taken at face value. Prior's summaries of this business in her final chapter seem much to the point: Darville destroyed her "promising" career, deeply alienated Jews and Ukrainians, and made the Australian literary establishment appear to consist of clowns, all because of her identity problems. The Australian literary establishment had it coming to them, but the volume of hostile and often prurient comment about her rise and fall was greatly in excess of the intrinsic merits of the case. To which I say: three cheers for common sense.

Not so Andrew Riemer's *The Demidenko Debate*, a truly appalling work which, in some respects, is worse than the book it discusses. Riemer, a Sydney author and critic of Jewish descent, blames the whole thing on "Melbourne Jews", an "attempt by the more conservative elements of Australian Jewry to regain some of the ground lost in the process of secularisation" (pp. 233–234). Eric Butler, where are you now that we really need you? Riemer's absurd and shameful nonsense was effectively demolished in an interesting column by Robert Manne last January, to which it would be pointless to add.

There are only two mysteries about Riemer's book, why a reputable publisher like Allen & Unwin, having produced *The Hand that Signed the Paper* itself, would compound a felony by printing this rubbish, and (not to put too fine a point on the matter) how a Jew like Riemer could write anti-Semitism.

This is an appropriate note on which to close, for Riemer's work may serve as an epitome of the whole shabby affair, revealing the provinciality, ignorance, and jejune mentality of so many of Australia's public commentators. With little sense of Western history, and, indeed, cut off from the mainstream of history, Australia struggles to discover its own truths by such resources as it has. Difficulty is only to be expected in such a venture, but not, one would assume, humiliation.

Several other books on Demidenko are promised, including one by Robert Manne which will be worth reading.

W.D. Rubinstein

## THE CULTURE OF FORGETTING: HELEN DEMIDENKO AND THE HOLOCAUST

*Robert Manne (Text Publishing, Melbourne, 1996)*

This is immeasurably the best book (and the best account) which has appeared about the Demidenko affair, and deserves a review separate from those given here to the other books which have appeared on this tawdry subject.

Professor Manne writes a sparkling, accurate account of the affair, missing little either in terms of its factual development or its moral and ethical implications. He is unrelentingly hostile alike to "Demidenko", her book, and to her defenders. Manne's reasons are always cogent, invariably cutting to the heart of the argument.

The book is also interesting in what it says about the intellectual and moral evolution of its author. On page 16 he discusses a Ukrainian character, Vitaly, in *The Hand that Signed the Paper* who, at Treblinka, killed Jews' babies and randomly killed Jewish prisoners. Manne says of Demidenko's portrayal of this character: "And yet — this is so incredible that I find it difficult to record — the unambiguous suggestion of Helen Demidenko's book is that the ambition to bring Vitaly to trial is vengeful and unjust."

The problem here is that it was not so long ago that Robert Manne was saying almost precisely the same thing. Not, moreover, in a novel which but for totally undeserved good fortune would have remained unknown to anyone apart from the tiny audience enjoyed by new Australian fiction, but in the daily press and in the pages of Australia's most prestigious cultural magazine. And not, moreover, by a pathetic twenty-four-year-old from Brisbane with delusions of literary grandeur, but by someone profoundly aware of the "incredibility" of this suggestion. To be sure, there is more joy in heaven at a sinner repenting etc., but those of us who pointed out the former error of Robert Manne's ways are also entitled to be somewhat puzzled. Whatever Robert Manne's intellectual journeyings, the destination is worthy of his considerable gifts.

John Nance Garner, F.D.R.'s running mate in 1932 and 1936, described the American Vice-Presidency (as his phrase was euphemistically reported) as "not worth a pitcher of warm spit." *The Hand that Signed the Paper* could be valued at considerably less for insurance purposes. It is an intrinsically awful and repellent novel by a writer of no talent, whose success is interesting only in what it reveals about the intellectual and



moral bankruptcy of its defenders. Both the novel and its defenders are, assuredly, as unique to Australia as the funnel-web spider, unless by some chance the "intelligentsias" of Zanzibar or Tierra del Fuego are equally deadly.

W.D. Rubinstein

## THE HAMMER & SICKLE AND THE WASHING UP: MEMORIES OF AN AUSTRALIAN WOMAN COMMUNIST

*Amirah Inglis (Hyland House, Melbourne, 1995, 195 pp., \$29.95)*

"We believed that the poorest he and she, once they had dared to reach beyond their grasp, could change the world", recalls Amirah Inglis of her all-consuming commitment to the Communist ideal during the Cold War era. "It was not always easy from 1946 onward for comrades to imagine that last fight we would face, as we sang the *Internationale*, but we knew that such a day would come" [p.30].

Inglis' memories of growing up within a politically (Left) active Jewish household in 1930s-40s Parkville and Elwood were the subject of her first volume of autobiography, the critically-applauded *Amirah: an Un-Australian Childhood* (Heinemann, 1983). This second volume is equally well-written and readable. The author resumes her narrative with her enrolment at Melbourne University at the end of World War Two, and details her formal affiliation with the CPA, her marriage to the charismatic student activist-cum-academic Ian Turner, and her efforts to juggle the demands of family and domestic life with those of the Party during the turbulent '50s.

It is a tale of passionate idealism and not inconsiderable courage; it is also a poignant study of disillusionment. Inglis and her compatriots embraced the Class Struggle with almost religious fervour and singlemindedness. ("Was there anything I would not have done for the Party? ... since I never refused to do anything I was asked, the answer is worrying") [p.67]. She remained a true believer through the Czechoslovak coup, the Korean War, the "Moscow Doctors' plot", the exposure by Krushchev of Stalinist atrocities, and — closer to home — through Menzies' crusade to outlaw Communism, systematic police and political harassment, debilitating court appearances, a Royal Commission, the Petrov affair, even the betrayal of the cause by former Party stalwarts. Her devotion survived the defection of her mother over Krushchev's secret report (her father, Isaac Gust, remained an unswerving "Australian Bolshevik" until his death) and her husband's expulsion by the Party machine because of his public protest at the execution of Hungarian premier Imre Nagy. It even survived Inglis' growing rebelliousness and anger at the CPA's lack of recognition of the sacrifices made routinely by many of its women members. Boggled down herself in suburban Glen Iris, with three small children to care for and Turner constantly away on Party business, she queried: "How could ordinary women, with their kids and their kitchen sinks and their jobs, willingly embrace the revolutionary importance of their men's work when it deprived them of so much of their men's assistance and company?" [p.150].

Inglis ultimately rejected the CPA over the Sino-Soviet split in 1961. Symbolically, her relationship with Turner, which had commenced the year she joined the Party as an undergraduate, ended at the same time. She remarried in 1965 and spent many years in Papua-New Guinea with her academic second husband (Ken Inglis). Looking back on her CPA involvement 30 years after her own defection, she expresses puzzlement: "The mystery is not those members of the Australian Communist Party who left, but those

who remained despite everything committed to a Soviet social system which so little resembled their dream of justice and equality ..." [p.188].

Filled with evocative glimpses of both radical and conservative Melbourne during the Cold War, *The Hammer & Sickle and the Washing Up* is absorbing reading and a valuable addition to a sub-genre which includes recent memoirs by Harry Stein and Bernie Taft.

Malcolm J. Turnbull

## THE TOMMY TYCHO STORY: MUSIC, MAESTRO, PLEASE

*Tommy Tycho (Brolga Publishing, 1995, 170pp.)*

Tommy Tycho is one of this country's most respected all-round musicians. The recipient of MBE and OA honours and the "Mo" Award (and the subject of a tribute on TV's "This is Your Life"), his hugely successful career as instrumentalist, conductor, composer and musical director, has encompassed helming the Channel 7 orchestra during the Golden Age of Australian television Variety (1956–71), supervising and organising Royal Command Performances, creating scores for films such as *Young Einstein* and *Reckless Kelly*, and working alongside such luminaries as Judy Garland, Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr., Jack Benny and Roy Orbison.

In *Music, Maestro, Please*, Tycho recapitulates the highs and lows of his life and career. Born into an upper middle class home in Budapest in 1928, his mother, Helen Tehel, was a celebrated soprano with the Budapest and Vienna State Operas; as a consequence, the boy was surrounded by "good high quality music played well" from infancy. (His father, who died when Tycho was a child, was General Manager of the Hungarian Electricity Commission). He made his first public appearance at age 10, playing Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, studied under Egon Petri and Leo Weiner at the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest, and had composed his first piano concerto (admittedly "dreadful") by the time he was 14. Raised as a Lutheran, Tycho was unaware of his Jewish ancestry until World War Two, when he was interned (along with his teacher Weiner) in Forced Labour camps and the Budapest "ghetto". After the war he resumed his musical studies and fell in love with the American Big Band sound. Work with the Szepesi Orchestra took him to the exclusive Park Hotel in Teheran in 1948; he met and married his wife Eva there and they emigrated to Australia in 1951. Tycho started out as a storeman for David Jones in Sydney, picked up work broadcasting for the ABC, and "never looked back" after proving his versatility as last-minute understudy for singer Johnny Ray's piano-player.

*Music, Maestro, Please* is filled with anecdotes about the Australian music scene of the 1950s–80s, and coloured with frank, often diverting, asides on the "Oz" television industry, contemporary music and some of the international stars the author has accompanied. Tycho's prose style is engagingly simple, the book is effectively edited (much of it was transcribed from tape) and, overall, makes pleasing reading.

Malcolm J. Turnbull



## HOBERT HEBREW CONGREGATION: 150 YEARS OF SURVIVAL AGAINST ALL ODDS

*Hedi Fixel (Hobart Hebrew Congregation, 1994, 99pp.)*

This modest, but clearly lovingly-produced, little book was prepared to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the consecration of the Hobart Synagogue. Still distinguished by the presence of convict benches at its rear, the Argyle Street building is the oldest such structure in Australia; the book is an affectionate tribute to the resilience of both the *shul* and local Jewish community.

Relying heavily on Levi & Bergman's *Australian Genesis*, early studies of Hobart Jewry by Wolff and Goldman (in the *AJHSJ*), and Max Gordon's somewhat unreliable *Jews in Van Diemen's Land*, Hedi Fixel has also made good use of unpublished congregational records and interviews. While the book cannot claim to be the definitive study of the congregation (in my view, Tasmanian Jewry cries out for an exhaustive, scholarly study which takes off where Levi & Bergman left off), the author must be commended for having produced a charmingly readable monograph which provides a useful (and user-friendly) introduction to the record of the Jews in Hobart. Actively associated with HHC for 50 years, Mrs Fixel served as matron of the Larino hostel in Melbourne before settling in Tasmania. (See Glen Palmer's moving article, "Seventeen Children", *AJHSJ* 13, Part 1, 1995, p. 93-4).

Much of the text was published in this Journal a couple of years ago (*AJHSJ* 12, Part 3, p.566-83). The book offers additional detail on the colonial period, including biographical information on Phineas Moss, Louis Nathan, the Solomons and Samuel Benjamin. Drawing on congregational minutes, Mrs Fixel also looks at the contributions of Reuben Benjamin, Moses Epstein and others in the first half of the 20th century. Of greatest interest are a 25 page appendix, "Reminiscences of Older Members", and a small collection of photographs.

Malcolm J. Turnbull

## JUDAISM IN AUSTRALIA

*W.D. Rubinstein (Australian Government Publishing Service,  
Canberra, 1995, 59pp.) \$8.95*

This attractively-presented booklet, produced by the Commonwealth Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research, is the first in a series of profiles of Australian religious communities. It provides the general reader with a succinct introduction to Jewish history and beliefs, as well as a short but informative overview of major Australian Jewish communal structures. Drawing on 1991 census figures, Prof Rubinstein tabulates the size, age-range, educational levels, geographical distribution, ethnicity and socio-economic/occupational spread of contemporary Australian Jewry. Other tables furnish statistics on intermarriage and religious observance. (On the basis of the data, the author concludes that "Jewish religious practice in Australia appears to be holding its own, and even flourishing" [p.52]). A useful glossary and bibliography round out what is an excellent and "user-friendly" community profile.

Malcolm J. Turnbull

## A STANDARD FOR THE PEOPLE: THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WELLINGTON HEBREW CONGREGATION 1843–1993

*Stephen Levine, ed. (Hazard Press, Christchurch, 1995, 478 pp., \$NZ110)*

This large-format celebration of Wellington Jewry is undoubtedly the most physically prepossessing such study yet published in Australasia. No expense has been spared in putting together a comprehensive “blend of communal history, sketches of synagogue life and family reminiscence”, profusely illustrated with photographs and lavish full-colour reproductions of historic paintings. Divided into seven sections (each one introduced with rabbinical commentaries and blessings), and incorporating historical chapters, extracts from the Jewish press, institutional profiles, genealogies and memoirs of Holocaust survivors, the book collates contributions from rabbis past and present, prominent congregational members, ex- “Wellingtonians”, even the British Chief Rabbi.

The historical summary makes use of recently-discovered correspondence by the Hort family in the 1840s–50s, and includes a valuable guide to the first Jewish cemetery in Wellington. Probably of greatest interest to Australian readers are the many references to laymen and clergy who spent time in both countries: members of the Nathan and Samuel dynasties, Jacob Frankel, David Isaacs, Revs Skolnick, Wolman and (Abraham) Myers, Rabbis Gottschall, Kustanowicz, Stransky and (Ephraim) Levy, are just some examples.

*A Standard for the People* has a number of shortcomings, however. Most glaring (in what should be, after all, the definitive reference work on a leading New Zealand community) are the general lack of foot/end-notes and the complete absence of a bibliography. Several chapters were apparently drawn from a “thesis” by the late Maurice Pitt, yet I was unable to locate bibliographic details (or even a title) for the dissertation in question. (Nor, surprisingly, did I come across any mention of L.M. Goldman’s landmark *History of the Jews in New Zealand*). Elsewhere, citation of sources by the various authors is usually cursory at best. Having organised and produced a volume of such scope and magnitude does the editor great credit; it is a pity, therefore, that greater attention was not paid to “scholarly apparatus”, particularly in the historical chapters.

Malcolm J. Turnbull

## A HISTORY OF THE JEWS IN THE ENGLISH- SPEAKING WORLD: GREAT BRITAIN

*W.D. Rubinstein (MacMillan, London, 1996, 539 pp., £60)*

This is another major publication which, strictly speaking, falls outside the *Journal*’s ambit (i.e. works dealing with the Australian Jewish experience); however, given the English origins of the colonial communities, Prof Bill Rubinstein’s ground-breaking new study of Anglo-Jewry warrants examination. (The book is dedicated to the author’s friends and former colleagues in the AJHS and the Australian Association for Jewish Studies). At the outset, he argues that the mass migration of Jews from Europe into the English-speaking world over the past two centuries “constitutes the most appropriate



and cogent paradigm in which to view the modernisation of Jewry" [p.1]. (Nearly 50% of world Jewry lives in Britain, the USA, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and South Africa in the 1990s).

The first of two volumes seeking to document and analyse the progress of Jews throughout the English-speaking world, the present work is, at one and the same time, a narrative account of Anglo-Jewry from its mediaeval beginnings and an in-depth reappraisal of that history — specifically, of the Jew *within* British society. The author offers an extended critique of Anglo-Jewish historiography's "younger school" (David Cesarani, Geoffrey Alderman, Tony Kushner, Colin Holmes, Richard Bolchover, *et al*); he targets the tendency of recent commentators/ analysts to exaggerate the extent and significance of anti-Semitism in modern Britain, to portray Anglo-Jewry in an "unrelentingly negative" manner, and to interpret events and individuals with post-Holocaust hindsight.

The fact that Anglo-Jews have endured qualitatively less hostility than their European peers has tended to be overlooked by many latter-day historians (maintains the author). Prof Rubinstein devotes considerable space to proving that many oft-cited instances of anti-Semitism may not have been all they seemed. He reevaluates the allegedly racist attitudes of Sir William Joynson-Hicks, Arnold White, Rudyard Kipling and G.K. Chesterton, for instance, as having been much more complex and ambivalent than is generally recognised.

Volume 1 of *The Jews in the English-speaking World* is an important, distinguished and often provocative contribution to Anglo-Jewish historiography, one sure to generate considerable controversy (particularly among members of the "younger school"). I look forward to reading Volume 2 in the future.

Malcolm J. Turnbull

## MINORITIES: CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN SYDNEY

*Shirley Fitzgerald & Garry Wotherspoon, eds. (State Library of NSW/Sydney History Group, 1995, 216 pp.)*

*Minorities* brings together 11 articles documenting the ethnic and cultural complexity and diversity which have enriched Sydney since "before the city was 'even a generation old'". Topics explored by the contributors include the early Greek presence in Sydney, inner-urban Irish sub-communities, the Chinese-language press, evolving approaches to treating Developmental disabilities, Gay male artists and the "Cold War", Aboriginality and community in the Leichhardt municipality, the geography of ethnic communities, the use of language in defining and marginalising minorities, sources for Italian history in NSW.

As the editors note, the Jewish contribution to Sydney's political, cultural and commercial life has "clearly been significant" and out of all proportion to Jewish numbers. In her important article, "The Golden Age of Sydney's Jewry", Suzanne Rutland examines the community from 1850 to the beginning of the Great War. "By 1914", she writes, "Sydney Jewry was a respected and entrenched, if tiny, minority which, for a number of reasons was very active in public life". The virtual absence of "structural discrimination", the desire by communal leaders to downplay distinctiveness, and low levels of anti-Semitism, combined to ensure that "in the comparatively free Australian society it was possible for a Jew to achieve his or her fullest potential". By way of example, Dr Rutland cites such achievers as Sir Saul Samuel, Sir Julian Salomons,

Fanny Cohen, Gladys Marks, Joseph Wolinski, and so on; she notes also that 75 Australian Jews gained honours in World War One while Sydney boy Leonard Keysor earned the V.C. for bravery at Gallipoli.

Of particular interest is the author's insightful analysis of the career of Rev Alexander B. Davis, who served as the community's religious figurehead for 40 years, and who can be said to have embodied the Anglo-Orthodox tradition. The article highlights Davis' commitment and contributions to education, philanthropy and social service, and underlines the considerable skill with which he managed to maintain communal unity. Under his leadership, for instance, services at the Great Synagogue became a "compromise between tradition and innovation which appealed to most congregants".

While much of the material will already be familiar to readers of *Edge of the Diaspora* or Dr Rutland's other publications, this article is a valuable summation and evocation of a key period in the history of one of Australia's premier Jewish communities, as well as a worthy contribution to an important study of urban Australian "identity".

Malcolm J. Turnbull

## THE SEVENTH SON OF THE SEVENTH SON (OVER 70 YEARS MEMORABILIA)

*Joseph Fox (the Author, Melbourne, 1996, 310pp)*

## I REST MY CASE

*Mark Verstandig (Saga Press, Melbourne, 1995, 290 pp; \$15)*

## KEEP YELLING: A SURVIVOR'S TESTIMONY

*Maurie Hoffman (Spectrum, Melbourne, 1995, 278 pp; \$24.95)*

## SUNSHINE AND SHADOWS (MOJE ZYCIE)

*Keila Pruzanski (the Author, Melbourne, 1996, 77 pp)*

Although these four authors are concerned primarily with recapturing youthful memories of their lives in Europe between the wars, and in particular, with recounting their wartime experiences, each of them devotes some space to recording his or her arrival, settlement and later life in Australia (specifically Melbourne). As examples of Jewish immigrant literature, therefore, the books warrant at least a brief examination.

*The Seventh Son of the Seventh Son* is strong on anecdote and of greatest interest for its descriptions of the Jewish East End. The son of a Russian-born "journeyman tailor", Joseph Fox grew up in London and served with the British Armed Forces in West Africa, India and Burma. He emigrated to Australia in 1952, opted almost immediately to settle instead in New Zealand (where he worked for the Department of Agriculture), and travelled extensively before finally making his home in Melbourne. One of his children is Rabbi Brian Fox of Sydney.

The other three titles are contributions to the growing catalogue of locally-produced Holocaust memoirs. Most outstanding is Mark Verstandig's beautifully-crafted *I Rest My Case*, which is both a wartime record and an evocative recollection of *shtetl* life in



interwar Galicia. Born into a Chassidic landowning family, Verstandig trained as a lawyer at the University of Cracow, survived the horrors of wartime Poland, and emigrated with his family to Melbourne in 1952. His autobiography, which provides insight into the complexity of Polish-Jewish relations before and after World War Two, concludes with an adroit summary of Verstandig's involvement in Yiddish journalism, B'nai Brith, the Zionist movement and the Kadimah in Australia.

Maurie Hoffman was also born and raised in Galicia. His memoirs, which he compiled while in Italy in the late 1940s, are written in the third person, and document his upbringing and his exploits with the partisans in Poland during World War Two. Hoffman's decision to emigrate to Australia in 1949, his marriages, his working life and a return visit to Poland in 1994, are all covered in a twenty-page epilogue.

A return visit to her native Bialystok in 1993 similarly provided the impetus for Keila Pruzanski's more modest *Sunshine and Shadows*. This unpretentious desk-top publication makes effective (and quite poignant) use of family photographs and genealogical tables to reinforce the author's descriptions of everyday life in pre-war Poland, exile with her parents to Siberia, and their experiences in Europe after 1945. (The family emigrated to Australia in 1949).

Malcolm J. Turnbull

## NEWCASTLE SYNAGOGUE 70TH ANNIVERSARY & NEWCASTLE BICENTENNIAL 1997

*Lionel E. Fredman (Newcastle Hebrew Congregation, 1996, 16pp; \$10)*

This informative booklet is a revised and expanded edition of the pamphlet produced to celebrate the Newcastle Synagogue Jubilee twenty years ago. Dr Fredman chronicles (briefly) the progress of Newcastle Jewry since the 1970s and provides an updated listing of congregational leaders as well as a number of additional photographs.

Malcolm J. Turnbull

## THE JUDY CASSAB DIARIES

*Judy Cassab; Lynne Segal, ed. (Alfred Knopf, Sydney, 1995, 518pp, \$45)*

Early in her diaries, Judy Cassab quotes from an old friend who had just returned from visiting Matisse. Matisse, she was told, though ailing and bedridden, still painted by "lying on his back with a brush tied to the end of a bamboo pole on a canvas stretched on the ceiling". This image of Matisse, still painting on regardless, is an appropriate one for Cassab, because like him, she is a driven artist who must paint, no matter the difficulties.

The *Judy Cassab Diaries* were written between 1944–1994, and tell of Cassab's experiences in Nazi-occupied Hungary, of her arrival in Sydney in 1951, and of her growing success as a portrait painter. (She has twice won the Archibald). They also tell of her family, of her two sons, and of her long and happy marriage.

In reading the *Diaries* I could not help but be impressed by Cassab's energy, enthusiasm and drive. No cattiness or bitchiness here. On the contrary, Cassab is revealed as an

optimistic and positive woman who displays a great willingness to accept people for what they are. She is rarely judgmental. Unfortunately, this is the great weakness of both her writing and of her portraiture. As a painter of the rich and famous she was in an ideal position to observe and comment on the workings of power, but she gives little insight. Her main concern is to create a likeness. Despite her husband's plea to "Work, and don't live on the surface", she is unwilling, or unable, to follow his advice. But there may be a reason for this.

On the very first page of the *Diaries*, Cassab describes how in May 1944 her family was deported to Auschwitz. She was able to avoid deportation by taking on the identity of her maid. In August 1944 she writes: "So, four months ago I shed my old self. I now live as Maria Koperdak. I have taken on the identity of Mariska, my old maid. I have her papers ..." At first, she was afraid. Her landlady and son were suspicious ... "They asked questions. I answered, guilty and frightened" ... but later on we read ... "I am becoming used to it".

Perhaps it was because of this war time experience that Cassab has such a respect for people's facades. She does not like to pry or ask embarrassing questions, and appears to have not the slightest interest in discovering what her subjects may have done in order to get where they are. Qualities which, no doubt, help partly explain her great success as portrait painter of people in high places.

Judith O'Donnell

## OUR LIPPMANN FAMILY: A CHRONICLE SPANNING THREE CENTURIES AND THREE CONTINENTS

*Kurt E.B. Lippmann (the Author, Melbourne, 1996, 86pp, \$25)*

Kurt Lippmann, in compiling this family chronicle, has made a real contribution to both Australian Jewish history and genealogy. The book is particularly interesting to me as our kinsfolk both came to Australia from Germany in 1852 — we remained while some of the Lippmanns returned to Europe. In the century that followed, their achievements and our achievements were entirely different. After commercial success on the Victorian Goldfields, members of the family returned to Germany and developed successful commercial enterprises in Hamburg.

Julius Lippmann (1820—1872) remained in Australia. He was responsible for obtaining German migrant workers to develop the Melbourne and Mount Alexander railway and to work in Northern Victoria. Where the workers settled was known as Germantown. Julius' sons William and Henry were eminently successful in banking and farming. Fanny Lippmann emigrated with her brothers to Australia and in 1853 married Louis Loewe in Sydney. They had three daughters who married in Australia and have numerous descendants.

One interesting aspect of the book is how very quickly the early Lippmanns lost contact with both their Jewish and German backgrounds and became part of mainstream Australia. For many years, little contact existed between the Australian and German branches of the family; a letter, sent overseas in 1914 and found among the late Joseph Lippmann's papers in 1928, ultimately rekindled correspondence. It is worth noting, however, that Australian relatives proved very helpful and actively renewed their family association when called upon to assist their German Jewish cousins with migration permits in 1938.



The passages in the book relating to Dr Leo Lippmann (page 40, for instance) are very revealing, even fifty-five years after the events described. The eulogy (Appendix 5) for Rudolf Lippmann, a 20 year old medical student who suicided in October 1933, is also very poignant. These sections alone would justify reading the book. But there is much more. The story (in Chapter 4) of Joseph Lippmann and his two sons Arthur (1884—1951) and Franz (1886—1953), who both came to Australia in 1938-9, is one of renewed family achievement. Franz and Olga Lippmann could take pride in their children who re-established themselves in Australia. Walter (1919—1993), who gave great service to the Australian Jewish Welfare Society and the Ethnic Community Council of Victoria, was awarded the MBE and membership of the Order of Australia (AM). Kurt was awarded the OAM (Order of Australia medal) for his services to the Jewish community, particularly B'nai Brith. Their sister, Elizabeth Leser, has also been active in Jewish communal life. Their cousin, Robert Lippmann, has been active in Lifeguard service at Bondi Beach in Sydney. There are extensive references to their American cousins with whom Kurt Lippmann has made contact.

In reviewing a book, one should not be critical when it is not necessary to be so, but I feel that *Our Lippmann Family* would have been improved by the inclusion of an Index of family names, a simple family tree, and sources for some of the outstanding photos. It would also have been fascinating to know about the continuing Jewish associations and observance of various relatives throughout the world, especially perhaps in America.

Recording his family's background in Europe and then throughout the world is a very real achievement and the author is to be complimented on a wonderful effort. Future generations of the Lippmann family will, with little doubt, be proud of Kurt Lippmann's compilation.

Isidor Solomon

## WHAT A LIFE: A BIOGRAPHY OF PAUL MORAWETZ

*Gloria Frydman (Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 230 pp., \$19.95)*

This book is a remarkable story of our age. Before the full onset of the Holocaust, Paul Morawetz set out to see the World. His experiences included speculative involvements in South Africa, and work as an Industrial representative in India and Thailand. In 1940 he came to Australia from the Far East, possessing limited financial resources. He was active in the Association of Jewish Refugees, on behalf of other Jews deemed (like him) to be "enemy aliens", and in the formation of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (he was the ECAJ's first Honorary Secretary).

Morawetz's arrival in Australia on a Japanese ship, his business associations in Hobart where there was strategic wartime manufacturing, and his political activity on behalf of Jewish migrants, all brought him under the surveillance of ASIO. Later, he was suspected of being a Communist. The book focuses closely on these political associations in Australia and maintains that ASIO really believed Morawetz to be a security risk. He has been described as a "go getter" — a typical Old-time Australian expression — and this he certainly has been. Without doubt a successful industrialist, as an investor he has experienced the vagaries of the stock market. (His stock market philosophy may well be worth following). The years in active business and then in investment have provided him with the wherewithal to be both a representative of the United Nations in Africa and in Chad, and then to settle in Israel in 1970. Certainly he has become a citizen of the World.



Very few people could tell you of so many activities and of having met and associated with so many personalities; in fact, the list at times becomes "mind-boggling". Many noted international names appear, from Zina Harmon, wife of a former President of the Hebrew University, to Teddy Kollek, prominent mayor of Jerusalem, or Balewa, Prime minister of Nigeria in 1963. I do not know if his association with Hepzibah (Menuhin) Nicholas adds any dignity to the book — what it does do is depict Morawetz as a "go-getter", not only in commerce, industry and international politics, but also in the more intimate area of human relations. Not many subjects of a biography would have been so frank about what he describes as "the love of his life".

Paul Morawetz is a remarkable man and this book tells of a very full eighty-one years. Whether in industry, finance, politics or travel, his life-story is breath-taking at times, and the author has made a very real contribution to biography in compiling these 230 pages. *What A Life* is well worth reading.

Isidor Solomon

## BITTER HERBS AND HONEY

*16 mm colour film, 1996. Producer/director: Monique Schwarz; distributor: Sharmill Films; cinematography: Laszlo Baranyai; editor: Uri Mizrahi; interviewees: June Factor, Jean Holkner, Amirah Inglis, Miriam Kuna, Rachel Levita, Sam Lipski, Solomon Pose, Bernard Rechter, Pinchas Ringelblum, Hilary Rubinstein, Victor Smorgon and Arnold Zable; Yiddish folksong performances: Freydi Mrocki; cantorial music: Rabbi Philip Heilbrunn, Rev Wolf Rechter.*

The formerly vital Jewish community of Carlton has increasingly of late become a focus of the retrospective gaze of historians, ethnographers, essayists and writers of autobiographical fiction. Not long ago, the Museum of Victoria mounted an exhibition on Jewish (and Italian) Carlton, replete with photographs, slides, documents, street maps, life-size models of old neighbourhood shops and much memorabilia. Until Melbourne film exhibitor and distributor, Natalie Miller, conceived and acted on the idea, we have not had a film on the subject. This film, directed by independent filmmaker Monique Schwarz, was made with the assistance of Film Victoria and the ABC; had its cinema release, most appropriately, at the Nova Cinema in Lygon Street, Carlton; and will be screened on ABC television, though probably shortened to fit the television time-slot.

*Bitter Herbs and Honey* is an ambitious film, incorporating and interweaving personal memoirs of former Carlton residents, the generalized observations of historians Hilary Rubinstein and Bernard Rechter, dramatic re-enactments, archival footage (still photographs and old home movies) and performances by Yiddish folksinger, Freydi Mrocki. The resulting hodge-podge is uneven artistically - the dramatic re-enactments and musical performances are especially heavy-handed - but the film succeeds in evoking the atmosphere of the old Carlton, largely through the graphic personal testimonies of former residents.

I was not a resident of Carlton but my grandparents and other members of my extended family were, so I was a frequent visitor. My grandparents were members of the Hascolah Talmud Torah in Rathdowne Street, North Carlton — a vital centre of Hassidism before the foundation of the Yeshivah in St Kilda. In the film, this aspect of Carlton Jewish life is omitted. The interviewees are predominantly, if not entirely, secular Jews; the few who discuss religious observance restrict their comments to the mainstream congregations at the Carlton and East Melbourne synagogues. As bemused detached observers, Lipski



describes the operatic performances of Cantor Rechter at East Melbourne (in his apt epithet, the Pavarotti of the Jewish community of Melbourne) and Smorgon describes the lack of decorum and busy level of chatter at Carlton services. But there is no discussion of the little "stiebels" and the observant religious sub-culture.

One can detect other omissions in the film's treatment of community politics. Among the interviewees, the left is over-represented: the four articulate women writers (Factor, Holkner, Inglis and Kuna) all grew up as children of the "Progressiver", Jewish communists, who were hardly a majority in the Carlton community; and the Bund receives recognition through Ringelblum and through accounts of its domination of the Yiddish language school (the Peretz School conducted on Sunday mornings and after school on weekdays in the premises of the Kadimah building in Lygon Street opposite the Carlton Cemetery). But there is no mention of the right, the General Zionists or the Revisionists, or of the Zionist youth movements. It is true that during the War the community was largely united in the struggle against Hitler, and in its concern for Jewish victims of Nazism, but before and after the War, factionalism was rife — within left and right; between Communists, Zionists, and Bundists; and between orthodox and secular Jews.

The film does not claim to be a history of the community, and does not provide statistics, dates or other hard data. It is more properly described as a film of selected memories of growing up in Carlton, which are endowed with a nostalgic glaze through the over-use of melancholic Yiddish folk music. The testimonies in fact provide personal memories from different eras — pre-war, wartime, and postwar — but their historical specificity is elided, in favour of a general evocation of "Jewish Carlton".

Freda Freiberg

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OBITUARY: HENRY SHAW

It is with sadness that we record the passing, on 28 August this year, of long-time AJHS member and well-loved communal identity Henry Shaw. Born in London in 1911, the son of *Chazan* Shlomo Rosen, Henry served with the British Forces during World War Two, worked as Youth Officer for the United Synagogue and AJY, and co-founded the Hillel Foundation in Britain. He came to Melbourne (with wife Sybil) in 1970 as Director of Hillel in Victoria, and convened and lectured for Victoria College's Jewish Studies program from 1978 until his retirement in 1986.

As one of the many students who attended his classes in Modern Jewish History and Literature at Victoria College, I was privileged to know Henry as an enthusiastic and supportive teacher and supervisor. (I recall that one of his many kindnesses over the years was the gift of an early number of the *AJHS Journal*, and the suggestion that I might find other issues of the *Journal* of interest.) Henry's considerable scholarship, generosity and "bonhomie" enriched the lives of innumerable students, friends and acquaintances and it seems a fitting tribute to his memory that future scholars can continue to benefit from his book collection which is now held and maintained by the Jewish Museum of Australia.

Malcolm J. Turnbull

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## REPORT TO MEMBERS

Our 46th Annual General Meeting was held on 26 February 1996, using for the first time the new premises of the Jewish Museum of Australia. We received with much regret the resignations from the committee of Professor W.D. (Bill) and Dr Hilary Rubinstein, who will, however, be continuing their close association with our Society from their new home in Aberystwyth, Wales. The following were elected to serve for the next twelve months: President, Dr Howard Freeman; Honorary Secretary, Mrs Beverley Davis OAM; Honorary Treasurer, Dr Serge Liberman; Committee: Dr Paul Bartrop, Dr Harvey Cohen, Trevor Cohen, Rabbi Dr John Levi, Mrs Judith O'Donnell, Isidor Solomon, and Dr Malcolm Turnbull (who is also editor of the Victorian AJHS *Journal*). Our guest speaker on this occasion was Dr Bernard Hyams who delivered an address on the history, past and present, of the South Australian Jewish community.

On 12 March, at the Caulfield Arts Complex Theatre, we presented a special preview screening of *Strike Me Lucky: Rediscovering Roy Rene "Mo"*, a one-hour documentary produced for ABC Television which appeared some months later. The film was followed by an on-stage panel discussion, led by theatre historian Frank van Straten, and including Kenn Brodziak, Val Jellay, Iris Shand, and Leila Dabscheck Cohen.

Our next meeting, on 6 August, had as guest speaker William (Bill) White, the Manager of Genealogical Services at State Trustees Limited, who told us about his fascinating involvement in *The Mystery Trail of Edmund Mandl*. Mr White provided the audience with new insights into the art of genealogical research in outlining the work entailed in tracing the rightful heir to the 2 million dollar fortune (an 85 year old woman living in Austria) left when Mandl (who had arrived in Australia as one of the famous "Dunera Boys") died, alone, in 1991, without making a will.

The final meeting for 1996 took place on 8 October with Mr Terence Lane, senior curator of Australian Art at the National Gallery of Victoria, spoke about a number of outstanding Jewish furniture designers and makers who were active in Melbourne in the post-war period, with particular reference to Ernest Deutsch, Schulim Krimper, Fred Lowen, Aaron Zoureff and Ira Zoureff. Today their works are highly valued and keenly sought as collectors' pieces.

We have made a number of heavy financial commitments during the past year which included the purchase of a new eight-bay compact unit to store part of our archival collection; a replacement microfilm reader/printer for our headquarters; and funding the publication of the Indexes to Volumes Eleven and Twelve of the AJHS *Journal*, as well as the November 1995 and 1996 issues.

An enormous amount of work has been carried out this year on the archival front. Thanks to a benefactor member of the East Melbourne Hebrew Congregation (who insists on anonymity) a substantial donation has been made to honour the memories of Rabbi Dr Herman Sanger, Mrs Ada Phillips, and the Reverend Isaac Amber Bernstein, all of whom have been highly significant figures in Victorian Jewish history. This has enabled us to cover the costs of restoration work on the very first EMHC marriage register, dating from 1857, which was initially thought to have been beyond repair.

A second major coup concerns the EMHC collection of marriage registers. About fifteen years ago, our Society was instrumental in having microfilm copies made of almost all of the Australian synagogues' marriage registers. At that time it was discovered that one register from East Melbourne was missing, which contained records of forty-one marriages from February 1884 to October 1888.



Since then, we have tried many avenues to acquire the missing information. We are extremely excited to be able to report that, thanks to the dedicated work and persistence of Beverley Davis, we have now been able to obtain duplicate records of all of these 41 missing marriages, and thus "reconstruct" the lost register! All of the costs of research and provision of documents have been met by a recent unexpected contribution from a non-member of our Society, and the balance made up by East Melbourne.

Similar efforts are now being carried out to replace missing records from the Ballarat, Geelong, and Sandhurst/Bendigo Jewish communities.

We are very pleased to announce that the St Kilda Hebrew Congregation has now transferred their archives to our care and control, in the same manner as already done by the East Melbourne Hebrew Congregation. A great deal of work has been involved in preparing these records for storage and (restricted) access, and thanks must go to Beverley Davis and her helpers for their efforts. A few months ago, a letter was received from the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation confirming that their executive and board have unanimously agreed to place their archives into the custody of AJHS Victoria. Work on this vast collection will be commencing soon.

We look forward to an equally busy and fulfilling year to come.

Beverley Davis OAM  
Honorary Secretary/Archivist AJHS Victoria Inc.

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## MEMBERS JOINED AJHS VICTORIA INC SINCE NOVEMBER 1995

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## CONTRIBUTORS

**Dr Rodney Benjamin** recently completed a PhD thesis on the Australian Jewish Welfare Society.

**Beverley Davis OAM**, has been honorary Secretary and Archivist of the AJHS Victoria Inc., since 1977.

**Elizabeth Durré** is a grand-daughter of Sir John Monash, and was an honoured guest at the recent 50th anniversary celebrations of Kfar Monash.

**Lorraine Freeman**, a former president of the Jewish Bereavement Group *Chesed*, is a voluntary guide at the Jewish Museum of Australia.

**Freda Freiberg** is an Associate of Monash University's Visual Arts Department and photography critic for *the Age*.

**Dr Bernard Hyams** is active in Jewish Adult Education in Melbourne, and the author of a new history of the South Australian Jewish community.

The late **Lou Jedwab** grew up in Carlton and was active in the Melbourne Jewish 'Left'. Chairman of the Youth section of the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism in the 1940s-50s, he was later prominent in the Australian Jewish Democratic Society.

**Kurt Lippmann OAM**, a former President of B'nai Brith in Melbourne, was a contributor to the late John Foster's *Community of Fate*, and recently published a history of his family.

**Philip Mendes**, author of many articles on Jews and the Political 'Left', teaches Social Work at Monash University.

**Judith O'Donnell** is a committee-member of the AJHS Victoria Inc., engaged in ongoing research into the life of Isaac 'Ikey' Solomon(s).

**Dr Hilary L. Rubinstein**, former committee-member of the AJHS Vic., lives in Wales and is currently preparing a study of international Philosemitism.

**Professor W.D. (Bill) Rubinstein**, is Professor of Modern History at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth. Former Victorian editor of this *Journal*, he recently completed *The Myth of Rescue*, a study of Allied efforts to save European Jewry during World War Two.

**Isidor Solomon** is a foundation member of the AJHS Victoria Inc., and a current committee-member. He has been writing and publishing on aspects of Victorian Jewish history since the 1940s.

**Professor Ronald Taft**, emeritus Professor of Psychology at Monash University from 1982, was co-founder of Temple David in Perth.

**George Tibbitts** is Senior Lecturer in Architecture at the University of Melbourne.

**Dr Malcolm J. Turnbull**, Victorian editor of the *AJHS Journal*, is currently preparing an early history of the Australian Reform movement in Judaism.





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MORRIS S. OCHERT, OAM, ASTC(MechEng), MIEAust, CPEng.  
3/23 Lucinda Street, Taringa, Qld. 4068

### **CORRESPONDING MEMBER FOR GREAT BRITAIN**

Dr. ANTHONY P. JOSEPH, MA, MB, BChir, DObst, RCOG  
25 Westbourne Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 3TX England

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